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# **An Eggshell Breaking From Within**

a lov story  
in e acts  
with poems  
and drawings

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Avoiding the line out front, Simon entered through a door intended for the opposite purpose. Stepping out of the slimy must of the alley into the dark, low ceiled basement club, he multiplied. Mirrors lining all the walls reflected an infinity of sailors in crisp white uniforms and matching hats. He elbowed through the thick crowd towards the bar. Leaning against it, he recognized one of his fellow submariners. Simon approached him and shouted over the din,

"Dudley! What's the good word?"

"Oh, hello Simon. Word's bad. My girl split on me. Again."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Simon offered, punctuating his sentence with a clap on Dudley's shoulder, "don't worry though, plenty of fish in the sea and all that."

"Pfft!" Dudley started, "We fucking live in the sea." Backing away from the bar slightly, the seaman spat on the ground, then leaned closer to Simon,

"I mean you're right," Dudley continued, his hand cupped to funnel his words, "there are, but what's really rattling me, get this...she leaves a tube of lipstick open beside the mirror, but no message. I don't get it." Simon nodded in response, trying to think of a way to change the subject.

"How 'bout a beer, Duds?" he asked, not waiting for Dudley's response before waving his index and middle fingers towards the barkeep. A different use for a peace sign. The barkeep returned the gesture with a nod and reached for two cloudy pint glasses muddied with fingerprints, arranged haphazardly on the shelf behind him.

"Thanks, mate," Dudley said, taking a deep breath as the beers, both grasped awkwardly in the barkeep's right hand, clunked down on the thick varnished slab of oak in front of them, "Well, may the best man win, eh?" He knocked his glass into Simon's, still resting on the bar.

"I didn't realize it was a competition."

"Cheers," Dudley said with a sly wink and downed half his glass.

Simon scanned the room, soaking in the brief respite from war. The overhanging lamps illuminated small islands of young girls wearing floral print dresses, bows tied carefully in their hair. Married women of varying ages wrenched their necks nervously about the smoky interior, awaiting the long anticipated arrival of their husbands. The domed caps that mingled and flirted boisterously no longer belonged to naval warriors but instead worldly naturalists, cheerfully pursuing unexplored parts of an archipelago.

His glances drifted from shore to shore. Some looked soft and inviting, others jagged and sharp, and between them all, possibilities of hidden peril brimming beneath their waves. He didn't dare approach any of them. Fear trumped curiosity and potential for discovery. Besides, he had already made his. Simon's gaze floated listlessly up towards the velvet curtain hiding the stage.

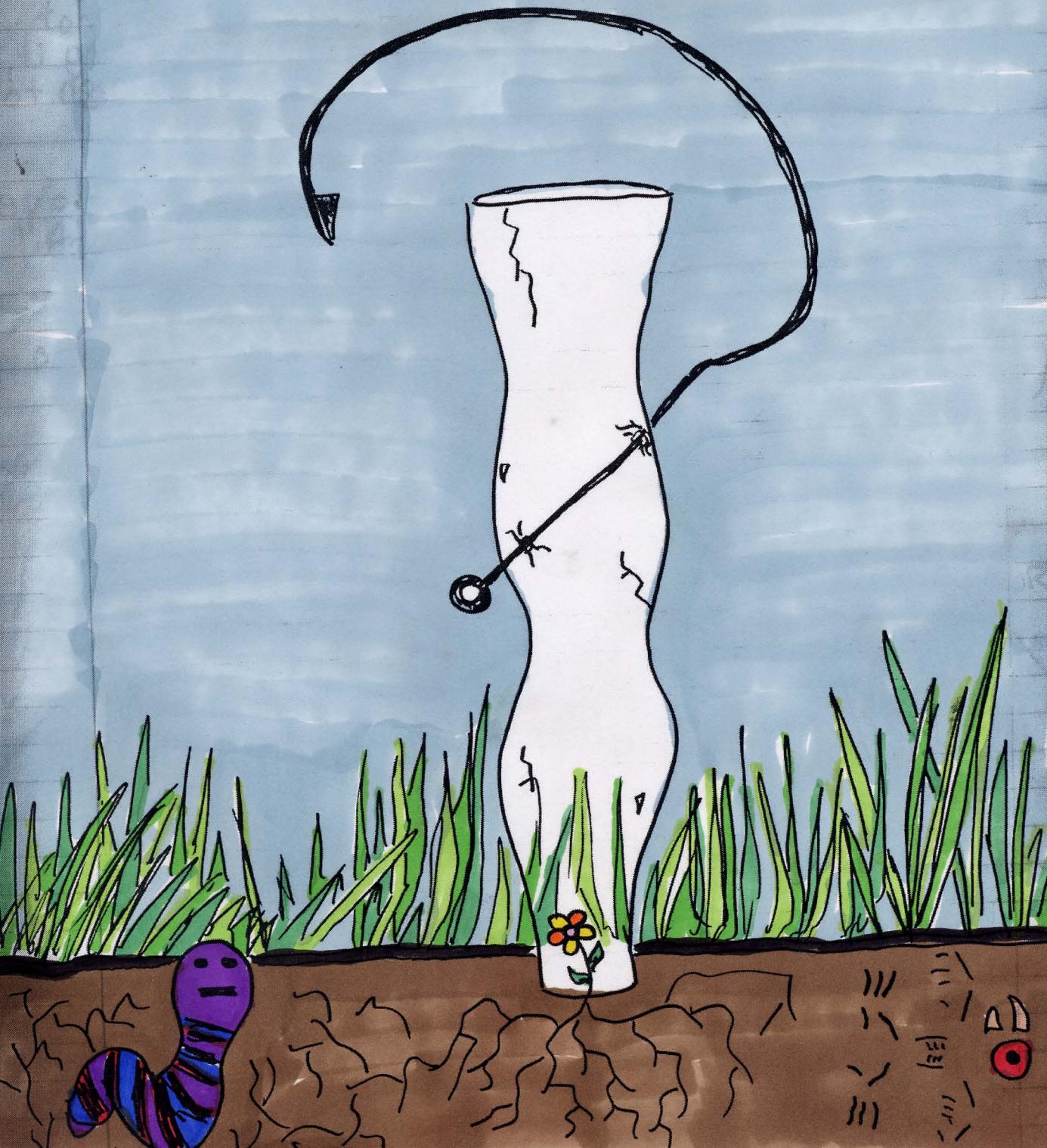
Dudley slurped the dregs of his current beer and whistled shrilly, bobbing his index finger impatiently in the empty mug. The barkeep leered back and continued to polish the glass he was holding. Dudley caught site of Simon's focus and extrapolated the reason for his frustrating lack of attention to the details of Dudley's faltering love life.

"You're hopeless mate," he laughed, "she could have any schmuck in here. Why you?" He whistled towards the barkeep again, louder. The barkeep grunted something inaudible and quickly filled a glass, sliding it hard down the counter-top towards Dudley. It smacked into his palm and slopped a third of its contents over his hand.

"Wanker," Dudley muttered under his breath, picking up the beer and turning back to Simon, "besides, I saw her first."

B  
I  
R  
T  
H

From Birth: life, death.  
From Death: birth, life.  
From Life: death, birth.



## **An Eggshell Breaking From Within**

The first cracks  
quiet, not quite  
cracking shell.  
Weakening  
persistence.

Persevere.  
A piece breaks,  
falls gently.  
Beak peaks out,  
retreats.

Tastes daylight.  
Smells wet, sweet.  
Feels. Alive.  
Needs to speak.  
Speaks to eat.

Speaks. Eats. Speaks.  
Meekly squeeks,  
then learns, sees.  
Feels the breeze,  
tranquil, breathes.

Wind feels right  
one night so  
letting go  
what it knows,  
is in flight.

## **planted**

a green and modest potted plant  
a warped and wooden floor  
the floor bent at a crooked slant  
beginning from the door

the plant is lush and often fed  
it basks in sweet daylight  
its roots set in a fertile bed  
hold firm in darkest night

morning comes, she roams the room  
waters the plant each day  
at night she leaves, its branches  
plead, beg for her to stay

towards her life the flora sways  
she marches out the door  
each new thirsty end of day  
longer than before

there will come a day, too soon  
when she's left and gone for good  
the plant waits with the changing moon  
would follow if it could

## **Mobile**

Cribbed.

Not walking,  
not talking.

Strange shapes.  
Secrets strung  
spinning loom  
out of reach.

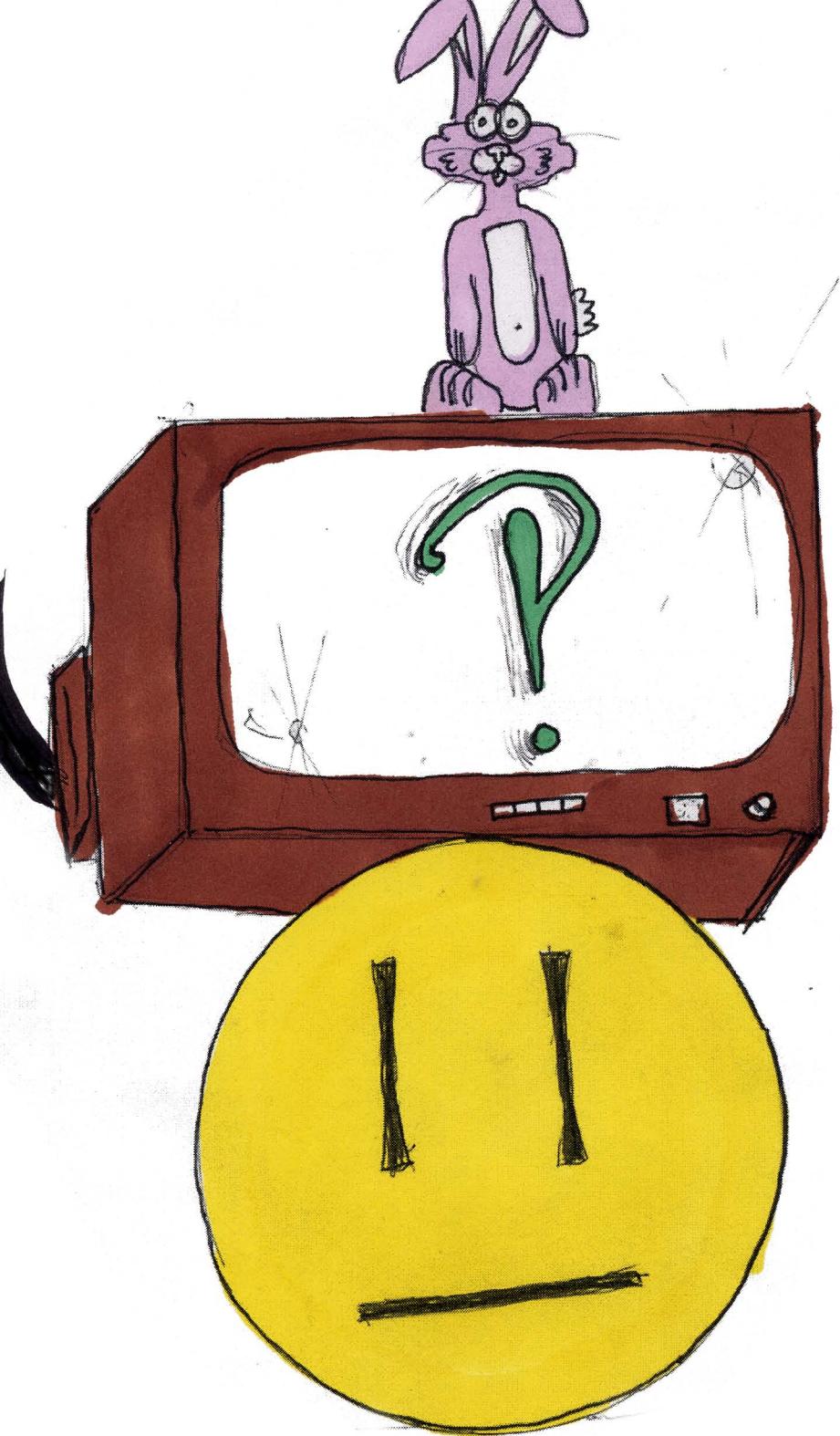
Spectral shades  
rotating waves  
splash in the corner,  
edge of the known.

