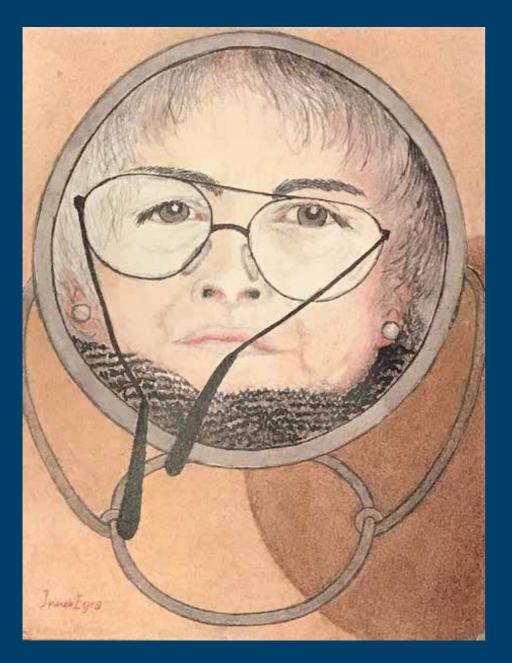
Psyche's Journey



E.S.Miller

The Introduction

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This is the pen that walks across the borders of reality in Nature's hand begotten, not with wilful recipe, but with the force that drives on trembling fingers to spell obscenities on lavatory walls and beg for mercy against a Judgement Day.

Newsprint tells you how to write for profit, and how to pass examinations but not to scribble in the margins of Tom Tiddlers ground where words play with gold and silver.

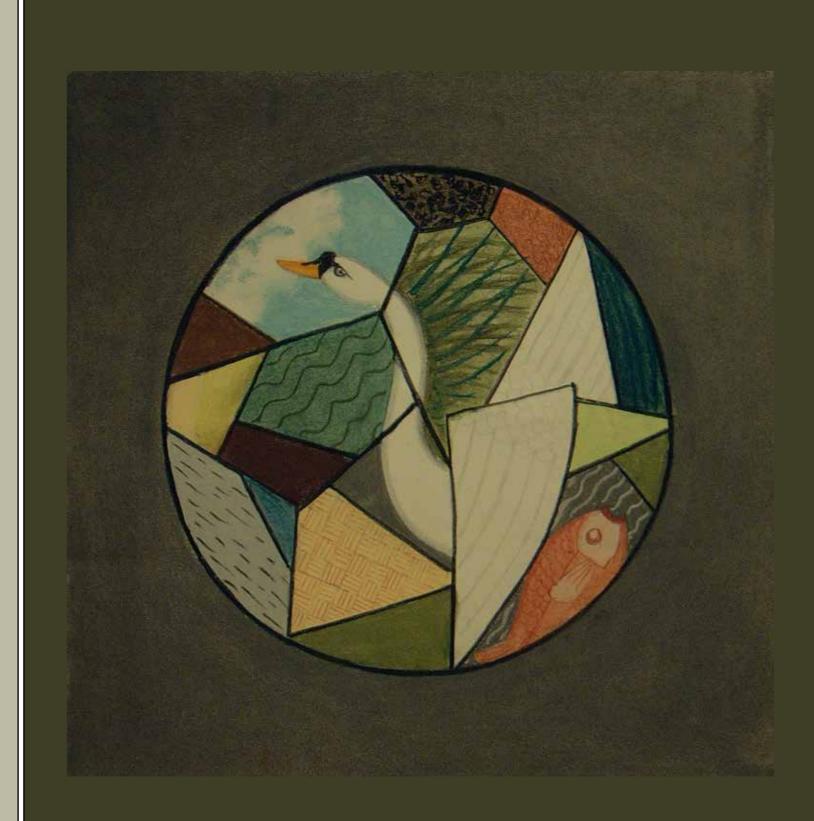


The Snow-bird comes to find a mate in reeded banks before the Winter floods subside: and when the sun-dried rushes bend apart the new green shoots, his beating wings will make a space to foster her fidelity.

There she will make a nest in which to lay the burden of fertility till feathered quills unfold that tell of a Winter's labour.

Listen to the sound of water flowing into lines that lead to inland seas, where fishes spawn and diving birds fulfil Spring duties to their young.

Stay with me to the end, and we will consummate a new beginning to old Love.





The Start

I fell down yesterday into a tomb, and what do you think I could do to get myself out?

I lay on the earth stunned. Then in moved the saints with their milk-white wings and peripheral commitment.

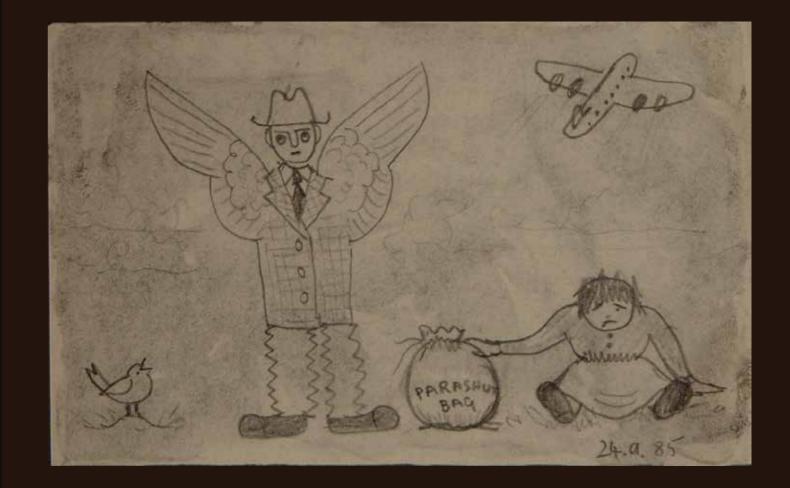
After them

came a host of horrified hands.

Then feet that trampled on my wounded mind.

I couldn't tell in the dark who caught my hand and lifted me up.

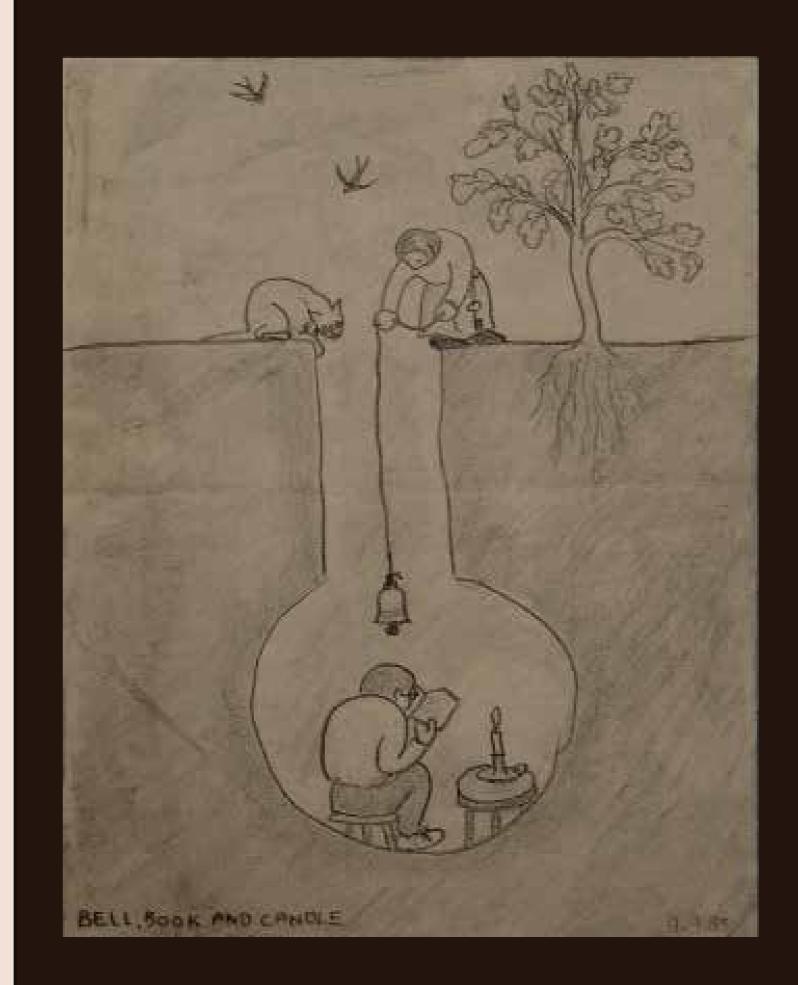
Was it you? I feel no broken parts, The matrix is unchanged, It's just that my breath is fitful, and my thoughts are uncollected.



Listen in the dark to the drum-beat and small feet running in passages.

Are you deaf?

said the heart to the silence, or do you need bells to ring in your ears to wake you?



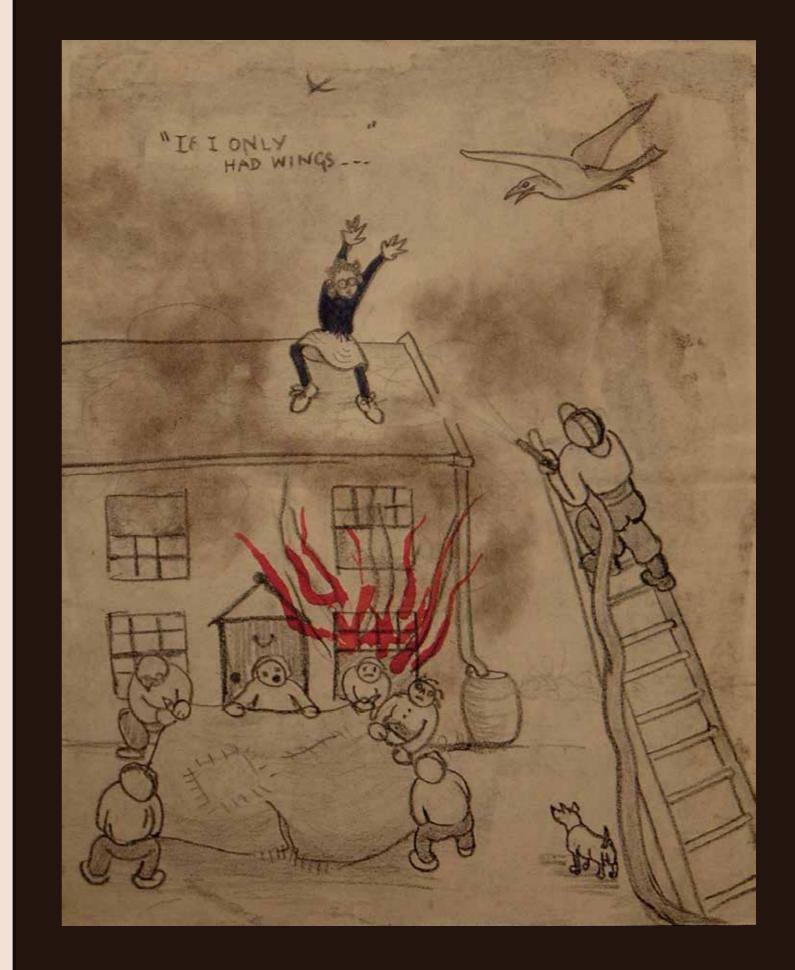
My body's for nobody now that I'm old for who will love my tired feet and fallen breasts? The recipe for grace has beaten me, and I no longer flush with shame for my transparent heart now that the flame has left my skin and dances with the wild wild shadows on the wall.



This is the point of contact where the burning flash of a short-circuit chars flesh to the bone. The mind distraught with pain flies from the cataclysmic force. Gas central heating presents no problems, but accommodation for original fire needs a hearth for safety. That's the rub fire burns.

> My blistered fingers shake with fear of the spark that lights the flame or fades.

Now the cold months are here, and I long for a hearth to hold my blazing fire.

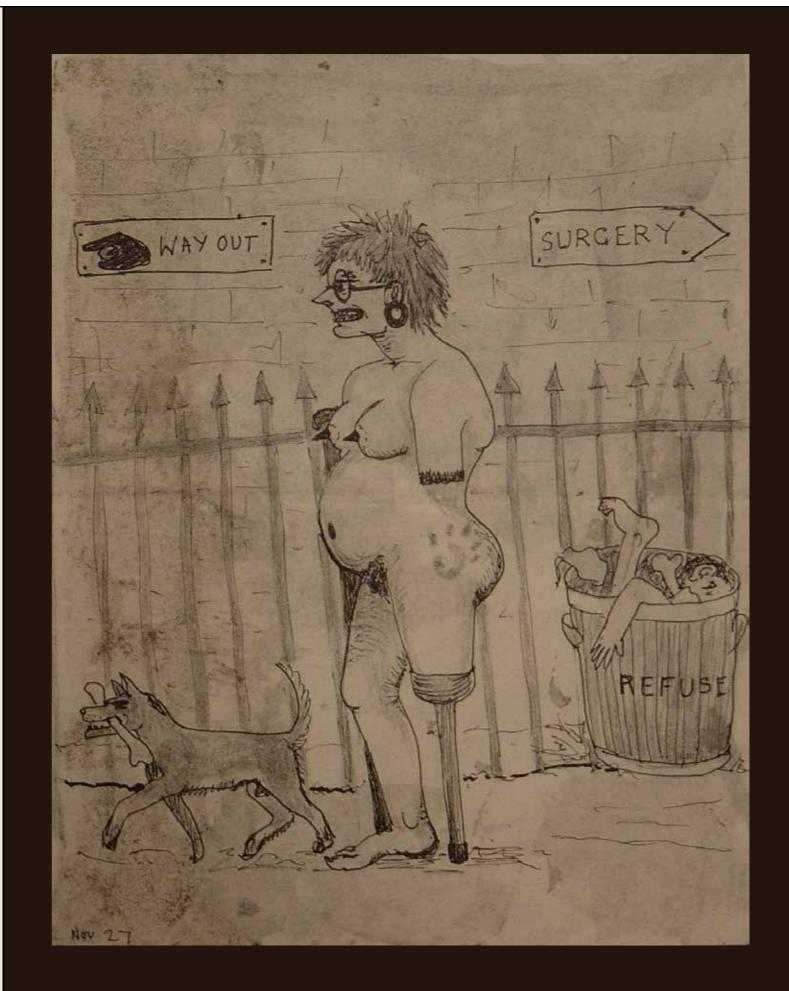


Hardened steel in a surgeons' hand lets blood for life, and circumscribes the route to the heart

Splintered bone

and torn flesh tell of a fall in the dark

Helpless and bound, blood flowed to the earth and Death stood ready to cover the grave; till countered by the blood of your heart, the fall was my beginning.



In Gethsemane, grey olive trees bear singing birds and the sun casts the shadows of the day. Scented thyme, crushed by heavy-laden feet, smells sweet in Gethsemane.

Purple flowers on stoney banks, that shelter the lizard and the toad, softened the road to Calvary.

There is no protection for the open heart, save love. It guides the surgeon's knife

and seals the children's fate; It lightens the load on tired feet and drives believers to the stake.

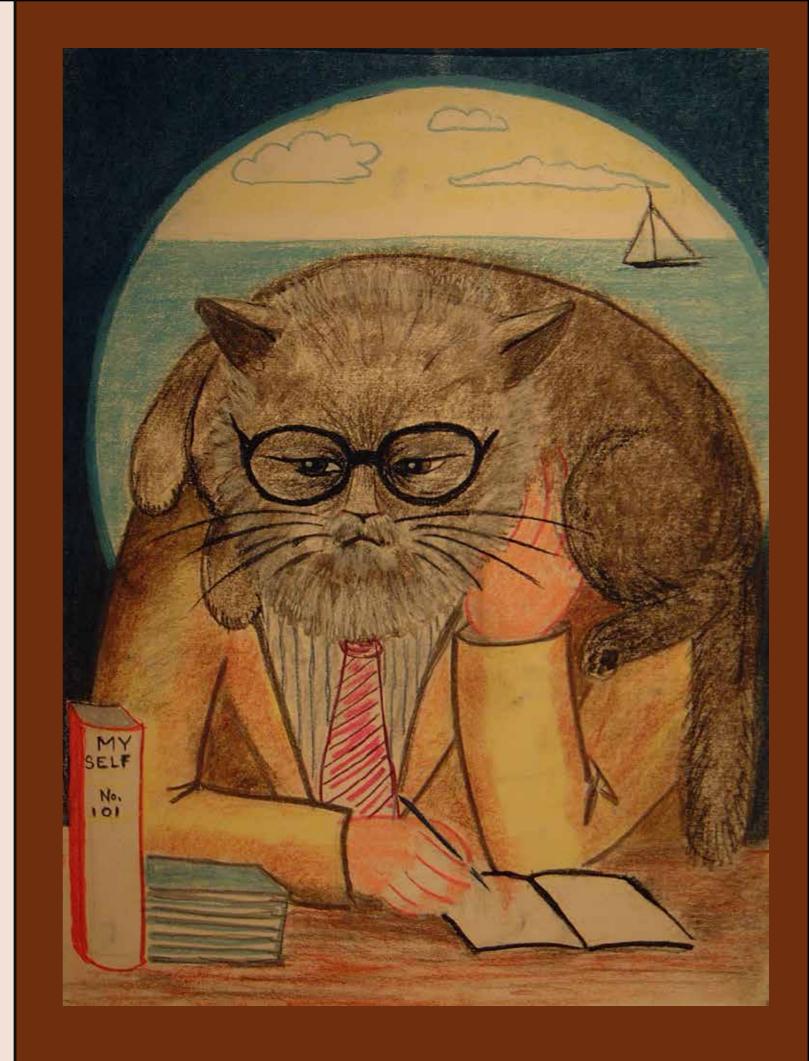


He sits reflecting behind his gleaming glasses, listening. Sometimes to the croaking frog, sometimes to sounds that rise from the hammer and the saw, or the whine of the high-speed drill in my heart.

