

"i am not a poet"


Tonya Nguyen

Why don't we dance to the buzz
of fluorescence, to the rain on
fiery trails, to the taste of
roasted barley - stuck in the
corner of my lips?

I dance on swinging trees,
where you won't remember me. I
saw flowers blossom despite the
dark, and together the petals
we plucked and ate.

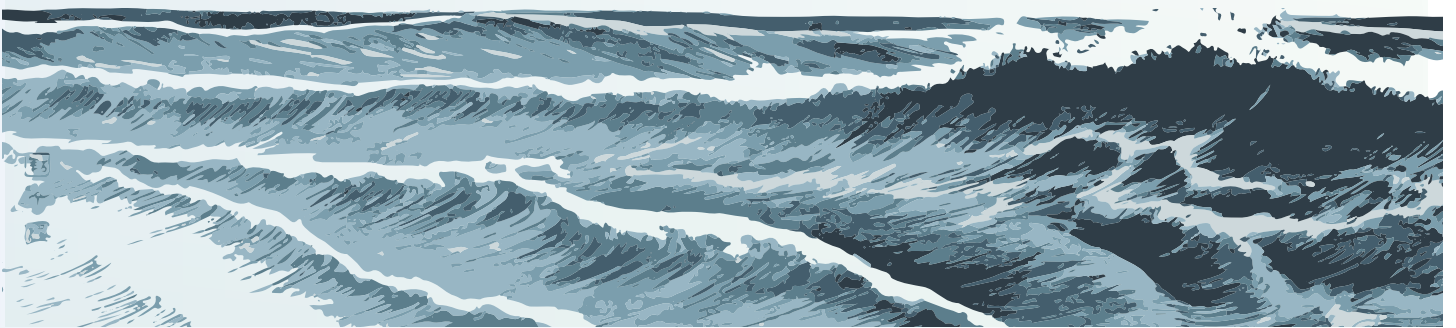
Today, a tender mountain peach
rolled down the hill and land-
ed at my feet, as I looked on
in defeat with the beat of my
heart like


falling trees.



The
smell of ginseng
pulling me in, it's the blue
glow of the window paneled doors
in my mother's room. The red, yellow,
queer, dirt-smeared plastic playground
that lived in frames peeking at me through
the transparent tapping. Under blinded eyes,
a drunken bird flew through, only to be halted
by that illusion of a path. The smell is gone now.
Wine rice has such an effect, like a silken sick-
ness that slices like vegan. I ate vegetables
that grew taller than me but if we didn't
eat them, under my feet they crumbled,
crunch, cry, chirp, little birdy, back to
life.

