

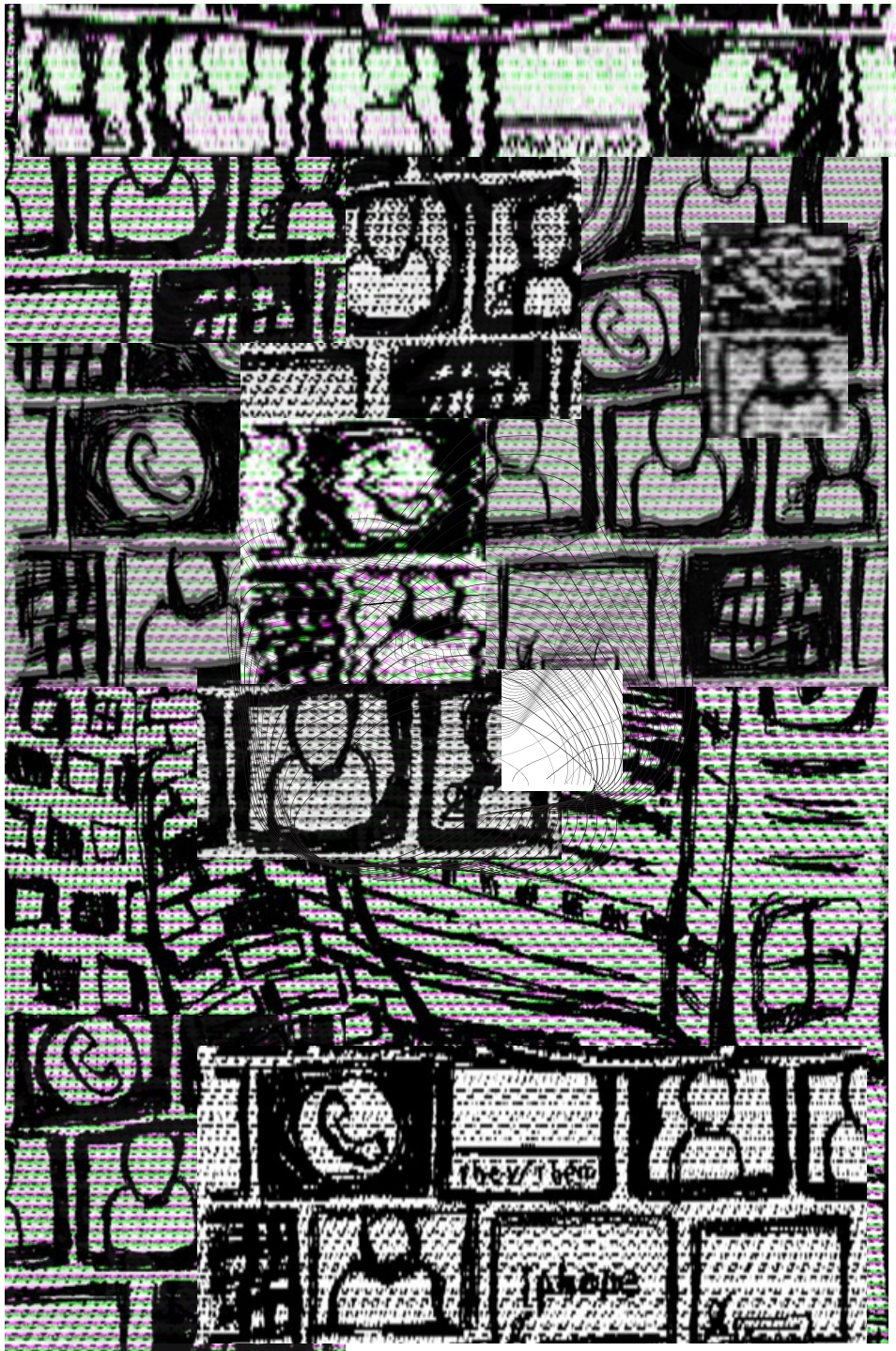


# Where Did Everyone Go?

by: Em Farquhar-Barrie



*Alone in the City*



*Zoom*



*Meltdown*





*I am so overwhelmed*



*Dismissed and Forgotten*



*Living in the Hospital*





*Distress, Trauma, Distress*



*Goodbye City*

# ARTIST'S STATEMENT

EM FARQUHAR-BARRIE

This series of pen on paper drawings was created during the Covid-19 pandemic and is expressive of my lived experiences. Some of the drawings have been digitally edited to further emphasize my thoughts and feelings.

The pandemic has been very difficult and caused my already poor mental health to decline. Over the course of approximately three months, I lost all my resources. My social worker, my community development and housing worker, peer supports, doctors, chronic illness specialists, psychiatrists, and most importantly to me, my therapist of two years. They all disappeared and I was devastated.

I used to get help going places; stores, appointments, community services, etc. I used to have help navigating the city and figuring out transit. I used to see these supports in-person multiple times a week. I benefited from those meetings on my calendar and seeing their friendly faces was helpful and provided enough hope each time to get to the next time. I depended on my familiar schedule more than anything, and having that changed was a huge trigger.

When I lost a lot of my resources and there was nothing else available, I was pushed into groups with all new people I had never met. I was another number in the system. I tried a DBT (dialectical behavior therapy) group on Zoom because it was made out to be the only option for me. Rather than seeing and communicating with a real person one-on-one, I got pushed into places that I didn't belong and that didn't work for me. The DBT group seemed as though it was created with the thought that everyone was the same and it felt so fake. Marginalized realities were forgotten and access needs were not considered, meaning different ways of learning were also not considered. Because of this I really struggled with relating, understanding, and processing the content. I experienced brain fog, meltdown, and complete shutdown.

It all happened so fast. I cried after every group, if I even made it through without leaving the meeting. After a few zoom sessions causing huge breakdowns and spiraling into crisis, I had to stop going. I didn't have any help. I was isolated and left to my own unhealthy coping. I experienced huge amounts of distress and trauma, each one escalating the other.

Without the regular resources I had prior to Covid-19, I was unable to live independently. My health and well-being were at risk, resulting in multiple longer term hospitalizations. It was when I came to the big decision of moving that I began to see a new-found hope and thus I left the overstimulating and isolating city.

