



digital diaspora

denny

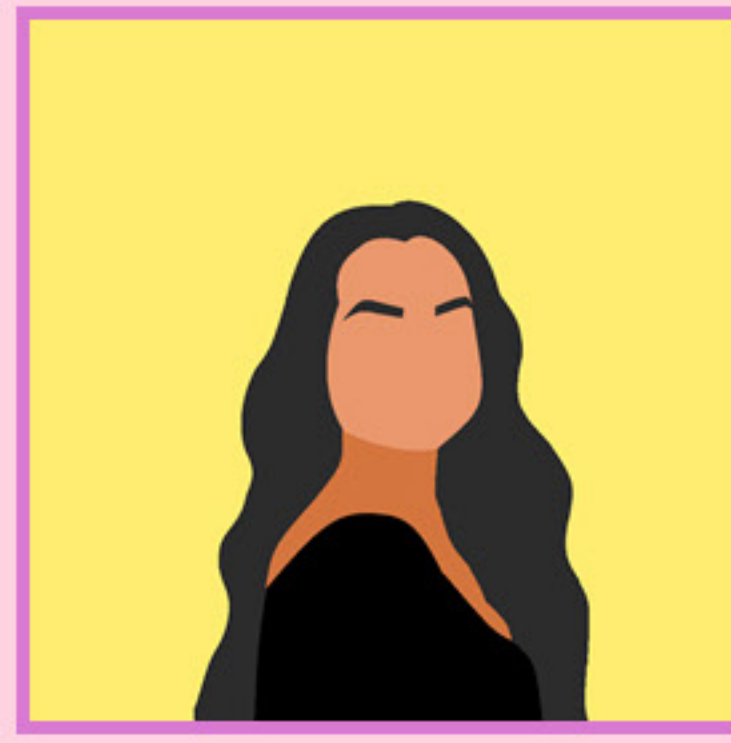


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special thanks

<home>

<home>

a desktop drop in the ocean

what happens when the web meets the water?

<pacific> <glitch>

</encryption> </atlantic>

from now on, we will call homeland

.com

(.gov)

tie a lineage into

@handle

open a paper map and point to a username

open google maps and reveal the

closest

fastest way

to get to ourselves

maybe this time around

there really is no pop-up virus or war

but we move, again

refresh, again

searching for an internet without borders

searching for a country without domain

tell me

where are you going?

are you forgetting something? someone? some place?

