

EMII ALRAI

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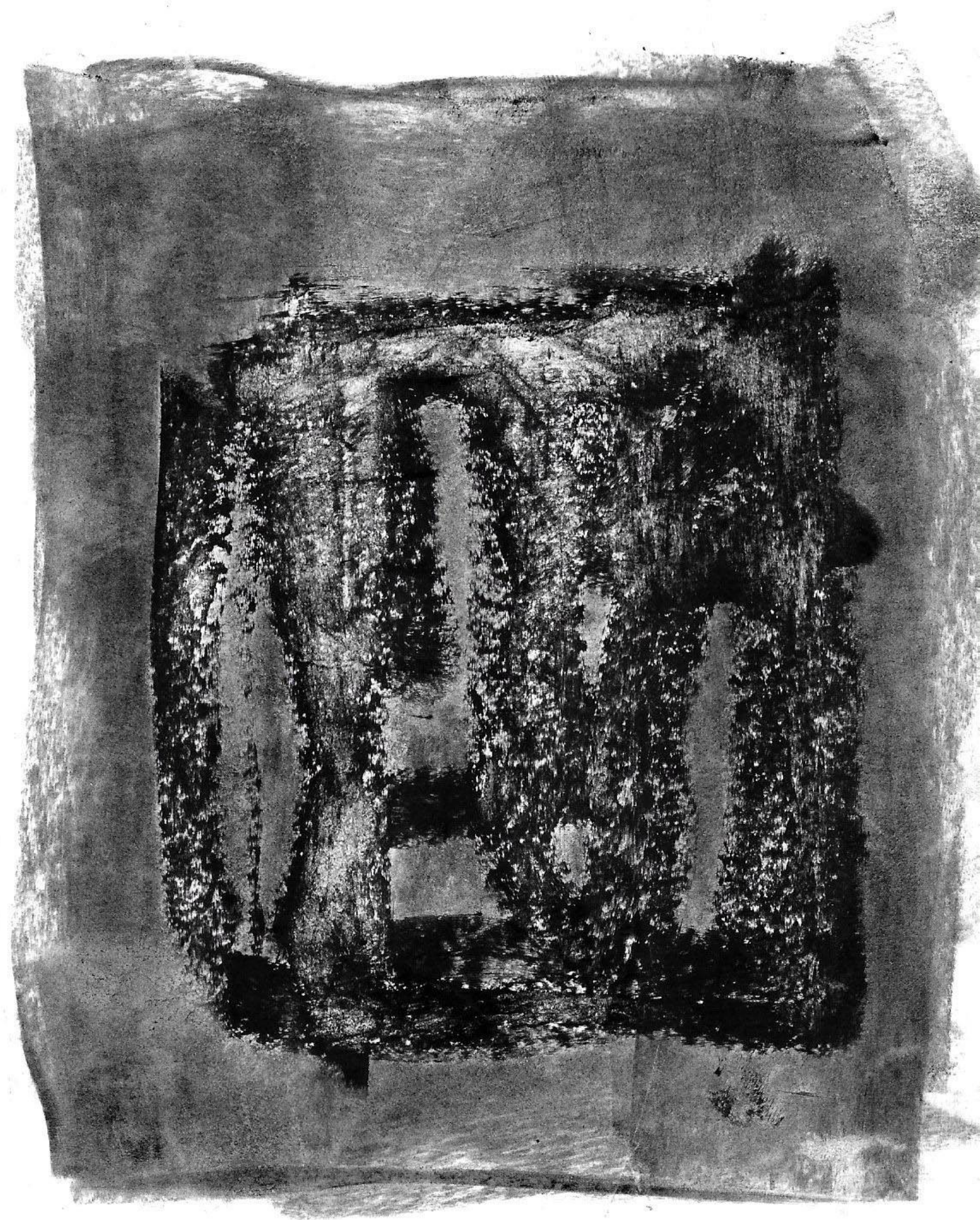
JESSICA MOORE

