

AUTITUDE!



INFO AND ADVICE!
MOVIES! ART!
AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

WELCOME!

Welcome to the third thrill-packed edition of Autitude!

Autitude is a magazine for the autistic community featuring an eclectic mix of articles, reviews, blogs, cartoons, photos and lots more. Illustrated and curated by the talented Ash Loydon, Autitude is shaped by what matters most to you.

Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to this edition, if you have something you would like to share please get in touch with us at autitude@scottishautism.org.

To make sure you are updated when the latest edition is released sign up here – thank you!

**Scottish
autism**

**WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED**

CONTENTS

- 4. Winter Connections update.
- 5. Reasonable Adjustment – A series by Lea B.
- 8. Taking Things Literally – An ongoing cartoon series by Peter Vermeulen.
- 10. Poems by C.D.
- 13. Hello Kitty! - Ash Loydon confesses all as teen hormones and cult horror collide.
- 18. Andrew Moodie casts a critical eye over Coming 2 America.
- 20. Artitude! Featuring Alistair Cowell.
- 22. Spectrum Superstars!
- 23. The Last Word.



WINTER CONNECTIONS EVENTS

We are delighted to announce that we will be continuing some of the groups from our recent Winter Connections project throughout the rest of the year!

With the winter months behind us, we need a new name for these groups and would love to hear your thoughts.

The groups that will be continuing so far are the Mindful Autism Support Group, Choir Group & Art Group.

Look out for further updates on our events section of our website, coming soon...



Email us at

events@scottishautism.org

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

(CRAZY ABOUT THE JOB!)

A SERIES BY LEA B.

2. Fallen in Love, From a Chair

December 2018.

Dear Santa, I think I blew it this year, after all. My too-good-to-be true job now will be devoured by a bunch of unhelpful feelings acting in my chest in coordinated ways. Santa, I have tried to mask things, but you know how it is by the time I get home, I get tired of it all. So last week my fiancé, aka elusive boyfriend asked me if I was in love. I said 'yes'. Then he asked me if it was someone at work and I said 'yes'. My, I would really need a more tactful brain than this one in my skull! I quickly added though: 'But I think it's nothing. Really. He must be just reminding me of someone from the past. You know. It will pass.' I know it won't. They say the young Jacqueline Bouvier wrote that Senator Kennedy will play a very significant role in her life, just upon meeting him. She felt it. Now, I haven't written this down anywhere yet but: I am totally scared! Why did such strong feelings have to find me when I am about to conclude a successful probationary period and already imprinted on everyone at work as being almost-cool?? I even did the very neurotypical thing of talking to the whole blessed collective of these 'pros', for several minutes, going on and on and on. Well, then it was mainly to leave an impression on Henrik. Because he seemed to enjoy me presenting for the first time. And my boss was over the moon. And Henrik seemed to be beaming. Must be my accent. I confess, Santa: I presented each month so far. Boy, did I present. Reciting information about community groups like it was Ovid! Along cometh fifteen participants/Your winter coats to me are piquant/Who can behold such statistics!... And so forth. Each word bouncing from the walls as an excited smile, what an enthusiastic new staff speaking...

I am already lost and I don't even know it. My partner does. It is the intranet to blame, really. Being sweetly cerebral, I can fall in love with someone's mind without much regard to other specifics. I find myself waiting for his messages in my trench-station - sorry, work-station - like they were carrier pigeons somewhere in France. Run, hide, explosions. I know this, what I feel, won't just scurry away. Not this time. This pigeon has landed, a real folk tale.

I am reading his words and falling, more and more love-hyperfocus sets in. It is most nightmarish for my brain. To begin with, I can only really focus on one thing at a time. Plus, I've always been proud of being able to stay away from really big emotions that seem to undermine so many folks, yet now... it is here. Lo, he is smart and witty enough and dashing in my eyes - and already belongs. I wish I could go back to where I was an adolescent, cleaning my houseplants every Friday the very same way, always between 1pm and 4pm, thinking growing up was not such a big deal, after all. (I couldn't imagine why people were fussing so much about it, after all, you just follow a set of different routines and that's it, right?) But that was before Henrik. You see, Jackie ended up covered in blood then unhappily married to a millionaire. What will my headstone say? 'Better to have been employed than to love'? Have some sense, Lea. Sure. [By next spring I will make a complete fool of myself in front of a bunch of colleagues - author's note.] I guess, this is the kind of situation we called '*nagy kaki*' in Hungary, here it would be something like a '*big stooshie*'. Ironically, I learnt that word from my manager, Megan. [She will only find out what is going on next summer -author's note again.] Santa, couldn't you at least make him be one of the roof workers at the office? So that we would never have to actually be present in the same space and me having to make plans for quickly diving under my desk if a meltdown comes too fast and I wouldn't reach the corridor.



Will I get myself fired if I absentmindedly scan my heart in the photocopying room?... Lord, turn me into a whistle and let me be carried away from here, messages or no messages! Nevertheless, thank You for the first three undisturbed weeks of this new job in October. It was great, seriously. And thank you for the twelve metres between he and I, nine to five. Now, I will drag my fiancé to the company Christmas dinner, will act as the most taken woman in the world, will look at both of them simultaneously and this will all go away. Sorted! Have some sense, have it. Right... And my world will break into two there, looking into the bathroom mirror of that restaurant. Lea, Lea, this is a new sense. See it.

