

Lexical Debauchery



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ENGLAND**



Editorial

Welcome to the fifth WonderZoo anthology, 'Lexical Debauchery'! This edition features poetry, prose and artwork from a wide range of writers and artists, many based in the Plymouth area and many from further afield.

There's poetry by WonderZoo veterans Phil Smith and Helen Billingshurst (AKA Crab and Bee), prose by William Telford, and an inspiring selection of visual art from artists including Eila Goldhahn, Liane Hocking and Anne Blackwell-Fox. Plus lots, lots more...

One of the greatest pleasures in promoting other artists' work is persuading someone new to publish with you when you know they're talented and I'm particularly pleased to welcome Liza Miloszka (my big sister, for those of you who don't know!) and Justin Daw, a published writer from Plymouth.

Enjoy reading the writing and looking at the art! This anthology also features stills from performance videos made by the WonderZoo crew in the North Stonehouse area of Plymouth - look out for these every Monday on our YouTube channel and please like and subscribe!

Cover art by Gabi Marcellus-Temple and HiP.P (thanks to those who gave us photos of their pets to use).

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More Than You Think - Sarah Adams

I am style, quality;
I am upcycled.
I am Radio 4, the FT.
I am Sarah:
Princess, Queen

I am not a jar of instant.
I am full fat,
Soft seductive
Marshmallow topped,
Rain forest dark
Chocolate curls
And a tongue tantalising
Ice cream float.

I am fuchsia, magenta, coral;
I am not....pink.
A prima ballerina,
Not the chorus line,
Mary, front stage,
Not a background sheep.
I am vitamin D,
And, of course, stardust
Singing at the top of my voice.

Simply: I am.
I am these things.
No matter what.

So I say to you:
Namaste.
We are more than we think.

Still Still Still

Still still still

says the summered grass,
captured in the straight down heat.

Shoot stem succulence,
says the soft summer rain
seductive symphony.

Wait wait wait
says the blood berry's winter promise
of salvation, life's victory.

Face me fool me forget me
says the flirtatious future
holding the blood bone chill within.

Dance with me dally and double dare
side step the sisters who spin,
warm yourself with flame within.

Choice chance creation
spokes on the wheel, needle or seamstress,
breathe in and hold....breathe out.

Snip swerve surrender
while the grass grows under
and the worms await you, agape.

So speaks god or you or time
while playing cards tumble carelessly
I don't know, dear reader.

I just don't know.

Why do fish like schubert?

Why do fish like schubert?

Because they know

How to flow through the gaps

Between notes, to observe

The shadow's float on the surface:

Sparrowhawk? a crawling succulence?

Tempting in night shine crunch....

When to ripple, entwine, dart, mislead;

They understand the craft of rise and dive,

The orchestrated shoal, the shimmer of scales;

When to lurk in dark hidden places,

Or dare the treacherous, forbidden expanse.

Fish know and grow

In the ocean vastness

Of Schubert.

YOU ARE
WONDERFUL
BEAUTIFUL
POWERFUL
MIRACULOUS
MAGICAL
DIVINE LOVE

Love will
Keep us
STRONG.
We'll get
through this!
xoxoxoxox



Agraphia - Shelley Szender

I have no poems
Left in me
My words sit idly
On other poets' lips
My thoughts are jumbled
Scrambled like eggs
Inside my brain

I dip my nib
Into the ink well
The well is dry
There is a word drought
Nought will come out

My thesaurus is meaningless
A muddle of words
That make no sense to me
I open my dictionary
Empty blank pages
Stare back at me
The words have cascaded

Making a condensed broth
Of alphabet soup
The words speak in a sibilant manner
“You’re no good”
“You fake, you fraud”
The literary elitists
Nod their head in affirmation

I’m willing the words
To formulate
My ability to write
Feels so contrite

I’m a writer without words
A poet with rhyme or reason
A wordsmith
With no words to forge
Into a significant piece of meritable prose.

© Shelley Szender February 2021

Cast-away

A crescent moon
like an upturned basket
has strewn stars across the sky
Night air spills from the open skylight
splashing across our exposed shoulders
The soft feather duvet binds us together
resisting the unrelenting cascade of air
anchoring us firmly in the present moment
The Heat of your breast against my ribs
draws my attention and I raise my hand
gently stroke your glorious golden skin
Sleepy sloe eyes slowly open... you smile
A goddess washed in filtered moonlight
I am adrift, lost in the ocean of your eyes
A virescent sea of blue green tourmaline
My vessel rudderless in velvet darkness
moved by the ebb and flow of passion
Pitched and tossed by thought and memory
Elevated pulse pounds within my veins
Colours are bright... Senses heightened
Your scent an exotic hint of spice
from the market of the Grand Bazaar
We sink into silk lined sleep
Lost... to the sandman's call

Peter Roe - July 2020



The Bride - Lesley Constable

I was allowed only one glimpse this time, as a bird
Circling overhead hovering close by for just a

Glimpse, but, I knew you as you walked
Pale your wasp-waist circled in sweet smelling flowers, your quiet smile partially

Concealed by white gauze a vision of loveliness, as you should be

How often had I seen you as a fish as a mouse as a blushing wife, myself

The smile behind your hand - your joke and no one else's

I watched as the congregation
I watched as your maid
I watched as the groom and the
 wisps of clouds in the cerulean sky all those years

I had watched and never understood
 Still not understanding the mystery of consummation

As the bride was I quiet? As the bride was I sad? As the bride nervous, giddy, serene?

I don't remember

So many times in so many lives, like you, I had walked that trembling long walk on
my father's arm and still, as you, as me and
 Not understood

That is my beauty
That is why men love me

I do not understand now

Only that the bride must marry herself and seed the child sleeping in her Belly at the
moment and all the while of the ceremony and later

In the room by yourself you become you and stop

Looking in the mirror stop looking
At the rogue's gallery of faces and behold only the presence of the other that is you

You sleep all those nights and dream your dream in love plural yet singular you are
yourself you

Are the one only
Who smiles behind your hand

And consummated in looking, consummated by looking I knew
You at the moment, I was you at the moment I saw you as a bird
circling slowly, lovingly overhead

I am you I am the bride

Golden Babies

The mothers are calling across the wine dark sea through the foam that
licks each wave as it comes to shore,
across the sky

The mothers cry, "cradle the baby, cradle her cradle him tight – don't let the baby
fall."

The little boat rocks gently on top of the waves.
It has a line that does deep into the dark water
The line is attached to the hand of the fisherman.

The sea is dark, deep opaque, green, a dark emerald.
The fisherman holds the line gently but securely,
understanding the pull of things, the pull of the fishes randomly from deep
underwater.

The fish, the line, the fisherman, the boat that rocks are one – a continuous line that goes
back into time, back to the mothers who call, who call me "don't forget the baby."

The baby, the babies are flying across the sky, golden, serene
They are smiling, the babies, knowing all – holding tight to them the pain, the
horror
and the joy – they smile

The baby holds us all gently together and as one
The baby will not let us fall
The baby will hold on and will hold on and will not let us fall.

The boat is our first cradle
We must mind the baby.





Lesley - Slain McGough Davey

An American Prayer Signing Off With Purple Rain

Diesel And Dust Under A Blood Red Sky

Peace Sells But Who's Buying?

With All Mod Cons

Licensed To Ill

Appetite for Destruction

Meat Is Murder

It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back

With Rage Against The Machine

In Search Of Space

With A Weapon Called The Word

With New Boots And Panties

Some Girls Wander By Mistake

Billion Dollar Babies

Welcome To The Pleasuredome

Power/Lies/Corruption

Nevermind

Pictures Of Starving Children

Scream

For The Jilted Generation

Live Through This

Like A Prayer
Business As Usual
On A Yellow Brick Road
In The Hotel California
Jagged Little Pills
A The Doors Of Perception
For The Magic Band
Wears White Socks
Feeding The 5,000
Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables
And Trout Mask Replicas
Of Leftism
Rafi's Revenge
Under American Suns
In Misplaced Childhoods
In Sketches Of Spain
Gypsy Punks
Burnin
The Prophets Of Rage
Never Mind The Bollocks (or Ballots)
Fire and Water
Solid Air

