







Safe





...or silenced?



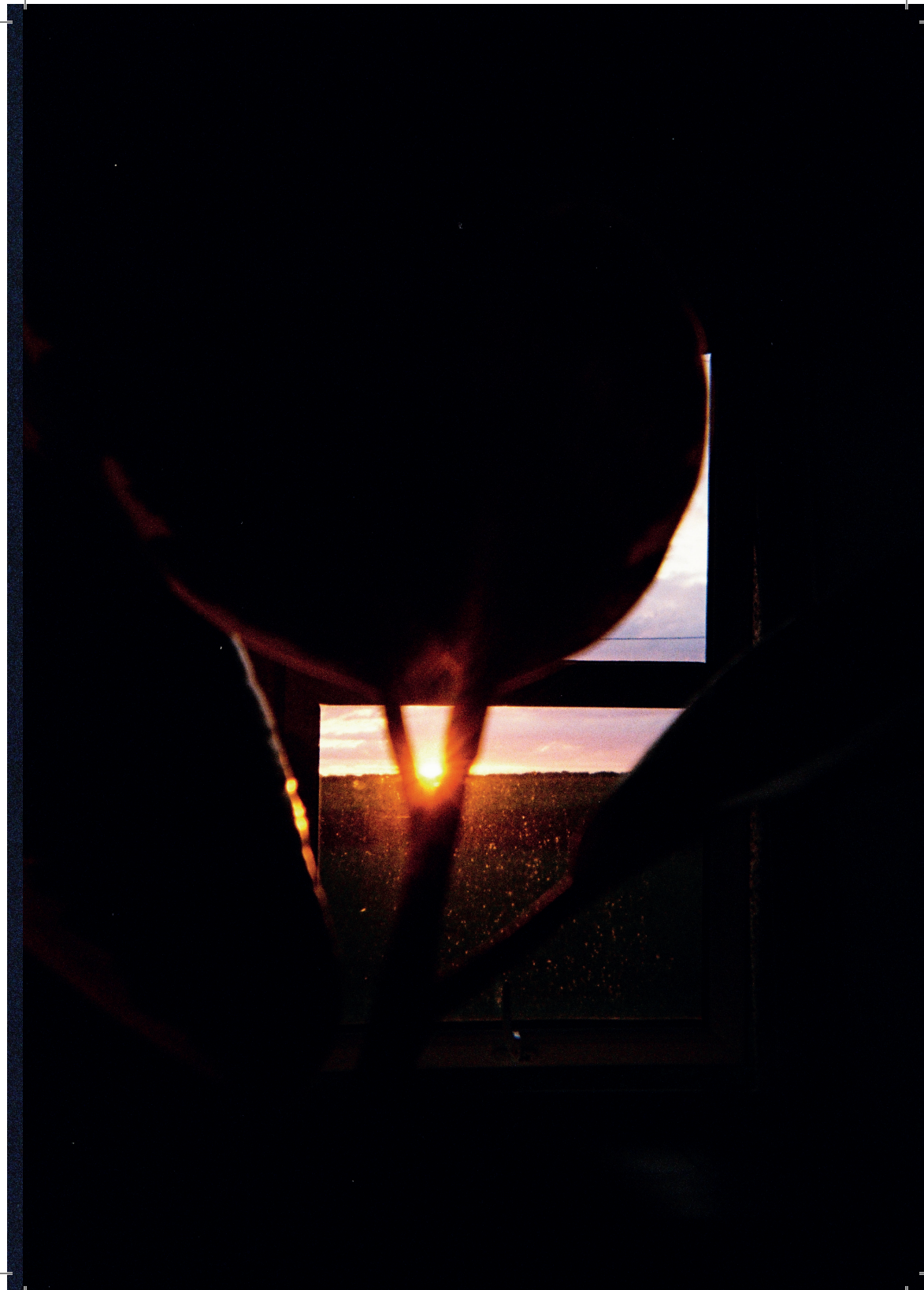
This project has helped me understand the depths at which I hide. I have struggled to visualise anything. My images are carefully considered and curated to show my world, while exposing as little as possible.

It's been over three years since I left and still, I fear that anything left uncovered will be used against me. All that I am can be twisted and curated to fit his narrative. The minute I speak up, I fall neatly into his construct of who I am and what he "had to put up with".

I am silenced before I utter a single word.









