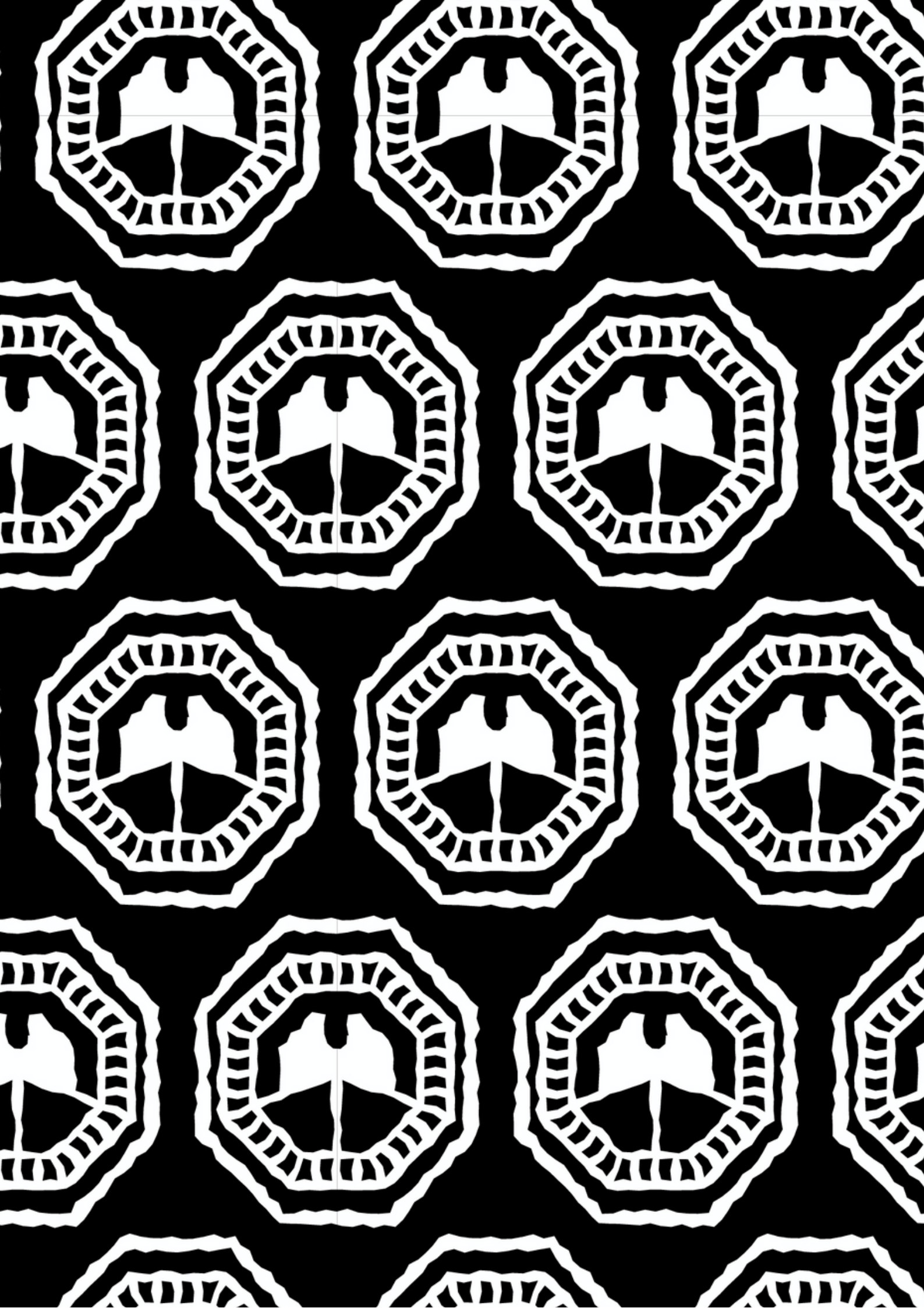




**CHEW
GULP
SPIT**



hello

*chewgulp*spit blends the
boundary between the
performed and the textual.
Just as *chewing* suggests a
destablised object on the
boundary between inner
and outer, formed and
formless, other and then
part of self; the dialectical
instability between
performance art that
accosts its audience and
writing at the mercy of its
subject is central to our
mission—

we have enjoyed the vague unearned air of authority which comes with signing off emails
as the editors of *chewgulp*spit. so much so that we are reluctant to shatter the
illusion of who we really are.

dear reader, we are: a trio of writers/editors/readers trio of introverts/therapy-
whores/irrelevants

in possession of wanky degrees our parents do not approve/understand/respect

we are primarily bits of web-text/email-junk/data-splurge. we also possess
fleshy/cavernous/rotting bodies all burrowed in glasgow

we put this zine together over a piece of focaccia (eaten on train rides home), a million
cigarettes, four spliffs, three ice creams (double scoop), wild garlic pasta, chermoula tofu
scramble, and at least two banana cakes.

chew is the first of three zines/events

stay tuned lil sluggers xoxo

- annie, isla & matt [CHEWGULPSPIT]

annie bowles

chirrup

I get lost in paint

fanciful

cheap acrylic smears

my tabula rasa

in shame I hide

my fingers and teeth,

tongue, locked

in a gilt box I bury

down the winding path of your garden

marked by the sundial

guarded by a bird, of

blue-grey feather

its stained wood

reminds me

of coloured glass,

light filtered, stretched,

upon splintered floorboards,

where once

we

saw visions, chattered, maybe

spoke to Him, said –

where are you?

