

ALICE CHANDLER

ISAAC CLARKE

IAN JACKSON

JILL MCKNIGHT

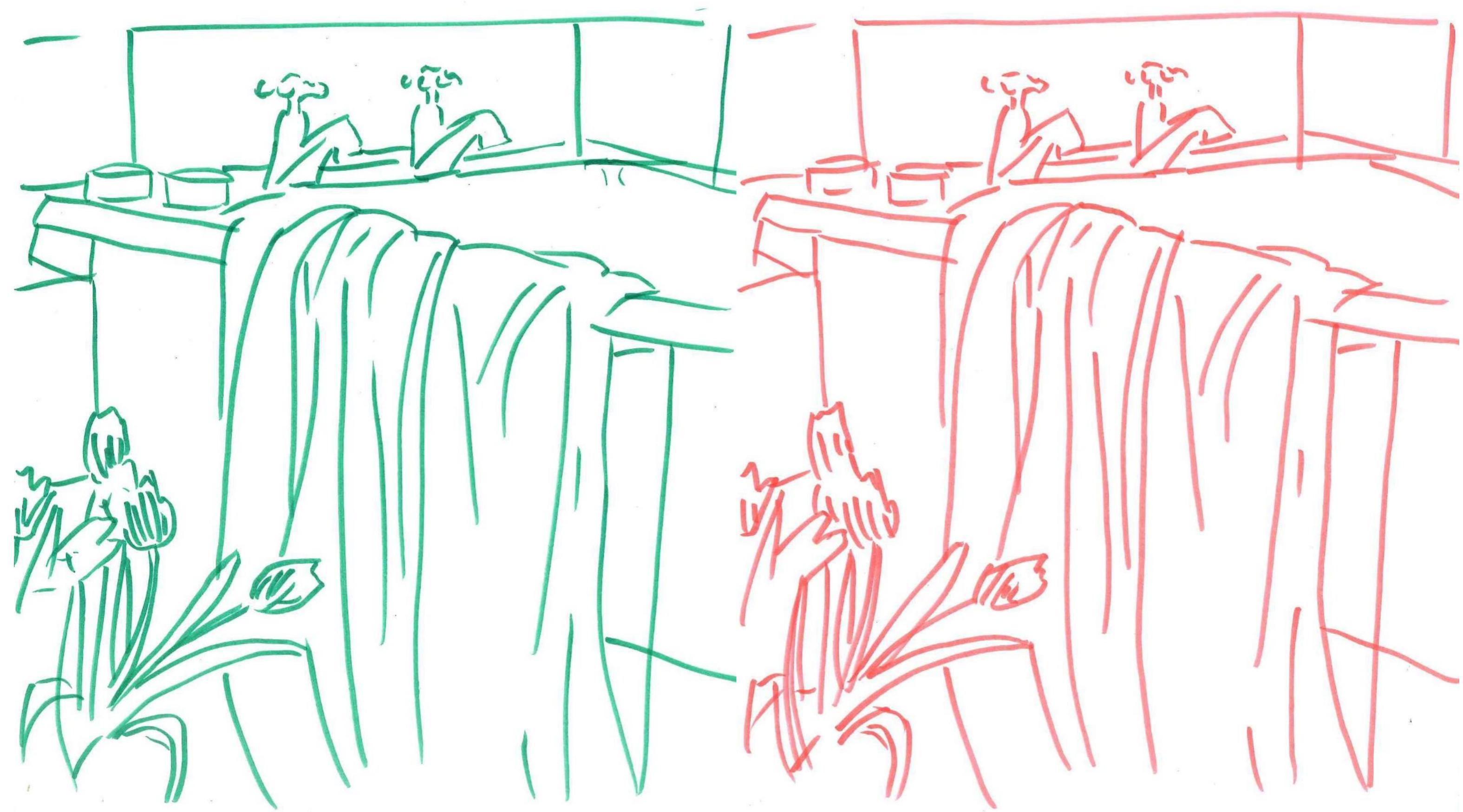
TAMU NKIWANE

EMILIE SPARK

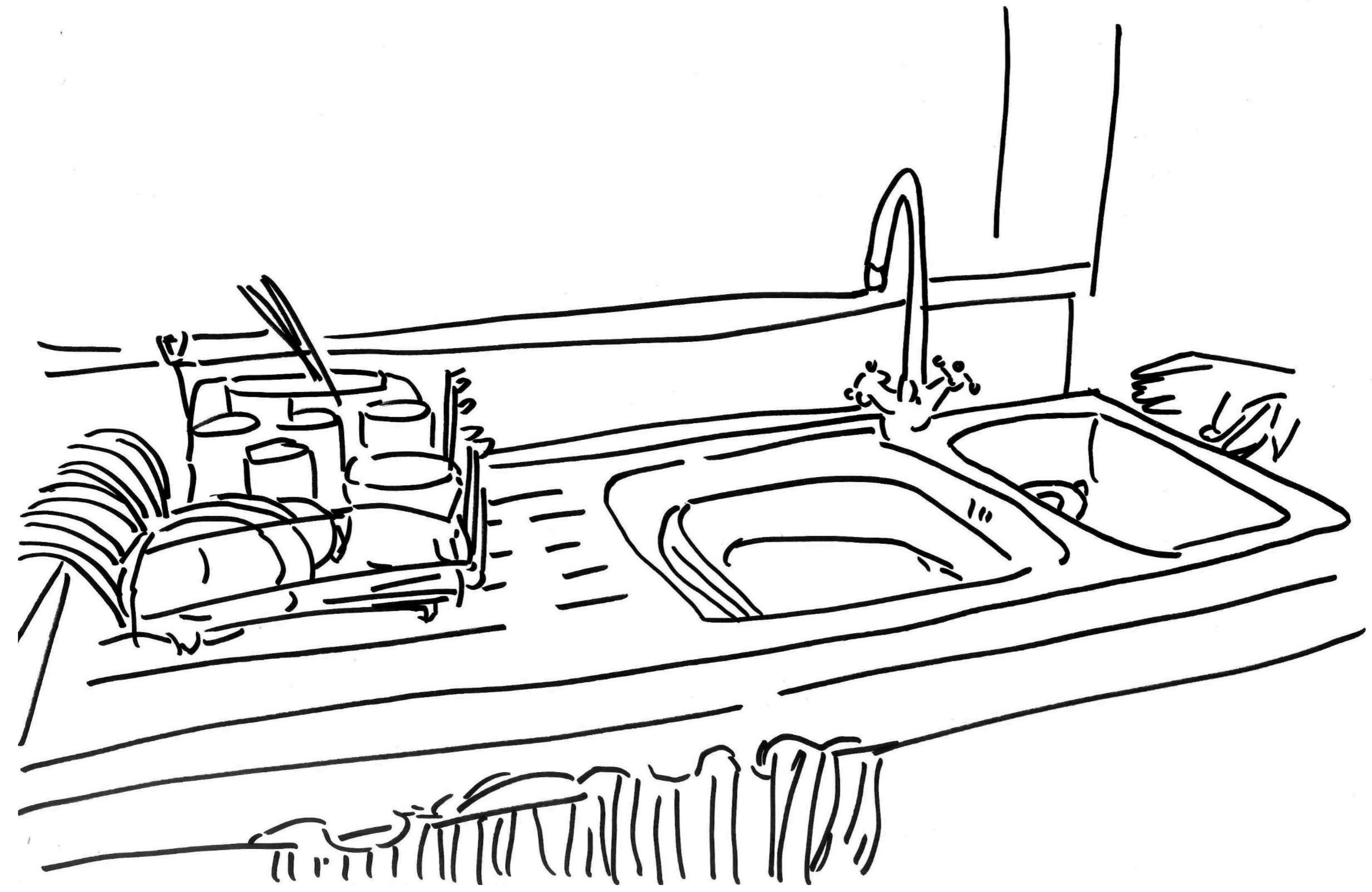
JUSTINA URBON

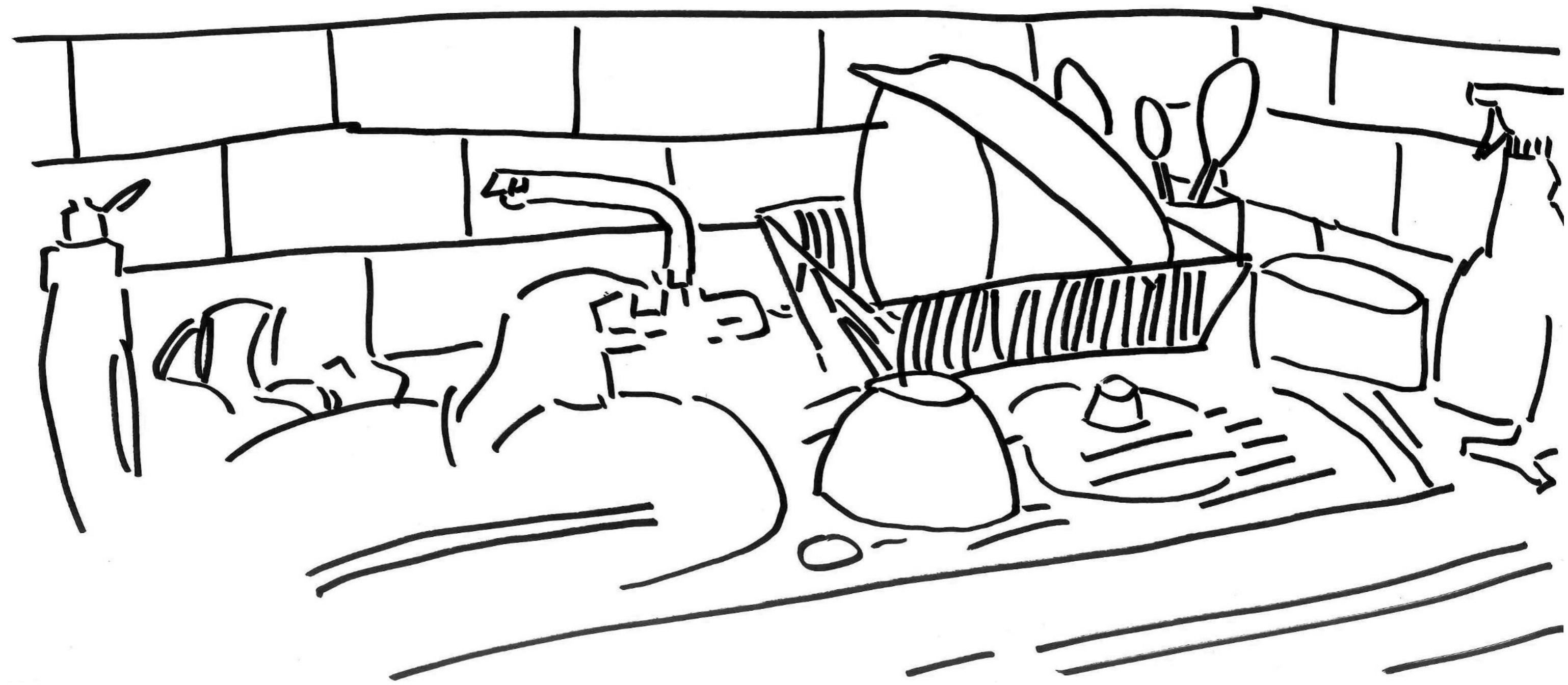
ELOISE WALKER

**conversations on swansong** 2018, still life with sinks by alice chandler, minds and hearts or not at all by isaac clarke, mining york minster by ian jackson, topography from 2010 by jill mcknight, science/fiction by tamu nkiwane, HNY ft /\ by emilie spark, dead cold fate by justina urbon, thoughtwoman, fascinated gallop, i + inspirational, constant morning by eloise walker.



