

- SIM STREET JOURNAL -

EXPLORES THE RELEVANCE
OF VIRTUAL TO REAL
COMMERCE AND CULTURE

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Insights from Extremes

by Eleanor Medier

There are more choices virtually than in reality. So the extremes of what nurtures or what destroys need awareness. It takes time to learn new rules, edit through experiments, and evolve relationships. Those profiled on these pages define what best works for their goals. They grew through their early days of discovery to complement real life.

Yet, in representing the virtual to the real, some of the pitfalls must be exposed. So this issue encompasses the best and the worst. It confronts the reasons why the virtual world is so culturally rich while it also has a darkness that can't be ignored.

in-world to out

- Tip Corbett embraces the fluid nature of virtual presentation into his art. Improvisational music is as fresh for the artist as for the listener. With his unique approach so well-suited to this audience, Tip's music transcends to art's pure reason. **"Music as Muse"** PAGE 16

critic's choice:

- Sword Starfall and Anouk Koray elevate building friendship to a craft. As the consummate hosts, their series of clubs comfort with a casualness that makes SL so much fun. The virtual world is not just a place to be creative, to experiment, to develop connections, but also to escape seriousness. **"The Crafted Welcome"** PAGE 27 with Alexia Sulamericana



**AVATAR AWARENESS:
BE CYBER STREETWISE**
offers Protection Policies
for avatar defense
against virtual dangers.
PAGE 54

pioneer perspective

• Eleanor Medier observes the positive paths and negative plights of virtual residents. Being real life street-wise is not the same as being cyber-street-wise. SL is a place to learn how to handle people, situations, and self, by bravely confronting seductions. "Inspiration versus Seduction" "Virtual Temptations" PAGE 42 (only in-world)

the aesthete and the amateur

• Rose Borchovski takes risks by expressing the devastation of war through the extremes of positive and negative human nature. Her installation stirs the range of feelings in the viewer. Elegant and original, the worst is balanced by the strength of love's connection. "Review: History Rhymes" PAGE 62

• Heavy Writer has a tough time. In his quest for an enriching life, he discovers that he has to sacrifice the long-term for the short-term when handling an art-addicted over-spending partner. He vows to learn more about the business side of art. "No Man's Land" PAGE 73



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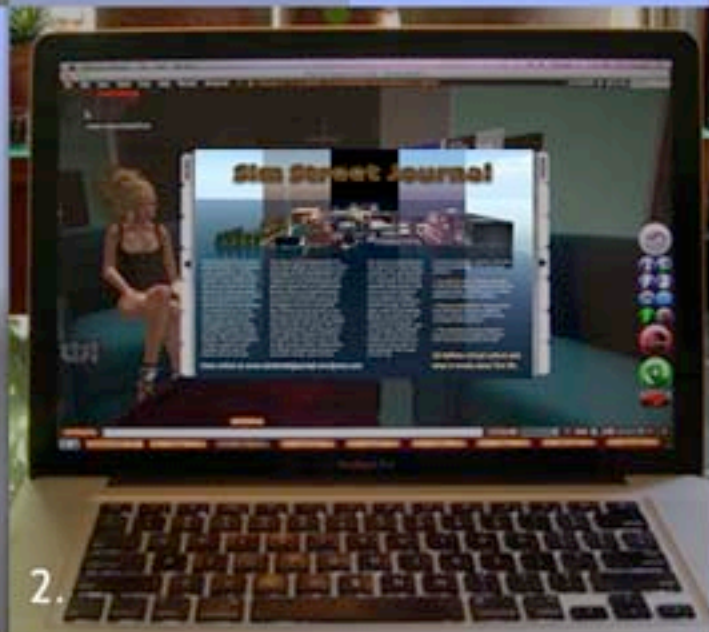
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-in-world-to-out-

Music as Muse

by Tip Corbett

improvisational pianist



The background is a dark, artistic composition. At the top, a white dashed line runs horizontally. Below it, a stage is visible with a crane holding several spotlights. In the foreground, there are several musical staves with colorful notes (yellow, green, blue, pink) scattered across them. The overall tone is moody and creative.

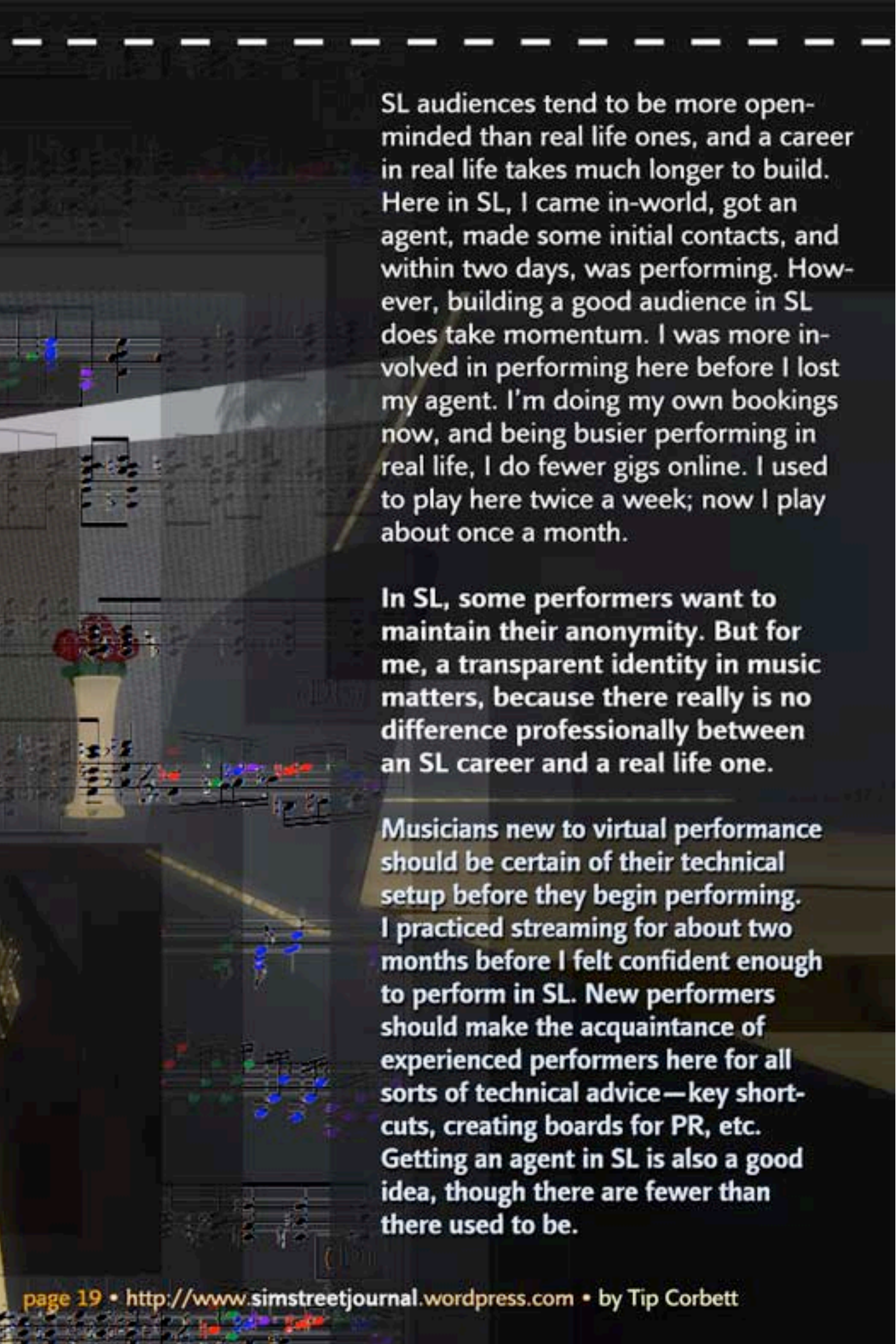
Although music has always been my first love, after about a decade of working in it professionally, I decided to get an engineering degree to augment my income. With this, I worked at Boeing for about eight years, until 2004. At that time, I made the decision to quit the job because I did not have enough time to focus on my music. Now I work as a church organist and music director near Portland, Maine. Although Maine is rather conservative — musically speaking — this is a vacation area, and tourism tends to govern musical tastes. Boston, with an audience more open to contemporary classical music, is just a few hours away.

I first heard about SL from a music professor when I attended Boston University in 2006, and joined SL a year after that. Soon I saw the possibilities inherent in SL for putting on concerts. I have done about 500 online concerts in SL — which would have been very impractical in real life. This has been a matchless opportunity to cut my teeth as a performer. Virtual performance is very different from the real life variety: you can stay at home in your PJ's, but you also have to contend with the vagaries of computers. Oftentimes, the latter is my biggest challenge in virtual performing.

in-world to out

Tip Corbett



The background of the page is a dark, textured surface. It features several faint, semi-transparent musical staves with notes and a vase of flowers on the left side. The overall aesthetic is artistic and related to music.

SL audiences tend to be more open-minded than real life ones, and a career in real life takes much longer to build. Here in SL, I came in-world, got an agent, made some initial contacts, and within two days, was performing. However, building a good audience in SL does take momentum. I was more involved in performing here before I lost my agent. I'm doing my own bookings now, and being busier performing in real life, I do fewer gigs online. I used to play here twice a week; now I play about once a month.

In SL, some performers want to maintain their anonymity. But for me, a transparent identity in music matters, because there really is no difference professionally between an SL career and a real life one.

Musicians new to virtual performance should be certain of their technical setup before they begin performing. I practiced streaming for about two months before I felt confident enough to perform in SL. New performers should make the acquaintance of experienced performers here for all sorts of technical advice—key shortcuts, creating boards for PR, etc. Getting an agent in SL is also a good idea, though there are fewer than there used to be.

