

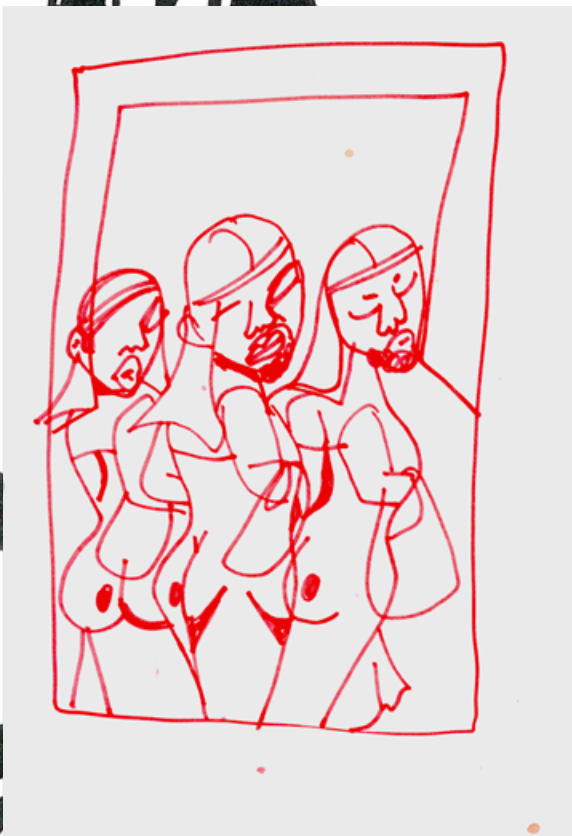


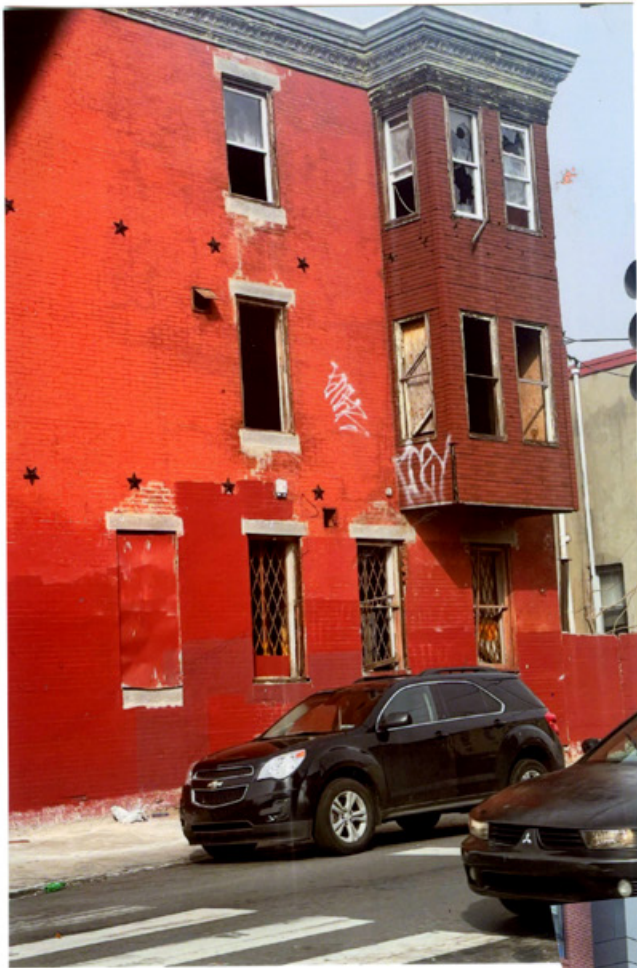
Jonathan Lyndon Chase



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3



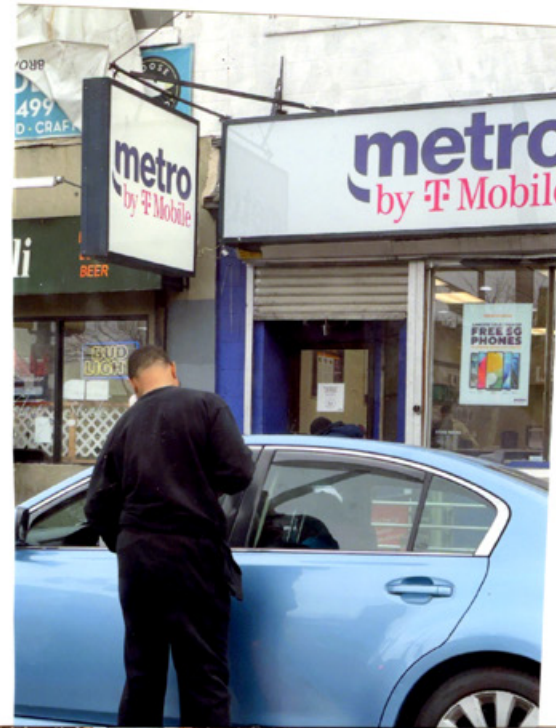


The beauty of a
sun kissed brick
empty rooms
darkness fills them
an appealing decay
time standing still
building - Body
passer byers look but
don't see

