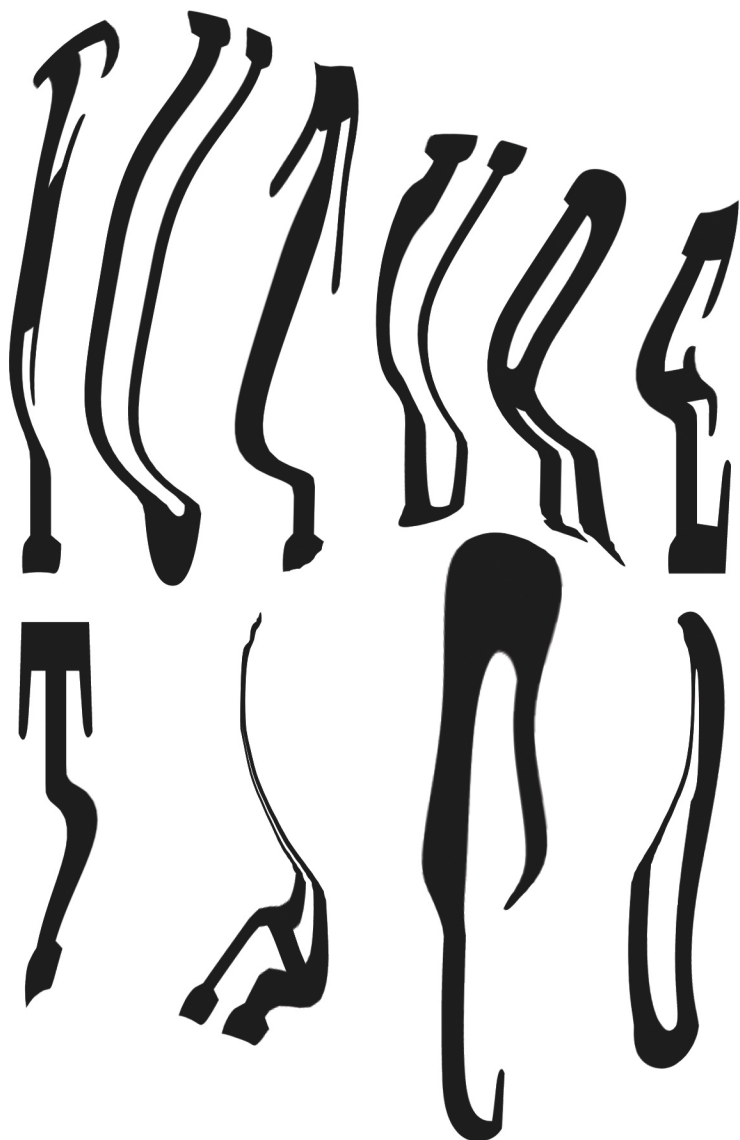
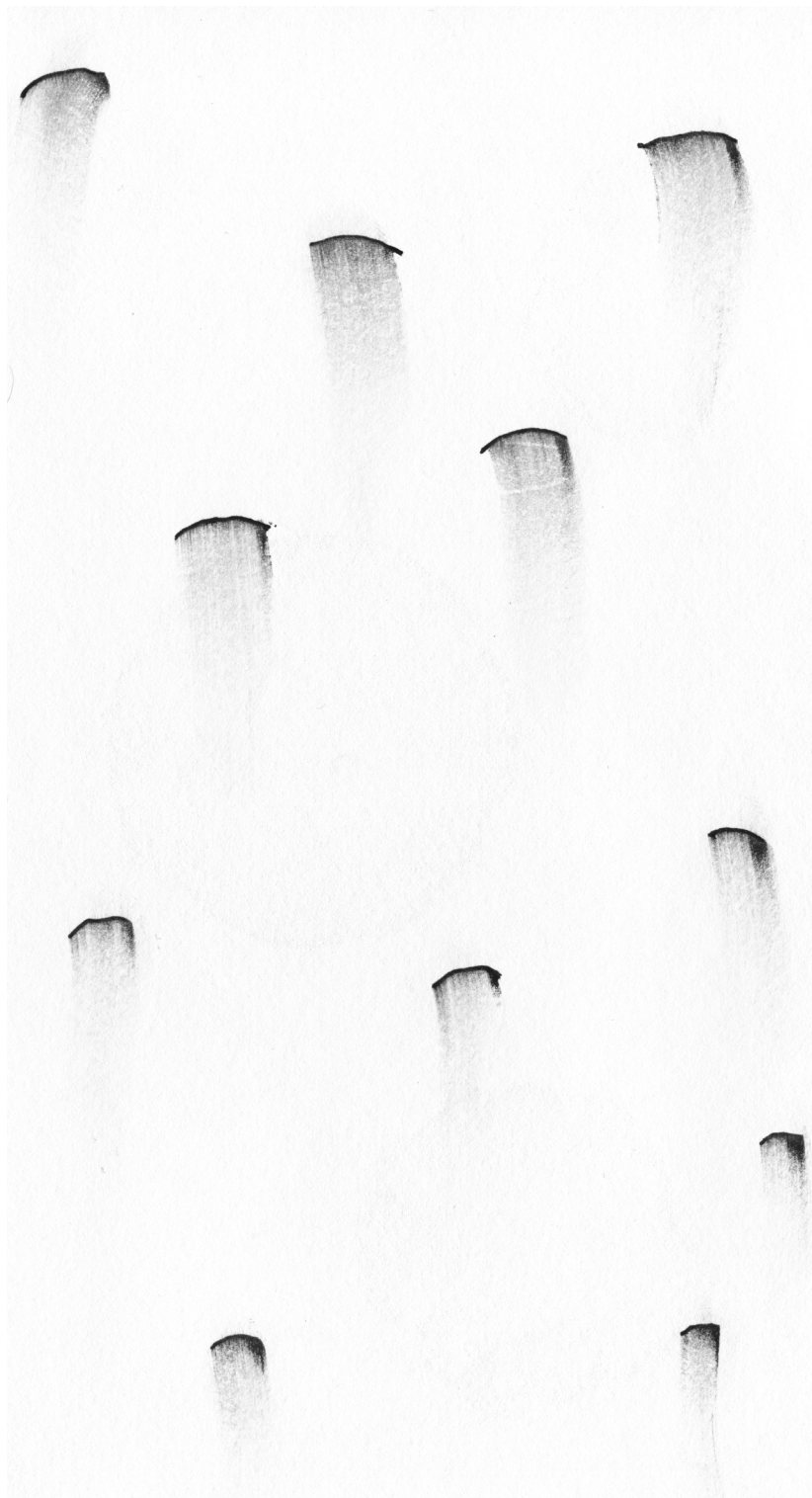


