



**POSITIVELY
PRODUCED
FOUNDATION
PUBLICATION**

Joyous Journeys

EDITION 3 DECEMBER 2024

POSITIVELY PRODUCED PUBLICATION

This is the third issue of our publication. It will receive an official title after input from our community including a poll. The magazine is owned and run by the Positively Produced Foundation, a nonprofit working to assist adults with autism achieve full community inclusion, in particular employability.

We hope that through their articles, they can lead more independent and fulfilling lives by connecting to the community as a whole. This connection will include greater understanding of the gifts and talents of said individuals and lead to opportunities within the business community for competitive employment.

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the nonprofit or those collectively involved in the publication.

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CLAMBERING THROUGH JUNGLE JIM'S

BY M.M.



Photograph submitted by Jungle Jim's

I have wanted to go to Jungle Jim's ever since I read about it in my copy of *Ohio Oddities*, a book about the many strange and wonderful sights to be found in Ohio. Yes. Really. I imagined an eccentric culinary wonderland ruled over by the Barnumian figure of Jungle Jim, a wonderful and amazing madman who built an amusement park of a grocery store. This summer I finally got my chance to see for myself if this capitalist Cockaigne was really the viand land of fantasy and myth. It was.

I knew I was going to experience something special as soon as the highway announced Jungle Jim's as an attraction and not a shopping destination.

I had read of its wonders. The animatronics, the carnival atmosphere, the props, and the selection of goods from all over the world. Now I would get to experience them for

myself. Even from the parking lot it was evident this was no ordinary supermarket. Ordinary supermarkets don't have monorails as signs and statues memorializing Harambe the gorilla. Upon entering I was at first disappointed at its size. It was large, but only like an ordinary superstore such as a Walmart or Wegmans. Then it opened, and I comprehended the true size of this place.

Jungle Jim's is big enough that they give guided tours. It has three bathrooms, including a portapotty, and a movie theater showing the Jungle Jim story. You can literally get lost in the supermarket.

The health food and organic section had a Volkswagen hippie bus as a display centerpiece, and I swear I saw a statue of the Roadrunner further back. On the ceiling was an inexplicable pizza inflatable and a hot air balloon. A plague doctor dress was modeled above a cooler con-

taining frozen food. I was officially off the map and into terra incognita.

The American grocery was a brief return to the sane mundane world outside. Until I passed through the cereal aisle and came to the hand-carved rocking horse and the animatronic cereal mascot show featuring Pinocchio, Geppetto, and the Raisin Bran sun.

Wandering further on I came to the seafood section, which was announced with the SS Minnow and inexplicably contained a mad scientist-themed fortune-telling machine. Some of the seafood was so fresh it was still flopping around. Passing through a hole in the wall I came to the produce section and found a bottle of cold-pressed fruit juice.

The candy kingdom proved disappointing, although in hindsight I realize the exotic sweets and treats were scattered among the international market until I saw what lay beyond it: A sea of genuine Japanese Gacha machines filled with the most amazing toys and collectibles you could imagine.

I experienced the nerd's pang of poverty as I saw wonders and delights I, having foolishly set a limit before entering, could not afford. Honesty and thrift are sometimes a curse. Passing through this kingdom of forbidden treasures I finally came upon an employee and

asked where I could find the soda, as it is my favorite vice. I followed her instructions and came to a carbonated Valhalla. The wall of soda pop before me was nothing short of spectacular. Flavors unimagined and unimaginable. Everything from novelty brands to Local specialties. I grabbed only those that seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and then continued through the store.

As I walked further on I saw strange murals on the walls of firemen in a smoldering landscape out of Dante's Inferno. I wondered if I had stumbled upon a memorial for 9/11 or some forgotten blaze of Ohio until I saw the sombreros, firetruck, and neon sign for hot sauce. Having a biological intolerance for spicy food, I passed on and came to the international market. Which was also too large to see in a single visit and was where all the exotic strange candy and foreign sodas I wanted had been tucked away. Chinglish Sarsaparilla soda, Indian frozen food, spices by the pound, and more awaited me in this exotic wonderland.

At the checkout, I was given a free package of Korean Honey Butter potato chips. They tasted heavenly.

Jungle Jim's is not a shopping experience; it's an adventure. To go there is to return to childhood; to a time when the world was not drained of its stranger and wonder. It is a bizarre tacky wacky wonderful place, but it's also achingly familiar. This is the supermarket the first time you saw it as a kid. I eagerly await my return and long to clamber back onto Jungle Jim's. Ω

Jungle Jim's International Market has two locations in Ohio, Fairfield and Cincinnati.



Photograph by M.M.



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HOW TO WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE (a real one)

BY PAMELA FERNUIK



Photograph by Pamela Fernuiik

Handwritten thank you notes are like sending a hug through the mail. They have personality and character, attributes a computer screen will never have. Let me show you why, when, and how to write a thank you note.

Need some quick advice? Here are nine steps to write a handwritten card or thank-you note. Read on for a thorough guide!

9 Steps to Write a Thank-You Card

1. Use nice paper or a card.
2. Find a pen with ink that doesn't bleed or smear.
3. Begin, "Dear _____," (insert person's name).
4. In the first sentence say, "Thank you," and what you are thankful for.

5. Write at least one sentence of appreciation for the act of kindness or gift.
6. Say something nice about the giver.
7. Write your closer, such as Regards, Sincerely, Love, All my best.
8. Sign your name.
9. You don't have to put your address on the inside of the card.

Those are the quick tips. Now read on for a longer guide including some thank you note card examples.

Why You Should Write a Thank You Note

It is easier and quicker to send a text message, an email, or a voice message to say "thank you." However, if the purpose of the thank-you message is to convey your deepest, most sincere gratitude, taking the

time to carefully write a message by your own hand, and not your admin assistant's hand, will mean more to the recipient than an instant media message.

