

# INNER WORLD



In case we've never met: Art Horse is a silly and serious podcast about stepping out of your comfort zone - and this zine is a collection of art made by listeners.

You'll find portraits and stories of our inner worlds: exploration and play, self-reflection and sense-making, escape into imagination, listening to your gut, and the discovery/creation of identity.

We hope you see yourself in these pages.

i'm going to cry

this is so freaking special

so beautiful

ughghghghghghghghghghghghg



Drawn from nature by J.J. Audubon FR.S.P.S.

This year packed a punch, perhaps even more than the year before. In 2020, I foolishly believed the impact of everything would be short term, that I'd feel whatever normal is by this point. It somehow felt safe to live boldly, loudly, proudly, to ask the universe for whatever it had to give me. I took it and I burned like a star, hopefully warming those whom my light happened to reach.

Now, "Inner World" is an appropriate theme for this month, this week, this moment in my life. When my primary instinct is to retreat, to rest, and to revel in any of the creative sparks I have left. In searching hungrily for a piece of art, an image that would capture my inner world, words spilled out onto a page, and I'm honored to share them with Art Horse, with you all reading them.

Thank you for bringing your light outside of yourself, out of your inner world.

*Rikka • York County, PA, USA  
@crimsonchimera (Instagram)*

*Inner world is a place  
I wish I could get to  
A thing I already have  
Conceptual, tangible, fluid*

*Where the -ism's can't get me  
There's a taste of safety  
To be me or anything else  
I revel in colors and stars*

*The art comes from here  
Within me, without me, screaming  
Half-formed most days  
But shaped with my broken pieces*

*Inside, it still storms  
Tumultuous, low visibility  
Flash flood warning  
I'll lose myself in my fears*

*My inner world is sacred  
Filled with so much love  
That it hurts to step outside of it  
Why do I want anything else?*

*It's survival, you see  
To turn my inner world outward  
An armor against everything  
I'm going to let you have a glimpse*

*Of what I could look like whole*



I've been drawing and painting a series of stylized anatomical hearts, and I love how this one turned out. I've always been interested in sea creatures and the ocean, and it was really fun to paint with such a vibrant color palette for this coral heart.

*Emily Schanowski • Wausau, WI, USA  
@emthejackalope (Instagram and Etsy)*



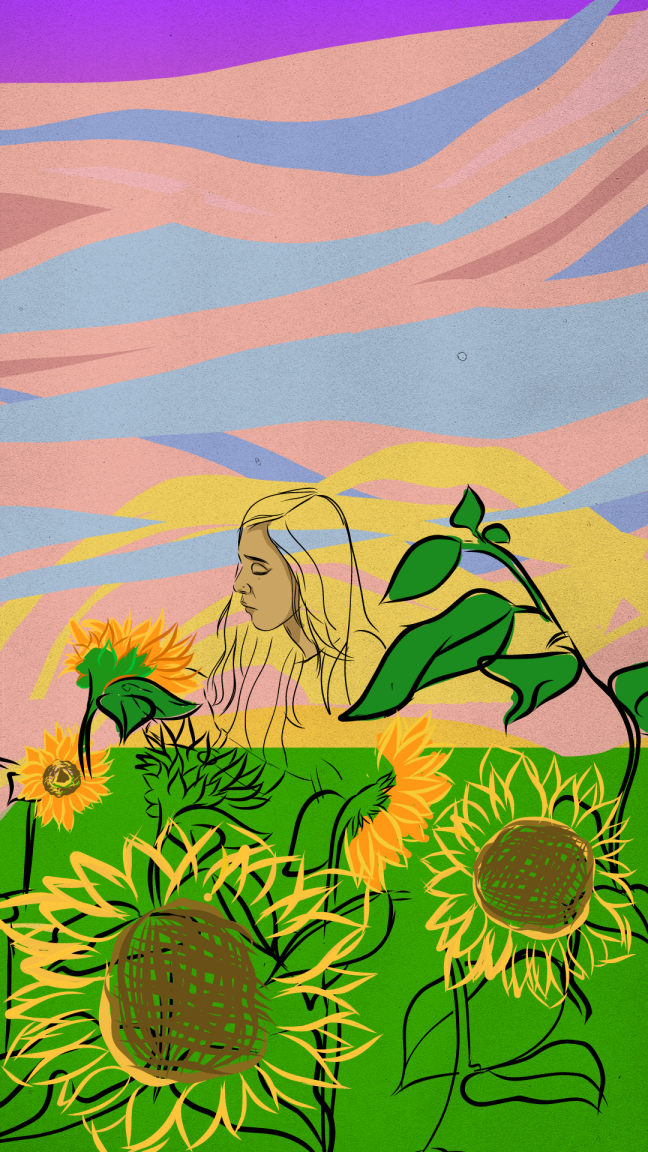


*Untitled Watercolour and Acrylic Marker on Watercolour Paper  
9" x 12" (22.86 cm x 30.48 cm) 2021*