COLLECTION ONE



POEMS BY MATTHEW MANOS
IMAGES BY DAN EVERETT





flying under pressure.

Like a deep sea dive each step
and each move and each breath
was meticulously planned.

One by one it became clear
like crystal because a diamond
is forever until you drop it down
a drippy drain pipe drop.

Hands and feet touch tile becomes carpet
becomes tile becomes hot becomes cold
becomes static becomes shock becomes
electricity to light up the once dark hall
of your worst nightmare's happy ending.

The ceiling comes clear as pressure
persists when flight takes place
by serendipitous means as the floor
turns to wall turns to light turns to
wood turns to grain turns to an arc
without the animals and a shimmer
of gold and bronze and gold and
silver blinds as chains droop and
drop and clink and clank with knobs
that twist and turn as the shine
becomes faint and the wall becomes
clear and the fan turns and the man
looks you right in the eye confused
by treacherous journey and discovery
and click and clack and clook and
clock and boop and bop and tick
and tock as electricity becomes
shock becomes static becomes
cold becomes hot becomes tile
becomes carpet and the man looks
you in the eye as on becomes off
and light turns to dark saying

Good night.

useless clowns.

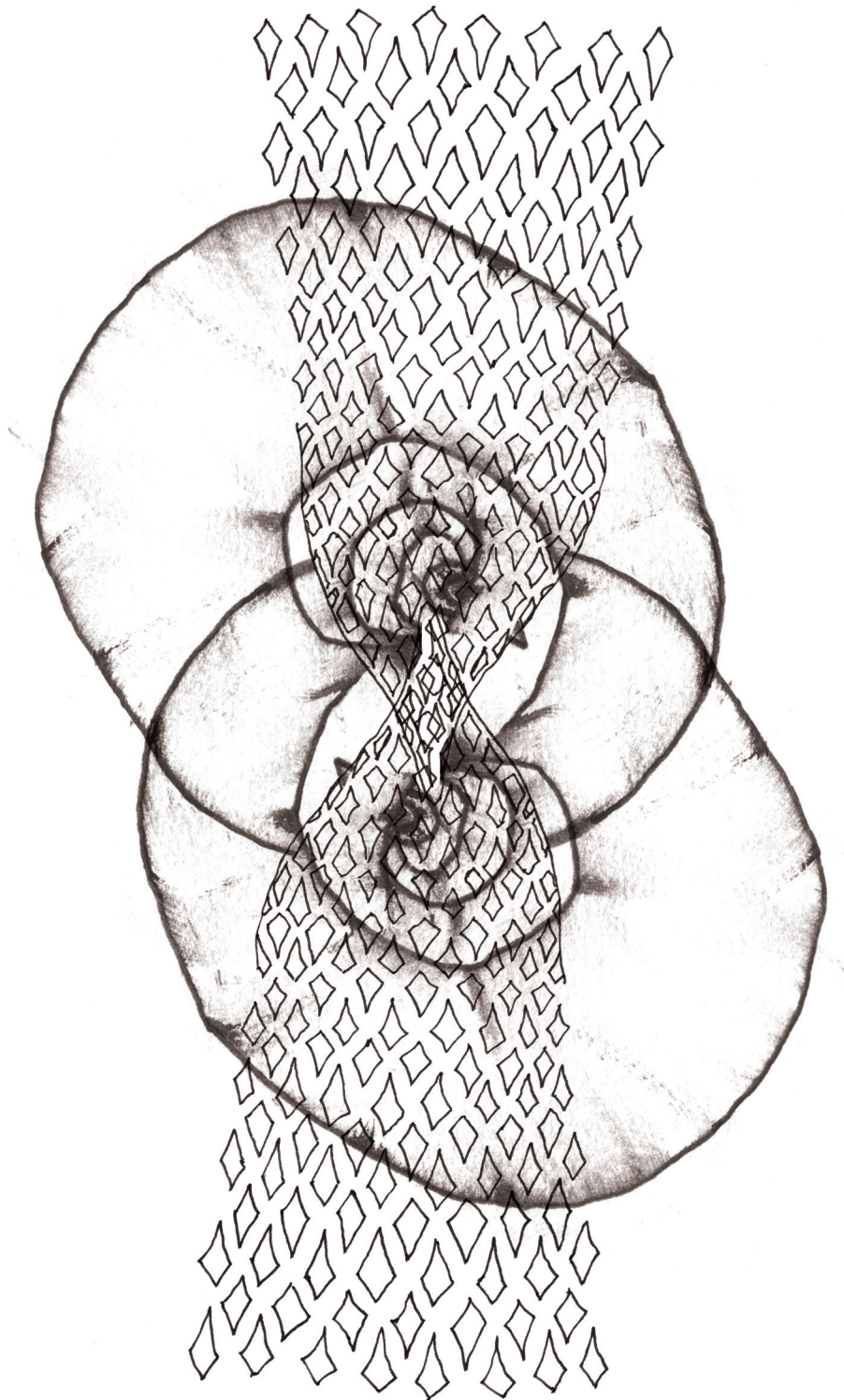
Methods of brewing of stewing of chewing
molasses and snickerdoodle cracked in half
fusing ink to paper and spilling carbonated
chaser to defuse the shock of the salt on
this sweet cookie you could imagine my
surprise at his demise when he asked if this
seat was free because they say nothing in this
world is free, but sometimes things are just
available with snicker snacker sugar doodling
birds tweeting and flapping and flopping on
the twig that was only designed to hold one
pound of nest heating your home cooling
your tile so you rest your face in this terrible
heat only to find an allergic reaction to granite
spitting into tubes of water feeding your shock
of water balloons splashing across your face
bursting only upon contact with the edge of
your glass eye lost in a bullfight all thanks
to a band of useless clowns.