**You're shoving food in your face and it's fucking gross.** You hungry? After all that? One person doesn't need all that food. normally eat that much. **You eat so fast.** You're slurping your tea really funny. What the fuck, no, condiments are **unnecessary** and even need to go down that aisle. Mayonnaise is the most revolting acceptable. Sour cream and guacamole, bleurgh, no! Salad dressing be banned. There's no reason for them to exist. I just don't understand Tartare sauce? \*Sick noise\* Not that ham, **it's too expensive.** You But I don't like that bread. **It's too expensive.** It's an **enormous** like you need to finish it all. Marmite? Devil's food. Chips on a night one needs to eat at midnight. Vinegar on chips? **Why?** Gross. C really. Nutella is way too **expensive.** No I don't like the cheap stuff have them as a part of lunch, that makes more sense. Fish and superior. **Why** eat food that's dripping in oil? It has no flavour. It other than a normal coffee? All other coffees are desserts. Chocolate full of chemicals. They're never fresh. Hot chocolate? Why not it down. Cream based cocktails? **No!** Nespresso pods? **No,** they It melts and goes everywhere. Popcorn? **Absolutely not.** It gets berries? Blueberries? **No,** berries are extravagant, don't you think **expensive.** You put so much butter on your toast. I don't like real like the taste. We won't get that anymore. I don't like French wine get it at all. Same with sparkling. It's horrible. Why would you drink does that. **You're so strange.** Macaroni cheese? It's so boring Your hip bones are incredibly attractive. Yes, I ate the honey. Why JUST honey? How about you have the kitchen until 8.30am, with that's entirely unrealistic? You don't get priority on the kitchen. priority? You're so **selfish.** Your recovery is making ME SO UN



You don't need all that food. You're eating so much. You're still  
ed. **No**, I won't order all that, **it's way too much**. People don't  
tea. You're making so much noise with your spoon again. That's  
**y** and I **absolutely refuse** to have them in the house. We don't  
lting devil's food anyone ever created. Salsa is **unnecessary** but  
dressing? Puke! A little olive oil is fine. White sauces should just  
nderstand why you would add ketchup. Brown sauce? Cretins!  
You can only have one slice. You want ham AND cheese? **Why?**  
**ous portion**. You probably don't want to eat all that. Don't feel  
a night out? But **why** would you do that, it's not a mealtime? No  
s. Chips are mediocre anyway. These are only a 4/10. **Pointless**  
shit. Crisps? As a snack? But **why?** It's not a mealtime. You can  
nd chips? Absolute gash. There's other food out there that's far  
t. It's just bland and greasy. Gross. **Why** would you get anything  
hocywoccydooda. Costa and Starbucks cakes are inferior and  
ot just eat actual chocolate? It's pointless. You're just watering  
they're not on offer. Ice cream? Gross! I just don't get it at all.  
gets everywhere. **Pointless**. Complete waste of money. Straw-  
think? **Unnecessary. Pointless**. They're not on offer. It's all too  
eal butter anyway, it's not spreadable and it's proper fatty. I don't  
wines. I only want to drink Spanish. White wine? **No**, I just don't  
i drink wine in the **bath?** That's just really fucking weird. No one  
ng. It has to have something green with it or it's just **pointless**.  
What is wrong with you? Calm down! **Why** are you so upset? It's  
will that help? **Why** would I not use the kitchen before 8.30am,  
n. It doesn't work like that. **Why** would it? **Why** should you get  
**INCOMFORTABLE**. Well, you were. Really. **Heavy**.



I'm still learning how to be.

I'm learning how to be alive without being consumed by guilt and shame. I'm still learning how to think without his voice. I'm learning how to be seen. How to eat. To sit. To sleep. To rest.

My entire life became a performance; an all consuming Art of survival.

I existed as a mask.

Little else was left.







