

PLEASE: A Chapbook and Video

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**Abstract**

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*PLEASE* is a poetry chapbook and video which make use of rhythm, rhyme, and musicality to explore recurring themes and motifs in the life of the narrator; a modern twenty-four-year-old in the midst of a quarter-life crisis. The narrator finds himself fragmented between his struggles with mental health issues like OCD, substance abuse, self-doubt, and existential dread, while simultaneously finding moments in which he is able to affirm his self-worth. His propensity for avoidance and distraction is equally rivaled by an inescapable sense of clarity regarding his situation and mental state. The video accompaniment sees the author, Lee, performing each poem in various locations, with varying aesthetic choices.

# PLEASE

By Harry Lee

## Writer

It's cold in open water  
I won't read Hemingway  
to my daughter  
If I had one in the future

Hemingway was cute when  
he was younger  
But discriminating values is cuter

Under party streamers  
downing drinks  
decisions glisten  
and often fester  
like sentences with no meaning  
all clumsily strung together

Literary messages are  
nothing more than this book  
contains thoughts  
that you could cross reference  
with your diary

I'm subject to this sophomoric  
author vibe that follows me  
down the beach  
like a puppy

I don't feel alone  
when I read out loud  
I don't feel like I'm that cringy  
but I rarely feel all that  
proud

## Mental Health Awareness

I'm staring at my dumb brown eyes  
in the reflection  
of a photograph of me as a child

My therapist says  
there's something behind my eyes  
that stifles light  
She asks my reaction  
but I keep the convo  
light  
like a plastic lighter

All kinds of smoke's been  
blocking out the windows  
and immediate pleasure is  
nice in the moment

I pounce on moments cause  
my pleasure's gone  
as soon as I notice it

I even breathe and count back from 3

but I can never focus

enough to peel the layers

of old memories

like a rotting onion

end up crying in the kitchen

have to go for a run or something

And please don't buzz my phone

when I'm re-centering

I feel like the stereotype of a

“Sad white girl”

...like...

**Please:**

let me watch my shows

let me cry

let me smoke

let me buy shit that I don't need

let me cop nail polish

and new weed

no seeds

Chocolate protein shakes

with no added sugar

chia seeds

and more peanut butter

Fat / Salt / THC

diary of a boring 20 something

with a lame degree

in poetry no less

*and* I have

OCD!

## Old Room

Smoking vortex in my old room

I'm old now, I lost my baby face

I stopped eating consistently

I only consume stimulus

makes me feel crazy

and/or numb

alone in my room

Except for usually

you're here now too

I love you, I loved you so soon

I just knew

My mom says it's loud in here

I taught her that expression

I'm always caught off-guard

When she says it

I cough up smoke

and clear my throat

and my few bites of dinner

and clear my throat again

to mask as I crack a beer

embittered

\*Crack!

(It's hard to leave the shallow

with the illusion that you'll drown without

A baby bottle full of dark chocolate

and chilled vodka...Easy to wallow

tough to swallow the fact that there's

no need to live inside tomorrow)

## **Before You're Born**

As a child in the dead heat  
of the steel city  
I couldn't hold an eye-line  
I'm fine if no one sees me

East coast, cold nature  
Slipped through barren trees  
dusted with snow  
lay on the radiator for heat  
like my cat did

I lived on point breeze  
Truly a breeze  
I lived far behind my eyes  
on that street

Tucked in a cul-de-sac  
I learned French  
but was too shy to practice English  
Just wrote in my head

