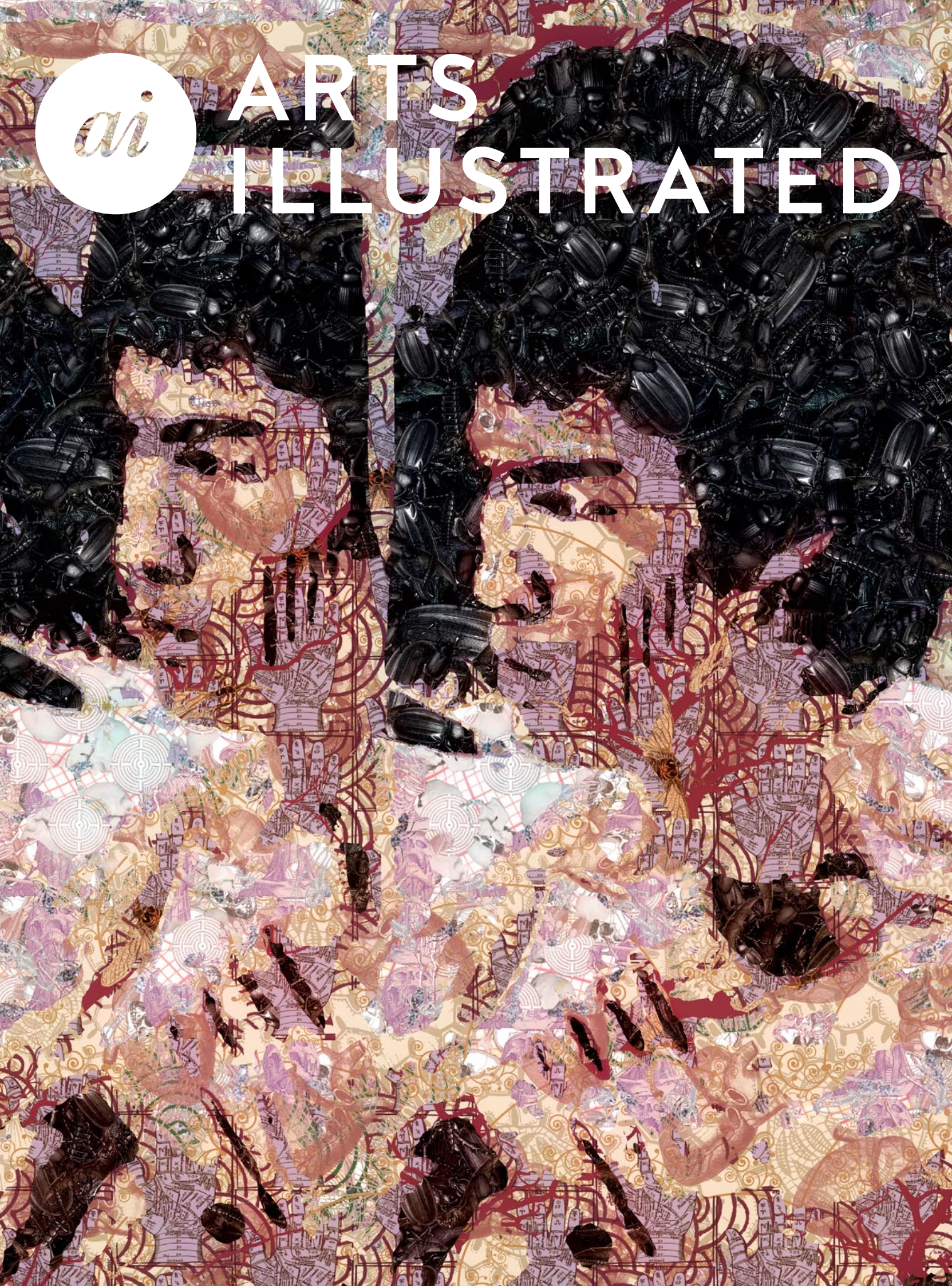




# ARTS ILLUSTRATED







# Mad Woman in the Hole

A re-imagining of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland with its forever-shifting, delicious definitions of sanity and insanity, especially for the times we live in today, and hoping the only turning in the grave the much-revered author of the original adventures, Lewis Carroll, would do for this travesty, is to say, ‘...we’ve had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you’d mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don’t mean to stop here all the rest of your life!’

