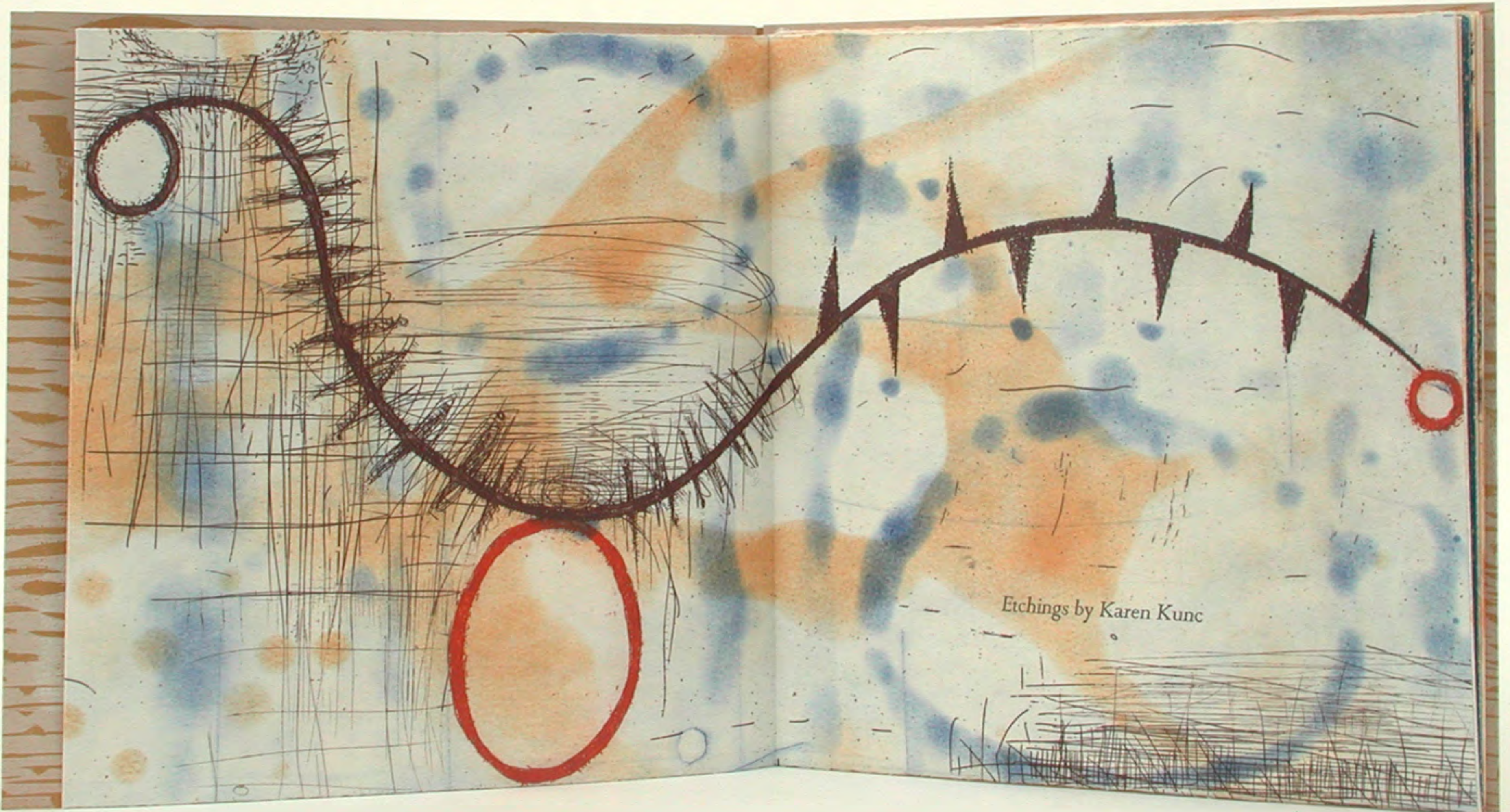




TRULY
BONE

Poems by Hilda Raz



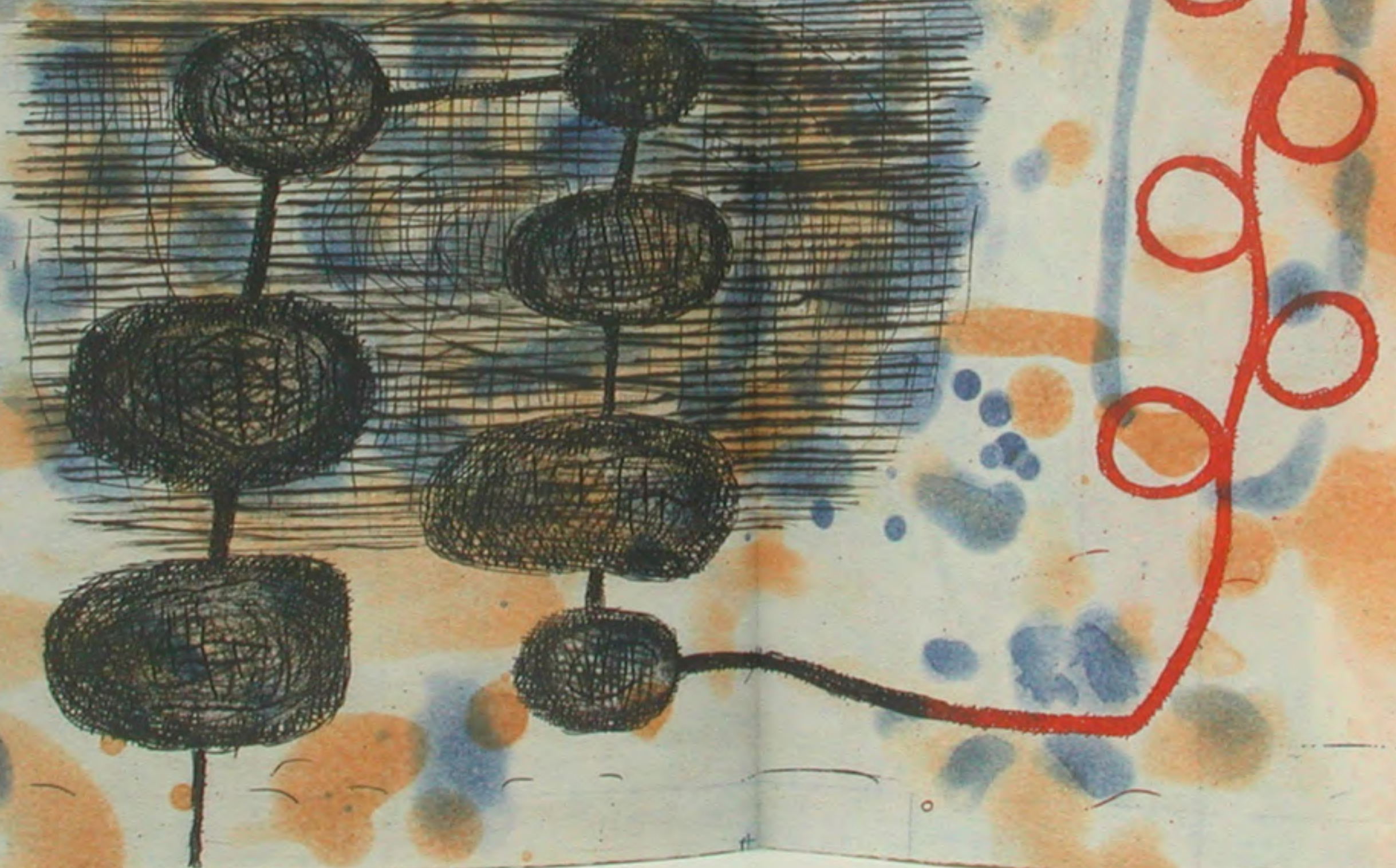
Etchings by Karen Kunc

"We don't deserve what we get, but we get what we deserve."

