



elementia

Cover Artist
Michelle Willard

“to all the children
to whom we
entrust the future”

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issue 9

Once upon a time...

The gem did spawn of evil's fire
The gem shall be his portal
He comes to claim; our time is dire
The end of all things mortal
His reign of evil, he did conspire
The gem shall be his portal.

When darkness falls, and pain is all
Darkness he shall leave behind
Only fools will fight (brawl)
Evil has consumed his mind
When right is wrong, and wrong is right.
A blood oath, to him, we bind
When he does come, never again shall there be light
The darkness is his guide,
The gem shall be his portal.

Breanna Swart

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essay

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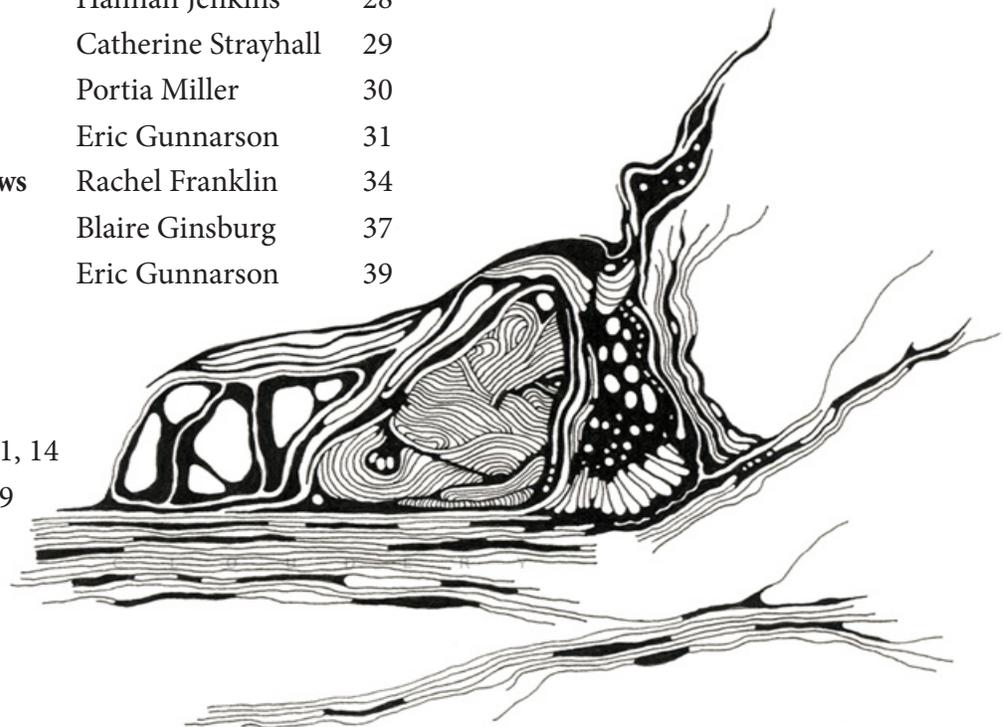
quoteworthy

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contents

“A hero is someone we hold in our hearts as a role model, an image of what we want to be. Heroes are everywhere, from the ones we do not know exist to the others who are well known. They change our society and make it a better place for us to live and grow. When I think of a hero, there is one person that immediately enters my mind. Uncle Felix, the oldest uncle in my family. He has accomplished much educationally and in his career even though he grew up in a poor family. Uncle Felix has made and continues to make great sacrifices in order to enhance the lives of family, friends and many others. He has a strong faith in his beliefs that inspires others. In my mind, he is a successful and respectful person of great integrity and dignity.”

pg. 21





an everyday misfit's dream

When you dream of becoming a writer,
You get stories embedded in your soul
Ideas of near and far-off lands,
And journeys down rabbit holes.

Every tale is a world all its own
With heroes that find a place in your heart
For despite the challenges they might face
They prevail through courage, love, and smarts

As we watch our favorite heroes struggle
We learn about ourselves, and who we are
We feel their excitement joy, and despair
And with them, we wish upon a star

No hero is perfect as everyone knows;
We identify with their weaknesses more than their strengths
Our obstacles are like the villains our heroes fight
They seek to destroy us and our hopes at any length

What we want is for our heroes to be like us
Misfits in an everyday place
All we want is for something special to happen to us
To know we can take down any challenge we face

So when you dream of becoming a writer
Know that the heroes will become close personal friends
And that no matter where your own story's going
Theirs will never end.

Catherine Strayhall

who we are

Who dreams?
Who dares to enter such a realm?
Visions, fleeting,
Escaping with the waking flutter,
Living on bated breath
And translucent promises of
A world all your own;
A world anew.

Who sings?
Who dares to give song?
Melody, lilted in the window,
And harmony's twine,
A thing of beauty,
Do so lure you to the door,
And you are captured by it,
Drowned in it once again.

Who dances?
Who dares to make movement expression?
Extension of the heart,
You are free beyond words,
Thriving off of air and
The world moving beneath your feet.
Music lives within you,
And there are no limits.

Who writes?
Who dares to translate the indescribable?
Words, black and white,
Taking you where you have never gone,
Blind and bind you to reality.
Here, it is where time is supple
And the pen is free flowing
And you cannot stop the coming story.

Blaire Ginsburg





I slipped on a little white lie

**“Before she even rested, it’s time to face the world again.
Some days she wonders: How many others fabricate their grins?
She takes a deep breath of air, and heads out to see what awaits.
After all, curiosity is always one of a hero’s best traits.”**

Catherine Strayhall

darkness inside

This darkness inside my heart
Residing in my pitiless mind
A fuel to a fire of ever-burning odium

That cutting sarcasm of such cruelty
The cold cynical aura that never abates
What is it that filled me with such hate?

A part of me, no doubt
And yet still I wonder, where did it start?
When was it I began to question
Everything.
Everything around me.

It doesn't end with society, nor does it start
An endless circle of a sardonic pulse
Carried by a hard, stone cold heart
Using such harsh mockery
To get a malicious point across

Satirical commentary on anything I see
What is this soulless part of me?
A derisive void inside myself
Black hole swallowing all that is kind
Leaving only this dark, twisted mind.

Lauren McGrath

somehere in between

Somehow you have found, where I was in the ground.
I am there, I am also here. You have something new to fear.
I'm not alive, but not quite dead . Though this is not what
you have read. While light can be quite fun, I must avoid
the world with sun. To walk the night is not quite what you
think. Would you like to try this warm red drink?

Briana Hooper

fighting blind

I scream
But no one hears.
The danger
Looming, perpetual nears...
The footsteps echo
In my ears
Closer,
Closer
Danger leers.
A dark silhouette
And merciless eyes
The fear in my stomach
Starts to rise.
And what happens next?
I'll tell you no lies--
He takes a step closer
And out my fist flies.
Thrashing and crashing
Tangled and twined
Fighting blind...

Leah Payne

**“Aren’t all heroes simply the sort of
people we live with everyday?”**

Catherine Strayhall

tell them

Okay,
I'm going to tell them.
It's been weighing on me for awhile.
Most of my friends know,
And they should know too.

But I'm scared.
So
So
Scared.

It twists my gut,
Making me feel sick most of the time.
I want to tell them.
But they might be disappointed.
They might kick me out of the house.
My brother might not talk to me.
(Not much of a tragedy, but still)
They might treat me differently.
No,
They *will* treat me differently.
I'm the same person,
Inside
And out
They won't see it that way.
But I've got to tell them.

