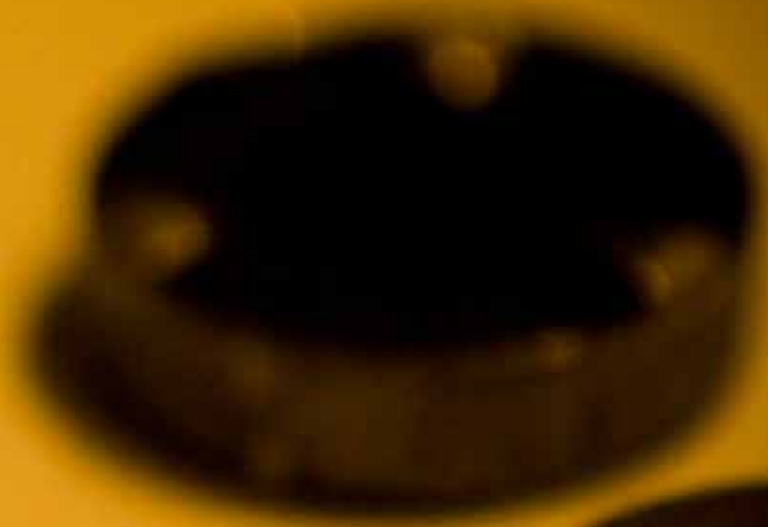




**RUST and MOTH**  
**WINTER 2008**







**Juxtaposition**  
**Sergio Ortiz**

The owls bled three cream  
tears, a cry, and twice a name;  
Jorge, on my lips.

**Postcard To Willie Perdomo: November 29, 2008**  
**Sergio Ortiz**

Willie, baby, when Eloy showed  
me the wedding rings I broke out in tears.  
He had to get a doctor to calm me down.  
I was so innocent, didn't even know why  
I followed him to Bolivia.

"Yo fui la más callada  
de todas las que hicieron el viaje hasta tu Puerto."  
The sky fell. Willie, write me a poem that'll bring  
me back to life, papi. Be my distraction or I am going  
to have to find a tall blue eyed angel  
with baker hands, and lips like Jimmy Dean.

"¡A dormir se van ahora mis lágrimas  
por donde tú cruzaste mi verso!"  
Negro, I've murdered myself so many times the effort  
is starting to hurt. Someone stole my poetry, they wanted  
to teach me to write on paper. Ha, as if everything I do  
isn't written in blood on paper.

I begged mama to help me die  
but she refused, had to slash my own wrist.

"Todos los ojos del viento  
ya me lloraron por muerta."

Do you think ghosts can ask for asylum in Cuba?  
Willie, take my clothes off, look at my scars  
without crying, and tell me I'm beautiful. Don't lie.

wanting to drink a cup of coffee with you  
reading me Ginsberg, Cimic, and Julia  
tuyo para siempre my rey  
Sergio



**The Meaning of Friendship**  
**Sergio Ortiz**

A junky wrapped his arms around me.  
That wasn't strange, he is a friend  
and I asked him for a hug.  
But then he said in an honest  
voice: Don't worry, everything  
will be alright.

I've called you at least ten times.  
Not once have you returned my calls.  
Stunning, this river of friendship.

I woke up in the middle of a dream  
where I was baking a bluebird pie just for you.  
When it was done I cut it open; ten bluebirds  
flew out. You're not good enough for me.

Platonic is for the birds.  
Today my flesh wants to crawl  
all over, dance on your skin,  
fuck until we are wasted.



**Another Postcard to Willie Perdomo: November 14, 2008**  
**Sergio Ortiz**

Willie, hermano, today the sky in Hato Rey  
is too blue to make sense, though the butterflies  
and the hunger try to cohabitate. It ain't working out.  
If you don't send me your number soon, I'll have to go back  
home and play by myself.

wanting to see you nude on the sofa,  
para siempre  
Sergio



**Open Door**  
**Sergio Ortiz**

She came out of church dressed  
like her other life, purple ready  
for the party and las palizas,  
carrying the eighty extra pounds  
of luggage she pawned the day before.

“Funny how a lonely day  
can make a person say,  
what good is life.”

The first time I felt  
mutual kisses, whispers  
nibbling one an ear,  
invitations under the cover  
penetrating like a dove  
wanting to take flight,  
I went along with the salutation.

“Funny how I often seem  
To pick and find another dream...”  
the boxer, the man I bumped  
into on the corner,  
Sylvia Rexach and her guitar  
taking it to a higher humidity.

