

# SWEET AGATHA

by Kevin Allen Jr.

ॐ नमः शिवाय | नमः

১৯৯২ খ্রিঃ

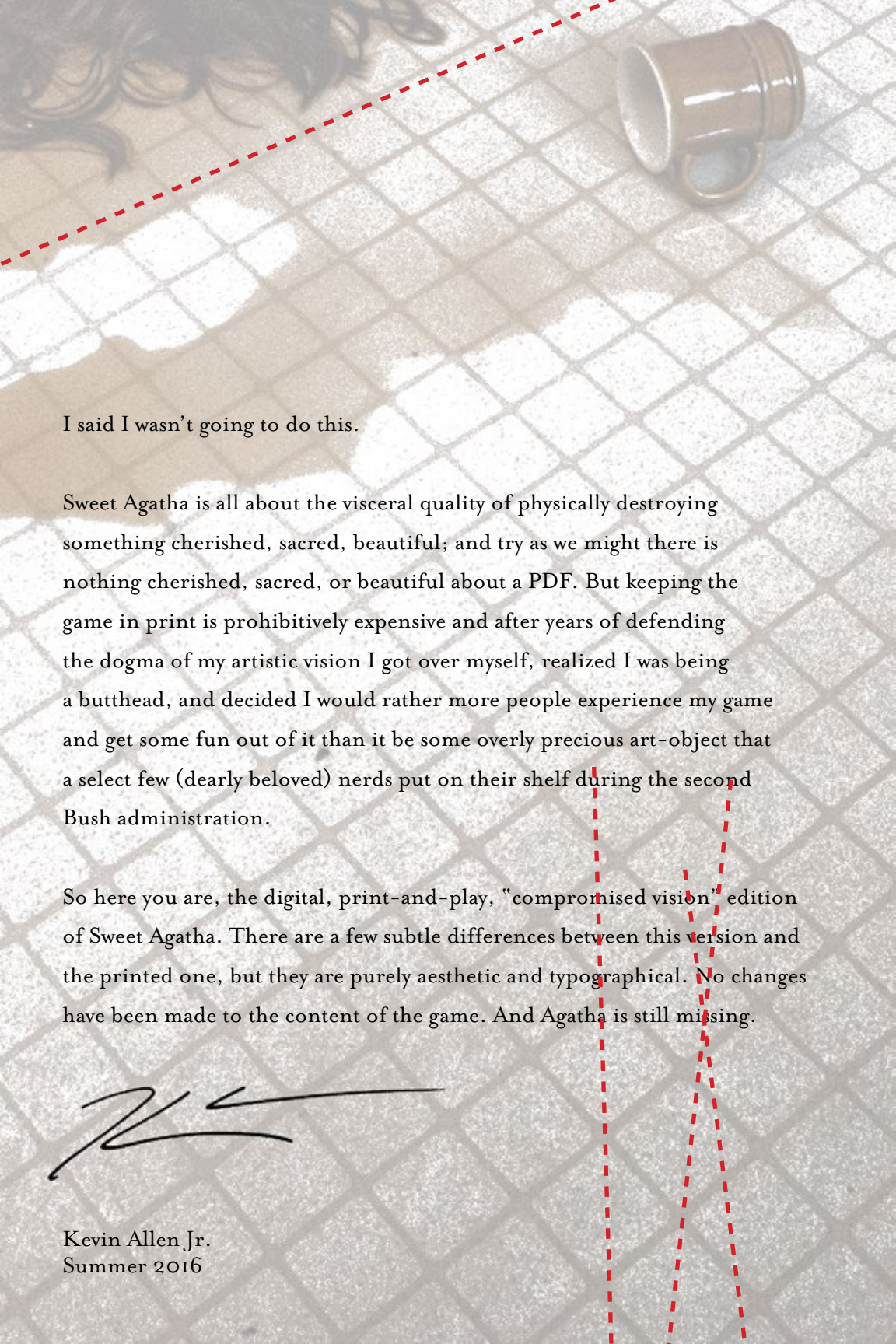
$\frac{0.01}{0.01} \mid \frac{0.01}{0.01}$

$\frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} \right) = \frac{1}{2}$

compromised vision  
PDF version

this is breaking the seal.

this was never meant for you.



I said I wasn't going to do this.

Sweet Agatha is all about the visceral quality of physically destroying something cherished, sacred, beautiful; and try as we might there is nothing cherished, sacred, or beautiful about a PDF. But keeping the game in print is prohibitively expensive and after years of defending the dogma of my artistic vision I got over myself, realized I was being a butthead, and decided I would rather more people experience my game and get some fun out of it than it be some overly precious art-object that a select few (dearly beloved) nerds put on their shelf during the second Bush administration.

So here you are, the digital, print-and-play, "compromised vision" edition of Sweet Agatha. There are a few subtle differences between this version and the printed one, but they are purely aesthetic and typographical. No changes have been made to the content of the game. And Agatha is still missing.



Kevin Allen Jr.  
Summer 2016



# YOU’VE BROKEN THE SEAL, YOU CAN’T STOP NOW

## (Making a mystery/what to do)

- Print all of the following pages in full color on the best quality 11”x17 or A3 paper you can manage. The better your prints, the better your experience will be.
- You will need a pair of scissors (or a paper knife/razor blade) and a pen to take notes with.
- Start reading **the Journal**. Cut the pages wherever you see a red line.
- The paper triangles you cut out are called **the Clues**.
- Once you’ve read **the Journal** and cut out all **the Clues**, you are ready to begin resolving Agatha’s story.
- **The Journal** was just the beginning; it falls on you to invent the ending.
- Give all **the Clues** to a friend. For ease of reference, let’s call this friend **the Truth**. Also, just to tell you two apart, let’s call you **the Reader**.
- **The Truth** should look over all **the Clues** and separate out those they find most interesting.
- Imagine you were describing to a friend the plot of a story. That is sort of like what you are about to do, but you’re going to make the story up as you go along, scene by scene.
- You (**the Reader**) are the main character. The story is about your personal search for answers in the disappearance of Sweet Agatha. **The Truth** will be in charge of what goes on around you, but don’t worry you’ll both have an equal say in the story, you just have different parts to play.
- The story is divided into 10 scenes. In each of these scenes you will each narrate back and forth a story. Try not to step on each others toes too much but also don’t be afraid to be bold. If one of you has a good idea run with it, its better to allow something to happen than to be stumped looking for the “best” idea. The best idea is the one you are have now.
- Remember, the story ends –for better or worse– in exactly 10 scenes. That should give you a feel for how to pace things. The story is at a slow burn during the first few scenes. There should be some really exciting things happening in scenes 8 and 9. By scene 10 you will have decided what happened to Sweet Agatha and you will end the story.

