



the void's song.

you had fallen asleep, i recall.



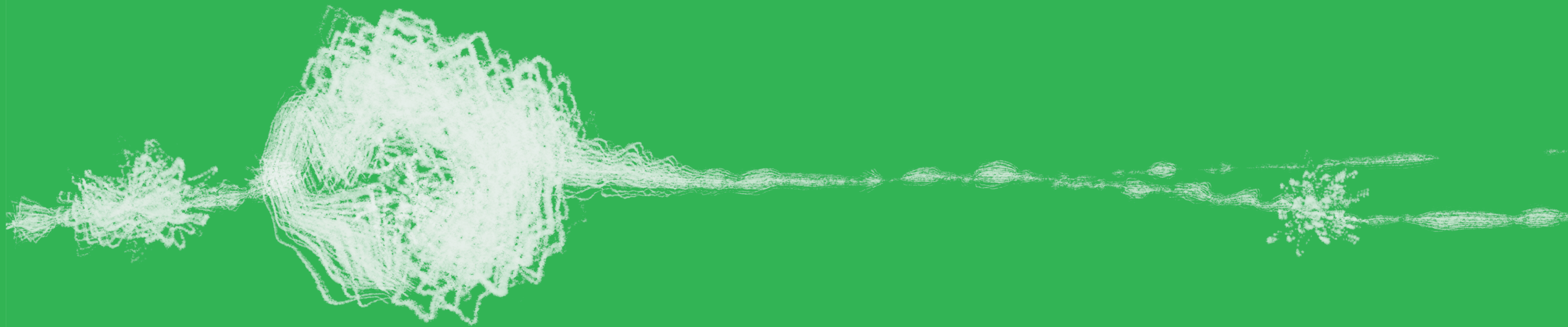


i had run out of words again,
words that were not mine to run
out of, i look upon you in a sleep
so deep,

it makes me pray for comfort,



for I am the void and I cannot offer it,



i am light years away looking for ways to unfurl a mouth that is sewn shut.





the humans, they make so many noises and
call them threaded sounds, but i like to
listen, and i've been learning,

