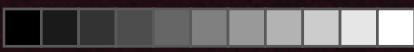




DAR LING

VERY TENDER STUDIO, LONDON







Darling is a durational and devotional work.

“It is within this bleak natural context that beauty is encountered, and the encounter is by its nature sudden and unpredictable. The gale blows itself out, the sea changes from the colour of grey shit to aquamarine. Under the fallen boulder of an avalanche a flower grows. Over the shanty town the moon rises. I offer dramatic examples so as to insist upon the bleakness of the context. Reflect upon more everyday examples. However it is encountered, beauty is always an exception, always in despite of. This is why it moves us.”

— John Berger, *The White Bird*



ARTIST STATEMENT

The concept that beauty exists as a respite to an otherwise difficult and cruel world is an integral part of my work as a storyteller. John Berger's theory that beauty is the unpredictable exception in our encounters with nature and each other reflects my artistic approach, constructing narratives of intimacy and hope despite personal and global crises.

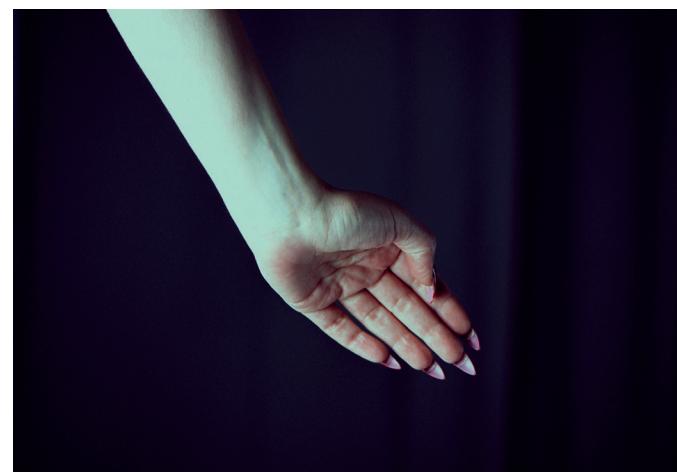
To me, hope is a gentle and necessary beauty, a vital sensory respite that I want to replicate through photography. This often subtly visible glimmer of human resilience is what contextualises identity; the spaces we inhabit together, and the world we build both on a small and larger, societal scale.

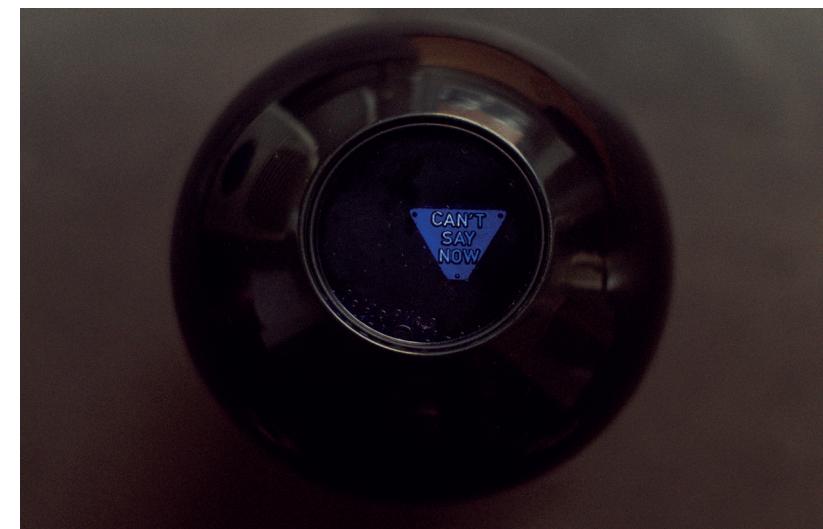
Darling is a retelling of the relationship I share with my partner; one of the smaller scales of this universal story of human hope. It is also a deeply intimate response to the world around me, and the space I occupy within it. Through constructed and fictional representations of reality, Darling explores acts of devotion and tenderness against the experience of the every day, and the tenuous complexities that form the foundation of real intimacy.

As an intrinsically collaborative work, the project is driven from our lived experience and will continue as we grow old together. This book, as an artefact, contains images from Darling 2018-2020, with text and design by my partner, Karen, contributing her voice to the conversation. Darling uses photography to materialise the mutual adoration we share, as completely different individuals, serving as a testament to devotion, change, intimacy, and love.

