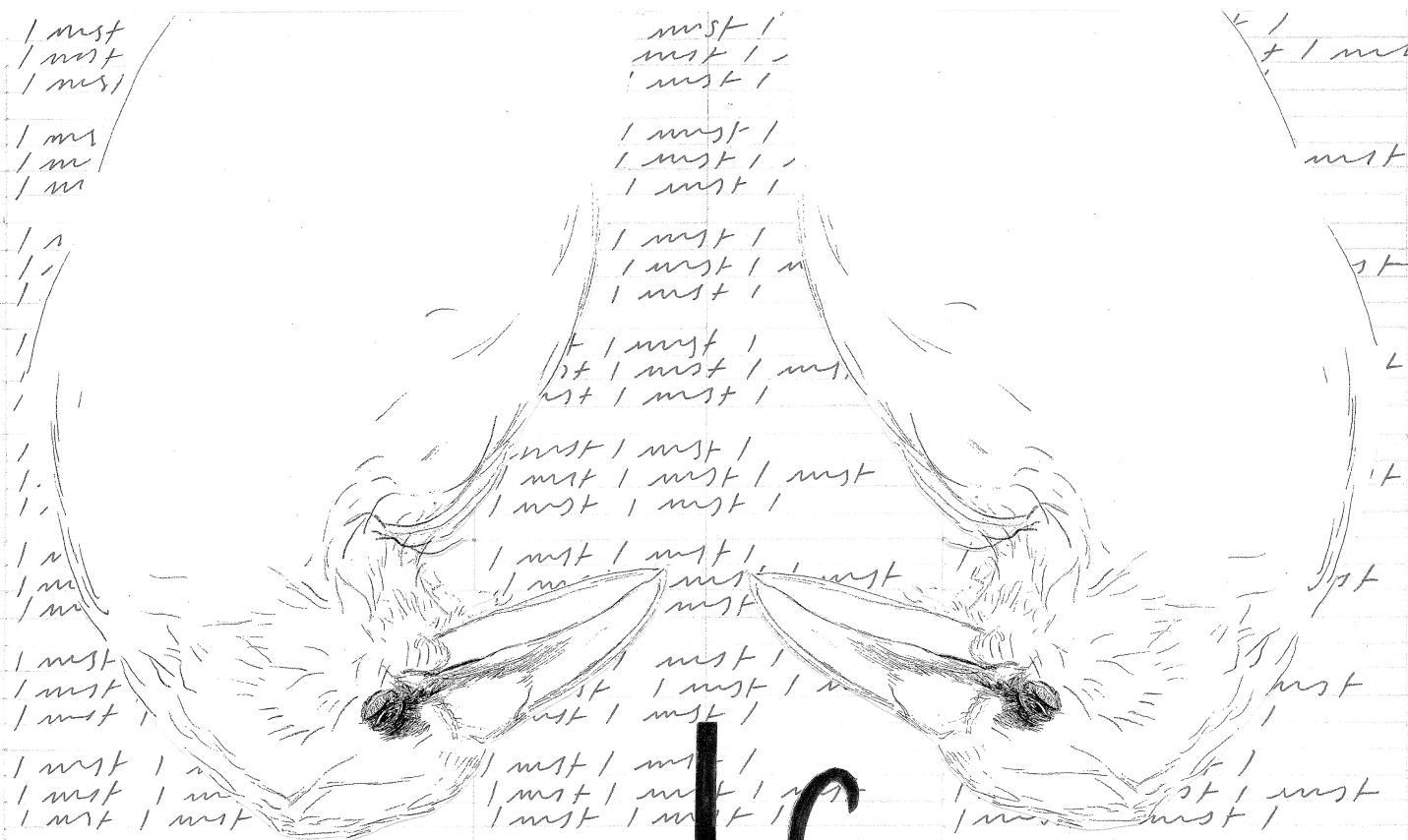
