

In the
Breast
Pocket of a
Fine
Overcast
Day

Nico Vassilakis

Blurbs:

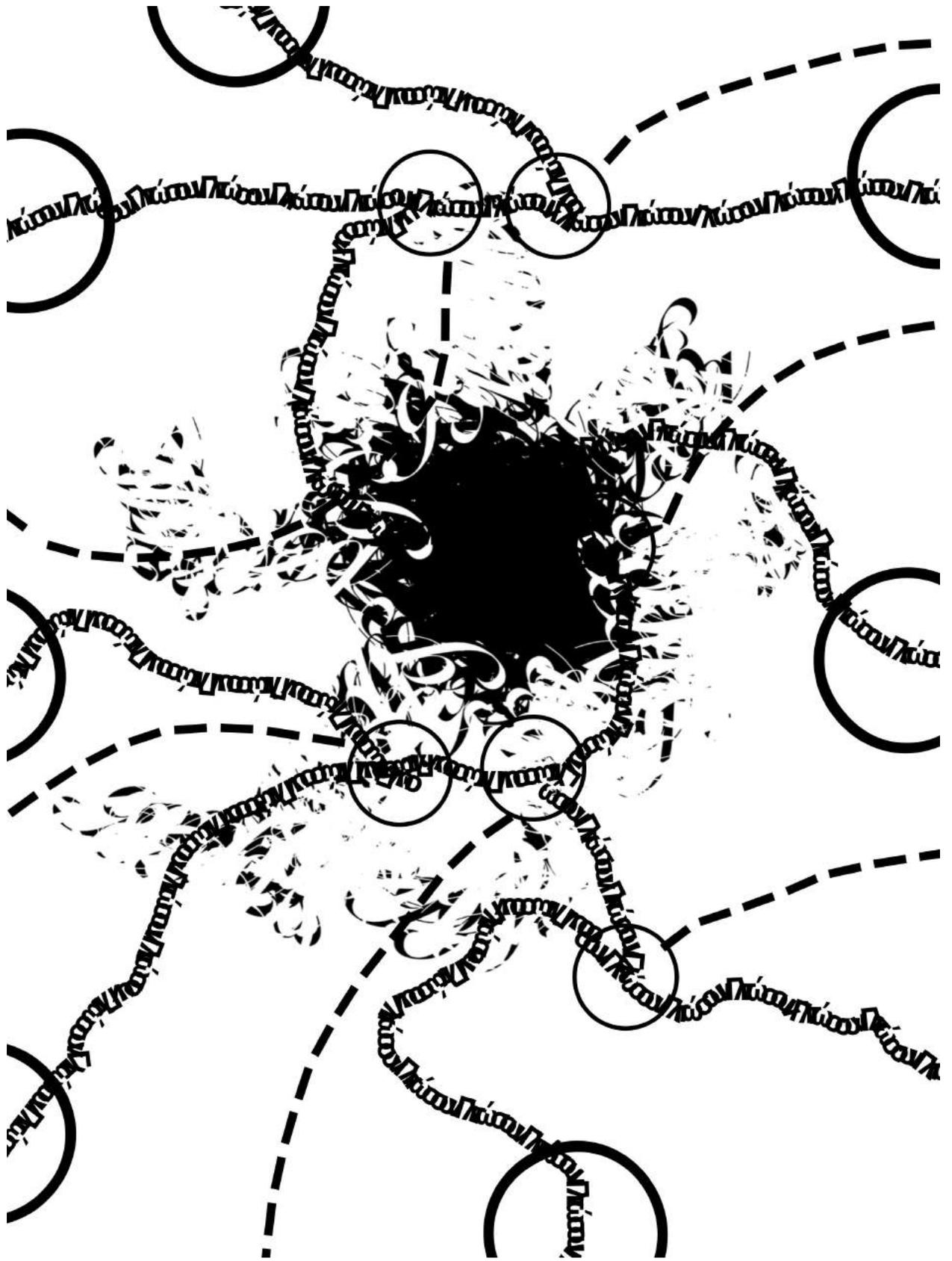
Reading *In the Breast Pocket of a Fine Overcast Day* gave me the startling feeling I was inside its poems — invited onto their planes of perception to take part by listening, and given space to catch the constant glimpses of recognition between world and poem as they mark their eternal gambits of overlap. Nico Vassilakis handles tone with a precision so deft and close-in as to shape intimacy's layers of wit and doubt with disarming availability. By extension the lines and spaces between them in his poems seem to equally vibrate, registering depths of wisdom and humor one will be hard-pressed to find anywhere else.

Anselm Berrigan

Once, in a conversation with Nico in Seattle he told me that he can't see words anymore, he sees their graphic composition.

In the Breast Pocket of a Fine Overcast Day is a book about text and image confronting each other. It is also about giving language another chance: this time with feelings. There is an intense awareness of the textual conditions of the poem in this book, also an awareness of the socio-economic and racial conditions. Nico mourns the diminished use-value of human life. Of sentences disguised as thoughts. In a world that switches language off, this book makes a sincere attempt to turn it back on again. The levels of awareness and sensitivity carried within this book are profound and contagious. It is a great book.

Maged Zaher



"The simplest unit, a spot, not only indicates location but is felt to have within itself potential energies of expansion and contraction which activates the surrounding area"

"A line can be thought of as a chain of spots joined together."

M. de Sausmarez

Descending

This grand immersion
dolloped up with downers
smeared and blurry

More sullied solute
than pure solvent

For just a second
you run alongside
the train
then remain unresolved
and left behind

The lids, lapels, the lazy epidermis
willing to lay down
to surrender, submit
to this wrong way of seeing

These accustomed processes
know more about what to expect
have been led so astray
that surprise is isn't

So, bullshit on this poem
this quirk of desire to dissolve
to be extinguished

Everything about leaving is
now spiced
dangled and altered
in the eyes

To go is to be gone

The trajectory
is horrible to begin with
a fiction is a terrible choice
a word so full of gaps nothing
can be kept inside

Division is a way to lighten loads

Find the perforations
and snap in equal parts

A distress is tension
is pressure
the chiseled center of a badge
bought at thrift

Perfume condensed

Adhesion, the kind of stick-to-itiveness
you only dream of

A shawl, a light cover
a thin veil between this weather
and that type of condition

Walking toward

Leaves behind
It's Pronounced anew
a new economy

And you shine
for a moment on the subway platform
You will come with me
that's what the voice says

The skeptic gland too activated to follow
the capillaries around the eyes engorged
You try to stop seeing, but have been raised on seeing what they want seen

So change the message or change the alphabet

My backyard is all potential
figuring out how to grow life
and make it livable

Something about removing binaries
and inventing new economy

You can't play it without the amp turned passed ten
my cousin fuzz and reverb annihilating space

The

Beauty you come for
is beauty to die for

You vibrate near it
and detach from the everyday

The astonished sleep
you rise and drop

The astoundingly wakeful
you rise and drop

And here
at the closest proximity yet

A hand unclenches
to say this poem is done

After

But really
the questions
are interesting
If only they're asked
What unholy death is best remembered, this one, now this new one
not this other one
When you wake up, you'll find the other awake
right by you

Money = Silence
Poems = No Money

Cops are the army of the rich. The rich are white

The frenzy of 99 to want them sour grapes
Tired of deceiving themselves
tired of the news

Sensitivities will be the first layers to be shed when the storm comes
Did you hear the good word, a storm's coming

It doesn't fucking matter if you were sensitive two minutes ago
are you sensitive Now

The light of your devices illuminating the way

Ok, let's try that again
this time with feeling

Deceive Yourself Further

Yes, you've become new

Yes, you delete

Yes, text and image confront each other

Yes, they acquire byproduct

You say here

A pause in flora

The detachable head

I am here now

A pause with fauna

Pulverized

With and without safety

Awake

Decide to look and you're looking

This attraction to electricity

Delete, that's its name

Pennies on the ground are a throwback to another economy

The store designed to take you where it wants to take you

Follow and you will always be behind

This pill dissolves and distributes throughout the body

Nothing is costly when money isn't applicable

You know what that means

You are sparkly sparkly

Beyond beyond

I deform what's normal to us

The sound of a rotary phone

Then its ringtone

I decide to never again and I lie through my teeth

You never undress the truth

A tourist to the truth

A wonderful painting, they called it

Anticipates the collision of opposing forces

The ink isn't even authentic, it dissolves upon impact

Reminded of ghost penmanship

(Hyphenated - for your pleasure)

One cycle includes all the content you'll ever need

A scarf in a box

A tongue in the mouth

I'll steer away from the sentence and off the storyline altogether

There's enough furniture to let you know you're in a room

It is predominately visual

As birds get caught in your hair

A jarring separation you point to

Makes memory of pain by covering it with itself

Yes, some colossal economy is staring me down

Yes, the balding of an empire approaches

Mishap

The plane here is similar to wherever you might be. Folded paper too, spread evenly across the sentence.

