

# Beautiful Truth, Dangerous Truth



A Series of Works Originally By  
Patrick "Rowan" Roughan

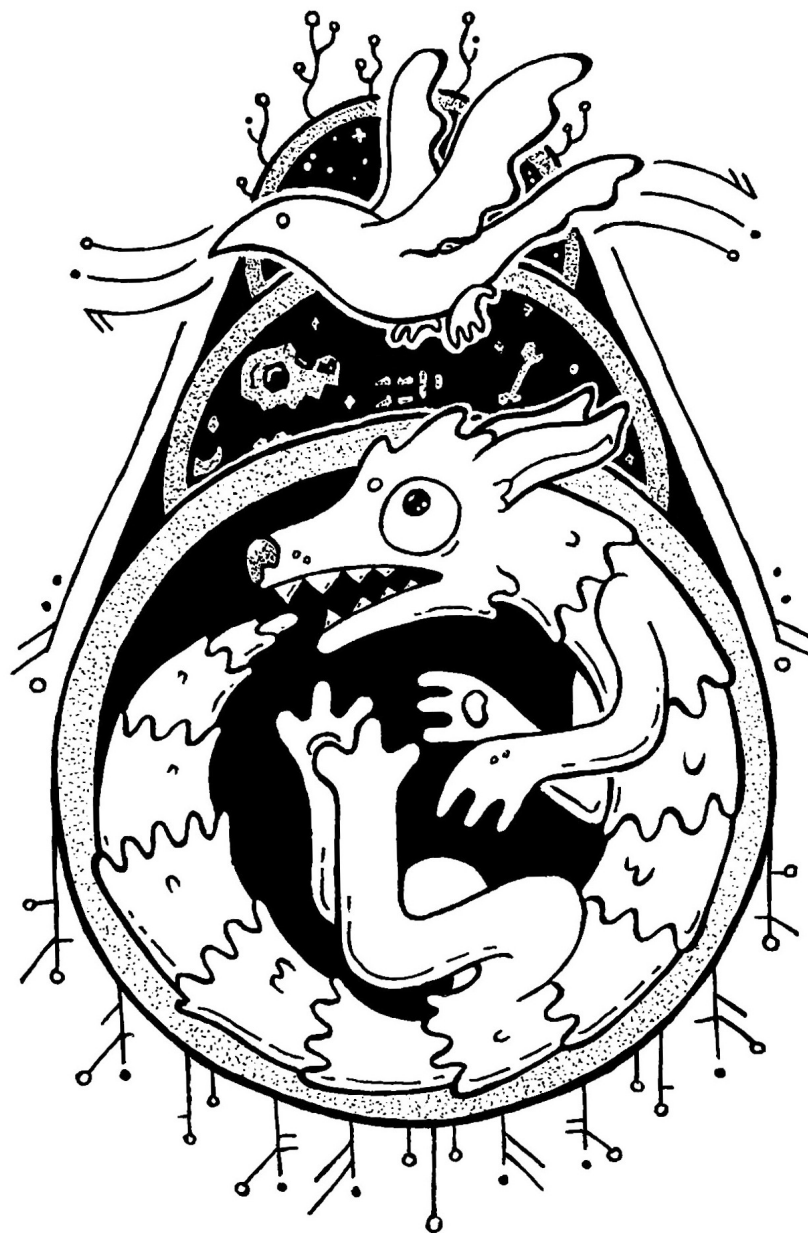
To You,

Thank you for owning my zine! Whether you bought it from me, or it was a gift, or you just found it on the side of the road, I greatly appreciate you taking the time to open this zine up and check out what's inside.

You may be wondering why the cover says "originally by." That's because this work isn't necessarily finished; I've completed my part, but you, zine-owner, are free to do with it what you wish. You bought it, after all, so make it yours! Color the inkwork, make blackout poetry from the words, rip the pages apart if that's where your inspiration leads you. There's no need to keep this zine exactly how you got it; I can print more of these, but I can't replicate your personal creativity and experience.

I've already put myself in this work.  
Add yourself to it, too.

ROWAN





There's a clearing out beyond those hills,  
far from this new and proper town,  
where iron rusts and lumber rots  
and a single siren bellows on.

