

I HAVE CAUSES

A Visual Chapbook of Despair

2008 – 2026

Matthew Haubert

Fracture & Form

COMPANION POEM

I Have Causes

*I have causes—
nineteen of them, spread across the years
like bodies in a field
no one thought to count.*

2008: I wanted a bar and a song.

2009: I wanted to float.

*By 2011 I had a knife in my eyes
and called it poetry.*

*There is a through-line here
and it is not despair—
despair is too romantic a word
for what this actually is:
a man returning to the same room
every year, rearranging the furniture,
telling himself this time
the walls are different.*

The walls are not different.

The man is.

Barely. Incrementally.

*The way a stone is different
after thirty years of rain.*

I have causes.

I have always had causes.

*The question I keep forgetting to ask
is what they are for.*

2026: still here.

Still writing it down.

That has to count for something.

It has to.

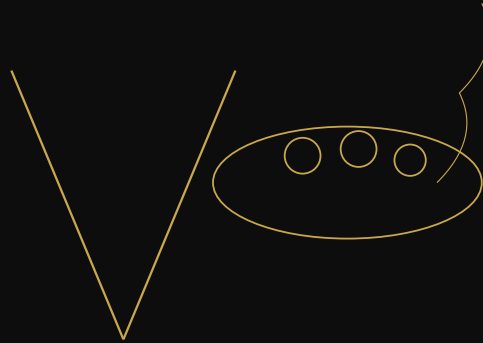
A Note

The poems in this collection were written between 2008 and 2026. They are presented here in the order they were made, one per year, as close to their original form as possible. Some have been lightly edited for the page. Most have not.

This is not a collection about recovery. It is not a collection about despair. It is a collection about the years themselves—what they looked like from the inside, written by someone who was still inside them.

Some of these poems contain content related to substance use, mental illness, and suicidal ideation. They are presented without apology, because the experiences were real, and the writing was the only way through.

—M.H.



2008

Blue Collar Blues

He comes home from work at night, born to play,
the most depressing man in sight.
Working for money, eventually fame.
In the end it's just passing away.

Blue collar worker I am destined to be.
Money is short, but he cares for life.
Now I'm saying to myself
I don't care for money and fame—
I just want a home, and drink my life away.

I drive down my country roads in my hometown,
the blues to soothe my soul.
I picked up the girl and my friends,
and we sang our souls out in the car that night,
together in sync.

Brought up how we don't need no money or cars,

just this ride to the bar.

Tell everyone we know and let's go out—

we work at dawn but fuck, we all said,

let's be late and live this night till drought.



2009

Leave Behind

Leave behind everything you own.

Forget what money has shown.

Come back to the place of dreams.

Live moments, not memories.

Seek the ones that shock and awe.

Explore where your heart stops, spins and sings.

Forget the truth and what you've been told.

Let us live, float freely in this world.

Let no one stop us, no one should care.

We want to live now,

not planning happiness in far away affairs.

Laughing, crying, anger, sighing.

Love—it whispers, creates and filters.

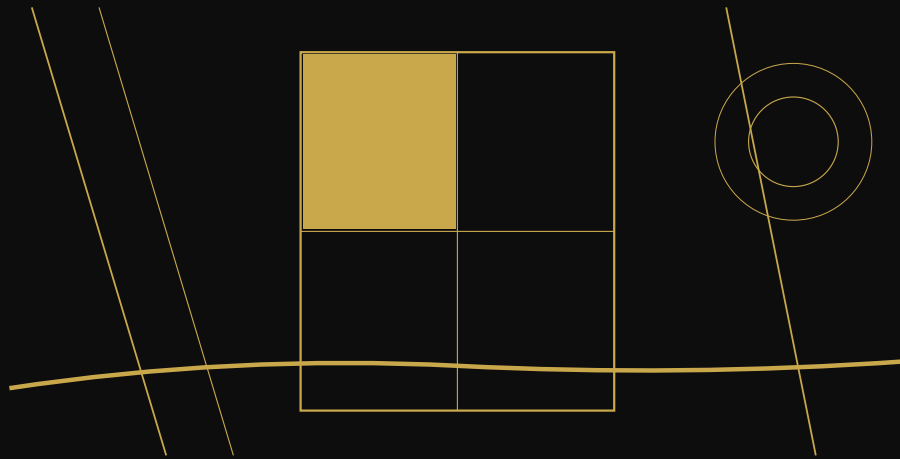
Stop what you're doing, follow your heart.

