



Bri Crick
STEEL
2018

A selection of poems. Most were written in 2018, with one exception. Some of these were written to a theme, but then I guess I had some other feelings and wrote about those, too.

All I Ever Learn is Love

I've forgotten, a hundred times over,
When I'm sad and sinking and
Dreaming of black steel,
and broken bones,
Resignation and dirt,
That, "If not me, if not me,
Then love them."

I've spent my whole life learning
To care like I can't help it,
But when I'm eaten alive by
Acid, fuel, and smoke,
A hundred times over I've learnt,
"If not them, if not them,
Then love yourself."

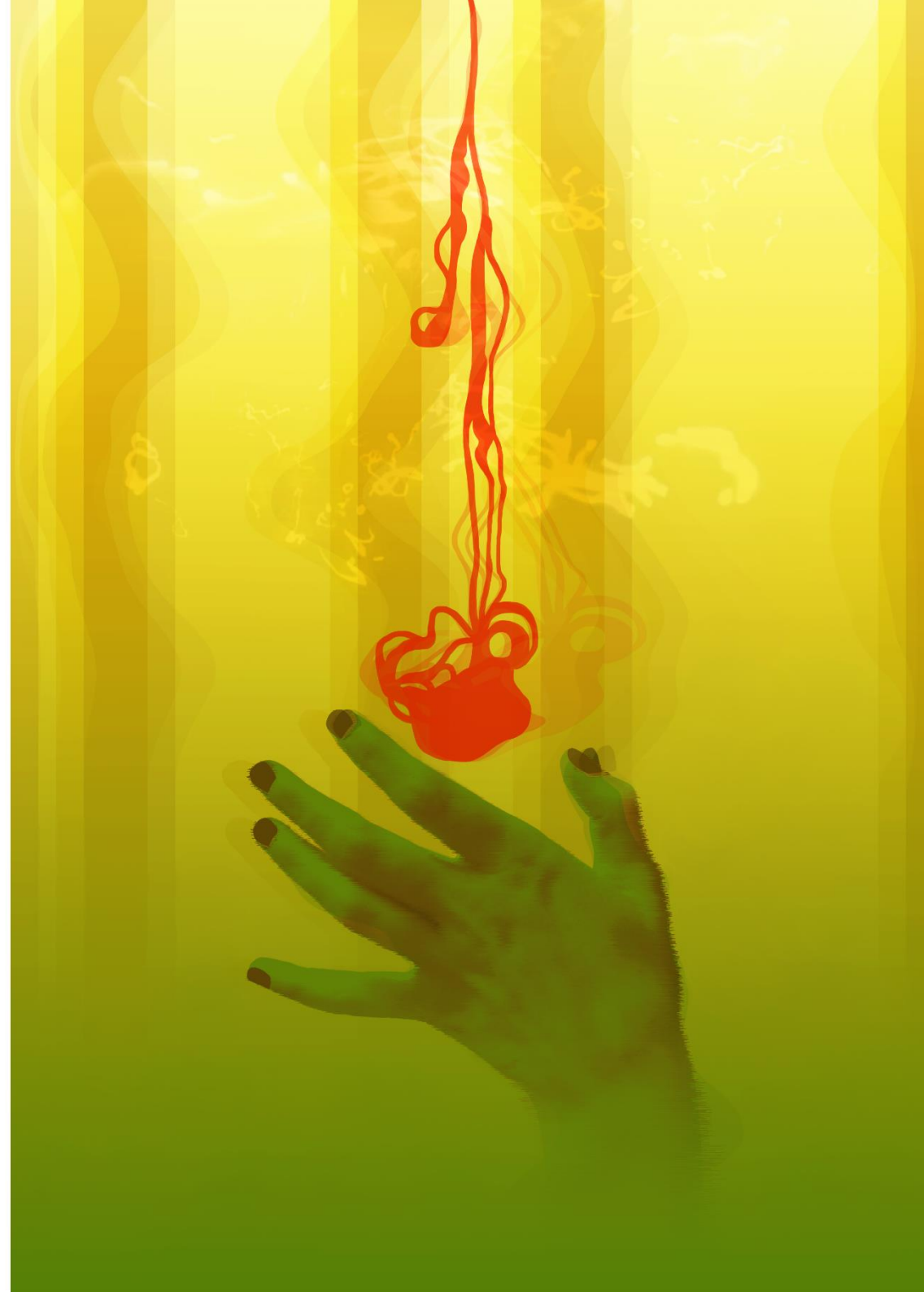


Coroners and vultures cry out, "Gloria!"

Brine to breathe and choke,
Acid bile to surface,
Resign to drown, deep,
Only to awash in shallows.