The red light blinks.  
The same static shrieks  
receive the same relief  
from outside the bars.

The meaning of the shapes  
is not understood. Still  
struggling, a stretch  
and the tiny prisoner is free.

Not questioning,  
not explaining.

Just climb.



<b>A</b>	©	<i>AHH...</i>
<b>B</b>	%	<i>BOOOOOO!</i>
<b>C</b>	(	<i>CUDDLE...</i>
<b>D</b>	[ ]	<i>DO IT!</i>
<b>E</b>	=	<i>EAT...</i>
<b>F</b>	/ =	<i>FOOD!</i>
<b>G</b>	&	<i>GO...</i>
<b>H</b>	#	<i>HA!</i>
<b>I</b>		<i>AYE.</i>
<b>J</b>	_ /	<i>J'AIME.</i>
<b>K</b>	<	<i>KRAP.</i>
<b>L</b>	/ _	<i>LOVE?</i>
<b>M</b>	``"	<i>MOVE.</i>
<b>N</b>	``"	<i>NO.</i>
<b>O</b>	( )	<i>OH?</i>
<b>P</b>	(>	<i>PLEASE.</i>
<b>Q</b>	?	<i>QUOI?</i>
<b>R</b>	/ > _	<i>ARR!</i>
<b>S</b>	_ / -	<i>SUPER.</i>
<b>T</b>	~	<i>TOO?</i>
<b>U</b>	\ /	<i>UGH.</i>
<b>V</b>	>	<i>VROOM!</i>
<b>W</b>	\ / \ /	<i>WHAT?</i>
<b>X</b>	> <	<i>EX.</i>
<b>Y</b>	> /	<i>WHY?</i>
<b>Z</b>	> _	<i>ZEBRA.</i>

## **An English Conversation in Vowel Sounds**

I, "Eh?"

You, "Ah! Eee!"

I, "Aye."

You, "Oh..."

I, "You?"

You, "Sometimes, why?"



“Kilimandjaro  
of tefi”  
or “Kilimandjaro  
of popp”



## Swing Set

Chained  
in their seats  
like links in a fence.

With a pull  
and with a push,  
toes sky bound, they commence.

Frightened fists,  
wrapped around rigid,  
the frigid chains tightly clenched.

Momentum increases  
with each catch, releases  
a fondness, a feeling; getting intense.

When the tip-top of their pendulum's reached,  
leaning a little they pop out  
of their seats.

For a few precious seconds they're floating free,  
then they land in the sand.  
"That's fun,"

they agree.

## **Duck Dreams**

Heads on backwards,  
beaks buried  
down deep.

A flotilla of fowl,  
lake pigeons,  
river sheep.

What kind of secrets  
do their waters  
keep?

Below the surface  
what predators  
creep?

Once in a while,  
one duck takes a  
peek.

And the rest?  
I can't tell,  
if they're awake  
or asleep.

For you the moon is hung tonight,  
bright ornament in star fed sky.  
A crescent smirk whose teeth are light,  
hungry smile shines glowing white.  
Desirous appetites concealed  
in phosphorescence are revealed.  
Feasting on our flesh with zeal,  
out of our love we make a meal.  
We bite and lick until night yawns;  
swallowed, digested by the dawn,  
in soft blue light regaling on.  
Morning rays having withdrawn  
in the sun's blazing afternoon,  
satiated, we sleep like spoons.



**p-t**

What if I am  
blessed  
with this curse  
of noticing?

What if I do  
guess  
at the t-th  
in everything?

What if I will  
rhyme  
beginnings  
with their ends?

What if I can  
find  
some b-ty  
now and then?

I still squirm each time  
a four letter word  
finishes the line,  
overheard, "He's a..."

## **Shhhhhh**

In this ocean of an eiderdown  
I tangle, roll, and nearly drown.  
Each empty night of wet unrest  
another salty sweat-stained test.  
Still I struggle to the shore,  
my vessel hesitantly moored.  
I shiver through the busy port  
stumbling with the strained effort.  
When the day's again been beat  
and shadows spread and cool the street,  
again retreat back to the bay  
and trust the softly swaying waves.  
This ocean of an eiderdown,  
this sea, seduces without sound.

## **Not Quite**

I walked into an empty room.  
Well, not quite empty.  
There was a table,  
several chairs;  
I leaned in the entrance.

I was alone.  
Well, not quite alone.  
Hundreds of others,  
maybe thousands;  
many long dead.

It was dark.  
Well, not quite dark.  
Dim hallway light behind,  
fluorescents flickering;  
my door-framed silhouette.

I stared for hours.  
Hours.  
The ghosts watching,  
spines lined on the far wall;  
a small tear in the painting of a city  
propped up on top of the shelves.

Feb. 2

O - NO!

O - PLEASE!

O - STOP DRAWING!

O - YOU  
BASTARD!

O - YOU  
HAVE  
CURSED  
MY EXISTENCE!

222

2006

MODERN CANADIAN POETRY



## **Development**

Satisfaction, delayed  
gratification, lost;  
importance of  
each shutter snap

capturing.

A picture is worth a thousand words  
no longer.  
Five-hundred,  
maybe. Less.

An image:

In a flash  
people slip helpless,  
carmine glow,  
breath chemical polish.

Invaluable.

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D

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F

G

H

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Dudley had seen her first. Almost two years earlier on the crew's initial anchorage in the port (they'd sustained substantial damage after floating carelessly into a depth charge dropped minutes prior by a friendly Destroyer). This shady, smoky bar was a convenient port side place for the seamen to drown their embarrassment in as the hull was repaired and repainted. The memory punctured Simon's mind like a harpoon. He'd been in the head at the time.

The voice had swept in from the bar above a melancholy piano melody and the soft rattling of a snare. Emerging quickly from his stall to investigate, he'd felt his eyes open widely as he stared up at the siren. Dressed in a slim black satin dress with a tasteful slit and matching elbow-length gloves and stockings, she'd crooned a familiar tune softly, *You Always Hurt the One You Love*,

*"You always hurt the one you love  
The one you shouldn't hurt at all  
You always take the sweetest rose  
And crush it till the petals fall  
You always break the kindest heart  
With a hasty word you can't recall  
So If I broke your heart last night  
It's because I love you most of all,"*

The clink of Dudley's next beer arriving snapped Simon out of his daydream.

"Do you know what time she goes on at?" Simon asked, not taking his eyes off the stage. Dudley shrugged and dove back into his beverage. Simon said nothing and began to squeeze his way towards the restroom through the growing crowd, hoping to avoid any potential interruptions mid-performance. Half way there he heard the intercom crackle to life and announce her. He felt his pulse increase.

The curtain flung open and the band launched in to an erratic up-tempo bebop. She was center-stage. She removed the mic from its stand and swung its black cord like a lasso. She looked back at the band, precisely pronouncing and projecting the lyrics into the mic. Tonight she wore a thick grey wool sweater, a knee-length black skirt, dark stockings, and simple black slippers.

The song closed with the crash of a symbol and the audience echoed the instrument with heavy applause. Those that weren't already standing sprung to their feet. Simon struggled to keep his balance among the shoulder to shoulder crowd.

"Thank you," She spoke into the microphone, the cheering still loud enough to drown out her words. She blushed, and started again when the applause petered out, "this next tune is one I wrote, and, well, I hope you like it." The lights over the band dimmed, and a spotlight enshrouded her as she approached the front of the stage and returned the microphone to its cradle.

She cleared her throat, and a hush fell over the crowd. She closed her eyes as the drummer began a steady 4/4 beat. She inhaled, and opened her mouth to sing.

L O  
V E

The

space same  
and time, as that,  
inches between  
or infinite spokes of  
between a wheel  
two pairs smoothly  
of lips, spinning,

holy.

## **A First Kiss**

Cottages scattered throughout  
a large, green, walled resort  
in the south west US.

A young boy  
and a young girl,  
run their experiments.

Retreating after  
hours of play  
to a nearby barn loft.

They sit close,  
closer, lie down.  
The hay is soft.

They talk and joke  
and laugh away,  
seek to whittle hours.

Some truth is shared,  
the girl dares  
to use her girl power.

"I dare you to kiss me,  
for thirty seconds,  
time it, okay?"

The boy, scared, says  
nothing, but his lips  
don't hesitate.

Quivering slightly,  
leaning in close, both  
keep their eyes closed.

Then they touch, skin  
on skin, two virgin  
mouths, connected.

The girl yells, "Ew!  
You stuck out your tongue!"  
The boy thought it was expected.

**Fuck, the Universe**

Seep inside  
a deep black void.

Avoiding sleep  
a pregnant mind,  
conceives the future:

Here it comes.

## **Messengers**

I see shadows disappearing under  
trees, behind buildings, homes.  
Balancing on windowsills  
or back and forth on wires, roam.

And still it's stuck, the image  
when they pass by overhead:  
A girl walking along, the ground  
beneath bent to her head.

I wonder what she's thinking,  
I try to imagine why.  
She gazes so intently at  
the earth, horizon, sky.

## **Vine**

Wet  
earth  
root  
warm  
shine  
greens  
leaves  
fruit,  
wine.

