



Dennis Chewy

DARK CHEUGY

by Maya Martinez

As the world turns to dust, as fire and floods take turns quenching and smoldering the earth of what we made of it, the phrase *Live Laugh Love*¹ will be one to fill the landfills, will be the phrase tattooed on the arms reaching for heaven.

The words first appeared in 1904, in a poem by Bessie Anderson Stanely, the prompt being to define success.

"He has achieved success

who has lived well,

laughed often, and loved much;"

The sentiment of a successful life, not qualified by riches, fame, bitches.

Live Laugh Love would have its heyday in 2010, the same year of the worst oil spill in American history, Deepwater Horizon or more commonly known as the BP oil spill.

In the 2010s it would spread like a sickness, mass produced as plastic, wooden, metal, stickers, cards, vinyl words regurgitated over and over in home decor, italicized font hanging in the air above the mantle in your moms third husband's adult man child's home.

Live Laugh Love.

The incessant proliferation of *Live Laugh Love* would ultimately pave the way for Cheugy. Like other trends, sentimentalities, and objects of the time (think girl boss, minions, stanley cups) Cheugy is what happens when *Live Laugh Love* is left outside for too long. Purchased from the store and then soured like curdled milk. *Live Laugh Love* had its day in the sun, and then became unprofitable, its excess left to be sold at strip mall franchise stores for eternity. Cheugy is the trend that was researched, marketed and sold, presented as a casual wholesome American romanticism. Who needs clean water or free healthcare when we have Lived, Laughed, and Loved?

¹ in manhattan darling font, in ballantines script, in barn house cursive, the looping letters soft in their edges, emanating casual whimsy, a quickness in the scribble that evokes heart felt signatures.

If *Live Laugh Love* is the seed,
Dark Cheugy is the flower blooming at the end of an empire.
If *Live Laugh Love* is what you purchased inside of any big box store in America,
Dark Cheugy is the desecration ritual happening to it in the parking lot.

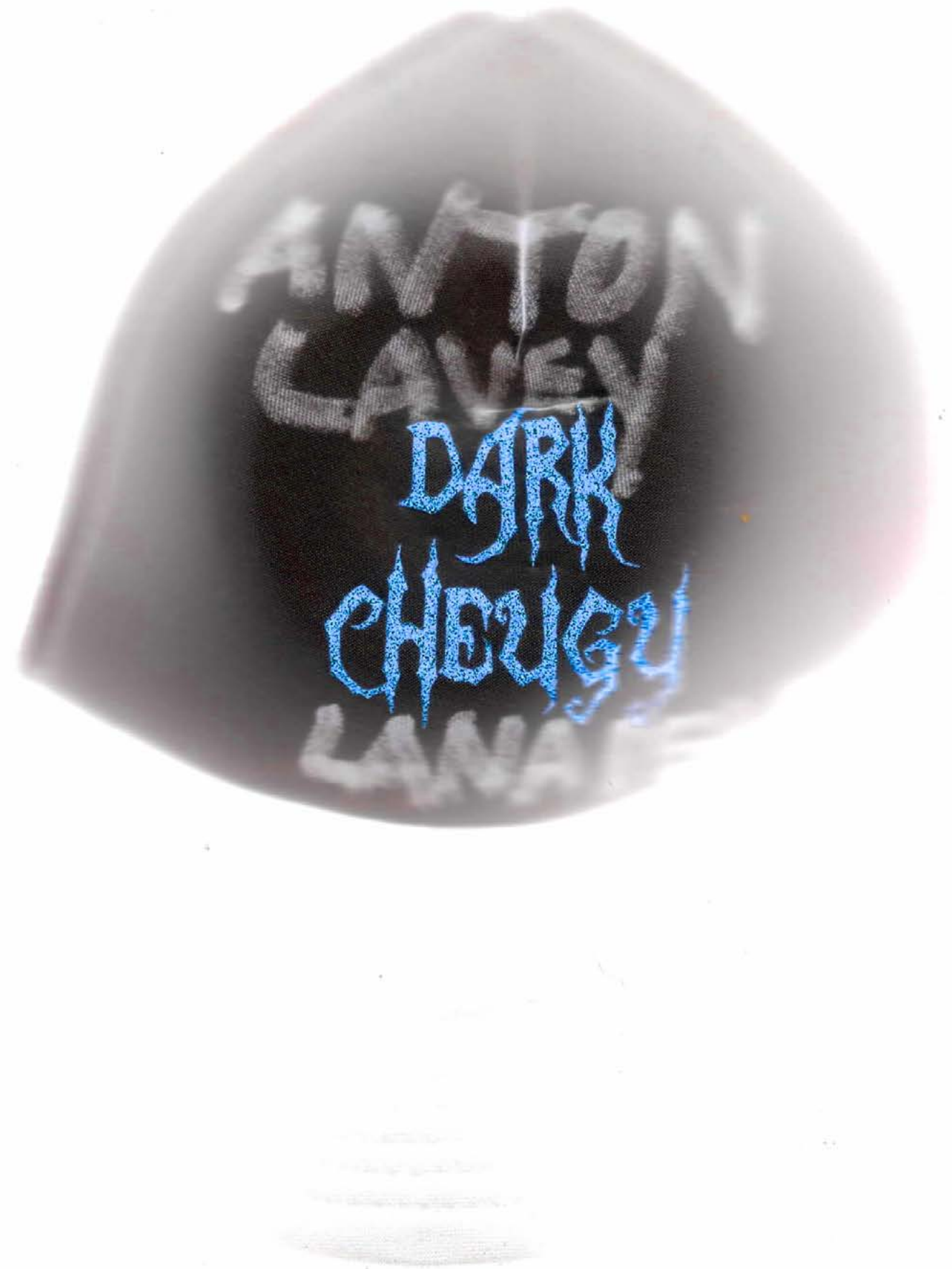
Emo teens grab your bag from you, emptying it out its contents onto the sunbaked asphalt behind the store. The three Ls fall with a scrape, betraying their shoddy fabrication. The pierced bodied teens draped in fandom attire, whacked out with sharpie scribbled up and down their seams. Letting their previously gulped blue slurpees mark their territory, they take turns pissing on *Live Laugh Love*.