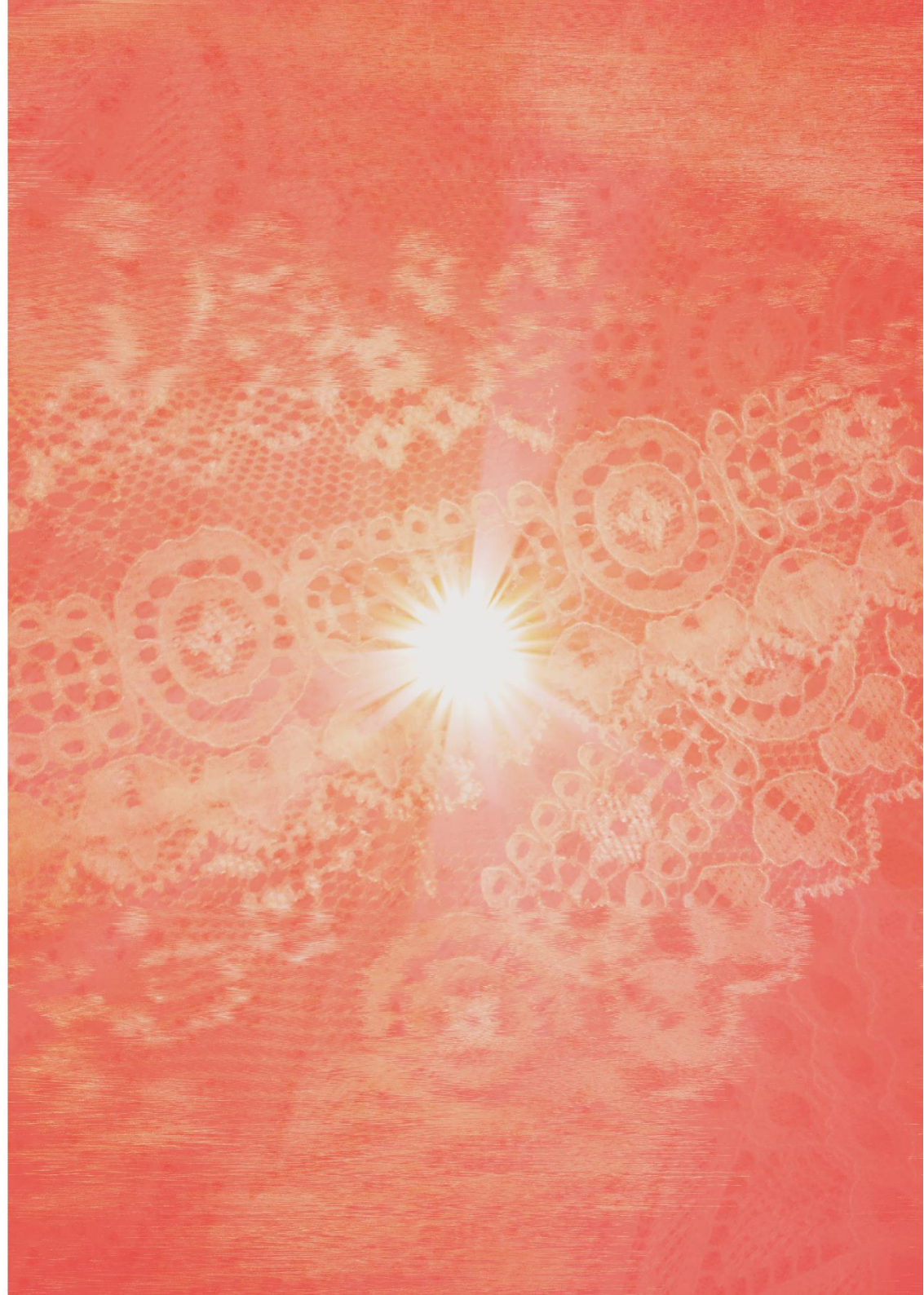
Spitting blood and venom under dawning light,
Wretched, drowned, tender with the sting of salt.
Feeling thunder in the earth
Through a heart restored,
Discard the last of a shedding skin
Torn on the rocks,
Abandon a bled-out cause and forge another,
That will take more than blood to charge.

*This title is from the Baroness song 'Psalms Alive',
and the poem is a response to their 2012 double
album, 'Yellow & Green'.*



Slowly

Slowly, slowly, sun-soaked blood, ripened,
sap-marrowsed, lungs honey-stuck,
lace like lead and light like lead,
Slowly, slowly, sun-brimmed blood,
sap-marrowsed and aching bones,
stirring honey lungs to breath,
light like lead, like love, like dirt, like rest.



