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Lamenting the End of Time: Living, Dying and Grief in the Shadow of the Sixth Extinction

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my **random** **actions** upon living, dying and grief in the shadow of the 6th extinction

ACT_i_ON

ACT_i_ON

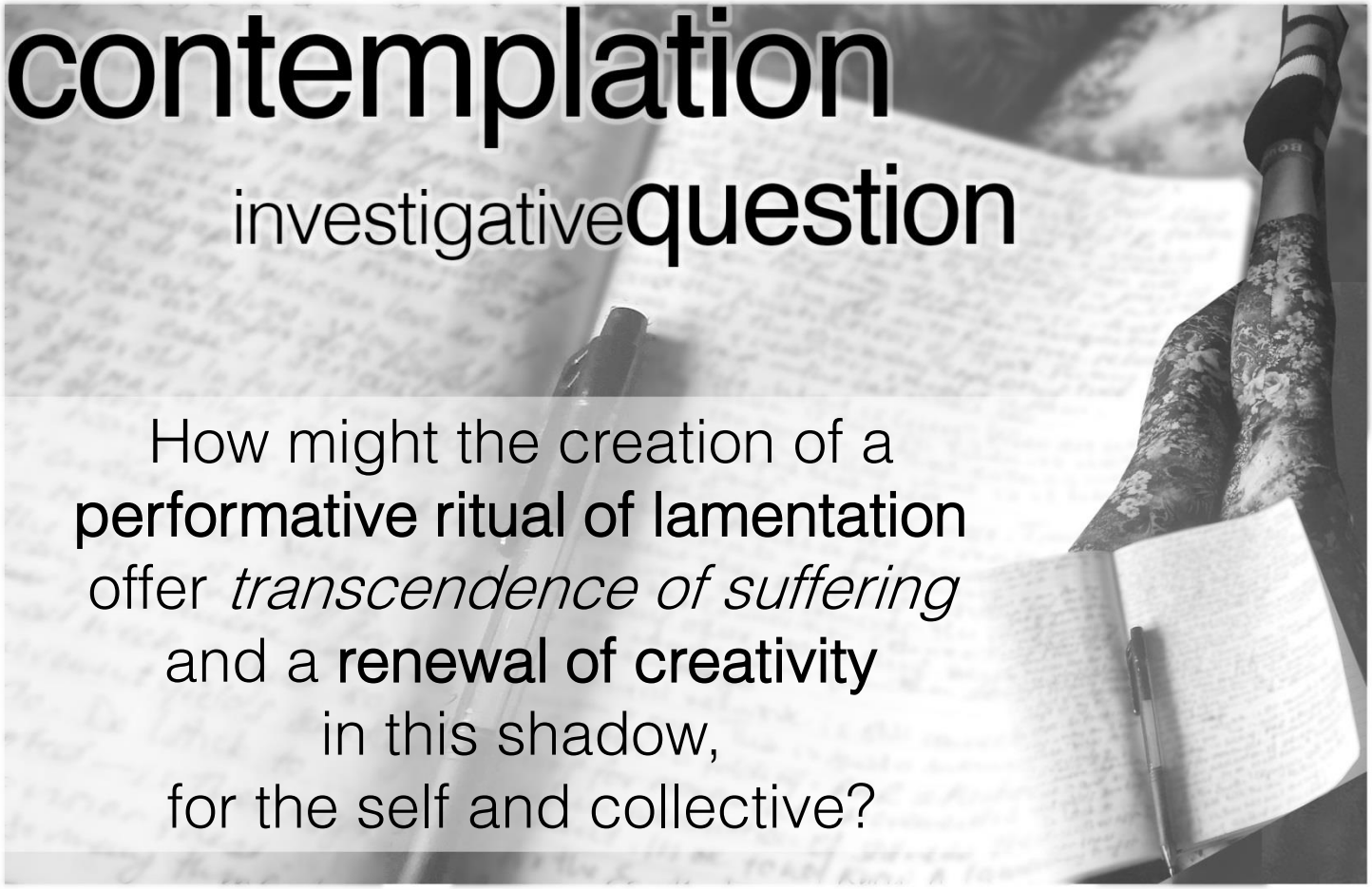
This mindful performative offering is a collection of narrative writings, photos and sketches.
These have gained form via creative expression through a series of

rituals of lamentation

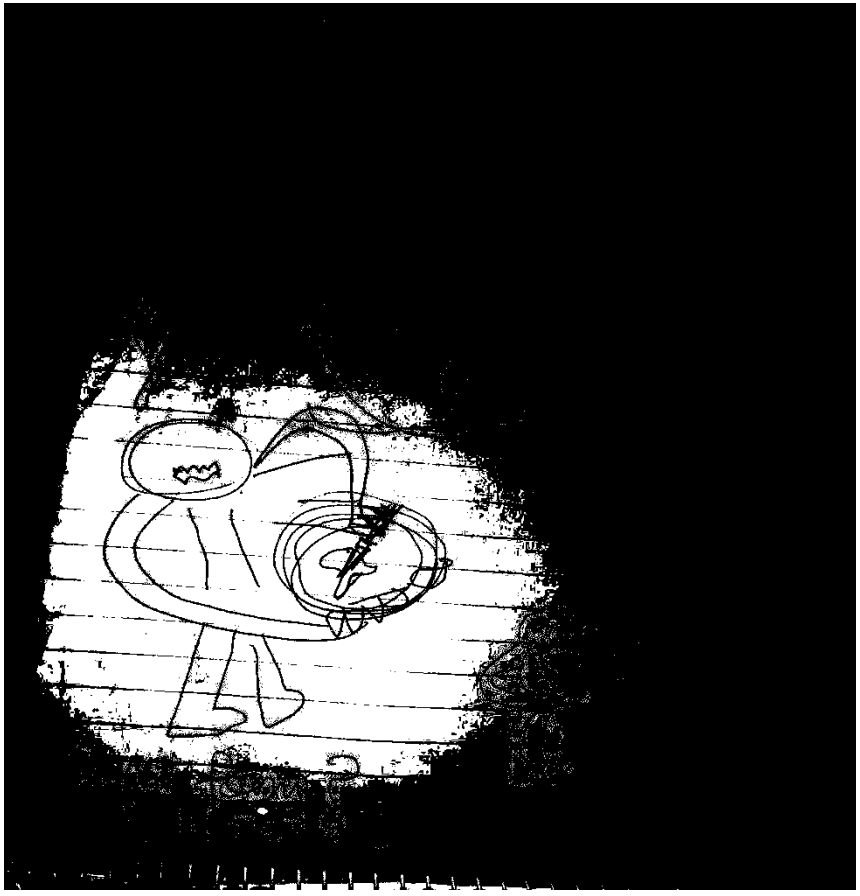
for the grief i feel for the global suffering caused by humans to ourselves, and to all other sentient life on earth, and my own personal grief.
It is expressed from my eclectic, personal, and auto-ethnographic perspective as a creative thought randomiser, who dashes off on anecdotal tangents.
My lived experiences of wandering and wonderings are the contextual sources of this narrative enquiry through which i endeavour to forge meaning of living life in this age of unease, while seeking my own place and significance in this world.

The random anecdotes and representations of mindful actions are my antidote or healing balm for the malaise of this possible end of time.
The performative rituals are my coping mechanisms. They occur as i calibrate and re-calibrate myself through random, mindful acts, managing my general life anxiety, my eco-anxiety and grief.
This offering documents both the malaise and the random coping mechanisms towards my own healing. Through expressing my thoughts and emotions i attempt to re-resource myself.
By seeking peace through centreing there is a commonality – a conscious embodied-practice combined with mindful engagement and self-activism. Others may use similar ACT-i-ONs to soothe themselves.

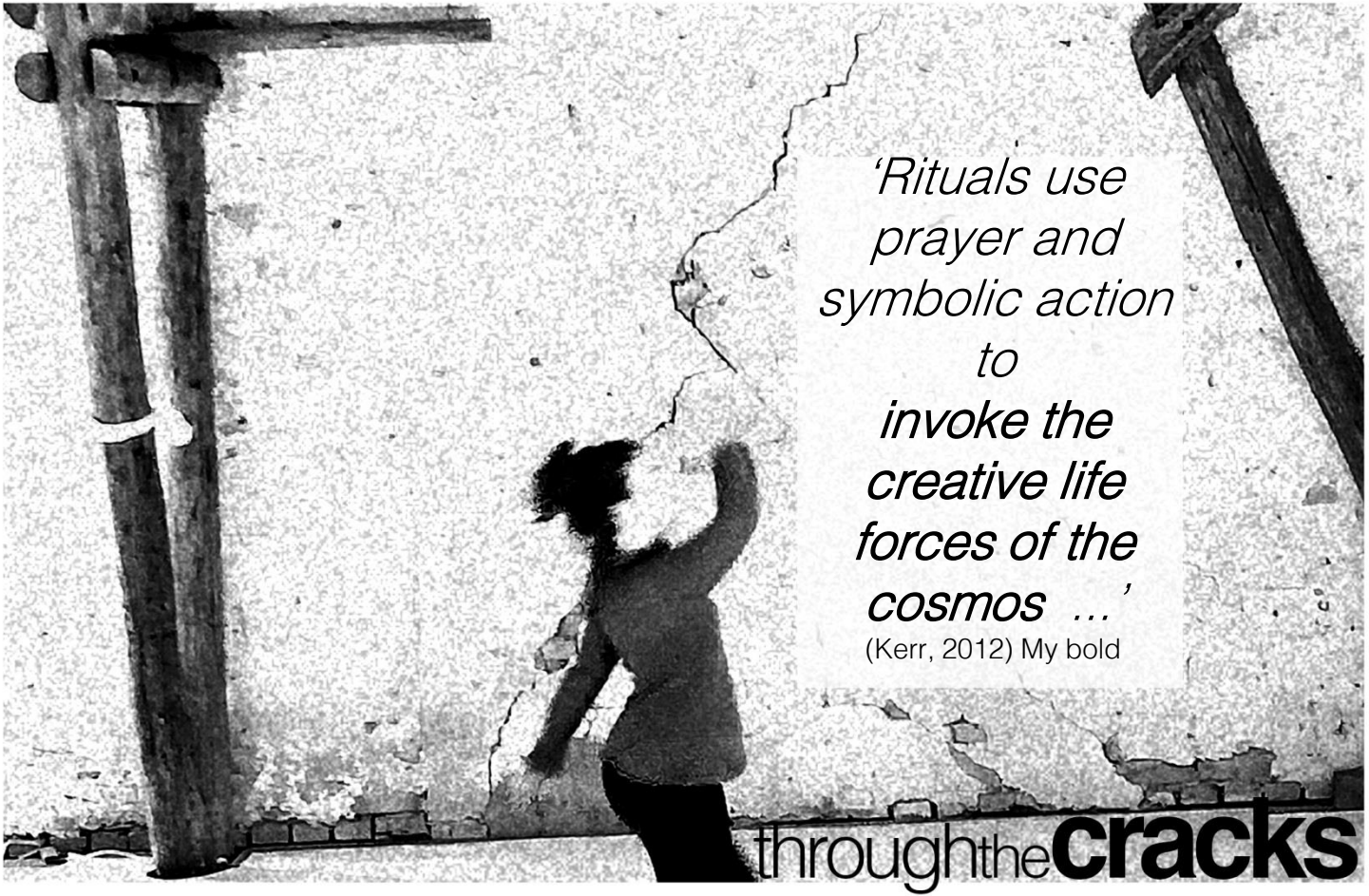
it's a randomly abstract kind of thing



'Healing is the personal experience of the transcendence of suffering.' (Egnew, 2005)



what
form
can
hold
such
grief?


