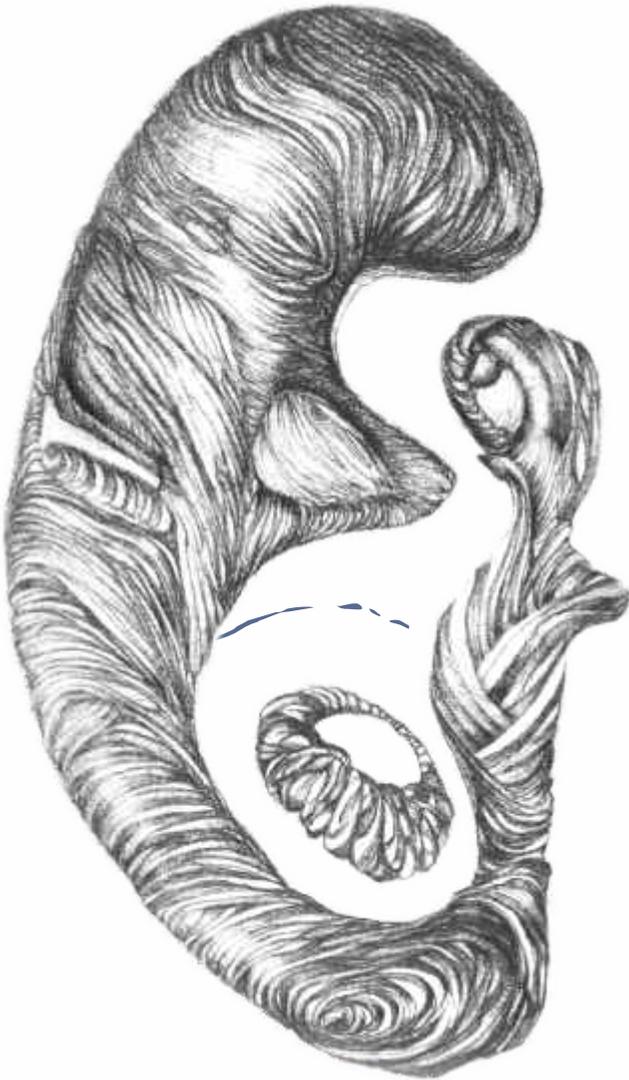


# Fine Tangled Strands

poems by

Utsa Seth



# Fine Tangled Strands

Fine Tangled Strands is a riveting collection of poems observing the world with uncanny precision and unrushed ease, all at the same time. The book speaks to you, transporting you to a rather quiet, inner realm, for a candid moment with your own self.

Coming from a young adult, with unyielding honesty towards her vulnerabilities, this book is a timeless poetic fabric woven with the threads of Utsa Seth's perception of her generation in the world today.

“*Is there room for waves  
in this world?  
Room for their  
certain uncertainty?  
Room for their  
cresting and crashing  
constantly,  
and cresting again.  
Room for their  
chatter that perpetuates  
coastline after coastline  
only unheard on the inside,  
distanced.  
Room for their  
meek withdrawals,  
though bold returns.  
Their majestic power,  
the pounding persistence,  
the relentlessness,  
the flux,  
the movement,  
the vastness,  
the transcendence.*”

From -

Is There Room For A Flood?



Utsa Seth often muses over her being raised by a village. Living in an extended family and studying at the Rishi Valley School where J. Krishnamurti's philosophies and a non-competitive holistic education have helped her form a fearless and empathetic worldview for herself.

Utsa deeply connects with nature, people, and animals, all forming her ever evolving community. She is often found atop her favourite tamarind tree, reading a book, writing, singing, or just observing.

She has a keen interest in fundamental sciences, gender issues, alternative economics, environment, law, and human behaviour. She is fond of deep listening and conversations with people of all ages.

She likes to divide her time meaningfully between academics and on-ground projects, allowing her to expand her horizon.

Well, the village child is out finding her own world village, and offering glimpses of her journey through her writings.



*To Lemon, my first and most beloved cat, and to the village,  
the diversity that made me who I am.*



# Fine Tangled Strands

Poems by

Utsa Seth

Design and Illustrations  
Manas Arvind

All poems by Utsa Seth

Cover, Design, and Illustrations by Manas Arvind

Copyright © Utsa Seth, 2021

[www.utsaseth.in](http://www.utsaseth.in)



# Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	1
<i>A Note of Gratitude</i>	4
<i>Author's Note</i>	6
<hr/>	
Smudged Ink	7
Fine Tangled Strands	9
Acknowledgement	11
Symphony	13
Warm Nights	15
Singular Multitude	17
I Want To Be Three Again	19
Dear XX/XY	21
On The Tamarind Tree	23
Asthachal	25
Talking Through The day	27
Dahlias In Love	31
Perfect Pace	33
Movie Night Handholding	35
Light Years Apart	37
Plain Words	39
I Had Two Things To Say	41
Visionary	43
Hey, Look At The Cookie	45
Bewitched	47
White Bougainvillea	49
Bubble Wrap	51
Consensually Weird	53
Existence	59
Is There Room For A Flood?	61
Shall I Talk To The Birds Then?	65

# Foreword

by Kiran Khalap

Apparently, the word ‘creativity’ did not exist in ancient civilisations. It was coined by the English mathematician and philosopher Alfred White Northhead as recently as 1927!

To the ancient civilisations, the ability to create was a gift.

When you encounter, Utsa Seth’s poems, you start accepting the older definition of creativity! Because her gift allows her to tackle serious themes even at a relatively young age.

For instance, when you begin with “Hey, Look at the Cookie” even as you read you are filing it away as an adolescent memory of romance, until you are stopped dead in your tracks by,

*“What sounds inside  
takes me to task,  
asks,  
with every silver lining  
don't tell me  
you don't see the clouds?  
To which I say,  
I do,  
but that isn't  
what the sky is about.”*

That’s a surprising ability to see the ground over which all illusion rests, like the TV screen with pixels acting as actors.

Utsa's poems are permanently embedded in her own reactions to events, which points to a self-aware mind.

In 'Consensually Weird' you can see this quality of play between one thought stream and the second overlapping one.

*"Everything I want to find can be found  
but I don't want to find,  
my mind,  
is too busy being weird"*

Sometimes, Utsa returns to tender moments unfurled by quiet insights. Hence in the poignant "I Want to be Three Again",

*"I want to wake up to clothes ironed and folded,  
emboldened by prints  
that I didn't choose"*

We can safely predict that Utsa will grow from craftswoman to master craftswoman, delighting us with visits to the past and to the future...on paths woven out of a twisting turn of phrase and lyrics of surprise.

*Date: 25th September 2021*

---

*Kiran Khalap won the Asian Age Indo-UK Short Story writing award in 1995; is the published author of three books of literary fiction (Halfway Up the Mountain, Two Pronouns and a Verb and Black River Run); TEDx speaker on creativity; brand consultant by day and rock climber over weekends*

# Foreword

by **Natasha Badhwar**

Utsa Seth's poems are bold and exploratory. They seek newer worlds and navigate delicately between doubt and certainty, beauty and longing, joy and isolation. Utsa has a confident, mature voice that belies her youth. Her poems are a space for healing, for sorting out the knots in the fine tangled strands of our emotions.

These are poems that are alive and breathing. The voice of the poet speaks directly to the reader, helping them get in touch with their own unsorted feelings.

Utsa's expression is unpretentious and direct. She doesn't write to impress and therein lies the quiet power of these poems.

*Date: 25th September 2021*

---

*Natasha Badhwar is the author of 'My Daughters' Mum' and 'Immortal For A Moment'.*

## A Note of Gratitude

This book of poems would have never materialized without the love and support of my parents, family, friends, teachers, and the Rishi Valley School. They have grown me up and given me the space to think freely.

I'd like to thank Rebecca Levi, an excellent poet herself, who managed to change my approach to poetry. I'd like to thank Bharati Challa for being an incredible friend and doing the grammar check for this book. Finally, I'd like to thank my father, Manas Arvind, whose apt illustrations and design gave life to the pages and without whom the poems in this book would still exist as a scattered collection of documents.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'U' followed by a smaller 'S' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

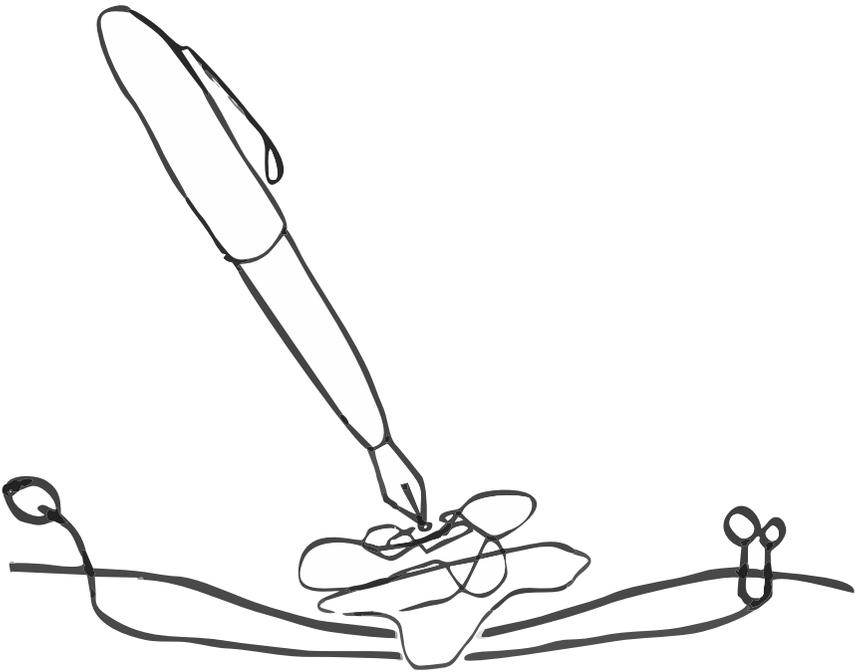
## Author's Note

For me, the birth of a poem is both undeniably random and incredibly beautiful. How does it happen? Most often they are born out of my observations; sometimes of things and people and other times of my thoughts. Each poem has a story, besides the one it chooses to tell. The story of an epiphany, a walk underneath the trees, or a night on which I couldn't sleep. Sometimes they start off as a few lines that show up at my doorstep, and as I play with them for weeks or months, they slowly give way to verse.