OLIVER GRABOWSKI





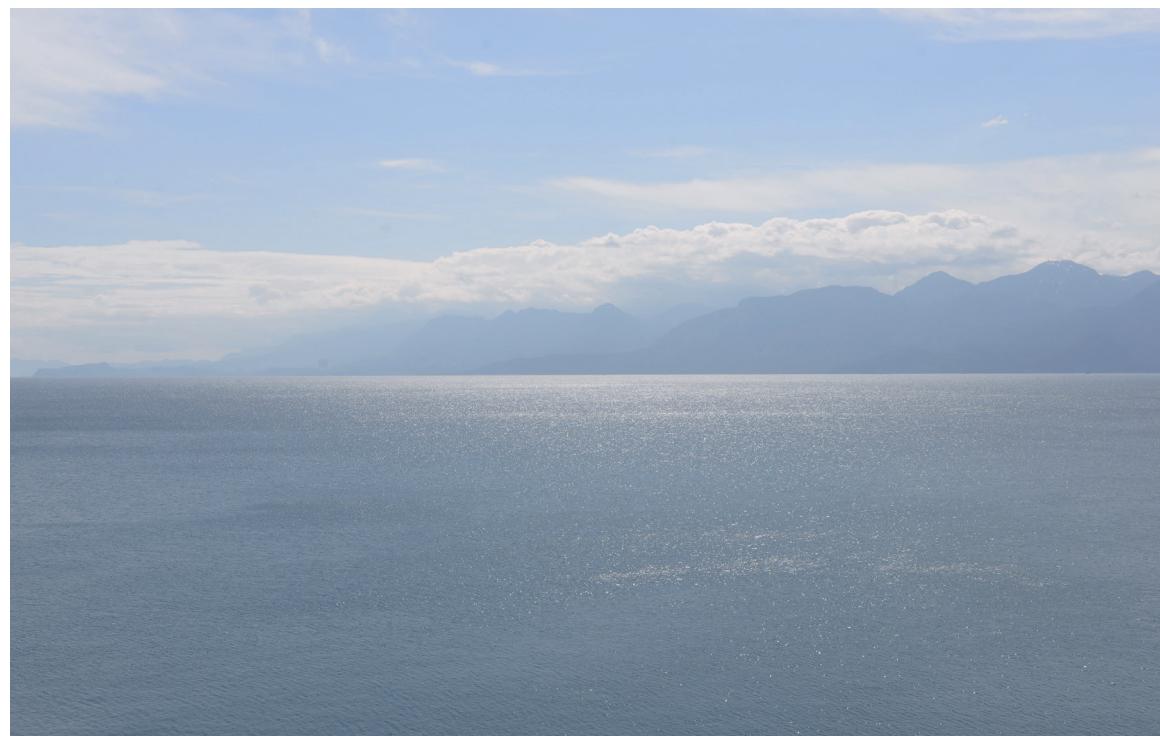




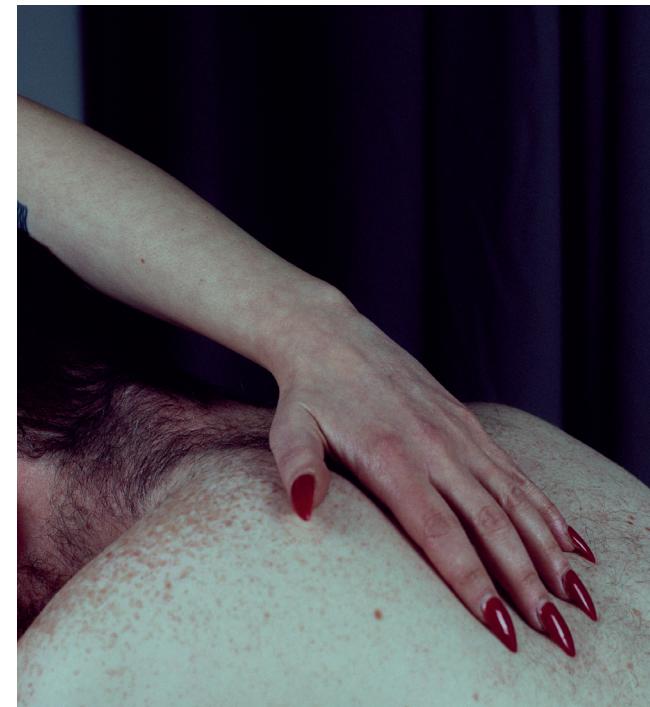






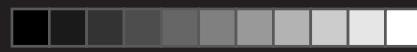














how do i explain to him that i'm awful?

that i am impossible to love
an impulsive drunk sending risky texts
(no shame when i'm hurting)
red-eyed from looking at a screen too long

that i am impossible to love
feeling everything at once and crying too easily:
a high-functioning idiot full of insatiable wants,
gooey and soft everywhere

that i am impossible to love
demanding and plain with my emotions
like a child, like a misbehaving pet,
a brat who simply cannot say “yes” to anything

that i am impossible to love
and notoriously difficult to *know*
that his kindness makes me feel guilty
and transforms the space between us into a reckoning:

i'm sorry,
i am finally seeing myself again, now, clearly.
i've never wanted anything else so desperately,
his laughter in my belly is a warning shot
of either hope or doom.

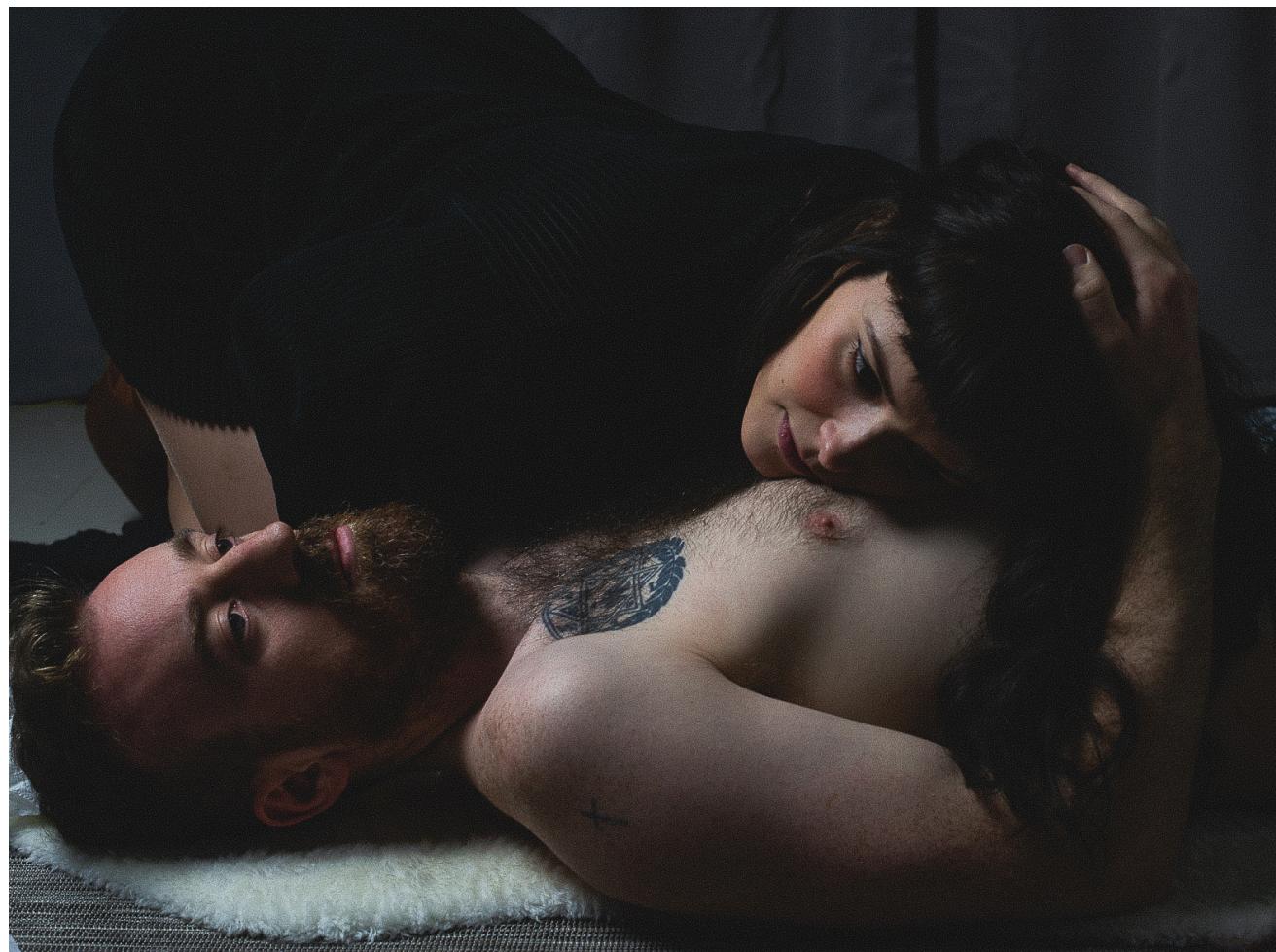
i don't know which it is,
but i want it all the same.