When was the last time you wrote a thank-you note? A real thank-you note on a piece of paper that goes into an envelope with an address written on it and a stamp stuck in the upper right-hand corner?

Was it in response to a generous birthday gift? For graduation gifts? After your wedding? A special occasion or dinner party? What about after a job interview with a hiring manager as a part of the hiring process?

A simple thank you can go a long way to express your appreciation for people, no matter who the intended recipient may be. Let's write one together today.

What Is a Thank You Note?

A thank you note is a short informal written message of thanks to another person for a specific action. Thank you notes are brief, often no more than five sentences, but they can leave a long-lasting positive impact.

The key word is brief. We are not talking about the changes in currency prices or the bird call of a Painted Bunting here. If you want to write about your summer activities or about how many litter boxes you have, write a handwritten letter instead. A thank you note is not a full letter.

Why You Should Send a Thank You Note:

You should send a thank-you note because my mother said it is a good idea.

To connect with another person.

Send a thank-you note because you want to say thank you.

The biggest reason to send a thank-you note is because you are a kind, considerate person. And you always want your friends and acquaintances to know how much you appreciate them.

Because you are thoughtful.

Supply List for Thank You Notes

Before you begin, make sure you have all of the following on hand:

Notecards or stationery.

Stamps.

An address.

Pens.

Writing a thank-you note might sound intimidating, but it is actually quite simple when you follow these nine steps.

1. Use nice paper or a card.

What is nice? Hmmm . . . a standard piece of printer paper, eight and a half by eleven, and an envelope are nice and acceptable. Personal stationery or a plain set of notecards is also nice.

What is not nice paper? A piece of paper ripped out of a notebook with a coffee stain on it, the back of your grocery list, or the back of a power bill would not be considered nice stationery.

2. Use a pen. (Not a pencil.)

Your best choice is one with ink that doesn't bleed or smear.

3. Begin "Dear _____," (insert person's name).

Check the spelling of the person's name. If Margaret wants to be called Margaret, don't call her Maggie. At least Maggie is not named after a non-stick spray like my name.

If you are on a first-name basis, call the person by their first name. If you don't know the person very well, or they are "The Big Cheese" in a company, use Mr., Ms., or use the full name.

Keep the salutation polite and friendly. "Yo" or "Hey" or "What's up?" might work with your college roommate, but it is a bit casual for a business or professional thank you note. And don't "Hey" your great aunt. Address the card "Dear Aunt Margaret," not "What's up, Maggie?"

Sigh, I am being a bit bossy. Who am I to tell you what to call your Aunt Margaret? Only you know

your relationship with your dear aunt. Please address the card in the same manner you talk to her. Which I hope is always polite and respectable.

4. The first sentence should have the words "thank you" in it.

And say what you are thankful for. Be specific. Thank you for the beautiful sweater. Thank you for introducing me to your editor. Thank you for being the best friend I had in grade school. Thank you for being the best mommy in the world. Thank you for cleaning my seven litter boxes. (I can dream. Right?)

5. Write at least one sentence about how much you appreciate the gift.

Thank them for their gift of ten kittens, or tell them how much their act of kindness meant to you. This sentence makes the note more personal.

6. Say something nice about the giver.

For example, tell them you are looking forward to seeing them the next time you are in New Orleans. Or tell them how you wished you lived closer so you could help them shovel their driveway.

7. Write your closer, such as Regards, Sincerely, All my best.

These are all polite and not too informal. "Chow baby" is too informal, and "chow" is actually spelled "ciao." Don't use the word "love" unless you actually love the person. Signing an email "xo" might give the recipient the wrong idea (unless you're romantically involved!).

8. Sign your name.

Use legible handwriting. This is not a prescription; it is a thank you card. Recipients should not have a difficult time reading the signature.

9. You don't have to put your address on the inside of the card.

Remember, this is not a letter, it is a note. Please put your return address on the envelope. Write clearly.

When to Send a Thank You Note

Not sure when a thank-you note is appropriate? Here are six times to send a thank-you note.

1. When you receive a present.

Whether the present comes in the mail or in person, remember to send a note of gratitude in response. This includes baby shower gifts, wedding day gifts, birthday presents, or really any other time you receive a thoughtful gift.

2. When someone introduces you to someone else.

If someone helps you connect with someone new, send them a thank you note to show your appreciation for their kindness. This is especially important for work networking.

3. After you interview for a job.

Yes, send a handwritten thank-you note after a job interview. The handwritten note will help you stand out in a mass of interviewees. However, according to an article by Molly Triffin on Interview Etiquette in Forbes, you should send a thank-

you email to everyone you met in the interview process within twenty-four hours. Managers make quick decisions, and your written note might arrive after they have already made a hiring decision.

So, I suggest you do both. Send a handwritten note and an email.

4. As an act of kindness.

When your mother comes and helps you pack up your house when you move from Minnesota to California. And then again five years later when you move from California to Pennsylvania.

Yes, even thank your mother. May no kindness go unthanked.

5. For a huge act of kindness.

When someone comes and cleans all your seven litter boxes without being asked, that is a truly generous gift deserving a thank you note. That hasn't happened yet. But if it does, I will mail a handwritten note.

6. For friendship.

Send a thank-you note to a dear friend because you want them to know how much their friendship means to you. You realize life is precious, and you don't want to get hit by a bus and not have them know you valued the friendship.

The Six Biggest Thank You Note Rules You Should Never Break

There are six unbreakable rules when writing thank-you notes:

1. Don't ask for anything.

Never, never, never in ten million years ask for something at the end of a thank-you note.