4

5

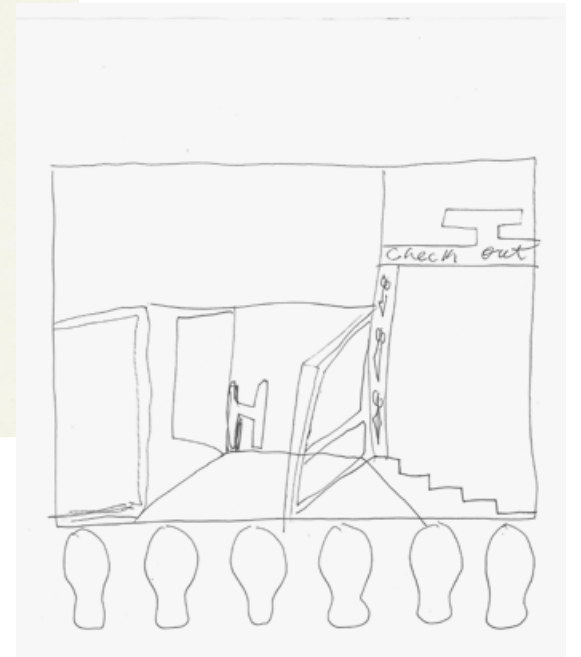
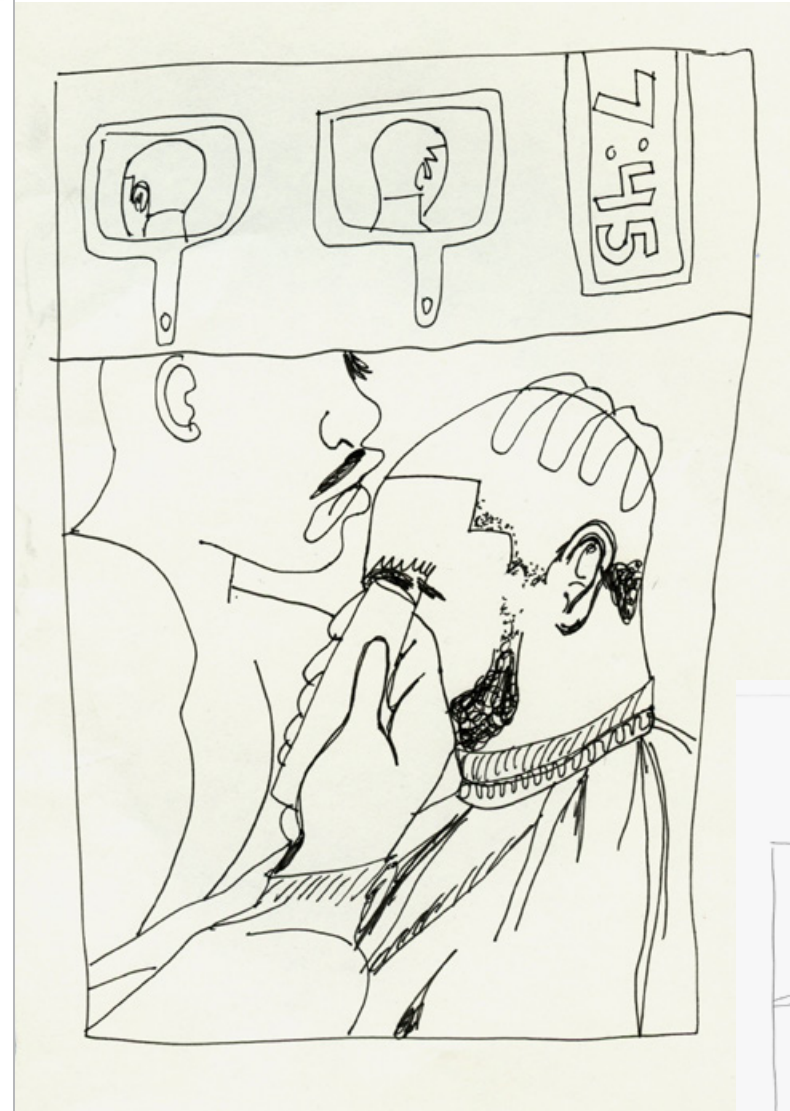
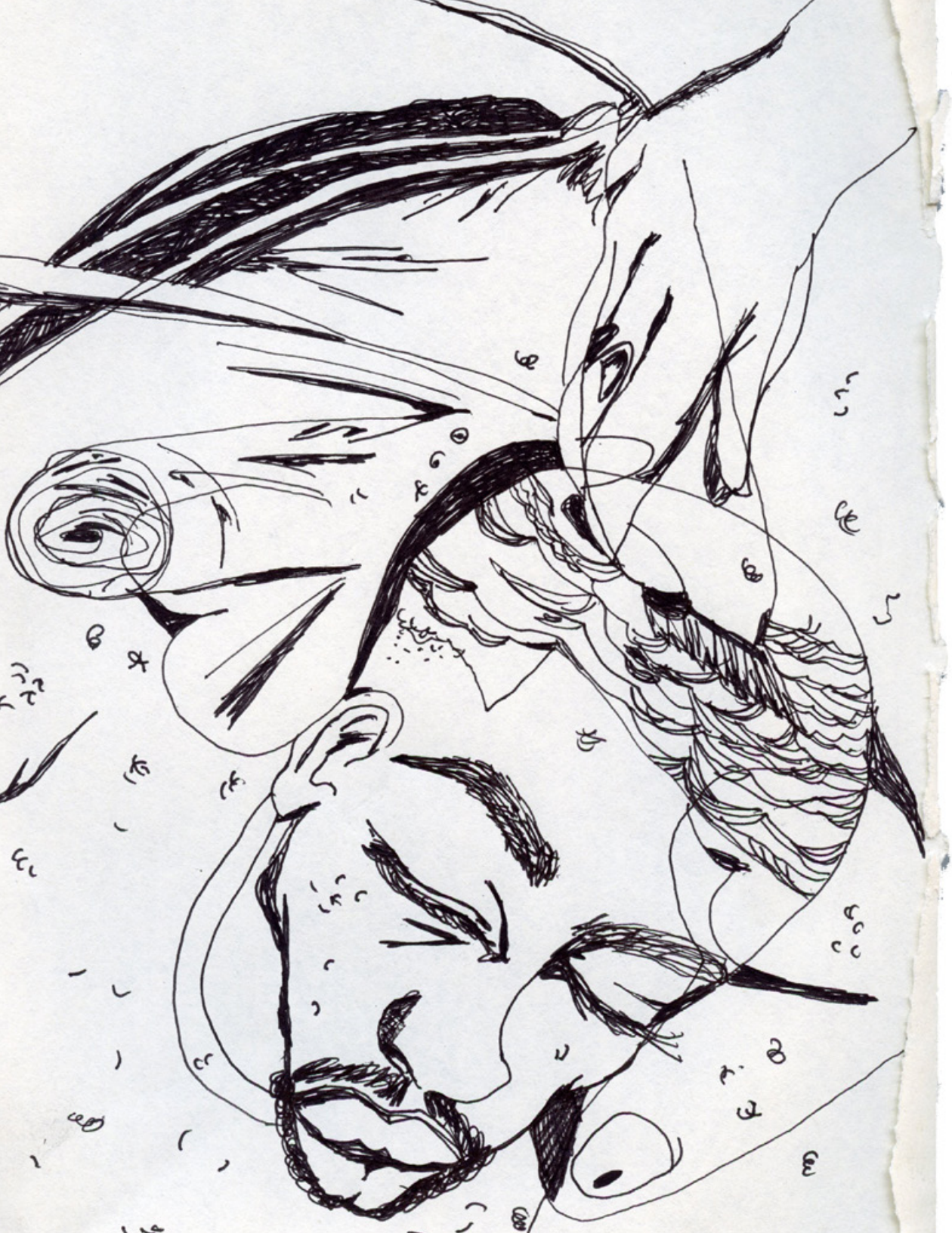
The city
inspires
me with
its many
textures
and colors
people,
places, and
things.