Karen Correia da Silva, Untitled, written
in iPhone notes (2017)

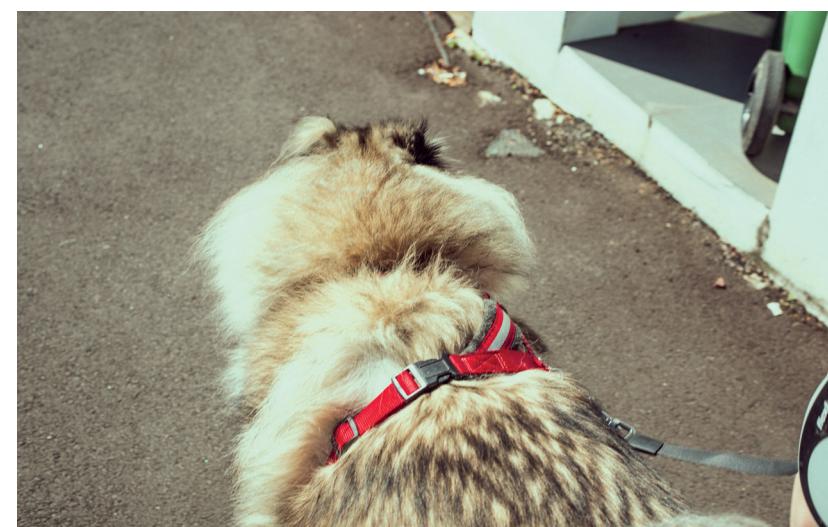


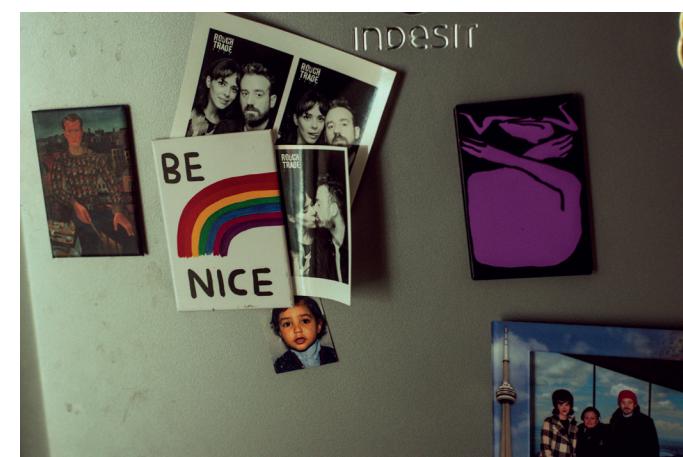


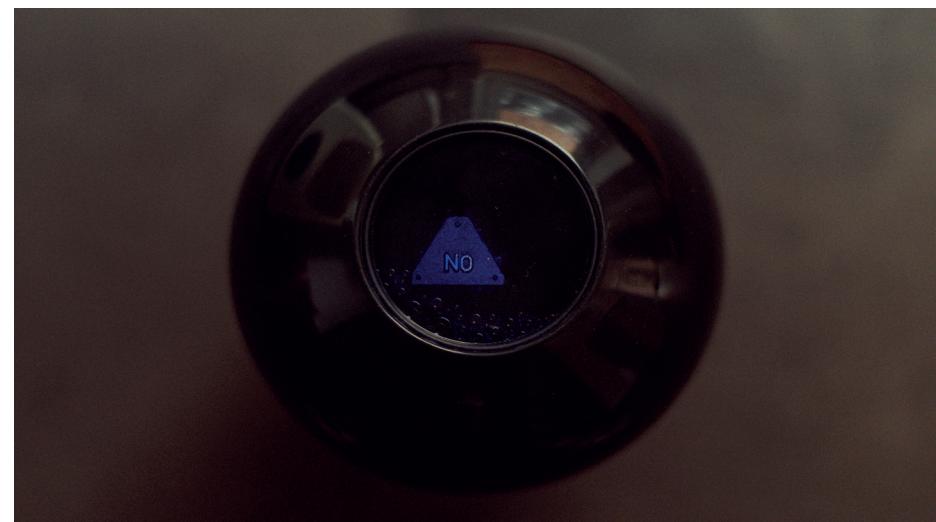




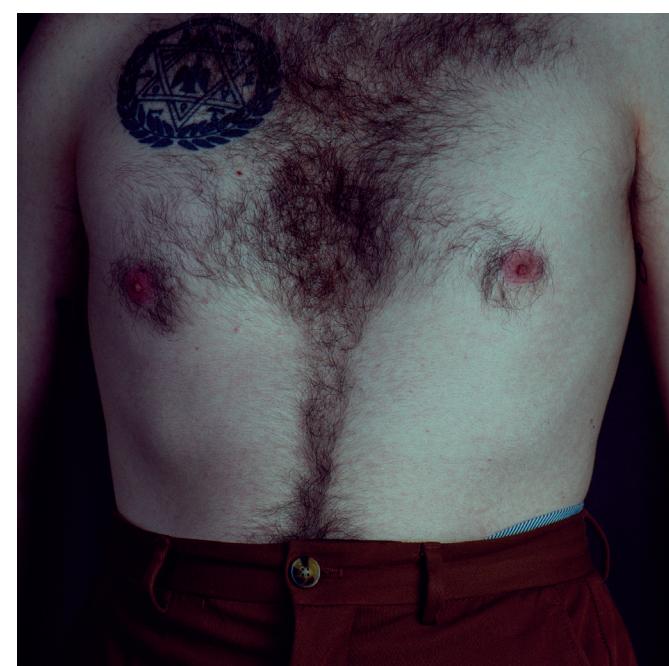
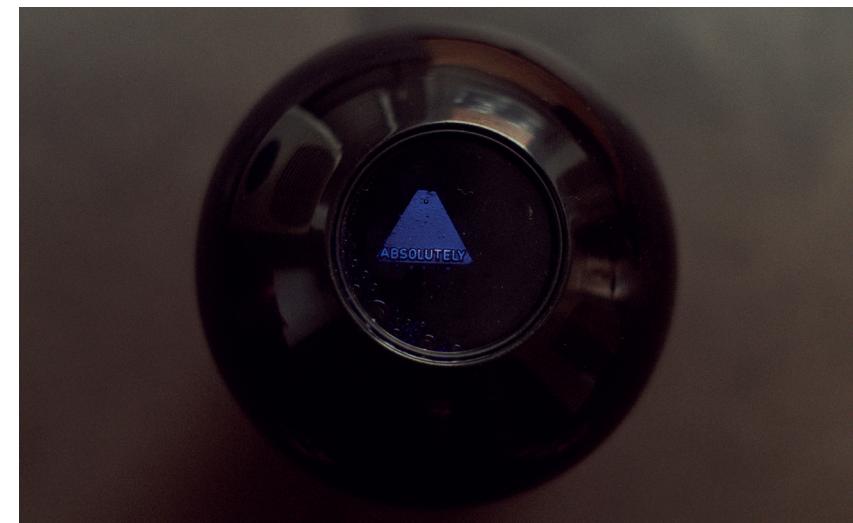


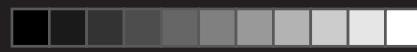














I'm turned on by the mild irritation of this IKEA queue / I've been spending too much time in airplanes thinking of holding the seat in front of me and shaking hard / I need to feel small and insignificant again / bb! tell me I am wrong in the way that I like it / or I'm afraid I'll lose my voice again for the next three thousand years.