I miss my teeth

the lines of your hands,

the time before

your fingers curved toward me,

mimesis of rib, speared,
and I, crooked and aching,
wept, cracked open,
only whole in a box,
the bird in my hand
cannot breathe
it sings backwards -
my fist closes over
hot little thing, melting,
until, like you did,
it drips in-between,
and leaves
an ink stain on my palm
licked, purposefully
forgotten
except in the
blue of my veins.

even now

paper eyes / barely filtered / closing the blinds / off and
out / concealed beneath / frightened, at its core / to say
eye / fingers tap / mouth, contorts / into any shape but
the wide / half grimace / of naming / to delve / further
than / surface / all eyes / all sides / high and low / even
now / the mouth / fractured / words of / another / come
choking out / time she stopped? / comfort in / senseless
/ on and / on and – / even now / lips, torn / disembodied
/ not / / ruby red and / glistening / spotlight on anything
but / speaking / of me / and me alone / when all / is said
and done / paint stripped away / lies poverty / only living
soul / even now / speechless infant / never knew /
incessant chatter / could be / her own / she had to /
admit / one day / she would / have to face / what lay
beneath / her mouth / and fingers / more than sinew /
velocity of words / stream forth / *agony* / *cannot bear it* /
the colours revealed / too much / even now / hidden in /
half-light / her teeth / tongue and lips / stoppered / could
not be hers –

- she looks / straining / for eyes / a mouth / a window /
like her own / words / like her own / cuckoo / like another
/ a little like / her own / ever since / she grasped / leaden
stub / between / bitten fingers / swollen, numb from cold
/ and wrote / the pain / *oh* / *the pain* / of it / she suffered /
to find / another / like herself / to close / the blinds /
shuttered / sleeping / even now / she casts / her eyes /
upon empty shadows / creeping from corners / white
room / all that is / just that / nothing more / time she
stopped.

bec ritchie

nightwood

i can kiss you in the dark nightwood sticky
sweet in the
sticky sweet in the night in the

dark but in the morning it tastes you taste

i my teeth feel

rotten.

get up cry brush spit

daytime i am

ty ponytail perfect prefect pink words pink lips cover

cavities i got from

hide you in the drawer that is me but is

secret

only take you out at night

love is forever

i touch you kiss you in the dark

nightwood

but in the morning i am

stiller

smaller

sadder still but make sure i am always

perfect.

i gargle, gag and

you

(who was never here)

i

spit

out.

her bubblegum got stuck in my braces, i'm saving it for later

i don't know if it's a date so i'll

act straight

we talk about normal things like my
dog and the weather and
whether we'd ever move away from here

we talk about college and how i
don't eat meat and how when your
father died you were sure that the grief would most definitely

swallow you whole

every time you look away i
count how many times you chew your

gum

i don't know if it's a date but it's late and i am
running out of things to say

i ask what you're reading for what i think is the second time and you

kiss me

i chew you all the way home and
(keep you secret)

dear diary,

her bubblegum got stuck in my braces
i'm straight i'm straight i'm straight i'm straight i'm
saving her for later

emma whitelaw

A penis was the only view. The hieroglyphics of disembodied genitalia scribbled, presumably, by hands that had never seen a penis, held it, felt its weight. The veins timid, as if not tracks that lead directly to the heart, unreadable as the loud braille spelling: "suck me, fuck me, portray my likeness flatteringly like the French – not just cock and balls". No, it was cartoonish, a caricature with balloon animal features, although, some may fear being called queer if they put their mouth to the balloon's lip so visual legibility should be taken into factor. The testicles were shaded a startling blue and named Pluto due to penis/testicle ratio and the colour. Penises were rarely munched, too consecrated, too much wincing and whining. Even eunuchs needed to pee. Yet, both chewing gum (whose view the reader is vividly described) and the penis portrait (the vividly described) are underneath this desk.

The cave ceiling drooped with luminescent plasma, muted greys and glowing blues and pinks globbed into gloopy droplets that wouldn't let drop – like never-ending-gobstoppers that actually did stop gobbing and became gum. The larvae of human-turned-extra-terrestrial mucus stilly swung, reeling from brutal slaps from sloppy chops' palms. PTSD the washing machine war flashbacks of hurdling from tooth to gum to teeth to tongue in a garlicy lickly liquid. Cracked like glowsticks, the polyol coating un-uncrackable where spirited gum leapt out from confinement it wished for confinement soon after. Its vibrancy muted through audible lip-smacking and talking back, not just to the victim but *through* the victim. Spread over gnashers, a film was created that bounced when voice hit it, spread thin the gum's insides and still the mouth's ear did not listen to its cries

- Day 1.

Kept in mouth, alternating only once behind the mouth owner's ear (just to try it) before panicked ripping of baby curls from sticky, hardening, semi-digested gunk. The viscous matter threaded with strands of wispy bone. Yank. Yank. Yanked from roots, sinful breakage of growth and tears. Tears that the chewing gum sought for moisture, but the salt would sting sores. Outside the mouth, without a coat, gum congealed, scabbed, painfully crystallised and when the uncaptive captive was soon to cry out for capture ...

not a hairy escape, the gum was roped back in with an addition of floss.


- Day 6.

Spit.

member.

in its cave until it felt heat once more from old breaths.

moist sentimentality though it knew the scraper was coming.



ash burnel

whose tongue sits in my mouth

savouring the gristle of a consonant
picking up my dropped *t*
ropey vowels soaked in spit
fricative *x* softened by
this wet tongue

picking the remnants of a letter
from between the teeth
sinew torn and mulched
in that cavern of a throat