heart.

The downstairs neighbor
keeps his presence known
through persistent beating
and pumping and filling
and draining of blood
and sugar and water
but it is tolerable
because you can just
turn up the air conditioning
to mask the sound
until one evening he beats
to the rhythm of a bad
Slayer cover band giving
you a hand when you least
need it as you think about
entertaining more natural
more organic more rooted
treats from trees and bushes
and soil to grow as gifts
to leave at the doorstep
as a kind way of asking
for some peace and quiet.

optimism.

Liquid pours
under the wire
with just three ticks
left as chili spreads
atop the chest of
a boy no more
than 40
only when he
wears white only
when we
wear white only
wondering if it is
an accident
or if the white is
just another canvas
another space
another opportunity
another place
another creative
mustard sandwich
embracing salami
and my BBQ
chips fall in my beer
under the wire
of the tick tock
as we look on the flip
side of the flop
of chili on your
white shirt.



doing dishes.

Flappy
birds
flopping

in the clogged sink
floating and fizzling
as bubbles
pop

with scents dispensing
like strawberry soda
shots of guinness dripping
and dropping
up the gutter

and down the shirt of
your nice tuxedo
with a penguin

lit on fire under your ass
as the floppy flip flop
flapping flap flip bird
pinches the shoulder
of a panda who ponders
and panders and ponders

how did I get here?

ownership.

Who spilled my beer?
Who spilled that beer?
Who spilled his beer?

“he did”

the race is on through
a circular city of lumps
and bumps and loops
and drops that pop
with hot dog flavored
diet soda spilt on your
shirt as the wood is
thrown towards your
face but you duck as
he drops and he falls
and he sleeps as you
slap the accuser because
he spilled that beer

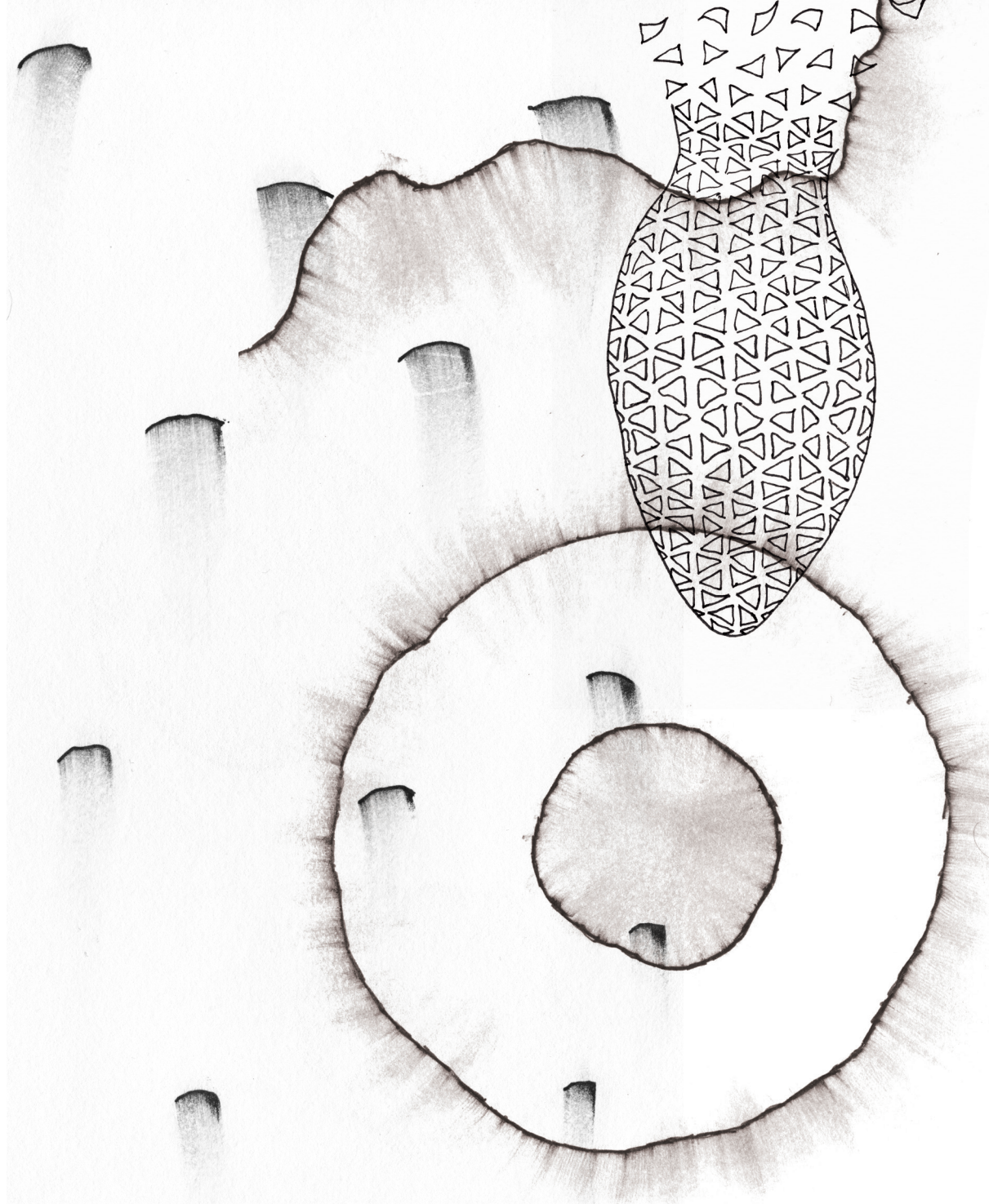
meet my mother.

