

WYRD & PAPER

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sanctum sanctorum productions
austin • seattle • chico • wichita • bakersfield

this collection is dedicated to:

every kid who's ever slammed poetry or competed in a speech tournament
or simply written private words in a tattered notebook

my family
richard and sandi and sabrina
for putting up with my crap for so long

my kitties thelonious and aretha
for being the most stable force in my life

marc smith
the father of poetry slamming

daniel ferri
the beating heart of the
nps head-to-head haiku championships

zara
my best friend
my habibi

INTRO

poetry is everywhere.

it's under rocks with the wriggling worms and creepy crawlies. it's flying in tatters stuck in the highest tree branches. it's in the sigh issuing forth from the sales clerk's mouth as she glances over her shoulder and checks the clock for the fifth time in an hour. it's in the heavenly scent of hair conditioner wafting in the wake of a pretty girl's walk, in the closed eyes of the businessman as he breathes deeply and smiles and thinks of someone he thought he'd forgotten, in the notebook of the poet on the subway who sees the whole thing and captures the moment and sticks ink pins in its wings.

in 2002, i was having a hard time seeing the poetry that's all over everything, having a hard time finding the inspiration and motivation to write on a regular basis, so i struggled to find something that would make the job of being a journalist of the human soul a bit easier.

oh, god... did i just use the term *journalist of the human soul*? but that's what our job is, really, to cover the stories no newspaper will ever honor, the tiny little ones that last the length of a sigh, the space between words, the place where words are of no further use. being a poet means documenting those tiny epiphanies that happen every second of every day but are so hard to notice and so very easy to forget the very moment they happen, like fireworks of mmmmmm.

anyway, yeah, i was having trouble writing on a regular basis, so i

gave myself what i presumed would be a simple mission, a challenge to get me back on the path of poetry. i decided to write one haiku every day for a year and post them online as i wrote them.

there were rules.

i could write as many as i wanted each day, but once the clock clicked over to the next day, i had to write at least one new haiku. no fair writing five haiku in one sitting then not writing for five days. and if i skipped a day? oh yes, there would be a price to pay in the form of a *haiku penance*, which meant i had to write seven thematically-linked haiku to make up for the one i'd missed. the goal was not just to write one haiku *for* every day of the year, but to write at least one haiku *every day* for a year to ensure at least 17 syllables of creativity happened on a daily basis. how hard could it be?

at first, it was easy. having a new project gives me a burst of energy, and i often found myself writing 10 or more haiku a day. just about any complete meaningful thought can be turned into a haiku, after all. the first month came and went with ease, and i had written probably 100 haiku. some were funny, some were serious, some were sexy or bitter or poetic. some were ripped off from headlines in the local newspaper. some were snatches of song lyrics. some were just what i saw when i closed my eyes at 11:49 p.m. and thought really hard for a long time, long enough for something to come.

and then came the second month. and the third. and the fifth. after a while, it really became the challenge i intended it to be, a daily

reminder to be creative. i brought my notebook with me everywhere, and when i saw something or thought something that was in anyway deep or profound or moving or funny, i wrote it down and started counting syllables. granted, most of what i wrote were not strictly haiku — it's more accurate to call what i wrote *senryu*, which is a close cousin to haiku that tends to be timely, funny, and sometimes even bawdy — but still, it was something. something creative.

i started looking at my days differently, squinting my eyes and swivelling my head to find the poetry. where was it? where's my haiku? is it in the way that little boy over there is holding his ice cream cone with a deathgrip? is it the bus driver's wave to another passing bus driver? is it in the unexpected pang of remembrance as my ipod shuffles an old song to my earbuds and makes me wonder if she remembers me fondly or even at all?

in the end, the first try at writing one haiku every day for a year was a failure. i was close, pretty damned close, but i gave it up just as the end was in sight. a year or so later, i tried again, but i petered out even further from the finish line that time. still, i was able to get something like 1,000 haiku from the two attempts that never would have existed had i not given it a try, and some of those haiku became the seeds that sprouted longer works of poetry. for a failure, it certainly has had its fair share of success. i plan on doing it again someday very soon.

to keep with the theme of a year's worth of haiku, i have picked my favourite 365 haiku out of the lot. some of them are pretty good, too.

after the second failed attempt at a year of haiku, i searched for another creative challenge, and i found myself staring at my dusty digital camera, the one i had been so excited about when i first got it, the one i had rarely used since that first rush of excitement. so, i decided if haiku were no longer coming, i could try taking a photo every day for a year. a good haiku is supposed to be just like a good snapshot, a simple presentation of visual images that leaves the interpretation to the reader, so it made sense to transition into actual photography. it would be my daily reminder that art is everywhere if i just had the eyes (and camera) to capture it. i went on photo walks every day.

i lasted several months, but fell way short of a year... way short.

when i started putting together this collection of haiku, it just made sense to combine both pursuits, words and images, into one grab bag celebrating the effort to make poetry and art a regular part of a day, a year, a life. both were about focusing my senses in order to see things that nobody else saw and catch them so i could show other people what they were missing, show myself what i had seen so i wouldn't forget, make myself do something creative every day.

i made a collage for the cover art by simply copying a photo and twisting it around and flipping it and joining it back with the original just to see what emerged, and i came up with something really cool. i did that with all the photos i had chosen for this book and ended up amazed to discover all these patterns that had been hidden until i started poking around. just like poetry. it all makes sense.



08/29/02

we press our bodies
together so tightly our
ribs become tangled.

08/29/02

every time i try
to write a haiku for my
lover, i write, *mmmmmmmmmmmm*.

08/29/02

electricity
arcs in tendrils between our
tesla-coiled bodies.

08/31/02

a tear weighs less than
a raindrop, yet an ocean
of tears can crush you.

09/01/02

this road trails behind
black asphalt spine connecting
your brain stem to mine.

09/02/02

sun-lazy cat on
cool green grass inspires envy
through office windows.

09/02/02

kitties yowl outside.
sleepy lovers loll inside.
screen door stands between.

09/02/02

i want to invent
god so i can thank her for
watching over you.

09/08/02

tiny fists pound their
sorrow on the tear-stained ground
outside our window.

09/08/02

when i want to please
my love, i don't buy flowers...
i clean the kitchen.



09/09/02

six million places
i'd rather be than at work,
and they're all with you.

09/09/02

shoe print. paw print. cane.
shoe print. paw print. cane. leaf. leaf.
autumn in concrete.

09/11/02

ant drags seed across
hot sidewalk. business man
answers his cell phone.

09/17/02

fat laughing buddhas
with huge flapping earlobes dance
slowly down my cheeks.

09/18/02

platinum moonlight
reflects from silver polish
on my fingernails.

09/20/02

the last place i want
to see my love's face is in
my rearview mirror.

09/22

motorcycle crash
stalled our conversation for
the next hundred miles..

09/23/02

driving into the
sun, the souls of dead insects
pollock our windshield.

09/23/02

pavarotti learned
how to sing by listening
to your heart beating.

09/25/02

spider floats on wings
of silk across our river.
conversation stops.



09/27/02

sandpipers scan the
grey morning tide for mussels.
i look for haiku.

10/06/02

only tom waits could
sing a song about the way
i'm feeling right now.

10/06/02

gritty symphony
of road-weary homesick blues
aches from ev'ry bone.

10/06/02

my skeleton's a
radio belting out blues
from every joint.

10/11/02

ted the sushi chef
is a true poet, crafting
haiku from raw fish.

10/11/02

the couch is where we
talk, watch, listen, kiss, fuck, sleep.
i love that old couch.

10/11/02

waiting patiently
for a dollop of honey
to grace my mint tea.

10/19/02

my lover's skin smells
warm like pumpkin spice and rain.
i hold her. she sleeps.

10/22/02

cold wet parking lot.
umbrella man starts his car.
cat darts from wheel well.

10/23/02

early morning bed.
scramble of sheets, limbs, and sighs.
alarm screams my name.



10/24/02

the good news: in hell
they play npr. bad news:
it's always pledge week.

10/29/02

dancing in the cold
catching snowflakes on my tongue
warmed by thoughts of you.

10/30/02

the prostitute knocked
on our motel door and asked
for a cigarette.

10/31/02

ancient live oak tree
shakes arthritic limbs at the
invisible wind.

11/01/02

let's pull apart the
fresh bread of our hearts and feed
it to each other.

11/15/02

i'm contemplating
angels dancing on the heads
of pens and pencils.

11/20/02

man orders, *the veal*.
waitress says, *we're outta veal*.
man sighs, scans menu.

11/20/02

threadbare green carpet.
flimsy floral comforters.
fist-sized hole in door.

11/21/02

my radio is
tuned to one station, the one
with songs about you.

11/24/02

lazy eights over
juneau, alaska, waiting
for the fog to clear.



11/30/02

being james dean ain't
easy; even he couldn't
do it very long.

12/02/02

echobelly boy
heartbeat bouncing against bare
walls of bone and flesh.

12/02/02

always searching for
the right thing to say... sometimes
silence is perfect.

12/02/02

the center of the
universe is a very
crowded place to be.

12/02/02

grassgrassgrassgrassgrass
grassgrassgrasssnakegrassgrassgrass
grassgrassgrassgrassgrass

12/02/02

broken blue bottle.
early morning light puddles.
pale blue sun on wall.

12/06/02

we make monkey love
while cats watch unimpressed from
the foot of the bed.

12/08/02

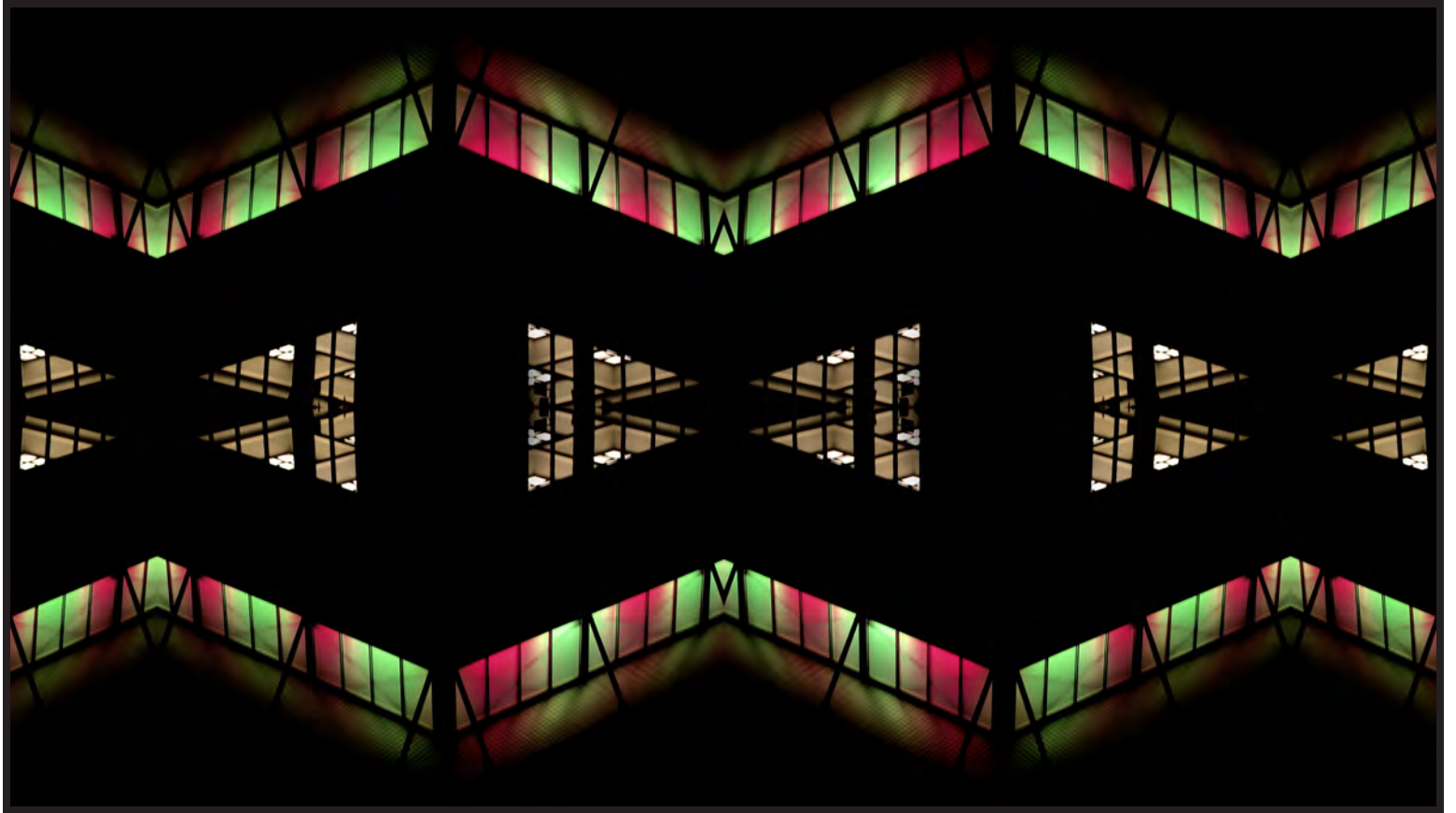
in a world of black
and white, you are a bouquet
of yellow roses.

12/12/02

*what are you doing
with that shotgun?* i shouted.
nothing, she whispered.

12/16/02

my hand has gone numb.
sweetie's asleep on my arm.
i endure needles.



12/16/02

even though i hate you,
i still sometimes miss you...
you fucking asshole.

12/17/02

spent all night looking
for sheep to count, but couldn't
find a single one.

12/19/02

sleeping in someone
else's bed, eating their food.
house-sitting is fun.

12/19/02

everything i've
ever wanted is here in
the palm of your hand.

12/20/02

fingers laced behind
head, staring at the sky from
the green grass below.

