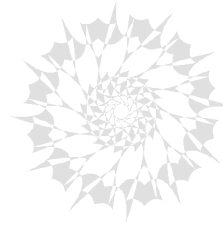
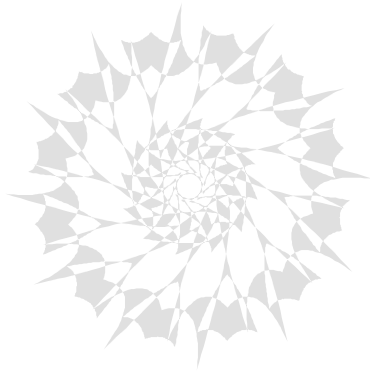


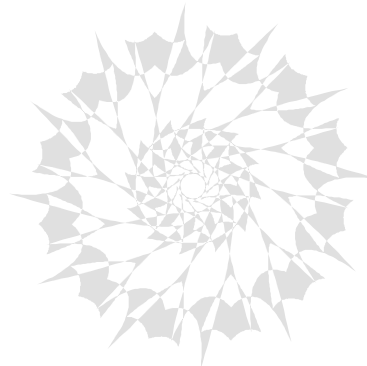
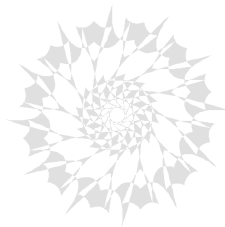
This group of poetry was originally published in booklet format using Microsoft Publisher. It has been modified by converting it to a PDF file, which is more universally available on home computers. The original size and graphics have been maintained with each poem on a separate page although standard sheet size is used instead of the original booklet size sheet. The poems are copyright protected, but feel free to send them to friends if you do so free of charge, which was the original intent.



A few poems from the infinite set of similes
that approximate the varied ways we love.

Ways That We Love

Poems and Graphics
by
Jim Michie





Acknowledgments

A deep bow to Elizabeth Barrett Browning who inspired me to offer my own perspective, and to Sir Winston Churchill, for a clever turn of phrase.

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Foreword

Love

double-edged

A rush of emotion

leaving reason to catch you
if it can

Tunneling through happenstance
in a rush for fulfillment

Eros

A meshing of the intellect

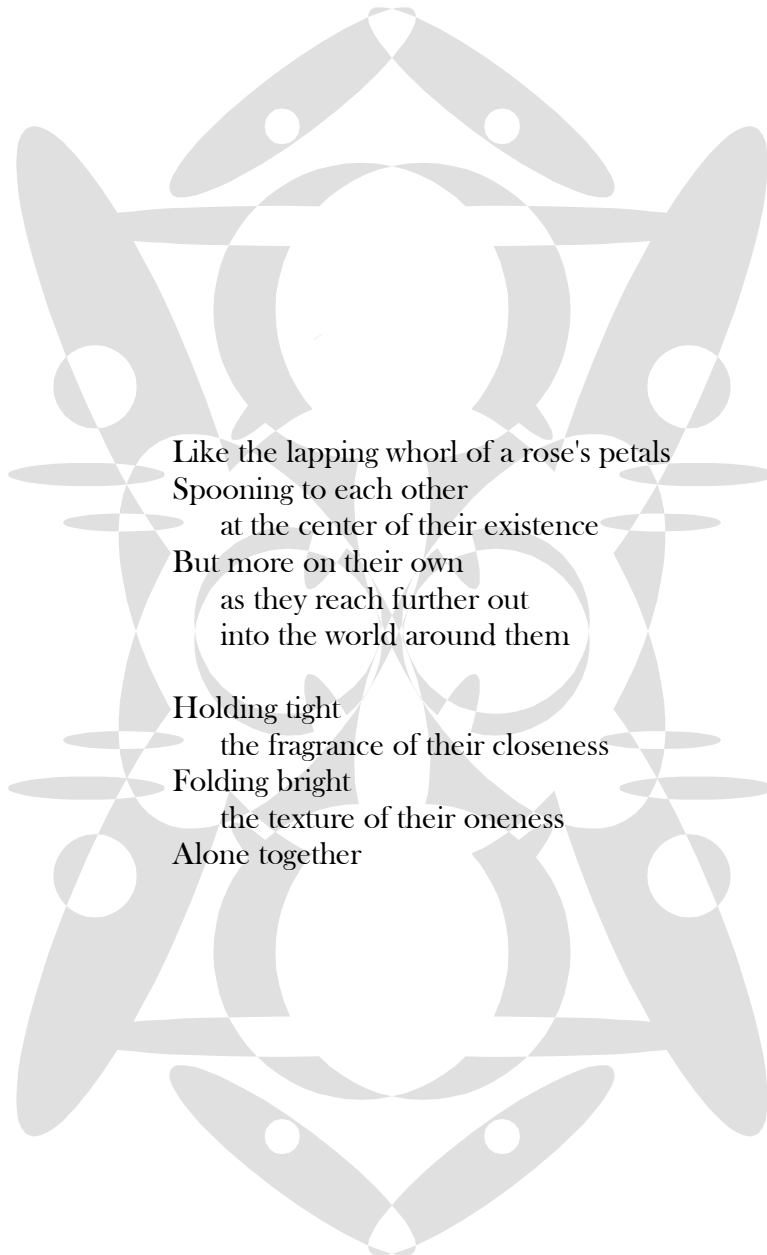
grappling with life's vagaries
when it can

Forging a Damascus
to cleave the apathy of self

Agape

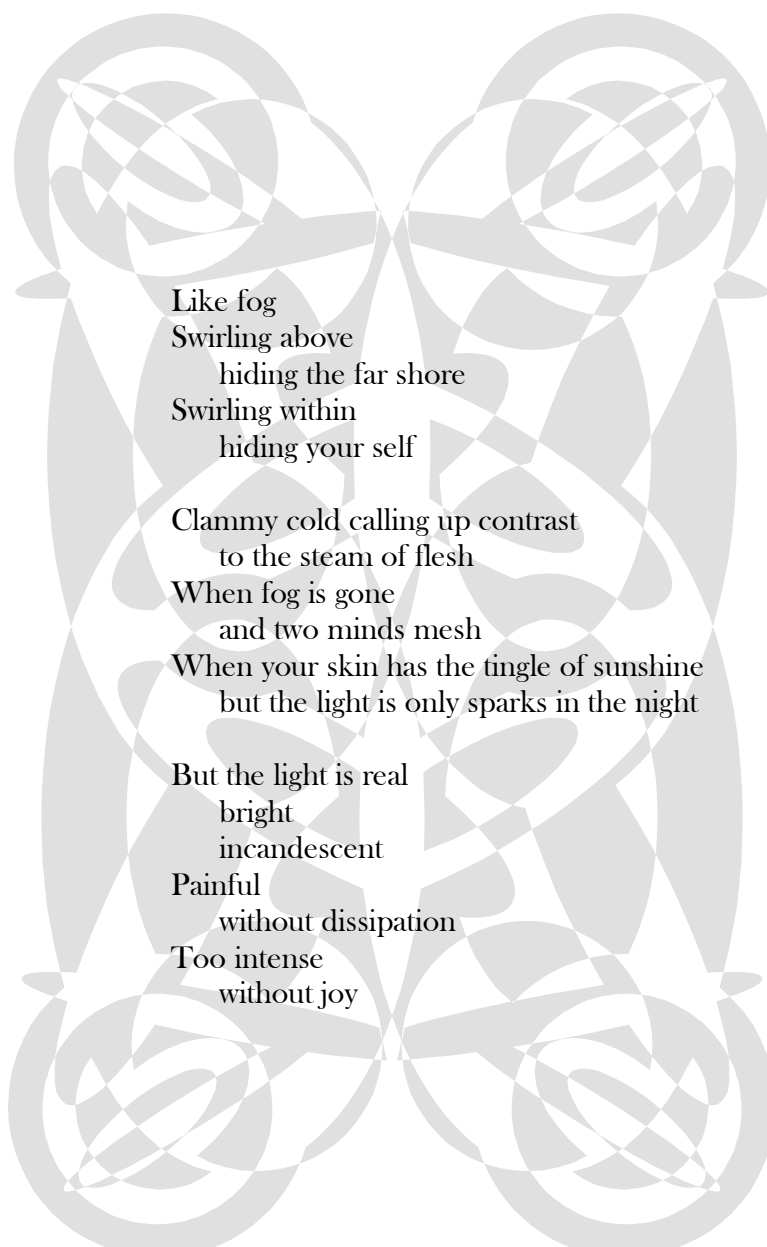
Wrapping the mystery of Eros
in the enigma of agape
is to solve the riddle of life

Ecstasy



Like the lapping whorl of a rose's petals
Spooning to each other
at the center of their existence
But more on their own
as they reach further out
into the world around them

Holding tight
the fragrance of their closeness
Folding bright
the texture of their oneness
Alone together



Like fog
Swirling above
 hiding the far shore
Swirling within
 hiding your self

Clammy cold calling up contrast
 to the steam of flesh
When fog is gone
 and two minds mesh
When your skin has the tingle of sunshine
 but the light is only sparks in the night

But the light is real
 bright
 incandescent
Painful
 without dissipation
Too intense
 without joy

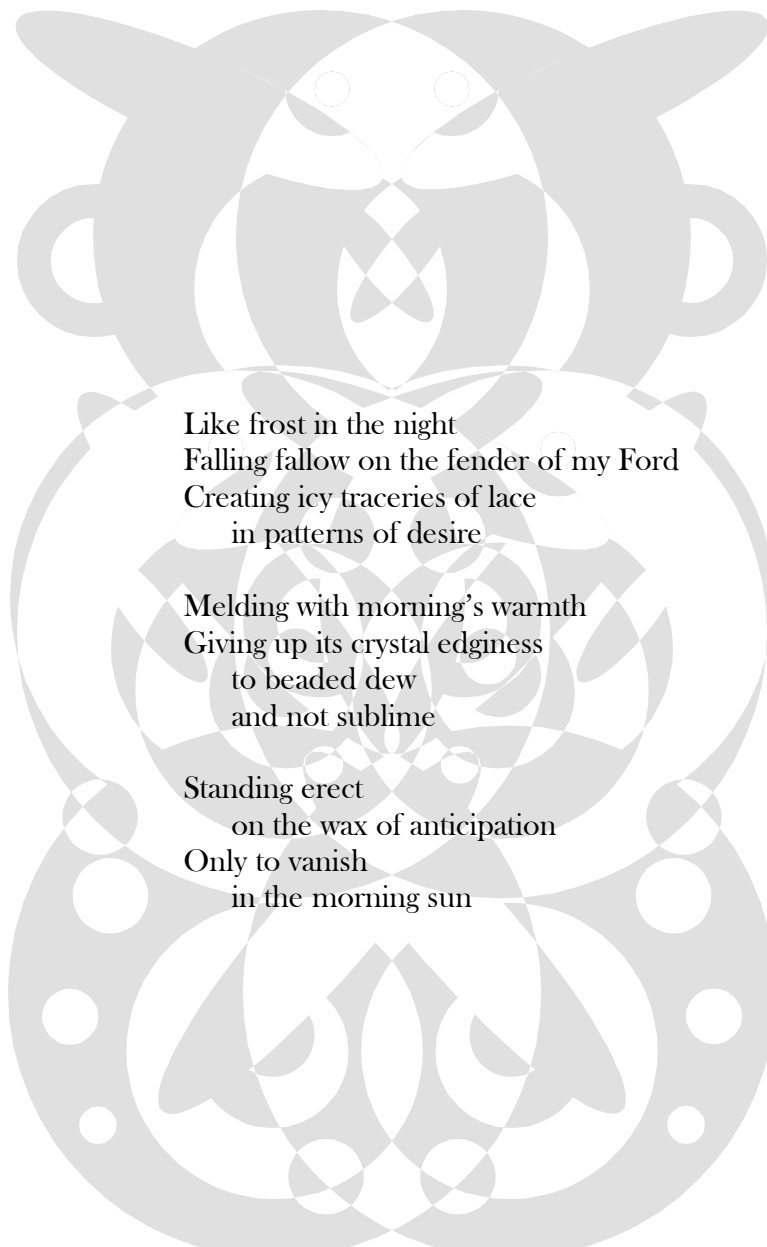


Like binary stars
Locked in joyful dance

Each with our own attraction
held at bay by our speed
Each with our own spectrum
bathing in the other's light

