

pearl press



# ISSUE NO. 6: LIONHEART

July 2021

This issue of Pearl Press features work from:

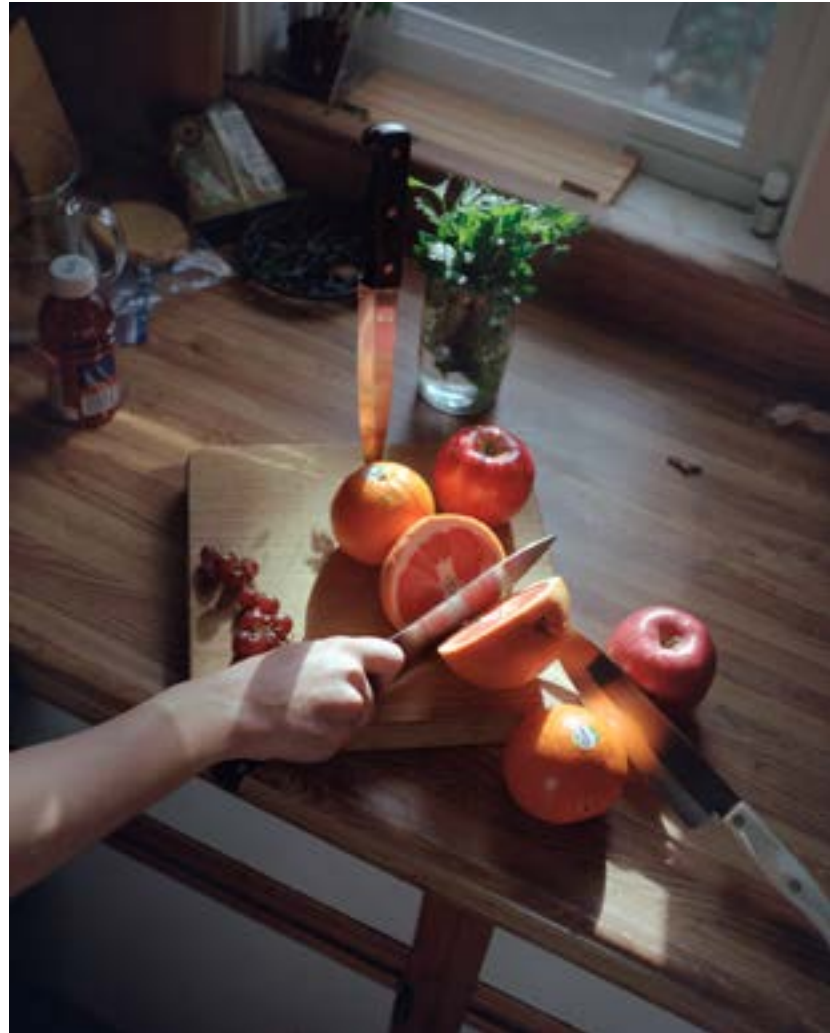
Pierce Sapper  
Niko Krivanek  
Loren Toney  
Jack Trego  
Diana Guerra  
Alanis Santiago-Rodriguez  
Laura Chen  
Molly Peters  
Jamie Riva  
Jenica Heintzeman  
Victor Isaac Alvarez  
Patrick Carew  
Justin Mills  
Jinwoo Hwon Lee  
Sarah Pfohl

