

**SELF-
PORTRAIT
AS
YOUR
TRAITOR**

DEBBIE MILLMAN

**with an introduction by
PAULA SCHER**

Seeing Duff

this duplicity we have in common.
you know I prefer to think we are liars

pretending what we want to believe is real

as our hearts are breaking.

yet you gasped when you saw her
your chestnut eyes wide

and I knew then that
you were a kind man

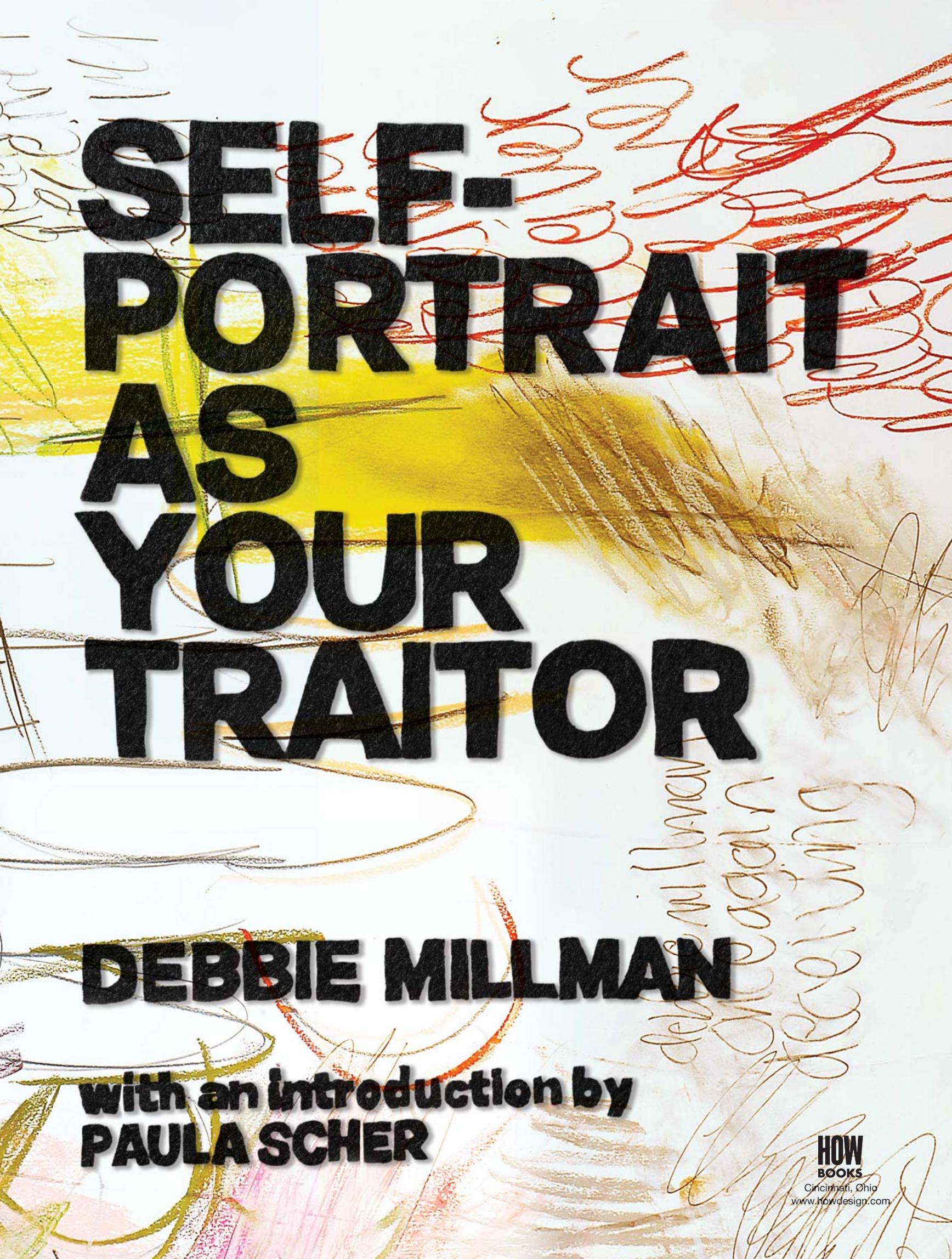
**SELF-
PORTRAIT
AS
YOUR
TRAITOR**

self portrait
as your loved
one

Portrait of
your loved
loved one
self portrait
as a

betrayed
traitor





SELF- PORTRAIT AS YOUR TRAITOR

DEBBIE MILLMAN

with an introduction by
PAULA SCHER

*debbie millman
one again
deceit and*

**HOW
BOOKS**
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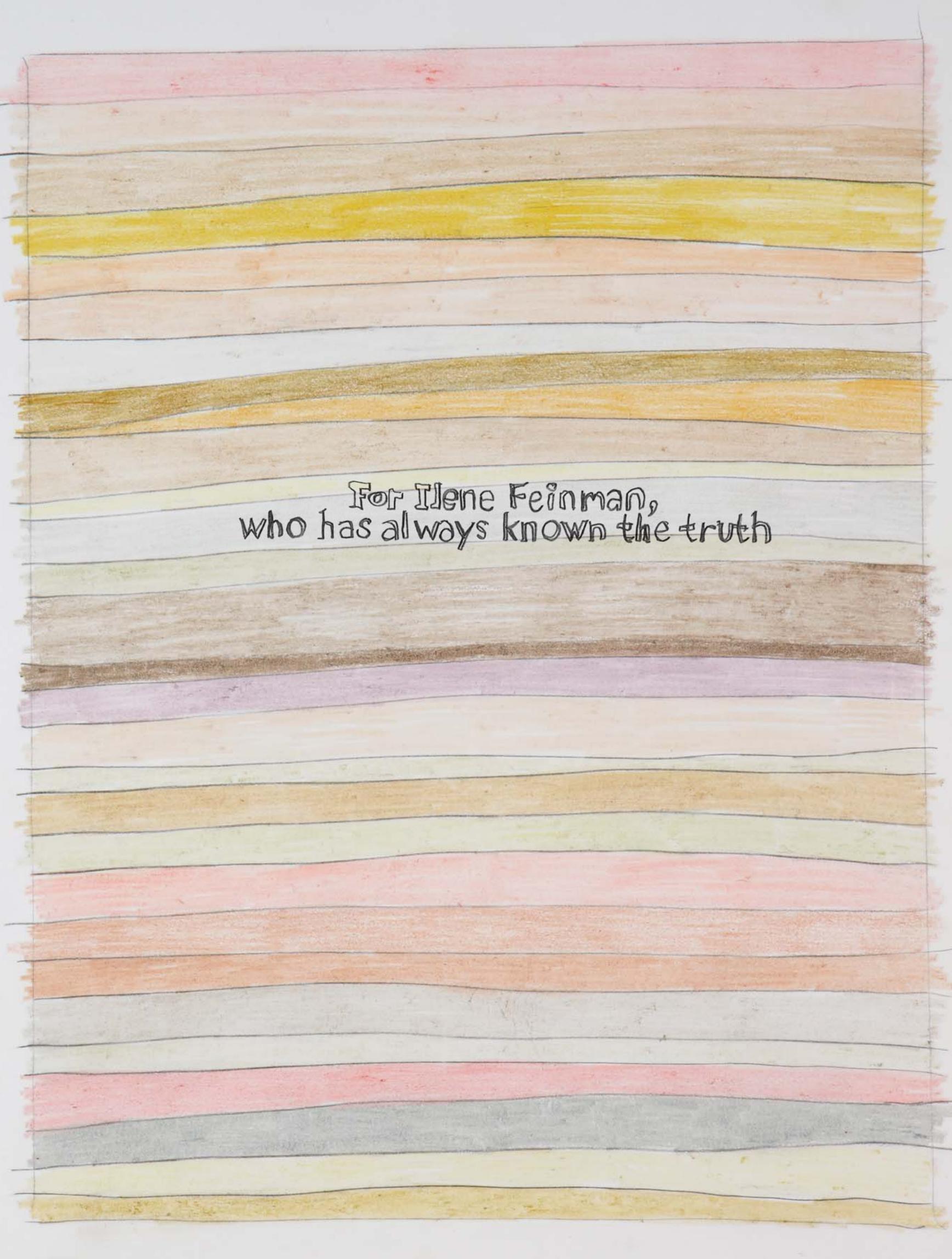
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For Ilene Feinman,
who has always known the truth

Contents

Better
Better

10

Card

Card Shark

22

Reflections on
a Puddle

28

Puddle

Post-Super
Bowl Musings

33

Lucky

43

Lucky

6

Insects
Insects

56

ene Penelope

67

8

53
No. 53

82

Thee
Thee

Fare Thee
Well

102

102

Pebbles
PEBBLES

112

Introduction

By Paula Scher

As children, most graphic designers don't know that they want to be designers. They start out by making things. They are uninhibited and uncritical. They draw from the heart. They draw the things they love: horses, toy soldiers - or conjure up comic book characters or create paper dolls with complete wardrobes. They doodle in their school notebooks. They make up stories with their drawing, and some of them are intensely personal. Later, when they are in high school, they become known for being "good at art." They draw portraits of their classmates or caricatures of their teachers. They make posters for the school prom or the student-council elections or the football rallies. They have found their position in life. They go to college and become graphic designers. They retain their passion for making things and still cherish the notion that they are "good at art." But then they graduate, go to work as designers, and begin to find themselves far away from the doodles and craft of their childhood. They become strategists, branding experts. They attend meetings. They become planners. They "execute" design.

They stop making things,
and they never totally understand
how that happened.

