

## Mar Fasihi Writing Portfolio

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## Life Through The Ages

**Age 5**, I want to read. I am a quiet child, my only friend is a girl with strawberry blonde hair that rides the bus with me. I see the world in her eyes. My favorite place is the classroom library and I want to understand the letters within the pages. It is through sheer determination that I teach myself how to read- English is not my first language, but I must learn.

**Age 8**, I want to fit in. My mother has pushed me to wear a scarf covering my hair and it makes me look even more different than I feel. She sends me to school with lentils and rice in Tupperware and I wish so badly for Lunchables and Doritos like the other kids. My brown skin, the colorful pashminas hiding the hair that makes me feel beautiful, I could never be one of the cool kids. The suburbs in Illinois weren't built for people like me.

**Age 11**, I want to check yes on the birthday invitations, I would do anything for friends. Everyone has their own groups when it's lunch period and I can tell that the niceties are just surface level when I sit down with them. I think that maybe, just maybe, no one will ever understand me.

**Age 13**, I want to be straight. I want to not feel so alone anymore. I look online if there have ever been any Muslim lesbians before. It feels like I am the first. *Great. Another thing that makes me different.* I know it is taboo, I know that my parents will never ever be okay with this new thing I am discovering. I feel like I am sinning by even thinking about girls. I want to wish it away.

**Age 16**, I want escape. I want it so dearly, I look into small college towns and dream about burner phones and middle of the night Ubers. The suburban bricked house closes in around me and it's suffocating. I take high school classes online and want to *just get out*. I cannot spend the rest of my life here like my mother wants. When can I be free?

**Age 18**, I want stability. I have been kicked out a week before the world locks down and now, I stay with family members until they find out about my sexuality through long voice messages from my mother and then I have to leave. I live out of my tiny 2009 coupe car, two suitcases and driving on broken shocks while DoorDashing food to make money. I don't

know where I will be next month and cannot even think that far ahead. Things just keep moving too fast. I want them to slow down.

**Age 21**, I want to find a reason to stay alive. I've been fired from the job I loved so dearly and my best friend has cut contact with me. I take my life savings, everything from the 40 hours a week the past three years, and I buy flights. I get on airplanes and see shows, *fuck it*, I go to Europe alone. Thousands of dollars disappear from my bank account in a matter of months, I think I'll keep going until I run out of money. Somewhere down cobblestoned streets in Paris, I find myself again. Back in Chicago I apply to jobs with two hundred dollars to my name. I keep living.

Now, **age 23**.

What do I want now?

I have my freedom, my stability, I feel like it's okay to be myself as an adult in a big city. I've got everything I've ever wanted, looking back. There have been so many different *I wants* as I age. And here I am. Confident and brave. Not perfect, not all the way figured out, but man have I come a far way, and man am I sure I will continue to as I look to 24, 30, and beyond.

**i have this accent**

and it doesn't match  
my father's voice  
and it doesn't match  
the shade of my skin  
and i look in the mirror,  
it does not make sense to me.  
i grew up in this pale country  
8,000 miles away,  
where my dirt covered roots  
did not belong.  
raised up behind pale blue walls-  
no one on my block  
looked quite like i did,  
talked or ate quite like me.  
so i tossed my food away  
i practiced my new voice  
i twisted my history away-  
*'i don't want to be different.'*  
no one told me, no one warned me,  
how i'd long for the pieces  
of myself that i had long buried away.  
six feet under,  
my Pakistani roots  
did not stand a chance.

## 200 CAPACITY INTIMATE SHOW JUST DAYS AFTER A HEADLINING SOLD OUT SHOW OF 5,000 AT THE SALT SHED

CHICAGO, IL—Bleachers, the band responsible for the hit song “I Wanna Get Better”, have announced a show at the intimate Chase Lounge in the Chicago Theatre, just heels on their headline show at the Salt Shed. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, 100 fans will join the band on a Monday afternoon for a night of live music. This sale was exclusive to Chase cardholders and is the cause of the band’s love for small shows and care for their fans.

Jack Antonoff, lead singer of Bleachers, says, “Love Chicago to death. Cannot wait.” The band released their fourth album which is self titled on March 8<sup>th</sup>, which will likely be showcased in these shows. The tour that they are embarking on is called “From the Studio to the Stage”, as they showcase the instruments that are a huge part of their music and make their claim as musicians first and foremost. With two drummers and two sax players, this night with Bleachers is sure to be one of true live music.

