

an evaporated kind of self

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“It ends with love, exchange, fellowship. It ends as it begins, in motion, in between various modes of being and belonging, and on the way to new economies of giving, taking, being with and for and it ends with a ride in a Buick Skylark on the way to another place altogether.”¹

-Fred Moten & Stefano Harney





* I come from generations of locked people, many familiar with the silence of terror like a sentence on one's life. Through lips sometimes sewn shut with grief, my loved ones taught me how to care for the small things. How to pour my eyes into & onto every good and beautiful thing I could. How to pay such attention, to attend with such intention, that everything & nothing mattered.

It is through these learned practices of observation & collection that I became interested in the accumulated details of people's lives. I ruminate on "people" all the time. I like to imagine the strange animal of the human. It helps me shape "myself", who and what that can be beyond what has already happened.

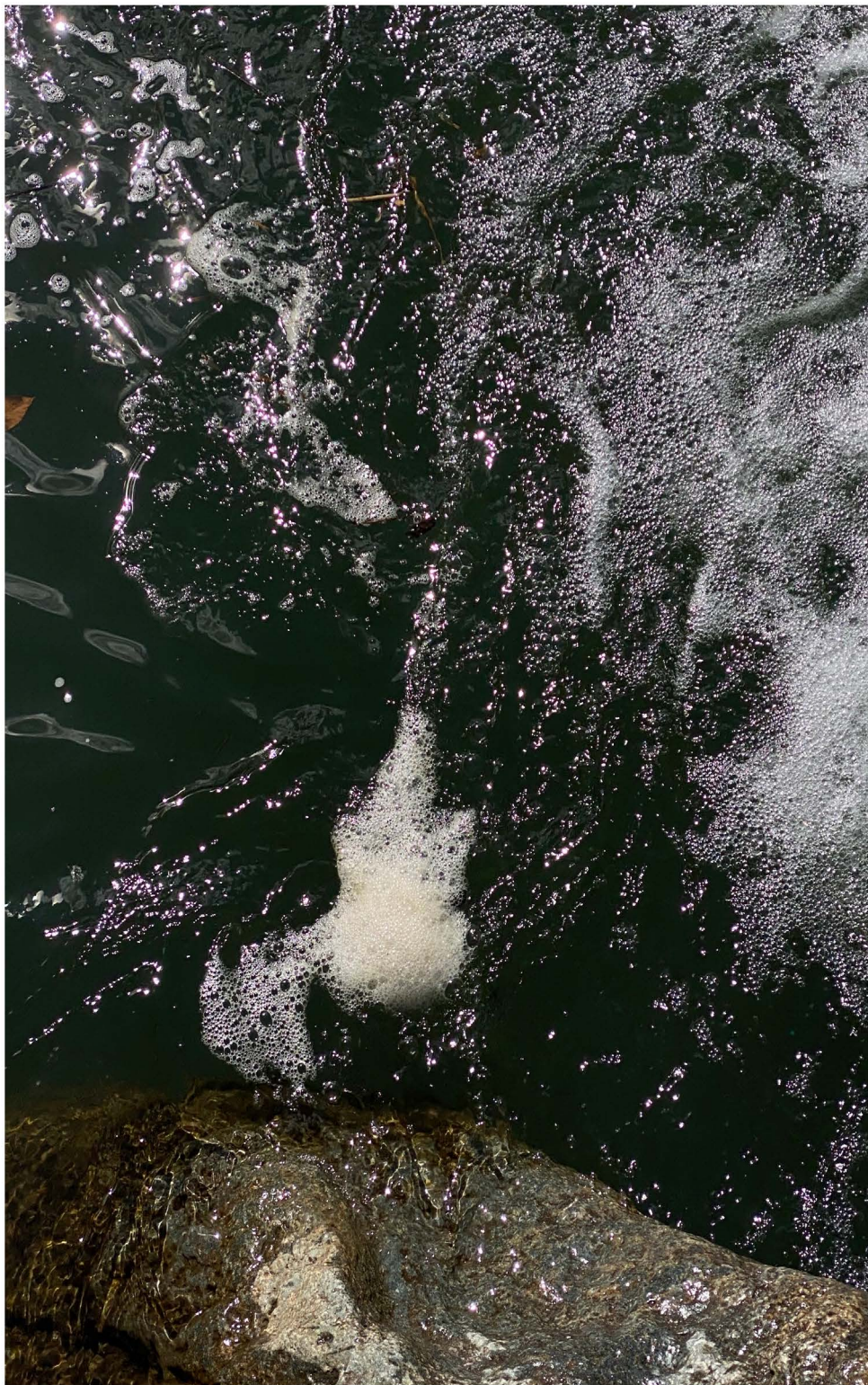
This research is about a practice of exquisite attention² to sustain my living and making and how I convinced myself to stay alive. By drawing my gaze into & over my life, I gather my self up from the outline of matter in my orbit.

* The conditions under which this work was made include a container of study.

*the container

the perscribed mode of academic gathering within this institution. In its introduction, the inherent limitations of (this/any) thing called a “contain-er” were addressed without necessary scrutiny or regard. This institution, like many others, verbalizes desire for liberation and subversion, especially of the term “school” and its meaning, while choosing containers of study too narrow to accomodate the very kinds of wayward being that our reading lists focus so heavily on. An institutional message of care and empathy that leaves out those already unaccomodated and under protected in our communities is a disheartening reminder. Our working, writing, reading, and thinking becomes redundant when it is so distanced from sociality that we prioritize the integrity of the school’s regulatory agency over the needs of those attending.

“Containers” that lack the capacity for those already dismissed by (present/prevalent) models of schooling impede the very methods of study that we cite in our bibliographies, that we dream of while they wait outside for us to simply open the door.













Sense Stories/Poems/Dreams

*What does sunlight feel like?

Like

Someone took a marble and dipped it in oil
(heavy like castor)
and is rolling it into in the back of my eye

(Deeper)

In my eye socket
Maybe the marble is my eye.

The sun streams into my face, plucks out my marble eye. Dips
it in castor oil, and with steady fingers, rolls in its place.

*There are eyes on my back.
On the back of this me who I'm looking at.

Closed

I approach myself,
touch under their eyelids (behind them).

I wrap my arms around them and the impact wakes me up;
(was something pooling, rushing beneath my skin?)

They hunch over a bed (are they grieving ?)
I want to comfort them.

I wrap their bare chest in my arms,
pull their back towards my chest
(their second face to my heart).

There is a great light and suddenly

we aren't two anymore.

I'm awake.

*I am in the gaze of a red gold sun.

It is the end,
and the sweet beginning.

I am the door.

(There are signs;
the cracked stars glittering in the periphery.)

The birds never stop speaking
(there is so much to say)

*dreams as fiction

*that the elsewhere is always already with us, no new ideas,
just new combinations, new feelings towards them². that
through poetics, dreams, feelings we metabolize that which
thought stagnates.

*the present as the inherent location of the surround. the surround the inherent residue of the past, peering through the mesh, and that to be in the present is to turn face into the future and meet it, each second

Friction/Totality/Other Notes

*it can never be all or nothing

*totality is not possible, the entirety of a thing is never available to us

*selectivity & choice; what frictions do you choose to interact with? do you want to hear everything?

*circulating rhythm through the body (choosing to circulate a rhythm for longer or shorter, to slip into a moment and then return)

*how do you differentiate the space from the floor?

*how does the density of a space constrict versus enable? how do we negotiate restriction in the tightest of structural constraints?