12/22/02

i'm fairly certain
jesus would not approve of
this christmas nonsense.

12/23/02

forecast calls for rain,
sleet, snow, ice, and tornados.
good driving weather.

12/25/02

i am feeling the
enormous weight of all my
untapped potential.

12/27/02

whip my bare back with
rose bushes and nettles, then
eat my heart for lunch.

01/01/03

the jerk who designed
our staircase should move couches
and dressers in hell.



01/03/03

we ate black-eyed peas
for good luck in the new year,
our hands held tightly.

01/07/03

best antidote for
disappointment: go and buy
something expensive.

01/07/03

where are you going?
he said, holding plane tickets.
nowhere fast, she said.

01/10/03

it's time to go, he
said, unlocking the cell. *let's*
get this over with.

01/10/03

we're writing our own
bible, not with ink and pen
but with sweat and skin.

01/12/03

lazy weekend with
my baby, snuggled under
covers with kitties.

01/14/03

we are surrounded
by lonely people looking
for someone like us.

01/15/03

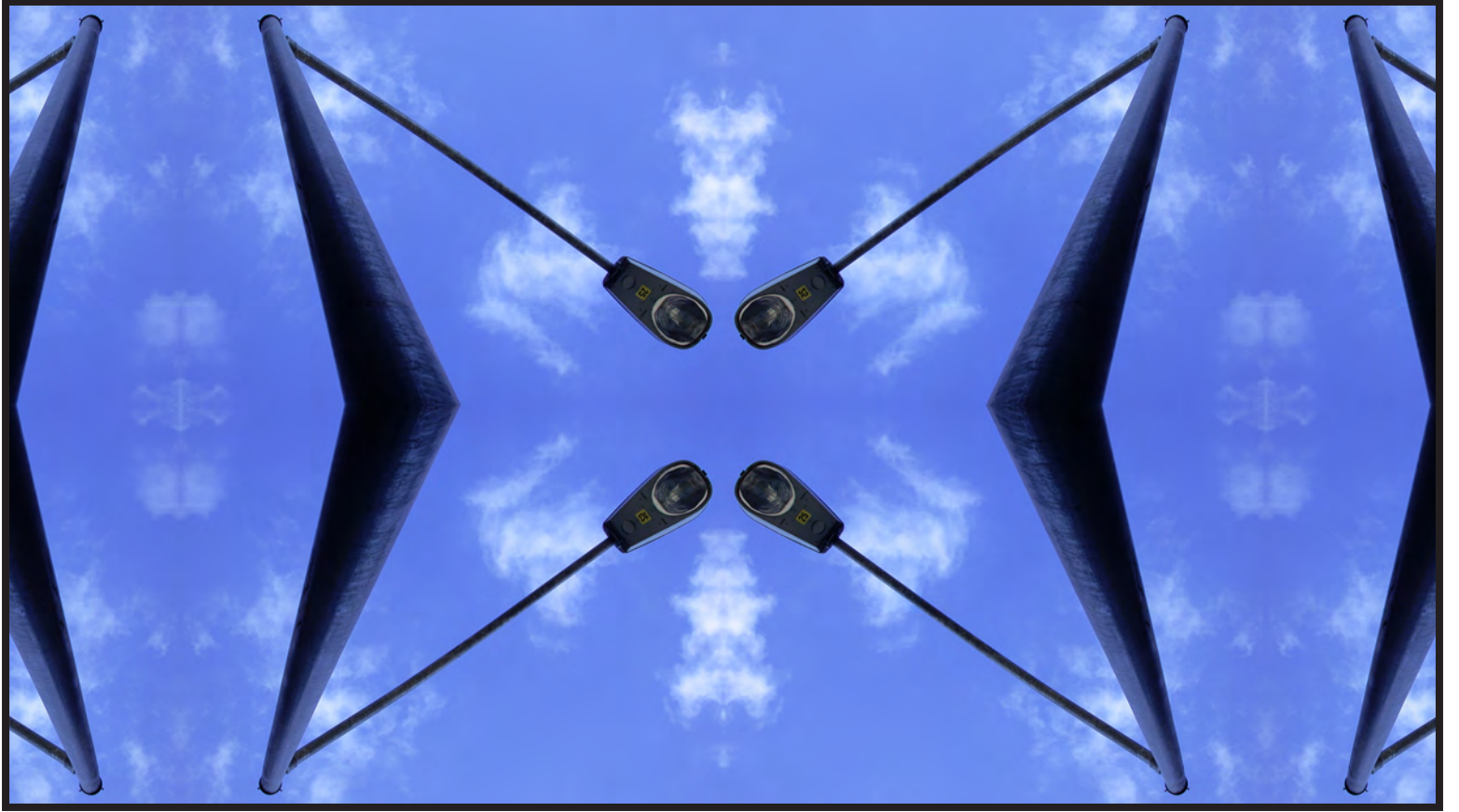
you are useless as
the alcohol swab before
lethal injection.

01/16/03

old cigarette butt.
dirty black gutter water.
little kid follows.

01/20/03

three in the morning.
ninety channels of nothing.
insomnia sucks.



01/23/03

*when have i ever
lied to you?* he demanded,
thinking of each time.

01/24/03

*who do you want to
be today?* she asked. *someone
who's happy*, he said.

01/26/03

early morning sun
catches in dewdrop prisms
on dead gutter bird.

01/27/03

you look familiar,
he said, sipping his latte.
no i don't, she said.

01/28/03

pushed you on the swing.
pushed you 'til you flew right off.
pushed you 'til you cried.

01/29/03

sock in living room.
balled up panties in corner.
lube bottle on floor.

01/30/03

sleep is a lover
spurned. she has stopped returning
my late night phone calls.

01/31/03

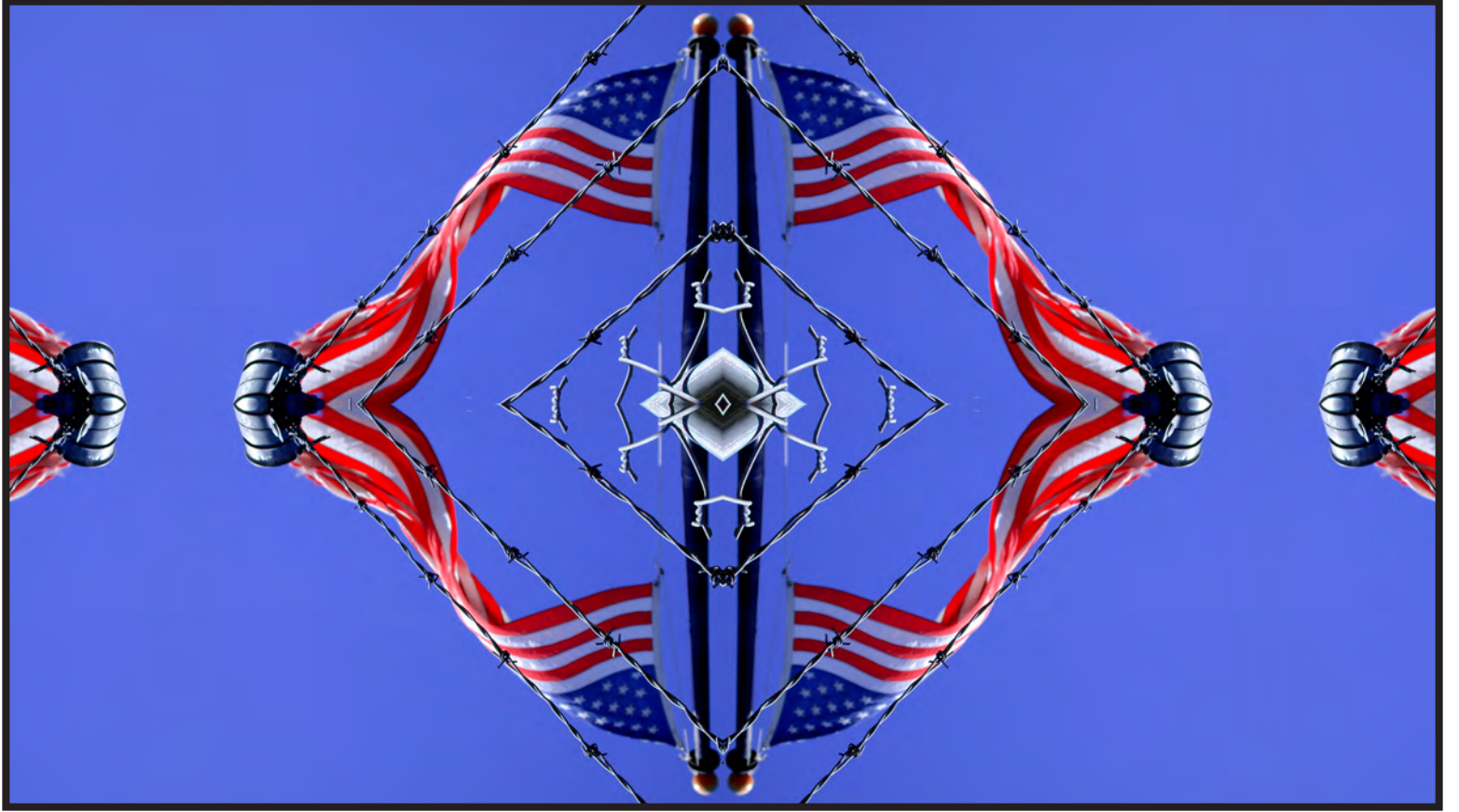
if you love something,
let it go. if it does not
come back, then kill it.

01/31/03

if life gives you some
lemons, squeeze lemon juice in
its fucking eyeballs.

02/01/03

i knew a girl named
nikki. i guess you could say
she was a sex fiend.



02/03/03

chipped blue nail polish.
mic cord wrapped 'round clenched fist.
sharp intake of air.

02/03/03

walmart universe.
single mothers orbit racks
of discount clothing.

02/03/03

china would envy
you if it knew about the
wall around your heart.

02/06/03

makin' love in the
afternoon with cecilia
up in my bedroom.

02/06/03

i punch sleep in the
nose. it kicks me in the shins.
we fight all night long.

02/08/03

, .
; &
? -

02/09/03

all the love i send
to you comes back to me marked
return to sender.

02/12/03

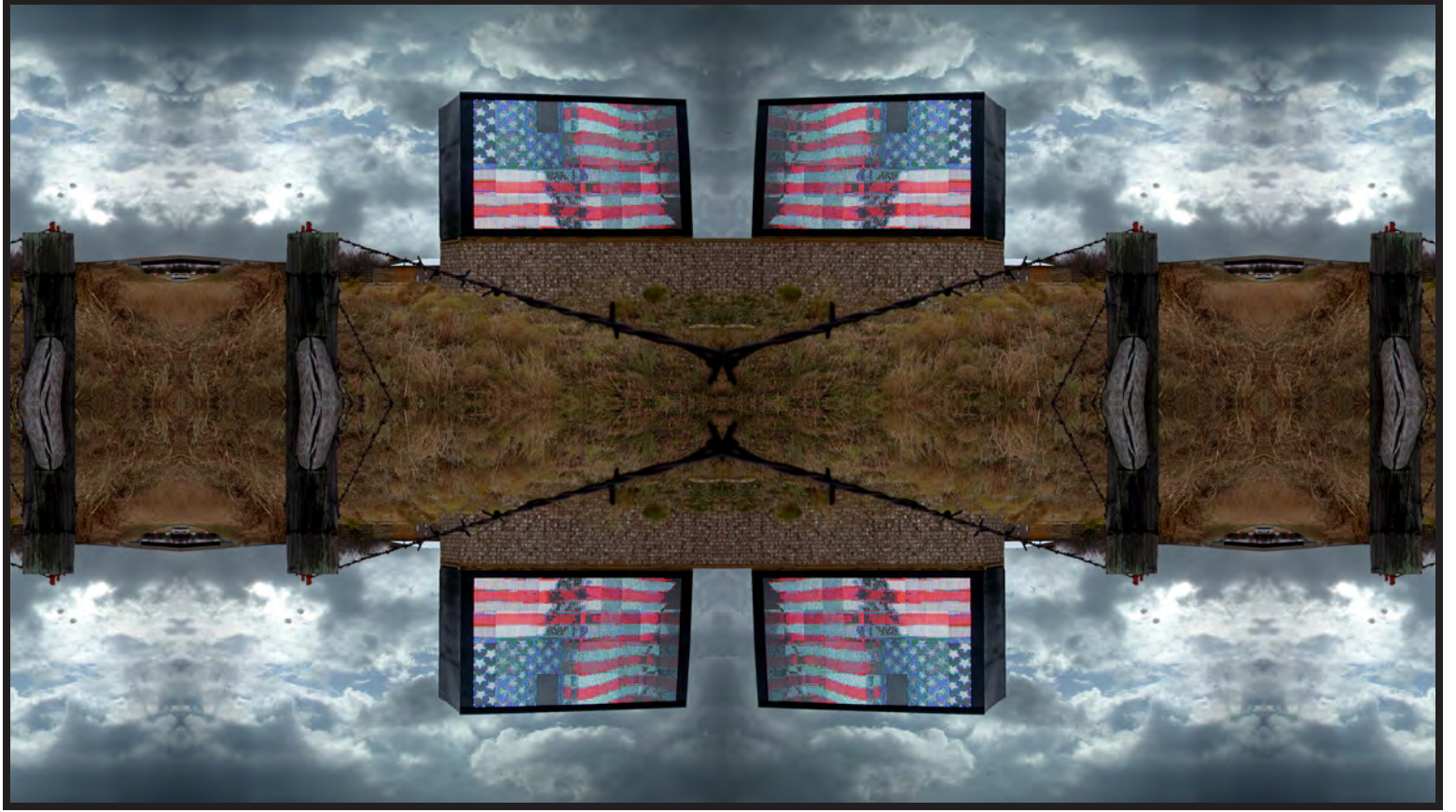
we slay all suckuhs
who perpetrate and lay down
law from state to state.

