

***HUM
MURMUR
MUTTER***

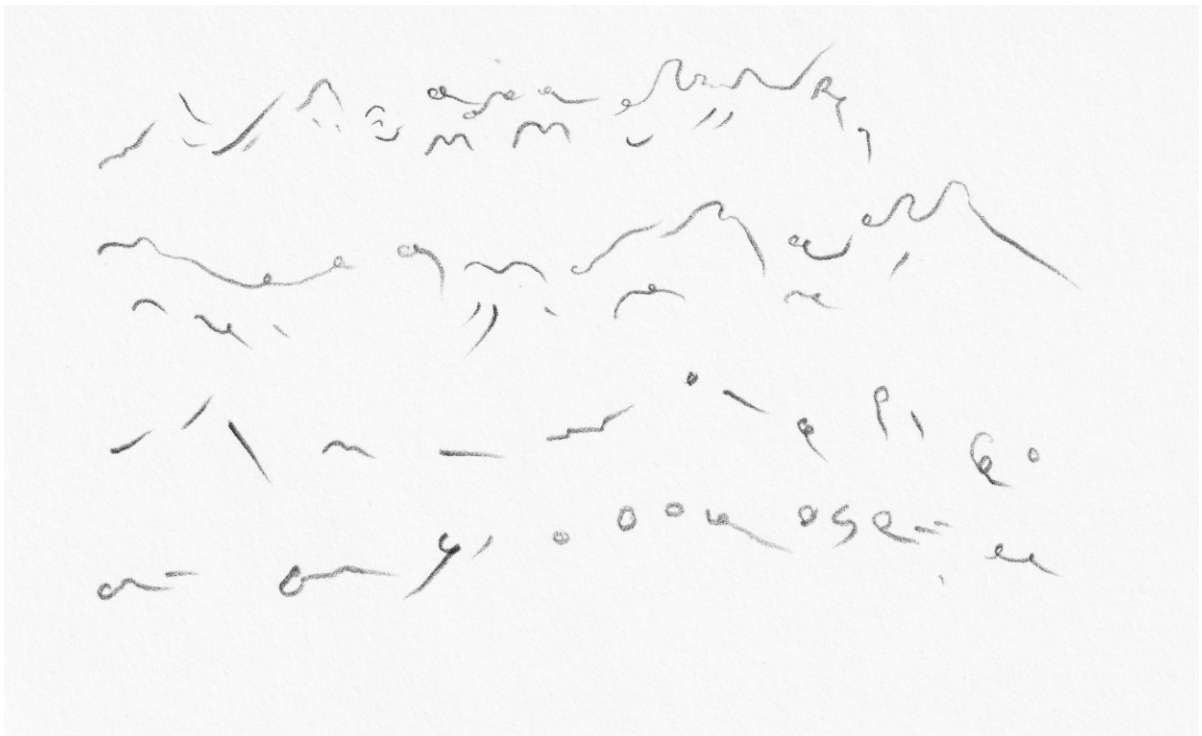
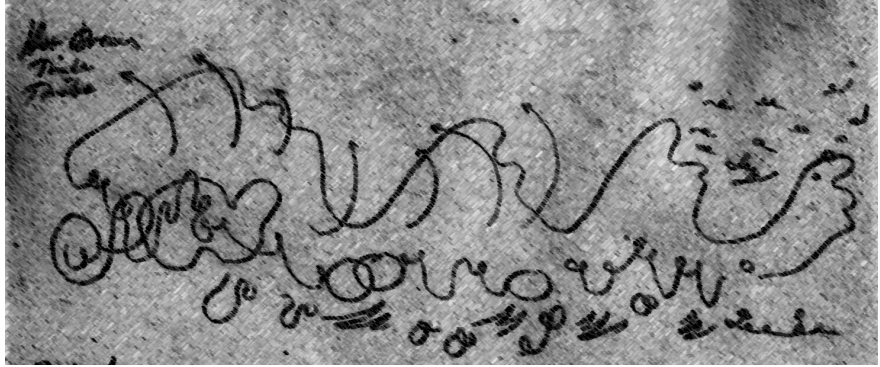
A collaborative zine by participants
on the experimental writing course
at Camden Art Centre.

This collaboratively edited e-zine brings together texts and visual materials from participants on the experimental writing course *HUM MURMUR MUTTER*, which I ran from November to December 2022 at Camden Art Centre. Over five Sunday sessions, we explored the connections between voice, body and text.

Starting with inner voices and mutters, we moved outwards to confessions and addresses, to songs and shouts, to choruses and cacophonies. We pushed the voices we could write into new places and modes – by turns sharper and softer, lighter and weightier, bolder and subtler.