Find a moment and love all your friends.

Leave behind the thoughtless scares of arguments.

Forget what we are told of money and a future life.

Let loose—your heart should not be tied
to a schedule that's government induced.



2010

Here and Forever

As I lie asleep at night

I can feel your soul outside somewhere in life.

You are still love inside my arms,

laying close, so warm, so near,

like back at home, no fear.

Lights become your lips in mine.

Streaks become your body entwined.

Colors they come from black to blue,

each one becomes a new panel of you.

Piece by piece my picture is made—

pictures of you beside me lay.

But not still on display.

Instead you're here in arms to stay.

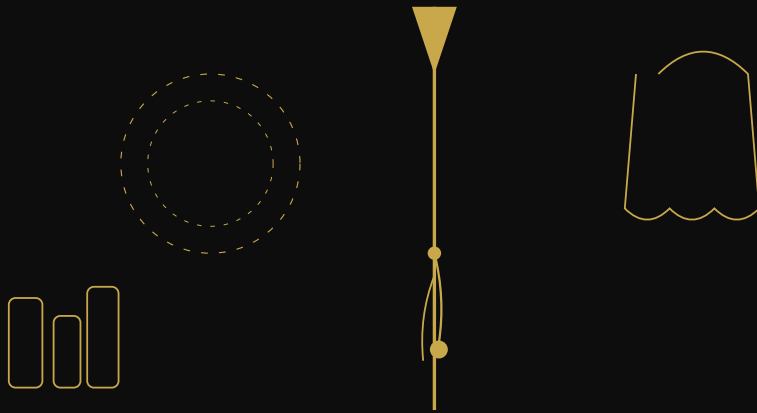
Where am I at, can you wonder then,

that once again you're here again?

Hallucinating, that I must be.

Please let me sleep inside my dream.

Then forever I lie with you right there—
here and forever, yours to bear.



2011

I Have Causes

As I lay in my slumber fourteen hours
in a hidden lie.

No cure for my mind—
towards a manic state I fly.

Bottles beside my head,
my knife inside my eyes,
tearing out my brain
upon the meaningless circle of never-ending repeat.

I just want to break down, tear up
until my veins run dry,
release my blood onto your stainless shirt
as the drips spill out my sorrow sigh,
and my ghost will reappear and watch you weep.

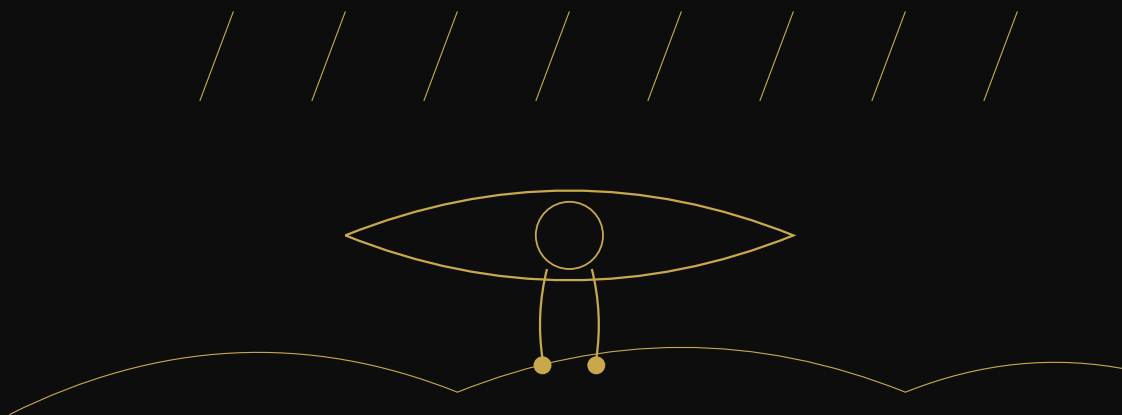
To my knowledge your pain will turn my ghost sweat.
Never will I stop haunting you,

always will I reap your soul.

I will find your empty glass with agony.

I have causes.

You shall never escape me.



2012

Salty Stinging Rain

My love has gone along with the winds.

