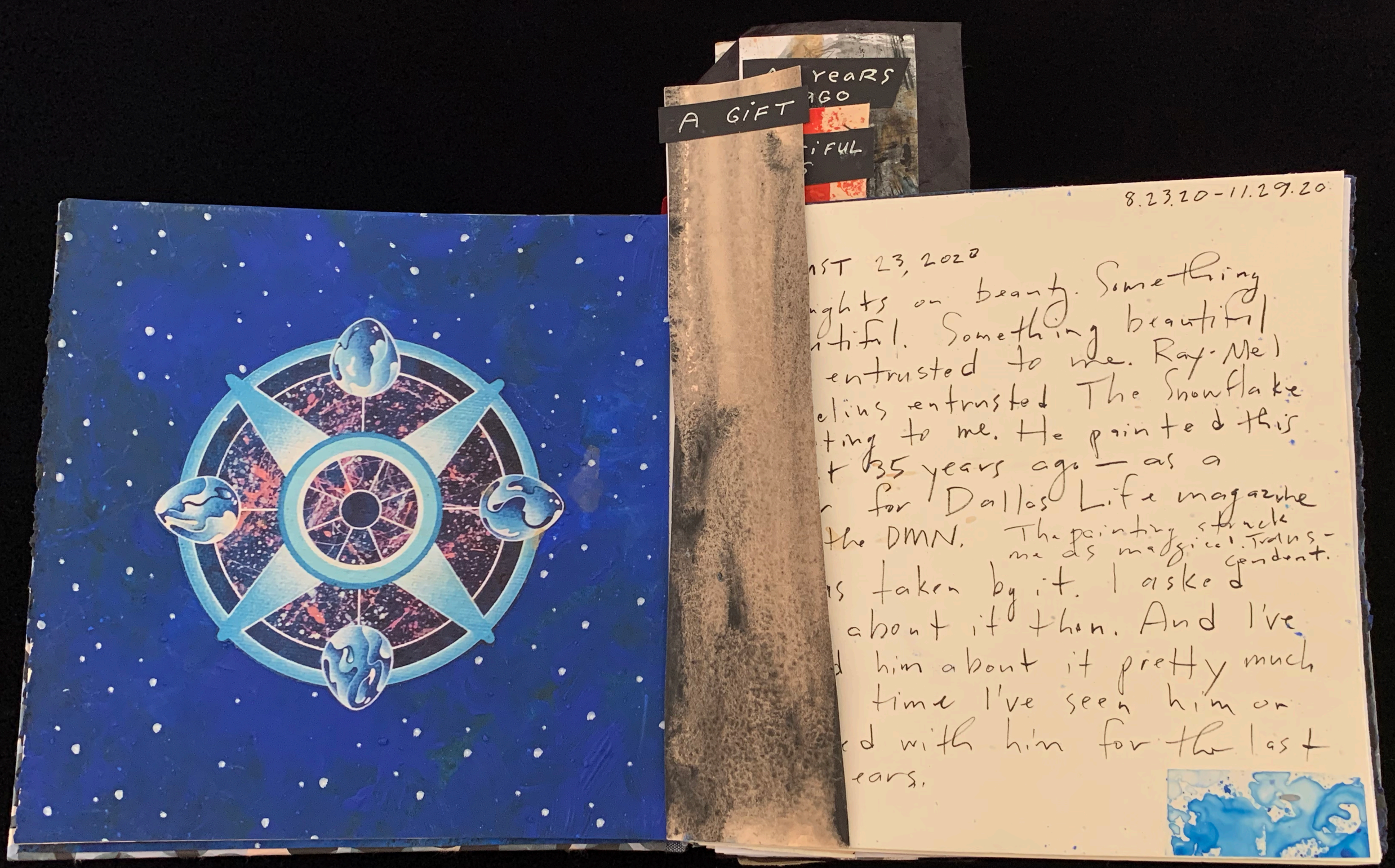
A GIFT

Something Beautiful


A GIFT
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8.23.20-11.29.20
ST 23, 2020
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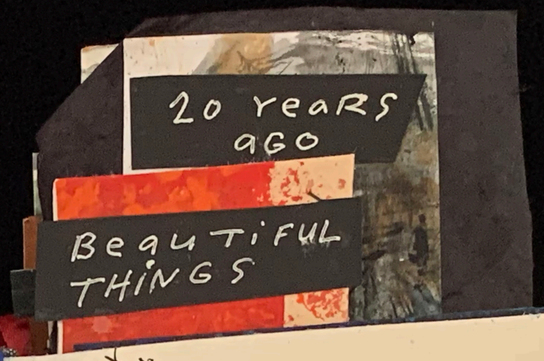

8.23.20-11.29.20

AUGUST 23, 2020

Thoughts on beauty. Something beautiful. Something beautiful was entrusted to me. Ray-Mel Cornelius entrusted The Snowflake painting to me. He painted this about 35 years ago — as a cover for Dallas Life magazine at the DMN. The painting struck me as magical. Transcendent.

I was taken by it. I asked him about it then. And I've asked him about it pretty much every time I've seen him or talked with him for the last 35 years.

and in doing provided me with a precious moment of truth + beauty in difficult time



20 YEARS AGO

BEAUTIFUL THINGS

I could've offered to buy it.
But I rarely, if ever buy art.
Many approaches to art appeal to me. But there was always something about this painting- something that held me.

In the last pages of "The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt she writes about the painting "The Goldfinch":

"Insofar as it is immortal (and it is) I have a small, bright, immutable part in the immortality. It exists; and it keeps on existing. And I add my own love to the history of people

20 YEARS AGO

BEAUTIFUL THINGS

are loved beautiful things
ooked out for them, and
them from the fire,
sought them when they
lost, and tried to
ve them and save
while passing them along
lly from hand
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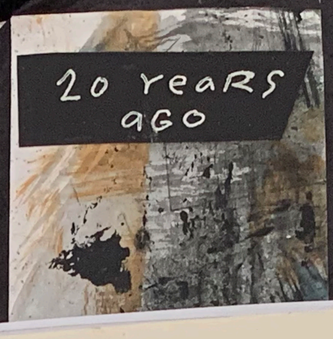
next."





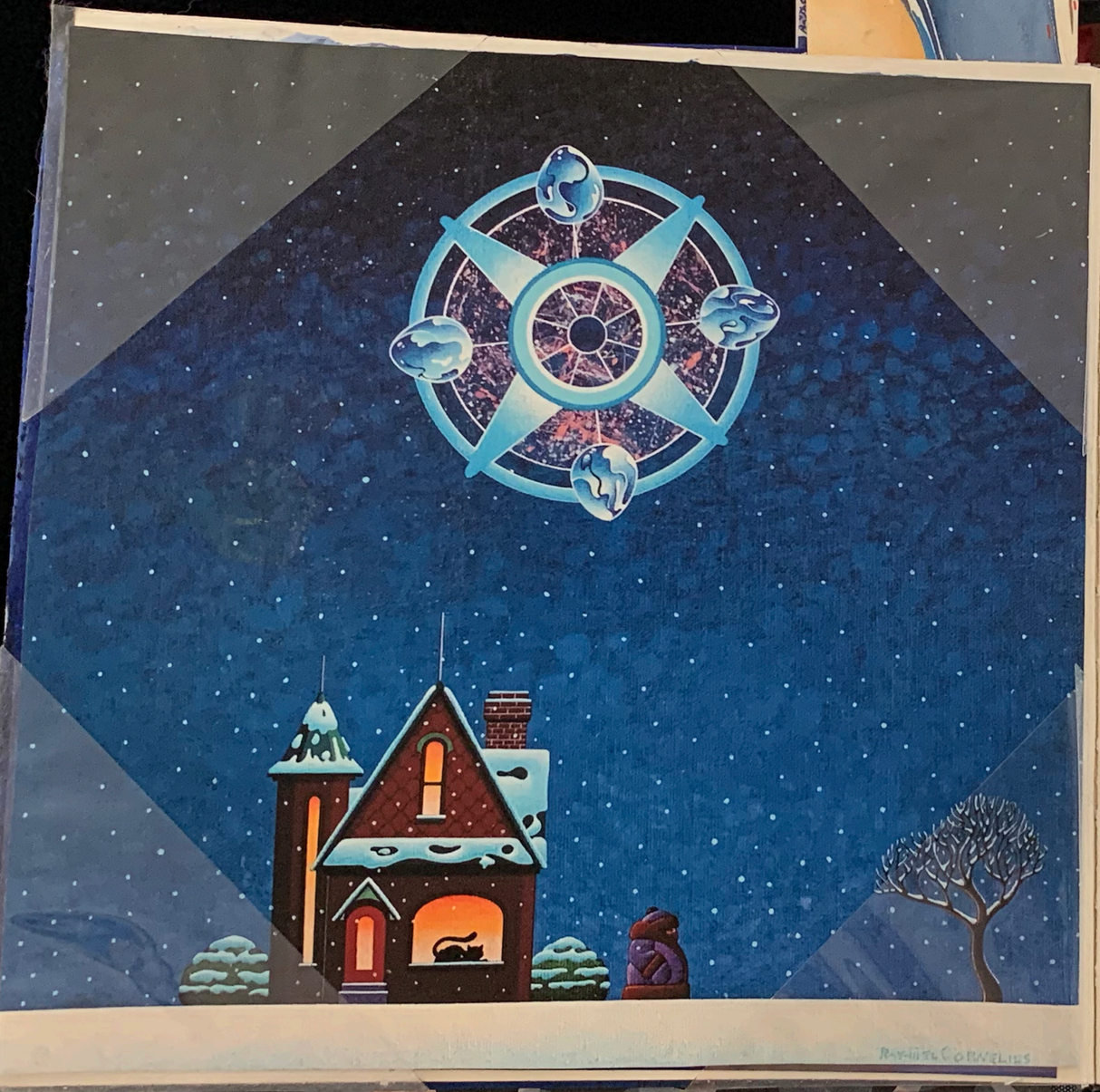




who have loved beautiful things
and looked out for them, and
pulled them from the fire,
and sought them when they
were lost, and tried to
preserve them and save
them while passing them along
literally from hand to hand,
singing out brilliantly from
the wreck of time to the
next generation of lovers, and
the next."



20 years ago

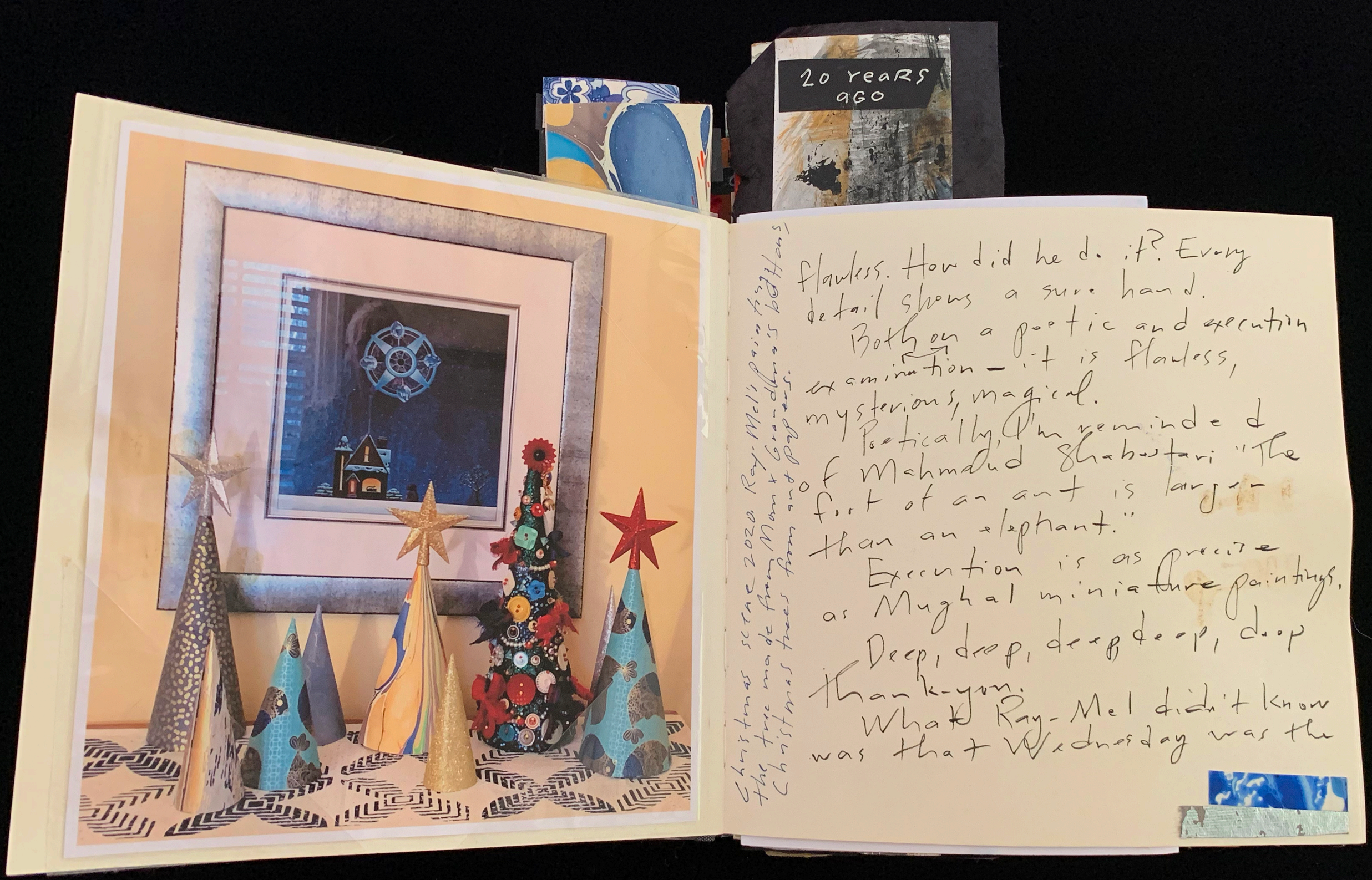


Ray. Mel wrote an explanation in an email response to a thank you email I sent him. I'll print it out and include here!

I've admired his work for many years, and he keeps evolving and growing while remaining true to his unique vision. And style.

Now 29 Pieces is hiring him to do one of the Trust for Public Land murals. His will be at Reinhardt Elementary.

The Snowflake. I'd never had the painting in front of me to explore every detail. It is



Christmas scene 2020. Ray-Mel's painting, the tree made from Mom + Grandma's bottoms, Christmas trees from ant papers.

flawless. How did he do it? Every detail shows a sure hand.

Both on a poetic and execution examination — it is flawless, mysterious, magical.

