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spring 2021

fluxus B L O O M



Editors Letter

Hi there! We are Fluxus! A brand that produces content that revolves around sustainability, mindfulness, and encouraging creativity. Created by two sisters, Fluxus has become our passion project and a creative outlet.

In the spirit of Spring, we are here to offer you a source of inspiration and an opportunity for reflection.

Fluxus is the Latin word for flux, a word meaning 'a constant state of change'. With this Spring edition being our fourth, we are so excited to see that we have come full circle and completed one year of following the changing of seasons. We believe that humans are made to constantly evolve and change. We hope that after reading our magazine, you'll find growth and perhaps some stability in this potential season of change.

When thinking of names for this fourth edition, we decided we wanted something that connected the ideas of change and Spring. We decided that 'Bloom' was appropriate for the feeling that we wanted this magazine to convey – flourishing in a time of change.

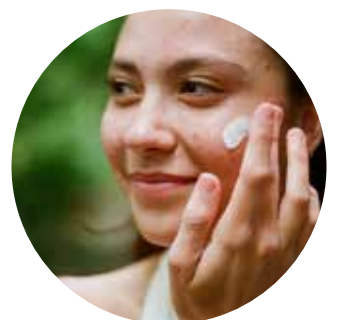
Happy reading!

Love,
Ren & Nikole



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Reflection on New Beginnings

Experiencing new beginnings and change is weird. Mixed emotions come into play – The best way I think I can put my current state of mind into words is: anxious excitement. And honestly, reflecting on these changes, for me, is even harder than any change itself.

I feel like I'm at a strange point in my life where I'm not quite sure what I'm doing. I've been in school for basically my whole life, and now I'm on the verge of finishing my college career, therefore knocking me into what we call "adult life".

In less than a month, I'll be moving away from some of the closest friends I have, I'll be expected to perform in a professional career setting, I'll have more responsibilities, and so on.

To provide some context, I'm a Virgo. Virgos are most commonly known for being over thinkers and planners. This is true of me. So, when I think about the future and these responsibilities that will be added to my plate, it's hard for me not to want to have my hand in everything and plan each step. But, this past year has taught me a lot about letting things go and allowing life to just happen. So, in this new phase of life that I'm entering, I've been actively calming my mind and telling myself that I'm going to take it one step at a time. It's okay if I don't have a job lined up right after graduation. It's okay if I need some time to figure out what kind of work I want to put my energy into. Success is not measured by my salary or where I work. Sadly, some professors shove this superficial shit down our throats. My entire senior year of university, a professor of mine has made me feel that I

am a failure if I do not make my job my life. She emphasizes getting high-end jobs in top design firms where the "real work" is done. But at this point in my life, I feel the real work that needs to be done is in my mind and in taking care of my mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

So, what do I want to put energy into when I step into this new season of life?

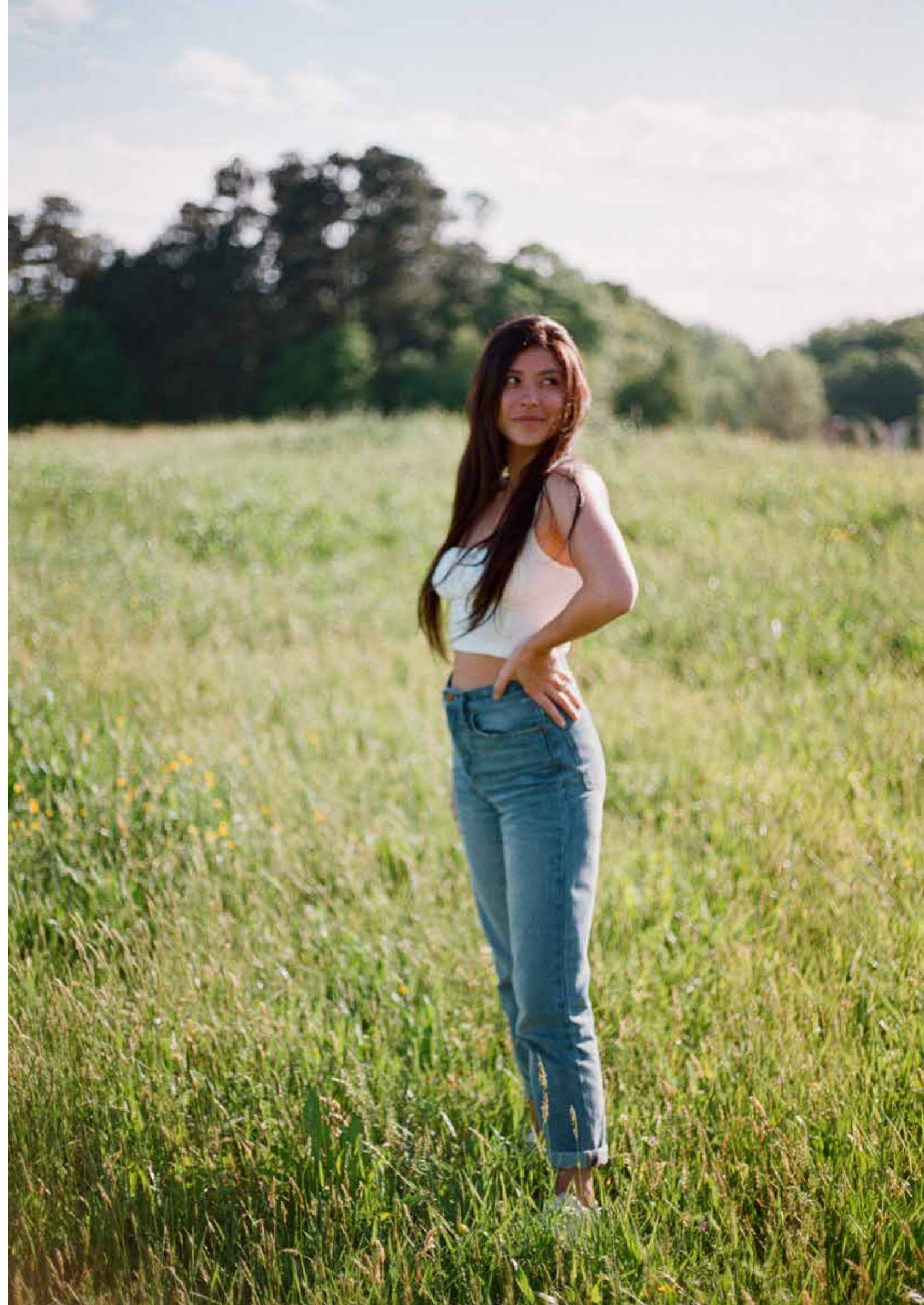
I've decided I want to prioritize myself and my mental health. Although we should always prioritize our mental wellbeing, I think it is especially important to give it specific attention in times of lifestyle adjustments. Instead of focusing on what I don't have planned, I'm realizing this is an opportunity to improve myself.

