



WRITTEN BY

Asher Danziger

ILLUSTRATED BY

Matthijs Jansen.

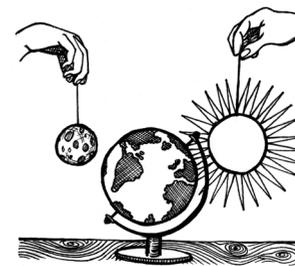
# It's Tuesday

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Hippopotamus Hypothesize Hypotenuse	9
II	...and Another Salmon...	35
III	Tuesday	47
IV	You're How the World Is Feeling	57
V	Paddle, Paddle, Paddle, Paddle,	79
VI	It Was Tuesday Again	137
VII	So Full of Wonder	153
VIII	Today I Woke Up to Today	163
IX	Marathon Moon Man	175
X	It Was a Storm of a Goodbye	183
XI	Remember to Remember to Forget	225

Dawn turns to noon.  
Noon turns to dusk.  
Dusk turns to moon.  
Moon turns to dawn.

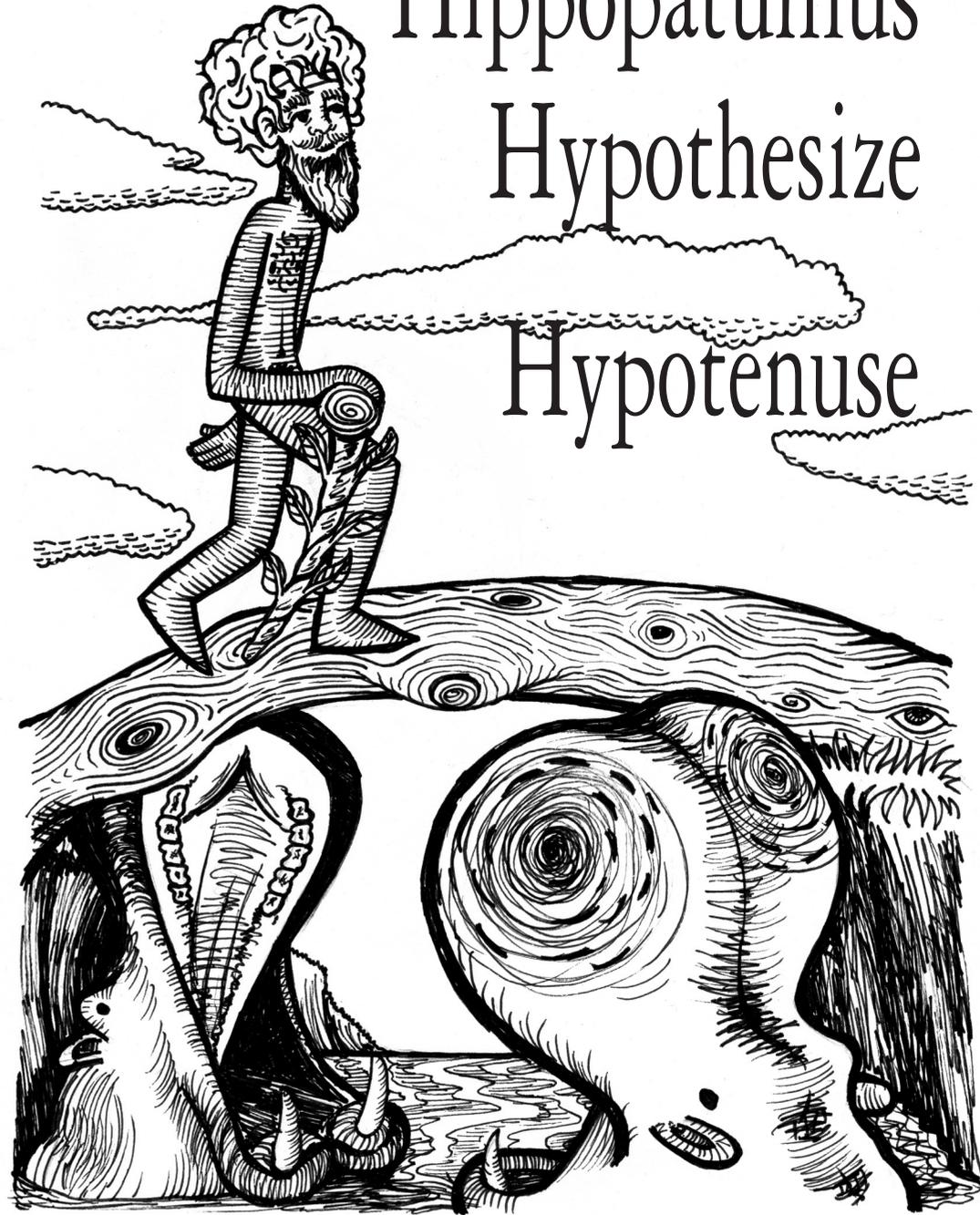
Dawn turns to noon.  
Noon turns to dusk.  
Dusk turns to moon.  
Moon turns to dawn.

