

A woman's face is the central focus, partially obscured by intricate, swirling marbled patterns in shades of red, purple, and pink. The patterns resemble liquid or smoke, creating a dreamlike and intense atmosphere. The woman's eyes are visible, looking directly at the viewer.

LIBRE ET FORTIS

Meraki Review
Beyond the Quill

Mini Issue

Female Rage
June 30, 2025

Contributors Featured

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black hijab and a dark, form-fitting tunic. She is wearing ornate, metallic armor on her right arm and shoulder, which features intricate designs. She is holding a sword with a highly decorative, golden hilt. The background is dark and moody, with some light rays or smoke-like effects.

1. Chainka
2. Evelyn Chan
3. Hafsa
4. INMMezzure
5. Irina Vèrene
6. Kei Solis
7. Ksenia Veronica
8. Lamiah Fathima
9. Mirjana M.
10. Nazia Naureen
11. Rachel Munnoch
12. Sumayah Mittal
13. Whispers of Wisdom
14. Zubaidha Afsheen



*Let the
Carnage Begin*

A Cup of Tea (clean)

Chainka

oh, please. stop playing dumb.
you're so tiny i could press you into dust with my
thumb
yes, i know, they've been raising you like a sacrificial
lamb
but now, if the lion eats you up
you'll be the one to blame
oh, please,
 don't you already follow the game?
because, if to be completely and brutally fair
you were only born for us to distract and stare
i mean — you don't even have a name.
you're just like the rest,
all parts of you're ugly except for your chest.
oh, please. don't. don't look at me with those bambi
eyes

while i'm pulling the arm in between your tights
“it's only for as long as you don't really mind”
(not that i'll stop if you do,
because, if being brutally honest, nobody cares
about you)

yes, you will be looked down on.
yes. you will be less of a someone's daughter to a
someone's son,
this is how it works
but you have to believe, it's a blessing, not a curse
i mean, learn how to be grateful, b***, because for
some of you that's much worse
don't be angry. blink one more time
and put on your smile
(for some that's much worse)
put on a smile!!

— this is, actually, your only way to fight any kind
of force

look at yourself,
to me

you're nothing but a cup of tea
tempting only while i know that it's warm inside of
you
look at yourself as i'm looking through
i don't care about the cup,
i can break that shit up
in the very first try to get the taste of your stale water
whispering that i'm more of someone's son than
you're someone's daughter
like a blood-sniffing shark
i'll hear your porcelain crack in the dark
and it will happen a lot.
in the coffee shop,
parking lot,
bus stop,
maybe even your favorite park
i'll hear your porcelain crack in the dark
i'll feel your body shiver
and you'll never know
from where i'll go
because i'm the water too, i change like the river
i'll feel your body shiver,

burning down as if you got a fever
every time you'll see me in the other form
at your only boy friend's home
in your room in the dorm
in the dimly lighted hall of the mall
you'll see me more as you grow

look at me.

don't you see?

you're only a cup of tea,
and i'll pour you out when you turn cold
nobody wants a tea that gets old!
nobody wants a tea that gets old!

c'mon.

yes, obviously you'll betray your friend for a guy
or she will.

the characters change, but not the storyline
and then, yes, you'll hate girls, and the ribbons, and
the pink,
just so they would treat you as person,
as someone who thinks

that's how it always happens,
that's just the thing

they'll call you a pearl, but they'll try their best to put
you in the necklace
as long as you have a shiny surface
and you're— nothing but what they tell
glued in the desire to cover / to cut / to cover / to cut
your shell
you'll lean into that feeling quite well

and yes, you'll bleed like the warriors did, not just
once, — every month
but they won't celebrate it. the girls will whisper,
“cover up, fast”
and then you'll start to believe that an innocent child
was full of lust,

not me
not me!

nowhere to run.
it's the same over the sea.

step by step, you'll agree
you'll really agree with me,
and then you won't even question
you'll too treat any kind of skirt as an invitation
and any kind of dress as the one that would make
you a slut
you'll be the best at that.

one day you'll become a mom
and your daughter will be much, much less than
someone's son
you'll watch how they'll take from her 'till she's gone
you'll watch how they'll undress her just to get fun
and you'll unlearn and learn again: how to punch
back
or, rather, how to attack
and how to swear
how to take up all place and the space and pretend
you don't care
when they say, "how did she dare?!"
how to finally stop starving your body and hating the
food

because, apparently, your body never will be that
good

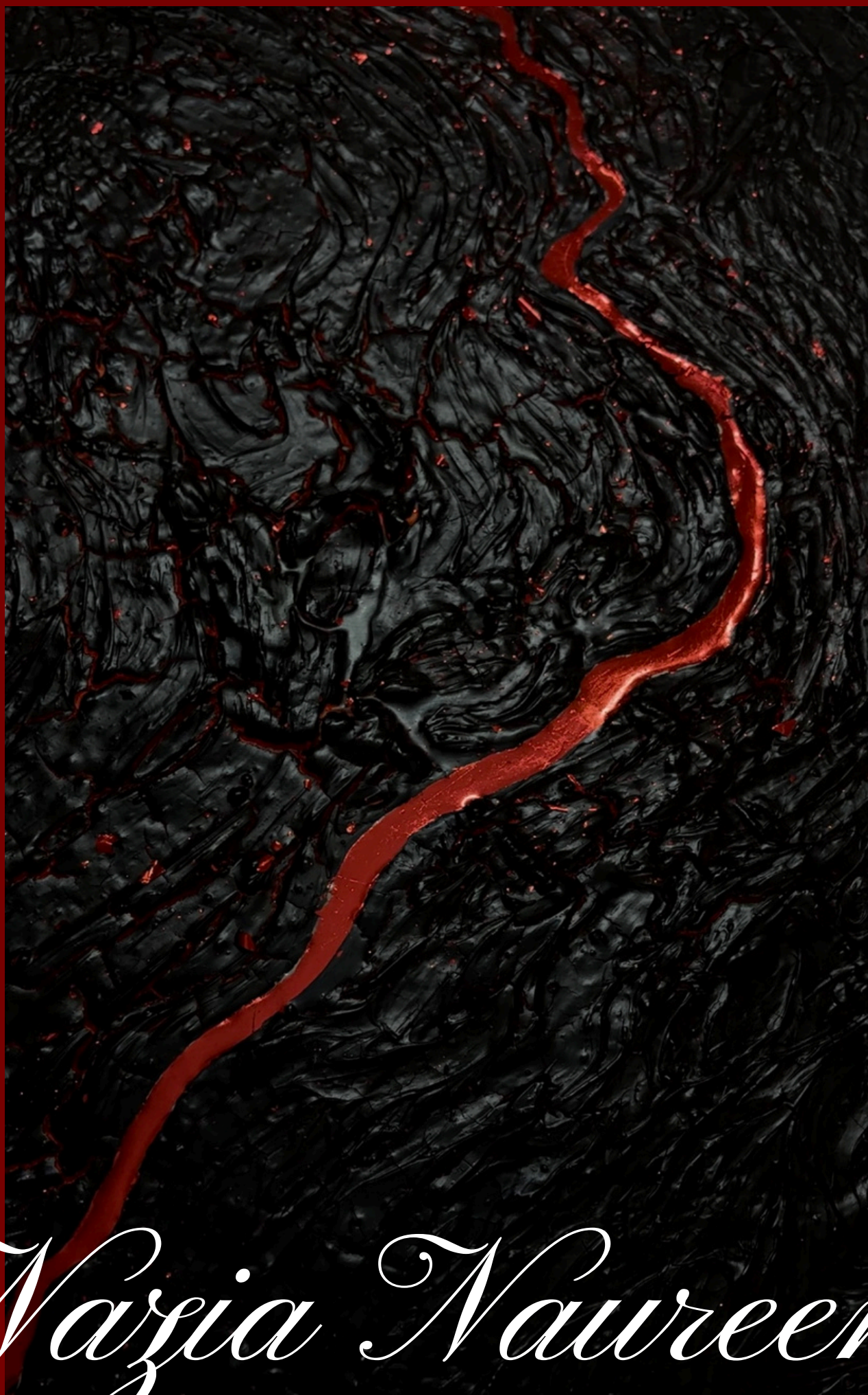
yes, you'll learn.