Seen out of phase as two distinct entities
Seen in phase as a bright unity

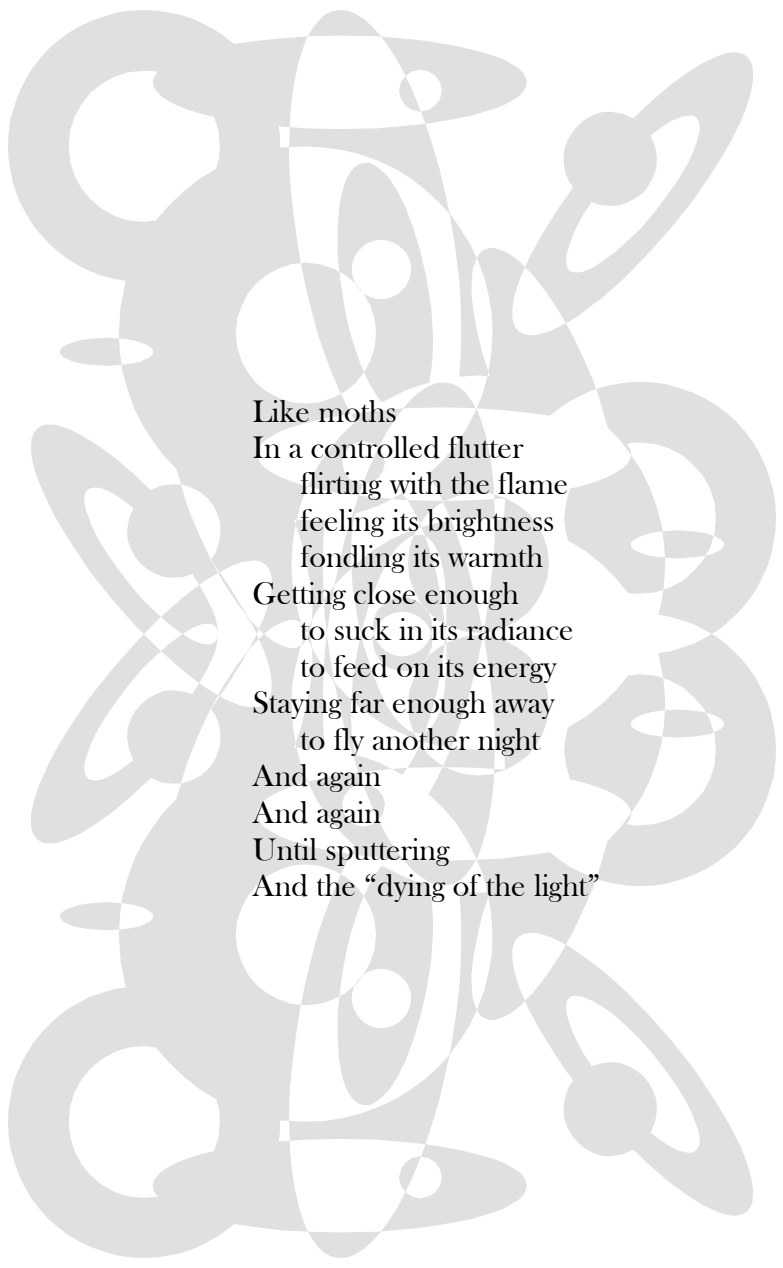
Sharing the warmth
Sharing the light



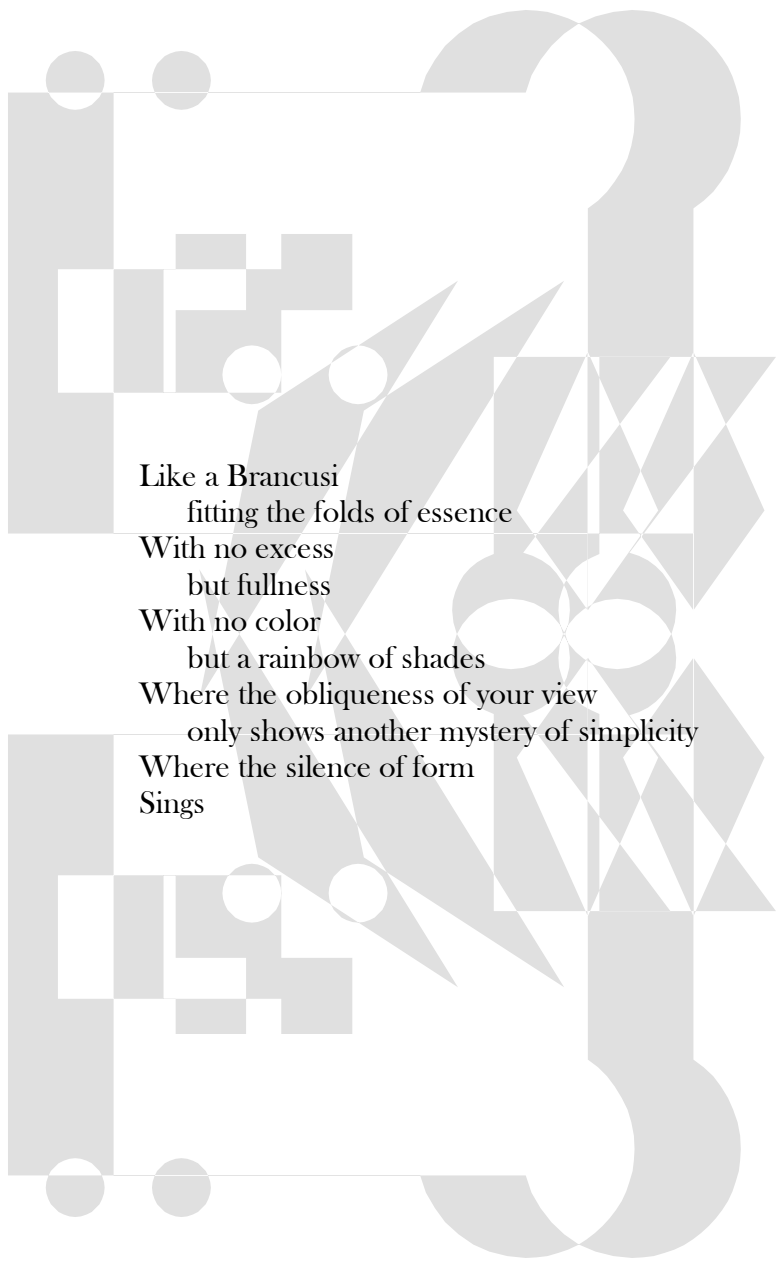
Like frost in the night
Falling fallow on the fender of my Ford
Creating icy trceries of lace
in patterns of desire

Melding with morning's warmth
Giving up its crystal edginess
to beaded dew
and not sublime

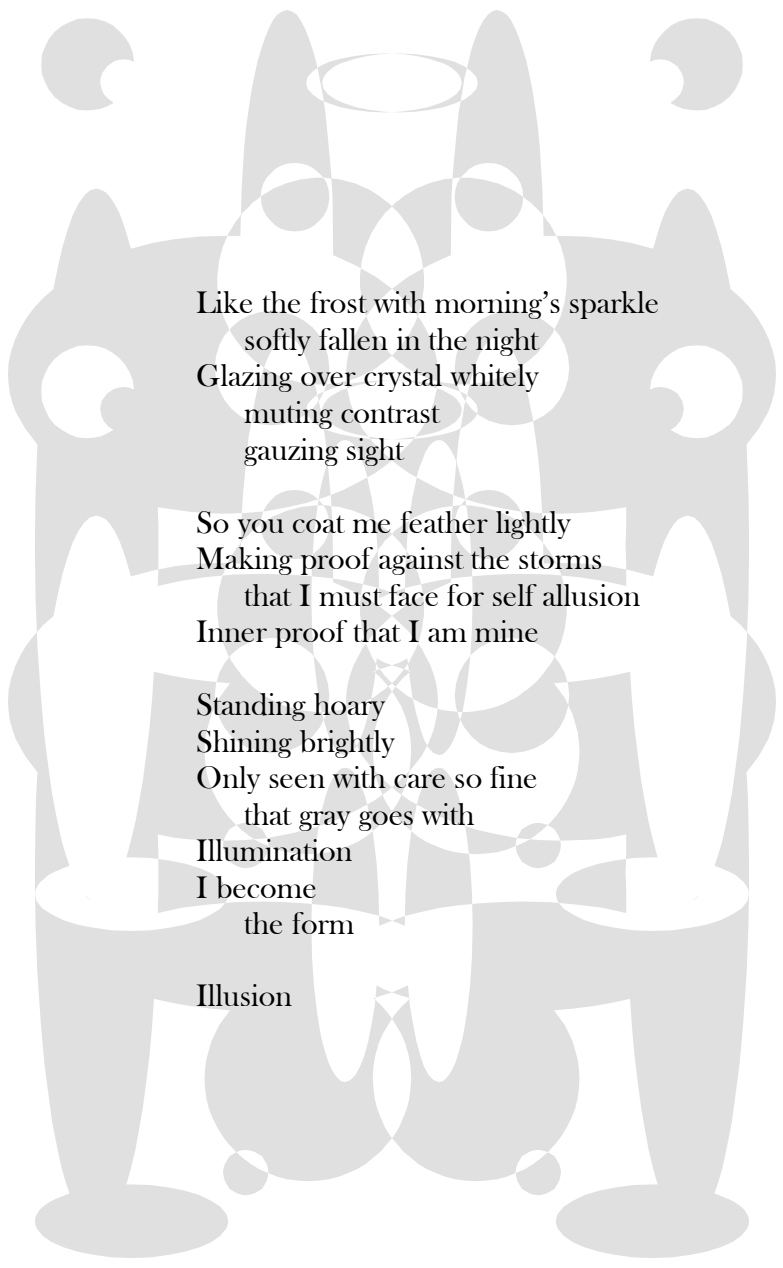
Standing erect
on the wax of anticipation
Only to vanish
in the morning sun



Like moths
In a controlled flutter
flirting with the flame
feeling its brightness
fondling its warmth
Getting close enough
to suck in its radiance
to feed on its energy
Staying far enough away
to fly another night
And again
And again
Until sputtering
And the “dying of the light”



Like a Brancusi
fitting the folds of essence
With no excess
but fullness
With no color
but a rainbow of shades
Where the obliqueness of your view
only shows another mystery of simplicity
Where the silence of form
Sings

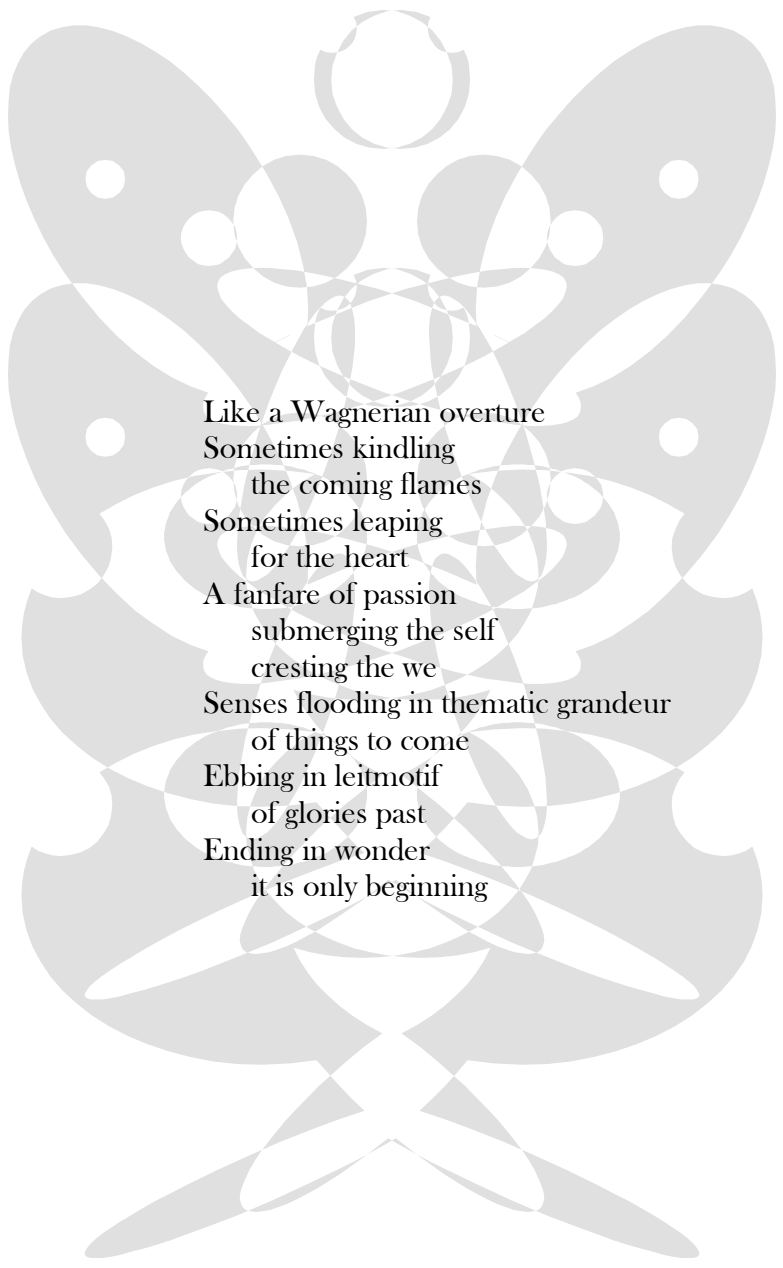


Like the frost with morning's sparkle
softly fallen in the night
Glazing over crystal whitely
muting contrast
gauzing sight

So you coat me feather lightly
Making proof against the storms
that I must face for self allusion
Inner proof that I am mine

Standing hoary
Shining brightly
Only seen with care so fine
that gray goes with
Illumination
I become
the form

Illusion



Like a Wagnerian overture
Sometimes kindling
the coming flames
Sometimes leaping
for the heart
A fanfare of passion
submerging the self
cresting the we
Senses flooding in thematic grandeur
of things to come
Ebbing in leitmotif
of glories past
Ending in wonder
it is only beginning