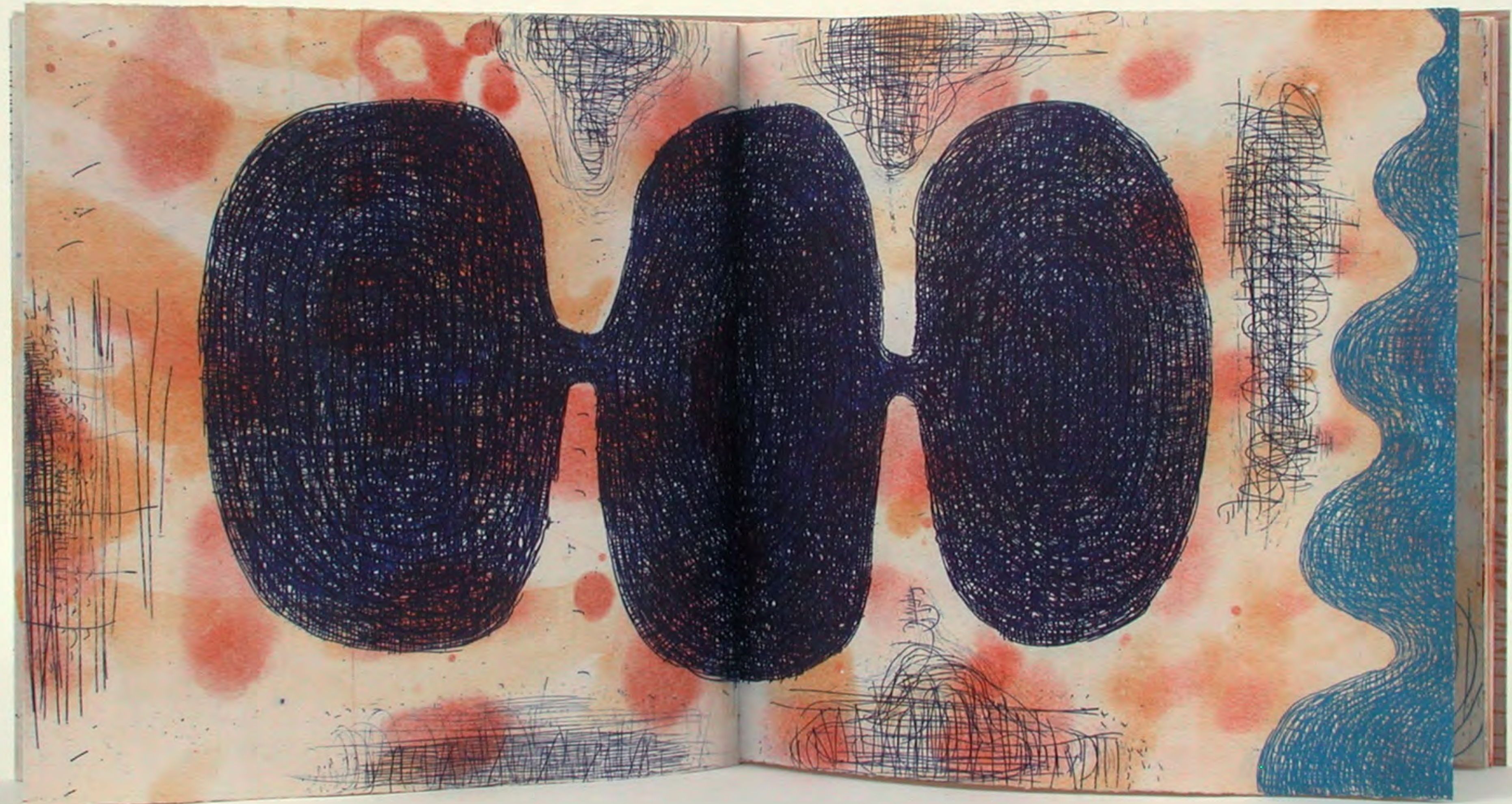
— Phil Condon

Rain pours
into the heart
of the hosta.

Each one
of fifty blooms
opens a throat to the wet,
can scent a room
each flower smaller
than your fingernail.



In the garden for herbs
basil and parsley, tarragon,
you stoop, take our scissors
to a fair chin,
bring in one blossom
leaking.