At once, we were one  
“This is me, this is me...”  
and the beat never stopped.  
His hand on my back  
crossed me to the other side  
of the street, took me  
to the movies, gave  
me his lucky charm  
on a date I do not remember,

“This is my life  
and I don’t give a damn  
for lost emotion... .”  
perhaps, on a day the Jewish boy picked  
me from a gutter, sat me  
on his bike  
and took me home.  
It was Sunday a.m.  
and I held him as tight as I could.



**Private First Class, Jack Shephard**  
**Vanessa Bissereth**

I saw my father in a dream late one night; his mouth set smiling, took by peace and inside it burned my heart. His fingertips strummed the thin strings of his old guitar as his throat sang a slow soundtrack just for me. Death, mercy, love and desire, confession quietly sung in his strongest voice. He was a struggling musician, a troubled kid... who was gay but fought to be straight and won his battle somewhere inside my mother. An alcoholic reciting psalms to himself, righting the wrongs that his father before him made, promising he would never learn the directions to his route, but as the drinks routinely dripped in, he drowned in them. Every midnight like clockwork, he would stumble in half past drunk, blindfolded to hide his blood-shot eyes, his lips whistling a beautiful tune, a smile resting lazily over his face. “Sing...sing... the world to my feet...redeem...this empty life...” he hummed with his lips curved upright. Under the dull gray moon, he would sink into his mattress and detox in his sleep. He had a monster he kept hidden under his bed that fed on whiskey and rum. This demon would wake at the uncertain hours of dawn as the world spun on, to eat at his heart, that fell someplace between his cracks, somewhere he couldn't remember, buried deep underneath his fractured folds, flesh, and bones. His low whiskey filled cries for salvation dropped like blessings in the monsters open ears, touched like soft embraces on its toughened skin and laughing it savagely tore away at him. Life is nothing like a song.





**Untitled**  
**Dane Langsjoen**

her sons carried her over the mountain while she blew what secrets she had to the moons.  
they are so heavy, after all.  
so she sent them away hoping to avoid the judgment that belonged to her,  
that the peaks would deliver her,  
that she might disguise herself behind a plague of smoldering deeds,  
that her desperation might treat with the stones.  
her sons tore their backs and painted the rocks red,  
but she did her part she said.  
they are so heavy, after all.





**Seagull Stare**  
**Jeff Smajstrla**



**Gull Chaos**  
**Jeff Smajstrla**



**Layers**  
**Jeff Smajstrla**



**Untitled #1**  
**Mike Rodriguez**

Deep under water  
and suffocating.  
Would you still struggle  
if you did not really believe  
that there is air  
waiting somewhere above you?  
And what if there is not?

