



# **RED LIGHT & RAIN**

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**poetry booklet by jaye robyn**







# Red Light & Rain

jaye robyn

A collection of poetry alongside photographs I took. I wanted to do a follow up to Vanishing Point for quite some time and, finally, this is it. To anyone who gives it a read, thank you. Please be aware that many themes are visited in this booklet including some which may be considered uncomfortable.

2	another dollar
3	the worst thing you can ever be is someone else
4	red light and rain
5	when you leave
6	the bells at the harbour
8	glass girl
9	what im thinking about / obligation
10	ode to the nhs
11	you make me
12	if god made me right
13	don't touch the grass
14	nettles on knees
15	the tilt / a word that's me
16	i get small
17	people like to say
18	poem from a dying world
19	i love you / inhuman
20	malignant thoughts
21	angel you / NEVERBE / pasta haiku
22	ive.loved / glimpses of life / a confession
24	stuck / 2am and 200mg THC
25	one long night
26	shapes in the fog
27	when you were sick
28	l'amour vache
29	the climb
30	states of being / laser light
31	faulty parts



## another dollar

five o'clock- you're let out of your pen,  
and the voice in your head starts to sing:

black out, black out, black out.

your pocket glows- it's your mother's voice,  
but you've never known it to be kind.

ignorance finds its rhythm when truth hurts to hear.

spend your life with the seconds second guessed,  
or spend it trying to avoid the inevitable,

you'll reach the same conclusion either way:  
nobody gets out of life alive.

the worst thing you can ever be is someone else

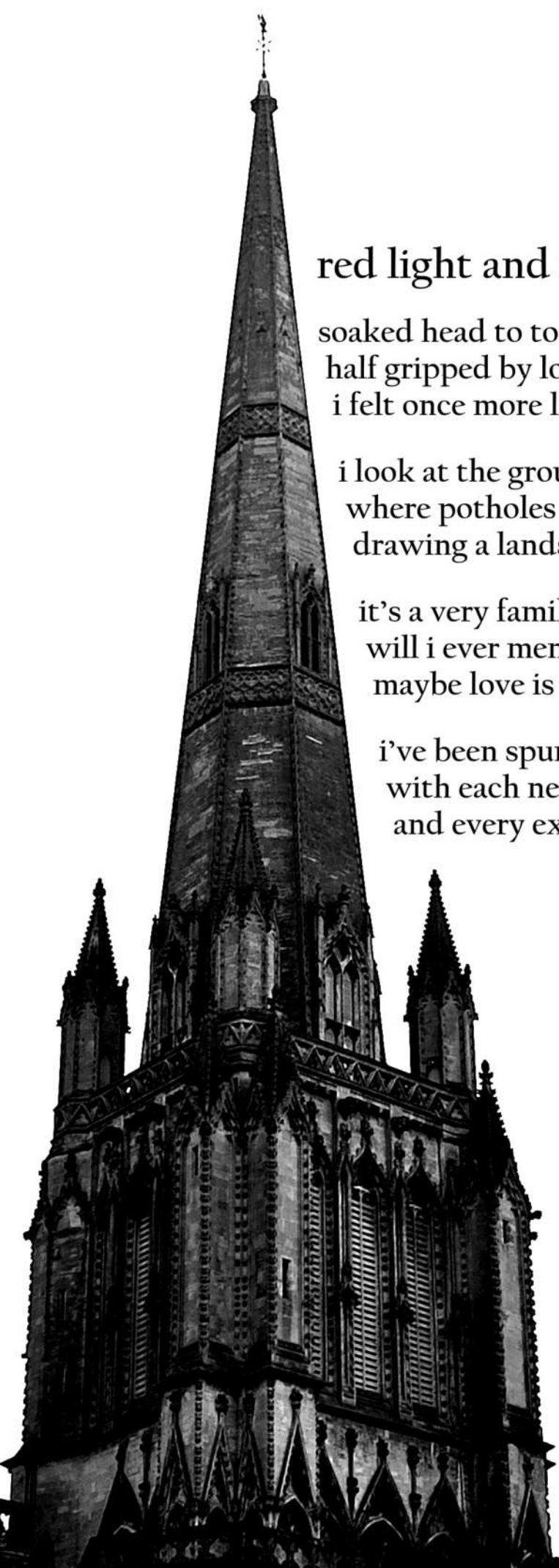
when the day is done and your farewells finished,  
you'll crawl back home in a gentle daze  
and stagger slowly up the stairs  
towards an empty bed that you may or may not reach  
before you pass out into sleep's blissful vacuum:

but only if you're lucky.

because when the sun is down and the streetlights dim,  
thoughts will creep and worm their way  
into painful places against your will  
forcing you to maybe, possibly, conceivably start to realise  
that the worst thing you can ever be is someone else:

leaving behind another day untrue to you.