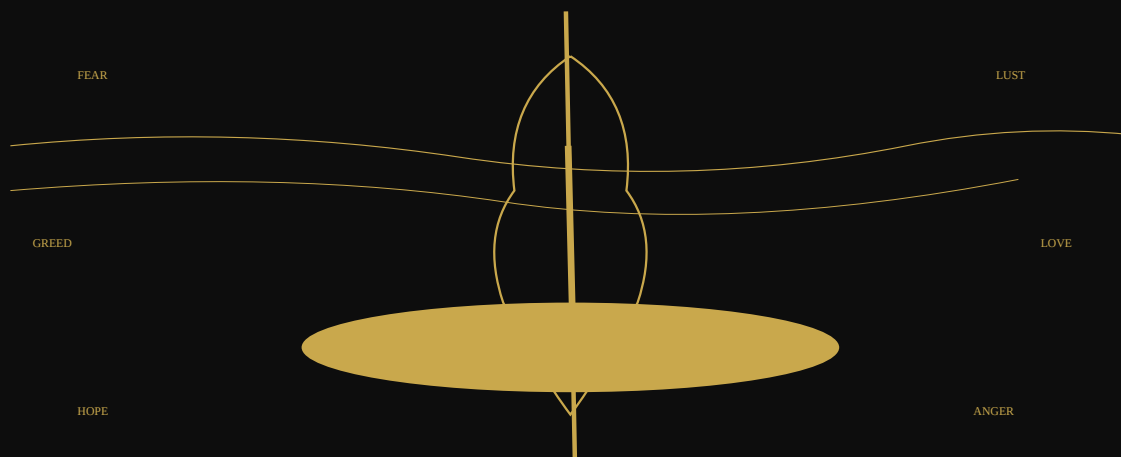
The eyes once sparkled, now gone from sin.

Nights now are restless, never-ending wounds.

As my eyes pour out salty, stinging rain.

Anxiety of future, a future with no hope.

Without her eyes I hold no rope.



2013

Her Dark Way

The glimmer of hope comes slowly but fades the same.

Closing fast are the walls that surround myself.

Without a hope I'm sealed shut inside.

I am continually wondering—why?

Why do I have this increasing painful sorrow,

like when the sky darkens

and the world falls into silence.

Let me refer to my thoughts as "her"

to show an unorthodox perspective.

Her style thick—

dark, slowing breeze.

Her beauty elegant—

dancing, twirling at ease.

But with her dark way,

some light may shine.

For but the crack small,
the light intense, low and fine.

She creeps to the front—
unstoppable force, unknown.

But my love for her so,
the most prominent, still unknown.

Still scared of what's to come after being here.

I miss everyone outside.
But in reality there is nothing really to miss.

The solace has remained,
the yearning for sweet pain.
A pain that chills and frosts inside,
slowly burning like kindling in dark nights,
compressing the empty light inside.

For what my thoughts are worth,
spreading like mist dreary on the earth—
helpless may I be,
but undying hope forgives me.

Fear— my hands shake uncontrollably.

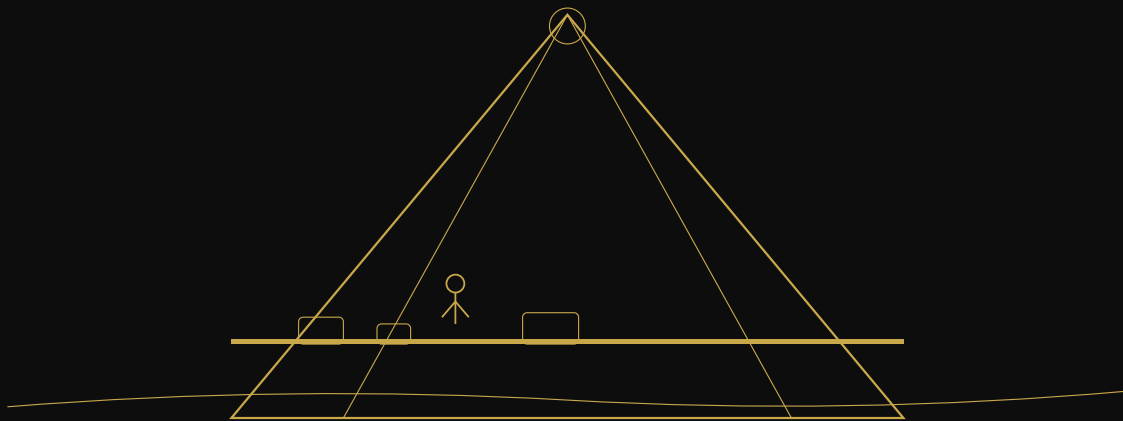
Lust— more and more my desire.