02/14/03

moonlit lovers mix
their moans with water rushing
over river stones.

02/14/03

and then, suddenly,
dark swollen clouds surround us
and choke out the sun.



02/14/03

grab handfuls of sun,
lock them in your heart and save
them for rainy days.

02/14/03

tonight is the first
night in three years i did not
think of you. wait... damn!

02/16/03

little kid hangs head.
tears sting hot summer sidewalk.
balloon floats away.

02/17/03

my life is a huge
office telephone with the
hold button blinking.

02/20/03

baby fist-sized rain
pounds timpanis on the van
roof as you slumber.

02/23/03

my love's a missile,
and your heart's a small country
i'm gonna blow up.

02/24/03

she drifts and floats like
incense smoke, hips of flame and
eyes of candle wax.

02/25/03

i've had to pee for
three hours, but i don't want to
leave this nice warm bed.

02/27/03

everything's your fault!
he screams, pointing his finger
toward the mirror.

03/17/03

downtairs apartment.
steel-toed boot drops hard above.
man stares at ceiling.



03/17/03

my lover is at
her most beautiful when she
is singing to me.

03/18/03

old man clasps his hands,
closes his eyes, and gives thanks
for his cheeseburger.

03/20/03

at least the bombs that
are falling are doing so
outside of my heart.

03/24/03

oh, my little veal
cutlet! my lamb dumpling! my
sweet potato pie!

03/24/03

i need a brand new
dictionary. all my words
are old and worn out.

03/25/03

your poetry sucks.
your hairstyle sucks. your friends suck.
you suck. fuck you. dick.

03/27/03

9:30 a.m.
the breakfast of champions.
cinnamon pop tarts.

04/11/03

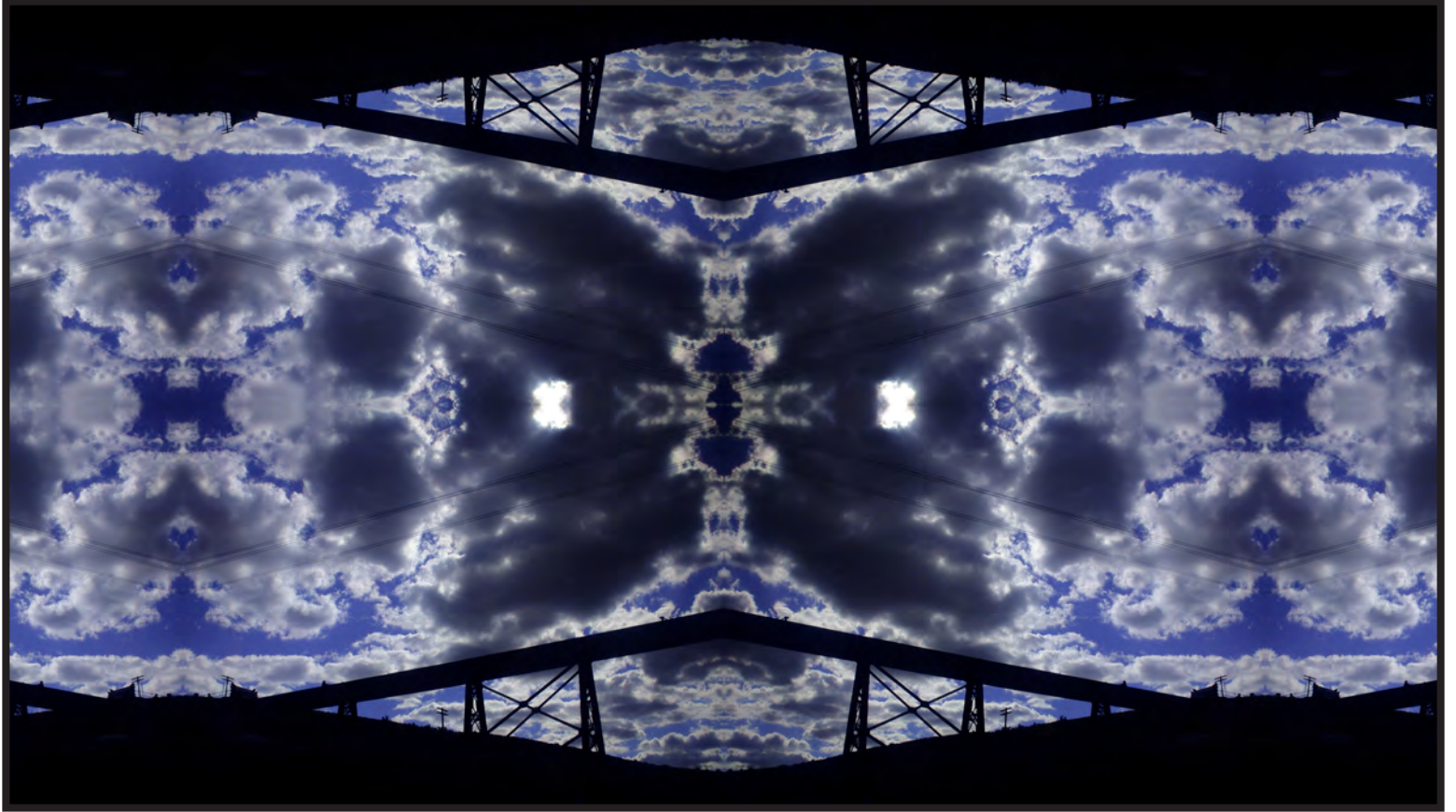
my cock is a soft
ball of yarn, and your mouth is
a playful kitten.

04/11/03

i wanted her to
spoon me, but she ended up
knifing me instead.

04/14/03

i open my eyes.
i stare at the van ceiling.
i go back to sleep.



04/17/03

mantra: i am a
magnet of love and friendship.
blather, wince, repeat.

04/21/03

7.95.
cold bagel. cream cheese. small coke.
i hate airport food.

04/23/03

11 p.m.
the alaskan sky is blue
as my lover's eyes.

04/30/03

the howls of gossip
reverberate against the
high school hallway walls.

05/10/03

for sale: one childhood.
mint condition. hardly used.
free, or best offer.

05/21/03

alone... bad. friends... good.
that frankenstein knew what he
was talking about.

05/24/03

the hardest question
in the world to answer is
this: baby, what's wrong?

05/27/03

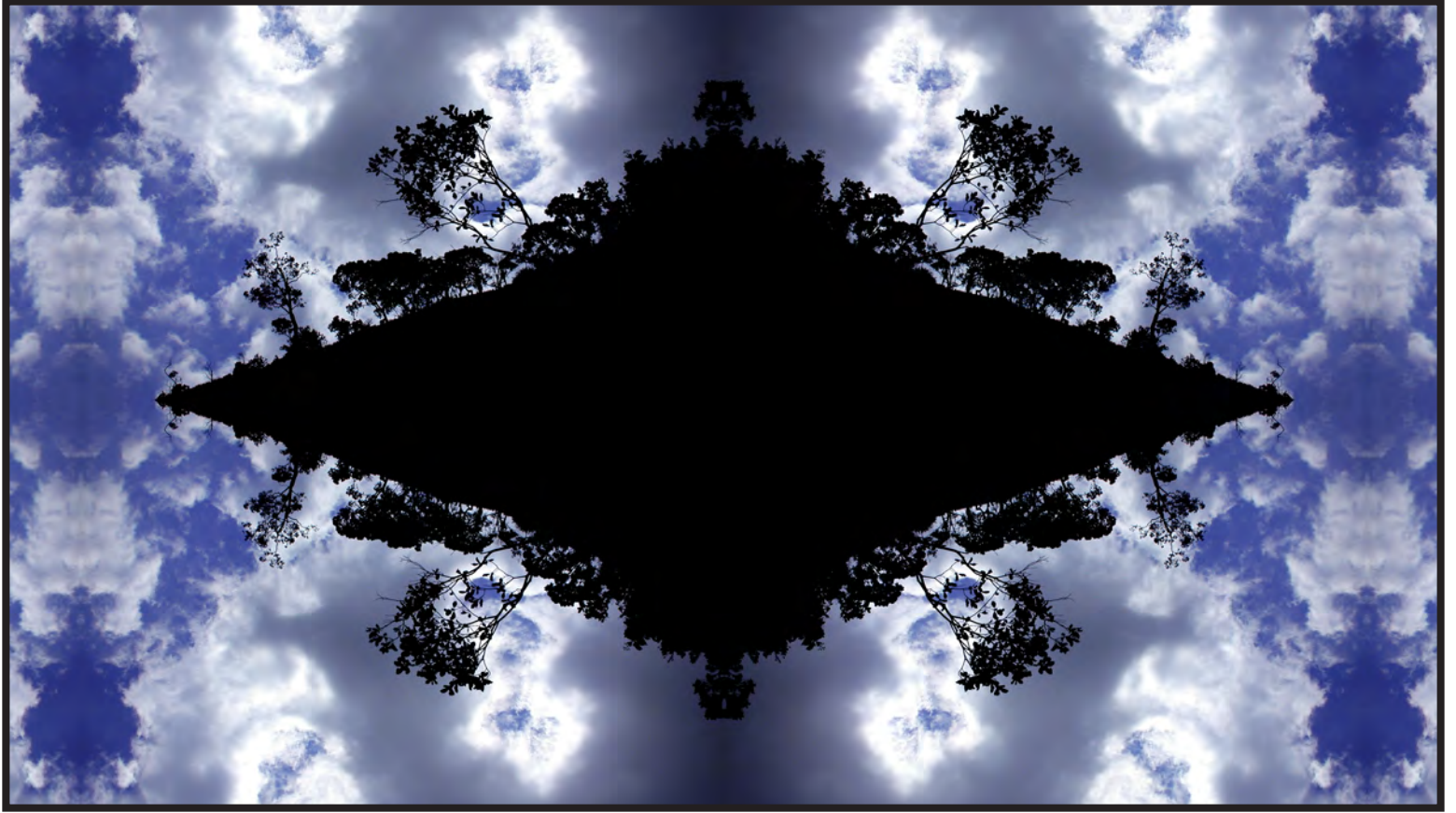
think kids are angels?
just try working at the sears
portrait studio!

05/29/03

don't hate me because
i'm beautiful. hate me 'cuz
i fucked your girlfriend.

05/30/03

mosquitos attack
little kid's ankles as he
licks his ice cream cone.



05/31/03

red stain on roadway.
could be paint or blood. biker
tightens his helmet.

06/01/03

homeless man watches
krispy kreme donut machine
through foggy window.

06/03/03

man watches teevee.
ad pitches frozen pizza.
man fondles keychain.

06/03/03

black cat stretches on
hot summer sidewalk. man waits
for the bus and sweats.

06/03/03

moisture beading on
mason jar of cold sweet tea
next to brown house plant.

06/05/03

dented chevy grill.
matted hair, blood, teeth. driver
remembers nothing.

06/07/03

man chews hamburger
and scowls at homeless man, thinks,
it's not my problem.

06/08/03

depressed punker kid
watches blind man in crosswalk
and silently nods.

06/09/03

the smoke of burning
bridges chokes out the sun and
brings tears to my eyes.

06/11/03

she wears a dress of
spider silk, pink champagne, and
dark black shadow eyes.



06/12/03

if fear is a gift
from god, then my life feels just
like christmas morning.

06/15/03

the cats love it when
i sleep on the couch, but she
hates it when i do.

06/16/03

chopped chives on counter.
tiny drops of blood on knife.
red thumbprint on phone.

06/17/03

i could never date
someone who thought sexy meant
playboy underwear.

06/18/03

if you dress sexy
to go to the mall, you are
probably fourteen.

06/19/03

when i was a kid,
i got caught humping the couch
in the living room.

06/20/03

kitchen phone on floor.
fist-sized hole in bedroom door.
blood stains on carpet.

06/22/03

bright white sun-bleached clouds.
waves as warm as bathwater.
sand in our sandals.

06/23/03

we peer over rail.
sunlight kaleidoscopes dance
in gulf waves below.

07/07/03

it's gas, grass, or ass.
nobody rides for free, man.
not even your mom.



07/10/03

car window kid stares.
i stare back for 60 miles.
neither of us blinks.

07/11/03

29.9.
a nearly perfect poem.
just like you and me.

07/20/03

face-down gutter man
drowns in rainstorm waterfall.
gin bottle death grip.

07/21/03

i hate mechanics.
they take your ignorance of cars
and fuck you with it.

07/24/03

oak tree silhouette
against midnight blackout sky.
dogs bark in distance.

07/25/03

flickering candles.
cross-legged on wooden floor
talking in hushed tones.

07/29/03

dark smoky pool hall.
ozark jukebox spits ozzy.
whole room air guitars.

08/15/03

masturbation is
sex with someone you love, at
least most of the time.

08/16/03

hilary's looking
over my shoulder as i
type this... i love you.

08/17/03

sweat drips from the lips
of the old man with the bomb
in his shaking hand.



08/20/03

shaved face on back porch.
next day, birds nests are festooned
with bits of grey beard.

10/01/03

i've loved you more than
anyone i've ever loved.
isn't that enough?

12/07/03

having sex with you
is like addressing envelopes
without the thrill of paper cuts.

12/08/03

scars are what happens
when life carves its initials
into your skin.

09/03/04

i am a student
of your pupils. i study
their depths for answers.

09/03/04

profound loneliness
eats me hollow, carves my skin
transparently thin.

09/03/04

there's no pain so bad
two bowls of fruity pebbles
can't fix it right up.

