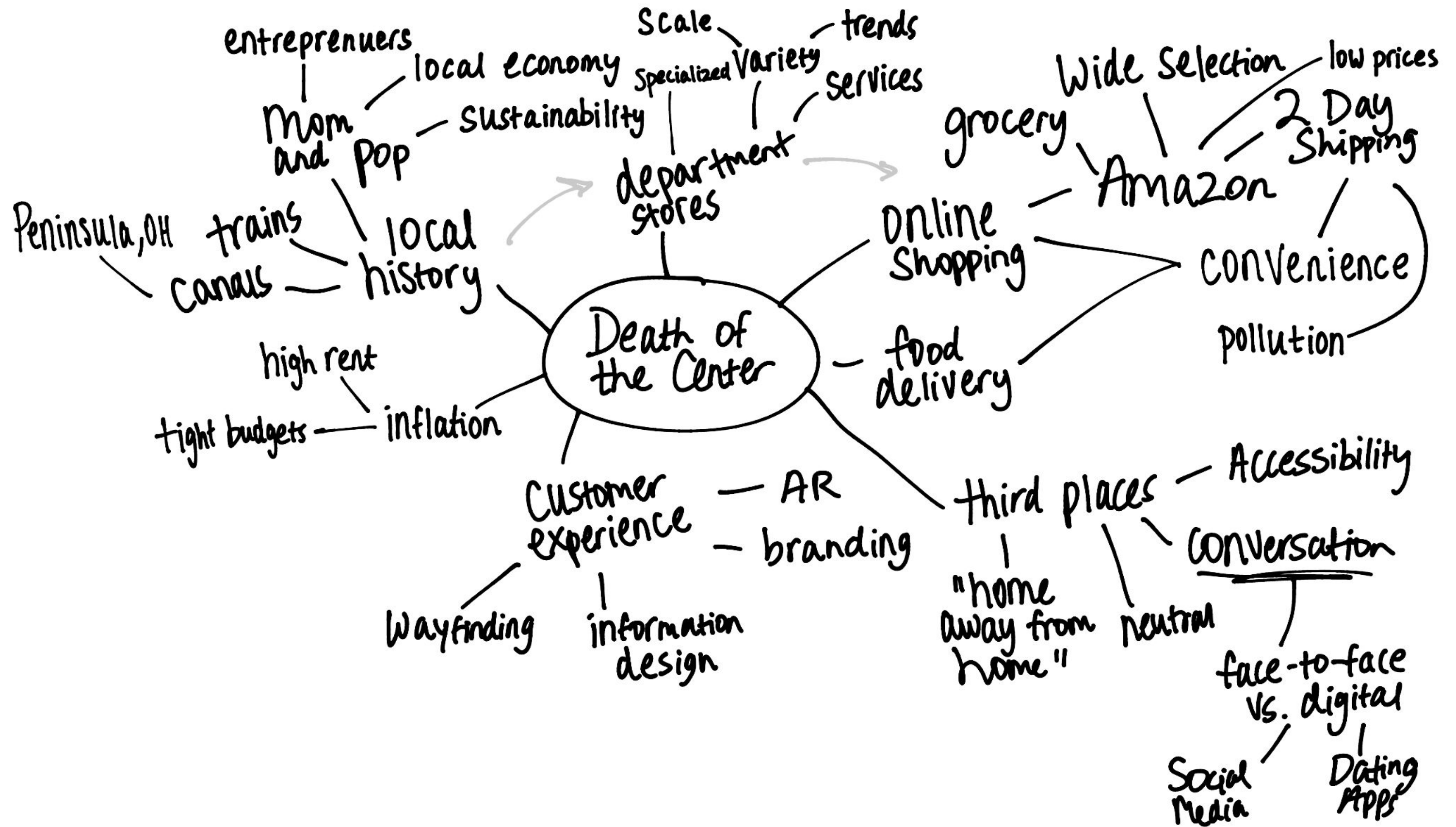
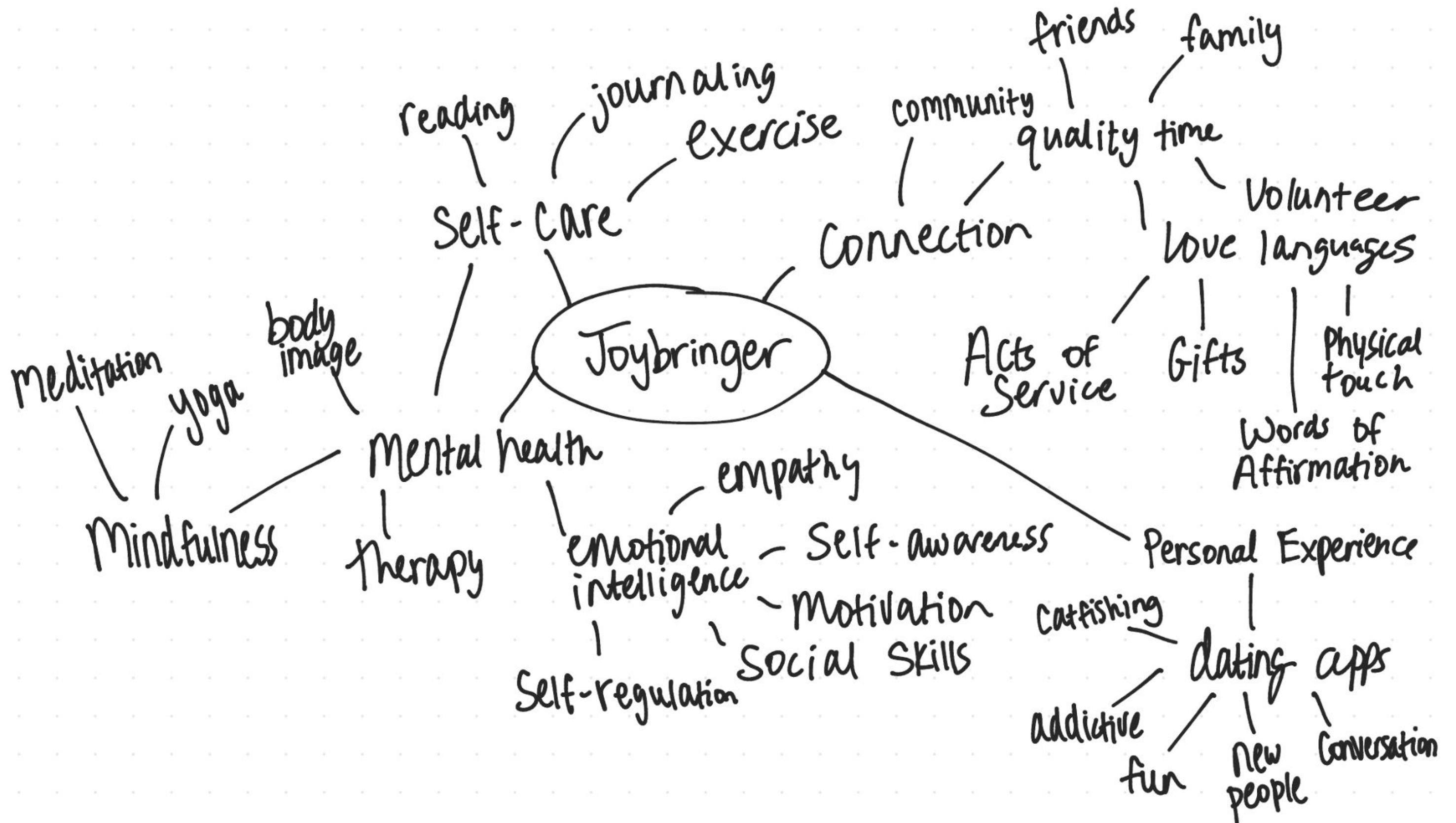


Research & Development

ISTD 2024 / THE LINE

ALEX MILLER





The Red Thread of Fate (The Line)

Overview

A Chinese proverb says, "An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle but will never break."

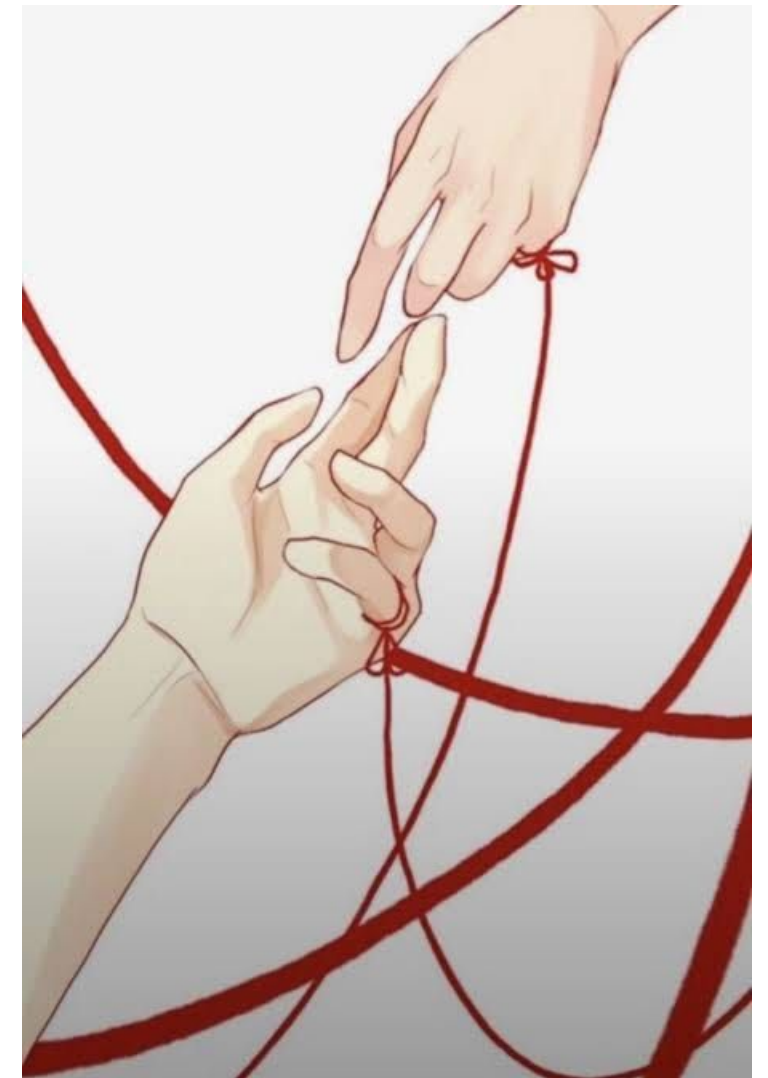
The two people connected by the red thread are destined lovers, regardless of place, time, or circumstances. This magical cord may stretch or tangle, but never break. This myth is similar to the Western concept of **soulmate** or a destined partner.

Ideas

- Making with thread
- Unraveling/unwinding
- Tying together

Format

- Long, slim booklet?



Evolution of Dating (Death of the Center)

Overview

Apps made dating a game. That's changing our relationship to matchmaking — and each other. More and more people are now meeting their partners or online rather than meeting through friends, at work, or on a night out.

Weaknesses

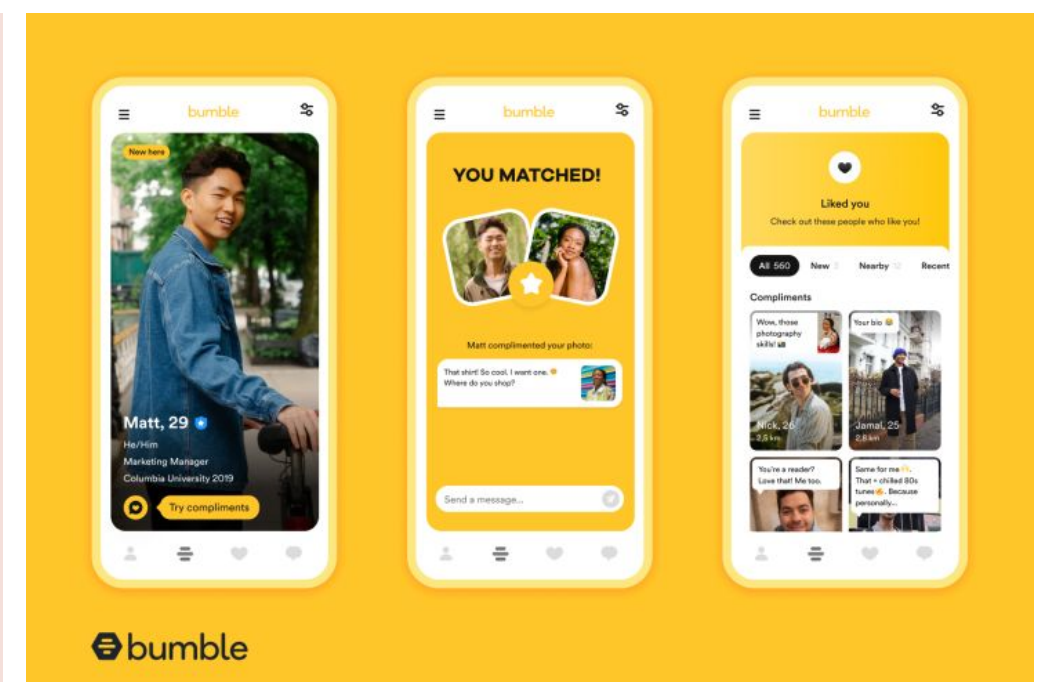
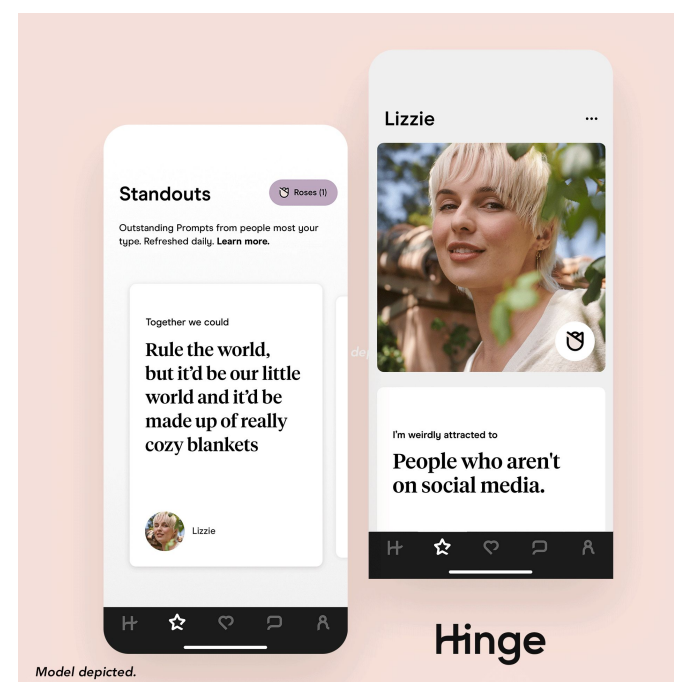
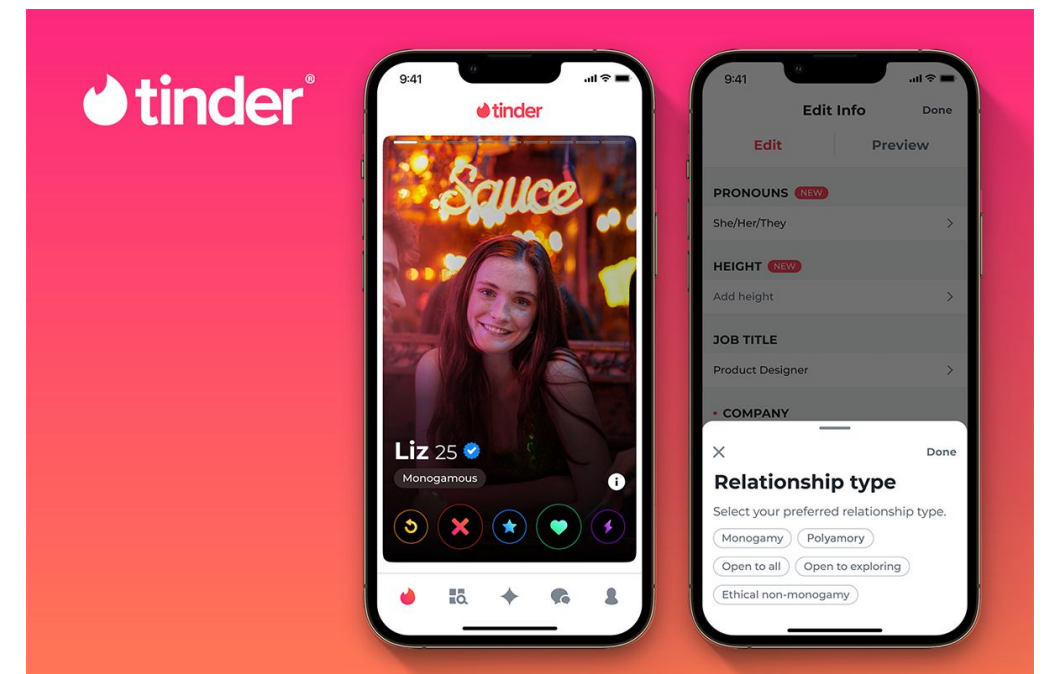
- Result/consequence of death of the center, not a contributing factor
- Should be an experiential typographic intervention that asks audiences to re-engage in their local town or city
- Could aid, inspire, rejuvenate or celebrate place and reconnect audiences with town and city centres