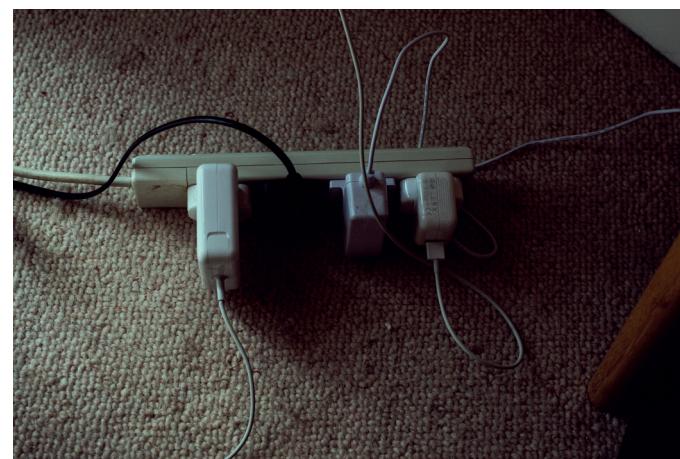
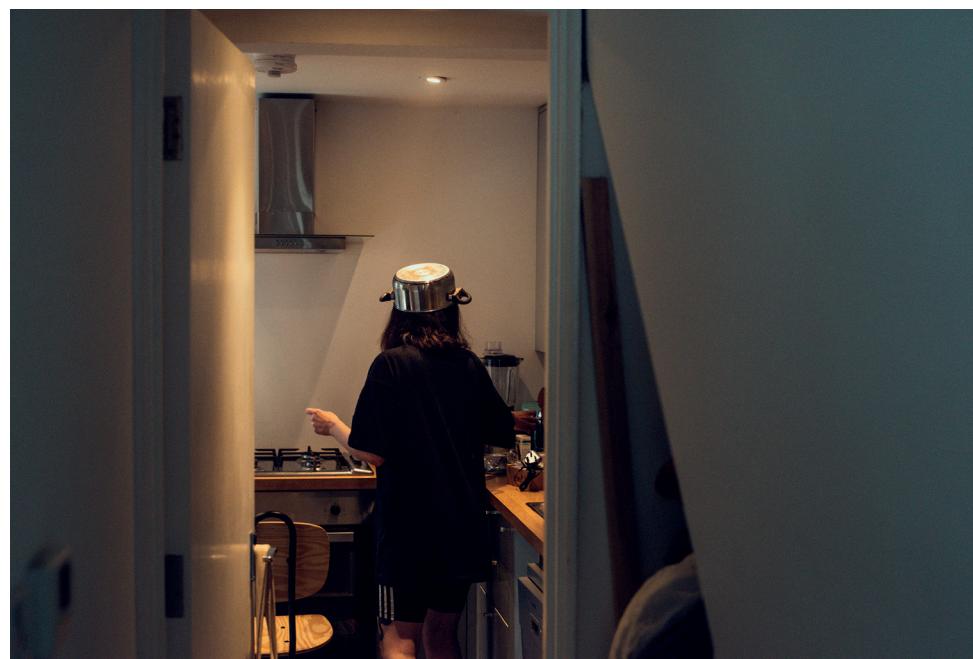
the power of speaking disgusts me! / I am stomping around crushing things / I'm afraid to pretend I'm someone they were anticipating / bb! tell me I am wrong in the way that I like it / or I'm going to see how long I can tread water in the Potomac River

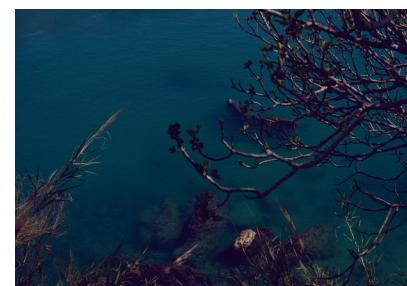
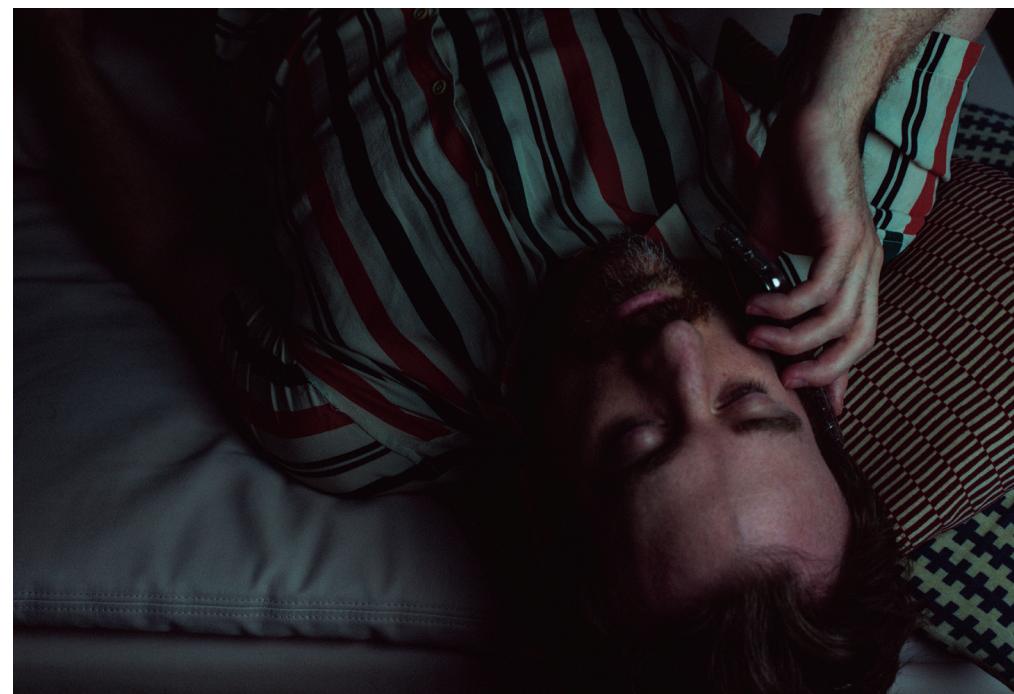
I'm misbehaving / I cut my own hair again / I can't sleep alone anymore / no one lives in DC anyway so there's no one witness me setting fires / bb! Tell me I'm wrong in the way that I like it or I'm going to take an axe to this water tower and ruin someone's night

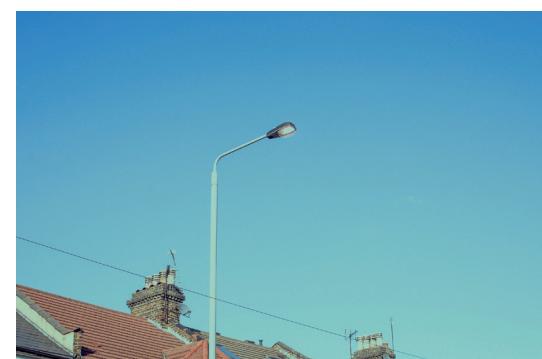
I need supervision, no, nothing about this suffering is beautiful / I'm sweaty and ungrateful / I'm trembling while I eat my onion soup / I'm floating in an airport lounge pool like an idiot / I hate myself every time I reformat my email signature / bb! Tell me I'm wrong in the way that I like it / I want to be the man I was destined to be

