

queer time

the one about queer time

volume 1





notes on Queer time

in all of my research for this particular project, i couldn't find a clear definition of the concept of LGBTQ+ delayed adolescence or "queer time". like much of our histories, lives, and experiences- the concept has been subject to the violence of the archive.

for the purposes of this project, the definition used is: "the experience of queer people having to go through a second adolescence or a delayed adolescence in their adulthood. this often comes from the fact many of us felt constrained during our early years by pressures to perform heteronormativity, need to stay closeted, and lack of accesible queer spaces. the coming of age of many queer people is, hence, delayed, or perhaps even happening in an entirely different timeline than that of cis straight teens."

queer time is an experience that often remains unspoken, a hidden thought we only dare visit in the lonely comfort of our bedrooms at 3am; and yet, when introducing the concept to the queer spaces i am a part of, there was an immediate sigh of recognition from all the people around me. queer time is as personal as it is universal, and i feel incredibly honored to have been able to showcase this by compiling this collection of thoughts from the incredible queer people i am surrounded by. i hope this project brings comfort and joy to any queer person that might come across it.

finally, i would like to recognize the honesty, generosity, and talent of all the people who got involved in this project. i serve as a mere caretaker- curator, if you will, of all their beautiful work- if this is you, thank you, i love you, and i can't wait to spend many more lifetimes of queer time together.



i know a straight girl who says if she doesn't have kids by 25 (TWENTY FIVE!!!) she won't have them at all. my parents had me when they were 40.

i don't know where we all got this idea that you have to meet your soulmate around high school or college, marriage by 25, kids by 30. that thought used to keep me up at night. at the old age of 15, the deadline was quickly approaching and i hadn't even been in a relationship yet! i didn't even have my first kiss until 17 and, writing this now, i still haven't been in a relationship. there was a time not even 2 years ago when that sentence would have made me cry. that's what the cishet timeline does to queer kids.

the disparities aren't just in sex and love, though. it is pushed onto naive children across the country that our best years, our peak, are high school and college. how can that be? we're kids!! if us queer people spend those years exploring our identity, how are we supposed to take advantage of "the best years of our lives?" how can we live carefree?? how can we catch up to these deadlines??

a couple months ago, i asked one of my moms what the best decade of her life was. she said "right now." at age 58, she said she hasn't even reached her peak yet. it's so important to realize that the timeline cishet people have set as the "norm" only serves to alienate queer kids and rob them of their opportunity to freely explore their identity. my goal isn't marriage by 25, kids by 30 anymore. i don't stress (as much) about how i'm a legal adult who has never been in a relationship. i just want to always be able to say that the best years of my life are "right now."