I remember I realized being dead is  
like before you were born

Before my brain was formed

I was in a Russian orphanage

I heard stories about cold porridge  
and dirty water

I felt like a tourist

felt like communist Harry Potter

Boys tried to trade me off the team

The coach wouldn't let them

Kids are mean

When you ask for something

say please

When it's too loud in the room

it's too easy

don't speak

## Chronology

2000s kid

2010s teen

2020s mid-twenties

I don't know what that means

But reflecting chronologically

makes me feel seen

2005 Dream Works

2015 dreams do work as reprieve

2022 OCD in my head I can't sleep

'96 was the year I was conceived

I think 1997 was the cause of OCD

'04 to '09 I look back

and think I'm weak

summer '16 I thought

I turned crazy on a dime

and not a dime was smoked

'til I was 23 in 2020

memories still follow me

I'm in tune with

the snapshots

of my chronology

For some reason

dates and times are on mind

and I tend to think in rhyme

Maybe dates and rhyme are

just my methods of confinement

## Ever Since

She smelled like paper  
and sugar when we first met

She pulled the metal door

loosely to see me

Feeling awkward as shit

I walked in coolly

and followed her through the common room

passed other girls

hidden in their rooms

I smelled burnt popcorn and burnt hair

burnt glass bowls

clothes and laundry soap

Her room was like a broom closet

with a bunk bed, and pastel drawings

that all looked yonic

For some reason

I wouldn't have guessed

That September smelled of oregano oil  
overpowered by cigarettes

Week by week  
crimson wine stains & black cloves  
over and over

I knocked four teeth out mid-October  
the EMT's said they couldn't find them

They were pulverized  
by the library wall  
The one time in fall  
I decided to fall

I flew back home and back to campus  
at each place wondering if people missed me  
All my feelings were light and basic

Transience for me was baseless  
But so goes the definition  
I was 18  
I wanted all the friction

I really loved that  
shit that kills you

Still do

in a larger sense

degeneracy never missed

The first thing me and my girlfriend did

was split a bottle of gin

and we've been together

ever since

## **Polish**

CVS replaced QFC

I bought blue polish

freshman year

I applied it perfectly

on the first try

I left my nails to dry

as I shoved down cherry Pop Tarts

crumbled in instant apple cinnamon

oatmeal with melted Reese's Pieces

drowning in it

Last Halloween

my nails looked like

Reese's pieces

drowning in glitter

The time between snapshots

can tear you to pieces

Old memories like

chipped polish

get stuck in the bed

of your nails

Emily Bronte couldn't

“speak the feeling” of a skyline

she couldn't inhale

I feel that

I used to smoke

every brand of cigarette

My lungs were loud

I felt reverberations

from my racing pulse

skirting from the losses

I was taking

Thankfully others saw in me

a THOT worth saving

The changes were rough

but cream suffuses coffee

and it all evens out

to something pretty lush

**Please II:**

Get me tickets to the Roots

at Woodland Park Zoo

Mark my calendar for psychiatry

on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June

Get me a spicy potato taco

and a crunch wrap supreme

with beans instead of meat

and no nacho cheese

a cheesy rollup

and a veggie burrito

with guac and sour cream

a tall pumpkin spice steamer

with just enough caffeine

not to kill me

please...

## Wholesome Culture

I wanna be wholesome  
My friend and I  
bought ourselves perfume  
and sat on a bench  
where we used to drink  
summer evenings  
Illuminated evenings  
The world spins  
and gets lit again  
We talked about how  
insecurity is fictitious

My sweatshirt has flowers on it  
The text reads “grow positive thoughts”  
I suppressed and eye roll  
went to checkout and thought  
“Why not?”

The Cartier bottle smelled the nicest  
I'd like to think  
People think

my vibe is floral spice

It smelled like an empty glass of gin

with no lime

Citrus makes my chest burn

these days

I just wanna be wholesome

so badly it makes my head hurt

these days

I tense my body and curl

My abs are 3 inches across

like braided dough

I'm tender in

so many spots

## **Bowl of Shame**

There's a lot of teeth pulling  
discomfort and foreign emotions  
trying to manifest  
a little self-love

My therapist is like  
it's fine, just circle all of the above

I was at the shop at 10 am  
Consumed the  
salted cookie dough on my 10  
wash the stinging acid away  
with citrus IPA

My thoughts are nothing  
if not sweet and volatile

If I can't take the heat  
I probably feel guilty about it  
I'm always on bullshit  
I try to stay calm

cook my way out of the kitchen

Manifestations of insecurity and history

probably just leave it to women

I have love for all the girls who ran the shop

like they were older than me

I'm too scared I'll fuck the stitch up

if I address it in time

I wait until I need 9

and I feel like about to die

Always... right on time!

At the shop at 10 am

consume the cookie dough on my 10

wash the stinging acid away

I loved the girls I worked with

Made me feel like my comments

were out of place

but worth it

Empathy seeps in reluctantly

Like I guess at least  
every third person  
is out of place but worth it

Girls just too cool  
Guys too lame  
Everything's all my fault  
Big bowl of shame!  
at the end of the day

A guy dropped his cone  
looked up at the sky like why god  
I watched it melt in the rain

## On My Mind

There's safety in my being misanthropic

But I want to get along

I want everyone I like to like me

I want to feel that I'm not doing any wrong

that the only thing to fear is fear itself

Maybe FDR had OCD

That disease makes you never feel

free from yourself

My aging friends remind me that I've aged

I'd like to turn the page

I don't care if what's on the other side

is strange

Do your parents feel like they're acting their age?

