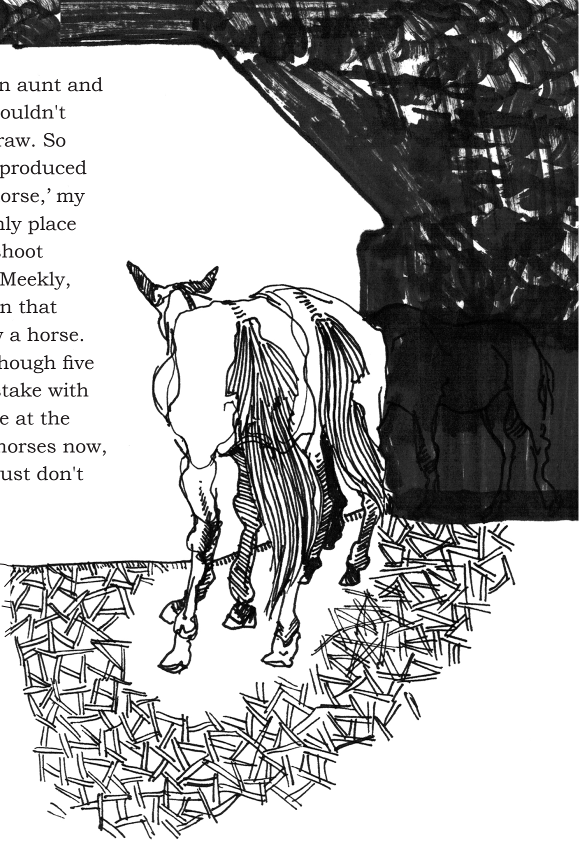
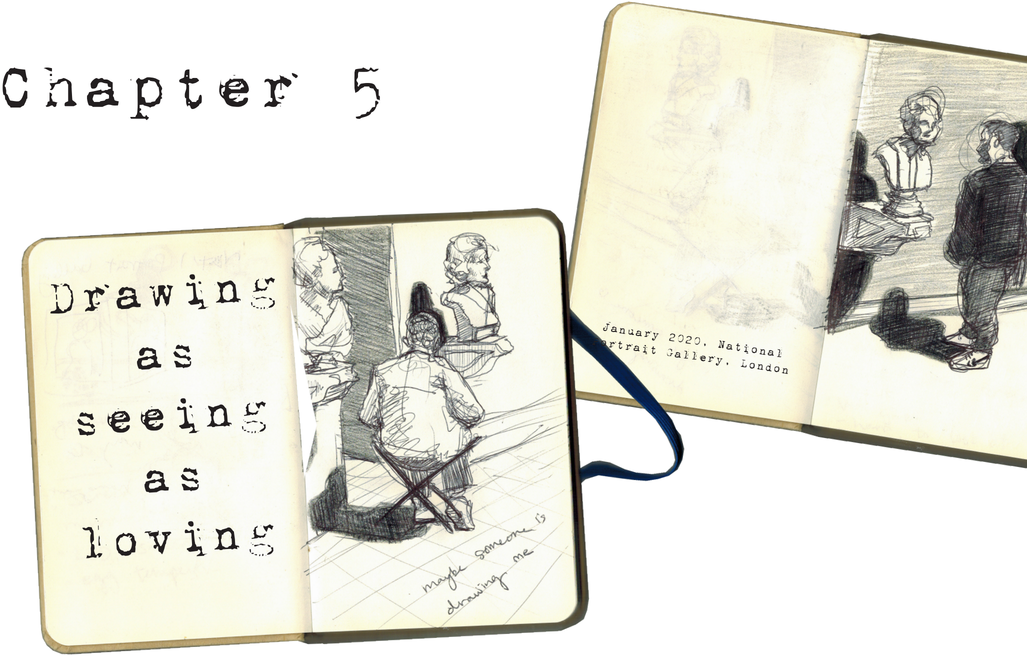
"The lover can see, and the knowledgeable. I visited an aunt and uncle at a quarter-horse ranch in Cody, Wyoming. I couldn't do much of anything useful, but I could, I thought, draw. So as we all sat around the kitchen table after supper, I produced a sheet of paper and drew a horse. ‘That's one lame horse,’ my aunt volunteered. The rest of the family joined in: "Only place to saddle that one is his neck"; ‘Looks like we better shoot the poor thing, on account of those terrible growths.’ Meekly, I slid the pencil and paper down the table. Everyone in that family, including my three young cousins, could draw a horse. Beautifully. When the paper came back it looked as though five shining, real quarter horses can been corraled by mistake with a papier-mâché moose; the real horses seemed to gaze at the monster with a steady, puzzled air. I stay away from horses now, but I can do a creditable goldfish. The point is that I just don't know what the lover knows..."