Zen: the one I love most holds my tongue

done nothing to deserve this
am something to deserve this

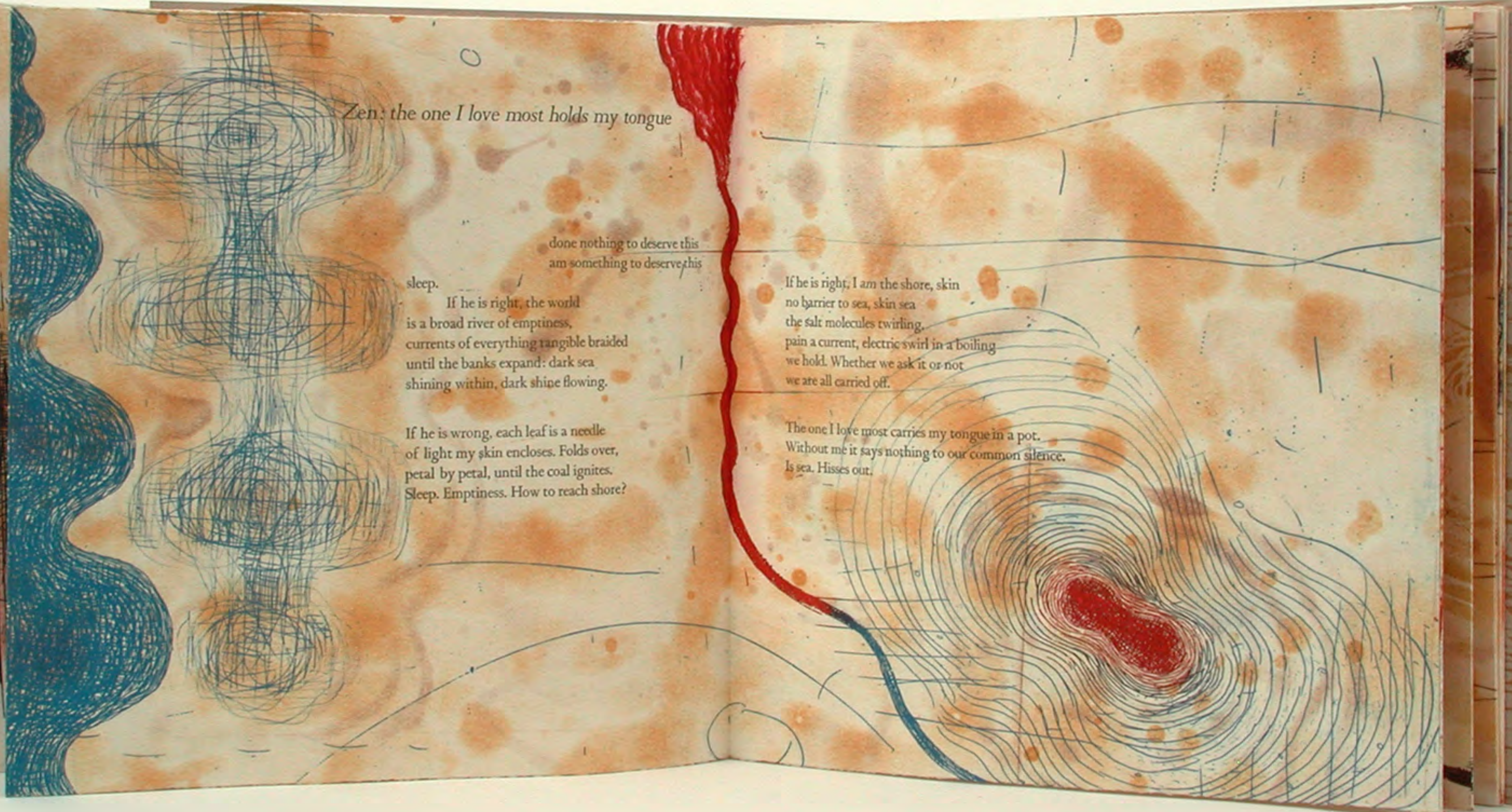
sleep.