READ THE WHOLE  
OF THIS DOCUMENT  
BEFORE READING  
ANYTHING ELSE

## WORKING WITH WHAT YOU’VE GOT

### (67/using clues)

- **The Truth** is in charge of what **Clues** get introduced into each scene. Decide before the scene starts what **Clues** you plan on adding.
- Introduce exactly 3 new **Clues** in EVERY SCENE (the exception to this rule is scene 10, if it doesn’t make sense to add more **Clues**, you don’t have to. Remember the story is what’s important, not the rules).
- Try to work the introduction of new **Clues** into the story. The more organically they come out of the narrative, the more exciting and believable your stories will be.

## STORY TOOLS TO KEEP YOU ORGANIZED

### (guides in the woods/optional rules)

- Set up a goal for each scene. Goals should either resolve an as-yet-unresolved issue, or shed new light on information that’s already been presented.
- Starting with **the Reader**, trade back and forth who gets to determine the goal for each scene.
- When the person who set up the goal for the scene feels that goal has been accomplished, say so and wrap up that scene. Don’t drag things out; keep the narration punchy.
- **The Reader** should speak in the first person. “I go down to the lake” is more engaging than just saying what’s going on at the lake.
- If you’re having trouble keeping **the Clues** organized, tape them to the back of this poster. Write all over it, draw connections, take notes. Think of those big boards they have in cop shows. There’s a reason they do that. Visual organization is really handy.
- Feel free to ignore any of these rules. You can go it alone; assembling the clues as you wish, finding your own conclusions. Sweet Agatha is yours now.

Written and designed by: KEVIN ALLEN JR.

Edited by: BRENDAN JAMES HINKLE

Sweet Agatha is: KIIRSTIN KUHI

#### Special thanks:

Nathan Paoletta, Blake Deakin, Dave Bove, Thor, Dro, Luke, Carrie, Passanante, Frank, Katie, Jake, Brian Lightbody, Tom Asselin, Jason Morningstar, Mark Z., Gregory G., Tamara, Malcom, Brennan, Chad (for letting me take thousands of weird pictures of your wife), the cities of Red Bank and Asbury Park, and of course Kristin.

#### Extra Special thanks:

Kathy Cook, for without whom this would never have been remotely feasible.

#### Colophon:

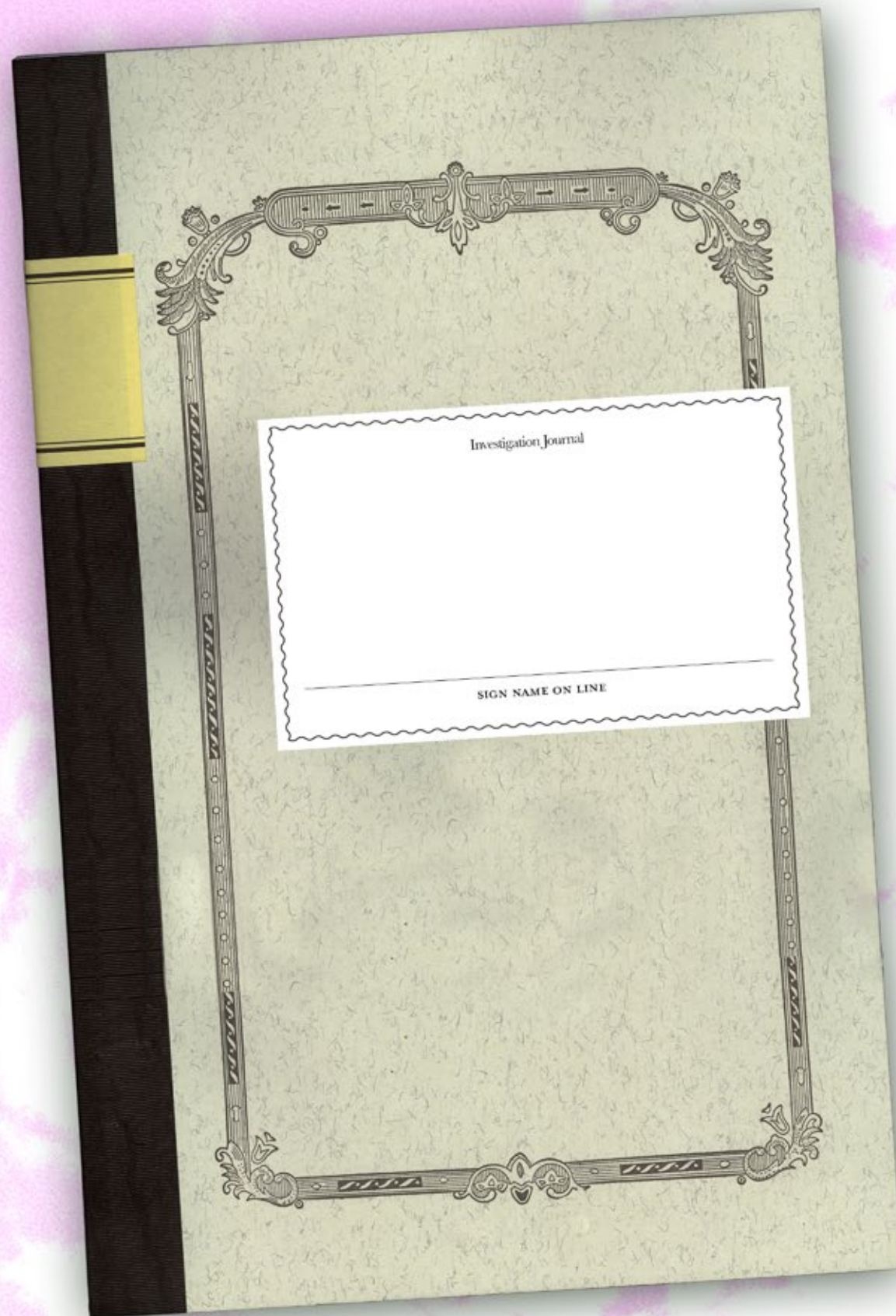
The lion’s share of Sweet Agatha is typeset in Mrs. Eaves, a font designed by Zuzana Licko for Emigre. The typeface is a revival of the classic 18th century English font Baskerville. Mrs. Sarah Eaves was John Baskerville’s housekeeper and mistress. Numerous other Emigre fonts were used, including the Brothers family.

this is not for you, it never was.

