



My Documents



My Computer



My Network



Recycle Bin

## Software Update Installation Wizard



Use the Wizard to install the following software update:

### POETRY.exe

Before you install we recommend you

- Back up all your systems
- Close all open programs

You might need to restart your computer after you complete this update.

To continue, click Next.

< Back

Next >

Cancel

You were young when you met her.  
Nineteen, twenty—something like that.  
She was blonde, the kind of blonde that caught the streetlight  
And made you think summer had leaned in to listen.

You spoke too fast, laughed too loud.  
She slowed you, steadied you,  
And by the second date you were already telling your dad,  
“She’s it, that’s it, I’ve found her.”

Years passed like they do—  
Late-night takeaways from the shop on the corner,  
Washing machines humming over cheap lino floors,  
Her head asleep on your shoulder while the TV hummed.  
Then the ring, the vows,  
The first house with wallpaper that cost an arm and a leg,  
And walls painted a colour you both debated.  
You called it a start.

A daughter first—  
You held her tiny body like a porcelain teapot,  
And she smiled at you before she was meant to.  
Life seemed to be expanding.  
And then the second.  
The boy.  
The morning.  
Her hand slipping from yours  
In the kind of silence you never believed could belong to her.  
Sirens, voices saying words  
You still can’t shape into reality.

Her last flowers were placed in your garage that day—  
You shut the door with your red-tinged face turned away.  
The wardrobe still hums for her,  
Dresses hung in the darkness,  
Shoes lined like soldiers who no longer serve.  
You do not touch them.





The baby walks now,  
His sister calls out,  
But you let their screams pierce the walls.  
You tell yourself they are safer without your trembling hands.  
Instead, television football illuminates your stale room,  
The tackles and tries drowning out your own heart.  
You fold yourself into the couch,  
Eyes stare empty, into the screen,  
Where no one dies,  
Where no one leaves their children behind.

Eighteen months,  
And the house is still paused mid-breath.  
You are a shell.  
You are the body left behind,  
Moving but not moving,  
Living but not alive.

And somewhere deep inside,  
You just know she would not want this—  
Not the children unheard,  
Not the flowers rotting in the darkness.

But you cannot rise,  
Cannot yet open the door,  
Cannot yet speak her name  
Without breaking yourself apart.

So you sit,  
And the game plays on,  
And the children grow louder,  
And her dresses, untouched,  
Wait in the dark for your hand.

‘Sidelined’  
Madeleine Macey

# Glowing, Softly

*Claire Falconer*

*It seeped in slowly, didn't it, dear?  
Smudges on lips and fingertips.*

*Radium kissed you -  
ushered through the  
rotted wooden door.*

*(Softly glowing.  
Never knowing.  
Until the,)*

*Lecherous licks past light mint lips,  
flecks of pitch paint lave across you, a  
thick film over the back of your canines.*

*Oil slick, radium slips.  
Your veins shift,  
chroma coloured contouring -  
wrists, lips, gums.*

*(Softly glowing.  
Never knowing.  
Until it,)*

*Slipped in, dripped in,  
just enough to vignette  
the corners of you.*

*Fragile eyes blur -  
numbers swirl,  
as lamplight dims to bring the pale hum.*

*(Softly glowing.  
Never knowing.  
Until there were,)*

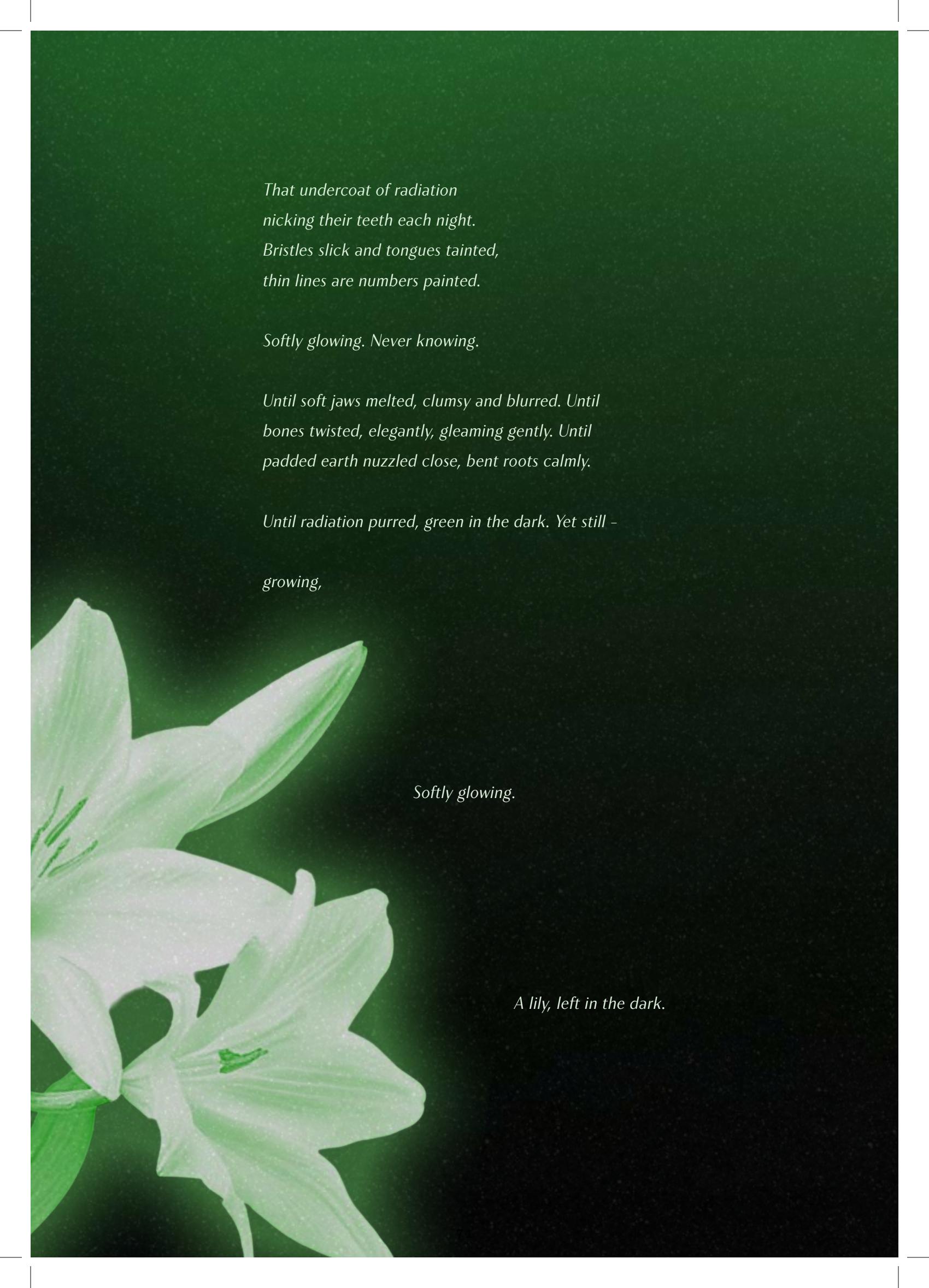
*Breaking hands and shameless ticking, Clock-faced casualties.  
They didn't tell you, darling.  
Oh, sweet girl. Lay down  
your buzzing head.*