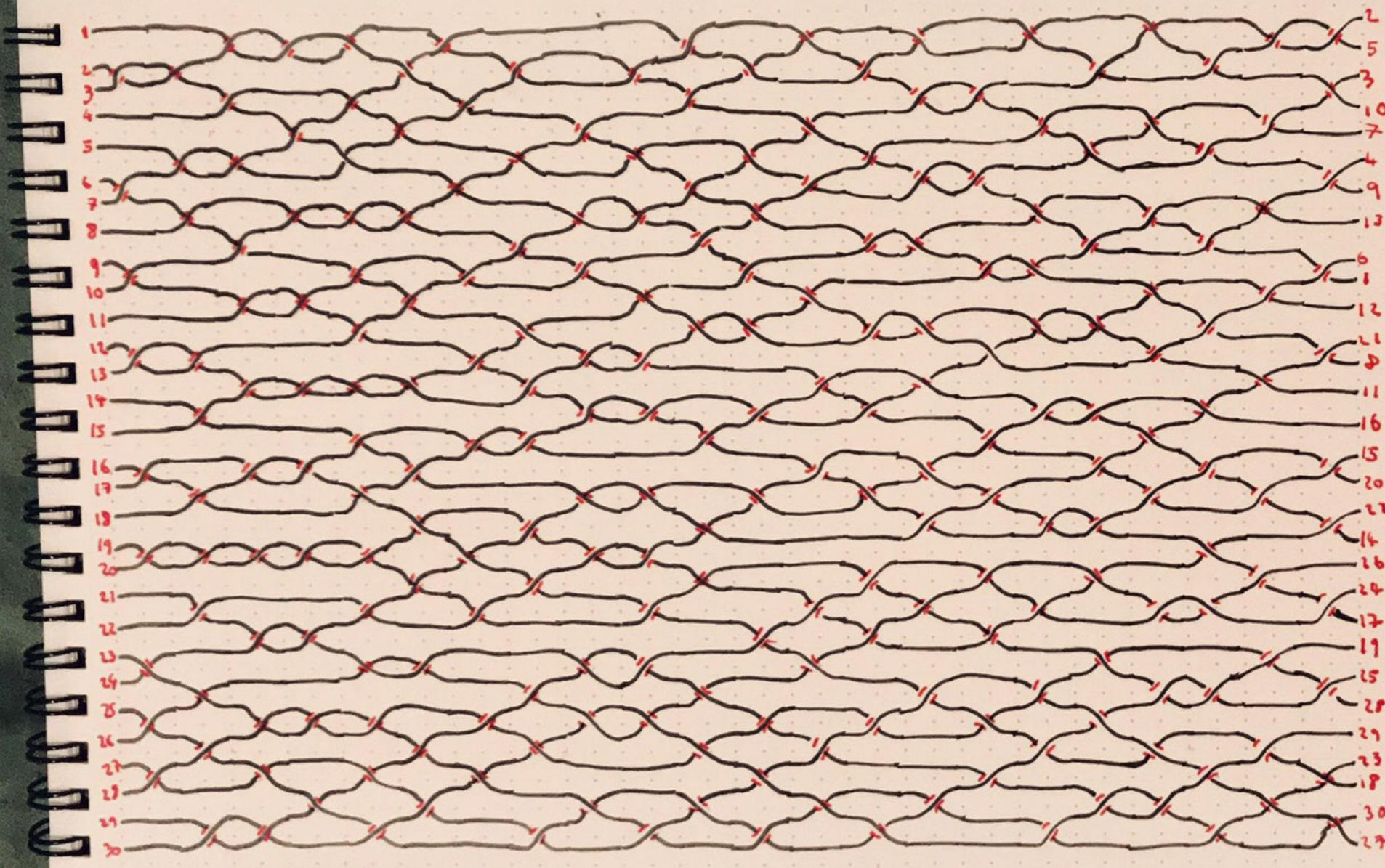




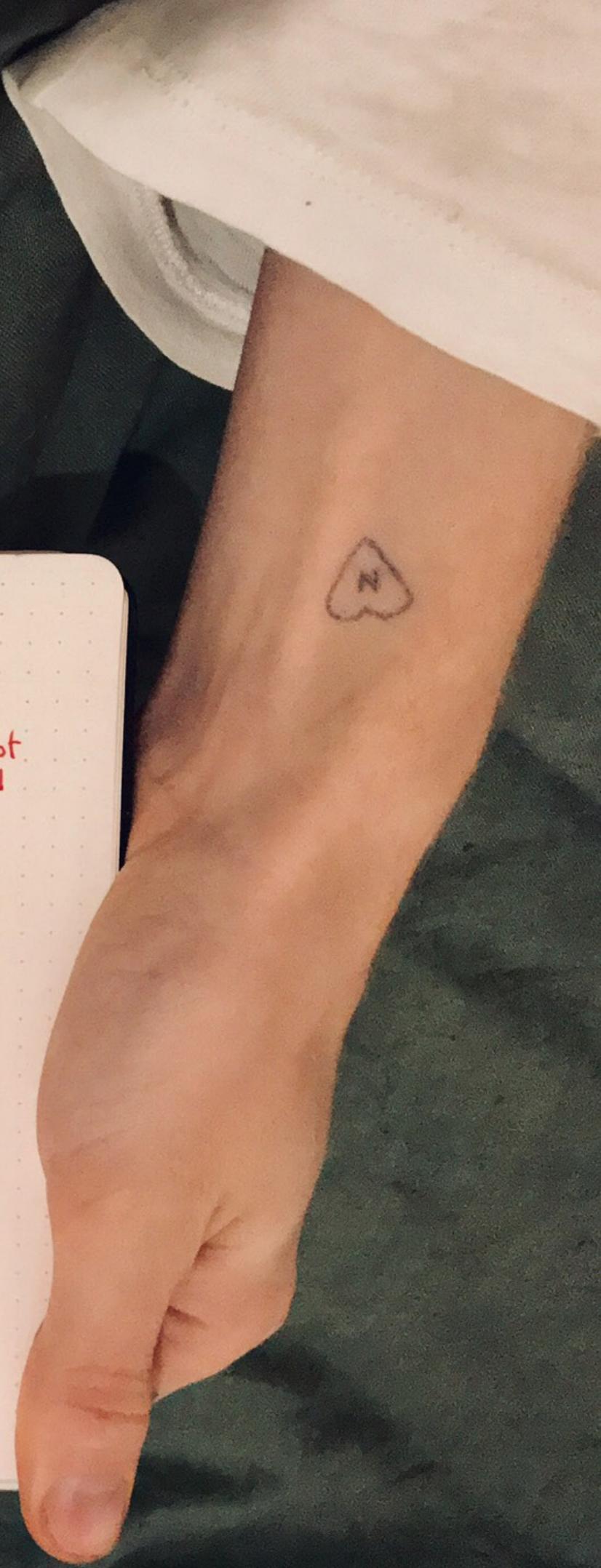


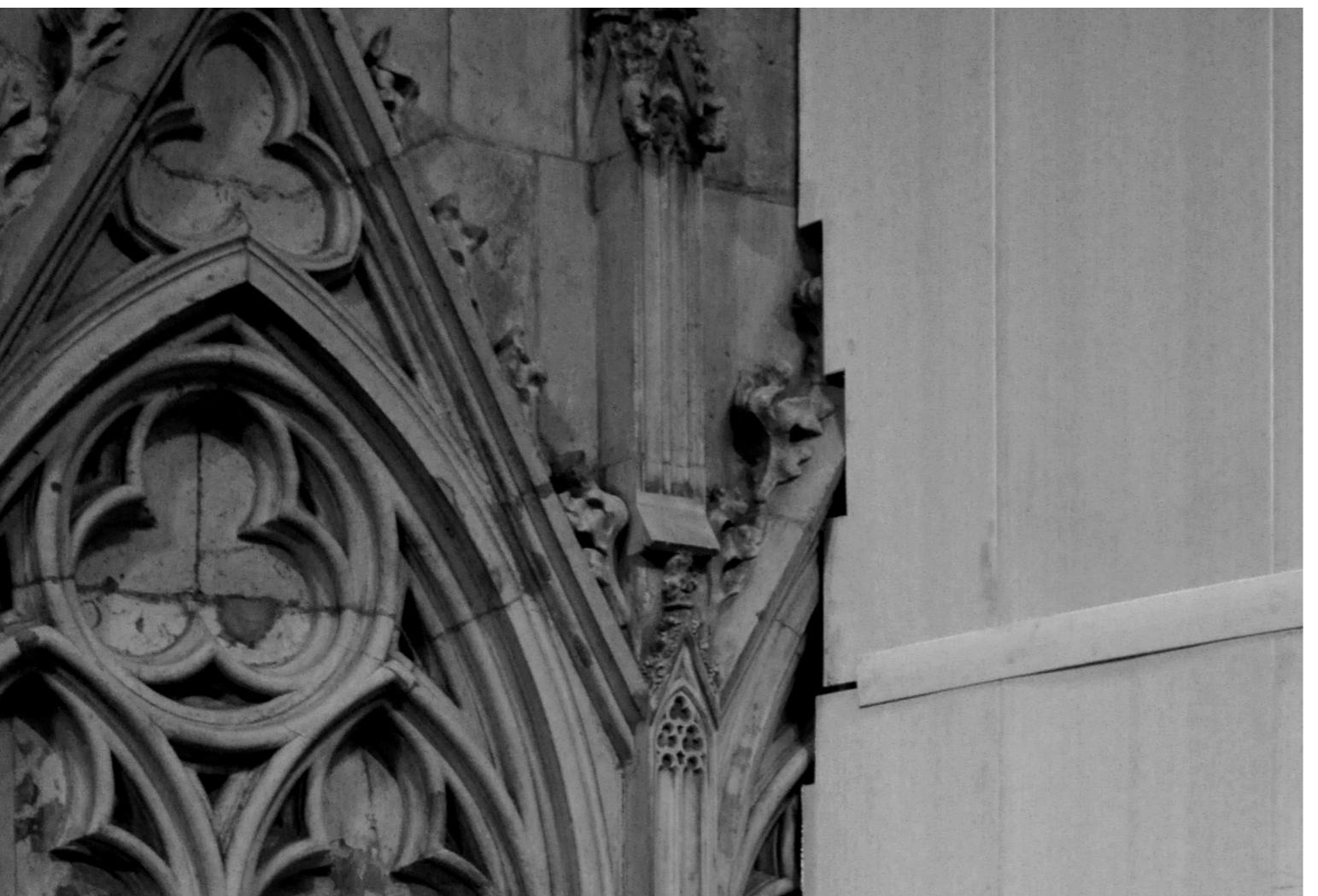






Minds  
and  
hearts  
or not  
at all





## Mining York Minster

A detailed visual and material language has been created by processes surrounding the mapping, restoration and dissemination of stone from York Minster. Damaged stones extracted from the building's facade are annually auctioned off to the public to help support the ongoing restoration project. Larger pieces of the Minster can make thousands of pounds, but on the day, smaller pieces are carefully arranged on long tables. If you get there early enough, have a keen eye and are prepared to queue, you can pick up a piece of this historic building easily.

I was surprised to see how many people attended the auction and how much value was being imposed on this material by the public. A large number of people lived in York, enjoyed the building and simply wanted a small memento - something to take home and cement a more personal connection with the Minster. Others had their eye on larger pieces, to be carted off across the city and become focal points in gardens. Since then, I have heard of pieces being repurposed into lamps, coat hooks and even paving slabs. Sharing the fabric of the minster to be repurposed across the city and beyond makes you rethink how you define a building's position and value.