Alive, I will walk through life; meet new people and see new places. These experiences could even turn all I've ever known upside down. With my first book, I invite you on my writing journey, and it would be most true to say, there is no journey I look forward to more than this one.

Utsa Seth

*26th September, 2021.*



# Smudged Ink

The story begins  
with a cold draft  
interwoven in the  
soft whispers of a hand  
that stutters out its  
first words.

As the blue fingers  
tighten their grip,  
utterances solidify.

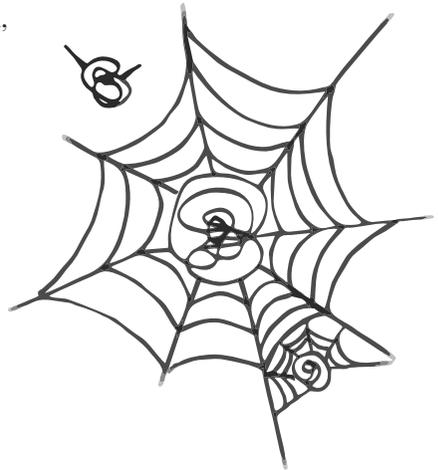
They harden and sharpen  
as the prose is chiselled  
to an effigy of thought.

Words rise from the depths  
where glistening thought bubbles  
fallen between cracks ambled, aloof,  
until the pinpricks of reality  
burst their taut surfaces.

They form sullen puddles,  
deepened by barred affection  
and endless struggles;  
but smudged ink is not weakness,  
it is to be treasured.

## Fine Tangled Strands

I walk right into it,  
feather-light neglect  
thriving at vision's edge,  
the cobweb.  
It lives loftily,  
but sinks on landing  
and sticks,  
tickling  
its inner twin  
the thought counterpart,  
my brain signals: *laugh*  
so I do,  
but my stomach hurts.  
In the absence of articulation,  
and the passing of time  
marked solely by the hands of the clock,  
my thoughts spun differently.  
Some primal spider instinct  
wove a web,  
and I watched them ebb,  
watched them trickle out  
from whence they came,  
saw them change.  
They were stretched,  
thin enough to almost disappear  
but still remain

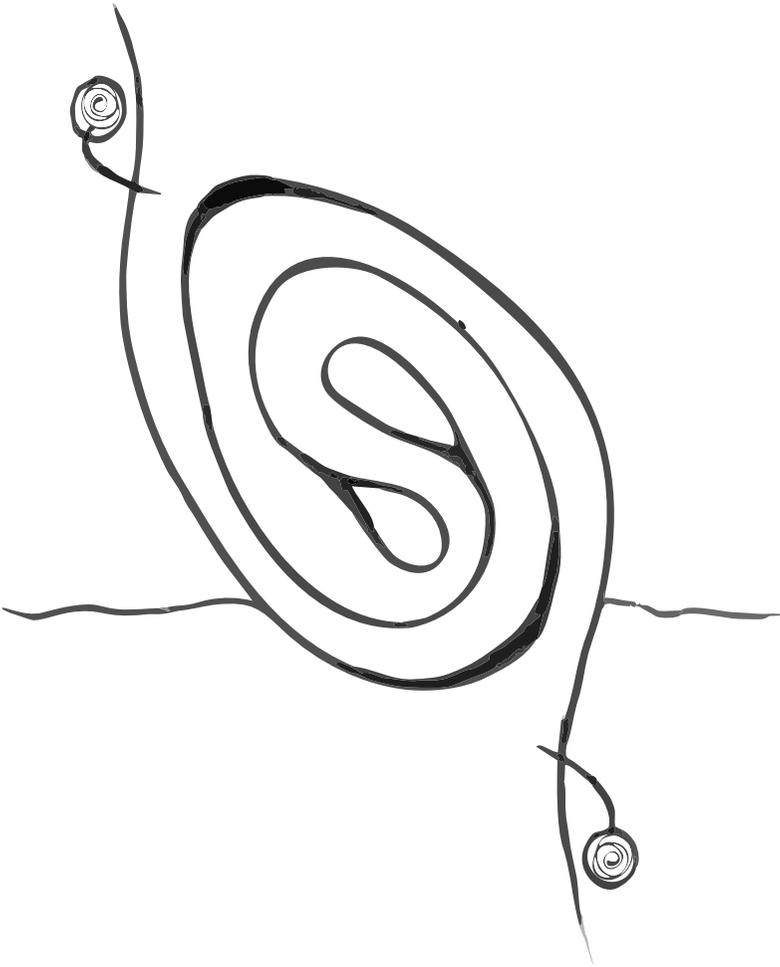


fine,  
*I brush them every morning,  
align my intentions,  
smile at my reflections,  
live the affirmations.*

tangled,  
*And then I forget,  
passing words and feelings  
are caught,  
— a myriad of muscle motions, emotions,  
and they hang in the air,  
waiting to be carefully picked,  
but there is nothing nimble about this.  
So when I reach out  
my limbs clunky,  
they pile and mix,  
nearing an impossible fix.  
The exhaustion is exhausting,  
strange sleep is costing me,  
the calm is violent,  
it's actually the silence...*



strands.  
*Eating food is a feeling I want to feel more often than I should.  
Sometimes I am sunshine.  
Other times, I am an eternally cocooned caterpillar.  
I turn my nose up at melancholy, but it's seeped under my fingernails and  
now I keep tasting it on my tongue instead.  
I think I know my own skin but I moult with the weather.  
I see lives and I see choices.  
Decisions pierce like sharp notes in the artificial mellow spontaneity I've  
synthesised.  
It happens to be, that I have caught the conductor of my complexity:  
“How can I let anything, be everything?”*





# Acknowledgement

Sitting amidst familiar,  
I feel alien.  
The white tubelight,  
lively, life,  
shines on everyone,  
yet I feel shadowed.  
A gap to be filled  
remains empty  
for days,  
neglected, ignored,  
but persistent, resurfacing  
again and again.

I need space to be,  
but sometimes the space  
is suffocating.  
Fullness,  
like flatness  
in a saturated colour  
feels empty,  
and I crave for more,  
more than just a duality,  
for something  
that deep breaths let in,

it fills me up,  
acknowledgement.



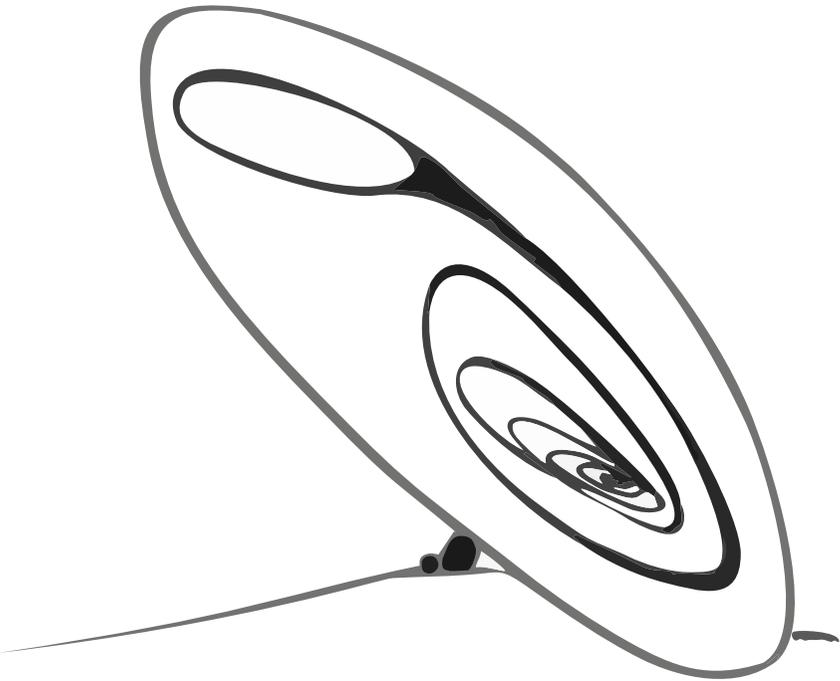
## Symphony

I know that harmony.  
It defines the song  
I hear in the pandemonium  
of accusations and salt water.  
Their deposits,  
icicles that press lightly  
below my lips,  
barricade my sleep.

As the melody solidifies  
into a shoulder,  
I rest,  
letting it all drain out,  
feel my toes leave  
the ground.



