

BEWARE THE GRASPING FINGERS

Mackenzie Hoffman

Love, death, mythology, pain, inspiration,
and literature. The relationship between these
things connected by my mind and my art.

mackhoffman.com



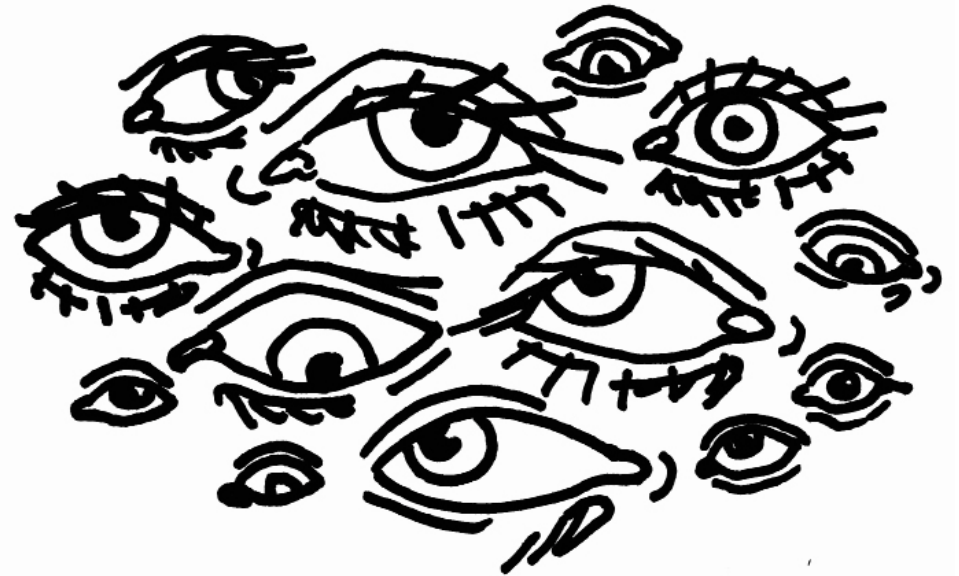
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Dedicated to my fellow MFA students.

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Hands and Eyes

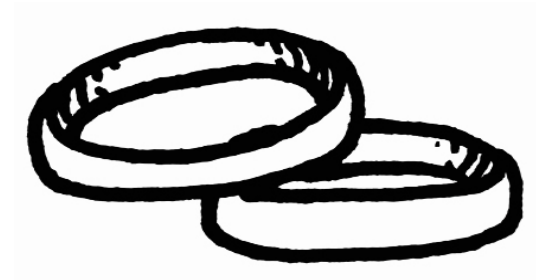
Young artists are drawn to two things: hands and eyes.
I spent years as a young scholar letting every surface see.
I made homework and desks cyclopes.
I made paper and my skin Argus.
Now I draw hands.
Spindling fingers with messed up proportions
from lack of practice.
They reach, they curl, they grasp.

Mr. Harker

Do you want a fourth?
Is that what this is?
Does your jealousy stem from the love you say you'll find again?
You love him,
yet you will leave him to the three when you're gone.
But for now, they are not allowed to touch.