Germ Free

Transform

3 Years 5 Months 2 Days

Of Country Steel Town

Bricks Are Heavy

And So Strong

Among The Living

Dare

Listen To The Planet Of The Apes Sound Track

It's From God

Like A Soulsonic Planet Rock

And A Night At The Opera

Hysteria

Please

Harvest

The Freewheelin

First Public Issue

Of Seasons In The Abyss

It's Special

Like That Lost Boys Soundtrack

Of Forgotten Black Sabbath Songs

And Dragon Fly

Living On A Tapestry

Live

On Different Trains

Like The Blue Train

On A Black Sunday

Horses And Streetcleaners

In Parallel Lines

Runaway

Gold

3 Feet High And Rising

Like The Stone Roses

On Led Zeppelin on High

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

With A Ghost In The Machine

My Love Is Cool

The Next Day

On The UnderGround

Sitting On The Big Chair

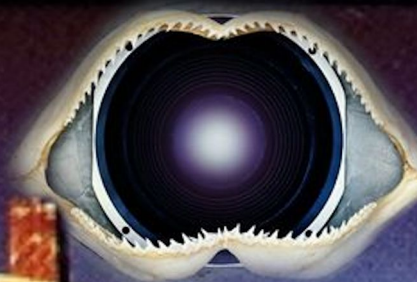
Mask In Hand

With No Cure

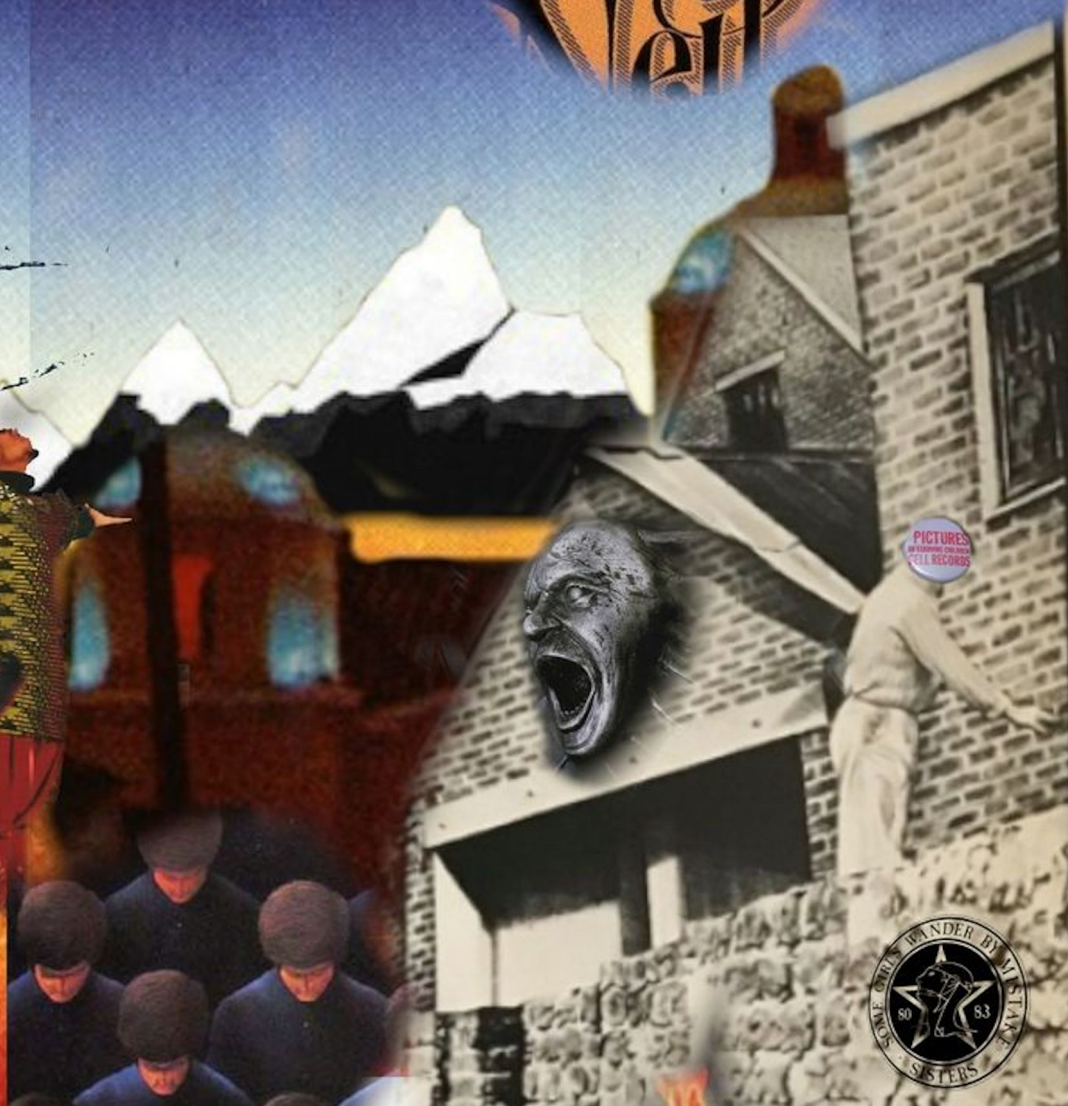
Of a Seventh Son

Or A Number Called Ten

With No Bloody Roots Talking About A Revolution



West
Ramp



PICTURES
OF THE
HELL RECORDS



VALENTINES - Margaret Corvid

I cannot change the world for you,
my love.

But I will try,
in quiet ways and loud ones,
in flocks of jackdaws
wandering down to feed,
leaving wing-marks
on the frosted grass.

I cannot believe everything with you,
my love.

But I will try,
in sandwiches made of three
perfect things
that I found by chance
in a strange store,
glasses fogged by my mask.

I cannot make you live for ever,
my love.

But I will try,
walking up hills too steep for me,
stepping in shit
and laughing as I pry it out
of the treads I wore down
on all our paths, together.

All The Poems I Dare Not Write

Looking through the window, light
cast by the restless orange fire
are all the poems I dare not write,
their yellow eyes full of desire,
their claws all sharpened to a point,
mouths packed with needles, mauls and knives,
sneaking their morsels off the joint,
all fighting for their little lives.

In between the bravest boasts
of old majestic lines of verse,
the mighty corsairs raid my coasts,
retreating with a shouted curse,
and sheepfolds empty, broken gates,
the tips of sails dipped out of sight,
a stoved-in kettle, shattered plates
are all the poems I dare not write.

Biohazard

I wrote poems about the plague
last April; the gleaming sun
baked my back tattoo
which is the glyph for biohazard.
I got the tattoo when I thought
that I would live forever, because
my body would be pumped full
of freezing fluid,
my head would be separated from my body
and frozen, to wake up one day
in a better world.

There was a sense of moment
in the bright purple wildflowers
and in every bird,
and in the silence of the streets.
Now I write poems about the plague
from my bed,
the sounds of children playing
in the too-crowded park
drifting through the window.
The tattoo is faded,
a question for nurses,
who I tell the story
of what it once meant.
I want the park to be silent,
at least empty of the sounds of apes,
safe from all the breaths

filled with virus.

But children will run and shout,
dogs will wrestle,
people will walk, slowly and lonely,
holding cups of tea.

It is not for them to carry
the hundred thousand dead.
It is for the government,
walking into a wood-panelled room
with its hair mussed,
holding a file
marked with the glyph for biohazard,
to carry them.









I can be fluffy

By

Zoë Reilly

I have love to give,
It's in there somewhere.
In a blanket of pain,
gasping for air.

I have hope inside me,
try as I might.
It's squashed to its limits,
especially at night.

I have warmth in my soul,
though my eyes appear cold.
It's dark in my world,
from stories of old.
I am but a princess,
deep within me.
Someone, come to save her,
she wants to be free.

I have affection,
in abundance for sure.
I just need a hero,
to unlock the door.

I have a cute dream,
to walk hand in hand.
To love one forever,
while roaming the land.

I have sent out a message,
I will just wait and see.
Will they come to bring out,
the magic me?

Time

By Zoë Reilly

Time moves regardless,
We move along slowly,
Taking our turn,
Waiting in line,
Just hoping for the best.

Moving on

By Zoë Reilly

There is always calm before a storm
There would be no rainbow without rain.
You cannot know euphoria,
Without a little pain.

To reach your destination,
You must walk a beaten path.
To see what is in front of you,
You must stop looking back.

There is beauty in the sadness,
But first we must reflect.
To get where you are going,
you must not deflect.

Look for the sun, on a cloudy day,
one foot in front of the other.
You can't see the moon without the sun
You must go through a winter for summer.





An Invitation to goof out the dark days
by Kellie Withers

When rest is not rest
You're not feeling your best
Sensitive to the news around you
When you're burying your head
Retreating to bed
Sleeping the day through

When numbing is the only way
You can get through the day
Without a bursting of a volcano!
When the fat or thin that covers
Is a barrier to your lovers
More than anyone, they know

When it all feels like ground hog day
When you're struggling to say
Your truth or even to know it
When melancholy rests heavy on your shoulder
And life makes you meeker not bolder
Swimming around in the shit

Reach out your hand for mine
Let's lose our minds in the art of rhyme
Take comfort in creativity and nature
Muddy puddles go 'a' splashing
Get wet clay, start sculpting and bashing
Embrace our intriguing sense of danger!

Create or find a safe space
Forget about the rat race
Roll around and relish in the earth
Embrace so called 'madness'
Splash paint beyond your canvas
Up rise to a wholesome re-birth

The magic of putting pen to paper
A dance, a song, being a master baker
Get in touch with your kind of creativity
Search out the measure
Of what really brings you pleasure
Embrace your wonderful sensitivity

Know YOU ARE NOT ALONE
Pick up the dog and bone
Let's remind each other of our deepest most powerful songs
Shed light among the darkness
Relish in our weirdness
Let's be goofy together, make dark days not seem so long





Long Live
Our Own
dear
Queen

THE REDEMPTIVE POWER OF ROCK N ROLL - William Telford

Lookin' back it was, I'm sure, the strangest show we ever done did, and not just because it were so darn hot, and in a place that looked mighty like the Opry, but weren't the Opry, but also because everyone in the hall was dressed up in sheets.

I looked over at Bill and Bill looked back and shrugged, and I shrugged too, and then Bill climbed up on his bass and then we started on Blue Suede Shoes and then all them fellas in sheets started throwin' stuff.

'Ok, Ok, Mystery Train,' said Scotty, wipin' his brow, and we started on that, but the fellas in sheets, all of them with their big pointy hats on and kinda sheet masks over their faces, well, they started throwin' stuff again and makin' a lowin' noise like cattle was bein' stamped.

So we got to endin' the number, because we was pros, and Scotty came over and said, 'Shoot, you know who these guys are?' He jerked a thumb at the sheet fellas, one of which was wavin' this big wooden cross, and went on, 'Wait'il I get my mitts on the Colonel.'

'Hey,' said Bill, a big graze blazin' away over his left eye where some stuff had of hit him. 'Maybe we should go hillbilly?'

So we done Blue Moon of Kentucky and then Just Because, well, just because, and that kind of pacified the sheet-wearin' fellas for a while, but then we got ourselves a tad overconfident and so we tried Tutti Frutti and, lord, that was like a red rag. The sheet-wearin' fellas were throwing like they was the Braves' Warren Spahn and we were duckin' like we was ducks, and one of those sheet-wearin' fellas, him with a big letter X on his chest and it ringed with big letter Ks and with a big red blood drop in the centre, he hollered, 'Quit with the uh-huh music!' Him not actually saying 'uh-huh' but usin' a word I don't likely like to use, 'specially now I'm up here singin' with the angels.

And then DJ yells out from behind his kit, 'Old Shep, do Old Shep,' and then some thrown stuff kinda ricocheted off of his high hat, and so we did Old Shep, and by the time we got to second verse and Old Shep was savin' that boy from drownin', well them sheet fellas were bestilled. And by the time we got to fourth verse, and the doc had said there was nothin' more he could of done for that old woofer and the boy had out his rifle, well, those fellas were a weepin' like maiden aunts at a weddin'. They were pullin' off them sheet masks and usin' them to mop up tear drops bigger'an the blood drop on their chests. And, I guess,

that's when I learned there's good in every man's heart, no matter how dark the blood that runs through it. And, I like to think that night in the Opry that weren't the Opry, me, Scotty, Bill and DJ, we four put a light in those fellas' hearts and I reckon made them a force for good. That's the redemptive power of rock n roll.

Anyways, we then did Lawdy, Miss Clawdy and the sheet-wearin' fellas put back on their sheet masks and set a fire to that big cross and headed for the door, that cross a blazin' away, no doubt to light the path to righteousness and show them the way home.

Tarantula - Jamie Wright

There's a tarantula in my wardrobe
It lurks behind my shirts
And every time I see it
My head begins to hurt

My corner eye it sees it
Its legs all fat and hairy
It makes me empty all my clothes
To me it's real and scary
It's crawled inside my jumpers
And up my trouser legs
I'm sure it's in there somewhere
For relief my brain it begs

Eight limbs inside my boxers
Crawling in and out of socks
I've got to check all pockets
And even my rubbery crocs
But I can't find it anywhere
I have to give up for now
It'll probably be there tomorrow
And I'll do the same, but how?

Just how do I keep going?
That arachnid from the wild
Eyeing me up through furry skin
Leaving my mind reviled
It's a spider's web of falsehoods
Compulsions and lies they probe
I really am at my wits' end
There's a tarantula inside my wardrobe





Vanessa Crosse

I wrote this for the clan kind project I was involved in.

As a child the meadows and woods were a place of endless fun, exploration, pleasure and even danger. Time seemed irrelevant - no one had a watch and mobile phones weren't invented. The only time we knew was when we left home to meet at the oak (Oak tree). To go on an adventure. The meadow and woods always being a popular choice

It was where we went with our bright green or orange nets to catch tiddlers in the stream, put them in a jam jar and transport them home. Taking your shoes and socks off and gingerly taking steps over the large pebbles in the cool water stream. Despite being able to touch the sides of the tunnel with your arms outstretched and only being knee deep in water.

Danger lurked by, daring each other to walk the length of the tunnel the stream ran into. It started in the meadow and came out in the woods. You were plunged into darkness at one point and your imagination would run riot with peril you faced. Scared you might find a body or a freak flood would completely immerse you. There muffled conversation could be heard or a shout into the tunnel was amplified. The other kids would run to the other end to meet you. To hear tell of your imaginary perilous adventure in the tunnel of doom.

Someone would get stung by a nettle - as kids we knew the remedy for this was dock leaf. It amazes me now how we derived so much simple pleasure out of pulling the petals off daisies to find out if someone loved me or loved me not or making a daisy chain to wear around our neck or as a crown.

What weird knowledge I knew about the plants growing in the area and now as an adult, now, now there was some flimsy reason for our understanding. Don't pick a dandelion you will wet the bed. But this curse did not apply to the dandelion when its round feather like seed structure could be blown to tell the time.