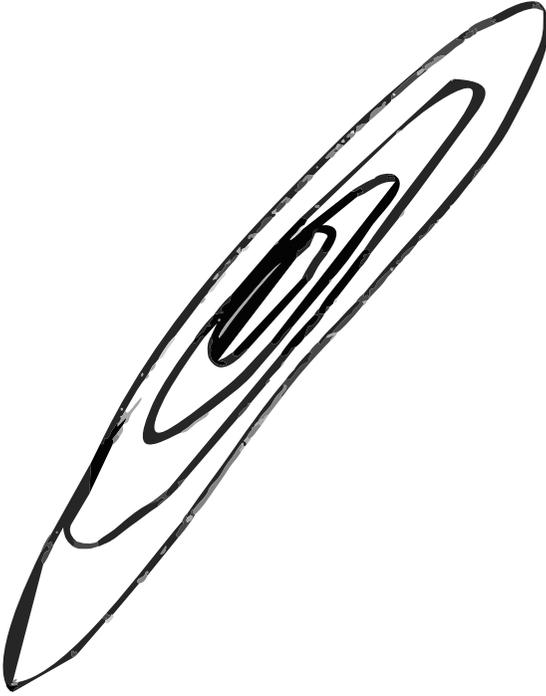
The cold menacing pressure  
gradually lessens,  
warms to the strains  
of the mellow lullaby  
that creates a cocoon  
where I now lay,  
our embrace radiating  
heartfelt love.



## Warm Nights

We sit, silent,  
enveloped in the arms of Nyx.  
She's warm today,  
and her stars shine,  
illuminating the finer lines  
of life.  
There are no words  
to fill up the space  
but we  
comprehend the quiet.  
So when a tear,  
content,  
meekly rolls down her cheek,  
I don't speak,  
but I smile.  
Thoughts move along  
conveyor belts in my head  
and the street lamp, bright,  
causes the tear to glisten,  
as I listen  
to its tiny reflections  
on her face.





## **A Singular Multitude**

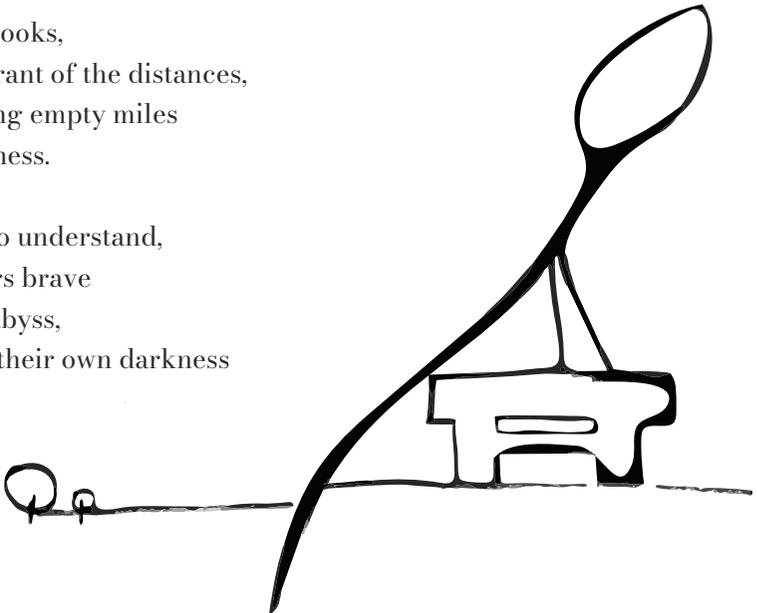
---

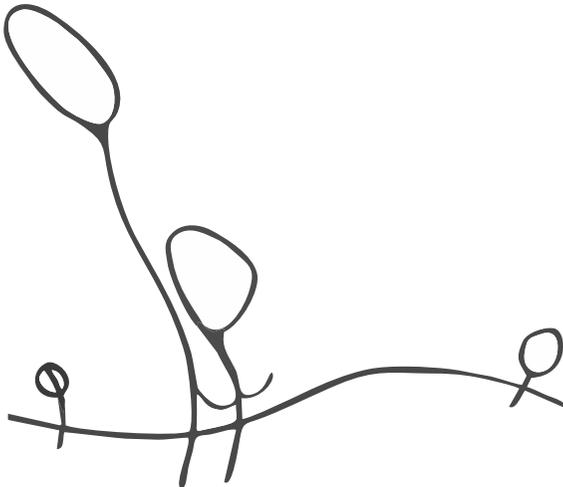
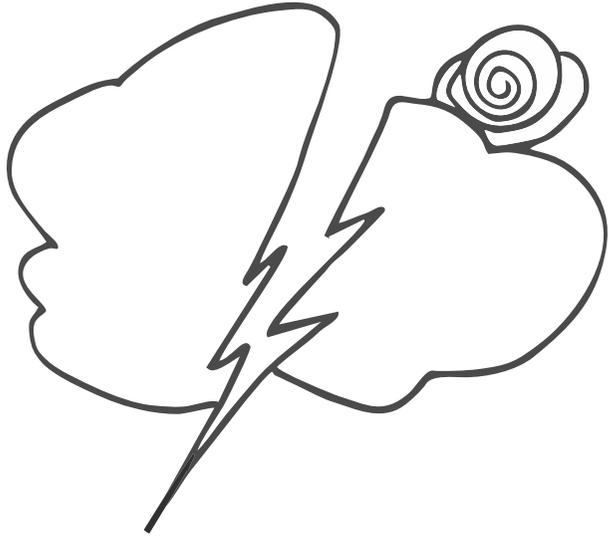
She looks up,  
gazing,  
her eyes travel, they move  
over the specks  
of a white spray.

The unified dome  
holds within it  
a play,  
of starlight and  
space,  
a singular multitude—  
a family, together  
because of their place  
in the sky.

When she looks,  
she is ignorant of the distances,  
the enduring empty miles  
of nothingness.

She is yet to understand,  
that all stars brave  
their own abyss,  
illuminate their own darkness  
to shine.





# I Want To Be Three Again

When I cross the road,  
I want to slip my hand into another  
and let them guide me  
through the blundering traffic.  
When I finally start school,  
I want to wake up to clothes ironed and folded,  
emboldened by prints  
that I didn't choose.  
I want to meet new people,  
and tell them everything  
in exactly my way,  
never wonder if they'll stay.  
I'll go the places they take me,  
see the faces I've always seen,  
and believe me,  
I'll be keen,  
I mean,  
at least I'll be happy.  
I have as many homes as I have fingers,  
family, all equally mine,  
so don't tell me which is more important,  
because without my fists  
how will I punch the bad away?  
I want to be scared of the thunder  
and wonder why the sky is so angry,  
then marvel at the beauty of lightning  
and accept the storm.  
And for that,  
I want to be three again.

## Dear $XX/XY$

You are a variable,  
and it may be hard  
to come to terms with,  
but your number will come.

You will have good times, bad times,  
happy times, sad times,  
you will change.

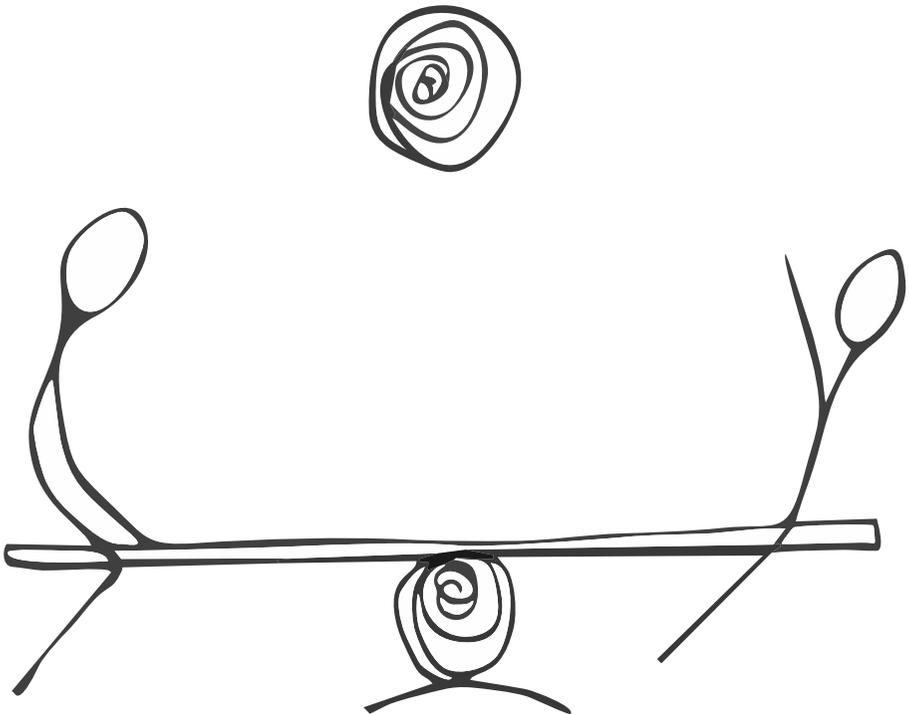
There will be additions  
and subtractions  
but your values can be infinite,  
both rational and irrational,  
while your smile  
will go on like pi.

Sometimes your coefficients  
will make you big, sometimes small,  
but know that  
you'll still be you  
on the inside.

There may be other factors too  
that will tip your equation  
but don't worry,  
they are always mistakes, inevitable,  
it is the learning that matters.

So learn,  
find new angles  
of looking at boring circles  
and never give up,  
especially when  
the problem is difficult.