PRAVEENA SHIVRAM

*Illustrations by Debasmita Dasgupta*



Did you see her? Did you see her?  
Going down  
Down the sewer  
A never-ending fall  
Till she hit the ground  
And saw a tiny mirror  
With an unblinking eye  
And a permanent grin  
That wouldn’t disappear  
From head to its rear  
Till you flung it across  
Only for it  
To again  
Reappear

Did you hear her? Did you hear her?  
Her words  
Growing and shrinking  
A tale unbecoming  
Of crazy little girls  
Travelling alone and  
Following thoughts  
Wearing waistcoats and a watch  
Opening unmarked doors  
To worlds that  
Were  
Not

Did you touch her? Did you touch her?  
And scream  
Like the Queen of Private Parts  
You know, of the mind and soul  
And said ‘Off with her heads’  
Because there is always  
More than one  
‘All the better to speak with  
My dear’, said the Hatter  
Amidst all the clatter  
Of irrepressible chatter

Did you smell her? Did you smell her?  
Eww, no, you say?  
Okay.

If you didn’t do any of that  
Not to worry  
No one’s in a hurry  
(Except White Rabbit)  
For a story is just  
Words that are  
Living and breathing  
In your loving memory  
That is nothing but a w(hole)  
New state of misery  
Skipping along gaily  
Saying, “Curiouser and curiouser”  
All the live long  
Daily





# The March Heir Hospital Psychological Report

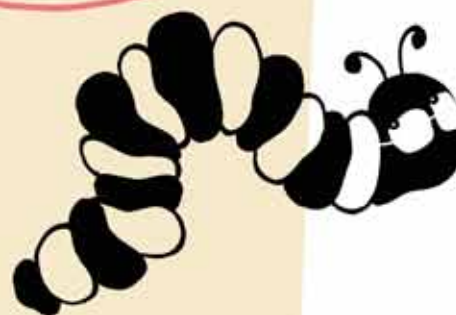
Source of referral: Dr. Kate Pillar

Reason for referral: Psychological evaluation

## Assessment Procedure Clinical Interview Visual Test Transcript of Clinical Interview



Name: Alice  
Age: 10 years and 0 months  
Sex: Female



**Dr. Kate Pillar:** Good morning, Alice, my name is Dr. Kate Pillar.

**Alice:** Yes, I can see that. You do look like one.

**KP:** I am sorry, I don't quite understand that.

**Alice:** Your name. You look like a caterpillar. Though I know one isn't supposed to make personal remarks. It is rude.

**KP:** (short laugh) Okay, Alice. Yes, you are right, it is rude. Who taught you that?

**Alice:** My sister. I was also taught to keep my temper.

**KP:** Did your sister teach you that as well?

**Alice:** No, it was the blue caterpillar. Though, he didn't tell me where exactly to keep it.

**KP:** Caterpillars don't talk, Alice.

**Alice:** They do. You are talking, aren't you? Oh! I am ever so sorry for being rude again.

**KP:** Okay. So, shall we begin with your day by the river bank with your sister?  
When you had your dream?

**Alice:** It wasn't a dream.

**KP:** You fell asleep next to your sister, Alice. Remember?

**Alice:** No, it was my sister who fell asleep reading a book without pictures or conversation and everyone knows there is no use for a book like that.

**KP:** So you saw the White Rabbit then?

**Alice:** Yes, like I told the other doctor before you. He was wearing a waistcoat and took out a stop watch and disappeared down a hole.

