

Master of Fine Arts Thesis

*Fostering a Fantasy*

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Abstract:

The intention of my work is twofold: to illuminate where there has been or is an absence of love in one's life and to convey the impact of such loveless relationships. Research revolves around aspects of societal norms in Western culture, and how variables such as gender and beauty affect the development of intimate relationships. While my own experiences form the foundation of this thesis, texts by bell hooks, Elaine Scarry, and Diane Ackerman will also be drawn upon. The use of glass as a recurring material will be explored as well, as its properties are critical to the conceptual weight of the work.

I.  
The Fantasy



I mourned for my father long before he died.

He was an unhealthy man, and he had been for most of my life. My earliest memories of him are much like my later memories of him—he was generally sedentary; he was emotionally unavailable. There was an impenetrable barrier that surrounded my father’s heart. Trying to reach him was like trying to scale a glass wall.

It wasn’t until I moved away from home that he began to express affection for me in the form of words. I can count how many times my father said ‘I love you’ on one hand. The sentiment sounded foreign coming from him; I wonder if it sounded just as foreign to him when I said it back.

The news came a few years later. It was four in the morning, and I awoke to the blaring of my phone. “Your dad’s in a coma. He’s in the hospital,” were my mother’s shaky words. *Still alive*, was the unspoken yet present sentiment. But I knew in that moment that he was already gone.

It feels like I am breaking a taboo by discussing my conflicted relationship with my dead father. It would be far more acceptable—and easier—to say that he loved me and that we had a healthy connection. For a time, I did exactly that. Lying about the nature of our relationship hurt me more than I realized.

Fostering a fantasy is draining. It leaves no room for healing.

The first time you came to me was in the living room.

All four of us were there, gathered in a home that no longer exists. You were speaking, but it was the strangest thing, because no one was acknowledging you. When I opened my mouth to ask why you were being ignored, my mother stopped me.

"Don't," she said. Her eyes flashed a warning.

"To say it makes it real."

We first learn to love as children. Our homes—whether they are happy households or spaces of neglect and abuse—are where our initial experiences of love occur. The relationships we have with our parents or caregivers are critical for our understanding of love. When it is lacking, we struggle to understand what it means. It is a confusion that can follow us into adulthood. The cyclical nature of lovelessness is an unspoken tragedy in our society. It begins in our childhood homes.

Many of us have heard of the term ‘daddy issues’. It is a label used to describe someone whose problems with men—usually in the romantic sense—stem from a tumultuous relationship with their father. This stereotype falls unevenly on women; rarely does one hear of a man with similar struggles. The truth is that these issues are more relevant for men than for women. Boys who grow up in environments that are lacking in love become men who are unable to love properly, who then raise children that suffer from the same inability. Their sons perpetuate this dysfunction and their daughters become women with ‘daddy issues’, and so the cycle continues.<sup>1</sup>

My work explores this dysfunction, addressing feelings of childhood neglect and isolation. The kind of relationship I had with my father is a common one. He was a detached person—he rarely showed any emotion other than anger. His affections were rare, both to my sister and I as well as to my mother. Hugs from him were a monumental experience in my household. I can recall my parents holding hands a grand total of one time.

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<sup>1</sup> hooks, bell. *All About Love: New Visions*. New York, NY: Harper, 2000. 23.

The relationship my parents had was an especially confusing experience for me. As I observed their lackluster interactions, I was simultaneously watching movie after movie which showed an altogether different version of romance. In reality, I saw love as bland and unremarkable. In the world of make believe, love was a fireworks display, full of passionate kisses, blooming, crimson roses, and glittering gowns in silver and gold. It was not real and yet it was right in front of me, glowing from the screen of an old TV. Right on the other side of the glass.

