

saudade issue 02



dear reader.

welcome to the second issue of serendipity magazine!

in this issue, we turn our attention to *saudade*—a feeling both tender and heavy, shaped by longing, memory, and the quiet presence of absence.

in curating this issue, we wanted to honor the beauty of yearning—the love that lingers, the memories that ache softly, and the connections that continue to shape us even in their absence. within these pages, you'll find stories, poetry, and art that explore saudade in its many forms: nostalgic, bittersweet, intimate, and deeply human. each piece is an invitation to sit with emotion, to reflect, and to find meaning in what we miss.

our contributors have poured their hearts into works that hold both sorrow and warmth, reminding us that saudade is not just about loss, but about the depth of love and experience that came before it. we invite you to slow down and feel. to embrace the ache and to recognize the quiet beauty in longing itself.

thank you for continuing this journey with us, and for allowing serendipity to hold space for feelings that arrive unexpectedly and stay with us.

with love,

angelina nguyen (founder and editor-in-chief)

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the shadows of our minds

claudia wysocky

Can
touch
hair?
my
on
shoulder?
the
of
body?
presence
anchor,
me

I
your
Place
hand
your
Feel
warmth
your
Your
my
keeping
steady.

But

darkness

when

and

I

you

not

in the

of the night

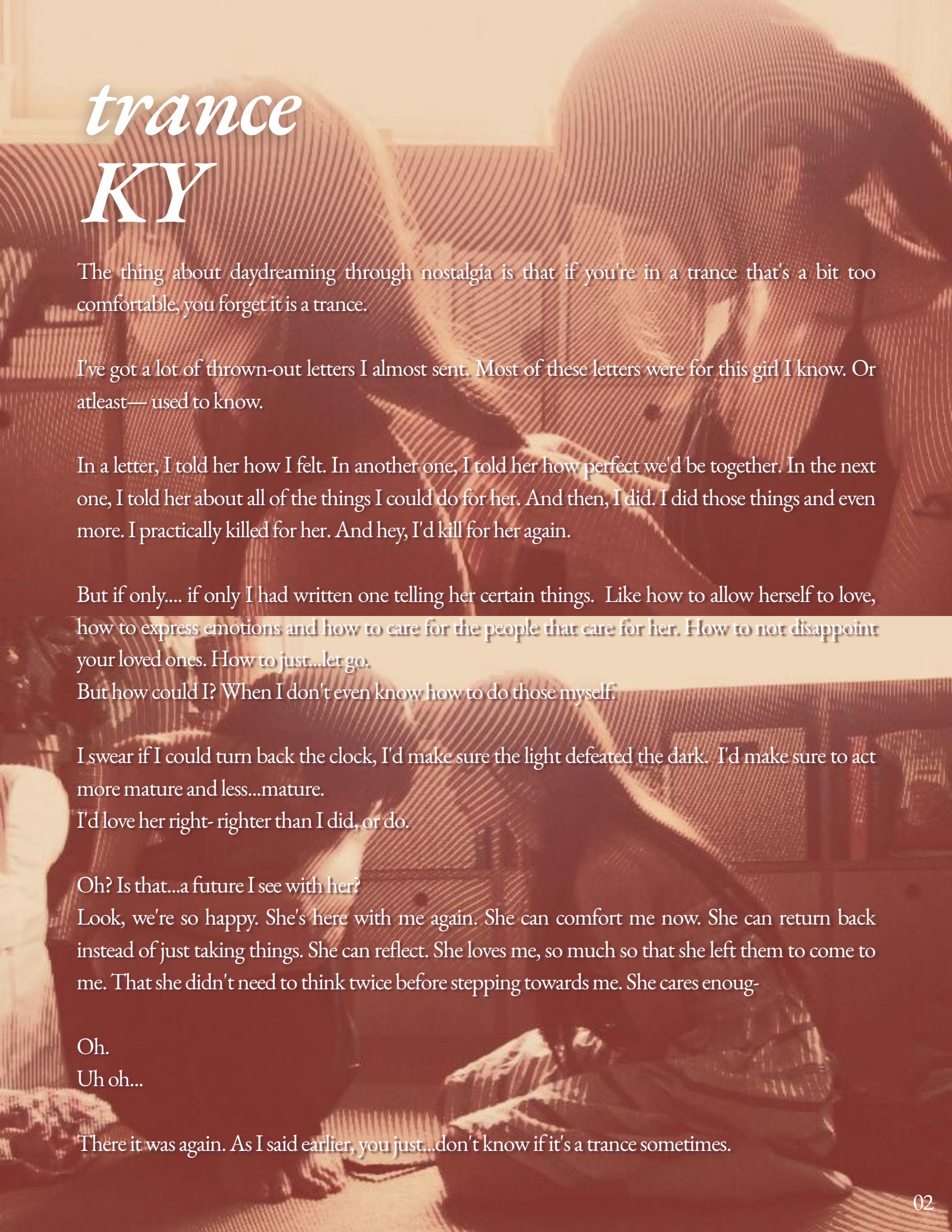
I close my eyes

feel you near

know

are

here.



trance

KY

The thing about daydreaming through nostalgia is that if you're in a trance that's a bit too comfortable, you forget it is a trance.

I've got a lot of thrown-out letters I almost sent. Most of these letters were for this girl I know. Or atleast— used to know.