They say there was a fortress there,  
once a place of peace and protection,  
with guards and gates and gilded blades  
and a siren to sing danger's song.  
That battle was lost a lifetime ago.  
What remains now is the remains of remains,  
pieces assaulted by explosions and rage  
and now ravaged by the passage of time.

And yet the siren bellows on.

It calls to no one, its purpose failed,  
what it guarded lost in place and memory,  
the blood long soaked into the earth,  
the wood obscured by a coat of vines,  
the blades rusted to scrap in the mud.  
And yet the siren bellows on.

We do not go where the siren bellows.  
There is no glory beyond those hills,  
out in the shards of what once was.  
We stay here in town, in here and now.  
After all, it's only on the quiet nights  
that you can hear the siren bellow on.

You haven't forgotten your lines, have you?  
You're up to perform and you've got that style,  
so bring your best stories, put on your best smile,  
and maybe this time they'll all stay for a while.

You remember how this goes, don't you?  
Wow them with your humor, wow them with grace,  
become the star of the room no matter the place.  
Just try not to show the bad side to your face.



You understand what I mean, can't you?  
Hard feelings are awkward, so dry up the tears,  
disagreement leads right to the grinding of gears,  
and truth will just shun you from all of your peers.

You're not surprised by this, are you?  
No one sings praises to a starless night,  
or writes an ode to bare tree trunks in white.  
If you want to be seen, you have to look right.



You're ready for this now,  
aren't you?

Remember, only beautiful  
things get to be known,  
so only the best parts of  
you can be shown.

The you that can't act is  
the you that's alone.



I'm standing at the edge of a pit.  
I've been standing here for a while now.  
And I'm very aware of it.  
Because every few minutes, someone else  
comes walking up to the side of the pit,  
saying "oh, it feels so good to just jump right in,  
I don't know what I was ever afraid of,"  
or some equally frustrating snippet of unrequested  
opinion,  
before tossing themselves right off the edge  
and into the darkness below.

Yes, I get it, the pit is usually safe, since people  
clearly return.  
I get that.  
It's still a pit.  
And not everyone returns.

I used to stay far away from the pit, but that only  
made people rather upset,  
so here I am, right at the edge.  
Maybe if I smoke enough, or drink enough, or feel  
some other alteration,  
I'll lose my footing on this edge  
and topple right in  
and fall down  
and down  
and be fine.

Maybe.





What is the source of this pull I feel,  
this magnetism from me to you?

Is this the drive of biology,  
our genes calling out for a suitable match?

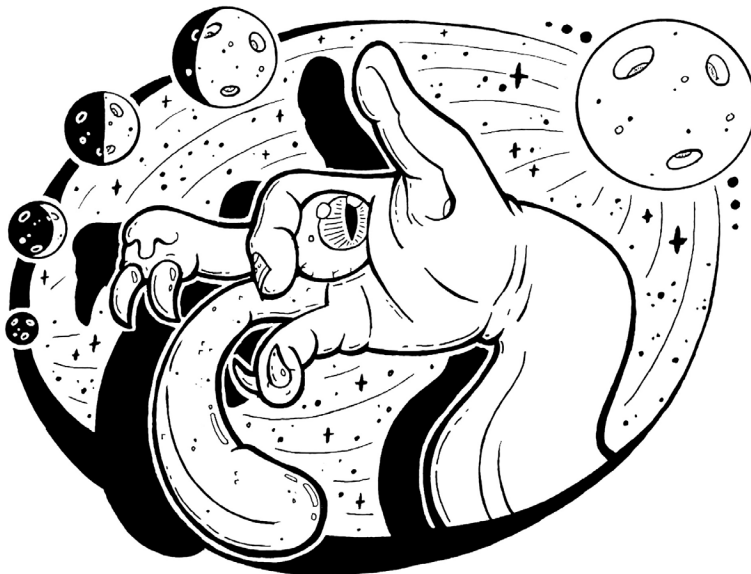
Is this the writing of the stars,  
a matching set of souls designed at our birth?

Or is this the tangle of our fate,  
our path just one from an infinite potential?

