REMEMBERING SUMMER

On the times worth living.

by

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"... photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of formswhich give that event its proper expression."

— *Henri Cartier-Bresson*

REMEMBERING SUMMER is a compilation of photographs taken throughout the season of warmth around my hometown in Upstate New York. Throughout my life, I've always questioned what made a photograph so memorable or of sentimental significance to a person. Photographs are usually kept close—archived in photo books to remind us of moments in our lives we cherish. These moments that exist in our mind as memories are held onto forever. In turn, these become or lead up to become cornerstones in our lives, shaping not only the rest of our life but also friendships; simply put, life long relationships with others. Infatuation on the subject soon became an obsession. I started to realize this project was more than just exploring my curiosity and finding the answer to my question. The images not only represent my friends and the land I grew up around, but also picture the spirit of myself shown within each frame. From the perspective of my eye and mind, these images would simply not exist the way they do without my being. It was comforting to recognize this throughout the process of choosing the images to be included in the project. Taking place in the Adirondack Mountains, I felt almost obligated to include Bruce Weber's influence on me into this work as well. The timelessness of his work and the way they feel so natural to view really impacted my mindset as a kid who grew into the realm of photography and portraiture. I've learned there's more to photography than just clicking the shutter and taking a photo. Along with it also comes a connection, one not only between the person taking the photo and the person being photographed, but one also with those mentioned and the scene they're interacting with. The main key ends up being to let life come to you, rather to seek life itself. I like to believe that is why I continue to take photos, and largely, my main motivation. It forces the process of production to slow down and

places me in the now. To create and bring into this world a memory of a moment in time that once was, is to remind us of the times worth living for.

Growing up during grade school my family would always go shopping before the new school year. Having three sisters and one of them being the oldest of us all (I'm one of five, also the middle child), a common stop at the mall would be Abercrombie & Fitch. Personally, if it were up to me, my old clothes would suffice. I never actually enjoyed shopping for clothes, but there was one aspect of the visits that I soon learned I would enjoy. That one thing was the exposure to all the blown up advising photographs throughout the windows or on the walls within the store. Not even just A&F stores, because other retailers would have images on their walls, but there was something special that caught my eye about the A&F ads. Upon my many gazes the imagery would fuel my imagination. Tall and oversized photographs, I'd imagine myself and my life as seen pictured. Or I'd think to myself, that's how I'd like to spend my time; smiling and laughing, having fun, and above all of that looking good throughout all of it! I mean, just taking a second to appreciate the beautiful people pictured in the photos made me want to be them, who wouldn't want to be surrounded by close friends and good times. They made what was pictured look so effortless and easy. As if they were created to sell this idea of a life full of bliss (and I suppose it worked since I could not look away). At times I would even feel guilty since some of the images were somewhat provocative, but it wouldn't stop me. I was a curious young kid and these photographs were full of life and even though I didn't know anyone pictured, I could see myself doing those things too—I could see myself being friends with them. It was an instant connection and all it took was a look of a picture. A connection that existed because of the environment the photograph created in my mind. Even if the scene was just made up and the atmosphere created for an ad, it looked and felt authentic to interact with.

As I got older I of course revisited the images online to learn that most of them I saw (And continued to see) were taken not so far from me in the Adirondacks area of New York. I also

learned that the man behind the lens is Bruce Weber, a name that I would remember throughout my entire photographic career. I was never exactly into the partial nude images, but I enjoyed looking at the forms and the stories that the pictures told. It was something I'd keep in mind when producing my own work, and something I continually thought about while producing the work showcased alongside this project. True to my idea, the photographs made for Abercrombie created "enduring friendships from the shoots.", as said by Weber himself. Possibly unknown to him, or maybe even it was known, but his work essentially captured singular moments of authenticity. They were as true as could have been. It ends up being exactly how I like to view it. It could also be said to have been that of a decisive moment, a "simultaneous recognition… of the significance of an event." And in today's day and age, there's a lot of these decisive moments going around, despite the creator even being aware of it.

Ask any young person or marketing firm about Instagram and they will tell you everybody is on it. A social media platform purchased by Facebook in the past decade that has ruled the feeds. For those who actively use the network and share images, it's like there is this dire need to post an image or video that is appealing to the masses of followers backed behind each account. Instagram is the new photobook, but instead publicly available online for all to see (that is unless the account is set to private). Aonce personal, almost intimate element of one's life is now conveniently displayed online, digitized for everyone to see. Now this is not such a terrible thing overall, but what I've begun to notice is a clear and distinguished effort to produce an image specifically *for* an instagram feed or even more so for their followers. Again this can be interpreted in both a good or bad way but what I'd like to comment on is this almost somewhat toxicity about that behavior. Even looking at myself at one point in time, I once created images for others with a mindset of what *they* would like to see. I didn't think this was all too bad until I started to get foggy when trying to find my own idea of what things I like to photograph. Above all I started taking photos for myself, so I should

absolutely continue that nature. Acknowledging this "flaw", I started to post less for others and began to post more for myself. Especially with no thought of how many likes (or that instant gratification) I'd receive on a post. Afterall my instagram feed account is a reflection of myself and my interests, which I would hope one could conclude is a sense of life, design, and photography. Nonetheless, to me Instagram is like a tool. As is my phone (which also doubles as a camera) and definitely my DSLR, "the camera" itself. All tools are to be used as an extension of our bodies. With Instagram, I'm able to utilize its platform to share with my followers and the world moments of authenticity by tapping "share." It's become so easy for me to take out my phone, frame the shot, and capture what I seek to hold on to and also to share with my circle. I also like to believe that this same principle applies to everyone else who uses the app, whether or not they may even realize it. The entire idea behind the platform is to connect people with similar interests via a social media network based on the sharing of images or media… hence the category of the app being **social* media*.