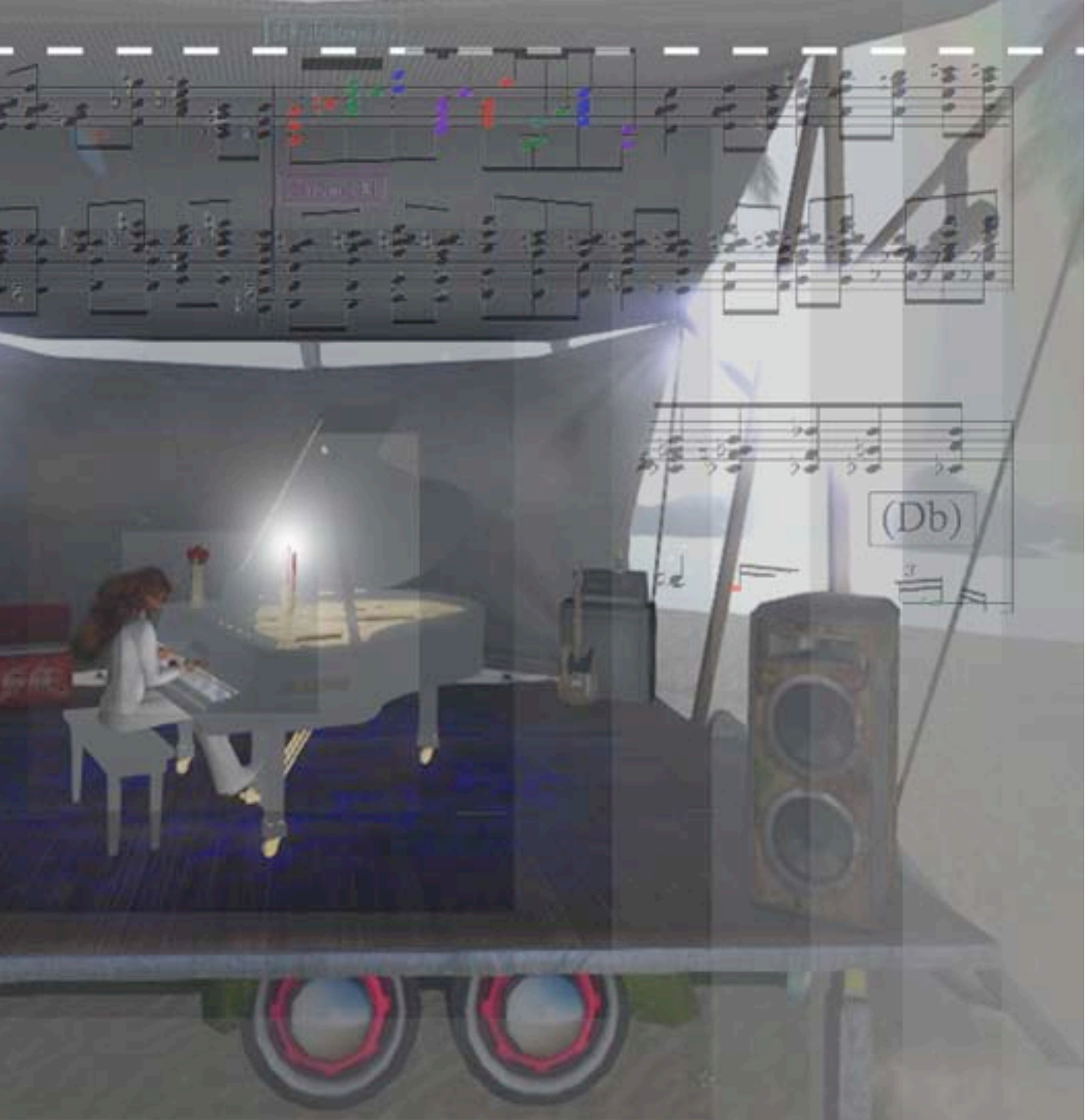
in-world to out

I first developed my improvisations as an outgrowth of my written work (I'm finishing an orchestral work for CRS Recordings right now). To some extent, I need improv in my life because I write music VERY slowly. So I created written templates which allow me to do 'randomized sight-reading' — to hop around the written page improvising, which results in a disciplined/structured form of improv. Because I have composed a lot of works which are written-out, my improvisations end up treading a delicate balance between formal discipline and freedom.

The composers Ravel and Scriabin are my two biggest improv influences. An ongoing goal is to develop the ability to improvise more and more in their styles. I have also developed my own playing style as well, one I call "compositional improvisation."

An interesting fact about music from about a hundred years ago is that it was, in general, more dissonant. People back then also had a greater tolerance for dissonance. So the contemporary lack of tolerance for dissonant harmony is actually one of my biggest challenges as a performer/composer — getting people to listen to my more dissonant sound.





I also derive inspiration from other forms of music. I actually listen to more pop music these days than contemporary classical—in many ways I think it's a more honest expression of the times. However, that does not stop me from developing contemporary classical music, as that is my skill.

I support the growth of contemporary classical music in SL and in real life, more and more utilizing non-traditional means like compositional improvisation. With about 10,000 classical composers writing for an audience of about the same number of people, there has to be a better way to share our music!

— in-world to-out —

My performing career helps to balance my compositional career. I could write without improvising, but performing helps free my mind, musically speaking. Since I am a slow worker, creating so much music on-the-fly loosens up my writing. As I perform more, I am starting to improvise out beyond the templates. As I mentioned before, improv has a structure, but is also based in the moment. Each performance is different. Though there is a dynamic interplay between writing and performing, in many ways they are removed from one another: one is a release from the other rather than an inspiration. In a sense I improvise backwards—I work from already written/composed themes, and improvise from there. How much I vary individual performances does depend on the moment. For example, I decided to do two improvs on the tune “Simple Gifts” during a recent performance rather than one, and I had to vary the two interpretations because of that—dig a little deeper for variety.

(Db)

Theme 2

Db Octatonic

Theme 2

(D)

Theme 1

D Octatonic

Theme 1



SL for me exists mostly as a venue to perform in, and hear other live musicians. I think this will be one of its greatest legacies. With bandwidths greater than they were ten years ago, things like Livestream now exist, with the ability to share live performances via video, and this will eventually draw more and more live musicians. But I think SL will always have a place for musicians — after all, the technical setup is less complex than that of online video performance.

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— critic's choice —

Dancing with Momentum

Alexia Sulamericana



No one loves music or friends more than **Alexia Sulamericana**. Joining the *Sim Street Journal* critics, she goes on the search for those who's passion matches her own. This issue, Alexia recommends a portrayal of Sword Starfall and Anouk Koray. Catch her dancing and exploring all the richness SL has to offer.

"Sword is a cheerful person with a good life, even in his worst real life moments, and this comes through when he DJs. Together Sword and Anouk formed a sincere friendship that gives Marcel's its joy. Each has a special charisma to make it a place where friends meet." —AS

The Crafted Welcome

by Sword Starfall
and Anouk Koray,

Caffeine Nights, Marcel's Cafe

Anouk: "Sword is the music man and the corporate schmoozer. He keeps the customers looked after. I build stuff and mess about. He is amazingly patient with me. I almost hardly ever drop heavy objects on him when he's being 'helpful' during my building sessions."

Sword: "If I keep a decent distance, we manage to work well together. I'm useless at building. Anouk is brilliant. However, we are extroverts, and can both get crazy if needed."

Anouk: "Sword is more discreet and ...Portuguese! We are both committed to this club too. This is actually our third club incarnation in the last four years. Our first, Mirage, ran for about two years. Then I wasn't online as much, so Sword had his own little place—Cafe Bleu. Since I'm back more—Marcel's came to be. Sword wanted the cozy French bistro."

Sword: "And we created a full story for it. Marcel's is the essence of what we've learned."

Anouk: "We keep our places small, welcoming, and friendly—where we can be just ourselves. We enjoy chatting with guests and providing a place where they can do the same. A club becomes popular due to the people—ours is like a family. But new folks, hopefully, also feel welcome and comfortable."

Sword: "The quality of the DJ's also makes for popularity."



Anouk: "We are fortunate to have some amazing guest DJs."

Sword: "The biggest challenge is how to make people that come in once want to come back again. This is the key. So we take time to talk to all that come in."

Anouk: "We're not doing this for money—we do what we love, and others seem to like it too. There's no hard-sell—no sploders or flashing boards or any of that stuff, and no awful gestures. Folks can actually *talk* to each other."

Sword: "I must admit that I have no musical skills, play no instrument, have no special musical instruction. I am a dilettante DJ, I guess. But I am a compulsive collector. It would be impossible to DJ if you didn't listen to a great deal of tunes of all genres. And most importantly if you are not sure of what you like. I also learn from great DJ's—such as Chriscloud Loon, Rhianon MacKenna and Calvin Hapmouche, G-Winz. G-Winz taught me that I must bring to the listener what I'd like him/her to listen to, not what is popular."



Anouk: "SL is my creative outlet. I like being able to form magnificent things at the touch of a button."

Sword: "And lovely ones too!"

Anouk: "Thank you. So if I could, I would do this same thing in real life. Can't I run a club or build massive sets in reality? Umm...no—I can't. We are limited by time, money, space, physicality.... But the sky is the limit in SL—and beyond. Here we have freedom."



Sword: "I never considered being a DJ in real life. But here... there's a quality to music in SL: you listen more carefully. Most people wear headphones and the association with screen images makes them focus. So if they are focused on image and sound, why not put them together? We built sets for special themes for years."

Anouk: "Sword did a great set based on tunes about weather. And I work very hard to make the set give the feel of the music."

Sword: "Marcel's uses building and music (sight and sound) to establish a frame of mind."



Anouk: "I'm very sociable in real life too. I like to make people laugh. SL allows me to do this on a totally different level. Nothing makes me happier than when folks turn up at one of my special show sets and go 'wow!' — then leave with a smile. And meeting folks from all over the world — even making dear friends in real life — because of it. I've met several wonderful real life friends through SL. The friendships are real — 110%."

Sword: "We share that happiness around the world. You can meet a Portuguese guy here and a British woman in a French bistro."



Anouk: "I used to play a silly little thing on Facebook called *Yoville*—incredibly basic. And someone there suggested I try SL instead—for it's versatility and realism. I got here and was hooked. The colors, the scenery, the possibilities—beyond all imagination! I still marvel at it today."

Sword: "The closest I got was *Farmville* on Facebook, so imagine the shock! I first found SL by chance, I was curious about the name: 'second life.' What could that be? A new game?"

Anouk: "(He's very innocent.)"

Sword: "I realized the potential. If you consider SL a game, then I'm a good player."

Anouk: "(I found him wandering in the woods and dragged him to his first SL wedding.) Seriously—socializing in SL helps folks do the same in real life, particularly people who are shy and reserved. Making friends here helps them break that barrier. It is confidence building."



Sword: "People really try to make this look real. Realism is a way to respect your fellow avatars — if you do your best to treat them like they are real (which they are), then you will get empathy."

Anouk: "Our places are popular because people are kind and pleasant. There's no nastiness."

Sword: "The champagne I gave you is not real, but I did my best to make you feel I was giving it to you, especially. The more you feel *actually* in a Paris bistro having champagne, listening to music, the better. You leave with the sense you really did that, as you would real life. *Would* it have been for real, it wouldn't have been much different — not in the essence."



Sword: "Mixing real life with SL is not an important issue."

Anouk: "We did spend more time with each other than our real life partners or colleagues!"

Sword: "Although we disagree in mixing real life and SL, it doesn't change the experience."

Anouk: "We developed a good balance. Sword worries I might find out he's not 32 years old with a six pack! When I make friendships, I have no problem taking that into real life. Why would I? I now have more great friends I didn't have before."

Sword: "I don't feel the need to bring SL in my real world."



Although some of it eventually does. Anouk and I do exchange gifts."

Anouk: "But I respect Sword's wishes and never (much) push it."

Sword: "We have never Skyped or met in person. But we do text daily. When I think of Anouk, the image I have of her is the one you see now, maybe without the hat..."

Anouk: "Even if I'm not online for a few days, Sword buzzes me regularly."

Sword: "It extends the fun beyond SL time. And we do know each other well."

Anouk: "We know pretty much everything there is to know about

each other—friends, family, grandkids, likes, dislikes.... Perhaps we are more purely ourselves here. We talk more, and don't waste time with the day-to-day mundane stuff. We can be totally absorbed. This is a complementary place when we're both working on the same project."

Sword: "As a barkeeper, I have the same kind of relationship with visitors here as a real barman has."

Anouk: "People like pour out their troubles to Sword. He's a good listener."

Sword: "Marcel's is probably popular because people relax."

critic's choice

Anouk: "Sword likes to keep me on my toes with building projects. It's NEVER finished."

Sword: "Although an excellent builder, Anouk hates when I say 'I've got an idea!'"

Anouk: "As soon as I finish one project (or before), he's got something else in mind. I get a nervous twitch when he says 'wouldn't it be great if....'"

Sword: "(She loves a challenge!)"

Anouk: "I bought an animation for banging my head against the wall. It's come in handy. But, much as I hate to admit it, most of Sword's ideas are great, and quite a challenge to make happen."

Anouk: "To those new in SL, I have this advice: have fun — don't take anything too seriously, don't get involved in other people's dramas, and don't ever try to run a club or business just to get rich."

Anouk: "We don't get much drama here — our clientele are 'grown-ups.' They appreciate good music, good company, and good conversation."

Sword: "The club's atmosphere, the music, the shows, eventually make the difference on who stays."

Anouk: "You either like it or you don't. We don't get youngsters. It's not their kind of place. And that filters out most of the trouble."