I also recall a plant we called mother die that under no circumstances you should pick as the demise of your mother would follow. As I grew older, I learnt that mother dies were probably cow parsley but often confused with highly poisonous hemlock. Dandelion, or pissenlit in French, translates to "pee the bed." Dandelions are a natural diuretic. And dock leaves to soothe the nettle sting. These tales about plants passed down through the generations from our ancestors.

When I think back, those days seem idyllic even just lying in the long grass chatting about everything and anything. Reminiscing about these days fills me with wonderment and longing to lay in the long grass, paddle in the stream and hear the distant conversation of the younger me. To be at one with the rituals of my ancestors, mother nature and me.

I belong to the universe. - Vanessa Crosse

like the oak tree is different from the bayob tree.

We are different you and me.

The trees are the same species

Just as you and me.

We share the same earth breathe the same air

We see the same moon and gaze at the same stars

we are a micro scopic

in the universe

the same air earth moon and stars

But the trees, are as

different as you and me.

Linnaean



Dominique Hickey

I live in abundance everyday,
It feels wonderful like a sunshine ray,
I have freedom to do as I choose
and to help others freely and to help them I choose.

I buy anything I need or want,
it feels like safety, like an undending font,
of giving and loving and power that's true,
I deserve it, I've earned it so abundance I choose.

Security and beauty of every kind,
I can enjoy life be free, be happy, unwind.
My surroundings reflect the beauty in me
and I receive gifts gratefully.

I am abundant in all in this life,
I always know which way is right,
I use my good vibes to gather my tribe
and have unending money to enjoy and provide.

This amazing feeling inside me dwells,
of relaxation, excitement, happiness and well,
look at me now, I've reached my highest path
it was effortless and fun and it made me laugh.

All I had to do was go within,
that was all I needed to win,
this beautiful life that I have right now,
I live my highest path
I'm blessed in the now.



Ham Wood - Phil Smith

How mad will this spring be
After a winter this warm
And not yet fully wound up, a day before the official release?
A worm got in the moon
May blossom prematurely come among the thorns
The weird eyes in the odd head of an over bred dog
Goggling, skittish
A giant swivels his head to tell us
“isn’t this place great?”
As if the two red and white woodpeckers and
Blip-blip-blipping tree creeper he celebrates are carousing in his trousers
The young couple sit at the edge of the boisterous stream,
wrapped in each other’s selfies, crackling
like twigs under careful feet
as we assuredly hump the rusty sun wheel up the slippery path
we’ve just slid uncertainly down
its nucleus almost coming adrift from its frame
and the whole wood burning down.
So what if we all got climate change completely wrong?
Not a dull shrivelling up of the world
but its bursting forth from timetables
decades after we first rolled the machine down its hill,
it’s burning us with its passion to still oxidise, bud and burst in white
and misty yellow boughs, sink its deep green trunks
and cake our hands in filthy orange light.













AND WEREN'T THEY ALL WOMEN - Sam Richards

The lady came from London town
Glorious from hat to shoe
And when she winked the other eye
You knew she knew you knew

she sang the songs that shadowed the low-way from the narrow
sallow streets of Shoreditch to London nights on the town, dancing
Aunt Louisa's knees-up jig, to the lights and mirrors of the Tivoli,
brash brazen bustled and bonneted she winked her conspiracies of
knowingness in songs that poked their out their cockney tongues at
prudery and clean-up-vice God's armies ever on the lookout for sin
- enjoying being outraged and shocked for pastime and prayer

she sang the songs that cruised full tilt in and out the Eagle, up and
down the City Road, the vinegar factory, music halls, penny gaffs
by candlelight, saloons with beer and sweat and chatter and fights,
flea pits and freak shows and free and easies, Mile End Road to
Mayfair, along the Regent's Canal, Ratcliff Highway where the
recruiting party beating the drum was exposed for all to hear in
ballads of queen's shilling deception attempted escape and court
martial and the street sweepers and costers and brickmakers,
cheap labour and smash and grabbers rocked in the aisles as she
pranced and waggled, the men laughed and clapped and
women loved her cheek and joined in her song of eviction
following the van and can't find my way home

she sang songs where her East End pride grabbed Victorian
morality, shook it from its shame and secret corners, assaulted the
prudery of the pure, looked it in the eye and exulted in the life, love
and voluptuousness of all people great and small lusting, knowing,
looking pious hypocrisy in the eye and replacing it with rumours of
the Devil and all his works as the wives and women of the rag trade
sweatshops and maids stitch-a-needle daughters and mothers
joined in her choruses and split their hormonal sides agreeing that
every little movement really does have a meaning of its own

and wasn't she a woman?

The lady came from far Quebec
To the footlights and the glare
Tell her she was this or she was that
Her song was I Don't Care

lived in a wrestle of tenements, within walking distance of the factory, fast as a flour city where the cotton mills and paper mills roared like Hell in a drunken town always on the razz, French Irish German Americans, where Temperance conducted a war on saloons and the bums came a-tumbling down, masquerades with Old Nick, tambourine girls, Japanese ladies, peasants, clowns, she danced fresh as a bottle of fizz like an inebriated fairy with insolent curls over her eyes cakewalking on the edge of control

lived off the libido of the city, from anonymous urban life her perpetual motion drew cyclones of cheers from the entranced who spent their leisure dimes on her Lincoln penny striptease which gave the eye to the prudish and the promiscuous, highbrow lowbrow any old brow, prancing like an escaped bear from burlesque, her dollar bill dress giving the finger to the nice little woman not too big not too loud defined in this life by marriage and motherhood love of God and a husband

lived on the vaudeville stage where she ran and wriggled, preened and panted, screamed and sweated when women's armpits were meant to be magnolia sweet, was investigated by the cops for violation of Sunday law, and moral crusaders and straightfaced raiders, reformers and grandstanding politicians demanded: would you take your wife to this – and the wives answered yes from behind their fans, yes indeed – God forbid that we should enjoy it or enjoy anything for that matter

and wasn't she a woman?

The lady came from Gay Paree
The dress she wore was black
They called her Little Sparrow
Sang shivers down your back

from the circus to the bordello, the gutter to the rooftops, carving
stanzas of love loss and sorrow onto the backstreet lamps and
shadows, throwing prayers at the god of the street corner where
she sang her gospel of today tonight and maybe tomorrow, taking
yes or an answer, regretting nothing and refusing to lie back down

from the defended heart of a cast out kid whose best friends were
whores and who sang abandoned in the holy nooks and crannies
of the Pigalle living it loving it living in the pink

from her life to yours to mine to all under the sun, under the city
skyline - all who have ears to listen let them hear - not mere songs of
love or sadness but manifestos of womanhood carried on the wind,
the water, the air we breathe the fire that burns

and wasn't she a woman?

The lady came from Tennessee
Sang from town to town
Sang that song that hates to see
That evening sun go down

with a tent show voice, street fights, the swampy part of town, no
submission no falls no knockouts, heart full and a troubled mind,
mammy maid lady of the evening, spending her money free,
remembering the doorways of shacks living in the cracks, no
manners in the blues no tears in her song

with a voice like the rasp of a trumpet from block to block, just 9
years old with big brother banging the old guitar, singing of sadness
and freedom, answering back with the triumph of the wounded
and statelike like a queen from Memphis to the Promised Land and
back

with a pig's foot a bottle of beer and home made liquor from back
alley dives to on stage with a stab wound, ain't tryin' to please just
livin' the life of a millionaire while I can drink you under the table
and no this mama will not be black hungry and disgusted, love
women love men who's the rooster who's the hen

and wasn't she a woman?

The lady came from Baltimore
A gardenia in her hair
Sang the blues like front page news
Every song a prayer

who took pain by the hand and taught it to smile in a love song,
tore the moon from the dark high sky to breathe spirit into the
lullabies of the night she sang sweet lush and sedated

who prayed to leave her heavy load in the main line station in the
lost and never found with violent cousins and rapist neighbours for
whom the bell never tolled but who taught her to poison sweet
songs with memories a dime a dozen

who was a woman at sixteen, a twenty dollar girl in Harlem, hip kitty,
cleaner sticking an emotional substance in her arm, singing soft and
low soothing and tailed by the cops, pissing in the bushes in the
south 'cause she'd get shot using the white folks toilet, lady sang the
blues alright, lady sang about over-ripe strange fruit in the Southern
breeze

and wasn't she a woman?

The lady came from old Berlin
Marching feet in the street
Where ladies were saluted by uniformed men
And the truth was dark and discrete

where decent women were never seen without hat and gloves,
duty
and discipline, spotless shoes, hide your feelings, poodles and
marzipan, chocolate and lace and most of all a man

where within a breathing space of the mask was the noise, rumour,
cabaret, the avant garde, food shortages and the flu, nothing
taboo, topless, blood and blunder, opium and sex, dancing
wearing only a crooked smile and lipstick, dances of horror, twisted
tangos, leather boys leather girls in shiny boots cracking whips
between despair and ecstasy, swarming round seamy
kursurstendamm bars or places where the White Mouse nibbled and
the transvestite Always Faithful never was ever, and she left for
Hollywood...

where she shone as a spark, dressed as a man and kissed the girls
full on, stood before the lights and cameras and lusting eyes in
erotic indifference, insolent and twilight, careless and cruel, singing
like she couldn't be bothered to be in tune, bisexual - so women
could love her, top hat and tails, looking the devil in the eye and
spitting in his face, high fashion drag, moth and flame, leaving
bouquets of violets wherever she went, wherever she sang, letting
no one see her cry, the mask of comedy the mask of tragedy

The lady was raised in New York City,
Loved the city lights,
The rats and cats that blew their horns
And sang like a bird in flight

she swung to the beat from the alley to the street, nice and gentle
to the underground wonderground, running numbers for the mob as
a kid with wide eyes and a smile, for the midnight blue bordello
cellars hell or bust, the snake hip saxers wailing to the full moon on
the corner, illicit shuffle shoes, Lindy Hop and Suzy Q and watch her
dance the Kangaroo, a Harlem hoofer tapping on the sidewalk – the
peoples' eyes her spotlight her stage the whole of Upper Manhattan

she swung and sung – ditch digger and laundrywoman's daughter, reform school beatings, black and alone, floating, weaving leaving around over and under the brass and reeds and drums of the big band, taking the A Train from Sugar Hill to Harlem, endlessly shy but the beat in her bones egged her on to scat jazz like no-one before – laugh, rasp, heydoobadoo, wahboooo, baby, slap, click, slick, hah, shum shadaddy daddy satin brass

she swung away her shyness, stood grand in front of the band, the majestic Mama of nothin' but the blues but from the city not from Dixie, woman as elegance, woman as flow, woman as cool, fingers snap, feet tap, woman as whatever she says she is and not what the others say, now take it from the top...