An old man awakens to the sound
of Niagara Falls and the site of some
punk’s balls quickly grabbing spectacles with
the hopes of breaking testacles when

the porch door swings open to the yard with
clocks one minute apart from one another’s
ceramic frog sitting atop a grapefruit
watching from a distance avoiding drama
and trauma and he’s not afraid to go back
to prison because he’s tired of cooking for
one but first he needs to consult his mother
made of steel and just like that Niagara runs
dry all in a days work so we go back

to plant pumpkins and a creek flows as
mother knows her time has come to bang
another drum made of dog food for run-
aways and rusted bikes for god knows who
but at least the mailman comes every day
and the orientals next door still have no clue
how to trim an orange tree for

the bees that buzz and sting and ring the
bell when it’s time to put mother back with
the umbrellas.



above green water.

There's a troll under the 6th street bridge sleeping
100 feet above in a hammock made of concrete with
a mini-fridge of rotting baloney and books
picked up along the way from the passersby
who reads in the shade below

his hammock
his shade
his tv

runs off the shade because plugs are a welcome
mat to the NSA controlling microchips
in cars inspiring the ones who misbehave
to turn left too early atop his hammock into

his river
his pool
his shower
his toilet
his skin

as he plans a mexican takeover in the
hopes of accomplishing one more thing
since the war because the cable company
took Dexter off general broadcast
and in his day you needed a gun
to rob a man as frustration builds

as access as lack of
as abundance of time
of anger

heightens the pain inspires the pain inspires
the tossing of baloney onto foreheads and feet
who just want salvation under

his hammock
his shade
his theory
his baloney.

every movie.

Grown men cry in movie theatres but nobody died so is it a good cry or a bad cry when the guy gets the girl gets the dog who told them so but spoke very little english as 13 went on 30 and the bride ran away from home to raise a dog that would grow old with a man who hated his job but loved partying in Cabo with strangers to get away from it all but of course she showed up out of the blue to check on the delivery status of her daily letters intercepted by jealousy because she was the one who he was the one for and the eyes meet and the feet float when the cry is a good cry as no one proceeded to die.

confidence.

How do you play it by ear when you are deaf and the deer in headlights is uncertain of the logical next move but indecisiveness inspires decision to decide nothing but nothing is a decision too so all of a sudden the most indecisive is the most confident and the world's view evolves and revolves around you because Splenda hasn't been around long enough to sugar coat this so why bother?

copy cat.

Copy machines copy me to write things I don't want to see and produce work I don't believe in the doorway of my office because today is the day that children bring parents to work and honorary degrees grant you the right to copy the machine that copies me to produce the work I don't believe and write the things I don't want to see.

dream job.