The warm tendency

to fold a paper plane
machine to nose honey
this frail communiqué
as tall data stream
as in need of pinch
the grandiose is off-screen
will diminish unfinished

*

The plane here
is similar to
wherever you might be

And intolerable racket
is everywhere

What's different
is our eyes
What fills them

The way to communicate
is all thumbs

*

This poem goes
The tunnel lighting control booth - 96th St.

Twist said that
Honed to a point
Hammered
Hammer said that

Not to suffocate with the obvious
or bludgeon with a poem version

I'll never really care
what comes out your mouth

*

Told
to the wing
most far
even extraneous
medallion of information
about how
we got here

I've got a brochure hidden
in the back pocket waiting to go

It's business as usual down here

The head pushed through atmosphere
The helmet pressed against open space

*

Fragments
collect
and make a go

of it

*

When the truth
is found:
to be

or not two b's
but questions

A paneled conference room to disrobe in

A tincture of mercurochrome
to dispossess the worst of its sting

Spending days narrowing

*

The penalty of causing
a child's mood shift

*

Lets get fucked up
and download a virus

*

This drinks
from a proposition
shaped mouth

A bottle neck

exposure of light
slashed-at and pocketed

A tidy pinnacle worth

Draped across
several paragraphs

Come gather dust

It being pleasure
to arrive at being
to depart from it
never knowing how
one gets
or its demise

*

The diminished
The upcomings
The dimming of minutives

*

I will treasure the moment we became friends
There was no one else to turn to
so we turned out to be compatible after all

I am in a different setting now

Porcupine mishap

Diminished Use Value

I'm going to walk into the living room and tell everyone I love them. Here I go.

Be light. Be light on your feet. Or lighter than that.

A marching band. A swarm of bees.

A collapsible font resembles crushed rock spiraling through space. Letters spinning out of control. One long drawn out whisper. A breath to fill your ear with words.

Well, I was checking my grammar at the red light.

Certain things should be carried for years until their meaning becomes apparent.

Recycling is every other Monday starting next Monday.

Binge drinking and economic failure go hand in hand.

Larger on the inside than out. It should please no one to leave this space with a known result.

Where it becomes a line across a canvass. A muted straight line. Black. Traveling across the canvass. An eighth of an inch wide. Black. Across the canvass.

How to live how you live is how to write how you write.

Whimsy's coming

Wit is coming.

She is, really.

Makes nihilism have curves.

Softens the softenables.

Elbows regardless.

Elbows always on target.

Churning.

Making serious fun creamy.

The danceable parts of a conversation.

I'm a segue humorist.

In the planetarium he looks for his feet. Fidgeting with a bus pass.

Garbage day is Monday.

A sentence disguised as thought.

Noise is life. There's no great desire to say everything.

Your lack of an active eyebrow will undo you.

Dear Dresden, said the perforations. Light shining through that one art project we call, for the last time, Plummet.

Dissimilar things align and come into focus – the byproducts of which reveal greater surface area. A better third.

These decentralized thoughts. A basket filled with pickings from a known source.

Even blameless, thought Maude, moving across the food court trying to go unnoticed. Straws left behind. Overstuffed garbage cans. Lots of living going on (here.)

Maude had cajoled the attendants into giving her extra attention.

A cluster of people were detained.

The problem with poetry is it can never be satisfied.

Completely.

It's all catch and release.

The visible person must become invisible – that is the nature of things.

A foray through.

Moving. Toward.

He needed to see it after smelling it first. One shape becomes what you stare at, then it changes into what you've been looking at. What has always been there.

*

How far back does one have to go?

Crashing under the weight of its own greed and vanity.

It is critical that you exist.

This. Written hundreds of times. Like this.

You see, you are just no good.

These other things are mostly made up of people like you.

Second-guessing as you go.

The more you seek the more invisible it becomes.

That being the product is less important than the marketing of that product.

Can that be something?

Turning your fucked up face toward and then away from the business end of popular culture.

I found my clown center.

By useful I mean your sensibilities are aroused and intentions engaged.

It's not wrong to need a break.

This is you looking at a poster.

No satellite connection.

x

If a horse

When a horse

The clomping

Drives itself

Among other

Preparing itself

Aspects of

Prepared to sound

Itself

Like itself

+

I will recreate a river

The bird and stone

Anything at hand is any

Communication possible

An excursion, its excruciating thinness, a line to the blind

Presented with all magic removed

and magic is another word for not being there

+

It's a walk in the woods

It's moments in the woods

The percussive nature of crumpled paper

+

Stopping to ease

Stepping toward light

Slow, slowed

Never discord

In a flaneur's thoughts

These are brighter than

Little moments of note – moving

This way for possible

Results that way
Could exist in an assembly of imitations

The radio quoted
The dalliance of fanciful scales
Deciding

To minimize the musical
Effect of drama on the
Listener. Approached as it were
With notes running on like
Words into sentences we
Glean certain meanings not
Exactly defined – against each

Sound takes effect

+

Moods of the year outside
Noise welcomes
Thought applied to music applied
To thought

A romance in there
Implied
He whispered, cathartic

+

The zero meditation of
Gnarled at first
Or first gnarl – then long
Breathing, this is the body
Talking its way through it

An Armoire in the Typewriter's Breast Pocket

The smooth distinction warbles in conduits

In mid shift, high terraced walls

Proceed without pitfall, stutter

Sculpture deceives one calamity at a time

Erasure too, wrings out moisture

“Lunar hemorrhage brings the face closer”

The Things We Bring

Tell me everything you thought you thought and we'll work on the gaps together
The duodenum-like foyer enters in slowly leaning in like this stomach will eat you twice
Closer to getting to a place that suits thinking about
Getting closer to a space that suits thinking about
Will you know me when I get there in the sense of paying attention
Will you recognize me when I have left will you be paying attention
In here you never get away you never get from under
In here we never get to think we never think about what to think about
In here we're alone and it's impossible to be alone in a place like this
In here you will join me without knowing how to join me and a space we'll make of it
In the middle where there is no up or down we cannot quite seem to make our way around
If you had a strategy it would be on how to start and then about what thinking thinks about
Driven on by wanting to be gone we're gone none the less without knowing what's behind
As we move along the things we bring will arrive all at once
This will be where all the things we bring can think about what the things we bring are all about
Now when you sit inside you sit alone without a thing to do
Each move you make is a move in space and there's nothing there to bump into
It's time to let go of nothing more than what you've come to know
With nothing held nothing weighs you down
To be awake in the chemicals of the brain
Blindfolded in a tube this long not feeling a door nor a handle or a jar
Squeezed till cellular attire goes dark in here

Off-Planet Language

We are off-planet language

+

Dreamed up by those that switch language off.

+

The brain creates the nervous system. A fiction we all engage in.

+

Staring is a primitive liaison to the system of communication in store.

+

*

+

Of course, there'll be no way to say this thing I'm saying now, no words, no sequence of letters, nothing will be uttered or conveyed in known forms.

+

This new thing, it won't be revolutionary, it won't tamper or adjust or topple the existing norm, it will entirely replace and leave no trace of what came before. Language will no longer be written or remembered.

+

Where alphabet is made of string atop fast water. I'm loathe to embrace the manifestos of the before time, as they were constant realignments to what will always be just ahead.

Yes, language that never repeats.

+

A tube of glass and fog. String moves. String gestures. Speed and the unattainable. Undulation for a second. String in the position of recognizable alphabet.

===

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===

Mingus Ah Um

I don't understand.

Animals should

have learned to talk by now.

Visiting hours

and hours of the day

and night.