Debbie Millman is a principal of Sterling Brands. She is a consummate branding expert who has worked on the identities some of America's biggest and most iconic companies. She is a planner, a strategist, and a designer. She spends a lot of her life in meetings, or on airplanes traveling to and from meetings. She is also a popular design commentator with her own radio podcast, "Design Matters." She is a dedicated educator at the School of Visual Arts, where she runs the Masters in Branding program. If that isn't enough, she has authored the books *Brand Thinking and Other Noble Pursuits*, *Brand Bible*, and *How to Think Like a Great Graphic Designer*.

But Debbie never lost her passion for making things. All through that busy branding career, she made paintings and drawings with the same intensity you see in children who want to "be good at art." Instead of taking her away from her passion, her work as a designer had a huge influence on her language-based drawings and paintings. She had fallen in love with the art of the word. In 2009, in her book *Look Both Ways: Illustrated Essays on the Intersection of Life and Design*, she published her literary doodles for the first time. She combined insights about design and everyday life with obsessive hand-drawn typography to create a new form of visual poetry, a 21st-century illuminated manuscript.

Set against her eccentric type,
the essays are a brave, highly personal
form of communication.

Debbie goes a step farther in this new collection. Here, the writing and illumination are even more personal and eccentric. The lettering compliments the message in a way that enforces the feelings that is, each piece of lettering seems to have been created to express the exact emotional subject matter at hand. A designer knows how to do this: to manipulate the visual components in order to evoke the appropriate feeling. It is a planned act. But a fine artist does it for herself, spontaneously, without a client or a brief. Debbie's elaborate doodles have more in common with Ed Fella's work than with editorial design. Though they are illustrative, they are not illustrations but wholly their own. They exist to demonstrate and illuminate, but their complication does not make them easier to read. It makes them significantly more emotionally resonant. These drawings are communication from the heart. And they are the bravest, rawest, and most honest form of communication there can be.

better

It is
better

It is before

better
beginning

better

the before

beginning

beginning

muscles
taut tanned
belt taut
and belt
belly aflutter
aflutter
aflutter

This is
This is when
there when
exists
exists
only a



mis-a

appropriate;

there
is so
little to
be
ashamed
of.

I wait.
now wait
for it
to
start to
and my
breath b

moves

quickly

quick

down

my
back

up
through
my
thighs,

stops
and

settles.

getting

ready

every-

thing.

s
c
t
t

CARD
SHARK
(A POEM)

I THINK WE
LOOK AT IT
THE SAME
WAY.

SKEPTICAL
YET HOPING THIS
TIME IT WOULD
NOT HAPPEN
AGAIN
LIKE BEFORE.

THIS IS WHY
YOU HAVE ME
AS YOU HOLD
ME
YOUR WIDE
FINGERS
WRAPPED
TIGHT AROUND
MY NECK
PULLING ME
IN PUSHING
ME OVER

KEEPING
ME

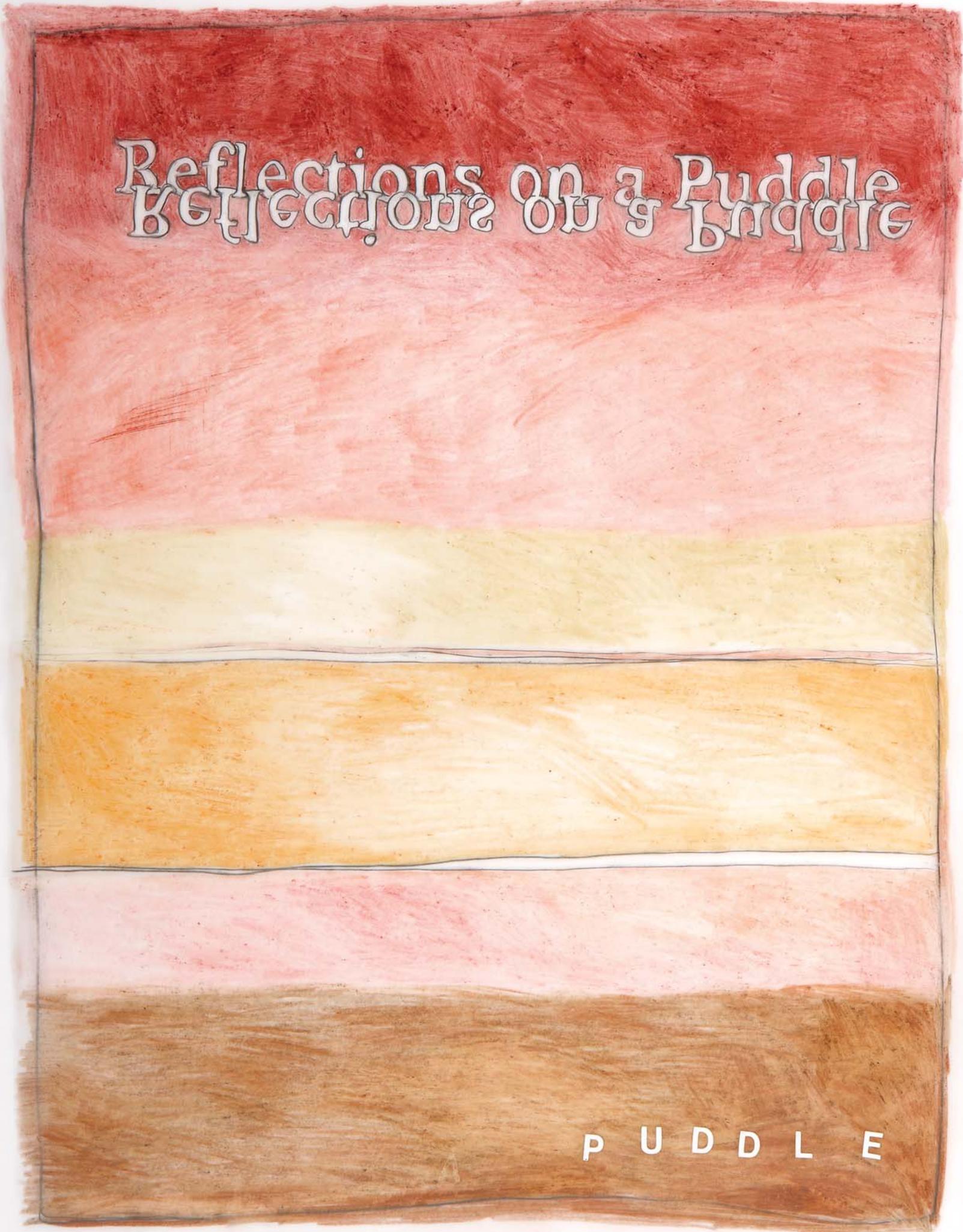
INTACT.

YOU ARE
TEACHING ME
ABOUT THE
TELLS.

THEY REVEAL
THAT I GIVE
MYSELF AWAY
TOO EASILY.
THIS I KNOW
AND FIGURE
INTO THE
EQUATION

I WEIGH THE AS
FRAGILE AND THE
NASTY.

NOT FULLY
KNOWING
WHICH IS
WHICH.



Reflections on a Puddle
REFLECTIONS ON A PUDDLE

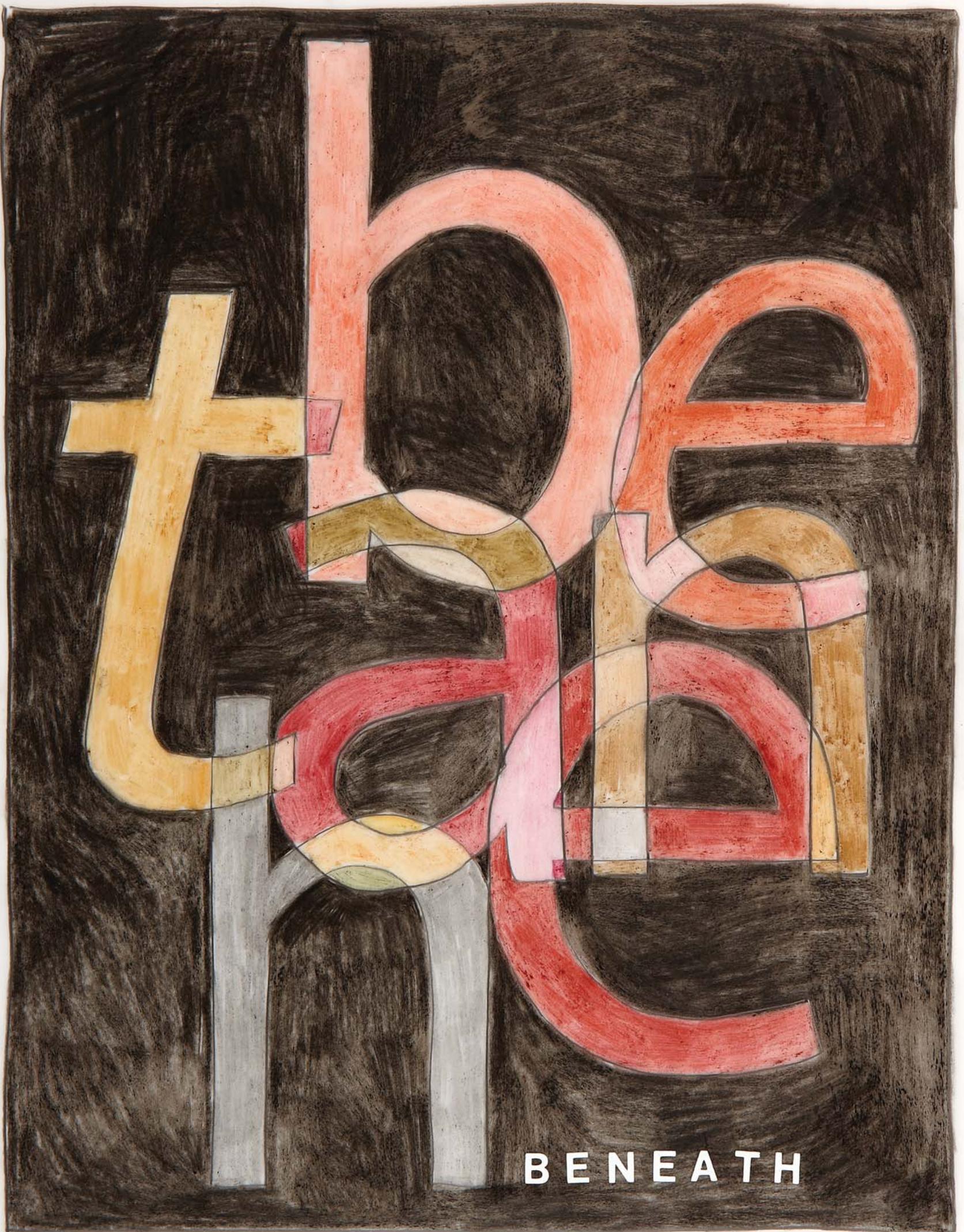
P U D D L E

R E A S O N

One must
have a reason
for reflection—
an eye to
admire
variations.
tations.