Henri Cartier-Bresson said it himself, the camera functions as "an extension of the eye." As social media functions as an extension of ourselves and our individual interests, these tools have become used on the daily. With each use becoming a natural reflex of some kind, it is at a point where no immediate thought is considered about it. From that point forward, it simply just exists and now is a part of what makes us who we are. I view my camera in this same manner, and when I say my camera, I mean not only my Canon 6D but also my iPhone, as well as my Minolta and my Polaroid. For whichever tool is most readily available to me is what I will reach for to capture the moment. A decisive one, captured within a fraction of a second. For within that fraction of a second there is more contained than what is seen. All the elements that makeup the photo are necessary to convince the viewer of its validity. Without the completion of forms within the space, the photograph would not succeed as well as it possibly could. Cartier-Bresson and this idea of a

"decisive moment" has always stuck with me and intrigued me. Most especially during shooting I would constantly be thinking about it and wondering if the best possible snap was recorded. But truth be told, the constant thinking about seeking this "shot" to capture the essence of the moment only got in the way of what I actually sought out to do. Rather, spending time in the moment itself and being a part of it significantly aided in my process. Again, the timeless and somewhat effortless look of a photograph had always appealed to me. Looking at Joel Meyerowitz work, Everyday Life, it's clear why it's titled what it is. Everyday photos of everyday life—Meyerowitz process is slowing down his own actions and movements. "...brief recognitions I have of a moment when the world seems to have a peculiar order for me, are the only reason I have for making the photograph. It has nothing to do with the people in it and everything to do with my being conscious for a brief moment." His process is more concerned about what's around him and what comes to him, rather than him seeking out what he's looking for. As a kid I was always told not to force things together, that they should just be together with a bit of effort. If a greater force is required, then it isn't meant to be. Having this mindset drilled into my head at a young age I always contemplated it and thought it had many more applicable meanings than a quite literal one. It stands true with how Meyerowitz allows his images to develop, and it is also true for how I approached my work. Much like many things in life, nothing should be forced. There needs to be a mutual agreement between both parties. Only then will the flowers start to blossom and the birds start to sing. It calls for the most authentic type of experience. For only then capturing a photograph of the moment comes the easy part.

Creating memories is something that is done between more than one party. Let that be someone and their environment or someone and another. They always hold up to what was remembered, and photography does a great job in aiding those same thoughts. From all my years in this world, I've come to realize that there can be many distractions to take away from experiences that may shape a life. I have always been observant. I noticed the genuinity behind certain photos

and became curious about what makes them so special; what makes them feel genuine and so easy to connect to. I've found that cherishable moments come to us in their own ways, and that nothing should be forced into play. Allowing oneself to indulge in the moment, to be a part of life rather than to just observe it, will bring to them what is sought. That these moments can introduce lifelong relationships and inspire. It will allow for time to be seen and felt slower than what is typically known. It's in moments like these that support a photograph into reminding us of one of those nights or days. That photographs can be held onto forever, and the moments they capture end up being small fractions of a much larger picture.

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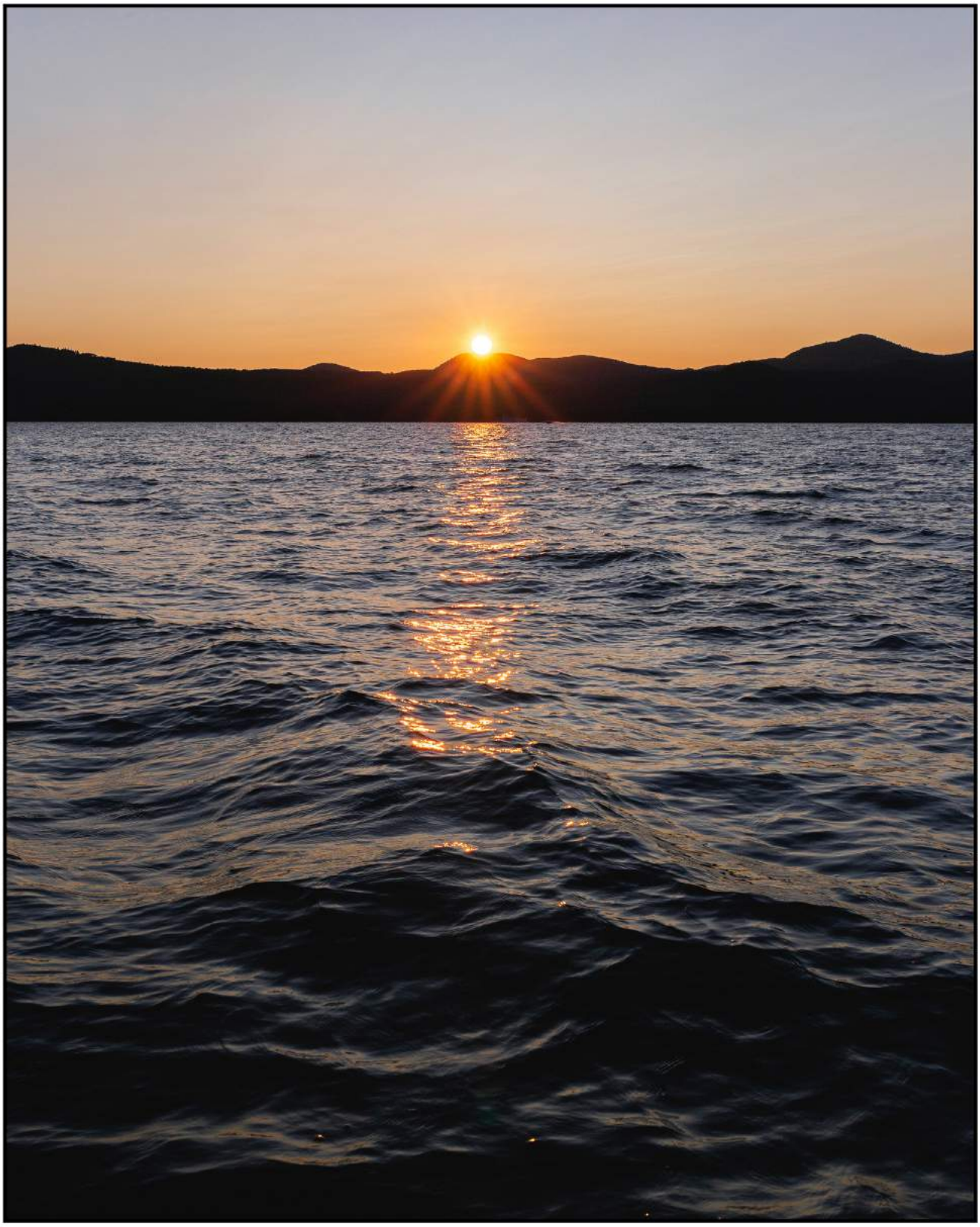