Your absence like an open wound  
stabs soul-ward when you leave the room.  
Look at it before and after  
you come conquering disaster.  
Leave, I'm cut, fevered, bleeding there.  
Return and stitch me with your stare.  
Your sight heals, voice like medicine  
nurses my injured condition.  
Prescribe a bedroom for our rest  
administer your love, your blessed,  
your wholly miraculous cure  
undiluted, perfect, pure.  
Stay and bandage me for ever,  
say we will be separate never.

## **Full Speed Ahead**

When she ignores every air  
I taint with her name,  
but keeps showing up,  
I start to wonder.

When she whisks by, standing  
so quickly, gears turning, the moon  
steering straight and sure and steady,  
spokes spinning into something solid,

it's hard to think anything.  
Except poetry.

## **Hairy**

Her hair is, "Such a mess."

Sitting on the stairs, a step below me,  
bare shoulders between my lap,  
she leans back  
and floods my fingers  
with an ocean of silky strands.

Tiny tricky little knots  
snag my digits as they dive in  
and begin to pull.  
I'm trying not to cause her pain,  
prying patiently apart.

It's, "Such a mess." Her hair.



## **Schoolgirl**

Schoolgirl.  
Stereotype.  
Skirt, whispering in wind.  
Socks, stretched sanguine up supple shins.  
Spurious succubus. Thirsty for sin.  
Sly smirk stolen in reflection.  
She walking silent. I?  
Sporting a grin.  
Schoolgirl.

## **Lukewarm**

Café coffee cooling,  
creamy contents steaming,  
wobbly table teetering,  
don't let that cup spill.

Drink and drain the dwindling  
desperate drops remaining.  
A see-through semblance waning  
in the chalice still.

A potent pot's been brewing,  
boiling beans bath, water stewing.  
A beauty barks renewing  
her offer for refill.

Heart now beating, racing.  
Stomach churning, chasing.  
Tongue, scalding, replacing  
taste buds burnt; words killed.

## Dates

They're sweet.

Sumptuous.

Sometimes they're even sexy,  
though sticky fingers  
and a pile of purposeless pits  
require a rare combination of circumstance  
to deserve that lush label.

They're delicious.

Delicate.

Often a delicacy,  
though they're easier  
to locate lately, and true, it  
takes a troublesome toll on ripened fruit's romance,  
being so available.

They're fabulous.

Flavoursome.

Almost always fun for me,  
though one point lingers.  
Even the firmest, freshest few  
simply will not do as a complete meal, no chance.  
These dates don't make me feel full.

## **Eyebrows**

Is there any body part  
more powerful than  
the eyebrow?

"I can think of one or two," she said.

Is there any truth  
more blatant than  
the wiry clench of a jaw?

"Why so quiet?" She continued.

Is there any lie  
more profane than  
an exasperated sigh?

She finished, "Do you want to stay over?"

Yes.

## **Tied**

A cool late October evening,  
kneeling on the sidewalk.  
Outside the red roofed bar;  
horizon pink, purple, orange glow.

Calf cradled, bowing to  
loose laces slithering up shins.  
Bonds of black high healed boots  
introduced to holes, pulled tight.

Long strings slide through, cross, climb.  
Wound around ankles, carefully knotted  
double bows at the mouths. Tongues held firm.  
The top of the bottom of your costume.

Leather, though mostly skin.  
Right off the cover of a magazine.  
Street lamp shining, blue night grins.  
My eyes tethered, attached, reeled in.

## **love song**

maybe I am a robot  
maybe I am not a man  
maybe I have been programmed  
maybe my frequency's jammed  
you, my love, are a hacker  
you, my love, are a phreak  
you, my love, ask the questions  
you, my love, mute my speech  
what if I am just a map?  
what if I am not a man?  
what if I have uncharted land?  
what if my legend's unplanned?

you, my love, are a statue  
you, my love, are a gun  
you, my love, I can't catch you  
you, my love, do not run  
you, my love, are a temptress  
you, my love, are like wine  
you, my love, you undress me  
you, my love, are so fine

perhaps I am an ostrich  
perhaps I am not a man  
perhaps I have done what I can  
perhaps my head's in the sand  
you, my love, are a leader  
you, my love, are a coach  
you, my love, are a teacher  
you, my love, I love most  
could be I am a fish  
could be I am not a man  
could be I'm too drunk to stand  
could be my wish, your hand

you, my love, are unequaled  
you, my love, are my love  
you, my love, are an eagle  
you, my love, are a dove  
you, my love, are an abbess  
you, my love, are divine  
you, my love, are a goddess  
you, my love, are not mine

## **The Willing Mister**

*based on The Willing Mistress by Aphra Behn*

Candy led me from the club  
    to a private dressing room.  
Safe from the thumping base above  
    persuaded by her perfume.  
Secluded from all cameras, spies,  
    our fears each kept to our selves.  
The muted music stroked our thighs,  
    sound pounded walls; rose and fell.

Inside we lay down on the couch  
    stripped each other, undressed.  
A thousand licks and kisses coached,  
    revealed desire, and confessed.  
She groped, fondled and rubbed backstage,  
    and I returned the same.  
Which made me willing to behave  
    a certain way, I might say.

Her looks charmed, bewitched, and revealed  
    a most hardening intent.  
Membership appeal unconcealed,  
    she was begged not to relent.  
She grasped, tongued, kissed, and straddled me,  
    groaned, gasped, exclaimed, expressed:  
And when done we got up to leave;  
    we had sex that's all, no rest.

JU  
PACK  
DIAPER

CUPID WORKS FROM HOME

WHAT?  
SOFT  
FROM  
HOME  
Now.

## Internet Pornography

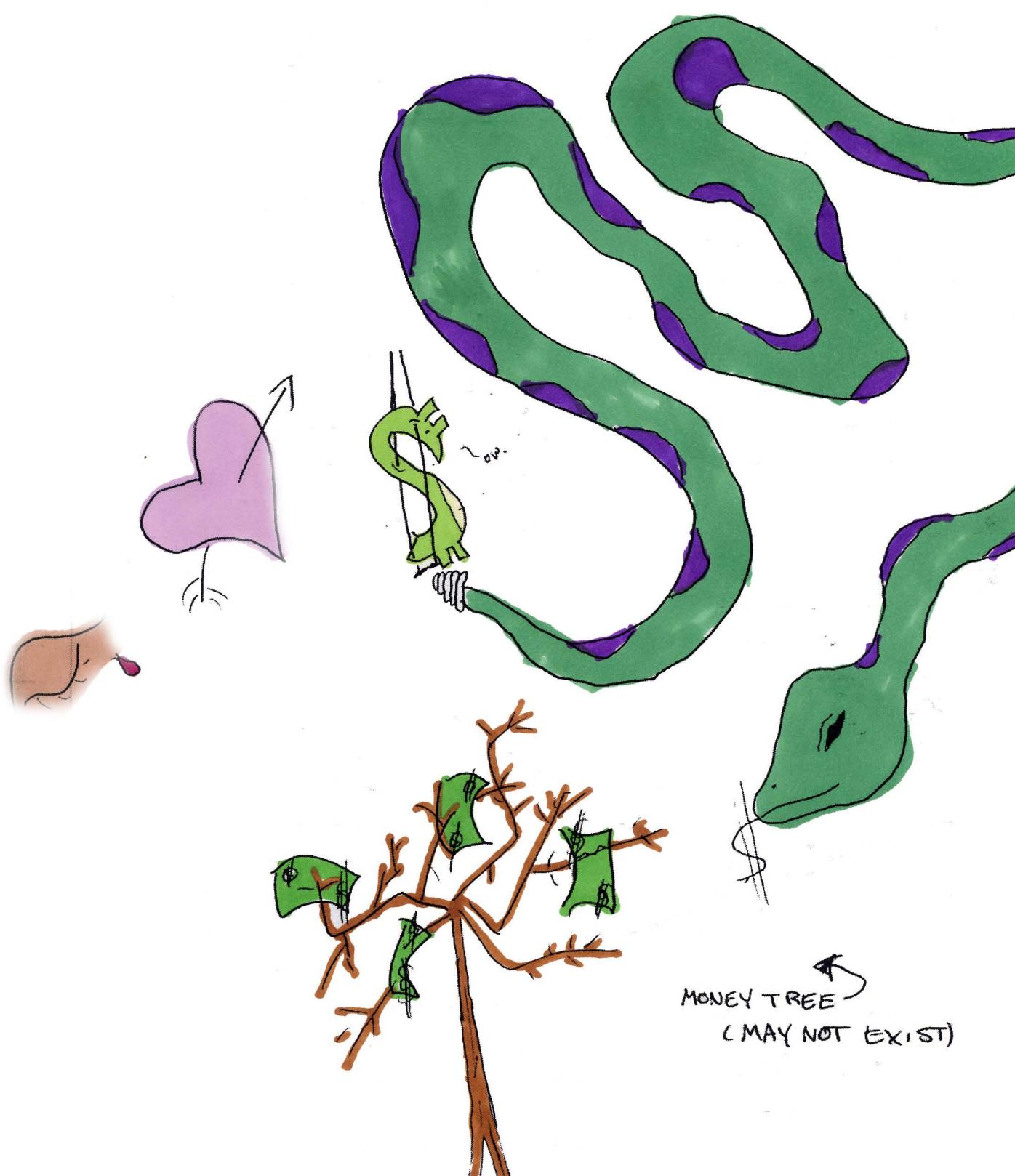
Who is it likely to displease?  
Who will say, "Cultural Disease."?  
Who will say, "Entertain me, please."?  
Who will say, "Who does it help feed?"?

It's not new, or less expensive,  
it is more Amateurish.  
No Steadicams or scripted plans,  
some get hurt and or get rich.

The culture of the world,  
not just sex, but everything  
is rapidly converging, mixing,  
sampling; is that a good thing?

A homogeneous mass,  
same airwaves shore to shore.  
Same stars, the same scandals,  
the same atrocities abhorred.

The Age we live in now,  
who knows how it came to be?  
Sex, ads, sold and bought,  
well what's not pornography?



MONEY TREE  
(MAY NOT EXIST)

## **A Cold One**

She's cool  
and the hue  
of her skin  
shines  
like diamonds,  
but softer.

I offer  
a hand and  
as we touch  
the  
moisture  
transfers.

My thumb  
slides shyly,  
peels back  
her dress.

I reach  
for her neck  
and begin  
my caress.

I'm distressed  
when I waste  
a wet  
foamy mess.

She's shaken  
and empty,  
and quite  
unimpressed.

## **Baggage Claim**

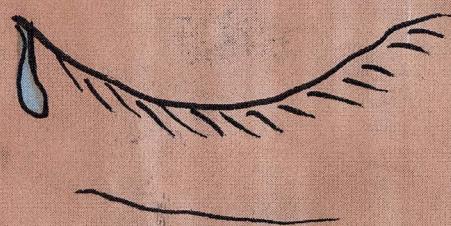
They've all got bags,  
slung boldly on a shoulder  
or burdening a back.

