

A couple weeks ago, I spent a few hours at the cemetery down the street, and it made me think a lot about the rituals and beliefs that we have surrounding death. The afterlife is an idea that every culture and religion has thought of, and they all have their own answers to it. It's a concept that can be simultaneously ominous, hopeful, frightening, peaceful, or comforting. I began to wonder what my answer to it was—how I understand death, and how I imagine what comes after. With my project, I wanted to engage with the idea without explicit tragedy, and instead emphasize the unknown, dreaminess, and melancholy of it.

I decided to capture this idea in an oil painting, because it is a medium that can capture immense depth and richness. It's also a medium that was completely new to me, and I was forced to discover my own technique and mark making throughout the process. The way I painted became very textural and utilized a lot of unblended strokes, creating an image that feels slightly fuzzy and just out of reach. I almost never plan out my art, and usually just let things naturally evolve; only a handful of elements in my final piece even appeared in my original sketches. But it was not just the subjects that evolved, and as I continued painting, the emotion and colors slowly became moodier, and the bright greens and oranges I was using retreated into purples, reds, and blues. The result was a painting that does not offer the viewer any answer or resolution, but instead puts forward a feeling.

CAN I GET THERE BY CANDLELIGHT?

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