What does it mean for a text to speak? How do we listen as we read, sensing the weight, texture, tone, and flow of a piece? And how can we shape our own writing to call readers into new ways of listening?

Fiona Glen, March 2023



HARRIET PRITCHARD

Sweet revenge

Sticky fickle viscous.
Undefined and unrefined.
Viciously delicious.

Our softness hardened, like tatty kettles calcified innards.
As the limescale hit your skin, I breathed in. I thought it ought to feel better.

The rareness and the rawness of it. Honey s

d
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Sickly.

A sweet taste.
A bitter waste.
A life encased in a kettle.

ANAHI SARAVIA HERRERA

Shivers

The shivers down my spine are the only thing I can intuitively say my body knows first.

This is an impulse that originates here, even beneath the full fleshy parts.

Beyond the muscles, organs, and joints, there is something else that knows.

She knows, that there is something tied in the feminine.

Residues of which remain in other tongues.

Yo acuerpo
Tu acuerpas
Nosotros acuerpamos

When my body becomes your body and your body becomes our body it turns from *cuervo* to *cuerpas*.

What shivers lay in our bodies? Even beneath the full fleshy parts?

Who's shiver is this? Is it mine or hers?

Cuerpas, beyond the muscles, organs and joints -

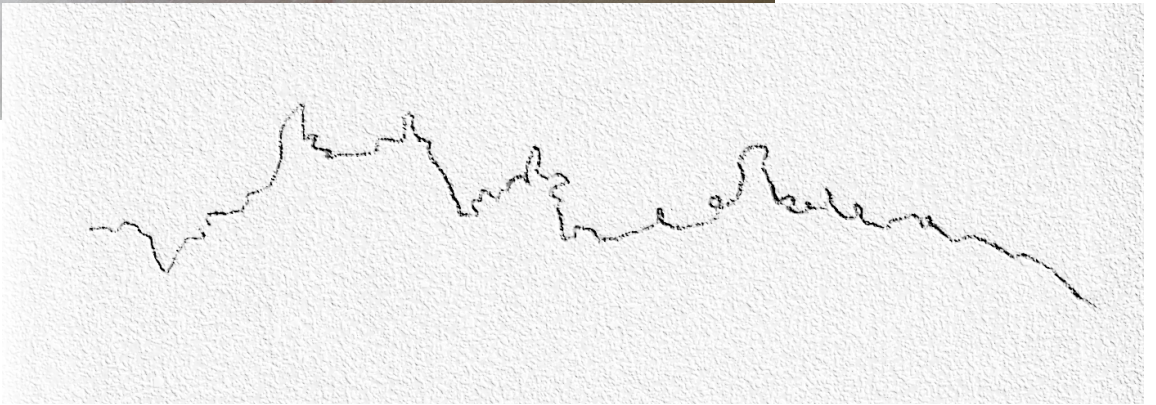
impulsed to move, beneath the full fleshy parts.

There is something tied in the feminine,

when my body becomes your body becomes our body.

There is an impulse that originates here.

The shivers down our spine are the only thing we can intuitively say our body knows first.



SHERAN FORBES
Between letters

yesterday ...
thought i woke up ...

started ... shaking ... still sleepy ...

sour
mouth /
/ lips clammed
shut /

crusted ... tangled ... eyelashes

thought i woke up ...
yesterday ...

... there was no light ... no dark either ...
... something / sometimes ... here and then not ...
on the outer edge ... beyond the silence ... beneath the dust

dear 'so and so'
i find myself
here

gathering silence
collecting dust

in the space

between letters

yesterday ...
thought I woke up...

ELANA BINYSH

Hey you

*Small wry smile, very believable
making eye contact*

Glixstone Fungi Shield FS42, still drying
sci-fi ceilings chrome echoes
Low hum with a tinge

Here we are again

I think my greatest strength

*Looks down, shift weight, meek
Hurling thoughts*

Lights, vents, brisk Alhambra
Beep shuffle other people veins open
Everything is labelled with ~~care~~ precision

Is standing near the sun, laser glow hitting where my lobe meets my jaw

*Shift weight, eyes closed, really brave everyone says so
Dissipate, no match for the air*

Time damp boggy slightly pendulous
thrum thrum mmmmmmm
the curtains are open but the windows don't win

And not looking

*Shift weight, become a curve
Seeing behind seeing, so graceful so elegant*

please return the clipboard to reception
Zszszszszszs curtain, always a slight gap
*Like zsa zsa gabor
moving up the scale*