(I hate saying space over and over)

*internal/external constraint, how much movement is enough movement

*“move without moving”³

*“biological matter is rarely static, in fact by its nature it is prone to anomaly. there is no total homogeneity to experience, living, and piloting a body. gesture always moves of the body and enters the space of other bodies (the interval)”⁴

*“Feelings are vectors; for they *feel* what is *there* and transform it into what is *here*”⁵

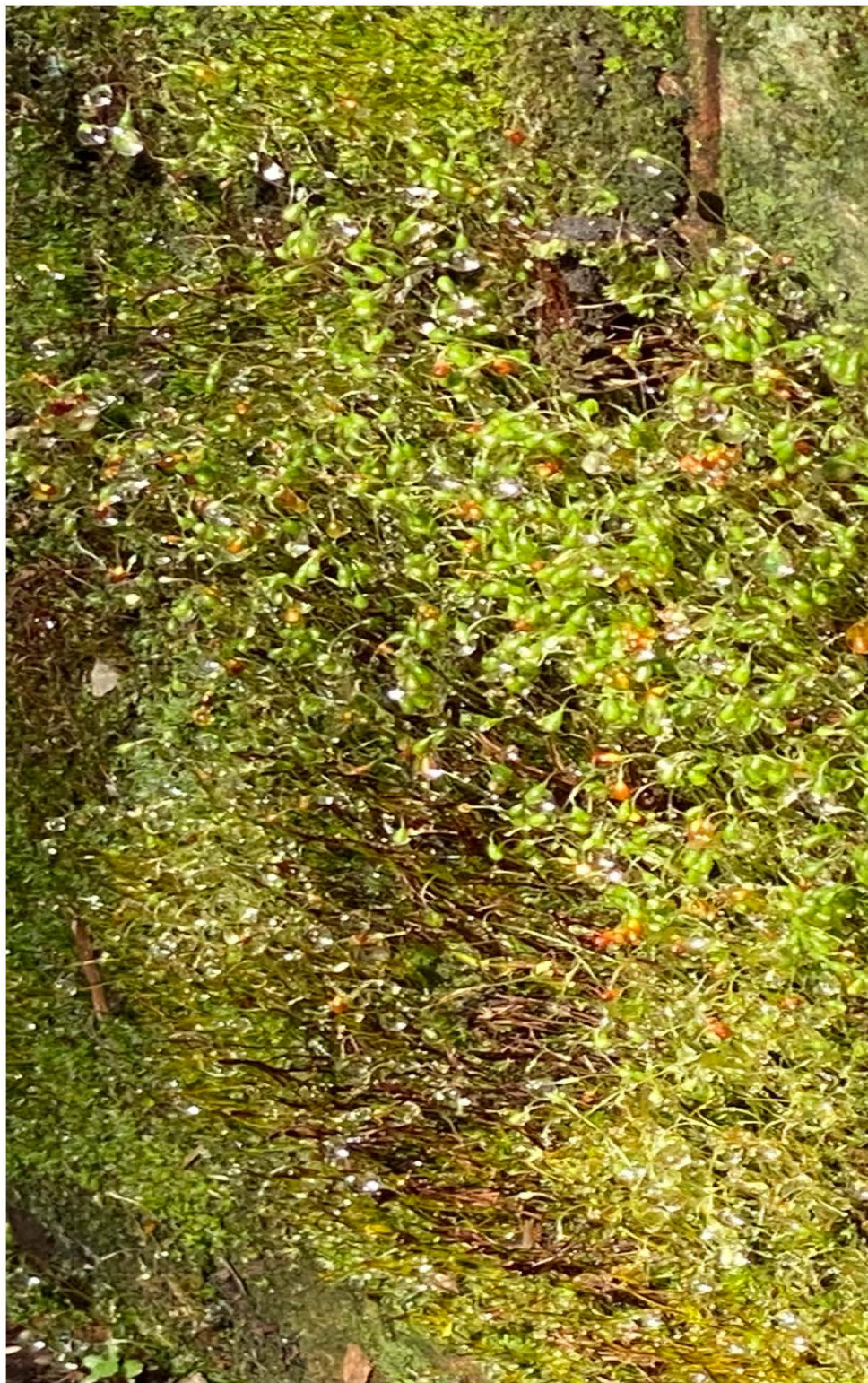
*“for me, memory isn’t situated in the past, but moves about freely. we can catch hold of it. and some of it is born within us, probably located somewhere in that dna spiral.”⁶







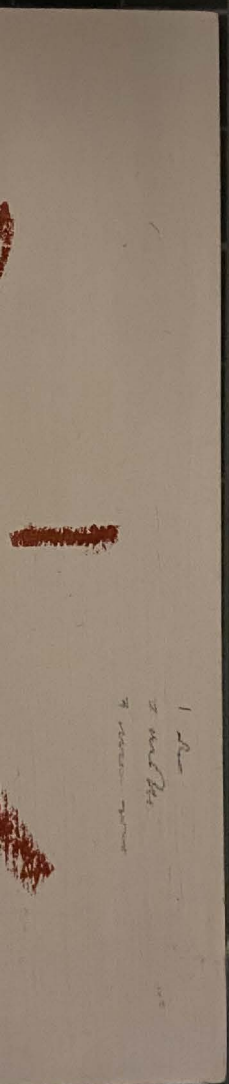






yellow
black







Sight/Seeing/Sensing otherwise:

*can you see with two sets of eyes?³ can you accept never being fully seen? can you accept that you will not see? when you look at something so close that it's no longer visible, and then you realize that it never was.⁴ sense is limited by the condition of the human; there is so much that we can know and never sense.

List:

*poetics and a relationship to witnessing, the fear of being witnessed (as an animal)

*perception, how we translate our senses, the space of habit (the familiar neural pathways, the corrective gaze)

*our eyes correct information that slips out of category (we cannot see colors outside our perception)

*utopian body, how senses function. you are, more often than not, touching (or being touched by) something. touch affects the most bodily surface area.

*touch & objecthood

*what is the texture of light? the consistency of sensation?

*the terror and the beauty of becoming

List:

*trying to become one's body through dance

*like stepping into one's body
drawn open by
the blooming of a wound,
transmutation like opening a crater of heartache,
the ginger shimmer & sizzle of joy

*that language fails to communicate what the animal
is trying to say. that one-to-one conversation, two animals
trying to talk their way around each other, and the language
fails. what do we do then?

*to move toward this method of living in/as one's
mutable self means moving out of a fully categorized under-
standing of sociality (and to do so, you have to understand
category)

*I am not who I thought I was

*how to make the call, the opening of the door saying
"I'm asking you to join me. this is that kind of thing. come in"