Dawn turns to noon.  
Noon turns to dusk.  
Dusk turns to moon.  
Moon turns to dawn.



CHAPTER ONE:

# Hippopatumus Hypothesize Hypotenuse



“So my brother, what do you think?” Lauralie Potamus said to her brother Ry while looking at the old man clutching a willow walking stick and taking a step onto the tree that stretched across their river.

“Well, he must be blind,” said Ry Potamus, “and judging by the angle and the fact that this tree is sixteen inches from the water, he will fall right here.” Ry Potamus swam seven feet from the bank nearest the old man and raised his mouth to the sky, imitating the alligators.

“Well my dear brother, I think you’ve misjudged the situation. You haven’t taken his tailwind into account. He’s definitely going to fall forward.” And Lauralie Potamus swam seven feet from the far bank and imitated her brother imitating the alligators.

From the river’s eyes, one would see the shape of a triangle that arranged the three. But the river didn’t seem to notice or care about the old man or the two hippos, it just continued to flow as rivers do.

It is within this flow that Ry and Lauralie felt themselves wait. The old man stood still, with one leg on the log, as the wind blew beneath his earlobes and the sun permeated his pores. Then suddenly, unannounced, he transferred all his weight onto the tree-resting leg and rose up, imitating the flamingo. After feeling each ridge in the bark beneath, and each tree ring that that bark hid, he allowed his left leg to come down and partake in the interaction.

Again he stood still. The hippos mirrored him. Neither Lauralie nor Ry’s head moved, their large teeth and tongues remaining within a millimeter of where they had first appeared. However, under the surface they paddled like hell, fighting both wind and current for their placement.

It was not as if the river was raging, but rather all was silent. The old man wasn’t really looking, but knew his image was mirrored on its surface. This wasn’t new to the old man. He’d spent hours, sometimes even days, exploring the shallow depths of puddles. He could feel the hippos beneath, as clearly as one notices the wrinkles on their fingers after time well spent inside the wet. “Prune,” he remembered, and then forgot.

The old man caressed the fallen tree with the willow branch he carried. Taking many breaths between each step, he slowly passed over Ry without glancing. Ry looked up, disappointment overtaking excitement on his face, but he did not move. He could not break the rules.

A smile replaced focus, and anticipation’s drool fell from the parted corners of Lauralie’s mouth. The perfect droplet’s ripples were quickly quieted by the river’s rushing.

The old man stood at the center of the log, squatting and rising with the rhythms his lungs made. He felt the maple’s center point, stood upright and, still stationary, listened.

He heard the thrush call and the man saw, the wind blow and the otter row. He heard the cricket sing and the ant sting, and

the droplet of spittle ting on the surface of the water before being rushed away.

He then leaned forward, hands first, and caught the trunk, before letting his limbs fall over the sides of the tree that his head now rested on. He closed his lids and ignored all of his senses but one, allowing himself to fully feel the vibrations run through the tree's core. He felt the steady flow of water, the heat of the sun, the rush of the wind, and the watery footsteps of old friends. He let the heat take him to dreams.



“Was it long ago or just yesterday, five minutes from now, or somehow, some way, that day that seems separate from other days? It seems so close but I don’t know where I’ve kept it, so far away, stretched past my toes, or up above my hairs. What’s left to do but become the leaf, wake up from my simple sleep, and float!”

Ry and Lauralie waited patiently, churning the water until it felt like cream, then butter, then cement, until their bodies sank them to the river’s bottom and they walked it to the banks with their heads hung low.

The old man lay there until the fresh morning light kissed his body, whispering

*“Wake up, Wake up, Wake up,  
A new days just begun.  
It’s rising with the sun.  
It’s time for everyone,  
To be loved.”*

The man awoke, smiled at his indulgence, and then let himself fall into the river, where he backstroked from bank to bank before getting out where he began and continuing on.

horse's tale in front of him, touching the tall brush that stood on either side of the walking path he couldn't remember ever walking before.