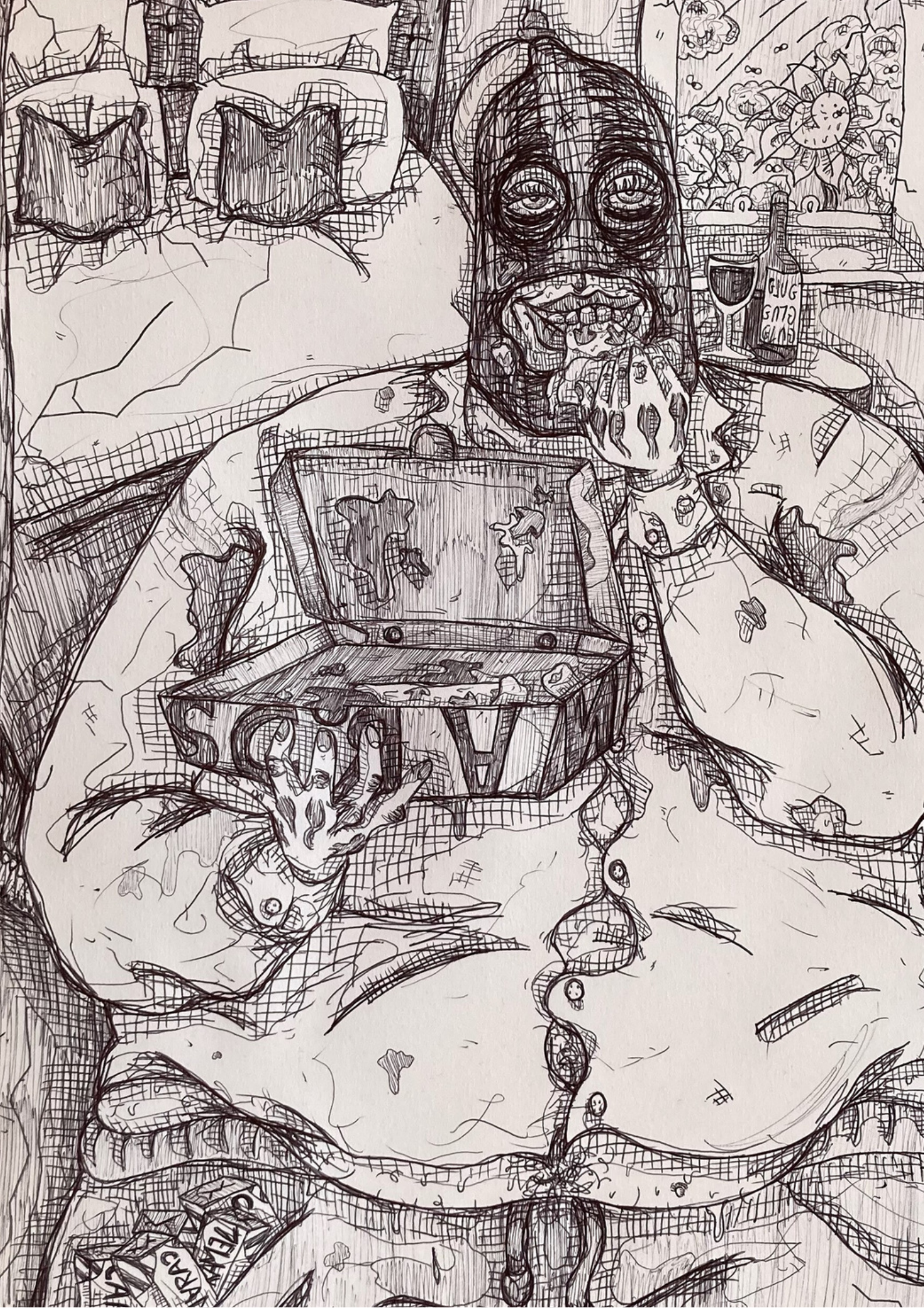
that spit from another's mouth
steeping the voice that
echoes and chokes before swallowing





THIS IS A BOMB





paul flynn

The Shut Mouth

He'd tell me to shut my mouth when eating

To shut it

And I swear that's where it comes from

The feelings of horror around open mouths swirling bits of glooped food

And now I go listen to him slurp soup from a tray

Unattended drool dangles onto his lap while he glares at the sun sheened tv screen

The mind a one track loop without even a mechanical rabbit

But I don't tell him to shut his
instead

I talk to him

This odd look of respect I get now through the delirium

I sit and talk about sports or odd bits of flotsam for him to cling to while adrift

I'd never tell him to shut it- to shut his mouth

But I do ponder the number of strikes taken to euthanise

alice orr

Poem

I've considered leaving my man
so I can free up more time
to do stomach vacuums in the
morning and modern dangers
like heartbreak and sodium

I count the scars on my knees and
the negatives in my bank accounts,
saw an influencer with a condo,
legs like polished ladders, reaching
and a profile on elsewhere.com

I wonder if she employs a cleaner
to vacuum her abs or if this is something she
does in the morning, the camera
angled towards her, recording
a life that was never free

I yearn for her perfectly formed
bowel movements, those habitual
secretions heralding the relief of a new
day
a regular down payment on fulfilment
lost to mortals like me

arlette k manasseh

The Vast Gap

If only I had learned to chew slowly, then I would not have ripped the tarpaulin off my hungry trailer park of a stomach to force myself swallow, in one wholesome gulp, my iPhone 6s Plus and a uni-ball eye fine Mitsubishi Pencil Co. Ltd - it was nearly finished, anyway.

I washed it down with a cup of supreme matcha tea. It was a bit like eating industrial sushi. Not exactly lunch, perhaps, but still: less fish, no pollution.

[AI had an epiphany.]

I decided to never chew on the problems of life again.

I noticed the cup still had a supreme matcha teabag in it, with the string hanging down in that limp, annoying way; half stuck to the rim too. It made me feel irritated, enervated. Since there was no d-d-desire to savour or ponder things. I peered down the empty cup instead. Then I peeled the teabag off, and sucked it dry, like a lemon slice. I didn't want to overstimulate my gastric glands. Would the cup's glaze crack my teeth: I realised chewing, in this instance, would be equal to self-harm.

It didn't stay down. When I regurgitated the cup, the handle was missing; I don't care. Why should I? Baby, I was born a consumer. Give me a break:

I've got this vast hole to fill. Real, actual hunger, is to be a-voided, not signalled; I would just call that a mistake, sorry. I've got less than twenty minutes to pack it in.

{Did you know Paypal are studying your gut bacteria?}

I was driving up the M90 a few days later. My maker had said I had creative constipation. But, now, as I passed the Amazon Fulfilment Centre at Dunfermline, - I knew my destiny. [AI had an epiphany.]

rachel brooks

ode to an anthropod

your star sign is cancer which is symbolised in a crab
it has claws that scratch the bottom of feet,
when they're walking in the sea

when you were diagnosed
the invisible claws scratched you from the inside
incarcerating you so you were no longer free

people eat crabs with salad sometimes
i've heard they taste best with lettuce leaves,
sour cream and pepper

when you eat your dinner
cardboard is all you can taste, people are munching around you
i can tell you feel like a leper

your star sign is said to be represented by a crab
because people like you retreat back into their shell
when it suits their mood

when you revealed that side of you
it made me believe that star signs are somewhat true
evident in your need to leave the room to brood


crabs regularly shed their exoskeleton
they are immobile for a time,
moulting is the process for them to renew

when you got skinnier and lost your voice
i knew you would regain it and become stronger,
becoming each day one step closer to the person i knew

greek mythology states that cancer tried to kill Hercules
and in its death cancer's creator the serpent Hydra
immortalised it in many a star

when i hear of a battle between good and bad
i would not think about the clandestine thing
that in its cessation creates the hero from afar

essentially a crab is symbolic
of the hardened shell that is covering
the softer, unprotected inside



when you say to yourself that star signs are bollocks
ask yourself why: in times of emotional
turmoil all you want to do is hide

its because your shell isn't visible
its existence you deny instead
all of that rigid infrastructure made fictional inside your head

but I've seen you peep out recently
to let yourself see the sky
soon you will realise what is left after that cancerous crab inside goes away to die

