

BETTER SAID IN VERSE

GEORGINA & VAISHNAVI



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To my Queer Family
- Georgina

PROLOUGE

Two feminine voices from Uttarakhand, each from different generations, yet they share the love for art and verse. This book, *Better Said In Verse*, brings their musings and moments, the highs and lows, falling in love and even out of it, not just in verse but also in compelling and delightful visuals.

Vaishnavi and Georgina present their labour of love, which compels women to tell their stories in their own voice and on their own terms. Pick it up and read lines that you may identify with or even if you may disagree, it's a point of view that cannot be ignored.

Better Said In Verse isn't just a collection of poems. It's a conversation across time. It weaves together the personal and the universal, the spoken and the unspoken, the softness of memory and the sharpness of truth.

Whether you're flipping through on a quiet evening or searching for something to stir your soul, this book is for anyone who has ever felt deeply, loved wholly, or stood in silence trying to put feelings into words.

With immense gratitude to those who have journeyed with me. To my mentors for their guiding light, my colleagues and collaborators for their creative magic, my friends for their joy, and my family for their unwavering love. Each of you has, in your own way, shaped not only this book but also the person I am becoming. Thank you for being an irreplaceable part of these experiences.

-Vaishnavi

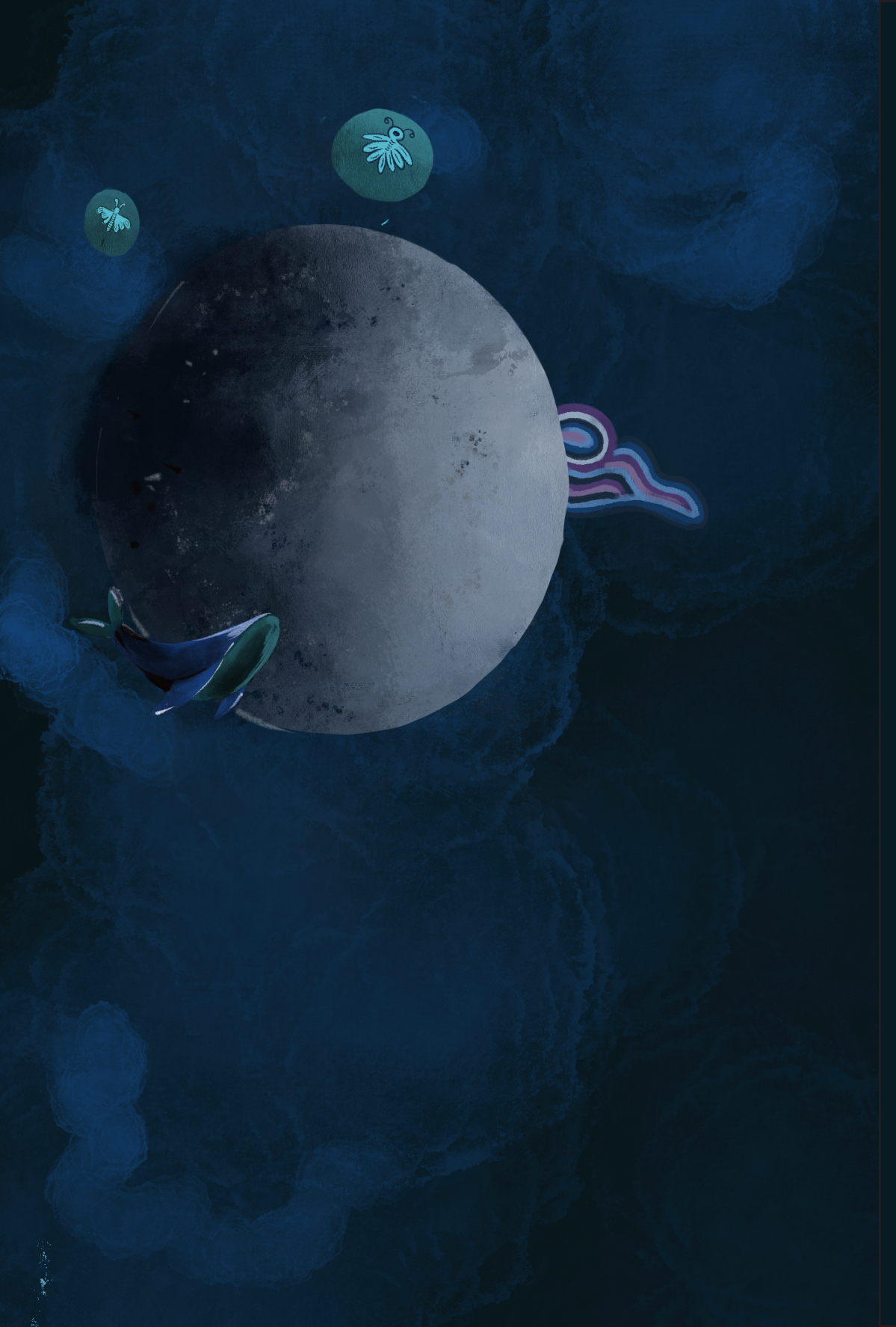
CONTENTS

Georgina Maddox

1. Awareness in Flight.....	1
2. Restore Me.....	3
3. Condition Report.....	5
4. Maps of the Mind.....	6
5. The eyes have it.....	16
6. The fear of love.....	18
7. Dream of Distress.....	20
8. Lines of Venom.....	21
9. Your Marks.....	23
10. Momentary Lapse.....	26
11. Pain Sings.....	30
12. Heartbreakers Club.....	33
13. Waking... ..	39
14. Blood Sangria.....	41
15. Value Changes.....	42
16. Conversations in a Café.....	44
17. Fishing feeling.....	46
18. Sleepless in Silence.....	48
19. Odes of Origin.....	49
20. Memory.....	50

Vaishnavi Balodi

1. Quiet Becoming.....	4
2. Back then at Ten.....	8
3. Home.....	9
4. Words.....	11
5. Unplanned Arrival.....	12
6. Stone.....	13
7. Things Happened.....	14
8. What Stayed.....	17
9. Paper Light.....	19
10. Sleep Stories.....	22
11. Gone too soon.....	24
12. Mine.....	25
13. In The Not-Yet.....	27
14. Place Like Cocoa.....	29
15. Pink Is The New Blue.....	34
16. The Sight I Miss.....	35
17. My Heart.....	37
18. Suffering.....	40
19. Under the Weather.....	51
20. Half Alive.....	52



Awareness in Flight

The New Moon
Winks out of the dark azure
The turbulent flight
Shakes you from side to side
It's like a gentle whale
Full with the clouds of the spring night.

You like Jonah, imagine it is...
Gauge the shaking of your heart...
Once again it beats.
Like a trapped butterfly,
Against the net of your ribs.

Once again you
moisten your lips...
This time you drink water
You drown your memories.

You wish the cold window
Of the airplane,
Could cool your burning soul.
Settle your beating butterfly.

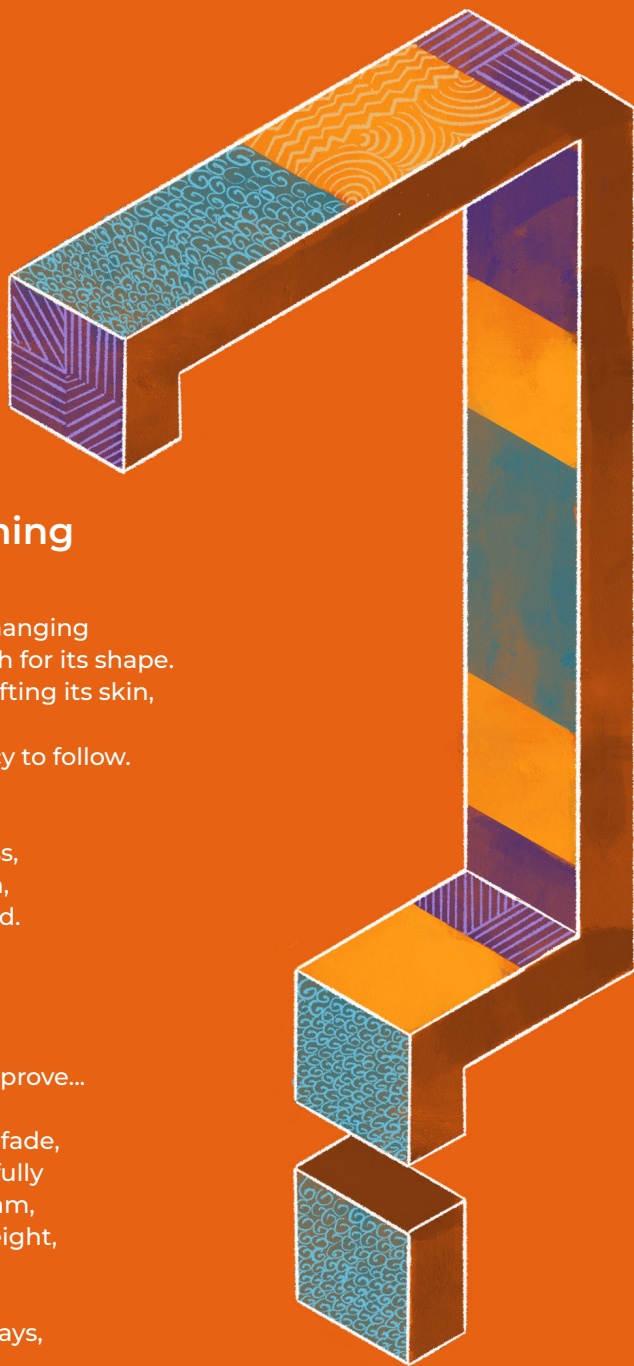
Soothe your aching heart,
And your troubled mind could, rest like the whale as
It lands on the bed of the asphalt earth.

