

A DESERTED BOTANICAL GARDEN

by Nadine Veitnere

Blossom

We have met before
we will meet infinitely more
where the orange trees blossom

The nectar droplet
hanging from a hummingbird's tail feather
is for us

I missed seeing you
collect the dew so carefully

Curious
how our bodies fit this time
and the times before time
when everything was white and static
but you and I
two breaths playing in a loop

Do you remember what it was like?
to rest your head on my lap
your curls tangled my fingers
begged me to *stay*

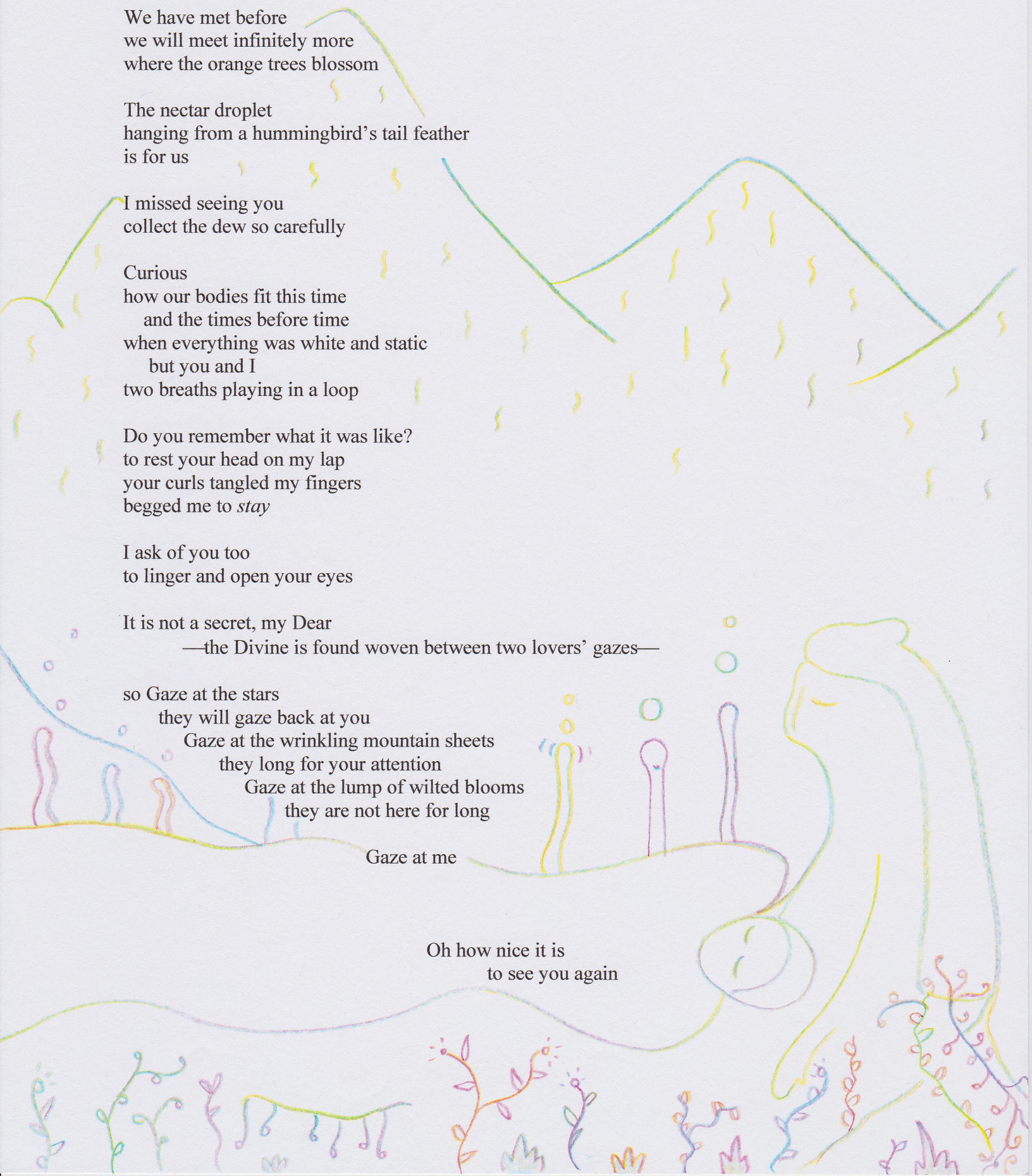
I ask of you too
to linger and open your eyes

It is not a secret, my Dear
—the Divine is found woven between two lovers' gazes—

so Gaze at the stars
they will gaze back at you
Gaze at the wrinkling mountain sheets
they long for your attention
Gaze at the lump of wilted blooms
they are not here for long

Gaze at me

Oh how nice it is
to see you again



Skin

You pick the rust
collected underneath my fingernails
I strike a match against your skin

Did we lose our sensitivity?