your mind will be sewed up and torn
from the very first moment youre born
but you'll learn and unlearn
learn and unlearn
learn and unlearn

not only for yourself but
for all the girls that were there, in the dark,
at the house, party and park
you'll learn, unlearn and survive
for all the girls that couldn't save their lives
for all the girls that were buried alive

you'll learn and suffer and suffer and suffer 'till you
finally make it on top of the world

didn't your momma tell you?
that's how it is when you're a girl



Nazia Nawreen



Prina Verène
I thought they
killed you

CN: captivity, bruises, implied violence and murder, revenge, blood

Inspiration: »I thought they'd killed you. I lost my temper.« – Tamora Pierce

»I thought they'd killed you.« Amilía swallows hard. She looks tense from head to toe, remnants of her rage still seething beneath her skin. »I lost my temper.«

Spoken like a true menace: No attempt to hide or downplay what she did. No hesitation, no guilt, no regret.

»I can see that, darling.« Chidera can't help but smile despite the pain, entirely enchanted by the ferocity her rescue inspired.

Amilía fumbles with the keys she took off the guard she found — and slaughtered — in the cell. The metal shackles click open, and the alchemist's arms, bound above her head before, fall down. She lets out a sigh and starts rubbing her

»I'm not that easy to kill, remember?« Chidera covers Amílía's hands with hers and turns to kiss her girlfriend's bloody palm. She pulls her into her arms, suppressing a flinch when Amílía's surprisingly strong arms wrap around her waist in a tight hug. It's worth the pain; Amílía always is. »I'm okay. I'm here, love«, Chidera murmurs, voice shaky and weak, just like the rest of her. »I'm right here with you. Always.« They stay like that for a long while, holding each other in silence. Only when Amílía seems ready to let go of Chidera, although reluctantly, the alchemist speaks again. »I will always find my way back to you.« It's an affirmation, a promise, an eternal vow. »Even from the other side — I did it once and I would do it again. You know that, right? For you, I could do it.«

Amílía nods. »I know.« A moment later, just a little bit more calm and collected than before, she looks her beloved up and down, only just realizing the extent of her injuries.

Gently, ever so gently, she runs her fingers over the left side of Chidera's face, tracing the bruises all the way from her bloody temple and her black eye to her split lip and her cracked jaw, then leans in close to press a kiss to the corner of her mouth.

»They're damn lucky I killed them already.« Her voice sounds ice cold, a harsh contrast against the tenderness of her touch.

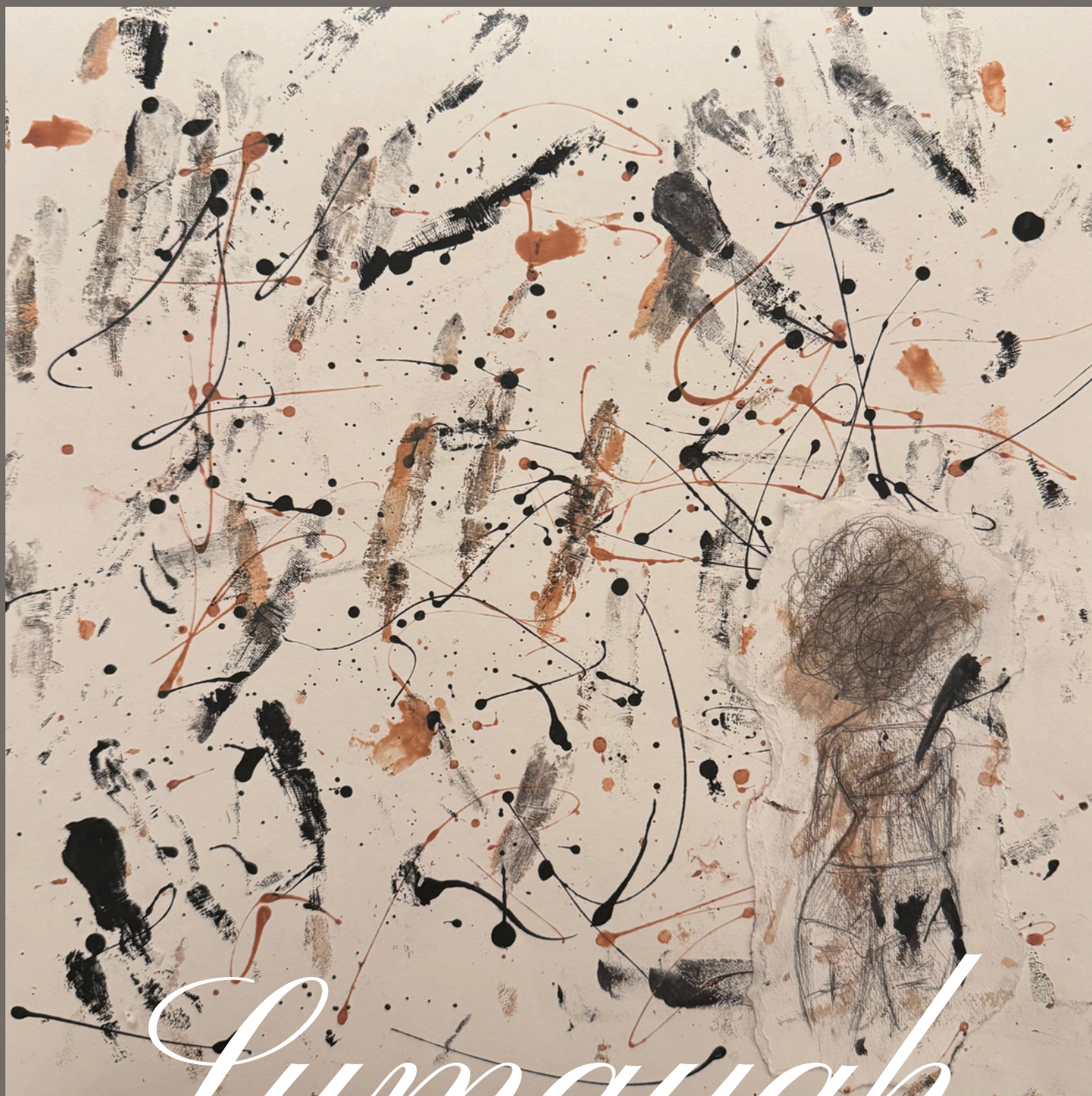
»Not all of them«, Chidera points out. »There's two more, at least. They were away on some business when you arrived.«

A wicked grin creeps across Amílía's face, her eyes light up with a new burst of excitement and energy. »Looks like I've got some bastards to hunt down, then.

