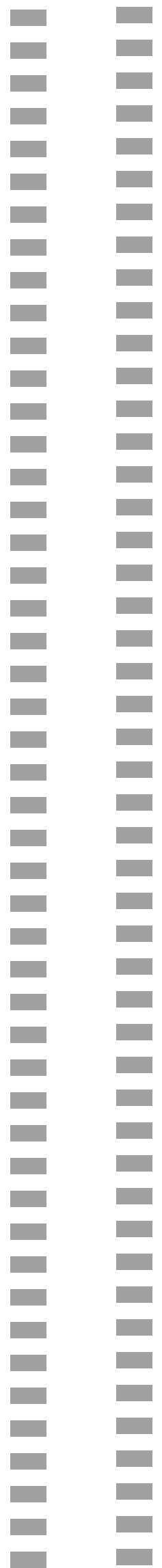




I am...

rick albertson

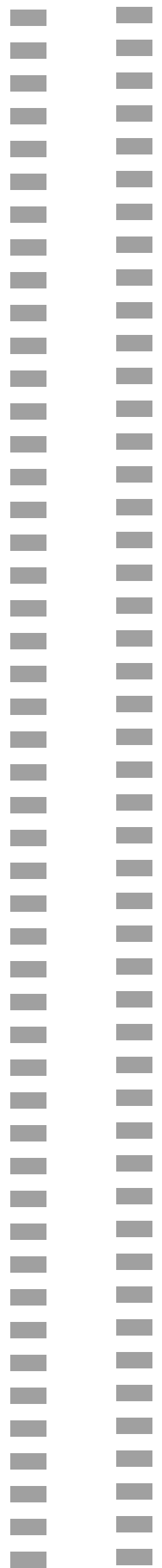


I am...

rick albertson

“ If I look at the picture
and feel
that I know them,
that’s what I want.
Show me
what it’s like
to meet them. ”

John F. Kennedy, Jr., *George Magazine*



Who am I?

One of three seriously searching questions my soul, your soul, our souls yearn to answer. A question ever trying to escape from behind the bars of soul into the glorious freedom of conscious thought. The question, though, is ever pressed downward, yet ever it strains, grasps, continually reaches upward, desperate to burst forth into the forefront of my thoughts—usually unsuccessfully. My brute force executive functions keep it at bay. Oh yeah, knowing full well that trying to answer is but folly. Why bother? Go back to your prison cell. Anyway, I know who I am. Well, at least I know who I want you to think I am. Authenticity be damned.*

** Who am I? Why am I here? What's the meaning of life?*

What is my identity?

Yet another way to ask the same. Perhaps nothing more than my sense of self based on my gender, unique characteristics, affiliations, my convictions, and social roles, even my job!

Who am I? "I am a man."

Who am I? "I am a midget. Well, not really a midget, but a short person; shortness I seldom cease to feel."

Who am I? "I am a conservative."

Who am I? "A Christian, one to whom God's reality and revelation rings true."

Who am I? "I am a photographer. There!"

What defines my Identity?

Surely, my memories, past experiences, relationships good and bad, values I hold dearly—these create my sense of self. Toss 'em all into the crock pot, stir 'em up, let 'em bubble, steam, and boil. Give it some time, some life-time. The mixture coalesces, it changes, it becomes me, my identity.

My identity has continuity.

I am, at least I feel like I am the same person today as I was yesterday, the day before, likely will be tomorrow and next month. Sure, my circumstances may change. I may feel as if my life has changed, yet who I am... over time remains unchanged. Can I change? Is it even possible to do so?

A paraphrase from various sources:

A photograph is often an exploration of identity, based on the repetition of sameness, evidenced by the image produced by the camera.

A portrait is a photographic recording of whatever light was striking that person at the instant the camera's shutter was depressed. It is a representation, but of what? Well scientifically speaking, it is a record of massless photons propogating as waves thereby creating a two-dimensional collection of independently resolved, variously toned pixels (in today's digital world) or scattered silver halide particles (if shot on film). In a more relatable manner the portrait is a representation of a person, yet should I see that same person in person would he or she not look different?

This is the conundrum of pictorial representation – how a bunch of lifeless pixels on a screen (or dots on paper, or paint strokes on canvas, etc.) can show us things in the real world.

Each person photographed for this book was asked to provide an abbreviated biography by stating who they are in three brief phrases:

"I am... _____"

"I am... _____"

"I am... _____"

and then to add a few sentences to further describe themselves.

[see back of book]

I ask a woman if she will consent to having her portrait taken. She considers, yet likely initially only understands subconsciously, that I am setting out to capture her personality, her identity, her soul, and her emotions. Consciously, she is more likely concerned simply with her "appearance."