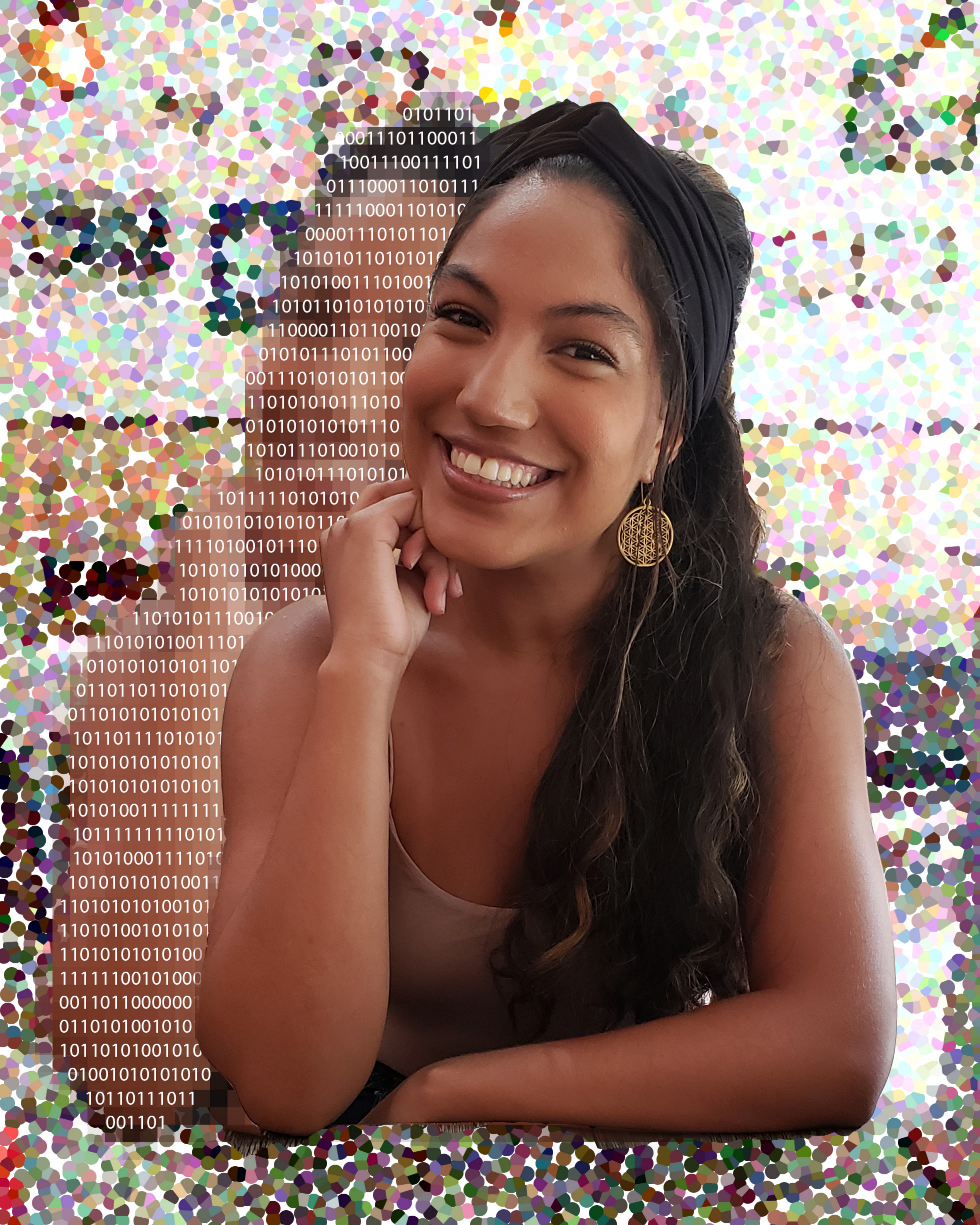
where will you go

if i tell you

you will never get there

as much as you've always been there all along

</home>



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<dreams>



Application For Naturalization

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form N-400
OMB No. 1615-0052
Expires 09/30/2015

For USCIS Use Only	Date Stamp	Receipt	Action Block
Remarks			

Type or print all your answers in black ink. Type or print "N/A" if an item is not applicable or the answer is "none" unless otherwise indicated. Failure to answer all of the questions may delay USCIS processing your Form N-400. **NOTE: You must complete Parts 1. - 14.**

Part 1. Information About Your Eligibility <i>(Check only one box or your Form N-400 may be delayed)</i>	Enter Your 9 Digit A-Number: ▶ A- <input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
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You are at least 18 years old **and**

1. Have been a Permanent Resident of the United States for at least 5 years.
2. Have been a Permanent Resident of the United States for at least 3 years. In addition, you have been married to and living with the same U.S. citizen spouse for the last 3 years, **and** your spouse has been a U.S. citizen for the last 3 years at the time of filing your Form N-400.
3. Are a Permanent Resident of the United States, and you are the spouse of a U.S. citizen, **and** your U.S. citizen spouse is regularly engaged in specified employment abroad. *(Section 319(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act)*
4. Are applying on the basis of qualifying military service.
5. Other (explain):

Part 2. Information About You *(Person applying for naturalization)*

1. **Your Current Legal Name** *(do not provide a nickname)*

Family Name <i>(Last Name)</i>	Given Name <i>(First Name)</i>	Middle Name <i>(if applicable)</i>
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------
2. **Your Name Exactly As It Appears on Your Permanent Resident Card** *(if applicable)*

Family Name <i>(Last Name)</i>	Given Name <i>(First Name)</i>	Middle Name <i>(if applicable)</i>
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------
3. **Other Name(s) You Have Used Since Birth** *(include nicknames, aliases, and maiden name if applicable)*

Family Name <i>(Last Name)</i>	Given Name <i>(First Name)</i>	Middle Name <i>(if applicable)</i>



Application For [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Home and Security
[REDACTED]

USCIS
Form N-400
OMB No. 1615-0052
Expires 09/30/2015

For USCIS Use Only	Date Stamp	Receipt	Action Block
	I've been feeling stuck.	This is how I start I think. I would like to leave.	Beyond this sheet is a place more vast than the emptiness of your words here.
Remarks	I said I would like to leave.		

[REDACTED] your answers [REDACTED] black ink. [REDACTED] not applicable or [REDACTED] "none" [REDACTED] otherwise [REDACTED] Failure to [REDACTED] all of [REDACTED] your [REDACTED] Parts [REDACTED]

Part 1. Information About Your Eligibility (Check only one [REDACTED] you [REDACTED] may be delayed)

Enter Your 9 Digit A-Number:
▶ A- **DONTFORGET**

You are at least [REDACTED] (i'm sorry)

- [REDACTED] Permanent [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] living [REDACTED] the last [REDACTED] has been [REDACTED] the last [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] your Form [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] regularly engaged in [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] Nationality Act)
- [REDACTED] on the basis of qualifying [REDACTED] service.
- [REDACTED] (explain): **my name to me when I forget**

Part 2. Information About You (Person applying for naturalization)

- [REDACTED] (do not provide a [REDACTED])

Family [REDACTED]	Given [REDACTED] (First [REDACTED])	[REDACTED]
Self	Given	Last
- Your Name Exactly As [REDACTED] Permanent [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Name [REDACTED]	Given [REDACTED] (First [REDACTED])	[REDACTED]
Temporary	Given	Optional
- Other [REDACTED] (s) You [REDACTED] Birth [REDACTED]