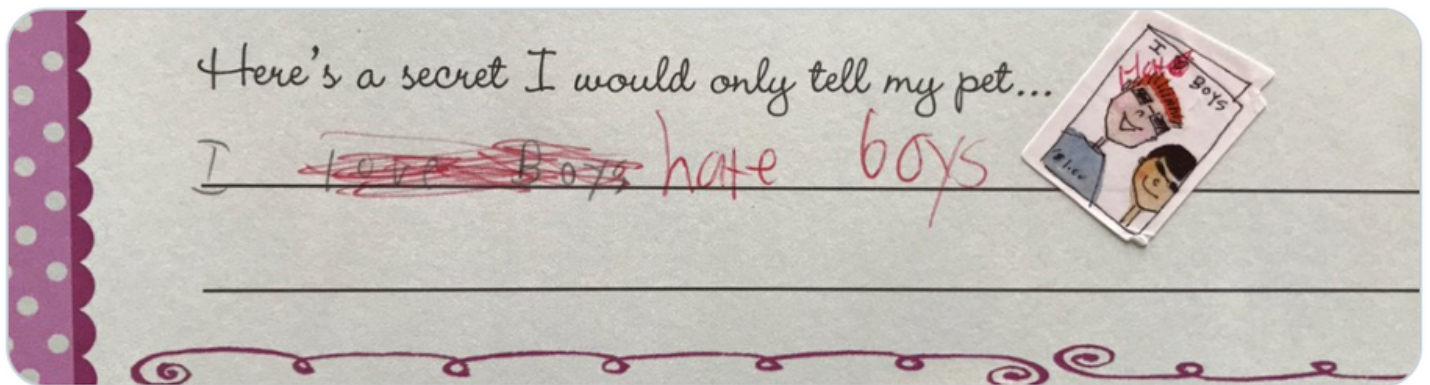


Brianna

@Briannabb7



were there any signs you were gay as a child...



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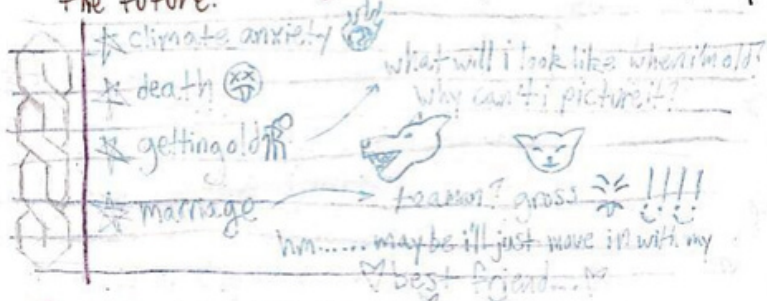
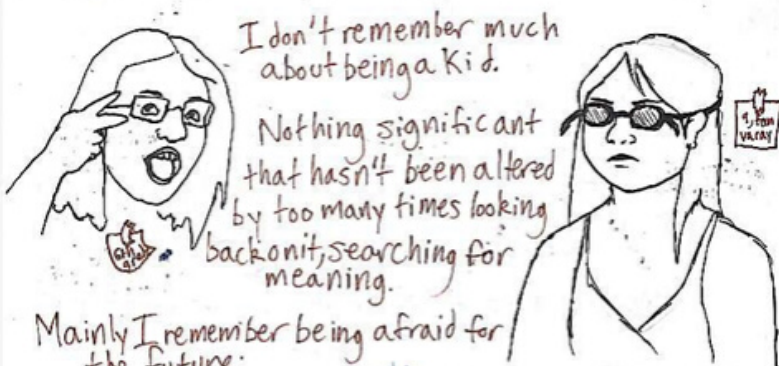
5 Likes

i hate boys. i always wrote this in my journal. I would tell my friends in elementary but they would always say "you'll come around some day". I knew I didn't like boys when I was 10. every year I would pick a new boy and that would be my crush, typically whoever was stereotypically masculine. I repressed my feelings towards girls and further slowed down my timeline. the first time I held hands with a girl, the first kiss, the first relationship. happening at the same speed as my straight counterparts but at different places in my life in college instead of high school. queer time used to make me feel bad but it's beautiful, it's slow, it's intense, it's gentle. I would not trade it for anything.

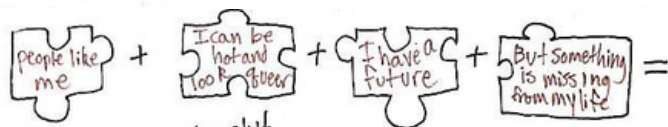


I've always felt like I never really grew up. All the time I would have spent on that went towards figuring out who I was. I know that now I'm supposed to be an adult I'm not sure if I really am. Often feel like I'm pretending, like I'm an actor in a big staged production of adulthood. The only catch is that I was never given a script and never got to attend any rehearsals. I'm just expected to perform like I know what I'm doing. It's a kind of imposter syndrome that has to do with age, and an inability to relate to peers. I know that i am an adult, but it feels like i had to skip over important steps and experiences just to catch up, and now I'll never get the chance to go back and have a real adolescence.