Pouches packed with  
subtle secrets or blatantly  
borne like pink knapsacks.

Torn when loads become  
too heavy, fabric worn  
tears, rips and cracks.

I try to keep  
my own case light;  
enough to carry on.

BLIND



TON

IN

G

IVE

## **shock**

just now pop-sparkle pretty  
mild jolt a life dancing  
blue white spark winking  
gone

a dry room switch flipped  
light flooding the cracks  
zapped into remembering  
i meant to write this poem

bed cold empty  
a tundra abandoned  
on fire with lust  
desire love lost

hair on forearms neck  
electric city noise  
outside hushed behind  
static, quiet, wish, miss, you

[blank page]

"Aren't you a bit warm in that shweater?" Someone yelled. Several sailors laughed and whistled in response. Simon felt an embarrassed anger flush his face. Dudley's slur was unmistakable. She closed her mouth, and turned to face her drummer, slicing an open palm through the air in front of her neck as she did so. The rhythm petered out, off time.

"Come on Honey! Give us a peak at least! We aren't all here for your voice, you know!" More raucous guffaws from the rowdier members of the crowd, some peppering the rapidly intensifying sense of tension in the room with their own rude requests for the removal of clothing. Simon's nostrils flared. He felt his face flush, more out of anger at himself for not acting than anger at Dudley and the crowd's spoiling of the show. He started pushing his way roughly towards the fire exit. He winced as he heard the calm in her voice falter behind him,

"Easy fellas, let's just...enjoy the music, okay?"

"But-thersh's-sho mush more of you to enjoy, dollfacshe!" Dudley didn't miss a beat in responding. The laughter in the bar chorused cruelly; whether at the increasing unintelligibility of Dudley's words or the singer's discomfort, Simon wasn't sure. He arrived in front of the door he'd come in from and looked up at the glowing red sign's stencilled letters. The word offering to extinguish the tears already burning the corners of his eyes.

"Look guys, I'm here to sing for you, not to—"

"Show ush your titsh!" Dudley screamed. Simon whipped his neck towards the area of the bar where Dudley was standing, surrounded by a group of sailors, gesticulating offensively. He looked towards the stage and witnessed her staring red-faced at the floor. This image so pained him that he lost his balance, taking a step backwards to regain it. Suddenly, he felt the sharp corner of something dig into the skin on his elbow. A metal cabinet, fire hose housed in neat folds behind a glass pane. He rubbed his wound, and looked back at the stage where she and the band seemed to be discussing whether or not to continue the show.

"Take it off! Take it off!" Dudley began to chant, her face smoldering a deeper shade of red with every repetition of the taunt. Other sailors joined in. Simon swung his fist backwards, the anger boiling out of him, and shattered the pane of glass housing the hose. The broken glass lacerated his hand in several places; his blood dripped onto the cabinet, the hose, the floor. He grabbed the nozzle, and began to make his way again towards the stage, the stained hose unraveling behind him.

The chants echoed aggressively, more voices joining in, and the band put their instruments down, stood, and one by one stepped down from the platform. Tears started down her face but she stubbornly refused to budge, staring at the floor, crying.

"Out of the way," Simon hurried his push, "move dammit, out of my way." Finally, he stood directly below her. The taunts continued. She seemed confused, frightened, but determined to stay put. Simon braced his free arm against the stage and leaped up beside her, breaking her trance. She backed away from the microphone. He smiled at her, and she smiled feebly in return, wiping her eyes.

"Dudley!" Simon yelled, focusing his stare on where the buffoon continued to chant and act out his own lude desires. The amplified name rang above the chanting, stopping it. Dudley looked up towards the stage, a wave of confusion washing over his face as he saw his shipmate standing there.

"Simon?" Dudley mouthed noiselessly as Simon raised and aimed the nozzle of the hose.

"Fuck, you!" Reverberated around the bar as he pulled the release on the nozzle. A high pressure stream of freezing water shot from the stage, soaking many innocent and not so innocent bystanders, but landing squarely on Dudley's torso. His muffled pleas for mercy were drowned in the three inch thick blast. Simon trained the stream lower, on Dudley's gut, slowly loosening the tenuous grasp on the bar that kept him upright.

Dudley's hold gave way, and he slid quickly backwards along the floor towards the fire exit. Simon stepped down off the stage, careful to keep his aim true, and backed Dudley towards the door. Finally the door swung open from the pressure and Dudley was pushed out into the alley, waving his hands in front of him in a futile attempt to ward off the water. Simon turned off the nozzle, spit outside, slammed the door.

When he turned away from the exit, everyone was staring at him, not making a sound. After a moment the bartender came out from behind the bar, took the nozzle out of Simon's hand and nodded as he began to coil the hose around his own short broad frame. Simon wasn't sure whether or not it was a nod of approval.

TRA  
GED  
Y

Fingers flash in frantic frenzies.  
Digits shoot and stab the air.  
Keys explode, note, press entry.  
Bodies, minds: sad, mad, scared.

BOOM

## **Charge**

The rich are a junkie  
and he's stealing from the poor.  
His oily habit's rainbows leak,  
and he always wants some more.

The pipes are full around the world,  
they're pumping through the veins.  
The poor old lungs and skin and bones  
are spinning down the drains.

It might take a flood to wash,  
to clean all the regrets.  
Who knows how long the water falls,  
how clean the junkie gets?

Depends on the profits  
that the pusher can squeeze out.  
He's not going to stop,  
doesn't want to go without.

## **The Ice**

It's melting, yes, it's melting fast.  
It's melting awfully quick.  
Where it does still exist, the last  
bit's not particularly

thick. It is getting warmer,  
afraid, I'm not sure why.  
It could be our polluted guts;  
solar winds and clear skies?

However at the end of day  
we might want to keep in mind  
(no matter, politicians say  
it's melting) is how we're going

to find time, if we can  
be bothered, actually make change.  
A solution? I don't know but  
maybe if we rearrange

our habits, fuel: our  
guilty memories, the flames  
burning less dirty than  
they might otherwise be.

What new stories will be told  
or would the race simply rather  
drown like rats abandoning ship,  
feeble squeaking, scuffling and sink

to the bottom of that undiscovered  
country where our numbers suddenly shrink.  
Planet on loan, a skating rink,  
and Spring here sooner than we think.

### **Ad Nauseum**

Shivers and shakes  
from any narcotic lack  
feign in comparison  
to the wracked  
nerves deprived  
another good hit of new.

Quick, please God, sell me something.



## Westmount<sup>2</sup>

At home but not at ease here,  
that's how it's always seemed.  
Can't quite call it comfort,  
more like familiarity.

Worry almost constantly  
about who and how to please,  
Certainly at home here,  
but quite rarely at ease.

A tunnel that connects it  
underground at the east end.  
The other end an avenue  
lined with green where locals spend

time. Worn men in tailored suits  
with new car keys in hand  
leer at those unfortunates,  
whose wardrobe's less well planned.

From avenue rich youth descends  
strolling nonchalantly by.  
Each decked out in their fashion,  
designer's names help blind their eyes.

The workers act politely  
and it's quite common to hear,  
"Merci Madame," or, "Bon journée,"  
but it's not always sincere.

At the end of the long tunnel  
the metro cars rattle and rumble,  
on the ground outside the entrance  
a waking hobo loudly grumbles.

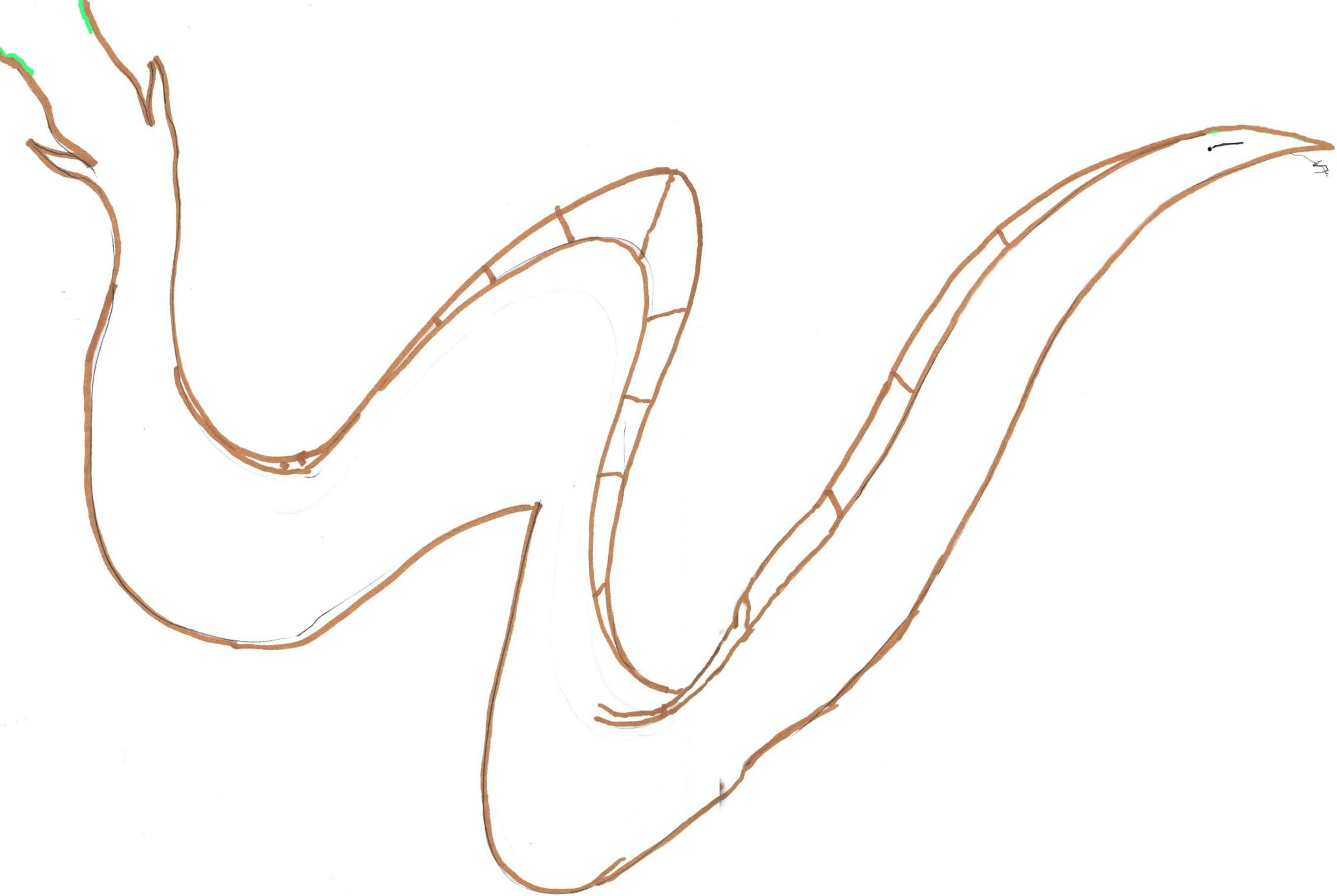
He voices his objection  
to passing pocket change's jangle.  
He can't get through the tunnel,  
cameras cover all the angles.