When I read the call for submissions, the theme Inner World immediately made me think of my own inner world and how loud and complex it can be. My mind turned to vast galaxies, and I had this bizarre idea of a self-portrait with my hair flowing back into a galaxy. I never do surreal work, so that makes this a very strange piece for me. However, it mostly came out as I wanted it to, and I feel pleased with it (especially since it's been a long time since I've done a self-portrait!)

*Kelsey Borden • Nova Scotia, Canada*





This started with a quick sketch of my friend holding her phone, and evolved into something else. I imagine her in a field, impassive, unreadable, paused in the middle of what feels like a half remembered dream, looking at sunflowers.

*Reva Sarma • Mumbai, India*  
*@revaraver (Instagram)*

*(Following page)* This was the final activity in a weekend of reflections based on Antoine De Saint Exupéry's book *The Little Prince*. In the book, the Little Prince travels from planet to planet, meeting interesting characters that each have their particularities. There is a king who changes his orders just to be obeyed, a drinker who drinks to forget that he drinks and a geographer who refuses to go out to map out the world but doesn't trust any explorers who tries to tell him what they saw (and a few others). We were asked to create our own planet, to create what the Little Prince would come to if he were to visit us on our personal little asteroid in the space, and this is what I did.

When I saw that the theme for the zine was "Inner world" I instantly thought of this, and re-reading it, it was a little shocking to see how no matter how much I have changed in 3 years, this planet still felt extremely true to me. Getting up to try and achieve your dreams is still very terrifying, because dreams are comforting to me, and I have so many of them. I guess I should try to bring these dreams out of my inner world, and into the real one.

*Francis • Montréal, Canada*



## Planet of the Dreamer

The next planet the little prince visited was filled with very tall grass, a small river and 3 clouds following each other. He walked a little bit through the tall grass, looking for someone, when he heard:

*-Hey?! Watch it!!*

On the ground was a young man laying on his back, looking at the clouds twirling.

*-What are you doing on the ground?! I almost stepped on you! Were you sleeping?* – The little Prince asked.

The young man smiled at his visitor.

*-Sleeping? No, I was dreaming!*

The little prince was not convinced.

*-You say you're dreaming, but you also say that you are not sleeping, how is that possible?*

*-But it is so easy! I lie here in the grass, watch the clouds, and imagine myself doing all the things I want.*

*-Things like what?* The little Prince found him to be quite special.

*-Well, for example, right now I dream of exploring new planets! Seeing new sights, adventuring through space.*

*-Why don't you come with me then! This is what I'm doing!*

*-No no no, this won't work, because now, I'm dreaming of becoming the fastest person in the whole universe! Running fast enough to go anywhere in seconds!!*

*-Well, why don't you get up and start running? You should probably start training, no?*

*-No no no, this won't do, because now I'm dreaming of dancing until my legs are too tired! To have fun for days, play and run, laugh while watching the sun rise and set.*

*-Now that sounds fun! Want me to dance with you? And I love sunsets!*

*-I'm sorry, but it's too late, I'm already dreaming of...*

The little Prince sighed and left this dreamer at his favorite way to pass the time. Dream of all the things he could probably very well do.



This is a drawing of my character Coyote Ugly, who I use as a representation of myself/my soul in my comics. Some of the comics I draw with them are autobiographical, but many are an escape into a world I've created for them. I hope to write/draw a graphic novel about this world someday.

*Ray Frost • Reno, NV, USA*  
*@raydaylamifrost (Instagram)*



I grew up as a kid that when wearing a hoodie often got called “boy” in the street. This was not an accident. There was an intention in the way I’d present myself as child which reflected my struggle to be perceived as a “person” beyond my gender.