The band is committed to low, fair, and transparent pricing, which is the reason that the show at the Chase Lounge was priced at just \$30 per ticket, without any hidden fees at all. “This tour means the world to me and I want to make sure everyone gets in the door feeling right,” says Antonoff concerning sales. The band also show a commitment to wanting fans to get tickets instead of bots or scalpers, which shows from the short turn around from announcement to ticket sale. They tweeted the announcement of the show as well as put it on their Instagram story at 9 a.m. CST, and tickets subsequently went on sale at 10, giving people just an hour head up. In this manner, they guaranteed that dedicated fans would be the ones to be in the know about the show. You can find tickets to the tour at <https://www.bleachersmusic.com/tour/> , although be warned, both Chicago shows have been sold out by the fanbase.

## **You, Yourself, and I**

Hi, my name is Mar, and welcome back to You, Yourself and I. This week, I wanted to dive into anxiety and how that can be a roadblock, self care, and why being able to do things alone is something that is so important to me.

So last Sunday, I knew I had to get out of the house, one way or another. I bought this couch in 2022 that I was so proud of buying with my own money, I'm a huge TV person, so it was definitely an investment. One thing about that couch, though- it sometimes becomes what I call my depression hole. I'll spend days in there if I'm not careful, barely getting up, napping and watching mindless TV with lifeless eyes. And as relaxing as that would be in theory, it's definitely not great for me mentally. Taking care of yourself can look like a lot of things- like, sure, if you need to lie vertically in front of some trash television, you should absolutely take that time! But part of self-care is also knowing yourself, your body and your mind, enough to understand what is and isn't good for you. Falling back into my couch cycle- it's definitely not healthy for me. This depression hole of mine usually happens on weekends, ones where I don't have any plans with friends and not a lot of motivation to leave the house. I think it's worse now that it's winter- it's freezing outside, why would you want to leave the warmth of your own bed?

But those weekends can get very overwhelming as well as meaningless, and I hate the way that I feel afterwards. So I decided last Sunday to take myself out on a self-date, to go out into the city, god dammit! I woke up pretty early, gave myself a few hours to ease into it. My sister had told me about this Asian market by her school a couple weeks ago- after giving me this incredible drink she'd gotten from there, and I think that finding it again was half my motivation.

After I get there, I'm hit with a wave of terror and something else, rooting me to the spot as I take in how crowded the store feels, how fast moving everyone around me is, how uncertain I feel having never been there before. I don't know where to go and I feel extremely rushed as people stride past me with purpose and carts. I feel my heart speed up and realize that this is my anxiety, part of what holds me back from trying to do more things and live more life.

I've always gotten pretty nervous and overwhelmed when places are crowded, it's kind of a fear of mine, having to navigate one. Sometimes I think that my ideal situation is that no one else is in stores or coffee shops, it's just me, happy and free to explore life without added pressure of tripping over others or bothering them or making a fool of myself in public. I've always been a great driver until there's a car behind me- what if they think I'm

going too slow, oh no, I'm making them wait too long to turn, god, I'm sure they're pissed off at me! It's always something that's gotten in my brain a lot.

Needless to say, I care a lot of what other people think. It's a huge source of my anxiety, being perceived negatively by other people, and it does hold me back. But look, I'm here, aren't I, advocating for solo adventures, hoping to help build confidence when it comes to your independence? Clearly, my anxiety isn't stronger than my passion to be able to do things alone. It's always, always scary at first, but some part of me is strong enough to always overcome that first and march on towards second and third times.

My dad and I were talking the other day, and he asked me why I have to travel now, why can't I wait till after I've finished school? I had to think about it for a second- technically, I could still wait till I have more free time, save up for it instead of living paycheck to paycheck as I buy flights with any extra money I find. But I realize, well, I'll never be this young in my life again, and the one thing that I can full heartedly say is that I don't want to have any regrets. I want to be brave and bold for my future self, the one that looks back reminiscing and knows that I have done everything I can to live my life.