Halfway down the tunnel  
between the basement and the stairs,  
an infinity of mirrors  
into which I stop and stare.

Reflections flash forever  
glaring from behind the panes.  
I'm considering my fortune,  
my losses and my gains.

At home but not at ease here,  
that's how it's always been.  
Can't quite call it comfort,  
but it's familiar to me.

Worry almost constantly  
about who and how to please.  
Certainly at home here.  
Quite rarely at ease.



## **Lettre a Montréal/Letter to Montreal**

Montreal, QC

13/02/2008

18:14

Allo,

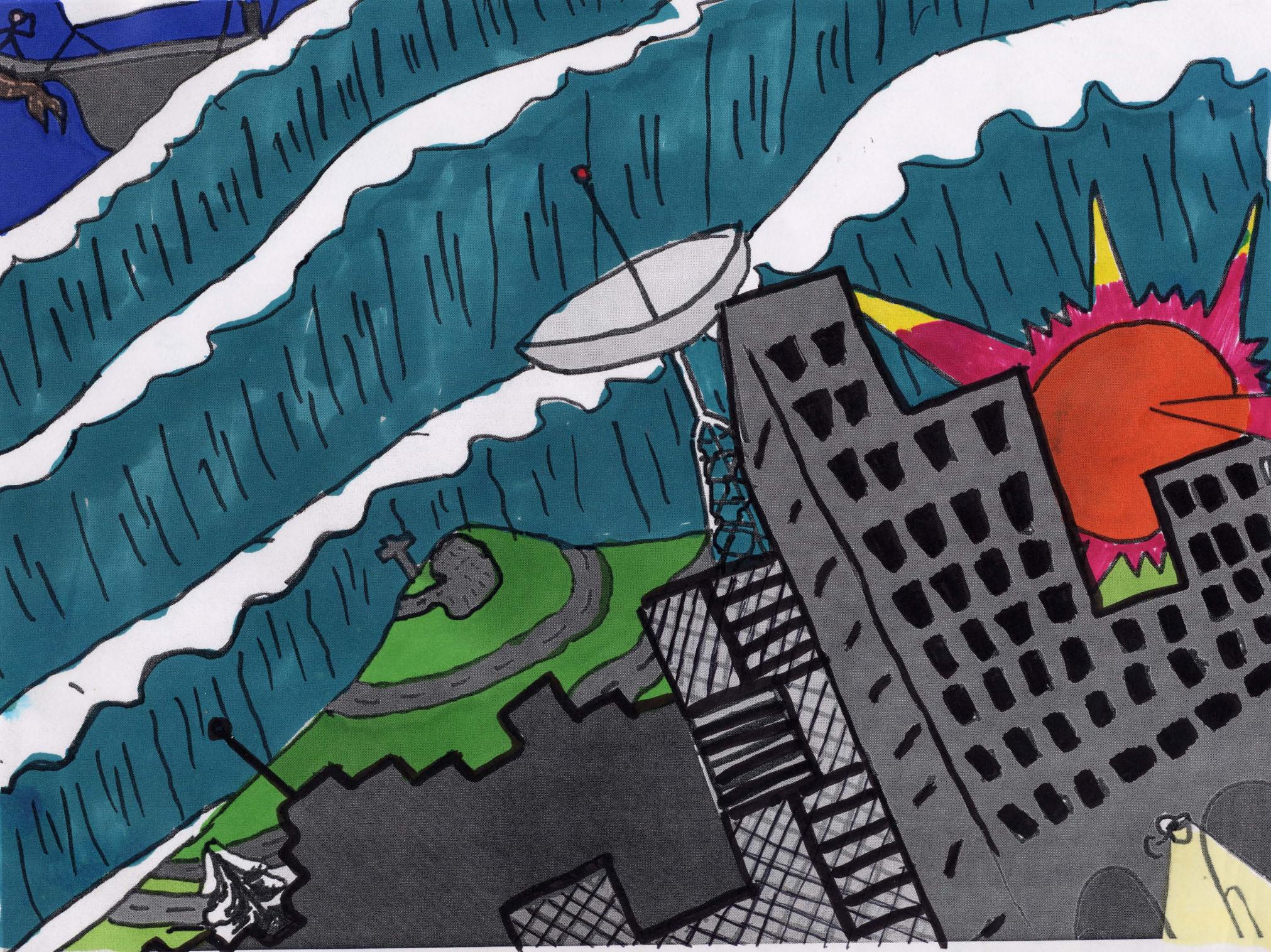
A vous,  
qui lire ca maitenent.  
Qui peux voir qu'est ce que  
je dit, mais j'avais aucun idee  
comment. Qui connais la  
difference entre l'ecran et le bois.  
Croir qu'est ce que tu veux, ca me derrange pas.  
Etre quoi que tu pense les autres souhait pour toi.  
Allez, trouver des themes, les sujets, le sens.

Hello,

To you,  
who is reading this now.  
Who can see what I mean,  
though I do not know how.  
Who can read in between the  
page and the screen, believe  
what you want, does not concern me.  
Be what you think that you're wanted to be.  
Conceive conceits, core concerns, themes and meanings.

A bientot, yours,

Free Bye Gratuit Aurevoir



## The Snail's Dark Secret

Sudden gale,  
desperate pail,  
"Bail, damn you!  
Bail!  
Bail!"

Forgot to raise  
the forward sail,  
suddenly swept  
a thunderous  
hail.

The ship sank swiftly,  
planks and crew devoured,  
the Captain acting like  
a frightful  
coward.

A snail stuck to a broken board,  
and for weeks on end oceans  
explored, until of course,  
he became quite  
bored.

The rest drowned or worse but all lost to the deep.  
The snail's dark secret, on some distant shore to keep.  
He knew the storm was coming, he just could not  
bring his sorry slimy snail-shell self  
to bear, to speak.

### 3

You monopolize my thoughts, love,  
corner markets, trade currency.  
Capitalize, compete, push, shove,  
take over me quite hostilely.  
Your portfolio, assets, strong;  
wield business prowess mightily.  
You buy out my shares before long,  
have me declaring bankruptcy.  
We have merged, you've acquired my love,  
bull or bear amongst our sheets.  
You've bought below and sold above,  
prudently kept your receipts.  
Without you my balance lacks;  
my bottom line is red, your's black.

**Sorry**

ker

smash

crash

glass

scatter ed

slow

motion

mistake

frag

ments

spinning

transparent

opaque

## **Fly Trap**

Translucent  
wings struggle  
to the edge  
of the small  
spilled puddle  
of lager  
near my glass,  
then they stop.

My next sip  
is smaller.

## **Installments**

Arranged carefully,  
packed tight.  
Like soldiers in cells.  
Twenty, or twenty-five  
to a company.

Sloshing sloppy,  
to and fro and to.  
Like tempest tides.  
Ebbing and flowing on beaches  
thronged with drunken gods.

Lucky iron shoes,  
tearing pristine green felt.  
Like maintenance too sharp.  
Flinging fortunes  
from their heels.

An impression,  
dented with regret.  
Like an unmade bed.  
The still warm mattress  
exhibiting betrayal.

## **A Stray**

Unattended  
burns, decays.

Stub holds past  
edge of tray.

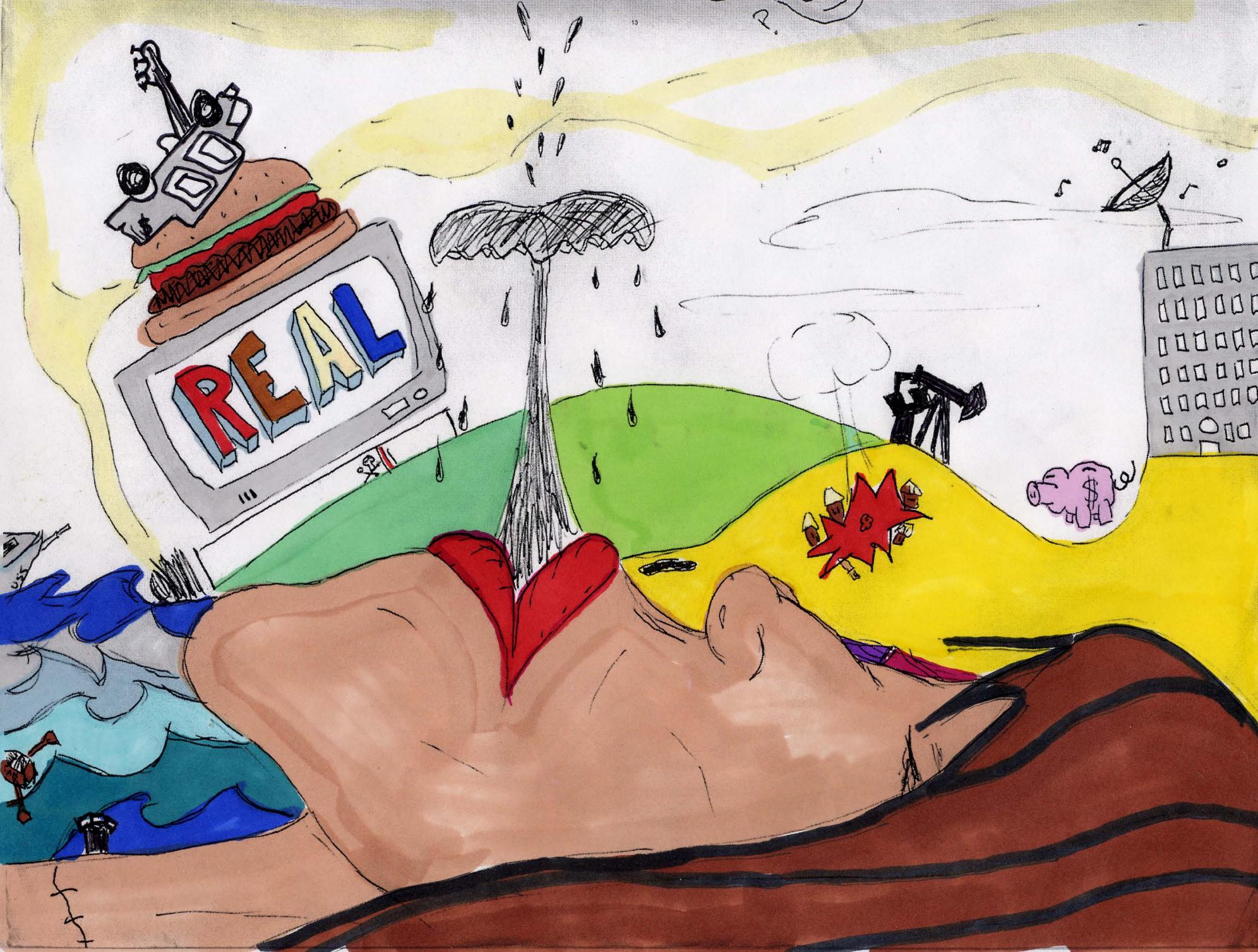
Clumsy reach,  
ashes sprayed.