Greed— the one thought consumes me.

Love— no one that's near.

Hope— fiercely drove away.

Anger— agony I feel every day.



2014

The Mountainous Set

The mountains I see from my childhood,
my mind—endless, torturous climb set for me.
Why was this obstacle,
never-ending height of a mountainous set before me.

Stop from the beauty,
the opiate drips of her lips.
Blinding your judgment.
Her eyes, her hips.

Soothing seduction—
colorless, she slurs.
Showering in her halo,
loving through your sight.

My thoughts are tortured again.
Her scream still living—
what have you done,

why have you done this?

I scream as they scream.

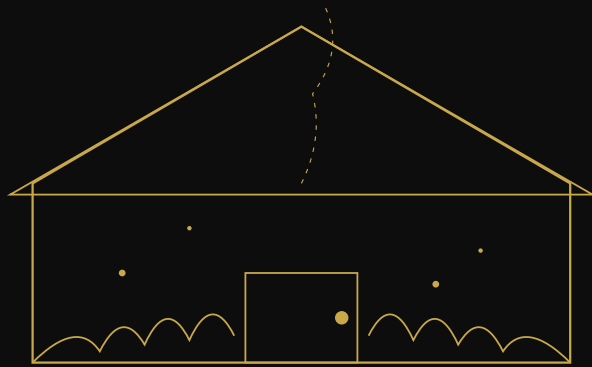
Table of fate spread across the first line—death.

Food of fake, laid perfect for months to bear.

Eat and drink

as the poison lips through drowsiness

they are dressed to fool you.



2015

I Just Wish I Could Love

My voice has gone rasp and away,
screaming in silence for you.

But I can only speak my mind
through devastating you.

My heart is made of sorrows and nothing more,
and I'm sorry that I plagued you with this curse.

I just wish I could love.

I just wish I could love.

I just wish, wish I could love.

So burn my house down and lock the door with me inside,
so I will die into the floorboards
and disappear with the ashes inside.

And let my soul drown into the devil's arms.

I'll watch over you then, scream silently as a ghost,
so no longer I can cause you pain,

but I can still see your beauty this way—
though forever tortured,
I feel okay as long as you're not hurt
by my love and obsession for you.



2016

When Will I Become Normal

Grand ideas that I will never accomplish,
focus everywhere but where I am.

Crash into the ground—
craziness, running, cycling,
can't hold myself down,
no control over my mind.

I am so nervous.

Where is my focus, where is my life,
where am I going?

Does anyone understand?

Anxious, can't focus, mind everywhere—
true hell.

Restart every day,
planning, writing the list.

I am a failure.

I'm in a room with people,
looking, gazing normally,
thinking normally.
But my mind is in movies,
analyzing, planning tasks—
over and over, everywhere but here.
Anywhere I am, I always am not there.
Not aware. Scared.

Suicidal sweetness calms my mind.
The thoughts of pain ease me tonight.

I feel like I have to do things, even if I don't like them,
or I will fail.

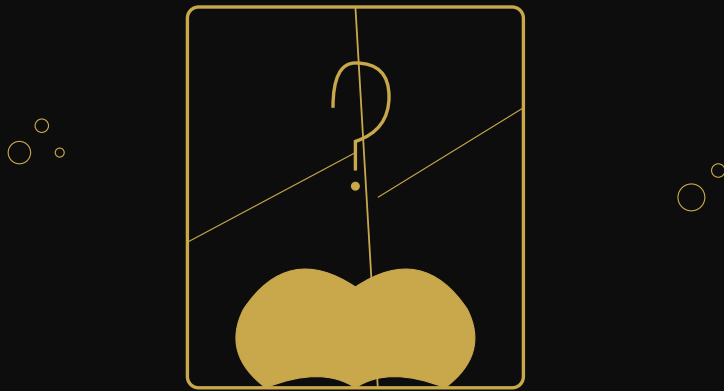
I feel like every day I have to be constantly moving
or I won't live up to expectations.

Obsession is a strength and a weakness.
Take the racing thoughts, put my body to work,
wear myself down so fast.
Tumble, fall, fail again.
Start again. New list, new tasks,
planning my future, planning more lists.