Roads

One

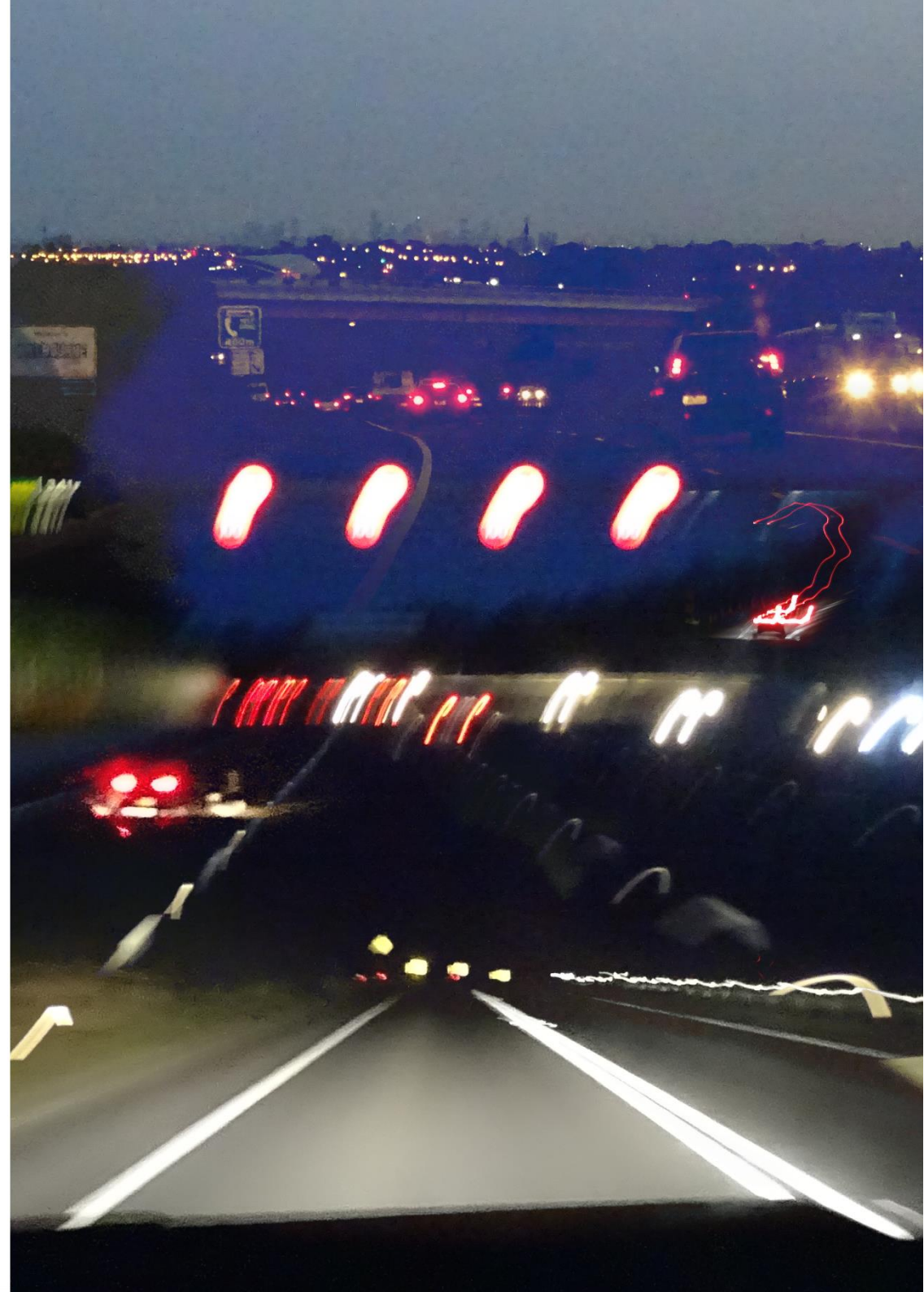
Roiling sickness wrought for
A compass point, first,
Then just a highway.
But I am forgiving, and
Any measure of road is innocent.

Two

It and I deserved better than those
Seconds counted in its darkness.
The chance again to freeze and
Taste sweetness in that air,
It's an unbidden kindness.

Three

Holding the sky, darling,
And equally rejoicing in it.
Cast in artificial light and
Watching all rot and stars
At favourable distance.