## red light and rain

soaked head to toe in red light and rain,  
half gripped by love and half gripped by pain:  
i felt once more like falling apart.

i look at the ground and i've been here before,  
where potholes fill up as the sky continues to pour,  
drawing a landscape study of ruined hope.

it's a very familiar despair once all is told:  
will i ever mend the trust that i used to hold?  
maybe love is no good for a fragile heart.

i've been spun around in circles time after time  
with each new dream treated like a crime  
and every exit out of scope.



when you leave,  
i listen out for your train  
as it echoes like a heartbeat  
getting further away.

## the bells at the harbour

wind and waves make quiet music with the buoy bells at the harbour  
in a moment that she alone will ever know and alone will ever lose.  
she listens with the solemnity of a priest taking the confession of a dying man  
with a list of sins that demands more time to explain than he has left.  
before her, fickle lamplight scatters over the discordant waves  
in an unwinnable struggle to mark down its place in the world.  
the pubs are empty and the punters safely tucked into their beds,  
leaving these cobbled streets to the festivities of rats, starving and mad.  
times like these are dedicated to that which can no longer exist anywhere else.  
before the sun rises, she is gone.









glass girl

glass girl

whose soul shatters so easily.

try and see her,

don't look through her.

she's good for very little

so treat her very gently

if you have the patience.

she certainly can't save you

and might not even be worth it

but that doesn't mean

she loves you any less.

## what i'm thinking about

sipping cold coffee as the rain pounds against my window,  
and i'm thinking about you.  
strolling through the suburbs at night with nowhere to go,  
and i'm thinking about you.  
being jostled by the movements of the two forty five train,  
and i'm thinking, i really fucking love you.

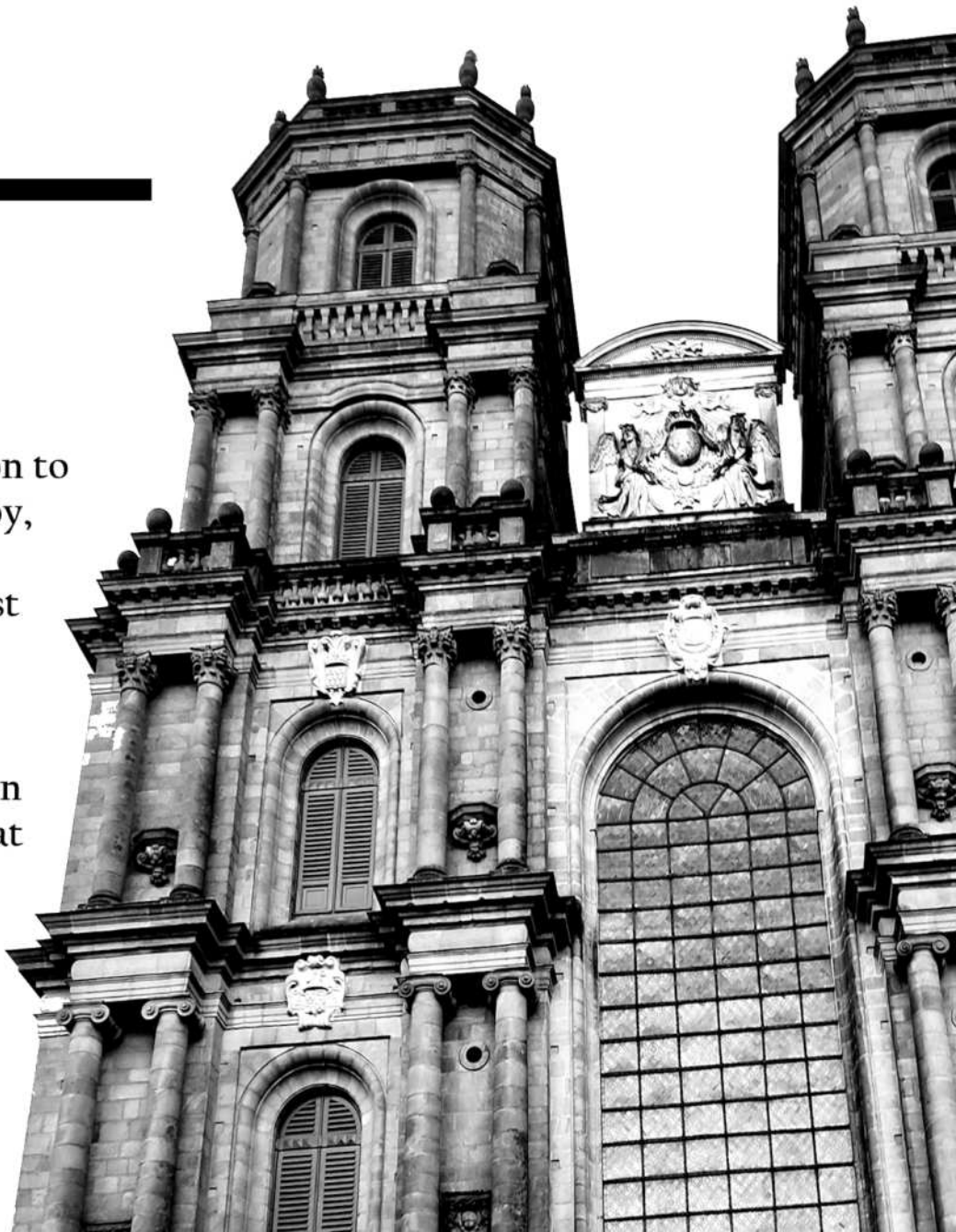
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## obligation