People at the auction seemed to be drawn to the more detailed decorative items. I think this was due to a sense of the initial craftsmanship put into the pieces, now mostly lost due to erosion and weathering. I purchased two stones cut away from a 13th Century clerestory window. I was attracted to these in particular because unlike the rest, they had been cut into slabs when being removed from the building. Each stone had two very clean cut parallel surfaces, contrasting a very weathered profiled face. They seemed to be talking more about their removal process, which interested me and made me think...

... what do you call a piece of stone removed and replaced from a building's facade?

I have been trying to understand and unravel what these pieces of stone are and reconcile my relationship to them ever since.

I thought a lot about what it means to stop and asses these removed stones at this specific point in their timeline. I am mining these things for value, when really it is all too easy to dismiss them as just stone. I don't think everything that's old should accrue value and deserve recognition, but I became fascinated by how these stones sit so comfortably between so many vast processes of production and topics of discussion. These stones are so hard to lock down and define in words as things beyond their material.

Almost all of the terminology surrounding stone masonry and architecture is tethered very closely to building and processes leading to a structure's completion, maintenance and repair. I found myself looking through glossaries of terms but couldn't find anything about what is replaced, or things that may end up further afield from the building itself. A lot of terms were describing little more than waste material that could be repurposed as rubble, so I started to look further afield.



Palimpsest is a term for writing material that is reused but still shows visible traces of earlier text or form. Interesting, but the more I think through the process, extracting stone from the minster creates a void rather than a trace. The new stones inserted into its facade are the trace. Held together with mortar, they are surrounded by older stone and context that can be read and understood, illustrating the functional process I am trying to understand. The removed stones bear the weathering of being part of York minster. Aged, hard and brittle, prone to faults; this is why they were removed and would be unsuitable to be reworked.

Are they relics? No. They are still active, not solely reliant on referencing something lost - after all the minster is still standing strong. A souvenir? commodity? memento? Maybe for some, but these all seem wrong to me. They were made with purpose to fit, support and engage with other parts. I like the idea that someone could track down every displaced piece of York minster and get a long way to reconstructing sections of its old worn out facade, but I think the more interesting question to ask now is: can these things stand alone? And if so, what and how much do they divulge to a viewer?

It's fascinating how this kind of building can create its own closed systems. I found out that the Minster still uses imperial measurements for all its repairs because that was the initial unit of measurement used. It is this defiance of outside influences and modernisation that I think these stone fragments have somehow managed to shed. They have a distance and autonomy of their own, which is much more permeable and is why they can be repurposed. This quality is what attracted me to them.

Are these displaced stones sculpture? I'm not sure. They reference and even represent a part of the minster, and I think unpicking and critiquing this material as I would a sculptural object has been valuable for me trying to understand them. I would hope that the specific formal qualities of these stones is enough to lead someone down a line of inquiry, but my biggest worry is that no-one will care about these things without the context of the minster behind them.

Perhaps thinking about the stones as signs or signifiers of the minster that can exist in the public realm and gesture toward the processes that informed their creation is best. But how far will someone get when confronted by this stone? I think putting them back into the public view with direction and intention, without relying on a rambling text, is important. In a lot of ways I admire the confidence needed to turn a piece of this building into a lamp and the resolve of making a functional object, but I don't want to ruin or lose what attracted me to them in the first place. How much/little do I need to do to let someone in? I like the idea of using the formal language of a sign to help point a viewer in the right direction, using the shape, colouration, and orientation of these stones to allude to my research and their origin without ever having to explicitly divulge facts that will weigh down or push these things inward upon themselves.

Hopefully, through display and context, I can figure out a way for someone to engage with these stones and the ideas I have touched upon, finally deciding what to call these pieces of removed and replaced stone. Perhaps I need to be bolder and declare these stones artworks, readymades or sculptures and have done with it, but simply placing these stones within a gallery and declaring them art seems too much like attaching a lightbulb and making a lamp for me.





## Spolia

The term spolia (derived from the latin, ‘spoils’), refers to building stone that has been repurposed for new construction, or decorative sculpture that is reused to form new monuments. It describes a process in which quarried, cut and worked stone that once formed part of a structure is transported elsewhere and incorporated into a new building process. Often, signs of the stones original use remain after this sometimes unintended shift in purpose and place.

How can I incorporate these stone into a new physical and mental structure of my own?

I don’t want to narrate these stones into art or talk them into something more than they are. There is a danger of being too precious, coveting these things as a scarce commodity and ultimately becoming too scared to do anything to/with them. The fear is already setting in. If I corner myself into not being able to make mistakes and be playful, I have lost something important. My pursuit of these things should not be purely academic and theoretical, I’m not interested in accumulating information around these stones to substantiate and elevate them. I need to physically do something.

It’s nice to know the proper term for my stones, but having to make do and struggle with defining and explaining their qualities in other terms meant that I had to also take on a set of material and societal connotations that came with that language. These ideas were separate from my stones and their ill fit provided me with another way of thinking about them - a kind of useful perspective or tension. Perhaps spolia is too neat, too wrapped up. The idea of these stones being signs or signifiers of more than their material worth still greatly interests me, but I need to find a way of creating an experience for a viewer that activates these objects, expressing their nuances and my encounter with them without relying on text. I don’t know if the term spolia will help me come to terms with and resolve these ideas, but at least I now know what to call my stones in the meantime.