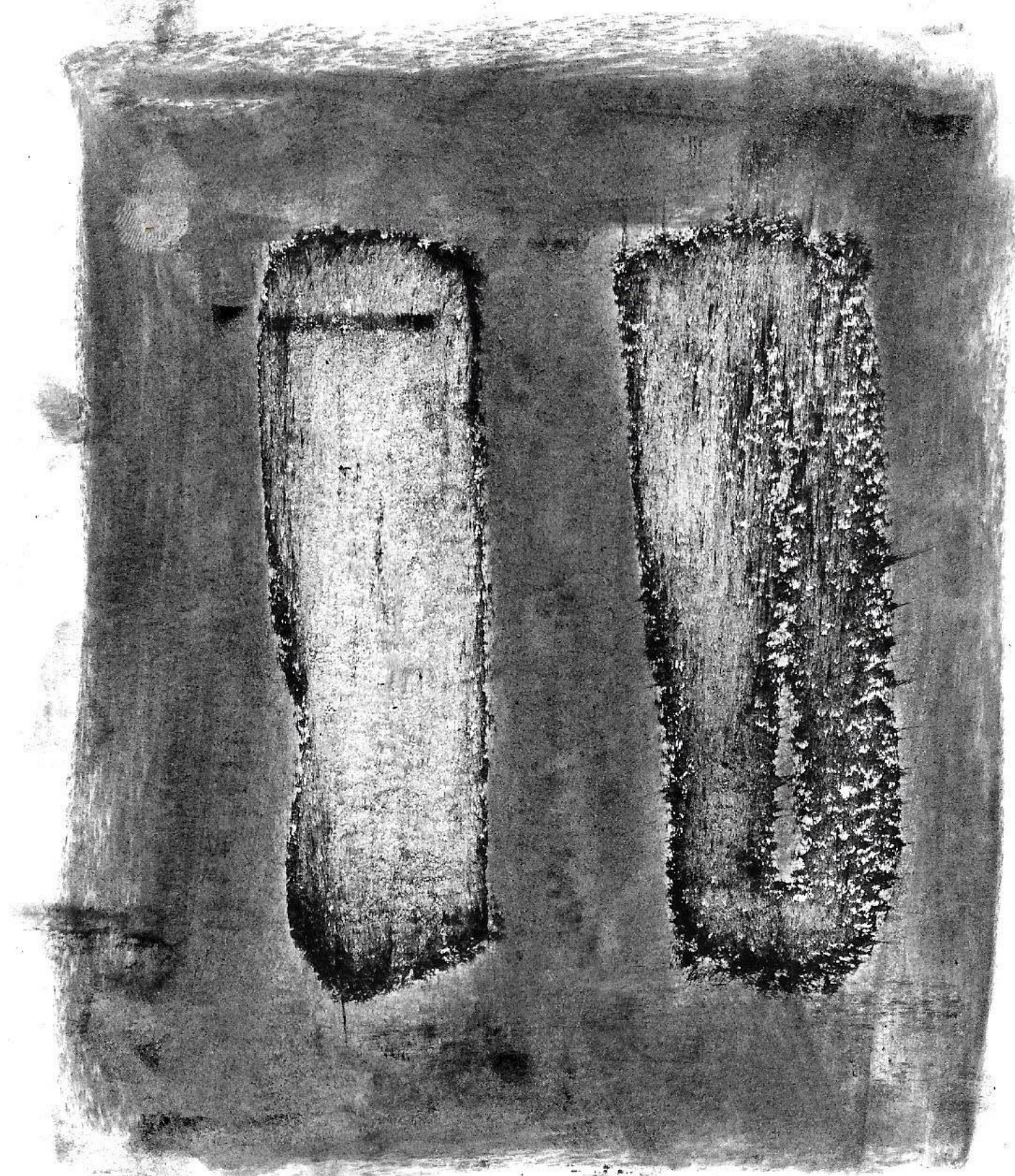
