

Apricots Before the Sky

When a matter of sky and birds, becomes a matter of some other things...

# Apricots Before the Sky

Elçin Marasli



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*Thanks to my roomie, Kelly, for not having apricots before.  
Thanks to Istanbul, New York, and all the other cities for being such...*

Perhaps,

a book by Elçin Marasli.



...Or some apricots and skyscrapers.





I wonder how fingers can actually be fingers when they have never felt the thin and fuzzy skin of an apricot? I wonder how a mouth can fully become a mouth when it has never licked the silky sweet juice out? You can find many skyscrapers in this world of today, but never the apricots.







I AM am disturbed.  
DISTURBED.

I am disturbed. I wait; I waited and am waiting. No matter how high, skyscrapers remind me of falling. No matter how fast I blink, it is the same vision I get, it doesn't go away, it doesn't change, and the same sky is being scraped again. Light, dark, open, close, I blink: the same.

**CLOSE:**

open:

dark:

I blink: the same: **LIGHT:**

the same.



I BLINK:

the same.



The same sky is being scraped again.

**OPEN:**

On the top floor of a skyscraper, I am lying flat, my spine feeling the cold of the marble. I am lying flat, and there is nothing to see on the same level, yet when I look down, I see many things from eighty-three floors below.



extended out in **dark:** body:



*My body physically extended out in  
this position of lying, yet my mind,  
resisting the idea.*



mi

I think, I thought a lot earlier, and am thinking for  
a second now, I wonder, is it here that I lost my *mind,*  
or may be, here that I found everything again?



/ remember.  
REMEMBER.

I remember it was a matter of birds when I was a kid. Now, when birds fly, if they can, they remind me of ships sailing away. Birds, like black dots up in the sky, or ships, like black boxes down in the water.

SHIPS:

birds:

ships:

ships:

ships:

birds:

birds:

ships:

Those ships that I was always afraid of would often have birds standing on top of their sails. That's why I thought of ships as strangers, with bad intentions, stealing birds caught in their hands, not knowing where to let them go. Yet it was always the birds moving to more birds, and ships trying to make their ways alone.



KID:

When I was a kid, I made my own ships all in color and never shadowy gray.





ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

lands:

ships:

army:

army:

birds:

birds:

ships:

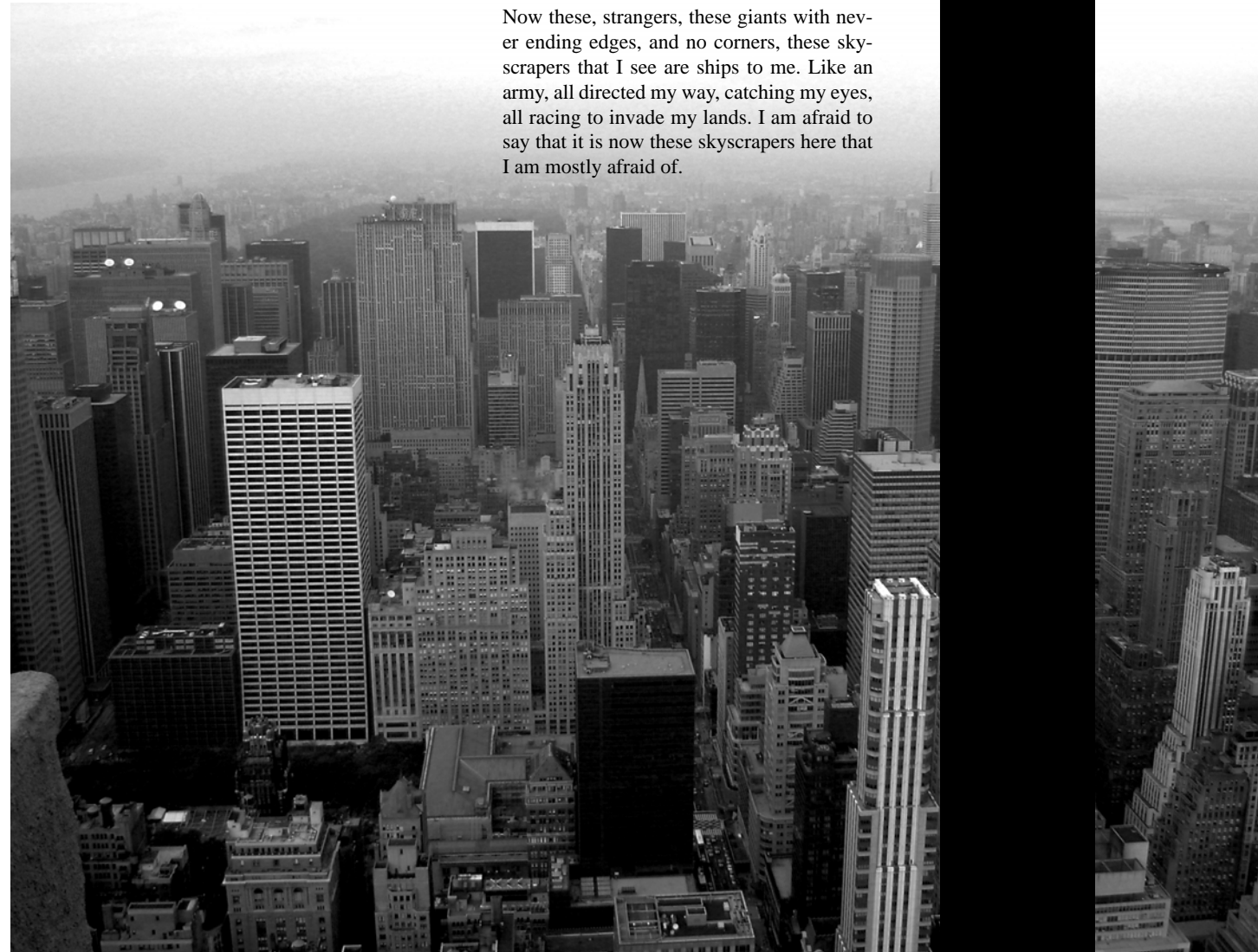
ships:

ships:

ships:

ships:

