

"TIME WON'T FORGET ABOUT ME..."

FREE LUNCH

CLAUDIA CLARK

ISSUE NO. 10



THE STAFF

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BRIDGET FONDA

MODEL, IT-GIRL
I THOUGHT I WOULD HELP OUT CLAUDIA SINCE SHE REALLY WANTS TO BE A BLOGGER. I HELPED GUIDE HER THROUGH MANY PHOTOS, TO MAKE SURE EACH ARE PLEASING TO THE EYE AND ENJOYABLE.

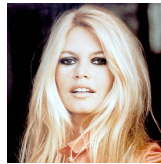


SONGS TO PLAY WHILE READING

MUSIC TRACK LISTING / Love in Portofino by Fred Buscaglione / Our Day Will Come by Ruby & The Romantics/ It's Magic by Dinah Washington
*BONUS SONG/E Se Domani by Mina

BRIGITTE BARDOT

INTERNATIONAL ICON
PARDON MY ENGLISH, TRUTHFULLY I DO NOT HAVE A TASTE FOR IT. THOUGH I THOUGHT I WOULD SAY HELLO, AND LET EVERYONE KNOW HOW PROUD I AM OF CLAUDIA AND HER EFFORTS TO MAKE THIS ALL COME TOGETHER, BONSOIR!



BRIDGET JONES

AMERICAN SWEETHEART
MAKE SURE YOU ALL COME HERE AND DOWNLOAD A NEW LOOK-BOOK EVERY MONTH! OR WHENEVER CLAUDIA PUTS A NEW ONE UP ON THE WEB! I SPENT A LOT OF TIME CONSULTING HER ON ETHICS AND THIS DESIGN, EMOTIONALLY MORE THAN ARTISTICALLY.



FROM THE EDITOR



With this attempt, I hope you all get a closer look at who I am. This Look Book is a diary of sorts, creating a little world month after month to gently remind me of life's beauty and how important it is to take a breath and jot it all down. Throughout every page, you'll digest my two cents on just about everything. I've learned it is important to romanticize all the occasions in life, from work to pleasure, I seek only joy.

We wonder what's the price for joy, simple joy. Is it bought for one and sold for two? How much of a deal am I getting? With Blahniks on my feet, it's safe to say I've been around so I know joy couldn't come cheap though I'd love to know the real cost.

Until next time.

BEST REGARD

Claudia Clark

FREE LUNCH

CLAUDIA CLARK

"I AM AT THE MOMENT WRITING A LENGTHY INDICTMENT AGAINST OUR CENTURY. WHEN MY BRAIN BEGINS TO REEL FROM MY LITERARY LABORS, I MAKE AN OCCASIONAL CHEESE DIP."