And not imagining what looking would feel like

*Crosses legs with an exhale meant to be heard as internal
Recline into the blue vinyl*

maybe a trolley

And being somewhere else entirely, where the light comes from nowhere

Scans the room, makes a joke, edged voice

loo doors I hope they don't put a you'll be fine biscuit

Later, hovering

It's over/still happening/in-between

*Chuckle, shrug the shoulders
Let the eyes fill with tears
Pathos*

A floating world

NASTIA SVAREVSKA
Number 18


Shhhh Listen. Don't talk. Do you see it? Do you feel it? Crawling. Creeping

like a wild nocturnal animal. Beeeending over me like a strong tree with heavy branches. The darker side of me. A constant battle, two exhausted gladiators in the sandy arena feasted on by the eyes of the hungry, all-consuming audience.

I'm so pure, unpolluted, unspoiled. I project innocence into the space I occupy, the space you occupy, the space

we both occupy.

I dream of the sun, large tulip fields, couples holding hands, grandparents who are still alive but when nightmares knock on the door, I have to let them in. They inject darkness so intense that I can't breathe. I'm drowning in it.

It looks like


Fuck. There it goes again, d

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g,

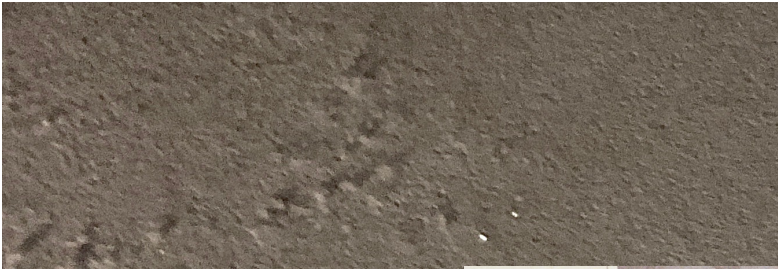
drifting over me,

slowly, casually, mercilessly, a massive cloud made out of my worst thoughts. I don't have a choice but if I did, I'd like to exist as two separate entities rather than a part of one unit that you're looking at now and thinking –

Oh, I really like this

arrangement

of colours on the canvas.



pleasure

Parkny Parknys Parknys Parknys

tz t1 tz ti tz ti tz ti tz ti

ti tz etti tz etti tz etti ette ti ette

DENNA CARTAMKHOOB

A Plug Adapter to Scan the Shopping

Two women are speaking Italian on the train
Mother and daughter?

They have fast brains and opinions.

A boy says grandad

This morning you asked your son to do his homework. He was doing it but not really, getting distracted by his sister but they were playing. You should have just left them to it but instead you punished him and snatched the distractions from his hand roughly. So rough you feel it. You haven't stopped thinking about this since.

A man with a too-red face opens a fizzy drink bottle and downs it gasping with thirst.

Everyone is on their phone.

Except for the boy.

A couple share a diet coke and laugh in happy shame. Smug fuckers.

When I arrived, there were mainly men in black suits. Apart from you calling my name. A blonde woman amongst the black planks with hats on, and by the way, your speech made me cry.

Where were all the other women I used to work with? Why hadn't they come to pay their respects to you?

What had you done?

I didn't want to be near you for a long time and I should pay that feeling respect, but now you're dead, it's all gone out the window.

I came because I couldn't quantify our friendship.

I came because I wanted to show I was important to you.

I came to check you were dead.

At the funeral people spoke about your life like it was true. I suppose it was, maybe I misjudged it. None of it seemed to have soul. It was all stories from an actor's mouth.

The tablecloth isn't clean from last night.

You find the pitch and speed of children's voices unsettling and stressful.

These are your children. Why are they so out of time?

Maybe they're just alive!

You force Good Morning and stroke their hair. You remind yourself that tactile affection is important.

You make tea and talk to yourself. Be more present. Enjoy life more.

You think about being taught to eat a raisin mindfully. You left half way through the session to feed your baby and never went back.

You keep trying

You remember your dream about your beautiful throbbing lactating breasts, wet and buzzing with milk, they looked fake. You long for that feeling with mouth-watering desire like the anticipatory crunch of a hazelnut inside a Ferrero Rocher.

A paper cup. A golden wrapper.

Now you're dead I can't remember why I howled in blind panic on the dark dark streets because you wouldn't answer my calls, or why I had second thoughts about being alone

with you, or why I felt embarrassed about spending so much time with you but I couldn't help it. I had to.