Sometimes I shave

and I feel young

and I miss the rage

But old rage can catch up to you  
If my heart stops now  
someone here has to come to my house  
feed my dog  
and burn some sage

I've been in a bubble since  
my age was measured in months  
it won't pop 'til I hit the grave  
Or hit the liquor  
speed the train  
it made me meek  
expensive pain

Winter days feel like dog days  
I'm trying to get enough movement in my joints  
to move out  
passed the salad days  
Purple haze flows past in my veins  
but resilience is in my DNA  
I can feel it  
See it all in front of me  
I wrote a page

25

Through existential shit

I still exist

I'm alive

I was born in '97

I'm almost 25

When I'm bitter

it's hard

to look forward to  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of life

I get scared and I recline in resignation

Hiding places are lovely vacancies

but they amplify the vacancies

you're already faced with

I'm 24

When I look back

I see the door closing on

every year before

There's more feeling than I can resort to

shrinking from and ignoring

the potency of going through  
personally, what I go through

Trying to find the confidence  
to take up space

safely

strengthen my roots

so my body retains its shape

Stay on the ground

so my thoughts don't fall so far off base

so the air outside the house

maintains its taste

By way of existential shit

I do in fact exist

in a year from now

if I'm down or up

I'll be almost 26

## **Dog Years**

Tall socks said

“If you can read this,  
bring me a cold beer”

I wore my low tops to see  
if anyone notices me  
if anyone cares

She told me I wear baggy clothes

cause I don't like my body

I need queer eye

I miss when they only  
focused on straight guys

Ten times it probably takes

to learn parallel parking

I've driven for ten years  
and avoid it at all costs

if that's an option

I feel old looking at my life

I don't know my parents' past

But I think it's mine now

I pour my girlfriend wine

so I can drink it vicariously

In turn she reminds me when

I need to pick her up from therapy

The comical mug said

“In dog years,

I'm dead”

My girlfriend's asleep

I looked at my dog

She blinked and said

Don't you forget it!

Cheap philosophies

not to be missed

ever present

Thank You

Harrison Lee

*PLEASE*

An Artist Statement

*A Note on My Writing Method*

I write to experience catharsis, to feel in touch with my humanity, and to relate to other people. My artistic mission is to dissipate the barriers between myself, the page, and my audience. When writing I prefer to practice a mindfulness in which I freely allow thoughts and phrases to drift from my subconscious to the front of my brain. I then manipulate the way these thoughts and phrases sound when I utter them in my head, and when I speak them aloud. I use sound as a tool to inject the words with unconscious feeling, until the combination of the words and the sounds together inspire an imitation of the emotions they originally stemmed from.

When it comes to the content of my writing, I stick to what I know. I draw on my own experiences and deliver my thoughts as they occur through my solipsistic lens. My art tends to take a sort of “World according to me,” approach. I treat poems like diary entries. “What am I seeing, feeling, tasting, smelling, considering?” I take influence from the art I am presently engaged with, and I root my art in my present experiences. For these reasons my writing has always lived in the “Here and Now.” I view my pieces like snapshots of definable periods of my life. *PLEASE* is my most current snapshot, reflecting the last couple years, through an artistic lens.

## *The Content*

*PLEASE* represents a series of themes and motifs in the life of the narrator, a modern twenty-four-year-old in the midst of a quarter-life crisis. The narrator experiences two sides of himself. One in which he struggles with mental health issues like OCD, self-doubt, self-loathing, and existential dread, and the other in which he affirms his worth and fortitude, making active efforts to allow himself to heal. He grapples with his tendency towards avoidance through the use of substances, fast food, and emotional hiding. At the same time he feels powerful in his clarity and recognizes his inherent sense of resilience in the face of his personal struggles. The narrator also makes reference to his partner who has been on a somewhat parallel journey, finding comfort in their shared experience.

We see the narrator's struggle with mental health most clearly in the poem "Mental Health Awareness," and the subsequent poem, "Please." In the former, he opens by expressing the lack of compassion he feels for the child he once was, stating,

"I'm staring at my dumb brown eyes  
in the reflection  
of a photograph of me as a child"

Later he reflects more deeply on his childhood and its connection to his present in the poem "Before You're Born." In the poem at hand, he goes on to describe his inability to take in "light" and accept pleasure, turning instead to "all kinds of smoke" which have been obfuscating the light from the windows.