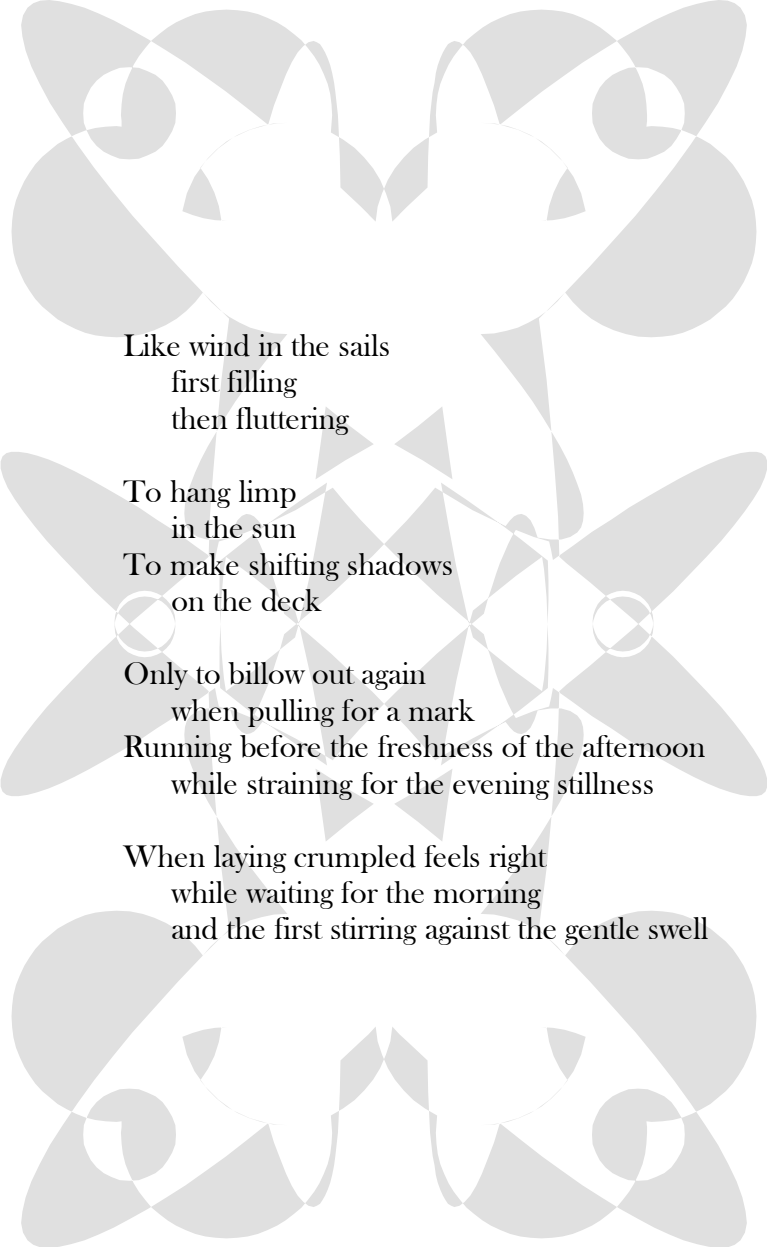


Like ruts in a back-country road
Travel worn
Euclidean ruled

Twinned through verdant pastures
Carving through sun and shade tunnels

Climbing the highs
Traversing the lows

Slippery through the mud
Crunchy through the gravel
Invisible on the hard surfaces
But getting there together

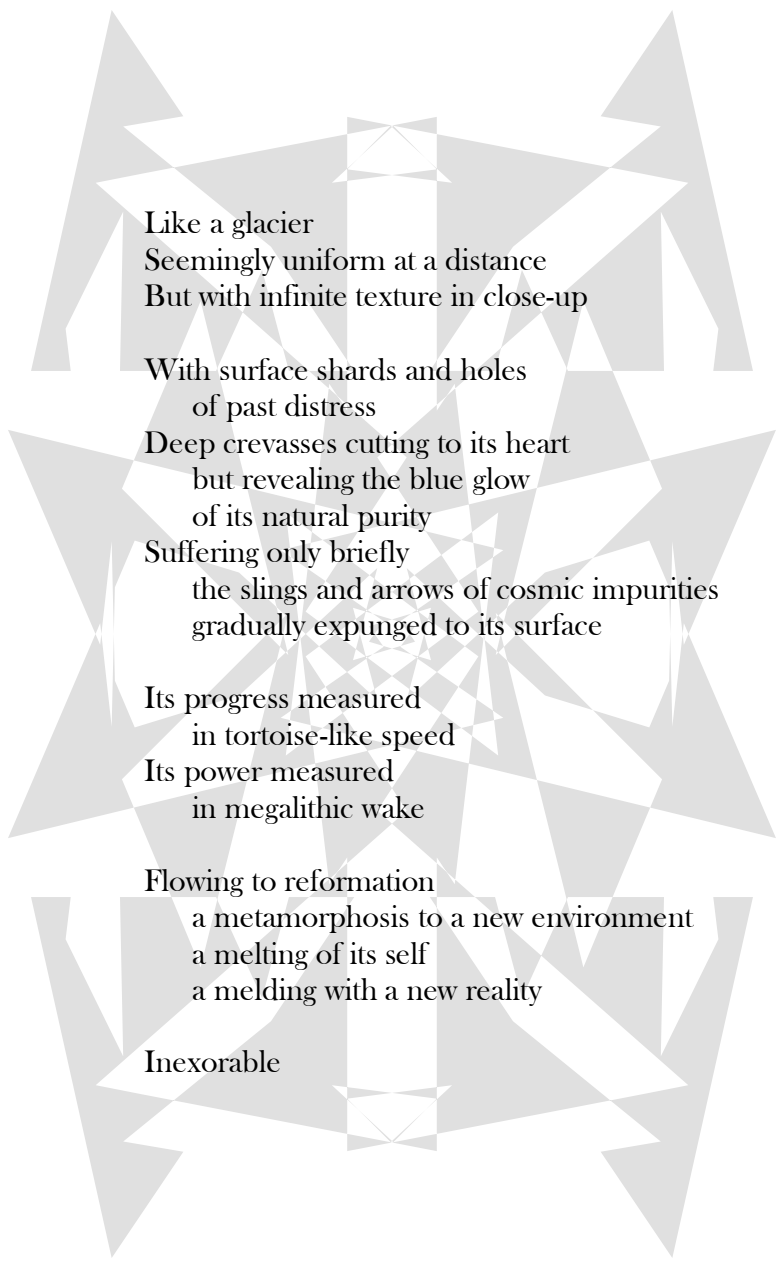


Like wind in the sails
first filling
then fluttering

To hang limp
in the sun
To make shifting shadows
on the deck

Only to billow out again
when pulling for a mark
Running before the freshness of the afternoon
while straining for the evening stillness

When laying crumpled feels right
while waiting for the morning
and the first stirring against the gentle swell



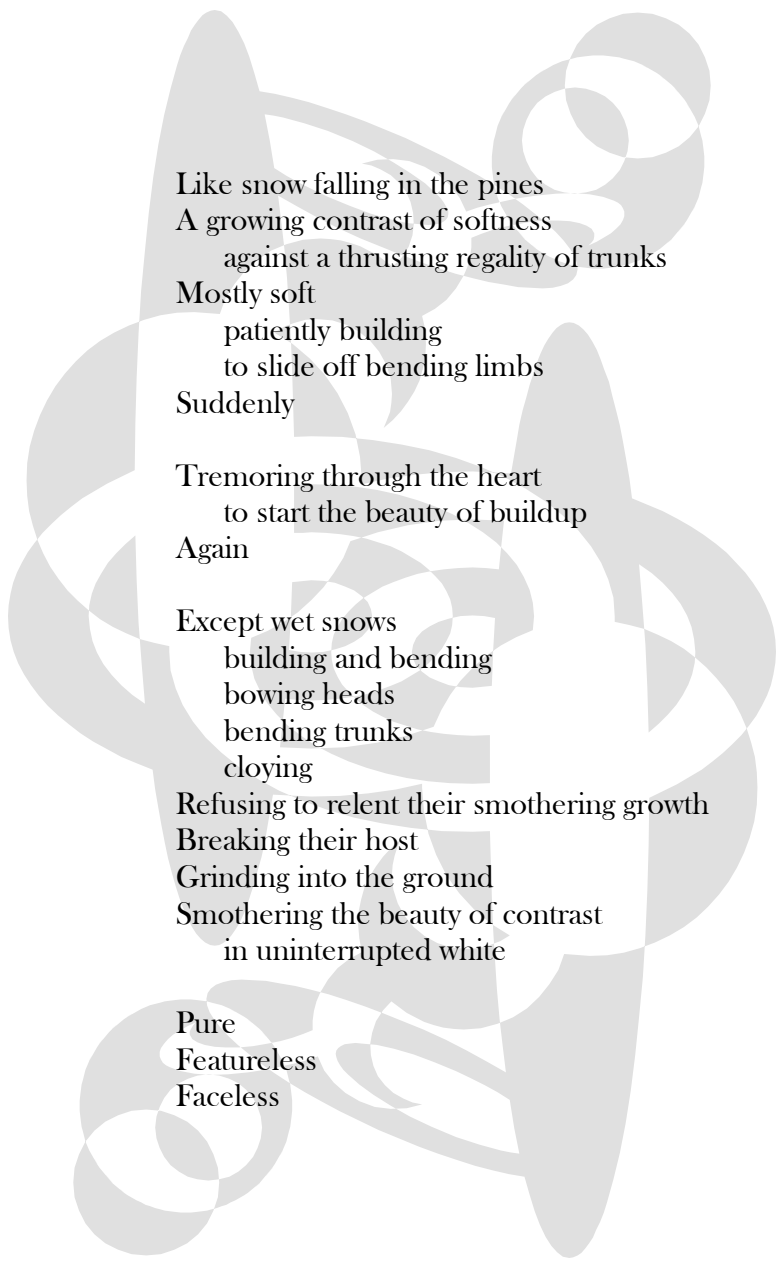
Like a glacier
Seemingly uniform at a distance
But with infinite texture in close-up

With surface shards and holes
of past distress
Deep crevasses cutting to its heart
but revealing the blue glow
of its natural purity
Suffering only briefly
the slings and arrows of cosmic impurities
gradually expunged to its surface

Its progress measured
in tortoise-like speed
Its power measured
in megalithic wake

Flowing to reformation
a metamorphosis to a new environment
a melting of its self
a melding with a new reality

Inexorable



Like snow falling in the pines
A growing contrast of softness
against a thrusting regality of trunks

Mostly soft
patiently building
to slide off bending limbs

Suddenly

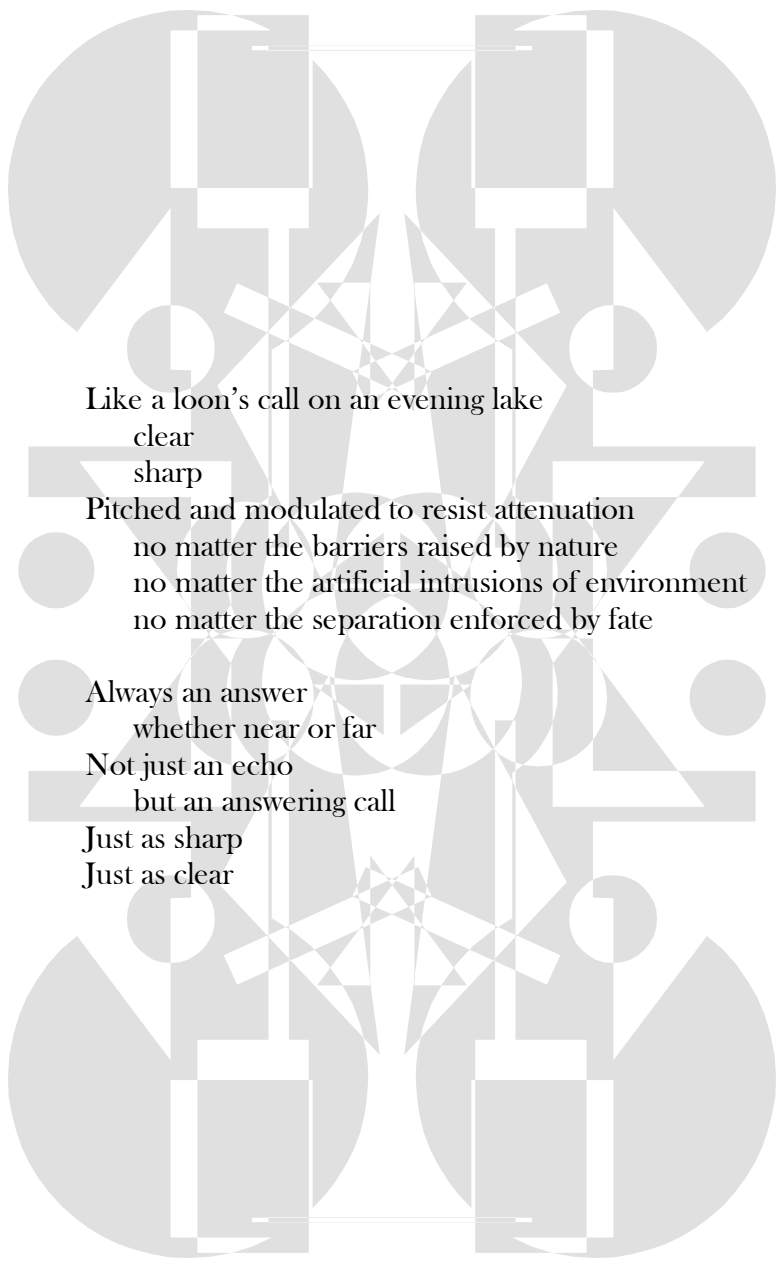
Tremoring through the heart
to start the beauty of buildup