Family [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] (First [REDACTED])	[REDACTED] (if applicable)
Self	Never	Self
When	Self	Determined

jenny zhang said, to be children of immigrants means to grow up and become something our parents will never understand. i tried to imagine the position our children will be in. i guess that's why i made this project in the first place; if i can understand where i am now – if i can fathom parents' misunderstandings of where we've gone and what we've become, we can kindle a dynamic with our children where 'intergenerational' does not mean 'too far to understand'.

when speaking to my cohort, i felt their hunger for a self-determined world where they have control over what goes into the universe in their pockets. even their sparked smiles at the mere thought of possibility at a fingertip's reach were enough for me to get it – there is new worldliness on instagram. a world we can simultaneously access as digital migrants and human natives.

one of my theories is that within a generation that migrates, this hunger for a better life in a different location becomes part of their blood. therefore, even if some of us have been in the u.s. for a few generations, that hunger still exists, except this time, we've found cyberspace as the new territory to move to. i can log onto instagram and express an emotion that might not have currency or value offline. i can exit the app, and be certain that the emotion still lives on there. i can come back to and leave it at any time.

what i wish to tell our family is: amongst new words, new technology, and new yearning, the story remains the same no matter the generation. if i am raised to believe where i come from is not good enough, what makes you think where i am now will suffice?



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<picture-perfect>





you know when you cross the street, sure enough by your gut to know you're in the clear, but a car or a bike speeds through, and that rush is enough of a reminder to never feel too sure?

or when your last week's instagram post did so well (400 likes), but the one today isn't doing so hot (200 likes), and that rush is enough of a reminder to never set the bar again?

what about that nude you have saved in your hidden folder? what about the passcode to your phone and even though you are the only one who knows it, even you can't face your own naked without hide or permission?

what about that half selfie you took because you could barely stand your own fucking face that day?

what about that cute outfit you snapped a picture of before heading out the door? or posting it as a reminder to yourself (and announcement to others) that the past two months of not getting out of bed didn't actually happen? or was it just forgetfulness?

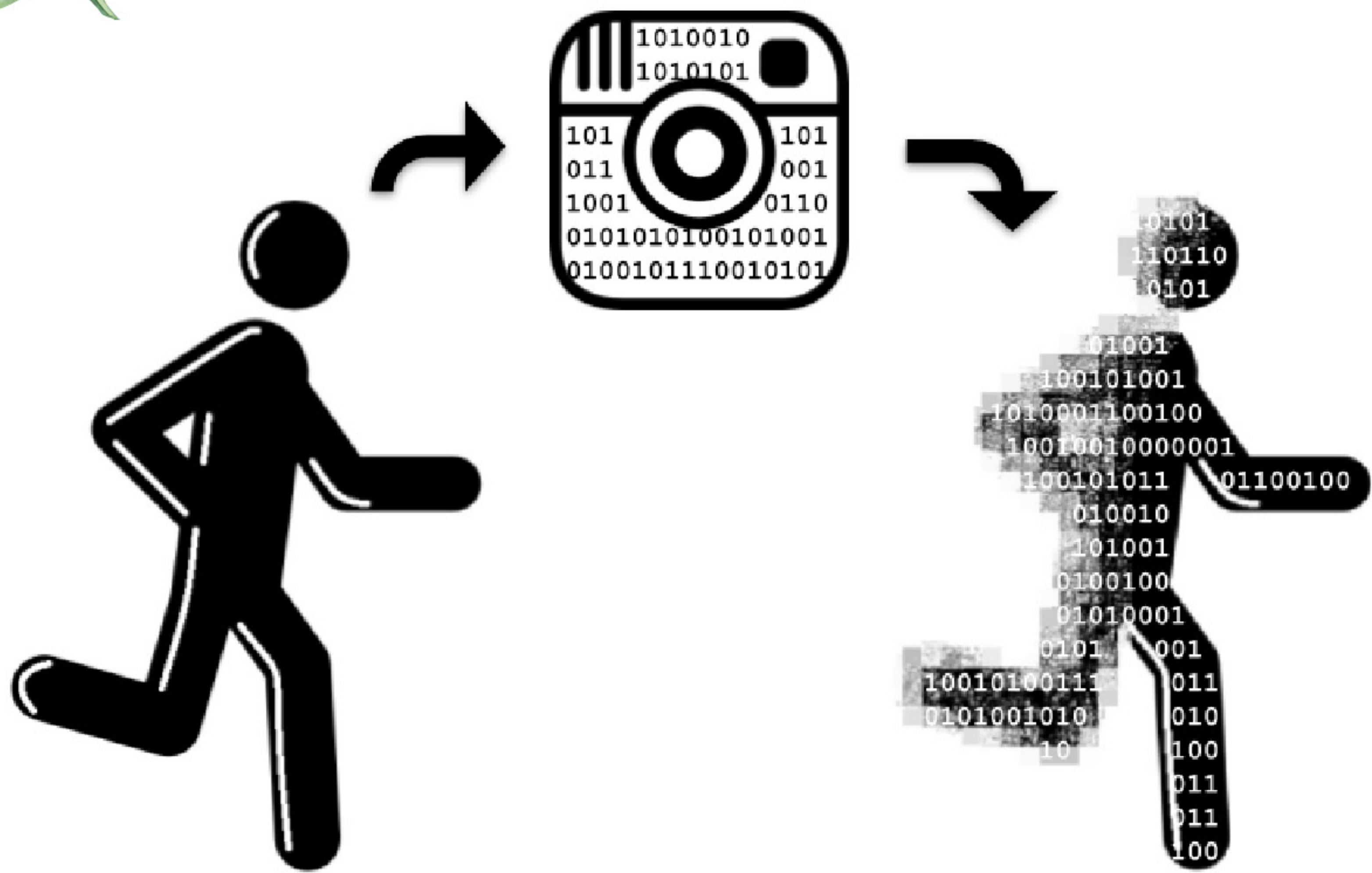
what about the velvet dress in the bathroom? or how you took a photo in it for that person to see but not really for them them but actually for them them but in your mind you never specify them so when you avoid thinking of them them you can pretend to peel them them off of you as easy as that dress slipped off ~~all~~ by yourself?