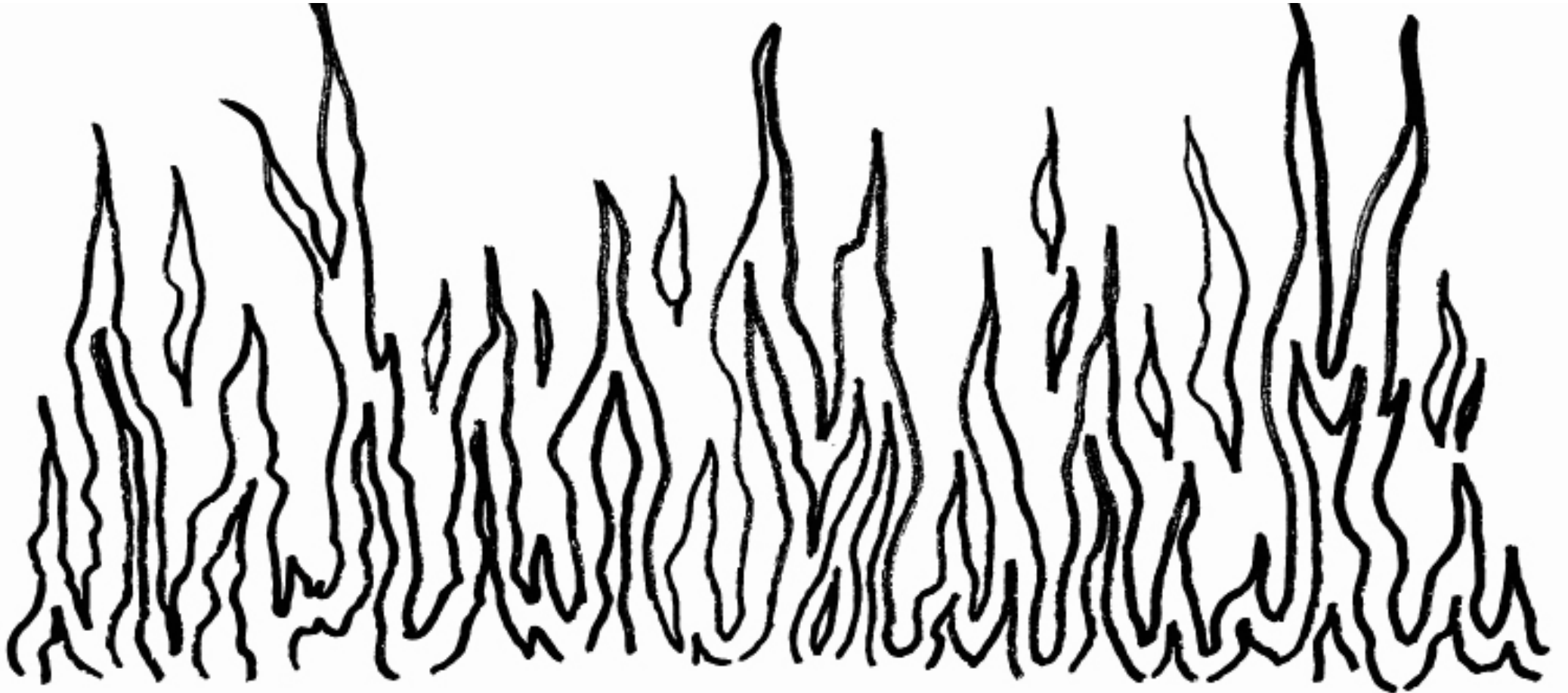
Mrs. Harker

Why do they steal your love away?
You have proven yourself true
That your husband is the only one for you
But when you are retold
this part of your being is stripped from you



The Everground

I will decide who lights the fire
The things you said I am
will never come to be
The almost,
The in between





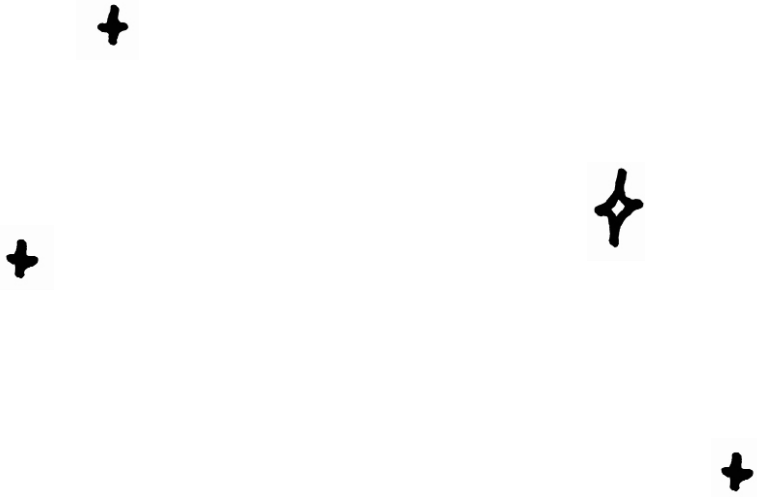
The Hubris of Man

They're bringing back
the woolly mammoth.