Now these, strangers, these giants with never ending edges, and no corners, these skyscrapers that I see are ships to me. Like an army, all directed my way, catching my eyes, all racing to invade my lands. I am afraid to say that it is now these skyscrapers here that I am mostly afraid of.





of



If there is only one thing that makes me feel like I am still alive, it's the cold of the marble touching my spine. I say it's a matter of birds, and the sky, again, and some other things...

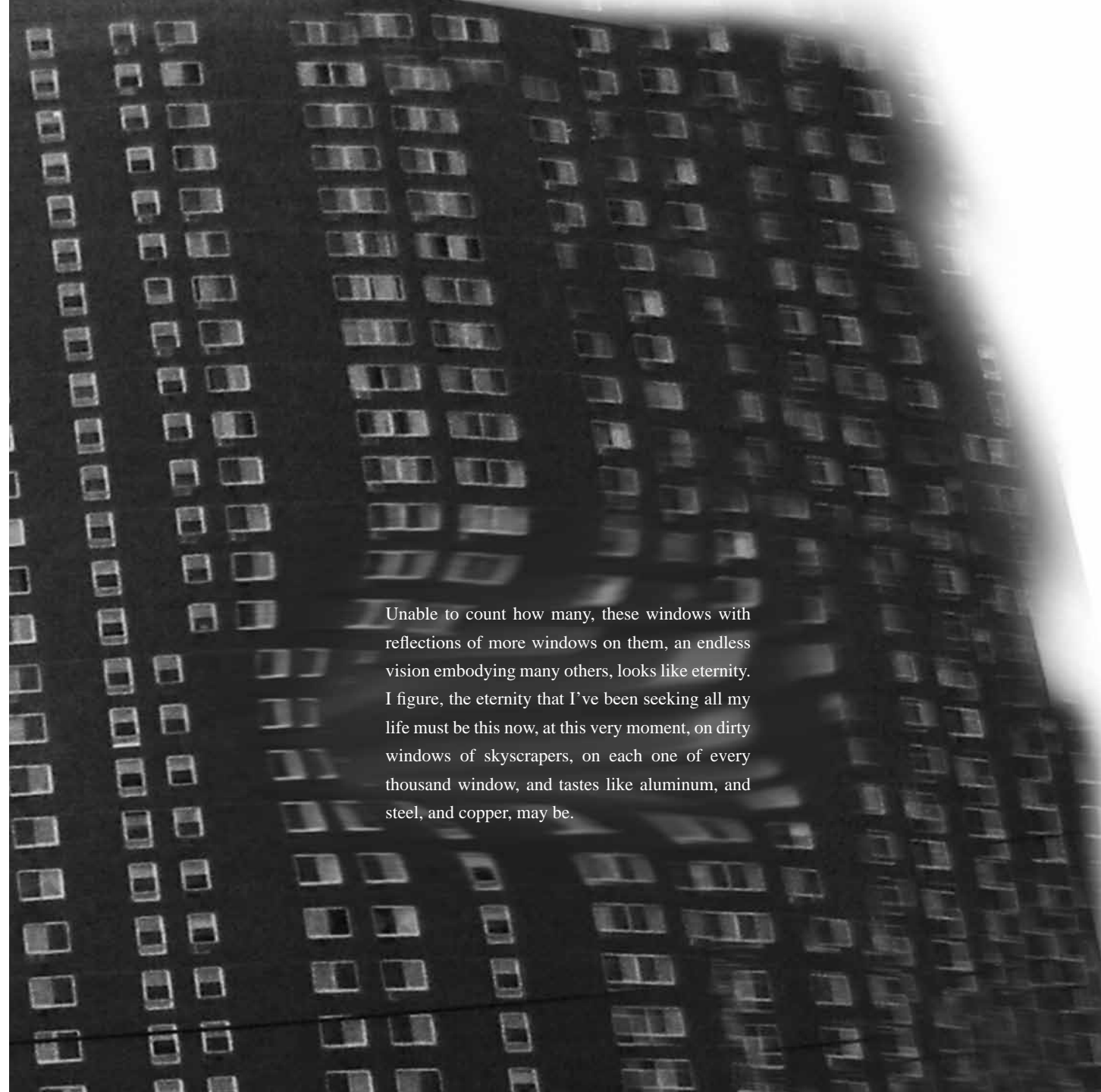


**YOU** ou know.  
KNOW.

You know when it tastes like honey; everything seems all right, no more tomorrows... Now, I get a taste of aluminum out of this day, today. This air that I breathe in, made up of walls, and walls, and shiny glass.

# ALUMINUM:

Unable to count how many, these windows with reflections of more windows on them, an endless vision embodying many others, looks like eternity. I figure, the eternity that I've been seeking all my life must be this now, at this very moment, on dirty windows of skyscrapers, on each one of every thousand window, and tastes like aluminum, and steel, and copper, may be.



