

always already
THERE

poetry & design by B. Merkur

Dedicated to my loving mother
who has encouraged my work
from Day 1.

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"His ministering angels ask of each other:
Where is the place of His glory that we
may praise Him?"

—from the Musaf prayer

ALWAYS



THERE THERE

voice of fire

i m m e r s e d

in tears

if only i

were there



air charged
the thorns burn
and burn



I... I CAN'T

touch

**I can't touch
it simmers within
yet distant, at the margin**

breathe

**I can't breathe
too much smoke, too much weed
I see the forest, not the trees**

stand

**I can't stand
up to my neck in sand
but I survived a crash land**

ART LIKE SIN

Paints run ebb flow
Saints come and go
Sun reigns for the day
Prostrates to the shore

Moon ray rings glow
Van Gogh frames show
Fire voice glows
In a geodesic dome

Paint my home
With the brush of Rothko
Kid paints like Pollock
Drips paint on the floor
Though his name draws more

Gauguin girls show
Watcha wanna know
Unmask Picasso
Duchamp's urinal
Stank ammonia

Can you rank Mondrian
With Rembrandt and Rubin?

Provocative like sin
And so they win



INSIDE

insatiable
ineffable
open

DYING TO ATTEND

Now, let's see...
When is there time for just you and me?
Shall we plan a summer vacation?
Let's look when I'm free

Oh, I'm busy this summer
I have a date penciled in
I'm meeting my Maker
And I'm dying to attend

Maybe something sooner then
Like the beginning of June?
Oh, I have something penciled in
I'm dying then too

What about next Tuesday
Or Sunday afternoon?
I'm dying from now to then
I don't mean to be rude

I'm dying this evening
From morning straight through
No time for anything else
It's all I can do

I'm busy, booked solid
Every day penciled in
I'm meeting my Maker
And I'm dying to attend