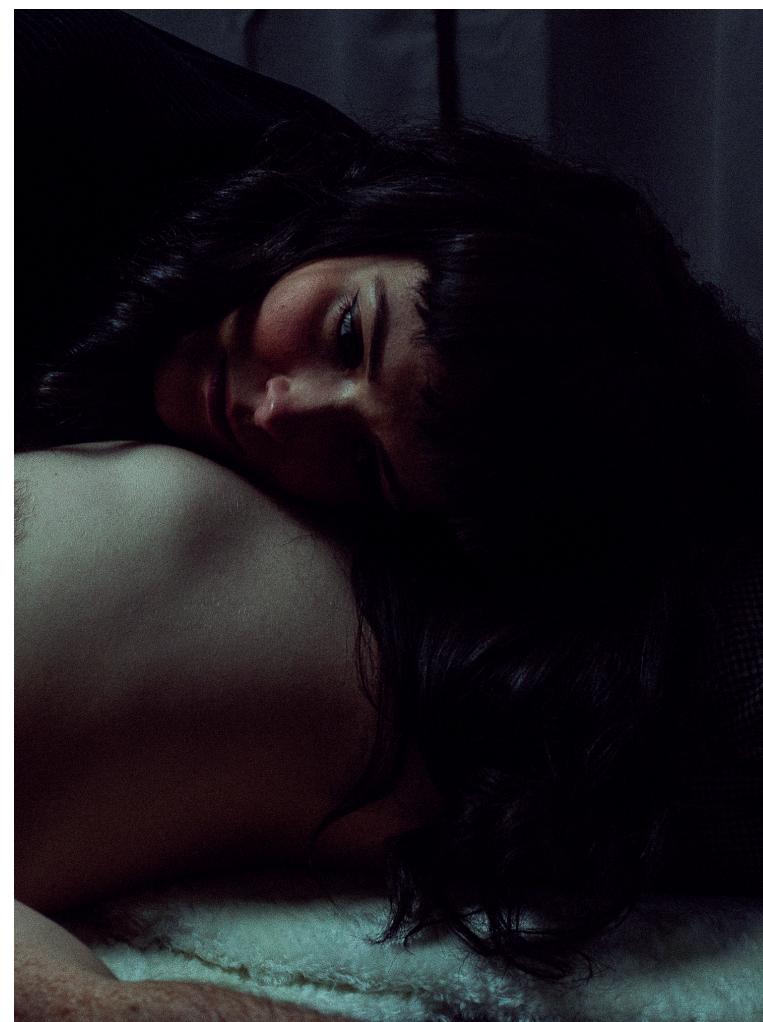
Karen Correia da Silva, "Curse," from the pamphlet *Two Dumb Cats* (2019)



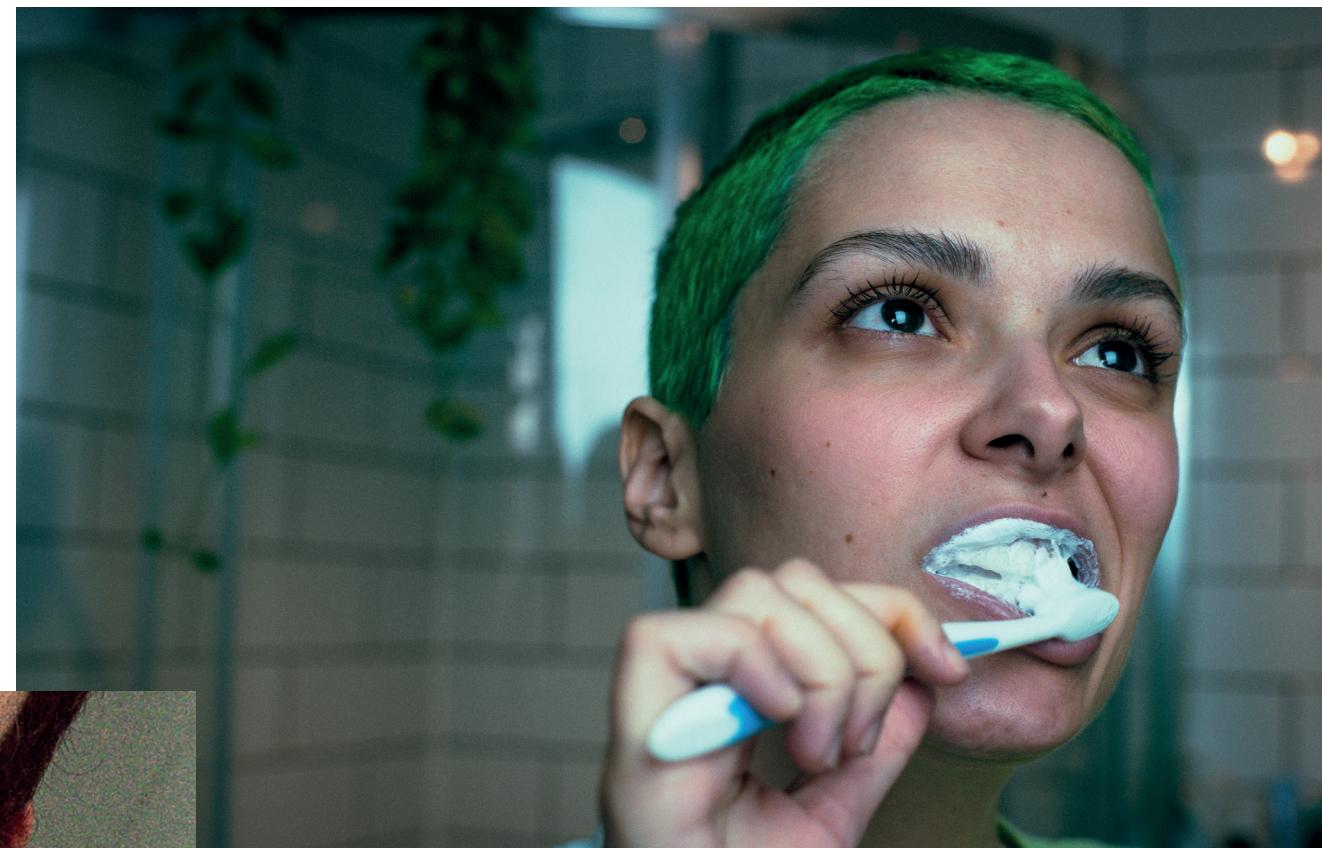




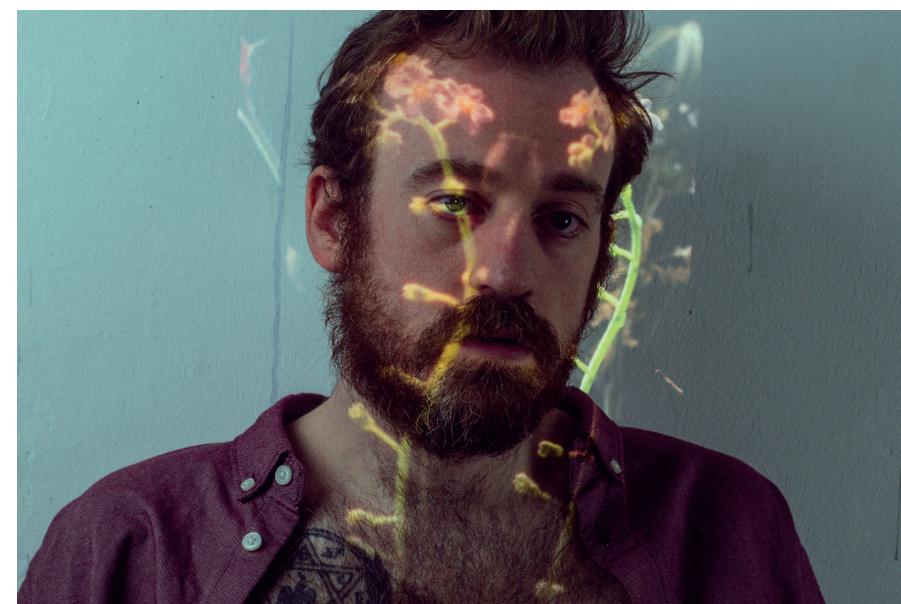






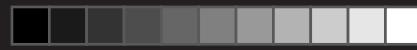












There are hundreds of parakeets in this storefront window
watching me eat a taco hatefully.
I'm sorry: I needed to be wanted more than I needed to protect myself.