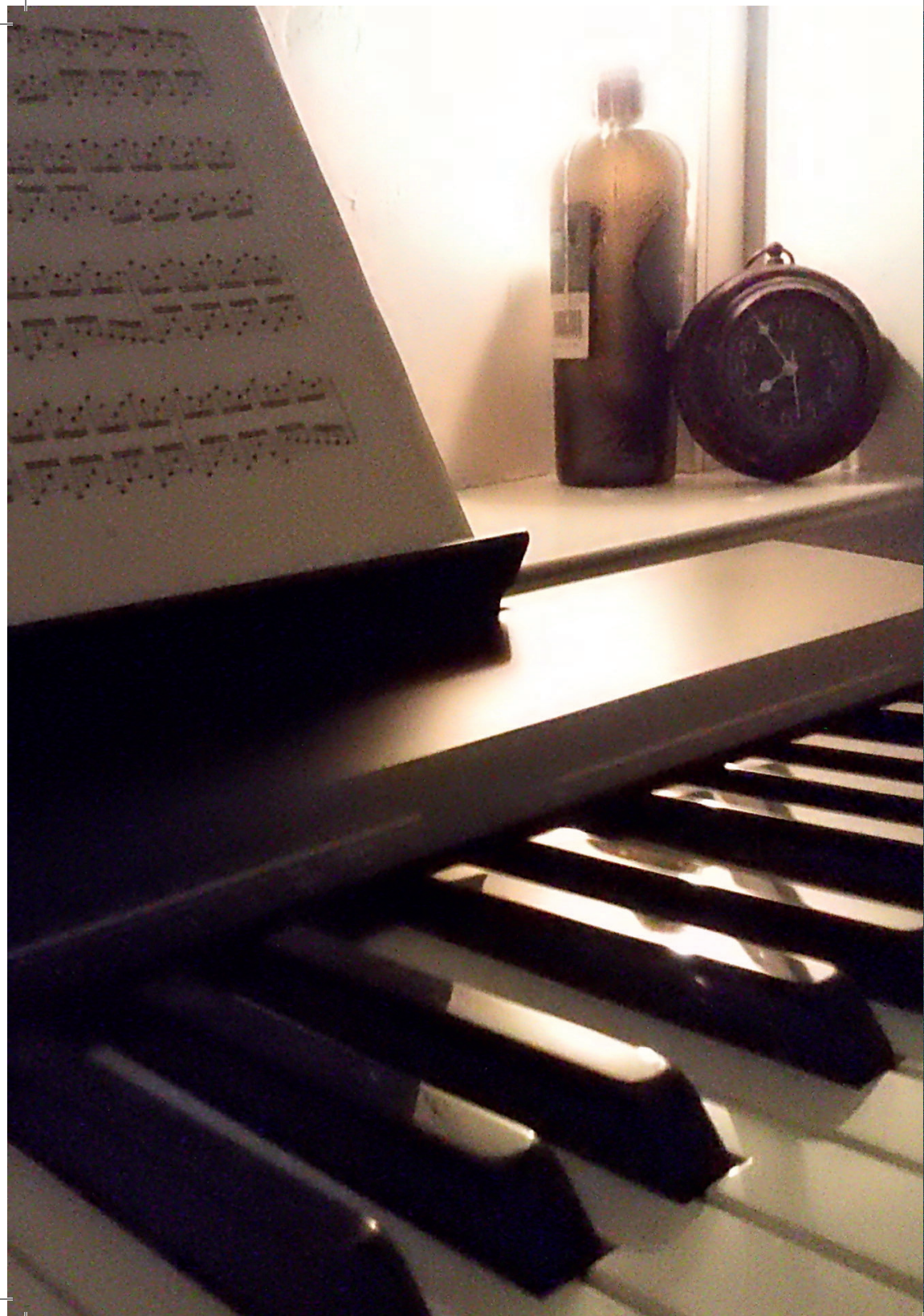














i am the space  
before the hammer  
hits the string  
the moment of release  
of the pedal, sustained  
from beneath the ivory  
my ghost sings