Ideas

- Success vs. failure, psychological and social effects
- Business models
- Juxtapose old handwritten letters / Tinder pick up lines
- Swipe left, swipe right
- Game concept

Format

- Interactive website/mobile app
- Booklet with style that evolves (a visual timeline)



Collections (Joybringer)

Overview

Explore collecting as a hobby; the benefits of having a collection and various types of collections. What constitutes a collection? Why do people collect? How do collections bring people together?

Types of Collections

- Coins
- Stamps
- Trading cards
- Postcards
- Clocks
- Vinyls
- Comics
- Seashells
- Model Cars

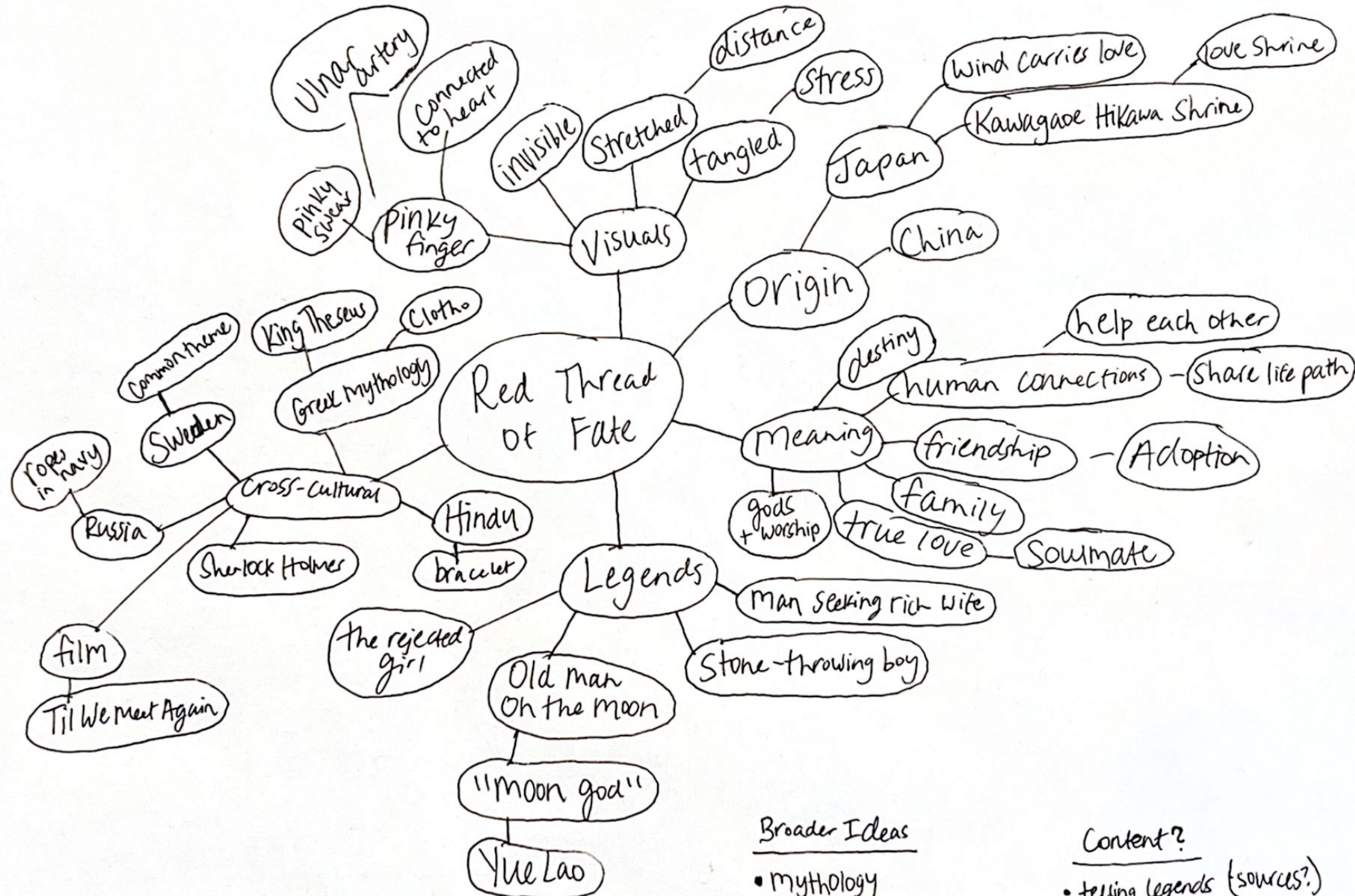
Ideas

- Type as image
- Strong grid structure



CHOSEN TOPIC:

The Red Thread of Fate



Broader Ideas

- mythology
- tradition
- fate
- LINE - interconnected
- sections w/ different people/culture

Content?

- telling legends (sources?)
- meaning across cultures
- soulmates/fate as a whole?
- Poetry/Personal stories



Layering type
(tangled)

Thread
through type





Experimentations with torn type, water, thread

Building a Type System

The Red Thread of Fate

To think, I was one decision away
from living an entirely different life

But as fate would have it,
we were destined to meet after all

I was on the brink of disaster,
but you pulled me in with a tug

On a single thread of invisible red string,
but now we're a love story for all the world

To see. To breathe. To believe.

A Chinese proverb says, "An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle but will never break."

JUSTIN + AMY

When we started talking, we had an instant chemistry. It felt like we had known each other forever. When we first met, Justin told me he liked my name because his first crush was a girl named Amy in preschool. I jokingly told him I didn't want to hear about another

girl named Amy who wasn't me.

A month into our relationship, I pointed out a scar above Justin's eye & asked him how he got it. He told me it was from falling off the monkey bars at "good ol' Sunshine preschool." My jaw dropped, I squealed, "What! That's where I went to preschool!" And then an-

Tuna Bold 80

Tuna Bold Italic 80 40/54

Tuna Regular 28/40

Tuna Regular 20/32

Notes:

Created a system with one typeface. Good variety, but wanted to experiment with adding a second typeface to the system.

The Red Thread of Fate

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Elmhurst Bold 8o
FIRA BOLD 35/54
Fira Sans 20/32
Elmhurst Regular 20/32

Notes:

Chose Elmhurst for its contrast, to resemble calligraphy strokes. Added a sans serif for more variety and contrast. Sans serif ties into the line brief.

The Red Thread of Fate

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Etna Bold 81

Adelle Sans 28/40

Adelle Sans Bold 33/51

Adelle Sans 19/32

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Notes:

More clean and crisp, but lacks character compared to the other systems.

THE RED THREAD OF FATE

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AZO SANS ULTRA 80

Yorkten Slab 28/40

Azo Sans Black 28/40

Yorkten Slab 19/32

Notes:

Tried a bolder system to see contrast in weights. This felt a bit too harsh and bold, whereas the thread line would be thinner and more delicate.

想 愛 恋

AB Harumi

色 ほ に ほ へ ど
散 り ぬ る を 我
が 世 誰 ぞ 樂 な

AB Appare

しんりゅう そう

心 龍 爽

ShinryuSou

Notes:

Want to incorporate Chinese characters into the system as background or point elements. Could be used to add depth to the work.

Meno Text Italic

Meno Text Regular

Meno Text Semibold

Meno Text Semibold Italic

Meno Text Bold

Meno Text Bold Italic

Meno Condensed Italic

Meno Condensed Regular

Meno Condensed Semibold

Meno Condensed Semibold Italic

Meno Condensed Bold

Meno Condensed Bold Italic

ADELLE SANS LIGHT

ADELLE SANS REGULAR

ADELLE SANS BOLD

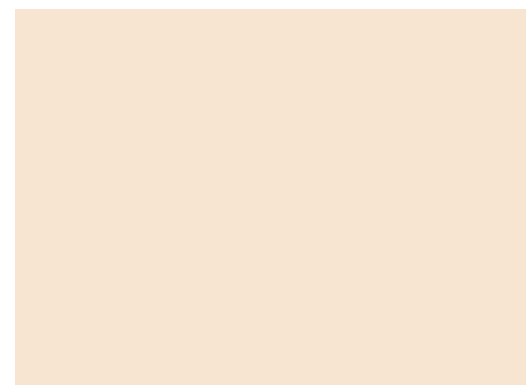
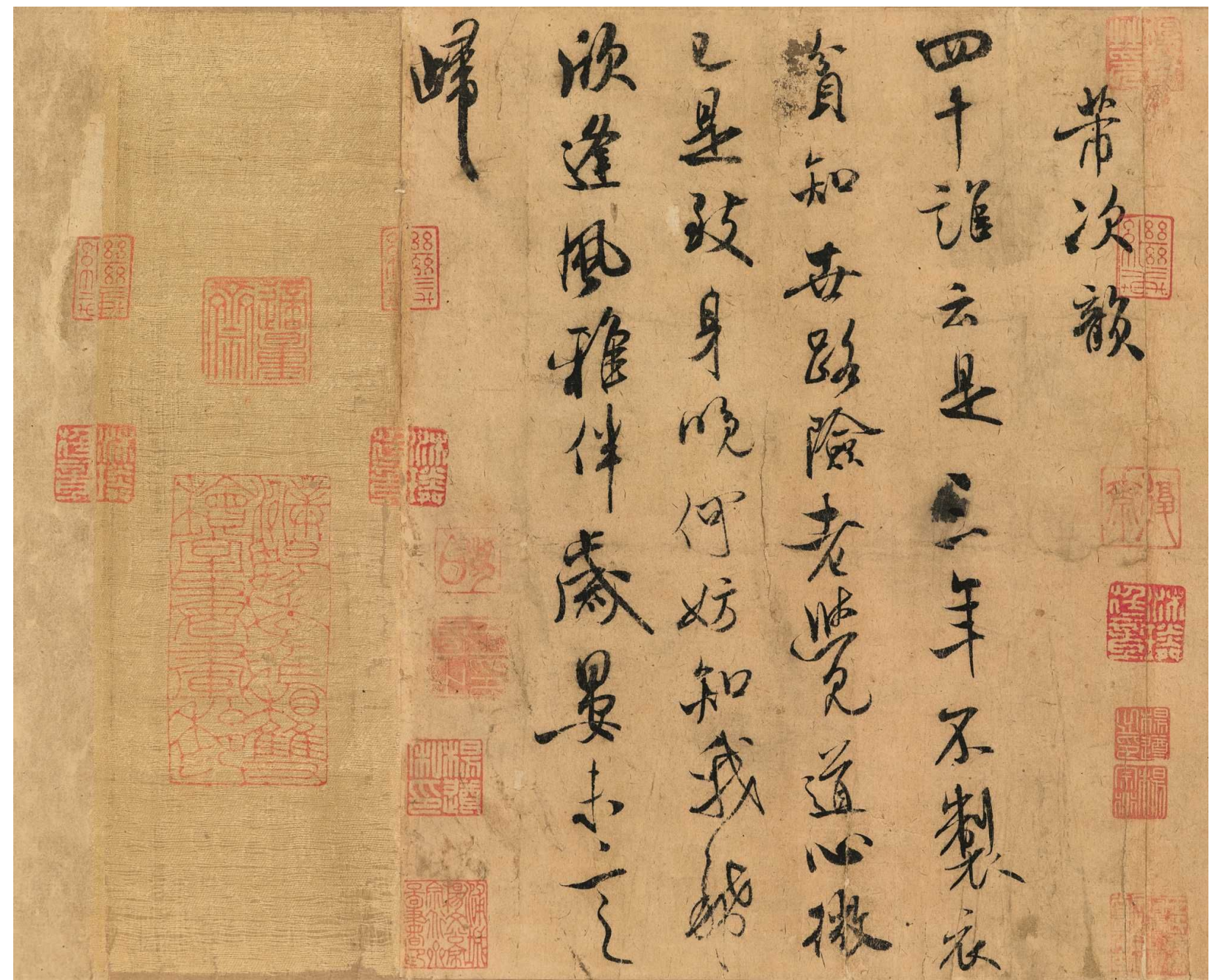
Color Inspiration

In addition to bringing in typographic elements of traditional Chinese characters, I also wanted to choose colors that were rooted in tradition.