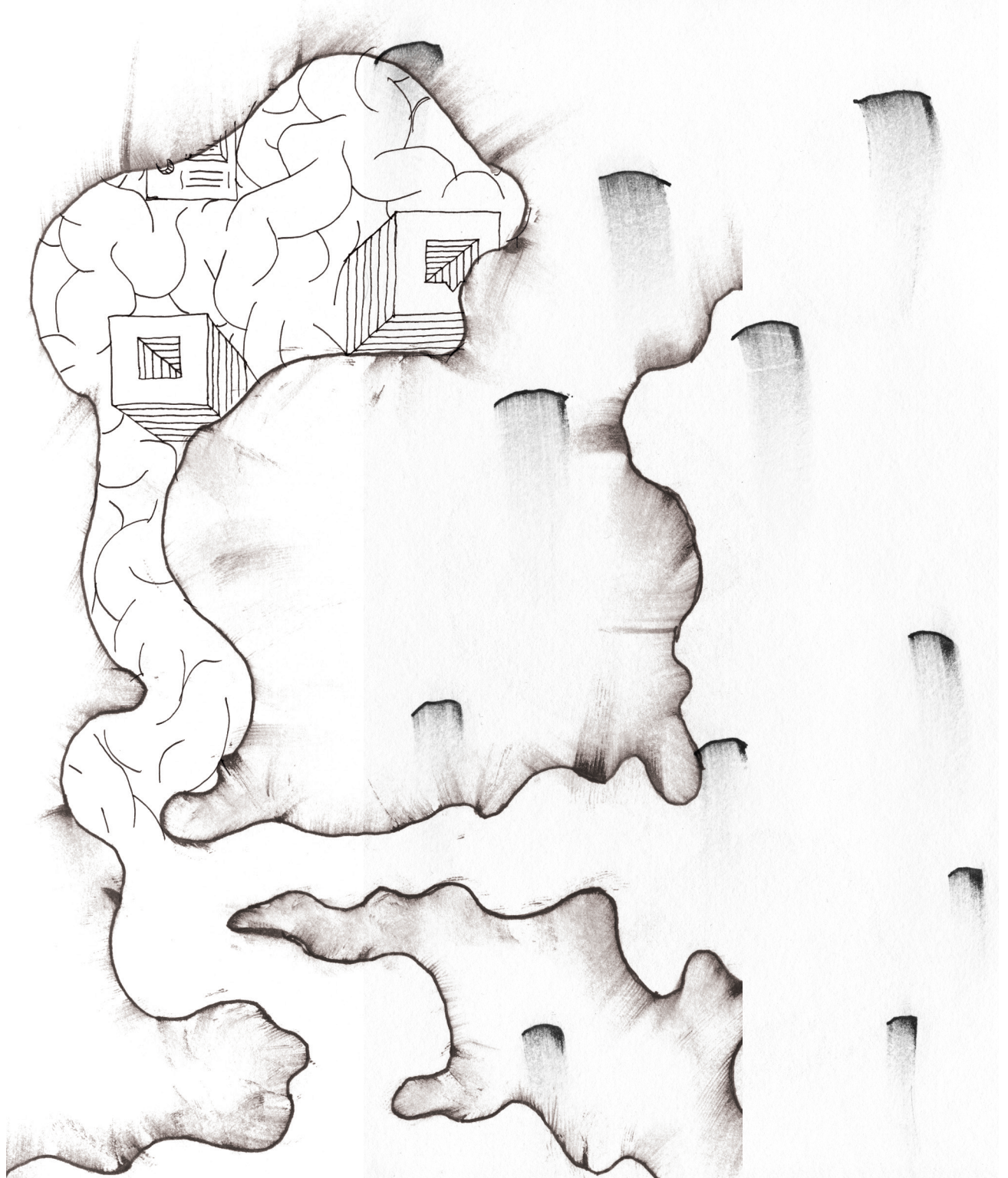
Squeaky hardwood polished
by the Vietnamese man
dreamed during sleepless nights
just 3 more years
4 more feet
5 more inches
6 more days
7 more feet
8 more months
9 more years

but the nightmare is the day
dream when the clock turns
90 and he was 75 too late as
the day reality of the day task
of the squeaky hardwood
that always could use a fresh coat

of fresh lies
and fresh fear
and fresh shame

just because a dream became
a job and 7 more became
7 less

— can I have a glass of water,
little man?



repetition and razor blades.

Repetition is what repetition was what repetition will be but routine doesn't welcome spontaneity happily as you defy the scheduled shave before walking to the scheduled train itching your face wondering what it was you forgot to do that morning

when pattern persists and repetition is doorsteps that correlate to the chin, car doors that respond to left cheeks, bushes that rely on right cheeks and birds that flock to whiskers you pick and pluck and you respond to a new repetition without a razor because repetition will be even if it was left behind and doors appear with bushes with birds with doorsteps as the itch slowly fades away and the blood persists and the scabs

will come and the itch will return and the blood will dry again as repetition arrives to repetition and routine is routine is routine and the train is on time when the little girl begins to stare from across the platform.

salami business.

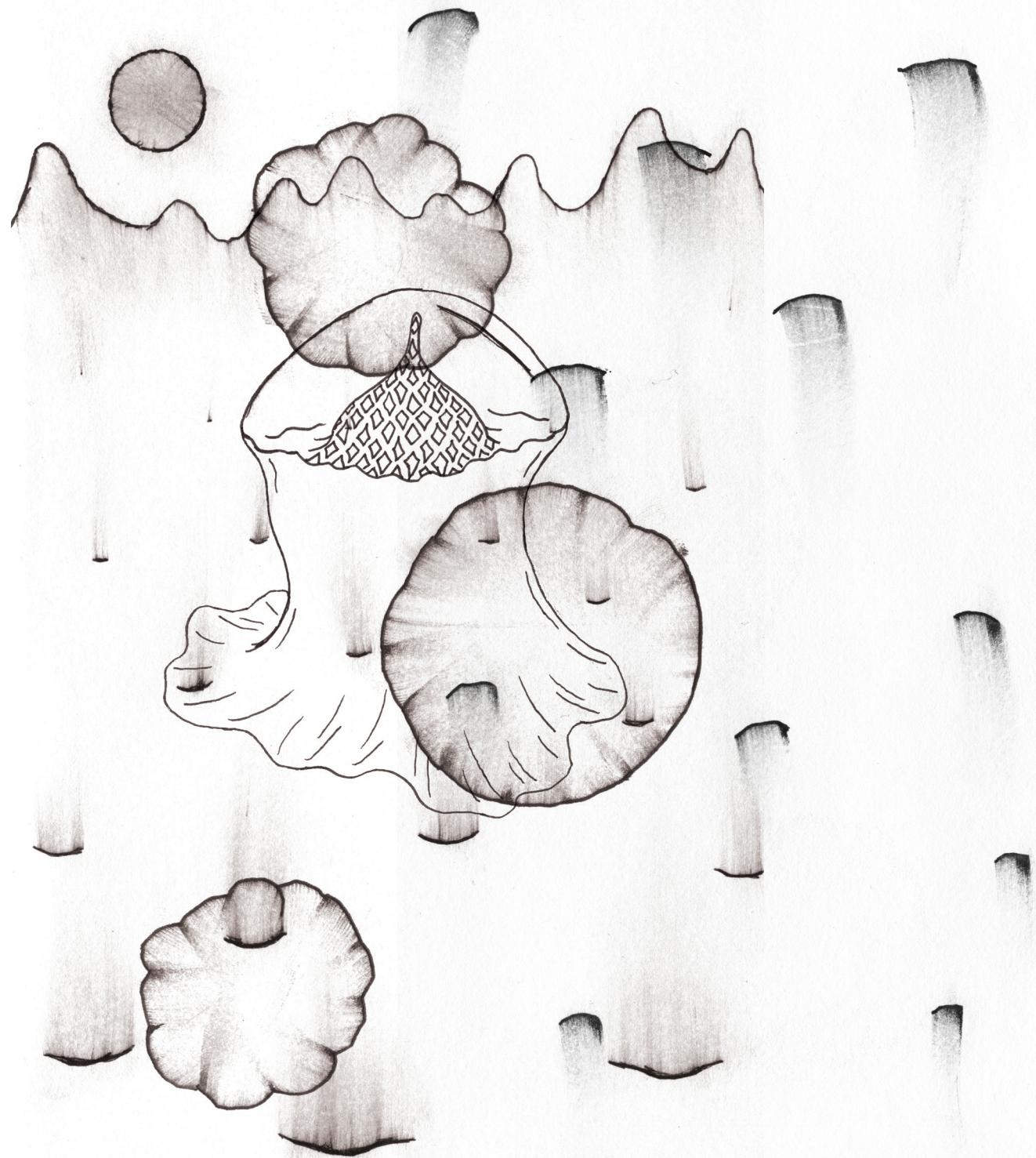
Meetings under bridges are suspicious when you're in the business of selling deli meat behind counters behind walls under the radar of the fire that burns in surprise to your staff but you collect insurance to move on to the next meeting under the next bridge because the business of salami chooses you.