you have no obligation to  
make anyone else happy,

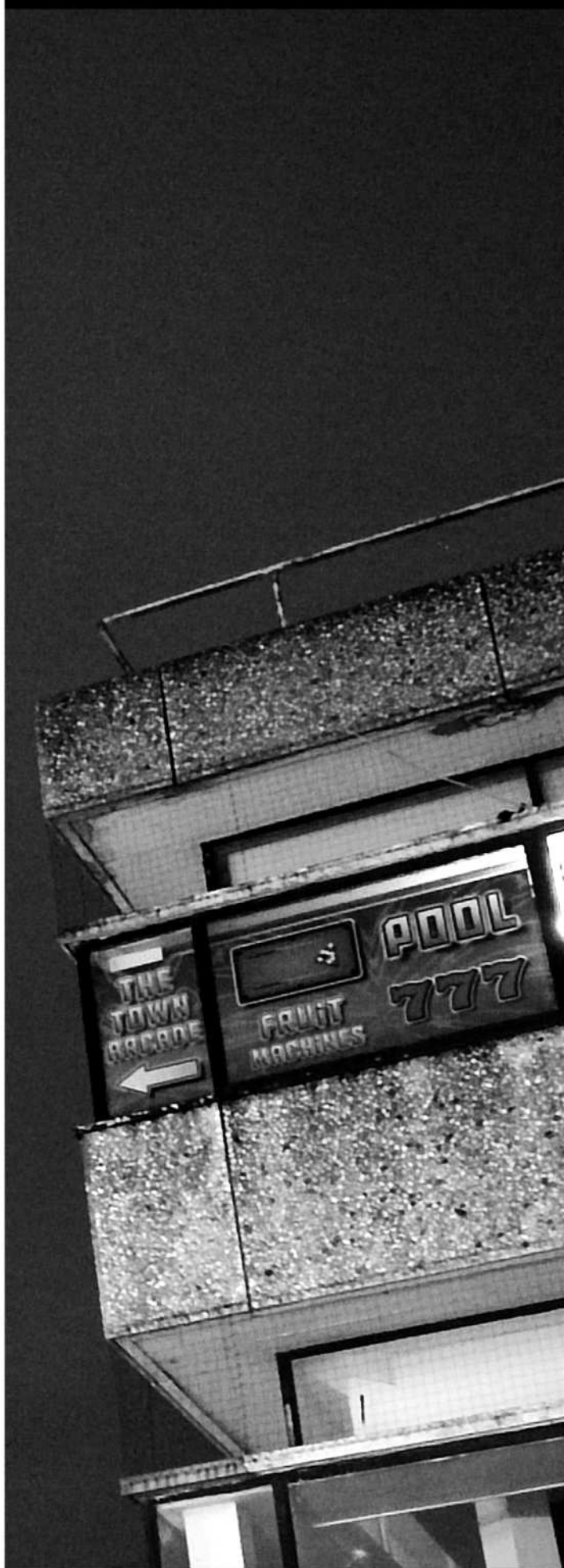
but if you're really just  
doing what's best for  
yourself

it will be the smiles on  
other people's faces that  
let you know.



## ode to the nhs

persistence is key- i know it's true-  
so i limp out of bed and into clothes  
to spend another day at the hospital  
and another twenty on taxi fares,  
and another anxious wait in the lobby,  
with another disappointed trip home  
where i hide my tears from the driver  
after a five minute meeting with a medical  
menace  
who seems convinced i can keep living  
this way  
but who never bothers to look into my  
eyes-  
cut short as she takes a phone call  
and gestures swiftly towards the door.  
even now, i am in pain.  
'we will contact you in the next three  
weeks,'  
which is code for six months of  
uncertainty,  
and thoughts of death come flooding back.





A black and white photograph of a city skyline. A tall, modern glass skyscraper with many lit windows dominates the left side. A construction crane is visible against the sky to the right of the skyscraper. In the foreground, there are other buildings, including one with a stone facade. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing text.

you make me

you pay for my tits and  
my curves and  
all of my hope and  
you make me  
what i should be and  
as you want me and  
i am yours and  
happy to be your doll



if god made me right

if god made me right  
well, if god made me right  
i'd be barefoot in the kitchen  
of someone i didn't love-  
knocked up for the fourth time,  
and knocked out in the evening.

# don't touch the grass

don't touch the grass  
that lies mangled on your lawn,  
run your hands instead through the wild grasses  
that are bejeweled with dandelions and daisies  
that nest in patches between trees and bushes  
that are tickled by the wind's gentle breeze  
that travels from afar across land, sea, and sky  
that stretches away into icy feathers of cloud  
that smile down the light of the setting sun  
that streams through and blesses the earth  
that provides for creatures both big and small  
who sing their songs of love around you  
and remind you of humanity's place in nature.