Thank you, and, oh by the way, can you do this for me _____ . This is a big NO will a capital N and a capital O. Here is an example of what not to do.

*Dear Mr. Faraday,
Thank you for introducing me to the President of your company.
I appreciate your kindness in helping me meet Mr. Wise Sage. I have enclosed a copy of my manuscript.
Will you please read it for me and give it to the editor in charge of acquisitions?*

*Sincerely,
Pat Asksfortoomuch*

2. Don't tell the person you hated the gift and want to return it.

3. Don't send a printed form letter with your signature printed at the bottom.

4. Don't have your secretary write your thank-you cards for you and then you sign the note.

I don't care if you are the President of the Company. Write your own notes.

5. If you spell a word wrong, don't cross it out and keep writing. Get a new card and start again.

6. My mother said, "Don't use profanity."

Thank You Card Examples

Here are a few more thank you card examples to use the next time you express your heartfelt appreciation.

*Dear Grandma,
Thank you for the birthday money.
I am using it to buy my favorite cat
figurines. Every time I see them, I will
think of you. I appreciate how you
always make me feel special, not just
on my special day.*

*With deepest gratitude,
Nancy*

*Dear Mr. Lowe,
Thank you for the extra time you took
tutoring me in Spanish this semester.
It has truly made a difference.
Teachers like you make a difference,
and I can't thank you enough.*

*Sincerely,
Thomas Smith*

*Dear Ms. Clark,
Thank you for meeting with me
today to help me with my job search.
I left with so many great directions
to explore! Your generosity has made
a positive impact in my life, and I
appreciate it.*

*Sincerely,
Ava Wright*

However you choose to express
your heartfelt messages, a hand-
written note is the perfect way to
leave a positive impression. Ω

"Handwritten thank you notes
are like sending a hug
through the mail."



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The image of Don Quixote decorates the office walls of Positively Produced Foundation in various forms.

Don Quixote had visions that were difficult for others to see.

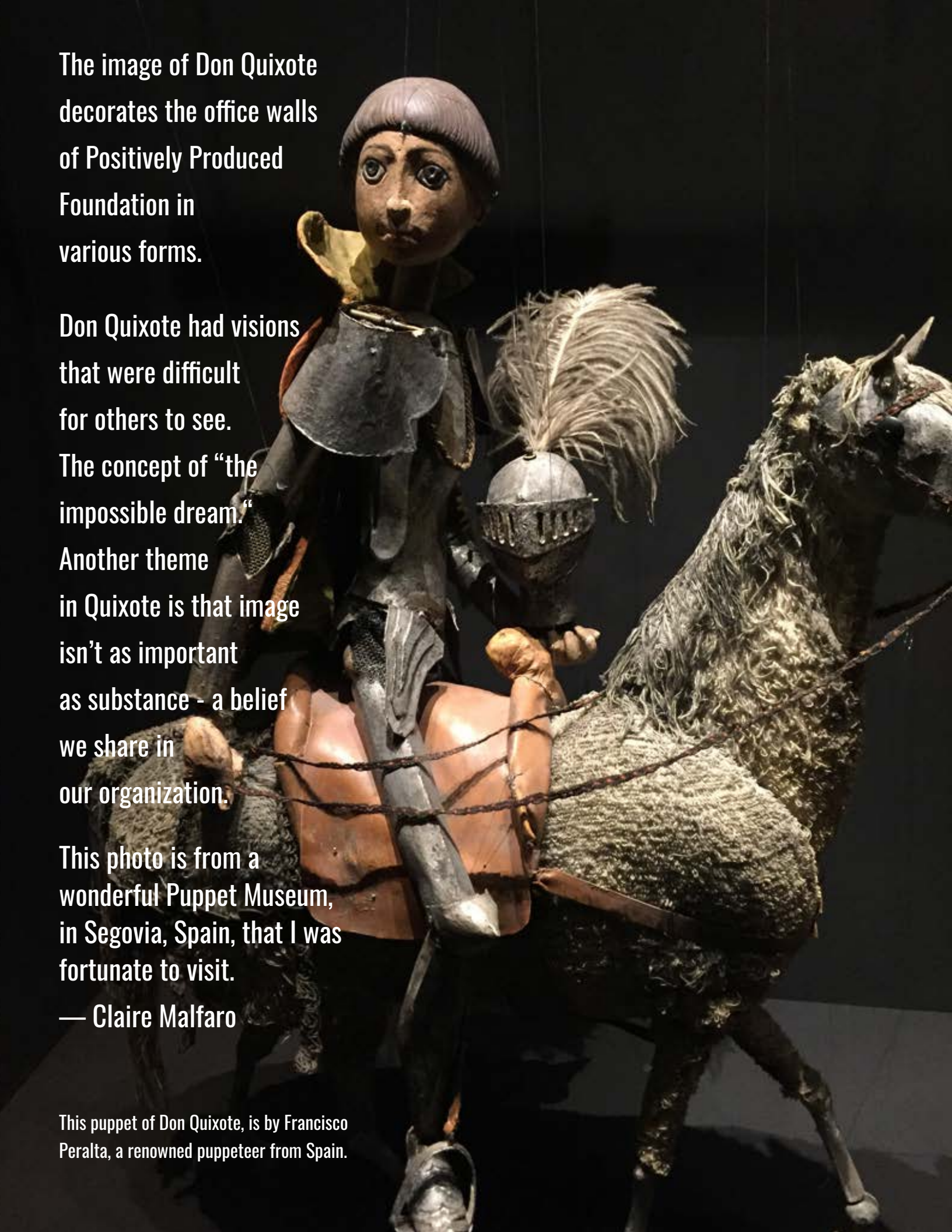
The concept of “the impossible dream.”

