



late may

Jill Stengel

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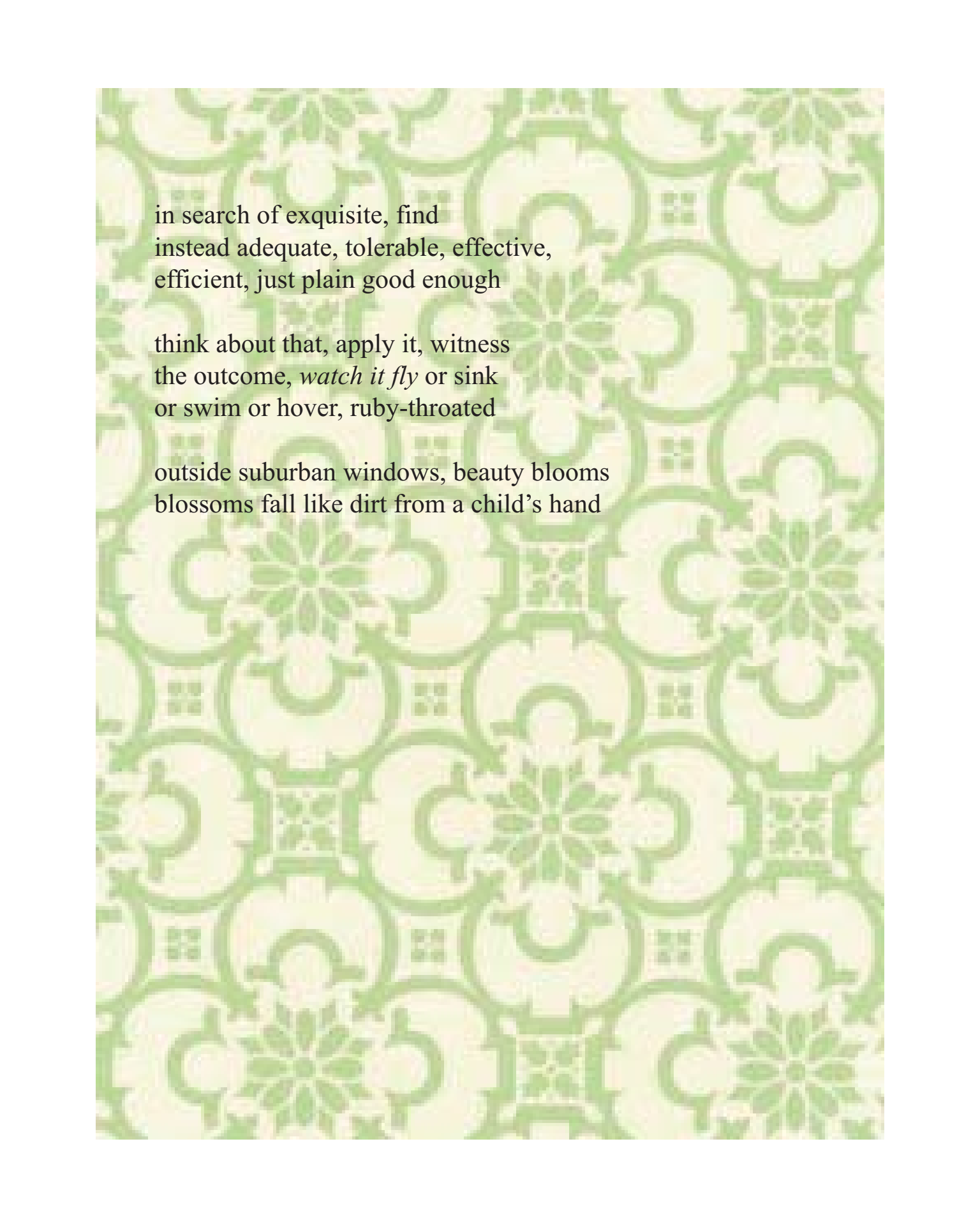
• a dusi/e-chap