Cover image: Molly Peters  
Curated by: Delilah Twersky

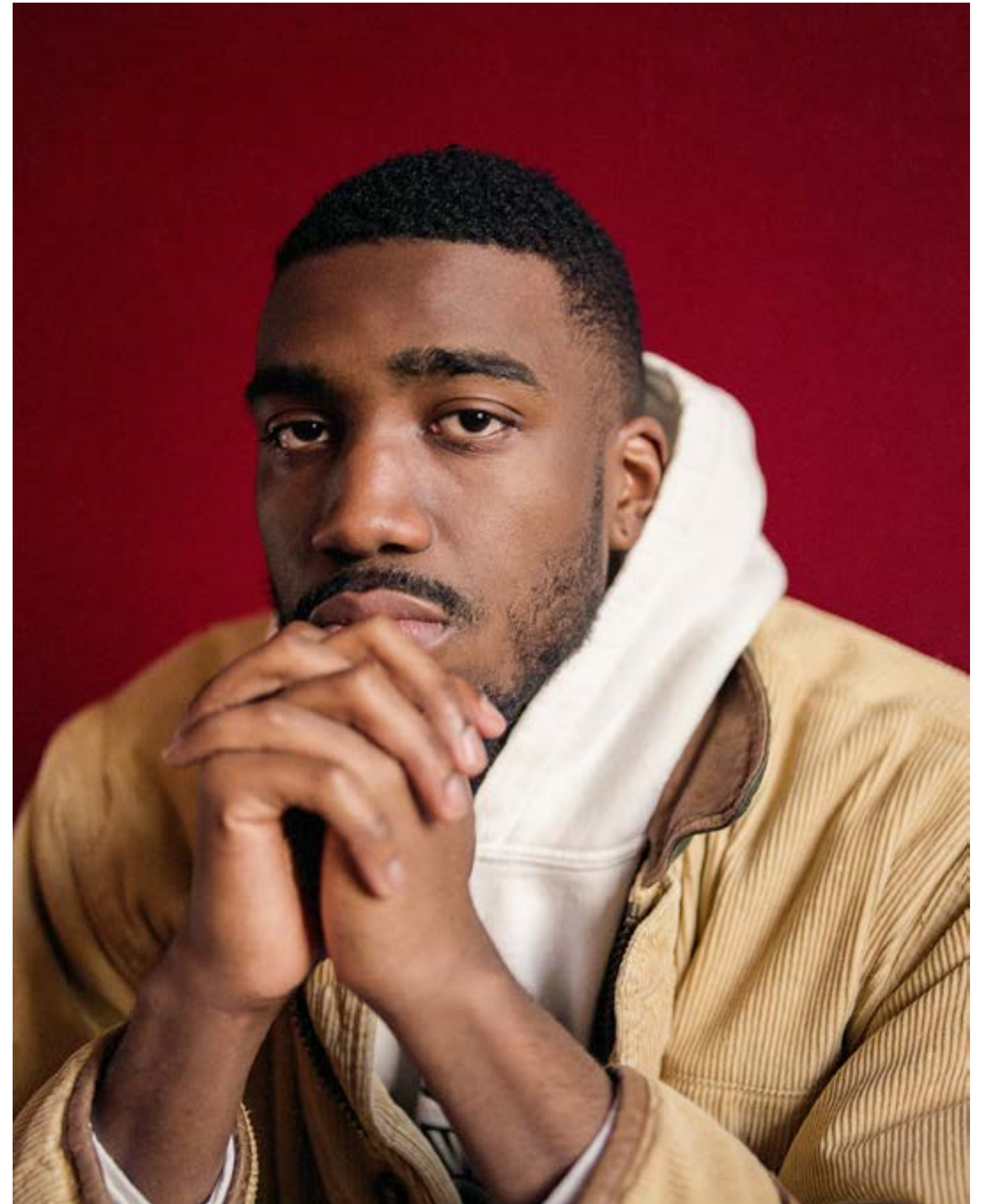


David: Pierce Sapper

Bombing: Pierce Sapper



Dear Sally, Love Mom series: Niko Krivanek



Brian: A Portrait of my Dear Friend: Loren Toney

# LYING HEARTS

For Fernand Pages (1929 - 2021) and Jacqueline Pages (1936 - Present)

My final tethers are fraying.

A full drop's nothing thud shatters  
the gloss of a global grey; unequal  
tensions, imbalanced responsibilities.

Beyond the page, my penultimate tether  
now beckons and rustles, rowdy as he was in life,  
and my final tether finds herself alone in this now  
emptier, now fuller space —  
maintaining herself  
despite all else.

But if only you could have seen them before.

But if only I could have seen them before,

in the grand lights of their youth,  
in their delicate balance of passionate man  
and proud woman,  
in their journey from French village life  
to American city life.

If only.

My spirit formed just as theirs  
began to wane and settle into the low  
crackling coda of their grand tour:

compelled into existence by him,  
unexpected but perfectly accepted by her.