*(Softly glowing.  
Never knowing.  
Until they,)*

*Rest glowing rabbit tongues -  
enzyme-touched.*

*Rows upon rows of them,  
only now you are told of them.  
Slimy lips on yours,  
lather young lilies in oil.*

*(Softly glowing.  
Never knowing.  
Until they saw,)*



*That undercoat of radiation  
nicking their teeth each night.  
Bristles slick and tongues tainted,  
thin lines are numbers painted.*

*Softly glowing. Never knowing.*

*Until soft jaws melted, clumsy and blurred. Until  
bones twisted, elegantly, gleaming gently. Until  
padded earth nuzzled close, bent roots calmly.*

*Until radiation purred, green in the dark. Yet still -*

*growing,*

*Softly glowing.*

*A lily, left in the dark.*

# BIO-MECHANICAL

TE KLAMPEREN.

**THE HUMAN BODY IS NOT MADE UP OF FLESH AND BONE.**

**NOT ANYMORE.**

**IT'S MADE UP OF COGS AND GEARS AND CRANKS,**

**WHIRRING AND TURNING AND MOVING,**

**KEEPING SEDENTARY MUSCLES INTACT.**

**USABLE. FUNCTIONAL. FRESH.**

**IT'S NECESSARY.**

**THE BRAIN DOES NOT DREAM,**

**DOES NOT THINK, DOES NOT LIVE,**

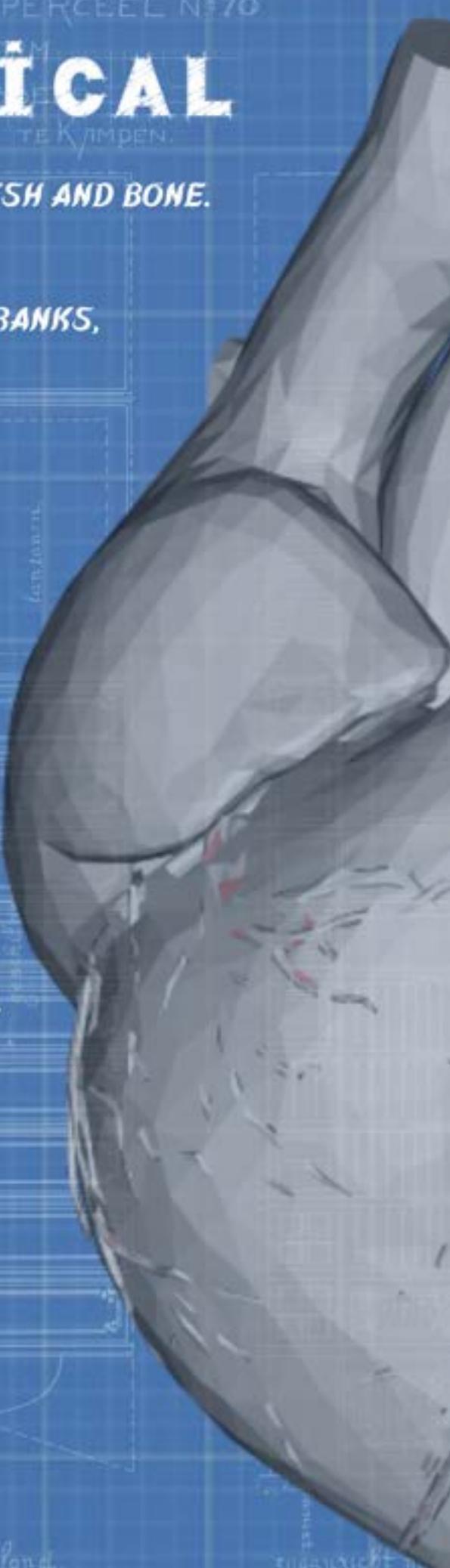
**ONLY HALF-RECALLS THROUGH SHOCKS,**

**WIRES RUN THROUGH BITS OF FIBRE,**

**TWISTED AROUND THE METAL CAGE**

**THAT HOUSES WHAT ONCE WERE ORGANS.**

**IT'S NECESSARY.**





WARM, STICKY BLOOD STILL FLOWS  
THROUGH FESTERING VEINS.  
OIL HAS NOW JOINED THE STREAM  
TOWARDS THE HEART,  
ENSURING THE METAL JOINTS REMAIN  
OPERATIONAL, SMOOTH, SILENT.

