

Seth Pick

FAILING

November 30, 2024 – January 10, 2025

### The Flayed and the Mirror

To step beyond skin—at what cost? The mirror waits, still and watchful, #reflecting the endless cycle of faces we flex and discard. Its surface is both a trap and a release, catching us in half-light, forcing us to confront every flicker of self as it dissolves into the dark. We come back to it, #lowkey searching for validation, feeling around the edges of something unfinished, our own thin-stretched shadows.

A silence falls; the quiet murmur of unseen voices fills the void, like the digital apparitions haunting our DMs. These voices, whispers from the crowd, live where our secrets hide, lost selves filling the reflection with an ache only memory knows. Here, in the vast feed of our minds, every comment leaves a scar. We learn to #ghost from judgment, slipping beneath new layers—yet we find ourselves flayed by memory, our suit exposed under the weight of too many unseen gazes.

Flaying goes way back to myth, marking the moment humans made themselves offerings to the gods. Marsyas, a Satyr, dared to challenge Apollo's song. He played his flute, whipping up a frenzy, but Apollo, whose music was flowing like #divine energy, wasn't about to get humiliated. Marsyas understood what flaying cost, the pain of a god's touch stripping him to his core. His voice dared the impossible, breaking divine silence. Survival wasn't a shield; it was a surrender to something way too raw, a truth so real it hurt, his voice echoing across eternity. Through every cell, Marsyas felt the emptiness, tasted the hollow where skin had been. Surviving wasn't armor, it was staying soft, letting bone and breath whisper: "This is what's left."

We live between our real selves and blurred pixels, under the screen's brutal gaze. Digital personas, #filtered truths, continuously shed for the next look. The screen—a mirror, a curated vibe check—makes us confront not only who we are but who we think we should be. Endless iterations. Flesh and identity blur in hyperreal spaces where we fragment, forever vulnerable to the judgment, and to invisible scrutiny of the feed. We're our own scapegoats, #dragged for the shapes we mold ourselves into, only to vanish under the next layer. When the mirror's indifferent light hits the hollows of our self-made myths, we feel the pain linger, our stories retold, waiting for the screen to recognize fragments we left behind.

This is our mythical inheritance: stitched together from wounds and lost posts, we drift in hope for a glimpse of something #iconic. In this space, we're flayed not by gods but by algorithms, likes, and retweets. Yet even here, shedding is a kind of survival. Marsyas' flaying wasn't just about destruction; it was about what remains, the realness pulsing in us even when the skin is gone.

In those moments, a personal lament rises—a cry for self, longing to exist beyond the show, to feel whole beyond the skin and screen.

*Petra Tomljanovic*

*November 12, 2024*