I'm overwhelmed from the years of it,
so now I lie to others to make you an image—
identities for everyone I know.

Racing grand ideas, flashes of ideas
from the past where I've failed.
Flashbacks to failures, years ago.
The only things I remember.

They flash up constantly in my mind—
in every moment, a repeat cycle.



2017

What Am I

I am so sad, lost, and extremely depressed.

I feel hopeless, fearful, self-worthless.

I'm scared of life itself.

I hurt everyone, manipulated everyone,
got into people's minds and toyed with them.

What am I?

Spawn of evil itself.

I do not see myself as normal.

I am not normal.

A demon infects me—
something like a poison, a virus planted in me.
Something that changes my thoughts, my life.

Hurt. Pain. Sadness.

Ruining people's lives, ruined everything,
people hurt—all my fault.

Matthew: pain follows him.

Horrible things follow him.

Will I ever be a regular person?

Someone who can love, be loved, think clearly?

I have never thought clearly in my life.

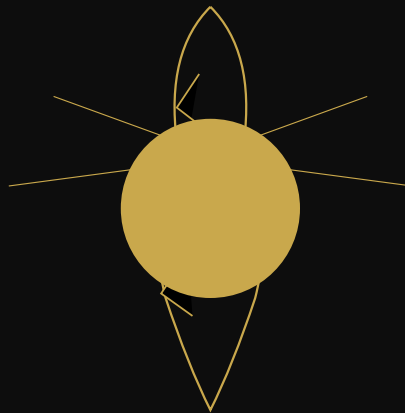
Nothing is real to me.

Mask the pain, the true problems.

What is wrong with me.

I can't remember.

dopamine



serotonin

2018

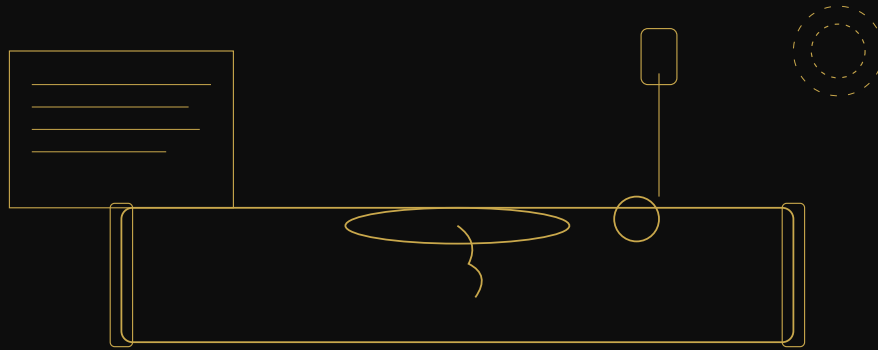
How Can I Mend

Every second, instruments of torture
run through my limbs screaming outward
till the pain pours from my skin.
My body turns black, covered from within,
till my sins—all my terrible things I've been in—
hold all the pressure.
I'm broken down, cracked all over.
How can I mend, how can I patch myself
till I am fixed.

Medication, counseling, programming to change who we are
or have become.
But can one truly change completely,
or only try to control their natural instincts?
Their natural state of mind
bred on variables we do not understand—
functions like memory, dopamine, serotonin,

and many other brain chemicals we manipulate.

Can we change our base structure,
or only fake it.



2019

Death Certificate

Blinded by the hair window of memories,
all my favorite memories follow
with the withdrawal of what I am today.

Just looking for a silent kiss from the never.
Just want to let the waters empty my thoughts.
Take these images of you,
the way—wash away the torture I am in.

I'm sorry you don't understand.
It's just the way my eyes move,
painted in black and white—
no, it's gray, the way I see the world
pains me in never-ending ways.

When I say goodbye,
when the police come by,
my death certificate inked finally

for how I tried—
please no, my agony is gone.
For me I see the world better.
I know that I am going.
I know it's what I wanted.

I think I can finish this time.
It's that type of year.
The sirens come by.
Peel off my skin, the razor blades of line.

My breath of intoxication,
my nose of heroin,
my mind of torment.

I know this happens all the time—
you can write it off as another episode.
This time it's real.
This life can't go on.
My soul is lost in my mind.

The first time was a message,
the second time a real try,
but this time—
dying hits my final art piece for you to see.
I do it so I can't feel.
When I feel like dying I think so freely.