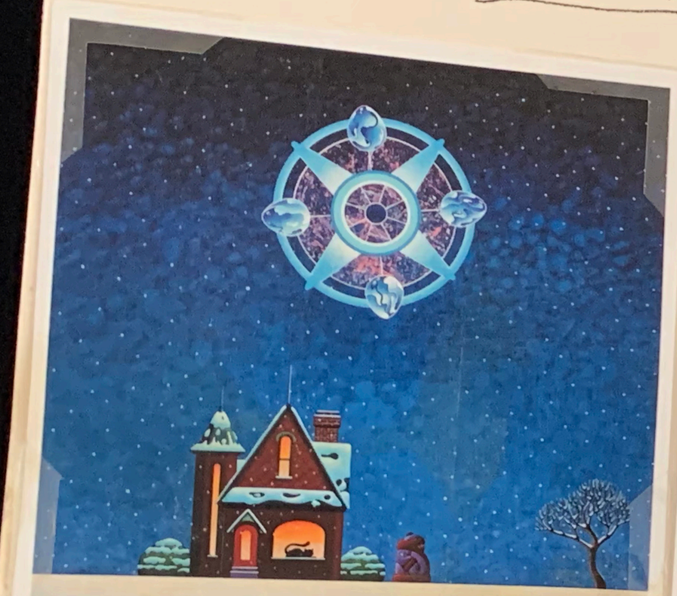
Poetically, I'm reminded of Mahmoud Shabestari "The foot of an ant is larger than an elephant."

Execution is as precise as Mughal miniature paintings.

Deep, deep, deep, deep, deep thank-you.

What Ray-Mel didn't know was that Wednesday was the

AUGUST 19, 2020



Ray-Mel Cornelius handed me the Snowflake painting. @Reinhardt Elem.



20 year anniversary of David McNulty's murder.

20 YEARS AGO



...of the murder
...t yard. I wrote
...in a story for

...the memories of
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...gift of the painting
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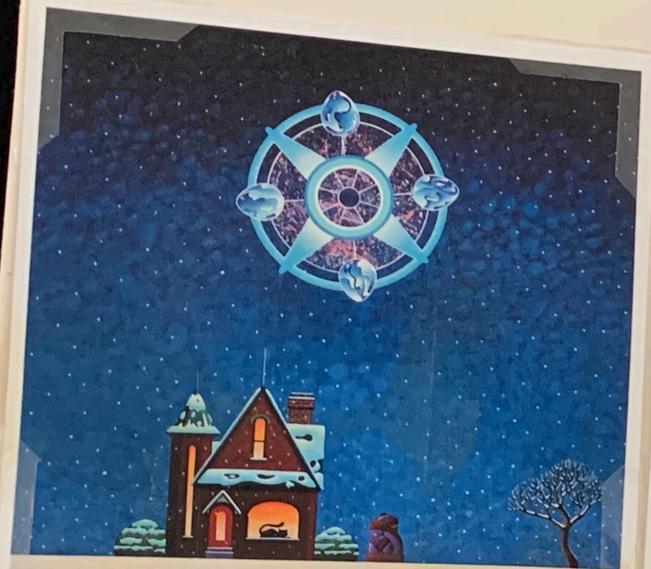
AUGUST 19



Ray-Mel Cornelius handed me the Snowflake Painting. @Reinhardt Elem.

2 of m

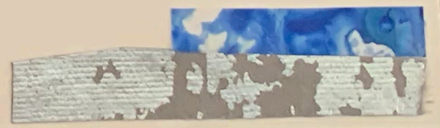
AGING

20th anniversary of the murder in our front yard. I wrote about it in a story for the DMN.

That day, the memories of the voices of the grieving family members & friends of the victim were with me.

The slaughter of Mother Nature next door.

So the gift of the painting, the beauty, the gesture of entrusting such beauty to me went deep.



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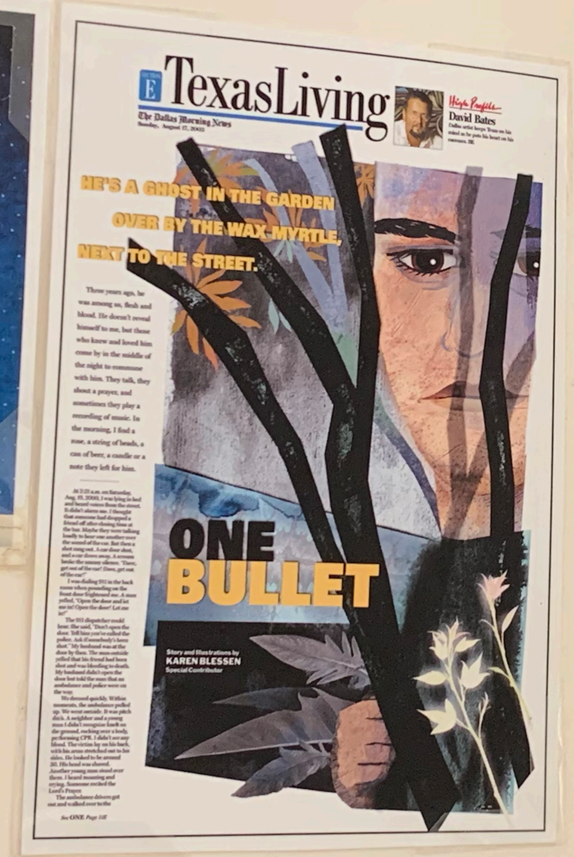

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AGING

De Chancery

SPARKY
2020

4, 2020
e is the 'SOMETHING
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d?

just wrinkles, sore joints,
energy. Beyond that—
the strains of departure—
despair, the crying out at
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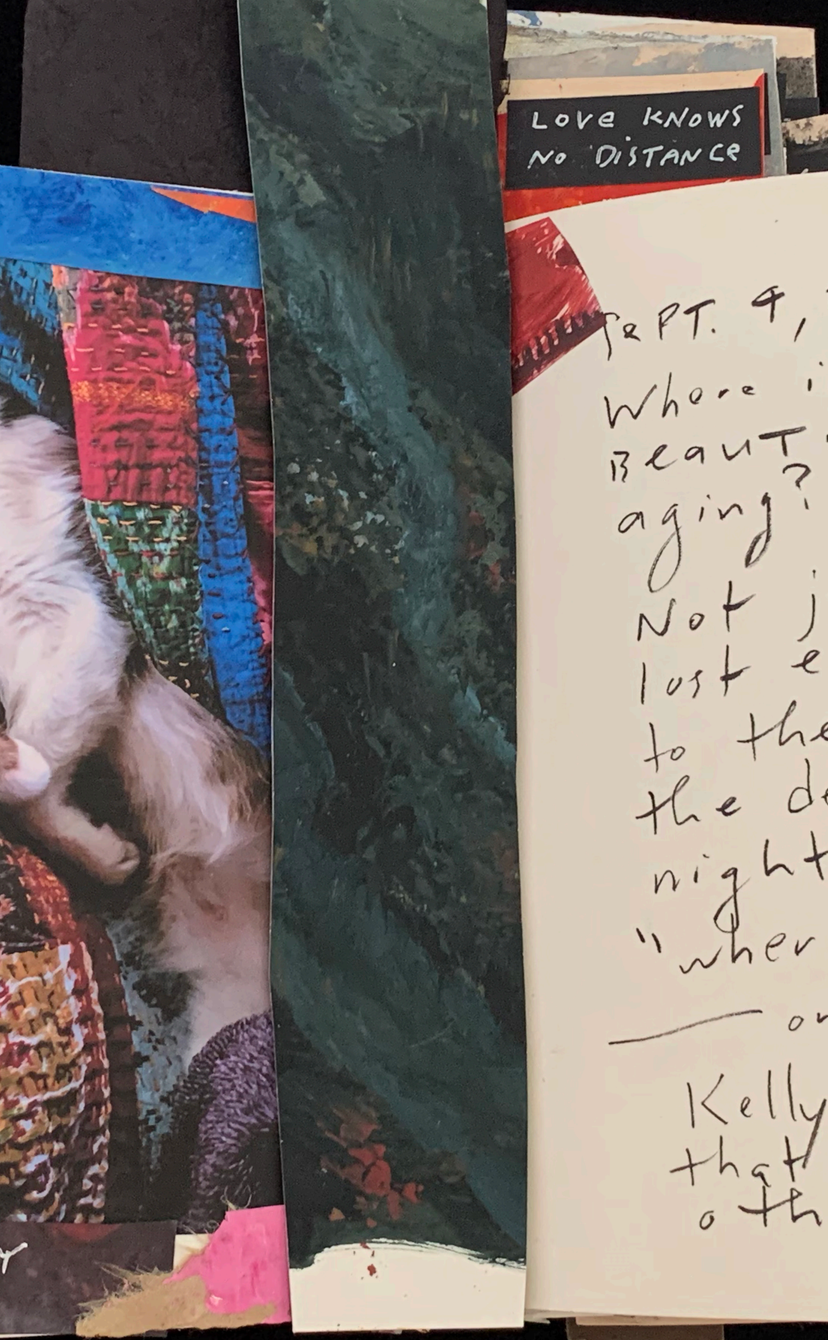


SEPT. 4, 2020

Where is the 'SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL' in last stage aging?

Not just wrinkles, sore joints, lost energy. Beyond that — to the strains of departure — the despair, the crying out at night, the confusion of "where am I?" Here — there — or in between?

Kelly and I are dealing with that — not with each other — yet.

LOVE KNOWS
NO DISTANCE

SPOTTED HORSE GUEST RANCH
Summer 1998



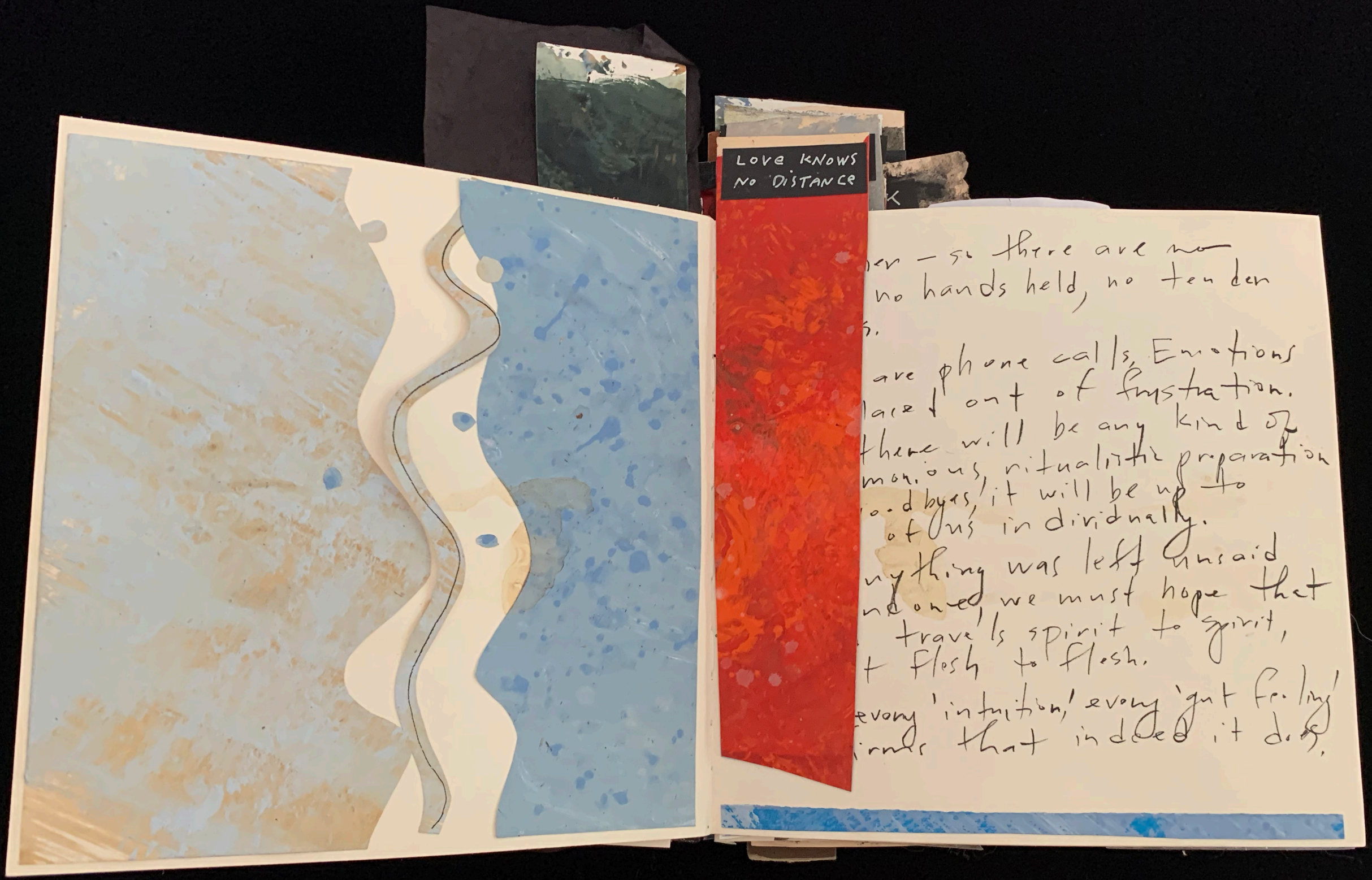
Barry, Janelle (72 then), Cheryl
mel, Joel, Kelly, Cari, Leda.

This year — 2020 —
Kelly is 72.

But with Janelle - his Mom,
and Sparky — our cat.

Janelle is 94, can't see, making
calls in the night + even de
on her list, doesn't know
what is going on, doesn't know
day or night or what meal
she just had. She seems to
crave connection — of any
sort in this time of Covid
separation — as she may
understand that real separa-
tion is imminent.

Because of Covid, no
family member is allowed



...er — so there are no
no hands held, no tender
...s.

