

# Shoreline Quarterly

## Issue 03

April 2026

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## Masthead

Shoreline Quarterly

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Issue 3

Shoreline, Washington

Editor: Daniel J. McKeown

Available on the web at: <https://altaredwood.work/sq>

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If you like Shoreline Quarterly, you can now [download a set of four postcards](#) from the [web site](#) featuring photos taken right here in town, which you can print yourself on paper stock and send out to your friends.

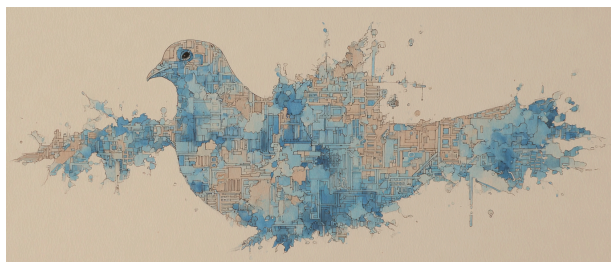
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This month's issue features a new set of a couple comic strips that I created decades ago. 'Kearny' and 'Polar' feature crude original characters, who are back for new adventures in their '2026' series.

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The train photo on the cover was taken at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park and then processed using [ImageMagick](#). To try the same effect on one of your photos, use this terminal command:

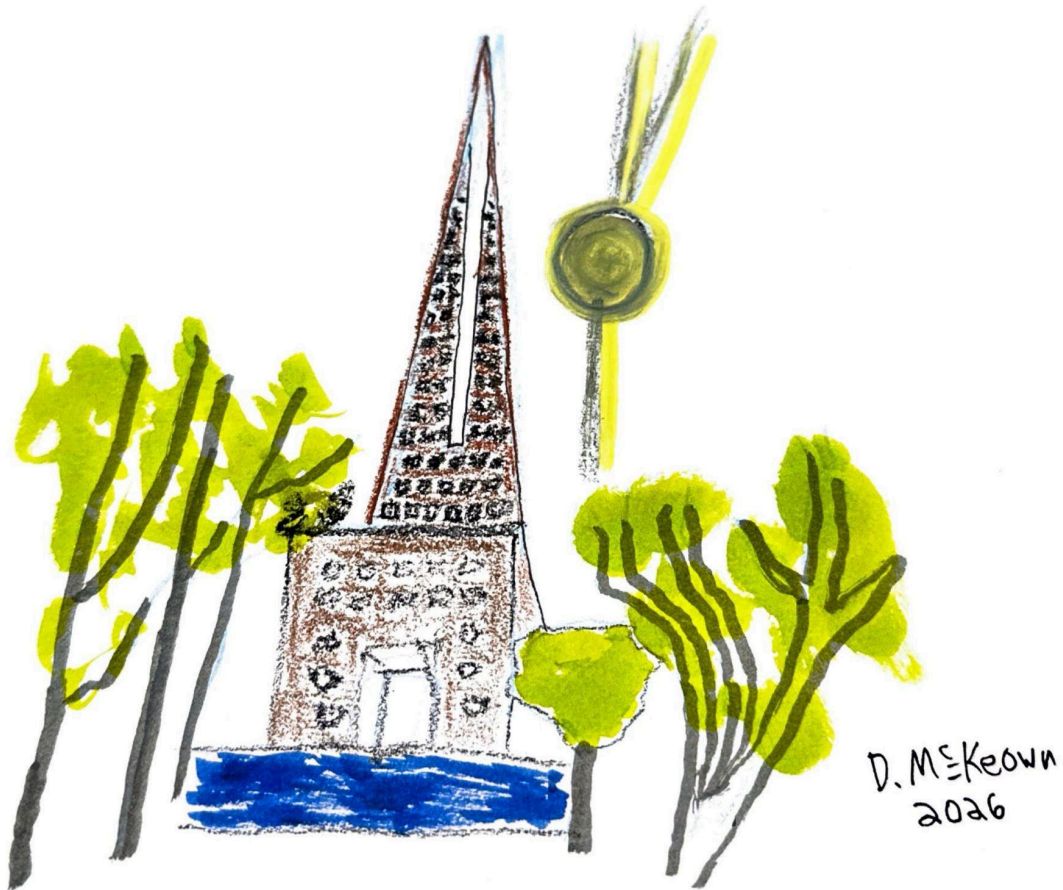
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## Sketches