It's scary, you know. I went to a café this week after work alone, and the entire day, I was like- it would be so much easier to just go home when my shift is up. It's cold outside, it's a new place, what if it's way too crowded and I can't sit anywhere? I spend the whole day at work just worrying and wanting to just go home. But eventually I compromise with myself- okay, if it's scary, I'll just get a drink to go and leave, that's the WORST that can happen. And I'll still have a drink I enjoy, and I'll get a bit more familiar with the place! I look up the menu and figure out what I want, and I go to the café- and to my surprise, there are only like, 5 people in this decently sized place! It's so much easier to order, the barista tells me she'll bring my drink to my table, and I find a table with no problems. The WIFI password is even on the wall, so turns out that I don't need to ask anyone, and I open my laptop and get work done with no problem. I'd been building it up all day in my head for nothing, and I ended up having a really good time! Turned out, I didn't need to worry about it so much.

I went to this international snack place at the end of the week, I'd just seen it passing by and really wanted to see what they had. This one was more of a split second decision- I had a friend cancel our plans last second, not her fault, but I now had some extra time to spend alone and thought, why don't I just go check that place out. The outcome was pretty different than the café- the snack place had narrow aisles and lots of people coming in to try something new. But you remember, I had a very similar experience in the Asian market earlier in the week. I had to remind myself that these people aren't paying that much attention to me, they're probably not people I'll ever run into and remember again, and most importantly- I reminded myself to just breathe. I came here for a reason and I have



TIME to navigate around people, go back to aisles I want a better look at. To my surprise, I find a drink from the country I'm from, Pakistan, a drink that I haven't had in so long and that I absolutely loved as a child. The cashier notices my multiple cans of it when I'm checking out, says "No way, Pakistani? Me too!" We have a conversation talking about snacks from there and I walk out smiling, thinking that wow that interaction made my entire week! I felt so happy that I'd made the decision to go in the store and connect with a stranger like that, and that I have new experiences all the time by trying to live life to the fullest.

I think it's a lot harder for people with anxiety to get up the nerve to be able to do things alone. There are so many thoughts in our head, so many worries that hold us back from experiencing new things because we're so used to our every day comforts. I love going home to my heated blanket, ordering from the Mediterranean place down my block, watching the same few shows over and over again. It's comfortable, it's what I know. But I also know that I'll never experience anything new if I don't step out of my comfort zone. I have to remind myself, you know, that it's not like it's a war zone right outside of it. My favorite places were ones that were strange and unfamiliar once upon a time, so who's to say that I won't find more favorite places by going to try them? I don't want to limit myself, never try anything new. I think the best advice that I've ever been given was to try something that scares you every day. I never took it THAT literally, but it really helped me to put myself out there, to be like – okay, this is my one thing that scares me, I'm going to try it. I don't have to keep doing it or go again if I don't want to, I'm just gonna try. And just the simplicity of that helps me push myself.

What helps even more is that I grow confident in myself the more that I do a hard thing and survive, the more I fight my way through obstacles all by myself. It feels empowering to be able to say that I overcame struggles, even when it was hard. I think the biggest instance where this applies to me is solo travel. I'll dive into it more in the next episode, but one thing I've learned is man, something will ALWAYS go wrong! There have been obstacles in every trip I've taken, and I can sit here and say that I figured each and every one of them out by myself. I can sit here and say, look, I can survive anything, I have the courage inside of me when push comes to shove. And finding that power in me has been so important in lifting myself up when I need it the most.

One of the biggest things I like about being able to do things alone- I don't have to worry about how anyone else is feeling, I can make my own decisions for myself and figure out what I want. I don't know about you, but every time I hang out with people, I really want to make sure they're having a good time and I often put that above my own comfort or feelings. I remember the times that I took trips with an ex, and they were so temperamental

while traveling that I spent the whole time just trying to alleviate their mood. It was hard to agree on those trips, because what I wanted and what they wanted to do often differed. We had to come to a compromise, or one of us just had to be unhappy, and I feel like the best part of doing things alone? You NEVER have to compromise, because it's all about what you want, no one else. If you want to have an early dinner, or go into that shop and check it out, or if you crave pizza- no one's stopping you! No one's arguing with you! You have a lot more power in just deciding the things you want for yourself and going for it.

Something that's also huge to push me to do things alone is just the fact that in doing so, I get to enjoy my own company, figure out my own thoughts and get to know who I am inside. I think that it's so good to date yourself, in a way, because you absolutely deserve that. The more you get used to yourself and your own thoughts, you start to fall in love with yourself, and want to go that extra mile for yourself.