things move
fast
my eyes
carefully look
for surprises,
beauty, and
mundane
happenings
my queer
lense.

summer boys
hood and fast
motor bikes and face
mask to warm their
faces brushing past
tunnels of wind and
concrete
its sexy fast and
daring popping a wheely
during rush hour





4 men standing across the street
 The men smoke and peep passing cars and each
 Hears They wonder
 "He how you dain today?"

My body blends in and also stands out but
 Sometimes invisible
 My shadow bends on busy pavements
 My reflections swimming on car windows, business doors,
 Faces that look like mine and also
 distorted and blank,
 Sometimes there's a hell
 Sometimes the doors open
 Cologne, alcohol, hairspray, oil, black'n milds,
 doughnuts smell fresh and familiar to me

4 sets of eyes
 blink blink blink
 what's good?
 what's up?
 How many waitin'
 2 and then you
 aight
 I got you
 what we dain today?

He is precise like a surgeon
 I want to look good
 I feel good
 He wants me to look good
 his hands are latex and
 oily

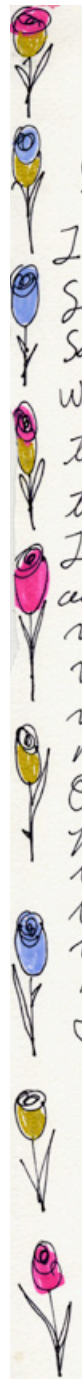
a fade
 I make a hand gesture
 for a part sweeping
 gently
 he nods confidently
 we don't know
 each others names

Take off my drag so you can smell
 my hair he says
 his back is cold and his face is smooth until prickly
 my favorite is his scruffy chest
 his favorite is my peach fuzz
 my datted breast.
 licking mistached, noses tickled by chins
 We have a early morning but I don't care.
 Hours gaemy our finger tips on our fresh
 cots, happy streams roll down my elbow
 and dry on our 2 day old silk

I'm wearing the last night
 he smells robe and hungry
 he rolls a falcat from his tongue
 his lips are dry now
 my pussy laced in stray hairs
 lips wet and dripping and then wet again
 something like problems swimming away
 Track after Track electronic, Sade, Drake, Ocean
 Waves

We showered three times today
 Short blow out and now the candles
 My part looks good
 looks fine

Fade to slumber



11 Chairs
 5 waiting people
 I came today yesterday they were closed
 Some of the men are old
 Some of the men are young
 Watches, grey socks, soiled hats, tight palms, waiting
 this place honors familiarity
 the Usual
 I have a relationship that is both intimate
 and cold with one man here
 We set a time
 We agree to a day
 We silently agree I will see them and
 no one else for this service
 Our monthly meetings of your hands and my
 head
 We are close
 We are not close
 We on average say no more than
 10 words each time
 the buzzing sounds drifts me to doze off
 Don't get too comfortable
 you might get cut