[www.kevinallenjr.com](http://www.kevinallenjr.com)

This is a conversation. The Truth needs The Reader and The Reader needs The Truth. Without one of these voices we would all just be talking to ourselves.





Investigation Journal

SIGN NAME ON LINE



Awake in bed. Not from screams or sirens; not towers collapsing or bombs in the market square; not from jackboots on foreign soil or fires in the countryside; not to a razor at my throat or a kiss on my mouth or the trumpet of angels or the horns of a car wreck or the cries of children or the curses of old men—no, nothing so dramatic as that, but instead to a cold, quiet realization. I woke to the hard odds that this won't end well, the keen understanding that there will likely never be keen understanding. This mess won't lead to easy answers and clean resolutions. This mess will probably just lead to even more mess. Doesn't matter. I won't be able to sleep again until I get my hands dirty.

6 days ago the sky opened its mouth and from it came a great deluge. Parking lot potholes filled full with puddles. Potted flowers and street weeds drank deep of runoff and, at some point in the night before the clouds emptied out, Agatha disappeared.

This is the journal of my investigation. These are the memories I have from before she vanished. This is the record of thoughts and observations pertaining to the case—a hard record of all I've come to know. Hold fast, hang on, because like so much rainwater these memories will dry up and disappear. Comprehension will crumble. Clarity will decay. The clues will evaporate and hope will be just another thing down the drain. For now the sky has cleared. Steam from the road and the hazey-eyed horizon is a thick anticipation of more storms coming.

Awake now, and I've got to stay that way. Eyes open. Hands out of pockets. Here's what I know: I was the last person to see Agatha (as far as I can tell). I tucked her into an empty bed in a lonely room in her otherwise unoccupied apartment, then went home to a restless sleep. In the morning Agatha was gone. She didn't take her purse or her phone or money or credit cards or ID or anything else. The tank top and panties that she wore to bed (the last thing I saw her wearing) were tangled up in the bedsheets. Nothing was missing. There were no signs of a struggle. Agatha just vanished.

She was tired and a little drunk after a long night of not acting like herself: guarded, hiding behind "Everything's fine" and "Let's just have a good time". I know when something's under the lake's surface, stirring up mud, but this time I couldn't get a bead on exactly what it was. She wasn't crying or on the verge of one of her rare breakdowns, so I didn't press the issue.

As a kid, she kept to herself—nervous, full of quiet and insecurity. She only spoke when spoken to, and it was a coin toss if you would get that much. This lasted until high school, when—with a mouth full of liquor and smoke—she found her voice. It was around that time that she fell in with a bad crowd. They buried her anxiety under a mountain of parties and painkillers. In the end, she got out and pulled her life together and she was made better by the whole ordeal, but you don't get to walk away from a thing like that the same as you walked in. (Her old hoodrat friends still call her sometimes needing money or a place to crash or just wanting to catch up. She always obliges them). The poison and the madness coaxed Agatha out of her shell—made her boisterous, funny, and exciting, but it cost her a pound of flesh, and the scar tissue still aches a dull pink.

Was Agatha happy? It's a hard question to answer. She kept a lot of herself to herself; put on airs. She could seem so bright and clear you couldn't hang a cloud on her, but there was always something lacking, something hollow or plastic or veneer—a diamond cut from soda bottle glass, a dollhouse stuffed with sawdust. There were always secrets kept or stories untold. Agatha was elusive even with those closest to her (and those people were few and far between). She didn't trust many people. She trusted me. That's why I'm looking for her. That's why I'm writing this down, keeping track of everything. She put her faith in me. If she doesn't want to be found, she won't be. But if she's out there and needs help, then there aren't many people she can turn to. I might be it. If I'm alone and she's alone...



87.9fm is a pirate radio station frequency.  
Mostly spinning unsigned local rappers, obscure jazz, and 70's Funk & Soul, the station is a local legend—its broadcast location is a well kept secret. Currently, tuning in the station returns only static.

I was the last person to see Agatha before she disappeared. She was right here, I had tucked her in... I never thought that it would be the last time.

I still hope it's not.

All these odds and ends, scraps, pieces... the left behind indicia of a life adjourned.



Nothing was stolen,  
and nothing appears to be missing.

Keep your EYES OPEN! It's going to be the little things that make the difference. Anything could be the trail of breadcrumbs.



May it be that in the morning after the levees break the tide will go out and where the water has receded there will lie the corpse of this mystery, drowned and bloated and blue. And may it be that it is the only corpse I find.

Even on the clearest nights you could count the diamond dust with one hand. From this window less than a dozen stars put up the effort to rail against the light this town graffitis over the firmament. Distant stars fight relentlessly to penetrate the halogen, orange, glowing holocaust. Agatha never once complained that she didn't have enough of something she needed; her modest collection of stars was no exception. She would tie them together however she could, making up constellations of her own, and little ancient myths about how they wound up in the sky. She did this also with the holes in her walls and the birthmarks on her body. She would say if I was ever lost, I could use her body to find my way home. It was a strange thing to say, and she said it strangely. It was as if there was some sort of in-joke that I was never invited to understand, yet I knew it was a private thing between just the two of us.



A foreigner comes to Agatha's apt.  
looking to pick up any deliveries  
that may have come for him  
in the past few days.

FROM A SKY LACKING STARS





Newspaper clipping: report of a serious building fire in an industrial park. The body of an as-yet unidentified woman was found in the rubble.

1.



3.



4.