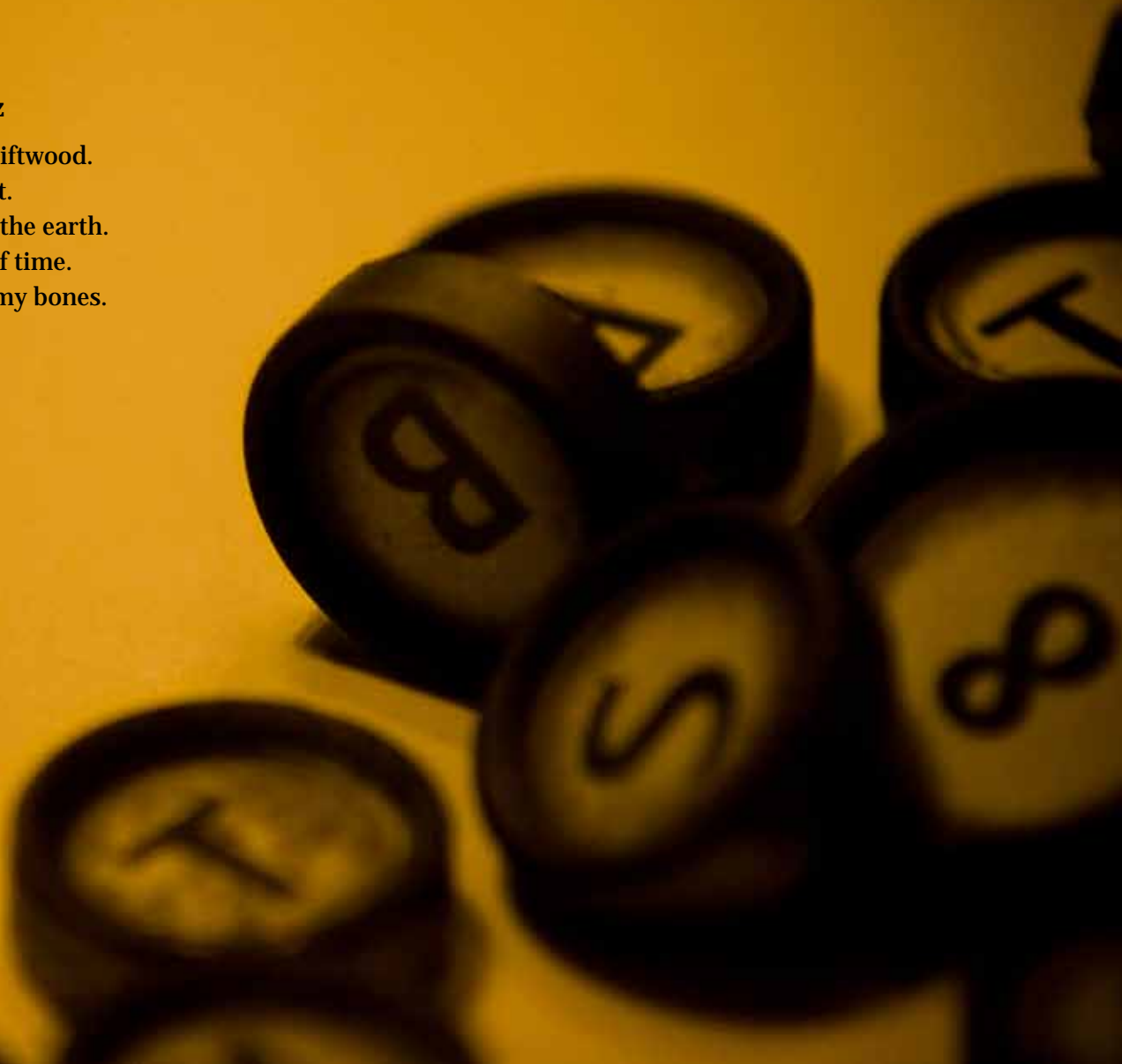


**Untitled #2**  
**Mike Rodriguez**

The solitude of the Sun.  
Surrounded by planets,  
yet dreaming of other stars.

**Untitled #3**  
**Mike Rodriguez**

Twisted hands of driftwood.  
Gnarled and ancient.  
Reaching deep into the earth.  
The stark grimace of time.  
Here might I leave my bones.



**Untitled #4**  
**Mike Rodriguez**

It died.  
And I took its skin  
and its bone  
and carried them to my home.

I remembered it.  
That it had eyes  
terrified.  
Eyes like mine.

I dried the skin  
and stripped the bone.  
I bleached them in the sun.

I saw the final breath leave it  
as it died.  
And I breathed in.

From the skin  
I made clothes.  
From the bone  
I made tools.

I carried it with me.



**Untitled #1**  
**Jack Kincaid**

Darkness closed above us like an enormous eyelid. And it was winter. And we slept and were alone. And I know that I dreamt.  
Painful Dreams.

But the dawn broke. (Funny that we should call it “breaking”.) And I was wakened by the light and warmth. And I smiled then.  
At the memory of my dreams.

But you did not open your eyes then. SLEEPING BEAUTY. You hid yourself away and dreamt what dreams you dream. Eyelids and  
blankets holding the sun at bay.

And I (fool that I am) thought that I might wake you. Whispered the springtime in your ear. And sang to you the sun, as best  
I know how.

I said, “You are not alone.”

I think that you probably heard me. But you thought that I was another dream, and were afraid. And you would not wake.  
It was truth I spoke to you. You are not alone. We are parted by your eyelids only.





**Untitled #2**  
**Jack Kincaid**

I but few should know me cast  
about in this small realm of my knowledge looking  
wanting to believe though belief can not console.  
For light a metaphor for a symbol is but  
a break in the darkness the stars are many but the space is more.  
The light must as no light can forever sustain itself, but  
the darkness goes what ending can I believe of it on  
and does consciousness believes that it exists without memory not remember  
its when we were young lapsing.