...are phone calls, Emotions
...laced out of frustration.
...there will be any kind of
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...every 'intuition,' every 'gut feeling'
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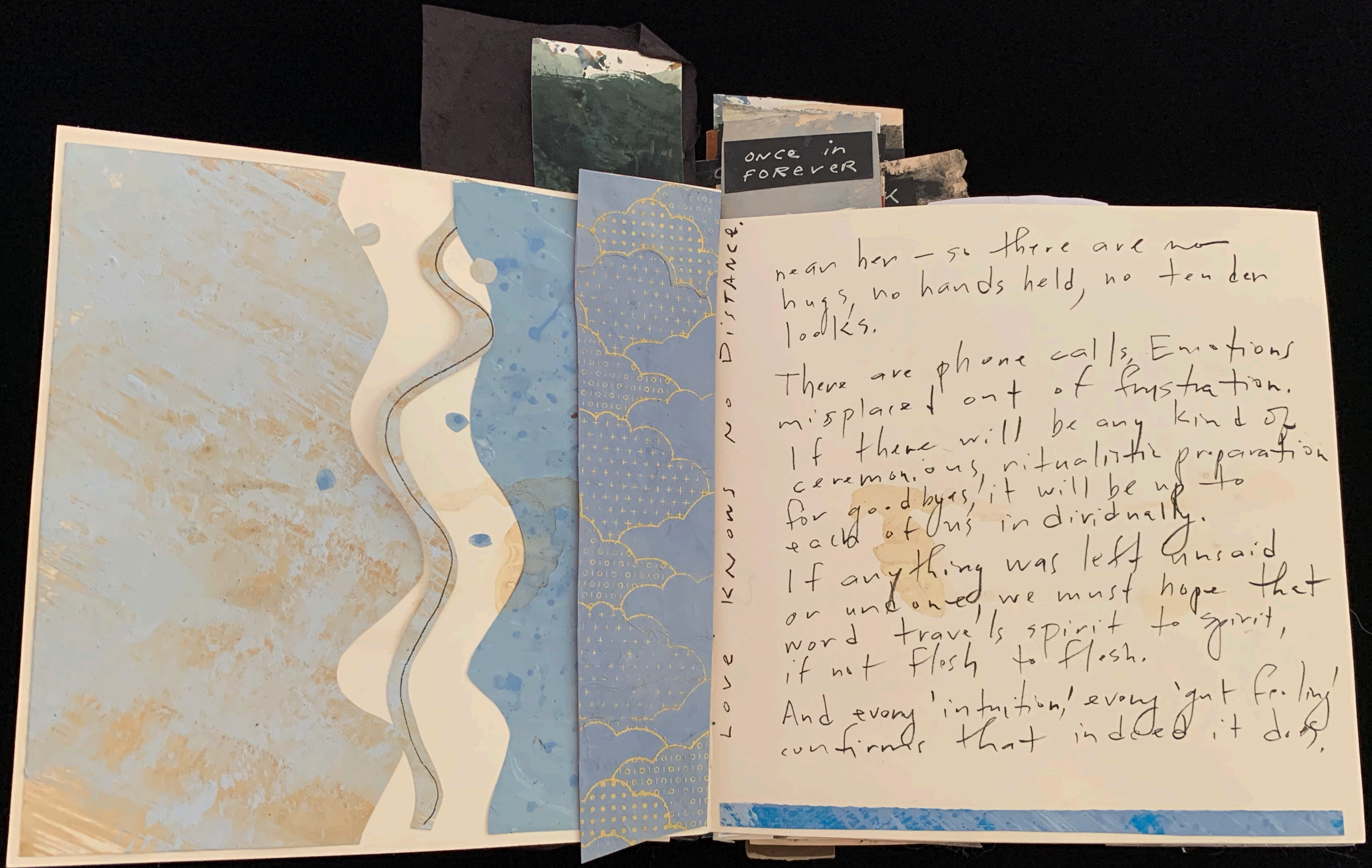
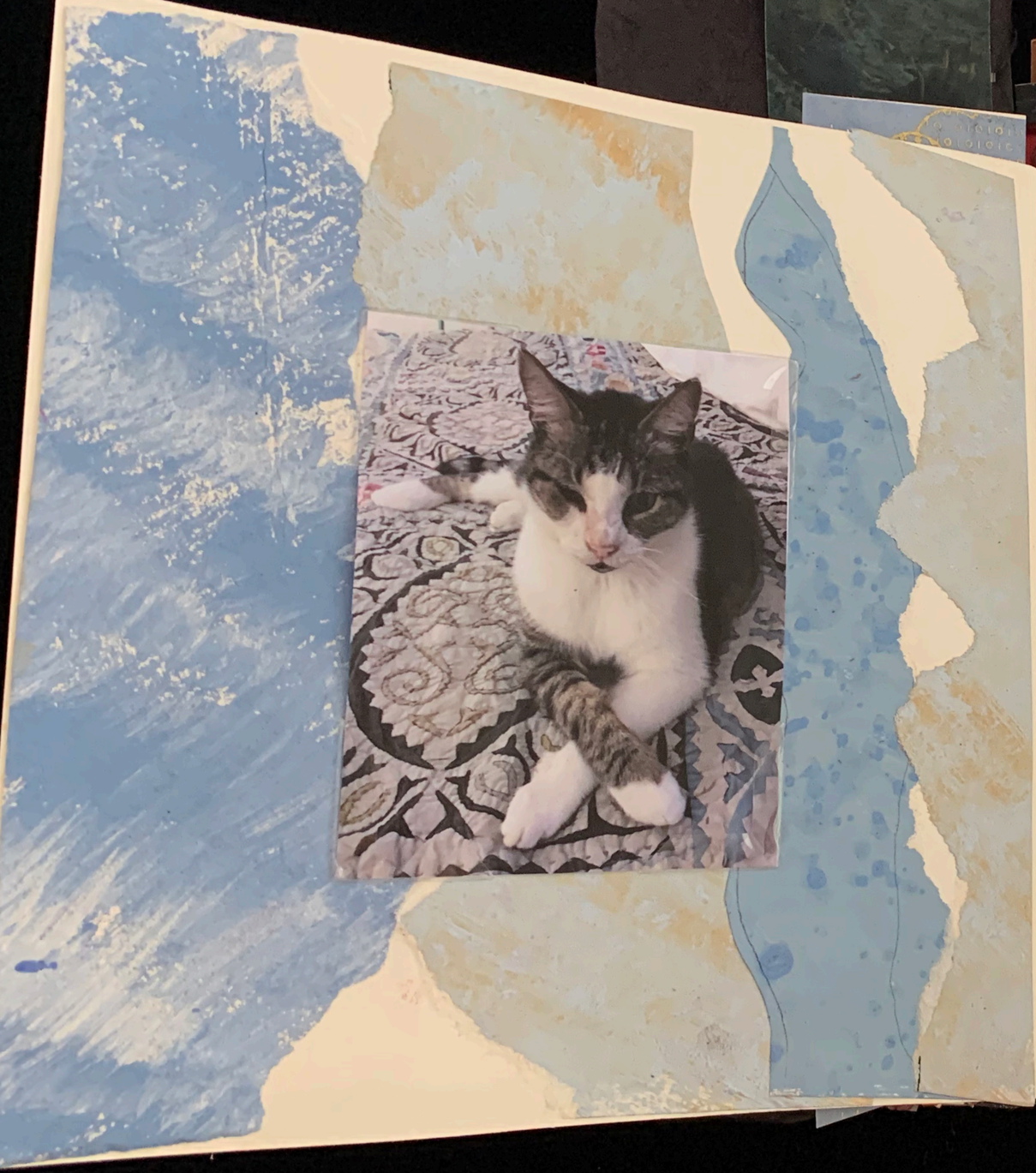


near her — so there are no hugs, no hands held, no tender looks.

There are phone calls, Emotions misplaced out of frustration. If there will be any kind of ceremonious, ritualistic preparation for goodbyes, it will be up to each of us individually.

If anything was left unsaid or undone, we must hope that word travels spirit to spirit, if not flesh to flesh.

And every 'intuition,' every 'gut feeling' confirms that indeed it does.



ONCE in FOREVER

Our 20+ year old cat Sparky gives us the opportunity to face head on these end stage unlocks from this level of existence.

Sparky can't hear — he has unlocked that connection to HERE.

He howls at night out of anxiety, hunger or confusion — who knows? But with Sparky we have the opportunity to give comfort.

Hold him, and he begins to purr. He relaxes. He is calm.



ONCE in FOREVER

He howls over his food plate on his water. We give him fresh of both.

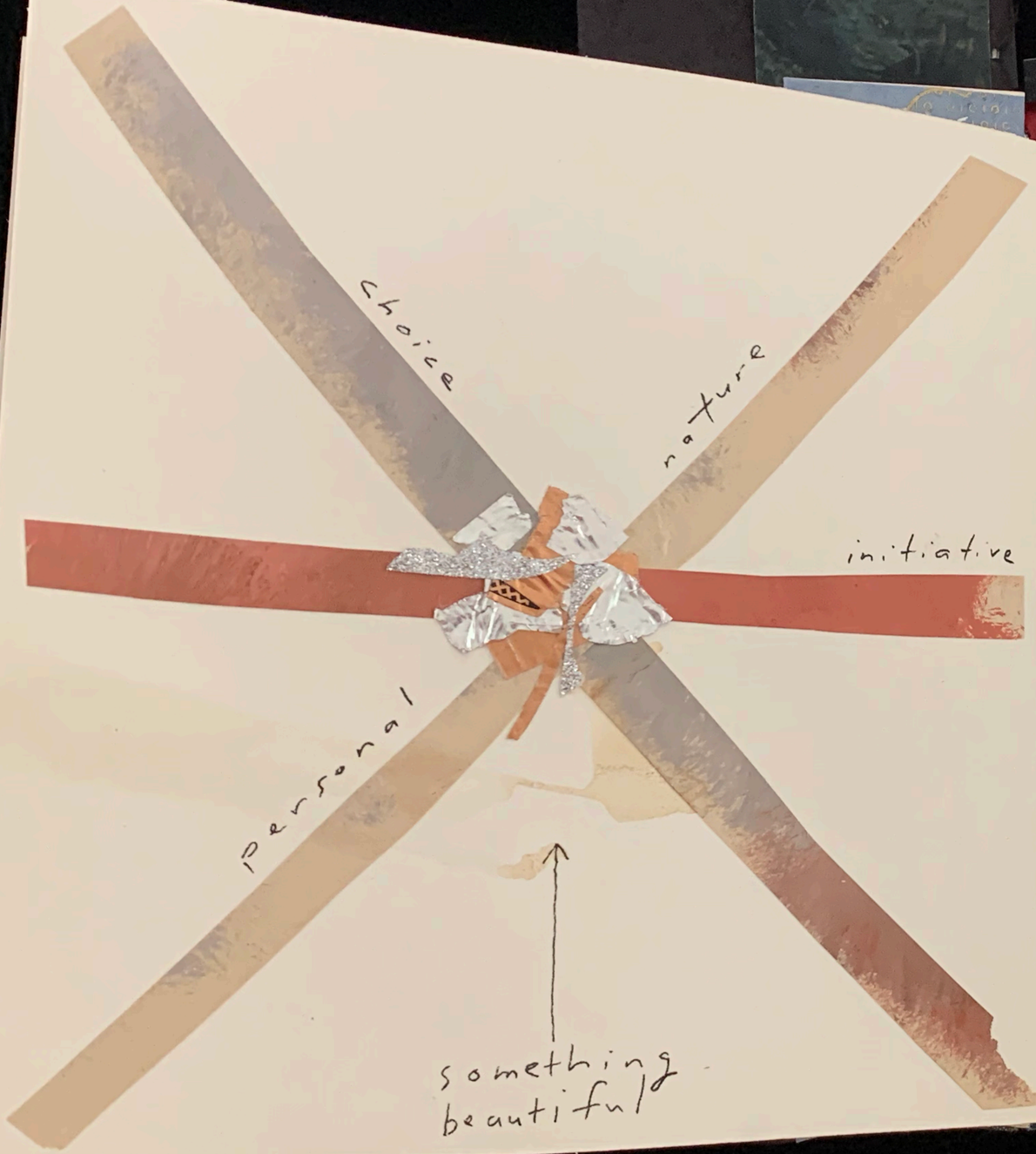
He wants to go outside for a bit— he can. He can still feel the breeze — maybe see a few things, or movement at least.

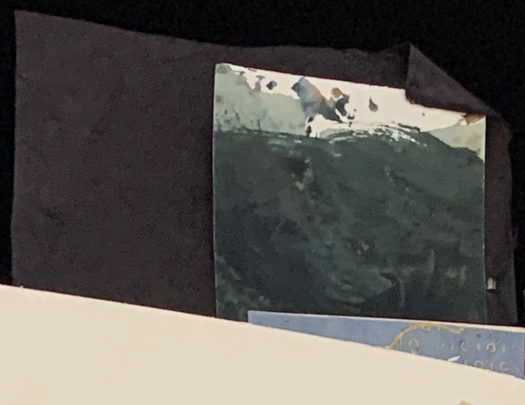
Janelle is denied touch, fresh air, being held.

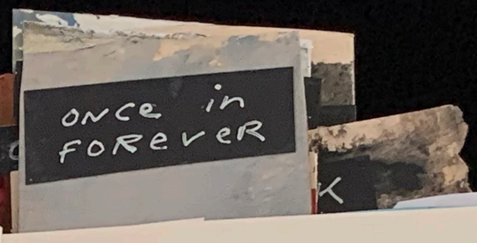
Both are preparing for departure— to a place where even the most faithful must recognize that THIS, THIS as it is now and as

DEPARTURE.





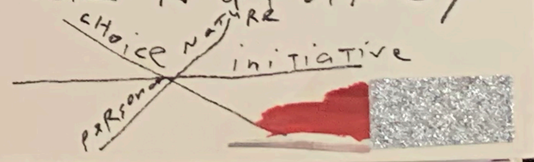




it has been in our time together, is over, and will never be again.

Is this indicative of:
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL
or
THE ULTIMATE TRAGI/COMEDY
CRUELTY
JOKE
MANIPULATION
GOD GAME

Here's where something beautiful- enters. At the intersection of/ choice / personal NATURE/ initiative.



ONCE in FOREVER

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no denying, lessening on
shing of the sweeping waves
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gratitude for the epic/quotidian
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of this life? Gratitude
the infinite beauty of creation?
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difficult ones who were
eat teachers? Along with
e wise, creative, gifted
es who showed us a way?

FORGIVENESS

TENDER

Because it is partially a choice.
There's no denying, lessening or
diminishing of the sweeping waves
of loss.

With gratitude for the epic/quotidian
experiences — the ups and downs,
the particular people who were
part of this life? Gratitude
for the infinite beauty of creation?
Gratitude for the awe of it all?
The difficult ones who were
great teachers? Along with
the wise, creative, gifted
ones who showed us a way?

The ones in forever patterns
Something beautiful



FORGIVENESS

TENDER

Let's start with Sparky first.
He's here. He's easiest. He's a
cat.

My memories of him, my love for him,
honor him, honor our creator for
making possible this deep,
simple, non-negotiated, unconditional
love between human and animal.
It really is quite simple + powerful.