In a letter, I told her how I felt. In another one, I told her how perfect we'd be together. In the next one, I told her about all of the things I could do for her. And then, I did. I did those things and even more. I practically killed for her. And hey, I'd kill for her again.

But if only.... if only I had written one telling her certain things. Like how to allow herself to love, how to express emotions and how to care for the people that care for her. How to not disappoint your loved ones. How to just...let go.

But how could I? When I don't even know how to do those myself.

I swear if I could turn back the clock, I'd make sure the light defeated the dark. I'd make sure to act more mature and less...mature.

I'd love her right- righter than I did, or do.

Oh? Is that...a future I see with her?

Look, we're so happy. She's here with me again. She can comfort me now. She can return back instead of just taking things. She can reflect. She loves me, so much so that she left them to come to me. That she didn't need to think twice before stepping towards me. She cares enough-

Oh.

Uh oh...

There it was again. As I said earlier, you just...don't know if it's a trance sometimes.

the relentless pursuit grace lee

The leaf was auburn as it drifted
down, down, down,
 descending through
 breezy, foggy air.

Like the petals upon the surrounding
branches, its tip had browned,
turned red and orange with fall,
as it fell like unfurling ribbons.
Its descent slowed as it grazed the
sniffing nose of a hound, whose
brown fur seemed to unfurl atop
the graveyard of browned leaves
upon which it stood.

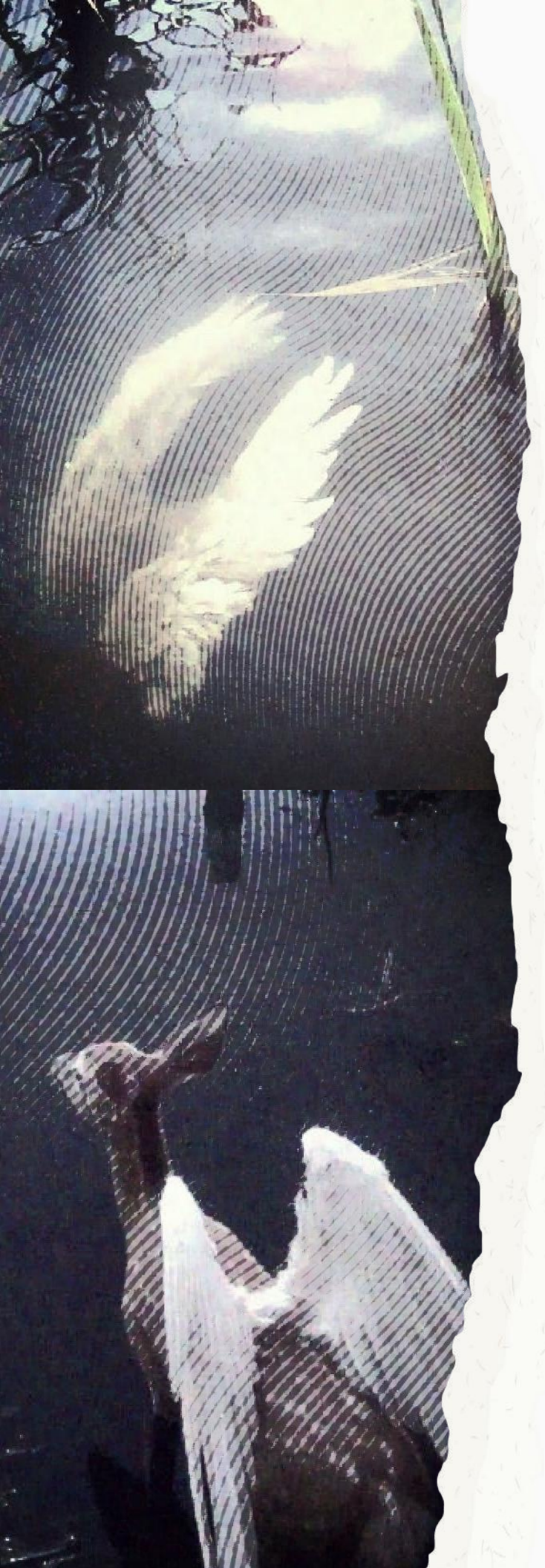
A flinch from the hound spurred the leaf forward.
Its long ears perking, the hound began its
hurried chase after the windswept, fallen leaf.

A cold, autumn breeze swept its ears
behind like drooping curtains as the hound
shot forward, chasing the rusted leaf
like a moth to a fiery flame. All else
blurred as its focus centered upon
the relentless pursuit. Unknowing of
having reached the pier, its speed endured.

Then, cold enveloped the hound's body.

The bubbling, bright blue water was a thick,
crisp blanket upon adrenaline-fueled
skin. The hound, eyes unfocusing at last,
spun upon the lake until its pupils calmly
gazed up at the azure blue sky above.





IN TWO SHADES OF LOVE

Ayushma Thapa

A forbidden apple,
So indulgent and bright,
I want our fates to be intertwined.