what about the filters before the picture even happens?



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<movement>



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in an episode of *digimon*, the digital world and the real world collide, and the children who inhabit both worlds have to come clean to their families about the double lives they've been living. being a young person who loved *digimon* as an audience of the show, even i forgot to grasp the lives of the characters outside of the digital world because i was so submerged in it myself. it didn't mean storylines of the children weren't real anymore. matt and t.k. were brothers separated through their parents' divorce; izzy's family seemed picture perfect until it was revealed that he was adopted and his parents struggled to disclose to him; mimi was self-absorbed, a fierce wall that hid her sincerity. their stories back home in the real world were never siloed. it just meant that in the digital world, their past didn't hold the shape to how their lives would be.

digimon aired in 2000.

nearly two decades later, our cyber creations of personalized social medias are built off of pictures, videos, thoughts, humor, and ideas of ourselves. and i'm sure some people live on the internet more than they do offline (i understand you), while some people refuse to even visit the digital world of self-creation (i understand you). but this is nothing new. the creation of fantasy and fiction serves to alleviate the limitations of our day-to-days. *digimon* and other newly fabricated worlds at the time served as a small window to what our reality is now, where digital is synchronous to the non-digital.

logging onto the internet doesn't necessarily require a username and password login anymore, does it? the access of entrance and convenience of immediacy modified our consciousness of intention when going online. it happens in a push of an app and instantly the online realm is ours. this power and accessibility grant agency, but sometimes the offline world provides so little room, and there's only so much of freedom online. while in other circumstances, the offline world is too good to compare to any online networks.

when we open instagram, we don't just open a social media network; we open a universe we've curated on behalf of a person that we, too, curate. when you go on instagram, what parts of yourself do you leave behind? what parts of yourself become artificial? what do you look forward to on instagram? have we forgotten the intentions of our legacy's movement to move so empty?



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<technology>

this essay is a linguistic collage of sentences recorded from individual interviews with the cohort members