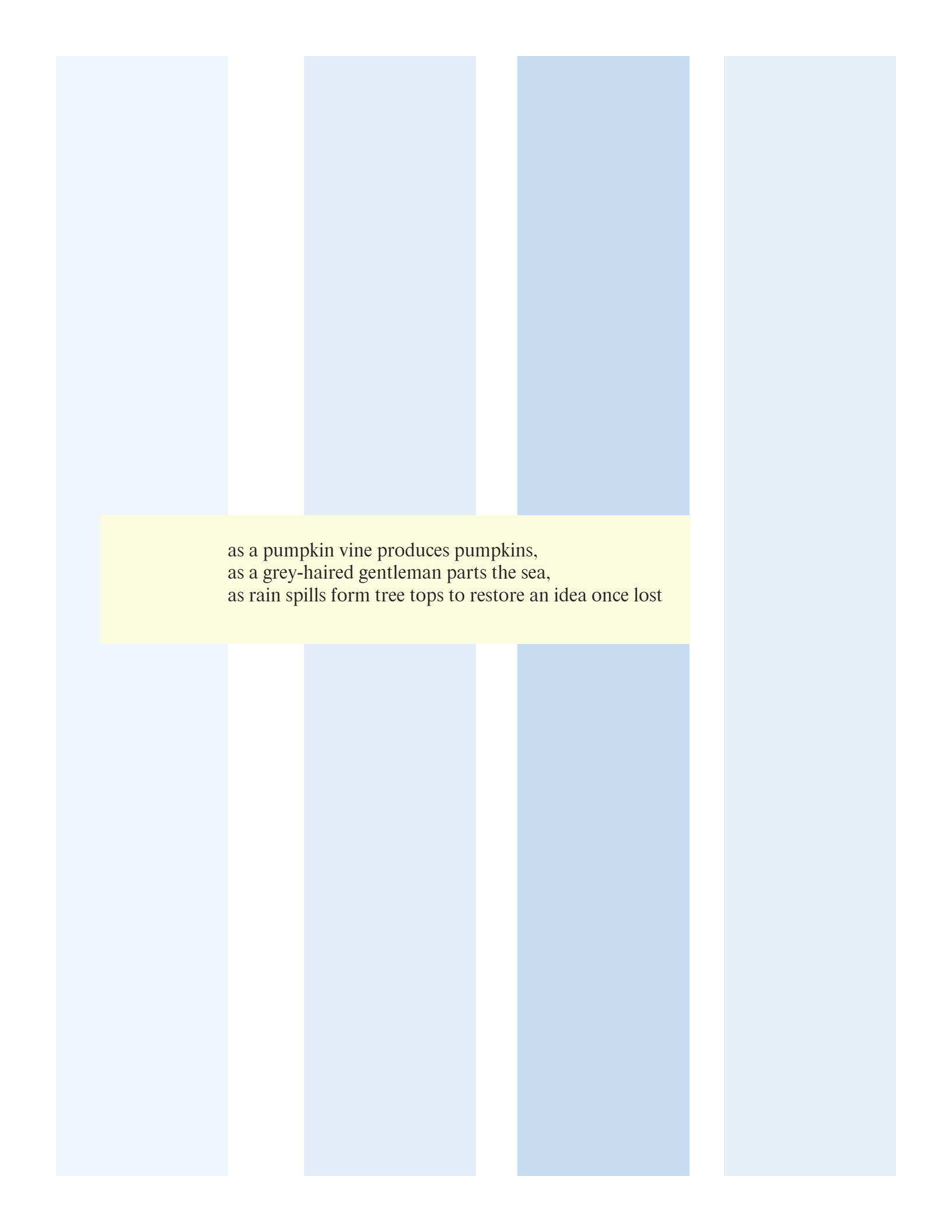
Sadness is the summer I stuck my head into deep water and nearly drowned. A lifeless creature moving upon the floor, its' only purpose was to clean. Feelings like sadness and disorientation come in lulling waves. My knees buck under my weight and I forget how to be half a human when I'm feeling something so clearly, definable, by the damned laws of physics, philosophy, the pedantry of AP Language at sixteen, human. But not all things come in waves, more like "glass pumpkins in a crackling vermillion sea," they push and pull harder than I can anticipate. When I feel that I've hurt you, I am an Egyptian in Exodus. I am seven, nine, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen and three months all over again. And the urge to clean is so strange. This is not an attempt to fix but all I know is how to fix and to wrap brushed cheeks in bandages. Am I hurting? Who? You? Hurting others? Healing me? Healing you? I'm that creature that cleaned the pool, blue, fun to drag on hot summer days. But. I am expensive and only exist if you can afford some luxury and brave the seasons.





today, my mind smeared across the sky
her voice sounds like the way dark chocolate melts
this room turns me into yellow, pink, blue

a body is born in wake of morning dew,
a body is decomposing into oil streaks,
a body is pink, brown, laid out like chopsticks on a table.



as a pumpkin vine produces pumpkins,
as a grey-haired gentleman parts the sea,
as rain spills from tree tops to restore an idea once lost



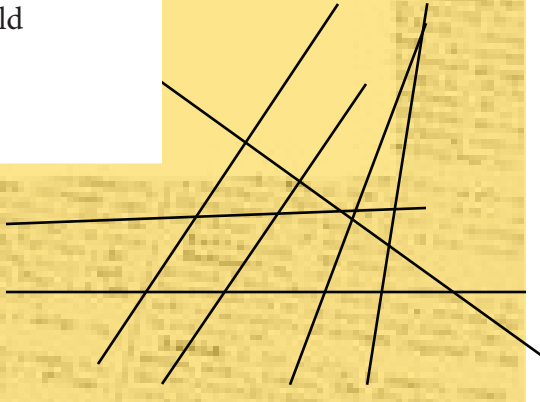
Honeysuckle sweetness
masks bitter leaves.