storm-swept palms
the boy throws stones
into the pale



mountain face
pools form
at its feet



SET OFF

pause for reflection
still

until the next drop
sets off

ripples
tremors



SAVAGE

gesticulating

tribal masks contain

a much

more

savage

fury

TOO CLOSE

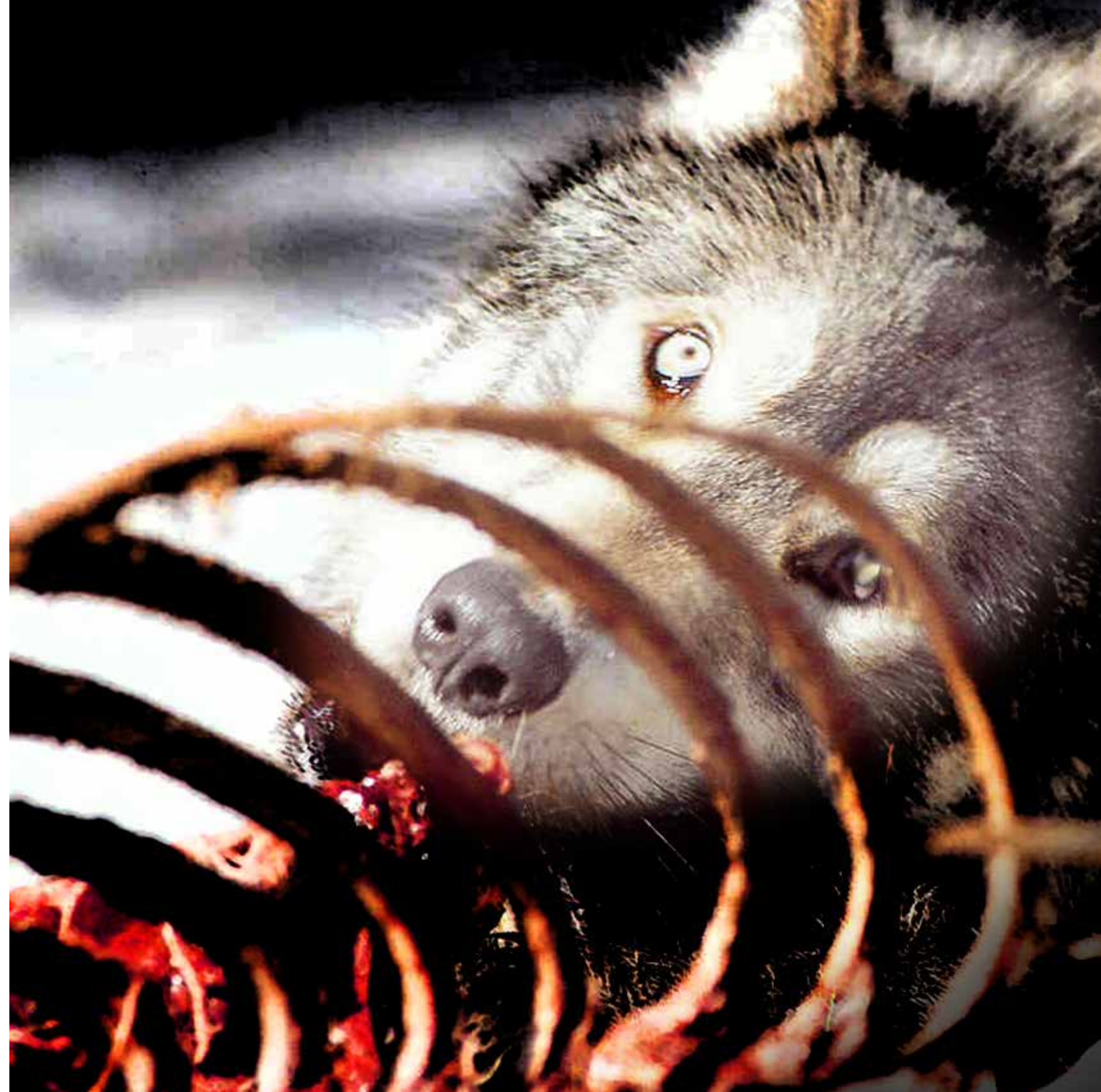
the scream of angels

drawn too close
to the holy

the trembling



hollow bones
the wolf waits
for the thaw



MORAL COLLAPSE

apocalypse
eclipse
lapse

quaking earth
scattered blasts send them
huddling



TELEPORTAL

black hole
attaché case
brings me places
leaves no trace

opens worlds
takes no space
closes up
to save face

attaché case
attached to my wrist
my black hole
I cannot resist

WARRIOR

tempestuous
circumstance
poise

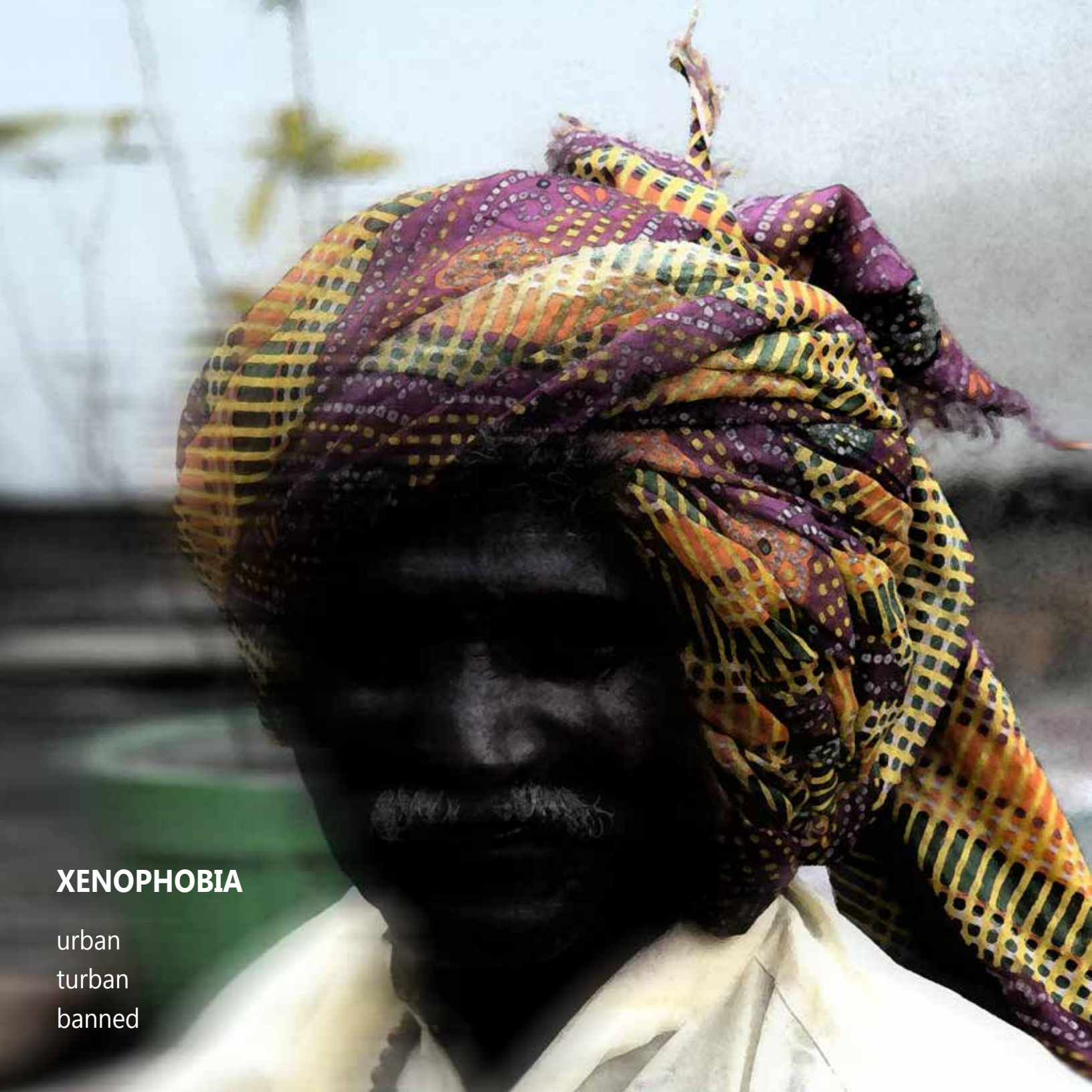
SUFFERING

solvent
salve
absolves

ONCE

slow roasting spit
searing flesh
in a pit

once a happy child



XENOPHOBIA

urban
turban
banned

ATTRIBUTING FREEDOM

Beleaguered legions weary from war
Some without limbs, some lacking more
Hunkered in bunkers near the enemy's core
Fearless in the face of gore

Ruins of the wounded stifling groans
Witness to horrors too horrid to be known
Scars mar their insides much more than is shown
A sacrifice they must own

Wounded warriors in hospital corners
Names of the deceased released by the coroner
Politicians take polls of the plight of the mourners
Promise a peaceful tomorrow

Maimed men with medals reminisce at reunions
Renewed with pride in place of confusion
Denuded at night by nightmare intrusions
Romantics pen pacts of collusion

Diplomats pat backs to uproot a coup
Aghast at the past, what they've asked them to do
Poppies worn by proxy for the forlorn few
Attribute their freedom to you



IMPULSE
RED GREEN
DANCING SCREEN
DARTING EYES
TIGHTENING TIES
IMPULSE ON THE RISE

MIRROR

silver
foils
vision

LOVE TAPS

Cozy bed
Siren head
Alarming noise
Familiar voice

Waking to taps
Lay like lead
Bright trumpets
Awake the dead

A personal refrain
Rings in my brain

Calling my name...
Calling my name...



A GLITCH

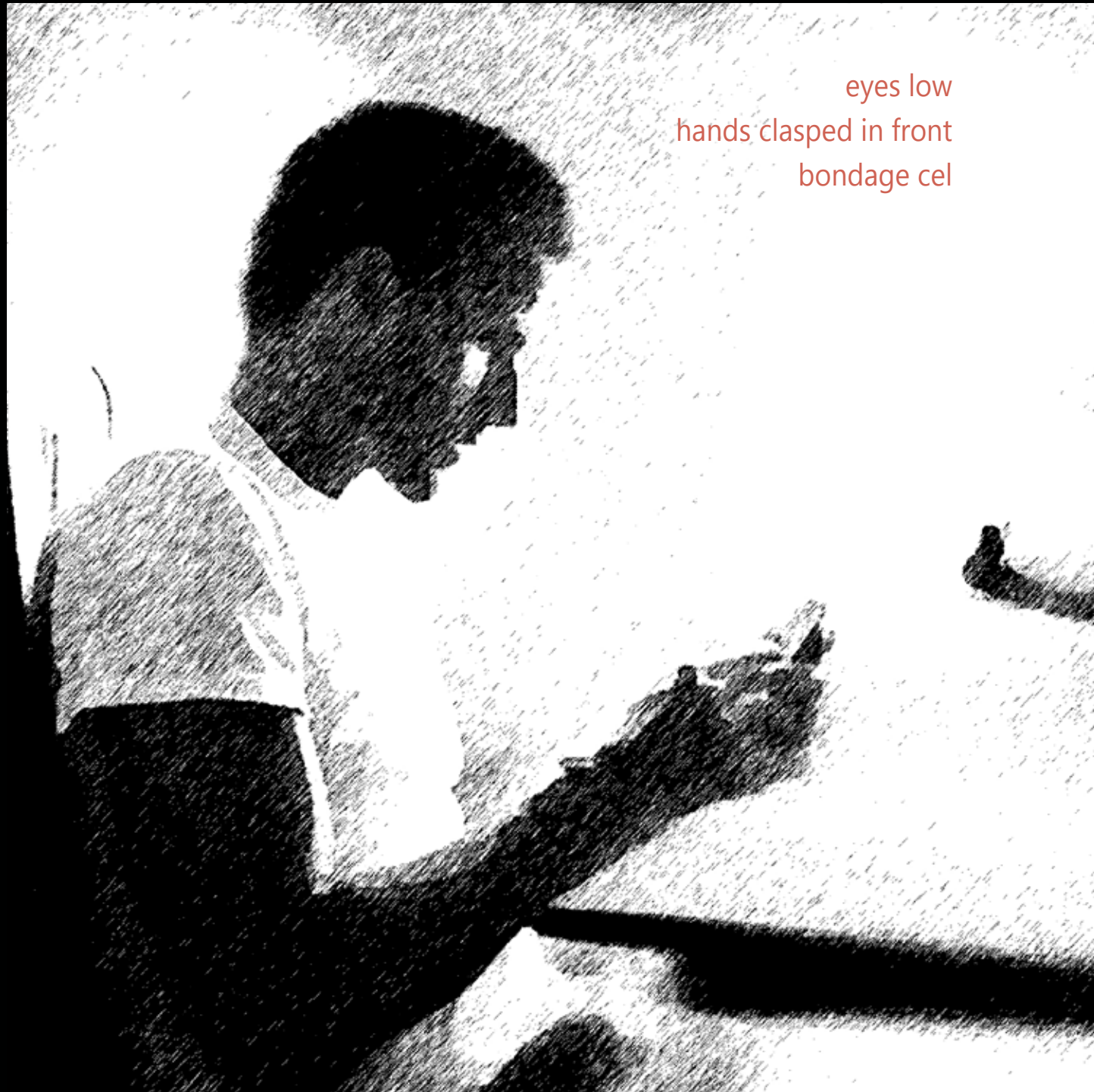
Engine's hissing
Be back in a jiffy
He won't even miss me

