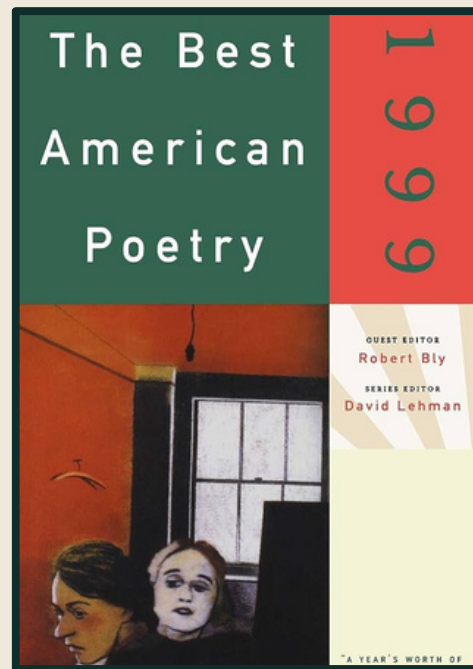


September

A short film by Corey Atkins

STORY & STYLE

ARTISTIC STATEMENT



Christmas, 1999. I'm given a poetry anthology that includes Jennifer Michael Hecht's *September*. It lives with me for 20+ years. Then comes March, 2020.

Locked down in my Harlem apartment, I read about how the pandemic is stirring up memories for those who lived through the darkest part of the AIDS epidemic—how similar the feelings of loss and fear, how drastically different the government response when the disease isn't a “gay plague.” (Reagan didn't publicly say “AIDS” until five years into the epidemic.)

We've all thought about loss and regret, time and aging—especially these last few years. I certainly have. Like when I'd escape from pandemic isolation to the beauty and history of Central Park: the Lake, the Great Lawn, the Ramble. And I found my mind returning to the poem I first read in 1999. Though there is no narrative in the poem, per se, the story suddenly felt crystal clear to me.

With this film I wanted to look to the past, to feel how it lives in our present, and to encourage a future where love—not fear—is our guide.

- Corey Atkins



September is a meditation on loss and regret—but also a tribute to the life force of New York City, and the refuge of Central Park.

And it's an ode to a generation of lost queer elders who fought, and died, so that others might live without fear. It's a fight we remember, and continue, in this film and beyond.