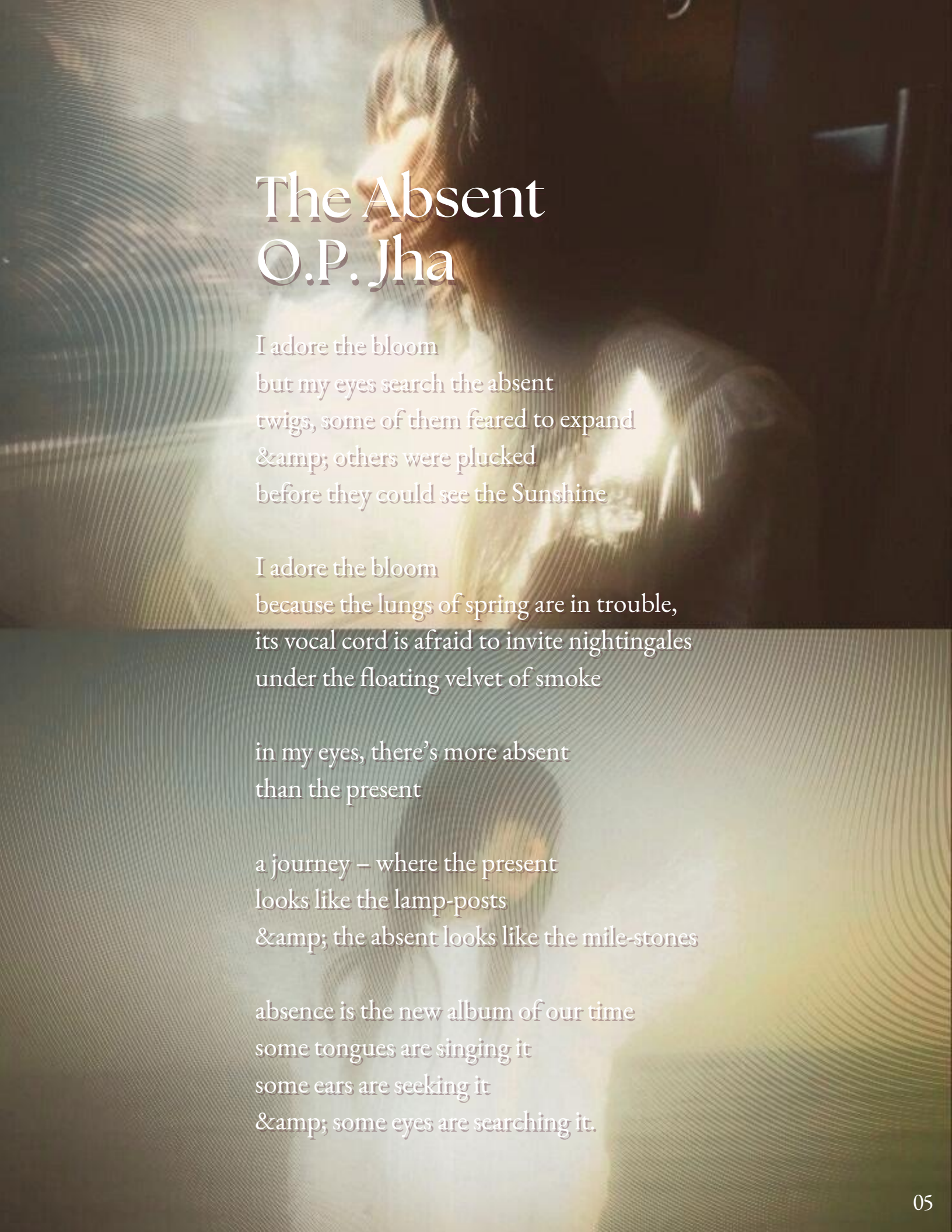
Like a flower,
You seem to unfurl me,
And I've lost all my grace.

So much so,
That I've kept you,
Like a secret to a grave.

My heart, it skips a beat,
As I catch your glimpse.
Like steel to a magnet
I feel drawn to your lips.

It feels wrong, awful
Knowing you don't love the way I do.
You seem to love in a shade,
While I love in two.

I love you so much,
And I try to let you go,
A tragedy it is,
I can tell, not show.



The Absent O.P. Jha

I adore the bloom
but my eyes search the absent
twigs, some of them feared to expand
& others were plucked
before they could see the Sunshine

I adore the bloom
because the lungs of spring are in trouble,
its vocal cord is afraid to invite nightingales
under the floating velvet of smoke

in my eyes, there's more absent
than the present

a journey – where the present
looks like the lamp-posts
& the absent looks like the mile-stones

absence is the new album of our time
some tongues are singing it
some ears are seeking it
& some eyes are searching it.