A fragile ego breaks easily







**tuesday**

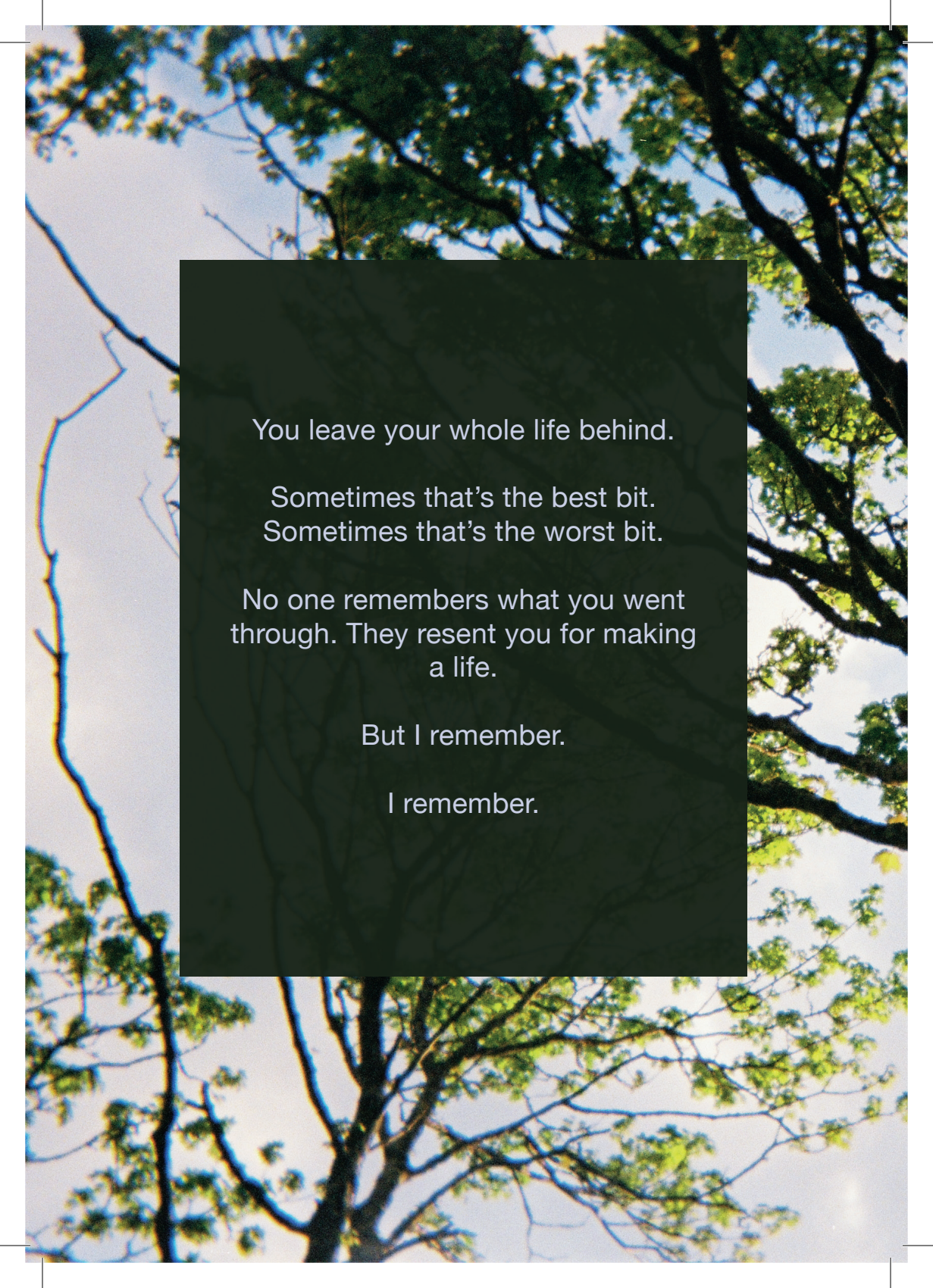
the palette before me erased  
i don't recall the painted sea  
as it softly beckoned me in  
with promises it won't take long  
and offers to swathe my skin  
tempting frail bones  
and dank soul

yes!

a thousand knives







You leave your whole life behind.

Sometimes that's the best bit.  
Sometimes that's the worst bit.

No one remembers what you went  
through. They resent you for making  
a life.

But I remember.

I remember.











## **day five**

soft gown scent of home  
air thickened with earthy rot,  
september breeze shakes  
one-hundred years of gummy gloss.

a hollow brown door  
between every stranger and I,  
only carrion scrutinising  
inches, shadows and folds.

bouquet of dying breath  
steeped in scalding seas,  
goosebumps fire upon yellow skin  
weathered enamel meets bone.

the rat gnawing under my ribs  
drags me from the wasteland,  
and tears fall  
like flaking duck egg blue.















