

coffee and anthills

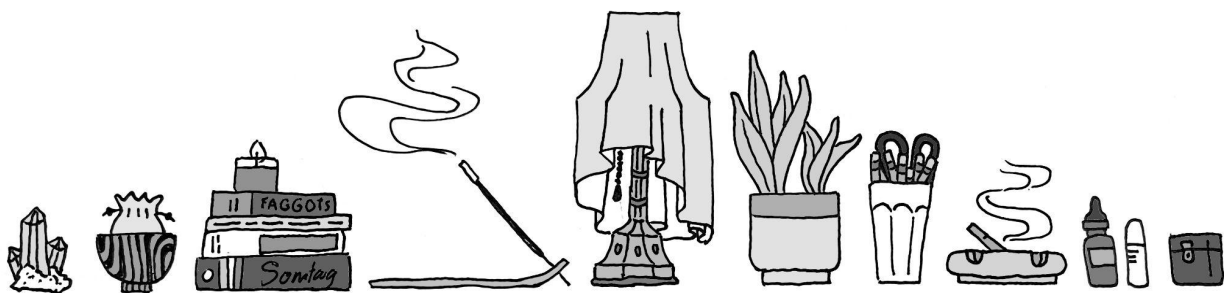


will montgomery



#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

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Ant Hill Doing

Ant Hill is always confused. He can't understand how he ended up living in such a beautiful house. He hadn't built the house, or even bought it. He didn't pay rent. He had just arrived one day, out of the heavenly blue, and never left. The beautiful house has peacock feathers carved in the wood around the door, and roses planted in the front yard. Inside is misty, hung with soft fabrics and feathers and sparkles, and smells of jasmine. The wifi is strong and the password is Grapefruit64. Ant Hill loves living in the beautiful house, because all his friends live there too. But he just can't figure out how they all got there.

Ant Hill misses his parents, but he can't quite recall what they looked like. He remembers their names as only Mother and Daddy. So instead, when he feels like missing them, he remembers their touch, their smell, the stories they told him and the songs they sang and the inflections in their voices when they were getting to their favorite parts. He holds the small ceramic tea pets and costume jewellery they left for him and feels the familiar contours. He thumbs through dog-eared pages of the red journal his mother took notes and wrote poems in, and takes turns with his friends reading sections aloud, seated on pillows on the floor beside the hearth, sharing magic substances.

Sometimes Ant Hill makes a mess and is filled with cold prickles. At these times, when he needs his parent's advice, he stands in front of a painting called *The Temptation of St. Anthony* at the museum of art. He knows that on another day, in another time, his parents and grandparents had been standing right there, looking at the same painting. They couldn't be there at the same time, but he knows that he is standing in the same place they had, looking at the same abstract expressionism, and that fills him with warm fuzzies.



The Temptation of St. Anthony is the most expensive piece of art left in the devastated city, not counting the buildings and tombstones. The cemetery is incidentally the other art museum Ant Hill goes to, looking for his parents. The sad and wonderful thing about his parents is that, since he doesn't remember their names or faces, they could be beneath any of the statues on the hill. He prefers this kind of museum to the indoors kind, because at the cemetery Ant Hill can touch the artwork as he pleases. He can pat the cold, stone boobs and butts of the cherubs as he walks past them to say hello, and let his hand linger on the intricate carvings in the headstones. He also likes being there because you can go for free, and no one asks you why you're there.

Ant Hill wonders what the neighbors think of all the strange objects he brings home. Lately he thinks less and less about why he's so confused so often, and chooses to instead focus on rearranging his to-do list in aesthetically pleasing ways, like errand themed Tetris blocks. Sometimes he and Monsoon sit on the porch and play Fuck-Marry-Kill with abstract concepts like healing and betrayal and faith. Ant Hill plans out blocks of time for this activity in his to-do list. Monsoon is more casual about it. One day a sign appeared on the front door of Ant Hill's beautiful house that read, "Snowball's Piss Club Meets Every Sunday - B.Y.O.P.", and he left it there because it reminds him there are so many things in this life that he is so far removed from.



Assorted Poetry I

Fire Escape

all of her friends
on the back of my book
I want that to be me

it will

whether I go to London or not
and then I'll come back
and me and my brother
will go to the gym together



Cheap Date

Of course
I can afford that grace for myself

I'm a cheap date



Two Coffees

one medium black coffee
splashed my hand
Damn that was hot

one medium matcha latte
with oat milk

Third Wheel

bet you guys thought
you were taking up the sidewalk

but nope

watch me squeeze by
in your
peripheral

Good Morning!