Ps: On another note, Santa, please do not turn Henrik into a roof worker. (It is almost the holidays, has mouths to feed, is gifted, very slightly ageing, too busy, too -what's the word- *braw* etc).

Regards.

Stamped.

Dated.

Signed by me (have almost passed probationary period, supposedly talented, somewhat exotic, too confused, too in awe, bonnie but doomed etc).

If you'd like to contact Lea about her article you can do so at leapublish@gmail.com

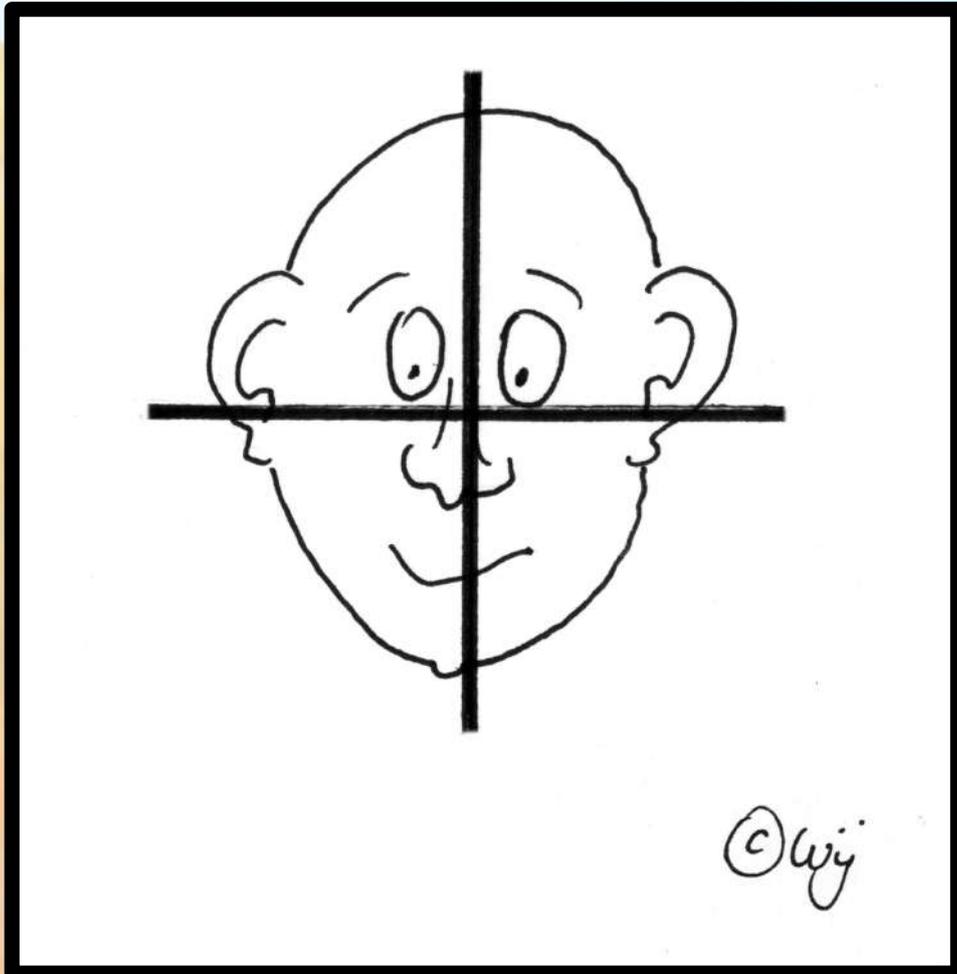


Peter Vermeulen's

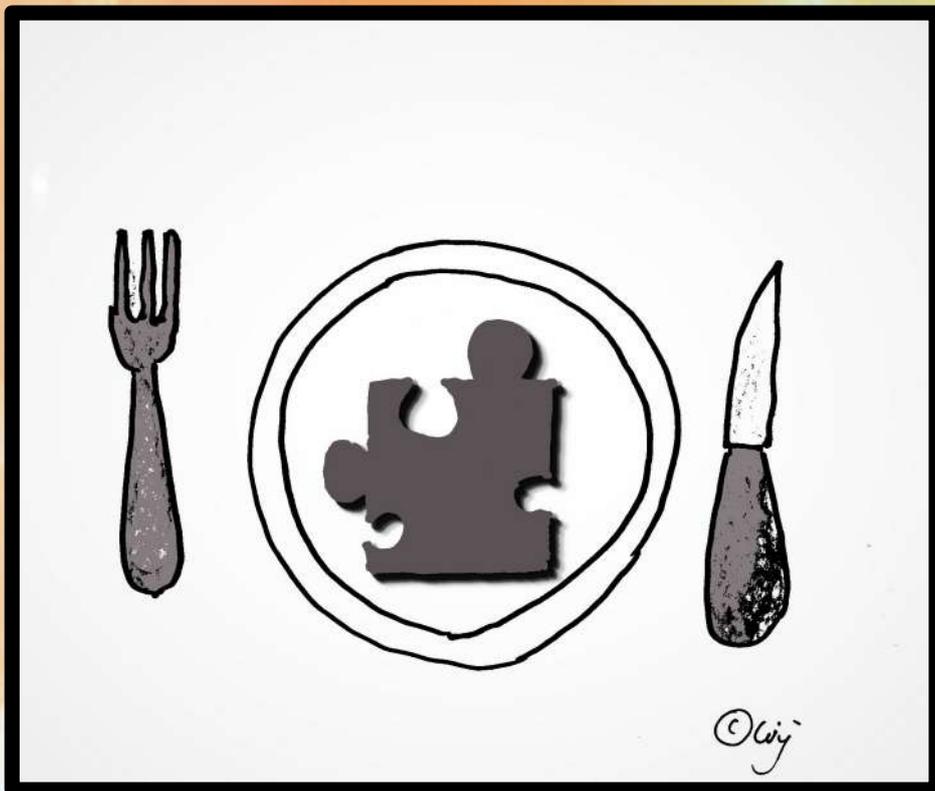
TAKING THINGS LITERALLY



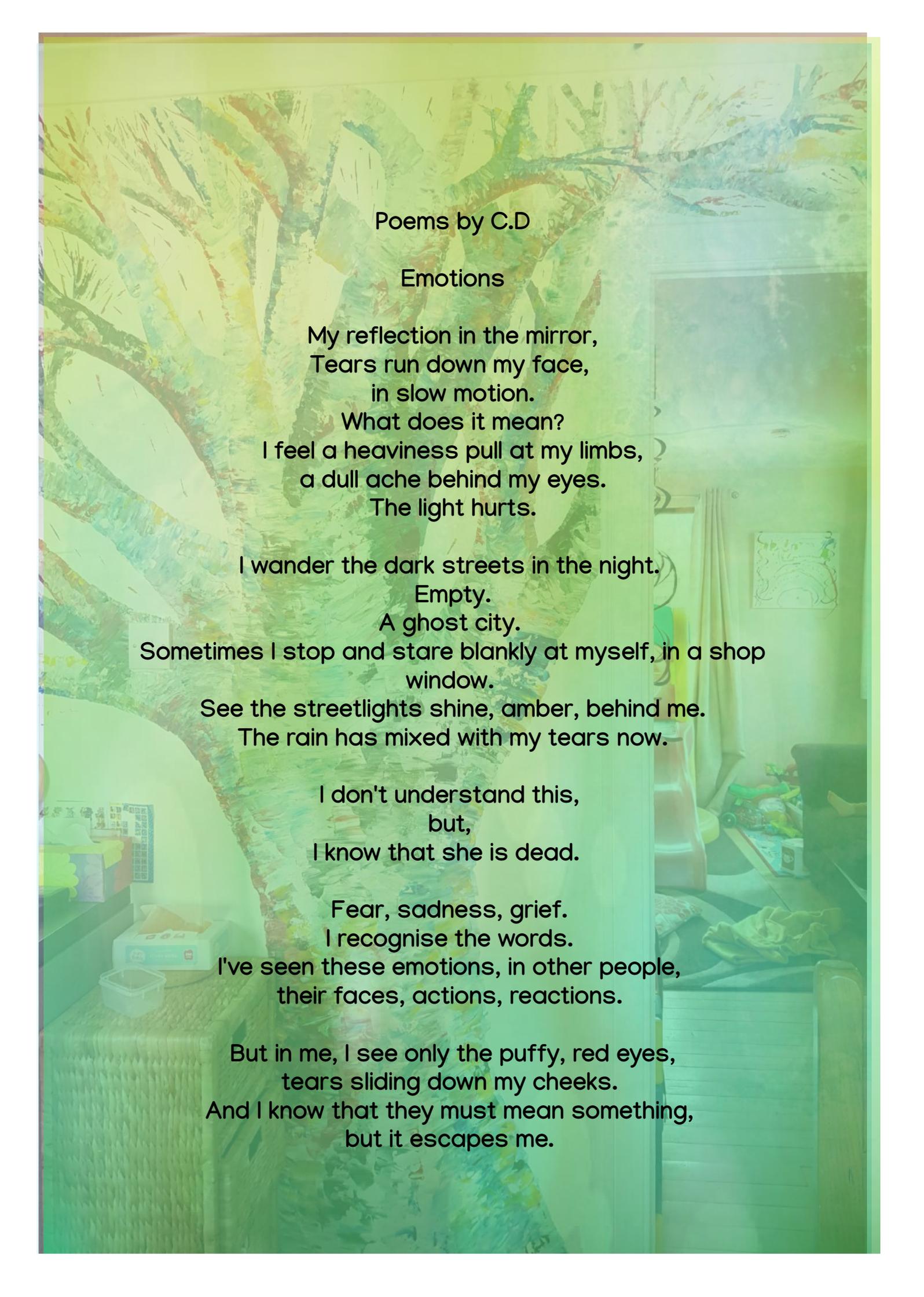
Brainwashing.



Headquarters.



Piecemeal.



Poems by C.D

Emotions

My reflection in the mirror,
Tears run down my face,
in slow motion.

What does it mean?
I feel a heaviness pull at my limbs,
a dull ache behind my eyes.
The light hurts.

I wander the dark streets in the night.
Empty.

A ghost city.