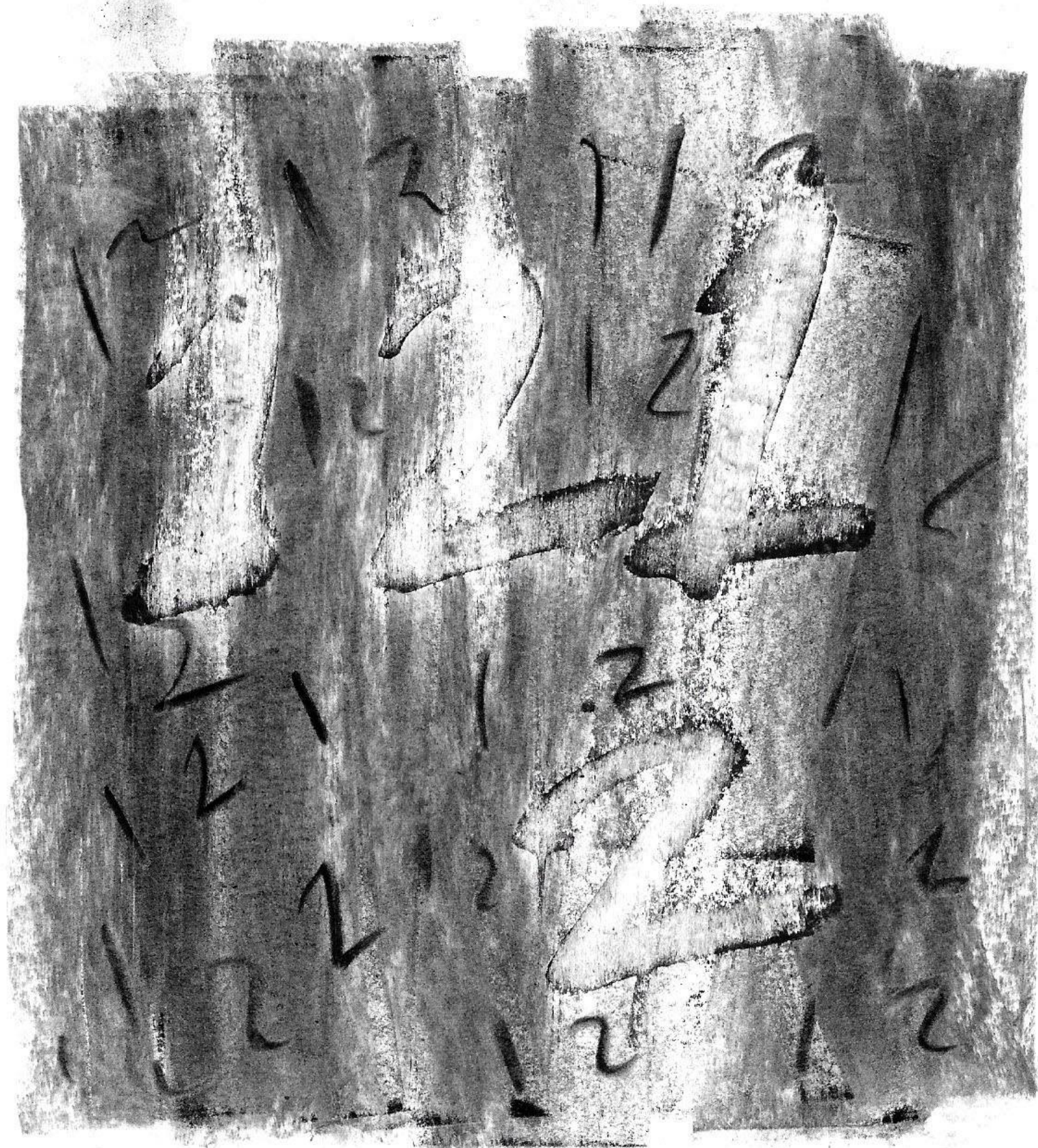
PETER SIMPSON