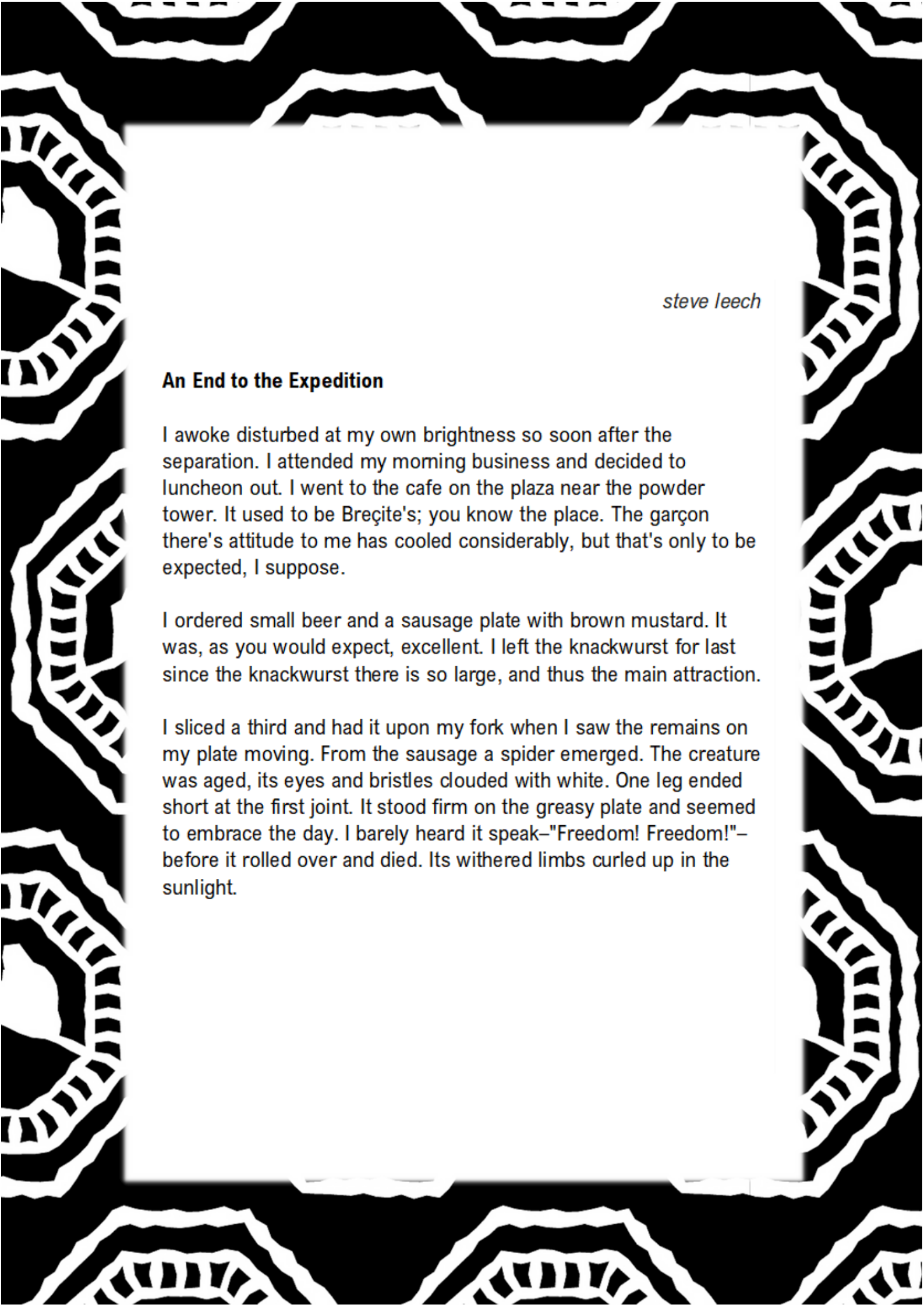
leah cameron



srishti jain

Nipped

If there is morphing done
on my pasteurized skin,
then perhaps I am ready.
I am ready to be rolled down,
and pushed over
from Sisyphus' boulder
to slide down their throat
swallowing spam stories
of now and the past.
If there ever is reality
of pinks and purples
then I would rebel,
I would rebel as grey
to create space
in the art of today.
I wonder if tattoos
could dissolve, there
I would write your name
and weigh its thickness
reminiscing every false promise
you made. I will remember
how you snuck in my nerves,
hung me to knobs and
parched me to death.
I will write letters
to strangers
calling you out
for eating me alive
and rinsing my feet
into your pond of profanity.



steve leech

An End to the Expedition

I awoke disturbed at my own brightness so soon after the separation. I attended my morning business and decided to luncheon out. I went to the cafe on the plaza near the powder tower. It used to be Breçite's; you know the place. The garçon there's attitude to me has cooled considerably, but that's only to be expected, I suppose.

I ordered small beer and a sausage plate with brown mustard. It was, as you would expect, excellent. I left the knackwurst for last since the knackwurst there is so large, and thus the main attraction.

I sliced a third and had it upon my fork when I saw the remains on my plate moving. From the sausage a spider emerged. The creature was aged, its eyes and bristles clouded with white. One leg ended short at the first joint. It stood firm on the greasy plate and seemed to embrace the day. I barely heard it speak—"Freedom! Freedom!"—before it rolled over and died. Its withered limbs curled up in the sunlight.

bryony mcdavitt

I had a Revolution

Throttle down another
bottle down the hatch
@ some randoms gaff in town
dead easy to detach

Asphyxiation as I fixate on the
peeling yella paper on the wall
one of the guys sees me staring
'landlords obvs no on the ball'

Are any of them?;)

I chortle, he snortles
And a tear comes to my eye
Next thing I know, am a ball on a floor
But I breathe cos I don't want to die

When anyone tries to touch me, I whisper

Please just get to fuck

I don't like what I look like

And all the wars
they fucking
suck

astronomically
autonomy

Head (is) of (a) State

False analogies
as strategies

Extra 700 to be paid.