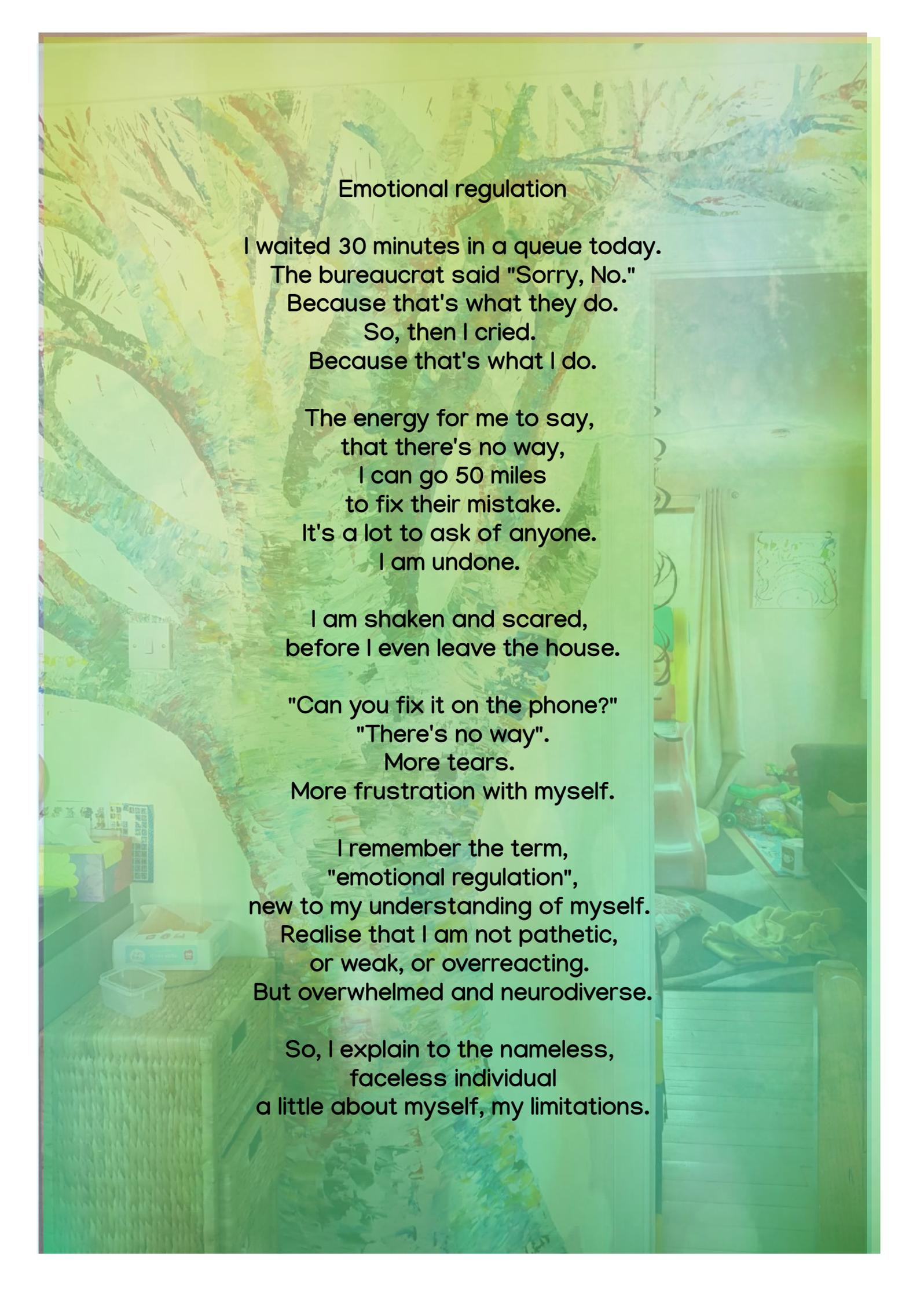
Sometimes I stop and stare blankly at myself, in a shop
window.

See the streetlights shine, amber, behind me.
The rain has mixed with my tears now.

I don't understand this,
but,
I know that she is dead.

Fear, sadness, grief.
I recognise the words.
I've seen these emotions, in other people,
their faces, actions, reactions.

But in me, I see only the puffy, red eyes,
tears sliding down my cheeks.
And I know that they must mean something,
but it escapes me.



Emotional regulation

I waited 30 minutes in a queue today.
The bureaucrat said "Sorry, No."
Because that's what they do.
So, then I cried.
Because that's what I do.