Yes, I am going to quote Sex and the City (and p.s. if you haven't watched the show – you should).

"Sometimes we need to stop analyzing the past, stop planning the future, stop figuring out precisely how we feel, stop deciding exactly what we want, and just see what happens."
– Carrie Bradshaw

With everything happening in the world, it's normal to feel that we've lost some control. I've decided to let it go, let life happen for a bit and embrace the uncertainty. ♥

Words by Ren Salas
Photography by Nikole Wells



Reset Routine

We all love that feeling of newness. It's why January 1st has so much appeal. A new year, new opportunities. The beginning of a change. We can now finally start again. Maybe some of us look for this newness more frequently than once a year. The beginning of a new month, or a full moon. That fresh feeling can be so motivating and powerful, but if we only tap into it with such little frequency, these good benefits cannot be fully realized. So, how does one go about creating this feeling of newness on a weekly or biweekly basis? Personally, I like using a reset routine to, well, reset my life and get that feeling of fresh beginnings each week. What even is a reset routine you may ask? Well, generally, a reset routine is a set of steps that you complete on a day of your choosing in order to get things done and create a mini "blank slate" feeling. Your own reset routine really depends on you. I tend to explain things best by using myself as an example.

My personal reset routine has 4 steps: Declutter, Do, Dump and Declare. Let's start at the beginning.

Step 1: Declutter

This one is pretty predictable. Clean your space. This initial step often prevents people from starting at all, and while some can spend hours cleaning, I find it best to set a timer. This prevents you from getting distracted by that thing you forgot about in the back of your closet that you just found again and now you're just sitting on the floor looking at your old discovery. Just 30 minutes is enough to pick up the dirty clothes and put them in the laundry bin, clean up the dishes from the morning, and sweep or vacuum a room or two.

Of course, you need to be someone who keeps up with dishes and basic cleanliness on a daily basis, otherwise 30 mins on a Sunday is not going to cut it. Other than your physical space, cleaning up your virtual space is important too. So take another 20 minutes and clear out your email inbox, organize your desktop, delete those tabs you still have open that you don't need, and maybe go through your photos from the week and get rid of those random pictures that you definitely don't need on your camera roll (I'm looking at you, the 30 screenshots that I no longer have a use for). 50 minutes of decluttering might seem like a lot of time, but it passes by so fast, and if you keep on top of the little things during the week, you may not even need that much time to declutter your space. I always recommend starting with this step because it helps keep the ball rolling onto step 2.

Step 2: Do

This is the time to do the things you've been putting off that week or that need to get done. I usually use this time to water my plants, take those dirty clothes in the bin and actually put them in the laundry, bathe the dog and check in on my expenses that week. The time frame for this really depends on how much of a procrastinator you are. And if this whole routine sounds like it's way too time consuming for you to do, just try doing one thing for each step. You don't need to clean your whole house and knock out all of your errands and to-dos. Just simply start with putting your sheets in the wash and organizing your desktop.

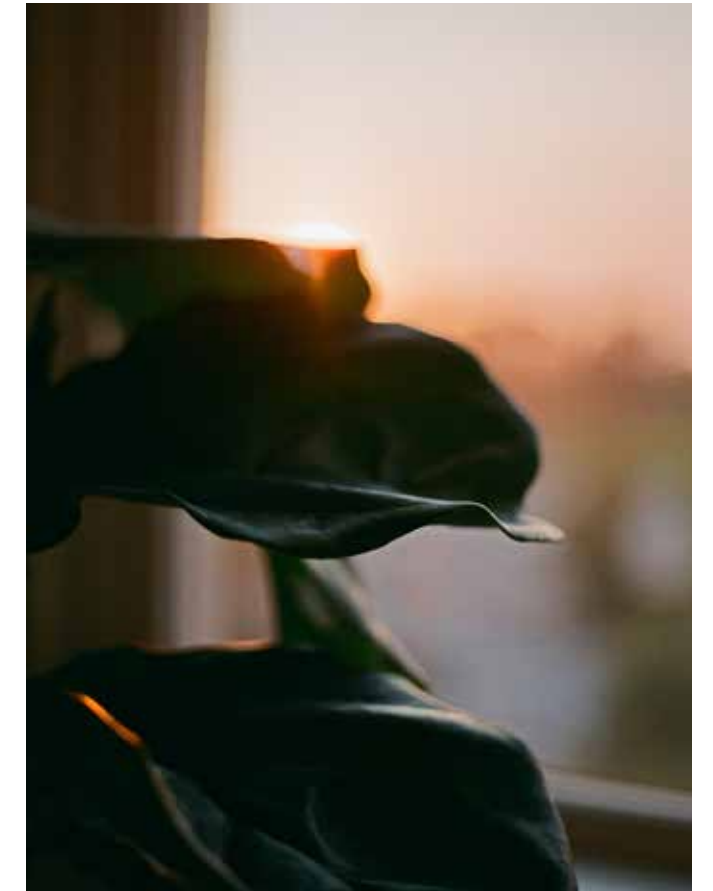
Step 3: Dump

This step is my favorite, and I personally find that

it's the biggest component to that new feeling. Dump is a time to dump out anything you need to get rid of mentally. Think of it like cleaning out your mental state. I like to do my resets on Sundays, so any worries that I don't want coming with me into the following week, I leave behind. I do this by brain dumping or journaling. For those unfamiliar with this method, just think of writing absolutely anything and everything that's on your mind and leaving it on the page. Physically expelling these thoughts helps me mentally get rid of them / just acknowledge them too. I like to light some candles and burn some sage or palo santo while I do this. I'm also a person who loves taking baths, so I'll use this time to run a bath for myself. After my bath I like to transition from step 3 to 4 by doing a tarot reading. After cleansing, I like to fill back up by looking forward to the coming week