Another sip of water and you will be home.
Where you can lie in the cocoon of dreams.
Once more you can meet the Saint of Sin.



Restore Me

Protecting memories,
She wraps it in foil,
she stores it in a drawer.
She arranges it in attractive straight lines...
The jewels of the past
The paintings of history,
The little objects,
Part of the drama of life..
What of the peeling walls,
Of our souls...
How will she restore that?
How great her task,
To slow the aging hands of time...
How necessary,
Yet how futile.
Decay is inevitable;
Yet she fights with it...
Tussling down hillocks
Of objects.
Wrestling them into,
Protective little boxes.
Smoothens paper,
With her long tapering fingers,
Whispers to them lullabies,
Sleep in the arms of
My protection...
For time is my friend,
I've served him tea.
So he's occupied,
He won't dismember you,
In a hurry,
As he usually does,
I've slowed him down.



Quiet Becoming

There's a question hanging
but I no longer reach for its shape.
The world keeps shifting its skin,
faster than breath,
and I feel no urgency to follow.
I move slower now,
not out of defiance,
but because stillness,
feels more like truth,
than motion ever did.
There is comfort
in slowness,
in doing something
not for gain,
without needing to prove...
One day,
when the noise will fade,
I'll return to myself fully
or maybe I already am,
just beneath the weight,
that hasn't learned,
how to leave,
And if the weight stays,
I'll carry it gently.
into my rest.

Condition Report

I drank too much
To forget the pain.
The pain of seeing you
Again.
Of seeing you but I'm
Forbidden to touch
Which makes me
Want to,
Ever so much.

I feel trapped
In my own head
And I look for answers
Lying in bed.

All I get is forbidden dreams
And they seems so real
That I'm ready to scream.

If screaming made them.
Materialize...
Then I'd have no more
tears brimming in my
Eyes.



Maps of the Mind

When the city holds memory,
Like a fragile cup
to your lips.
Broken a little bit by time,
But strong against
the wind of change.
You drink whole heartedly
Till you are drunk...
with the strands of
Memory and change...
Then you let her in.
You allow the newness
To caress you,
Into sleep.
Sun 6 AM (23:21)
With the violence of Delhi
On my back.
Imprinted in dark
Purple bruises.
I roam the quiet morning-
Streets of Mumbai.
All the shops are closed.
A young man,
Takes his bath.
In front of the rolled down shutter of a
fast-food restaurant;
His lithe body,
Covered in soap,
Oddly sensual...
Against the folded metal.
I hide my gaze,
In my camera.
Focusing on the
Parsi Agyari instead,
The imprint of the city...
Come alive again.
It is different from
what I remember.
Cities are allowed
to change.



The background is a dark green field filled with stylized palm trees. The trees have long, thin trunks and large, fan-like fronds. In the foreground, there are large, swirling, concentric green shapes that resemble waves or ripples in water. A small, light-colored figure of a person is sitting on one of these waves, looking down. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

Back then at Ten

A quiet ache,
from long ago.
A memory,
I didn't choose to know.

At ten, I felt
a kind of storm,
with no clear shape,
no certain form.

Back then,
I didn't understand,
just held on tight
to empty hands.

Strange now,
how I made it through
and stranger still,
why I had to.

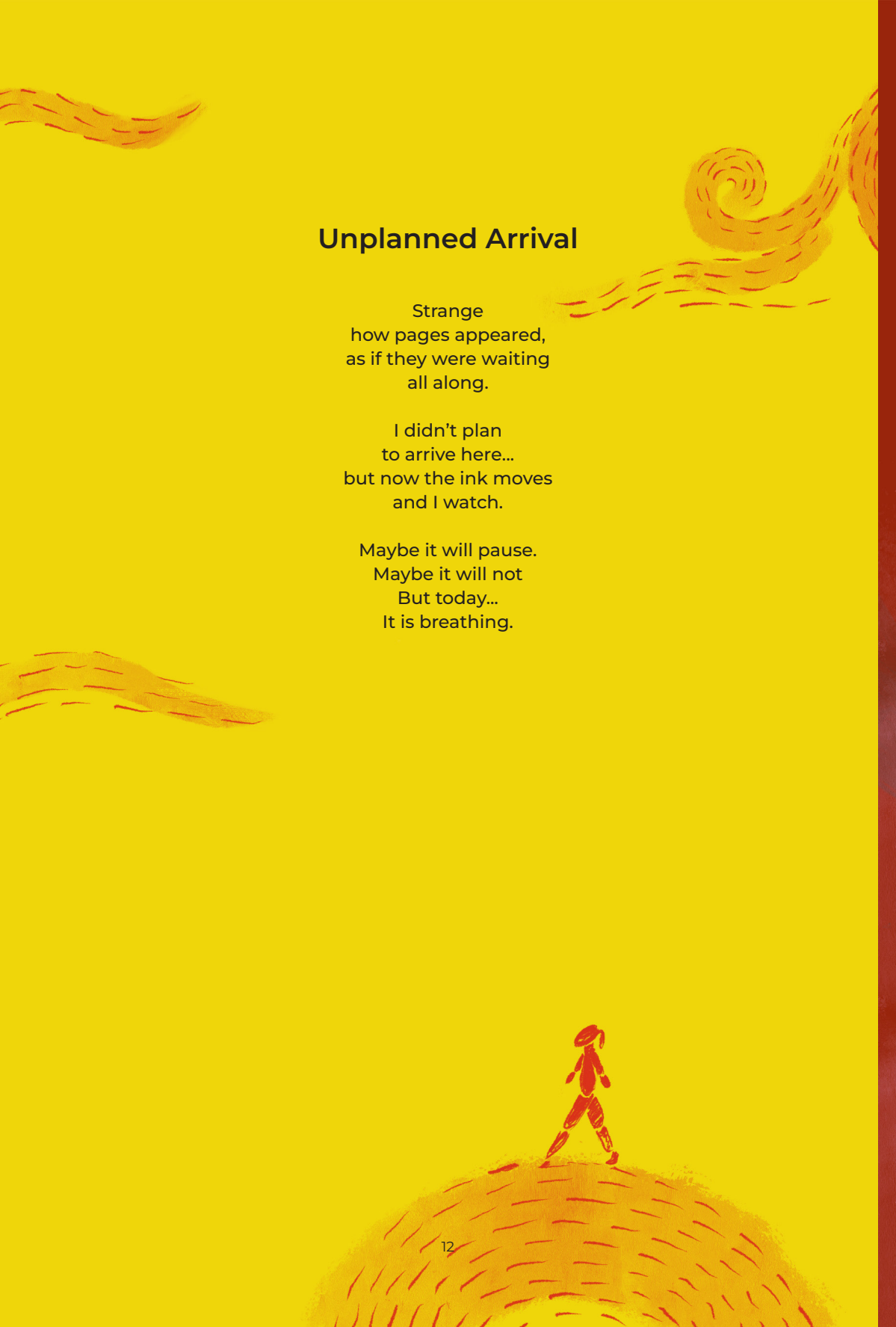
Home

Spring...
Where petals fall, buds bloom.
The warmth in the air sings of summer.
A little hint, it's coming soon,
The smell drifts in...
It takes me where I long to be.
To mountains high, where once I played
Where childhood memories never fade.
A house so small, just rooms but three
Filled with love, a family's sea.



Words

My father once said,
"Artists see the world differently"
Maybe those words never left me.
The endless urge to create,
The thrill of the work.
A feeling too deep for words.
The rush, the madness,
Of starting something new,
Some spark of creativity...
It sends shivers through me.
Maybe this is what life means to me.
I once questioned my purpose,
it's simply chasing these moments.
These bursts of excitement,
These creative highs.