09/06/04

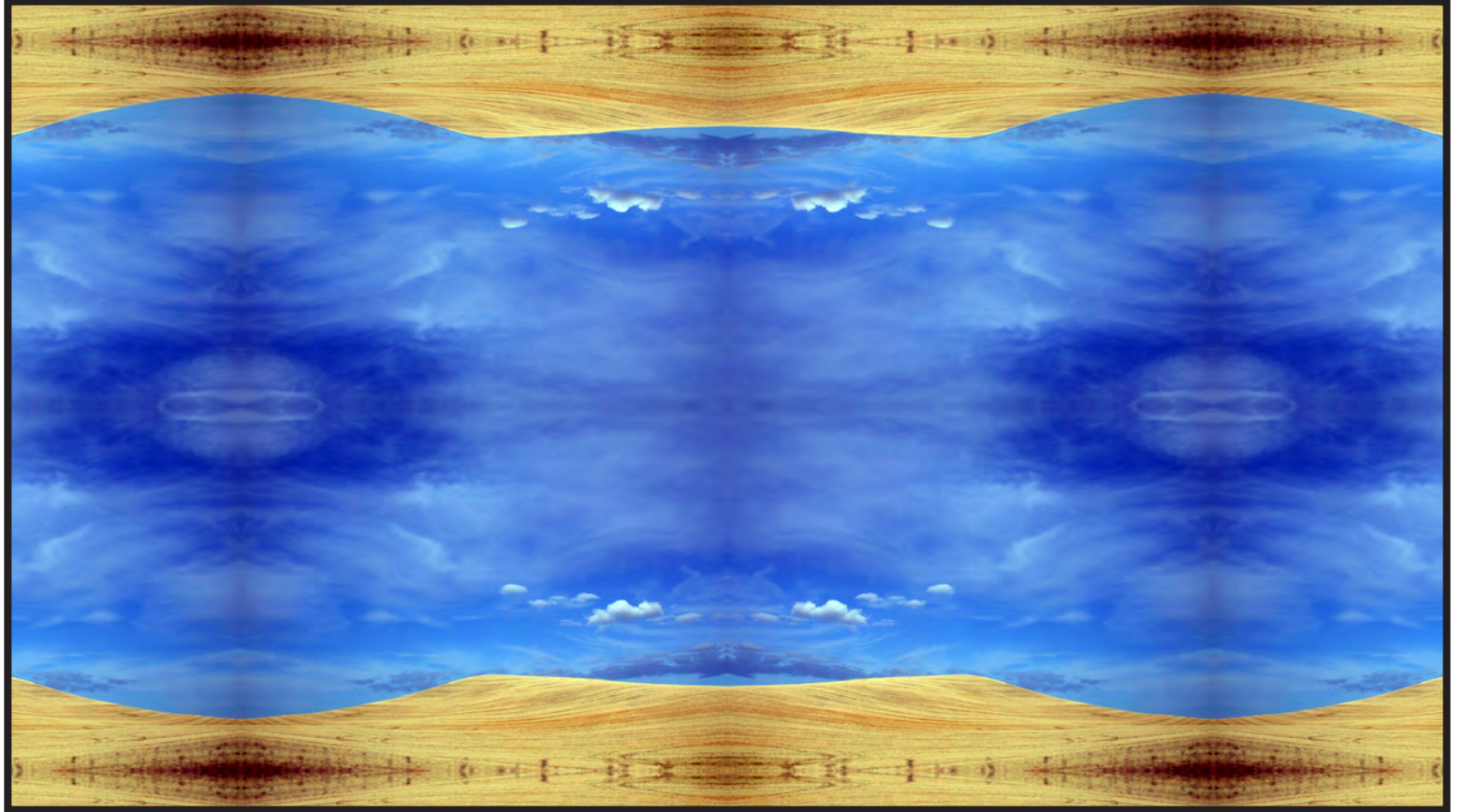
sky has had enough
sorrow, pinches its eyes tight,
showers earth with tears.

09/07/04

the empty belly
of my skin growls with hunger
and licks its cracked lips.

09/08/04

teenager watches
television as sun sets
salmon belly pink.



09/11/04

you are so sweet that
dentists recommend brushing
after kissing you.

09/14/04

he walks through the rain
with head held high and smile wide.
nothing can touch him.

09/15/04

you suck so hard that
stephen hawking is trying
to prove you exist.

09/15/04

your heart's like iraq's
weapons of mass destruction:
it does not exist.

09/17/04

treading water is
harder when life keeps adding
bricks to your backpack.

09/20/04

the sun rises. the sun
sets. the sun rises. the sun
sets. the sun rises.

09/23/04

the tip of my tongue
taps a trail of tingles up
and down your backbone.

09/23/04

your nipples blossom
on my lips as i kiss rings
around the rosy.

09/23/04

my fingertips have
memorized every curve
of your body.

09/25/04

beads of sweat collect
in the hollows of your hips.
my lips drink deeply.



09/26/04

come closer, darling...
i'll make your skin crackle with
flames of dark delight.

09/26/04

movie theatre.
hips kissing in darkness.
ovals of shared warmth.

09/26/04

my fingers linger
on my dollar bill hoping
for counter girl's touch.

09/26/04

i bask in the scent
of your hair conditioner
wafting behind you.

09/26/04

packed elevator.
construction worker's cologne
reminds me of dad.

09/26/04

when you fall into
a bottomless pit, what kills
you is starvation.

09/26/04

taxi driver smells
of hot curry and incense.
i say, *take me home*.

09/27/04

the moon bursts open
and the whole wide world smells of
cinnamon and sighs.

09/27/04

i'm gonna kiss you
like a machine gun, rip the
flesh right off your bones.

09/27/04

silken wings flutter.
tiny belly tornados.
my heads spin.



09/27/04

summer rain.
a thousand tiny hands
applauding themselves.

09/28/04

the faint ghost
of mississippi
haunts her voice.

09/28/04

i'm going to crawl
inside your ribcage, lay my
head upon your heart.

09/28/04

operator
sounds like old lover.
we talk for hours.

09/29/04

i held up traffic
watching her
disappear.

09/30/04

brown and yellow leaves
waving goodbye
as they fall.

10/01/04

her slender arms
weeping willow branches
wrap around me.

10/03/04

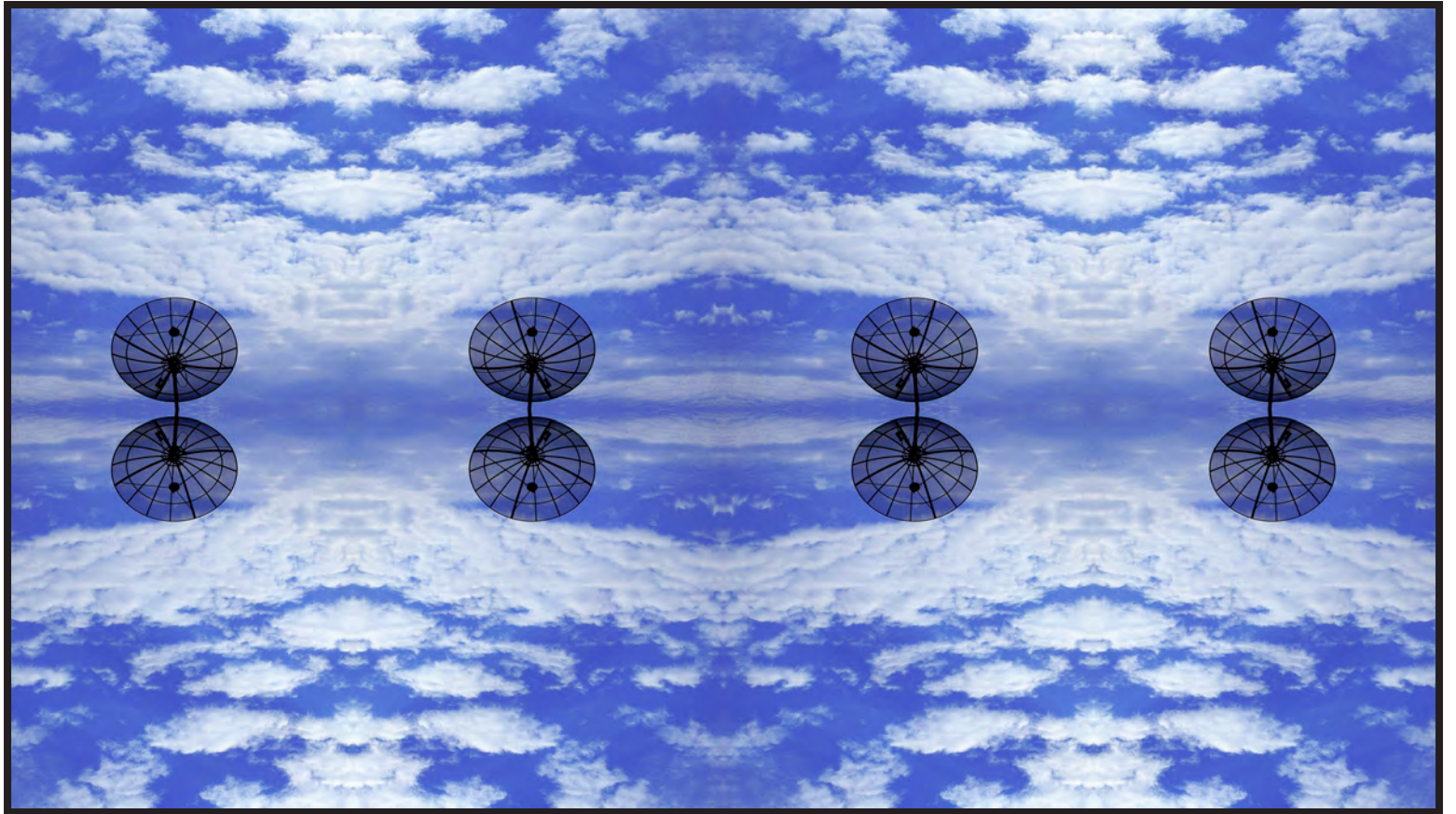
we slip so
easily into sleep.
we just disappear.

10/03/04

the bible's got nothing
on your eyes, sister girl.
each tear a psalm.

10/03/04

palm between her breasts.
gentle rise and fall of sleep.
we spoon on the couch.



10/05/04
old t-shirt
found under the bed.
still smells like her.

10/07/04
turbulence.
eyes squeezed tight. airplane pillow.
joni mitchell.

10/09/04
man stuck in traffic
has heated argument with
memory of ex-lover.

10/10/04
man runs hand
across face of dead dog
at side of road.

10/11/04
my invisible friend
no longer believes in me.
he's outgrown our games.

10/12/04
bald man at bus stop
stands tall and straightens tie as
pretty girl walks by.

10/15/04
bus stop dj cuts
headphone breakbeats with fingers
that flail in midair.

10/16/04
man sits in subway,
seat still warm from her backside.
he closes his eyes.

10/17/04
old woman smiles at
supermarket check-out girl.
girl smacks her gum.

10/18/04
red-rimmed sister girl?
stir your tears into my tea.
let's drink to blue skies.



10/19/04
girl in library
cross-legged on aisle floor.
lips move silently.

10/21/04
laughter
outside his bedroom window.
man stares at ceiling.

10/22/04
man stands in tea shop.
so many teas to choose from.
fingertip to lips.

10/22/04
his heart's beating flesh
dangles between sharpened teeth
as her jaws tighten.

10/23/04
man stands silently
in the central texas rain
thinking of lost love.

10/24/04
woman presses ear
to hotel room wall,
palm between breasts.

10/25/04
woman at playground
thinks briefly of snatching child,
turns and walks away.

10/25/04
carved on the roof of
my mouth in a language your
tongue alone speaks: *yes*.

10/25/04
your belly beckons
in syllables of sighs.
my body obeys.

10/25/04
i tattoo devotion
on your hip with my lips
in glistening script.



10/25/04

i read psalms from the
open bible of your loins.
holy nectar flows.

10/26/04

kitty in the grass.
yellow eyes narrow. tail sways.
bird raises its head.

10/26/04

i want to get lost
in you, sister girl, just leave
and never come back.

10/27/04

man waits in clinic.
doctor looks at chart, shakes head.
outside, the sun shines.

10/28/04

woman on airplane
presses nose to window.
man on bus looks up.

10/31/04

let's press our dirty
soles against the belly of
this town 'till it purrs.

10/31/04

her bright idea casts
shadows behind me
that leap and dance.