1549 - 67

1549 - 67

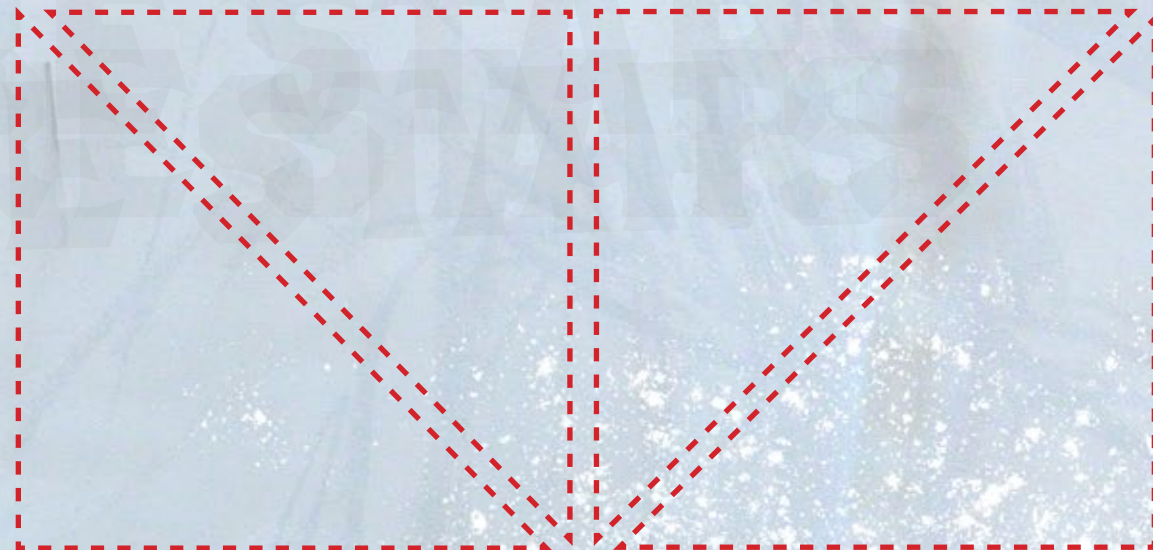
An assortment of objects. Possibly evidence (of what?). These things all feel important now, but the connections don't exist yet. How can I tie them together? Should I? How much of this stuff matters? How much of it could help?

This book is all printed in Cyrillic. It's like a regular published book, probably from the 60's, but it doesn't have a title page or anything on the cover or anything else that might indicate what it is. It immediately starts with paragraphs of content. Maybe it was a technical manual or something else not meant for the public? I don't know Russian (Serbian? Kurdish? Chechen?) so I can't read it. The code on the cover was handwritten, and occasionally coded notes are written in the margins.

The smokestack is only a few blocks from her apt. It used to be a trash incinerator, but the city doesn't do that anymore, so the place sits abandoned. She once told me that she would sneak in and write stories on an old, beat-up typewriter she found inside. She never showed me any stories. I'm not even sure they exist.

1. Her bathroom sink smells like chemicals. Something sharp, acidic.
2. She didn't wear glasses or contacts. Why have these? Whose are they?
3. Is the antenna important or the building? Why label this photo like this?
4. The day she drew this on, she wouldn't tell me what it meant, and she never did it again.





Agatha gave me this mix tape a few days before she vanished. It was the last thing she gave me, and I haven't even listened to it yet.  
I didn't even think of it till now.



A man is seen running from Agatha's apt. building. He was taking photos of the exterior.

You discover tiny audio recording devices (bugs) hidden in her apartment.

"RIP Agatha, we already forgot U" has been spray-painted onto a local highway overpass.

Agatha had been friends with a nurse. They had only known each other for a few months, but they had been spending a lot of time together.



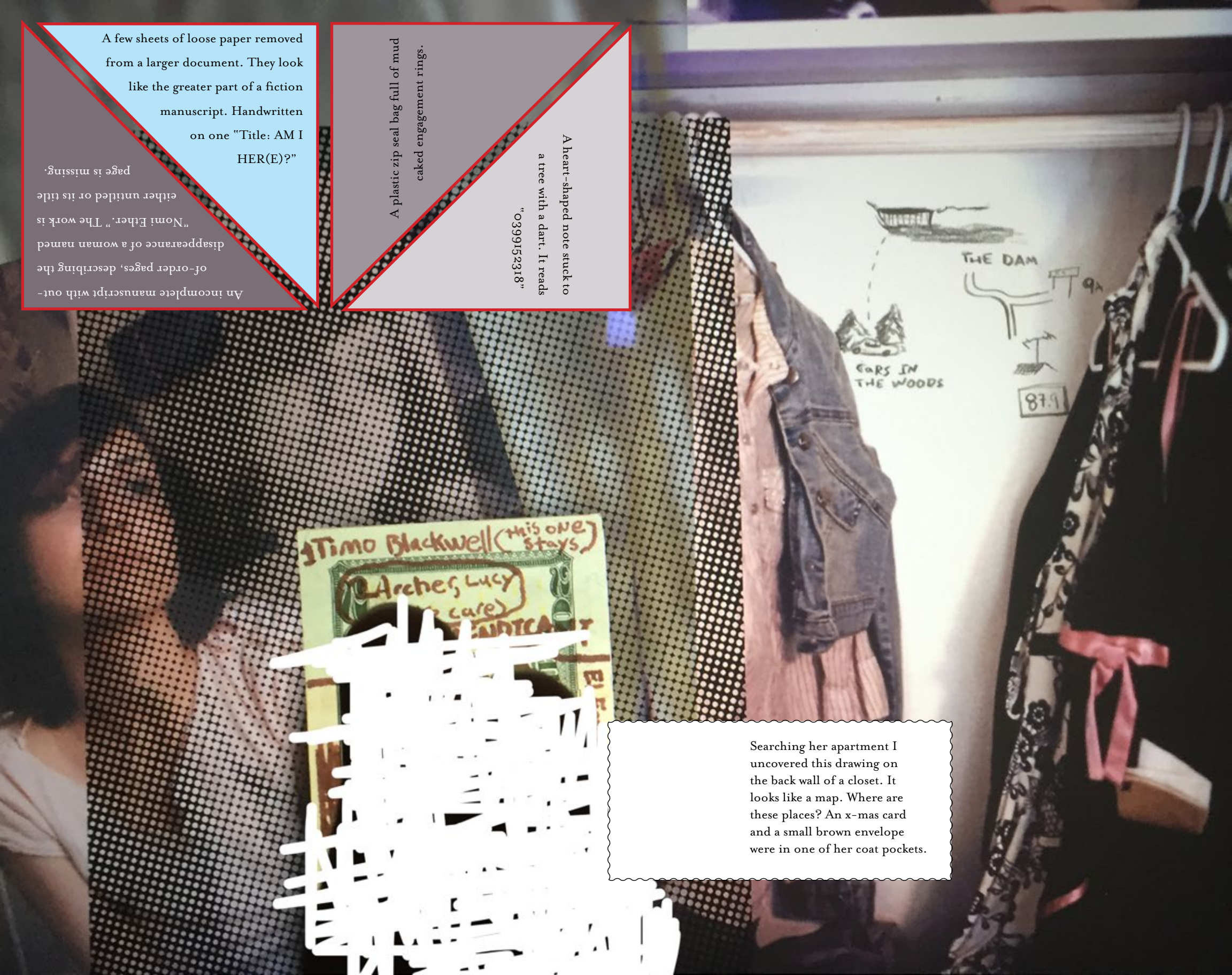
A few sheets of loose paper removed from a larger document. They look like the greater part of a fiction manuscript. Handwritten on one "Title: AM I HER(E)?"