Red Postage

Red postage is exciting
Red lips are beautiful
Red nails are sexy
Red hands are frightening



Don't Hit Me With Your Car

Melt away
 A blue form in the deep night
 Car lights illuminating my form
 Distinguish me from the rest
 From the road and the trees
 From the gleaming rain
 Silver like the song

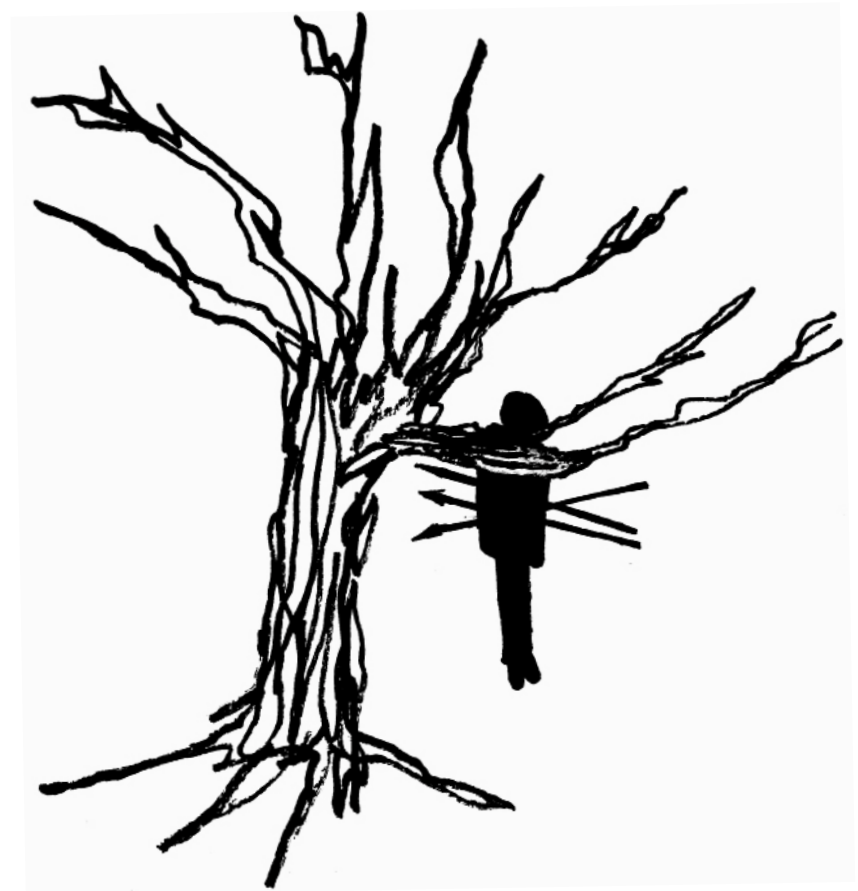


King David's Kiss

The mad king,
my father,
has set my love to flee
With one last kiss
my king, my love, leaves me

King David's War

After his return
and his son's betrayal of kingdom and morals,
the enemy's downfall is aided by the trees.
His enemy has fallen, yet for his son he weeps.



