

There are moments in life, when contact with animals can heal us
Is your pet a crutch for your anxious attachment style?
Select dogs are deemed therapy dogs, but aren't all dogs therapy dogs?

There are parallel quantities of time in a life, when masks heal us
I get a text: "I think the mascara on brows really healed my inner child today."

The other day, my older neighbour Berenice tells me about her lovebird that died, her "little baby"
She tells me she still watches videos of her flying on her phone
We sip La Croix in low daisy printed plastic outdoor chairs with cushy neck cushions, in the dark,
against the hum of cars
She shares that she doesn't want to be wife material anymore, she wants to be toxic

"I've been the good girl too long, girl. The world is toxic, dating is toxic. so I too want to be toxic."

Berenice recently bought a pick up truck.

"He had a pickup truck," she said, yelling from the driveway, "so I said, girl, I'm getting one too!"

Should we talk at last about shielding ourselves, which begins early on in places we grow up in, like
cold tiled suburbia, that we never connected with?

What about wearing social masks to protect yourself from the swaths of people you would like to
never see again?

The truth is, seeing your own freshly painted face is similar to seeing a dead animal.

Something in your body changes, something in your heart moves over.

Has facepaint ever changed your life?

It was a day in January. I couldn't get it out of my head. I wanted my face painted and I told my
friends so.

("If you gaze too long into the abyss, the abyss stares back." -Mark Twain)

We were in Bushwick, this was 2009, when the Morgan L stop was dead.

At that time, there would be one lone person walking on the empty streets, maybe a musician with a guitar case, or an artist awkwardly carrying a sculpture.

We walked into a friend's place in a loft, the ones that don't exist anymore, and there they were, their faces painted.

I knew exactly what to do, the scene flowed like water.

I painted my face black and white like the faces of the characters in the unofficial MGMT video for "Kids"

Remember that band? (Fame can make something toxic to the point of evaporation)

Later, I met the lead singer at a wedding, the same wedding where a sexy but forlorn lawyer turned to me and said,

"Today is a very bad day, today corporations are more powerful than countries and human rights don't have a leg up."

The truth is, the world is toxic

Animals, on the other hand, are not.

They give us a similar life line from the sudo-Christian hellscape of Neoliberalism that a mask or a pickup truck might more superficially provide.

They are genuinely wild and needy in ways our culture won't allow us to be

They need us and we need them in a way we aren't supposed to need anyone.

And the feeling of face paint is wholly specific, if not holy.

The mask you wear is like other masks you will wear in life,

but this time, sweat is locked in, so your face is unlike your body, it's locked in time

Face blanketed in something kin to vinyl,

to forget the animal of you, so you can begin the transformation to the next animal

Toxic, yet evangelized, **you are free**, and needy for it all