In the Pinata district a security guard watches me sob under a fake palm tree.
Did you know there's a Wells Fargo just off of Skid Row?
That's the unbearable distance between you and me.

See a vast sprawl of traffic on the 405, a backbone so far from the ocean.
I want to bring all my kills to your door because you deserve them.
Please let me come home so I can stop measuring the space between
the elevator and the ice machine,

I'm better now, I know what it sounds like when someone laughs with *intention*.
I think of you, and how I want to tell you that
It's weird that all porn tagged "British" is so gross

That there was a barefoot man on Venice Beach
who looked exactly like Hollywood Jesus.
That someone tried to charge me for using their "Customer Only" bathroom
And I ran away.

When the sky over the Pacific is this dull it makes the ocean look black and hellish,
and the skate kids are fighting with one another while we watch...





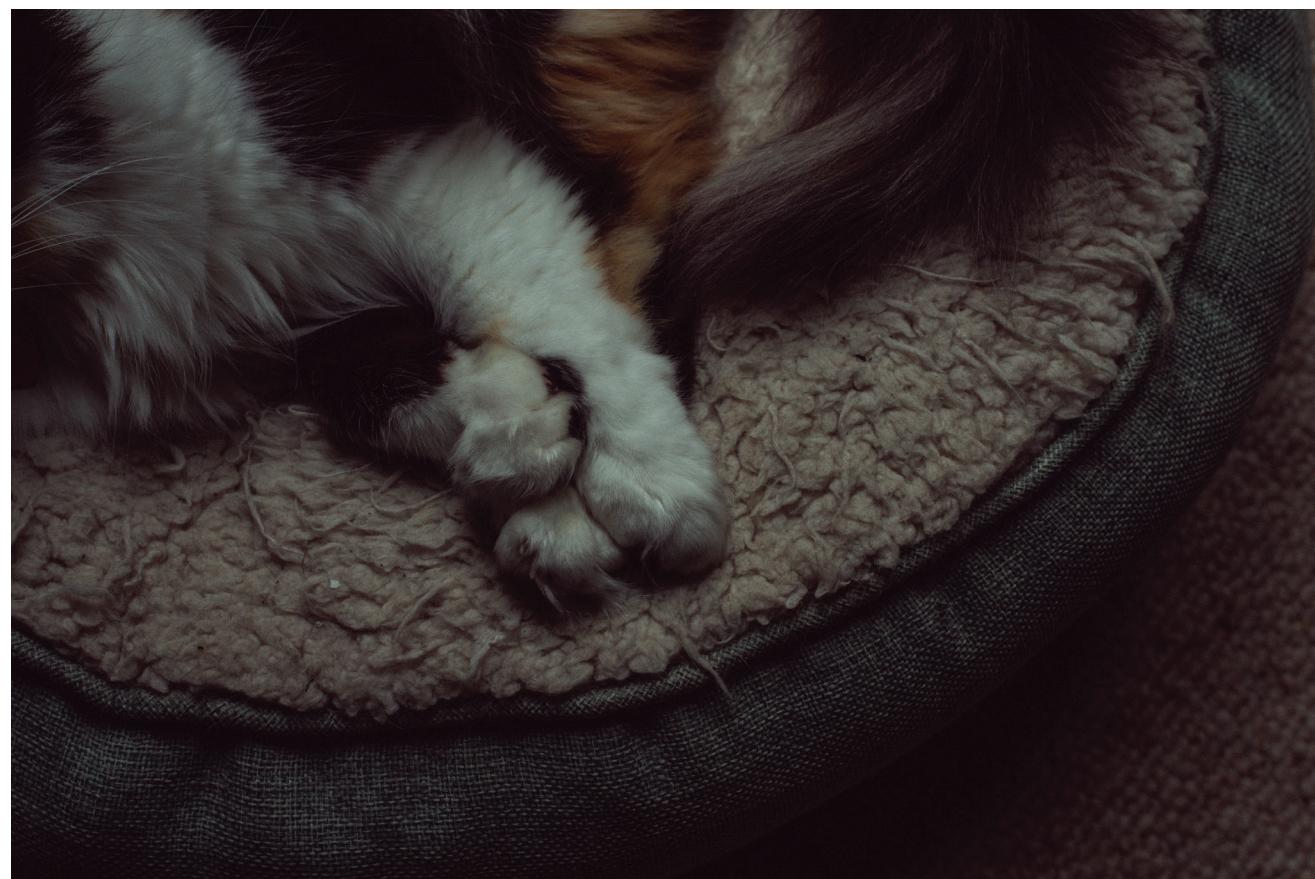
I imagine you
standing on the boardwalk
ready to take my confession
and absolve me,
like they used to when I was a kid.