Another theme in Quixote is that image isn't as important as substance - a belief we share in our organization.

This photo is from a wonderful Puppet Museum, in Segovia, Spain, that I was fortunate to visit.

— Claire Malfaro

This puppet of Don Quixote, is by Francisco Peralta, a renowned puppeteer from Spain.





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**“If I could snap my fingers
and be nonautistic,
I would not.
Autism is part
of what I am.”**

— Temple Grandin



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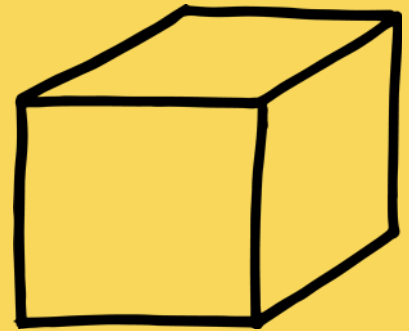
THE TALE OF THE GENIE IN THE BOX

BY M.M.

The man
The woman
The Genie

The lights come on, and we are on a tropical desert island. The sound of waves is heard as is the strange call of the wedge-tailed shearwater. A single palm tree is by the curtain in center stage. A man and a woman march in from opposite directions. He is carrying a guitar, an oddity, and an old folding chair, while she is carrying an assortment of canned goods and a chest. Their clothes look to have been nice once but are now torn and damaged.)

The man: (Brightly) I found my guitar!
The woman: Did you find anything useful?
The man: This chair
The woman: We can't eat that chair
The man: And we can't sit on canned goods.
(They place their finds on the ground and begin to sort through them)
The woman: What is this?
(Picks up an odd prop)



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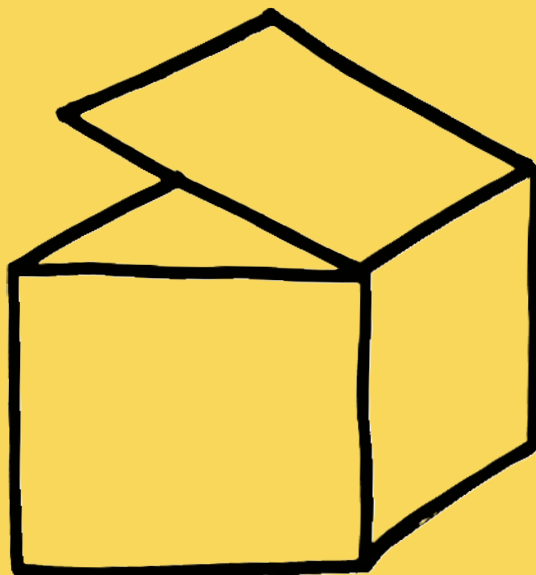
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The man: Don't know
The woman: What's this?
(Picks up a different prop)

The man: Don't know.
The woman: Begins singing "What's this, what's this."
The man: No! We'll have none of that!
The woman: Spoilsport
(Silence for ten seconds)
The man: What is this?
(Picks up the box)
The woman: (flatly) A box
The man: But what's inside?
(He opens the box. The stage goes dark briefly, and a thunderbolt is heard.
The Genie steps through the curtain during the brief darkness.)



The Genie: Shazam!
The woman: Shazam?
The Genie: I am Ibrahim the great, wonderful, and amazing. Thank you for releasing me from the box after decades of imprisonment. For this great blessing, I will grant you three wishes.
(Suddenly and impulsively) The Woman: I wish for more wishes.
(The Genie crosses his arm and glares at her.)

The Genie: That is not allowed. I also can't bring back the dead, make anyone love you when they don't, travel backward in time, predict the future, or grant you immortality. I also refuse to make myself an imbecile, turn into anything but what I am, or marry you, re-prison myself, or become your lover or slave.
The man: That's an oddly specific list.
The Genie: Experience is the spectacles of the intellect, but that is a story for another time.
Now, what is your first request?
The man: Can you fix my guitar?
The woman: That's what you think of?
The man: I like music.
(Genie restrings the guitar by flipping it around. A loud though not unpleasant sound is heard when this happens. A trick with the light should also be done if it's workable)

The man: Wish I could do that.
(The Genie pulls a guitar pick out from behind the man's ear)
The Genie: You'll be needing this as well.
(The man experimentally strums the guitar and then plays "the oriental riff")
The woman:(somewhat petulantly) I want a boat.
The Genie: Done!
(The Genie snaps his fingers. The stage goes dark for about five seconds as the sound of carving and hammering is heard. The palm tree has disappeared, but the Genie steps through the curtain holding a toy wooden boat.)

The Genie: One freshly carved boat for you.
The woman: That's not what I meant.
The Genie: I know what you meant. I just couldn't get enough wood for it.

(He places the boat on the ground. There is a flash of darkness. The toy wooden boat is switched for the palm tree.)

The man: Is every wish going to be granted with some parlor trick?
(The Genie draws himself up to his full height)

The Genie: Sir, I am offended. We jinn are not given some divine ability to grant a wish. Being honorable people, we simply feel a duty to respond to three requests of our saviors using our great magical powers and our vast wealth.

(He picks up the box and begins to pull out a vast quantity of stocks and bonds. If possible, they should have been hidden up his sleeves.)

The Genie: But unfortunately, a man I thought was a friend convinced me to invest in his company right before the economy collapsed. I lost everything.
(the Genie gazing wistfully off stage)

The Genie: He told me to meet him on his yacht, and he would give me all my money back, and I believed him because we were great friends.
(He gives an overly dramatic sigh.)

The Genie: Then he tricked me into the box and threw it into the ocean.
(As he speaks he mimes these actions.)

Woman: How'd he trick you into the box?