And Sparky gives us tangible
opportunity to find + name
the beauty in this stage of
life. The breaking of the
bonds from here + there



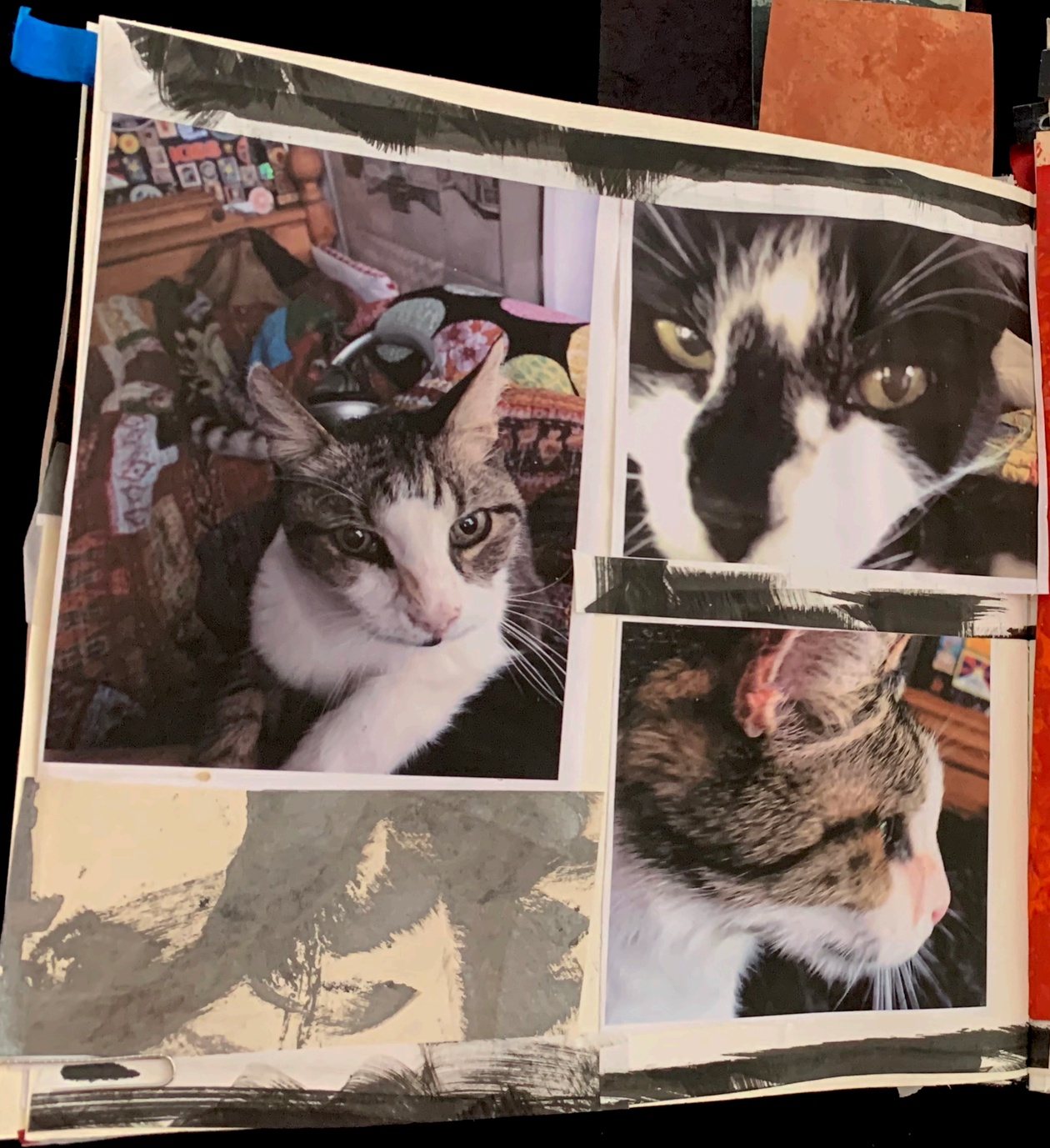
FORGIVENESS

TENDER

In the pupil of an eye, an endless Heaven.

For all the time of his life with us — till there last months Sparky made the most intense lasting eye contact of ANYone in my experience. Not my Mom Dad Kelly — no one — ever looked at me as lovingly + intensely as Sparky. Betsy the chow-g would be 2nd on the list.

What do those long soul searchi looks mean? They last 30 minutes or more. Release of 'feel good' chemicals, for one thing.



FORGIVENESS

TENDER MERCIES

"I feel loved."

h Sparky, I can offer
patience, reassurance,
holding, night lights to
is night vision.
talk to him and calm
I can compile photos
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his sister and brother
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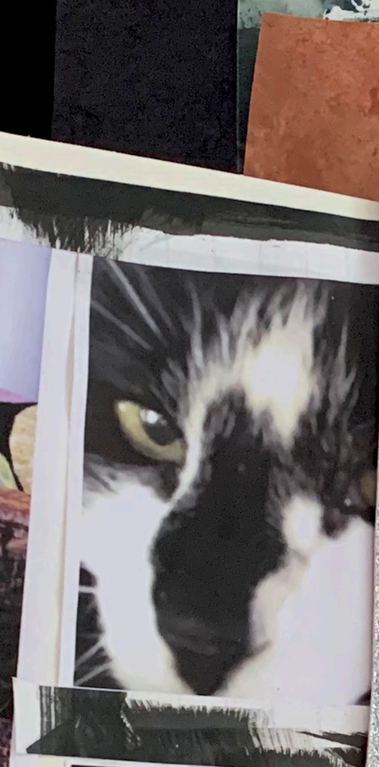
tenderhesses are

eTHiNG BeauTiFuL.

TENDER MERCIES









FORGIVENESS

TIK TOK

It means "I feel loved."
So with Sparky, I can offer
love, patience, reassurance,
touch, holding, nightlights to
help his night vision.
I can talk to him and calm
him. I can compile photos
of him + remember him, along
with his sister and brother
and how much joy + love I've
shared with them.

Those tenderhesses are

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL.

TENDER MERCIES

FORGIVENESS

TIK TOK

with Kelly's Mom, I must
totally depend on the
invisible as a way to connect
with and comfort her.
We cannot talk, due to her confusions
or touch.
or see one another.
due to CoviD-19.

I can write mantrams, say
prayers, comfort her son,
honor her with kind words
and happy memories. I can
honor her by trying to imagine
what her life may have been
like. Married to Kelly's dad,

Looking at pictures
BAD Anxiety

TIK TOK

The Game is Locked

FORGIVENESS

TIK TOK

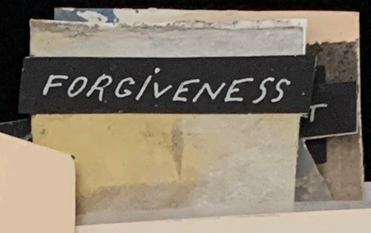
totally committed
d to another
In Omaha,
es. What might
perienced? Well
The families
about anything
, the family never
imitation, brattiness,
another.

s of boiling feelings
er the lid. Kelly's

[redacted]

nd name the

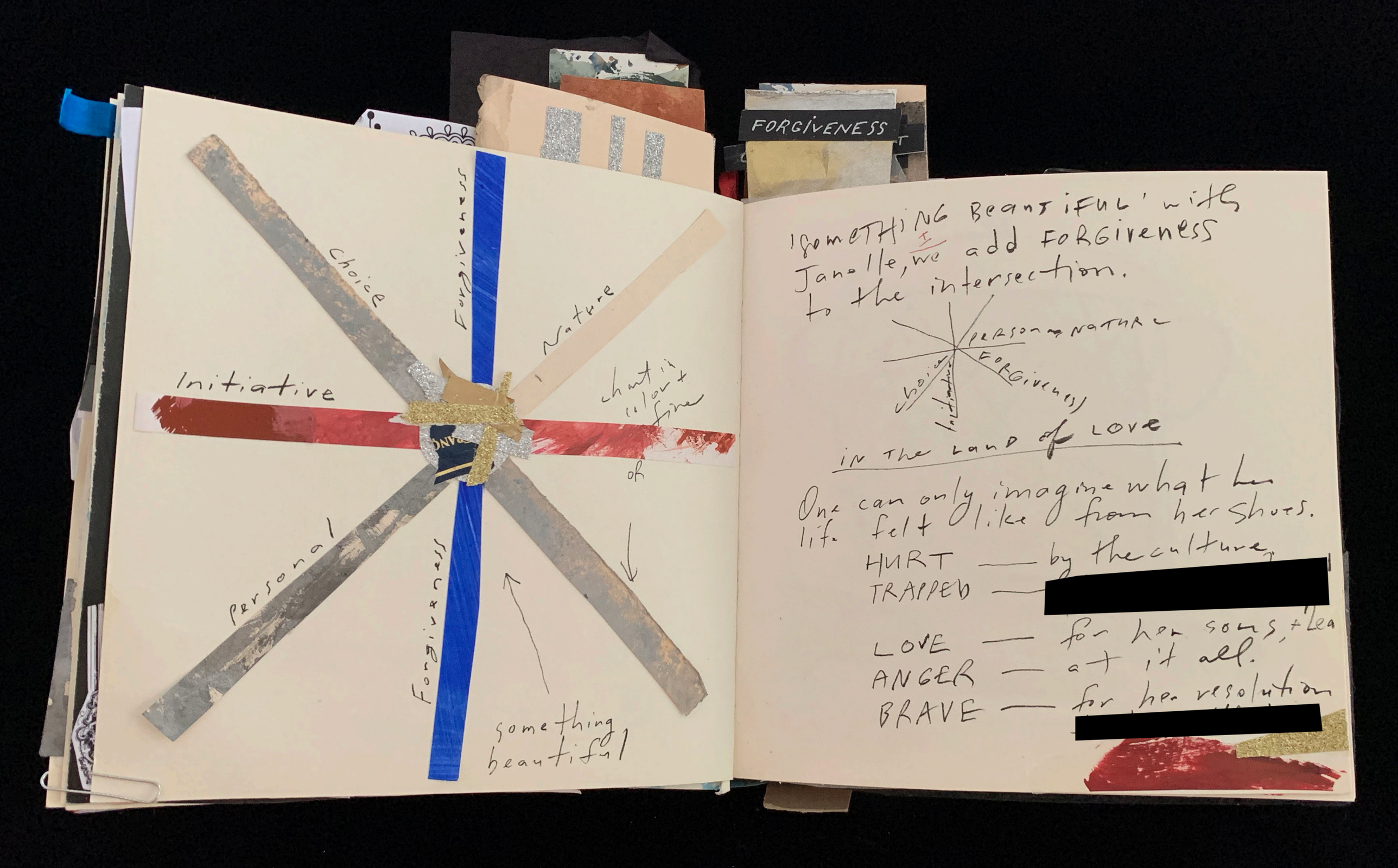


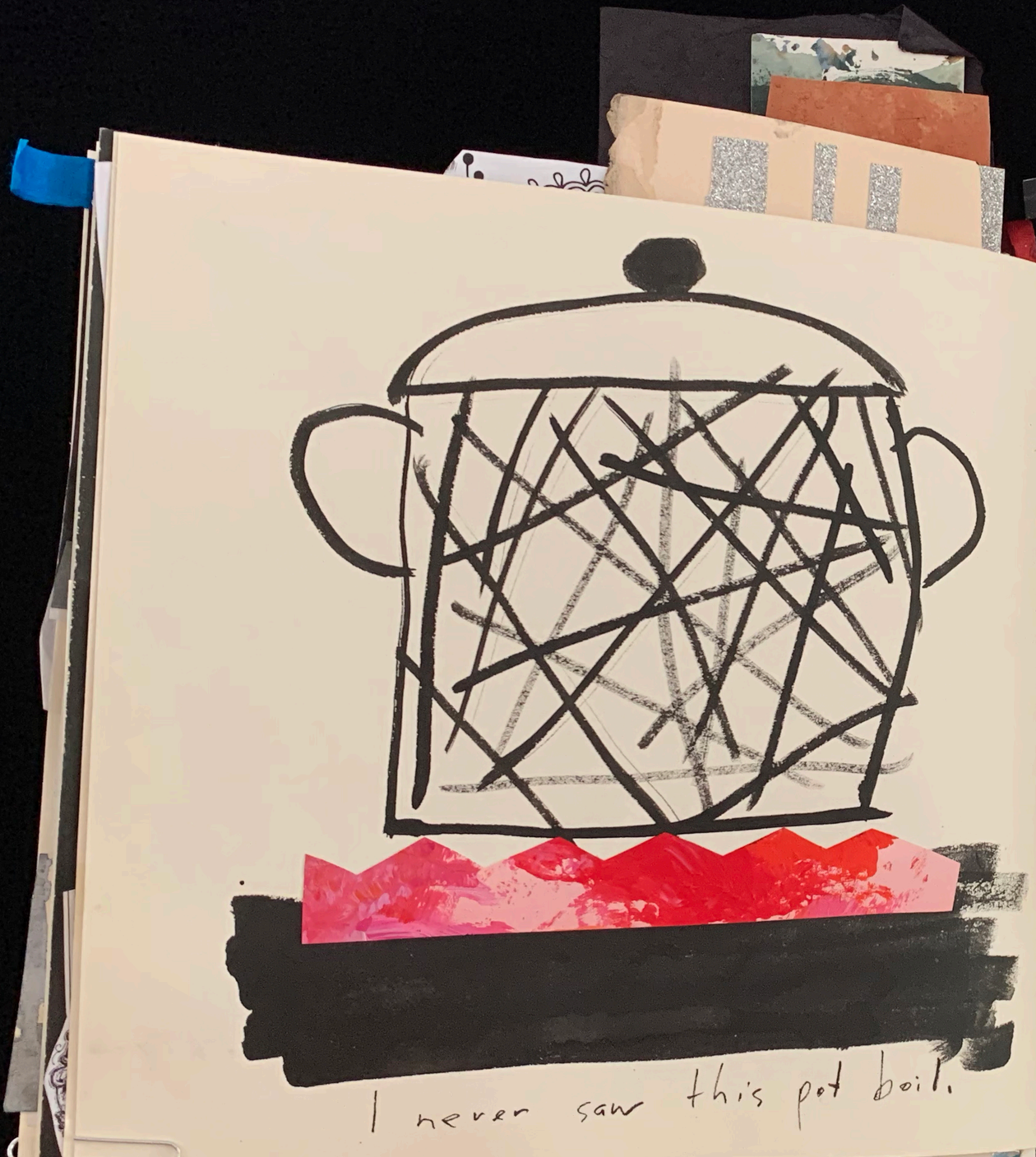


and in love/totally committed
and connected to [redacted]. In Omaha,
[redacted] with families. What might
they have experienced? Well
never know. The families
didn't talk about anything
of substance, the family never
even showed irritation, bratthis,
anger to one another.

The whole mess of boiling feelings
was kept under the lid. Kelly's
[redacted]

So to find and name the


FORGIVENESS
Choice
Forgiveness
Nature
Initiative
chart in color + fine
personal
Forgiveness
something beautiful
'SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL' with Janelle, I we add FORGIVENESS to the intersection.
PERSONAL NATURE
FORGIVENESS
choice
initiative
IN THE LAND of LOVE
One can only imagine what her life felt like from her shoes.
HURT — by the culture,
TRAPPED — [redacted]
LOVE — for her sons, + Lea
ANGER — at it all.
BRAVE — for her resolution
[redacted]



I never saw this pot boil.