Your roots draw from a cigarette stem
your body too
will wilt

It was before time,
when we climbed this mountain
two souls galvanized
by the moon's sickle which pulled us forward

there was no other
but you and I

it was our bodies
How can they ever be someone else's?

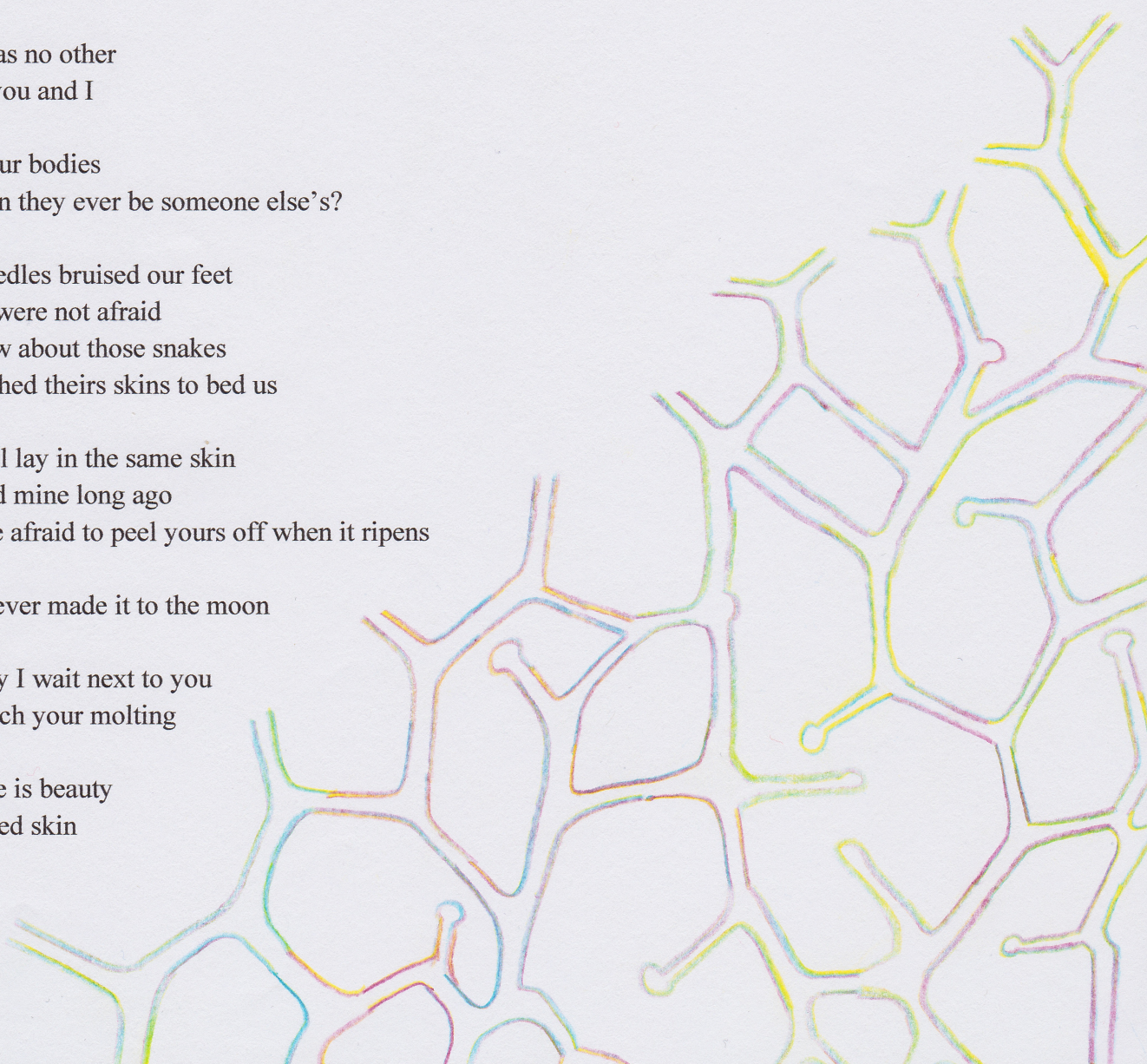
Pine needles bruised our feet
but we were not afraid
we knew about those snakes
which shed theirs skins to bed us