Small beginnings to full lives,  
like a funnel opening unto the cosmos —

Witnesses to their own triumphs  
and despairs, witnesses also to  
the world's, they grew old  
together in this room, bickering  
and needling,

but in the end, their lying hearts betrayed their love. For:  
each other  
their daughter  
their family  
their life  
me

In the end, their lying hearts  
showed that everything they did  
extended out from their  
love for each other.

Stories, photos, remembrances and other  
remnants of two lives intertwined  
rustle in the winds of their shared chronicle:  
tales of dukes, of singers, of  
diplomats and their wives, of  
bewildering travel agents.

My birthright is to steady these disparate  
elements, arrange them to track  
the thread sown through the heart of each,

but as I start my joyful duty, a sliver of my own heart splinters and out seeps  
my soul, drop by drop,

my eyes closing and I see them  
there, together again, their outlines  
shimmering and evanescent.

I grasp her hand firmly as his figure untethers, generating a gentle rocking of the  
cosmic cradle I've grown within,

the cradle they crafted through their  
perfect power of will — not forcefully,  
but gently, like the gradual smoothing of  
a rock in a stream:

what is unseen in this calm stream's  
flowing continuity is the power  
it derives from its source,  
a great, faraway river —

the deep power of a life yearned for and chosen and crafted and lived and, eventually,  
perfected in its imperfection

Jack Trego



This Will Also Fade, 27 Days: Diana Guerra



El Vaivén series: Alanis Santiago-Rodriguez



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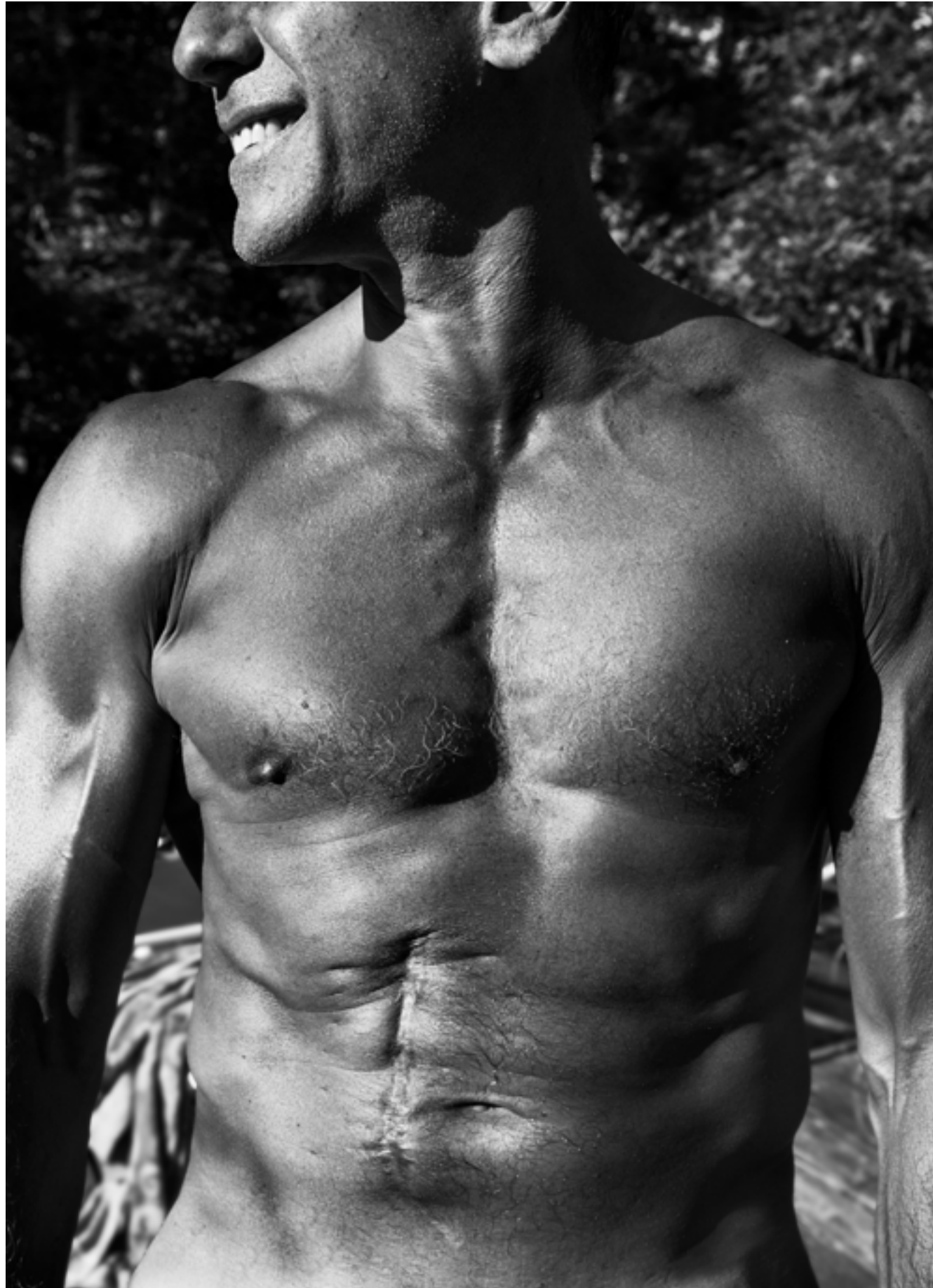