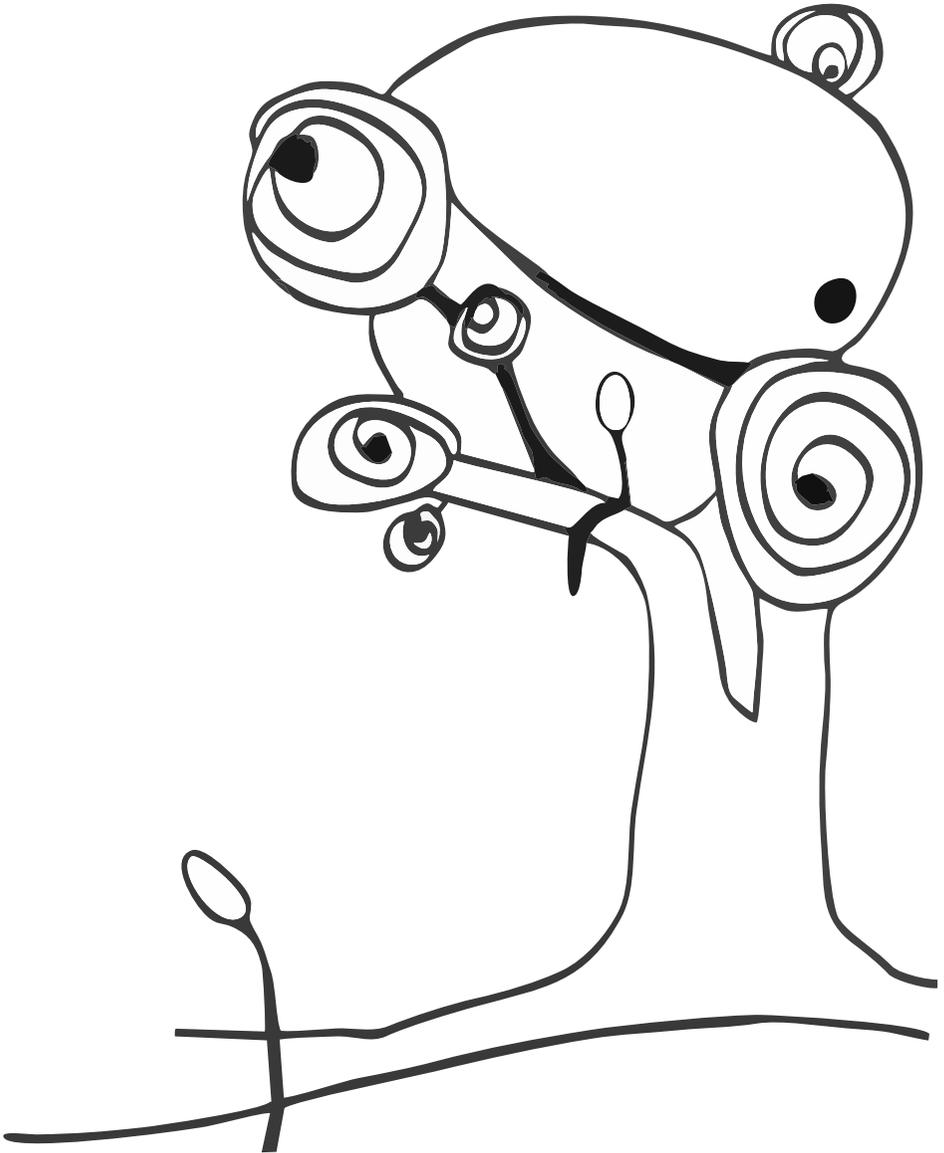
And they will be,  
so when you lose heart  
just remember  
that I'll always be around  
to make it easier,  
a constant,  
in the equation of your life.



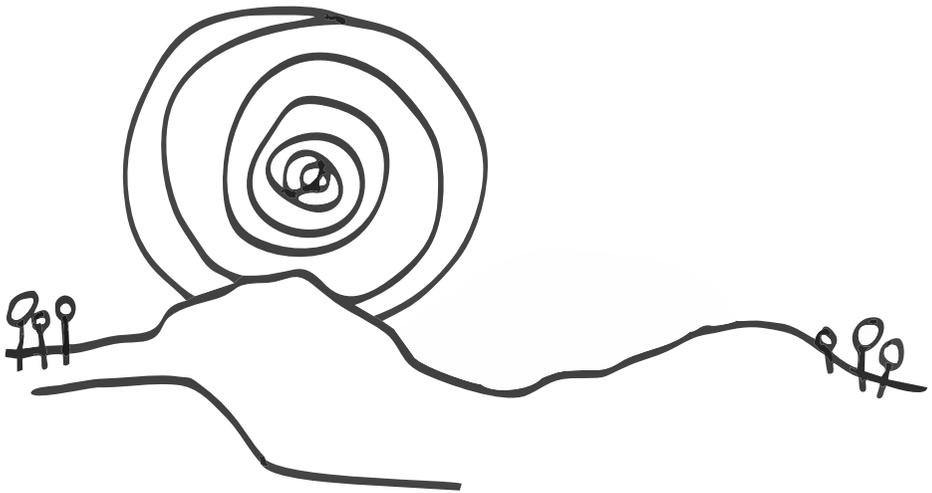
## On The Tamarind Tree

She stands beneath me,  
as I sit on the tree,  
and sends up demands  
for sweet and sour tamarinds.

Unfortunately, every single one  
is raw and green,  
so I look down and shake my head.  
She,  
then shakes her head at me,  
and walks away pouting.



# Astachal\*



*\*Astachal - The hill at sunset. It is also the name for the evening quiet time held on a hill at my school, Rishi Valley.*

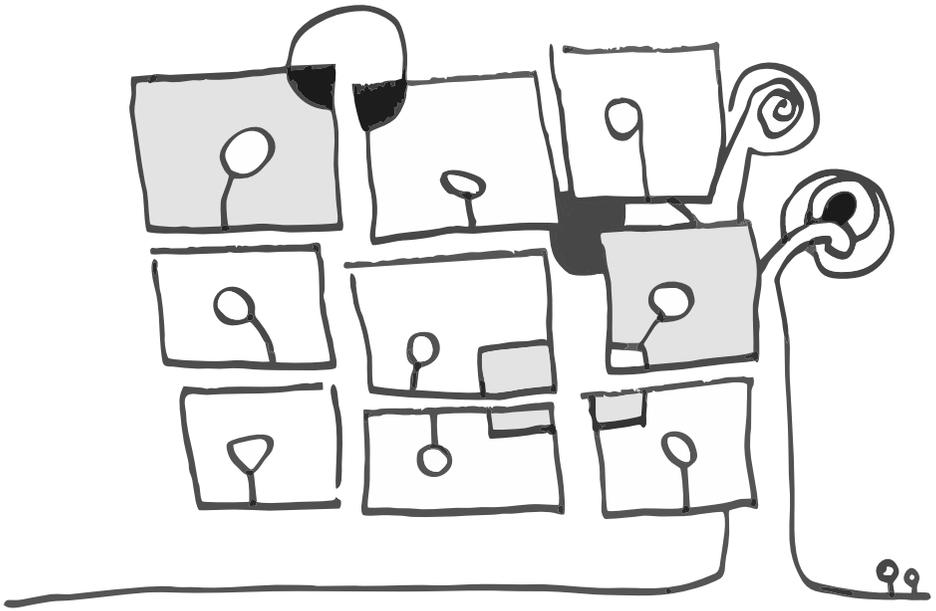
The sun's rays  
flatter the clouds  
into a bright blush pink  
that yellows as his radiance spreads  
outwards, makes me giggle  
as I stare,  
unaware he's watching too.

The branches of the trees  
inch towards the skyline  
and reach towards the cosmos,  
lazy, like the breeze that  
lifts the leaves.

The people are quiet  
on the outside,  
while their toes wiggling,  
feet tapping, fingers snapping,  
knuckles cracking, brains racking,  
suggest otherwise  
to me.

So I sit at the platform,  
an aimless wanderer,  
a poet,  
and listen to the announcements  
on the silent speakers, intently,  
watching carefully  
as their trains of thought  
turn the bend  
and disappear,

sweet-smelling wisps  
of smoke  
from the Sambrani.



# Talking Through The Day

It was in the afternoon today.  
My retrograde nostalgia played  
for me  
the chatter, the banter  
that once lounged with us  
in classrooms that felt full,  
that felt alive,  
with the  
breathing-coughing,  
looking-feeling-thinking,  
loving-upsetting  
of physical presence,  
now sounding  
abbreviated,  
broken,  
new,  
since fifty people  
were reduced to a group chat,  
and their friendships  
to WhatsApp.

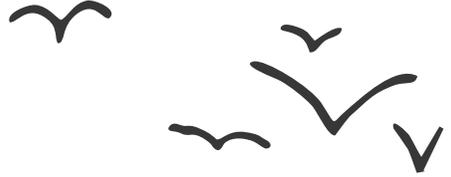
Sometimes,  
I can hear the music  
in these words we type,  
like in a language  
I don't speak.  
It's in their virtual dullness,  
in that feeling of detachment,  
in the lack of commitment,  
absence of tangible warmth—  
the tunes of texting are melancholic.

They take to the air  
like birds at twilight,  
loud, but escaping to horizons,  
when vibrant verditers  
and cacophonous crows  
all become the vagrant Vs  
we drew as children,  
unidentifiable.

The warmth of these evenings  
only exists in the bright  
but brief  
pinks and oranges.  
They are too soft for whole days,  
too short, too little,  
easy to miss  
and even easier to dismiss,  
yet they leave me wanting  
for just another glimpse  
of the silver lining.  
It doesn't return.

I watch the seconds ticking,  
afternoon turn to evening  
and evening turn to night  
as I finally find,  
our primal communication,  
the same space speech song.  
It sings like the harmony of the night sky,  
its pitch and its light.

The non-words are the firmament,  
abundantly filled with sighs and smiles,  
beating hearts and rolling eyes.