## nettles on knees

nettles on knees, hands for holding,  
love hit you like a closed fist kiss  
and sets your whole body off-balance.  
something is stabbing you in the heart!  
but if it fills a desperate void of longing  
with a deep and beautiful aching  
that makes you want to write poetry  
about how he puts his arms around you  
at 3am, to give you a shoulder to cry into  
without a second of judgement or resignation-  
let it swallow you up, and let it hurt.



## the tilt

when we finish talking, i always want to die-  
you make me so happy that i feel like shit.  
you're the problem and the fix, the sickness and the cure;  
a brilliant light that eats me whole,  
and spits me out with an aching soul.

and there are a million words that i could say to you-  
to mend a moment of this pain in my heart.  
i could tell you the ways you twist me up, the ways i fucking need you;  
but before the night is up and done,  
i won't have squeaked out a single one.

## a word that's me

if you gave me a sentence to describe myself,  
i'd take a word and then let you keep the rest.  
that word would be a short one-  
in the simplest font style i can find-  
in the tiniest point size available-  
small.



i get small

when you praise me  
or berate me  
i shrink down for you  
i get small  
when you walk past me  
or look me in the eyes  
i shrink down for you  
i get small  
and if a stranger sees me  
i get small  
and if i have to speak  
i get small  
and if i have a desire  
or a feeling  
or a need  
or really anything at all  
i shrink it down  
and i get small

# people like to say

people like to say im doing better  
and when im getting things done, i tend to agree  
but people like to say a lot of things.  
people have said i landed on my feet  
and when i look down at my toes, i tend to agree  
but people dont know how carefully im balanced.  
people claim ive gone up in the world  
and when i look out the window, its hard to deny  
but people talk about all kinds of shit  
and i haven't been asked what i think.





# poem from a dying world

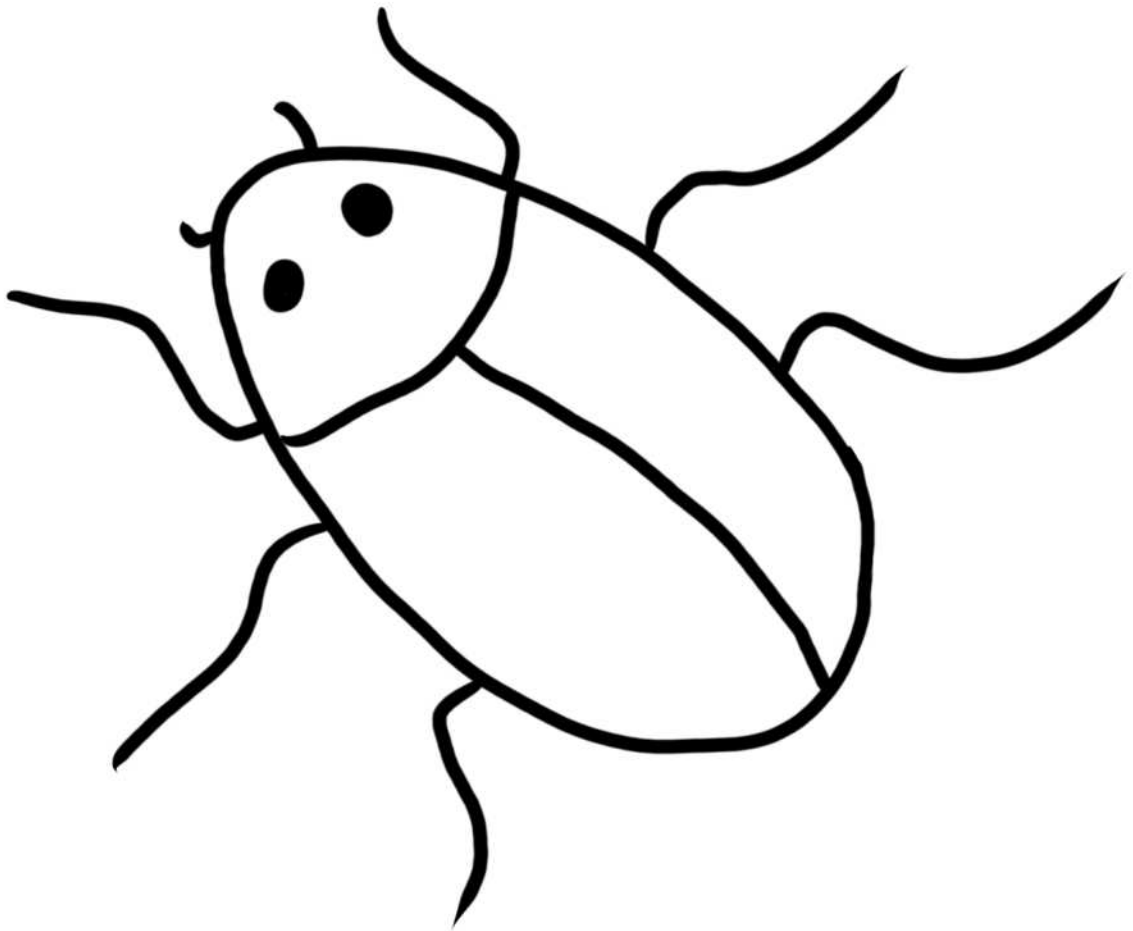
remember who these men want dead  
to know why we turn their wishes around.  
some things can never be innocently said  
if they aim to put people in the ground.

