

An abstract painting of a human face in profile, facing right. The face is rendered in a vibrant, multi-colored palette, including shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and purple. The background is filled with swirling, organic patterns in the same color scheme, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall style is expressive and emotional, with visible brushstrokes and a rich, textured appearance.

# THE SHADES

Jaxyn Robinson

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# YOUR MEMORY MAY GO POEM

YOUR MEMORY MAY GO  
AND MY NAME,  
TELEVISION STATIC.

THESE LONG DRIVES TWISTED INTO EVEN LONGER STORIES.

YOUR MEMORY MAY GO,  
BUT THE WEEKEND SLEEPOVERS,  
AND CRIME TELEVISION,  
WILL BE FOR OUR EYES ONLY.

YOUR MEMORY MAY GO,  
CRANES SWINGING LIKE A PENDULUM,  
NEON LIGHTS SURROUNDED BY CHEAP PRIZES.  
YOU WERE THE REAL PRIZE.

COKE CANS SCATTERED,  
MINT CHIP IN STRIPED BLUE BOWLS.

YOUR MEMORY MAY GO  
BUT I'LL RETELL OUR STORY IF YOU'LL LISTEN.

# FORESHADOW

EVERY INSTINCT,  
EVERY THOUGHT  
JELLS.  
LIKE RAINFALL I FLOOD.  
FIGHT TO OVERCOME  
BUT I CRUMBLE,  
LIKE DECAYING BRICKS.  
FACING THE DREAD OF MIDLIFE AUTUMN,  
COMPLEX  
AND KNOTTED.  
CHERRY PICKING MY INSECURITIES.  
STOP.  
I BITE MY NAILS.  
MY PAST DOESN'T KNOW THE NEW ME.  
HANDICAPPED AND LOST,  
MY BACK CARRYING THE INVISIBLE WEIGHT.  
FORESHADOWING IS MY CURSE.

# LACK OF UNITY

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE A DYING BREED.  
INFLUENTIAL MEN IDENTIFY  
AND SHARE SOLACE,  
BUT RAPED GIRLS DON'T MATTER.  
I DON'T MATTER.  
ROE PLUNGED INTO WADE.  
FUNDING BY THE CORRUPT AND UNEDUCATED.  
FIFTY YEARS OF ACCEPTANCE,  
DWINDED INTO SILENT SECONDS.  
STATE LAWS OVER A WOMAN'S OVARIES.  
MAYBE I'LL SHED RED-TAPED ABORTION ACCESS.  
BIRTH CONTROL IS NEXT,  
PROTESTING AGAINST,  
BUT IT NEVER MAKES A SOUND  
EVERY CASE RIDES ON SEXISM.  
MORALITY CAPSIZES LIKE THE TITANIC,  
WE'RE LEFT WITH A COUNTRY DIVIDED.  
FEMALE RIGHTS ARE A DYING BREED.

# VENDING MACHINE

MY FATHER ONCE TOLD ME,  
HE PUT A GUY THROUGH A VENDING MACHINE,  
BECAUSE HIS BROTHER WAS BULLIED.  
I GUESS THAT'S WHY HE HAD TO GRIT HIS TEETH AND SWING  
HIS HANDS.

IT WAS THE GUYS FAULT.  
HE HAD MANY GIRLFRIENDS,  
THE GUY MADE HIM CHEAT.  
TOLD HIM HE COULDN'T DO IT.  
SO HE SHOWED HIM,  
MY MOTHER TOO.  
THE GLASS FROM THE MACHINE MUST'VE STUCK,  
THAT'S WHY HE NEEDED STITCHES,  
IT CUT TOO DEEP.  
SHOOTING OUT EVERY TIME HE WAS COMPELLED.  
NEXT TIME THIS GUY SHOULD LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

# MISSING PIECE

HE NEVER LEFT VIETNAM,  
BUT HE LIVED TO SHARE THE TALE.  
HIS HANDS,  
DISOBEDIENT,  
SOMETIMES  
THEY TWITCH.  
MY NAME,  
SOMETIMES BURIED.  
DEEP.  
LIKE IN THE MURKY SWAMPS.  
DISEASE SPREADS LIKE AGENT ORANGE.  
PAPA'S MIND IS LIKE MISSING PIECES.  
LOSING THE FAINT MEMORIES  
I WISH THERE WERE MORE,  
BUT HE STILL SLEEPS FIGHTING.  
SHOOTING ENEMIES,  
AND DYING FRIENDS.  
WHEN IT'S TIME,  
VIETNAM WILL ESCAPE HIM.