Again

Except wet snows
building and bending
bowing heads
bending trunks
cloying

Refusing to relent their smothering growth
Breaking their host
Grinding into the ground
Smothering the beauty of contrast
in uninterrupted white

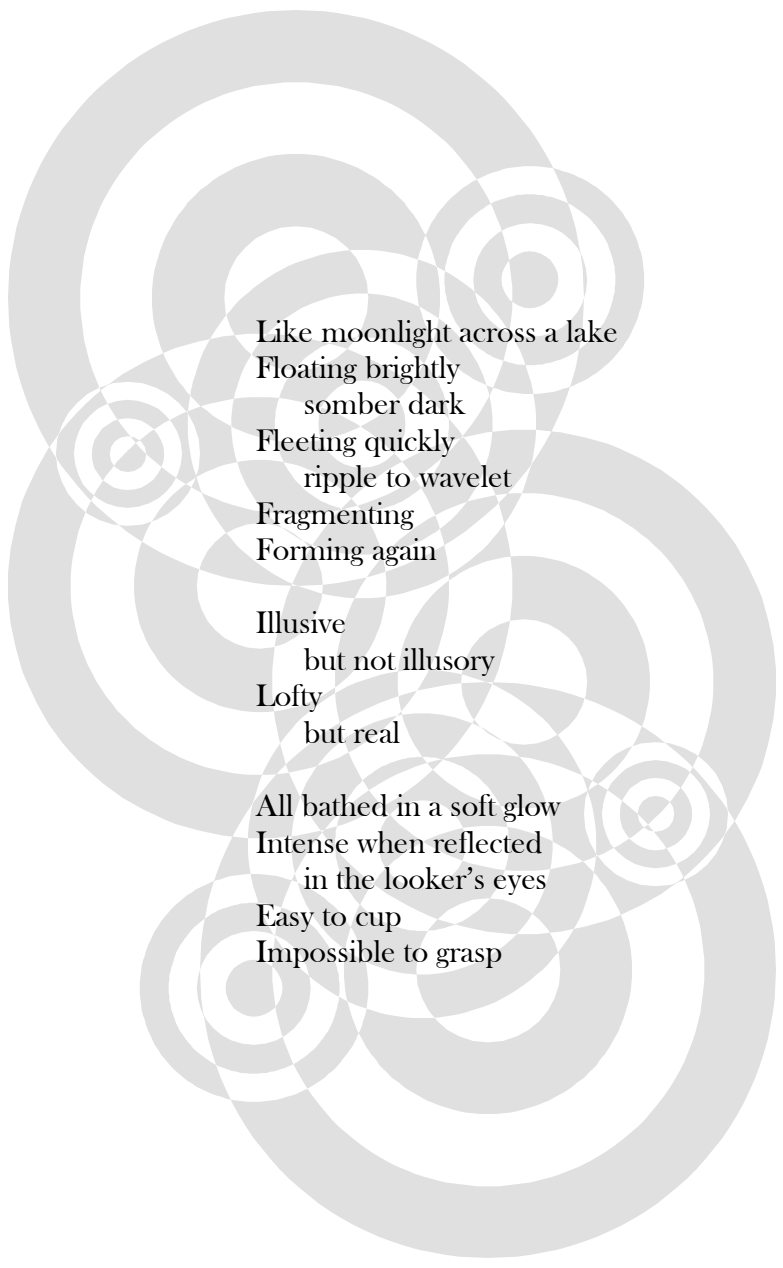
Pure
Featureless
Faceless



Like a loon's call on an evening lake
clear
sharp

Pitched and modulated to resist attenuation
no matter the barriers raised by nature
no matter the artificial intrusions of environment
no matter the separation enforced by fate

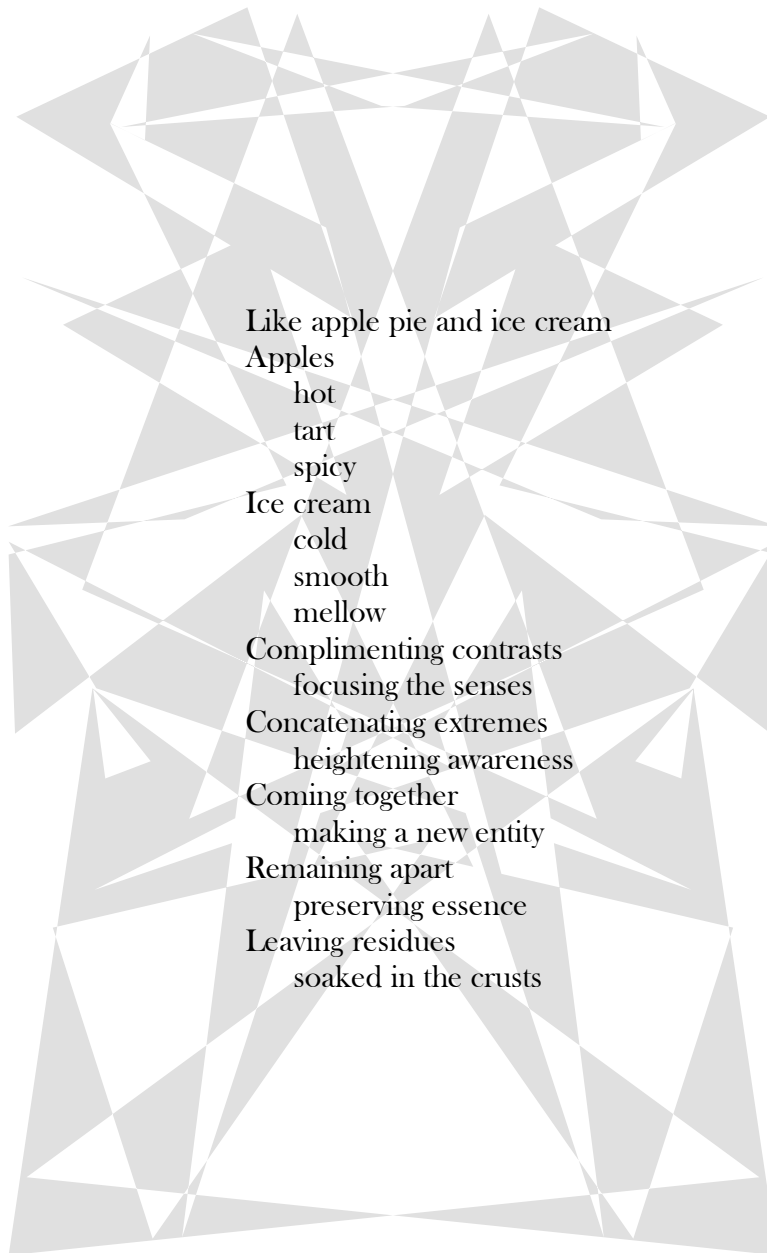
Always an answer
whether near or far
Not just an echo
but an answering call
Just as sharp
Just as clear



Like moonlight across a lake
Floating brightly
 somber dark
Fleeting quickly
 ripple to wavelet
Fragmenting
Forming again

Illusive
 but not illusory
Lofty
 but real

All bathed in a soft glow
Intense when reflected
 in the looker's eyes
Easy to cup
Impossible to grasp