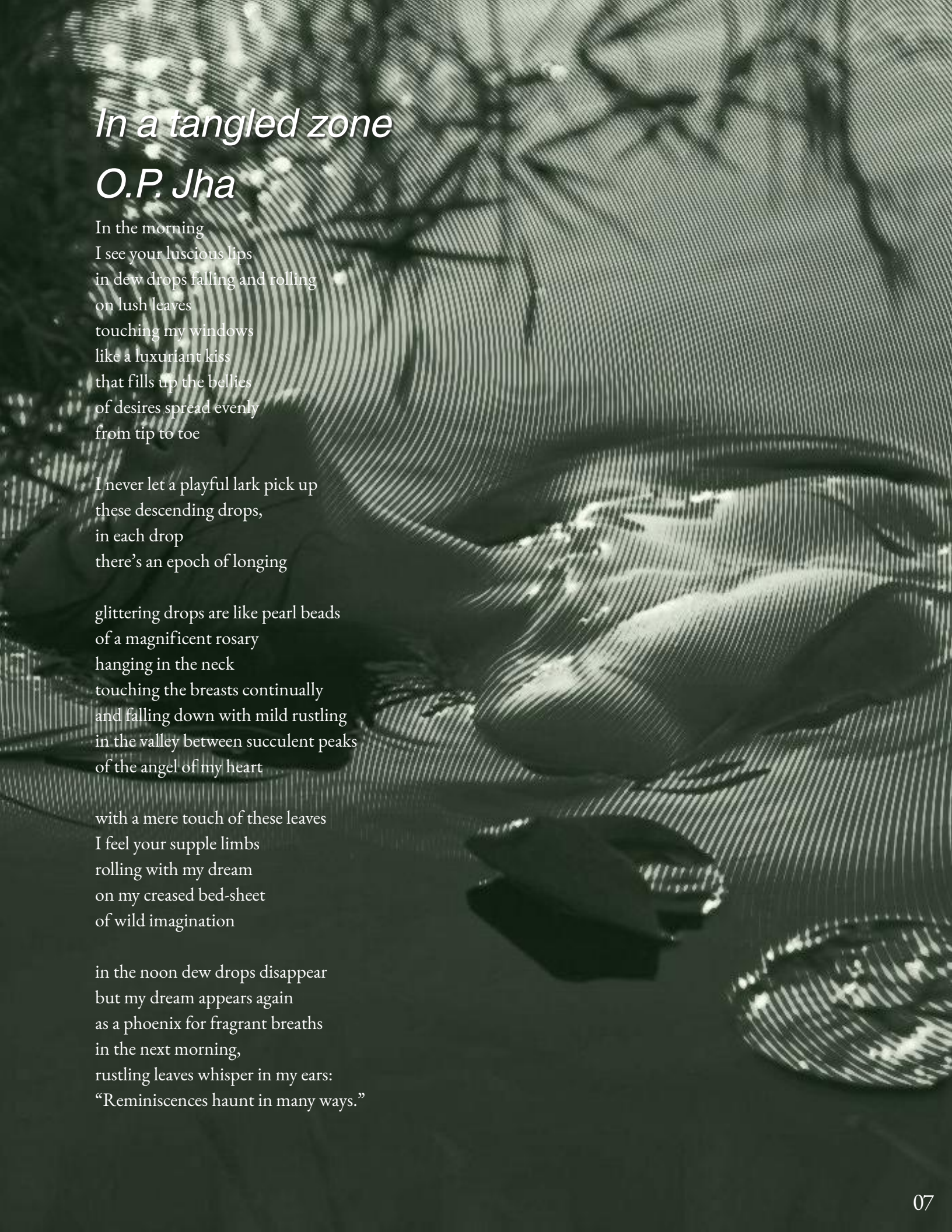
You - Me. Hello - Goodbye.

Hibah Shabkhez

You wave hello, you wave goodbye:
And never can I tell which I
Should rejoice in. Hello: I see
You; goodbye: I know you happy.
You wave hello, you wave goodbye.

Your heart sails away as you try
For both of us to laugh, to lie;
Within: tug of war. New country -
Or me. New family - or me ...
You wave hello, you wave goodbye:

And I smile too, who would fain cry
For the brother who would not ply
Me so with splendid gifts, just be
- Here, in the present, painlessly -
You wave hello, you wave goodbye.



In a tangled zone

O.P. Jha

In the morning
I see your luscious lips
in dew drops falling and rolling
on lush leaves
touching my windows
like a luxuriant kiss
that fills up the bellies
of desires spread evenly
from tip to toe

I never let a playful lark pick up
these descending drops,
in each drop
there's an epoch of longing

glittering drops are like pearl beads
of a magnificent rosary
hanging in the neck
touching the breasts continually
and falling down with mild rustling
in the valley between succulent peaks
of the angel of my heart

with a mere touch of these leaves
I feel your supple limbs
rolling with my dream
on my creased bed-sheet
of wild imagination

in the noon dew drops disappear
but my dream appears again
as a phoenix for fragrant breaths
in the next morning,
rustling leaves whisper in my ears:
"Reminiscences haunt in many ways."



my eyes see a chunk of the Sun
kissing the contours of clouds
and falling down through the clump
of dense leaves
to remind me for facing a tough day
going to spread its paws

my cells carry my flapping past
but my skin is treading
through my dappled present
here, my loss has found a life
in a fresh pithy poem
as a glittering pearl rosary of my love,
and my soil is soaking
the falling and rolling drops
of my lover's unforgotten sweat

my moist present is recalling my past
in the drenched soil of my love

my lips say, "I miss you."
but heart says, "I play with you."



moth angelina nguyen

you mistake the porch light for the moon and die for the error.
your faith burns brighter than sense ever could.

you worship the glow that blinds you, loyal fool of fire.
even smoke can look holy if you're desperate enough.

your wings applaud the heat that ruins you.
you keep circling the wound that made you.

i want to call you foolish, but i understand devotion.
i too have flown toward what would not hold me.

you think brightness means belonging.
you think the burn is proof you mattered.

around and around, your orbit tightens
a dance so graceful, it looks like purpose.

if i could, i'd ask you "is kindness so rare in your life that you mistake it for desire?"
but we both know, i'd still reach for the light.

the fear of bugs, and the urge to kill

Elle Lane Marston

Killing seems to come naturally to us. We kill our animals, we kill ourselves, we kill each other.

