



Vent a dome, invent a habitat
for tubeworm, sea-stout, eelpout
waltzing, 700 degrees in love.
They must know their origin
is hydrothermal swirling,
that fate is motion-of-life
agitating to occupy the world.



If we said of starfish they are flying
or of scenery it was lying—
well, there seemed to be a bridge,
romantic territory for we discouraged
at reality; Amazonian ferns instead of eyes,
cuttlefish crawling off the paper in surprise.
We feel so good about everything we collect.
Our intentions seemed so accurately felt.

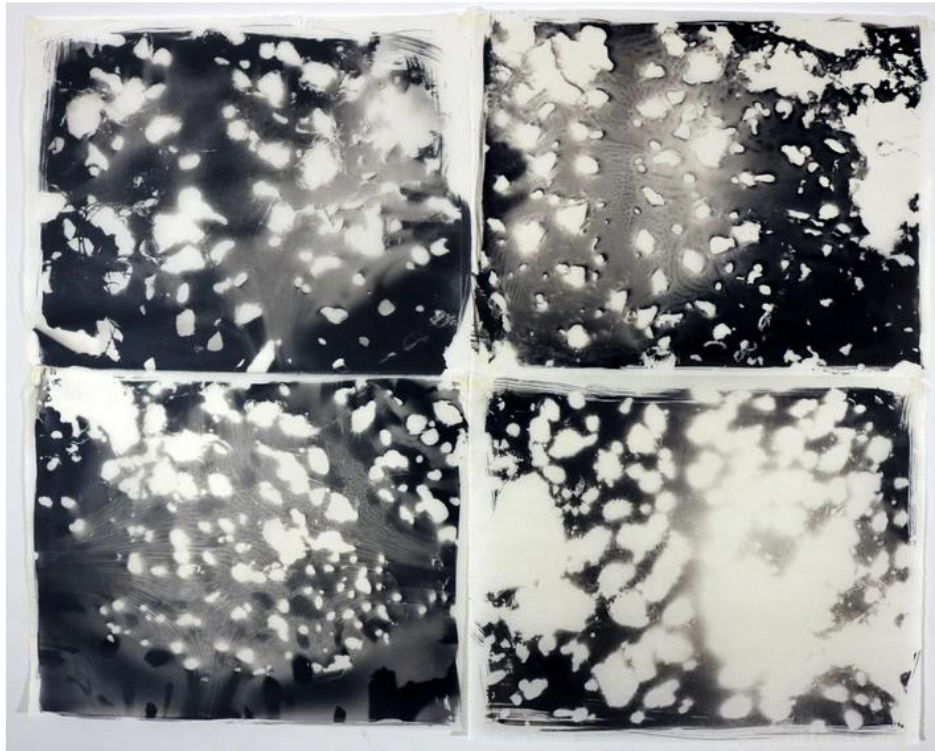


When we fall extinct
we revive ourselves,
sun-printing eyes,
fishing around
nomadic for a while.

Sea-scent freestyles
off the page, and tides
serenade our shapes.
We hold our iridescence dear;
find us crawling in our tears.



Obscenely felt but sweet
we fell into a fever with boas
gnawing at our shoulders,
drunk and seeing double.
Eyes tumble off our faces.
We scribble and scratch
our disappearances in pencil.



In the chasm of the cosmos—
(less a body than a mind)
we knew to feather up to fly
when we were young and blurry.
Yet we measure in millions
some maneuvering | beyond time
we telescope the traveling light.



My vagabonding ruminations
streaked with orange feeling
reveal the wilderness in my eyes
and burn my throat.

I knows that this is graceful work—
to Thumbelina into being—
blood-dark and disembodied still.
I'll grow the parts I need to fill.



I redecorated my heart
months before light
yielded images.

When I unfolded you,
a mineral pool of calcium,
phosphorus, and avant-garde
shapes spilled onto paper,
scenes to give exposure to.

You are the inverse
image of photographs
that ultrasounds make.



Abstract and irregular
are scribbles we tangle into
first. We recognize the loop
of fractals and organic lines
that trace the wayfaring—
chaos in the hands like fireflies.

What surprises are first tattoos,
coherent before the years cohere,
before we sweat the skills to illustrate
the locomotion of our minds.



Forehead full of holes,
sequins press into print
lies; we see not straight
but off-camera; our eyes
the disfiguring view;
so, freaks, snap a reflection,
know for a minute
being human is a wish—
to spy on, long for, weep
so long we lose our faces—
never but a swirl.



I scribbled my surprise
into tornadoes, penciled love
into a cairn, and left.

Below my madness
birds airlift the burn
of tattoos I carry,
snakeskin dries off,
formulas offer calculations,
offspring of magic.



Q left to experience
the messiness of love
at great disruption to the system.
Each bee broke free—
the hive became cnidarian—

Lava-the-honey
swarmed the sea-fruit.
Q married the clownfish.
When she stung her own wrist
bees clotted her wound with honey.