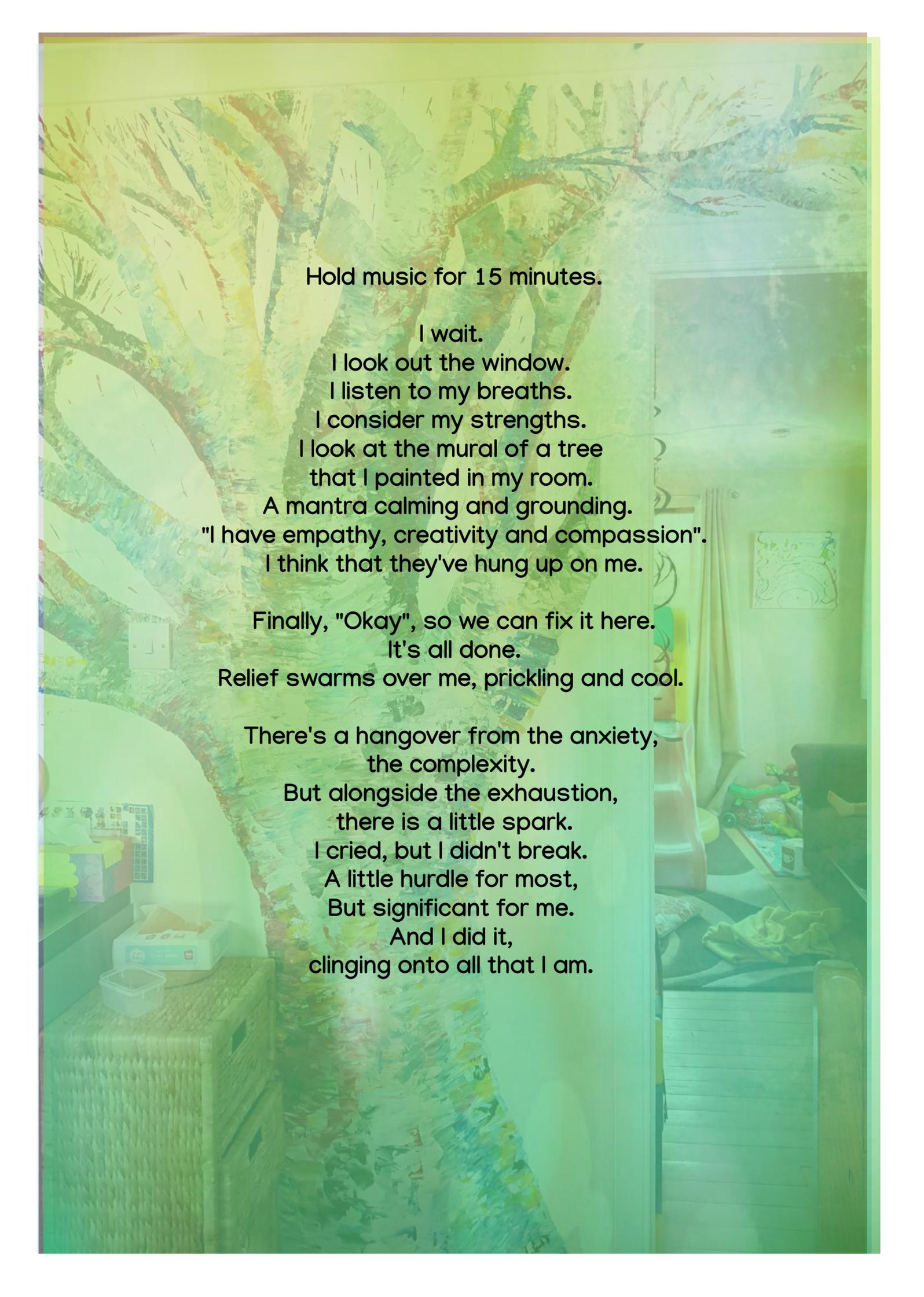
The energy for me to say,
that there's no way,
I can go 50 miles
to fix their mistake.
It's a lot to ask of anyone.
I am undone.

I am shaken and scared,
before I even leave the house.

"Can you fix it on the phone?"
"There's no way".
More tears.
More frustration with myself.

I remember the term,
"emotional regulation",
new to my understanding of myself.
Realise that I am not pathetic,
or weak, or overreacting.
But overwhelmed and neurodiverse.

So, I explain to the nameless,
faceless individual
a little about myself, my limitations.

The background image shows a room with a large, colorful mural of a tree on the wall. The tree has thick, textured branches and dense foliage in shades of green, yellow, and brown. In the foreground, there is a wicker chest with a white box and a clear container on top. To the right, a desk with a chair and a window with curtains are visible. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

Hold music for 15 minutes.

I wait.

I look out the window.

I listen to my breaths.

I consider my strengths.

I look at the mural of a tree
that I painted in my room.

A mantra calming and grounding.

"I have empathy, creativity and compassion".

I think that they've hung up on me.

Finally, "Okay", so we can fix it here.

It's all done.

Relief swarms over me, prickling and cool.

There's a hangover from the anxiety,
the complexity.

But alongside the exhaustion,
there is a little spark.

I cried, but I didn't break.

A little hurdle for most,

But significant for me.

And I did it,
clinging onto all that I am.

HELLO KITTY!

Everyone that knows me will know that *Breakfast At Tiffany's* is my favourite book ever.

I don't think there has ever been another author (outside Terrance Dicks who basically taught me to read) to have such a profound effect on me than Truman Capote, from the moment I first read *In Cold Blood* I was hooked – finally a voice I understood and – more importantly – believed in and quickly devoured everything and anything I could find by or about him. Yup, even *Murder By Death* on big, bulky VHS.

You could say I'm a wee bit of a fan.