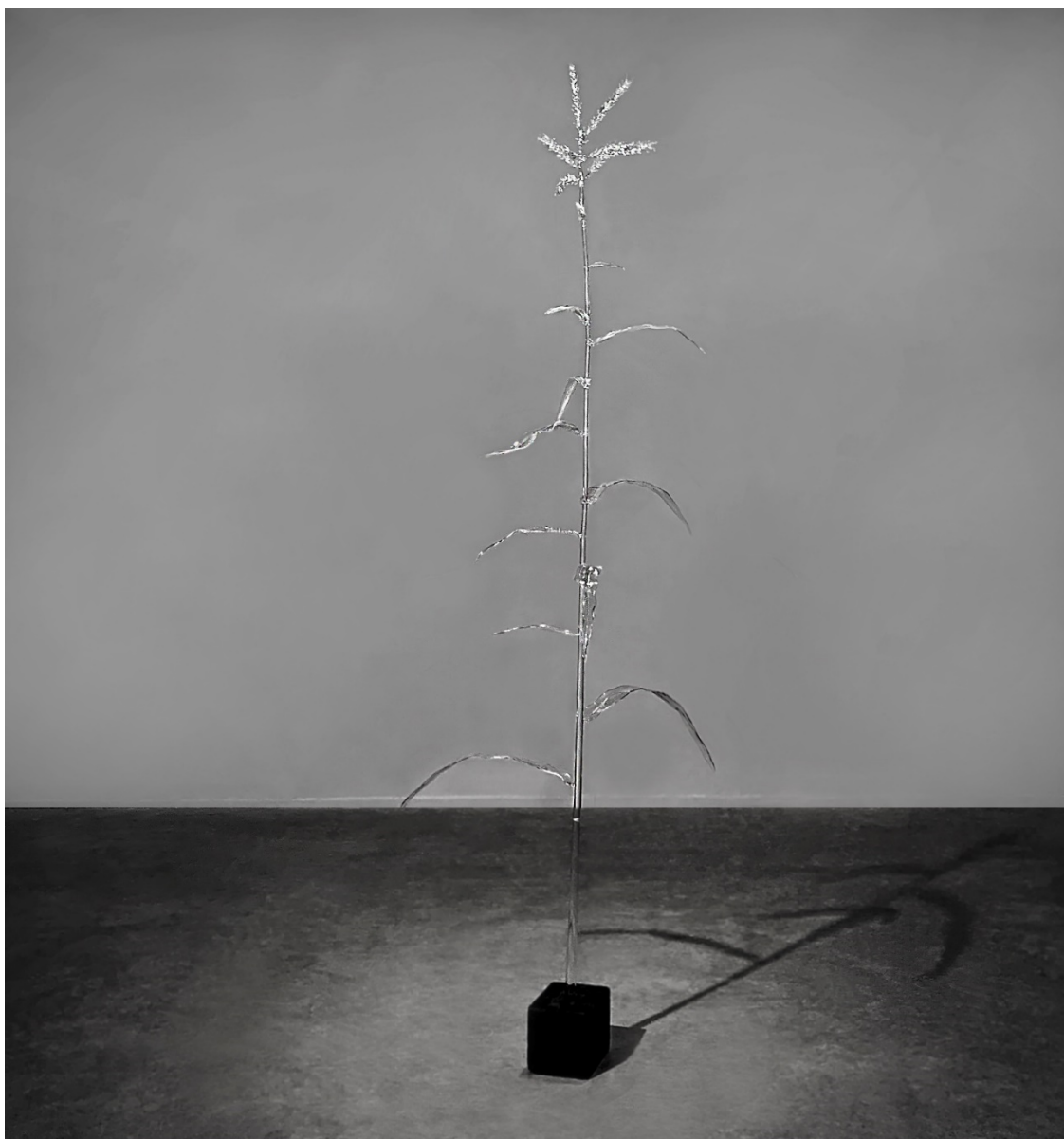
That fantasy extended into the rest of my world as well, as my surroundings were as dull as the relationships I observed. I grew up in rural Illinois in a small town, one defined by its endless cornfields and consistent gray skies. It was the antithesis of the fairy tale realms where adventure and mystery lurked behind every corner, where magic was as common as the cracks in the sidewalk. The cornfields were suffocating—a sea of prison bars holding me and everyone I knew in monotony. I had the daily task of superimposing a sense of wonder onto a dreary existence. My world of make-believe was beautiful, but I couldn't share it with anyone else. I felt isolated in my desperation for something *more*.

*A Lone Stalk* stands in the center of a room. Made entirely of glass, its jewel-like mystery compels or beckons. Its glass leaves are paper thin; the tassel at the top catches the lights and it, along with the narrow stem, casts a long, translucent shadow. At over six feet tall, the piece towers over most who dare to draw near to it. Few do.

