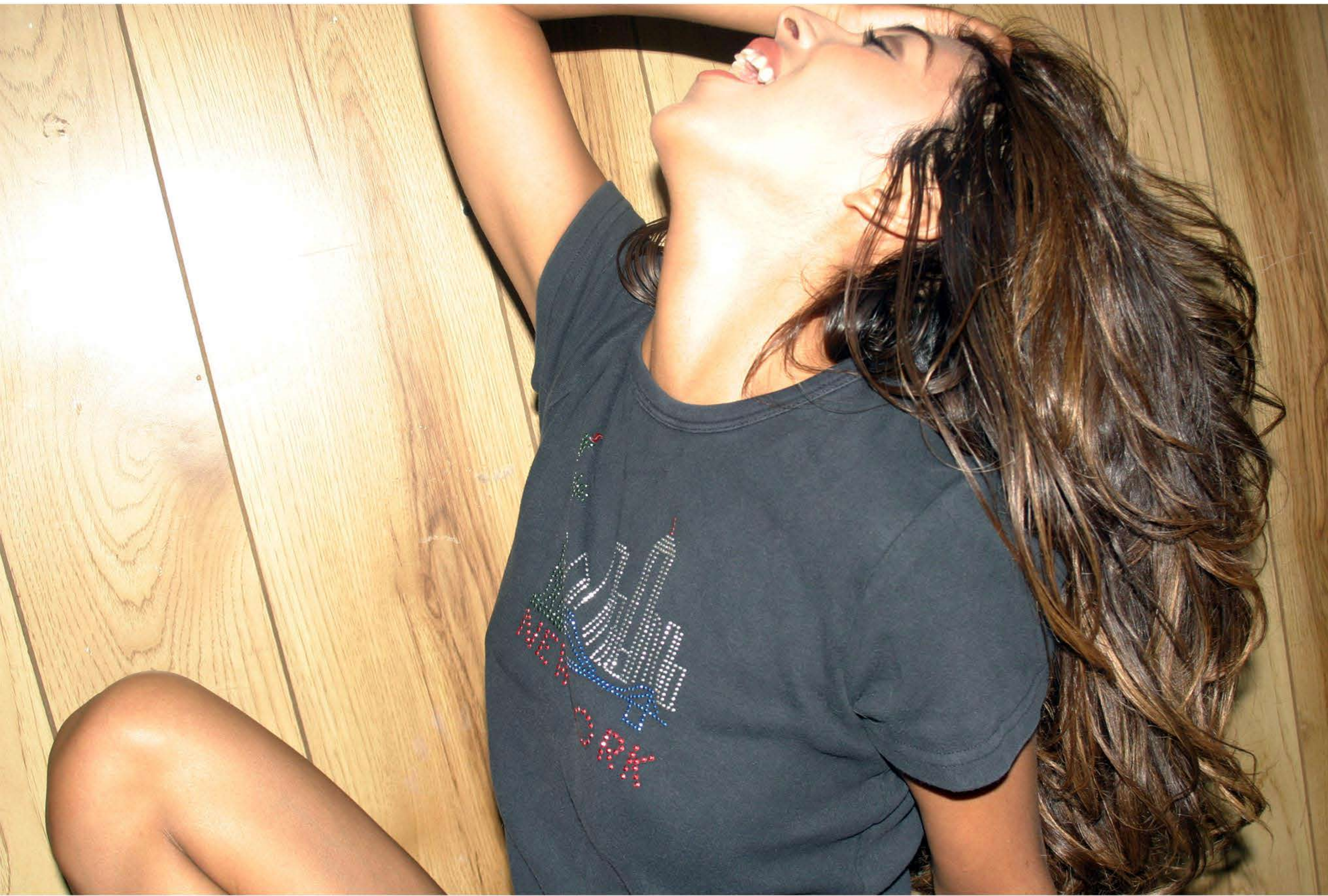




unsinn **ZINE**



VANESSA
the park motel









“Well, isn’t love primitive? A wild gift that you want to give.”