Fears 1 and 2 still hold - 3 and 4, not so much. But for most of my (first) puberty, I didn't understand and couldn't picture the future.

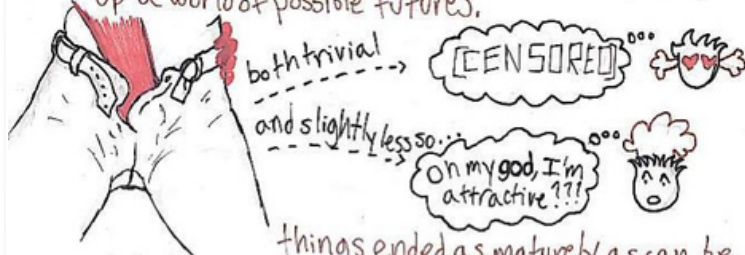


I feel like I'm in some nebulous "before" period. But I also don't want to rush into anything!

Not to grasp the future is not to know your self. My first girl friend flirted with me for months before I got the hint.



Me, from my pov Me, from her pov When someone touches you with love for the 1st time, it opens up a world of possible futures.



things ended, as maturely as can be expected of two gay high schoolers, but I came away different and better. And with a new kind of confidence, I began to piece things together...

But damn, I'm alive now! And I only get so long!



I refuse to live in the past or the future.













queer clocks on straight walls

I am living on borrowed time. How very queer of me. I live on a borrowed dollar (a scholarship with a contractual obligation), borrow space to live (they call it renting), and wear a borrowed identity (or two).

I am living on queer time, spending my money on PrEP (so I can have butt sex), finding queer spaces (and practically dying to get in), and just being gay (slightly behind the curve with it though, here's why).

There are no queer clocks on the walls of houses in homophobic homes decorated by religious parents in third-world countries. There are no books about queer time in the little island libraries and they don't have any queer clocks on their walls either. It's almost as though queer time doesn't exist where I'm from. Queer time doesn't exist where I'm from.

My queer time is just like me: perpetually late but very pretty. I've never had a boyfriend. He's taking his queer time. I had my first guy kiss at nineteen. Thanks queer time! I'd already done so much more with my body and other men, but the intimacy of a kiss evaded me. It was on queer time. If I were straight (ha!) I could have gotten that out of the way like one of those little white boys in a teen rom com. But I'm not.

Now that I've found queer time in New York I at least have a queer clock to reference. My lesbian friend gifted me a little queer watch for my birthday. The time zone on my phone is set to queer and I downloaded a little queer calendar on my laptop this semester – it helps keep the queerness organized.



Younger me would've never believed that every aspect of myself would be something I defined as "queer." Yes, my sexuality has never been heterosexual, and gender always felt strange to me. But the way I dress myself in the morning? The coffee I order? The way I do my laundry? My daily walks through the park? In recent months, I've connected every single thing I do with queer. It's normalized for me what it means to be someone outside of the cis het norm. Now, instead of "queer," just being a word to describe my sexuality and gender expression, it describes me. Every aspect of me; every choice I make from the moment I wake up until I shut my eyes.

This outlook on my life has all happened relatively quickly. So quickly that I don't know how to explain any aspect of it to my parents, who have always been understanding. I understand that your freshman year of college is supposed to be something that reshapes you, brings out the "real you." But how do I explain to them that their daughter went to college in the summer and came to visit them this spring as just a queer person? Someone who didn't even use the name they gave me at birth? They see college as a time to find what you're passionate about, to find life-long friends, to slow being to plant roots. But I changed nearly everything about my identity. Things happened so quickly that I almost felt ridiculous, invalid, even in my own community. I hadn't been through the years of deep thought on my expression. It was as if I just woke up one day in my XL twin bed and was entirely queer.

Reborn, happier, still confused. Beautiful.