Seeing by Annie Dillard, 1974



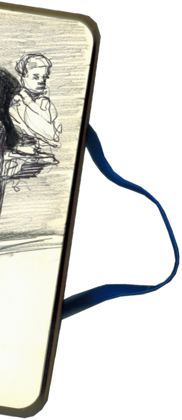
Chapter 5



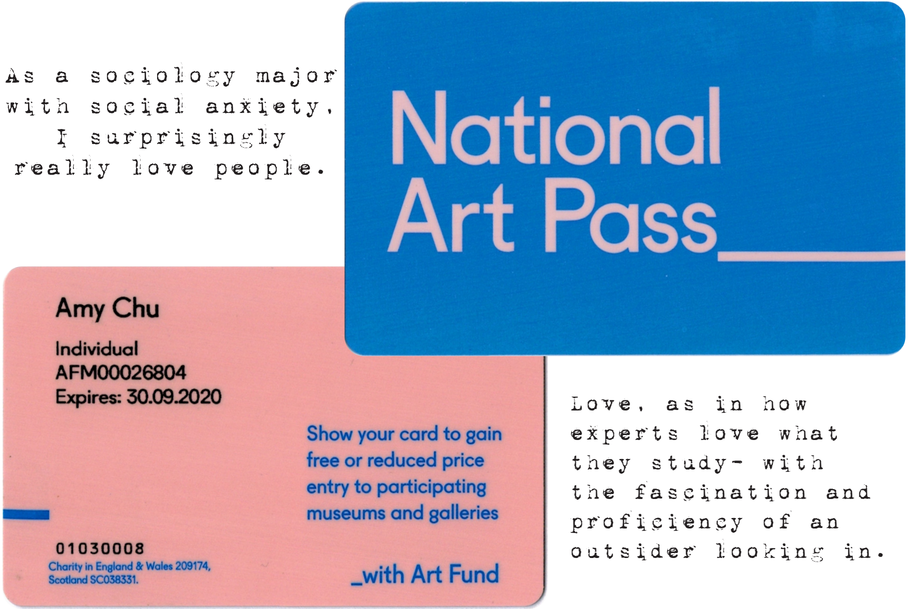
Drawing as seeing as loving

maybe someone is drawing me

January 2020, National ortrait Gallery, London



As a sociology major
with social anxiety,
I surprisingly
really love people.



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Love, as in how
experts love what
they study- with
the fascination and
proficiency of an
outsider looking in.

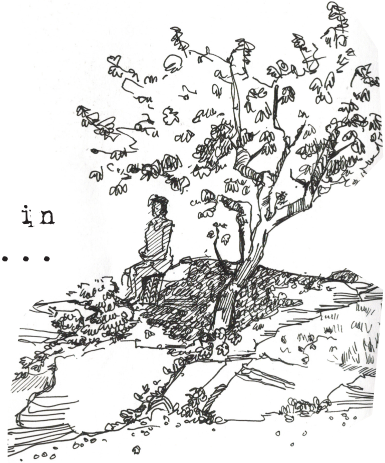
I love
people...

people
doing
things...