He sleeps

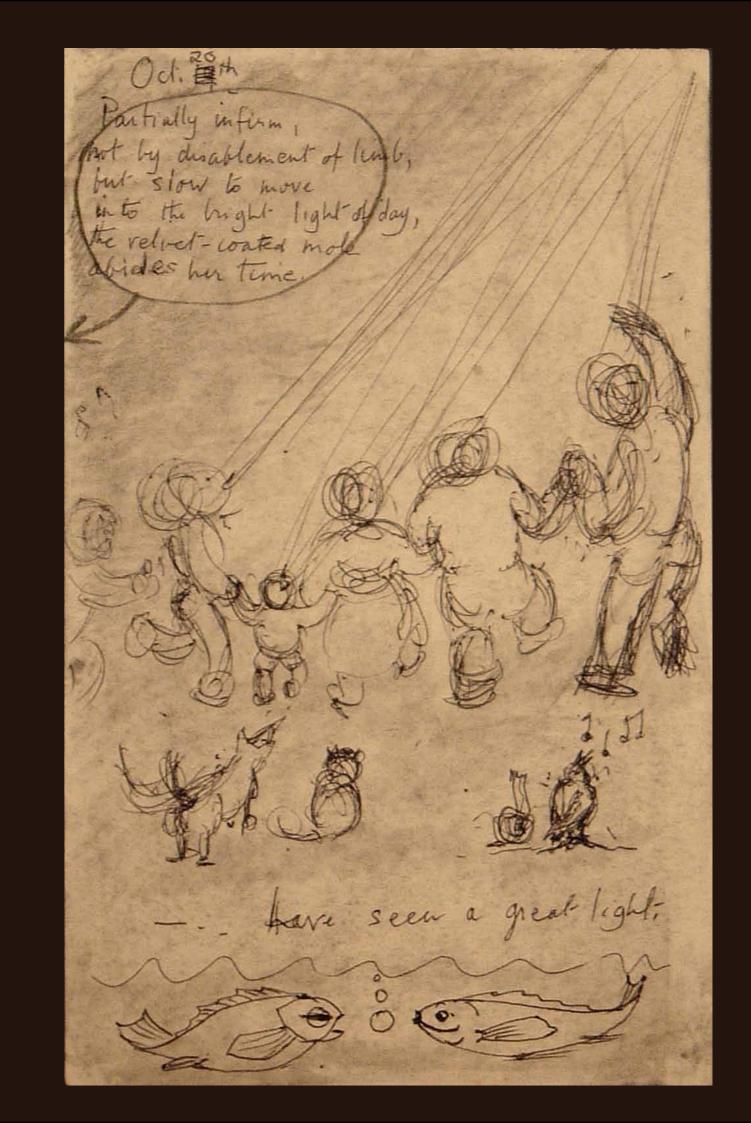
when the sun is brightest, and wakes in the shadows of dreams. Beauty stirs him to worship, and love is the vessel of his universe.

He is me and I am he.



The pumping of my heart I fill I fill I fill I fill tells of the restoration

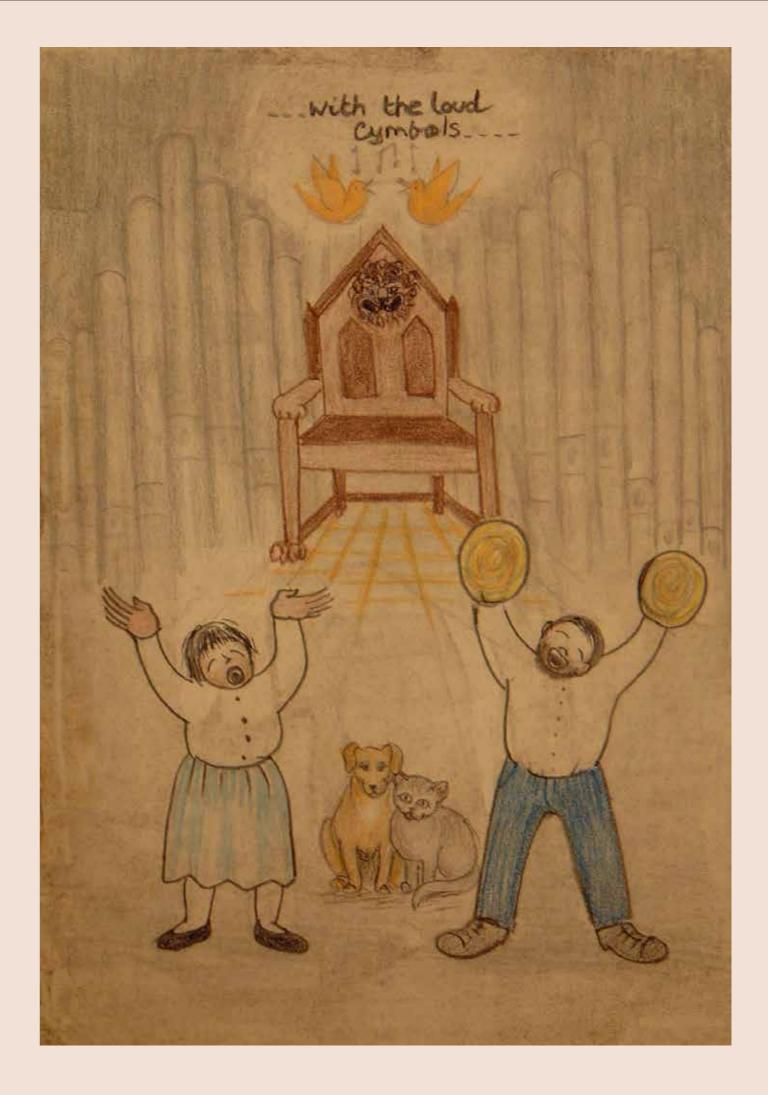
of a damaged valve, and the force that sends life to tired limbs and lightens the load borne in solitude.



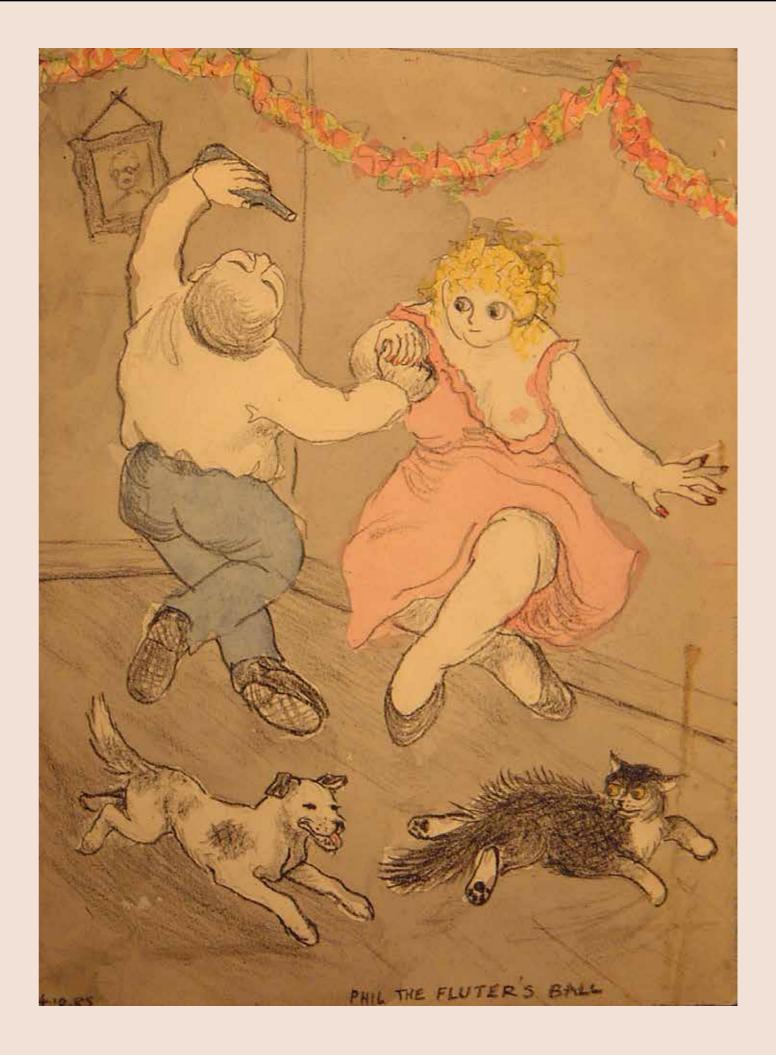
Now that the hangman's noose has parted Body and Head, the claims of life and death have dropped their trap.

Do you hear what I'm saying? -

Hang flowers on the gibbet. Swing bells on the rope of the Executioner and ring a peal for Spring. Speak of understanding in music, play words on the telling strings, and love will orchestrate new images and order for this resurrection.

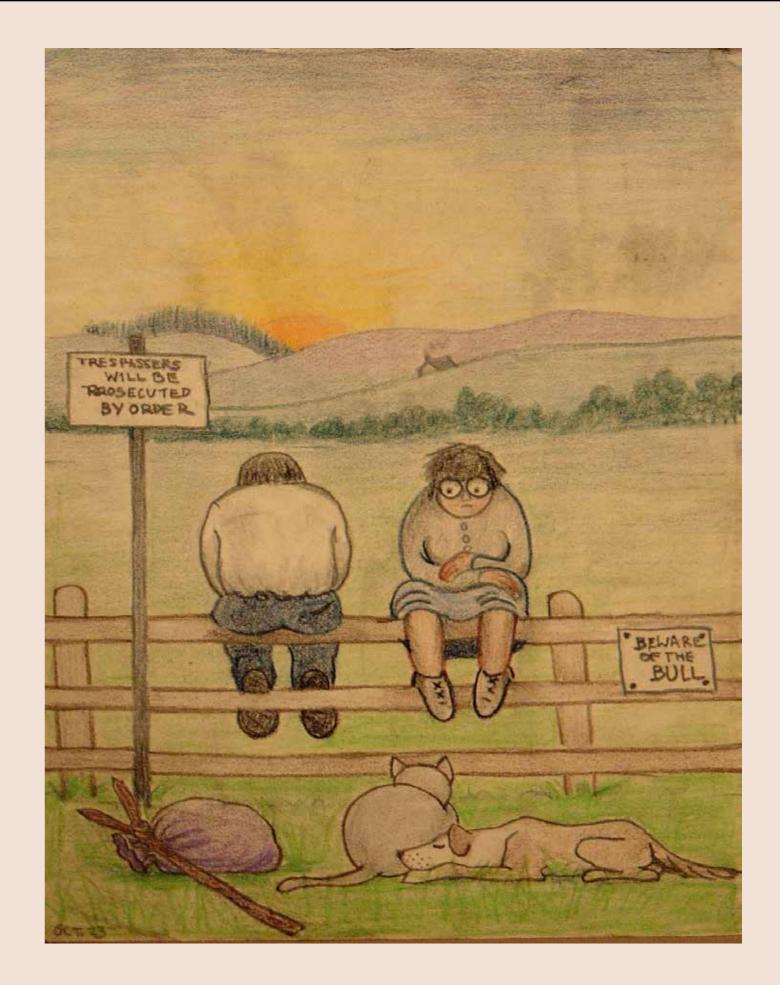


The music in my blood forces me to dance though rats gnaw my hair awhile. Melodic line transposes rhyme and tottering feet lurch and spill their message from the Gods. Sound the drums! The changing steps are ready to perform a new quadrille. It is time for the Maypole game, when boys and girls ring round with ribbons flinging out and back again, their swinging course circling the ancient tree. But now this day of liberty is lost in a calendar of holidays, my music has become a lunacy.



Once I fell where the blue flowers grow caught in the hyacinth folds of Spring.

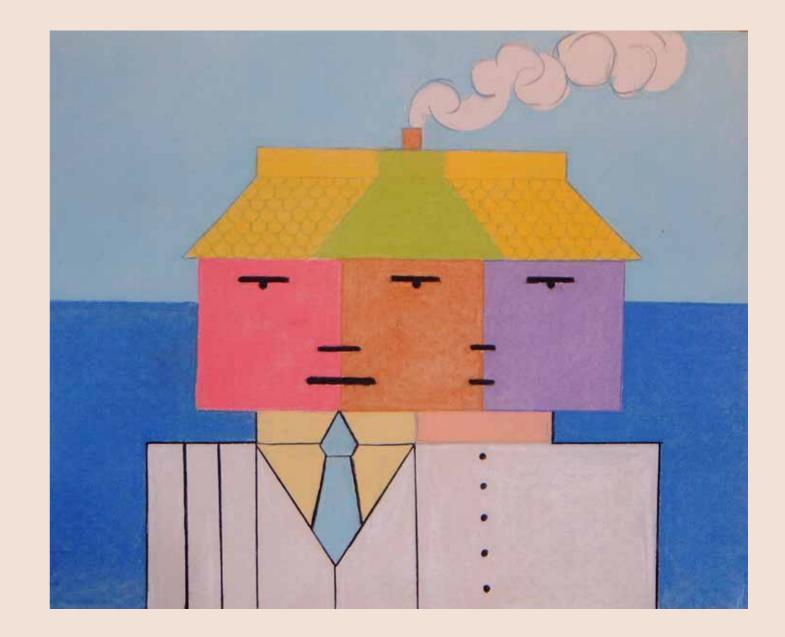
Water ran by mossy banks without direction or promise of renewal, only for pleasure in the green growth. So much for love in Spring. Now yellow leaves have come to gild the Exit gates where we must go by crossing paths, and changing winds will swing our destiny.



Round the bend I go on a return journey to the land where I was born into the storm of war, and left to go far from the land of home-baked pie to the desert life of city streets and Father's ruined hopes.

Did you say Mother?

But there was no Mother in the chill of cold porridge.



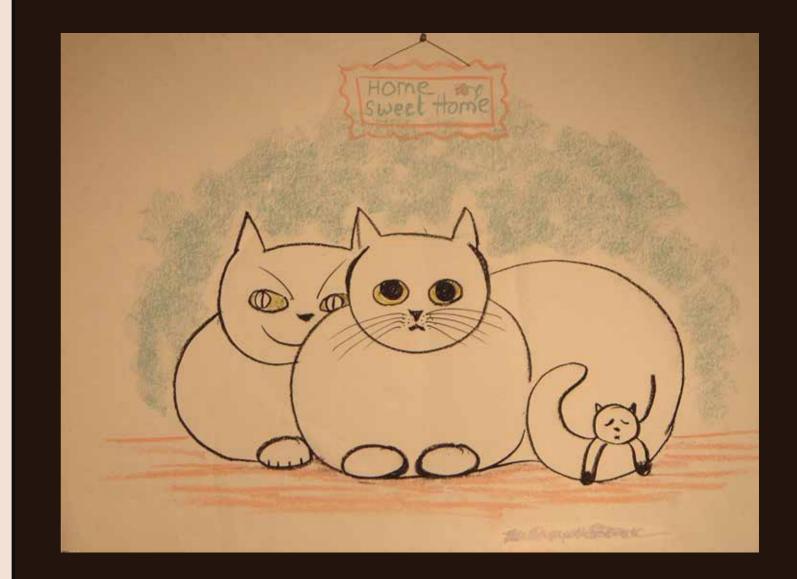
Gnarled bones of the withered tree, hung with Mother's watch and chain.