10/30/04

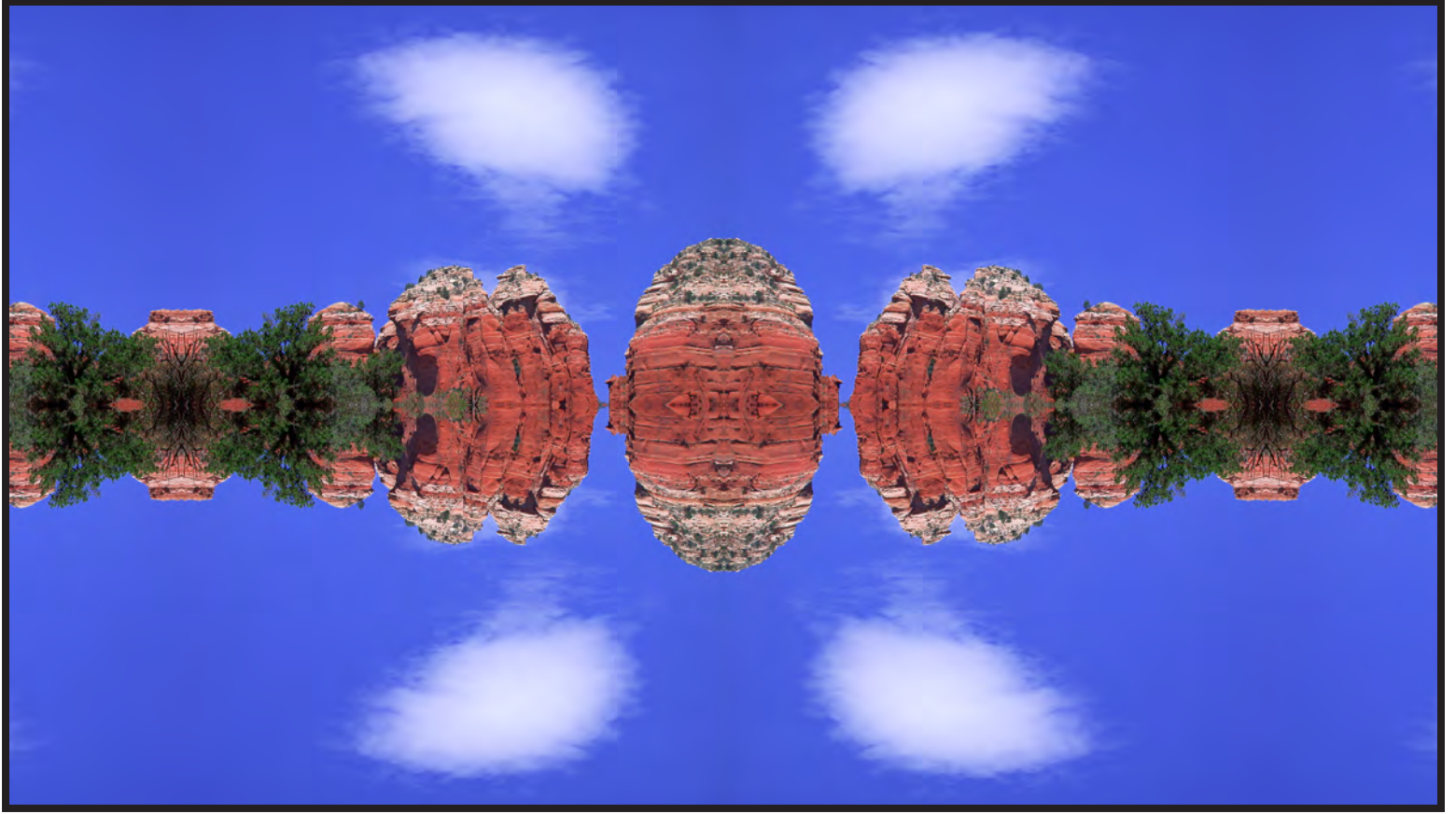
she licks her whiskers
and stares at the moist kibble
of my beating heart.

11/06/04

i don't try to make
sense of my choices, i just
try to survive them.

11/08/04

i can never tell
if my upstairs neighbors are
fighting or fucking.



11/11/04

she rips her heart from
her chest and whispers, *go deep*.
i race for the endzone.

11/13/04

under covers.
warm bellies.
purring.

11/13/04

i fucking dare you
to love me! she screams, beating
her fists against him.

11/14/04

a strict regimen
of diet coke and cigarettes
fuels her sleepless nights.

11/15/04

snorting sweet cocaine
from the nipples of porn stars.
ah, the poet life...

11/15/04

i slather my
honey butter love on
her hot cornbread heart.

11/19/04

a fetid snowdrift
of soiled underwear and socks.
perfect kitty bed.

11/21/04

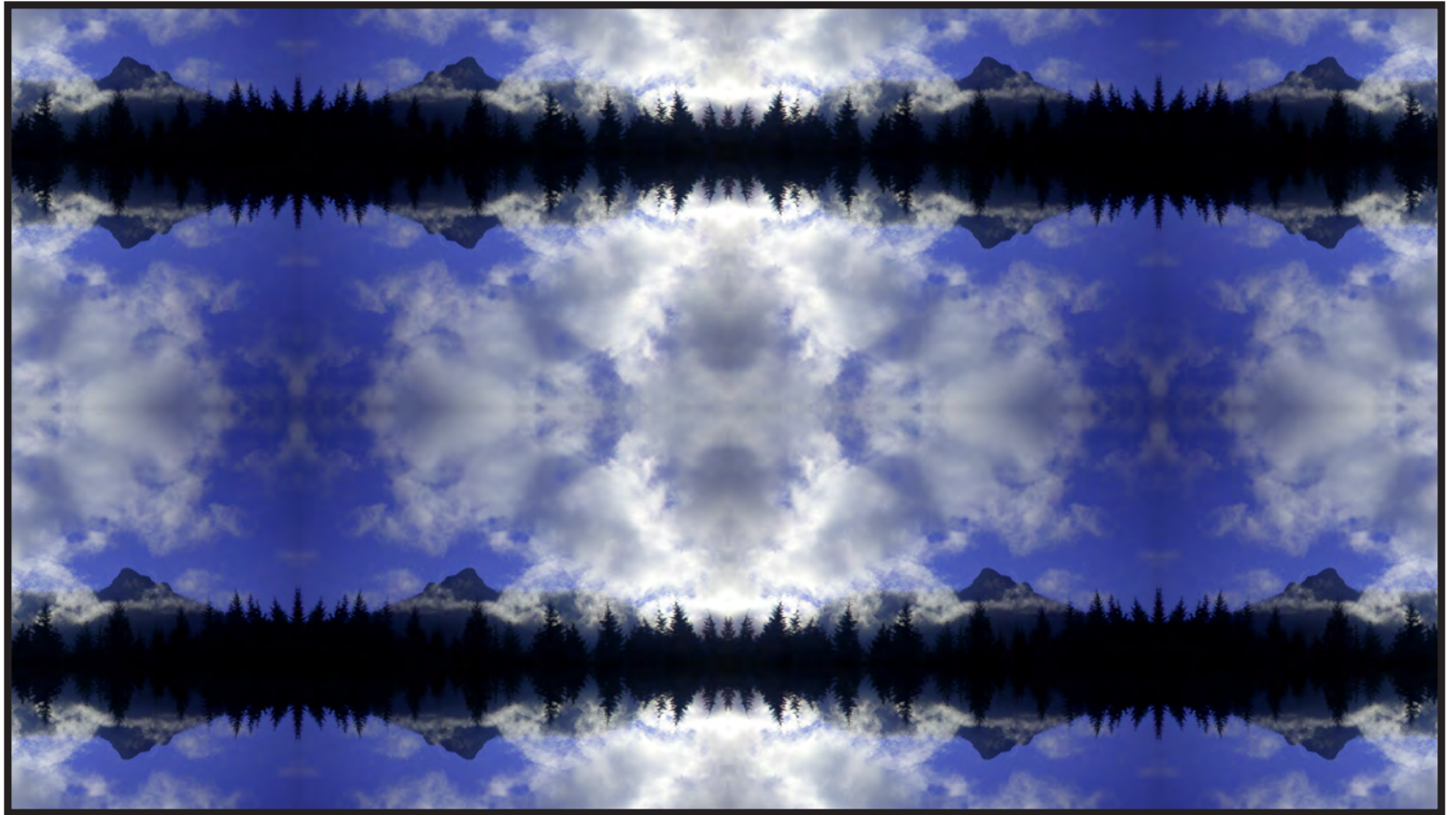
the black hole
on your side of the bed
sucks.

11/21/04

man in record store
sits in listening booth and
cries with carole king.

11/22/04

man imagines
the toothy grin of her voice
as he counts the rings.



11/23/04

knock on front door.
wet footprints on welcome mat.
the wind and the rain.

11/26/04

pressed petals of a
lavender rose beckon from
her belly button.

11/27/04

furnace belly girl
blows smoke rings from heart-shaped lips
that singe my eyebrows.

11/27/04

her ass is shaped like
two teardrops dangling from the
base of her backbone.

11/28/04

i cut my wrists
on your lips and bleed psalms
on your tongue.

11/30/04

kitty rule her lands
from the soft mountain of my
blanket-shrouded hip.

12/01/04

the spinning wheels of
addiction carve black skidmarks
up and down her arms.

12/03/04

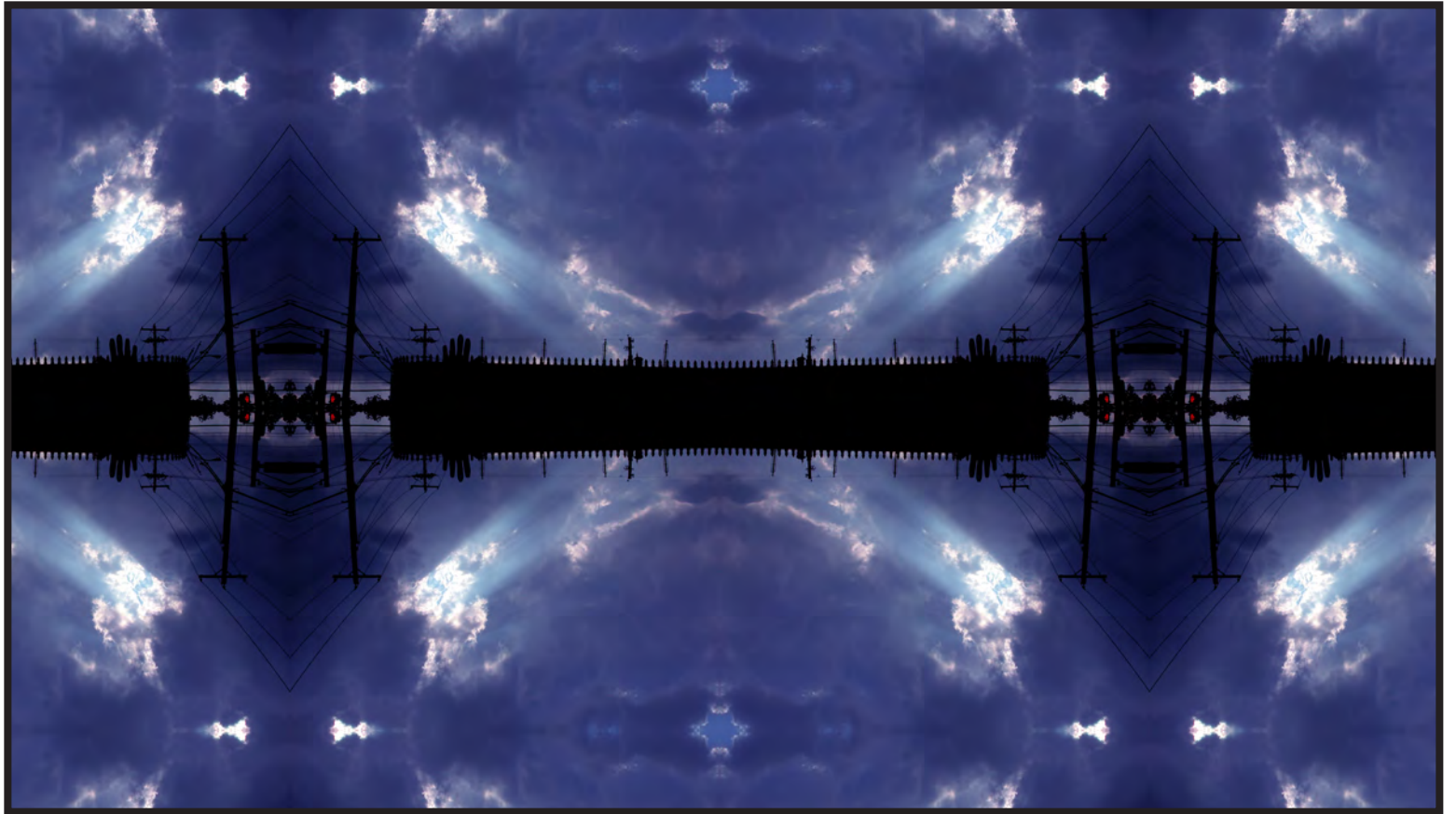
woman in market
presses nose to fish fillet,
thinks of first marriage.

12/03/04

man in gutter grime
lifts his head and looks around.
suv drives by.

12/03/04

let's peel off our flesh
tuxedos and dance bone naked
in the moonlight.



12/05/04

i've washed your pillow
a thousand times, but it still
smells like you.

12/05/04

stevie wonder was
only twenty-two when he wrote
superstition. damn...

12/06/04

the angry fist
in my chest loosens its grip.
wind in the trees.

12/07/04

beads of rain
on greyhound windows.
headphones weep.

12/10/04

pin oak silhouettes
reaching arthritic knuckles
toward the moon.

12/14/04

orion's belt
looked so much brighter
from her front porch.

12/14/04

broken cereal bowl.
milky shards on kitchen floor.
kitten licks her lips.