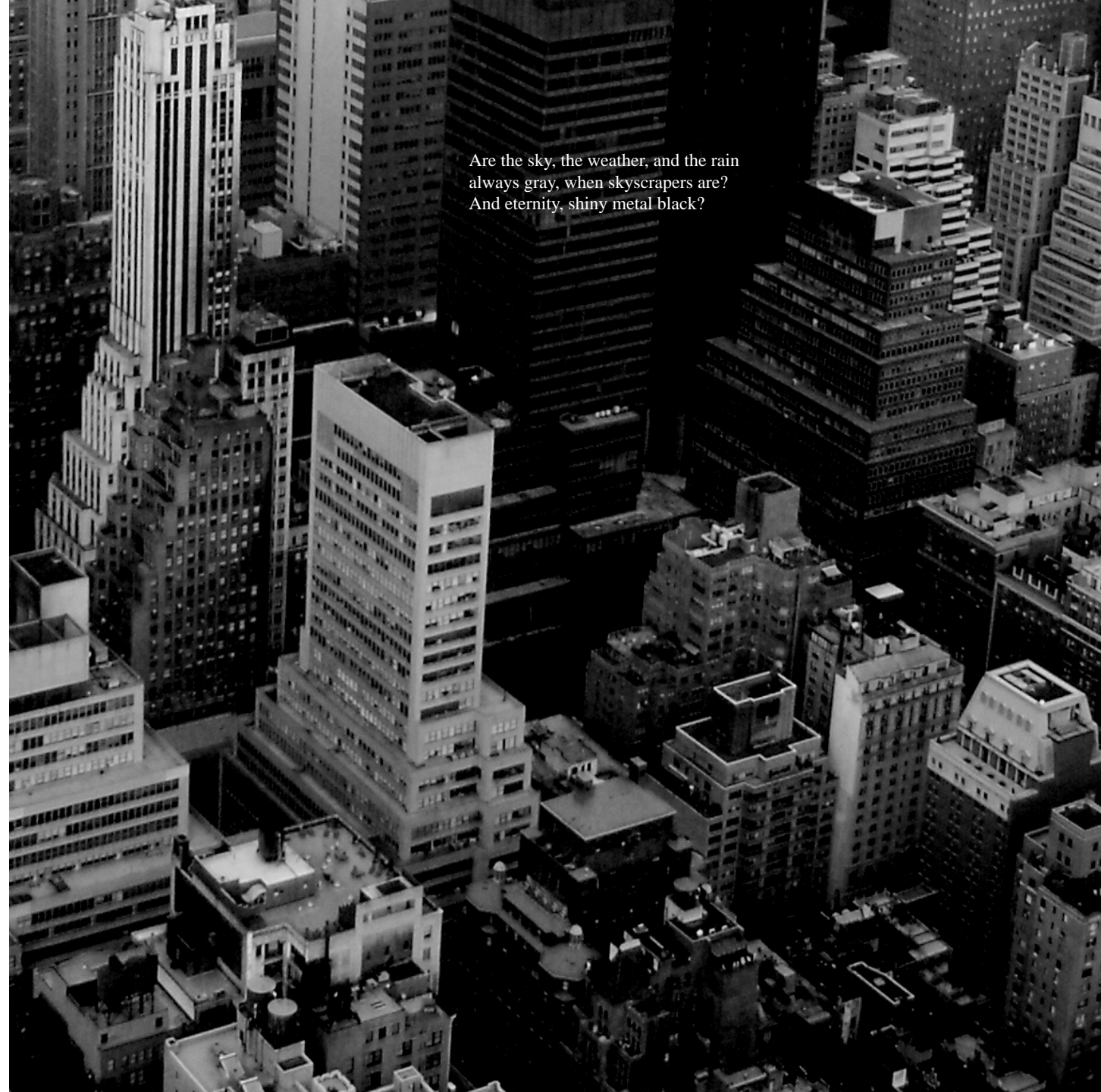


steel:  
copper:

**Eternity, for which I used to sing before,  
is an illusion now, only a reflection. That  
which I thought can only be one and  
nothing else is everywhere now; from  
across these windows it is reflected in  
my pupils that are dilated despite all the  
darkness.**