You know me.
This is what I've always fantasized.
I never connected with the people from this side.
So now my ship sets sail,

my life fades and I smile.

My sea of blood, my regret—

is there something else?

This time I travel existence to see.

If I live on I'll see you again.

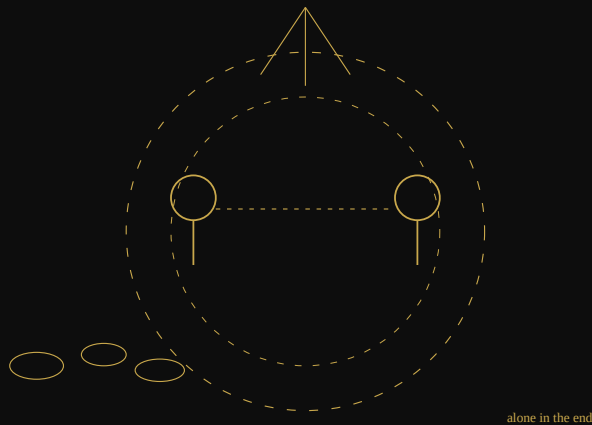
If it's all just gone,

don't weep over me.

This is what I jumped off.

My hospital bed,

with my mind bleeding out of me.



alone in the end

2020

A Tale of Two Addicts

Here we go again—another year circling,
causing grief, lying just to sin.

Chasing that scent of melancholic smoke,
a sweaty room, our drug-induced prison.

Lines on the table, pills in our bags,
concocting elixirs just to feel something.
To travel back—ten years ago—
when every high was so fine.

But now the ending's always the same.
Sunrise breaks, and here comes the pain.
Regret's the only thing that stays—
how the hell did we lose our way?

All we're doing is causing heartbreak,
yearning for our lives to change.
Getting high, making plans—

never doing a damn thing.

Whether it's me or you,
one fucks up, the other follows too.

What can we do?

Can't say no—deep down, we want to use.

It's all the regrets, the people we bruised,
recycling through our eyes like ghosts.
Piercing hearts, no love, no one close.

Night after night after night—
trying to feel alive,
chemically twisting the mind:
dopamine, serotonin—wires fried.

And away we go again,
another cycle, same old friend.
Soon another year will end—
and I'll be singing this song again.

Here we go again—another year circling.
Same roads traveled, just new pavement.
Running on fumes, out of time—
ten years ago still trapped in our minds.

Outdated vessels not built for the new,
chasing old highs, but we're breaking in two.

What will we look like in the end?
What's our legacy—will we leave anything?
A tale of two addicts—
trust me, next year, we'll be back again.

We never get it right
and die alone in the end.
Alone in the end.
Never get it right.
Keep fucking up every year
and die alone—with no one by our side.



2021

The Last Letter

I wrote your name a thousand times,
each one harder than the last.

The ink ran dry, the paper torn thin,
but still I can't forget the past.

I must keep writing.

I tried to find the perfect words
to make you listen and understand
why I became the person
who destroyed what we planned.

If words could heal the fights we made
I'd write until they fade away.
But language fails where hate shines through,
and sorry just is no goddamn use.

This is the last letter I'll send,
carried by the wind,

praying you'll forgive me
for all I've been.

This is my last letter, my friend,
but my love won't ever end.

Seal the page with trembling hands,
drop it off in the postal box,
hoping you will open and not toss aside,
will read the brokenness I feel inside.

I wrote you things I couldn't say
when you were standing right here—
about the fears that scared me
and what I couldn't let you in.

If words could build a bridge
I'd write until my hands bled out.
But bridges need both sides to stand,
and I don't know if you'd try that hard.

Maybe you'll find it years from now
when I'm just a distant name in the ground.
Maybe you'll read these words and know
I never was the same.

Maybe you'll fold it up again
and put it with the rest of our memories from then.

I don't expect an answer back.