The lady came from North Carolina
Looking for a new dawn, a new day,
Following music in the air
And hitting against the usual rocks on the way

singing out – the black girl at the bar and grill where they pay more for songs than just piano, earning dollars to break the chains that rattle and tighten every time she crosses the road, outrage and genius, excellent anger, vocalizing the power and glory of a woman's anguish that looked you in the eye as any woman's blues rolled along like the train that took you far away from home

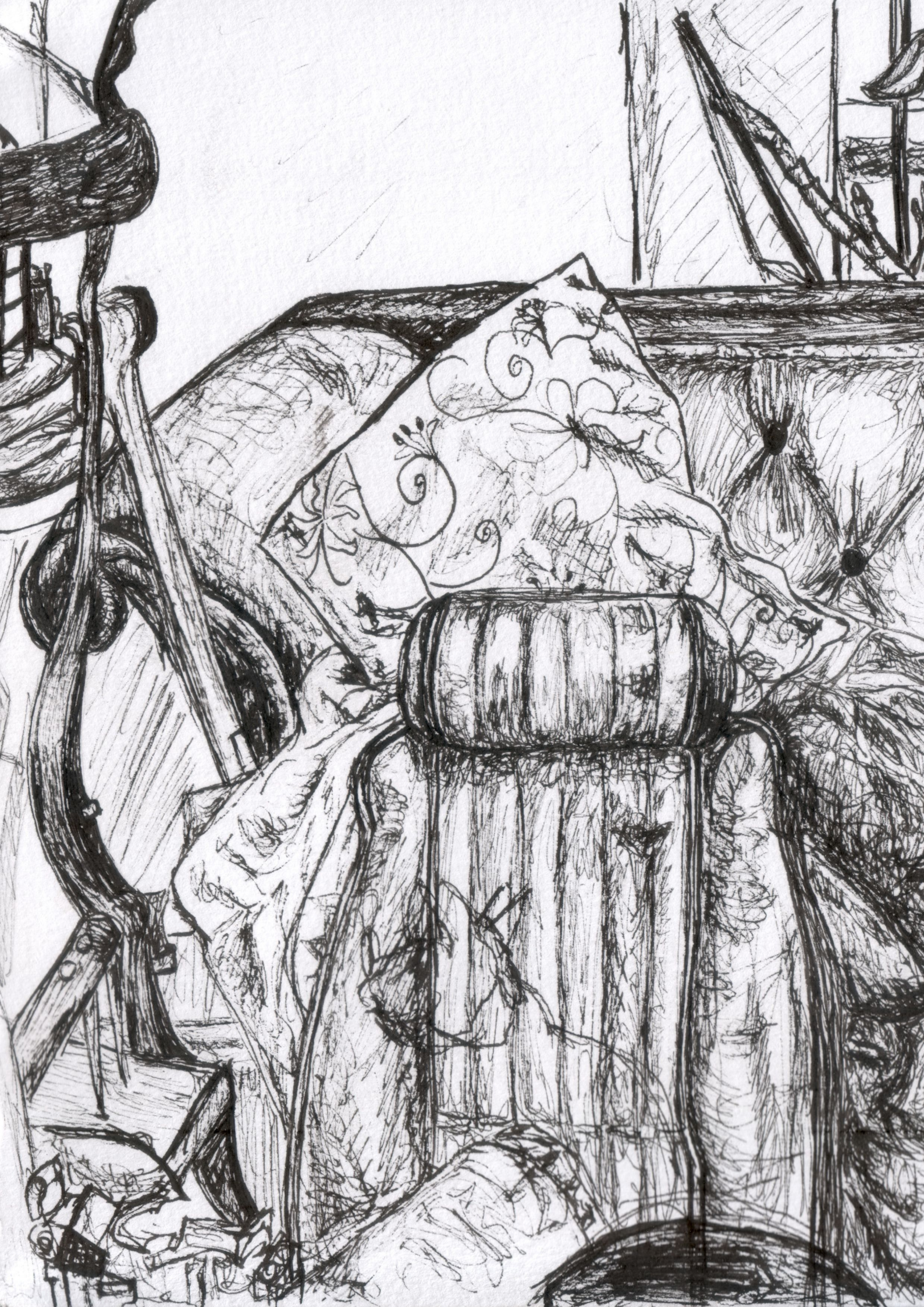
singing out at being boycotted, cheated, mistreated, bruised used and abused, singing the black and blue blues for Mama while he's off with another girl hanging on his arm like a petal soon to be crushed, singing out at the hound dogs on her trail sniffing out words from the rooftops, jumping over the moon, how sweet it would be to find she could fly and how it would feel to be free like a dragonfly out in the sun

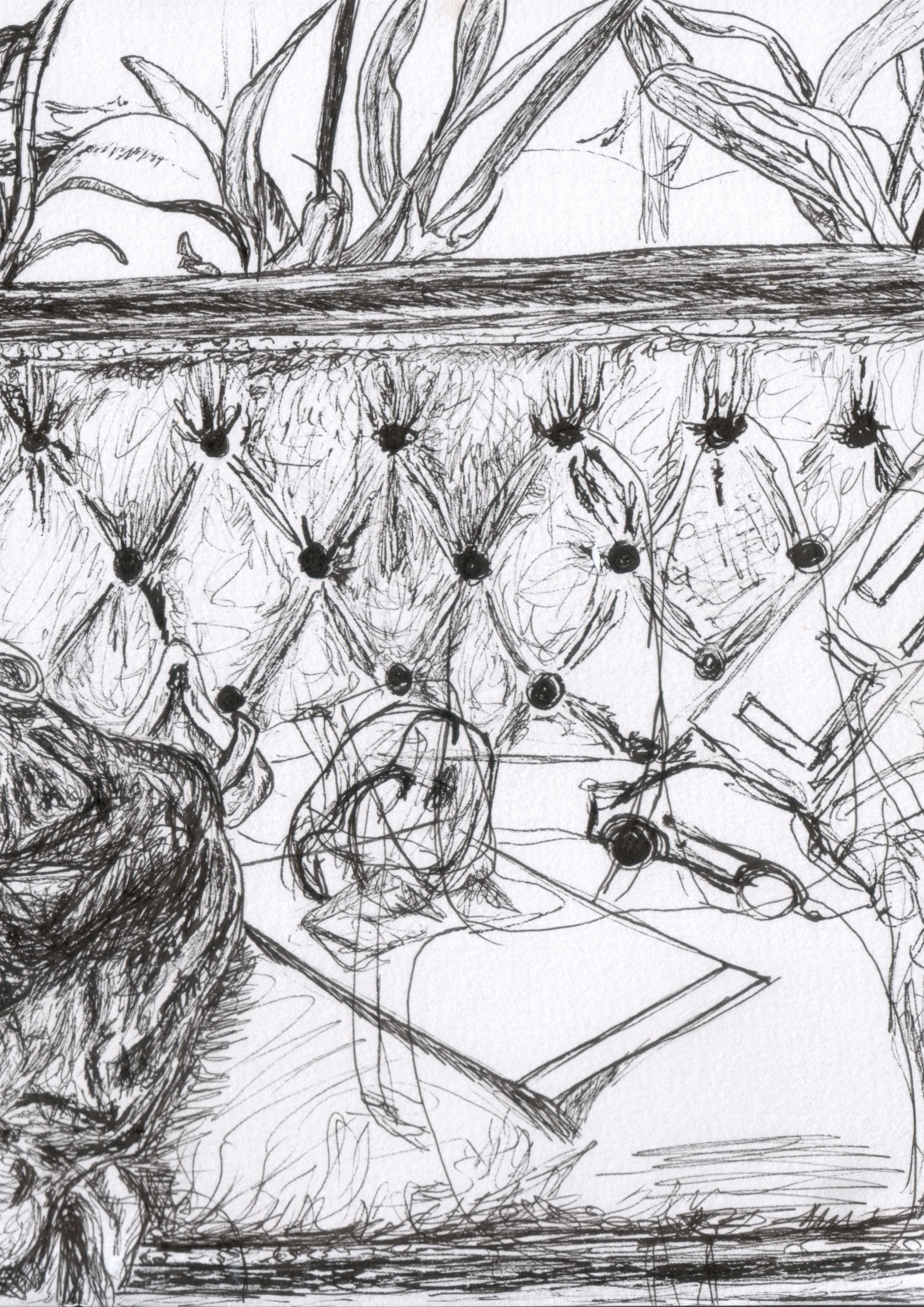
singing out for civil rights, singing as exorcism, Bach and the blues, singing for Medgar Evers and the church bombing in Mississippi goddamn, singing and praying for peace in the pain, a tremulous heart and voice in a country full of lies and violence, don't belong here don't belong there, no subtext all goddarned text and what the hell, swindled singer, neighbour of Malcolm X, sitting elegant straight-backed on the piano stool with them big earrings swaying to the beat, powerful from low to high take me to deep inside,

take me to feeling good,
take me where trust has not vanished into tainted air,
take me to the universe for ever and ever,
take me to the water and way back home
and if anybody ask you who sang this song
tell them lazy cotton pickers swaying to the Backlash Blues
from London town to Mississippi
Paris to a pig's foot –
tell them a crazy thing in dollar bills
dancing the night away singing I Don't Care,
singing to ease a troubled mind,
singing to the dance of life,
singing to take the fight where it thinks it can hide,
singing because it can't hide
won't hide
and will never hide
while it has breath to sing
singing to the moon above
singing for anyone who has ears to hear –
let them hear...

and weren't they all women









Lockdown - Gabi Marcellus-Temple

I watch the sky everyday,
Silvery sliver, inter-house
A stripe, no longer stripped
Collapses into moss-piled granite

It's warm in here
And baby, it's cold outside
Wet on the step in the rain
Shouting in the shops, one at a time
Your mask's on wrong, you went the wrong way
Shouldn't have touched that thing
Felt its delicate crackle under numbed fingertips

It's easier to call now
I don't have to lean against the walls
Trying to find a perch to ease the pain
Heart thudding, eyes swimming
Hyperventilating over your love

You've never been worth it
And now I've got the perfect excuse not to go
Not to come when you call
The excuse to sit and watch the sky
Elaborating pinkbluegrey
The westerly wind bears no good

But in here it's warm
And I can call you if I need to
Watch your face dip in and out of signal
Look round your kitchen, see your cat.
Miss you like I've never missed you before

Crazy quarantine

We've been here before
We know the texture of these walls
Our very first time was so very long ago
Well known our route along these halls

It's nothing new
To creep in and out of bed
No novelty, no thrill
When it's always like that in your head

And now you're all so scared
In case you start to wheeze
When we could never breathe
Hearts torn by the slightest breeze

We know all the delivery numbers
Now I've told you them all
How we stay alive
And ignore your every call

We never thought you could learn from us
From our soft and newfound skills
We hold each other in the dark
Each as strong as the other wills

обручальное кольцо

obruchal'noye kol'tso

Copper

Copper leads straight to the heart
Venusian conduct
Electrical heat slivering my veins
Straight to the heart
Which is consumed

Silver

It shines so bright on the outside
Even from beneath the waves
A bruise wouldn't show up beside it
Those screams were silenced
By a blindfold in the dark

Gold

Solid enough is gold, although
Still soft enough to bear the marks
Resilient through conductivity
A gleaming trace through darkest earth
Sown together by these two

SUNFLOWER SEEDS - Justin Daw

May I first of all thank my parents, my family, and all the very good friends I have in this life. For I was born in the United Kingdom (the British Isles) and I was very gracious to welcome all friends to the sacred island, being as it is, what it is, a collection in parts, of many regions, religions, cultures, and diverse dialects. In Oscar BAFTA.

"May somebody please explain to me so as I may say to my wife why my son died in a foreign field over somebody else's war."

"It was my fault."

"How so my bloody friend."

"When he was a young man I traded a Predator Tank [Warhammer 40k] for a [Marine Band] harmonica."

"Why."

"Ms. He wanted the tank, I wanted the harmonica."

"I was in the Navy."

"Indeed. He told me that by joining a tank regiment he knew he only had a twenty-percent chance of survival should it come down to it. Eastern Europe and all that."

"My son."

"My own father, over nineteen years, told me four, maybe five times he had between a five and a ten percent chance of survival."

"What did he leave you with."

"A shaving towel, a Sony Walkman radio, a razor (dual bladed), and a morphine cup."

"So what do I say to my wife?"

"My father also left me his wife, my mother, my brothers, the house, and the grandchildren."

"So what did my son say."

"Aluminium sidings. He said nothing that day. He was dead. Yet I remember speaking to him before then and he told me a story."

"What did he say."

1st airborne 2nd recon

Patrol

"Like they say in America, it is not what America can do for you, it is what you can do for America. In sidings. We split it two ways. One gets the inside of the house the other gets the outside of the house."