"I look around to realize I am the problem// Am I put into this world solely to embody it?": I miss you. I wish I could have held you tighter, but you were already suffocating. take care for me until we see each other again, ok?

and still i'm late always late



running and yet so very late





Queerness, in my life and experience, became transparent through my family's refusal to acknowledge queer legitimacy. In this way, medias that memorialize queerness speak to me greatly and assure myself in my queerness. Queer time encapsulates the joy of queerness seen through film, the creation of a ^{world} ~~space~~ that allows queerness to be unapologetically visible.



Its like everything I ever experienced as a high schooler is happening again but now I'm actually authentically myself? So I kind of had like "my first night out" or "my first hook up" but it was as an openly queer woman and I kind of hid that part of my identity in my first bout of adolescence, so experiencing it again, but as the actual person I know I am in my soul is like, experiencing it for the first time all over again. I find myself realizing how much fun I have when the people I'm surrounded by don't see things in a cishet way, I'll be in the park with my friends and we'll just be talking about queer theory or art and it's so much more riveting than the conversations I'm used to. I think there's a magic to queerness so being able to live openly queer surrounded by queer people for the first time in my life is like, all of a sudden the world makes sense, like "oh! This is what I was missing! This is why it never felt like this before!"



"On Queer Time"

Playing hopscotch in the yard during recess
Left right left right
I wonder if she'll look at me
While she's playing jump-rope games

"Ice cream soda
Cherry on top
Who's your lover?
I forgot!
A
B
C
D"

Hoping the initial that she lands on
Will correlate with mine.

Sidewalk chalk powder
I skinned my knee
A stunted growing up
'Cause I was so afraid of myself.

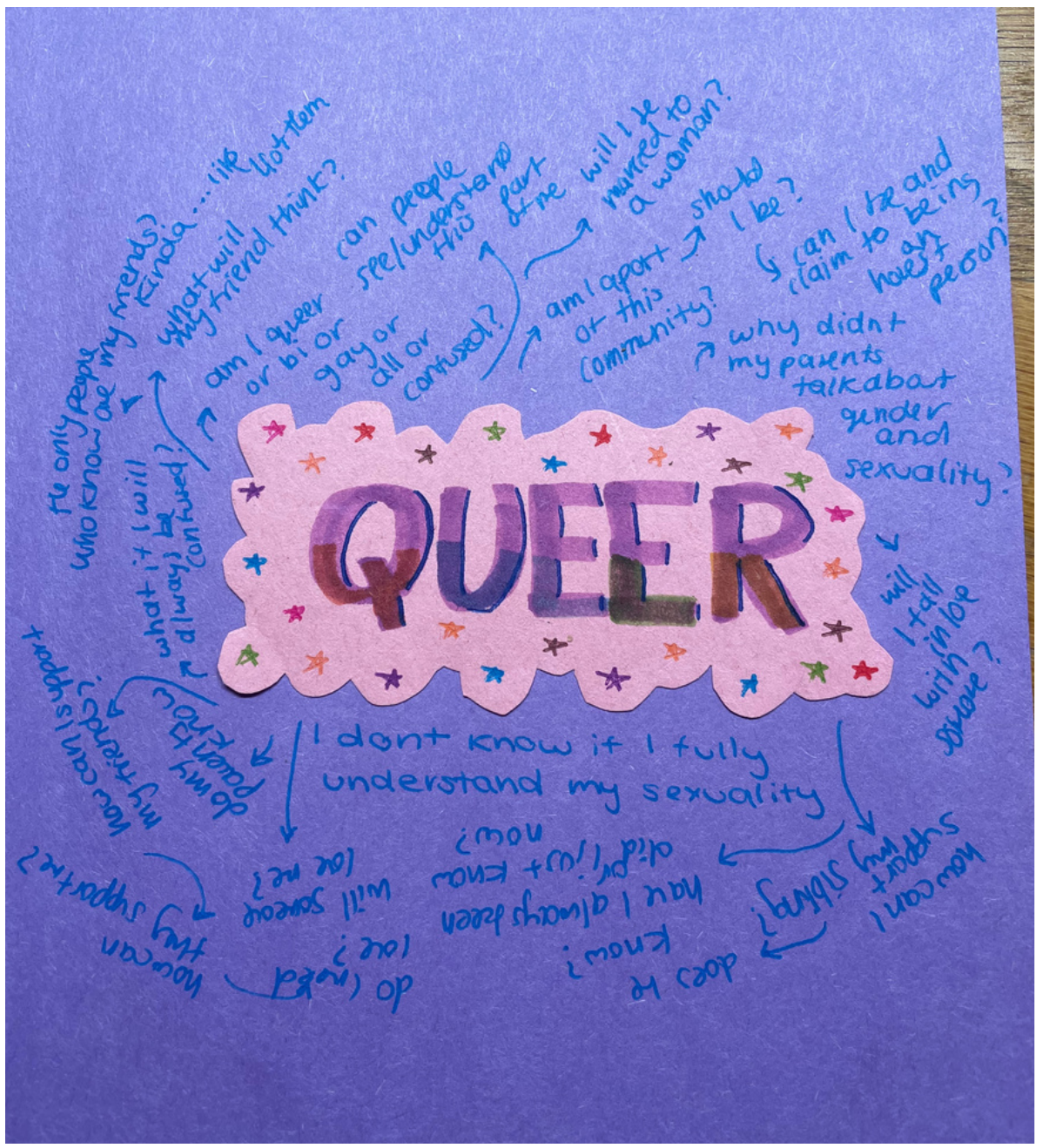
In high school health class
The teacher never mentioned dental dams
A misbegotten condom on a unpeeled banana