When translated into glass, a common and familiar cornstalk becomes otherworldly. It is a magical object in its transparency and fragility, ghostly in its solitude. It reflects the sensation of isolation I experienced as a child in a rural town. *A*



*Lone Stalk*, removed from the multitude of rows and its usual landscape, becomes extraordinary.



*'A Lone Stalk', glass, 75" x 24" x 18"*

The second time you came to me was in the kitchen.

You were serving us food that you had cooked yourself, which immediately tipped me off that it was a dream because you never did that. You were smiling—also unusual—as you offered to clean dishes before we were even done with them. “Don’t be silly,” we said. “Eat with us.”

You did, and it was the most pleasant family dinner we’d ever had. We talked about school, the neighborhood, last Sunday’s sermon. You refilled mom’s iced tea and asked if we’d like seconds.

None of us mentioned the fact that you were dead.

Neither the physical landscape nor the emotional one I grew up in matched the romanticism I associated with love. I often wondered why my parents weren't like the fairy tale couples I saw on the screen. I learned later in life that my father grew up in an extremely toxic and unloving household. It is no wonder, then, that he became a man confused about love and its importance. It is also no wonder that I would inherit that confusion and carry it for most of my life. In her book 'All About Love: New Visions', bell hooks discusses these patterns, revealing how tragic yet common they are. Many of us go our entire lives without realizing that the cause of our negative behaviors stem from a lack of love—behaviors we unconsciously learned from our parents.<sup>2</sup> I have only recently begun to understand this cyclical nature of lovelessness, using art as the vehicle for addressing this topic. Creating is reflecting. It serves as a starting point for healing.

*One Day* consists of three clear, cast glass intravenous bags. They are suspended above at head-height, dangling together like a chandelier. Rather than tubes providing life sustaining liquids, glass formed into the shape of icicles hangs from them. Strung up with minimal wire, the entire piece is cold and surreal.

My father was in a coma before he passed, and the number of IV bags created reflects that time. Three 1000 mL bags per day is the approximate amount of liquid an adult patient in a comatose state requires to live. I spent over three days with my family waiting while my father, whose body temperature had been medically lowered to prevent swelling, was slowly warmed. We were told this was highly unlikely to work due to his

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<sup>2</sup> hooks, 8

condition, but we pretended all the same. I remember staring at the IV bags as they would slowly deflate, waiting for the inevitable. They were liquid hourglasses that I could not stop.





*'One Day', cast and frameworked glass, dimensions variable*

While my father remained comatose, I spent my nights sleeping on the floor of the waiting room of the Intensive Care Unit. The space was so cold; it felt as though I had carried the December air inside with me and was unable to expel it from my lungs. I developed a fever. I dreamt I burned a hole in the waiting room floor in my sleep, incinerating the blankets, the tiles, and the wood beneath. It was a strange heat that stayed with me when I held my father's hand the next morning, trying to warm his fingers.

This feverish memory inspired the piece *The Waiting Room Floor*. A four-foot by four-foot section of tiled floor has been carved by a silhouette—a shadow that has burned straight through the tile and into the wood. The piece is the memory of heat proclaiming the reality of cold. Nothing runs hot forever, but imprints remain.



*'The Waiting Room Floor', burned wood and tile, 4" x 48" x 48"*

The third time you came to me was at the playground.

We were outside of my old grade school, next to the swing set which faced an expanse of grass. In my memory that field seemed to stretch on forever; in this dream, it no longer felt so big. The border which we were told not to pass—the dark, forbidden tree line—was well within reach. My friends and I used to make up stories about what lived in those woods. Fantastical unicorns and fierce dragons; silly trickster gnomes and snakes that could talk.

The Devil.

I sat on a swing and began to gently kick my legs. You joined me, taking the swing on my left.

The chains creaked as we slowly swayed.