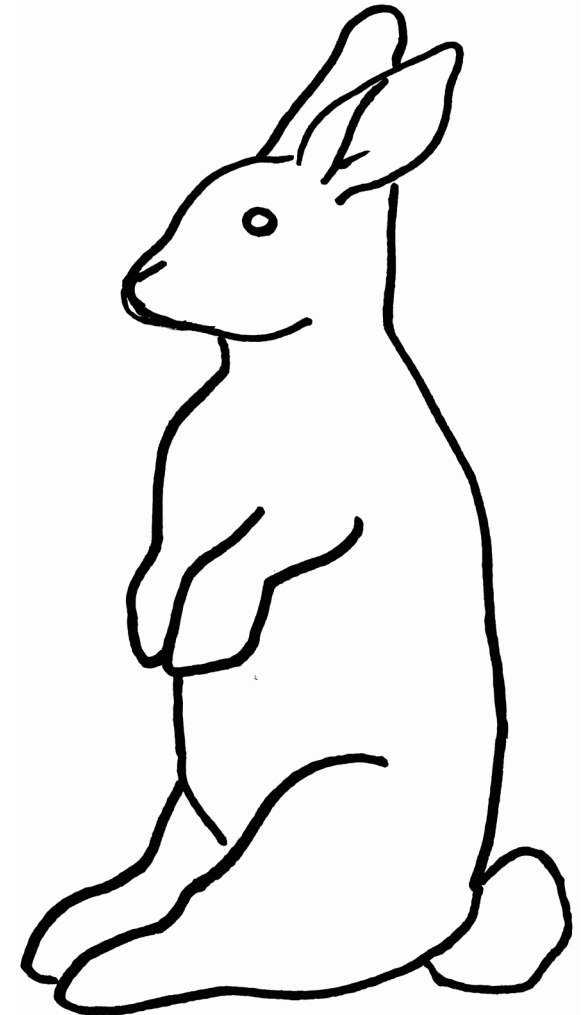
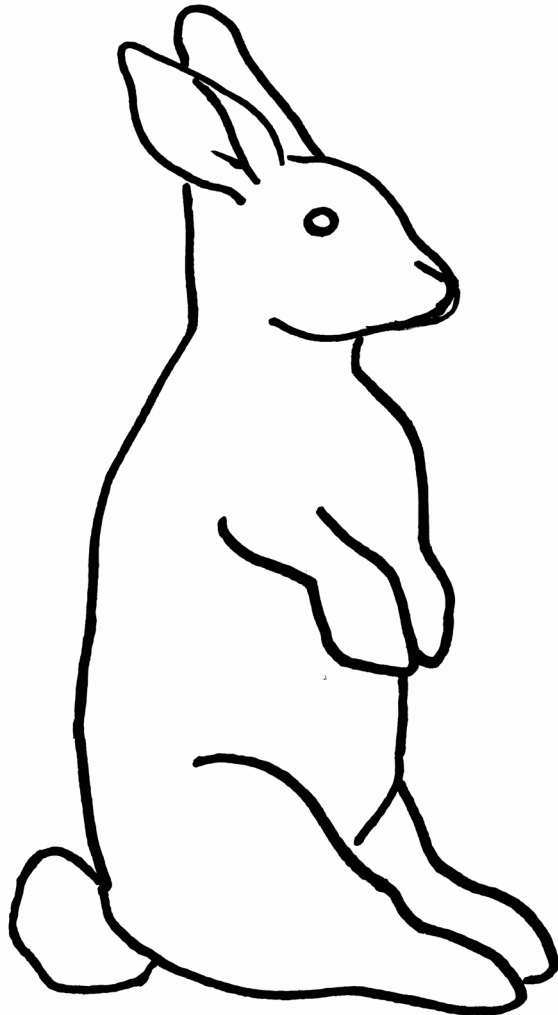
Grave

Six feet above
my dutiful love
replaces wilted flowers
How sweet is she
to remember little old me



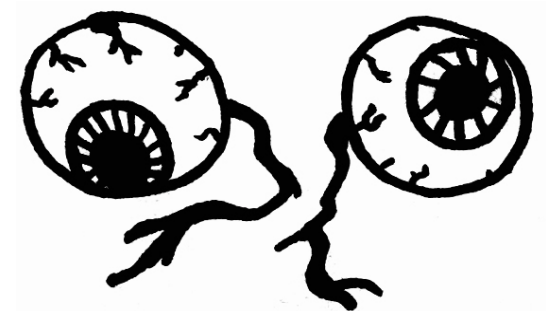
I Am a Rabbit

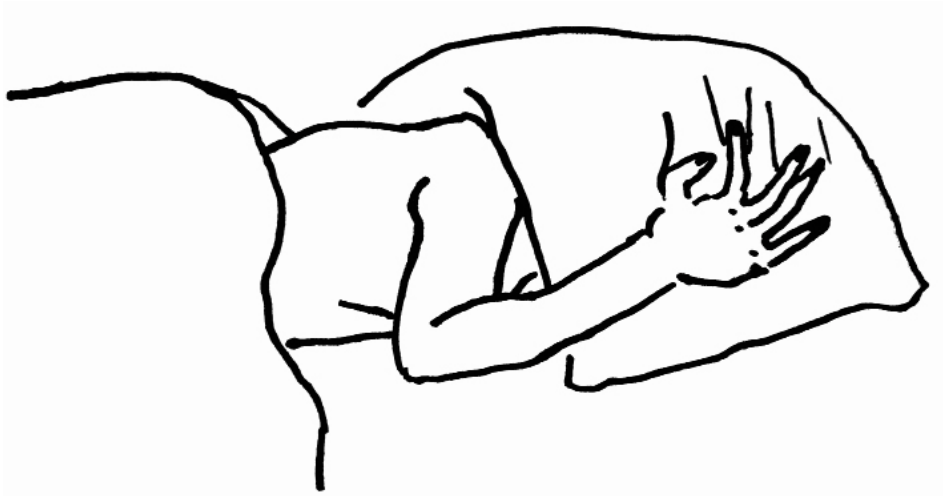
Every person has their familiar,
their daemon
Did I choose the rabbit
with my favorite stuffed animal?
Or did it call to me?
Was it inevitable?