"Nom! Either." The work is disappearance of a woman named of-order pages, describing the An incomplete manuscript with out-

either untitled or its title page is missing.


A plastic zip seal bag full of mud caked engagement rings.

A heart-shaped note stuck to a tree with a dart. It reads "0399152318"



Searching her apartment I uncovered this drawing on the back wall of a closet. It looks like a map. Where are these places? An x-mas card and a small brown envelope were in one of her coat pockets.



A woman with dark, curly hair is standing in a shallow body of water, possibly a lake or a large pond. She is wearing a blue and white checkered dress. The water is calm, reflecting the light. In the background, there is a window with a wooden frame, and some green plants are visible outside. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

This one time in the late spring, she and I went down to the lakeside, down a little winding path behind a car dealership, down to the shoreline farthest across from the dam. I had no idea where we were going. We were just on a walk but it was warm and the concrete lakebed was smooth and cool. And without a care in the world or a cloud in the sky she was in the water and out of my sight. It seemed so spontaneous, but knowing her, she probably had planned the whole thing. I had no choice but to follow her...



A small, unset but very well cut diamond in a little cloth bag.

Slips of carbon paper stuck in an empty checkbook from an account in Agatha's name. All of the checks are made out to "Hector". Every check is for \$555.00. The oldest is dated less than a year ago.

A pinhole video camera hidden in a wall, connected to a remote transmitting device.

A previously unknown relative arrives, laying claim to an object Agatha does not appear to own. The relative is very aggressive.

One photo hidden behind another in its frame.

A note slipped under a door.

Locks of hair in small brown paper envelopes labeled with men's names.

A rusty key ring with keys to an old Buick's trunk and glove box.

*at Jamie's place. I didn't think he would show, but like anything unexpected... I got what I needed from him, and added Timo's name to the list. It won't be long, just a few days, assuming everything is provided to my specs. I'll drop off the package tomorrow before meeting up at the bridge. The leaking in the bathroom*

*persists. What is a girl to do? After the incident with the camera (it better not be more of THAT bullshit) I'm not really in a position to call the super, and besides he and I have an agreement, and I don't want the blood on my hands for breaking it. Christ, when did I become so melodramatic? Was I this severe before I met Blackwell?*

A few years ago we were joking around and she let me read it. I started in on the diary, but it was actually pretty boring. Probably the only boring thing about her. She mostly just summed up her days. I don't know what I had hoped to find—probably the same thing I hope to find now. I've read and re-read the whole thing. Its pretty cryptic; she doesn't often clarify who or what she's talking about. Like an inside joke thats not particularly funny. Some of it is a little strange, though I'm having a hard time putting my finger on why.



A 7" record with Agatha's picture  
on the sleeve. She sits on her  
bed, head down in stoic  
contemplation.

A library book from a library that  
was closed several years ago.

Agatha's TV shows live security camera  
feeds from unknown buildings.  
Changing the channel only  
reveals different camera  
feeds, not television  
shows.

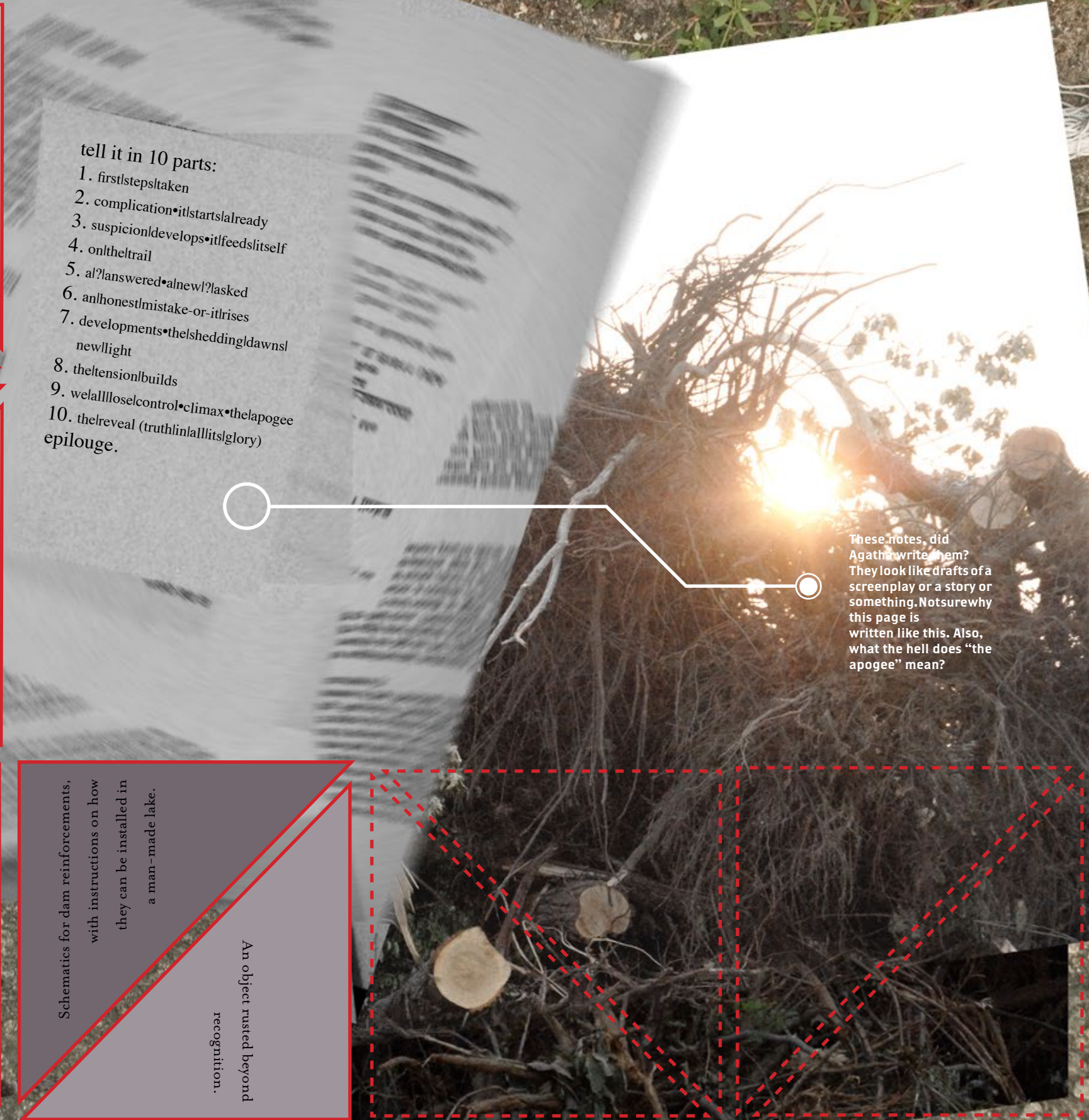
Drafts of suicide notes, none  
finished, all written in 2nd  
person narrative, as if  
written to a diary.