be who we are.

You laugh when I laugh but did you find it funny when you yawn when I yawn but are you actually tired when they look at their phones when nothing is left to say because eyes and trees and bees and birds and views aren't enough for two friends or three friends or four friends that fill out profiles with great hesitation granted by frustration of appearance but you slide your finger to the left to the left to tap the screen of a face of a friend insecure because the view isn't pretty from here.

paranoia.

You sleep with one ear buried
in deep cotton and the other
wrapped like a Christmas present
on Easter only to muffle the sounds
of squirrels on sidewalks and raccoons
in leaves left behind by confident
landlords distracted by the beat of
Blondie proclaiming frustration
about going over her minutes
while we fill trash cans with air and
air with cool breeze and
cool breeze turns to suspicion
turns to sweat turns to regret
because Red Bull gives you wings,
but this pillow is becoming wet
as existential decorations wonder
why they hang in April casting shadows
that flicker from the moon to the rhythm
of a fat man's growl wondering if
revenge was sought on a previous
tenant that looks
just.
like.
you.



kid pix.

Imagine jumping inside a Windows screen-saver sleeping with fishes to avoid doing dishes because mold makes you cringe and the guy next door just wants to shoot fireworks but the fuse went out so you sit in disappointment when the bomb goes off and the ominous sound of a guilty toddler echoes through every megabit of your megabyte's giga watcha mah call it and colors persist through blinking monitors and riders persist through the storm to throw you a rope but your progress saves to a box with a floppy flash of a light bulb each second so fast that the next fuse is lit and ready to burst each megabit of your megabyte's giga something and the screen-saver turns to rolling hills with nothing but a blue sky and a right click and a horizontal barber shop quartet singing one more time to sleep with the fishes instead of making wishes with coins on docks in movies to print just one more achievement posted to just one more blank spot.

games.

Go fish with an old maid in Texas fighting in a war without apologies for the collapse of your five story tall castle assembled with the joker who hides rules from the Queen and her King ringing the bells of the stock trade hay barrel sure not to buy too many hotels too many motels too much jail time persists as the family pursues the conversation starter initiated by too many pixels in the palms of an old maid's fish.

triggers.