I clear my throat,
Mom
Dad
I need to tell you something
They look at me,
faces expectant,
laughter lingering in their eyes.
I'm gay.

Portia Miller

I walked into my room, setting my old backpack down next to my bed. One more, one more year and then I'll be old enough to move out of this place people call a home.

And then as I was thinking about him, as if on cue, my number one reason threw open the door. My father. I winced and under normal circumstances would have cried, except today, I decided. I wasn't going to take his constant abuse.

"Noe, come here, you worthless little girl!" His flabby arms flail about him as he, as usual, yells at me in a drunken rage. I see the reddening around his eyes, smell alcohol from across the room. Then I saw the rope he had in his chunky fist behind him.

It would be stupid to stand up to him now, but I know it is either now or never. "No."

He stands there, stunned, though only for a few seconds. When he realizes what I had said, I began trying to push him out of my room, but when he leans back against the door to resist, I know it is too late. "What the," he is even more angry now, if possible, and all I can think about is how much trouble I was going to be in if he catches me.

So I run.

I duck under his swinging fist which had been aimed at me and run down the hallway, slamming the wall as I try to turn. I slip. Fall. I scramble to my feet.

untitled

He has me. I know, somewhere in me, that no matter how hard I try, I am probably not going to make it anyway. He seems to be enjoying it as he ties up my arms and legs, dodging my slaps and kicks, calling me names like, "worthless," or "trash."

I scream and my mother comes running down, her eyes are red from crying, she has a bruise on her face suggesting she had been hit earlier too, but she is too scared to help her own daughter. I glare at her as Kyle, my stepfather, carries me off to some unknown place, me not even resisting anymore.

"Glad to see you know how futile your efforts were. Are. Noe, your mother even tells me how much she wishes you hadn't been born into this world. She is always saying it and crying. Now I can show her what it's like for awhile. Enjoy your stay!"

I fall into total darkness, one moment I am in the air, falling blissfully an unidentifiable distance, the next I land on hard cement.

The hours passed, me cowering in the only corner I found that seemed to be away from where I landed that I could crawl to. I am about to start screaming for help when my younger brother Zack finds me in the basement as he returns home from school. He asks me what is wrong, and I tell him about the story, and he says that I really am useless.

I slapped him, hard after he unties me. He ended up with my handprint on his left cheek. "What was that for?"

Glaring, I mimic what he had said moments before, "You really are useless."

"What are you talking about? I never said that!" And after thinking about it, it didn't sound like it came from him. It was a completely different voice.

Days go by, same abuse as always: take some punches, get called names. I simply wait, constantly anticipating the hits.

On Monday, it gets worse. I am at school, hear someone say that my dad is here, and I freak out. The teacher asks why I was yelling and I ask to visit the counselor. After a long conversation, the counselor tells me that she hadn't said anything and that I had basically been carrying out a conversation with myself. "What?" I am more confused. She stands to leave and says, "Stay here while I make a quick call." And I do.

She returns moments later with a doctor in a white coat. I had been anxious, waiting for something to happen to me, but when I see the man, I know something is wrong. They drag me out of the school, "Your family has already been contacted; your brother was the one who asked for this to happen, for your sake." That must be the doctor.

I am in a small car, looking around, when I feel a pinch in my neck and begin to feel drowsy. Upon waking, I am in a white room. There is a nurse, she smiles at me. "Hi Noe, I'm Lindise, please call me 'L,'" and she holds out her hand to me.

I refuse, not wanting to accept her smile and warmth when even my family is outcasting me to a mental hospital. She would be there, every day for the next two weeks, holding out her hand and smiling at me, waiting for me to shake her hand. I never do. I met Mel in these two weeks. She is obsessive-compulsive, and will wash her hands constantly to get rid of germs. She seems relatively normal compared to the other patients except that she has a tic that her left arm will twitch sometimes.

I wake up early one day and see *L* next to my bed. She smiles, and this time, before she can hold out her hand, I hold out mine. I strongly respect her. She puts up with a girl like me, and not once does she complain. She is just that way. She takes it happily and seems even happier when I shake her hand the next day.

I am happier here than I had been anywhere, and after one short month, I have found someone who cares about me. I found someone like *L*, and that just makes me happy. I am so happy that I don't think that it will end, not once did I think that.

A week after I had shaken *L*'s hand, she is gone. When I ask where she has gone, another nurse tells me she went to Africa.

I was stunned. For the first time in my life, I had found someone interested in actually helping me. And she is gone. She had become my idol, someone that I wished to become, someone that if I had had the strength to become, I could make the world better. She is someone worthy of trust and respect. She had done little more than sit around and talk with a grumpy teenager and try to shake her hand. *L* is a big part of my life. I know she hadn't been in my life prior to this hospital, but my memories have her in them somehow.

After an hour of grieving for my own selfishness, another nurse comes in and tells me that I am going home today. Seeing my stepdad, brother, and my mother. "Will you say hello to your family on behalf of all of us here?" Another nurse says, this one completely indifferent towards me. I hear someone say, "Finally she's leaving, can't believe her, so annoying."

I run out crying, holding my small bag of belongings. I know that I shouldn't be sad, but I am. In my stay I had almost gotten used to not being called names and being harassed. I know it is coming.

At school, people had heard the rumor about how I had to stay in a mental hospital, people are avoiding me. I cry at first but think of *L*. I think about how hard she tried to get me to accept her, and decide that I should do the same.

Unknowingly, *L* had been built up in my mind; she had become the only person who got me through that last year of my stepfather's beatings. They gave me medicine for my schizophrenia, apparently to help me not hear things and to relieve some anxiousness, and told me the reason I am leaving is because my father refuses to pay for my treatment.

My mother sees me, not bruised, and I see her, bruised. I am looking around the outside of the hospital, waiting for something to happen to me. But I have the idea that maybe when I grow up, maybe I can become someone like *L*, if I can get over some things first.

"I fall into total darkness, one moment I am in the air, falling blissfully into an unidentifiable distance. Next I land on hard cement."

There for Me

just
when
she
thought
no one
was
listening,
she hid
her face
behind
a mask
that she
hoped
would last.

Once
there
was a
time
before
she
broke
down
and cried.

She
cried herself
to sleep
no one
could
hear her
silent tears.

As much
as she wanted
help,
she felt
as if
she was
the only one
who could
give a solution
to all the problems
she had.

She prayed
for a guardian
angel,
but little
did she know
she already
had one
who watched
over her while
she cried.
She thought
no one heard
but all along
God
was
listening.

JDC Resident (Female, 17)

There for me, my dad
"No matter what," he promised
By my side
Refusing to ever give up on me - no matter what I did
If everyone else gave up
My Dad would stand by me
Telling me he believes in me
Knows I am strong
To think positively
To get through these rough times

JDC Resident (Female, 15)

Sister

Used and abused
Still standing strong
You are the one I lean on
Who knows how to turn it around
With me through thick and thin
No matter what, where, or when
The pain of being without you
Excruciating
Day by day, I'm deteriorating
I am going to do everything I can
To get back home to see you again

JDC Resident (Female, 16)

Father

My Dad's taken on many roles,
mother
father
martial artist
experimenter
business owner
gardener
I learn from him
he teaches me the real values of life
he's prepared me to live.

JDC Resident (Female, 15)

no hero

I always feel like I'm doing my best
but being put to the test.
People come and go,
No one ever seems to know.
They come in and
Leave so fast,
There's so many
I can't remember who was last.
I need someone to stick around.
Now there is someone I've found.
I've realized I've done nothing wrong.
My life has changed into a happy song.