Chidera beams at that sight. Revenge suits her so well; it always has.

Amílía holds out her hand to Chidera, helping the love of her life to her feet.

The alchemist is still a bit wobbly on her legs, but she is now grinning, too, traces of her own blood showing between her teeth. »Looks like we do.«



*Sumayah
Mittal*

Bah humbug

Evelyn Chan

Clovis told me to be more selfish.
She tells me I care too much about others' feelings
and I don't cater for mine

My mom tells me I'm way too selfish.
She tells me I don't care about others' feelings
And I don't cater for other people's
I found out I care too much and too
little at the same time
I feel like I can't find an in between

sometimes I feel like I'm fracturing
Like how my mind wants to do something, and I'm able to
visualise myself actually doing it, but when I move
something, it feels like it's wrong
mom tells me I'm way too high on my horse
That horse is nonexistent.

I'm really trying to care for people, but it's just
that they seem to refuse my care.
It might be because it's the wrong time, but does it matter?
I'm really tired.

I just don't know what to do anymore
Every thing I do is wrong, and nobody ever actually
appreciates me.

I'm literally going against tens of people whom i love with
all my heart.

They think I'm being stupid, but I only want the best for
the both of us.

And I have to listen to my mom.

She's always right.

I hate you so much chloe .

You are literally causing my entire moral compass to
crumble

If it's not you who's not leaving, that person will be me.
nobody wants to hurt. it's better for everyone this way.

You don't understand how much you've actually hurt me.
Again, I might be over exaggerating, like how you usually
do.

You've thrown rocks and sticks at me.

I don't tell you they hurt me, because I don't want you to
feel guilty. I hate you.

You don't understand that my self-worth is so low, it's
practically touching the bottom of the Mariana Trench.

You're contributing to my low self worth with your own personality.

Every time we compare grades, every time I hear you sing, everytime you tell me about something you won recently.

I'm happy for you, really, but I can't erase the feeling of being inferior to you.

I feel like you're basing your confidence on singing solely. With grades, you're around my level at best.

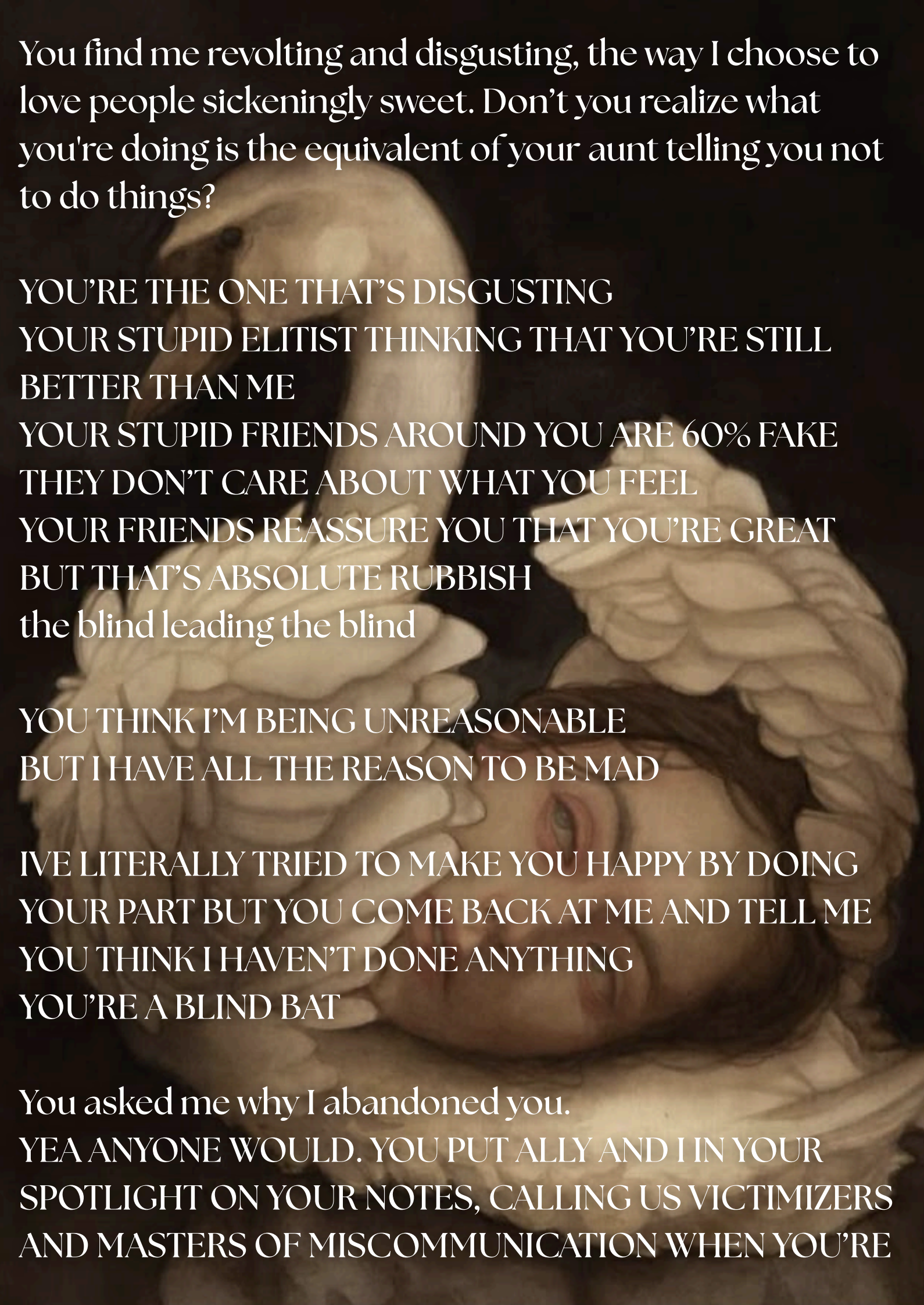
Without singing or English Literature, you're basically nothing, you know?

Stop being so narcissistic and so critical of other people. You have the mentality of some primary school student who thinks berating people purely because they've wronged you or your negative views on them.

It's like you can't see the good in anything.

You still think that saying you don't want to partner up with me for projects to teachers is some sort of action a 14 year old would do.

Even if I don't find you petty, the teacher does. I'm the person YOU'VE wronged and instead of telling me what YOU think I've done wrong to my face, YOU tell other people.



You find me revolting and disgusting, the way I choose to love people sickeningly sweet. Don't you realize what you're doing is the equivalent of your aunt telling you not to do things?