**Untitled #3**  
**Jack Kincaid**

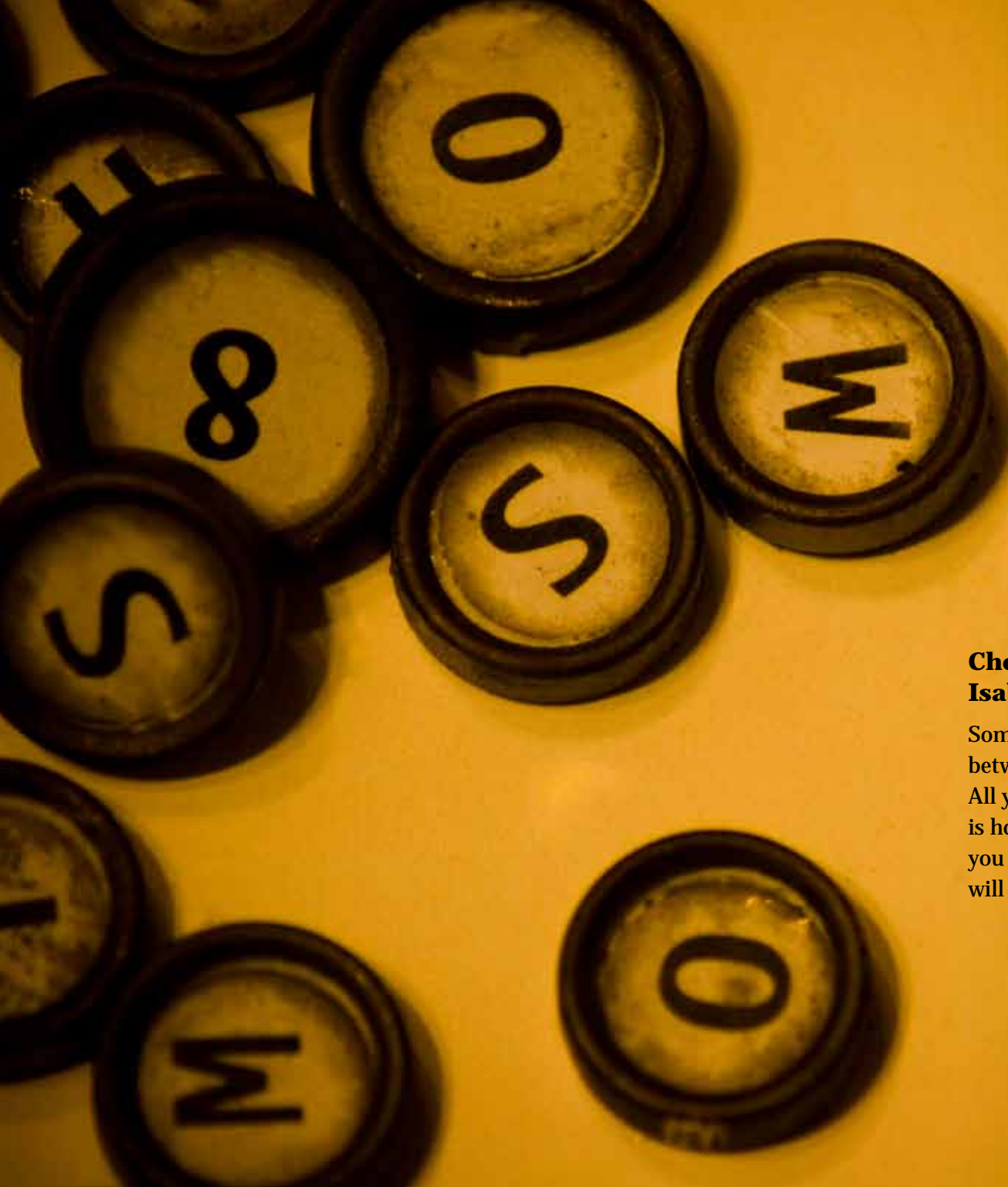
I wondered broken for a while,  
meaning to find lost meaning.  
I thought there struggling might be  
reason  
and adrift in the tempest perhaps hope.  
This without order madness,  
this without the strength it takes madness might  
not be unendurable.





**Untitled #4**  
**Jack Kincaid**

This drifting constant companion wind the pure and steady tone of a bell is not enough to move vast in its emptiness me but I feel singing peace and silence it all the time against gentle surrender to a lover my skin against memory before birth my lips it is in everywhere before and after my ears a unknown but certain whispered scream I do not listen let it take me but it is there erosion release the fist that holds takes millions of years but it can move mountains it can move mountains.



**Choose Me**  
**Isabella Black**

Sometimes life makes you choose  
between two things you love.

All you can do  
is hope the one  
you don't choose  
will forgive you.

**Once Forgotten**  
**Isabella Black**

I apologize for my awkwardness  
toward your suffering.  
It's just that your misery  
brings back memories  
that I buried so deep  
so long ago.





**Space Grows Too**  
**Isabella Black**

As I grow old  
the universe seems to grow too,  
in such a way that,  
even though  
I never really believed  
that “no man is an island”...  
I am starting to  
feel  
the  
space  
between what I call you  
and what I call me.