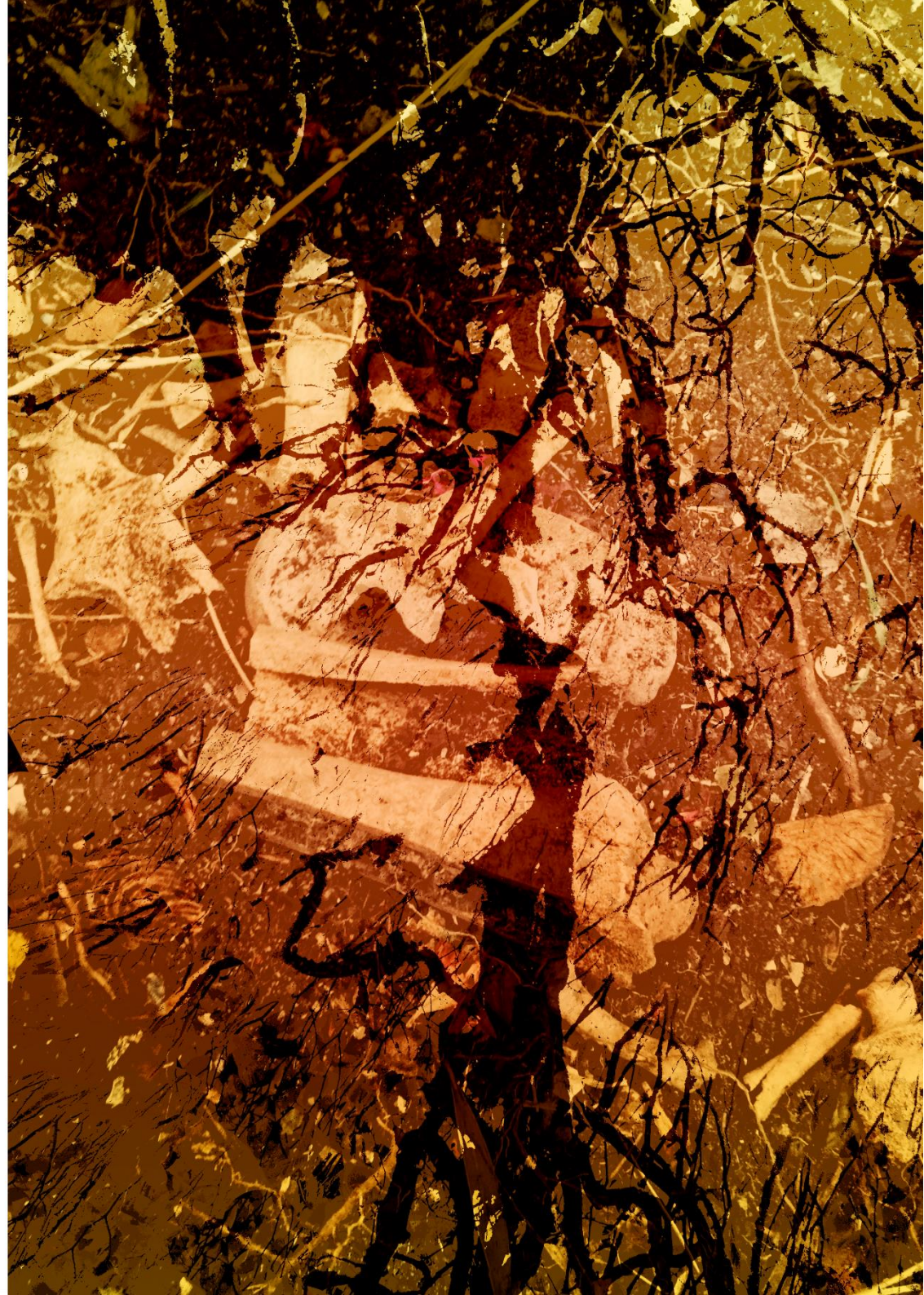
Mercies

Fervent hands in the soil,
wrenching roots from the earth
and ivy from the walls.

It's vicious, but trust that
you'll have your time
when I'm dead and gone.