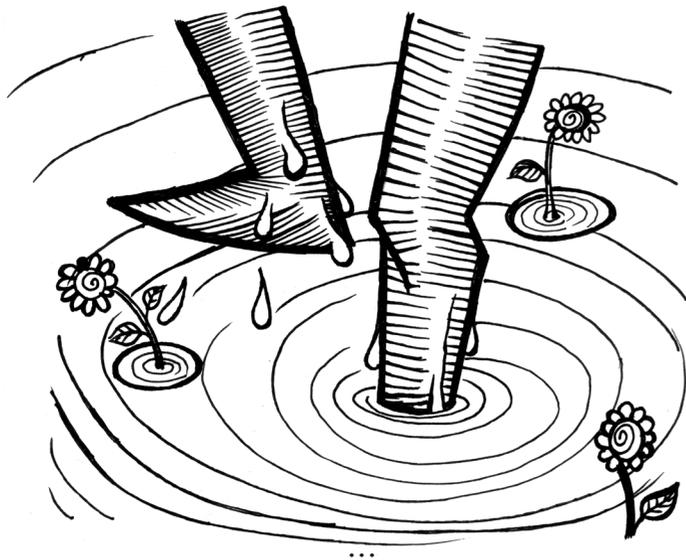
*Whht, Whht*  
*Step,*  
*Whht,*  
*Step,*  
*Whht,*  
*Step, Step*

*Whht, Whht*  
*Step,*  
*Whht,*  
*Step,*  
*Whht,*  
*Step, Step*

*Whht, Whht*  
*Step,*  
*Whht,*  
*Step,*  
*Whht,*  
*Step, Step*

Sun and shade entered his eyes through leaves he heard rattle in the wind as variations of red and blue.

*Whht, Whht*



The old man continued on, his willow stick swishing like a

Step,  
Whht,  
Step,  
Whht,  
Step, Step

The coyotes howled signalling the grand shift, and the air, or sky, or world, became dark and cool.

Whht, Whht  
Step,  
Whht,  
Step,  
Whht,  
Step, Step

The dewdrops touched his feet and brought another new day with them. The terrain changed from rocky, to wet, to soft, from up sloped, to down sloped, to steady.

*A day happens  
A day happens  
A day happens  
And then a moment comes and changes it all.*

He heard the single droplet of water hit the already full leaf before he heard the snuffle that accompanied it.

“Why do you cry?” The old man asked the woods.



“I’m not crying,” said the voice of a girl now standing and scraping her back on bark.

“Come out from beneath that oak tree then, and help show an old man where to rest.”

“How can you tell that this is an oak? How do you know I’m under a tree at all? I can see that you’re blind.”

“You’re perceptive, that’s good,” the old man said, while feeling the movement in the grass as the girl approached. “Your shirt snagged as you stood, I can always hear a good snag.”

The girl stared unabashedly at the old man, her mouth was crooked and her eyebrows scrunched. “Nobody ever told you your face would stay stuck like that?”

Astonishment led to an attempt at fixing the face she knew she wore. “They have,” she said. “But, how do you know?”

“Well they’re not wrong.” The old man said, “Now stop straining your eyes, your face will do the rest.” She did and felt a smile on her lips as she appreciated the moment.

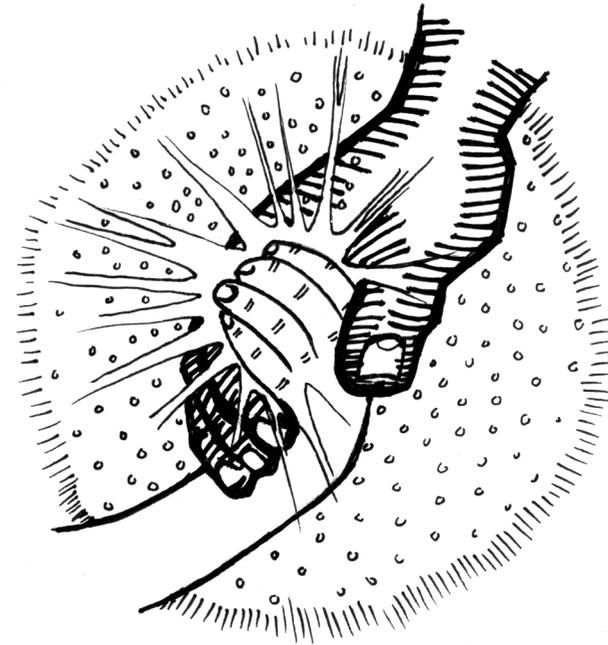
“Eyes that don’t strain don’t tire. Eyes that don’t tire don’t tighten necks. A loose neck leaves a calm back. A calm back makes free feet. Free feet keep eyes from straining.” The old man said those words as much to himself as to the girl, and they both stood straighter.