**Visions of a Destroyed Island #1**  
**Shane Greb**



**Visions of a Destroyed Island #2**  
**Shane Greb**



**Visions of a Destroyed Island #3**  
**Shane Greb**



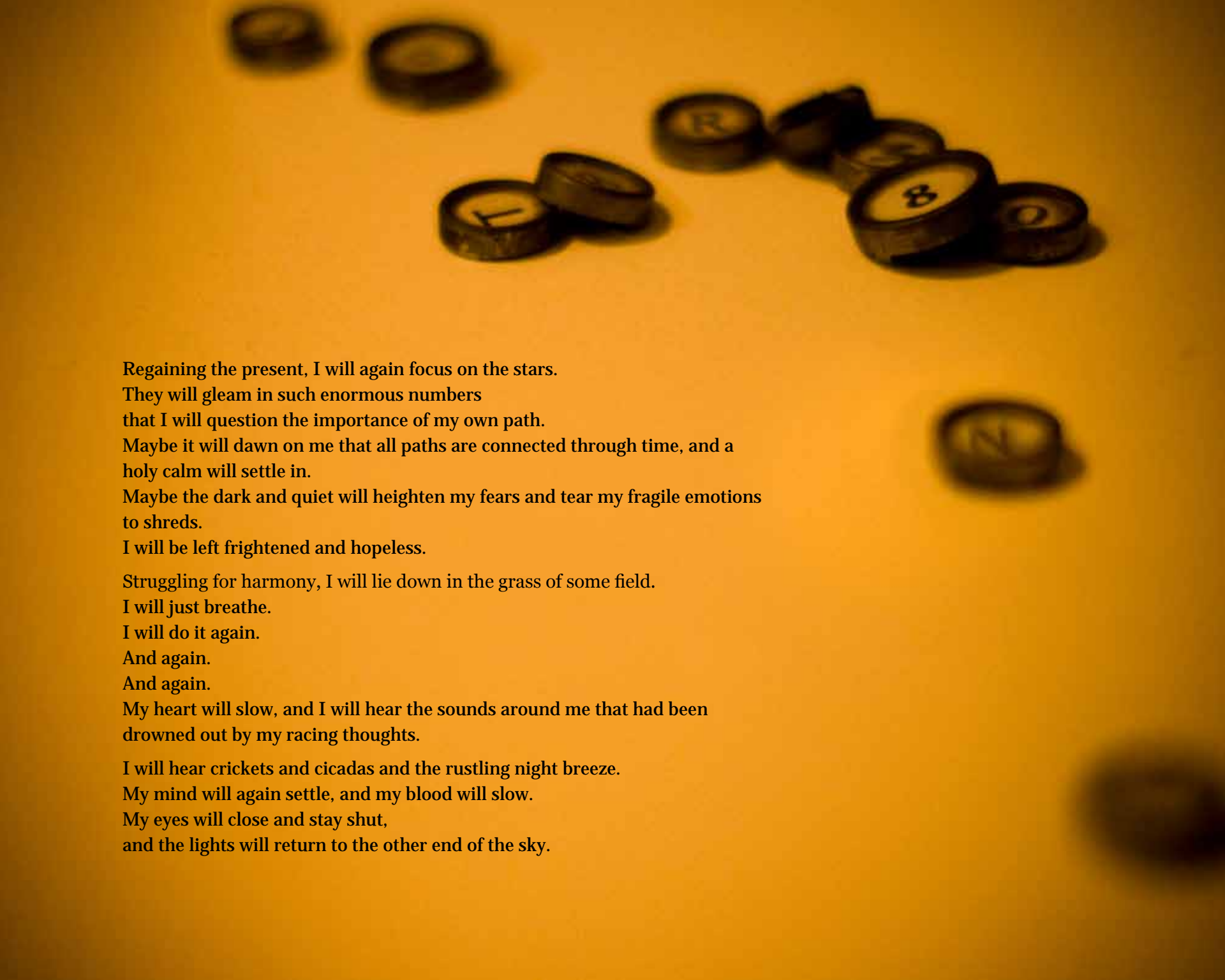
**Nighttime Thoughts**  
**Andrew Davidson**

I feel it all around me,  
Calling me to just tear off running,  
Maybe through this field,  
Maybe through the one that I ran as a child,  
Maybe through the spot in my memory where time has left only the calm and happy.

I'll get in this truck and drive straight,  
Without a destination, but with an instinctual purpose,  
My favorite CD serving as my soundtrack.  
I'll drive into the bright pastels of sunset.  
The colors will blaze into my eyes and sight and song will merge in my mind.

When the car stops,  
I will get out, sit, and watch the blacking of the sky.  
New lights, softer and more melancholy, will shimmer down upon me.  
I will walk underneath these lights, looking upward and into all time.  
The light will hit my eye and reflect this eternity.

My mind will begin to wander down the trails of my own existence.  
It will stop and sit on familiar logs,  
swimming in Davy's creek or lying on the sofa in Dot's living room.  
She is still there humming through her teeth, her wizened features focused intently  
on the crochet needles.  
She will see me and smile, knowing that I am part of her eternity.  
I will smile back, knowing that she loves me.