It's Easy

When do the eyes that bore into my skull go away?
Must I gouge them out myself?





Panic

LEAVE ME ALONE
DON'T TOUCH ME
LEAVE
STOP

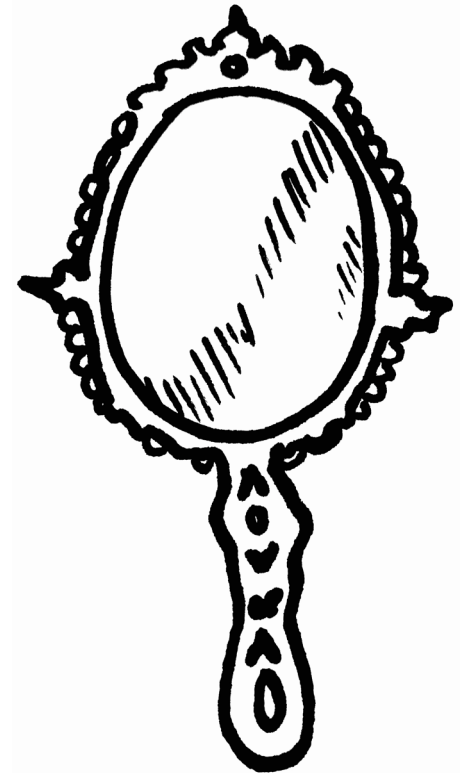
Education in London

Thank you to my mind for telling me I'll be alright.
For telling me to leave the rose be.
If I touch her she wilts faster, petals falling
If I leave her, she will heal.



Mirror

As a child,
I would stand in front of a mirror
and lose myself in the possibilities
of worlds beyond our own.
There was a girl in front of me who was not me.
How could she be?
I'm right here, she's there.
She copies me and blocks my attempt to pass her
and join her world.
Our hands meet but there is no warmth;
only the sleek touch of glass.
I lift my fingers
and drum them along the surface like playing a piano.
She does the same.
Let me in, I thought,
Why don't you want me to see your world?



Beware The Grasping Fingers

Beware the grasping fingers
The nails will cut and gut you,
They'll pull and search every part of your body
looking for the lock
looking for the key
Once there's nothing left
but your addled mind
they'll keep you alive
to know what they have done.



Blue Flames

The evasive flames hide treasures beneath the surface.
Fallen soldiers from wars long ago lay undisturbed
from fear of the evil above.



Jupiter's Moons

How you must feel
Continually disrespected
even when so many no longer believe
You're not included
Your husband, surrounded by mistresses
put there by nature
named by man



Swimming in Air

In my dreams
no matter how much I scream
not even a whisper comes out of my mouth
I scream I cry I yell I stomp
No one pays attention
No one seems to care
In my dreams
my feet take me nowhere
I do not touch the ground
Souring not above heads, but at eye level
Through hallways, I roam
the air shining like crystal

