

## **GABBY DAVIS THE CROWD**

**I bet my first apartment in Los Angeles looked pretty similar to yours. It was in a mid-century, Tudor-style dingbat in West Hollywood. For the first few months, I was so overwhelmed by the novelty of the city that I didn't notice the apartment's "eccentricities." Wall to wall carpeting ensured that the apartment trapped as much piss and dirt inside as the city sidewalks outside. Layers of grease, built up by decades of tenants, mixed with the inescapable Los Angeles dust to coat bright pink kitchen tiles with an oily tint. While preparing food, the fluorescent lights hanging from the faux-wood ceiling fan gave anything organic—fruit, meat, myself—a sickly, pale hue. Other rooms had no lighting at all, creating an erratic contrast between hospital-like brightness and blurry darkness. I never had any friends over for dinner. If I *had* hosted though, it would have looked a lot like Gabby Davis's paintings.**

**Smudged glassware, flaccid shrimp, and mismatched cutlery are evidence of a gathering that has concluded before we've arrived. A haze has settled over the objects, coating them with a thin film of grime. Harsh yellow light throws the paintings' subjects into bold relief, but this light seems to obfuscate as much as it reveals. The shrimp caught in the glare appear to be wilting, the glassware is getting dirtier, even as it sits untouched. All of this contributes to the sense that we are outsiders here, unable to make sense of what we are looking at or how the objects relate to one another. Peeking into one of Davis's scenes is bewildering, a feeling heightened by the lack of a clear perspective to ground the viewer.**

**I moved out of that apartment after a year, but I look back on my time there fondly. Details I once found unsightly now appear charming. It exemplified the beauty of Los Angeles, a beauty found not in grandiose skylines but in intimate details, like the kitsch of a Tudor façade, dust swirling in a sunbeam, or a dirty spoon caught in a spotlight, separated from the crowd.**

**Sampson Ohringer**