So I wanna talk about self care a bit to expand on this- I feel like showing yourself this care, this love, that most people wait until they find a partner to feel- it's just so special knowing that you can do that for yourself. Dating is so hard, even finding real genuine close friendships is hard, and it always takes time to find people that click like that for you. I feel like in the past, I felt like I had to wait around wasting time for that perfect person to come and treat me well. I wanted love so badly, to be with someone who bought me flowers for no reason or took me to new places to try food or told me that I'm enough. And then I realized that I don't have to wait or force those expectations on someone. I can do all of that for myself.

Now, it's not like you just jump into self care and figure out how to be that person for yourself immediately. It took me a lot of work to love myself at first, to be able to laugh at myself and think, man I love the way my brain works, I think my mind is amazing. It's a process, you've gotta start with little things, just getting to know yourself more and figuring out what your body needs at certain points. Treat yourself, tell yourself words of affirmation, like oh, I deserve this snack! I was so smart figuring that tricky problem out just then! Give yourself that extra love that you absolutely deserve.

Something that's always helped me is that you gotta treat yourself the way that you treat your friends- you are your own worst critic most of the time. I wouldn't be awful to my friend for making a small mistake at work, so why am I beating myself up for one? We're always really quick to defend the people we love, but for some reason, it's hard to extend that gentle hand towards yourself. I know that personally, I'd be making excuses for a friend that say, got a talking to from a boss, and I'd be trying to make them feel better and doing whatever I can to lift their spirits afterwards. But if that happened to me, if my boss had told me I'm doing something wrong and that it wasn't okay, I feel like I'd be down in the dirt, just

wallowing over my mistake so upset. I'm really glad that I'm someone so involved with self care these days because although that's how the situation would start, being really upset, I also know that I'd give myself the space and time I need to move past it. I have those resources for myself when it comes to tough situations, and the goal is being able to be there for yourself in tough times like that.

I think that self-care is a huge first step into doing more things alone, because it's the initial thing that you need to be able to say for yourself that you want to do things to make you feel better, that you're giving yourself the time and things that YOU want. It's an important baseline to have, it forms the motivation to be able to get out and know that whatever happens, you're going to be there for yourself. So I ask you, what does your self care look like? Candles and a warm bath? A night out with friends? Escaping into a hobby? Even though we've learnt it's certainly not mine, is self care lying in front of a tv for you?

I hope that you all challenge yourselves to do something alone this week, even if it's small in a way like grabbing a morning coffee and sitting in the café for a bit, or simply taking a walk. Take care of yourself through everything life throws at you. You deserve to be that perfect person for yourself. Thank you for listening, and see you back here soon for another episode of You, Yourself and I.

## **Driving Music**

Mallrat 2019

MP3

Mallrat takes a risk on her latest EP, *Driving Music*, by writing extremely transparent lyrics that display her heart on most of the songs. Grace Shaw lends not only her voice but also her mind to the record, producing most of the songs as well as writing. She craves to be understood in the gentle croon of her voice behind the chords of guitar and heavy thuds of drums. A toe is dipped into the pool of nostalgia in this EP, and Shaw treats these songs as raw confessions to the world. She longs for companionship and to not be left alone, to be loved back, and hides this as she sings of everyday moments such as spending time with a loved one or making coffee in the morning.

*Driving Music* is bittersweetly true to its name. It has a serene feel to it, the beats casual enough to roll one's windows down on a nice summer day and listen to it while going 45 on a familiar road. However, it also takes on the overthinking essential part that comes with driving; listeners will reflect on love and trust and who in particular they may be driving to. That is the part that truly stands out in this EP—the emotion in the words, the manner in which honesty overflows as human connection is desired.

Most songs on the record have a soothing beat, but do not let that fool you; when listened to closely, the lyrics reveal painfully vulnerable longing concealed in the build up of background music. At the beginning of “Intro”, we listen to a chorus of voices hum into our ears as twangy chords from what seems like a xylophone play. As Mallrat's vocals chime in, the song presents itself as a lullaby as the humming builds and the voices sway as if to calm listeners. With only two verses, the song is the very embodiment of ‘short but sweet’. In the lines “Wanna hold your

hand/ but I just hold my tongue. Oh, I understand/ you're already in love,” Mallrat reveals this gentle ever-present ache in her heart for someone without a face.