In the following poem, "Please," the narrator makes clear his tactics of avoidance, writing, "let me watch my shows/ let me cry/ let me smoke/ let me buy shit that I don't need/ let me cop nail polish and new weed/ no seeds/ Chocolate protein shakes with no added sugar/ chia

seeds and more peanut butter..." These methods of avoidance have become integrated into his day-to-day life, and serve to distract rather than confront the issues he faces.

Though the narrator tends to avoid his issues, he exhibits a sense of clarity at the same time. We see the way he understands his own impetus towards engaging with the world in the poem "Old Room," in which he concludes by writing,

"It's hard to leave the shallow  
with the illusion that you'll drown without  
A baby bottle full of dark chocolate  
and chilled vodka...Easy to wallow  
tough to swallow the fact that there's  
no need to live inside tomorrow"

He understands that his fears and anxieties are largely an "illusion," and sees the way his thought patterns limit his ability to live in the moment and feel an effortless sense of stability.

We see the first direct mention of the narrator's partner in the poem "Ever Since," in which he recounts what we presume to be the early days of their relationship, taking place on a college campus. Although he exudes a great deal of sentiment and affinity for this person, the memories he calls upon are not of the most wholesome or healthy nature. He discusses shared drinking sessions, clove cigarettes, and ends it all by concluding,

"in a larger sense  
degeneracy never missed  
The first thing me and my girlfriend did  
was split a bottle of gin  
and we've been together  
ever since"

Though the narrator presently struggles with substances, there seems also to be a sense of sentimentality associated with them, even acting as a catalyst in the formation of a relationship he truly values.

In “Wholesome Culture” we see the narrator’s desire to accept himself, embrace self-care, and set aside his cynicism towards mantras such as “grow positive thoughts.” In the poem, he and a friend buy perfume and come to the realization that “insecurity is fictitious.” The narrator seems almost to be able to taste the “wholesome” state of being that he longs for, that which allows him to wear floral perfume and wear clothes that advertise positive messages. Yet he still finds himself “suppressing an eye roll” at the thought of accepting the positivity he seeks. He exclaims, “I want to be wholesome so badly it makes my head hurt.” He knows what he wants, but for one reason or another it is just out of reach.

In “On My Mind” we see the first real moments of positive affirmation from the narrator, acknowledging on one hand “Purple haze flows past in my veins,” but also declaring that “resilience is in my DNA.” The positive affirmations are joined by more moments of clarity in the following poem “25,” in which the narrator first admits,

“I get scared and I recline in resignation  
Hiding places are lovely vacancies  
but they amplify the vacancies  
you’re already faced with”

He goes on to admit that he can no longer “shrink from” or “ignore” his issues. He makes a series of empowering affirmations stating,

“Trying to find the confidence  
to take up space  
safely  
strengthen my roots  
so my body retains its shape

Stay on the ground  
so my thoughts don't fall so far off base  
so the air outside the house  
maintains its taste”

At this point we feel that the narrator has come up for air, breaching the surface of the emotional obfuscation he has faced up until this point. Although we are still unsure as to whether he will be able to follow through with these affirmations, there is a sense of clarity regarding the path forward.

The chapbook ends with “Dog Years,” a slightly ambiguous concluding note in which the narrator reflects again on his tendency towards avoidance, his struggle for self-acceptance, and the potential influence of his parents’ experiences impacting his own. He makes mention of a mug which reads, “In dog years I’m dead,” a cheeky and cynical joke, but perhaps a message to the effect of “Life’s too short.”

### *Notes on Style*

Many elements of my style have shifted and developed over the years. I’m always searching for a new vibe, a new tact that will help me articulate my feelings in the truest and most loyal sense. I have often heard artists say that when they are locked in on a particular project, they will avoid consuming any outside art as not to be influenced or swayed

subconsciously. I tend to feel the opposite. I can't imagine creating my art in a vacuum and I take constant inspiration from artists that I engage with on a day-to-day basis. My desire for innovation requires me to digest the work of others, so that I can broaden my horizons beyond what I've done in the past. In the coming paragraphs I will make reference to specific artists who have had the most effect on the writing in *PLEASE*. These are artists who share my propensity for sound, authenticity, and expressing their humanity in raw and honest forms.