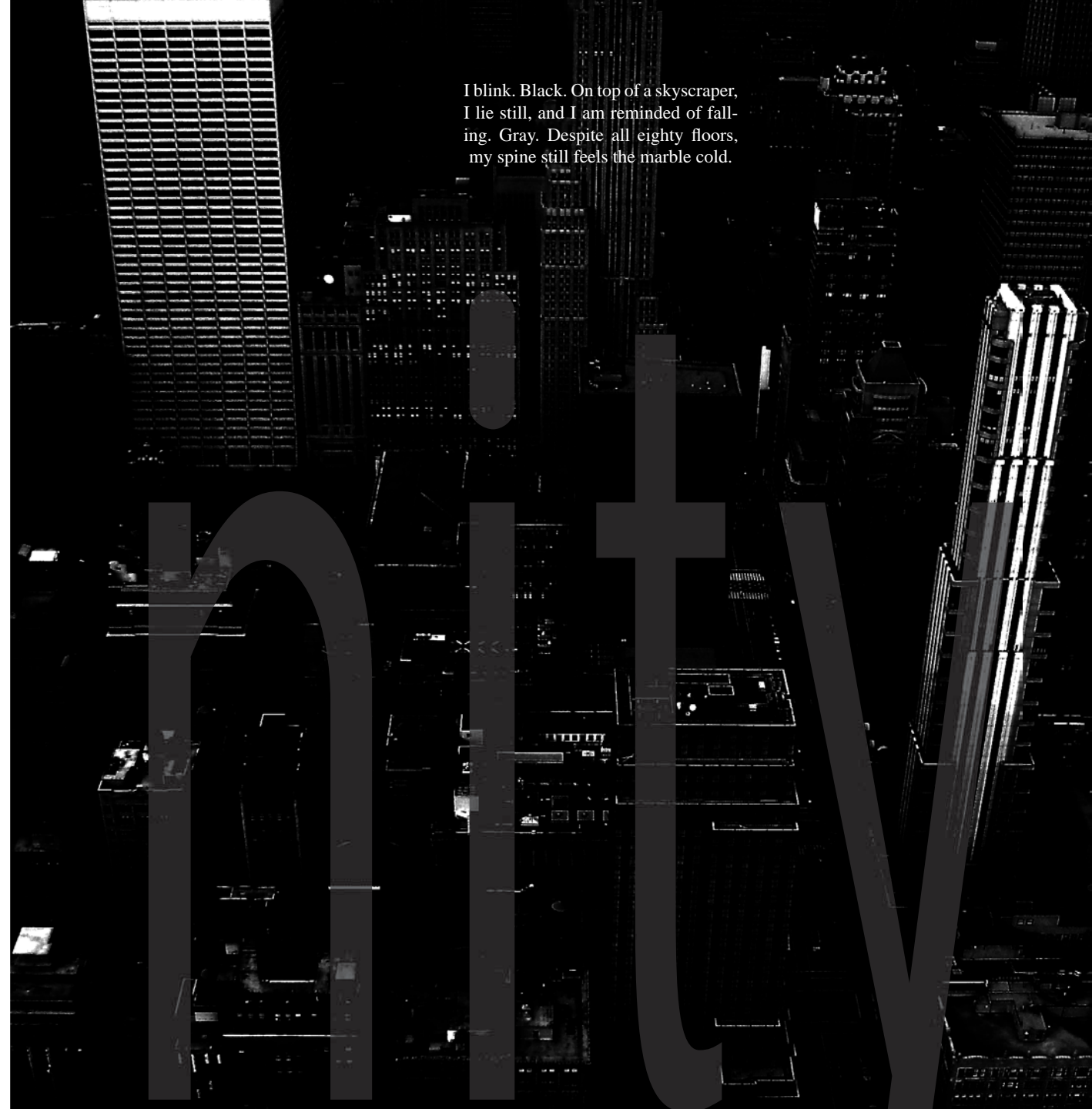
I **BLINK:**  
maybe:

Are the sky, the weather, and the rain  
always gray, when skyscrapers are?  
And eternity, shiny metal black?





atlas



I blink. Black. On top of a skyscraper,  
I lie still, and I am reminded of fall-  
ing. Gray. Despite all eighty floors,  
my spine still feels the marble cold.

city






*THE* he air cuts.  
AIR CUTS.

The air cuts through my lungs, not my hands, not my skin, but something inside my heart bleeds. I smell a memory of having to say white lies. I smell a village, a hill, some trees, many stones, a ladybug, and one door handle. I breathe in an old room, cracking floors.

SMELL:  
LOOK:



I smell voices from behind, quarreling, yet the smell of company comforting my soul. I smell fresh sheets, white sheets. They are not lied on yet. This house that is white, and pure, is brought down. I look now and see many stairs, metal ones. I look again; see metal stairs, again.

white:

I remember in my childhood climbing a white wooden ladder.



the memories: white: **WASH:**  
gray:

The sky, the weather, and the rain are always gray. Skyscrapers are too. It is this rain here, these waters that can only wet the inside of my palms, but never wash the memories away. It's like these skyscrapers standing so next to each other, so close to me, so very near, palm against palm.