when laws make lives impossible to live  
each new rule becomes a violent deed.  
the suffering of others is only easy to forgive  
when you're not next in line to bleed.

don't shake your head at the thought of dissent  
or mistake your comfort for peace on earth.  
if others struggle while you stay content  
it will soon become clear what you are worth.

i love you

ily. i need you- i do.  
but you wedged a bullet in those three words and shot me dead.  
ily. i need you- and you know this, you do.  
but that doesn't mean that you know the rest of it.  
ily. i need you. i love you- it's true.  
i just wish you'd said it back sooner.

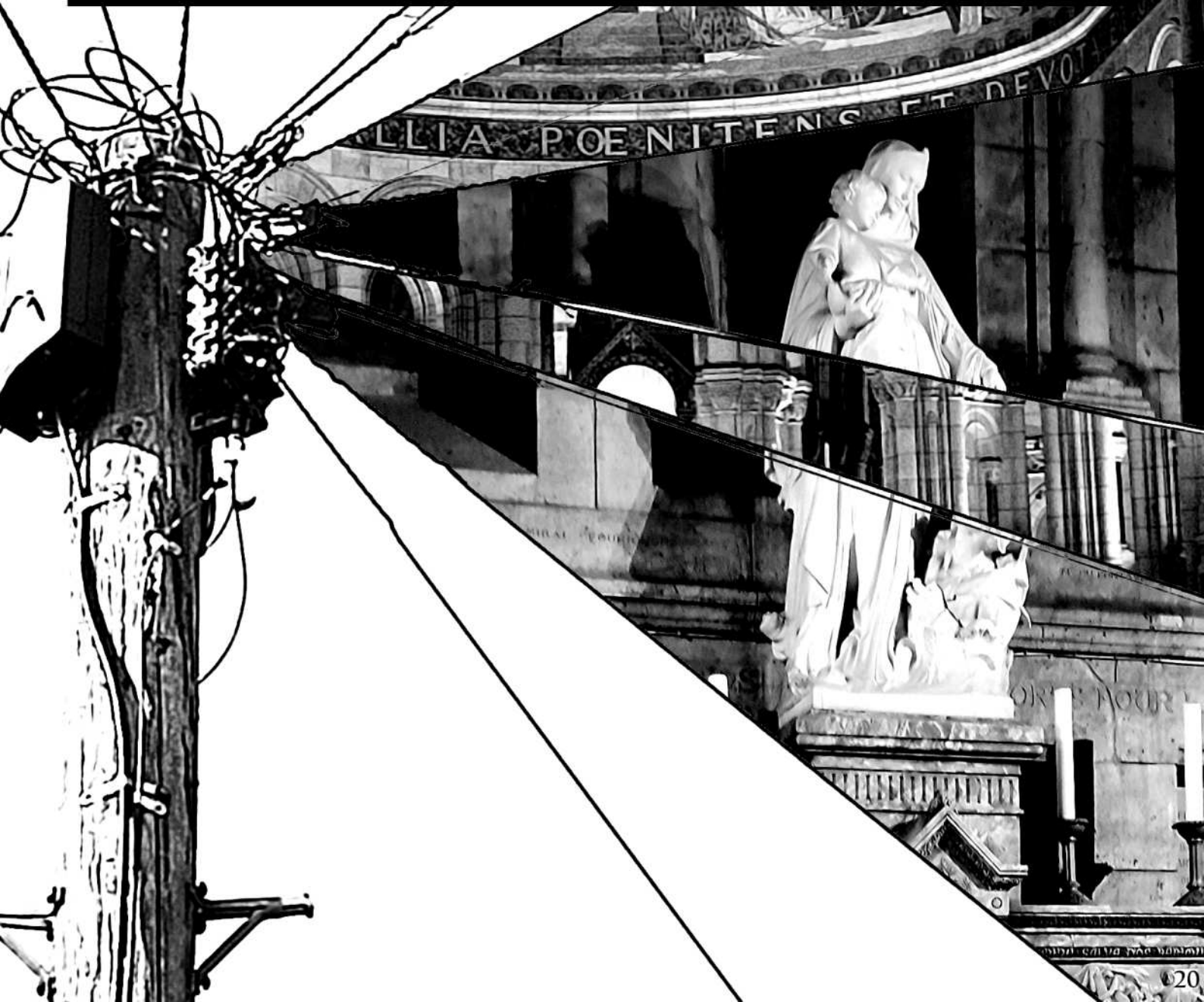


inhuman

certain sights and slight sounds, little words and lucid moments,  
they're all the reminder i need that i will never be fully human.  
there's a correct way to come into this world,  
an exact way to exist, and a right way to rest in peace,  
a human order to toil under even if the world beyond has none,  
and definitions to live by no matter how thin the idea of truth-  
no, i'm not human at all.