You still lay in the same skin
I shed mine long ago
don't be afraid to peel yours off when it ripens

we never made it to the moon

patiently I wait next to you
and watch your molting

for there is beauty
in fracked skin



Crooked

There are two blue swans
They meet every sunset in secret,
tie their crooked necks together,
and listen to the other's ambitions

One craves to be like the sky
The other craves to find delight in time

One desires to catch the scattered bits of light
The other desires a romance with the wind

One wishes for dandelions to never wilt
The other wishes to be courageous

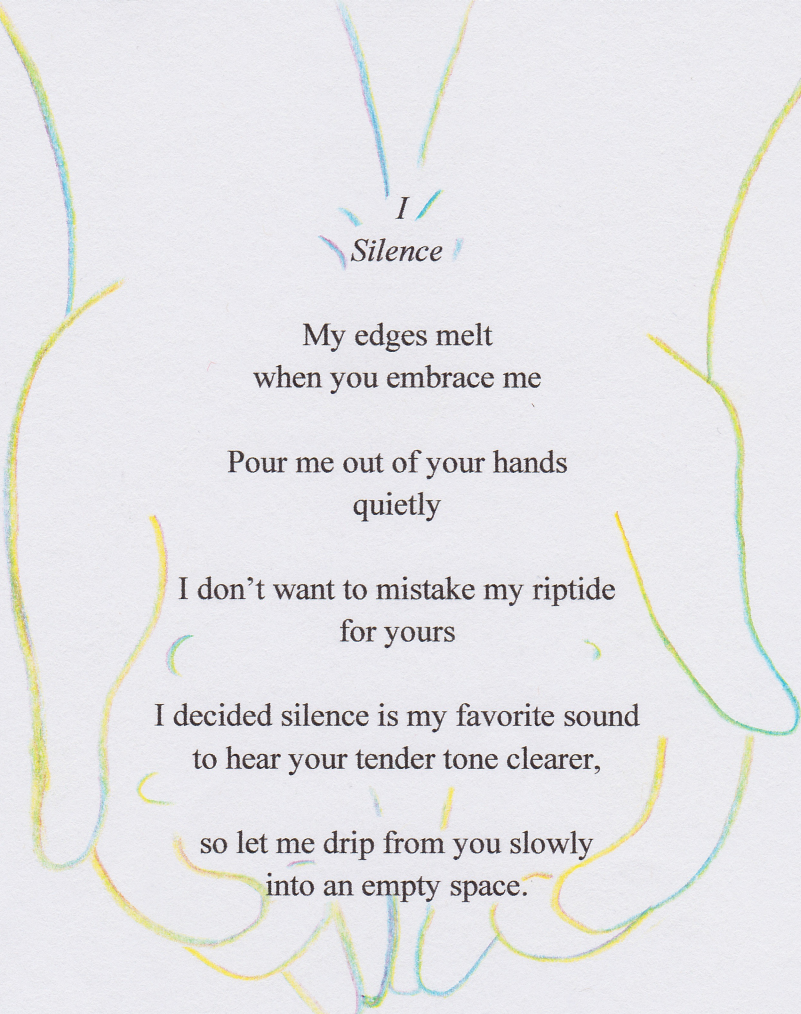
One nips at the other
The other plucks three of its feathers

Their necks loosen,
but they will meet again at the next dawn

Butterfly

In the days when you are a fleecy dandelion
in the days when you are a stinging nettle
I love you

I will love you
so long as you don't rip the wings off a yellow butterfly



I
Silence

My edges melt
when you embrace me

Pour me out of your hands
quietly

I don't want to mistake my riptide
for yours

I decided silence is my favorite sound
to hear your tender tone clearer,

so let me drip from you slowly
into an empty space.

Why

do I

feel so much thicker
when I fall out of your hands?