Step 4: Declare

Declare your intentions for the coming week. What



do you want to accomplish? How do you want to feel? You can tell a friend, your dog, or just yourself. I like to have a record of it so I can visit it again in the middle of the week to remind myself of the direction I'm going in, so I'll just write it down in my journal. Now that you have a direction, use this time to plan out the week. I write out everything from due dates to friend dates and alone time. If your goal is to work out x amount of times, write it out and plan those times in your agenda. Want to go out in nature more? Make it a date with yourself or some friends. I think it's important to have an intention or end goal before making the little daily plans so you know where you're headed and what you're working towards. Knowing your priorities helps making decisions easier. ♥

Words and Photography by Nikole Wells

Spotlight: Rebekah Gills

Spring, you either are optimistic about new beginnings, or have the pre-conceived notion of pessimism as you blow your nose for the one hundredth time. I, for one, adore the new beginnings bit, the allergies we can talk about later.

Spring is the sheer excitement of watching your cherry blossoms bud alongside the fresh breeze and sunshine.

Spring is the life that inhales anticipation which shoots our green sprouts from the earth hurtling, unfurling flowers that smell like Petrichor.

Spring sweeps the dust out of our minds as we wake up, as we look and hear to the promise of the morning sunrise to our absolute joy of unfolding to the glow of the optimistic new life that is spring.

I use each season as a symbol in my life. I take what each mean to me, and turn it into something to live by. Spring. You think about life, sprouting (as I mentioned earlier.) The smell of anticipation as you wake up; or is that just the smell of coffee that your lover made for you which is now wafting through to the bedroom where empty sides are still warm from her embrace?

This spring i choose growth, love and new beginnings

What will you choose this season? ♥

Words and Photography by Rebekah Gills



Spring Flowers

This article topic got me thinking - why do we love flowers so much? Personally, I love receiving flowers, whether it be from my significant other or just as a little gift to myself.

I love walking outside and seeing little flowers pop up out of the ground, especially around the beginning of Spring time. Seeing the flowers and feeling the warmth of the sun gets me so excited for Spring. Why not bring this excitement into our homes? My husband and I just recently moved into a new apartment and something that I decided I want to start doing is keeping fresh flowers in our living space. There have been studies on bringing biophilic elements into our indoor spaces and how it reduces stress while absorbing and cleaning toxins out of the air. But what is my own personal inclination toward flowers? I'm not even sure that it's any deeper than that they smell amazing and they're a beautiful way to bring nature inside. Sigmund Freud once said, "flowers are restful to look at, they have neither emotions nor conflicts". So, maybe I love flowers because they are peaceful to look at.



I mean, whenever I see a beautiful array of flowers (in a store for example), I gravitate towards them in admiration of their beauty followed by shoving my nose in them to snag a sniff.

Other than the beauty and scent, flowers are a great way to bring life into a space. Spring is a time

to dabble with color. I'm big into neutrals and adding small bursts of color here and there. Honestly, flowers are a great way to add subtle pops of color especially if you're nervous to experiment outside of your personal color wheel.

There are so many flowers to choose from but I compiled a short list of a few Spring-blooming flowers that I thought had lovely meanings.

Daffodils

These cheery yellow flowers symbolize rebirth and new

beginnings, as they are one of the first perennials to bloom after the winter frost. They display that spring has arrived.

Hyacinths

Hyacinths come in a variety of colors and make a



beautiful accessory to any garden. They are often associated with the Greek legend of Hyacinthos. The Greek god, Apollo named this flower after the death of his dear, Hyacinthos.

Tulips

This classic flower is a symbol of love and can bring adoration into any garden or indoor space.

Pansies

These flowers represent free thinking. Gift a bouquet of pansies to your favorite outspoken and creative-thinking individual!

Sweet Alyssum

These flowers are dainty and delicate looking but

tough as nails. They are said to provide emotional balance, which is something I feel like we can all use after the past year we had!

Lavender

Lavender flowers represent serenity and calmness. I personally prefer to use lavender oil in my diffuser.

Whether you're in love with the natural scent, beauty, or just want to add a pop of color to your space for Spring, flowers are a great option. ♥

Words by Ren Salas
Photography by Nikole Wells

Spotlight: Natalie Sinclair

Winter has given me a chance to reconnect with creative projects and organize my space. When I was younger, I took a few art classes and got infatuated with drawing comics. Fast-forward now, and what started as a few doodles on sticky notes for my coworkers in November quickly became a life of its own. My friends would send me funny scenarios they'd experience or a spontaneous idea, and during my down time I'd draw a few poorly drawn comics visualizing the situation. I dubbed it "third wave drawings", after the ultra-hipster, new-age coffee shop trend. There's no established plot or character arcs, except for the fact that these poor characters seem to end up in poor situations. Exploring a new hobby, such as this, has helped me enter the new year feeling inspired creatively.

The truth is, I never was a natural green thumb. After killing my first five plants, I figured the only logical next step was to fill my room with plants so I couldn't fail again. Luckily, somewhere along the way, I assumed quite the jungle of plants and several handy tricks to caring for them.