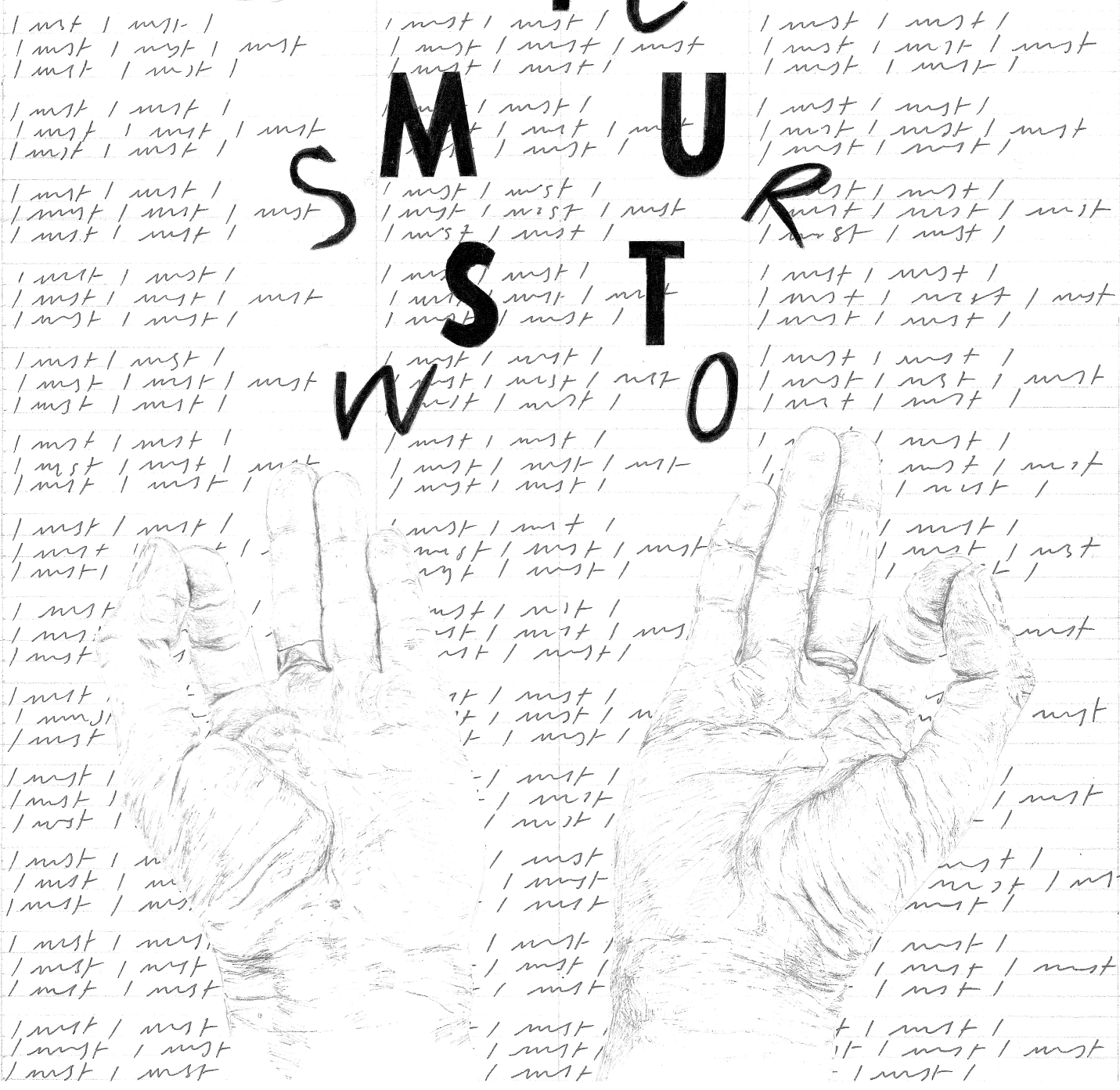