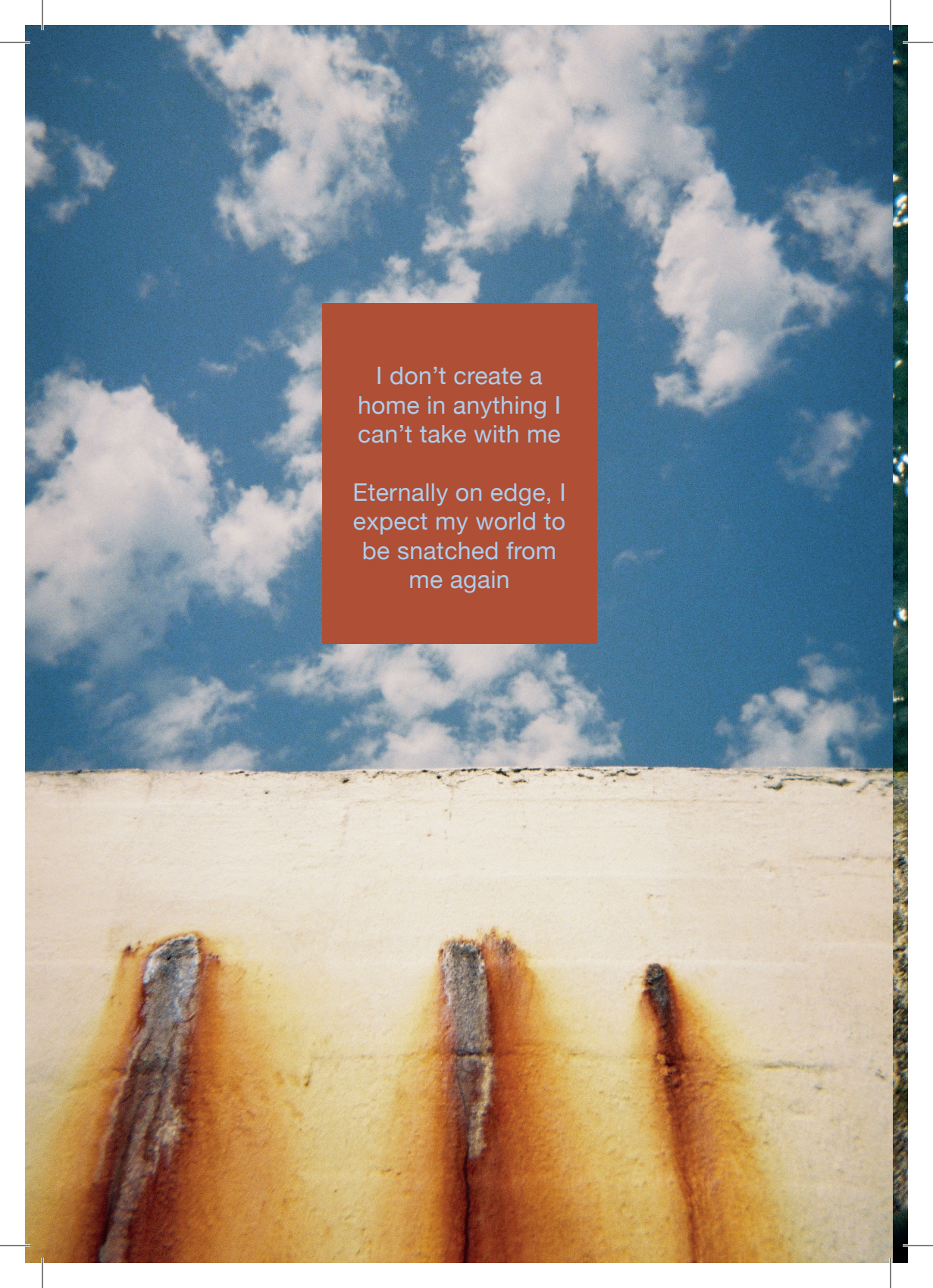
candles, two

one burning with the wax shifting  
to one side, ready to escape over  
the precipice. their neighbour, a  
bunch of white roses once so  
perfect, now browning along the  
edges of their pristine pages

A half read book and a small pair  
of gold hoop earrings lay  
alongside, concealed by the  
darkness

dust is forming in the cracks of  
the worn, unsteady coffee table.  
its surface gives way to tiny  
splinters, hiding with the  
eagerness of  
one thousand paper cuts