You exercise and feel guilty
You make cereal and swear there's too much in the bowl
Another mother's voice in your head says she spoke to an expert and granola is all sugar.
YOU SHOULD BE HAVING MORE PROTEIN

You eat almost all of it
You'll punish yourself all day
No portion control
No idea
No reply to my text asking to visit you in hospital

Your best moment was holding her warm body against yours.
If I could I'd just go backwards all the time

A clean nappy in a compostable bag twisted because knots are too hard.

A wooden chip and pin reader with an old library card.

A plug adapter to scan the shopping

Growing up in a world of adults distracted by rectangles of greasy black water and little dogs.

Dogshit on the pavement everywhere.

Look up to the blue sky and feel the mild breathable air, the sun on your face.

Make the exhale twice as long as the inhale.

Try again
Keep trying again
Regress
Become an animal
Steal food
Eat from the bin
Don't wash
Power walk
Pretend
Multi-tasking disguise
Don't touch your own body
Don't look in a full-length mirror
Think about his hacking cough, twisted face and Vaseline hair
Now think about all of that dead
Look at the Instagram page of your estate agent
Replay the handsome man walking in the hot night, picking up a glowing wet cigarette butt from the floor and smoking it. Put it to your lips.
Eat Sugar by the spoonful like she did, straight from the packet, now forget the spoon, use your hands.

Eat it lying down, naked, clumps edging awkwardly through your fingers, sticking to your soft clammy body, granulated like sand paper.

Close Your eyes.

Force yourself asleep

Go out raving

Pick up a random truck driver

Have sex with someone you love and then leave them

Repeat the moment the yoga teacher reformatted another man's arse.

Tell him to wash the dog poo off his trainers in a puddle

After a heat wave stand in the rain at night

Try not to let anyone remind you of who you are.

Let the exhale be twice as long as the inhale.

When it rains the street shines.



ILEANA GRIGORESCU

Picture this: a pair of one-metre-tall girls bent over a Barbie universe on a blanket in the back of the house, sewing dresses from grandma's leftover fabric for hours and hours and hours discovering envy and trembling selfhood over her box of matches that made for a better nightstand than my Fanta bottle lid.

Touch this: the perfect shaved head resting on the shoulders I tapped to offer one hundred DVDs of must-see movies, to make me worthy in her wide eyes to talk with our hands in bars about right and wrong and being Atlas holding the world.

Taste this: bitter bubbles fizzing into our conversation, sweet limb and dispositions, smoke dancing on the ceiling. Three friends discuss the fabric of things in their worlds and compensate extravagantly for what you can't, don't want to, is not fit and there's no time to be outside of that living room on Sundays.

Smell this: body spray and sweat in the room with dilated pupils and heavy thumps radiating through our bodies. Friends in darkness and neon lights insist on nothing but living and living on nothing but whims for the weekend.

Don't feel anything walking behind a mother's coffin resolving to find closeness in other blood, to dress in better selves until I pass as same blood with stronger blood, to return to the safety of the knowing womb.

ELANA BINYSH

It's really hard not to think of/mm/I think when like/yeah/I mean
when when you've got com when you've got stuff
you know you know/yeah/to really to judge how
you feel by/by the/over there/mm/you know things/it's quite/
mm sorry what were/no its/you going/fine you/you go/go/
unmoored/mm/like flai/yeah/ling so

I can't remember what the floor is made of
Both things last week and things ten years ago
Herself loving someone forever without

Swirl swirl chaos
It's operatic
Didn't we see each other last week
We, slowly, resentful, gripless
We (!!!!1) is from far away
A minute/a day

when everythin is moving how n i be moved when everything is moving ho csn i e moved wen everything i
moving how can i be moved when everything i moving ho vsn i br morf when rvrtthing
id moing hoe sn i br morf when rrtything id moing whe eveyhing is moving how cna
ibemovedhwneverythingidmovinghowcsnibeovewheneverythingidmovingehneverthingidmovere
hneverythingismoving

(After Sylvan Esso)

MARY MIN

To be & To see.



I love long train rides.

Especially the ones where I have the whole carriage to myself. I witness the landscape evolving right in front of my eyes. There's a steady murmur of engines at work. People trail in and out. My space. My place to just be. My place to just breathe. My place to just see... my thoughts from what has been, that has lingered within and for a moment, a pause.

Just to be.
Just to see.

I love drinking something warm in the sheltered outside, especially when it's pouring down with rain. It's like a scene from a movie. A strange serenity. Where even amongst all the chaos, peace exists. And it is fine. Every pitter patter adding to the symphony of nature just being. And doing what it always has been doing. I witness this moment. A pause, please.