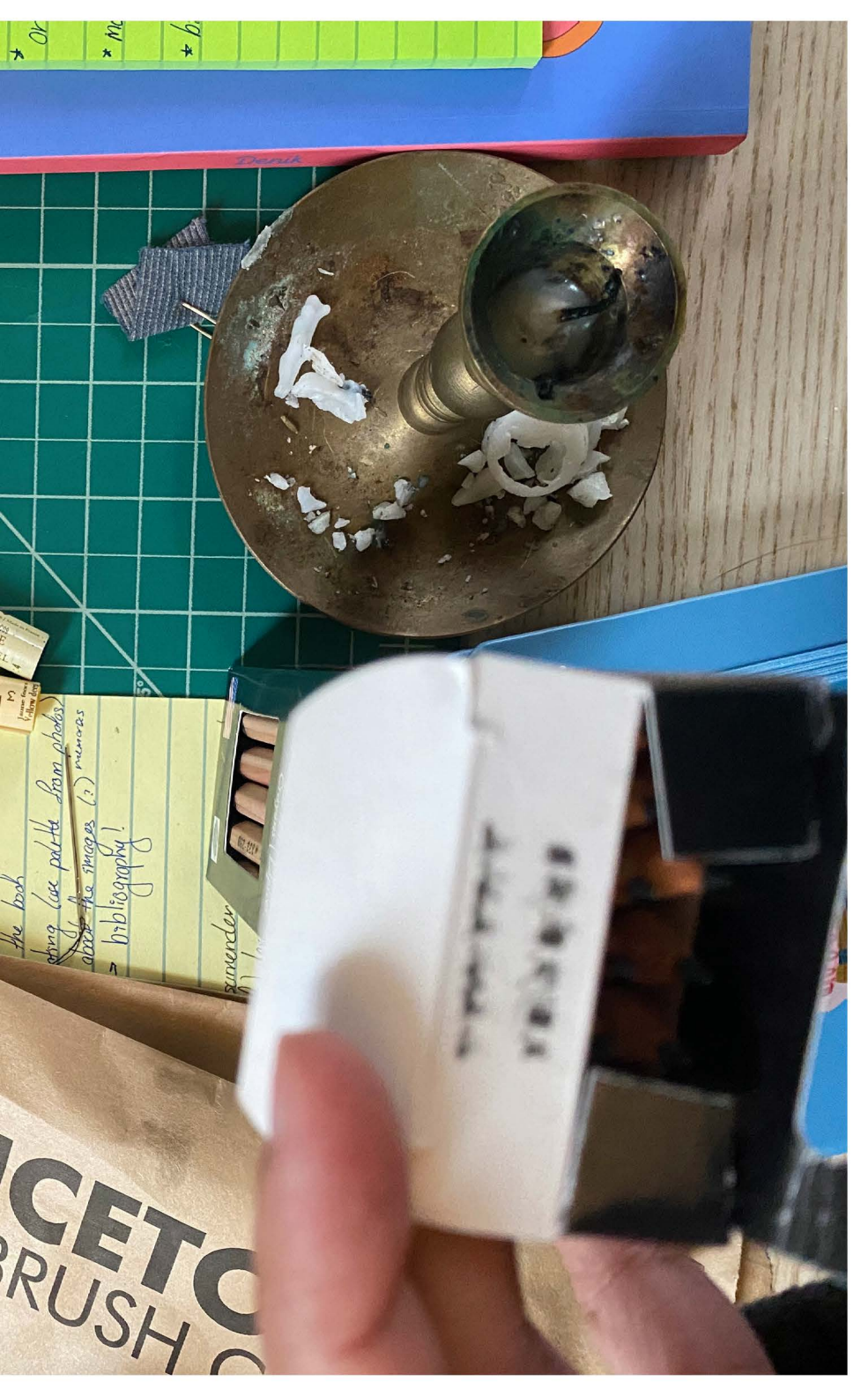
*strategies of looking, assessing how we've learned to see/look, what eyes we use, learning to grow new ones. i like the idea of alchemizing one's eyes

*habits of perception

*recognition alongside sight, how we recognize our reflections as ourselves

*the ephemerality of our vision; we see things two nanoseconds after they happen, and light from the sun takes eight minutes to reach us





the book

doing love parts from photos
and the images (?) mirrors
> bibliography!

sumender

ACETO
RUSH

1941-1942
1943-1944

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* me
* b

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Grief/Surrender/Annihilation

List:

*grief

(grief as a threshold; grief as weight)

love

mass

orbit

*grief is something you surrender to; we're always moving toward surrender, until we do

*the mass of something & its effect on our orbit, the heavier/denser something feels, the more powerful its gravity

*wondering about surrendering into attachment, accepting my humanness

*the tension of having to resist grief, that trying to stay light is exhausting

*and so, surrender to the desire to cling to the weight and joy and terror of attachment. there is no logic that escapes the flesh, so accept the self as the animal it is.

*in the clearing of the dream, circling the beast of my great fear, circling me

*note for a spell:

*the clearing, the arena, the cast circle, meet me in the bound environment

List:

*the negative space of an absent person, emphasized by the outline made by their belongings

*“we’re not seeking the meaning of life, we’re looking for an experience of living”⁷

*does grief/pain offer velocity?****

*“without something to bounce off of we never take shape”⁶

*the difference between a “stop!look!listen!” kind of pain and an annihilation of self through the unknowability and vastness of the wound

*surrender through attachment (& nonattachment)

*mutuality, vulnerability, desperation

* “only in love are we here”⁸ (leaning into love as an anchor to the present, as a reminder to arrive, listen, recognize)

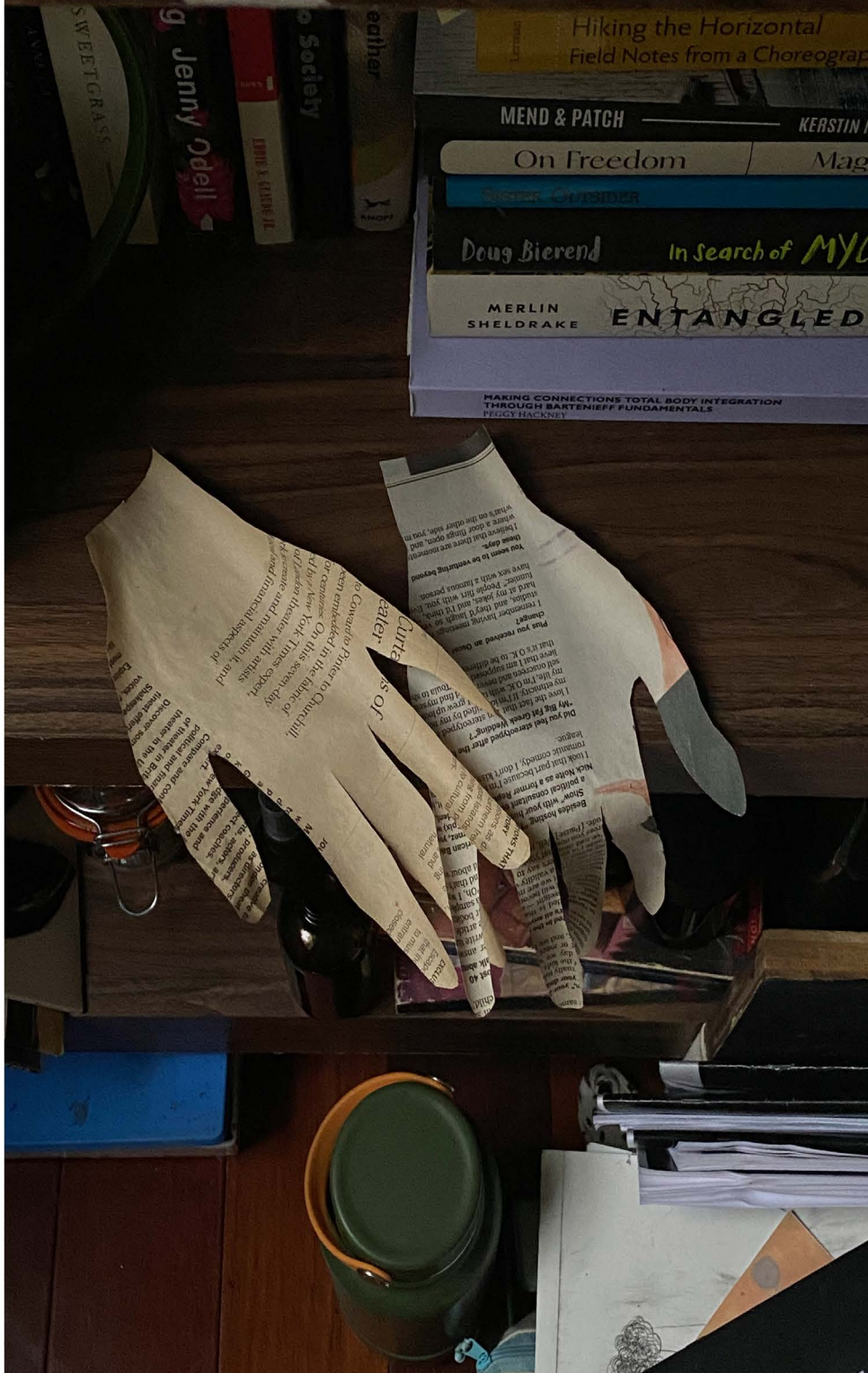
*the intensity of feeling being like a flood, learning how to let water do what it does and know that it will bring you back to shore (but if you struggle, you drown)