12/15/04

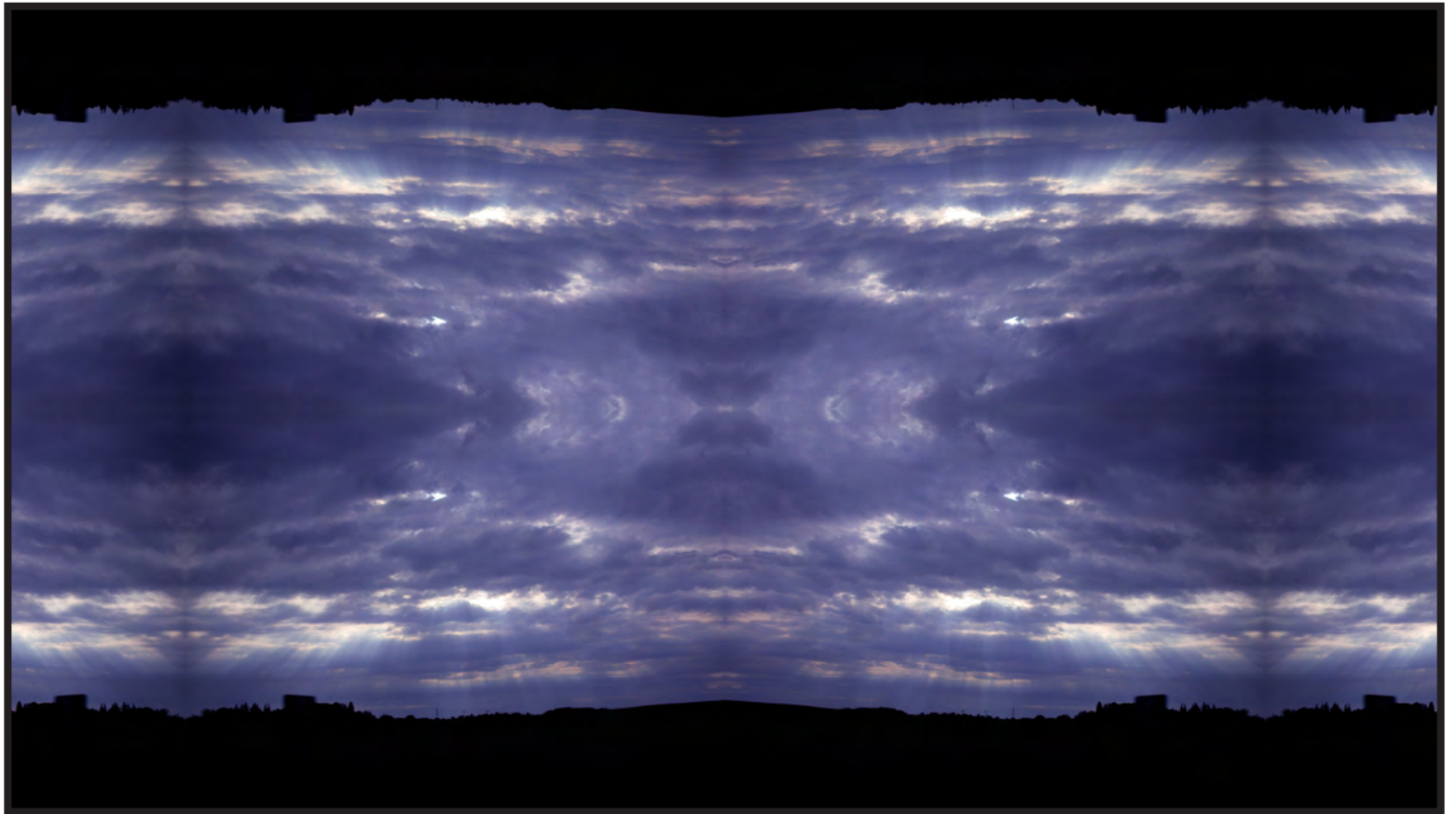
a child's red glove
amongst crimson fallen leaves
stiff with frost.

12/19/04

she laughs softly in
her sleep, and i watch her smile
as the sun rises.

12/20/04

laughter and singing
from the tacqueria
across the alley.



12/21/04

ghosts of ex-girlfriends
haunt my cd collection.
i need exorcists.

12/22/04

the difference between
a rut and a grave is how
long you spend in them.

12/23/04

suicide bombers
strap themselves to my chest
when i think of you.

12/24/04

she stumbled into
the mess hall of my heart and
blew us both to bits.

12/25/04

the streets are silent,
just my bicycle and me.
christmas morning sun.

12/26/04

you glow so brightly,
lightning bugs cover their butts
out of respect.

12/27/04

she does not speak, she
purrs warm kittybelly words
soft against my neck.

12/28/04

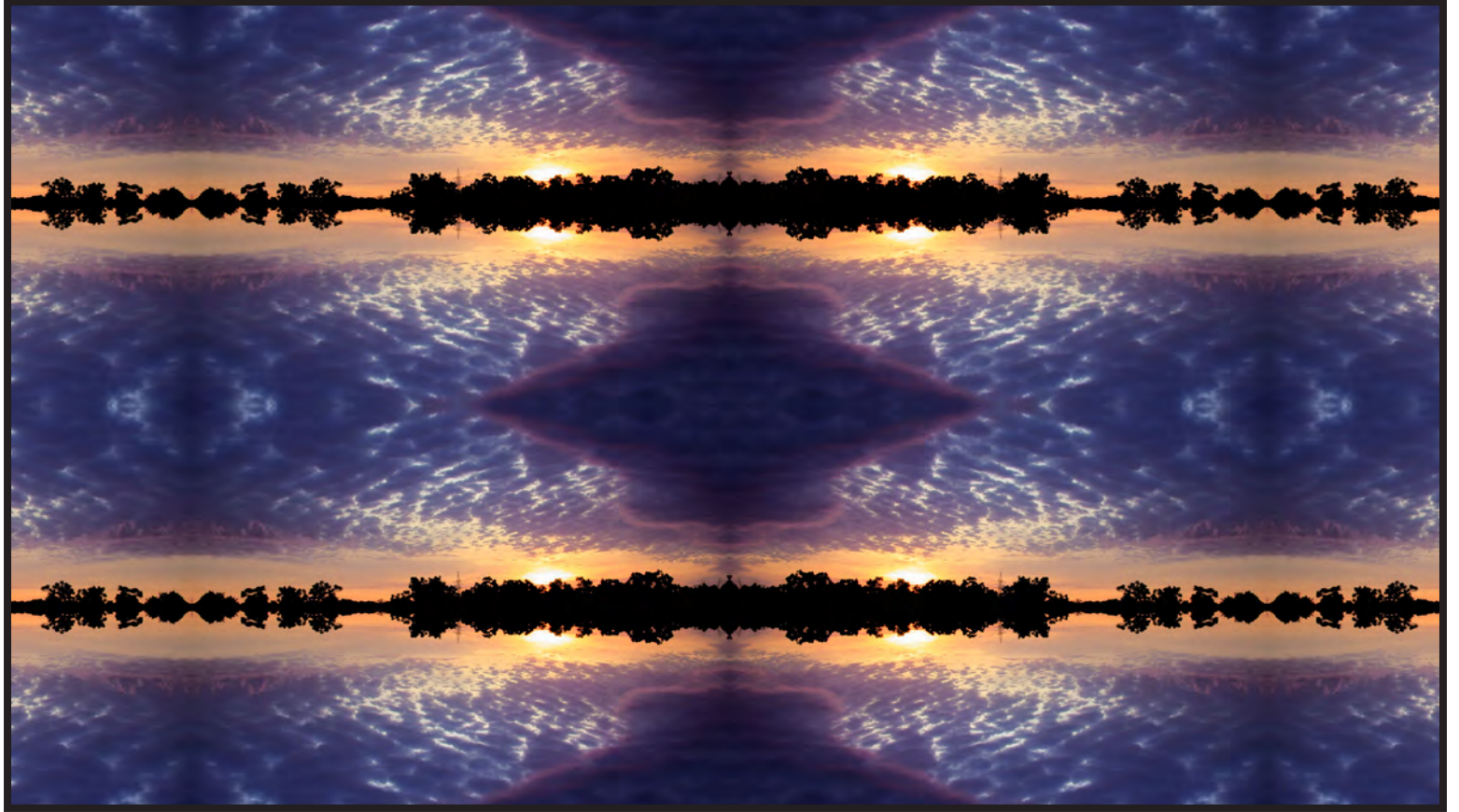
moth kisses in haiku.
seventeen tiny nibbles on
my belly button.

12/29/04

the cute bartender
with the black-framed cat's eye specs
makes me want to drink.

12/30/04

shirtless laundromat
guy waited way too long
to wash his clothes.



01/01/05
my resolution
for this year is the same as
always: be happy.

01/03/05
constantly talking
is not necessarily
communication.

01/03/05
sorry means nothing
when you say it over and
over and over and...

01/05/05
stoplight sing-along.
me and the girl in the bug.
same radio station.

01/06/05
girl in cafe
catches my stare and
throws it back to me.

01/07/05
this plump orange begs
for the thrust of my thumb
into its navel .

01/08/05
my fingers reach for
the ripe fruit of her smile, and
she snatches it away

01/09/05
little kid stomps on
ketchup packet as man walks
by in business suit.

01/10/05
i take vitamins
every day so i'll be
healthy when i die.

01/10/05
the weight
of profound sadness
bends my spine.



01/10/05
beautiful people
should never be sad.
sadness is ugly.

01/12/05
place your body
on my tongue .
it tastes just like god.

01/13/05
my fingers trace
lovely imperfections
on your skin.

01/14/05
i collapse, sweaty,
head on your tummy,
hands on your hips.

01/14/05
we fall asleep
with me inside you,
spooning .

01/17/05
if i had a cell phone,
i would program your heart beat
as my ringtone.

01/17/05
i love you with all
my heart. can i come a
santa's beard on your face?

01/20/05
chain link fence, stars, moon.
the smell of fresh tortillas.
back alley haiku.

01/21/05
your yearning for love
is a yawning black chasm
that warns lovers away.

01/22/05
she smells of sweat and
skin, of dirt and grass and wind.
she smells of the earth.



01/23/05
a sturdy rope
can both kill you
and save your life.

01/25/05
ache in my chest.
she thinks it's love.
i think it's cancer.

01/26/05
i tattooed your name
on my chest backwards so
my heart can read it.

01/27/05
tsunami woman
crashes over my bedspread ,
salty arms spread wide.

01/28/05
shotgun bride scratches
her trigger finger against
my lips, blows me away.

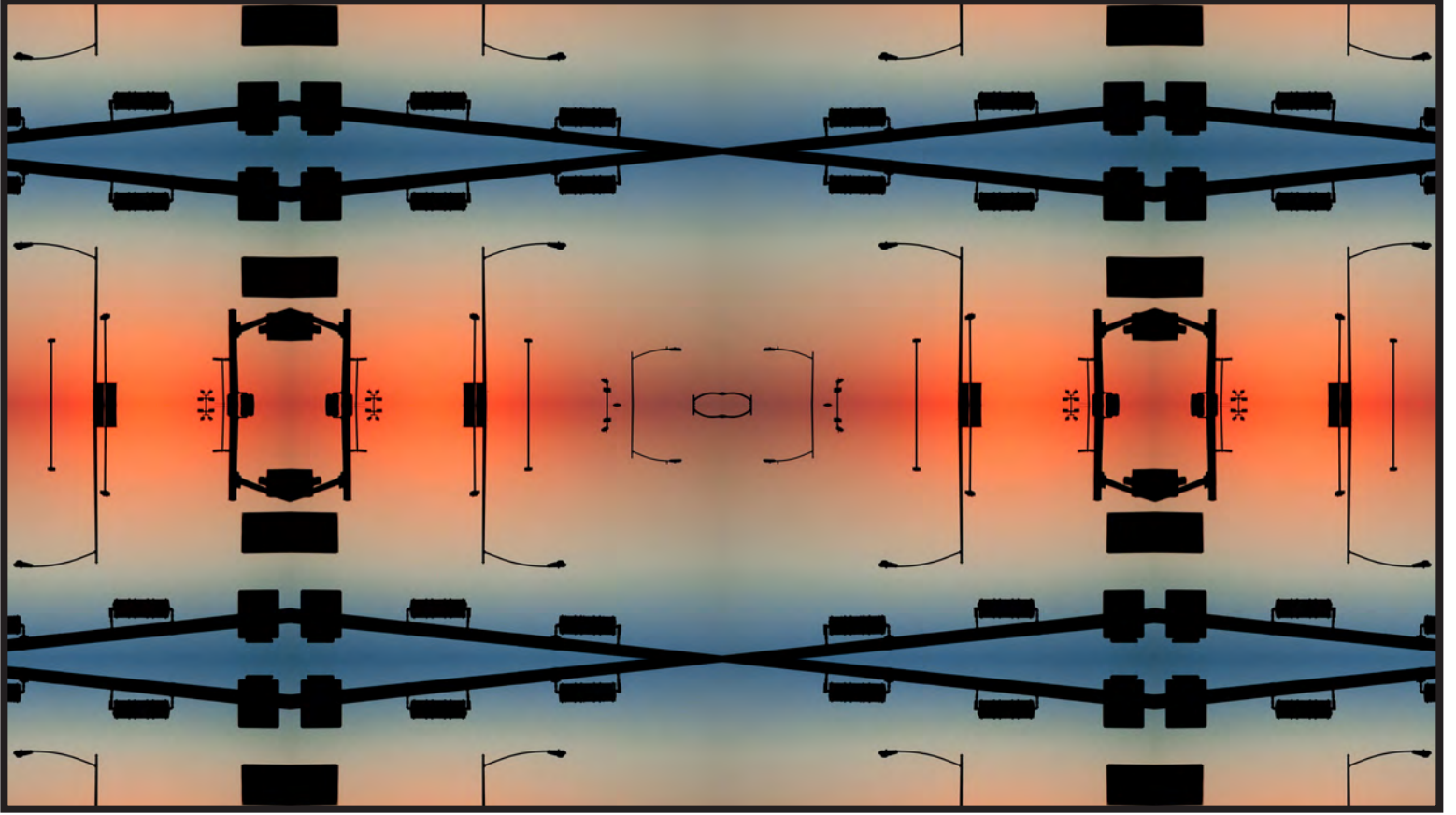
01/30/05
crisp white napkins.
fine white china and silver.
my heart on a plate.

01/30/05
like texas rain,
she falls for you
hard.

02/01/05
we drift through each other,
two lonely ghosts haunting the
same cold apartment.

02/03/05
there's no such thing
as complete silence
in a city.

02/03/05
warm sister girl,
slender petals pressed flat
between flannel sheets.



02/05/05

cloud belly kisses.
morning dew on collar bone.
breathing me deeply.

02/05/05

if you were my tumor,
i would comb your hair
and brush your teeth.

02/07/05

her willowy limbs
clatter and sway in the wind
of troubled slumber.

02/08/05

hip bones buried tight
in my thighs, she presses
her ear to my chest.

02/08/05

she asks, *how long will
you love me?* i say, *how long
is a piece of string?*

02/09/05

fragile scent
of flower petals
still in my shirt.