Progress begins with dialogue. To discuss love, we must first agree upon what, precisely, love is. In *A Natural History of Love*, Diane Ackerman reveals just how inhibited we are by love and its nebulous definition.<sup>3</sup> We speak about love with such great variance that it can hold so much weight as to mean absolutely everything or so little sustenance that it means absolutely nothing at all. “I love you,” we say breathlessly to someone we adore, an exhilarating confession that puts our hearts on the line. “I love your haircut,” we say to an acquaintance because we know we should, and we don’t really mean it, and we don’t really care.

bell hooks defines love as ‘the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth’<sup>4</sup>. I agree with this definition. It removes the popular notion of love as being unintentional, one that is inherent in parents and their children, between siblings, friends, and those in romantic relationships. Love is an action, one that is constantly evolving. In all the discussions I’ve had with my peers and family members on this subject, everyone seems to feel the same. Love requires effort.

Why is it so challenging, then, to accept this as the definition of love? For many of us, it is difficult to recognize a description that would expose the truth that many of their relationships either are or were lacking in love. We want to believe that all our relationships are loving, but if love is solely a nurturing exertion, then it cannot exist alongside exploitation. It cannot thrive in the same space as neglect and abuse.

Love needs air to breathe. Cruelty suffocates it.

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<sup>1</sup> Ackerman, Diane. *A Natural History of Love*. New York, NY: Random House, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> hooks, 5

"I regret not trying to change things," you eventually said.  
I dragged my feet on the ground so that I would come to a stop. When I  
looked at you, you were looking away. Towards the trees.  
"What do you mean?" I asked.  
"I wish I had done more. I regret it."  
It was the closest thing to an apology I had ever received from you.

What of the most celebrated of relationships in Western culture, then? Those which are championed so highly above all others; those which inspire dramatic poetry, sonnets set to song, and for which sacrifice is so readily and willingly made?

What of romance?

I'm no stranger to it. Few people I've met are. I've heard of that initial attraction that leads to romance described as many things: a lightning strike; a sudden, burning spark; an incendiary crash and burn. *Falling in love*. Nearly every description carries with it a degree of violence.

*These violent delights have violent ends  
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness  
And in the taste confounds the appetite.  
Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.*  
(Romeo and Juliet, II.vi.9-15)

This is a familiar depiction. Popular fiction presents romance as something simple yet divine, and we become exposed to these fantasies early. I grew up watching different iterations of the same fairy tale: The Princess, after going through some trials to prove herself worthy, is saved by and consequently falls in love with the Prince. It's all exciting and dramatic and thrilling, and it all happens quickly. It wouldn't make a very good story if it didn't.

The Princess in these tales is an idealized anomaly. She is young, she is beautiful, she is innocent. She is also an island of a human. She has no parents (occasionally a stern

Father) and no friends (unless one counts unusually intelligent creatures with a knack for impromptu sing-a-longs). All she needs to be fulfilled is love. One passionate, romantic kiss to awaken her from her cursed slumber, and she and the Prince live happily ever after.

Unanswered questions abound: What if the Princess was ugly? What if she and the Prince had nothing in common besides a burning desire? What about after that kiss? Fantasies don't often elaborate.

Romance and the relationships that grow from such swift, burning attractions are powerful. They cause us to discover parts of ourselves that we never knew existed. They incite passion and yearning and hormonal storms of cataclysmic proportions; sleep is lost and thoughts are derailed. Romance is the most welcomed and beatific of distractions. While that is all exhilarating, it is more disruptive than nurturing. It is not love.

*Toss* is a precarious sculptural work. On the floor sits a span of wood that is approximately two feet by four feet wide. The surface is stained a light oak, the color often seen on wooden dance floors. To one side of the wooden base is an upside-down bouquet of a dozen roses, its stems covered in sharp thorns. It is fabricated entirely out of glass.

The sculpture represents an impossibility for several reasons. The fact that the bouquet is made of transparent, shining glass immediately makes it ethereal, but what is most perplexing about the piece is how the bouquet stands at all. It is tipped severely to one side, propped up in a way which should not be physically possible. When examined closely, it appears to be balancing delicately on the very tips of just a few thin petals. One

must bend over the sculpture perilously close to see this. Viewed in such an intimate manner, it feels as though one's breath might cause the bouquet to tip over. But it never does.

Stretched beneath the glass, extending from the tips of the petals, is an echo of the bouquet. A shadow-like distortion of the flowers, stems, and thorns has been burned into the wood, magnifying them all. The silhouette is soft and undefined; its smooth, silky darkness contrasts with the bouquet's sharp and colorless clarity.