1208

2026



S M I C U R S T W O



[cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo]

What do you do?

In August Away

In these pages the Cuckoo is a clock, a pendulum; only irregular, wild, responsive: a *visitor* - as we all are dear reader, and we must not forget.

It is the twelfth of August in the year two thousand and twenty six CE.

The night sky is moonless & black with stars, black as the hare Bipalium's eyes; dark as the future.

If the Crow sounds death crying,
So the Cock calls death dying.

To take interstice
these very calls -

and the crow
turns its head;

every point,

a radiation.

The future is dark, which is the best thing the future can be, I think", Virginia Woolf (1915)

ravine, as the old crow, heading his long, straggling troop,
came flying down homeward. Half a mile away I could
hear the contented '*All's well, come right along!*' as we

with me
a gun.'
in the t

No. 1.



Caw

Caw

they v

“Nevermore.”

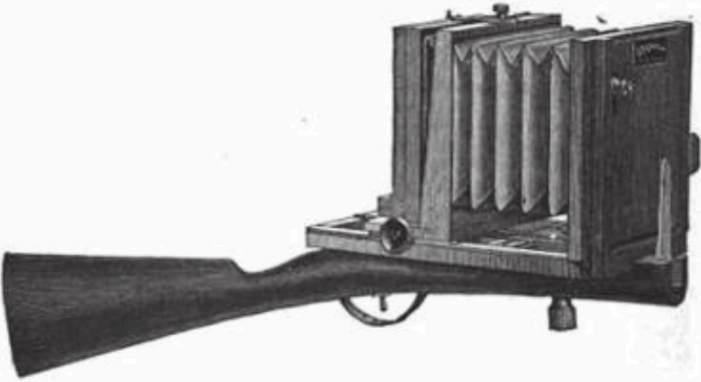
Edgar Allen Poe, *The Raven*. (1845)

30 SCOVILL'S AMATEUR SPECIALTIES.

KILBURN GUN CAMERA,
 For 4x5 Pictures.
 (PATENTED.)

Price, \$27.00.

Gunstock Attachment only \$5.00.



A popular method of hunting lately introduced is in conformity with the laws of Mr. Bergh's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It never results in the death or even maiming of fish, flesh, or fowl, yet all three may be easily bagged. The weapon used is a late invention called the gun camera. It consists of a small camera mounted on a gunstock and provided with sights and triggers. Its ammunition is chemicals instead of powder and lead. It is both breech and muzzle loading, is light and simple in construction, and is used like an ordinary shot-gun. When a bird rises, it must be brought to the shoulder, a dead aim taken at the feathered object, and the trigger pulled. There is a slight shock as of an explosion, the bird flies on to cover unharmed, leaving its picture on the sensitive plate in the camera. It is all done in a moment of time. The plate is removed, another inserted, and the hunter is ready for the next object. The amateur may go forth with two dozen dry plates as his stock of ammunition. If he fire with precision at any stationary or moving object, he may be absolutely sure of bringing it down.—*New York Tribune*.

FIGURE 1.
 Advertisement for
 Kilburn Gun Camera.
 Reproduced from
 Scovill product
 catalog, New York,
 1883.

Antoine Traisnel, *Capture: American Pursuits and the Making of a New Animal Condition*. (2020)

- 'animals appear in their disappearance'



American Crow.
CORVUS AMERICANUS.
Black-brown, lighter on the face.
No. 22. (See Plate CLVI.)

John James Audubon, *American Crow*. (1827)

Then suddenly, suddenly, incredibly strongly he was there.

Because then I thought about him, I remembered and then I sat down and took a piece of paper, and like that I did draw a portrait of him, and like that without thinking really it was an incredible likeness.

It surprised me not when I was doing it but afterwards, when I was looking at it it was him.