A sneer from a girl in the locker room:
"She can't change with me!"

Can I grow up
Without the head-start the other kids got?

(yes, yes I can.)









THE ORIGINAL
DELTA
1873 2017
GAMMA
FORMAL





i love using photography as a way to document and showcase what it means to be queer. My friends have played a huge role in me accepting and embracing my queerness, and although I don't take many photos of myself, I am always taking pictures of them every opportunity I get. I mostly take portraits of my friends to capture the beauty and pride of being queer. It is my way of expressing my gratitude for them being in my life.



I came out as bisexual my junior year of highschool. Then a lesbian and non-binary my first semester of college. I never really knew I was queer when I was younger and going through middle school. As a kid I always wanted to play with guys at recess, and buy boy's clothes and shoes. I suppressed that real quick after my teachers told me to hang out with the girls and my parents discouraged me from buying the clothes I wanted. The older I got the more focused I became focused on pleasing others. By middle school I'm fully fem, unhappy and still convinced I'm straight. I barely even remember my middle school years through freshman year of high school because I spent most of it with my head down trying not to get noticed.

Then, my sophomore year I get a boyfriend. I put myself through a year of a relationship I didn't want to be in because I was afraid of breaking heteronormative boundaries. He even "accused" me of being gay, but I still did not take that as a sign. When we broke up, I started to come to terms with my sexuality and began to dress the way I wanted. I felt a sense of freedom I had never felt in my life.

Now in college, I find myself trying to make up for the time I lost pretending to be someone I'm not. I've been clinging to some of the hobbies I had to give up as a child (video games) because they weren't girly enough. Right before I left for college I cut my long hair. This was the most liberating experience. Coming to college and being able to be independent and secure in my identity has allowed me to change as a person for the better.







An open letter of apology to him

I'm sorry I couldn't complete your sandwiches

When we hid under covers texting all night

Talking about life, death, masturbation, greek mythology

I'm sorry that I grazed your hand only to hide mine away

When we walked at least 5 miles in downtown Pasadena

My pocket has always been the safest place for it to live

I'm sorry I couldn't take my shirt off in your pool

You really did look so great, swimming those laps

While I googled "is love real" or "can i be in love at 15"

I'm not sorry for the views we stole, though.