02/10/05

i like missing you.
i like knowing you will be
there when i get back.

02/12/05

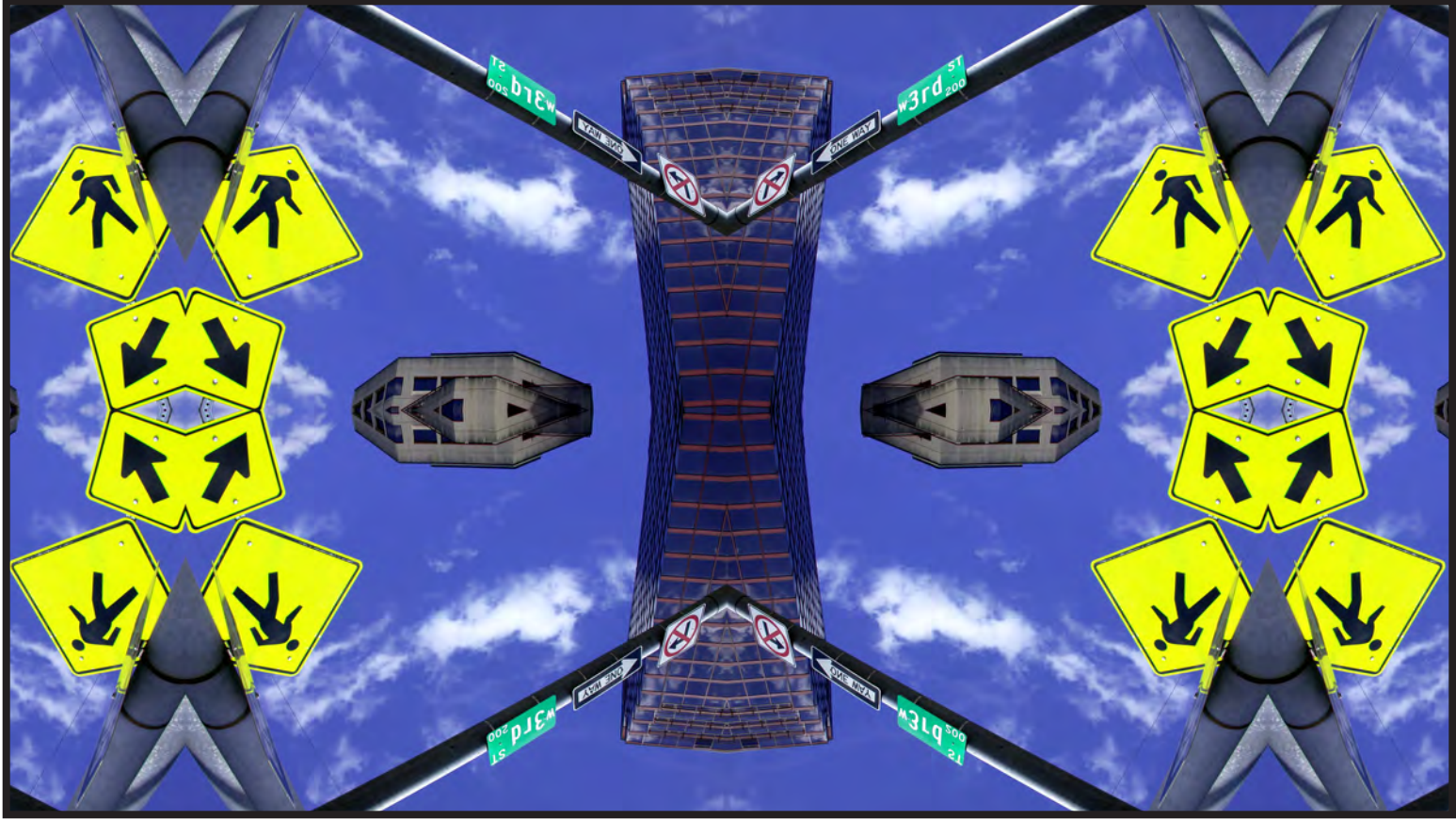
oh, to be young again,
to know everything there is to know
about everything.

02/13/05

girl, you can call me
autobiography 'cuz
i'm all about you.

02/14/05

opened my door tired.
welcomed by paws and tails and
kisses on my pillow.



02/14/05

your drama makes me
sick. i should have taken
my dramamine.

02/15/05

flannel sheets scented
with rose petals and kitties
beg for my return.

02/16 /05

hibernating hedgehogs
breathe once every two minutes,
like me when you're gone.

02/17/05

cute girl in cafe
reads my favourite book and
slowly twirls her hair.

02/19/05

i love you in god's way,
which means i ignore you and
never return your calls.

02/20/05

my ass is so cold
nasa is studying it
for space shuttle tiles.

02/20/05

i spelled *vichyssoise*
correctly the first time i tried
without even looking!

02/21/05

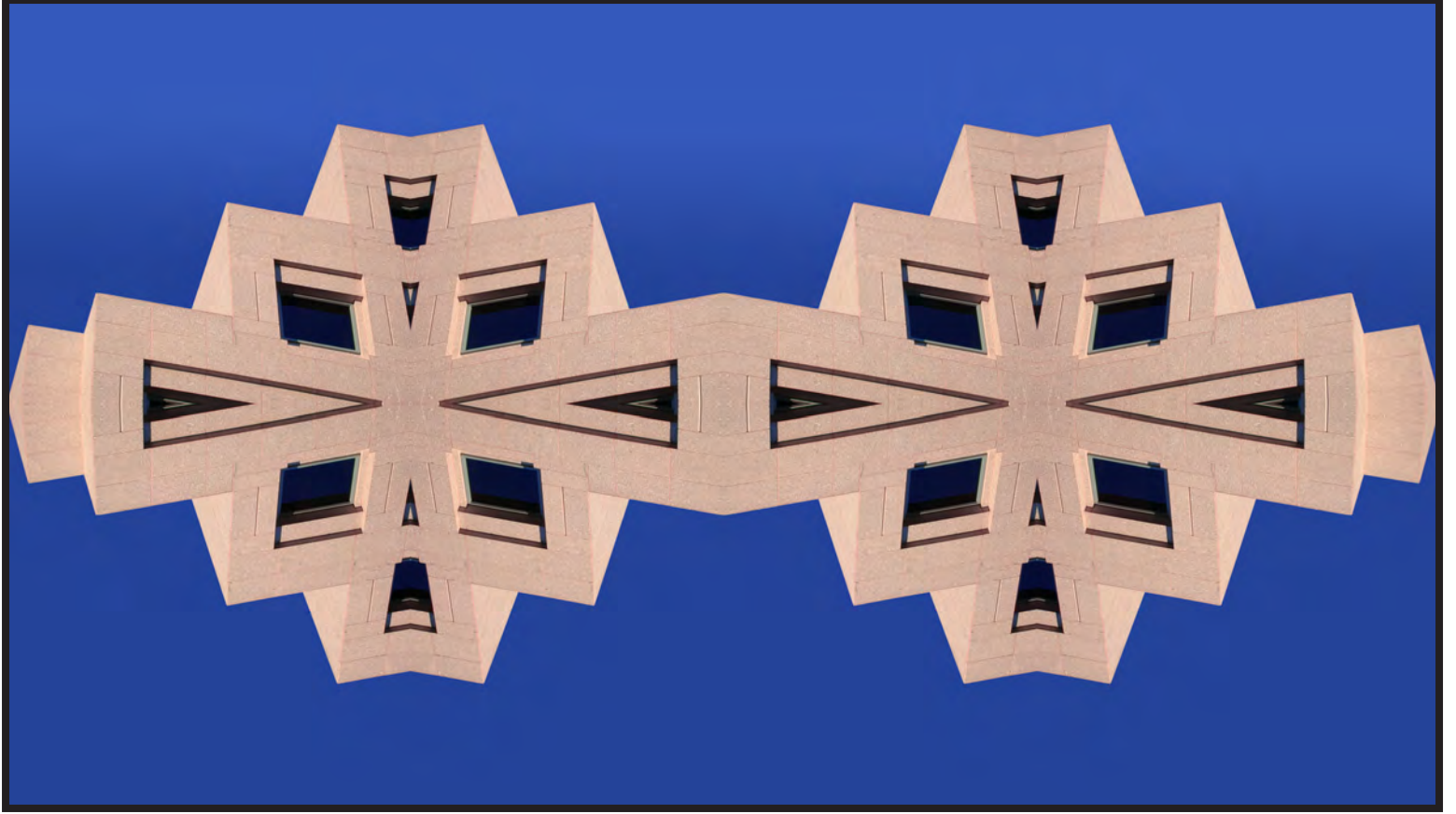
errant soap bubble
alights on the tip of my nose,
explodes with a sigh.

02/22/05

central casting should
win an oscar for choosing you
as my love interest.

02/24/05

snapshot eyes smile from
album pages. she was so
in love with me then.



02/25/05

the worst thing about
breaking up is learning to
sleep with yourself again.

02/26/05

i've worn paths in
the ceiling of my bedroom with
my sleepless gaze.

02/27/05

midnight darkness.
refrigerator hum.
distant screech of tires.

03/01/05

girl, i'm gonna work you
like an indonesian kid
in a nike sweat shop.

03/01/05

my lover sways softly.
cinnamon wind.
warm summer rain.

03/01/05

the days huff and sigh,
but the years
blink.

03/03/05

neon lights greet
the coming night with
glowing middle fingers

03/03/05

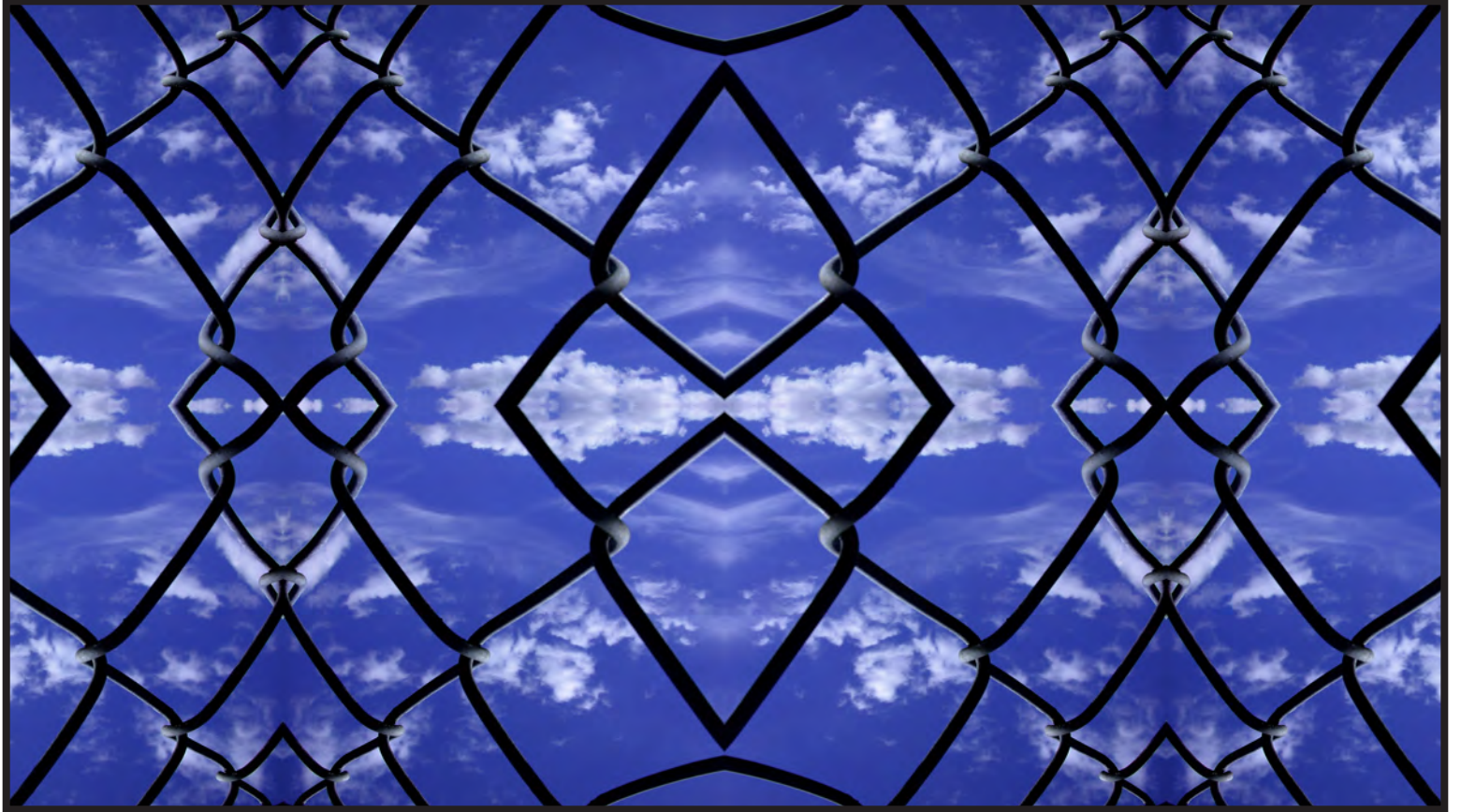
your kisses are so
sweet, baby, i gotta take
an insulin shot.

03/05/05

trembling
sunflower lifts her head
and smiles at the sky.

03/06/05

the very things that
draw you to me now will push
you away in the end.



03/07/05

you are not worth
what i had to give up
to keep you.

03/08/05

barefoot sky breeze blue.
bicycle tires iced sweet tea.
ropeswing waterhole.

03/10/05

fighting for peace
is like fucking
for virginity.

03/11/05

crack cocaine
has nothing
on your smile.

03/12/05

girl, we may still be friends,
but I'll only help you move
ONCE every year.