Viewers, based on their prior experiences and the circumstances of the portrait, look at the photograph and consider (again probably subconsciously) how the woman sees herself, how the world might see her, how the photographer sees her, even how other viewers might see her. All the while consciously these ideas come together to convey her identity in the portrait.

"A great portrait is not about aesthetics, it's about the story it tells and the change it brings."

Platon Antoniou

"If the photographer is interested in the people in front of his lens, and if he is compassionate, it's already a lot. The instrument is not the camera but the photographer."

Eve Arnold

"In a portrait you always leaver part of yourself behind."

Mary Ellen Mark

"What my portraits are made of? 10% showing reality, 90% showing my philosophy."

Scuro Chiaro

So take a look at the portraits in this book. See them for what they are. Or perhaps you'll want to take a little time and analyze one or more. Ask yourself:

Who took this photo?

Where was it taken?

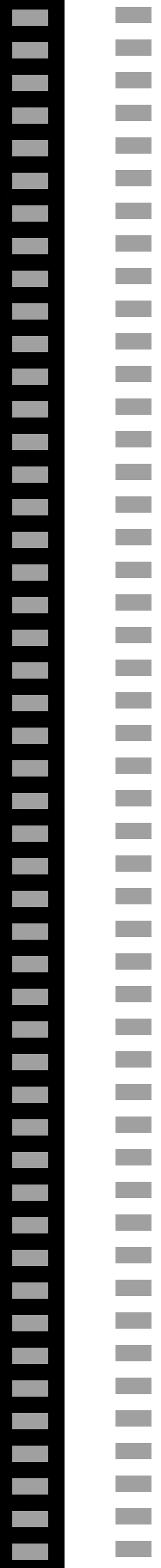
When was it taken?

What was happening at the time the photo was taken?

Why was it taken?

What evidence from the photo or your knowledge of the photographer led to your conclusion?

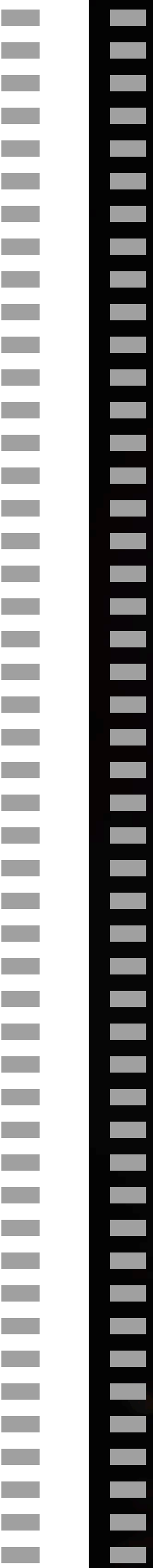
Who then is the person represented by the portrait?



