

Zine

Mark Benjamin Herz

Leaving a Mark

- I wanted to do something that reflected who I am. I know very well who I am, I've always have. My issue was always transpiring who I am inside my head to the world, so here's an attempt.

I try to fit in but I don't know where I want to fit in, I don't know what I want to label myself as. Some people know me as the "Trans Mark", some as the "Jewish Mark", "Brazilian Mark", "Disabled Mark" and so on. I just want to be Mark, myself, without being associated with any particular label. I am proud of being a Disabled Brazilian Jewish Transgender man, no doubt. I just don't want these things to be what people associate with me when they hear my name, I'm much more than these particular parts of my being.



I've always loved listening to people's stories, especially my family's. I love looking at picture albums, both from times long before I was born and photos from different moments in my life.

This drawing was made from the history before me. The story of my ancestors, tales that have been told to me, from great great grandparents to my own childhood. It is not me, it does not represent who I am, but where I came from. It's my past, but my own life is still ahead.

I'm comforted by nostalgia, I have a superhuman memory and remember the most. Specific details. It is a blessing and a curse. I revisit all that has happened, but I don't wanna be tangled with what once were. The history before me is simply a tool, to inspire me to build my own future.



My last name Herz means heart.

My grandmothers father's first name was Levi, which also means heart.

I took his name as my Hebrew name.

I have a big heart and I'm proud of my names.

I'm the heart man

Being trans is something else. I always knew I was a man, but I had no words for it, no idea. I grew up in a country where even being gay was bizarre when I was a child. I didn't know the term trans until much later in life. But I always knew, I always knew I was a guy.

Coming out is the worst thing I ever had to do in my life and, I had to do it twice.

How do you tell your family, everyone you love, they don't know you at all.

My friends (as well as my cousin) all knew it.

Some of my family acted like it was some huge mystery, I was so feminine after all (I never was!)

People only see what they want.



The Dress

I wanted to please you

I peeled my skin off and exposed myself

My entire body burned

I painted a mask

You couldn't see my tears through your smile

Colorful fabric covering me

My heart is being squeezed

My chest compressed

I'd rather be dead

It's worth it- I said

You're proud

I'm glad you like to see me in a dress

A series of untitled poems

He, She, Why? It?

Words, names, pronouns, what?

Does it matter? Maybe it does

Why do words hurt so much?

Two letters together make me at ease

Add one and those three hurt deeply

Isn't language an invention?

He, she, what is it?

#2

Alone at home I raised myself
A man hid in plain sight
Secretly stealing the vestments of another
Donned as thy brother
Mascara covers his cheeks
as a mask falls momentarily
The mirror embraces him
In a few hours it will be undone
but the Dawn has already begun.

#3

A Mask you must wear at all times
Cemented in thy face
Chained to society's mindset
Free me of these invisible handcuffs
Confined inside someone else's head
One is dead, yet attached to their past
Born twice, brimming with life
Don't look at her, she's long gone
She will never be back.
She never was, she was a thought.

#4

I didn't come to this world to be in your dream house,
Don't force me to dress with the clothes you want,
My hair doesn't need your comb
I apologize if you didn't get what you want
I'm not a product you can return to the store
I have feelings and I have thoughts
I will never fit in someone else's puzzle.