Mathilde Vhargon

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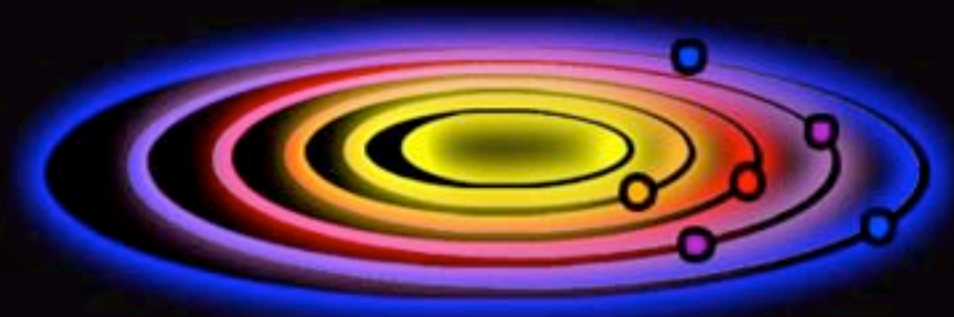
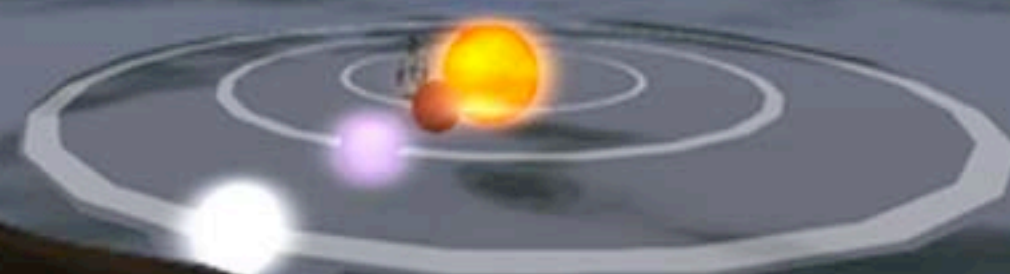
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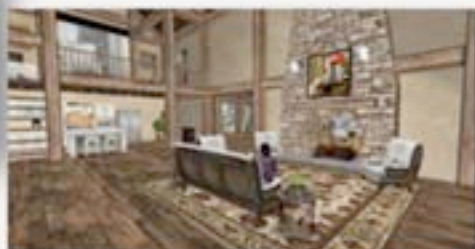


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Inspiration versus Seduction

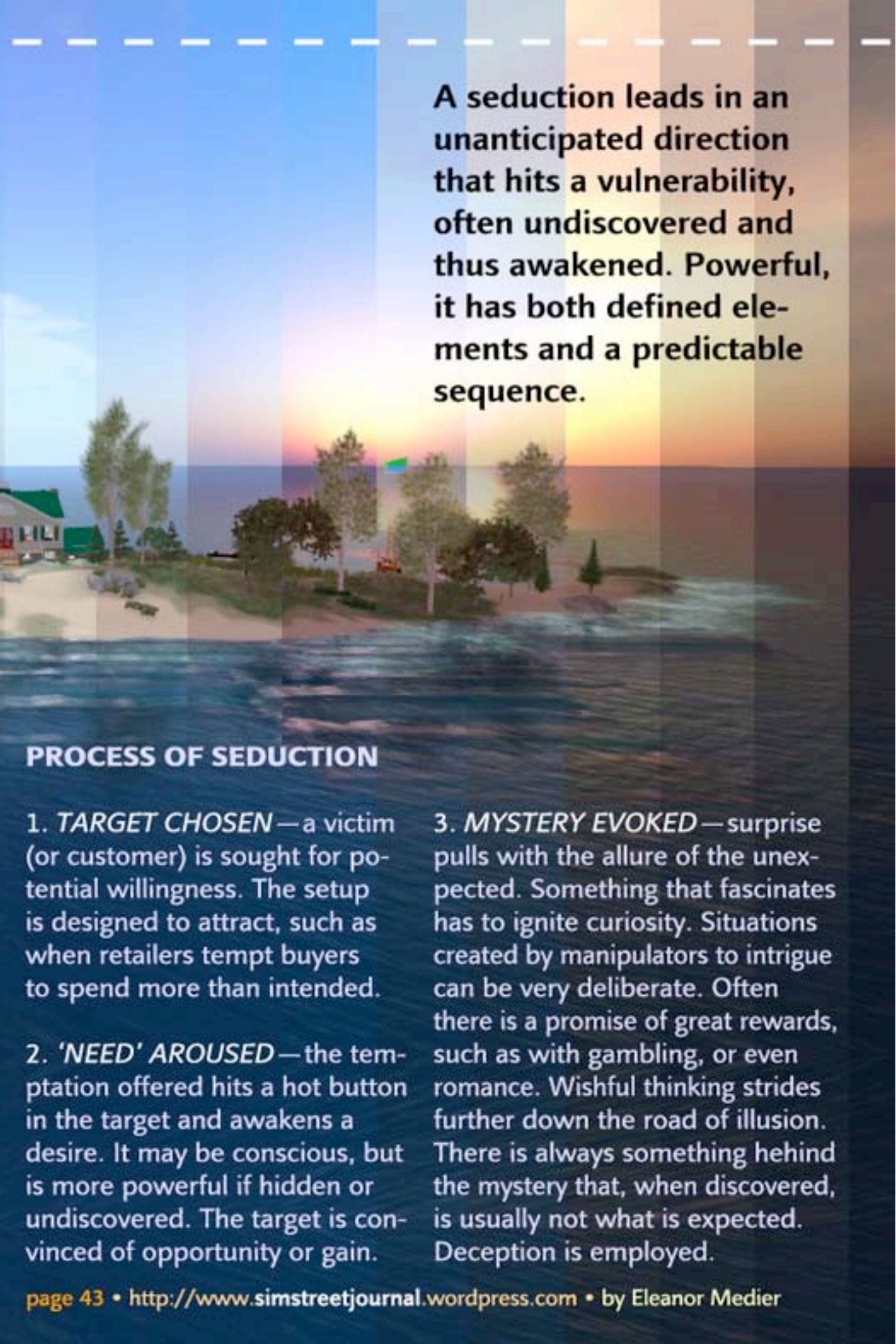
by Eleanor Medier

It is time to confront some of the most subtle dangers of the virtual world that should not be ignored. Real life press damages the virtual world's reputation through skewed and unfair reporting. Those with in-world experience know some of the real dangers. But those without can't know without finding out through experience. Consequently, to address dangers within SL must be done within SL. It does little good to explain to outsiders. With SSJ's mandate of relevance, rarely do articles focus only inward. But this one does because even real world street-smarts are unprepared to handle some of the quicksand in an unreal world.

A virtual world is full of seductions that gobble up resources of the unsuspecting. Conversely, it has as many inspirations that can feed resources. Seduction tempts with distractions. Inspiration enhances with direction. Seduction disrupts. Inspiration accelerates.

Be cyber-streetwise. Awareness is the best defense to keep control of decisions, especially for those generous of heart.

In Second Life,[®] the freedom to be idealistic is unlimited. It is much easier to be confused by choices and wishful thinking than is real life. It is also easy to fall into a few psychological/emotional traps that influence in destructive ways. Recognizing whether a technique is manipulation or choice depends on the situation, for what is inspiration to one can be seduction for another. The difference is in motivations. To best distinguish, all seductions have elements in common.

A scenic view of a lake at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow. In the background, there are several trees and a house with a green roof. The water in the foreground is dark blue with some white foam from waves.

A seduction leads in an unanticipated direction that hits a vulnerability, often undiscovered and thus awakened. Powerful, it has both defined elements and a predictable sequence.

PROCESS OF SEDUCTION

1. **TARGET CHOSEN** — a victim (or customer) is sought for potential willingness. The setup is designed to attract, such as when retailers tempt buyers to spend more than intended.

2. **'NEED' AROUSED** — the temptation offered hits a hot button in the target and awakens a desire. It may be conscious, but is more powerful if hidden or undiscovered. The target is convinced of opportunity or gain.

3. **MYSTERY EVOKED** — surprise pulls with the allure of the unexpected. Something that fascinates has to ignite curiosity. Situations created by manipulators to intrigue can be very deliberate. Often there is a promise of great rewards, such as with gambling, or even romance. Wishful thinking strides further down the road of illusion. There is always something behind the mystery that, when discovered, is usually not what is expected. Deception is employed.

— real in the unreal —

4. ATTENTION WITH FLATTERY—when complements are abundant and believed, it makes the target feel valued. Sincerity is not part of seduction. Instead, the feeling of being appreciated can become an allure. Manipulation happens when the seducer knows the right words to say for control, and the target is thrilled to allow. This appeals to the target's ego. But real motivations for control are hidden.

5. REWARD HOOKS—generosity can mask as a technique for control—the most creative manipulators offer quite a bit to lure their victim. Often they “take care” of necessities or even luxuries. They make all the decisions in the guise of pleasing. What appears as a gift is really a string.

6. ESCALATION GROWS—the progression creeps in without notice. The best manipulators are patient, slowly gaining control, taking up more time, attention, talents, connections, and even money. It slowly evolves to be more and more one-sided.

7. PRIORITIES SHIFT—a previous direction is diluted or diverted—the manipulator's needs supplant the victim's. Playing on sympathy is a great technique used to intensify.





There are seductive situations and seductive people. All:

- pull with temptation
 - play on sympathy
 - surprise by mystery
 - offer attractive allure
 - cause inadvisable actions.
- Webster's Dictionary

8. *DRAINS RESOURCES* — there becomes a point of more take than give — the manipulator gains greater benefit from controlling the victim's time, money, talent, connections, good will. The target becomes generous to please and keeps the seduction going.

9. *ILLUSION OF VALUE DEEPENS* — momentum builds on the target's desire to belong — the victim feels needed by the manipulator who gives just enough complements, time, and gifts to instill gratefulness, while hiding other goals.

10. *CONSUMES* — gradually the seductive situation becomes addictive, even co-dependent. More time, talent, and energy is needed to keep satisfying the manipulator who takes more while the victim gives more. Investment in both positions makes it hard to change the dynamic, which appears symbiotic, while the victim loses what was of original value.

-real-in-the-unreal-

The most vulnerable to seduction are those who are lonely, isolated, recovering, or insecure. So really, *everyone* can be manipulated! Every person is, at some time, lonely, recovering, or wishing to escape from problems in the real world. These are some of the reasons to interact in SL!

No matter what the topic or preference, if the involvement is not sought for, then the possibility of seduction is high. The idealistic virtual world requires different defenses against predators than does real life. The most important factor is always choice. This is not to say being introduced to new topics, activities, and friendships are all seductions. But many are. The difference is in motivation and control. For example, where one person may find role play participation seducing, another may find it educational or relaxing. If a hobby becomes an obsessive priority, then motivation should be questioned and seductions confronted. If choosing to be seduced, at least know it.

To be aware of the techniques might transform a potential seduction into a positive and balanced exchange. Some manipulators use these techniques unconsciously, which is easier to handle than those who have mastered their use under a mask of deception. The dangers in SL of emotional quicksand are real. It may be easy to turn off the computer, but the affects can haunt, and even destroy real life equilibrium.



"Seduce —verb—

- attract someone to a belief or into a course of action that is inadvisable or foolhardy: *they should not be seduced into thinking that their success ruled out the possibility of a relapse.*
- entice into sexual activity.
- attract powerfully: *the melody seduces the ear with warm string tones.*" Oxford Dictionary

Seduction seems more a change of direction. It often is foolhardy, but always a lesson. In fact, it can be the catalyst to find what other direction is better. But there is always a price to pay for that. The idea of seduction is that it takes more than it gives; some other motivation dominates. Unless the temptation fits equal interests, it demands more sacrifice than seems apparent in the exciting beginning. The virtual world has easier temptations than the real one. Consequently, many prefer the virtual world to the real. Yet it is no substitute. It may be a place of great assistance, but seductions are distracting from keeping a good balance. With a nurturing balance, there is no where better.

