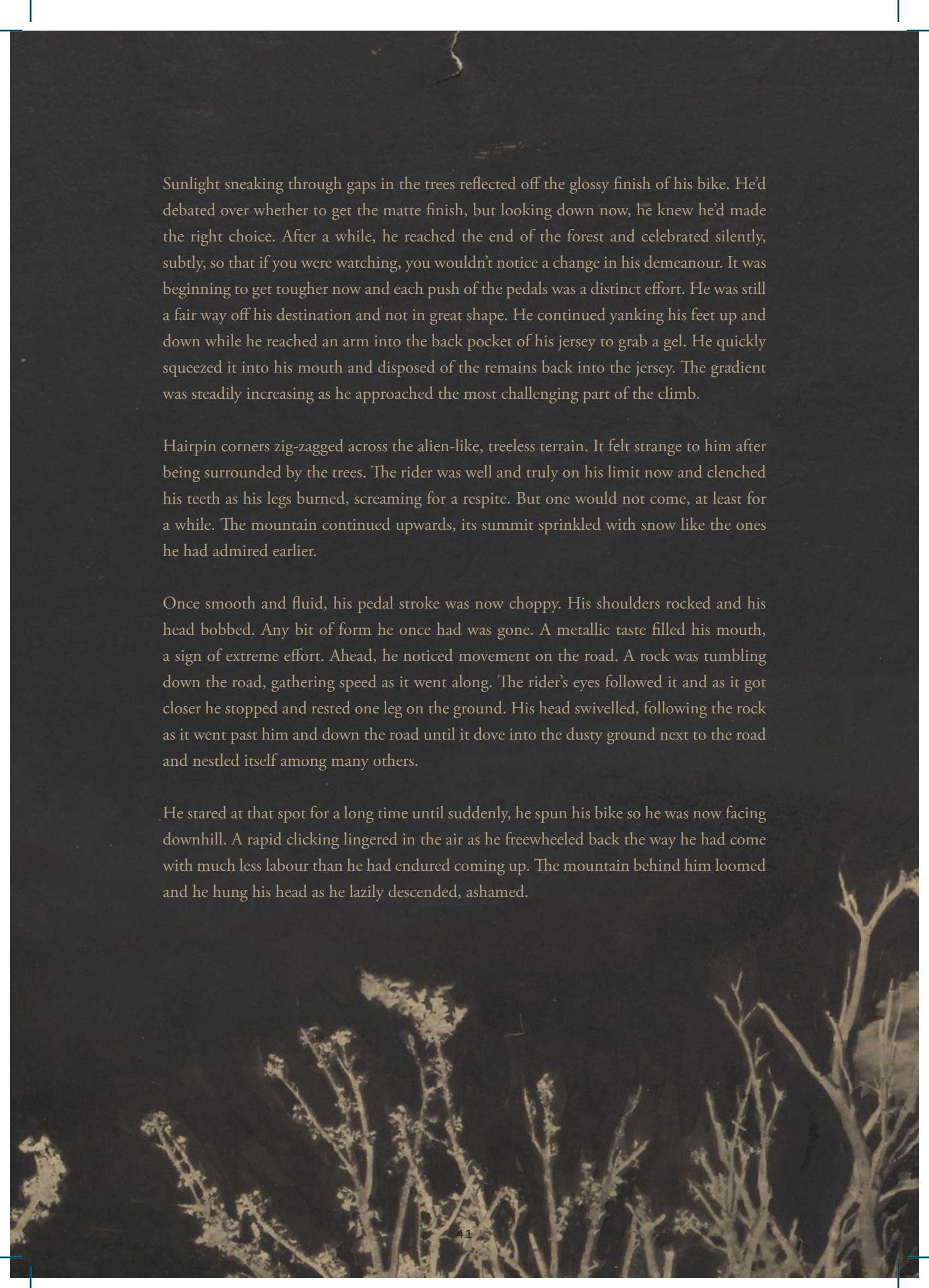




Sunlight sneaking through gaps in the trees reflected off the glossy finish of his bike. He'd debated over whether to get the matte finish, but looking down now, he knew he'd made the right choice. After a while, he reached the end of the forest and celebrated silently, subtly, so that if you were watching, you wouldn't notice a change in his demeanour. It was beginning to get tougher now and each push of the pedals was a distinct effort. He was still a fair way off his destination and not in great shape. He continued yanking his feet up and down while he reached an arm into the back pocket of his jersey to grab a gel. He quickly squeezed it into his mouth and disposed of the remains back into the jersey. The gradient was steadily increasing as he approached the most challenging part of the climb.