this is how humans say,



i hope you're safe in my arms

this is how they say,





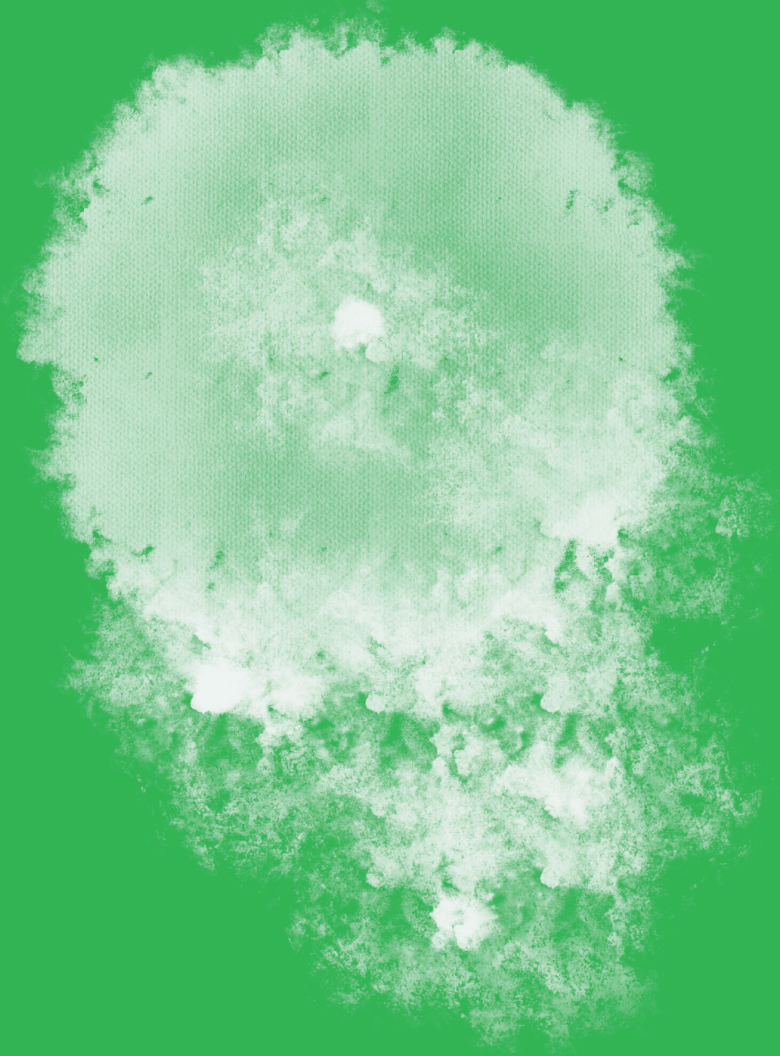
i pray for miracles i don't deserve

so i wander and wander
and hear the humans out

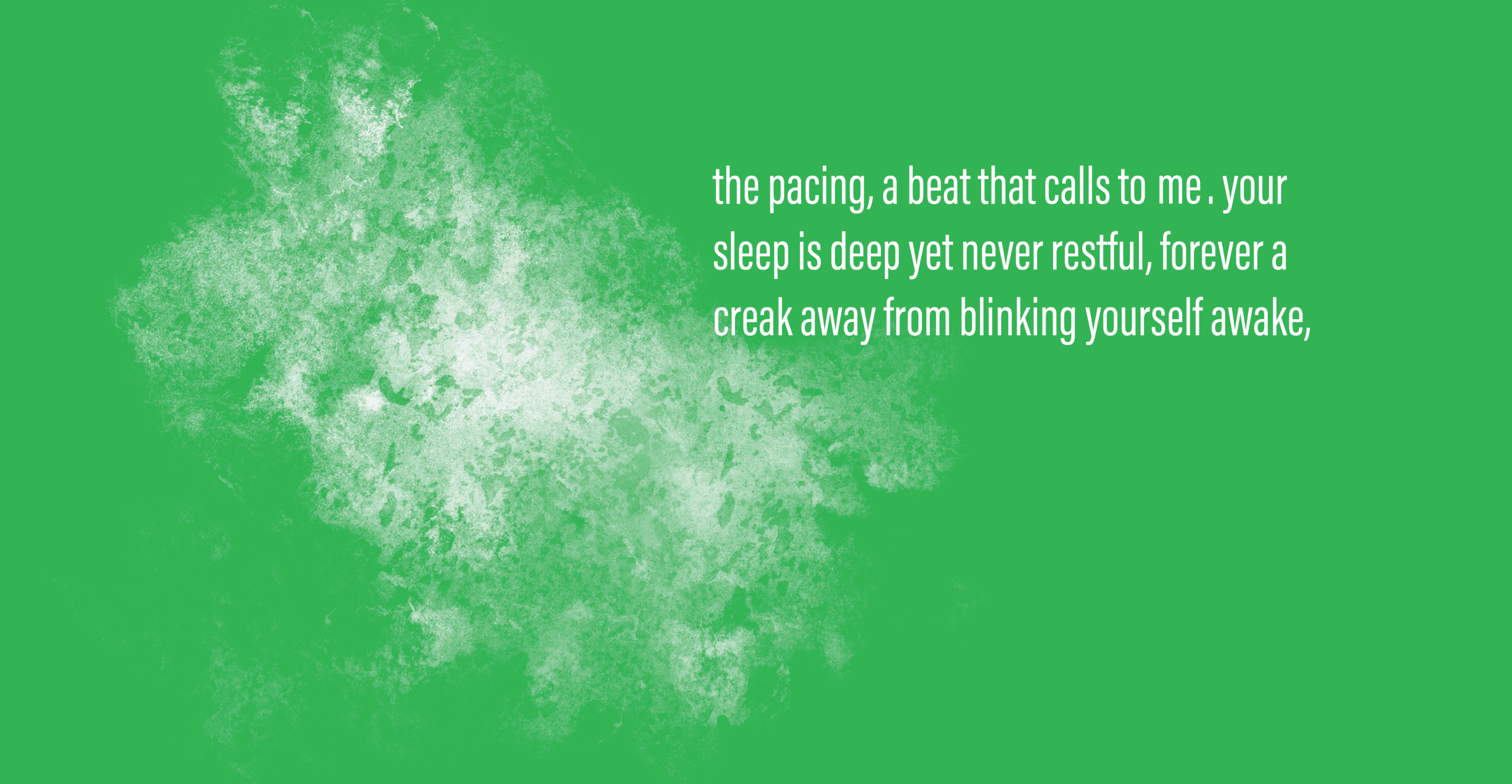


as they fall apart.