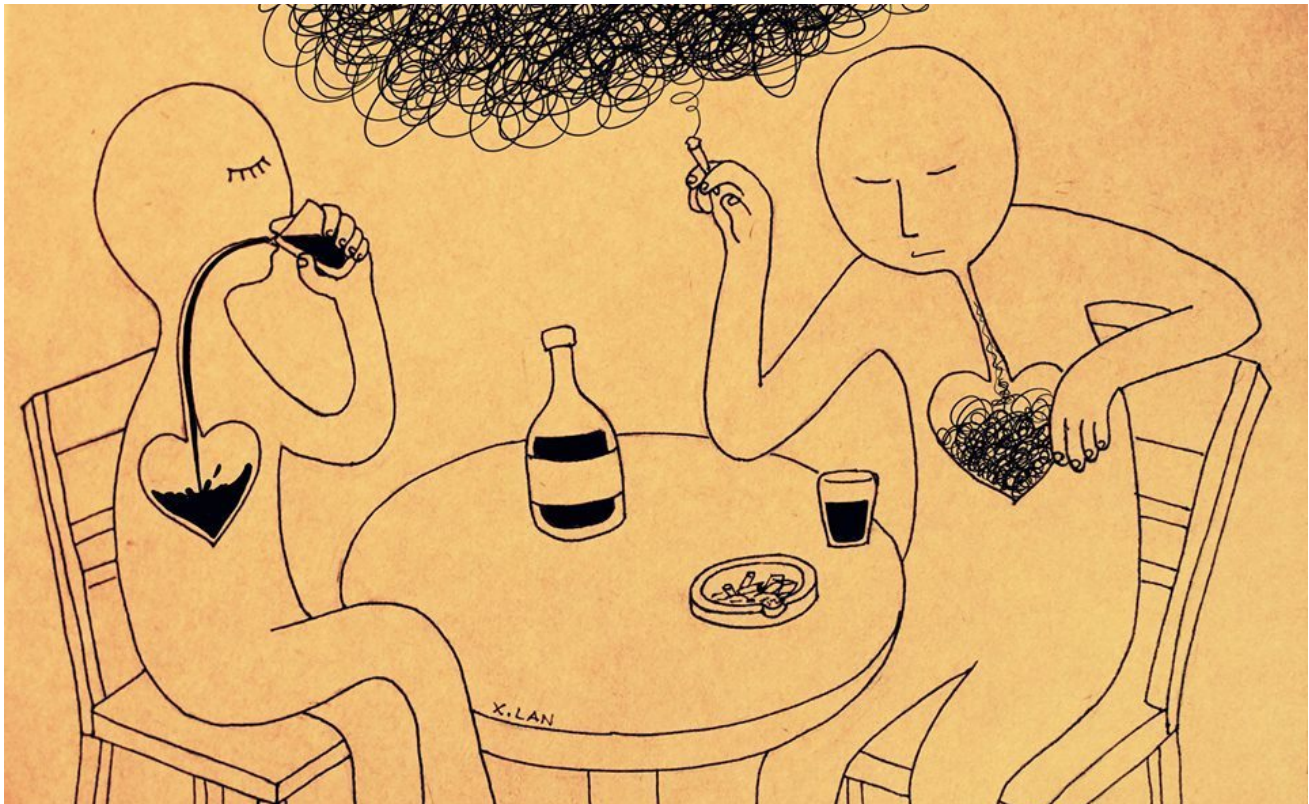
Weeks passed by and I had yet to really notice. Time had up and left, forgotten all about me. There was a fear that history was to be made without any mention of my name, accomplishments, no sort of recognition or acknowledgment and I would sit alone in a park, fiddling with my thumbs, flipping through pages of a random story - critiquing every word, rewriting every sentence in my mind, wishing my name was on the work.

I was upset, and often. Like many times, sitting alone questioning why no man was worth a damn, I would nod my head to the fact that there were many men worthy of many things, but how come none of them have spoken to me. I wasn't walking around aimlessly through life - messing with hearts, tampering with mens emotions for sport, why was I the victim?

The last date I sat through, I was lectured into thinking that we were all forced to be where we are due to circumstances and

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will remain that way, unconsciously living our lives from directions given to us as children. “This is why I’m a writer.” He told me. Without a reason to fight for change, there is no reason to live— time will forget all about you. I smiled at the idea of it all, the idea that I could be favored if I was to keep my chin up and nose even higher. Much too afraid to mention my wins and if it ever came to losses, I would be sure to spill out ever woo. If you fight capitalism with capitalism, then what do you fight life with? All the

random things that come with it, heartbreak, wins and losses, I have felt like I’ve been lied to since the very beginning, I even sit down and date someone for free lunch. Not because I am unable to pay for it, not because I want to use someone- but because I am a user.

We use until we are useless, for many days, especially in the summer, there was a time when I felt I had it all. Mentally sharp, emotionally sound, I was in the best shape of my life, every item in my closet was perfectly curated down to the bras.

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"PULL UP A CHAIR. TAKE A TASTE. COME
JOIN US. LIFE IS SO ENDLESSLY DELICIOUS."

ABOVE
Inward.

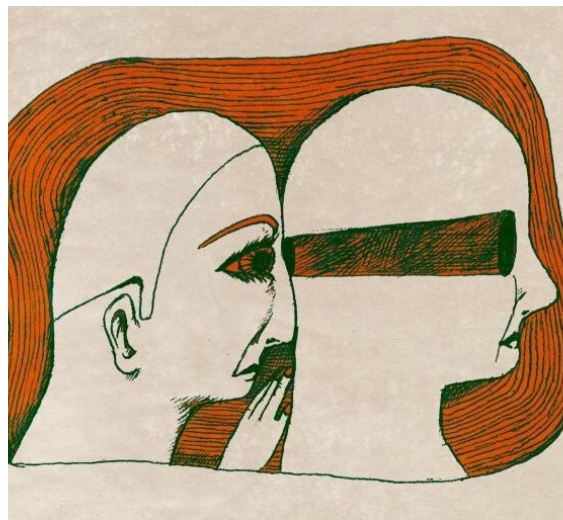
BELOW
Outward.