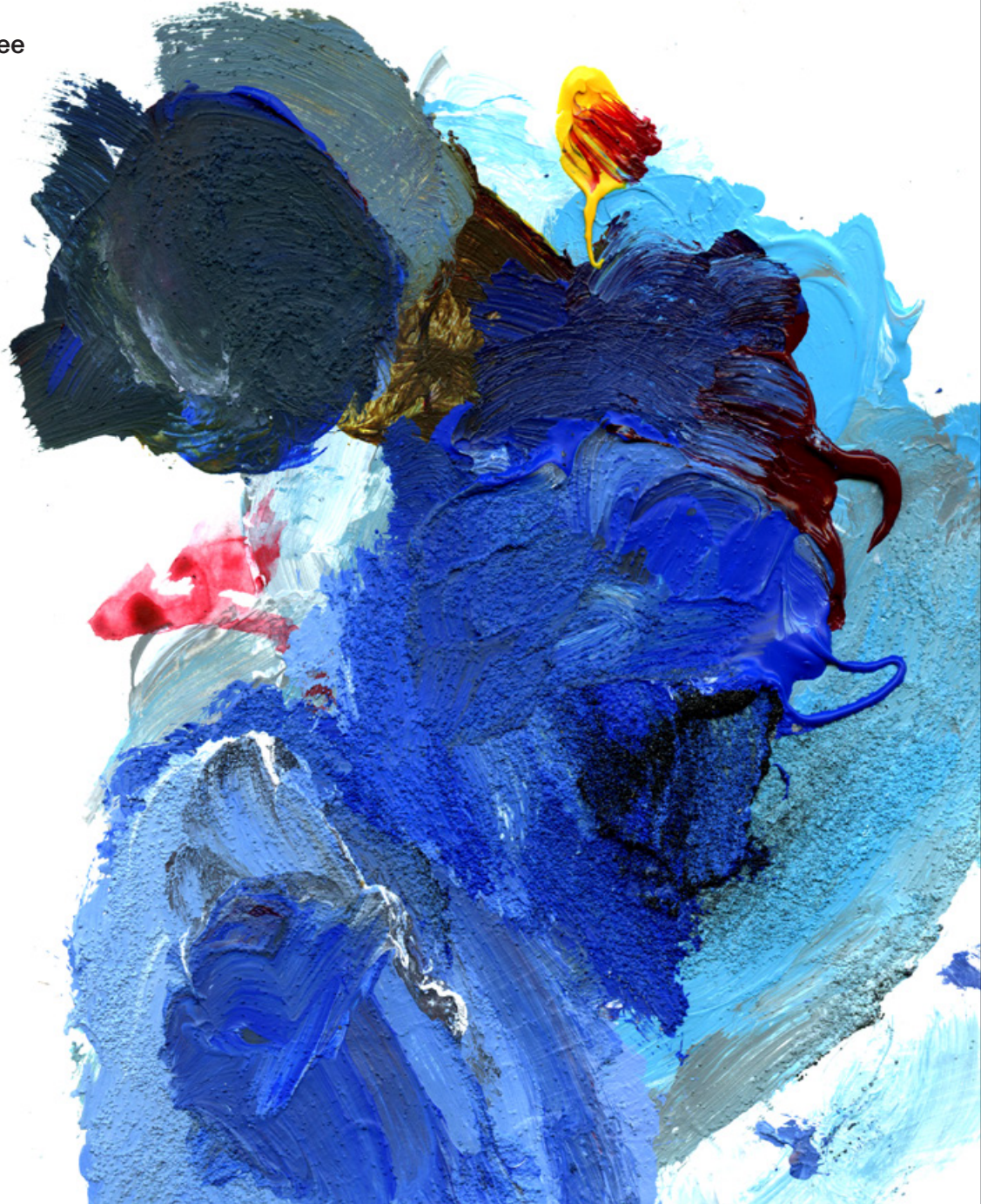
my friend sends
 me a photograph of
 the moon
 I'm almost home to
 bathe
 I ride past the Str 8
 men singing, rapping
 loud in the night
 sky corner and
 corner handsome and
 relaxed

In my blue fitted
 hat he looks like someone
 I ~~know~~ knew
 mouth full of lemon
 he holds its seeds
 sourly showing his
 lips
 his beard is soft
 my hands are
 empty

Nigga cut cut
 cut Cut Cut
 Cut Cut Cut
 Cut Cut Cut
 Cut Cut Cut
 Cut Cut Cut
 Cut Cut Cut
 my ^{out} heart
 heart
 ♥ ♥ ♥

Vignettes

Maleke Glee



I saw him across the barbershop.

It was him. A gray avatar made real.

There was one faceless profile, 100 ft. <. It was him. I became curious. Could be fun.

Hello. Sent!

There were others— in the chairs, standing, cutting hair, waiting like us.

But

we see each other.

It was him.

I looked up, and we caught a brief glance.

It was no longer him.

I was me, and that was the problem. I made them visible. So I'm erased. I'm used to it.

You know me.

Who are you?

You don't want to know.

Cold.

I melted into my phone's screen again. That faceless profile was now a nothing, an absence.

All I did was look up.

Were you ever there?

Would be fun.

I'm blue from all the holding I had to do. I am doing.

Lungs full of breath for words stacked, peering whenever provoked. They spilled.

Sorry, you didn't deserve that.

Brain barely there, nothing to stimulate. I've erased the memory and tread cautiously now. Blind.

I'm blue from loving you. It was good. Until it wasn't.

Where do I put it?

Angst. Regret. Upset. It was more than just you. It was that version of me that reveled in our creation. I said goodbye to the past and imagined future.

Are no expectations enlightened or simply a coping mechanism for the frightened?

I'll hold that, too. For you.

They wouldn't get anyways.

You're welcome.

Grandad asks, "You my grandson's boyfriend?"

"Yes," then-boyfriend replies.

"Okay. You take care of him," Grandad says.

I love him.

I never wanted to be a girl. I just wanted to be pretty.

I liked being a boy, but everything pretty wasn't for boys. As active as it was, being a boy meant being boring. It was routine, expected, dim.

I wanted to shine. I wanted to question, and adorn, and laugh freely. I wanted to move toward my attraction— look at her nails, her hair, their dolls. Girls had fun. They could live with their inner worlds in material matter.

When I became a man, everything was beautiful.

"You cheating on me?" my handsome barber asks. I smile.

Looking back at me
Maleke Glee



Philadelphia writer and activist Joseph Beam's proclamation that "Black men loving Black men is the revolutionary act" has reverberated since its introduction in a 1986 issue of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays' *Black/Out* journal, of which he was the editor. Fellow Philadelphian Jonathan Lyndon Chase takes up this mantra in loving depictions of queer worlds. In Chase's work, we experience bodies intertwined, pregnant, penetrated, connected, and reflected. Little separates the figures; they become one body. Looping through another in myriad modes of connection, we may find new ways to care for ourselves. Our vision of ourselves may be clearer, fuller, when reflected in the eyes of another, a brother. Eyes peering back, with similar desires unsaid but mirrored in our active longing.