The Genie: That's a story for another time. Now do you have any more reasonable desires?

The man: Something to eat that isn't from a can.

The Genie: DONE!

(He exits stage left)

(The Genie walks back on stage carrying a bag of Hula burger fast food, wearing a lei necklace and a Hawaiian t-shirt, and wearing flip-flops instead of his sandals.)

The man: You can fly?

The Genie: Unfortunately no. I walked the five hours into town after stopping at the gift shop to buy supplies.

The woman: Into town?

The man: Gift shop?

The Genie: Naturally. We are in a US National Park on the largest island of Hawaii.

The man and the woman simultaneously: what?

The Genie: I thought you knew.

The man: We've been stranded here for three days eating canned goods and seaweed.

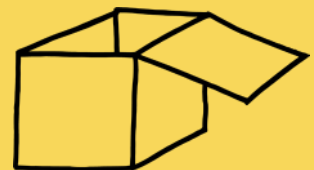
The Genie: Now you will have burgers!

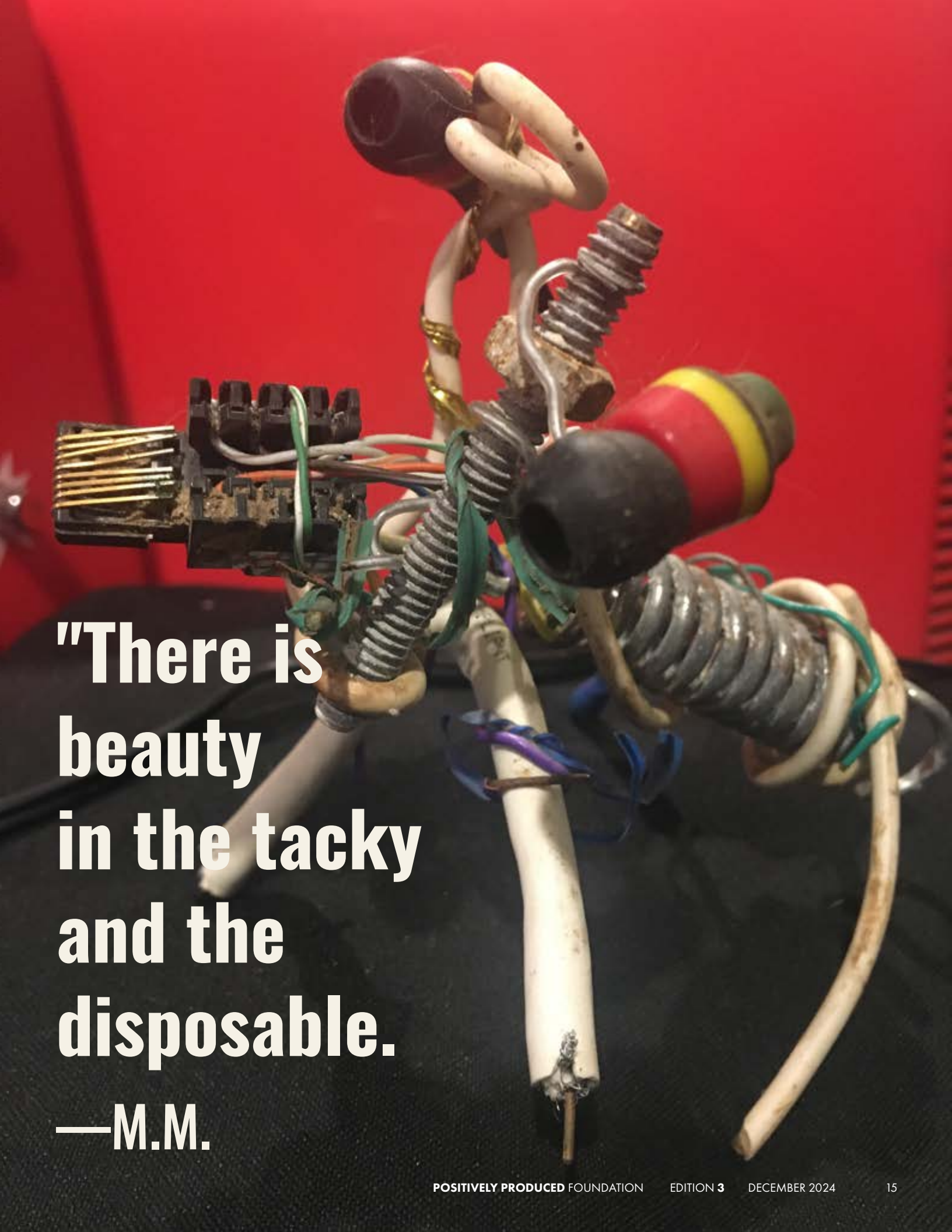
The woman: That's not the point!

The Genie: So you don't want the burgers?

The woman: No. Give those here.

(They eat in silence. The Genie joins them.) Ω



A sculpture made of discarded electronic components and wires. It features a black multi-pin connector, several coiled metal springs, a black cylindrical component with a red and yellow band, and various colored wires (green, blue, purple, white) intertwined with white plastic tubing. The sculpture is set against a vibrant red background.

**"There is
beauty
in the tacky
and the
disposable.
—M.M.**

"endalend"

BY GG PATTERNS

Formerly Published as Es

All this water around me,
Oh, when did I drown?
Much too dark to have found me,
Oh, when did I drown?
The pressure is heavy now,
And I can't recall:
When did I drown?
When did I drown?

-Dust and ravines and forgetful and dreams

Silt and salt settling, sparkling.
Blizzards in blackness,
Fickle and feckless.
Currently venting, wrestling, harkening, Entrenched in such deepness,
The pressure is darkening.