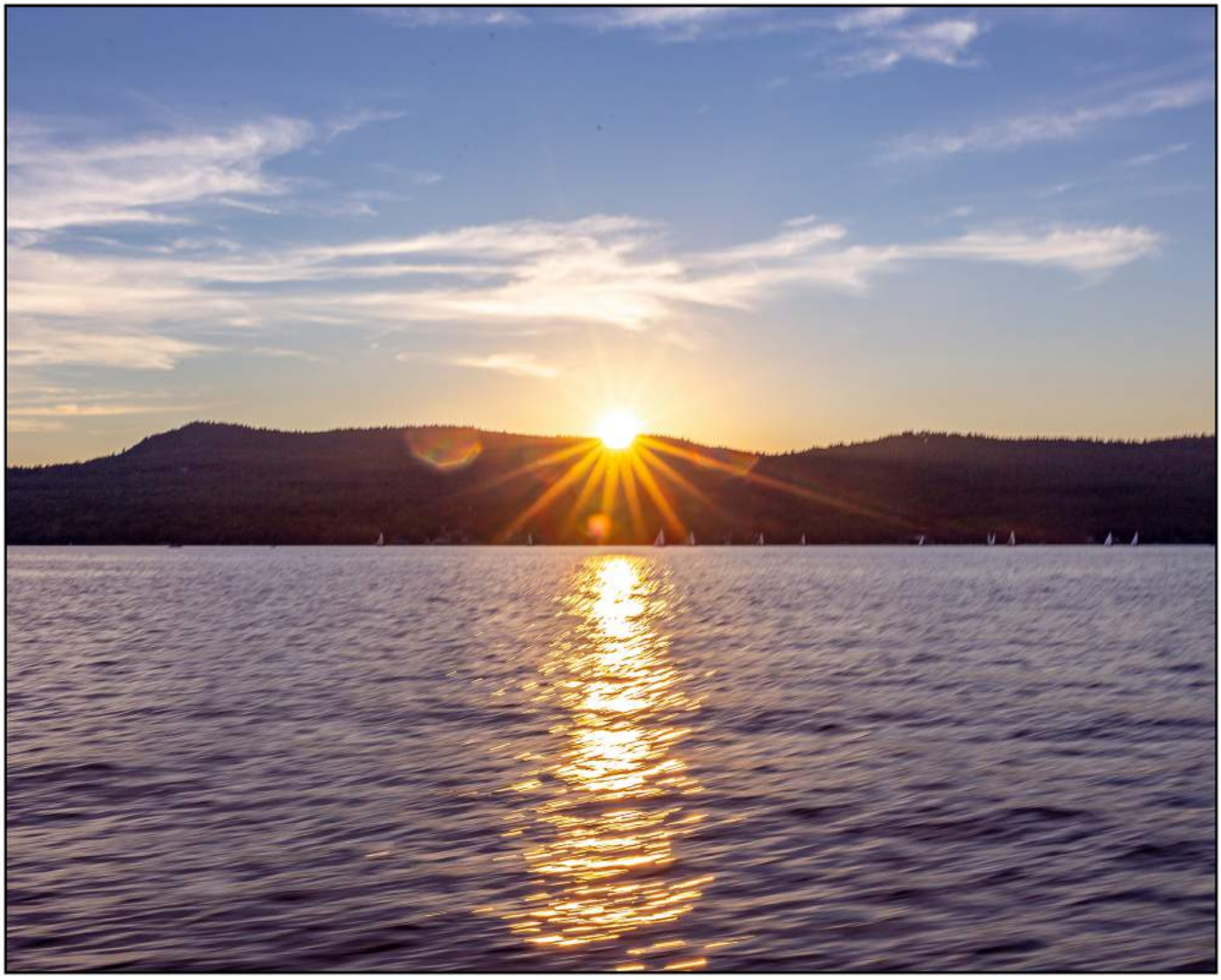