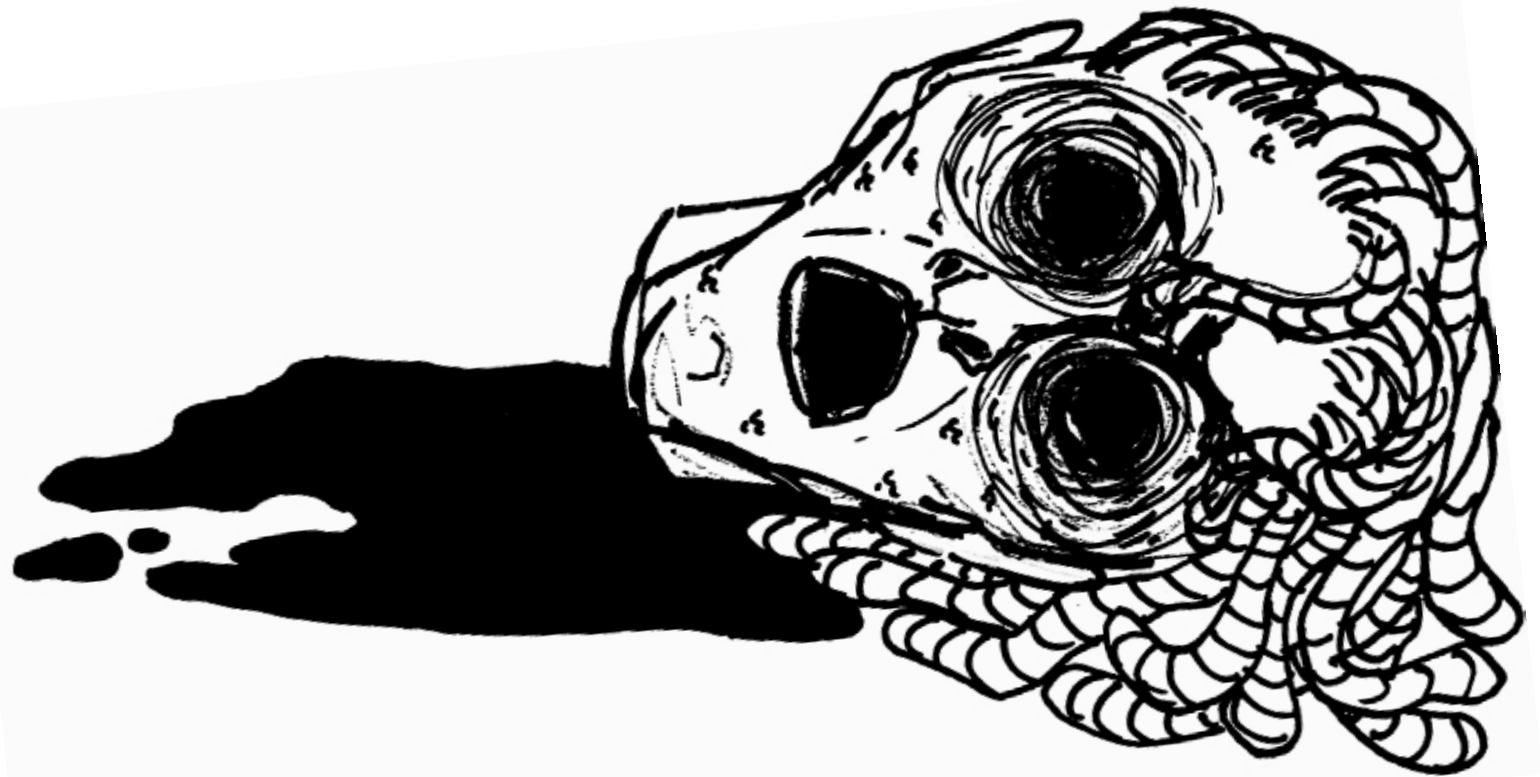
Language

Leave me be
Let me have my thoughts without your screams
Do not drown me out
I will think things in a way I can understand them
Do not correct me
I am not wrong



Pegasus

How many of you are there?
Surely you're not the only one?
Would the gods be so cruel?
A single being by himself
born of violence, born from blood
Your father wronged your mother
But he has wronged you too
even by giving you life





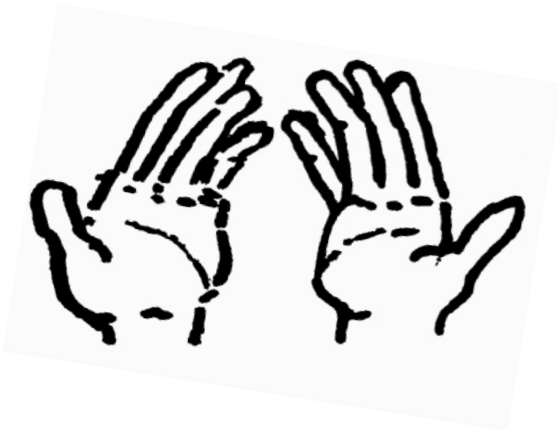
Pomegranates

All-consuming, starving
Pomegranates are hunger
They are love

Will you tear me apart,
stain your fingers on my insides
pull me open, scoop out my heart?