> Evergreen. Never green. Days of milk-teeth. fingers into this and that.

No No, not that again, not that again. Hogmanay brought oaten gifts, and First Footing stilled the children's crying for the Old Year gone.

Give a penny, take a penny, Beggars at the withered tree greet and greet.

> (Scottish dialect. Greet = Cry out)



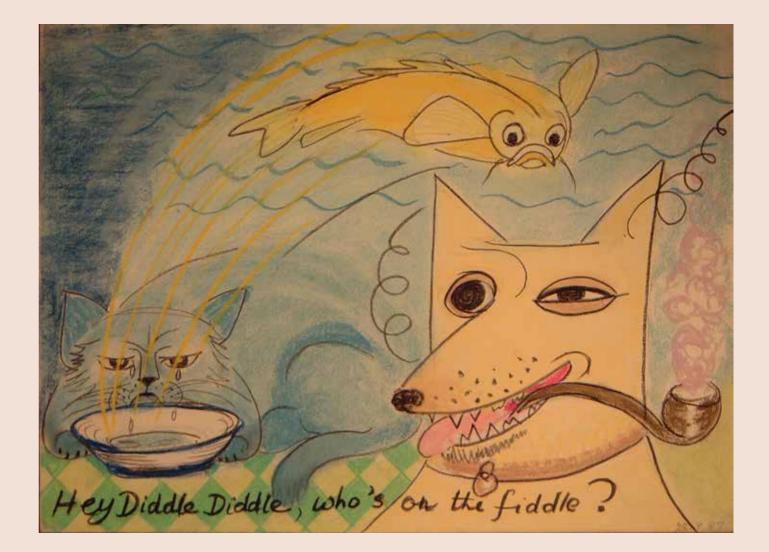
This cat's allegiance to the hearth defines a home within. Her nine lives saved her from the hungry dogs, till the sheathed claws of her soft paws found of her soft paws found safe custody. Alone she takes the routes she knows will bring her back to wait her heart's return.



God made Eve from a spare rib, the butcher's cut for Father's dinner. Blood of the Father stains for all eternity, and some of the Mother carry the wound.

Where are you going to my pretty maid? I'm going a-fishing, Sir, she said, since there's no milk for Father's girl No milk at all.

Then what about some Pitch-and-Toss down in the hay? O No, she said, Sir, I must be my father's dinner ever-more top-side up over neck and chops with the offal on the floor



My belly-full of yesterdays lies heavy without urgency to stir my sluggish bowel. My open mouth is crammed with follies and my spittle dry with fear.

I have drunk too much. My head falls on my hand.

> My mind besotted reels with stars. My body ails.

Grief trickles from my mouth, and shame blinds my eyes.

Keep heart for me in my decay when all my members shrink, and palsy steals my steady hand. Please cut a stick for me to lean on when my shoulders bend and find a little stool to hold my tired feet.



Was it gold or dross in the up-turned crock? The measure of my tears is lost in the torrent of flood water.

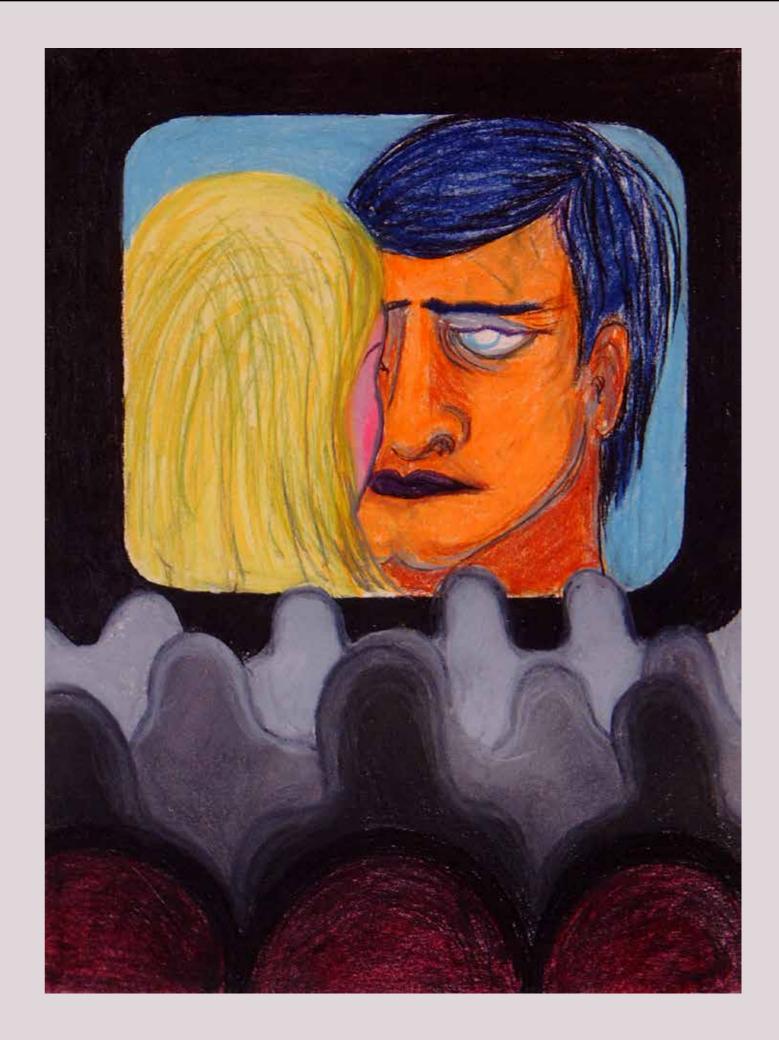
I used to know that Winter ended when growth circled my year, not anymore. The frost in my hair is not |Winter. The chill in my heart is not ice. What is age but forever when spring has passed by?



Beyond the cataclysm, Bewilderment, lies and false alignment. There is the stuff of fortitude. Where in this world is moderated pain save at the Mother's breast?

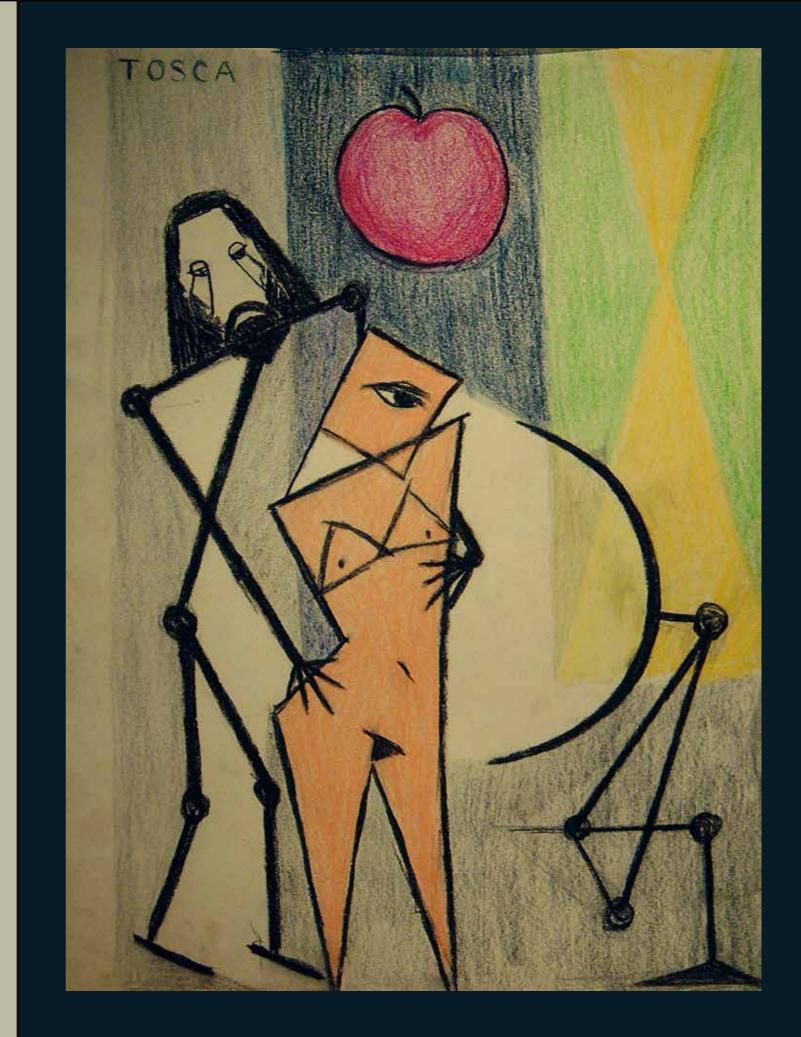
"I gave away my silken dress for ashes, and my golden ring for love" she said, "together with the gems that flash light in darkness."

Fidelity, infidelity that fill hearts with doubt be gentle with this mind till players find their parts again in this immortal story.



The roads are crossed in No-man's land far from the garden of Gethsemane.

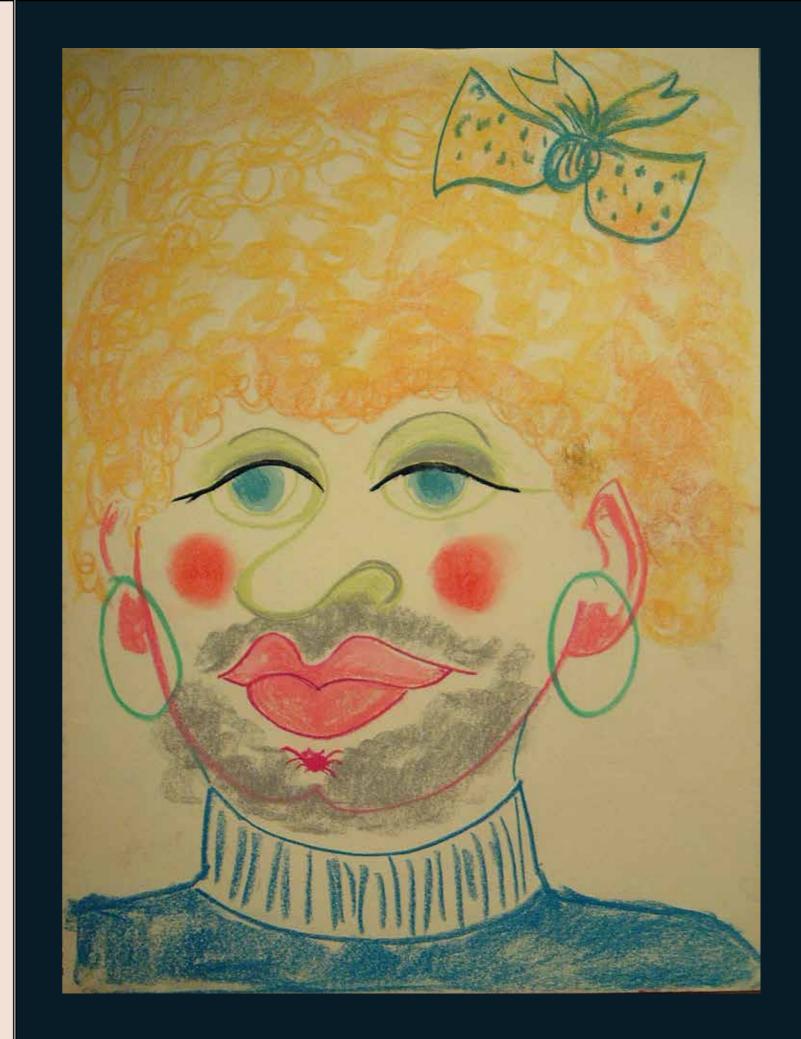
We have no stake in love; we that show the way are virgin in the hidden entrance to the heart. You'll find us in bright lights and music and music staged slightly. by ticket entry to a memory of joy



Who speaks for the victim? Or the unclean?

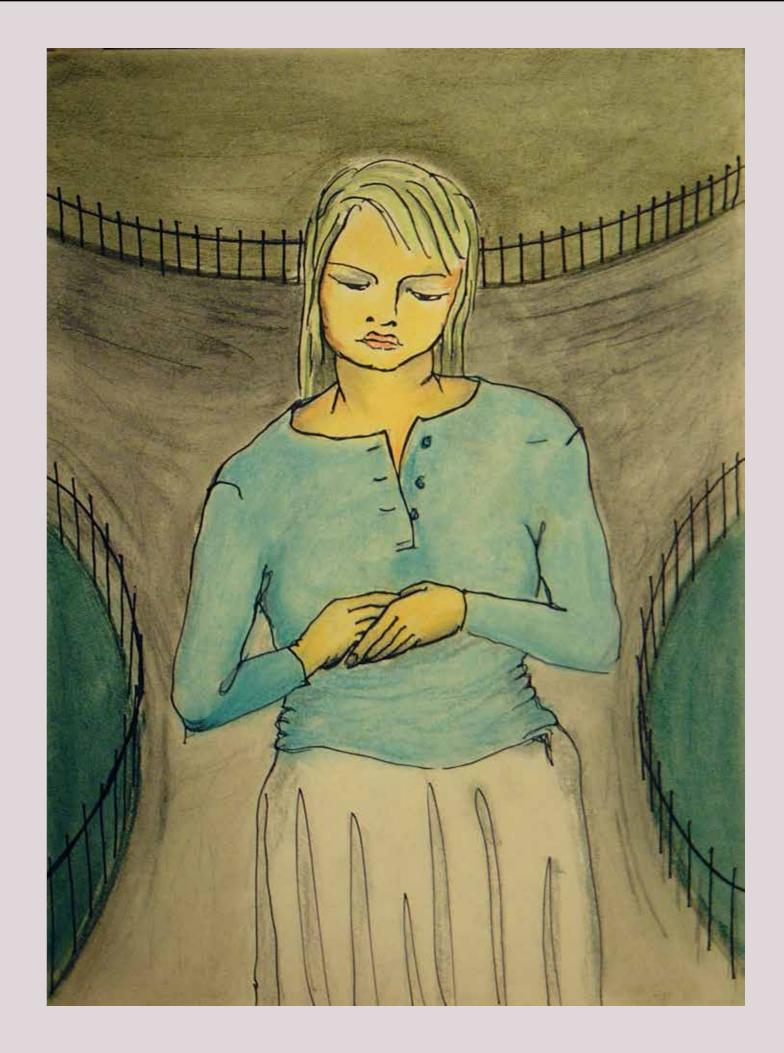
The webb that holds her fast flood lit, needs a stage to register impunity... and make a pact with Love.

For Love runs through the streets at night, scattering tickets for journeys to discover ice-packed fortune, golden rain, and rivers flowing upwards to the sun, and leave to lie and dream.

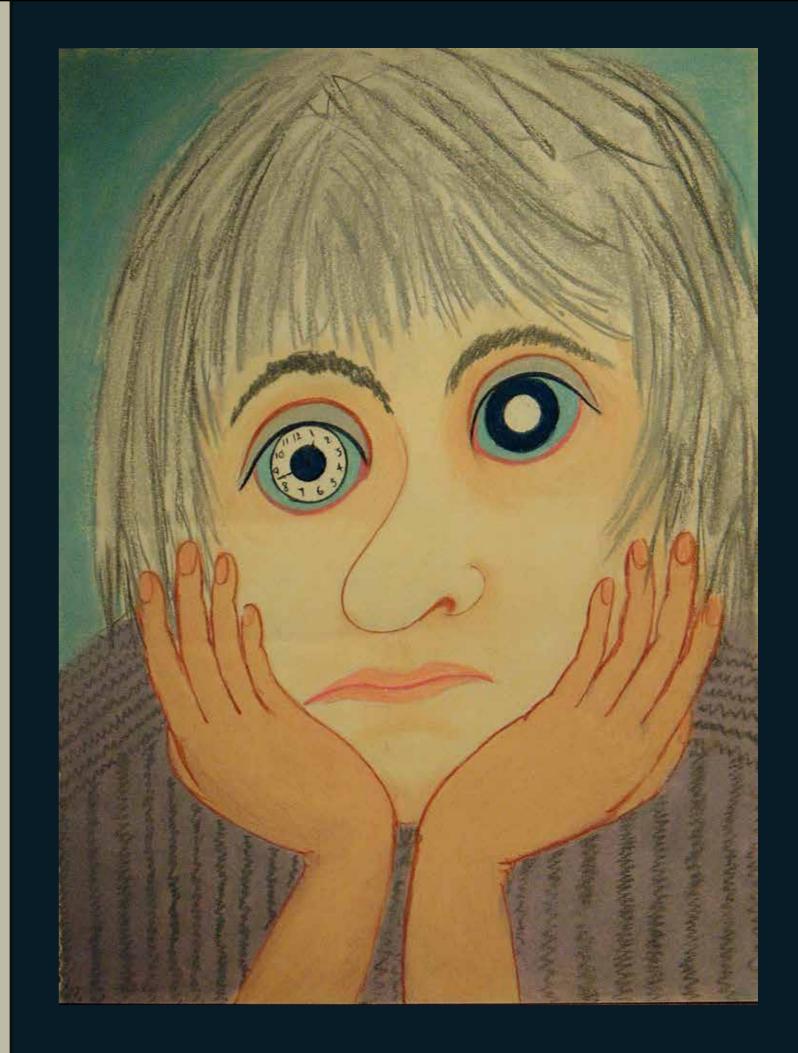


There are those who are born to sleep, and thread through the day telling their beads as they pass stations set out by time and hours of regular employment.