“Should I take your hand?” The girl asked.

“You may.”

“But do I need to?”

“No, but you may.” And she did.



“Are all blind people like you?” That question had been working its way from her eyes, to her nose, to her fingers, and then to her baby toes, ever since she had first seen him walk through her woods. It had finally found her mouth and could no longer be contained.

Old Man: “I should think that they’re not and probably that they are.”

Girl: “Where should I take you to rest, my house?”

Old Man: “Not now, I think I just need a good place to sit. Do

you know of any?"

Girl: "I did, but today it's a sad place."

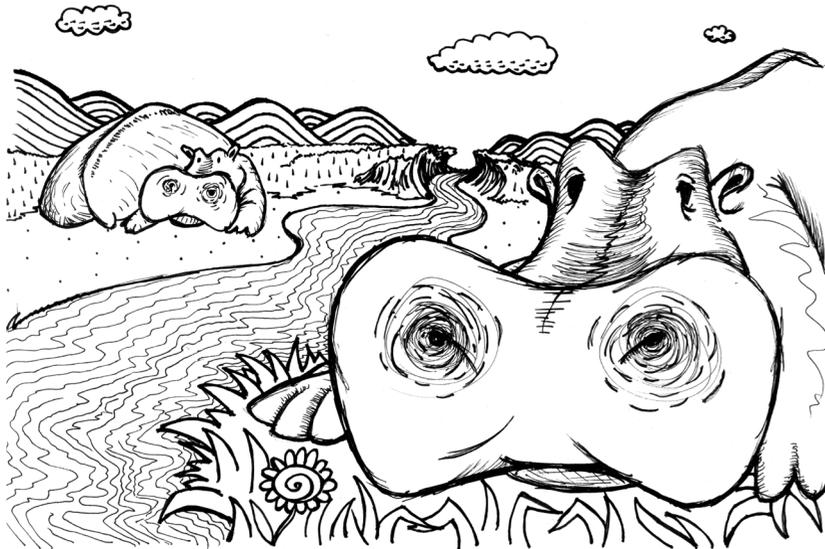
Old Man: "Would you still take me there, a place must be beautiful to be so sad."

Girl: "It is, but I can't."

Old Man: "Well, would you tell me how to find it, a place that makes you feel so much, I would very much like to feel."

Girl: "I will walk with you until I can't, until it's too sad and the tears start falling down my face again." The girl spoke these last words softly to the old man, not wanting to let go of the hand she held.

...



Lauralie and Ry Potamus lay in the mud of the opposing riverbanks for two days, too tired to swat at flies or talk of anything more than heat. They kept their muzzles near the water's edge and lapped, hoping to rejuvenate.

Finally, as the dew of the third day sprouted on the tails of the two siblings, their ears flickered with life for the first time in a long time.

The twitch ran down their necks, through their rumps, past their knees, and asked their legs to stand.

Both hippopotamuses stood at once and followed their noses to the river where they met in the center, nuzzled, and danced, expressing love in the way only they knew how.

With both brother and sister satisfied with their greeting, they started paddling together, towards their family that they knew would be upstream. Their feet were dragging through water in unison, while toes stretched happy to be used.

Dawn turned to moon.

Moon turned to dusk.

When Lauralie and Ry came around the bend and found their family mourning, like only their family mourns. Big heads rested on little tails, encircling the sorrow of one who was loved, but was no longer. Hippo tears ran off hippo tails and raised the water, which rushed around the island where they all lie.

Grief hung in the humidity, as the two approached, fearing what they'd find. As they continued to tread water, poems began to form inside both Ry and Lauralie, since they were hippopotamuses, and hippopotamuses think in poems.