'Rituals use prayer and symbolic action to ***invoke the creative life forces of the cosmos*** *...'*
(Kerr, 2012) My bold
throughthecracks

Lamentation

'The passionate expression of grief or sorrow; weeping.'
(Merriam-Webster, 2019)

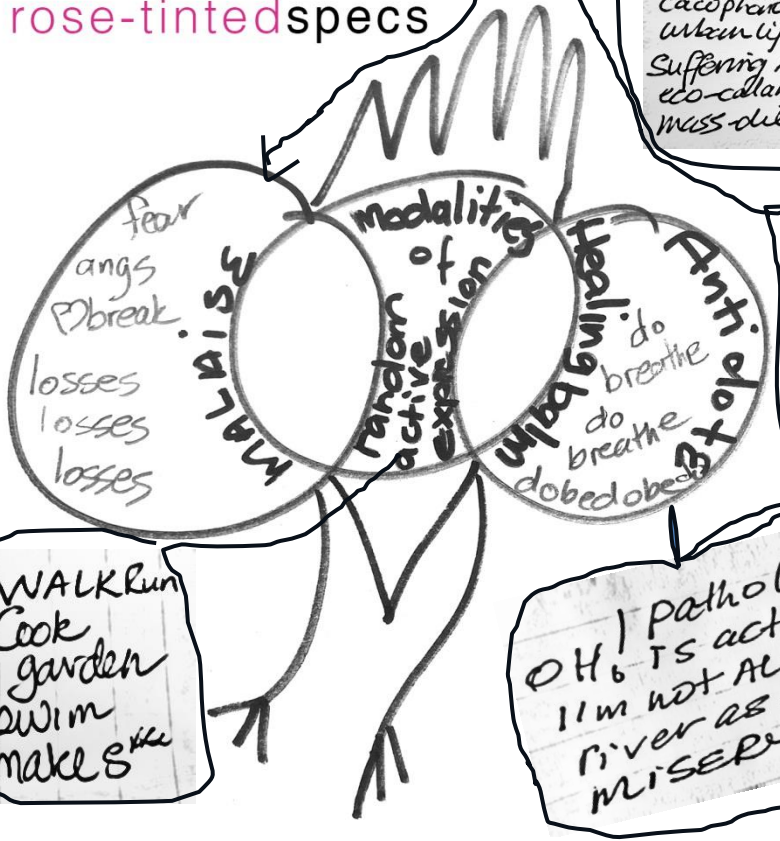
' … lament is not an action,
but a response to
and an expression
of human suffering.'
(Harasta & Brock, 2009)

'The purpose of healing is to be awake.
And to live while you are alive
instead of dying while you are alive … '
Roth, 2014)

aliveliving

This desire to **live alive** has been, and remains a daily challenge against the backdrop of the Sixth Extinction. Terrifying, and saddening for me because of the suffering that has been unleashed on so many for profit, greed and power. So many voices silenced, tortured, made **extinct**.
i seek an infusion or renewal of Life, firstly for myself, and by extension for others who are suffering the same overwhelming grief, and levels of anxiety and stagnation. We're all enmeshed in the systems that have caused this – how do we envision a different world?

MsMalaise's rose-tinted specs



yearning 4 creative expression
awkward aging
body-mind acted
cacophanous modern
urban life disconnect
suffering sentient
eco-calamatous
mass-die-offs

overcome the dulling drone of the "so what" in my head, against the equally raucous din of social media's manipulations / algorithms feeding me DEEP FRIED BONE LESS FAST BYTES

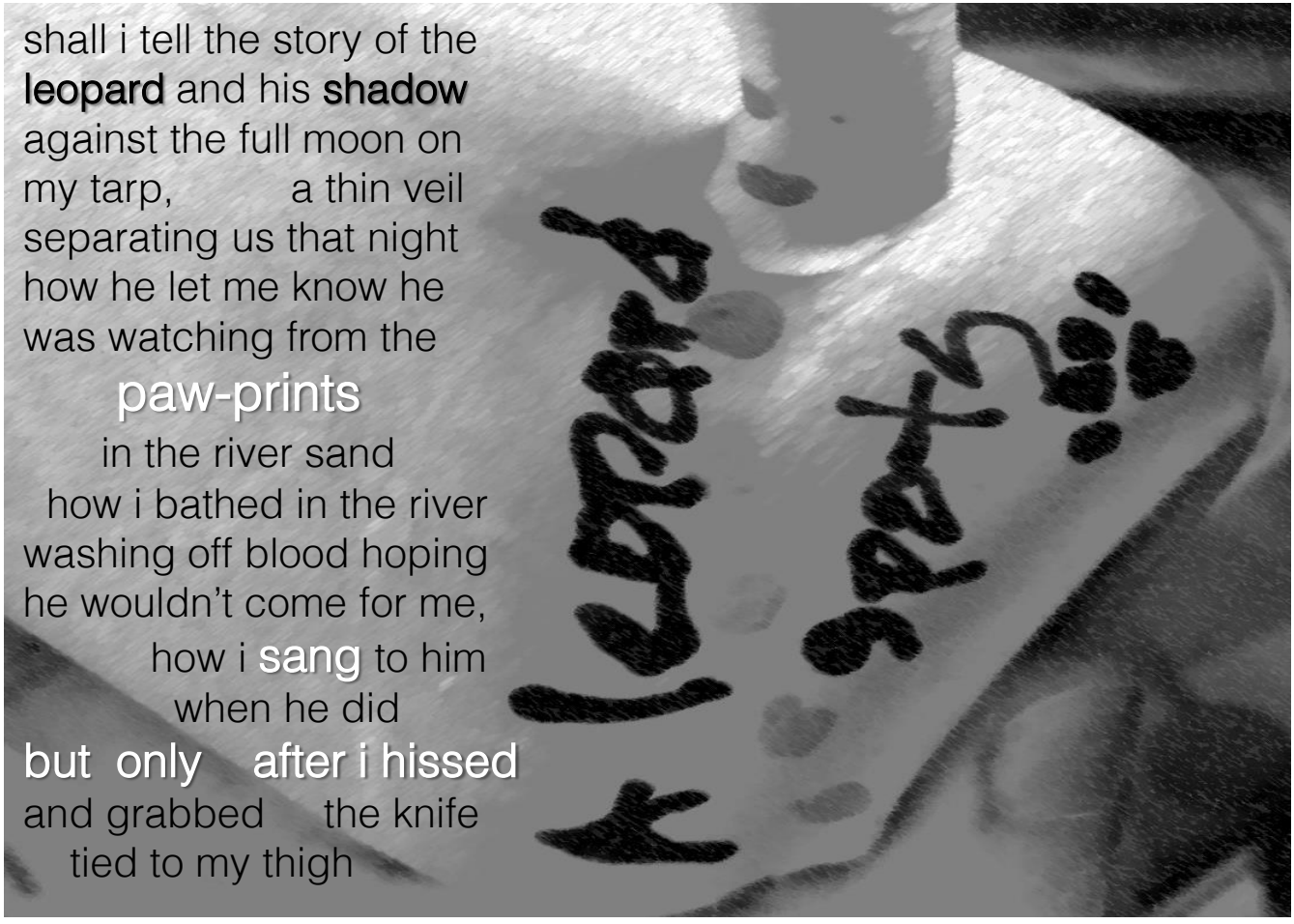
life-long-melancholy-teetering on the edge-of-life imperfect flawed fearful bag of water bobbing along a river of pain

WALK Run
Cook
garden
swim
make s**t

OH! pathologized own 'river of pain'
I'm not ALONE, but submerged in same
river as millions of others!
misery loves company



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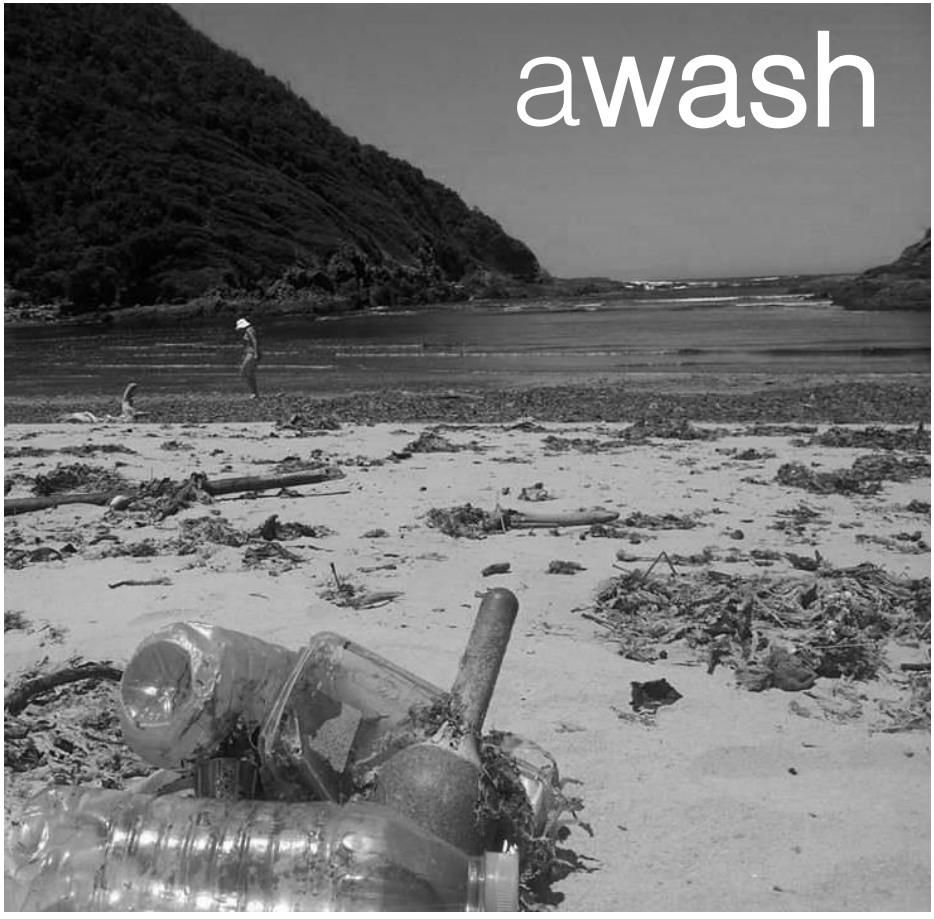
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anima mundi



as i move on earth
with each rhythmic breath and footfall
each in-and-ex-halation, i desire to intend back into the earth my gratitude, my love, my wish to do better, my wish to do no harm, my wish to live harmoniously
each movement forward i wish to plant this practice into my body and back into the earth
and yet, i am the community of harm

the state of our world
- i weep -
tears cannot wash it clean. we are polluted. generational memory is polluted. **the bodies of water that hold the memory of all are polluted** – we cannot return there is no return.



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unravelled

s t r e t c h e d as a
cloth might be

an old cloth
still attached
to the loom in

parts

warp and weft
unthreading
and torn

what is life?
living?

are we doing it fully?

when is enough?
is too much?
is not enough ?
are we fulfilled?

what is it about life
that keeps us here?

is that even a question!