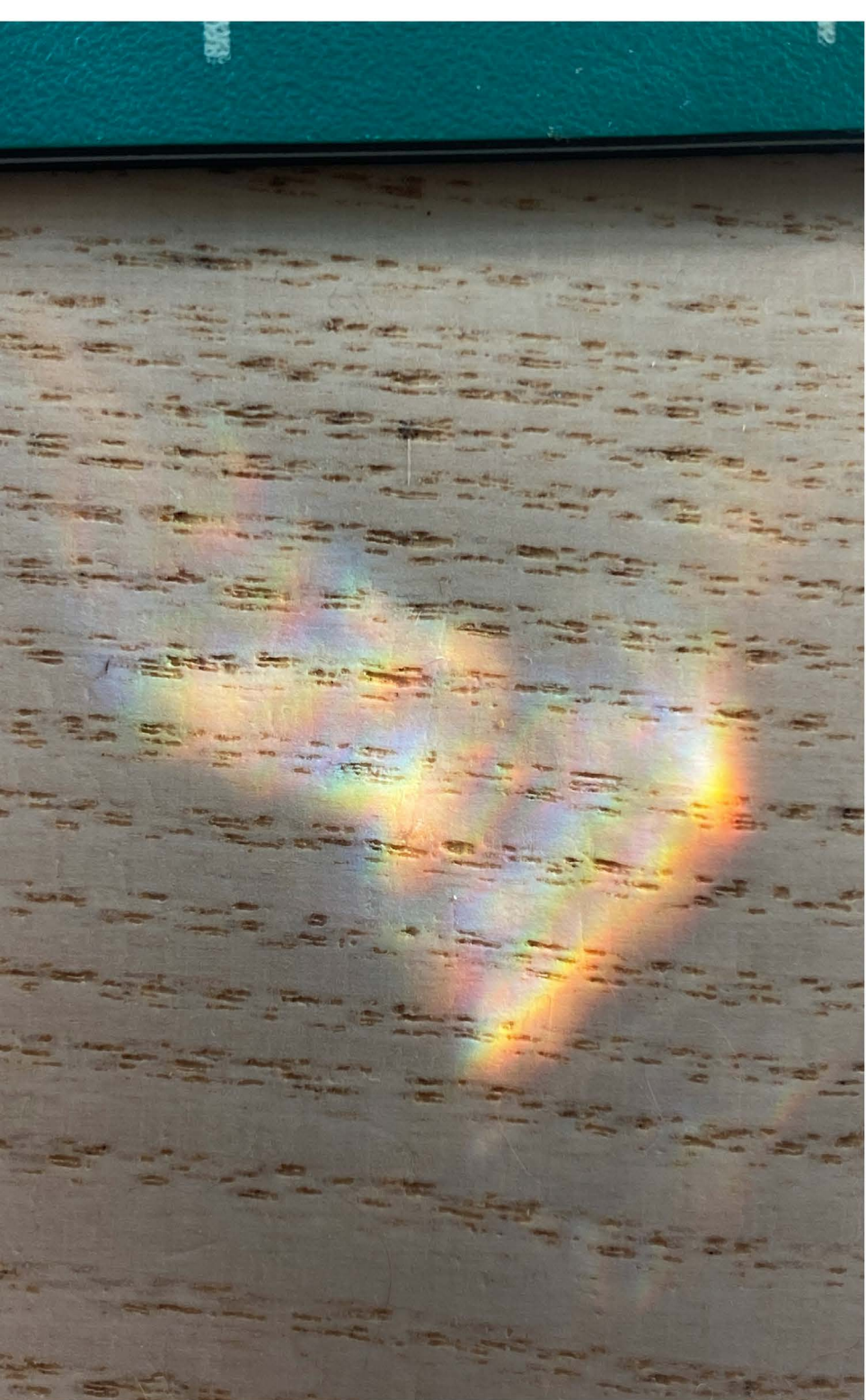


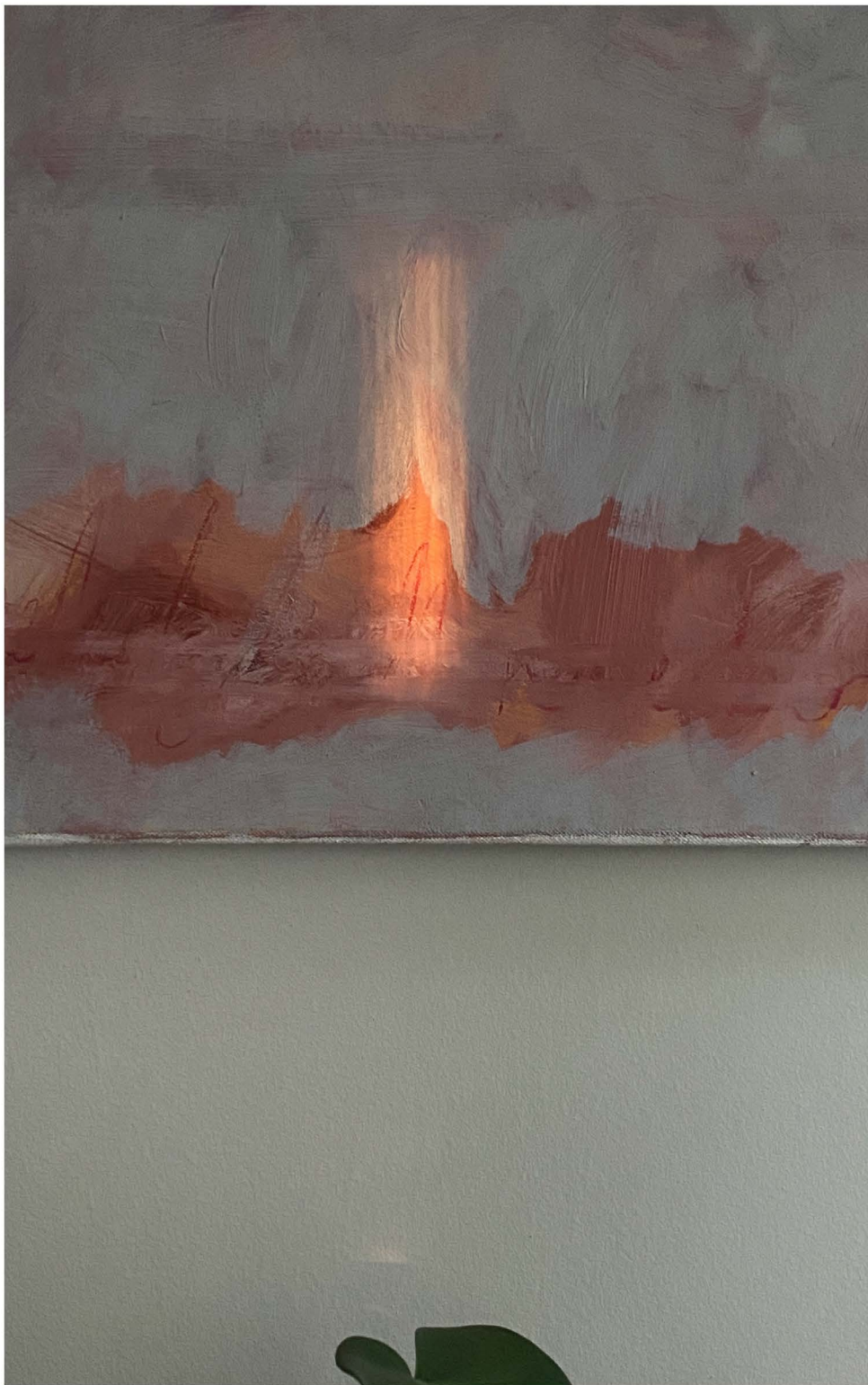
















Desire/Orientation/The Animal

*desire as a tool of orientation; by desiring something,
one is pulled into orbit

*weight/mass of desire, the materiality of desire

*the way that we categorize a want vs. a need (and the
praise we give suffering, restriction, discipline, apathy)

* I learned that want was childish, and unnecessary,
that want takes a lower value to need. but to understand how
to need, you have to go through want. we wouldn't know if &
how we need something, if we didn't know how to want it first

*desire as magnetism

*the material desire of my body is a gesture;
something that I call my heart stretches and lashes
out,
into/onto...

an apparatus of want,
a selective mouth
a sword,
a burning tongue
a brilliant limb

*

List:

*the space of the creature/ the monster, the insatiable,
the non-human, the more-than-human

*the way hunger (desire, appetite) is weaponized