CHRISTMAS 1995

FROM LEFT. LES, BARRY, JANELLE, KELLY (CARI in window) LES DIED 2 MONTHS LATER.



WYOMING SUMMER, 1998

JANELLE

FORGIVENESS


FORGIVENESS
HDMI
LampFree


he FORGIV
MENU
HDMI
LampFree


OMMITMENT


COMMITMENT

CLOSET

L

J

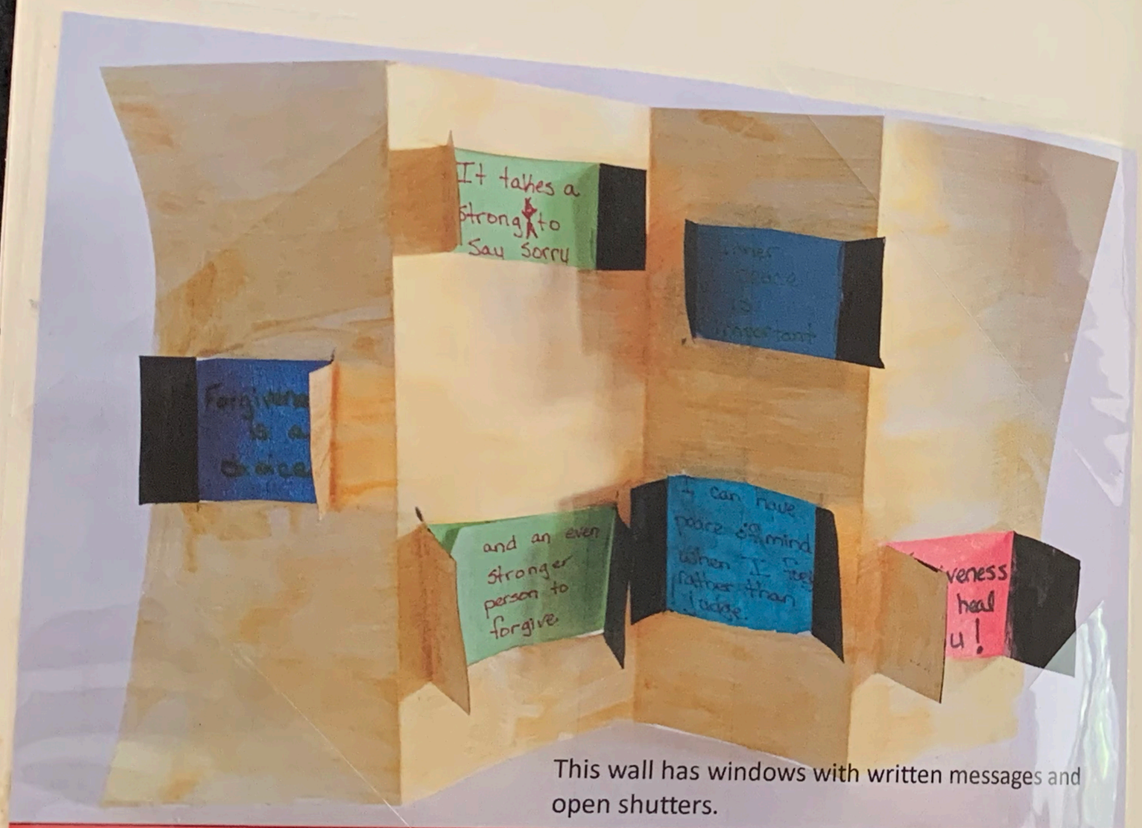
OFFICE

BATH

COMMITMENT

And now, in an ultimate series of twists of fate:

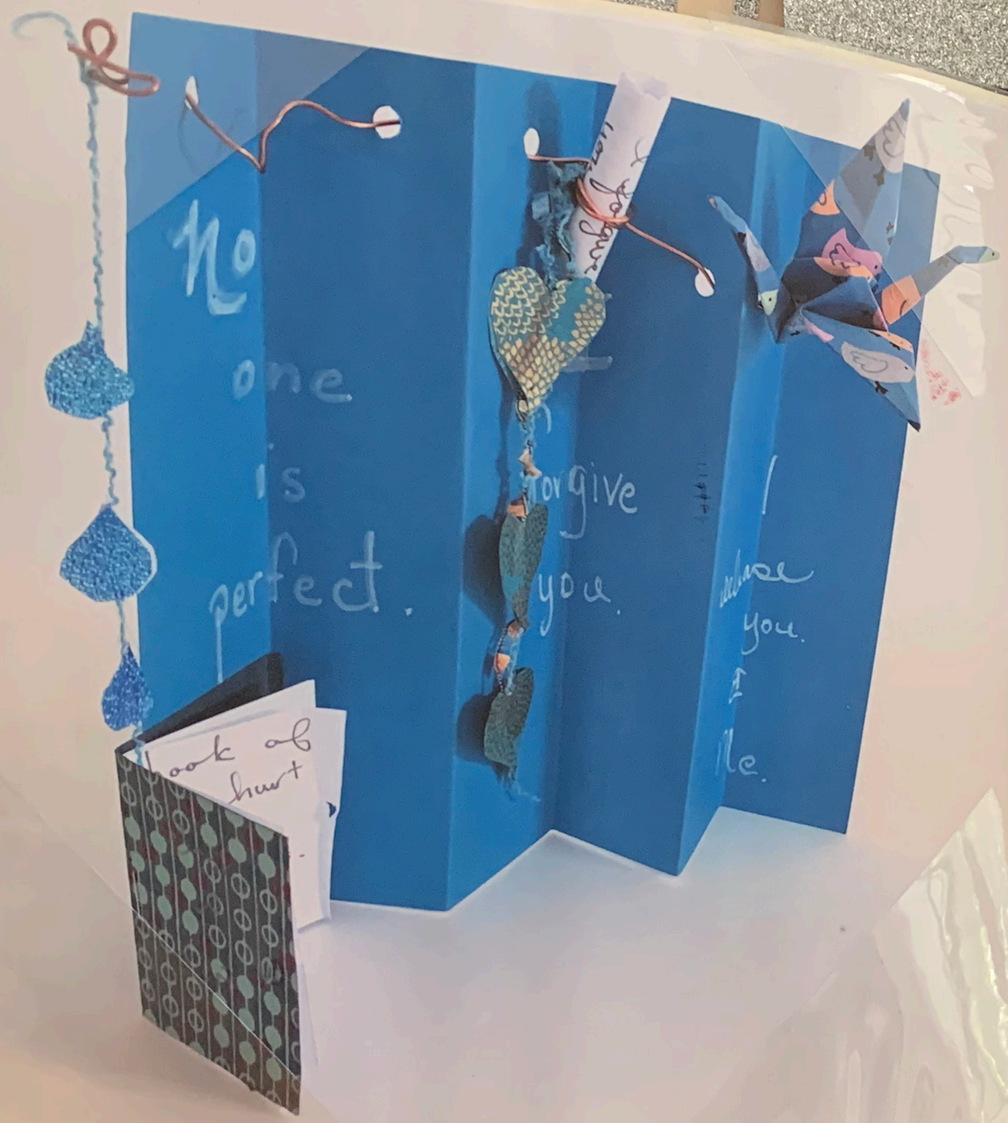
1) Last October, Janelle asked for Lea to be removed from the apartment because she was no longer Lea. She was frightening Janelle.
2) Janelle wanted to move to Dallas.
3) COVID-19.
4) Janelle spent 6 months alone due to COVID-19, became depressed and ill, went to the hospital, and is now in the same



This wall has windows with written messages and open shutters.







COMMITMENT



ART REQUESTS TO STUDENTS

ASSELL

s for student art:

OTHER SHORE

COMMITMENT

020 Labor Day

MENT is THE SUBJECT

day today I've a good

ite a short introduction

email blast for 29 Pieces

the COMMITMENT Lesson.

first lesson we did.

spired by Jeremy Gilley, and

Commitment to naming

ember 21 as the International

of Peace, and my work

th Jeremy on the book—

ace one DAY.

The lesson was born, but hand



ART REQUESTS TO STUDENTS

ASSELL

s for student art:

OTHER SHORE

Sept. 7, 2020 Labor Day

commitment is the subject of the day today. I've a good to write a short introduction to our email blast for 29 Pieces about the commitment Lesson.

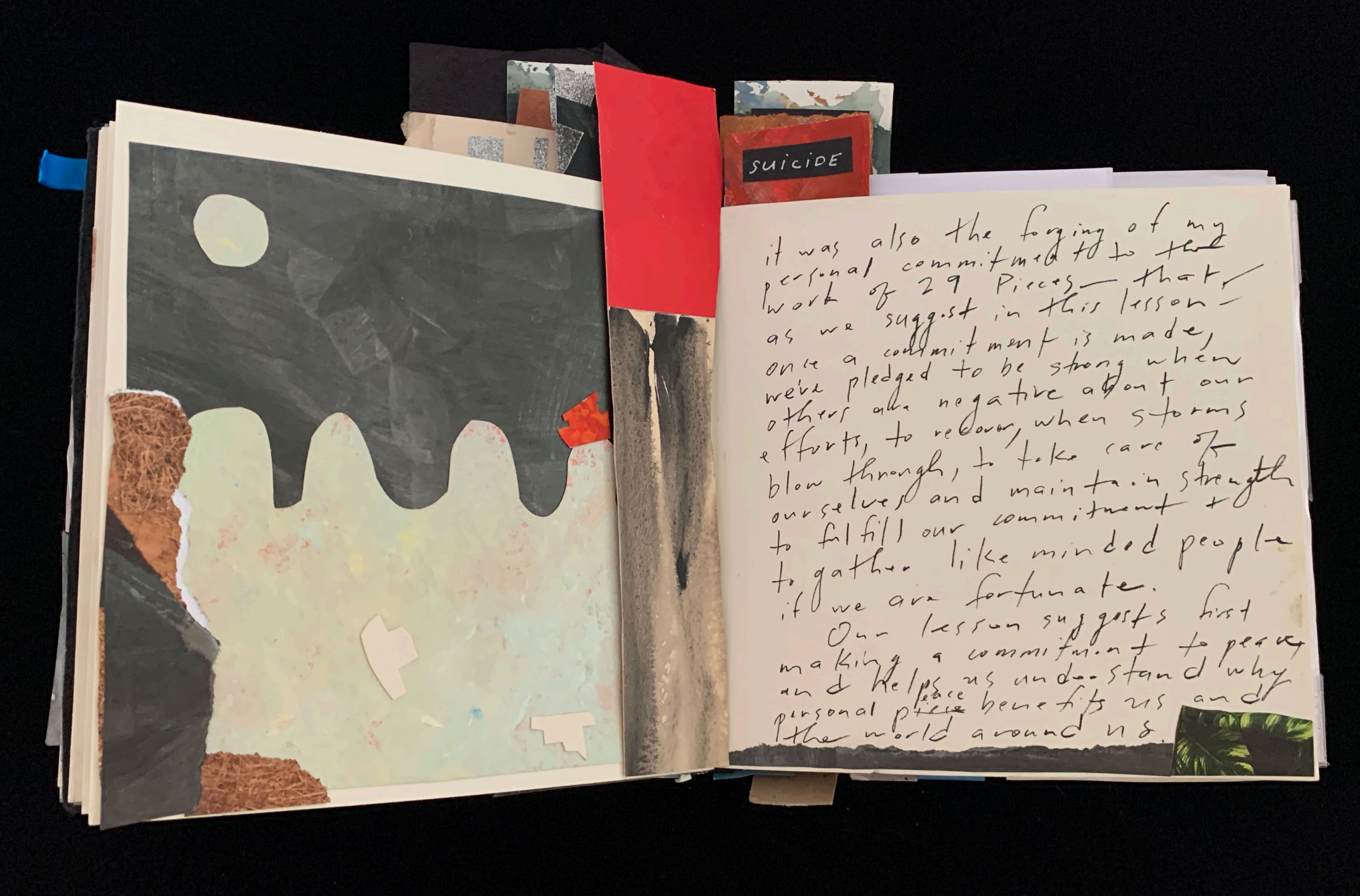
The first lesson we did. Inspired by Jeremy Gilley, and his commitment to naming September 21 as the International Day of Peace, and my work with Jeremy on the book— Peace one Day.

The lesson was born, but hand



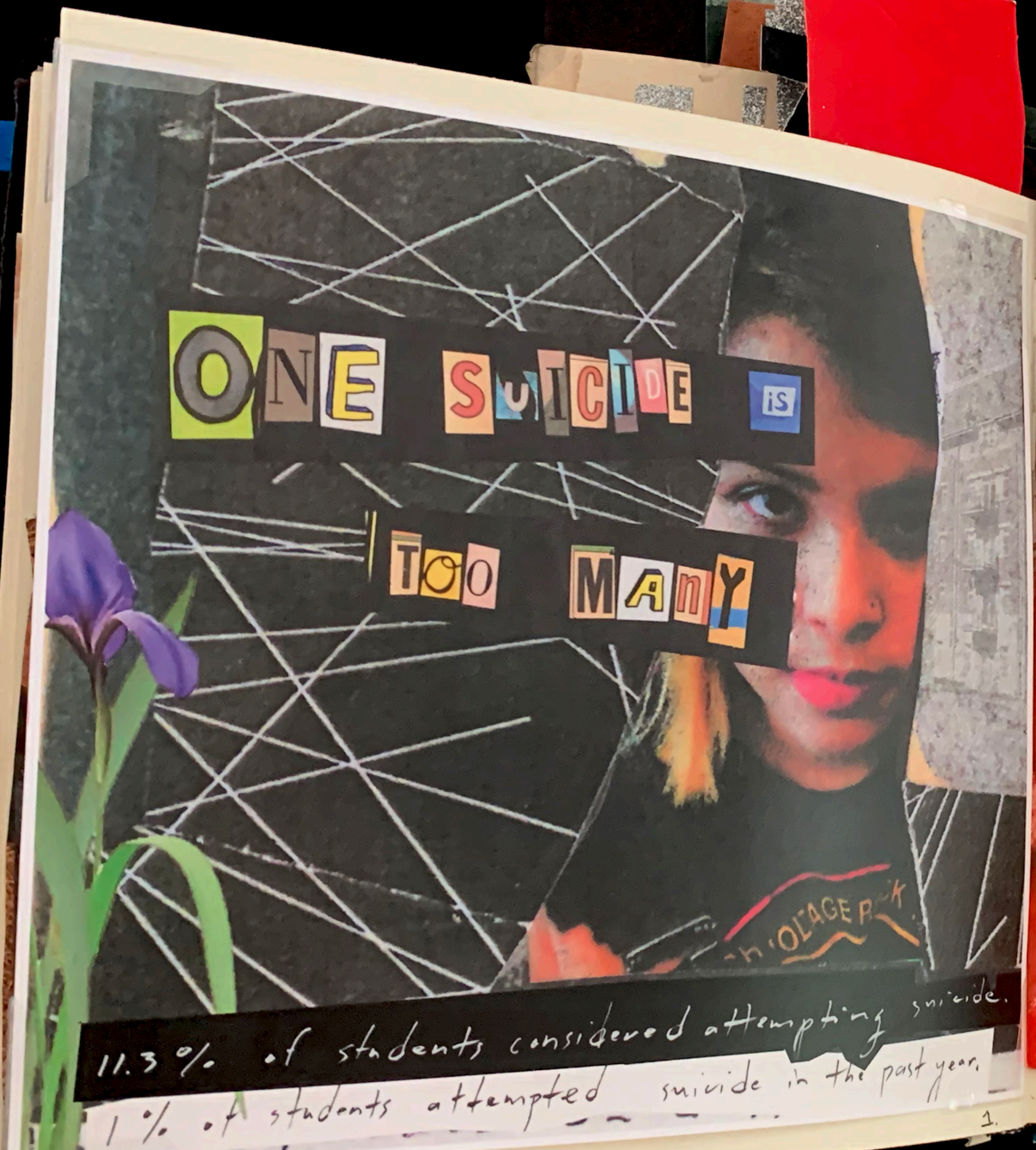
OTHER SHORE

also the forging of my
al commitment to the
of 29 Pieces — that,
e suggest in this lesson —
a commitment is made,
pledged to be strong when
s also negative about our
ts, to recover, when storms
through, to take care of
e lives and maintain strength
. I fill our commitment +
ther like minded people
we are fortunate.
Our lesson suggests first
king a commitment to peace
+ helps us understand why
nal piece benefits us and
world around us.



it was also the forging of my
personal commitment to the
work of 29 Pieces — that,
as we suggest in this lesson —
once a commitment is made,
we've pledged to be strong when
others are negative about our
efforts, to recover, when storms
blow through, to take care of
ourselves and maintain strength
to fulfill our commitment +
to gather like minded people
if we are fortunate.