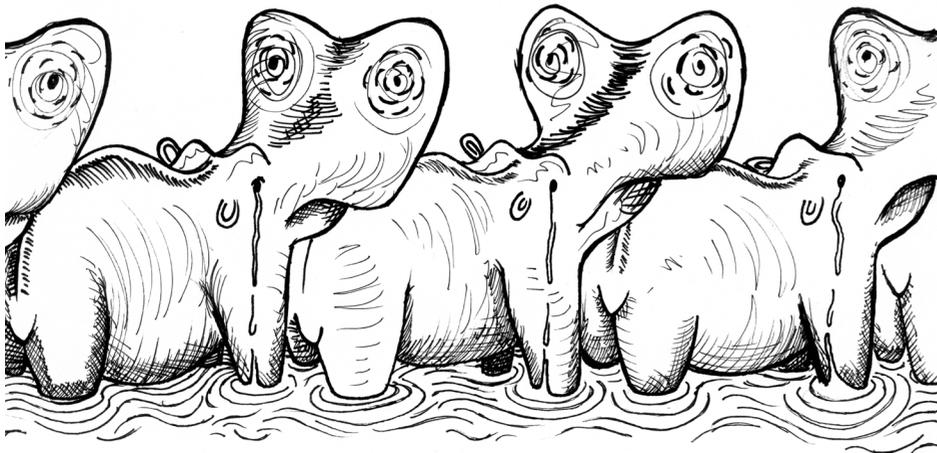
Ry thought:

*We've come around the bend to another end,  
We've come around the bend to another end,  
We've come around the bend to another end,  
And though it isn't my end, I feel it.*

Luralie thought:

*Who are you that I won't see,  
Who are you that I won't see,  
Who are you that I won't see,  
Oh, I can't breathe.*

They squashed the mud of the island, again in unison.  
They groaned together, harmonizing the sadness of the scene.



As they reached the circle it broke and reformed to include them. Lauralie's tail slid beneath her father Silver's head, while Ry's head lay upon his mother Dalia's tail. As hippo head found hippo tail, their poems pushed through skin, joining and melding with each other's, until all eleven silent voices were heard together. The moment was described through every eye.

All together thought:

*Breath that isn't, is breath that was.  
Once and will be are no different.  
There's just that we're here and you're not.  
You don't know we think of you,  
But you knew that we would think of you.*

*You are gone, gone, gone, gone, gone, gone, gone my friend.  
You have gone, gone, gone, gone, gone on to begin again.*

*We feel you sink further into the mud.  
We see the new rivulets form from your love,  
And the seeds of the oak ride the new streams,  
Wherever it is you will take them.  
Wherever it is they dream.  
You don't know where that will be, but we will soon.*

*You are gone, gone, gone, gone, gone, gone, gone my friend.  
You have gone, gone, gone, gone, gone, on to begin again.*

*Thank you for all you were, are, and will be.  
We'll remember you until we aren't,*

*And we'll be remembered until they aren't,*

*And so on  
And so on*

The water level rose faster.

...



The old man and the girl had walked for hours. She asked, he answered, and the sun sank in the sky.

She had expected herself to turn back one hundred times by now, but at each point that they passed that she thought would be the endpoint, she found it sadder to let go of this hand than she did to carry on. The sun had almost set when she stopped.

“So this is it,” the girl said. “It’s just over this hill.”

“Thank you for taking me here,” the man responded, and relaxed his grip, but the girl did not let go.

“Why do we die?” she asked, a tear appearing in the corner of her eye.

“We live,” the old man said, catching the salty droplet in his palms.

“Why do the ones we love die?” she asked, while another tear fell.

“They also live,” the old man said, and the pool of water in his palms grew.

“What is death like?”

“Nothing living knows and nothing dead can answer.”

“I know that, but what happens?”

“For the one that dies I really could not know. For those who still live, nothing changes dramatically. The days continue to be days, the rain still falls, and the sun still shines. The dead may still be thought of, their words still remembered, even the seeds that grow from them may be seen. But this day won’t be all that different from the day before or after.”

The old man breathed deeply, he hadn’t asked his lungs to work so hard in quite a long time.

“Oh.”

“Does that help you?” the old man asked.