Virtual Temptation: Hobby or Addiction?

What is a conscious choice for one person can be a seduction for another. Examine the process and the motivations to distinguish. These are the most typical categories for what pulls participants out of balance. When embarking on these most-fun and engaging activities, where the virtual worlds really excel, know who is driving the boat: curiosity or obsession.

1. Communities. It is human nature to join a group of the like-minded. In a virtual world, the dangers are those who prey on others' weaknesses to gain control of their time, emotions, talents, and resources. They can provide the illusion of a unity and a sense of belonging. But it is a seduction when the participation is obedient to another's orders. If a community is chosen by interests, it is not a manipulation. But if pulled into a group that takes priority over previous activities, it is suspect. This can happen easily by those who have experience gathering a flock to execute their objectives.

2. Partnership. Getting close to another is most satisfying and to couple is very popular. Having a companion to share the experience deepens it. As in real life, there are advantages to being part of a couple in SL. Unlike real life, in the virtual, deceptions are easier to perform and are most dangerous on a commitment level. It pays to learn real identities if love is involved. Yet many do choose to keep real life and SL separate as a way to balance, which does work well if emotions are cool. The point is to know the truth about the other person if making an emotional bond.



3. *Fantasy.* Impossible to discuss rationally, idealism and imagination do dominate in the virtual life. Sexual adventures give SL a bad real life reputation as a place of easy morals and cheating spouses. Without placing values on what participants choose, keeping it private is a good idea. Sexual preferences are much like religious preferences—everyone has a position. Fantasy becomes seduction when it controls preferences to please. It can come from friendship pressure as well as from romantic seductions. Identifying when an emotional seduction is taking place has to reveal both vulnerability as well as recognize the techniques in play. When expectations do not match, someone will get hurt.

Seduction: Virtual Temptations

4. Role Play. Simulation used as a learning tool is one of SL's best applications. Taking a role in history or fantasy, engaging in a shared fiction, stretches the participant in new ways. The danger is when participation turns into a very time consuming presence. It is easy to get pulled into the story, strategy, and goals of the collaborative experience. Fearing to miss any action or intrigue, it is easy for the drama to eat up hours without even being aware time has passed! More than being seduced by an individual, it can be the social dynamic that encompasses.

5. Clubs. The music scene is one of the most vibrant sectors in SL. Between talented DJs and even more talented live performers, a visitor can spend all day long, and all night long, hanging out to hear tunes and chat. It becomes mesmerizing that in one virtual room there are people from all over the world! To talk to such a huge range, to build up an active social life that consumes more time and energy than the real one, must be a conscious choice, or it damages the potentials in real life. Additionally, clubs are a great place for manipulators to find victims.

6. Creativity. For many residents, building dream houses, finding new creative outlets not allowed in real life, experimenting, are all parts of the magic that SL offers. It can awaken hidden talents and interests, open new doors of enhancing experience, and be a breakthrough into new directions previously unknown. But to become so consumed with building dreams that continual sleep loss, isolation from loved ones, or neglect of real world necessities, the balance is skewed. Also, the idea that by building the impressive, others will be attracted: the concept of "build it and they will come" does not work in the virtual world. There is just too much to see. People follow friends. Or explore what they see published. Best is if an idea can appeal to both levels. To be creative and build an audience are really two different skills. Obsession can be from choice or seduction. Creative pursuits that become careers erase seduction, replacing it with conviction.

Seduction: Virtual Temptations

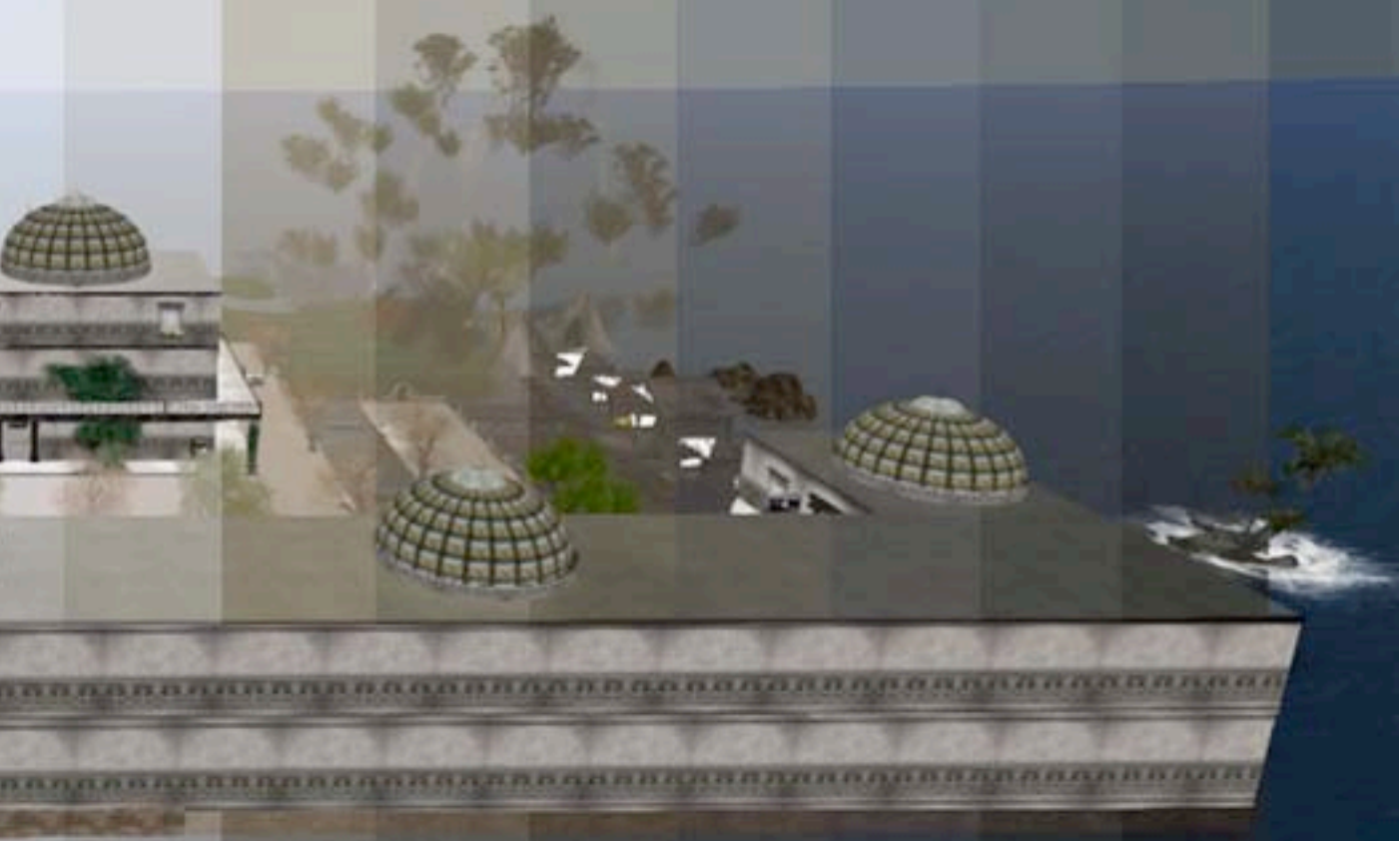
7. Shopping. Most residents are enthralled with the visual and the stylish, a major aspect that makes SL so fantastic. Those who lack physical advantages in the real world can compensate in the cyber. It enhances. But spending hours a day checking shops, studying Marketplace, and reading blogs for the best deals, can become a compulsion that distracts from other priorities. "Everything in moderation" could not be more appropriate. Yet, it can save spending time and money in real life, for the same satisfaction!

8. Breedables. The designs of animals can fascinate with a mystery of semi-controlled production. Having the quest to get certain traits becomes its own hobby. The most clever breedable companies require that creatures have to eat food, which has regular costs. Merchandising is all about seduction. But when the product sold fits the buyer's needs and purposes, it is not seduction but choice. Being pressured to buy what is not needed, or even desired, is seduction.



9. *Games.* The society makes a virtual world different from internet games in general. The population of SL, the economy, and the networks make a backdrop that affects all activity, magnified through avatars that interact. To compete, to win, is much like gambling—a momentum is established and it is hard to switch gears.

10. *Causes.* Some of the most aggressive and convincing people in SL are those running charities. They have to be. Their causes are like crusades. It becomes their job to seduce contributions and volunteers. If it fits the contributor's own direction, it is not a seduction, but a trade. Some charities are legitimate, but some are not.



Virtual World Warning Label

As a world vision expands, so do the experiences of euphoria and tragedy. Though the virtual world is, hopefully, a refuge from a harsh real one, it really isn't. Amidst a current of idealism, as avatars can build dream houses and fulfill fantasies, there lurks a dark side. Everyone wishes for a kinder, gentler world. But, sadly, human nature is human nature. The criminal element is real. Social and virtual media are tools for illegal activity as well as legal. Generally, threats in the real world are visible. But in the virtual one, threats are invisible.

Defensive behavior is necessary and needs new defense skills. Avatar anonymity is a myth. Any talented criminal can find out an avatar's real identity. There are hackers, stalkers, and scammers. Each use different tactics and gains in new ways to cause mischief.

Avatar Awareness: Be Cyber Streetwise

Think of a virtual world as if a big city. Everyone knows there are pickpockets and worse out there, so people must be conscientious about where they go and who they trust. The same has to be true in the cyber world with some additions. This advice may not protect from all trouble, but these are policies that can cut down on it:

1. *Choose to visit high-traffic public areas wisely.* Often in the busiest locations, the unsavory hang out. Many are just curious people, but the criminal element needs prey, and high traffic spots offers good targets.
2. *Read Profiles.* Older avatars are generally the most reliable, with honor in age/status. However, some are particularly skilled at gobbling up time and resources of newcomers.



3. *Recognize seductions.* It is easy to get pulled into various communities or activities, so make choices carefully. Role play, games, shopping, etc. are great if real life permits the time to participate. But those with demanding real lives need to limit in-world responsibilities.

4. *Verify partner identities.* Any close relationship needs transparency between participants. To do business, to own property together, or to make any kind of time or talent commitment, set up a foundation of communication. It is a red flag when a partner will not reveal real contact information.

People can be streetwise in real life, and yet not be cyberwise. Hopefully, everyone wishes for a better world. And, in most ways Second Life® is a better world. There are freedoms, opportunities, and experiences not possible to have in the real one. Virtual worlds will continue to grow in prevalence because the technology is so useful. The awareness of victim-avoidance must grow too.

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The Aesthete & the Amateur
virtual visual arts reviews

the aesthete & the amateur

PART 1 of 2

History Rhymes: Review of Rose Borchovski

On-going role-play series of gallery and art reviews by credentialed art critic, Eleanor Medier, and her less-than-professional husband, Heavy Writer.