D U S I E



late may

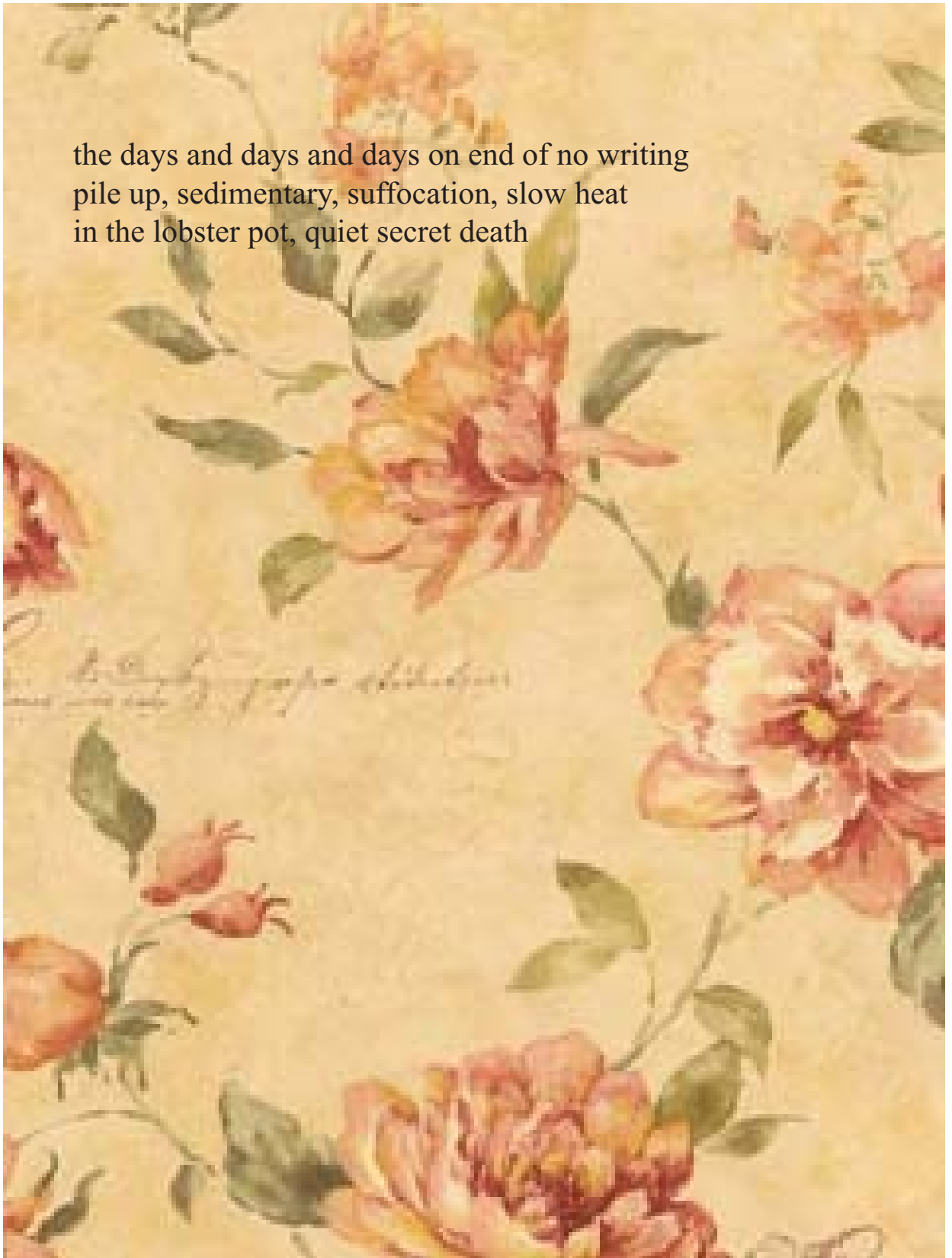


in search of exquisite, find
instead adequate, tolerable, effective,
efficient, just plain good enough

think about that, apply it, witness
the outcome, *watch it fly* or sink
or swim or hover, ruby-throated

outside suburban windows, beauty blooms
blossoms fall like dirt from a child's hand

the days and days and days on end of no writing
pile up, sedimentary, suffocation, slow heat
in the lobster pot, quiet secret death





choke

choke cherry
choke weed
choke, no air
choke, hold back
choke, clutch, throttle
 (hold)
all choked up

attempt to write a book review,
chapbook, single line, word—
fail—call it *do it later*

think of words, lines, whole
poems in the space just before
sleep—forget everything when pen—

special books, easy targets, five
and two and crayons—stash—
inaccessible, but preserved,

sacred, mine, the place
I go sometimes—a home
of sorts, this land of large blank pages

here three years now

Village Homes, Davis, California

a planned community
plan: for community, environmental sustainability
you know, eco-friendly, *green*

two hundred forty-some houses and apartments
solar orientation, solar water panels, some photovoltaic

community pool, community center, community events

community gardens
edible landscape: vineyards, orchards—fruit and nut

bike and walking paths throughout
little and big parks
no backyard fences


common areas
neighbors
potlucks
fire pits

the walnut tree nearby
all the chairs we put out there

what does it take to end the isolation?