IT'S NECESSARY.

IT'S NECESSARY,  
FOR WHEN THE GLASS EYES OPEN,  
WHEN THE LUNGS WHEEZE ANOTHER  
BREATH,  
ALL THAT WORK WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR  
SOMETHING.

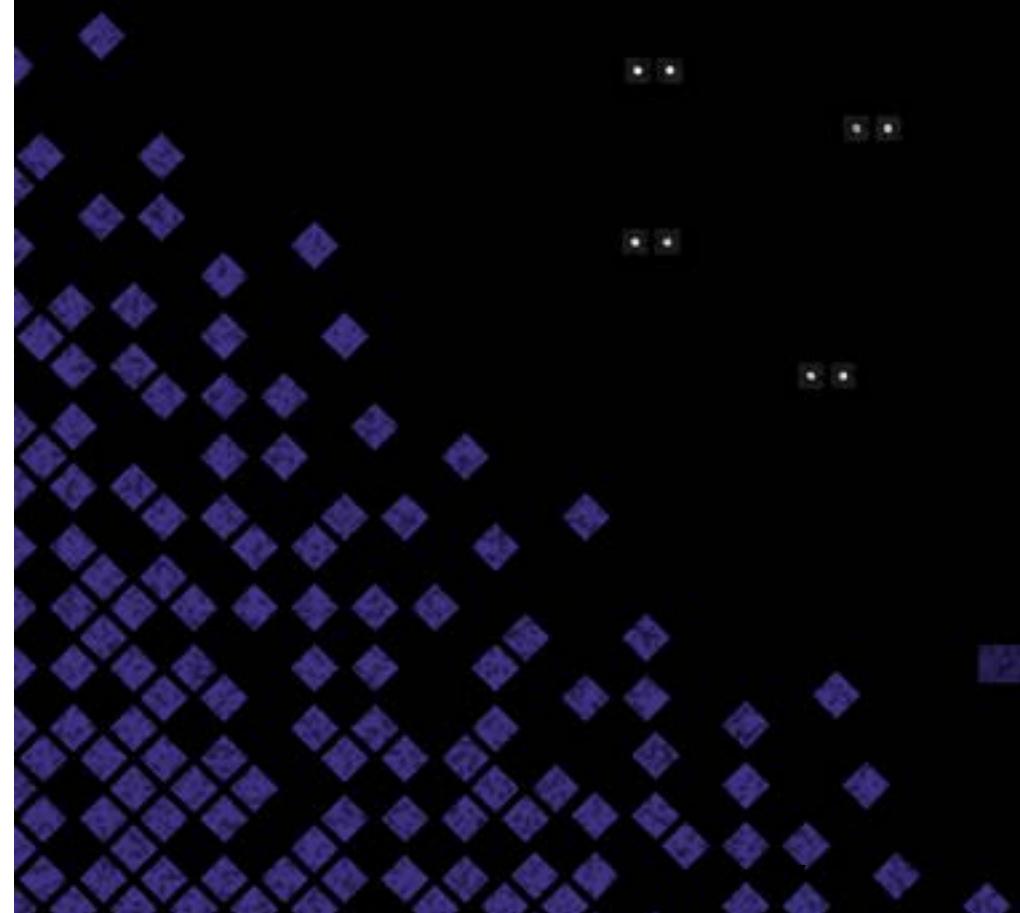
IT'S NOT A MECHANICAL HEART THAT STILL  
BEATS.  
WHAT AN INTRICATE METAL MACHINE,  
ALL FIGHTING TO KEEP A ONCE-DEAD BODY

ALIVE.

ISABELLA MCCULLOUGH

# THE NOSE, THE MOON, THE RAVENS

BY MOIRA KIRKWOOD



**L**

**N MARCH, I CAUGHT COVID. IN BAT-BLACK, CORVIDS CAME  
TO SHARE OPINIONS. BAD. I WAS SICK FOR – WELL, THREE DAYS  
THEN AROSE ANOSMIC. NO STINK FROM THE PILED-UP  
DISHES. MY WHOLE FACE IN THE CAT FOOD: NOTHING. PERVERSELY,  
I FELT BOTH BLIND AND DEAF. WHAT ABOUT GAS LEAKS, OR TAINTED FOOD?  
THIS FRIEND I'D NEVER COUNTED, YET COUNTED ON. GONE.**

**G**

**NCE I SAW THE MOON THROUGH A TELESCOPE AND WEPT  
AT THAT COLD SOLITUDE. ANCIENT CONTRACT BOUND HER TO ME,  
TO MY MOTHER AND ALL THE MOTHERS. I'D BEEN CARELESS.  
SHE'D EXPECTED NOTHING OF ME, I GUESS, AND GOT IT.**

**R**

**ITTY LITTER (USED). ASH FROM MARTIN'S PIPE. THE GARDEN  
WITH KELP DRESSING. ALL THE SMELLY TREASURES! THE OLEFACTORY'S  
RETURNED, BUT SULLEN: JUST FOR THE HELL, WITHHOLDING  
GARDENIA, AND – OF ALL THINGS – BLEACH. STILL, THIS WORLD'S A MARVEL:  
OUTSIDE THE CORVIDS TRY TO QUELL OPTIMISM  
BUT RUIN ALL THAT BY EATING YELLOW LOQUATS.**

# THAT MOTH WAS ONCE A CATERPILLAR

Emma Pagotto

You stare at it through the frosted glass  
slit,  
wondering again,  
Where did it come from? What should you  
do with it?

This grotesque, alien creature. Bumpy  
and knobbly and hairless.

Tall, lean, and muscly. Silky-smooth skin  
and prominent cheek and collarbones.

It is horrific. It is spiders crawling into  
your ears and cockroaches into your  
mouth.

It is your skin being grated off like  
cheese and your nails slowly peeled away  
from your fingertips.