-Dust and ravines and forgetful and dreams

Oh, when did I get so long?
"So long," to what I knew.
Oh, where did I put my wrong,
And right when I had broken through?
If I sleep in sod hovels, am I dead now? Am I dead now?
Will my traces become dirt?
Go to bed now.
Go to bed now.

-Dust and ravines and forgetful and dreams-

O'er walls or fences, leaping,
"Shoulders be blinders."
Run onward too fast, weeping,
Blink, blink, blink-blur reminders.

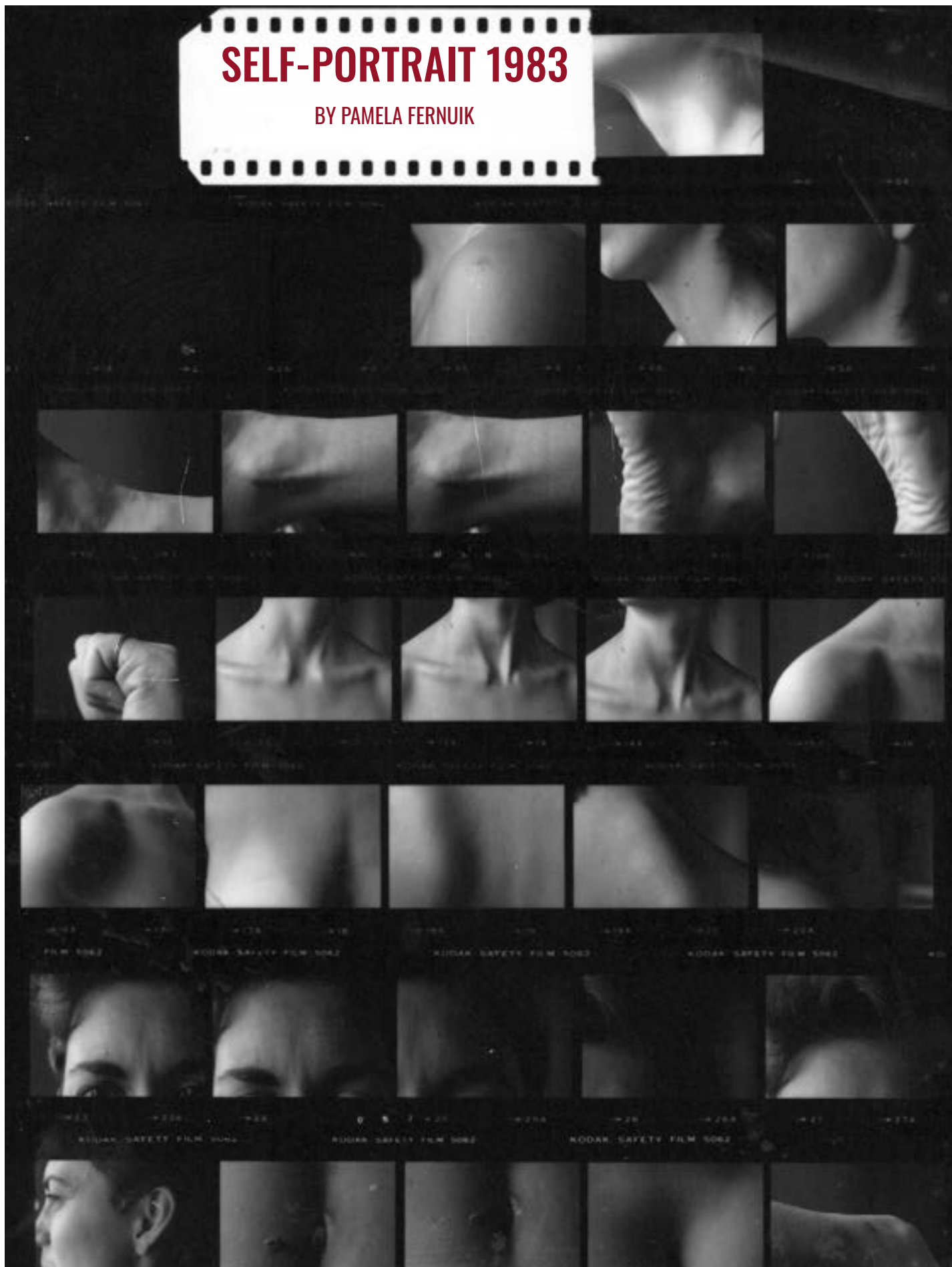
-Dust and ravines and forgetful and dreams

And I'll find the end again, again, again.
Feels like everything I said was just pretend, pretend, pretend. Do I get to peek back?
Pretty please?
Tell me when, oh when.
In the end I'll end, I'll end, I'll end,
And in the end, I'll know that I was wrong. Ω

SELF-PORTRAIT, PHOTOGRAPHY MAJOR, ALBERTA COLLEGE OF ART, CALGARY, CANADA, 1983. CREATED 31 YEARS BEFORE AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS.

SELF-PORTRAIT 1983

BY PAMELA FERNUIK



ON THE NEED FOR A COMMUNITY THEOLOGY AND CLASSICAL HISTORY PROGRAM

BY CHRIS

I had spoken to someone in the administration of an organization in the community about this project. It was at the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA) meeting. Since I did not receive a response, I will open this request to the community. Strange times may bring people together in ways we don't expect.

Let it focus on young adults but make it available to all adults. Ideally, we should use the Saucony Creek Brewpub to symbolize the coming together our community.

I would like it to be ecumenical and interfaith, if possible, as Reading's projected growth through the CRIZ application, the Downtown Strategic Plan, the college communities increasing ties to center city and the passenger rail's return, make this an ideal time for dialogue.