Just to be.
Just to see.

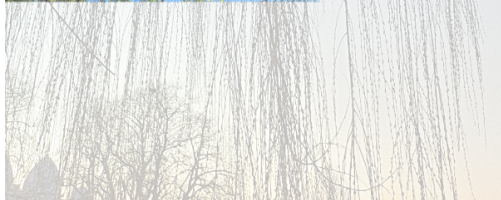
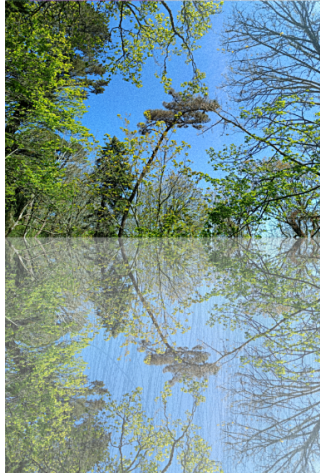
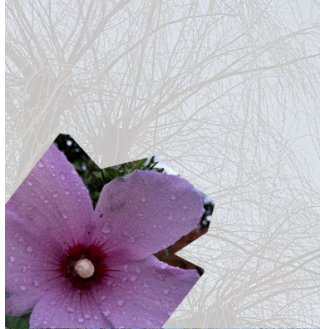
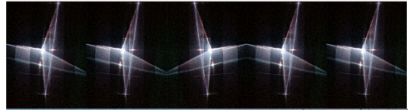
I love singing when no one else's listening, especially when I have a piano accompanying. It's a raw expression, a sole intention. My body singing, playing, being, dreaming. My place to just be. In the solitude of my feels and chords. Thoughts and unthoughts. I am seen. A witness to the unseen... which is quite the opposite to the busyness, the scatteredness, the sirens and the tiredness. So a moment please...

For the breathers.
The day dreamers.

The changing of the seasons, sunrises, sunsets. Belly laughs, the moments we just pass. The first and the last you greet in the day. The slightly longer hugs, noticing the slight shrugs. The thank yous and miss yous. The laptop shut down, the bare faced smiles. I could go on, but as you see the moments can go on.
As we are being and seeing the moments.

The moments.

A moment.



NASTIA SVAREVSKA

The average person will spend six months of their life waiting for red lights to turn green

I want someone to love I wrote when applying to adopt a dog but they didn't believe me.
My flat is cold and wet. Are you still teaching yourself to play the piano?
Is your mother still collecting terracotta pots?
Is your father still playing golf with your
brother who told me "I'm the one?"
I didn't think we'd descend so
quickly into deep water
when we went diving
I couldn't do it you held
my hand my vision was blurred
but I saw you clearly. "You never see
me as I am" you said and all I heard was
Patti Smith singing "without you, oh, I cannot live."
I thought of photographs from that exhibition we went to in New York.
I can't listen to the song anymore and in New York the red lights take too long to turn green.

[Aʰ] [sɔ] ['k] [mʌ] [eɛ] [Aʰ] [sʰeɪ] [eɪn]

LINNET MACINTYRE

litany

weird
no
sorry
fuck

over+over roll over+over roll over+over roll over+over roll. WOMAN
 s
 r
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 over

gener(ation)
incant(ation)
frustr(ation)

weird
no
sorry
fuck

over+over+over+over+over+over+over+over+over+over+over+over+over+ over

SARAH HOWE

pinpricks across a surface
illustrate my omission.
an apparition.
a figure, gone frail
a voice deepened by age
left
waiting

some days the ringing in my ears melds with the sirens in the city,
power tools, aeroplanes, my neighbour's smoke alarm
all crowd inside the cochlear.

hidden,
this clandestine spiral consumes
rhythmic chunks of stray frequency
spat out in sharp zaps as soon as my eyes close.

I have been here for some time now.

and I've been thinking a lot about the wound over the past year
um and
I've come to think of the wound as this open space
more like a gash
that allows light to go through
it's like the empty boat
that needs to be filled
somehow.

you're outward turned
you're looking
you're watching
and that's when revelation comes