Hairpin corners zig-zagged across the alien-like, treeless terrain. It felt strange to him after being surrounded by the trees. The rider was well and truly on his limit now and clenched his teeth as his legs burned, screaming for a respite. But one would not come, at least for a while. The mountain continued upwards, its summit sprinkled with snow like the ones he had admired earlier.

Once smooth and fluid, his pedal stroke was now choppy. His shoulders rocked and his head bobbed. Any bit of form he once had was gone. A metallic taste filled his mouth, a sign of extreme effort. Ahead, he noticed movement on the road. A rock was tumbling down the road, gathering speed as it went along. The rider's eyes followed it and as it got closer he stopped and rested one leg on the ground. His head swivelled, following the rock as it went past him and down the road until it dove into the dusty ground next to the road and nestled itself among many others.

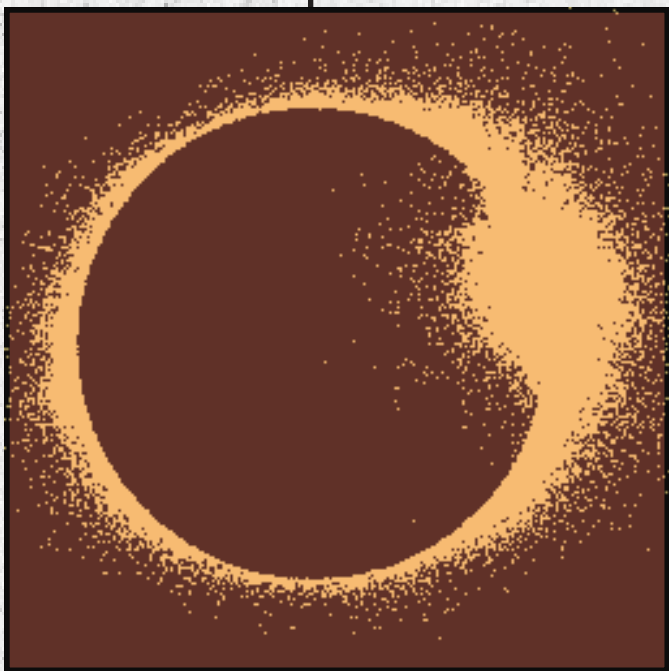
He stared at that spot for a long time until suddenly, he spun his bike so he was now facing downhill. A rapid clicking lingered in the air as he freewheeled back the way he had come with much less labour than he had endured coming up. The mountain behind him loomed and he hung his head as he lazily descended, ashamed.



**RIISING | DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME | TREE
INHUMANITY | BEAT POETS | SMRT | THE
SEEING IMAGES OF YOU THERE | HIT M
SINS | THE RUINS | RISING | DON'T WAIT**