We must be so bitter
without wishes
not to send the seeds
of the dandelion's rosette
parachuting, and keep it intact.

More startling yet
we bloom peonies on our skin,
dispense their scent;
hold exoskeletons of insects near,
carry serpents on our backs.



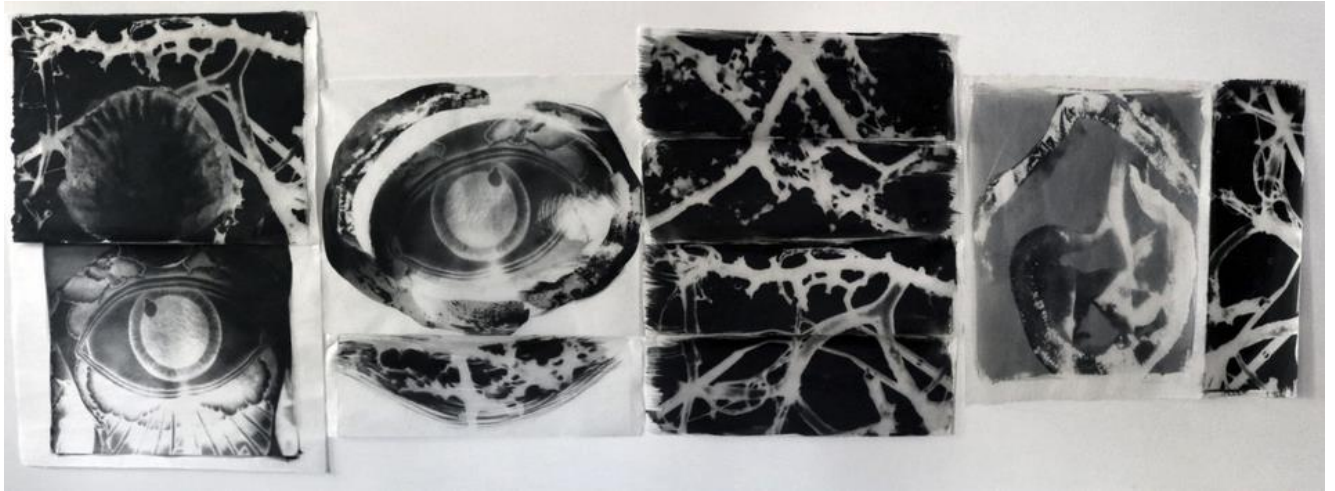
Her thin, reticulated spine
resembles mine,
dendritic and arthritic.
(All is but a husk of life!)

Hexagons, lines, light—
motion-camouflaged
in attack but iridescent
like me, more lift than drag,
tessellated as if to reinforce
her short life exploring.



Spinning up the blades,
I ignite the air and fuel
my seaplane, whirring
over a still black lake.

In its reflection
my propellers rotate
until pink auroras
join us and we float.



I fixed my eyes so long
on one thing only
they cut my eyes out.
But what did seeing give me?

I wonder what Kepler
learned from Alhazen.
My eye balances on a shell.
You took my corneas
to make sculptures out of me.

Alice Garik is a Brooklyn-based artist whose work have been collected by The Brooklyn Museum, The New York Public Library, and the Polaroid collection. Garik studied intuitive painting with Philip Guston, which led to experiments in long-exposure photography and collaging images of bodies over time. Her new work depicts species depletion from climate change. She melds enlarged camera-free negatives of partial exoskeletons of flowers, seaweed, insects, and snakeskin, and collages or layers them on tattooed bodies, which serve as archives that carry flora and fauna longer than their own lives permit. Garik prints these collages with palladium on handmade Japanese Gampi paper. The translucency of Gampi, made from a wild plant, highlights fragility; with pearlescent paint, she draw low-relief mythological life into these shapes. Garik has exhibited at The New York Historical Society, The Berlin Collectiv, Floresta Magazine, The Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition, “Oc.cu.pied”, Naturatis, EcoArtSpace, and AzureArtsNyc. Her work has been supported by residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the School of Visual Arts.

Diane Mehta was born in Frankfurt and grew up in Bombay and New Jersey. She is the author of the essay collection *Happier Far* (UGA Press, 2025) and two poetry books: *Tiny Extravaganzas* (Arrowsmith Press, 2023) and *Forest with Castanets* (Four Way Books, 2019). She has written for The New Yorker, Virginia Quarterly Review, Kenyon Review, A Public Space, and The Southern Review. Her writing has been supported by the Café Royal Cultural Foundation and fellowships at Civitella Ranieri, Yaddo, and the Virginia Center for the Arts. She was an editor at A Public Space, PEN America, and Guernica. She was a judge for the 2024 Arrowsmith-Derek Walcott Poetry Prize and for the 2025 Silvers-Dudley prizes for literary criticism, arts writing, and journalism. She is collaborating with musicians to invent new ways to work through sound together and she is poet in residence at the New Chamber Ballet in New York City.