The title, *Toss*, is a reference to the bridal toss, a tradition in which a newlywed bride throws her bouquet to a group of unmarried women. The tradition holds that whoever catches the bouquet will be next to be married. This ritual of one wed woman passing on her supposed luck in love to another through flowers represents a cycle in its own. Considering how common divorce is in our society,<sup>5</sup> this is an absurd tradition. The notion that love could simply fall into one's arms is in direct opposition of the definition I previously proposed as defined by bell hooks. Love is not determined by luck.

*Toss* conveys the fragility of this fantasy. It is a snapshot of the critical moment when the bouquet is not caught, but instead falls to the incinerated wooden floor. It hovers on the precipice of shattering.

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<sup>5</sup> "How Common Is Divorce and What Are the Reasons?" How Common is Divorce and What are the Reasons? | Your Divorce Questions. Accessed April 18, 2020







*'Toss', glass, burned wood. 44" x 24" x 10"*

"It's okay."



Just as I emerged from the awkward phases of puberty, I became entangled in a romantic relationship. I felt I needed to be. My sense of self was dependent on being in a relationship with a man. Having a partner meant that I was desirable and being desirable meant I had worth. But I would be lying if I said that was the only reason. The truth is that it was easier to be in a relationship than it was to be on my own. I was, for better or worse, considered attractive. I was pursued by enough people that it was exhausting to keep saying no.

How wrong it feels to declare such a thing! It seems like blasphemy to talk about being attractive as a woman. It is a cruel and unfair predicament. We are told of the supposed importance of our looks, expected to invest so much time and money in the pursuit of beauty, and yet if we dare to utter out loud that we are satisfied—even if only for a moment—with our appearance we are deemed arrogant, shallow, or vain.

The truth is that beauty is as much a burden as it is a blessing. Elaine Scarry addresses the impact of beauty quite eloquently in her book *On Beauty and Being Just*. Beauty inspires the desire to replicate, to copy, and to own.<sup>6</sup> This can be as true of a beautiful object as a person. For as much importance that is placed on being beautiful in our culture, it creates yet another obstacle for intimacy. It can be difficult to see beyond a beautiful appearance.

An obsession for beauty caused me to live as a false version of myself. Deeply unsatisfied regarding love, I was hungry for affection. I spent countless hours of my life chasing idealized beauty because in my mind being beautiful was equated with being

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<sup>6</sup> Scarry, Elaine. *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

worthy of love. I portrayed myself as the fantasy I thought others wanted, but in doing so I failed to be authentic. I naturally failed to reach the unobtainable beauty standards so encouraged in our society, and therefore despised myself for my shortcomings.

I was not nurturing any part of myself in a healthy way. I had a severe lack of self-love. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon story for women in our culture.<sup>7</sup> It sets the stage for failure when one delves into the depths of romance. I believe RuPaul put it best with the famous quote, ‘If you can't love yourself, how in the hell are you gonna love somebody else? Can I get an Amen?’<sup>8</sup>

According to *Allure* magazine, the average woman in the United States wears approximately \$8.00 worth of cosmetics on her face every day. She applies an average of 16 different products before leaving the house and spends an average of 17 minutes a day following a make-up/skincare routine.<sup>9</sup> The idealized image of a woman is everywhere, sold from the covers of magazines, ads, and commercials. She is either depicted as sultry and sophisticated, oozing of sexuality, or as smiling and blissful. They are images that convey a lovely falsity: ‘If you buy this product, you will be beautiful too. You will be happy. You will be worthy’. L’Oréal, one of the top ten cosmetic companies in the United States, even says it outright—the words ‘Because I’m Worth It’ accompany the standard image of the model, who is photoshopped into perfection.<sup>10</sup> It is a clever slogan.

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<sup>7</sup> hooks, 48

<sup>8</sup> *Rupaul’s Drag Race*. “Drag on a Dime.” Episode 1. Directed by Nick Murray. Logo, February, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Denton, Elizabeth. “Here’s How Much the Average American Woman Spends on Makeup In Her Life.” Allure. Allure, May 25, 2017. <https://www.allure.com/story/average-woman-spends-on-makeup>.

<sup>10</sup> “Because I’m Worth It.” lorealparisusa.com. Accessed April 23, 2020. <https://www.lorealparisusa.com/about-loreal-paris/because-youre-worth-it.aspx>.