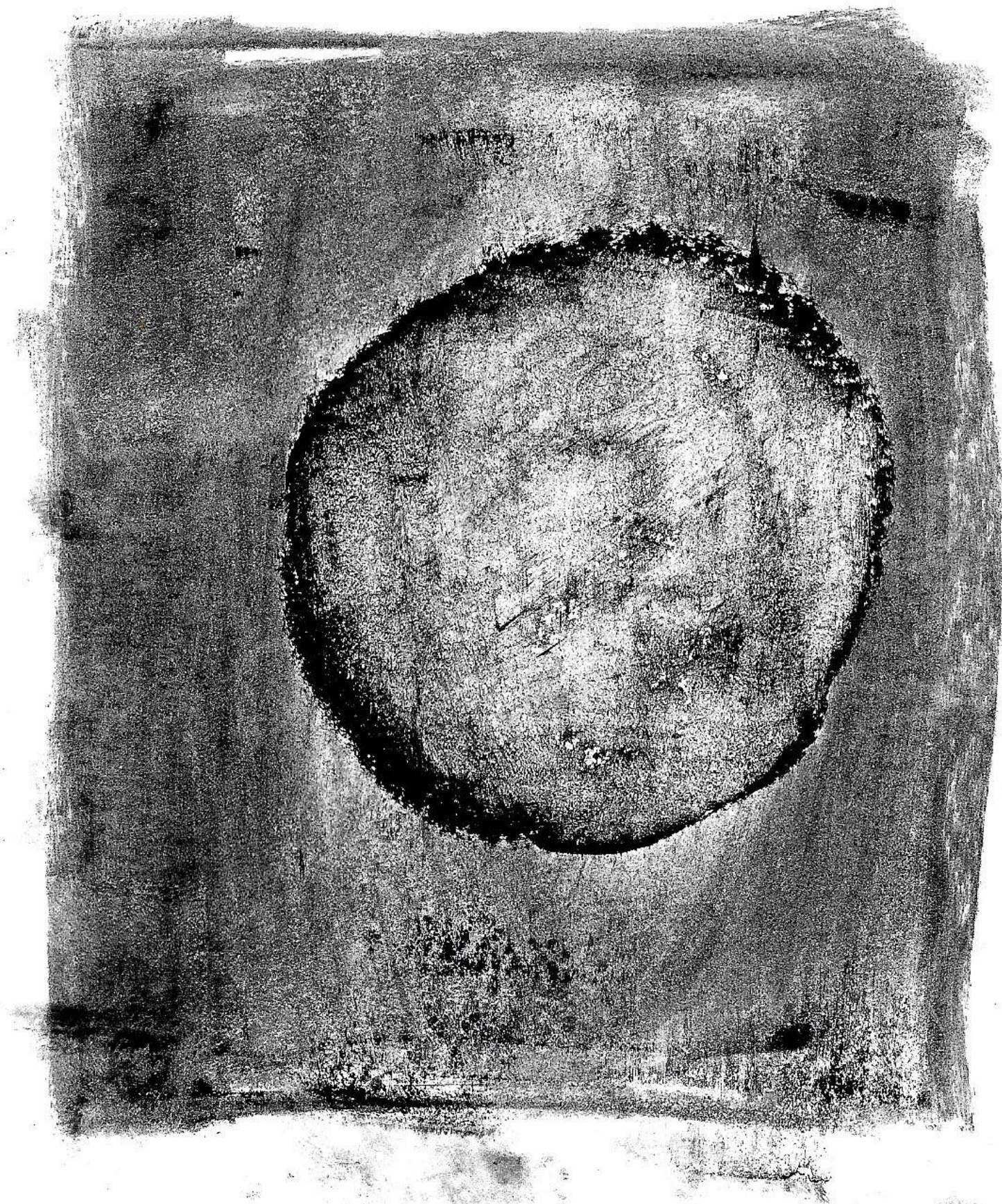
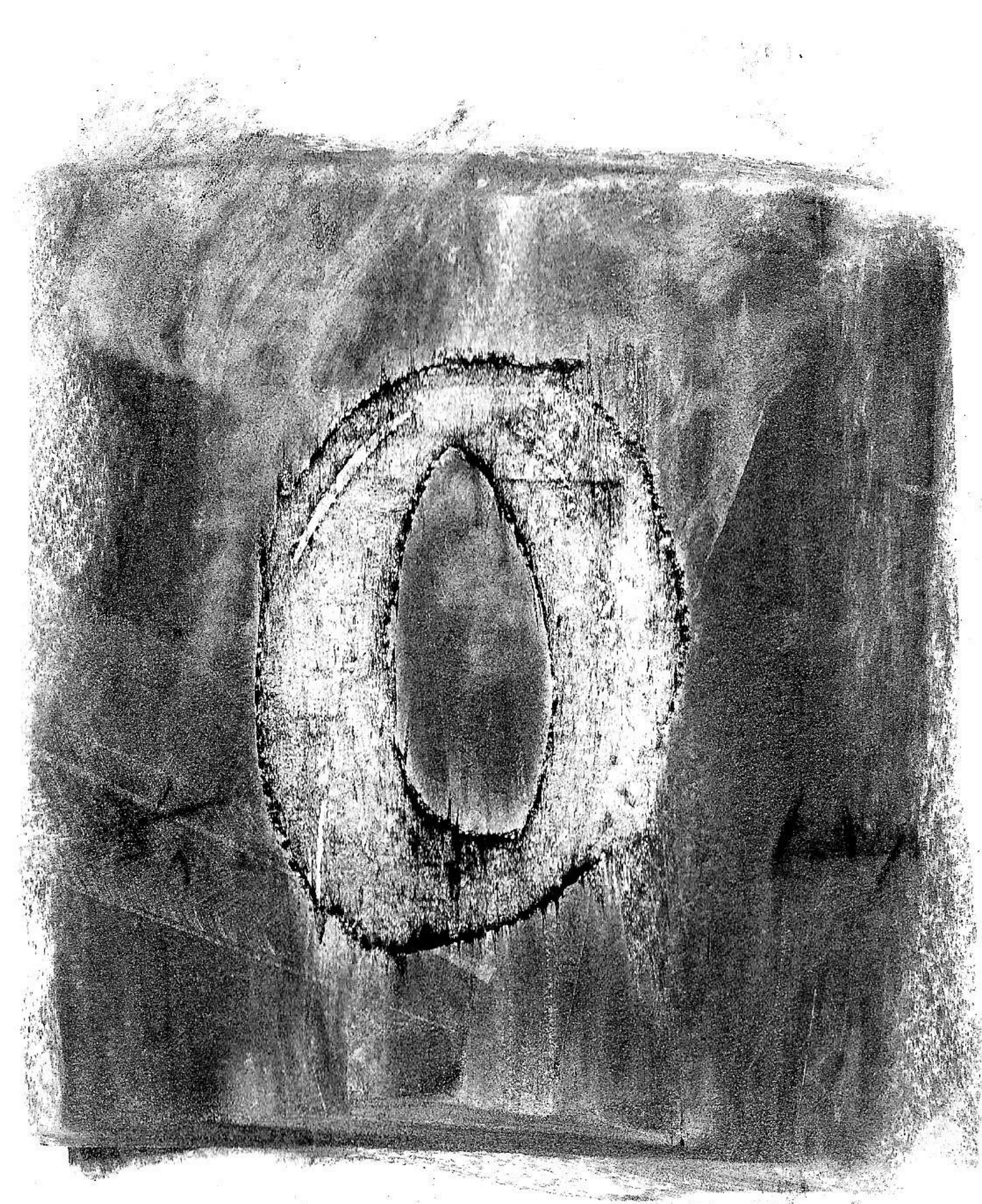
RUBY SMITH FERNANDEZ