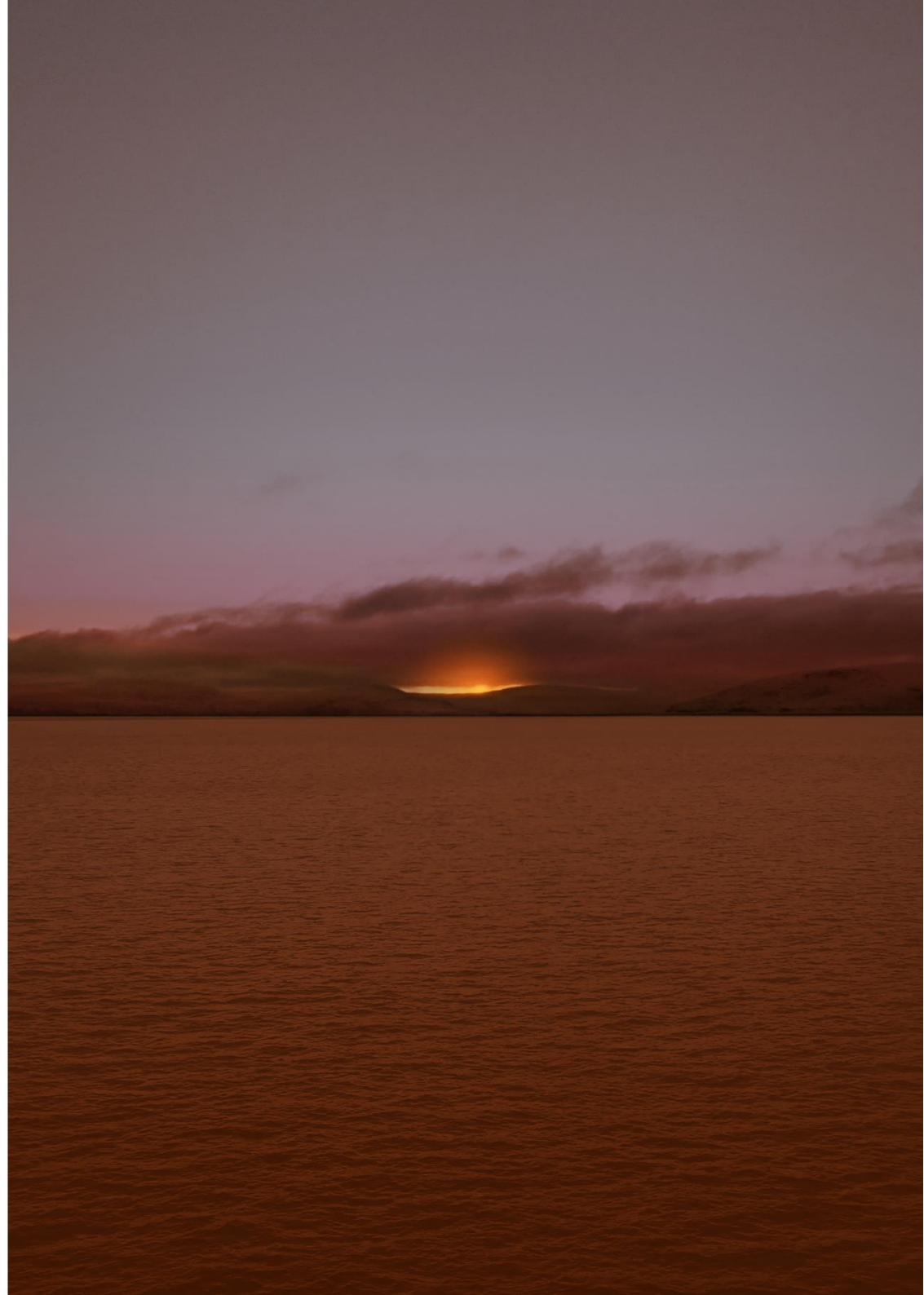
Meanwhile there's seeds and
Teeth and stones to plant,
Some of us have to live, we have to,
And this is how.

When the history of a humanity
That destroyed you
Cowers under your wing,
Too weak for the sun,
Patiently clutch it to your heart,
And let it wither in your claws.



Desert Emptied

He's kneeling in the dust, shards in his hands.
The earth is cracked and
So is the glass, plastic, and acrylic laid about him.
All through the night, in the cold he doesn't feel,
he gathers the pieces and
carefully brings them together. It's a pyre unlit.
What a sorry fucking sight,
A loss he can't name.
He's feeling broken too, now.
He wants to become shards in the dust.
Too late he thinks to light it, but
There's plenty else to burn.