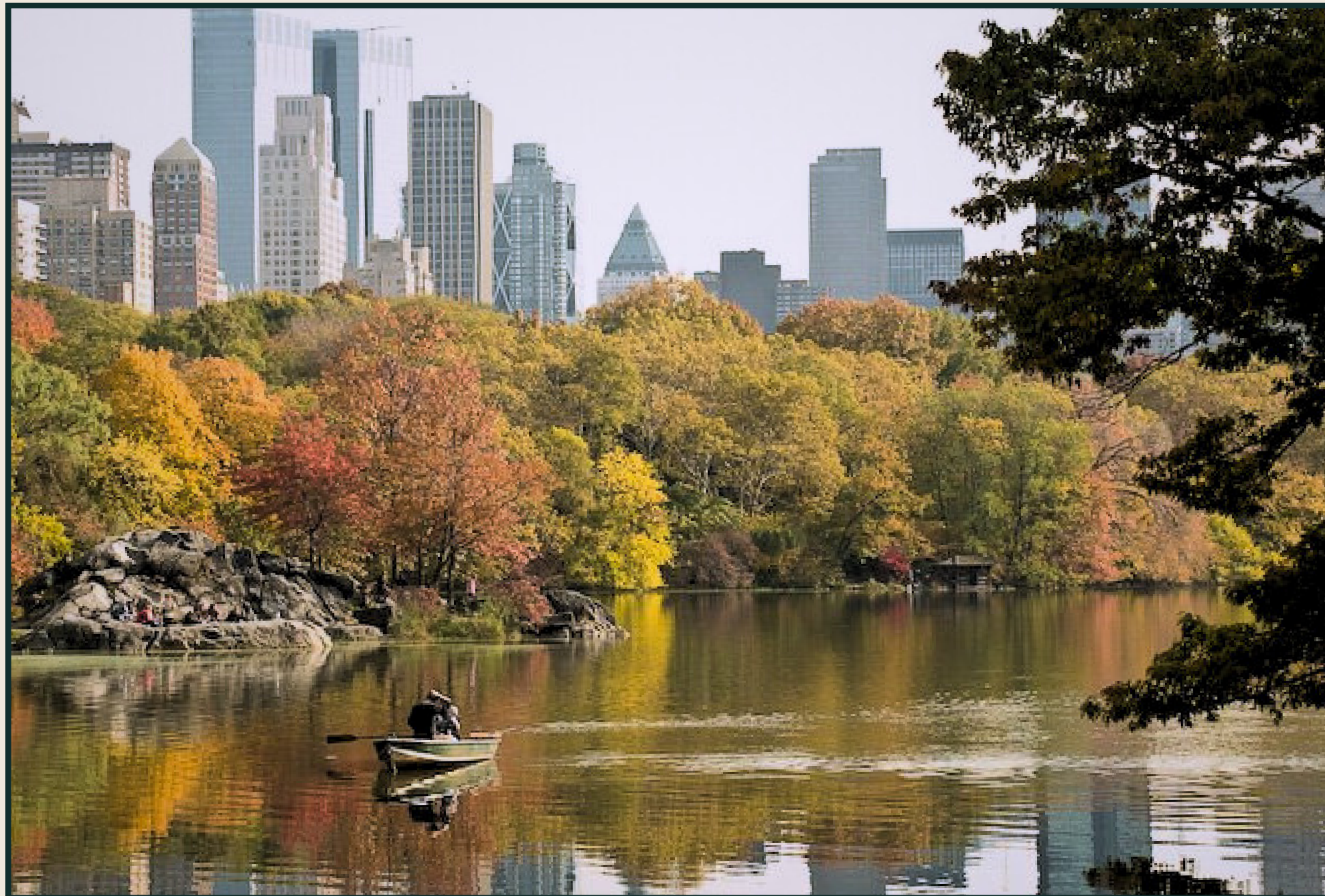
STORY

In *September*, we experience one man's twenty-year journey of remembrance —

and reckoning.



As he takes in the the life and connection around him from a rowboat on Central Park Lake, he remembers the deep love he found, then ran from, when faced with the specter of AIDS.





As night falls, he comes to accept that
grief and regret are like the seasons:
they shift and change—

but they are always there.

