





Safe



...or silenced?

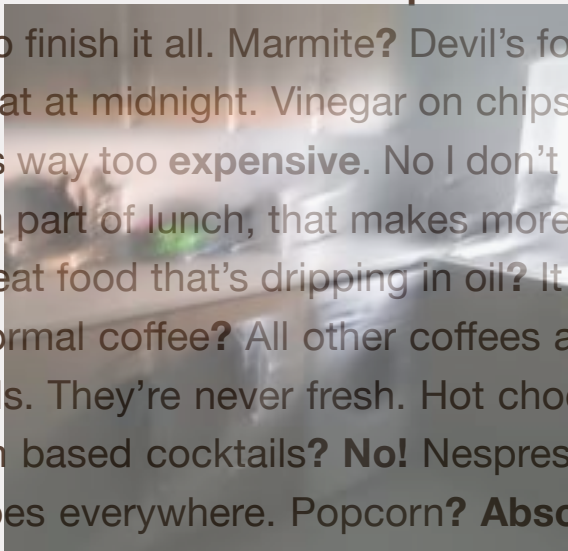
This project has helped me understand the depths at which I hide. I have struggled to visualise anything. My images are carefully considered and curated to show my world, while exposing as little as possible.

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 don't need all that food. You're eating so much. You're still hungry? After all that? One person doesn't need all that food. **No**, I won't order all that, **it's way too much**. People don't normally eat that much. **You eat so fast**. You're slurping your tea. You're making so much noise with your spoon again. That's really funny. What the fuck, no, condiments are **unnecessary** and I **absolutely refuse** to have them in the house. We don't even need to go down that aisle. Mayonnaise is the most revolting devil's food anyone ever created. Salsa is **unnecessary** but acceptable. Sour cream and guacamole, bleurgh, no! Salad dressing? Puke! A little olive oil is fine. White sauces should just be banned. There's no reason for them to exist. I just don't understand why you would add ketchup. Brown sauce? Cretins! Tartare sauce? *Sick noise* Not that ham, **it's too expensive**. You can only have one slice. You want ham AND cheese? **Why?** But I don't like that bread. **It's too expensive**. It's an **enormous portion**. You probably don't want to eat all that. Don't feel like you need to finish it all. Marmite? Devil's food. Chips on a night out? But **why** would you do that, it's not a mealtime? No one needs to eat at midnight. Vinegar on chips? **Why?** Gross. Chips are mediocre anyway. These are only a 4/10. **Pointless** really. Nutella is way too **expensive**. No I don't like the cheap shit. Crisps? As a snack? But **why?** It's not a mealtime. You can have them as a part of lunch, that makes more sense. Fish and chips? Absolute gash. There's other food out there that's far superior. **Why** eat food that's dripping in oil? It has no flavour. It's just bland and greasy. Gross. **Why** would you get anything other than a normal coffee? All other coffees are desserts. Chocywoccydooda. Costa and Starbucks cakes are inferior and full of chemicals. They're never fresh. Hot chocolate? Why not just eat actual chocolate? It's pointless. You're just watering it down. Cream based cocktails? **No!** Nespresso pods? **No**, they're not on offer. Ice cream? Gross! I just don't get it at all. It melts and goes everywhere. Popcorn? **Absolutely not**. It gets everywhere. **Pointless**. Complete waste of money. Strawberries? Blueberries? **No**, berries are extravagant, don't you think? **Unnecessary. Pointless**. They're not on offer. It's all too **expensive**. You put so much butter on your toast. I don't like real butter anyway, it's not spreadable and it's proper fatty. I don't like the taste. We won't get that anymore. I don't like French wines. I only want to drink Spanish. White wine? **No**, I just don't get it at all. Same with sparkling. It's horrible. Why would you drink wine in the **bath?** That's just really fucking weird. No one does that. **You're so strange**. Macaroni cheese? It's so boring. It has to have something green with it or it's just **pointless**. Your hip bones are incredibly attractive. Yes, I ate the honey. What is wrong with you? Calm down! **Why** are you so upset? It's JUST honey? How about you have the kitchen until 8.30am, will that help? **Why** would I not use the kitchen before 8.30am, that's entirely unrealistic? You don't get priority on the kitchen. It doesn't work like that. **Why** would it? **Why** should you get priority? You're so **selfish**. Your recovery is making ME SO **UNCOMFORTABLE**. 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.

