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Telephone

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Abstract

An illustration of a pay phone with an accompanying story.

Keywords

image, illustration, communication, stranger

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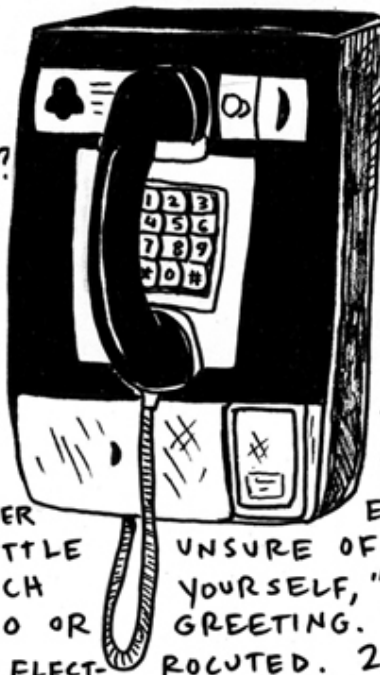
May 17, 2013

Telephone

by Summer Pierre

TELEPHONE

ALL DAY LONG THE PAY PHONE BY THE FRONT PARKING LOT RANG. SOMEONE MUST HAVE ANSWERED IT AT SOME POINT. EVERYONE PASSED IT ON THEIR WAY TO CLASS, BUT I NEVER ONCE SAW ANYONE ANSWER IT. I WAS A FRESHMAN, AND NEW TO THE HIGH SCHOOL, SO I DIDN'T YET KNOW ANYONE TO ASK-- BUT WHO CAN RESIST THE LONELY PAY PHONE RINGING FOR LONG? ONE AFTERNOON I STOOD ALONE WAITING FOR MY RIDE WHEN THE PHONE BEGAN TO RING. IT WAS LATE AND NO ONE WAS AROUND -- JUST ME AND THE PHONE. I WALKED OVER TO IT AND WAITED A MOMENT THEN PICKED IT UP. "TOUCH YOURSELF," THE VOICE ON THE OTHER END SAID. IT WAS A QUIET VOICE, A LITTLE UNSURE OF HIMSELF, ALMOST A MUMBLE: "TOUCH YOURSELF," IT SAID WITHOUT NEEDING A HELLO OR GREETING. I SLAMMED DOWN THE PHONE AS IF ELECTROCUTED. 25 YEARS LATER, I CAN STILL REMEMBER THE IMAGE OF A DIM ROOM THAT VOICE CONJURED UP. I SEE THE SHADES DRAWN TO BLOCK OUT THE SUNLIGHT, THE AIR STALE AND THICK. I SHOOK IN MY MINISKIRT AND SNEAKERS BEFORE BOLTING FROM THE SPOT. I RAN TO THE SUNLIT PATCH I HAD BEEN BEFORE AND STOOD WAITING THERE IN THE LIGHT, WHILE THERE IN THE SHADE, THE PHONE SAT AND BEGAN RINGING.



Summer Pierre is an illustrator and writer and the author of *The Artist in the Office: How to Survive and Thrive Seven Days a Week* [Perigee Trade]. Her work has appeared in numerous places including *Slice Magazine*, *Loaded Bicycle*, *The Huffington Post*, and a zine she creates called *Forgive Me*. She lives in the Hudson Valley with her family.