Eli Whitley



Natalie Iopiccolo

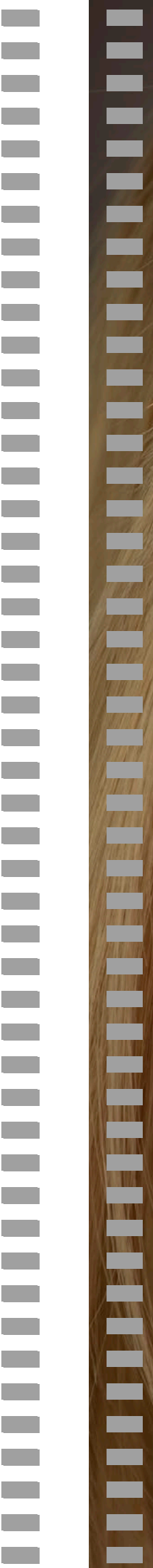




Jordan Abbertson



Emily Stütz

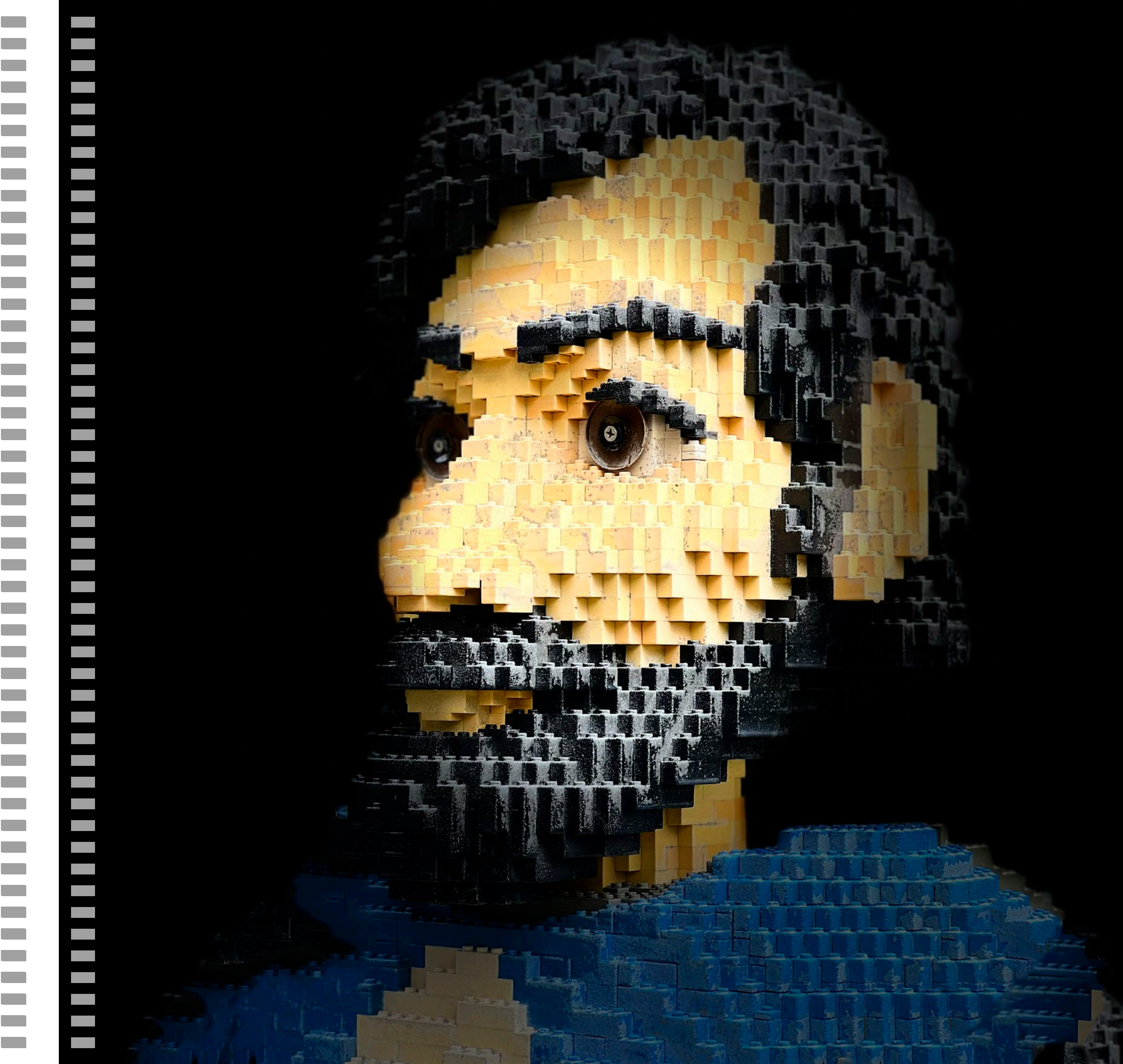




Pepe

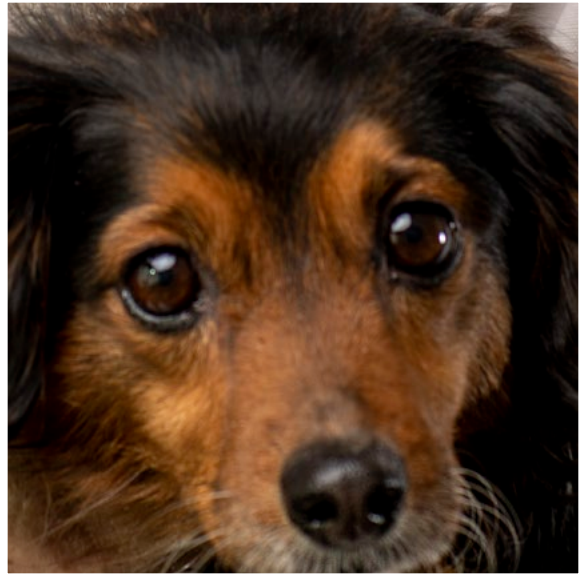


lego Abe





Debra Gonzales



Ies Herold, Nutmeg



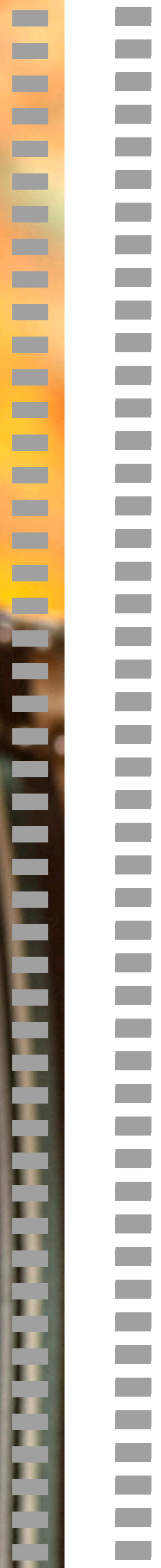


Brittany Keeley



Suzi Nason McKinney





June Logan



Tim Abward



Eli Whitley

I am...