The City of Reading could be a leader in the dialogue of unity for the nation and the world. We could have guest speakers from every religion and representations from every part of the world. Several conferences, such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, and the Parliament of the World's Religions have done this already. Reading, PA was internationally known in the world before, and it could be known as that again, (this time for something more humane than chemicals and hosiery).

I prefer city locations and would like paper translations made ahead of time. The city is 68% Latino as of 2020, and it would be good to reach out to that population. We could also reach out to the world, with several other translations via closed captions, as did the Zeitgeist Movement with their captions team. And yes, these presentations could be recorded, streamed live, and put on things like YouTube, Facebook Twitch, Discord, and Vimeo.

I am suggesting that we fuse all Classic and Ancient Studies with theological concepts. At least one religious leader had said that you can't separate Greek philosophy from the Bible. And I would add, nor can you separate Classical Roman, Sumerian, and Egyptian history from it. Consider also all the intellectual collaborations between people of different faiths that were brought about by the Middle East as the gateway to the Far East.

Though we don't have to present them at the same time, we can eventually draw connections between Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Daoist, Jainism, Shinto, and other religious traditions. I would say, pick one day of the week in which denominations of non-Christian religions are featured, one each week, and pick another day of the week in which Christian denominations are fea-

tured, one each week. The reason for this is simple: If there are fewer denominations of other faiths, it will give each non-Christian faith an exposure proportional to that of several Christian denominations. This is because non-Christian faiths tend to be underrepresented in the US. We can learn, in several parts, the perspective of each faith on each pertinent modern historical event as well.

This format is also an opportunity to give the general public a review of how all of the Christian denominations came to be. There is an extreme lack of religious literacy among the public. For example, I've never read Tertullian or Eusebius.

I'll also note that this is a very critical time for all Christians, as church membership in all denominations continue to decrease sharply, and no one knows how we will fill that void where there was a social space before. That's the one time each week where everybody tries to make sacrifice to be together, and where people will drive up to sixty miles to find "their people."

What can we learn from each other? We still need semi-religious spaces, even if the beliefs that were once there are gone, because it keeps the fabric of society together. Division preys on Isolation. Ω



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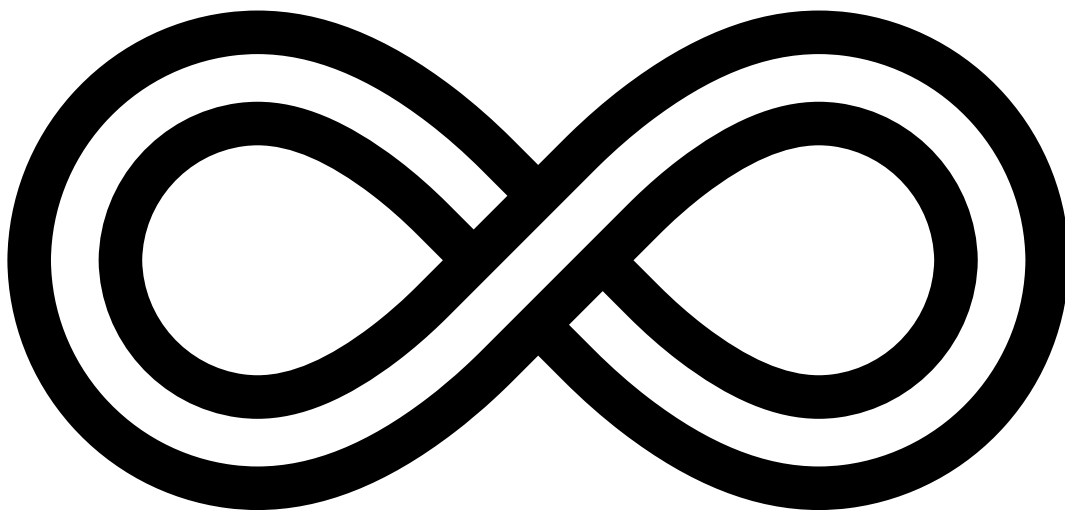
Wednesday- 10:00-5:30

Thursday- 10:00-5:30

Friday- 10:00-5:30

Saturday- 10:00-3:00

Sunday- Closed



The infinity loop conveys a sense of unity. It signifies that while experiences may vary, there is a shared connection among those who identify as autistic.

HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY

BY CLAIRE Malfaro

When I first saw *Inside Out*, the animated movie, I was struck by the idea that most of us like to push away sadness and embrace joy. The problem in the movie arose because sadness isn't something you can just ignore by shoving it under the bed. Like all problems, ignoring it just makes it worse. You have to take the good with the bad or else you can't have the good. Our publication this quarter has a theme - joyous journeys. But, like Riley, our lives are full of both journeys of joy and journeys of sadness or anger. My essay will do the same, tell our journey so far - covering the wonderful aspects of Positively Produced Foundation, yet also the less pleasant parts.

We began as an idea. Ten years ago, I saw a need for competitive employment opportunities for adults with autism in our community. I traveled to North Carolina to learn how businesses around the country were working to address this need. At the time, I believed established nonprofits or other agencies would fulfill this purpose. I waited, as did other parents of autistic adults, without success. When

my youngest child was getting ready to graduate from college, I realized I would have more time and, if no one else were going to do it, I would need to. I believed I was being called to fulfill this purpose. Hence, In the Spring of 2023, our nonprofit was established. Joy.

**NEURODIVERSE
PEOPLE
ARE 30% TO 140%
MORE PRODUCTIVE
THAN
THEIR PEERS.**

— HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

Our initial plan was to collaborate with the Doubletree by Hilton in Reading in their planned appetizer production. This, however, fell through when they ended the program due to an unforeseen tragedy. Sadness.