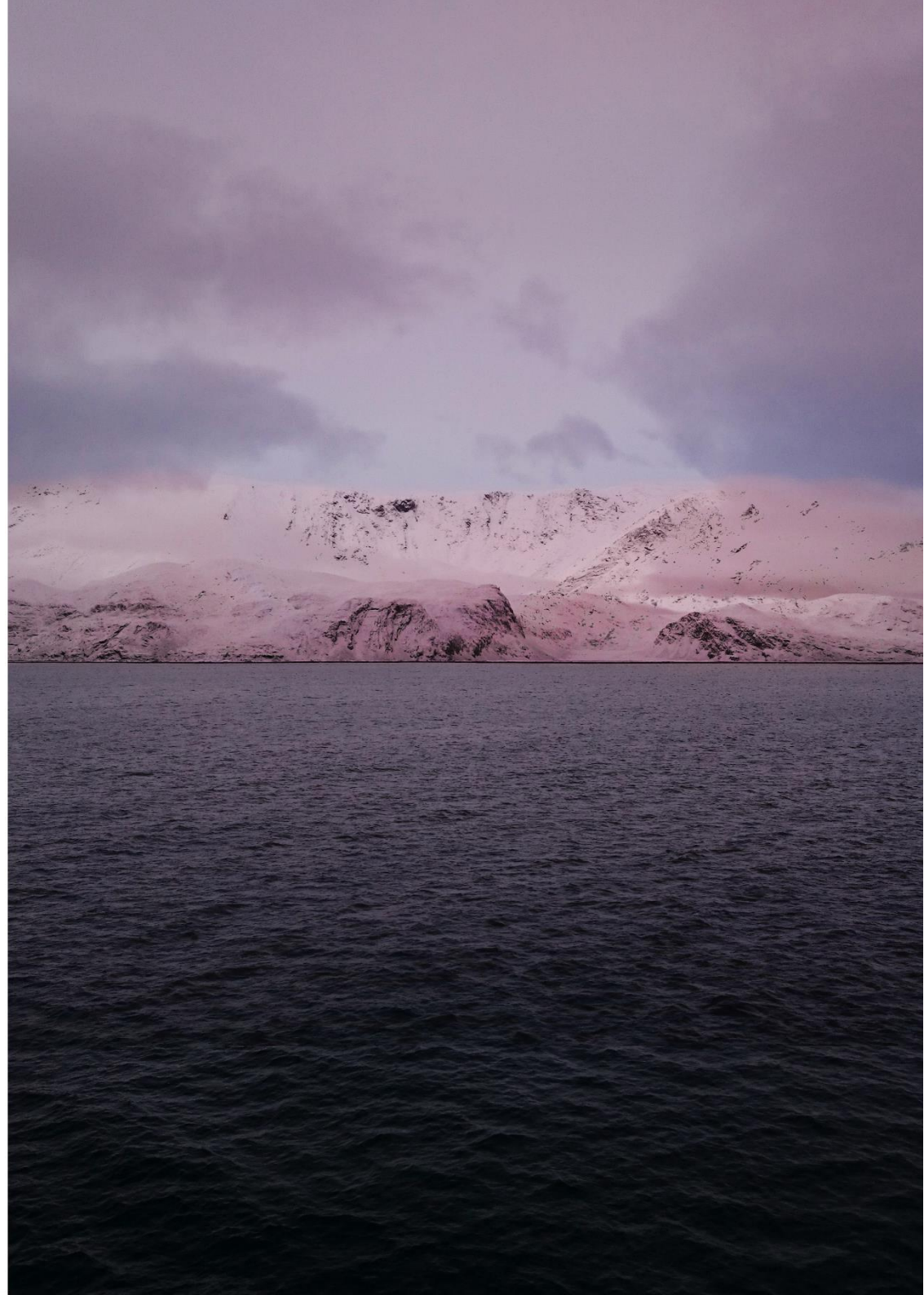
Ah, beastly thing, dragged over mud and stones.

Calm now, calm. You don't need the bandages
But they're a comfort, allow yourself them.
You've been dreaming of persecution again,
You've been running and fighting and hiding,
All through the safe summer night.
Darling, you're coldly inspired, baring fangs,
Watching the doors, sharpening claws,
But gentle, now -
Gentle.