Mornings are like holidays
Insomuch As
I always celebrate
seeing
brief
twilight
on my live solar gradient
laptop background

Image Selection



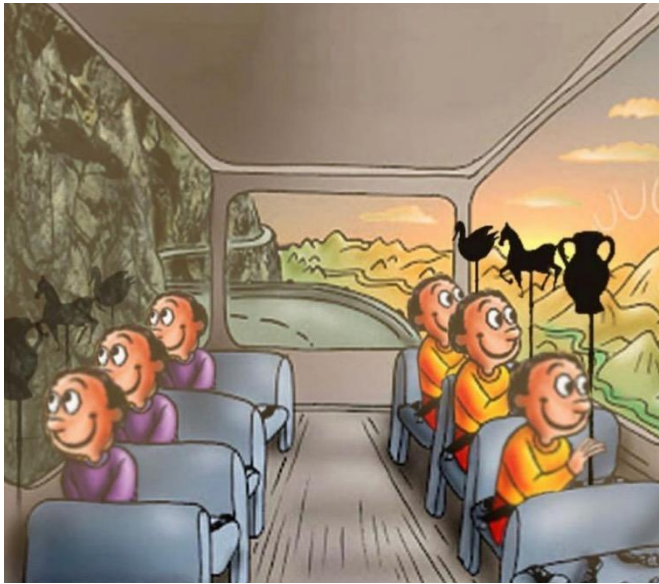
“YES! On Pride Union Jack NFT”, Digital collage, 2021, Will Montgomery



Sally Ride communicating with ground controllers during the six-day space mission of the Challenger in 1983. NASA, via Agence France-Presse — Getty Images



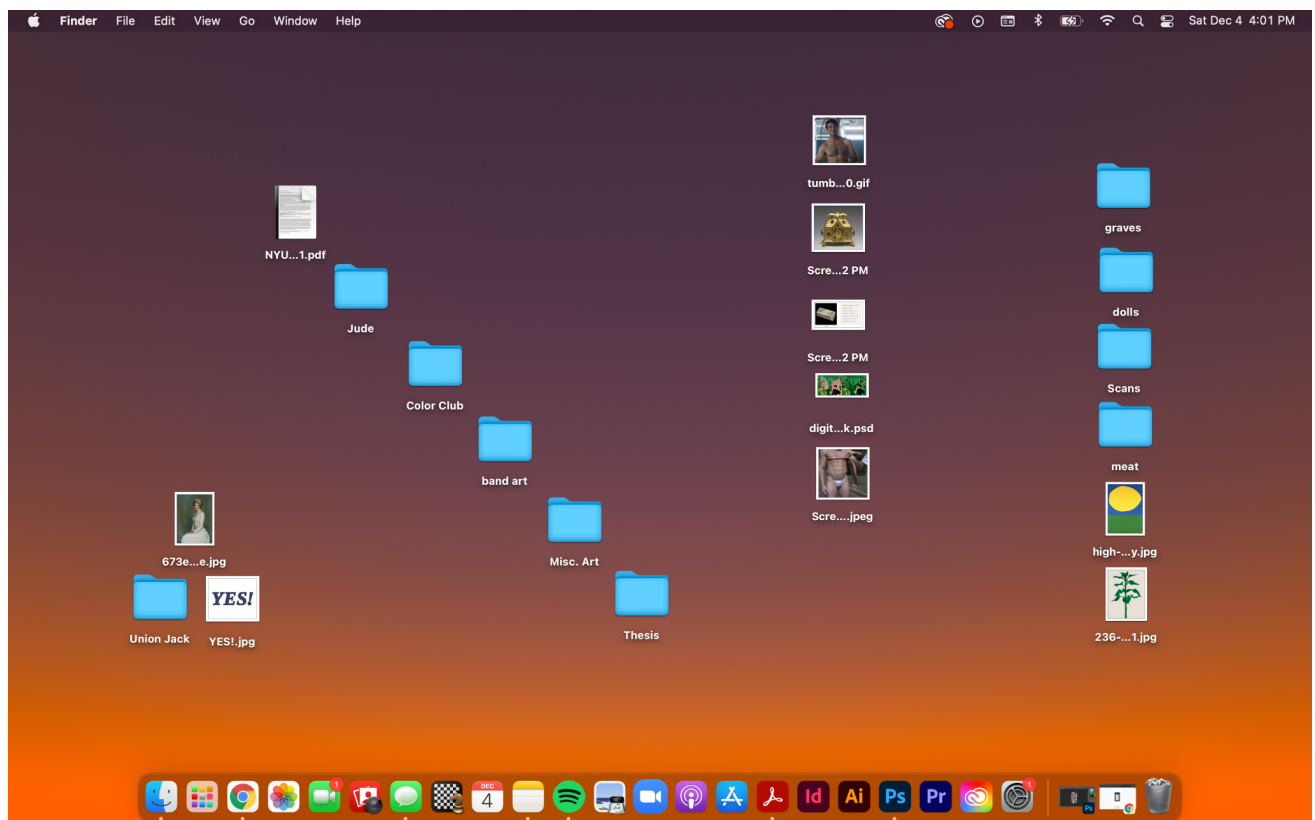
“La gruta Del Sol Manchego wedge at the financial center on December First”, Digital photo, 2021, Will Montgomery