Unplanned Arrival

Strange
how pages appeared,
as if they were waiting
all along.

I didn't plan
to arrive here...
but now the ink moves
and I watch.

Maybe it will pause.
Maybe it will not
But today...
It is breathing.

Stone

The retacent stone,
That leaves me alone,
Won't break me apart,
Won't break my heart.
Instead I will cradle it.
Put it on the shelf,
And think about it
as part of myself.



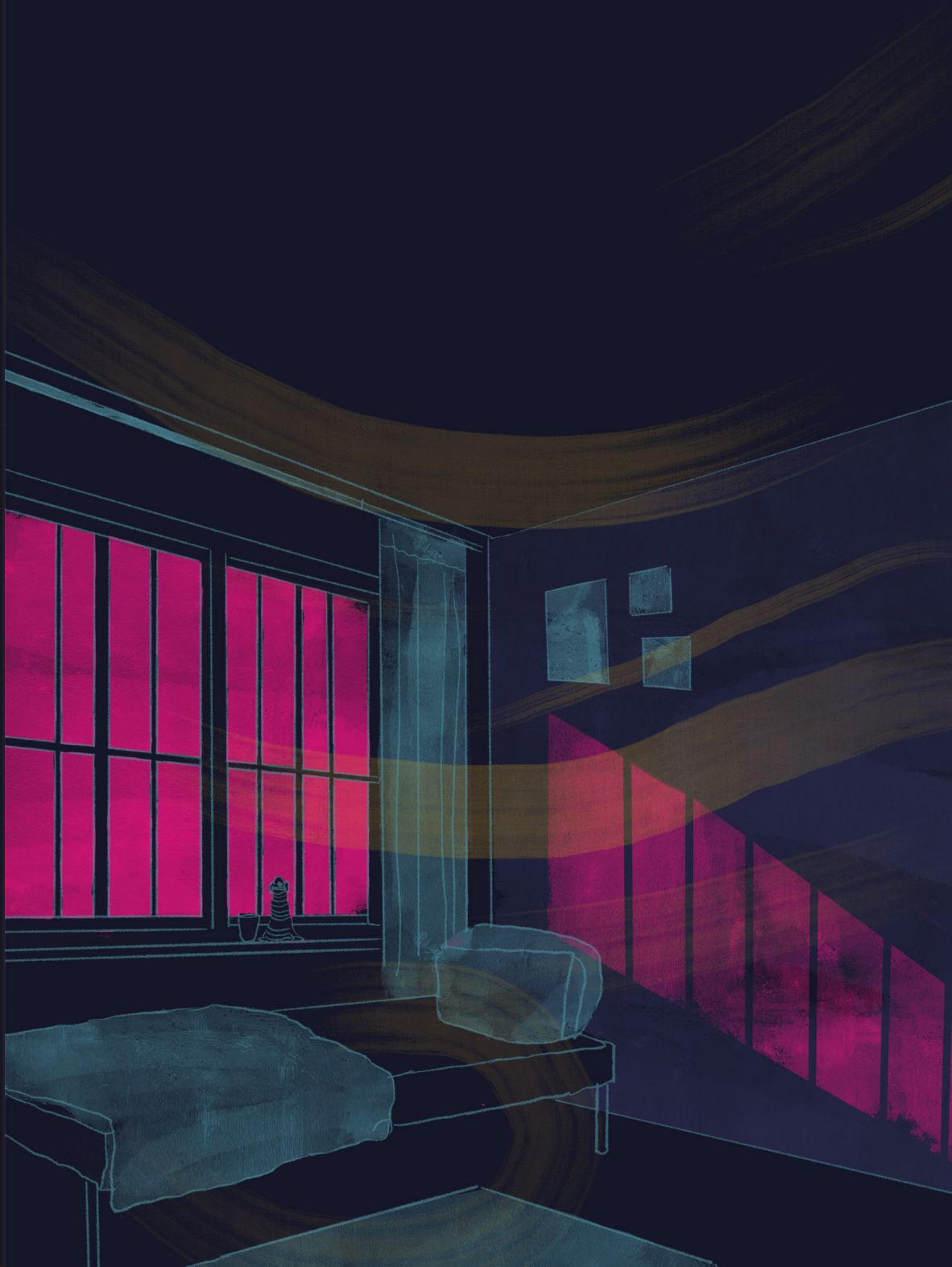
Things Happened

In a city I had never known,
something quite settled around me like fog,
not heavy,
but enough to blur the outlines of who I thought I was.

And in that stillness,
reflection arrived uninvited,
pulling me through slow hours
where I met myself in unfamiliar ways.
There were moments drenched in softness,
where light felt like a language I could almost understand,
and there were hours steeped in shadow,
where nothing made sense except the pain.

It wasn't a clean transformation,
but more like a slow erosion of noise,
until what remained was raw and honest and mine.

Things happened,
some I never asked for,
some I can't yet name,
but all of them folded into the shape of a story I carry now,
not perfect, not complete,
but real.
and maybe that's enough.



The eyes have it

Her drunk Birthday picture,
Pierced my heart with longing.
Her dark-as-coal eyes,
Lighting sleeping fires within.

My body trembled,
With soft, warm,
fingers of desire...
As it combed over memory.

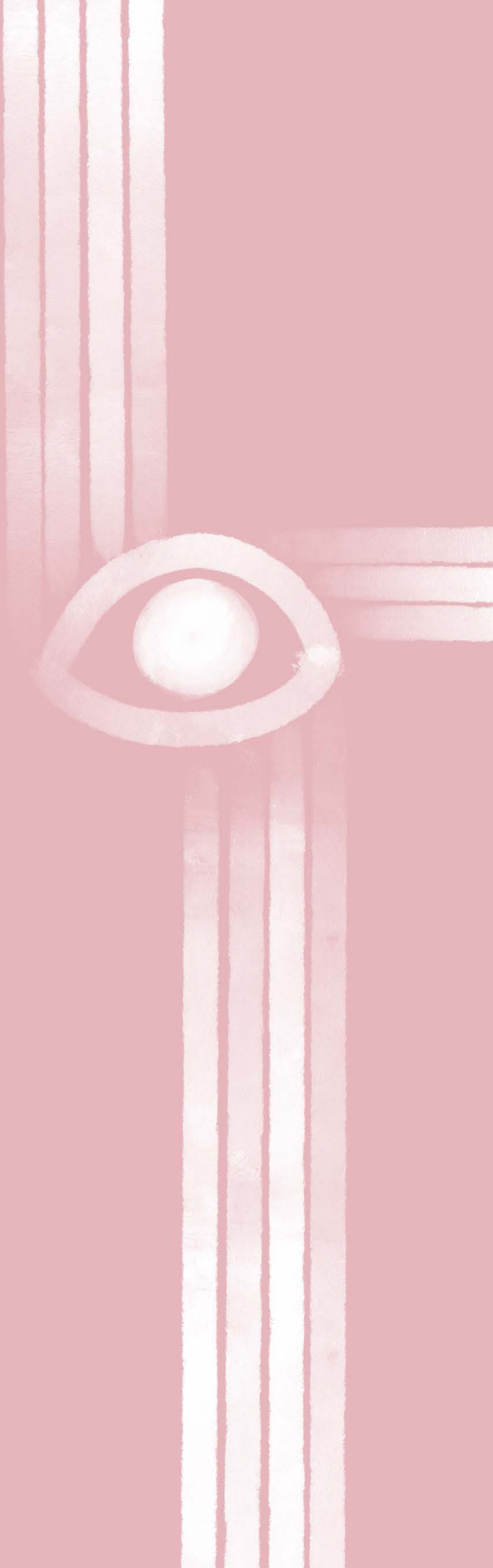
Plummeting me into,
The warm depths of
The 'well of loneliness.'