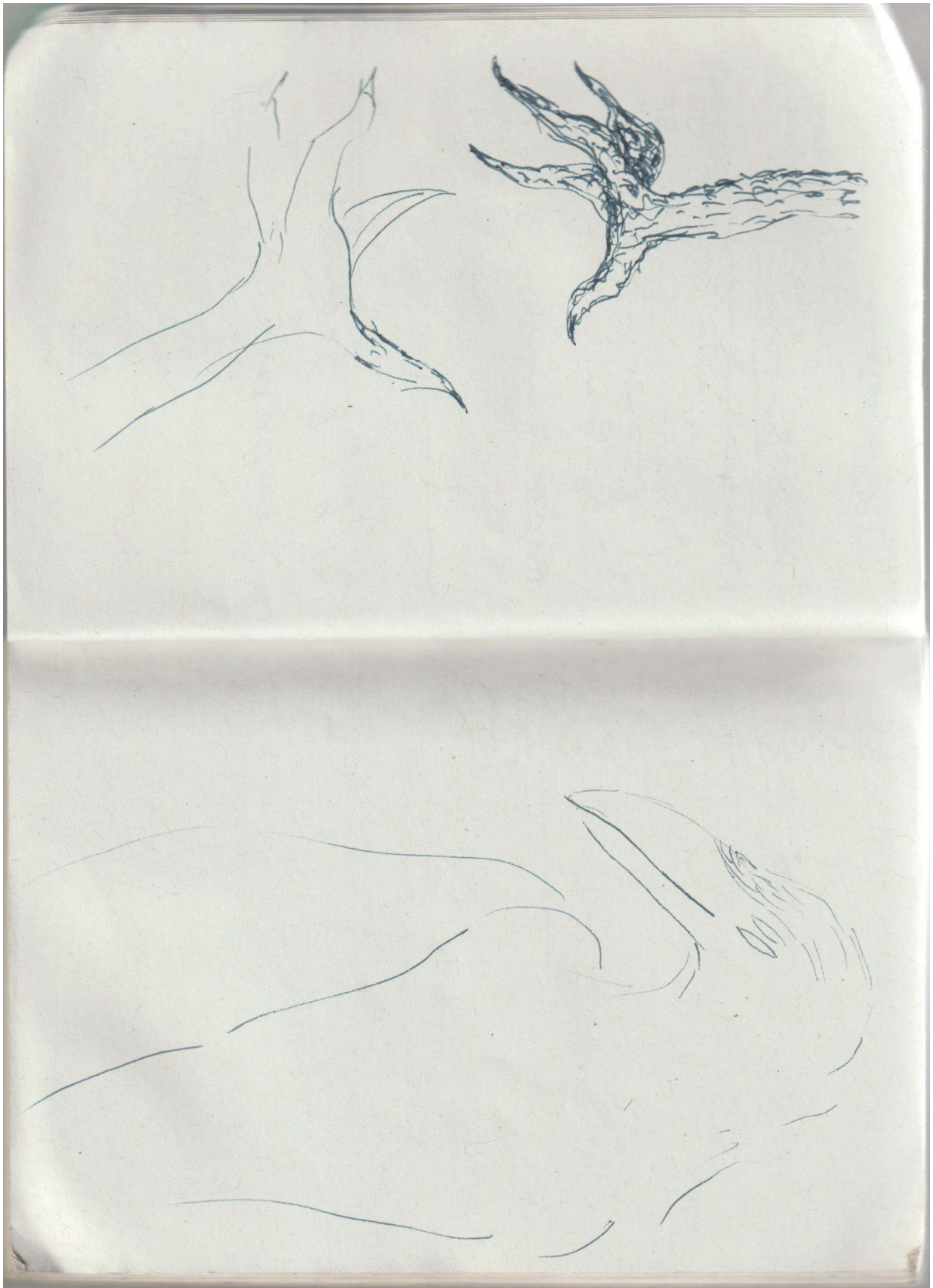
And I think that is interesting cause it tells us something about the way memory works, and the way that what is absent is present.