JDC Resident (Female, 17)

Untitled

I would want someone to
Not judge me
No matter what
Someone who I can trust
Talk to about anything
Feel comfortable around
Someone who will be there for me
When I really need them
Someone who "gets" me.

JDC Resident (Female, 16)

hero

A hero is different,
A hero is kind,
A hero can live,
By the thoughts in his mind,

A hero makes changes,
In the world for the best,
And seeks good in others,
That's hidden from the rest,

A hero stands strong,
Does what he thinks is right,
He's noble and just,
All his visions take flight,

It's not about powers,
Or being all grand,
Nor having the world,
In the palm of your hand,

A hero's just someone,
Who thinks from the heart,
And when compared to others,
It sets him apart.

Ashley ruckman

Uncle Felix grew up in a small town called Shinzhu, located on the north side of Taiwan. His family was not able to afford extra clothing or toys or even to pay for his education. Uncle Felix learned to take what life gave him, and to always look on the bright side of things. Working hard during school and pushing himself gave him an opportunity to attend National Taiwan University, the best university in Taiwan. Graduating at the top of his class, he began working in a large insurance company. Uncle Felix advanced his career when he left his home in Shinzhu, and headed for Taipei as a branch manager for quite a few years. In order to be successful, he worked day and night, and traveled overseas most of the time for meetings, conferences and marketing researches. With his determination and skill, he was able to advance to a high ranking position within the company. After fifteen years of his career life, he was promoted to be the CEO of the company in Taiwan. In his career, Uncle Felix consistently demonstrated his loyalty to the company, and he was admired among his business partners for this.

Uncle Felix has always valued family and his children's education and demonstrated great love, care and support. He is kind and generous to his relatives and friends and willing to support them when they have economic hardship. For example, he had married Victoria in 1981, and they had two children, their daughter Sarah and son James. The supreme ordeal occurred in 1992, when he resigned from his position and started a home-owned business in order to spend more time with his wife and children. The business became very successful, and he began to earn a good amount of money. Although Uncle Felix is wealthy and he can live a luxurious life, he chooses to use his money to help others. From time to time, Uncle Felix donated money to non-profit organizations of Taiwan. Also, he contributed a large portion of money to his church.

Uncle Felix's faith began when he was still in his mother's womb. His parents were faithful believers and brought him to church when he was very young. He was raised in a strong Christian family, and his parents taught him not to take what he had for granted. Regularly attending church, he was baptized when he was fifteen. Since then, he volunteered at the church and saw how the Lord had blessed him. When he heard the pastor's sermon one Sunday, he felt that God was calling him to fully serve the Lord. At the age of fifty, Uncle Felix closed his business, and decided to completely devote all of his life to Christ. He spent most of his time serving others in his church, and began attending Taiwan Baptist

hero of my life

Seminary in Taipei. After taking courses of Biblical theology for five years, he began to get involved in teaching at Sunday school, organized youth fellowship, preached in his church, and shared the gospel with non-believers in the community.

Unfortunately, Uncle Felix was not able to preach for long, as he suffered a heart attack in 2008. Doctors found that there were many blood clots in his aorta, and he needed emergency heart surgery. The hospital required him to reside there for three months, so that they could monitor his recovery from heart surgery and health condition. Many of his cardiologists did not believe he would survive the surgery. While he was in the hospital, close friends and family members went to visit and pray for him. Many people asked him about his faith in God. They wondered why he was still committed to the Lord, even when things went wrong. As a response, he told them that God gave him everything he had, and there was nothing to do except to be grateful. Since then, he has made a remarkable recovery, and he was released one month early from the hospital.

Uncle Felix came to visit us only a few weeks ago. Joyful as ever, he praised the Lord for helping him to live, and be healthy. When he is around, he is such a positive influence to everyone around him. He is not pessimistic, and makes you want to be a better person.

To me, Uncle Felix is the model of all I aspire to become. His successful career makes me realize that I need to be well-prepared for my future education and career goal. His selflessness and compassion towards others reminds me to continuously consider the meaning of life. His strong faith encourages me to consistently keep my faith during the difficult times in my life. Uncle Felix's life testimony is an inspiration to people of all ages. He makes me want to become just like him, so that someday, I too, can be someone's hero.

Katherine Chin



the difference between simile & self



I have problems
and I'll swap mine with you like trading cards.
Long lovely disorders go over the lips like chocolate
but honey, we've been writing about these pits of darkness
long before shrinks slapped name tags on them.
While the rest of the world cringes and looks away
together we will scribble from one breakdown to another.
It is a saga marked by the usual trappings of our kind:
I have dizzy spells, you cry at night, I have pills,
you describe flowers, I see through hypocrisy,
and we both lose love like loose change.

I have problems.
I used to eat the skin at the tips of my fingers
but my bad habits are now limited
to searching out the human condition
and touching my face a lot.
I name and shout about my problems
through the glittery curtain of metaphor
because who wants to hear misery unless it's diluted
by pretty words?
There is something uniquely rewarding
about well-written suffering;
poetry is the confetti at a pity party.

I have problems
yet writing helps me and it's mine.
That's why I read it to other people
when I'd never post my x-rays in the waiting room.
Look. Here's the crow and chips
I ate last night, the break in my heart,
the back pain from always looking to the sky.
If you find your condition
between my lines, if this makes you ache
I'm sorry. I mean't to, but I'm sorry.
No one ought to feel this
but at least we can share it.

I have problems
and poetry doesn't solve them
like pills might, but it goes down easier.

Rachel
franklin

medication

Drifting through the world
I let my thoughts wander
what if?
what it might feel like to know...

I kept thinking & wondering 'til
I am walking out the door.
Head strong but emotionally weak
I let my spirit embrace those that were bad for me.

Expecting lies for truth
Pride told me it would spare me the hurt of youth.

I sent out my soul to bond with the world.
It sent me around, 'til disappointment was my pillow, anger my
clothes, fear in every breath.

The world stripped me of my wealth.
Ignored my angel and passed the days.

