

poems by
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illustrations by
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inside me sleeps fury

water

in my family we inherit water
you see, i have been drowning for millennia
before my grandmother ever was alive to hold me
it was pouring
this is an ancient bequest
as old as the element itself
when god made the earth
she took a fist to her newborn child
and thus was the sea from which my ancestors emerged
this flood is generational
daughters' daughters cup their hands
and hold it without spilling
i think my mother poured it down my throat instead



ecdysis

i shed the skin of my birth
peeled it off my decaying body
like gauze from a festering flesh wound

i tailored a new coat
out of scraps and fragments
of a language not my own

verses of words that found
their place between my lips
so i could speak myself into existence

i had to flee across europa
and grow a new tongue
to hear myself at last



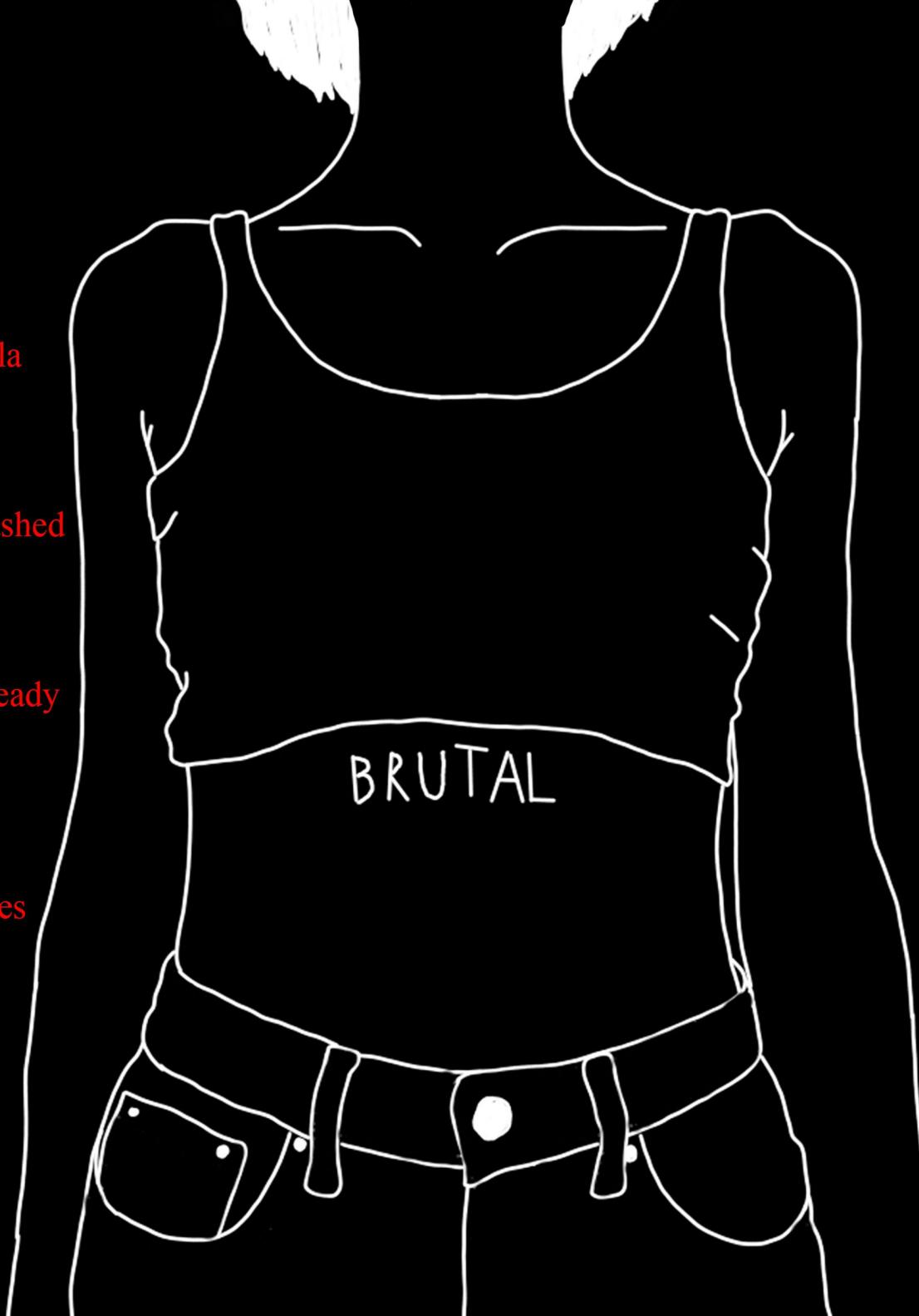
inside me sleeps fury

i am a new god
woven into the sick membrane of my amygdala
dwells terror

somewhere far away
a butterfly flaps its wings and i am become unleashed
naked rage