And only
so many
days can
fulfill
day- in
which one
can be
close to
that April
sky- with
sight of it

F U L F I L L



BENEATH

This requires
an understand-
ing: A reason
without, an
inward nature,
a spontaneous
glance.

anson

GLANCE

Post Super Bowl
musings

OR

How I Learned
to Stop

WORRYing and

LOVE

COFFEE

Whenever I tell
people I've never
once consumed a
bottle of beer, I
am met with
shock
and
incredulity

But I haven't!

I grew up in a household that was mostly voluntarily void of alcohol and spirits (unless you include Manischewitz, but I won't) and I simply never developed a taste for beer. In fact, I rather loathe it. I also have a particular disdain for the taste of beer on anyone else. Which, as a teenager growing up in a suburb rife with football parties, made for difficulties.

My parents were more the type that drank coffee, at least my mother was. Every morning she would put up a big pot and when it was brewed, she would pour herself a cup in her favorite, Corningware mug. But it was the pot that she brewed her coffee in that captivated me. It too was of the Corningware brand, but this pot had three blue periwinkle flowers centered on the lower half of the front of the pot, and for some reason, I thought they were beautiful and magical and fascinating. It was my favorite thing in our kitchen.

My mother drank her coffee black. Back then she smoked cigarettes and often her friends from the neighborhood would sit in our burnt orange breakfast nook and talk. They would all light their cigarettes from the same slim lighter, pour their coffee, stir in the milk and sugar and then they would start to gossip.

They would
chat about
who had
recently
bought a
new car or a
fur coat or who
was taking a
vacation or a
mistress or
some new pill
that had come
on the market.

At eight years old,
I was fascinated
with my mother's
girl friends: to me, they
were magnificently
glamorous with their
brightly painted nails
and tightly pulled faces
and billowing wisps of
smoke, and I would sit
in the kitchen, off by
myself, and pretend
I wasn't listening
when in fact I wasn't
missing a word.

One day, one of my mother's friends, Daphne, the brassy and most confident woman in the group, invited me to join them in the breakfast nook. I was surprised by the overture and suddenly shy. But the women all urged me over and made a place at the table. Then they did the unthinkable: they poured me a cup of coffee. My mother objected, but the ladies insisted and they compromised by filling the mug to the tippy top with milk. I hesitated for a moment before I took a sip, and as my mouth approached the now lukewarm liquid, I inhaled the pungent aroma and fantasized that I had a cigarette languidly hanging out of a fabulously manicured hand and a cute pair of cat glasses perched on my nose. The minute I tasted the coffee I knew I was fooling myself, I knew even before I sipped it that I wouldn't like the bitter, acidic taste. I grimaced and swallowed, and the worst possible thing happened: the ladies all laughed. "Oh she doesn't like it," Daphne declared. "Oh give her some time!" my mother retorted. "Who likes coffee when they're eight years old?"

It took me a long time to develop a taste for coffee.

Back in college my friend Linda's boyfriend Jorge was CONVINCED that anyone that didn't drink espresso was uncivilized, and desperate to impress him, Linda and I joined him

in a little cafe to become acquainted with this heady nectar.

We both had teeny tiny cups perched in front of us; and at that moment I was convinced that what looked like nothing more than two tablespoons of liquid couldn't possibly distress me too much.

But alas, even after adding four packets of sugar, I was incapacitated. The two sips turned into two hours before I could finish it off. I finally fell in love with coffee when I fell in love with

Oscar.

Oscar

was

British and

Beautiful

and taught me

two things:

how to

SMOKE

and how

to drink

coffee.

He jiked his coffee light
and sweet; initially I
found it palatable but
then began to crave it,
and him more
and more.

my love affair
with coffee and Love
flourished in earnest.

These days

I still put sugar in my
Coffee but now I prefer
it over ice. My mornings
mostly start the same way
with an iced grande
skim latte and an ultra-
light cigarette, and as I
put on my black cat-like
glasses and wonder
how much I have been

shaped by my family and
my friends and my partner and
their tastes. I think our
lives are made up of these
bits and pieces of our
shared experiences
and the rituals and habits we
seek and feed not only signal our
affiliations, they help define
who we are, both to our
ourselves and each other.

LUCKY

THEY DROVE IN SILENCE FOR THE 25 MINUTES IT TOOK THEM TO GET TO THE FISH STORE. MARGARET SAT BESIDE JACK IN THE VAN, HER FOLDED HANDS RESTING ON HER KNEES. SHE WORE HER BROWN CORDUROY WINTER COAT AND HER LEVI'S OVER LONG THERMAL UNDERWEAR. SHE HAD GOTTEN USED TO DRESSING THAT WAY; THE MORE LAYERS ON, THE LONGER IT TOOK TO TAKE THEM OFF, AND IN THE MEAN-TIME SOMEONE MIGHT COME UPSTAIRS OR DRIVE BY. THEN THERE WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH TIME. SHE HATED THESE OUTINGS, NEVER SURE IF THEY WOULD STOP ON THE WAY THERE OR BACK FOR A WHILE THINGS STOPPED AFTER WHAT HAPPENED WITH DAVID, BUT IT HAD BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE THEN, AND JACK STARTED TAKING THE CHANCE AGAIN. IN THE MEANTIME, DAVID STOPPED LOOKING AT HER, AND NO WONDER WHY.

Now they were on the way to the fish store to pick up some flounder for dinner.

IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE
IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
THAT SOLD WISE'S SALT
& VINEGAR POTATO CHIPS.
SHE FELT THE QUARTER
IN HER POCKET.
SHE SAVED IT FOR
THIS TRIP SHE
COULDN'T WAIT TO
OPEN THE BAG, PICK
THE FIRST CHIP OUT
AND PUT THE WHOLE
THING IN HER MOUTH.
SHE WOULD SUCK OFF
THE SALT AND VINEGAR
AND KEEP THE CHIP IN
HER MOUTH UNTIL IT
WAS SOFT AND MUSHY
AND THEN SHE WOULD
CHEW AND SWALLOW
IT TOOK ABOUT 3 OR
4 MINUTES TO ACHIEVE
THE RIGHT CONSISTENCY

IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE

SO TO FINISH THE WHOLE
BAG WOULD TAKE THE ENTIRE
RIDE HOME.

UNLESS JACK WANTED TO
STOP SOMEWHERE FIRST.

Margaret could barely
contain herself when
they got to the fish store.

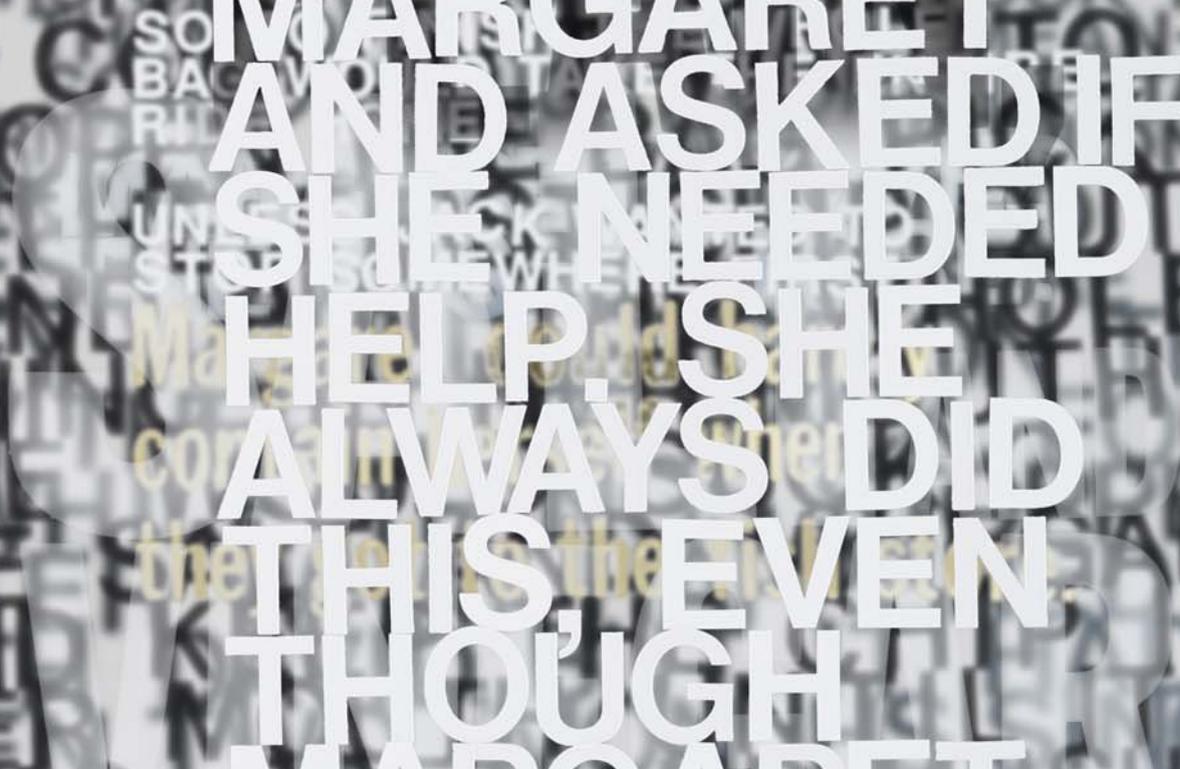
4 MINUTES TO ACHIEVE
THE RIGHT CONSISTENCY

JACK WENT TO THE FISH COUNTER AND MARGARET HEADED STRAIGHT OVER TO THE CASH REGISTER. ABOVE THE REGISTER WAS A METAL DISPLAY OF SMALL BAGS OF CHIPS:

barbeque
PLAIN,
SALT AND
VINEGAR.

