

The only person in my life who truly knew my mother's mother is a man I have never had a conversation with. She died when my mother was eight years old, too young to have understood her as an adult. Ten years later, my mother moved from Hungary to the U.S. to marry my father, and raise me. I heard Hungarian spoken as a child, but never fully learned it. When I was 16, I followed my mother on a trip to Hungary to see her father for the first time in a decade, and, she expected, the last time: he was elderly, and in poor health. I told myself that if I ever got the chance, I would learn Hungarian and visit him again, and learn from him about my grandmother, in their native tongue.

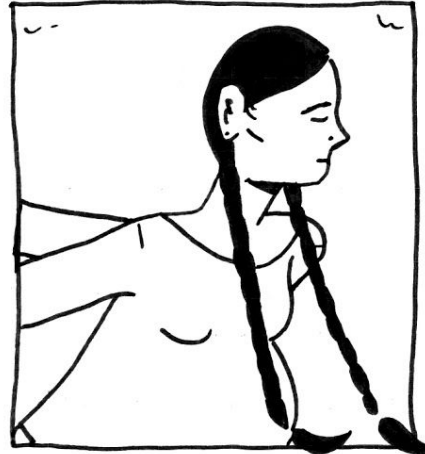
I had the opportunity to do so when I was 21, through my independent study abroad. I learned half my Hungarian from self-study before, and the rest by diving in and speaking, with my grandfather and his wife while I stayed with them in Budapest, with friends my mother had in high school, and with other artists of all generations that I reached out to independently. Through these conversations, as well as trips to museums and other cultural centers and smaller towns surrounding the city, I became fascinated with the national history that surrounded my family's history, and the troubling rise of the far right's anti-immigration stance in Hungary. I spent the summer surrounded by questions about heritage and identity. When I proposed my independent study, I dreamed of finding the answers to my questions about nationality, culture, language, and family. Instead, I found, amid my few answers, a lifetime of questions that has continued to drive my work since.

Portfolio (with notes)

23 MAY '19



THERE'S A PHOTO OF MY MOM
WITH LONG, LONG BRAIDS.



SHE WAS
PREGNANT
WITH ME
IN IT,
OR
MAYBE
MY
SISTER.

SHE'S PROBABLY MY AGE, A LITTLE YOUNGER.

I ALWAYS TOLD MYSELF SOMEDAY I'D GROW MY HAIR THAT LONG,
& ALWAYS WEAR IT IN BRAIDS.



I NOTICED HOW LONG IT'S GOTTEN
WHEN I BRAIDED IT THIS MORNING.



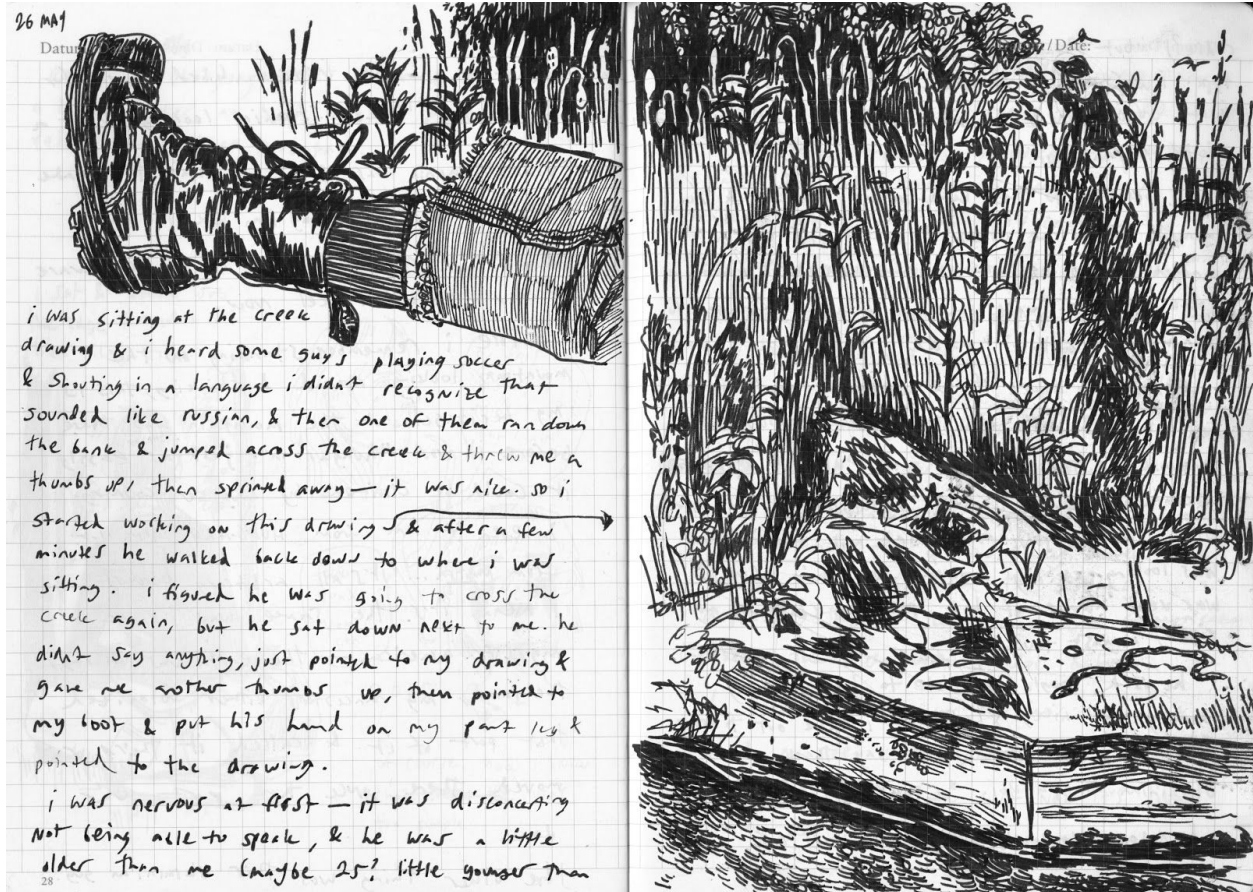
THIS IS THE
LONGEST IT'S
EVER BEEN.