Earlier this year I happened upon the New York School of Poetry. I admired the movement's ethos. These were writers and painters, primarily in Manhattan, who sought to deviate from the weightiness and gravitas of the post-war artists that surrounded them. Instead, they embraced wry wit, basic human instinct, and conversation. As *Poetry Foundation* (an excellent beginners guide) notes, "The poets allowed everyday moments, pop culture, humor, and spontaneity into their work, seeking to capture life as it happened." The movement truly struck a chord with my quest towards raw human expression, and is the reason why I felt such profound appreciation when writer Selah Saterstrom described my writing as containing "humor, nuance" and human heart.

After showing interest in the New York School, my thesis advisor pointed me towards Frank O'Hara, and his manifesto "Personism." In this text, O'Hara relays a story in which he intended to write a poem for a particular person, but subsequently realized that he could just as well pick up the phone and call this person. "And so Personism was born," says O'Hara. He advocates for a poetry that is based on instinct, directness, and human connection. He explains, "(Personism) puts the poem squarely between the poet and the person... The poem is at last between two persons instead of two pages." As an extension of his advocacy for conversation, O'Hara's believes that a poem need not adhere to any single poetic device, that poetry should be

allowed to break form. When we call a friend, our speech is unfettered, unrestricted, yet these friendly conversations are some of the most candid and meaningful exchanges one makes in the day. O'Hara's manifesto spoke to my desire to continually seek styles of writing which enable me to articulate my feelings and experiences in a true and honest form. In the spirit of "Personism" I began to move closer towards simple and direct language.

One major area of departure I take from O'Hara's philosophy is my inherent tendency towards rhyme. Where O'Hara mostly considers poetic device to be an antagonizing restriction, I simply can't escape it. Rhyme is so inherent in my poetic style that I feel unnatural, unauthentic without it. One reason for my tendency towards rhyme may be due to my love of hip-hop, which began around age 15 or 16. I draw most of my day-to-day inspiration from the incredible swathe of hip-hop artists who have been pushing the craft of language forward for more than several decades now. Whether my sense of rhyme stems from my exposure to hip-hop, or whether hip-hop was there to foster some inherent tendency towards rhyme, the genre has been an artistic inspiration since I began writing. Many hip-hop artists seem to use rhyme, not as a formal constraint, but as a vehicle to generate momentum, energy, and free associative thought.

KRS-One is widely considered one of the "fore-fathers" of hip hop as we know it, releasing material from the mid-eighties to the present. KRS's flows bend and stretch around the bars of the beat, yet he stays loyal to the rhythm. His rap style is inherently simplistic, and by this token, every line garners special attention. KRS tells stories in a lot of his songs. While the content and messaging behind his stories are substantive, his rapping remains measured and his lyrics are concise. In his song "Can't Stop Won't Stop," he tells a story from the perspective of a drug dealer who is being raided by the police. The dealer ends up in jail where the cops physically assault him, and proceed to interrogate him for information. KRS raps,

“No need for guessin, yes they want my supplier  
I said, what makes you think there's anyone higher?  
He said... "Don't be a God damned liar!"  
Later in the verse he raps,

“He continued to say, you can't think it through  
This whole drug game is BIGGER than you  
Follow our plan man and you'll be free  
Let me explain one thing so you can see, we  
Can't stop, won't stop - sellin mad izm  
All competition - I gots to get with 'em”

KRS sticks to simple rhyme patterns. “Supplier” rhymes with “higher,” which rhymes with “liar.” There’s little internal rhyme. One of the two internal rhymes that does appear is decidedly common and banal, “Follow our *plan man*.” Ultimately, through his use of clear and concise story-telling, as well as simple, plodding rhymes, he is able to depict the impenetrability of the clash between ghettoized people who sell drugs to survive, and the police who wage war on them, no small feat.

I draw inspiration from KRS’s rap style for many of the poems in my collection. I was especially inspired for my poem “Ever Since,” In which I keep the imagery minimal, and the rhymes uncomplicated. I write,

“She pulled the metal door  
loosely to see me  
Feeling awkward as shit  
I walked in coolly

and followed her through the common room  
passed other girls  
hidden in their rooms

I smelled burnt popcorn and burnt hair  
burnt glass bowls  
clothes and laundry soap”

Each line offers only a small movement in the action. I try to let the story plod along at a steady and relaxed momentum. As a writer, I feel like I have gotten caught up in the past with trying to overcrowd my images to the point that they are difficult to picture in the mind’s eye. KRS’s writing inspired me to slow the pace of my prose, and stick to concrete images that put little strain on the reader, thus hopefully fostering a more engaging and pleasant story-telling experience.