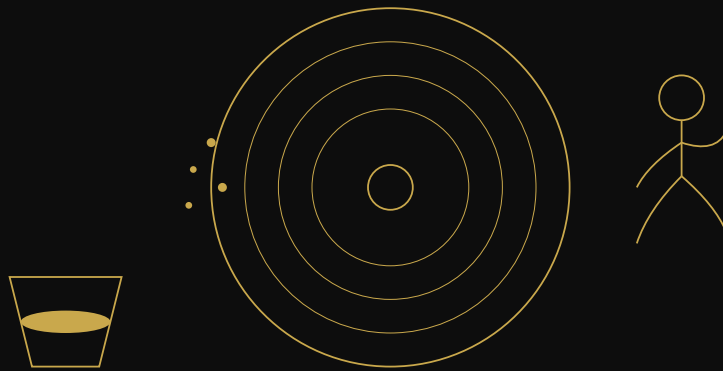
I don't expect a reply.

Sometimes goodbye is just one voice saying
I love you, and goodbye.

But I needed you to know

that I remember every day
the person that you tried to love
before I left you and ran away.

This is the last letter I'll send.
But my love won't ever end.
No, my love won't ever end.



2022

Only From Ohio

All these flashes of memories come instantly I awake—
all my old loves, everyone so perfect in their own way.

The way Grace held me for endless hours.

The way Miranda and I made love so much.

Endless one night stands
that I would think were instant love for mere seconds.

The way Nicole and I clicked on anything, so much.

So many loves I could name—

Roxanne, Miranda, Emily, Mary, Nicole, Sam, Melissa,
the forgotten ones,
and the one only from Ohio.

She danced through streets,
magical with no care,
living through the sound of music,
unfiltered, unaltered,

just completely true.

Her beauty was in her town,

her heart-stopping gaze.

Unrivaled, delicate, gentle and soft—

it raised your hairs,

goosebumps up your spine,

sexual tension in your mind.

That touch and pull to her body,

holding on to each other so tight.

The way we passionately kissed,

bare skin, fucking all night,

soaked in whiskey, smoke and lust

from records made for loving.

The night of memories—it was beautiful.

The love in the moment

a masterpiece of art no one could replicate.

The only one. My favorite love.

Only from Ohio.

Is there nothing I can say



2023

Fuck This Place

Fuck this place
because I'm not with you.

My lover now
is not half of you.

Would you be interested in starting over?

Leave this place
and live together face to face.

I just want to lay with you and the pups.

I love you all so damn much.

Is there nothing I can say
to make you smile at me again.



2024

The Way Back

Getting older—you're making the same work,
trying, but it's tangled up with metrics and deadlines
and whether it's landing.

That changes everything about how it feels.

It stops being refuge
and starts feeling like a job you're failing at.

What was stolen wasn't youth.

It was full presence—
every part of you inside the moment
with no part of your mind elsewhere.

Does the tranquility of youth come back—
doing things for bliss,
the unknown of future and discovery
with no regard for outside stressors?
It's all a laid out day on repeat.

Sometimes I wonder if feeling a true new moment
of creativity is possible,
or if by a certain age we can only create
with the constraints of planning, timing, overthinking—
wondering if you have enough free time,
acting like the forty-hour work week is stopping you
when we used to work, go to school,
do extracurriculars, hang out,
and still have time at 2am to create
because you wanted to discover.

The exact feeling doesn't return.

Not identical.

The unknowing of youth,
the first-time-ness of everything—
that specific flavor is gone.

But that's not the only door into that room.

People find their way back to presence.

Not the same presence—a harder-won one.

Some through stripping everything back to almost nothing.

Some through hitting a moment so raw
that the planning brain just stops.

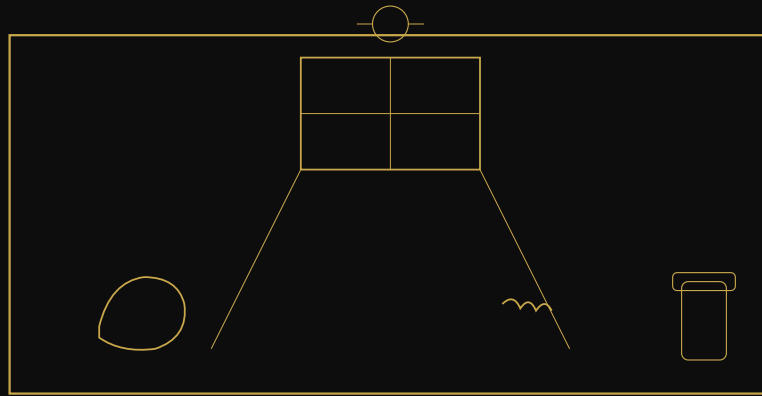
Pain—when you stop fighting it and just let it speak—
sometimes that's the door back in.