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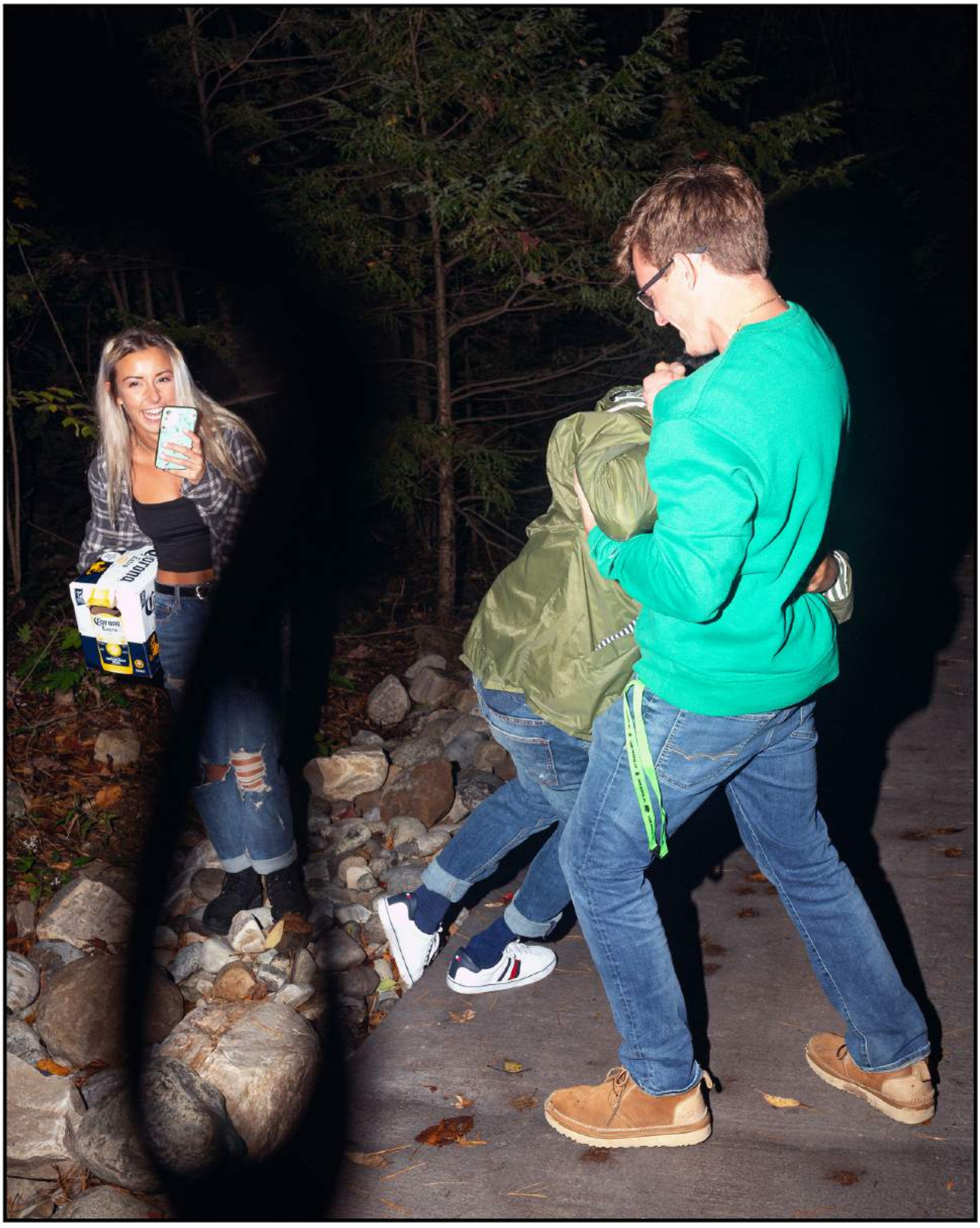

