

RAW

*a poetry
collection*



by **Annette Mokuia**

illustrations by **Judith Tong**

Raw

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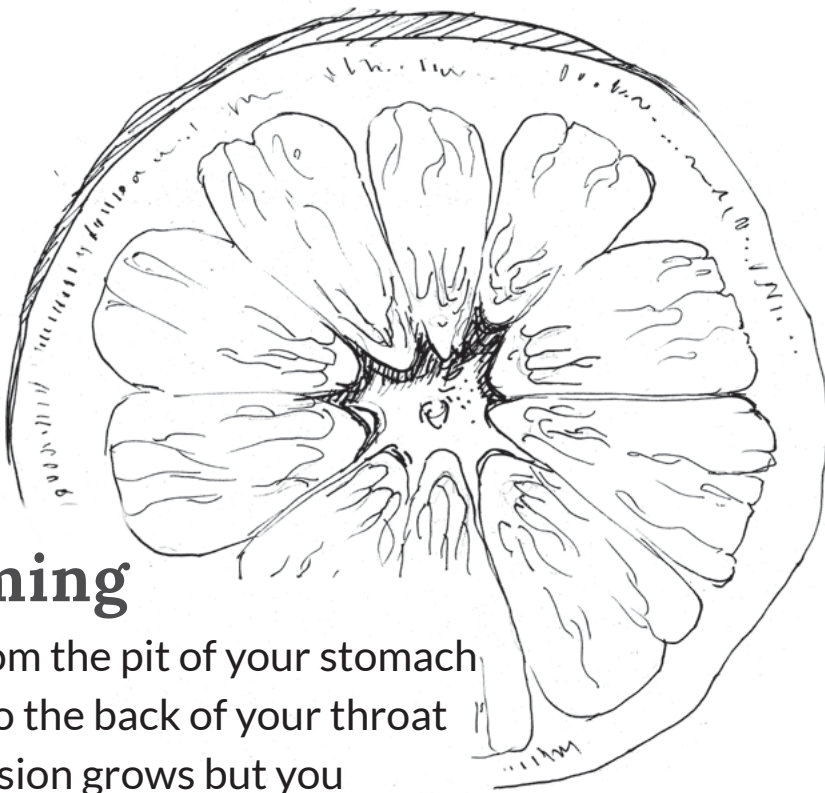
Holy Communion

Our limbs
Dangle across the branches
We smell of the earth. Our sweat
Dripping, as its scent rises
Up to greet our noses
We radiate life

Lucid Dreaming

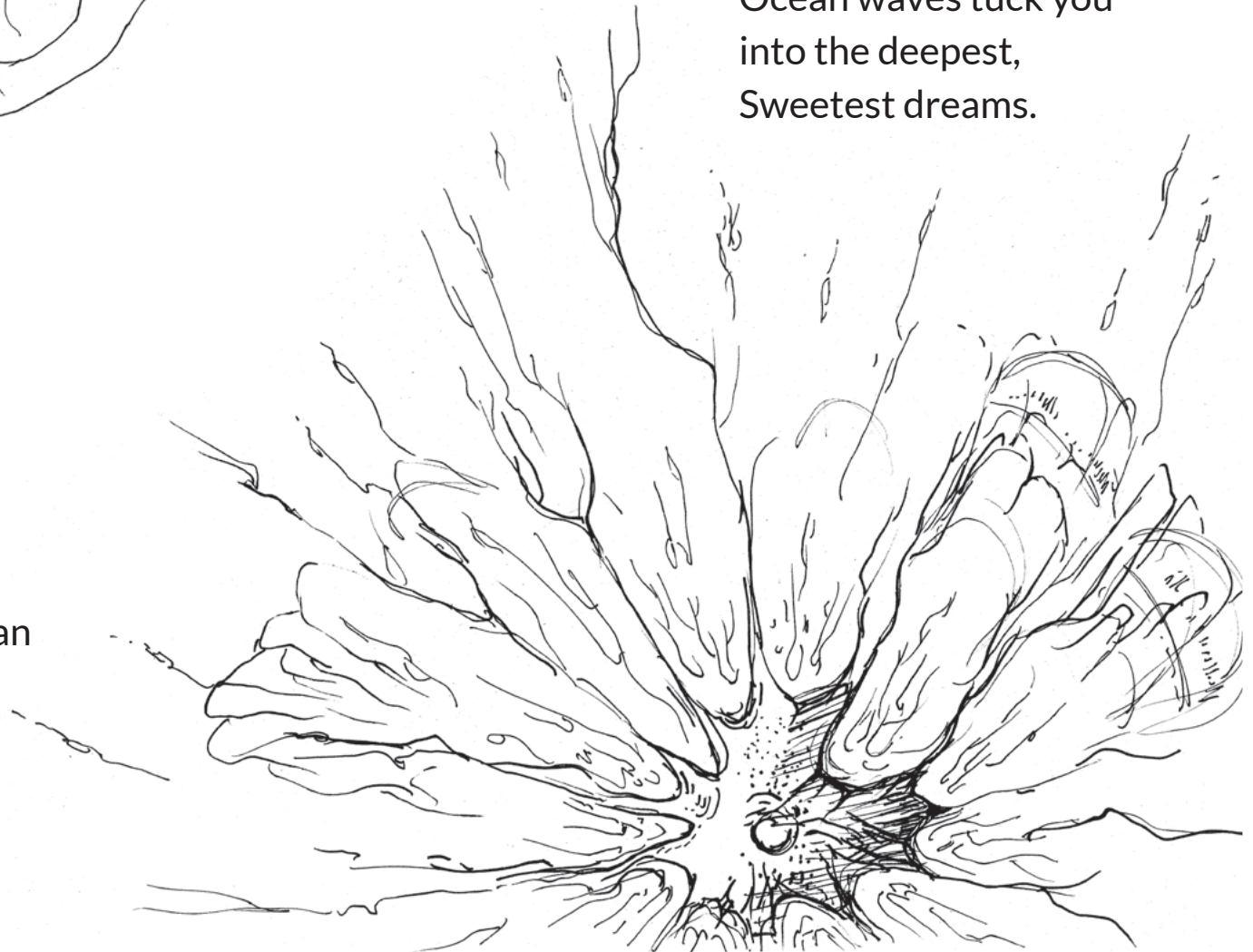
It rises from the pit of your stomach
Pushing to the back of your throat
Your aversion grows but you
Dare not look away
The image plays and replays itself
Backs and forth
Energies rocking
You are in the vessel.
And yet you are far, far away
Squinting at screens