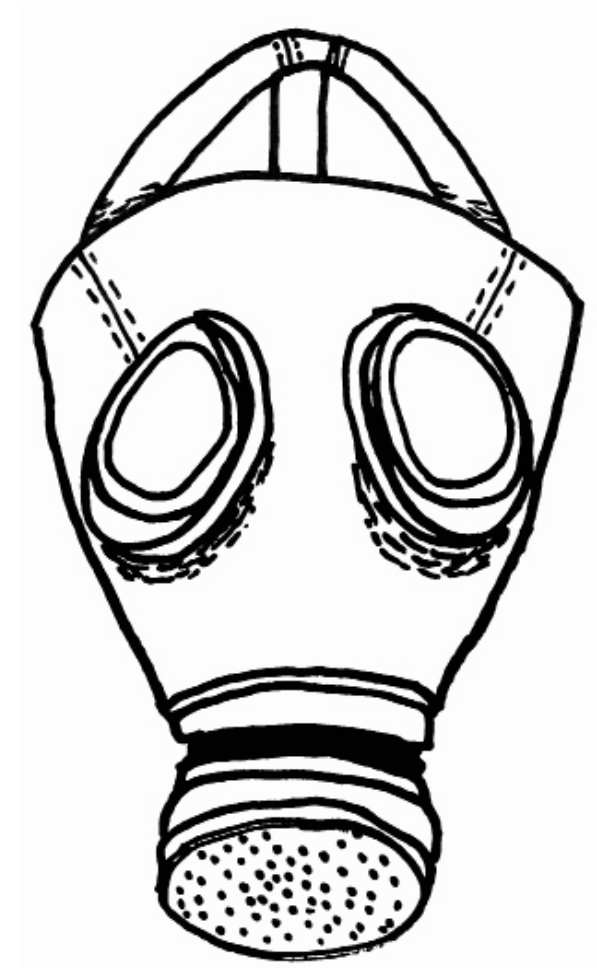
King's Blood

No, for you even Neptune's ocean will not cleanse those hands
The guilt is alive despite her words
This will break you



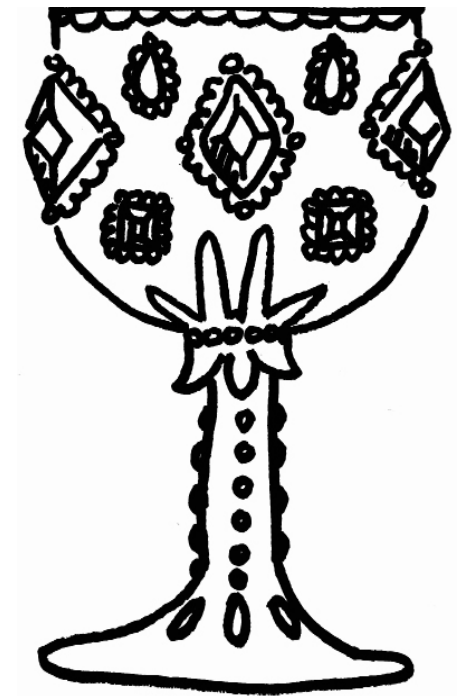
The Opposite of War is Not Creation

The opposite of war is not creation.
Creation and war are lovers.
When war rears its ugly head
Creation comes along to advance
the poor souls
who must bear witness to Ares.
Creation leaves us a gift when the rampage is done.
We thank her with tears in our eyes and loss in our hearts.



Glow

Neon blood and charcoal bones
Drink me,
and shine in a way I couldn't
at least until what's left of me
breaks you down





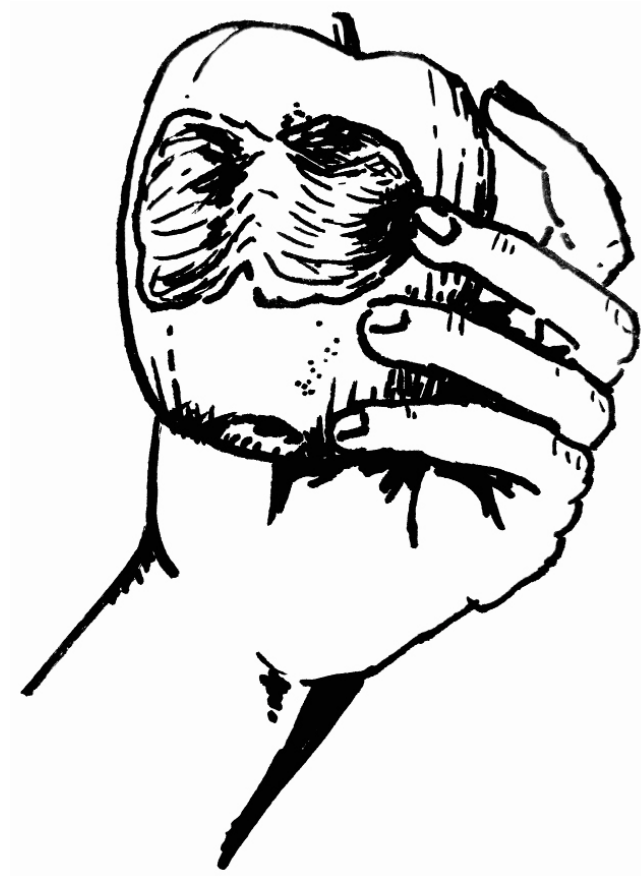
Woman and Wolves

I do not pity her
Banging on the door
Whether or not she hears wolves
she does not show
It does not matter
Her child is gone
I do not pity her
They will reunite soon enough.