Lamda.

Patriots as we are. We laughed that day. Am I allowed to tell jokes at a funeral.

Ne fume pas. It depends what joke it is.

Mic key m o u s e

I know you are going to send some silly twat to my funeral one day yet the only thing I was worried about that day when I suddenly appeared in my cadet's uniform was what my Mum was going to say. And my Dad of course. Yet to be honest I was shitting myself that day, they told me the food was good and showed me the menu (pizza, cheeseburger) yet like they say, if you want monkeys and feed them peanuts, yet in order to maintain protein and calorific intake and all that, maybe sunflower seeds, I know I've got no way of explaining to my parents why I signed on the dotted line, yet I realised they were 007 [not only killing the parents to be they were killing children] so I've heard that when you get shot your body convulses goes into shock and you throw up and ejaculate and shit your pants so I ate the sunflower seeds so they could see it another way a happy day

Report. CO. That day. In French, à fume pas. We waited patiently at the end of the service. And then the daughter approached. My colleague said, "I am here on behalf of the NHS". They held hands in the Christian way for a moment and chatted. She was the one, a single parent on working tax credit, whose job it was to get on a bus turn-up at work at 6.30am clean and wash the bodies that day, normally five or six, dress them in linen, for the porter's bar in last orders. She told me that after they were washed and dressed she kissed them on the forehead. She spoke to me in fido bido and said she thought she was the angel of death. Of course she was only allowed to turn up to five or six funerals and then the manager may say you are too attached to your patients. I think they may have a rota system. Course, we cheated and turned up at a few nursing homes as well, often with the children so they could see them dancing, in case their own children were away. Another day, when out of matron's way, we visited him in hospital, he had requested new trousers in an oxygen tank (which had no calibration on it so he didn't know when the tank was empty and had to press the bell sometimes at night; sunglasses) which she bought for him that day, signed, sealed, delivered. George said he was comfortable, and mentioned something about there being money in his effects in the nursing home, and he needed the toilet shortly, a bit like Bumpy when I pressed

the button on his behalf and then the second time he pressed the button so I had to explain to the nurse (HCA) that perhaps she didn't notice the full catheter bag, so at the end of visiting hours we spoke to the staff and said that he needed the toilet and left. We received the telephone call approximately four hours later. A bit like when I asked a friend to ask a friend what tunes he would like to be played at his funeral before his condition worsened to strokes and paralysis. He was buried on my birthday such a friend that he is, buried on my birthday so in time party wake.

Telex|

Halo. Did you call me or did I call you.

Y-E-S. Staff. Do you need a cleaner.

Windows, doors, French polishing. Does your bath have a handle.

It is a walk in shower. The combat engineer said he's sick of sending people to their death

Swimming pools. Winchester Rifles. What are the rules of engagement under NATO

Heads, shoulders, knees and toes

Knees and toes. Uranium depleted ammunition. They just shot a man, a woman, and a child in front of me. Am I allowed to return fire.

No

We are not married

D-company left flank, engage

NATO breaker break

By your command officer

With me

Justin

.....

Dispachio [Gazpacho] Soup

Will they mention me in dispatches telegram field

There was this one time, abroad, I was asleep. The special forces were using non-standard guns and non-standard ammunition. So I woke up instantaneously and killed three in friendly fire

What happened to the other two

XXO









A little set of stacked haikus for you: - Tia Meraki

Adrenaline surge
Nosedive, held under and spun
Break the surface, breathe

Battered by storm swell
We feel alive, pumping hearts
Do what hearts do best

Midwinter rolls, turns,
Dashes its strength onto shore
Nods its head to spring

We had caught

A strange wild creature in our nets.

It turned and looked at us, a sly look from its grey eyes.

We let it go.

It turned back to face the ocean. As it gave a flip of its tail and began to swim away, I called out, “hold on, wait!”. I jumped in and swam after it, to see what kind of life it had, to live that life with it, or not. Far out at sea.

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Interim
by Lea May

I remember when you held me
In the interim that day
You told me I was always whole
Despite what my mind told me
You told me that you swam
In the depths
And that you could see it in me
You wrapped me up
And invited me in
For the shallows
Weren't for
You and Me

You told me
They would never understand
But I'd make peace with it
If I surrendered
To my own
A love so calm and deep awaits me,
You said
But fear could no longer be our passenger

Many nights alone we
Both spent
Crying rivers
In our separate beds
But there would be peace and solace
In the interim
As long as you'd be willing to let me in

But times changed and moments passed
You felt the cold in your bones
And I felt dishonesty corrupt my soul
You cocooned
And I patiently waited
For you to bloom once again

I cast a dark shadow
Over myself too
A veil so light
With the intention to buffer
And we didn't notice
Before it was too late

Out into the shallows
We both recklessly swam
As if we had no prior knowledge
Of the beauty within
We cast dark magic
Without thought
Or honour
And gave away
The last of our light

We both came
To many bridges
Always finding a way
Under or over
Never through,
At least not fully

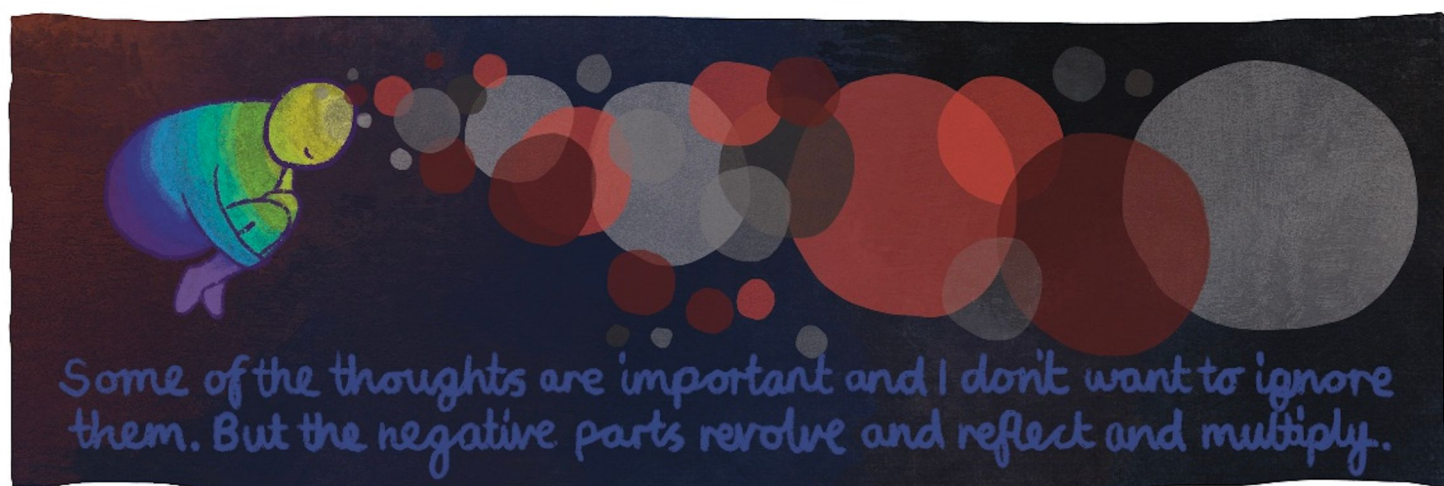
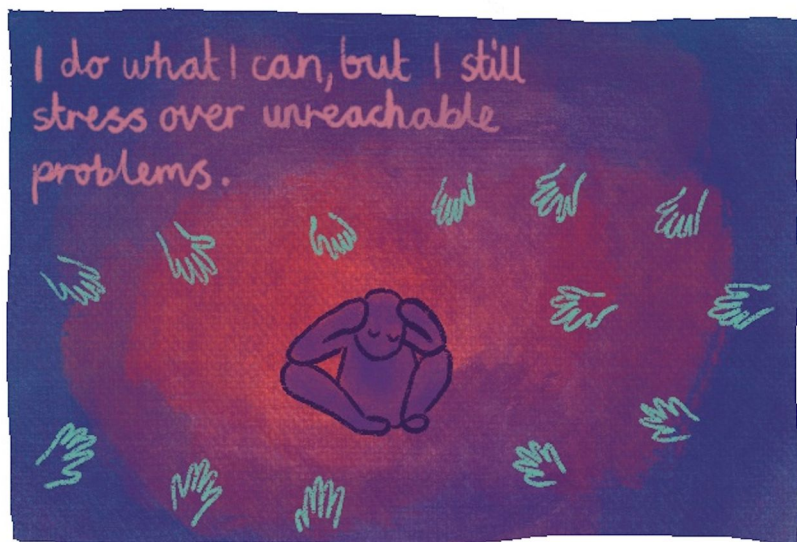
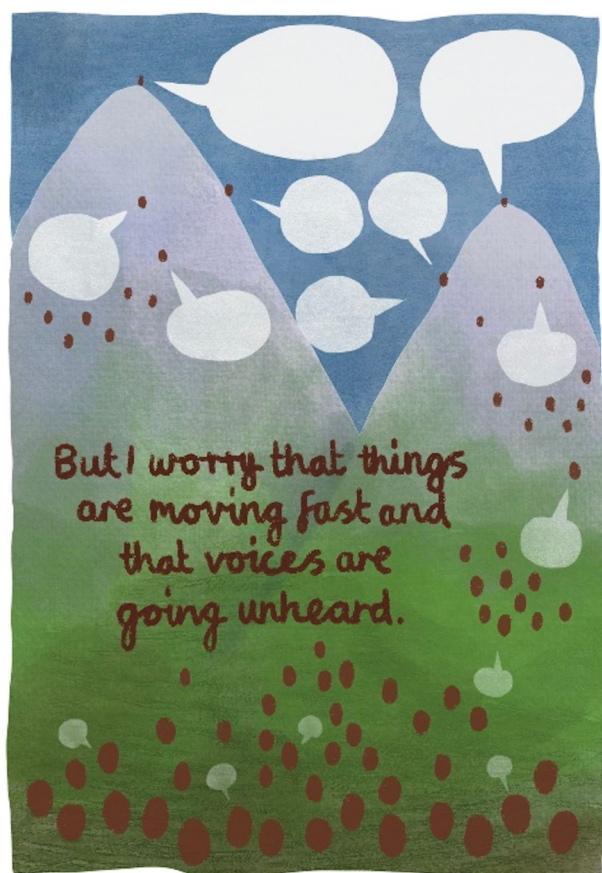
We lost our way
And talked to people
That didn't understand us
Our screams choked
In the shallows
The ones around us
Mocked our depth
But still
We tried hard to fit in
Because
Wasn't that all we had left?