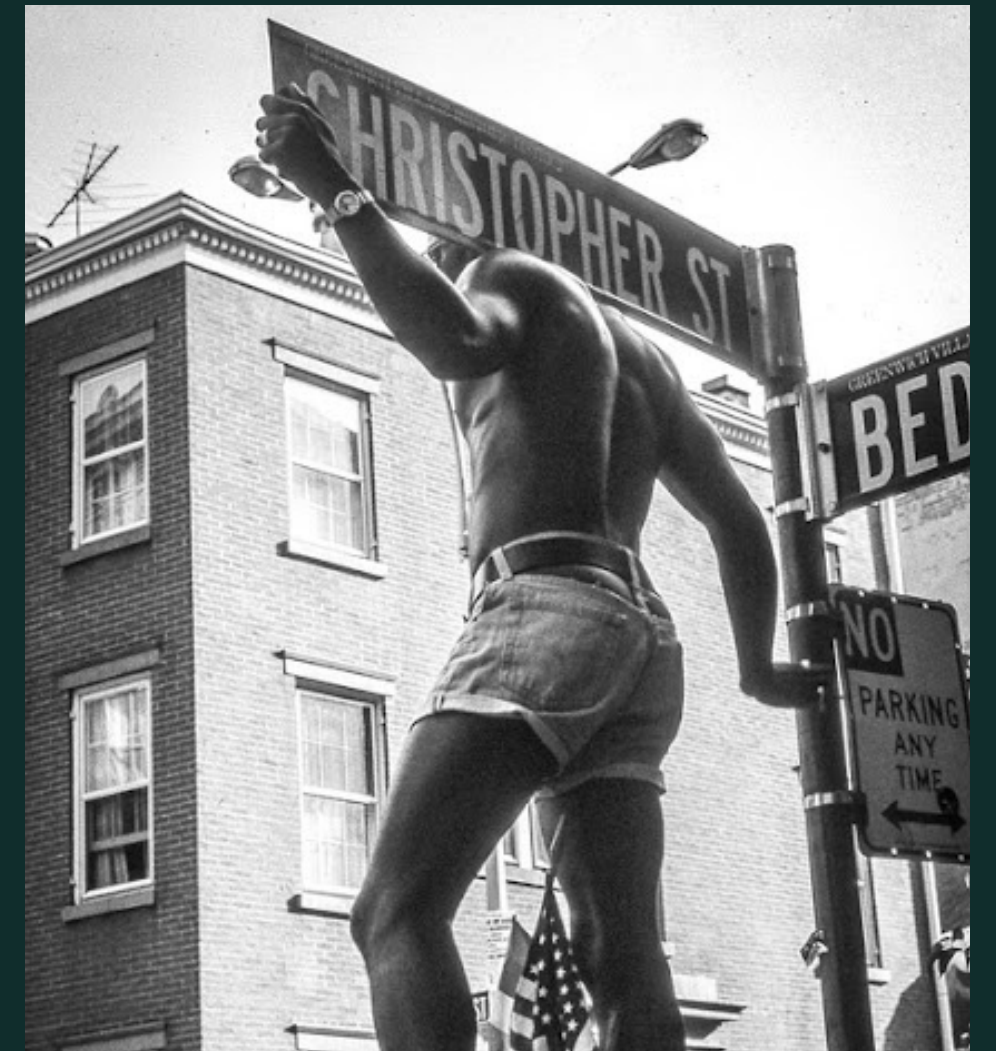
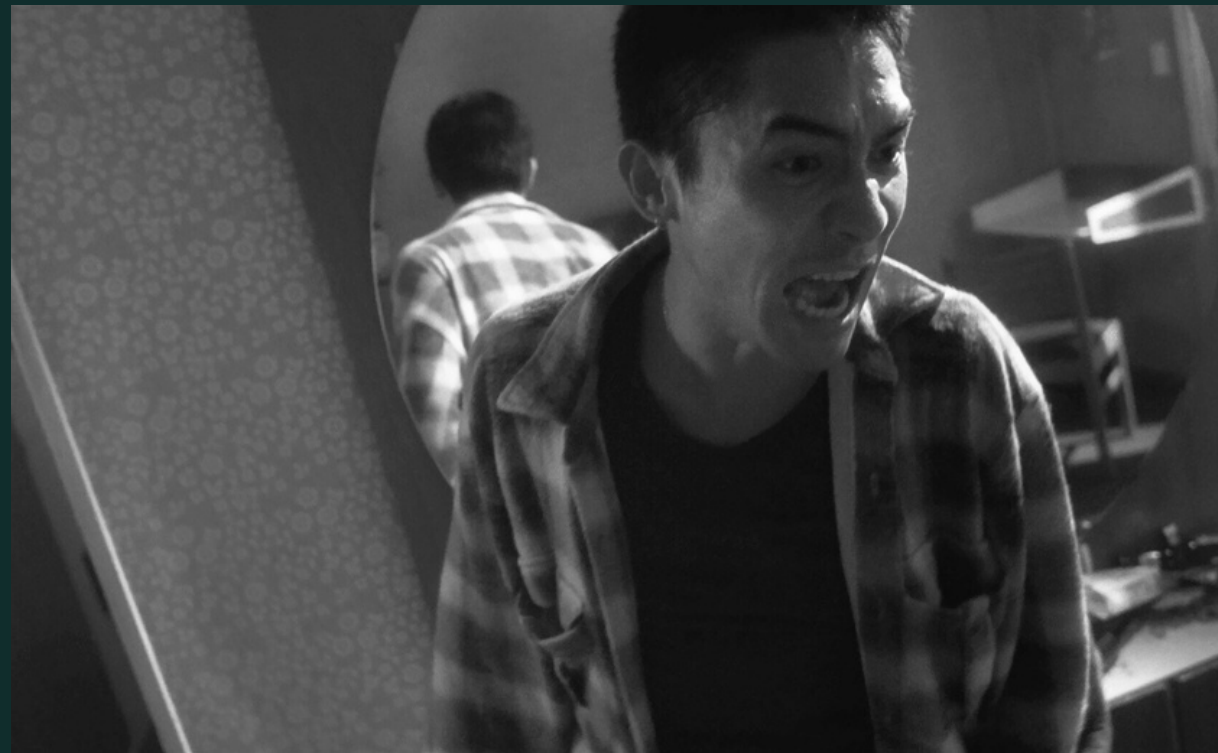
*September is adapted from the poem
by best-selling author and poet,
Jennifer Michael Hecht.*