A long string of vomit balances
Between your esophagus and the trash can
Your stomach walls clench,
Ceaselessly,
You expel air and noise
Grunts and moans



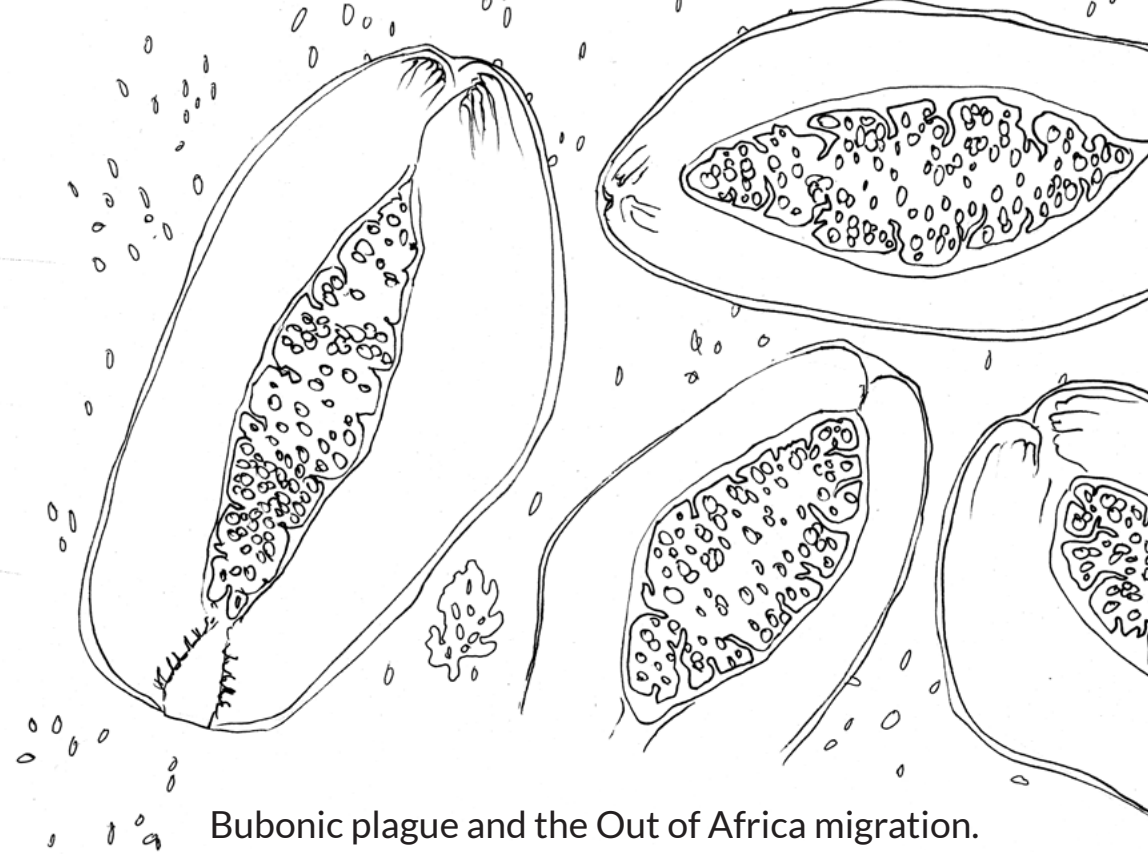
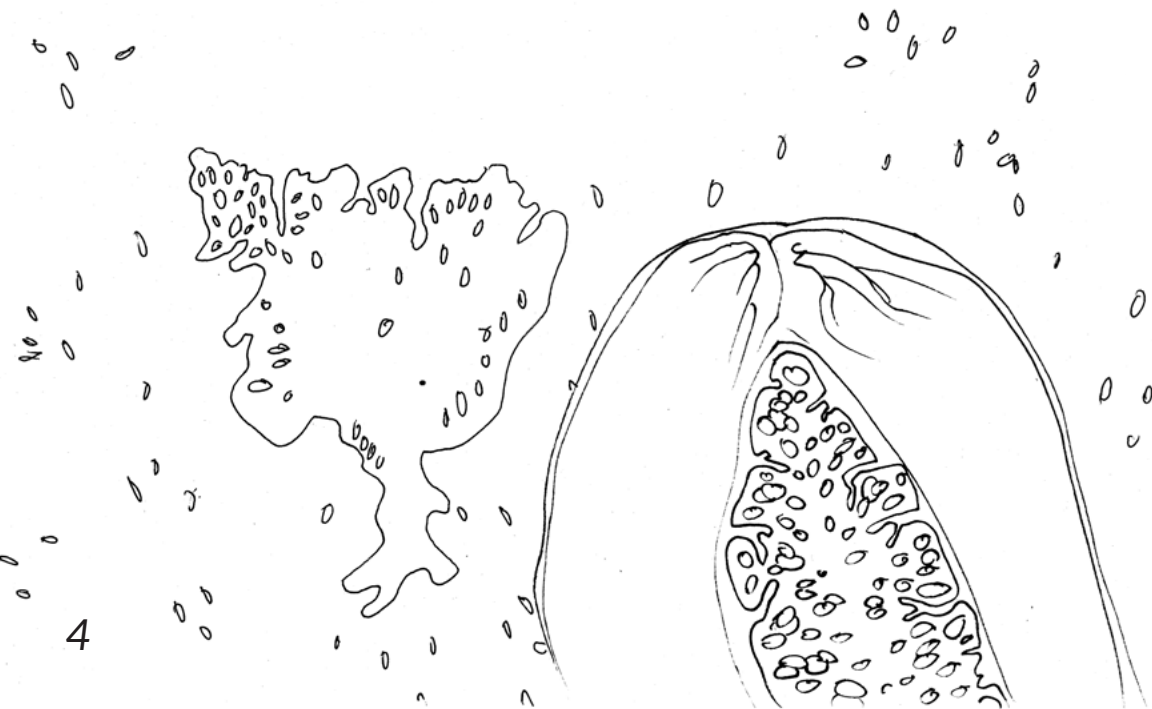
Sounds of rebellion
Expelling the rotting
This is your one act
To halt the autolysis

You wipe the corners
Of your mouth
The storm has calmed
Ocean waves tuck you
into the deepest,
Sweetest dreams.



To Zion

Broken promises. Interlude. Misdirected lyrics,
misinformed deduction, **emphasized**
reductions. Negotiated destruction,
facing reconstruction. Hybridity and Duality.
Spirituality and negating conformity. *Dragged*
earloops. Pulled bodies. Estranged spirits. Black hole. Empty
soul. Frozen cuts. Tender pieces. Open wounds. Alcohol
fills them. Simplicity and **redundancy**. Creativity in
abundance. Cosmic Injustices. Ripped Open, Mangled.



Bubonic plague and the Out of Africa migration.

The rape of black men and the sacrifice of the
flesh. **Control of the pen.** Freedom of the mind.

Diminishing returns and **divinity** in reverse. Morose.
Fingers deep. Sleeping dogs lie as *muscles throb*
on their neck. Blood runs dry.

Othello revised is Okonkwo revived. **Decline and**
demise. Tentacles of the pale man. Discontent.
Insecure. Unsure. Clichés, so mundane. *Ordinary as*
fondue. Nina so blue. *Country so progressive*. King not
aggressive, King impressive. Repressive ideology.
Compression. Oppression. Redemption?

Sleeping Through Revolutions

I awoke to blood, thick and heavy
On my thighs.
Imagined it spreading its gelatinous
Consistency across my lower body and
Pulling at my skin.
Stretching.

I am parched.