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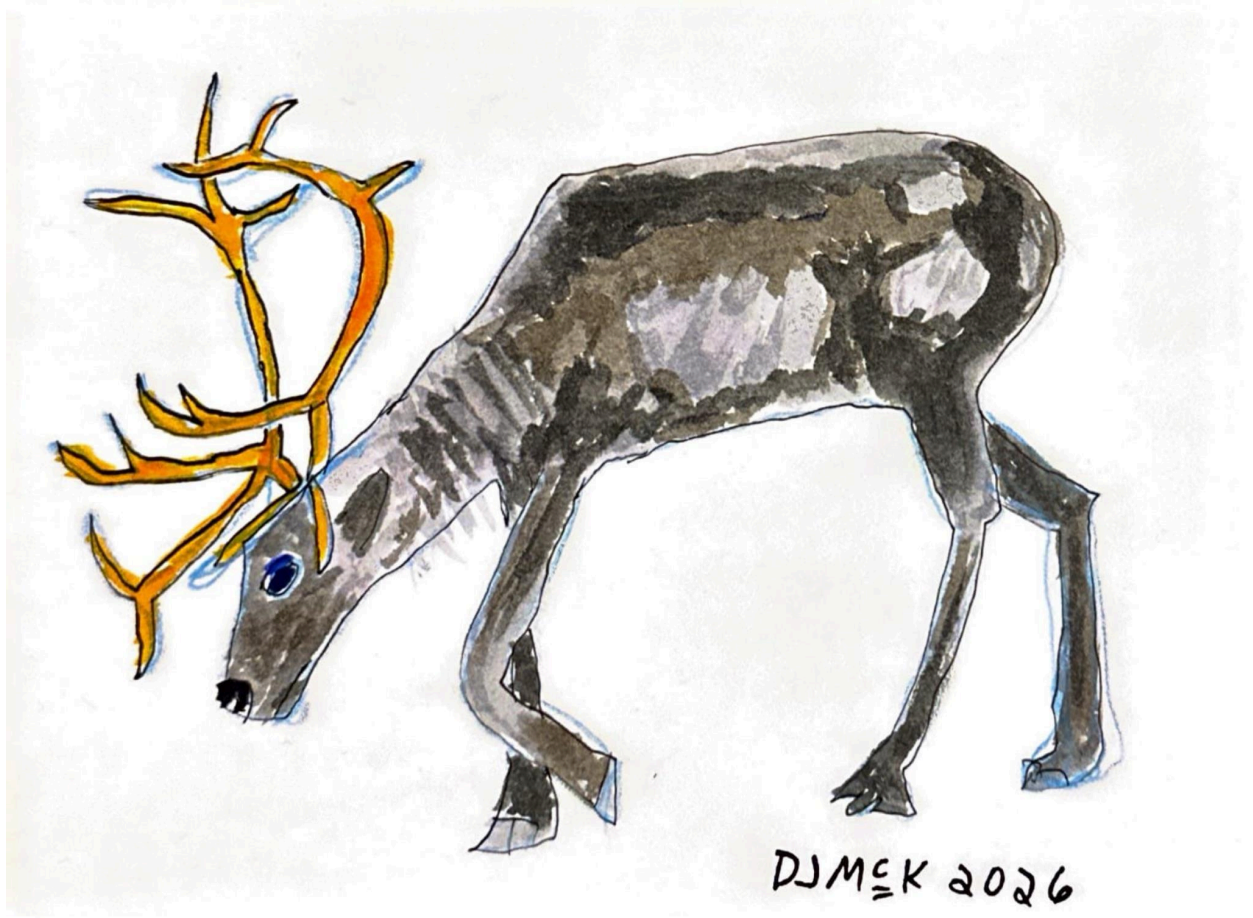
### Transamerica Pyramid



"Your golden sun will shine for me."

Shoreline Quarterly discussed San Francisco in issue 1.

Reindeer



I wrote about Christmas traditions [in issue 2](#).

Emu



On Australia's west coast, at [Monkey Mia](#), they call the emus that wander over to humans "cheeky."

## Postcards

I created a set of four Shoreline postcards: they are available for download as a two-sided printable PDF [here](#).



Richmond Beach, Shoreline, WA

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Interurban Trail, Shoreline, Washington

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## Dogs of Shoreline, WA



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WA

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The first one is entitled “Richmond Beach” and shows a view of the Puget Sound and Olympic Mountains from the perspective of the shore.

The second postcard highlights the a view of the Interurban Trail, a walking and cycling path that runs from the top to bottom of the town of Shoreline.

The third one clockwise has a photo of North City, the small downtown-lite that is around the corner from the public library.

The fourth photo is a tribute to the “dogs of Shoreline” and shows a white dog wearing a bandana.

Comics



## Seahawks Super Bowl Parade 2026



The Seattle Seahawks won the NFL's championship for the second time ever in 2026. On the Wednesday after the Super Bowl, coaches, players, staff, and family members got on double decker buses and army vehicles and paraded through downtown Seattle, starting in Pioneer Square and riding along 4th Street up to Belltown.



## ‘A North Cascades Mystery’, a short story

by Daniel J. McKeown

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--How many volcanos? Haley was a little taken aback by what Lanei was filling her in on. This was some heavy stuff.

--Lots! Lots of them! But all of our transcendent Cascade giants are volcanos. But at the same time, yes, Mount Baker contains multitudes--OF VOLCANOS!

--That's a lost icon of our American cuisine, Haley said sentimentally

--What is this, Lanei said as they came up to a roadside stopover with a parking lot and bathrooms. They had gotten off of the east-west road, as this was the furthest north continuous route going that way in the country, but they wanted to get further up Mount Baker to get some views and maybe stop off for a picnic.

--The volcano taco! Oh my God that was good! Do you remember it? At Taco Bell?

--Nahh, Lanei said as she took the car over to the stopoff. Never heard of it.

--I can't--you didn't--ok well this was a taco, typically ground beef, with cheese, lettuce, normal crunchy taco size--

--Was this a long time ago?

