



## life cycle

Jo Galvez

### *the dreams of a kid*

i want to be a doctor! i want to be an actor!

### *an adolescent's enthusiasm*

i will do the most amazing things!

### *a teen's desire for freedom*

let me do what i want!

### *an adult grieving*

for themselves before they even die.

t r e a d i n g   w a t e r

going

through

the

motions

going

through

### *the stages*

#### **denial**

of course there is more to life – there is more for me – than this!

#### **anger**

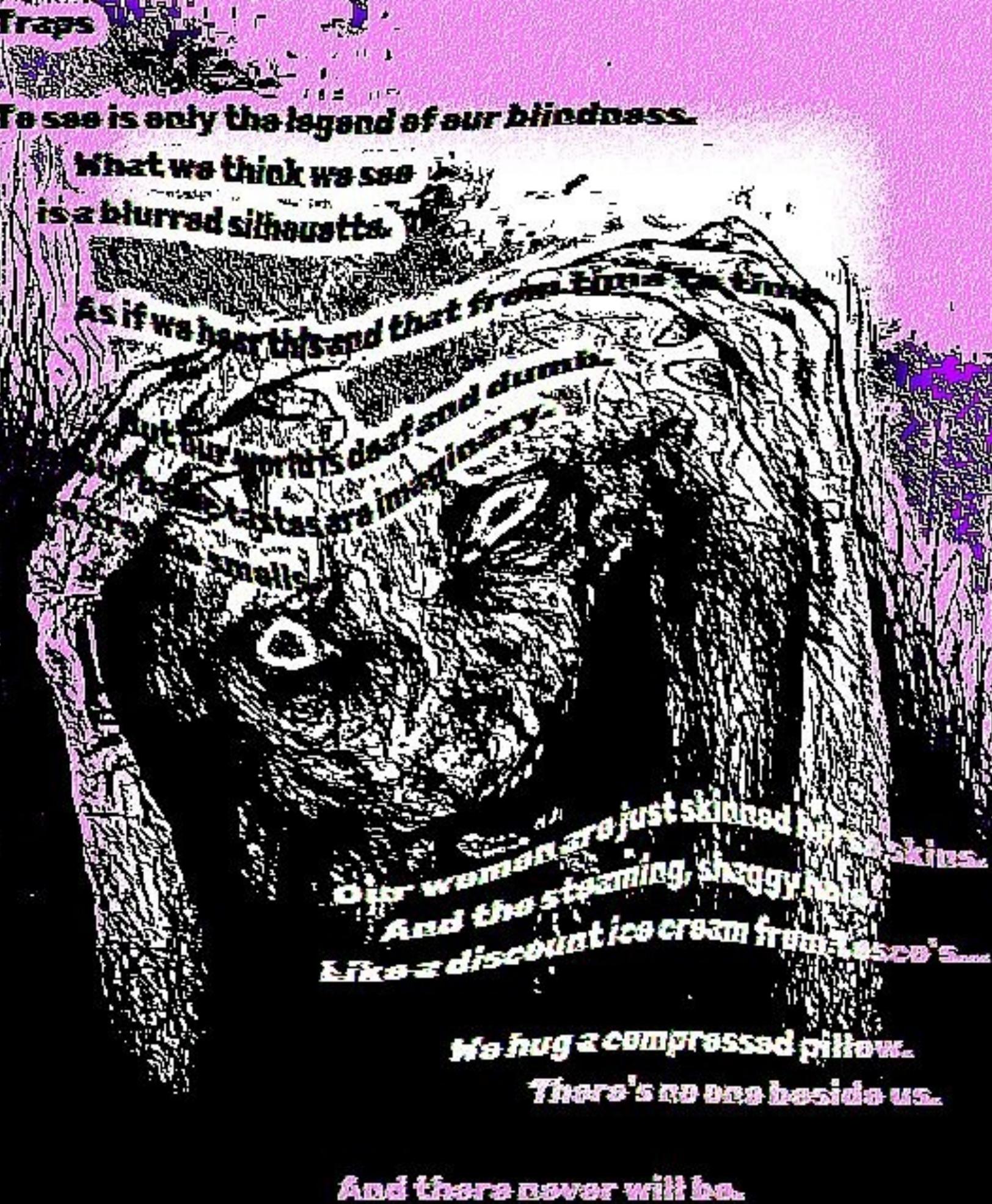
fuck this life. why do i even try?

#### **bargaining**

there is more to life than this, isn't there? please tell me there is, please.  
PLEASE.

#### **depression/acceptance**

sorrow and acceptance combined into one word: resignation.  
no, no, there isn't. stop hoping for more. this is all of it.



To see is only the legend of our blindness.

What we think we see  
is a blurred silhouette.

As if we hear this and that from Emma's tin  
of our world's deaf and dumb.

All the world's deaf and dumb  
is like a tin of Emma's tin.

Our women are just skinned horse skins.  
And the steaming, shaggy hair  
like a discount ice cream from Tesco's.

We hug a compressed pillow.

There's no one beside us.