I spent winter, spring, summer
Drowning bitter pills in sweet slumber
I left my possessions undressed and
In your bed, there lives a brightness
I wonder if you'll throw it away, that
Yellow pillow where our heads laid.
With the spring dew dawn and no summer song,
I should've known you should be far gone.

I	gave	love	and	no	control
I	gave	love	and	no	control
I	gave	love	and	no	control


I am out of love and only
Control

There are new fruits
In season. I pick from tree to tree,
Swinging vines that dance without reason.
If the Christian God were real and if
I could fit in some archetypal field
Would someone call me Eve?





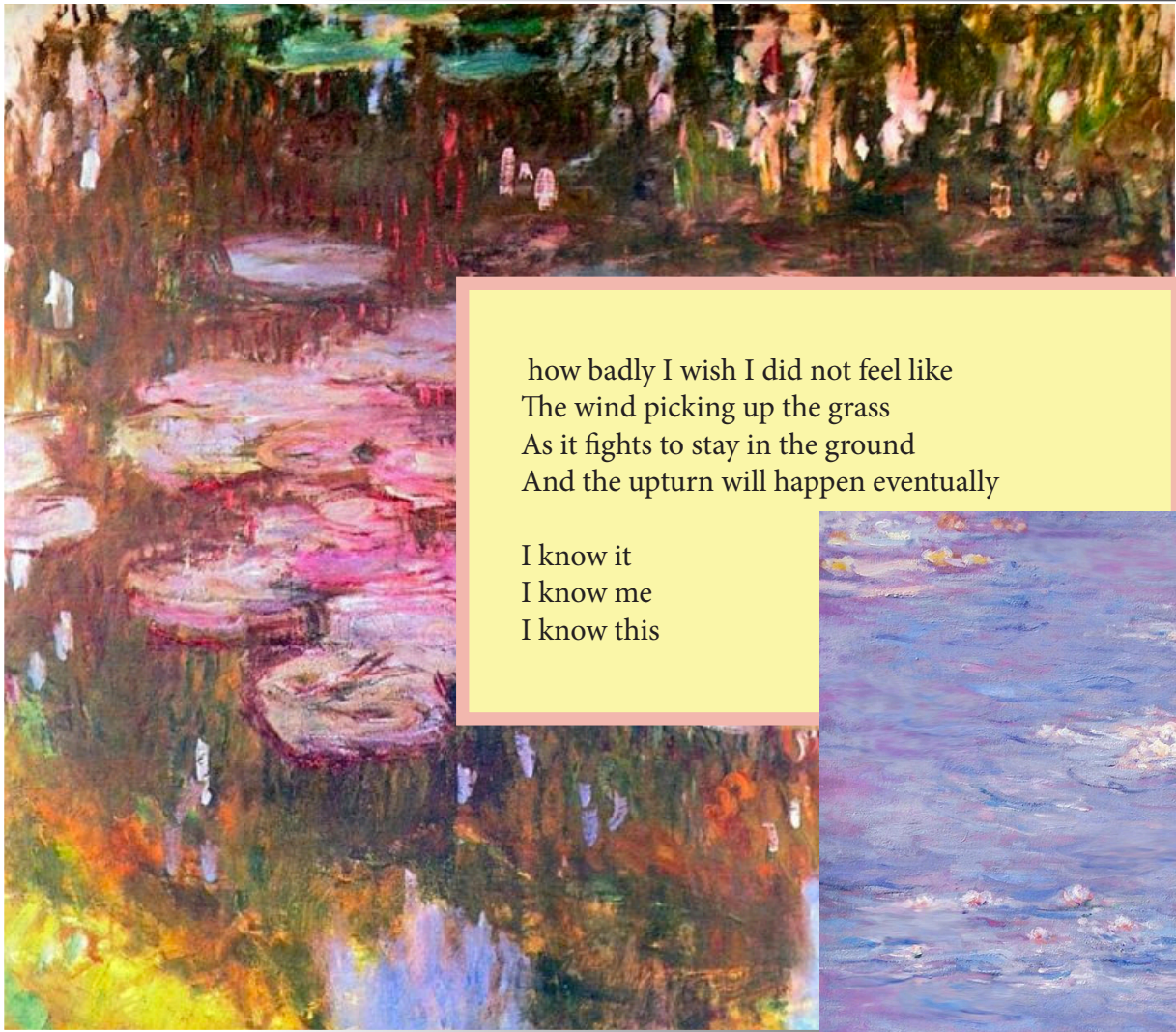
Would it be nice to be frozen in gold, forever
etched in memory? I know even the sun will
die, even the stars turn to dust, that diamonds
can recede into
nothingness – but I, give without
expectation,
live for moments like this.