Or the late-night talks, when you told me your dad scared you

Or the walks in the blazing heat, in your suburban hellscape

Or that time we walked for so long to come back to your bed

To lie down, eat Oreos, and stare at each other's faces for 20 minutes

Until my mom came to pick me up.

We both lived on time that wasn't ours.

The time that we whiled away was precious.

And you were the best person I've ever done nothing with.



A collage of various eyes and faces on a background of repeating text. The text, in a black, handwritten-style font, reads "and we keep looking - but what are we looking for?" and is repeated across the entire page. Overlaid on this text are several cutouts of eyes and faces. These include: a large blue eye in the top left; a brown eye in the top center; a red eye in the top right; a large blue eye in the middle left; a brown eye in the middle center; a green eye in the middle right; a brown eye in the bottom left; a large brown eye in the bottom center; and a large brown eye in the bottom right. There are also several smaller, more abstract or stylized eyes scattered throughout the composition.



it is never too cold
when you are being held closely
in the viewfinder,
in between songs, closely,
on the stone stoop steps,
on the walk home.

(queerness always starting over,
always going over.)

missing feelings I have not yet experienced,
the queers I know are living
in me,
loudest music, baby,
the heels I would wear.

(this is my life,
I pray, I pray.)

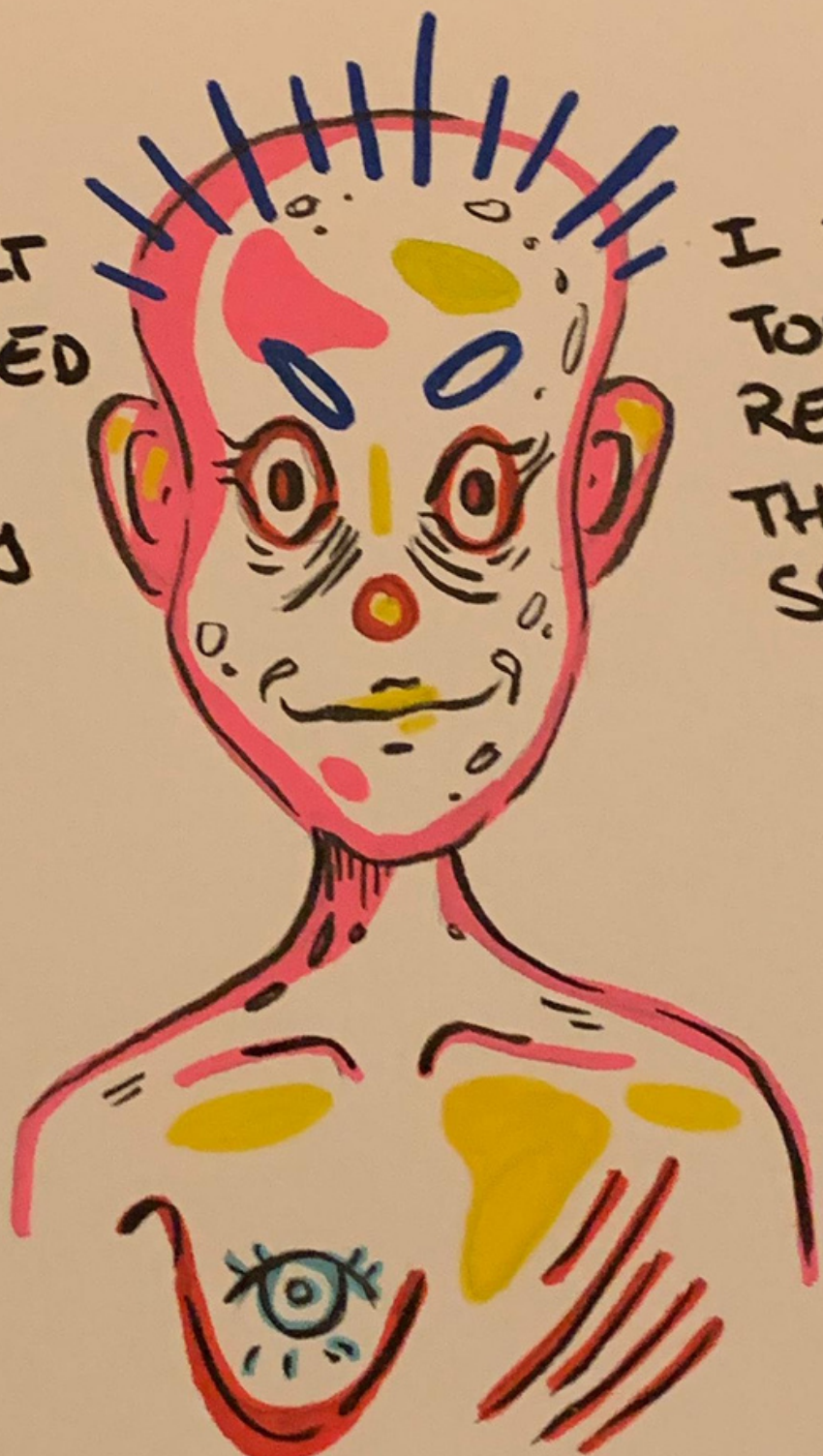
what is negotiated through us?
who sees?