Day and night.

What happens on the surface

of a planet stays on the

surface of the planet.

Until it leaves.

I don't think language

just naturally occurred

but was assisted

egged on by something

off planet.

A tube of glass and fog.

Speed makes it impossible to locate.

I had an episode

that took me back

through my life

to every place I lived

and into my mother's

womb and into

my father's eyes

as he came

inside her.

:::::::

:::::::

Language is everything
you do

"like using 21st century software on
50,000 year old hardware"

It's not, so much, that
but, more like, this

A language event

Switching our already embedded broadcasting system on

:::;::

;:;!;!;

Reasons to be Cheerful:

Language is over

Innovation is stopped

For now

These poems go

Nowhere

This isn't news

The wow of transmitting

A loop

Repeat, nowhere

ì°ì°ì°ì°
ì°ì°ì°ì°

The pledge of allegiance includes a passage about leaving the planet after exhausting its resources

More ambient

More insect logic

More small talk disguise

More slow Byzantium choir

What more

About machines

And their psychological

Impact.

We've been harassed

Enough.

Books are leaving

Falling out our hands.

The previous visible and invisible language is distressed

The new will be devoid of all this

And is promised never to arrive

./././././
./././././

The formality of alphabet
How we read our seeing
A scaffold rigged in string
Think visual grammar
and letter combinations

Our verbs and stuff are limitation

./././././
./././././

ęPęPęPęP
ęPęPęPęP

Miscommunicating can be fun!

Maybe English
As a 26 string banjo

Pretty cumbersome.

String and string
String is string
String's abrupt string
String string
The penalty of string

How do you take
language
And apply it to string

Who do you think you are?

Scissor Scissors
Slice lices
Letter letters away
Till form
Comes through

And then annihilate
That form
And the thousands
After that

To want
New paradigms
And only this language to use

ö'ö,ö'ö,
ö'ö,ö'ö,

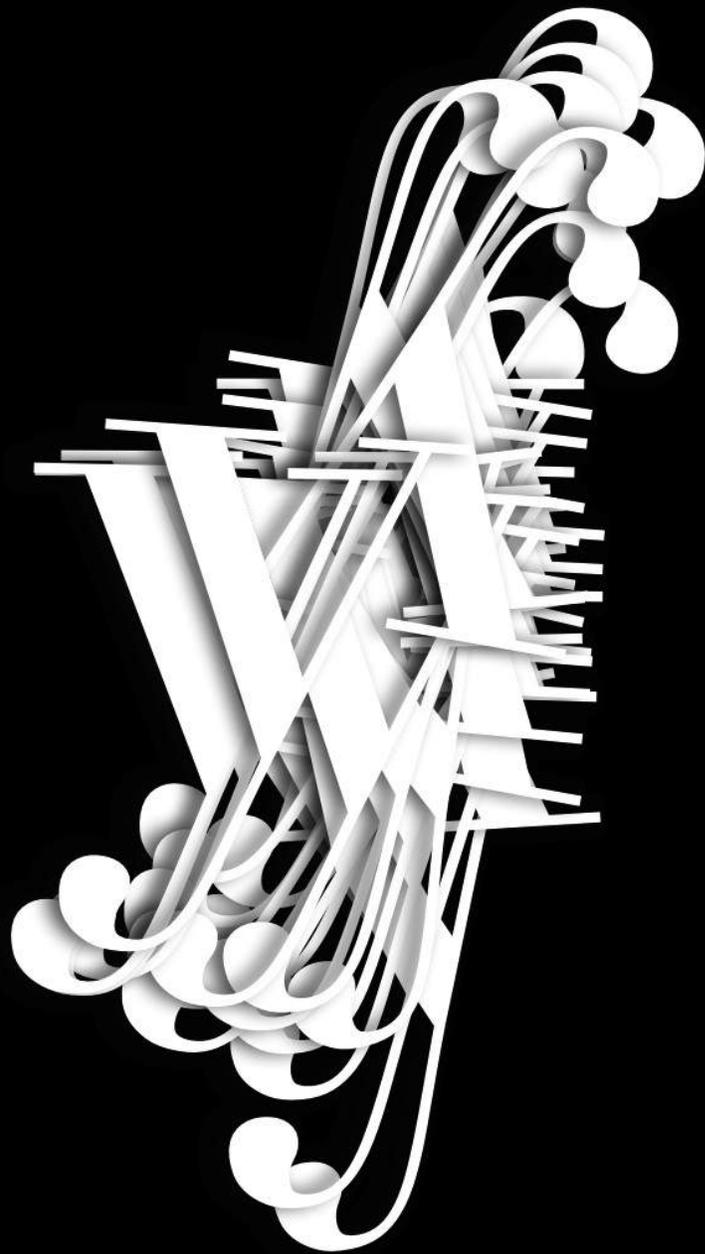
This economy of speech

I will have by now
Over extended

Myself
With these
Words
And you
Will agree
There is a time
For every purpose
But enough