Red lumps of tissue float
On the cotton runway.
Clinging delicately to each coil
On its way.

Uterus pulsing, swollen, bursting
With heat
I am sure I am about to explode

The coldness of re-wearing
My blood shakes me to my core.

This is how you expel demons.

Birth

Allow the pain to shake you,
As you should.

Shivers run down your spine as
your mascara stained tears
turn into a stream.

You are the Nile, birthing and rebirthing.

You promise yourself
this will be the last miscarriage.

Next time you won't be so broken.

Next time.

Status Quo

Long slender fingers grip
The white and blue
Her fingers daintily positioned
Against its slender body.
She presses it against his lips
And he takes a breath from her hand.

Tinted windows stare back at her
She peers even more before looking away
Surprised by her audacity
“You don’t know me,” he says.
“No one really knows me.”

You think of the countless nights
You have watched him sleep,
How many uneven breaths you have counted,
How you have become accustomed to the
Cadence of his snore.

“You don’t know me either,”
You return.

Edges

Hairs pulling, stretching,
Coiling, curling

Bending and bowing to the
rhythm of the heat

The track pulls ferociously at her thick cornrow
It sits precariously at the edge of her forehead

Black thread unravels and pokes out

the edge of her tracks.

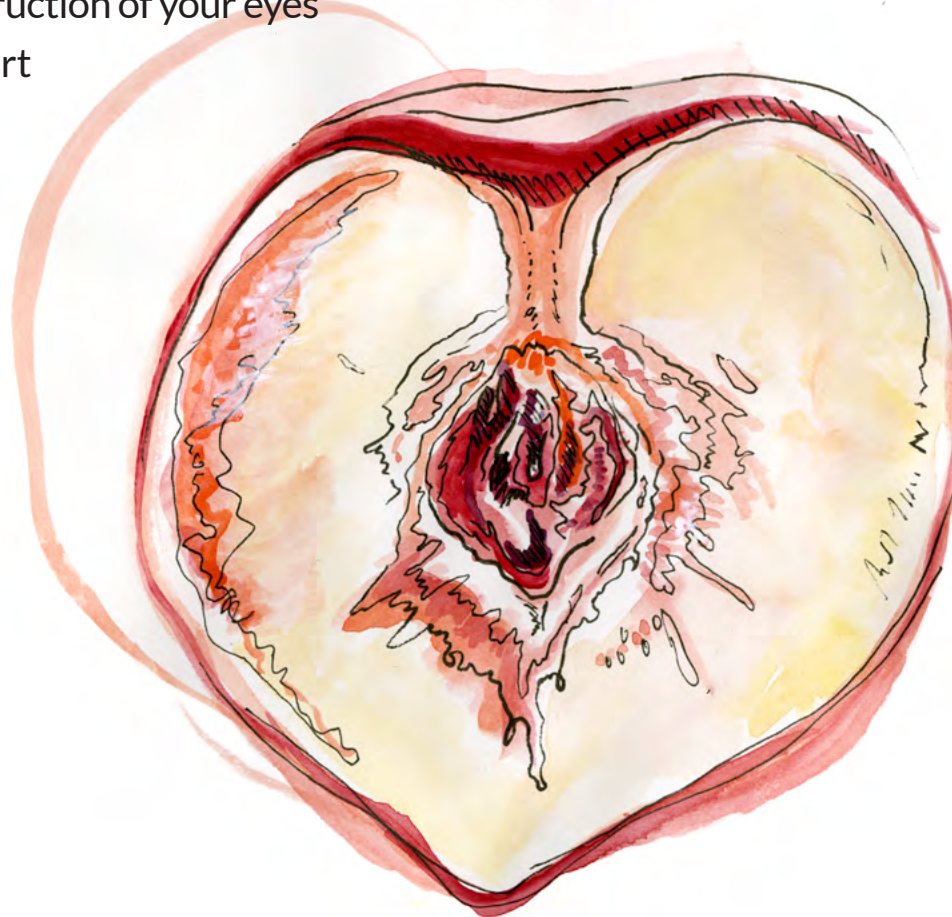
Exposed.

Opening

The muscles on her calves
Clench and unclench.
It reminds you of the swelling,
The sweet smell underneath
Your dress.



It reminds you of the vast expanses,
Of clouds and skies.
Lights dancing in rays to the instruction of your eyes
You feel an opening in your heart



A lifting, a stretching
Light pours out.
Multiplying, building.
Overwhelmingly,
Ceaselessly



Utamu / the Sweetness

It tastes like a warm, over-ripe
Mango on a humid afternoon,
Under towering mango trees,
In the sweet, sweet heat
Of Mombasa.

The mango melts on your tongue,
Gliding its way to the back of your mouth
Its fibers curl and entwine around your tonsils
Choking,
Soothing,
Calming.



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