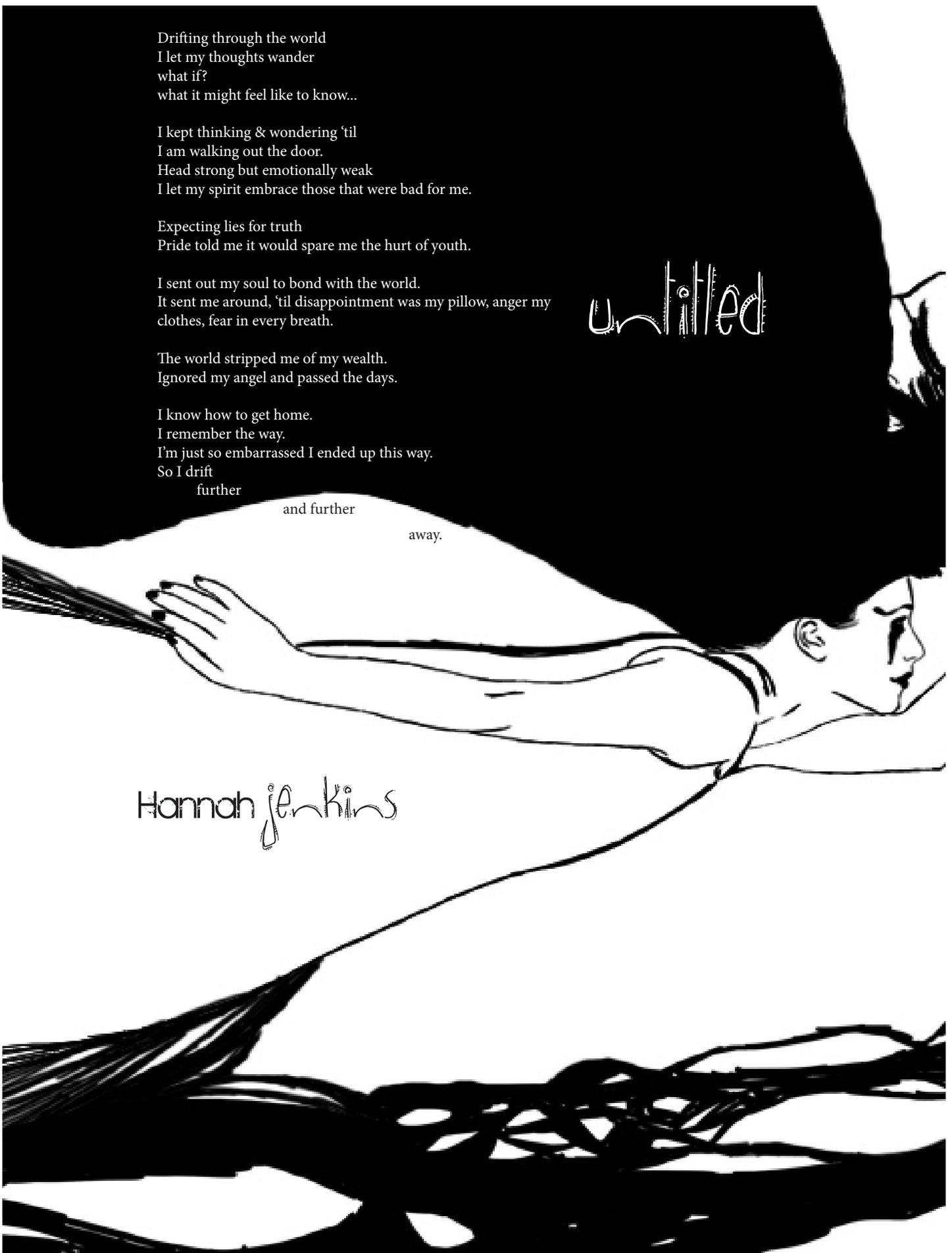
I know how to get home.
I remember the way.
I'm just so embarrassed I ended up this way.
So I drift
further

and further

away.

untitled

Hannah Jenkins



Stare into these eyes of flame
Warm embrace of blazing love
Wild animal you cannot tame
Feral beauty of gentle dove

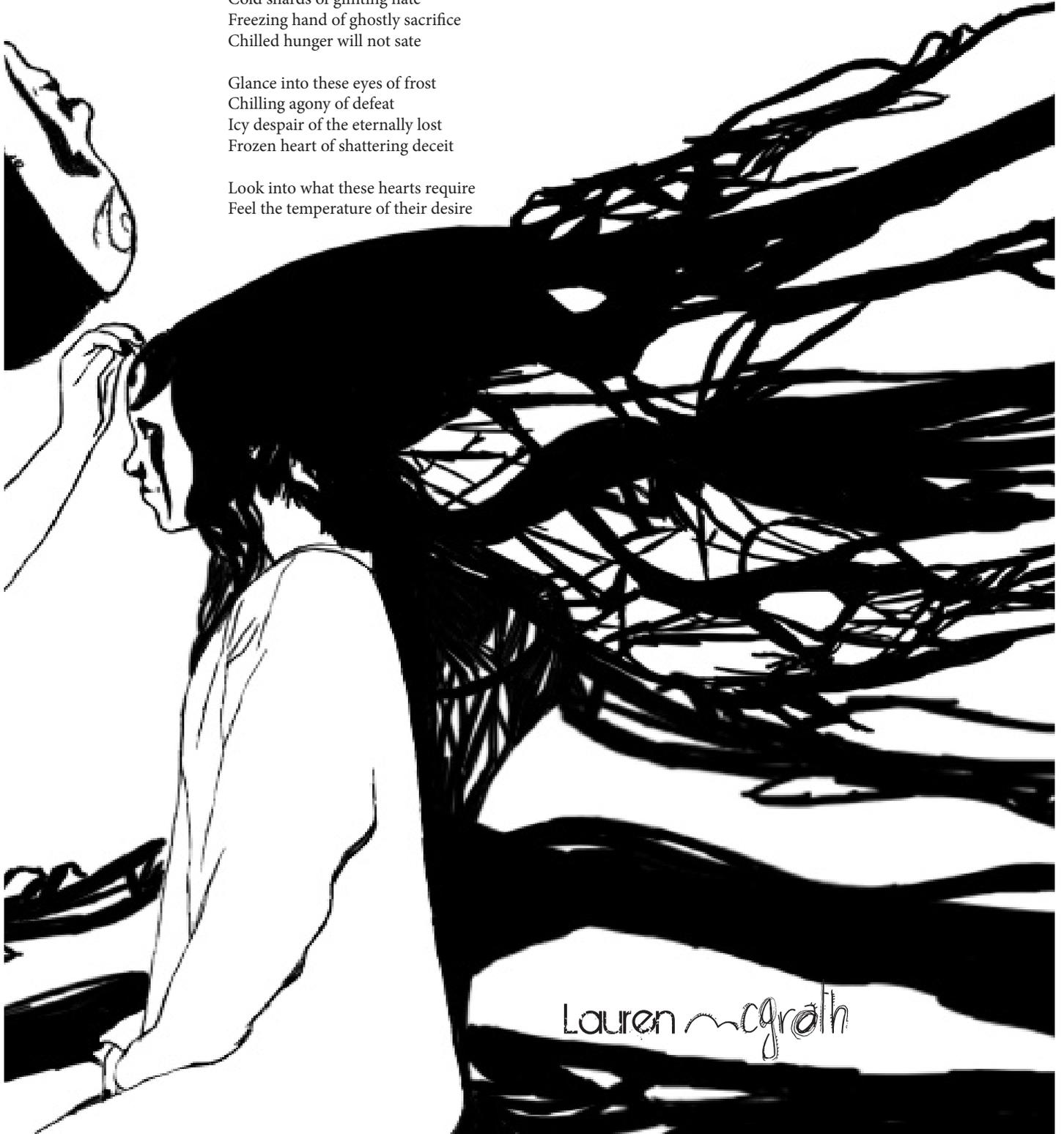
Gaze into these eyes of fire
Scorching heat of kindled lust
Burning secret of past desire
Scattered ashes of annihilated trust

Look into these eyes of ice
Cold shards of glinting hate
Freezing hand of ghostly sacrifice
Chilled hunger will not sate