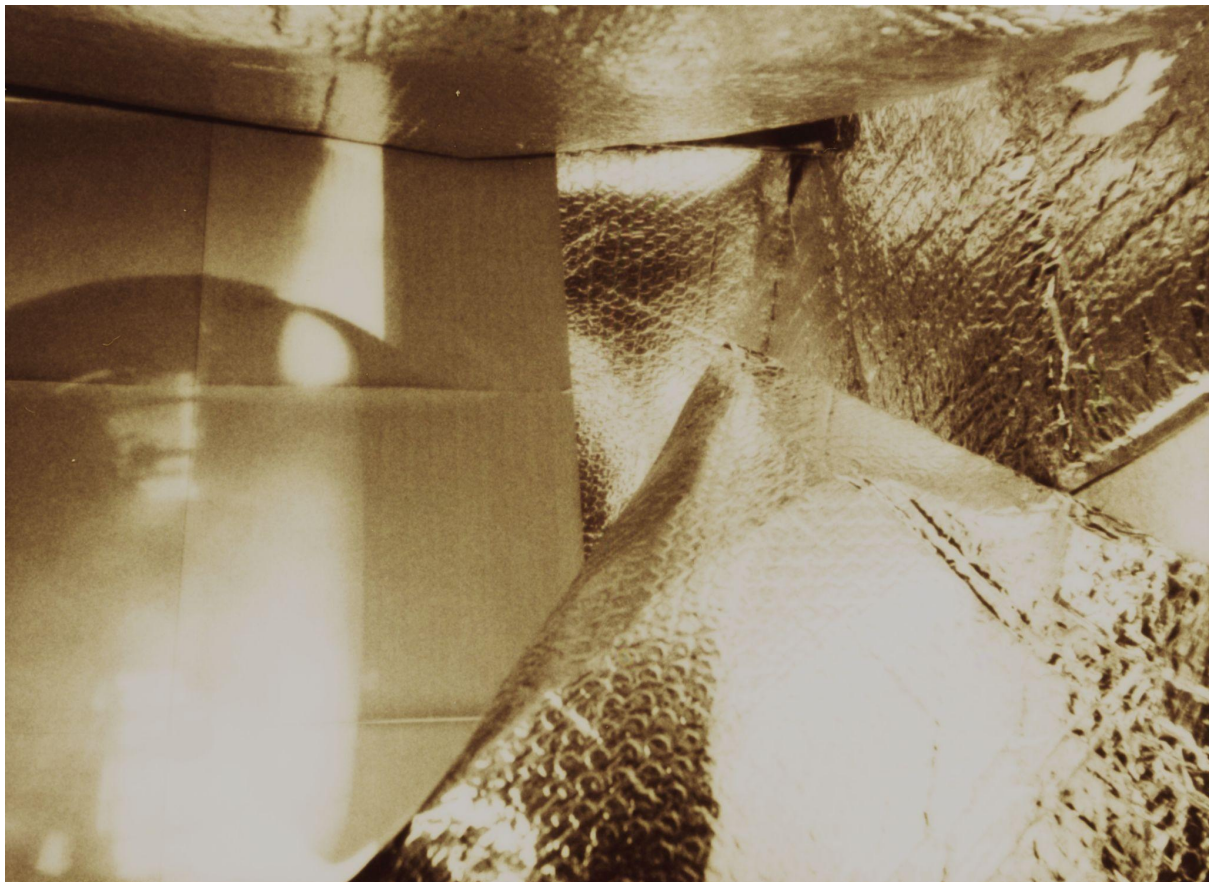
it isn't quite dark
the light somehow resists surrender to its own absence.
it permeates the walls.
humming in yellow
it haunts.

my body,
cold,
sinks into it.
it is softly punctured by the beating amber sound
the metallic taste
dry copper wool to the mouth

it's a miracle really sarah
yeah
it's quite weird
it was just an outline of things
I couldn't even see clearly
across the room
and now of course
it's jus...
oh I can see
oo forever

and it's not a process that finishes
It could also mean to veil again
like revelare
To conceal again
so it's not just a matter of
exposing something
revealing something
but also re-vailing somethings
so there is always this kind of dynamic between
things which are brought to life
but also concealed

you know
words are imprecise aren't they?
this is the problem
you can't
you know
it's very difficult to find exactly the right words
sometimes
the real meaning you search for
is sort of
inbetween a sort of constellation of words or phrases
But it's a feeling of
this is important