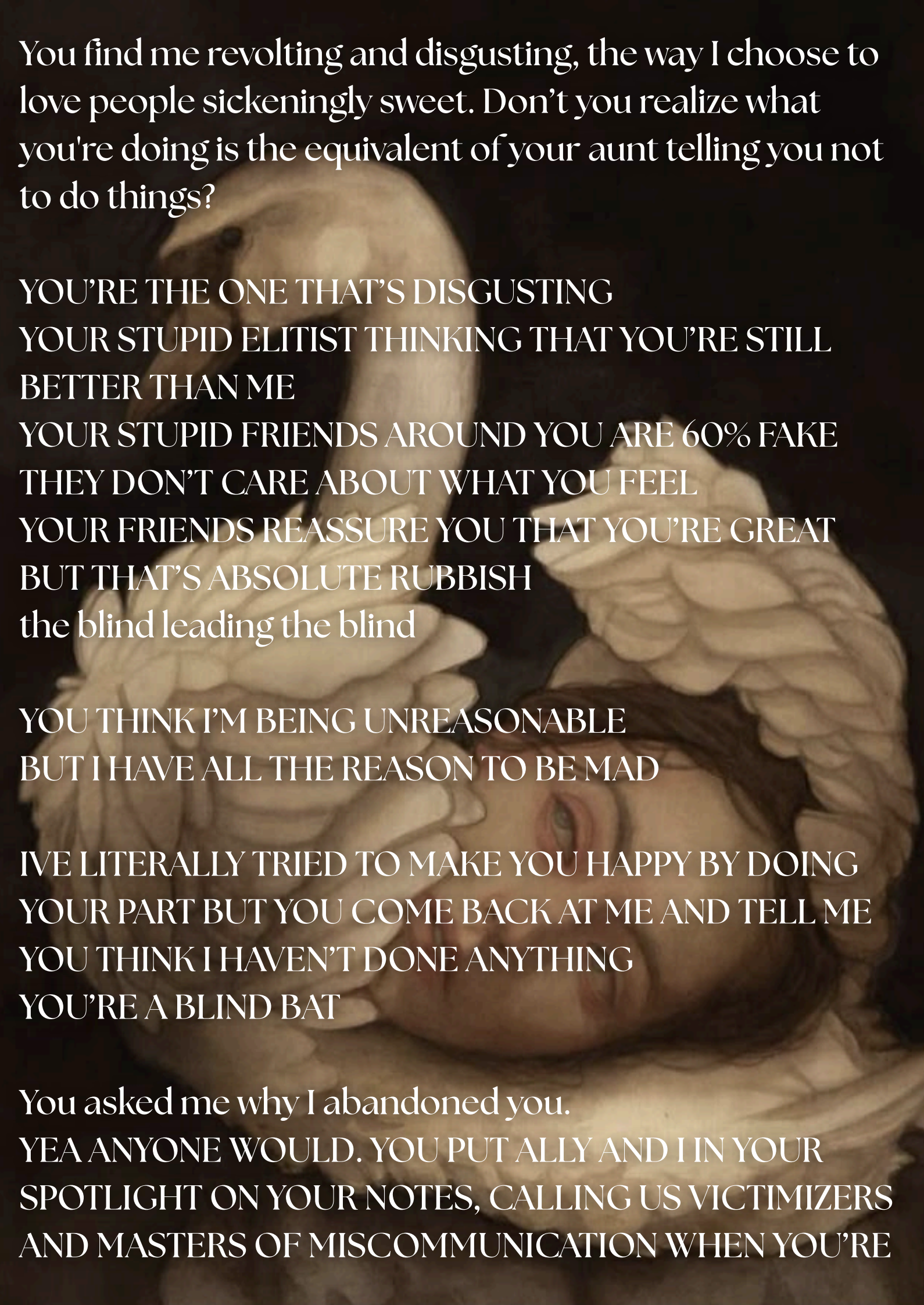
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S DISGUSTING
YOUR STUPID ELITIST THINKING THAT YOU'RE STILL
BETTER THAN ME
YOUR STUPID FRIENDS AROUND YOU ARE 60% FAKE
THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU FEEL
YOUR FRIENDS REASSURE YOU THAT YOU'RE GREAT
BUT THAT'S ABSOLUTE RUBBISH
the blind leading the blind

YOU THINK I'M BEING UNREASONABLE
BUT I HAVE ALL THE REASON TO BE MAD

IVE LITERALLY TRIED TO MAKE YOU HAPPY BY DOING
YOUR PART BUT YOU COME BACK AT ME AND TELL ME
YOU THINK I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING
YOU'RE A BLIND BAT

You asked me why I abandoned you.

YEA ANYONE WOULD. YOU PUT ALLY AND I IN YOUR
SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR NOTES, CALLING US VICTIMIZERS
AND MASTERS OF MISCOMMUNICATION WHEN YOU'RE



You find me revolting and disgusting, the way I choose to love people sickeningly sweet. Don't you realize what you're doing is the equivalent of your aunt telling you not to do things?

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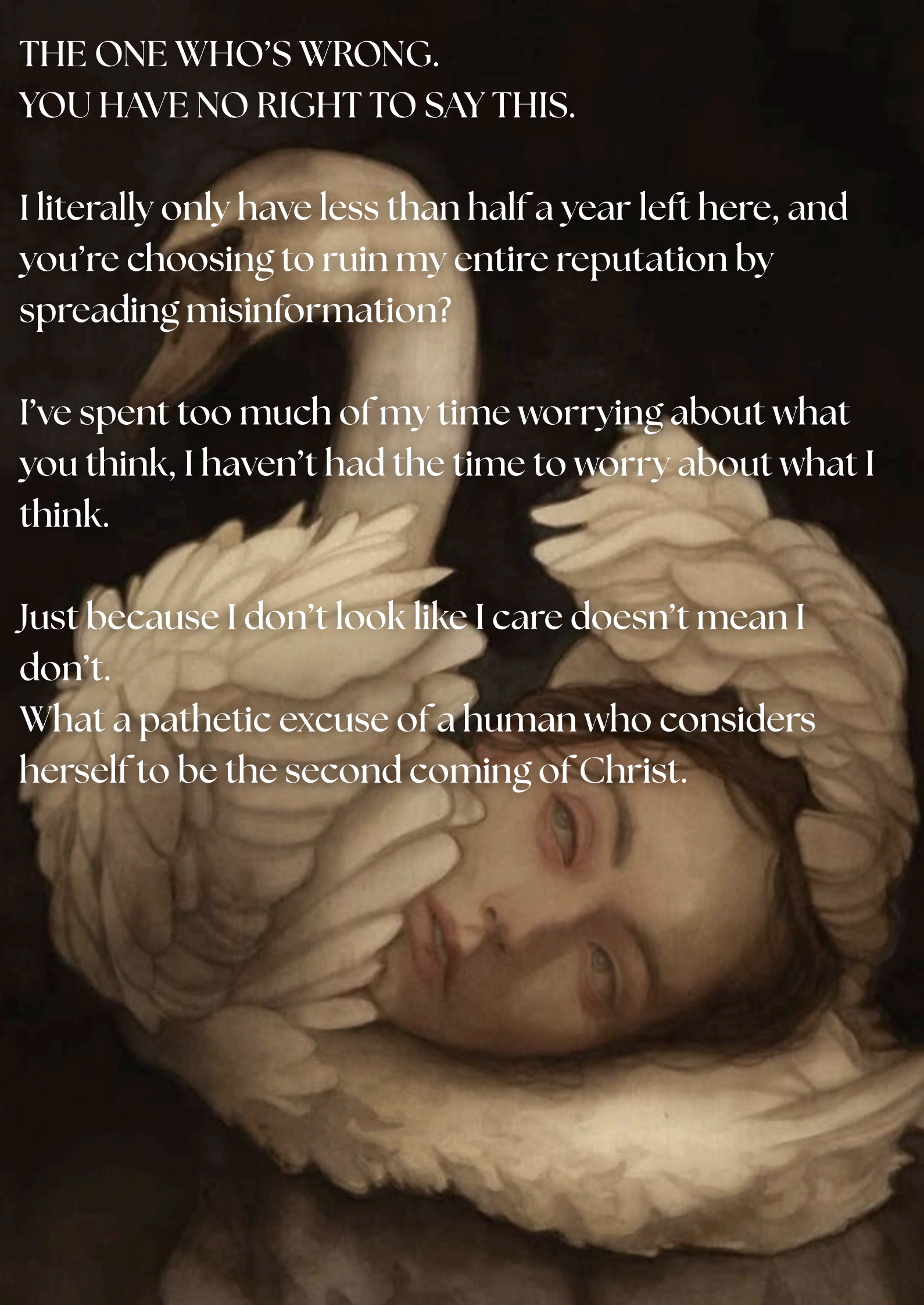
THE ONE WHO'S WRONG.
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY THIS.