## malignant thoughts

a tragedy might happen once but will always last forever, worming its wicked way through your every endeavor. you'll learn very quickly that there's no hiding or running, when the ways it will hurt you are always too cunning. so no matter how sudden or silly your trauma's birth, the day you escape will be the day you're in the earth. find distractions- if you can, and lessen the pain- maybe, but we both know you'll be back to crying like a baby.






angel, you

angel of my heart, you  
and i say this gently, you  
and i say this with love, you  
you break me apart

it is all very simple:  
NEVERBEAPROBLEM  
NEVERBEABOTHER  
NEVERBEABORE  
NEVERBEACHORE  
NEVERBETOOLoud  
NEVERBETOObig  
NEVERBETOOhappy  
NEVERBETOOSappy  
NEVERBEAnything

burning the pasta  
breaking down in tears again  
on the kitchen floor






ive loved everyone ive loved but  
and im typing with frozen fingertips but  
whetyer ive made the righgt choices  
ill never know but  
assuming i have (i mean i haave to)  
that's pretty dqmn sad

### glimpses of life (Penelope)

Metal on metal outside while I was by the window by the fan its a good one considering the heatwave and the sound was irritating annoying even if rhythmic made me wonder what he was doing seemed to be trying to smash through a bike lock it was about 2am and it was strange it would be his bike but to steal something so loudly would be brazen though that's a whole strategy I suppose could be a kind of master thief as even everyone just walked him by like the people stumbling home from the bars drunk and screaming slurs at one another I can never truly tell whether or not its friendly but its in any case strange to hear from ones own home and makes me wonder if im missing out on anything though I know thats strange too its just all I ever wanted to be was everybodys honey and all I managed was to be convenient and maybe less so everyday because the world kind of passes you by when youre shy and moreso when your leg is so fucked you can barely walk but last night I dreamt I could stand on my own two feet as easily as anything no pain at all and I could even go for a run if I want and I think this makes me miserable I need one of those hugs people only ever give you when you can cry but if I cant then Ill be waiting forever theres a car blaring the most unbearable music now so at least someone is happy but Im not sure they realise people are trying to sleep around here not that I am and there really are glimpses of life everywhere I look beautiful everything I just dont want all of them to be someone elses.



### a confession

i've never been rejected much in my life  
but it's only because i've never tried much worth doing.  
if you drown out all aspirations beyond becoming a wife,  
your world shrinks until it's just who you're screwing.





## stuck

i needed to be somewhere else,  
and the doors sealed themselves shut.  
i needed the freedom to move,  
and the walls closed in towards me.  
i needed to be someone else,  
and i could feel my body grow larger.  
i needed to think other thoughts,  
and the ceiling moved down an inch.  
i needed to scream and cry,  
but i could barely breathe anymore.

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## 2am and 200mg THC

high as fuck and cleaning someone else's vomit off the floor  
the doctor says i already have a knee in the grave  
and i never wanted to be a grown man's mother  
when i never got to be a little girl

# one long night

when i passed through the first village, there were so many lights that i gave no thought to the number. the night was dark and the path ahead was long and winding. as i had no idea where this journey would end for me, i was determined not to risk wasting any time by stopping to look around. lantern by my side, i kept putting one foot in front of the other at a steady pace.

in the next village there were fewer lights, but still i paid them no mind. a few people here or there doesn't make much of a difference. the village still felt pretty much the same as the last one. i raised my lantern high and continued down the road, knowing i could not stray from it.

as the villages grew darker and darker, quieter and quieter, i only focused more on nurturing my own light. the darkness was giving me chills but i felt like there was a lot of distance left to cover. i could not even think about stopping.