Deeply personal lyrics continue into “Drive Me Round” as a gentle synth driven beat is laid down. The lines “Something in your tone / said Gracie, I’m alone” seem to be taken directly from the artist’s experience, and her inclusion of it makes it seem as if she is singing purely to one single person. Grace is Mallrat’s first name, and the mention of it in the lyric appears to be a personal nickname from someone deeply loved by her. The song is an overload of emotion as she struggles back and forth with her feelings for them. Her voice is tinged in melancholy through her tussle of calling this mystery person. It is a song in which you may lay your hand on your heart at a stoplight whilst driving, touched by how wistful the lyrics seem. Two minutes into the song, the beat changes much more upbeat as we hear synth-y layers while vocals overlap, signifying that Mallrat has joined the person she is singing for. “And ya drive me ‘round”, she chants as the growing beat shows her happiness from simply sitting in the passenger seat next to this person. Listeners can feel her heart ache throughout this song, which sticks to the overall theme of overflowing emotion and the vulnerability that Shaw tucks between easy going melodies.

The lead single on the track, “Charlie”, is a largely confessional song that boils down to one major theme: love. Pure, simple, unfiltered love. It seeps into listener’s ears as gentle backing vocals build up to warm and fulfill the heart. Mallrat starts humming at different parts of the song to help overlap sounds as everything comes together. The overall effect feels as one might when everything in their life is falling slowly into place. This song is the embodiment of driving down a familiar neighborhood, strolling to a stop at a red sign, and feeling close to home. The instrumental aspect grows as the song does, the soothing backtrack of a piano growing into

everlifting strums of a guitar and gentle snaps. A trademark synth beat--as Shaw's music seems to have to have one in every song--drops as the chorus starts over halfway into the song in order to truly draw out the hopeful message of it all. The sound matches the lyrics; she sings of coffee and tea and wanting to be loved as loyally as her dog does, waiting at the door for her to come home. Even in the first lines, in "And I know it's bad / but I just can't wait / till you feel in love / when you see my face", Mallrat lets us in on her innermost desires. She even divulges her parent's sour relationship and the way she raised herself, trusting whoever may hear her confessions. Similar to other songs on the record, this song is a reveal all, the artist humming her secrets into listener's ears.

One track that does not fit the norm is "When I Get My Braces Off", which dives in with a taunting tone and heavy bass. It is the epitome of teenage angst, angry at everyone and everything the world has to offer. The chorus is almost hypnotic, repeating "Bet ya hate what I like" over and over, directly feeding us thoughts from an angry girl's mind. Many of the themes mentioned in the song are very teenage-esque, including having low self-esteem ("I swear I can hear a voice that's telling me I'm ugly") and longing to be different ("Wanna dye my hair blue, wanna cut it all off"). The girl singing appears to have a lot of aggression, especially against school; in the second verse, she recites, "They think I've got potential, I think they got the wrong girl, I'm skippin' school like jump rope". There is a clear set mindset against most of the things in her life. It's apparent that there is a darker edge to the song that doesn't show up in other songs. While listening to the album, diving into a very serene state that the rest of the EP envelopes us in, the heavy beat of "When I Get My Braces Off" definitely is a divergent surprise. This song takes a turn from the sincere lyrics included in the rest of the record and does not quite

belong. The obscure way of relation it may have to the EP is in the name of it, *Driving Music*, as the song is something you may listen to as you speed down the highway.

When the record is listened to carefully, it shows that Shaw attempted to sing from a different perspective in “When I Get My Braces Off” that plays into the wistful song that is “Stay”. Note that this laying-in-bed-all-day daydreamy song contains a lyric: “And I’m not sure when or why / my little sister started smoking”. In contrast, “When I Get My Braces Off”’s thudding beat is explained by the lines “Barely even smoking / but my sister says I must stop.” Further, “Stay” mentions that the sister’s smoking makes sense to her mother, and in “Charlie”, Mallrat mentions that her “mum she smells like cigarettes”. Her mother’s affinity for smoking and approval of her younger sister doing so link up in lyrics, showing listeners that this is the same mother being mentioned in various songs. She also mentions in the lyrics that she is “sixteen in October”, bringing a fresher and younger mindset into play. Looking at the clues we find in the lyrics, it is clear; this song contains lines straight from the view of an angsty pent up younger sister. It intertwines with “Stay” to bring listeners a break from the assumed main character’s longing and pent-up feelings to introduce us to heavier tones of instruments. It is a unique idea and listeners enjoy putting the piece together on this, but the song is still a staler derivative of the EP.