no end—

settle for *relieve more frequently*

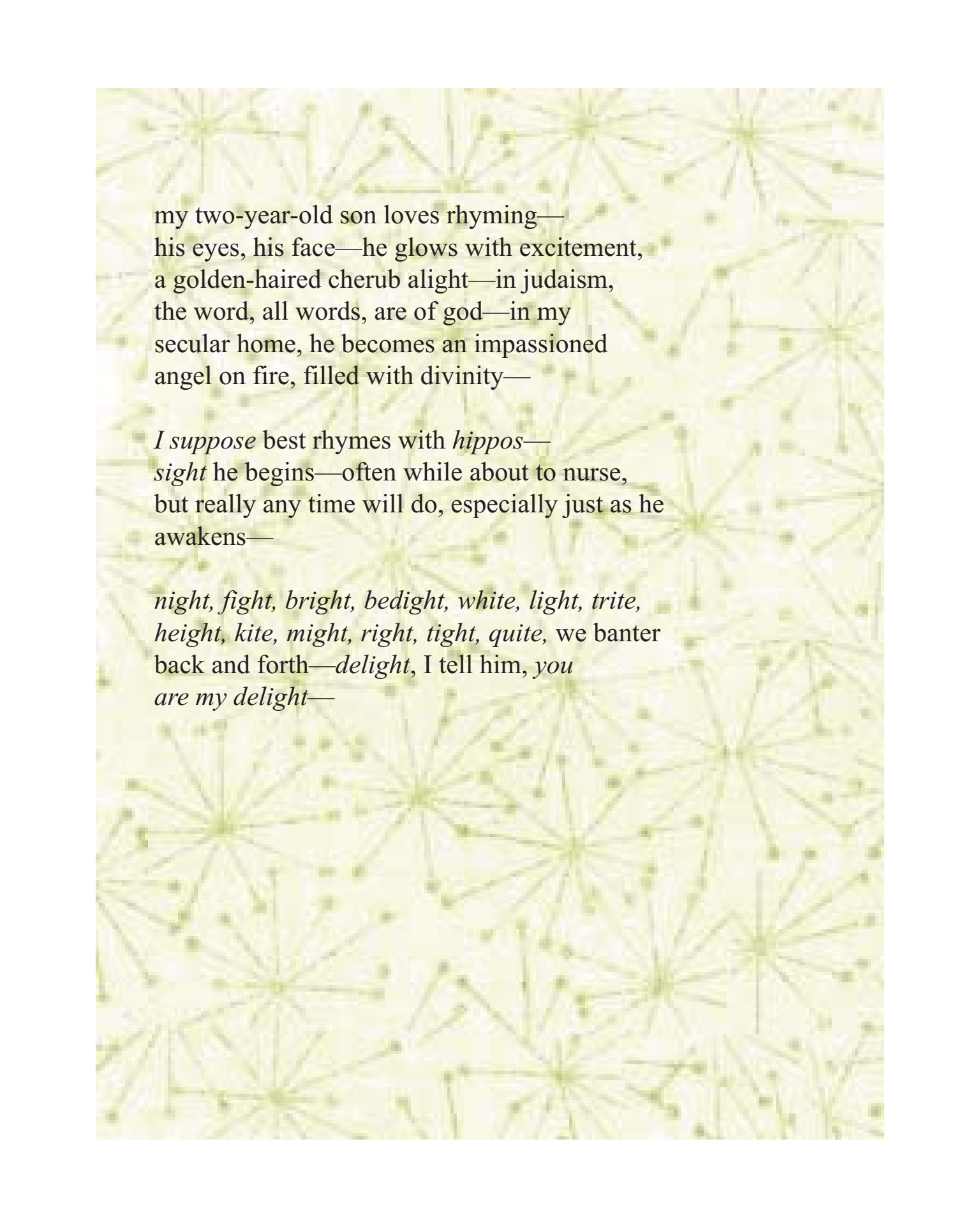


my five-year-old daughter likes to tell me
poems sometimes.

here's one:

love oh love who comes from hearts
love oh love you are so good
love oh love it seems like you come from a hood
love oh love you'll never go
love oh love you're just too slow
love oh love the love of world
love oh love you love to hurl
love oh love I love you much
and this is the end of the poem