Words and Comic by Natalie Sinclair

1. Yellow leaves are generally the first warning sign that your plant needs something. Almost always, this has to do with the frequency of watering. For a simple check, submerge your finger all the way into the dirt. If moist dirt sticks when you remove your finger, your plant is too wet, which causes roots to rot. A cheap investment is a water meter, which provides information on soil moisture and pH. Plants require their roots to dry out between waterings, so picking a day of the week to water helps ensure consistency!
2. If you start accumulating plants, pests are an unfortunate friend who likes to tag along. When I bring a new plant home, I like to wipe its leaves with a soft cloth to rid any hitchhiking bugs. Neem oil, a natural insect repellent, is an additional product that works wonders on a wide variety of insects!
3. Ah, lighting. Talk to any plant expert and they'll start talking about choosing windows that face south, east, or west. Guess who only has a northern facing window? Luckily for me, UV lights ended up being one of my favorite investments. Not only does it provide consistent light, but I've found it's a great way to elevate your mood during winter months. ♥

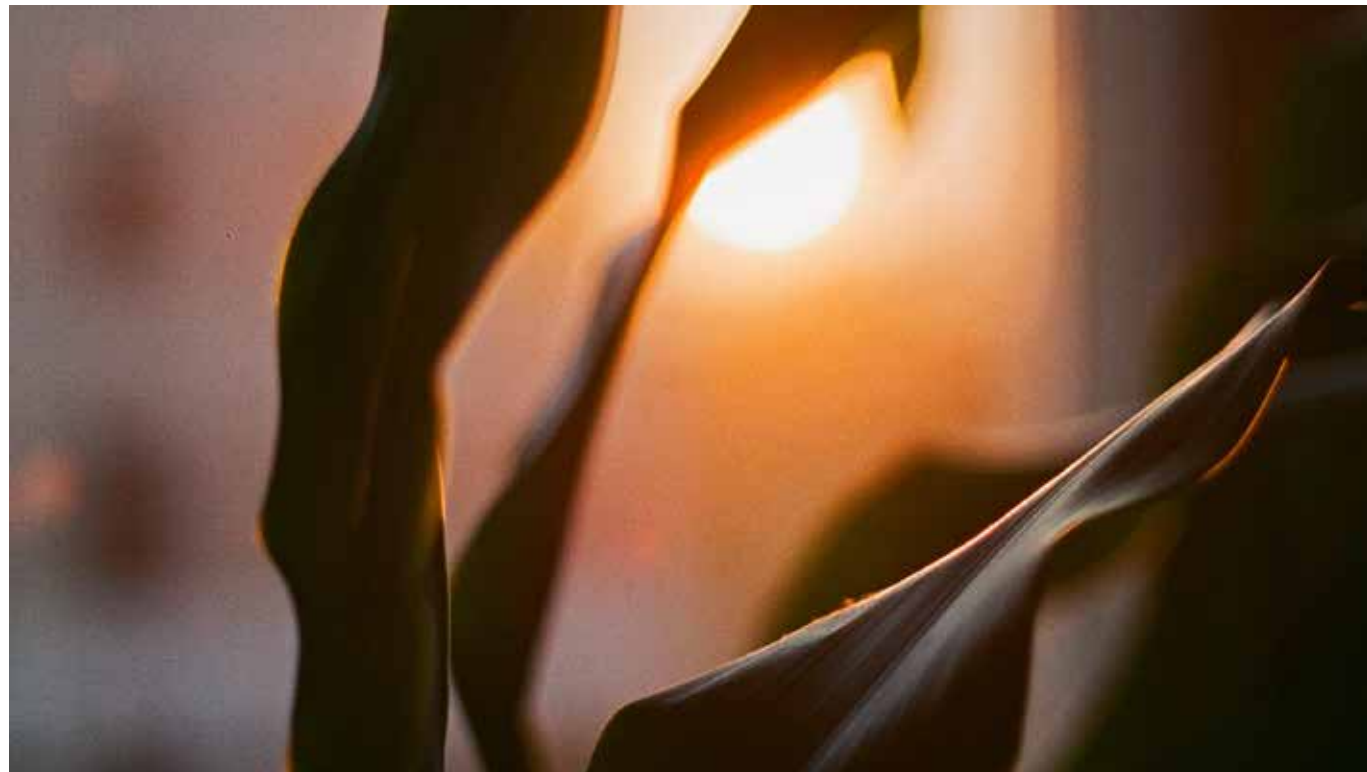
PLANT TIPS ① watering



② pest control ③ uv lights



Tips for a Tidy Space



We all know the saying, “tidy space, tidy mind”, and for most people, this rings true. I know personally it helps me declutter my mind by taking time to clean my environment. For me, my room is my safe space, and I like to keep it in tip-top condition and make it a stress-free zone. Nothing stresses me out more than coming home to a pile of what seems to be an insurmountable mess. I’m fortunate, in that I actually enjoy cleaning. I find it calming and nothing feels better than that rush of dopamine after completing a task with instant visible results. I know that for others, keeping a room tidy can feel like a never ending battle, but never fear! I come bearing gifts in the form of tips that can hopefully help any messy-prone readers.

Tip 1: “I pick things up, I put things down”
Sounds simple right? If you put something down, you should pick it up, sooner rather than later. We’ve all been there, frantically trying on outfits

until you find the one. Maybe there’s a deadline, your date texted you that they’re already on the way, and you still haven’t located your favorite going-out shoes. One thing is for sure, you are not going to be putting away laundry after a night out. And what if the date goes well and you invite them back to your place? Wouldn’t you have wished that instead of throwing discarded dresses or evening slacks across your bed, that you had hung them up or folded them and put them back in their rightful place? I get it, maybe you didn’t think you had the time, but it’s going to save you time the next day when you’re possibly hungover and have to go collecting your various articles of clothing that have been strewn about. I know it’s easier said than done, but if you pick something up, you should put it straight back to where it lives.

Side note: this author does not have kids, and clearly this tip may be harder to apply if you have tiny humans.