trembling with it now
my hands cradling her white neck like they are ready
to kill
and they are

sanguinary dreams
flash behind my irises each time a butterfly flies
and wakes me



on writing

how am i supposed to create
something worthwhile
if i have no worth
and will only be here a little while
this great task of digging my fingers into my sternum
and revealing the white shreds that remain
when the blood has drained
each word fills me with the terror of my young body
gripping the sink, heaving
oh, this art! it turns my hands to stone
and my guts into a freshly dug grave
the sweet smell of rotten soil
sickly in my stomach
filling my words with its odour
am i supposed to dig trough the bones
to find a sign i was ever alive?

housefire

mother, please may i scream the roof off this house?
i promise i will do it quietly
like i never was
you will be so surprised

i ask, will you be so kind and cover me in gasoline?
there are matches in the drawer
i will burn so good
the mess will be minimal

have you seen my bones?
aren't they so smooth?
aren't they what you wanted?



where daisies grow

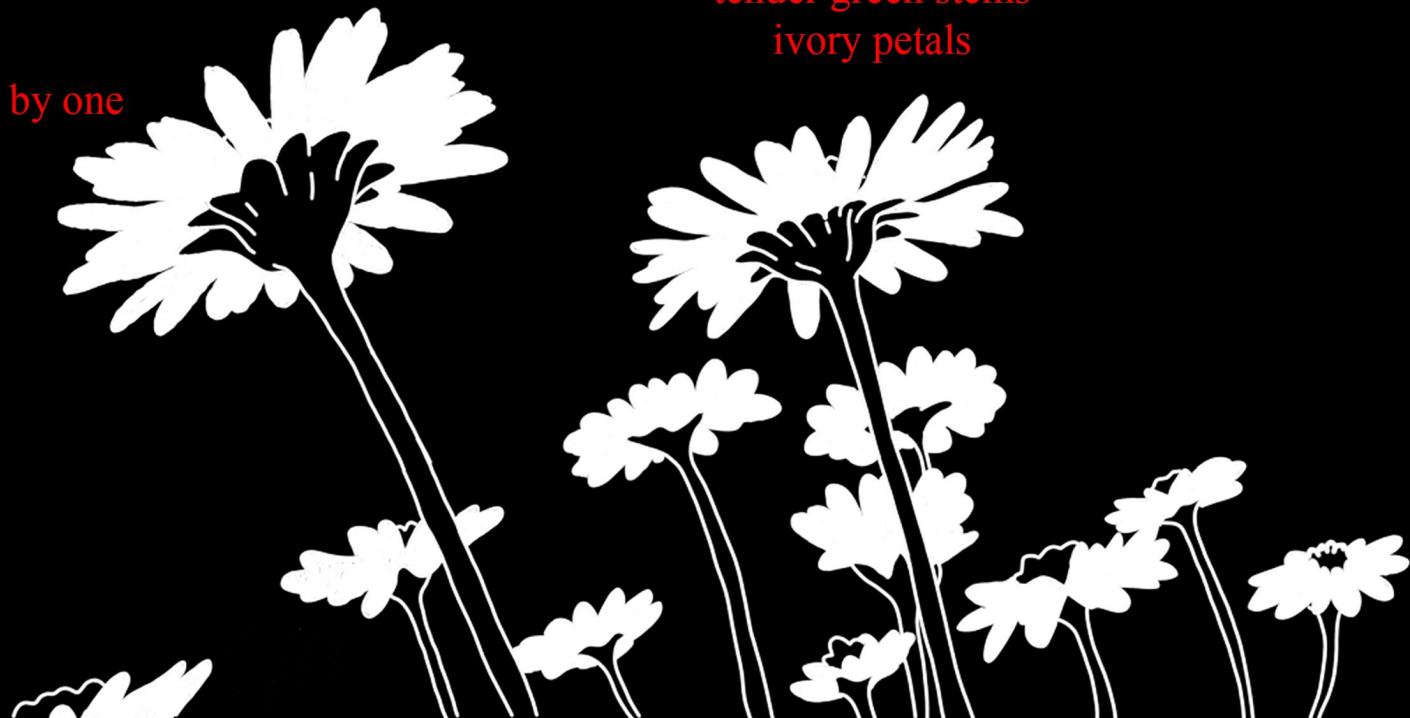
i have taken my borderline personality
and put it in a little brown sack tied to a stick across my
shoulder