An envelope full of  
foreign currency

A box of high caliber  
rifle bullets

Schematics for dam reinforcements,  
with instructions on how  
they can be installed in  
a man-made lake.

An object rusted beyond  
recognition.



- tell it in 10 parts:
1. first steps taken
  2. complication • it starts already
  3. suspicion develops • it feeds itself
  4. on the trail
  5. a! ? answered • a new! ? asked
  6. an honest mistake - or - it rises
  7. developments • the shedding / dawn /  
new light
  8. the tension builds
  9. we all lose control • climax • the apogee
  10. the reveal (truth in all its glory)
- epilogue.

These notes, did  
Agatha write them?  
They look like drafts of a  
screenplay or a story or  
something. Not sure why  
this page is  
written like this. Also,  
what the hell does "the  
apogee" mean?





When Agatha was 7 she was abducted from a playground not 600 ft from her house. There was an anonymous tip that she was seen being forced into a beat up Buick festooned with great leaves of rust by a middle-aged man, but no hard proof of this was ever found and the trail went cold. Five weeks later she was found alive and well, alone in the parking lot of a highway motel wearing ill-fitting clothes that had not been her's. She had neither underwear nor shoes. Agatha was never able to remember any details of her abduction or what happened in her time away.

No one was ever charged.

You find a cardboard box  
full of radios pulled from cars.

An abandoned  
municipal library.

An OBGYN with a  
debilitating phobia

A document stuck in a  
disconnected printer's  
memory. When  
plugged in, it prints  
unexpectedly.



A photographer who lacks  
inspiration.

The automatic disaster  
of evening: A million little  
things trying to penetrate  
the lingering oppression of  
the industrialized world.  
A million little things  
rendered impossible to  
find: obfuscated,  
suppressed, disappeared.  
Stars like letters too  
small to make out,

overexposed beyond  
knowing. They arrange  
themselves into words,  
icons, the myths, the  
constellations. The  
ancient world put its  
most cherished into the  
sky so that they could  
be observed regularly.

Such as it is now, the  
constellations are the words  
in a paperback pulled from  
a bucket of ink. Information  
has been irreparably obscured.  
We turned on the bright lights  
to find things lost in the dark,  
and in our searching we lost  
much more.

A laundromat that has a private  
backroom. You must have a key  
or a password or know some  
manner of secret to gain  
entrance.





A retired millionaire whose  
crushing boredom lures  
him into dangerous  
situations.

A simple key tied to a paper  
tag tied with "coffee club"  
penciled on it.

Someone with an addiction to hard  
candy. Their favorite kind has a  
distinctive wrapper.

A very large man-made lake

A dog walker who uses the job as a  
cover for dealing drugs.

In the middle of acres of forest are  
several old cars. It is unclear how  
they got there, as they are not  
near any of the footpaths  
through the woods.

Got a late call, 06:07AM.

641.715.3900

Just labored breathing, quiet,  
as if from a great distance.  
Then a hang up. No further  
calls have been received.





There's a lot of different ways to run from a problem. Maybe she just wanted out. Maybe she wanted a clean start, a way to get away from the trash that piled up. Make a phone call, catch a ride, and gone-baby-gone you're out of the wasteland and into the doors thrown open possibility of another life; this one may be better. An empty parking lot is the waiting room for a hundred places that aren't here. A hundred chances to make an escape, to leave it all behind.

But not a goodbye left? Not even a note? It takes a certain type of person to throw the change-up, a person with two very distinct qualities: cunning and confidence. Seeing Agatha, you would think she had that stuff in spades, but get a little closer, peek behind the curtain, and the illusion failed. She demanded attention, lived for everyone to be watching her, but really she was only happy alone. Agatha needed the show.

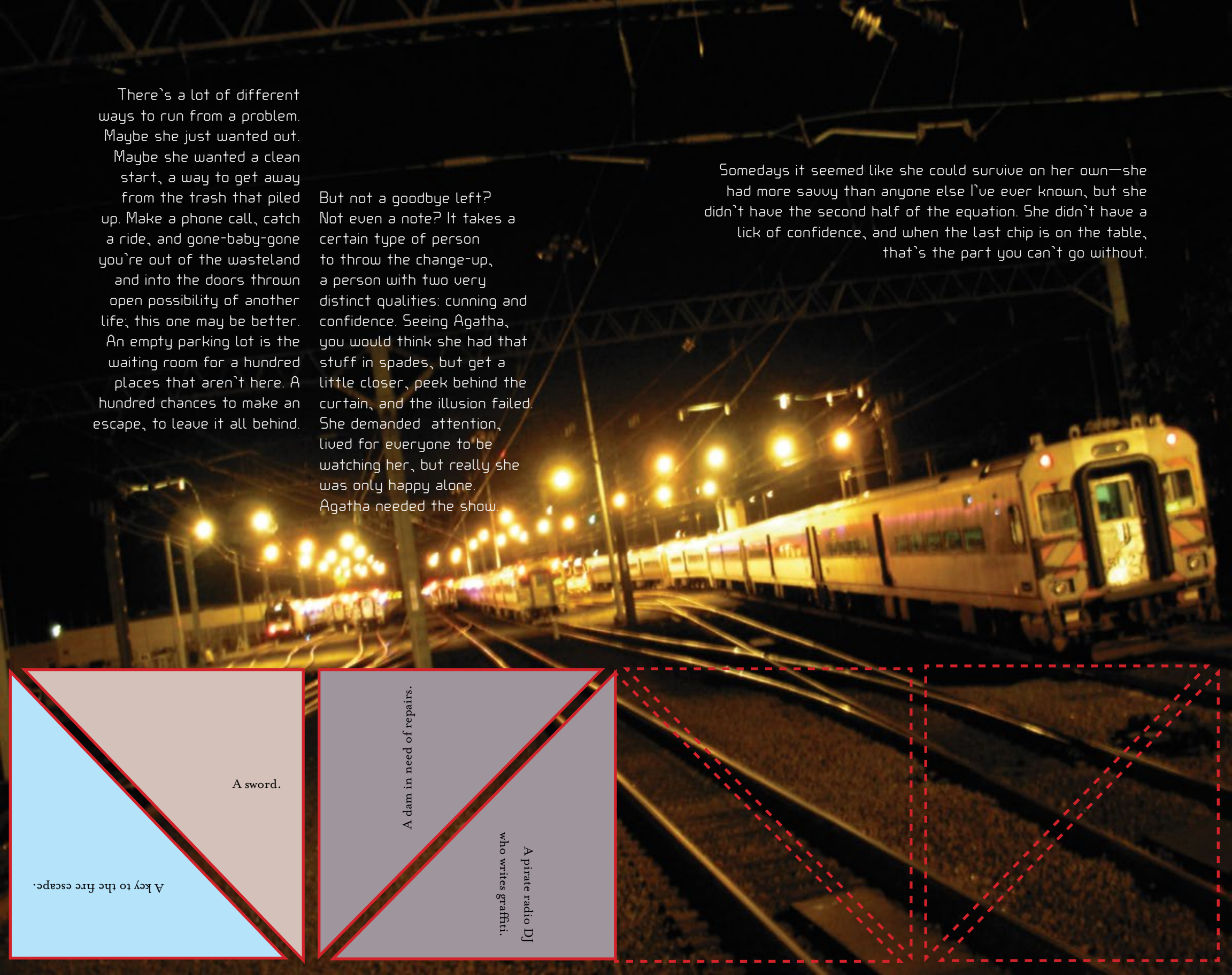
Somedays it seemed like she could survive on her own—she had more savvy than anyone else I've ever known, but she didn't have the second half of the equation. She didn't have a lick of confidence, and when the last chip is on the table, that's the part you can't go without.