--Oh yeah, a decade, maybe two, Haley said with a vague sense of wonder. She looked at herself in the passenger mirror and thought, this young lady, eating tacos twenty years ago, wow. So yes, she continued, they had this kind of wind-down phase for the era, where they would still have the ‘volcano sauce’ and use it on other items if you asked and you were at a cool Taco Bell; the closest they have now, kind of a wobbly successor, is the Doritos Taco

--Oh because the shell was like, volcano red or something

--Yeah it was the total package--cool shell, great sauce, it was epic!

--Let's get out here, Lanei said, at least stretch our legs and use the KYBO, then we can see if we want to set out our cheese and crackies

--Crackies?

--Yeah I picked that up in Australia, calling everything something short and cute. They have a lighthouse, near Augusta, at the southwest edge of the country, it's where the Indian Ocean and Southern Ocean meet, you can see their waves running into each other, and it's one of those--they build these tall and boxy lighthouses out there, looks a lot different than

those Lake Michigan lighthouses that Midwest people have printed on their tote bags

-So, uh, do they call a lighthouse a 'lightie' in Australia? Haley ventured.

-What? No. Here have a hit of bug spray before we get out, it's worth it, here, Lanei said as she pointed the bottle at Haley.

They came out of the bathrooms and looked at the scene that had started seemingly after they casually slipped into the facilities only minutes earlier. A coyote was bleeding and snarling, and a camper van full of people had shown up at the rugged rest stop on the road up to Mount Baker at about the same time as it had stumbled across the road from out of the woods that ran along both sides of the park road.

--ok what the hell, said Haley as her eyes opened in an eery vertical motion and she froze a few steps outside the door

--it's just a lost canine trickster, Lanei told her as she put her arms around Haley to get her moving and then walked her to the passenger side of the car, made sure she was in, and then got behind the wheel and started the car up when suddenly two ranger vehicles with lights flashing blocked one way and an old North Cascades fire truck blocked the other way out.

--We're going to be here awhile, noted Lanei before she saw the panic on Haley's face

--Oh no, look m'lady, you just have to relax with me here for a couple minutes, we will be sleeping on the ground soon

--I thought you said you borrowed cots? Haley sounded like she might have been more concerned about the cots than the coyote

--Oh no that's just a figure of speech, Lanei reassured her, yes I picked up the cots from Haki before I came and got you

--Didn't Haki want to come? Haley wondered, he likes this stuff doesn't he, and he likes you

--Yeah well, Lanei chortled, there was a convention he had to attend this weekend

--Oh really? You mean for his programming? Or one of his hobbies like art or something?

--Aw no, those are good guesses, but it was actually a--Lanei interrupted herself with breathy laughter

--What?! Haley laughed, wondering what Haki could be up to right now

--It was a dumbass convention! At this point Lanei laughed

heartily--Hwuh Hwuh!--and Haley couldn't help but join in guiltily, maybe agreeing a little bit but somehow wanting to spare Haki's feelings from Lanei's ruthless and humorous pragmatism.

--Ranger Sid here, wanted to know what you might-ha saw with that ky-oat? Lanei had relented and rolled the window down after the dude had tapped away for almost a minute.

--Nahh she and I went in to piss right before anything started to go down, then we just got in the car, for safety you know, and waited here since then

--Did you hit the coyote?

--What?!! No we just pulled in, he wasn't here--you see anything on the car?

--Ma'am, you need to de-escalate right now, the ranger ordered

--Am I free to go? asked Lanei

--Yes, but--

--Buuut? Lanei asked in an annoyed tone

--if you think of anything, this is my card, I'm Ranger Sid

--Ok, see you later Sid, Lanei said as she pulled back on the road sharply.

---

A right turn out of the rest area led them to continue to ascend into the environs around Mount Baker, as Lanei was keen to explore the region before continuing west on the highway. Haley was filing her nails nervously in the passenger seat. --That didn't put you on edge a little bit? she asked.

--Nature..finds a way, Lanei replied spacily.

--Did you get into the mushrooms? Those are sacramental!

--Nahh, nahh, Lanei laughed, taking another sip of her root beer.

Haley noticed that it wasn't Barq's or Mug or whatever, it was a cannabis root beer, and she had a 100 mg can. --That stuff--you get loopy with that stuff.

--Should have asked you if you wanted any? Lanei held up the can, put it in Haley's hand, it was mostly full still

--You're just,..that's just--

--It's just me! Lanei said in a cootish voice

She turned right and they crossed a creek and the thick mossy woods stretched into the distance in both directions while the road narrowed and lost its divider lines and and Lanei started telling the story of how she had gone on a camping trip to the Olympic Peninsula and the day they were driving home they decided to drive around the Quinault Indian Reservation and she quickly realized that it was mostly a timber forest with roads that got cruder the further they went and she just kept going,

bouncing her 2013 Chevrolet Malibu with those old 17 inch tires over rocks that got bigger and bigger, going slower and slower but not giving up in her quest to see a view of the ocean after all this rock and dirt and potholes that they had been driving through, until after going miles in they encountered a dude with an Arabic accent in a Land Rover saying --Ohh noo it's terrible, there is no getting thru!! and at that point she finally turned to her date and said, ok let's turn around.

--Was that an ash tree? Maybe the clearing for the road leaves enough sunlight for one to grow! said Haley excitedly

--A little, Lanei wondered, a little taste of home?