I was born in a female body and I am comfortable with it (notwithstanding the periodic low self-confidence moments of how it’s supposed to fit the norms of female bodies... too fat, too thin, too hairy, too bleak for as a white person, etc.). What I have never really aligned with was the idea of being a “woman” or a “girl”.

Whereas I admired and looked up to women who “broke” the boundaries I realise it wasn’t so much about their being a girl/woman, about “girl power”, as it was about them “breaking the imposed pattern” so that they could be themselves, to prove that just because one is female (most often an accident of genetics) one is worthy as a human irrespective of how they present themselves. Some months ago, after years of following the breadcrumbs, I came to “see”



that I just simply have never identified with the gender binary and that I've struggled with this all throughout my life, sometimes as an inner struggle and often also as part of my interaction with the world.

The breadcrumbs have been multiple. As a child and teenager I enjoyed toying with the idea of gender fluidity, I drew moustaches (still do), wore gender neutral, boyish clothes one day and lipstick or eyeliner the other day. I was always intrigued by persons that clearly didn't fit a binary definition of gender. These were mostly famous musicians or actors I'd see on TV, but there were also a few friends. I'd write a lot of poetry and a few short stories and I remember vividly the difficulty and discomfort to tell my story without succumbing to the gender binary of my mother tongue (Portuguese) where it is so pronounced. Often, as a result, I would opt to use male pronouns for the characters that represented me or my experience. This was rather as an act of rebellion against being fit into the "female box".

It wasn't so much that I felt I was male or aspired

to be so, but it was a the "easy fix" that I had to go against the established binary pattern. I noticed, as I grew older, the different reactions of some boys/men to my feminine versus more masculine phases of presenting myself. Like if my hair was cut short(er) I was not the same person, like if I was not "female" enough to be considered as a potential romantic relationship.

I got asked frequently "why do you wear training suits all the time?". I had a great answer ready to use: "oh that's because I have Sports classes and volleyball practice basically everyday. It's just practical". Obviously it was much easier, certainly growing up in a not so progressive small town, to explain that rather than that I felt most comfortable in gender neutral clothes. And it wasn't so much that I wanted to "hide" my female body all the time, I was perfectly happy with the tight and short shorts and a bit looser t-shirts we used to play volleyball in. I just didn't want to expose what my sex was all the time. What did my breasts and vulva have to do with anything beyond activities involving my physical body? What did that have to do with my taste in music,



books or school subjects? The answer to this for me is still: nothing in particular. However, the Western societies I was born and have been living in spend a great deal of energy convincing you otherwise: this color for girls, that one for boys. Girls can't do X, boys can't do Y. Behave like a lady, man up. If you want to succeed you need to "play the game and be one of the guys". The list goes on and those who buy into this narrative and spread it range from mine and my partner's family, to my friends, colleagues and managers at work to strangers on the street. I myself often help to spread it even if it's the opposite of what I would like. And yes there may be people that feel comfortable in the "womanhood" or "manhood" that they either were born or grew into. Those experiences are valid too. Mine is just different.

After more than 30 years through much reading, listening and other ongoing education I have come to accept that I just don't fit the male or female box and that this feeling is something real and NOT a glitch in my brain. It has been a constant and it is who I am: non-binary. I've had

the time, the luck and the privilege to come to understand this about myself.

Through the words and experiences of other people, some I don't know but who have the broadcasting power or some in my extended family beyond my home and birth countries, I've finally arrived at this station and I am so relieved, at peace and happy.

My body is female and my mind is anything I want it to be. My pronouns are she/they/them and the adventure continues as I share it with those who are important to me.

*Marina • Utrecht, the Netherlands  
@mses\_art (Instagram)*



*"Where Is My Mind?" • mixed media collage on melamine board*

This is probably my most favorite piece of art I have ever created. I hosted a collage-making party for my birthday a couple of years ago and this was what I made. It captures my near-constant mental state of "head in the clouds" - always imagining, fantasizing, dreaming, wondering.

My favorite parts are the dimensional aspects - the silver stars and the bird-like shape are mounted with foam tape, and the metallic clouds extend off the edges of the paper. I used foam tape to mount the collage to the board as well, for an extra dimensional element.

I went into the creation of this piece with no plan and no outline - I just pulled elements that called to me, and spent hours arranging and rearranging them until it felt right. This experience showed me that it's OK to move forward with something without an idea of where you're going. I was also fascinated by the way that it felt like I spent 95% of the time moving stuff around and experimenting, and in the last 5% is where it finally came together and I was ready to glue it all down!