# WEATHER

AGED BY WEATHER,  
RAIN FLOODS THE OVERPASS.  
WEeping WILLOW TREES  
AND  
SPANISH MOSS,  
CRADLE THICK OAK.  
ADAPTING SEASONS,  
AGED BY WEATHER.

## TWENTY-FOUR

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS.  
MY HANDS ARE CRACKED,  
FEET TOO.  
THE SAME INDISTINGUISHABLE PATTERNS.  
MY KNEES CARRY MY WEIGHT,  
BUT SO DOES THE SHIT CAR I DRIVE  
TO THE JOB THAT WASN'T ON THE 2020 PLANNER.  
GURGLING STOMACH,  
HALF FROM COLITIS,  
THE REST IS DISAPPEARING MONEY.  
YOU'VE SEEN IT.  
MY EYES SOFTEN,  
THEY BLUR THE LINES.  
DISAPPOINTMENT UNDERNEATH.  
ANXIETY STREAMING IN BLOOD,  
2025 TO BE MET,  
BUT TWENTY-FOUR YEARS IS TO SURVIVE GROWING UP.

# SWEET WORDS

STRUGGLING TO WHISPER SYLLABLES.  
SYLLABLES THAT BRING ON A SING SONGY PITCH,  
EXCEPT  
THAT IT ISN'T A SONG,  
BUT A PHRASE.  
SLOWLY,  
CARRIED OUT.  
EACH PART,  
TRIPPING OVER  
ONE ANOTHER,  
AS IT SLITHERS BETWEEN TWO TEETH.  
WHEN THE PUDDLES OF WATER RUSH WORDS,  
YOU CAN HEAR A MUFFLED EXPLANATION.  
LIKE BITS AND PIECES STUCK BEHIND THE GUMS,  
LIKE FOOD,  
JUST NOT QUITE CLOSE ENOUGH TO REACH.  
YET YOU DO.  
WHEN THE FINAL ENDINGS COME,  
WHERE THE LIPS MEET,  
THE SWEET SILENCE  
GLUES ITSELF LIKE THE TONGUE TO THE ROOF OF A MOUTH.

# TOLERANCE ISN'T BLISS

TOLERANCE IS BITTER ON THE TONGUE.  
IMPERFECTION,  
ONLY APPLIES TO THOSE WHO LET IT.  
THAT'S WHAT MY DADDY SAYS.  
EACH NEW BRUISE,  
OR SCRATCH,  
IS POUNDED INTO ME WITH LOVE.  
DADDY'S LOVE TO BE SPECIFIC.  
CLENCHED FISTS REMAIN HALF-DRAWN,  
UNTIL THEY'RE NOT  
AND YOU'RE ANGRY  
BECAUSE DADDY DIDN'T TEACH YOU HOW TO FIGHT BACK.

# POKER GAME

IF I STAY STILL,  
THEN THE RUSHING WATERS WILL BE WINDLESS.  
IF I SLOW DOWN,  
THEN MY LUNGS WILL FOLLOW.  
BARGAINING WITH DECEITFUL ACCEPTANCE.  
CRAVING CHANGE,  
IF ONLY,  
AND NEXT TIME.  
WHEN SPARKS FLY FROM SALTY TEARS,  
AND LONG NIGHTS.  
WHEN THE FROWN LINES DROWN OUT THAT ONCE BRIGHT  
PERSONALITY.  
ON EDGE.  
COMMITTING TO FALL,  
PRAYING FOR CHANGE.  
ALL MY BARGAINING CHIPS ARE GETTING USED UP,  
AND I'M IN DEBT TO MY OWN POKER GAME.



# CRACKED

DIAMONDS RUSTING,  
LIKE YOUR BROKEN HEART.