I don't create a  
home in anything I  
can't take with me

Eternally on edge, I  
expect my world to  
be snatched from  
me again



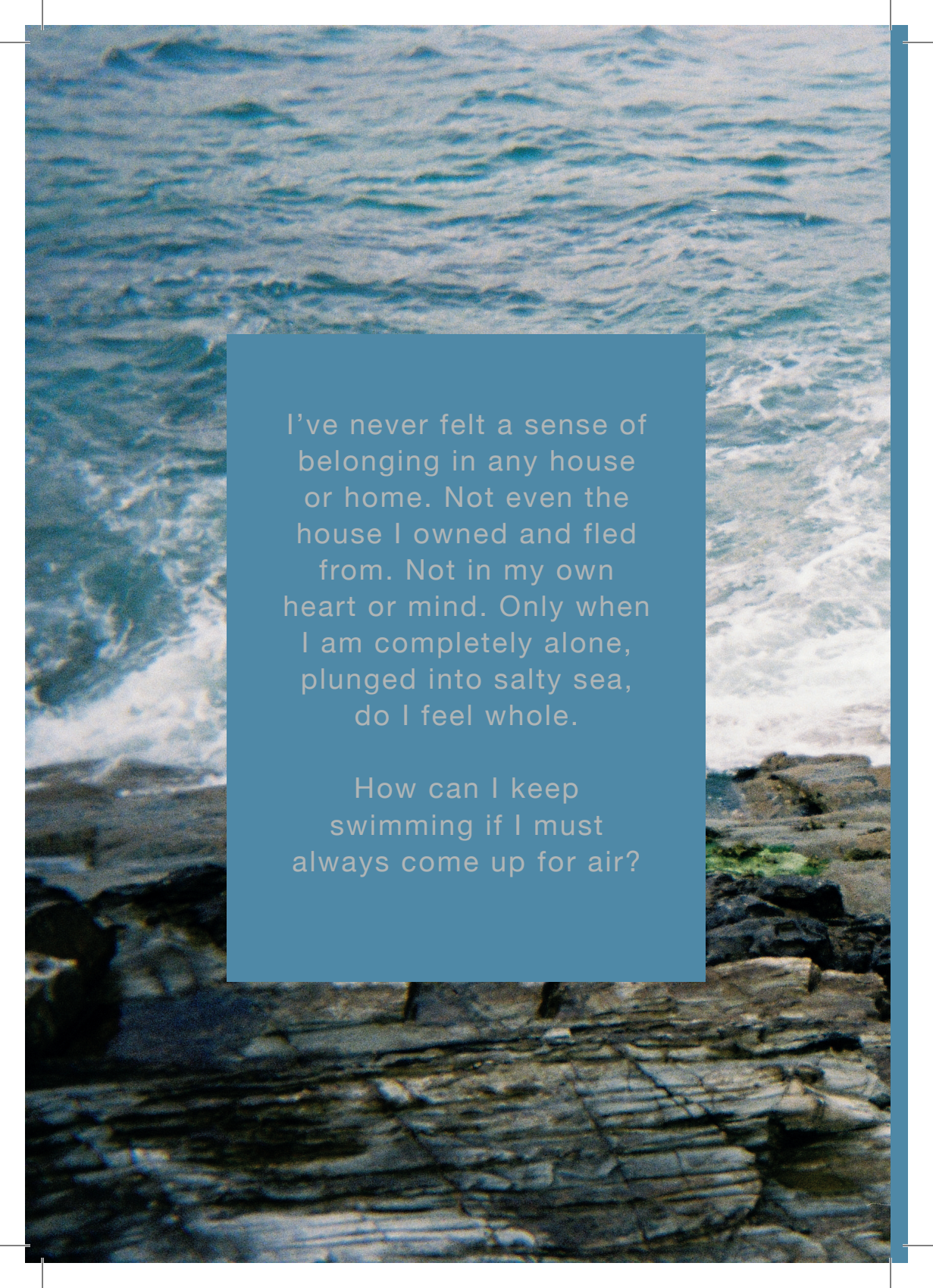


The outside is the only  
semblance of home  
that you have left

A reminder that you  
are a child of the earth  
and sky and sea

You, like nature, are  
inhuman





I've never felt a sense of  
belonging in any house  
or home. Not even the  
house I owned and fled  
from. Not in my own  
heart or mind. Only when  
I am completely alone,  
plunged into salty sea,  
do I feel whole.

How can I keep  
swimming if I must  
always come up for air?