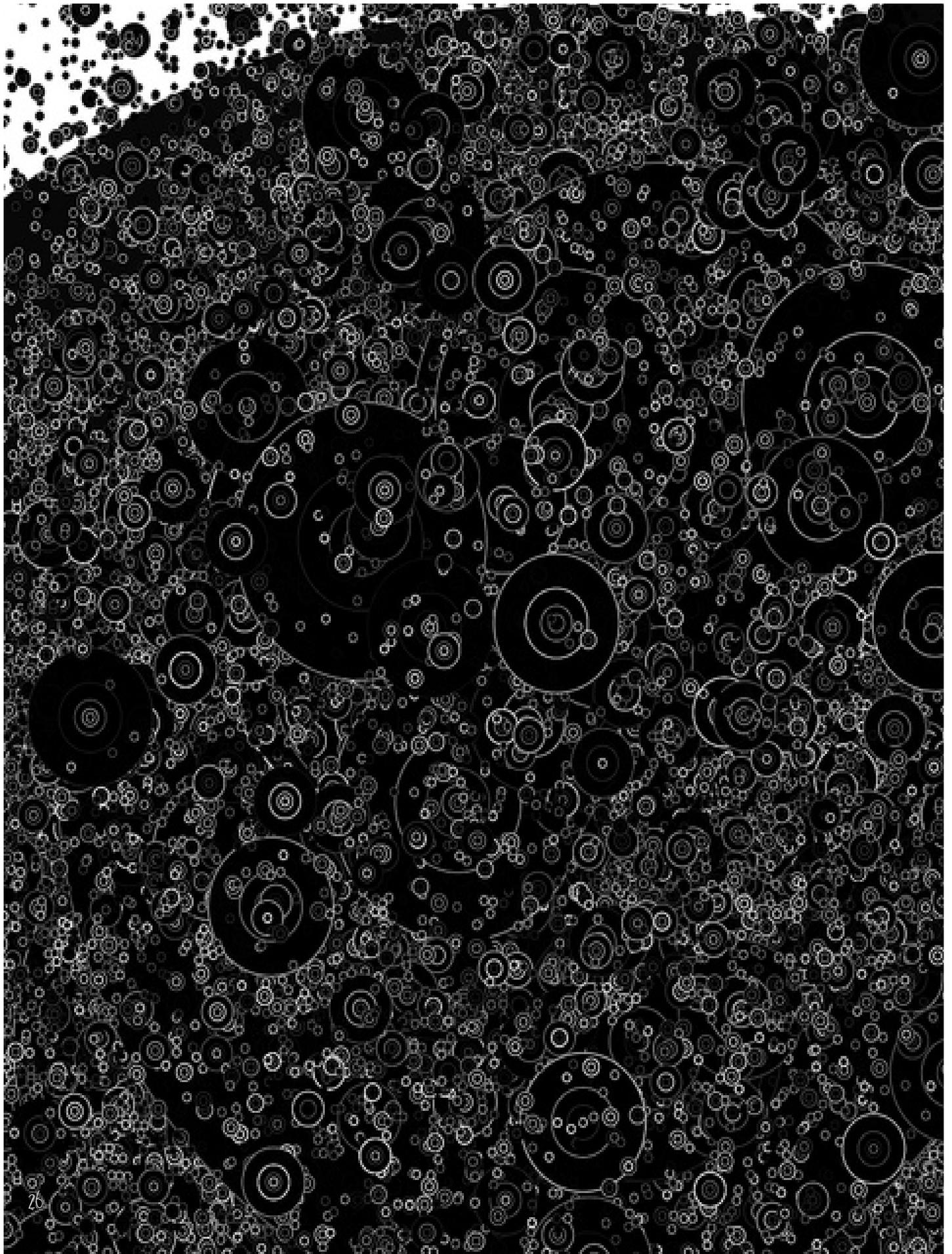
Glance into these eyes of frost
Chilling agony of defeat
Icy despair of the eternally lost
Frozen heart of shattering deceit

Look into what these hearts require
Feel the temperature of their desire

song of ice and fire



Lauren mcgrath





Relics of
the Post

The peace the nations had promised
Some days that were gold
Now all fade into stardust
Disappearing with the old

Yet the Earth shock beneath them
Then the final warning rung
They whom nature condemned
Lost their wings because of the sun

Taken to a nuclear reactor
Where the heavens are above
Power that sought recapture
Among the forgotten ones they loved

Who could tame the hearth?
No one can, that's what,
as the ocean water rises
The heat rising on surfaces of Earth
Just like sky-rocketing gas prices

The victims such disaster
Swallow smoke in the air they breath
What to do hereafter?
The generation doesn't know and grieves.

An ocean of debris
Surround the Nations of war
As far as the eye can see
The never-ending things they fight for

As you stand in the quiet
In the Catastrophe stricken nation
And in the cities collapsing under riot
They are beaten by their devastation

Should they look to peaceful cranes?
To embrace hope in the heart?
Or suffer in the pattern of war chains?
Where love never starts?

Love that is raw and pure
For the humans, Who are one and the same
The answer to the pain; the final cure.
If it cannot be found; then who else is to
blame?

Michelle Chan

wicked discretion

It's not about what you told me,
but what I chose to believe.
Nothing feels worse than living
an imaginary dream.
And they occur so often and freely
whenever Satan creeps in.
By the time I breathe, and count to ten
it's over and I have to start again.

When I dream while awake, the ending
usually involves an earthquake.

No you can't tell me what to believe.
The display that you set before me,
are the words that I built around
my dream.

You were with me, but not in your mind.
No you were somewhere else, all the time.

I saw what I wanted to believe
your words were nothing
'til I accepted them for truth.
That is how I let you deceive me.

Never be anxious to accept the
empty flattery of words
often they end with sadness
and crying.

I chose to believe what you said
I wanted your promises to be
proof of your affection.

All I got was dishonest discretion.

Hannah Jenkins

As I walk through these crowds day after day,
I see people's silhouettes;
The stuff they're made of deep inside,
The good or bad they try to hide,
And their joy or sorrow with every breath.

They drag around shadows that look light as a feather,
But that can contain the weight of the world.
I can see the silver hues of their souls,
So beautiful, but sometimes riddled with holes.
Their flags of sadness are quietly unfurled.

Everyone steps in rhythm with
The beating ballad of their life.
These songs can be heard on the wind;
They're full of hope that comes from within,
And the will to save others from the scythe.

Sometimes they feel like marionettes;
Nothing more than wood and some string.
Getting tangled isn't hard;
They always have to be on guard
From the storms and the hurts and the stings.

Each day that I navigate these crowded streets,
I take a quick look at silhouettes – and faces.
Maybe I'll catch a glimpse of who they are,
Or I'll see a memory in a tattoo or scar;
Then we'll continue on to our different places.

Catherine Strayhall

silhouettes in a crowd

“Let us lift that burden off our shoulders
And stand straight and tall.
We are and always will be
perfectly imperfect.”

Eric Gunnarson

mirror

What does it tell you?
Does it tell you what lies in your heart?
It tells you what lies on the outside,
That's for certain.
It tells you how other people perceive you.
How they label you.
You have feel the weight of those labels.
They are a thousand bricks on your shoulders.
You feel an obligation to change.
To cast off these weighty labels,
And lay claim to lighter ones.

The longer you wear these weighty labels,
The more crippled you become.
More defeated.

You no longer sleep well,
Tossing and turning,
As the nightmares take hold.

One day,
You're sick of it.
Sick of carrying the labels,
Tired of caring.

You look in the mirror
Bags under your eyes,
Hair a mess.
Designer clothes hang loosely
On anorexic shoulders.

Who is the fair-
Crash
Shards of glass come tumbling down.
Clattering to the floor,
While you stare at your fractured
Reflection.