--You know I love Colorado, Lanei, Haley said, realizing as she said it that it wasn't that out there, Colorado was cool--her family's deep Texas roots made them sometimes, maybe jokingly, talk about Colorado as 'not exactly Texas' or whatever--

--Which is the point, Lanei stated.

Haley wondered if she had said out loud what she thought that she had just thought?

Soon the wood got a little less thick and the clearing got wider, and they started to see a few trucks parked on the shoulder.

After encountering a 'Campground Closed' sign that seemed to preclude further progress on the road, they were driving back down south toward the North Cascades Highway when they realized they could use another break and stopped at the same rest area, again eerily quiet on their arrival but staying that way through their quick visit before they looped around and drove a little ways to eat their cheese and crackers with a view of the hydroelectric dam overlooking Baker Lake.

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They went back down to Concrete.

--Well we are now in Concrete, Lanei remarked as she came up on the crossroad with the North Cascades Highway.

--Where is 'Concrete', do you know? Is it, like, ex-exurban sprawl?

--That's the vibe, Lanei said reflectively as she felt the summer sun hit her arm through the open window. Maybe--let's go swim

--Is this stuff icewater, like that brook outside Steamboat that Jace convinced us to jump into?

--It's not--it's from these northern mountains, so the snow it is sourced from is probably much colder than there on average. Lanei looked over at Haley and wondered if her narrow frame and warm Texas blood were

ready for the Skagit, started questioning herself--am I just YOLO-ing this the way I do with my drone lately because it's so old and had so many crash landings and close calls--wait does that also apply to Haley? Not really. She turned right to head east to a river beach she knew about, and in 15 minutes they were pulling into Resar State Park.

--This, this is why I have that damn Discover Pass, Lanei shouted as she parked the Subaru after pulling through an empty ranger station. They saw some cars in the lot but no one getting in or out at the moment, and they shared a joint that Lanei had rolled at a picnic table while they puzzled over where to go to get to the water--it had been a while for Lanei, and she sort of remembered parking elsewhere that previous time anyway--and they saw a trail going through a field that they realized was up in front of them through a thicket of trees, and they walked in their swim outfits with their towels for the trek through the thicket and along a short wedge of the enormous field and another set of woods and then looped around until they joined the Up River Trail, which delivered them to a sandy, pebbly little beach on the Right Bank of the river, even equipped with a shallows that invited the tentative Lanei into the cold rushing water--by the time she looked up Haley had dropped her warmup pants and waded into the water almost up to her waist, her heat-curling reddish blowing in the summer breeze as she splashed around with delight at the cool mountain energy flowing out to the Salish Sea.

While they were walking around in the river Lanei had fished another joint out of the top of her one-piece suit and they had started blazing away and feeling the sun on their backs and the cool water on their legs and were talking fairly loudly and laughing, when they suddenly heard an incredibly loud splash just downriver, right on shore, at a spot where the river bend made it impossible for them to see, but the sound and the wake from the splash were unmistakable.

--What jumped out of the water?

--A whale? asked Haley

Lanei laugh a little and then put her hand up to her mouth as though she were deep in thought. --Not in the rivers here, I don't think; this isn't one of those ocean estuary rivers like the Thames. Long way to go upstream from the Skagit delta.

--Does that go as far as LaConnner? Haley asked.

--Oh, no, close, but that waterway is actually the Swinomish Channel--oh wow look at that thing!! Lanei was looking at the near shore while Haley was looking at her and across the river. By the time Haley turned around the thing had waddled its way into the woods.

--Oh, whoww! Yeah, that--that wasn't a bear, I don't think. Too--bipedal. I don't know.

--Are you! Haley started to laugh, but suddenly felt the chill of the water. Are you serious? You saw a Sasquatch?

--No..yeah..I don't know. I saw some kind of wild forest creature, for sure.

--Maybe it was a fox? I really want to see a fox.

Lanei pointed to Haley's swimsuit, which was brown with purple fox patterns. --Yeah I can tell.

--I am cold as fuck! said Haley.

--It sneaks up on you sometimes. Let's dry off, Lanei said as she went for the shore.



In the massive field that stretched out along most of the path between the tree-shaded beach overlooking the river and the small wooded hill in front of the state park's parking area, Lanei stopped to take some photos with her iPhone as Haley fished around the sack of her waterproof backpack and dug out a small hard plastic jar with a nice stack of psilocybin mushrooms.

--Time for a snack, she said with anticipation, pointing to the jar as Lanei looked over

--I,, uh, er, I think I am going to wait until we are at the camp--until we have the tent pitched. C'mon.

--Ok, I, uh--

Lanei pointed at her mouth so as to say, Go ahead and enjoy. At least that's what Haley thought she meant, feeling in the grip of the mushrooms slightly just as the first cap touched her tongue

--Youknowhowsometimes you feeeeeel it right away, or even before, started Haley

--Isn't that just some 'spooky action at a distance' or something? Lanei said blithely. Her utter calm, Haley thought, in the face of the complex--even the unknowable--ran side by side with her frequent confusion..uncertainty..what was I just thinking about? Haley lowered her window and felt the cool early spring air

--Right down from the mountains! she exclaimed

--Yeah, eh, sure, Lanei said, passing her a lit pre-roll.

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Lanei pulled the car off the two-lane country highway to the right as soon as she saw the sign for the Newhalem Campground. Haley sat up from a laid-back zone-out and looked around--just enough light remained as they pulled in at 7:30 that she could see the one-way bridge that spans high above the Skagit with the stoplight that waits out any crossways traffic and the handful of facility buildings and the many tall pine trees.

