



A MILWAUKIE-BASED ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY CHAPEL THEATRE

ISSUE 1 | 04.19



## COVER ART

By Miriam Russell

"UNTITLED"

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## SUBMISSIONS

Are you an artist, writer, budding journalist or community resident in the Milwaukie, OR area? Is there something you'd like to contribute to 99E Magazine in the future?

Please contact us below to be considered for upcoming issues:

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**Editor:** Illya deTorres



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*Thank you, kind reader, for respecting the work of our contributors!*

Design by Diane Stankard

## COVER ART-INSPIRED POEM

By Jark

*And we walked*

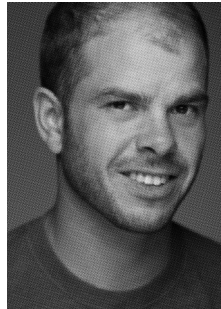
*As fog through the trees.*

*It was the frigid edge of the wind  
that cut through our shallow mask  
and opened,  
with rare spirit,  
the forgotten sense of our nature.*

*In that moment we walked  
as trees through time.*

*Frozen as our growth became  
nameless and beautiful.*





## WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF 99E

And thank you for taking the time to read Milwaukie's newest arts and culture magazine. This magazine serves as an extension of all that we do at Chapel Theatre. The place for performance art in Milwaukie. It also exists to highlight all the awesomely talented artistic people we know. This town is full of them and we want to share them with you.

We want to keep you up-to-date with everything happening at Chapel Theatre.  
We want to connect with you and want you to connect with us.  
Let's let 99E be a conduit for that connection.

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*An attempt to understand the process of a simple existence  
through a flowing river of rant and observation...*

## THOUGHTS ON...THOUGHTS OFF

BY J. R. HOLLAND

An introduction seems in order.  
As a small business proprietor, a single father, a home-owner, a goofball, a saint, a sinner, a winner winner vegan chicken dinner. I have seen a bit and experienced the same in my nearly 40 rotations around the sun, that I may be uniquely qualified to offer insight. Then again I may not. Everyone has a story and not everyone sees fit to tell it, unfortunately. The storyteller tells the story; the people who listen pass the judgement — in 200 words or less. And, seeing as I've used up more than half of them on a mediocre biography

intended to earn your trust, I expect things to only get better from here!

I've read **Yelp** reviews but never met a person who wrote one. It's hard to imagine what might have to transpire for me to put that much effort into that kind of exercise. I've known people who've been fired because of a bad **Yelp** review and I've been an employee of many small small restaurants that didn't deserve half the vitriol spewed by a person with an opinion. Food for thought.

Moral: **Think before you Yelp!**



# BREAKING SECOND SUNDAY

BY HAMID SHIBATA BENNETT

**W**hat is there to do in Milwaukie, Oregon after First Friday is over and the Farmer's Market is no longer in full swing?

Chapel Theatre and the Milwaukie Arts Committee (artMOB), collaborated to create the Second Sunday Winter Performance Series, a monthly event from January through March, created to fill this void and bring folks together for inspiration and community through the chilly winter months.

February 10th, 2019 was our second event, an exhibition of Hip Hop Culture, featuring graffiti art and breakdancing with the Morpheus Youth Project. Creative movement is a brilliant way to create connection, find self-expression, develop body awareness, let go of trauma, plus it's freaking rad. Let's find more ways to teach this to every generation!

Hope to see ya'll at Chapel Theatre soon! Pop and lock!



DANCE SHOWCASE



ALL PHOTOS  
ON THIS PAGE  
Provided by  
Hamid Shibata Bennett



*Creative movement is a brilliant way to create connection,  
find self-expression, develop body awareness, let go of trauma...*

”

# TRIPTHE DARK

BY CORINN DETORRES



*It was 2009. People were losing jobs, businesses were being reimaged. Social connections were strengthening and budding. Romance was thrifty. Beers were cheap.*

I was cleaning houses with a newly earned Master's Degree and re-discovering dance after a three-year hiatus.