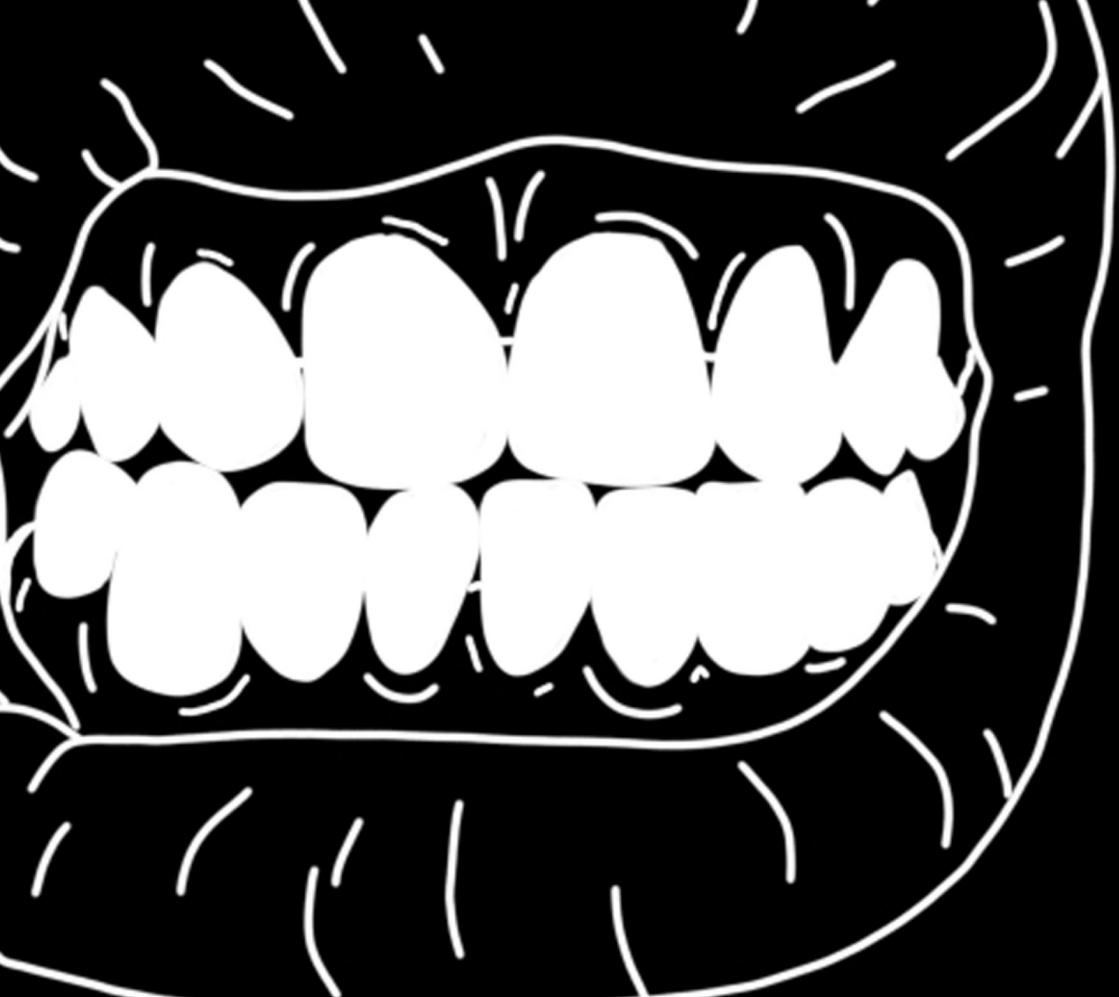
in it i have put it and
crusty sourdough bread
a handful of ripe cherry tomatoes
a flask of spring water
and it

tonight i will carry it to the field behind my house
push my hands into the dirt, feel it give
and lift it - gently -
set it aside with utmost care
and sit

i will unpack my little brown sack one by one
save the food for after
and put
it
in the ground
where it belongs
push the dirt over

it
sit and feast then go to bed
in my absence the foxes will guard
the small patch of land
the crows will stand sentinel from above
in the morning daisies will bloom
tender green stems
ivory petals





shame

tastes bitter on the tongue
sticks to your teeth
covers them in a layer of grime
now i am yellow stained, sickly
the sediment rough and dirty against
the soft flesh of my mouth

slime, crud, scum
i want to take a fist to my face
and remove this reminder of defilement
for every time i try to speak
i cannot unclench my jaw

sullied as i am, rigid
in my ways of shame
i cower and tremble and remain
silent and filthy still



family history

i have scoured the dictionaries of the world
the DSM
for the origin of this curse
there is no trace of my grandmother
in the history books
tales of the black death that came and took
every living thing in her body
an infection so great
it has me begging for mercy still