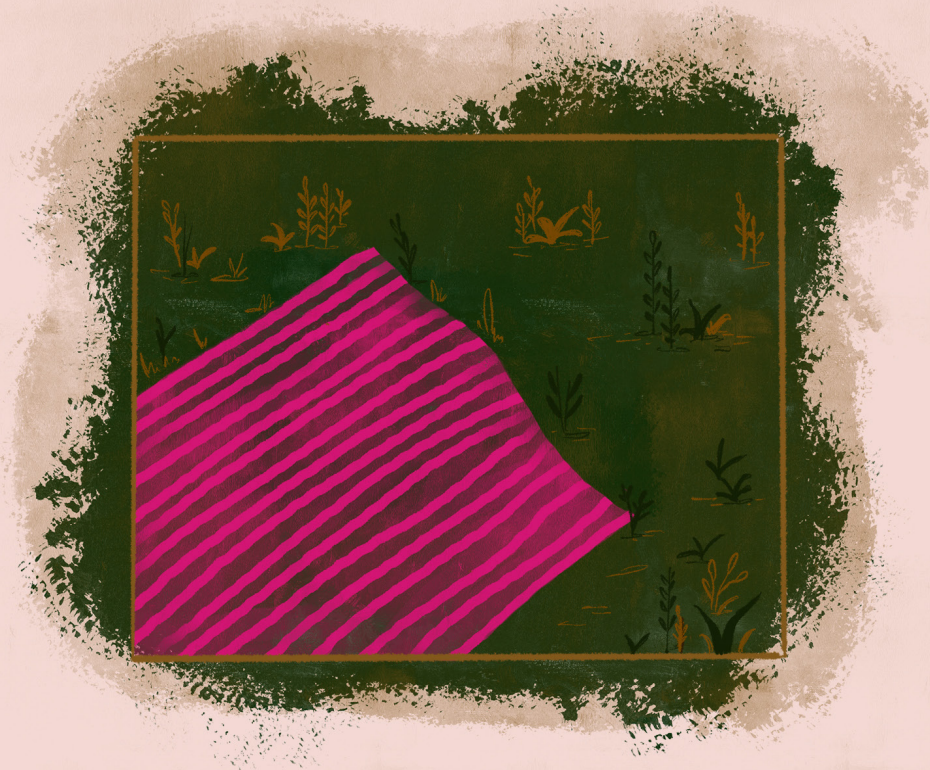
I swam like I do...
In dreams against the tide,
Kicking rhythmically.

The broken beat of
My heart,
a lone drum.
On the Moors.

Beating...
Till my sleep
Is broken...
I'm coming up for breath.

From sleep...from swimming
From drowning in her memory.





What Stayed

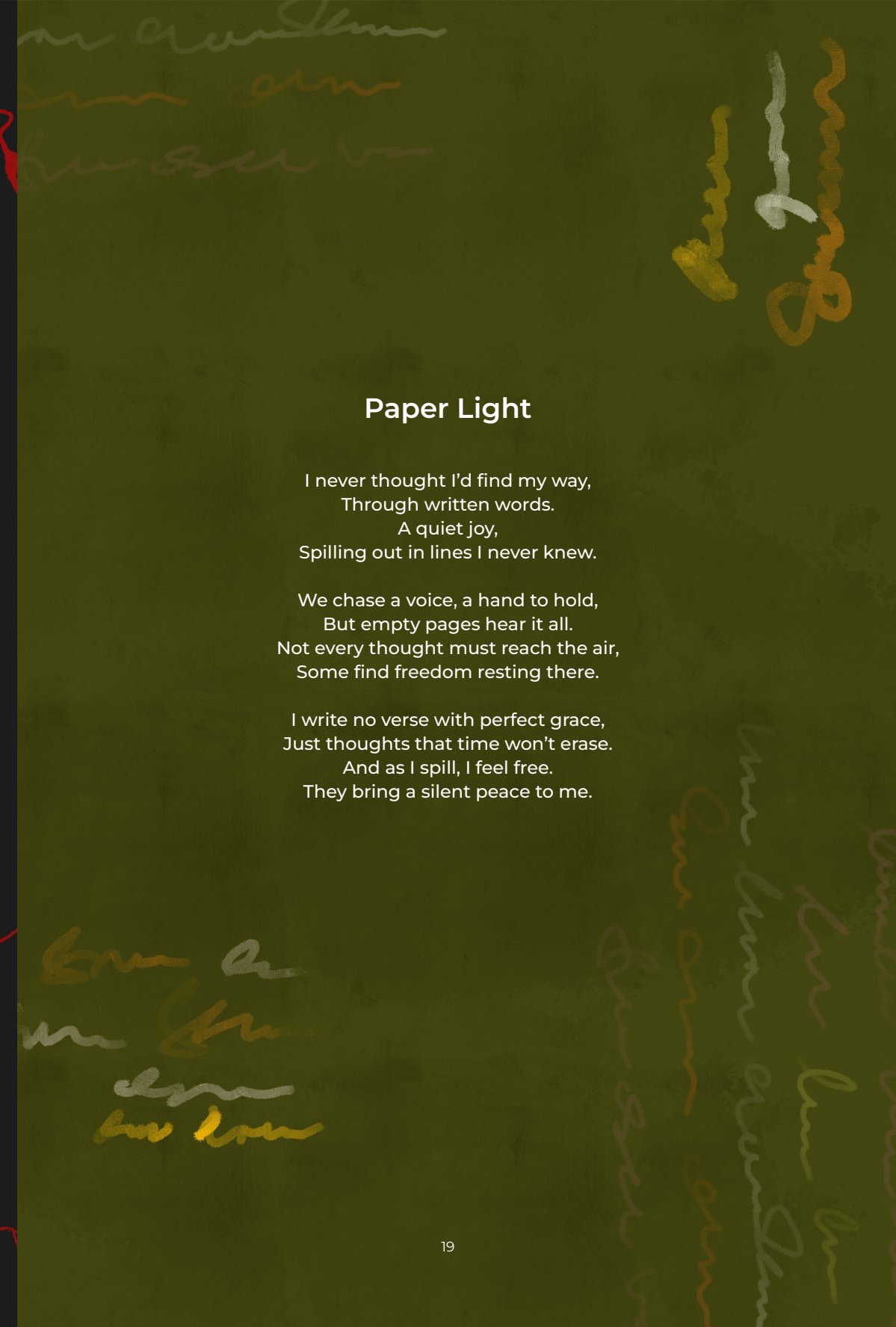
There were days the light felt thin,
slipping through cracks I couldn't seal,
and nights that pressed too close to skin,
with silence filling all the in-between..

Yet somewhere in the drifting grey,
something lingered, quiet and close...
not bright enough to chase the dark,
but soft enough to keep it clear.

Now when I turn to where I've been,
I do not search for what was lost.
I trace instead the things that stayed,
the warmth that was always there.

The fear of love...

I only wanted the buds to meet...
I wanted a slow blossom...
But then I couldn't stop,
The petals sprang open,
Both sun and inflorescence met.
As we proceeded down the path
Scented with intoxicating flowers,
And low hanging sumptuous fruit,
I realized how beautiful it all looked,
in the throes of passion...
I wanted to utter those words..
But I was scared...
When the birds spoke of love...
The mountains echoed back.
But again, sometimes fear eats sound...
Sometimes we let the silence of gestures
Do the talking...we let them speak,
the language of many moons...
We didn't trust words.
Sometimes...well most times.
They are inadequate,
to express how we feel...
The complexity of emotions,
Can often evade comprehension...
The fear, the thrill,
the longing to not stop along the path.
Till flowers lay exhausted...
In the arms of night...
And drifted into sleep,
Then in the morning...
When they awoke to the fiesta of sun rays,
We revisit them...
The bird trusted herself to say it.
I didn't...I was ...
Surmise to say it...
...Scared.