Glows a moment,  
fades away.

### **Bird's Eye View**

Up there in  
the warm wet  
air whistling  
alone with  
or without  
cares sharing

the sky with  
no one, no,  
though, many  
watch without  
its knowledge  
from below.



## **Pump**

It does not know  
when midnight comes,  
does not fear the dawn.  
Does not lose sleep.  
It does not weep.  
It stubbornly yawns on.

Pumps bored, and stern,  
pumps sure and steady,  
even, not equal, pumps.  
While the surface bruises,  
it dishes out its lumps.

It pumps, it pumps, it steals.  
It does not give a damn.  
Blood runs in the fields  
of this or another land.  
That is all it knows how to do.  
It has no master plan.

It pumps and bumps  
and it abuses,  
truly hurts the earth.  
All that it is concerned with  
is who put it there first.

All it has are its instructions,  
it cannot think for itself.  
Only a tool, a weapon  
wielded by those with wealth.  
It's not worth fighting over.  
It's not worth killing for.

Eventually that won't matter.  
Fairly soon, when there's no more.  
What excuse for murder next?  
What borders bathed in gore?  
Self-defence? What intruders?

I see looters, polluters, more.  
Those who bend the rules,  
or make them, call  
the others fools. Those  
unafraid to, "Pave the way!"  
are too afraid to give away.

What is it to give up something?  
What is it to refuse?  
What is it to accuse someone?  
What is it to prove?  
What evidence admissible?

Dismissable, what clues?  
Who will be left with nothing?  
Who will still have their bank accounts?  
Who will still have their investments insured.  
Who will still have their health?

## **Canary**

Somewhere deep  
the feelers slither,  
snaking out from under the fog  
that obscures the face of that beast, imagination.

They pilfer, pillage, poke, prod, pry  
and plunge  
into every nook, each dusty shaft  
the voices (Oh God, the voices...the voice),  
echoing out or creeping like gas,  
beckon(s) from.

The thousand dead ends of useless rock  
for every finger nail of ore.  
The other monsters in the way,  
from far above, a foreman's, "More!"

They cradle, clamber, crawl, creep, climb  
and catch  
another victim hooked, but not the last  
of course (its appetite grotesquely vast);  
a vein behind fresh smudge of blood.  
Three tiny yellow feathers drifting in the dark.

## **Marks**

There are two opposing strategies in contemporary marketing.

The Rifle Approach:

Pick your targets.

Ready?

Good.

Aim...fire!

or

The Shotgun Approach:

Fill both those fucking barrels with buckshot.

Ensure maximum spread.

You'll hit something...

eventually.

Isn't it odd that both methods involve shooting the customers?

## **The Criminal Element**

It's not the dealers nor the dice men  
nor the management to blame.

It's not the shysters nor the heisters  
nor the ones that have no name.

It's not the cards nor odds, the, "oohs," nor, "awes,"  
not the shuffler's shifty shame.

It's part my fault, but mostly not;  
just how the game is played.

I am the criminal element  
and its creeping bad intent.

I am the sore on every soul,  
latent then malignant.

I am the end and the beginning  
and the every and the now.

I'd tell you what I do, but,  
well, it's not allowed.



## Databases

They do know where you live  
if you had a package sent.  
They do know where you work  
if your paycheque pays the rent.  
They do know who your friends are  
because they go to the same bars.  
They do know what you've spent  
because of purchases you've charged.  
They've learned an awful lot about us,  
because of surveys they took.  
They know an awful lot about us,  
and they keep it, in their books.

DOES NOT COUNT AS FREEDOM

Serpent!

Your cage has no borders,  
and your slippery vanity  
has no merit.

Are you so proud of your curves  
that you would choose  
this imprisoning fate?



## **the line**

the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before

the line is one that feels so good  
in matchbook bags it hides its moods  
in rolled up bills and mirrored fools  
the line is one that feels so good

the line is lined with smiling faces  
filling magazine shelf spaces  
celebrating stars and chasers  
the line is lined with frowning faces

the line is stretched around the block  
and waiting times? well, check your clock  
and waiting times? hell, don't wait up  
the line is stretched around the block

the line is one that should be true  
this overwhelms all other cues  
might be true that this line's false too  
the line is one that could be true

the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before

the line is one that has been drawn  
by nervous hands that mask the yawns  
broken at the break of dawn  
the line is one that has been drawn

the line is one that can't be budged  
in sand or mud or crayon smudge  
its mud and sand define the grudge  
the line is one that can't be budged

the line is one that has been crossed  
before now is the price it's cost  
again, before is what's been lost  
the line is one that has been crossed

the line is one that's being reeled in  
the surface breaks, reveals shark fins  
their owners angered by hooks within  
the line is one that's very thin

the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one you've heard before  
the line is one line, are you bored?  
the line is one you've heard before



[blank page]

The water was mopped up, the band resumed their places, and the show went on. Simon sat at a table and let her voice hypnotize him. He tried to make eye contact with her several times, but one or the other of them always quickly diverted their gaze. Eventually he gave up and settled his stare on the single candle on the table in front of him; he lost himself in her voice. So entrancing was her singing that even after the set was completed he didn't notice her step off the stage and approach his table.

"Hi," she said plainly. Simon rocketed out of his seat, banging his head hard on the lamp hanging over his table as he did so.

"Ow," was all he could muster. She laughed kindly,

"Listen...I just wanted to thank you. So thank you, for what you did."

"It was nothing."

"It was something." There was a long pause before she resumed the conversation,

"You're wounded," she added, indicting the cuts on his hands bandaged sloppily with napkins, "let's go get you fixed up," she finished. She put her hands on his shoulders and quickly ushered him out through the front door. Standing outside, she kept one hand on his shoulder as she circled to his front.

"Let's get a look at you," she said, taking both his hands in hers softly and turning them palm up as she pulled off the napkins.

"I'm—" Simon started, still dazed.

"Still bleeding," she finished for him, "these cuts are pretty deep." Simon looked down at his hands, amazed to find them being held by the woman who had been the object of his fantasy for years.

"I—"

"Don't worry," she interrupted again, "my place isn't far. I've got some first aid stuff there, we'll have you patched up in no time."

She placed her hand on his shoulder again as they walked slowly along the beach. The moon was bright enough to see the reflection of the stars shift into the sand under the tide as it swept out to sea. She turned them off the beach onto a narrow cobblestone road, and after a moment stopped in front of a modest duplex.

"This is it," she said, taking her hand from his shoulder. She pulled a key from her pocket and fiddled with it until the cylinder of the lock gave way. "What's your name, anyway?" she asked quickly after an awkward silence.

"Simon. Yours?"

"Olive." They shook hands, didn't let go right away when the shake was over.

"Well Simon, thanks again. I'll be right out with some stuff."

They made eye contact for a second and then looked quickly away, not laughing, but smiling and exhaling at the same time. They both stood still until their eyes connected again. This time the gaze held.

"Unless," Olive swung her arms towards the door, "would you like to come in?" Simon beamed.

H O P E

beyond      beyond  
reason      rhyme  
beyond      beyond  
space      time

beyond      beyond  
always      never  
beyond      beyond  
ahead      behind



## **Escape**

A small bird  
brown and gray  
size of a  
child's closed hand  
stuck under  
the mesh weave  
wrapped around  
the new pond  
in the yard  
meant to catch,  
to capture  
falling leaves,  
leaves fall in  
still, get wet.

A young man  
quite dismayed  
to see the  
cage restrict  
another  
wonders if  
pocket blade  
is the thing  
to free the  
scared singer.

Quickly it  
unfolds, sharp,  
and tears through  
woven thread.  
The small bird  
flutters, flaps.  
It's still stuck.  
The young man  
whispers, clucks,  
but still: trapped.

And that's when  
the other  
open end  
gets found out;  
the bird freed.  
The young man  
now alone  
holding an  
empty net.

## I

I'm in the dark,  
without light.  
Nervous, shaking,  
filled with fright.

I am not blind,  
but cannot see  
that which is right  
in front of me.

I cannot know  
what I'm not told.  
I'm skeptical of  
all I'm shown.

I don't believe,  
I do consider.  
I can't explain,  
won't judge either.

I watch, and what  
unfolds, unfolds.  
I watch, and what  
is folded, folds.

Wonder what's been,  
what will be told.  
What will be bought.  
What will be sold.

I won't predict,  
I might change.  
I'll just watch,  
what stays the same?

I'm in the light,  
without shade.  
I still can't see.  
I'm still afraid.