# I AM

I AM ENOUGH.  
I AM WILLING.  
I AM DESERVING.  
YOU DIDN'T TRY.  
YOU DIDN'T SACRIFICE.  
YOU HAVEN'T WON.  
I AM BEAUTIFUL.  
I AM INTELLIGENT.  
I AM WORTH IT.  
YOU ARE UGLY.  
YOU WERE DUMB.  
YOU WEREN'T WORTH IT.  
SO WHY AM I THE ONE TO SUFFER?

# DYSFUNCTIONAL

CRINKLES IN THE OVARIES,  
SQUARE  
INSTEAD OF ROUND.  
SLIME BUILDING AT THE RIDGES.  
A MOTHER'S EGGS,  
POUNING THE BROKEN WALLS,  
UNTIL BLOOD SEEPS THROUGH.  
KNIFE-LIKE PAINS,  
PUNCHING AT HER INSIDES.  
CARVING ITS SIGNATURE.  
CURSIVE LETTERS INSCRIBED ON EACH,  
BROKEN EGG.

# LET THE DAY FALL

SODA CAP CRUSTED WITH DIRT.  
RED SNOWFLAKES,  
QUIET RAIN,  
BEAT BOXING.  
BROKEN TONGUE.  
FOLLOW THE ALLEYWAY,  
A BRIDGE TEN FEET HIGH.  
TWICE IN DIAMETER.  
AK'47 ROUNDS BLASTING,  
HEADLESS BODY,  
BRITTLE NAILS.  
LET THE DAY FALL.  
LET THE DAY FALL.

# PAPER DOLLS

YOU'RE PAPER THIN.  
WEAK AND USELESS.  
STICKING TO ME LIKE 5 DOLLAR NAILS,  
GLUE MADE OF CHEAP PLASTIC.  
IF YOU WERE A CANDLE  
THE FLAME WOULD BURN SMALL,  
AND LAST LIKE A MAN'S ORGASM.  
DO NOT ASSUME MY ROLE.  
DO NOT ASSUME I AM COMPLACENT.  
I AM NOT.  
FUCK YOUR DICTATOR RHYMES,  
AND YOUR SQUANDERING GAMES.

# MOTHER DUCK

MOTHER DUCK WAS HER TAG.  
NOW IT IS #264 ON A PRISON SLATE.  
BLUE FEATHERS,  
LIKE HER CYANOSIS SKIN.  
NOW PALE GREEN FROM MEDICATIONS.  
HEROIN,  
COKE,  
OR HENNESSY.  
SMILE,  
WEEP,  
SHOUT,  
SCREAM.  
PHOTO HOUR,  
BACK DROP.  
BOTH BLACK AND WHITE.

# BREAKING ICE

BLACK ICE CRACKS UNDER PRESSURE.  
GLACIAL WATERS RUSH TO THE SOUND OF THE DECAYING EARTH.  
PENGUINS SLIDE,  
AROUND THE DYING YOUTH.  
SNOWFLAKES BECOME SOUR,  
VINEGAR-LIKE,  
TO MATCH THE TASTE OF UNWELCOME EVENTS.  
• THE BLACK ICE CONTINUES TO CRACK.

# MARK ME




MARK ME.  
STRETCH MARKS,  
INCHING ALONG THE CURVES OF MY THIGHS,  
GROWING TOO FAST,  
TOO LONG.  
I USED TO WATCH THE TELEVISION,  
AND TRACE THOSE LINES UNTIL IT CHANGED INTO  
MY REAL SKIN.

MARK ME.  
THE CHUNKY SCAR ON MY RIGHT KNEE IS FROM THE FIRST  
TIME I SHAVED.  
BECOMING A WOMAN,  
AND ACTING LIKE ONE WERE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.  
NOW MY STRETCH MARKS CLAW UP MY STOMACH,  
TRYING TO TOUCH MY BREASTS,  
BUT JUST  
BARELY  
REACHING.

MARK ME.  
AT NIGHT,  
THE SCABS ON MY CHEST REOPEN.  
AS IF I AM BORN AGAIN,  
EXCEPT WITH MORE BLOOD.

MARK ME.  
I AM NOT THE SAME PERSON,  
AND YET I AM.