It seems to be perhaps the most natural instinct of the Human, to kill.

Afterall, was it not Cain who gave us life, by killing his brother?

Was it not his curse to wander, that led him to our benevolent hatred today?

We might seldom admit it, but we love to kill.

We love to lure bucks out into the open, to display their carcasses as trophies.

We love to step on ants and spiders and bugs, to enshrine our superiority in violence.

We love to desecrate the grounds on which plants have grown for millennia, all for a dollar.

Humans love to kill.

We hold a deep pervading selfishness, encouraged by catastrophists and grifters, that killing another is selfless, that killing oneself is the opposite.

We whine and groan when someone dies on the subway, for they, in their deep inconsideration, have just made you late for your meeting.

We cheer and roar when someone is killed in a faraway place or in a movie, for they were not worthy of living, for their suffering is finally over.

Everywhere we look, we see killing as a staple in society.

We talk and boast about killing ourselves, past, present, and future.

We engage in olympics, attempting to prove that we, in all our hatred and misery, are in fact the ones who detest their lives and bodies the worst.

We find talking about killing each other bubbly, saying such things as, “Argh, I’ll kill him for that,” and “If I have to fill out one more form, I swear to God I’ll kill someone”.

We love to threaten violence for the slightest transgression.

We find no hope or shred of compassion in our hearts for relieving the suffering of others, for they are not us, so, why should we care?

We tell ourselves we shouldn’t, so we don’t.

We walk by those in misery and hardship, we tell them to lace their bootstraps and “man up”, to simply get over it.

Yet, the truth is, there can never be improvement in our reeling societies, if an ointment is not applied to our wounds.

An ointment of kindness, compassion, and most of all, mercy.

Mercy to see someone, who has hurt us very much, perhaps unforgivably so, and decide not to hurt them back. To not exact revenge or comeuppance, but to simply live, and let live.

To die, and let die.

We Humans love to kill things, but perhaps, it doesn’t have to be that way forever.

Perhaps we, in our collective mistakes, are able to rise above our selfishness and hatred, beyond our impossibly self-centered impositions of respect and power.

Beyond the utter powerlessness we feel, in a world which won’t bend to our whim, in a world we’ve been led to believe would.

Perhaps, it is exactly this powerlessness that we must come to terms with.

The futility of our actions, the hundreds of, I love you’s that you never got to say, the hundreds of thousands of, I’m sorry’s.

Perhaps, it is only in finding acceptance of ourselves, in which we can truly, effectively, help others. Perhaps it is only in kindness that hatred can dissipate, only in compassion that apathy will resolve, only in mercy that cruelty will die.

We Humans love to kill things, and perhaps, with enough effort, we may kill our hatreds forever.



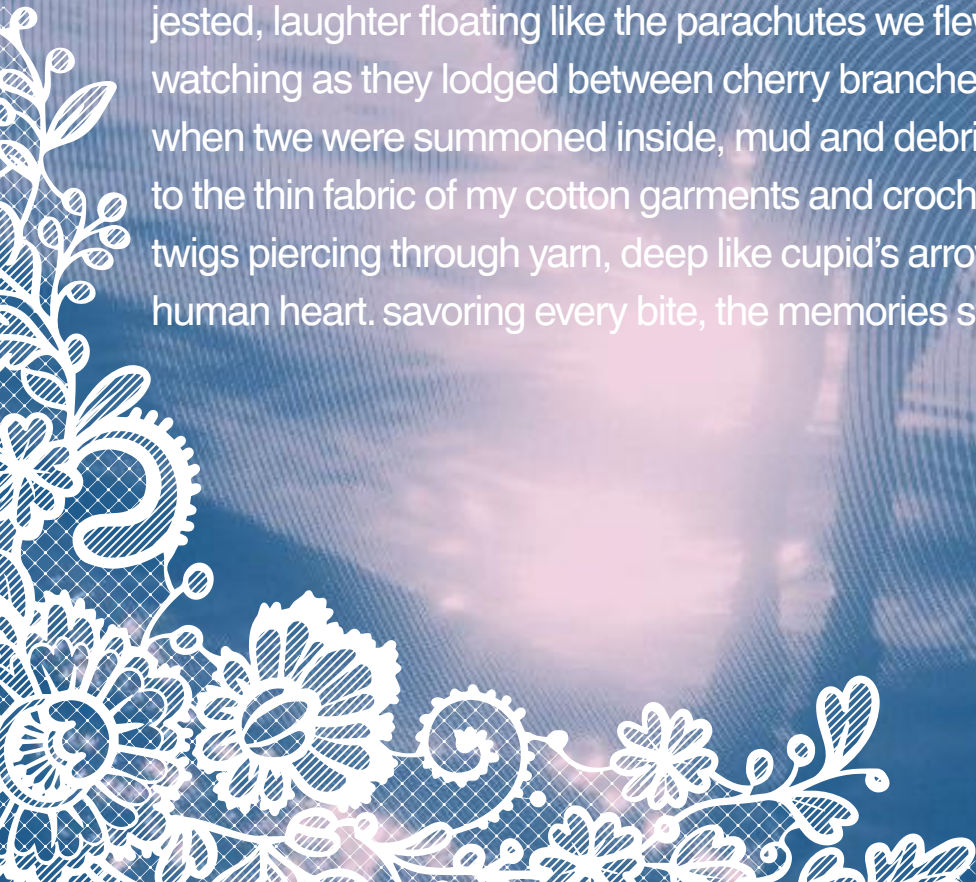
Spiral Downward
Aja Thomas

the memories stream

grace lee

grown by grandmother amongst her cherry blossom trees,
nurtured and rinsed by grandfather's calloused hands,
they whisper to my mind the echoes of my lamented youth.