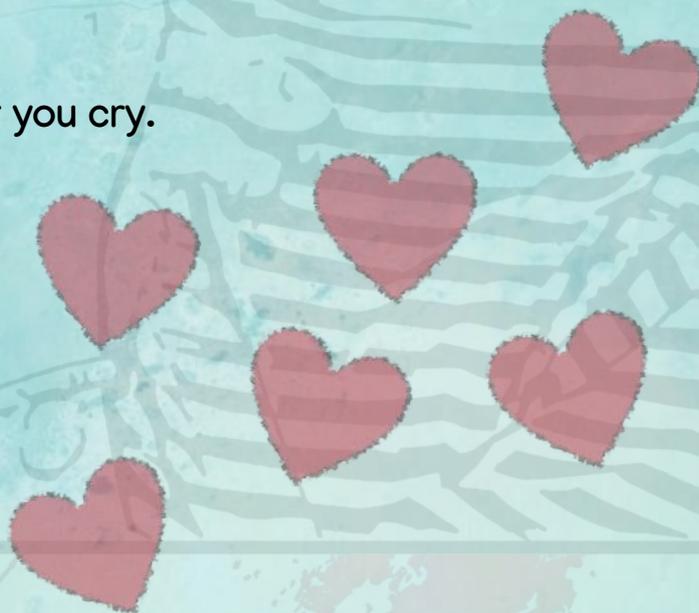
Looking back late last year I realised that it was this book that first introduced me to such life-shaping ideas as dating, relationships and, gulp, girls.

I was instantly smitten with Ms Holly Golightly and my teen, hormone raddled brain decided that she was the perfect girl, so I spent the next few years (decade?) trying to find the perfect embodiment of Capote's heroine. You see up until that point girls didn't really register on my radar as anything else other than folk I spoke to and the thought of being attracted to one was utterly terrifying.

And I can thank Nastassja Kinski for that.

In particular her portrayal of Irena Gallier in Paul Schrader's 1982 remake of *Cat People*.

But why? I hear you cry.



To explain this frankly bizarre – and fairly embarrassing – turn of events we have to go back in time to me as a small boy.

A small boy utterly obsessed with horror movies.

Seriously my first memory is from around 2 years old and it's not of my parents, it's of sneaking out of my cot, crawling into the living room and watching the 1931 Frankenstein from behind a chair.

Which I think says more about me than anything else really.

Anyway my obsession as you can tell started young, and helped along by my granddad my love of horror – and especially the Universal classics of the 30s and 40s was cemented.

And so I began to soak up other companies movies from the time as well as immersing myself in whatever literature about the genre I could find because you can never have too much information about your favourite thing.

Reading about these classics (usually in a book by Alan Frank or Leslie Halliwell who it seemed had the monopoly of horror works in the 70s) I came across a little RKO chiller called Cat People directed by Jacques Tourneur and starring Simone Simon that told the story of Irena Dubrovna, a newly-married Serbian fashion illustrator who becomes obsessed with the idea that she'll metamorphose into panther if she sits on the sofa and holds hands with her husband or something.

This bit of the plot was unimportant because I'd read it was a classic that had to be seen so that was enough for me.

I mean I could tell you the storyline, the running time and the cast list but as far as I was concerned it was actually just about a woman turning into a big cat and it was a classic because I'd been told it was.

And being a big horror fan meant learning and repeating these things. Many – many – years later during one of our drunken chats my wife Ro pointed out to me that the whole point of the first film is that it's an exploration of sexuality, sexual awakening and identity and I had to admit that I didn't actually realise that at the time but who can blame me? It was called 'Cat People' not 'Nervous Lady Becomes a Cat At The Thought of Kissing a Man'.

I'll come back to this later.

Jump forward to 1982 where, as a very serious 12 year old film fan I was getting rather excited about the amount of top quality movies getting released that year.

Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, John Carpenter's The Thing, Blade Runner, Halloween III: Season of the Witch, Conan The Barbarian, The Sword and The Sorcerer and The Dark Crystal were just some of the delights I had to not only look forward to (hopefully) seeing but also to read up and learn more about. Blade Runner and The Thing were a given as I already knew EVERYTHING about these being the directors biggest fan (be kind) but the one I was most excited about was Cat People.

I mean come on – it's director, Paul Schrader had written Taxi Driver (which I hadn't seen but had read how important a film it was), it was written by Alan Ormsby (whose film Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things was a cult classic, obviously I hadn't seen it but I had seen some photos from it and read how it was a low budget gem whatever that meant), Malcolm McDowell was in it (and who didn't love him as Alex Delarge in A Clockwork Orange? I did, or I would of if I'd seen it) as was Nastassja Kinski who I knew from the final Hammer film To The Devil A Daughter which I admit I'd not really been that interested in as everyone in the photos seemed a bit too grumpy and all wearing plaid sports jackets which was enough to put anyone off.

Oh yes and I read that it featured nudity so I thought better of it. I mean come on, what 12 year old boy watches horror movies for naked ladies?

Not me I can tell you.

So anyway, in no way being able to pass for 18 I had to find another way to see the movie, which is where our local video shop and it's ability to source screeners from across the pond came in, so it was on one fateful Saturday evening when my parents had gone out for the night – and left my sister at my grandparents – that I settled down to watch what would possibly be THE greatest and scariest horror remake ever.

An hour and 58 minutes later I was left shocked and shaking.

They'd taken a film about a lady that turned into a cat and made it about sex!

How very dare they!

I was expecting long lingering looks, stilted dialogue, scary shadows and a cat transformation not Malcolm McDowell trying to kiss his sister, nudity and a saucy lady getting eaten by a leopard.

But most of all I wasn't expecting that the boy-haired, librarian like, needy and nervous Nastassja Kinski would cause a huge hormonal explosion that by the film's climax would mean that for the first time ever I was aware of thoughts that weren't altogether PG rated or in any way related to movies.

Horror or otherwise.