against the marginalized, that the means of our survival are
deemed non-necessary

*to claim one's self as animal to combat the ways hu-
mans are labeled

*my experience with dehumanization, when my needs
are deemed superfluous (far more reasonable, far more than I
deserve)

*what is a reasonable desire?

*desire beyond the rational, the animal representing
desire that cannot be controlled by reason

*expressivity, to express! maybe when I say 'meaning' I
mean feeling, the expressivity of being, the experiential

*that holding on is a rehearsal for letting go

“I have to fill myself to get empty,”⁹

*the tongue serves as an organ of:
desire
sustenance
communication

*these can be the functions of many organs (heart,
eyes, the architecture of the mouth)

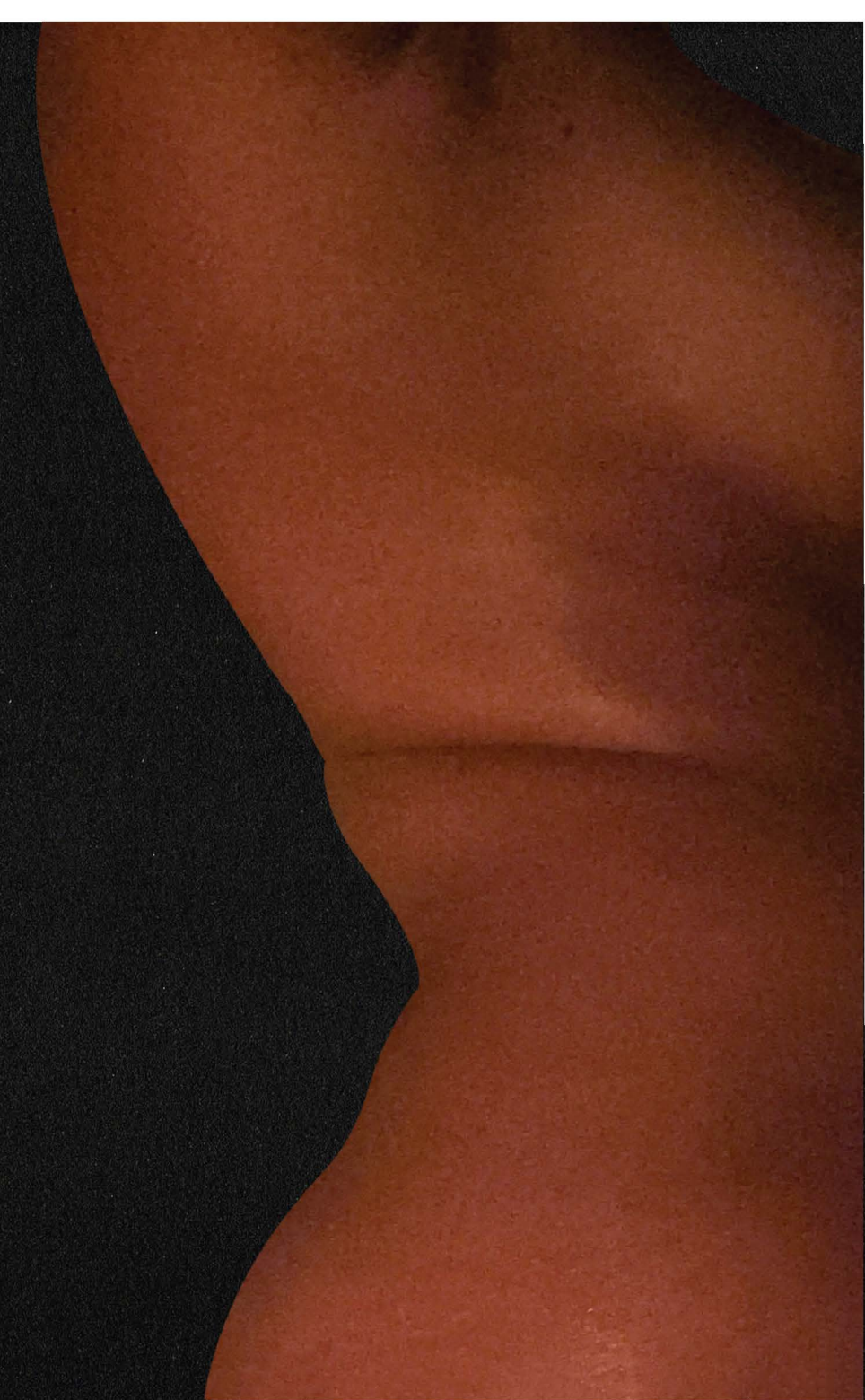
*can the tip of the tongue be connected to the heart?

*having an audience of one

*i couldn't look at them before, desire and appetite.
being core drivers of the animal of the human, i couldn't bear
to confront the creature of myself.

