

Ghost Practice, 2015

I've gone through a monumental heartbreak. After the dust had settled and I started picking up the pieces of my life moving forward, I began contemplating those paths not taken. Those *should-have*, *could-have*, might-have-beens. What if we had gotten that house? That car? Would things be different if... what-if, what-if?

I was struck deeply by a section in Cheryl Strayed's book, "Tiny Beautiful Things" that explored the idea of ghost ships - the life path that you didn't take:

*"I'll never know, and neither will you, of the life you don't choose. We'll only know that whatever that sister life was, it was important and beautiful and not ours. It was the ghost ship that didn't carry us. There's nothing to do but salute it from the shore."*

In my recent artwork I've been practicing those salutations across five mini-series. Intuitive painting on wood led me to reveal personal symbols of those ghost ships - scissors ready to cut and thread uncut. A staircase at a residency I didn't apply for. A doorway to a permanent, independent home I didn't pursue. The pause in my life as the semi-colon. There are watercolor houses composed of abstract shapes whose doodles got me through the rough patch of regretful insomnia. The house sculptures that I had planned earlier in the year became inverted; I wanted to protect and tuck all their color and joy into the inside. Warrior arrows made of beachcombed driftwood stand guard outside. And then there are the portraits; hooded figures from dreams and faces of friends far away alongside characters from the escapism I retreated into.

In practicing the art of letting go, these works conspire to dissect my threads with scissors, my inner landscape with stairs, and my truth from the lies I tell myself. Here I stand, waving from the shore.

- Sara