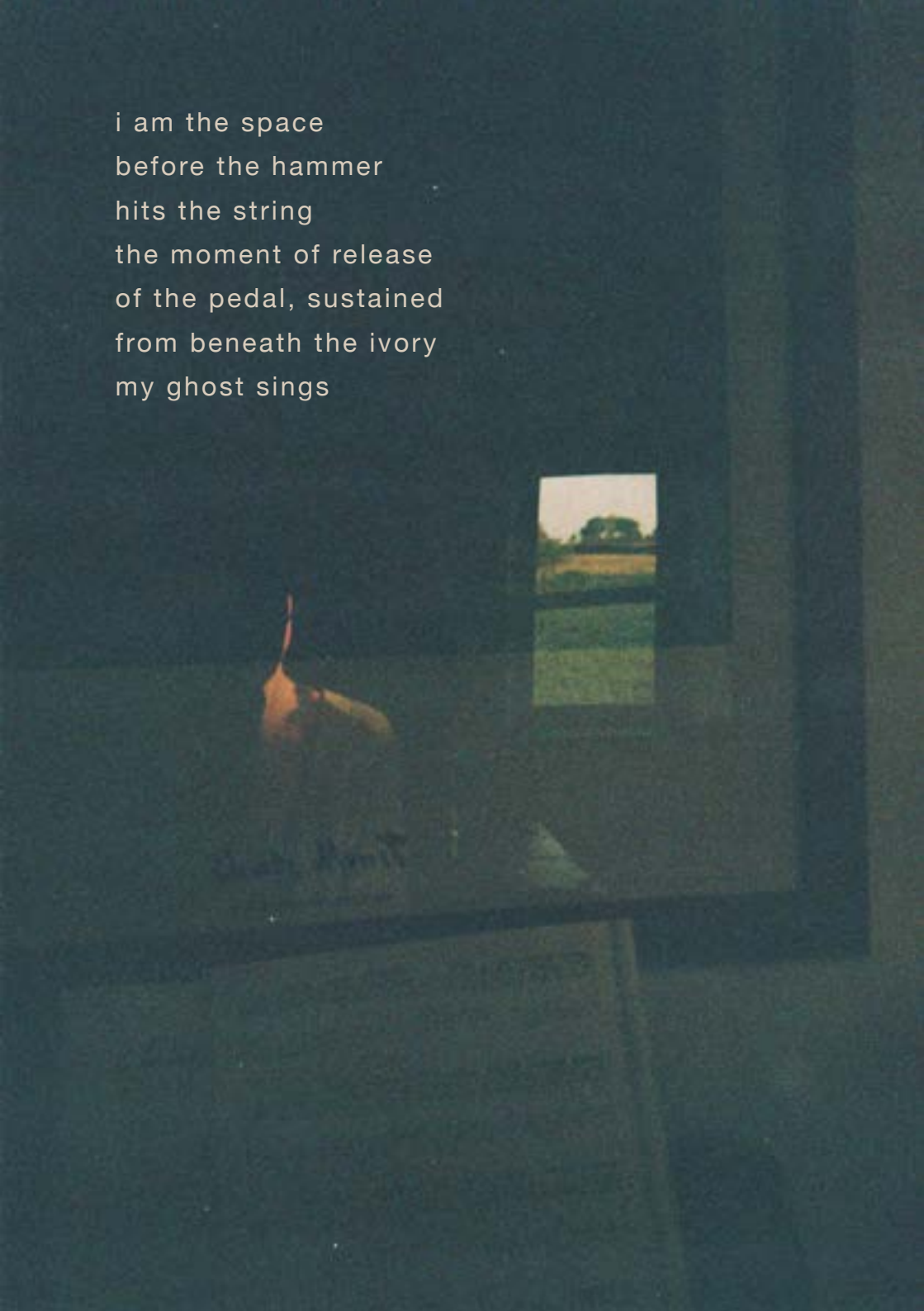
Little else was left.