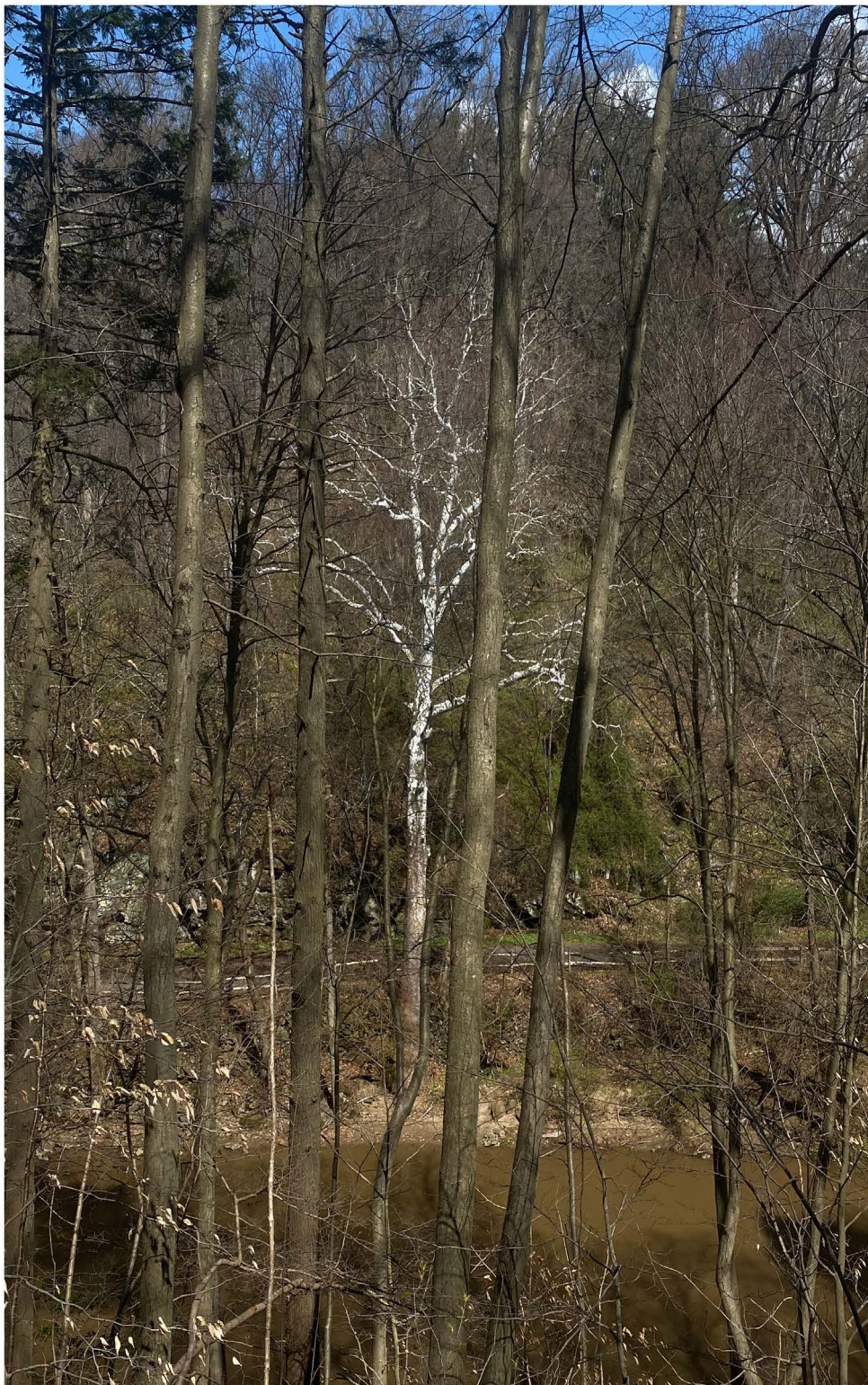
*heartbreak as a possible death, that emotional pain
can physically deteriorate the body











Mythos/Fear/The Beast

List:

*that haunted animal, fear
drenched pungent and sticking to the roof of our
dry mouths,
it is a predator that will not eat
eyes gone yellow and stale,
unblinking,
breath too close,
gaze too sharp,
purpose too clear

*the exact moment of being caught in the gaze of the
predator (that jolt of terror); connecting sight to touch, that
seeing itself can inflict harm, when that touch is in terror

*thinking about anger & shame (about being social-
ized against anger as a girl-child, about being labeled aggres-
sive)

*thinking about the dreams of beasts and demons
and bloodshed, of being the harbinger of fear, an appetite for
retribution

*dog headed child turned death god in the wake;
about becoming what you hoped would save you then

* “trying to make power out of hatred and destruc-
tion”¹⁰

*the animal (that is sometimes me)
and I (that sometimes isn't) are together
in the arena,
testing each other's eyes and hungers

and now we're looking at each other.
and having another kind of conversation,

outside
of what we can say

the words are outside the door,
looking, listing, lusting

*is the goal to think our way out of the condition of
being human? is it even possible? if it is, there is reward in
reaching toward the impossible, we change whether we suc-
ceed or not

*black feminism & the defining of "human", who gets
to be human in an oppressive system? how are those defini-
tions entangled with colonization and imperial violence?
What does the animal teach us is attainable outside of these
oppressive interpretations?

*who gets to be angry? who is deemed dangerous?
who is deemed worthy of safety? what is safety, especially in
the united states?

*the great beast of my fear, circling me, is me
I am the great beast; “look at me, looking at you”













Study & The Undercommons

*“[I]t’s not as much having a shoebox in which I’m writing down my thoughts as that I’m having a long conversation with a few people. What I’m trying to say is that the content of the box is less important than the ongoing process of talking with somebody else, and the ideas that emerge.”¹¹

*the context of the box, the where and how of it, can be inconsequential in light of the ideas and conversations that emerge

*thinking about conversations “outside” the context of study (evenings on the porch, run-ins on the way to another place, discussions over shared meals). the generativity of casual conversation, gatherings that develop loosely

*how our lived experiences influence our awareness of restriction. living in marginality can develop one’s comprehension of socioeconomic oppression in ways that institutional study cannot.

*conversations outside of the presupposed context of “study” are deeply necessary in moving towards the aforementioned awareness. by remaining permeable and passing through the very real barriers of the university, our ideas remain influenced by our social lives.

* a class that is not called to attention, but allowed to unfold and direct itself otherwise

* “What’s also interesting to me is that the conversations themselves can be discarded, forgotten, but there’s something that goes beyond the conversations which turns out to be the actual project. It’s the same thing I think in the building of any kind of partnership or collectivity: it’s not the thing that you do: it’s the thing that happens while you’re doing it that becomes important, and the work itself is some combination of the two modes of being. Or to put it in the way of *the shipped*, it’s not the box that’s important but the experiment among the *un/contained*.”¹²

*“With my kids, most of what they do with toys is turn them into props. They are constantly involved in this massive project of pretending.”¹³

*“In the end what’s most important is that the thing is put in play. What’s most important about play is the interaction.”¹⁴

*“We have a box, and we’re going to let you open this box, and if you open the box, you can enter into our world.”¹⁵

*“...there are these props, these tools, and if you pick them up you can move into some new thinking and into a new set of relations, a new way of being together, thinking together.”¹⁶

*on the importance/function of the prop: “Or, the prop is important only insofar as it allows you to enter; but once you’re there, it’s the relation and the activity that’s really what you want to emphasize. So, with that said, if somebody’s reading our stuff, and they think they can get something out of the term ‘planning’ or ‘undercommons’ or ‘logisticality’, that’s great, but what matters is what they do with it; it’s where they take it in their own relations.”¹⁷















Improv Notes

*my body was inclined to fold the more i swayed, especially backwards and along the sides of my feet. shifting forward felt dangerous, and i lost my fluidity at the thought of falling on my face

*i challenged that by using momentum from the curve of my body, rolling from the heel to the side of my foot and into the front, letting my knees give a little (reminder that you have safety in all directions)