The scenes of Jonathan's work remind me of personal vignettes of the Black men whom I love. A core memory of mine is holding the gaze of my good friend Khari as he shaved my head. I recall what Khari's eyes said to me, about me, and how he and I understood each other in that moment. The energy between us spoke of the years of our relationship and forecast years in the future. In his Baltimore studio apartment, incense coating the air, I sat on his toilet. He leaned toward my face, scared but willing to offer his first shave to someone else.

Khari started as a teenage crush, moved into my early twenties as a lover, and later, in a better alignment, became a close friend. We shared many firsts. That spirit of togetherness, holding each other's hands, has sustained our friendship. Khari is the person you look forward to watching grow because you are privy to their journey thus far and see what others may not see, even what they may not see within themselves.

I asked Khari to shave my head to ensure that I avoided my habitual mistakes, where I miss the parts I cannot see. It's hard to shave your head, and for that reason, I am attracted to perfecting the process. It feels like a commitment to myself, and as this shave reminded me, sometimes that task requires those close to us to offer a hand.

Hesitantly, Khari obliged. Our eyes in contact but trembling, we broke out in laughter. It was a part of our mutual discomfort at the newness of it all. Silence. Stillness. Exhalation. When it was over, we smiled; we've completed the final step before an evening out. I don't remember where we were going, but I remember that feeling—the hand at the nape of my neck; the paintings above me, including one we made together in the park. This shave becomes another relic, albeit temporal, of our relationship, another sweet moment I'll cherish forever.



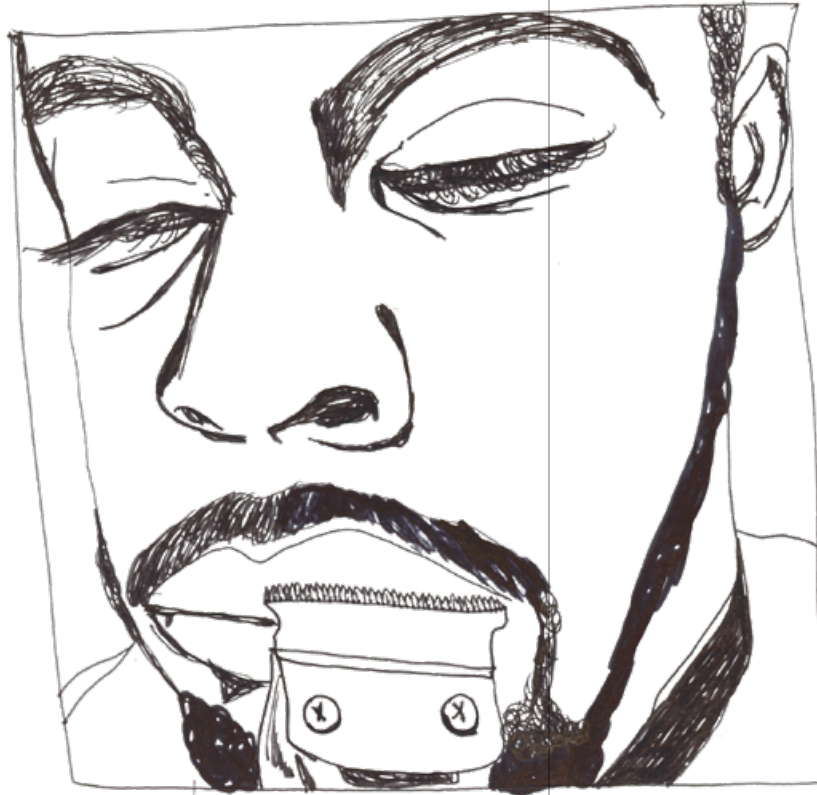
After our success, we talked about our grooming rituals, sharing tips and tricks. We realized we had come to it all through trial and error, without instructions or guidance. Our grooming journeys were a part of our manhood. Perhaps bitter-sweet: the journey was one traveled primarily alone, for our gender expression, and overall self-conception, are partially of our design, unique and fitted specifically for us. However, there remains a little longing for familiar supervision, for someone with a Band-Aid ready for the likely nicks of a straight blade.

Black Queer folk grow up navigating a multiplicity of worlds, often with caretakers unfamiliar at best and uninterested at worst in traveling those terrains. There are no coming-of-age rituals or milestones to celebrate our journeys; we are children, and then we are adults. The in-between is of our own making. We often make that in-between meaningful with our girlfriends, our fellow butch queens, our gworls. These relationships are vital to our self-development. I thank you.

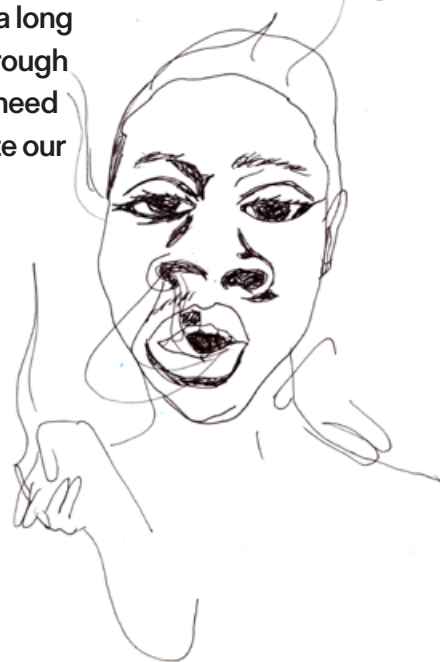
In Jonathan Lyndon Chase's work, I see those relationships and am reminded of these gentle moments in the home, like those I share with Khari. Jonathan's practice reflects these relationships with self and others, often mirrored several times within one painting, video, or sculpture. The material forms become generous hybrids,

breaking disciplinary barriers, moving away from binary codes and value systems of aesthetic form. The works' embedded narratives and psychological landscapes distill value systems that infringe on the lives of Black Queer folk.