03/16/05

if you say them enough
words lose their meaning,
like *sorry* or *i love you*.

03/17/05

cactus-scented breeze
hushes rose-tinted granite.
whirlwinds and whispers.

03/18/05

her tiny booty hairs,
so downy soft and fine,
like tears on an apple.

03/19/05

ceiling fan.
sheets in a tangle.
pillow across room.

03/20/05

i lick
organic pear juice
from her chin.



03/20/05

my neck
is an aircraft carrier
for your jet plane lips.

03/22/05

bus stop madman shouts
doomspeak over thunderclaps,
eyes rolling stormward.

03/24/05

pasty girl sweats makeup.
black dress black skirt black cloak.
it's hard being goth in Austin.

03/24/05

oh, summer time goth!
shade me from the evil sun
with your black parasol!

03/24/05

love is tempered by
the fear of how much it
will hurt when it's gone.

03/26/05

i share green tea
with the morning sun
on my window.

03/27/05

bright blue sky
reflected in the tears
on her elbow.

03/29/05

i knew it was a
dream because we were together,
and we were happy.

03/29/05

roommate barges in.
it smells like nekkid in here.
we smile sheepishly.

04/01/05

blood from my girlfriend's
period is encrusted
on my fingernails.



04/03/05

baby, if your ass
were a lightbulb, the whole world
would wear sunglasses.

04/03/05

i woke up to find
it was the end of the world.
should I lock my bike?

04/05/05

my spine tingles as
my pee mingles with the hot
soapy bathwater.

04/06/05

my roomie doesn't
like my cats. that's okay. they
don't like him either.

04/07/05

we'd only dated
for two months. we shouldn't have
worn each other's clothes.

04/09/05

kissing you is like
shooting up with novacaine:
i don't feel a thing.

04/10/05

loving you is like
losing my keys for six months:
i'm going nowhere.

04/11/05

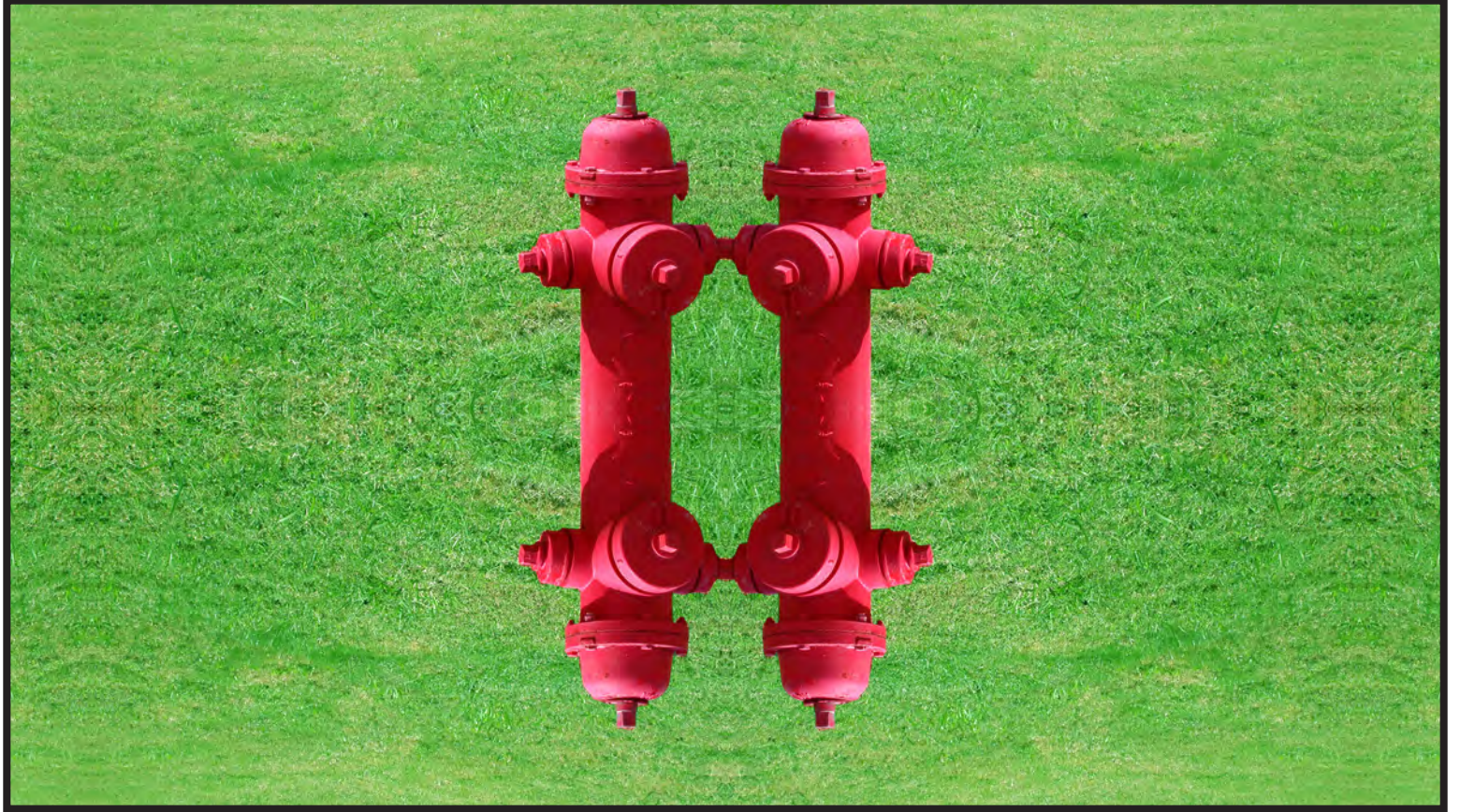
remember that night
we made love for the first time?
we lied to ourselves.

04/12/05

i hate you i hate
you i hate you i hate you!
oh, please take me back!

04/14/05

scalding hot bath in
vain to cleanse the stain, the sin,
her smell from my skin.



04/15/05

just 'cuz i don't want
to see you again doesn't
mean i won't miss you.

04/16/05

all the songs today
whispered of ex-lovers and
friends i've left behind.

04/17/05

if you put your ear
to my chest right now, you would
hear my heart breaking.

04/18/05

perfect summer day,
playing hackey sack with
yo grandma's titties.

04/19/05

here's a poem that's
so small you could hold it in
the palm of your hand.

04/21/05

sonia says, *please don't
write a haiku about me.*
i say, *well... okay.*

04/22/05

lego must've made
our bodies, baby — the way
they snap together.

04/23/05

it is never the
fall that ends up killing you,
it is the sudden...

04/25/05

americans fear
silence, and they destroy it,
like all things they fear.

04/26/05

forgot our angst long
enough to run through sprinklers
just like little kids.



04/27/05

i will not hit *play*
on my cd for fear the
plane will dive straight down.

04/28/05

don't push me 'cuz i'm
close to the edge. i'm trying
not to lose my head.

04/29/05

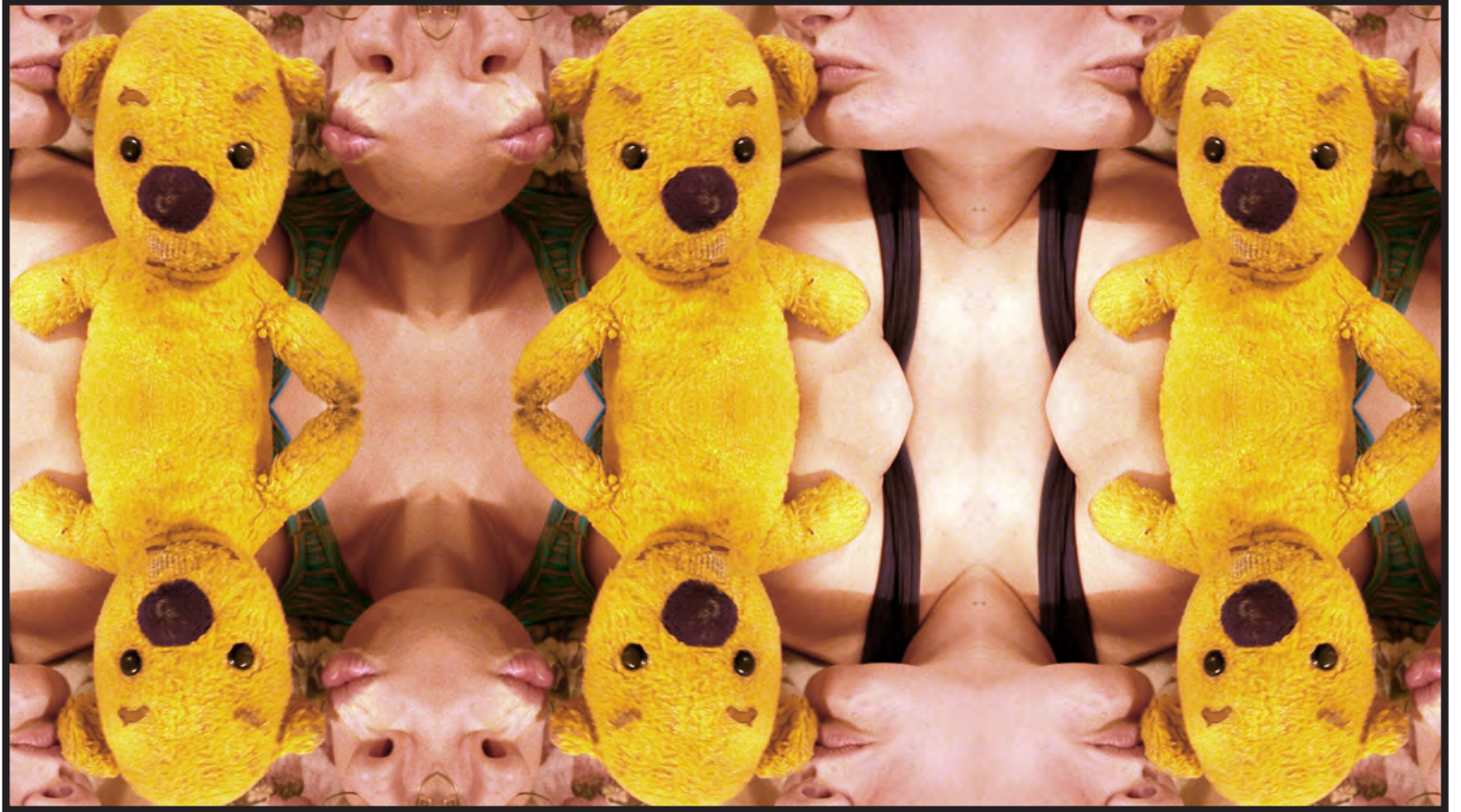
there's a hole in my
heart shaped just like her smile that
will never be filled.

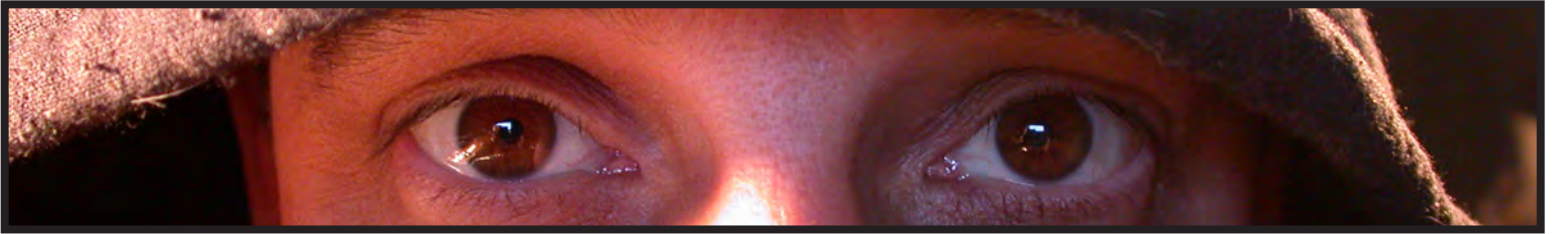
05/01/05

i was born without
a soul, only a hole where
my heart should have been.

05/03/05

poets just muddy
their shallow waters to make
them appear deeper.





big poppa e is a three-time hbo *def poetry* alum and was a member of the 1999 national poetry slam championship team from san francisco, the only undefeated team out of 48 that year. he has appeared on bet's *the way we do it*, cbs's *60 minutes*, and national public radio, plus he has been featured in numerous newspapers and magazines, including: *the new york times*, *the los angeles times*, *the chicago sun-times*, *the london daily news*, *the ottawa citizen*, *the sydney morning herald*, *utne reader*, and *bust magazine*. bpe has appeared at every national poetry slam since 1998, either as a member of a team or as a volunteer host or bout manager, and he plans on continuing to do so as long as there are national poetry slams. he is a staff member of the poetry slam cross-training camp organized by poetry slam, inc. his official title is *activities director*, which means if there's an after-hours cypher or a really brutal game of scrabble going on, he's probably right there in the middle of it. bpe has performed as a member of five different poetry slam teams as of this writing: san francisco, ca ('98 and '99); chico, ca ('00); austin, tx ('02); and san antonio, tx ('04). although he is pretty much retired from team competition, he reserves the right to change his mind and dive back into it just to show the whippersnappers what's what. although he has never won the head-to-head haiku championship at the national poetry slam, he has come in second twice, which is more than most people can say because you have to bring, like, 40 haiku to win the dang thing, so getting second is almost like winning, only not really. whatever. he's not bitter or anything. fuckers. big poppa e has toured all over the country performing his poetry for crowds in cafes, colleges, art spaces, dive bars, and bookstores since 2000, and he can safely say he's spent more time on the back of a greyhound than most people will or should in their entire lives. he currently calls austin, tx, his home, where he lives with his two tuxedo cats aretha and thelonious. he finished this book on 01.01.08 at 9:30 p.m. while listening to iron and wine on his computer speakers. i love you.