This derogatory
lobotomy

reality plurality
distorted

far from sorted

I exhort it

I'm exhausted.

Disillusioned?

Delirious?

Corrupted?

Deranged?

There's weans with empty bellies
heat or eat

and then they're blamed?

To assert at all a meaningful stand

Is ten years inside the jail

Some laugh these villains must've had

'They cannie afford the bail!'

The jokes on

them, they

cannie stop us all

this febrile pot,

is overflown

it always feels like a waiting game

When is it all now going to blow?

I get up minutes later

and I take a seat

I act like nothing happened, the room follows

- we're sheep.

They chew me up and spit me out

It's a mighty potent taste

They're no wanting their one night off

dampened, dobbered, or defaced.

I lie back couch to belt out the Zeez

Eventually it'll come for us all

Western luxuries unfastening.

Wake me up when somethings happening.

rebecca kane

Spag Bol

With the microwave humming, low grade & hospital white,

I have no choice but to stare back at time.

Hips bent backwards & inwards,

with eyes staring straight down her nose, she stares through my kitchen window.

The glass has a crack that allows for the stench

to spiral through; dying saints fill the quarter.

She breathes like a failing bird & claws at the doorframe with a tenderness expected of something

born from the cold. Each unsteady fingernail bitten back with black cuticles; she is feasting.

The amber light provides a false warmth that she begs for. Body unfurling with a waist that provokes
forgotten memories of childhood slender.

She wants meat, juicy and browning.

She wants to suckle on something fat and giving.

Veins prominent and twisting, hanging heavy like wet hair. I am alone with time.

In this house,

in this kitchen,

only time can see me.

Perceived under her bleary eye,

I am burning.

PING!

rebecca kane



julian colton

Shepherd's Pie

Asking you to bring me some Shepherd's Pie
Wasn't meant to affirm proof of your love.

Despite the cool fact you cooked it for him
I could live with the partaking of none.

My hand didn't intend to force your hand
To express, share superior love

Switched from surly him to me
Apportioned with potatoes and peas and mince.

All love at heart is domestic.
Arranged beside towels, soap and toothpaste

Food the sustenance of loving relations strong and weak.
Come dine with me

Let us love each other a little
Eat good meals, drink tea.

Kestrel

When I see the sleek brown kestrel
a soaring, diving, killing machine

swooping
hooded cruel beak

turned, curled in on its own instinct
a brutish selfish survival act

tearing the pigeon, its own kind
I fear he does not exist the God divine.

ellen niven

4 minutes

This time last year, brushing my teeth would make me cry
twice a day I'd grip the sink and suck