& THE LONGEST TIME
I'VE EVER SPENT HERE.



& THE CLOSEST TO HER I'VE EVER FELT.

A diary comic I made after three weeks of staying with my grandfather in Budapest



Observational sketches and journal entry, sitting at the creek near my grandfather's house (the guy turned out to be Ukrainian, by the way)

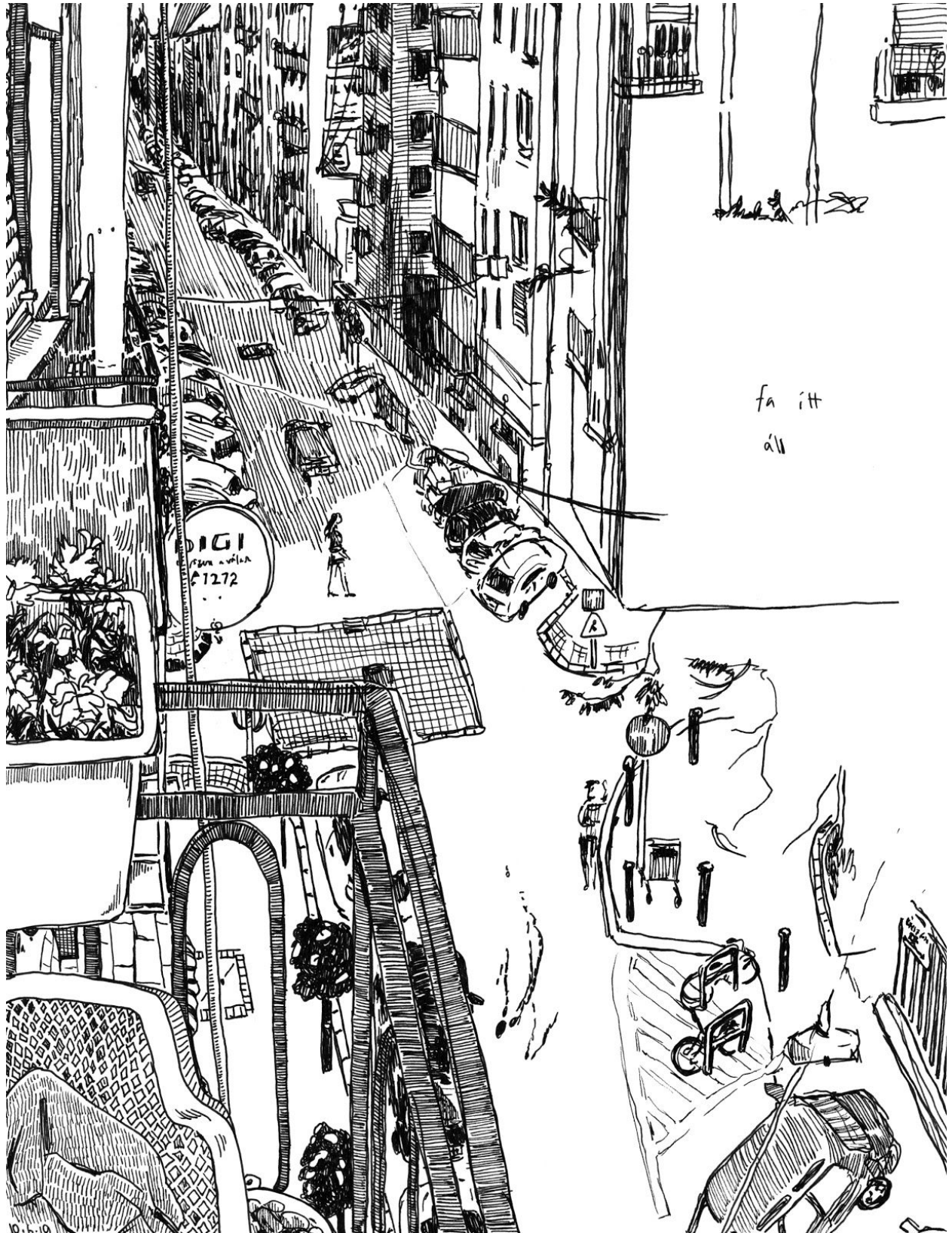


Observational sketch/comic made while staying at a queer feminist artist residency called Ways, in Gyula, Hungary (235 km from Budapest)

4 june 2019 - written at the nemzeti galéria

would you rather look at the sky
or a painting of the sky?
what do you think,
can you decide?
or just take a photo of both
for later
would you rather just look at a photo of the sky?
they say it's the same one they have in barcelona
me i'd rather
text my mom
& invite her to come watch the sunset
or the dirt collect under my fingernails
which would you pick?
i'm not being sarcastic
i don't think it's so obvious
from the castle the mountains
look just like a postcard
that wishes i were here
what's more beautiful,
seagulls or pigeons?
all of them breathing
getting dirty looks from tourists
we can only blink when we've photographed
every plaque in the museum
standing at the top &
closing my eyes to the view cuz
i can &
i'm tired
it's just as breathtaking on t.v.

A poem written overlooking the sunset on Castle Hill, Budapest



Observational drawing made while staying with my mother's high school best friend, in Budapest