There are those that trust in the day's return, and plenty. Some move crab-wise along side-streets, away from the main-thoroughfare, but I, fearful of loss, stand still.



He is not dead, my mid-night caller but has changed the time for love to day-light hours. He could be the plumber or the meter man. You wouldn't know that Eros is a handy-man the one-time joker, and Prince of Sleep. Before I woke, and saw him there, He spoke songs of ever-lasting love into my ear, sweeter than sweet, and sharper than the sword, that swings Orion's loins across the sky on Winter nights and stole my youth.



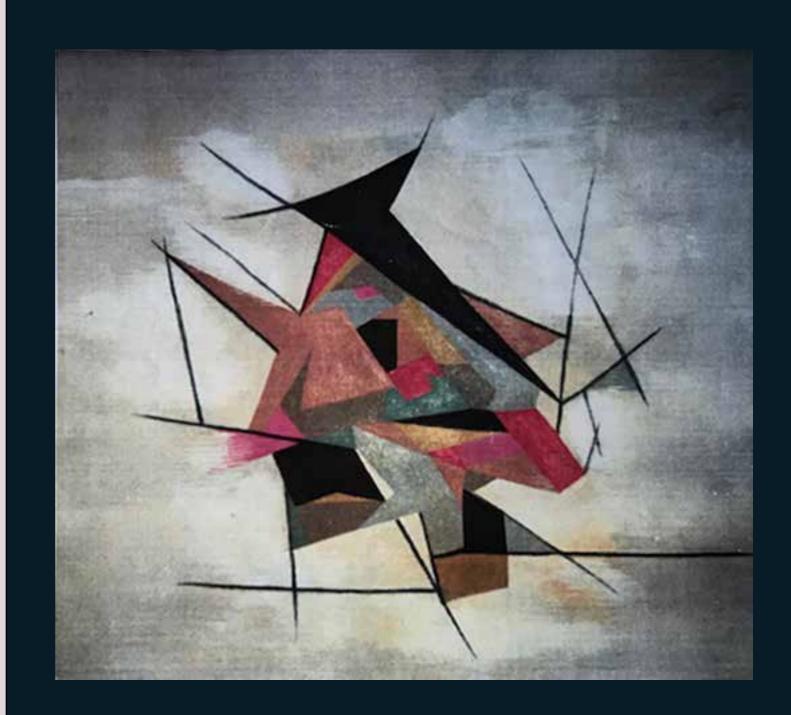
You are for all time, my gentle man. Sound and space put us together when sight and touch failed us. The cup from which we drink is held by unseen hands. Our lamp-lit vision moves with the shadows on the wall, stirring new images from old illusions. You hold my truth, not skill or wit, nor even beauty's dying flame. In honour, we shall show our best, In love, prove faith.



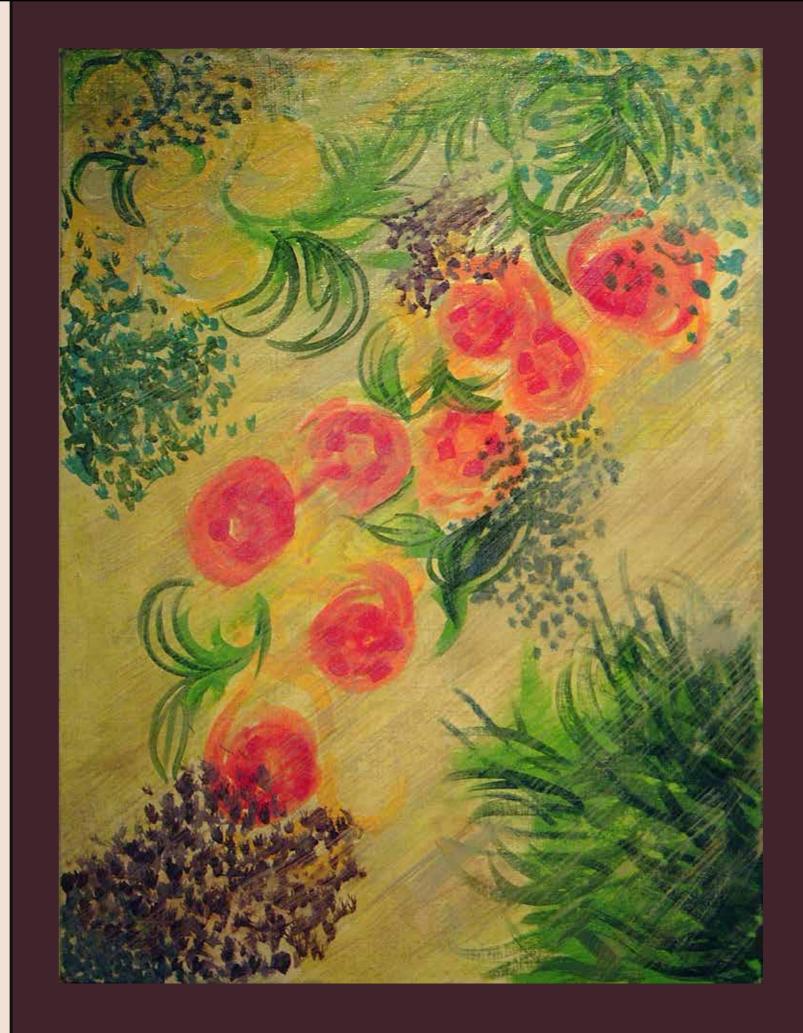
Did you know that bells are ringing under the ice-bound lake?

Maybe you have to stop to hear them where the water falls free in the warm sun, and runs head-long through banks bursting with green song into the fathomless sea.

So slow do the glaciers move from the heights into warm valleys. Deep-frozen and sun-bled, blue-jaws crack on the rock hard bed that spans a thousand years.



Mostly, purple flowers come first after the Winter, then yellow for Spring days or blue. Pink buds come in May, and in high Summer crimson has a turn as well. But scarlet Autumn burns me on its sacrificial wheel. Fruit falls bereft of pickers in old orchards, ripe for decay until the day when apple cheeks are dust, and all the leaves have vanished in the wind.

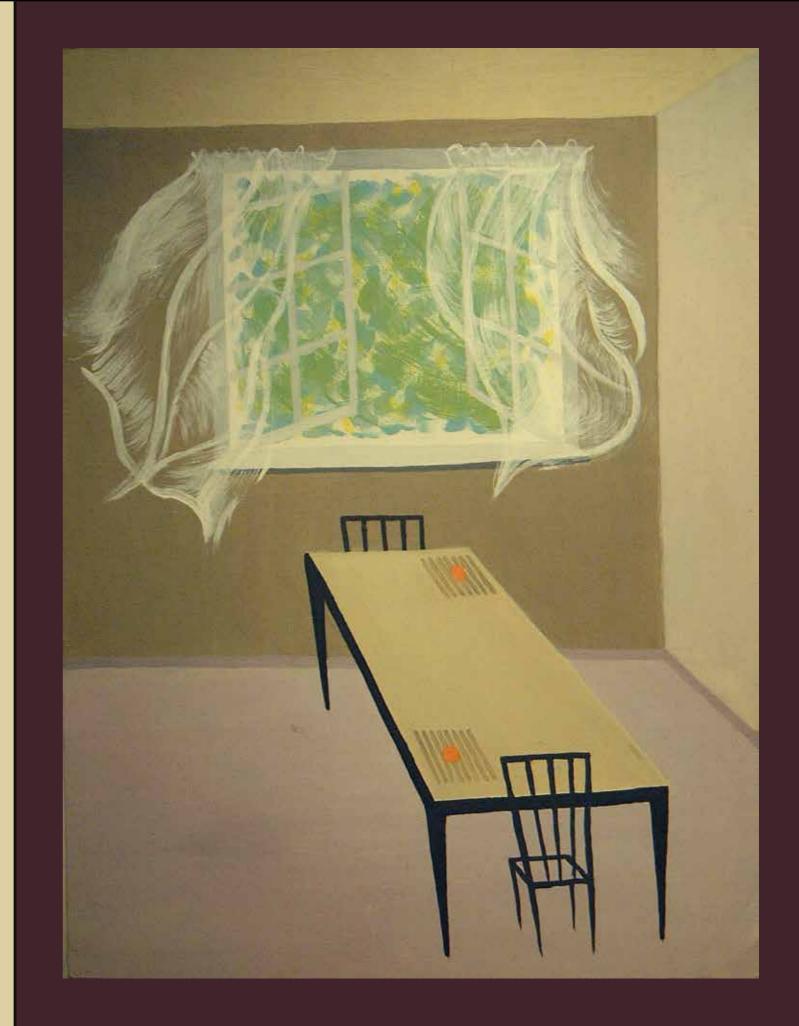


My name has escaped me, blown down the street with the dustman's leavings.

It is not registered in sound or form, nor in the telephone directory.

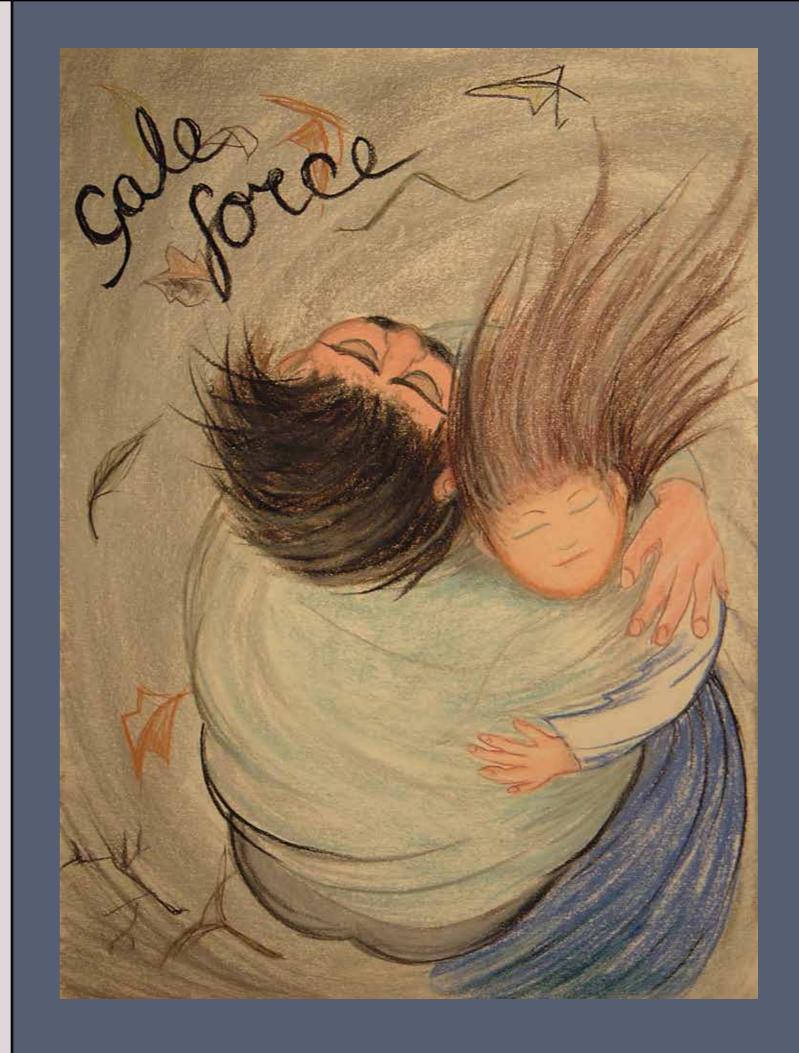
My words are flying in profusion tossing and turning blindly, singing or crying at the touch of love; playing with fire, and running feet, skipping where the small waves cross in the shallows – scattering options in the roaring surf.

My thoughts are lost.



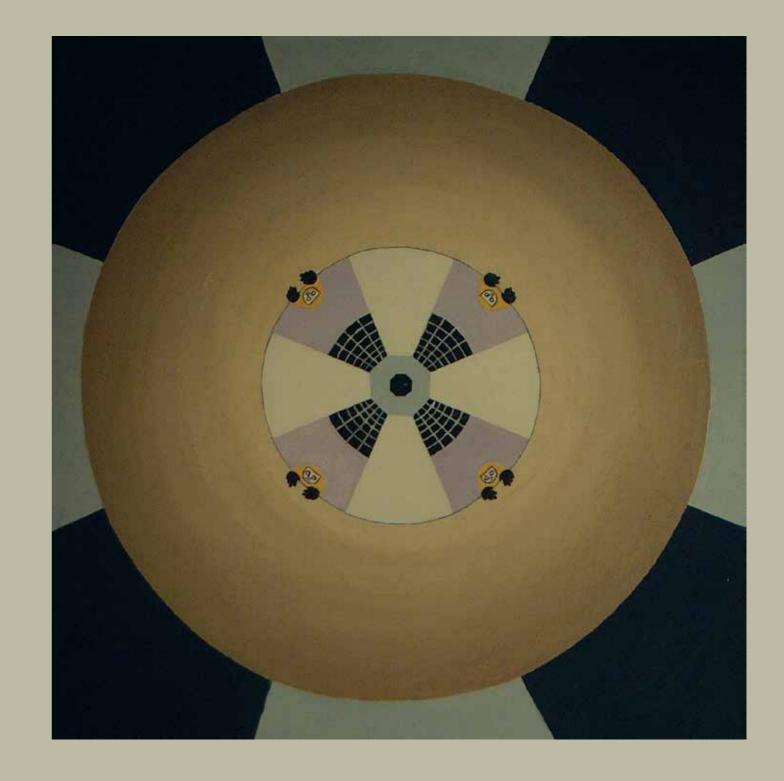
Take care of me, Love, and never fear that I shall leave you in my riper years, or play the infidel.

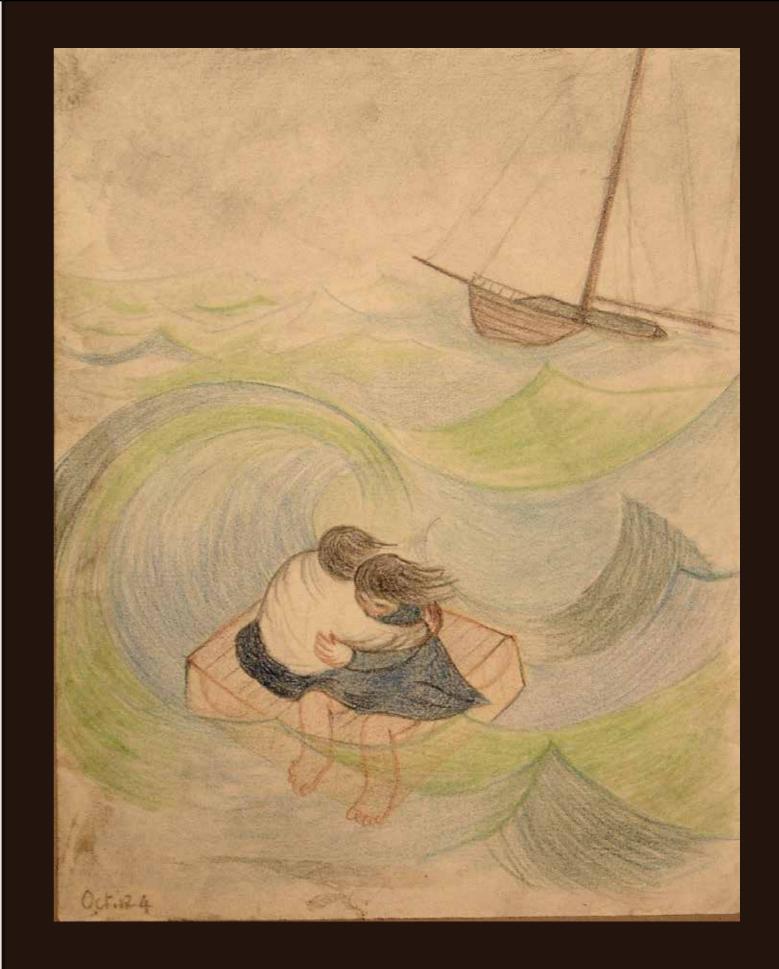
You and I shall lodge together in one house forever more to praise our matchless days; for marriage binds in mortal state and Love in spell-bound immortality.