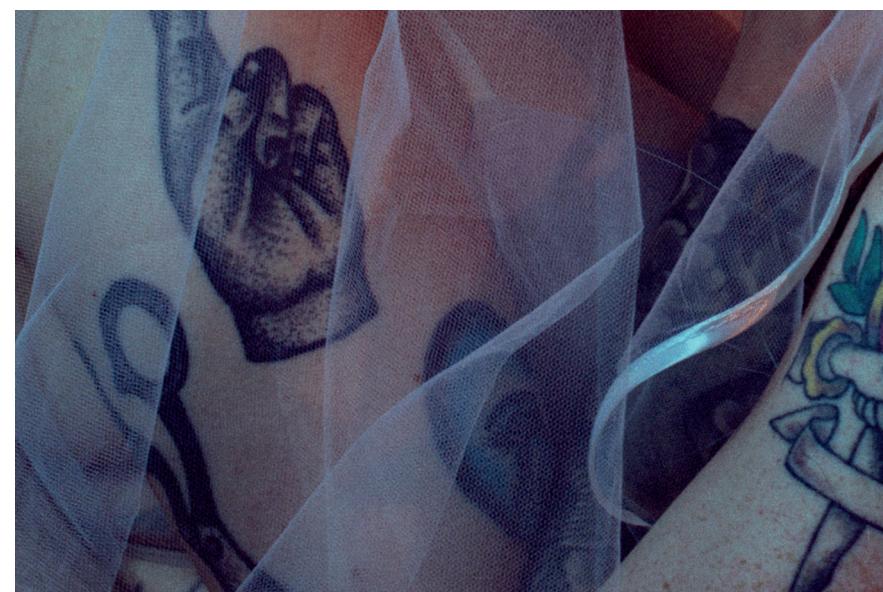
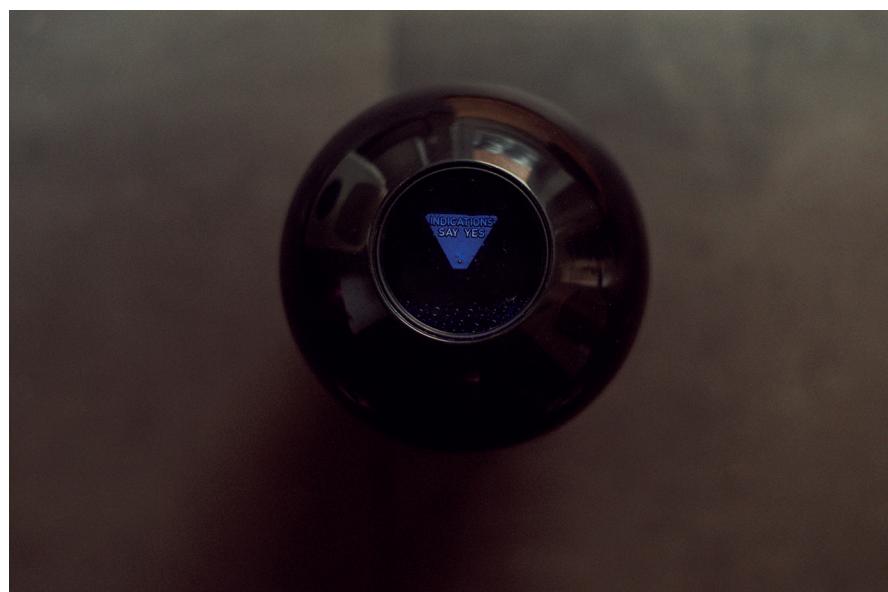
Karen Correia da Silva, “Everyone is Shitty
Sometimes,” from the pamphlet *Two Dumb Cats* (2019)

