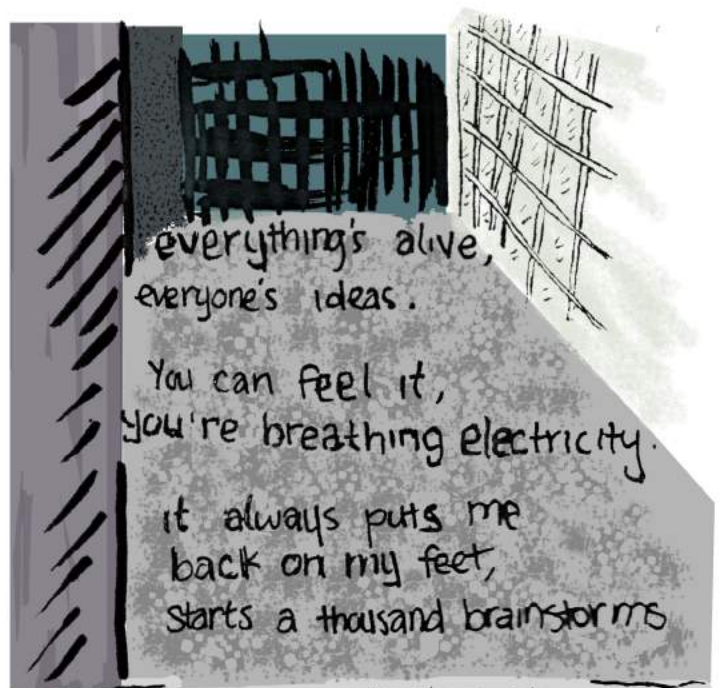




Hot New Yorker Stories
(love letters to the
wrong coast)

Tori Holder



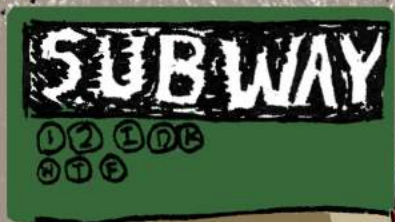
everything's alive,
everyone's ideas.

You can feel it,
you're breathing electricity.

it always puts me
back on my feet,
starts a thousand brainstormms

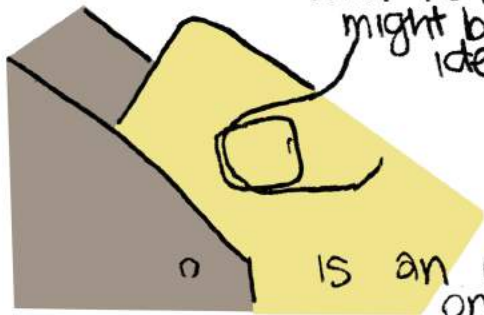
that's what this place
is for.
(I think)





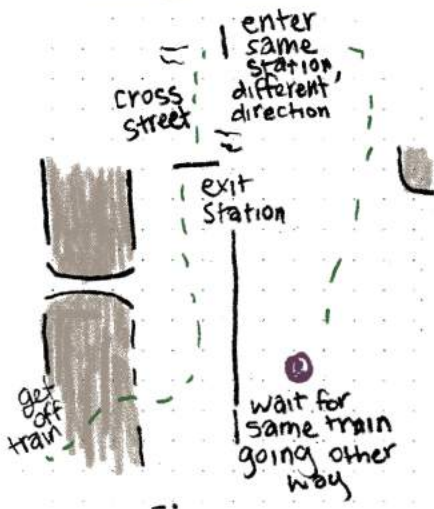
To say I'm directionally challenged
is an understatement

so to say me, alone
with the NYC subway
might be a poor
idea



is an even bigger
one

Now approaching stop
that is CLEARLY IN
WRONG DIRECTION






Dammit!
I'm such
a fuck up.
I'll never
make it
as a
real
adult,
I can't
even
make
it to
SOHO!

Stupid
Tori..

Stupid
Stupid
Stupid!



Now
I'm
going
to be
late...

WAH!



A young girl with curly hair, wearing a purple jacket and dark pants, sits in a green chair. She looks up with a surprised expression at a red, rounded object hanging from above. The background is a simple yellow wash.



boop

boop

boop
da
boop
boop



BOOP!

and maybe that's why these sorts of things happen - a little bit of brightness unexpected



sorry I'm...