My coworker and new friend, Lauren, was at a bar one night and met a dude who said he was looking for dancers for a show. Fast forward a year and Lauren and I found ourselves caught up in what would be a life-changing relationship with the late Jeffrey Wonderful. Jeffrey embraced the alternative and welcomed those of us who were more than a little rusty and entering into Portland's performance scene for the first time. He created a magic that anyone who knew him felt and understood, even when we didn't fully understand his fever-driven creative visions.

The magic was infectious, a hard-to-shake energy, an invitation to go big. Whereas outside of Portland we were not thin,

flexible, or strong enough to dance professionally, in Portland, our vision, creativity, and passion could take us anywhere, everywhere; successfully.

TriptheDark was born in 2010 and we continue to carry Jeffrey's spirit alongside our work every day, finding familiar stories and reimagining them through dance.

From *Twin Peaks* to *Labyrinth*, our productions are thought-provoking, well-crafted, and professionally performed.

Our current production, *A Little Less Human*, is about grief, about love, about the loss you feel when you die.

Based on the movie, *A Ghost Story*, this dance production follows the story of a couple who is real, who loves and disagrees and has passion. A couple who feels loss, deeply and separately. Through contemporary dance, TriptheDark delves into a love lost and a death trapped in a house, a home; purgatory.

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## UPCOMING PERFORMANCES AT CHAPEL THEATRE:

### A LITTLE LESS HUMAN

APRIL 2019

12<sup>TH</sup> & 13<sup>TH</sup>

19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup>

26<sup>TH</sup> & 27<sup>TH</sup>

PLUS:  
APPRENTICE SHOW:  
APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>

SHOWS BEGIN AT 7:30PM

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There is something I've been reminding myself of over and over again in the last few months/years:

*If you need something to love but can't find anything, you've got to make something out of thin air.*

When your brain is a thing that just ratchets tighter and tighter, and your heart is a swollen, sad muscle, you have to love something to stay afloat.

Which is part having something to love, part allowing yourself to love something, and part allowing yourself to feel joy from that love.

You have to get so soft and vulnerable because you're risking so much possible hurt. It means there's a thing to lose... but you can make joy where there was nothing before.

What I made when I needed something to love was *Telltale*, a monthly curated storytelling event for people who like to get vulnerable and take no shit. It's focused on community, resilience, connection, and saying *damn the man* together.

Each month, I'll feature a piece of writing from a *Telltale* participant. It might be funny. It might break your heart. It might make you uncomfortable. It might make you feel a little less alone. We'd love for you to come to a show, even to get involved. We'd love to see you there. It would be so much better with you there.

Please take a few minutes to read this month's feature story from Isaac on the following pages. A local comedian, he also happens to be an incredible storyteller who makes me want to sit up and pay attention.

INTRODUCTION BY JASMINE PETTET  
— CURATOR/CREATOR OF TELLTALE —



# Drive-by

BY ISAAC A. PENDERGRASS JR.

I don't need this shit! That was all I was thinking at that moment. My two-month old son and his four-year old sister were in the backseat. My wife was riding shotgun. All of them were asleep. Peaceful — as if they knew that I could protect them from anything.

It was June 16, 2013, and I was awake, driving along the tree-lined back roads of Washington State, on my way to the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad. I didn't want to be there, but to make my wife happy, I would have given my own life, and judging from this Father's Day excursion, it may well have been a requirement.

Eventually, the thick lining of trees gave way to patches of life that seemed all too familiar. A rusted mobile home, here. Dilapidated wooden plank structures and "Beware of Dog" signs, there. Having grown up in the Deep South, it almost felt like home, and that was the problem. At that recognition, more than ever, I absolutely did not want to be there.

As we entered the town and passed the general store, on our right, the hair stood up on the back of my neck. These days, I like my stores to be very specific. And without actually knowing this, I knew for a fact that, at that moment, we were the only Black people in town. It wasn't just the stares that clued me in to this fact. Nor was it the gaping of mouths that occurred almost in unison. Those were solid clues, but it was something more. It was a feeling, an instinct, molded in the forgotten areas of the South.