Don't touch the stick
It's dangerous
He listens

Locks click
Better be quick
Try not to panic

He's holding his hands to his ears scared and sick
A glitch in the system
Sound switched on at full emission

I'm so sorry I did this
Petrified lips speak volumes in silence
If only my embrace could undo the trauma and violence



eyes low
hands clasped in front
bondage cel



pale flesh
they dance in the shadow
of the golden calf

ALARM

empty
mug
nightcap

RED ALERT

my words r urs

just call me sir

thought blurs in slurs

i dont think think; im sure

well, as it were

rest assured

i wont be interred

as you may have inferred

this is a red alert

ALERT
CONDITION: RED

HART OF TEN

Penultimate
No worse
Better to be last
Than second to the first

This pen, my mate
Solid state
Ready aim
And just wait

A hart of ten grazes
Doe-eyed gaze
Stares
Leaps into crosshairs



in heat
the tiger crouches
downwind



dark valley
whitecaps rise towards
a distant crest

"We must transform pain into action and
tears into growth."

—the Lubavitcher Rebbe

ALREADY



A CURE

to love

to live

to give

the highest bid

a n y t h i n g

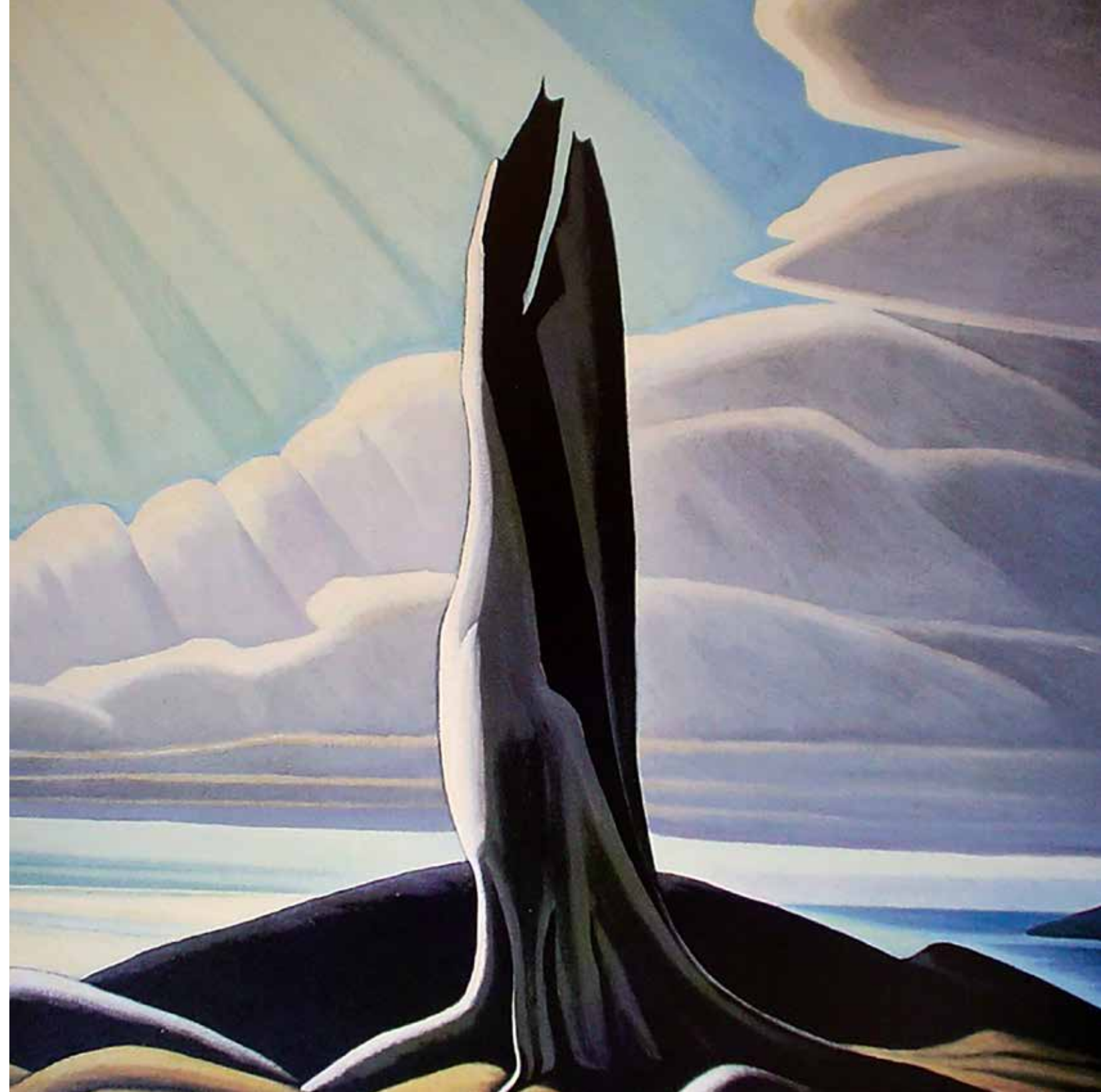
a n y w h e r e

e v e r y t h i n g



broken home
a child found
in ruins

blanched tree
roots clutch
the earth





UP TO ME

round little window
squinting snow
bright fluffy skies
rubs his eyes
yawns and sighs

I know I won't die
though I have sinned
turbulence lies
beneath the bed of clouds
I recline in