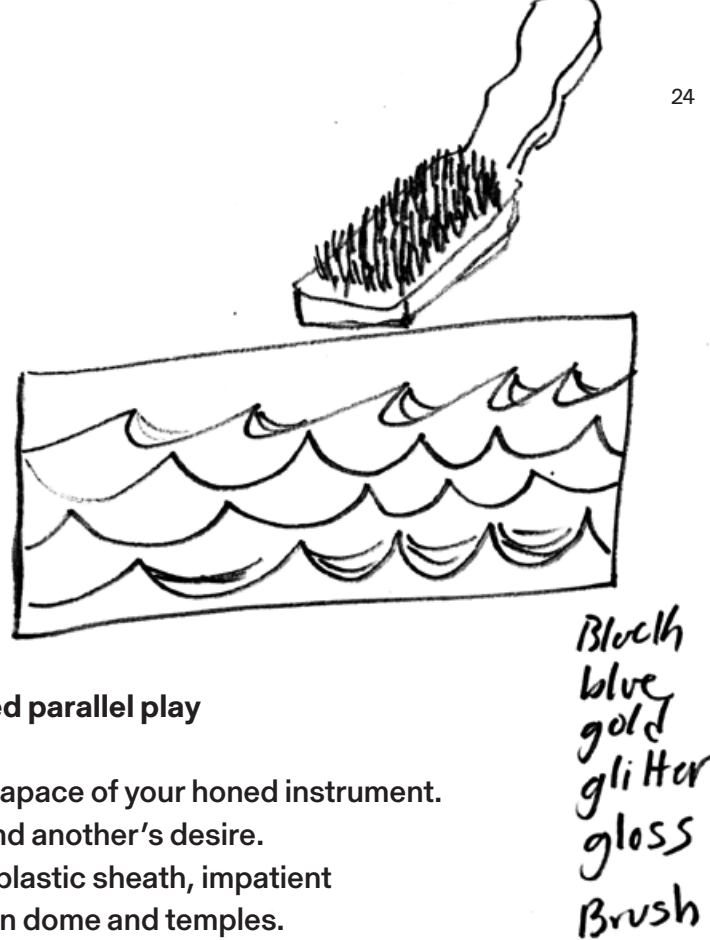
With lips full, arms open, breasts plump, dicks erect, and busses boastful, Jonathan's work invites pleasure that requires no body and nobody. The physical is as present as the energy that binds together the figures. Gazing into mirrors, gazing up at the barber's hand and looking back at it, there is always something outside the figures to actively influence, affirm, challenge, and otherwise enunciate elements that define them. Their figures move in and out of focus, in and out of a distinguished body. Feeling, fucking, and folding into themselves; they are one body, almost a still from a long motion picture of our imagining. Whether through barber or beau, Chase's works suggest our need for each other to help us recognize and realize our fullest potential, pleasure, and possibility.



67



Diedrick Brackens



24

sides//men involved in unrecognized parallel play

with the S of your fist, you rap the carapace of your honed instrument.
you knock your flesh against metal and another's desire.
the buzz announces teeth beneath a plastic sheath, impatient
to graze briar down to the quick, clean dome and temples.

a slick gown slides between you and every patron.
you swivel leather under every man and cradle his skull.
each closes his eyes, a promise of devotion to your tending.
you mark out a line and part, feint, and fade.

you vowed to never withhold attention to their beauty.
but this man clutches the armrests of your silver chair
and folds nervy hands in his lap as if to disregard the unspoken.
he closes his laughing mouth on queue or command.

you hover over his lips to level his forehead and notch his brow.
breathing each other, a brush edges you both into a single boat.

25

static waves/reclining waves/a single boat

i am not used to waiting for someone to come home.
to a head in my lap, to massaging another scalp.
to the point of annoyance, i ask: do all barbers have barbers?
can you trust a barber with a fade? a man who is on time?

the end of the road . . . it's unnatural . . . I belong to . . .

too quiet? can you see the back of your own head?
i brush your hair we giggle, dizzy soon, the bristled paddle slips
and my couch is the only safe place to be awake with you.
everything you empty on to me is a succulent ocean.