It intrigues you.

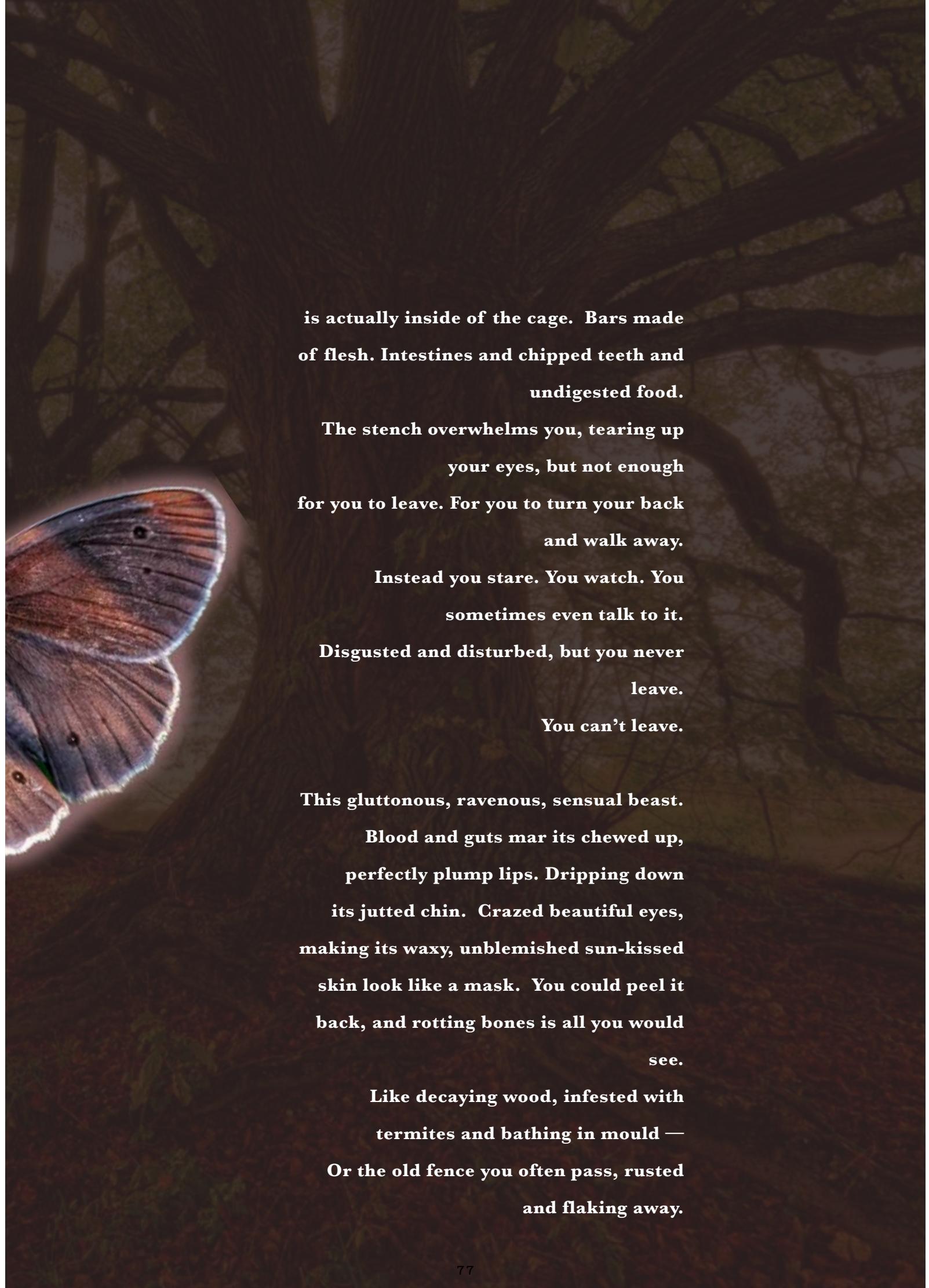
It troubles you.

Consumes you.

A shark follows the scent of blood; you  
always follow the scent of fear, of desire,  
coming back to this place –  
this asylum. Or is it a prison? A  
containment centre?