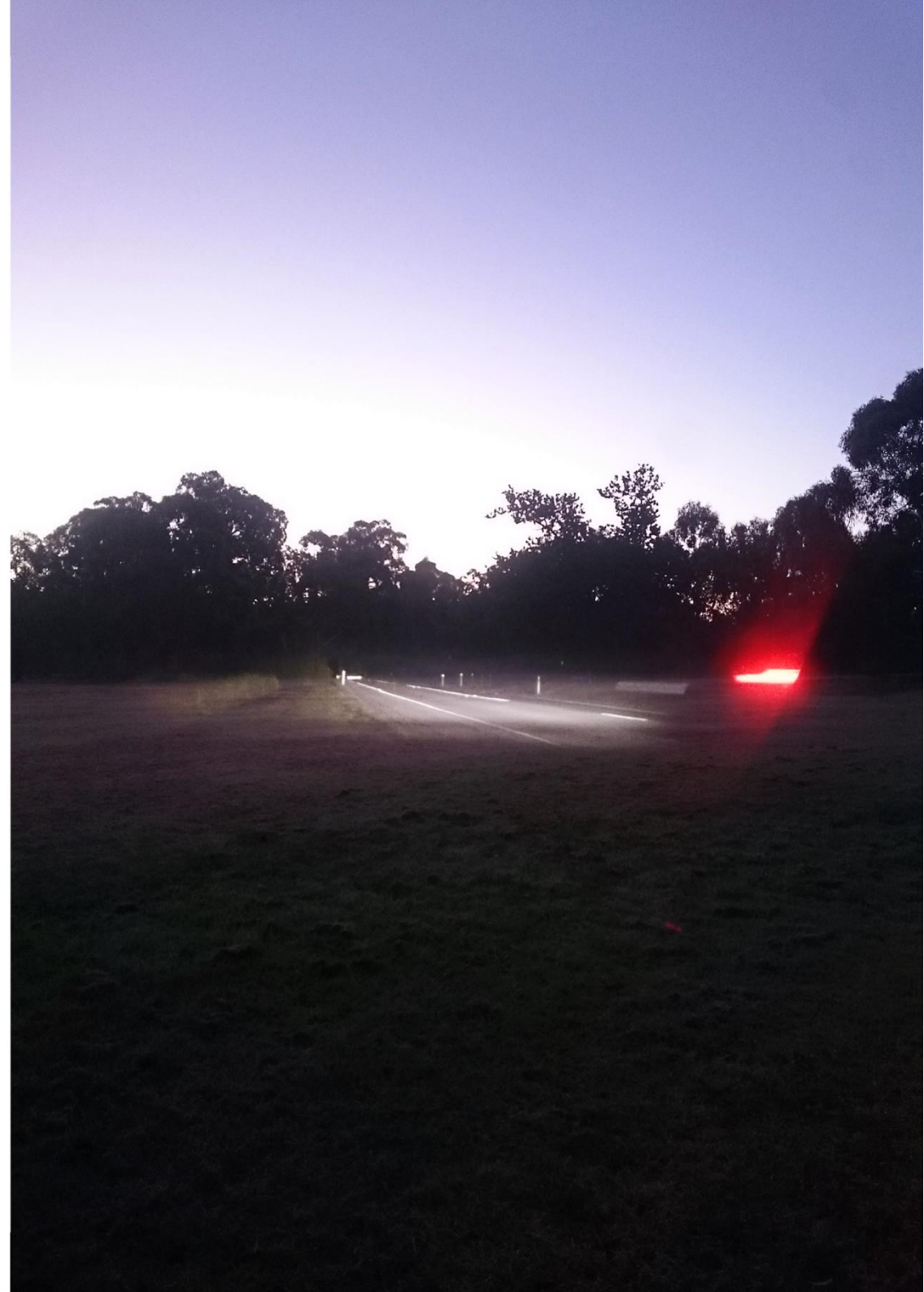
Sea Ice

What leaves us brittle we must turn to air, or
A final lacquer over skin, sensitive points
Like joints and shin, to be a shield –
What weathers us we must amend,
Amid silence not deathly, but preparative,
Thaw the ice in our seas, draw into our
Grey-dark depths; We've sea beasts
Translucent, and pressures unsurvivable.
We've strength in love and numbers,
And no safety but that we make.
What frightens us we must face,
To be soft, to be sharp, to be a shield.



Ghost Cars

I'm chasing fog and cold and distance.
I'm not going anywhere fast enough.
I've become enamoured with ghost cars,
Endless night, incorporeality, solitude,
Still going nowhere in particular,
But surely getting there fast.
I'd like to keep my eyes on the horizon.
Confident, thoughtless forwardness,
All quiet mystery, wild winds rushing by,
All life and risk and potential in the air.



Lemons and Roses

Angels – angels!

All afeather by me,

Wordlessly, “Rest, weary”.

It is work, tireless, just to

Be present and kinder still.

I’m all superficial wounds,

Catching on cotton and

Drawing away from an ache –

From something sleepless.

Ah, to burn this out.



Two States Of Half-Death

You could fall apart with a moment's notice,
Lover, these bones in your hands are more pronounced
Than mine, and your veins are bluer, too.

Sugar I've been thinking about fibres, about the lace
Of muscles and sinew. I've been thinking too much,
Like my thoughts are trying to tell me something.

Whenever you shudder, shake yourself down,
Lover, I feel you'll dissolve in that very moment,
I wonder what's underneath you. I fear it.

Sugar I've been dreaming of another place,
I love it, and I want to vomit. I dream too much,
Don't I, torn in two, between there and you.

And sugar I've been looking for a way to bury myself
And the world, with me. I've been looking too hard,
If I could only find the earth beneath my feet.

We've strength and guts and nerves and cursed minds,
Lover, and all the heart you could ask for, surely,
We're here, and what beast could face us two?