The scroll pictured at the right is by [Su Shi](#), who is often compared to Da Vinci. Su Shi, a household name in China, was an 11th-century scholar, statesman, poet, writer, calligrapher and artist, whose painting style has influenced virtually every Chinese painter ever since.

I was inspired by Su Shi's use of color and texture and implemented them into my project.

The color red also has significant cultural meaning beyond the literal 'thread:' In China, [red is auspicious](#)—associated with life-generating energy (the sun, blood, and fire)—and is the color of celebrations and prosperity.



Research

To add another level of type and cultural meaning to my piece, I decided to include Chinese characters as a background element. These became part of my type system for the title of each page.

過房 愛情

過房
guòfáng

to adopt / to give for adoption

愛情
àiqíng

romance; love (romantic)

見面
jiànmiàn

to meet; to see each other

俗語
súyǔ

common saying / proverb / colloquial speech

運道
yùndào

fortune / luck / fate

現在
xiànzài

now / at present / at the moment / modern

見面 俗語

運道 現在

Source: <https://www.mdbg.net/chinese/dictionary>

About the Proverb

I explored the origin of the Red Thread proverb, uncovering stories within the proverb and its meaning across different cultures. Elements of this research were used in the final piece.

[Sakura](#)

[Mythopedia](#)

[University of Pennsylvania Language Log](#)

[IMDB](#)

[Chinatownology](#)

Red Thread of Fate (Chinese: 姻緣紅線; pinyin: *Yīnyuán hóngxiàn*), also referred to as the **Red Thread of Marriage**, and other variants, is an **East Asian** belief originating from **Chinese mythology**. It is commonly thought of as an **invisible red cord around the finger** of those that are destined to meet one another in a certain situation as they are "their true love". According to Chinese legend, the deity in charge of "the red thread" is believed to be **Yuè Xià Lǎorén** (月下老人), often abbreviated to **Yuè Lǎo** (月老), the old lunar matchmaker god, who is in charge of marriages. In the original Chinese myth, it is tied around both parties' ankles, while in Japanese culture it is bound from a male's **thumb** to a female's **little finger**. Although in modern times it is common across all these cultures to depict the thread being tied around the fingers, often the little finger. **The color red in Chinese culture symbolises happiness** and it is also prominently featured during **Chinese weddings**, such as having both bride and groom wear red throughout the entire procession or at some point during the marriage rituals.

The connection is not limited to romance because people connected by the red string of fate may share a life path. They may achieve something great together. On the other hand, it can be someone you help or who helps uniquely. It can also be someone you are fated to have a deep connection to. Though the legend has many origin stories, they all relate to the old man. He is sometimes called the "moon god" and visits on moonlit nights.

Overview

In **Chinese mythology**, Yue Lao (月老), also called Yue Xia Lao Ren (月下老人), is the god of love and marriage who appears to people beneath the light of the moon.

Worship of Yue Lao

This story spread and soon people began praying to that old man for help in marriage concerns. As no one knew his name, he was referred to as the **Old Man under the moon, Yue Lao** or Yue Lao Deity. 月下老人, 月老, 月老神君

Stories of Fate

As part of my project, I wanted to find stories of fate that encapsulated the meaning of The Red Thread of Fate proverb.

Love

Heidi & Ed

After meeting on family vacations as children, Heidi and Ed met again by chance two decades later.

Rediscovery

Thrift Store Jacket

After moving from Tennessee to Alaska, a man finds his childhood jacket, 24 years later. He passes it on to his own son.

Adoption

Discussed on next slide

Newlyweds discover they were childhood sweethearts **two decades later**

Heidi and Ed Savitt had a 'holiday romance' as children

"We had been together for four years when we found out so it's mad to think we might never have known," Heidi said.

"People keep telling us that it must be fate and that it's like the plot of a movie!"

Man finds his childhood jacket after **24 years** while shopping for his kid at thrift store

This Alaskan man never thought about reuniting with his long-lost denim jacket, but **fate brought them together once again**

Connection to Adoption

There is a common connection between the Red Thread of Fate proverb and parents who have adopted children from China. In my research, I found this and a personal story from Katie Kaessinger that was used in the final designed outcome.

[Academic Paper](#)

[Katie Kaessinger](#)

Red threads to tie to the wrists of parents and their children. They cannot be seen by mortals, but once they are tied they cannot be separated. They are tied the moment they are born and the distance between them, the enmity between their families or their social position does not count. Sooner or later they are going to be united. I have seen that you and your wife are already tied to your future daughter, so there is nothing to do except to wait. (12)

lead the list of the top ten receiving countries adopting from China, while Canada occupies the fifth position. Within the virtual, web-based communities of parents adopting from China, variations on one plot in particular have turned out to be astonishingly popular: the ones referring to a Red Thread. Stakeholders like to emphasize the fact that this story derives from Chinese folklore. It has been recycled so frequently that it has evolved into a canonical origin story. The Red Thread plot has given its name to numerous books, documentaries, web forums, newspaper sections, theater plays, and songs about adoption.³ This essay compares various adaptations of the Red Thread plot to its source text to unearth the submerged moral commonplaces

go by this virtual community's own historiography³—the adoptive mother Stefani Ellison was the first to connect the Red Thread plot to transnational adoption: “An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance; the thread may stretch or tangle, but it will never break.” The aphorism caught on quickly in the virtual communities of adoptive parents. It was quoted time

Modern Interpretations

The third chapter focuses on modern works that are influenced by this proverb. I referenced several sources to find these modern words and explore how they connected to the proverb.

Music

Taylor Swift's song "Invisible String" alludes to the Red Thread of Fate proverb

[NBC News](#)

[Mashable](#)

[Story of Song](#)

Literature

Published in 2022, Lyn Liao Butler's novel Red Thread of Fate explores the proverb in a new light.

[LitHub](#)

Cinema

The 2023 film "Past Lives" revolves around the concept of "In Yun" (a similar theory to The Red Thread of Fate proverb)

[The Conversation](#)

[Medium Article](#)

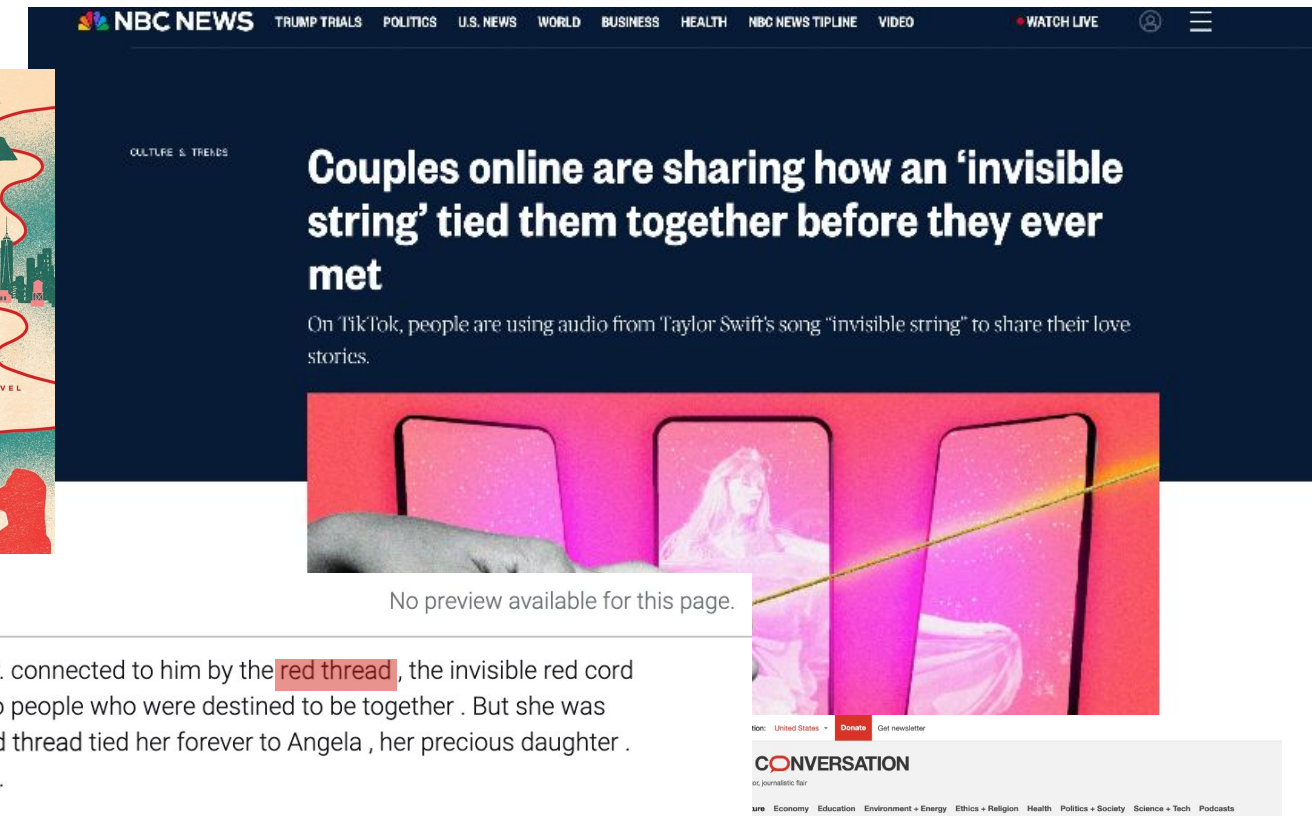


PAGE 42

Lyn Liao Butler. connected to him by the **red thread**, the invisible red cord that bound two people who were destined to be together. But she was wrong. Her red thread tied her forever to Angela, her precious daughter. She gazed at ...

Many on TikTok are using **audio from Taylor Swift's song "invisible string"** – which professes that “all along there was some invisible string tying you to me” – to share their love stories. The song alludes to East Asian folklore around the **“red thread of fate”** that ties together lovers who are ultimately destined for each other.

The concept of **In Yun** is that we are connected by a thread of fate, some call it the red thread of fate. It is providence, it is a belief that for people to get married, it takes 8000 times for lovers to form a family, over 8000 times. Nora believes in the philosophy of In Yun, and in a heart-wrenching scenario, she admits to her husband Arthur that their relationship is not one formed by In Yun. She wonders with Hae Sung what their past lives looked like, they debate the type of relationship they had in the past at a bar while her husband nurses a drink while being excluded from the conversation by the two star crossed lovers.



No preview available for this page.



There is a word in Korean – *inyeon*. It means providence or fate. But it's specifically about relationships between people." So writer Nora Lee tells her American lover when they meet on an artists' retreat in director Celine Song's new film, *Past Lives*.

The film tells the story of two lives unfolding in parallel, converging only briefly in moments of *inyeon*. One life is Nora's time as a child in Korea with her *cheonsarang* (first love), and the other is her life in New York when her first love comes to visit her 24 years later, after she has married and settled down with an American husband.

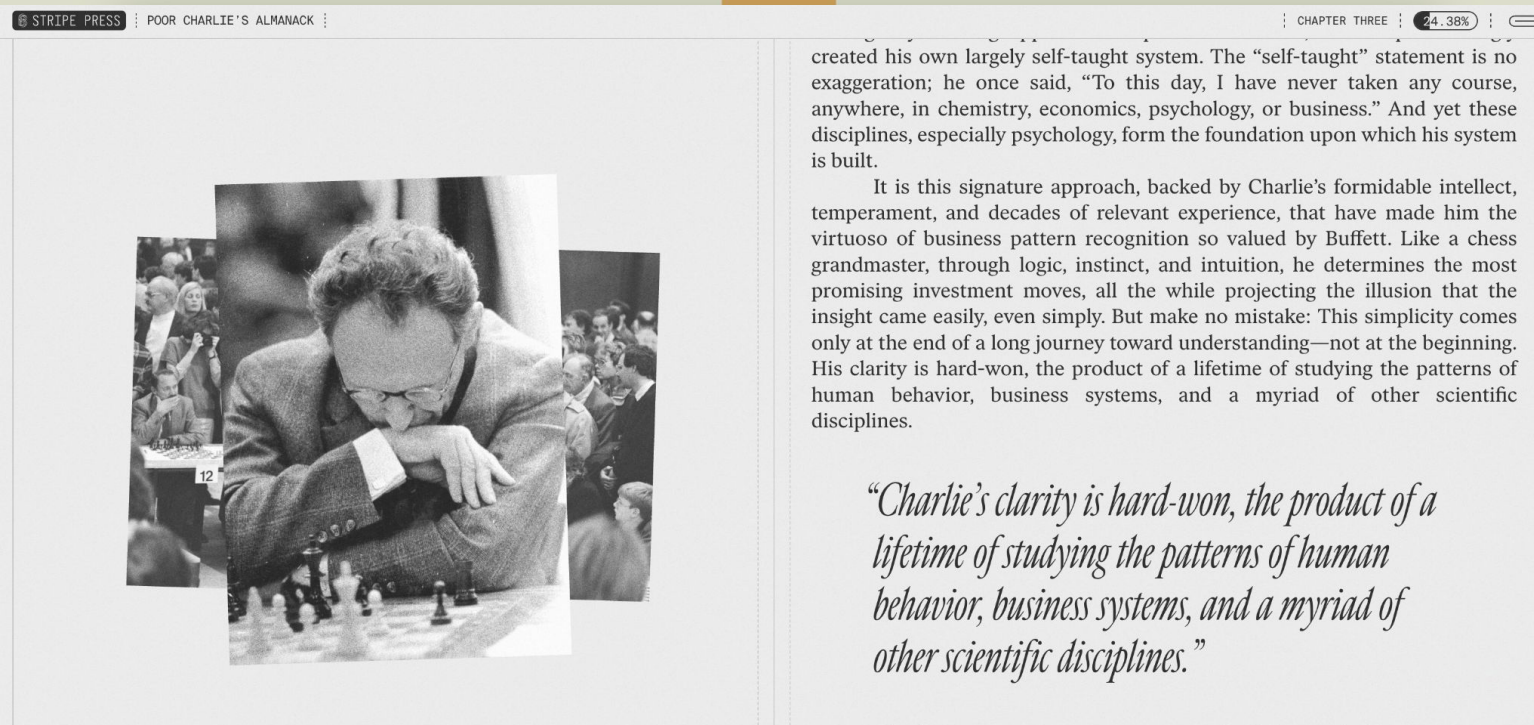
explores *inyeon* through the relationship between Nora (or Na-Young as she is known in Korea) and Hae-Sung, her childhood friend and crush. In *Past Lives*, the film tells stories about relationships told over an extended time, *Past Lives* explores the twists and turns, the "what ifs" and the manifold choices that lead to wondering whether they were meant to be together. Nora's exploration of the concept of *inyeon* to the story gives the characters space to explore the possibilities of coming together not just in this life, but in lives before and after.

coverage based on evidence, not tweets

nd 'jeong'

ill come across *inyeon* in conversation occasionally, it's not a concept that has spread a lot in popular culture. Apart from cropping up in a number of songs, *inyeon* has its origins in a traditional Korean belief that was a more common feature of everyday life.

to be referenced in Korea less often than *jeong* – the idea of "care-ism" that comes from people sharing one "heart-mind". Visitors to Korea often hear *jeong* as an explanation for unsolicited acts of kindness that are often referred to as "invisible hugs". *Jeong* is a seat given up on a bus, an extra side dish at a restaurant, or a wallet handed in to the police.