Like apple pie and ice cream

Apples

hot

tart

spicy

Ice cream

cold

smooth

mellow

Complimenting contrasts

focusing the senses

Concatenating extremes

heightening awareness

Coming together

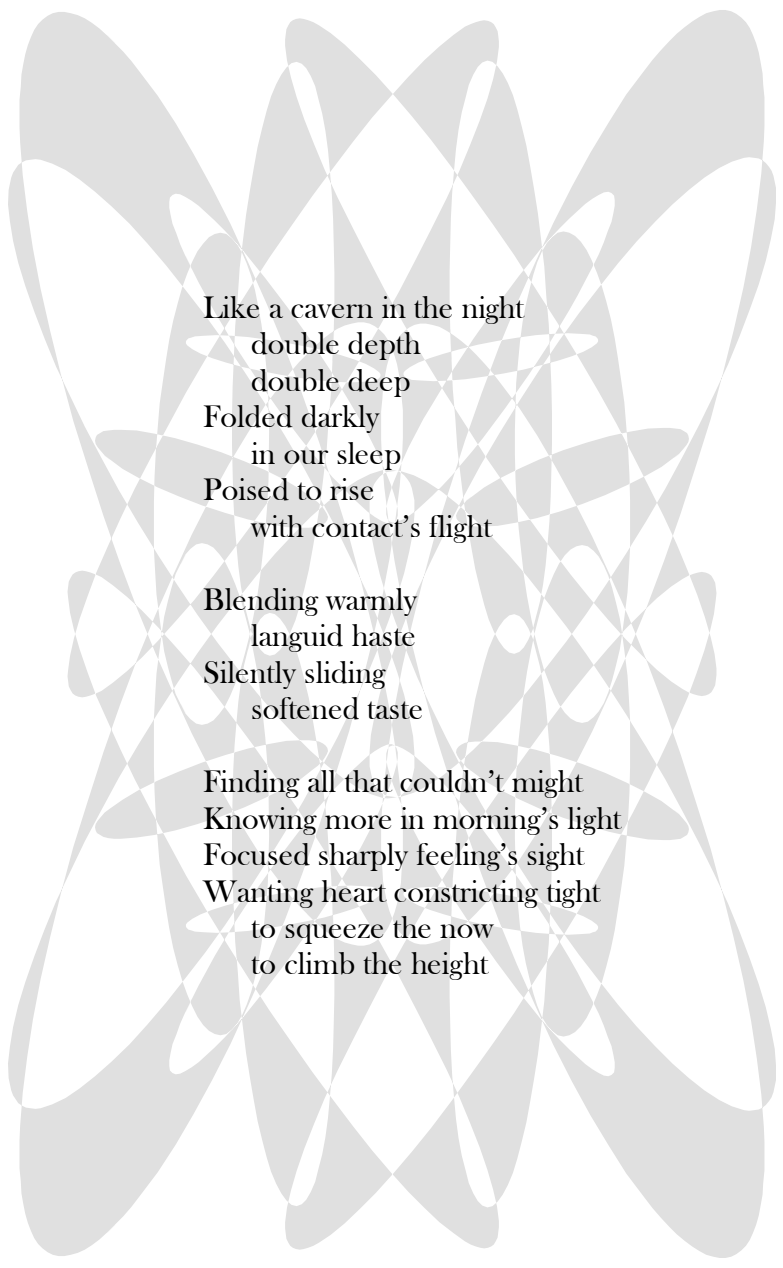
making a new entity

Remaining apart

preserving essence

Leaving residues

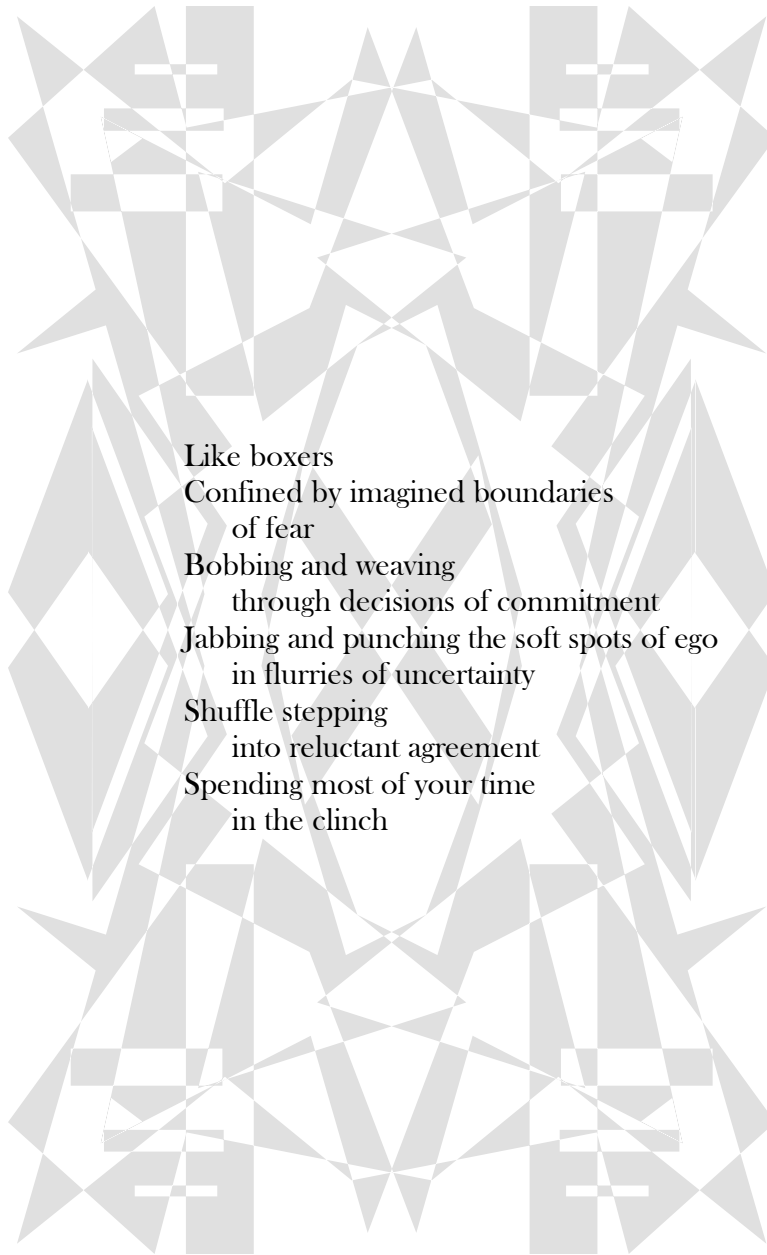
soaked in the crusts



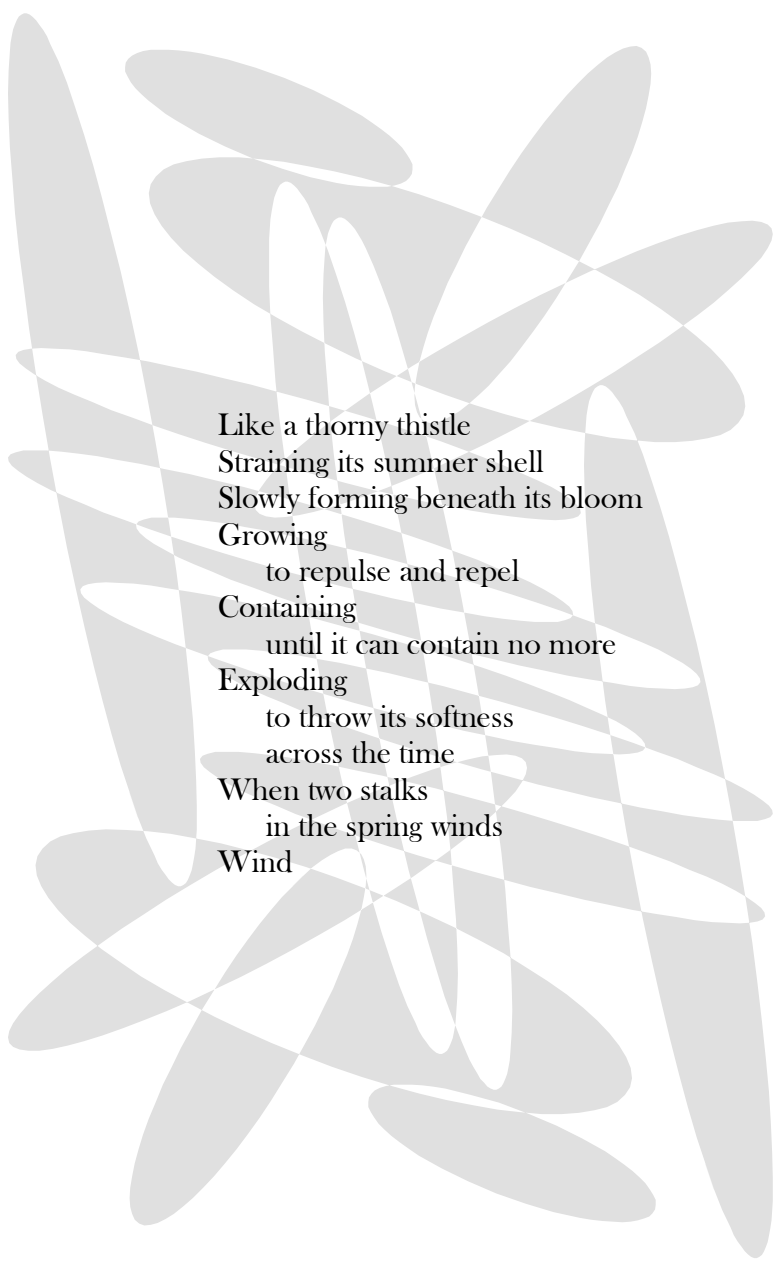
Like a cavern in the night
double depth
double deep
Folded darkly
in our sleep
Poised to rise
with contact's flight

Blending warmly
languid haste
Silently sliding
softened taste

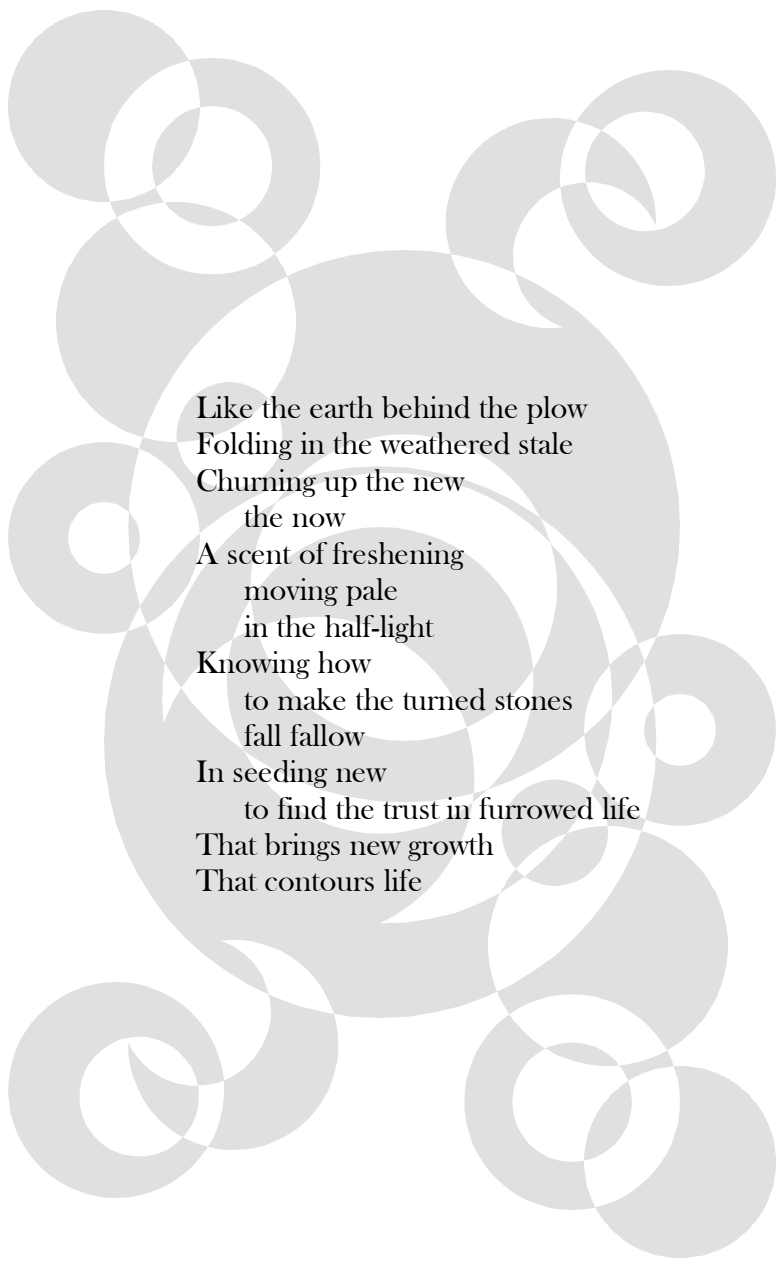
Finding all that couldn't might
Knowing more in morning's light
Focused sharply feeling's sight
Wanting heart constricting tight
to squeeze the now
to climb the height



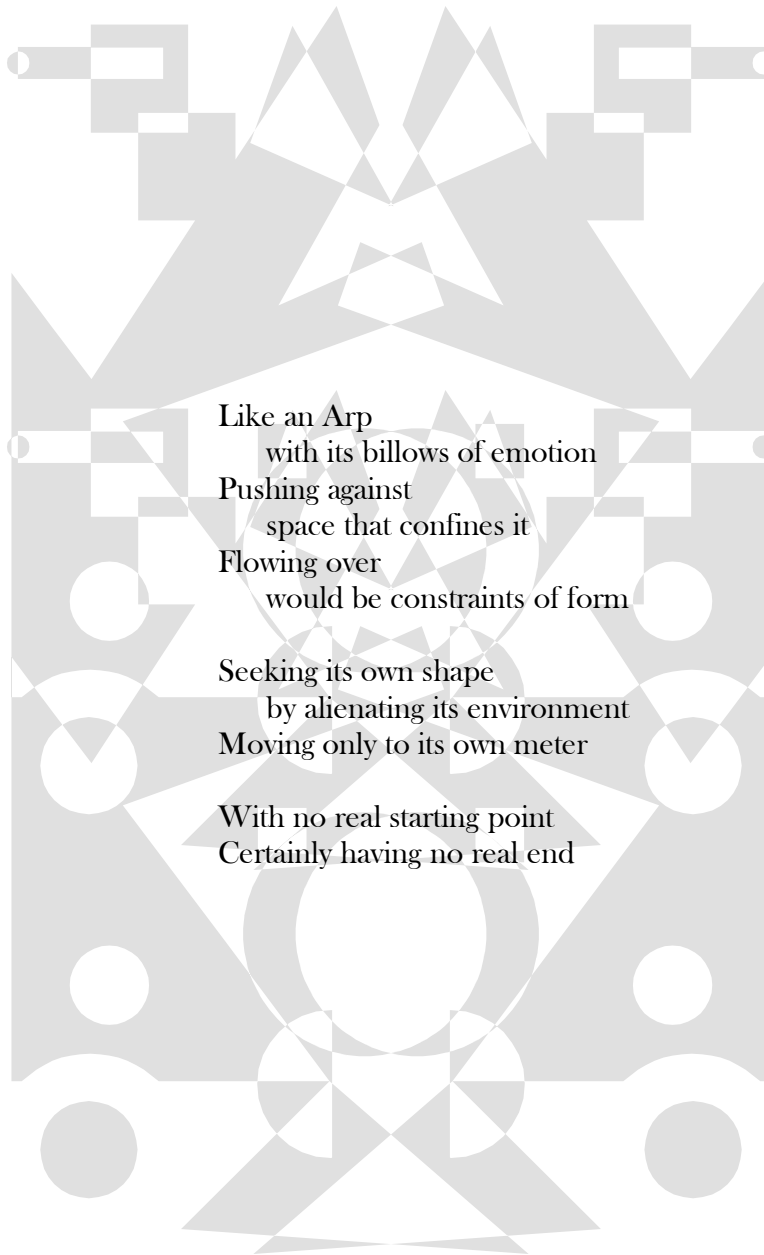
Like boxers
Confined by imagined boundaries
of fear
Bobbing and weaving
through decisions of commitment
Jabbing and punching the soft spots of ego
in flurries of uncertainty
Shuffle stepping
into reluctant agreement
Spending most of your time
in the clinch



Like a thorny thistle
Straining its summer shell
Slowly forming beneath its bloom
Growing
 to repulse and repel
Containing
 until it can contain no more
Exploding
 to throw its softness
 across the time
When two stalks
 in the spring winds
Wind



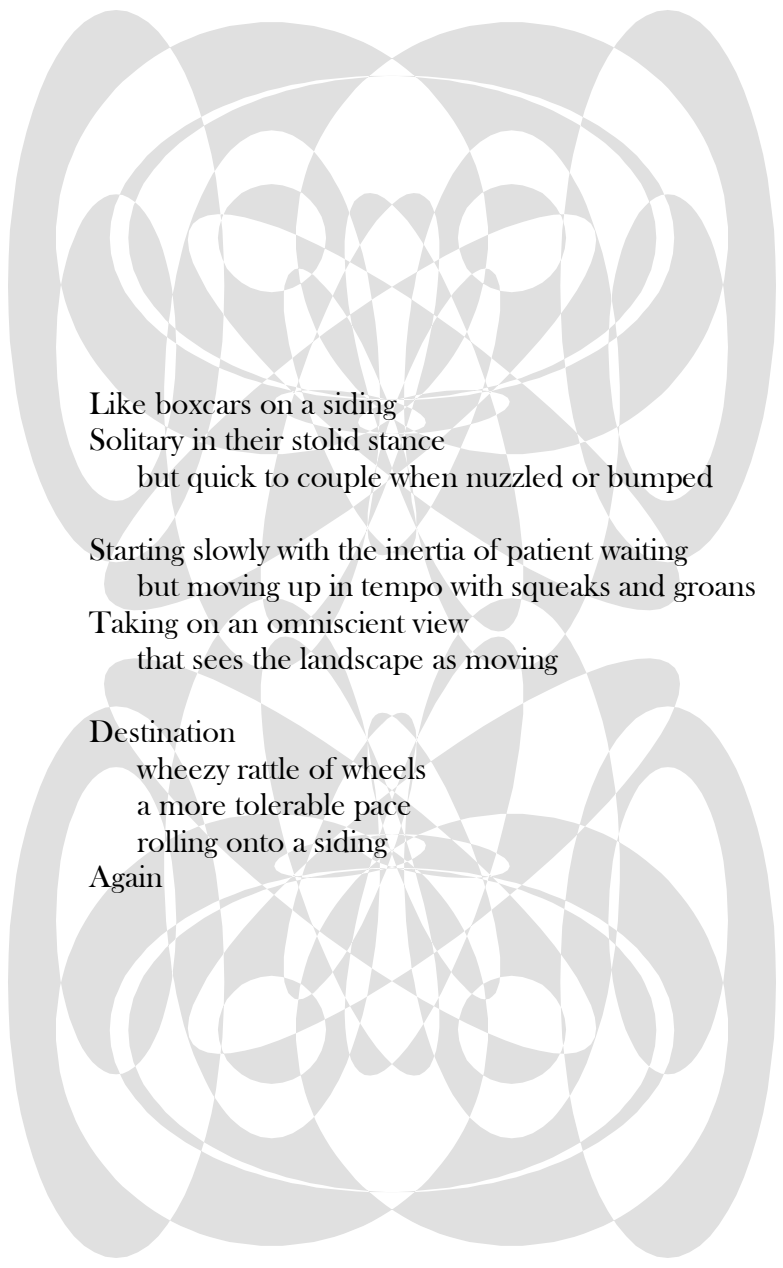
Like the earth behind the plow
Folding in the weathered stale
Churning up the new
the now
A scent of freshening
moving pale
in the half-light
Knowing how
to make the turned stones
fall fallow
In seeding new
to find the trust in furrowed life
That brings new growth
That contours life