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



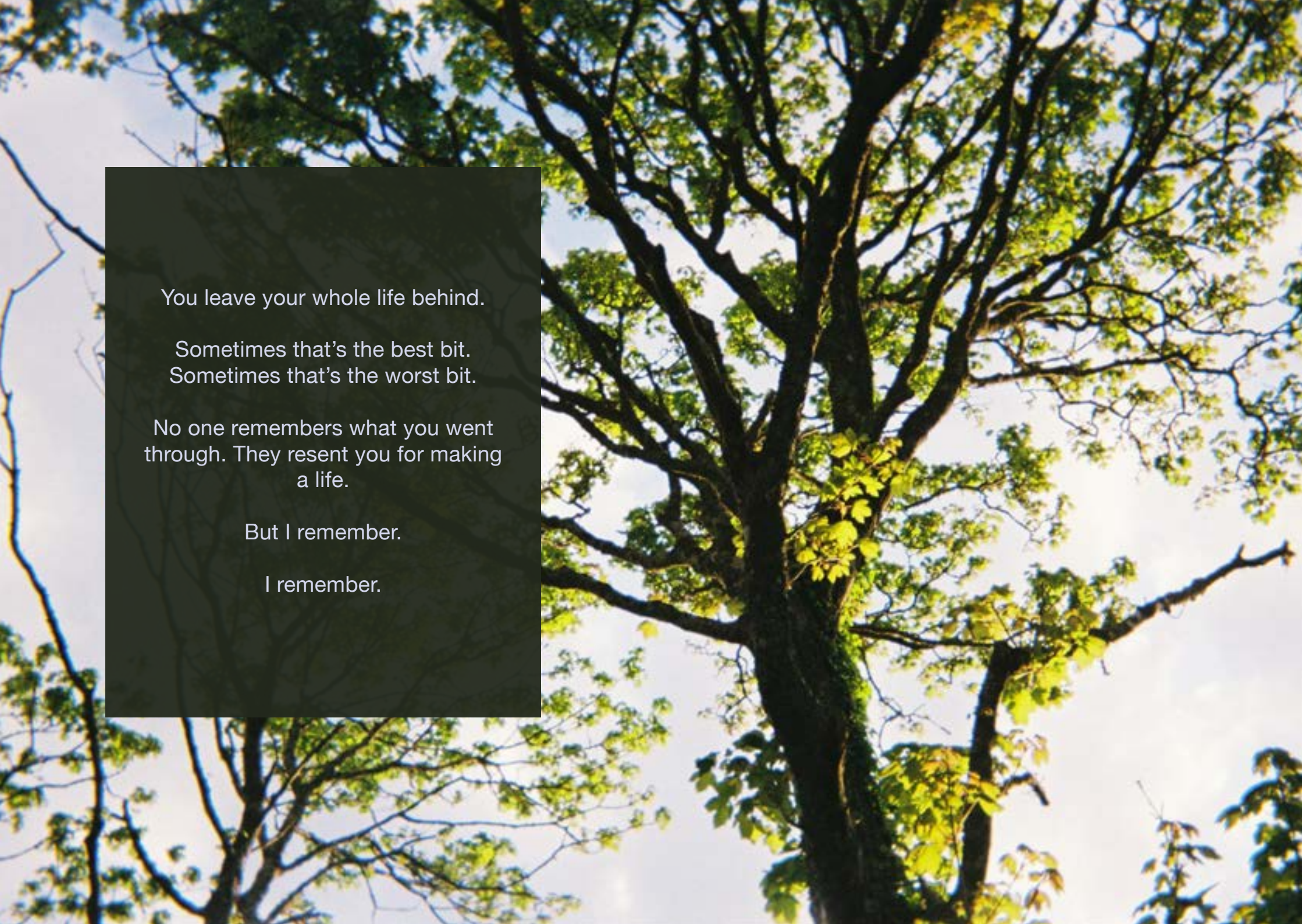
A photograph of a wooden bench on a grassy hill overlooking a body of water under a cloudy sky. The bench is in the lower left foreground, facing right. The hill is covered in green and yellow grass. In the background, there is a body of water and a distant shoreline. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

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.