‘Because I’m Worth It’ conveys a sense of empowerment while encouraging women to spend more money and more time.

One of the works I created is entitled *Kiss, Kiss, Kiss (Kiss, Kiss)*, a video/performance piece. It begins as I hair-flip my way into the camera’s view, wearing a dress and full make-up. My long, dark hair is straightened and loose. I hold a giant, mirrored ball—a gazing ball. The only color present in the video is red, an overly saturated hue which stains my lips and is painted on my nails. All else is in black and white.

The moment the video begins, I am clearly obsessed with own reflection on the surface of the sphere. After examining my likeness for a moment, I kiss the glass. The lipstick blocks my view of myself. I therefore shift the sphere and kiss myself again, once more blocking my view. This goes on and on, until the sphere becomes a mess of pink and red, completely blurred. The same lipstick becomes smeared all over my arms, face, and hair. By the end of the video, I appear rather clown-like.



*Stills from 'Kiss, Kiss, Kiss (Kiss, Kiss)', Performance/Video, 9:35*

This performance conveys the futility of chasing beauty. It is a retelling of the story Narcissus; the tale of how one who is obsessed with their looks becomes blind to everything else. While this video does not end in my untimely death, it does reveal the hollowness of the pursuit of manufactured beauty. The video is nearly ten minutes long. Watching someone aggressively kiss themselves for a few moments is amusing; watching it for almost ten minutes is disturbing.

*Kiss, Kiss, Kiss, (Kiss, Kiss)* also demonstrates my selective use of color. Red is used to highlight the features associated with idealized feminine beauty. The color from the lipstick bleeds onto everything else, contaminating the otherwise pristine black and white landscape of the video and marring the monochromatic mirror. Color is intentional when it is used in my work, but there is greater significance in its absent.

You didn't say anything. You kept your focus forward, staring at the tree line with an emotion for which I had no name. Your eyes looked so haunted, but that was usually the case. Those irises were a steely blue-gray, almost colorless, framed by lashes like a spider's legs.

Mine are exactly the same.

"It's okay," I said again.

I squeezed your hand. It was freezing cold.

Clear glass is as close to transcendence as I can hope to achieve. It uniquely reflects and refracts light; it shines vibrantly one moment and seemingly disappears the next. I use this etherealness as a tool.

The duality of the colorlessness and the prismatic possibilities of glass are highly appealing to me. Single colors are often associated with emotion due to the intrinsic effect they have on a person's blood pressure: red with rage or passion, blue with sadness or solemnness, and so on. When I create entirely clear works, it is with two intentions. The first is that the initial, perceived lack of hue will convey a lack of emotional depth. The colorlessness acts as a metaphor for something which is absent. However, upon further reflection, it may be perceived that clear glass encompasses all colors—both in how it absorbs the colors of whatever is near it and how it can, with the right lighting, create rainbows. Much like how the word love often means either too much or not enough, clear glass can be either awe-inspiring or a nearly imperceptible ghost.

I am also drawn to the fantastical qualities of glass. It is the encasement around the sleeping beauty; it is the shoe into which only a Princess's foot can fit; it is the enchanted mirror that speaks to a Queen. Glass carries a sense of magic and the sublime. When used as the material to create representative sculptures symbolic of the past, my work is a union of fantasy and nostalgia.

Lastly, process is a significant part of my practice. While glass objects convey ideas of fragility, beauty, and enchantment, the actuality of creating these works is far from idyllic. My flameworked structures are complex and largescale, demanding hours of careful construction with a flame. Casting requires mixing molds of silica and plaster, weeks of annealing in kilns, and constant heavy lifting. All the while, there is the ever-

present possibility that a piece may break. It is an frightening experience, yet also empowering—while making work that explores themes of lovelessness, neglect, and solitude, I am forging with fire, lifting the weight of solid glass and physically bringing it to a polish so that it can glow.

Glass is a brutal material. It cuts, it burns, it shatters. But when it shines it shines, and nothing can hold a candle to it.



You suddenly stood. I got the sense that you might turn to me, smile at me, hug me; I thought that you would finally tell me all the things I'd always wanted to hear.

You didn't.