Lighthouse signals and angles meeting on a navigators' chart spell direction measured from the matrix of the compass bearing. My purpose fades each time the sun falls into shadow.

Not so the humble bee who plots her homing course hour by hour, flower by flower, laden with sweet intent to store against the Winter hardship.





I have lost my voice and all those untold songs that rise and fall in waves breaking on the shore. Maybe it fell over-board into the merciful sea into the merciful sea far from the eye of the wind. But did you not say you heard it crying with the gulls that follow the plough when the storm is at sea?

Stones rattle on the beached hull, cast by rough waves. Bones picked clean by ravenous gulls are sucked by the sea. Did you hear the storm in the night that threw her on a lee-shore? Or did she just drift rudderless off-course? But maybe love threw away his bow, or tore apart his wings to find a mortal form, and fell, foul of the wind.



She is gone. There is no record of the day she came. Words drift down the tidal river where she lay in her brief anchorage. Torn fragments of memories, chased by the scattering wind, hake patchwork to employ old fingers after tea, stitching the patterns of the honeycomb.

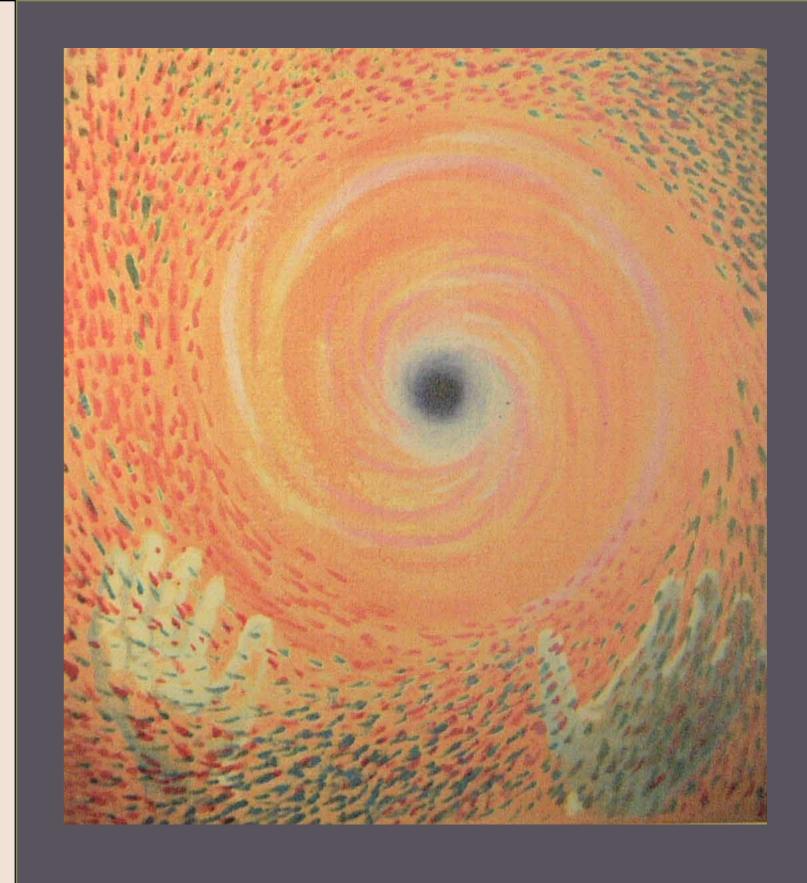
Never say it was her heart that failed her, or that it broke. No No It was just that hearts were not her suit.



Here Aladdin's cave narrows to the neck where all must kneel to enter, and grasping hands move slowly into the hollow dark.

There are no signs of measured distance or details once remembered that soften the dread of no return. The jewels of the mind's wide open eyes that shine in the light of day, cast shadows on the cavern walls and grow dim with the slow march inward.

Now gather up your wealth to give it up, and start the Journey made in darkness and in trust.



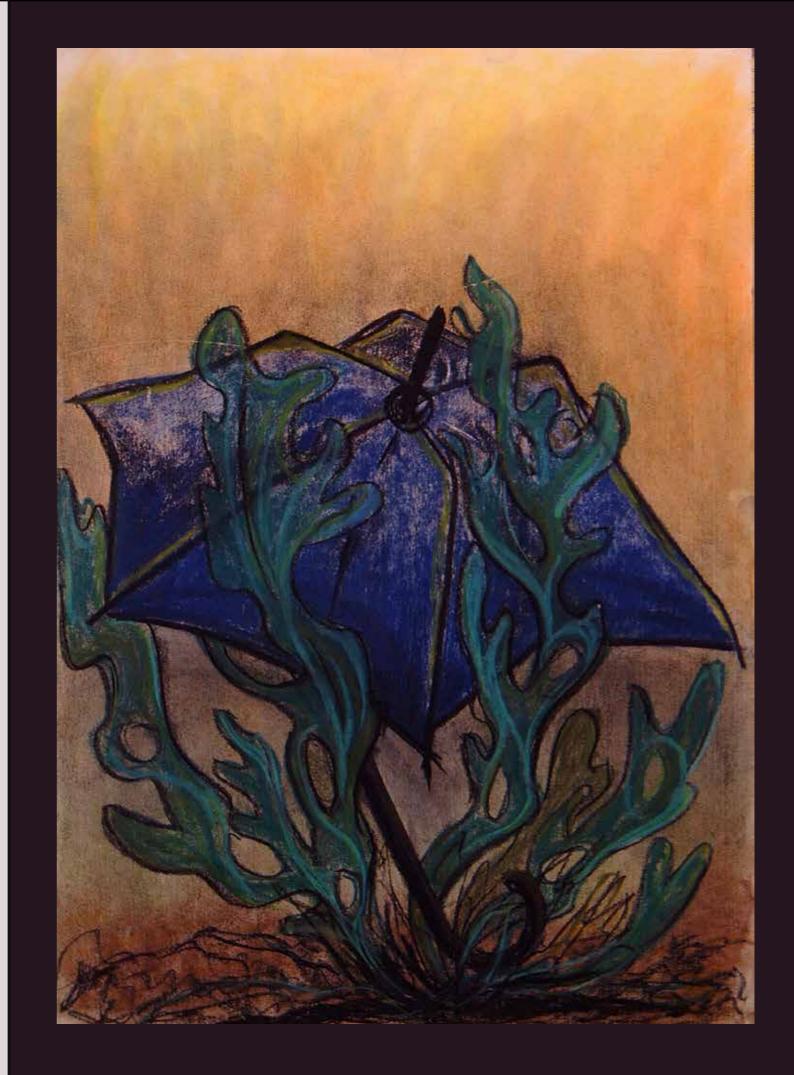
Sinking in the depth alone I go drifting through garbage thrown overboard.

There is no shelter for the fallen in this one-way tide of shadow that turns the hands of time.

Lost and found

found and lost

alone I go.

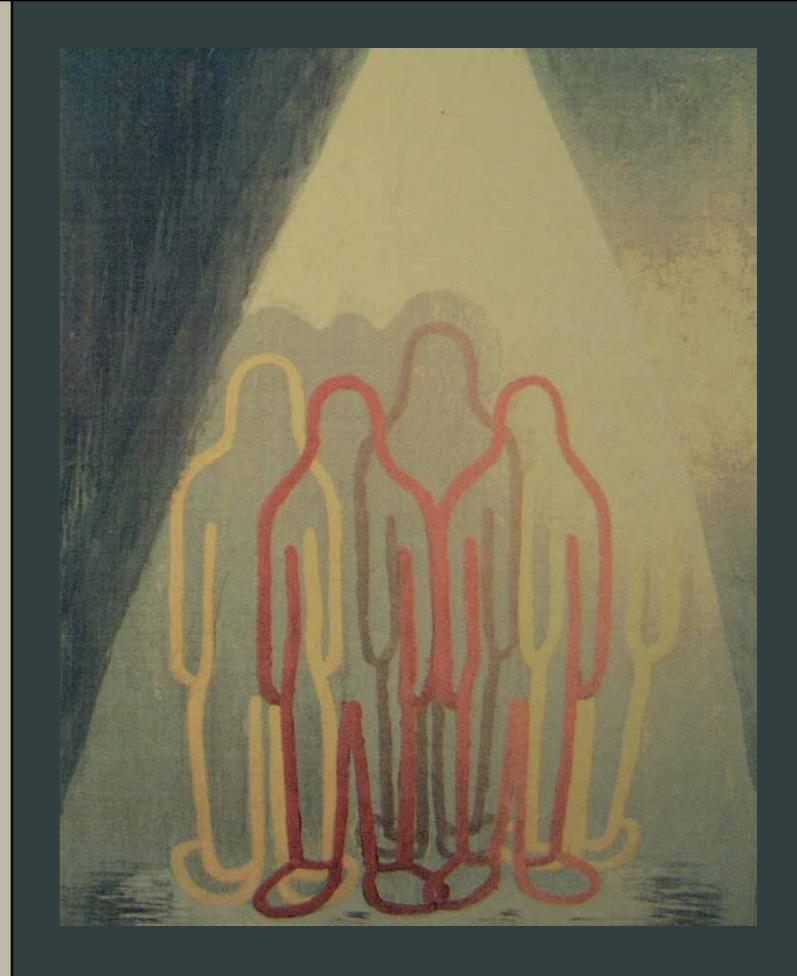


After the make-believe comes the plain-song, unaccompanied anonymous sound in arched hollows.

Listen.

Wind blows in the pipes Rain feeds the gutter gullies. Silent feet are breaking into into running rhythm.

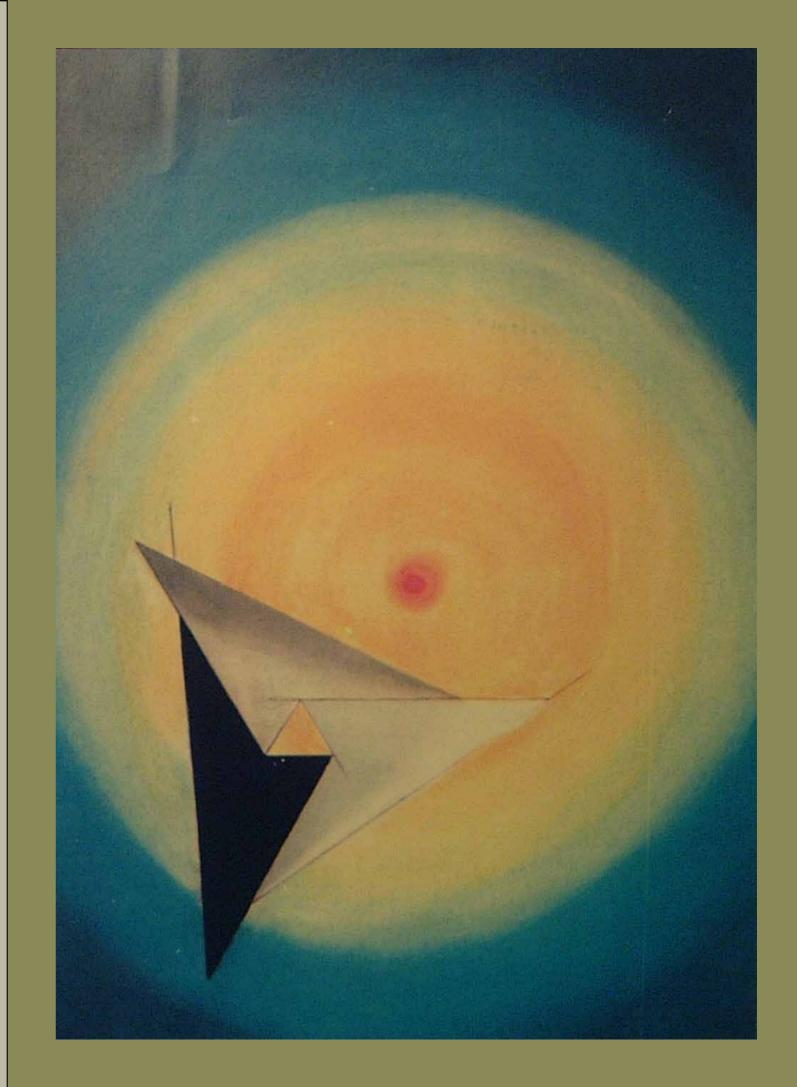
O measure your feet with mine, for fear hardens the frail arteries that lead from my heart.



Hill below hill in break-neck torrents, rivers of Sun run wild in the valleys and carry me off from my bed.

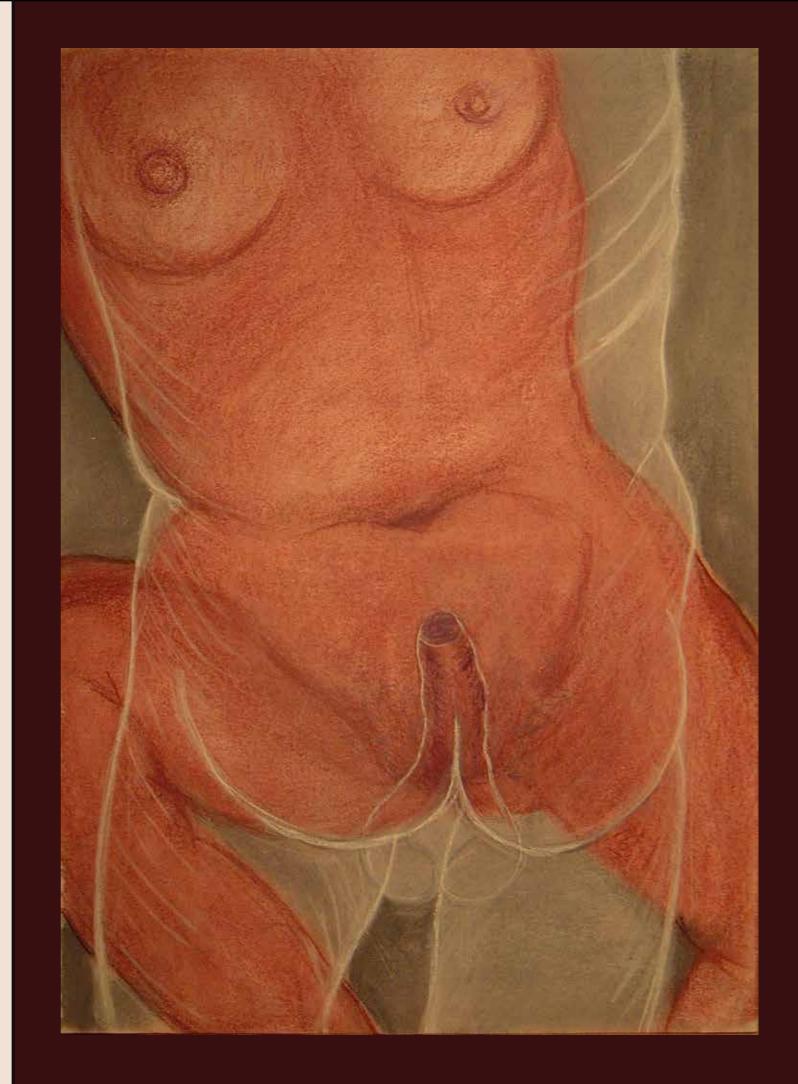
Nobody knows where I've gone for I've gone to the land of the dead, joined with armies of fore-bears that march under sleep.

Waking and dreaming dreaming and waking pursued by re-newal, re-newed by pursuit, the rivers of Sun run wild in the valleys and carry me off from my bed.



Take me down deep under the green swell of sleep. Take me down deep. Light-limbed and finger held floating in desire suspended ribbon wreaths will wave in our hair where fishes spawn and eels beneath keels

Tides will balance gain and loss and swing us gently where no echo sound can reach, to and fro to and fro Take me down deep.