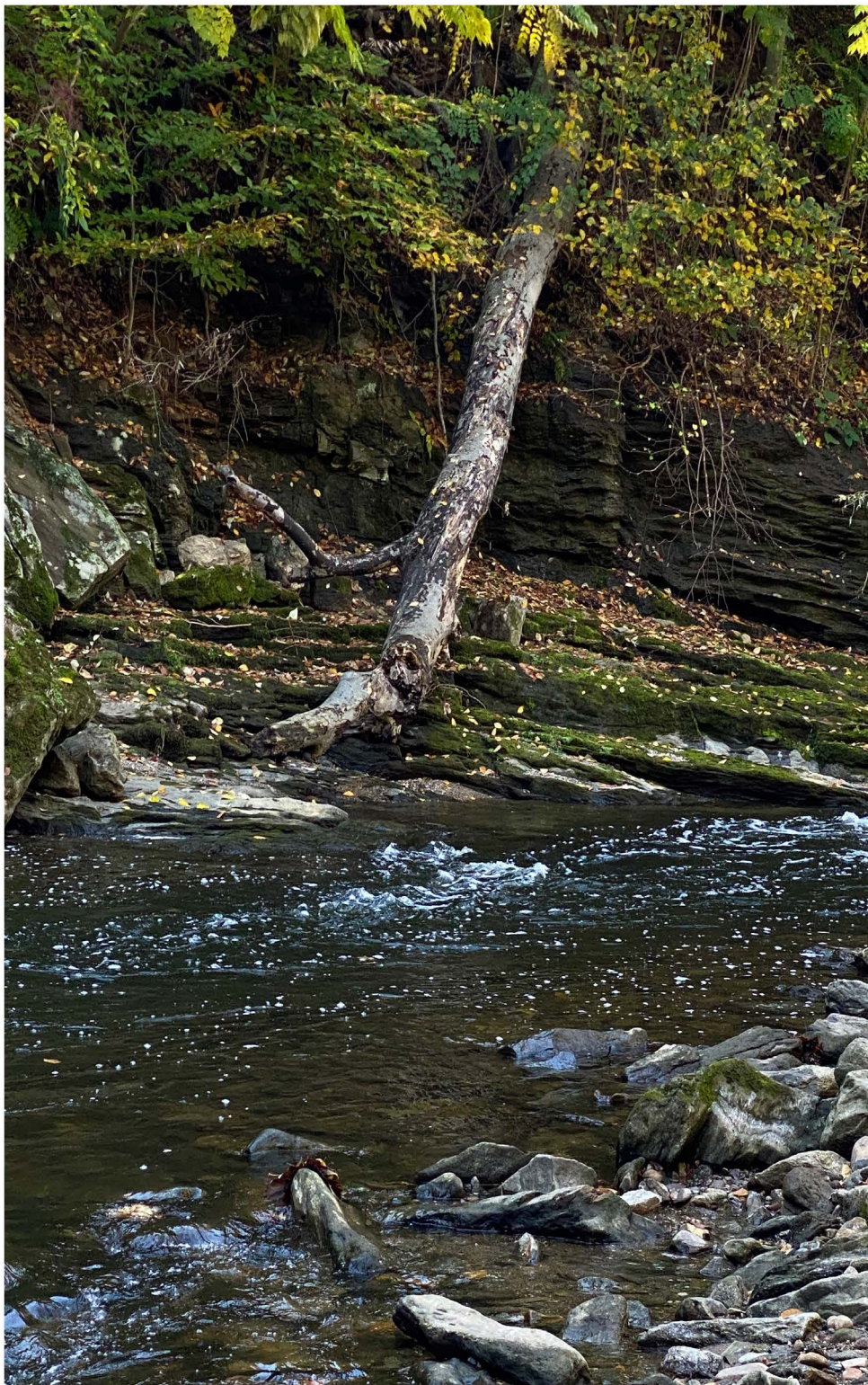
*how sound moved off of the objects nearest me, and the people nearest me, and then trying to resist the urge to flinch and open my eyes, and instead steadily course correct in response

*the space between bodies, objects, etc. being spongy, or buoyant, and sound and the sensation of density resulting from rebounded echoes. what would make that space brittle? what would make it spongy?

*how to use the body like a sponge, how to use it like a battering ram. how we can alter the alchemy of our space, (soft exploration like the meeting in the clearing/arena, trust & familiarity)

*falling & shame, falling & failure; the ways we are taught/told to move, how we handle discomfort

*ambiguity is apathetic, ambivalence holds friction



Time/Relation/Heterotopia

*time as the experience of difference

*heterotopias being a space within a space, or able to conjure up several spaces within themselves

*multiple timelines (social media, the timeline & the past always being compressed in/onto the present)

*poetry as ritual, poetry as ceremony, conjuring double-sightedness, attuneing to what is resting in the body, what can be trans*formed

*heterotopias are worlds within worlds, mirroring and yet upsetting what is outside.¹⁸

*poetics as heterotopic methodology; poem as site, as heterotopic space

*see my living as an event, constellations, disruptions, collision, friction

*heterotopia as a topology of one's events, (this is my now. my now looks forwards, and backwards, and sideways.)

*the chaos of the black hole/the atomic storm, to crash into and make different (collision of any intensity begets change, to encounter is to be changed by)

* “Deleuze, in *The fold*, says *collisions explain everything*. i’m not sure he says that exact thing but it’s something like that and what i think it means is: without something to bounce off of, we never take shape.”¹⁹

*catalysts of change and the continual reckoning of impermanence

*“Becoming is continuous rephrasing, carrying a process across thresholds.”²⁰

*identity existing in relation

*“That is very much the image of the rhizome, prompting the knowledge that identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation. Because the thought of errantry is also the thought of what is relative, the thing relayed as well as the thing related.”²¹

*constituting the self via what we orbit around, shifting our orbits in order to survive (changing course/direction, releasing matter)

*what matters to us? what is magic about our living? does magic help with living? (yes)

*“Dawn powell wrote, people—not the sun—revolve around each other, sometimes being in eclipse, sometimes in full blaze of sun, sometimes touching each other, then remote for eons. We are moved by magnetic forces beyond our control as if we were dolls; our reactions to each other are just that. Same way we are able to hook on to Infinite Power accidentally or in a particular point in orbit, of time or place. At certain times of life you are at peak power at midnight (if you only knew it), at dawn, at noon, at certain places, near water, near mountains.”²²

*“flesh is ethics, and self passes beyond the skin.”²³

*“body is event. body is more expressivity than form.”²⁴

*love as a physical texture of relationality

*river sand
that trace residue
can collapse a moment of unraveling laundry
into a reflection of a river

i want to call it
moments of thinness in time,
but actually these
(compressions/fissures)
are monumental