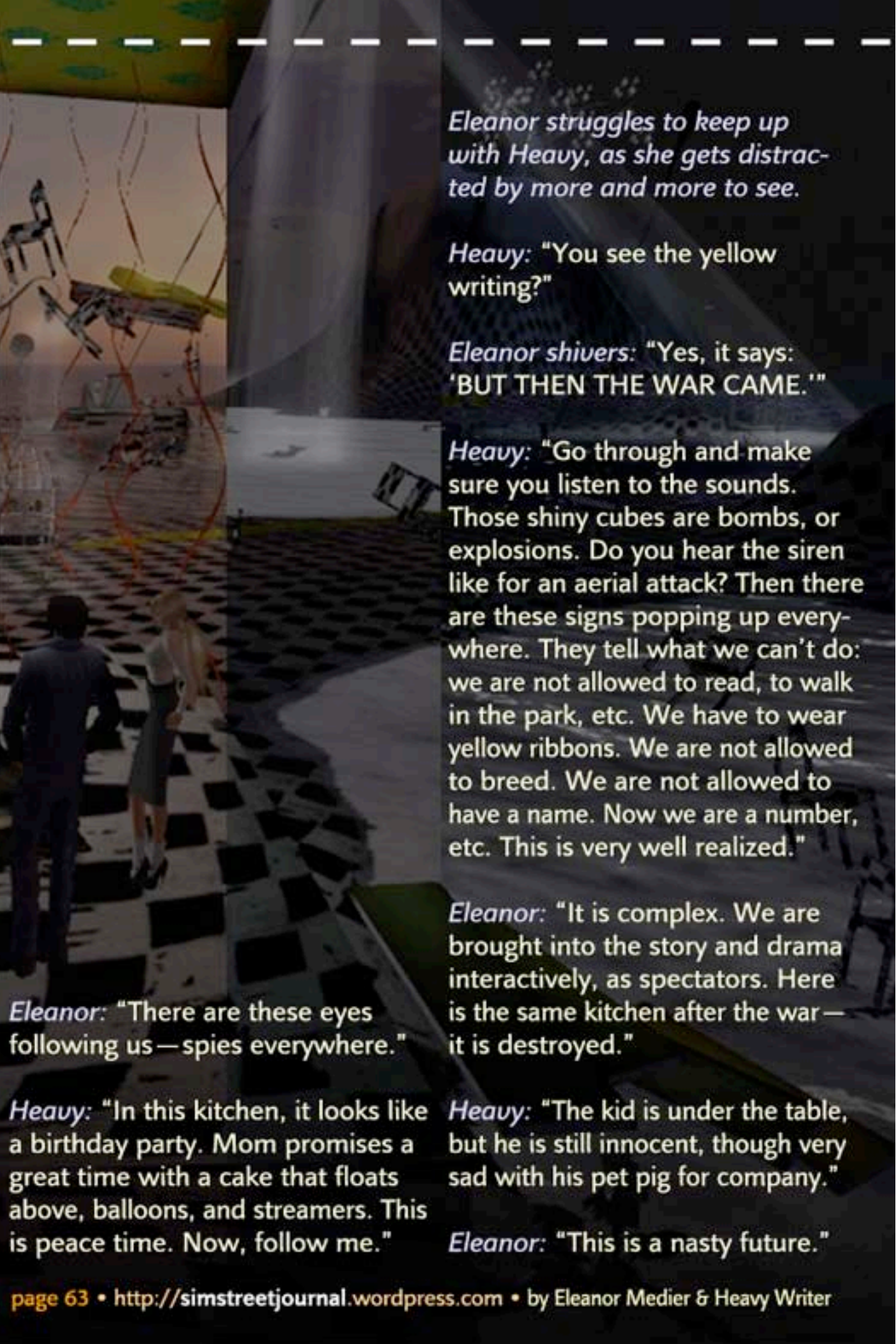
Heavy is determined to impress his snobby wife with all he has learned about visual art. He goes on a hunt to find the most moving and masterful installation in the virtual world. Once discovering the work of Rose Borchovski, he can't wait to share with Eleanor.

Heavy: "You know I'm not a big fan of 3D big installations, but this one I think you'll like. It is on three or four levels. Do you hear any sounds? The sounds are important. And there are some arrows for directions here and there."

Eleanor looks around bewildered: "I hear child sounds and a dog."

Heavy grabs her hand: "Come, follow me. You have to walk through so you can understand, dear. Here there are some toys and a child with his mom. He has a pet pig too."





Eleanor struggles to keep up with Heavy, as she gets distracted by more and more to see.

Heavy: "You see the yellow writing?"

Eleanor shivers: "Yes, it says: 'BUT THEN THE WAR CAME.'"

Heavy: "Go through and make sure you listen to the sounds. Those shiny cubes are bombs, or explosions. Do you hear the siren like for an aerial attack? Then there are these signs popping up everywhere. They tell what we can't do: we are not allowed to read, to walk in the park, etc. We have to wear yellow ribbons. We are not allowed to breed. We are not allowed to have a name. Now we are a number, etc. This is very well realized."

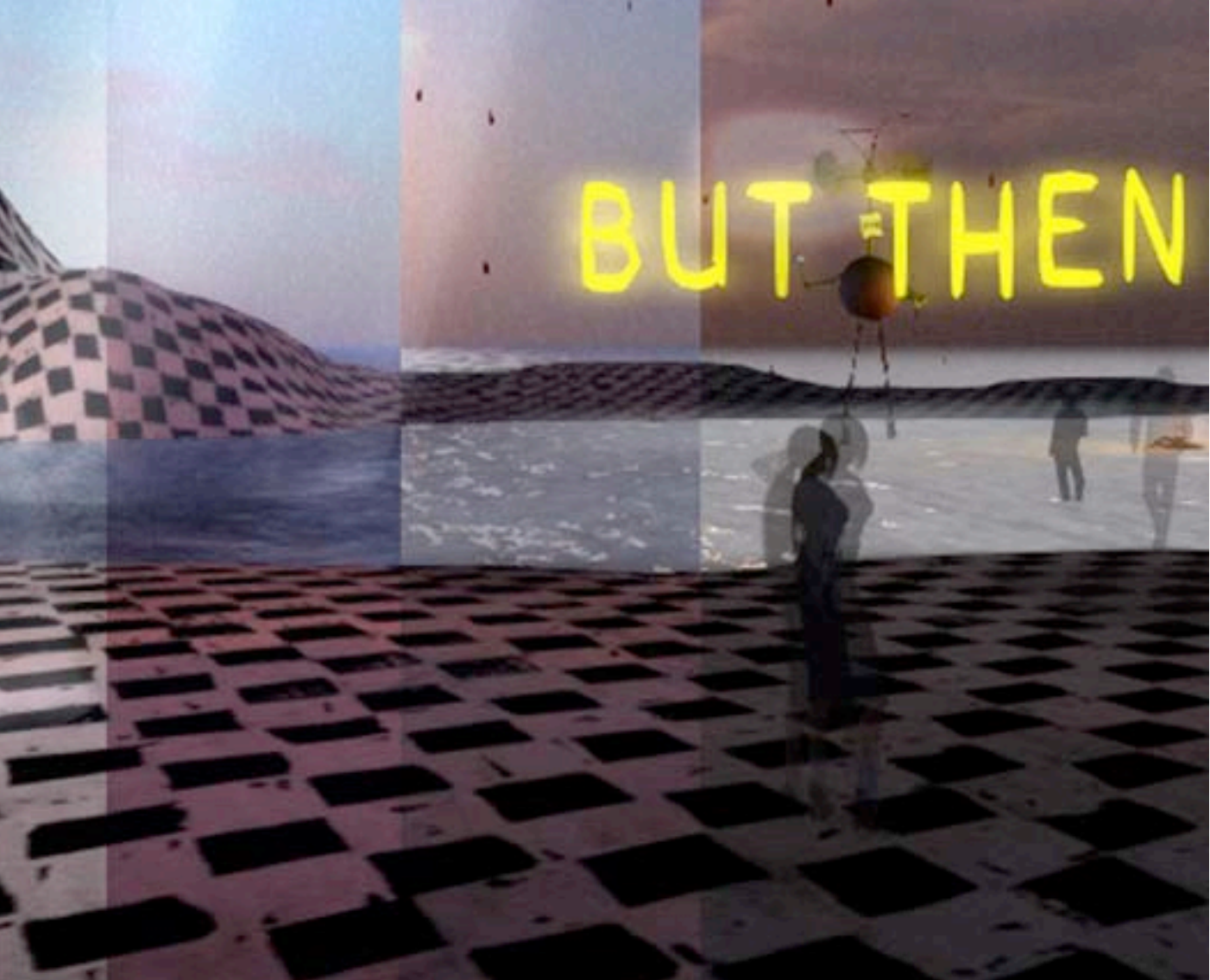
Eleanor: "It is complex. We are brought into the story and drama interactively, as spectators. Here is the same kitchen after the war — it is destroyed."

Eleanor: "There are these eyes following us — spies everywhere."

Heavy: "In this kitchen, it looks like a birthday party. Mom promises a great time with a cake that floats above, balloons, and streamers. This is peace time. Now, follow me."

Heavy: "The kid is under the table, but he is still innocent, though very sad with his pet pig for company."

Eleanor: "This is a nasty future."



BUT THEN

Heavy: "It is not the future, but the past—World War II, the Holocaust. The signs say: 'You have lost your name. You are a number.'"

Eleanor: "Ohhhh the yellow ribbon! yes I get it now. However, I have to approach it not knowing that—it is much more about the human condition. Though a narrative, it is a huge piece, its visual symbolism carries through."

Heavy: "Come closer and listen. Do you hear the list of names?"

And she put a pile of yellow ribbons to suggest all who died—nothing creepy. Most would have put bodies, but she could find a symbol for death. So the creepy thing is not visual, it is the suggestion of what happened."

Eleanor: "This is a powerful portrayal. It pulls in the observer to experience and feel the changes."

Heavy: "Here they are deported; you can hear the sound of a train. This is probably the best 3D installation I have seen in SL. I saw an



THE WAR CAME

interview with her on *Youtube*— she wanted to display this at SLB 2007 or so, and LL banned her. They didn't want to display this."

Eleanor's curiosity overtakes her conviction to only judge visual artwork visually: "Why not???"

Heavy: "They said it has too much nudity for a PG sim. Since it has no nudity, it was obvious they just didn't want to display it."

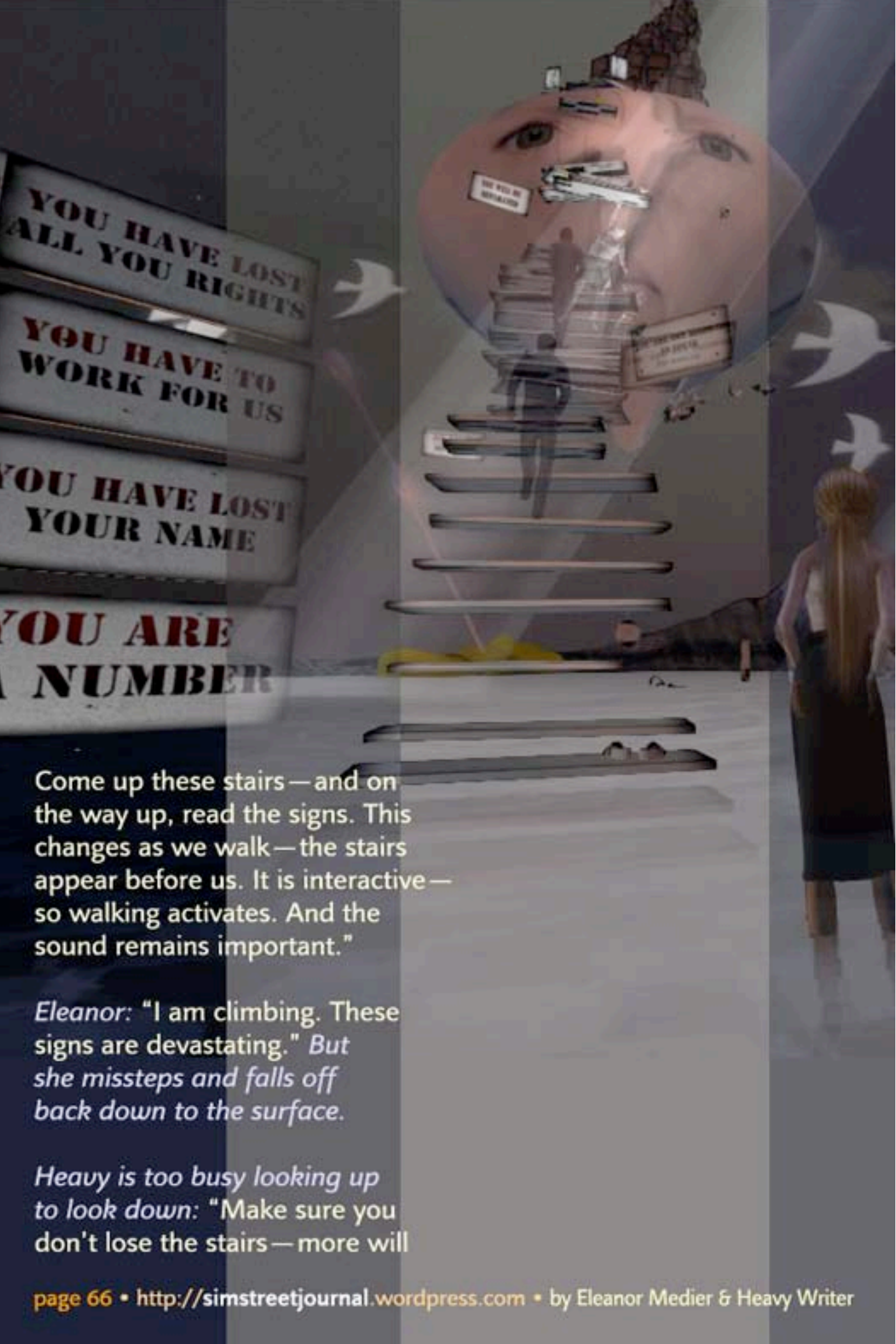
Eleanor is aghast: "This can't be ignored! This is a major work in SL—