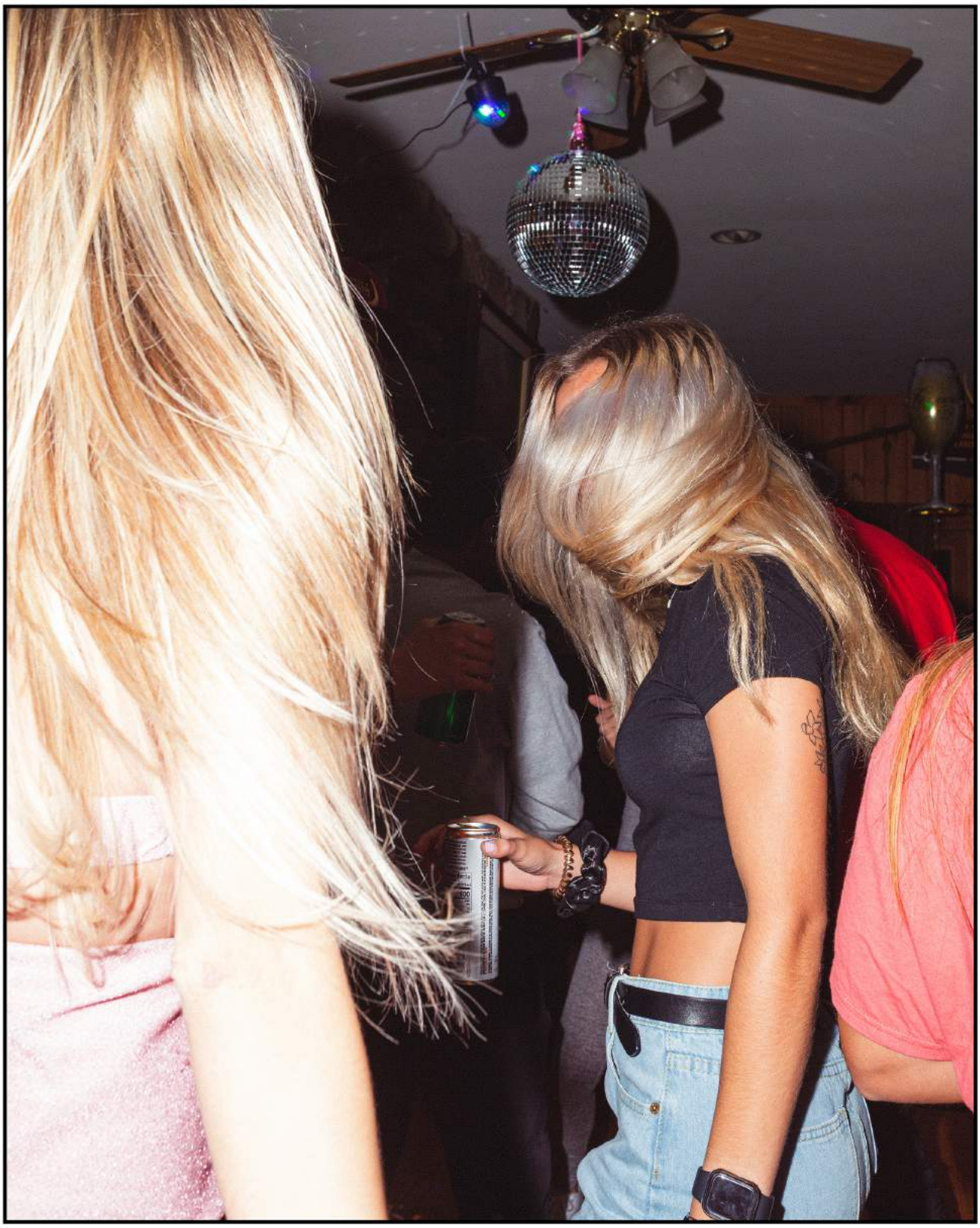

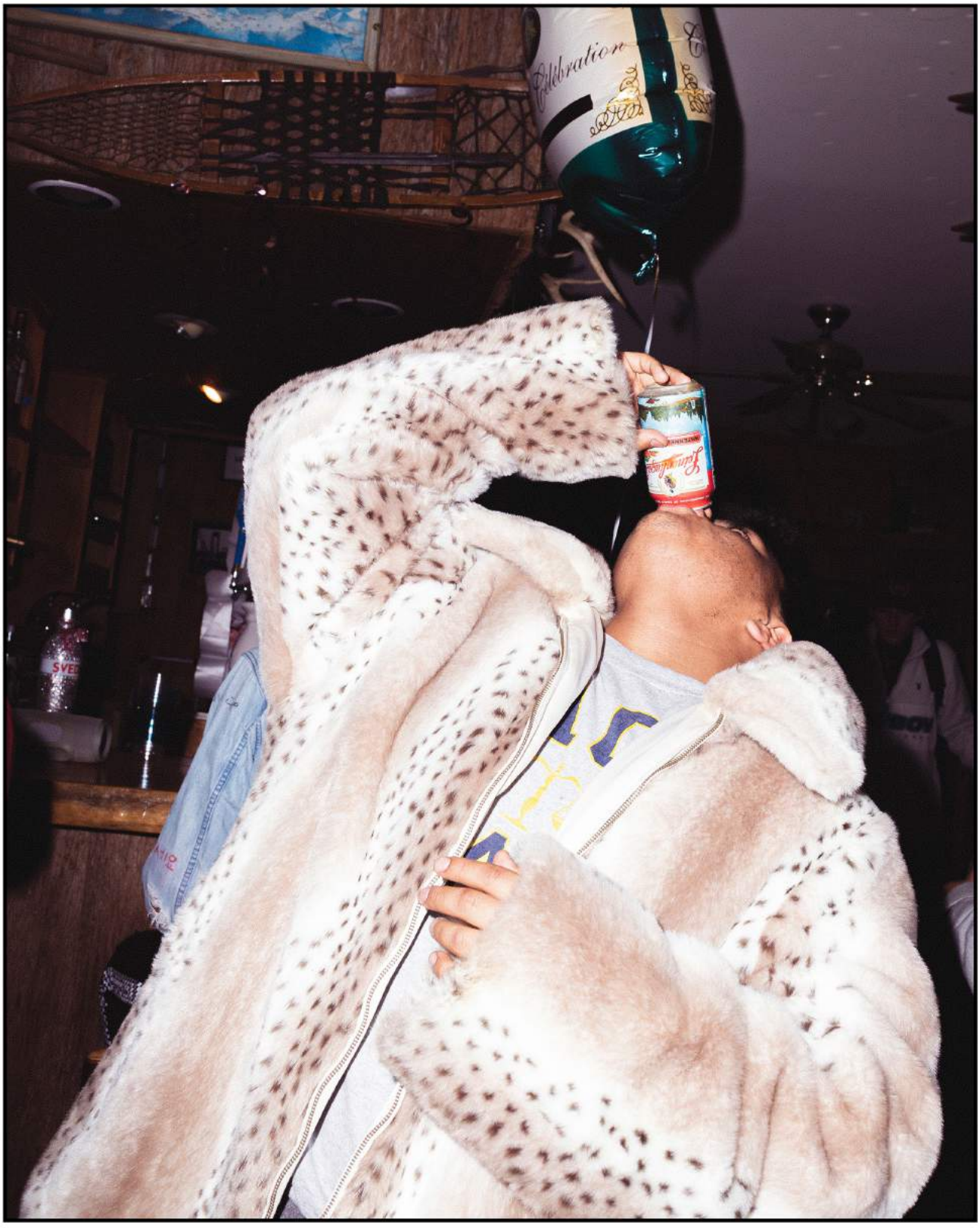