Thin bones crumble mathematical notation
on green and the sound of that thk thk thk
sighs against my ear, the sensation of my
shaking soul punching its way out of my
heart, already torn open like summer ro-
mance, taro, chocolate, cs61a nervousness.
I cried so much and you fed me sugar and
confidence.

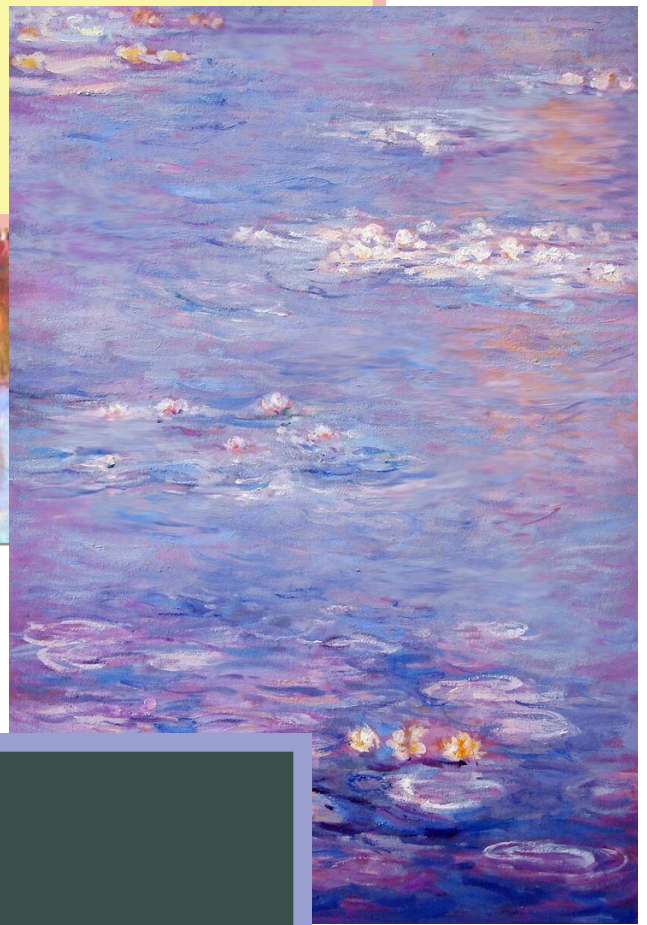
That face, a question mark, marking sense
in scissors hands and crisp cut curtains.
Pull the blinds over my eyes to shake me
to my core

Wash away the past
Do I even exist to you?
Illusion of respect are like left over rice