*Megan Clark • Austin, TX USA*

Making art is one of the best ways for me to express my inner world to the outer world. My work is often about strange worlds, adventure, nature, creatures and stories of strong independent characters.

I decided to be vulnerable with this submission and let out one of the most personal pieces I've ever made. I cried when I finished it because it felt right to finally get this feeling out of me and onto a page.

I used to think the darkness inside me was bad, spreading out like a disease, consuming me and everyone around me. But I realized over time that darkness is a part of me, there is a balance of light and dark, like night and day on Earth. Stars and galaxies shine in the night sky alongside the moon. Owls hoot, wolves howl, loons call and fireflies blink across the forest floor.

Like these creatures, I too am powerful in the dark.

Kat Middleton • Ottawa, Canada  
@katmidds (Instagram)



This story was born from a moment in time, transitory, part connection, part separation. As easily as a conversation with a stranger can happen aloud, sometimes they only happen in your head. Real or imagined, I write to bring these conversations into being.

*Nina Couser • Greenisland, Northern Ireland  
@ninacouser (Instagram)*

## A Little Story

In Rome, on any given day of the week when Italians have an extra marital fling, they call it “una storia” – a story. Nothing major. Not grounds for separation, home wrecker, I’m gonna divorce you and take you to the cleaners. Just a story.

“I tell you, it’s a shame you’re blind,” I say to the woman beside me, “because I’m gorgeous and well, I think you’re missing out.”

She laughs. I lift my head and catch the eye of the guy sitting opposite.

“And that guy’s gorgeous too,” I say winking. “He wants to come over and join our party. Come on over, that’s it. I’m Ros and what’s your name? Pete? Hi Pete. And this is... Mirabelle. Mirabelle? Wow, I was not expecting that.”

Pete laughs. His shoulders move up and down. He can’t hide his nature. Powerful shoulders. A blue linen shirt. The scent of his shower gel rising.

He catches the eye of the woman passing by. She smiles and sits down at the nearest free seat. Mirabelle taps her cane.

“I was named after the minister’s wife.”



"The minister's wife?" I say. "She sounds like a hottie. Was she?"

"No not really," says Mirabelle. "She was plain. They had seven children."

I lean in closer to Pete and whisper, "Not that plain."

Mirabelle laughs too but she leans back, catching something between me and Pete that excludes her.

"I grew up in the church too," I say. I've got to get a handle on the giddy before they think I'm a weirdo. But I can't help adding, "Yeah. Some good lookers there too. That Monday night meeting – phew!"

Pete laughs again. Mirabelle laughs. The woman who just sat down laughs and the couple opposite begin to laugh. We allow the moment to unfold as it was intended, like a letter, uncensored.

"I don't know what's come over me," I say. "I'm not usually this forward... At least not on a weekday... Unless of course it's a Mon-day..."

Pete is laughing with all his teeth now. Good teeth. Brought up with the right values kind of teeth.

Clean fingernails, a light tan, outdoor hobbies that involve nature. A natural man. A man who marries his childhood sweetheart, has plump healthy babies and a wife who can sing. A man travelling back from a meeting in Wisconsin, who orders juice on the flight home then changes his mind and asks for a beer. A man who always says please and thank you and holds the door for a lady. A man who looks the lady in the eye and allows...

...the twinkle of bright blue eyes to become bedroom eyes, stiffened bodies pushed against the walls of elevators and hotel bedrooms, dreams shared, truths told, numbers exchanged...

An announcement over the tannoy. Flight BA540 to Rome now boarding. I stand up. "That's my ride Mirabelle," I say. "It was so lovely to meet you." I reach forward and take her hand.

Pete stands up. "Really nice to meet you Ros." We shake. "Hope you have a safe flight home." His hand is firm in mine. His fingertips reach all the way to my wrist.

I blink. I offer the green of my eyes for him to think about on his journey home. Just a little story. I glance back. Nothing to write home about.

I had a few different thoughts running through my mind as I interpreted Inner World and created this piece “Great Wide Open”, but mainly it represents where my mom is. It’s somewhere between my dreams, the lake and a sort of heaven. I was inspired by the song “Great Wide Open” by William Prince he says

“I hope you forget me in heaven. I pray it’s just that peaceful. That you stop looking down through the holes in the clouds and keep on baskin’ in healing”.