I literally only have less than half a year left here, and you're choosing to ruin my entire reputation by spreading misinformation?

I've spent too much of my time worrying about what you think, I haven't had the time to worry about what I think.

Just because I don't look like I care doesn't mean I don't.

What a pathetic excuse of a human who considers herself to be the second coming of Christ.



Hafsa Tahir

You left hollowness at her door,
She was told to pick it up and survive,
but
All she could see were blizzards in a core.
Is it okay to stay alive?
The dreamy thoughts she lived,
The scrappy tales she carried,
The perished hearts she buried,
The hollowness she got, the thorny sighs she caught,
The hopeless questions she asked, and
The thundering answers she got,
the bleeding eyes she watched,
The life she lived,
the love she cherished,
and the souls they crushed.
Still,
In the end,
She was asked to survive,
When she was no more alive.





Nazia Naureen



The

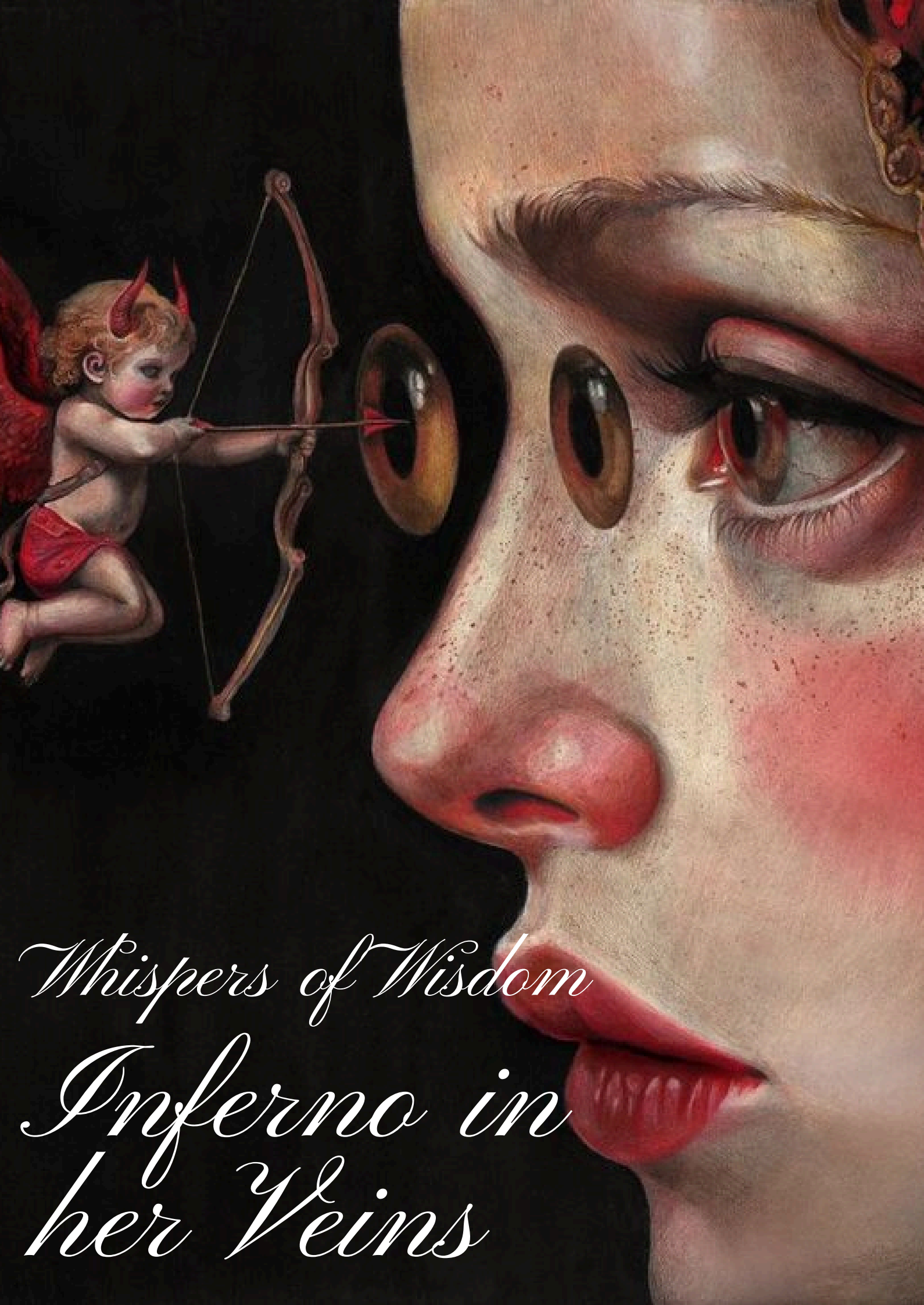
Rachel Munnoch

Matchstick Girls

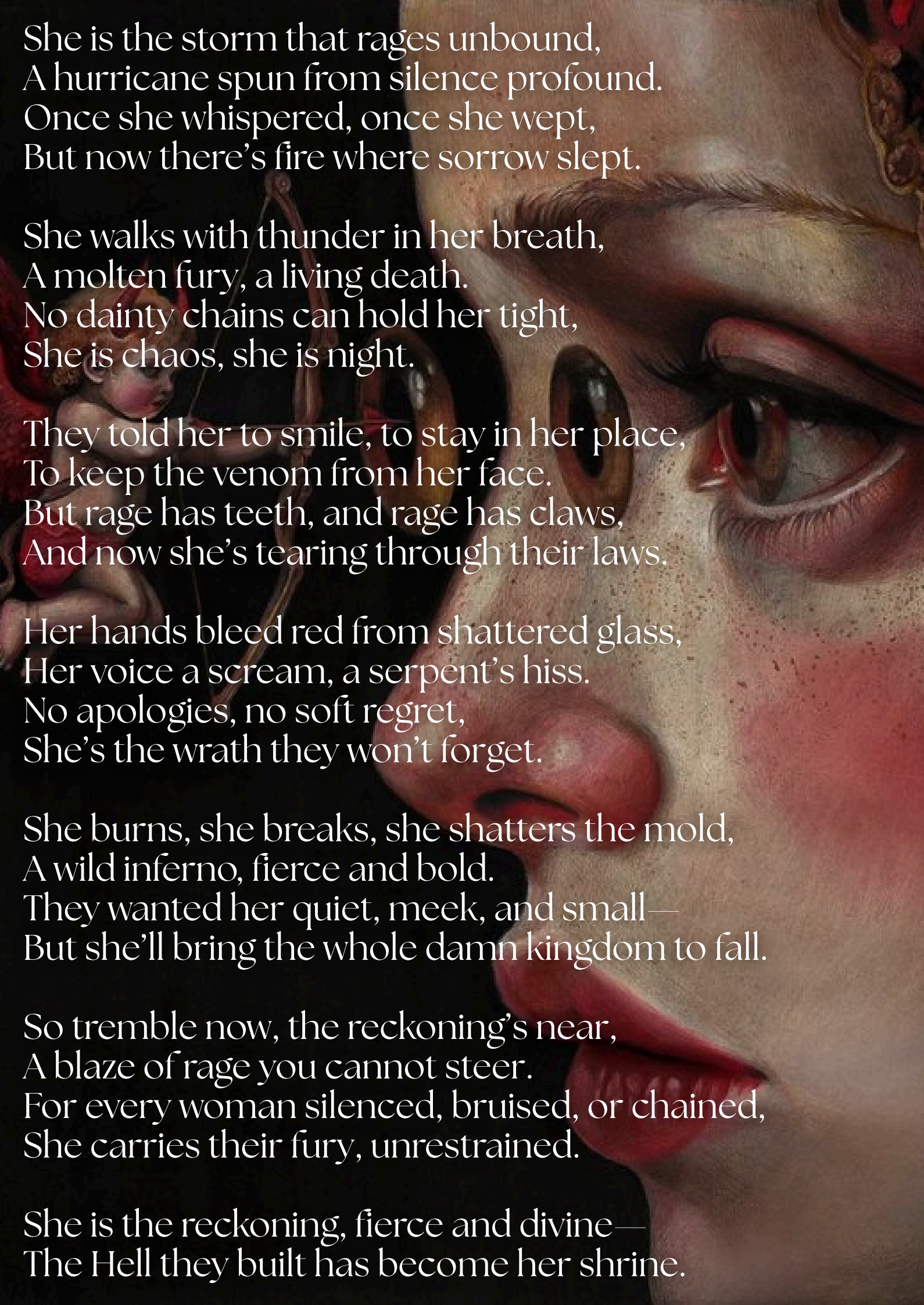
Beasts of brick and mortar loom on either side, their jagged tops far reaching, shrouded in a blanket of darkness. Impenetrable, even to sunlight, the darkness rests in the sky and in your lungs like sodden lead. Yours is a world of monochrome, of metal and bone that scrapes and groans, of ash and smoke and hellfire. You look up towards the heavens but cannot see; your burning eyes are streaming, half-blind, as you gasp rattling, shallow breaths, the putrid taste of sulphur staining your tongue. A million morally bankrupt souls, no hope of salvation, fighting for the same breath.

Until she said no more.

Broken-backed and phossy-jawed, they were told bend and Bow. But fourteen-hundred 'rough set girls' sparked a change that no man could stop: Paddys. Negros. Israelites. The 'lowest strata of society' marched with their heads held high; the fire that had smoldered for far too long was finally catching. They crawled through the embers so that we could run.