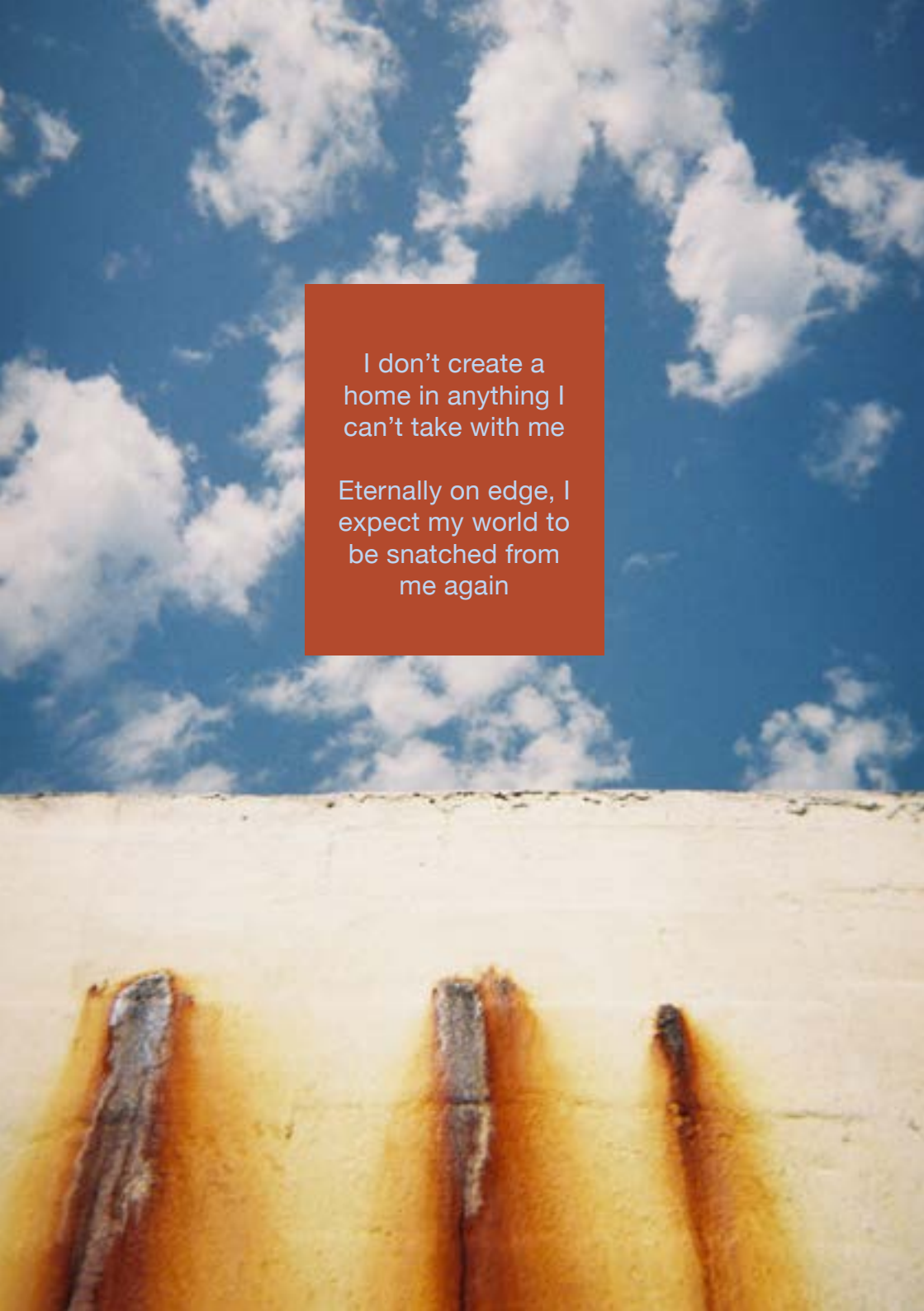


candles, two

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

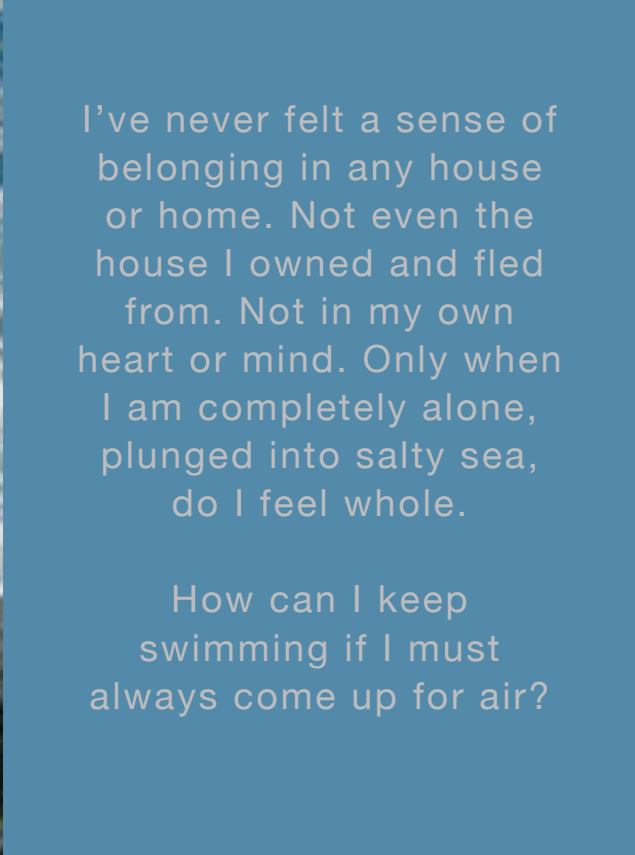
Eternally on edge, I
expect my world to
be snatched from
me again