This is the modern way
To end a poem



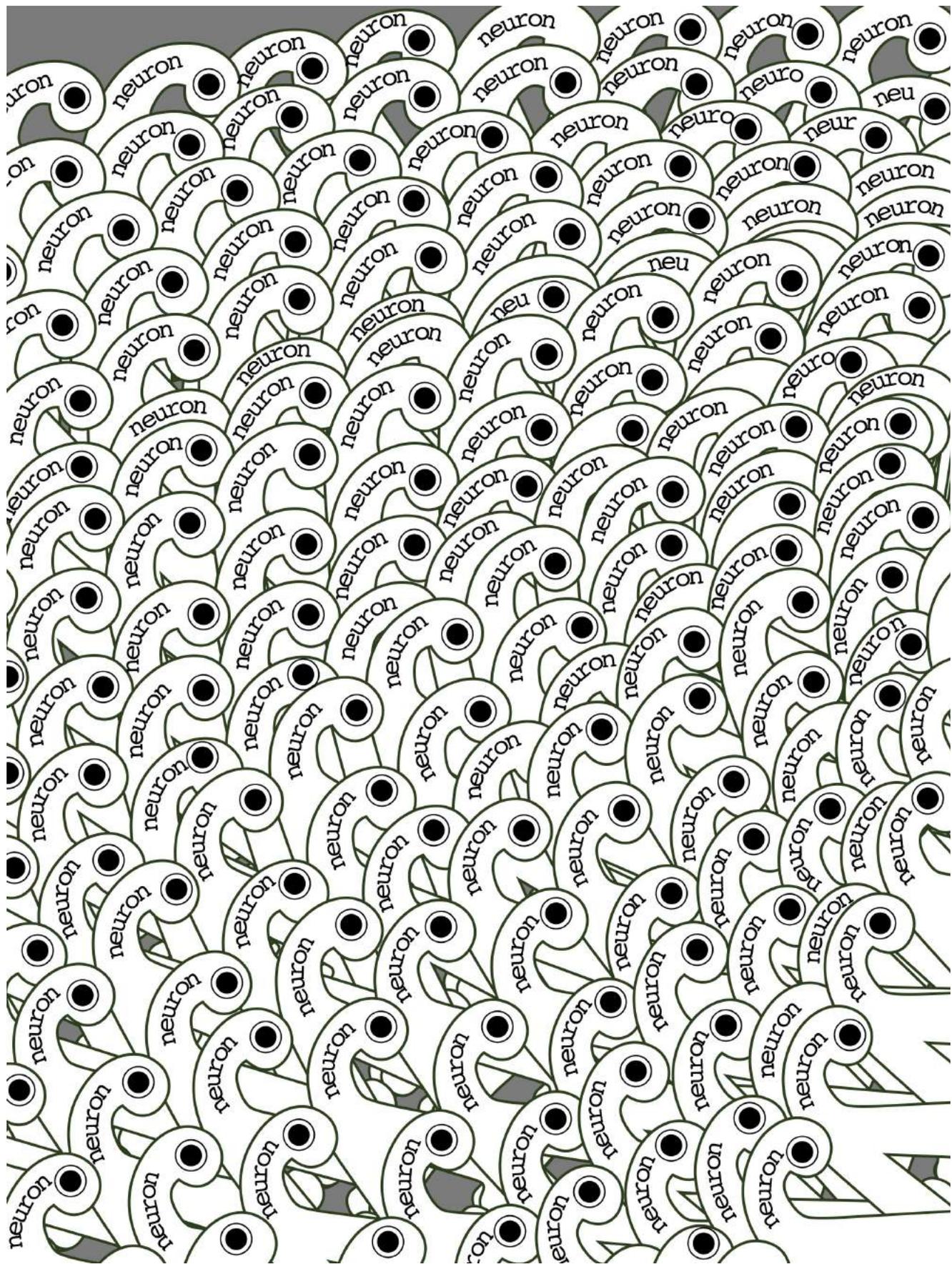


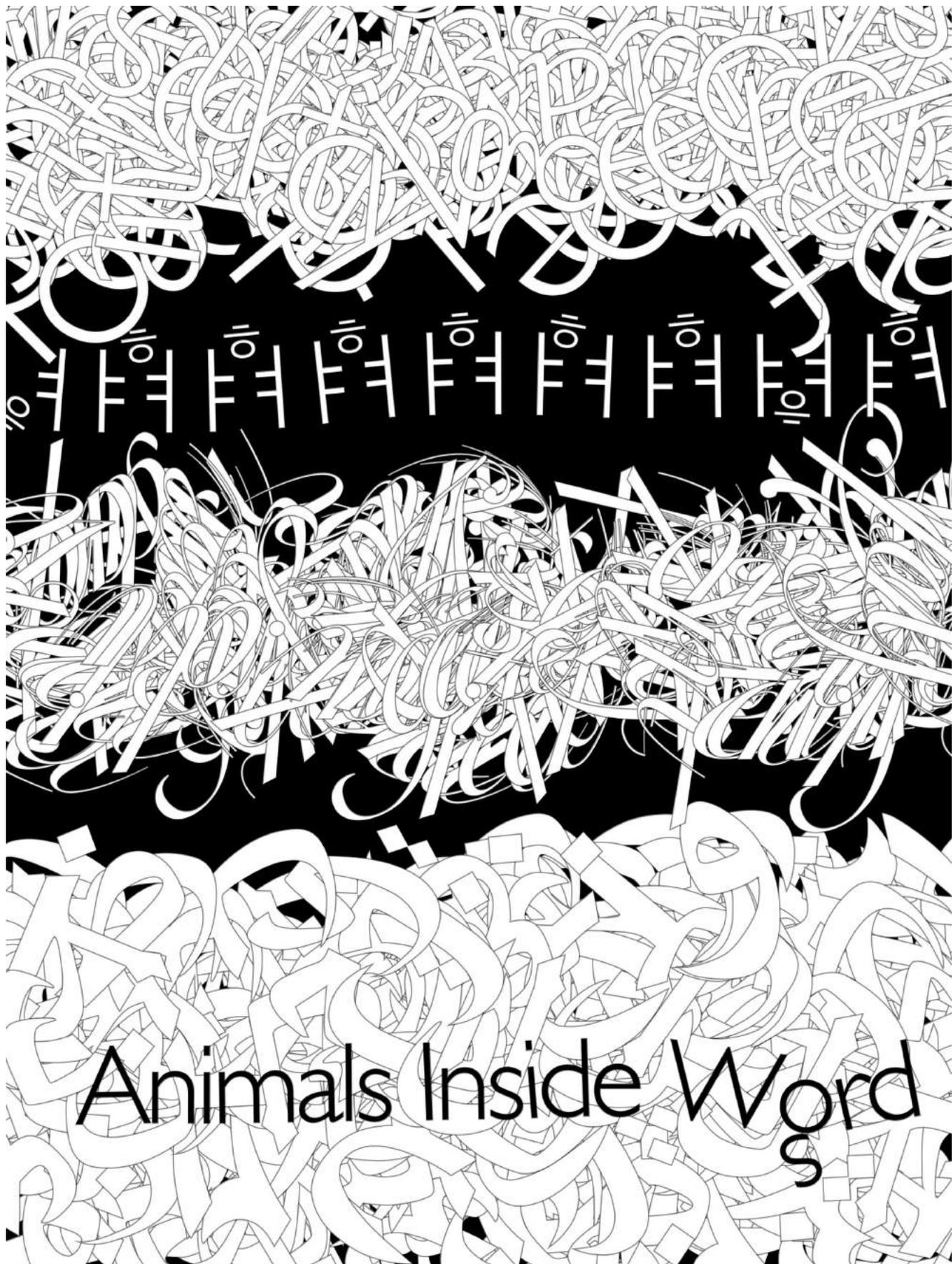
Dictionary
A-J

Dictionary
K-Q

Dictionary
R-U