THERE IS something about the wood paneling aesthetic I like.

For my photography that is, not for my home.

It's very 1970s. Which, and I am being kind here, is likely the last time the sheets were changed at the Park Motel in Studio City.

But in spite of its sketchy housekeeping and even sketchier clientele, it is my favorite divey L.A. motel.

At least, so far.

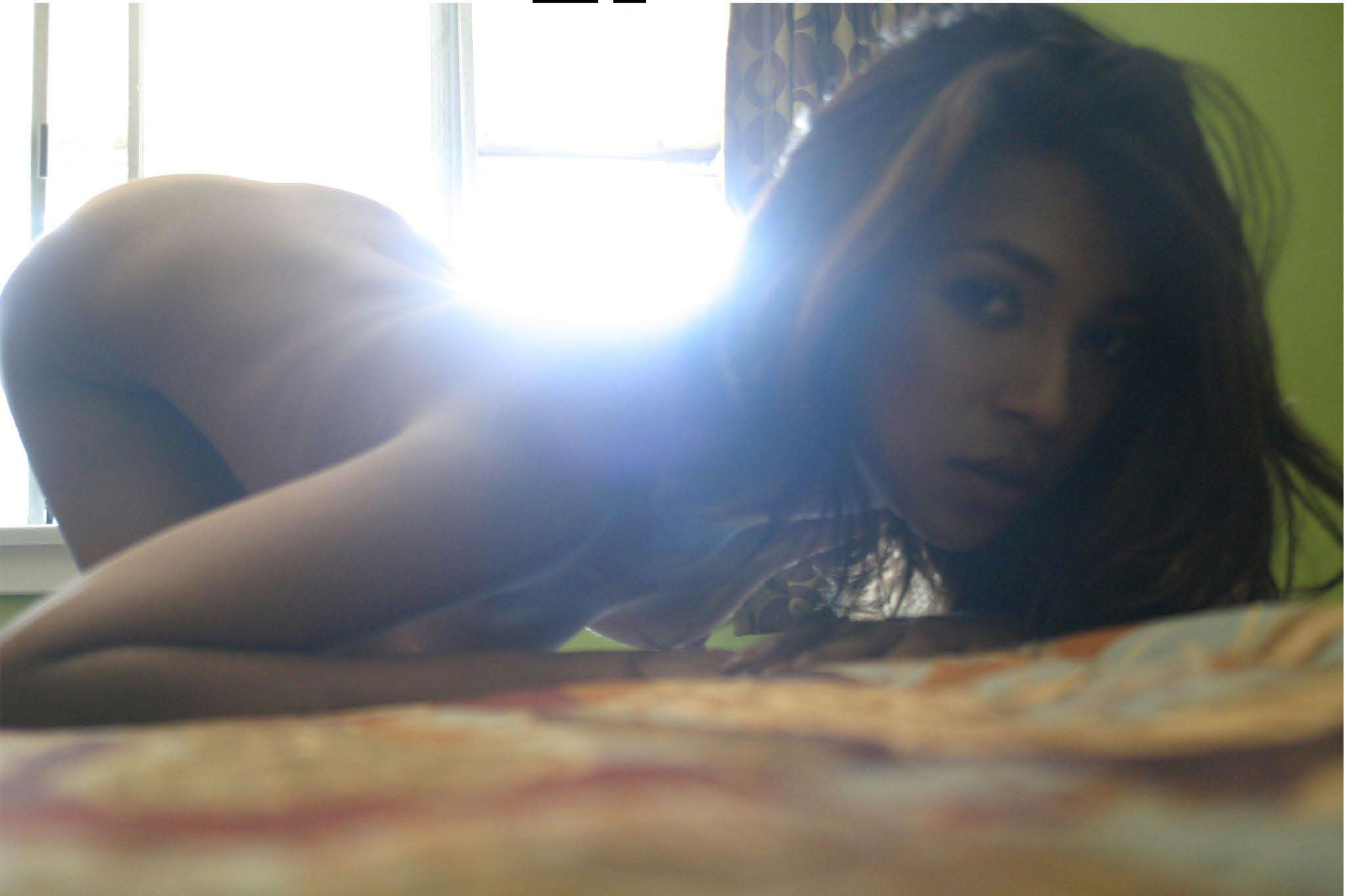
One time I shot there, the owner came running and screaming at me and accused me of shooting porn. Putting aside the probability the Park Motel's two primary revenue sources are prostitution and porn — so what the hell did she care, anyway — I then witnessed my make-up artist pull such an amazing Jedi Mind Trick on the woman to send her away that I still think of that MUA with the same reverence Mudvillians thought of Casey.