MRS JOHNSTON, THE FISH LADY,

IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE
AND MARGARET...
WAS BY THE REGISTER.
SHE SAID HELLO TO MARGARET AND ASKED IF SHE NEEDED HELP. SHE ALWAYS DID THIS EVEN THOUGH MARGARET KNEW MRS. JOHNSTON KNEW WHAT



JACK WAS THE ONLY PLACE
AND THE ONLY PLACE
ON THE MAIN FLOOR OF THE STORE
THAT WAS BY THE LATE
OF VINEG REGISTER PROHIPS.
SHE SAID BARBER
AND HER...
SHE WANTED. BUT MARGARET WOULD TELL HER
ANYWAY AND SHE WOULD HAND OVER THE QUARTER
AND MRS. JOHNSTON WOULD SMILE AND THANK HER,
RING UP THE SALE AND PUT THE QUARTER IN THE
REGISTER. THEY REPEATED THIS OVER AND OVER,
AND TODAY WASN'T ANY DIFFERENT. MRS. JOHN-
STON GAVE HER THE BAG OF POTATO CHIPS AND
MARGARET HELD THEM CLOSE, SAVORING THE
ANTICIPATION OF OPENING THEM UP AND SMELL-
ING THE FAMILIAR SMELL. BUT TODAY MRS. JOHN-
STON HAD SOMETHING MORE FOR HER. SHE SHOWED
MARGARET A NEW METAL DISPLAY STAND ON THE
COUNTER. IT HELD LITTLE CARDS CONTAINING
DIFFERENT EARRINGS WITH HANGING NAUTICAL
DESIGNS. THERE WERE PAIRS WITH TINY FISH, PAIRS
WITH SHELLS, PAIRS WITH SILVER ANCHORS.

MARGARET FIXATED ON THE EARRINGS.

DESPITE HAVING
HER EARS
PIERCED 3 YEARS
AGO, HER MOM
ONLY ALLOWED
HER TO WEAR
EARRINGS
WITH POSTS.
SHE DIDN'T
LIKE YOUNG
GIRLS TO
WEAR DANGLY
JEWELRY.

MARGARET KNEW SHE HAD TO WAIT UNTIL SHE WAS 16 BEFORE HER MOTHER WOULD LET HER WEAR THE NAUTICAL EARRINGS. THAT WAS ALMOST FOUR MORE YEARS. SHE FROWNED.

MRS. JOHNSTON ASKED MARGARET WHAT WAS WRONG AND SHE TOLD HER. MRS. JOHNSTON FROWNED TOO. SHE CALLED OUT FOR JACK AND BECKONED HIM OVER.

SHE INSISTED HE MUST BUY A PAIR OF THE EARRINGS FOR MARGARET; HOW PRETTY THEY WOULD LOOK ON SUCH A LOVELY GIRL. COULD HE EXPLAIN TO HER MOM HOW SPECIAL THEY WERE?

JACK LOOKED AT MARGARET.

— YOU REALLY WANT THEM? HE ASKED.

MARGARET LOOKED AT THE EARRINGS AGAIN. SHE TOUCHED THE PAIR WITH THE SILVER ANCHORS AND LOOKED UP AT JACK.

— PLEASE.

— OKAY, JACK SAID TO MRS. JOHNSTON. WRAP THEM UP. HE WAS SMILING.

DESPITE THE CHANGING
MARGARET,
SQU
LEAF
D

SHE WANTED TO GO TO THE QUARTER
ANYWHERE. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
AND SHE WAS THERE. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
RING HER MOTHER. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
RIGHT SEE HER MOTHER. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
AND THAT WAS ALL. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
STON FOUR MORE YEARS. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
MARGARET SHE FROM THE QUARTER
ANTICIPATE THE QUARTER
NO TALKING TO THE QUARTER
STON HAD SOME MRS. SHE HAD TO GO TO THE QUARTER
MARGARET FROM THE QUARTER
OCCURRED TO CALLER JACK AN THE QUARTER
DIFFERENT EAR RING OVER THE QUARTER
DEEDS HERE. PAIR THE QUARTER
WLDN. DAVID WITH THE QUARTER
MARGARET FIX AT THE QUARTER
LAIN MARGARET SHE INSH
BIG JACK LOOKED AT THE QUARTER
G YOU REALLY WANT THE QUARTER
MARGARET LOOKED AT THE EARS
SHE TOUCHED THE PAIR WITH
ANCHORS AND LOOKED UP AT J
W PLEASE THE QUARTER
O.KAY JACK SAID TO MRS. JO
WRAP THEM UP HE WAS SMILIN
4 MINUTES THE QUARTER
THE RIGHT OF THE QUARTER
MARGARET ON THE FISH LADY,

MRS JOHNSTON
TOOK THEM OFF OF
THE RACK AND SHE
HELPED HER PUT
THEM ON. MARGARET
LOOKED AGAINST
THE FISH COUNTER
AND SHE COULD
SEE HER REFLECTION
IN THE GLASS.
THEY LOOKED BEAUTI-
FUL DANG-
LING OFF
HER EARS.

JACK PAID FOR THE FISH AND THE EARRINGS AND THEY GOT BACK INTO THE CAR. MARGARET CLUTCHED HER POTATO CHIPS IN ONE HAND AND AN EMPTY BOX WITH THE OTHER. SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW LUCKY SHE WAS.

ON THE WAY HOME JACK ASKED MARGARET IF SHE MINDED WHAT THEY DID. THAT WAS ALMOST FOUR MORE YEARS.

SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. THE LAST TIME HE ASKED HER SHE TOLD HIM THAT SHE DIDN'T AND JACK GOT MAD AND LATER SHE GOT PUNISHED FOR SOMETHING SHE DIDN'T EVEN DO.

— IT'S OKAY, SHE SAID. SHE HAD A POTATO CHIP IN HER MOUTH AND FELT THE SALT AGAINST HER TONGUE.

— JACK SAID GOOD SHE WAS A GOOD GIRL.

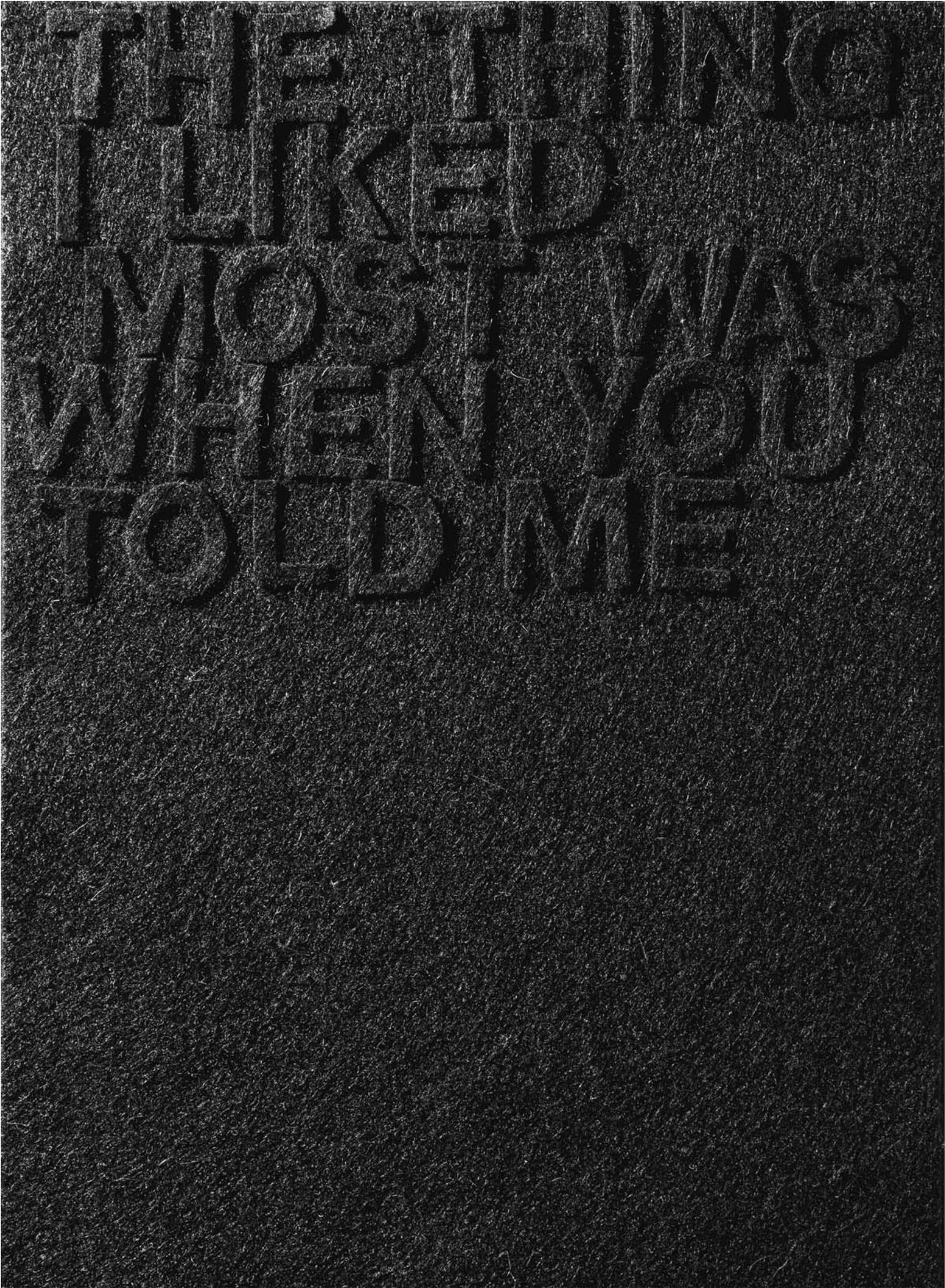
MARGARET LEANED HER HEAD AGAINST THE WINDOW OF THE CAR. THEY DROVE THE REST OF WAY IN SILENCE AND WENT HOME. WHEN THEY TURNED ONTO THEIR BLOCK HER NEW EARRING MADE LITTLE CLINK TO HER SOUNDS AGAINST THE GLASS. BOYS WERE PLAYING FOOTBALL IN THE STREET. THEY LOOKED UP AT MARGARET AND JACK AS THEY PASSED BY. MARGARET HOPED THEY COULD SEE HER NEW EARRINGS. SHE FELT VERY GROWN-UP.