My next plan was inspired by a publication I saw in the UK featuring stories written by adults with

autism. By putting out a similar periodical, we could begin to educate the public about the substantial talents of adults with autism, highlighting writing and artistic skills. Through this, we believed we could fight the stigma about people with autism. Businesses would open their eyes to the untapped abilities of candidates they rejected for social deficits, even though many are highly qualified, with half having college degrees, even though Harvard Business review has reported that neurodivergent people are 30 to 140% more productive than their peers.

We were excited when Fred Sheeler, the Berks County recorder of deeds, hired our first candidate. Joy

He even wrote a glowing article regarding the young man's transition into the job. He described him as a hard worker, efficient (able to do the work of two people) fitting into the office culture. Extreme Joy.

We heard from local companies of their desire to partner with us in our mission. We presented our process and explained the plethora of

resources at hand - the Neurodivergent Employment Network, Drexel University's Autism Center, and companies with established working programs (Wawa, Aramark) willing to help local businesses establish their own. Unfortunately, we have not been met with concrete collaboration. Frustration. Sadness.

I try to explain to myself (and my: candidates, intelligent, talented people, who wish to work) that ignorance is at the root of this dilemma. Companies imagine the necessary accommodations will be burdensome and expensive (they are not), they do not fully understand autism and imagine intellectual disabilities or other barriers to competency for

jobs in their companies (this is not true of our candidates). Sadness.

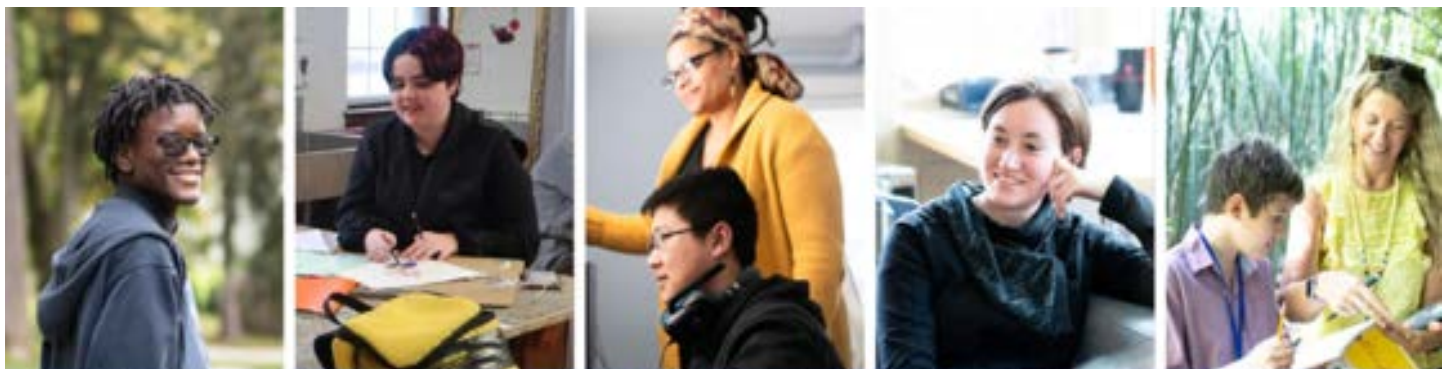
What has happened as a result of our organization is that a community has developed of committed families who want to continue to educate our community. We also meet monthly for socialization and support. We rented an office and are awaiting interns from Kutztown and/or Albright to help with our process. What that will achieve is to educate those interns who will then become a greater force in the necessary change of inclusion of adults with autism into the community as a whole. Joy.

As we celebrate this holiday season, giving thanks, and sharing

with family and friends, my hope is that we may be mindful of our community responsibilities; to care for those who have less than us, those who are disenfranchised or marginalized. Xavier Le Pichon, one of the discoverers of plate tectonics, has spoken of fragility as a fundamental of vital evolving systems. He raised his children intentionally within a community of disabled individuals. He has come to think of attention to weakness as an essential quality that allowed humanity to evolve. To move from being human to being humane. Joy.

May we all aspire to this goal.

Joyeux Noel. Happy Hanukah. Peace to all. Ω



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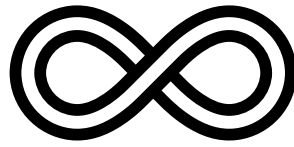


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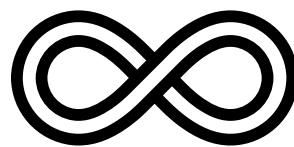


Submissions may be sent for consideration for the next edition.
Please utilize our website or mailing address listed below.

For sponsorship and ad information, please contact Beth at (610) 764-2100
or Bmccormick1122675@gmail.com.

We as a community can implement changes
to better the world in which we live.
We are called to be our brother's keeper.
The marginalized in our society are a fragile part of our world.
We are connected to them in intricate ways and if we allow,
we can join in their vulnerabilities and
create stronger communities together.
Positively Produced Foundation is a nonprofit
serving adults with autism with an aim of overall societal inclusion,
especially gainful employment opportunities.

Positively Produced will help businesses understand the benefits
of employing adults with autism
and assist in the recruitment,
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Contact Claire Malfaro at clairemalfaro@gmail.com or www.positivelyproducedfoundation.com.
Mailing address is 7 Widgeon Drive, Denver, PA 17517.



POSITIVELY PRODUCED

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Positively Produced Foundation's mission is to employ adults with autism, assisting them in leading productive lives by improving social language communication skills, community interaction and employment preparedness.

VISION STATEMENT

To create a safe environment where adults with autism can thrive in the world including full community engagement.

Our aim is to educate employees and business leaders regarding the benefits of hiring a neuro diverse workforce as a greater goal of full community understanding.

www.positivelyproducedfoundation.com



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