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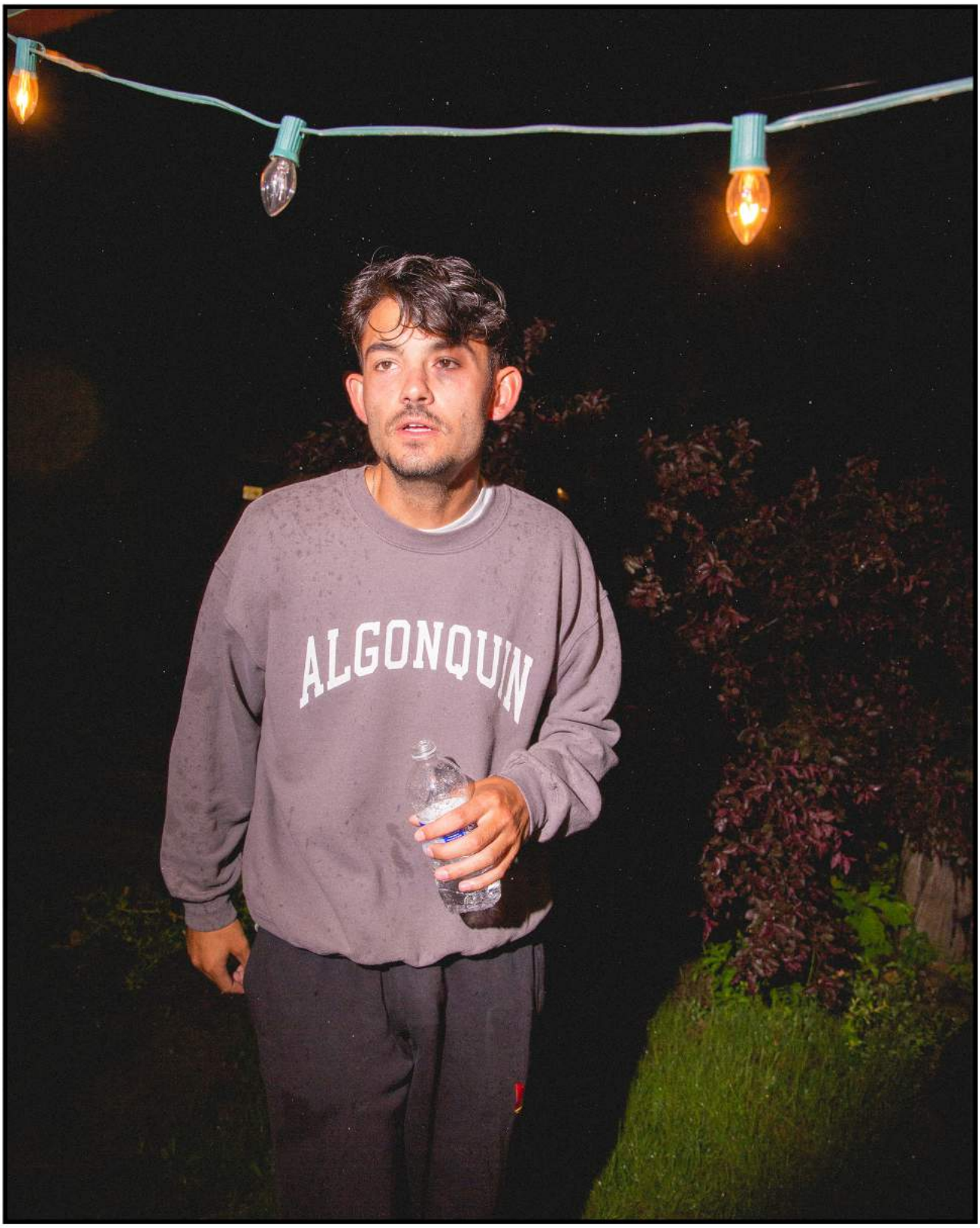