YARDEN GUR

Escalating

1 being very unfamiliar

10 being very familiar

1 being extremely low regard

10 being extremely high regard

1 being not relevant at all

10 being extremely relevant

1 being not different at all

10 being extremely different

1 being almost never true

10 being almost always true

1 being not well at all

10 being extremely well

1 being never

10 being every day

1 being hardly ever

10 being almost always

1 falls asleep on the train

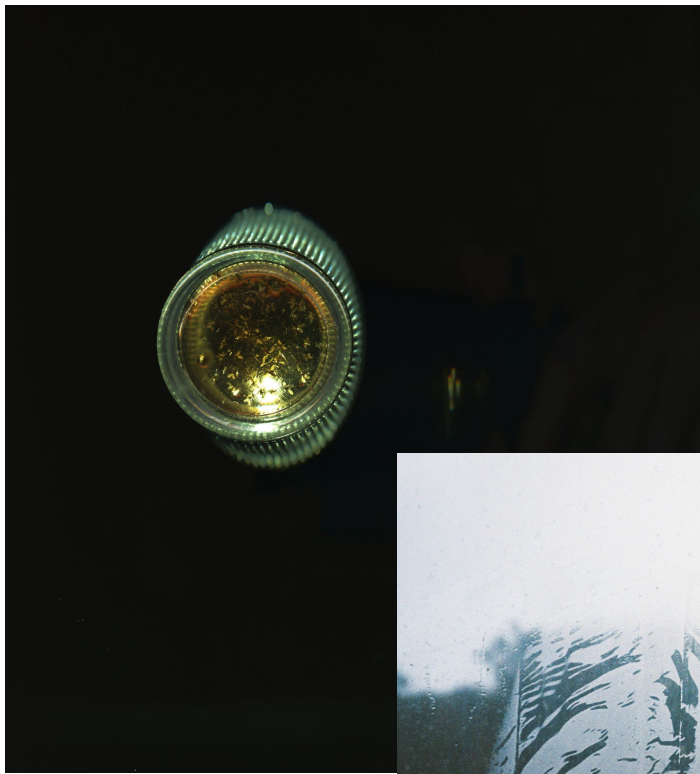
10's headache is getting worse

1 has an elevated heart rate

10 has a recurring nightmare

1 takes a cold shower

10 wakes after two hours of sleep.



FIONA GLEN

Her voice is gently strong
as a hand round a hand,
bobbing regular on the
balls of its feet. Fat with
bouncy surety like the
humour that hums from
undoubting love, one that
senses its permission to
tease. Here, a trampoline
surface – kicks of thrill in
stomachs as it sinks and
it springs – but really, it's
woven tight. A nudging
play: a hurtless, smiling
dig: a drive so familiar
towards that place

& her voice tastes

like cold, citrus
and fizz, it's
like courage, like

rude dips of birds who
test the belly-shape of
dawn in gasping space

bright soars or arc-turns
cut short, cut calligraphic,
hard edges sliced in a
glowing, bodiless ink

sharp as flames

are sharp

& her voice has that
shake-it-straight break-
out-that-other-me mood,
like a midnight

in the lounge where
questions, punt-like, slip
loose from under their
politely stained tarpaulins.

Watch them drift

all so delicate-risky down
this channel made wider
by wine, along a glossy
surface only half-aware
of its own tension.

NASTIA SVAREVSKA

A letter to the stars that didn't align

1.

Every time I close my eyes, I see

2.

the words you cut my wrists with the night
our faux silk curtains caught fire.

3.

My hair is falling out, but I still force my fingers through it. The horoscope said self-care is my most important commitment.

4.

You're listening to Radio Regret. Oh no,
don't go – we're only getting started. Please

5.

sit down & tell us, why is

6.

the ocean hiding its biggest waves
beneath the surface & does saltwater

7.

really heal all wounds?

8.

IKEA ergonomic pillows are swallowing my face. There are no mirrors where I come from & all coffee cups are made from plastic.

9.

The moon enters Capricorn & I'm not sure

10.

what that means. I meditate & repeat to myself

my hair will grow back.

my hair will grow back.

my hair will grow back?

SANDRA LANE

Lime

The mushrooms fall in a rubbery tumble
Will he be happy without bacon
And will the wall ever dry out

I keep coming back to the wall.
Smooth, milk bottle white.
Like blank paper.
Chalky. Bleached.

I'm drawn to the absence of colour. Empty like sadness?

There are patches that are mottled like chilled legs that won't warm.

Cold rain moving though

spreading in faint patterns like veins or meanders of streams.

It's not smooth everywhere.

White fur beard wisps bloom
Silkworm fine and sparse,
Palely growing in its own time.

I think of old ladies, babies and mushrooms.

Press the airy fibres with your thumb to compress into nothing.

Mycelium thumb.

Noisy crusty salts

brushing the wall clinging crystals

pattering salts

hit

dusty

wood

Lime rhymes with time and it's endless.

LAURA RAPHAEL

I love you. Unconditionally. I always have, and I always will.