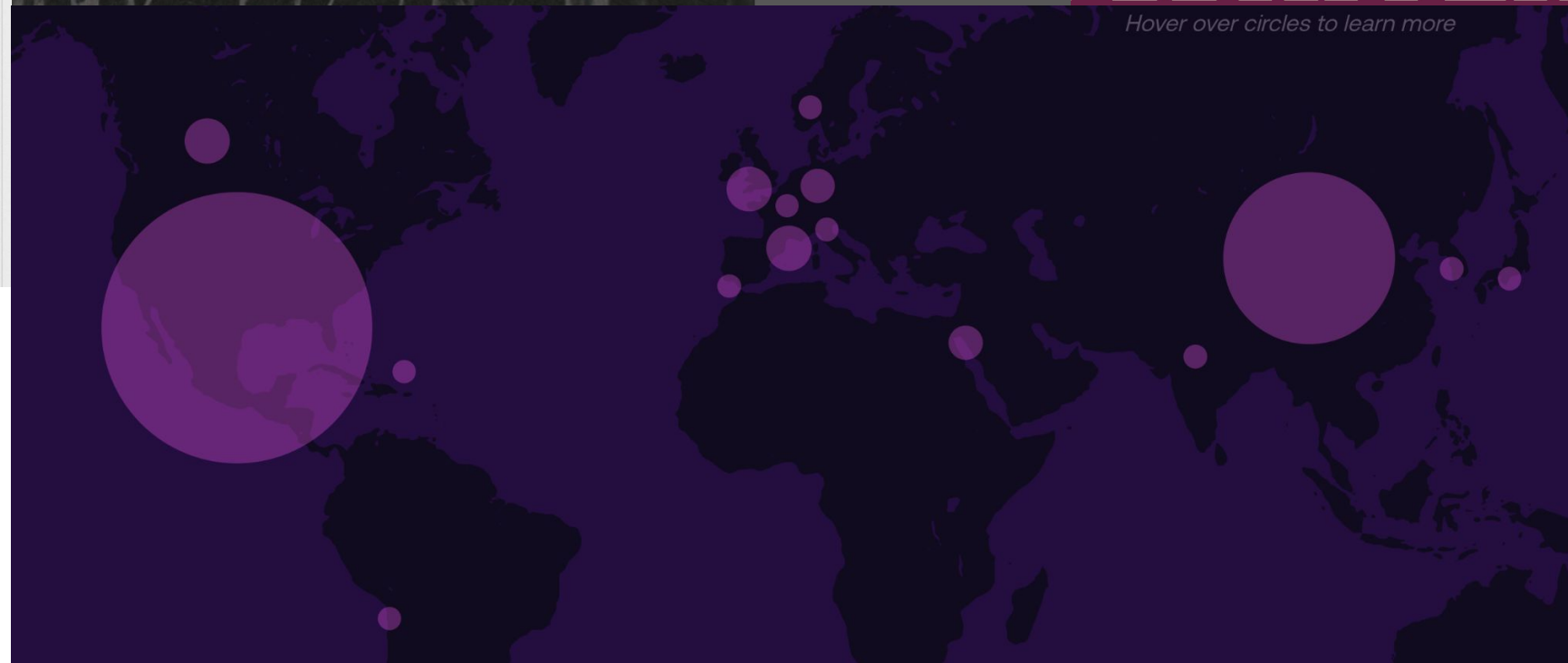
<https://thesevenvirtuesproject.com/virtues/faith>

<https://amway-fund-report-2021.webflow.io/>

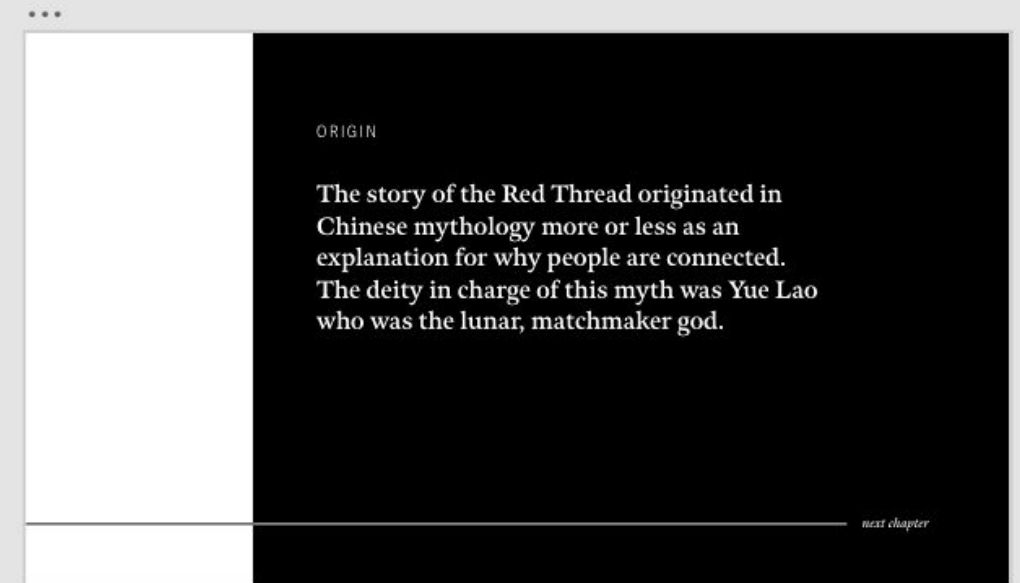
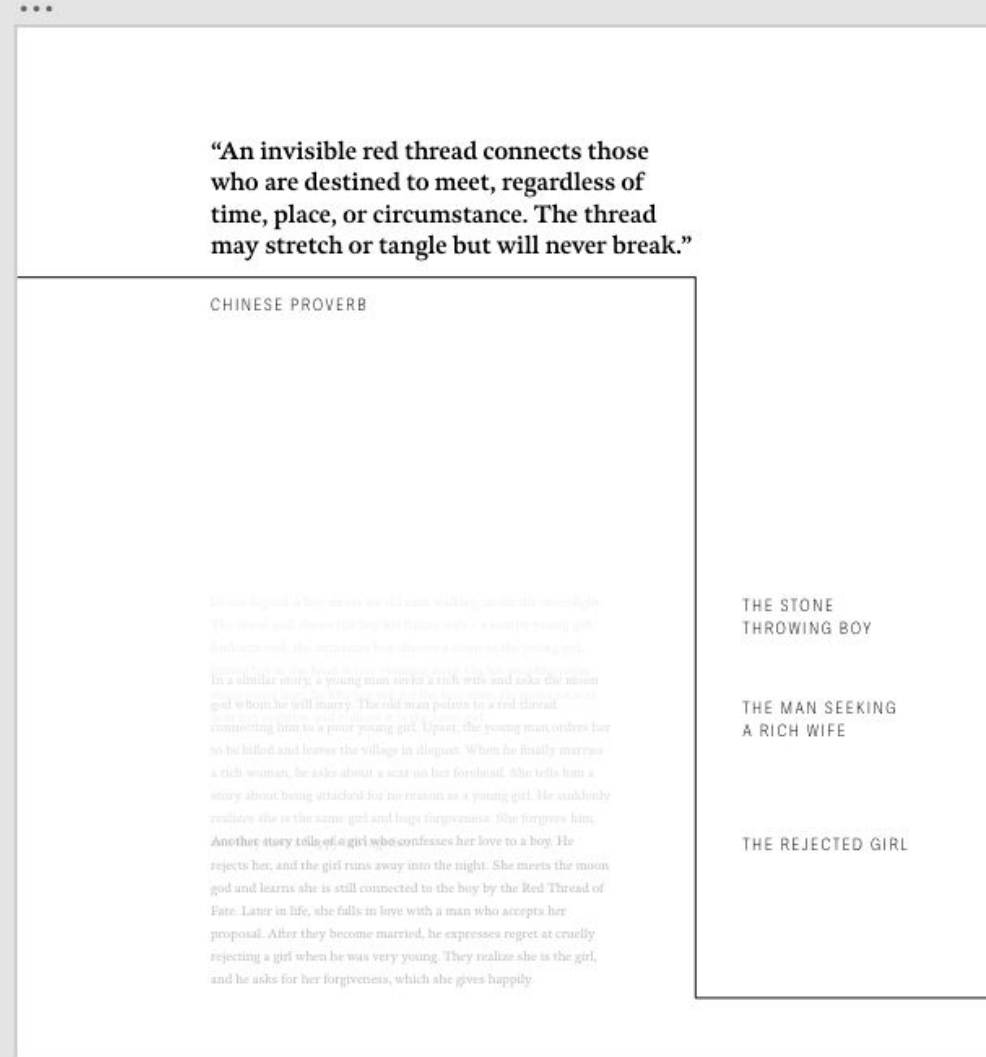
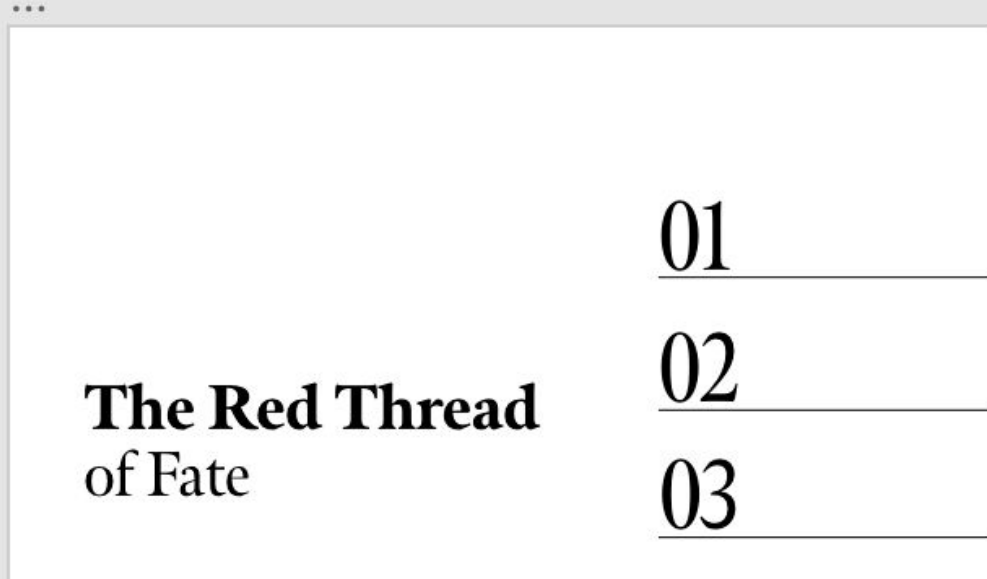
<https://gehry.getty.edu/>