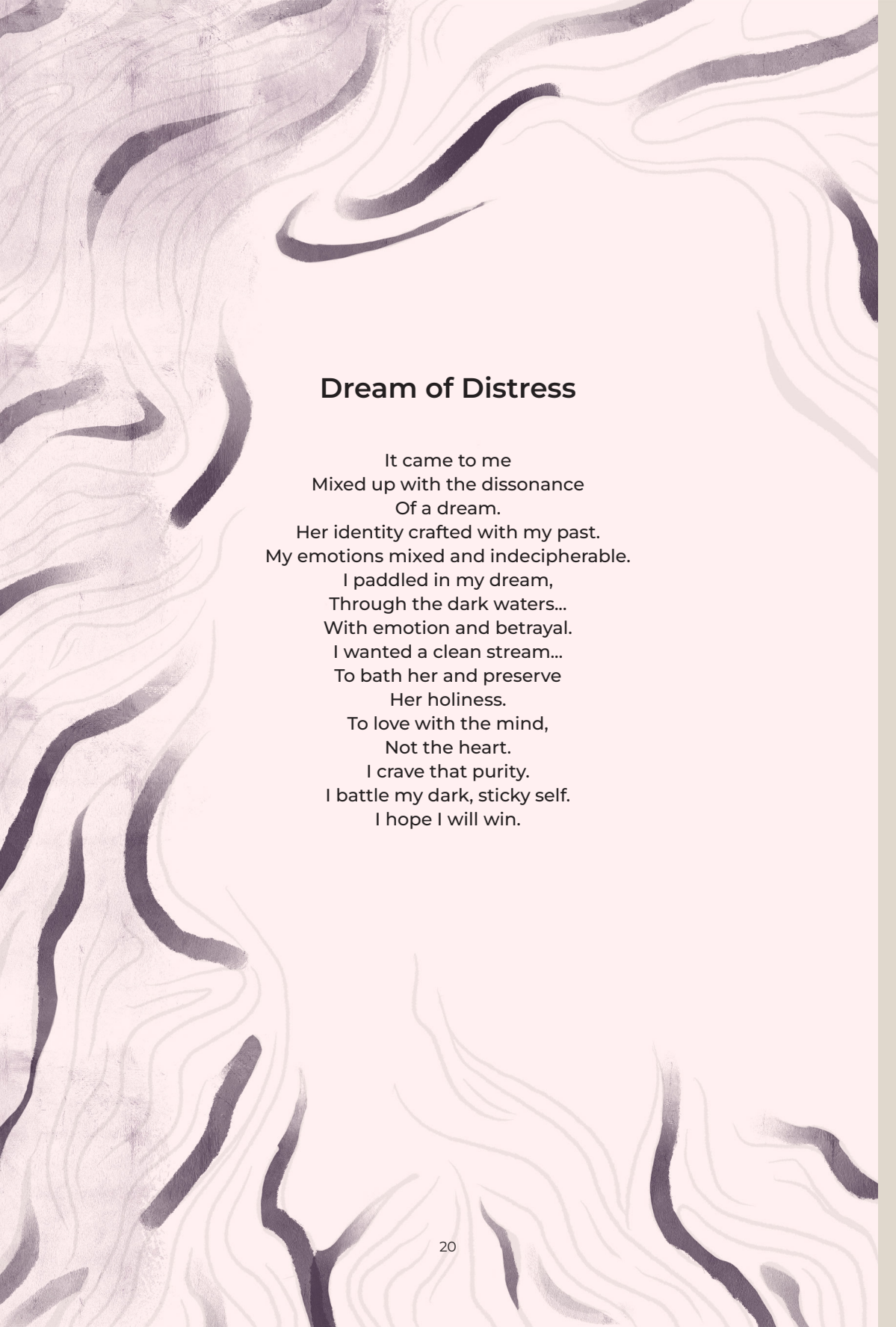


Paper Light

I never thought I'd find my way,
Through written words.
A quiet joy,
Spilling out in lines I never knew.

We chase a voice, a hand to hold,
But empty pages hear it all.
Not every thought must reach the air,
Some find freedom resting there.

I write no verse with perfect grace,
Just thoughts that time won't erase.
And as I spill, I feel free.
They bring a silent peace to me.



Dream of Distress

It came to me
Mixed up with the dissonance
Of a dream.
Her identity crafted with my past.
My emotions mixed and indecipherable.
I paddled in my dream,
Through the dark waters...
With emotion and betrayal.
I wanted a clean stream...
To bath her and preserve
Her holiness.
To love with the mind,
Not the heart.
I crave that purity.
I battle my dark, sticky self.
I hope I will win.

Lines of Venom

The Earth that you
trust the most,
will betray you...first

The water that you
fear the most,
will protect you...

Anglo-Indian-Burmese,
It's so hard to trust Chinese.

But then I look at
the struggles they faced,

The land they worked,
buried in disgrace.

Betrayed by the land,
And torn apart,
oh how the violence,
hurts my heart.

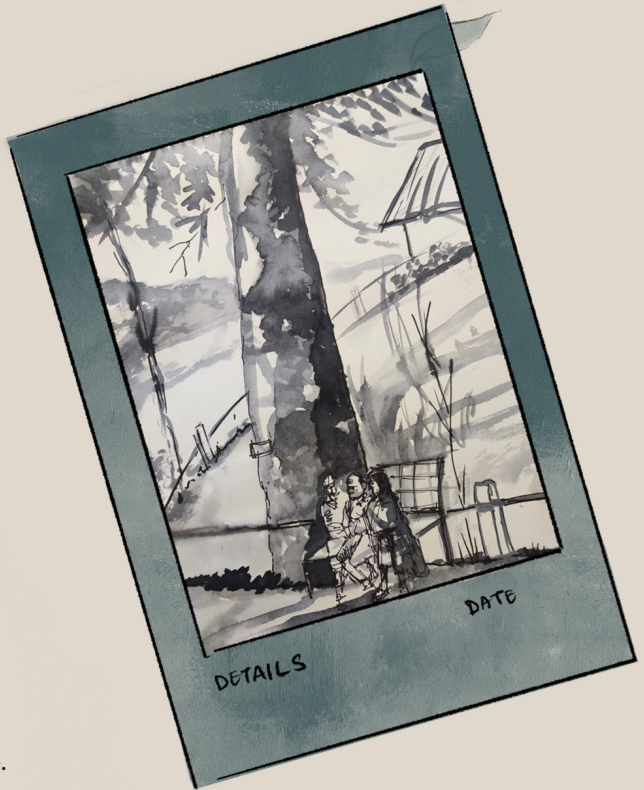
The ruins of
the wars of past,
form borders,
on the land at last.

Lines drawn
by men with venom.
Lines drawn
without a sermon.

Nature doesn't
have the time,
while people understand,
these lines...

Anglo-Indian-Burmese...
Grow past lines like trees.
Growing over the fence,
the branches are their
own defense...

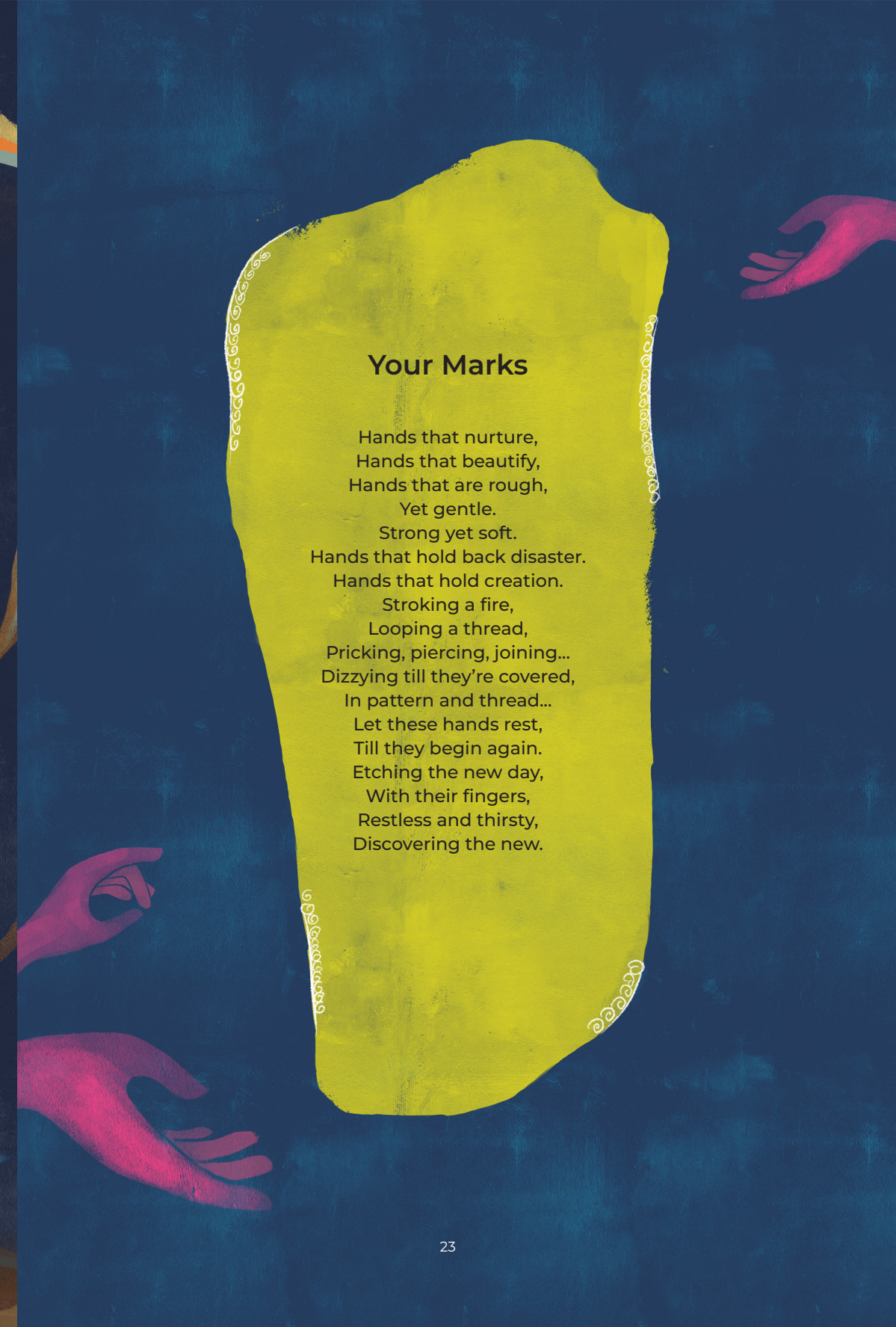
Nature doesn't
have the time,
to understand
these venom lines.