Tip 2: Consistency is key

If you want to maintain a tidy space, you have to be consistent. 5 minutes in the morning and 5 minutes at night of tidy time will go a long way. You don’t have to deep clean your kitchen every single day, that’s not sustainable, but placing your dishes straight in the dishwasher is something small and easy to do that really does make a difference. Within this tip, make it a habit to make your bed in the morning! We’ve all heard this one before, but starting off your day with a tidy bed will make it easier for you to maintain a clean space. If you haven’t even made your bed, it’s unlikely that you’ll feel motivated to tidy up the rest of your room. This leads us straight into our next tip...

Tip 3: Don’t make it harder than it has to be

If clutter makes you anxious like it does for me, perhaps filling your home with Knick-knacks isn’t the best course of action. Similarly, if it’s always been hard for you to make your bed a daily habit, perhaps consider not having 30 pillows and 3 different blankets adorning your bed.

Yes I agree that nothing is prettier than having a beautifully made bed that is fun and full of different textures and colors, but if those pillows spend most of their time on the ground, perhaps they aren’t necessary. At the end of the day, you want to make it easy for yourself to keep your home free of mess, and sometimes that means taking a deep breath, and Marie Kondo-ing the heck out of your possessions.

Tip 4: Divide and Conquer

Sometimes life gets the best of us, and we end up with more mess than we can tackle in just 10 minutes. Sometimes the more the mess builds, the more we put it off. I’ve found that it’s easier for me to get started when I divide up my task into smaller tasks. Feel like you can’t possibly clean your whole room? Divide your space into sections and start there. I always like to start with clothes, they always make a room feel more cluttered than it really is. Pick your clothes up, either place them in a laundry bin or hang them

back up and take a look to see how much tidier your space already feels. This initial step helps you feel more motivated to keep cleaning. Sometimes you can’t do it all in one go, and that’s okay! Just start with something small. Remember, something is always better than nothing. And finally,

Tip 5: Make it fun!

Make cleaning something fun for you to do, not just another chore on a list. Make it the time that you listen to a podcast, or put on some music. Put on a timer and move your body while you tidy up your place! You can even put on a show while you take care of the mess. This time can be anything you want it to be, so make it something you enjoy doing! ♥

Words and Photography by Nikole Wells



My 2021 Book Reviews

When I was younger, I loved reading. I remember I used to track the books I read each month, and there were a few years when I was a teenager where I would average 20 plus books a year. While I generally kept the resolution to read at least one book a month, I fell off this the last few years. Sure I still read, but it wasn't the same as when I was younger. I didn't make the time for it and I didn't lose myself in the novels I was reading like I used to. That is until this year. I recommitted myself to my love of literature and treated my reading time as I should have, self care. I began taking myself out on dates to my local bookstore, and got excited about the process of picking out my book of the month. I looked forward to getting to sit down with my book and lose myself in the words like I used to.

“I recommitted myself to my love of literature and treated my reading time as I should have, self care.”

So far this year I've read 3 books and wanted to do a sort-of review on them. Honestly I'm very bad at describing books. I either am too vague because I'm afraid of spoiling it or telling it wrong, or I'm telling you every single detail and retelling you the plot of the book (usually all out of order too). But I thought that I'd still give you some recommendations and my general thoughts on the books I've read so far in 2021.

My book for January was “The House in the Cerulean Sea” by TJ Klune. This was such a lovely book to rekindle my love of reading. If you like magic and gay characters, this book was MADE for you. Reading this book made me feel warm, and immersing myself in this world with beautiful

gardens tended by gnomes and islands with forests and beaches guarded by kind sprites was a wonderful getaway. The House in the Cerulean Sea touches on themes of chosen family, prejudice, and what it means to choose your own path. This feel good book is the perfect read for rainy days when you just want to wrap yourself in a blanket, drink some warm tea, and be transported to an orphanage full of magical children.

In February I read “The Only Woman in the Room” by Marie Benedict. I only learned after finishing the book that this story is based off of a true story, and I do want to reread it now with this knowledge.

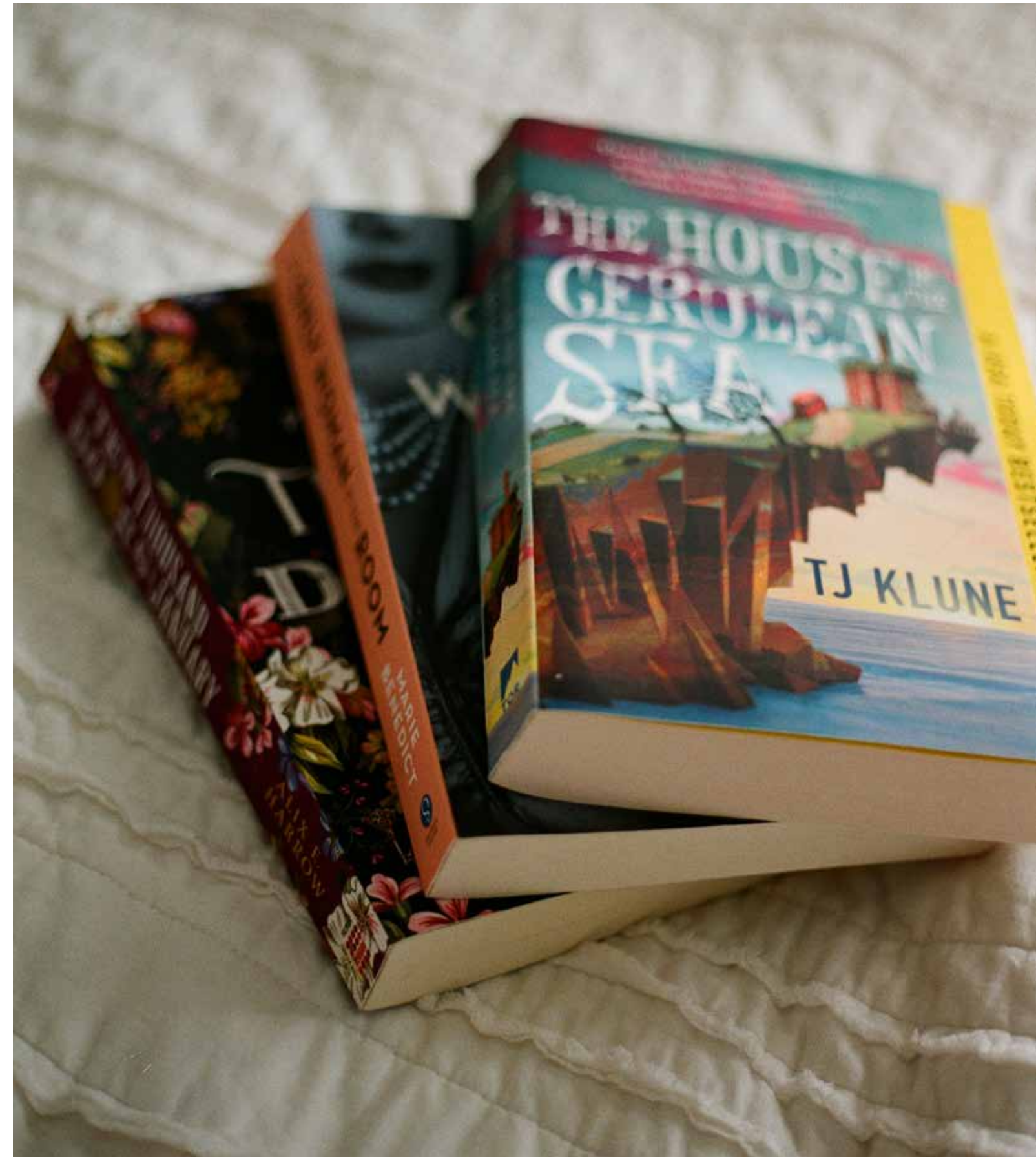
This book tells a story about a strong woman who is overlooked as just a pretty face. Set right as Hitler is coming to power, this book lets us