I only return when one of you are
burrowing holes in your floors,



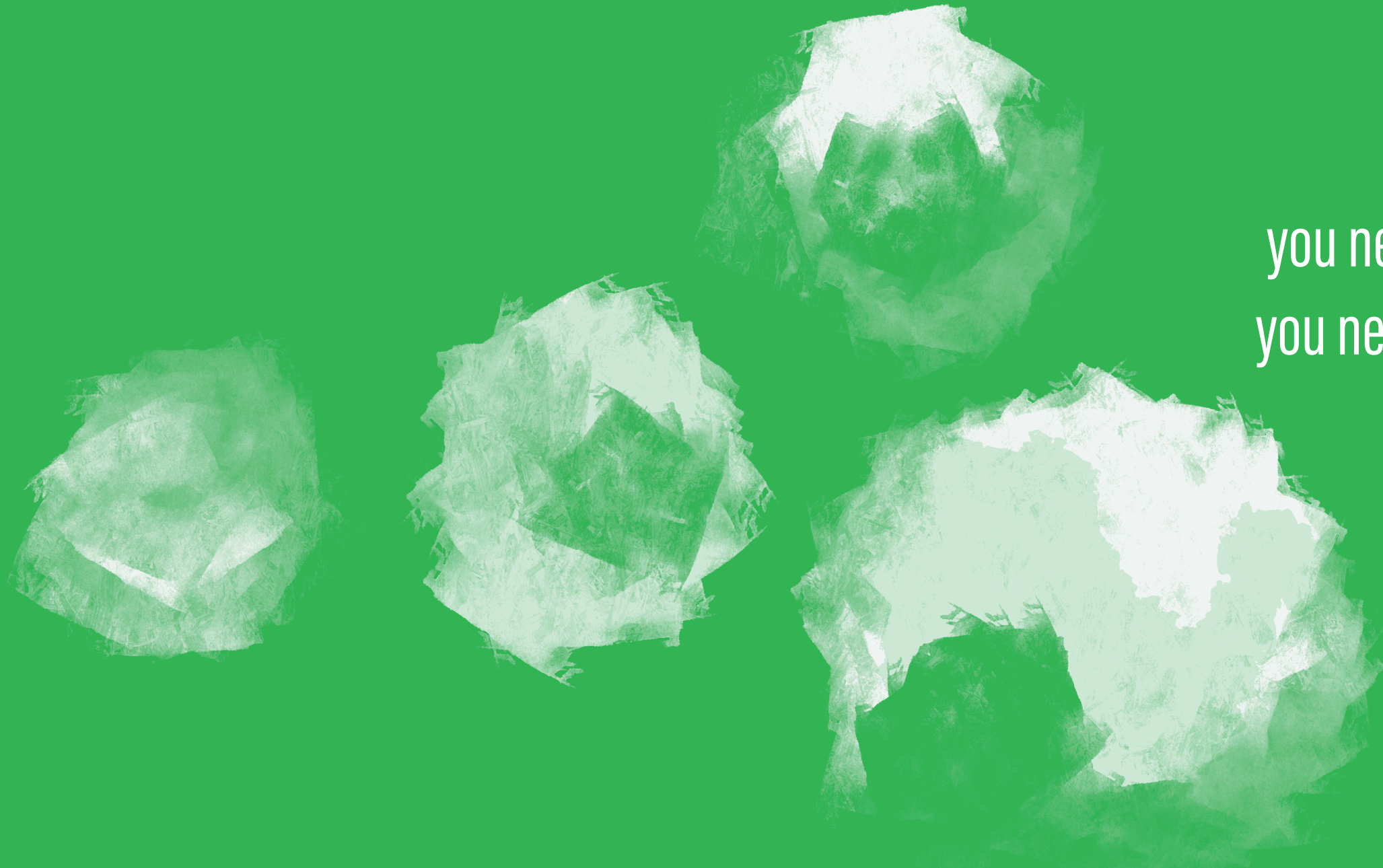




the pacing, a beat that calls to me . your
sleep is deep yet never restful, forever a
creak away from blinking yourself awake,

my brown girls,

you never call for help when
you need it, so i must always
be on my way to you.