(thinking, sometimes, about the 5th grade,
a fracture in an after-hours parking lot,
and I couldn't tell if it was my left or right ankle
but could feel the sharpness,
switching sides
without choice,
place.)

the clock makers,
those lo fi hip hop
beat poets,
they thank us, I believe.
they see us, I believe.
they revere us, I believe.



I FELT
ROBBED
OF
PLAY



I TRY
TODAY TO
RECLAIM
THAT
SPACE.



"There were so many times this year when I felt as if I was going through an expedited version of what my hometown friends had already experienced in middle school. I felt like I was behind and catching up but couldn't put together why I hadn't gotten to this point in development until college. And now I've found the name for this phenomenon: delayed adolescence. The concept makes total sense to me. The person who existed in middle school and high school was just a reflection of other people. I never allowed myself to think deeply long enough to grapple with the parts of me that I knew would make my high school experience more difficult. I knew how different people would look at me, how lifelong friends would start to fade from my life, and the thought of that loss of comfort was too intimidating so I decided to save all my deep internal thinking for college. And here I am, in my second adolescence and happier than ever. It was definitely a very, very painful process, but it makes this year that much sweeter. Everything feel so easy. I feel like I actually exist for the first time instead of just adapting myself to who I'm around. As much as I wish I could redo middle and high school knowing who I actually am, I'm content with where I am. I'm grateful to be in an environment where I actually feel safe to freely express myself. Do I think delayed adolescence should have to exist? No. But I think it's allowed me to reflect on my past and develop myself more than if I had followed the average flow of adolescence."



when i was younger,
and i heard the sound of clocks ticking
i couldn't stop myself from counting
a sequence of neverending seconds

it got so bad that my family had to lock
all the clocks, the watches, ticking devices
in a trunk in the other side of the house
every night, just so i could sleep

time has been my forever enemy
we have always been in a race
where i lose it, chase it, kill it, waste it, dread it
and i'm not very fast

not as fast as the girls from my hometown
who wore beautiful dresses- shiny, glamorous
and went out clubbing at fifteen
with the boys from the high school a town over

i remember when i was in seventh grade
and i threw my friend's vape
into the trashcan of the downtown starbucks
it wasn't until twelfth grade that i got my own
then proceeded to throw it into the Hudson river
just for me, myself, to jump right after

and in the water time stood still
the sun created rainbows when it touched the surface
and i heard music, the siren's song,
behind me, swimming, in the water, were my friends--

what queer little creatures they are
with their silly little quirks
all of us forever behind schedule
floating in our oceans of talent

queertimezine.com

Sincerely,

Sofia Lopez Arredondo