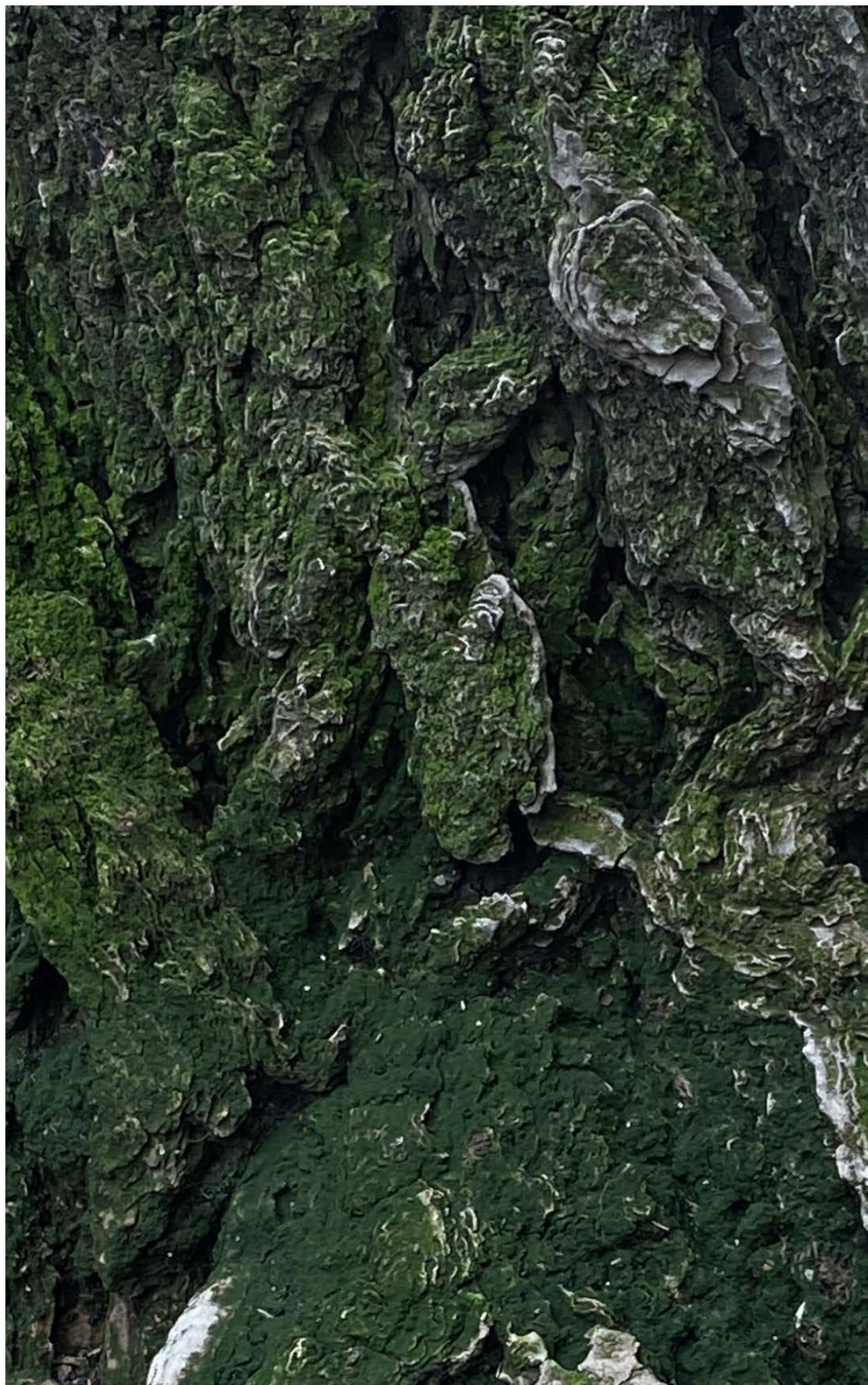
memory and sense pile into each other,
a swarm of touch,
textures

buttercream
iris pollen
phthalo blue

*there goes that sound again, coming through the cracked
window by my bed. tinsel shattering over the leaves, damp
mist breathing into my sleep









A photograph of a dark brown wooden door with a metal handle at the top. To the right of the door is a red brick wall. The door has some white graffiti on it.

gohst
friend







*I'm just starting to debate my in/visibility
(whether I can stop checking to see if I'm walking
right)
and there it goes.
this time on the back of a passing bus, as an ad for
Classix radio station.
you are everything
and everything is you"

(logged april 27th, 2022 @10:04am)

Poem Note:

This is some weird rain.
Smells just like seawater (mom)

Poem Note:

When the sky swallows itself
becomes an enclosure of incomplete light
That I find a crystalline clarity to the wet green life

(in my eyes)

Poem Note:

And memory* came glistening down the road,
indigo hands outstretched,
asking.

Shattering the night silence with fragments of orange porch light,
dancing off their wind chime body.

Poem Note:

And finding myself tensed
Into one day-long minute

Waiting

Poem Note:

A searing,
nuclear pearl pummeling a crater through my skull

Poem Note:

A cold, crystalline memory,
slick and white hot as menthol,
rattles up my sinuses,

landing in the black vacuum at the back of my eye.

Image List

- * Cover. Untitled (in maryland, 2019) (Photo by author)
- * Figure 1. blue seashell (photo by author)
- * Figure 2. grandma's kitchen (photo by author)
- * Figure 3. pop pop's mailbox (photo by author)
- * Figure 4. blue green river foam (photo by author)
- * Figure 5. tree/limb (photo by author)
- * Figure 6. blue film / ground debris (photo by author)
- * Figure 7. hand! (collage by author)
- * Figure 8. mystery light streaks (photo by author)
- * Figure 9. iris pollen in the palm (photo by author)
- * Figure 10. factory window/portal (photo by author)
- * Figure 11. dew drop moss wall (photo by author)
- * Figure 12. eye underpainting (photo & painting by author)
- * Figure 13. star fragment among the rocks (photo by author)
- * Figure 14. pencils & palms desk mess (photo by author)
- * Figure 15. b. newsprint hand parade (photo by author)
- * Figure 16. empty spotted egg (photo by author)
- * Figure 17. untitled (beloved stone) (photo by author)
- * Figure 18. stone step avalanche (collage by author)
- * Figure 19. paper hand holding (photo by author)
- * Figure 20. tiny light spectre (photo by author)
- * Figure 21. pink painting light flare (photo by author)
- * Figure 22. on the river (photo by author)
- * Figure 23. cupid ruins (photo by author)
- * Figure 24. portrait cut out (collage by author)

- * Figure 25. charcoal smudge detail 2 (drawing by author)
- * Figure 26. tree/bone
- * Figure 27. charcoal smudge detail 4 (drawing by author)
- * Figure 28. hand amulets in progress (photo by author)
- * Figure 29. hollowed roots (photo by author)
- * Figure 30. free! (photo by author)
- * Figure 31. post-hike pocket contents (photo by author)
- * Figure 32. melting/warping root (photo by author)
- * Figure 33. blue thread desk mess (photo by author)
- * Figure 34. brown & blue egg (photo by author)
- * Figure 35. seashell drying sink (photo by author)
- * Figure 36. tree fallen to the river (photo by author)
- * Figure 37. a lair, a cave (photo by author)
- * Figure 38. subway silhouette (photo by author)
- * Figure 39. moss & root bark (photo by author)
- * Figure 40. gohst friend (photo by author)
- * Figure 41. sidewalk star (photo by author)
- * Figure 43. wood grain (photo by author)
- * Figure 44. paint bucket (photo by author)
- * Figure 45. palette knife color (photo by author)
- * Figure 46. black seashell (photo by author)



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List

- * *
- * abstraction
- * animal
- * annihilation
- * attachment
- * attention (to attend)
- * attunement
- * Blackness*
- * belonging
- * ceremony
- * collection
- * container
- * desire
- * desperation
- * disavowal
- * eye (as vehicle, vessel, window, tool)
- * evaporation
- * expressivity
- * fellowship
- * grief
- * habits of perception
- * iconography
- * improvisation
- * (in)visibility
- * love

*rich with color in the dark, moving and shimmering, somehow glittering without light

- * magentism
- * mass
- * mutable
- * mutuality
- * obscurity
- * orbit
- * orientation
- * potency (of the self)
- * queerness
- * referential language
- * refusal
- * ritual
- * social symbiosis
- * surrender
- * symbolism
- * totality (and its impossibility)
- * vulnerability