i am the void,

a millenia ago, i belonged to the soil and to the earth and for a
human tongue i am unutterable, the void is so unutterable, what a
tragedy to always be unspoken.

when the humans grew enough to think, they realized how lonely they were, how they missed feeling like they were lines in a tragedy with a healing ending, not one that breaks your heart,



they built their mountains of brick, and their stones of
sound, and then felt even more alone, so they built
lines in the air that can reach out to each other, and
when they did, they never reached out at all.

it was only then that i found you again,

my children, the lost ones, the infants of the diaspora.





my brown girls run away from towns, and leave places that run them to
the ground, end up floating in rivers they cant map.



i am the void,

and you find me in song, in your little funny
boxes, you find me and i tell you in words that
are not mine that you are worthy of the ground
opening and swallowing you whole, not to
consume but to root.




my brown girls,



we are both in a perpetual state of transition, moving across the
planes with no welcome and no home to call our own.



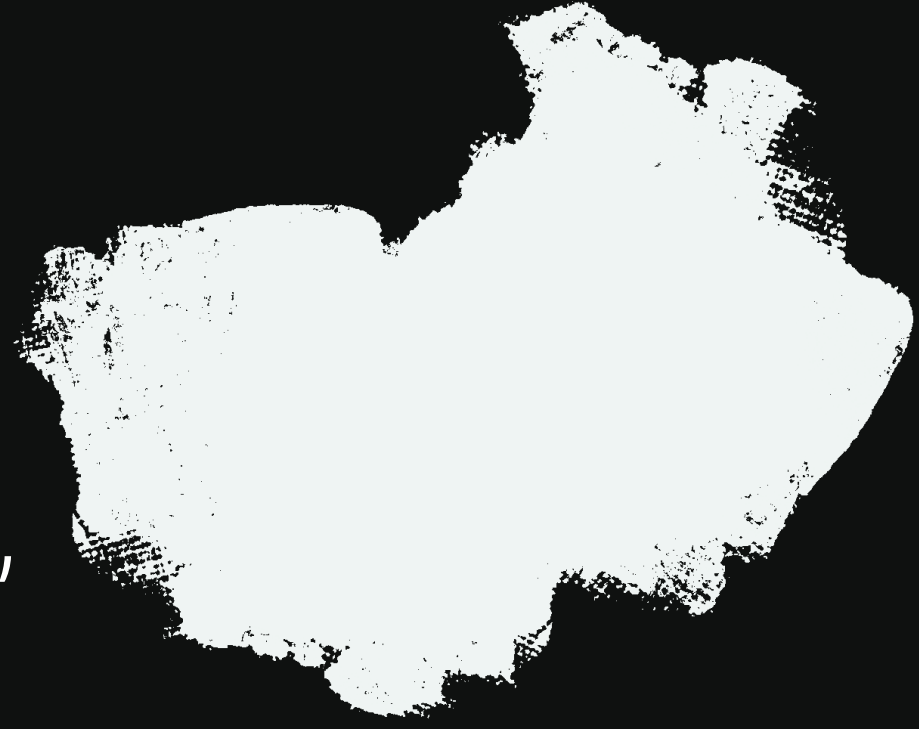


i've been using these lines, the ones that the
humans made, to deliver my heart to you in
song, at the end of a heartbeat, as if
coincidence, as if chance, as if the universe
gathered to unravel words into tune
and call it revelation.



my brown girls, i hope you've been listening.

to my darling void,



did you find it?



what you were looking for?



did you find the space you've been looking to carve
between the end and the beginning of these sentences?



me neither.