I see a lot of myself in you. The reserved person who, at times, should shout fucking loudly but doesn't quite know how. You have a voice that others need to hear. You are intelligent and creative, but I wonder if someone along the way made you feel as though your voice wasn't valid. You have as much right to be heard as anyone else. To be no holds barred, to be bold, to be brutally honest, and occasionally to be ugly. You can want better, more, or the ridiculous, don't settle.

You have taken on a lot alone. I'm sorry no one was with you when you were diagnosed with cancer. I'm sorry you had to drive yourself to the hospital while having a heart attack. And when your marriage silently broke up, I don't know if it was ever even addressed. These moments, which would crush an average person, took place almost in silence.

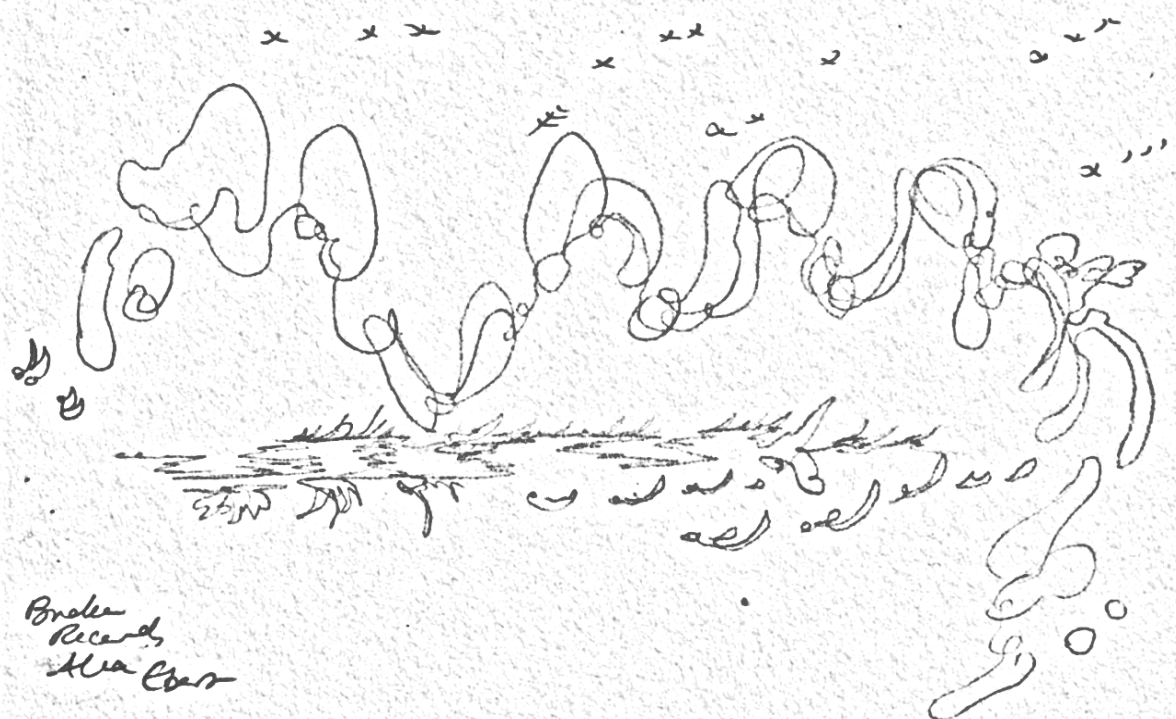
I am immensely grateful to you. We've taken on a lot together. You are kind and thoughtful and always put everyone else first. You love like there is no tomorrow, and sometimes I worry that you give all this love away but not to yourself.

I am protective of you, even though it might not seem like that at times. Sometimes I get frustrated because I want the best for you. I know that sounds like a fucked-up contradiction. Why get angry with someone if you want the best for them? It's frustration at the situation.

I know you are strong, independent, and like me, hilariously stubborn. It still makes me laugh that you said, 'are you calling me mental?' when I suggested we do something for your mental health, like the meditation course. And, 'what the fuck are these?' to the florets placed in your trolley for post-surgery food. You also say, 'sorry for going on' when talking on the phone. Don't be sorry. I want to speak to you.

For you, I want comfort, happiness, and calm. I hope you dream, laugh, and achieve the impossible. I hope you know how much you are loved.

I love you. Unconditionally. I will always be here for you.



Broken
Records
Alia Eber



Unclimbed
Melody

ELANA BINYSH

This one goes out to all the

drench of sun
Harpichord
Squeeze me tight
Someone else's breath filling me up
A moment of suspension
Tunnel, wash over me
Warm veins
Pulsing low frequency back of the throat
I am god