- marleny



- kate



- richard



- jimena



- adia



- gogo



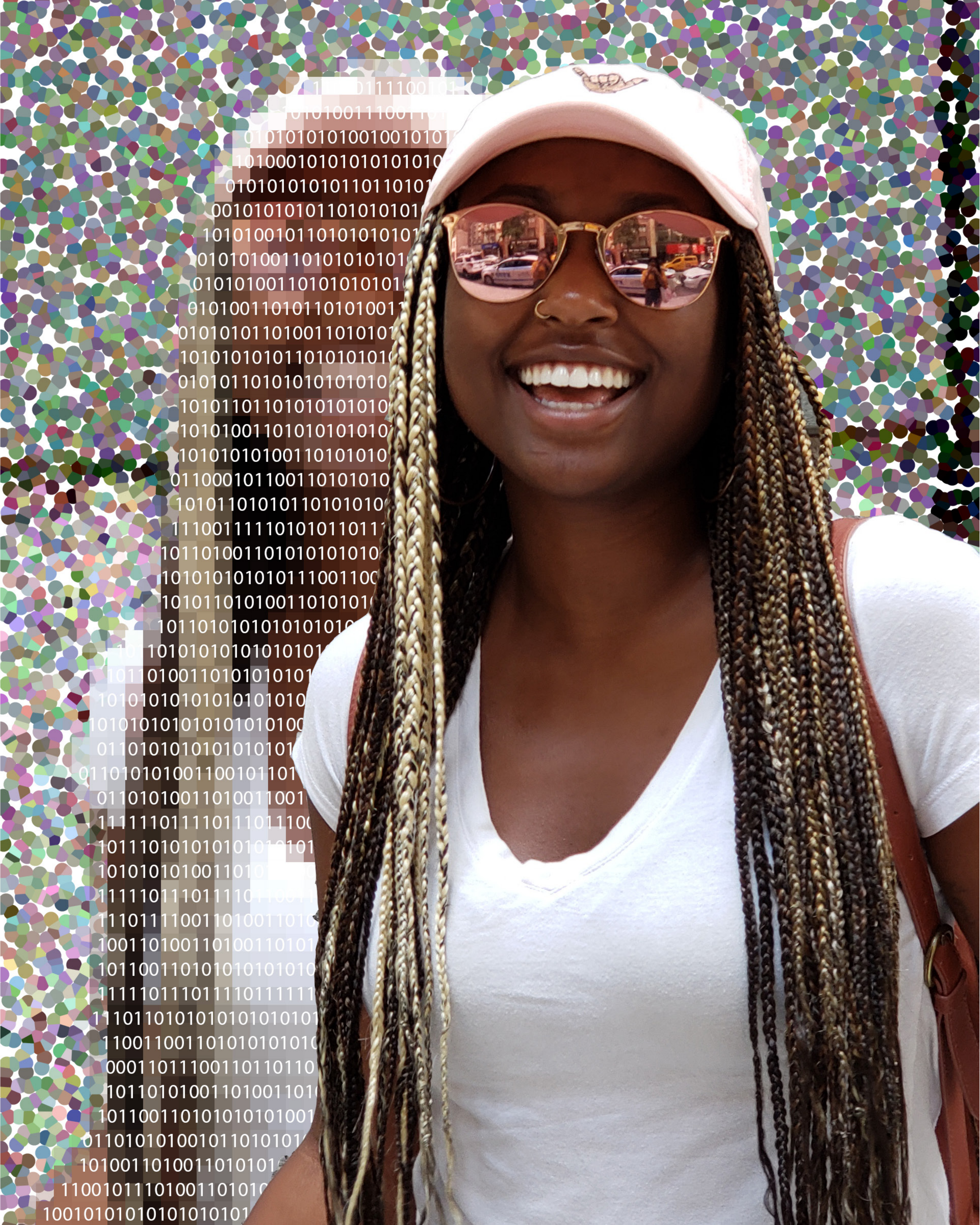
- mohammed

let's *connect!*

[Instagram] is a way to stay **connected**. It's become so central to everything I wanna do -- to **connect** with people and put relationships first -- and use the goal of building strong relationships to push forward the best of my interest. [I] deleted Instagram because it was the main app used to communicate with ex-girlfriend. When I deleted [Instagram], my life didn't change, and it was an indication that I didn't need this app. [Instagram] keeps me [**connected** and] in touch with people I might not see all the time. I enjoy that you can really visualize yourself and create this other world for yourself. On Instagram, you're not out here struggling all the time. You decide what to share with people and how you want to be viewed. I like that it was a nice creative outlet. You can curate your life, as opposed to what life brings to you every single day, which you don't have any choice over. I've always wanted people to look at me as a confident, smart beautiful girl. So, I did everything that I could to maintain that standard of whatever I wanted to be seen as. I use Instagram to share fun things that happen in my life, to keep in touch with people that I maybe don't talk to on a daily basis, to keep up with their lives. I use it to share my poetry. I value love and human **connection**. Like having two or more people exchange experiences and information as humans, and finding things in common with one another. And understanding differences as well. Something I think about lately is 'when was the last time I followed someone I wasn't attracted to?' I'm trying to challenge that. In reality, when you post something on Instagram, it's not really for you, it's for everyone who follows you. So if you don't think your followers won't like it, why post it? Just keep it to yourself if you think it's nice. I just don't feel

it necessary to support people going on [Instagram] with the purpose of trying to get as many likes as they could. It felt very fake. [That's] the thing about being insecure of your own image on social media: being able to feel seen in a way that I have agency over, [as opposed to] just like going outside and seeing people. Sometimes I have a desire to be selfish and express things that aren't savory. Instagram is just one iteration along the line of many different social mediums that I've used since, like, Aim. I'm a human using it, so I have human errors as well. I'm not perfect in my interactions with people. It has to do with validation, because if I really, truly wanted to stay in touch with people, there are so many different ways to do that than on Instagram. I don't like that it almost feels like [...] it says a lot about your image. Like if you post about your bad day, I wish it didn't say "Oh, this person is emotionally too much" People are ever changing, and I wish Instagram could capture that. Documentation is important. They can't tell us we never existed, or that we don't exist. At this point, it's 2019, we all deserve to have avatars that look however we want to look, because we are human, we're not past having this physical form. But we should have control over how we look. Our bodies don't define us, our minds should be able to - they're decisions. My definition of a place would be somewhere tangible, so I wouldn't consider Instagram a place. There's a communal-ness that you occupy in a way that feels similar to a physical space -- to look at things or find something or information. And it also takes a certain degree of knowing how to navigate the app, which feels really placey to me. If you want to search something, you have to know how to search for it. And you can really go down