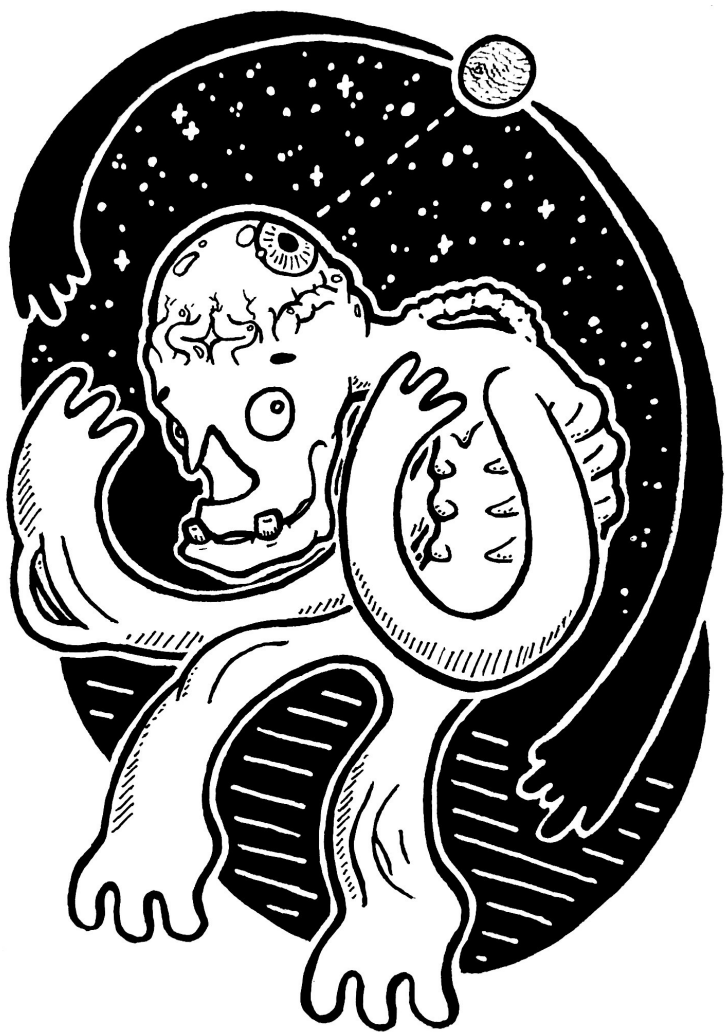
I feel the pull again.  
Your hand finds mine.

Biology, astrology, or infinite realities,  
knowing the source loses its importance.

This pull can be from anything,  
as long as it's pulling me to you.



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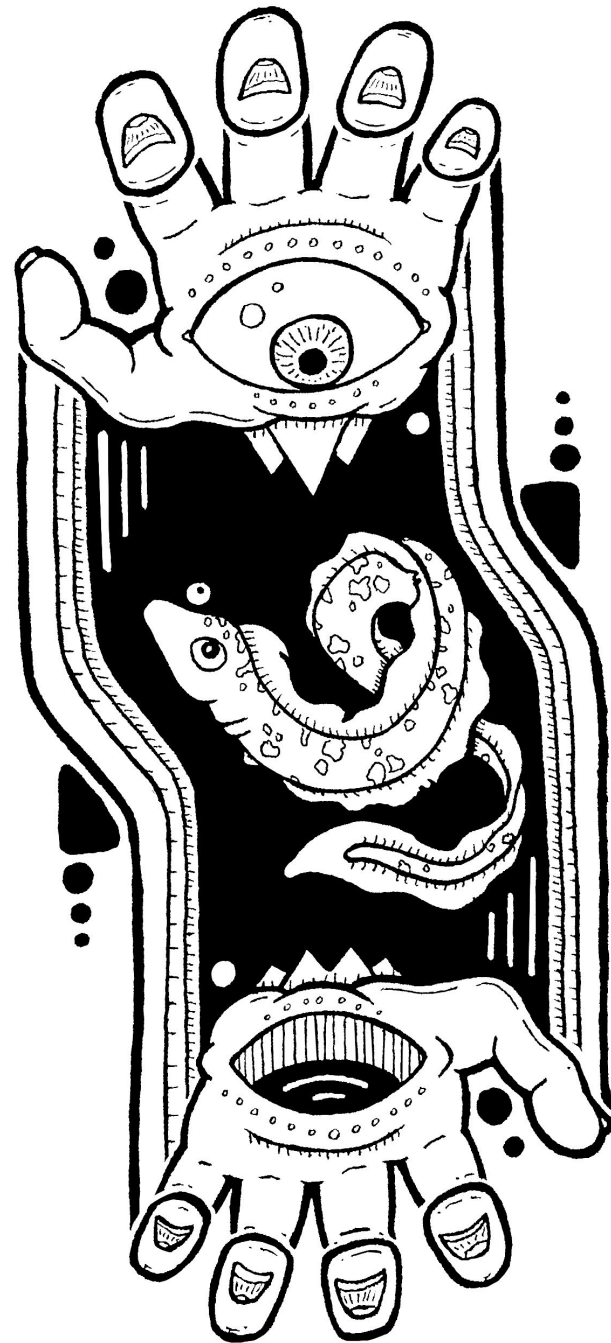
I live in a world with a hot pink sky.  
It is the only sky I've ever known.