peek through the curtain in Austria and see how one woman made her escape from her powerful husband to America and the flashing Hollywood lights. This feminist book will leave you in awe of women, and angry on their behalf at all the men that underestimated them. I would say this book makes for a great poolside read, as it's not too long and is a pretty chill read.

“The Ten Thousand Doors of January” by Alix E. Harrow was my book for March. This book was written for the explorers, the dreamers, and people who believe that storytelling is a powerful tool. I love love love this book, and will definitely be rereading it in the next year. The characters and the world building that this author did is

astounding, and I loved every minute of reading this book. This book is perfect in a multitude of different places. It's great to read on a train, on a plane, in a new place, outside on a patio, or in a cafe. I cannot recommend this book more. ♥

Words and Photography by Nikole Wells



Spring



Skincare

My winter skincare routine consists of deeply hydrating products to help compensate for the dryness that comes with the cold weather. With the turn of Spring, I get excited to switch up my routine!

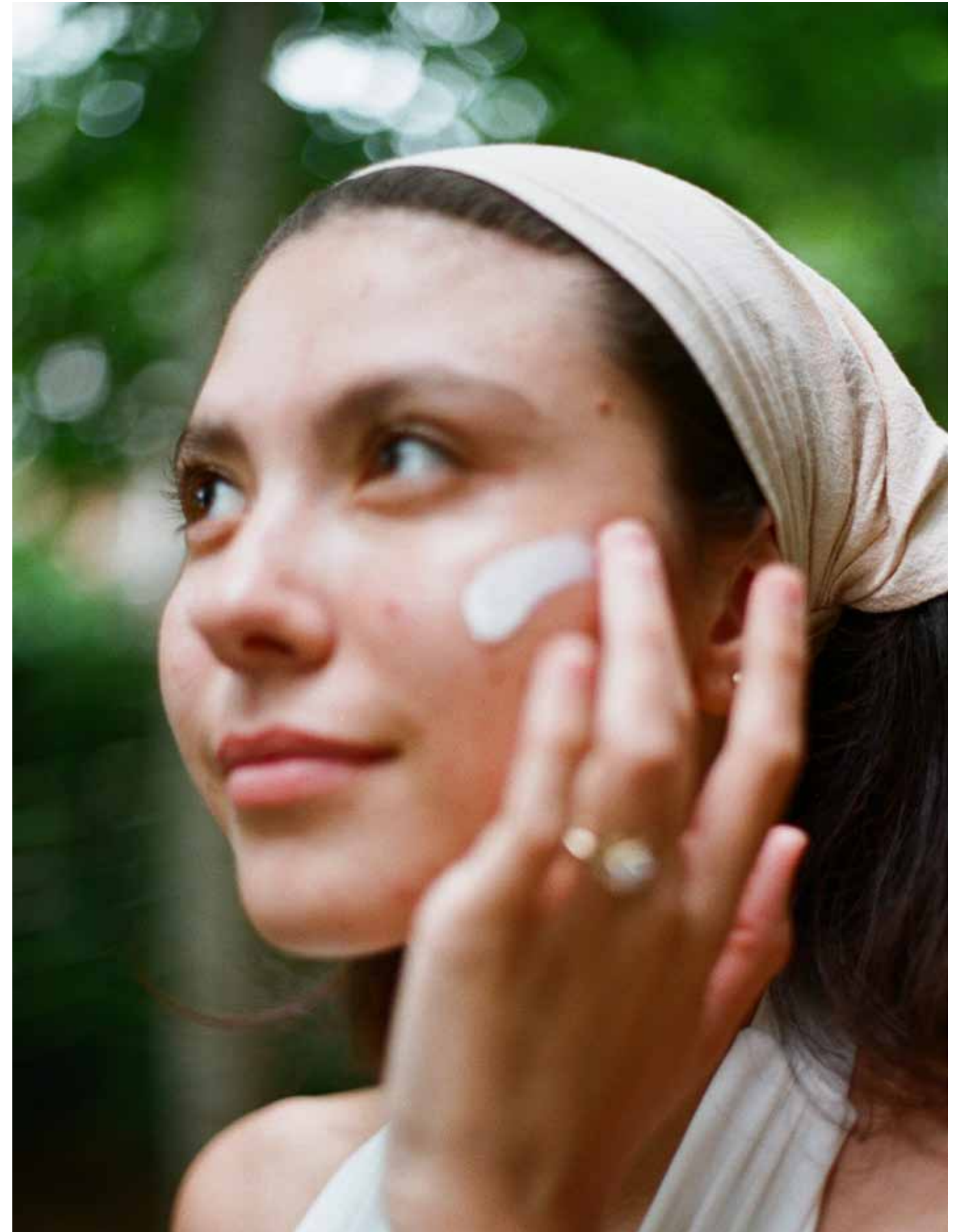
Of course, skincare is relative to everyone depending on your skin type, but I wanted to share my personal routine with you.