the rabbit hole of clicking through profiles and going to the next one and the next one. There's a maze to it. A place should be more volatile in a way. You can't make memories there [on Instagram]. The places are the pictures you took. You can't feel like you're in a place there. You're not getting new memories. Instagram is an internet space. It's that party you're at, or not at. It's like the town square, where you go and say whatever you want, except it's with pictures instead of words. It's like a bulletin board sometimes, or sometimes people just shout things. It's so deeply tied into our reality as a platform for interaction. Real things happen on Instagram. Within capitalism, capital is real, and money affects our realities. People make money on Instagram, so it's a real place. There's a fearlessness in [having a public Instagram] that is more courageous than I actually am.



<codes>

Lo-Fi

at what point do we
forget who we are on
the basis of someone
else's position?

Mayfair

did you know your
mother was a
daughter before
you?

Reyes

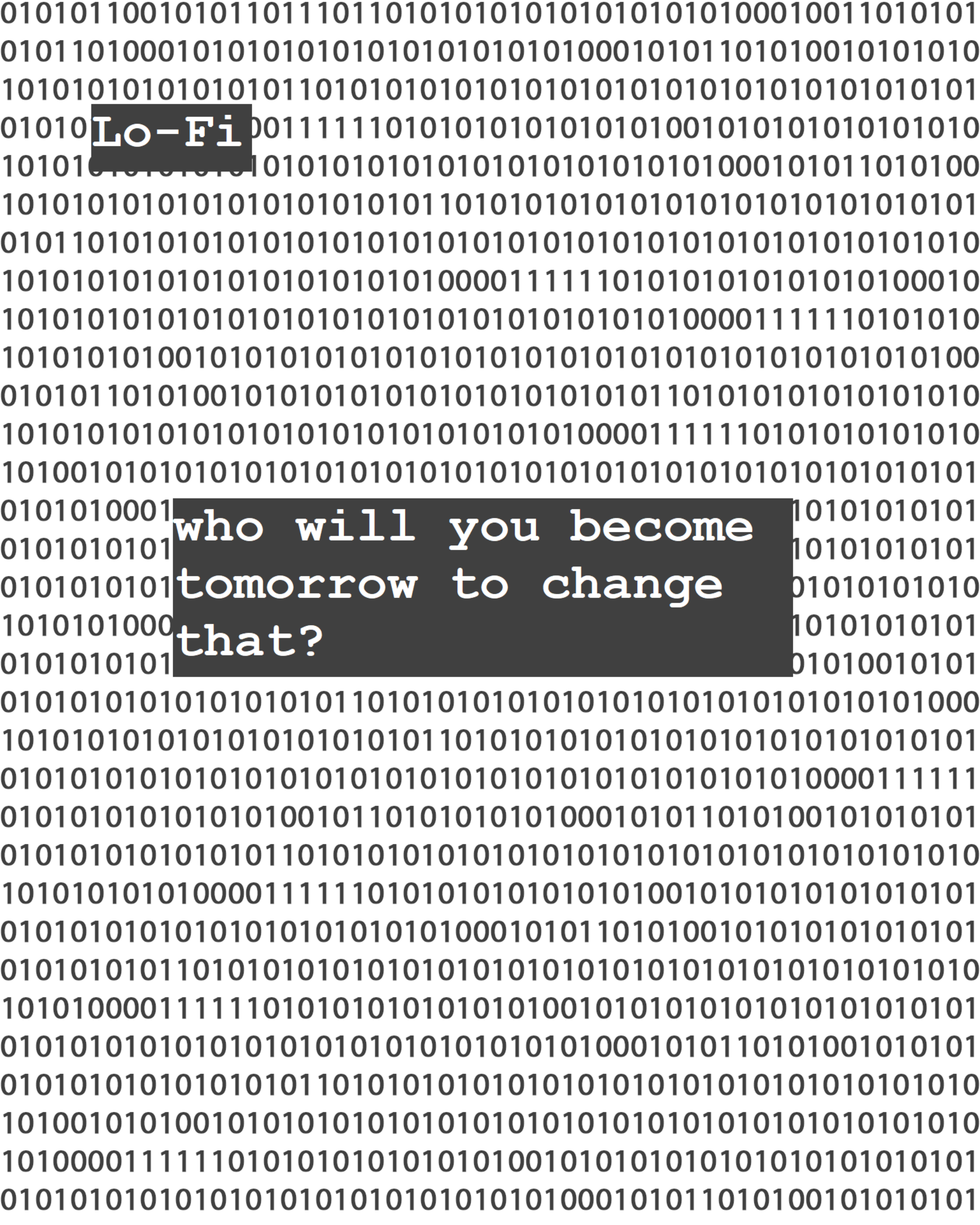
you are someone's
child today and down
the line we'll
forget you.