## **Hello Stranger**

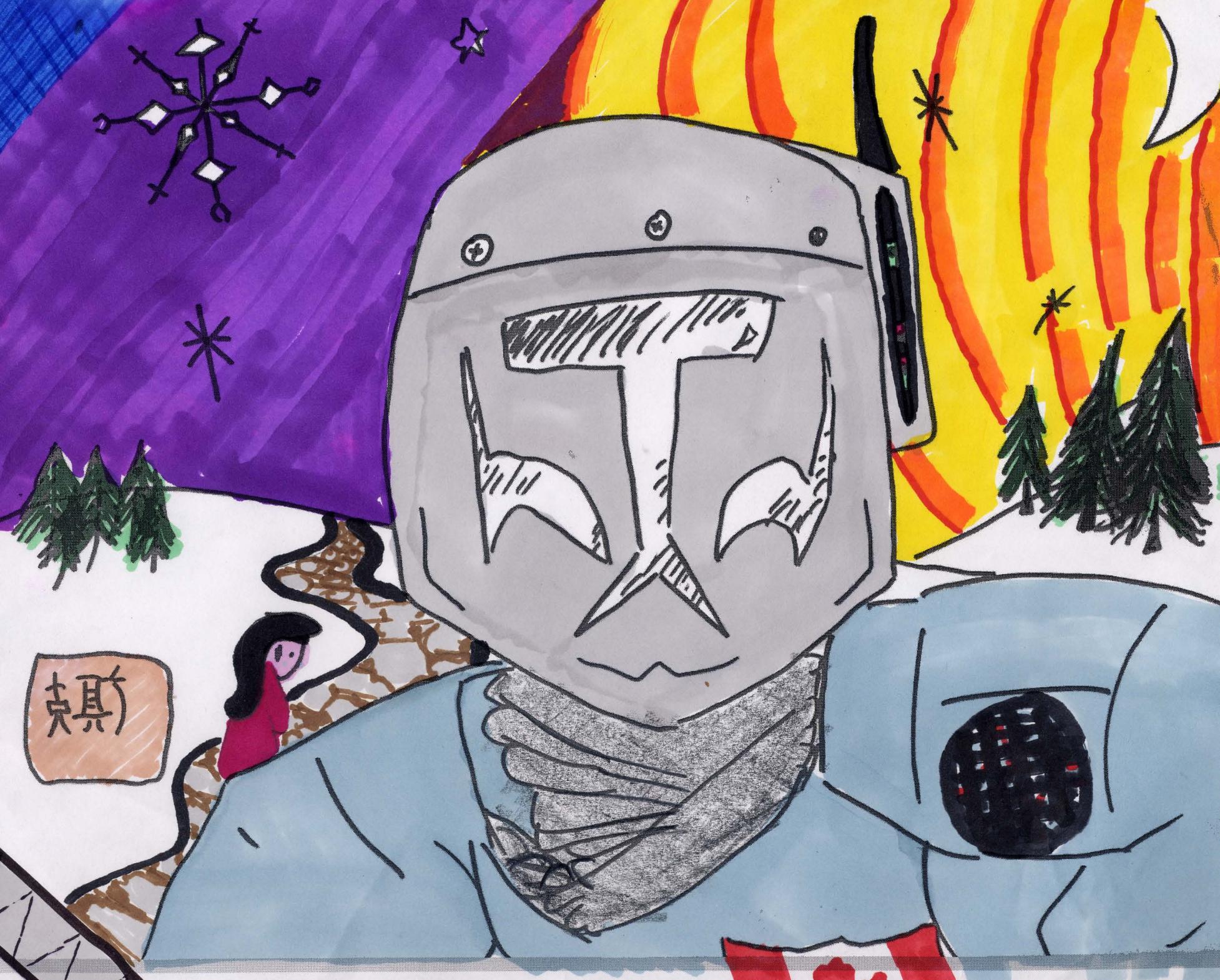
Each time more  
than the next  
as you pass.

Gracefully  
drifting by,  
I wonder.

How can we  
come to be  
together?

How can we  
be brave, speak,  
say hello.

Beautiful,  
we could be  
anybody.



棋

You're my favourite addiction,  
on your substance I'm dependent.  
You're my best desired affliction,  
won't relent despite repentance.  
You're a habit I can't break,  
the will required too massive.  
You're an obsession growing great,  
active fixation, not passive.  
You're my passion most hung-up on,  
I shake, jonesing when you're not here.  
You're my craving, wanting, longing,  
you quitting me is my worst fear.  
You're the most preferred tendency  
of this sad heart-sick love-junkie.

## **Fishermen**

Fishermen  
are teaching me to fish.  
On boats and on  
the shore side,  
how to cast a line  
and reach.

Waiting for a nibble,  
the hardest lesson breached.  
On cold spring days  
in light grey rain.  
Rubber boots.  
A pebbly beach.

Walking home, between us  
the cooler  
lightly swung.  
We smiled at  
the catch that day;  
that the ocean had won.



## **Five Questions, Zero Answers**

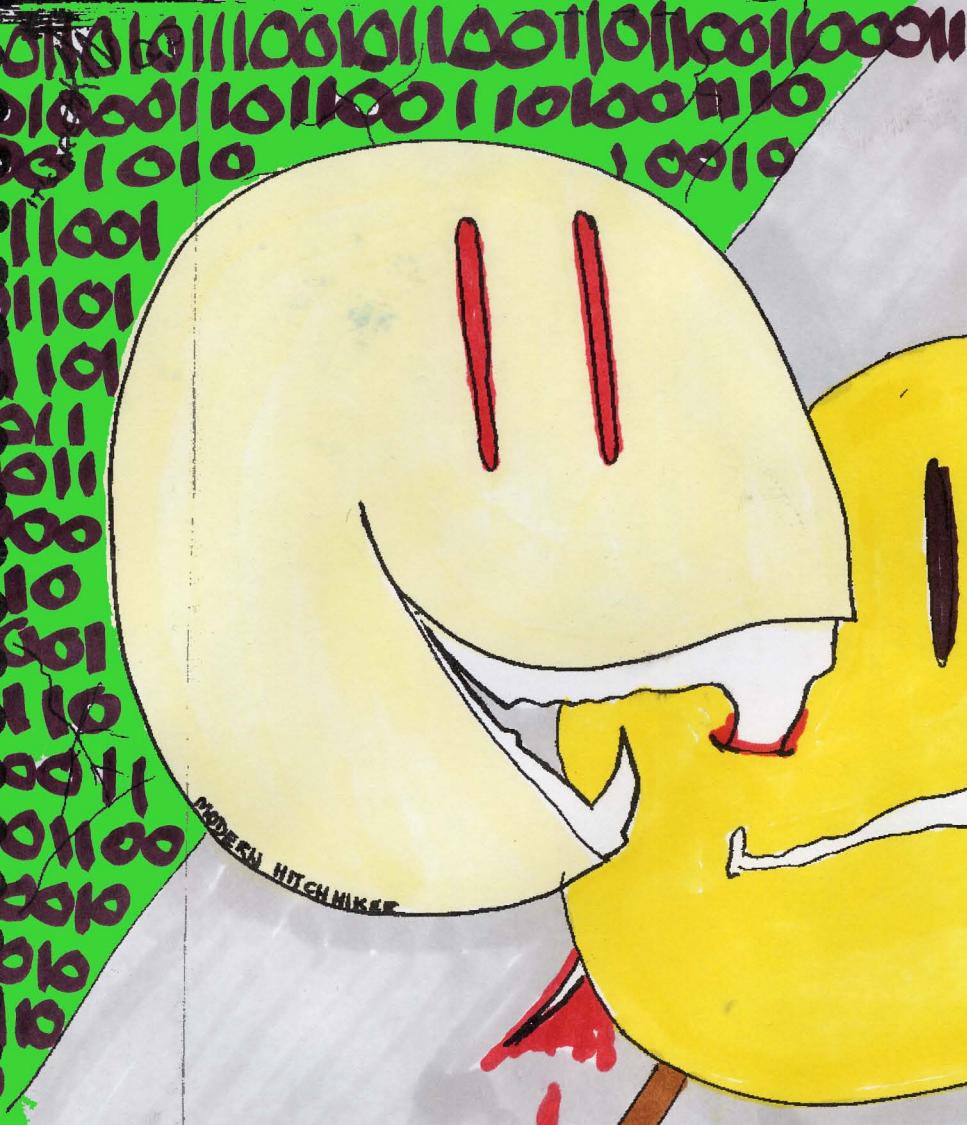
Why is it that  
the hunt  
is so much better  
than the meal?

Why is it that  
the cleaning  
inspires so much  
less appeal?

Why is it that  
the grass  
is so much greener  
in the field?

Why is it that  
the shadow  
keeps itself so  
well concealed?

Why is it that we  
dream, and then  
refuse to call  
dreams real?



## **EmotiCons**

You shiny  
yellow  
harbingers  
of doom,  
you fiends!

You loom  
behind  
your static glass  
and plastic  
screens.

You beguile  
youth with  
wicked smiles  
and stinking winks,  
absurd!

You stare back  
blankly  
when I ask,  
“Just what happened  
to the word?”

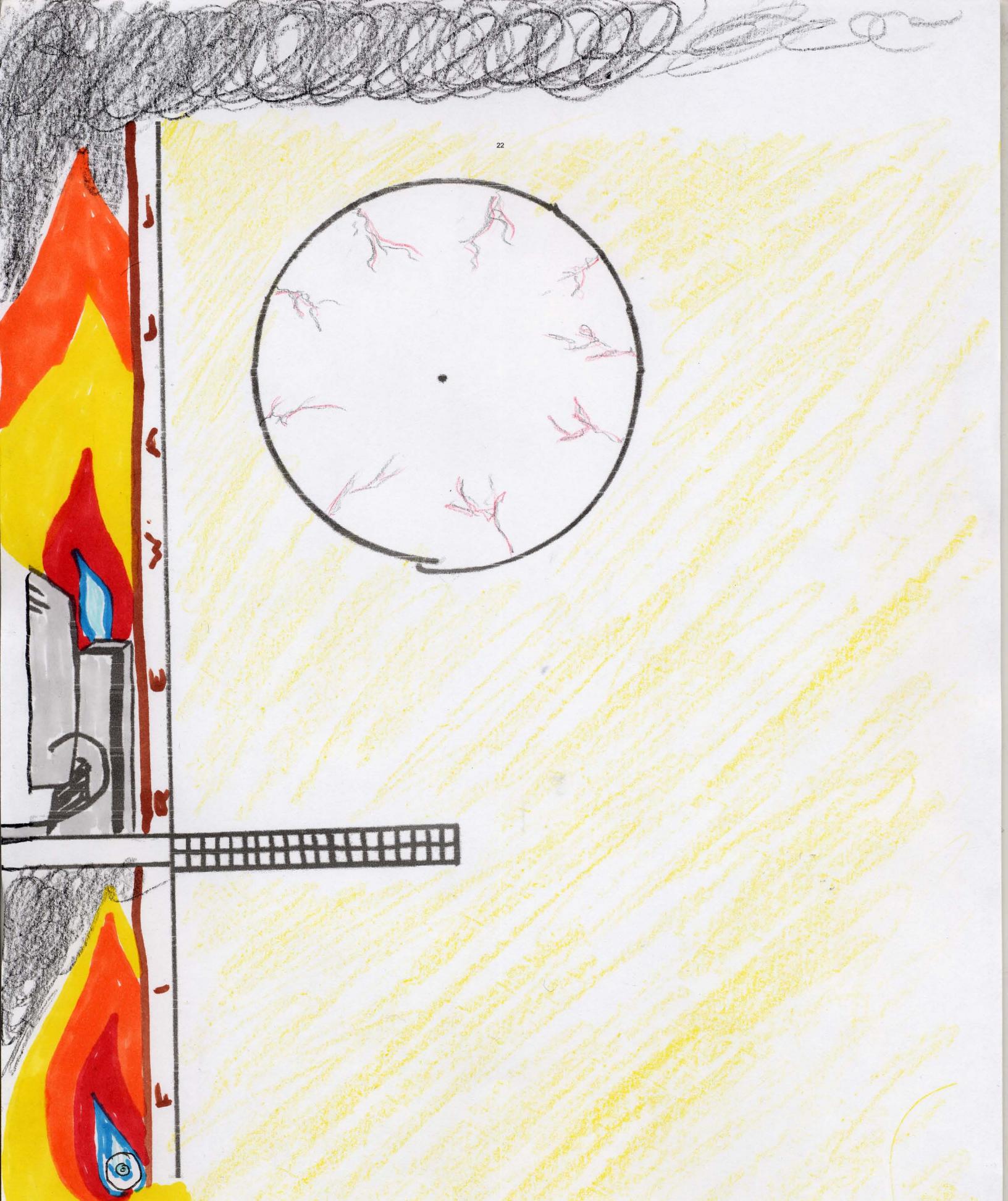
## **A Public Domain?**

Go on click, disclaim away.  
Go ahead, just hit okay,  
no one knows what it means.