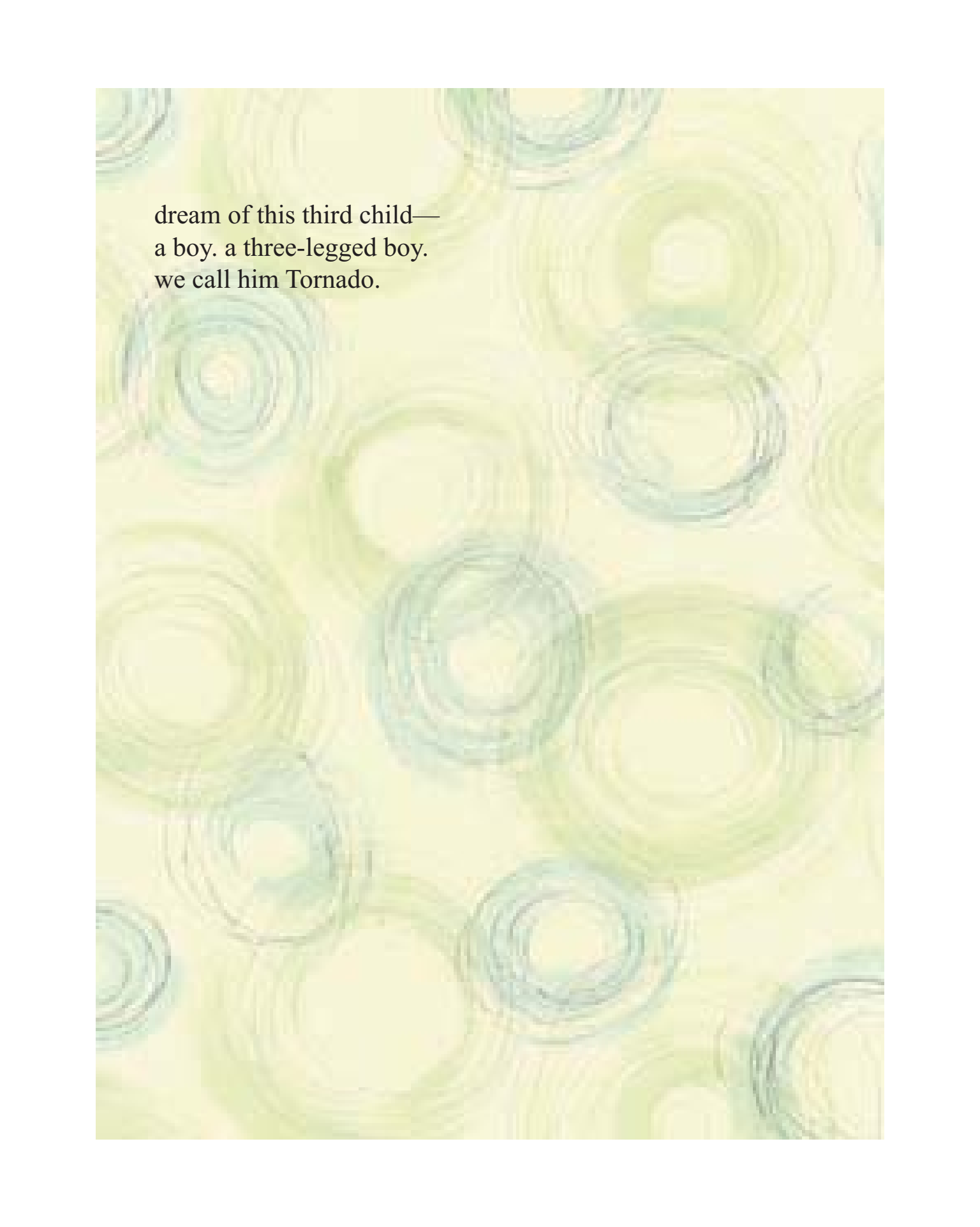




my two-year-old son loves rhyming—
his eyes, his face—he glows with excitement,
a golden-haired cherub alight—in judaism,
the word, all words, are of god—in my
secular home, he becomes an impassioned
angel on fire, filled with divinity—

I suppose best rhymes with *hippos*—
sight he begins—often while about to nurse,
but really any time will do, especially just as he
awakens—

night, fight, bright, bedight, white, light, trite,
height, kite, might, right, tight, quite, we banter
back and forth—*delight*, I tell him, *you*
are my delight—