peopl
place

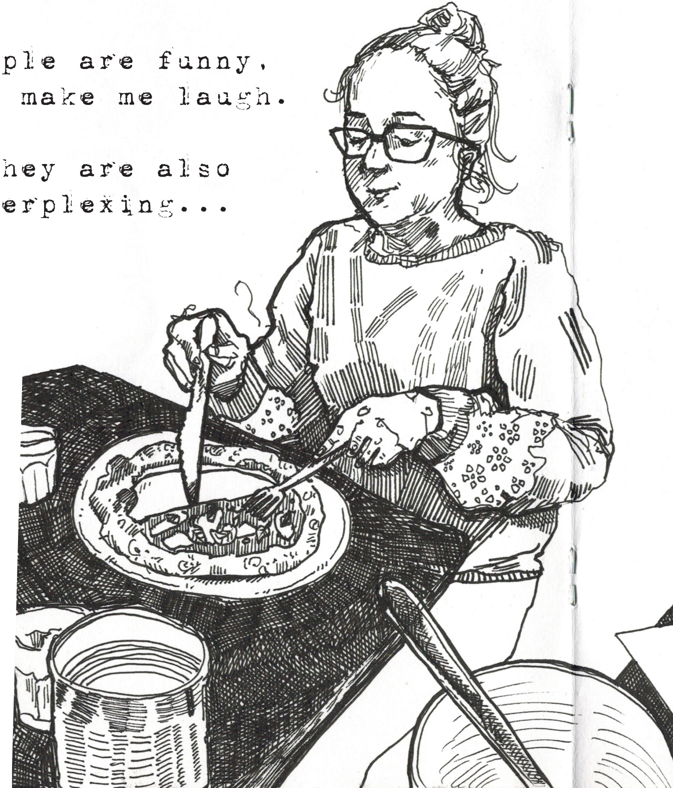
people
with
people...

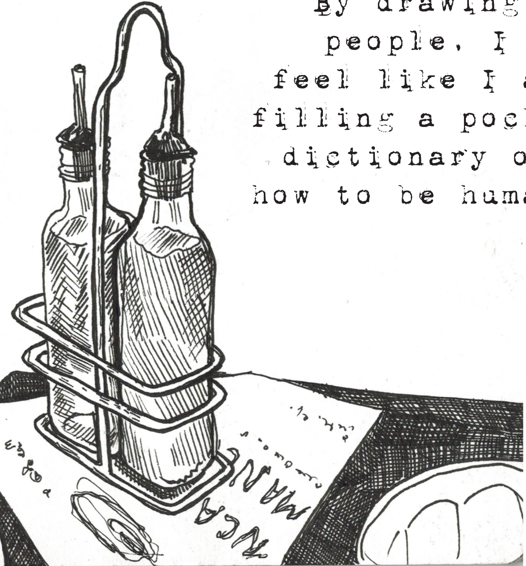
e in
s...



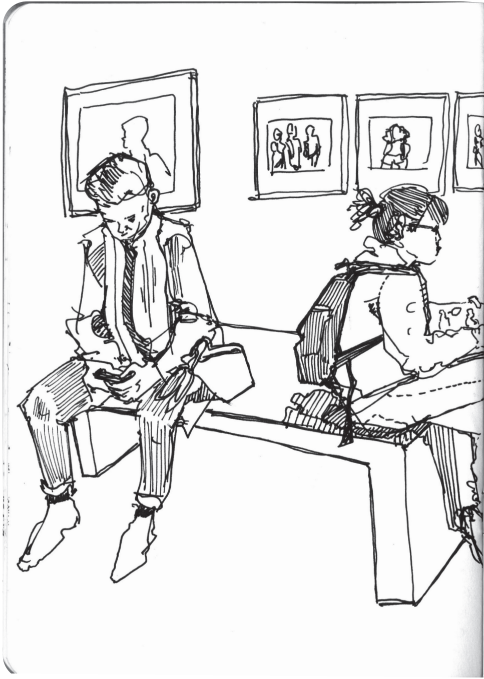
People are funny,
they make me laugh.

They are also
perplexing...

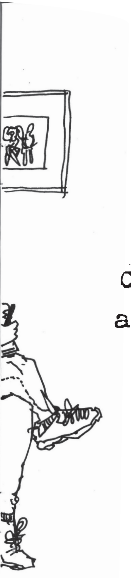




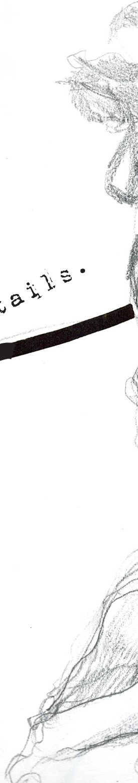
By drawing people, I feel like I am filling a pocket dictionary on how to be human.