Moments later, we parked beside what appeared to be the only stretch of sidewalk in the little town.

"You sure about this?" I said to my wife.

"We can leave, if you want!" she shot back at me, her aggravation starting to show.

"No, I'm sure we'll be fine." I lied. I wasn't sure.

Just then, my son erupted in sound and motion. Sleep had grown weary of his company and decided to leave his little body all at once. My wife surmised that a walk would help to calm him down. I trusted her intuition, but understood that her reckoning did not account for my own anxiety. I turned to her and said,

"I'd feel infinitely more comfortable if you didn't."

"We'll be fine, Isaac!" she huffed, as they exited the car.

I sat with my sleeping daughter, but after witnessing a few cars reduce speed when nearing the wandering half of my family, I woke her up and we reunited on a precarious stroll. That's when it happened.

As we walked, I heard a car slowing behind us. My senses were heightened, but I dared not turn to look, because my southern blood had taught me well; in that sometimes, situations like these are better ignored. But this time, it was different. I could feel the cool from the approaching shadow, and I instinctively knew that ignoring the impending encounter would have a tragic end.

Turning to address the threat, I heard a window winding down. *This is really happening* were the words that consumed my entire existence. Before I had fully faced them, the one in the backseat unloaded.

"Hey, Blacky!"

The seconds that followed were stretched beyond their limits with a silence that can only be compared





I checked,  
but the only holes  
were in my expectations.

to death. The window returned to its original position, and the car sped away as if its racist detour had been detrimental to a previous obligation. As the car disappeared into the distance, I checked, but the only holes were in my expectations.

What had just happened? Had I stumbled upon a primitive racist civilization? My mind flooded with questions and emotion. I was relieved and disappointed, all at once. Relieved that there was nothing more. Disappointed that there was nothing more.

The walk back to our car took longer than one would expect. My wife looked at me and said, "We can go, if you want." This time, there was no aggravation in her voice. I thought about it for a second and my head began to shake, slowly.