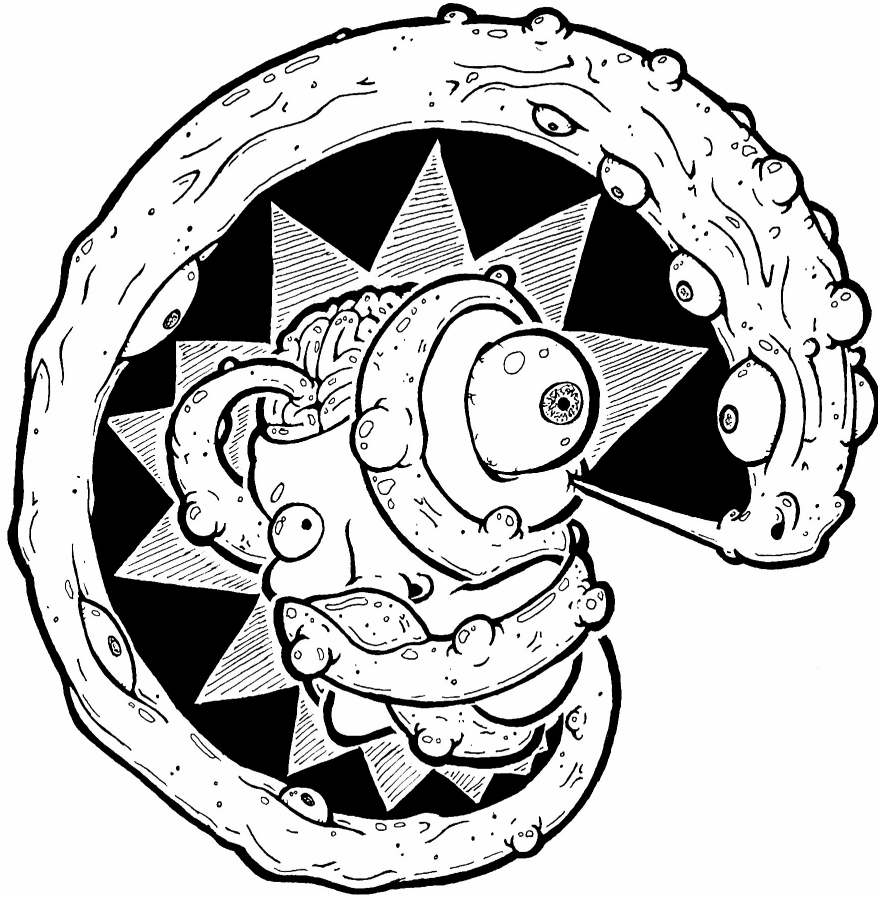
They always tell me how sad that is,  
living in a world without their blue skies.  
How tragic, the lack of beauty!  
How pitiful, this different hue!

I've tried telling them I do not mind my sky,  
that while the brightness can hurt my eyes  
I consider it a beautiful sky all the same.  
After all, it is the only sky I know.

I say this, and their words change.  
How brave, this tolerance of cruelty!  
How admirable, finding beauty in sorrow!  
Different words, but such pity all the same.