Dutch Dunes: Laura Chen



Ellen, 2017: Molly Peters





A Scar and A Smile: Jamie Riva

# A BRANCH OFF THE TREE

I broke my branch off the family tree by the hum of the highway. Scraping against asphalt, whittling down to a point. The branch directs me “Go east for three days and what a vision you will behold.” The reflection of the Great Salt Lake shimmering, shrinking pale as it thirsts for rain, rusted reflection in the silver station covered wagon. My foot hard pressed on the gas pedal, sacred groves of quaking aspens slowly, leaf by leaf transforming into sweet, sugary maples. Thirty-two hours of solo driving, crisscrossing plans, thinking, not thinking of next steps. New words of wisdom etched into soft bark. Tangled roots dug up and a family forsaken. Every mile further away from families are forever. Every gas station fueling the hellfire and brimstone of a certain damnation.

Since childhood, the mimosa tree blossomed red in the yard, blushing from the men that entered the house, heads bowed down. God’s house filled with secret handshakes and the bright green fig leaf from Adam and Eve, white and delightful fruit. Accountable to everyone’s raised eyebrows. Subsumed into the whole, the self vanishing, raised from the dead by twelve brazen oxen, a defensive circle. The priesthood omnipotent does no wrong but there are shadows and long faces, the laying on of hands. With your dreams of mother and fears of whore, I would become neither, faceless in the crowd. No hopeful submission of obedient, modest, sealed for eternity. The weight of other branches, creaking and cracking, barely holding on.

I cut myself off that tree slowly at first but then feverishly, giddy with delight. The tree lurches, uneasy from the drop, an inversion of growth. And it came to pass, a cloud of darkness overcame me. Stumbling alone, dwindling down, a half-colored laminate daring to leave the fold. Reality hits like ice cold water in the font. With the celestial kingdom gone I started to fear death. But I won’t go back. My new empire surrounded by water, rootless blades dance with the tide. Move underneath the sparkling, obsidian waters without horizon. A branch off the tree turns to floating driftwood washed clean, bright and burning free at last on the shore.

Jenica Heintzelman



Billy, 2013: Molly Peters



Red Bird: Pierce Sapper



Prelude, to Battle: Victor Isaac Alvarez



Janet, After Becoming a World Champion: Victor Isaac Alvarez



Dad II: Patrick Carew

# HER/HYMN/THEIR

When I was sixteen, I took razorblades  
and peeled away my boyish skin.

I had just slipped into the sundress,  
when I heard thunder in the distance.

What could I have said  
to halt those crashing, callused hands?

When I was nineteen, I threw out my razorblades,  
and grew my beard as long and thin and wiry as it went.

My skin fit like a wetsuit, tight,  
but not uncomfortable,

despite that nagging feeling  
I might be suited for the shallows.

When I was twenty three, I turned into a willow tree,  
and weeping by the river's path, I learned to grow.