Mallrat delivers lyrics with a light lullaby tone, her rhythmic voice immediately pulling in listeners. She has created a masterful EP that most stands out with its vulnerable messages concealed in the lines, and only stumbles when she attempts to delve out of this territory into a foreign perspective. Aside from “When I Get My Braces Off”—which frankly does not quite belong on the record, although it may be a good fit on another—the confessional soothing atmosphere of the lines fed to listeners make *Driving Music* a standout EP. Most of the songs

give us tender, romanticized every day moments disguised in chill synth-y beats; this is what Shaw does best, and what she should continue to do.



## **Our Secret Worlds**

When my sisters and I were young, you could almost see the tendrils of imagination swirling around us. At least, we would have thought as much.

My mother is a very religious woman, and she hated the thought of ‘influence’. She thought if we went outside, we’d be exposed to the world of partying, drugs, boys, and all the other horrible things out there. So we knew of work, school, the mosque, and a few of her friend’s houses, and that was it.

But how we longed for more. We wanted worlds, we wanted to be and go everywhere. So we found them within the walls of our beautiful prison, between papercuts and words beyond our knowledge. Oh, how we devoured books upon books. My sisters and I attended Hogwarts, stepped into wardrobes to see Narnia, and slayed monsters at Camp Half-Blood. The pages grew worn and tattered, but the magic was still there. We imagined ourselves going on great adventures when we could barely step outside.

Ramadan came every year, and it was a month of holiness. We had thirty days of fasting from sunrise to sundown and only thinking of God. Our mother forbade ‘American’ books this month, and we watched one of our biggest solaces fade away. It was time to discover another medium... we turned to writing, instead. Lina and I took our favorite series- Rainbow Magic Fairies- and added a brown Muslim character to represent ourselves. We were 8 and 10 respectively, and had a vision.

The writing continued beyond Ramadan as we found joy in it. I wrote about the things I loved and illustrated princesses and castles to go along with my words. I imagined being a child author and my books going worldwide... wouldn’t that be wonderful?

My younger sister, Amna, took one of my characters and wrote her into a different story. I yelled, I felt like something had been stolen from me. I was cruel at the time... I didn’t know that it was a compliment, that she thought I had written something so wonderful that she wanted more of it. We shared our stories and collaborated on others, and our imagination became something that connected us. We all wanted more from this world... more than the small lives we had come to know, anyway.

Now, Lina studies day and night for her degree in biochemistry. The only thing she writes is scientific formulas. I work as a preschool teacher and watch the kids create worlds that I now find harder to see. Amna enters college with the intention of living the life my mother kept us from, and our past slips away from us. Our imagination and our passion for storytelling brought us together. Now we move further apart as we grow older. Our brains sag from the weight of the world, from working and studying and growing up.

The time to imagine feels so far gone. Our adult lives and adult worries overtake all the time we used to have to escape into other worlds. But sometimes, in between working and sleeping and studying, we call each other and remember.

Preschool 3/24-3/28

Happy Friday, Preschool families!

### **New News**

This week was bittersweet as we bid farewell to Auden and wished him luck at his new school! Although we only got to hang with him for three weeks, it was such a nice time with him and we will miss him as he moves on to new adventures. I will definitely miss having my art buddy by my side even while everyone else finds interest in different toys! This week, the weather got a bit chillier, and we longed for spring weather to reflect the season, but rolled with the punches and kept venturing outside. We ended the week with a wonderful warmth and a promising weekend around the corner!