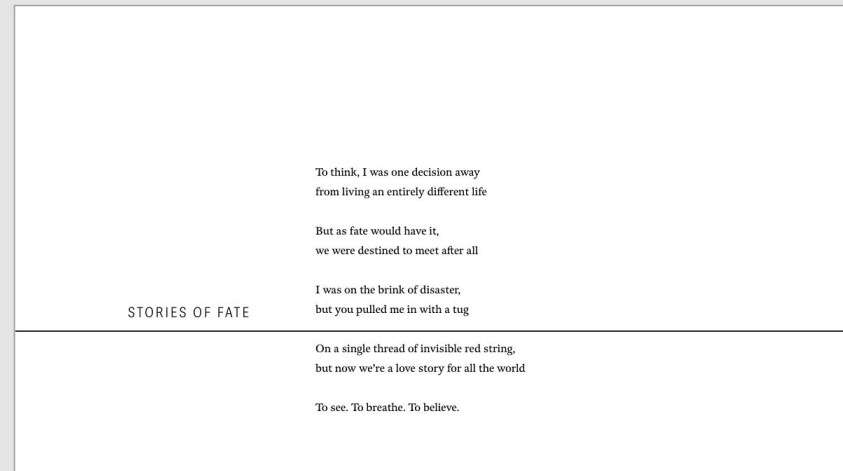
Hover over circles to learn more



Wireframes & Website Development



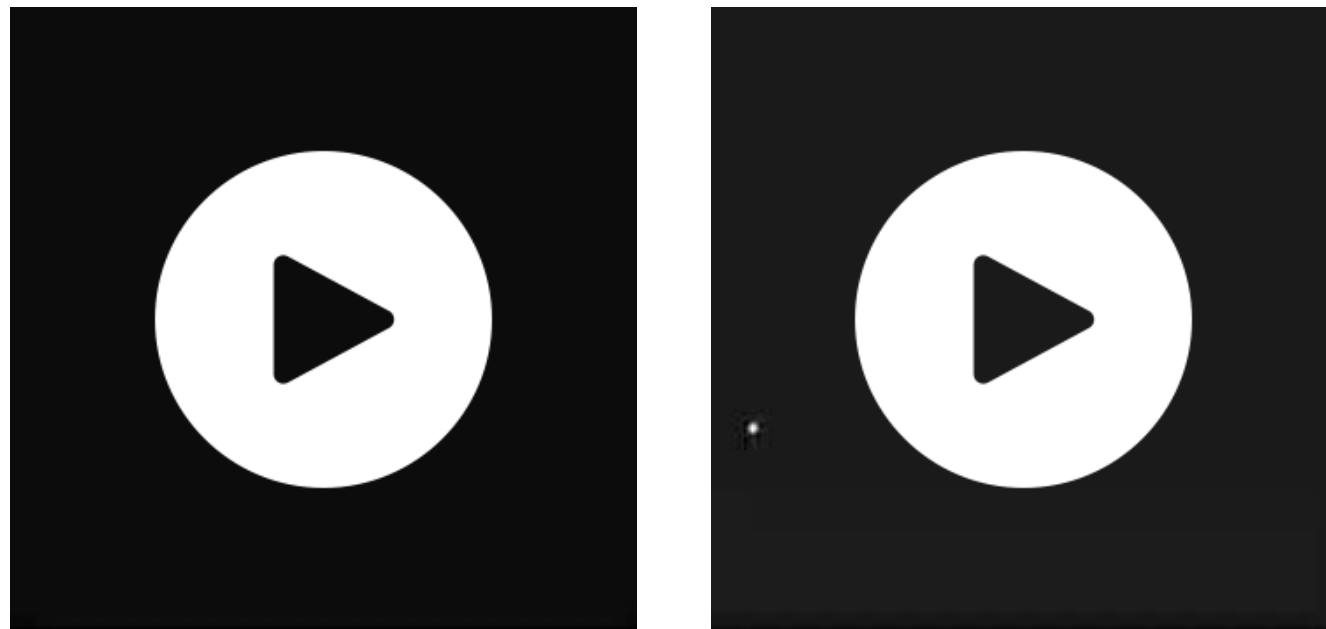
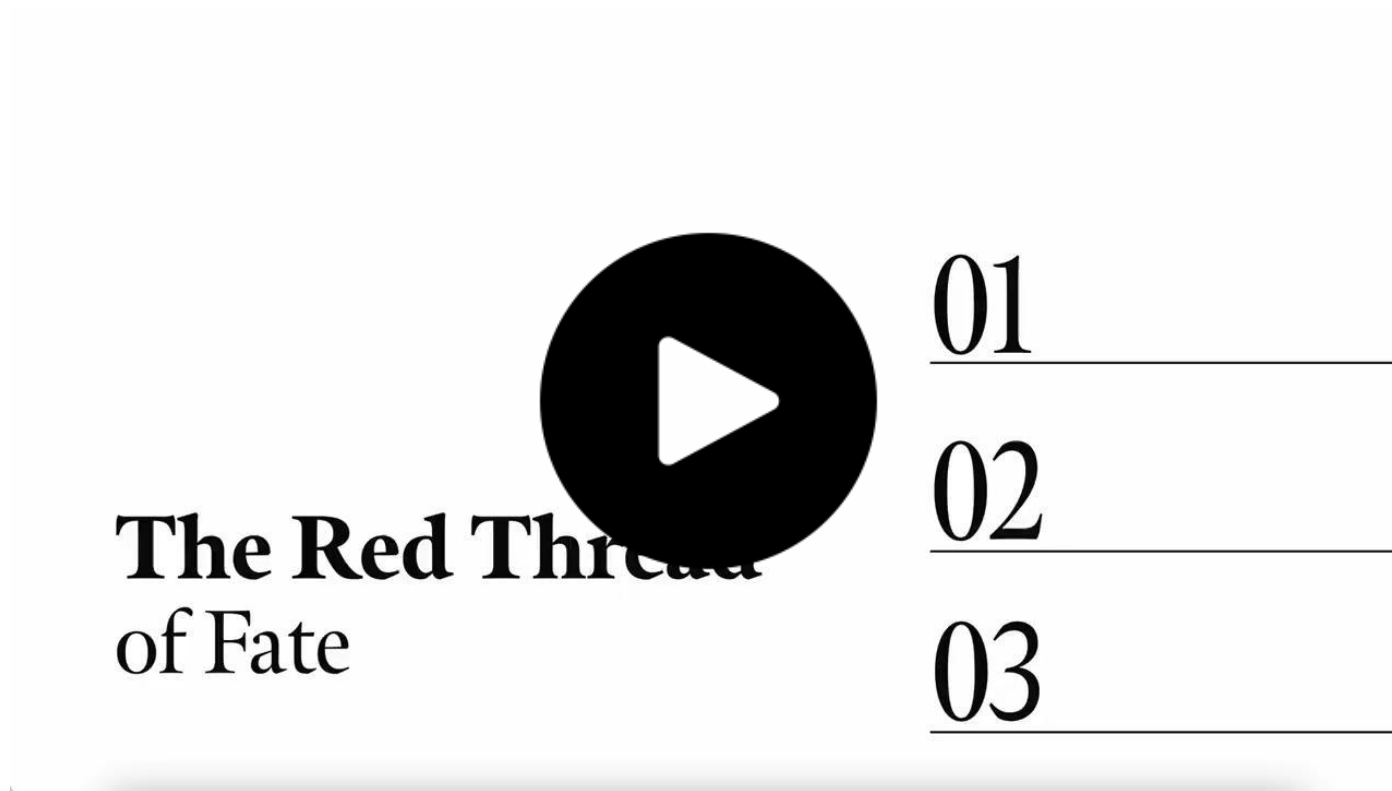
Web 1920 – 5



Web 1920 – 6

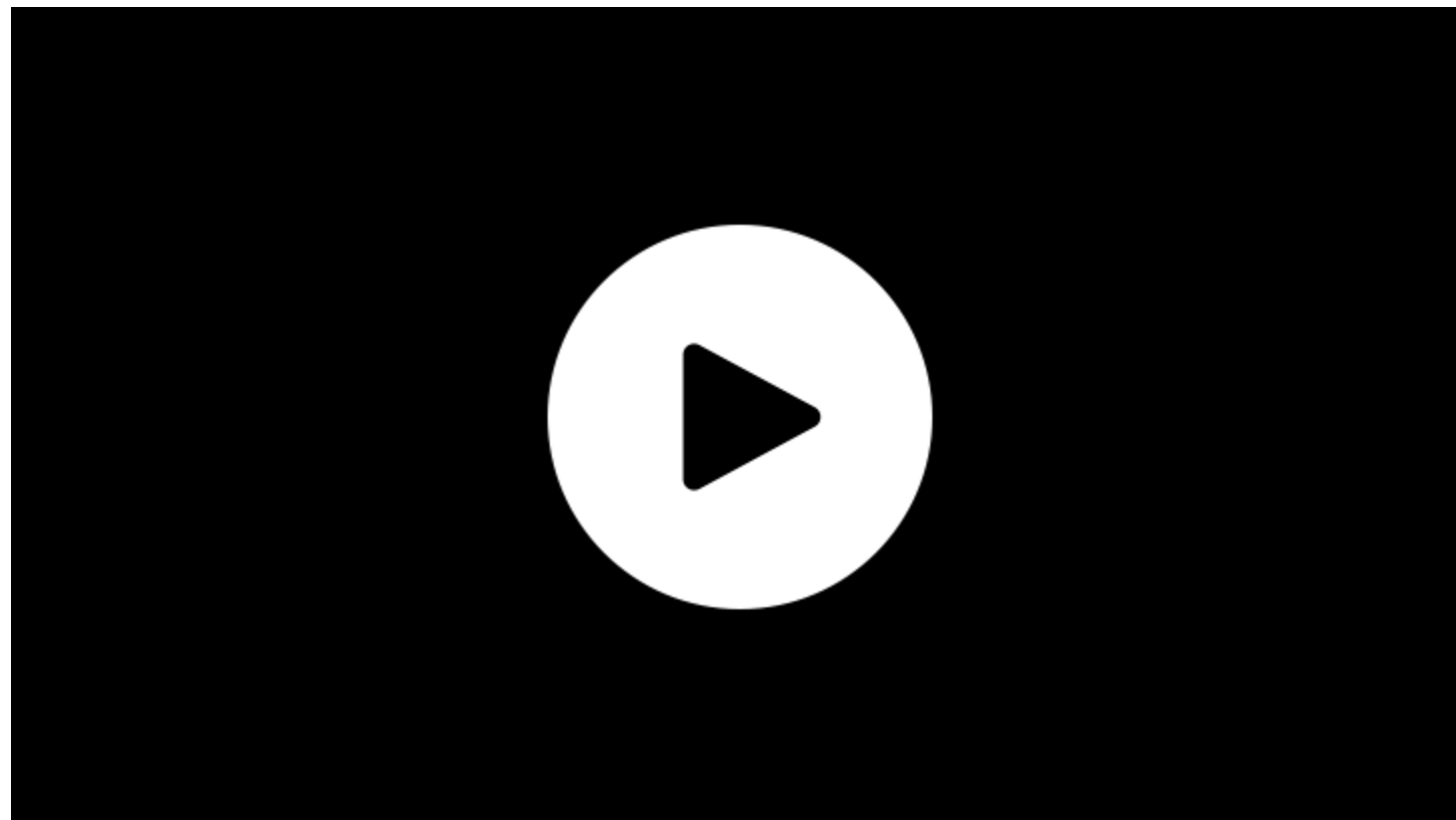
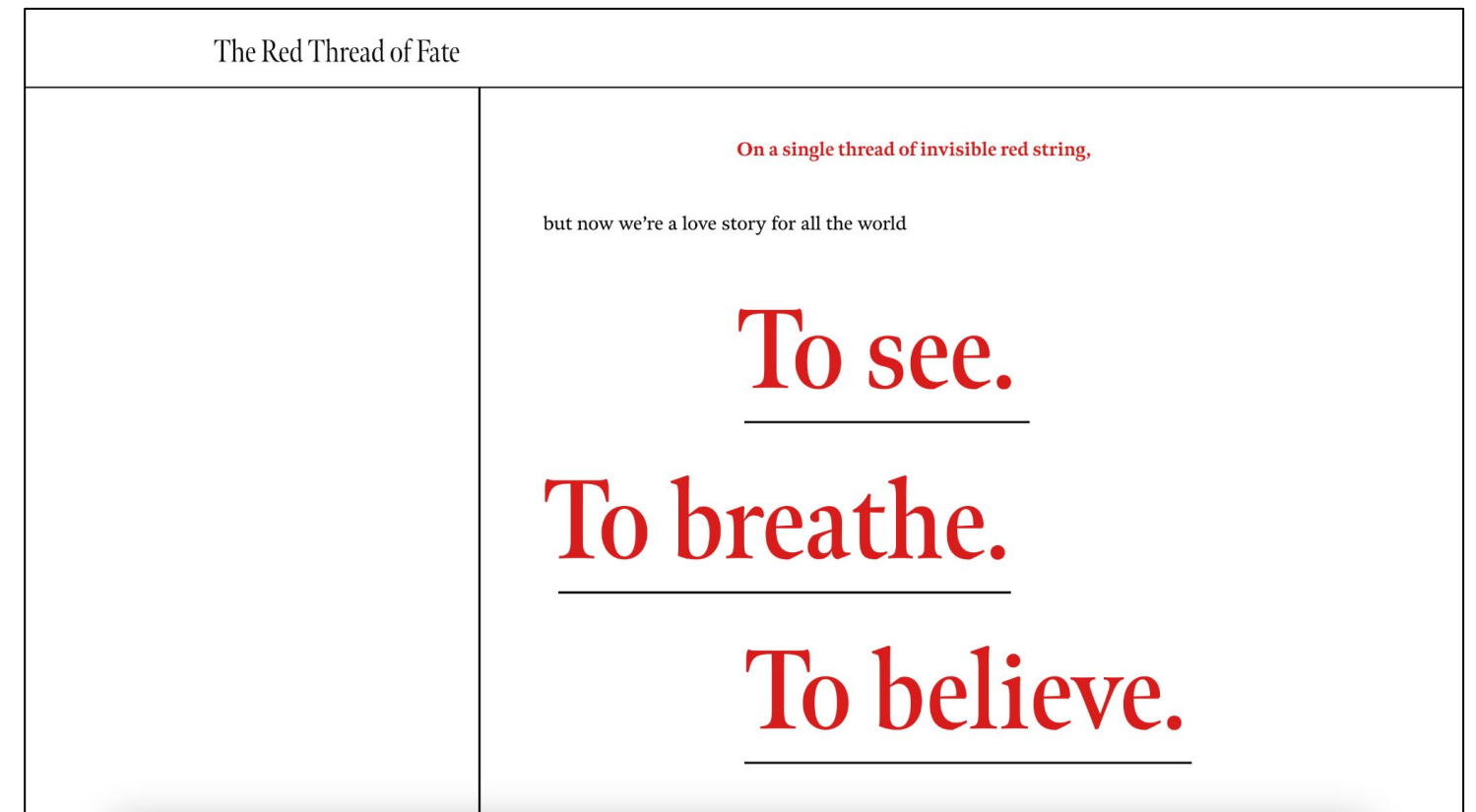
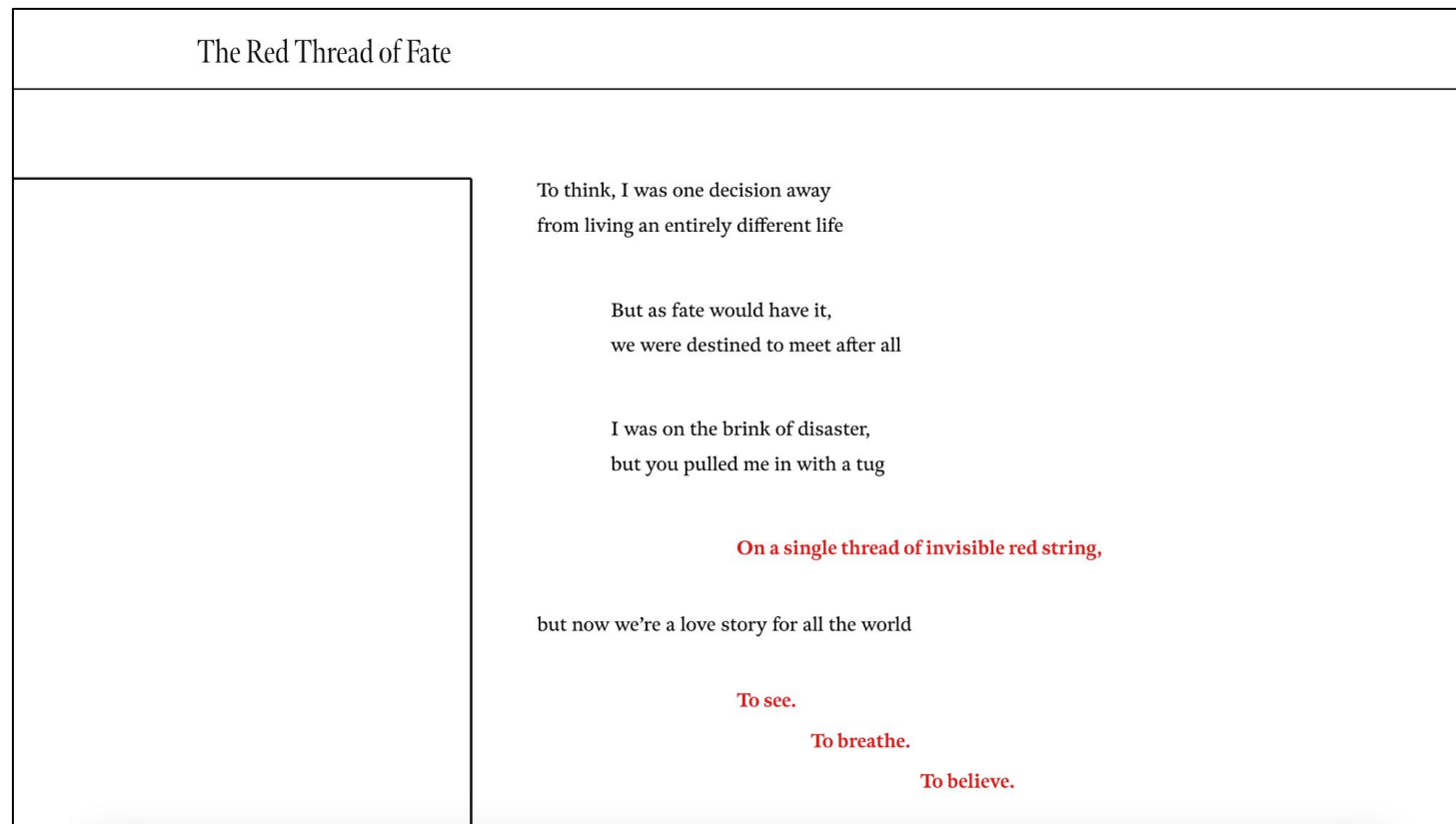


Early draft, focused on guiding the viewer throughout the website with a connecting line.



