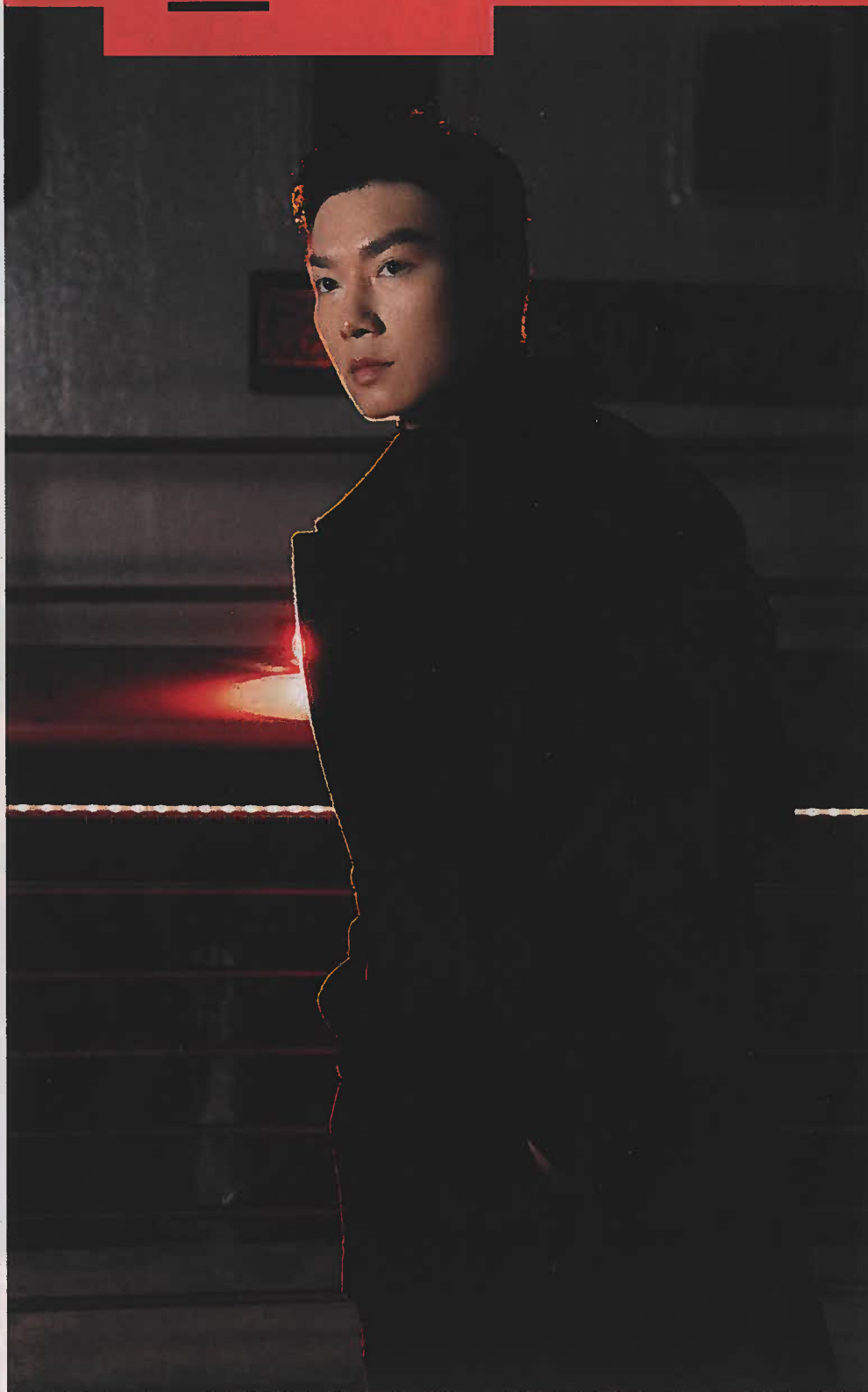


P.78 **THE
HYPERREAL
LIFE**

While China's sci-fi authors are elevated to the status of New Age prophets, Chen Qiufan's career—like his genre's place in society—has gone through the looking glass.
by Yi-Ling Liu



P.34 **DEAR BIRTH MOTHER**

As adoption migrates to Facebook, regretful adoptees and birth mothers are confronting prospective parents with their personal pain—and anger.
by Samantha M. Shapiro

P.48 **GOD VIEW**

Security cameras. License plate readers. Phone trackers. Drones. We're being watched 24/7. All of those eyes could become one.
by Arthur Holland Michel

P.56 **HOW TO REMEMBER
A DISASTER
WITHOUT BEING
SHATTERED BY IT**

Margaret McKinnon survived a midair catastrophe, then became a researcher of trauma. Now she's studying how the pandemic will haunt us.
by Erika Hayasaki

P.68 **FLIGHT PATHS**

The secret history of the first microprocessor, the F-14, and me.
by Sarah Fallon

ELECTRIC WORD

P. 4 Rants & Raves

ON THE COVER

Illustration by Lisa Congdon

It's a tradition in computer science, dating back to the days of the earliest microprocessors, for rookie coders to pass a simple test. They must write a program, no more than a few lines long, that outputs the phrase "Hello, world!" As we look ahead to the coming months—to the end, we hope, of isolation and the start of new growth—we can't think of a better message than that. So we asked Lisa Congdon, an artist based in Portland, Oregon, to put it on our April cover. The program isn't ready to run quite yet; there's still the vaccine rollout to worry about, and the emerging variants, and plenty else. But one day soon, the world is coming back, and you'll want to say hello.



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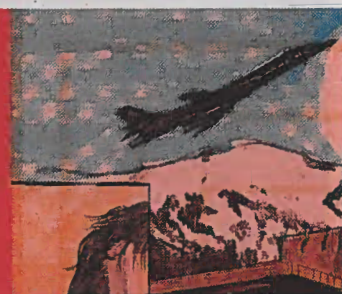
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Top to bottom: illustration by Mari Fouz; photograph by Andres Gonzalez; illustration by Nicole Rifkin; illustration by Violet Reed