Our lesson suggests first
making a commitment to peace
and helps us understand why
personal ~~piece~~ peace benefits us and
the world around us.



11.3% of students considered attempting suicide.

1% of students attempted suicide in the past year.

1.



2020

than a month gap here.

it's been busy around here.

any layers of what's

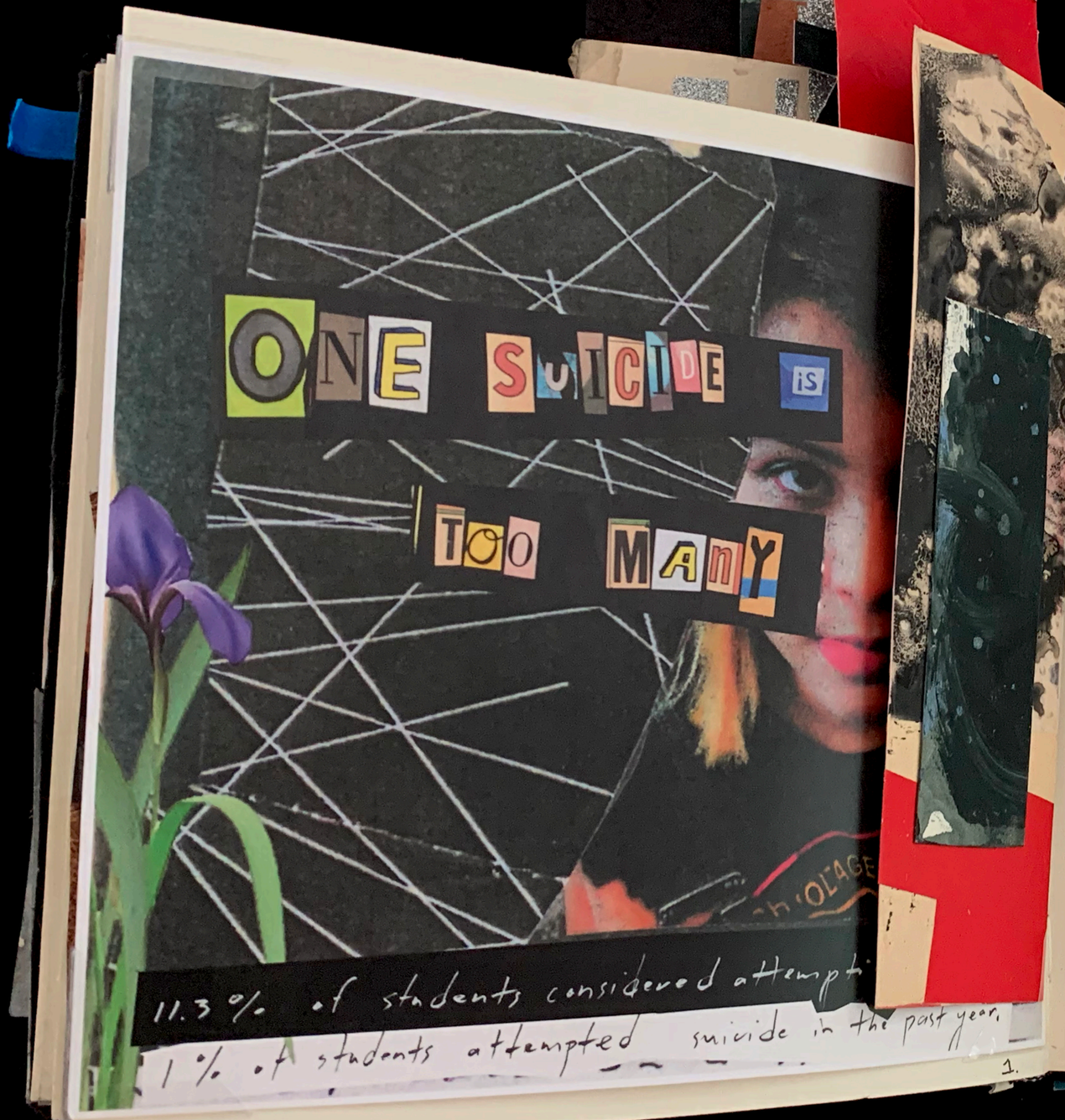
on:

Kelly's recovery from ankle replacement.

Kelly's upcoming hip surgery - Dec. 3.

Janelle in nursing care, unhappy there.

. Covid-19



11.3% of students considered attempti

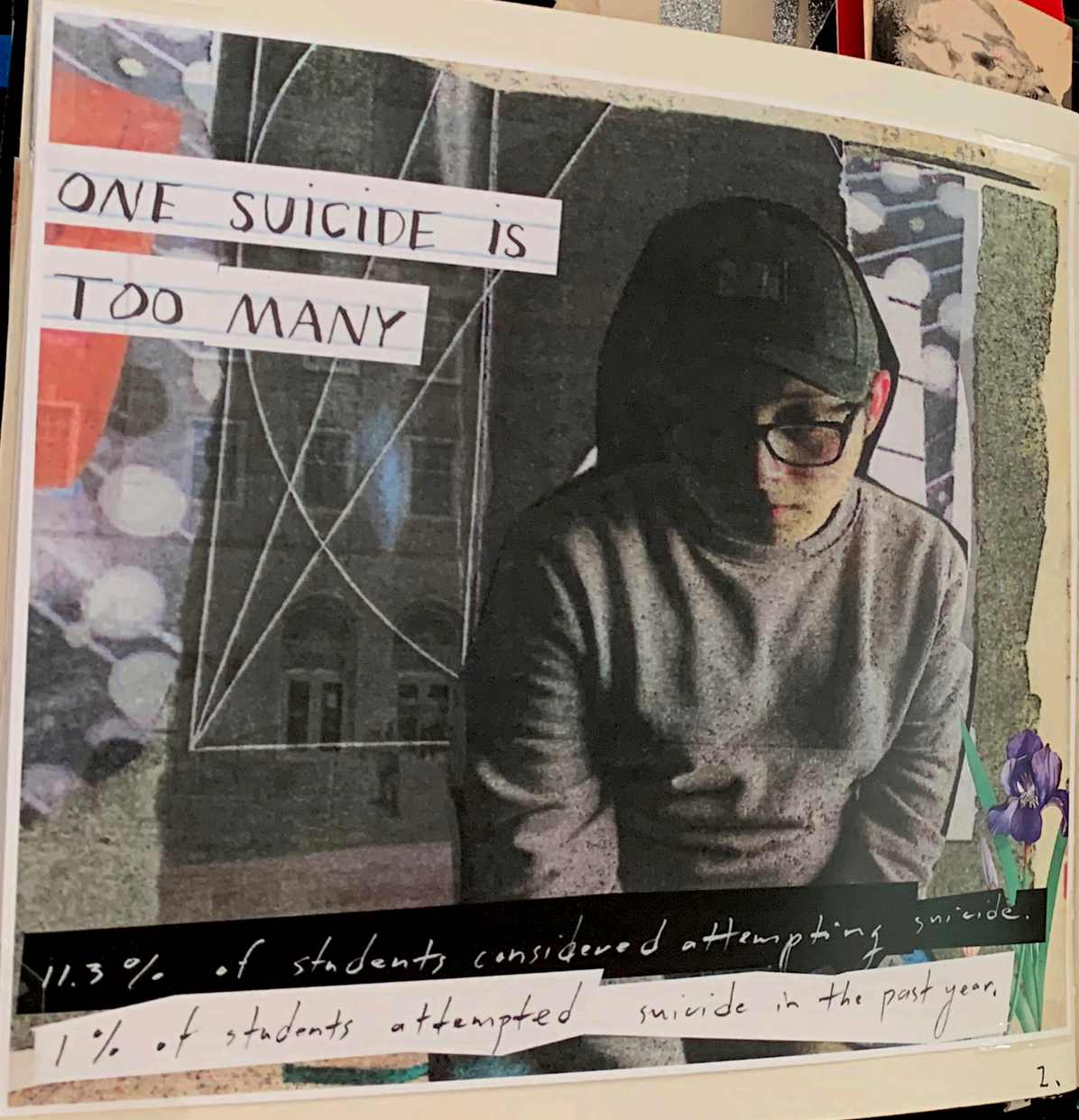
1% of students attempted suicide in the past year.

1.

ELECTION

Oct. 17, 2020
More than a month gap here.
Guess it's been busy around here.
So many layers of what's
going on:

1. Kelly's recovery from ankle replacement.
2. Kelly's upcoming hip surgery - Dec. 3.
3. Janelle in nursing care, unhappy there.
4. Covid-19



2.

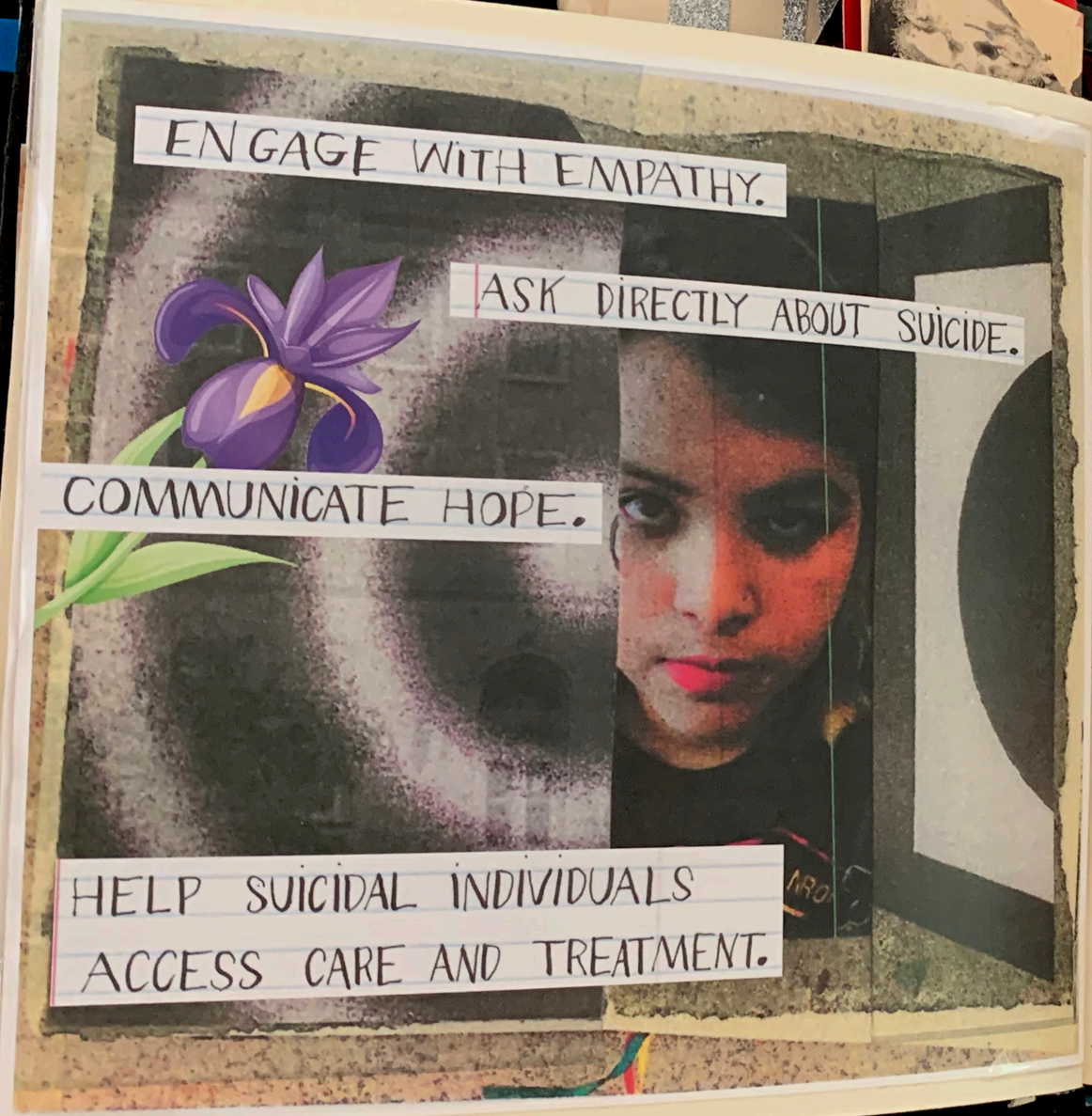
ELECTION

15. The election — enough said.
6. Nightmare of Donald Trump.
7. Fires, hurricanes.
8. The stripped earth next door
9. Conspiracy theorists.
10. Caged children on the border

...and on and on.