And there never will be.

## Csapdák

Lázló Aranyi

Látni a vakságunk legendája.  
(Még a látnivaló elmosódott  
sziluettjét sem érzékeljük.)

Mintha hallanánk időnként ezt-azt.  
De süketnéma a világunk.

A négy alapíz is képzelt.  
Ahogy az illatok.

Nőink csak lenyúzott lóbőrök.  
S a gőzölgő, busa lyuk,  
mint a leértékelt jégkrém a Tescóból...

Összegyúrt párnáját öleli.  
Senki sincs mellette.

Nem is lesz soha.

## Bad Party

Michele Rule

There wasn't much small talk.  
The host hooked me up  
with some drugs.  
Slow drip.  
Steady pump.  
Creeping around my body  
like a big boa constrictor.  
The squeeze of it  
horrifying and delightful

The music came on.  
I swayed with the lights guy  
in my hospital gown.  
Dancing skeletons  
all knees and hips.  
Neon blinks.  
The pictures rolling out  
on the massive HD screen.

A final drink  
with vampires  
poking and prodding.  
Drawing blood acidic and salty.  
There's nothing left  
but a thin shell  
of skin and scar

It's a standing invitation  
that I want to decline.

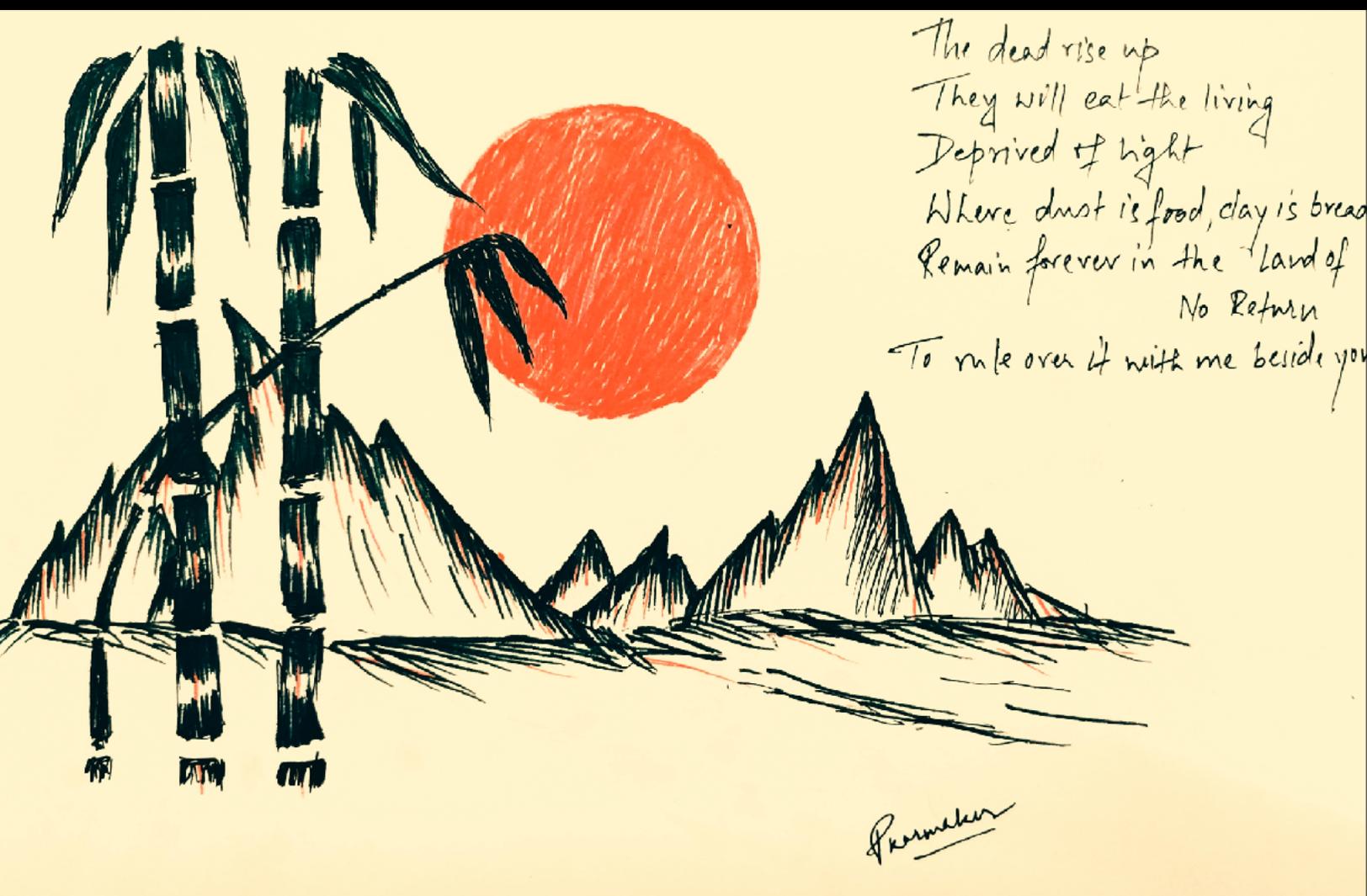
## The Evening Mediation Session is Cancelled

Colin Dardis

We are getting sick of all this hot noise slumping through the windows and walls. Here we are, trying to lead the tiniest of lives, most minimal of movement and sound, yet the world insists on eructating around us. The slop of a dog, the truck of a bin being taken out, taken in again, the squeal of children still alive in the summertime. Even an innocent cough is delivered on a knife. We've abandoned our journals, our reading, our studying. Learning isn't possible here; we have given up on enlightenment and now only pray for survival. Our fingers aren't enough for each other's ears. Our hands are too full of blood and injustice.