Before he shit the bed at the bat, that is.









THERE ARE, of course, potential pitfalls to shooting at “exceedingly off-brand” motels.

For instance, while it is **TECHNICALLY** true Vanessa was kinda **ALMOST** kidnapped and spirited away to an unknown fate on her way to our shoot...it wasn't my fault.

You can't just go walking into the parking lot of a place like the Park Motel and ask a random guy “are you Geoff?”

Because, if there's a random guy loitering in that lot...and if you look like Vanessa...that guy is gonna answer “yes.” And he's gonna invite you into his room.

And while it is possible he had only the most virtuous of intentions, it is also possible he was just waiting around for a lovely woman like her on whom to test out his new chainsaw dipped in rabies and broken glass.













NOT FRAIL, BUT FAILING

an original short story
based on **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION**
created by Gene Roddenberry

THERE WAS no counting how many times he had scrubbed his single skillet. And every time he did he thought to himself, in response to a question posed to him by a stubborn old captain long, long ago, "THIS is a task too menial for an entity."

He looked out the small window over his sink and into the endless darkness. Then, a brief flash, like a nuclear blast, filled the room, casting the shadow of his silver hair and hunched over body against the wall and through the glass out onto the snow.

It had been a lifetime since he had seen that pure, white light. But he still remembered what it was.

"Q," he said.

"Ted" was the reply.

He had been alone so long, neither the name he was given nor the name he was denied had sliced through the silence in an eternity.

The old man dropped his steel wool and turned.

"How long has it been, Q?"

"In your current state, Ted, that is impossible for you to conceive."

"Don't call me that. It's not my name."

"Of course it is. You can no longer comprehend being Q."

"But I can! My mind is as expansive as it ever was!"

"Crammed into that tiny, monkey skull? You know enough to know that isn't true, Ted."

"Stop it!"

"How about Lyle, then? Or Gregg...with two g's?"

The old man pondered these equally unacceptable options, then snorted in resignation. "What's in a name?" he concluded.

Ted crossed the tiny room to a rocking chair and sat in front of the fire. Cold. Hungry. Alone. All learned responses from an eternity of punishment, yet ingrained in his heart and soul. If he truly had either. Q sat down beside him.

"You're holding up well...for their standards," Q said. "Not frail, but failing."

"I like to think I'm getting more distinguished," Ted sneered. "Are you here to tell me all is finally forgiven?"

"I don't have to be omnipotent to know your lesson still hasn't been learned."

"But it has!" Ted crowed. "Q, I understand now!"

"You've squandered every chance. One opportunity after the next. The Continuum concluded you were irredeemable. And it hasn't changed its mind," Q explained. "Why should it? It sees all and knows all."

"Yet it HAS changed its mind. Again and again."

"Yes, in magnanimous selflessness...to give you every possible chance to change! Don't confuse mercy with fallibility."

"If they're so infallible, then how do you explain ME?"

Q just stared at him.

"Give me one last chance!"

"The only way to truly measure a last chance is in the absence of a subsequent one. You've had yours. It's over."

"Is this the lesson I was to learn, Q? Giving up on a brother?"

"We steered you back to them, time and again, hoping something of their fundamental nature would rub off."