It's okay,
I figured
you'd be late

or maybe expected after all



I thoroughly
refuse to believe
there is anywhere
in the world
I am not
home



Every movement forward
is just me retracing
my own steps

catching up


to where I was

when I was

who I was

when I was who I really was





all consequences

and no
coincidences

up 34th St

moveable pennance
Kicking me in the
shin 3 times
a block

and frankly I'm so far
gone, off timetable
doses of reality,

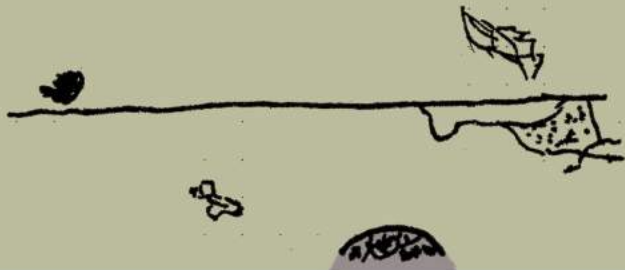



everything is just
reflections of
achieved patterns



it takes a
moment to
realize I'm
not just
walking,
I'm
following

We're just moving in two forces the same direction

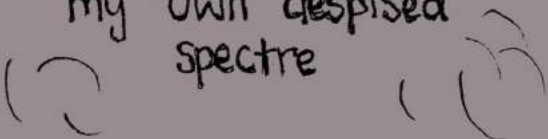




at first,
I feel terrible

I've become
part of the
threatening gaze

my own despised
spectre



how would I explain,



that I know you,
that we've met so
many times under
different names?

you're a pleasant
memory with a
twinge of sad
in motion



Actually, a very flailing
motion that (almost)
circles back to graceful.

and when I almost
miss you in the hash
of jaywalking crowd,



the greyfaded tattoo
you didn't have until
today makes you easy
to spot

I quicken my pace
when you cross the
street without me






not even realizing
I've become a sweaty
almost-running mess



What the hell was
I going to say?

hey, we were
friends in a
past life!



I'm having a
rotten day, wanna
walk with me
to the print shop?

hi there...
you!

I would sound completely
insane

so I let you get
ahead of me on the
last block



watching you fade
like the doppleganger
ghost you've always been

and as I lose you for the
hundredth time, I know exactly
what I should have said:



you're an
anchor

and I'm
a ship



(please keep me from drifting away)

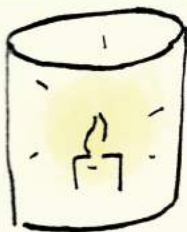


this place looks
cuter without me

gulping down
cute French Glass
top water like I
could will it into
being something
stronger and
wondering why
I have the nerve
to be
here.



↑
they even have real votive
candles, dammit!

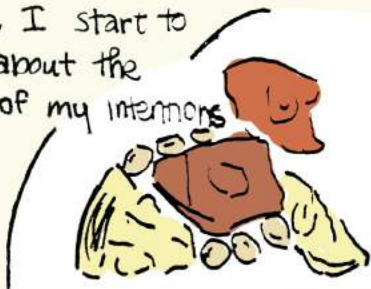


My virtue being
that with my
sketchbook, I can
at least lend an
artistic / bohemian flair
to the scene of Brooklynites
having nuanced political
discussion.*

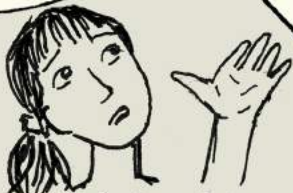


* really, I'd love to say it was a convo
about hats, but it was a take on the DNC
worthy of an NPR slot

But as I am startled
by heirloom tomato &
couscous, I start to
wonder about the
honesty of my intentions



And think about some-
thing Carrie Bradshaw
said:



(yes, I am about to
quote Sex & the City and I
realize that is not what you
thought you were getting into
here, but bear with me.)



About how you
have to confront
the solitude head-on:
have a meal with
yourself—no armor,
no companion, no books.



And I have
to admit



that sometimes,
how I view the world

acts as a crutch
to how I live
in it...



to let myself
be consumed with
what I was drawing

instead of
what was actually
consuming me



That every
place I go,
everything
has a place
except me.

That it feels like
I'm in a long con



Scamming the world
for all the heirloom
tomatoes.



Obviously
not just
tomatoes,
but everything
in the world
that I was

intaking
but not
contributing
to



And that's where the armor helps