None of what we write  
can bring silence – a flower dries,  
we evaporate.





The dead rise up  
They will eat the living  
Deprived of light  
Where dust is food, clay is bread  
Remain forever in the Land of  
No Return  
To rule over it with me beside you

*P. Karmakar*

Deathless City by Pritikana Karmakar

## Another Fleeting Night

Richard LeDue

Naked and comfortable,  
sleeping next to each other,  
even if an empty wine bottle  
will try its damndest in the morning  
to fill us up  
with memories of last night,  
while far away,  
ghost hunters search for cold spots  
in an abandoned house,  
where a family lived and died,  
but suffered through something (an affair,  
a murder, a suicide, a dead child)  
to clothe themselves  
in the hollowest immortality.

# DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

A. R. Tivadar

The Devil sat across from me at the table. We both had whiskey. His lipless smile cut his face in half. I watched the smoke rise from his cigar, which he lit with the tips of his fingers.

“Well,” he grinned, “time for your part of the deal.”

I swallowed uncomfortably, fidgeting with my glass. “I can’t...”

“Don’t tell me you’re regretting it *now!*” He laughed mockingly.

“It’s not that.” I said. “The thing is... I already sold my soul years ago...”

The Devil blinked. “What?”

“I probably should have told you sooner...”

“What am I supposed to do now?!” He slapped his hands down on the table, making his glass dance.

“Is there anything else I could give you? My soul wasn't worth much, anyway.”

The Devil pinched the bridge of his nose. “The contract can't end until both parties have done their part. Which means *I am stuck with you.*”

I glanced around awkwardly, tapping my fingers against each other. “How about my first-born child? Would that suffice?”

“What would I do with a child?!” He snapped at me.

“I don't know... eat it?”

He stared at me, his expression a mixture of appaled, confused

and profoundly sick of me.

I shrugged, holding my lips tight.

“Fucking hell... Let me think of something...” He said, rubbing his forehead.

“I haven't dated in a while, so I doubt I'd be able to-”

“Shut up.”

“I'm sorry...”

“You better be.”

“I could be your servant, or something like that.”

“I doubt you'd be of much help.”

“I could pay your debt back.”

“With the money *I* got you?”

“Y-Yeah... like a bank loan, no? Heh, like that saying, you know? *Money is the Devil's eyes*. That would be the translation in English, it's a bit clunky, hahah... hah...”

The Devil wordlessly looked at me, waiting for me to shut up.

He rotated his wrist, making a piece of parchment manifest into existence. He grabbed it from where it was levitating with one hand and flicked his index finger against his thumb on the other. His nail covered in ash, he quickly wrote something.

“W-What are you doing?” I asked.

“An IOU.” He grumbled. “I'm dealing with you later.”

“O-Okay!”

“I'm going to need more drinks.” He shoved the note to my chest. It blended into my heart and I felt it burn like, well, heartburn.

“When should I contact you again?”

“I'll do it. Now leave.”

“Alright. Would you like me to do anything else right now, or order another round of whiskey for you, or-”

“Leave.”

“Alright. Sorry. Goodbye. Sorry again. Bye. Bye.” I said as I left, walking backwards and always bowing.

The Devil drank straight from the bottle.



## Wasteland

Nancy Machlis Rechtman

The monster roars  
The vibrations intensify  
Consuming my body  
Crushing my head in a vise  
Filling my lungs  
With gritty sand  
And every breath  
Leaves me drowning  
In an arid wasteland  
And I wonder  
Why no one can help me  
Even as I crawl towards the light  
And if I will ever  
Come to life  
Again.

## Rotting Under the Road

Reznov Tarkovsky

So people were singing with glory  
And the sky filled with so much light  
And yup they didn't know misery  
They were happy so they didn't hide

Alone being paved under the road  
With an empty bowel and sore throat  
I could breath with the small hole  
That day my life went tragically to fall

People were singing dancing screaming  
My body began to rot: disgusting!

In the Crypt... by Lázló Aranyi





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“life cycle” by Jo Galvez  
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“Bad Party” by Michele Rule  
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“Wasteland” by Nancy Machlis Rechtman  
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Book: Post Roe Alternatives: Fighting Back (<https://a.co/d/hjTw1KL>)

“Rotting Under the Road” by Reznov Tarkovsky