I fold myself seven times over and build a saffron cocoon which feels just like you
Here I wait to be near you again

and boil into a thicker lump of dust, skins, and thoughts. I wonder if I will remember the fall
when I wake up with new limbs and go searching for you

How often
to another
but you

do souls leave an echoing space looking to cling
I have pursued symmetry ever since I left
taught me to love the chaos after an ecstasy

Gonzo

One tile in my bathroom
is upside down

One finger out of ten
hates its neighbor

I heard a voice at night yell
Your blood is made of quicksand!

I paint with my fingers
from empty paint pots

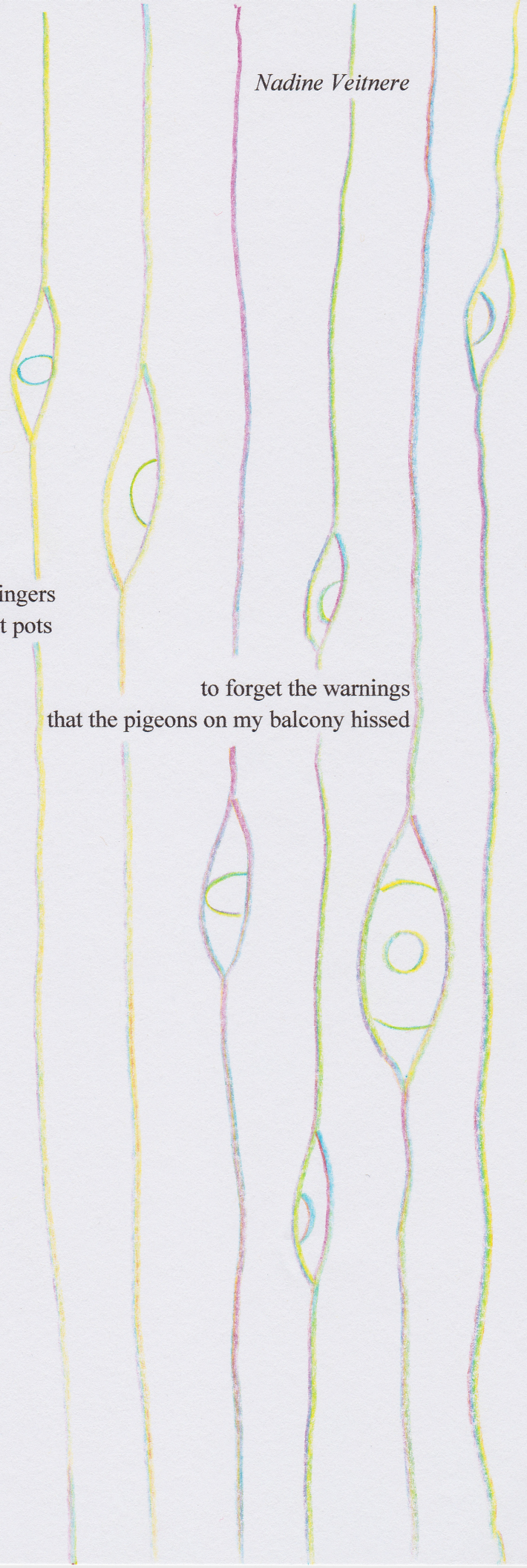
to forget the warnings
that the pigeons on my balcony hissed

I found a spider on my fingertip *
I trust it
To watch me
.oO with its million eyes Oo.

To leave my body
and keep my *soul*

It's a tragic thrill
once in a while

to skip a step
when I march



Wet Grass

There is a pocket-sized fisherman
living on my right shoulder

Every morning he makes a trip to my wrist,
casts his bait,
and sets the fishing rod between my knuckles

He grows dandelions on my elbow
and collects milk from their stems

At nights he returns home
and picks a hair for tomorrow's fishing line
Before bedtime he looks upwards,
and tells my freckles about his daily adventures