even exemplary of the medium! Here is an immersive powerful exhibition that could not be experienced any other way."

Heavy: "The subject is controversial, but her staging is genius."

Eleanor: "I wish to get a handle on the whole. Ok—starting with the floor. Why is it checkered? This is very visually dominant."

Heavy grabs her hand: "Wait! You are going in the wrong direction. Now walk with me—



YOU HAVE LOST
ALL YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE TO
WORK FOR US

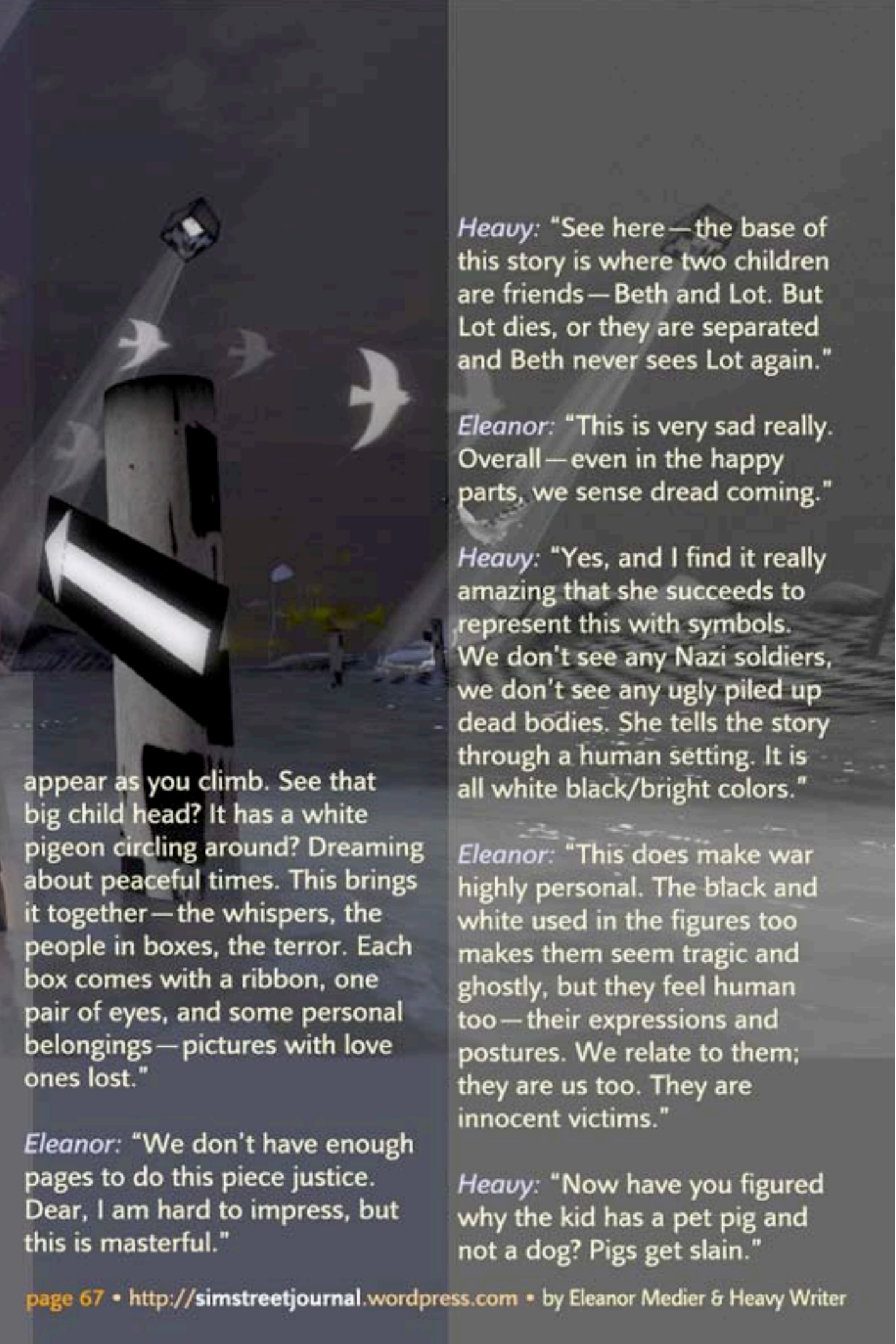
YOU HAVE LOST
YOUR NAME

YOU ARE
NUMBER

Come up these stairs — and on the way up, read the signs. This changes as we walk — the stairs appear before us. It is interactive — so walking activates. And the sound remains important.”

Eleanor: “I am climbing. These signs are devastating.” But she missteps and falls off back down to the surface.

Heavy is too busy looking up to look down: “Make sure you don’t lose the stairs — more will



appear as you climb. See that big child head? It has a white pigeon circling around? Dreaming about peaceful times. This brings it together—the whispers, the people in boxes, the terror. Each box comes with a ribbon, one pair of eyes, and some personal belongings—pictures with love ones lost.”

Eleanor: “We don’t have enough pages to do this piece justice. Dear, I am hard to impress, but this is masterful.”

Heavy: “See here—the base of this story is where two children are friends—Beth and Lot. But Lot dies, or they are separated and Beth never sees Lot again.”

Eleanor: “This is very sad really. Overall—even in the happy parts, we sense dread coming.”

Heavy: “Yes, and I find it really amazing that she succeeds to represent this with symbols. We don’t see any Nazi soldiers, we don’t see any ugly piled up dead bodies. She tells the story through a human setting. It is all white black/bright colors.”

Eleanor: “This does make war highly personal. The black and white used in the figures too makes them seem tragic and ghostly, but they feel human too—their expressions and postures. We relate to them; they are us too. They are innocent victims.”

Heavy: “Now have you figured why the kid has a pet pig and not a dog? Pigs get slain.”

Eleanor: "The boy does hide under the table with the pig. Though this piece is huge, the narrative holds together."

Heavy: "Yes, there is unity in composition—a mature artist with a defined style."

Eleanor: "Oh it is soooo sad dear. 'Lot had no chance to become who she was meant to be.' That puts tears in my eyes. This art has a spirituality—the birds, the beams of light, the ghostly figures."

Heavy: "Now this is after the war."

Eleanor: "Ohhhh. This is not an easy piece to see, but it is easy to understand. There is a lot to it though. It is weird how the eyes still follow us."

Heavy: "I think the eye symbolizes the idea that terror will always follow you after such experience. Look on the wall—there are pictures of kids having numbers instead names. At the end of tunnel, you fall down to the first stage."



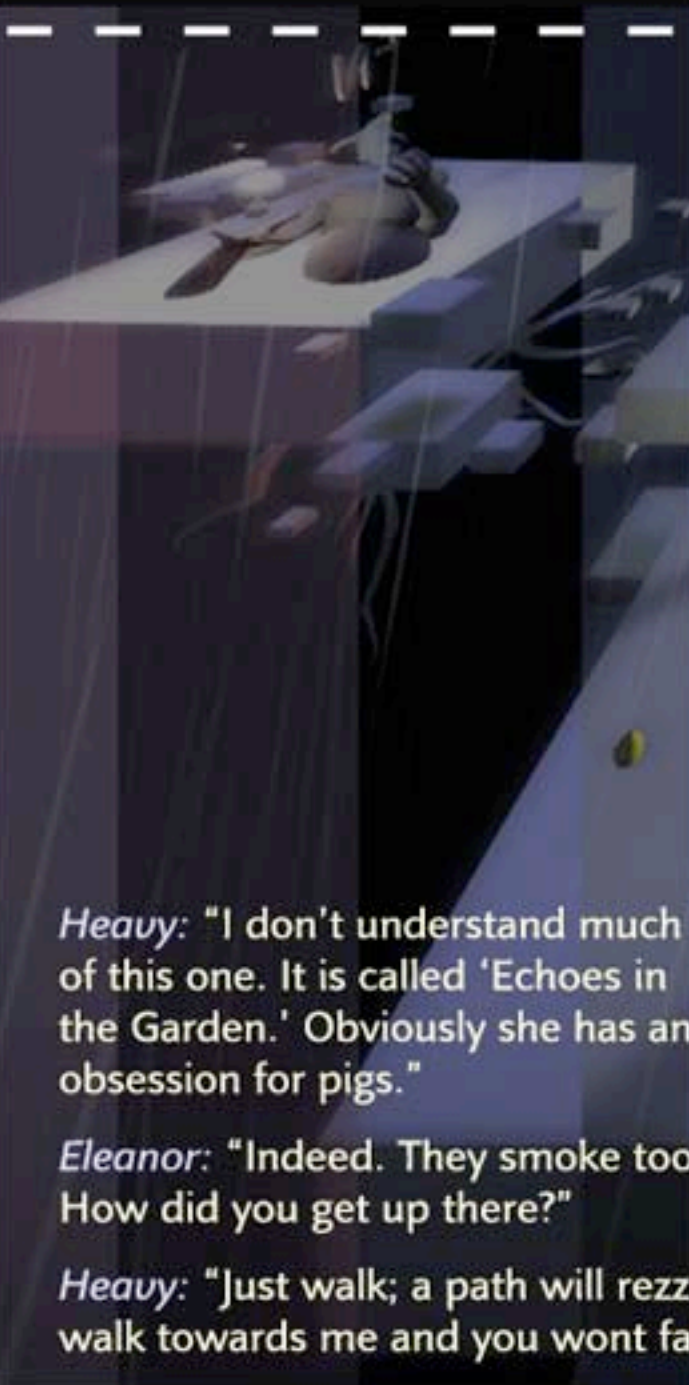
Eleanor: "This is the kind of statement you will never forget. It is highly personal and very much affects your feelings for what the people went through."

Heavy: "This goes beyond what we know about the Holocaust. This represents what can happen again in the next war — not necessarily to the Jewish people, but can be Palestinians next. It can be as well about people from communist prisons. Look at the bigger scale."

Eleanor: "There is genocide throughout history. With all of our civilization too, this still happens. 'History does not repeat, it rhymes.'"