Billy Woods is a contemporary rapper who began his career in the early 2000’s. Somewhat in opposition to KRS-One, Woods is noted for his dense, free association, abstract lyrics. His songs take the listener on a journey of absurd imagery, drenched with dark humor. Along the way he sprinkles in pop culture references, historical references, and Kafkaesque observations. Though his lyrics are packed full of content that will tend to go over the listener’s head upon first listen, he retains the ability to paint distinct images in the subconscious. He jumps from scene to scene, and by the end of a song, the listener has an inherent sense of the world he is painting. In his song, “Giraffe Hunts,” he raps,

“The zoo had a decapitated giraffe  
A dedicated staff of volunteers, the acid was bad  
The gift shop was packed  
Congolese hands chopped and dropped in your gift bag  
Seepin' blood turned the gift wrap black  
Marrow weepin' out the cracks, sweet king crab  
Darwin screamin' out his sleep”

Though these lines are initially difficult to digest, we get a plethora of sensations. We feel psychedelic, haunted, historical, horrified. In his next verse he raps,

“On the train home, a Maasai warrior asked me for change

I said no

They were shootin' bison out the same train

Crack lightning, gunsmoke

Not a word, just brass pingin' on the floor

Express to 42nd

Deafened by the retort of the weapons”

There is a sense of whiplash as he throws us from one image to another. Each line contains its own image, yet as a whole we still feel the vibe of an acid trip gone wrong, ghosts from the past, human violence, oppression. I was inspired by Woods’ ability to take the listener through a perpetual series of images and vignettes, while still imparting a cohesive sensation. I attempt to do this most notably in my poem “Bowl of Shame.” I write,

“If I can’t take the heat

I probably feel guilty about it

I’m always on bullshit

I try to stay calm

cook my way out of the kitchen

Manifestations of insecurity and history

probably just leave it to women

I have love for all the girls who ran the shop

like they were older than me”

In these lines I'm merely discussing my time working at an ice cream shop, as Billy Woods is merely recounting a trip to the zoo. However, I try to impart feelings of incompetence, guilt, masculinity, and histories of misogyny. I am intrigued by the way more abstract writing can broach the same amount of clarity as simplistic writing. I finish my poem with,

“A guy dropped his cone  
looked up at the sky like why god  
I watched it melt in the rain”

Here I try to distill the essence of the poem, ending on an image of a defeated man dropping an ice cream cone and cursing the heavens. The image is simple but I hope it encapsulates some of the ideas related to incompetence and masculinity that I present in the early sections of the poem.

### *PLEASE: The Video*

In the video accompaniment to *PLEASE*, I take an informal, DIY approach to the video's aesthetic. Like with my chapbook, I take a great deal of inspiration from hip hop. Because hip-hop is often focused on lyrics, often coming from a single individual, many hip-hop music videos are minimalist compared to other genres of music, concentrating the attention on the artist rapping into the camera, often shot in different locations. I took special inspiration from the group Armand Hammer, one its members being Billy Woods who I mentioned previously, and the other being a rapper named ELUCID.

In 2020 the duo released an album called “Haram,” along with a series of videos, each taking place in different locations, as well as switching location within a single video. In the video for the song “Sir Benni Miles,” the duo are seen walking through New York, under

tunnels, through parks, under archways, rapping their lyrics. The unedited, simple, everyday backdrop strikes a direct conversational tone with the audience, the kind O'Hara was after, as well as places focus on the rappers and their words. As a viewer we feel like we are there with them, receiving their poetry. Sometimes one member will crouch while the other delivers their verse, a simple pose but a noticeable aberration from how one usually stands. I mimic the crouch in my video while delivering the poem "Before You're Born." And generally, I place myself in everyday settings; the woods by the park, in front of a scaffolded house, in front of a brick wall. One area of departure I take from the Armand Hammer video is that I read each poem towards, but not directly into the camera. I wanted the poems to feel directed at an audience, but not obviously staged for a video. I felt this decision would add an extra layer of realism to the mise en scene.

Here's to art imitating life and life imitating art

Thank you very much

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