

EMMANUEL MICHAUD

# SORTIR AU JOUR







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« Sortir Au Jour » est le récit d'un monde qui glisse inexorablement de l'ordonné vers le chaotique.

« Sortir Au Jour » émerge d'une lecture croisée des mythes de l'Égypte antique et de principes thermodynamiques.

« Sortir Au Jour » est un poème de la fin.

## AVANT-PROPOS

*Cette publication est le fruit d'une recherche effectuée au sein du Master Transdisciplinaire de la Haute École d'Art de Zurich entre septembre 2019 et décembre 2023. Elle a été développée de concert avec une installation vidéo du même nom dont elle constitue le pendant discursif et réflexif ; recherche et production plastique se sont ainsi nourris mutuellement tout au long du projet.*

*Cet ouvrage a plusieurs fonctions : documenter et expliciter ma production artistique ainsi que son évolution, proposer au lecteur un ensemble d'hypothèses et de questions (qui disposent de leur propre autonomie vis-à-vis de la production à laquelle elles sont liées) et, à un niveau plus personnel et tourné vers le futur, me permettre de clarifier ma propre position en tant qu'artiste – artiste transdisciplinaire en particulier.*

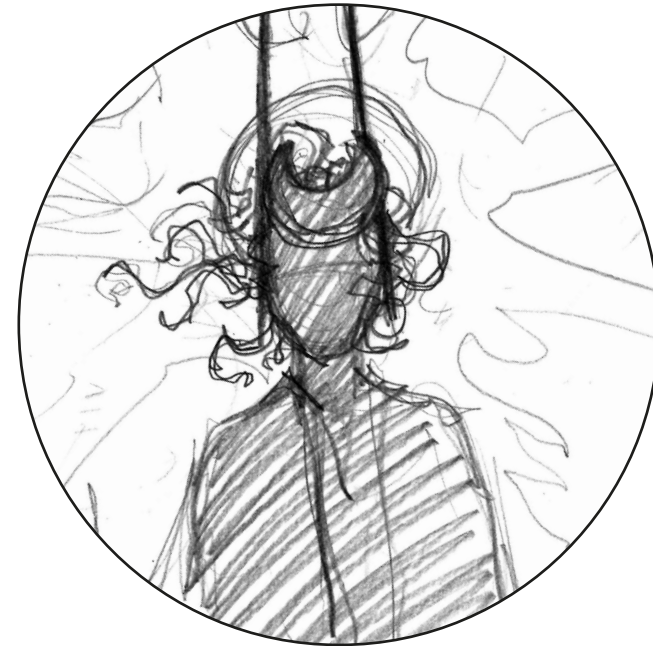
*La première partie, « Mise en Lumière » décrit les tenants et aboutissants de ma recherche. Les trois suivantes correspondent à des étapes majeures de son évolution : « Witness the Deicide », première esquisse du projet prenant la forme d'illustrations ; « The Great Northern Hippopotamus », un ensemble de textes assortis de commentaires, qui marque un tournant décisif dans ma recherche ; et enfin « Stills », qui documente l'installation vidéo mentionnée plus haut.*

*« Sortir Au Jour » est une production multidisciplinaire qui découle d'une méthode transdisciplinaire ; deux facettes que je différencie comme suit. La multidisciplinarité est directement observable par le spectateur : vidéo, art sonore, danse, texte et sculpture participent conjointement à la constitution d'une même forme. La méthode transdisciplinaire se développe dans la recherche ; plus timide vis-à-vis du public, pour lequel elle ne se révèle qu'implicitement, je la définis comme le dialogue entre différentes disciplines qui permet un glissement de perspective sur un sujet donné. Dans le cadre de ce projet, ces disciplines sont la mythologie (en particulier l'égyptologie) et la physique (en particulier la thermodynamique) ; elles offrent deux visions distinctes de l'évolution vers une fin, qui est ici mon sujet. À partir de ces deux versions d'une même histoire, j'effectue un travail de lecture croisée dont j'extrait une nouvelle trame narrative. Une étoffe neuve est ainsi tissée à partir des fils tirés d'histoires préexistantes.*



SORTIR AU JOUR

# I. MISE EN LUMIÈRE





## RECRACHER LE MONDE

Je suis. Un « je » flou et insaisissable ; « je » malgré tout. Récepteur, je reçois des signaux de mon environnement, par le biais de divers organes : des yeux, des oreilles, un nez, une langue, un palais, une peau, un système nerveux. Je reçois des formes, des couleurs, des sons, des goûts, des sensations.

Mon cerveau traite et interprète ces signaux. J'en extrais des questions et des réponses, provoquant de la joie, de la colère, de l'euphorie, de la tristesse, du plaisir, de la curiosité, de l'indifférence et mille autres émotions que les mots peinent à définir.

Je suis un récepteur et je suis un acteur, doté d'une capacité à intervenir dans ce monde qui me nourrit de signaux. Avec un degré de contrôle certes limité, je peux le façonner, interagir avec lui. Mon corps, interface avec le monde, me permet de le manipuler. *Homo faber*, je dispose d'outils en tous genres pour soutenir cette démarche ; je dessine, je filme, j'écris, je produis des sons et des formes.

Rien ne se crée, tout se transforme : je réagis au monde en le remettant en scène. Par *mimesis*, j'imité le monde afin d'y trouver ma place. Je le mets en scène en fonction de la manière dont je l'ai perçu : je suis un miroir déformant. Les signaux entrants passent par une boîte noire, et ressortent métamorphosés sous forme d'actions. L'algorithme qui définit la manière exacte dont est calculée cette transformation n'est que partiellement déchiffrable ; en étudiant les expériences du passé (j'entends par là les signaux reçus ainsi que la façon dont j'y ai réagi), je peux effectuer des déductions quant au fonctionnement de cet algorithme. Ces déductions me laissent entrevoir la partie supérieure de l'iceberg ; la partie immergée, ancrée dans un subconscient aux eaux opaques, reste un mystère qui me laisse un sentiment d'absurdité.

Des signaux, un algorithme de traitement, des actions. Aussi opaque qu'il soit, je peux influencer cet algorithme, et me pousser moi-même à comprendre le monde différemment. Une pratique quotidienne qui me demande des efforts considérables pour des résultats qui tardent à pointer. Des tentatives répétées de prendre le contrôle sur ma perception du monde, dans l'espoir d'enrichir mon expérience, de faciliter mon quotidien ou encore de nourrir ma pratique artistique.

Le monde m'envoie ses signaux, je les digère et je les recrache. Naturaliste, je me fais le miroir du monde, tout en sachant pertinemment que le reflet que je propose n'a rien à voir avec la Vérité ou l'Absolu. Le monde que je perçois est terrifiant et magnifique, et c'est ce qui façonne l'histoire que je raconte ici. Fort de ma petite influence sur cette perception, je choisis de l'aborder sous un angle en particulier : je développe et me concentre sur une vision du monde comme système de transformation tendant vers l'indifférenciation, peuplé de figures subissant la force d'une entropie grandissante.

Aussi terrifiant que je puisse le trouver, il y a de la joie et du plaisir à refléter le monde ; une joie qui motive mon obstination à créer sans cesse de nouvelles formes. Et dans le partage de ces formes avec un public, il y a à la fois la volonté de partager un glissement de perspective sur le monde et l'espoir que la joie qui accompagne ma pratique transparaisse et déteigne.

*Il te sera donné tes deux yeux pour voir  
tes deux oreilles pour entendre ce qui est dit,  
ta bouche pour les paroles.  
Tes deux pieds pour marcher, marcheront.  
Tu feras tourner tes deux bras  
et tes deux épaules.  
Ta chair sera ferme,  
tes muscles seront en repos.  
Puisses-tu te réjouir en chacun de tes membres !  
Puisses-tu compter tes membres  
au complet, en parfaite santé !  
Et le Ka de répondre :  
« Je suis vivant ! »\**

## ESCHATOLOGIE

Mes actions sont guidées par ma conscience d'une fin à venir. C'est la vision d'un futur dans lequel je ne suis plus qui forme la motivation fondamentale pour agir dans le présent. J'ai conscience de ma finitude, et par conséquent je dois agir maintenant ; cela s'applique à l'individu comme au groupe, dans lequel cette motivation est mise en commun. La fin (ou l'idée de la fin) est le fil rouge qui définit le trajet qui y mène.

En étudiant la fin, en jouant avec elle et en la mettant en scène, je cherche à clarifier ma façon d'évoluer dans le présent. La fin ne m'intéresse pas en tant que telle, mais plutôt en tant que fondation de ce qui la précède. Je me projette dans le futur avec l'espoir d'en extraire un savoir applicable à mon quotidien.

Ici, j'envisage la fin comme le résultat d'un processus de confusion poussé à son paroxysme : une entropie maximale. Une approche basée sur un discours scientifique et des interprétations mythologiques, au premier abord détachée de la morale pour mieux s'y rattacher *a posteriori*. C'est en les faisant résonner avec des conceptions qui lui sont étrangères que je cherche à ouvrir de nouvelles perspectives sur des idées de bien et de mal, de bon et de mauvais, de juste et d'injuste.

\*] « Rituel de l'Ouverture de la Bouche », Fresque funéraire d'Amenophis III. Naud, Yves. La Vengeance des Pharaons. Famot, 1977, p.72



## ENTROPIE

Le concept d'entropie est l'un des ingrédients nécessaires à ma conception de la fin. Il m'apporte une perspective logique, phénoménologique et factuelle qui vient structurer mon récit. L'entropie naît avec le deuxième principe de la thermodynamique, branche de la physique qui met en relation des phénomènes thermiques et mécaniques. Le premier principe (nécessaire pour appréhender le deuxième) est énoncé comme suit :

*Au cours d'une transformation quelconque d'un système fermé, la variation de son énergie est égale à la quantité d'énergie échangée avec le milieu extérieur, par transfert thermique (chaleur) et transfert mécanique (travail).\**

Un principe de conservation de l'énergie, puisque cette dernière ne varie que dans la mesure d'un échange équivalent avec un milieu extérieur. La deuxième loi de la thermodynamique complète ce principe d'équivalence en y ajoutant le concept d'entropie, un terme introduit par Rudolf Clausius en 1865 qui décrit le degré de désorganisation d'un système :

*« Nous pourrions appeler S le contenu transformationnel du corps, tout comme nous avons appelé la magnitude U son contenu thermique et ergonal. Mais comme je tiens pour préférable d'emprunter aux langues anciennes des termes pour désigner des grandeurs importantes, afin qu'ils puissent être adoptés tels quels dans toutes les langues modernes, je propose d'appeler la grandeur S l'entropie du corps, du mot grec Τροπή), transformation. J'ai formé à dessein le mot entropie de manière à le rapprocher autant que possible du mot énergie ; car les deux grandeurs que l'on veut désigner par ces mots sont si proches dans leurs significations physiques, qu'une certaine similitude de désignation paraît désirable. »\*\**

\*] Von Mayer, Julius Robert, 1854. Cité dans : E. Hecht, T. Becherrawy, J. Martin (1999), Physique, p. 604. Les formulations des lois de la thermodynamique peuvent varier.

\*\*] Clausius, Rudolf. The Mechanical Theory of Heat. T. Archer Hirst, 1870, p.357.

Traduit depuis l'anglais par Emmanuel Michaud (Citation originale : « We might call S the transformational content of the body, just as we termed the magnitude U its thermal and ergonal content. But as I hold it to be better to borrow terms for important magnitudes from the ancient languages, so that they may be adopted unchanged in all modern languages, I propose to call the magnitude S the entropy of the body, from the Greek word Τροπή), transformation. I have intentionally formed the word entropy so as to be as similar as possible to the word energy; for the two magnitudes to be denoted by these words are so nearly allied in their physical meanings, that a certain similarity in designation appears to be desirable.»)

En thermodynamique, l'entropie (symbole S) est une valeur numérique dont l'unité est le J/K (joule par kelvin, respectivement mesures d'énergie et de température thermodynamique). R. Clausius résume ainsi les deux principes de la thermodynamique :

*Si l'on conçoit pour l'univers entier la même grandeur à déterminer, d'une manière constante et en tenant compte de toutes les circonstances, que pour un seul corps j'ai appelée entropie, et si l'on introduit en même temps l'autre conception, plus simple, de l'énergie, on peut exprimer de la manière suivante les lois fondamentales de l'univers qui correspondent aux deux théorèmes fondamentaux de la théorie mécanique de la chaleur.*

1. *L'énergie de l'univers est constante.*
2. *L'entropie de l'univers tend vers un maximum.\**

L'entropie, le degré de désorganisation global a donc tendance à augmenter. Le deuxième principe introduit une notion d'irréversibilité : une transformation thermodynamique ne peut s'effectuer que dans une direction dans le temps. Si la quantité d'énergie avant et après une transformation reste constante, comme le premier principe l'affirme, l'entropie reste constante (dans une minorité des cas) ou augmente, et par conséquent la transformation d'un état A à un état B n'est possible que si l'entropie de B est supérieure ou égale à celle de A.

## LES DIEUX D'ÉGYPTE ET LA MORT

Dans l'Égypte Antique, des officiants étaient chargés de lutter contre l'augmentation de l'entropie dans le corps des défunts par le biais de la momification. Si l'on en croit le deuxième principe de la thermodynamique, cette diminution de l'entropie dans le système fermé du corps physique ne pouvait s'effectuer qu'au prix d'une augmentation de l'entropie dans un système plus large ; j'envisage ce système plus large comme étant celui qui inclut non seulement le monde des hommes mais aussi celui des dieux. C'est cette frontière qui vient s'effriter avec la momification : en les momifiant, on prête aux défunts des caractéristiques divines d'immortalité, et par là même on désorganise la division du monde en catégories terrestres et divines.

\*] Clausius, Rudolf. The Mechanical Theory of Heat. T. Archer Hirst, 1870, p.365. Traduit depuis l'anglais par Emmanuel Michaud (Citation originale : « If for the entire universe we conceive the same magnitude to be determined, consistently and with due regard to all circumstances, which for a single body I have called entropy, and if at the same time we introduce the other and simpler conception of energy, we may express in the following manner the fundamental laws of the universe which correspond to the two fundamental theorems of the mechanical theory of heat.1. The energy of the universe is constant. 2. The entropy of the universe tends to a maximum.»)



Les textes confirment cette hypothèse : dans le Livre des Morts des égyptiens, manuel à l'usage du défunt pour accéder à l'au-delà, le voyageur s'attribue le nom d'Osiris, le dieu de morts.\* Le nom propre devient nom commun, l'absolu devient relatif ; le divin perd de sa substance pour se diluer dans l'humain. Avec chaque prière, avec chaque déclamation des textes rituels, la frontière entre les mondes devient plus floue, plus poreuse.

*« Prends mon nom », murmuraient des dieux métamorphes, semant la surprise dans les âmes des défunts vagabonds qui réalisèrent leur incapacité à identifier l'information générée par une source et s'effritant dans les canaux du Delta.\*\**

## LE DÉMON DE MAXWELL

Le démon de Maxwell est une expérience de pensée proposée par James Clark Maxwell en 1867 pour contredire le deuxième principe de la thermodynamique. On imagine un système fermé divisé en deux parties par une cloison. Cette cloison est dotée d'une porte, dont l'ouverture et la fermeture sont contrôlées par un démon. Dans ce système clos se trouvent des particules, se déplaçant à des vitesses variables (et donc à des températures différentes). Le démon, dont le rôle est de contredire le principe d'irréversibilité énoncé plus haut, ouvre et ferme la porte de manière à ne laisser passer que les particules les plus rapides d'un côté de la cloison, et les particules les plus lentes de l'autre. Si le démon s'acquitte de cette tâche, il y aurait donc diminution d'entropie : les particules seraient organisées en deux groupes distincts, l'un chaud (particules rapides) et l'autre froid (particules lentes).\*\*\*

Cette expérience de pensée est invalidée en y introduisant le concept d'information : pour décider d'ouvrir ou fermer la porte dont il a le contrôle, le démon de Maxwell doit acquérir de l'information ; et le coût de cette acquisition vient rétablir le deuxième principe de la thermodynamique. La mémoire du démon, initialement vierge, se trouve mise à jour de manière désorganisée au fur et à mesure que le démon apprend la vitesse des particules. Autrement dit, la baisse d'entropie du système de particules est compensée par l'augmentation de l'entropie de la mémoire du démon.\*\*\*\*

\*] Budge, E. A. Wallis. The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. Epiphanius Wilson, A.M, 2016, p.29

\*\*] Tiré des voix off de l'installation vidéo « Sortir Au Jour », première janvier 2023

\*\*\*] Maxwell, James Clerk. Theory of Heat. Cambridge University Press, 2011 (Publication originale 1871).

\*\*\*\*] Brillouin, Léon. Maxwell's Demon Cannot Operate: Information and Entropy.

I. Journal of Applied Physics, vol. 22, p. 334-337, 1951.

Effectuant une équivalence mythologique de cette conception scientifique de l'information comme pièce manquante du puzzle, j'inclus la notion de langage dans le système du corps momifié. Dans le cas du Démon de Maxwell tout comme celui de la momification, on retrouve une apparente diminution d'entropie dans un système qui déguise une augmentation d'entropie dans un système plus large, dans lequel on prend en compte l'information (contenue dans l'observation ou dans le langage).

*Je passe les frontières, les rendant chaque fois un peu plus poreuses. Je te croise au fil de mes allers-retours, et j'effleure ta main quand elle est assez proche. Les prophéties ne m'intéressent pas ; mais force m'est de constater que les mots s'entremêlent. Vivant, je prononce le nom des dieux. Mort, je le leur prends. Ils vivent et meurent avec moi. J'ai prié longtemps sans comprendre pourquoi ; maintenant je discerne les brèches qu'ouvrent la sémantique. Prier comme une question de vie ou de mort, mais pas seulement de la mienne. Parler devient difficile alors que ma langue s'engourdit, alors je te regarde. Dans tes yeux, le reflet net d'un futur trouble. Dans le ciel, une marée montante me parle d'un océan de matière inerte. J'écoute. Je me tiens debout dans le marécage, et soulever un pied me demande un effort considérable. Alors je ralentis. Si mon énergie est intacte, il devient difficile de l'utiliser pour accomplir un travail. L'air est humide, l'horizon flou ; l'atmosphère lourde, le sol fluide. Comme un enfant, je joue dans la boue ; je construis des tours qui s'affaissent une à une sous leur propre poids ; plus la tour est haute et plus l'observation de ce processus m'égaie, jusqu'à ce que je rie aux éclats. La Terre et les Eaux furent séparés, puis se rencontrèrent de nouveau pour former le limon dans lequel le corps d'un dieu démembré fut jeté. Mais la vase dans laquelle je me débats ne ressemble plus à ce lointain parent : cette boue a perdu de sa fertilité, et je dois chercher plus loin les fruits dont je pourrais me nourrir. J'ai faim, et cette faim me fait mal.*

*Un démon se tient sur mes épaules, et me susurre que cette faim n'est qu'une illusion. « Joins tes lèvres », me dit-il. Il enroule mille bandelettes autour de mon visage, alors je ferme la bouche. Mais sitôt cette porte fermée, une autre s'ouvre, deux fois plus grande et béant sur l'inconnu. Le démon ne peut retenir sa frustration ; je lui caresse la tête entre les oreilles. Il est si vieux qu'il est devenu difficile pour lui de vivre avec son temps ; il appartient à un autre monde, plus tangible et plus précis. Il fait partie de ces êtres dont le pouvoir, par le passé immense, décline.\**

\*] Tiré des voix off de l'installation vidéo « Sortir Au Jour », première janvier 2023

## LE TEMPS

Puisqu'il repose sur l'idée que les transformations ne peuvent s'effectuer que dans un sens, le temps est le personnage principal de mon récit. Un temps linéaire et inexorable qui définit la fin de toutes choses comme l'ultime stade de l'augmentation de l'entropie.