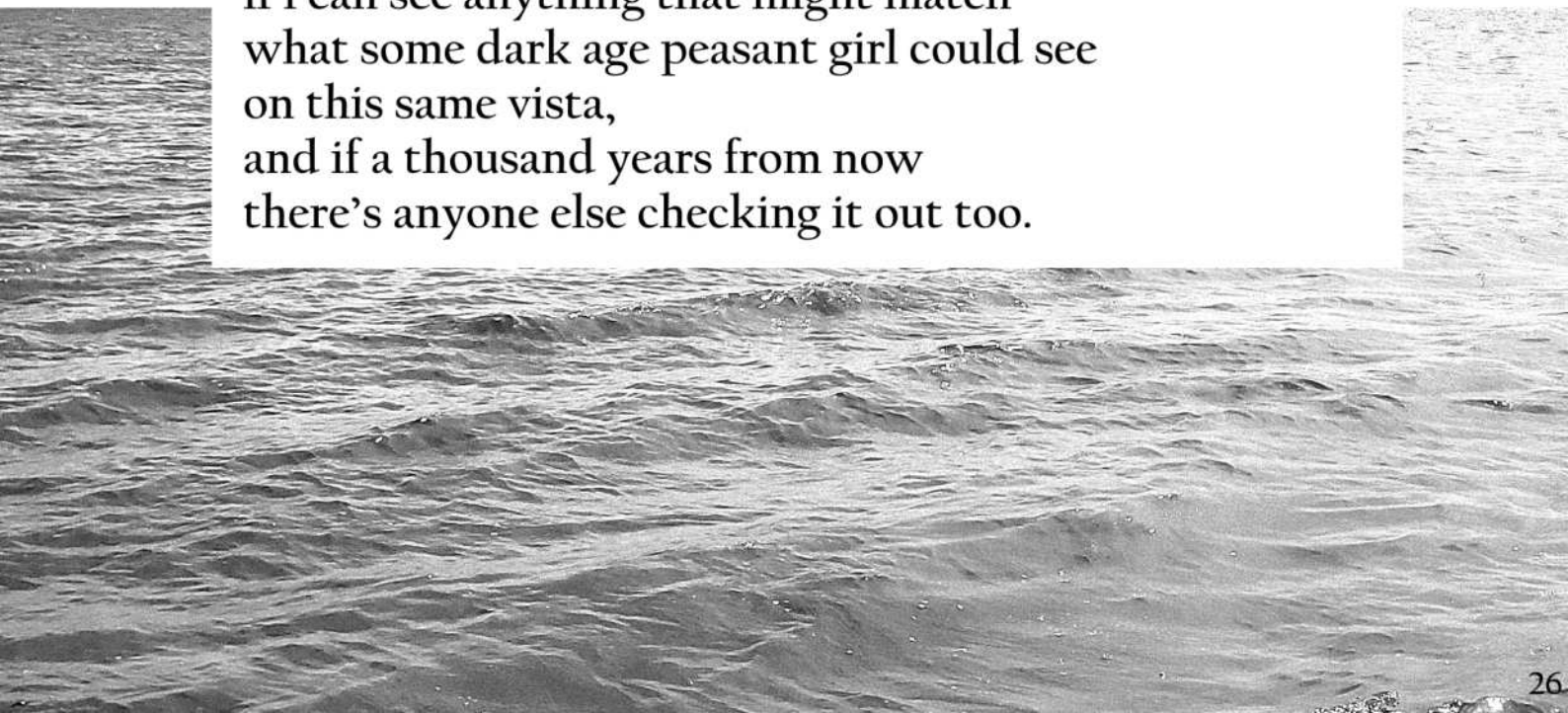
eventually there were very few signs of life at all, and none that reached out to me, just a handful of faint glimmers in the dark. i started to wonder who they were and how they lived.

now i reach a village that is all but pitch black. my loneliness takes on a new shape that creeps over me and whispers:  
drop your lantern!

but my feet move on their own

## shapes in the fog

when its dark out,  
im talking three or four am in winter,  
and im out walking in the cold  
and i look over the water  
where theres this low fog obscuring everything  
so you cant tell where the horizon is  
like its some kind of closely guarded secret  
and youve got to fill in the gaps  
yourself  
then i start to imagine  
all kinds of things  
that could be hiding out in there  
like creatures with appendages defying any description,  
giants with metal arms to sock each other with,  
men on boats shovelling the islands into place,  
and im wondering  
if i can see anything that might match  
what some dark age peasant girl could see  
on this same vista,  
and if a thousand years from now  
there's anyone else checking it out too.



# when you were sick

when someone is sick  
and they wake you up with their screaming  
it's hard to make it about yourself  
but hey, i will:  
i was so afraid of losing you  
i was so afraid of being alone  
and i couldn't say a thing

when you were dying  
and i felt your cancer burning my palm  
it wouldn't have been right to say anything  
but now, i can:  
my days were full of grief  
my head was full of needles  
and i loved you all the same

when it was all over  
and life began to return to normal-  
well, fuck:  
i'm not sure it did.