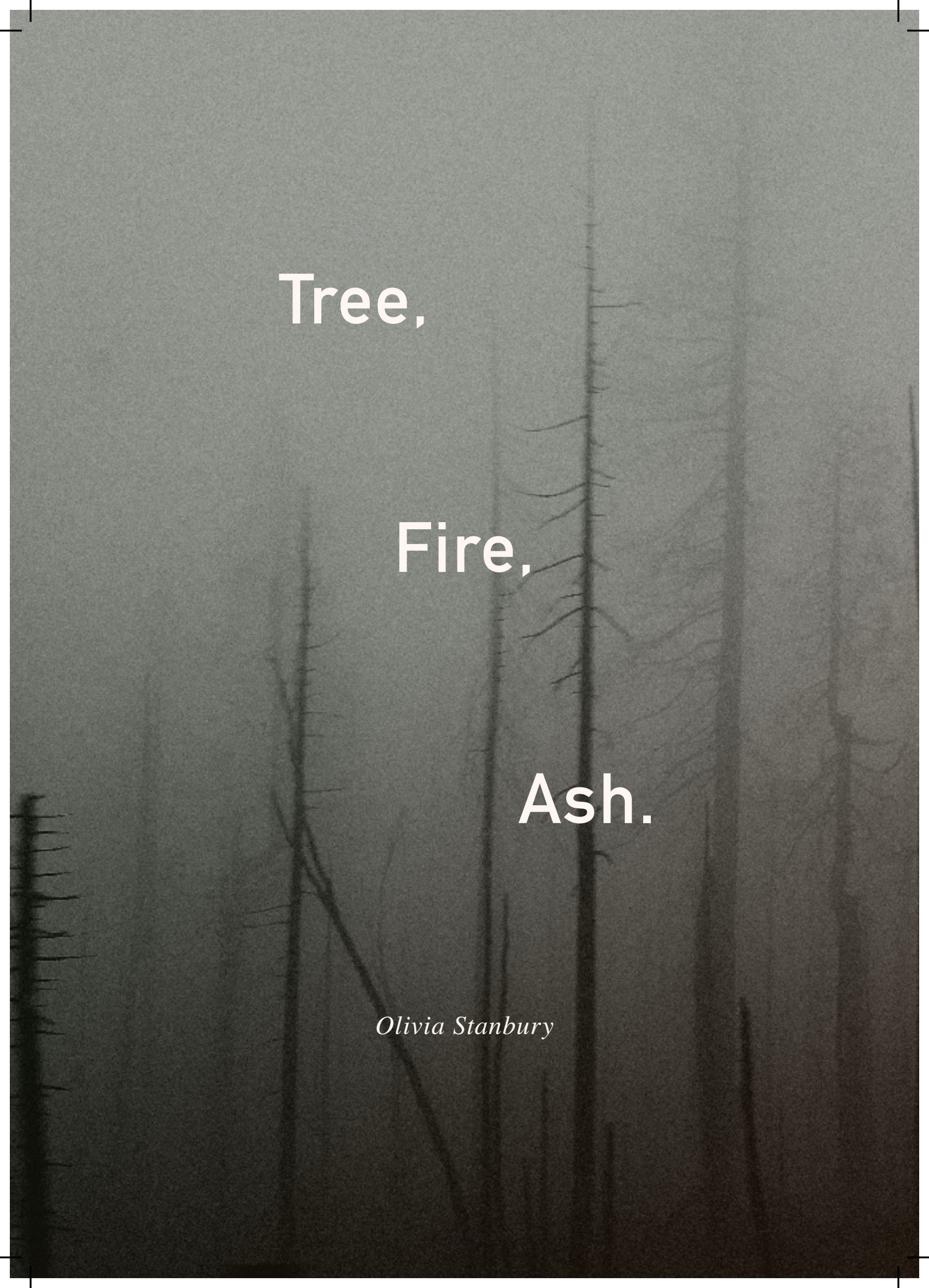


HOLLOW OF MAN | SEVEN SINS | THE RUINS | RISING | DON'T WAIT UP
A LIPOGRAM | SEEING IMAGES OF YOU THERE | HIT ME AGAIN. | H
WALLET | INHUMANITY | BEAT POETS | SMRT | THE END OF THE WO
RISING | DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME | TREE, FIRE, ASH. | OBLIVION | A



EE, FIRE, ASH. | OBLIVION | A WALLET |
THE END OF THE WORLD: A LIPOGRAM |
ME AGAIN. | HOLLOW OF MAN | SEVEN
IT UP FOR ME | TREE, FIRE, ASH. | OBL

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ETRYPO



Tree,

Fire,

Ash.

Olivia Stanbury

sprouting hands above the ground / fingers pinch like small
open beaks beckoning for a feed / only knowing how to
need *please look after me*

trunk planted / stagnant and stiff bark / truncating roots
clawing through the dirt for distance only depicted from
above *look where I could be*