Whether she’s flying through the sky or gliding through the water, I hope her world is just that peaceful.

This piece has a watercolour background, with gold ink and a carved linoleum print. I originally did it with a colourful pastel sky and clouds, but it just didn’t feel right. It felt too fluffy. I’ve been drawn to these soft blues; they remind me of the lake on a calm foggy morning. Peaceful, but still pays tribute to the sadness and emotions wrapped up in it all.

*Cassidy McAuiiffe • Sudbury, Canada  
@cassidyjeanmc (Instagram)*





Lately I've been a little frustrated by the things I've made that were meant to hang on the wall. They can't give me the tactile satisfaction I get from holding a pleasing object, so I've started letting the wee beasts of my inner world spill out onto plates and bowls and mugs and things I've made that make me go, "mmmm, yes," when I hold them, use them, break them.

Maybe I'll drink a little of that hare's quickness back into myself with my morning coffee. Maybe with my stew the moth will serve up some peace. Maybe it just feels like giving art a spirit, to make an object that wants to be used.

*Morgan G • Denver CO, USA  
@m.kathleen27 (Instagram)*



To me, "inner world" brings up feelings of inner child, play, and exploration. When out in the woods alone, my inner child takes over. I get a little dirty, kneeling on the forest floor, taking photos of small moments of beauty.



Coming across Elliot Creek, I felt a magical combination of stillness and energy. It mirrors my memories of childhood, a balanced mix of calm and excitement, the familiar hug of unknown wilderness.

*Caitlin McIver • Seattle, WA, USA*  
*@cmciver.studio (Instagram)*

Perhaps you'll read the opening to this poem one of several ways--angry and resentful, or wistful and nostalgic. I was thinking about what personal growth looks like, and also came across an article mentioning the immigrant experience of having to continually prove oneself, and being raised with those values. How differently it might feel to go about the world knowing you already belong, and how that changes how you see things.

The thing with writing about my inner world, though, is that it altogether too cerebral! It took some effort to highlight the imagery--I'm particularly fond of the houses on the hillside looking like glitter and how cozy each one must be. Who do you think is the "you" in this poem?

*Bryan Bach • Bay Area, California, USA  
@microphylum (Instagram and Twitter)*

## Discernment

You don't get to share my  
perspicacity anymore, to  
hear what wonders illuminate  
September winds in multiplex

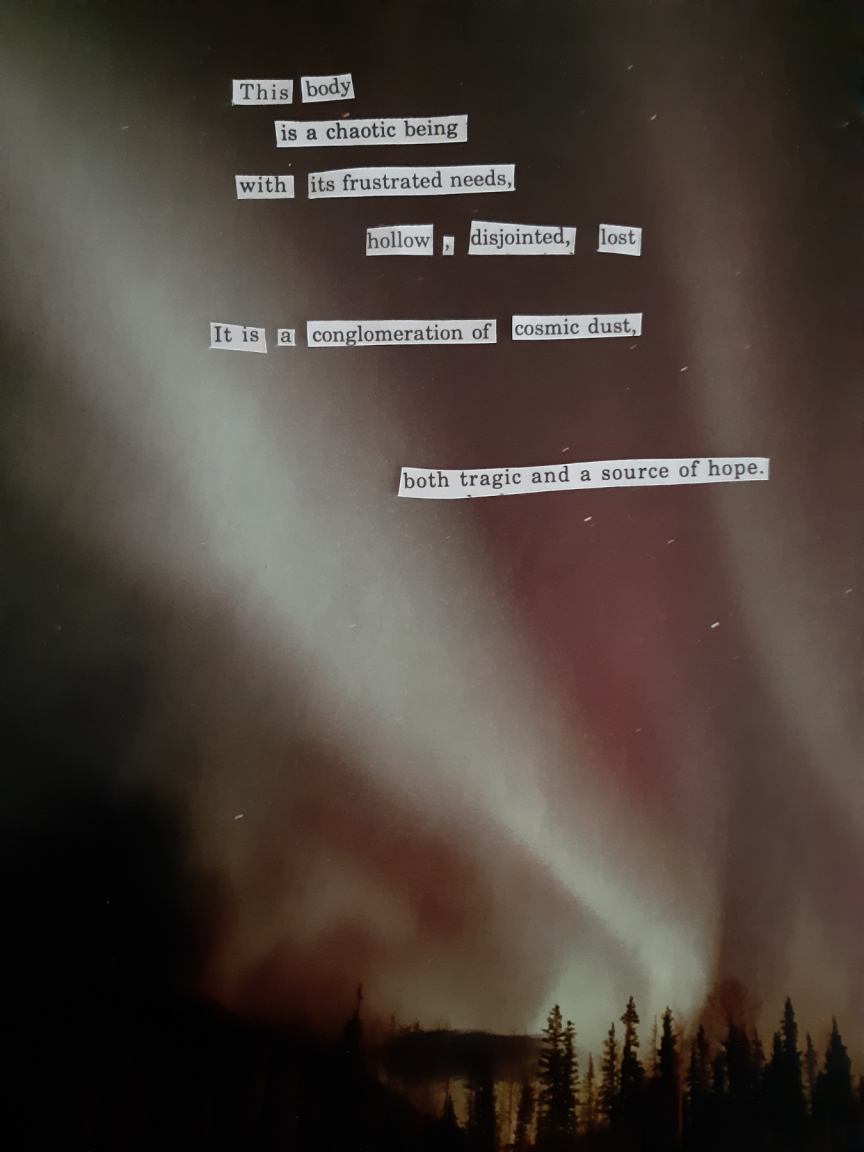
that bring some coze to  
truncated days, every nightfall  
a scramble to share in warmth, sparkling  
each point of hillside in conspiracy