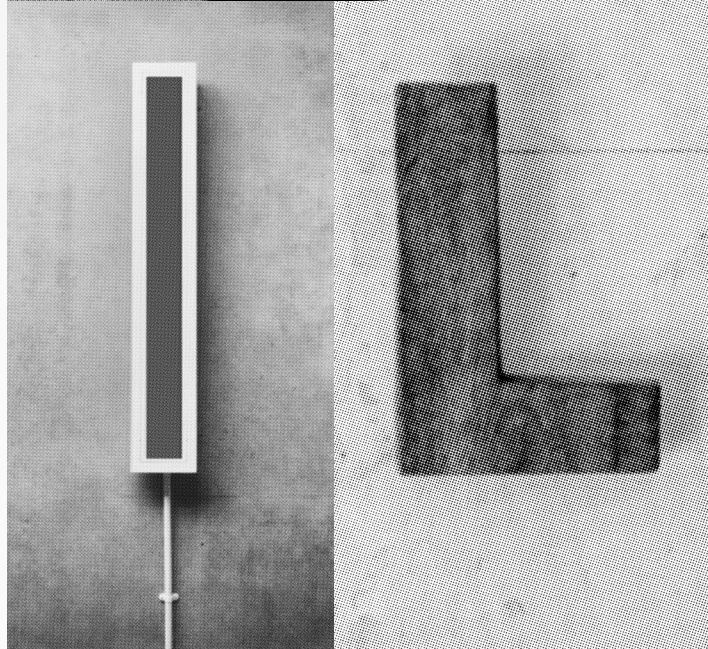
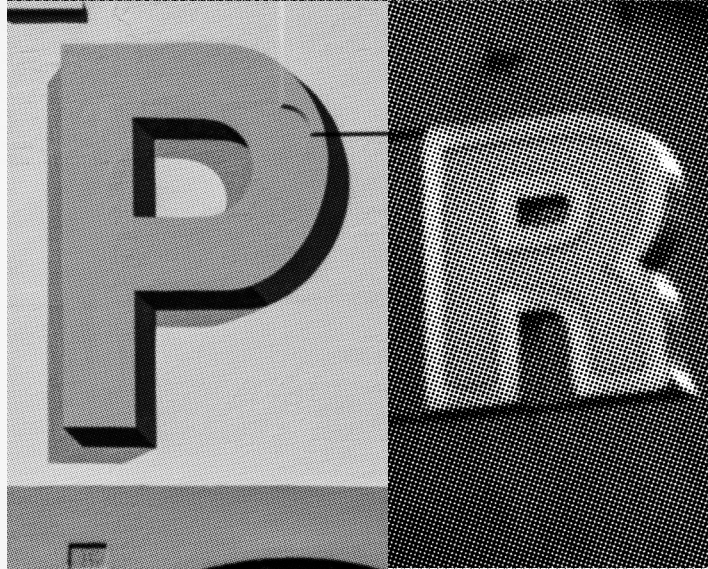
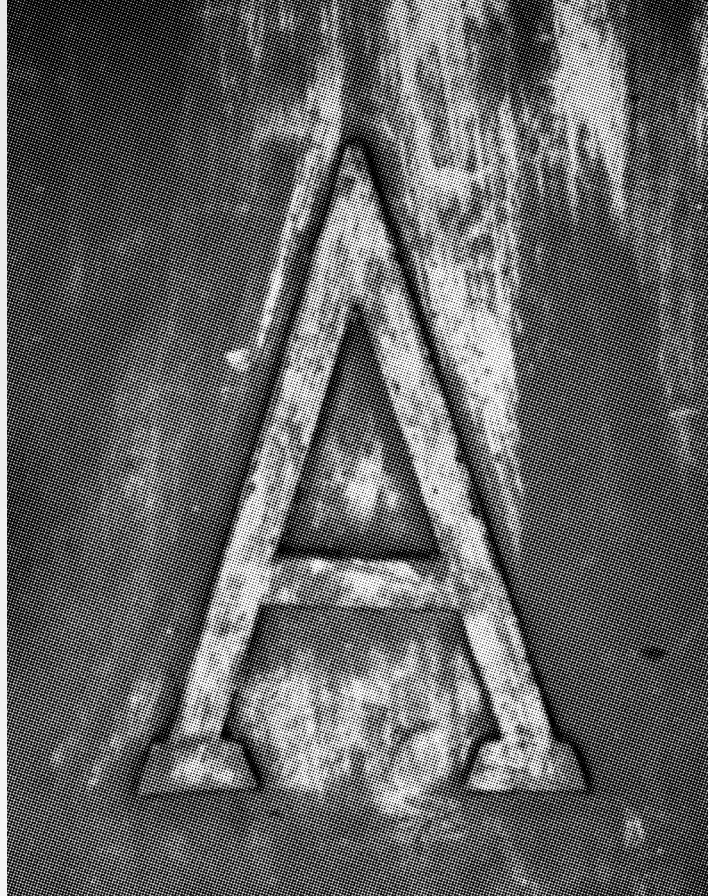
"No, I can't risk it," I replied.

Tearing up, I quickly looked away from my children and sighed, "I can't let them see me like that."

My kids were young and, more than likely, will not remember that day. But if there is a chance that some lingering impression, of those events, may settle on their lives, I could not let it be accompanied by the feeling that their father ran away from something that he felt he could not protect them from. For better or worse, leaving was no longer an option.

Sitting on that train, my son in lap, looking into the eyes of my wife and daughter, the cool breeze brushed across my face. It was the very same breeze that ruffled the confederate flags that would peek from behind the trees, as the train moved. In those moments, I realized that there was no other place I'd rather be, because the love I felt for my family, while surrounded by an always uncertain world, was the only thing I had ever needed. ●





MONDAY

1

TUESDAY

2

## APRIL FOOL'S DAY

*(All Fools Day)*

Some historians speculate April Fools' Day dates back to circa 1582; France switched to the Gregorian calendar from the Julian calendar — but it wasn't the smoothest of transitions.