through whistled gaps burning air
 into a minty pit

lose sight

tracing salt tracks and frothing spi

eroding lines into soil and skin

and it is drowning

 my features the over

 flowing caverns and creaks

brush limp in my hand, its

eff-er vesc-ing drone

hangs

distant
 and

obsolete

I don't remember our

final embrace

which would have been rushed abrupt

smothering

faded longing like

a flame extinguished

 between wet fingers

bodies but their roots

 which out grew

remain tangled

in years of adolescence

long gone too

I don't recall the feel of your skin

I'll slot another coin into the mould

wrap a string around it and yank it out

before I'm ~~used~~ spent

deceive my senses with another's warmth

the little spoon

in a reheated mug of soup, still cold in the middle

but it'll do

I'll dress in your clothes

sew them to the skin, weave them into my bones

let muscle memory immortalise what my brain

failed to hold

take the locks of hair from the mantle

piece

floss your DNA between my teeth

till they bleed

gargle your keratin

let chemical burn the wounds


like Listerine

if I had you now I'd wring you out

bottle your scent like a cologne

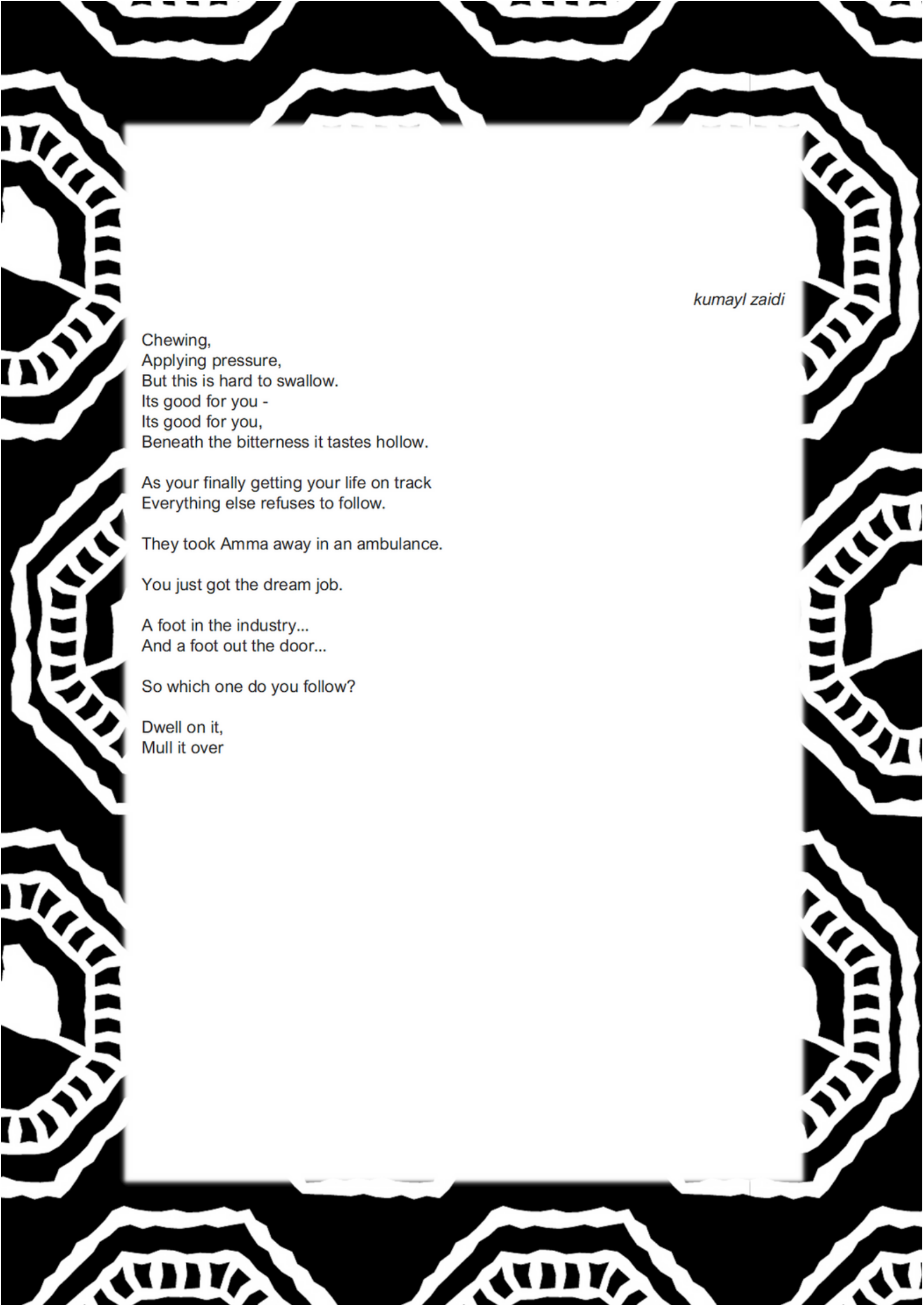
throw it back like whiskey

down the hatch and chase it



with
gum and ecstasy

It's funny what the mind chooses to retain
as I stare at myself in mirror
preparing to clean my teeth again
you once taught me a trick
a certain grip, a tip
which leaves no paste
wasted
a little thing irrelevant you'd think
but it stained my memory like water marks
on a bathroom sink
I used to cry squeezing the tube
now I'm thankful for those
4 minutes a day
when I can't help
but remember you



kumayl zaidi

Chewing,
Applying pressure,
But this is hard to swallow.
Its good for you -
Its good for you,
Beneath the bitterness it tastes hollow.

As your finally getting your life on track
Everything else refuses to follow.

They took Amma away in an ambulance.

You just got the dream job.

A foot in the industry...
And a foot out the door...

So which one do you follow?

Dwell on it,
Mull it over

megan rudden

not always dessert

Upstairs in the CCA, the art writers sat at a large table that might have been round but might have had edges and Francis McKee told us he liked sports writing. Maybe the last true purple prose he said. I'm more interested in pink poetry but not like drunk-tank pink, I mean decadence. Cheap magenta pink snatched from the pallid cheeks of aristocracy, reproduced with more intensity and in a deeper hue. Hot pink that refuses to stay in its place, a burlesque dress swirling on a dimly lit basement stage. An erotic descent into anarchy. Baby pink that is infantilising, repulsive and gorgeous, childlike in its sophistication. Bubblegum pink ingested in small squares, chewed up and spat out as a vulgar habit, only to stick to someone else's shoe. Pepto-bismol poetry that smells like mint, full of synesthesia and disappointment.

[chew]

When words are gorgeous (or arranged in a gorgeous manner) reading is like eating jelly. Teeth sink into this liminal substance, not liquid, or solid, it is a suspension, content in its transitional state. The jelly is usually pink or red, and I think that's because of my insides and the notion that what I am biting into is actually flesh or maybe I can't separate language from the body. I encourage others to eat my flesh-jelly. The substance I serve to them might be transparent or panna-cotta-opaque, depending on how much I've decided to give up. I present it to them on a patterned plate dressed up in whipped cream, cherries disguise my flaws as something more appealing. I urge them to feast on my sacrifice, to cannibalise me, to spit out the stone and tie the stem in a knot using only the dexterity of their tongue.



[spit]

Downstairs in the CCA, Morwenna Kearsley is thinking about jelly and summoning. This time gelatin photographs and Lee Miller. The exhibition text I am handed on the way in to the gallery is another ingredient to be consumed alongside the jelly-material. It is an integral part of the meal, delicious and haunted and slippery; Lee Miller in Hitler's bathtub. Like Morwenna, I don't mean the jelly-object as metaphor, I mean materiality. The jelly-texture of gorgeous words; art writing is not always dessert. The jelly-object is too clean, too contained, too overly concerned with impressing others, too aspirational, too kitsch, too American Dream, too defined edges, too wholesome, too inoffensive, too moulded, too frivolous, too sure of its place on the table (centrepiece) jelly-asmaterial like ectoplasm, like mucous, like slime, like thicker than water, like almost flow, like hair gel, like coagulated, like transitional, like stasis, like blood, like insatiable, like desire, like malleable, like liminal, like saliva collected in your mouth from talking for too long without swallowing –

[swallow]

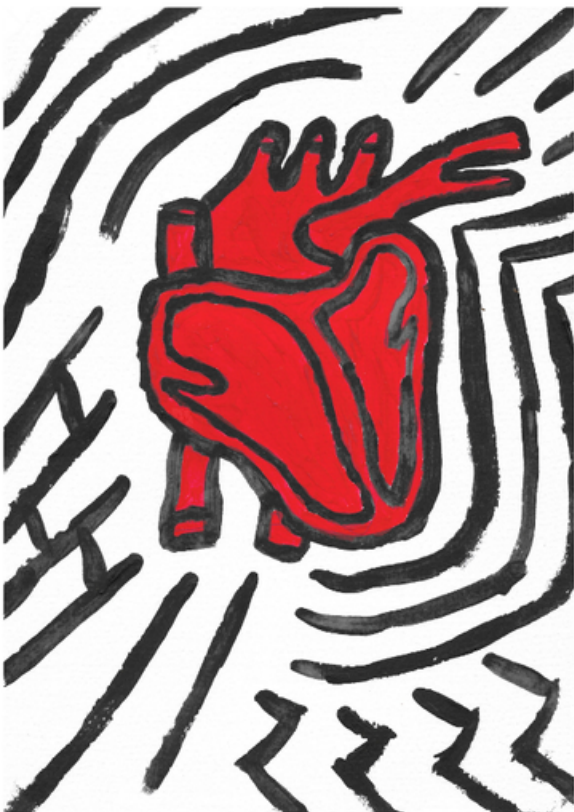
This jelly is not gelatin either, something more like agar, red algae, sweet seaweed congealed. Not the pure pig protein of blood boiled ligaments, tendons and skin, less cruelty more artifice. The animal body is more than throw away bones, soup flavour (extracted), lip collagen (injected). Replicate the jelly-texture without violence, ask the sea politely if it can spare the red greenery. Teeth sink. More of a slice than a bite, slivers divided in saliva glide across the sides of incisors. To think of flesh as something so synthetic and separate, from others and animal bodies, a slug belly, conjunctivitis goo, albino axolotl gills, vodka jelly shots. All the same pink slime.



fog



grind



thump



flutter

matthew seaton

Gracias Monsieur

Excerpt.