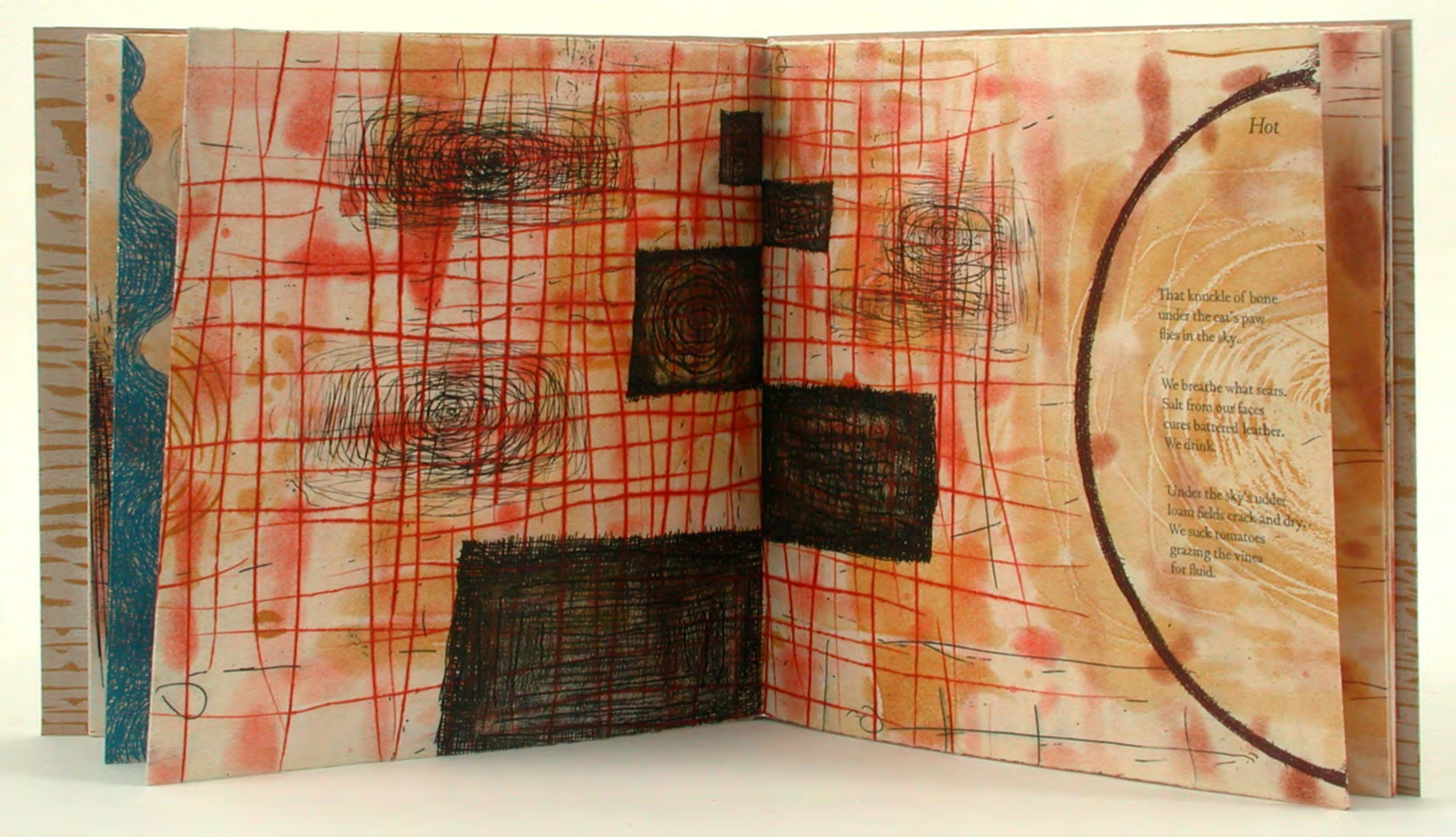
If he is right, the world
is a broad river of emptiness,
currents of everything tangible braided
until the banks expand: dark sea
shining within, dark shine flowing.

If he is wrong, each leaf is a needle
of light my skin encloses. Folds over,
petal by petal, until the coal ignites.
Sleep. Emptiness. How to reach shore?

If he is right, I am the shore, skin
no barrier to sea, skin sea
the salt molecules twirling,
pain a current, electric swirl in a boiling
we hold. Whether we ask it or not
we are all carried off.

The one I love most carries my tongue in a pot.
Without me it says nothing to our common silence.
Is sea. Hisses out.