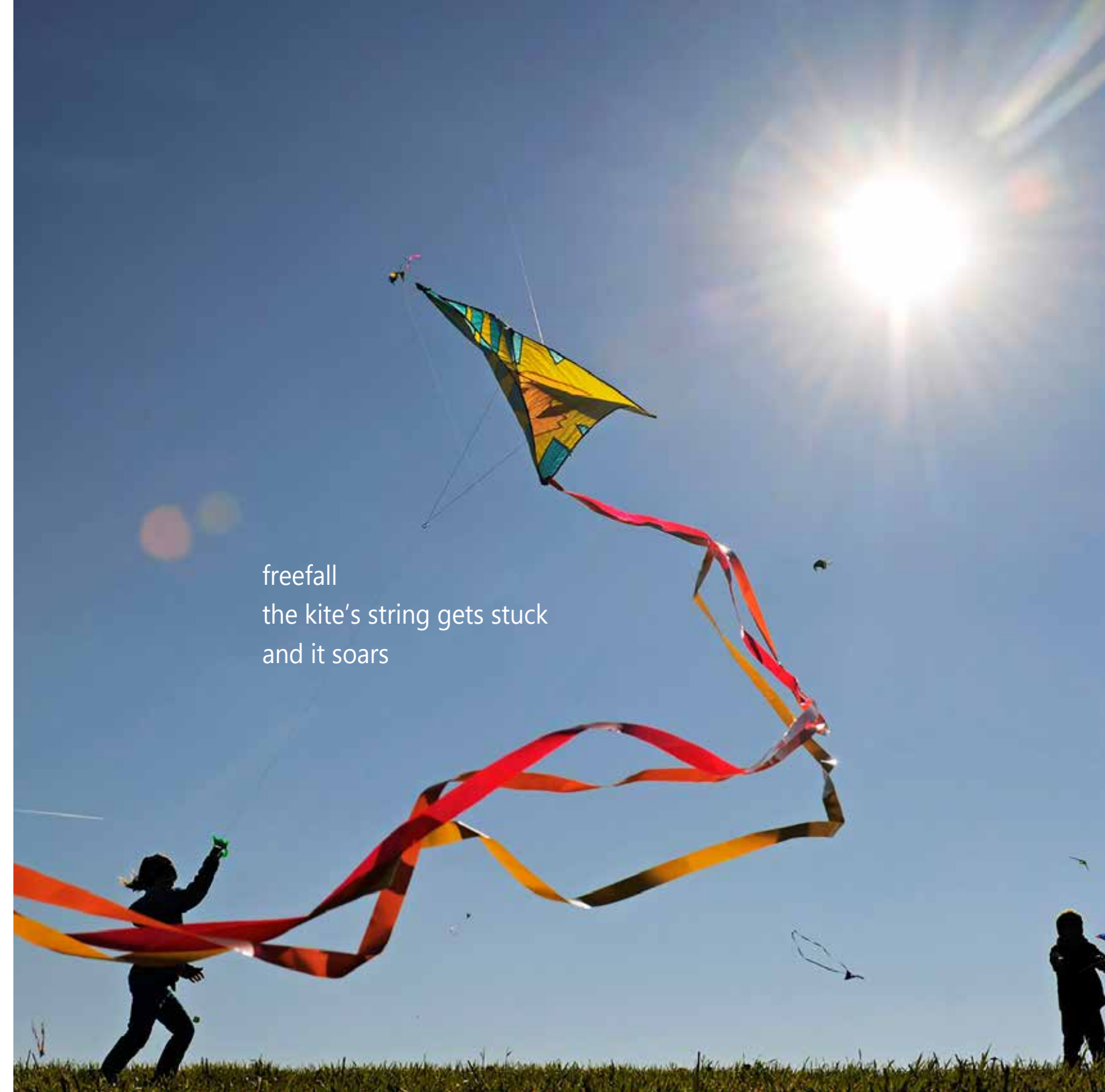
I am upright
worthy to land
I am loved by somebody
who looks out of a round little window
someone who looks up to me

NEXT TIME

I spat in the wind
And that's a sin
Cuz much to my chagrin
It struck someone's chin