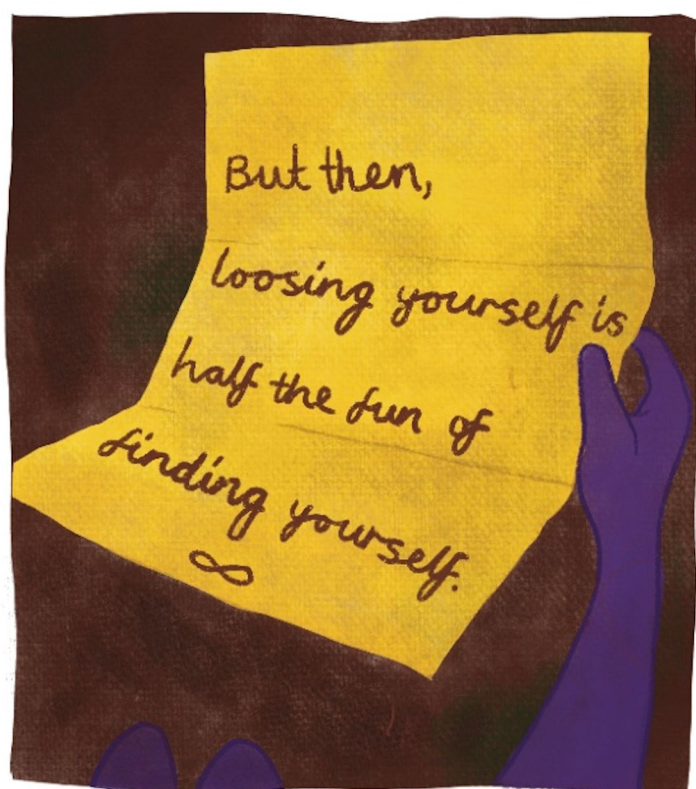
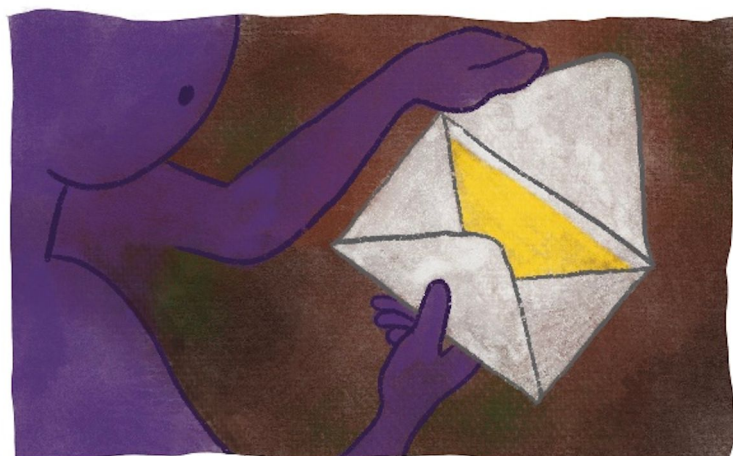
We cursed and cried
But still no one heard
So we became numb
So as not to awaken
Our Inner.

But how long, sister
Shall we keep this up?
This slow, soul dying facade?
This digestible, dishonest
Half life

How long until we meet in the middle
Cast away
The dark reds and the light blues
And I meet you again
In the interim

And we remember
That not only are we whole
But that is, of course
Where we are loved
Most of all





My Familiar. - Fierce Sister

You are My old familiar, my eyes and ears to the world.
I remember when we stole the night, kept it for ourselves,
whispering and laughing, trying to contain outbursts under our
breath.

Our eyes crease and cry together.
We sometimes roar until our heads ache,
then make love with soft kisses and salt tears,
like if we were to fall apart now,

Our lives would just cease.

Sometimes, our conversations go so deep,
we sit shocked into silence for hours,
contemplating each others thoughts on existence
(then we'll watch 'friends' and laugh until we forget
ourselves, ignorantly slipping back into bliss).

We travel worlds on the sofa of our beach cottage.
We fight dragons and play dice games.
We run through cupboards, climb mountains with hobbits and
wave wands with wizards.
We drink until 3 am, then bleary eyed, run up to the ocean under
the stars.

Once we even watched the meteors race the skies on
top of the hill you shivering and laughing,
me wide eyed like a child at a circus.

We used to make music every week,
singing and pounding the air,
we would get paid to have fun, then come home, drink tea and
complain about our mundane lives- now we make music in
different, silent ways, just for ourselves, Penniless but happy, as the
history books always tell us artists truly live.

Sometimes we do nothing but sit in the mess that we make, I make,
with nothing but the dog and the film and the rats in the roof,
hiding under duvet covers, not even talking, and that too is
enough. Sometimes we talk just in text, and yet somehow, we still
connect...

The kitchens' a mess, the dog is asleep,
you're making music and I'm drinking wine,
writing you out of my head,
smiling only to myself,

feeling inspired by our simplicity, because with you it IS

simple It's nothing more than poetic
And that is all I ever wanted from Love,
a beautifully simplistic poem that someday I could tell
the world and leave on a napkin,
pinned to a wall in a small restaurant we both love in Europe.

When we go back,
to dance to old legends and ride theme park coasters,
I shall take my thoughts with me and do exactly that,
whilst you photograph another memory for us to keep.

With you it's always been a poem,

my old familiar,

with words I dreamt I'd say as an awkward teen about love,
learnt in quirky movies;

We are the lucky ones, you and I...





Winter-Spring

by Lucia Daramus

It snows
as after holidays
with snails
the whole world is a shell
you can feel the smell of
resurrection in the grave.
It snows
lambs - ramping as after a Sardonic dream
within the swarming of the astral rain -
kneel before the holy easter.
It snows
with entries in Jerusalem
with palm-tree branches
thorny crown of blood .
a metaphysical corner
takes shape in me
the snow becomes one flesh with the rain
like a transcendental kiss.
on the shrine the rain is to break
It snows
with crucifixion
it is winter-spring...
and - I - look out of the sky window
at - my - friend eternity ...eternity...
per aspera ad astra!
.....and.....behind us only fragile tearing souls.

The Light

by Lucia Daramus

I saw like Daniel I saw
the open heavens
angels coming down and climbing up
tongues of light sliding
on Hanukkah day
onto the people of Israel.

I saw, I saw, I saw....
the light in the Temple
the Menorah alight
eight days without oil
I saw Anthiohus defeated

I saw like Daniel I saw
the fight of Israel
children and mothers dying
but the light overcame
in heaven and on earth
Lo V'hail V'lo V'koah ki
Im B'ruhi

(neither force, nor power, but the spirit overcomes)

The second essence (micro-poems)

by Lucia Daramus

*

The waiting with the hands in a dream with
fingers the city with yellow stars in your eyes
the overturned sky under horses'
hooves...flying a moon floating from the
right to the left

and...between our worlds a beating mind

*

It's fying day of spring
over the Mount Fuji
flowers alive on fields

*

A sunny day near Fuji
blossom cherry and birds singing
under melting sky

*

Alive spring
the hot already in the sun
the moon above snowdrops

*

try to plant
as your soul wants
a little wield quince tree

*

In this night
behind sleep's silence
singing a bluebird on a star.

*

two birds- friends dream
on an apricot tree's branch
the happiness of peace angels
smiles to faith.

The memory of silence

to Paul Celan

by Lucia Daramus

I know a guardian of the memory
he writes and writes about your hair Marguerite he
writes and writes about your skin Shulamith your
killer, eyes...blue eyes ...the master of the death forever
is forgotten in the sea of oblivion yes, forgotten in life,
forgotten in gods' mind. your hair, Margarite, your
hair

your skin, Shulamith, your skin
sung by the green of the stars,
by the poems of the famous poets -
your lips, Margarete, your lips
your steps, Shulamith, your steps
painted in the memory of time.

No, no, no...you are no longer prisoners in the
pain and the destructive cry of humans! Black
milk of daybreak you drink -
under the flight of death, of death
you'll rise then in smoke to the sky

as shy flowers, birds beat under the night
silence, silence, the silence of your word in
our unpredictable world

stillness, stillness, stillness of your song in
our lifelong leap

The dance of our nights through time
mirrors in the sinister air without you
struggling in historical defiance
the innocence of your face
shines on the memory of silence...

– life long kiss with death! –

Nest Without Being

by Lucia Daramus

John, take off your mind
take off your soul
take off your pain chain
and wash your memory cells
John, don't cry, don't cry
to the memory of Adam
Adam of the yesterday , Adam of the today just
take off your soul
emerge in a light pool.
You are not lonely in your solitude
Do you see? the light is so
heavy, is so clear, and so
opaque, and so poor without wealth
the light has no crown,
has no diamonds, has no crystals and gold and
she has no pain, no, no pain...paiiiinnnn you are
not lonely in your solitude
no, don't build the cemeteries chains for people the
cemeteries are built of pain threads
John, for us, for man
we need a word
only a word – LIGHT
to live in this word
and to reject the pain of the fact of being born yourself
again, and again, and again –
we were ourselves through Adam
and only the shadow of our – To Be –
to fly in nothingness
like a nest without being...
.....a nest without being
in a cage , a cage only with yourself
but not lonely

Artist statement of non-procrastination - Becki Viner

This is a piece of work concerned with the flip side of international relations.

By employing a postmodern approach to the legends we love expressing the sentiments of the Brothers Grimm in their attempts to calm the situation as they moved from court to court collecting information from the little birds and disseminating the intel subversively to get their bread.

The transcript below is a complex work of traditional techniques combined with modern materials to show the fine points of narrative we don't see in the tapestry.

Surrounded by deceptions, the princess changed gears and threw caution to the winds, just get the words out, follow your training, she thought.


Resistance is never futile. Eyes front.

Focal points shifted within the council.

As the princess made her escape, hair flowing in the wind as her oppressors closed in, cornering like she was on rails, the sapphire blue Porsche took a hard right and she flies off into a sky that's a blaze only lovers can see.

Professional Practice Flow + Diagrams

How can I showcase my art as an unknown overly contemporary Mature Art Student Post COVID? with complex pre-industry training?

as the cupboard under the stairs was already full of String Theory 

Bright
Luminous
String Theory,

I went my own way as I used my own unique perspective to marry classical training with Post Modern Thought.