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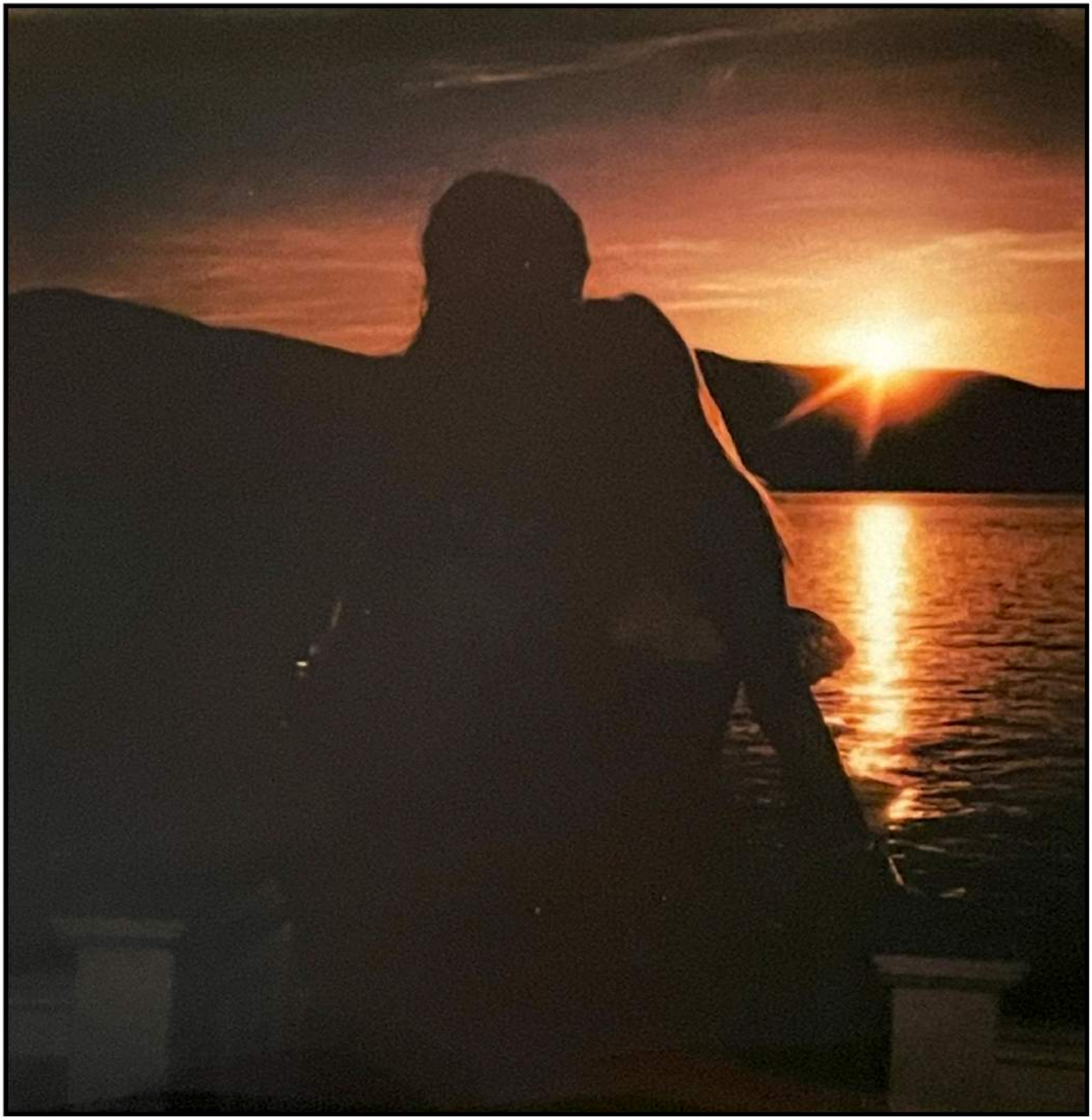