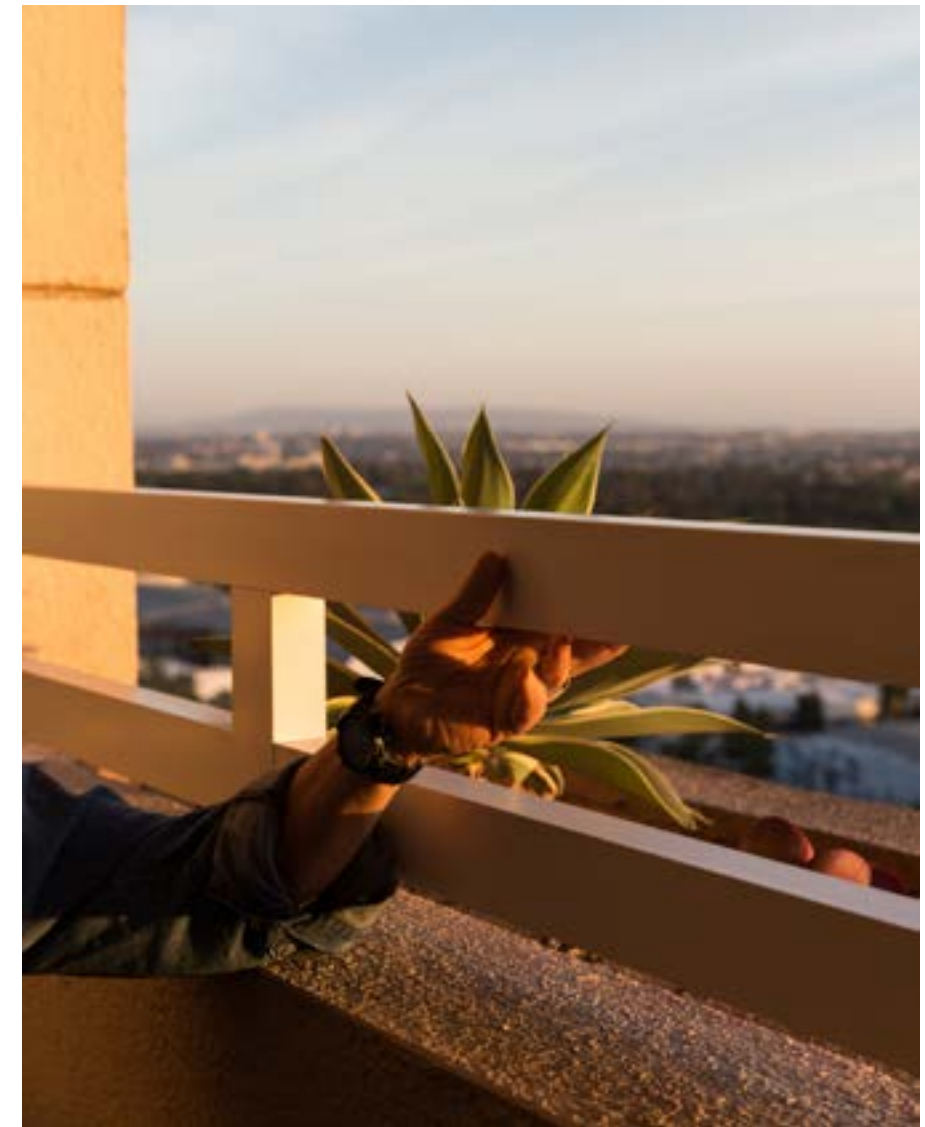
I am learning the language of water.  
I am learning to pray without faith.

When the stars fall, when the moon bleeds,  
when the great and terrible day comes, I will be me.

Justin Mills



Evan: A Portrait of my Nephew: Loren Toney



Larry Fink, Los Angeles, 2017: Molly Peters





Home Is Everywhere and Often Nowhere series: Jinwoo Hwon Lee



After Digging: Sarah Pfohl



Sam: Pierce Sapper

Thank you for reading.  
For more updates check @pearl.press on Instagram.

[www.pearl-press.com](http://www.pearl-press.com)

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