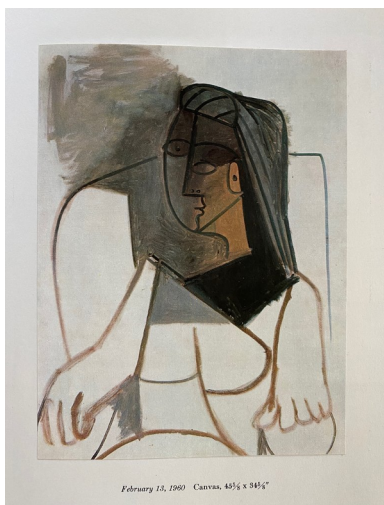
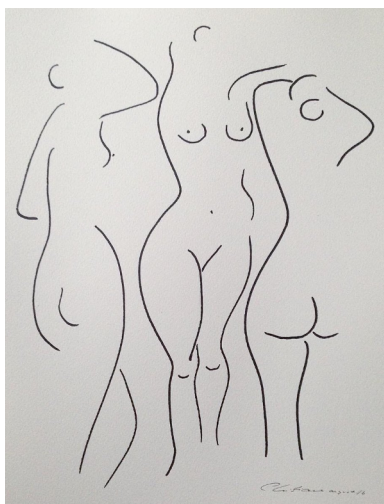
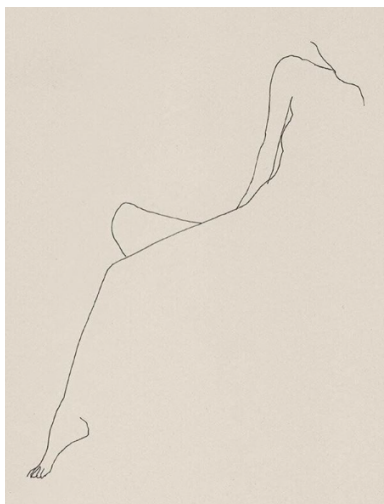
I found a new perfume that aligned with my personality. I realized I had become like my old friend, Rosa.

Rosa would always say, “since the world hasn’t stopped spinning, we might as well continue on making the impossible, possible.” She was a girl I knew who could pull off any trick that would have everyone hooked. Her wheelhouse was over-abundant and it came with high demands. My fascination with her started in high-school. Growing up, it was a challenge fitting myself into a satisfying inner-circle to the point I had to look further in the school district. Rosa had the style of a woman, way beyond her teenage years and I wanted to know everything, how her boyfriend became her boyfriend, why so many others were willing

to fight to the death over her, and also what I found so appealing. She had a wonderful Myspace page, I copied her layouts until it was no longer cool to login. Her favorite bands, became my favorite bands, I bought the same shoes as her, I ate the same lunch, read the same Tumblr blogs, and liked the same guy. There was a time when we became close enough for me to share some of my own thoughts, she took them in as if they were her own. She would devour my opinions and spit them out back at her other friends, including her boyfriend. When it came to her boyfriend, I swore I liked him more than she did. The three of us began spending time together, eating lunches, moseying after-school, weekend outings, just the three of us.



CLAUDIA CLARK





CALL ME WHAT YOU WANT

BUT...

DON'T CALL ME WHEN I'M EATING...

“

“THERE IS NO LOVE SINCERER THAN THE LOVE OF FOOD.”.

The three of us began spending time together, eating lunches, moseying after-school, weekend outings, just the three of us. At a party, Rosa's boyfriend and I had spent a little time on our own one night,

things had gotten a little out of hand with all of my staring and girly giggles I would throw in his direction. Rosa found us kissing behind the house of the party. She was devastated but had no words for us, no rocks were thrown,

not even spit.