--This place is gorgeous! she told Lanei

--I know, right! One of the best spots to stay along here. I have also stayed at the private campground which is mostly an RV park but has a few tent sites on the other side of the road near the river, and there is a trail that keeps going quite a ways along the river, with fishing' spots and swimmin' holes that the locals know how to find: sometimes you might see someone boating or fishing but usually it's beautiful and empty except for the fish and the waterfowl.

Pitching the tent was never a straightforward exercise for Lanei

--I get distracted in the middle of pitching it sometimes, she explained to Haley as they puzzled over the collection of sticks, many of which were connected by stretchy rope to each other, ready to snap together before being implanted into their nubs at the corners of the tent. After consulting the instructions on the bag, Haley felt confident about how to run the long stick under the pocket in the middle and then cross-crossed the two next

longest sticks and snapping the sticks to the tent structure, one at a time, and then pounding in the stakes--for this Lanei helpfully provided a rubber mallet, which she said had been used in installing flooring in her bathroom, and they pounded the stakes in and--suddenly it was definitely getting quite dark. It had snuck up on them and they used the lights on their iPhones as flashlights as they dug around for the rain fly --Might as well--let's be realistic. Yes the sky is clear now. But this is Washington--you can't say when the rain will come next, it just rolls in off the ocean when it's ready--and anyway I think it's still spring and it will be fucking COLD tonight, that rain fly is a major warmth conserver. The tent was now covered, but the rain fly had four stakes of its own to be secured--and that, Lanei reflected, is our tent! --Look how much of this jar is left, Haley said as she gave a handful to Lanei. Let's get the food and make a fire!

---

Lanei had built quite an old school log cabin fire with the cord of wood they had picked up at the 7-11 in Shoreline --The fire rises, said Lanei in Nolan Bain voice --Haley nodded with excitement and started her chanting. Before long she was broadcasting her incantations in full-throated form as Lanei tapped lightly on the bongo drums from Morocco that Haley had made sure to pack along with her gear. The modest dinner of hot dogs and baked beans had filled them up and their thoughts about the strange events of the day faded away as they felt the wildness and remoteness of their setting and sat next to each other at the fireside making music of uncertain quality and looking over the fire and the bits of the woods it illuminated slightly.

Lanei heard that branches-cracking sound that can mean so many things at night in the woods and could well just be a critter or something, but then suddenly she saw it come into her field of vision, in the vaguely lit dusk light of the fire, assisted by the moon near its fullness shining through the canopy in pieces, painting little patches on this thing--this strange, furry, bipedal mammal. --There it is! I saw it in the water! --What?!! Lanei yelled back --It's that..Sasquatch, that you saw--I visualized it on the way here --You visualized it!

--Well, I saw it following us, after the river, but I thought it stopped at the edge of the woods

--Edge of the woods? Are you fucking serious? You saw it too?

--It must have followed us!

--At 50 miles per hour?

--I don't know

--Maybe there's--several of these

--Where is it now? Haley asked--and Lanei's silence was noticeable in the quiet of the woods and the crackling of the fire. Did you see it?

--Yeah I fucking saw it, Lanei replied, as though it was obvious

--Well before, you were--

--Questioning whether we saw Bigfoot?

--Should we get out of here?

Lanei took a long look into the fire. --Nahhh. She took a swig of her beer can calmly and looked over at Haley.

While still ready to bolt, Lanei's blithe confidence was reassurance enough, and Haley stopped flashing her lucky old Maglite around the camp site and went back to watching the fire, with no more visual on the creature and as the strange sounds grew fainter until all that was heard was the fire and an owl.

---

--Haley! You warm over there? Lanei called across the large tent

--Aww. Yeh. Haley said in a very small, raspy voice. So glad to be on this cot!

--Yeah. It got pretty cool overnight. But you camp on the mountains out there in the Rockies, huh?

--Aw, I brought the old alpaca wool quilt that I got..you ever been to Glacier?

--Glacier, uh, that's just a few hundred miles from here. But no.

--Well I got this from a little store on the way to Glacier, where this lady was feeding me and Allison paella with lamb in it

--Do you like lamb?

--Oh sure, said Haley

--I like it, like when they try to serve it to me in business class, and the alternative is this mega seafood thing--

--Never order seafood on a plane

--Yeah, so my hand was forced in this instance. Got to eat! But I can't bring myself to order it, like, narr

--Sure, said Haley. But what do we have to eat now?

--Camp stove instant oatmeal

--And those donuts I bought! Allison laughed with anticipation

They had lit a smaller morning fire and were making coffee and passing Lanei's blunt that she had just rolled and they had forgotten for the moment about the oatmeal and were discussing whether it would be worthwhile to start a new round of attempts at volcano movies when they heard someone walking on the trail call out

--Oh, hey there! A couple, with the guy lanky in tech pants and a White Sox hat and one of those blue camping shirts with extra loops on it and the woman a short pretty lady with green eyes and reddish hair contained in a white visor, approached their camp site from the road.

--That is they, the woman said, nodding

--So, uh, the guy said as they walked up toward the fire

--Whoa, hey, what's going on here, asked Haley, looking over at Lanei with the expectation that she intimidate them and get them to leave.