The narrator is travelling around Europe with a man he has recently met. Jeng-Zhe: intense, erratic and aloof.

Drawn to his energy, the narrator has been mimicking Jeng-Zhe, thinking it will help him forget himself, and propel him into more exciting versions of reality.

We lounge in bars and cafes for weeks on end, rarely speaking, looking off idly.

He has a habit of standing up impulsively and marching off, leaving me there to hurriedly pay the bill. I throw down currency and race after him.

Sometimes, if I am intending to pay by card, I lose him. This happens in Madrid, in a restaurant near Chueca. Jeng-Zhe had ordered an assortment of tapas in manic sequence. Four rounds of octopus: grilled, marinated, twice boiled. A sweet pastry in between. A chorizo sausage he eats with his hands. A beer he drinks through a straw.

Halfway through a hot chocolate, a platter of whitebait on the way, he stands up mid-sip, froth dripping from his mouth, jolting the table and spilling beer into my lap. Having knocked over the plastic seating, he walks in a perfectly straight line through a flower bed and away down the street.

His large frame and long black hair refuse to be swallowed up by the crowd, rippling visibly as he storms through. I only lose sight of him when he turns a corner (the first swerve since he's taken to his feet) as he approaches a wall. It seemed plausible that he would carry straight on, climbing up the side of the building and striding across the roofs, or barge straight through the stone wall and charge through the city's innards.

Seeing his hasty departure, the waiter serving us goes to chase after him. Noticing me still at the table, he strides over and hands me the bill, hovering over my shoulder and refusing to fetch me napkins for my soaking trousers until I've paid.

'Are you trying to run off from your bill?' He asks me suspiciously.

Without meaning to, I apply a broken European accent as if English is my second language. 'No, my friend!' I say, arms outstretched. 'My friend, no! He, my friend, who walks off. Only, he needs air. To walk off food.'

'Yes, maybe that's how it is. Sorry if I don't believe you though. I've worked here too long, *signor*. I know when someone is looking to run off with their food.'

A joke involving stuffing octopus into pockets makes itself momentarily known to me. I drop it, mostly. 'Carrying octopus my friend...You could not tell. No. He is good man, not thief.'

'He is a thief. I can tell,' he said simply, as my receipt prints out.

'No...no...How?'

'By the teeth marks in his food.'

'No, my friend...'

'Sideways bites of the seafood. As well he left the salad. He was too busy thinking of stealing the food to enjoy it; he was just trying to eat the expensive stuff. He ate the marshmallows and the cream, then left half the chocolate. Look at the way he left the *patatas* that came with the octopus.'

'He's low carb.'

'He's all about the value.'

I come to my senses. Drop the accent. Prepare to wield my voice like a weapon. 'Hold on a minute mate. If you can infer one's disposition from a bite, look over here at my plate, *chap*.' He leant over the table. 'Consider this carefully loaded fork. This perfectly constructed mouthful. Salad, chip, octopus. A little of each loaded neatly onto the prongs, a little aioli over the top. Look how perfectly cut the octopus.'

'That's way too much on your fork. You eat one piece of food at a time.'

'You can do that if you wa- '

'And you don't put aioli on octopus.'

'I'll bear that in mind. But this, right here', holding up the fork that had been resting on the table, soaking in beer, 'this right here is an ornate mouthful. Like a sushi roll.'

'This is Spain sir.'

'Chap, tell me what you see here. Is this the forkful of a food-stealer? Go back to the kitchen. Inspect my plates. Pull them out of the dishwasher. All of them. Are they the leftovers of a reprobate, a social miscreant, a man with anything less than a clean moral conscience?'

'Or a *psicópata*. Do you know this word?'

I pull out my phone, hand it to him to translate it into English.

'Ah', he says, listening to the tinny American voice on the phone, '*psychopath*. Yes. You eat with arrogance, calmly, knowing you are going to steal everything you eat.' He takes my plate off me, half-full still, and inspects it.

'Look at the way you've sliced the octopus. Far too neat. You probably cut up a body just the same. *Clínicamente*.'

'Sir', I say, lighting a cigarette, thoroughly bemused, 'I hope you are aware that you've lost half your tip with that comment, and the other half is slowly going back in my pocket. So, watch your words.'

'You already put five percent on card, *signor*.'

'So I have.'

'Pre-halved, *signor*?'

'May I request my tip go entirely to the kitchen?'

'No sir.'

'Very well', I say, standing up, losing myself in a long speech bemoaning the failures of Spanish government. Unable to find work for a trained criminologist. My mouth moves as I stare through the crowd, searching for him...

'But I implore you, dear friend', the speech finishes, 'save yourself: read not in the straw-sips, the knife-marks, the napkin-folds *criminality*. Instead, find the gentleness, the humility, the nobility of the human spirit within the leftovers of their plates. With that, *adieu*.'

But as I bow, I see that my audience has left me. The waiter is on the other side of the veranda, seating a couple.

Strange, I think to myself absently, inspecting my plate, then Jeng-Zhe's. How strange. Bits have been ripped off imperfectly, leaving sinew and spat out chunks of flesh. Is this evidence? Of a mind imagining, in the chewing, the ripping off of a mouthful of octopus, another passionate act I cannot begin to imagine. Which I shudder with excitement at the thought of.

Anxious to re-find him and not miss whatever he might have in store, I tuck in my chair and saunter off.