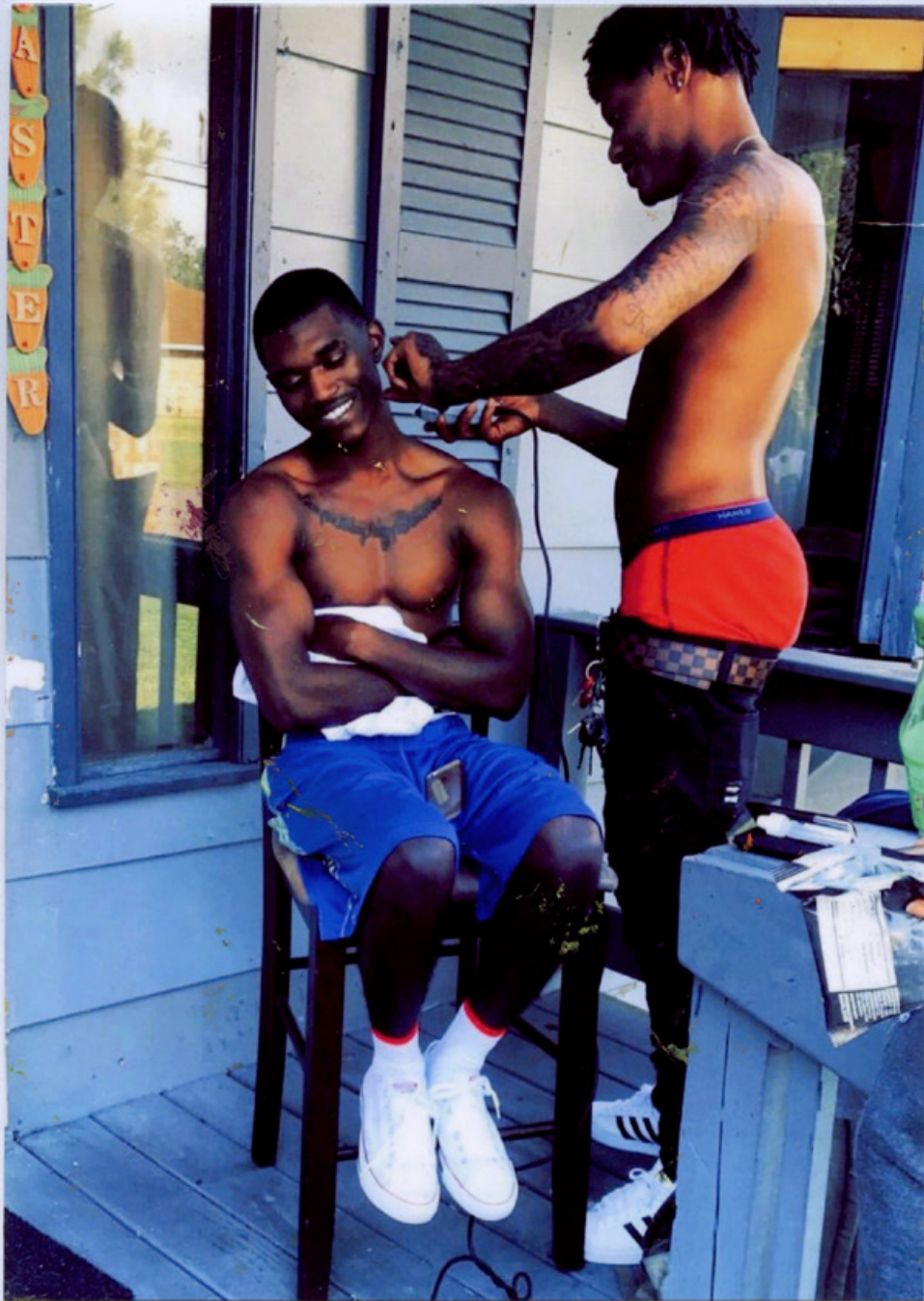
the end of the road . . . it's unnatural . . . I belong to . . .

my laced fingers and legs around your waist make me a dragnet.
there is only a little day outside, but the night always watches.
draw me after you, but first, draw the curtain. spin me around,
spin the blinds down on any eyes pressing us to outlines.

*did anybody see you come into my . . .
that you wanna do anything I like alright . . .*

a single lamp dressed in silk drains the room
to a glint and softens our skin to petals.
the ends of our durags hang a bridge between us
pelt the pleated clench i offer you with a rough tongue

guts, our heads, metaphor, mirrors, oil sheen thaw to sweat
i trickle into you, and you spit out recuse to moor the oars of night.

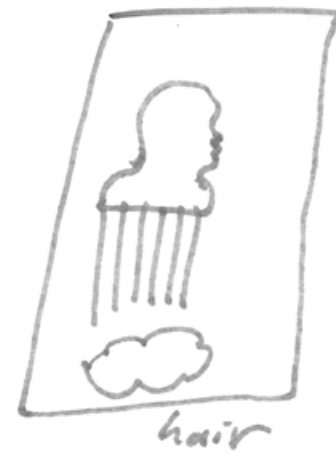
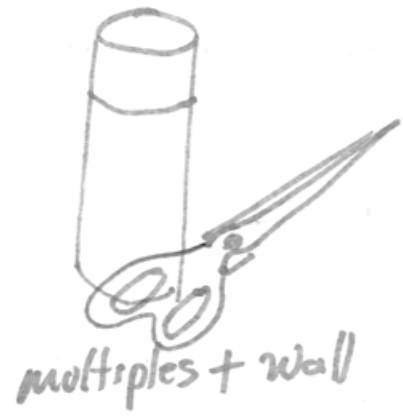


Take off my drag so
 my hair he says
 his back is cold and i
 smooth until prickly.
 my favorite is his scrotty cl
 is favorite is my peach for
 my tattooed breast.
 looking mistakes, noses teeth
 e have a early morning but
 re. hours grazing our finger
 r fresh cuts, happy streams
 slow and dry on our 2 day
 m wearing the last light
 e smells nose and hungry
 he rolls a folical from hi
 his lips are dry now
 my pussy laced in stray
 lips wet and drying and
 something like problems s
 Track after Track electron
 ocean waves
 We showered three times
 Short blow out and
 My part looks good
 looks fine

Several men have
 heard about me
 soft bitches cooing
 gargling barks
 I pulled the chain
 Don't run from my
 bright eyes