If a freckle shoots,
the fisherman makes a wish

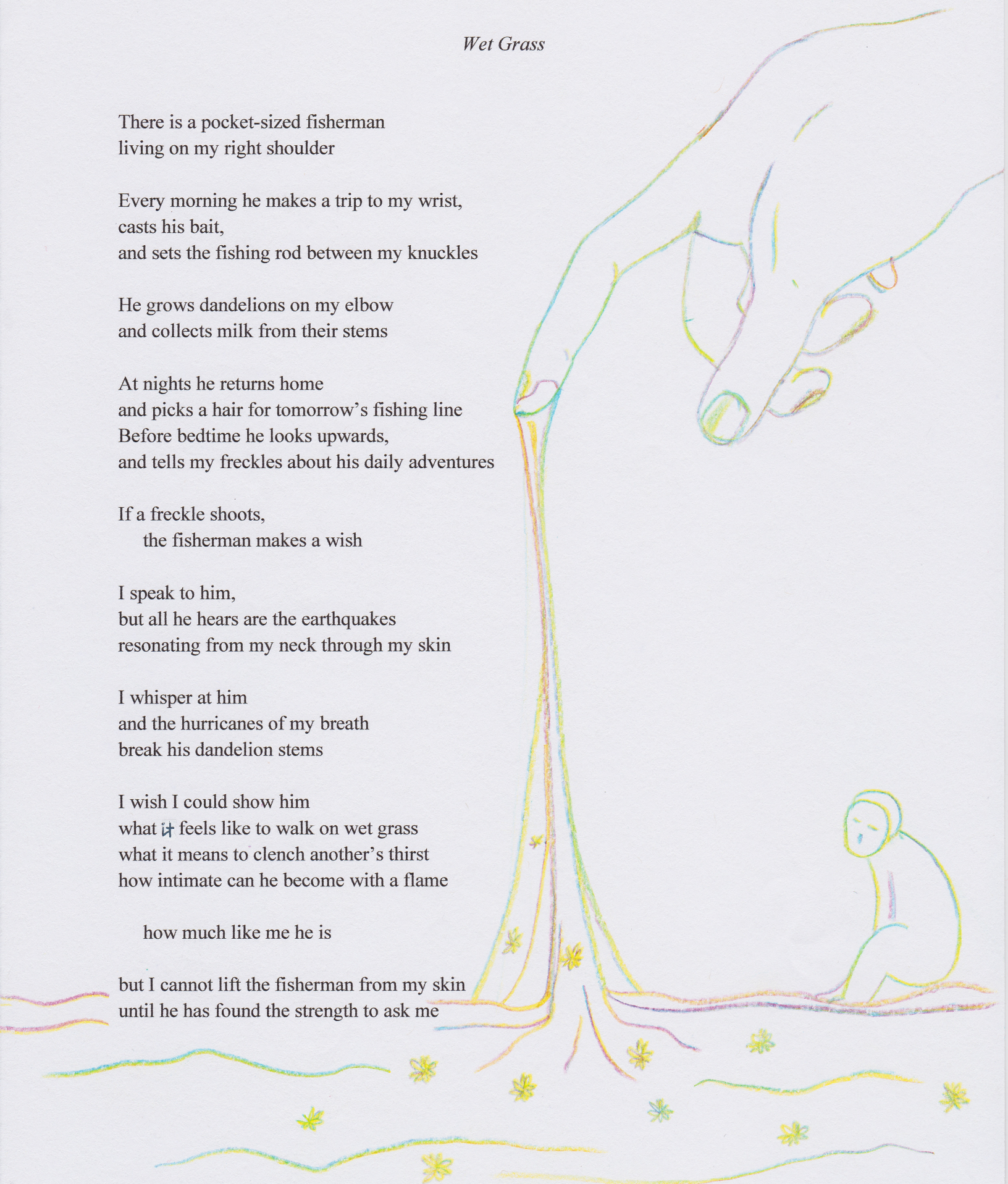
I speak to him,
but all he hears are the earthquakes
resonating from my neck through my skin

I whisper at him
and the hurricanes of my breath
break his dandelion stems

I wish I could show him
what it feels like to walk on wet grass
what it means to clench another's thirst
how intimate can he become with a flame

how much like me he is

but I cannot lift the fisherman from my skin
until he has found the strength to ask me



Dear Father

Lay with me in the chamomile field
and look at the egg yolk
I am holding in a silver spoon
so carefully

Do you see how it glistens?
Does it look yellow to you too?

It reminds me of the day
when you climbed a pine tree by the seashore
up high you swayed with the treetops
they had waited for you

I saw the Sun tenderly buff your shoulders
and you chose to look down at me

look again
Can you tell how fragile it is?

I was afraid
that it could be the day you fall
I was too raw to notice
the day you actually dropped

You have wandered through the forest with bruised knees
for a long time,
so cover your wounds with chamomile leaves
let them heal

don't be ashamed
to dance with green knees
I forgave us and the forest,
put some white blossoms in my hair,
and rejoice in your spontaneity

I will always watch you
and guard this ripe Sun's yolk
from breaking