But Lanei was calm; Haley was pretty sure that she even saw her subtly point to her with the bottom of her hand but anyway what was she going to do?

--Are you looking for the ranger, I know him, Lanei cracked.

--Uh..no. Should we be looking for the ranger? said the guy, who looked at his partner questioningly.

--No, she started, we wanted to let you know, we saw..

--You saw what? asked Haley

--We saw, the guy started up again. Well, we saw your car right here

--It may not be much but it ain't for sale, said Lanei

--No, no, that's..ok let me introduce myself, said the guy, my name is Gus. Lanei nodded.

--Oh, and my name is Lonnie, said the woman

--Haley, said Haley, having worked her way back down to the raspy wakeup voice

Lanei nodded again.

--Well, ok, them, said Gus, I, er, we were walking along the trail just out past the furthest west campsites here, along the ridge above the river where you can see the narrow bridge--well we saw you car

--Well, yes, said Haley

--Yes, said Gus, and on top of your car, while you crossed the bridge into the campsite, we saw the ol' Sasquatch holding on to the roof rack of your station wagon.

Lanei and Haley started laughing, in a giggly way at first but then rather profoundly as they gasped and chortled on for quite a while, as occasionally one would say a short fragment of a sentence before returning to laughter.

--Oh, we just, it's so cool you saw him--that you saw him too, Haley managed to almost say before looking over at Lanei and laughing some more, as Lonnie tentatively joined in with goatish giggles while Gus muttered nervously.

EW

## Excerpt from *The Trial* by Franz Kafka

As a longtime fan of Kafka's fiction, I recently created [a video](#) about his novel *The Trial* and what messages it has for today's readers. Below is an excerpt from [the book](#), a dark critique of legal systems and so much more which is esteemed for its extraordinary atmosphere, which is at times both surreal and humorous:

The two of them had disappeared, but K. remained standing in the doorway. He had to accept that the woman had not only cheated him but that she had also lied to him when she said she was being taken to the examining judge. The examining judge certainly wouldn't be sitting and waiting in the attic. The wooden stairs would explain nothing to him however long he stared at them. Then K. noticed a small piece of paper next to them, went across to it and read, in a childish and unpractised hand, "Entrance to the Court Offices". Were the court offices here, in the attic of this tenement, then? If that was how they were accommodated it did not attract much respect, and it was some comfort for the accused to realise how little money this court had at its disposal if it had to locate its offices in a place where the tenants of the building, who were themselves among the poorest of people, would throw their unneeded junk. On the other hand, it was possible that the officials had enough money but that they squandered it on themselves rather than use it for the court's purposes. Going by K.'s experience of them so far, that even seemed probable, except that if the court were allowed to decay in that way it would not just humiliate the accused but also give him more encouragement than if the court were simply in a state of poverty. K. also now understood that the court was ashamed to summon those it accused to the attic of this building for the initial hearing, and why it preferred to impose upon them in their own homes. What a position it was that K. found himself in, compared with the judge sitting up in the attic! K., at the bank, had a big office with an ante-room, and had an enormous window through which he could look down at the activity in the square. It was true, though, that he had no secondary income from bribes and fraud, and he couldn't tell a servant to bring him a woman up to the office on his arm. K., however, was quite willing to do without such things, in this life at least. K. was still looking at the notice when a man came up the stairs, looked through the open door into the living room where it was also possible to see the courtroom, and finally asked K. whether he had just seen a woman there. "You're the court usher, aren't you?" asked K. "That's right," said the man, "oh, yes, you're defendant K., I recognise you now as well. Nice to see you here." And he offered K. his hand, which was far from what K. had expected. And when K. said nothing, he added, "There's no court session planned for today, though." "I know that," said K. as he looked at the usher's civilian coat which,

beside its ordinary buttons, displayed two gilded ones as the only sign of his office and seemed to have been taken from an old army officer's coat. "I was speaking with your wife a little while ago. She is no longer here. The student has carried her off to the examining judge." "Listen to this," said the usher, "they're always carrying her away from me. It's Sunday today, and it's not part of my job to do any work today, but they send me off with some message which isn't even necessary just to get me away from here. What they do is they send me off not too far away so that I can still hope to get back on time if I really hurry. So off I go running as fast as I can, shout the message through the crack in the door of the office I've been sent to, so out of breath they'll hardly be able to understand it, run back here again, but the student's been even faster than I have—well he's got less far to go, he's only got to run down the steps. If I wasn't so dependent on them I'd have squashed the student against the wall here a long time ago. Right here, next to the sign. I'm always dreaming of doing that. Just here, just above the floor, that's where he's crushed onto the wall, his arms stretched out, his fingers spread apart, his crooked legs twisted round into a circle and blood squirted out all around him. It's only ever been a dream so far, though." "Is there nothing else you do?" asked K. with a smile. "Nothing that I know of," said the usher. "And it's going to get even worse now, up till now he's only been carrying her off for himself, now he's started carrying her off for the judge and all, just like I'd always said he would." "Does your wife, then, not share some of the responsibility?" asked K. He had to force himself as he asked this question, as he, too, felt so jealous now. "Course she does," said the usher, "it's more her fault than theirs. It was her who attached herself to him. All he did, he just chases after any woman. There's five flats in this block alone where he's been thrown out after working his way in there. And my wife is the best looking woman in the whole building, but it's me who's not even allowed to defend himself." "If that's how things are, then there's nothing that can be done," said K. "Well why not?" asked the usher. "He's a coward that student, if he wants to lay a finger on my wife all you'd have to do is give him such a good hiding he'd never dare do it again. But I'm not allowed to do that, and nobody else is going to do me the favour as they're all afraid of his power. The only one who could do it is a man like you." "What, how could I do it?" asked K. in astonishment. "Well you're facing a charge, aren't you," said the usher. "Yes, but that's all the more reason for me to be afraid. Even if he has no influence on the outcome of the trial he probably has some on the initial examination." "Yes, exactly," said the usher, as if K.'s view had been just as correct as his own. "Only we don't usually get any trials heard here with no hope at all." "I am not of the same opinion," said K., "although that ought not to prevent me from dealing with the student if the opportunity arises." "I would be very grateful to you," said the usher of the court, somewhat formally, not really