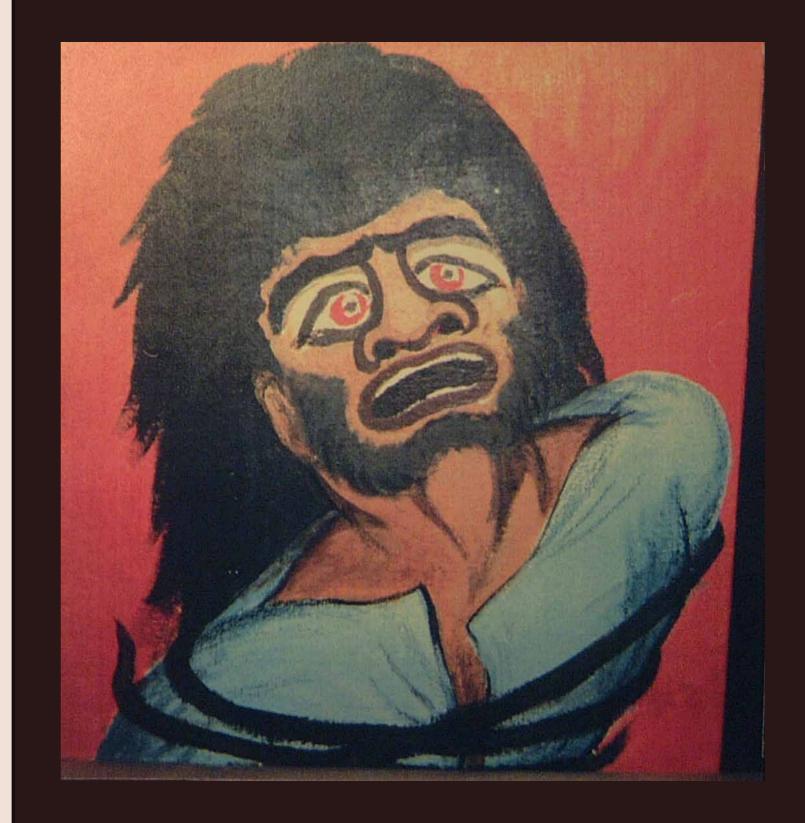


A voice in a far off register said I am the rose petal pipe that accompanies symbols and strings of allusions through multiple levels of sound, and all the while words are making their way into bursts of song from the crumbling of common sense.



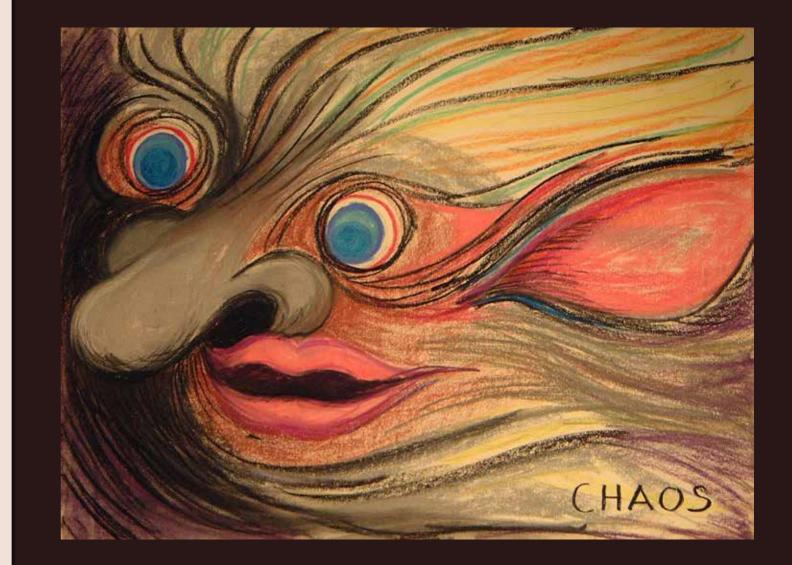
He is caught in the net of the sea, strangled by limbs, his own limbs sinking and floating in the tidal eye of the moon, bound in his Mother's blood.

Make no mistake, it is against the in-born wastes he fights to find the ring-catch of release into the soundless swell of evergreen bereavement.



I see with the bat's eyes and fly with the bat's wings, sounding the night for direction. Day-light routes, place-named and numbered for map entry, signal codes that send me running to the cliffs of Gadarene and the blind alleys of deception.

Close to the world's end, by border-lands of night and day, I looked to find you, till night-blinded by the exit out of sleep I fell into the scorpion's pit. War heads closed me in.

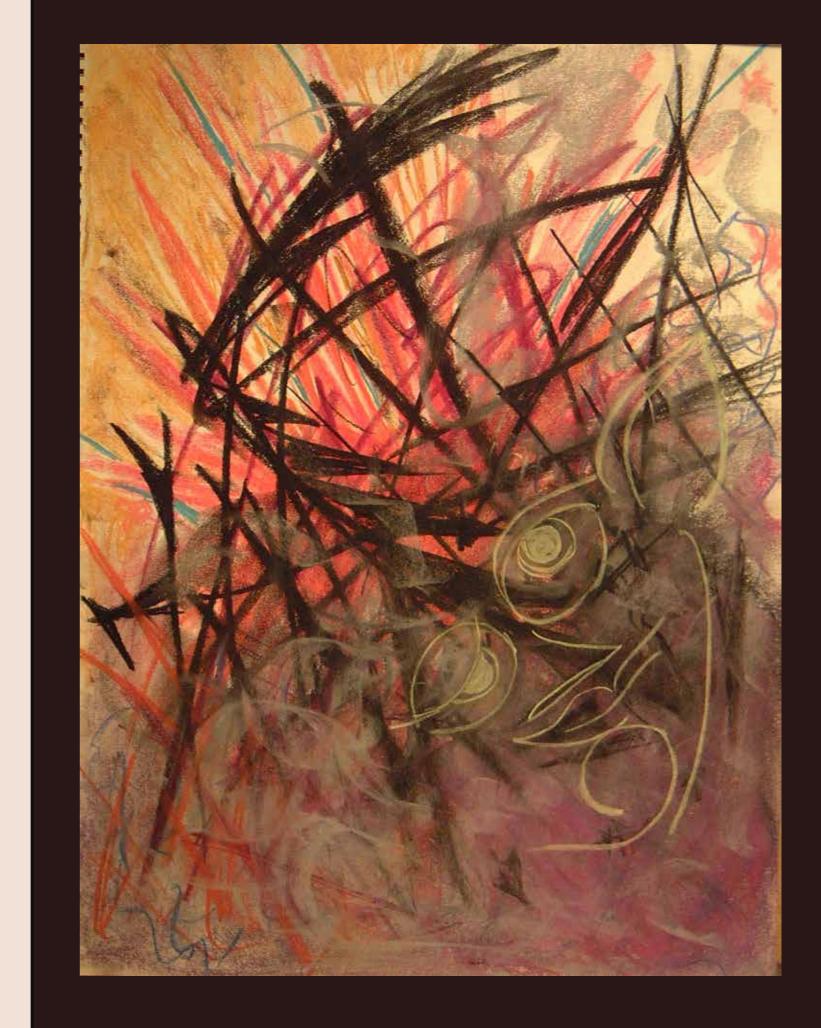


I saw the double tongued repeaters spitting fire, and air-born monsters screaming out of clouds of dust; earth bursting in volcanic fountains forcing fugitives to run for shelter in the wayside ditches.

Then with a roar and lightening flash, stone timber and splintered glass thrown high by some malignant giant came crashing down.

And still more devastation came to murder the maimed lest someone lived to tell the tale

Hatred made Hell on an unknown front, when Love exploded and left a thousand deaths.



After the tornado, restoration starts.

Shuffling through rubble in the wake of splintered glass fallen walls and broken timbers. I push my bloody limbs.

It was for my protection, you said, that the demolition order was served at short notice. I did not seek to evict the thieving Jackdaws or the gnawing rats that found open windows and the doors ajar.

Can you see me through the dust and ashes or will you pass me by?



The keystone of my shattered heart is lost in the rubble.

It was for my protection, you said, that the demolition order was served at short notice.

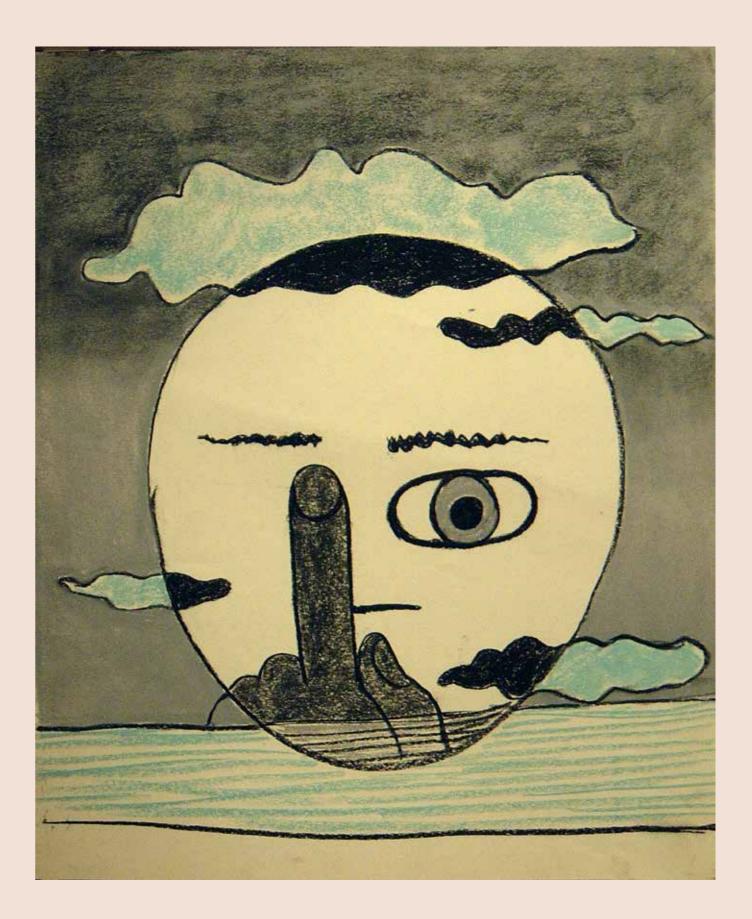
I did not seek to evict the thieving Jackdaws, or the gnawing rats that found open windows and the doors a jar.

> Fire risk? There was no fire, or warmth to lose after you'd gone.



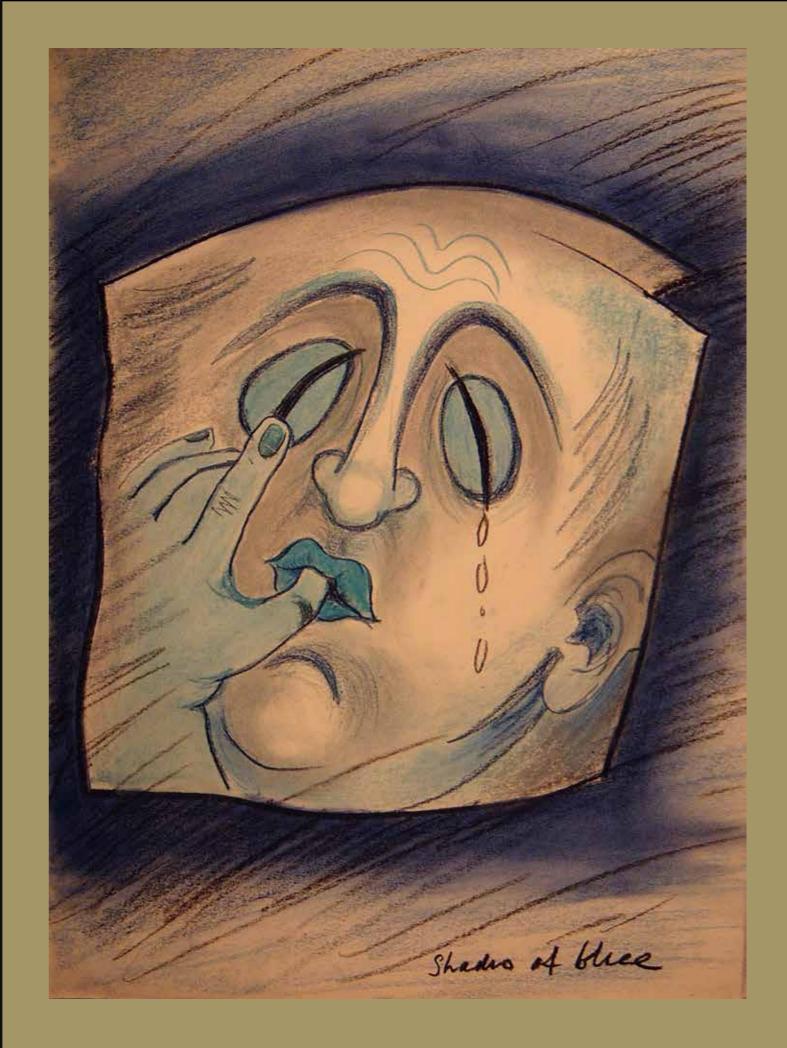
Becalmed, the Pater Noster moves our lips but when the wind licks up the dog-tongued waves to bare their frothing teeth we tremble at the Mother's wrath and beg for mercy.

Corruptible. Incorruptible. We swing full circle on the changing tide forever anchored to the shy encounters of Sun and Moon, until the dog-days' heat is done, and we shall rise divided and as one.



The floating castaway swings on the nursling waves to the sound of singing below.

There, wide open mouths show pearls and fishes rise and fall to guard the coral gates that lead to the heart of Mother. Imprisoned thus the castaway floats this way and that, searching for love to set his spirit free.



Death comes too across green fields, his purple cap in hand, his black locks blowing in the wind.

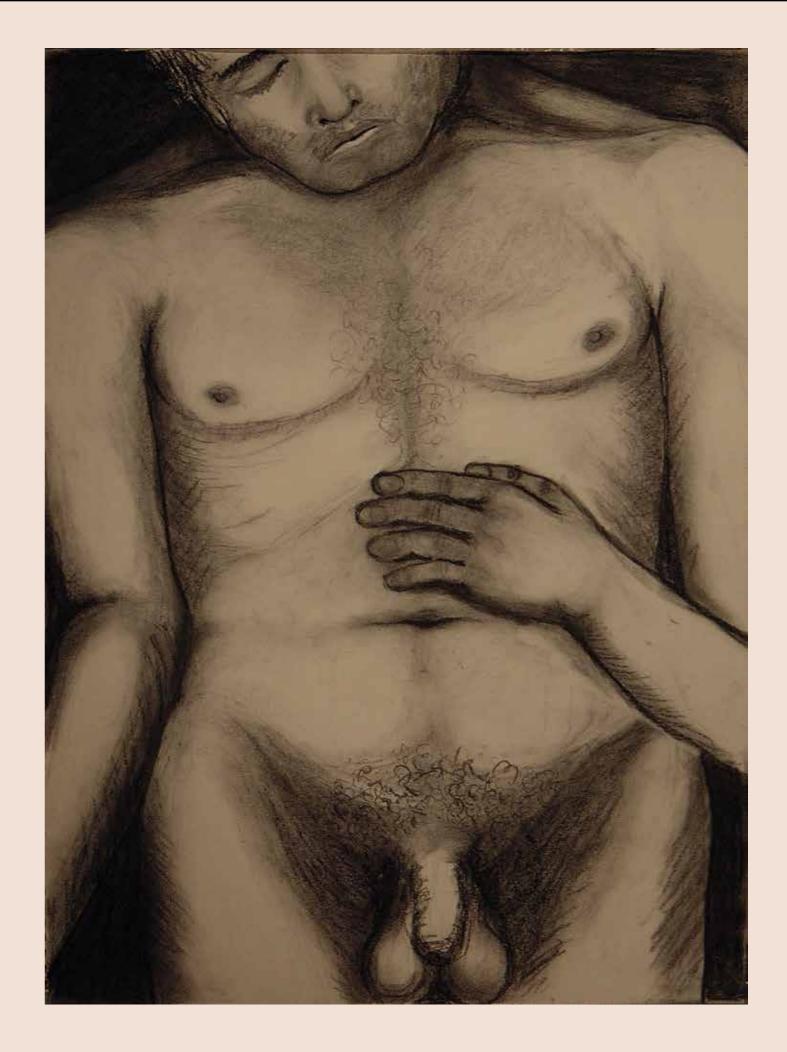
He takes the dying in his arms and hangs their garlands in everlasting groves.

You'll find him in the golden wine and laughter,

the granary and wisdom. He stands with me to watch new lambs in Spring and burning leaves in Autumn.

He is my shadow

and gives me my dimension.