You forget, sometimes, which one of you





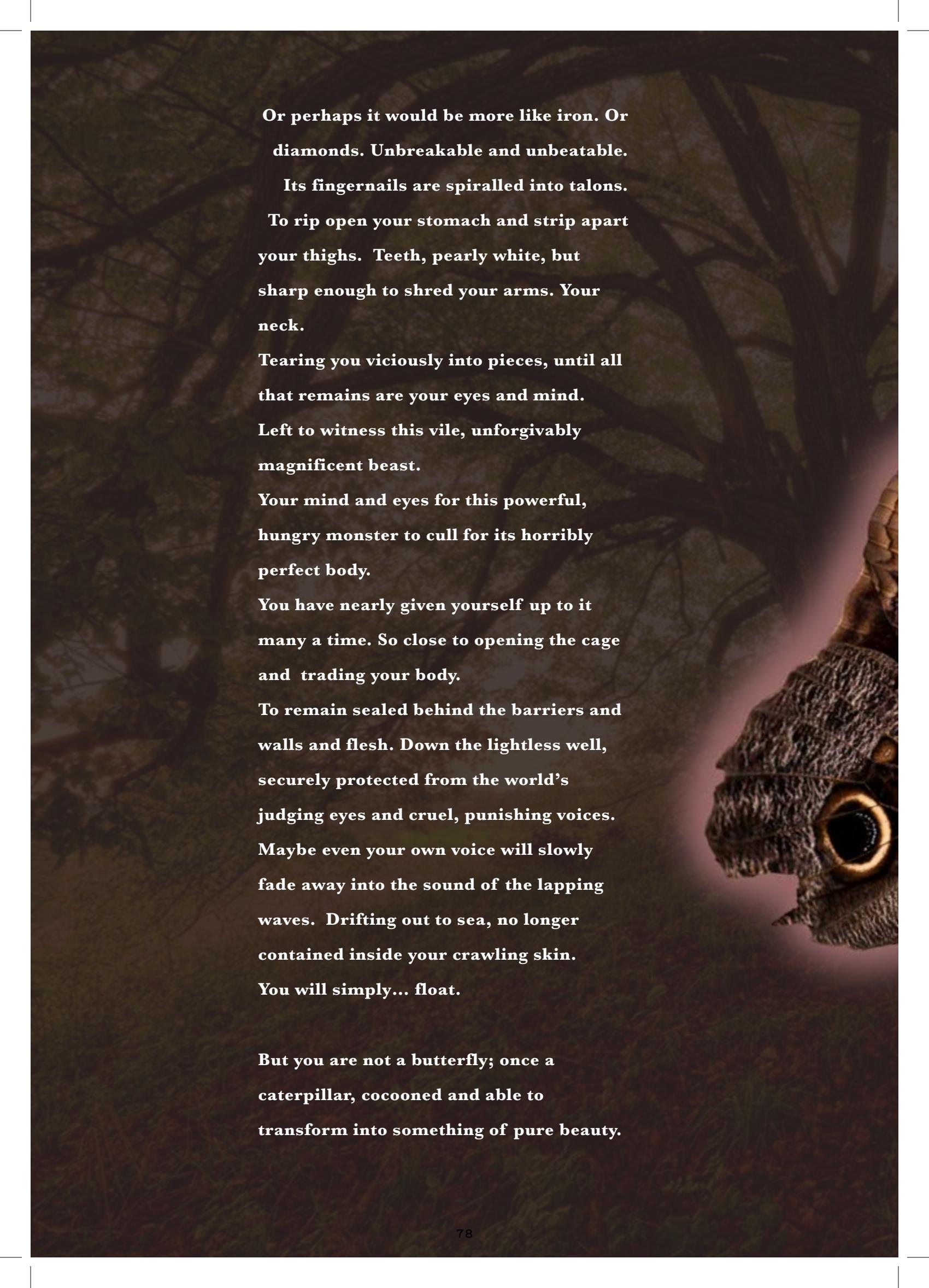
**is actually inside of the cage. Bars made  
of flesh. Intestines and chipped teeth and  
undigested food.**

**The stench overwhelms you, tearing up  
your eyes, but not enough  
for you to leave. For you to turn your back  
and walk away.**

**Instead you stare. You watch. You  
sometimes even talk to it.  
Disgusted and disturbed, but you never  
leave.  
You can't leave.**

**This gluttonous, ravenous, sensual beast.  
Blood and guts mar its chewed up,  
perfectly plump lips. Dripping down  
its jutted chin. Crazed beautiful eyes,  
making its waxy, unblemished sun-kissed  
skin look like a mask. You could peel it  
back, and rotting bones is all you would  
see.**

**Like decaying wood, infested with  
termites and bathing in mould —  
Or the old fence you often pass, rusted  
and flaking away.**



**Or perhaps it would be more like iron. Or  
diamonds. Unbreakable and unbeatable.**

**Its fingernails are spiralled into talons.  
To rip open your stomach and strip apart  
your thighs. Teeth, pearly white, but  
sharp enough to shred your arms. Your  
neck.**

**Tearing you viciously into pieces, until all  
that remains are your eyes and mind.**

**Left to witness this vile, unforgivably  
magnificent beast.**

**Your mind and eyes for this powerful,  
hungry monster to cull for its horribly  
perfect body.**

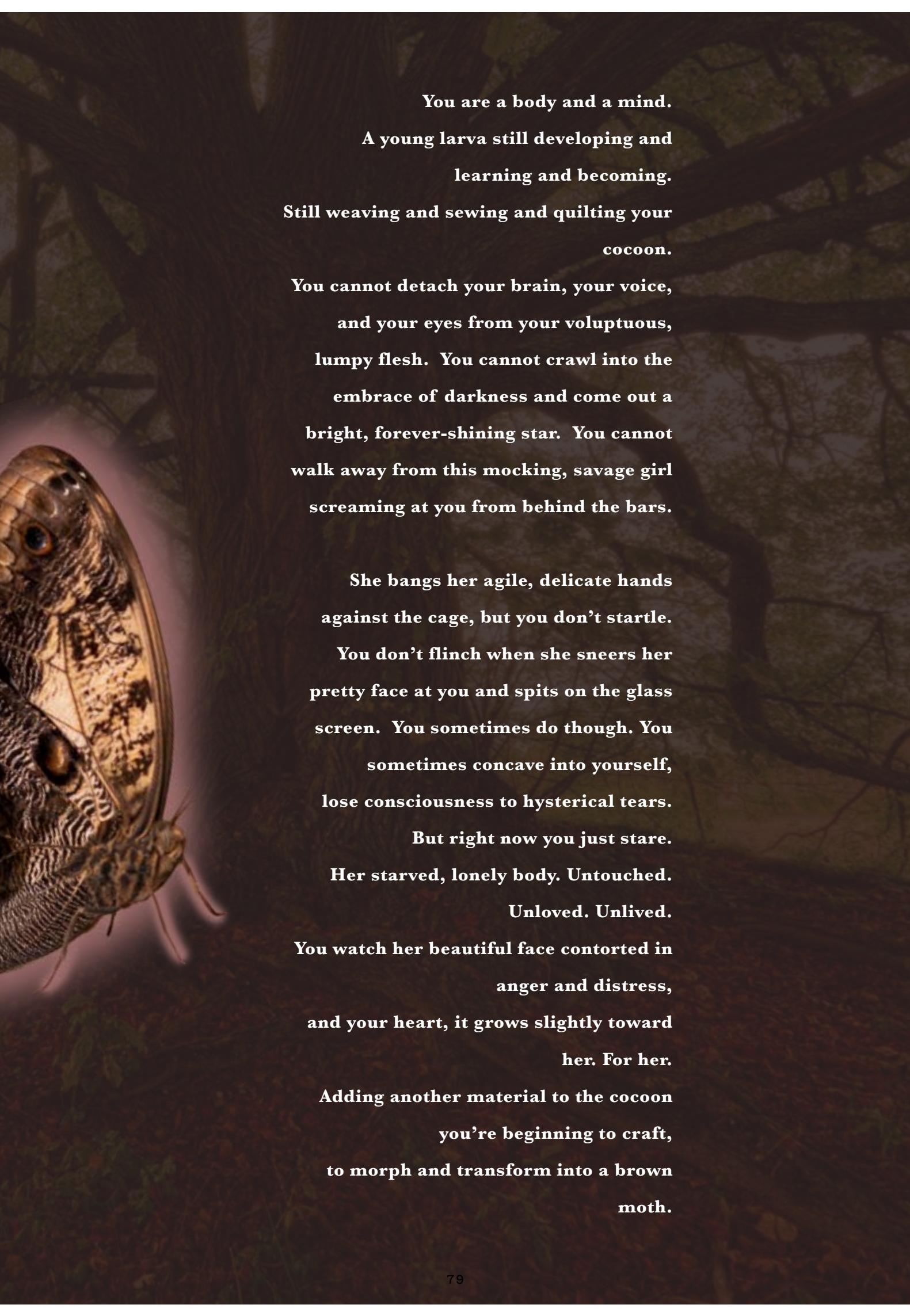
**You have nearly given yourself up to it  
many a time. So close to opening the cage  
and trading your body.**