A key to the fire escape.

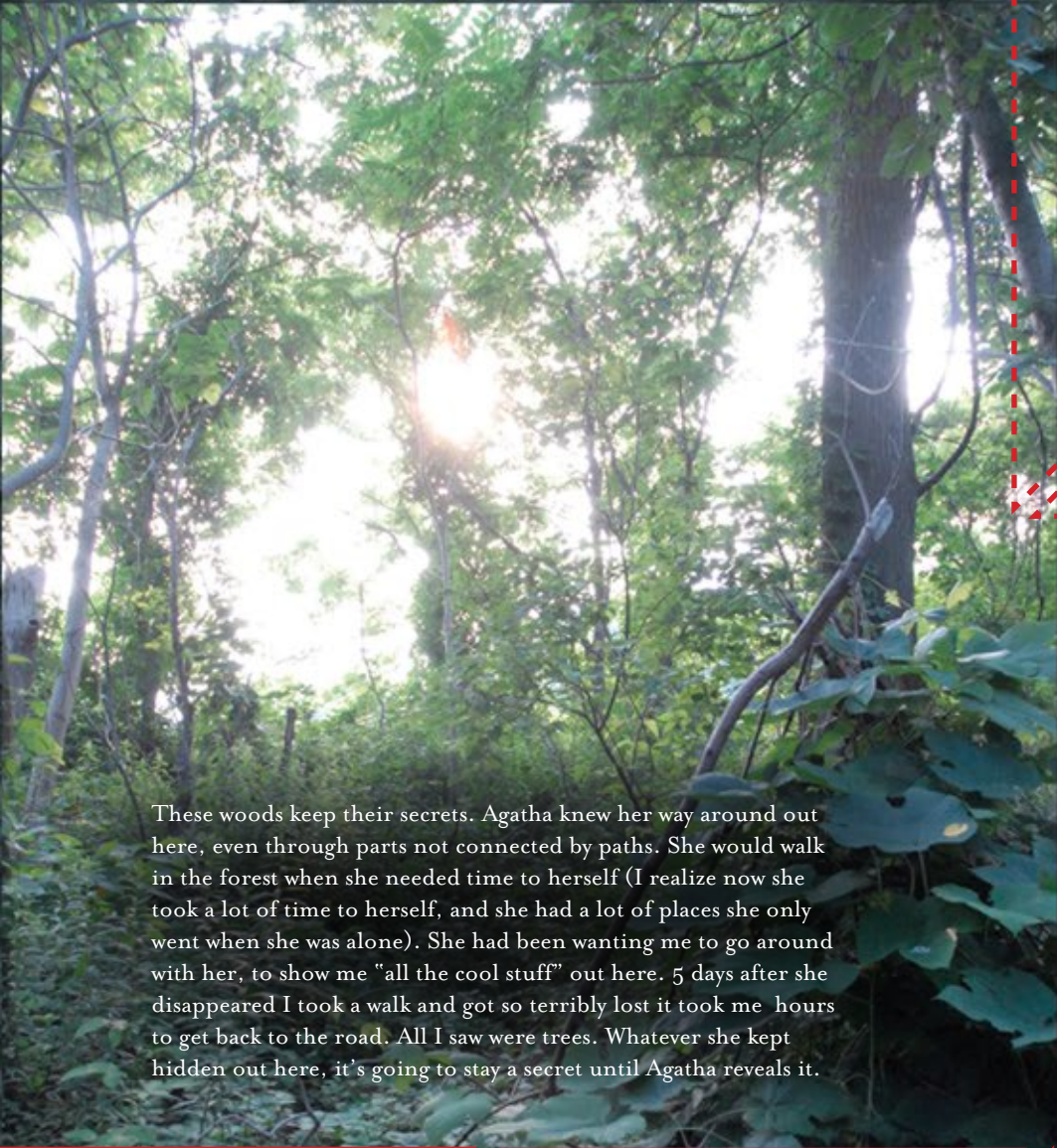
A sword.

A dam in need of repairs.