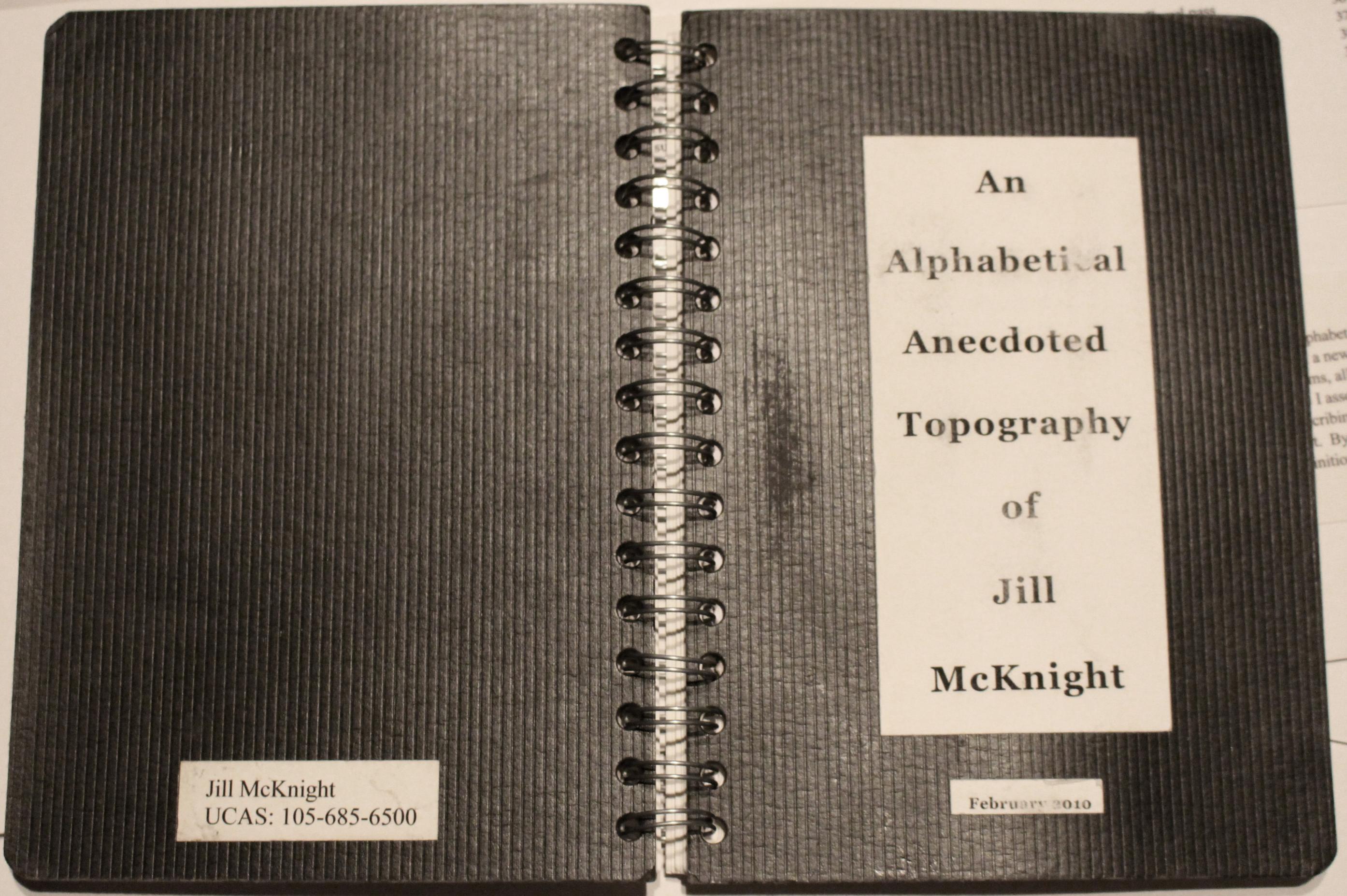


## Bigger

I like the fact that my research has taken my thoughts far away from these stones. As objects, they have an incredible distance held within them; they carry ideas much bigger than me and are part of a process that spans more than any one person’s lifetime. When I met the master mason at York Minster, he said he was just about to start the restoration of a new section of the minster. He quickly followed up this statement by adding that the project won’t be finished before he dies. The weight and time imbued in the structure and such tasks has strongly influenced my approach and the responsibility I feel to do the ‘right thing’ with these stones (whatever that might be).

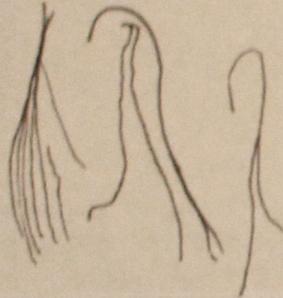
## Stalled

A friend came to visit.  
We talked about these stones and I questioned if I had stalled with my work.  
They said I’m still excited.  
I think I am too.



- 36 Bracelet  
37 Money  
38 Broken mi  
39 Protractor  
40 Notes  
41 Paper cu  
42 Pasta  
43 Cotton  
44 Bird se

phabet Tiles." Danie  
a new way of repr  
ns, allowing each  
I associated each  
scribing each objec  
t. By telling differ  
nitions and associa



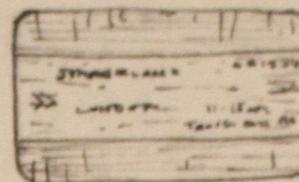
**22. Hair** cut from my head, contains my DNA. the strands are lighter towards the tips than at the roots, as they tips suffered being bleached blonde and consequently are still recovering, although dyed close to my natural colour. My natural hair colour (a) has came through a lot darker than I can remember it being. I have particularly thick hair, like my mam (b).

(a) What I thought was a light brown, but now closer to a medium brown. JM

(b) Your mam's got lovely thick hair which has a wave in it (i), and my hair is very straight and thin, but luckily have not lost much thickness over the years (ii).

(i) So I have my mam's thick wavy hair, and a mixture of my dad's blonde hair and my mam's almost black hair. My brother's hair, on the other hand, is very thin, though a similar colour. JM

(ii) And you have not gone grey. PM



**23. Train ticket** from a short holiday (a) - Sunderland to London (b) departing (c) at 11.15am on Thursday 3rd December 2009, to visit my friend Laura, an architecture student at UCL. During the visit, while Laura was at university, I went to an Ed Ruscha retrospective at the Hayward Gallery which was enjoyable and surprising – also, I was the first customer of the day; the Freud Museum, one of the trip's highlights and Pop Life at Tate Modern which was altogether more tedious. I then went to see Laura's installation based on the third painting from William Hogarth's "A Rake's Progress" – the orgy. We also visited China Town and Portobello Market followed by Sunday lunch, after which I got the train home.

(a) We had a train tickets for London reserved but got on an earlier train (i) without realising and were trying to get the people in what we thought were our seats, our of theirs seats. GM

(i) The train we accidentally boarded had been delayed, so it arrived just before ours was due. PM

(b) Changing at Newcastle (i). JM

(ii) Hard to get one for me personally due to the expense. DP

(c) Two days ago I went to get my train home from Edinburgh and as I arrived the train was departing. I had no money and could not buy train tickets over the phone using a credit card, so my mam, who was in Preston on business, had to go to Preston Train Station at 9pm to buy tickets to be printed in Edinburgh. I managed to get a ticket for the 9.30pm train, 3 hours after the one I missed had departed. AC



**32.** Key for my inner (a) front door (b), no longer face on in the set plaster. The plaster has created a circle of rust that looks like a shadow.

(a) We have an inner and outer front door, but only have a spare house key for the inner door. It is on a Vera Duckworth (i) keyring. GM

(i) A Coronation Street character no longer in the show. JM

(b) You're forever losing (ii) your keys. PM

(ii) I had a set that had replaced a previous set I had lost, and was convinced I must have lost them somewhere outside the house, so paid for a new set of the two keys, then soon after found the original keys had slipped behind a chair in my room. At the moment I can find neither set of my keys, so have been using 'the Vera Duckworth' set, which is useless if someone has locked (iii) the outer door. JM

(iii) Which is difficult in itself to lock as it is a wooden door which swells in the cold weather, making it an ordeal for me to even shut. JM



**32A.** Rust from the key, created during the making (a) of the tile by the reaction of iron and oxygen in the presence of water or air moisture (b).

(a) Rust never sleeps (i). GM

(i) Cars never seem to get rusty anymore (ii), years ago a little scratch in the paint would rust . PM

(ii) It used to be a curse, even painting it with tar would not stop the rust. GM

(b) Water moisture. JM



**33. Book** from Sunderland City Library, 'The Nation's Favourite Poems'  
(a) with a foreword by Griff Rhys Jones, with Rudyard Kipling's 'If' being  
the nation's very favourite. Brought home by my mam, who also works in  
the library (b).

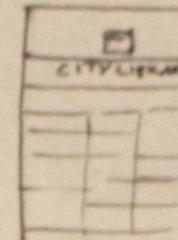
(a) My favourite poem (i) is 'Abu Ben Adam,' whenever our teacher  
was off, Mr. Tarbitt (i), the headmaster did anthology with us and still  
remember it off by heart. GM

(i) My favourite is the Leonard Cohen poem from 'Book of Longing'  
that begins "Remembering my mother, at a theatre in Athens." JM

(ii) My piano teacher's husband. I went to piano lessons for 12 years  
from the age of 7. JM

(b) She works in Fulwell Library 19 hours a week and I work in  
Silksworth Library 3 hours a week. I have worked there since 2006,  
my job interview being the day after my 16th birthday, where I was  
extremely nervous as it was the first of its kind. We both enjoy the job,  
apart from the management of course. JM

CITY LIBRARY



**34. Date Stamp Label** found in the front of all library books, so the  
borrower knows what date to return it (a) by, should they wish to avoid  
a fine (b). This particular book was due back the 13th December 2009(c).  
The label also contains the phone number of the City Library and  
Sunderland Library Service's old logo. The book was first issued in  
January 2002 and has been out 5 more times in the 5 years since then.

(a) Date stamps come in 1 week loans, 2 week loans and 3 week  
loans (i) depending on the book. PM

(i) Although you can change the date stamp to any date. 1 and 2  
week loan stamps are usually red. JM

(b) There has been uproar since fines went up from 10pence a day to  
20pence a day - extortionate. JM

(c) However it is not overdue as I can keep renewing it and not receive  
a fine as long as I work in the library. The password to override  
maximum renewal limit is 'super.' JM

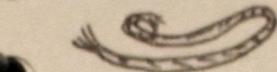


**45. Grass** which unexpectedly grew (a) from the bird seed inadvertently planted in the tile. Following the Christmas holiday I was surprised to see a plant growing around the sides of the tile it was beneath, and at first could not place where it had came from, until I examined the tile closer, at which point it took me a minute or two to realise that the bird seed had germinated (b).