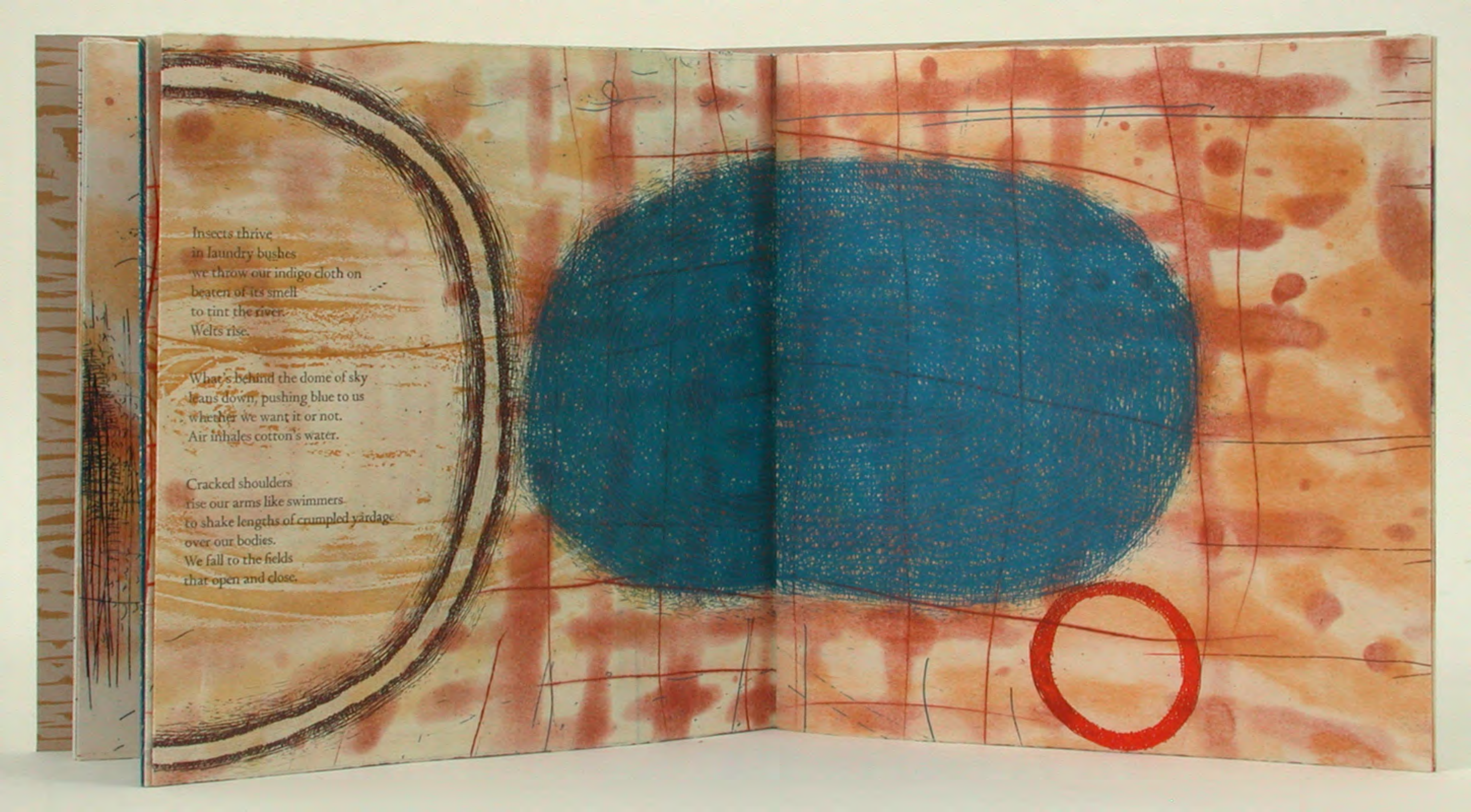


Hot

That knuckle of bone
under the cat's paw
flies in the sky.

We breathe what sears.
Salt from our faces
cures battered leather.
We drink.