Heavy: "Where there is war, there is massacre too. There are so many examples. I wonder if she has other displays." *He pulls up his Search box and enters 'Rose Borchovski.'* "I found out another, not as big." *Off he teleports and sends for Eleanor.*





Heavy: "I don't understand much of this one. It is called 'Echoes in the Garden.' Obviously she has an obsession for pigs."

Eleanor: "Indeed. They smoke too. How did you get up there?"

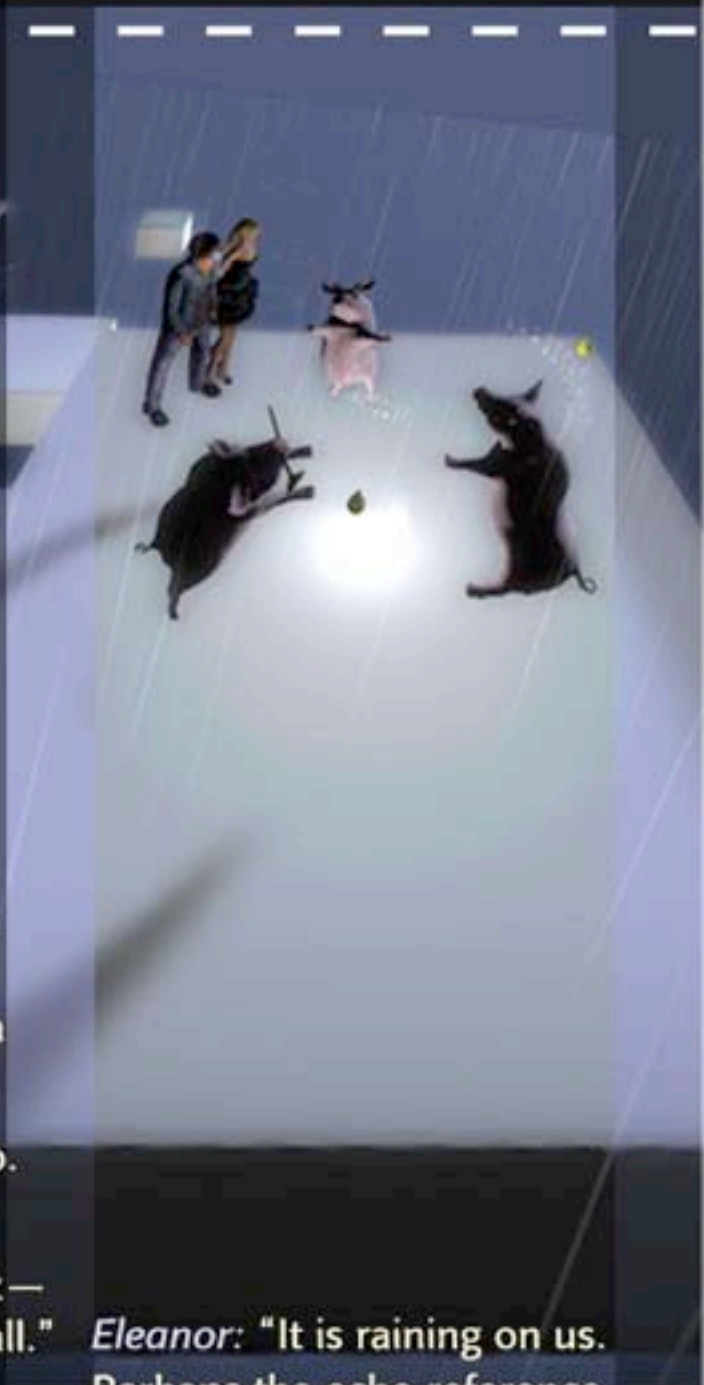
Heavy: "Just walk; a path will rezz— walk towards me and you wont fall."

Eleanor, who has a talent for falling off of stairs and platforms, mutters: "I'm scared."


Heavy: "One pig is vegetarian. The pig is a symbol for politicians."

Eleanor: "Generally."

Heavy: "At least those two smoking I believe are politicians. I'm not sure about the third one."



Eleanor: "It is raining on us. Perhaps the echo reference is that this does *not* take place in the garden. The pigs have emerged from the garden; they are dancing. She sets up her own visual metaphors, and the dancing pigs have little regard for anything going on around them. Careful, or you might get in their way."



Paris Obscure

*We all are ... little Monsters
New album available*



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the aesthete & the amateur

PART 2 of 2

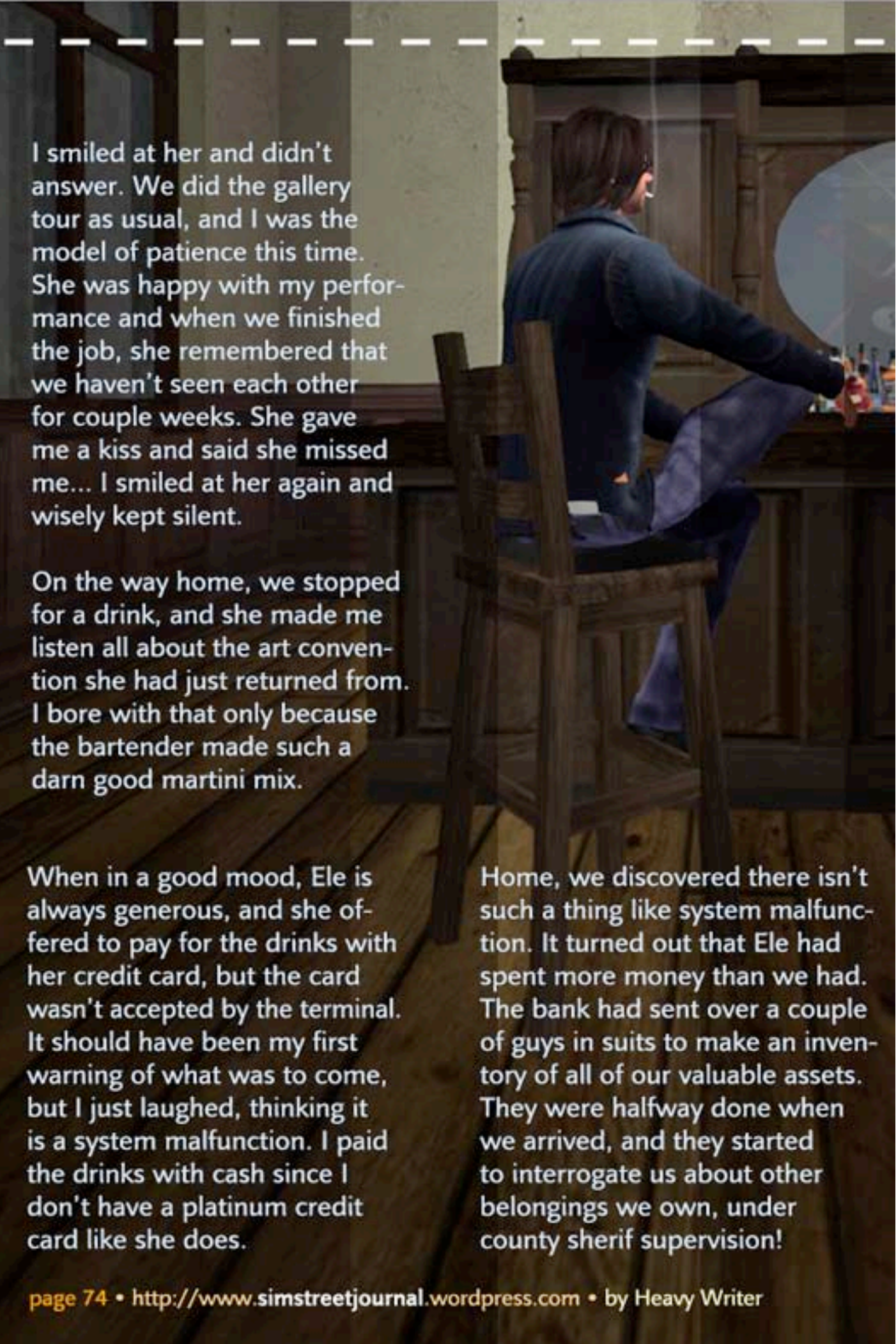
No Man's Land by Heavy Writer

It's been a while since my last story but sometimes events are coming faster than I can write about. ...

I was having a drink on the porch, looking at the grass growing back in the yard after I did such a great job cleaning the scenery of that megalomaniac sculpture my art-addicted wife, Eleanor, bought with our life-savings. I expected her to arrive, and I felt ready to fight her wrath when she realized the sculpture was gone and all the paintings in the house are gone too.

Life always takes you by surprise no matter how prepared you think you are! Ele did come home, and with the speed of a lightning bolt, dropped her luggage in the hall and dragged me to another art gallery scheduled for review. She didn't notice that a three-story tall sculpture was missing from our yard, but she DID notice a greasy stain on my jeans jacket collar! I waved my hands in front her eyes to make sure she isn't blind. She glared at me over her glasses saying: "Is this supposed to be a joke?"



A person with dark hair, wearing a blue jacket and dark pants, is sitting on a wooden bar stool at a bar. They are viewed from behind, looking towards the bar counter. The bar has a dark wooden facade and a circular mirror or light fixture on the wall behind it. The floor is made of dark wood planks.

I smiled at her and didn't answer. We did the gallery tour as usual, and I was the model of patience this time. She was happy with my performance and when we finished the job, she remembered that we haven't seen each other for couple weeks. She gave me a kiss and said she missed me... I smiled at her again and wisely kept silent.

On the way home, we stopped for a drink, and she made me listen all about the art convention she had just returned from. I bore with that only because the bartender made such a darn good martini mix.


When in a good mood, Ele is always generous, and she offered to pay for the drinks with her credit card, but the card wasn't accepted by the terminal. It should have been my first warning of what was to come, but I just laughed, thinking it is a system malfunction. I paid the drinks with cash since I don't have a platinum credit card like she does.

Home, we discovered there isn't such a thing like system malfunction. It turned out that Ele had spent more money than we had. The bank had sent over a couple of guys in suits to make an inventory of all of our valuable assets. They were halfway done when we arrived, and they started to interrogate us about other belongings we own, under county sheriff supervision!



Ele started to cry, and was spared to answer questions, which was the smartest thing she could do. I had to deal with the two suits myself, and answered all their questions with best replies that crossed my mind which were: "I don't know sir! I have no idea sir! I don't recall about that sir!" Etc. Which was true, considering that I saw their list of what Ele had bought for the first time.

At some point, they asked about a new boat, which lit up a green lightbulb in my head! Of course, I told them my boat was sunk by accident in the city bay, and we were still awaiting the insurance money on that one. I am not sure where they got another boat from, but it appeared Eleanor was up to more than I thought.

A faded background image of a building facade. On the left is a dark wooden door with a small window. To the right is a window with a dark frame, showing some items inside. To the right of the window is a poster with a circular logo and text. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle.

Finally, at midnight they left but told us we needed to leave the house within three days and that we were not allowed to take any of the assets they had on the list, which they left with us. Those sharks listed everything—even the pearl earrings and necklace Ele wore that night.

Once the suits left, I went in kitchen, made some muddy coffee, and placed the sniffling Ele under interrogation myself, since her tears couldn't fool me at all. It turned out every painting or work of art she bought was on bank credit, and one painting was the guarantee for the credit to buy the next painting, and so on, and so on.



Eleanor had built up so many debts that we wouldn't be able to pay them back in ten lifetimes of hard work! But, still, we were fortunate to live in the 21st century because in the Middle Ages, we would have been thrown in jail for such an offense.

Also, that boat mentioned on the list was not the one sitting on the bottom of the bay. It turned out Ele purchased a big sailing boat for me because she felt guilty for sinking my old rusted one. Did I mention that she is generous when she is in good mood? I kissed her, told her to not worry, and sent her to bed.