Check the box, press  
next a lot, it's not  
paper, just a screen.

But have you heard,  
of a word, something  
called Copyright?

Well, no one's watching  
anyway, not really  
really, right?



## **Star Bucks**

Even the name,  
I mean...come on.

I've heard it's meant to honour Ahab's mate  
but wouldn't there be an apostrophe if that were true?  
Started by at least one English teacher. Maybe more.  
And where's the whale? The customer?  
No, too easy prey. Sheep patient in line for a feeling.  
Harpooned. It sort of makes sense,  
public domain, free.

Here's the way  
*I* see it, #1:

That five-dollar latté isn't five dollars  
so that twelve year old boy  
burning in the Argentinian sun  
can go to school,  
or that barista serving you  
can pay off her loans  
in only a decade or three.

Market research isn't cheap, but  
it doesn't seem like a fair trade to me.

## **BIG BOX**

Somewhere  
between the asphalt lot  
that would be desert like  
if it wasn't so crowded,  
the fake books in the labyrinthine show room,  
the pick-your-own warehouse,  
the abattoir-esque cash,  
the instructions made multilingual by the removal of the words,  
the holes that don't quite line up,  
the slightly troublesome extra pieces,  
and the wobbly sweat soaked, blood-stained result,  
it hits.

The vision of a five hundred pound Swede  
wearing a suit made of money  
cackling hideously in the back of a limousine,  
wolfinng down bucketfuls of spherical meat  
slathered with grey sauce.  
Cute, affordable buckets mind you,  
with fun umlauted names like, "Görjen."  
I stare at the ripped and open boxes,  
tools, bits of paper, cardboard, plastic packaging  
scattered throughout the room.  
Patiently gathering them up, I realize, dammit  
I don't have a waste paper basket in here.

## **Exhausting**

It grew exhausting, the repetition.  
The repetition of the same old lies.  
The lies, camouflaged in so many lines.  
So many lines crossed, tangled, or woven.  
Woven on or in or around the web.  
The web spun and the web spinning until...  
until the thread's gone and there's no more wire.  
Wireless the lies remain untethered.  
Untethered to man or technology.  
Technology not a lie, exactly.  
Exactly the false promise required.  
Required to generate the desire.  
The desire for more, more of the same.  
The same brands or else brand new names instead.  
Instead of fed, the hungry left for dead.  
Dead. Dead, dead, dead, dead, dead. But why? When bread...  
bread is so cheap, and even wine, sometimes.  
Sometimes the line, the line can be blurry.  
Blurry, or clear, if near enough. Focus.  
Focus on the tired lies, exhausting.

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p  
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t



insecurities  
are like needles in a haystack  
you are using as a mattress



## **You Don't Have to be Dirty, But it Helps**

Sweat, grit, soil, sand.  
A natural armor that can  
not be built, only earned  
after a day's long toil.

It helps because you can relate  
to the blazing noon time spent  
bent plucking vegetable pittance,  
counting beans on earthed knees.

It helps because you can't-  
or don't- take for granted  
if you can't take advantage  
of the soothing spoils of soap.

The luxury of coming clean,  
liquid soil escaping the sheen  
of skin in a hurricane drained  
between two feet and shins.

## **Change**

Scattershot of metal on a table,  
or rifling though a pocket while in line.  
Tip jing-a-linging in a plastic jar  
or a finger sliding in a slot for coins.

A burden clacking a cause's cup,  
or quietly caught in waiting hat.  
Cheers as a quarter splashes beer,  
or a silent nod in thanks for that.

Exotic currency thrown out,  
or saved for months for vaccinations.  
Pennies replacing missing pawns  
or a rook in need of renumeration.

Sizes, shapes, material,  
all value is relative.  
Worth is so ethereal,  
whether you get it, or give.

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When he woke up he was naked and alone, curled fetal under a thin white sheet, morning sun cutting through sheer curtains, illuminating the blurry form of a house plant next to the bed as he slowly opened his eyes. He found his pants on the cold wooden floor of Olive's apartment and followed the scent of bacon into her kitchen.

"Good morning," he said warmly, and leaned against the refrigerator by the room's entrance. Olive was standing by the stove in her nightgown, making coffee while the meat fried.

"Morning," she glowed back, "thought I'd make us some breakfast. You want eggs? There should be some."

"Sure," Simon chirped, reaching into the fridge and pulling out the egg carton, it's weight lighter than he'd thought it would be. He opened the box and took the one large egg from its cardboard crib. "One left," he informed her, running his thumb over its shell.

He let it pendulum slowly in his carefully bandaged palm before handing it to Olive. She waved her free hand close to the surface of the frying pan in front of her. Judging its heat adequate, she brought the egg down on the pan's edge, gently cracking it open. It sizzled.

D  
N  
E

NOTHING'S EVER FINISHED  
IF IT ISN'T STARTED  
EVERYTHING  
ARRIVES AGAIN  
AFTER IT HAS DEPARTED



TRUTH JAR

MASON JAR CAPS

## **An Awkward Landing**

Dawn shows up far too early,  
and the cuckoo lies there bent.  
No robin now, no nest,  
only cold grey cement.  
The question left, forgotten  
and with nowhere now to turn,  
a stubborn new sun rises,  
renews its ritual. To burn.

The wind was wrong  
or lied—but either way,  
that wing is shattered.  
No droplets now, no dancing,  
just one star's bright light that matters.  
That searing white God eyeball  
men can't even reach with ladders.


The orb is bright  
and lights the day,  
achievements  
and mistakes.  
Bird struggles  
against stifling heat,  
cannot retreat the rays.

Collapses, when at last it sees  
the nest ahead, it breathes, relieved.  
Ignores the test with ease but can't  
or won't, ignore the breeze.  
Not disappointed,  
neither pleased.  
Simply content to be.

I'm a foolish mess without you,  
an awful waste I must confess.  
Can't mop up, sweep, I doubt too  
the vacuuming will get finished.  
There is no order to my life,  
it's chaos when you are not here.  
Can't wash, or scrub, or scour the strife,  
of being alone shedding tears.  
Our reflected souls can sparkle  
and our consciences come clean.  
No soot, mold, must, ash or charcoal,  
dust banished, and left, a sheen.  
Soaked in happiness together, souls  
fresh, habilitated, better.

## **Mirror**

Guard in the glass on my front door,  
protects the outside from me.  
Each step I take, he mimicks more,  
scoffs at each movement mockingly.  
I don't know what I've done to him,  
nor why he thinks that I deserve  
his angry frown; his cautious grin  
hidden, quietly reserved.  
He does not allow intrusion  
into any outside space.  
He accuses my collusion  
and insists on my disgrace.  
My reflected ami cannot see,  
nor I, on the inside of me.



## **Tick Tock**

What can be done  
in a minute?  
How long  
does one minute last?

What can be done  
in an hour?  
An hour  
goes by how fast?

What can be done  
in a week?  
How long  
does one week endure?

What can be done  
in a month?  
A month's time  
is how finite, how sure?

What can be done  
in a year?  
How long  
does a single year last?

What can be done  
in a decade?  
A decade  
goes by how fast?

What can be done  
in a lifetime?  
How long  
does one lifetime endure?

How important is  
time itself?  
How potent?  
How perfect? How pure?

## **Deadlines**

afterlife  
annihilation  
bereavement  
casualty  
cessation

curtains  
darkness  
deceased  
demise  
dissolution

downfall  
dying  
end  
eradication  
eternal rest

euthanasia  
exit  
expired  
extinct  
finished

future  
home  
grave  
grim reaper  
mortality

necrosis  
obliteration  
oblivion  
paradise  
parting

passing  
passing over  
quietus  
release

repose  
ruin  
ruination  
termination  
sleep

## 24/7

Darkness drags domed daylight.  
Sunshine sweeps skies, slowly.

Fibrous follicles flounce fields.  
Clouds creep cryptic-CRACK!

Broom breaks, black back.  
After? Again and again.

Darkness drags domed daylight.  
Sunshine sweeps skies, slowly.

Fibrous follicles flounce fields.  
Clouds creep cryptic-CRACK!

Broom breaks, black back.  
After? Again and again.

Darkness drags domed daylight  
after again and again.

### **part of the story**

part of the story  
is not written down  
part of the story  
is under the ground

part of the story  
will never be heard  
part of the story  
didn't happen in words

part of the story  
involves little birds  
part of the story  
is pretty absurd

part of the story  
you wouldn't believe  
part of the story  
songs can't conceive

part of the story  
is not written down  
part of the story  
will never be found

## **the bottom of things**

like a good bottle, or conspiracy  
like during high tide, a beach under sea  
like a dark secret unhidden, revealed  
like a well haggled bargain, a deal, a steal

the bottom of things, things found and lost  
things priced too high or bought, sold at all costs  
the bottom of things right side up or down  
things left, forgotten, or known all around

like a message in code for just one pair of eyes.  
like truths un-eroded despite all the lies  
like the who and the how without why, where, or when  
like the already instead of the again

like the again in stead of the already  
like a beat broken...or steady  
like sand in a glass after hours have passed  
like that same glass turned over, space where grains amass

the bottom of things, of things lost and found  
the bottom of things, like the underground  
the bottom of things, whether losing or winning  
the bottom of things can be ends, or beginnings

## **Washing Up**

Torrents of dream  
crash screaming,  
splash jagged crags  
clean, wrinkle hands.  
Rocks caught  
sinking in soft sand.

Stand, grip switch,  
flip, pull,  
push, twist.  
Shower stalls  
flow, falls  
below. Sit, sit.

Tub's edge,  
float feet above  
dry mat.  
Reach back,  
grasp at tap that  
drips drips, drips.

Wrench wrist.  
Wipe soft  
white cloth.  
Drag last  
drops dry.  
It's day.



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*You Always Hurt the One You Love* written by Allan Roberts & Doris Fisher.

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