Experimentations with interactive wireframes and bringing in motion



**Note:**

Good introduction of size contrast, but possibly too large. Experiment with adding indents, more size contrast throughout

Home page / navigation menu

**The Red Thread
of Fate**

01

02

03

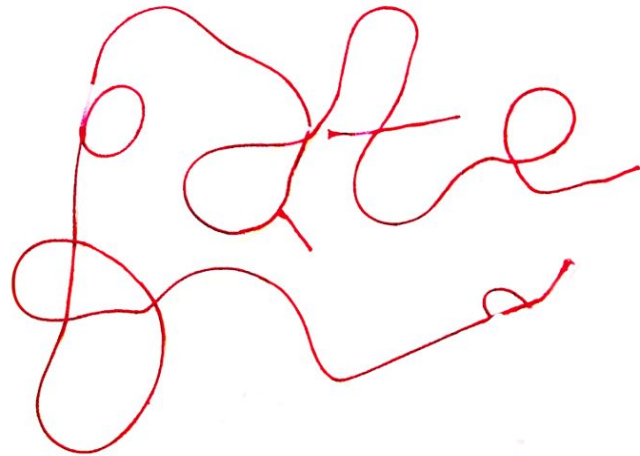
The Red Thread of Fate CHAPTER ONE

A STORY OF

FATE. **CONNECTION.**

RELATIONSHIPS.

The Red Thread of Fate CHAPTER ONE TWO THREE



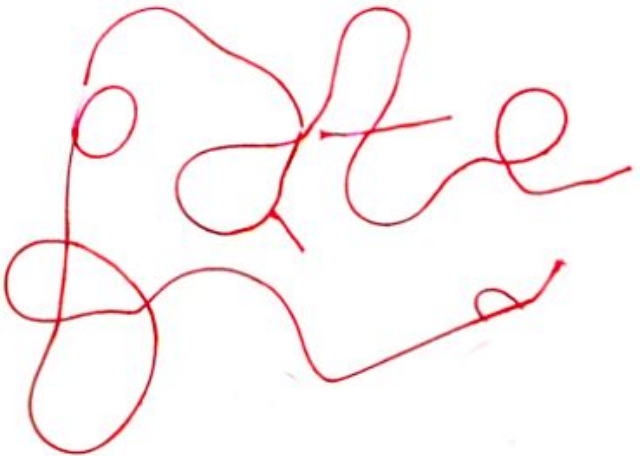
A STORY OF

FATE.

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The Red Thread of Fate CHAPTER ONE



A STORY OF

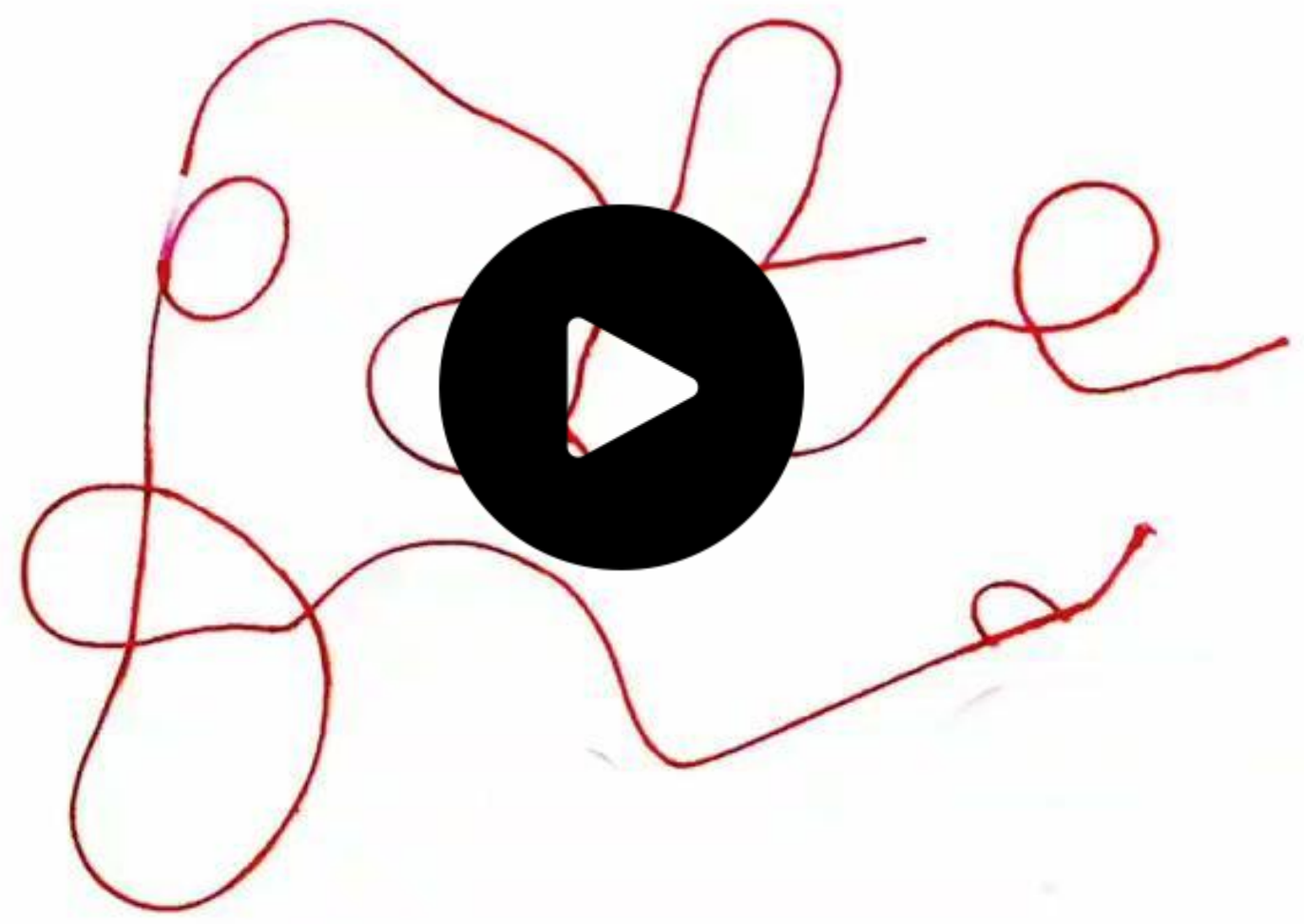
FATE.

CONNECTION.

RELATIONSHIPS.

The Red Thread of Fate

CHAPTER ONE



The Red Thread of Fate

CHAPTER ONE

TWO

THREE

“An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle but will never break.”

CHINESE PROVERB



The Red Thread of Fate

STORIES OF FATE


ADOPTION

“Red threads to tie to the wrists of parents and their children. They cannot be seen by mortals, but once they are tied they cannot be separated. They are tied the moment they are born and the distance between them, the enmity between their families or their social position does not count. **Sooner or later they are going to be united.**”

– EL HILO ROJO

Adoption can cause so many feelings: happiness, appreciation, anger, fear.

I have not yet adopted children so I cannot speak about that. However, as an adoptee, I do feel like I ended up where I was supposed to as the result of my adoption. I live in a beautiful city with a supportive family and a solid circle of friends. I think growing up in a faith with a higher power as well as with this cultural symbol of the **red thread** has made my life more fruitful.



I have lived my whole life fostering the belief that destiny has something great planned for me; and even though I am not related to my family by blood, I am where I am meant to be. This made it easier for me to muddle through the harder days as I was taught that something greater was always on its way. On the other hand, both my faith and this proverb have given me a strong moral code and made me extra deliberate about my choices because I was taught that my words and actions mattered.



Either way, I have a lot of trust in the divine and that I am on the right track, even though my origin story involves loss. Ultimately, I am thankful to my parents for introducing these belief systems to me early in my life.

To my fellow adoptees, you do not have to believe in this kind of divinity, but I believe you are where you need to be. If you have not already, I hope you find the people your **red thread** is connected to soon: the people who make your soul thrive.

The Red Thread of Fate


STORIES OF FATE

ADOPTION

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– EL HILO ROJO

Adoption can cause so many feelings: happiness, appreciation, anger, fear: I have not yet adopted children so I cannot speak about that. However, as an adoptee, I do feel like I ended up where I was supposed to as the result of my adoption. I live in a beautiful city with a supportive family and a solid circle of friends. I think growing up in a faith with a higher power as well as with this cultural symbol of the **red thread** has made my life more fruitful. I have lived my whole life fostering the belief that destiny has something great planned for me; and even though I am not related to my family by blood, I am where I am meant to be. This made it easier for me to muddle through the harder days as I was taught that something greater was always on its way. On the other hand, both my faith and this proverb have given me a strong moral code and made me extra deliberate about my choices because I was taught that my words and actions mattered. Either way, I have a lot of trust in the divine and that I am on the right track, even though my origin story involves loss. Ultimately, I am thankful to my parents for introducing these belief systems to me early in my life.

To my fellow adoptees, you do not have to believe in this kind of divinity, but I believe you are where you need to be. If you have not already, I hope you find the people your **red thread** is connected to soon: the people who make your soul thrive.

The Red Thread of Fate CHAPTER TWO

ADOPTION

“Red threads to tie to the wrists of parents and their children. They cannot be seen by mortals, but once they are tied they cannot be separated. They are tied the moment they are born and the distance between them, the enmity between their families or their social position does not count. Sooner or later they are going to be united.”