# TIME CONSTRAINTS

NOTHING MATTERS LIKE THE PRESENT.  
WHAT ABOUT WHEN THE PRESENT  
SEEMS LIKE THE FUTURE,  
AND THE PAST  
BLENDED.  
LIKE AN ART PIECE,  
YOU STUDY TO DECIPHER.  
IGNORE THE BUMPS.  
THEY CAN BE SMOOTHED OVER.  
THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER.

# JUNE BUGS

HUMIDITY CLAMPS DOWN ON THE SKIN.  
STICKING LIKE TACKY GLUE.  
GNATS SWIM,  
AND LINGER IN SODA CANS.  
TREES HANG FORWARD,  
SHADOWING THE BURNING RAYS.  
RIVERS FLOW LAZILY,  
FOR FEET TO BE DIPPED IN.  
DANDELIONS GATHER,  
REMAINING UNPLUCKED.  
JUNE HAS COME.

# FOLDED THOUGHTS

FOLDS OF THE BRAIN,  
TURN OVER,  
AND OVER.  
INFORMATION  
SPIRALING  
DOWN.  
SOME SCATTERED.  
OR HIDDEN DEEP,  
IN THE DARK MATTER.  
THE FOLDS BECOME WRINKLED.  
WRINKLED WITH TIME.  
ALL THAT EMPTY SPACE,  
DRIES IT OUT MORE.  
UNTIL THERE IS NO MORE ROOM.

# PETER PAN

PETER PAN WAS NOT A LOST BOY.  
HE NEVER WAS.  
NEVERLAND'S ADVENTURES  
WERE LONELY.  
AS DAYS BLENDED,  
CHASING SPECIAL MOMENTS,  
TIME BEGAN TO CREEP.  
EVEN IF PETER PAN NEVER GREW UP,  
I DID.  
PETER PAN WAS NOT A LOST BOY.

## MY NEXT LIFE

RE-INCARNATION WOULD BE BETTER,  
DIFFERENT.  
SOCIETY TOO.  
EXCEPT HELL'S RAGING WATERS,  
SLOSH AROUND A HUMAN'S INSIDES.  
SEVEN LEVELS OF SIN,  
EQUAL  
REAL CHOICES OF SELF.  
HEAVENS DOVES DO NOT SWIFTLY FLY,  
BECAUSE THEY ARE CAGED.  
CAPTURED BY THE INABILITY OF SELF-POWER.  
LEFT WITH SELF-REFLECTION,  
BARRIERS BETWEEN THE TWO.  
IS IT THE WILL TO CHANGE,  
TO COMPROMISE,  
TO BEND?  
GHOSTS CARRY THE BURDENS OF LIFE,  
RELIVING IT  
AGAIN  
AND AGAIN.  
MY SPIRITUALITY CANNOT FIT INTO A BOX,  
IT IS EVER SPREADING,  
LIKE AN UNCHECKED PREDATOR IN THE WILD.  
NO DEGREE OF SEPARATION AND CONFORMED RELIGION CAN  
CHANGE THAT.

# CROWS NEST

A CROWS NEST,  
PERCHED ON A WILLOW TREE.  
EMPTY.  
COVERED BY DUST.  
EACH SIDE,  
FRAYED,  
BOTTOM MATTED.  
IT NEEDS TO BE UNTANGLED.  
TO RESTART,  
TO REBUILD.  
MY CROWS NEST IS EMPTY.



# MISSING STICKS

NO MORE STICKS TO PICK UP.  
THEY'VE FALLEN DOWN A WELL.  
SURROUNDED BY,  
CRUMBLING BRICKS.  
DARK.  
BARELY FLOATING,  
BUT STILL VISIBLE.  
NO MORE STICKS TO PICK UP.



# PSYCHE

I AM CHAOS.  
BURNT OUT,  
REGRETFUL.  
CRAVING THE STARS  
AND  
SKY.  
HALF-IN,  
HALF-OUT,  
OF THE BEACHY SAND.  
I AM ENVELOPED BY SUSPENSE.  
SENSIBILITIES,  
DEMENTED.  
MY TAP IS DRIED OUT.  
NO BALANCE.  
CHAOS IS ME.