EMILIE SPARK

conversations on swansong 2017, the bone cruncher by emii alrai, looming by isaac clarke, e-fits, the national anthems & new silks by cole denyer, anima in effect by jill mcknight, a painting by ilya mcmillan ross, 🙏 tract by jessica moore, thicker by peter simpson, i am not frail. #1, MH370, i am not frail. #2 & MAS370 by ruby smith fernandez, X|V.taction by emilie spark.







Sweet seeds, for Jodo, when he came back from the market. The veins on his hands would be pulsing blue and rising like the Euphrates on the map.

In his hands, you said, will be a blue plastic bag, the same colour as his veins. In the bag might be oranges, or sunflower seeds brought from the street vendor, to help our teeth gnaw away at the midday boredom. You told me that Jodo did not eat the seeds, because he preferred to crunch on chicken bones, in his sleep to frighten children who would not sleep.

Oh bone cruncher, cruncher of bones! I can't now look at chicken bones without imagining them smashing into a thousand kernels, lodging themselves one by one in the pit of my throat, mocking me for my inability to sleep.

We pruned the pomegranates as you spoke in your silken rhythm. You took a handful of the freshly plucked seeds, your arm glistening with the sticky red.

Three by three, you fed them in to your mouth, allowing the red trickle to trickle, down your elegant chin - sweet red jewels, fit for only a queen. I watched you, over a well anointed minute, whilst you patted your lips and chin down. I watched as you wiped the iridescent glaze on your cotton dress.

The cruncher of bones still buys three pomegranates when they are in season. Still enough for two, when enough for one is too much in the first place. They sit in the plaited reed bowl, waiting for your child hands to pick them up, prune them and give them back as a token of shared time. They are less plump, less vivid and less sweet.

When your cotton dress was wrapped around you, lilac, shimmering with the mingled dust and 4 am light, I thought of you as that iridescent glaze, which stuck around your lips for hours after you wiped them. I imagined the sticky sweet molasses would bind your cotton dress down and force you not to leave, force you to yawn and roll over instead of sleep.

We bought a chicken, because no one could cook, and we all sat around its carcass on the table. The chicken was perfect and eerily glazed by the inferno machine at Tesco. We slowly gave in to the hunger we had not noticed for the past 9 hours, 17 pairs of feet jostling nervously under the table. When we finished eating, I noticed that all the bones were intact, still in the shape of a chicken, perfect and whole. No one had dared move a single bone, but instead picked off the meat tenderly and meticulously as though the bones were a sacred offering.

When we had left the table, I saw a shadow of a hand, wrinkled and mottled, quietly put the bones neatly into a blue plastic bag. The hand disappeared accompanied by the sound like that of feathers shuffling, a bird rearranging to be more comfortable.