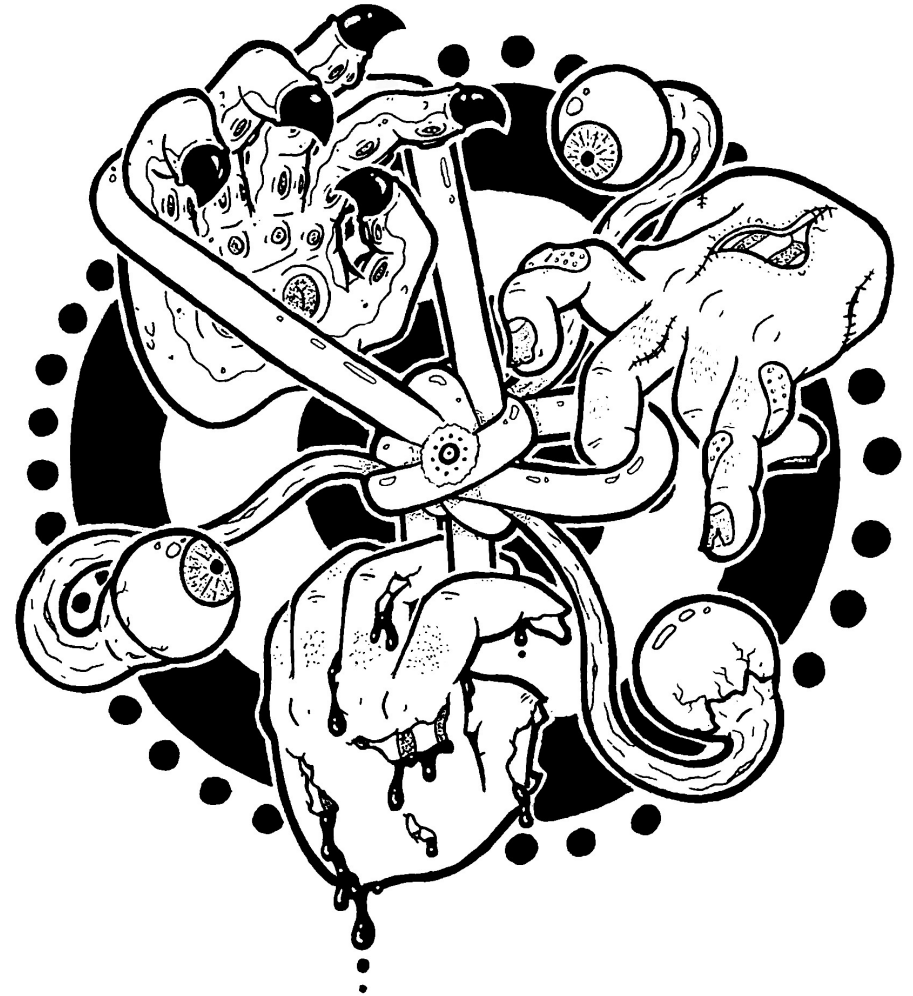
I leave the crowd to look up at my hot pink sky.  
It is the only sky I will ever know.