"And it did. Their petty, childish vindictiveness. All-consuming self involvement. Their endless capacity for idle cruelty masquerading as evil. YOU made me what I am!"

"We gave you role models! You decided to set them afire them with a magnifying glass."

"It was repartee. A series of challenges to expand their minds," Ted defended. "Don't you know good, clean fun when you see it?!"

"Mercy. Self introspection. Capacity for improvement. You could have absorbed those qualities from the humans. But you didn't. Because you didn't have to. Suffering a complete lack of natural predators and unlimited by time and space, you made choices. You made your YOURSELF. And arrived fully-formed."

Ted slumped in his chair. He knew it was true.

“Someday, they will surpass us all,” he sighed.

“I know,” Q said. “We’ve seen that day, too.”

“I’ve been remiss as a host. Would you like some coffee?”

“Thank you, no.”

Ted and Q sit silently, watching the fire pop and dance.

“Why are you here, Q? If it’s simply to twist the knife, you’re undercutting your own point. No pun intended.”

“The pun is always intended,” Q said as he looked at Ted cuttingly. “Just to see you, old friend. The Continuum did what it had to do in stripping you of your powers...but that doesn’t come without sadness or remorse. You will die in that shriveled, aging shell. And you will cease to be.”

“Something no Q has ever had to face.”

“True. And that is a loss. Albeit a jaded one.”

Even after all this solitude, it was a thought Ted had not been able to envision. A lack of him in the universe.

“Cease to be,” Ted said. “I guess you’re right. It IS too much for a monkey brain to process.”

Q stands.

“I should be going.”

“Yes. You’ve looked upon the pitiful condemned man and snatched away his last ray of hope. What else is there to do?”

“I take no joy in this.”

“And you give no compassion. Maybe YOU should spend some time with the humans. I’m told it can be quite educational.”

“They say sarcasm is the last bastion of the truly witless, Ted.”

“Those who say that have usually just run out of ripping retorts.”

He smiled. And with a snap of his fingers, Q was gone.

Ted wallowed in his hopelessness, allowing it to invade every corner of his mind and seep slowly into every fiber of his decaying, mortal being. He then stood and stripped.

His wrinkled body naked in the orange firelight, he grabbed his skillet from the sink, opened the door and wandered out into the wind-whipped snow.

He snapped his fingers one last time, just to make sure his powers hadn’t been surreptitiously returned. But, when he failed to become a Rigellian condor, he surrendered to his fate.

Within moments, he was numb in his body and his mind. He leaned back against a tree, then slowly slid down the trunk and into the snow. The bark cut his skin to ribbons, letting the blood that then stained the pristine, white drift. He tried to cry, but no tears would come. He couldn’t remember if he’d ever cried, actually. He thought, perhaps, it was a human trait he could never master.

Or merely refused to indulge.

Then, as his mind closed in around him, a truth dawned on him no Q could ever comprehend. These immortal masters of time and space could never know this thought...this feeling...of leaving the physical body and expanding their consciousness back into the fabric of the universe.

They could never see what lie beyond the dimensions of existence.

They could never know the true omnipotence of becoming one with the stars.

Understanding the simple state of “not being” was beyond them.

It was their unlimited limitation.

And in the moment he transcended the Q, a single tear froze to the cheek of his corpse.

“How fucking cliché,” he would have thought.

UZ





VOODOO LAPDANCE.

That is the term I created to describe my work.

To somehow express the energy and spirit of my photography for those times I have to put it into words.

Of course, they say a picture is worth a thousand words. And I became a photographer, in part, so I wouldn't have to explain shit WITH words. But, I digress...

Intimate. Spontaneous. Provocative. Real.

These are the feelings I try to capture. And Vanessa was a perfect subject for it. Beautiful. Fearless. Sexy. Playful. Experimental. Joyful. And most importantly, fun.

Because, if I'm not having fun, I'm taking my toys and going home.