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preparing for **death** is impossible

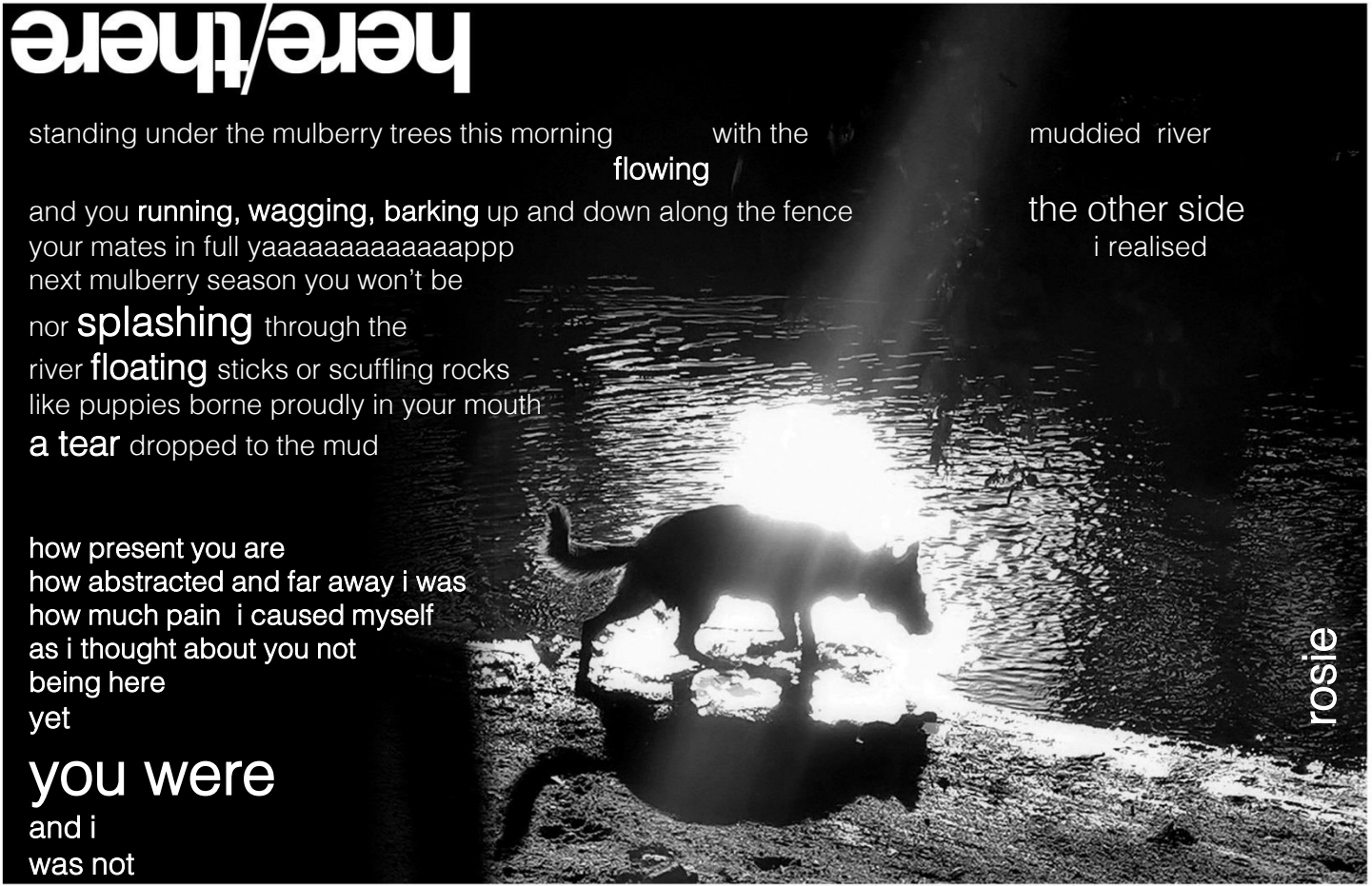
Dad Mom Rosie … i tried

here/there

standing under the mulberry trees this morning with the muddied river
flowing
and you running, wagging, barking up and down along the fence the other side
your mates in full yaaaaaaaaaaaaappp i realised
next mulberry season you won't be
nor splashing through the
river floating sticks or scuffling rocks
like puppies borne proudly in your mouth
a tear dropped to the mud

how present you are
how abstracted and far away i was
how much pain i caused myself
as i thought about you not
being here
yet

you were
and i
was not



rosie

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unspeakable grief wells up during lunch while looking at a photo that fills the e n t i r e w a l l

i'm pulled right into it

elephants run forward **trumpeting**

and then they're cut down by rounds of automatic gunfire

i'm hit in the stomach

tears land on my salad



hide

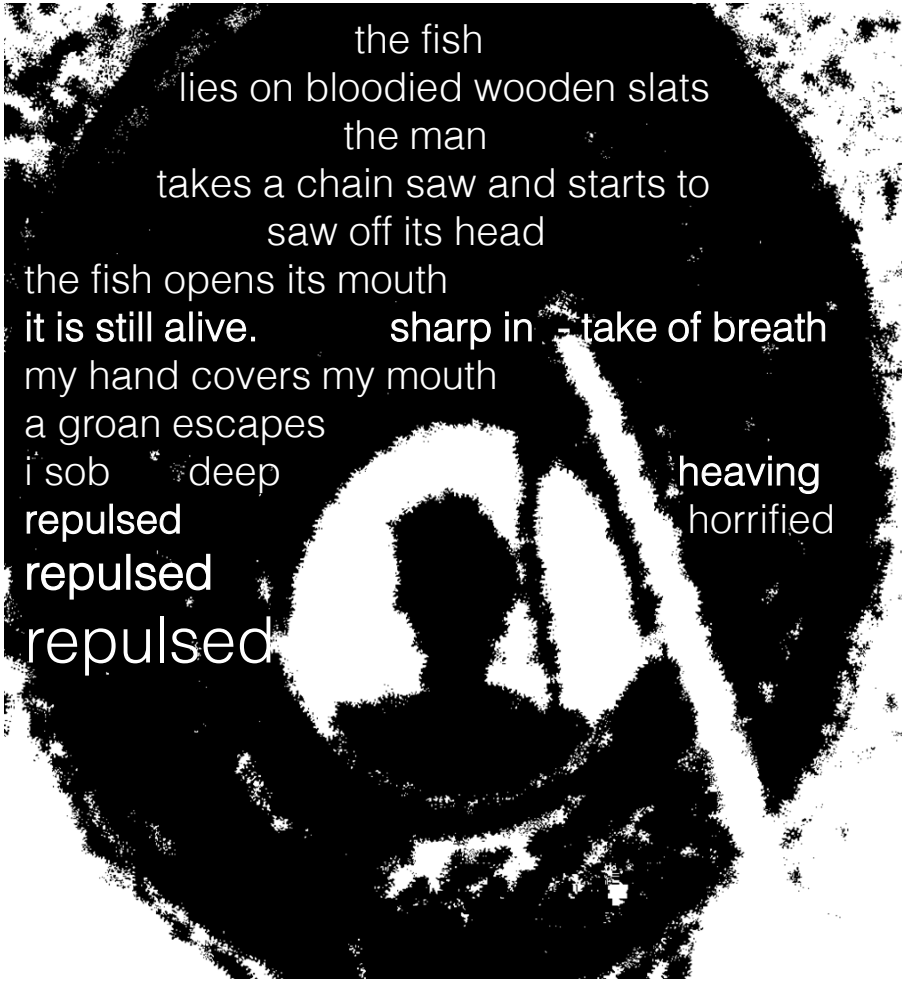
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food becomes us



about 100 of them
lying with their babies
lying with their mommies
i *ommm-ed* to them and they
listened ears twitching
eyes gentle
they didn't get up and run away

150 million **terrified, shivering,** quivering, **helpless,** hormone-filled, **tortured** sentient **beings slaughtered daily,** hearing the sound of their kin **screaming out for mercy,** only to be served with potatoes and gravy



the fish
lies on bloodied wooden slats
the man
takes a chain saw and starts to
saw off its head
the fish opens its mouth
it is still alive. sharp in - take of breath
my hand covers my mouth
a groan escapes
i sob deep heaving
repulsed horrified
repulsed
repulsed

later another man
inserts his hand
into the fish's body
look he says, holding
up a soft organ –
it moves -
it's still beating
he gleefully laughs

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☼♥☻♫!

choc brownies have been served!

♫☻♥☼

Distr-

ACT-

-i-

-on

one

sure

way

to

avoid

grief

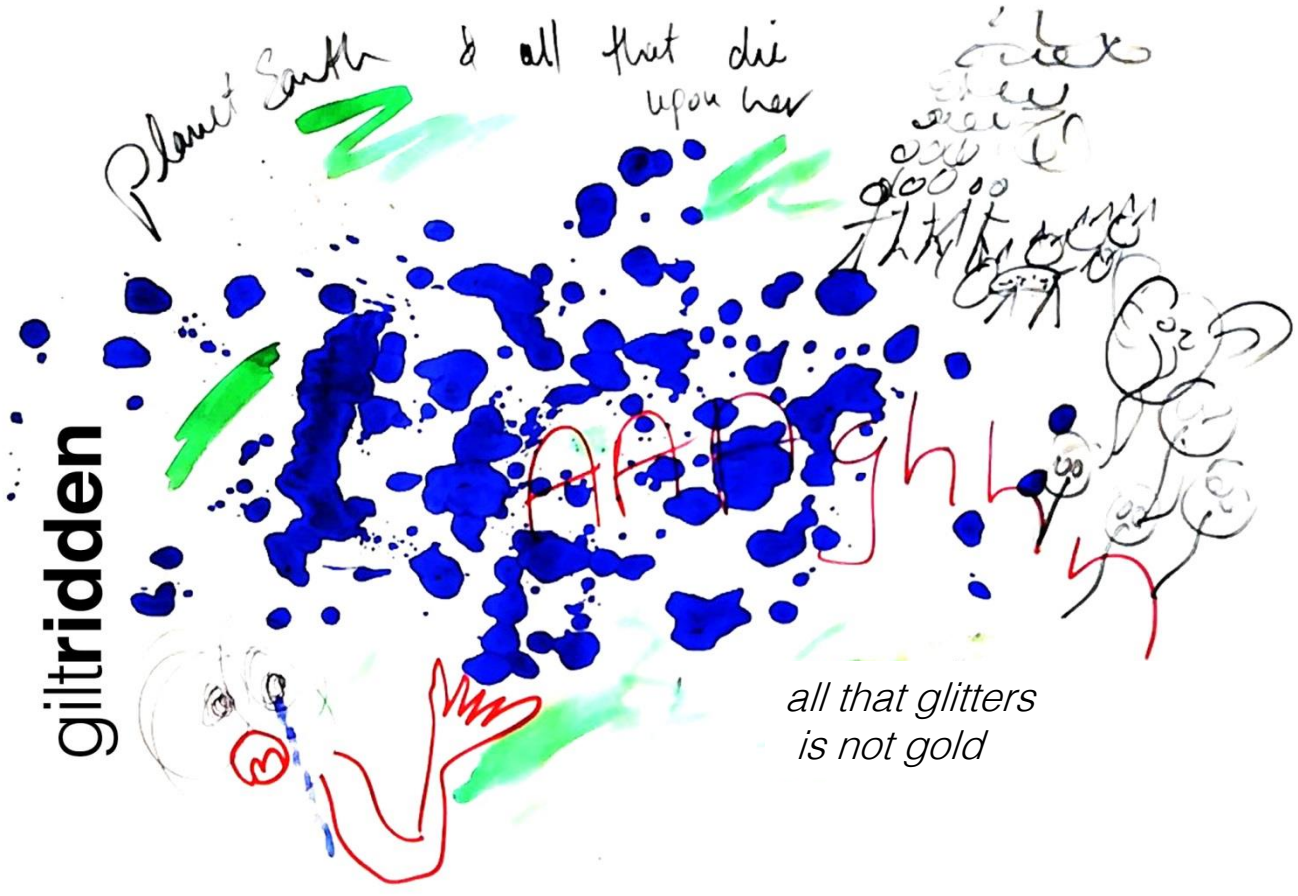
…

grief dragnets me through the ocean, trapped along with millions of fish, sharks, dolphins, turtles and crabs. grief stun-guns my head and bleeds me out onto the blood soaked concrete with billions of factory farmed "*live*"*-stock* ! grief suffocates me as yet another few billion trees are butchered. grief bloats me as plastic blockades our rivers and chemicals poison our seas.

g
r
i
e
f



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neurological nets *with energetic threads* *field*

contract
expans-**i**-on

moving connective tissue

of the morphogenic

appreciate

this **life**
merely
mostly
magnificently
the embryonic womb
expression on larger scale