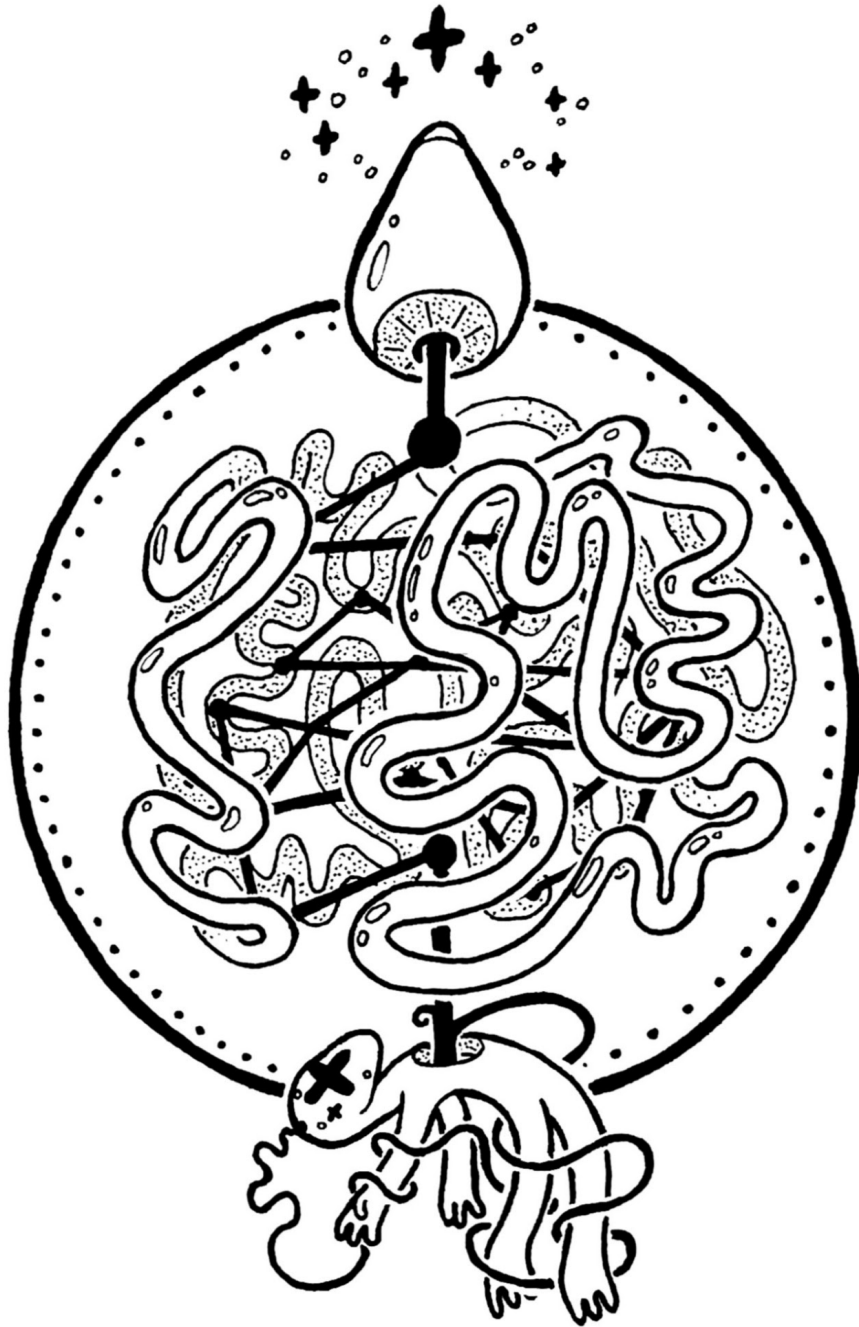
Water rushes into my open throat,  
lungs burning with a craving for air,  
eyes burning with a craving for light,  
mind burning with a craving for peace.

There is no peace in these waters.  
The depths, once reaching out with open arms,  
now claws and clutches at my spasming chest,  
dragging my body downward and downward,  
the dark around me finding its way inside  
as thought comes to an unceremonious end.



I awaken, air flooding in with gasping breath,  
the danger gone, the abyss still deep within.  
Thought returns, and with it my circumstance,  
a soul forever in debt to the fates of chance,  
and a cost repaid in sensations replayed  
night after night and after night.

It must be felt again, or I may forget again,  
and fall for the trick of a premature end.



Relax.

Sit, and allow your body to settle.

Relax.

Release the tension in your neck  
and let your shoulders loosen and drop.

Relax.

Flow through your body in your mind,  
from head to neck to back to legs,  
and make them rest, piece by piece.

Relax.

Loosen your muscles more and more,  
untie the knots moving under your skin,  
unwind the tension in every joint,  
until every piece can fully let go.

Relax.