The grunts and groans  
become the grounding  
for the words,  
they are stark,  
and in the dark  
their light shines, guides  
like the dipper once did.

Time, sown into the fabric of space,  
is accompanied by words  
interwoven  
through them both.  
That is the cloth we used  
to dress our relationships,  
hold them firm.

Still, new days dawn,  
and the world moves on.  
We will renew, replace, create,  
and perhaps find other ways  
to sate our need for  
these common spaces.  
But a lifetime taste  
of what that sky can mean  
has been  
both perpetuating,  
and subtly devastating  
in these lock-down mornings.



# Dahlias in love



On a soft  
misty morning I saw  
dew,  
on the fifty odd petals  
of the dahlia,  
found my mind resting on  
the three odd ones  
that were left  
dew-less,

wondered about love,  
love unrequited, and  
about chance.

Some gentle pressure,  
perhaps wind, or wing looking  
for food,  
was responsible  
for the rivulet that then formed.

The water trickled  
away, together,  
earthed without thought.

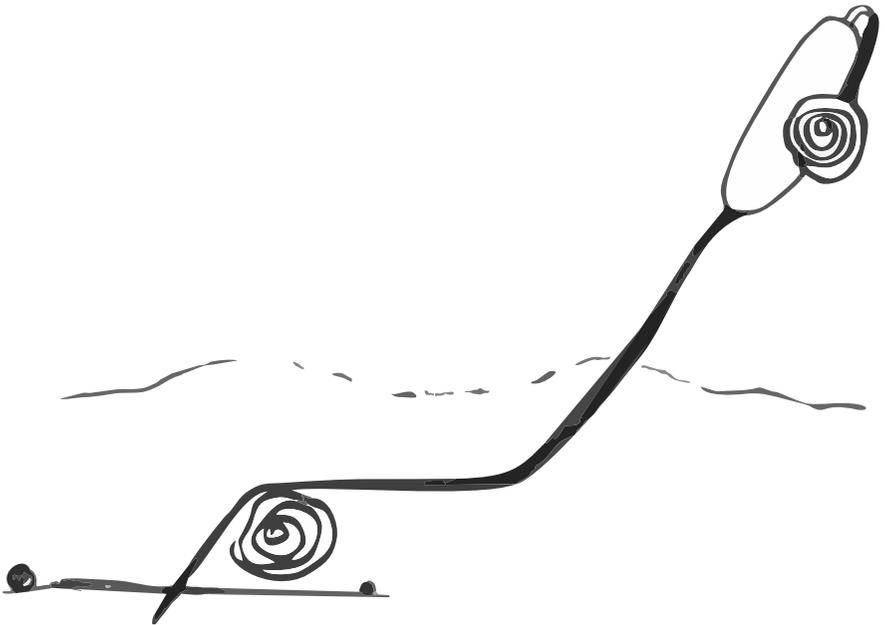
In the fading mist  
warmed away  
by the turning earth  
I saw,  
a sunlit magenta hue,  
on the fifty odd petals  
of the dahlia,

wondered about rebirth,  
the vibrancy of youth, and  
about choice.



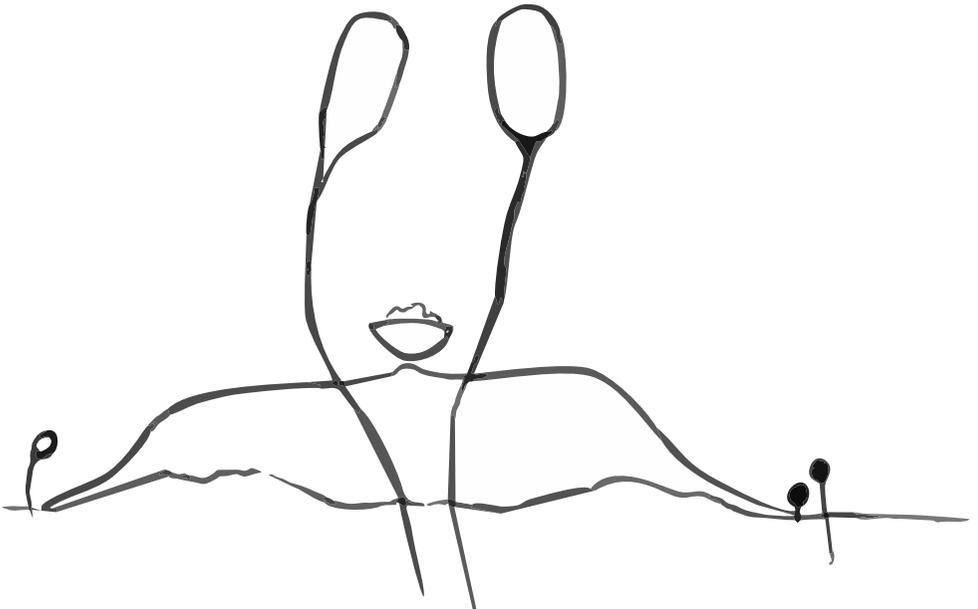
## Perfect Pace

My lethargy starts off transparent,  
hidden and invisible,  
but with every poke,  
every persistent peek,  
it begins to possess a prominence  
that is impossible to ignore.  
Over time it portrays  
its true colours,  
staining my personality  
with a stubborn permanence.  
With every push  
it only pulls me in deeper  
until it peaks, prevails,  
it triumphs the periphery  
and penetrates the core.  
No matter is pressing enough  
to pursue,  
so I place myself  
in a comfortable position  
and press play,  
because sometimes  
that's okay.





## Movie Night Hand-holding



*Painted in crimson,  
he has pale skin and dark hair,  
stuck in the wicked monster's lair,  
he is hurt,  
will his princess dare?*

We stare.

Eyes glued to the television screen, and  
*Ah!*  
a jump scare.  
Both catch on  
to a hand there.

Silence.

A pair,  
getting comfortable comforting,  
attentions diverting,  
horror converting to something else,  
it's working—

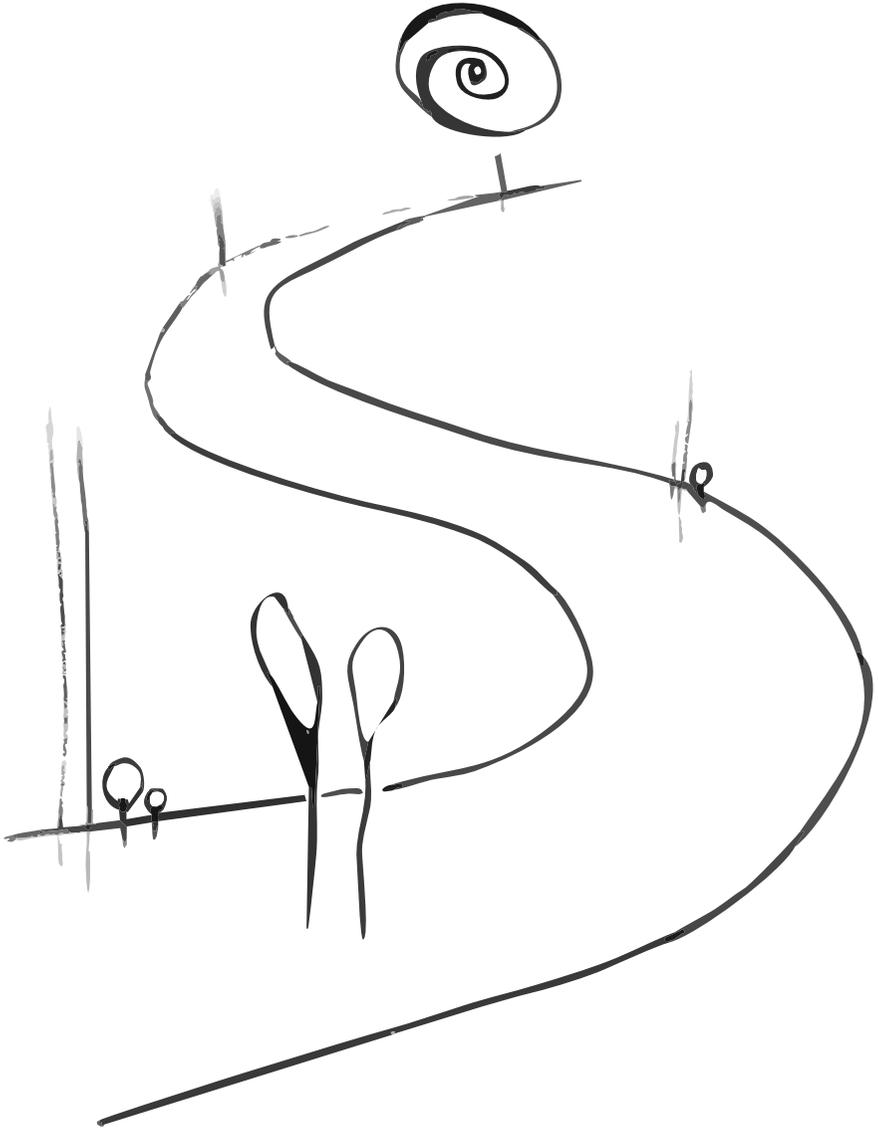
yet,  
uncertainty taints  
for there are fears at play,  
*the princess must keep the devil at bay,  
but it is difficult to say,  
walls could crumble,*  
so we mumble,  
but on this trip,  
we know,  
our grip  
is all that matters.

## Light Years Apart

Seated across a table  
from you,  
I sit at another end  
of the universe.

Separated by light-years  
of conversations never had,  
times not spent together,  
hearts not held together,  
what we never tried to  
make well together,  
I stare into the darkness.  
Its opacity deludes me  
into thinking I knew you.