Not through less suffering
but through letting this exact moment be the material.

You've done it before.

The work that already exists came from somewhere.

And here, after a day of writing this,
I didn't realize for a second I was in that moment.
What if the way back isn't through less suffering
but through letting these exact moments be the material?
Thinking without constraints.



2025

Twenty-Something Odd Days

Twenty-something odd days of loneliness,

no dopamine, depleted from drugs.

Worn out from withdrawing,

in my room, my cell.

Feeling imprisoned inside my body,

not wanting to go on.

So low on dopamine.

My mind is wandering every which way.

The lights of the world look much dimmer than before.

Nothing has ever hurt like this before—

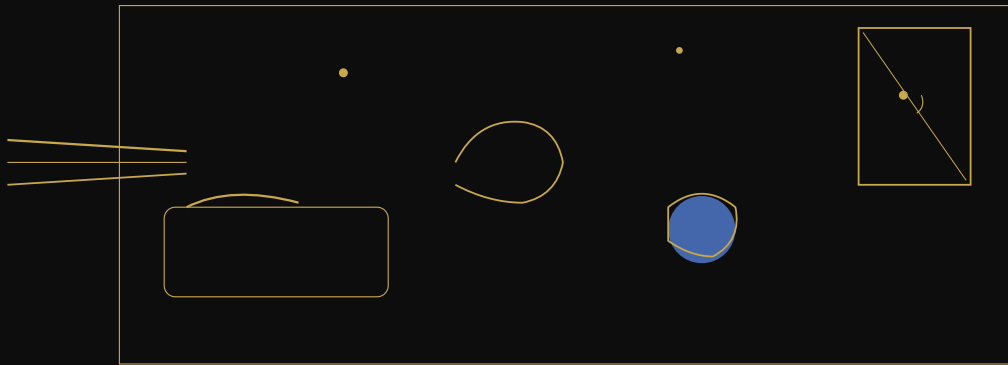
nothing compares to this pain I'm having now.

My hands are shaking from panic.

Just one more time

I wish I could feel good again.

I wish I could reverse the last five years.



2026

We Are All Addicts

Drove 100 mph trying to outrun my anxiety,
landed at a friend's house
where the house was filled with meth and fentanyl,
people on couches terrified from paranoia,
others passed out, back hunched forward, blue—
overdosing on cocktails of death.

How did this become my life?
Why am I here, wasting nights?
But then I realize it's been fifteen years.

My reflection I despise.
Afraid to go in public.
Only feel safe hidden inside.

So I came to those I call friends
who are just like me—
disappointments to everyone in their lives.

We all relate that way before the ritual,
being denied love by family and friends.
We've become seekers of some kind of pleasure
for that void.

It just happens to be this.

We are all addicts.

Some people have family, love, and work to be obsessive over.
Some people like us here
feel so alone just waking up to their life.
We have nothing but to cry,
get high to chase the fulfillment others get in life.

When will it end? I hate this carcass of mine.
I try to explain and show it to the young people in this house,
to quit before they become me—
full of regret.

Who am I to say?
I can't even quit myself.
But seeing them going down a long road starting new,
it never ends.

I only use it because of how far I've come now.
At my age, my dreams aren't achievable.
To not be alone.

It feels like twenty years have just disappeared
and I've lived no life.

Have I become one who now uses it
because life isn't fixable—

chasing unachievable childhood fantasies?

Stuck in a job I hate,
and my dreams are planned for years.
Night after night, high after high,
never going to finish them or start.

Instead choosing after midnight
false intellectual and moral bliss,
thinking I was a rebel, a free thinker,
smarter than those who live through society.

Real protesters do something with their life.
I'm all bloody nostrils talking,
chasing the writing of lists,
planning how I will become all I ever dreamed of,
how I will change the world, leave a mark.

To forget it all the next day.

That was my goal in high school—
to change the world, make an impact.
And it's just a fleeting thought now.

What does my brain think without poison in the blood?
What does my heart feel without dirt clogging my veins?
What does breathing feel like in my collapsing lungs—
will fresh air still soothe my failed organs?

And I still sit here with the only people I know,
no talking,
just a house of chasing highs,
sitting, ruminating the failures of our lives,
decaying in darkness.

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A Visual Chapbook of Despair, 2008–2026

Written by Matthew Haubert

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matthewhaubert.art

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