(a) The climate temperature has to be 6 C for grass to grow. GM

(b) This chance (i) occurrence provided the art work with a life force of its own, allowing an element to grow and die independently of me as a creator, much like the work of Dieter Roth or Spoerri's EAT ART. Imagine making sculptures, or even paintings, embedded with thousands of seeds, and recording its life process. JM

(i) Perhaps my interest in chance is because I lack confidence in my own decisions and feel more comfortable when I am not in complete control of my work. JM



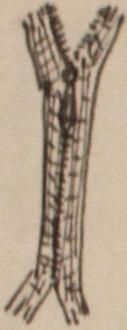
**46. String** (a) dipped in fluorescent pink (b) ink (c), swirling in and out of the plaster tile's surface like a radioactive worm.

(a) My dad always carries a bit about in his pocket in case he needs some (i). PB

(i) A better measuring device than a tape measure. I have been using lengths recently at univesity in a project to do with measuring and triangulation. LY

(b) At Catholic Camp we played a sheep game and each group was given a different colour length of string to wear around the wrist. I wore mine for about a year afterwards, I think it was green. AC

(c) From a box of inks borrowed from the A Level art room to do work at home, sometime last year, still yet to be returned. JM



**58. Zip** from my mam's sewing box that has been in there for as long as I can remember. It is a dark brown colour. Due to the plaster, it is functionless, unable to zip up or down (a).

(a) I have a zip down the side of one of my favourite pairs of shoes (i) and I went shoe shopping one day with my friend Joanne. I couldn't zip them up or down myself since it was so stiff, so Joanne had to do it for me in every shop. AC

(i) My favourite pair of shoes are black flat brogue types bought in a shop near Portobello Market that I do not remember the name of. They are comfortable and suit me well. JM

#### **Contributors to the Topography:**

- 1. Paul Barber**, who I have not seen in person for too long.
- 2. Hans Biedermann**, author of 'Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons and the Meanings Behind Them' Plume, 1994.
- 3. Alice Chalder**, who is brilliant but ever so slightly mad
- 4. Suzanne Hill**, an art historian.
- 5. Carl Jung**, the founder of analytical psychology.
- 6. Myrriah Lavin**, a writer of the occult.
- 7. Geoffrey McKnight**, my dad.
- 8. Pauline McKnight**, my mam.
- 9. The Oxford English Dictionary.**
- 10. Laura Young**, my best friend now residing in London.





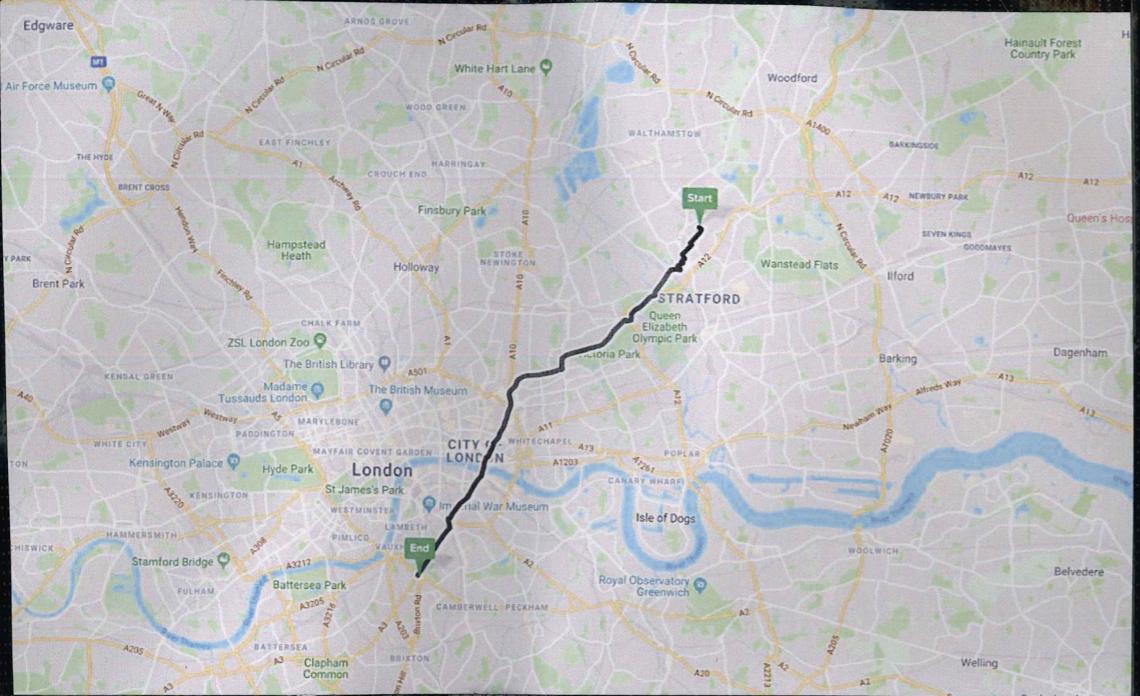
LOCATION: LEYTONSTONE  
DATE: 16/12/18  
TIME: 3:20 PM

I'D GIVEN MYSELF AN OVERDUE SENSE OF IMPORTANCE, LIKING MYSELF TO SOMEONE WHO'S MADE IT. IN ACTUAL FACT I'M FAR FROM IT! THE SIDE VIEW EYE AND LOOK OF RED BLUSHED CHEEKS AGAINST WET CONCRETE AFTER TWO DAYS OF RAIN. BLEMISHED OUT OF MY TEMPLES DERANGEMENT I TRY AND KEEP BALANCE. NO CARE AND BAFFLEMENT. WILL I CARE TO

WORK WITH ANYONE AGAIN? ARE THE SCUFFFOLDS STRONG AGAINST THE SWEEPING OF MODERN AMUSEMENTS. I LAUGH AND CLE UP. IN AND OF ITSELF. MUSSELS, LOBSTERS, CRAYFISH BEING COOKED THE FOLLOWING EVENING AT SOME BOVAGNEOIS RESTURANT OF CHOICE. THERE ARE OVER 54 COUNTRIES TO PICK FROM. I WOULD LOVE TO ENVELOPE MYSELF IN GARLIC BUTTER, PLUMP AND PHAT. FUZZING THROUGH RADIO TRANSMITTER AND AUDIO OUTCASTS I SHOVEL THROUGH THE LACK OF HEAT TASTE OF FOIL ON ONES FILLINGS BREAK THROUGH THE LACK OF HEAT. TASTE OF FOIL ONES FILLINGS, BREAK THROUGH AMONGST DISSELDWINS OF MEAT, HEADACHE AND MARON.

The side view eye and look of red blushed cheeks against wet concrete after two days of rain. Blemished out of my temples derangement I try and keep myself to someone who's made it. In actual fact I'm far from it!

THE DAY GREW SHORTER, MOURNING  
SILENTLY  
LIKE THE COLD POOL THAT SOOTHES ME  
TRIES TO WARM ME  
BELOW IN EVEN NIGHT



THE TASTE PLACED MY PALMS BENEATH  
HOT ELECTRICITY  
COLD, ICY GROUND WHILE MY HEAD BEAT IN THE  
THE FREQUENCY  
I'M FENCING OFF MORTALITY  
IT HURTS LIKE COLD RAIN ON TUESDAY  
I FEEL SURROUNDING  
RHYTHM...