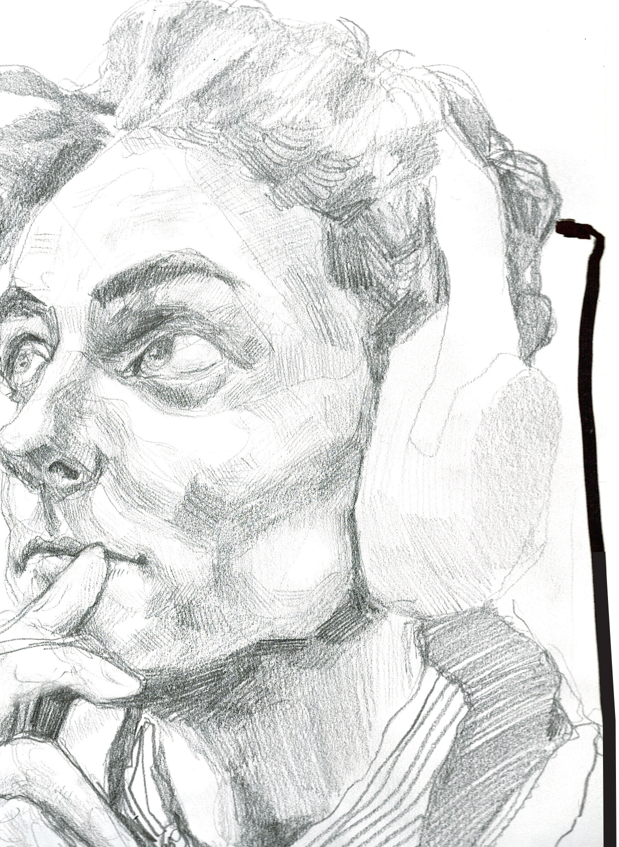


January 2020, National Portrait Gallery, London



Life
drawing
allows me
to slow down my sight and notice all the details.

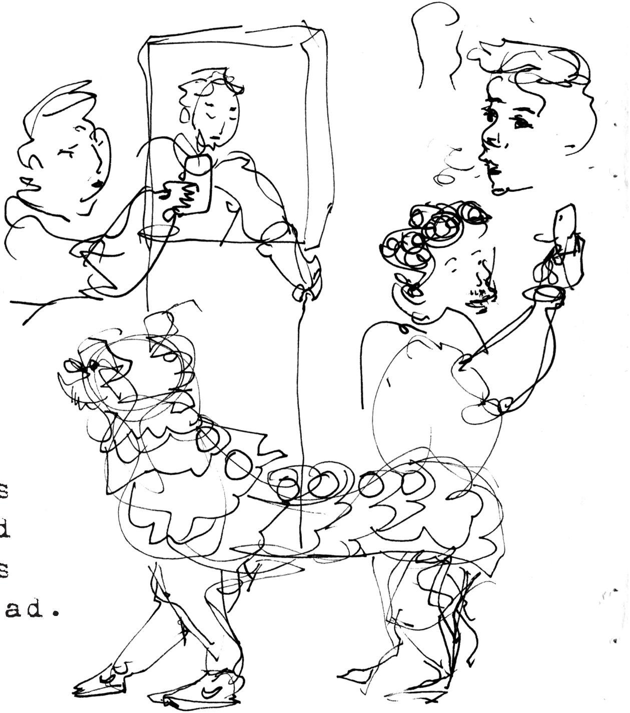




That being said, I like having more detail and precision than the moment gives me. I normally work from photographs.

The week my phone w
pickpocketed, I tri
to commit my memori
directly to paper inst

as
ed
es
tead.



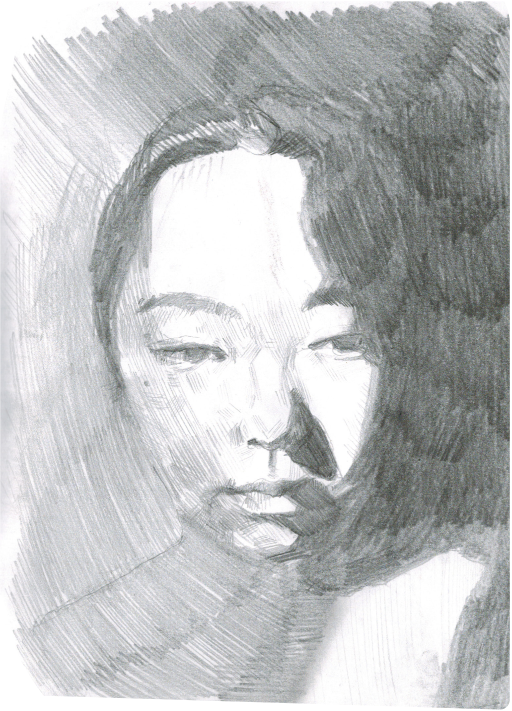
2020 Lunar New Year, Chinatown, London

This chicken-scratch
depicting dance and
firecrackers prove that
drawing can't replicate
the camera's function- to
snapshot. Rather, drawing
reveals the eye's biases
and subjectivities.