The start of the new year moved to January 1 but many people didn't get the news, communication being as it was in the 16 Century. Instead, they continued to celebrate it as they always had: during the last week of March through April 1.

As was the humor of the times, these poor folk became the butt of jokes, hoaxes, and pranks including having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril"; April fish — symbolizing young, easily caught fish/gullible person.





WEDNESDAY

3

THURSDAY

4

FRIDAY

5

SATURDAY

6

SUNDAY

7

FRIDAY

12

TRIPTHE DARK DANCE COMPANY PRESENTS:

**A LITTLE LESS HUMAN**

7:30pm Doors @ 7:00pm

**TriptheDark Dance Company** is in its ninth season and has gone from fairy tales (*The Wolf Child's Mother*, *Just Right*) and popular 80s films (*I Carried A Watermelon*, *Labyrinth*) to the dark comedy of *Twin Peaks (Dance of the Dream Man)*. Known for expert storytelling through contemporary dance, drawing in audiences unfamiliar or under-appreciative of dance, this year's production is about grief, about love, and the loss you feel when you die.

Based on the movie, *A Ghost Story*, **A Little Less Human** follows the story of a couple who is real, loves and disagrees, and who has passion. A couple who feels loss, deeply — and separately. TriptheDark delves into a love lost and a death trapped in a house, a home; purgatory.

*Produced, performed, and directed by TriptheDark Dance Company.  
Runs for three consecutive weekends.*

**ROCK 'N' ROLL FAIRY KINDIE MUSIC**

4-5pm Doors @ 3:30pm

**IMPROV SHOW: BRIDGE CITY IMPROV**

7:30pm Doors @ 7:00pm

**ART OPENING:****JOE RISO**

5 - 7pm

MONDAY

8

THURSDAY

11

WEDNESDAY

12

TUESDAY

9

SATURDAY

13

MONDAY

15

**HEALING PROPERTIES:  
INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA  
ART EXPERIENCE**

5 - 7:00pm

**Kathryn Cellerini Moore** presents her art called *Healing Properties*. This multimedia work exploring the gravity of death, loss, and vulnerability through video and visual displays.

SATURDAY

20

**A LITTLE  
LESS HUMAN**7:30pm  
Doors @ 7:00pm

FRIDAY

19

**A LITTLE  
LESS HUMAN**7:30pm  
Doors @ 7:00pm**A LITTLE LESS HUMAN**

7:30pm Doors @ 7:00pm

**THURSDAY  
TELLTALE**

18

8pm Doors @ 7:30pm

Curated storytelling  
open mic for fierce,  
vulnerable people.  
*Curated by Jasmine Pettet.*

WEDNESDAY

17

TUESDAY

16

**HEALING PROPERTIES**

Gallery Hours:  
11:00am - 3:00pm  
April 16-18

SUNDAY

21

**MASS OF LAUGHS:  
STAND UP COMEDY**

8pm Doors @ 7:30pm

Hosted by Portland-native comedian **Chad Alan Gemma**, this month's showcase will feature a seasoned lineup of local comedy favorites **Laci Day**, **Brian Bixby**, **Kate Murphy**, **Ben Harkins** and headlining the evening is the one and only **Adam Pasi!**