THE WORLDS: MEMORY

We first see the Young Man, the Man's lost love, in a black & white photograph taken in the 1990s.

From this, other memories come rushing in—also seen in black and white.



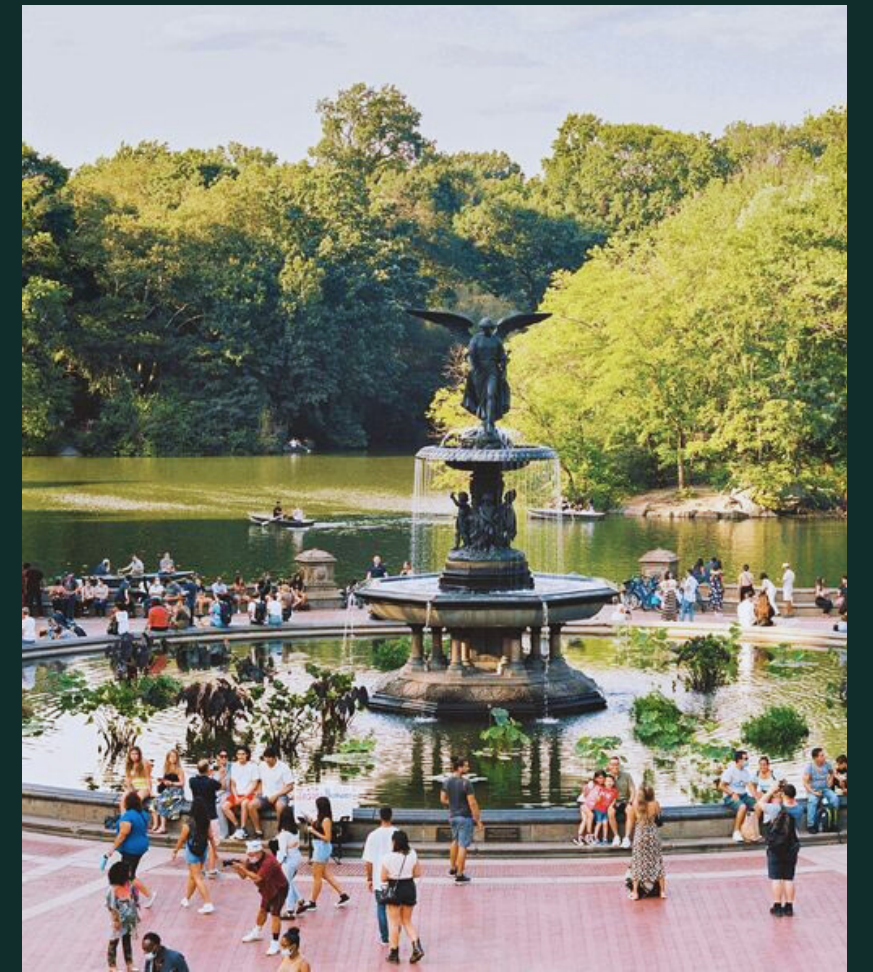


THE WORLDS: CENTRAL PARK

In the Park, the Man finds a kind of contentment in the human connection and joy he observes from the water—

Even as it reminds him of ways in which he's lost those things.





LOOK & FEEL

September pulls us into the Man's physical and emotional journey.