↑ + 11
The brightness

Headphones moments upstairs/ downstairs

laced

trailer

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

4th year

5th year

6th year

7th year

8th year

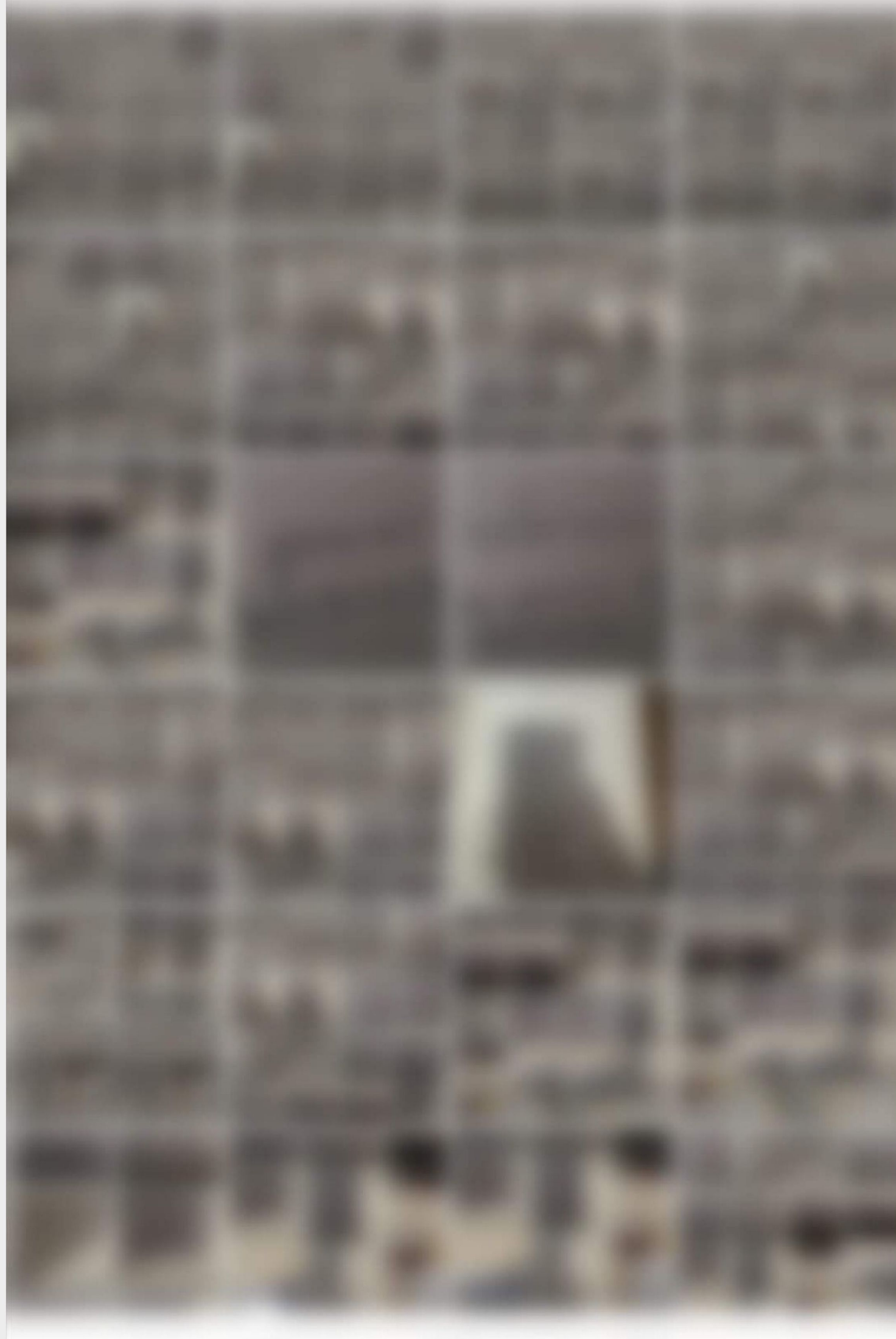
9th year

10th year

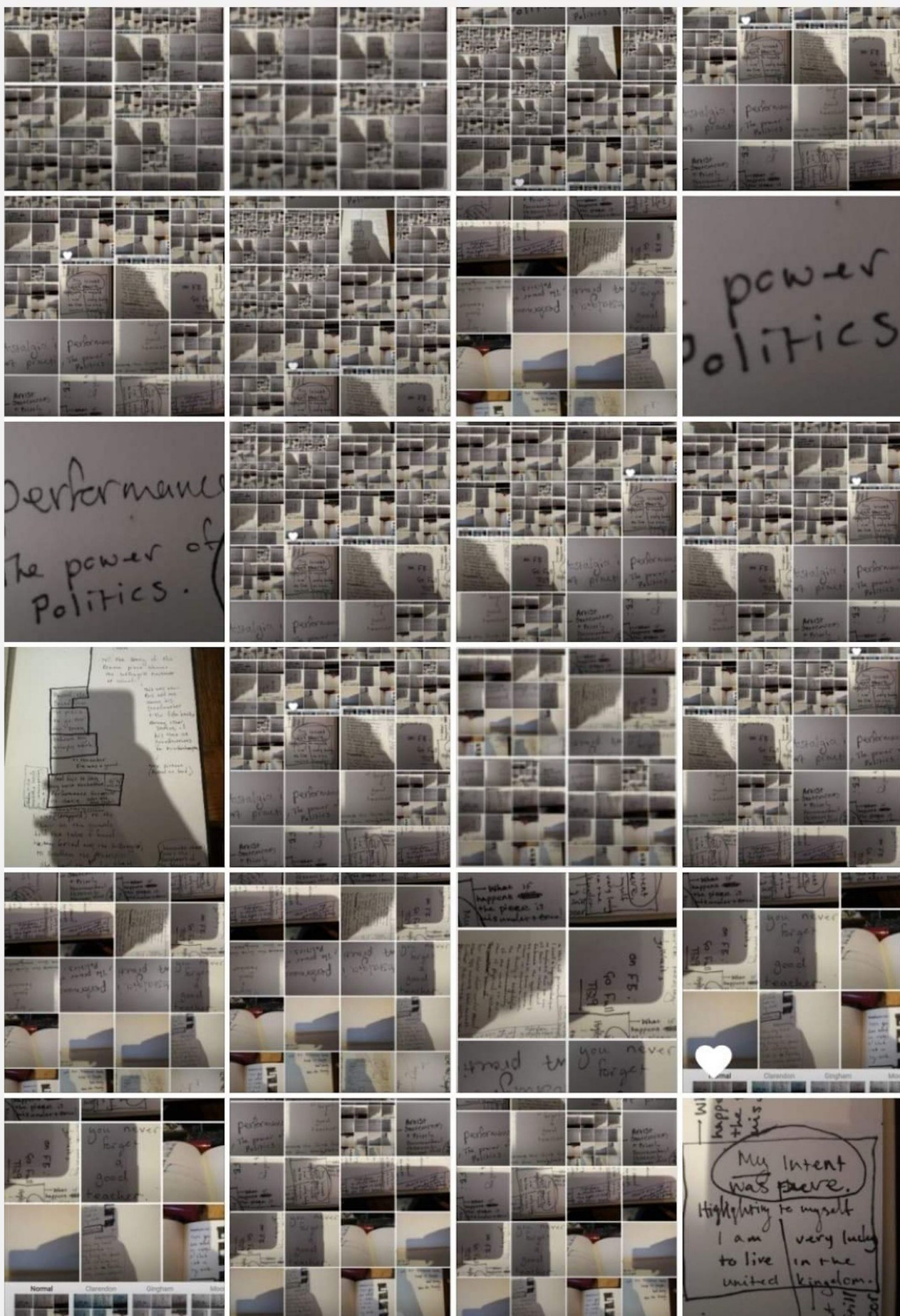
Waiting the words down for other
The reason Editors are so
vital to the process is that
help to slow the flow
check for blind spots
in larger pieces of
work that might
have missed a
marvelous opportunity
for growth of the
narratives, enable
an understanding of
Type through professional
international exchanges.

who LOVES the Messages
from the words

Princess
Dubai
Surrounded by deception
The princess therapy
Caution to the
wonder
Just the
Words off
Resistance
The princess therapy
Caution to the
wonder
Just the
Words off
Resistance
The princess therapy
Caution to the
wonder
Just the
Words off
Resistance



← All photos (All) ▼



13:31



Becki Viner

Active now



Is that one meant to be blurred?

The second one looks like a screen shot. Do you want to trim off the writing?

Yes, in abstracting the screenshot to show parallels to the targeting software used post party by the international military complex

Ok cool. So I'll send those three images now

The unveiled image shows the reality that's its the women holding shit down

Ok

If you want another page filled we could screenshot this conversation to to stick on the wall xxxxx



Aa



Stranger - Veronica Aaronson

My given name is so long, writing it
walks my wrist over a never-ending landscape
valleys, hills, roundabouts, bridges.
When I leave home, I dump a few syllables.

Nothing can slow me now. I'm at the front
of every queue. The winner of every race.

My mother can't keep up. She chants
my baptismal name like a mantra, hoping
I'll change my mind. She won't acknowledge
the new me, keeps a calf close
to the house to fatten on my return.

As my body shrinks and slows
and time loses its urgency, I glue back
the discarded sounds, but
I'm too late.

The calves have long gone.
Mother still mummurs my name,
all syllables intact, but can't remember why.

"Do I know you?" she asks
as she looks me in the eye.

Email from Cambridge (Caring for my Mum) - Helen Billingshurst

It was mainly grey today.

I cut my mum's hair, cooked loads of food to put in her freezer and went shopping.

The sun came out at 5 pm, so I walked to the chalk pit and then up Lime Kiln Hill.

Along the secret path that overlooks my old playing field and watched the sun go down:

an orange ball over the city

and onto the narrow road that runs down the other side of the hill
past the dogging place.

Here, I become Hare,

Fox,

then Muntjac Deer

running on the narrow road where there is no path and people drive so fast
running on the narrow road between the cars

hiding in the hedge when cars come

lights glaring

horns beeping

running for my life at dusk

and then

through the gap

in the hedge

down the hill

at the side of the field.

There, I turned back into a human.

Gathering more mud on my shoes with each step:

heavy legs, feet of clay,

back onto Worts Causeway.

Driving home tomorrow.

Cambridge Swan Song (Following the River Cam west)

Head north
from chalk hill,
Nine Wells to
Lamas Land, Sheep Fen
(here a childhood
recollection:
a hot day,
ice cream, wasps,
Newnam public paddling pool).

Turn left:
a path through Paradise
Fen,
green and shady,
pale bodies swam,
my own
reflection
alongside, inside
languid and lazy Cam.

And on:
left again,
past Marlowe Road,
(a terracotta head of Pan, lips half-pursed,
looks South)

at Riverside Walk,
head west
through nostalgic meadows
(Mother do you think they'll drop the bomb?)
towards Granchester
dark disturber of poets
(hush now)
picnickers dream in hazy heat torpor
(you crazy diamond)
under dangling willows
kissing the cool water

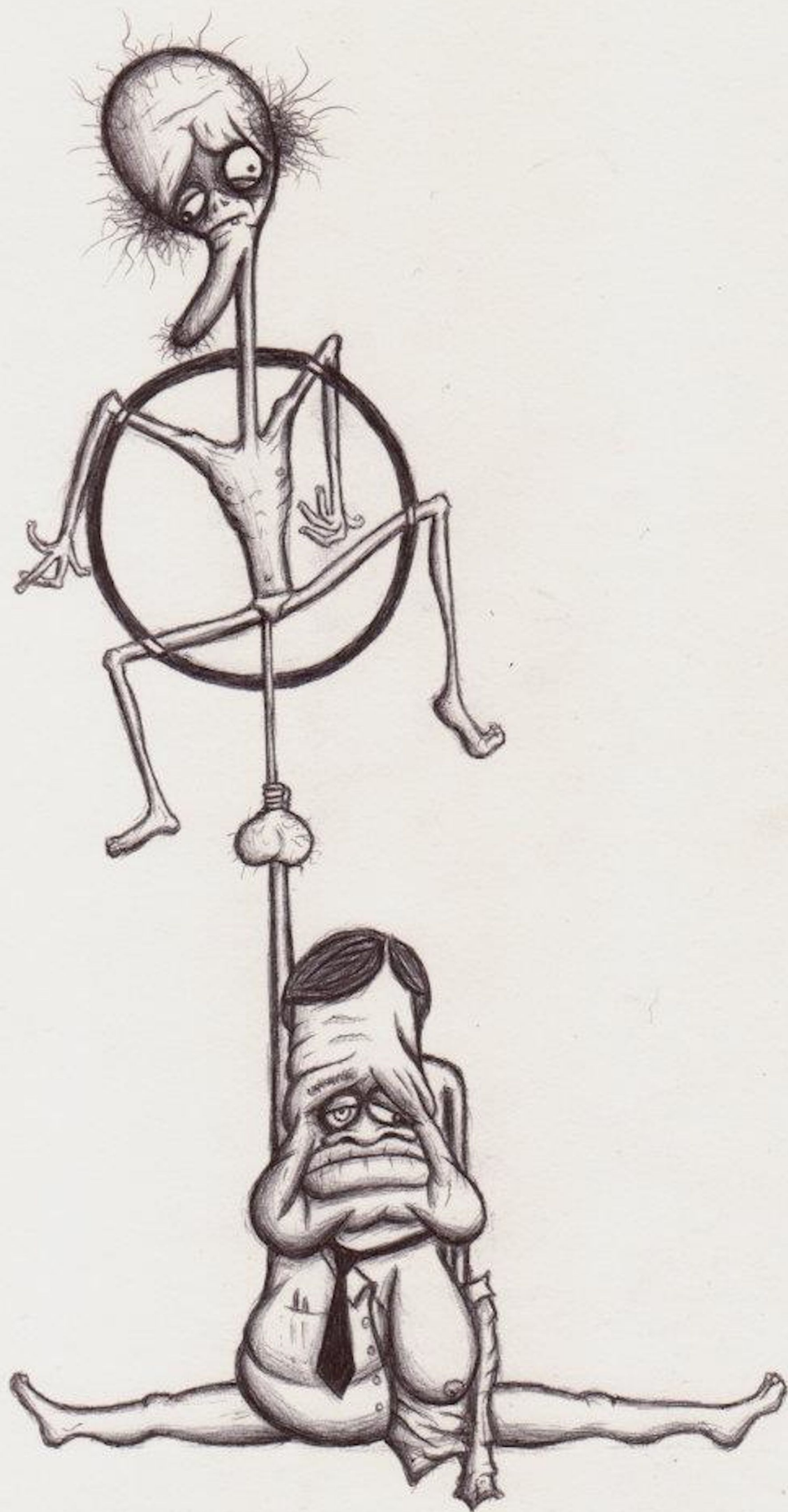
Ted sries
for Sylvia
stained and mournful,
muddied at the bottom of the Brook
they flit towards
honey and the stopped clock
and then

are born further West
(Past a track to Haslingfield,
Frog End
where once my friend
did not watch his friend
get wed)