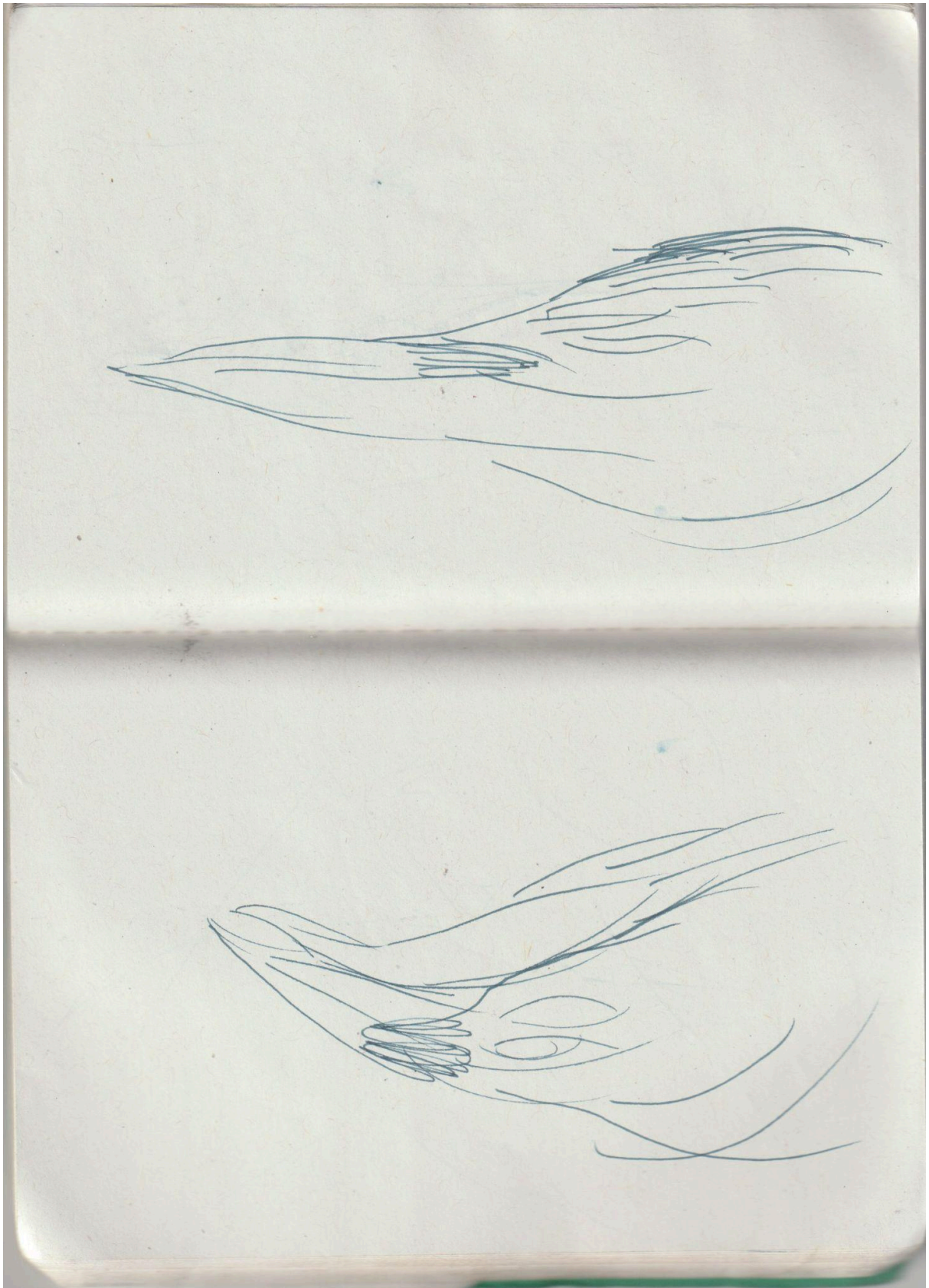
There's a wonderful letter by Rilke to the painter Balthus when Balthus was a kid, you probably know it; Balthus has just lost a pet animal, has died or something like that, and Rilke says to him; I'm paraphrasing badly but he says; Loss has a very strange and contradictory relationship with the opposite of loss which is possession. And in fact when we lose something or somebody, if that thing that we have lost is important we begin to possess it internally more strongly than when we "possessed" it externally.

This story about the drawing is somehow connected to that.









Sunny Vowles, Corvus' from sketchbook

Woken up by the smoke of camphor and ghee, each year my father performs *shrad* (a ritual for the dead) for his late father and mother on their death anniversary.

As a dutiful son and daughter-in-law, the son sat obediently in front of an Odia priest whose name or face I can never recall, surrounded by the daughter-in-law's eager footsteps, marigold flowers, palm leaves, sacred thread, and a fire *kund* for *havan* (a fire ceremony). The mumbling, out-of-tune mantras were chanted by the two around *havan*. Simultaneously, a mandatory and elaborate, all-vegetarian meal for everyone in the household, including the deceased, was prepared for the day.

In the midst of the ritual, we were greeted by the much-awaited crow/s on the grilled window, peeking through an eye and exposing its belly as it clawed at the rusted grills. Within seconds, this incarnate soul, as the crow/s, flew and feasted on the meal on our terrace and blessed the house and their living family. Somehow, we were never permitted to witness or interact with the crows/ our late beloved feasting. Neither this son, who has lost his father at the tender age of four, nor this son's four-year-old daughter, who has a conception of death, has ever fully grasped the grief morphed into a *shrad*. His grief is internalised, and his outlet are the duties he ought to perform. Meanwhile, his spouse, ever-so-less-credited, dutifully shares. This phantom and fleeting emotion is embodied as a bird, often, a crow.

So, does that crow have a taste that feasts? Has another incarnated bird feasted instead? Has the deceased been granted a day to live? Those unanswered logistical questions were intertwined with this bird.

CA:

That was so exciting with the crow! They flew to my window ledge to eat crackers, peanuts, and cherries that I put in a little bowl. [Eventually, I could hand this crow food, and I was even allowed to pet their beak.] They brought me 12 gifts, but it was the night of the first gift when I had a dream that they brought me a large piece of rectangular gold foil. And in real life, the 12th was gold foil!