We shift from sunset's glow to the solitude of night as he travels across the lake—

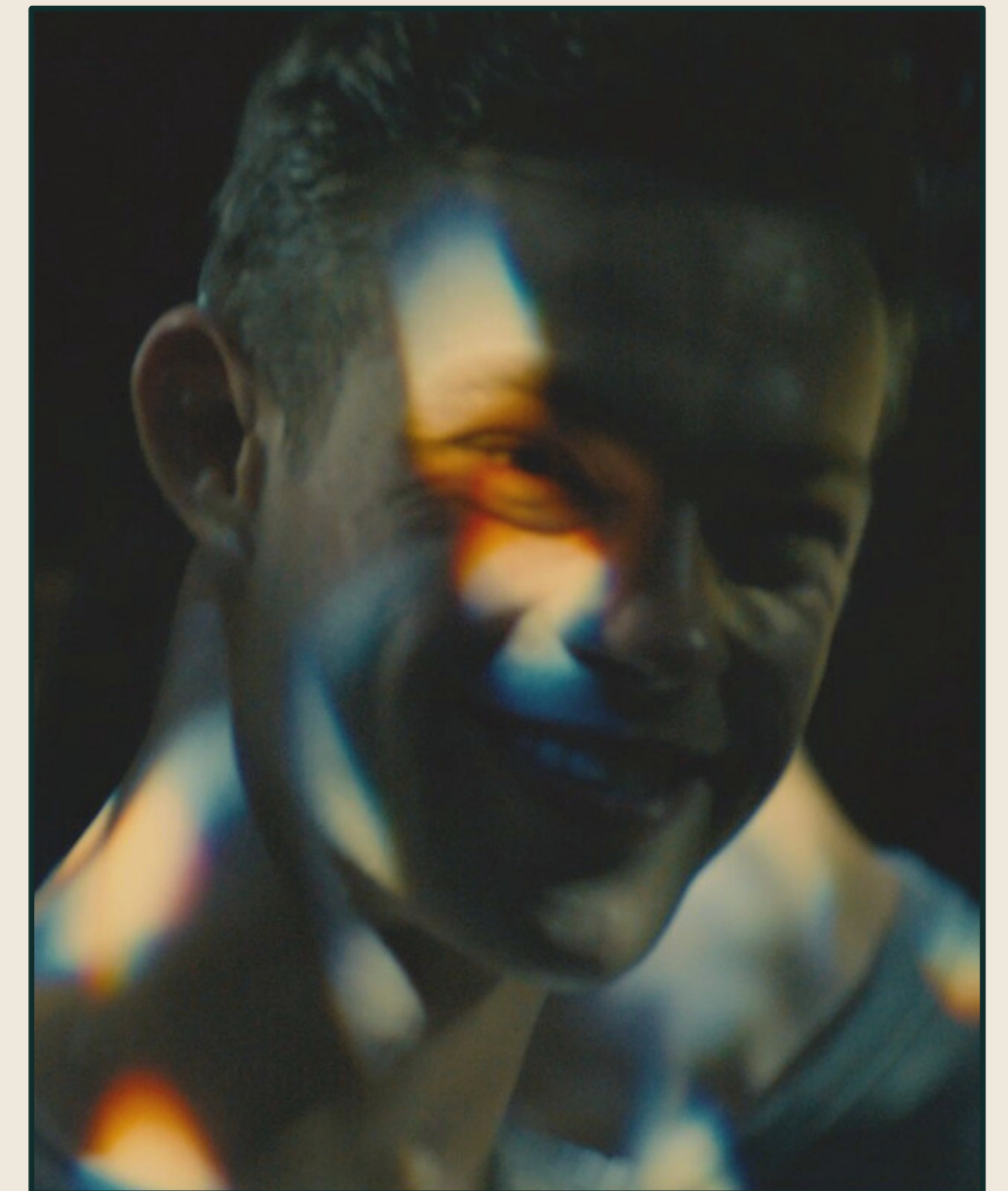
and into his own memory.



Textured & Contemplative

With an emphasis on texture, light, and depth—

the Man's thoughts and feelings become palpable.