I've been thinking lately of how to let you know that
emptiness tastes like a craving you can't pin down



but who better knows emptiness than the void herself,

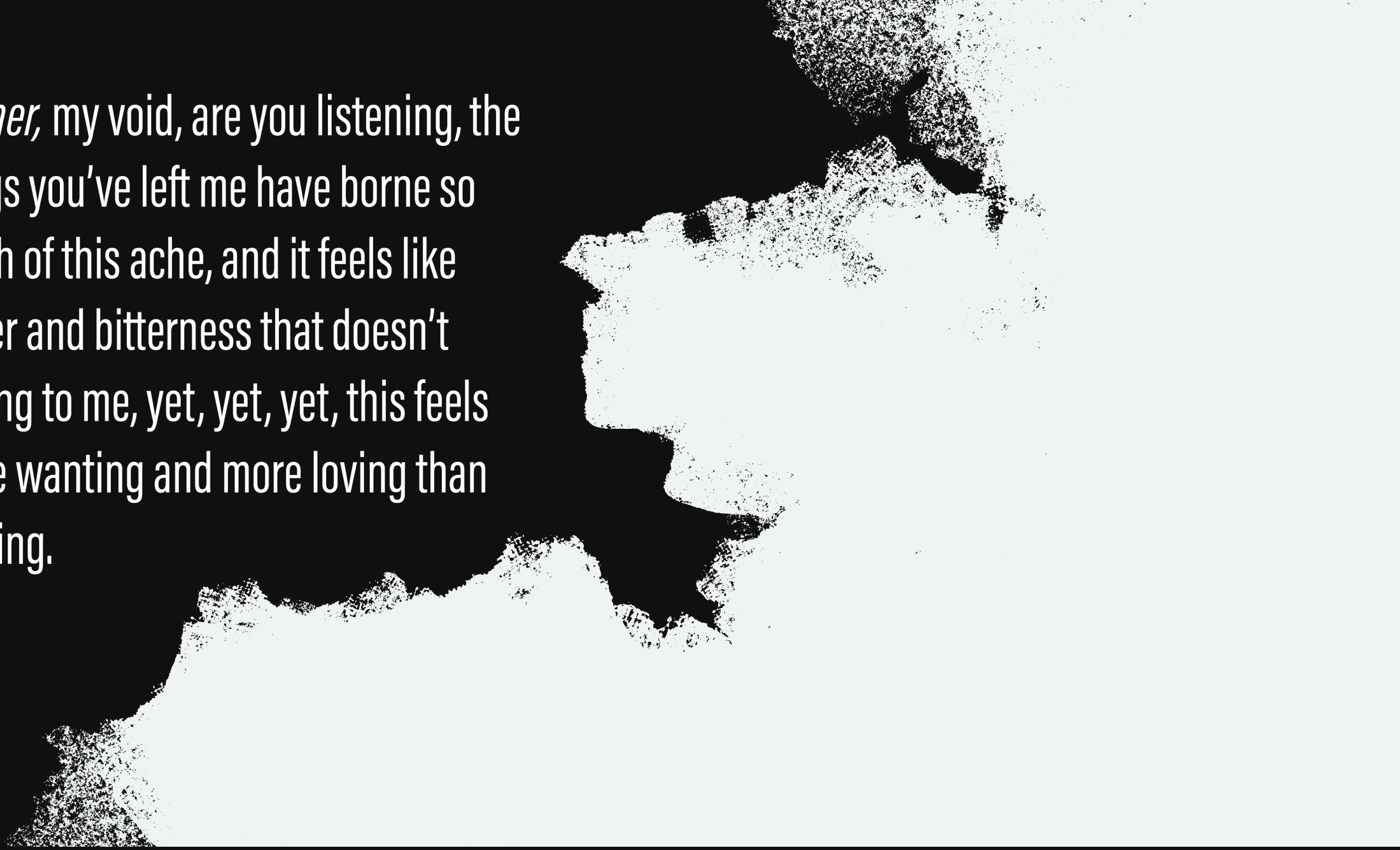
I've been silent for so long only now do I know how to tell you my heart in song,
in the diaspora, I have found you, aching and lonely, reaching and listening, I
have been answering in words and melody made by ones more able than me, to
prepare myself for the hold being lost has on me.



to my darling void,

you send the songs and I listen to them and in return i send you some too, my dearest void,
have you been listening? to all of this calling? i've been reaching out for days and I don't
know if I can keep going. I've been finding myself in corners, and cans, and the last stop in
the subway and no one has noticed that I haven't been back in days, i worry that for all that i
am human, i am unseen, i worry that home is a language I've forgotten how to speak, or that
there is no good left in me to speak it,

mother, my void, are you listening, the
songs you've left me have borne so
much of this ache, and it feels like
anger and bitterness that doesn't
belong to me, yet, yet, yet, this feels
more wanting and more loving than
holding.