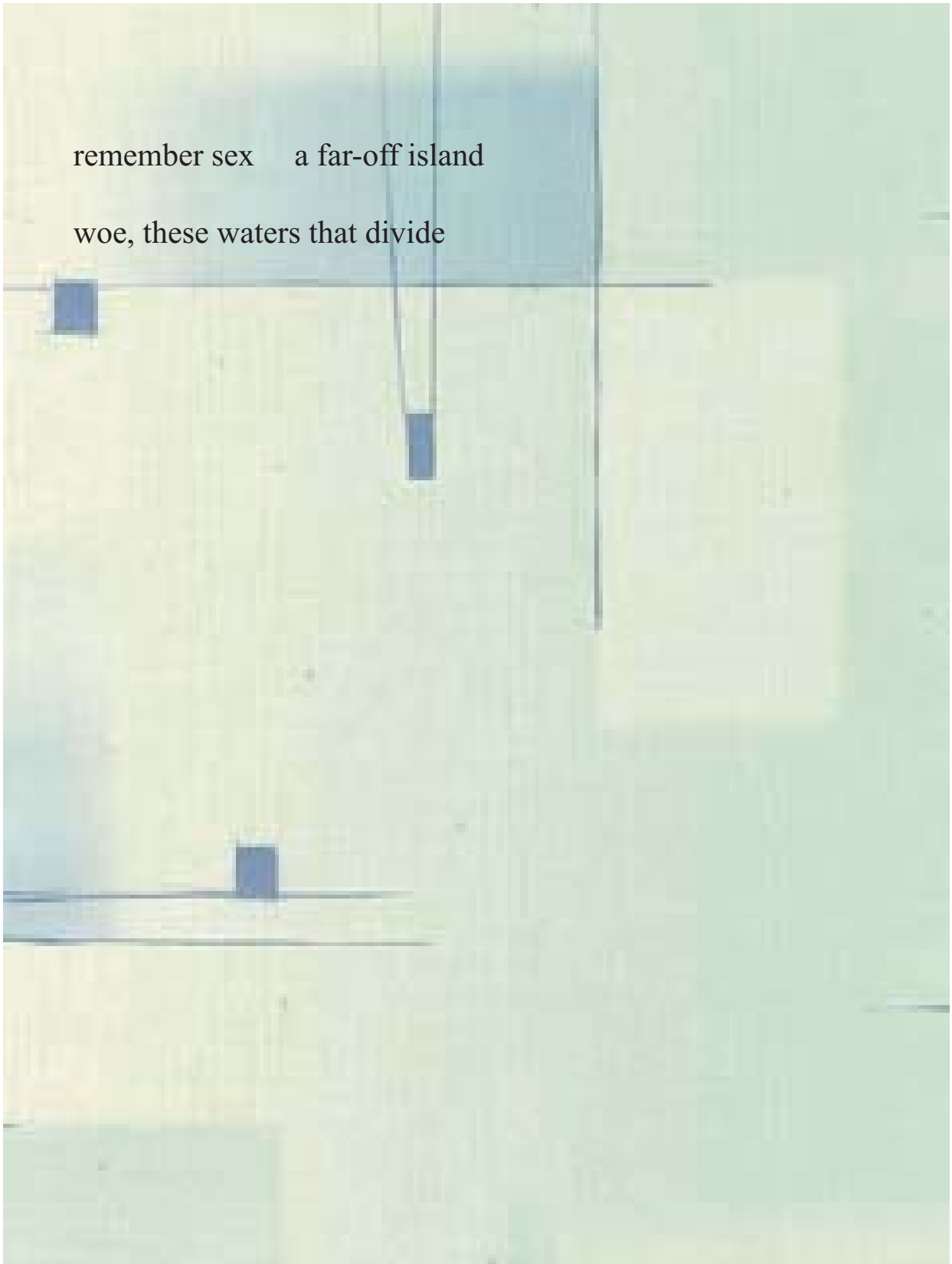


dream of this third child—
a boy. a three-legged boy.
we call him Tornado.

at eleven weeks and six days,
a rash begins. twelve weeks and
one day, ear infection. twelve
weeks and two days, use ear drops
containing thimerosal, a mercury
preservative—most likely broken
skin, most likely entering
my blood. twelve weeks
and two days, aggressive tylenol
ingestion. twelve weeks and
three days, start antibiotics.
prior to antibiotics, note no new
red rash bumps. twelve weeks
and three days, consider
tylenol with codeine, desire
end of knife-tip ear pain,
consider stupefaction of nursing
toddler, see how long one can wait
with knives in ear. worry all
the while about the developing
baby. hold closely bears brought
by kindergartner.