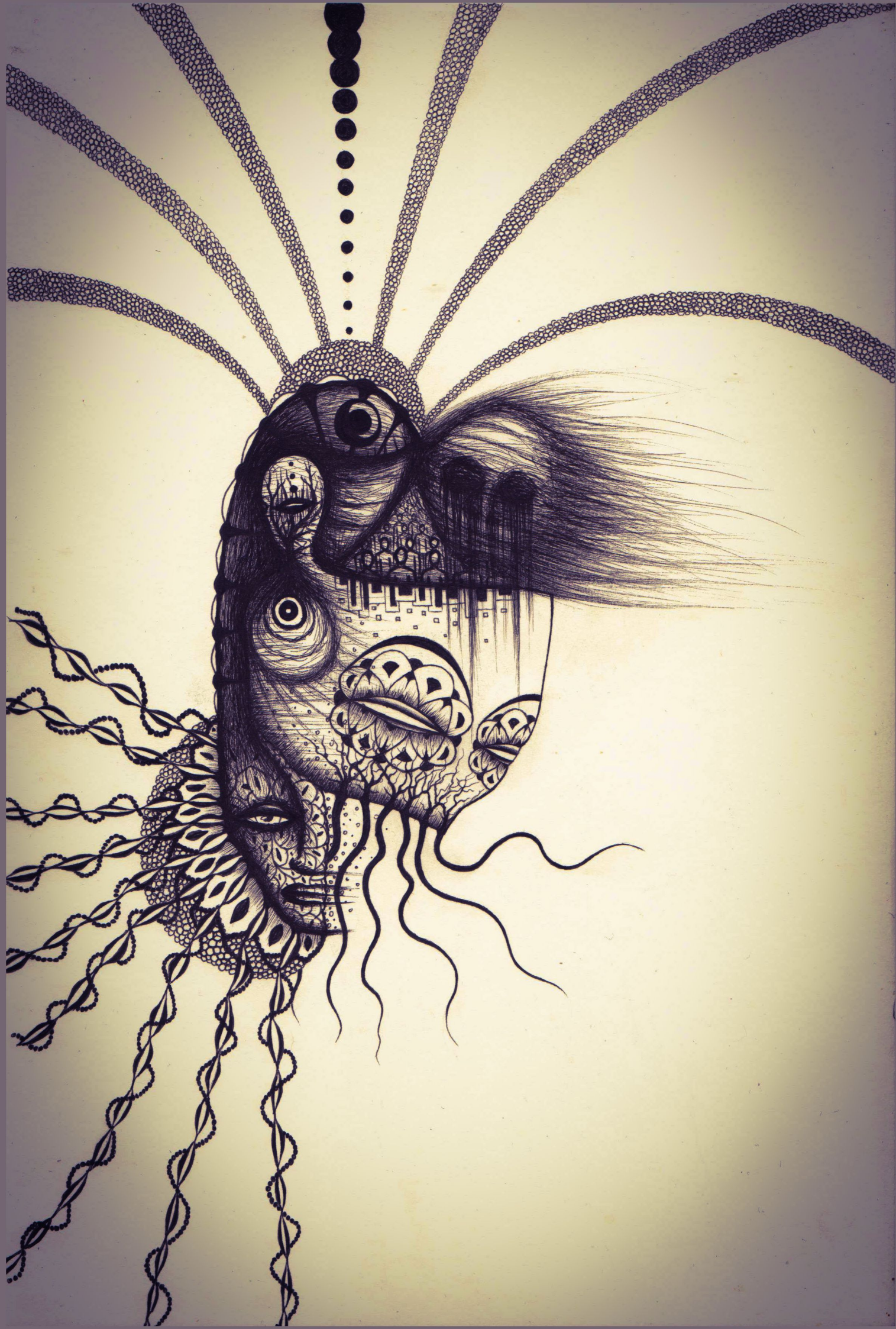
on to Byron's Pool
by weir,
swan and
rush
of traffic:
M11, A10

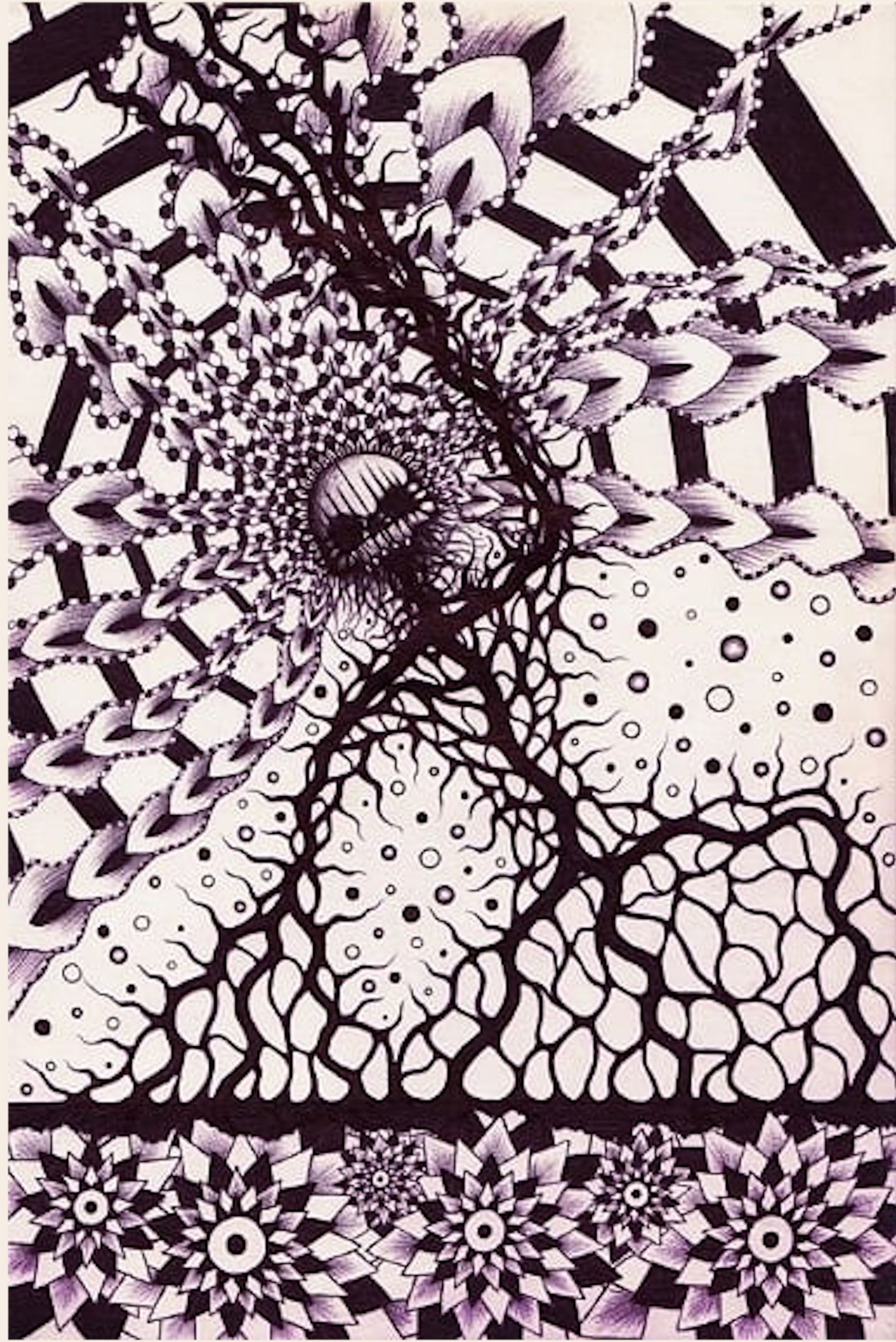
Ascending roar
of car
reminding us
that Paradise is lost,
the pointless war is never won,
the grim and grinding day
of toil and futile work
is never done.













Lockdown – Photo-opportunities – Ruth Butler

Nowadays

they don't make you sign for parcels,
and a face in a half-open window
saying "leave it there," won't do -
No, they have to take a **photo** of you
beside your open door.

The photo says

"yes I delivered it, that's her -
beside that cracked, scratched red-painted door -
mask, tangled hair, pyjamas? Maybe.
Startled eyes...

No..ooo - that's not me.

So now,
on dates, marked in my diary,
I get up quickly, dress, brush my hair.
I'm poised and ready for
deliveries,

dressed to be seen...
stylish, colours bright, as I like them to be,
these, are my photo-opportunities.

I wish I had a really handsome
door... standing beside me.

Lock-down Weekends

Ah, the weekend comes round again,
the one night each week of action and decisions -
that's *Monday night*, when I put out the wheelie bin.
The week begins Tuesday, mid-day,
when I take the bin back in.

Weekend excitement, choices to be made...
which bin to wheel out, green, or black?
I consult the list the council sent
(a hallowed ritual, really I know),
then, with a new black plastic bag
I scour the premises. Could more go?
Should it? Or shouldn't it?
- *No, I think I'll keep that...*

I wheel the bin out under the dark sky,
retire satisfied, settle down, relax,
choose a bottle, fill a glass
as you do, when the weekend arrives.
Tomorrow the new week starts.

.

Lock-Down. Time... Seeping Away

There is a pattern
to these days and weeks:

the daily shower, combing wet hair, cleaning teeth,
last night's clothes picked off the chair,
or a change. Whatever, just to please myself...
Choices - do the colours blend?

or does the mirror... seem to groan.
Weekly bath ritual, warm steam, shampoo,
a cup of tea. a book to read,
a final biting-hot quick shower,
sorting (those) last tangles out

with an afro comb.
Laundry: weekly - when it's due -
But now, well into Winter's new lock-down,
filling the washing machine, I'm surprised to find
that time has seeped away, unseen,
as the wash this week will be...
a fourteen-knicker-wash -
has it really been that long?
I'm well owed a luxury bath bonanza,
forget the tea, I'll treat myself
to something sweet and strong -

I run the tap, pour the bath cream,
watch bubbles foam, steep in the steam...
add candle flicker to this room's dim winter light,
wallow in deep hot silky water,
my hair floats and swirls like seaweed...
I re-fill my clear-plastic bathroom-tumbler,
with another G and T,
give in to time...galloping past me,
lie back and dream...

My name is Melissa Darling and this poem
is dedicated to my son who I'm estranged
from but who I love very much.

Dear Son

It was you in your review
I couldn't quite believe
We froze in time
You moved and winced
Your eyes full of anger
To realise it was me
Biting your hand
And averting your gaze
Your backseat passenger turned
Her startled gaze she turned to you
Moving your hand to the wheel
You drove ahead lost to me again
I love you
I'm sorry
Forgive me
Thank you