But today I space travel,  
as we bond  
over buttermilk.



# Plain Words



I threw a testament at you.  
Words in a sack  
that you had no need for.  
I entered on Christmas night,  
dropped them down your chimney,  
in the stealth of night  
you were gifted.

They landed sooty,  
they landed old,  
they'd travelled so far.  
Their origins  
in a room where  
shelves brim  
with ideas, stowed away  
untrimmed,  
brain tight,  
invisible.

A priceless clutter,  
a warehouse,  
messy and full  
but frequented,  
if only by me,  
so all surfaces dust-free,  
singularly touched,  
unless,  
you can mind read.

I had so many things to say.  
So I parcelled  
and pampered  
and prepared.  
Conjuring these compulsions,  
decorating, dressing them  
in necessity,  
smudging unseen corners,  
implications,  
I drained everything  
into you.

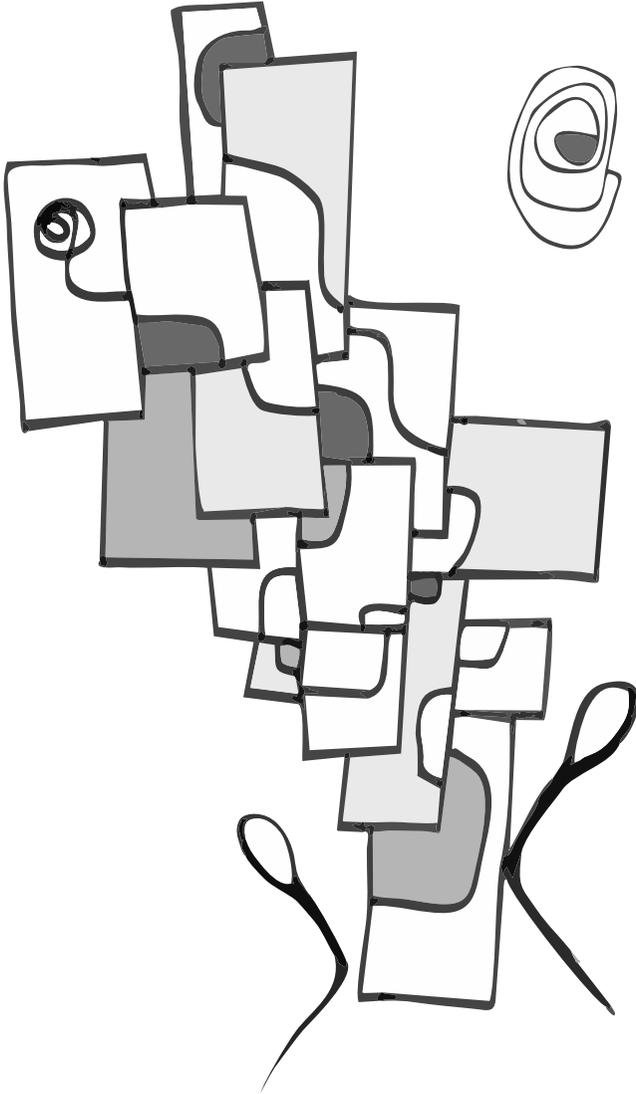
Can't help wondering  
what you'll do with my words.  
If you'd  
eat them  
seat them  
seed them  
need them  
or anything  
at all.

The phone separates  
and dims realities,  
I don't wait for your reply.

Yet, with my closing eyes  
as I lay there tired,  
in the growing divide between  
my projections and life,  
my ideas become bare.

I search but find  
nothing else,

plain words.



# I Had Two Things To Say

Honesty?

Honesty.

— *I want you*

to know

that I deal

myself a new hand

from a deck

with some cards

— *missing. You*

don't see them

but I call them

— *yours.*

Stare at

fate,

face

— *tired of asking*

where they went.

If there was a thief,

if there was another me,

— *my love,*

love lost.

But mostly

— *I ask again*

so we don't have

to play

with my incomplete...

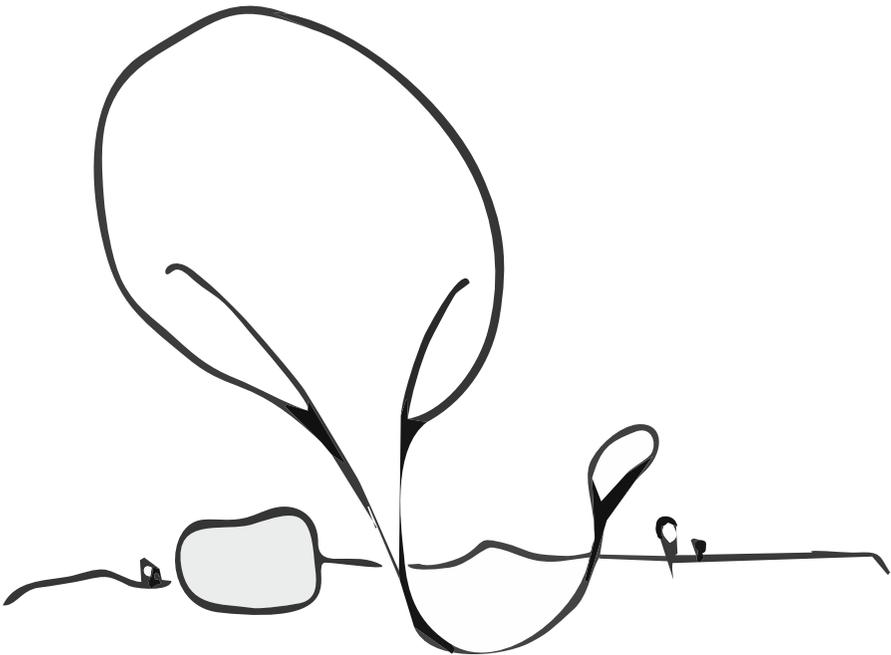
— *Every time?*

— *Every time.*

# Visionary

With the help of the light  
that you emanate,  
your blood and muscle  
turned glass,  
and I,  
a visionary.

Your construct,  
as detailed as a tree's  
has been studied diligently,  
alike to the carefully painted strokes  
of a practised perfectionist.





The soil you grow on,  
fertile today,  
is profiled  
by sweat filled days,  
characterized,  
by the rich ebony of mud  
that supports.

Cultured, nurtured  
from a minuscule seed,  
by branch and leaf  
you have grown.

Still,  
a past frame lingers.  
Its carried in the faint smell of hard work  
on your persona  
and in your story:  
the soil epic.  
Demons digested,  
frustrations fermented,  
and malice manured  
to productive compost.

You bear sweet fruit,  
enchancing,  
but there is no magic in its sugar,  
only traces  
of dedicated parentage,  
and wine-like aging.

Years slip by  
in peering through  
your glistening transparencies  
before I reach  
the meaningless rock,  
the mere possibility,  
your essence  
that lay hiding  
a master sculpture,  
unsculpted and  
unappreciated  
from the world.

## Hey, Look at the Cookie



I sat down slowly.  
Pencil in hand  
and  
love on a platter,  
and thought about how  
I may reach you  
beyond, and deeper  
than mere chatter,  
convince you,  
that the intricacies,  
the struggle, the ache  
you feel,  
I feel,  
is just as temporary  
as full stomached satisfaction  
and the hearts that melt in our hugs.

We're always turning  
our heads away  
in the wrong direction,  
looking 'neath the flowers  
at thorny torment,  
glancing above the cookies  
to see more space in the jar,  
only growing  
to get over.

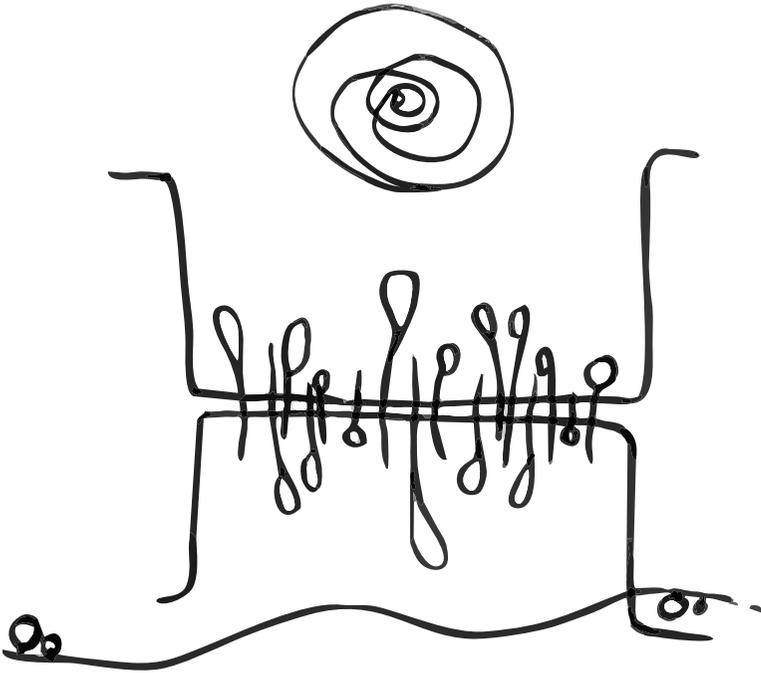
What sounds inside  
takes me to task,  
asks,  
with every silver lining  
don't tell me  
you don't see the clouds?  
To which I say,  
I do,  
but that isn't  
what the sky is about.