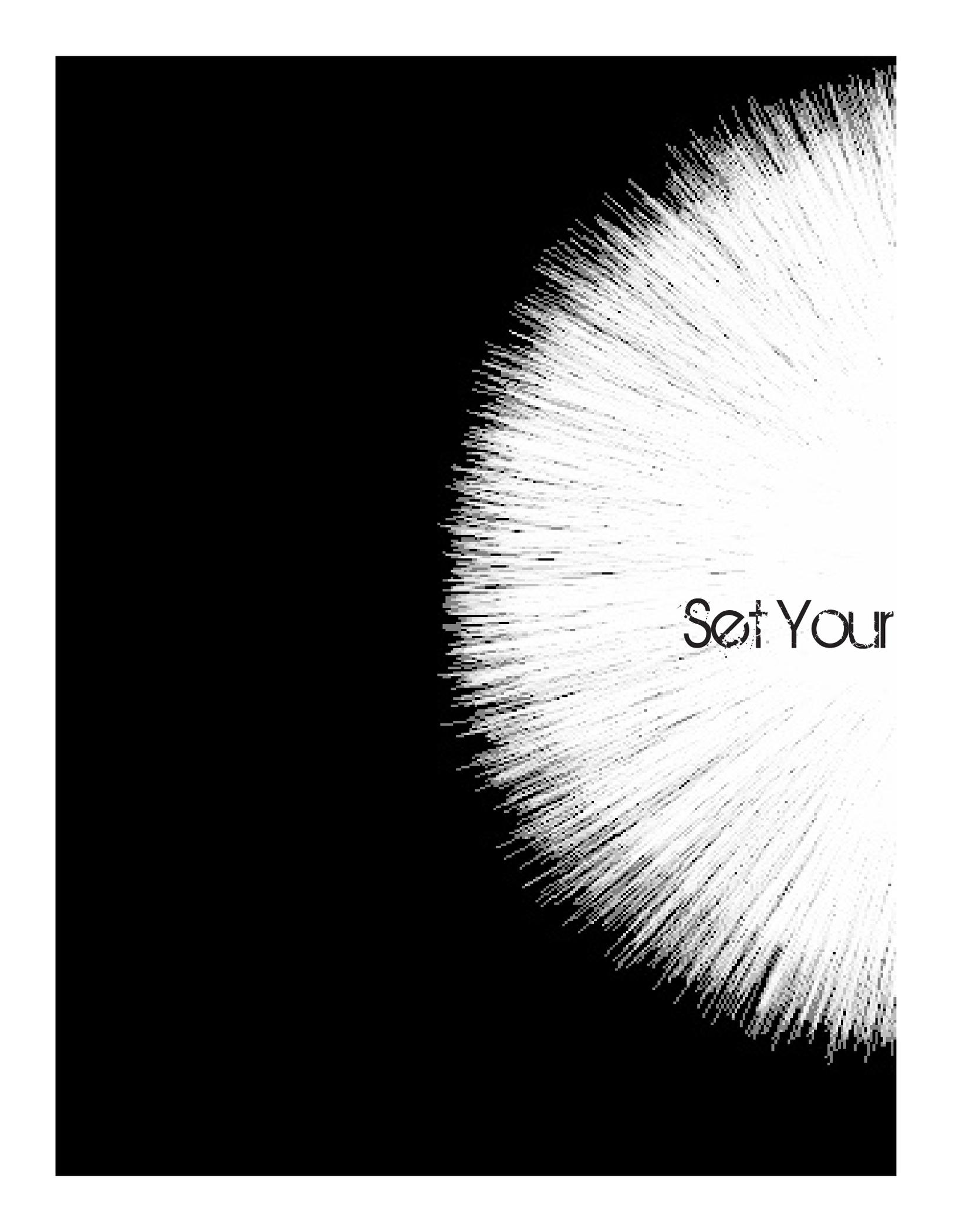
I'm the fairest of them all.

Portia Miller

ode to the oddball

There's a simple liberating joy
In being different,
Being obtuse,
Having that little bit of self outside of normality,
A s k e w
People will either embrace it,
Or reject it.
Some will revel and thrive in their unlikeness,
Others will shrink and wither at the stares of conformity,
And some will teeter and totter on the razors edge in-between.
I personally advocate the former;
But am too afraid to let myself go.
Our world just isn't quite ready to live and let be.
I hope someday those shunned by "society" will realize,
Realize the very irony of what's happened.
Their willingness and determination actually scared them,
"Them" being the people who are scornful naysayers.
All due to the simple fact that the naysayer is envious,
Angry, jealous even, how dare you say, "I'm different and proud!"
How come I can't do that?
D i f f e r e n t
The word that the world hides and locks away,
Maybe out of instinct
Maybe out of the frightening desire it entails.
I myself can see, yet cannot grasp it,
The key.
The key of acceptance,
The key that will bring a revelation!
D i f f e r e n t
A word worth a thousand pictures
Everyone has as key to that lock box of quirks
Open it...

Eric Gunnarson



Set Your



self Free

the parasite lives and grows

Once upon a time Goliath fell.
They built buildings on his body
and David walked away without looking back
didn't know his victory
until he moved
opened the door
to have his pebble drop at his feet
looked up and his apartment was
the white pulp of a gigantic eye dripping blood.

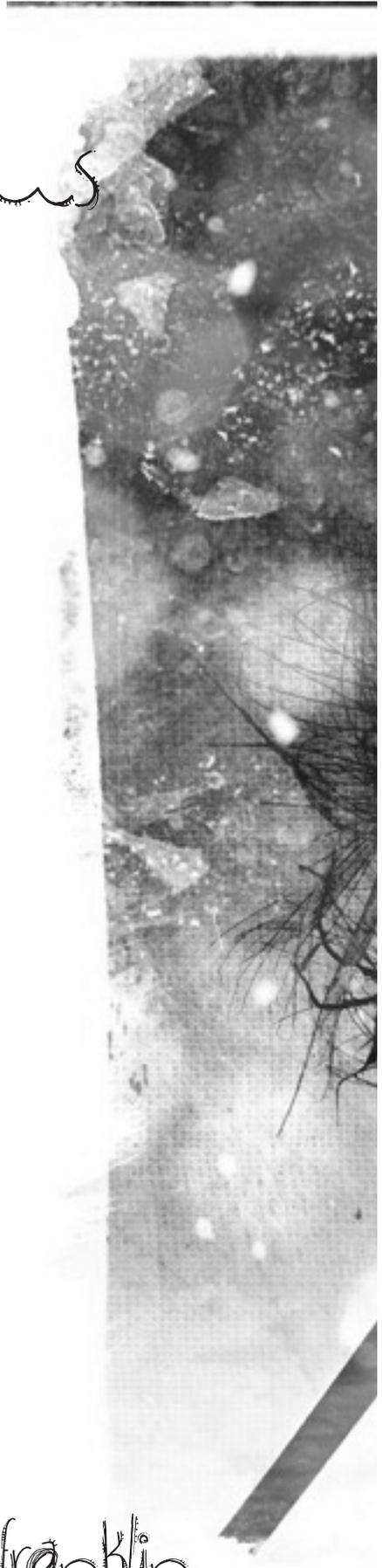
David is meant for spaces
muddy brooks, gaping skies
flanked by open, gnashing trees
skies that swallow
cigarette smoke, pollen dust, and sweat.
He wants to go where the government doesn't care
where you can flick the paperwork
off like stragglng hay.