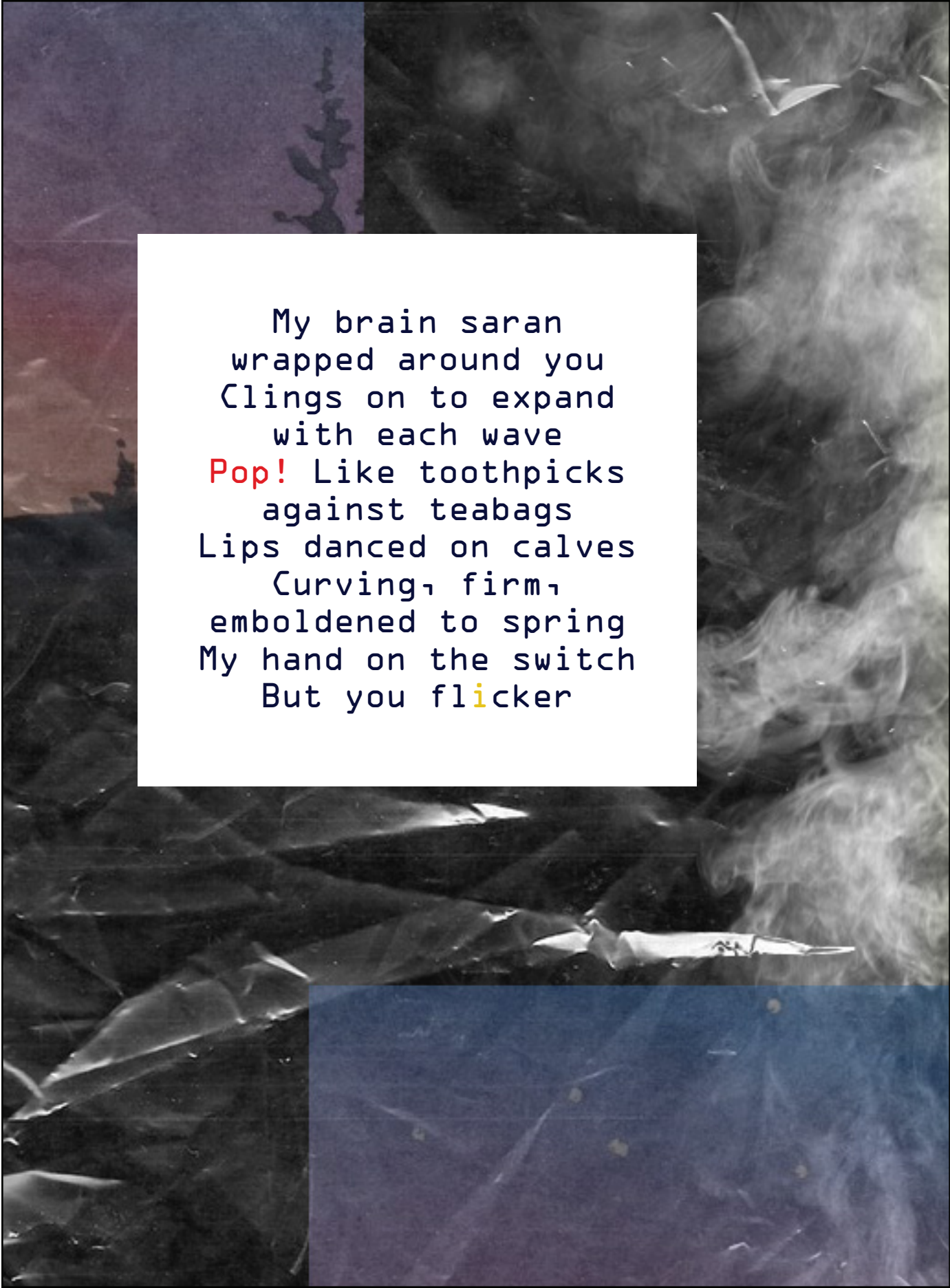


how badly I wish I did not feel like
The wind picking up the grass
As it fights to stay in the ground
And the upturn will happen eventually

I know it
I know me
I know this



I know



My brain saran
wrapped around you
Clings on to expand
with each wave
Pop! Like toothpicks
against teabags
Lips danced on calves
Curving, firm,
emboldened to spring
My hand on the switch
But you flicker