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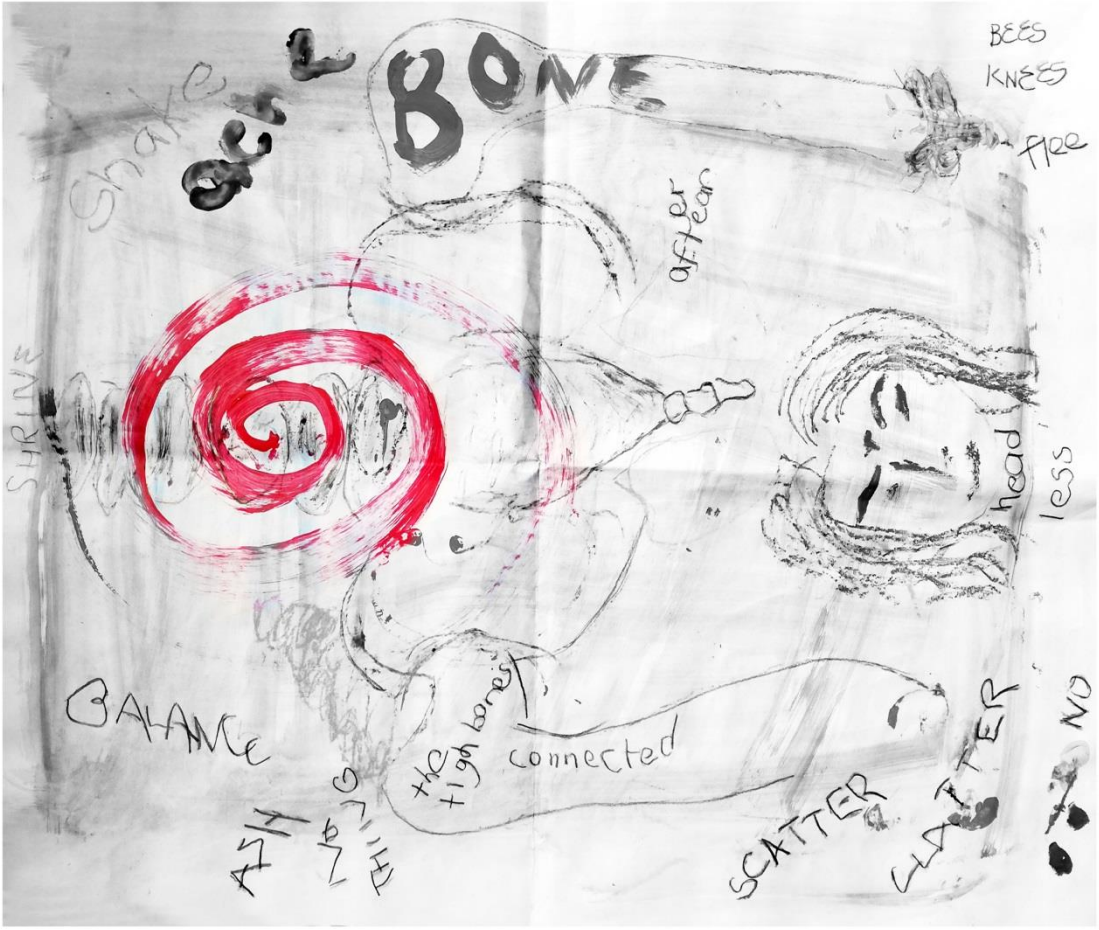


belonging

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os coccygis

near the end
my father
who **danced** me
up from my cot
who soothed
me to sleep
and on
spacious
shoulders bore
me skyward
laughing into
the wind
was
light enough for
me to lift in my
arms generous
enough for
students to pick
his cadaver
loving
enough to
nurture the
plants with his
ashes **my father**
who **danced**
laughing



The Luz or coccyx: a mystical bone of resurrection (Robert Shapiro, 1987) chantal nativel ACT_i_ON 2019



lament for mother

Before you read the poem, i invite you to place light attention on your breath… and feel where the breath moves your belly, and now you're following breath into your belly for a while, and as you do you may allow a picture of your mother to emerge. Breathe into whatever feeling may arise for you. And as you just allow these feelings, imagine your mother's mother behind her, and her mother behind, (take your time, be gentle, that's right) and her mother before that, and all the mothers before. Let yourself breathe deeply through your umbilicus for a while. And then, you might follow your breath to your feet, and through them into Mother Earth below you. That's right. Perhaps you are even feeling how the nourishment returns to you, up through your feet and into your umbilical knot feeding your mother, and your mother's mother, with each breath you are of the Earth, a living seed, a connected spirit, remembering itself.

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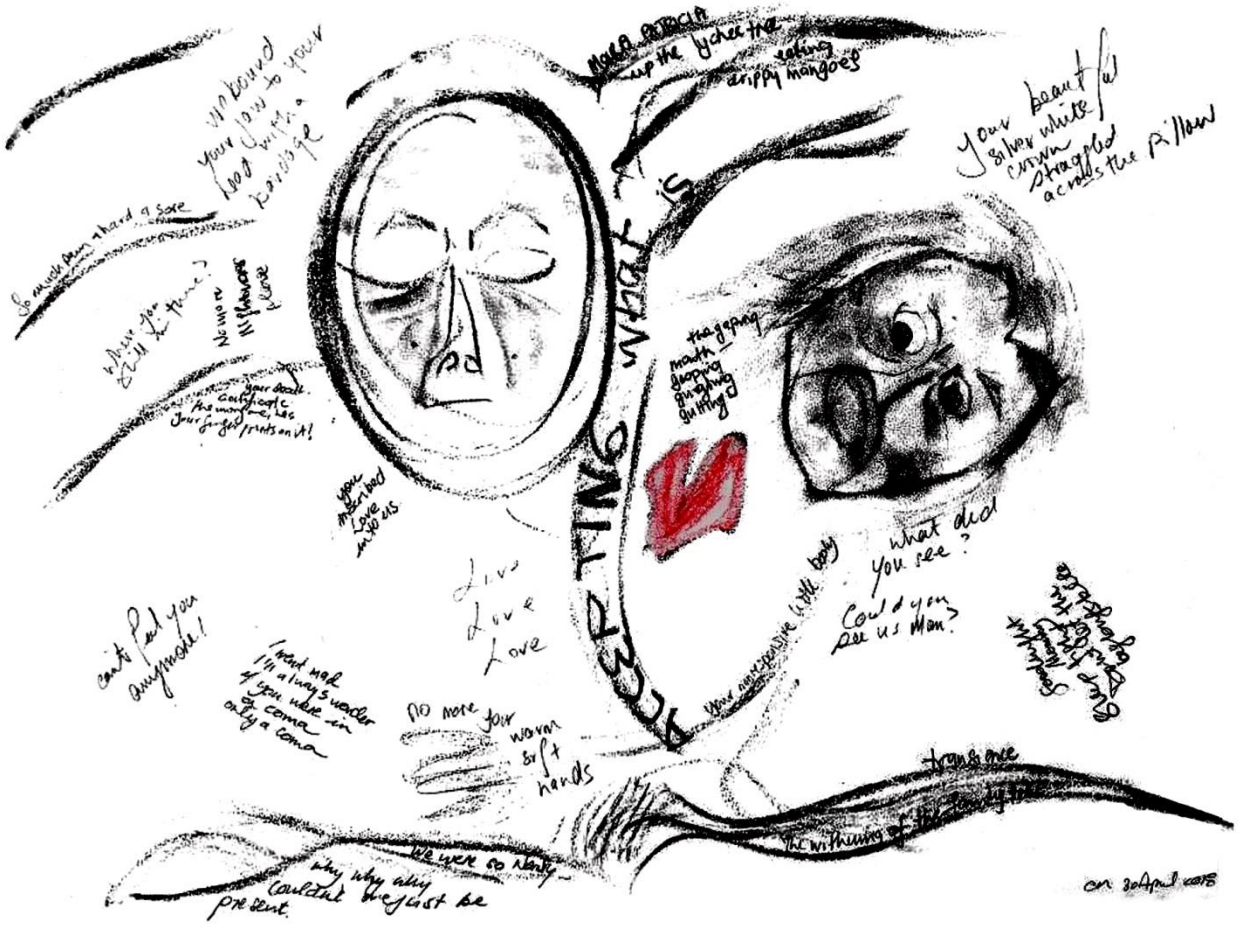
i am undone
untethered
an unbeliever
that you have actually gone
this time
This time
you left
untethered unmentionable are you not going to open your eyes
again
the soft warmth of your hands
How can you
we asked you
we wished you would
to end the suffering and now that you have. My g-dd
so cold you became
your eyes fixed and your breath
That's what they mean
Rasping breath
Breath taking death
There i have said it Death
My mother has left and now
i don't know
and now she's cold and alone and gone but has she really
what happens now when she's dead
My mother dead
My mother dead? Can't be, not her

mamma

In your pyjamas we dressed you - pink plaid
and a grey top with love written on it 3 times
Love
Love
Love

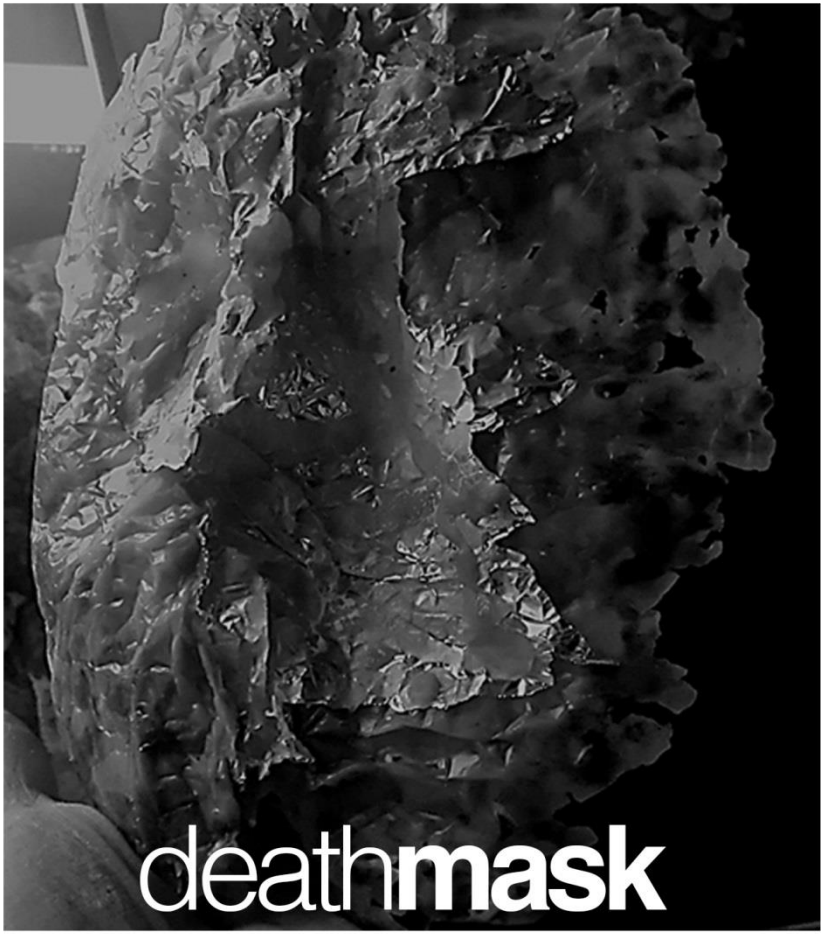
You inscribed love into us
All over us you wrote love
Love of people and trees and mangoes lychee salad animals
Compassion you through and through
My mother so much sore and pain and hard and compassion to fill the ocean
Never again your warm soft hands