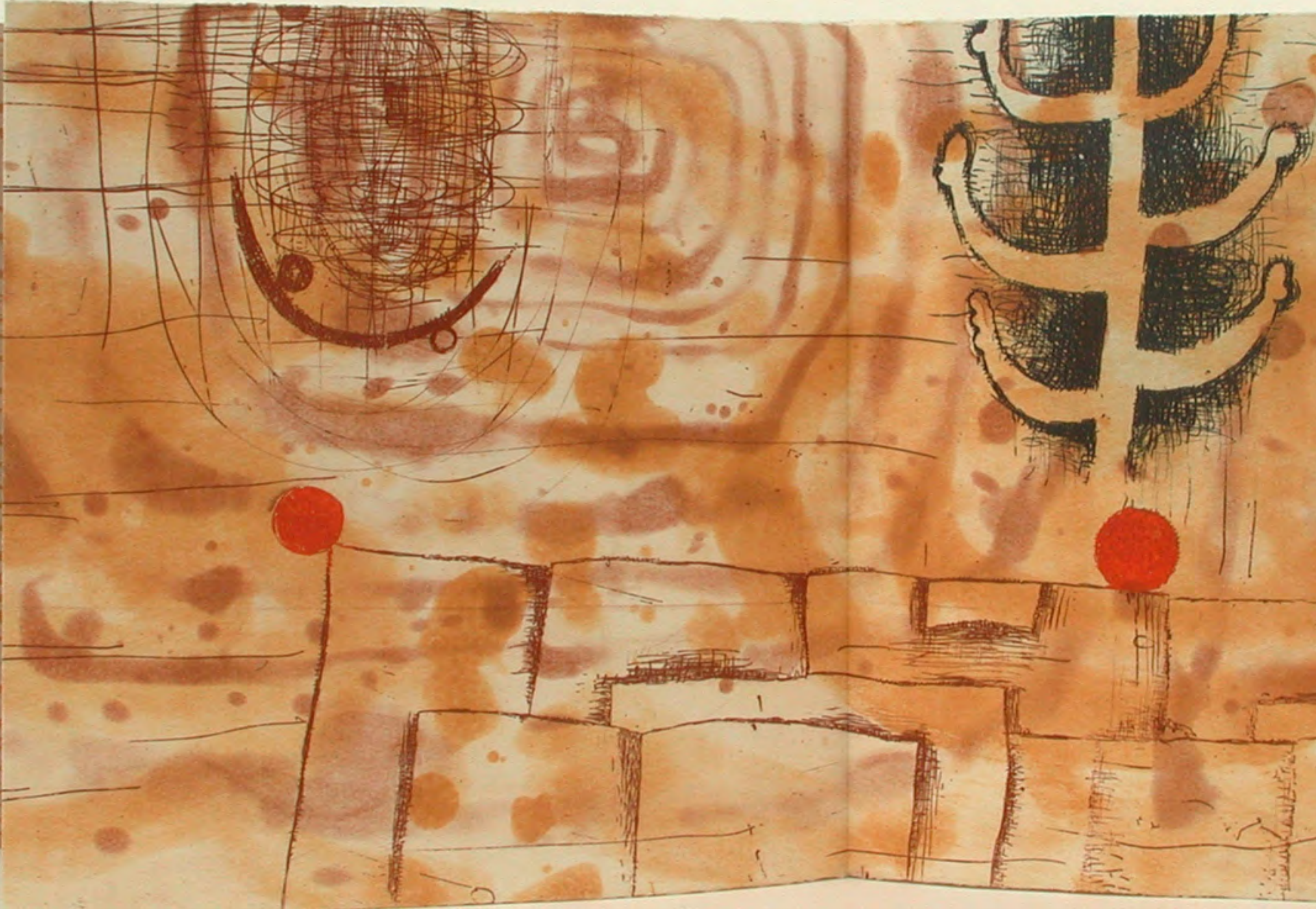
Under the sky's udder
loam fields crack and dry.
We suck tomatoes
grazing the vines
for fluid.



Insects thrive
in laundry bushes
we throw our indigo cloth on
beaten of its smell
to tint the river.
Welts rise.

What's behind the dome of sky
leans down, pushing blue to us
whether we want it or not.
Air inhales cotton's water.

Cracked shoulders
rise our arms like swimmers
to shake lengths of crumpled yardage
over our bodies.
We fall to the fields
that open and close.