If *Live Laugh Love* is boomer, Dark Cheugy is what happens when we are tired of being told to love ourselves in a tweaked out bastard world. A world that's spun and babbling nonsense.

Dark Cheugy is the night shift nurse smoking cigarettes behind the hospital and in the fluorescent light you see a halo gleaming around her as she scrolls on her phone during her cigarette break, a meme of a minion rolls up on her screen, the minion is in a bikini, sporting a devious smile, the floating black text above the minion reads "I'm hiding from exercise" the black text below it delivering the punch line "I'm in the fitness protection program" a smile erupts from the ageing nurse's face, she laughs a smokers laugh, hoarse, lived in, and reposts it onto her facebook wall. She is earnest. She thinks "that's so me" and it's beautiful because it's true and it's wonderful.

This is the gift of Dark Cheugy, an anarchist language of images, objects, sentiments, born from the repurposing of the world given to us by Pixar and Target. America has no heroes, so we improvise, recycling the trend forecasted trash that is overproduced and dead by the next trend cycle. It is a sincere effort to make meaning, it is a creative undertaking by all who engage in Dark Cheugy.

Dark Cheugy is what happens when we allow ourselves to dream. Dark Cheugy plays with earnesty like a child plays with putty, pulling and spreading, smearing it until the sincerity is thin and shining wet in the hands. Dark Cheugy is what we put on when we want to fuck the bull. A shining ass hole, winking at us through the muck.



When images of contemporary folk hero Luigi Mangione's cheugy life, before the incident, started popping up on my instagram and twitter feed, I was in awe of selfies he took, holding up a McDonald's happy meal, the box, advertising the release of the live action movie, The Lion King. Videos surfaced of him being goofy and silly with his friends at Target. His social media posts, manifesto, the sentiments he radiated, all felt so sincere, he Lived, Laughed, Loved. He was a product of the American Empire in every way, from his private school upbringing to the chronic back pain he experienced, a pain that had no end in sight and was accruing endless hospital bills. Luigi Mangione embodies Dark Cheugy because he loved McDonalds and he shot a United Healthcare CEO. He took the world as it was sold to him and repurposed it to make a language of his own.

Dark Cheugy is the aesthetics of the current folk era, where the Joker is as common as Jesus on the cross. The video art of Connor O'Malley embodies Dark Cheugy because it is a constant, earnest, farce, painting of masculinity today. In Connor O'Malley's film "Coreys" the character repeats over and over "I'm outside of time. I'm outside of currency". His language mimics right wing masculinity influencers and vibes, taking the Cheugy and moving it into Dark Cheugy. Repurposing a language that is constantly selling itself and making it into art.

Covered in sweat I was lost in the woods. A juggalette found me, put a minion bandaid on my wounded knee, leaning in, she kissed my forehead so sweetly, that her boobs pushed into my face and I smelled her aura.

Dark Cheugy is a form of communication with the dirt, the past, the earth, with time. A scream back into the void. Time marked by objects, Dark Cheugy is a language created to speak back to time, using only what was given to us. Dark Cheugy enjoys itself. Dark Cheugy is your CVS receipt carved into the tablets Moses came down the mountain with. It is finding a home for yourself in the holes of the images we are forced to consume on a constant loop.

Build yourself a home, surrendering to the memorabilia landfill America gave us. To look at a thing and know it does not stand up to "true beauty", but it didn't have to because this was the beauty that was canned and given to you.

Despite it all you were determined to find the silver lining. Have you ever leaned into the parking lot of your mind and chewed gum with tweakers in the sun? Through sheer will you crafted, plagiarized, and took the point of view into your own hands on the porn set, to show yourself and the world that through the scum of what they gave us, you could find the beauty, the shimmering humanness in the void.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maya Martinez is a poet and artist, raised in Florida and now living and working in New York City. Her published works include Hole Play and Hell or Mercy? . You can find more of her writing readily available at substack.com/@maya691

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Zody Burke (b.1991, Manhattan) is an American multimedia artist and musician who is currently living and working in Tallinn, Estonia. She creates cyphers through sculpture and sound through which to cartograph the complexity of American identity within late capitalism, explore parallel inherited cultural mythologies & their relationship to truth, and interface world-building with geological time.

Freena Kirppu (USA), also known as FL Pig, or DJ Pi69Y, is an American multidisciplinary artist and professional hot girl. A hater of the world and lover of the Earth. "I only want to sit on a pile of trash on the train track. I do not want to write about my art. Gotta go I am listening to Eminem. Have a beautiful day.



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