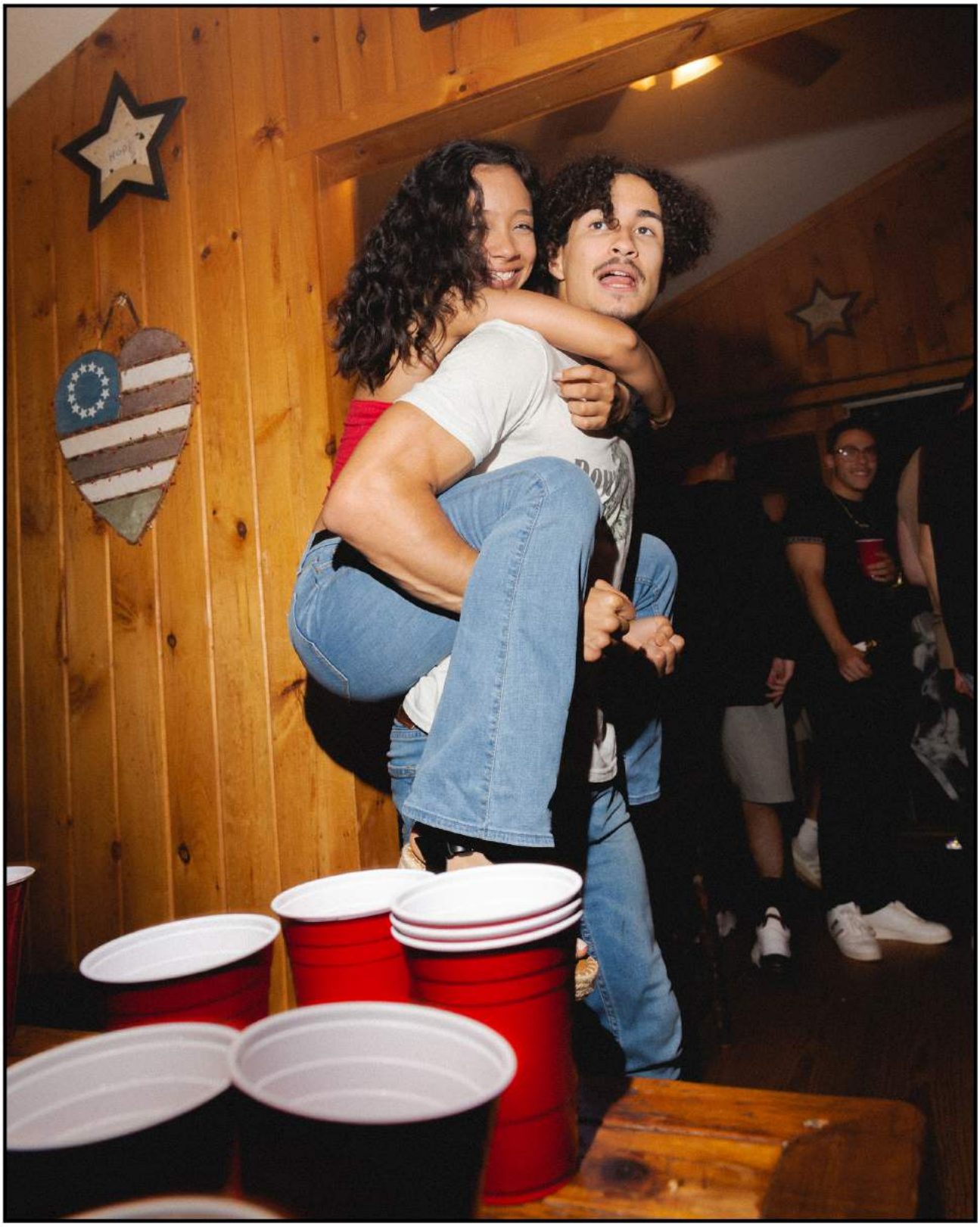

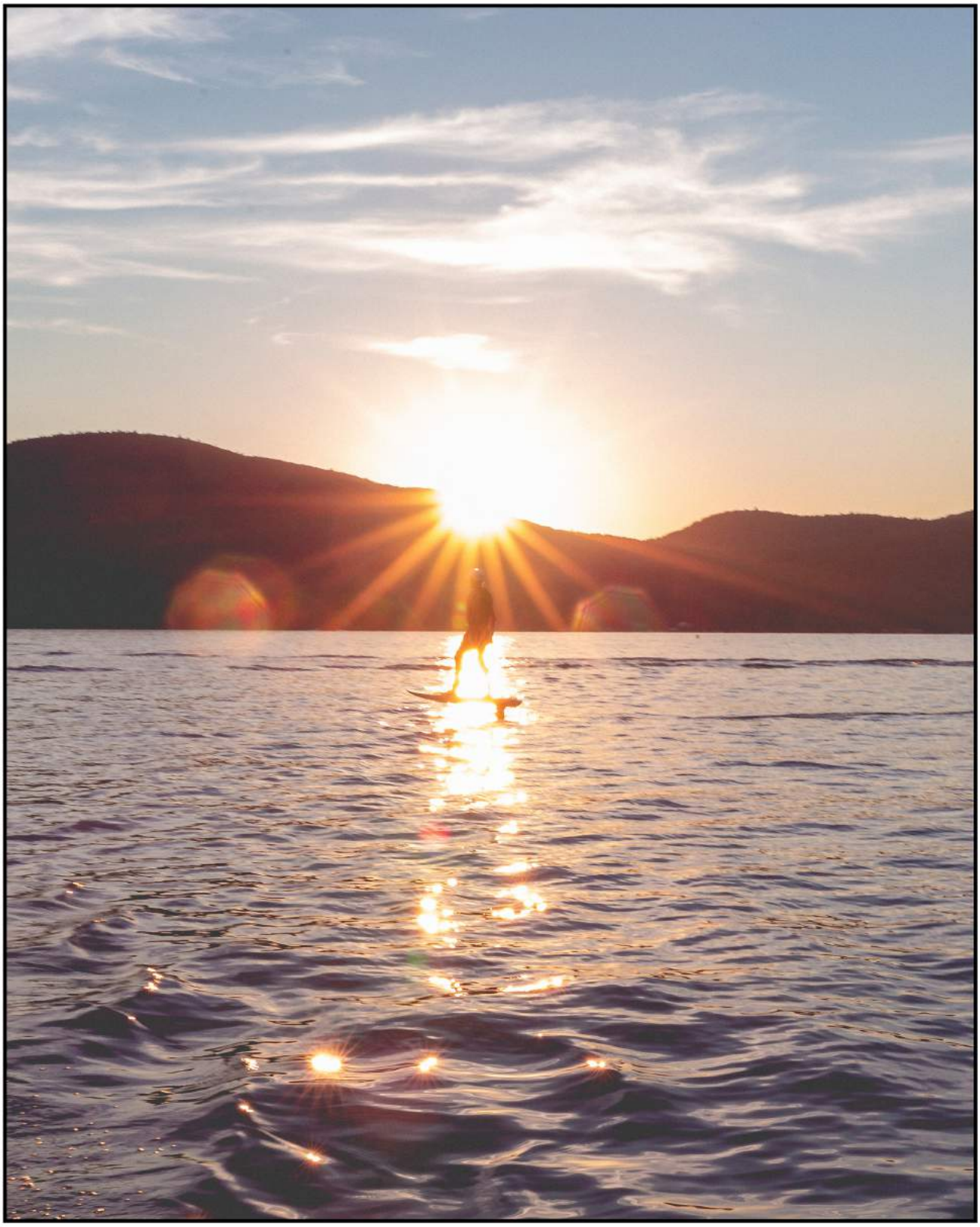


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