THURSDAY

25

**A LITTLE  
LESS HUMAN**7:30pm  
Doors @ 7:00pm

FRIDAY

26

**A LITTLE  
LESS HUMAN**7:30pm  
Doors @ 7:00pm

SATURDAY

27

**A LITTLE  
LESS HUMAN**7:30pm  
Doors @ 7:00pm

SUNDAY

28

MONDAY

29

TUESDAY

30

MONDAY

22

TUESDAY

23

WEDNESDAY

24

INTRODUCTION BY CARLOS CHAVEZ



# MORPHEUS YOUTH PROJECT

## NO TITLE

By Juan

In a blink of an eye, time evaporates  
As if it was smoke, she gets lost in the darkness  
Wait, please don't leave!  
She leaves you feeling like you don't exist  
Unacknowledged and ignored, you are left to be  
Unaware of how deep you steal a glimpse  
Yet in complete darkness, it's difficult to see  
You close your eyes and begin a prayer  
Discretely a forgotten voice tunes in instantaneously  
You should have listened to my advice.  
Use your pride  
You are self-reliant  
You have mastered this art.  
You have sturdy walls and a frozen heart.  
Come ...  
What is gone is gone  
It is time to move on  
Remember rule number #1  
Never trust anyone

This poetry has been brought to you from young men currently serving sentences at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility in Woodburn, Oregon. The largest state facility housing youth typically between 15-25 years old, many are serving sentences of several years or more due to Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing laws.

All of the young men who submitted their poetry are young men that I work with regularly. Some participate in workshops that are hosted through MYP or they are youth I mentor regularly at the facility. The offenses committed by these young men do not define who they are. I've known most of these guys for several years and I'm very proud of them. Through their poetry you'll find a piece of their story. I hope you enjoy it.





## FOUR WALLS

By Andres

*Poetry Prescription. Write one poem every day, review, reflect, inspect and enjoy. This is my poem: Four Walls.*

These four walls keep me confined,  
separated from society  
I've been labeled a menace  
The deep frustrations I have with the system  
I'm a third generation inmate  
These four walls with many names and stories  
My girl tells me I look different... I wouldn't know  
I stay away from the sheet of foil they call a mirror  
She tells me that I'm looking older  
I feel something, but I can't quite understand  
the ice in my chest  
I guess my heart's getting colder  
As I sit on my stool bolted to the ground,  
I count the bricks all around  
With a quietness that seems to creep like the  
reaper coming for his reap  
With the faint chirp of a bird  
The sounds of liberty only heard  
You can see, but you can't touch  
You can smell, but you can't taste  
These four walls keep me confined  
Two thousand, one hundred and ninety days  
Seventy-two months, six years  
Broken hearts, shedding tears

My family, my girl, my homies  
These walls don't let me see  
I'm blind  
I'm invisible to the world  
I'm lost  
"Chale'," I say as I write Andres + Miriam Por Via  
Next the hundred other vatos expressing their  
love to their girls the same manera (way)  
I look outside my window  
I look at what could be, no... what used to be  
My freedom  
But still, I am free  
You see, my pencil and paper is what I use to  
escape  
These four walls keep me confined,  
but my writing helps me leave  
The predicament I'm in  
The reason for my sin  
To be or not to be, that's not the question  
We make life  
We plant the seed  
Gang banging was my reason  
Gun fights is my treason  
Yet these four walls don't keep me confined.

"Alright, Mauricio pack your shit up, you're  
going home" says the guard.  
The day has finally come,  
I'm out of here.  
I dap the homies up, say my goodbyes,  
and I leave contact info for my real ones.  
"Mauricio! You ready to go?" the guard asks.  
"I've been ready" I reply.  
"Well let's go, it's time."

Final goodbyes to the homies was hard,  
But my time in this correctional facility has  
come to an end.  
Far too many years have been spent within  
this fence.

**DAMN**

Author Unnamed

The walk to the fence was nerve wracking,  
It was a gloomy morning,  
Sky full of clouds.  
My anxiety kicks in,  
Yet I'm full of excitement at the same time.  
I enter the gatehouse,  
I sign some form.  
"Mauricio, you're good to go" says the guard.  
I walk out...  
Wow this is really real...  
I feel fluorescent lights hit my face,  
"Everybody wake up! Time for breakfast!"  
yells the guard...  
It was too good to be true.