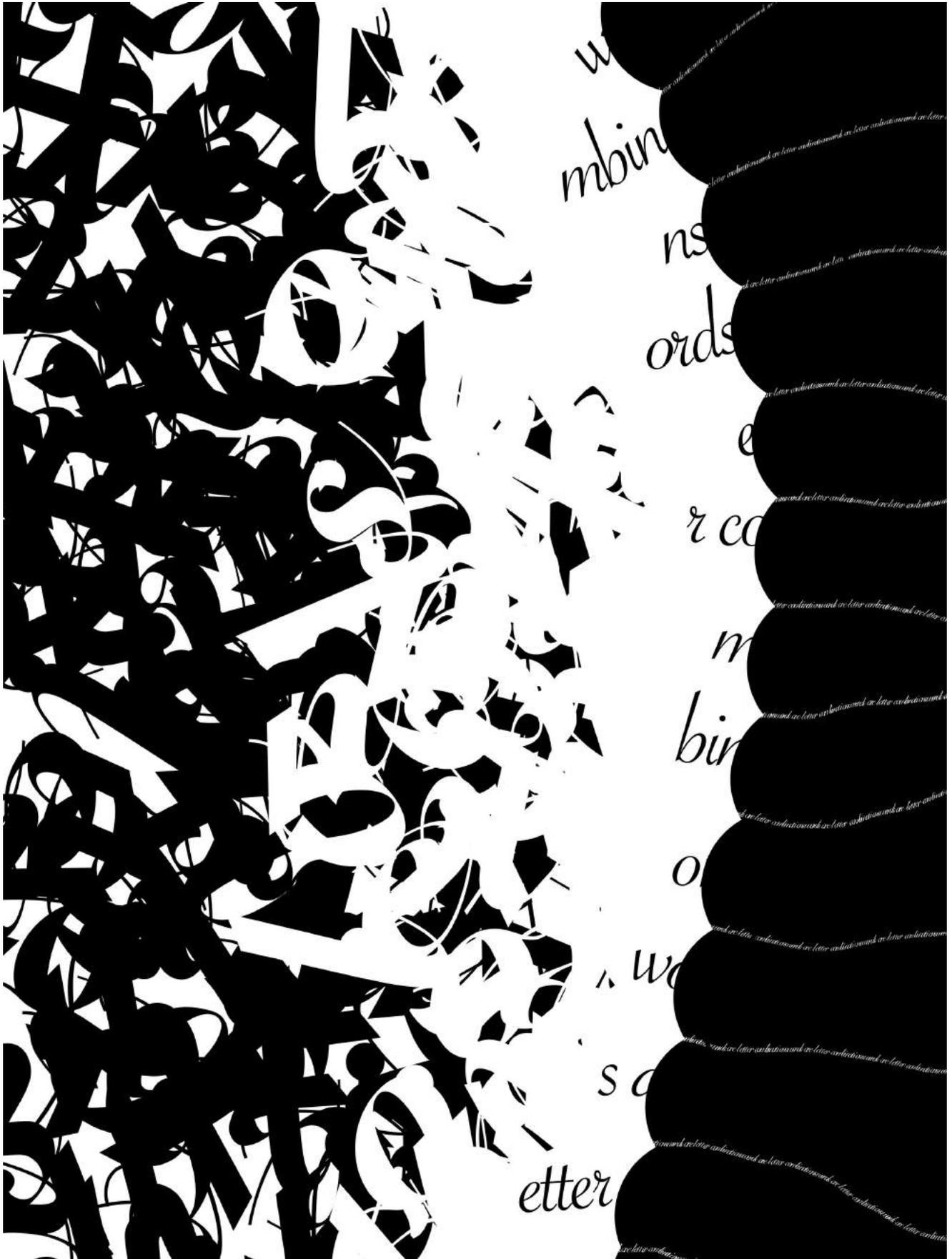
Dictionary
V-Z

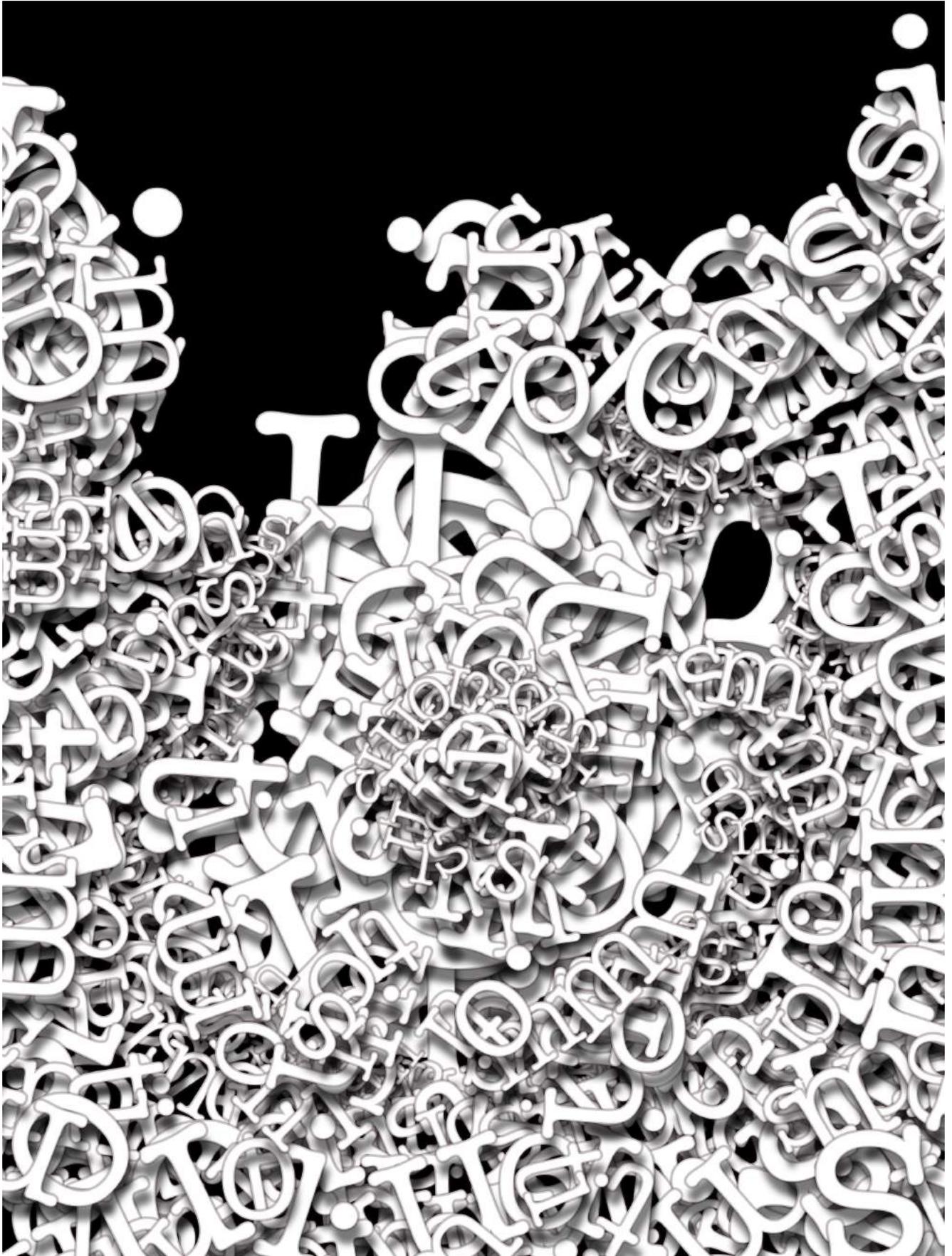


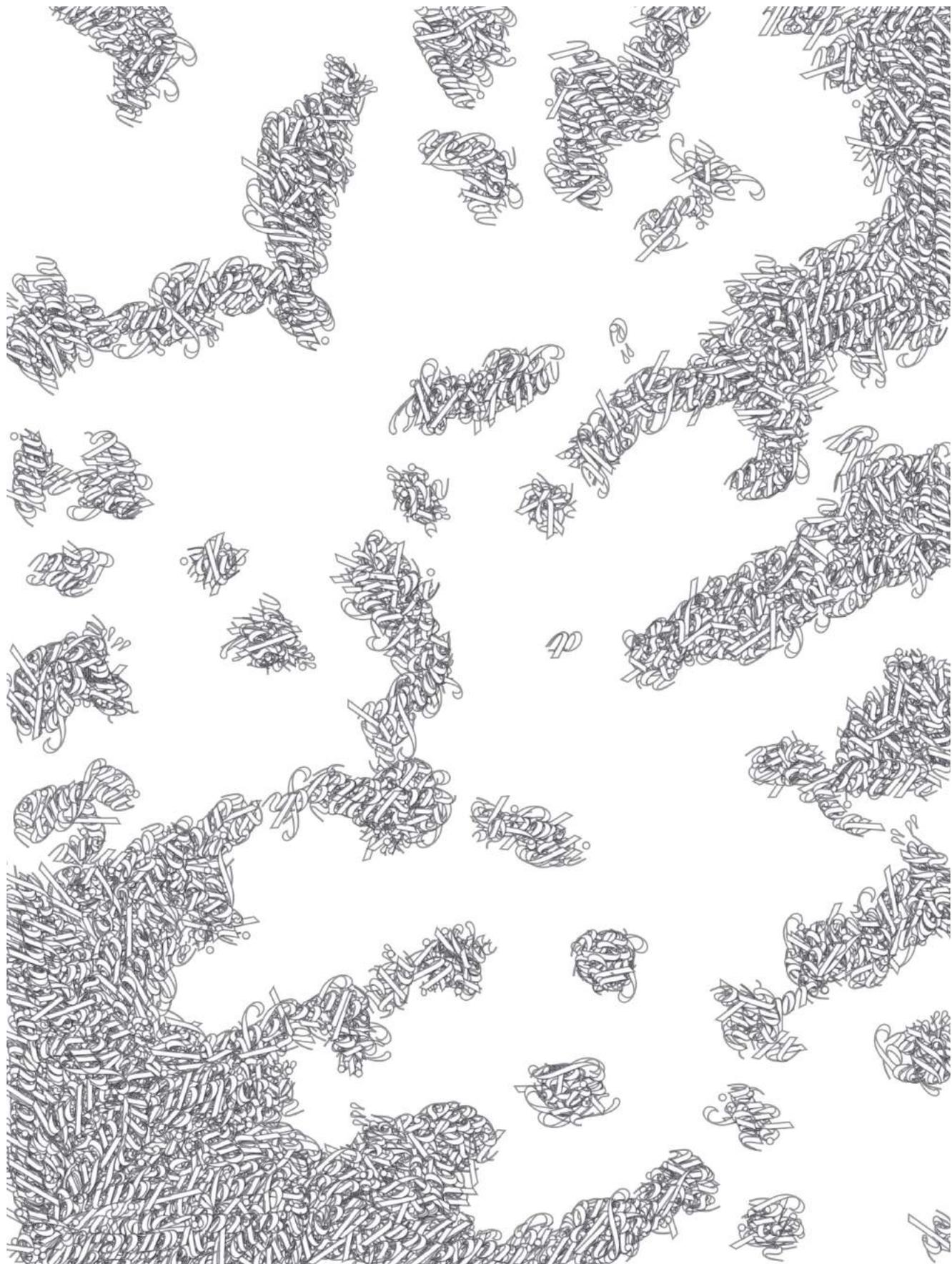


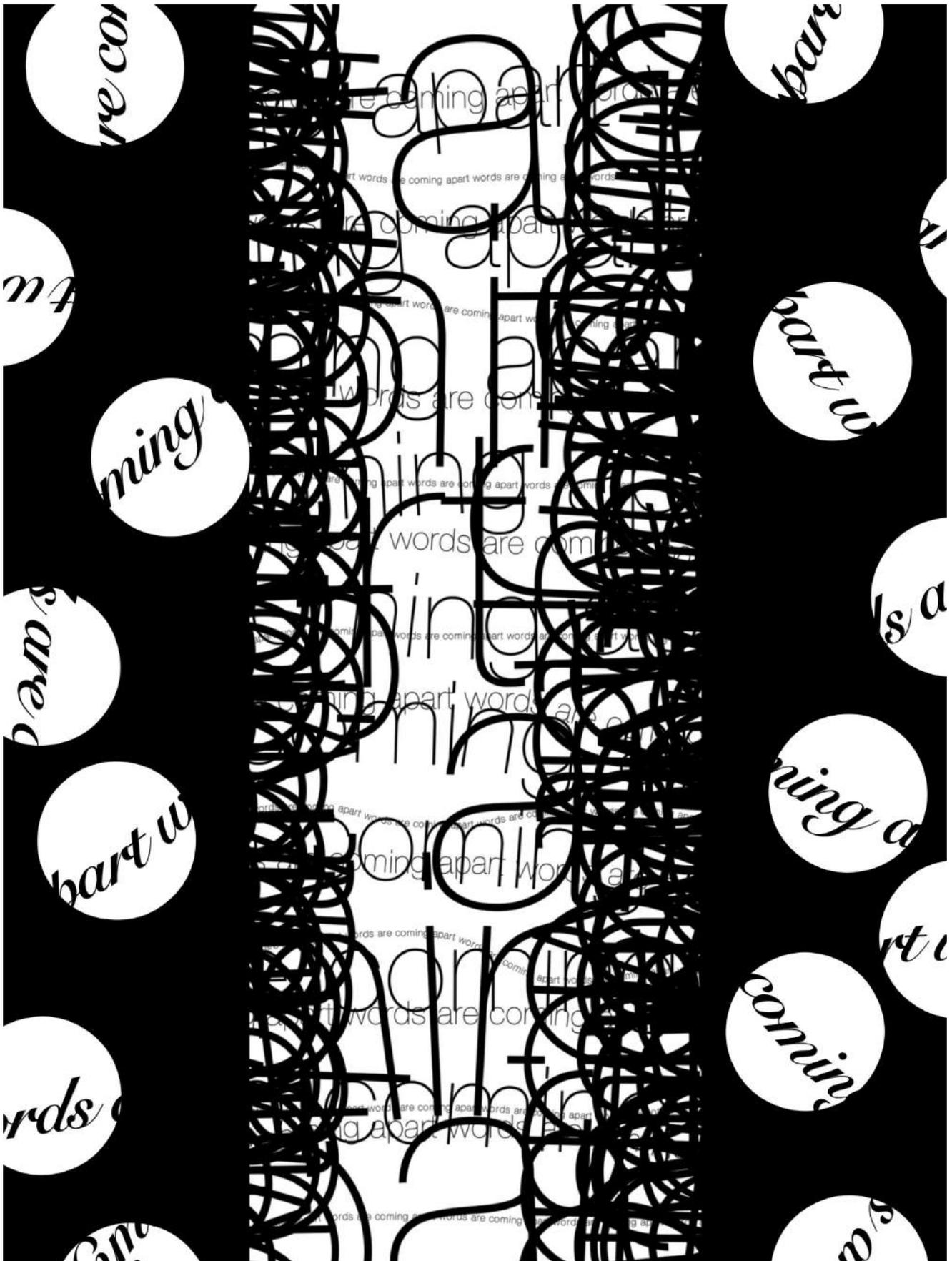