**KP:** You did not think that was strange? A talking rabbit?

**Alice:** A lot of strange things happened that day, but it was fine because I was in it too.

**KP:** Okay. Let's assume you followed the Rabbit and fell down that hole. Weren't you afraid?

**Alice:** Oh yes, I was. Frightfully so. But you see, the fall itself was so slow and there were so many things to see all around me and I was talking to myself and then I even fell asleep and dreamt that Dinah – my cat – was holding my hand and we were walking.

**KP:** When you say talking to yourself, what exactly do you mean?

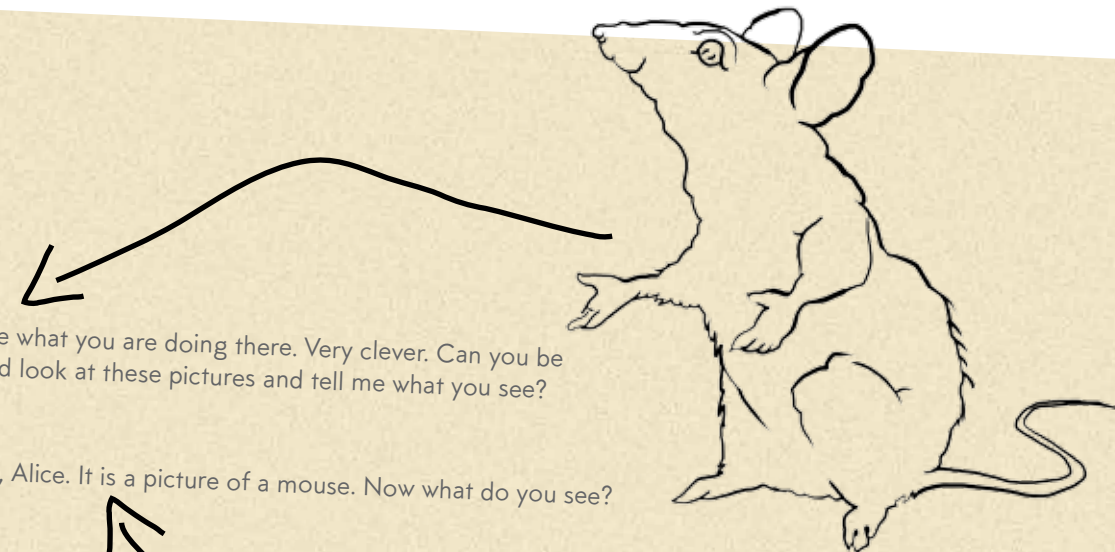
**Alice:** Exactly what I said. I am two people in one. Except when I shrunk so much that it was no use being two people, when I hardly had enough of me left to make one respectable person.

**KP:** Alice. No one can be two people.

**Alice:** Of course they can. You are two people, too. You are a doctor and a caterpillar.

**KP:** I think that's quite enough of the caterpillar now, Alice.

**Alice:** Why, you should follow the advice you give. Now look who isn't keeping their temper. Is it because you don't know where to keep it too?



**KP:** Okay, Alice, I see what you are doing there. Very clever. Can you be just as clever and look at these pictures and tell me what you see?

**Alice:** I see a mouse.

**KP:** That's very good, Alice. It is a picture of a mouse. Now what do you see?

**Alice:** I see a lizard.

**KP:** Excellent. Here's another one.



**Alice:** I see the five of spades.

**KP:** Wonderful! So you can see things for what they are.

**Alice:** Is that all?

**KP:** For now, yes.

**Alice:** Can I stop being clever now?

**KP:** What do you mean, Alice?

**Alice:** It is tiring to constantly tell people what they want to hear, don't you think?

**KP:** You did see a mouse, a lizard and a playing card, didn't you?

**Alice:** I saw what you wanted me to see. It's such a pity that no one wants to see what I actually see. You, for instance, look like a...