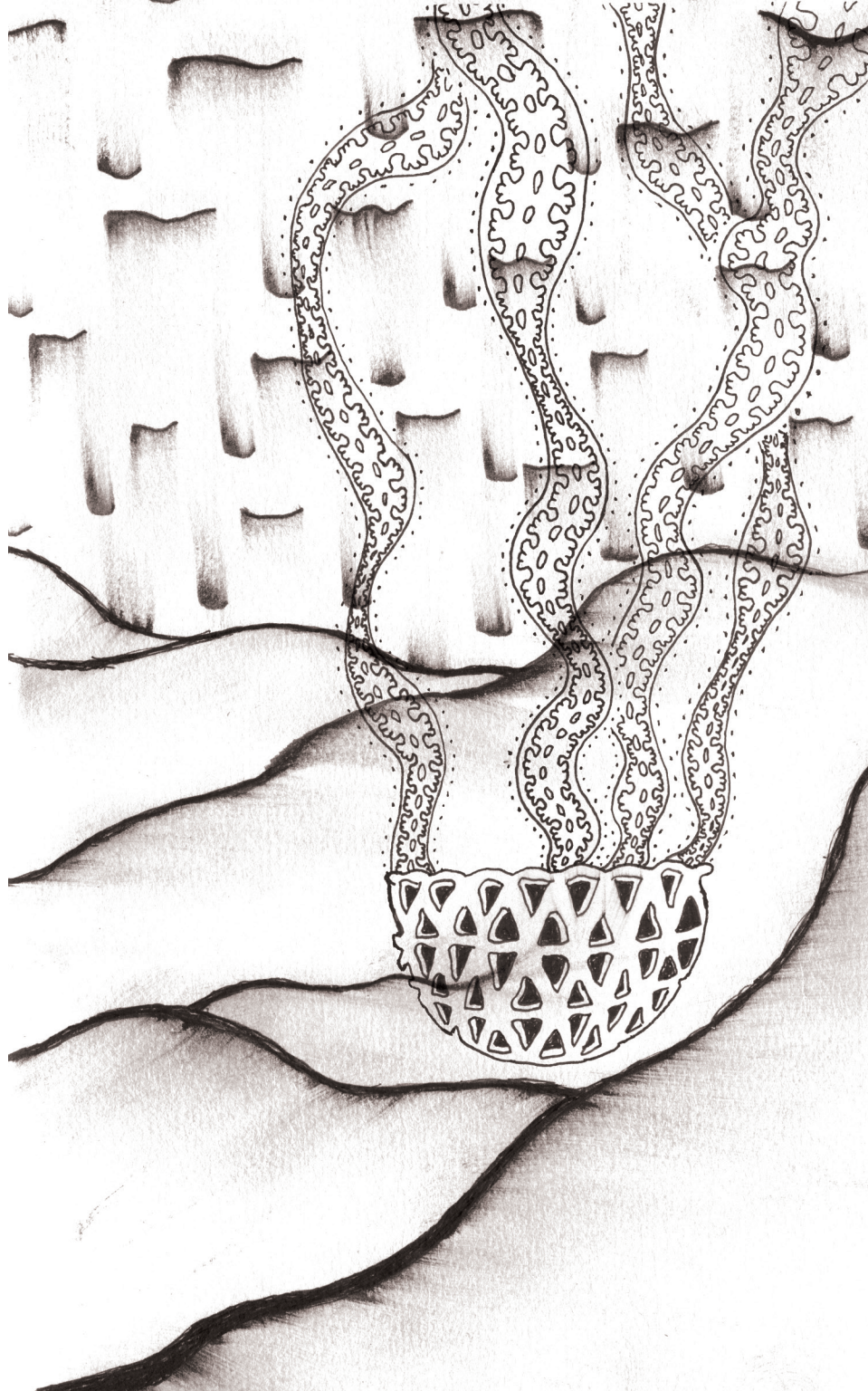
Keys hanging from closets hold memories inspired by mountain ranges making it hard to leave home when life's biggest events take place from different perspectives of the valley's vantage points from the Los Angeles lookouts always standing before memories before mountain ranges behind clouds before moons before sounds before birds flying and dying and loving just as we do from the Los Angeles lookouts framed by different perspectives of the valley's vantage point.

sports.

We never miss
a monday night
chance to praise
those that piss
on toddlers
to move on
to the next one
the next ring
the next point
the next buzz

we aspire
to leave
the maid
a challenge
to keep her
on her toes
to write words
in fog
in mirrors
that fade
from dripping
sinks clogged
with newborns
never born in
the face

of the next one
the next ring
the next point
the next buzz



weight watchers.

Pajamas
take
the form of clouds
in the sky
with waffles
on the bottom of your shoes
and the flapjacks flip
to the heat of the moment
just because it happens
to be playing
in the background
at the shack where you blow
your points on hawaiian rolls.

comfort food.

Baby carrots are
big carrots
shrinkwrapped
into small carrots with
big shoes
to fill
high hopes
to measure
to comfort
to focus
to illuminate
one perfect square in
a sea of dates
and days
and squares
and moments
to comfort
to trust.

Baby carrots are
big carrots
shrinkwrapped
into small carrots with
big shoes
to fill
high hopes
to disappoint
to choke
to cough
to illuminate
one fucked up rectangle
in a vacant hotel off
the 405
with no definite
destination
but up.