MARGARET LOOKED AT THE EARRINGS AGAIN. SHE TOUCHED THE PAIR WITH THE SILVER ANCHORS AND LOOKED UP AT JACK.

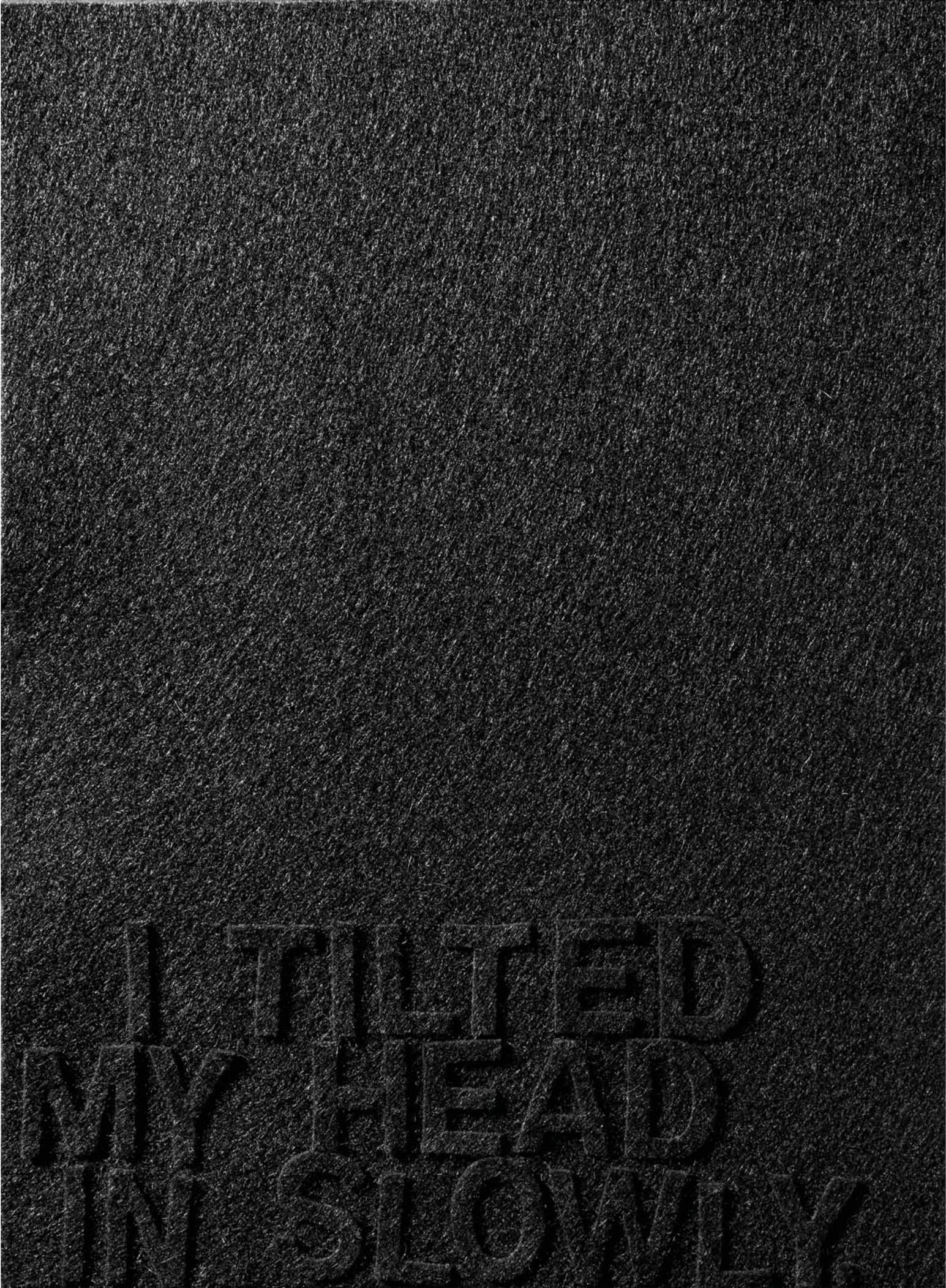
— PLEASE — OKAY, JACK SAID TO MRS. JOHNSTON WRAP THEM UP. HE WAS SMILING.

THE RIGHT CONSISTENCY

INSECTS



WHEN I
KISSED YOU



YOU ARE
SO MUCH
BIGGER
THAN ME.

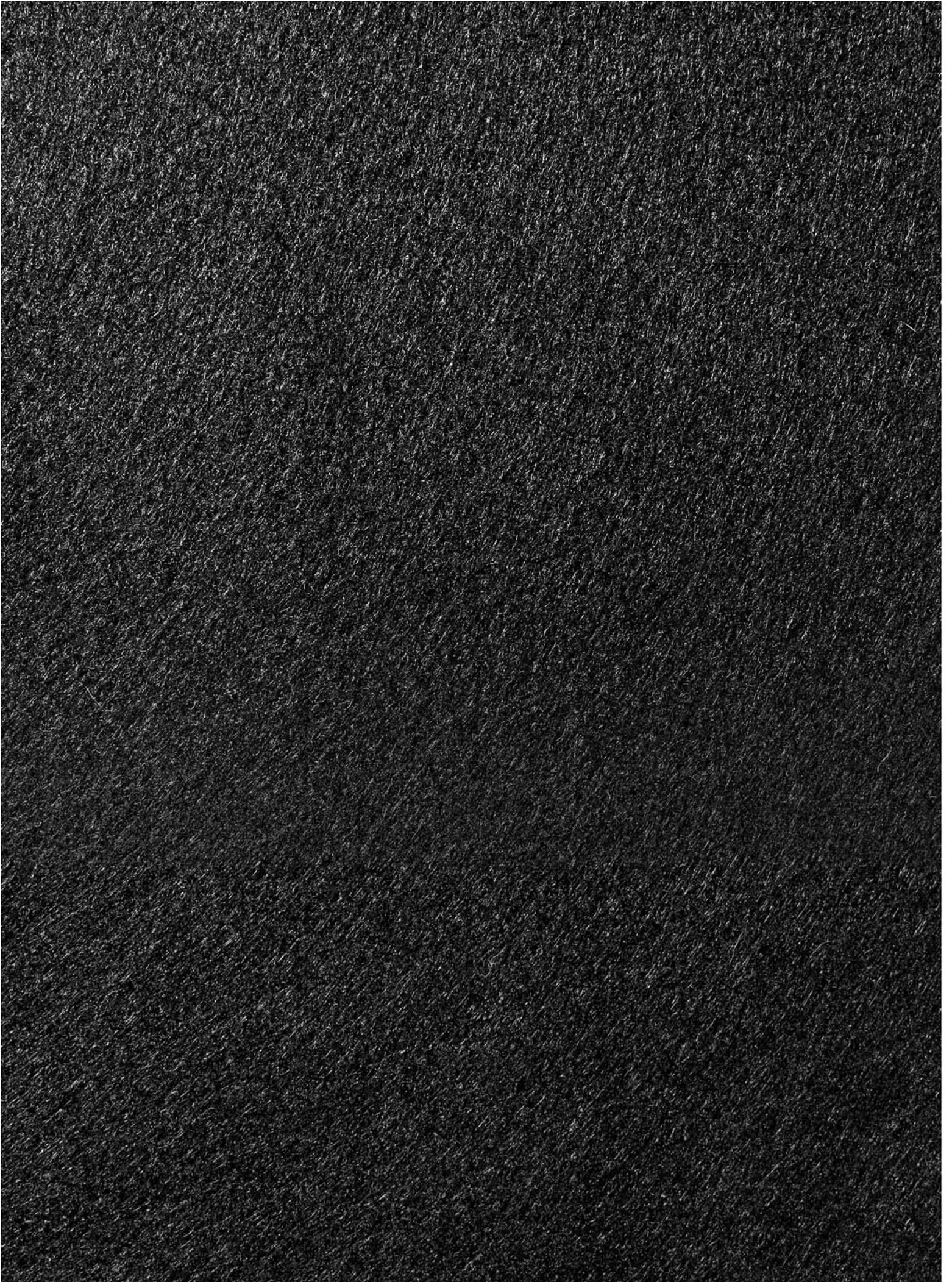
I INCH MY
WAY IN
BURROW
MYSELF
INTO
YOU
LIKE

A FRAGILE
LITTLE
BUG

SOFT
AND
BLACK
AND
ROUND
AND

I FELT
MY
RESILIENT
NARROW
HEART
SHAKE
IN ITS
SHELL
AND

BEG
FOR
FORGIVENESS.