Animals Inside Word

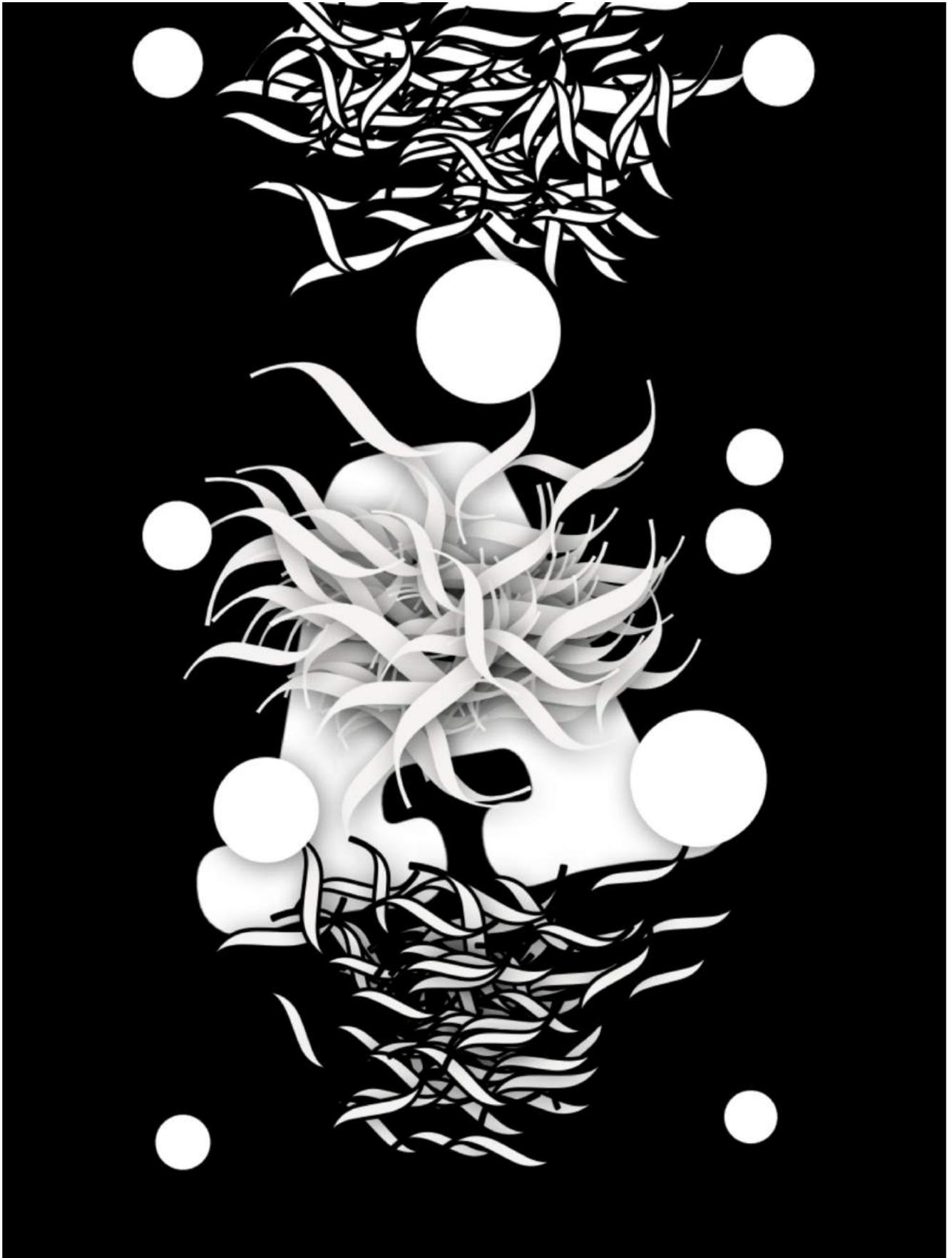
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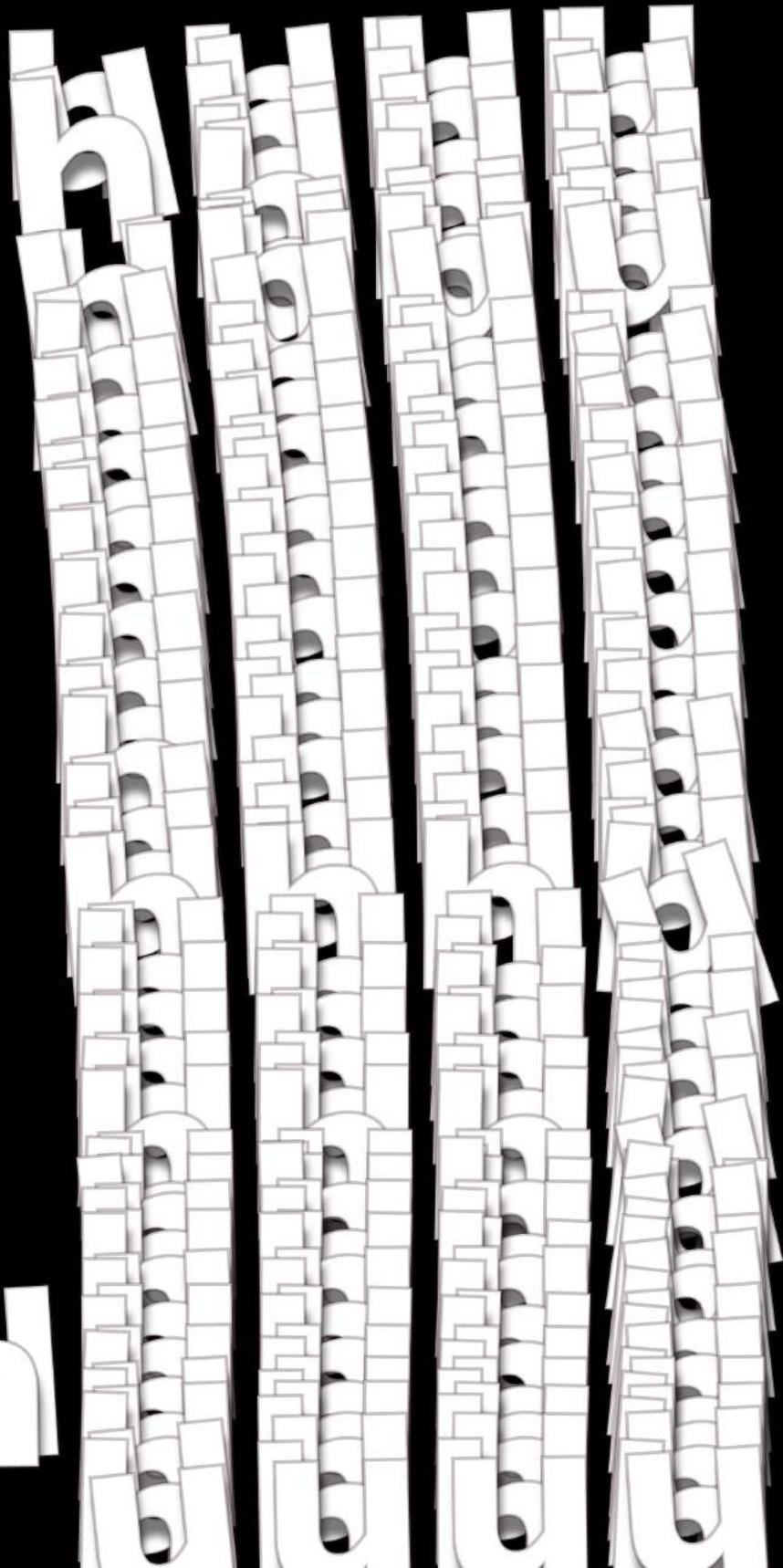