Like an Arp
with its billows of emotion
Pushing against
space that confines it
Flowing over
would be constraints of form

Seeking its own shape
by alienating its environment
Moving only to its own meter

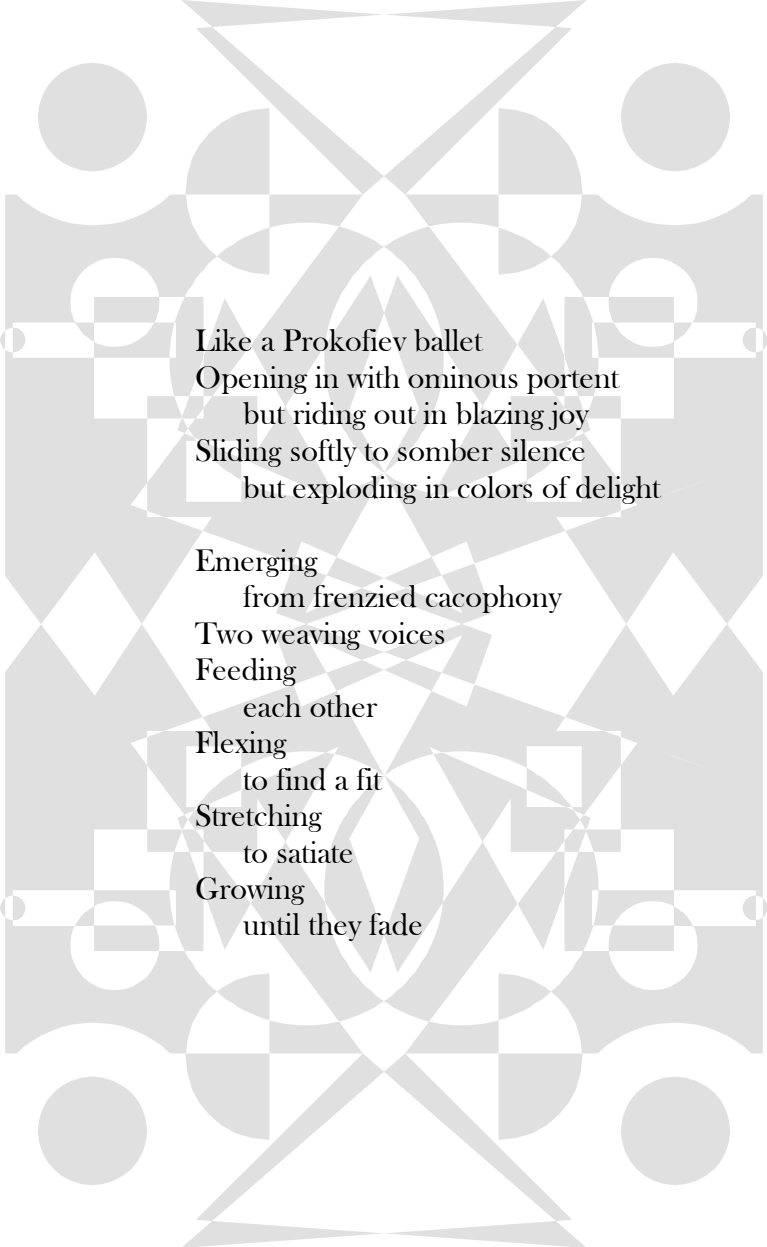
With no real starting point
Certainly having no real end



Like boxcars on a siding
Solitary in their stolid stance
but quick to couple when nuzzled or bumped

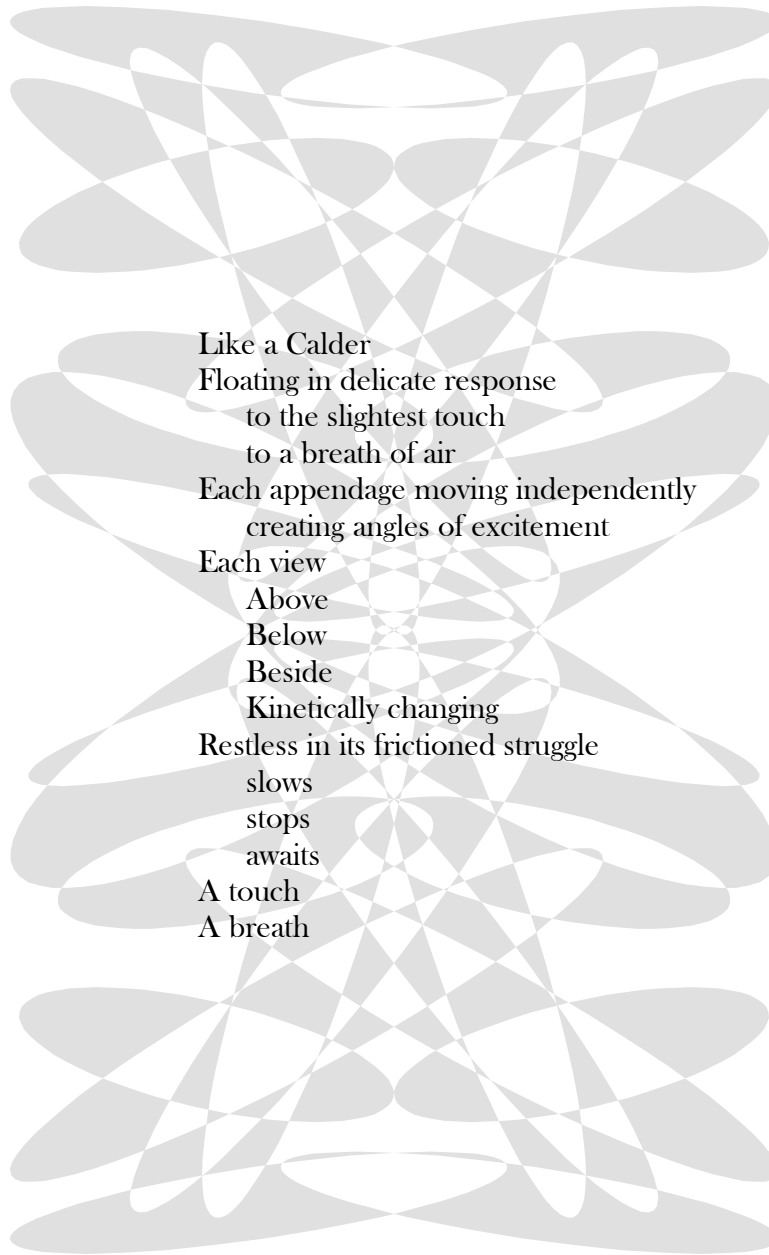
Starting slowly with the inertia of patient waiting
but moving up in tempo with squeaks and groans
Taking on an omniscient view
that sees the landscape as moving

Destination
wheezy rattle of wheels
a more tolerable pace
rolling onto a siding
Again

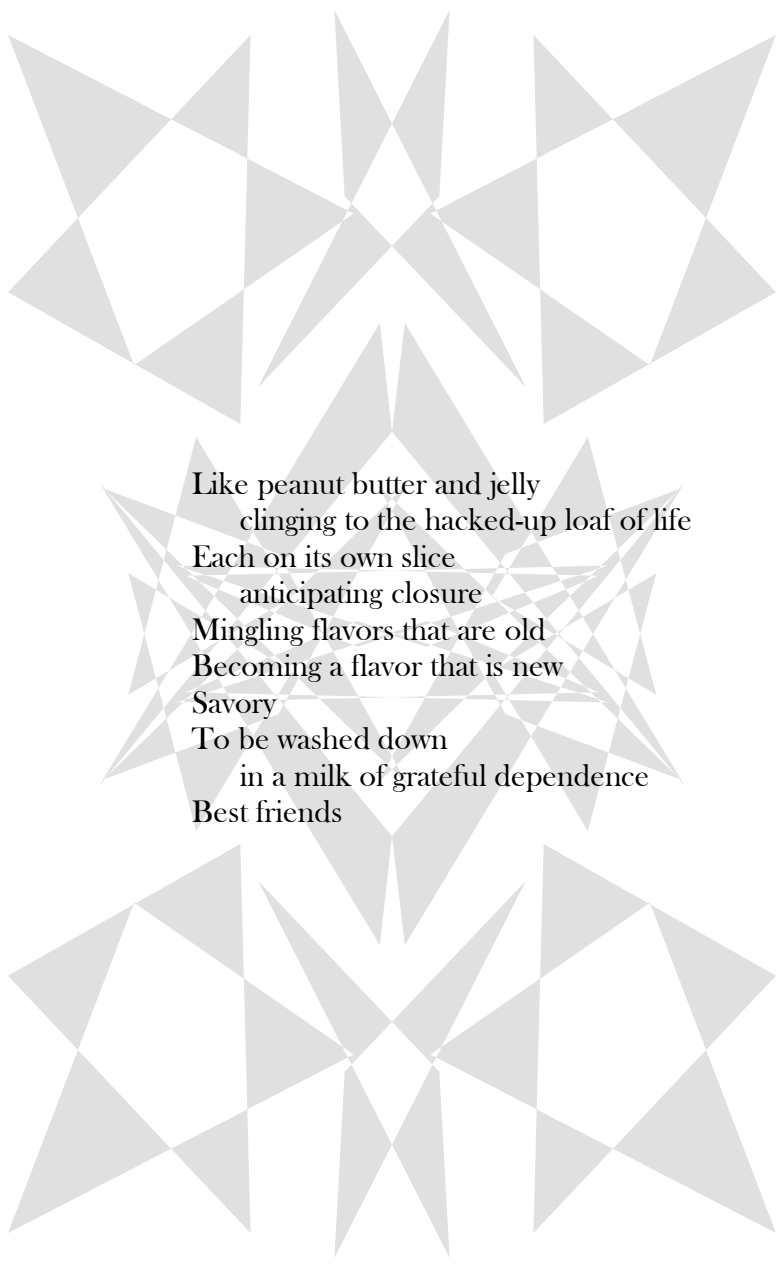


Like a Prokofiev ballet
Opening in with ominous portent
but riding out in blazing joy
Sliding softly to somber silence
but exploding in colors of delight

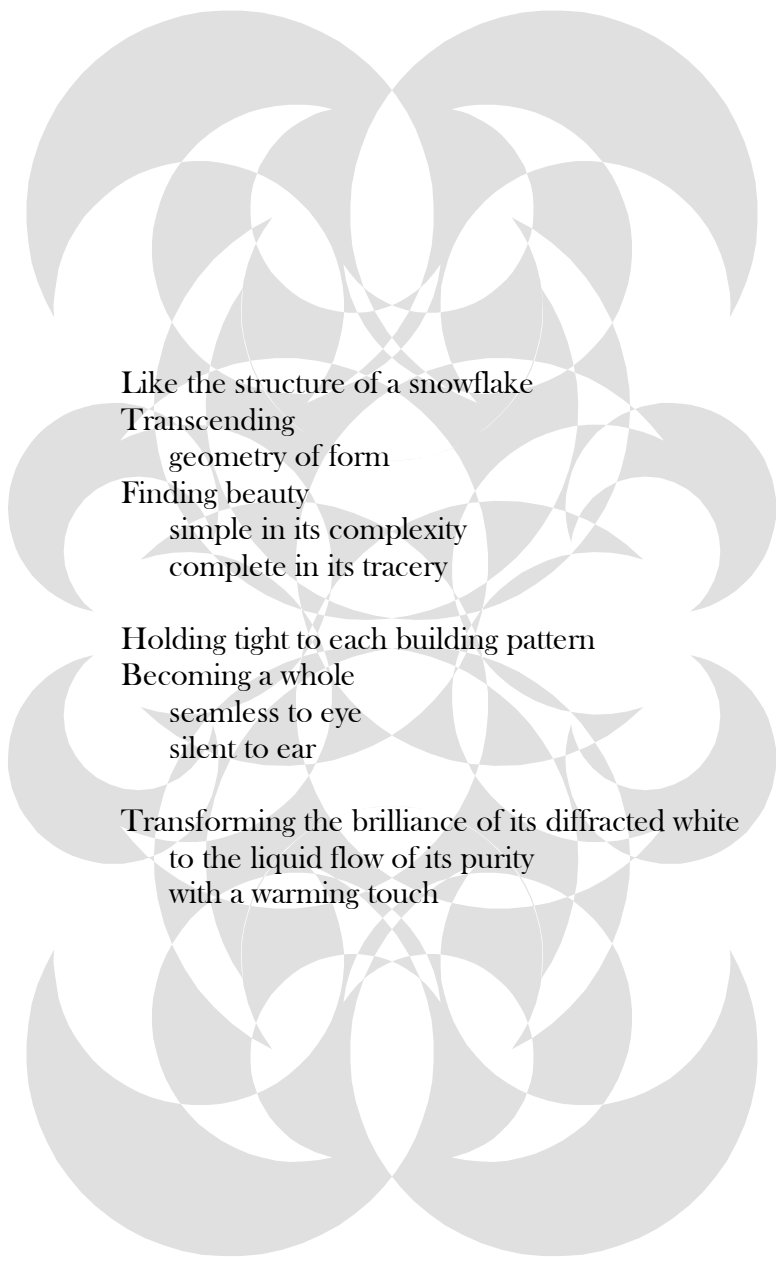
Emerging
from frenzied cacophony
Two weaving voices
Feeding
each other
Flexing
to find a fit
Stretching
to satiate
Growing
until they fade