Cette conception du temps décrit tout autant une utopie égalitaire et harmonieuse qu'une vision cauchemardesque d'un futur sans potentiel ; je n'ai pas pu décider s'il s'agissait ou non d'un *happy end*. Je laisse mon public se faire sa propre opinion.

## L'ORIGINE

La soupe primordiale, telle que représentée dans la tradition d'Égypte antique sous le nom de Noun, ou telle que décrite dans la théorie du Big Bang, reste le mystère des origines. Une origine qui semble décrire une fin : un Océan indifférencié, un condensé de particules à température homogène, qui aboutit à une structure organisée, qu'on la définisse comme un monde fait de dieux et d'humains ou comme un ensemble de corps célestes séparés par de vastes étendues à plus faible densité.

Du Noun surgit le Ben-Ben, sur lequel se tient le Démiurge. Et le Démiurge, tout comme le Dieu de la Genèse, sépare et organise d'une manière qui défie à tout point de vue les lois de la thermodynamique. De la masse indifférenciée surgit l'Un, puis l'Autre, le Différent. Malgré le principe de linéarité qui régit ma narration, le début ne cesse de refléter la fin ; ce qui peut engendrer la frustration de l'incompréhension tout comme l'espoir d'un nouveau cycle : si d'une masse inerte quelque chose a pu être défini, il paraît raisonnable de croire au renouvellement de cet illogisme.

L'alternative à l'acceptation de l'incohérence serait, suivant la logique thermodynamique, d'imaginer que l'ensemble constitué par les mondes de l'humain et du divin fasse lui-même partie d'un ensemble plus large. Une porte vers un univers au-delà de l'Univers aurait ainsi été ouverte, rendant possible une diminution locale d'entropie par le biais d'un échange d'énergie qui prendrait la forme du Démiurge ; dans un second temps, le Démiurge aurait quitté le monde et l'aurait scellé, laissant derrière lui une boîte fermée contenant des humains et des dieux livrés à eux-mêmes et condamnés à subir les effets de l'augmentation de l'entropie jusqu'à leur fusion en une masse indifférenciée. Une conception qui n'est pas sans rappeler la sortie du jardin d'Eden : une entité supérieure quittant le monde et ses acteurs pour les laisser livrés à eux-mêmes et à l'inexorabilité de lois immuables.

## LE RITE RELIGIEUX

Dans le rite religieux se cache un jeu d'ordre et de désordre ; le deuxième principe de la thermodynamique sera vérifié si le désordre créé est supérieur à l'ordre créé. Bien entendu, il s'agit non pas de particules dont les températures seraient mesurables mais de phénomènes socio-religieux qui ne se laissent pas quantifier ; il s'agit donc d'une expérience de pensée et non pas d'une expérience telle que définie par la méthode scientifique.

Le rite religieux est à la fois une ode à la différence, en ce qu'il célèbre le sacré en tant que sacré, c'est-à-dire en tant qu'Autre, et une affirmation que cet Autre peut trouver sa place dans le monde terrestre – la célébration d'un Autre auquel l'accès serait inexistant n'aurait aucune utilité pour l'humain. Le rite est ainsi une façon de nourrir et raviver l'étincelle de divin qui se trouve en l'humain, qui va de pair avec une personnification (ou une objectivation) du divin qui vient faciliter la connexion ainsi effectuée. Si l'on prête au divin des attributs du monde terrestre (un corps, des paroles, des oreilles par lesquelles entendre des prières, ou autres symboles tirés d'objets du monde physique), c'est bien que le rite vient également nourrir et raviver l'étincelle d'humain dans le divin.

Il ne s'agit pas de dire que les dieux ont besoin de l'humain pour exister, ou inversement ; théoriquement, on pourrait imaginer un cosmos dans lequel les dieux seraient séparés des humains par une barrière hermétique et dans lequel ces deux groupes n'entretiendraient aucune relation. Toutefois, une perspective thermodynamique de la religion encourage à penser que la moindre ouverture reliant les humains et les dieux ne pouvait mener qu'à la confusion de ces catégories ; et la simple observation de la présence du divin dans la pensée humaine suffit à démontrer que cette ouverture existe bel et bien.

Le rite, c'est la mise en scène sans cesse renouvelée de l'origine\* ; ainsi les égyptiens renouvelaient la momification d'Osiris à chaque momification de l'un des leurs. Et selon les traditions de cette civilisation, l'origine des origines, comme on l'a vu plus haut, se trouve dans le Noun, l'Océan primordial inerte et parfait dans son immobilité. Si le rite et sa répétition peuvent donner l'impression d'une structure rigide et ferme, il manifeste aussi la nostalgie d'un état primordial d'harmonie, de perfection qui ne nécessite ni ne permet une quelconque action. On y trouve le désir d'un état de fusion avec toutes choses, où la béatitude remplace tous les besoins et toute motivation à l'action ; le Noun est parfait et c'est cette perfection même qui le rend stérile. L'organisation crée le contraste qui motive l'action, là où le Chaos se suffit à lui-même.

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\*] Une formulation inspirée par : Benoist, Luc. Art du Monde : La spiritualité du métier. Editions Orientales, 1978, p.24



## L'AMOUR

*Empédocle décrivait la matière comme étant constituée d'éléments éternels et indivisibles ; des éléments dont le comportement serait régi par deux forces, l'une unifiante, qu'il appelait l'Amour, et l'autre divisante, qu'il appelait la Haine. Entre ces forces se jouait la complémentarité de l'un et du multiple. Originellement, l'univers aurait été un sphairos sous la domination de l'Amour, dans lequel le mélange des éléments était homogène. Le devenir s'inscrit dans l'alternance des forces présentes à l'intérieur du monde. La domination de la Haine seule permet d'accéder à une différenciation, telle que puisse s'opérer une hiérarchisation en sphères concentriques, répartissant depuis le centre, la terre, l'eau, l'air et le feu (de sorte que se produit à ce moment l'attraction du semblable par le semblable). Lorsqu'advient le retrait de la Haine, ayant produit l'hétérogénéité complète des quatre racines, la croissance de l'Amour à nouveau relance le processus. Ainsi faut-il admettre que l'univers actuel ne peut être situé qu'au point de jonction où s'opère l'accroissement d'une force.\**

Mon amour prend des formes étranges. L'intime se cache dans des visions de l'immense et du cosmos – des visions *pharaoniques*. Dans ma logique entropique se trouve l'histoire d'un amour fusionnel. De Deux ne faire qu'Un, faisant le sacrifice d'une certaine unicité de l'individu : un désir qui pourrait donc être considéré comme naturel en ce sens qu'il reflète les lois du monde physique.

Lorsque Seth découpe son frère Osiris en morceaux, Isis se met en quête des composantes désintégrées du corps de son frère, amant et époux. Elle le fait par Amour, dans un sens qui comprend tout autant un aspect passionnel qu'un aspect physique tel que décrit par Empédocle : la force unifiante de l'Amour. Aidée par sa soeur Nephtys, elle parviendra à retrouver les morceaux du corps d'Osiris, à l'exception des parties génitales, dont il est dit qu'elles furent avalées par un poisson du Nil.\*\* Au terme du réassemblage de ce corps démembré (origine mythique du rituel de la momification), elle s'unira à Osiris, poussant la réunification au-delà de la simple réparation. Il y a désir de fusion et il y a augmentation d'entropie, puisque ce qui était différent l'est moins.

*Pour moi aussi la peur est là. Comme le démon, j'ai bâti des barrages pour contrecarrer le flux des eaux ; je voulais stopper le cours de la gestation d'un inconnu, et j'ai pleuré quand ces barrages ont cédé. Je*

\*] Paraphrase de : Houelle, Thierry. L'Eau et la Pensée Grecque. L'Harmattan, 2010, p.143

\*\*] Plutarque. Isis et Osiris, 18. Traduction Froidefond 1988. Cité dans : Goddio, Franck & Fabre, David. Osiris : Mystères Engloutis d'Égypte. Flammarion, 2015, p.51

*me suis muré dans le silence pour éviter que mon âme ne dégouline entre mes lèvres ; j'ai fui du regard et prié pour que le temps s'arrête. J'ai rêvé de terre ferme ; j'ai cherché le Ben-Ben, l'île sur laquelle je pourrais maintenir le statu quo. Je voulais que les choses restent intactes ; j'ai refusé de pousser la porte, et j'ai maudit des dieux qui se tenaient en moi. J'ai refusé de me disloquer. J'ai refusé de me perdre.*

*Aujourd'hui je fatigue, et je me surprends à accepter ce qui m'était impensable. Je suis tombé amoureux, sous l'effet des lois rigides de la gravité. Ensemble, nous tomberons jusqu'au fond du gouffre, et au fond du gouffre il y a un océan dans lequel nous pourrions nous dissoudre. Nous tenons les objets de nos désirs dans une étreinte thermodynamique, et ces objets sont indénombrables. Nous ferons l'amour jusqu'à ce que le monde disparaisse.\**

## L'UN, LE DEUX ET LE MULTIPLE

Dans « Sortir Au Jour », tout est un jeu entre similitude et altérité. Le dualisme est le résultat de l'acte séparateur, à la racine de la création. Un contraste est nécessaire pour obtenir une énergie utilisable pour un travail mécanique (une différence de température ou de pression par exemple) ; de la même manière, dans les récits cosmogoniques (chez les égyptiens mais aussi dans le christianisme), la séparation des choses est nécessaire pour que l'histoire du monde commence. Le créateur sépare les eaux de la terre, le Ben-Ben du Noun, les humains des dieux, les animaux des humains. Le dualisme, la différence entre une chose et une autre, est nécessaire pour que *quelque chose* advienne. L'Un, solitaire, n'a aucun potentiel et ne peut pas s'inscrire dans le temps ; il est stérile quand le Deux est fertile.

Ce que nous apprend le second principe de la thermodynamique, c'est que l'utilisation d'un contraste thermique pour effectuer un travail mécanique induit une réduction de ce contraste au niveau local (système clos). Pour effectuer ce travail mécanique une nouvelle fois, on devra avoir un échange d'énergie à un niveau plus large, c'est-à-dire englobant le système clos et le milieu qui l'environne. On pourra ainsi réduire l'entropie au niveau local, et de nouveau avoir le contraste nécessaire au travail mécanique, mais cela se fera au prix d'une augmentation de l'entropie au niveau global.

Dans le contexte de mon hypothèse d'une analogie entre un système thermodynamique et un système regroupant les dieux et les hommes, cela signifie que le contraste entre ces deux catégories diminue chaque fois qu'il permet d'effectuer une action : dans le contexte du système religieux d'Égypte antique, un rite ou une prière. Le

\*] Tiré des voix off de l'installation vidéo « Sortir Au Jour », première janvier 2023

dualisme nécessaire à l'action ne peut que diminuer lorsque cette dernière est effectuée.

On a donc une tendance à évoluer dans le temps vers un état plus homogène, et cet état peut être envisagé par l'intermédiaire de deux concepts qui paraissent opposés à première vue : l'unicité et la multiplicité. Ce paradoxe cesse d'en être un si l'on adopte une perspective statistique, au cœur de la thermodynamique ; il faut pour cela regarder cet état homogène de plus près.

Imaginons un groupe de particules à température T dans un récipient fermé qui définit notre système clos, la température étant la mesure de la vitesse de ces particules. Bien que notre température soit de T, il se peut qu'il n'y ait jamais deux particules ayant la même vitesse : cette valeur décrit une moyenne. Qualifier la température de ce système d'homogène revient à dire non pas que toutes les particules ont la même vitesse, mais que la probabilité de trouver une particule à une vitesse donnée V est la même quelle que soit l'emplacement dans le récipient ; une probabilité maximale si V s'approche de T.

L'homogénéité, comprise en termes statistiques, décrit donc une courbe de probabilité plate : si on dessine un graphique dans lequel les abscisses représentent la position dans l'espace du récipient et les ordonnées représentent la probabilité de trouver une particule à une vitesse donnée, il y a homogénéité si la courbe obtenue est plate. Si on dessine un graphique dans lequel les ordonnées représentent la vitesse *réelle* des particules (toujours selon leur location en abscisse), la courbe obtenue peut avoir ses pics et ses creux sans que l'on cesse pour autant d'avoir une température homogène.

On aborde ainsi une conception de l'homogénéité qui cesse d'être un antonyme de la diversité et qui inclut l'Un autant que le Multiple. Dans cette ligne horizontale d'une courbe de probabilité, j'entrevois en surimpression la surface du Noun, le calme stérile de l'océan primordial et final. Une platitude que la silhouette du Ben-Ben, sur lequel se tient le Démiurge, vient briser, rendant ainsi la création possible — comme si des vagues se formaient sur la surface d'un lac, sans qu'aucune créature n'y nage et sans qu'aucun vent ne souffle.

Un océan dans lequel l'Un et le Multiple sont synonymes.

*Dans une incertitude grandissante, j'écoute la source couler ; une collection d'octets dont la signification glisse entre mes doigts. La nostalgie d'un message monosyllabique m'étreint contre mon gré : le souvenir lointain d'une terre aux mêmes mots. Faisant le deuil de la redondance, des pleureuses aux visages voilés versent des pluies torrentielles, et je me surprends à me baigner dans un océan de symboles équiprobables. « Faisons-nous un nom, afin que nous ne soyons pas dispersés » scandaient les sujets de Nemrod, clamant*

*leurs certitudes jusqu'à ce qu'elles crèvent la surface du Noun, comme la langue du Démiurge vociférant sa création. Ils virent en songe que leur langue de chair parlait avec le même souffle dont fut animé la bouche des hommes pour converser entre eux.\**

## DIEU EST MORT

*Dieu est mort ! Dieu reste mort ! Et c'est nous qui l'avons tué ! Comment nous consoler, nous les meurtriers des meurtriers ? Ce que le monde a possédé jusqu'à présent de plus sacré et de plus puissant a perdu son sang sous notre couteau. — Qui nous lavera de ce sang ? Avec quelle eau pourrions-nous nous purifier ? Quelles expiations, quels jeux sacrés serons-nous forcés d'inventer ? La grandeur de cet acte n'est-elle pas trop grande pour nous ? Ne sommes-nous pas forcés de devenir nous-mêmes des dieux simplement — ne fût-ce que pour paraître dignes d'eux ?\*\**

Où sont Thot, Isis et Osiris ? Que sont-ils devenus ? S'ils sont morts, c'est bien qu'ils se sont trop rapprochés de l'humain, jusqu'à perdre leur immortalité. Auraient-ils choisi cette fin ou bien étaient-ils comme nous soumis à des lois qui les dépassent ? Les avons-nous absorbés, en même temps qu'ils nous absorbaient nous ?

De lointains ancêtres leur ont adressé des prières, et chaque mot, bien que destiné à réaffirmer leur condition divine, a mordu un peu plus la barrière qui les séparait du monde terrestre ; le monde des dieux est devenu un récipient percé par lequel se sont écoulées leur essence et leur intégrité. On leur a attribué tant de symboles, de mots, d'avatars, de totems, de temples, que les dieux cessent progressivement d'exister en tant que tels. Nietzsche clamait la mort de Dieu, et les transhumanistes appellent à la fin de l'humanité — l'échange d'énergie va dans les deux sens. Dieux et humains sont encore là pour le moment ; ils conservent toujours une partie de leur altérité, fût-elle moindre que par le passé. S'il se passe encore *quelque chose* dans le temps, c'est bien que le processus n'est pas terminé, mais il y a des signes de dilution qui ne trompent pas... Affaire à suivre donc.

\*] Tiré des voix off de l'installation vidéo « Sortir Au Jour », première janvier 2023

\*\*] Nietzsche, Friedrich. Le Gai Savoir, Livre Troisième. Traduction par Henri Albert. Paris, Société du Mercure de France, 1901 (Œuvres complètes de Frédéric Nietzsche, vol. 8) p.180



## LE KA

Dans la tradition égyptienne, le Ka est le double spirituel de l'individu ; un *alter ego* en charge des actions à effectuer après le moment de la mort.\* Dans ma lecture thermodynamique de cette tradition, il devient le symbole de la reconnaissance de l'altérité dans la similitude, et inversement. L'individu rencontre son double et s'y voit comme dans un miroir déformant.

Se reconnaître dans l'autre et reconnaître l'autre en soi, c'est une quête personnelle qui m'accompagne au jour le jour et qui vient ici se lier au récit d'un futur ou l'entropie gagne du terrain. Une quête guidée par des considérations morales dans mon quotidien que j'aborde ici sous un angle plus factuel, par le biais de la distance offerte par le discours scientifique autant que par mon éloignement de la civilisation égyptienne.

Le pluriel de « Ka » se prononce « Kaou » et désigne la nourriture, les aliments, les offrandes (c'est à l'intention du Ka que les égyptiens laissaient des aliments dans la tombe), dans le sens d'un « principe de vie et de force matérielle ».\*\* Dans « Sortir Au Jour », l'individu se nourrit d'un Autre qui n'est autre que lui-même, bouclant un cycle d'échanges d'énergie, de consommation qui est source de création autant que de destruction. Une digestion de corps étrangers au corps, qui lui-même nourrira un autre corps, jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus rien à digérer.

## LE TEMPLE

Le temple est la demeure des dieux dans le monde terrestre. Espace du sacré et du rituel, il est la porte reliant deux mondes, similaire à la porte manipulée par le démon de Maxwell ; avec la notable différence qu'il n'y a cette fois-ci pas de démon. Le temple est donc le point de contact où un système est exposé à un autre ; une porte ouverte vers un échange d'énergie. Dans un monde résolument tourné vers l'augmentation de son entropie globale, le temple est le premier à perdre sa structure ; les colonnes qui séparent le divin du terrestre sont les premières à s'écrouler. La nécessité rituelle d'une structure architecturale qui vienne ancrer la présence des dieux dans le paysage terrestre ne peut qu'aboutir à la diffusion de cette divinité ; c'est à la fois sa raison d'être et la cause de sa chute. Les opposés s'attirent, et la plus petite des portes suffit à laisser glisser le divin dans l'humain et l'humain dans le divin.