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– KATIE KAESSINGER

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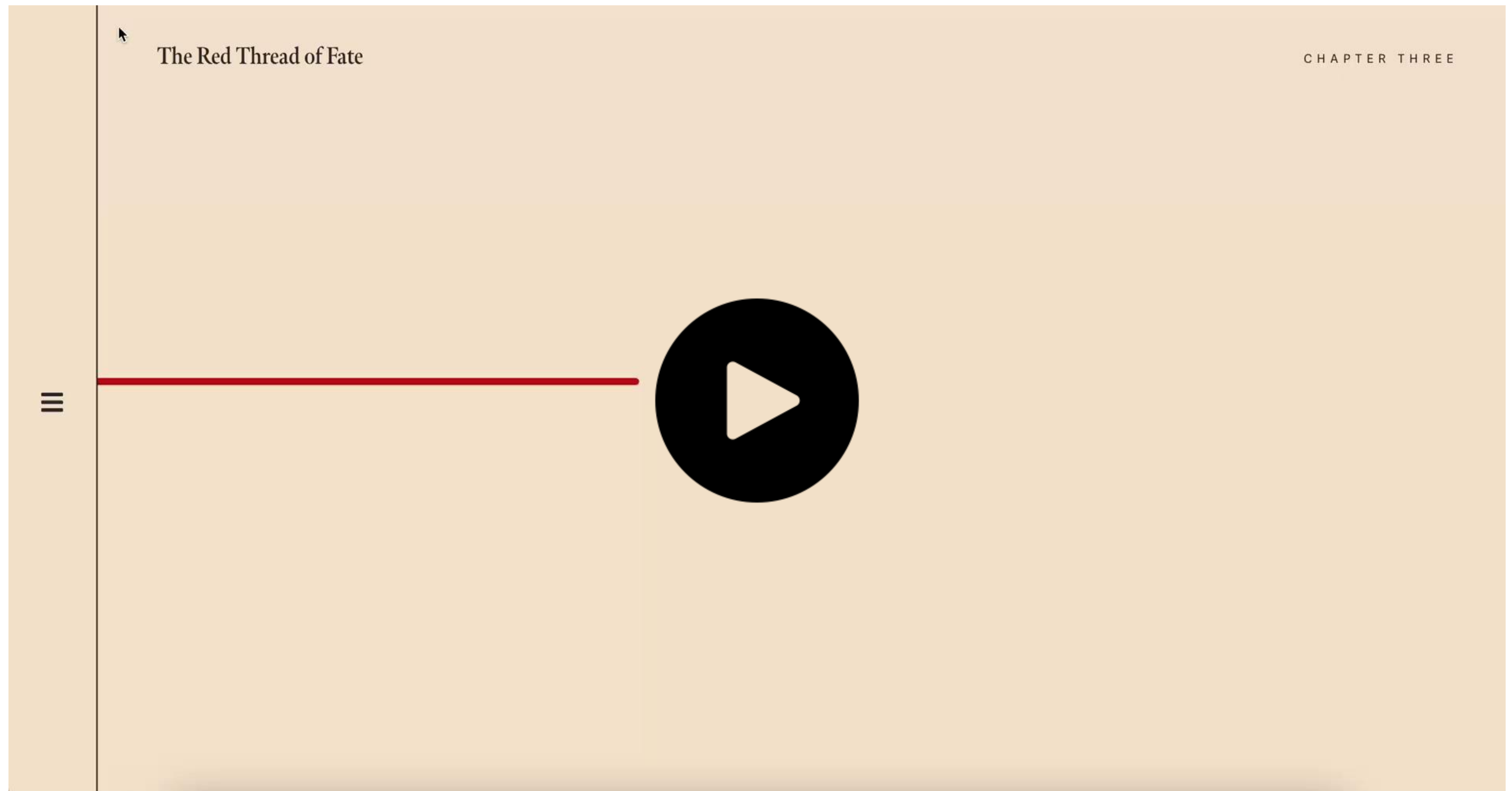
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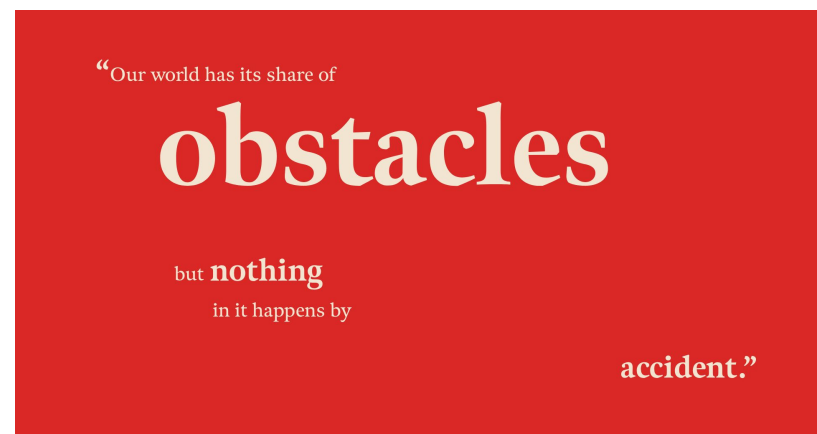
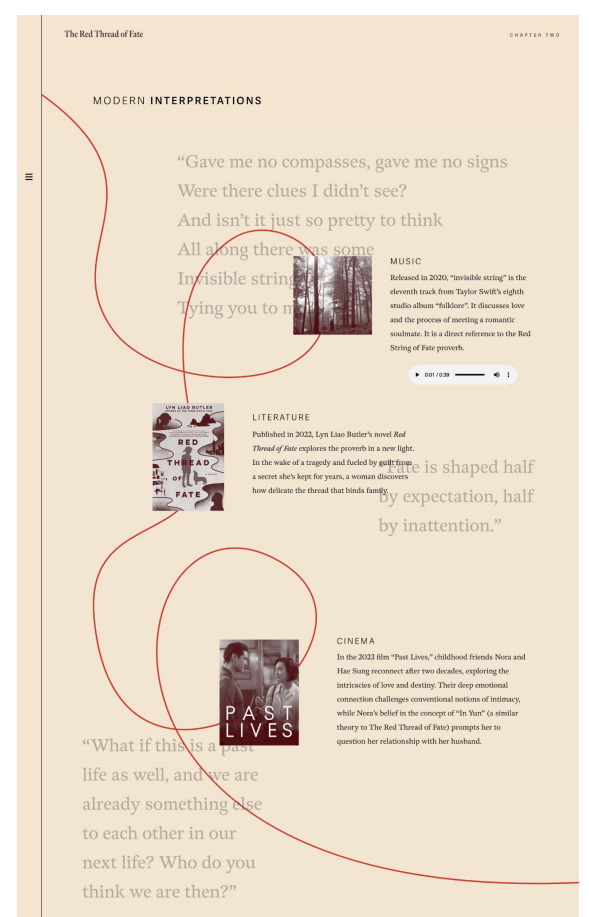
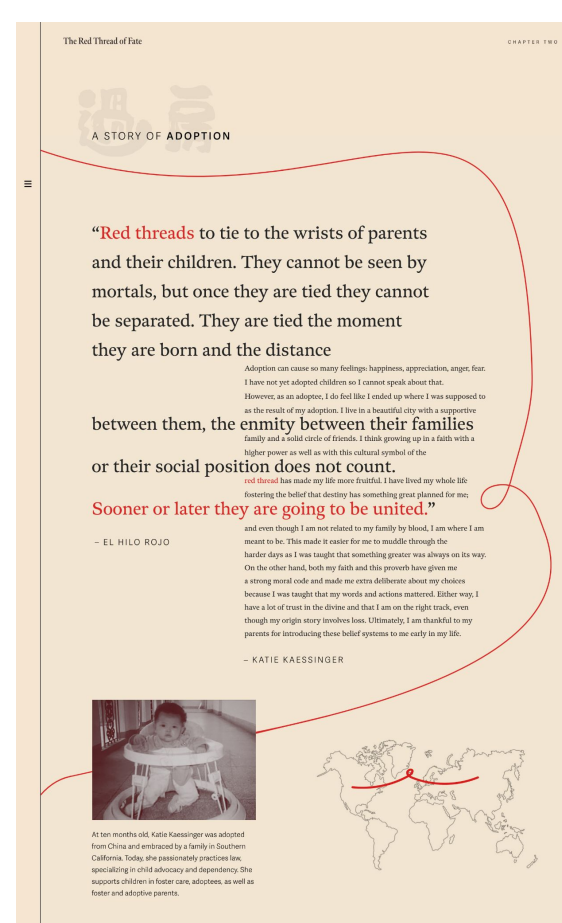
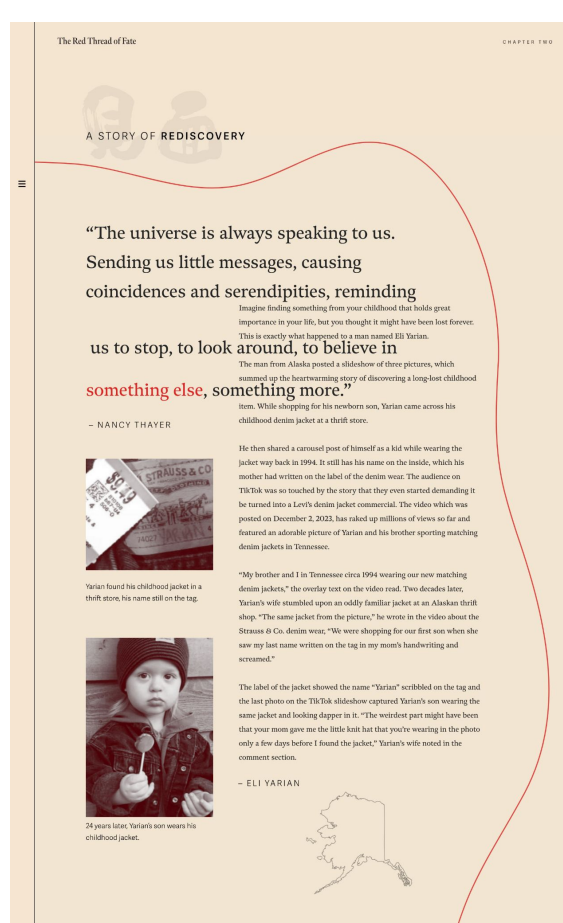
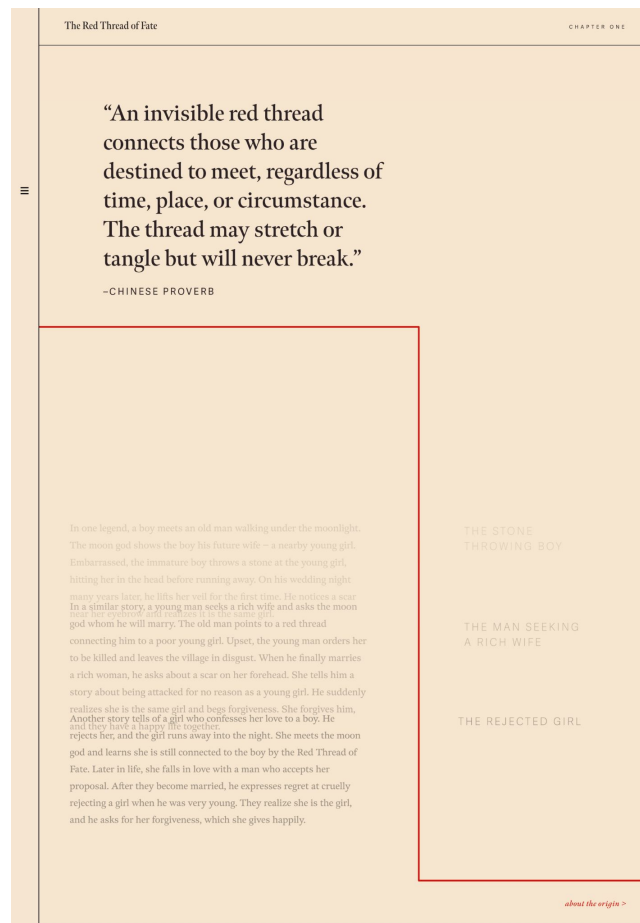
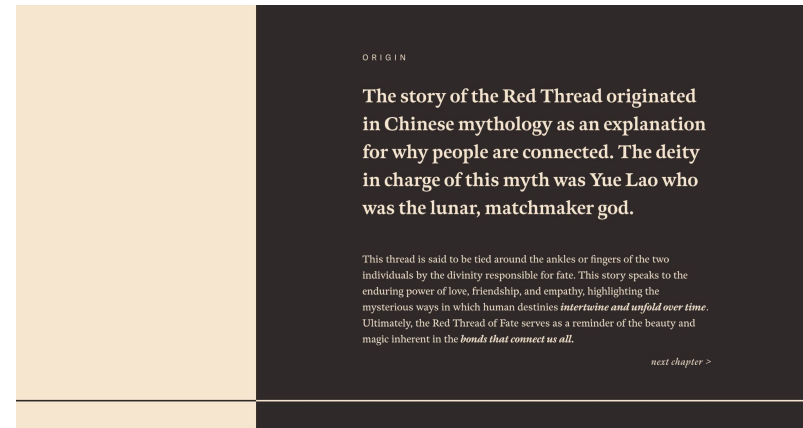
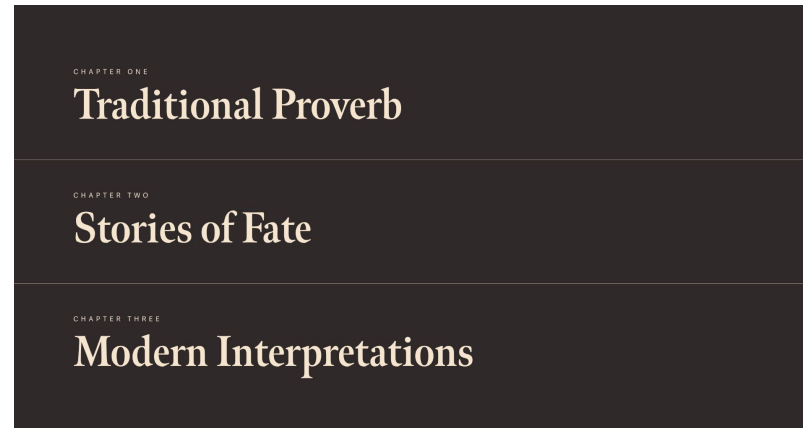
Further development of type system

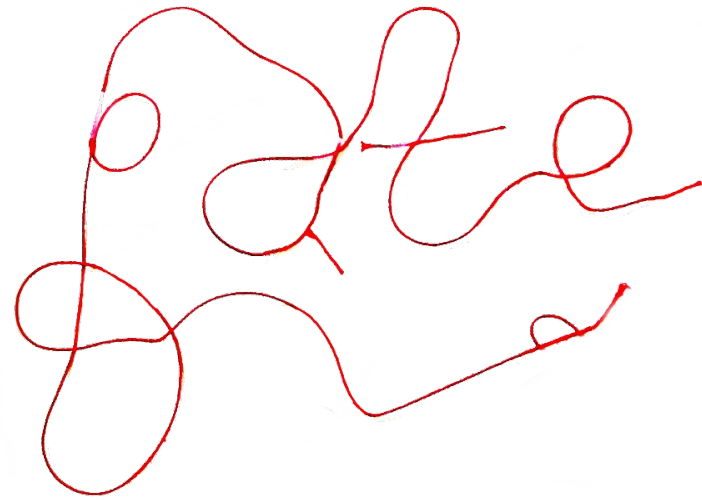
- Option 1 with the interweaving stories best connects to concept
- Experiment with different leading/shorter sections overlapping
- Option 3 feels too structured/boxy



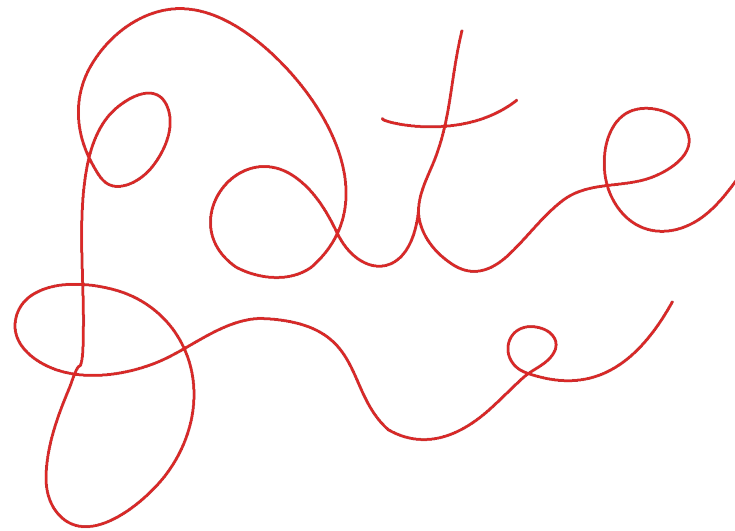
Coding of 'drawing' the lines and navigation menu options

- More straightforward navigation menu works better
- New idea: Start with straight line, becomes more wavy throughout
- Line could be more delicate, thinner