I start with a gel cleanser. Then I use a revitalizing essence rather than a toner. I prefer an essence to add moisture to my skin! Next, I go in with a Vitamin C Serum – which I recommend everyone try for the Springtime. A good Vitamin C Serum should give you that natural glow look. Next, I use moisturizer. I just switched from an extra hydrating one that I use on my dry winter skin to an oil-free moisturizer that I use during the warmer seasons. I love an oil-free moisturizer because

it's more lightweight! An optional step for me is a spot treatment that I use on any pimples that pop up. And lastly, I use a non-oily face sunscreen. Sunscreen is important year-round, but even more so when the weather starts to warm up and the UV rises.

I don't wear makeup too often, but in the Spring and Summer I dial back even more on the makeup. Especially when I start tanning, I love going with a natural look. Plus, for me hotter weather means more sweating. A pet peeve of mine is wearing makeup while I sweat, so I'd rather just pump some extra Vitamin C Serum on my skin, throw on some mascara and call it a day.

I've recently been seeing more people on social media sharing filter-less photos and embracing their natural skin. I love it! I'm here for it and I'm hoping it's not just a temporary trend. ♥



Words by Ren Salas
Photography by Nikole Wells

Being a Beginner

**“Even the greatest was once a beginner. Don’t be afraid to take that first step.”
— Muhammad Ali**

We all know that discomfoting feeling of being a beginner, because we’ve all been there. Whether it’s starting a new venture or entering a new phase of life.

For me, it’s that feeling of uncertainty that scares me the most. Am I going to be good at this? Is this going to work? Will people judge me?

I’ve become very well acquainted with being a beginner. Over the years, I have knowingly put myself in situations in which I will be a beginner. Why? Because as much as being a beginner scares me, living a stagnant life scares me more.

So how do I, personally, avoid a stationary life? I practice being a beginner. I put myself in uncomfortable situations that will force me to grow and learn new skills.

Although, as someone who lives with anxiety, I am careful not to overload my brain – I put in small, frequent portions of energy to ease into it. I focus on celebrating the small wins. I remember the first rendered interior design perspective I created that I was proud of. It was a view of a coastal kitchen I was designing for a project. It was the best work I had done that far, but I didn’t allow myself enough time to celebrate my small win because as soon as I saw the work of another one of my classmates,

comparison took over my mind and I decided my rendering was not good anymore, as hers was better. I remember the first time I properly held my headstand without wobbling in yoga, after allowing myself a few seconds to celebrate, I immediately thought, now I need to master my forearm stand. I find myself diminishing my successes and constantly wanting to move onto the next best thing. But we should consistently celebrate our wins and remember that everyone is on their own timeline.

Over the past few years (and even still today), I’ve had to cultivate an abundance mindset – the idea that there is enough success to go around for everyone. As I graduate college and step into “adult life”, my friends have accepted jobs (wool!) while I have not. I’ve had to take a step back and remember that we are all beginning to step foot in the professional world and their successes do not mean that I am failing. I can genuinely celebrate my friends and still remember there is room for me at the table of success too. Remember that everyone is on their own timeline and no one is necessarily “ahead” or “behind”, some are currently in the beginning stages while others may be about to enter a new beginning. That brings me to this – surround yourself with other individuals who will celebrate with you. Your community is everything.

But when you feel you’ve moved from those beginning phases, remember these moments from your start and never lose the appreciation for what you’ve learned or created. As cliché as it is, remember where you came from. When you’ve

gained experience and knowledge, never look down on those who are beginning, because you were too once. Be patient with those around you who are in a beginning phase, just as you once were, and just as you will be again.

I think sometimes we forget that our life is being shaped at the present moment. What you did yesterday shaped your today. What you do today shapes your tomorrow. Ultimately, what you do today is your life. So, put yourself in new situations and don’t be afraid of the beginning stages that are essential in order to grow and evolve as an individual. ♥



**Words by Ren Salas
Photography by Nikole Wells**

An Interview with Claire Conway

I was fortunate enough to virtually sit down with not only an amazing singer/songwriter, but also someone I consider a close friend. Claire Conway, a Charleston native, wears her emotions in her lyrics and pairs her honest and vulnerable words with melodic guitar riffs.

N: Okay. So I do have a few questions. But mostly I just kind of want this to be an opportunity for you to say what you want to say about your EP. I don't know if you like to let your art speak for itself, or if you like having some kind of dialogue to go along with it. So let's start with what's the "why" behind the making of this EP? What do you want people to take away? Or is this EP more for you than it is for other people?

C: Yeah, I think as a songwriter, I definitely write out of necessity. I didn't set out to write an EP. It's kind of a collection of songs that I've written over the last couple of years. And I usually only find that I'm able to write, I try to write very often, but I'm usually only successful when I'm feeling something very deeply. And it gets to the point that I can't keep it in anymore. I feel like I have to write in order to get it off my chest. So I would

"I feel like the songs and the artists that I appreciate the most are really vulnerable, or personal. I think that's kind of like what we connect with"
— Claire Conway

say, the "why" behind these songs is just kind of my own emotional necessity to write I guess. But I have tried, intentionally, to be very vulnerable in these songs, and so I hope that comes through. I feel like the songs and the artists that I appreciate the most are really vulnerable, or personal. I think

that's kind of what we connect with, or what I find I connect with in music the most.