My outspoken words to:

1. Kelly
2. Maria Patiño



ELECTION

3. Jordan Gonzalez at UNL regarding the Alumni Ambassador group. And the threatened closure of the textile dept. at UNL.

All of this leaves me impatient, with unfiltered responses. Wondering if the time is now for unfiltered honesty — or if it's time to pull it back — and be a voice of calm. And- an illustration project — on suicide. For UNL.

COMMUNICATE HOPE.

ONE SUICIDE IS TOO MANY

ASK DIRECTLY ABOUT SUICIDE.

ENGAGE WITH EMPATHY.

ELECTION

ELMER

ELECTION

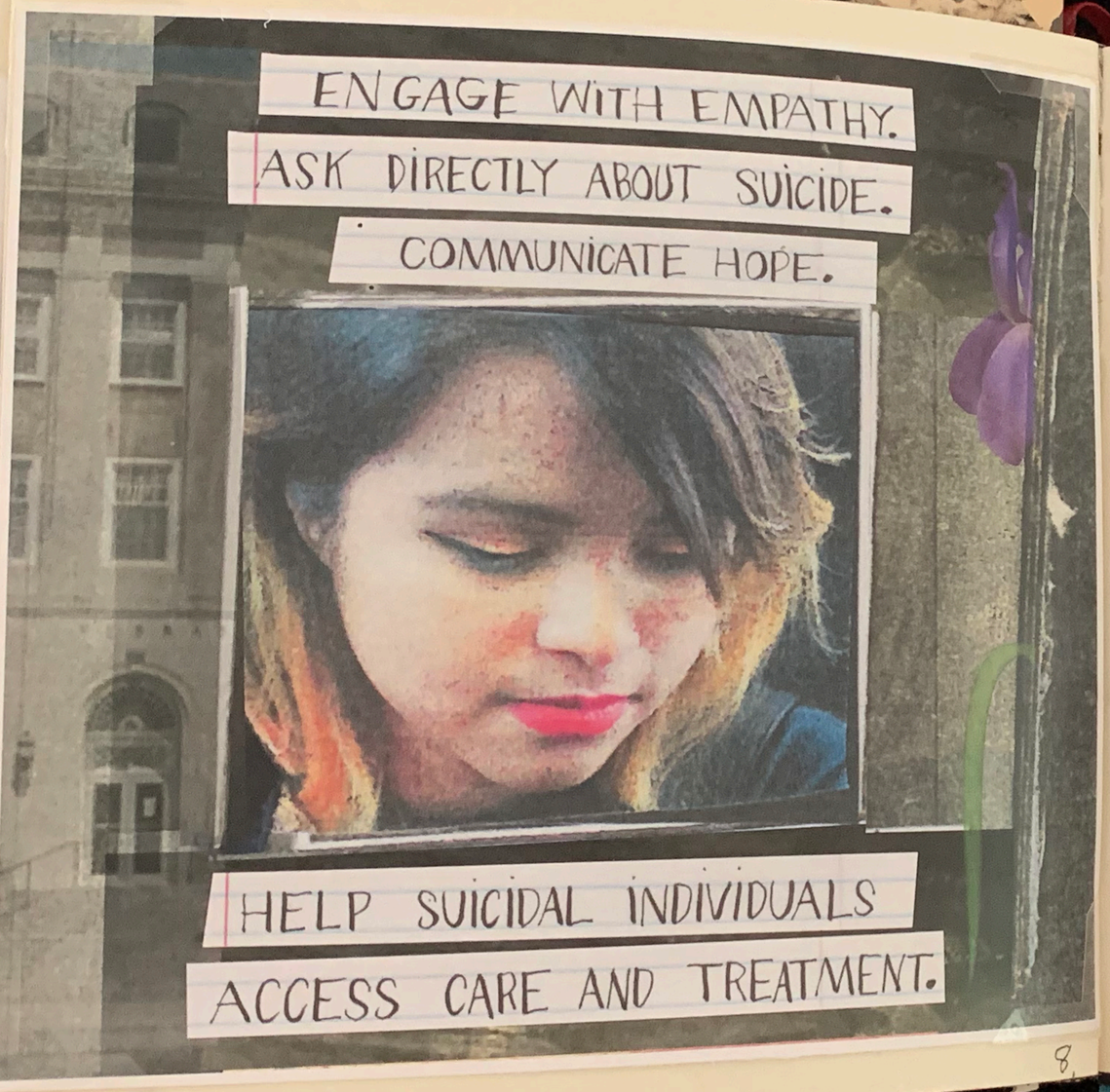
ONE SUICIDE IS TOO MANY



ONE SUICIDE IS TOO MANY

1% OF STUDENTS ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR AT UNL

ELECTION



8.

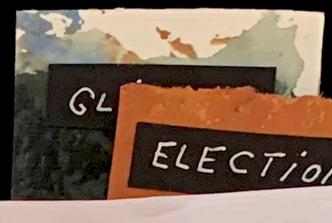
GL
ELECTION

10.27.20.

These stabs at drawing are interesting. Painful. Disappointing. It's being out of practice. It's!

@ out of practice
@ too speeded up for the singular focus required.
@ changed/diminished sight.
@ changed dexterity. I feel it'd be more suited to draw with a can of paint on the side of a building.
@ But mostly — out of practice, the old gunfighter trying to suit up + sober up





to shoot straight. Can she do it?
The concept is there.
I can make time.
Can I shut out distractions?
Apply focus, concentration,
discipline?

These hands that are used
to punching a keyboard?
This mind that thinks/
processes more in words + collage
now?
Can there be flow again?
This gestate, personal flow of eye→
heart→hand.



Drawing well is like most things done well. Focus, practice, concentration, a prayer for inspiration, connection. Drawing is more like a dance than a spreadsheet.

TUES	WED.	THURS	FRI	SAT.
PRACTICE DRAWING	PRACTICE DRAWING	DO DRAWINGS	DO DRAWINGS	BUILD

SUNDAY
BUILD

MONDAY
FINISH

ELECTION

ONE SUICIDE IS TOO MANY

11.



12.

Nov. 1, 2020

WORKING on the analytic stage of the suicide pieces.

election

unit + ditching the arts.

Break to rest.

Relax Concentrate

Focus. Patience

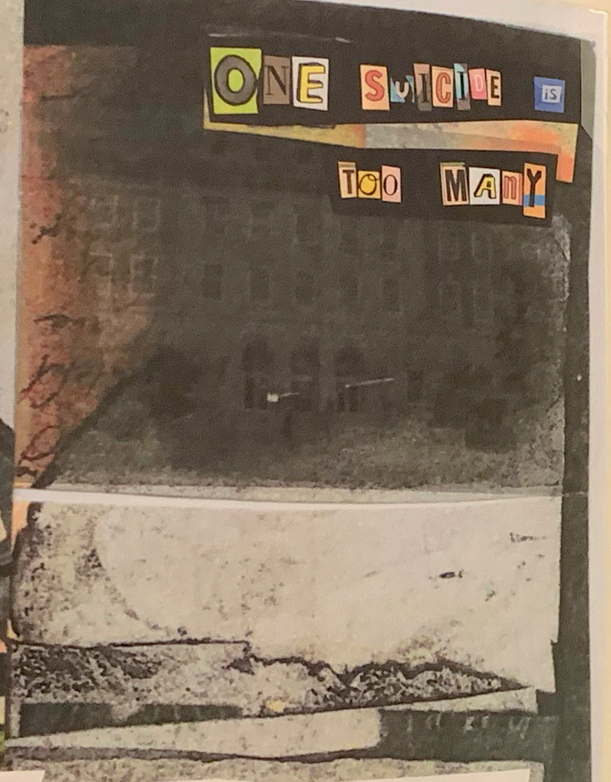
Analyze. Fell

one mind

this is the project.

the guy next door





1% of students attempted suicide in the past year.

11.3% of students considered attempting suicide.

13.

Friday, Oct. 30, 2020 – I had another confrontation with the chain saw happy neighbor. That must go out of mind for the next two days.

[redacted] was cutting trees done at 4:15 p.m. Using a chainsaw. I yelled. "What are you doing? We're still in legal discussion!"

B.B. "There's nothing to talk about."

B.B. "Why didn't you just buy this property?"

"Why don't you move to the country?"

K.B. "I am going to call the police."

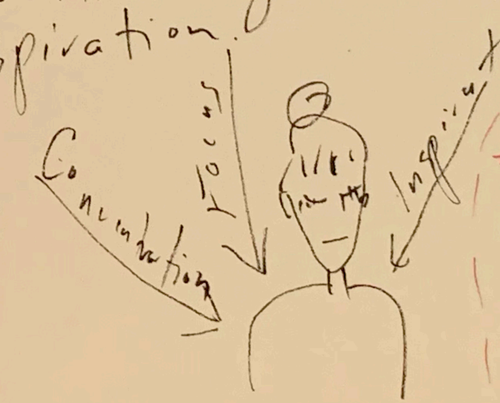
B.B. Go ahead

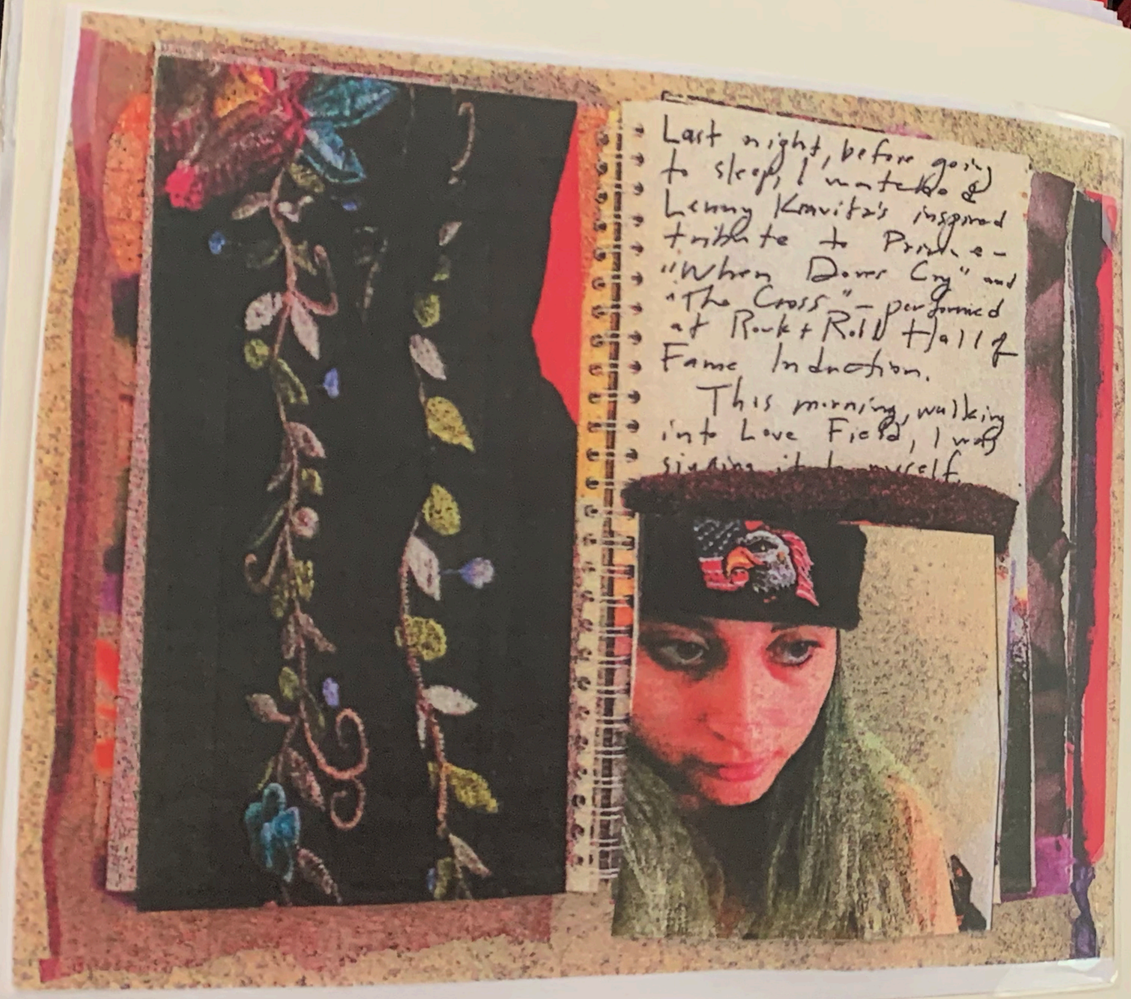
K.B. "You say you care about your family's welfare but don't give a rat's ass about others."

B.B. I can't talk 2 you.

Nov. 2, 2020

Focus. Analyze. Task for inspiration.





Last night, before going to sleep, I watched Lenny Kravitz's inspired tribute to Prince - "When Doves Cry" and "The Cross" - performed at Rock + Roll Hall of Fame Induction.

This morning, walking into Love Field, I was singing it to myself

14,

GL

ELECTION

IDEAS I.

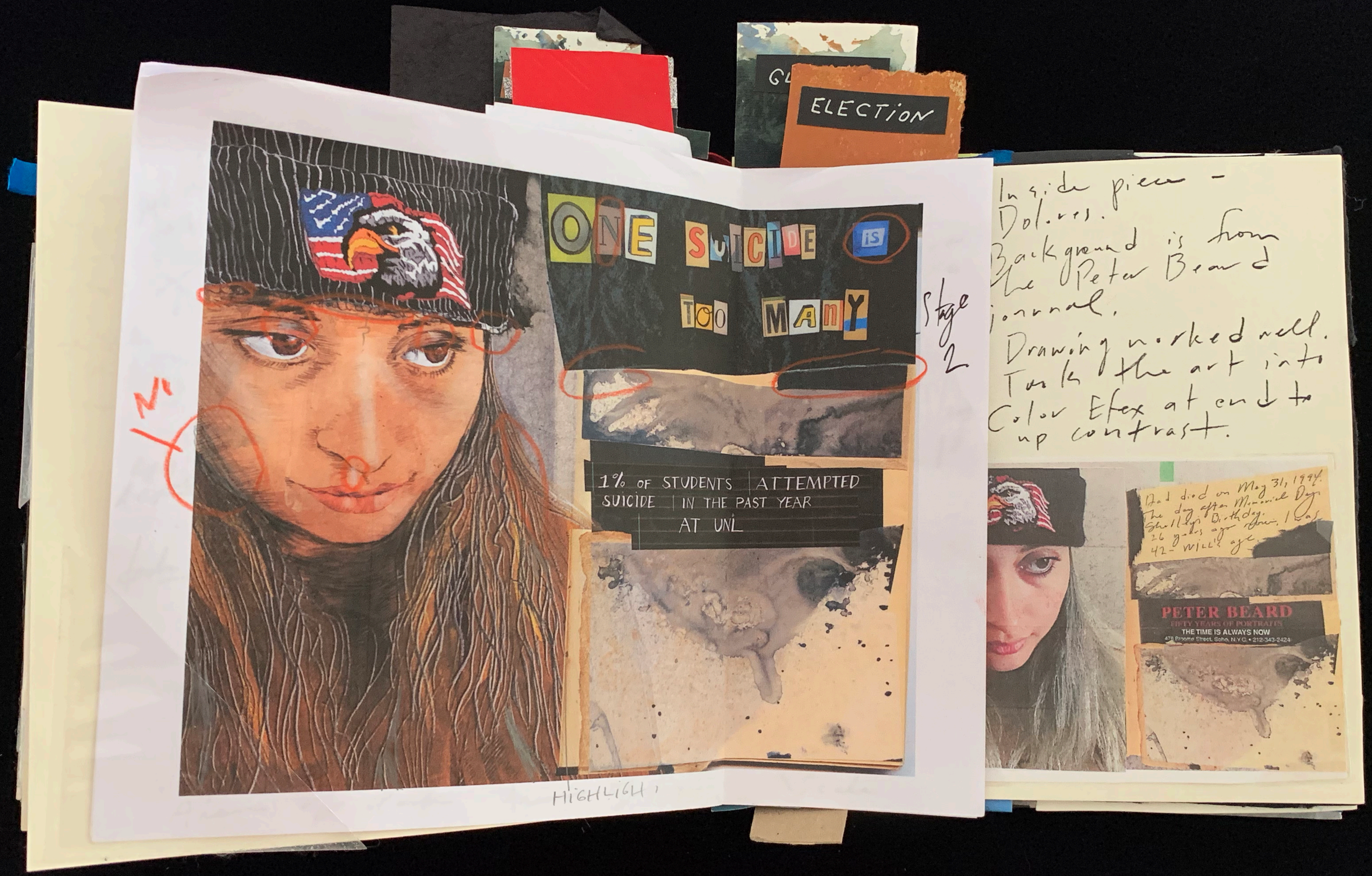


15.