## POWER

By Malique

I'm proud to be black it's sad that we're feared by  
The color of our skin  
That's a fact  
Police ask for our hands to be raised as we comply  
Another young brotha gets shot in the back  
So as my brother sits in the sky high with the man  
Above we're still down here fighting for EVERY  
And ANY fist to be raised  
So when I get the right of respect I will show the same  
So all these thoughts that run through my brain  
Is this life we live has to change  
I love you moose I know things aren't the same  
So when the discrimination and racism stops that's  
When this game ends so all we can do  
Is play it out until everyone wins

## RISKY LIVING

By Ezequiel

SO WHEN THE  
DISCRIMINATION  
AND RACISM STOPS  
THAT'S WHEN  
THIS GAME ENDS

These lessons learned  
came from dire consequences.  
Tear drops fall from blood spilled. Placazos on walls become sacred dedications.  
The Wind of Death had whispered my name.  
Repercussion demanding compensation, someone  
had to pay. Este vida es un locura  
It was driving me back. I felt that I was wondering with the deceased,  
pasos in the dark, pariona became the lack of sleep.  
Carrying metal steel knowing my freedom was running on borrowed time.  
Death or Prison the answer soon would be mine.  
Homies were barely living not knowing they  
were already dead inside. Corrupted by the streets  
their souls were lost screaming for salvation.  
In the mist of complication nobody listened and  
failed, falling into temptation.  
Of course I ended up as another one who choose  
not to listen. Pain that slowly turned into comfort my heart races from  
poisonous clouds, I was losing my vision. Confronting the pressure meant  
numbing my thoughts, actions taken by lifting a pipe.  
As time went on I began growing restless. It was only matter of  
time to face the choices that I made.  
How could of I been trapped  
following the evil ways? Secret indictments  
I was left all alone. In the end  
I realize that the life I choose was wrong.  
But like I said, someone needs to pay,  
Incarcerated and forgotten  
I slowly begin to drift away.



# ON BALANCING ON A STEEL GIRDER

BY JACOB AIELLO

**H**ave you seen those photographs of the shirtless men balancing on steel girders thousands of feet above New York City? Yes. They look like they're relaxing in a lawn chair with a glass of iced tea on a lawn on a Sunday in the summer with the sounds of their children running through a sprinkler just out of sight and not, as they are, balancing on a steel girder thousands of feet above New York City. If you have not seen them then that is what they look like. Just the sight of one of those photographs makes me lightheaded and requires me to lie down and feel the ground or bed or whatever it is beneath me beneath me to remind me that what is beneath me is not thousands of feet and New York City.

It must have been a long time before they were comfortable enough to balance on a steel girder high above New York City like they were relaxing on a lawn chair with a glass of iced tea, I think, after the vertigo has passed. The first time I imagine they must have soiled themselves stepping out there on the ledge, no rope or harness or anything. This is absurd, they must have thought. Foolish. What if a gust of wind came and carried them off the girder? Miles away in Hoboken or White Plains the wind would be considerably gentler but still with enough force behind it to collect a few stray water drops from the sprinkler and disperse them on the chest of the man in the lawn chair, who would either curse the wind if it wasn't an especially warm day or thank it if it was too hot outside and the water was refreshing. From the house his wife would call and ask if he would like some more iced tea and he would either say yes if his glass was nearly empty or empty or no if it was still relatively full or also no if it was nearly empty or empty but he didn't desire any more iced tea.

Eventually I imagine they'd become more comfortable, convince themselves that solid ground beneath your feet thousands of feet above New York City is no different from solid ground on a lawn in White Plains or Hoboken, and what does it matter if three inches to your left or right are thousands of feet of nothing. No. It does not matter. I've once or twice before balanced on a railroad tie and been entirely certain of my footing until remembering one of those photographs and believing that three inches to my left or right was thousands of feet of nothing and have then had to lie down and feel the ground beneath me, which if you think about it is exactly the opposite of them.