Don't see how to begin
To be forgiven
To make it right again
To make it a win

I guess I'll keep my spit in
Next time there's a wind



freefall
the kite's string gets stuck
and it soars

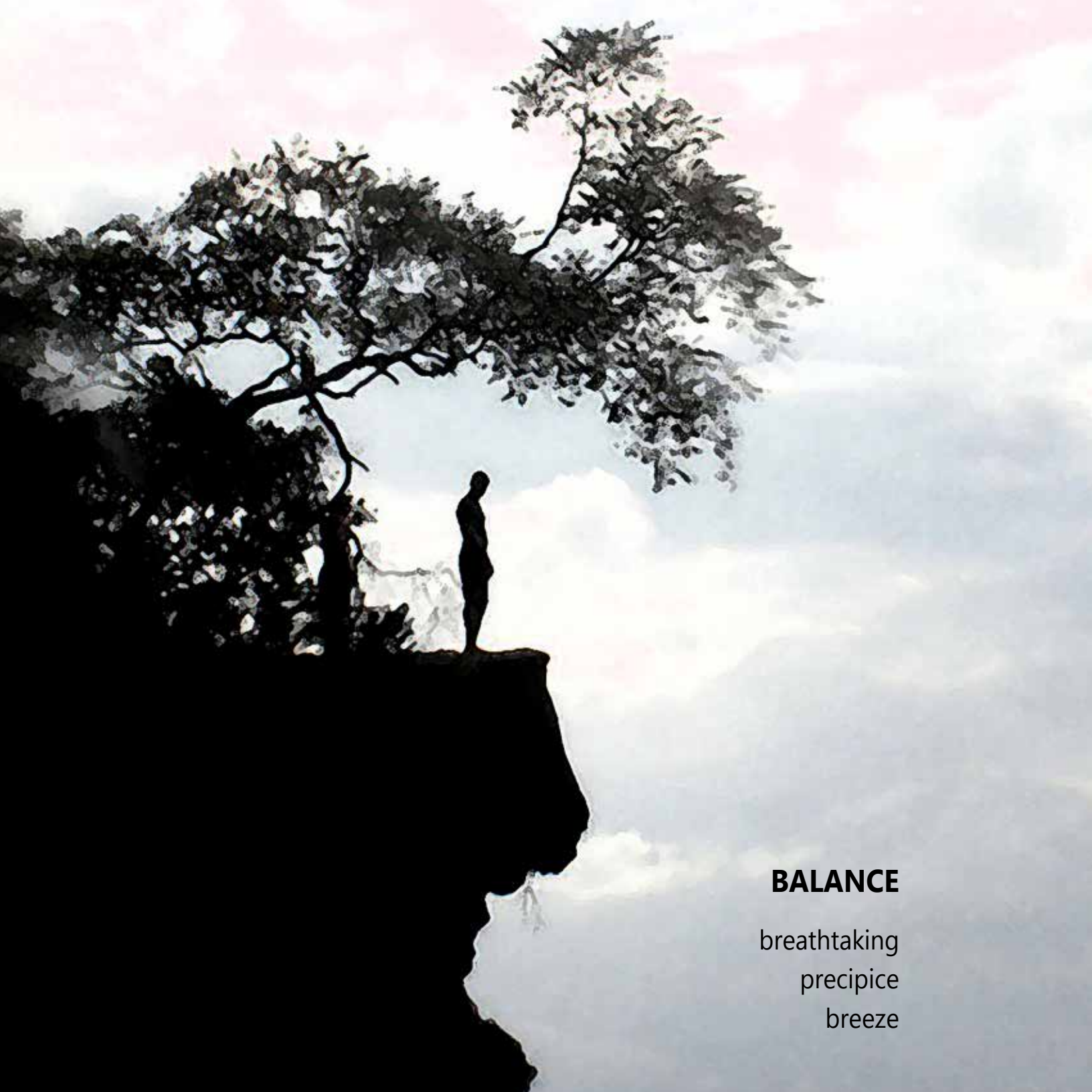
AIRBORNE

air
a
parent
breathes
easier



BREVITY

braving
gravity
bareback



BALANCE

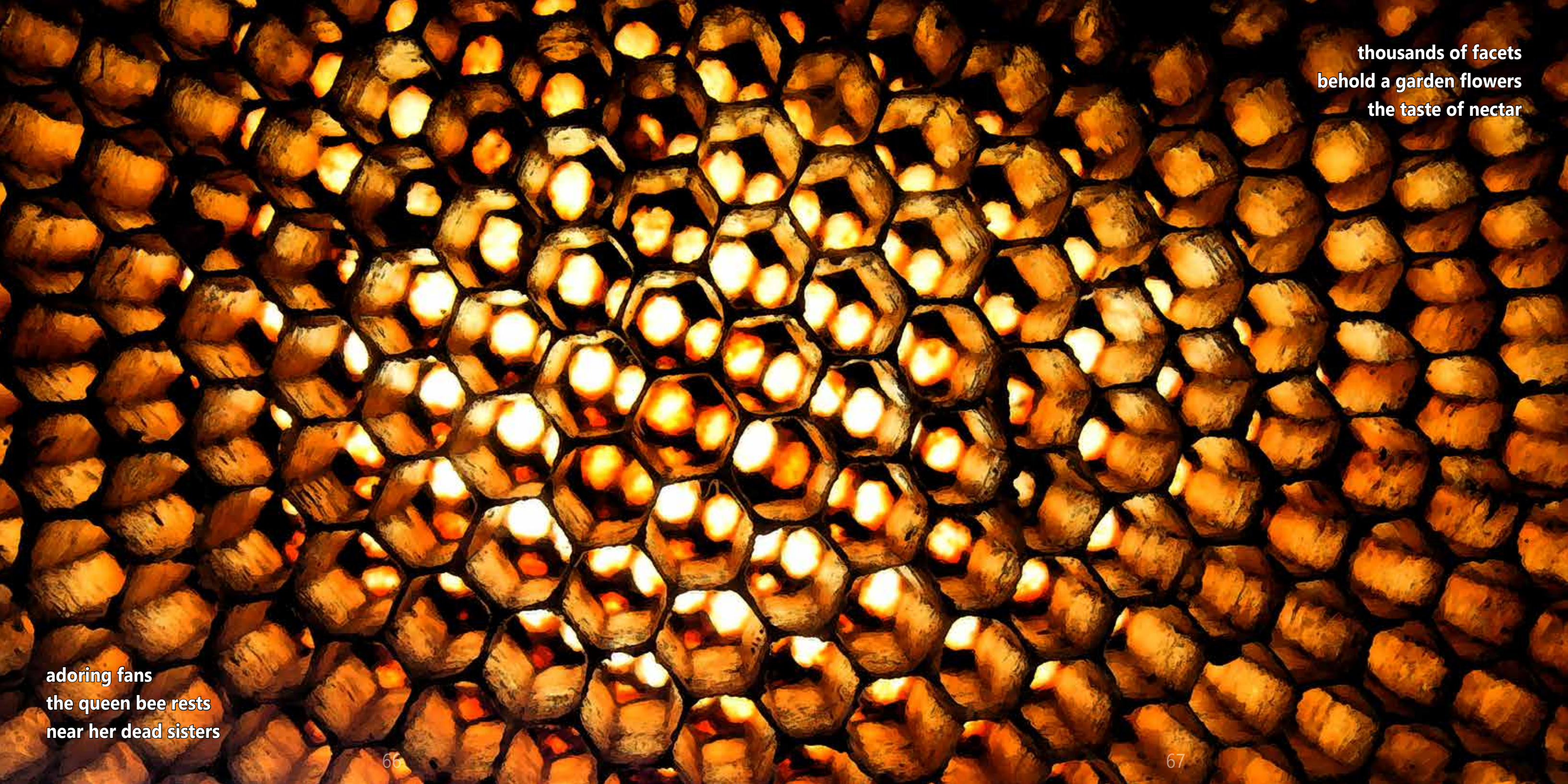
breathtaking
precipice
breeze



night sky
availed of its thunder
hilltop accolade



hunting rifle
a cheetah purrs
by the throne



thousands of facets
behold a garden flowers
the taste of nectar

adoring fans
the queen bee rests
near her dead sisters



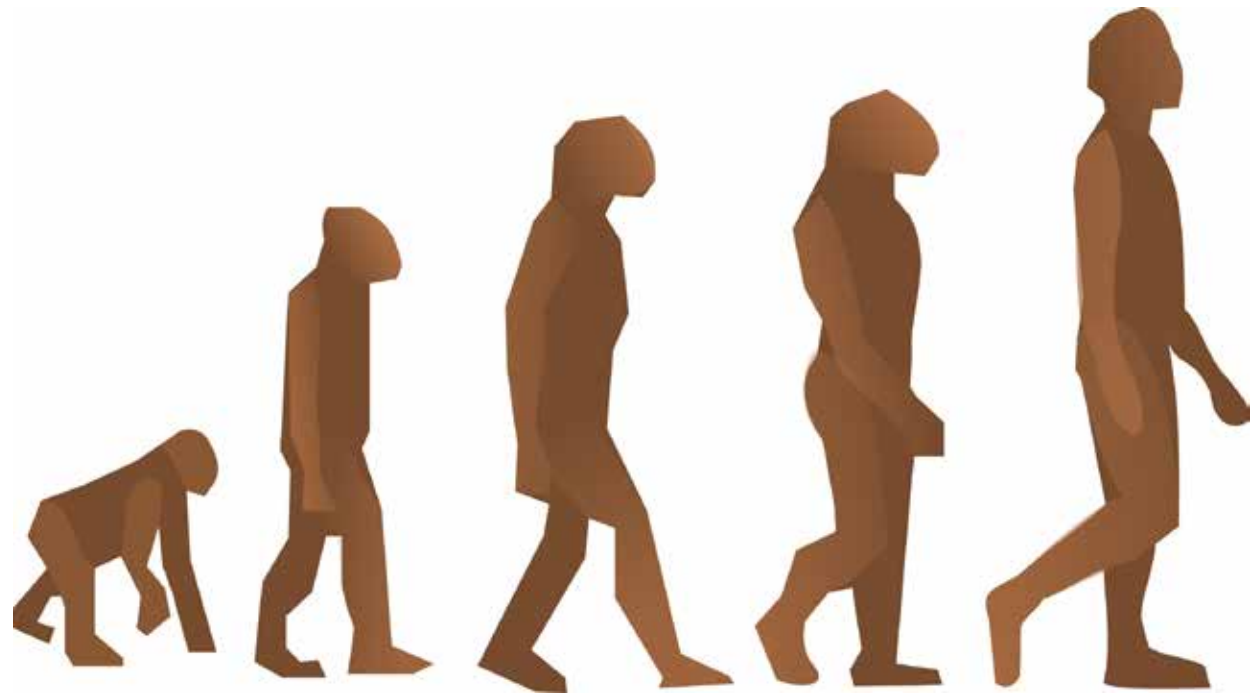
standing beneath
a black canopy
respectful distance



phoenix
crowned in petals
a summons

HOMO SAPIEN

a man can bend
make amends
lift his head
and stand straight again



chimpanzee in jeans
struts laughs and preens
purloined pen

TADA!