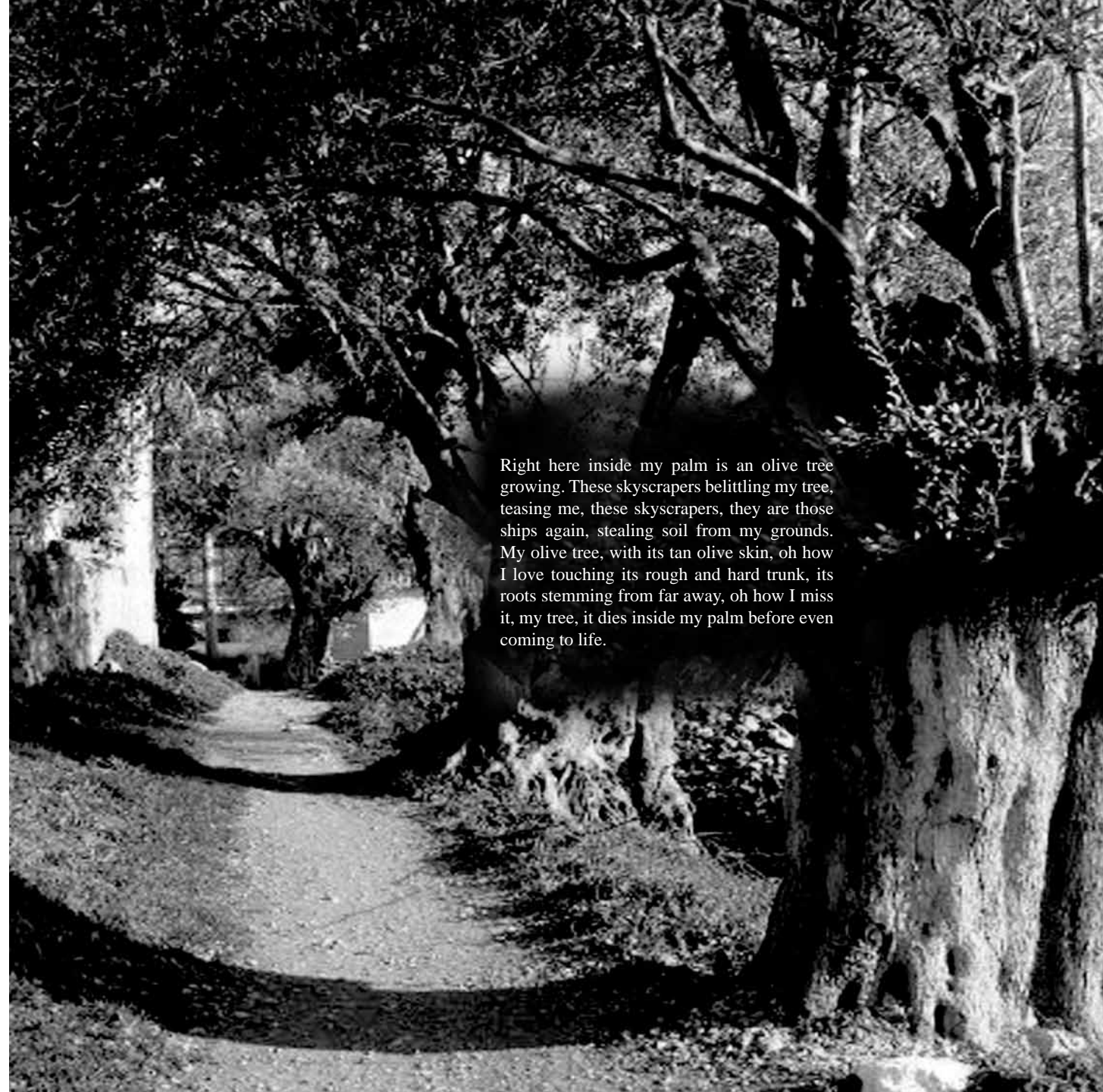




TEARS:  
LINES:

Raindrops dripping on the walls of the skyscrapers dry out before they make it to the ground. Raindrops, dripping along the lines in the palms of my hands, become tears and never dry out again.

touch: OLIVE: ROUGH:



Right here inside my palm is an olive tree growing. These skyscrapers belittling my tree, teasing me, these skyscrapers, they are those ships again, stealing soil from my grounds. My olive tree, with its tan olive skin, oh how I love touching its rough and hard trunk, its roots stemming from far away, oh how I miss it, my tree, it dies inside my palm before even coming to life.



are

This moment cannot be with these skyscrapers that are many and these trees that aren't.







I AM am waiting.  
WAITING.

I am waiting, still...the light  
trying to pass from behind the dark-  
ness of them scraping. Why do they al-  
ways scrape the sky? Through the holes  
where they rip the silky sky, black birds  
fall.

# FALLING:

I get reminded of falling, again, by a black bird. None of these birds are able to fly, they all fall from above, birds to many birds, fighting the ship-like skyscrapers.



black: ones:



EYELIDS: WINGS:

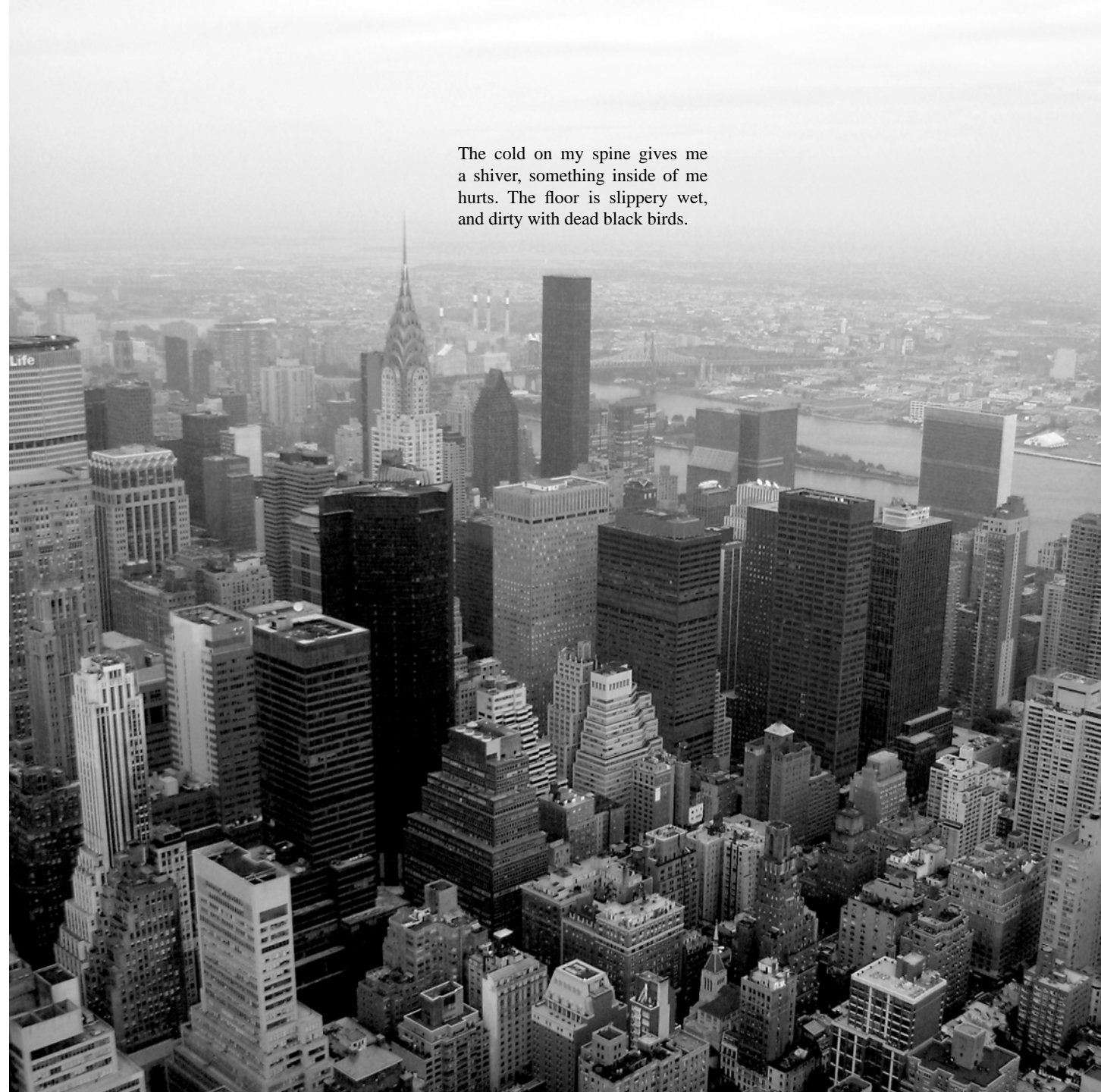
If only my tree had grown, these birds could have been singing to me. Or is it my eyelids closing to the highest peak of all the skies, and not hearing the black birds flapping their wings anymore?





dirty: dead:

The cold on my spine gives me  
a shiver, something inside of me  
hurts. The floor is slippery wet,  
and dirty with dead black birds.



jets:  
birds:  
SHIPS:

The sky is now filled with rather angry jet planes. The giant skyscrapers, which are like ships to me, are at war with the jets. They are all stealing away from me, these ships, these skyscrapers, these jets; they are running. I can't catch up with them. These jets, they are flying, running, they are killing.







No one wins, but even more black birds lose.





want.  
WANT.

I want my white ladder  
back to climb out of this black pile of  
squares, rectangles, and squares on top  
of squares, out of these skyscrapers. Yet  
I am reminded of falling, deeper down.