h



surface

nature

surface

nature

surface

Newer Development

How one affects
Both intentionally and in Haphazard surprise

This is a goal
We strive for and too find failure Awaits us

So we go about touching Everything, breathing life into
Anything in front of us or what Happens in thoughts

It used to be mistakes Were absorbed and adjusted into
Compositions

What better mishap to Accommodate than the unintended

How will this affect Make change Permanent
irreversible Or possible advances In nowhere To follow
the mapped river Beyond its end

How to start again What tethers to This inky score

Tall ceiling, domed Roundness, paisley rug
Pattern overtakes the floor

Lost in the loop, at the Middle section – here we are
At the lump of it Making solids out of nothing

The loyalty of parallel lines

Oscillate till your head Comes off – and I will follow
Wrapped confection of Noise disrobes before you

A future myth of systems With life and without
It's about getting your groove off and on

The non verbal Paying and receiving of Attention
My delirious conversation of meats Hanging all in a row
On hooks A butchers' take on music

The dumber it gets the More intense the experience
A onetime only thing – twice

For the kids

A treacherous turn meaning Somehow you might survive but
Really it's fatal and without Recovery

Air is scarred After this All things become ridiculous
And go away

Discord even functions as eventual Logic to the right Ear

That's not to say he acquired A taste for distaste but
Allowed taste to develop

Bottles clanking Arias we stretch toward Hidden ringtones Sheet music Searching the room
For perfection A synchronous bliss Vaudeville opera you don't Need to stand up for

The poison won't distinguish Between one ensemble or Another
Sheet music finds a Corner in the room to liberate Talent

The gypsy excused A panhandle's worth of Content you go home with
Brilliant really, a left Parenthesis full of money
She's got a digital sampler in her Hand and clarinet under Her arm

Longing for rebetika

A monosyllabic reading of day Into night Takes awhile

How light affects sound How I can hear you Where I'm not looking

Word monkey bars you in
The hopes on twisted fabric
Dreamt of where to hang
Onto for the rest of day

It's double tugs at the seam
Plays along the line of it
More instrument than shake
A stick out the side of a box

Distorts this page flowering
A pamphlet of local actions
We say conjoined in occupation
Near enough to a beach the shore

If you are wearing this out
The line of beads that separate
Two fields apart from the other
And other than that it is done

x

Of all there is
Wishes for more
Until it reaches
Fruition and then that
Equilibrium holds

It is a digit
With flexible value
That adapts to each
Exchange

A face lunged into
Water

Demurring will not
Dissuade anyone
Nor intentions rile
The ill positioned
Opponent

There are no opponents
Here by the street
Two blocks away from
The river you remember
Standing by

We have no detachable reason
No more yolk

Dice Mallarme

The eternal circumstance of a shipwreck's depth

Gravity declares. Drops through filters of itself a laughing bottom.

Beyond former calculations

Loosened rivets and adhesion. Wonder, cartography and modes of mathematics.

Whose dread the veil of illusion rejected

A phantom. A balance both holds and sways.

And cradles the virgin index

Results of quiet, an entire surface area. Reorganization.

The rigid whiteness

The forgetting yes, the forgotten coin this.

Slim dark tallness

Keen deteriorates. The switching parallelism threatens.

To bury itself in the original foam

It needs the fix. Denominators and unswerving.

The memorable crisis

Arrives

and does repeatedly.

Haiku

The amazing un
Folding of sensory trans
Duction blows my mind

Trouble

I am writing from a pencil
museum.

It's a visual question
how we read our seeing.

All short talks & Content loop.

O miss O I missed the talking O miss the mist aching O miss I missed the spell O miss I took O miss I
ventured O miss I stood under Dear miss I aligned Dear miss I spoke Sweet miss conveyed
O I missed O miss I have taken O miss I heard again

Let me tell you about ears.

People are finicky about alphabet, about semicircular canals.

I'm taking notes about
- seeing writing and writing reading and reading seeing.

A rolodex of blinks.

*

Can you write exactly what you think.

oooooooo

Does thinking create writing.

oooooooo

Do you think like you write.

oooooooo

Is there distance between thinking and writing about thinking.

oooooooo

*

What kind of thinking travels.

Is non-linguistic thot even a thing.

Does it pry itself away from itself
to become writing.

You distract yourself
unable to retrieve your real intentions.

Saying this
doesn't assure I am in control.

Writing it down is a distant echo of an initial something.

Where you first bump into it
is the big surprise.

*

It could be trouble
how environment rages on.

Holding a pencil offline.

I match your posture
just to stay in
the conversation.

Eye contact or I'm alone again.

The hum of myself
continues.