leaping up high to grasp the hanging fruit as my
mother warned us against havoc and harm,
being scolded when i grasped scissors, sharp and piercing
as a siren's song, to trim glistening leaves upon branches
stretching above me like ancient towers. my brothers and i
jested, laughter floating like the parachutes we flew,
watching as they lodged between cherry branches and tomato leaves.
when tve were summoned inside, mud and debris clung
to the thin fabric of my cotton garments and crocheted socks,
twigs piercing through yarn, deep like cupid's arrow through a
human heart. savoring every bite, the memories stream into my mind.



Memories Of A Future

Jordan VanDerlinde

One of my plants has flies but I cannot tell who
I am so busy this morning, eating chia pudding, thinking of you

I read some poems, apparently the best of some year
made me smile, how nearly every one was an offense to my ear

I did think of some of yours, how you layer words so distinctly you
I need to scream about this, but what now? And to who?

you reminded me I love to write, that I should say my words aloud
that its not about sending them off, keeping them dark, under some shroud

the same way you love my untouched skin, imperfect thighs I gawk at in the mirror
whisper in my ear all the parts of me you love, lets just keep coming back right here.

sipping the sap

O.P Jha

no one saw churning inside
but someone saw seepage
of sap
and tried to sip it
but failed,
another strived to hold it
searched it in eyes
on lips
and on some delicate spots,
explored some caves
aspired to dive into abyss
with an inward thrust

on the deepest bed
found an oyster sleeping furiously
and touched the layers
of nacre, the mother of pearl

with an upward thrust
came up
a journey, a penance

a touch of the bottom
created ripples on the surface

then sipping the sap
then light
then blooming.



making glutinous rice with mother

grace lee

in my mind, i am twelve years old,
besides my beautiful, giggling mother,
molding glutinous rice into neat balls
with my flour-covered hands.

the kitchen is painted with a haze of thick, gray steam,
curling like silken ribbons around our dusty faces.
the earthy scent of sugar mingling with rice clings
to our hair, heavy as morning dew. my floury hands
press into the glutinous rice, its surface soft and sticky
as wet clay. powdery imprints bloom across the countertop
like fragile petals. mother twirls like a child herself, her
laughter a melody ringing soundly in my ears, as she sprinkles
my fingernails with sugar, or fairy dust, as she calls it. when she
tosses the rice into the air, it arcs like shooting stars across the
kitchen. her smile is like the bright, shimmering moonlight.

in reality, i am sixteen years old,
watching the horizon for a letter she
promised would arrive at the break of
dawn. foolish hope carves into my chest.

sunlight creeps in, sluggish and pale, its mustard yellow rays
pooling at my feet. my hands tremble as they clutch the
metal lid of the mailbox, its cold biting my fingertips.
when mother left, she swore one thing. like the scorpion
in the fairytales she once read to soothe me, her promises now
stung sharply with the venom of deceit. i send my wishes
to shooting stars as though i am sending paper boats
into harsh waters. i fold them with trembling hands,
yet each sinks into dark navy seas, unanswered as
they are swallowed whole by the hopelessly deep abyss.

water - blue

Last night I dreamed that I died by your hands.

You held me below the surface of the water, tears dripping down your face as I writhed under you, as the bubbles slowly ceased to come to the surface, and your hands eased their grip round my throat and my eyes went blank and so did yours.

When it was done, you stood, wiped your face, fixed your hair, schooled your expression, and walked away.

I remember sinking through the water - watching the colours fade from the earth, sinking past fish and the sharks and whale carcasses, gazing at me mournfully, begging me to save them from the maggots feasting on their souls.

I closed my eyes and passed by.

The light then began to fade from me, my skull slowly being crushed, my brain and body leaking fluids that curled into smoke signals in the water.

I remember yearning for you, despite it all.

I remember fighting - clawing at my skin, digging at my eyes, tearing the flesh off my bones - anything, anything, that would make the pain stop.

And then - I remember growing - larger and larger, until I was as big as you always were to me, until I could claw at the sides of the earth and draw myself up from the depths, heaving sweet air into my lungs, shedding sheets of water off muscle and fat, no longer bound by a body.

I remember stepping up, crushing the world below me, and launching myself away, into the sky, past the indiscernible universe.

I remember drifting through galaxies and explosions, past wars and births, existing alone, where nobody could touch me.

And through it all I could remember you.

I remember solitude, and I remember you, and I don't know if you remember me, but sometimes I like to tell myself you miss me. I say that you regret, but you never would, because I was at fault there, and no matter what I say or do or think that's not going to change.

I miss you.