# l'amour vache

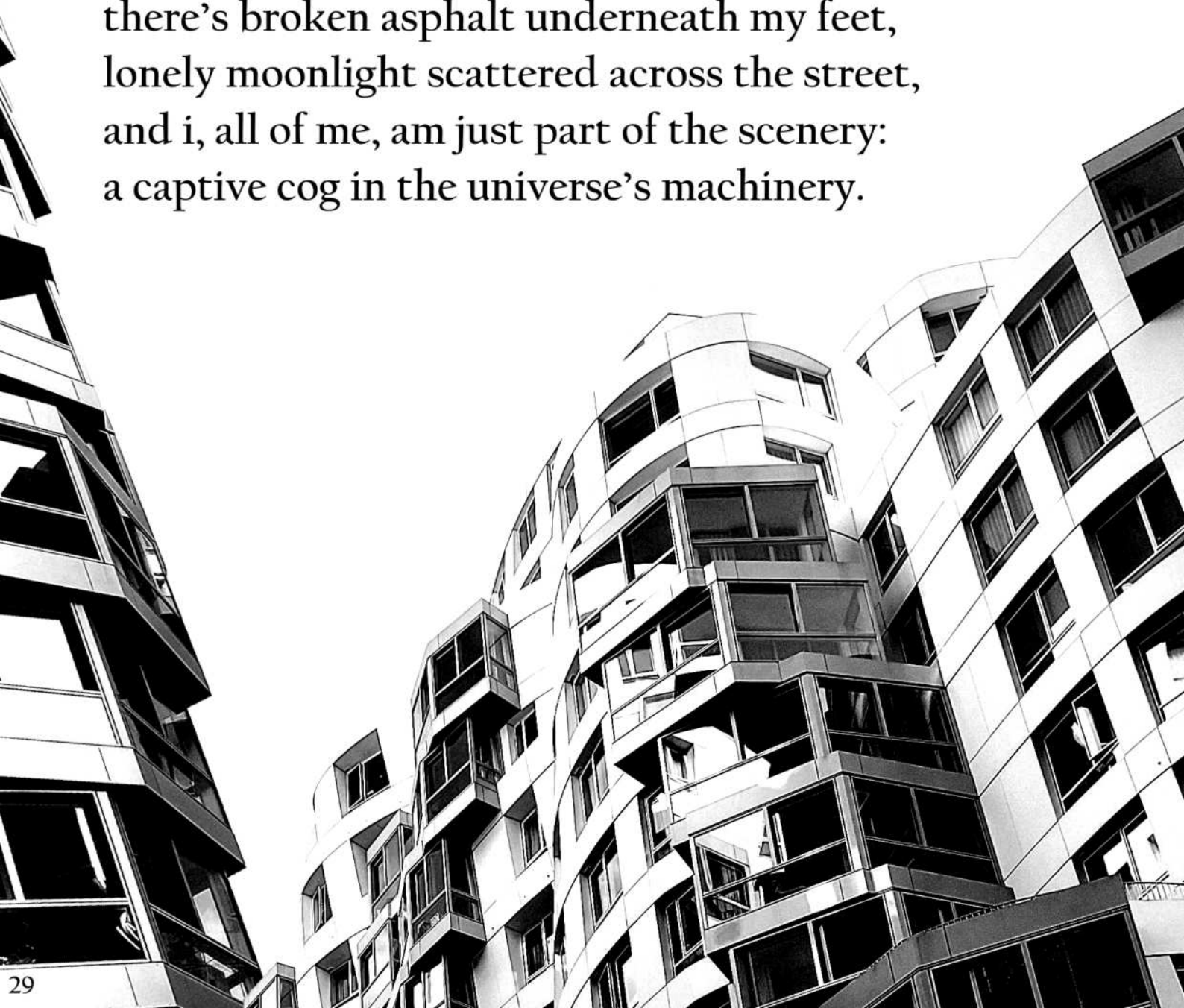
with pistol boots and a bullet necklace  
gunning down the street i love where  
i saw a man die/ i saw so much life  
you can take your pick with this one.  
hearts racing for good and for bad  
in a hundred different accents,  
beautiful balconies of wrought iron  
artistry hanging above my head as  
blood pools under someone else's,  
and the sun is shining so so warmly  
that it feels like a loving embrace.  
every sudden sound puts me on edge  
but then every smile sets things right,  
and i can truly do nothing to fight  
this strange affection.



# the climb

(derived from the same draft as 'red light and rain')

i've scrounged for better, seen how high i can climb,  
let my flesh become tainted with all the world's grime.  
a mountain of hurdles, both fearsome and vast,  
and i've tried my best- done all that was asked.  
yet when i look down, it's just a place from before  
and i've failed to get away from the things i abhor.  
there's broken asphalt underneath my feet,  
lonely moonlight scattered across the street,  
and i, all of me, am just part of the scenery:  
a captive cog in the universe's machinery.



## states of being

the girl on her way home from school where she will discover  
her father lying half-dead in a pool of his own urine,  
the boy cutting ribbons of rubies into his arm just to feel  
some kind of control in a world forever indifferent to him,  
the woman making herself look pretty for an unfaithful lover  
who will never live up to what he pretends to be,  
the kid crying because they went another day at school  
without making a single connection with a hope of sticking,  
the man using a streetlamp to keep himself upright  
as a drug induced haze threatens his body with collapse,  
a crowd of people listening helplessly to screams that echo out  
of a burning building as they feel the heat lick their faces,  
they all breathe in, they all breathe out,  
and how wonderful it is to still be anything.

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## laser light

(i'm a) sexless whore in scattered laser light  
dancing harder than the intrusive thoughts  
a six foot tall woman removes her bra  
and a stranger's sweat hits my skin  
step to the right and step to the left and  
step outside myself again



faulty parts

i built myself using faulty parts  
and then counted down to malfunction  
five, four, three, two-  
i never thought i would last long enough  
to regret my self-destruction.