ELECTION

ideas 2.


Black aura
Black aura
highlight
Black aura
Stage 1.
Black shape
Take photo away to see drawing
hi lights
hi lights in shirt
words on sep Taya
11.3% of students considered attempting
1% of students attempted suicide in the past y
fence pattern
Cover piece.
I looked at Watteau drawings of innocent young faces.
Pulled pages from my journals as backgrounds. Stayed in greyed-out pallette = saddness.
Downward lines, other imagery contribute to feeling of anxiety + overwhelm.


ELECTION
ONE SUICIDE IS TOO MANY
1% OF STUDENTS ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR AT UNL
HIGHLIGH
Stage 2
Inside piece - Dolores.
Background is from the Peter Beard journal.
Drawing worked well.
Took the art into Color Efex at end to up contrast.
Had died on May 31, 1994. The day after Memorial Day. Shelley's Birthday. 26 years ago now. I was 42 - Will's age.
PETER BEARD
FIFTY YEARS OF PORTRAITS
THE TIME IS ALWAYS NOW
478 Broome Street, Soho, N.Y.C. • 212-343-2424

ELECTION

I thought of Hope [redacted]. Still alive.
Suzan [redacted]. Alive.

ONE SUICIDE IS TOO MANY

Sondra's friend's son. Suicide.
[redacted]'s granddaughter [redacted] Alive.
All the young people I haven't met.

The New York Times

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020

Harris Will Become the Country's First Female Vice President

BIDEN BEATS

RACE IS FINALLY CALLED AFTER

CHAOTIC TERM ENDS WITH RARE

ELECTION

nov. 7, 2020

ing beautiful. Something
mp and his band of
re on their way out.
+ Harris won.
relief, the joy is unbelievable.
les of champagne last night
elly, Katz + Betsy.
vas a beautiful day.

THE VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT

MP

Historic Milestone for Woman Steeped in Civil Rights Battles

URNOUT;

NT LOSS



ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ms. Harris was elected to the Senate from California in 2016.

GLITTER

nov. 7, 2020

And something beautiful. Something good. Trump and his band of creeps are on their way out.
Biden + Harris won.
The relief, the joy is unbelievable.
2 bottles of champagne last night with Kelly, Katz + Betsy.
It was a beautiful day.

The New York Times

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020

Harris Will Become the Country's First Female Vice President

BIDEN BEATS TRUMP

RACE IS FINALLY CALLED AFTER CHAOTIC TERM ENDS WITH RARE RECORD TURNOUT; INCUMBENT LOSS

THE VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Historic Milestone for Woman Steeped in Civil Rights Battles



ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ms. Harris was elected to the Senate from California in 2016.

GLITTER

The New York Times

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020

Harris Will
First Fem

BIDEN BEA

RACE IS FINALLY CALLED

CHAOTIC TERM ENDS WIT

Nov. 7, 2020

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TRUMP

THE VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Historic Milestone for Woman Steeped in Civil Rights Battles

ECORD TURNOUT;

NCUMBENT LOSS



ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ms. Harris was elected to the Senate from California in 2016.

GLITTER

De Chanceny 1957 Brut

FRANÇOIS MONTAND BRUT

FRANCOIS M

The Dallas Morning News

Dallas, Texas, Sunday, November 8, 2020

GLITTER

ELECTORAL COLLEGE
BIDEN 290
TRUMP 214
270 to win
34 Not yet called: Alaska, Georgia, North Carolina

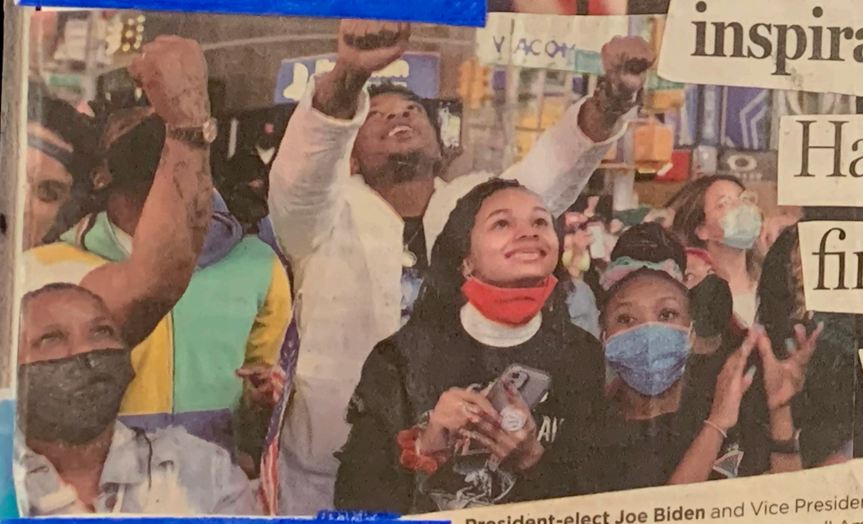
POPULAR VOTE
AP/10 p.m.
BIDEN 75,193,022 50.64%
TRUMP 70,804,968 47.69%

President-elect calls for end to 'this grim era of demonization'

She's their inspiration

Harris becomes first woman elected vice president

BIDEN WINS



President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris celebrated with their spou night in Wilmington, Del. Addressing all Americans, including those who voted against him,

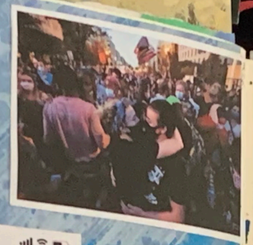
Jim Watson/Agence France-Presse

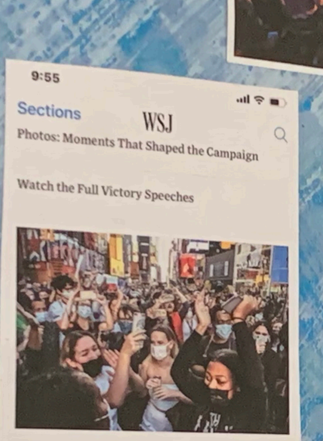
Jill Biden and Doug Emhoff, after the election winners spoke to supporters Saturday len said, "Let's give each other a chance."

GLITTER

Nov. 11, 2020

Parking lot, Waxahachie, TX.
We came here early this morning for Kelly to take a "nuclear stress test" for pre-op for his hip replacement. It's Veterans Day + a beautiful 'not a cloud in the sky' day.
I'm thinking about a veggie burger before my head home + maybe doing a little looking around this historic + conservative town.





9:14

The New York Times

How Biden Won the Presidency

He Bet on a Sober Message, Not a Cult of Personality

279 BIDEN — 270 — 214 TRUMP

See full presidential results ›



Biden Trump Reporting votes

Today Elections For You Sections

9:55

Sections WSJ

Photos: Moments That Shaped the Campaign

Watch the Full Victory Speeches

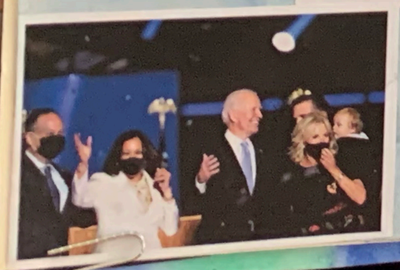
CAPITAL JOURNAL

How Biden Could Turn a Fractured Picture to His Advantage

The 2020 election may seem to have produced a deeply divided country. But perhaps a different picture emerges now that Joe Biden has been declared victorious in the presidential race: an alignment that actually could work for getting some things done.

NOVEMBER 7

News MyWSJ Market Data Notifications Profile



Sections WSJ

DJIA -0.24% ▼ S&P 500 -0.03% ▼ NASDAQ 0.04% ▲ RUSSELL



PLAY VIDEO | 5:00

Biden Moves Ahead With Transition Planning

The president-elect said he would name a group of experts to advise him on the coronavirus during the transition. He is expected to name a chief of staff quickly, according to people familiar with the matter. President Trump hasn't conceded the race.

A Crisis Candidacy, Then Party Unity

- Joe Biden told a close ally two years ago he feared for the country's soul.
- Top Democrats worried his message would flop. This is how he won.



After days of uncertainty, Joe Biden became the president-elect.

Today Elections For You Sections

Sections WSJ

What CEOs Expect From Biden Presidency: More Predictability

Corporate leaders foresee a more traditional, "no-nonsense" working relationship with the White House and urge the next administration to prioritize the Covid-19 pandemic.

NOVEMBER 8

LIVE UPDATES: ELECTION 2020

Biden Transition Team to Begin Review of Federal Agencies

This week, a group of policy experts assigned to every major government agency will begin laying plans to implement Joe Biden's agenda, according to a Biden transition official.

World Leaders Ready Themselves for a Biden Presidency After a drawn-out vote count, many global leaders were quick to respond to Biden's victory, with most sending congratulations and vowing to work with him.

NOVEMBER 8


GLITTER
CRAFTSMAN


HOH
OHO
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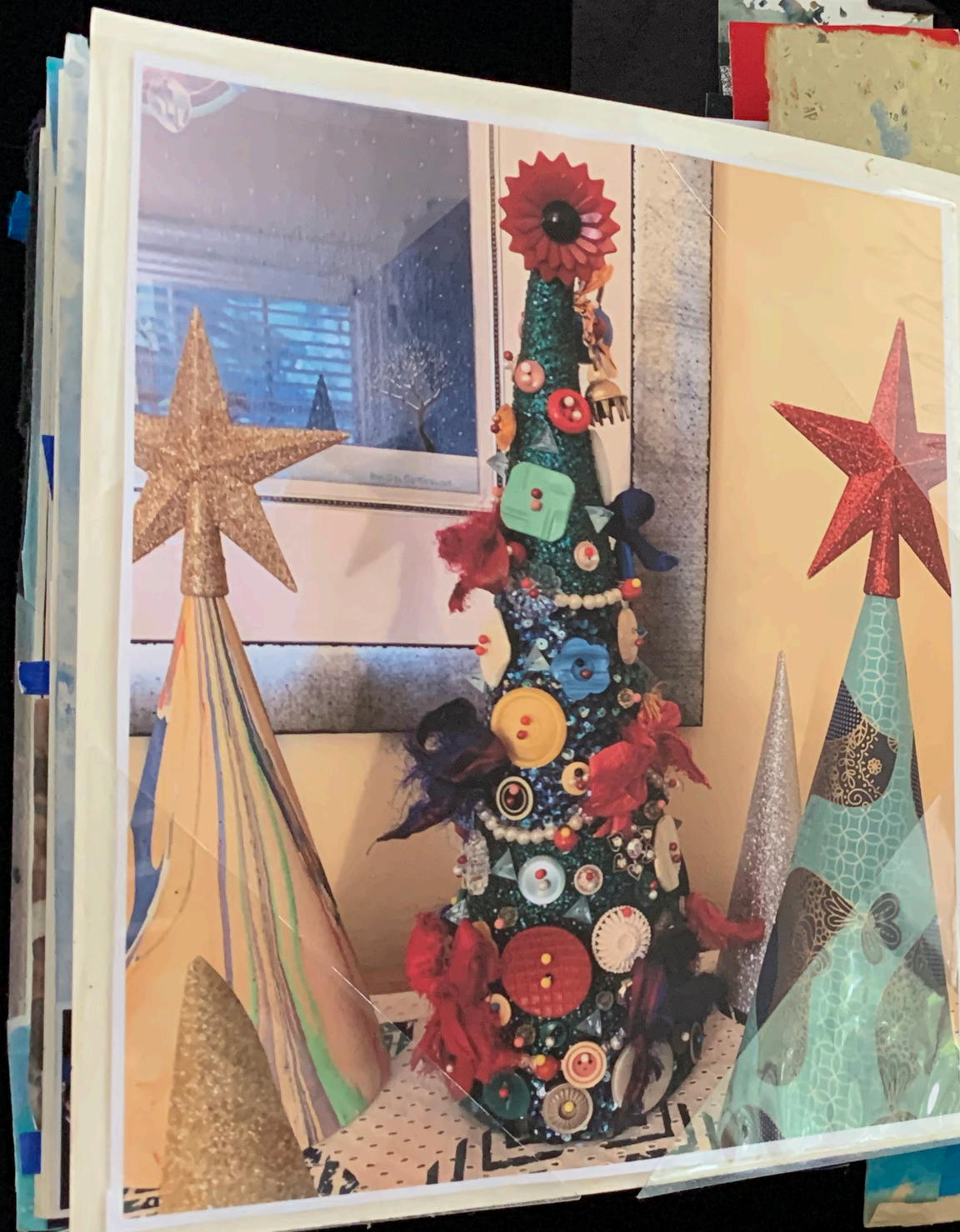


CRAFTSMAN



"Does glitter lure the fish or the fisherman?"

Something Beautiful.
A painting.
A gift.
Love.
Forgiveness.
Courage.
A creation made in full engagement.
Inspiration + work.
Tender mercies.
Loyalty.
The mother line.



Vicken

Our front door. Nov. 2020

FOR
GIVE
NESS