(I hope you miss me too).



morning glories
hannah greenberg



peach mango swanresolution

my favorite dessert
is peach mango pie.

i love the taste
of the sweet fillings,
filling me with a warmth
that's tangible
and that burns my mouth.

i love the crunch of the pastry,
fried to perfection.
it reminds me of the home
i never actually grew up in.

when i taste the peach and mango,
i think back to warmer months
when the sun was out for longer
and the heat was blazing
and the flowers were blooming.

i remember us three,
sitting around the dining table,
wrapping peach and mango filling

into lumpia wrappers,
making our own desserts.



that late spring day
must've smelled like
fresh, on sale mangoes
and sweet canned peaches.

i remember that day so clearly.
when we walked all over town
and you split the teriyaki chicken
between all three of us.

i remember the cat who loved the sun,
accepting our love
as i put a daisy
in your back pocket.

i remember that day
and all the joy that came with it,
because you both were with me—
we weren't alone.

i miss you,
the sun who always shined for us.

i miss you,
the moon who was always in my corner.

i miss the summer
filled with peaches and mangoes.
now all i have is the memory
of our fond smiles
and of peach mango pie.



al fresco hibah shabkhez

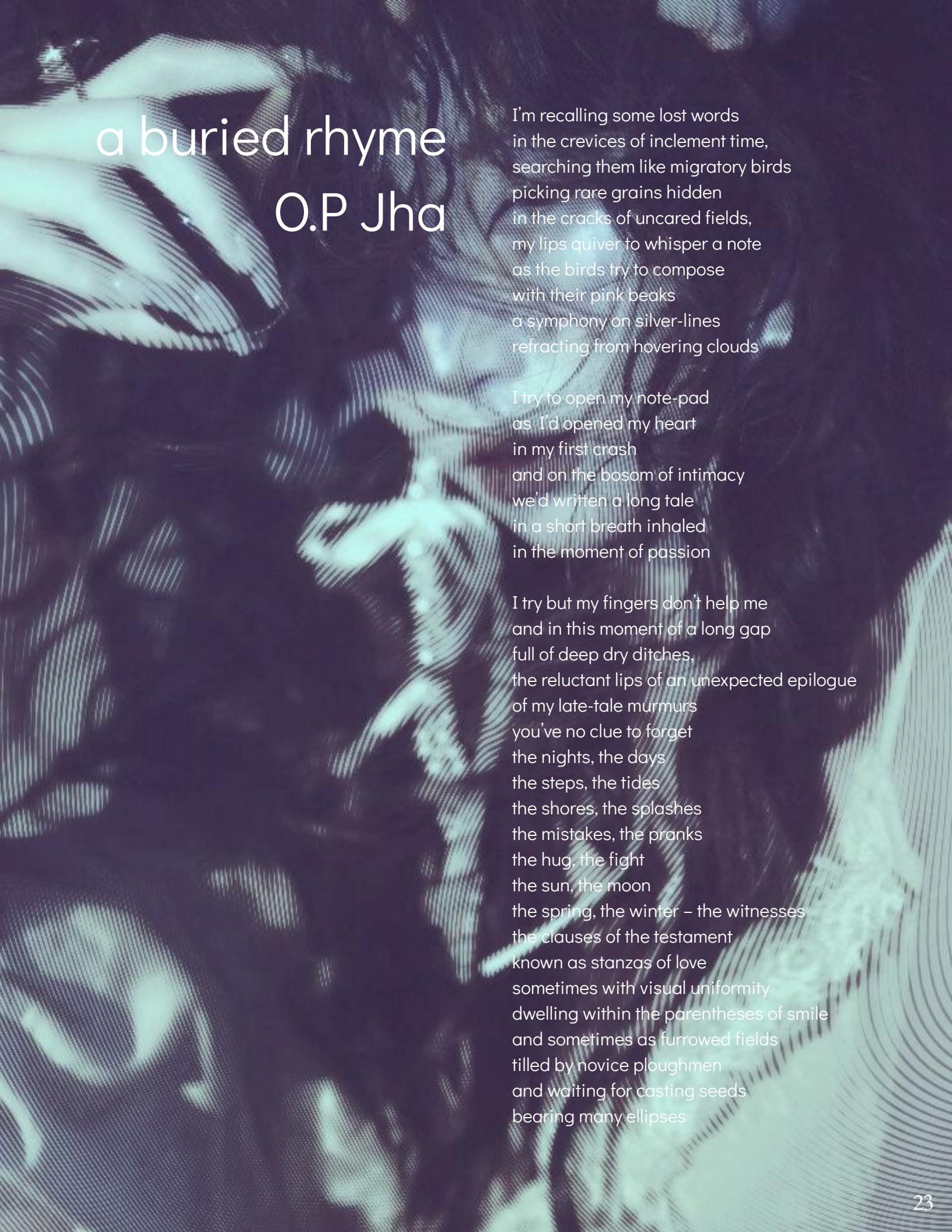
Squinting at the spring sunshine from the prickly grass that makes a mockery of our sheets and mats, we squirm to flatten the trickles of perspiration sailing down our skins, rictuses firmly in place. We bat our longing for shady rooms lit in cool white away with the bugs, and we smile, smile, smile, murmuring inanities about nature and the weather. City-children, costumed crystals lurching close to the edges of precipices, we dare the earth to fling us off; The vague, frustrating, generational guilt stuck like boiled-egg yolks to our palates we force down with the 'juice' that is actually just sugar and flavoured water. Fenced into carefully pruned patches of greenery surrounded by concrete jungles, the earth can still find a dozen little ways of laughing at us, from wasps to wisps of wind. Dust coats our sandwiches, and we munch on determinedly, trying not to look at the children as they run around us, laughing. If we watch, we must call out - a warning, an offer of food, a demand that shoes be put on - something, anything, out of a compulsion, unacknowledged, unknown even to ourselves, to check their genuine enjoyment, that stark if silent reproach making us fidget more than the sweat. The 'ground' is our only reason for the picnic; we are here, because it exists, because we have graciously permitted it to exist, for just this purpose: to prove that we are alive, to prove that we are whole, and prove it we will. Prove it we will.