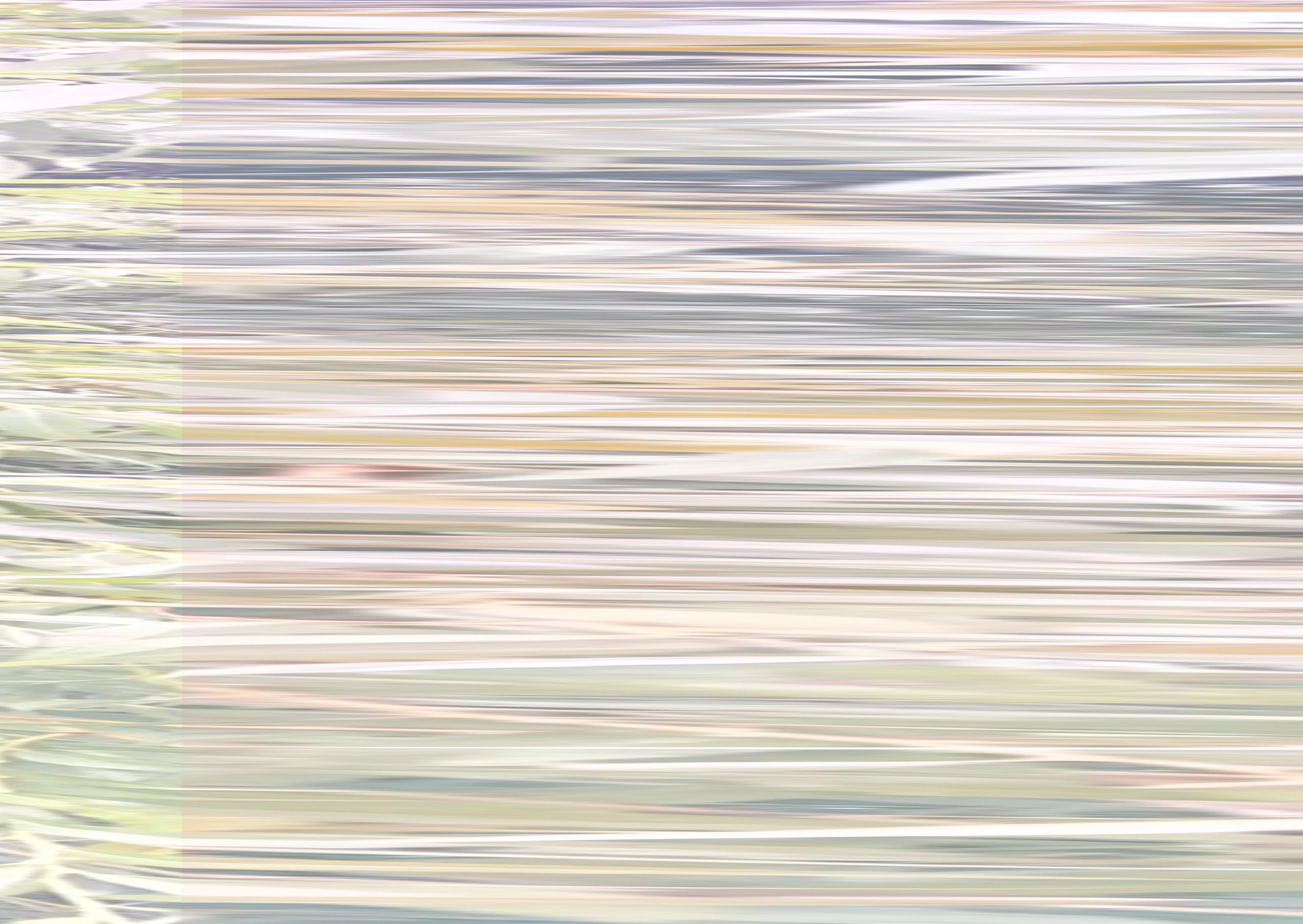
THERE WAS NO SUN  
IN WINTER TURMOIL  
MY SNOT DRIPS TO THE BASE OF THE FLOOR  
I HAVE NO ISSUE OF YOUR FACE NO LAW  
I DRINK FOR PLEASURE OVER ELECTRIC BEAT  
WE ALL DANCED FOR LEISURE IN THE MIX OF  
A SOUR STELLA  
THE GREATEST GREEN I'VE EVER SEEN.  
A PALE TALE FOR LOVE, I FORGOT MY BOW  
I USED TO SONG THESE TIGHT LIPPED  
WORDS  
IN MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO....  
SOME DISTANCE AGO.