Like a Calder
Floating in delicate response
to the slightest touch
to a breath of air
Each appendage moving independently
creating angles of excitement
Each view
Above
Below
Beside
Kinetically changing
Restless in its frictioned struggle
slows
stops
awaits
A touch
A breath



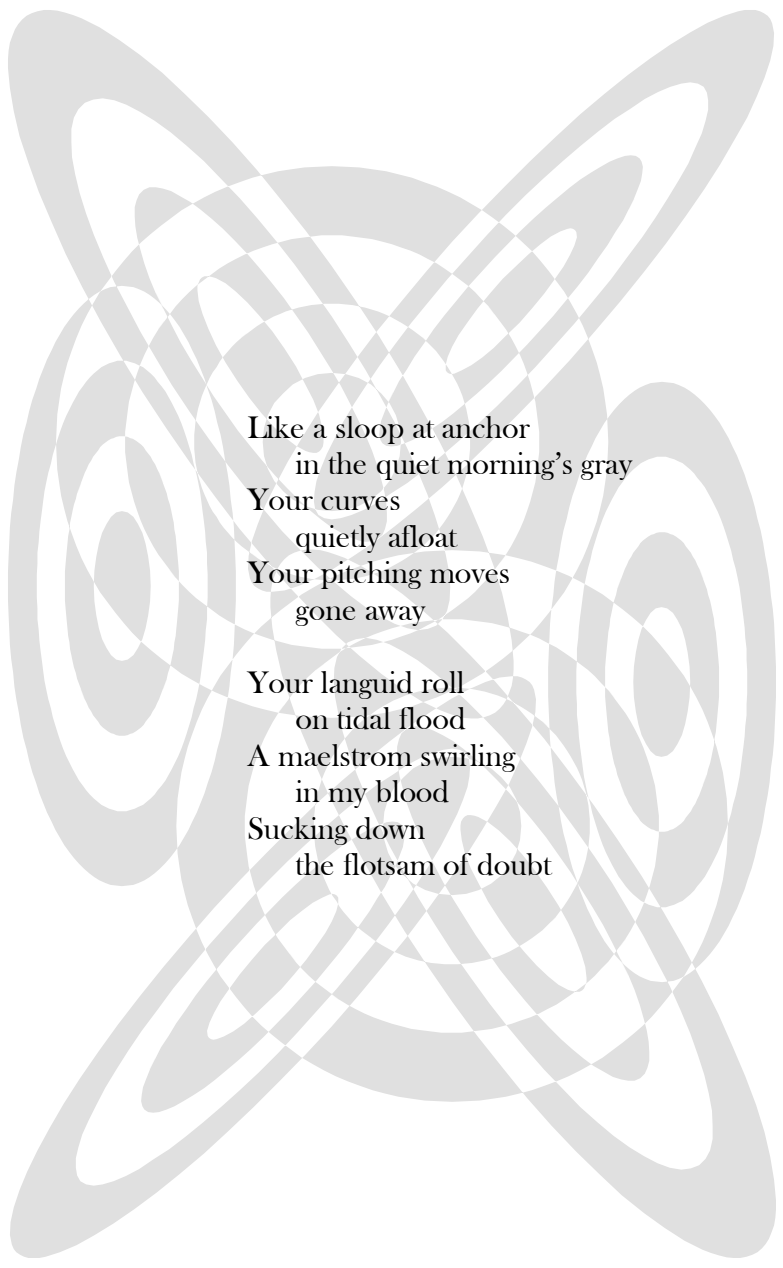
Like peanut butter and jelly
clinging to the hacked-up loaf of life
Each on its own slice
anticipating closure
Mingling flavors that are old
Becoming a flavor that is new
Savory
To be washed down
in a milk of grateful dependence
Best friends



Like the structure of a snowflake
Transcending
geometry of form
Finding beauty
simple in its complexity
complete in its tracery

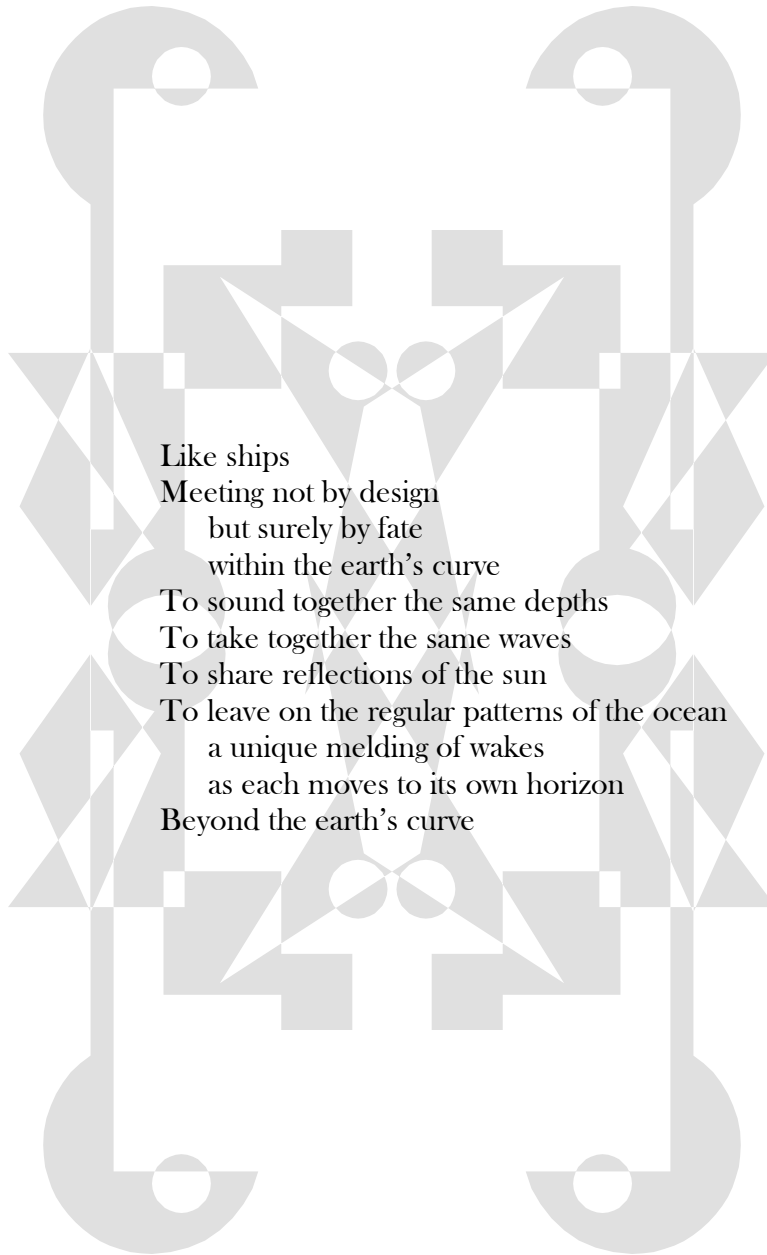
Holding tight to each building pattern
Becoming a whole
seamless to eye
silent to ear

Transforming the brilliance of its diffracted white
to the liquid flow of its purity
with a warming touch

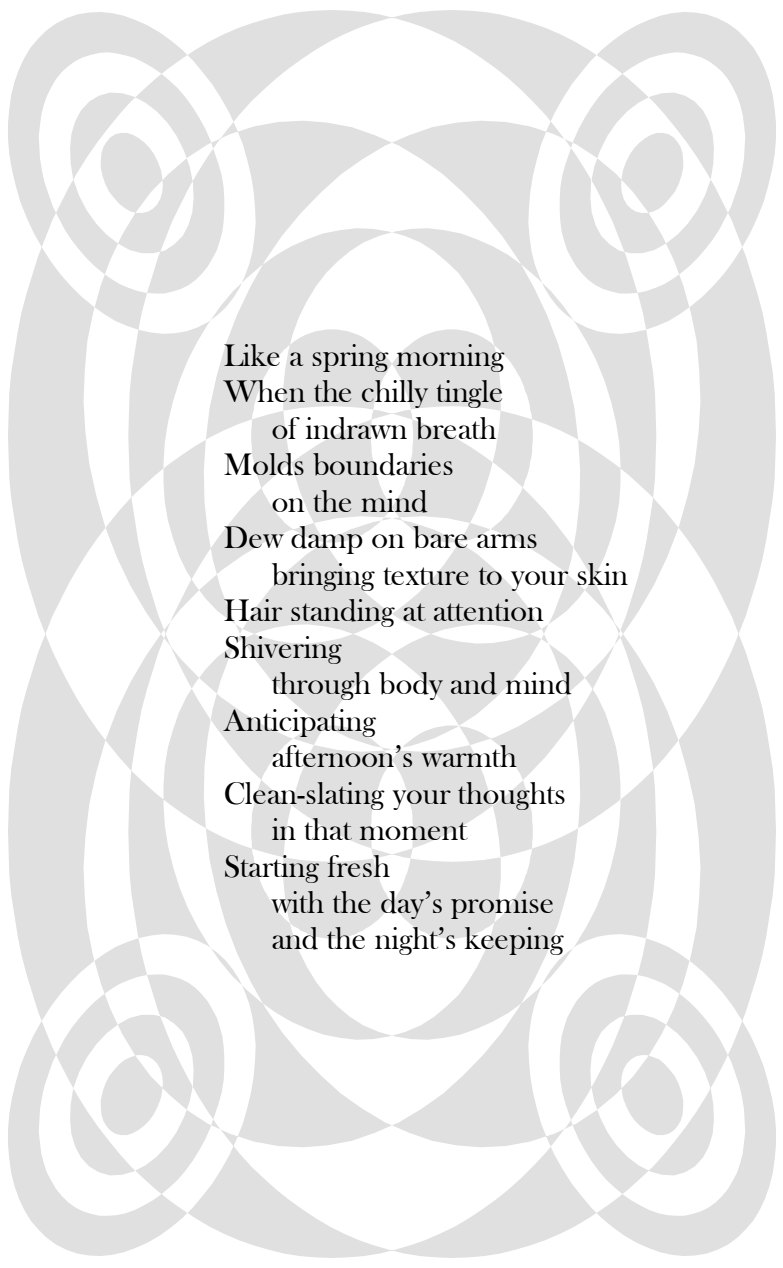


Like a sloop at anchor
in the quiet morning's gray
Your curves
quietly afloat
Your pitching moves
gone away