All My Love

Jordan VanDerlinde

I've spent a long time thinking about the
slope of a river, the way a wound can become
the whole heart. Is it ugly to imagine all the other
me's? I know I know...there is no place without colorful
agonies, only a where, a when, layered and left along the
loop. I've been delicately ladling sips of light to my lips.
I am storing this for later. It enters my mind often;
I have done this for you. I have done this, in spite of you.



a buried rhyme

O.P Jha

I'm recalling some lost words
in the crevices of inclement time,
searching them like migratory birds
picking rare grains hidden
in the cracks of uncared fields,
my lips quiver to whisper a note
as the birds try to compose
with their pink beaks
a symphony on silver-lines
refracting from hovering clouds

I try to open my note-pad
as I'd opened my heart
in my first crash
and on the bosom of intimacy
we'd written a long tale
in a short breath inhaled
in the moment of passion

I try but my fingers don't help me
and in this moment of a long gap
full of deep dry ditches,
the reluctant lips of an unexpected epilogue
of my late-tale murmurs
you've no clue to forget
the nights, the days
the steps, the tides
the shores, the splashes
the mistakes, the pranks
the hug, the fight
the sun, the moon
the spring, the winter – the witnesses
the clauses of the testament
known as stanzas of love
sometimes with visual uniformity
dwelling within the parentheses of smile
and sometimes as furrowed fields
tilled by novice ploughmen
and waiting for casting seeds
bearing many ellipses



sometimes a bird sings,
even with broken wings
but humming is heard in a heart
that measures the distance
between the Earth and the sky

in a short breath
as long as I've this testament
running in me with my blood
and finding a shelter in my cells
I can't send my last message,
the last letter isn't for dispatch,
it's a treasure
to be buried in the heart forever

like millions of billets-doux
this one will sleep furiously in a grave
and my love will read the epitaph,
not the epistle of a forgotten rhyme.

Splintering Red
Hibah Shabkhez

Gold on black, and your heart leaps unbidden
To dreams of hallowed lands, a pilgrimage
In a single pulse, before the stricken
Wall-paper rolls away. The grainy page,
Bare as a moonless night, bids your fingers
Etch glittering dreams into its blank face:
They steep it in heartsblood, red that splinters
With yearning that the black and gold embrace,
Then transform into peace.

From me to you, 22 years ago
Cayman

I didn't know you then, barely a thought, barely a person, you were just a dream floating through space.

I don't know you now, now that you are a person with a body, a person with thoughts, dreams, hopes, and feelings.

In a way those are the same, in a way those two people, one with a body and one without, those two dreams are the same.

You were born into this world, not knowing who you would become, I think I ruined your potential but I am unsure. I would like to hope I didn't; I would like to hope that I didn't destroy the chance you would've had to be something different while in pursuit of my selfish desires. I would like to hope I didn't rip your wings before they had a chance to grow in, before you got to fly on your own. This section isn't about me, isn't about what I desired, this section is about you and who you were before me. You were a blank slate, you were something beautiful and pure. Something unbeknownst to me, something I had never seen before. The time before we became one is short, moments that I wasn't a part of, memories that I can't access. Filthy and tainted hands should not have access to such a pristine life.

Now this section is about me, something that is my own, something that shows I exist without you. I've never had something without you, I have existed as long as you have. I have worn your shoes and your school skirt, I have laughed with your friends without ever having my own. I said this section was about me but here I am talking about you but in truth I cannot exist without you. You can exist without me but you have never known life without me so what would you do? I was born into this world with you, sleeping dormant. I don't know when or why I woke up, but I know that I can't go back to sleep.

Most of our childhood is in pieces now, little fragments in my mind that don't even seem real to me. I don't even remember them now, but I've been in this body as long as I can remember, existing on this plane of space, boarding this line of existing and living. You were just a kid with a mind running too fast to keep up with her, but even then, did I even know that kid? Was me not knowing her, the reason her youth was stripped from her so early, taken before she could fully grasp what she had. Forced to grow up by hands that were not her own, bounties and motives placed on a body too young to understand. I think I ruined that kid, I think about her often, I think about how I would be if I gave her the space she deserved, the space to grow without me but that's gone now and we are the person in her place.

To that little girl: I am sorry, maybe life could've been different for us but I can't change the past. If I could then everything that made the person sitting right here would be non-existent, and the thought of not existing is the scariest of all.

closing statement

saudade lives in the quiet spaces. between what was and what remains, between memory and longing. it is the ache of distance, the tenderness of remembering, the beauty of holding something even as it slips away. as this issue comes to a close, we hope these pages have honored that delicate pull: the people, places, and moments that stay with us long after they've passed.

but saudade is not an ending. it lingers, reshapes itself, and gently reminds us of what has mattered. stories continue to echo, emotions deepen, and meaning unfolds in reflection.

thank you for sharing this feeling with us. until next time, may you allow yourself to remember, to miss, and to find beauty in the longing.

with gratitude,
serendipity magazine

serendipity
magazine