Interiority & Character POV

We see what, and how, the Man sees—

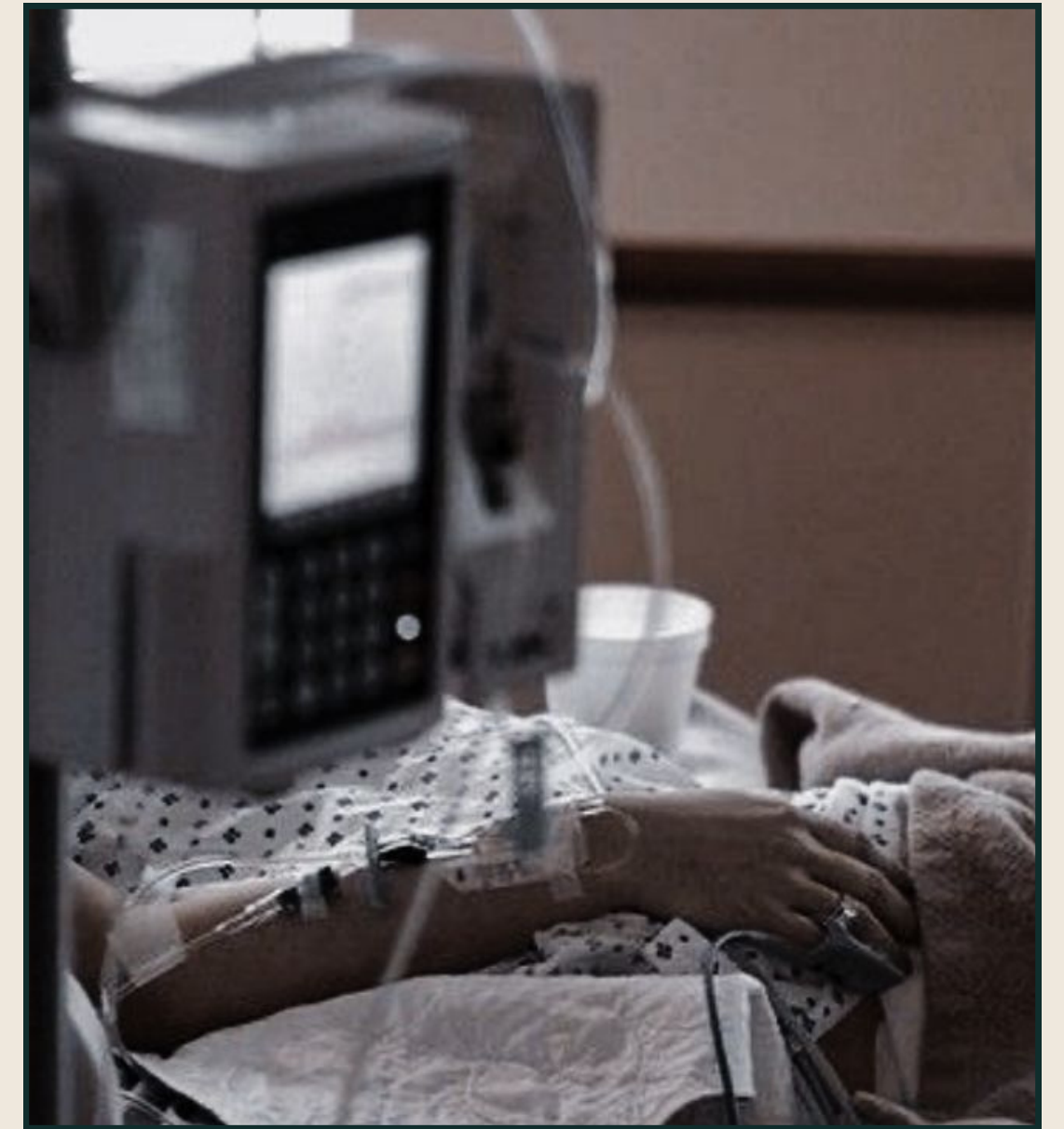
including how he sees himself.



Pieces & Parts

Like memory itself,
September plays with
image echoes and
fragments—

creating an unexpected
sense of the
whole.





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