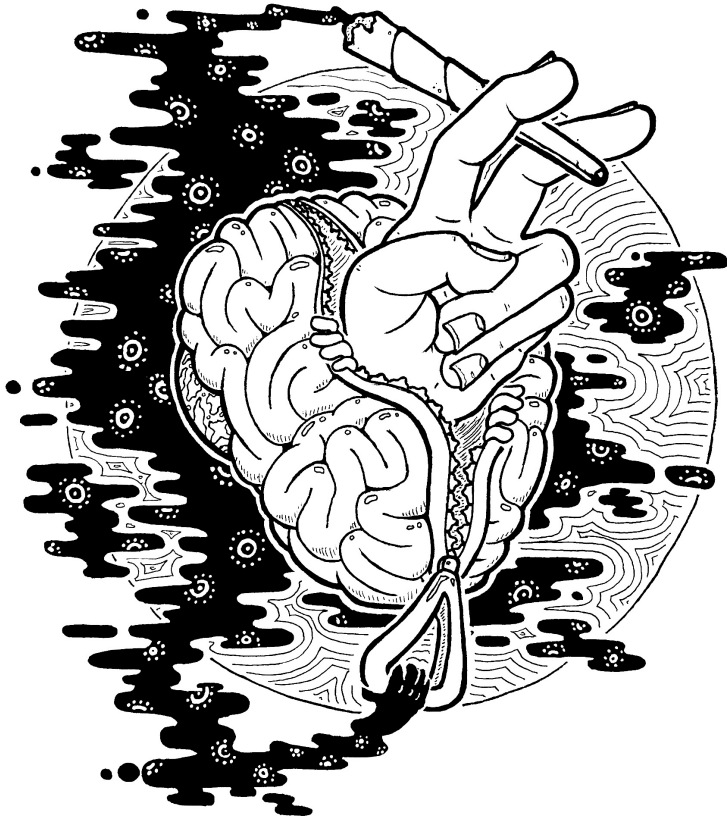
Feel your skin unfurl from your body,  
let the muscles slide off your bones,  
notice your bones slip from their joints,  
as you release the tension you've held so long  
and gravity brings you down to the floor.

Relax.

Bring your focus to the tensions in your mind,  
now scattered in your disassembled parts,  
a worry near a finger, an anxiety under a lung,  
and release them, one by one, bit by bit,  
until your mind, too, loosens, slips, and falls,  
everything you are now unwound in a still heap.

Now, you can finally

relax.



I felt a pain inside of me,  
one I wished to never feel again.  
So I hunted it down within myself  
and pushed a hook beneath my skin  
to pull it out entirely.  
Out came the pain, a tangle of fibers,  
but with it came the threads attached.  
As I pulled more, out came more,  
until a pile of entangled roots  
spilled out onto the floor.

Finally, I feel no pain within me.  
Finally, I do not feel at all.



I carve my truths into wooden dolls.  
An embarrassing memory in a porcupine,  
my current obsessions inside a bear,  
each piece of me, my every thought,  
are stored within these figurines.

To others, I give them out freely.  
A boar of my past to a chatty cashier,  
an emotional fox to a group at the bar,  
I share my truths with an openness  
that can take others by surprise.

In truth, these truths cannot hurt me.  
In stranger's hands they are hollow dolls,  
forms without substance, truths without power,  
for absent of an emotional bond  
a truth is a fact, and nothing more.

But that is not the case with you.  
In your hands they're infused with you,  
creating a spark that turns to fire,  
the cracks of the carved wood now glowing  
as lanterns filled with brilliant flame.

What beautiful truth, what dangerous truth!  
The glow from within draws my eye  
as the heat reaching out scorches my skin,  
my body both magnetized and repelled  
with a force that risks my bifurcation.

You do not feel this burning heat.  
Holding a sheep, you ask for a wolf,  
your eyes only aware of the gleaming shells  
as your spark alights in another, and another,  
until my truths could light a starless sky.

The fire's heat surrounds me entirely.  
My eyes stare at the truths in your hands,  
now filled with a power that could destroy me.  
I think back to the dolls in stranger's hands.  
They were harmless. They were hollow.

You ask again for another truth.  
I give it, but I struggle.  
You take it, but you notice.  
You ask why I don't seem as open anymore.  
It's another truth that I struggle to give.

I carve a new figure, this one just for you.  
In a panther I place my fears of being known,  
my worry of my truths used against me,  
and my guilt of letting the burns in my past  
tarnish the beautiful flames between us.

You take the figure, and then my hand.  
You lead me to a field of wooden figures,  
the place you've stored all my gifted truths.  
With you, the heat is no longer burning.  
With you, my truths become the stars.