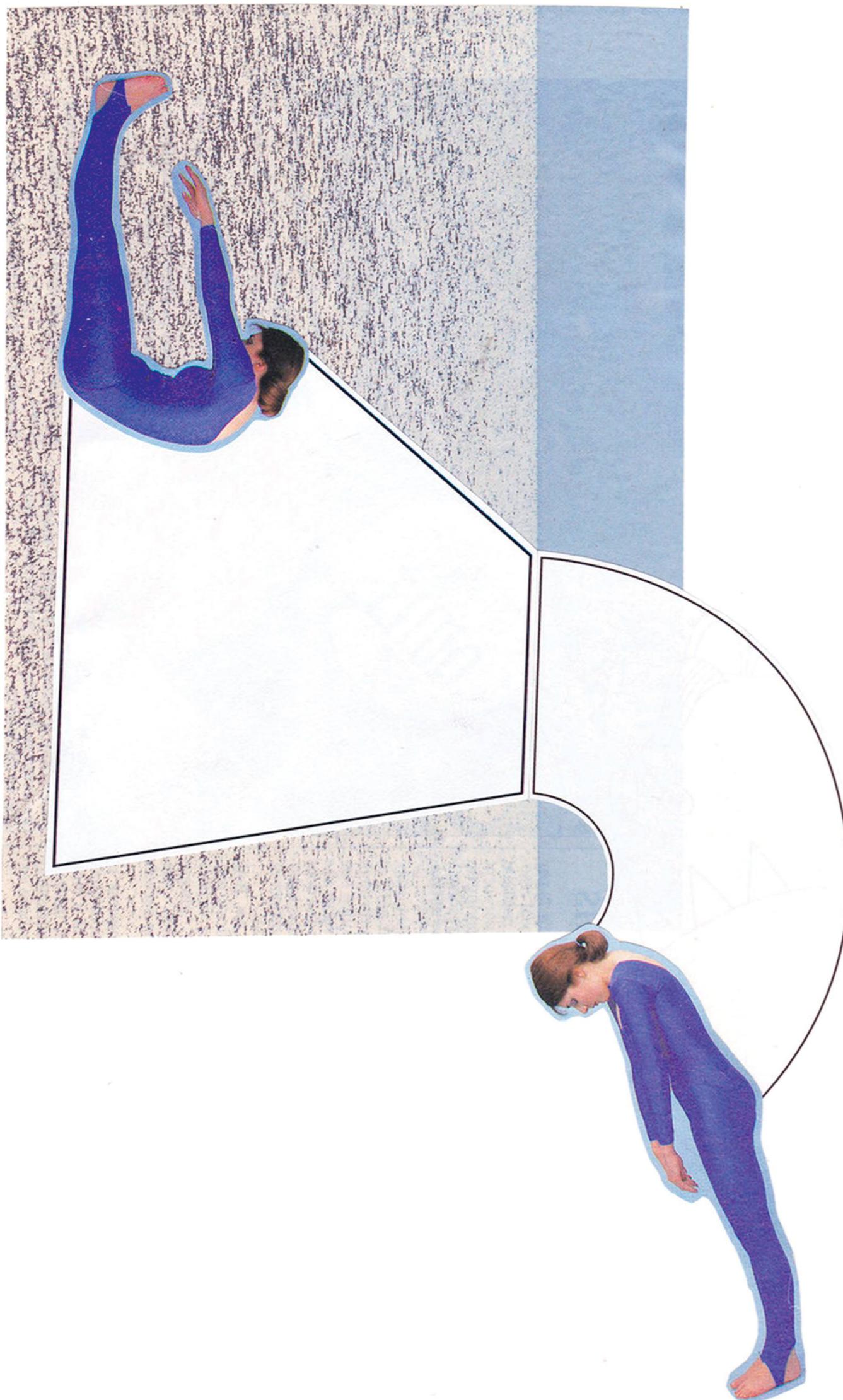


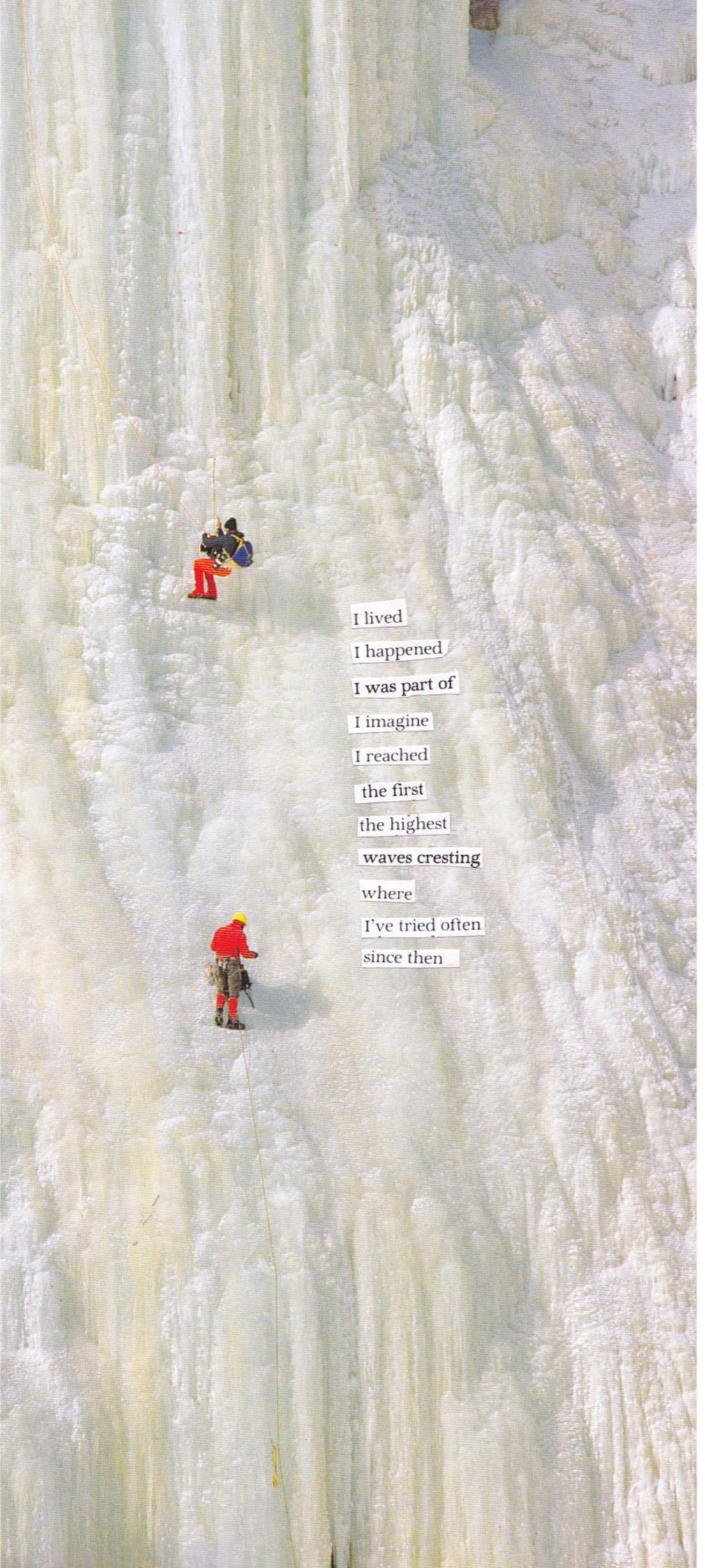




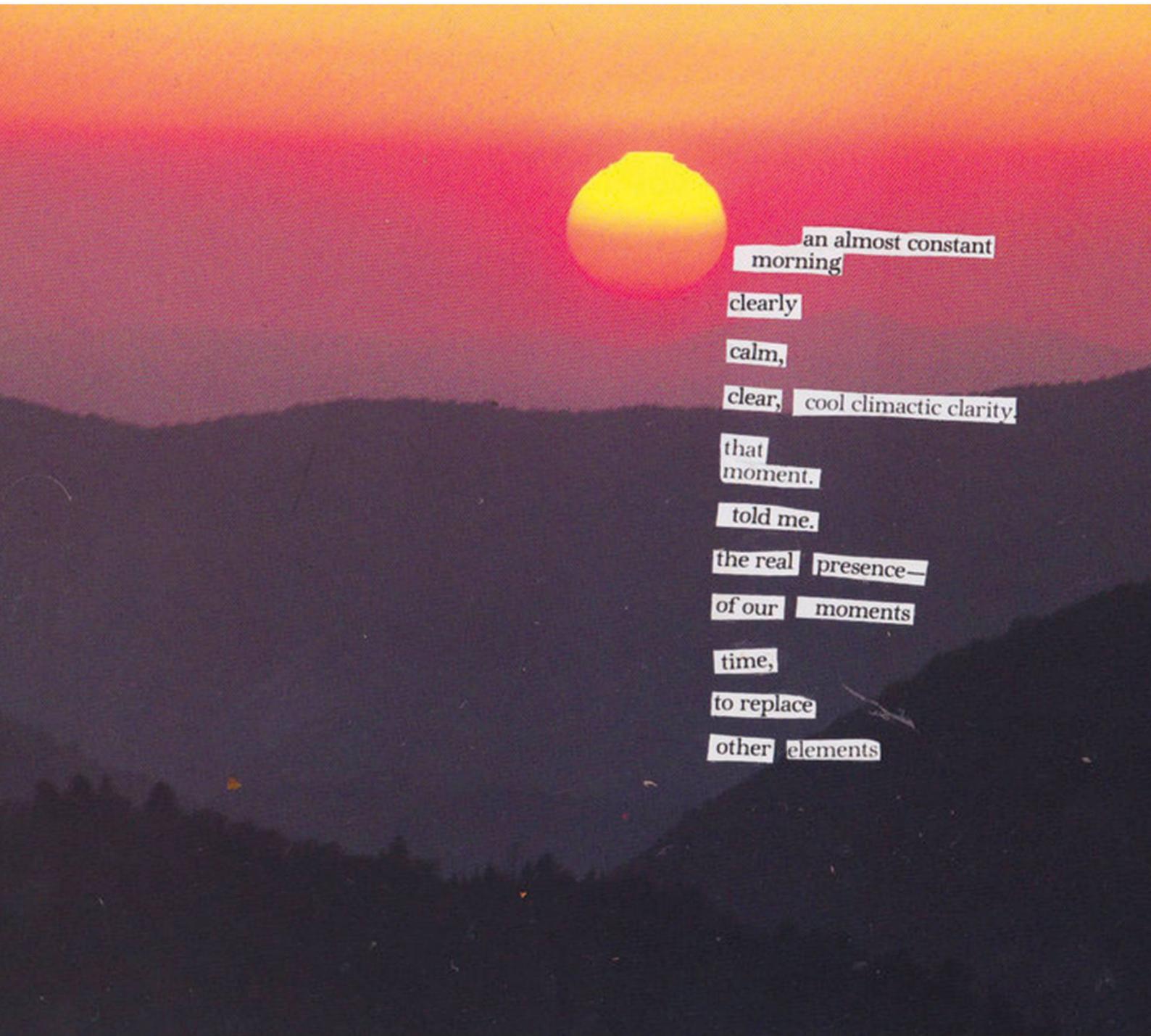








I lived  
I happened  
I was part of  
I imagine  
I reached  
the first  
the highest  
waves cresting  
where  
I've tried often  
since then



an almost constant  
morning  
clearly  
calm,  
clear, cool climactic clarity.  
that  
moment.  
told me.  
the real presence—  
of our moments  
time,  
to replace  
other elements



2018