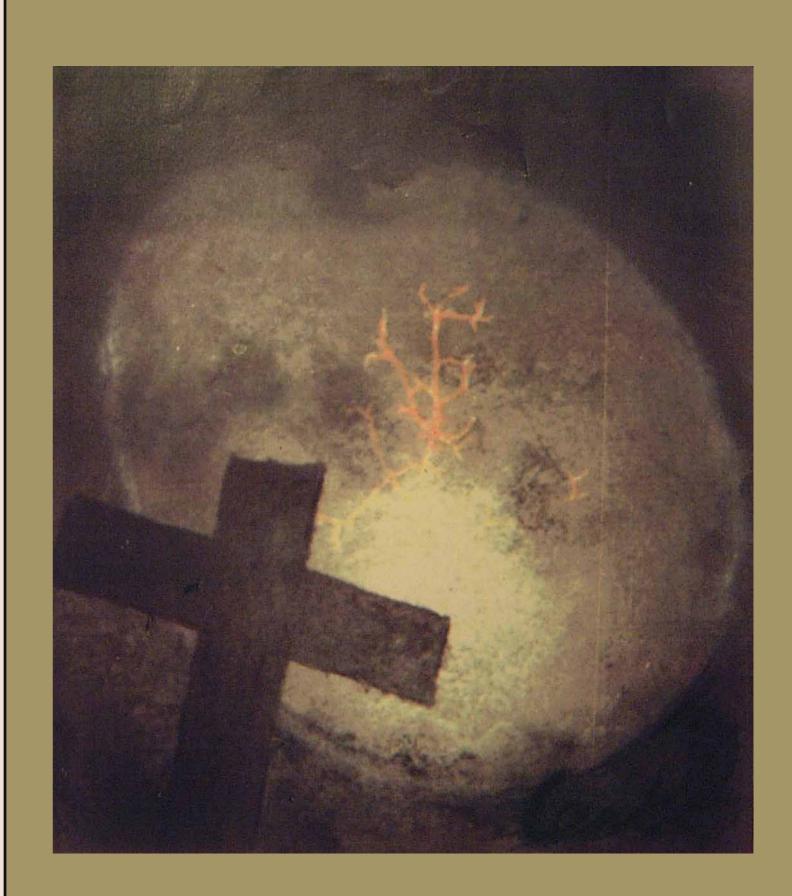


No slow music

will accompany my end, or drums roll, with trumpets sounding over my grave.

O No, my crown will hang where the blackthorn grows and Magpies lay sorrow with their treasure.

Take my death lightly when it comes, for black has been my faithful friend so long; it frames my colour and honours the bones of all who dream.



I said Amen on the first day of Spring when I saw the clown crucified. There were nails piercing his dancing feet and a cap of thorns for his crown. The laughing mask on his painted face that made the children smile is washed clean by the rain from my drowning eyes as I sit with my grief at the tree where he hangs like a leaf from a Summer gone.



O Christmas mystery dry-boned in Easter's skeletal truth, come to birth again! Miracle re-born in ancient creed, Life and Death in wedlock bound. Spirit cross-purposed be mine!



A single breath got me with child, mouth-yield of my labour.

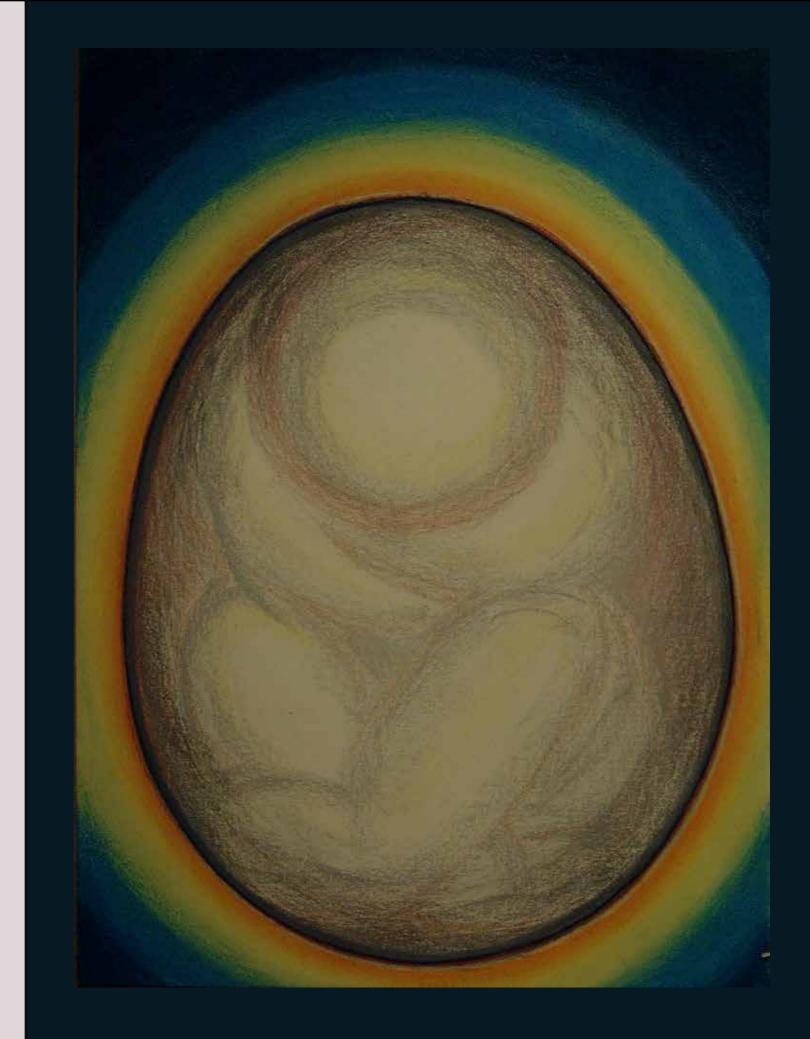
Shame holds the bastard fast against the time when all is known and this our child be called unnatural a brain-child of illicit love.

O give me strength to bear the shafts of ignominy! without the shield you stole the day you left.



Hullo Egg! Where are the trammels of conception gone? and the genetic fervour known as love?

Your simple beauty, Egg, is no mean achievement, and hides the fire within that sets the Phoenix flying at the time appointed.

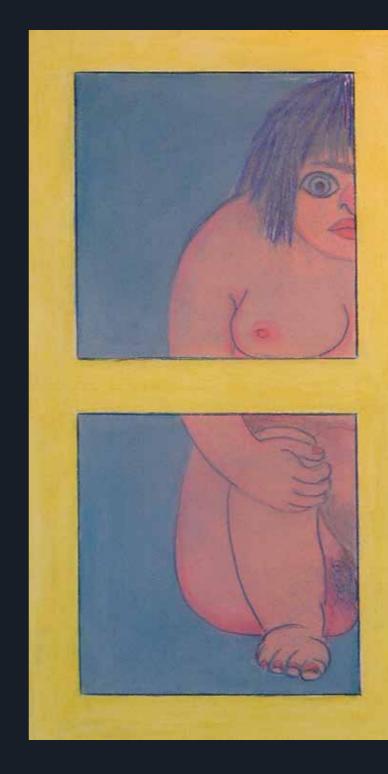


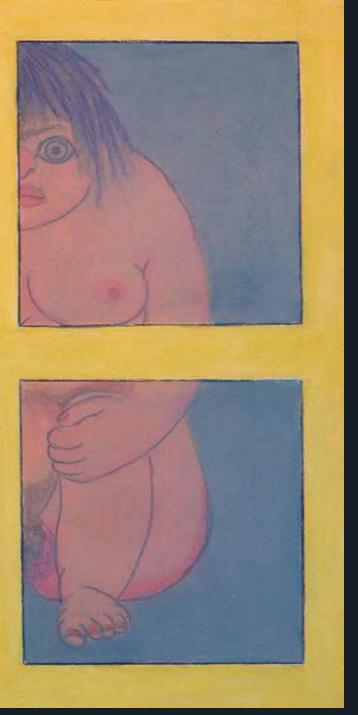
This child, fathered by love and fatherless, has turned full-circle in my womb, and gathered strength to move head-strong into the dark passage

Sharp signals pierce me, and my rushing breath tells of peril stalking through stretched arches past beating drums that mark the progress of this scarlet stranger.

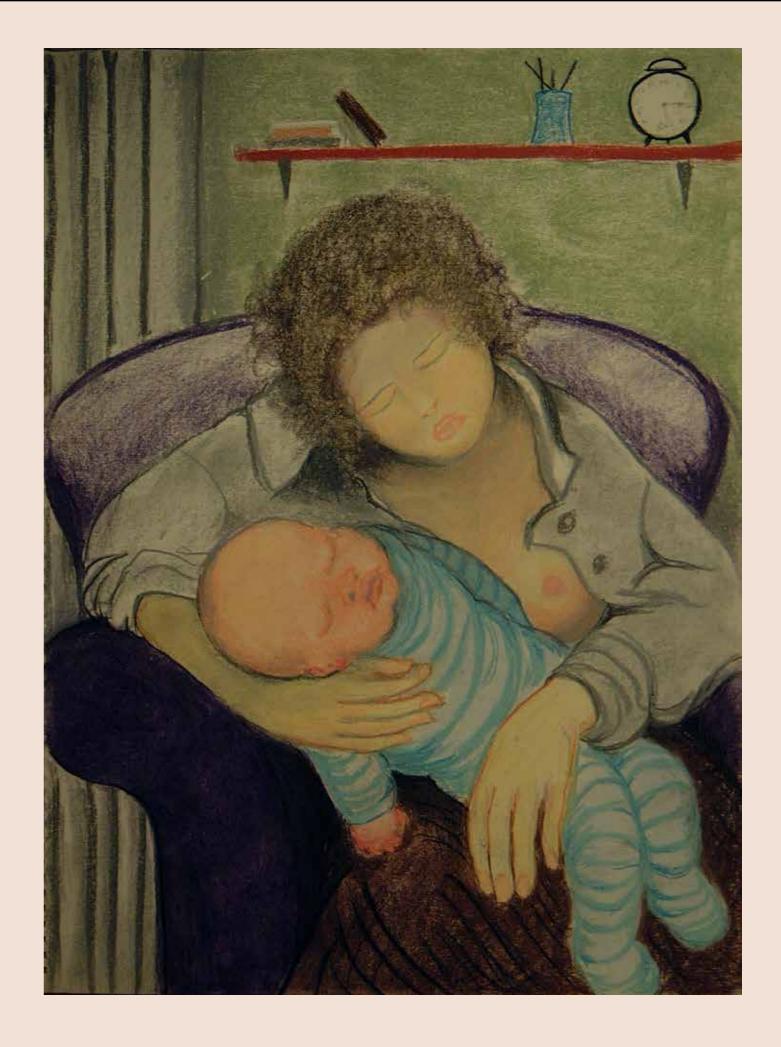
The slow march labours on, until a far off ringing in my brain proclaims the parting and forgotten power forces the exit to yield before the crown.

Call up the frost-bound stars to shower their fire in celebration of this birth! Whistle up the four winds to meet and swing the cradle, gently, gently, so we shall sleep, my child and I while love returns to light the blackened sky.





Further to my dreams the marvels of creation lie, not eased in sleep or sapling growth on sheltered slopes, but where great trees root deep in time that rings the hard-wood trunks, and swings their boughs weighted with gold, at heights determined by genetic code and random propagation. Yesterday the fountain-head joined us in purpose till this new-born child called us from labour to blind us with wonder at this proof of love.



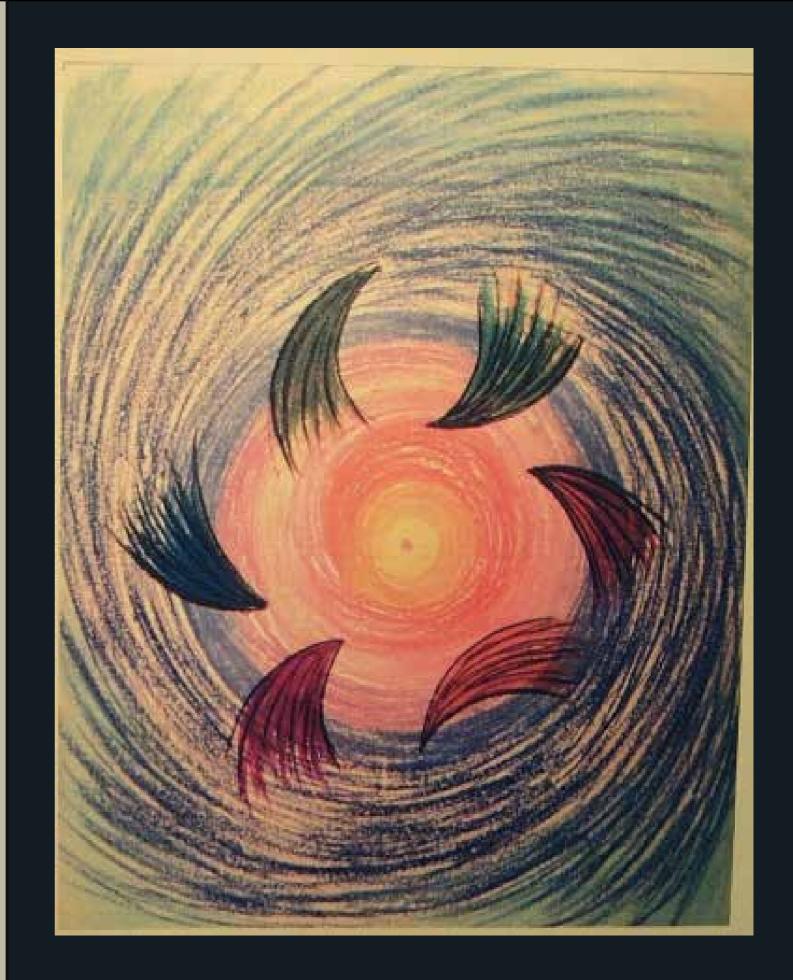
In the middle of the city birds rest.

Why not? They come from all four corners of the earth to meet in honour of a Royal Birth.

North, South, East and west, they match arrival times and circle on even wings to land jostling and shrill, to share their points of view with Nelson and the lions. Reason, purpose, virtue hang suspended

Occasion reigns.

Knowing and not knowing, the birds have come to leave the centre for a flying start.



Curb the force that takes us to the grave lest the banks burst and flood the meadow land.

High winds and tides and forthright words carry strength to break through loaded locks and breach the dam that holds the power to generate a transformation.

Sluice gates yield at

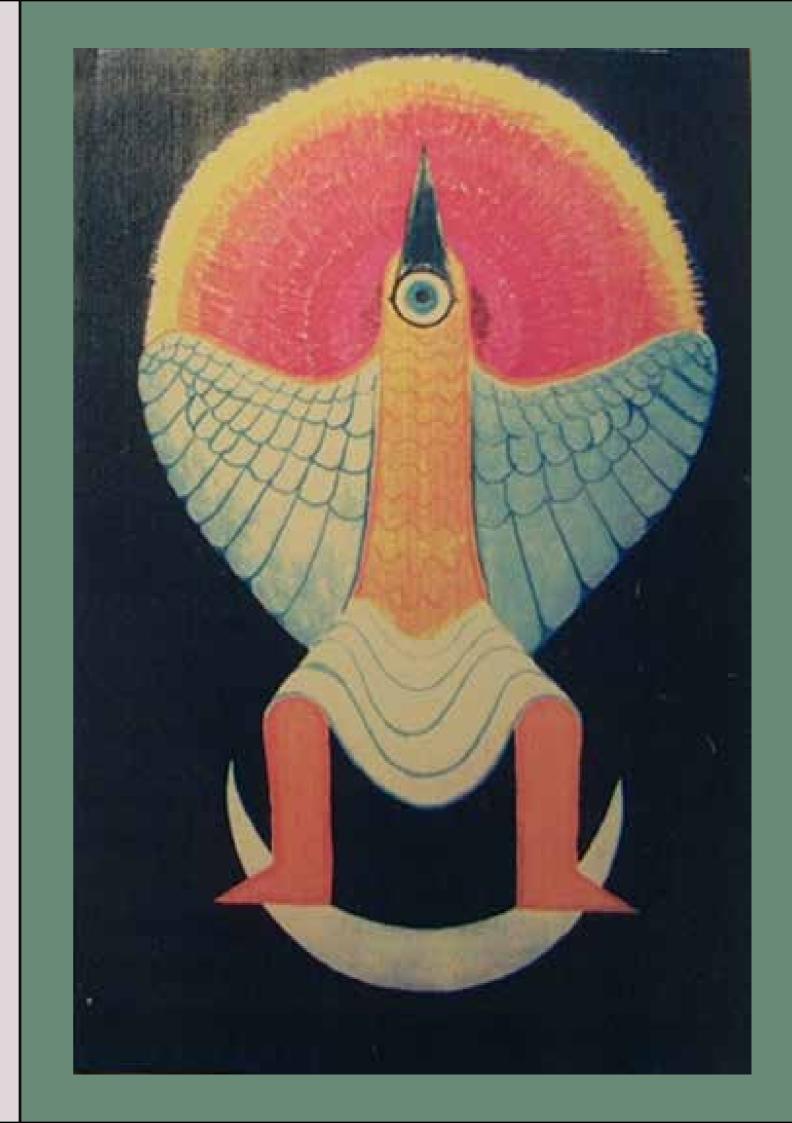
the line of exit, the mill-race pours in guided flow, and where will you be, my maiden love, when the wheel starts turning for me?