N: Definitely. Your last EP was vulnerable as well, very vulnerable, especially because I kind of knew a little bit behind what you were feeling in that. So how is this EP different? Or the same from your previous releases? Is this like a continuation or is it a new direction entirely?

C: It's funny that you should mention that because you're, I think, out of all my friends, probably the person closest to that story. This EP, unlike the last one, doesn't chronicle one particular story. It's a collection of stories or like, you know, snapshots of life. I don't want to say too much about what the individual songs are about. But there is one that sort of came after the last EP and felt like a closing chapter to that story. It's called Amsterdam.

N: I cannot wait to hear it.

C: It's funny, because like, you were there for parts of that story. So it's interesting to talk to you about that. But yeah, I'd say this one is, I mean, some of the songs are still about other people

and my relationships with other people, but I think some of them I've kind of turned inward a little bit more, it's maybe a little more introspective. A lot of these songs, whether they're about me explicitly or someone else, are about my mental health and my ability to relate to other people. So I think these

songs are just reflective of a lot of my personal growth over the last couple of years.

N: And then what can you tell us about the EP, do you have a tracklist, release date, cover art, anything like that?

C: Those are great questions. The process of creating this EP has been a lot less straightforward and a lot less linear than I anticipated because of COVID and other things. You know, for so many reasons, we've just had kind of one hang up after another. We initially recorded the EP in December, but the band, for reasons of COVID exposure, had to quarantine and we weren't able to go into the studio the week that we had planned to record. So I have gone into the studio twice since then and basically have been working remotely with my producer to like, piece together the new parts that I've recorded in the context of the songs and then polish everything up and make sure that it's sounding the way that we want. So it's been a kind of convoluted process. Which, you know, I guess I should have expected, because that seems to be the way that everything has gone this last year. But all that to say, I'm behind on my timeline, but we are putting the finishing touches on the mixes now so we should have masters within the next few weeks. I haven't set a release date yet, but I will be able to soon.

N: Do you have a season that you're like, definitely wanted to get it out before then?

C: It'll be out before summer.

N: Well, you kind of answered my last question about how recording in a pandemic has been different from just recording. Generally, because, you know, I think a lot of songwriters and artists came out with a lot of stuff during the pandemic, because they're like, well, I'm at home, might



as well make music. But, you know, for smaller songwriters who don't have an entire studio in their house, I can imagine that it's just been really hard and weird working, especially from a distance with someone you'd like to be in a room with and be like, hey, how does that sound and stuff? And then sound quality over zoom I'm sure isn't great.

C: Yeah, it has been really challenging. Part of the experience of recording music is being in



the room with other people. Recording is a very collaborative process, especially for me, because I'm not a sound engineer, I really don't know how that stuff works. So as much as I would love to have the equipment and the skills to just like, record the whole thing in my house myself, we have had to deal so much with, you know, just trying to make sure that we're being safe, and also making the music happen. So yeah, it's felt a little disjointed. Which is uncomfortable because I want to have tight control over my work and have it all together. And it has not been a smooth process. It's been pretty challenging. But it was nice, we ended up tracking drums in the living room of my producer's apartment because we couldn't go into a studio at the time. And so there are ways I think that the limitations we faced because of COVID have allowed for more creativity on the tracks. The way that the drums turned out, I think sounds perfect. It sounds intimate, as if you were listening

to the song live in a living room. And so there've been highlights, for sure. But I'm just finishing up the tracks and trying to make sure that we have a consistent tone across all of the songs when I've recorded, you know, in multiple different studios. And my producer hasn't been there for all of those sessions. It's been challenging, but yeah.

N: Well, speaking of live I know that Charleston is starting to do live shows outdoors with masks, you know and distancing and stuff. I don't know how it is over in Seattle, but do you think you'll want to be able to perform live this year?

C: In the next year? Yeah, I really hope so. I think that Seattle really has taken a more conservative approach to reopening during the pandemic, whereas Charleston, I know has been partially or entirely open for a long time. Seattle really has remained largely shut down, we just moved into

a new phase of reopening, so things are starting to open up more. And I've heard whispers here and there about live music returning. I think in the summer, in Seattle—you know, it rains so much of the year, but in the summer, it's much more feasible to do outdoor shows. So I'm definitely optimistic that in the next year, I'll be able to play some of these songs live. Because I do really miss it, it definitely feels like an element of life that's missing. And it's really strange to be releasing new music and not being able to play the songs in a room full of people.

N: I know that some artists have been doing, including you, live video recordings and stuff like that in place of getting to play to an audience that's in the same room, but it's definitely not the same.

C: It's not the same. And honestly, I've seen so many artists really utilize those resources, and just really perform consistently and have their music accessible to people virtually, but I really hate it. It does not feel the same to me, it feels very uncomfortable to play to a computer screen. What I love about live music is that sense of connection that you can actually feel when playing a song for people and feeling the way that it's received in the room. And that kind of reciprocal energy doesn't really exist in live streaming platforms. So I haven't done a lot of that. I've poured more of my energy into recording and writing and have sort of just been waiting until live music eventually comes back.

N: Do you have any other closing remarks or anything else you want to say? Um, your EP does have a title, correct?

C: It's called "Be Good". The title track is Be Good. And it's been a really challenging process, but I also feel it's taught me a lot about myself and my own creative process, and about being able to relinquish control and be proud of what I've created, especially since it wasn't easy. I've also, like many people I think, really

struggled with my mental health this year and had to confront my own relationship with myself in moments of isolation, and I think these songs reflect that. So it's kind of like a time capsule. At this point, especially because it's taken so much longer than I anticipated, I am just ready to have it out and have my hands off the project. Because the first song on this EP, I wrote like two and a half years ago, so these songs feel old to me now. Well, some of them do—some of them I wrote in the last year. But yeah, I'm just really excited to finally have it out there where people can listen.

"Be Good", Claire Conway's third EP, will be out Summer 2021. ♥

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