Clarendon

did you know you are
at the top of
someone's algorithm
on instagram?

X-Pro II

you are non-existent
to some people you
follow.



Lo-Fi

who will you become
tomorrow to change
that?

Nashville

for heritage? for
nostalgia? for
maintenance? for
who?



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nico_pang Watching this again bc I miss you and wow 🥹🥹 love you!! farrellevanbrocklin What a beauty

souvlakivapestation finger me the cover, when is your shoot for Vogue?!?! barbarajoyce3 Damn girl u look so sexy on

marshmella BITCH HOW DARE YOU BE SUCH A TRIPLE THREAT 🥹🥹🥹 what can't she do!!!!!! instaakit Omg you're perfect hailey_harding SLAY QUEEN 🥰❤️

lagoonamatata 🥰🥰 tempeh_temptress YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL WTF

justin.renald YAS QUEEN FUCK ME UP IM BALD katricig queen. literally such a queen. ysled_ WHY CANT I BE YOU. IM GONNA BORROW THAT OUTFIT

djscarzafava This is so fire I'm hype. 🥹🥰 emilyytستا You're flawless rbuttzzz Killin it Den!

laikeyyyy omg my heart 🥰❤️🥰 acb826 You sing like an angel whispering in my ear and wrapped in velvet.

katiesotack YOU LOOK DROP DEAD GORGEOUS caseyell Oh my god !!!! ❤️❤️❤️❤️ molly_bookworm Your hair looks amazing and you just look gorgeous but your hair! 🥰

haillls_ You're my inspiration. I love you! glori.ousss 🥰🔥 raneelakhan Slay pic maadmoneymike Too much hotness in one

jannyjos oh....my god your voice is like silk 🥹 noelle_bry26 WHY ARE YOU SO PERFECT

farrellevanbrocklin Happy birthday beautiful!! coopsthereitis LITERALLY SO BEAUTIFUL OMG 🥰

saraadip Are you KIDDING me you are unreal 🥰❤️ lillianlp Literally took my breath away when I saw you today my fucking QUEEN

tarissamambasco ooooOoooOohHhHh myY GODDd notyouramigo You are RADIANT omg

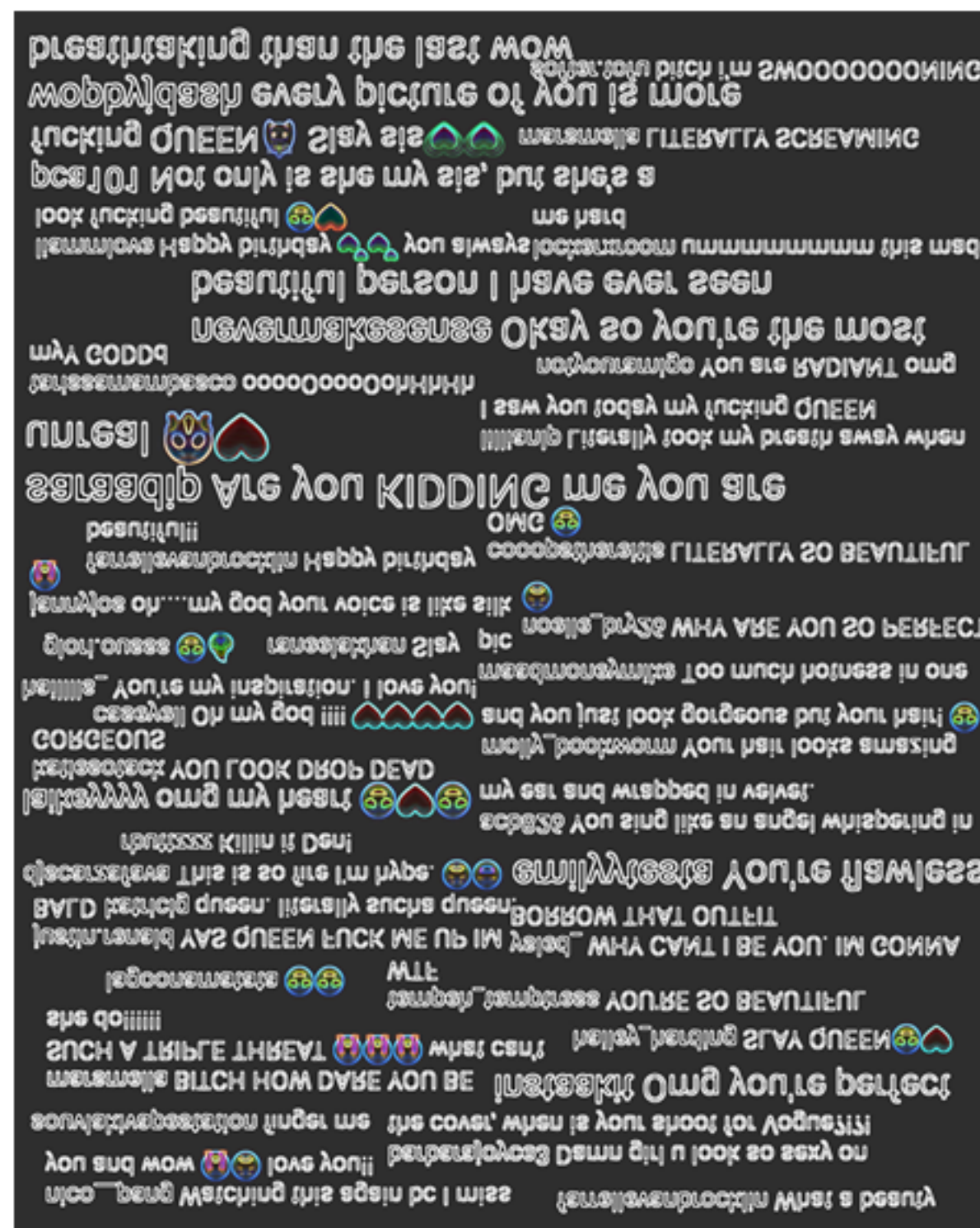
nevermakesense Okay so you're the most beautiful person I have ever seen