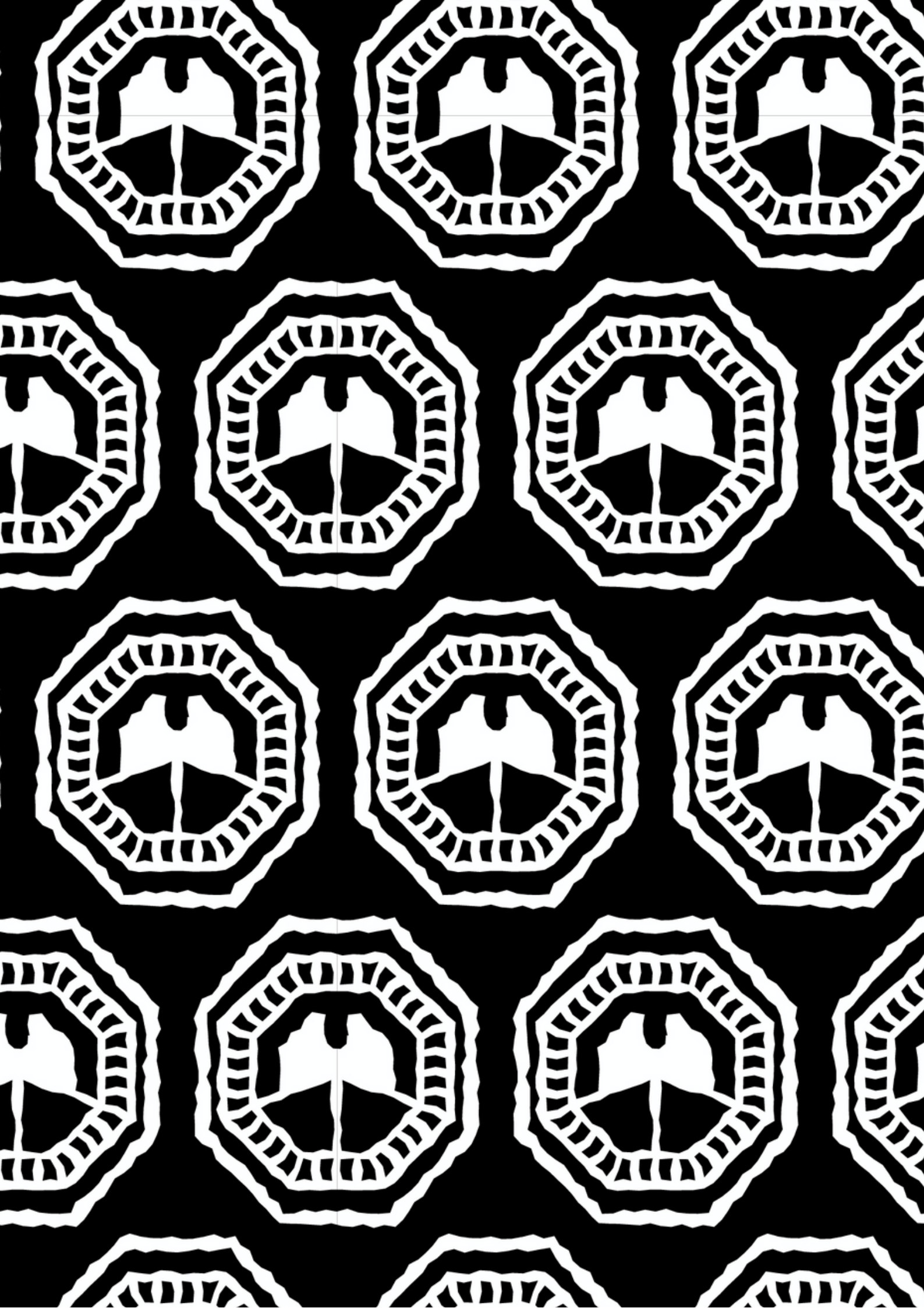
isla scott

cowmouth

once I had a cousin, she is still my cousin now but not in most of the usual ways. she smoked all the teeth from her head like thirty-two small enamel foxes from their dens. they fled in groups of three or four and her gums were left vacant and shuddering with nothing to chatter or chew, so they followed shortly afterwards. the root of these symptoms remains under question, something to do with her perception of her own self-image and her feeling that everyone around her already knew what she was just beginning to learn. the dentists huddled round like flies, hovering but unable to land on a diagnosis. the parts of yourself that you can break easily are never worth breaking and never grow back. the damage cannot be repaired, only replaced. the dentists agreed that the only option was total reconstruction using bovine tissues sliced away from cow flanks slick and clean and inserted by way of an elaborate chrome and meat scaffold, assuring there was no need to worry about jawbone pathoses or chronic fungus. the last thing she said was that she didn't mind losing her mouth, that the thing with losing something is that you wonder if you ever had it to begin with or if it was only visiting, and you can't expect all visitors to stay, so I should stop trying to console her. at some point the dentists rushed muttering out and the veterinarians rushed muttering in and then it was too late. they sluiced her down and sent her out to pasture. she had always been clinically addicted to rumination and now it churns not only in her head but in all four of her stomachs. the nails on each hand and foot have grown together into hooves which I paint for her like when we were girls. I visit her often, she sleeps standing on all fours and chews the breakfast cud at lunch and dinner. her eyelashes are much longer and thicker now, which I know makes her happy but she cannot speak to tell me.

I have been living

in the field I took the teeth from my mouth
shook them up in a jar and tried to put them back the same.
I squeezed every blackhead from my nose
for you to curl like a calf in the open pores.
I ripped the heart from my chest, but there was only
a wet artichoke left in my hands. I buried it
in the midden on a damp day. I watched it
sprout and stretch, the tendrils twined
and twisted in a sinister manner
together they built a tenement, small as my fist
I climbed inside, through the front door
and crouched by the stove. I have
been living alone, taking photographs
of my dinner, picked from between your teeth;
of blue light skimming cellulite ripples;
of that hapless piss-artist with staggeringly accidental hair,
who watches me through the window at night. I need
to know these things are really happening, I have
been prodding at the bubblewrap my head is
wrapped in, poking too hard so parts pop and dissipate
shivering away before I can remember
what went between the questionable past
and the unsavoury future. I think I am
the only one here, my neighbours
have either vacated, or move silently,
shrewd shadows through the close
I have been here for so long now that I no longer
notice the changing of the seasons.





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