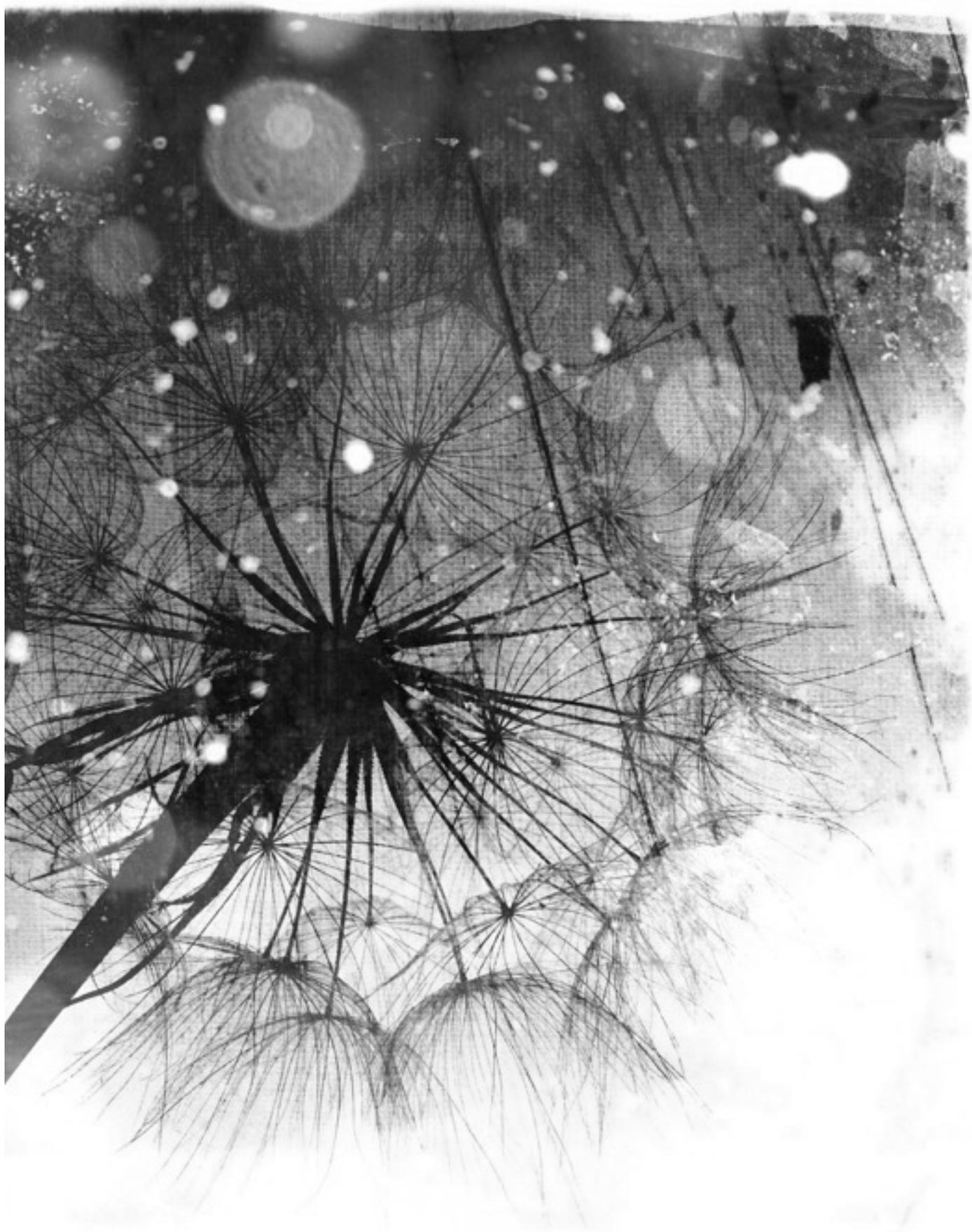
David does not want to know he is living
off others' misery, will not swim where
there are leeches.
But he lies down in a bed, in a carcass
with white walls, strings up the eyelids
for a shower curtain.
The water is not salty
but the air conditioner sounds like fading breaths.

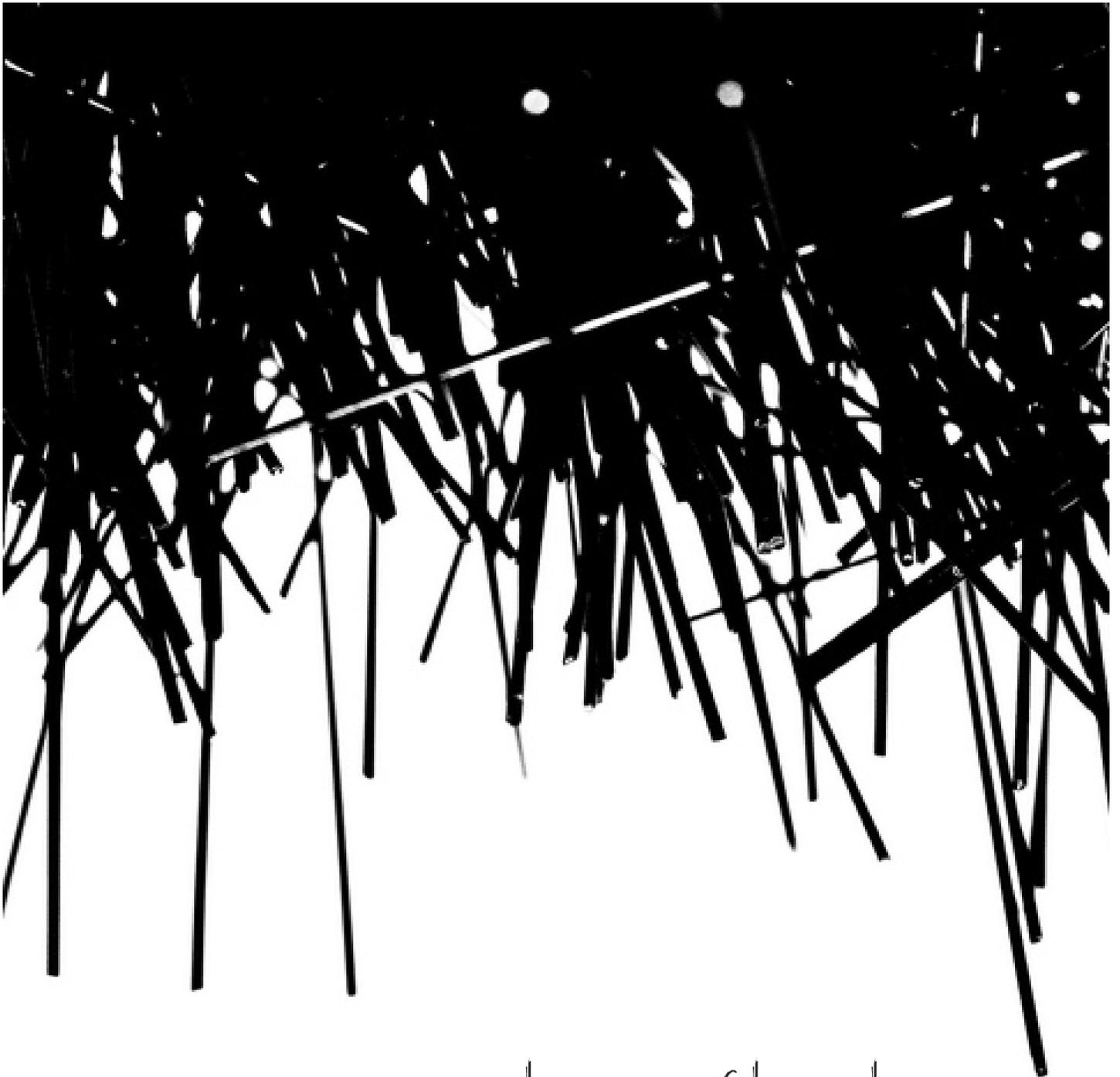
David does his laundry every Thursday
and ignores the centipede next to him
dropping sock after sock into his washing machine.
He doesn't watch TV much.
Sometimes he browses the paper
and when he's driving
mentally takes pictures of "for rent" signs.
He got an air freshner a few days ago.
It makes the rot smell like cinnamon.