Magic wand
Fascinates
Obfuscates
Sleight of hand
A rabbit can vanish –
In its cage eating cabbage

And now for my next and final feat
If everyone would please stay in their seat
To much applause and cheer
I will make this bull disappear

REBELLIOUS SON

A round, refrain
Planets 'round his brain
Mobile turnstile
Circle single file
Clicking clockwork
He pedals and jerks
Solar system hovers
Kicks off covers
Reaches for the stars
Bumps into Mars
Chuckles with mirth
And clutches the Earth

The sun and the rest
Ever bow to the west

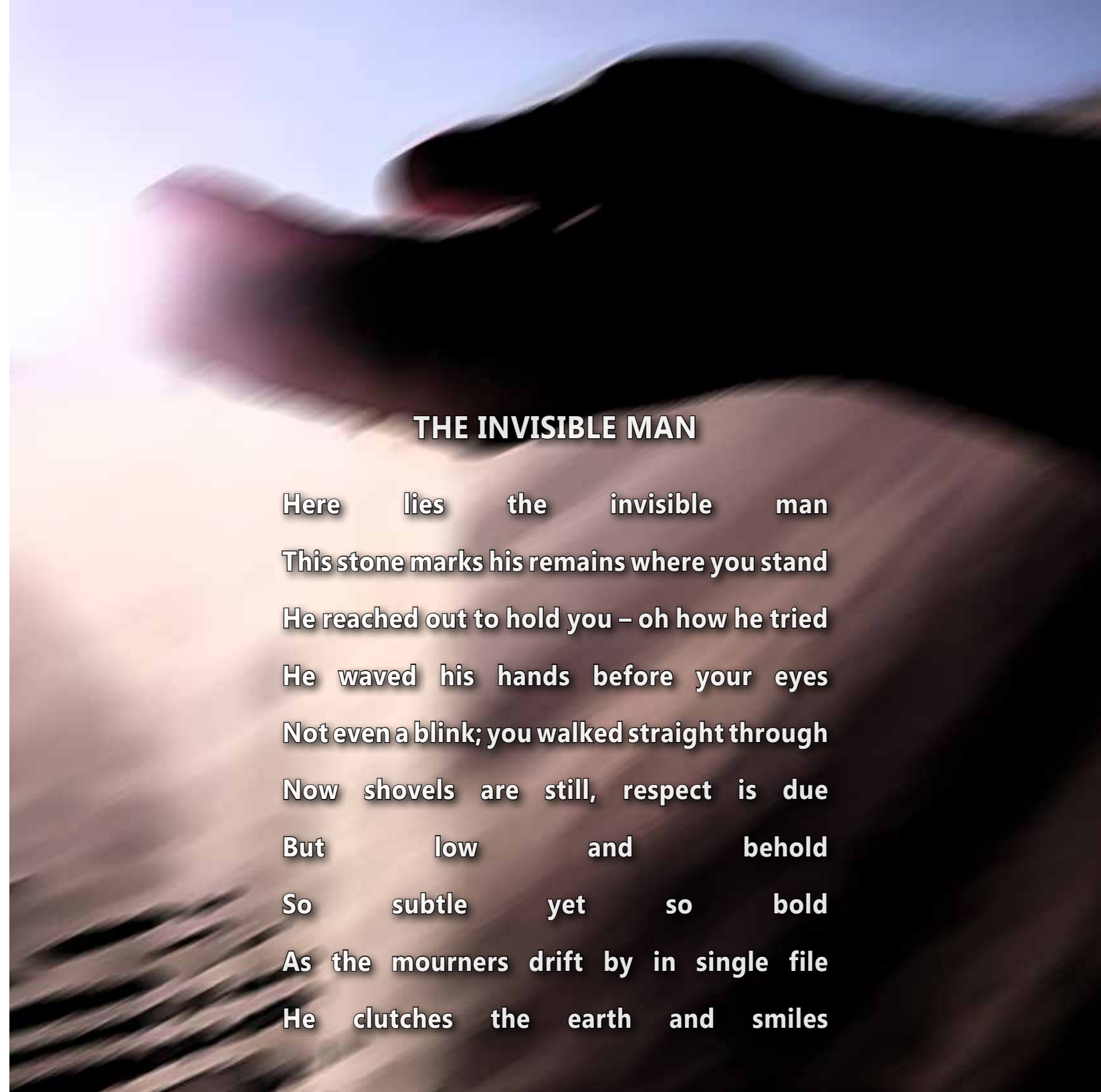
FUTILE RITUAL BATH

the poor man showers
as if it matters
his garments hardly
smell like flowers



THE INVISIBLE MAN

Here lies the invisible man
This stone marks his remains where you stand
He reached out to hold you – oh how he tried
He waved his hands before your eyes
Not even a blink; you walked straight through
Now shovels are still, respect is due
But low and behold
So subtle yet so bold
As the mourners drift by in single file
He clutches the earth and smiles



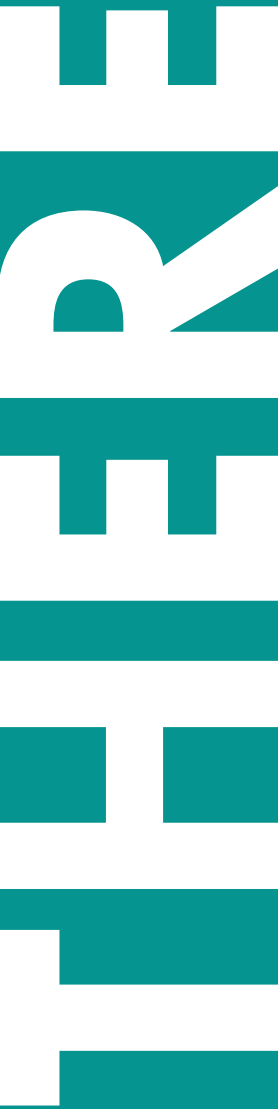
GHOST TOWN

rural
funeral
unattended



"When G-d returns the captives of Zion,
we will have been as dreamers ... Then
they will say among the nations, G-d has
done greatness with us, we will be filled
with joy."

