



1st Draft

Qian Cheng

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Daylight pries open the world, a slit cut into nothingness spilling out the contents of the sky.
The chance for a new beginning.

If we could erase our memory, we could start again. Not like a baby but like The Fool, stepping out into the world for the first time, dog nipping at his feet, unaware of the cliff right in front of him. Is he a fool because of his optimism, his naivety, his innocence? Because he ventures out into the harshness of the world with wonder and without care? He is unencumbered by reality's cruelty. He begins his journey filled with hope, unconcerned by the what-ifs. His faith so blinding that he stands on the precipice of something but he doesn't even see it. He follows destiny, a belief in what is yet to come. He steps forward.

999

Faith persisted at the local casino as the flashing slot machine spun its wheels in never-ending cycles of cherry, diamond, horseshoe, grape, and 7. You'd been eyeing each player's outcome, smoking the cigarette you bummed from one of what looked like the more "regular" ladies in your section. Looks like it hasn't hit a matching payline in a while. You waited patiently as the devotees took their turns grasping for the plastic red knob. Now it's your chance to take a seat on the stool with the moulded indentation of the butts of countless players who have prayed at the altar of fortune before you—each hoping the ritual in repetition will reap its reward.

Let's linger on that same hope just a bit longer. That if we keep going it will all be worth it in the end. After all, we've already come this far. We can't think about stopping because we've already put too much into this. If we quit now, what will it all have been for? Just imagine you're folding paper cranes. Would you give up before 1000 because you got bored or your hands hurt? What if the difference between wasted effort and the granting of your wish was just one-more-time?

1111

If we count our wishes, how many do we have in total? One for the shooting star I saw while lying in the sand along the river next to the eel pit. One for the 25 cents I threw into the Crystal Mall fountain. One for the stray eyelash you found on my cheek. "Stay still." I held my breath watching your hand reach for my face. As your finger touched my skin you didn't notice how my face flushed with warmth, the same heat as when I open the door to check the preheat on the oven. Like it was some sort of miracle you presented your finger to my eye: a small black line. "Blow."

When we were kids, they used to say you could make a wish at 11:11. However, the wish would only come true if you were making it while your feet were off the ground. As if touching the ground kept us tied to this physical world. But if we jumped and severed our connection to the Earth, for half a second, we could be closer to heaven.

Text by Asia Jong



Checklist

1st Room (Clockwise)

Hydra Momentum, 2025

Charcoal on paper
16 x 38.5 in (framed)

Steady Footing, 2025

Charcoal and soft pastel on canvas
36 x 48 in

Close your eyes and reinvent, 2025

Charcoal and soft pastel on
paper and vellum
19.5 x 11.5 in (framed)

Counting Stars I, 2025

Charcoal on paper and vellum
45.5 x 31 in (framed)

Fickle Circuit, 2025

Graphite on vellum
206.5 x 19.5 in

Peek back, 2025

Charcoal on paper
10.5 x 29.5 in (framed)

2nd Room (Clockwise)

Hi, how are you?, 2025

Charcoal on paper
14 x 6 in (framed)

Held by the sky, 2025

Soft pastel on vellum, paper,
laminated white wood panel, metal,
wireless puck light
3.35 x 157.5 x 8.5 in

Meet me at Angel Cafe, 2025

Soft pastel on paper
20 x 21 in (framed)

Qian Cheng is a Vancouver-based artist and organizer whose practice delves into personal narratives and experiences through drawings and collaborative projects. She holds a BFA in Illustration from Emily Carr University of Art and Design (2016) and has participated in residencies and fellowships such as M:ST, Calgary (2021), and Tentacles, Bangkok (2018), and has been awarded grants from BC Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. Cheng has exhibited across Canada and internationally, including darkZone, New Jersey (2024), Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto (2023), Afternoon Projects, Vancouver (2023), and Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey (2021). Her work has been covered by press including *Peripheral Review*, *Art Viewer*, *Akimbo*, and *Canadian Art*. Alongside her solo practice, she has initiated and contributed to artist-run initiatives such as nap gallery, This Useful Time Machine, and People.