

Keep Out!!  
(No, seriously)

#1

11 2023

## **Introduction**

**Welcome to the first issue of Keep Out! (No, seriously!), my monthly personal magazine. You may be wondering - what is the point of this? Isn't a little self absorbed, Pepper, to make a magazine all about yourself? Why would you do that?**

**Okay, so maybe no one is actually wondering that. I can't tell. But regardless, I'll answer: I don't know. What's the point of anything? I don't think that talking about the self is self-absorbed. I think it's crucial to have a good relationship with the self, and having a good relationship with the self is not synonymous with being absorbed in oneself.**

**I have, for twenty two years and up until about two-weeks-ago-don't-ask, despised every aspect of my being. I was never able to view myself as something worthy of art, only as something cursed to forever churn out art that I believed would never find an audience. Now I'm churning out art that is effectively intended to not have an audience. I promise I have a point here. I was never worthy of the act of creating art, I just had to create art, like it was a chore, to put my soul to rest. I didn't particularly enjoy art; it was important to me, it was my main hobby and my ultimate career goal, but everything I created was so deep and emotional that the act of creating soaked up all of my energy. It felt tedious to constantly disperse myself into inked letters, and it was difficult to freeze myself back into solidity when I was finished with my work.**

**I started making zines, recently. It's been a pretty rewarding experience so far. I made a zine about how much I hate the zines I create, and how I keep making them anyway because aesthetic isn't always or even often the ultimate goal when creating art. I made another zine about the ending of my favorite TV show. I've always loved writing creative nonfiction, and these zines are just another extension of my need to tell my personal story to the world, hoping that whoever needs to hear it will find their way home and feel less alone.**

**So why not? Why not nurture my perception of myself, and allow it to blossom out of toxicity? Why not create something self-indulgent every now and then, just for the sake of making myself feel kind of happy for a little while? Who would I be hurting? Who am I hurting if I refuse to allow myself to feel that happiness?**



*recent  
art*



***That feeling***

***When you rest your eyes and fantasize and it turns into a dream***

***when you see something so beautiful, you can't explain until you reach the light***

***But you never reach it***

***The light pouring down on you, making the perfect dream***

***The colors you love***

***mixed into a harmony of sounds***

***blare into your ears***

***your eyes***

***The color has no name***

***It is very light, yet dark in hue.***

***swirling, filling the air.***

***then you open your eyes***

***and wish you never woke up***

***and your eyes are amazed***

***And the moon never rises***

***it is daytime always***

***your eyes water***

***oceans of joy***

***and you never even believed in***

***something like***

***watching a newborn child laugh***

***and having her look at you.***

***The cracks in a crystal ball.***

***And maybe, your halo will turn to energy.***

***the mist will revive***

***and i wouldn't trade anything for a masterpiece***

***when you rest your eyes and fantasize and it turns into a dream***

***a color changing sky***

***so light you never want to leave***

***I've never been touched so gently before***

***look me in the eyes.***

***tell me this***

***Tell me i'm not dreaming***

***Up a world where a bird isnt just a bird, but a symbol of life***

***Then you open your eyes***

***And wish you never woke up***

***a poem from childhood, 2011***

*When I was about fifteen years old, my mother won three tickets to a group session with a local psychic. We were always firm believers in the paranormal; we've had too many truly inexplicable experiences to completely write off the existence of a ghastly afterlife. She gave the other two tickets to me and my nana.*

*He arranged the chairs to have everyone sit in a circle in the back of a local metaphysical store. I sat in the innermost point of the circle, my family on each side of me, directly facing the psychic. He introduced himself, explained how his connection to the future and the spirit world worked, and then he began reading people.*

*He approached the first person to his left and asked permission to hold her hand. She nodded, and they held hands, both of their eyes closed tightly in prayer-concentration-prayer. Before their eyes could pry open, I experienced a very odd sensation, as if someone was suffocating me with some sort of fabric— a scarf? wrapped around my neck, choking my life right out of me, my consciousness fading with each passing moment. I gave a silent gasp.*

*And then the psychic said: "I'm getting maybe he couldn't breathe. I'm getting -- was he -- was he choked, maybe?"*

*She held her hand up to her trembling lips. "Yes," she replied. "We think it was his sister, but..."*

*The feeling immediately subsided. Okay, I thought. That's weird.*

*He gave the woman her message, and, with a genuinely empathetic sigh, aching in his core right along with this poor woman who lost her husband, he moved on to the next client.*

*I tried to ignore it at first, but a few minutes into their conversation it became too painful to bear—a sharp, pulsing pain around my knee. It was a gnawing, inescapable pain, and every time it pulsated I felt myself falling beneath a thousand oceans. My eyes closed then, too burdened for the sensory input.*

*"You're right," said the next man, voice breaking through each syllable. "She lost... part of her right leg. In an accident."*