— Psalms 126





fish turn toward
the current sends 'em flapping
fresh catch for black bears



snow blankets the field
immeasurable blue sky
immaculate



two shovels stand
in the snow
angel impressions

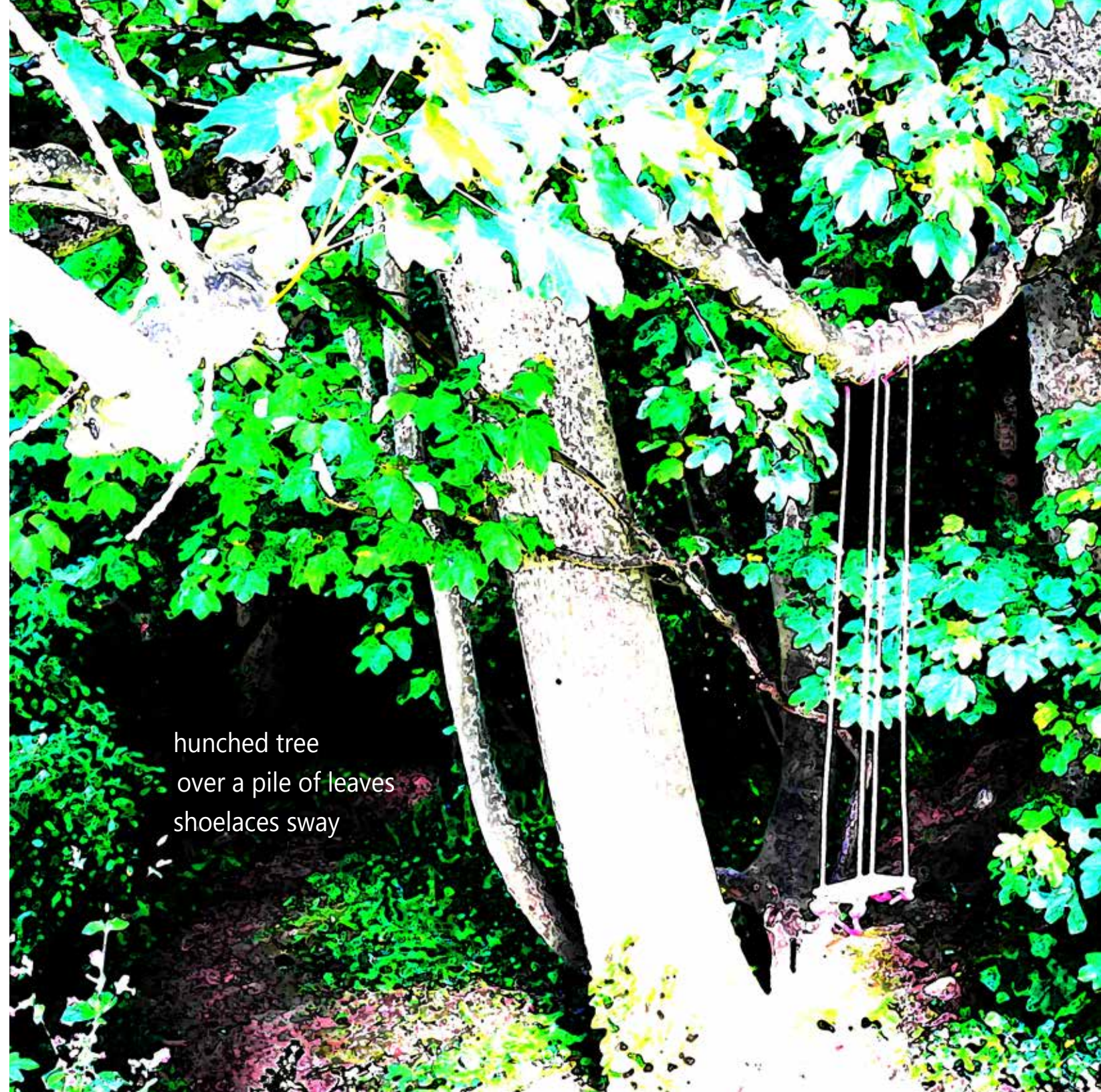




eyes squint
playing catch in the park
forever twilight

rain patters rooftops
and streams out to the lane
soaked sneakers

hunched tree
over a pile of leaves
shoelaces sway



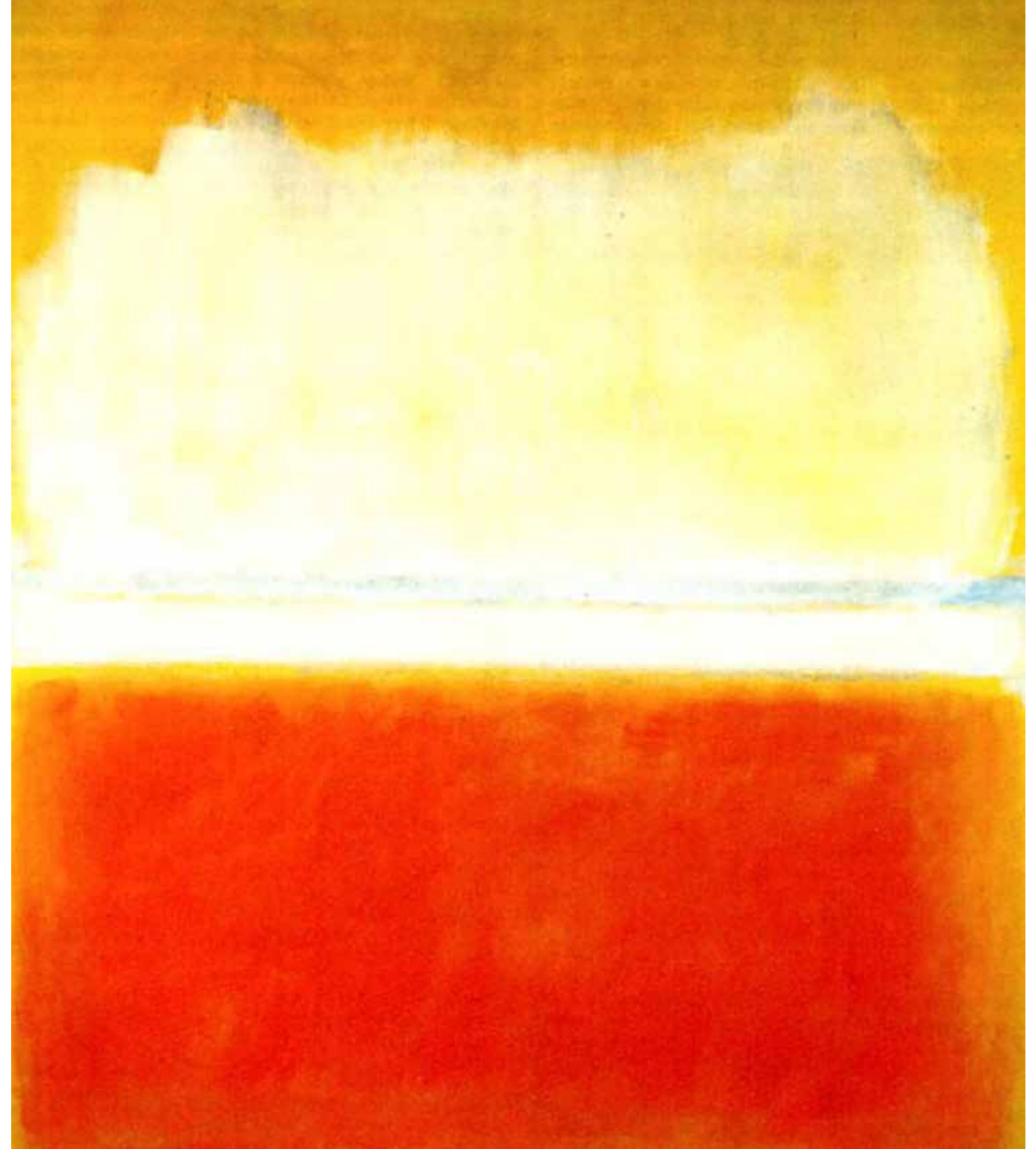
NOT ESPECIALLY

apostrophe s
possessive at best
obsessive when pressed
a character nonetheless
with this I've been blessed
a gift I possess
though I must confess
it's used under duress

autumn leaves
he gathers a bunch
and drifts off again

AURA

phonetics
linguistic
harmonics





cascading clouds
a fortress of ice
reaches heavenward



ocean breeze
lotus petals face
the horizon



blossoms emerge
from tangled branches
upstream iris

radiant plumage
the peacock displays
its glory



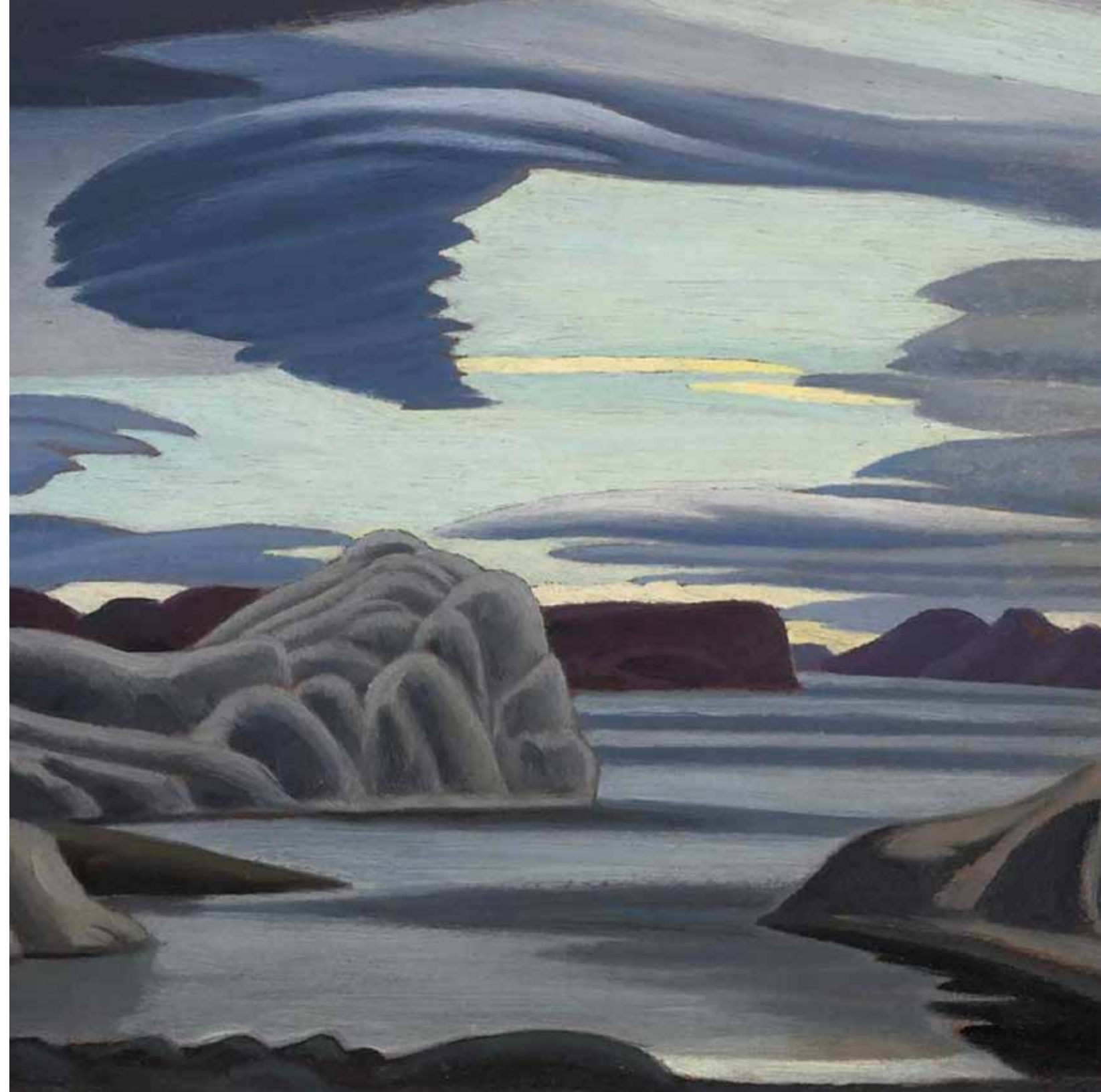
I WILL AGAIN

a baby step
a perfect pool
a school of fish
a rainbow swimming
a palette mixing
a prism passing
a glimpse from afar

a lightning thunders
a window shudders
a crystal shatters
a moment matters
a child stutters
a mother yawns
a new day dawns

I will dive into this pool again
I will take your hand

the whisper of mist
magentas pale with distance
icebergs loom





MESSIAH

clandestine
destined
dynasty

A SIGN

I stand up here against the wall