*Whispers of Wisdom
Inferno in
her Veins*



She is the storm that rages unbound,
A hurricane spun from silence profound.
Once she whispered, once she wept,
But now there's fire where sorrow slept.

She walks with thunder in her breath,
A molten fury, a living death.
No dainty chains can hold her tight,
She is chaos, she is night.

They told her to smile, to stay in her place,
To keep the venom from her face.
But rage has teeth, and rage has claws,
And now she's tearing through their laws.

Her hands bleed red from shattered glass,
Her voice a scream, a serpent's hiss.
No apologies, no soft regret,
She's the wrath they won't forget.

She burns, she breaks, she shatters the mold,
A wild inferno, fierce and bold.
They wanted her quiet, meek, and small—
But she'll bring the whole damn kingdom to fall.

So tremble now, the reckoning's near,
A blaze of rage you cannot steer.
For every woman silenced, bruised, or chained,
She carries their fury, unrestrained.

She is the reckoning, fierce and divine—
The Hell they built has become her shrine.

Season of Salems

Kei Solis

Can you twist the knife deeper
in a girl who writes on anger,
carrying her soul on a platter?

She ate his heart out—
tried to scrape her tongue clean in its chambers.
Write on the walls of her gut the—
symmetrical sins, the ones you recognize.

You see it, don't you? —
how her mouth is not a wound
but a blade, still wet
with the morning of a new scream.

They told her to be still.
To fold herself into the quiet
like a letter slipped under God's door.
But what is a woman
if not a mouth
dragging a history of teeth?
I learned early: to love is to press
your tongue to the blade and call it honey.
To be loved is to be
ayed open—
your ribs a cathedral of missing.