\*] Naud, Yves. La Vengeance des Pharaons. Famot, 1977, p.67

\*\*] Moret, Alexandre. Le Ka des Égyptiens est-il un ancien totem ? Dans : Revue de l'histoire des religions Vol. 67 (1913), p. 182

## LA LITANIE

Le Livre des Morts égyptien regorge de prières qui ne sont autres que des suites sans fin des divers noms des dieux.\* Le défunt se doit de faire montre de sa bonne connaissance des noms des personnages du panthéon, mais il ne s'agit pas seulement de les honorer. Par la récitation et la répétition, le défunt vient digérer les dieux dans un estomac sémantique. Il leur prend leurs noms, comme autant de symboles de leurs individualités respectives, et les mastique un à un, patiemment, jusqu'à ce que grandisse le divin en lui. Après tout, si l'on en croit les recommandations du Livre des Morts, l'une des étapes à suivre lors du voyage vers l'au-delà est d'effectuer la « transformation en Dieu ».\*\*

*Je te parle, et avec chaque mot c'est une partie de moi-même qui s'échappe, afin que je la retrouve métamorphosée. Je performe l'ouverture de la bouche, traversant des frontières qui m'étaient interdites. Le doute s'insinue entre mes lèvres ouvertes, et se glisse chaque jour plus profondément dans les recoins de mon être. Créature aimante entre toutes, il écrase mes certitudes une à une dans son étreinte. Il brise la géométrie de ma pensée qui change progressivement d'état, tout comme l'eau change d'état au fil de la modification de sa structure moléculaire. La matière est fluide et coule comme un ruisseau. Je me liquéfie, je fonds et je confonds.\*\*\**

## ENTROPIE DE SHANNON

L'idée d'entropie, si elle naît de la thermodynamique lors de la deuxième moitié du XIXème siècle, fut ensuite empruntée par diverses branches des sciences, où elle est définie par le biais de concepts différents tout en conservant sa qualité de processus de transformation tendant vers la désorganisation. L'une d'entre elles est particulièrement intéressante à mettre en relation avec la figure du démon de Maxwell et avec ma conception de la prière comme vecteur de l'entropie. Cette variante, appelée « entropie de Shannon », est développée en 1948 dans la cadre de la théorie de l'information (dont Claude Shannon est le père fondateur) ; une théorie qui traite de la quantification de l'information contenue dans un message, là encore en suivant une approche probabiliste. L'entropie de Shannon permet de mettre en lumière la notion d'incertitude, qui rejoint ce que l'on a déjà abordé en établissant la similarité entre homogénéité et platitude d'une courbe de probabilité.

\*] Budge, E. A. Wallis. The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. Epiphanius Wilson, A.M, 2016.

\*\*] Budge, E. A. Wallis. The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. Epiphanius Wilson, A.M, 2016, p.136

\*\*\*] Tiré des voix off de l'installation vidéo « Sortir Au Jour », première janvier 2023

Shannon établit la relation entre la probabilité d'avoir un certain signe contenu dans un message donné et le niveau d'incertitude du récepteur quant au contenu dudit message\*, qu'il décrit en empruntant le mot « entropie » à R. Clausius. Autrement dit, si on a un message constitué par un ensemble de signes (par exemple des mots), plus le nombre de mots est grand (plus le dictionnaire du langage utilisé est large), plus grande sera l'incertitude quant à la signification du message. En effet, si le dictionnaire contient un seul mot, on peut être certain du contenu du message, mais si le dictionnaire contient une centaine de mots, l'incertitude augmente ; pour être plus précis, elle augmente en fonction de la répartition des probabilités d'apparition des différents mots : pour un dictionnaire de cent mots, l'entropie d'un message atteint sa valeur maximale lorsque tous ces mots ont une probabilité d'apparition égale (on retrouve là encore la platitude d'une courbe de probabilités).

Il y a donc un glissement direct de la fusion à l'incertitude ; si le vocabulaire du panthéon augmente, l'entropie d'une prière augmente en conséquence. On peut aller plus loin en abordant le cas de l'homonyme, du même mot qui prend une signification différente – comme abordé précédemment avec le nom d'Osiris, qui décrit à la fois le dieu des morts et le défunt lui-même ; dans ce cas, l'unicité du signifiant déguise une multiplicité du signifié qui vient masquer une entropie croissante. Autrement dit, l'incertitude quant à la signification des signes eux-mêmes ne peut qu'augmenter l'incertitude quant à la signification du message dans son ensemble.

## L'EAU

L'eau est image qui m'accompagne dans la conception de ce projet. Elle est un exemple d'une efficacité redoutable pour décrire le deuxième principe de la thermodynamique – je ne compte plus les fois où j'ai pu décrire un récipient contenant de l'eau chaude et de l'eau froide qui se mélangent, et que l'on ne peut séparer de nouveau sans échange d'énergie avec le milieu extérieur au récipient. Elle est contenue dans le Noun, l'image de l'origine et de la fin, et elle accompagne l'ensemble des mythes égyptiens par le biais du Nil, qui régissait d'innombrables aspects de la vie laïque et religieuse de l'Égypte antique. Selon Plutarque, « en Égypte, Osiris est le Nil qui s'unit à la terre-Isis, et Seth la mer, dans laquelle le Nil se jette, disparaît et se disperse ». \*\* Dans le delta du Nil, là où l'eau douce, vive, fertile et dont le mouvement est clairement défini, se déverse dans l'étendue salée, dans laquelle ne pousse aucune plante cultivable, aux courants plus flous de la Méditerranée, se reflète l'image d'un ordre qui plonge dans le Chaos de Seth, le dieu qui démembre et désintègre.

\*] Shannon, Claude E. A mathematical theory of communication. Dans : The Bell System Technical Journal, Vol. 27, pp. 379–423, 623–656, July, October, 1948.

\*\*] Plutarque. Isis et Osiris, 32. Traduction Froidefond 1988. Cité dans : Goddio, Franck & Fabre, David. Osiris : Mystères Engloutis d'Égypte. Flammarion, 2015, p.25

Cette association d'Osiris au Nil et à sa fertilité se reflète de façon particulièrement frappante dans le rite de l'Osiris Végétant.\* Célébration du cycle de la vie (qui pour les égyptiens était par la force des choses intimement lié au cycle du Nil), ce rite consiste à façonner une statuette à l'image d'Osiris momifié contenant des grains d'orge, de blé ou de maïs que l'on laissait germer dans le corps du dieu :

*Je suis la plante de la vie,  
celle qui jaillit du corps d'Osiris ;  
cette vie qui naît entre les côtes d'Osiris,  
d'Osiris qui fait vivre les êtres humains,  
ce même Osiris qui donne leur divinité à tous les dieux ;  
lui qui donne l'esprit aux esprits  
et qui apporte la richesse à ceux qui possèdent les champs,  
lui qui fournit les fouaces pour les esprits.  
Osiris qui ranime les vivants,  
Osiris qui redonne la vie à leurs membres.  
Comme le grain, je vis la vie des vivants ;  
je jaillis entre les côtes de Geb  
et je suis aimé dans le ciel, sur terre,  
dans les eaux et dans les champs.  
Maintenant, Isis est heureuse  
à cause d'Horus, son divin fils ;  
elle est remplie de joie par lui, son dieu.  
Je suis la vie qui jaillit du sein d'Osiris.\*\**

Osiris, c'est la fertilité, la fertilité consommée, c'est la mort, et la mort, c'est Osiris. La fertilité n'est que potentielle dans la différence, elle n'est réalisée que dans l'unification qui mène à l'indifférenciation. Maintenir le contraste revient à ne pas exploiter son potentiel actif, et à refuser de s'inscrire dans le temps.

## HISTOIRE

Ce que l'on appelle l'Égypte antique correspond à une civilisation qui s'étend sur plus de trois millénaires (sans même compter la façon dont ses traditions perdurent à travers celles de la Grèce antique, qui elles-mêmes continuent de nous influencer jusqu'à aujourd'hui). Bien entendu, une période aussi longue contient nécessairement ses changements, et il en est certains qui sont notables pour ce qui nous intéresse ici.

\*] Leca, Ange-Pierre. Les Momies. Famot, 1977, p.218

\*\*] « L'enchantement pour devenir grain de froment » Naud, Yves. La Vengeance des Pharaons. Famot, 1977, pp.45-46



L'un de ces changements concerne la momification : si elle était réservée aux rois aux débuts de la civilisation égyptienne, cette pratique s'est ensuite étendue aux membres du haut clergé pour finalement cascader le long de l'échelle sociale, jusqu'à ce que tout un chacun ait accès à la momification (avec des techniques et des degrés de sophistication certes variables selon les moyens financiers).\* On pourra également noter que cette pratique s'est même étendue de l'humain à l'animal (on a pu retrouver des cryptes massives contenant les momies de milliers de bovins, oiseaux et autres animaux en tout genres)\*\*, l'augmentation de la porosité de la barrière séparant les espèces n'étant qu'un symptôme supplémentaire d'une entropie en augmentation.

Un autre de ces changements concerne le panthéon égyptien. Au fil des dynasties, les dieux sont assimilés les uns aux autres, ce qui se traduit entre autres par des changements de noms. Râ et Osiris deviennent Osiris-Râ, le Désiurge s'appelle tour-à-tour Amon, Ptah ou Atoum, les hybridations, les croisements, les combinaisons d'attributs et de récits se multiplient pour tendre vers une confusion terminologique – amplifiée par les échanges culturels avec la Grèce, qui apportèrent avec eux leur lot de démarches syncrétiques.

Je peux ainsi observer et extrapoler l'augmentation de l'entropie à plusieurs échelles : au niveau de la civilisation égyptienne en elle-même, dans les différences qui séparent cette période de ma réalité contemporaine, et en déduisant de ces évolutions un hypothétique futur.

## TRANSFORMATIONS

Les rites et textes liturgiques égyptiens regorgent de processus d'identification et de transformation, de manière tout à fait directe et littérale. Le Livre des Morts inclut ainsi des indications quant à une transformation du défunt en faucon, en gouverneur, en lotus, en Ptah, en oiseau Benu, en héron, en esprit vivant, en hirondelle, en serpent Sata, en crocodile\*\*\* – on parlait aussi plus haut de « l'enchantement pour devenir grain de froment » et de la « transformation en dieu ». Outre l'usage du nom d'Osiris pour décrire le défunt, on remarque également que les hymnes et litanies dédiées à différentes divinités sont effectuées à la première personne : le défunt récite les hauts faits de diverses divinités depuis la perspective du « je ». Devenir ces divinités fait partie de son devoir religieux, et si cela transparait au travers du langage, ce langage est perçu comme imbibé de réalité : le langage est directement connecté au monde terrestre. Les récits cosmogoniques varient selon les périodes et régions d'Égypte, mais on y trouve de nombreuses références à un acte de création par le Verbe, comme dans cet hymne à Amon-Râ :

\*] Leca, Ange-Pierre. Les Momies. Famot, 1977, p.36

\*\*] Leca, Ange-Pierre. Les Momies. Famot, 1977, pp.151-185

\*\*\*] Budge, E. A. Wallis. The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. Epiphanius Wilson, A.M, 2016, pp.137-150

*He came forth as self generated  
All his limbs speaking to him  
He formed himself before heaven and earth came into being  
The earth being in the primeval waters of the "weary flood".*

*You have started to create this land  
To establish what has come from your mouth (=the gods)  
You have raised heaven and kept earth down  
to make this land wide enough for your image*

*You have taken on your first form as Re  
to illuminate the Two Lands for that what you have created.  
as your heart [planned], you being alone  
You created them, the gods being in your retinue*

*after you came forth alone from the primeval waters  
You created humans together with creatures great and small  
and all that has come into existence and all that exists.\**

Ou encore cet hymne à Ramsès III :

*Humans issued from his eyes  
the gods emerged on his mouth.  
Humans issued from his eyes,  
the gods from his lips.*

*He secreted everybody from his eyes,  
but the gods issued from his mouth.  
Gods issued from his mouth  
and humans from his eye.\*\**

Ou encore :

\*] Hymne à Amon-Râ, 1400 av. J-C. Cité dans : Assmann, Jan. Creation through hieroglyphs: the cosmic grammatology of Ancient Egypt. Dans : La Porta, S. ; Shulman, D. (Hrsgg.): The poetics of grammar and the metaphysics of sound and sign. Leiden ; Boston, pp. 17-34 (Jerusalem studies in religion and culture ; 6), 2007, p.20

\*\*] Hymne à Ramsès III. Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak I, OIP XXV pi. xxv = AHG no. 196. Cité dans : Assmann, Jan. Creation through hieroglyphs: the cosmic grammatology of Ancient Egypt. Dans : La Porta, S. ; Shulman, D. (Hrsgg.): The poetics of grammar and the metaphysics of sound and sign. Leiden ; Boston, pp. 17-34 (Jerusalem studies in religion and culture ; 6), 2007, p.22

*Who created heaven and earth and gave birth to human beings,  
who brought forth all that is through the utterance of his mouth.  
Who spoke and it happened, who gave birth to what exists,  
Great One, creator of the gods and human beings.  
Who came into being alone and gave birth to himself as millions.  
It was his limbs that answered him,  
it was his tongue that formed everything he created.\**

Un récit du Verbe créateur qui rappelle encore une fois la Genèse biblique. Selon les textes des périodes antérieures, seuls les dieux sont créés par le Verbe, puis cette méthode est étendue à l'ensemble du cosmos. Les récits cosmogoniques font constamment référence au Verbe, à la Bouche et à la Langue ; le langage est comparable à une sécrétion physique qui découle de la pensée du cœur – les mentions du Verbe créateur vont souvent de pair avec celles du crachat, de la pluie, du sperme et autres sécrétions du corps. Le Verbe est incarné, ce qui révèle toute la puissance de l'acte d'identification tel qu'on le retrouve dans les rites du Livre des Morts : de l'identification sémantique à la dissolution de la structure du cosmos, il n'y a qu'un pas.

## ART DU TEMPS

Le contenu de mon récit de la fin et du trajet qui y mène se reflète dans sa forme, c'est-à-dire dans les moyens utilisés pour l'incarner. On y retrouve la vidéo et le son, arts du temps par excellence – puisque leur existence se définit par leur inscription dans une temporalité. Les autres pratiques qui trouvent leur place dans ma production sont des sous-catégories de ces deux ensembles, puisqu'ils sont traduits par l'intermédiaire de cette même temporalité : la danse, la sculpture et le texte (parlé).

La vidéo tout comme le son enregistré offrent la possibilité d'un temps déformé : le montage, c'est la possibilité de l'ellipse, du raccourci, de l'inversion (le terme « déformé » doit ici être compris dans un rapport au temps du récit, et non pas dans un rapport à un hypothétique temps absolu) – ceci d'une manière similaire au fonctionnement même du matériau vidéo (25 images par seconde qui sont autant d'ellipses) et même du son, puisqu'il est ici numérique (48000 samples par seconde). Il s'agit donc avant tout d'une sélection de moments, d'images-clefs, qui doivent être agencées dans la réalité du monde physique de manière à traduire le temps du récit, qui est purement imaginaire.

\*] Tombe de Nebwenef, 1300 av. J-C. Cité dans : Assmann, Jan. Creation through hieroglyphs: the cosmic grammatology of Ancient Egypt. Dans : La Porta, S. ; Shulman, D. (Hrsgg.): The poetics of grammar and the metaphysics of sound and sign. Leiden ; Boston, pp. 17-34 (Jerusalem studies in religion and culture ; 6), 2007, p.24

Comme toute autre traduction, celle-ci contient sa part interprétative et ne se limite pas au littéral ; il faut avant tout traduire la direction, l'intention. Les images-clefs, les moments du film sont les mots utilisés pour traduire le langage de l'histoire ; ils sont à la fois des outils subordonnés à l'intention générale de cette dernière et des artefacts qui possèdent leurs propres qualités poétiques et musicales. La traduction mot-à-mot permet de mettre en lumière de nouveaux artefacts, de découvrir des formes fascinantes, mystérieuses ou bizarres.

J'effectue donc cette traduction avec le souci de la cohérence et de la fidélité à mon propre récit, mais aussi avec la joie d'être surpris par les formes nouvelles auxquelles elle donne naissance. Il n'y a pas de traduction parfaite, et je cherche à tirer parti de cette imperfection, à jouer avec la perte de contrôle sur mon histoire qu'elle engendre. J'ajouterai que j'effectue cette traduction au fur et à mesure du développement de la narration, et donc qu'elle influence ce développement.

Ce processus d'allers-retours entre l'imagination d'un récit et sa traduction dans un langage artistique aboutit à un ensemble d'images-clés qui deviennent des séquences, elles-mêmes regroupées en deux films qui ensemble constituent l'installation vidéo « Sortir Au Jour ». De la même manière qu'il doit reconstituer mentalement les intervalles séparant 25 images par seconde, le public doit reconstituer les intervalles suggérés entre ces séquences. Fait d'une matière poreuse, « Sortir Au Jour » se base sur de l'absence, sur une présence en négatif ; une production à la fois rigide, puisque j'y fixe des images immuables, et ouverte, avec des interstices à différentes échelles dans lequel un public peut s'infiltrer et ainsi s'approprier le récit.

L'une de mes tâches consiste donc à définir la densité de ma production ; quel est le ratio de vide par rapport au plein, quelle est la taille de ces interstices ? Mon public devra-t-il se faufiler dans de minces failles entre des blocs gigantesques ? Aura-t-il la liberté de se mouvoir librement entre de vastes espaces séparés par de rares points de repère ? Tout autant que je puisse filer la métaphore spatiale, cette densité reste en dehors du domaine du quantifiable, et je n'ai par conséquent aucun standard, aucun point de référence à disposition pour guider ce choix. Cette densité de la matière de « Sortir Au Jour » doit donc être ajustée de manière empirique (au toucher pour ainsi dire), tout en développant une capacité à se mettre à la place d'un public – sans quoi il y a risque de faire du sur-mesure, de tailler le vide d'une manière qui ne laisse d'espace que pour moi-même.

## EXPÉRIMENTATION & FOI

Mon processus de création emprunte à la méthode scientifique sans s'y limiter. J'effectue une observation, j'en déduis une hypothèse, puis réalise des expériences qui sont mises en comparaison avec cette hypothèse, et enfin effectue un compte-rendu public de ma recherche. Mon observation, c'est l'étude des mythes égyptiens et du concept d'entropie. Mon hypothèse, c'est l'existence d'une augmentation de



l'entropie à une échelle métaphysique (puisqu'elle englobe le divin) ; elle génère un récit en induisant une lecture différente des phénomènes. Mon expérimentation, c'est la production artistique, la traduction de cette histoire dans une réalité plastique. Mon compte-rendu prend la forme d'une installation vidéo, et consiste en une sélection des expériences les plus pertinentes (c'est-à-dire qui viennent soutenir ou contredire l'hypothèse).