Regaining the present, I will again focus on the stars.  
They will gleam in such enormous numbers  
that I will question the importance of my own path.  
Maybe it will dawn on me that all paths are connected through time, and a  
holy calm will settle in.  
Maybe the dark and quiet will heighten my fears and tear my fragile emotions  
to shreds.  
I will be left frightened and hopeless.  
Struggling for harmony, I will lie down in the grass of some field.  
I will just breathe.  
I will do it again.  
And again.  
And again.  
My heart will slow, and I will hear the sounds around me that had been  
drowned out by my racing thoughts.  
I will hear crickets and cicadas and the rustling night breeze.  
My mind will again settle, and my blood will slow.  
My eyes will close and stay shut,  
and the lights will return to the other end of the sky.

## **Origins**

### **Luke Burns**

Steel drums beat symbiotic rhythms in the night,  
crashing together metal and flesh with each organic auditory announcement.  
Tribal percussion rings out fast and free  
signifying the footsteps of dance,  
spoken with toes and heels,  
arms waved high to spin hurricanes;  
here comes the story of the whistling gale.  
Bodies bend to sound, ears tuned to the stars,  
every breath becomes soul, every soul becomes ours.  
Muscles heave limbs to the wind, like sails to catch notes,  
like nets to reel in the utterance of throats,  
fingers trace the form of every sound as it slips  
from ancient scriptures and lips,  
to taste the songs that birthed the world through fertile hips.  
The infancy of fluidity recalled in the curving, coiling viridian vines of our DNA,  
deoxyribonucleic acid tabs to illuminate the darkness between each  
rhythmic pounding of our hearts,  
as we keep natural time  
to unnatural beats:  
mechanical, synthesized rock breaking rock to peel away thunder and rain.  
Raindrops are the protodrumsticks, hammering itinerant beats upon animal skin,  
the membrane we still dwell within,  
each tumultuous torrent of water splashing life to life in the rock pools of our ocean.  
This rolling tide provides the melody,  
springing voices effervescently,  
out of silver-blue waves to chase each empty cave along the coastline of our psyche,  
to wash away silence and replace it with reverberating resonance,  
calculating the reverence of prayer out loud.  
Vocal cords cut loose to speak gibberish in praise of the divinity of understanding,  
hands link arms like daisy chains

and each person becomes a being of the sun,  
full of light and sound,  
blazing bright music to wash purple scented leaves into trees  
that we may write our lyrics upon.  
Fusion of genres is the path to us,  
singing wildly with our feet we tap-dance our messages in Morse-code to the soil,  
and the world rumbles back that we are welcome.  
We all waltz around and around,  
just as day follows night so step follows step,  
and we orbit the jukebox of eternal jazz,  
blues,  
rock,  
gospel,  
and soul,  
listening for metal,  
punk,  
hip hop,  
and violins out of control.  
We are every hollow drum compelling air to vibrate,  
and spirit to vacate  
the receptors of reverb crossing paths with celestial fates.  
Strings plucked by Greek hands jerk marionettes into  
Broadway roulettes as green-fingered executives  
lay waste to the crescent of emergence.  
We sang our harmony above black seas,  
arid sands and olive trees.  
Drunk on euphoric Euphrates  
we danced,  
before towers and avarice,  
before languages broke us.  
Prismatic pyramids present the perfect approach to attain the sky,  
reaching high to slide our fingers tenderly around the sun.

Ra sings sweet,  
and Horus, anagram of hours, homonym of ours,  
the son shared by Isis, giver of gifts and eternal mother,  
grants us open eyes to drink in the music of light  
that drips, cascading down from above,  
painting murals on the canvas of the night.  
We sing to the tune of these beads of sunlight,  
bodies of starlight  
condensed into one.

The scorching heat burns our skin with fragrant ashes of hydrogen.  
As each illuminated note casts triangular shadows against the desert,  
we skip back to the plains and lakes that birthed us.  
Each voice touching the air like an elegant opus,  
trading lyrics and words for mantras of birds  
in flight.

But we are no longer here, and this is no longer us,  
and having deciphered the hieroglyphs of the stars,  
we believe we understand the language of the universe.  
So we throw out old records, play our reason and logic on infinite repeat,  
presenting our manipulated choreography to a manipulated beat.





**After Death**  
**Sarah Hruby**

I have drawn desperate distinctions  
between worlds which ought to be apart-  
apart as this world and the worlds beyond death.

but when one soul lit so gently within me  
and death came for him, it claimed us.  
those things that were meant to be separate,  
are separate no longer.

now, lovers are acquaintance; sex, a firm hand-  
shake,  
and you, friend, touch me more deeply  
than my most intimate lover.

every distraction is obsolete,  
every distinction has unraveled,  
I can only look to you.