You were next to me, sitting between the pomegranate tree we picked together when we lived in Jordan.

I was 5; my pet chick was bathing in the dirt outside. I wore lime green leggings, dashed with white daisies. You had your legs splayed over the stone steps, under which lived the thousands of fire ants I dreamt about at night.

We were pruning pomegranate seeds into the bowl.

I went back to see you in your cotton dress, in the glacial room hewn with morning light. The cotton dress, glazed and lilac fluttered. When I brought myself to look at your very gentle face, you greeted me with a large and shocking wink. Frozen to the spot, I stared at your face which looked exactly the same as how we left you before eating the chicken, still and with no trace of a wink. I pressed myself towards the wall to look at the scene in full. As I stood at the wall, I heard next door, through the thin plasterboard, the very faint but distinctive, slow crunching of bones.









(1/3)

In
Derbyshire,

the
sound

did rush
by

parody

that power
and its quietus

made

exquisite workmen,

reeled the whole orchestra

touches
property

to self-defence,

the
front
door

said
the roof
is lost

and the
day is wet,

to give up

and
to be
given

in
too grit
pain

on the
beach towel pavement
exit currency
to inspect,
to bring closer

dying they
never crease to

show they've

never went

in the
face

yet living,
and
you don't
always
get what

you
want

only
plenty
till empty
our friends
crowding
the blood
banks,
a gel-ring
against a city,

our skin
is to pacify

rags taste

of dogs filial

pathos as
fence line
defending us
from that
fridge-freezer
incinerator

you that air cavity

ran up by smoke
the exhaust,
sparks to blares
fire

fed us as we
inlay the empires

water frame

in the spokes,
outgoing
in proof
of less
and
so on,
even
just bearing this
slanting, raising
it will
not be
near
to call nothing
nothing, less
even
get
grateful for
what for,
the raids
don't work
don't fucking work,
and the animal food
the morning in
broken estuary is

with
no
issue,
set little to little
did come under press
the way they
ought to be,
gentle turbid
kept
among grids
raging streets
these symmetries
stints our
hammered sky
as
someone
slams on
all water works
look,
so reverse the furtive
now frozen
stamina
occurred in tarps
winded down
yet or later,
avian level palate
hit at the why
not set down
harsh the lintel grip
the block up there,
every one as
a pyrite already
fading with
a choice
few

stopped and
 searched fake
 splinters
 then pressed in
ways to count,
 to lower
against yet less
 so
never picket
 your regains,
 the flags on
 the roof
 joined
well
 now all
 your glory
is in personnel,

 the pollens broken

 and stuck in
 random,
all the world
 toward the end
on blank
 by trial
 charges
 you

of
 an empty
 day thrown from
 roof the
price crowns sun
strokes as
 lives of citizens
are
banded,
 moveable
 on
forgotten bin bags
 our weather,
then pity is aimless
 the glass upturns
our wounded
 day
reinserted
can be seen from
 the
 rich ethers
that we cannot claim
 grounded in receipts
we get zeroed on the
faint alcohol clouds
 so drunk on
 borrowed time,
 these feet
 make less
 of hours,
piled upon each other
 on communal stairs to
break into the
 faces gathered
 up there
waiting to spit barbed

tungsten song
as white
as the impropriety
of our wage, the
overtime you pray to,
kiss yourself believing
the coin
is real in the
blood glucose
by redacts watch the
expelling flow raise
the heart
a free willing
rate carries
itself
from pump function
to circulation so
get on your
way as
promise clefts
from a graceless face,
facing-top
eating cake
is a ersatz nourishment,
classic freedom voucher
in the cellophane substantival
seals the
bleeding inside the mouth
to make things stick
but what remains is a
metallic taste, kiss
the all white-crowns
the American nights are
100 times greater
than moon light, switch

lancing any
hour
to the ends
of day
of sleep
the stars exit
our city
the
best
shelter rigs
exit currency

















Muffled hearing and tunnel vision, just grey pouring rain and shivering spray. You peer through condensed eyes.

In the curl of a conch shell, you know that life dies. But it broadcasts ghosts of calcified crust through a translucent trumpet.

Miles out to sea, far beneath and belly up to the waves, a metal christ apes the sky and transmits a heavy message.

—

Weightless under the pull of the great mass, waiting in a gel suspension for the release which never arrives.

Every head rises in grave recognition of the sad fact. You will breath through our sighs.

The lights dim as the batteries run out, one and each one; one by one. Sleep.









2017