Cet emprunt à la méthode scientifique est un guide qui vient structurer la production d'une manière qui s'accorde avec l'élément scientifique dans lequel elle prend l'une de ses sources. Puisque cette source dialogue avec une autre (de nature mythique et mythologique), il est vital de rétablir la balance des pouvoirs entre les deux, sans quoi il n'y a pas de dialogue mais seulement des ordres d'un supérieur à un subordonné. Il faut donc laisser sa part de pouvoir au mythique, lui laisser son mot à dire dans le processus de création : j'appellerais ce pouvoir du mythique la foi. Je parle ici de la foi en tant qu'outil méthodologique ; il ne s'agit donc pas de la foi en une divinité d'Égypte ou d'ailleurs, mais de la foi en mon propre récit, auquel je décide de croire de façon à motiver sa mise en forme.

L'usage simultané des stratégies du scientifique et du mythique implique le renoncement aux fins de ces deux domaines, qui font tout deux montre de trop de tendances totalitaires et contradictoires pour que l'un d'entre eux puisse suivre les desseins de l'autre. Ma démarche emprunte donc à ces deux disciplines pour emmener le récit sur un terrain qui leur est étranger – qui est celui qui m'intéresse. Tout comme je tisse une nouvelle toile narrative à partir des fils d'entropie et de rites funéraires d'Égypte, j'utilise les démarches du scientifique et du mythique pour les placer dans une direction tierce. Je me détache de la recherche de la vérité scientifique et du dogme moral vers lequel tend le mythe religieux pour les diriger vers le poétique :

Une poésie comme pensée qui émerge du sensible.

## DISSOLUTION

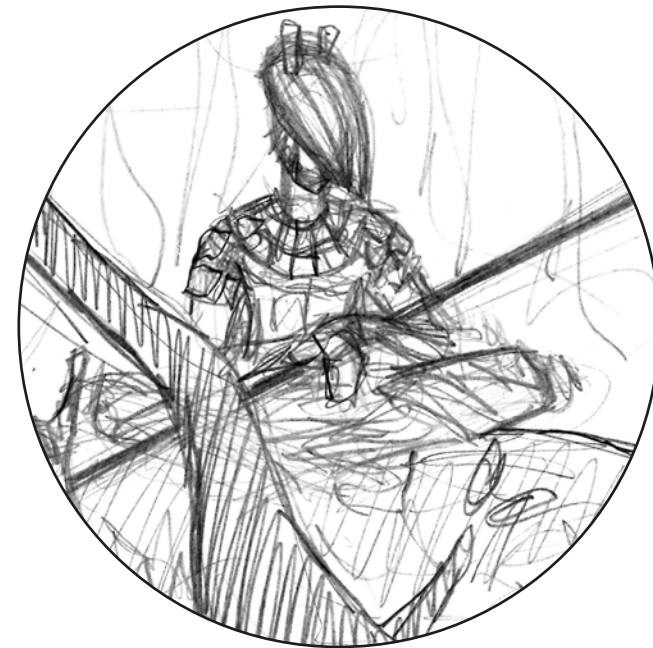
Je suis.

Récepteur et acteur du monde,  
j'échange avec lui  
jusqu'à ce que la frontière qui nous sépare

se dissolve.

SORTIR AU JOUR

## II. WITNESS THE DEICIDE





## GENÈSE DU PROJET

*Je regroupe sous le titre « Witness the Deicide » la première étape de ma recherche effectuée en 2019. Les pages suivantes contiennent un story-board (inachevé) ainsi qu'une série de planches couleurs qui révèlent ma première approche des mythes égyptiens. Le concept d'entropie est encore absent de ma recherche à cette période ; cette première tentative est le fruit d'une fascination naissante pour le mythe osirien, doublé d'un désir acharné d'en comprendre les tenants et aboutissants. Ce mythe relate l'arrivée d'Osiris, Isis, Seth et Nephtys dans une Égypte prédynastique, le règne conjoint d'Osiris et Isis, respectivement premiers roi et reine d'Égypte (Chapter I: The Breather); il continue avec la trahison et l'assassinat d'Osiris par son frère Seth, divinité du chaos, puis sa momification et sa résurrection dans le kheret-netjer, le monde des morts dont il devient le dieu (Chapter II: The Sleeper). Le récit continue avec la naissance d'Horus, né d'Osiris et Isis, envoyé dans le monde des vivants pour lutter contre son oncle Seth ; lutte qui symbolise celle de l'ordre et du chaos (Chapter III: The Fighter).\* Le mythe d'Osiris sert de fondation au Livre des Morts ainsi qu'à une grande partie des rites funéraires de l'Égypte antique.*

*Ce story-board s'approche d'un travail d'adaptation ; je le perçois aujourd'hui comme une étape d'étude de l'Égypte antique au travers du plastique, étape cruciale mais à laquelle manque encore une dimension interprétative et transformatrice. On y aperçoit toutefois déjà les concepts d'ordre et de désordre, qui deviendront plus tard centraux, grandir en arrière-plan.*

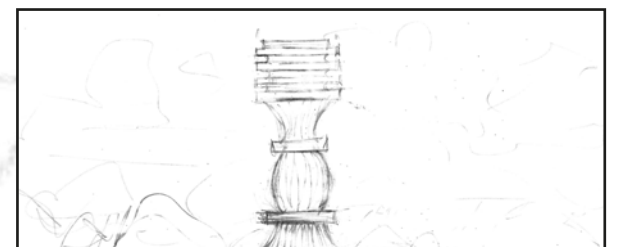
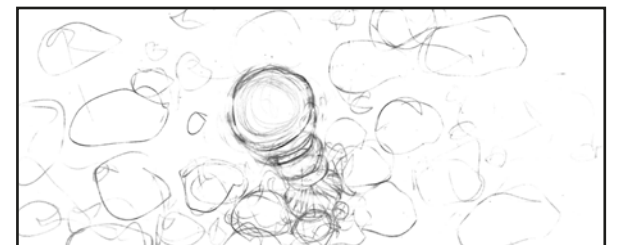
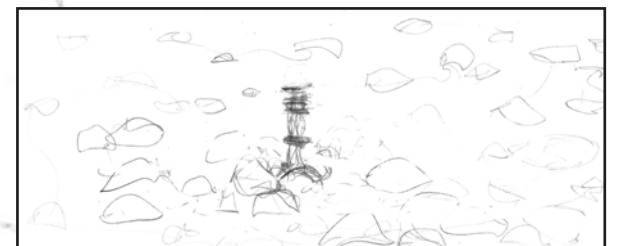
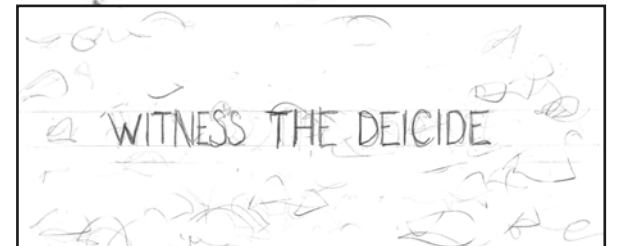
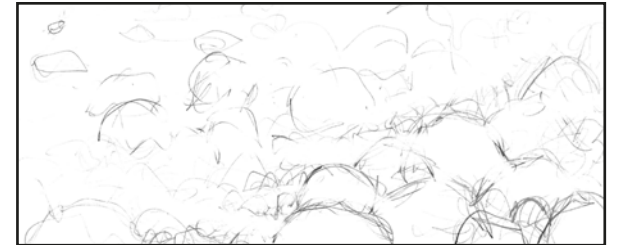
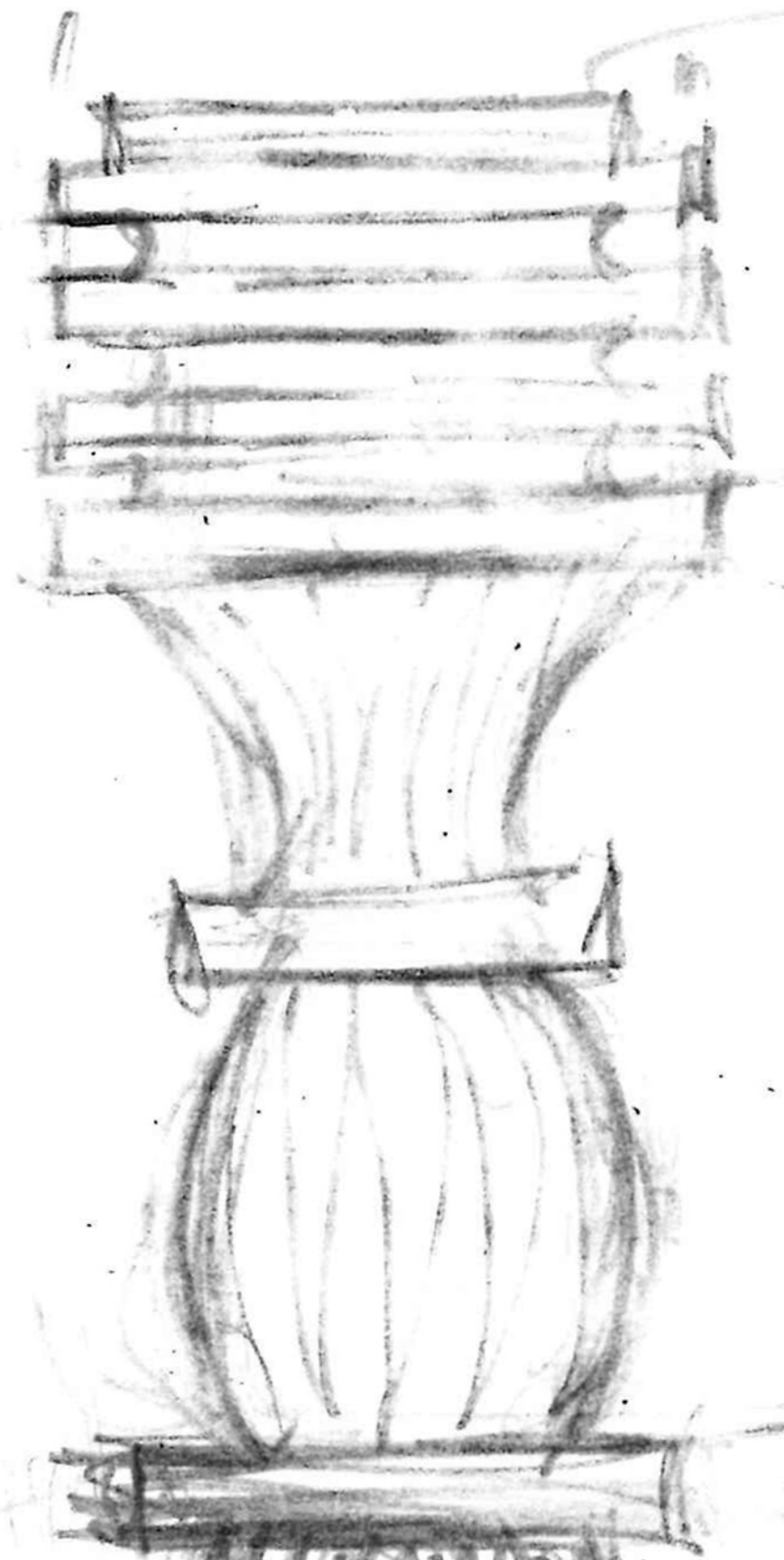
*Les images se lisent de haut en bas puis de gauche à droite.*

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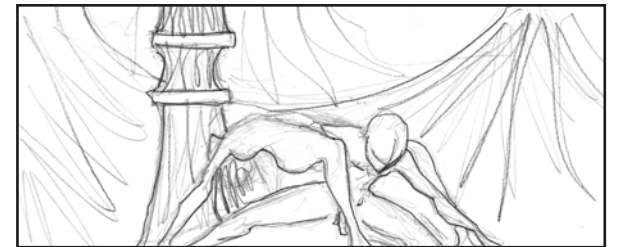
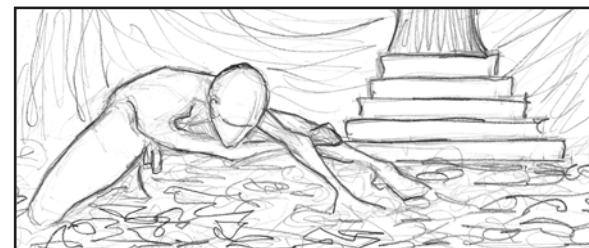
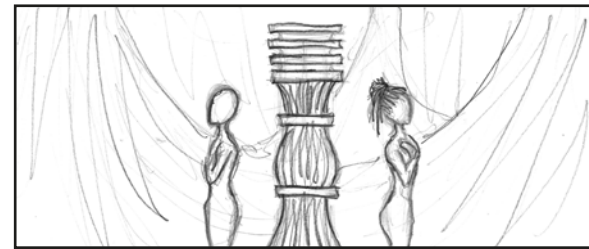
\*] Description du mythe osirien en section IIIA, sous l'entrée « A (Very) Brief and Non-Exhaustive List of the Characters Involved in the Osirian Myth ».



CHAPTER I: THE BREATHER



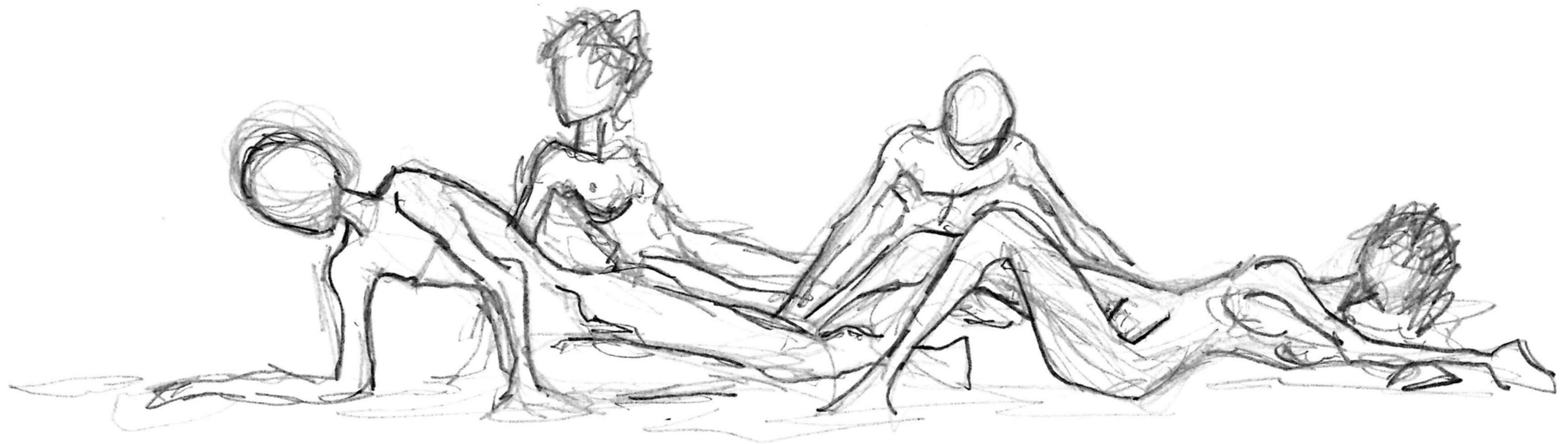
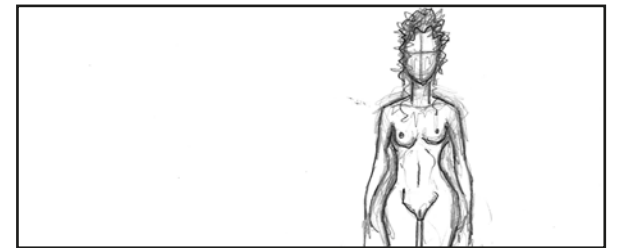
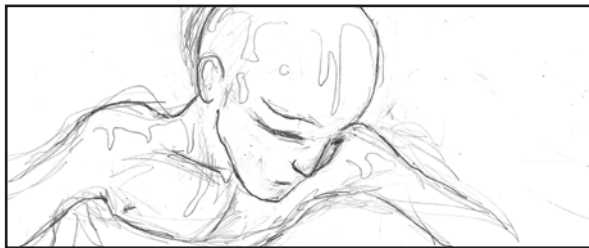
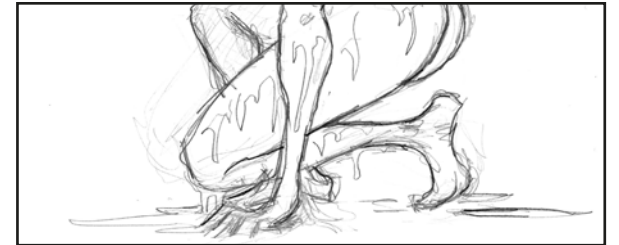
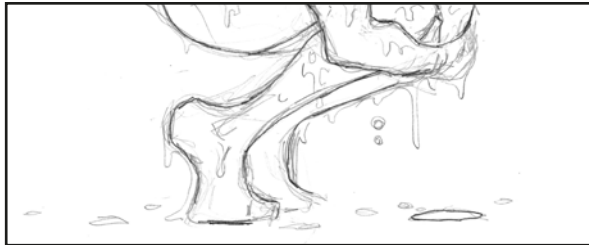
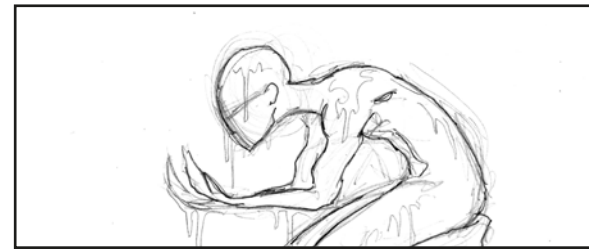
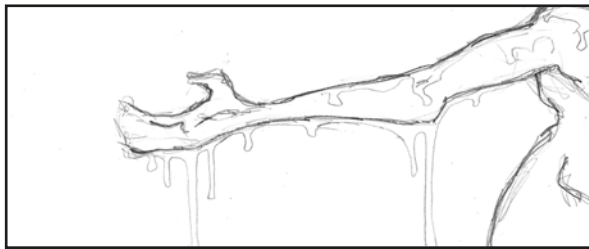