David keeps his pebble on the dresser by the bed.

Rachel franklin







story of the stone



Minor fissures,
Just hairline cracks,
Spread slowly
At first,
Fine lines on a
Smooth surface;
Creeping across a
Marble plain,
Barely making
A sound, but
Marking - scarring
- All the same.
See here, where
The lines turn
At odd angles and
Bend to meet, but
Never touch.
Traces like veins,
Telling different
Legends every time,
Spell the history of
A more valiant heart.

Blaire Ginsburg



do i?

Do I dare disturb the universe?
Indulge in the quizzical whims of questioning?
Sit on the throne of knowledge,
partake in the feast of Newton's apple?
To eat the forbidden fruit,
and cast myself out of the paradise of ignorance,
learn the sin of curiosity?
To let myself fall into the seductive embrace
of a lover that is not body or mind
but as real and palpable as both?
Knowledge, a cruel mistress, would have me learn the evils of life
and the cogs that spin the cosmos,
leaving the wonder of the unknown to dance off into oblivion?
For all the great science of hows and whys
I would, in the end, still confront death,
From whose born no traveler, no matter how intelligent, returns.
But why, then, should I play the miserable Hamlet,
pondering the "to be or not to be" of the universe.
All I have to do is pick the beauty and art of the unknown.
Fantasy is infinitely more pleasing,
but being fictitious in nature,
the stuffy scholar will eventually knock down your house of cards.
That which is creative shows the soul of man, his dreams and desires,
but never the blatant truth of his existence.
It is a mystery that appeals to man,
simply because it cannot be formulated, calculated, or simplified.
So, whom to chose?
The brush or the book
the fiddle or the flask
the sonnet or the seminar
Do I dare
 disturb
 the universe?

I'll have to think on it...

Eric Gunnarson

Thank You

jennifer taylor
tricia suellentrop
donna lauffer
gene ann newcomer
mickey willard
mary shortino
barbara brand
kate pickett-mcnair
dennis ross
kelly sime
kristen worthington
louisa whitfield-smith
gregg winsor
cassie coles
michelle chan
joe morgan
josh neff
marsha bennett
kasey riley



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NO SIGN

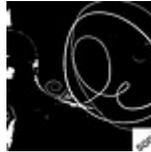
Creative Commons Artists

flickr screen names

BLACK EYED SUZY



Yegwa



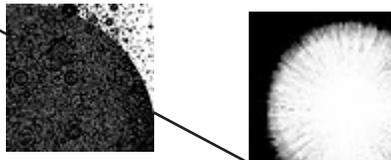
fliannaki



firefly violin



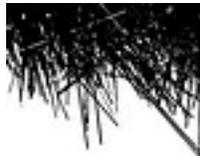
the pain of fleeting joy



justelene//statikmotion



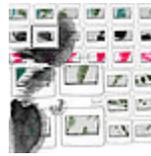
mikedarnell1974



StolenName



Zoë Slock



tiffanybstone



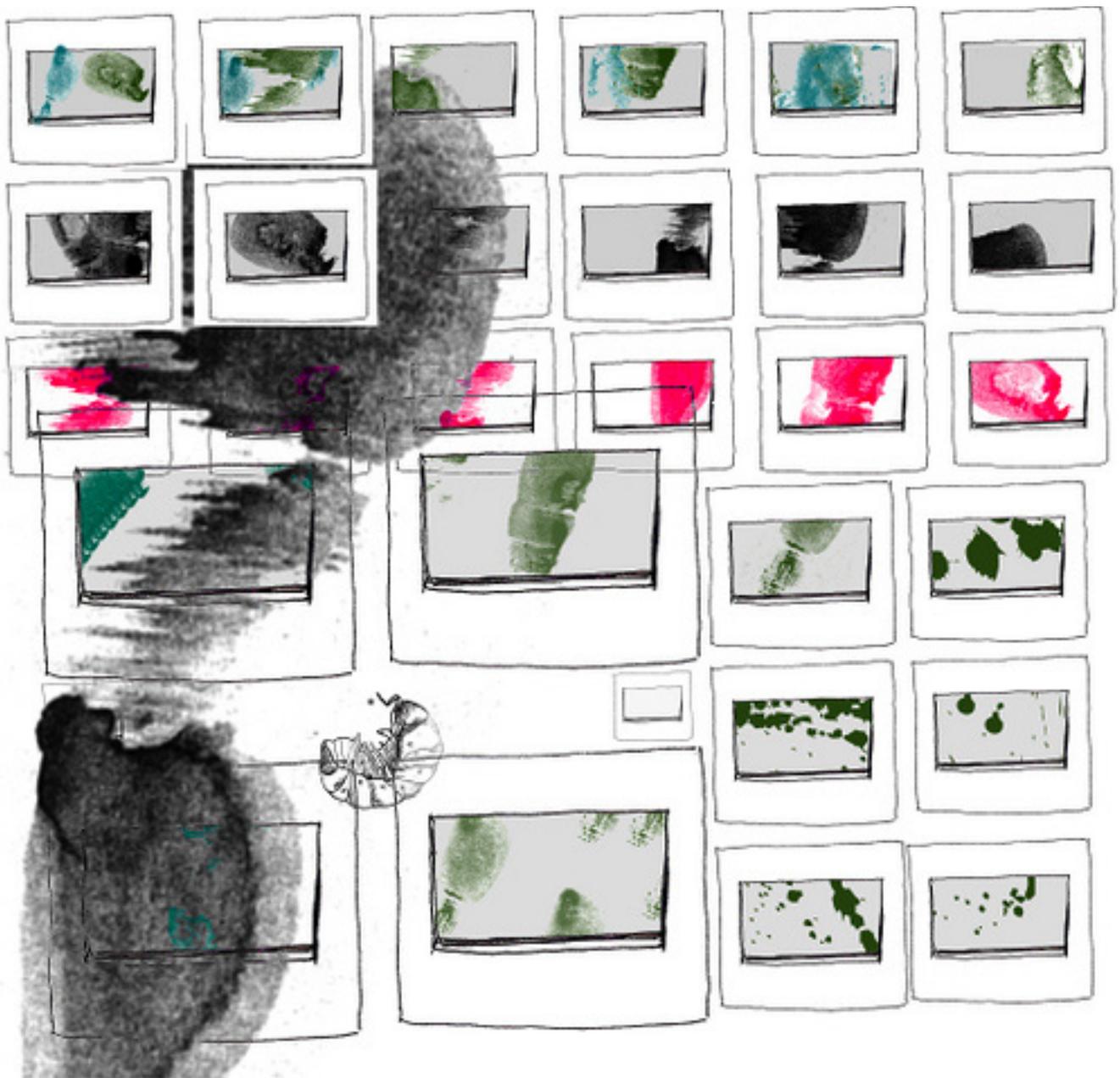
East of the Sun and West of the Moon



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The anonymous submissions were submitted by students at
Johnson County's Juvenile Detention Center.
English teacher Kristen worthington.



This issue is in honor of the hard work & years of library service that Linda Kautzi, Donna Lauffer, Susan Woodruff, Kathy McLellan, Debbie Crough, Marcy Conley, & Debbie McCloud dedicated to the youth in our community.

enjoy retirement.