Eve

Were you warned?
Did he tell you?

The punishment dealt,
not only for you,
but for every child
born with a womb.





Inspiration

Tree
Sidewalk
Attic

Emily Wilson

The words of a woman
changing the world's view of women
long viewed as whores
and adulterers

He made you clean the blood
of those who took from you
Then with soiled hands
you hung side by side
At least you did not journey alone



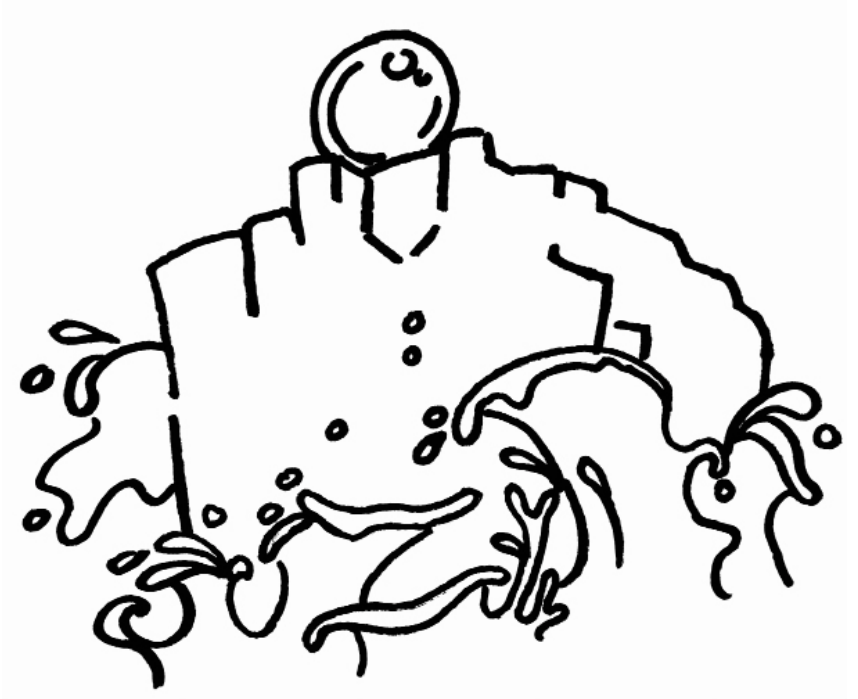


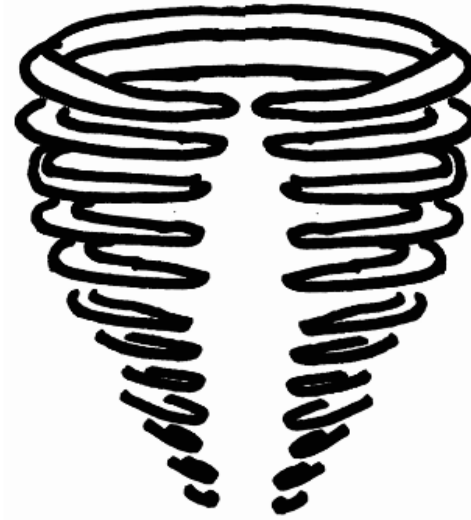
Vampire Teeth

The teeth grow sharper and sharper every minute
They cut my tongue
They cut my lips
I don't dare smile
lest they cause fear
If not for the teeth then for my blood-soaked grin
Sharper still they grow

Elsewhere

Soft ocean waves
Concussed rocks
Broken skin
Hot and cool
Aphrodite's beginning
The line of the father ends





Adam and Eve

Ribs ripped in half
Given for his other
For the promise of eternal love
Will you give a rib for me?

The Tragedy of Womanhood

Sweet girl,
you'll drown





Jennifer's Reputation

The mother's tongue is false
True to her mind but her mind is wrong
The true mother died years ago,
leaving a stranger

Death of the Artist

Art lives on
You have no say
Forever it thinks
or passes away
You die two times
Your art is born twice