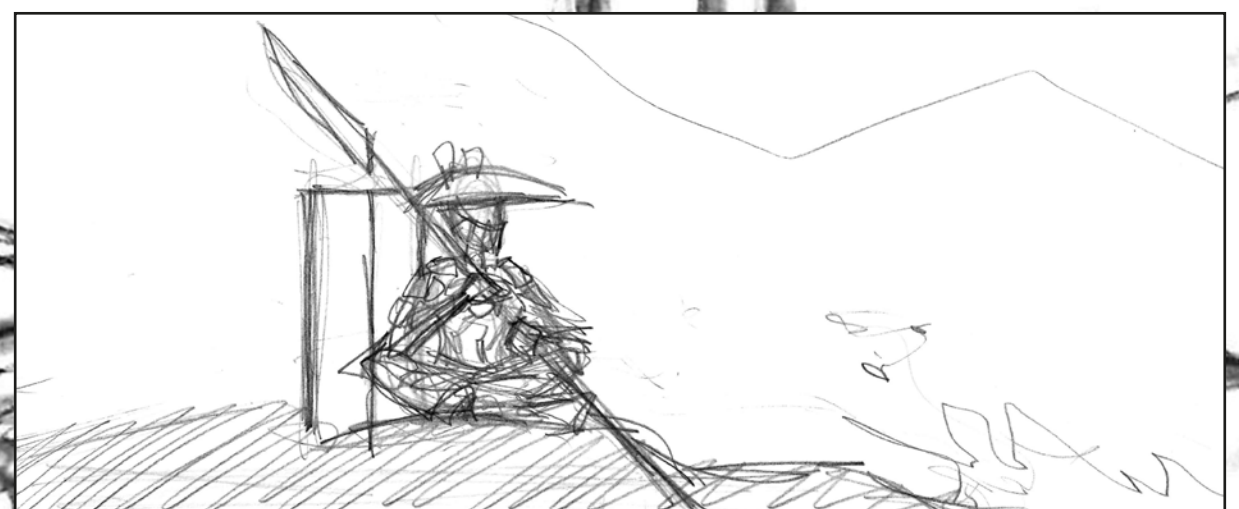
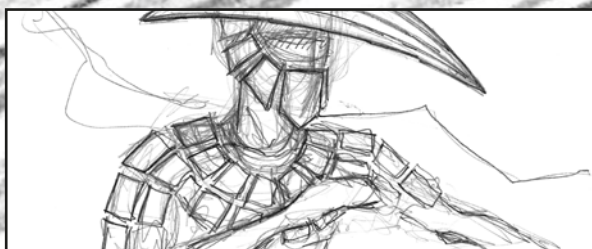
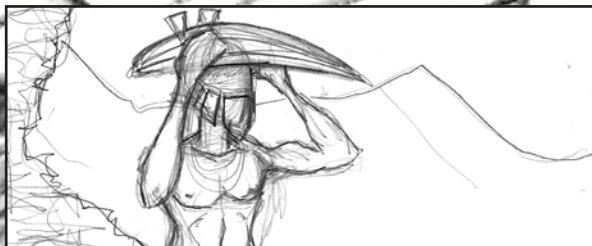
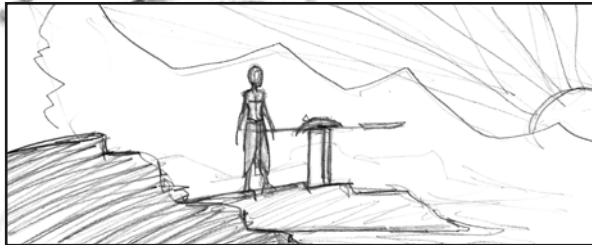
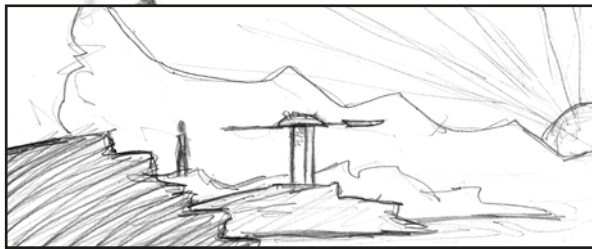




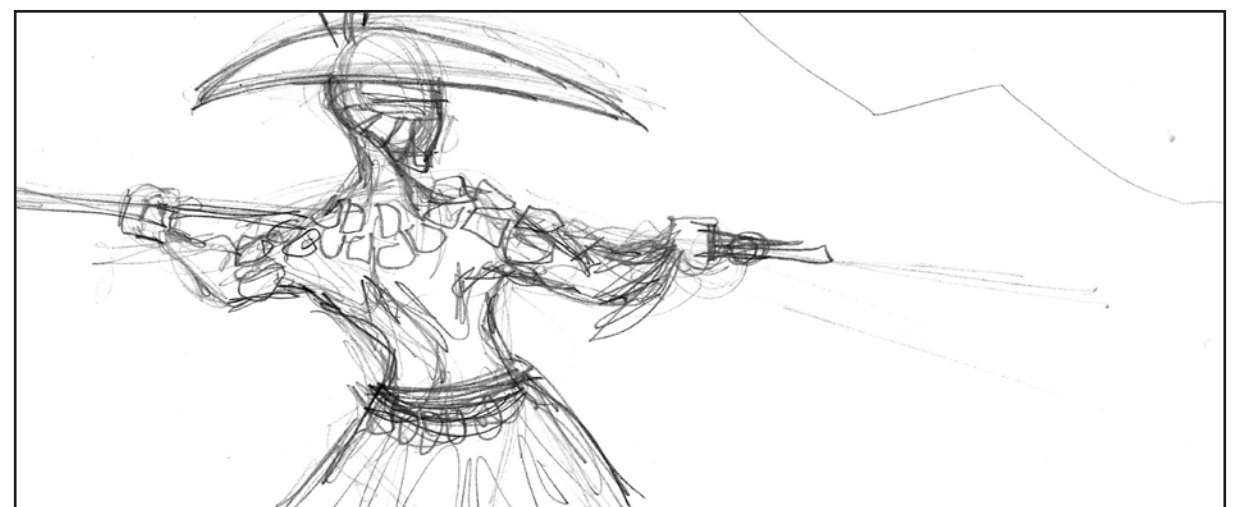
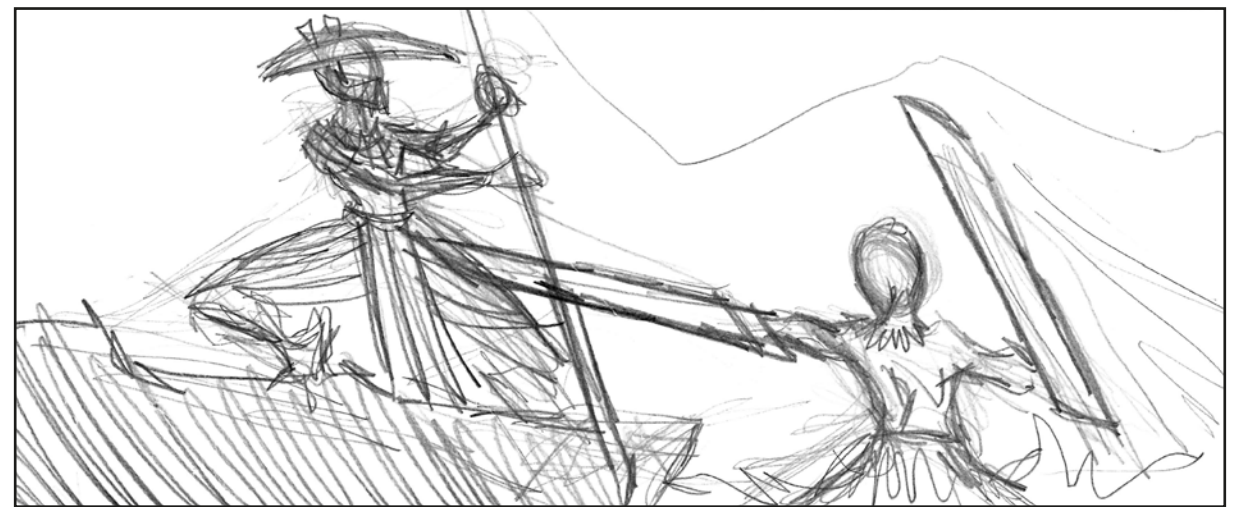
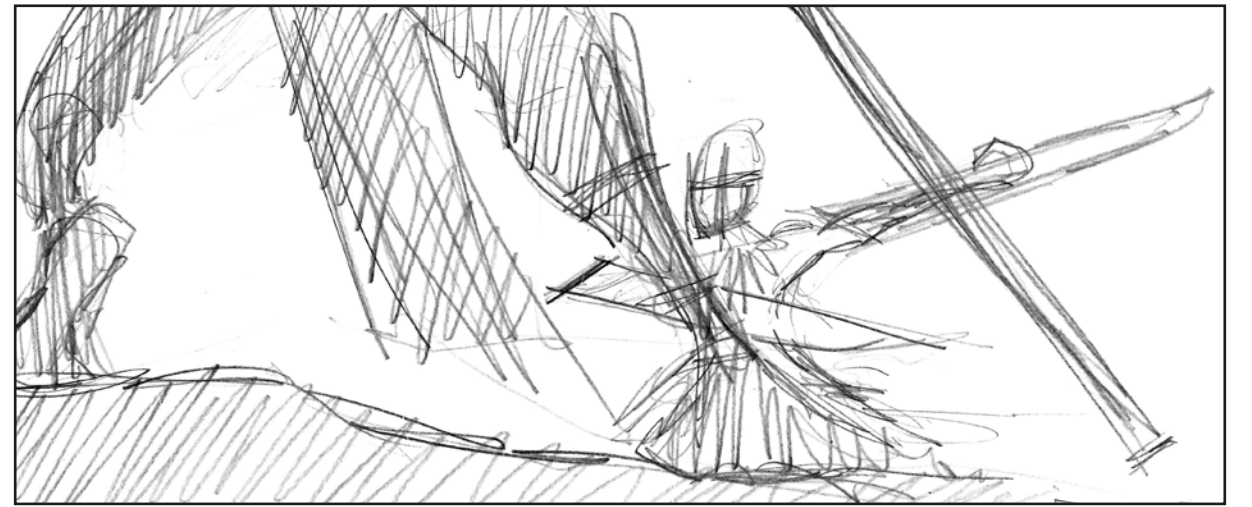
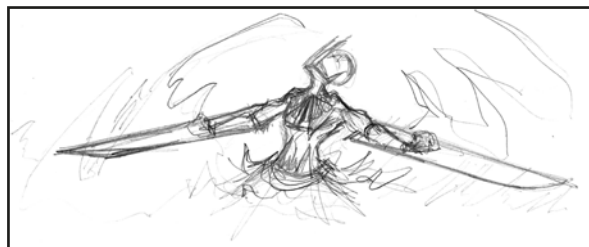
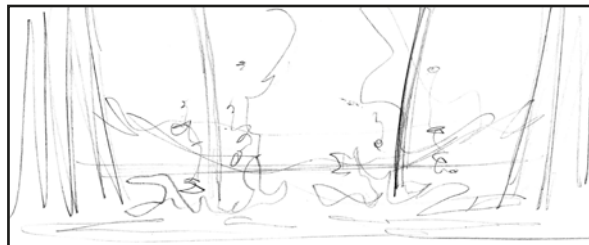
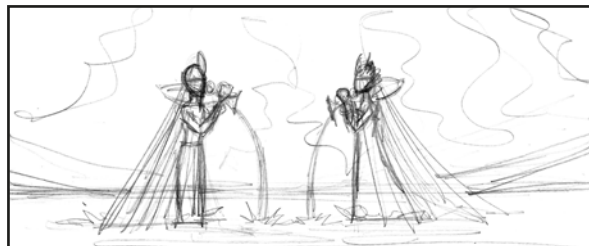
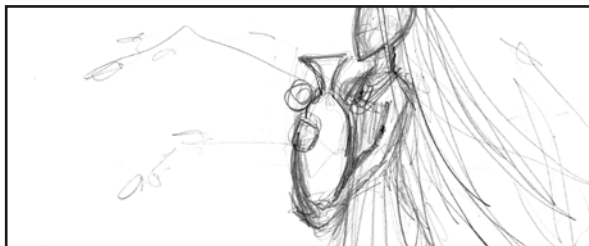
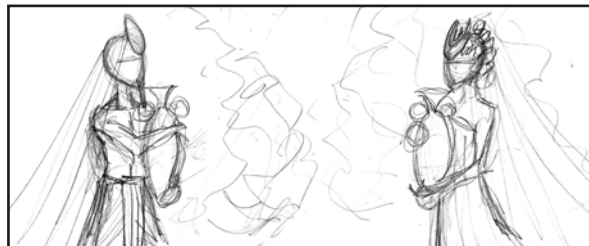
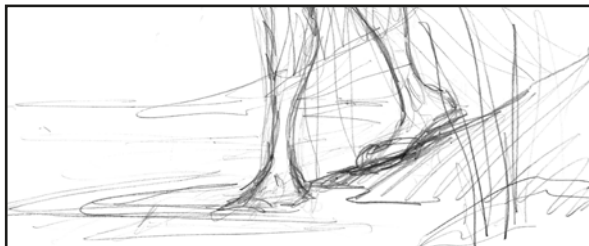
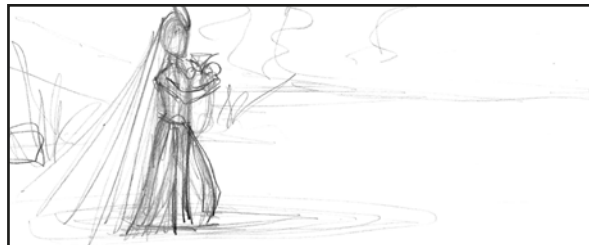
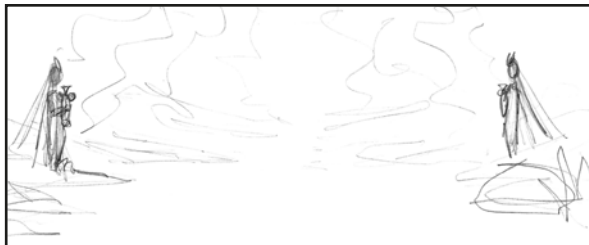
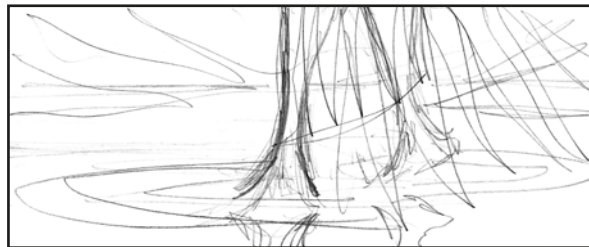
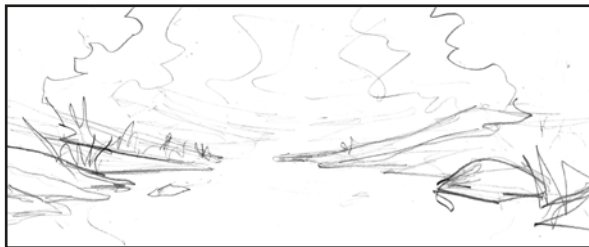




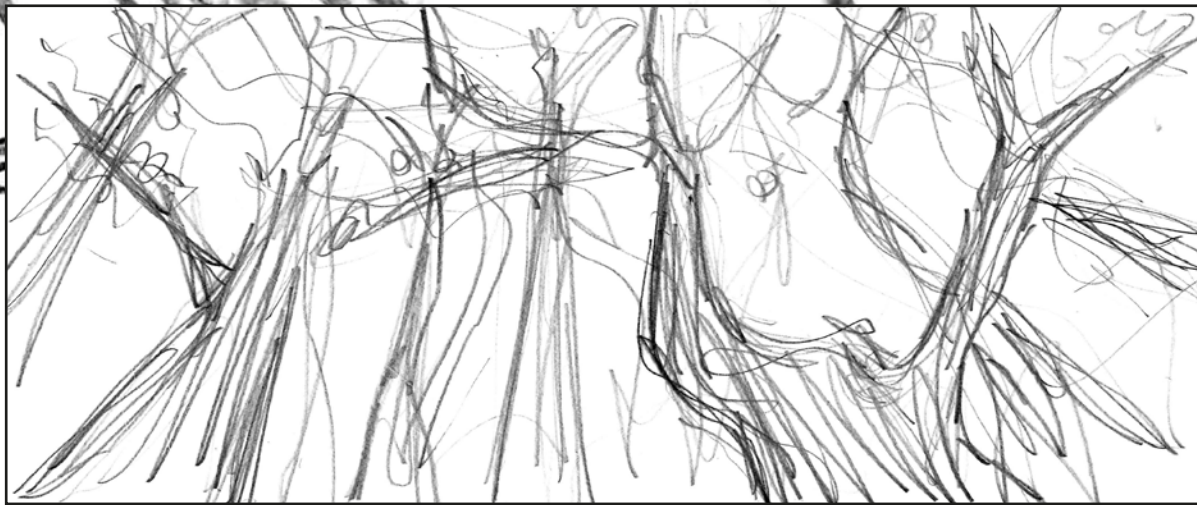
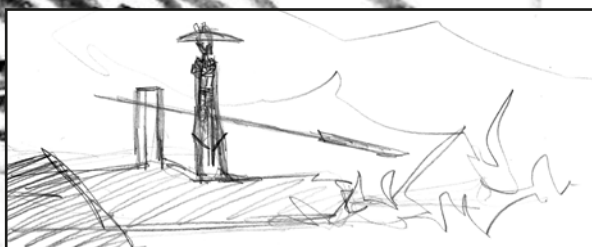
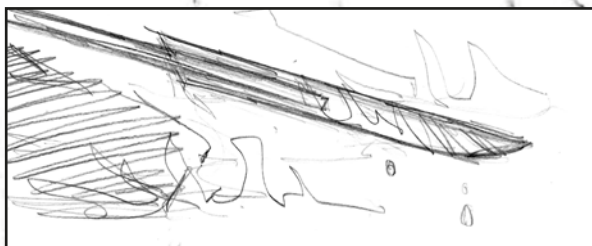