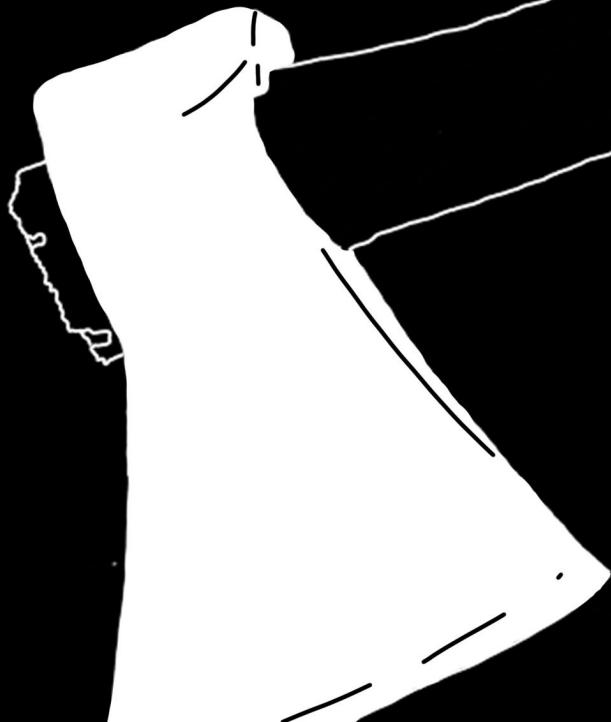
how did i come to know the intricacies of her trauma
the way it reached out its hungry fingers and
engulfed her in eternal embrace
or was it really just men
with their ruthless appetites
1940s germany countryside out of sight
did the whole village know
how he paid her for housekeeping
keeping her knobby child knees
on the tiles she had cleaned

i hold her stories tenderly
afraid of breaking them like glass tears
or crumpling them up like old letters
from the hospitals she's lived in
the one she went to when my mother was born
because her husband couldn't keep his hands to his bloody self
or the one she went to every day for twelve years
my aunt's bones jutting out of her comatose skin

pill bottles and nursing home kitchen knives have aged her
beyond beauty and benign love
i have carried her weight since before
i was old enough to wipe the tears off her cheeks
and i will bear it with the strength of
my broken bones forever