Sleep Stories

Dreams are where it really all starts.
The writings, thoughts, ideas in my past.
However my path was not defined.
The lines are unclear, and not so kind.
However I started as I knew best.
Defining things with a new zest.



Your Marks

Hands that nurture,
Hands that beautify,
Hands that are rough,
Yet gentle.

Strong yet soft.

Hands that hold back disaster.

Hands that hold creation.

Stroking a fire,

Looping a thread,

Pricking, piercing, joining...

Dizzying till they're covered,

In pattern and thread...

Let these hands rest,

Till they begin again.

Etching the new day,

With their fingers,

Restless and thirsty,

Discovering the new.

Gone too soon

Places and time, a curious game,
They twist and turn, still feel the same.
We chase their dance, yet every time,
They catch us lost in their design.

One place can shift the way we feel,
A fleeting dream seeming to be real,
And in a breath, so strange, so fleeting,
We lose ourselves but feel complete.

Moments we leave behind,
Slipping by, day by day.
They fade so quickly, gone too soon,
If only we could feel them, truly, in some way.

Why does it happen this way,
Those hard times stay, while joy slips past?
The memories of pain linger long,
But the good ones don't seem to last.



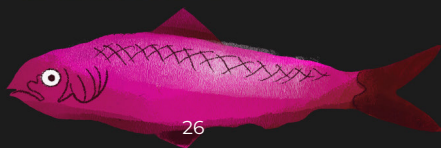
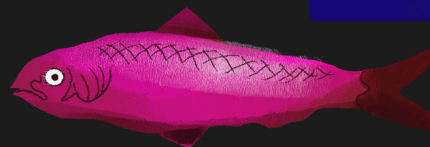
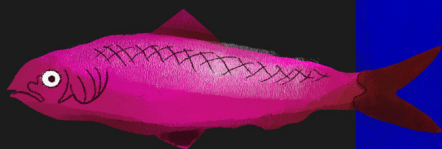
Mine

I take joy,
in the things I make,
whatever it is,
I meet it with heart.
Not built to follow
another's call,
I long to build,
a world that's mine.
I may misplace time,
or let details slip,
a little forgetful,
a little untamed.
Where others see forgetting,
I find threads of gold,
glimpses of something not yet real,
but waiting to be.



Momentary Lapse

You rolled your heart back,
Like tin foil to cover the,
Sardines quivering in oil;
Too fragile,
Too hungry,
Too much ...

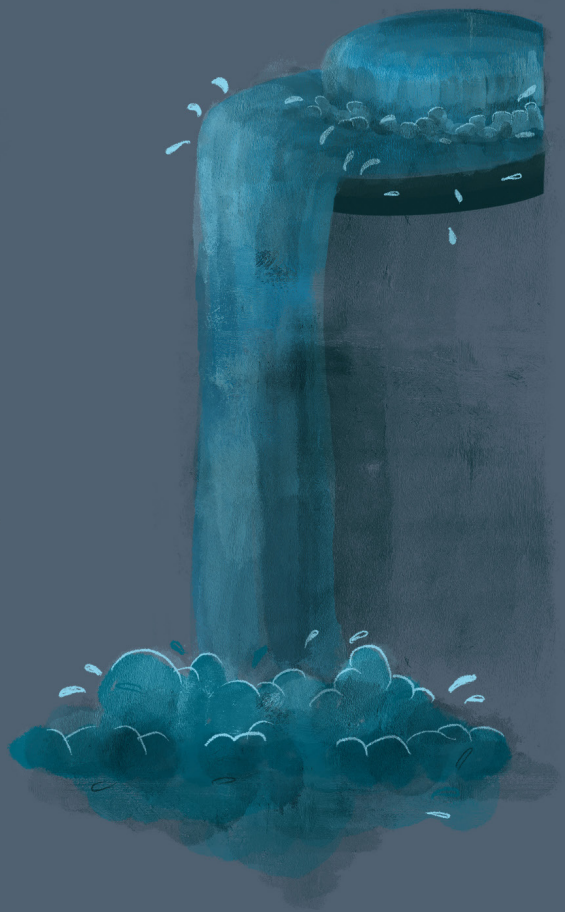
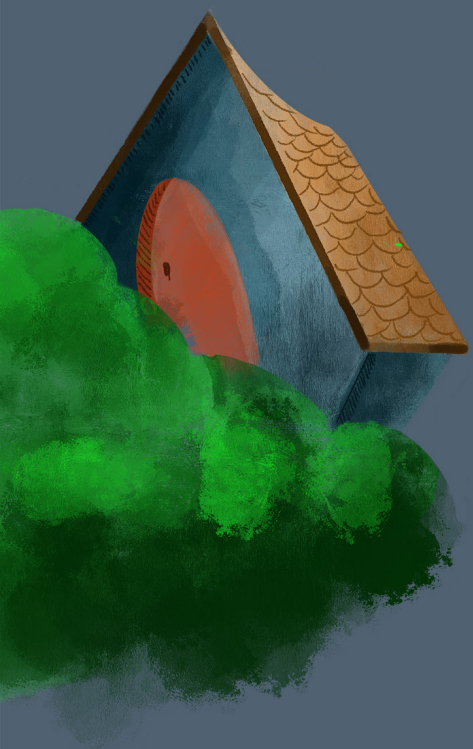


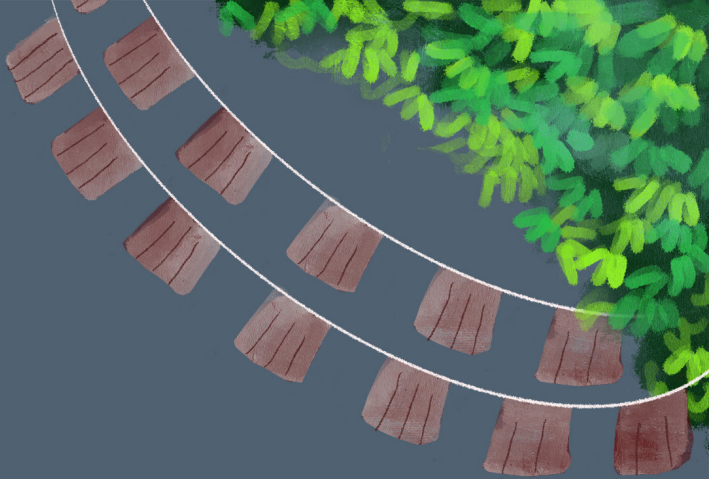
In The Not-Yet

Some things don't rise
as quickly as others...
words, for instance,
prefer to linger in the dark.

And I wonder,
if holding them too long
makes me distant
or just a little resistant.





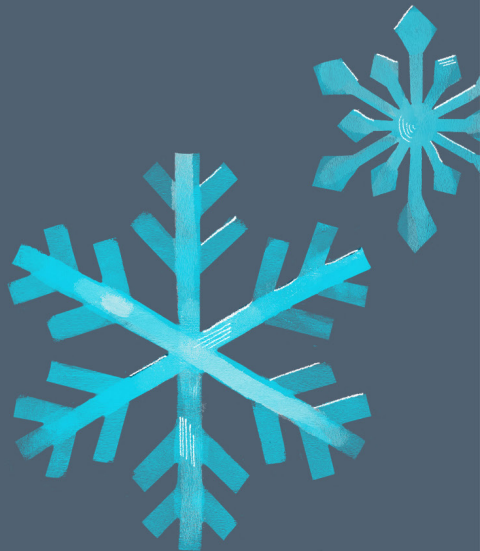


Place Like Cocoa

A beautiful place, peaceful and bright,
Cold in the air, warm at night.

Snowflakes fall, a safe embrace,
The scent of chocolate fills the space.

A cottage-like haven, calm and true,
Wrapped in winter's softest hue.



Pain Sings

I was thirteen
My mother was dying of cancer
Was this her punishment
For being beautiful?
For singing?
I had no answers.

Instead the ink flowed
Through my veins
Like blood.

Writing words that hurt
Rolled on the page
Like soft balls of cotton

Picked from the fields
Of memory
Like Summer time
When the living was easy.