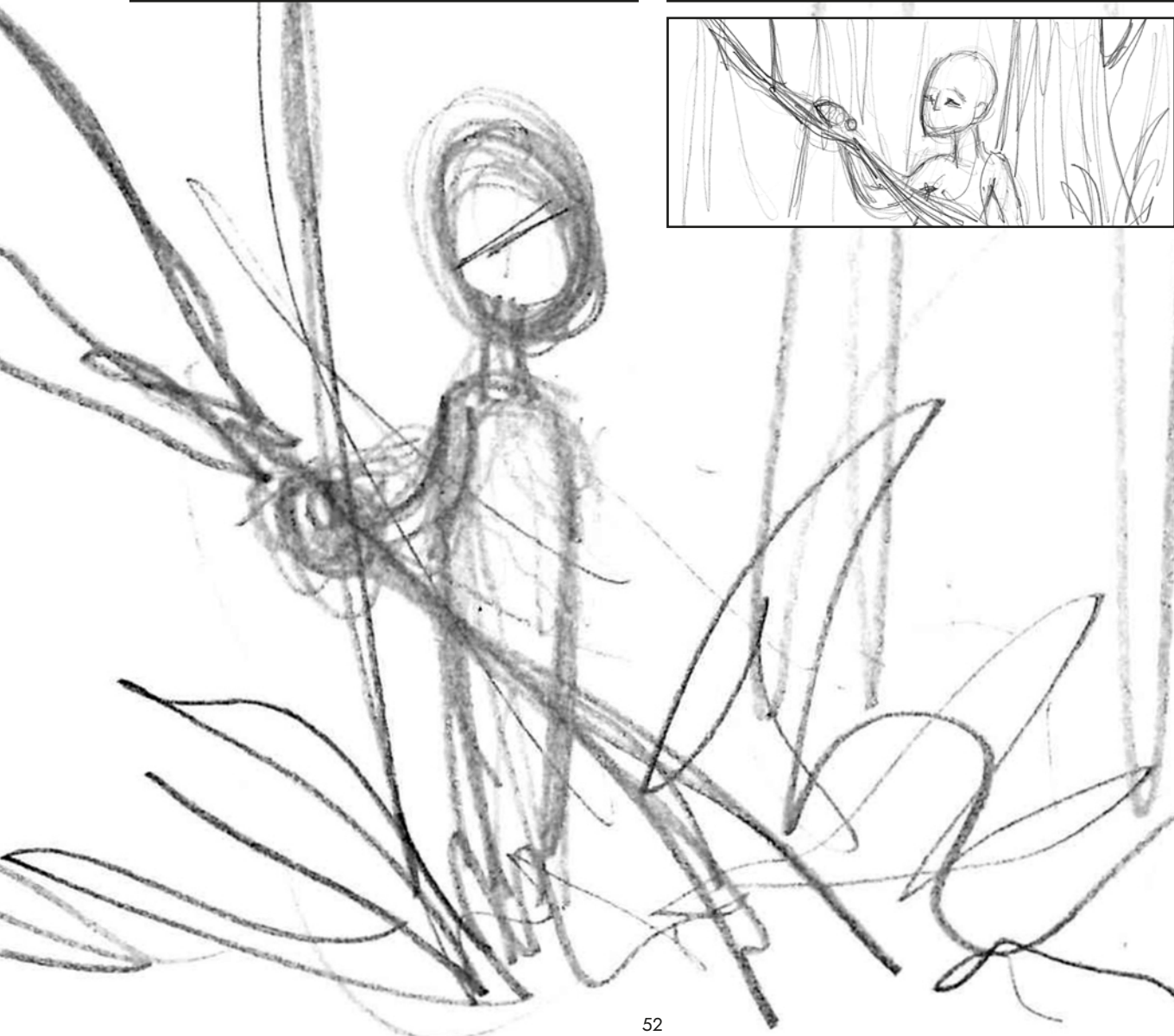
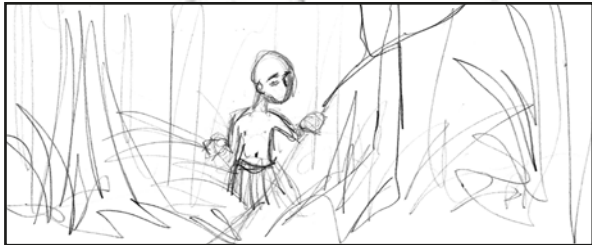




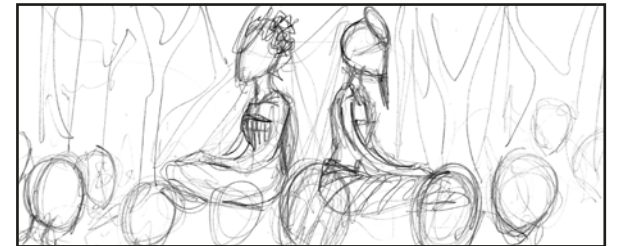
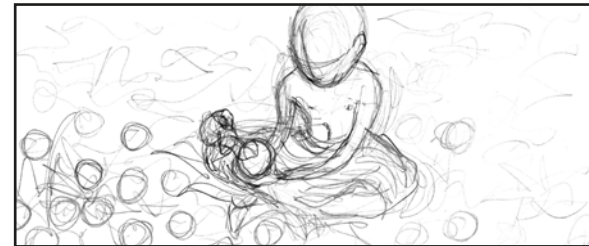
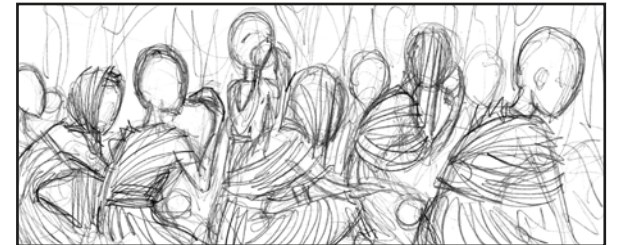
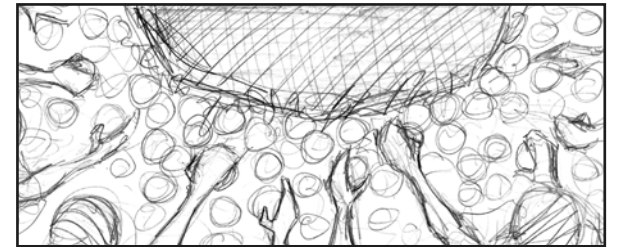
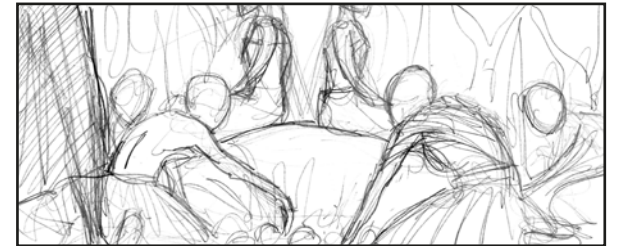
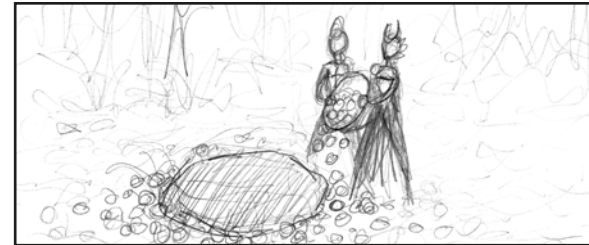
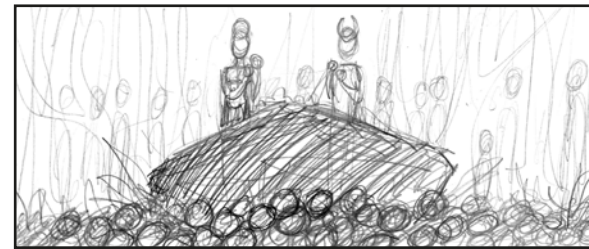
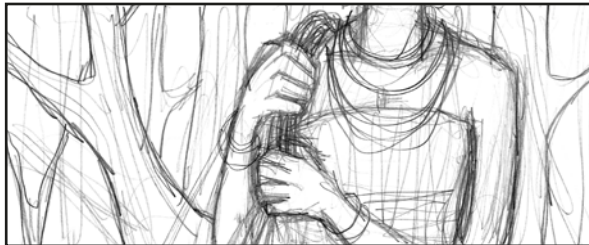
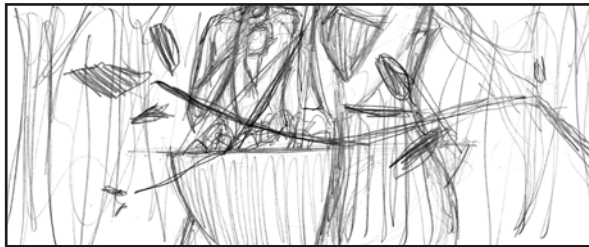
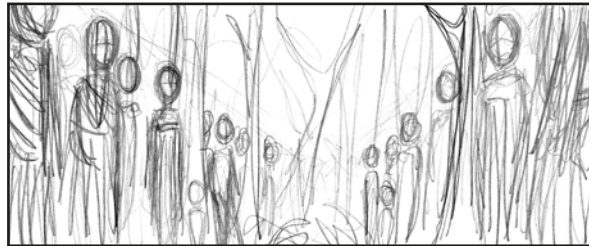
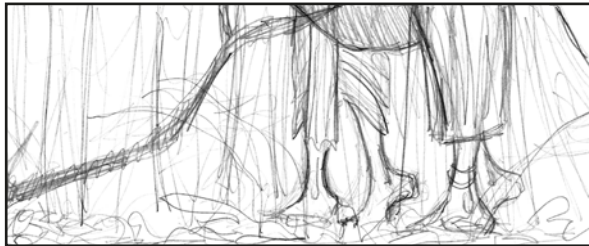
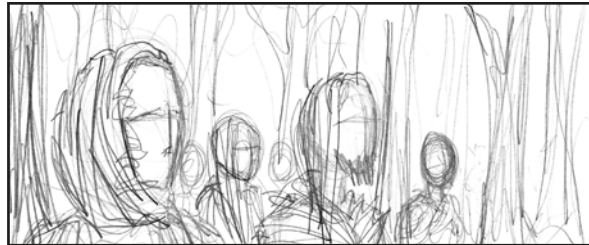
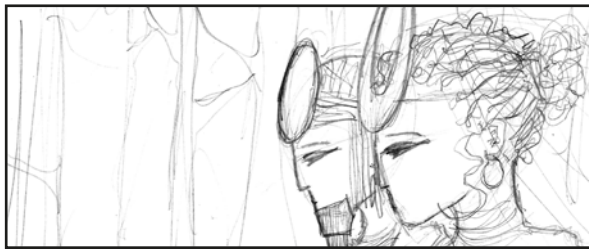








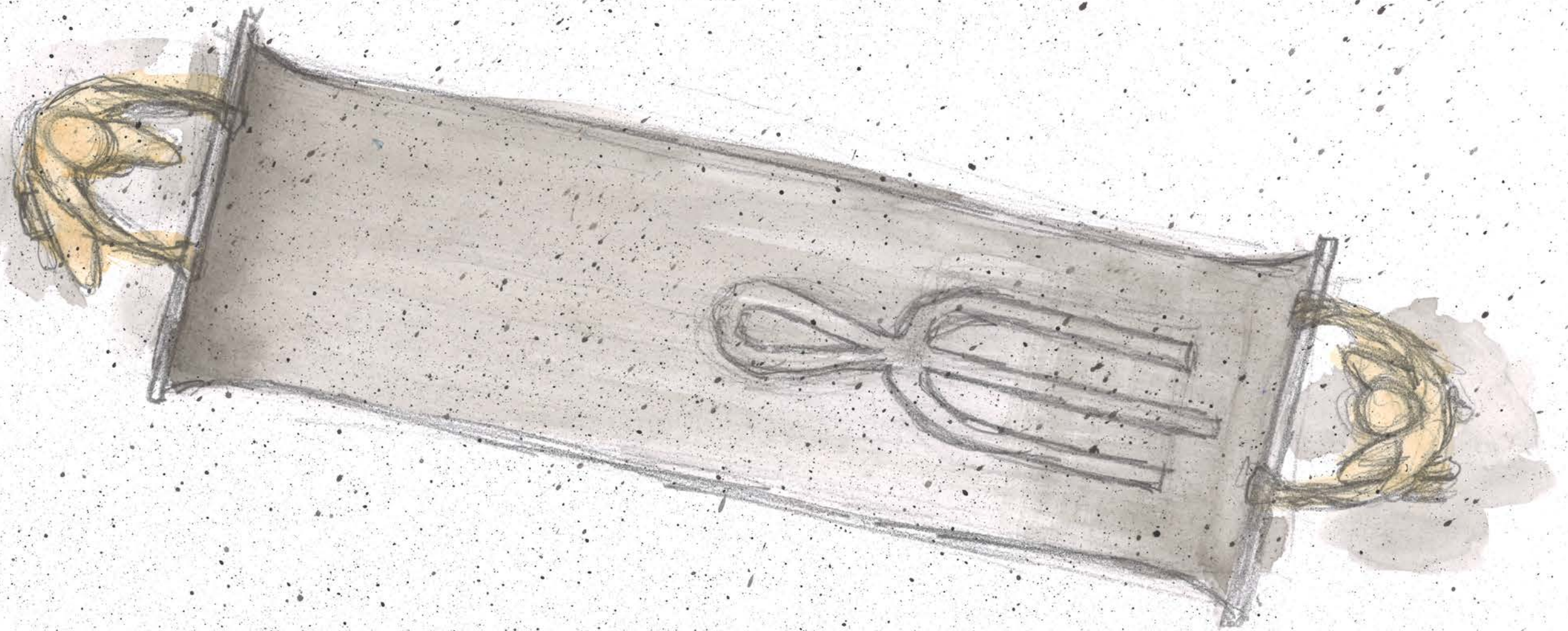




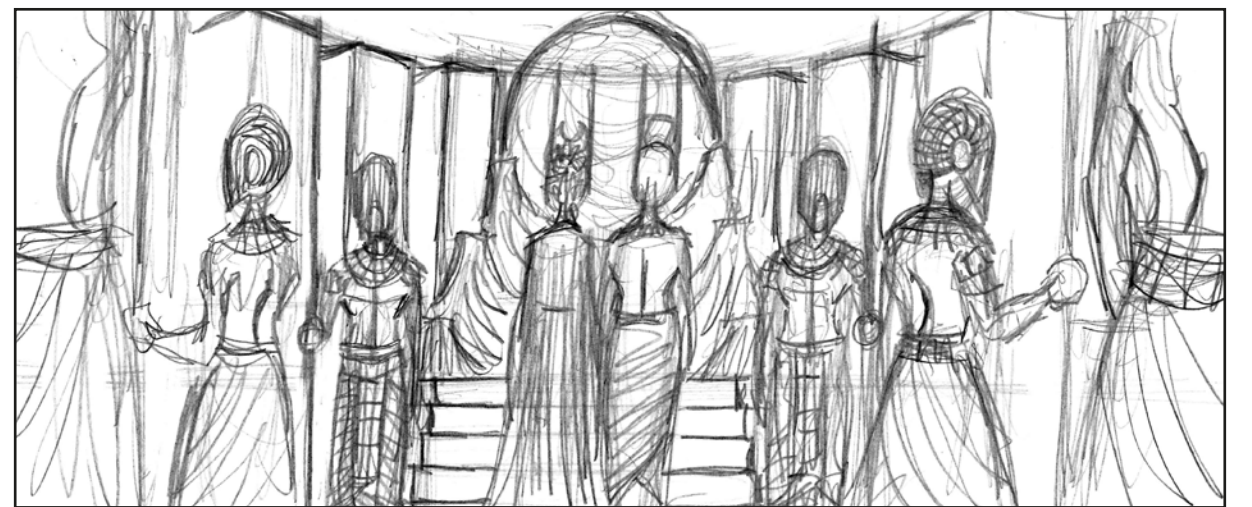
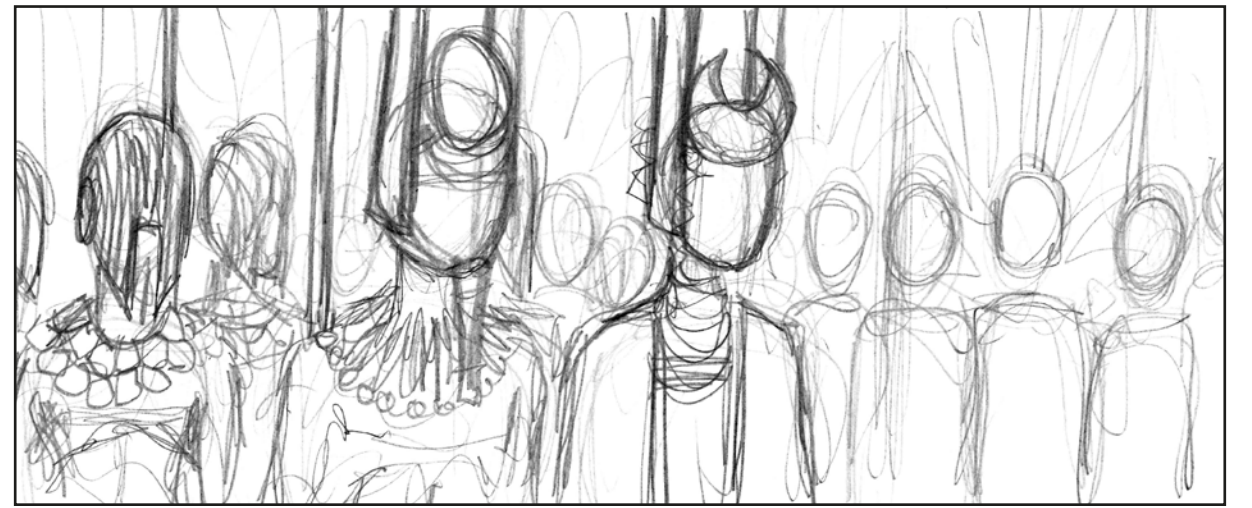
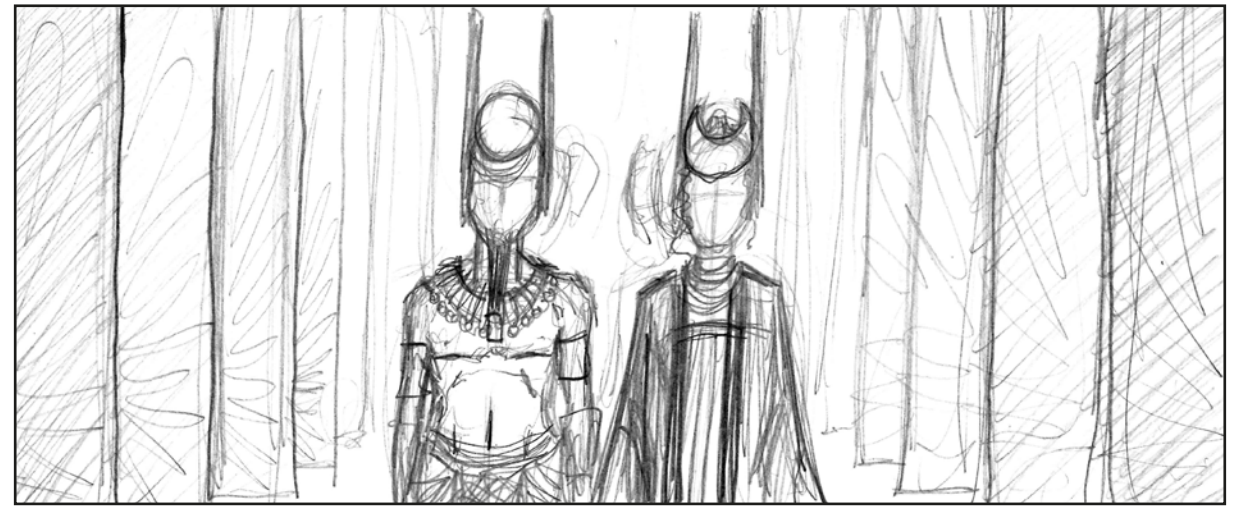
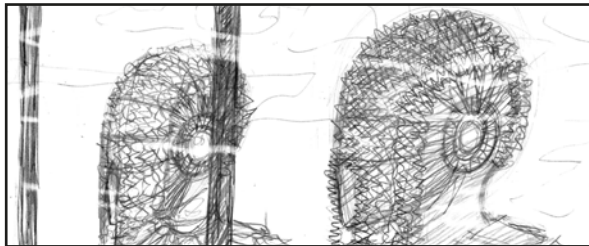
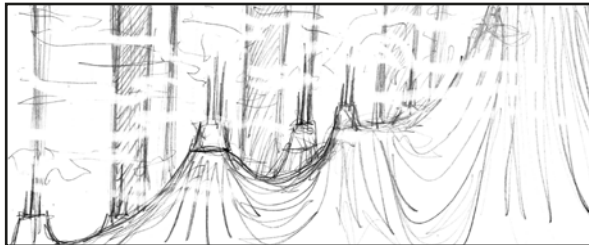
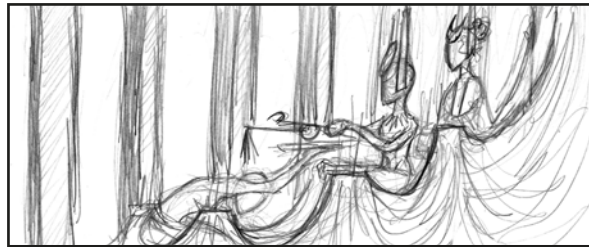
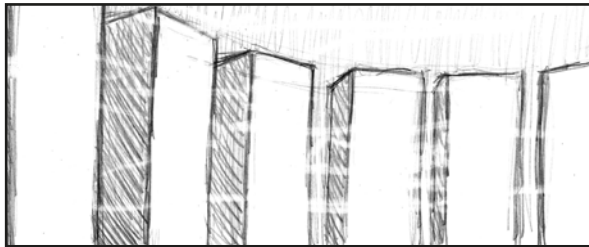
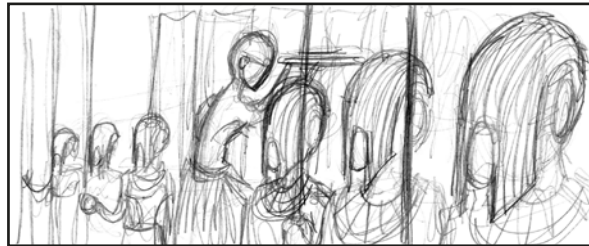
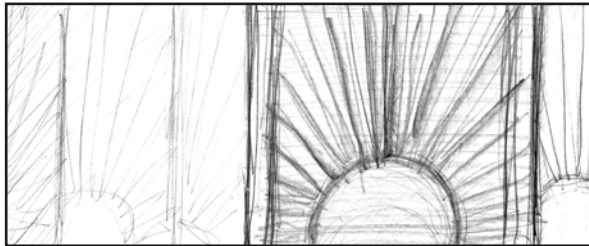
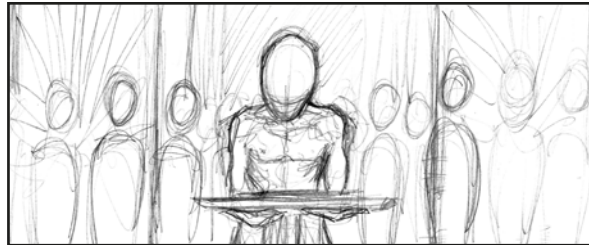
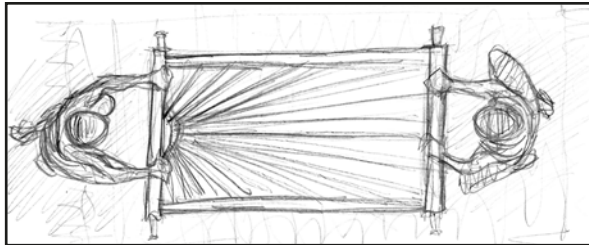
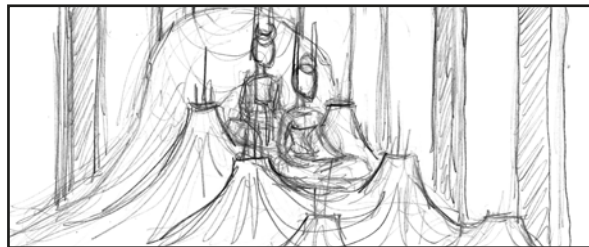
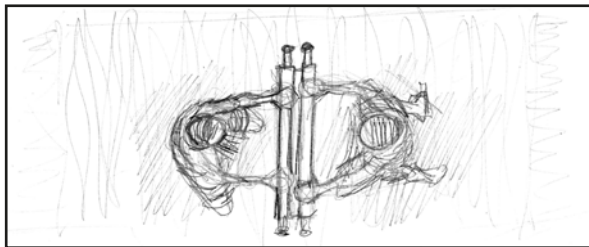