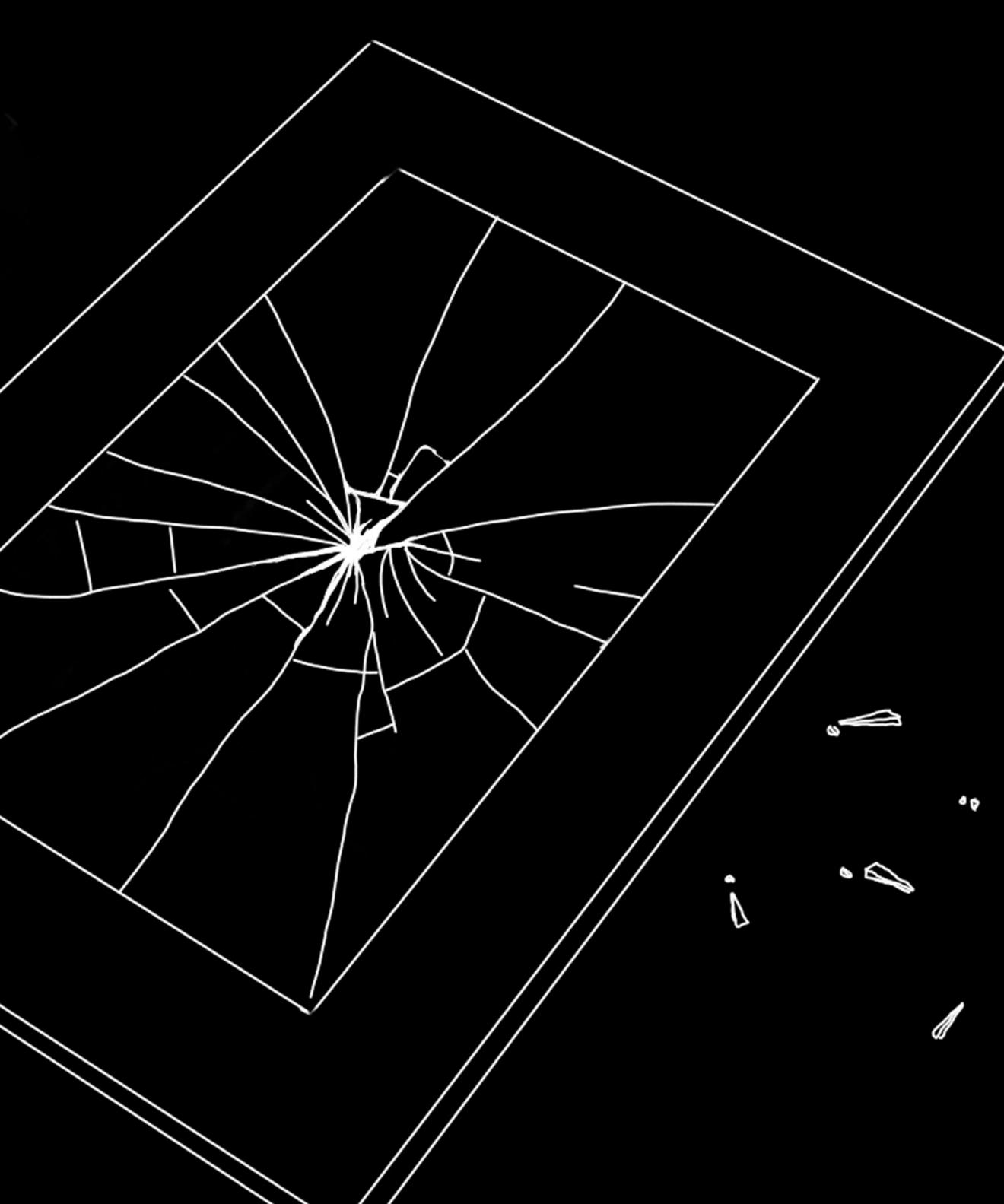
excavation

maybe the time has come
for excavation
taking an axe down memory lane
and cutting down all the trees
ripping the weeds from the cracks
in the pavement
i think i am finally strong enough
to demolish suburbia
bulldoze every house on this street
and see what they were built upon



re

i am coming back from the dead
i am unkilling myself
needle stitching up -
piercing through skin -
pulling flesh back together -
these wrists will go from canyons
to fertile land



memoir

cracked picture frames and faded
watercolour drawings line the walls
of my hollow mind
last week is a corrupted image file
with more dead pixels than colour
last year is holding me at gunpoint
as i stare down the barrel
with glassy eyes and say "i forgot"
i am desperate for a memory
that i can touch and hold and
know i lived it i lived im alive
for what is a person if not
an abstract of the stories that made them
leafing through the pages
i find blood splatters and tear-smudged ink
amongst torn-out pages and
unfinished sentences
i am an ever-growing testament
to my feeble existence
a vacant museum
a void



daughterhood

it is not me who decides when
the one who feeds me comes and swallows me
whole

the human condition

where is my animality?
does the sparrow in the tree
scratch its family history into the bark
or is pain a human disease?
a parasitic symbiosis between
see-through skin and slicing blade
brittle bone and brutal hand
heavy head and hopelessness

there is no melancholy
in a life infested with misery
that feasts upon the self
until all that lingers is the carcass
of who i was supposed to be
when i was a cluster of cells
a crying babe with the umbilical cord
wrapped around my neck like
a noose the doctor forgot to remove



was my fate first set in stone
when they saw my fatal state
on the ultrasound
or was i doomed since the day
my grandmother took her first
dying breath in 1935
ere she learned the ways of agony
that torments her to this day

i sense that asking questions
of existential interest is as futile
as speaking to the birds
about the eggs they hatched from
for they sing and sing and sing
in the nests they built
while we cut down their trees
and contemplate destiny

genesis

i think i became when i first wanted to die
a big bang detonation in my prefrontal cortex
ruptured a billion synapses and made me
a neurological masterpiece of a wreckage

porous tissue, damaged from erosion
has left me atrophied and stunted
the fibres of my being withered and spent

yet in the corrosion of my cornerstones
something awakened in the fragments

opened its eyes and lived