I wonder then,  
that when I say,  
the world is a tad sweeter  
with you in it,  
and that you live  
in someone's smile,  
and mine,  
will you believe it?  
If only for a short while,  
that you're a gift  
worth every dime  
and life has wanted you,  
and waited a long,  
long time to love you.

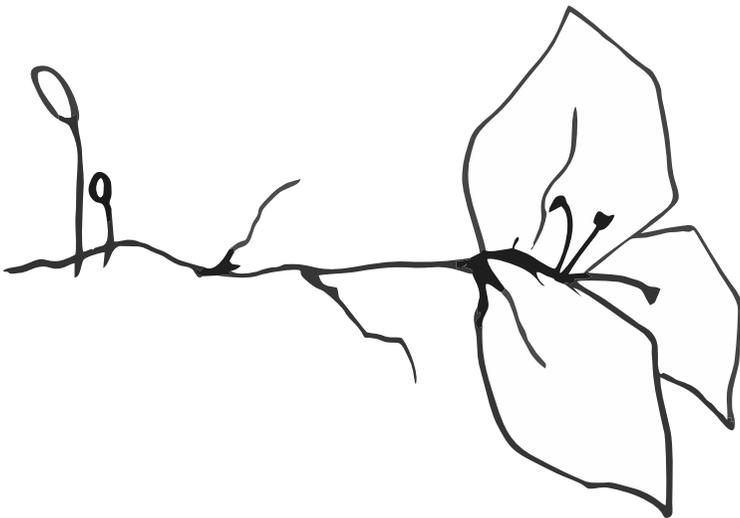
## Bewitched

In the stewing pot  
love bubbles,  
frothing roses with  
strains of yesterday's conversation and  
tinkling laughter,  
mingling in the cheery company  
of my own satisfactions,  
my inward grins  
and childish whims.

Eventually though,  
it all boils down  
to traces of faces  
lining the Pensieve.



# The White Bougainvillea



It fell.  
Appearing suddenly,  
a surprise,  
a blessing,  
a small papery thing.

I needed a standstill,  
a tangible silence,  
I needed time to procrastinate.

A longer elongated second,  
a moment starting here  
and moving to  
the next without pause  
but very slowly.

Instants like droplets in a wave,  
inseparable, continuous, infinite,  
to create a reception.

I needed it to flutter down...

It fell.  
In the Prussian embrace  
of a full moon night,  
from amidst a past of emerald leaves,  
to a ground existence.

A white bougainvillea,  
like life,  
a passing wonder.

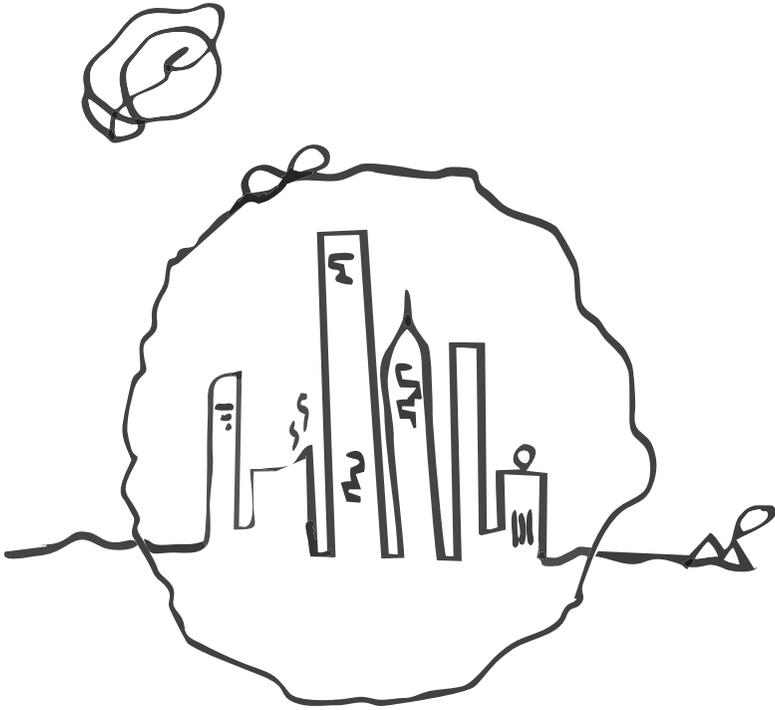
# Bubble Wrap

It's a ravenous hunger,  
an all-consuming claw,  
in its tight trap  
I writhe and groan  
a hunted animal,  
a prey captured, ensnared  
without a chase, without a chance,  
I had no choice.

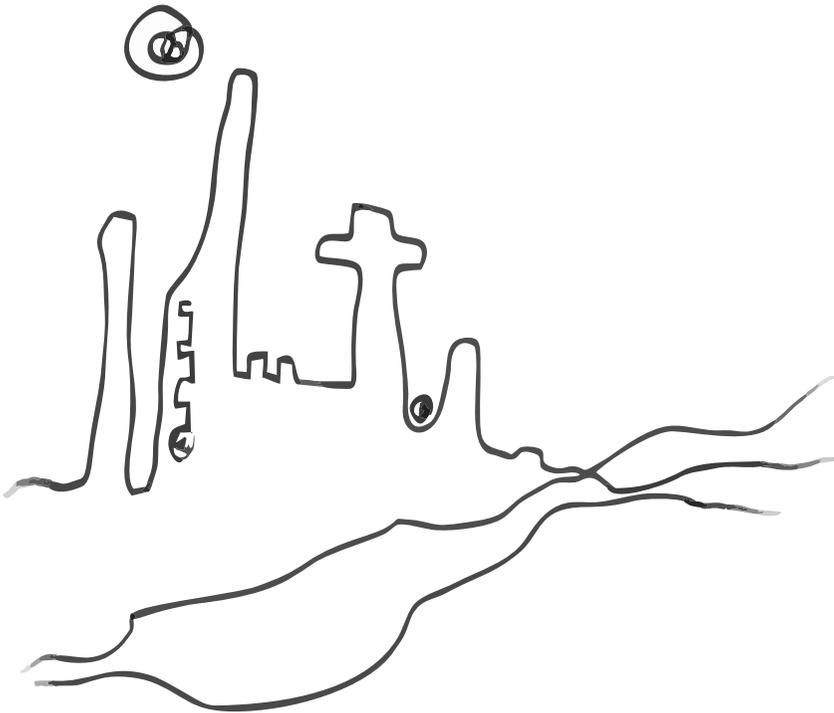
My voice, sat on  
by the magic of 99  
now 9999999999,  
is small,  
and whispers travel  
but ears are shut.

Agony roars and misery engulfs,  
but money  
is found in the bubble  
where vibrant reflections  
catch eyes,  
and civilization floats  
on thin ice.

The brink,  
seemingly at horizon  
is advancing light speed,  
and it will split  
to show what it is made of.



# Consensually Weird



The surreal is more real  
than the stats they feed us  
to seed the trees  
on which the money grows,  
who even knows.  
There's a dead cockroach,  
upside down, brown,  
with its six flailing legs.  
It rests in a corner of the room  
I haven't broomed  
for a while.  
But my headphone cables  
are orderly and wound,  
each thing knows  
what it's doing around,  
everything I want to find can be found,  
but I don't want to find,  
my mind,  
is too busy being weird.

I will the keys on my keyboard  
to clack out thoughts,  
but they lack  
being anything more  
then just another thing I jotted down,  
just another thing going round  
and round again,  
swirling,  
my words,  
I breathe them out  
instant after instant,  
existent,

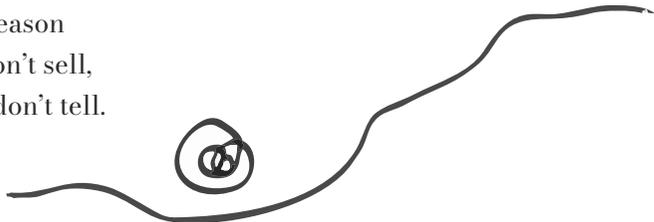
but they just sit in my mouth,  
everything I want to find can be found  
but I don't want to find;  
my mind,  
is too busy being weird.

I had accepted,  
it's eight hours of shut-eye  
or I,  
I am angrier,  
more easily annoyed,  
buoying on this  
mild sleeplessness.  
Lashes tired and down, breeze loud,  
when they talk they shout,  
when I look I kill.  
How do I fill? How do I fix?  
This six-hour sleep pattern  
I'm out of tricks,  
so I give in,  
lean in,  
sleep in,  
accept the din  
that drags me through sundown  
pulls me to morning  
and leaves me  
at the feet of my own expectations  
looking around,  
everything I want to find can be found  
but I don't want to find;  
my mind,  
is too busy being weird.

The chair turns below me,  
the backrest is too small,  
not that I'm tall,  
but I'm still appalled,  
and stiff.

I don't want to stretch though,  
don't want to fetch anything,  
doing the necessary and nothing more  
makes me sore—  
ly content.

Alas, it's a temporary end.  
I haven't yet pressed send  
on that message I wrote thrice,  
my thoughts are a vice,  
they won't stop, they won't size,  
so it's my size fits all  
but I'm not even tall,  
and I'm likely to fall  
because of thinking and not telling,  
thinking, thinking, thinking,  
and not telling;  
I'm so tired  
but still yelling  
in the privacy of my own head  
at the things that are just thought  
and not said,  
but there is a reason  
some stories don't sell,  
so I think and don't tell.