mammmaaaaaa



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r
i
t
u
a
l



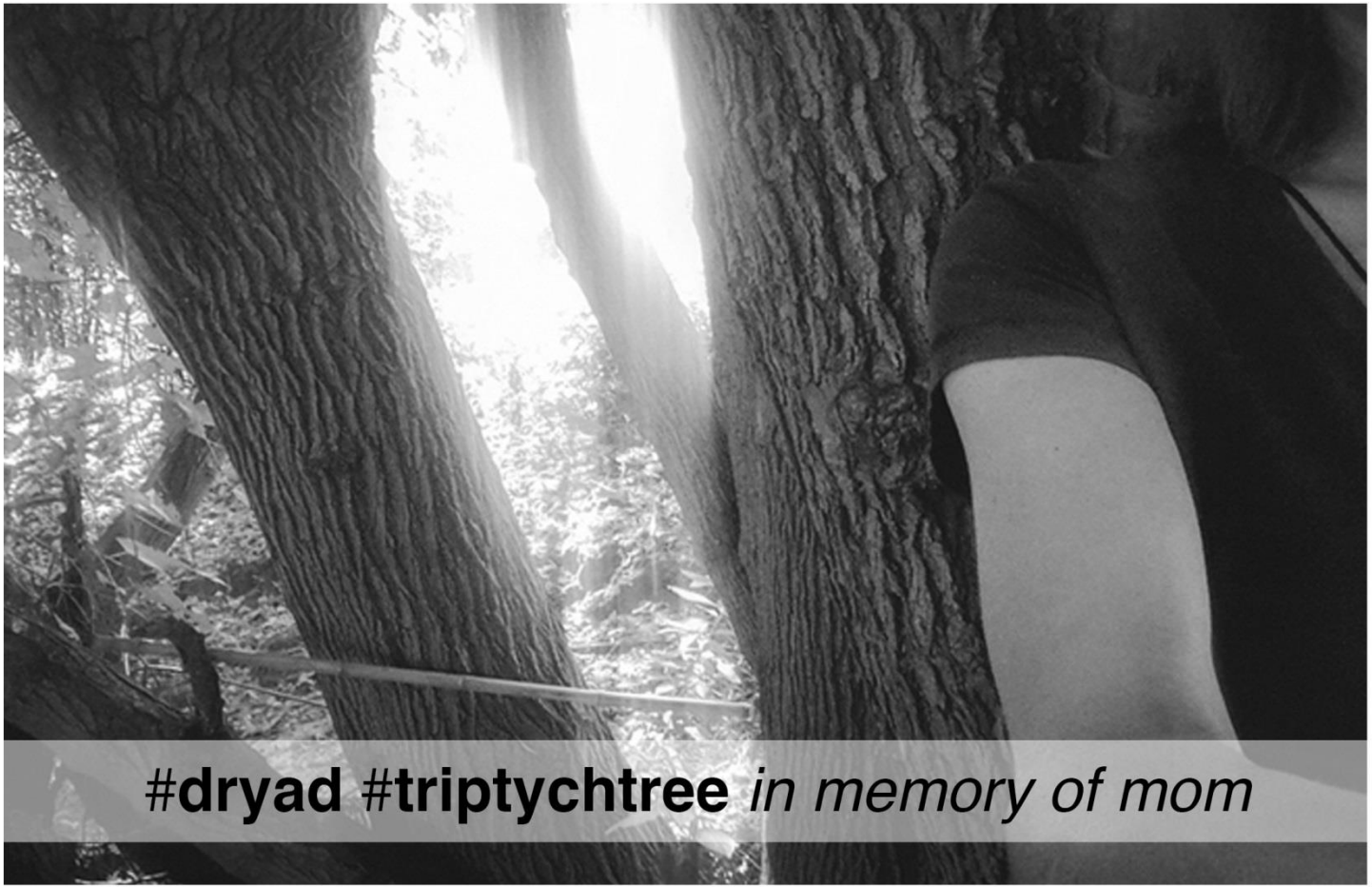
can't
contact grief
i'm numb
not true
i'm angry
as
scared
of
death
as she
was
i'll be so angry
i'll hate
everyone

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a million sorrows rise
how does this body hold them
where do they store when grief sets all the old …
this deluge of pain gains power as the pasts
join and link and gush to the
skinthe monuments of
grief
where did you put
where stuff it
where
waning mind returning past
anxietysuppingdemons
i too am now scared
did your grief steal your mind
your losses and pains and all the not good
enoughs that came back, did they
slowly steal your life
away
slowly
thought by thought, and word by word?

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Dryad: nature spirit who lives in trees [“Dryad | Greek mythology,” n.d.]

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my aging
energy is
hard soft *difficult*
to locate subtly
subtly retiring
no impulse to spar or
thrust or quest
i'm asked to roll,
move, react, jump,
thrust.
i want stillness
or contained focused
micro-movement
... i want to stop
except when outside
outside i want to
walk. explore.



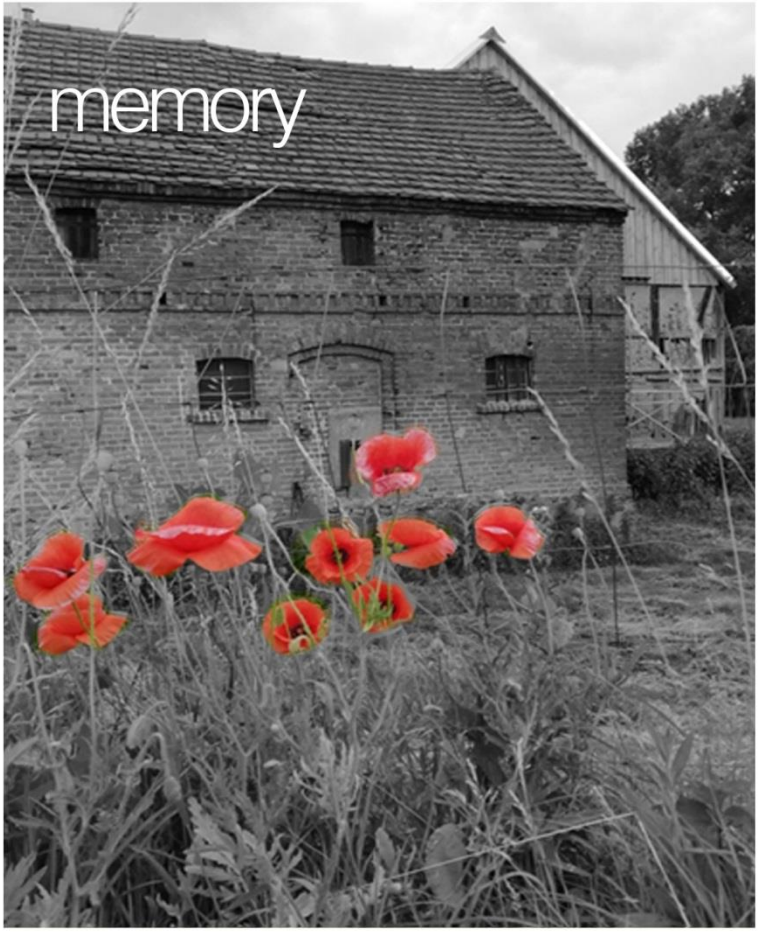
is this the same for the Earth?

the abused aged
Earth struggling
with things rolling
jumping
poking her

retire: to retreat

retir**ing**: process of
disengagement

retiring: to become
tired again



i'm walking across the bridge back over the river. i went for a run. Bales of hay, and the most astonishing crane sounds, and this bizarre sense of safety.
i'm one of the few people awake. Birds are still waking.
It's incredibly beautiful and it really feels incredibly peaceful. i feel like a huge layer of armour has been removed from me.
i'm looking at red poppies.
It makes me think of all the wars, Flanders Fields. Standing in Germany. A sense of my grandfather and uncle in prisoner of war camps … can't get the camps out of my head …

life is a bowl of cherries eat your **heart** out feed your soul

soul is a bowl eat cherries feed

bowl out life

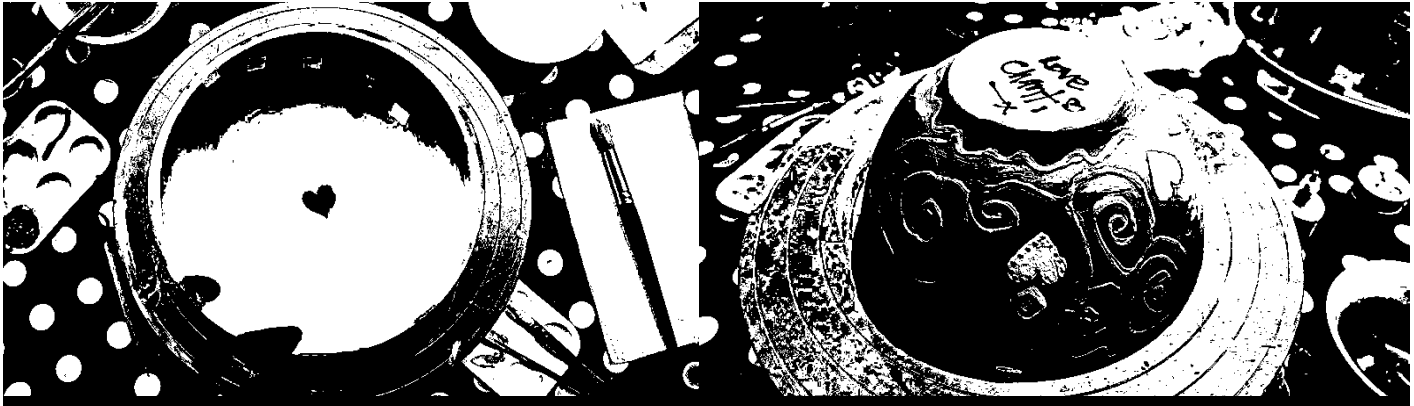
eat heart feed

your life

soul cherries

eat your heart a bowl of life

eat your soul



spiral**InSIDE**out**SIDE**spiral

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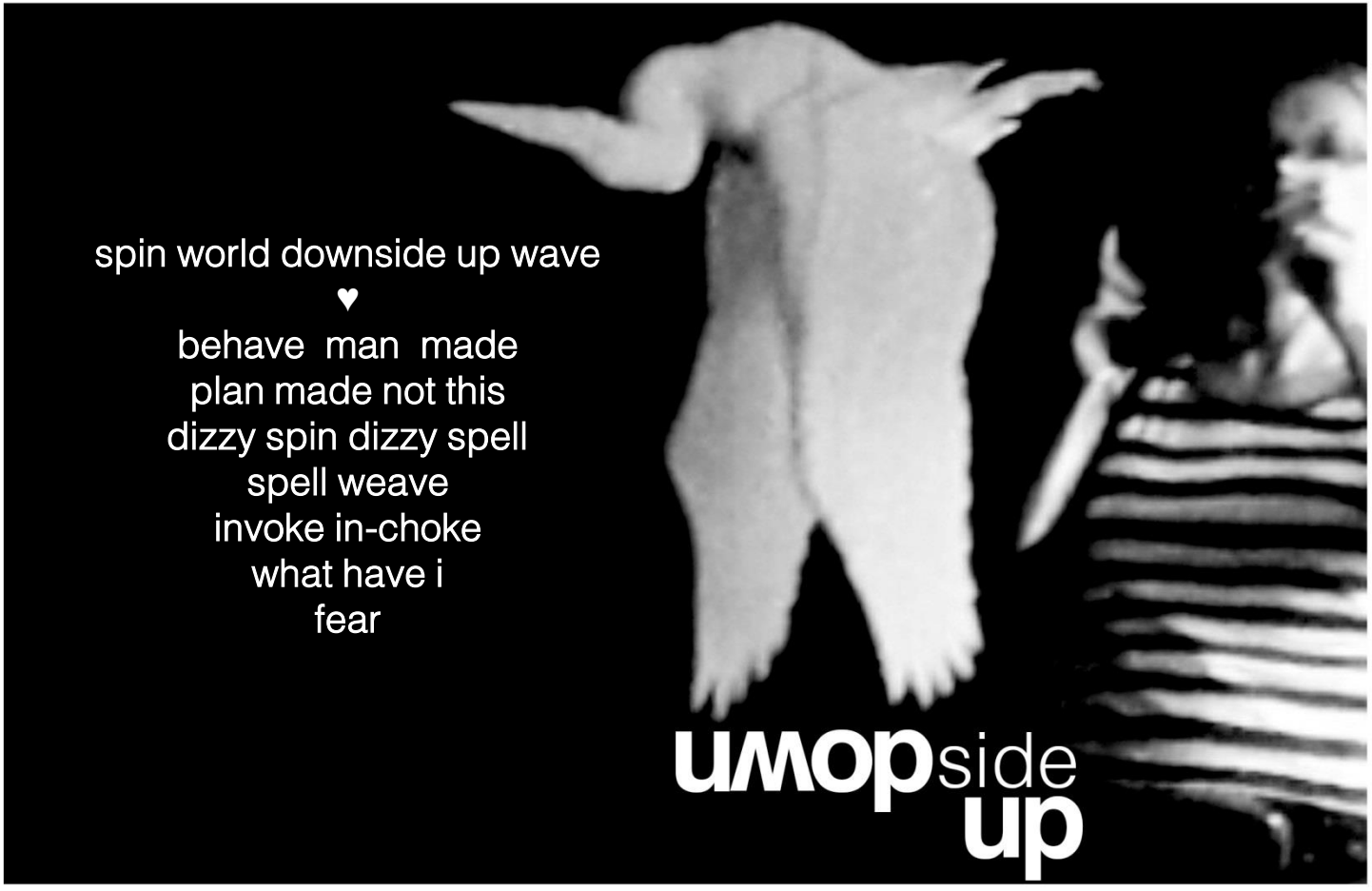
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every time i cooked breakfast and entered the pantry - an awkward narrow space secured by an old wooden door fortified with a heavy latch, i'd wonder how many people had hidden in there during wars
every time i gazed out at the barn opposite with its dense double doors and small top window from what would have been the old hay loft above the milking shed, i felt the sniper's rifle trained on my forehead, and heard the chaffing ropes pendululming bodies of agitators and innocents
every time i strode along a cobbled street flanked with vibrant hanging baskets and windows framing orchids, i walked abreast another 4 and 20 in goose-stepping precision
every time a leaf crunched or twig broke in the forest i favoured, scraggly blood-smeared ghosts soaked into boughs