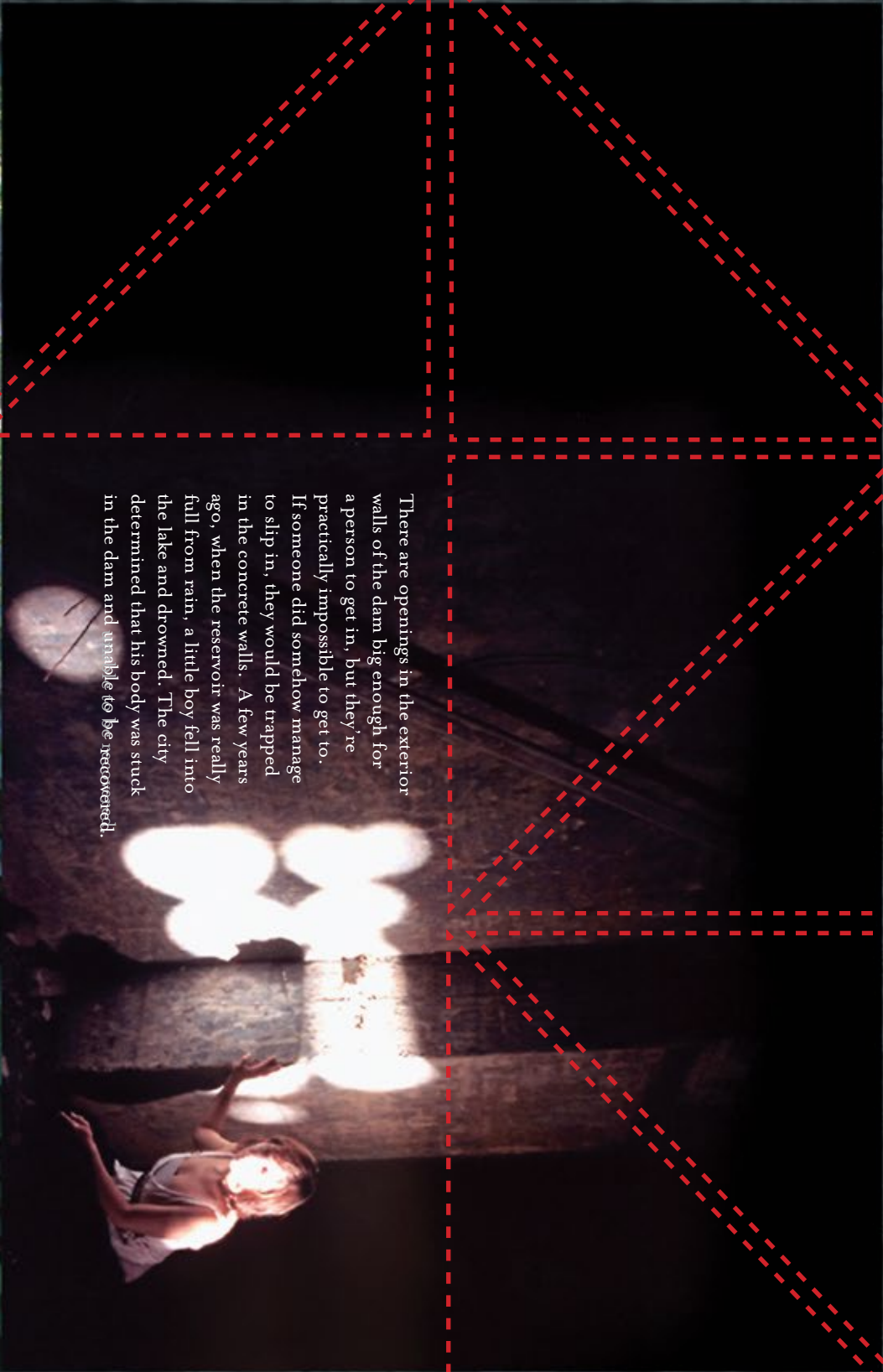
A pirate radio DJ  
who writes graffiti.







These woods keep their secrets. Agatha knew her way around out here, even through parts not connected by paths. She would walk in the forest when she needed time to herself (I realize now she took a lot of time to herself, and she had a lot of places she only went when she was alone). She had been wanting me to go around with her, to show me "all the cool stuff" out here. 5 days after she disappeared I took a walk and got so terribly lost it took me hours to get back to the road. All I saw were trees. Whatever she kept hidden out here, it's going to stay a secret until Agatha reveals it.



There are openings in the exterior walls of the dam big enough for a person to get in, but they're practically impossible to get to. If someone did somehow manage to slip in, they would be trapped in the concrete walls. A few years ago, when the reservoir was really full from rain, a little boy fell into the lake and drowned. The city determined that his body was stuck in the dam and ~~unable to be recovered~~.

A ballet student  
in desperate need  
of money.

A liquor store run by foreigners  
who are always talking  
on cellular phones.

An abandoned greenhouse  
grown thick with weeds.

A difficult-to-find path.



A Hasidic Rabbi  
unable to complete  
a novel.

A bookie with a rabbi brother  
who would be shamed  
to learn the truth.

Nail clippings  
with a distinctly-colored polish  
found in an unexpected  
location.

A motel desk clerk.

A one-hour photo  
developer.

A black trash bag full of blurry,  
water-damaged Polaroids.  
It is hard to identify the  
subjects: Perhaps  
close-ups of a naked  
body? Perhaps  
car parts?

Is this helicopter  
following me?  
Note the call numbers  
on the tail. See if they  
can't be traced to an  
owner or something.

Agatha has a radio that picks up  
ultra low frequencies.

A ransom note typed and dated  
before Agatha disappeared.  
It has editorial corrections  
handwritten in red ink.



In a turn of events  
that I'm guessing are  
actually unrelated—  
Agatha's car has been  
stolen. It happened  
a couple of days after  
she went missing.  
Pretty standard,  
glass on the ground  
indicated a window  
was broken. The car  
wasn't worth much  
and didn't have  
anything of value in  
it. The keys are still  
in Agatha's apt.

As the days drag on apophenia sets in. Did I see the car in the parking lot of a pesticide factory or was that another car?



A psychic/fortune-teller  
suffering a crisis of faith

IF SHE ISN'T LOST THEN IS SHE...

The ferry





The remains of a campfire

A doctor's report showing that  
Agatha was being treated for  
chronic sleepwalking

Another girl, roughly Agatha's  
age, with a similar physical  
description has also recently  
gone missing. The two  
women did not know  
each other.

A trash compactor with nigh- illegible  
graffiti on it; located behind  
a private business

An astronomer attempting to recover  
from years of alcoholism

An orange extension cord  
tied in a noose

A small zippered pouch  
containing a rubber tube,  
a bent spoon, and  
a needle

The municipal junkyard/  
recycling center

And animal that appears to  
be following you.

Agatha's superintendent used  
to be a stage magician.  
He will perform card/  
coin tricks for anyone  
willing to watch.

found?





\_\_\_\_\_

100