seeming to believe that his highest wish could be fulfilled. "Perhaps," continued K., "perhaps there are some other officials of yours here, perhaps all of them, who would deserve the same." "Oh yes, yes," said the usher, as if this was a matter of course. Then he looked at K. trustingly which, despite all his friendliness, he had not done until then, and added, "they're always rebelling." But the conversation seemed to have become a little uncomfortable for him, as he broke it off by saying, "now I have to report to the office. Would you like to come with me?" "There's nothing for me to do there," said K. "You'd be able to have a look at it. No-one will take any notice of you." "Is it worth seeing then?" asked K. hesitatingly, although he felt very keen to go with him. "Well," said the usher, "I thought you'd be interested in it." "Alright then," said K. finally, "I'll come with you." And, quicker than the usher himself, he ran up the steps.

At the entrance he nearly fell over, as behind the door there was another step. "They don't show much concern for the public," he said. "They don't show any concern at all," said the usher, "just look at the waiting room here." It consisted of a long corridor from which roughly made doors led out to the separate departments of the attic. There was no direct source of light but it was not entirely dark as many of the departments, instead of solid walls, had just wooden bars reaching up to the ceiling to separate them from the corridor. The light made its way in through them, and it was also possible to see individual officials through them as they sat writing at their desks or stood up at the wooden frameworks and watched the people on the corridor through the gaps. There were only a few people in the corridor, probably because it was Sunday. They were not very impressive. They sat, equally spaced, on two rows of long wooden benches which had been placed along both sides of the corridor. All of them were carelessly dressed although the expressions on their faces, their bearing, the style of their beards and many details which were hard to identify showed that they belonged to the upper classes. There were no coat hooks for them to use, and so they had placed their hats under the bench, each probably having followed the example of the others. When those who were sitting nearest the door saw K. and the usher of the court they stood up to greet them, and when the others saw that, they also thought they had to greet them, so that as the two of them went by all the people there stood up. None of them stood properly upright, their backs were bowed, their knees bent, they stood like beggars on the street. K. waited for the usher, who was following just behind him. "They must all be very dispirited," he said. "Yes," said the usher, "they are the accused, everyone you see here has been accused." "Really!" said K. "They're colleagues of mine then." And he turned to the nearest one, a tall, thin man with hair that was nearly grey. "What is it you are waiting for here?" asked K., politely, but the man was startled at being spoken to unexpectedly, which was all the more pitiful to see because the man clearly had some experience

of the world and elsewhere would certainly have been able to show his superiority and would not have easily given up the advantage he had acquired. Here, though, he did not know what answer to give to such a simple question and looked round at the others as if they were under some obligation to help him, and as if no-one could expect any answer from him without this help. Then the usher of the court stepped forward to him and, in order to calm him down and raise his spirits, said, "The gentleman here's only asking what it is you're waiting for. You can give him an answer." The voice of the usher was probably familiar to him, and had a better effect than K.'s. "I'm ... I'm waiting...." he began, and then came to a halt. He had clearly chosen this beginning so that he could give a precise answer to the question, but now he didn't know how to continue. Some of the others waiting had come closer and stood round the group, the usher of the court said to them, "Get out the way, keep the gangway free." They moved back slightly, but not as far as where they had been sitting before. In the meantime, the man whom K. had first approached had pulled himself together and even answered him with a smile. "A month ago I made some applications for evidence to be heard in my case, and I'm waiting for it to be settled." "You certainly seem to be going to a lot of effort," said K. "Yes," said the man, "it is my affair after all." "Not everyone thinks the same way as you do," said K. "I've been indicted as well but I swear on my soul that I've neither submitted evidence nor done anything else of the sort. Do you really think that's necessary?" "I don't really know, exactly," said the man, once more totally unsure of himself; he clearly thought K. was joking with him and therefore probably thought it best to repeat his earlier answer in order to avoid making any new mistakes. With K. looking at him impatiently, he just said, "as far as I'm concerned, I've applied to have this evidence heard." "Perhaps you don't believe I've been indicted?" asked K. "Oh, please, I certainly do," said the man, stepping slightly to one side, but there was more anxiety in his answer than belief. "You don't believe me then?" asked K., and took hold of his arm, unconsciously prompted by the man's humble demeanour, and as if he wanted to force him to believe him. But he did not want to hurt the man and had only taken hold of him very lightly. Nonetheless, the man cried out as if K. had grasped him not with two fingers but with red hot tongs. Shouting in this ridiculous way finally made K. tired of him, if he didn't believe he was indicted then so much the better; maybe he even thought K. was a judge. And before leaving, he held him a lot harder, shoved him back onto the bench and walked on. "These defendants are so sensitive, most of them," said the usher of the court. Almost all of those who had been waiting had now assembled around the man who, by now, had stopped shouting and they seemed to be asking him lots of precise questions about the incident. K. was approached by a security guard, identifiable mainly by his sword, of which the scabbard seemed to be made of aluminium. This greatly surprised K., and he reached out