Yes, I'm (very) embarrassed to admit it but I discovered girls via this film. And as much as the feeling it gave me in my tummy was nice the thought that if I ever met a (real) girl I liked and tried to kiss her the very fact that there was a good chance she'd turn into a huge black cat and eat me terrified me.

So I did what any 12 year old boy in that situation would do.

I ordered a Cat People poster and hung it above my bed so I could stare at it every night before I slept.

Partly in the hope that it would make the fear of girls go away but mainly because I reckoned if I wished hard enough Nastassja Kinski would step out of the poster and be my girlfriend.

Don't even think about taking the mickey.

You see when my autistic brain realises a thing that memory/definition of it becomes the default setting, so I equated girls I found attractive with slightly accented librarian types with dark secrets that may at some point attempt to eat me if upset.

And this isn't a metaphor, it's genuinely what I thought.

As you can probably guess, the rest of my teens were interesting to say the least.

So in the words of Simon Bates, thanks for listening and enjoy the film.

Bizarrely I actually ended up marrying a Scottish accented librarian but to be fair she hasn't tried to eat me.

Yet.

Grab your popcorn and get comfortable now as Andrew Moodie takes a look at....

COMING 2 AMERICA

It's funny to think that the last film I reviewed was *Bill and Ted Face the Music*, a sequel that came out ten years after the previous entry, with many of the main cast returning and its main criterion for existing being that nostalgic fondness for the original could lead millions of people to go and see it. The same applies to *Coming 2 America* in all three categories which, like *Bill and Ted*, isn't necessarily a bad thing but this type of sequel can go wrong so easily.

Set thirty-three years after the first film and with directing duties being competently handled by *Footloose* 2011 alumnus Craig Brewer, we find Prince Akeem (Eddie Murphy), his wife Lisa (Shari Headley) and their three daughters Meeka (Kiki Layne), Omma (Bella Murphy) and Tinashe (Akiley Love) all living happily in Zamunda. The prince seems to have done well with his family and bringing the fast-food restaurant 'McDowell's' to the kingdom. But problems arise with the death of his father Jaffe, the king of Zamunda (James Earl Jones), whose dying words reveal that Akeem has an illegitimate son named Lavelle (Jermaine Fowler) who was conceived during the previous visit to America while he was drugged.

Following a funeral complete with a speech by Morgan Freeman, Akeem and his best friend Semmi return to New York to find this long-lost son, bring him back to Africa, put him through a series of tests to see if he is worthy of the throne, and possibly marry him to the daughter of the neighbouring kingdom 'Nextdoria' led by General Izzi (Wesley Snipes).

Of course, when the son is found he is as far from royalty as you could expect. He lives in Queens with his mom and his uncle Reem (Tracy Morgan) – who prides himself on being the male figure in the son's life that Akeem was not.

It's safe to say that the Eddie Murphy people loved is back with the same likeable personality and is always entertaining to watch. Hall is very much on the same level, and even with his brief screentime, James Earl Jones manages to make talking about his imminent death funny. A lot of it is down to the way the actors deliver their lines, with and without the use of supposedly 'African' accents. Snipes is fine but assumes a voice that comes across as trying too hard to be a harmless, cartoonish villain. On the other hand (and I admit it may be intentional) most of the new characters are rather annoying, especially Morgan as Reem - every time he opens his mouth it's just one rant after another about how he and Javelle are New York people and not royals.



Let's get the obvious out of the way, there is nothing here that anyone going into this film couldn't see coming. When the plot is going through the conventions of its genre it's easy just to sit there giving the film only half your attention until something that's actually funny turns up. Even with two of the original film's writers involved (Barry W. Blaustein and David Sheffield) the jokes just aren't as good. They also try to throw in some modern touches such as referring to the preacher from the first film as a sexist, and the rule that only a man can become king, but I don't think this really needed to be spelled out, it would be obvious after a while anyway. Jermaine Stegall has created a bland score and is under the delusion that a repetitive, near-identical string of hip-hop and rap will be good enough, but it isn't. Fortunately, Gladys Knight shows up in the middle of the funeral to sing 'Midnight Train to Georgia' (but with some new words about leaving Zamunda). A similar joke comes up the end when the film's original band, 'Randy Watson and the Sexual Chocolate', sing 'We Are Family'. Watson changes a part of the chorus to be about his band. They were one call-back that I didn't need.

If you want to pinpoint how this sequel does nothing to outshine the original, look no further than the men in the barbershop. Yes, it's the same actors playing them, even Murphy as the Jewish man, but something just isn't clicking as well as it did the first time. This comes full circle with the preacher who has his outrageous personality and energy sucked out of him and is just left with his unique voice. That was definitely the biggest disappointment for me here – I was hoping this character would give me something to remember but he was just part of the 'fan service' for those who love the original (and where he truly stood out). If you're going to bring back old characters, it might be a good idea to let them do some decent stuff. At least Semmi and the daughters get to fight Snipes in the end, even if it's ridiculously one-sided. Don't get too excited about it, it's amusing but only passable.

What you can be certain of is that Coming 2 America gives what it promises, but the feelings the audience has about it once it's over will depend on the individual viewer. It's nothing very special and it won't be a key part of the legacy Eddie Murphy will leave behind, but it will serve as a reminder to the world, especially the under-30s, that this talented individual didn't spend all his career voicing a scene-stealing CGI donkey.



ARTITUDE!