**Probably**  
**Tiana Harrington**

He probably could've loved me inside out.  
He could've touched my inner beauty with his eyes closed.  
His glasses kept my reflection  
So vibrant in his presence  
And when his eyes met mine,  
We made music.  
I saw myself in him.  
I probably could've loved him.  
I probably did.



**Strand Cycle One #1**  
**Bobby Van Zandt**



**Strand Cycle One #2**  
**Bobby Van Zandt**



**Strand Cycle One #3**  
**Bobby Van Zandt**

**i used to have this dark blue chair**  
**Estlin Thomas**

i used to have this dark blue chair  
that i would sit in every evening.  
i kept it under a large oak tree  
in the front lawn.

i use to love watching  
the light from the streetlight  
hit the leaves as the wind moved them,  
and i'd listen to the cars passing  
on the interstate two blocks away.

sometimes i'd fall asleep out there,  
and wake to the sound  
of the sky turning.  
and sometimes i would just  
think about everything  
that i had been through in my life,  
and remember faces.

it was there, sitting  
in that dark blue chair one evening,  
where i got the idea  
that i would love you forever.

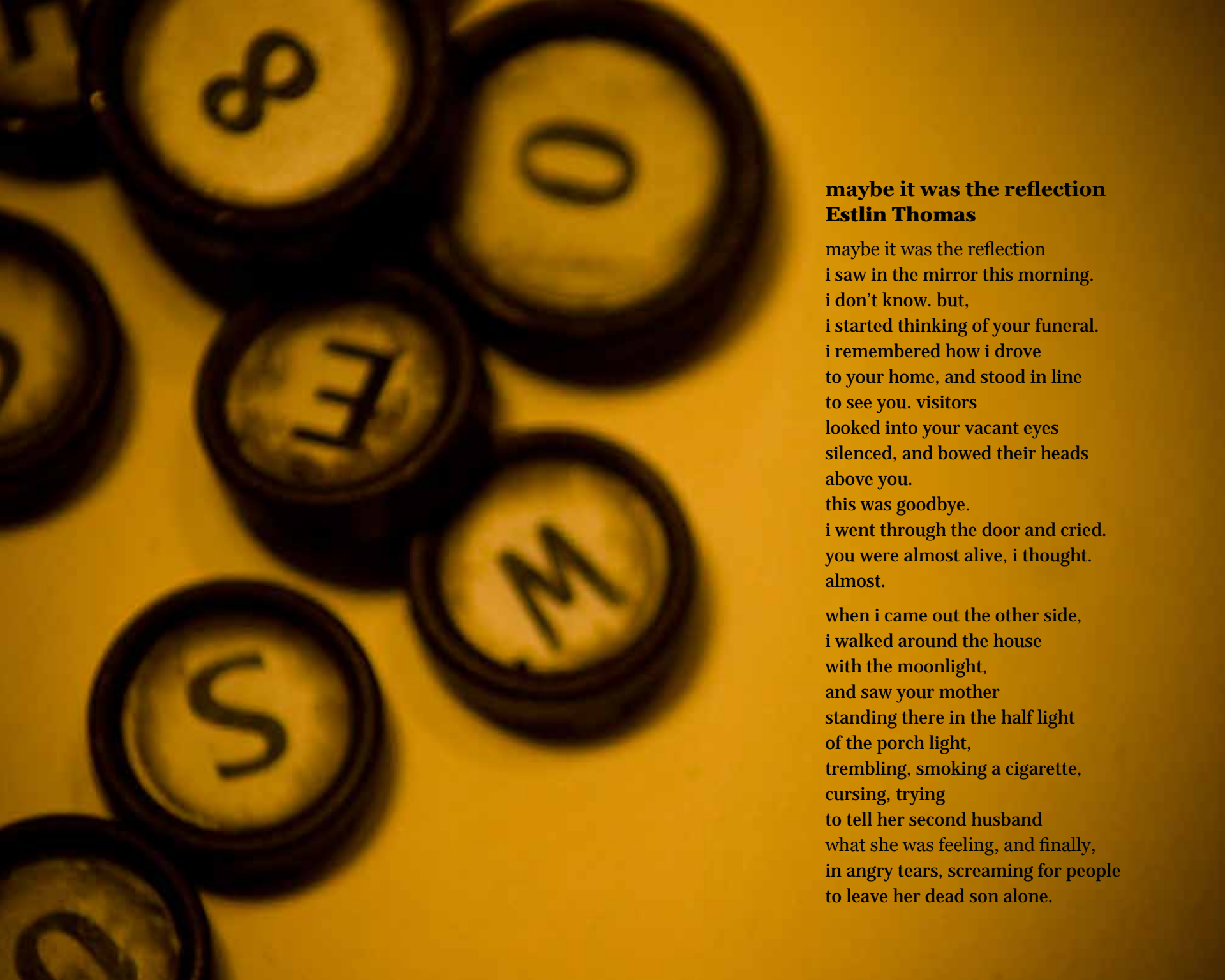
and it was there, years later,  
where i knew that  
that was more than i could do.