remember sex a far-off island

woe, these waters that divide

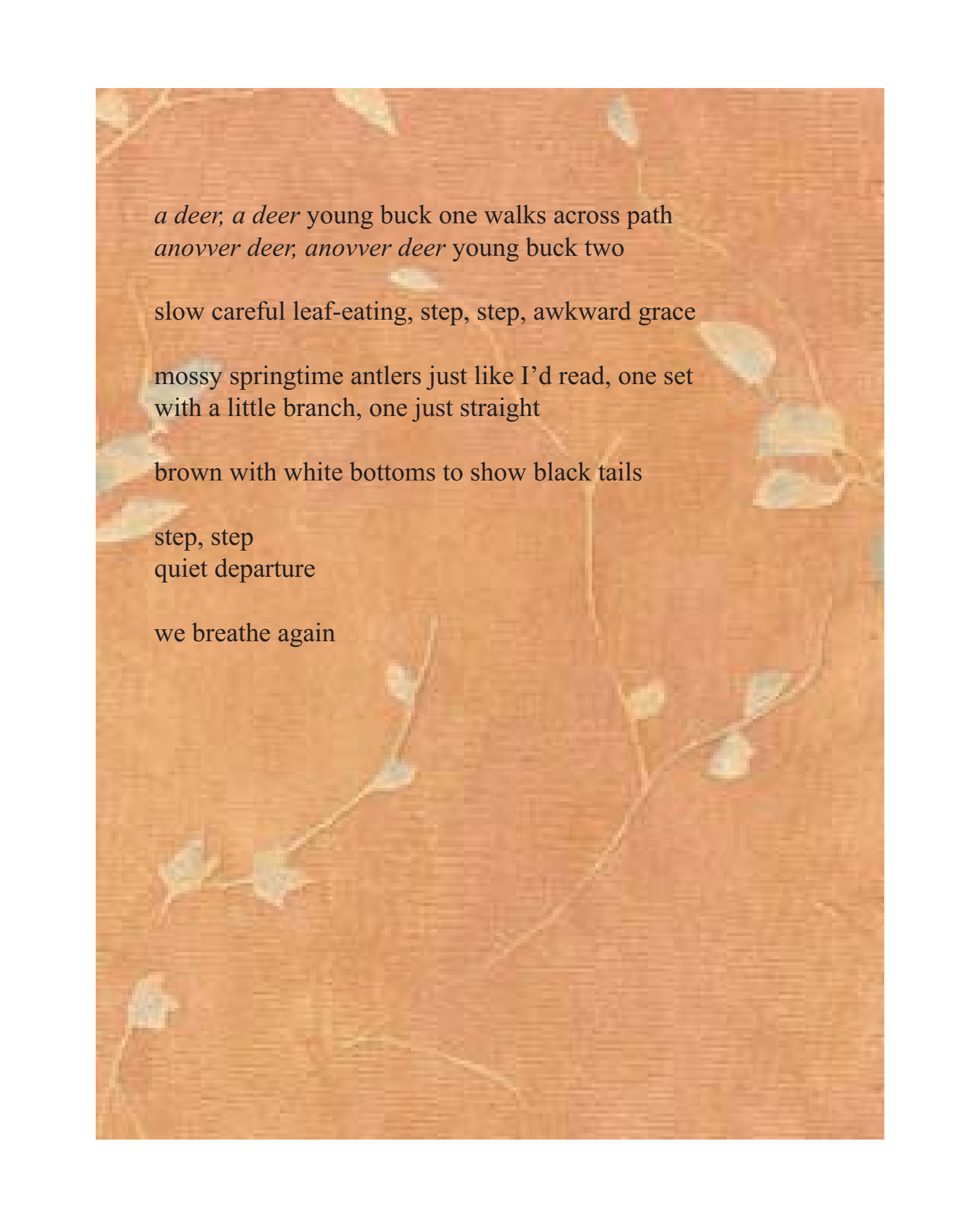


(another island)

orcas island was green. pine green.
fern green. grass green.

little beaches everywhere. some more
accessible than others. steps, cliffs, or
walk-right-ups. a million little
rocks of really every color if you
count the sea glass, the crab shells,
all those other shells and rocks and