I had felt like I lucked out, I had gotten away with murder and could live the rest of my teenage years in bliss. When summer came, I was invited to the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts by him and his family. During the trip there were many uncomfortable moments I had to hurdle over. For some reason I was forced to come of age, emotionally at least. The parents would ask me questions I could barely wrap my head around. I would hold my answers in until the spotlight was off of me. I was reminded that I was once that girl who couldn't confide in anyone, the one who was too shy to play with all the other girls in the playground, reading poetry and opting out of listening to a cd player because I had no taste for pop stars with 15 minutes of fame. I was sun-drenched, crushing over a boyfriend that wasn't mine, it was the first time I had ever been to New England, let alone on a row boat somewhere off where parental guidance couldn't be found. Those voices of reason

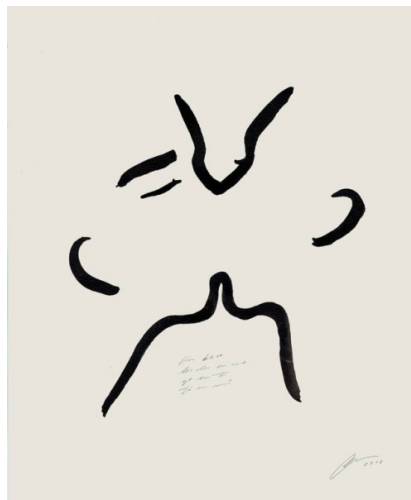


ABOVE

"Treat yourself, don't trick yourself."

BELOW

The kiss.



were too far away for me to hear them. I was isolated from the judgmental 40-somethings, their minds could no longer understand me. I was away and at peace, it was a gift. For some reason, he picked me; I thought about it the whole way there and up until the moment he asked to kiss me again, we sat there, practically motionless, letting the waves of the lake rock us until I grew a little queasy. I felt so alive when I was with him. I got used to the feeling of guilt, I thrived in

it, when I was in his arms I used those emotions to lift me up - I found the bright side of it all. Rosa was incredible, she could bounce back from this no problem, he was my defining moment, I couldn't find another guy as easily as she would.

I blamed myself for not resisting all of it, I was such a climber who had a taste for more than I bargained for, the hunger was irrepressible. I wanted to move to Paris, New York, pilgrimage South America, I wanted to love hard and fall flat on my face if I had to.

None of this stopped the growing guilt when looking at him, because of him I was an evil bitch. There was a special place for people like me, it was one thing to be better than everyone else, to act like you had the world on a string but to take without apologies, now that was the lowest. Why did it feel so good? At the time, I was completely fulfilled, satiated with a belly full of memories. There was no sign of letting up either, I felt secure with him, confident that he would never do to me what he did to Rosa. I was the

"HUMOR KEEPS US ALIVE. HUMOR AND FOOD. DON'T FORGET FOOD. YOU CAN GO A WEEK WITHOUT LAUGHING."

exception to the rule. I was an urge that couldn't be stopped, it was fate, him and I. We were to be together to learn, leave our home towns and become something, a walking tell-all, I thought. "Time wouldn't forget about me, no way."

Several months had went by and I found myself in a routine, what I considered a romance became nothing but air-dried conversation with poor eye contact. The connection I had was lost, in and out - fizzling by the second. We would hold hands when

Rosa passed by in the hallways. She would smile at the two of us, particularly me, and I would feel her judgment piercing at me as if she commanded me to answer to her. "How does it feel? Have you really found what you're looking for?" Coincidentally, these thoughts dragged on until I was twenty, and they hung around further until my mid-twenties. It's funny how that works, you could be a full adult with a lingering aftertaste of teen angst.

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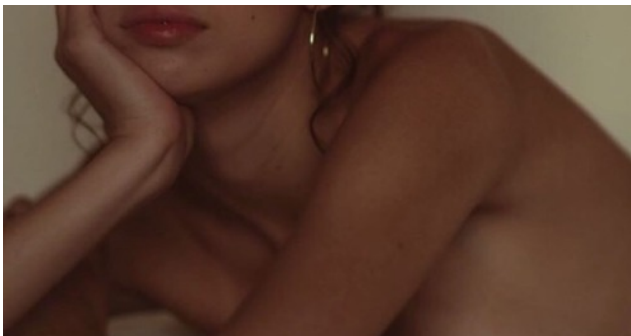


LEFT
Hips.