**To remain sealed behind the barriers and  
walls and flesh. Down the lightless well,  
securely protected from the world's  
judging eyes and cruel, punishing voices.**

**Maybe even your own voice will slowly  
fade away into the sound of the lapping  
waves. Drifting out to sea, no longer  
contained inside your crawling skin.**

**You will simply... float.**

**But you are not a butterfly; once a  
caterpillar, cocooned and able to  
transform into something of pure beauty.**



**You are a body and a mind.  
A young larva still developing and  
learning and becoming.  
Still weaving and sewing and quilting your  
cocoon.**

**You cannot detach your brain, your voice,  
and your eyes from your voluptuous,  
lumpy flesh. You cannot crawl into the  
embrace of darkness and come out a  
bright, forever-shining star. You cannot  
walk away from this mocking, savage girl  
screaming at you from behind the bars.**

**She bangs her agile, delicate hands  
against the cage, but you don't startle.  
You don't flinch when she sneers her  
pretty face at you and spits on the glass  
screen. You sometimes do though. You  
sometimes concave into yourself,  
lose consciousness to hysterical tears.**

**But right now you just stare.  
Her starved, lonely body. Untouched.  
Unloved. Unlived.**

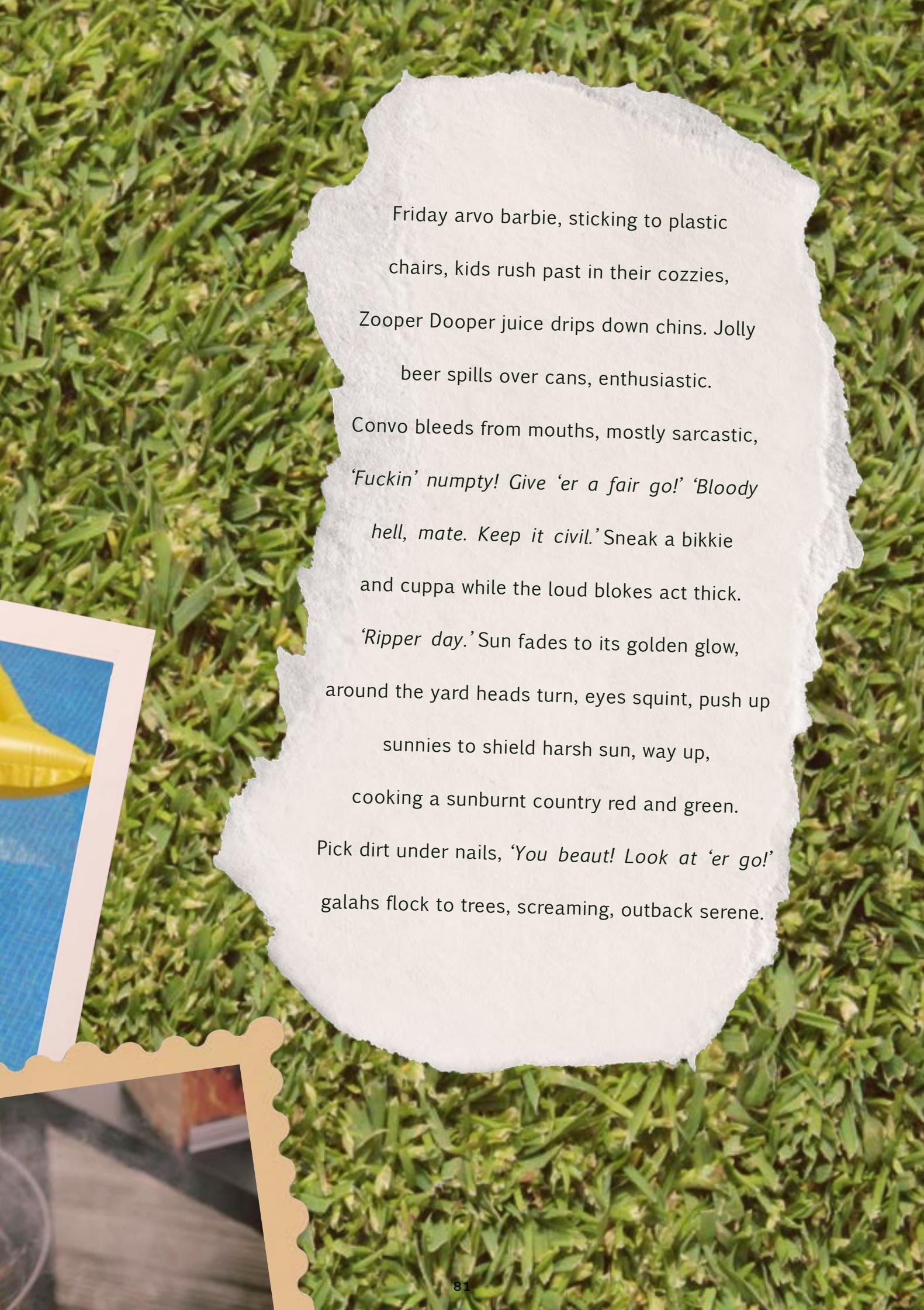
**You watch her beautiful face contorted in  
anger and distress,  
and your heart, it grows slightly toward  
her. For her.**