The sun beats down upon me
While I wait.

The color has long since
Been blached from my face
My features are indiscernible
Like a fading memory
Who will recognize me?
I am a sign.

There was a time
I blazed in glory
My countenance dimmed the sun
Masses paraded before me

I was their banner of pride
A sign of hope, a wonder.

But perhaps this fate is more heroic
What comes easy under the sun?
I am a weathered fortress
A hard-earned medal
A sign of perseverance
Suffering, merit.

I stand up here against the wall
The sun beats down upon me
While I wait.

ABSENCE

see
vacant
seat



A TIME TO TEACH

a mother begging
a doctor injecting
a newborn struggling
ten nurses running
a father pleading
praying beseeching
little knows he
it's just doctor teaching



IN THE SHADOW OF A GLACIER

O glacier patient sway
Nothing mortal in your way
Ancient rhythm primordial play
Did you cover ground today?
Poets pine for words to say
What only silence gives away

Under the shadow of endless day
I fill my lungs and pray



thousand-mile journey
peaks turn valleys – always
already there

Boruch Merkur is a brevity-minded writer of poetry. He is the editor of a weekly magazine on spirituality, mysticism, and religion. Boruch is also a composer of music and a guitarist, who lives in Toronto, Canada with his family. He has a degree in philosophy and rabbinical ordination. Boruch is thankful that his day job is in real estate.



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