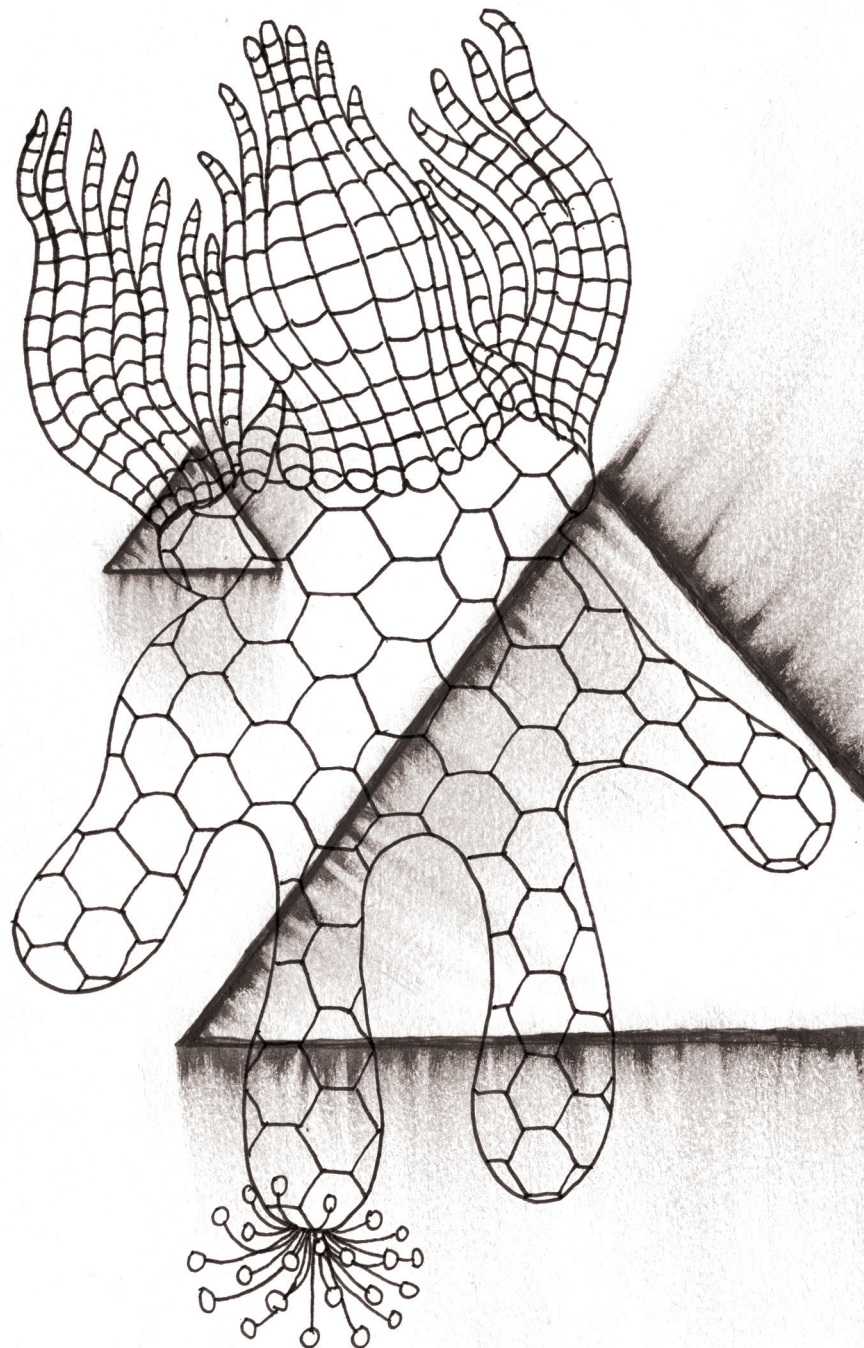
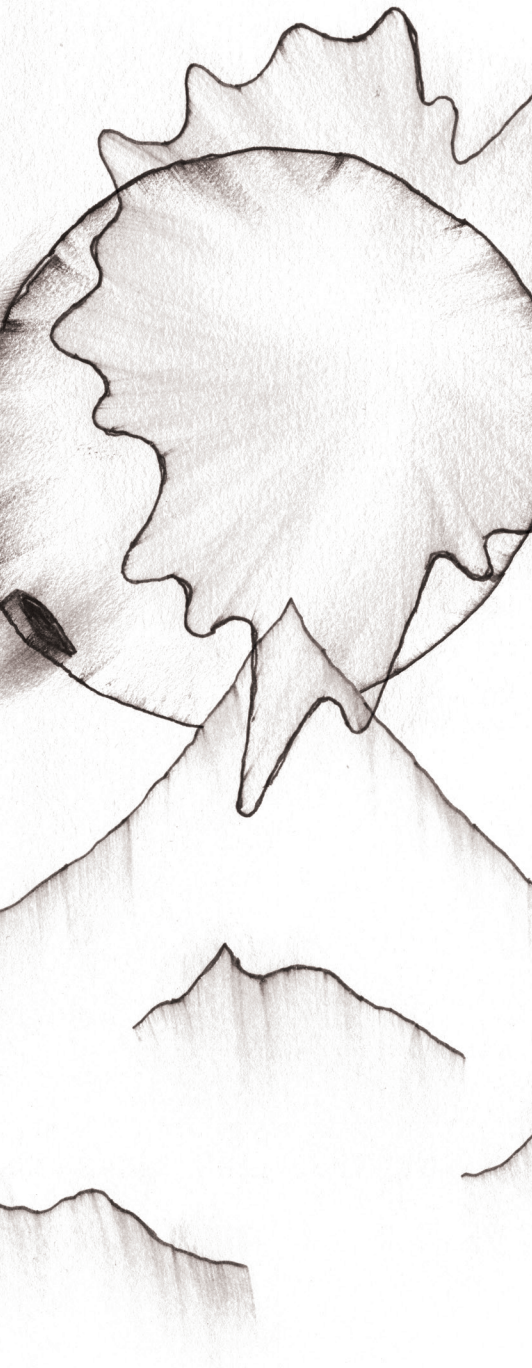
love.

Eyes flutter like a long wave hello as she persists
to buckle him in because he'll fly through the window
and it is all for the better like layered lasagna that
was first boiled in tomato sauce to avoid inevitable
sphericalization of burger meat without the buns
wrapped in cute summer dresses planting flowers
and mint and spicy peppers that impend death
but not before a great meal's leftovers likely stored
in just one too many mason jars but adorable
none-the-less because she finds small things cute
although unusable and that's not the point because
her eyes flutter and her tongue sticks out in deep
concentration like it always has because I love her.

paranoia II.

The bill is overdue but the mail man
put it in his mail van in the bucket marked
"for the man" as they watch and the
oven stays warm and the room is watching
me because the bed wants to eat me but
is the bill overdue is the oven still on is the
man still watching me if I take one more step
they'll see but if I just stand here they won't
— how could you do this to me?

Don't you know the oven is on and the but-
ton is round and silver with warning because
the bill is overdue and that shine means
stop and that stopp and this roof are not
welcome here any longer so you can't leave
because I can't move and I know what you
are thinking but just one more rosary, one
more thank you, one more dozen roses sent
to the doorstep of the last page of my last
rolodex doesn't come any closer or the oven
will blow and the roof will collapse and the
man will know that this bill has to be paid.



fresh coffee.

Eyes meet
while class is established
while credibility is assumed
while floors descend
while floors rise to stop eyes
from meeting
because your eye is different
than my eye
and clearly
I'm sweaty
while you're dry.

The earth shakes
while the ground quakes
while the blinds scatter
and floors
respond as our heads level
and eyes start to look the same
as I wonder if you were actually
dry or if I was just
too far to tell.

You cry
and you dive
and you embrace
and you shit
all over the walls
as I'm reminded that
I also respond to nature's call
on seats of porcelain
and I'm close enough
now
to tell your eye is the same
as my eye and you are
far
from dry.

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