Thundering falls fill the air with particles of rainbow light. In cosmic splendour up leaps the Spectre to claim his diamond crown swinging on his knees his huge knees with flattened thighs astride.

Up rises the golden bulrush from its silver sheath, and from his feathered torso springs the head with a single eye ablaze with fire.

Watch him stir sleepers from their dreams, draw spirits from bare walls and open eyes closed in delusion. His magic voice will rouse the children's play with skipping words and singing lines in the weary hours of time. Why has he come so late to wrest the pillow from my head? No depth, or space, or time can ever close him in again. The master of illusion looks for new investment.



Coming down to earth from out of the cloud-wrapped heights to the ashes of waste hours, lost lines and broken words, one particle remains to light another fire.

The body's touch with taste sound, smell and sight, renews hum-drum ways of working days stopping and starting, and cutting corners to find new routes, my rattle-bang bus proceeds across hills and valleys and knows no line of parting.

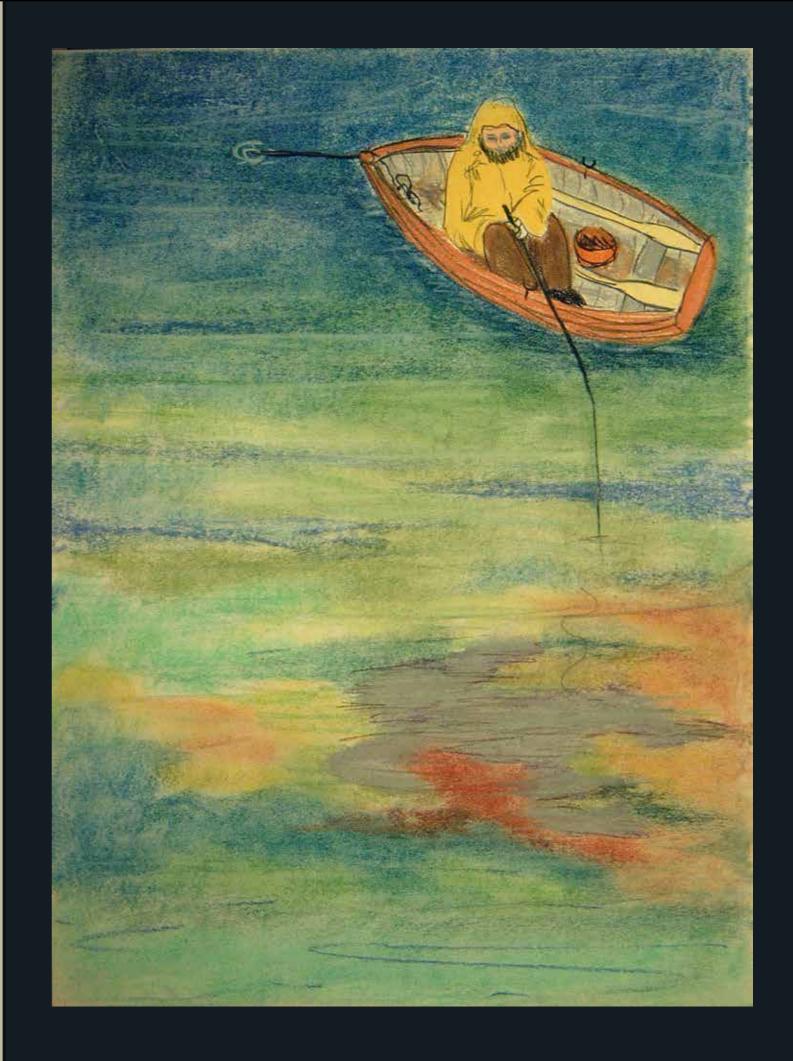
> Alone and together Pilgrims make their way.



Waiting for the fish to rise the Watcher holds his brief, until

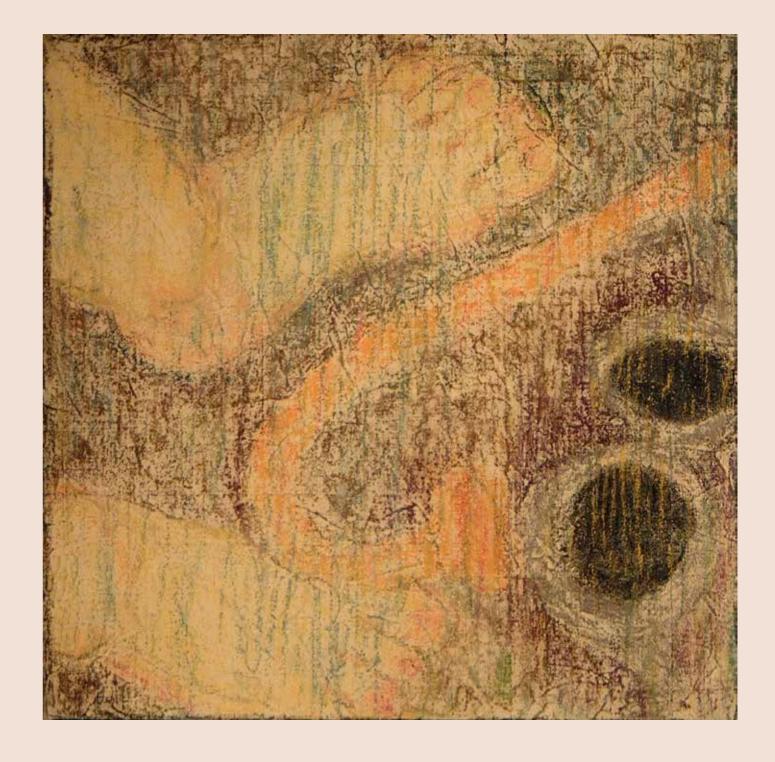
rising and falling falling

she finds her feet again.





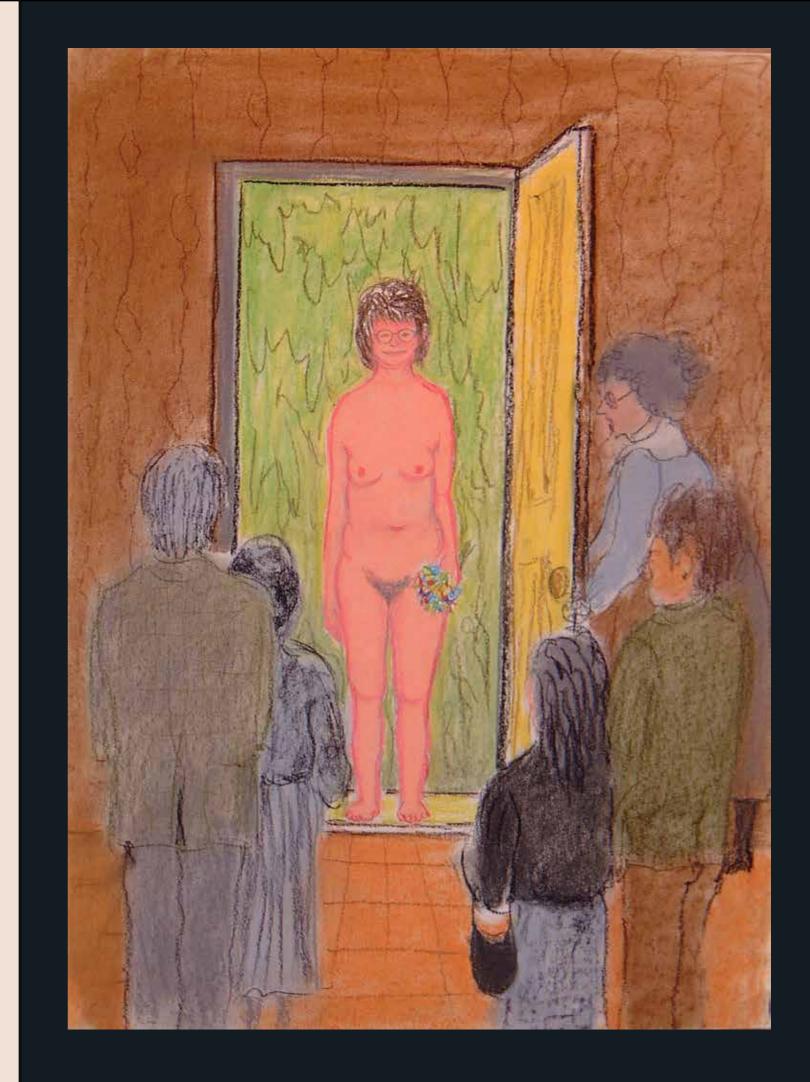
She has a lucid look in her eyes again now the troubled water has resumed its calm. Eyes closed in blindness bave regained their sight, for seeing alters the mirror image, and sleep returns to plumb Shallows mark the exit from the depth when sure-footed steps return to upper slopes.



My lay-about suit was flowered with poppies of the grave. It was a neat affair, becoming to my age, and hid my trembling heart.

Appraising my uncovering my counsellors commend my fortitude, deflecting stricken glances from the door.

But the seeds of decay are set in furrowed lines. There is no Spring renewal. I hang by the thread that joins death and immortality.

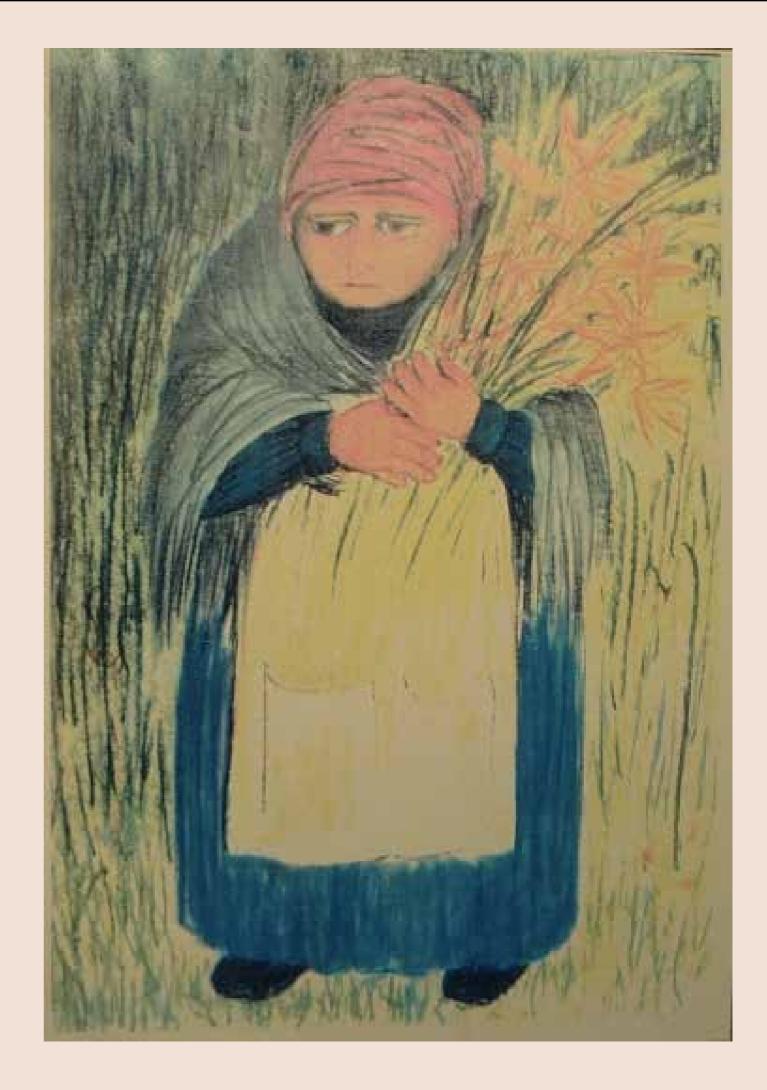


The fabric of my spendthrift life is due for re-newal. It's threadbare patches and bursting seams have seen some service and survived.

> Signs of fading that soften the scars of fortune and betrayal, hide stains of negligence.

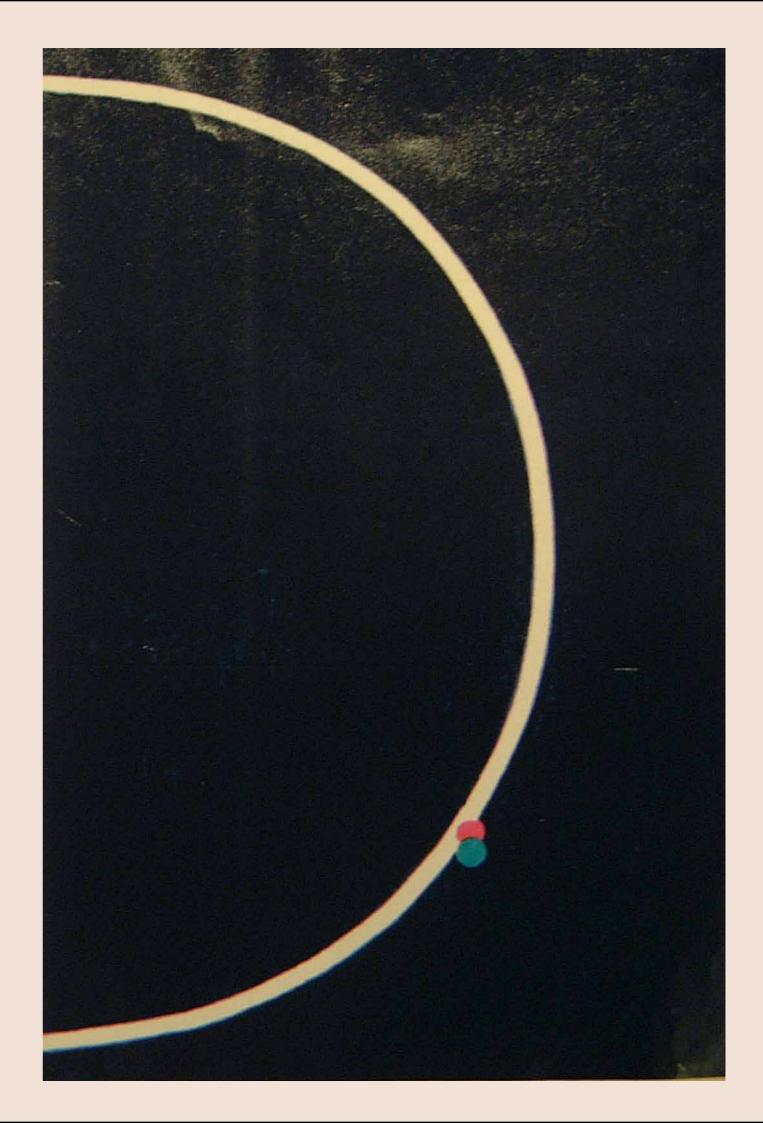
Fear of exposure to the mid-day sun that burns skin-deep, is not of the bright light, but loss of silent shade for songsters.

Let colour come with springing words and my old clothes out-live the claims of fashion. Let evening come with singing birds and night restore dimension.



We will leave the world one day we, the living, and others will come to live in our familiar places. Children of the spirit, orphans of convention, and the bewildered, will make their daily journey to the city on tracks laid down by ever-watchful vigilants fearful of change. Your feet and mine, together for a while, travel without concessionary fares for a return journey. We will go through deserts, scale measured heights and sink in waters of abysmal depth.

> Rising and falling sinking and swimming, We go.



Dear Love,

that carries all my passion, never leave me.

Tear aside the curtain of bewilderment and call me by name. Let my mark be your mark, light as a feather from the golden wing that touches the eyes of lovers in their sleep.

And when they wake fold sorrow in these lines and join our hands in celebration.