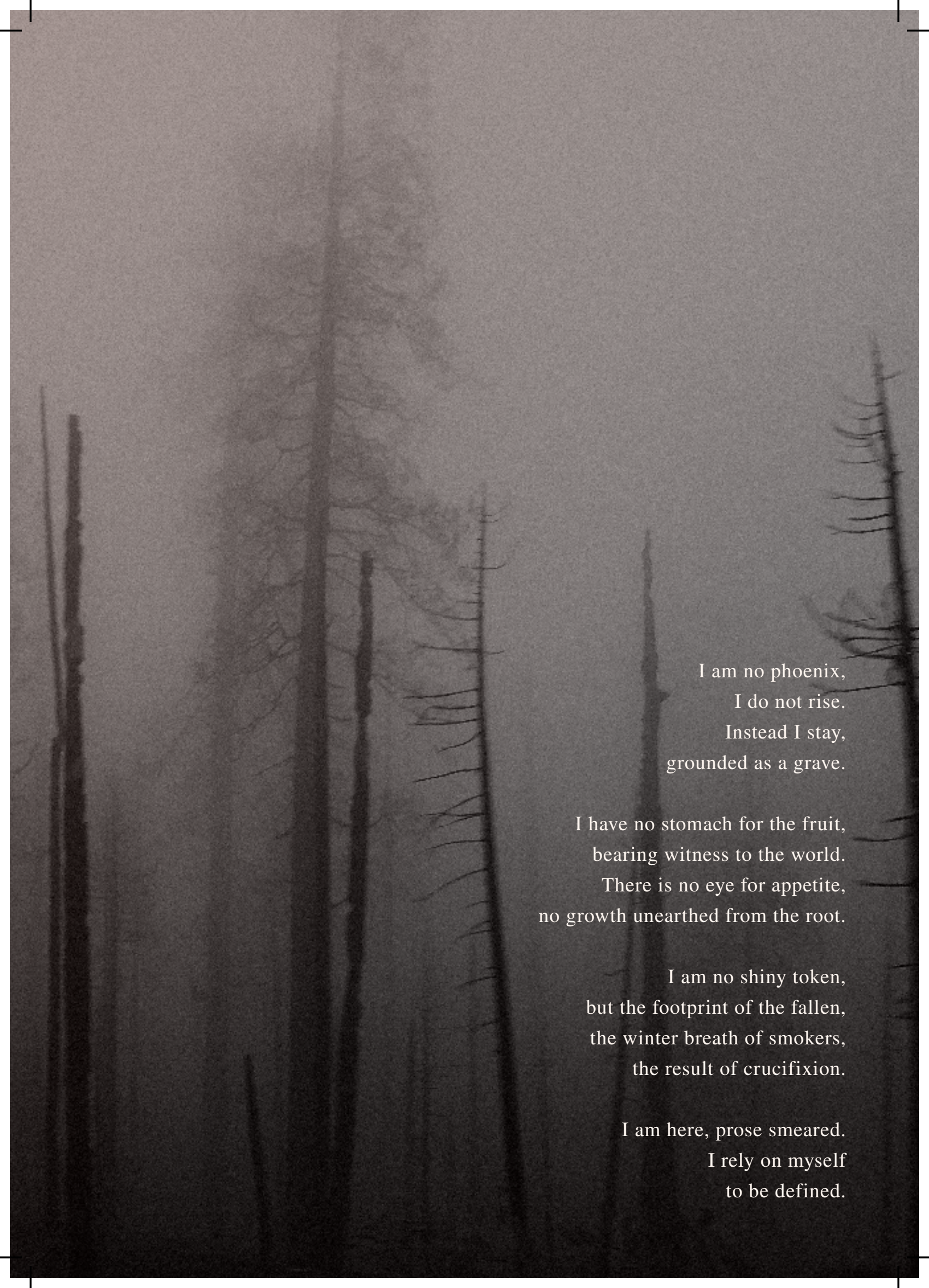
leaves falling languid and low / slipping like clothes
disposed / limbs unfurling / open / eyes lingering over what
is desired *just look at me now*

wisps shred in whispers of wind / the warning of wood /
water drops dribbling on dry dirt, a birthplace and a burial
look at how I howl

cut me down / I am a stump / thin me out / I am paper
lengthen me / I am useful / but you did not lengthen my life
look at what is done

Fate has faltered,
life left altered.
Cycles are never a circle,
cycles are 'here we go again'.
The trees are not seedlings,
they have been here before.
The ash is not new,
it was once you.

Here we go, again.
This is how it has begun,
reached for the stars, burned by the sun.
The fire did not need to start this way,
it did not need to start at all.
Fire is the fuel that pursues the fool
chasing with errant attachment.
Fire is the open-mouthed desire
coating the earth with its tongue.
Fire is the spite of the sun,
teeth against pearls;
destroy to prove you are real.



I am no phoenix,
I do not rise.
Instead I stay,
grounded as a grave.

I have no stomach for the fruit,
bearing witness to the world.
There is no eye for appetite,
no growth unearthed from the root.

I am no shiny token,
but the footprint of the fallen,
the winter breath of smokers,
the result of crucifixion.

I am here, prose smeared.
I rely on myself
to be defined.

Don't wait up for me

By Max Dedomenico

My wife didn't have much vision left.
She could find the light switch, the bed, the window,
things within blind reach.
She knew she was greying, but couldn't remember her age.
She knew outside was loud, and the sun set and rose,
but couldn't remember the year.
She would be guided to bed, kissed on the forehead.
Reminded she was loved.
She would mouth in sync as it was said to her:
'Don't wait up for me.'

In the mornings I would curl her hair.
She would mutter to herself,
clutching her sacred symbols.
I never knew what she prayed for.
More time?
Perhaps a swifter end.
Her eyes always scanned the ceiling,
sorting through all the possible wishes.
Some debts were owed to the prideful kind.



The grim grey of her hair would be pinned
through the thin twisted tendrils,
with a cross carrying the bleeding body of the Lord.
I'd never met the man,
though it was said he was good, some kind of good,
to someone, whoever that may have been.

She often spoke of 'another world.'
Dreams far beyond what she cannot see.
She had better vision in that way.
She was richer, safer.
In the arms of a different man, perhaps.
The one she read about all those years.

There came a day,
a protruding nail on the calendar.
Where 'don't wait up for me' was harder to say,
and the wishes stopped being sent.
When a debt, to the most prideful of the kind, was no longer owed.

BEAT POETS

NADAV DREYFUS