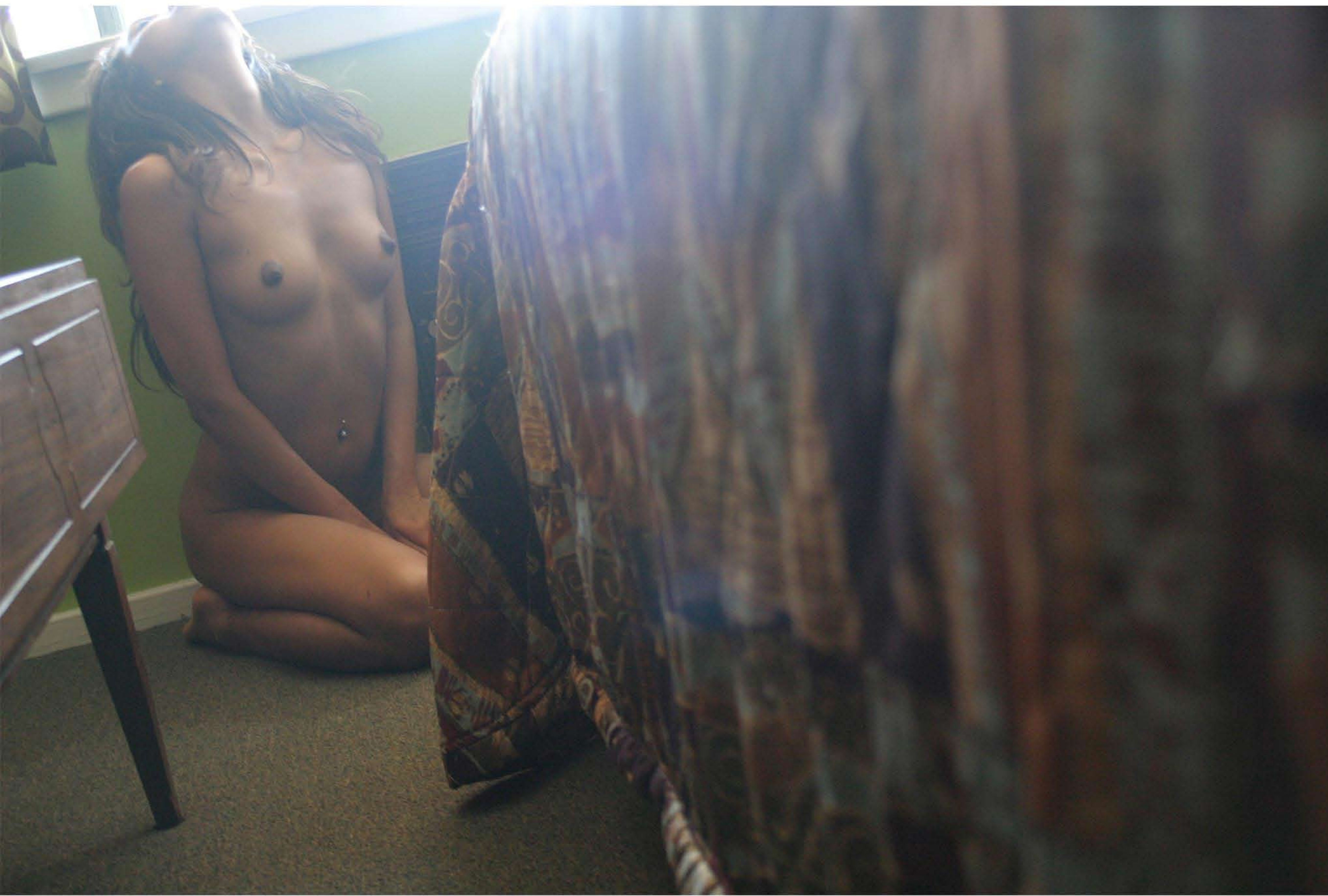
Naked ladies or not, life is way to long and dull to spend the time you can control NOT having fun.





















the darker side of Americana...

AMERICAN SLIDE

in the next **special** issue of

unsinn**ZINE**