Part 2 Chorus

We spoke of mothers,
Of loss, of that hair
She cut--without permission...
Her fingers laced with my sweet-sorrow
that I carried
In the cup of my heart.

She drank green tea from it,
Said it was delicious...
I smiled forgetting the pain
An afternoon smile...
That was slow and stayed
Even when she left...

Lingered till morning ...
Surrounded by birds and floods
By death and organ harvesting...
She knew the real story.
And she kept it close to her heart...
She told me where the key was.

But I touched it's hot metallic body...it's
grooves
Not daring to open the door.
To the garden of forbidden fruit... Where
secrets lay exposed...
Like soft fruit decaying in the monsoon
rains.





Heartbreakers Club

She did not come
You were waiting for that smile...that laughter
Those soft fingers in your hand...
That shimmer in her hair
Brushing past your lips
And her absence
Is the only air that touched
Your naked skin...

Pink Is The New Blue

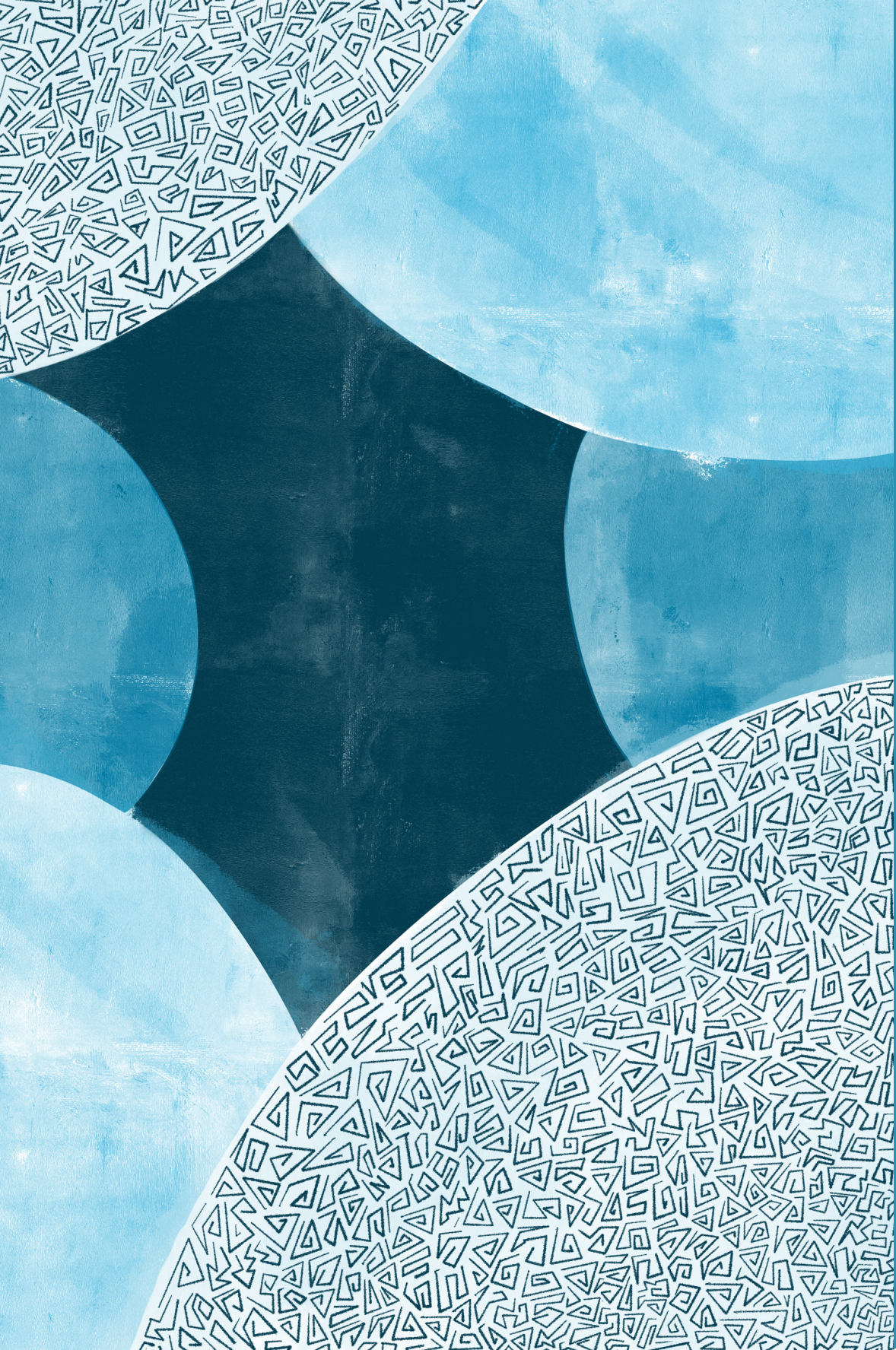
An endless veil of quiet blue,
Moving slow above the ground
Something in me,
longs to lift
to leave footprints in the air.





The Sight I Miss

As a child,
I had a sharp, clear sight...
I could see things far away,
I could see the tiniest elements,
The particles in air.
Floating; sparkly things,
It happened only a few times,
Where have they gone?
I wish to see them once again,
It was magical.



My Heart

I had written about passion before,
Introducing My words...to the world
I am writing about it again.
Covering it in layers,
Of my heart.
Because some emotions are exclusive...
For those who know my heart,
Shall understand.



Waking...

Wiping the sleep,
Erasing the dreams,
I rise to meet the morning
With no sun.
It looks like night,
Yet the thunder,
And rain do not let you see.
You see only the darkness,
Of dreams.
The loss of memory and names,
The magic of the semi-real,
Holds you infant.
Rocks the dreamboat.
You swim against memory,
How you love to drown,
In her eyes like deep-pools...
Of brown instead of black.
Harbouring doubt and hope.
Twin swans that glide,
On the water of imagine lake.
Feeding off the olive leaves,
Floating like Ophelia...
Alive or dead...who cares?
You reach the shore of
Sanity... holding the white
Of your quilt, speckled
With owls,
Wiser than your dreams.
Wilder than your domestic
Urge...to settle in her arms
Floating infant.
No Moses among the bullrushes,
You cry into your coffee.
Hoping for a saviour.

Suffering

Time is in a constant loss.
My words have started to fail me.
A part of me has surely been sick.
To most, I am poorest of all
But my wealth is my ability to feel, to empathize,
To care, to nurture...
Yet to most, I am poorest of all,
Because all of this is inside me,
With my lips sealed,
to share, to speak up, to show what I feel, is an inability.



Blood Sangria

My struggle lies in,
leaving her disappointed...
Where do my thoughts end and hers begin?
Where words rip flesh...
Wounds hang open to the winds,
Deep and infected they weep...
Pools of blood that,
Dry into crimson cakes.
She works her strong fingers,
Into the hole and she pulls,
I gush red...
Helpless and hapless.
Deep and infected they weep...
Tears of blood red wine ...
That shame even Christ
Who was born to die.

Value Changes

Why do I have to look at my chest and my hands?
Every time I look down constantly...
How would the world see me
If my chest was smaller?
My hands bigger,
my skin less soft and vulnerable,
My heart impenetrable;
Like a glass swan navigating on the ash of origin

...12/05/2005





As I look at the sutures on my right hand,
I value my body differently...
I treasure each and every inch.
Holding on to its fading functionality,
The Swan navigates the waters
Paddling more furiously.
With a desperation that only
the bubbles rising to the top know of.

06/07/2025

Conversations in a Café

Re-looking at the night of red light,
I understand her secrets better.
I looked into the pool of light,
Bright October shining through,
glass doors of the café.

A place where she met her secret.
Who is still a mystery to me...
But we will unravel that spool.
Later, on another day.

Today she told me about the cards.
Shuffling them with hands,
Tinier than mine.
Hands that create those black lines...
Wavering and pulsing in charcoal,
Hands that are perhaps sensuous,
Pierced with tattoos of memory.

I focus on the cards, tearing my eyes.
Away from those busy hands...
From those delicious pink lips
Those drowning eyes curtained
by gossamer lashes and hair.

I focus on my bright future.
Not unlike the blinding sun
outside the glass doors,
the pulsing heat that
shimmers with the noise.

The crowds that bounce
in slow-motion off the street,
like pebbles thrown into a glass bowl.
Almost cracking the delicate exterior.

'Your future is shining,'
she says with
so much conviction
that I believe her.
My future must be bright.

But there are swords on my back.
There are cups fallen over
There is the devil...the cards look dim...

'See the cups standing before you!'
she almost scolds;
Her voice is like gentle sandpaper.

I look at the three cups before me.
It is true that I did not see them.
I focused on the loss.
That is my shortcoming.