FATHER, DAUGHTER

In Naples people speak with their dead as much as with their saints. Enlist their help. As a Florentine Jew, I too speak with my dead. I love them, and they help me clear my mind.

*

It is the first red light of morning
and the others are praying outside
with old songs, sage, and tobacco
while I have been dreaming from the deep, the ancient
taking in the red light rising between the Eucalyptus trees and their fragrance
They drop three seeds in the shadows
three deep shrines
worlds becoming
I can hold them
and the naked bark
its spare intimacy
that peels back and reveals its other layers
deeper, earlier, without effort
that beautiful undoing
the smooth newness
some of the religions say
that the five senses are thieves
so let's say
I am stolen
because my senses are all awake
and like the tree I can lose myself
layer after layer
all the way down to infinity
and that's when the world has eyes
and sees
the whole world
loves
the unlayered
human

Linda Hogan, *Eucalyptus*. (2008)



Clipping found in The Abbey Bookshop, 29 Rue de la Parcheminerie (April 2026)

Remembering coyote backwards

I remember not remembering coyote

I remember,
from early on.
From the beginning,
I remember -

My father,
driving his car,
and my stretching to peer
out the windows from
the back seat.

All around us shacks,
wooden walls and blanket doors.
All around us children
and men and women,
and dogs too.
All around us people I later
would know to call 'Indians',
on a hill I would later know
To call 'Hill 57'.

I remember my father
Rolling down the car window,
Speaking with someone. A man.

And what happened next dwindles into darkness.

My mother mentioned it once,
years later.
Dad hired some Indian workers
to roof a house he was building,

the very first house he built,
the one the O'Hare family owns
on Sixth Avenue near water tank park.

But they took our money,
Mom added,
Took our money and ran off
in the middle of the job.

Dad must have brought me with him
to Hill 57, the hill where for decades
Crees and Metis who arrived too late to be
confined

to a reservation
simply built their homes anyway
on stones and dust
beyond the outskirts of Great Falls,
overlooking neatly plowed fields
of prosperous Norwegian farmers
growing wheat and alfalfa.

Coyote stories, I suspect,
were lurking on Hill 57.
Only later did I return there,
Following a dusty road cutting through
Thistle and sagebrush
On my last summer in Great Falls before
going to college.
I worked for one month for the Census Bureau
and was responsible for determining the state
of the basements in large sections of rural
Cascade County.

No one said so, but the basements were
obviously of interest
if there were ever to be a nuclear war.

And so I was asking householders far and wide
about the depth of their basements, the walls of
their basement,
indeed, if they had a basement.

And so I found myself on Hill 57,
the settlement now mostly empty.
A few shacks here and there.

One man lifted the blanket to his home,
Invited me in, asked me to sit down.
He explained to me carefully why he would
Not answer my questions, even though his
Floor was of earth, even though the notion of his
Having a basement was laughable.
I squirmed in my chair. I did not know what to
say.

Later that day, I ate lunch
next to a Minuteman missile silo,
and read the beginning of James Agee's *A Death in the Family*,
At no point in that day did I listen
for the howling of coyotes,
nor did I hear them.

Some people, the elder recalled, did not convert and move to the coast. They became the orang Gi, “Gi people,” the “lost people.” They became invisible (gaib); they became witches (swanggi). Gi can turn into birds and animals, but they are also cannibals and sorcerers. That kind of power is not available to modern people on the coast, who are churchgoing men and women of faith. Even though the church front is painted with enormous men with wings (the Javanese finisher copied these angels from a pattern book, people said), there is no tie between humans and birds, even in stories, they told me. The only exception my interlocutor could think of was the possibility of reading the flights of brown-headed crows (*Corvus fuscicapillus*). If a crow flies from the west and gives a special call, it means someone in the family has died or, alternatively, that someone unexpected and unwanted will come. Of the animal relations once possible, there has been a bifurcation prophecy—legitimate and respected—and satanic force. The latter is identified with the lost people, who retain the animal relations of the region’s pre-Christian heritage. Today’s village dancing and drumming (with no feathers involved) were learned from Ambonese Christian missionaries and schoolteachers.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, ‘*The Sociality of Birds: Reflections on Ontological Edge Effects.*’ Waigeo, Indonesia. (2022)