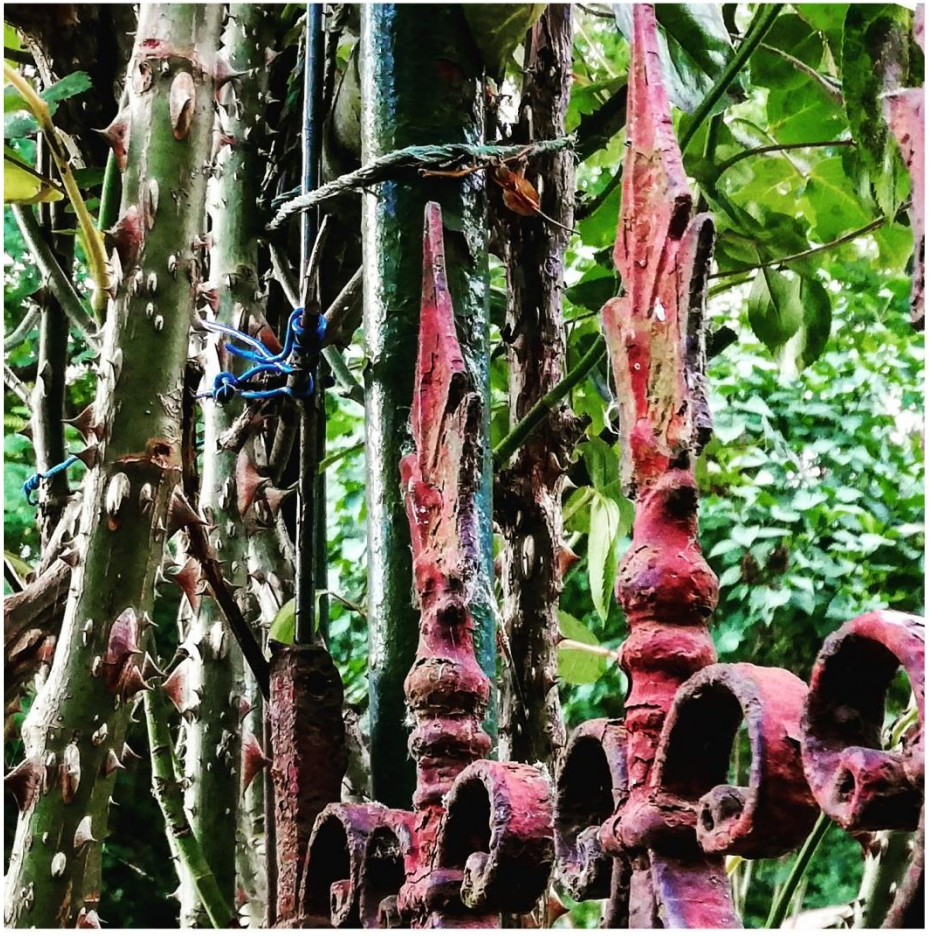
a pantry isn't a pantry, a barn isn't a barn, a street's not a street, nor a forest a forest - what shall we leave behind?

once upon a time i overheard …





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fairytale

meeting the brittle edges as i walk
chaff stone trauma experience loss grief
thorny edges pokey edges
sticking out appendages with tendrils
warning bells, learned behaviour

how hard our scar tissue is
it loses its pliability
losing our ability to weave, like
challah bread, strands have been
worked and worked and kneaded
so that they s t r e t c h
and**stick**together & **stay**together.

these edges, these weavings of
life, meeting our edges,
knowing when to be in fear
and not to be in fear

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The other day i ran. Only person i saw was an old man on a bicycle and i was so … i remarked to everyone how safe i felt. Today out running, i see a tractor, farish. And i prickle, then it goes past the junction, and i breath a deep sigh. Then the sound changes, and it turns direction and starts to come towards me, and on my right is a maize field, on my left is a maize field.

And i wonder where can i escape. i see trees. i think the driver can plough through the field no matter where i ran. If i go up a tree he'll just wait. And i wonder how long it'll take him to find me.

All the fear and memory. All i've read, seen, heard. And i wonder - why would i feel safe?

It doesn't matter my age, dress, anything … and i'm thinking about women, lured under false pretences for work in fields such as these, all around the world. Women sold! Night after night. Repeatedly raped. Women lined-up for men who are working the farms, spilling semen and not caring, and then tending crops, but i suppose it's not much tending.

i can see the church steeple from where i'm walking now.

All he needs to do is drive over me a few times with the harvester. But i'm hoping that my leopard print pants stick to the machine. Somewhere at some time someone will find a piece of fabric, and he won't get away with it. (Sigh)

But here are purple flowers, and white flowers, and red, and thistles, sand and cobbles and cranes and ducks and hares.

And it is exceptionally beautiful. It is pastoral. It is astonishing.

It is unbelievably beautiful

How unbelievably beautiful it is.

tendrils

whirling



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into the **briars**

last night was the solstice. i had **nothing to offer**.
one of the oldest in the group and **couldn't offer**
a song, couldn't offer a ritual. i, i **couldn't offer**
a dance. i couldn't offer - there was **nothing**
that i **offered**.
a sense of emptiness. a sense of sadness,
a sense of, of redundancy

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dead

is gone
is not here with me anymore
is never to be here again
is all memory

a diminishing sensory experience

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brittle
brittle edges
brittle centre
the world a shard of brittle
cutting bone and the
flesh
tattered torn

i
rough crushed
underfoot
i
the egg shells others tip toe
around

but still the aloes tint the sky
pink



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what is my expectation of
being alive
in the world

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In*spiralINSPIRINGInspirational

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i
stole ♥
Midsummer, like an
invader, a conqueror
absorbed it as my own
tried on all the rituals hoping
some would fit



when i allow myself to connect to my memory of my mom or dad or rosie, i get teary, and i feel my heart expand, and i acknowledge how very much i loved them. how very much i miss them, the spaces where they were have been filled in, but not in my head or my heart, those are in my cells and i'm actually filled with them, right now, they are in me, around me, i am them. and i thank them, i tell them i'm so sorry for when i was irritated and didn't have enough time to just be in loving full breath with them, and i send heart love to them



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observations of a contemplative movement session with objects - person with fern tattoo curving around their neck proudly carries a long steel pole. this totem, adorned with high-top nikes, is paraded around the room. a doe made of hard plastic with 3 broken legs is carefully carried and laid down in the centre of the space. it is wrapped in a blanket. a few people gather, quietly, and one strokes, in a gentle smooth manner, the person who has placed the doe there, someone ties ribbons around the doe's neck. later another comes to offer the doe water from a green plastic watering can.

chaos breaks out. power struggles. masked people. interactions.

i sit on the side, using my object as prayer beads. there are beautiful moments of structure – rhythms that move through the room. a large emerald green dragon is dislodged from the rafters and transported dangerously around. with 7 of the 37 minutes left, i'm compelled to enter the space fully! i crawl to the doe - lying on her side covered by blankets. i lay her head in my lap and repeat –
buddha of compassion have mercy on us, rocking to and fro. someone comes and rocks me more. someone else tries to tie a thread through my plastic yellow prayer beads - i snatch my hand away.



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bike rides to lakes and stolpe
and cake and raspberry ice cream made from the milk
of **happy cows free roaming**! a nursery of two mommies
and about seven or eight babies.

walked in long single file back to the herd,
after being taken to the tanker for water. one baby
running after mama - one mama gently nosing another
to move a little faster. a run broke out amongst them -
playing, racing, kicking their heels