- Cut - collage
 paper collage / drawing? / layered materials



waiting / soft sculpture
 resting on top

community base

Receptionist Desk
 music

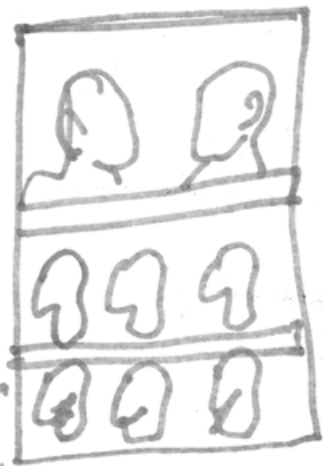
Talking

TV

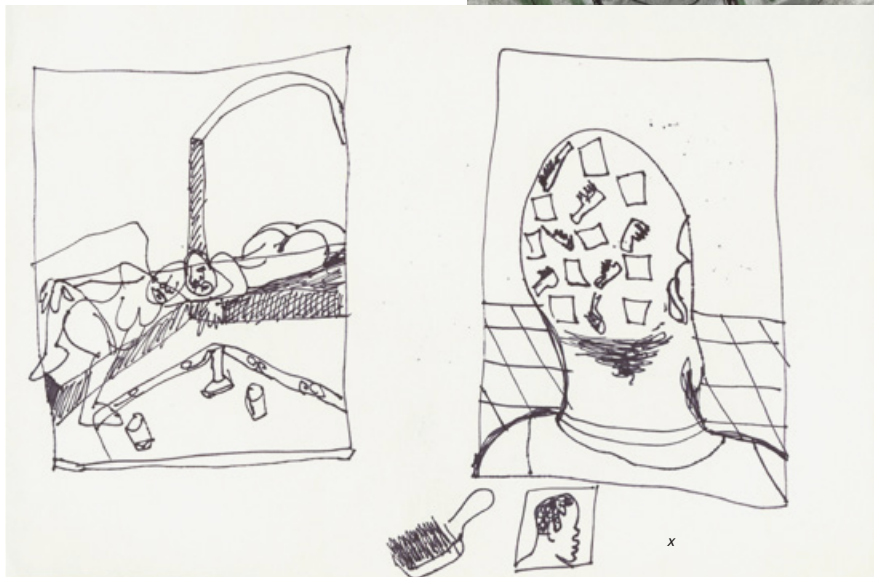
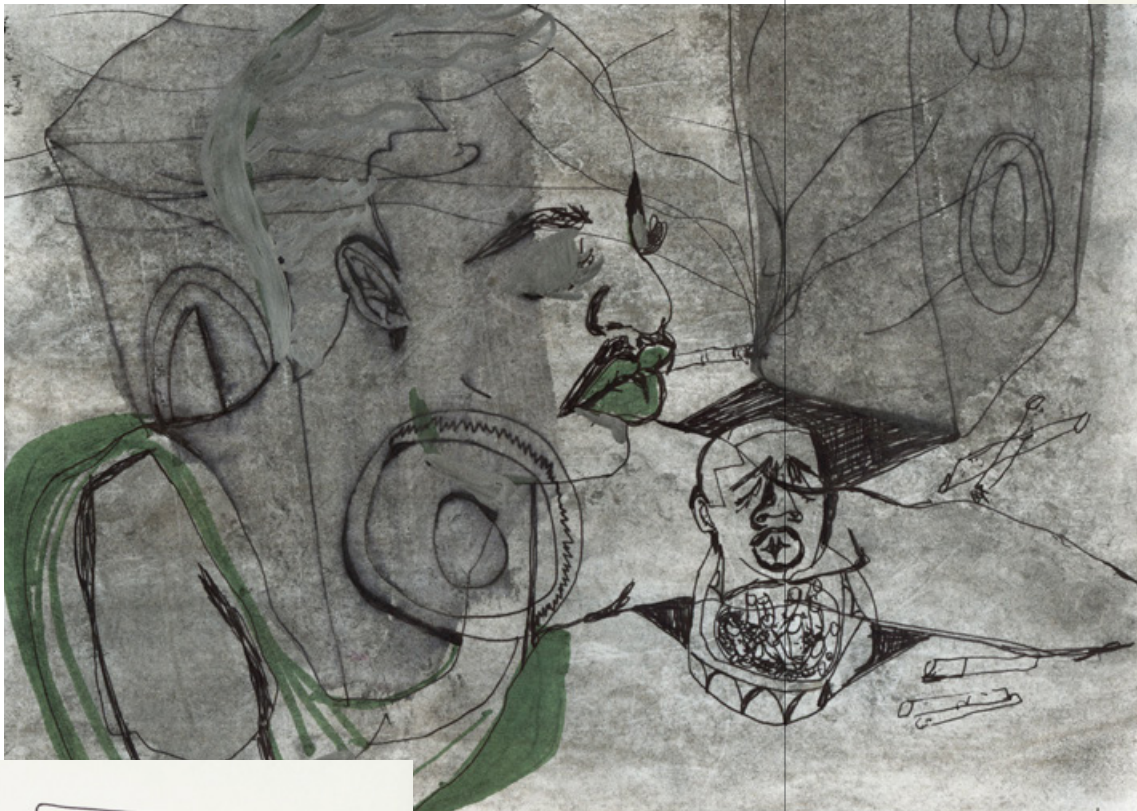
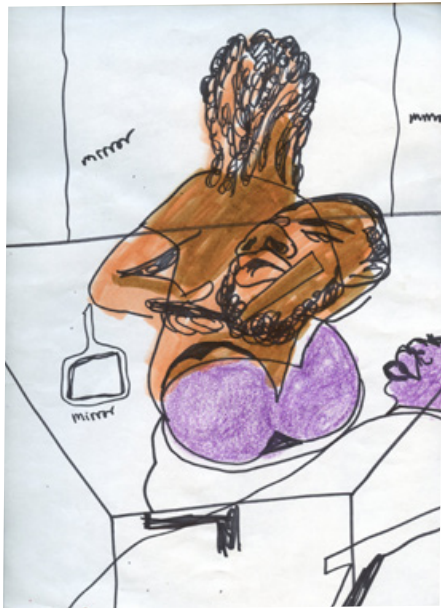
Merch

positive pictures on Mirrors + Clients

- black couch
- Shampoo bowls
- sweep hair
- sports - politics - women
- Clipper ownership
- Sharp skills



Mirror Wall





Jonathan Lyndon Chase: *his beard is soft, my hands are empty* is presented at Artists Space, September 8–December 2, 2023.
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All images from Jonathan Lyndon Chase’s *his beard is soft, my hands are empty* exhibition portfolio © 2023 Jonathan Lyndon Chase
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his beard is soft, my hands are empty