After all that there is still the issue of the work for them to do, tightening bolts and guiding steel girders to be tightened by bolts above them and then balanced on to tighten the bolts above them and so on and so forth. Imagine what just one bolt falling from such a height would do to the skull of a pedestrian passing below. No. I do not want to imagine that. Don't want to even imagine one bolt falling from such a height because it's absurd. What would be marvelous and also absurd but in a way that is wonderful and not foolish would be if we were each right in our own confidences and had I slipped off the railroad tie I would have actually fallen into thousands of feet of nothing, and had they slipped off their steel girders thousands of feet above New York City they would have actually fallen into the grass of their lawn on a Sunday in the summer with the sounds of their children running through a sprinkler just out of sight.





HEALY'S HIJINKS

## THE SECRET WEDGIE

*Disclaimer: I speak in abbreves. Sorry for you if you can't follow; just learn to read betts (better... Look, I can't spend all my time spelling out my dangus abbreves, so good luck.)*

Do you ever have one of those days where you pick an unusual amount of wedgies? Like, one of those days you keep finding yourself doing that awk a.f. cheek shift, trying to loosen the wedge, but eventch you just reach down and pull the dangus thing out? Or, honestly, if no one is watching (or you're quick enough) you just dig right in and get it out? To be clear, I mean an over the pants,

respectable a.f. dig-like move. We're not talkin' a deep digging IN digging in, but just a regular dig in, a no nonsense quick wedge grab. You can picture it. I'm literally sitting here picturing myself picking my wedge right now. Takes me back to a day not long ago that started off with an unusual amount of wedgies. Like, a ridick amount. I was constantly in there. All morning I was cheek shifting and digging in while at work. That dangus cotton found its way into my... dangus, we'll call it, over and over. Every step would wedge the wedge deeper and deeper.

Honestly, I was getting used to it, the fact that I was doomed to live the wedge life.

Then, at lunch I finally discovered why.

Turns out my underwear was on backwards. Totes butt side front. Usually I'm an inside out mistake kinda girl. This was new and different. And ridiculous a.f.

As I was sitting on the toilet laughing at myself and having the time of my life for a brief moment, I had an idea. I decided that I was going to keep it that way, butt side front, my little secret. Always looking for ways to spice up that work day, know what I mean? What's life without a little wedgie from time to time? Probably a more comfortable one, but def not as funny.

So, next time you go to pick your wedgie, think twice. Sometimes it's fun to have a little secret.

BY AMANDA HEALY



secret  
the pizza  
society

opening in  
March 2019

Portland  
Style  
Pizza

all  
Organic  
all  
Vegan

7201 N.E. Glisan  
P.D.X, Or.  
97213

vegan pizza that doesn't suck



## VISITOR TESTIMONIAL

**A**s a family member of the owners of Chapel Theatre, I came to visit and participate in events happening at the theatre in December and January 2018/19.

With my close relationship to the owners, I recognize that I come with pre-existing admiration and love for their accomplishments, and therefore bare an undeniable bias. But alongside this bias, I also come with the experience of having been involved in the creation and management of a performing arts service organization in Manitoba, Canada for 15 years, as well as working as a performer myself.

My experience offers me great understanding of the challenges involved in working within the arts, as well as the integrity and level of care the work requires. I also recognize how much dedication, perseverance, and risk taking is required in the promotion of the performing arts. With this understanding, I was deeply inspired by how The Chapel Theatre functions. The venue and the artists involved in its creation, are motivated by their belief in how crucial art making and presentation are. The venue is also run with an understanding of the interconnectedness of arts, culture, identity and human connection.

What I especially admire of The Chapel Theatre, is in their ability to recognize that as a venue, they cannot do this alone, and deeply depend on the participation and initiation of its community. Therefore the venue functions as a resource, where its activities are continuously expanding, based on the interests of its community members. This allows for the identity of the theatre to be based on the diversity of those who choose to interact with it.

The Chapel Theatre has open doors, and has become an established meeting place where cultural solidarity, and celebration can flourish. I am proud to be connected to this place, and to see the programming evolve as more and more individuals find ways to utilize this cultural treasure.

— NATASHA TORRES-GARNER

Dance Artist;  
Founding Member of Young Lungs Dance Exchange;  
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