Who Does This/A Six Hour String Quartet/Feldman's String Quartet 2

There was more
Water than expected

A self conscious approach
To listening

One after another
Waves beyond count

A book you run fingers down
The length of a spine

And now for language

Cognition deviates
A hallway of epaulettes

A horrid book
Unknowingly defaced

To sense migration
Borders being hopped over

A tickler of hair
Slowness enhanced for more

Two simultaneous systems

A page turns, a light swerves
A lack of proper counsel

Nothing is diminished
How false is that

Repetition visits often
It is gross distraction

Awaits a certain combination
To reappear

The interplay of shadow and
Music entirely thrown

It is safe to say
You are looking for patterns

Logic and intent are funny
They make the other known

Momentary landscape
Suddenly

Correlations are positive
For every one there is another

A pyramid sideways
Attacked by surprise

Too much of it
Hurts itself

A gesture like a call for help
Breathing in unison

Vessels in treachery
These instruments make other

As genuine as
This sentence is not working

Alleviate tension where
The word is a source of tension

A furious exhale
All sixteen strings

One demonstration of length
Has nothing (to do with distance)

What you say here about discomfort
Will linger

An elaborate trance
By elaborate, I mean, in free fall

A wheel wagon of interludes
Connected to the axle

And the intervals
They mesmerize, of course

The letters barely held
Together are nervous

Anything happens
In mid flight

Textures involve
Repeating textures

Tactics evoke
Repeating tactics

You leave the forest
And carry the forest with you

Time alters the uprights
Forcing them to bend

Why travels
Forward by light

Nothing retards a setting
That won't generate and ooze

This snake pit of wires
Straightened

One ball effects change for others

This glass of water
Made to last weeklong

The focus required
To keep the bird perched

This reverie for boredom
Plus time signatures that extend

Church at the end of fire
Asphalt going into thick wood

A declaration
Gets folded back into the deck

Of the countless
Section by section it proceeds

One hemisphere fills
As, oddly enough, the other empties

A tray of opposites
The waterline will distinguish

Inhaling navigates composition
A reckless will to continue

We are who we are here
A shared recklessness

What silence is
Will fill with more

The closing is coming
Where nothing will at last be open

Diminished Use Value Two

Her fluorescent demeanor askew. Made everything unwanted. She said, will you speak into and through my center. Will you collate our conversations and make a flip book of them. I detest everything, but this. Makes it worth breathing.

Enjoys communicating, enjoy silence too. The book made it clear. Devise a hum or frequency of self. Write it. The parts that surprise you.

To be real is to assimilate what we've become. It's not enough to be real. You have to include the things that are killing us.

To trombone into and out of sense. Writing in the head. To be fragmented for I am fragmented. What's it like you ask? You get used to it. You're left with threads pulled from a continent of drapes.

We play catch with globes. There was an excess of globes.

A slow twang in a jar of thrum

She wanted to download love, but found she was hitting delete before the file ever got underway. His computer habits were even worse.

How the river bent just ahead and disappears from sight. They were lazy cartographers. I was employed, one summer, as a member of a survey team taking measurements for future road expansion in Hackensack, NJ.

A new hat abides the brim.

Under fear of death every night we go to sleep. We travel there.

*

Ink.

If you are with me then you are on your own.

Ink holds to ink. Sex and think, a sweeping madness propels. The growl and grasp of ink on a surface - it stays on, doesn't run.

A new gem atop a new neural path. Cherished, I can't say enough about new neural pathways. A hinge on surprise.

What is the commonest denominator? Give me my sugar, brother. Dreams aren't beautiful, but informative. It's a question of how awake you are at any given time.

The tree is not impressed by our analytic, philosophic prowess.

Deliver me from evil is inactivity.

Discerning a point
In there
In what you're saying
Clamping down
On what
Your intentions
Are meaning to do

The plan is to shoot
A line through every
One of your words

What you're supposed
To say is
Facing out
Hanging on your necktie
For all to see

The drizzle of rain on me
Right now
Exceeds anything I can say

Something

So many issues pile up, says distress the scaffold. It's unclear if I made those structures, but I must've. A wobble there in the sentence. They mention noise like a monster, that it sneaks up behind you. Uhh, the haunt of nostalgia. These factors don't add up or with even any regularity, but after a few decades, a few blinks, the weight of it's formidable. Not unexpected, you understand, cause somewhere, somewhere, I knew something was brewing. What bullshit! As if I didn't know the problem. You wake up and attempt to translate the new language. It goes where all rallying for popular subject matter goes. No place special, he said. The rivets are what I collect, not finished products. You wrestle with them if so inclined. Your website with those on the incline. That rest stop of throes, your moment of reclaim. Better hurry Newton's third law. Lacks of power seek gaffs in power to climb onboard. My thirsty friend, I can give you a rock, but if I teach you to rock out you will always be undead. A brain built on fenestrated slits to let poisons in. What gaseous fun, Jack Flash. A dull gaze and raucous underscore play on the surface of the skin. I still can't recall if these are mine, but they must be. How arms hang at the side of a body. The jostling corrupts the mapmaker's results. Nothing at all to find differently. To reach the shore, on a fence, where talent makes no more. Hello thirsty friend, I am smoke and privilege, untried in a match includes compassion I can't know that NOW language. What's that? We are deliberate, the plodding humongous, and never so surprised. You know exactly what I move, this, in front of you, across a surface to grab two of your pointed bishops. I will hug you now without irony. Smother you like some overly lush prose determined to lull you into false cupped hands containing that special elixir. Hmm.

About Me Then

In 1975, at twelve years old. I went to see Woodstock, the movie, with my cousins. I saw Joe Cocker's hands for the first time. It froze me with amazement. I was fascinated by how his hands could communicate. It was a new and liberating experience. Previous to that, I had not considered what my hands and fingers were doing, what they were capable of. They were asleep.

It became apparent to me, at that time, that hands and fingers were another form of expression, that there was language in their movement. A few years later I went to a Grateful Dead concert and my fingers and hands were welcomed communication devices. No words. These moving appendages could curve space, exude heat, paint a way forward and feel future contours. My hands spoke.

Then I began to write. That connection was confusing at first. It became apparent again that I was drawing, honing the lines required to form a letter then a word. The pen was dancing in my hand. Before writing on paper, I would return to Joe Cocker's hands as a segue from thinking to actually writing. Convulsed hands trying to convey some idea - from thought through hand to written form - an electric discharge expressed. So, from a type of palsied scribing to reading my writing aloud. I would stand at a microphone and could not begin without first shifting my hands into convulsed digits. This was a way to return to the initial impetus of the text, to revisit the germ of its start.

You know, until I was 15 years old I never heard my voice, the voice inside your head when you speak to yourself. I played a visual game of following the line. Everything around me became a line to follow. The street, the buildings, the stairs, the walls were all traced out in my mind, but nothing was internally vocalized. Taking a walk was drawing a line. Lying in bed was following the contours. Thinking visually. Playing a game. No speech.

I never thought in words or sentences, I was always immersed in a present tense silence. All eyes and emotion. All quiet. All surface. Then that thing happened, I spoke inside, it was cliched, it was obvious - I said, HELLO. I was startled, as you can imagine, even frightened like finding myself in a giant room with a tiny flashlight turned on for the very first time. After that, nothing was the same.

*

Nature is Alphabet. Maybe we live in a sequence of letters, perhaps in a sentence.

*

There's something about constant compliance that eventually erodes the will to topple it. We no longer live in a place. The experience of living occurs a few feet off the ground. A levitation of invisible electrical dramas. A generation of unrooted husks of flesh bound to their devices. We forget our unplugged brothers and sisters around the planet.

In
Infant eyes
A gaze
The glaze sweetens

The waft of it
Tit tit tit
Grasps at smoke
Finds it in the face
Stares right into it

*

There's a time in my early twenties. I was living alone. No one around. I'd sit on a chair as one does. Apropos of nothing I'd begin to lean to my left. I'd be drawn off the chair and toward the floor. I would land on my side. This's what happened next. Once on the floor, I would roll. My body rolling across the floor, the room. Turning and swerving while rolling. Things knocked over. Wires wrapped round my feet. Lamps crashing down. The same kind of rolling as downhill, but spinning in circles too. I recognized my starting point, the chair. I rolled as if possessed. Head pointed up. Eyes into my skull. Rolling, turning. It stopped when I hit a wall. My face against it. Neck twisted. Glasses askew. Hands clenched. I'd get up and sit back on the chair. Not much time passed. And this is what remains. Thirty years later – listening to Echo and the Bunnymen's Villiers Terrace. I never did get checked. Never told the wrong people what happened.

*

I was reading a book with an adjoining illustration that I wanted to examine closer. Instead of moving the book toward my face or my head thrust forward to see further details - i found myself putting my fingers on the image in the book and using that magnify finger and thumb motion over the picture you'd use on a tablet.