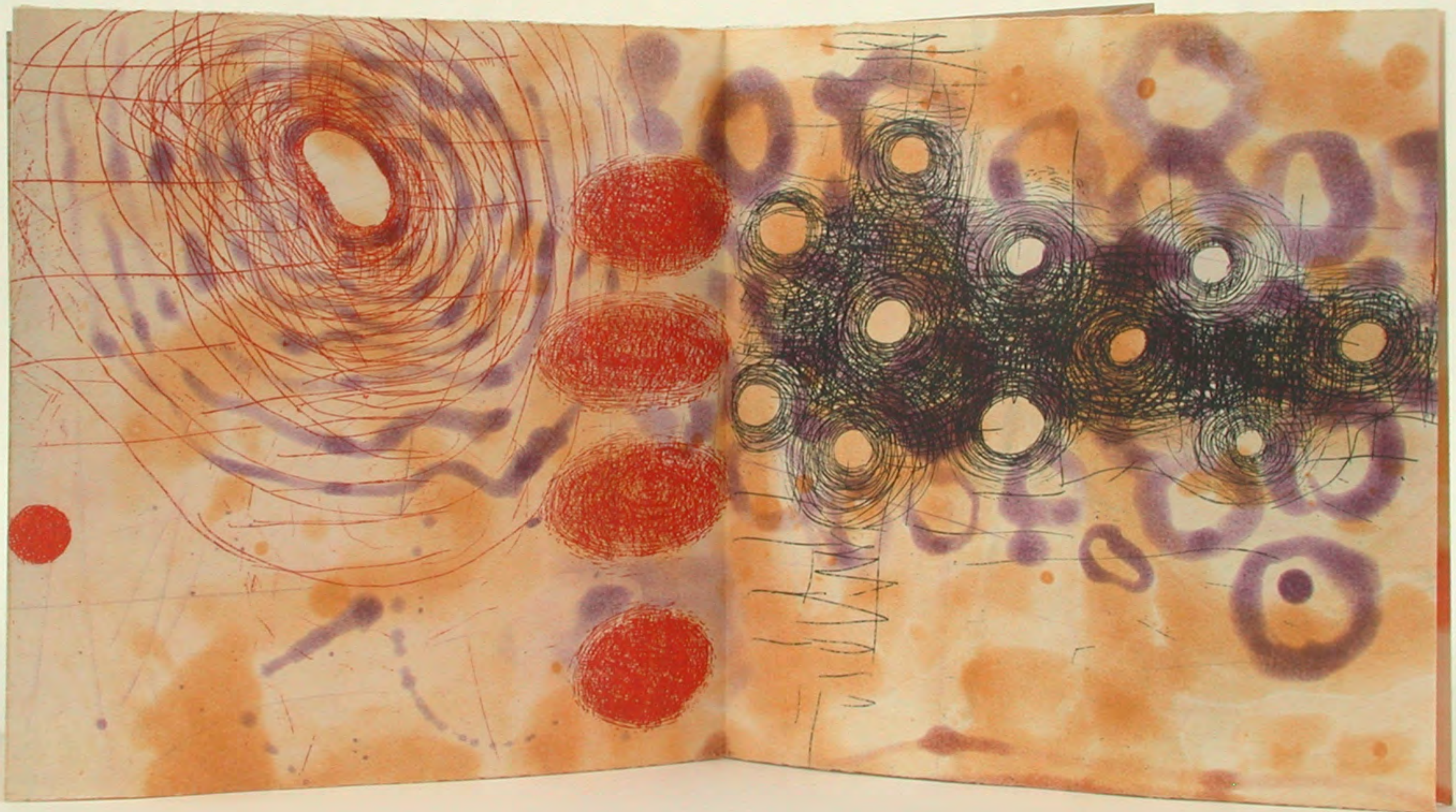


Letter of Transmittal

Herein find one woman, used, in fair shape,
given to excess, too fond of what's personal
to star in meetings, intuitive
rather than learned as we say,
whose favorite pastime is the job
you've offered (which in our service
she defined), whose greatest accomplishment
is drawing breath.

On the office phone we heard
she heard this counsel, part of her job,
to pet the scar, croon to her body,
the surviving parts, sway and cherish
like a lover all that falls easily
into the upturned palm. Representative
of the job she's done.

Her last assignment is her signature, here
at the bottom of this letter. Take her.
We have voted, given voice to her eulogy.
Where she goes now is her own affair.
Our names are below. Take her.
Everything we have been able to do
for her is done. What's left is truly bone.
If you wish it, take her home.



During three seasons passing,
Truly Bone has become resolved
at the end of 1998. The images
are etching, aquatint spit bite
and drypoint from multiple
copper plates using 16 colors.
The letterpress type is Romulus
11 point, and the paper is
cream Italian Alcantara. Sharing
in the handwork and collaboration
of printing are interns
Ryan Ninete and Lynda Sock.
Blue Heron Press (this time) is
the artist's studio in Woods Hall,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
This is edition number $\frac{16}{50}$.

Karan Kunc

Blue Heron Press



*Copyright by Karen Kunc, Blue Heron Press
Published by Women's Studio Workshop, Inc.
Supported in part with public funds from
the National Endowment for the Arts,
the New York State Council on the Arts
and the Research Council,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*