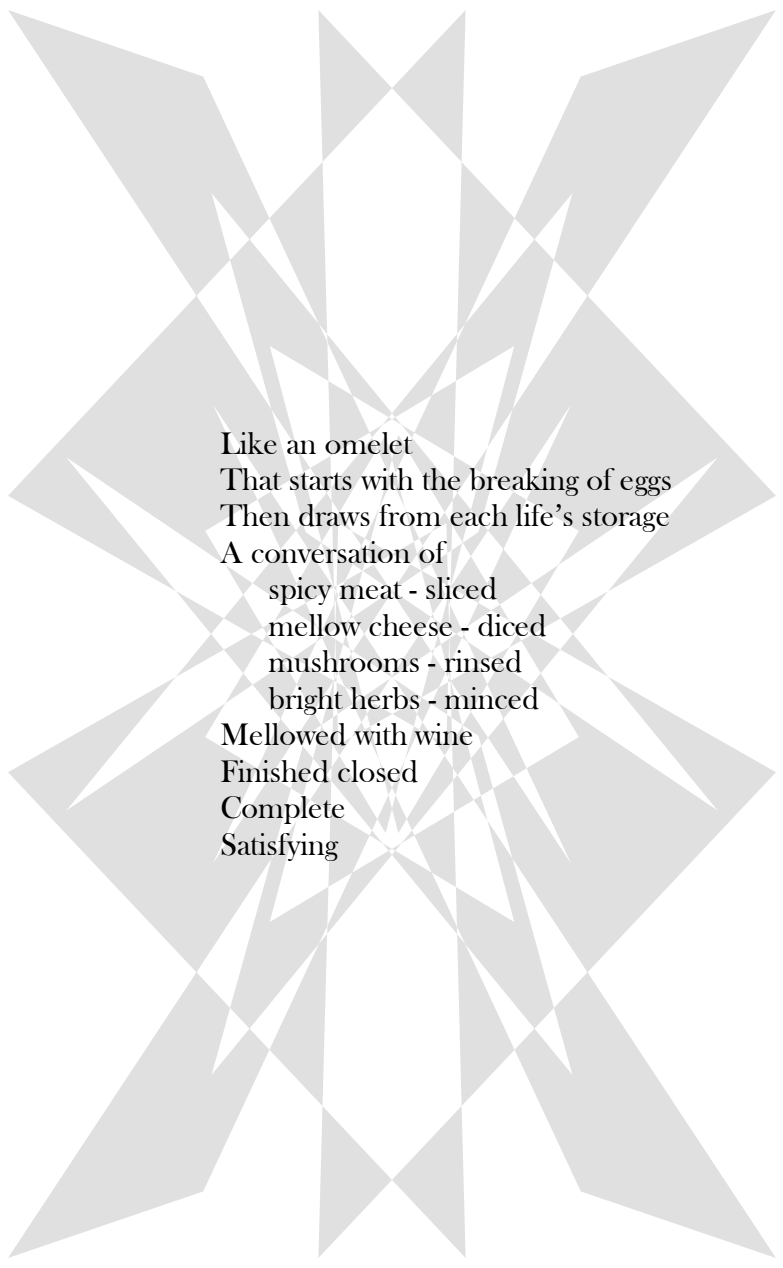
Your languid roll
on tidal flood
A maelstrom swirling
in my blood
Sucking down
the flotsam of doubt



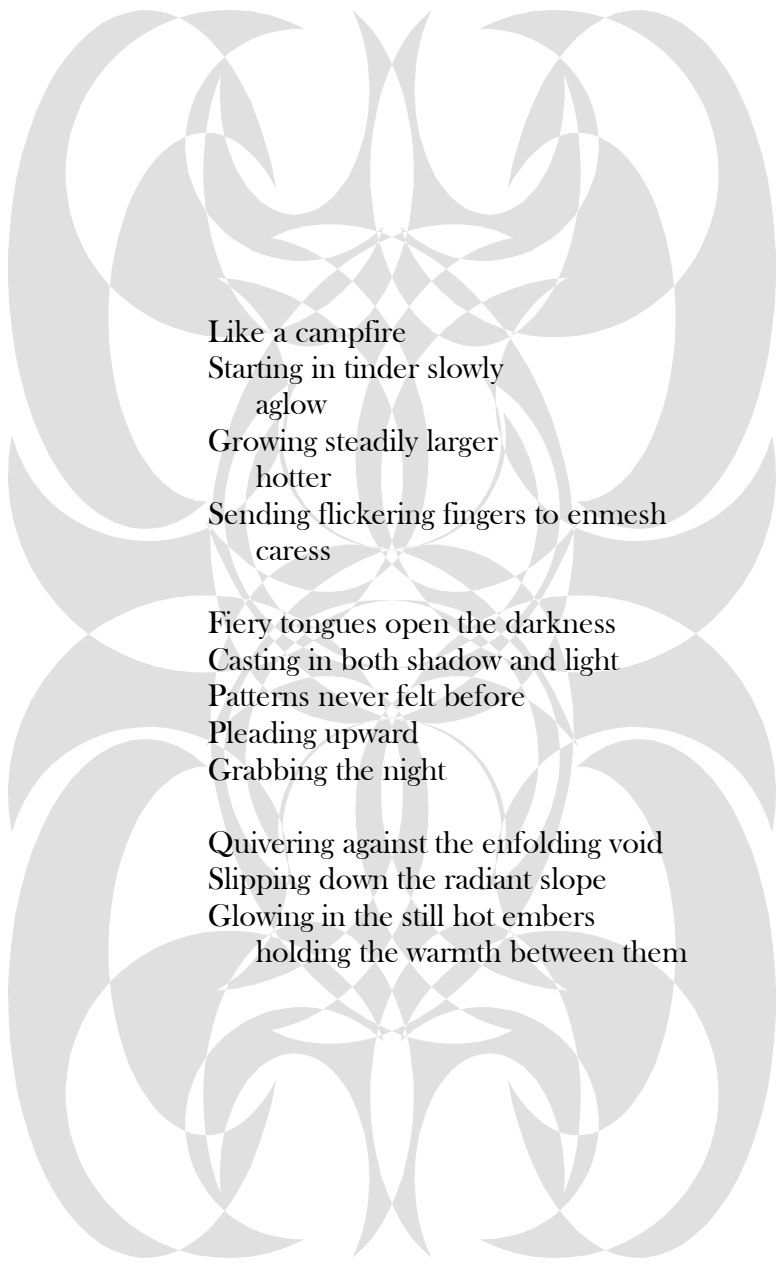
Like ships
Meeting not by design
but surely by fate
within the earth's curve
To sound together the same depths
To take together the same waves
To share reflections of the sun
To leave on the regular patterns of the ocean
a unique melding of wakes
as each moves to its own horizon
Beyond the earth's curve



Like a spring morning
When the chilly tingle
of indrawn breath
Molds boundaries
on the mind
Dew damp on bare arms
bringing texture to your skin
Hair standing at attention
Shivering
through body and mind
Anticipating
afternoon's warmth
Clean-slating your thoughts
in that moment
Starting fresh
with the day's promise
and the night's keeping



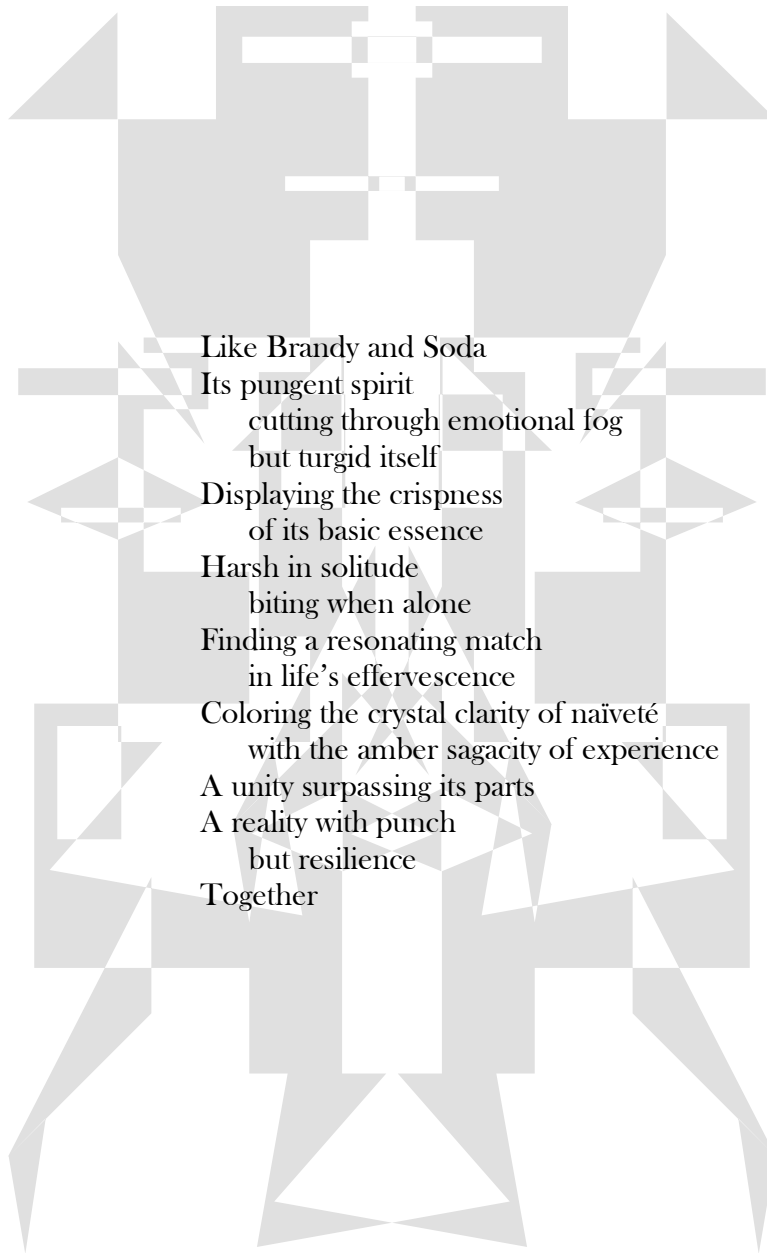
Like an omelet
That starts with the breaking of eggs
Then draws from each life's storage
A conversation of
spicy meat - sliced
mellow cheese - diced
mushrooms - rinsed
bright herbs - minced
Mellowed with wine
Finished closed
Complete
Satisfying



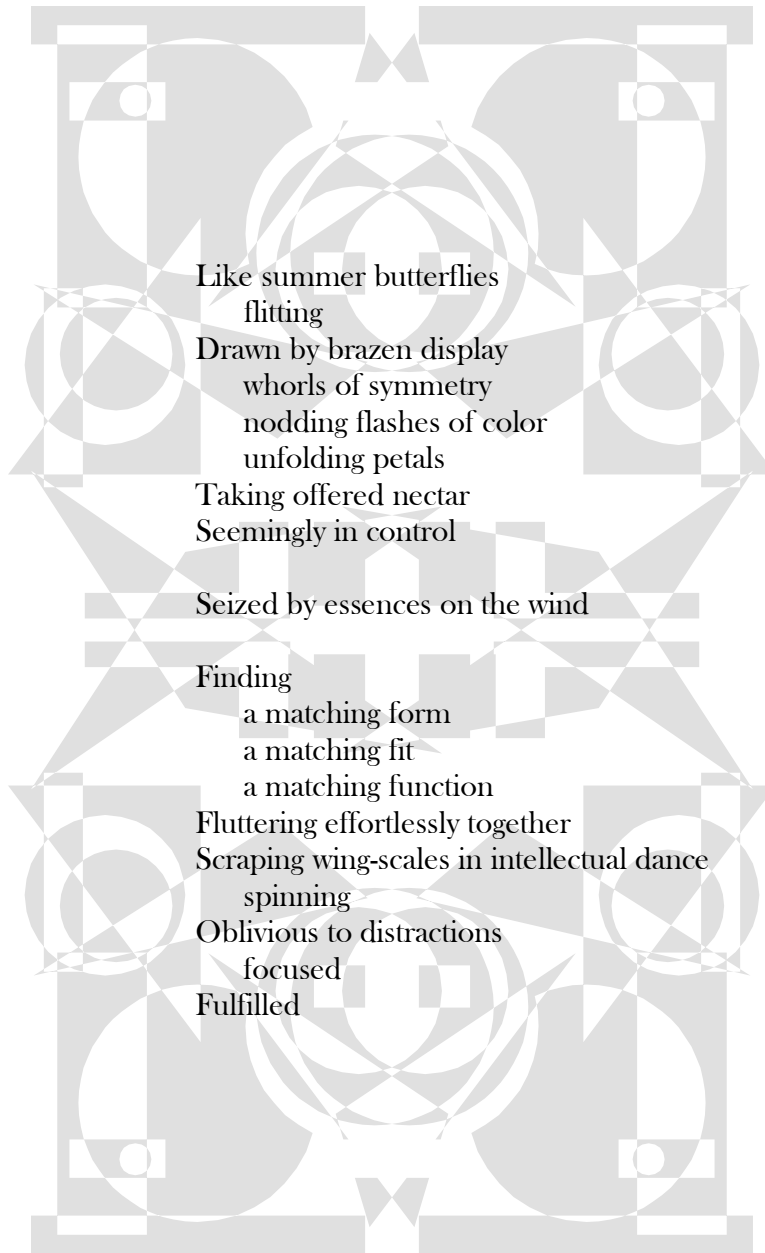
Like a campfire
Starting in tinder slowly
 aglow
Growing steadily larger
 hotter
Sending flickering fingers to enmesh
 caress

Fiery tongues open the darkness
Casting in both shadow and light
Patterns never felt before
Pleading upward
Grabbing the night

Quivering against the enfolding void
Slipping down the radiant slope
Glowing in the still hot embers
 holding the warmth between them



Like Brandy and Soda
Its pungent spirit
cutting through emotional fog
but turgid itself
Displaying the crispness
of its basic essence
Harsh in solitude
biting when alone
Finding a resonating match
in life's effervescence
Coloring the crystal clarity of naïveté
with the amber sagacity of experience
A unity surpassing its parts
A reality with punch
but resilience
Together



Like summer butterflies
flitting

Drawn by brazen display
whorls of symmetry
nodding flashes of color
unfolding petals

Taking offered nectar
Seemingly in control

Seized by essences on the wind

Finding
a matching form
a matching fit
a matching function

Fluttering effortlessly together
Scraping wing-scales in intellectual dance
spinning

Oblivious to distractions
focused

Fulfilled

Afterword

How do we love?

In the measureless multiplicity
of the sum of one plus one

In the cosmic complexity
of simultaneous sub-sets of selflessness

In the startling simplicity
of giving

We can but explore the ways
We can but experience realities

We live
to love

We must love
to live