‘animals first entered the imagination as messengers and promises’

John Berger, *Why Look At Animals*. (1980)

ALL'S
WELL

I looked in the well and saw nothing.
So we had bread and honey for supper.
my tongue - licking it. I looked *wicked*!
plucked from the tree of refuge in my
twisted it in my teeth. Strong they are;
I don't belong to you: *you see*
A L L ' S W E L L
I had my head in the well and I took out
in the water over my shoulder;
CawNOmore. They were sparrows.

cause I don't know you never did never will not possible
A H ! W E L L ! A L L ' S W E L L !
You vanished! *Must be nice to vanish like that.* look forward.

So I went home and it was Summer!
I saw my face, in the spoon, starting with
My wicked reflection hatched an idea
imagination I took my spoon and
NO ROT, NO PEGS, NO VICTORIA!
I walked my spoon along to
Twisted over backwards, as you do.
my spoon; & I saw *you*, yes I did,
birds first, not the lover crows, they don't
Yes I saw you your *mask* you

[Sparrow song]



Stephen Gill, *The Pillar*. (2019)

When death came to town

As with the enduring and the ephemeral, so with life and death. Death is not a stand-alone event; it only exists because of life. One of the crucial distinctions within the world of life is between those who die of necessity (eukaryotes, or mortals), and those who may live forever (prokaryotes) provided bad luck does not wipe them out. We mortals are those for whom programmed death is pervasive: cells die, individuals die, and species, too, are destined to die. The complementary dynamic is that sex is the partner to death. Mortals reproduce, thereby enabling the emergence of abundance and diversity. With sex, we mortals pass on some of our genetic make-up to our offspring; we do not live forever in the way of prokaryotes, but at the same time 'new non-copy organisms are brought into being', diversity takes precedence over stasis.

Hans Jonas wrote an insightful essay on the burden and blessing of mortality. The burden, in his view, is like this: although we know we are going to die, we don't know when. Death could take us at any moment, and there is nothing we can do about that. We live always on the knife edge. At the same time, the blessing of mortality is that we actually do die. His analysis works with the individual. If you were uniquely able to live forever, or for centuries, would you want to? Would you want to live, growing older and older, and finding all that you know and love dying around you? Or, if it were the case that all humans, indeed, all mortals, could live forever, or for centuries and centuries, where would we put them all? What would happen to earth life if mortals kept accumulating? The blessing of mortality, according to Jonas, is that it averts these ugly scenarios.

The story of mortality is equally the story of natality, as Shestov wanted us to remember and learn to love. The sometimes shocking fact of natality is that although each individual is in some sense 'new', the world into which one is born has long existed. In Jonas' words: 'natality... means that each of us had a beginning when others already had long been here'. The ephemeral world into which we are born is already a given fact of natality, and so we join the flows as beneficiaries of much that precedes us and will outlive us. Jonas tells us that the connection between natality and mortality is that the organically programmed death of parent generations makes room for their offspring. He is not talking about sacrifice, but about necessity. There

is nothing in the great kingdom of mortal life that does not come into this world through waves of generations involving both death and birth.

Every day, and every moment, we draw life from our surrounds, and we avert death. Metabolism, Jonas wrote, 'is a continued reclaiming of life, ever reasserting the value of being against its lapse into nothingness'. Life holds onto itself only through connectivities, that is through flows of energy and information that cross individual and species borders. As it is always coming, so it is always becoming, indeed, co-becoming. Life is always 'with others', and always in motion.

...

Jonas was working primarily with an either-or logic: *either* life in its vivacity *or* death as a kind of nothingness. When he and others spoke of precarity – mortal suffering and oblivion – they offer the kind of resistance to death that has been so prominent in the secular West. Jonas found beauty in death, as well as practicality. He wrote that through the work of staying alive, 'life says yes to itself'. This affirmation gestures beyond dualisms, inviting us to think of death in both-and relationships: death as part of the dynamic between the enduring and the ephemeral. But still there is more: a participatory embrace of death would see natality and mortality as pulses that join individuals to ancestors, and that join ancestors to waves of power that carry life through the living and the dying. So this dynamic, too, depends on flux and metamorphosis. The meaning of becoming-ancestral goes beyond what we can readily know, but that seems to include a particular ethical call: to die, to become ancestral, and thus to join the waves that bring forth life.