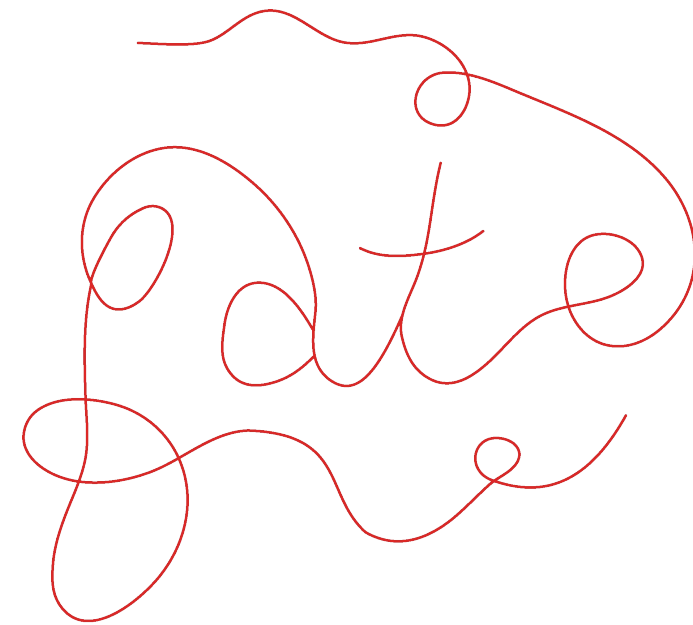




Physical iteration from making studies



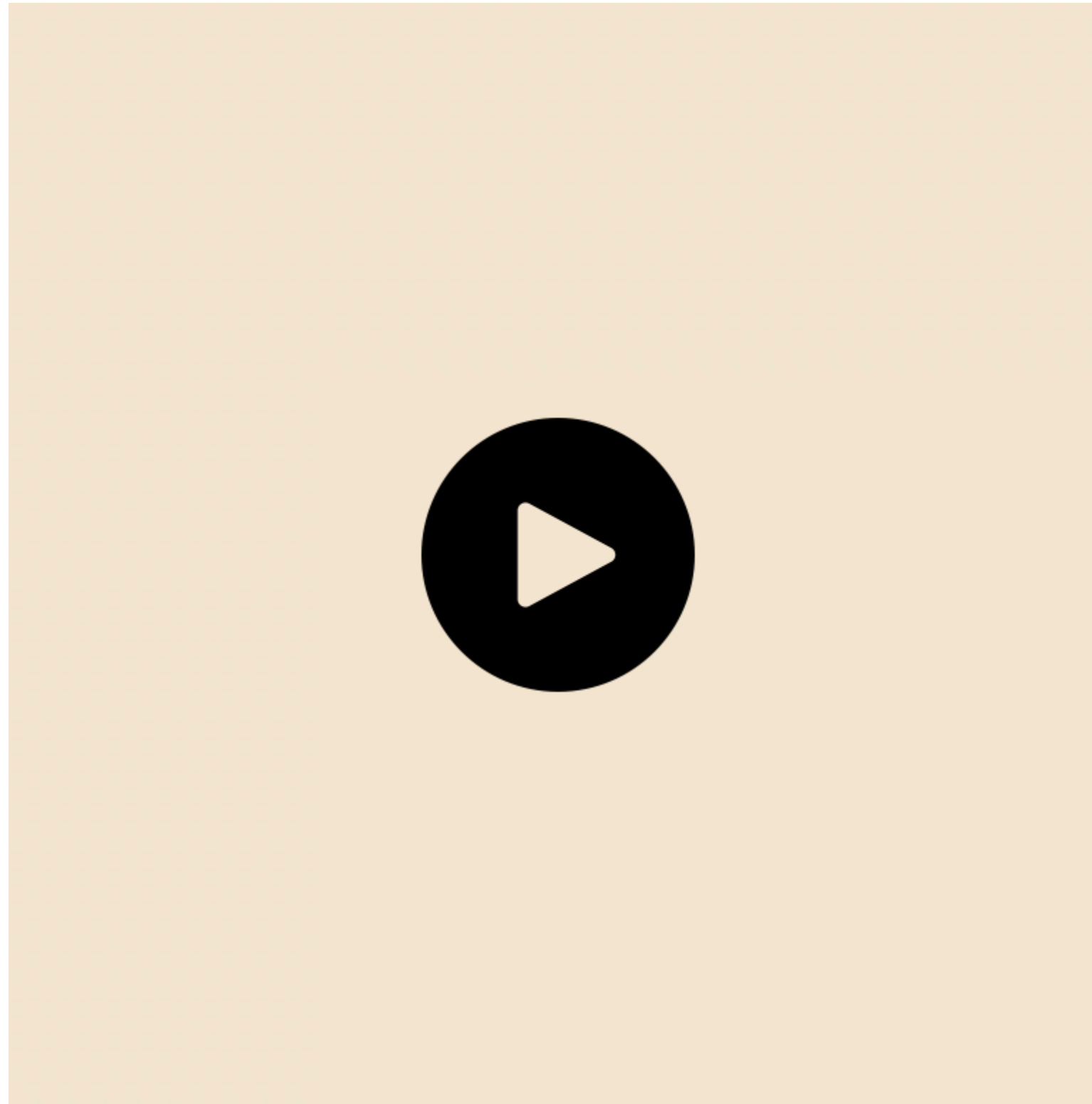
Digitized

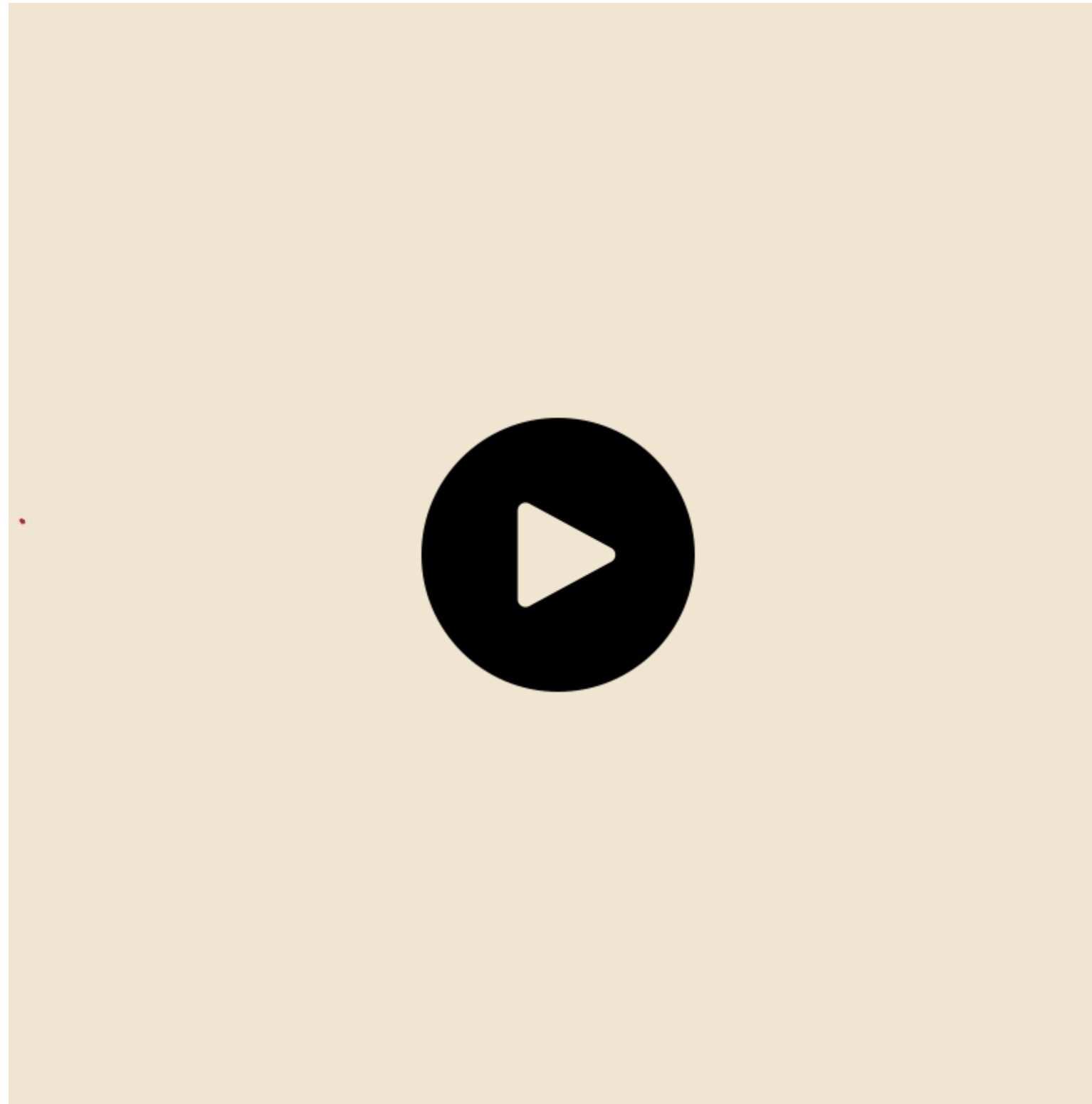


Digitized, revised for readability



Final, revised further for readability





User Testing

User #1

User testing was implemented throughout the project to get feedback from people who had not yet used the website.

My first user, Chloe is a 21 year-old fashion merchandising student. She offered some insight on the functionality of the website.

These were some takeaways from the test:

- The navigation menu and links at the end of stories were easy to find
- She was confused on what to do after landing on chapter one (**I added text that tells the user to scroll down based on this comment**)
- Chloe also suggested slowing down the speed of the line at some points of the website

User #2

My second user test was with Shayna, a 32-year old electrical engineer. She approached the website in an analytical and logical manner.

Takeaways:

- Noticed a few inconsistencies with the responsiveness of the website, some orphans needed cleaned up
- Shayna was slightly confused with the horizontal scrolling section, the poem. After this test, I added arrows to help the user more clearly navigate the section.
- She found the structure of the website to be straightforward and user-friendly

Peer Feedback

Peers also offered feedback that I implemented into the final design.

D Douglas Steinbrink
10:45 AM Mar 7

I think you could have the chapter titles within the menu correlate better with a heading on each target page.

H Hannah Rogers
10:18 AM Mar 7

I believe you use and em dash before a persons name for a quote they said.

D Douglas Steinbrink
10:47 AM Mar 7

I almost didn't catch the interactive swipe across the photo. Maybe indicate the ability somehow, because it's very neat. Could you use that elsewhere, too? Maybe with some text even?

D Douglas Steinbrink
10:52 AM Mar 7

Your photo caption type could possibly benefit by differing from your main body a little more.

Also, watch your consistency of spacing between image and caption.

M Mariah Alanskas ✓ ⋮
10:29 AM Mar 7

I agree with Hannah. I also really like the idea of the lines fading in and out, but I do think you need to mess with spacing or the opacity a little further because they I still feel like I was trying to read both lines at once even when I wasn't suppose to.

M Mackenzie Deertz ✓ ⋮
11:46 AM Mar 7

I love how the red thread goes through the spread! I'm just wondering if it needs to be so straight? In your other layouts the thread moves more organically so maybe having that happen here too but also in a way it still follows down the page!

M Mackenzie Deertz
11:48 AM Mar 7

I agree I wouldn't have known I could swipe across the picture had it not been for the other comment. I also think adding that to text could be really cool!

D Douglas Steinbrink ✓ ⋮
11:01AM Mar 7

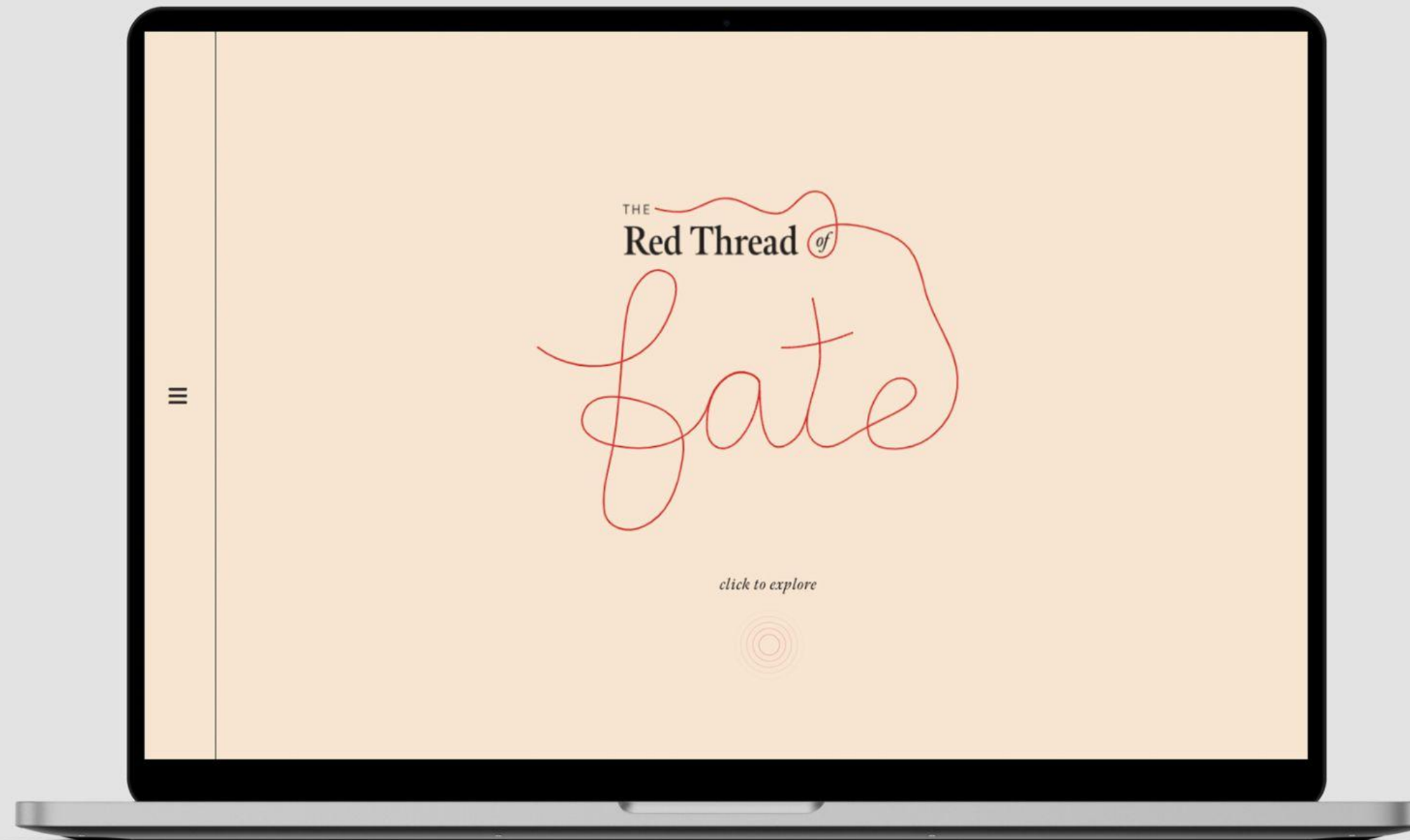
The lines of small body text sometimes feel like they are a bit lengthy.

Possibly the leading between lines of smaller type could tighten a little, but don't let it ruin your layering effect!

M Mackenzie Deertz
11:50 AM Mar 7

could be cool if you could incorporate the word "nothing" into the string? like the text is written in the string as it goes along the page

Final Design Outcome



redthread.alexmillerdesign.com