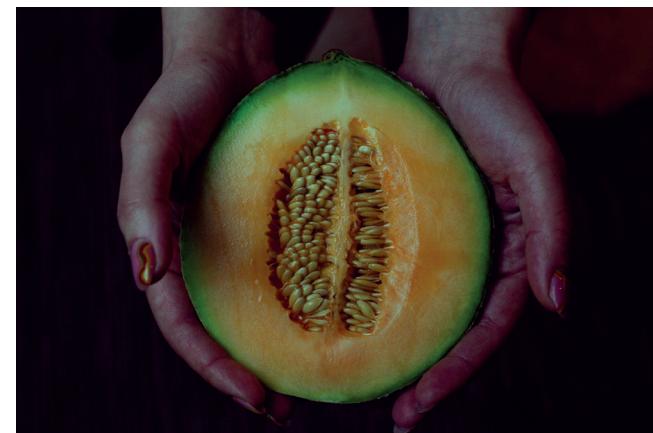


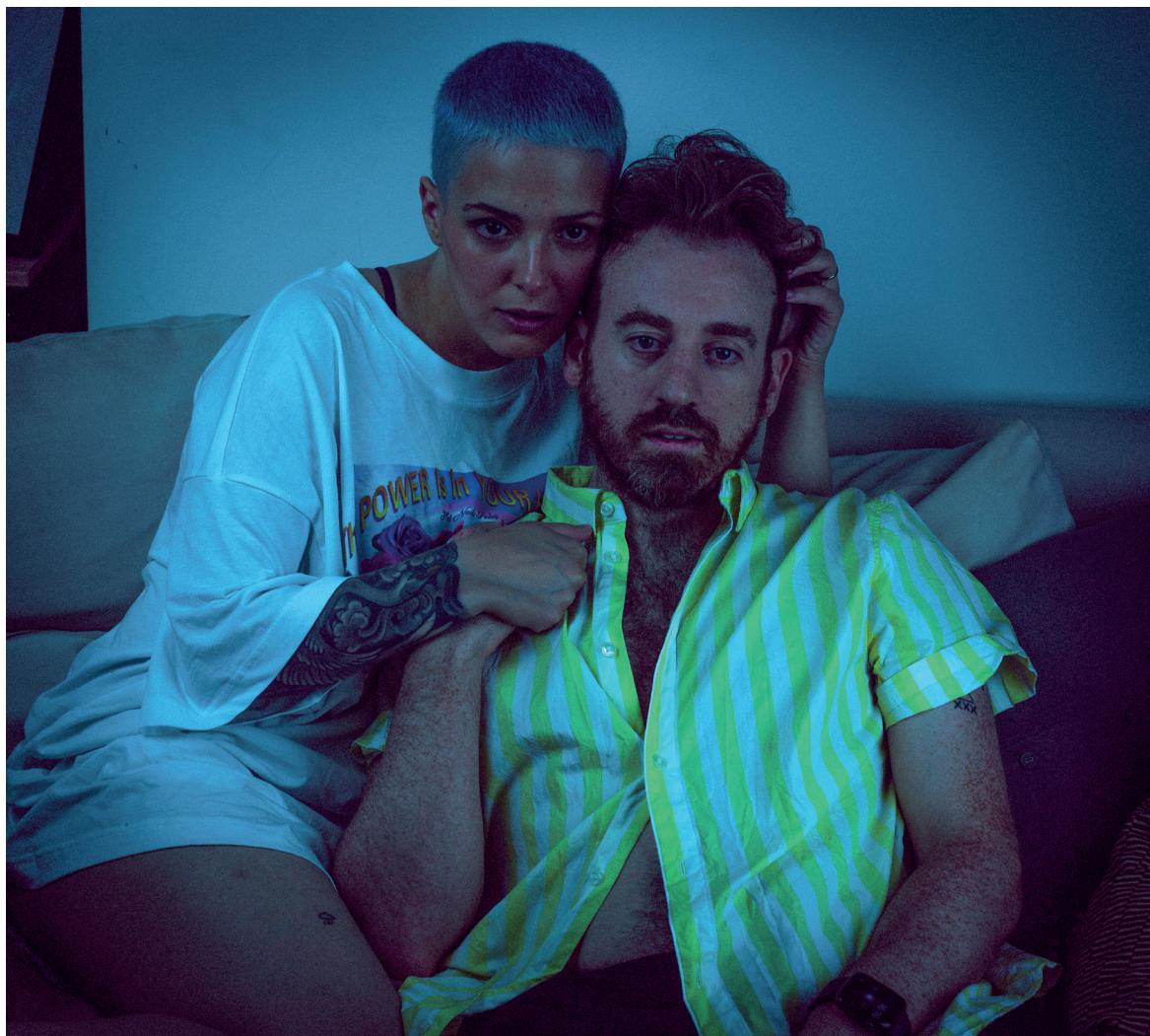




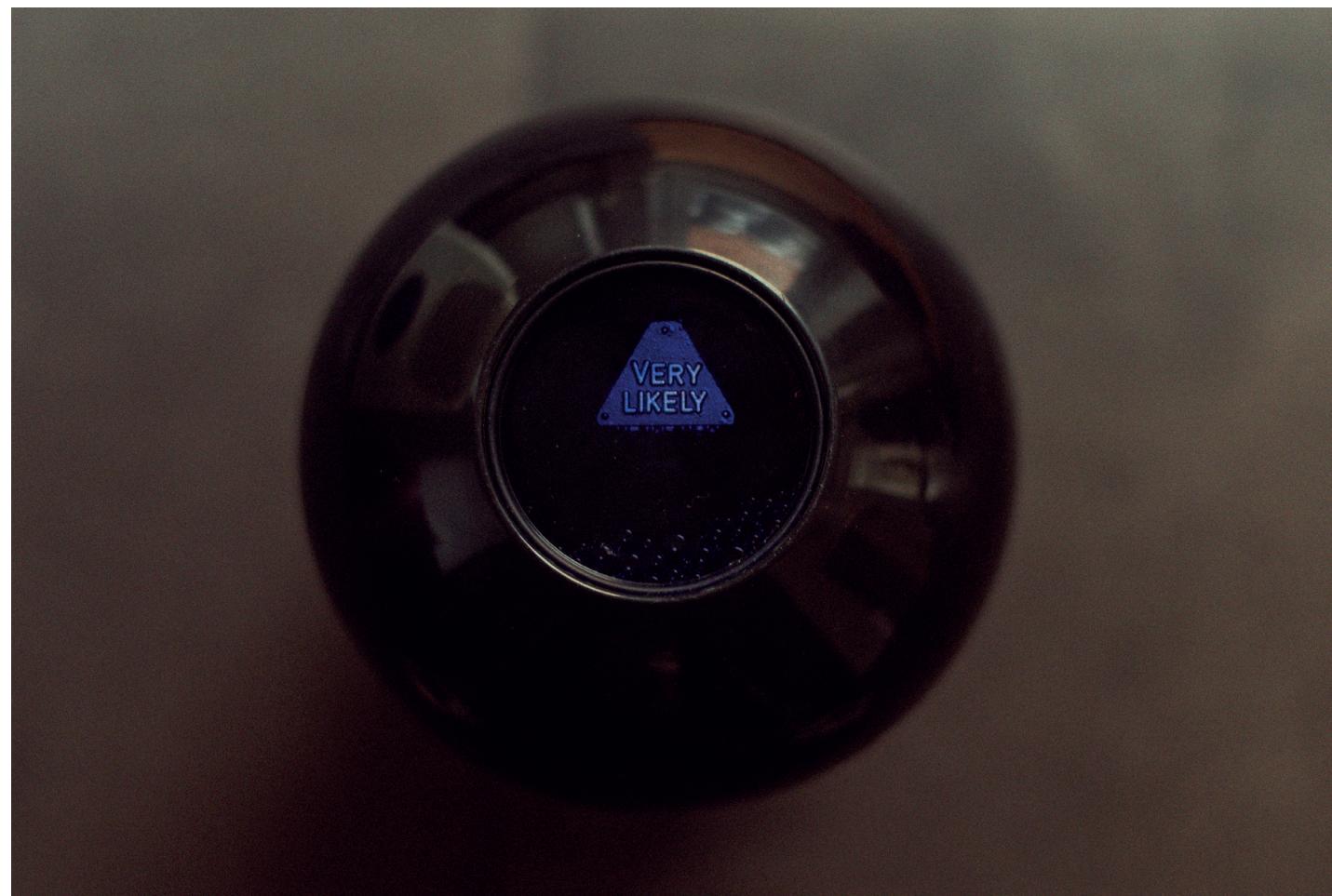




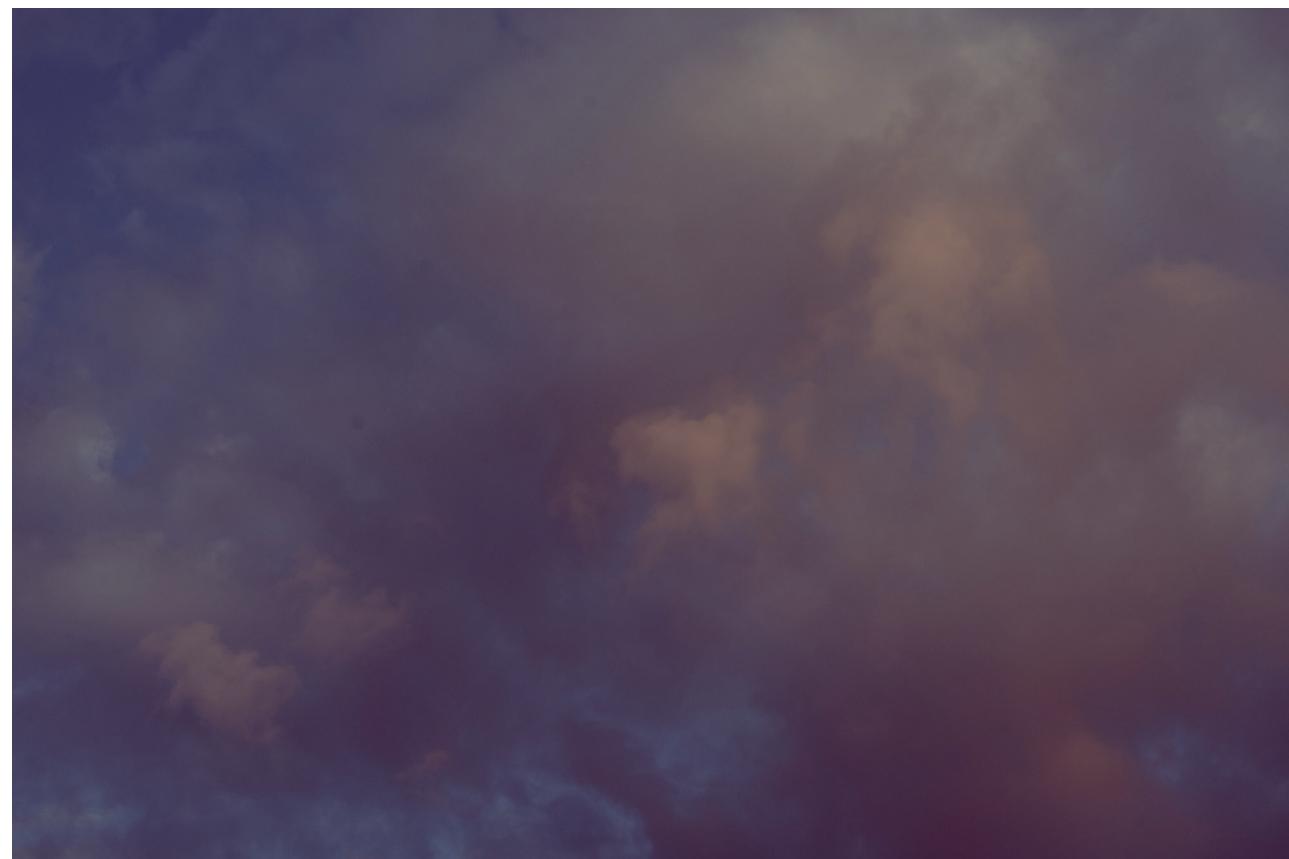
















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Oliver Grabowski & Karen Correia da Silva
Published in the UK by Very Tender Studio, London



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