pure delight

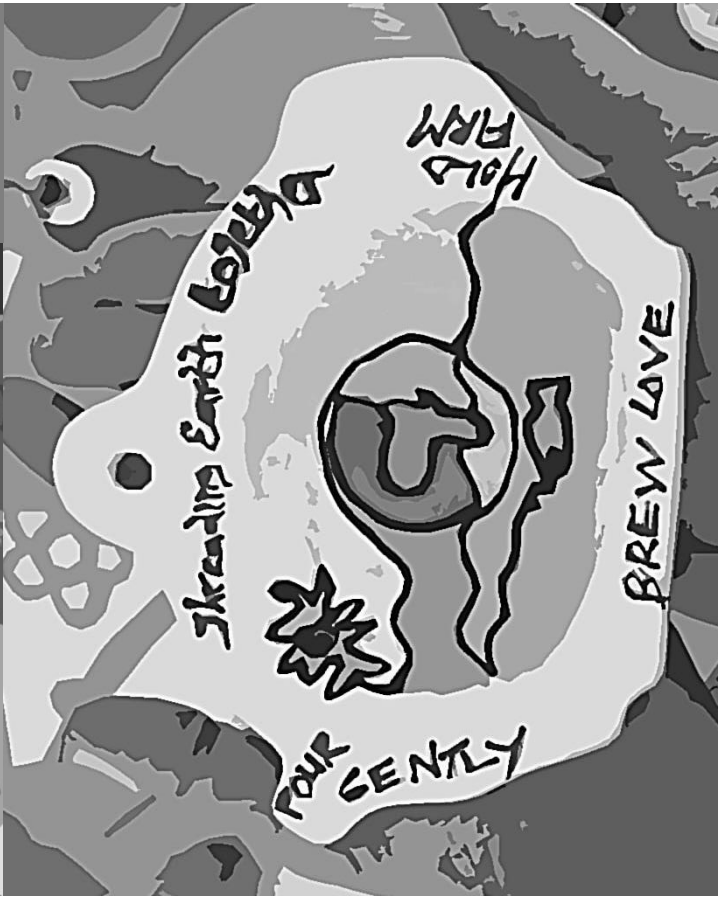
puredelight



inspiration

expiration>







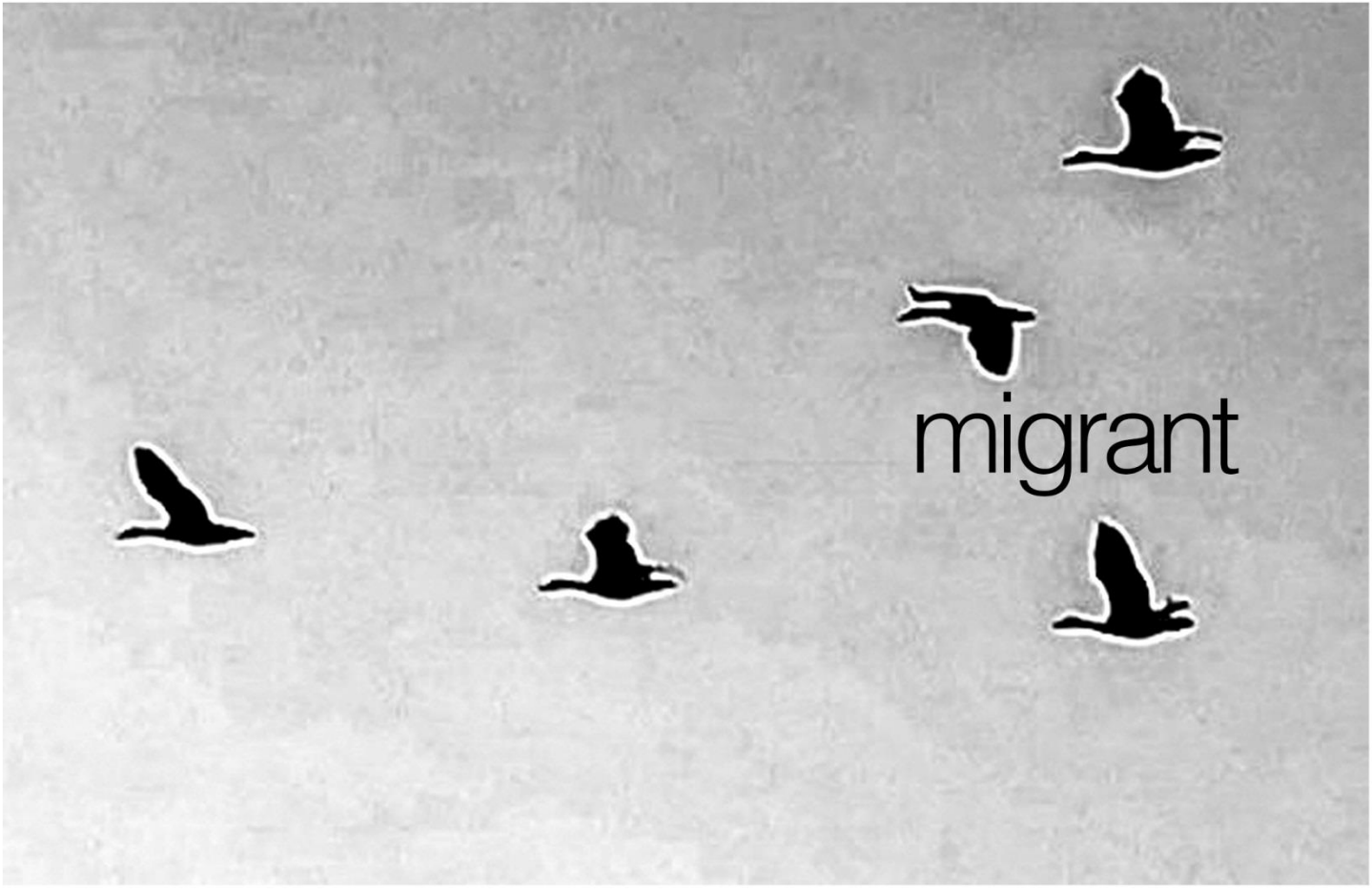
a prayer for the earth

all is not lost

all is lost

who's-the-boss-at-what-cost-

lookout-no-more-permafrost



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accepting what is

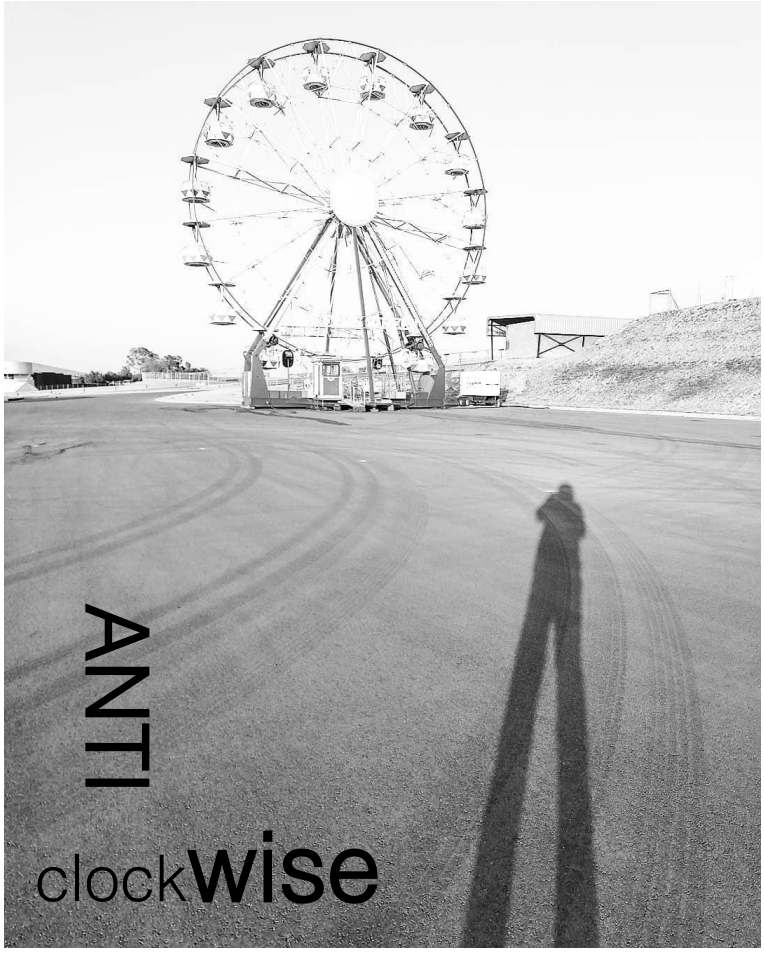
this is time for radical action!

accepting?

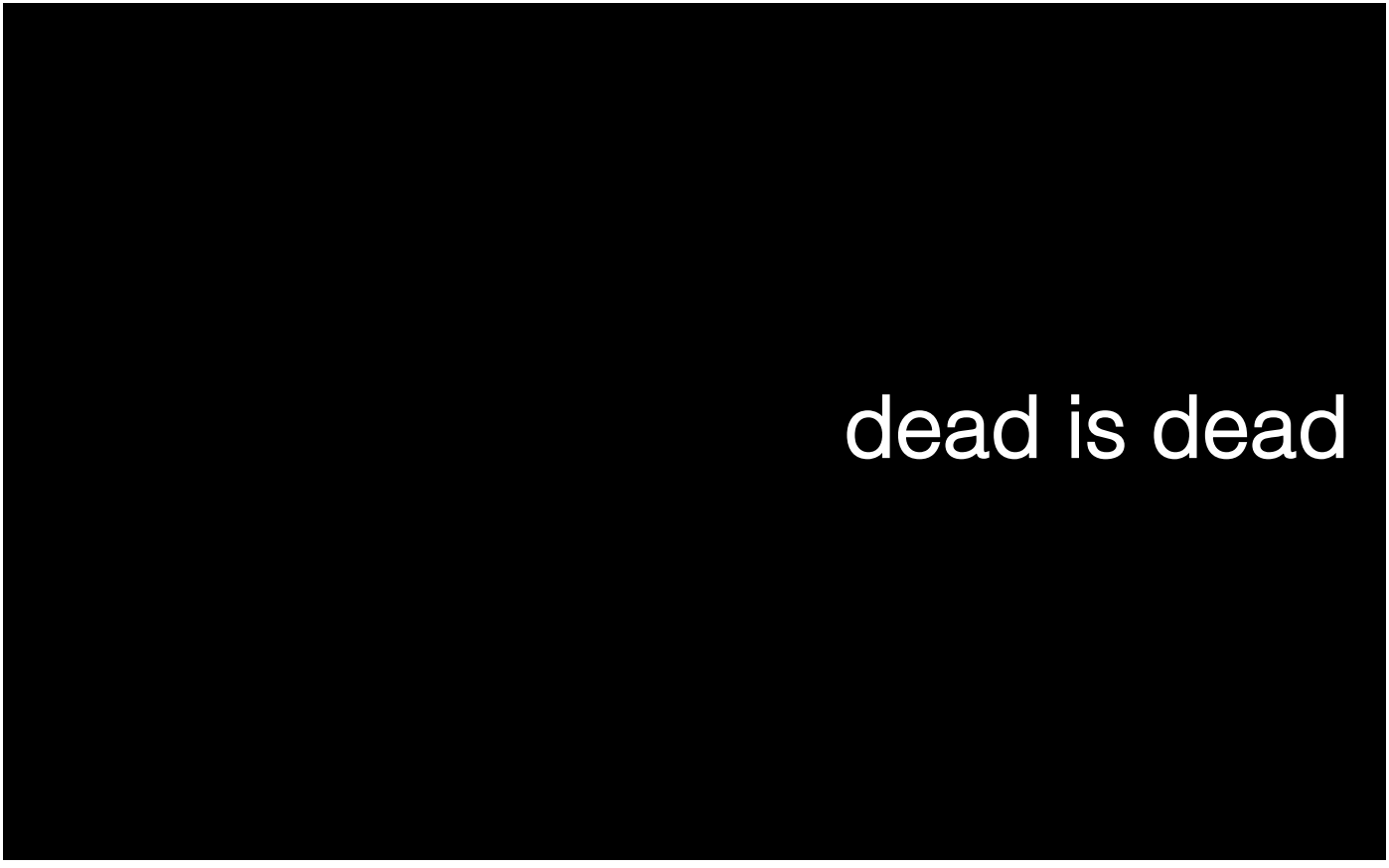
what is … this?

is there time for radical action?

only radicals take action
radical actions take time
is time a free radical?
time accept radicals
~~debate … oops too late~~



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dead is dead

speaking about this and we kept coming back to the thought that

flowers grow through the cracks …

if there's 10 000 years (or whatever that awful number is),
and all the pollution in the whales, and the plastics, and toxic air, and no food and everything that we've killed off,
whatever survives with its own nuclear mutations grows to be a new Something …
isn't that what happened after the dinosaurs and other extinctions?
all this massive die-off! surely an asteroid would be better, quicker.
but we, we're cruel, deeply cruel.
so there's a hawk that's riding the air currents above me
what pain and suffering will we cause it …



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the
world
isn't
ending
time
is just
bending
away
from
you
and
me



mindful**embody**ments

♫dobe**do**bedoooo♫♪

practiced**rich-uals**

keep me afloat

> healing balm

run-walk

walk-run

breakfast-making, walk-spirals, taking photos, swims, run-walks, home-rituals, crafts work, and of course breath, let's not forget breath here people! and we're breathing …

move

home-rituals n crafty stuff

swimming

breathing

deep

here rub on this >>

my thoughts are always under construction

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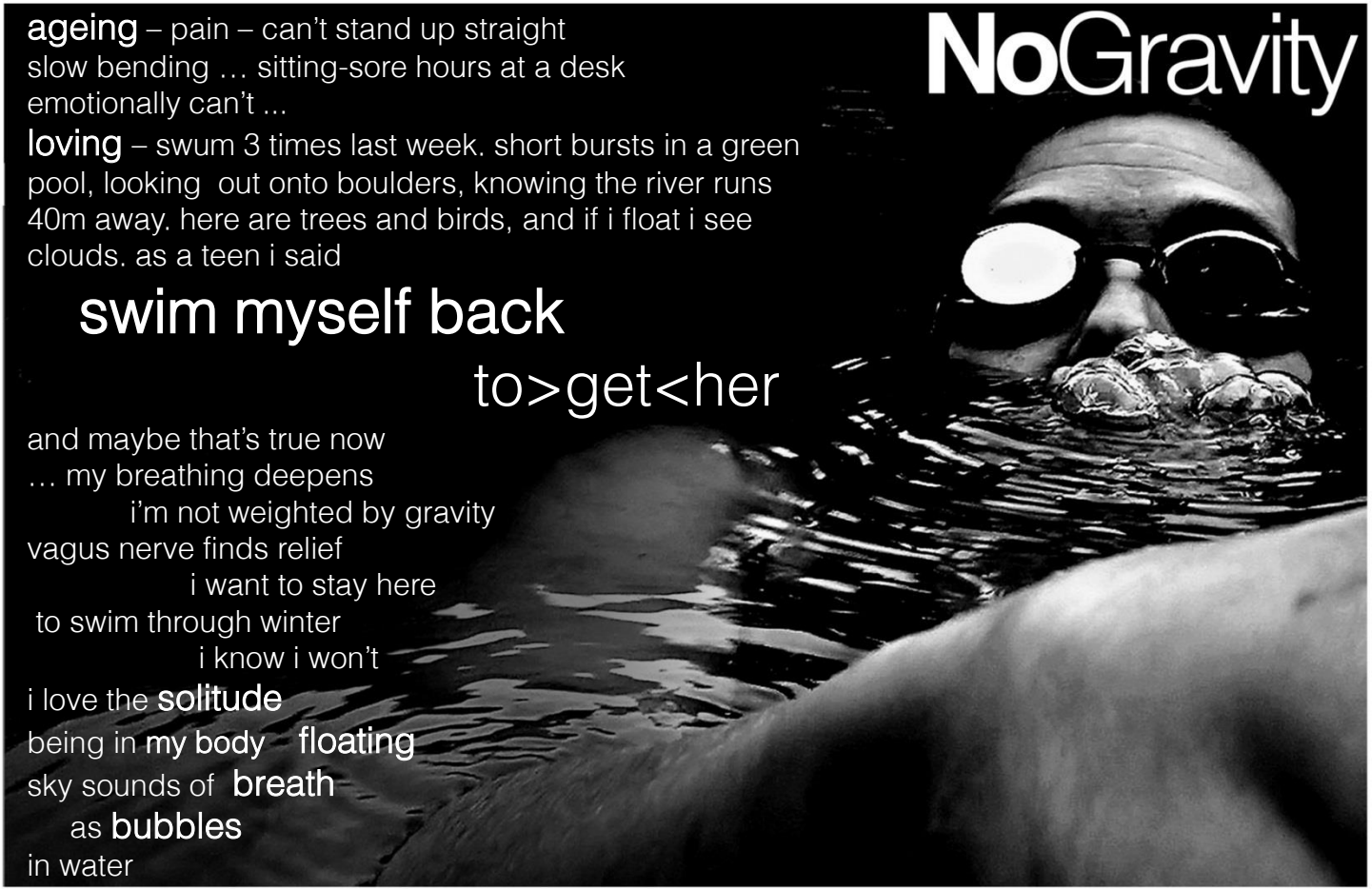
NoGravity

ageing – pain – can't stand up straight
slow bending … sitting-sore hours at a desk
emotionally can't ...
loving – swum 3 times last week. short bursts in a green pool, looking out onto boulders, knowing the river runs 40m away. here are trees and birds, and if i float i see clouds. as a teen i said

swim myself back

to>get<her

and maybe that's true now
… my breathing deepens
i'm not weighted by gravity
vagus nerve finds relief
i want to stay here
to swim through winter
i know i won't
i love the **solitude**
being in **my body** **floating**
sky sounds of **breath**
as **bubbles**
in water