to withstand the fog, and I  
look to the coming of fall,  
of white-crowned sparrows,  
and yet, above the hills

I will be nobody else's second choice,  
and watch the fluffy pinks  
fade and darken, the emptying  
cubicles here overlooking

the encroachment of darkness, and  
never have to prove to you again  
that my belonging is any more  
contingent than twilight.





This body

is a chaotic being

with its frustrated needs,

hollow, disjointed, lost

It is a conglomeration of cosmic dust,

both tragic and a source of hope.

Lately I've been trying to avoid thinking about gender, but it's been impossible to ignore. I put this found poetry together one evening, and it help to express some of the angst I was feeling about how I am perceived by others. My inner world has felt very tumultuous, and creating this released some of the pressure and made room for more exploration and growth.

*Mandi • Prince George, BC, Canada  
@sundogcreativestudio (Instagram)*

a bone-crushing hug.  
this was best, for both of them.

Don't do this to me

firm and constant  
stop its furious pounding,  
pile of stone and brick

Obviously, you  
fed off each other's hatred.  
almost like mirrors.

I was a rebel,  
Trembling fingers fumbled with  
joyful, fulfilled life

I'm a foolish kid  
And you're a pretty liar.  
pretty flattering

good sugar cookies  
in a cracked and wicked voice.  
Darling, don't you think

I was not fooled by  
the kind of prudishness that  
does not make mistakes.

caught them in the act  
what kind of coward was he?  
Let's show everyone

managed to kill time  
An hour and twenty minutes  
You son of a bitch!

a nose for money  
she blew her nose lustily.  
four-hundred-dollar

I thought tea would help.  
I didn't feel anything.  
it would do for now.

More and more I see  
Home is wherever you are,  
life's too short to waste

Social media has so shaped my creative process:  
if I make it, I share it, and if it's not worth  
sharing, I don't make it.

I'm trying to change that by setting aside space  
and time for creative play, and one thing that is  
helping enormously is collage! Phrases, found  
photos, and magazines, there's something so  
juicy and abundant about not starting with a  
blank page.

I'm exploring my inner world, and I'm finding  
that things I'm drawn to aren't the things I've  
been making art about. I'm attracted to cruel  
twists like death and cheating lovers, and truths:  
tea helps enough, and if home is wherever you  
are, maybe you can stop looking so damn hard.  
Life is short AF.

I'm discovering stories and making connections  
in a way I've never allowed myself before.

IT FEELS SO GOOD



Jess • 100 Mile House, BC, Canada  
@birdstrips (Instagram)

things are more 'wishable,'

And yet. . . .

It's unreliable and often dangerous.

The power, the glory,

always draws a crowd.

From the Zoo's point of view,

possible cause of death

a piece of my mind

Are you planning to retire?

don't lose your passport.



Thank you for reading, and thank you  
so much to everyone who shared  
themselves with us for this project.  
This has been such a treat.

Keep making art!!

Love,  
Fiona and Jess

*PS: Find us online at [arthorsepod.com](http://arthorsepod.com)*