**KP:** Yes, yes, caterpillar, we have established that. Okay, tell me what you did see then.

**Alice:** Why, I saw the Dormouse trying hard to sleep but unable to under the glare of this harsh light. This room is too white, if I might add. And there isn't anything to eat. Then I saw Bill the Lizard, the one I kicked right through the chimney when I was ever so big I filled up White Rabbit's House, who thought I was his housekeeper, Mary Ann, when I didn't know in the least who I was myself, with all the shrinking and the growing, and really, I ask you, how many people can one person be? And then I saw the five of spades, shivering in fright for he could hear the trumpet announcing the Queen's arrival who would say, 'Off with his head', and really, he is just a playing card and I could just huff and puff them all away. Oh dear! Does that make me a big bad wolf, Dr. Caterpillar?

Really, you ought to know by now where to keep your temper.

End of transcript





# The Wily Fork Times



## Who is Alice?

By WFT Staff

Date and place (unidentified;  
unknown; unimportant):

Ever since Alice came out in the open with the truth about Wonderland, the angry debates, the fiery insinuations, the endless discussions haven't stopped taking the nation by storm. And the furore over Wonderland continues as Alice, in yet another explosive interview, not only revealed ugly secrets about the Queen, but also the Duchess.

In an interview to a popular television channel, Alice said she saw the Duchess nurse her child in the kitchen, a dangerous environment as it is, but made even more so, according to Alice, with an angry cook throwing pots and saucepans at the Duchess and the baby. 'And the pepper in the soup was deadly enough to make us sneeze all the time. Everyone knows it is pepper that makes people hot-tempered,' said Alice. We tried to reach out to the Duchess but all we got was a terse SMS: 'Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.' (And as per Alice's request, we present this to her written down to understand it better).

Alice also said the Queen had absolutely no manners ('and quite likely too much pepper in her soup'), ordering people around, constantly changing the rules of the game they were playing, shouting and ordering heads to be cut off if anyone dared to suggest an alternate fact, and generally being obnoxious, according to Alice. 'She even ordered for the head of the Cheshire Cat to be cut off. Except, there was no body attached to the head, and that was quite a predicament for the executioners.'

We spoke to the Queen regarding this allegation, but all she said was 'Off with your head'. The King, however, clarified saying they have filed a defamation case against Alice. 'She is clearly mad. We have no comments to make. We will see her in Court.'

The debates around Alice's adventures in Wonderland are far from dying out. White Rabbit, the cause of this adventure in the first place, has categorically denied 'leading Alice on'. 'I was just minding my own business, trying to find my white gloves and fan, when she just appeared, pretending to be lost, and

I was only being kind, giving her a job as my housekeeper, but within minutes, she took over my house completely. Every nook and corner was filled up with her presence. What could I do?'

White Rabbit's neighbours, Mr. Hare and Mr. Hatter, agree that Alice did take advantage of them. 'We never invited her in for tea, but she sat down at the table and started to speak to us and eat with us. And she wouldn't say what she meant, which isn't the same as meaning what you do say, as she wanted us to believe. It was all a nightmare!'

Even the Mock Turtle, a reliable, silent observer of the events, said, 'It's a pity she didn't go to the same school as I did. They only had French and music as extras, and no washing. And you know a school that doesn't teach you washing couldn't be a very good school. She was quite a simpleton, I felt. She didn't even know what uglification meant.'

Alice remained unreachable at the time of going to press. The trial of Alice's adventures in Wonderland has been set for the day after this. Remember, you heard it here first.



### The Song of the Cheshire Cat

She was told she couldn't walk  
Until she did her talk  
But then she hitched up her skirt  
Muddled her feet in dirt  
And called you out to dance

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?  
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

Her steps were wibbly, wobbly  
Her moves rough and un-gently  
But her laughter rang out wildly  
And made you all giddy  
Till you couldn't stand a chance

Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.  
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

There were some who did join in  
Unsure, yet eager to fit in  
But alas, she trotted right away  
Leaving you quite in the fray  
Without even a backward glance

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?  
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

And then came all the fury  
For it was out, the people's jury  
And the battle of words began  
The To Be and Not to Be for a ban  
Till blood was split in the vast expanse

Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.  
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

It's over now this story  
And I am not in the least sorry  
For before she disappeared  
She taught me what I feared  
That everything was a question of circumstance.

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?  
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?