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

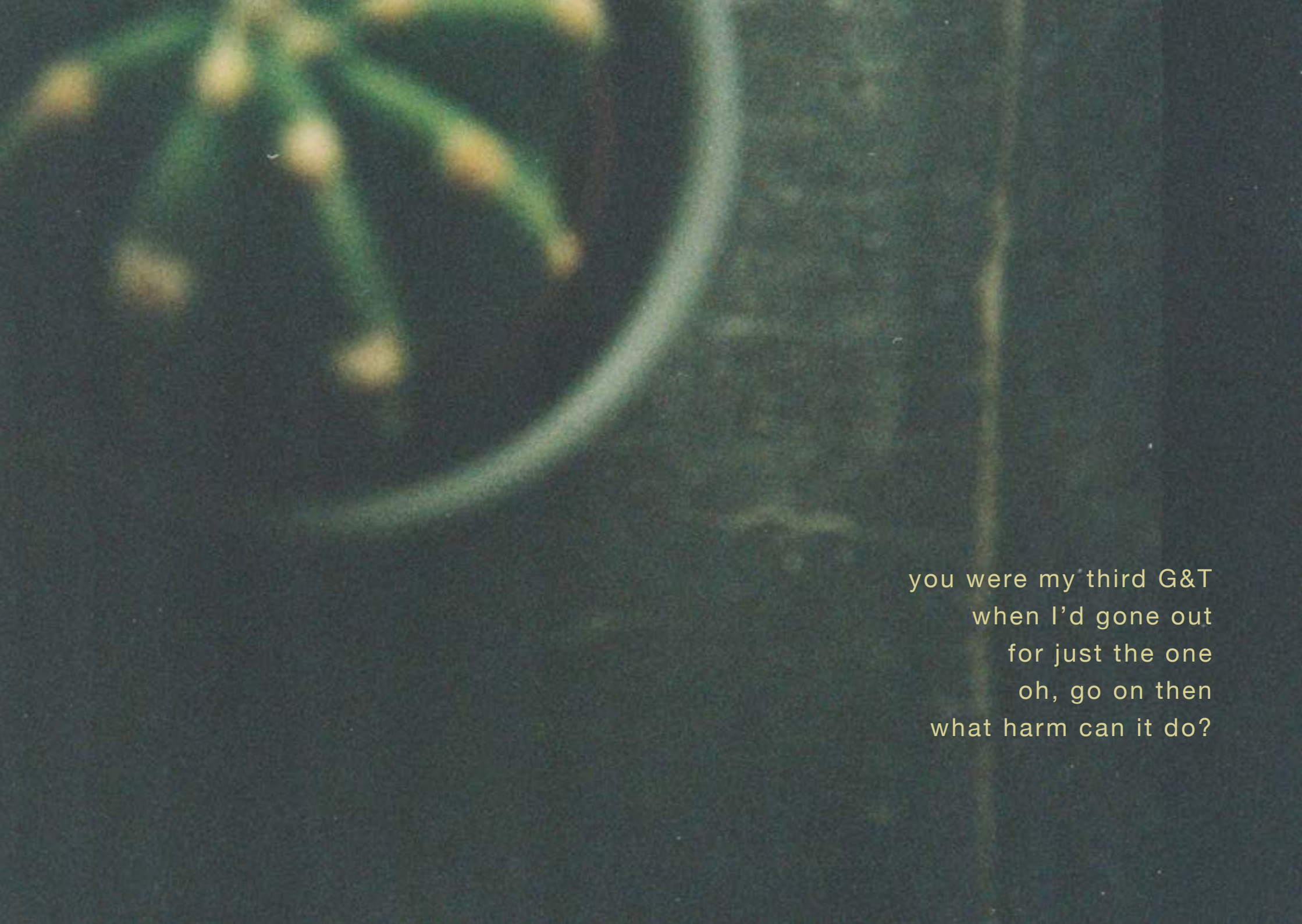
You, like nature, are
inhuman



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?