From my hospital window I can't help but notice the busyness of city life, but a horizon is drawing ever closer, and I am drawn to stories that take me to a threshold not yet fully imaginable. Old Tim Yilngayarri, one of the oldest Lawmen of Yarralin, had been a clever man when he was young, a keeper and practitioner of knowledge and action that went beyond ordinary. He said that he had lost a lot of his power, but one of the gifts remaining to him was the ability to track the condition of a person who was near death. Sometimes he could follow the person into a zone of transition and bring them back. Other times he knew the person was going into a place where death was the only outcome. Old Tim's work with the person at the very edge tells us about that place where a living being is slipping: not yet dead but not able to come

back. This threshold is a transition zone where the living and the dying have not quite lost touch with each other. Over there, some new pulse is soon to be released, but here at this edge of unbecoming, living creatures are being pulled out of the life they were born to. A surge of life is returning to join that wave. in the transition zone pulses are being shaped. Death is imminent but has not yet arrived.

crow¹ / *n.* **1** a large bird of the genus *Corvus*, with a powerful beak, harsh call, and usu. glossy black plumage; esp. (in full carrion crow) the common *C. corone* of Europe. **2** any bird of the family *Corvidae*, which includes the magpie, jays, etc., as well as the black plumaged members (raven, rook, jackdaw, and chough). **3** sl. derog. a woman, esp. an old or ugly one. □ **as the crow flies** in a straight line. **crow-bill** a forceps for extracting bullets etc. **crow's-foot** (pl. **feet**) **1** (usu. in pl.) a wrinkle at the outer corner of a person's eye. **2** Mil. a caltrop. **crow's-nest** a barrel or platform fixed at the masthead of a sailing vessel as a shelter for a lookout man. **crow steps** corbiesteps. **eat crow** N. Amer. submit to humiliation. [OE *crāwe* ult. f. WG]

crow² / *v. & n.* • *v.intr* **1** (past **crowed** or **crew** /*kru:/*) (**of a cock**) utter its characteristic loud cry. **2** (of a baby) utter happy cries. **3** (usu. foll. by *over*) express unrestrained gleeful satisfaction. • *n.* **1** the cry of a cock. **2** a happy cry of a baby. [OE *crāwan*, of imit. orig.]

Herbal tobacco blend -

Althæa officinalis (Marsh mallow root)

Althæa, *al-the-a*; Gr. *althaia*, a healing medium, referring to its use in medicine.

Hardy herbaceous and biennial.

OFFICINALIS, *of-fis-in-a-lis*, of the shop (apothecary's), applied to plants always kept "in stock" by herbalists.

Tussilago farfara (Coltsfoot)

Tussilago, *tus-sil-a-go*; from Gr. *tussis*, a cough, its use in ancient medicine.

Herbaceous perennials.

FARFARA VARIEGATA, *far-far-a var-e-eg-a-ta*, variegated-leaved farfara or coltsfoot.

Calendula

Calendula, *kal-en-du-la*; from L. *calendæ*, the first day of the month, probably alluding to the flowering of the plant throughout the year. Hardy annual.

OFFICINALIS, *of-fis-in-a-lis*, of herbal shops. The Pot Marigold.

Rubus idæus (Raspberry leaf)

Rubus, *roo-bus*; old Roman name, probably derived from L. *ruber*, red, the colour of the fruits of many species. Climbing or trailing and upright-stemmed shrubby plants; fruiting and ornamental.

IDÆUS, *id-a-us*, of Mt. Ida. The Raspberry.

Verbascum thapsus (Mullein Leaf)

Verbascum, ver-*bas*-kum; classical L. name, possibly a corruption of L. *Barbascum*, a hairy plant (*barba*, a beard), many of the mulleins having downy foliage.

THAPSUS, *thap*-sus, after Thapsus in ancient Africa (now Tunisia), or after Grecian Thapsos Island.

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When my father died suddenly, the insecurity that lit in me was unlikely and vast; a charge that still drives this desire –an urgency– to transform.

This cycle has been—

With revisions due the full moon. Out with an eclipse. & an event in the flesh when in print.

For now may we make meaning in corvus song
work from insecurity
so we may trust in negentropy
trust in memory &
hospice the father—
so we may believe in order
without patriarchy.



Clipping found in The Abbey Bookshop, 29 Rue de la Parcheminerie (April 2026)
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