**for so long i've waited**  
**Estlin Thomas**

for so long i've waited  
for my life to be filled  
by something  
(something more than me).  
something else.  
some song (some one).  
some voice. waiting...  
and i never rose to walk.  
  
i've wanted to though.  
i've wanted...  
instead, i just waited.  
(waited for...)  
and the rain just fell  
(fell for...)  
against my window  
(on my rooftop).  
and i only half listened  
as the hours moved  
over me.

it wasn't suppose to  
be like this (empty).  
i was suppose to create.  
to come to know. to believe.  
to walk in the rain  
(to lift my cup in it).  
and to drink what  
i gathered from the sky.  
i was suppose to touch  
things unseen  
(to trace their voices  
for others to see).  
to live in greatness.  
to live with greatness.  
  
but i am far from this.  
i am far...(too far).  
how? why?  
help...



**maybe it was the reflection**  
**Estlin Thomas**

maybe it was the reflection  
i saw in the mirror this morning.  
i don't know. but,  
i started thinking of your funeral.  
i remembered how i drove  
to your home, and stood in line  
to see you. visitors  
looked into your vacant eyes  
silenced, and bowed their heads  
above you.  
this was goodbye.  
i went through the door and cried.  
you were almost alive, i thought.  
almost.

when i came out the other side,  
i walked around the house  
with the moonlight,  
and saw your mother  
standing there in the half light  
of the porch light,  
trembling, smoking a cigarette,  
cursing, trying  
to tell her second husband  
what she was feeling, and finally,  
in angry tears, screaming for people  
to leave her dead son alone.

**Untitled**  
**Lauren Langsjoen**

Hold on...just  
hang there.  
Tightly loose.  
We all love to  
be in control  
of out.





**Untitled #1**  
**Jeremy Hollinger**

into this world i tumbled,  
vain from my mothers hollow,  
with blood and a voice made known  
screaming about who i am to grow dim,

?

me, a comet flaring on into a space who forever swallows shut  
me, a temporary broker for the moment's in-between  
me, a thing that ponders its own significance quiet erosion  
me, the ticket taking subway socialist  
me, the opposable thumb man with hands  
me, to be continued...

...amidst emptiness and stars.

**Untitled #2**  
**Jeremy Hollinger**

Presenting Clock eater,  
The Destroyer of the space between seconds  
A Seeking Soul of bliss  
Another Metaphor Made Man

“I always eat from the grave of my disappointments at least once a week,” he would chuckle  
while laying in the grass, claiming he could feel the earth grow shallow,  
but when he discovered he could keep footprints in a jar underneath his bed  
he grew excited by their permanence

yet tragically he soon learned that the Sea would always come to take them  
and he could not contain how broken he it made him feel  
to spend so many years carving out real clever holes for hiding them  
in the ‘going ons’ of his life in between

no matter what though,  
every time the door would knock his heart would startle  
because he knew that one day there, in his door way, the sea would stand,  
hand out stretched in anger demanding the return of his footsteps  
explaining that all he could ever own

“was really just borrowed in the first place...”

and over and over this game would go  
until a young man turned old  
and an old god just turned

and in the fading light of his sunset dust you could catch him  
laying in that same patch of grass, croaking  
“I always eat from the grave of my disappointments at least once a week”  
his eyes focusing on you as if it was the first time he said it  
lips quivering while he slips into a glazed cautious wait non-stop



rumor has it that on the day of his death  
he opened that door for the last time  
and swallowed the jar whole,  
while they never found the body  
they did find a poem

“I could spin around the outside of a world all silent  
and never find a single drop of blood  
gone cold like a lantern in repose  
or the sick pay for a lighthouse on vacation  
and better yet,  
how life is just a loose association of the dramatic  
a sordid conquest of the real  
so I give to this world my blood, sweat, spit and tears,  
though I don't know why...

the best I can figure is I'm just trying to find  
this cliff high enough that when I jump  
I get to die before I hit the ground

all of this for a glimpse of the sudden  
all of this for the madness in dreams”





**a second  
Claire Payne**

a second.

and it was gone.  
nothing mattered except  
THIS  
nothing.

I was free.

a second.

and they were gone.  
nothing mattered except  
THIS  
nothing.

I was free.

**writing words letters lines**  
**Claire Payne**

writing words letters lines  
when will it come to  
something  
that fulfills  
feels full  
so that I can be done.  
I want to be done.



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