# SISTER, SISTER

SISTER IS MUDDLED,  
CORRUPTED EVEN.  
MOVE ON,  
FORGIVE,  
BUT SHE NEVER WANTED IT.  
DOESN'T DESERVE IT.  
SISTER WALKS THE BROKEN LINE.  
DRUGS,  
THEFT,  
AND MANIPULATION.  
SHE CUTS TOO DEEP.  
LOST TOO MUCH.  
YET IT WAS NOTHING BUT AN EMPTY BUCKET OF LOVE TO BEGIN  
WITH.

# FALSE JUSTICE

JUSTICE HASN'T PROGRESSED.  
RIGHTS OF MANY DENIED.  
UNWANTED CHILDREN.  
MAYBE THEY'D HAVE WANTED THE ABORTION,  
INSTEAD OF A BROKEN SYSTEM.  
CRIMINALS WALK,  
THE INNOCENT LOCKED IN CAGES.  
IT ISN'T BALANCED.  
THE ROLES OF SOCIETY CHANGE,  
GEOGRAPHICALLY.  
POOR ARE PUNISHED,  
THE RICH BENEFITS.  
IMMIGRANTS ARE ALWAYS THE FIRST TO BE HELD  
ACCOUNTABLE.  
ARE WE REALLY FREE?

# THE ROAD

THE GRAVEL ROAD,  
STRETCHES FOR MILES.  
CHASING TO BE PAVED.  
PLAYING HOPSCOTCH,  
BETWEEN THOSE DASHED LINES.  
THERE ARE SPECIAL CURVES THAT BEND,  
MANIPULATE SIGHT.  
RIDGES,  
THAT CAN'T BE UNDONE.  
THE ROAD.



# WRITING ON THE WALL

THERE'S WRITING ON THE WALL.  
CURSIVE LETTERS,  
BLOODY WORDS.  
EVERY SYLLABLE CONGEALED.  
A STORY UNFINISHED.  
SOMEONE'S LAST WORDS,  
LEFT TO ROT.

# UNTOUCHABLE

FIRE AND WATER,  
DO NOT MIX.  
BUT WE DO.  
BUBBLING WATER,  
SMOKY FIRE.  
ALMOST DESTRUCTIVE,  
BUT NOT THE END.  
WHEN WE TOUCH,  
WE MELT.  
MY FLAMES NO LONGER TOO GREAT,  
YOUR WATER,  
STEAMING.  
THEY SAID WE WERE UNTOUCHABLE.  
THEY SAID WE DON'T MIX.  
UNTIL WE DO.  
THEY SAID YOU'D EVAPORATE,  
AND I'D DISAPPEAR.  
MAYBE THEY'RE THE UNTOUCHABLE ONE'S.

# SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN LINES

DAY ONE,  
DISAPPEARED INTO MYSELF,  
LURKED IN THE BACKGROUND OF PEOPLE.

DAY TWO,  
HID AS A STOWAWAY,  
ON MY OWN ISLAND.

DAY THREE,  
STARTED COUNTING TIME,  
WITH A BROKEN WATCH.

DAY FOUR,  
TAPPED MY FOOT,  
TO MY OWN OFF BEAT.

DAY FIVE,  
SMILED AT MEMORIES,  
THAT RAN TO MEET MY EYES.

DAY SIX,  
THOSE SAME MEMORIES,  
WASHED BY A FLOOD.

DAY SEVEN,  
SEVEN DAYS,  
SEVEN LINES.  
TRACED THEM,  
UNTIL TREASURE WAS REVEALED.



# MISFIT

CHILDHOOD FRIENDS,  
WERE MY GROUP OF MISFITS.  
WE GREW UP.  
WE GREW TOGETHER.  
THOUGHT I WAS THE LEADER,  
WE CREATED OUR OWN HISTORY.  
NOW,  
THERE'S A SHIFT IN OUR MISFIT BAND.  
MY PUZZLE PIECE'S EDGES ARE CHANGING.  
I NO LONGER AM ATTACHED.  
NO LONGER INCLUDED.  
WE GREW MORE,  
BUT NO LONGER TOGETHER.