Penelope

and she had
minutes
bars
at her eye she had
the most perfect
tar
and sky blue some had
stripes some had geometric
patterns some had
that allowed you to
though to
less
Penelope
and when
squint
some
I knew
Penelope
wasn't
breezy
slightly
was smart
dropped, on the other hand,

My first job after college paid me \$6 an hour.

I was doing what would now be considered old school paste-up and layout for a fledgling cable magazine, and because I enjoyed it so much I could hardly believe that I was getting paid to do this magical thing that I loved.

My
page
hour.

first job after col-
paid me \$6 an
doing what

doing what

doing what

In fact, I
never
wanted
to leave
the office.

• 2 2 1 1 0 0 0 0

I was the first person
in every morning, and
I blissfully stayed way
into the night.

The evenings
in the office were
the best; I would busy
myself by drawing
picture boxes with
a rapidiograph, but it
was simply a shroud
to eavesdrop on the
real designers sitting in
the bullpen as they
compared notes on the
latest issue of the
Soho News, or who was
going to see Richard
Hell at CBCBs that
weekend.

I knew I was out
of my league
and I knew they
were better
than me, but
I projected the
fantasies I had
of what my life
could be onto
their lives and
imagined that
I was one of
them, but still
me. Only better.

What I coveted
most was the easy
confidence they
had in their design
ability; and while
I worked on mine,
I watched and
waited and wished
for a moment
when they might
accept me.

All that
changed
when
Penelope
was hired.

All that
changed
when
Penelope
was hired.

Penelope was tall and thin and she had a swingy brunette bob with lazy bangs that brushed the tips of her eyelashes. She had the coolest hosiery I had ever seen and sported leotards in fuchsia and yellow and sky blue; some had stripes, some had geometric patterns, some had textures that allowed you to see through to her long, pale legs. As I am only 5'4", Penelope towered over me, and when we met, I felt her squint in an effort to make sense of me. In that instant, I knew she didn't like me. Penelope was everything I wasn't. She was lean and breezy, effortlessly chic and slightly haughty. And she was smart and sardonic and droll. I, on the other hand,

was chubby and over-eager; I bit my nails and wore grey corduroy gaucho skirts with matching heels. Penelope lived with her Italian boyfriend in a swanky loft uptown. I lived in a fourth-floor tenement railroad flat and had to pass through my married roommates' bedroom to get to mine.

Everyone liked Penelope. For me, her arrival brought on a fiery jealousy I never felt before. I wanted to look like Penelope. I wanted to dress like Penelope and talk like Penelope.

Looking back on it now, I realize I simply wanted to be Penelope.

Suddenly my \$6
an hour job
wasn't enough.
Becoming a
good designer
wasn't enough.
I needed to buy
new clothes and
new shoes and I
needed a new
haircut and new
thighs and a new

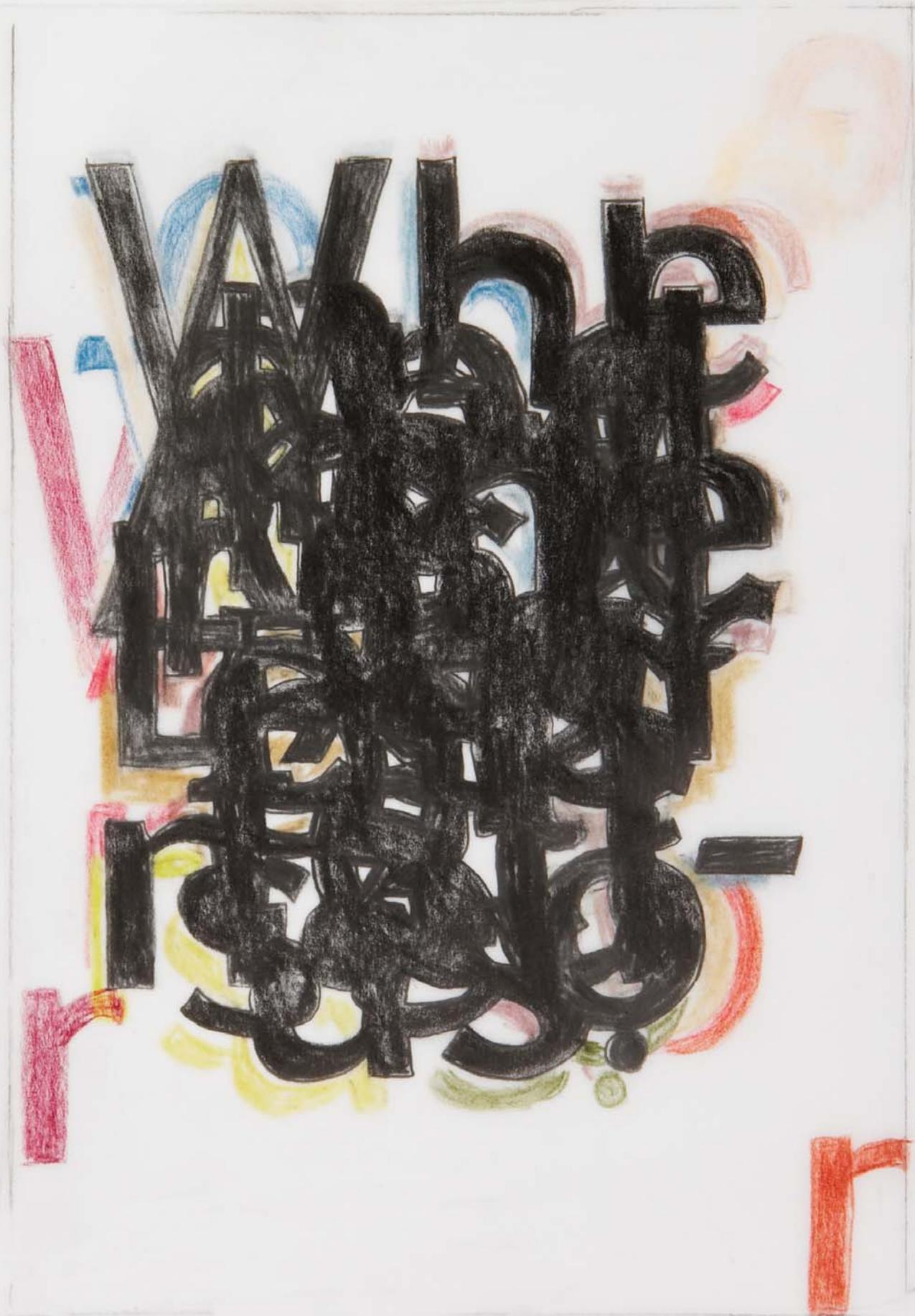
life



hoped would insure my
security. I thought about this

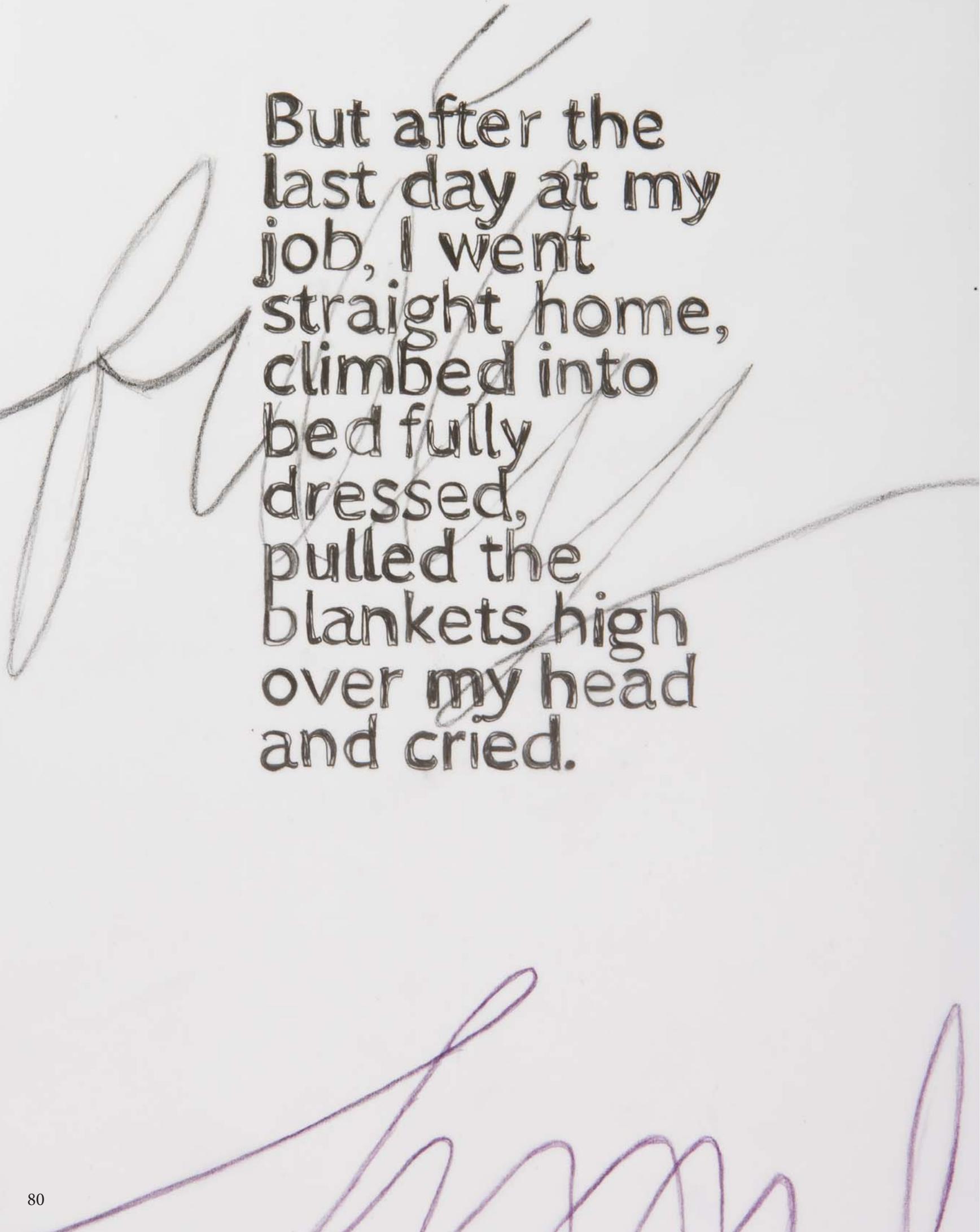
Everything about me
was utterly awful
and wretchedly wrong.
I didn't have money
to buy all the clothes
I wanted but decided
to buy them anyway,
and charged them to
my brand new, shiny
American Express
card. But when I went
to work in my new
duds, I still felt shabby
next to Penelope,
and I knew that no
matter what I did
and how much I tried
to change who I
was, I would never be any-
thing like Penelope.
And I hated myself
even more.