That's okay. My goal
is not to document,
it's to learn through
careful study.

;

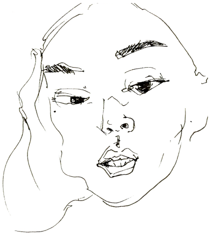
Although my pocket dictionary of people grows, one definition I'm continually struggling with is my own.

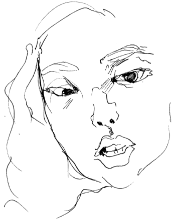


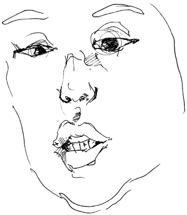
The only reliable subject I have is myself- you would think.

But the expectation of knowing oneself only adds to the frustration

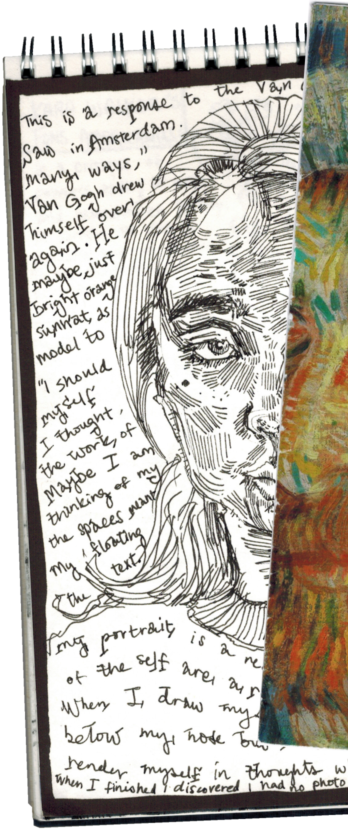
when I find that I don't.

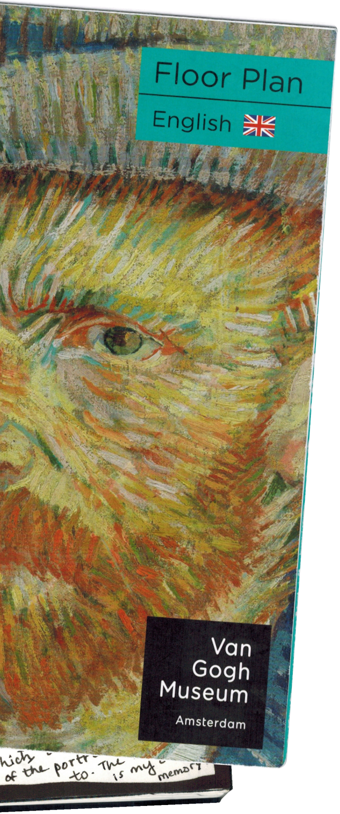




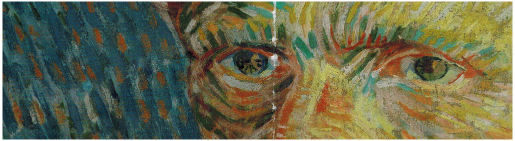


Van Gogh produced 36 self-portraits, which are now framed and hung in museums around the world, though we can probably reckon he was no narcissist.