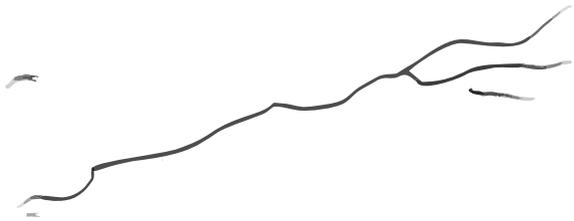


Created and destroyed  
they live phoenix lives,  
living, burning, resurfacing,  
keep catching them in the wrong stage,  
can't even let them age,  
they just return to the same page  
and I can not, shall not  
just throw fire out to hear,  
it will seer and still,  
they'll just jeer.

I don't want to explain everything  
when it's all just paper  
on its predictable projectile  
of crumpled and thrown.  
I don't want to own this  
if I'll just get shown this  
both in telling and not,  
it's not even safe underground,  
yet everything I want to find can be found  
but I don't want to find;  
my mind,  
is too busy being weird.

My exit gates are warring,  
my mind is cataloguing,  
my thoughts are printing  
like bills in a mint,  
and I am done squinting  
because I'm getting no hints,  
again,  
but that is the chain,  
so I snap it.

It happens as soon as I see  
that the peace treaty  
isn't held  
by the all-knowing.  
We've been assigned this confusion,  
it's not an intrusion,  
so I pick up my pen and sign  
for not knowing,  
and slowly count to ten.  
I wait to be astounded,  
I wait to be grounded  
till I realise what I've founded:  
home is on the sands  
and the waves,  
they keep coming.  
With change our only constant  
we arrange,  
and rearrange  
and rearrange  
and rearrange...  
That's life.  
Differently spiced,  
but still life,  
and now,  
at least I've signed up for it.

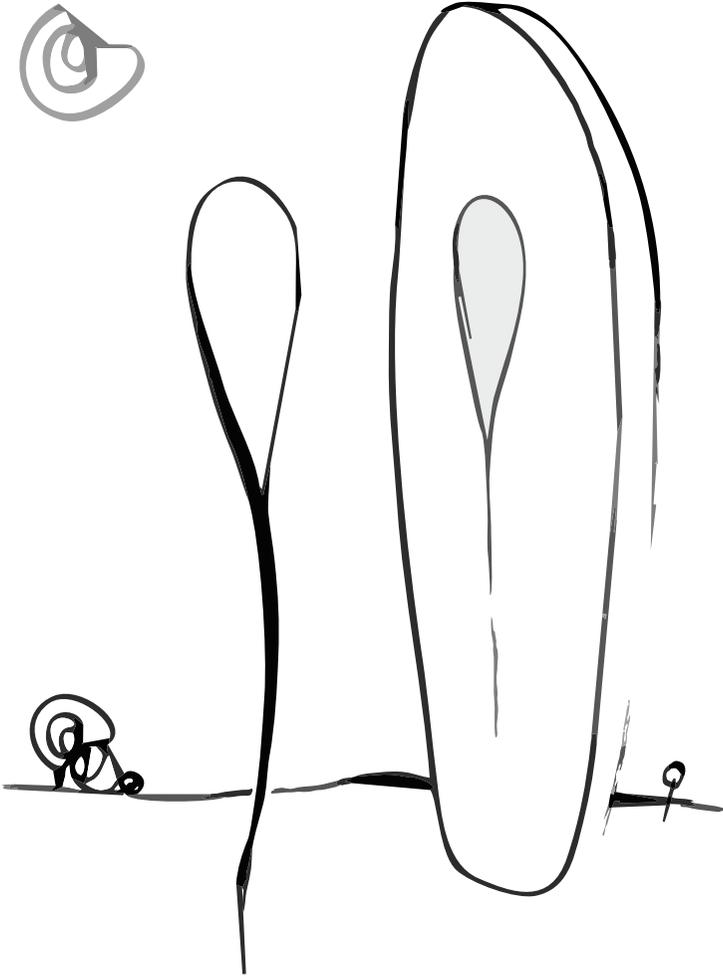


## Existence

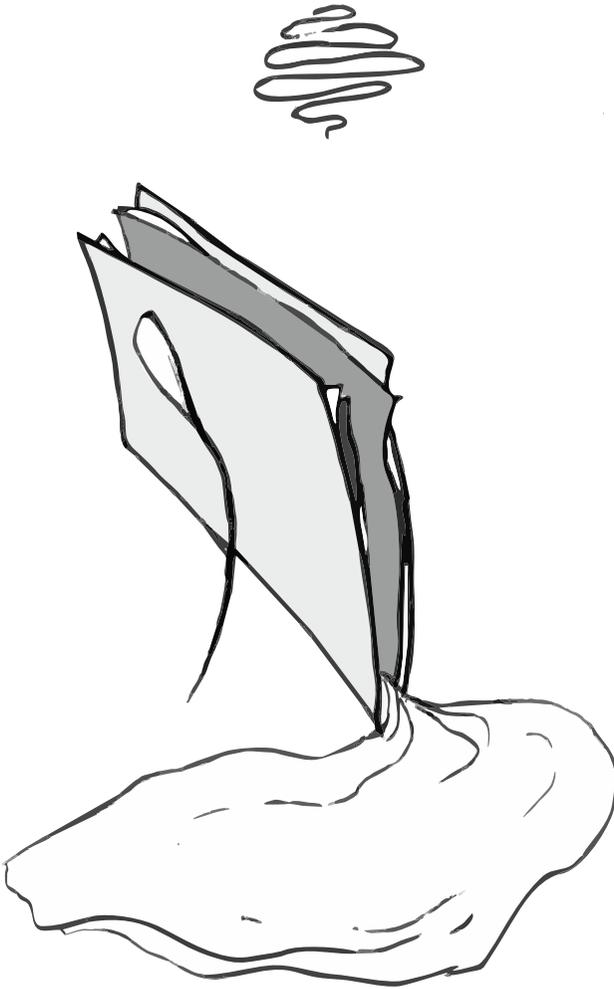
Once in the zero  
the one is amplified,  
I see it separate.

The one I ignored,  
the one that hoped,  
the one who never left,  
the one who wins,  
the many ones – wins,  
they desert me.

In the quiet  
with nothing to hide behind,  
I look my zero in the eye.  
The tears,  
always threaten to spill.



# Is There Room For A Flood?



Seeing 02:23 in your  
24-hour system  
daily,  
pinches in strange places,  
upsets 'real'-time.

The notepad  
can not process  
what you tell it now.  
Not because it is foolish  
but because  
it is always late.

~

Lying here today  
I wonder  
how honest I really am,  
I wonder  
how candid is too candid,  
I wonder  
how plain truth, may bring  
plane boundaries  
that are overly defined  
but vaguely understood,  
paving  
stern glinting metallised roads  
in place of  
randomly romantic,  
unstructured undulating,  
content  
goat paths.

Should heads bow down shamed  
when they are  
illuminated by confusions?  
Should fingers hesitate  
to share words  
unknowing,  
unformed?  
Should we not tell  
that we are fuelled  
by the sharp tastes  
of uncertainty,  
drunk on the magical  
dancing spontaneity,  
the absurd sudden loveliness  
almost a deity  
—we pray variably, of course.

Is there room for waves  
in this world?  
Room for their  
certain uncertainty?  
Room for their  
crested and crashing  
constantly,  
and cresting again.  
Room for their  
chatter that perpetuates  
coastline after coastline  
only unheard on the inside,  
distanced.

Room for their  
meek withdrawals,  
though bold returns.  
Their majestic power,  
the pounding persistence,  
the relentlessness,  
the flux,  
the movement,  
the vastness,  
the transcendence.

Is there room for a flood?

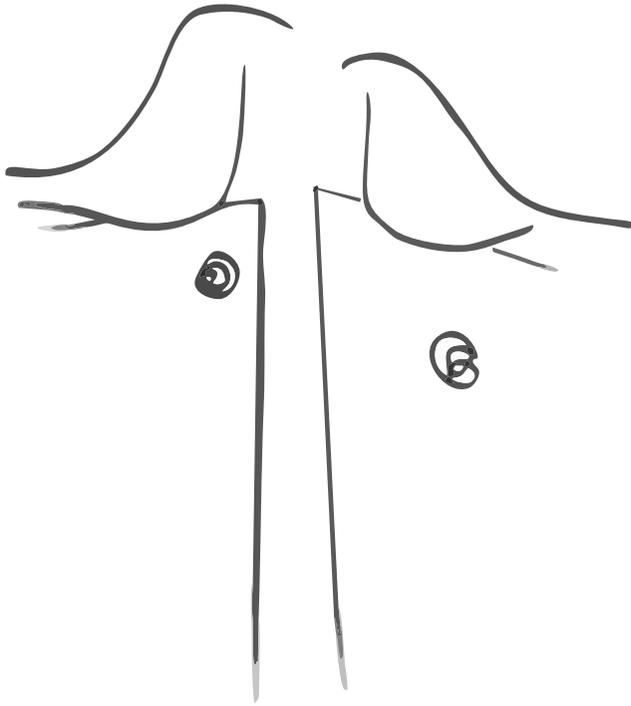
~

But they're late thoughts.  
Blurry by means of  
less light,  
less mind,  
surreal time,  
no?  
Dismissible.



## Shall I Talk To The Birds Then?

Shall I talk to the birds then?  
Tell them my tepidly tragic tales of trauma?  
Murmur my mellow maladies?  
Whisper my weak woes?  
Sing out the sorrow I feel in being sorrowful?  
They will see what's holding me down,  
and it'll change nothing.  
They'll harmonise,  
they'll listen,  
and they'll keep sitting on the rusty rails,  
and I'll keep my stasis,  
sit very still,  
we'll leave no trails.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a long horizontal line followed by a small loop and a larger circular flourish.