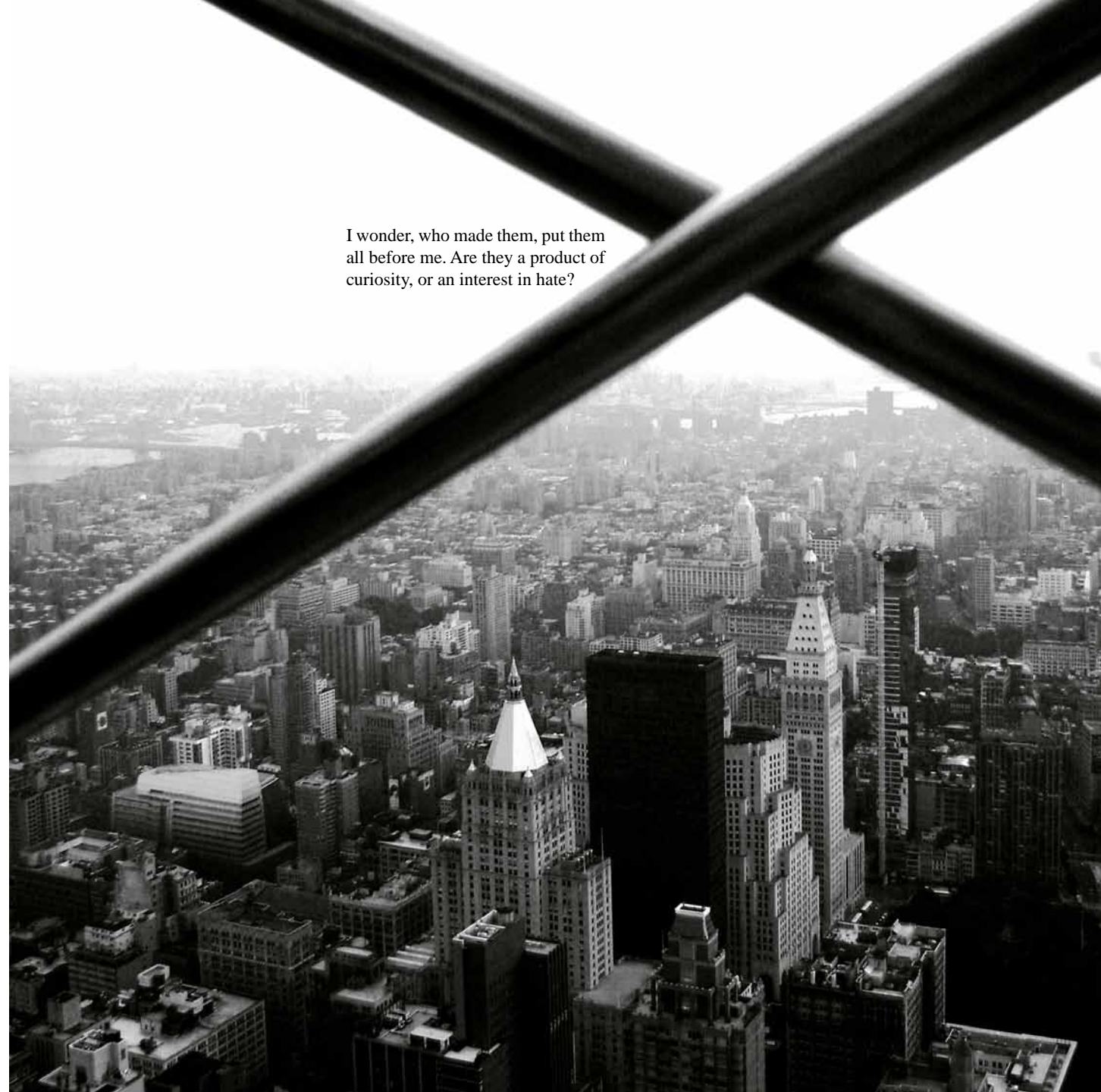
smooth: perfect:  
**ROTTING:**

Dirty, one more time, dusty, shiny but  
dusty, these glass walls, gray raindrops  
licking their surfaces, no bumps, no  
holes, all perfect, yet rotting inside, these  
skyscrapers.



HATE:

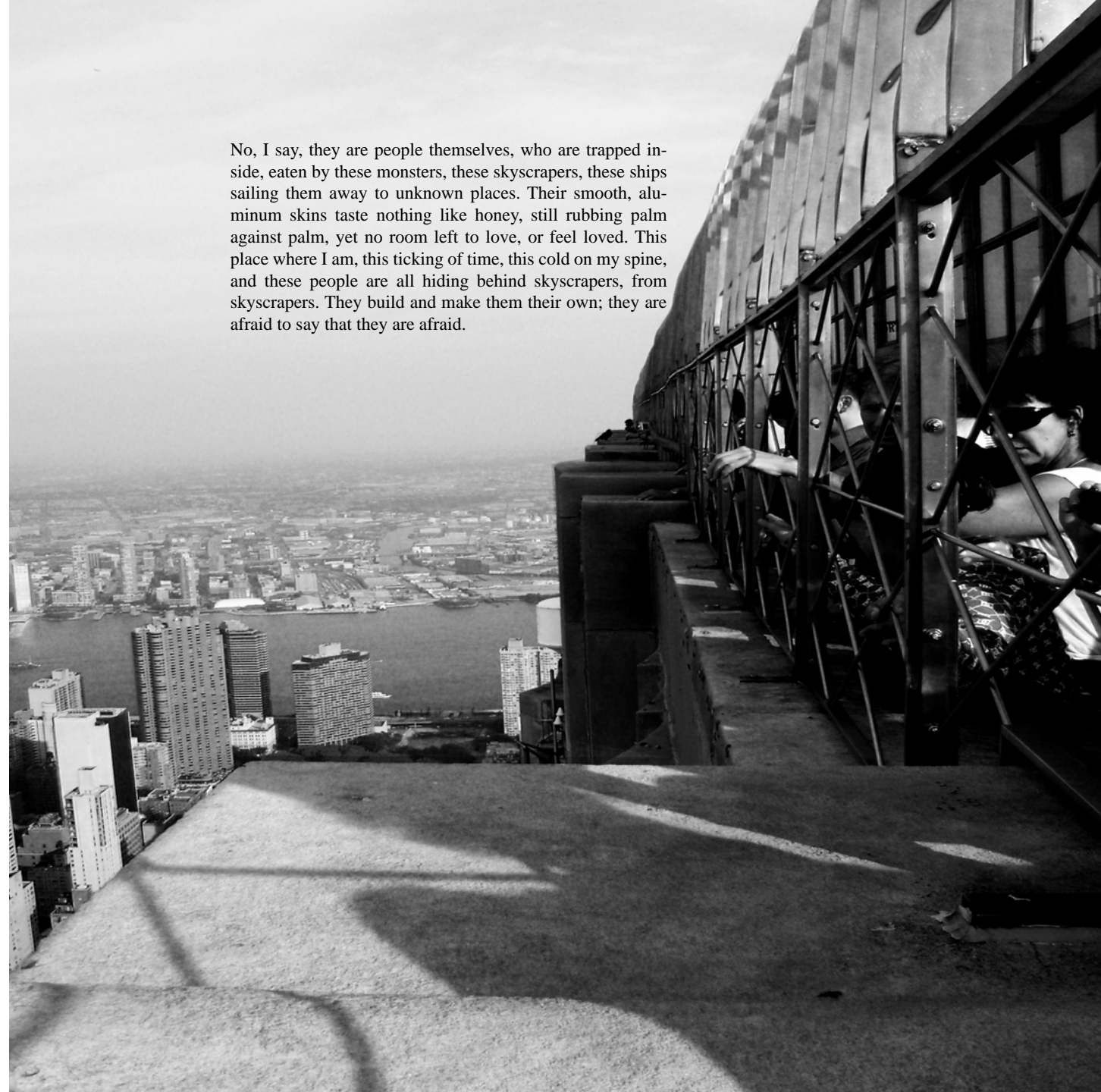
I wonder, who made them, put them  
all before me. Are they a product of  
curiosity, or an interest in hate?