You gave the barest nod in my direction before you left, walking with purpose towards the forbidden tree line. I couldn't follow. I was tethered to my swing.

You slipped between the leaves without a backwards glance, and that was the last I ever saw of you.

## II. The Reality



*April 25<sup>th</sup>. 2020, Alfred, NY*

There was no show.

The novel coronavirus was reportedly discovered in January of 2020 in Wuhan, China, and the year began with a devastating viral outbreak. On March 11, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic.<sup>11</sup> Alfred University, as well as many other establishments, closed its doors to non-essential personnel. The artworks that are described in this text are only a fragment of what should have been. Several pieces remain in my studio space half-finished, uninstalled, and undocumented.

As I write this, a new reality unfolds. The true horror of this virus and the damage it will cause is currently in motion. The news consists of almost nothing but coronavirus updates. Our president promises “a lot of death”<sup>12</sup> in the coming weeks, and it may be the first time since he has taken office that I undoubtedly believe him. Medical supplies run low and people are dying from a lack of hospital beds and ventilators. Life grows more frightening and more bewildering every day.

*Wash your hands. Don't wear a mask. Wear a mask. You must wear a mask. Six feet of distance. Twenty-seven feet. Stay home for one week. Two weeks. A month. The summer.*

*Be safe.*

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8 Holly Secon, Aylin Woodward. “A Comprehensive Timeline of the New Coronavirus Pandemic, from China's First COVID-19 Case to the Present.” *Business Insider*, 1 Apr. 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Blue, Victor. “Coronavirus Live Updates: With Over 300,000 Cases and 8,000 Deaths, the U.S. Braces for Still More.” *The New York Times*, 4 Apr. 2020.

There was no show, but there was a performance.

A rosary is a circular set of beads used for prayer. Traditionally, in the Catholic faith, they contain 59 beads as well as a crucifix, each one representing a specific prayer. They are about the size of a necklace, easily placed into a pouch or pocket. They typically take around fifteen minutes to pray from start to finish.

Upon coming to Alfred, I created a 100-decade rosary made of silver wire and white glass. It is long and unwieldy, spanning over fifteen feet when fully extended. It tangles easily and feels overwhelming when carried. Moving it is always a burden, and there is no easy way to store it. Although I made it, I had never prayed it to completion before.

The day that my exhibition was originally scheduled to open, I did exactly that. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, I woke up at dawn. I settled into a nook in my home, sitting on a wooden floor near a window. And I prayed.

There were 1,207 prayers said, words chanted into the morning and afternoon. It was a nostalgic practice for me. I once prayed the rosary nearly every morning as a child; on the day that I did this performance, it had been well over ten years since I had used one. Still, the words came easily enough.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*

I remember the sounds. The creaks of the wooden house as my house mates moved about on the floor below; the birds chirping outside the window; the cat meowing in displeasure from the stairwell as she was banned from the upstairs. The beads of the rosary dragging along as I moved it, pulling a new prayer into my palms.

The moments that stay with me the most are the times when my body acted without my consent. When my voice cracked unexpectedly. When I accidentally made eye contact with one of the cameras and jolted as though I had caught a stranger staring at me. When I reached up to wipe my face, only realizing after I had done so that I had been crying.

Prayers are usually made in dedication to someone or something, and mine were no exception. I thought about many people as I made my way around that massive rosary, pulling it into an eventual pool of beads at my feet. The safety and the health of my friends and my family came first, specific faces floating in and out of the forefront of my mind. At some point, my dedications began to blur. It became an endless, cyclical devotion, one thought eclipsing all others:

*Let this end soon.*

The pandemic, the quarantine, the performance itself. Everything.

When it was over, my throat was raw but not in pain. The rosary had not taken as long as I'd thought it would. I wonder, and wonder still, if that means it wasn't enough. I

expected to feel something different; I anticipated something definitive and reassuring when I finally said the *Hail, holy Queen*. Instead I was left with a residual feeling of uncertainty. To be fair, the experience is still very fresh in my mind—it has been less than 24 hours since I turned the cameras off. My in-home studio is still set up, an attic space full of tripods and cameras with memory cards not yet full. It looks as though it is awaiting another performance.

I don't know if it was enough. But then again, I don't think there's any such thing.



*Still from '1,207', performance, approximately 6 hours*

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