**Adding another material to the cocoon  
you're beginning to craft,  
to morph and transform into a brown  
moth.**

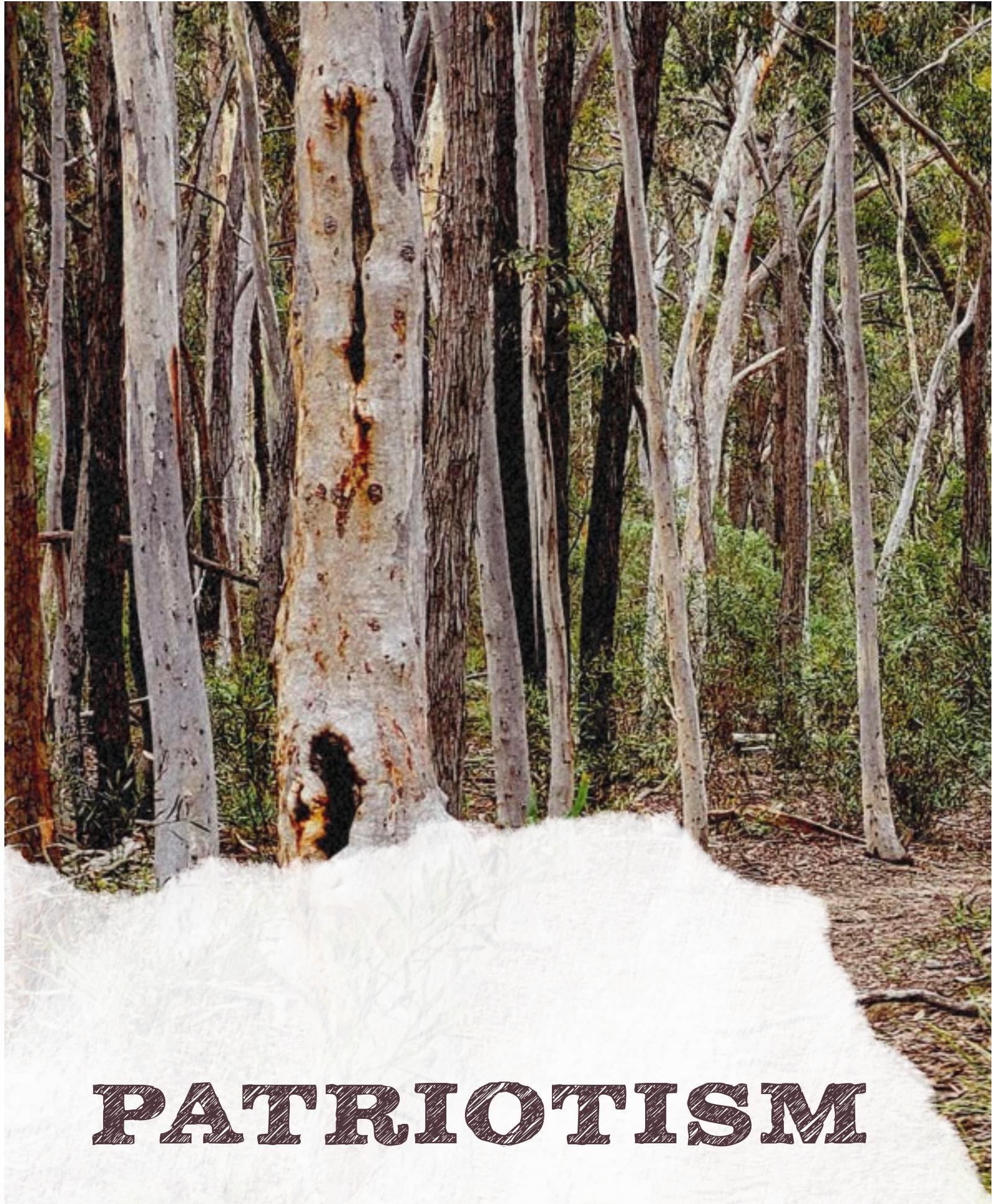
# Outback Rather

Laura Trebley





Friday arvo barbie, sticking to plastic  
chairs, kids rush past in their cozies,  
Zooper Dooper juice drips down chins. Jolly  
beer spills over cans, enthusiastic.  
  
Convo bleeds from mouths, mostly sarcastic,  
'Fuckin' numpty! Give 'er a fair go!' 'Bloody  
hell, mate. Keep it civil.' Sneak a bikkie  
and cuppa while the loud blokes act thick.  
  
'Ripper day.' Sun fades to its golden glow,  
around the yard heads turn, eyes squint, push up  
sunnies to shield harsh sun, way up,  
cooking a sunburnt country red and green.  
  