liammlove Happy birthday 🥰🥰 you always look fucking beautiful 🥰💙 lockerxroom ummmmmmmmm this made me hard

pca101 Not only is she my sis, but she's a fucking QUEEN 👑 Slay sis 🥰🥰 marshmella LITERALLY SCREAMING

wopbydash every picture of you is more breathtaking than the last wow softer.tofu bitch i'm SWOONING

how do i live up to your words?



how do i not inevitably let you down?



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<distribution>

meet **susanpevensie-bow**, an avatar i created 11 years ago on an online virtual world called *gaia online*.



my favorite thing to do on gaia was to commission and buy people's art. i thought i'd share them here. they fill me with so much joy.



susanpevensie-bow was heavily inspired by one of my childhood heroes, susan pevensie, from *the chronicles of narnia*. susan was one of many catalytic tropes of women heroes i strived to become. the sustenance of her intelligence left me in awe of the beauty of certainty and knowledge. her romantic storyline with prince caspian in the second movie pushed against the tiers of what i knew smart people to be. her wisdom had integrity, yet her ability to love and to not want to choose brain or heart taught me the in-betweens of an edge and softness.

i didn't think anything of making a girl character at 11 years old. i showed my avatar to my brother, who rolled his eyes and said "really?", though we both can look back on this now (and many more of my miniscule clues) and find clarity in why i was the way i was. but regardless of my age, regardless of the little understanding i had about myself at the time, **susanpevensie-bow** was a real part of my life. to be frank, i find it difficult to recall the years 2008 to 2011, but these four years were formative to not only holding onto myself through middle school, but also holding onto parts i felt i could not reach in real life. these years were a blur. i was attached to my computer for hours. i made friends with so many people on **gaia** -- people i did not need to explain myself to. hell, i barely explained it to myself at the time.

high school required me to be more physically present,

and eventually, i lost grip of my life on **gaia**. it makes me really fucking sad, honestly. i found other games, like **maplestory** and **call of duty**, but none of them were ever the same. i had forum chats i called home on **gaia**, a group of friends i chose to reveal myself to, a universe i had no obligation to ascertain.

freshman year of undergrad, i posted a selfie on instagram and said to myself, *all i want is to get over 100 likes for the first time, and if that happens, i'll be satisfied*. needless to say, it surpassed 100. i accessed my first experience of temporary social media high, and the comedown was fast. brutal. empty. that night, i deleted my instagram.

in the selfie, i had on a dress and sparkly makeup. it was my first time posting a picture of myself in my deep feminine. i deleted the account because i had to deal with the reality of transitioning in real life. my gender was not a freedom i was used to having online. posting a selfie of myself in a dress and makeup disrupted the jarring universes i kept separate; online and offline. being online with my face present but not yet in a place i felt i've ultimately reached was dark and troubling.

i came back two years later, with **@likethediner**, almost two years into transitioning. for once, i felt stone-like. here i am. i'm on instagram. i'm a girl. i'm a girl on instagram.

that's that. nothing else. **susanpevensie-bow** never existed. experimentation is weak. uncertainty is slippery. who doesn't want to stand strong on ground?

here's the thing. nobody made rules on instagram, but we follow an etiquette that oftentimes feels limiting, solid, and dangerous. so fuck it all. there's no point in posting a pretty, posed picture unless you have one and it matters to you. there's no point in posting an experimentative picture unless you have one and it matters to you. but know where you are. know what matters to you. know what brings you a little closer to something you like. i wish i could go back to 2008 to check-in and ask myself, *where am i going with this persona? why does she bring me joy?*, but all of this isn't for you to question your headspace. i can attest to you that even if we can't put words to it, our gut knows more than we give credit for.