Said To All Parties: Shut Up & Fuck Off

That's -

It's irrelevant, it wasn't right, she -
Is gone, it's gone! Now, forgiveness,
Isn't that a virtue? No? Is justice?
Now justice, that's what we need -

Oh fuck off, how, and what - is just?
It was good, then, you know, you just -
Need to forget, then! That's all, really,
It was so long ago, and it wasn't a fault, then -

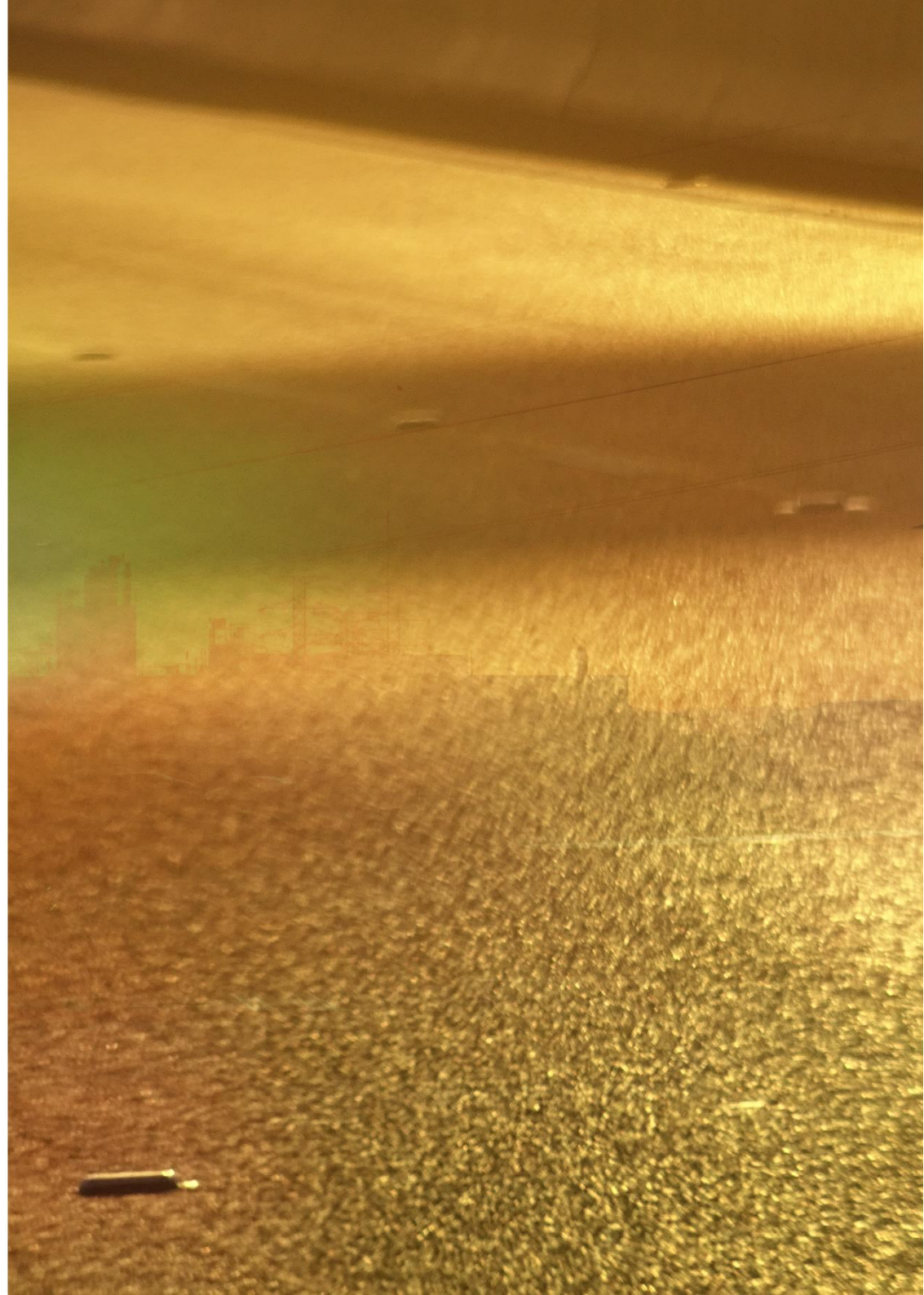
Not like it is now, what could she have done to -
To live it again and not let it form, just so,
Isn't that all that happened? It wasn't so -
Messed up, you know, until it settled and was.

It was dramatic then and it's dramatic now,
And couldn't she just - and it would be just -
Shake her head and, like so, forget it,
Alright? So it was something, fine, but it's not -



Right There in Concrete

I knew it was final, even then.
Bared in that vast grey space,
Worn smooth and stark,
The sky cracked open and
Blinding white-gold light
Poured like sleet upon us.
You were transparent, and
I thought that I must be too.
With sightless clarity and
No shade to hide, we saw
Right through ourselves
And yours, sincerely, left.



Spinebreaker

Blessed, cursed boy,
You need not eat nor move,
Live in stasis and sunlight if you will.
But you won't, restless one.
You may hunger and wither yet.
You weren't blessed, cursed,
To be stagnant, but rather
To entertain a god or two.





Quietly, but insistently, steel yourself.