for it with his hand. The guard had come because of the shouting and asked what had been happening. The usher of the court said a few words to try and calm him down but the guard explained that he had to look into it himself, saluted, and hurried on, walking with very short steps, probably because of gout.

K. didn't concern himself long with the guard or these people, especially as he saw a turning off the corridor, about half way along it on the right hand side, where there was no door to stop him going that way. He asked the usher whether that was the right way to go, the usher nodded, and that is the way that K. went. The usher remained always one or two steps behind K., which he found irritating as in a place like this it could give the impression that he was being driven along by someone who had arrested him, so he frequently waited for the usher to catch up, but the usher always remained behind him. In order to put an end to his discomfort, K. finally said, "Now that I've seen what it looks like here, I'd like to go." "You haven't seen everything yet," said the usher ingenuously. "I don't want to see everything," said K., who was also feeling very tired, "I want to go, what is the way to the exit?" "You haven't got lost, have you?" asked the usher in amazement, "you go down this way to the corner, then right down the corridor straight ahead as far as the door." "Come with me," said K., "show me the way, I'll miss it, there are so many different ways here." "It's the only way there is," said the usher, who had now started to sound quite reproachful, "I can't go back with you again, I've got to hand in my report, and I've already lost a lot of time because of you as it is." "Come with me!" K. repeated, now somewhat sharper as if he had finally caught the usher out in a lie. "Don't shout like that," whispered the usher, "there's offices all round us here. If you don't want to go back by yourself come on a bit further with me or else wait here till I've sorted out my report, then I'll be glad to go back with you again." "No, no," said K., "I will not wait and you must come with me now." K. had still not looked round at anything at all in the room where he found himself, and it was only when one of the many wooden doors all around him opened that he noticed it. A young woman, probably summoned by the loudness of K.'s voice, entered and asked, "What is it the gentleman wants?" In the darkness behind her there was also a man approaching. K. looked at the usher. He had, after all, said that no-one would take any notice of K., and now there were two people coming, it only needed a few and everyone in the office would become aware of him and asking for explanations as to why he was there. The only understandable and acceptable thing to say was that he was accused of something and wanted to know the date of his next hearing, but this was an explanation he did not want to give, especially as it was not true—he had only come out of curiosity. Or else, an explanation even less usable, he could say that he wanted to ascertain that the court was as revolting on the inside as it was on the outside. And it did seem that he had been quite right

in this supposition, he had no wish to intrude any deeper, he was disturbed enough by what he had seen already, he was not in the right frame of mind just then to face a high official such as might appear from behind any door, and he wanted to go, either with the usher of the court or, if needs be, alone.



## Record Review: 'Antidepressants' by Suede (2025)



[Suede](#) has a tour coming up this year, and they released a new album called '[Antidepressants](#)' last year.

The album begins with a glitchy "connected/disconnected" callout which runs into the energetic opening song "Disintegrate," starting with an edge and gliding into the melodic lilt that the band's modern records exude.

"Dancing with the Europeans" is a straightforward touring song presumably about touring Europe—which of course, in this context, means The Continent across the English Channel.

The next song, the album title track, has a mod feel especially in terms of the guitar and drums.

While "Sweet Kid" is a straightforward pop song as sung by Brett Anderson, the solo/bridge at 1:45, however short, brings the subtle tones of nostalgia that the main melody plays past.

Simon Gilbert's drumming is consistently excellent but he really throws down at the start of "The Sound and the Summer," which is a powerful track that dares invoke, if slightly, the band's 1994 classic album '[Dog Man Star](#)'.

The first outright retro ballad of the album comes at track 6 with "Somewhere Between An Atom And A Star" which sounds at times like a 1970s track.

"Broken Music For Broken People" brings a high level of energy and ends with a vocal snippet sample.

Next up, "Criminal Ways" continues the mod vibes that "Antidepressants" brought and adds a pub-rock bass solo by Mat Osman and a guitar bridge from Richard Oakes before the last chorus.

"Trance State" may not sound like a trance music song but it definitely has the sound of synth pop, providing a showcase for keyboardist Neil Codling during the verses.

A spoken word verse starts off "June Rain" before duet singing and then Anderson singing solo, building to a big chorus ("hung myself out to dry/hard to say goodbye/love you 'til July") that sounds a little bit like early 2000s rock.

Vocal harmonies layer on top of guitar melodies in the first verse of "Life Is Endless, Life Is A Moment" before an energetic chorus, and then the sound gets end-of-album big as they play it out.

Maybe Suede will gain acclaim in America and have a "Johnny Marr at Coachella 2013" type of moment at some point—but whether they do or not, this album will be enjoyed by many of their fans around the world.