### **What Did We Do?**

Our space exploration was so intriguing to the kids- we decided that with Earth day coming, we could focus our interest on one planet... our own! On Monday, we started learning a bit more about what it has to offer us. I scrounged up some Sharpies and we all took a trip to the Pre-K bathroom where our big butcher paper lives to get a big slice of it. Back in the classroom, we gathered around and watched as I drew a big circle on the paper. We started talking about what the Earth gives us- to start off, I mentioned that it is our home, and it gives us air to breathe and water to drink. We really stressed the importance of taking care of it... because it is our only home, we can't just fly to Jupiter or Mercury! I asked kiddos what else the Earth has for us... and kiddos had a lot to say! Emma immediately exclaimed that it gives us presents. Asa had really great thoughts that we get food, water, milk, and finally... paint! Tommy and Naomi turned their thoughts to nature; Tommy mentioned leaves and Naomi talked about flowers, right on brand. Felix told everyone that Earth gives us cars, so I told him, hmmm, Earth gives us materials for people and machines to make cars! He responded, "Materials? Planet Earth gives us materials!" Hudson said something really sweet- his thought was "Love, we can be loved with our families." It was wonderful thinking about all the different things Earth has for us. Next, we chatted about the seven continents, which led to the discussion of the difference between North America and South America. Everyone learned that south meant down! The five oceans were part of our talk, as well as the equator, which we learned was the hottest part of the Earth running right through the middle of it. We took out the classroom globe to explore it and talk about all the different parts of the planet. Preschool was so intrigued by this discussion and learned so much!

We decided to make a big Earth to put up in the classroom to go with our giant castle!

When thinking about mediums, we branched out to try a different one: tissue paper! First,

we knew we had to put some base color on the Earth. We identified the two different colors corresponding to land and water: green and blue! Naomi was especially enthusiastic about differentiating what these two colors meant. Tuesday was another field trip, but this time we went upstairs to grab some paint! Kiddos love these sparing trips, especially because the windows look out to the playground on one side, and our classroom on the other. After peeking out at OT2 on the playground, we grabbed the colors we needed and headed downstairs to get started. I filled in the separate parts with color and asked friends if we could try painting blue where it was blue, green where it was green. Three year olds are not the best at staying in the lines, nor can they be expected to do so, so I knew they would just do their best at this task! True to form, we had some mishaps with water where land should be, but no worries, I fixed it up in a jiff at the end.

After painting the base colors, it was time to start prepping our tissue paper! On Wednesday, we took it out along with two bins and scissors. Friends started cutting it up, and then after I gave them the option to rip it with their hands, many of them abandoned scissors to take that route! Auden and Tommy particularly liked crumpling it up and experiencing that sensory feeling and texture. After sorting the blue and green pieces with our early math skills, we took them back out on Friday to start glueing. Some friends liked the gloppy liquid glue and watched it drizzle onto the paper, like Asa, Damali, and Hudson. Others preferred to use a glue stick to get an individual piece onto the paper, like Dru and Auden. We did our best to get as much paper on, but attention spans are waning so we took what we could get! What an exciting addition to the classroom, one we will put up in the room for us all to observe and reflect what we learned this week.

### **Gross Motor**

On Thursday, we stretched our legs for a walk! We went west towards Damen and strolled down Dickens to enjoy the 50 degree day. It was a very exciting day in the neighborhood- first off, we spotted a truck unloading. The kids hung on to the worker's every move, watching the back of the truck slide open! They could not stop asking, "What's going to happen?" We theorized about what could be inside the truck while a street sweeper rattled by us. On Damen, Asa let me know we were about to go under a 'tunnel' as we walked past a construction site. We turned down a quiet street and were met with the sight of a squirrel darting up a tree! Everyone stopped in their tracks as we watched it scamper from branch to branch, and then make a daring jump to another tree! Hudson mentioned that that wasn't safe for our bodies... so we chatted about how squirrels and humans can do different things with different bodies. Then, turning the corner, we saw a box of chalk and messages from lots of different people on the bricks by a house. I wrote 'Preschool' and Felix immediately called me out, telling me that it wasn't my house to write on! I tried to

explain myself... but accepted defeat to them, knowing we talk about keeping hands off other houses on walks. Going forward, we listened to birds chirping and took in the fresh air. We walked back to school at the perfect time to be able to go on the playground!

### **Quotes**

Felix: "This sticker is crunkled... Miss Mar, could you uncrunkle it?"

Auden: "You wanna go scoop sand with me?"

Felix: "I'm going to Japan in 24 years!" (We'll check back when you're 27, Fe!)

Have a great weekend!

Please continue to check on the bulletin board next to the sign in sheet any needed items your preschooler might need for their cubby! We also appreciate labeling everything and anything belonging to your preschooler so that it can be returned to you if accidentally misplaced by these silly kiddos.

-The Preschool Team