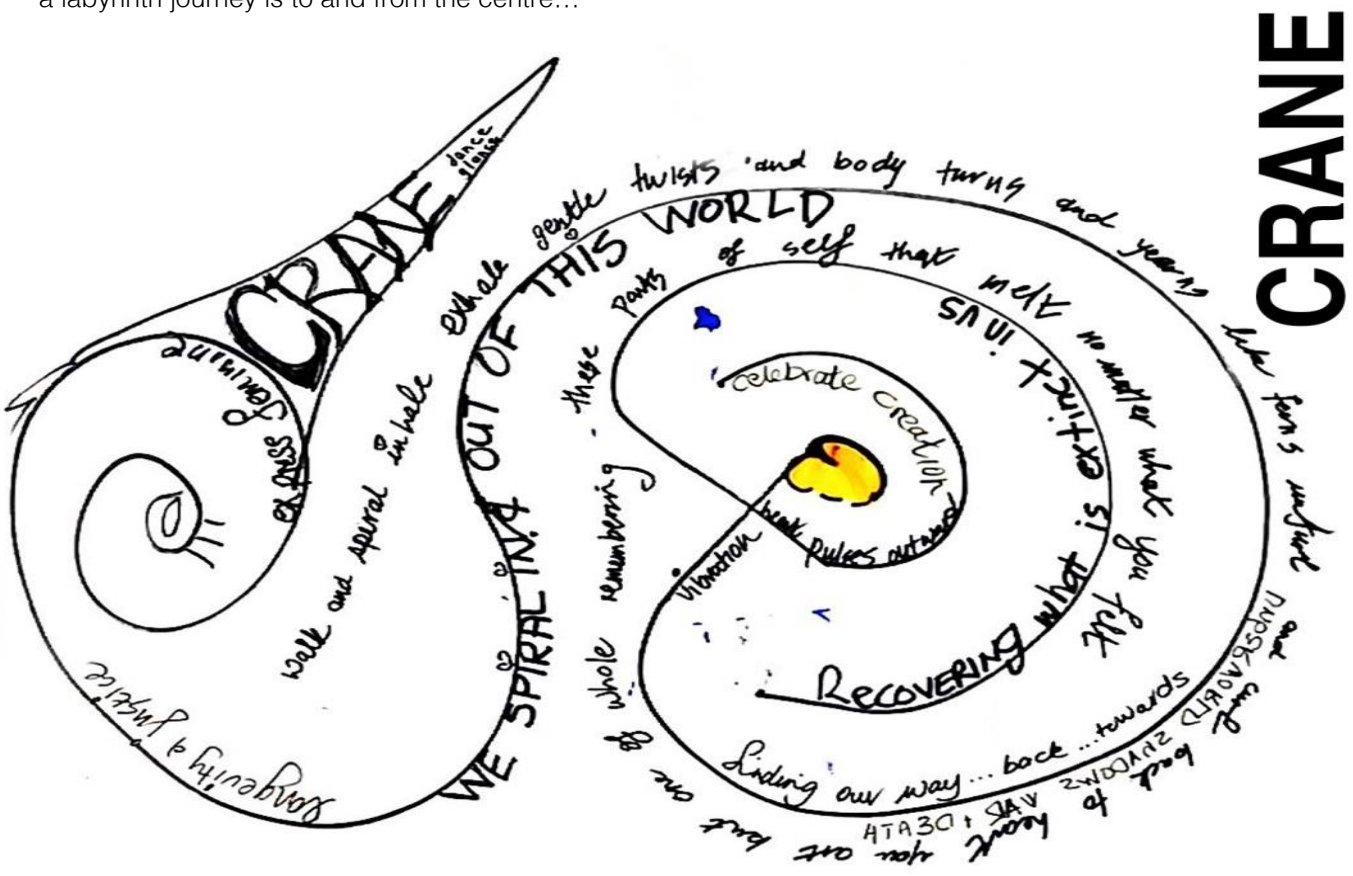


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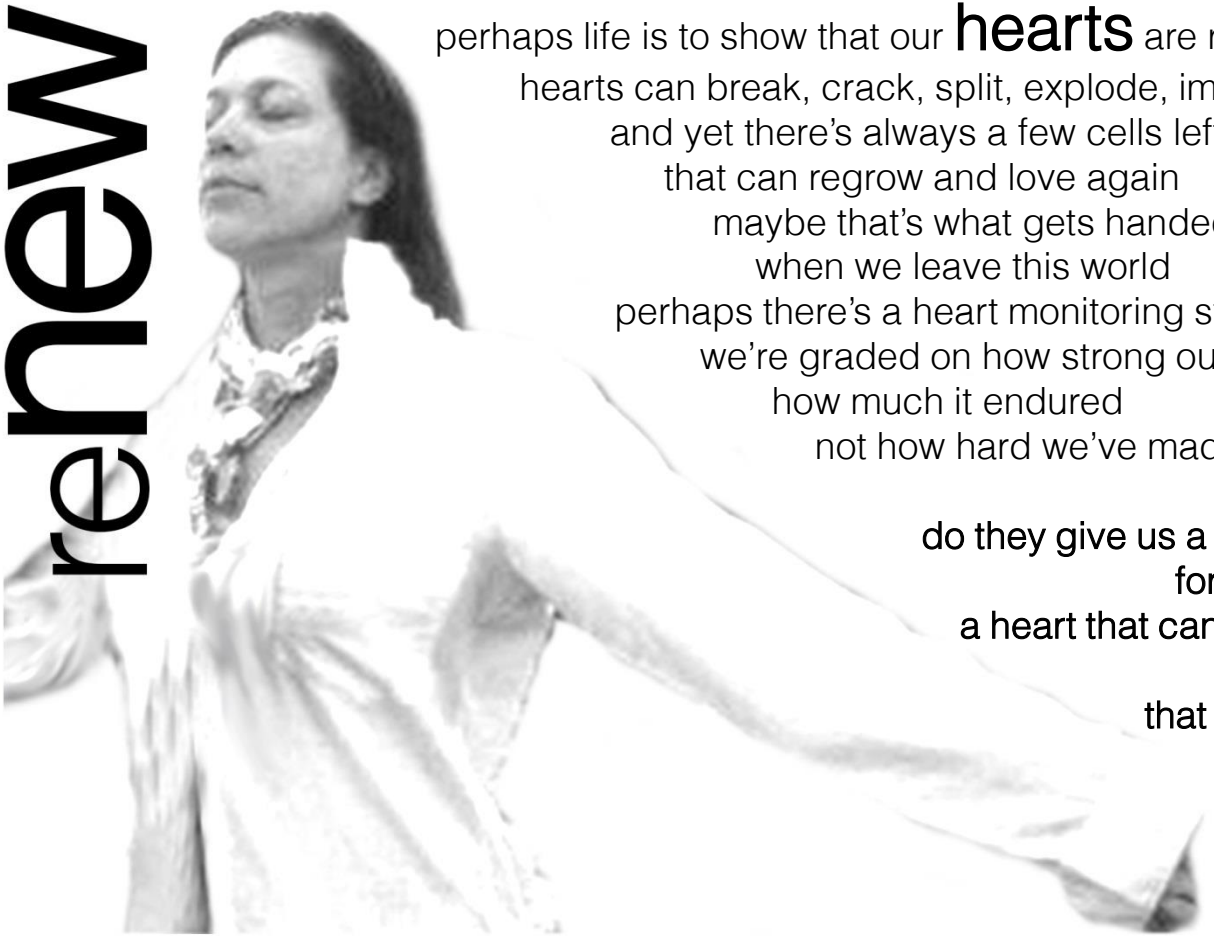
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a labyrinth journey is to and from the centre…



GREEK SAYING - In your wound is your genius.
Communal (upper) grief
shatters the heroic fiction of individualism
Speak out
Reach out
listen
THANKS FRANCIS WELLER! for Sacred GRIEF
(Rabbe 2019)
Thu outrageous courage of the body
Rema Chandra
① Effing I ♡ I will lose
② Pets that never knew love
③ Sorrows of the World
④ What we expected + didn't get
⑤ Ancestral
commune

renew



perhaps life is to show that our **hearts** are renewable
hearts can break, crack, split, explode, implode
and yet there's always a few cells left
that can regrow and love again
maybe that's what gets handed-in
when we leave this world
perhaps there's a heart monitoring station where
we're graded on how strong our heart was
how much it endured
not how hard we've made our hearts

do they give us a better model
for the next trip?
a heart that can endure more,
or a life
that breaks it less?

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we can only
pick up a foot
breathe a breath
in the deep pain
there is the absolute
miracle of life itself



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Photo credits : i've photographed most images. i've collaged original dance photos of myself taken by Ludger Storcks. Olivia Flowers' image for **breathe**abreath. My father is credited with the image for **spiral**in**spiral**out. No photographer credits for : loom, hide, renew, belonging, a pantry.

Glossaryl definitions :

*Anima mundi "A principle regarded by some as animating the universe much as the human soul animates man's body. The notion of an organic and living world ruled by spiritual forces rather than by mechanical laws" ("World Soul (Anima Mundi) | Encyclopedia.com," 2019)

*Definition of anima mundi : a vital force or principle conceived of as permeating the world ("Definition of ANIMA MUNDI," n.d.)

"… a sense of personal wholeness that involves physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of human experience….: Healing is the personal experience of the transcendence of suffering." (Egnew, T. R. (2005). The Meaning Of Healing: Transcending Suffering. Annals of Family Medicine, 3(3), 255–262. https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.313)

Trauma: "An experience … that we perceive as overwhelming. It may feel inescapable and it occurs outside of our control. At some level conscious or unconscious trauma feels life threatening even if it does not actually put our lives in danger." (Mead MD, V. (2018). The Chronic Illness & Trauma Connection Series Book 1.)

Os coccygis: "The word luz in Hebrew and Aramaic ... associated with the coccyx. The belief that this one was indestructible and would give rise to the resurrection of the dead in Psalms 34:21 (1) ...
indebted to embryologists ... the coccyx contains the vestige of the primitive neural tube" (Robert Shapiro, 1987). Luz The Mystical Bone of Resurrection. RSNA, VOL. 163(3). Retrieved from https://pubs.rsna.org)

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dedicationsgratitude

My beloved parents Pat & Neville, who saw me into the world as i saw them out
loves i've lost - furry and non-furry
and all sentient beings, and minerals
and the stuff we can't see and the stuff we can
and Life in general and specific
and you and me and Life as sore and magnificent as it can be
and Mother Earth and the miracle of creation

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