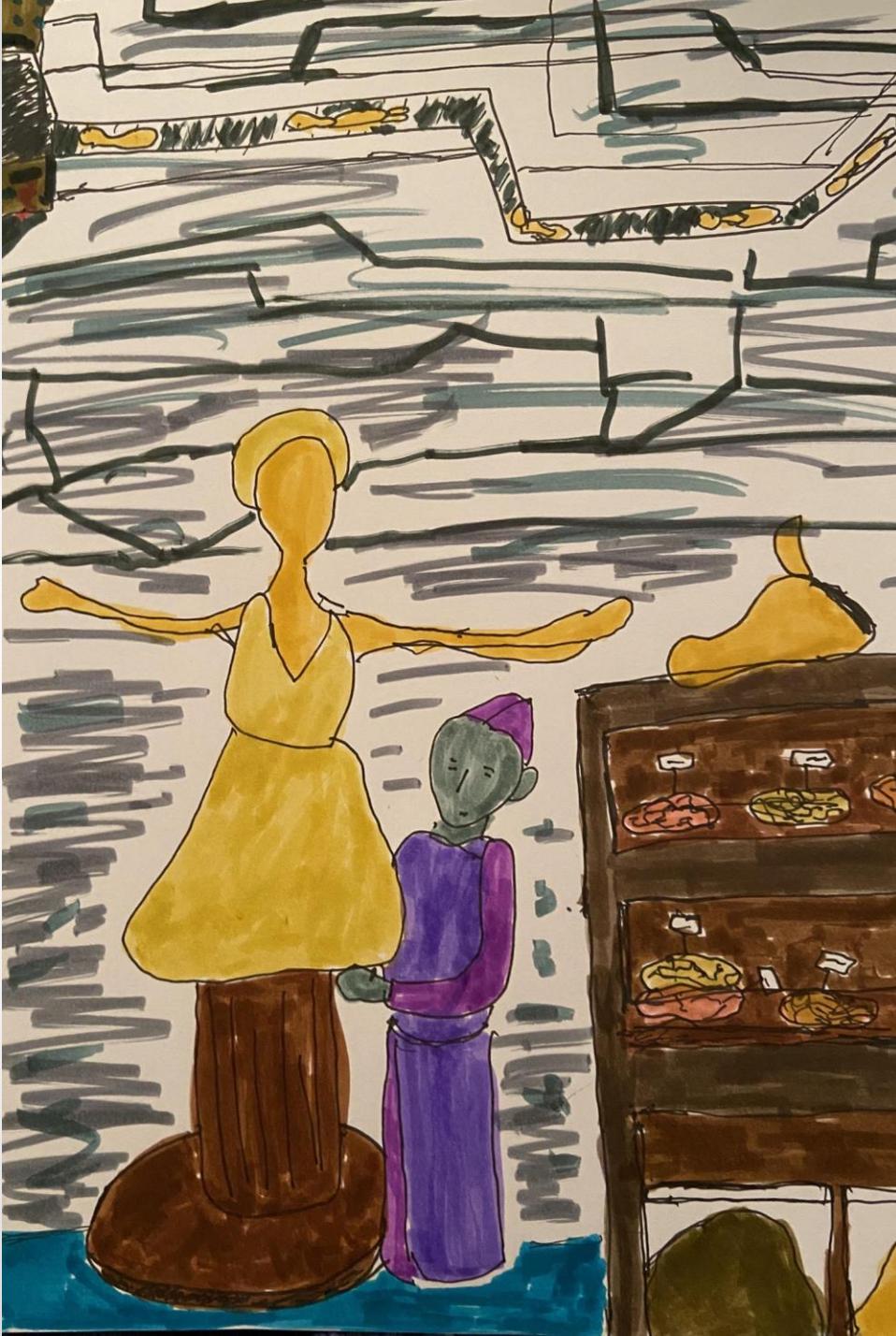
#5

Where do I find inspiration if not inside my own?

Open my soul and read my memories

transpire my feelings into papers or words

I bleed my tears into poems I sing



Wouldn't it be nice if we all could just magically be all that we wanted? If we could send our brains to a factory that will produce our own individually produce shells, and live comfortably in our own bodies instead of hating ourselves.

The Past is Dead (is it?)

I used to hate drawing myself, because that figure wasn't me, it was someone else.

Now almost all my drawings are self-portraits.





Quarantine Self-Portrait #1007
(Probably, who's keeping track?)

Quarantine Blues



Saudade is a word that only exists in Portuguese.
It is so specific that words can barely explain..
It is a feeling that takes over your body and soul while you miss someone
It's not just a "I miss you" it is much more deep
As if missing, means missing a piece.
Now, more than ever I feel it daily.
Saudades
of New York, my city, which I'm in
but not living it
the strangers in bars you talk to after a drink or two
the parks during all seasons, with trees naked or in bloom
Saudades
of a city I once ran from, though it used to be my home
Rio is the paradise that suffocated me
the most beautiful place, no contest
but nightmares that fill my memories
yet I long for visiting again
what other city has mountains, lagoons, waterfalls, beaches, forests in its landscape
Saudades
of the people back there
feeling a rush when I arrive in the airport expecting to see my mom
running to her hug, the feeling of home
the laughing and talking and taking care of each other
my best friend is my mother
Saudades
of my dad, even the fights we always have
of teasing his ways, and laughing about it
of playing as if I'm still a child
the adventures through the city
the stupid jokes he's told me repeatedly
Saudades
of my grandmother and her stories,
of her apartment and her piano
of the feasts she'll make with all my favorite foods
following by me napping through all the rooms
Saudades
of my old dog who's been with me since I was so small
his life at its end, sick, knowing I cannot be there
Saudades
I don't know if I feel it with my brother,
I do miss singing while he plays *my* guitar
All through the night until a neighbor complains
singing the songs of Caetano Veloso, Bowie and Damien Rice
of my friends
throwing parties and inviting heterogenous groups of friends and circling through them
the parties that don't end, even after we see the sun
the singing, the games, the drinking, the people
Saudades
of walking, of going to the theater, of kissing random people
I wonder when this will end
I want to live it again.