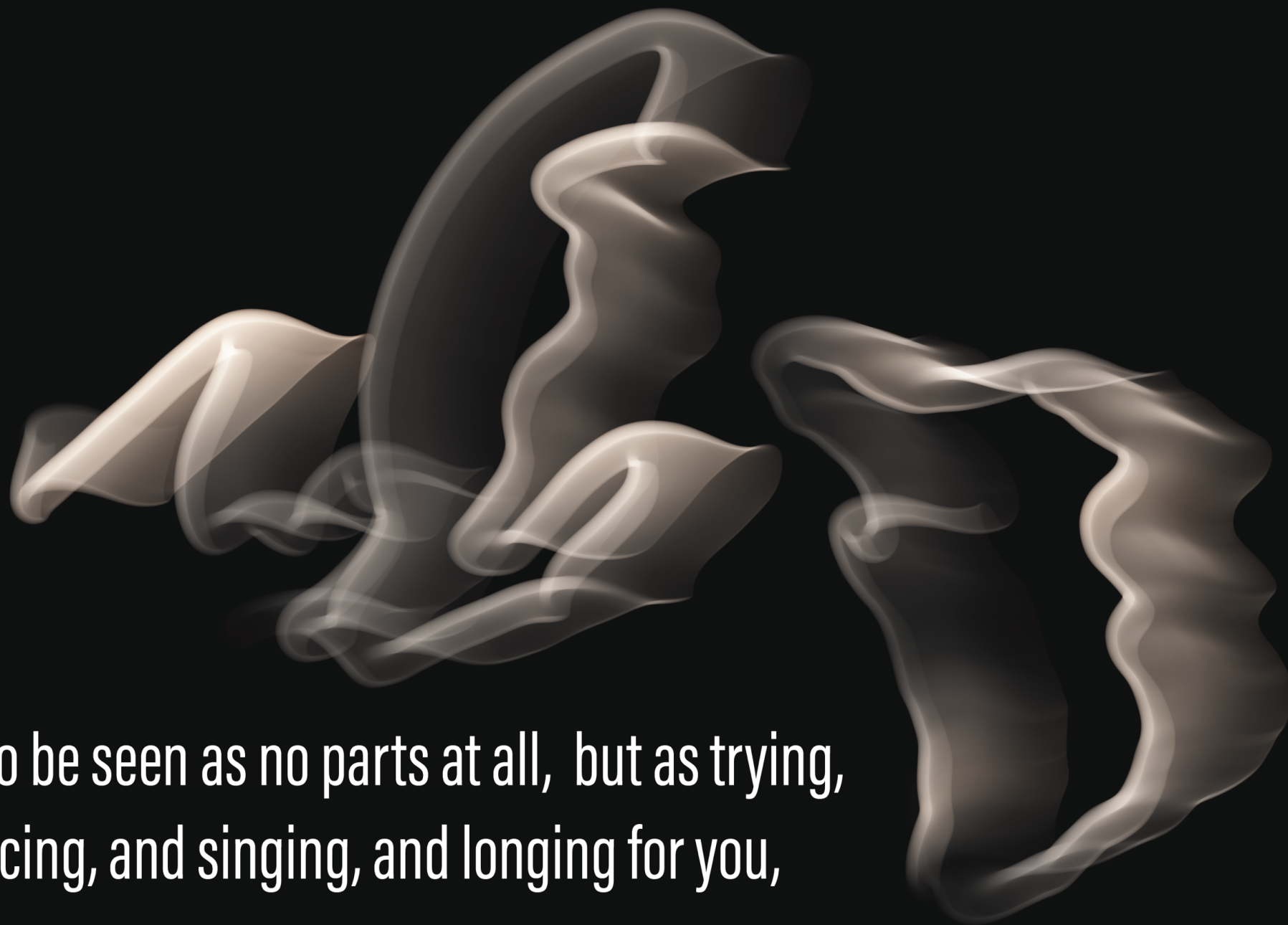




to my dearest void,

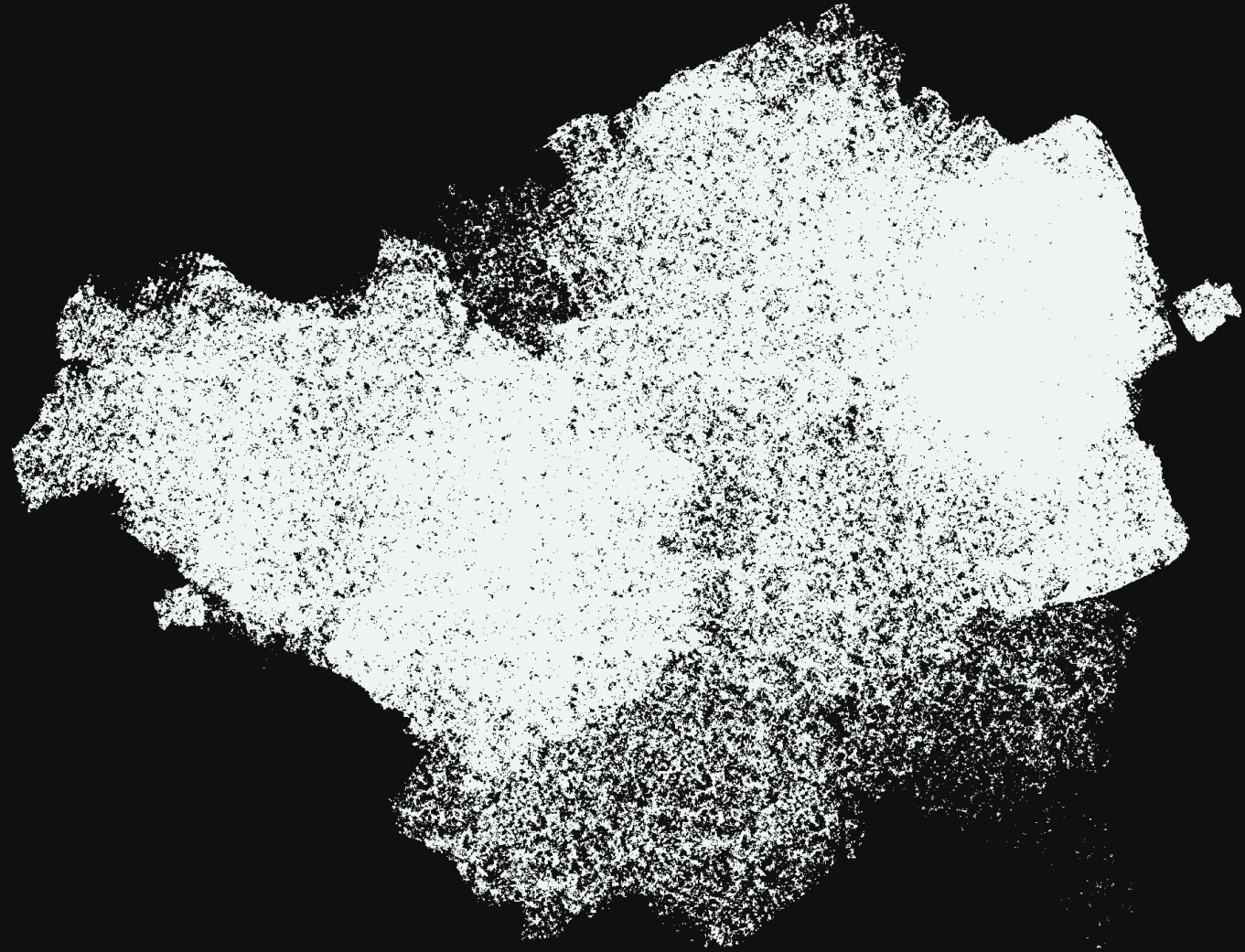
we are the brown girls,

i've been finding you at the end of a story on a
screen that was never supposed to be a story at
all and i am filled with longing to be seen for
more than the sum of my parts,



maybe to be seen as no parts at all, but as trying,
and dancing, and singing, and longing for you,





repeating these words, again, again, and
again, the words you can't say, the ones you
can't utter, i'll say them for you, i promise,
i'll sing them for you.



A zine by Yasmeen Nematt Alla

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to the brown girls—may the void's song always find you