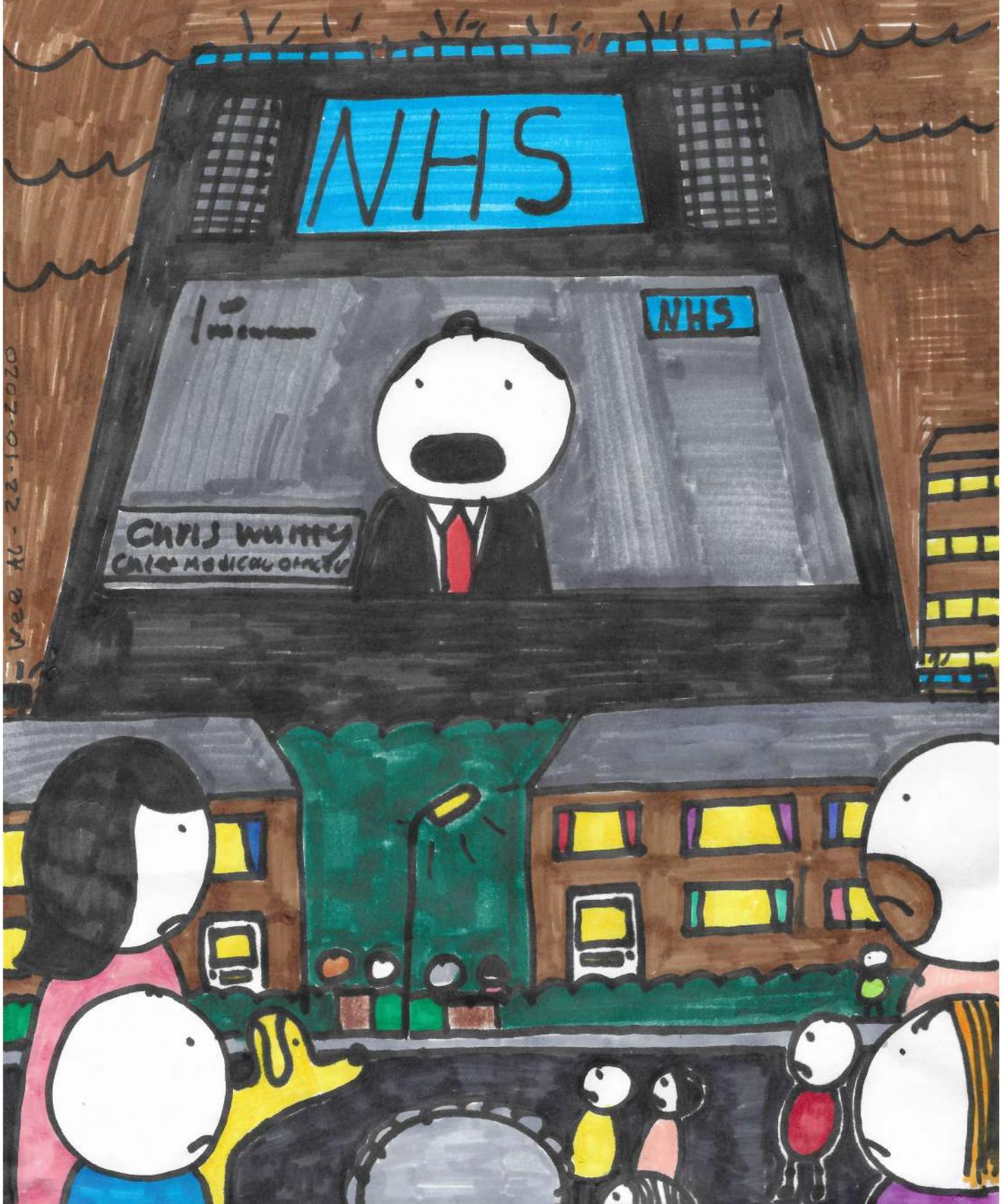
I'm Alistair Cowell (a.k.a Wee Al) and I attend Abbie Resource Day Centre in Glasgow. I have been creating comic stories there since September 2017 and to date I have completed 33 comic stories over three years, which covered issues including bin lorries, strict teachers, dogs and rail fare increases.

Here for your enjoyment is my drawing, 'United Kingdom Becomes the NHS State', describing what I have felt during the first lockdown in spring last year.

I created the picture in October last year to describe the nature of the stringent lockdown that occurred in Spring last year. The lockdown meant that people could only leave their homes for very limited purposes, citing the 'Police State'. But with that and NHS being mentioned everywhere you go, it is fair to say that the United Kingdom did become the 'NHS State'.

The picture shows a large TV screen with a large NHS logo at the top and blue lights flashing. It is showing a public information film featuring the Chief Medical Officer for England. We see everyone leaving their houses to see the public information film from the large NHS television screen. It was in the evening (just before 8pm), with the city glow shining on the very clouded sky.

UNITED KINGDOM BECOMES THE
N.H.S STATE...



0207.01.22 - 74 221

SPECTRUM SUPERSTARS!



Name: Anne Solway Hegerty AKA The Governess

Age: 62

Occupation: Professional quizzer, television personality and "chaser" on the ITV game show The Chase.

AUTITUDE NEEDS YOU!



Well that's it for issue 3!
Hope you've enjoyed it!
Don't forget to send your contributions to
autitude@scottishautism.org