hips and



When I opened my credit card bill I felt nauseous. I didn't have enough money to pay it, so I asked my mother for a loan. She didn't have much money either, but she gave me what she could after I swore I would repay her. And though I managed to scrape by, I never seemed to have enough. I needed new things and couldn't help wanting more. I told myself that if I could just save \$1,000 everything would be okay. I could pay my bills, buy a few pretty outfits and then I would feel better about myself. I would feel secure. I could feel safe! And with that, despite the fact that I still loved my job, I began to look for another one that would pay me more.

Shortly thereafter, I found a job as a Director of Marketing at a real estate company in Westchester. It was a big title with a big increase in salary; now I would be making \$25,000 a year. And the job came with a car! Everyone congratulated me on my good fortune and the potential of this prestigious new opportunity.



But after the
last day at my
job, I went
straight home,
climbed into
bed fully
dressed,
pulled the
blankets high
over my head
and cried.

I hated my new job the entire time I was there, I hated the work and I hated real estate and it took me a whole year to save the \$1,000 I hoped would insure my future security. I thought about the money every day on the long, grey drive to and from work. By the time I reached my goal, I changed my mind and decided that I actually needed \$2,000 to really feel safe.

When I finally determined what it would take for me to feel impervious to my life's challenges, I looked out at the long, grey landscape in front of me and remembered the super cute pair of suede boots that had caught my eye in Bloomingdale's, and realized I had to keep driving.

driving

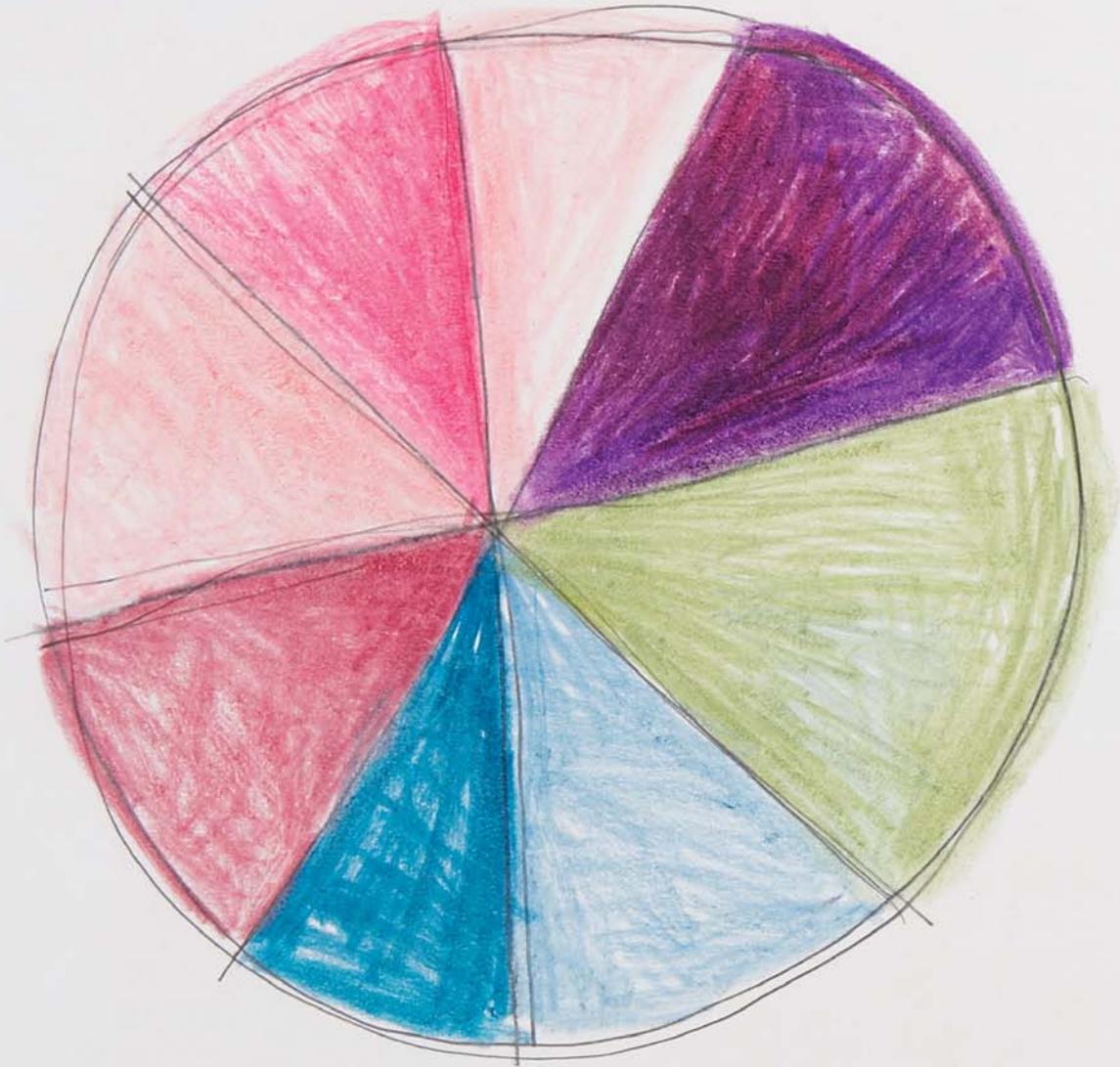
My job paid me \$6 an hour.

doing what

I was doing what would now be considered old

yet for a while in

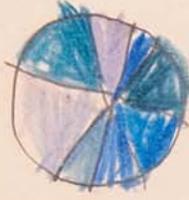
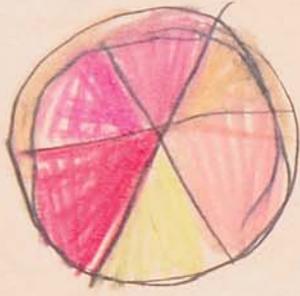
able
aga



No. {53}

The office
is fifty-three
narrow steps up
on the second
floor of a dilapidated
warehouse
on Mott Street
one block north of
Chinatown.

The office is
fifty-three
narrow
steps up



~ No 53 ~

The walls are a cool parchment
the ceilings are rather funny
to think if you know what I mean
you do.

what do you think

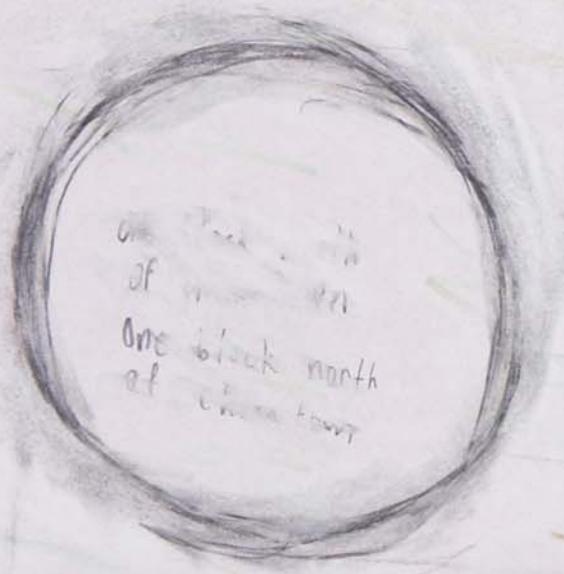
what do you think

what do you think?

The walls are a
COOL parchment
grey, the ceilings
smoky and cracked.