My source of pain.
I tell her most of my pain
is related to loss.
That attachment is loss...

The beginning of
disassociation.
That mother who left when I was 13
That father that left when I was 34
That lover who always leaves
irrespective of the age or number.

--XX--

She blames my past life
She has learned from Karma.
'That seems convenient', says
my skeptic, wearing her pointy hat.

Karma is a cycle, it is continuous.
To break the circle, we need the
Pebbles in the glass bowl.

To break out of their confinement.
'This may not happen in this life'
I told her. Falling back,
on my chair with exhaustion.
This life is a circle.

The repetition of love and loss
Till one overlaps the other.
Till I am afraid to love again
Because I am afraid of loss.

"We all have this fear," but...
Does that make it easier?
I question leaning into her with urgency.
I want the answer.

She evades me with her coffee cup.
Looking into its depths...
reading its secrets,
then she looks up into my eyes.

"Loss is inevitable."
Did I not already know that?
Even if someone is telling you,
Something you already know,
It's good to hear the lesson repeated.

That is till you learn...
To break out of the glass bowl
And roll into eternity.



Fishing feeling

Diving into her eyes
I lost my life saver,
I dreamt that
I knew how to swim.

The dream kept
me alive.
As I went deeper
Wading into
her much-ness...

Thrashing against
waves of
Desire that,
Held me captive,
Held her gaze.

The gaze of a fish or,
That of the mermaid?
I had to decide.

It could be both
I decided.
Wearing my philosophy.

I cast my line,
Dipped my net...

Into the water...
Dark and quaking
With surprise.

The anticipation,
Worn like thin
Sunscreen.

The smile cracking,
The layer of cream.
The laughter...
Shattering the calm.

The scared fish,
left the nets
But those hooked,
On my line...Stayed





Sleepless in Silence

To not want what you want,
It is hard nails on a soft pillow.
Lying on them gives me nightmares.
Dreams that are delicious yet poisonous.
The thing about some poisons,
Is that they can be slow.
They kill you gently.
Sometimes in your dreams...
Sometimes at breakfast...
It's like holding on to lines,
The lines are white;
Incised into the softness of the paper,
with slow yet deliberate pressure...
Ripping through the paper.
Etching its presence...

Your silent scream rips,
Her soft flesh,
Rips her lips...
You awake alone in bed.
Reaching for that dream...
Futile are attempts to sleep,
To forget,
To leave behind...
One must then,
Step forward on new territory.
On firmer ground...
Where you bury your dream.

Odes of Origin

A rolling stone gathers no moss.
It's a clean stone...
But come to think of it
Which stones are clean?

They're part of the earth
Beneath it...rising to the surface
With an air of defiance.
Let the moss grow here.
Or perhaps not?

The stone moves forward,
With the river that never runs.
Backward...moving forward,
Is good, desirable even.

The stone chatters along,
The way...banging into other stones,
Into weeds, fish, a plastic bag?
Left by the errant manchild...

It rests in the lap of the valley
Basking In the sun...



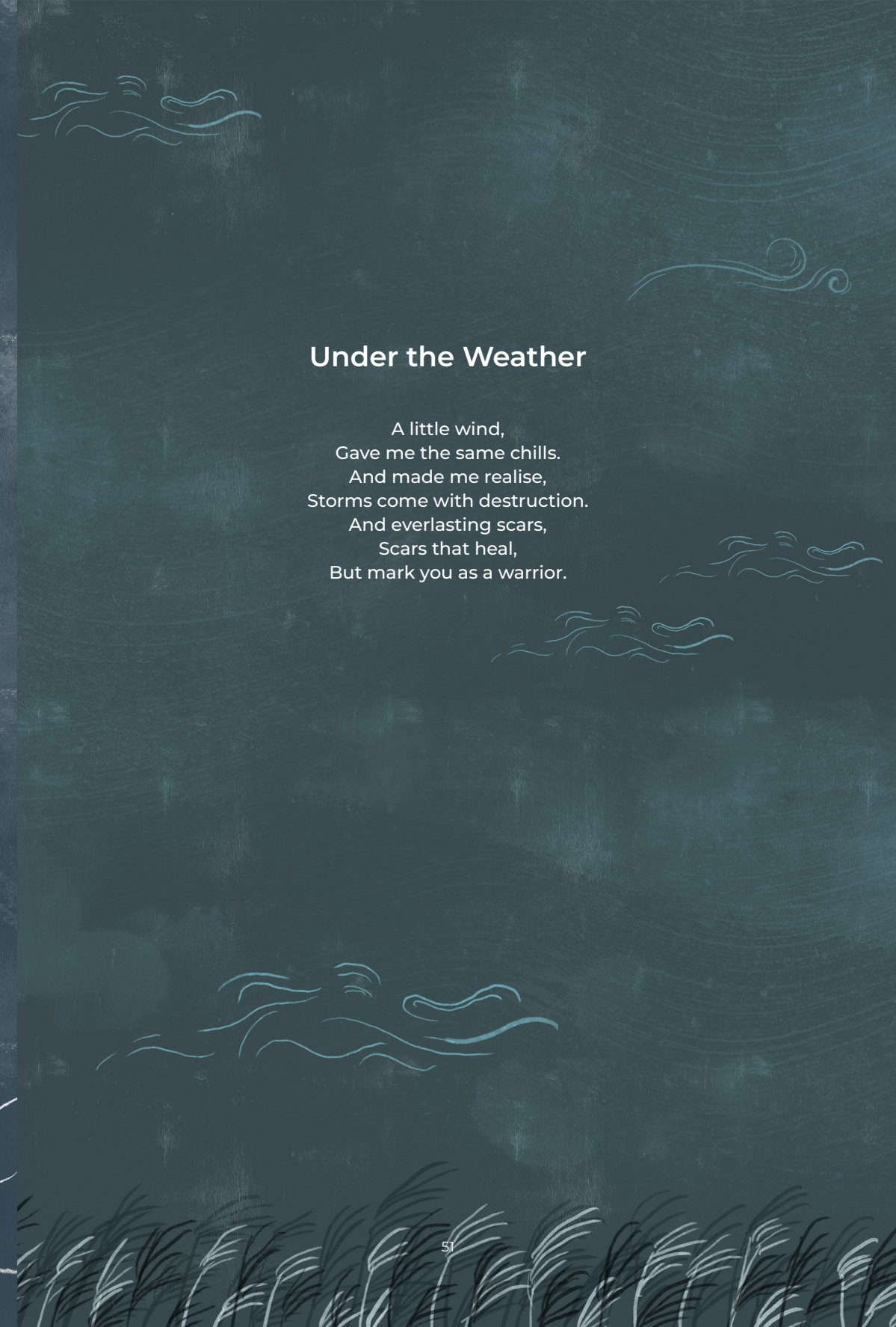
Memory



Continuity is perhaps a myth.
Human Construction.
Relied on for sanity.
In a random and discontinued existence.
Actually memory is torture,
reminding you of the things you lost.
Of how death is final and there's no communication after.
There's only the ghost of memory.
Of how you exist only in your mind.
Where you remember love.
Since that too changes.
Every moment is different from the last,
but it persists in the subconscious.
That reconstructs that moment to reassure you that moments last.
Why can't we exist without memory?
Perhaps because we must remember the past to confront the future.

Monsoon 2024
As it rains...





Under the Weather

A little wind,
Gave me the same chills.
And made me realise,
Storms come with destruction.
And everlasting scars,
Scars that heal,
But mark you as a warrior.

Half Alive

Life's endless fight,
Shadows dancing through the night.
Hearts weighed down,
Holding hope as days stretch long.

Year by year, the battle stays,
Through aching nights and weary days.
Still, they rise so brave,
Believing life will pull them through.

But watching someone lost in pain,
Shatters you time and again.
For when they fight to stay alive,
A part of you won't survive.

Yet we believe in miracles,
In prayer and hope and things that chill.
The burning soul that makes a hole,
We fill it up with little goals.



EPILOGUE

Poetry is a timeless and unending expression that continues well after the poet has left this earthly body...words have a way of living on...

As Rabindranath Tagore famously wrote:

***“The song I came to sing
remains unsung to this day.
I have spent my days in stringing
and in unstringing my instrument...”
(Waiting, Gitanjali 1910)***

Poetry continues to resonate because it provides a unique way to express and understand human experiences, emotions, and the world around us. It transcends time and cultural boundaries and the endeavour is to not go quietly into the night.

It is with a humble heart that both Vaishnavi and Georgina hope that their poetry lives on and that this is but part of a series that they plan to release, both having published their poems before.



*In moments
One can live an entire lifetime*