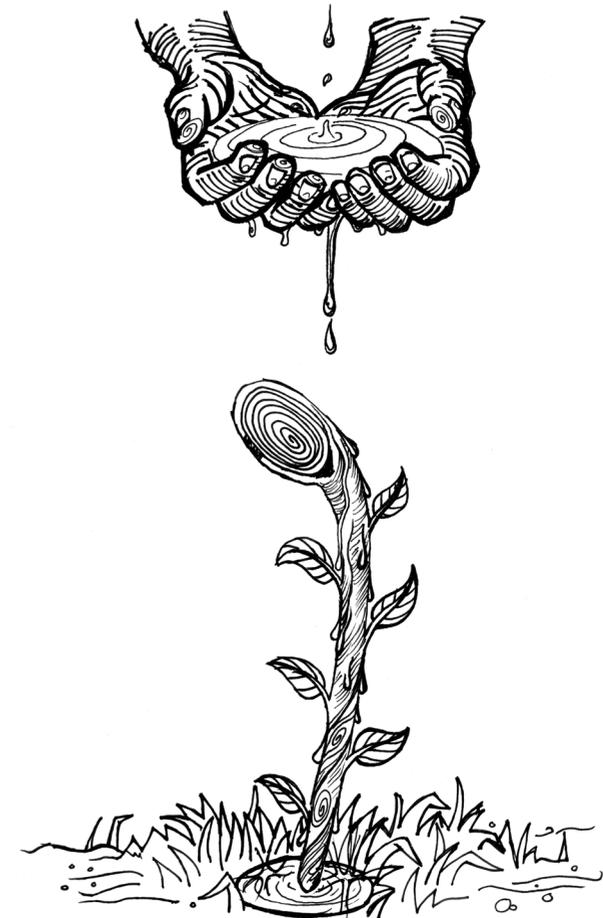
“I’m not sure.”

“My dear friend, will you tell me what has happened that has caused so many tears?” and the spluttering began. Words that escaped the tears fell fragmented into the old man’s ears.

“She was my friend...  
Maya... white with black  
spots and a pink...  
held her when she was first...  
the river by my house...  
in the light of today...  
under a tree... She  
drank... It bit....  
she sank.... I ran...  
you heard me.”

His hands could not contain this amount of water, so he let the tears of the child fall through the cracks of his fingers, and then pushed his willow walking stick into the wet soil.

“This willow will grow, long after you will. And while you are here, you will have a place to remember,” and the old man began to move toward the dike. The girl could not find it within herself to unclasp, so instead she moved with him into her sadness.



“You are brave,” the old man said.

“No, I’m sad,” said the girl, “and I don’t want to be any sadder.”

The old man smiled and pushed all his energy into the palm that touched her palm, and whispered “Embrace the poetry of your existence. The tears are as significant as the smiles.”

And she led him to the tree, under which she had watched her friend, Maya the Cow, get eaten by an alligator earlier.

“Thank you for taking me here,” the old man’s whisper continued, while the girl’s head rested in his armpit.

“You’re welcome, even though I don’t know why you wanted to come,” she replied not moving.

“I wanted to find whatever I found.”

“And what was that?”

“It’s hard to say.”

The girl stared at the shape on the island in the middle of the river. She knew it had been Maya.

The old man felt the breath of the girl change as she looked and heard the family of oaks talking of the event with the wind. They shook their leaves to speak and dropped their acorns for punctuation, telling each other a story that made

their bark peel.

And then, through the earth, the old man felt a tremble he knew but did not expect.

“Look downstream,” the old man said to his young friend.

She rearranged her head in his armpit and asked. “What are they doing?”

“They loved her too.”

She watched and he listened as nine hippopotamuses swam up to the island and encircled it, before slowly climbing the slope. At a single moment they all fell to the ground, just so, so that heads fell to rest on tails.

The girl watched and the man felt the breath of the moment. It came through the trees and the rising and falling backs of the hippos, and left as a crackled whisper through the girl’s gapped teeth.

“Oh.”

And the old man sung the girl a song as sun turned to moon.

*Oh won’t you grow  
Oh won’t you grow  
Sow your seeds in my bare bones  
Oh won’t you grow.*



*I don't want to live forever.  
I don't want to live forever.*

*I want to die with my face towards the sky,  
Flowers and life growing out of my eyes.  
And the tears that fall, from the friends that I leave,  
They're wetting the soil and sprouting a tree.*

*I don't want to live forever.  
I don't want to live forever.*

Dawn turns to noon.  
Noon turns to dusk.  
Dusk turns to moon.  
Moon turns to dawn.

Dawn turns to noon.  
Noon turns to dusk.  
Dusk turns to moon.  
Moon turns to dawn.

Dawn turns to noon.  
Noon turns to dusk.  
Dusk turns to moon.  
Moon turns to dawn.