Sometimes the fast decisions are the best ones. Just take what you have and go for it! Thinking too much can just lead to more trouble.

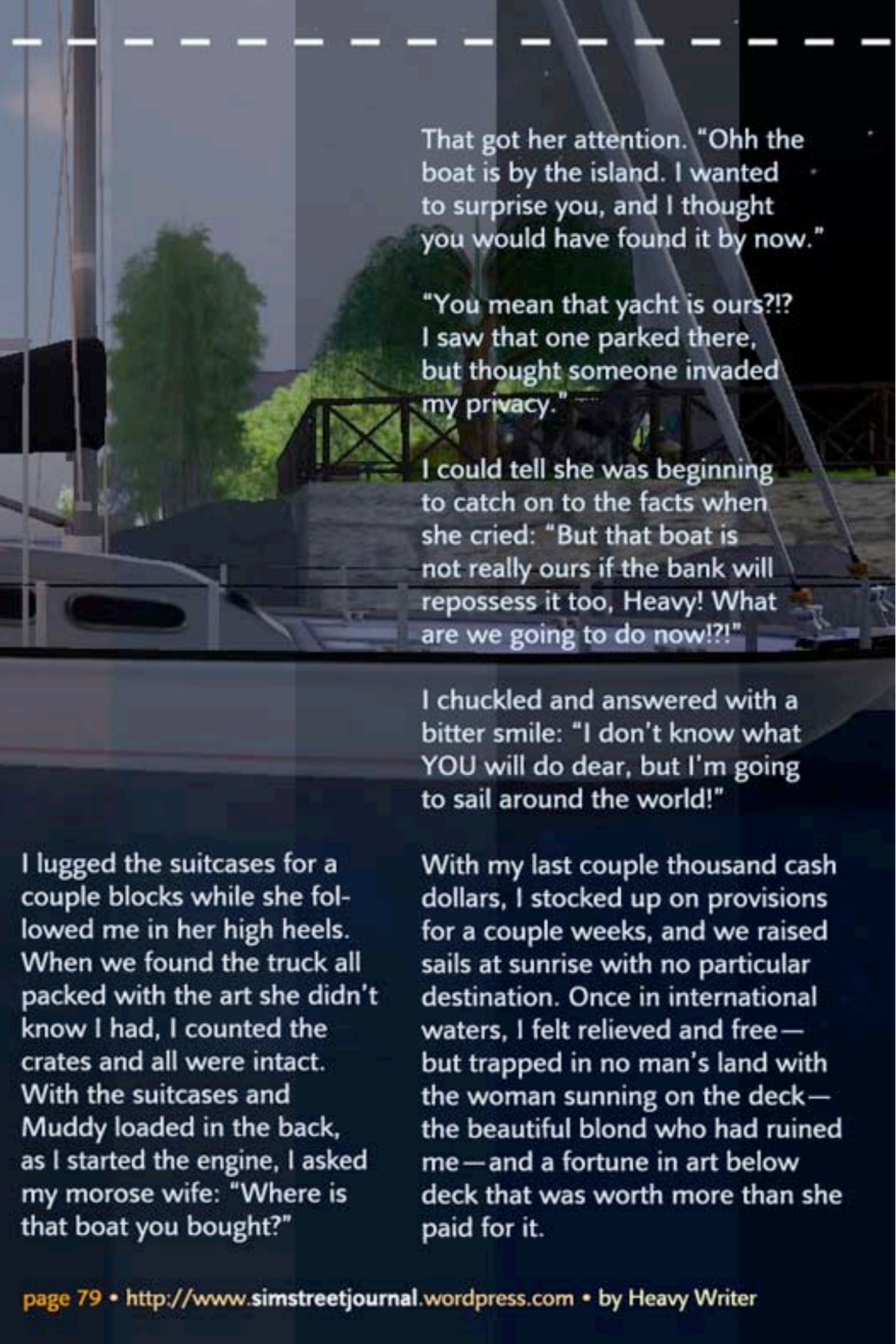
When alone, I left the house. While I walked around and looked for a cab at that late hour to take me to my garage, I considered seriously getting a divorce for first time in my life. So Ele was lucky I found a cab fast, got back in action, I forgot all about divorce. ...



At the garage, I considered all those crates I packed up containing her painting collection to teach her a lesson. She still didn't realize I had done this, and was so distracted by the suits that she didn't focus on the now-blank walls. So, I loaded the well-packed crates into the back of my pickup truck, feeling proud that I had such foresight, even if done for a different reason.

I then drove the loaded truck home, and parked a couple blocks away.

At 6 am, I woke Ele and asked her to pack luggage for a long trip which she accomplished, crying again of course! Once all essentials were in suitcases, we put Muddy on a leash, and we left the comfortable house for the chilly autumn morning.



That got her attention. “Ohh the boat is by the island. I wanted to surprise you, and I thought you would have found it by now.”

“You mean that yacht is ours?!? I saw that one parked there, but thought someone invaded my privacy.”

I could tell she was beginning to catch on to the facts when she cried: “But that boat is not really ours if the bank will repossess it too, Heavy! What are we going to do now!?!”

I chuckled and answered with a bitter smile: “I don’t know what YOU will do dear, but I’m going to sail around the world!”

I lugged the suitcases for a couple blocks while she followed me in her high heels. When we found the truck all packed with the art she didn’t know I had, I counted the crates and all were intact. With the suitcases and Muddy loaded in the back, as I started the engine, I asked my morose wife: “Where is that boat you bought?”

With my last couple thousand cash dollars, I stocked up on provisions for a couple weeks, and we raised sails at sunrise with no particular destination. Once in international waters, I felt relieved and free — but trapped in no man’s land with the woman sunning on the deck — the beautiful blond who had ruined me — and a fortune in art below deck that was worth more than she paid for it.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

“Our challenge is to go beyond the virtual world as a 3D toy, into something with a solid foundation. Machinima breaks the real life/SL barrier, because it reaches a broad audience without their need to log in. We give people an idea of the vibrancy and potential of creative applications in this new society. They must want to come into virtual worlds to learn and confront the learning curve.”

—Jayjay Zifanwe, University of Western Australia

UWA's virtual campus is one of the most active and comprehensive in Second Life®. Leading in academia, sciences, and the arts, they are famous for their 3D Art Challenges, attracting the best and most talented virtual artists.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETERA LANDAR AND ELEANOR MEDIER

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Blues, Classic Rock
and Soul on the
Party Pier
Monday - Saturday

Lakeside Sunday
Mornings
Blues and Gospel

Blue Moon
Sunday Nights
Romance at Cay's

owner: Cayleen Linette

owner: Bundy Xue

THANK YOU READERS

FROM THESE MUSIC VENUES

As fellow supporters of live music in Second Life®, these venues collaborate with *Sim Street Journal*. Receive the journal as music for the eyes as you enjoy the music for the ears! Each issue contains articles for listeners, performers, and promoters.

Relax! Dance!

Enjoy music from long ago to the present with live DJ's and performers, events, contests, games, boats, jetskis

Bring friends for a great time!



owner: Quistiss Shippe



THE PARTY NEVER STOPS @ MUDDY'S
WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

24/7 PG open air music cafe
features the best in Blues, Jazz, Rock-n-Roll,
Classic Rock, Top 40, Alternative,
Classic Country, Live Music, Live Dj's

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Muddys-Music-Cafe>

owner: Bridget Hammill

Howlin' Wolf Blues Bar

Bringing you the finest music
on the grid...

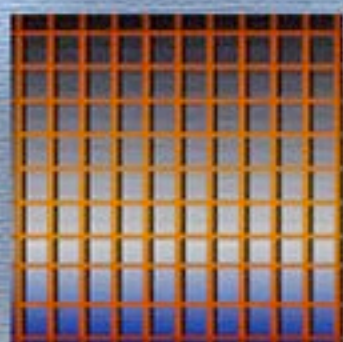
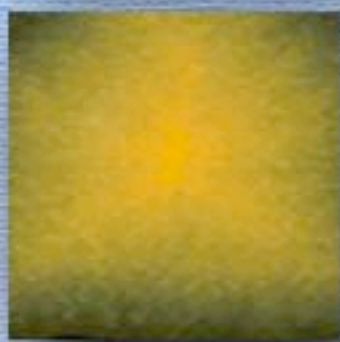
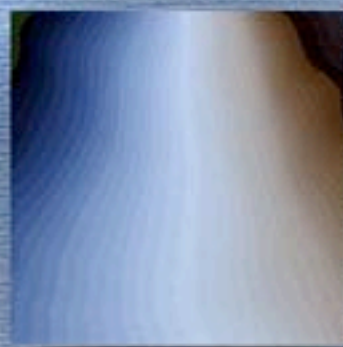
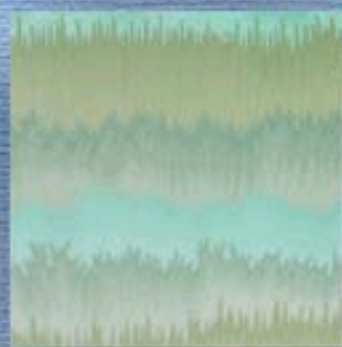
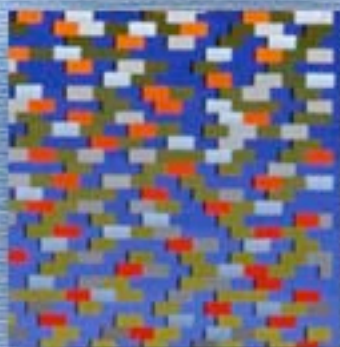
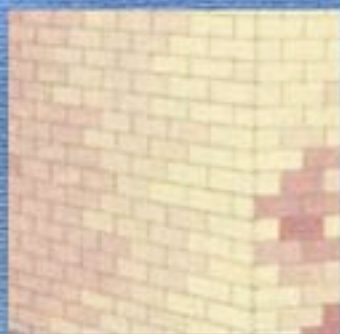
Blues and more!



owner: Jen Cuddihy

psychological scenery

Paintings by Eleanor Medier



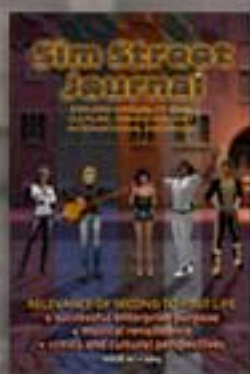
GALLERY
MEDIER

Rotating exhibit of paintings and textures that transform interior landscapes by Eleanor Medier.

IN-WORLD & ONLINE

Back issues available.

***Sim Street Journal* in-world has LMs, links and exclusive features. Discover the relevance of virtual worlds through those who know.**



Issue #1
Blindboink Parham
musician



Issues #2 & 5
Yanik Lytton
Fogbound Blues



Issue #3
Maches Lemton
entrepreneur



Issue #4
Russell Eponym
musician



Issue #5
FreeWee Ling
UWA curator



Issue #6
Tara
Lopes



Issue #7
Paris
Obscur



Issue #8
Megan
Prumier

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ONLINE: <http://www.simstreetjournal.wordpress.com>

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Issue #9
Lorraine
Charron



Issue #10
Lorah
(Lohrahlahnah)



Issue #11
Cadence Carolina
Blues Disc Jockey



Issue #12
Tip Corbett
musician

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FIND BALANCE

Readers of *Sim Street Journal* are fascinated by the virtual world culture and how it relates to the real one. They are serious about both their second and their first lives, and how each is enhanced. Authors, and those profiled in the journal, speak from the heart. They share, from experience, how they integrate their two worlds.

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SIM STREET JOURNAL
explores relevance of virtual to real commerce and culture

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Locations of photos: Business Park, Cica Ghost's "Rust", and Second Life's 10th Anniversary Celebration Island.