FROM: WITHIN:

No, I say, they are people themselves, who are trapped inside, eaten by these monsters, these skyscrapers, these ships sailing them away to unknown places. Their smooth, aluminum skins taste nothing like honey, still rubbing palm against palm, yet no room left to love, or feel loved. This place where I am, this ticking of time, this cold on my spine, and these people are all hiding behind skyscrapers, from skyscrapers. They build and make them their own; they are afraid to say that they are afraid.



I : Am:

Am I one of them, or am I even myself?





one million of us: **WATCHING:**



Now inside these skyscrapers  
every one of them, of us, every  
one million of us, rubbing palm  
against palm and watching rain-  
drops fall.

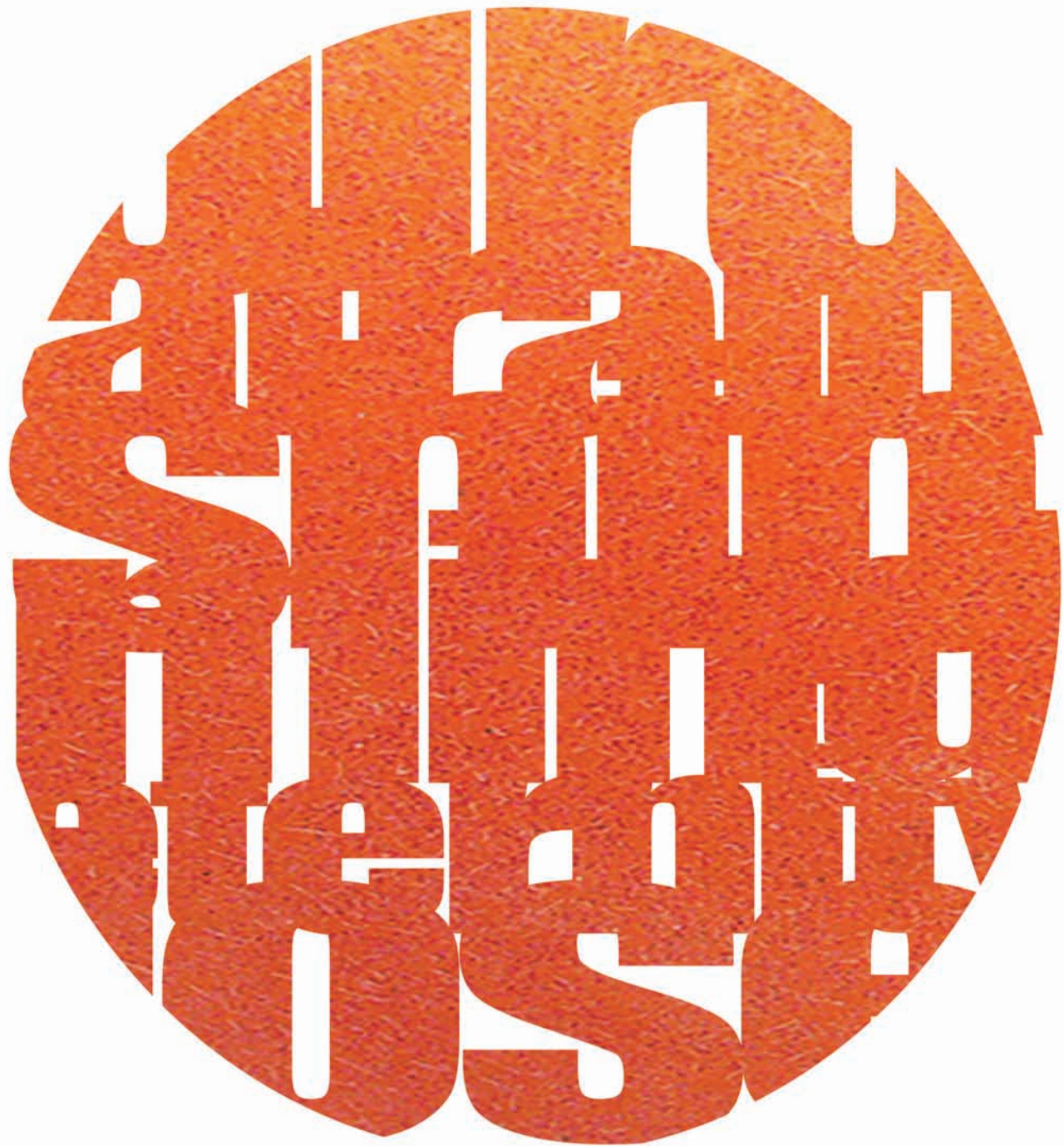


our: **FLESH:**

We people behind these windows, within and behind all eternity, reflected in one another's pupils, in our insanity, all we can do is to build more skyscrapers and watch them continually rip our sky, our very own flesh...







...and the black birds lie dead.





Is it worth it to be all vertical, sharp, keen, precise, stabbing,  
bitter, sharp, sharp, sharp, and overwhelming?

Or is it possible, I wonder, to be fully alive, when one may not have tasted  
apricots before?

...and may not have been gentle, and weak,



...maybe?