shards and driftwood, so much driftwood

so much adrift



a deer, a deer young buck one walks across path
anovver deer, anovver deer young buck two

slow careful leaf-eating, step, step, awkward grace

mossy springtime antlers just like I'd read, one set
with a little branch, one just straight

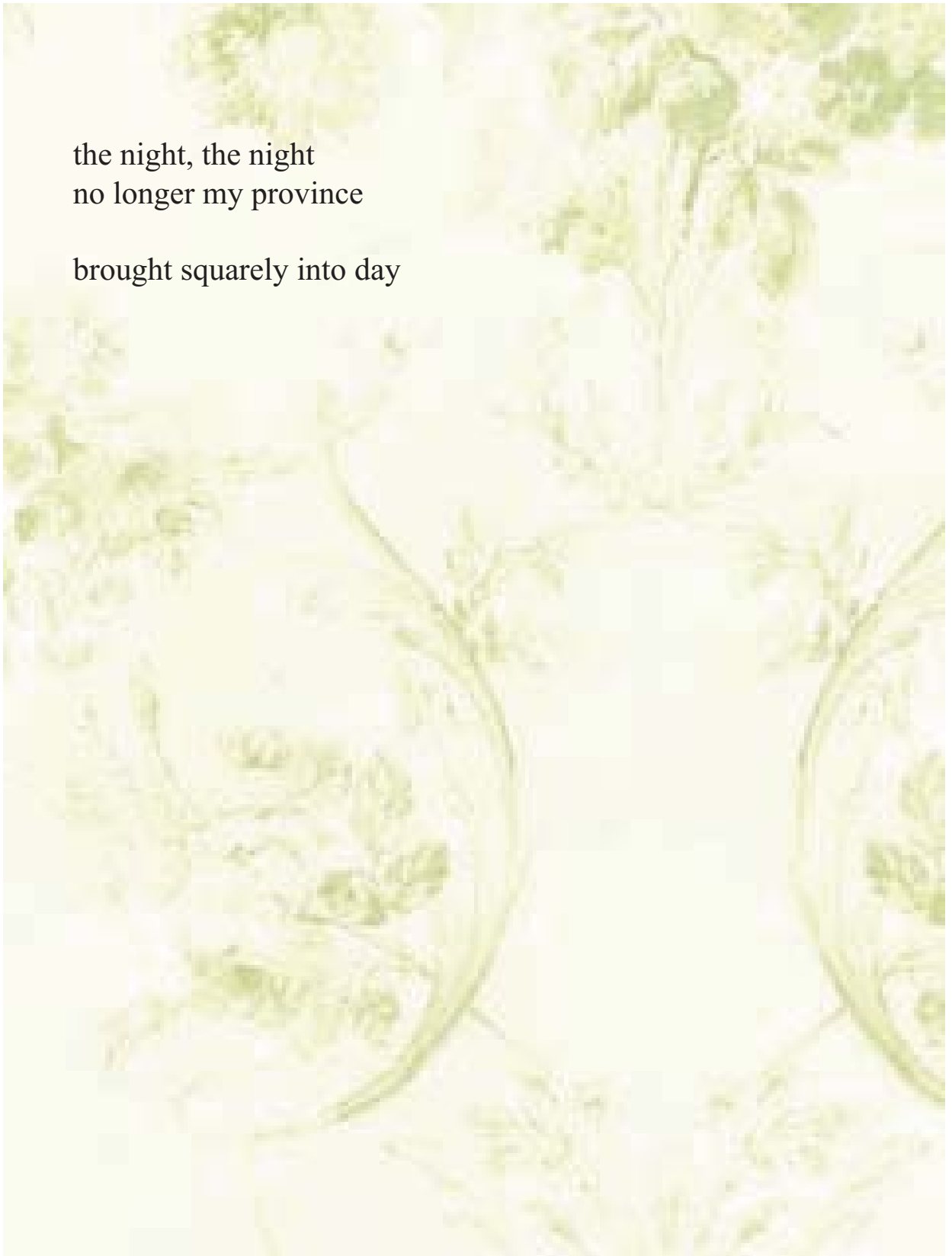
brown with white bottoms to show black tails