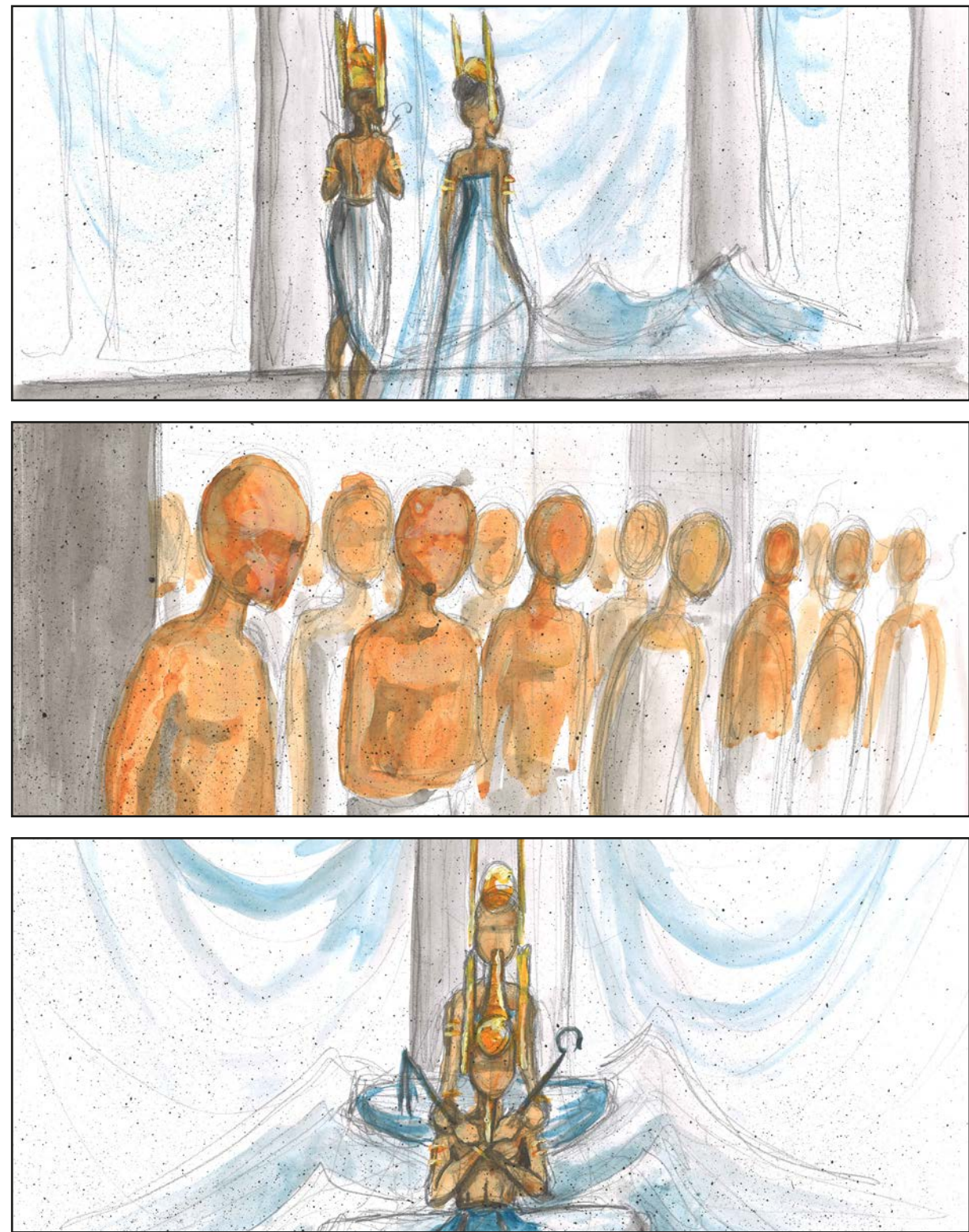




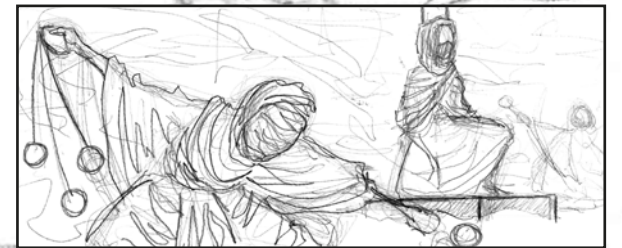
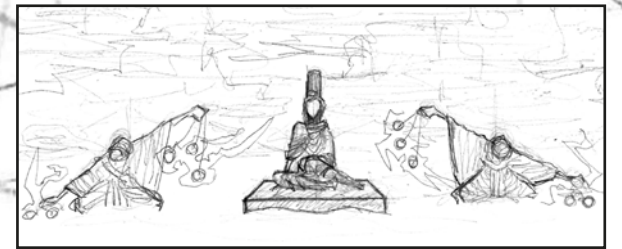
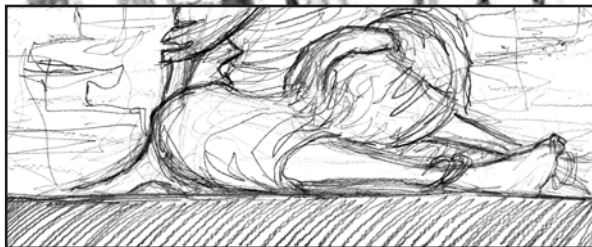
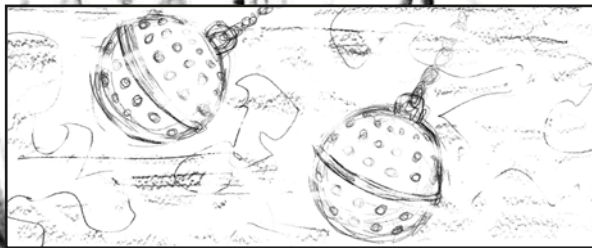
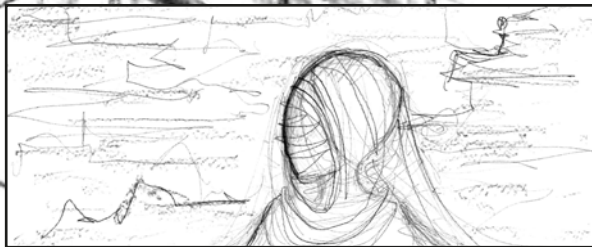
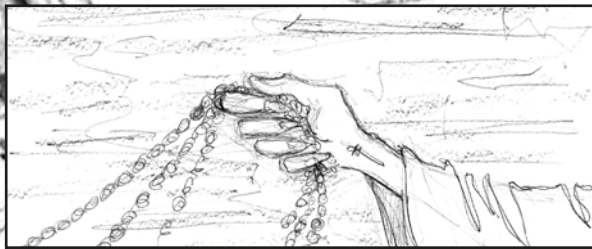








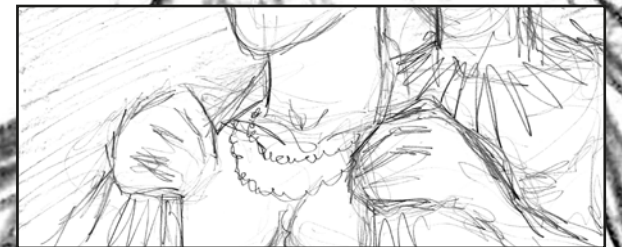
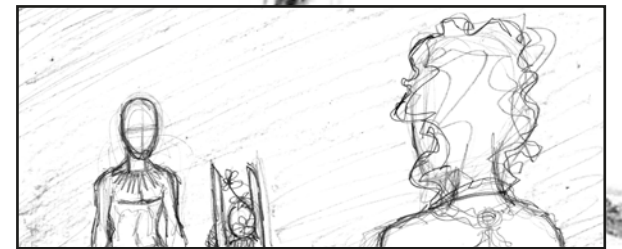
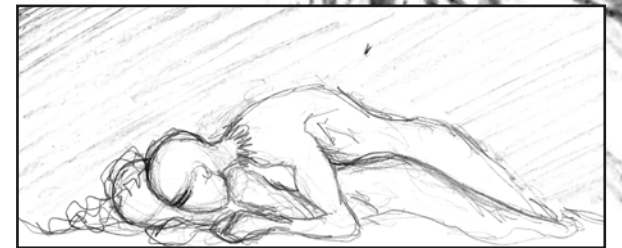
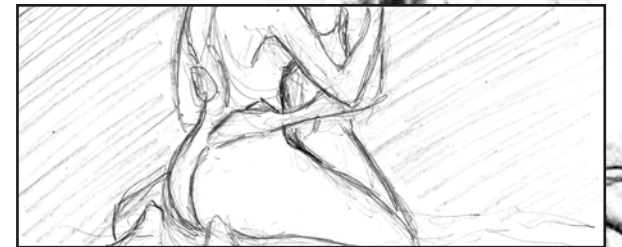
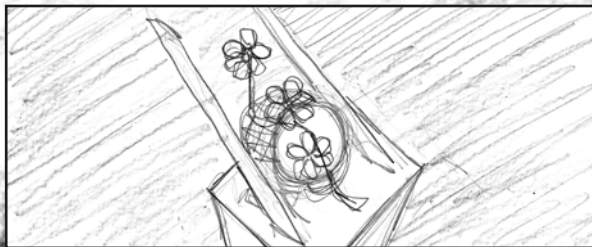
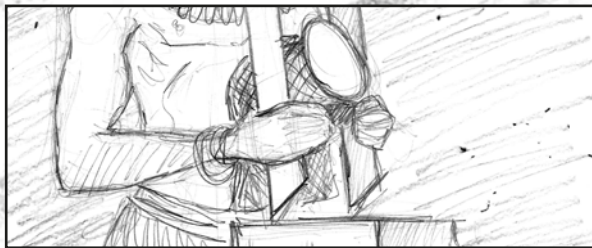
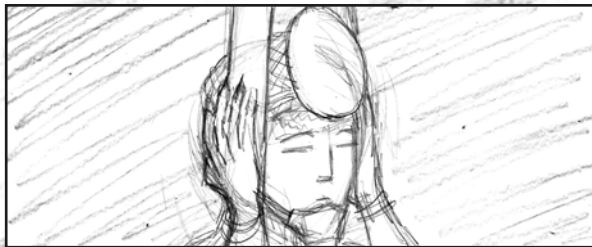
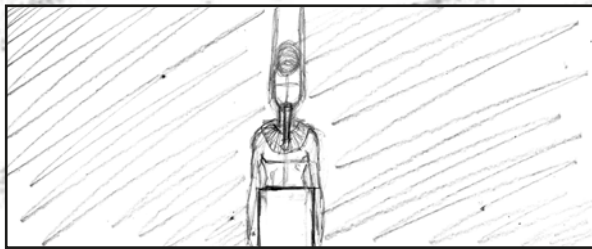