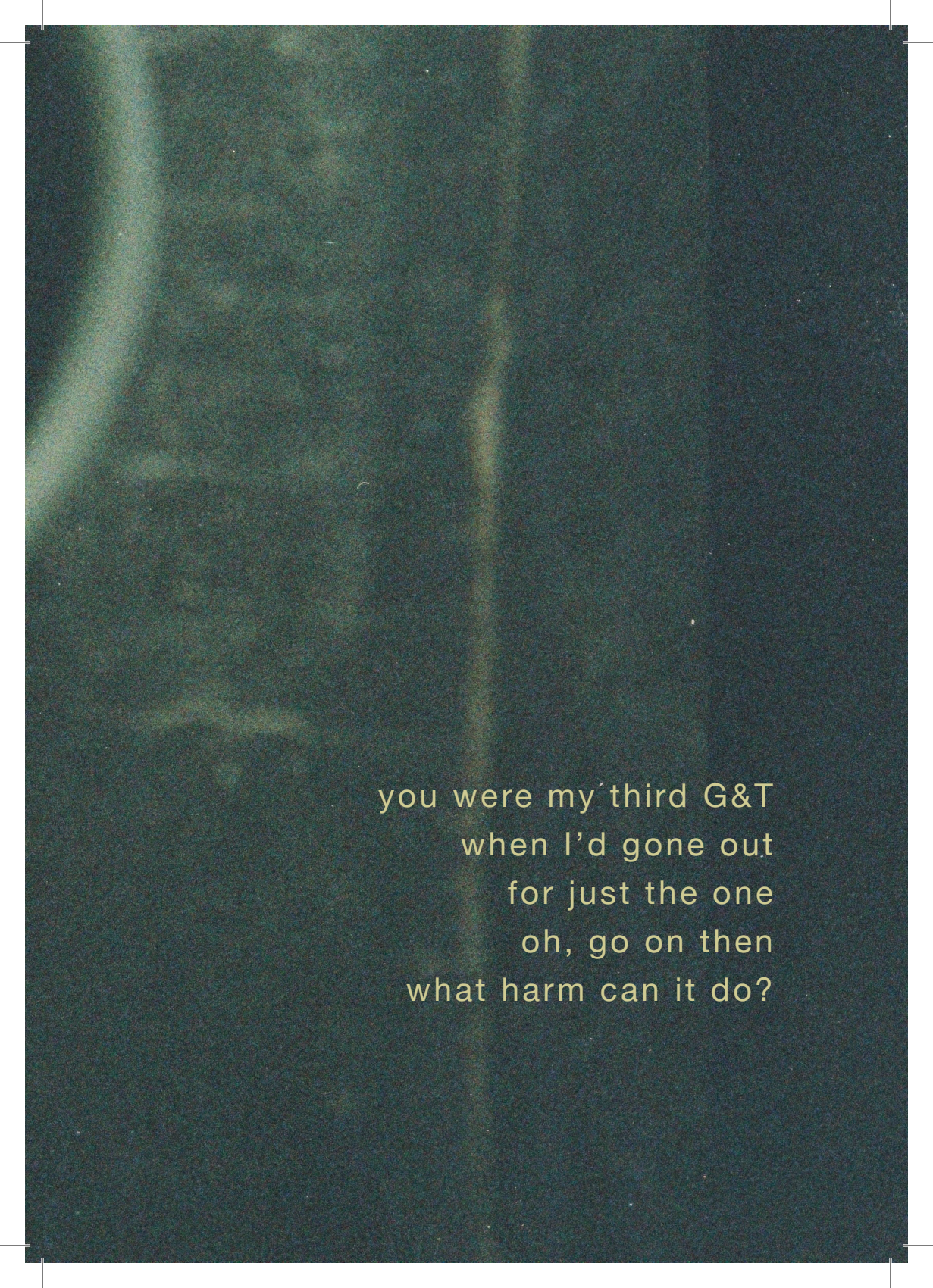












you were my third G&T  
when I'd gone out  
for just the one  
oh, go on then  
what harm can it do?



## **“Why didn’t you just leave?”**

The day I left I was maybe a week from death. Malnourished, and practice-tying nooses, I was not oblivious to the catastrophic hole I had found myself in.

Despite co-owning my house it was never safe, and it was never really home. A once beautiful Edwardian dream that became a life sentence. I knew I had to leave, but I didn’t know why.

Some abuse is insidious. It creeps. It lurks. It caresses your skin while it slices through your heart and mind, one laceration at a time. It convinces and corrals and blames and shames, and it leaves you as a shadow. Empty. Hurting. Angry. A barely walking personification of pain and confusion.

It is all hidden so deeply that you have no way of conceptualising that you are not wrong in every single way:

That to breathe is not a violation;  
To eat is not a transgression;  
To exist is not rebellion.

If you are coerced into a life which makes you the problem, why would you question anything but yourself?