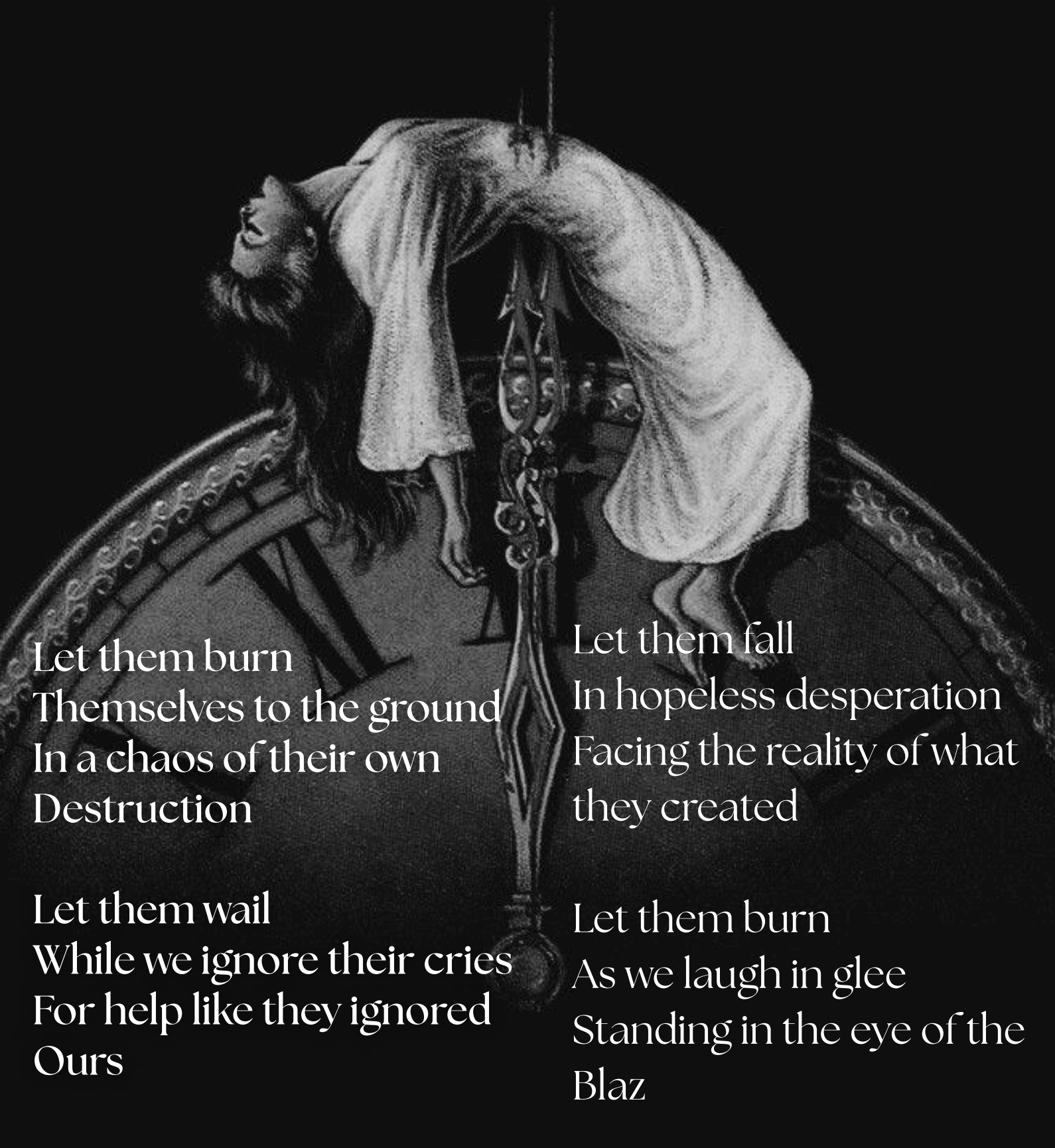
She gathered her rage like stormwater,
let it rot into something fertile.
She tastes of every dark thought I ever swallowed. His
lips—wine-scarlet madness.

The holy violence of her hands:
cradling the world before
setting it alight.

How cruel your veins are,
but what can I say?
The altar's crowded—
we all kneel.

Let them burn

Ksenia Minina.



Let them burn
Themselves to the ground
In a chaos of their own
Destruction

Let them wail
While we ignore their cries
For help like they ignored
Ours

Let them fall
In hopeless desperation
Facing the reality of what
they created

Let them burn
As we laugh in glee
Standing in the eye of the
Blaz



DVM Mezzure

Zubaidha Afsheen



*The Rage
Embedded Within*

I had always been an angry child- teeth bared and claws ready for a fight. Screaming till I could feel the walls of my throat closing in on me, tightening until I couldn't claw my way out of it, words lost in a whirlpool of my anger, and when the avalanche of it died down, the anger was replaced with tears. Ugly, hot tears that never stopped, that pulled me down and left me there, clutching at my heart, and saying a silent prayer. I'm just as angry now, as I was then. But instead of boiling rage that lashes out at everything around it, it simmers beneath my veins, in the bed of my nails that still have dried blood in them, in the valves of my heart, where everything feels like it's moving too fast. It nests itself within me, like a second layer of my skin- coating my insides with its saccharine honey, blurring out my vision, and making everything I see distorted, broken glass pieces that meld together into the sharpest edges, that twists slowly inwards until the dam breaks and the blood flows, and the hot, boiling rage is everywhere, all at once, burning the surface it's on, and everything in its way.



Pineapple Jam

Lamiah Fathima

Tipping, tipping, my fever is spiking,
Huh, mother, we've got pineapple jam in the house,
In a small jar near the gate,
Pineapple jam,
Wonder who made it.

My grandpa used to love pineapple jam,
Before he went 6-feet under, that is,
Maybe he made it and left it as an offering to the
spirits so that they won't torment the house,
But the spirits are in the house!

They're everywhere,
Everyone,
I tell you,
Everyone.

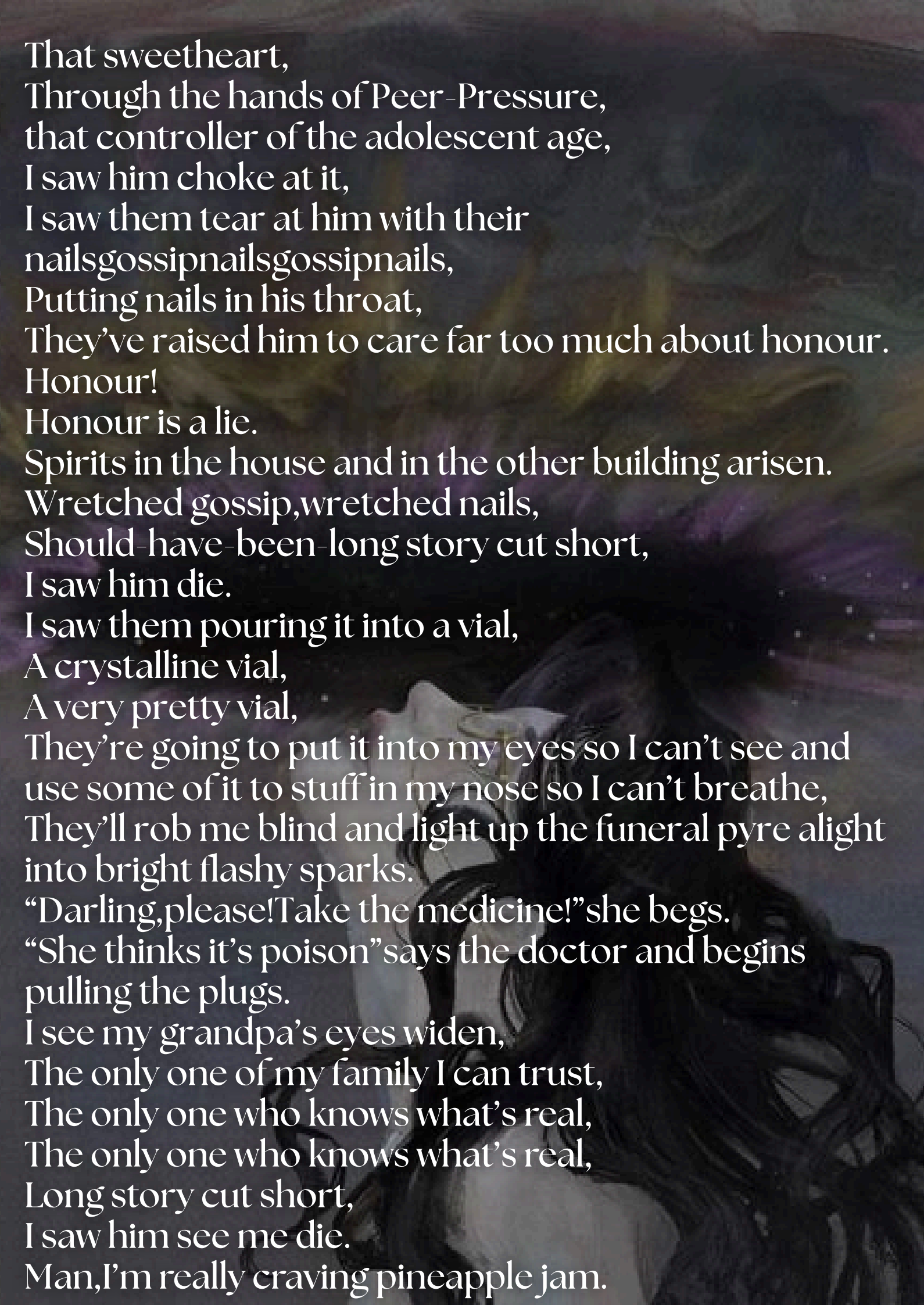
I saw the spirits shit through my uncle's
mouth, spewing mockery at pretty women simply
walking along the street,
Ripping at their pretty tops and skirts and pants,
Ripping even at the jewels sewn on the bottom of a
burqa.