Pick dirt under nails, 'You beaut! Look at 'er go!'  
galahs flock to trees, screaming, outback serene.



# PATRIOTISM

*A sonnet by Laura Trebley*



Kangaroo and Wombat and Bin Chicken too,  
between leaves of eucalyptus and wattle,  
a stable family, no backyard battle  
with bunnies or Possums, left to the few  
who, at altars of Fire Ants, pray at you,  
still Baby Magpies refuse your cradle  
of violence, sting like the Blue Bottle  
around your eyes, deep breaths find you anew.

Fight for freedom in your mind, a prison  
self-taught. The bandage-wrapped nation  
becomes the Aussie *Proud Boys* condemnation  
attempt healing, find balance to altruism,  
pride usurped, turned against new hope risen,  
hear the bush cry, your racism isn't my patriotism.

# My Hero, Your Shadow

By Paige Jenkins

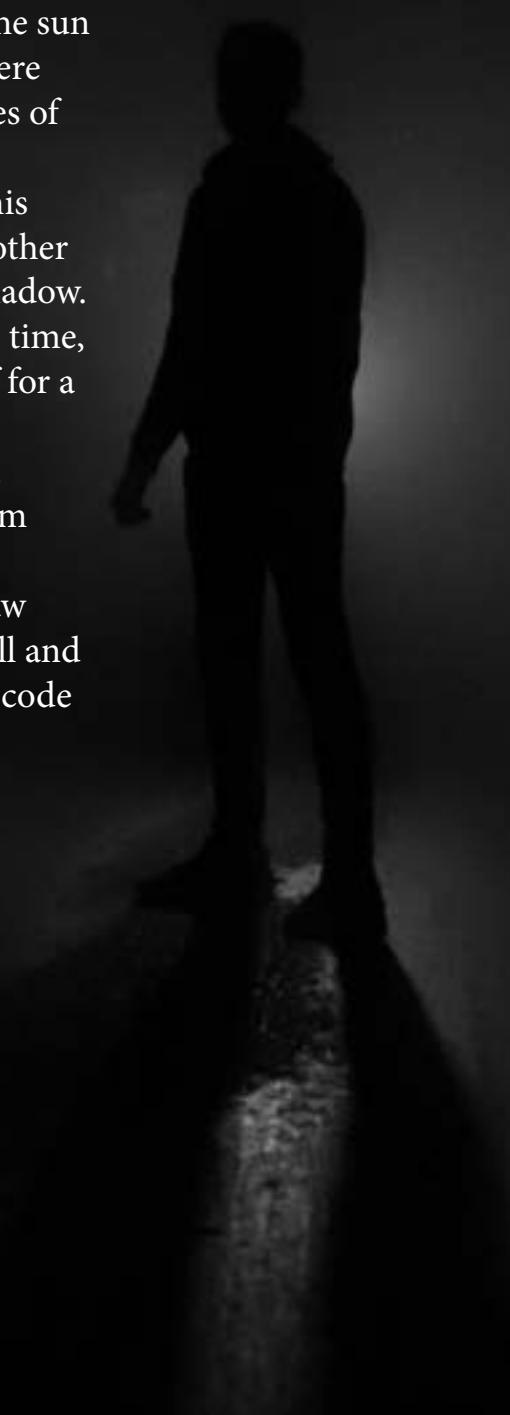
Losing a man has never made me  
doubt myself  
I always leave on my own accord  
Or at least, I try to  
Losing a man has never made me doubt my worth  
because I know I deserve more than what they gave me  
Losing a man has never made me quite as numb as this  
distance we seem to be plagued with  
This icy chill and fiery rage are the only temptations to bleed  
on a page this time

The hopelessness and guilt floating inside leaves slime in  
my stomach and I can't ignore the signs blinking in bold  
screaming that we're not fine.  
You've always been my hero,  
my blanket,  
my guide.

I've always been your shadow, only a  
few paces behind.  
There's been forks and overgrown  
forests that covered the path, broken  
pavement and stumbling blindly in the  
dark as you step further away from me.

I used to think it was a game  
You'd run, I'd chase.  
There was never a time I wasn't looking  
for you  
Even when walking on parallel lines,  
our intersection was at the forefront of  
my mind.  
But now, like Icarus, I came too close.  
I tried to step in the footprints you left  
behind and I fell just before reaching  
the  
break in the tree line.  
But you didn't notice the blood on my  
knees,  
nor the bones splintering, protruding  
out of me.

From your perch up ahead,



you saw the twisted form of your  
shadow, like a smell you can't  
shake,  
extracted a pocketknife and  
began to trace your boots and  
pants and torso and hands,  
separating the dark from your  
light.

Emancipating from the past,  
tearing the wrong from what you  
heard was right.

And without looking back, you  
tossed your knife and left me  
there to fend for myself as the sun  
began to set and my cries were  
drowned out by the creatures of  
the night.

I watched as you walked. This  
time not alone, but with another  
who had parted from the shadow.  
Side by side, each footfall in time,  
mirror images as you set off for a  
new Home.

And in your wake is the last  
flicker of warmth, dying from  
trying to continue to walk  
towards the last place she saw  
you, before you put up a wall and  
forgot to give her the secret code

and somehow forgot how  
you left her broken, scared  
and crying in the cold.

It never hurt like this, losing  
a man.

Because I always had you to  
hold my hand.

But now all I got is a  
message to stay in my lane,  
and a lifetime of questions,  
and emptiness and pain.

It never hurt this bad, losing  
another

because I always had the  
trust and respect from my  
big brother

It's new, the silence, the  
stonewall

because I never thought  
It'd be me you stopped  
trying for.

I never thought it'd be me  
you stopped talking to.

Never thought I'd be the one  
who wasn't worth fighting  
for.

And I really never thought  
it'd be you saying I was  
unlovable.