RIGHT
Legs.



BELOW
Lips.





As time went on, I forgot all about Rosa until after college. We both ended up at the same company right outside of town. We spoke over a lunch break and it sparked a new friendship between the two of us. There was a time when we went for drinks one night. We sat there and laughed and choked, about the years we fought over a boy, a time that once felt like a disaster. It was amazing how new problems would face us, we never saw that coming, an idea that we would let this go and have new woes to cry over. Rosa expressed to me how she feared she would never get out of our home town. She was trapped and she knew any day now she would meet a guy, get engaged, become pregnant and that would be that. I would see her in passing, she would become too busy for leisure and the rest of us would fade in the backgrounds of her mind. It was a grim way of looking at things, I thought, honest, but grim. "You could always quit and move." I said to her, knowing that I could too but none of us did. There was no force that propelled us to seek further, why would it have to be a love interest that finally forces us to move away? For some, college, for others, a job, but never for yourself. We are where we are at based on circumstance.

As luck would have it, Rosa quit her job and moved away, she found someone from Minnesota who "checks off the boxes" for her. By the time she left, she was already

"Rosa quit, so will I!"



pregnant. It inspired me to leave as well. I thanked her once again, for helping me - pushing me through a lull I couldn't seem to get through on my own. She was the formidable helping hand over the years. When I was afraid to date, she handed over

her boyfriend, when I was afraid to move away from home, she did it first. It was a terrifying thing to be flipping coins and randomly pointing your finger on a map repeatedly, until I was satisfied with the new location.





CONT'D

CLAUDIA CLARK

I To go somewhere for inspiration, only? When did pleasure become this important to me, is it okay to live your life a moron, with the only thing you long for being flowers, fine fabrics, romance and food? I said yes. I said yes to everything and never looked back. I was an ocean crab popping out of its shell and dashing through the bottom of the ocean for another replacement, searching for a new shell with more wiggle room.

One day, I was searching for my free lunch. It was a day unlike any other when I became self-made. I was sitting alone at an outdoor restaurant with a seaside view. There was a pleasant breeze that came and went, off and on, notes of assorted flowers were brought to my attention, a round of scents that inspired me, Gardenia, Lily of the Valley, Jasmine, Rose, Freesia and others I couldn't put my finger on. I ordered a meal that was too large to champion on my own, my eyes were bigger than my

stomach. I had a large appetite for the best on the menu, a table for one, eating what I could, breathing in slowly in no hurry at all. Sometime between a bite of an omelet and sip of white wine, my epiphany struck. I was no longer in transit, my thoughts were calm as the ocean in front of me. I was no longer rocking myself back and forth, trying to push out some random urge or nameless emotion. The world became small in my eyes, sitting around made things



clear as crystal, I was exactly where I should be, sitting down, breathing, thankful for life with nothing else to ask for. My hand was no longer out, taking constantly, food, money, boyfriends, ideas, designs that could lead me to a place that is easier on the eyes. In a figurative sense “Hopping the next train” every six months had led to a circus, a life on the run, I was in much need of fresh air and solitude.

The last thing I could ever wish for was to be sitting there, wandering what I've come to, questioning if age had gotten the best of me, have I peaked already and now only have the time to sit and eat and ponder dreary thoughts and lullabies. I had hope in one hand, optimism in the other.

My own luck was with me, it brought a smile that was larger than the bill. I would then head to my new home, an apartment that wasn't sought after based on desperation or hurriedness. I turned the key to see

furniture that was bought with patience, curated artwork that hung on the walls, I was attuned to my real inhibitions, no longer dragging my feet, walking on fumes, thinking about my efforts at the workplace or if my romantic relationship is "getting the best of me."

No, not at all, I was alive again, eating like I've never tasted food at all, feasting like every meal was free.



CLAUDIA CLARK



"I AM A BETTER PERSON WHEN I HAVE LESS
ON MY PLATE."

ABOVE

That day, I looked fate in the
eyes.

JUNE 2021

FREE LUNCH

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