# HARD GOODBYES

HOW DO YOU SAY GOODBYE TO SOMEONE STILL BREATHING?  
GLASSY EYES POUR THROUGH,  
SAME FIGURE SILENTLY SITTING,  
HALF OF THEM MISSING  
HALF OF THEM WITH THE LIGHTS OFF.  
THE ROPE IS TUGGING THEM  
FARTHER DOWN.  
CRAWLING AFTER THEM.  
NOTHING TO CLING TO,  
NO ROPE GUIDE.  
HOW DO YOU SAY GOODBYE TO SOMEONE STILL BREATHING?

# TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN.  
ALARMS BLASTING FULL VOLUME.  
AN EAGER YEARNING FOR SERENITY.  
NO STOP SIGN IN SIGHT.

COLD SWEATS,  
PUT THE WIND UP SHAKES.

DISQUIET FALLS APART LATE AT NIGHT.  
OVERREACTING AGITATION THAT BREWS. [   
MISGIVINGS RIDE THE TENSION.

CHARGING HEADSTRONG,  
TO PRESERVE,  
TO PROTECT,  
FROM UNSETTLING WOUNDS.

# A HAUNTING

SONGS THAT BURROW IN THE CHEST CAVITY.  
LOW SPIRITED MOTIVATION  
SLOWLY ROTTING.  
CASCADING TEARS,  
FLOWING BLUE.  
DRINKING DEFLATING LUMPS.  
OUT OF SORTS THOUGHTS,  
MAKE YOU CRAWL  
THAN  
STAND.  
DOWNCAST JUST LIKE THE WEATHER.  
OBSESSIVE LOVER STORIES,  
LOCK ON  
TO TRAUMA.  
DISNEY RECOGNIZES IT BEST.  
GRIEVING FOR THE ABSTRACT,  
AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.  
TOO MANY SORRYS,  
WRITTEN IN A PRIVATE NOTEBOOK.  
KNOCK SIDWAYS PLANS,  
DEVALUE DAYS LOST.

# ALL OR NOTHING

ALL OR NOTHING,  
EGGS ALL IN THE BASKET.  
NOTHING ELSE TO ADD.  
MODERATION IS THE SECRET.  
BUT I'M ONLY ALL OR NOTHING.  
I'M EITHER EGGS ALL IN THE BASKET,  
OR WITH NOTHING ELSE TO ADD.

# DAY AT THE ER

SITTING IN SOMEONE'S LEFTOVER SHEETS,  
TABLESIDE SCATTERED WITH BROKEN NEEDLES.  
AN EMPTY ROOM,  
EMPTY VOID.  
AWASH,  
WITH A DEEP ACHE.  
WARY NOT TO TUG THE TETHER PULLING IN OPPOSITE  
DIRECTIONS.  
DOCTOR,  
NURSES,  
ABSENT.  
HOURS PASSED.  
NO NEW NOTES.  
LEAVING EMPTY-HANDED,  
QUIT WITH BRUISES.  
HAD TO DO A CUT AND RUN,  
NEVER COMING BACK,  
TO SOMEONE'S LEFTOVER SHEETS

# THE ORIGINS OF YOU

ORIGIN STORIES,  
EPISODES,  
THAT INFLUENCE PERSPECTIVE,  
CONDITION EMOTION.  
MY ORIGIN,  
IS CATAclySMIC,  
PUSHING AWAY THE LEFTOVER PEOPLE.  
OUTBURSTS ARE THINGS NOT READY TO BE HEARD.  
TRIGGER FOCUSED,  
CONTROL ISSUES,  
WHAT IS YOUR ORIGIN?

# SHATTERED PIECES



SHATTERED GLASS,  
TO MAMA'S IMAGE.  
RISKY BUSINESS,  
IT IS.  
MAMA DOESN'T NEED TO BE LIBERATED.



# THE SHADES

WINTER STORM COMING.  
ICY FROST COVERS THE GROUND.  
THE SHADES ARE IN NOW.





Jaxyn is a 24-year-old college graduate with a Bachelor's in Professional Writing, and an associates in Creative Writing. Her work has been featured in Common Ground, Dreaming of Ink, Small Talk, Ke'Lab, and was a finalist for the Gina Nutt Publication. Jaxyn has a passion for creative writing and is an avid reader.

**The shades define the intricacies of human emotion and connection. Each poem was crafted to connect trauma and personal hardships with an audience. Some accounts are based on real life, and others are metaphorical in meaning.**



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