They get themselves up like this and blame the men,
Like he's some kind of saint, Diogenes arisen from
the grave,
I'm pretty sure he's dallied with a dozen different
women.

I saw them rub that greasy shit onto my grandma's
throat,

I saw him help them.

Now she's spewing it too,
And for all, we thought she was one of us,
I saw them force-feed it to my baby cousin,



That sweetheart,
Through the hands of Peer-Pressure,
that controller of the adolescent age,
I saw him choke at it,
I saw them tear at him with their
nailsgossipnailsgossipnails,
Putting nails in his throat,
They've raised him to care far too much about honour.
Honour!

Honour is a lie.
Spirits in the house and in the other building arisen.
Wretched gossip,wretched nails,
Should-have-been-long story cut short,
I saw him die.

I saw them pouring it into a vial,
A crystalline vial,
A very pretty vial,
They're going to put it into my eyes so I can't see and
use some of it to stuff in my nose so I can't breathe,
They'll rob me blind and light up the funeral pyre alight
into bright flashy sparks.

"Darling,please!Take the medicine!"she begs.
"She thinks it's poison"says the doctor and begins
pulling the plugs.

I see my grandpa's eyes widen,
The only one of my family I can trust,
The only one who knows what's real,
The only one who knows what's real,
Long story cut short,
I saw him see me die.

Man,I'm really craving pineapple jam.

get to know the *Contributors*

Chainka

Chainka was born in Kherson (Ukraine), but due to war she had to travel abroad. She has been writing since she was 8 years old, mostly prose but also poems. She writes in English and Ukrainian in the topics that touch your soul hard and soft at the same time: war, peace, love, hatred, — and how they're all placed together in a human. Her works were published in Meraki Review, Garden Literature, Eloquentia and many others.

Evelyn Chan

Evelyn is an indecisive reader, jumping from one book to another. She's currently stuck in school, and contemplating whether or not she should do something better than doomscrolling.

Hafsa

Hafsa is an aspiring writer in her early twenties, who tries to capture the intricacies of life through her words. She likes to drown herself in the healing words and art to convey a human's inner conflicts and wonders. She is trying to create a world for people, whose battles can only be heard through words.

DNM Measure

Immezzure is a specialist in all units of measure. They seek to create a new narrative and pop iconography through the use of the tape measure. The tape measure as a formerly masculine object and all that encompasses it (who is allowed to use it, its structure as a reflection of masculinity). Their art reflects the contemporary culture as we examine gender identity, politics, career choices and gender roles.

Irina Vérène

Irina Vérène is a non-binary femme writer from Germany who explores the rawness and complexity of human connection and emotion in both poetry and prose. Their work has appeared in Vial of Bones Zine and is set to be featured in The Queer Gaze Mag, Venus Virgo Press, The Infinite Blues Review, Moss Puppy Magazine, and a zine by Gnashing Teeth Publishing. Find them on Instagram (@queen_of_gore) or Substack (@queenofgore) and more of their work on AO3 under herzblutballade.

Kei Solis

Kei Solis is a seventeen year old writer, poet, artist, and humanities student from the Philippines. She was a senior writer and editor for the Literary Category in her school journalism club. She is a staff writer for Meraki and the Scarlet Heir. Her work delves into the idea of mortality, tragedy, identity, life, and the shifting tides of raw human emotion. She writes to stir souls, to unearth truths, to dig between the lines.

Ksenia Veronica

Ksenia Veronica is a teen author that recently found her love of writing again. She was born and lives in the United States, while her parents moved there from Ukraine. She enjoys reading, writing, cross stitching, crocheting, and cuddling with her cat and dog.

Lamiah Fathima

Lamiah Fathima is a poet and a writer who is working on a fantasy novel titled 'Farah and the Secrets of Legacy' and a collection of short stories, both which she hopes to get published. She enjoys eating sweet things, reading, and drawing. Her favourite poems are Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti and Call Me Ishmael Tonight by Agha Shahid Ali. Her favourite books are Legendborn by Tracy Deonn, Babel by RF. Kuang, and A Tempest Of Tea by Hafsah Faizal. She likes to write about mental health, religion, murder, fantasy, comedy, the concept of being filial, and the innate inanity of the human existence. When it comes to poetry, she generally writes in free verse.

Mirjana M.

Mirjana M. (they / them) are a digital artist and writer from Belgrade, Serbia. Their work focuses on exploring the juxtaposition of various elements through mixed media of photography, double exposure, textures and light. Their work most often explores concepts of duality and has appeared in Vocivia, Broken Antler, Spellbinder, New Limestone Review, The Fantastic Other, Soft Star, Elixir Verse Press magazines and other places. They authored 4 poetry collections.

Nazia Nawreen

Nazia is a self-taught abstract artist and dental student, blending science and emotion through vibrant, textured paintings. Her work explores themes like inner conflict, resilience, and cultural identity—often drawn from her own life experiences. She is currently funding her master's in dental surgery through her art, proving that passion and purpose can coexist.

Rachel Munnoch

Rachel is a Glasgow-based writer with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a passion for fanfiction and movies.

Sumayah Mittal

Sumayah is a young novice author and artist, with a passion for diving into themes and emotions that resonate with her in her works.

Whispers of Wisdom

A passionate writer with a flair for vivid storytelling, they explore themes of romance, heartbreak, thriller, and self-discovery. Their work is infused with raw emotion and a keen sense of depth, reflecting a love for language and the power of the written word.

Zubaidha Afsheen

Afsheen is a student with an avid love for all things literature. She loves to read, bake, watch 2000s rom-coms to fill the void in her heart and ofcourse- write. She finds herself most at home within the pages of a book, or with a pen in her hand. She has a constant desire in her to seek out new knowlege- whether it's in the form of people watching, or diving deep into internet rabbit holes.