*Okay, I thought. That's really weird. Surely it's a coincidence?*

*His eyes pivoted to me. "I'm being drawn to you," he said, "all of a sudden."*

*"Oh?" I asked.*

*"You're - how old are you?"*

*"I'm fifteen," I said, embarrassed as I curled into myself. "Sorry."*

*"What's happening to you right now?" he asked.*

*"I don't know," I replied. "But... there's something wrong. There's something off. I can't really put my finger on it."*



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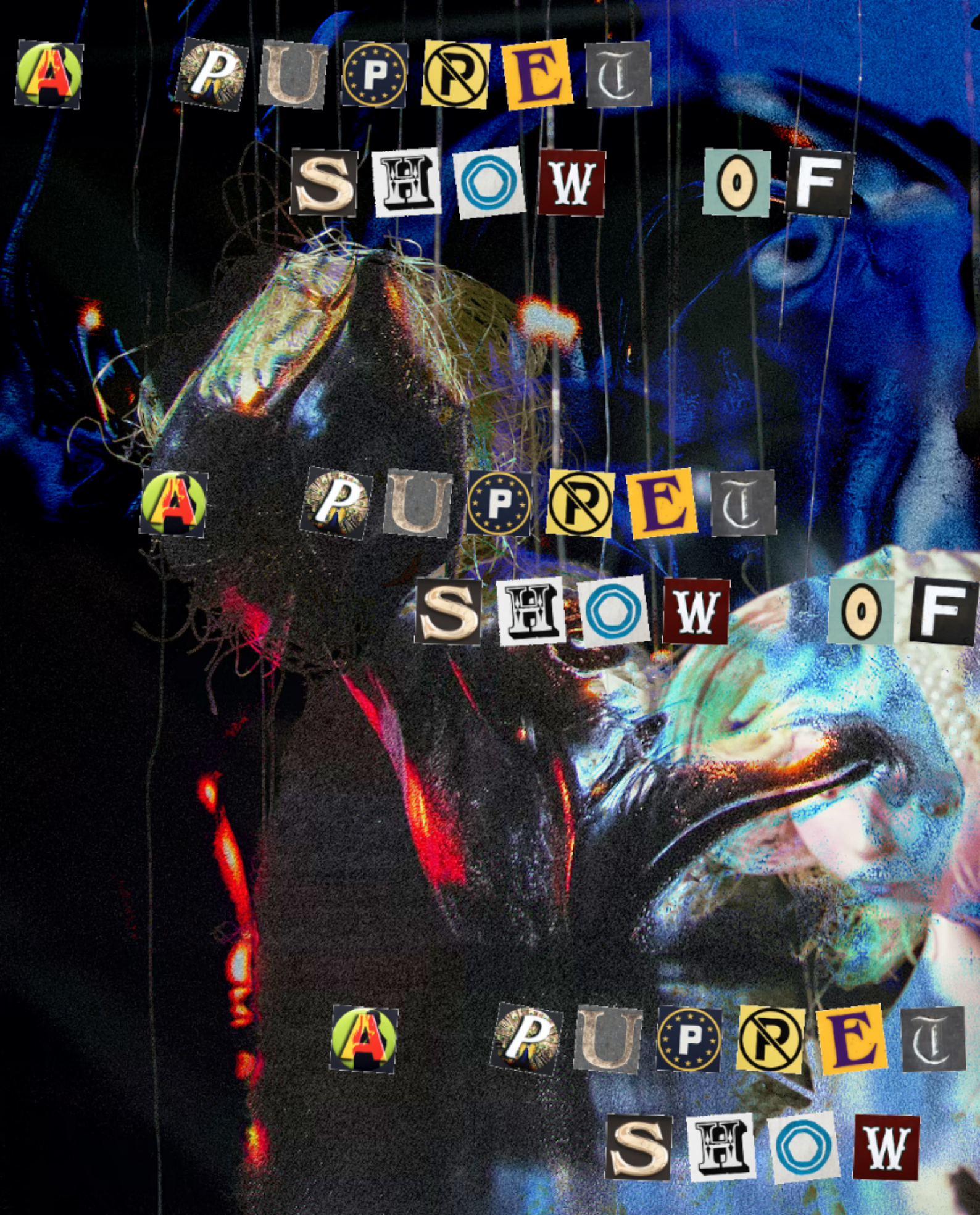
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SHIFTING

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S U R E

I DON'T

FIND OUT

# MONTHLY PLAYLIST

1 | *HOW NOT TO DROWN* by *CHVRCHES*

2 | *WATERSONG* by *PURITY RING*

3 | *SLOW DISCO* by *ST VINCENT*

4 | *HAUNTED* by *POE*

5 | *BLUE* by *BLOC PARTY*

6 | *GOLD* by *SPANDAU BALLET*

7 | *WE ARE GOLDEN* by *MIKA*

8 | *HALF HERO* by *OH LAND*