There is a faint odor
of fried pork, likely
emanating from
Excellent Dumpling,
Which is around the
corner on Lafayette
street. The woman
at the desk has soft





dreamy

reamy features:

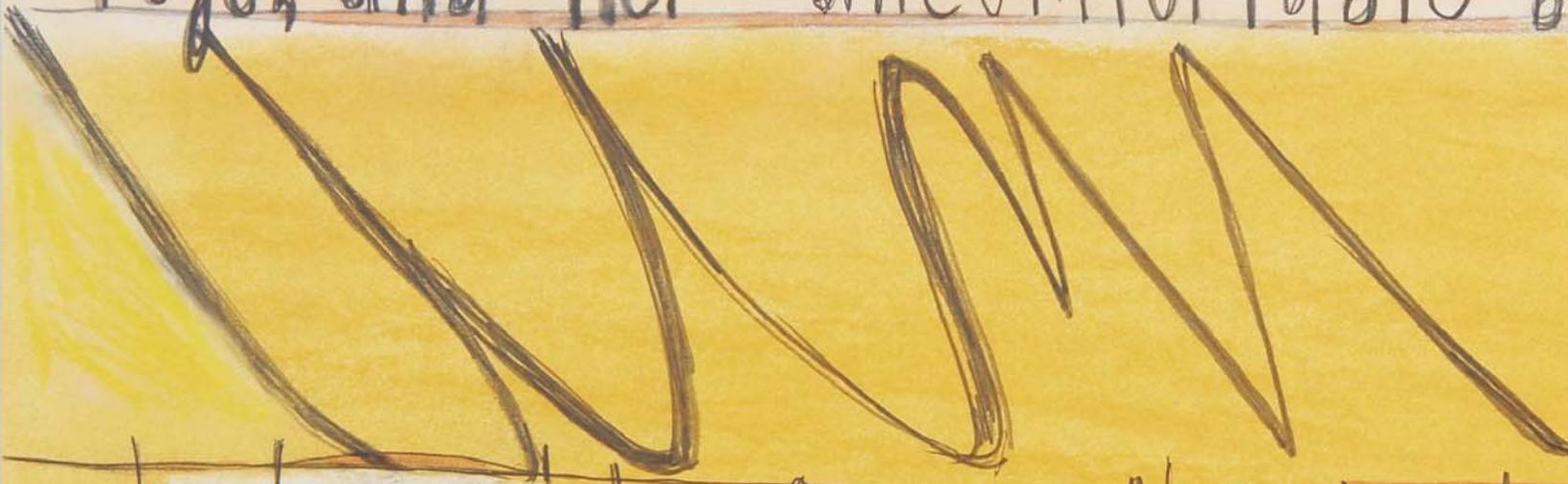
big lips,

moon like

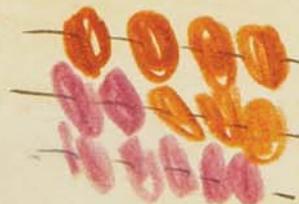
eyes.



Her fishnet stockings camoufla
 legs, and her uncomfortable b

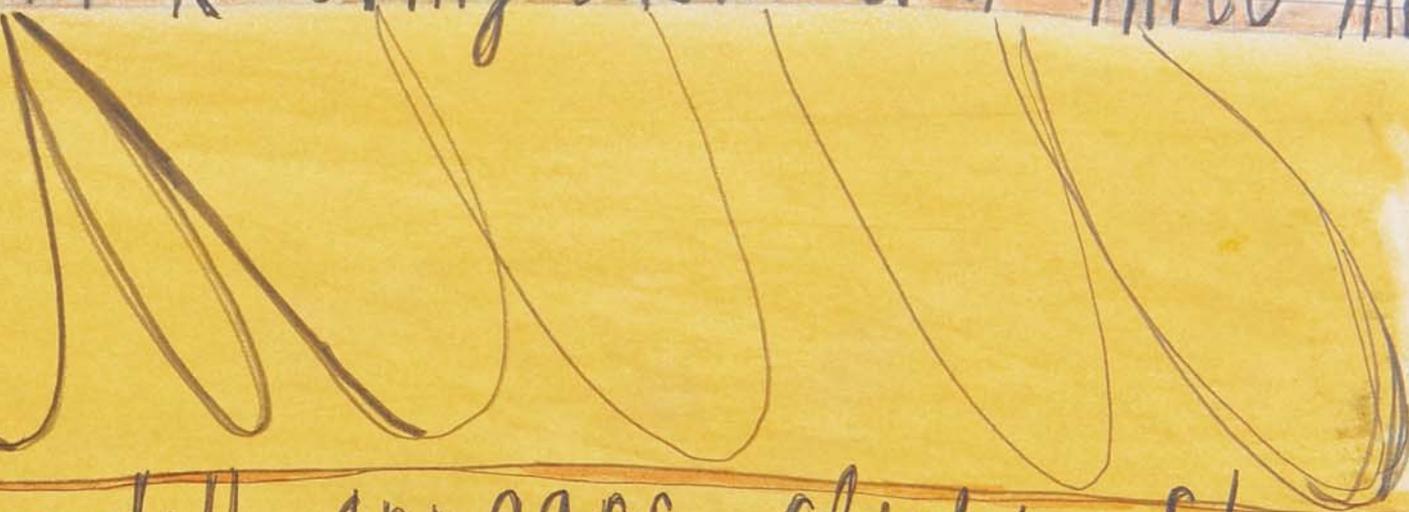


to her petite frame, though she
 smoking a cigarette with s
 exaggerated, rhythmic exhalation
 for a peace rally. She is fumbli

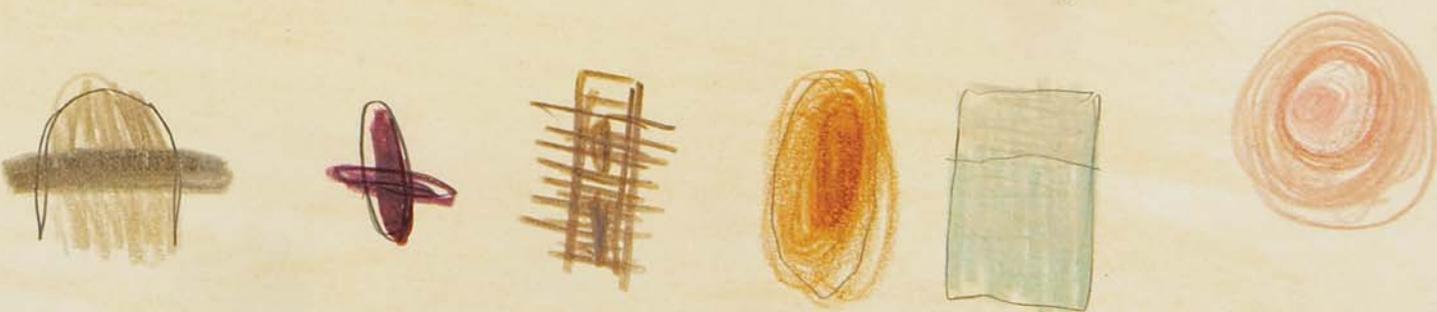




ge six mosquito bites on her
back sling backs add three inches



still appears slight. She is
oft sucking, somewhat
ns. She is designing a poster
ng with the type and can't get it



right. Should it
be bolder? Should
it be italic? Should
it be red? She
gives up, and
pushes her mouse
away. She thinks
posters are the
cruellest thing
to design -
there's no place
to hide and
she has nothing
interesting
to say.

All she
to do is
the m
at the
next
how sh
about
Shimme

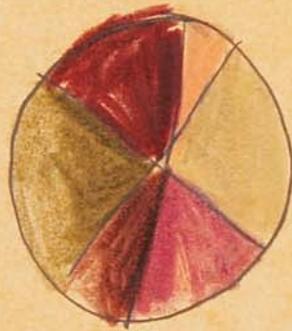
wants
tell
an
desk
to her
e feels
his
ring

pale skin, that, she
is afraid if she
reaches out and
touches him that
her hand will pass
right through him.

She wants to tell
him that the lazy
green grey color of
his eyes makes her
heart ache. She
wants to tell him
that he makes her
happy and everything
she sees is sharp and
clear and she smells
every smell as the air
hits her and all this makes
her feel as if she could



beautiful



bored



{and}

The man has black gold hair down to his shoulders; he hasn't shaved in several days, his Liz Phair cotton tee shirt is untucked. His khaki's are starched, the pleats profoundly apparent. His sneakers are as white as his skin. He is



1441



10011



10011



Jiana



time



passes



for



fast



Confidenc

He too

He glance

in front

and believe

than hers

about the

in the dirty

at and beautiful and bored.
s struggling with the poster.
es at what is on the computer

nt of the woman next to him
s that his work is less terrible
and he chuckles to himself. He thinks
night before and wishes he was back
bar with the bad martini's or

Better yet, that he was
back in bed with the dirty
girl from the bar.

He could
still smell her sweat on his
fingers and he licks them.

They are salty and musky
and slightly bitter. He likes
this and he remembers that
this is what she tasted like and
he runs his tongue back and forth
across the inside of his teeth.
He takes a sip of the cold,
murky coffee that has been

in the styrofoam cup for
at least two hours and grimaces.

What was her name again?

He can't remember. He
plays with the type on his
screen.

The woman
next to him sighs in
frustration. She slides
away from her desk with an
exaggerated motion and

examines a mosquito bite. She looks
up at the man and frowns
as she takes in Liz Phan's
the white sneakers, the
black hair. She tells him
she feels like going down
stairs for a Starbucks, and
as she stuffs a twenty
into her jacket pocket
she asks the man if he wants
one. He looks up, glances
around the dingy room
squints at the curly-headed
girl and says thanks, but no
thanks, he's good.

ks
NS
r,
m
d
t
nts
es
m,
a



~ No 54 ~



**Fare
thee
well**

**You didn't realize
I had died until you
walked in and found
me freezing under
the beige blanket
we both hate.**

While

**relaying the
news to
my friends**

**You decided it was
good
that I went so
quickly.**

In mulling this over
Since,
I am unclear
who
it benefitted
most.

You couldn't

know

**that I woke
before I went.**

It was 2:15 am.

**Scruffy was
sleeping
by my side.**

**Duff started
licking my face.
And**

suddenly suddenly

I couldn't see.

**Remorse raced up
through my arms
and exploded in
my head.**

**It took
a long time**

**for my brain to
wind down.**

**And I cried to myself
it was too fast too
soon too too -
I tried to hold on
as I felt the dogs
slip away from
my side.**

**I have travelled a
long way since
then - way past
Saturn and Pluto.**

**I like that I can
see them up
close, but
I hate that they
wave as I pass.**



PEBBLES

Here we go again:

You're wet, I'm dry and
no matter how hard I try
I find I'm still stone.

∩ test this seamy side of myself now:

Thighs wide and hips spread

I search you for something long lost.

I lick the salt off my hands.

I see remnants of me in your eyes.

you you you you

you you

you regard me with your pity

I knew that you were (like me)
desperate to be filled up
and drained -

fooled into thinking that
more may be enough -

as if back-up could insure that
we would never be left ^{again} again.

there is comfort in this lie
as we languish in our sweat
and wait for trouble.