This is a response to the Van
Saw in Amsterdam.
many ways,"
Van Gogh drew
himself over
again. He
maybe just
Bright orange
sunhat, as
model to
"I should
myself
I thought,
the work of
Maybe I am
thinking of my
the spaces meant
my floating
text.
the
my portrait is a re
of the self are a r
When I draw my
below my nose bu
render myself in thoughts w
When I finished I discovered I had no photo


Floor Plan
English
Van Gogh Museum
Amsterdam
of the portr
to. The
is my
memory

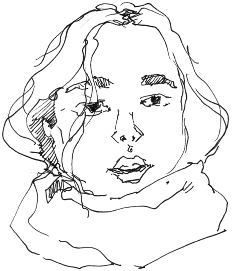
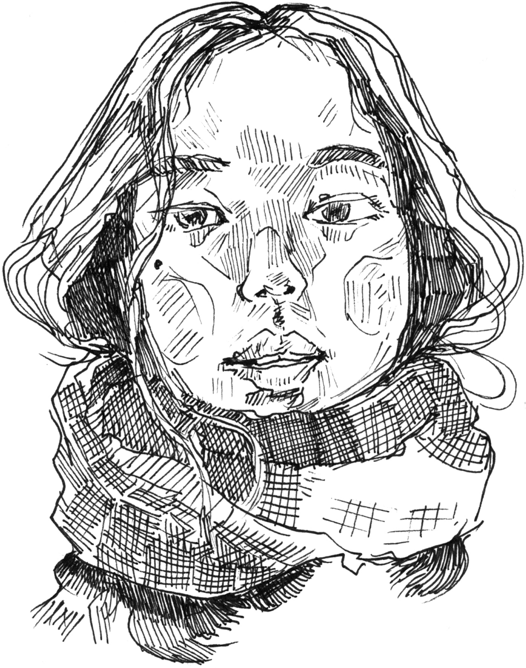
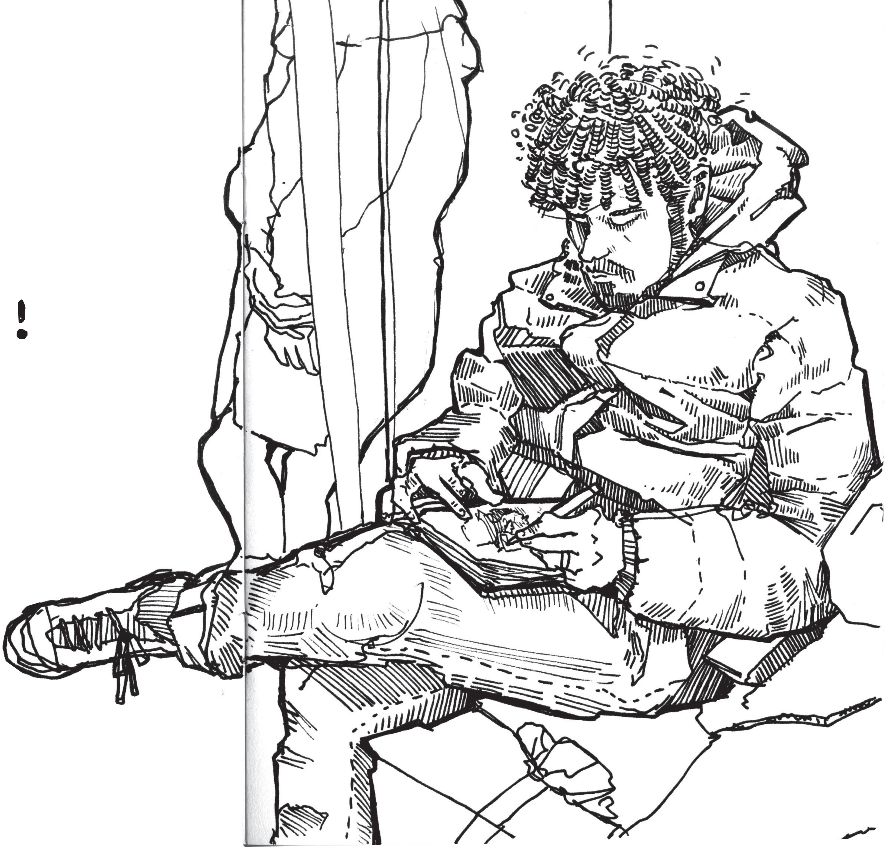
Van Gogh, who never sold any paintings, was trying to discover himself.



I think art was a salve for Van Gogh, the way it is for me, whenever he felt himself slipping through his fingers.

We can all relate, too, to the notion that our own selves are as unknowable as strangers--changing like snapshots in time. A pimple today; an extra white hair tomorrow.

So I keep drawing.

and when I
finally see,
it feels like
a revelation