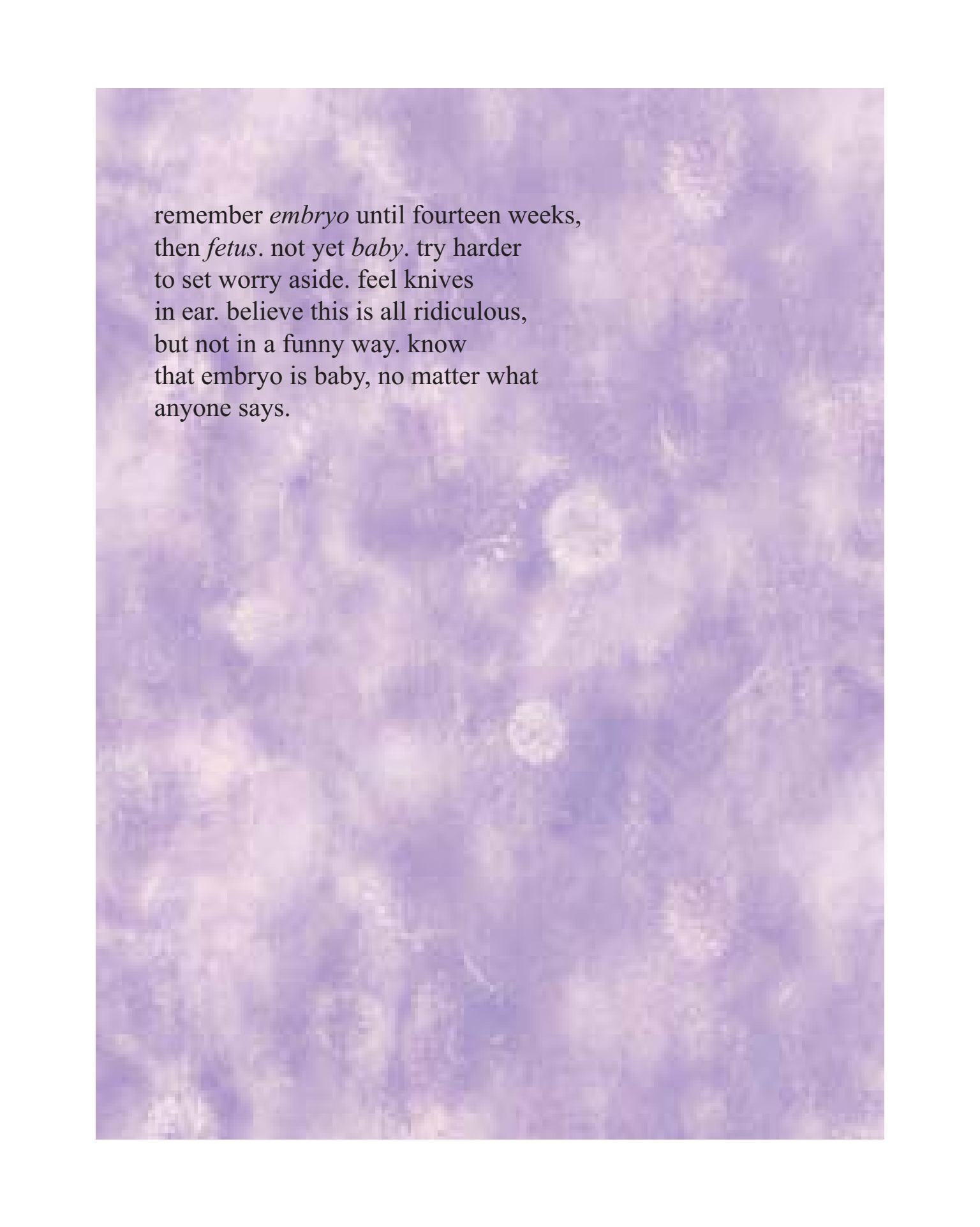
step, step
quiet departure

we breathe again

the night, the night
no longer my province

brought squarely into day





remember *embryo* until fourteen weeks,
then *fetus*. not yet *baby*. try harder
to set worry aside. feel knives
in ear. believe this is all ridiculous,
but not in a funny way. know
that embryo is baby, no matter what
anyone says.

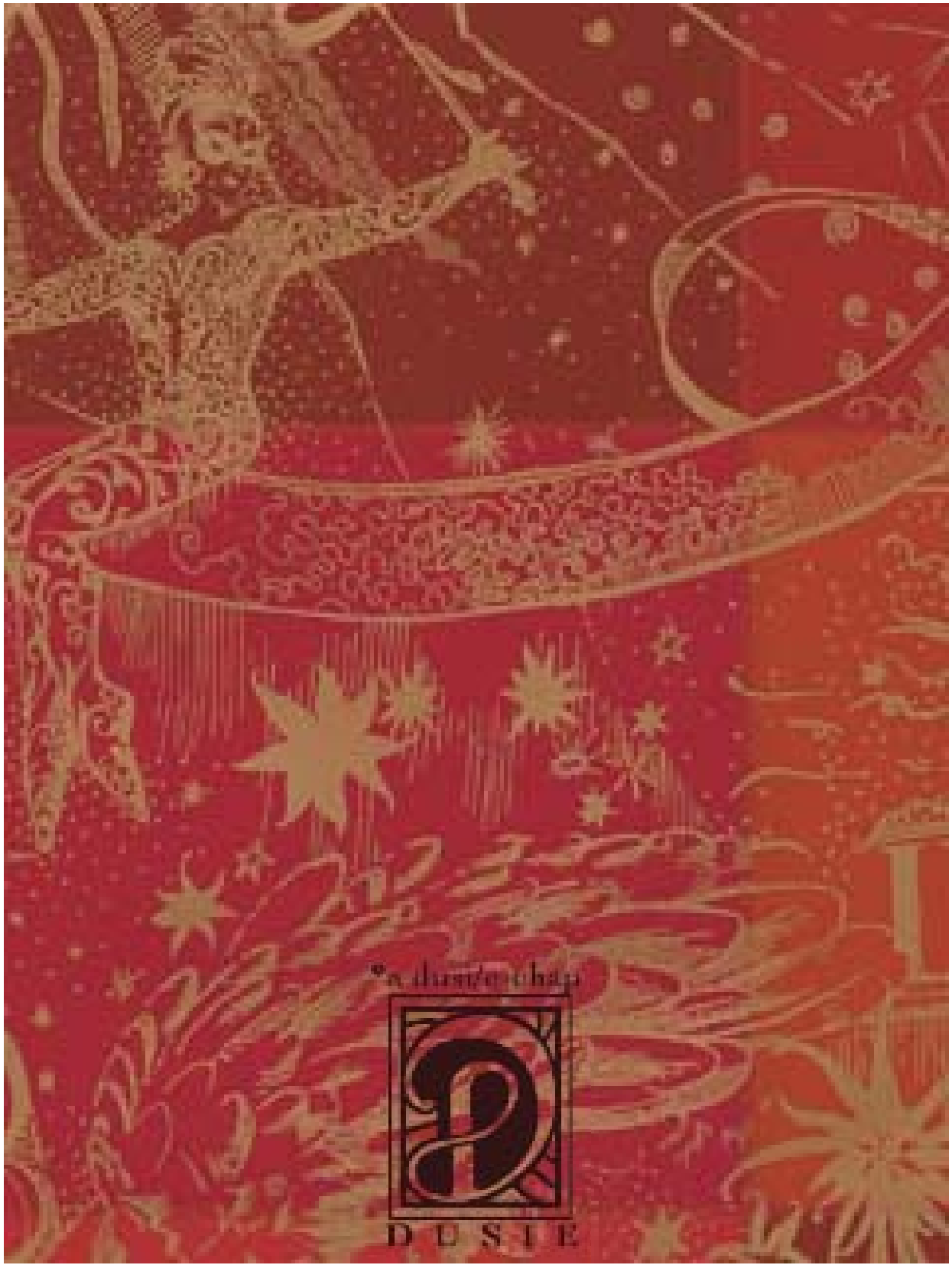


in bed

think about sleep

touch deep pen groove
side of middle finger

feel
satisfaction



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DUSTIE