“Two Guys on a Bus meme; Shadow Puppet Variation” Meme, November 21st, 2021, Twitter user @roting



“Private Tea Party seen from Izzy’s roof, November 23rd”, Digital Photo, 2021, Will Montgomery



“Twilight on my Solar Gradient Live Background”, Screenshot, Saturday, December 4th, 2021, Will Montgomery

Sunshine Being

Sunshine thinks she knows exactly how she came to occupy the beautiful house. Whether or not this is true is no concern to anyone, least of all Sunshine. Because of her supposed familiarity with her surroundings, she feels a bit disenchanted by them. She prefers to travel the devastated city on wheels and play banjo music on street corners. She wears a straw hat tied to her head by a green ribbon. She began this routine with the idea of mimicking a certain sort of person, but found herself too carried away by the music to pretend not to truly enjoy it.

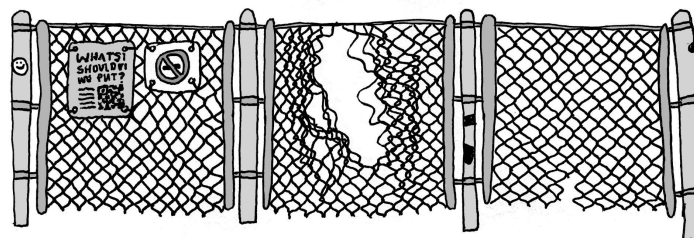
She's working on an article called Can You Buy Vibes In Brooklyn. You can't take photos at the mushroom cult's psychedelic breathing sessions, but the audio recordings are amazing. Not very good for a print article though. Hopefully the interviews will be enough.

Sunshine is tough. She prides herself on it. This means she keeps an aluminum baseball bat under her bed, to protect her friends from intruders. It also means that she keeps her sewing kit on her at all times, unafraid to poke herself with the needle while stitching up a hole in Persimmon's cargo shorts, or embroidering Ant Hill's name into his hoodies. She's the one to pick up a spider by its legs and escort it off the premises, as she would prefer no one kill it. Often she

will sit down in the old rocking chair on the front porch and let the spider sit on the arm rest, and the two of them will chat up anyone who passes by, or sing them the old folk songs. Spiders have the most beautiful singing voices, she'll tell you, if you listen closely enough.

Singing is very important to Sunshine and all her friends. It's how they tell their stories, and remember their history. Over time, they add more and more verses to each song, keeping them updated. When they travel in groups, as Walnut always tells them is safest, they sing so that all their neighbors can hear the new verses. And to annoy those who would rather they just shut up and stay indoors. They can go fuck themselves! Sunshine and her friends sing.

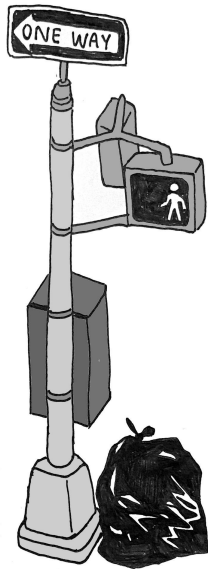
Sunshine finds it easiest to consider herself a keep moving machine. This is far easier on wheels. She can't take care of plants, so she paints them in watercolor quickly before they die. She never carries a lighter, because she quite likes the idea that each flame should be born from one already burning. Her friends find it impractical. When she came home one day and saw the sign on the front door that read "Snowball's Piss Club Meets Every Sunday - B.Y.O.P.", she figured she was free next Sunday, if they needed a Banjo accompaniment.



Assorted Poetry II

Friday

anxiety
over
panties



Inside My Mind

At least I'm safe
inside my mind.

inside my mind,

inside my mind,

inside my mind,

Excuses

Excuses, Excuses.
Yes please



Conclusion

When on the road, visiting other crumbling cities, the friends would anoint themselves with the right oils and sew magic stones into the linings of their third-hand coats. They parceled their magic substances into vegan gelatin pills and enclosed those in little purple tulle bags spangled with gold stars. They kept all the necessary reading materials in their minds and written out on their forearms. They traced the words on each other's skin in their downtime. When they left the beautiful house they had to bring the essentials with them. They were so close to realizing that the house was profoundly unimportant. They had the ability to transform any setting into their beautiful house, any gathering into a party, any boulder into a picnic table, any ant into a guru. They would realize this soon enough, as their legendary parents had. Their own folk songs foretold it.





“What’s red and smells like blue paint?”

Red paint!