...

...



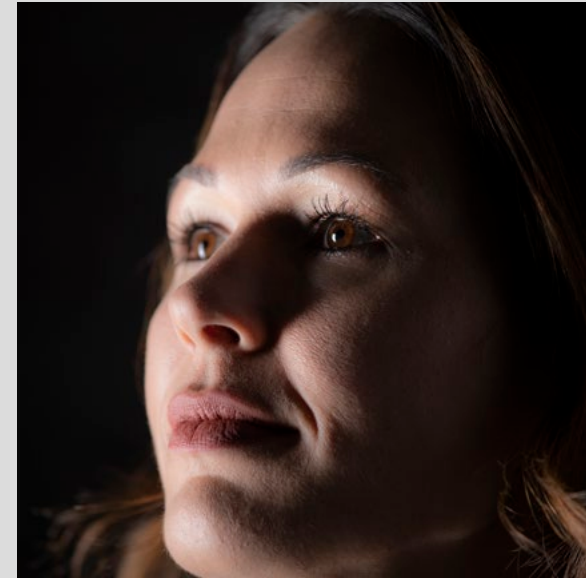
Jordan Abbertson

I am... a boy.

I am... in the third grade.

I am... the youngest in my family.

I like to sing in the National Children's Chorus. I like to cook with my Dad. I am eight years old. I like to play with my older sister. She's my best friend. I speak English and Mandarin.



Natalie Iopiccolo

I am...

...

...



Pepe

I am...

...

...

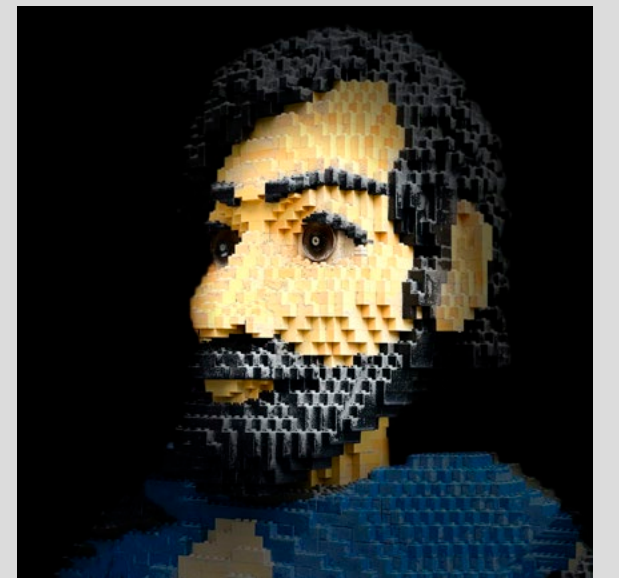


Emily Stütz

I am...

...

...



Lego Abe

I am...

...

...



Debra Gonzales

I am... strong.

I am... confident.

I am... fabulous.

I am a vibrant woman who doesn't hesitate to live a bold life, always choosing to be encouraging and bright.

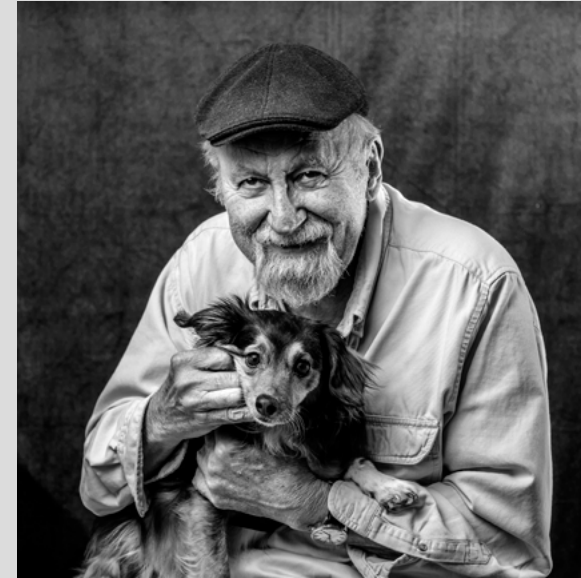
Name

I am... my four-legged daughter's dad.

I am... a cinephile.

I am... indeed a friend in need.

I am a diabolical card player. "Take no prisoners!"



Brittany Keeley

I am... resilient.

I am... an empath.

I am... persevering

I am a special needs mom who also overcomes my own disability everyday with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. I am a volunteer special education advocate.



Suzi McKinney

I am... a yogi.

I am... creative.

I am... strong.

I am a native Californian and retired from a long career as a dental hygienist.



June Logan

I am...

I am...

I am...

Tim Alward

I am...

I am...

I am...



I am...



“We’re not those characters
we want to be.
We’re those characters
we are.”

Thomas Wolfe