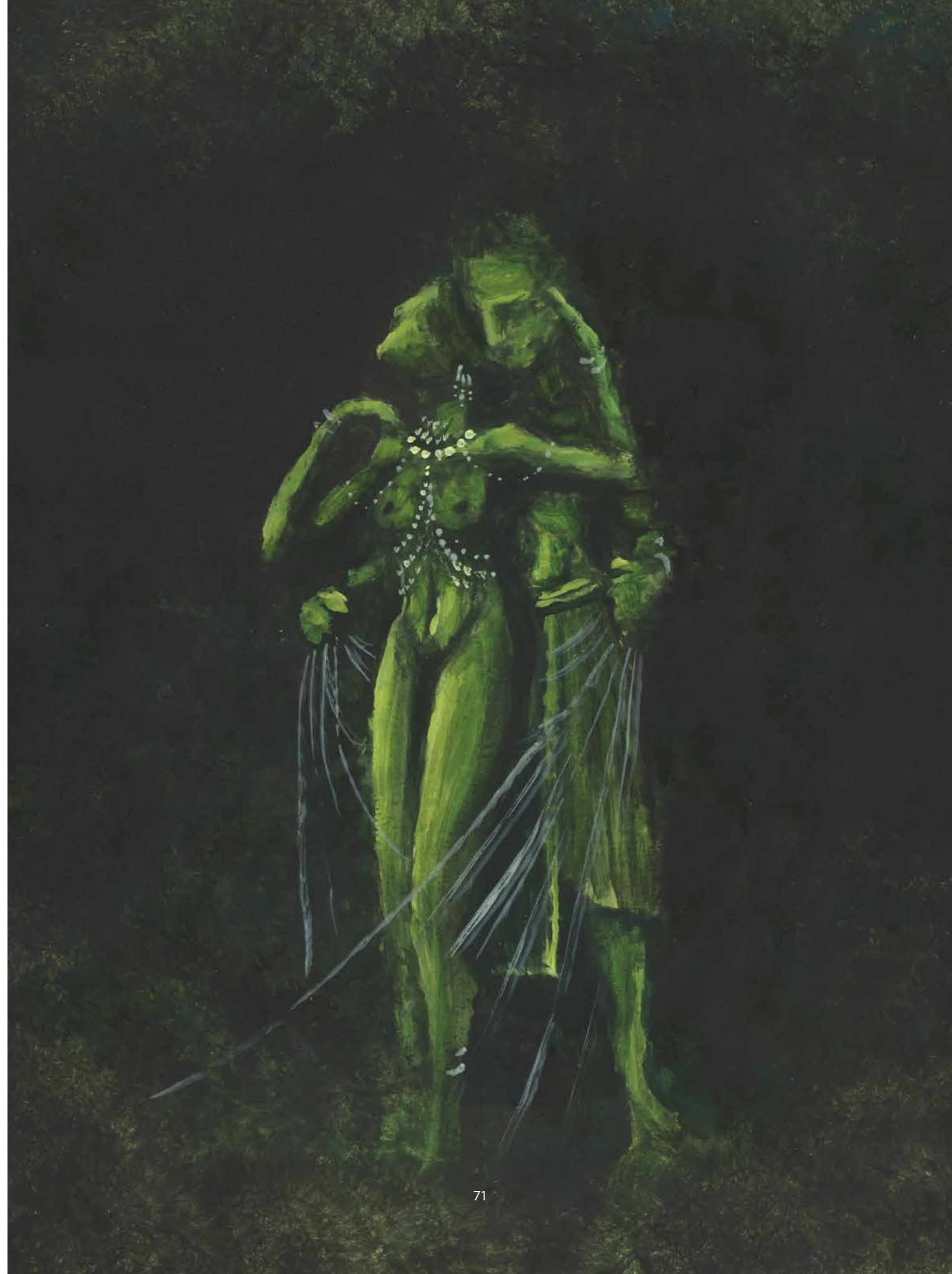
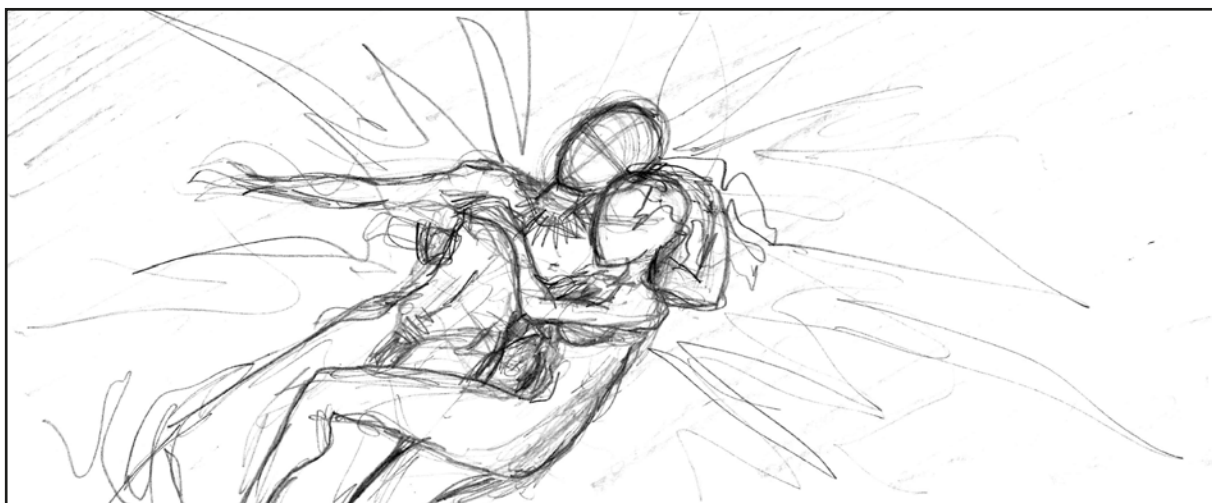
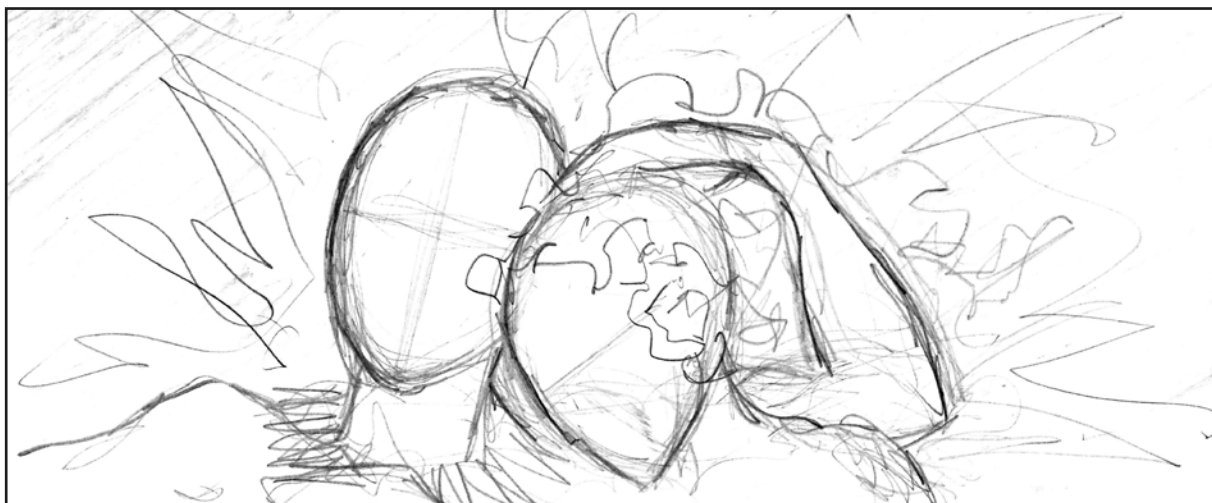








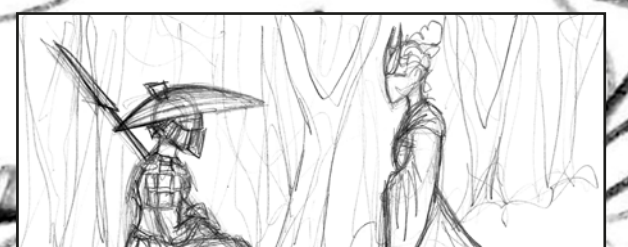
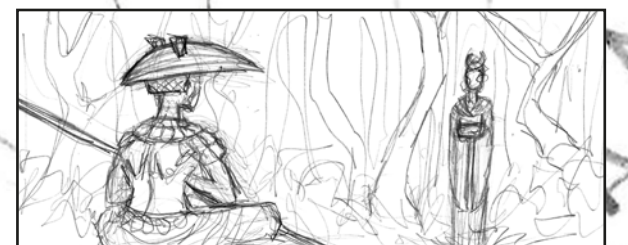
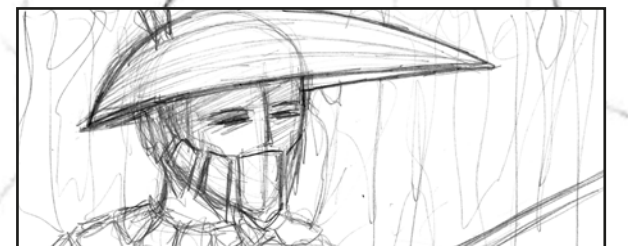
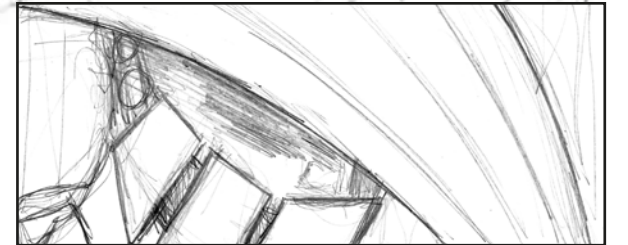




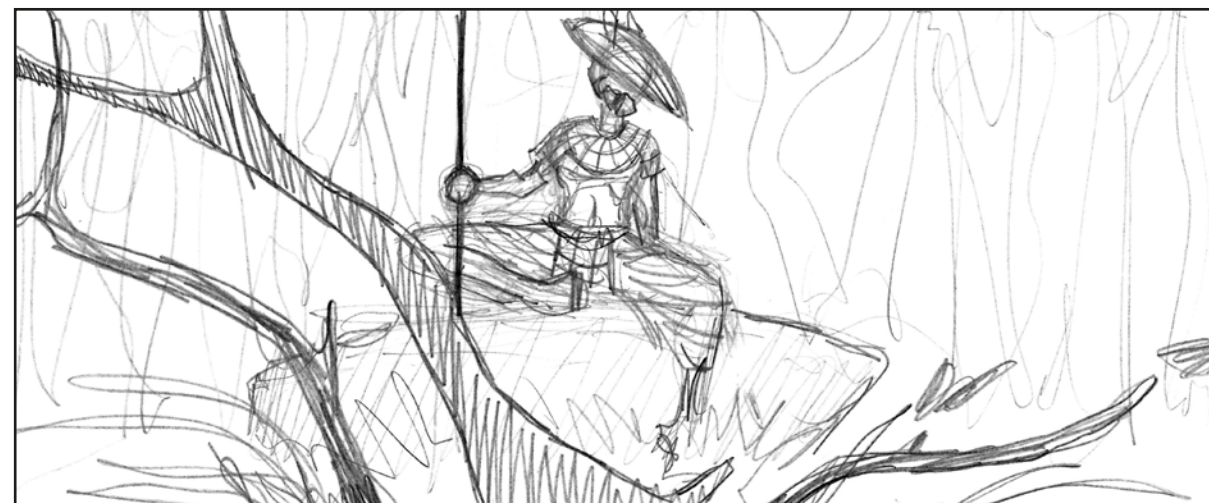
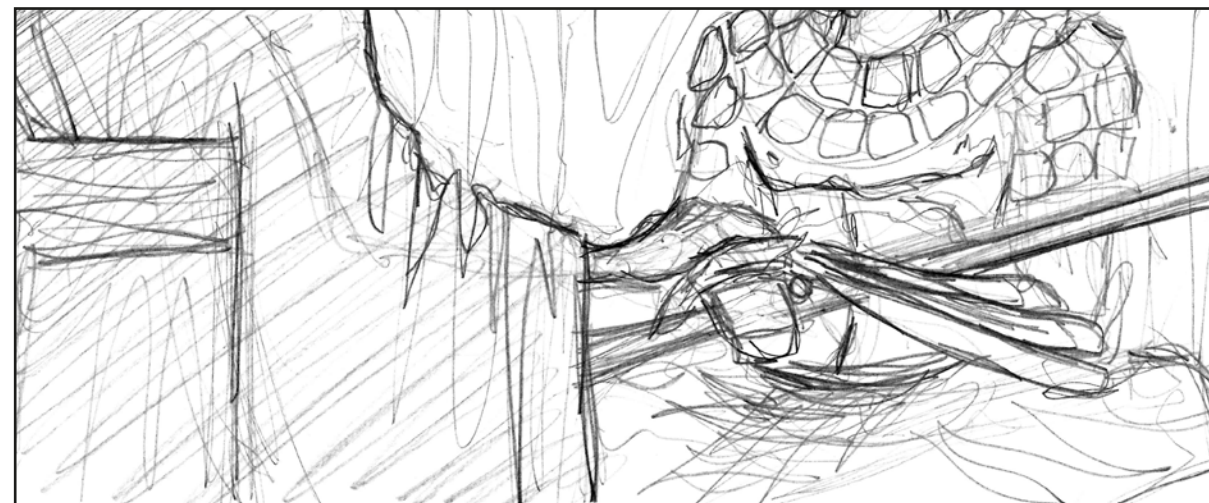
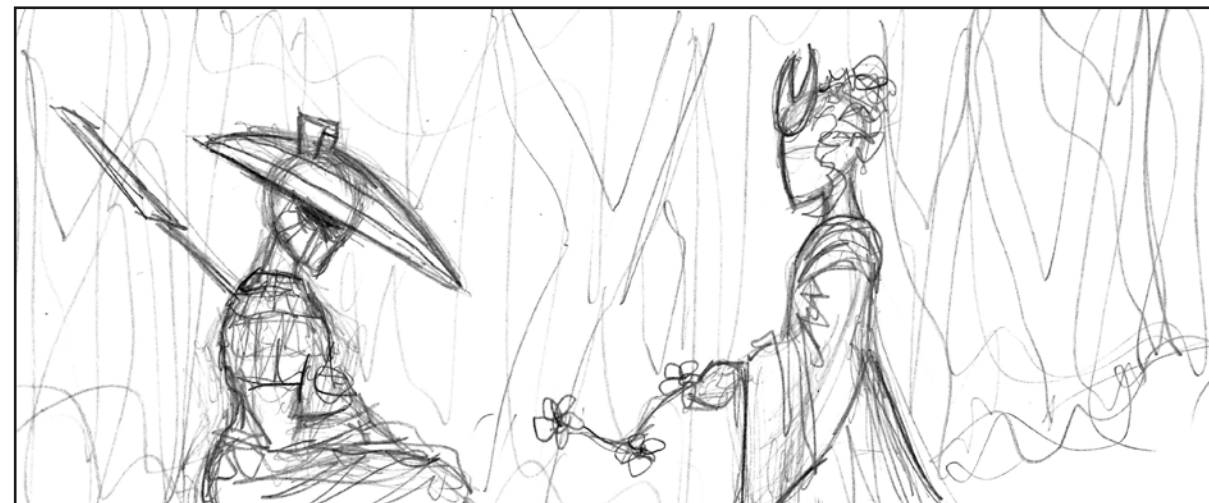
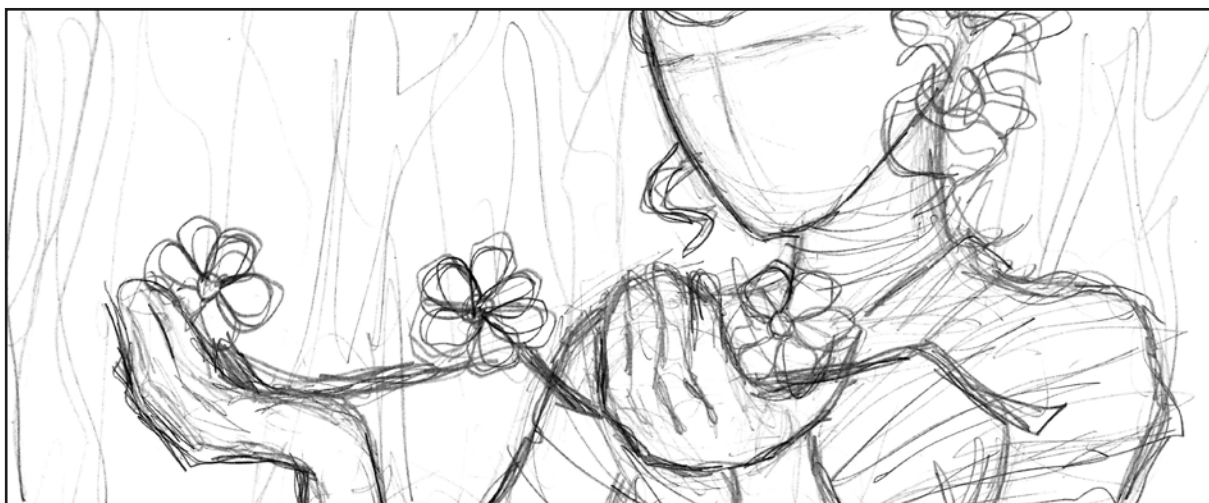
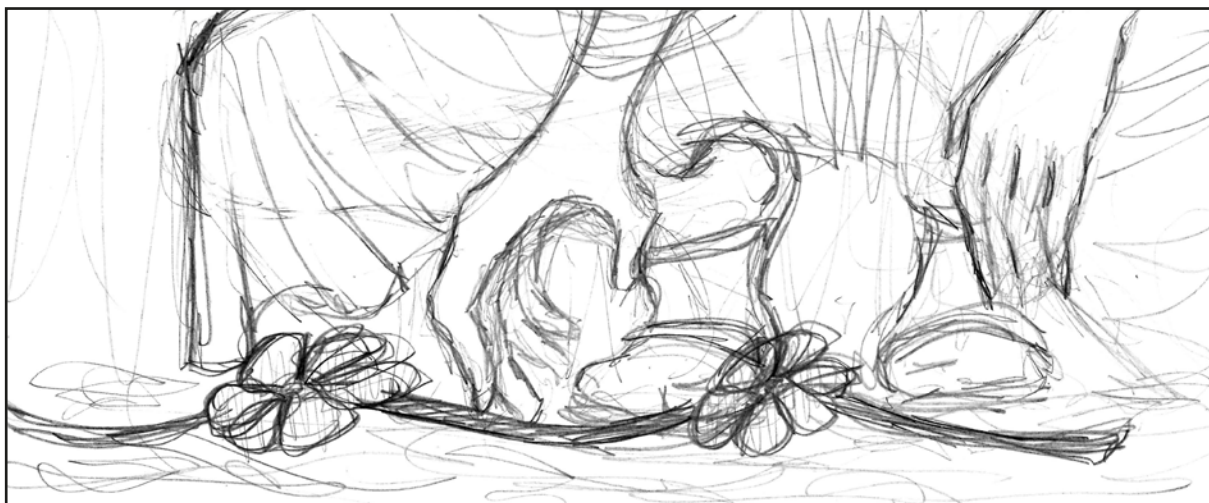
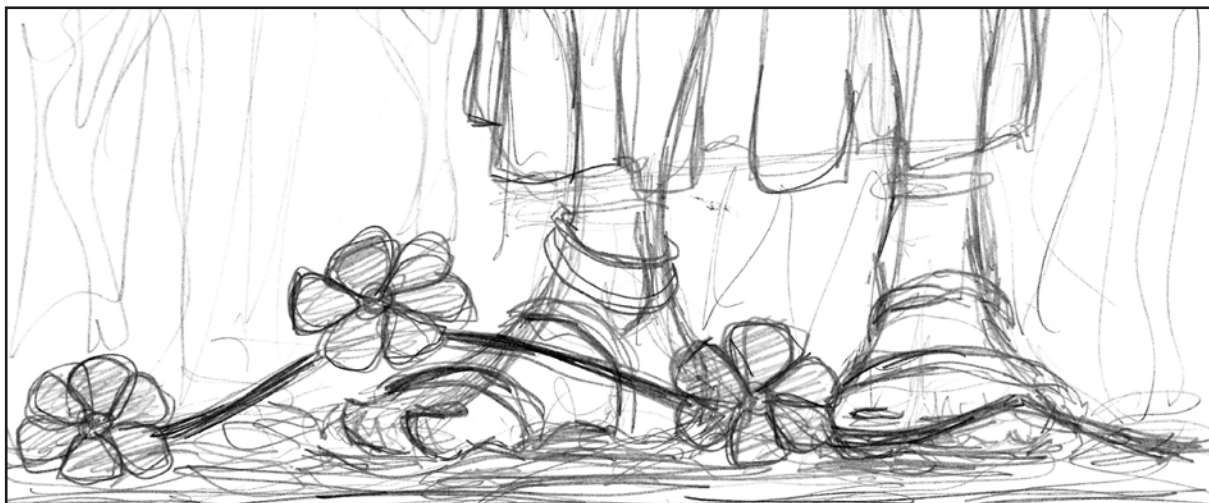




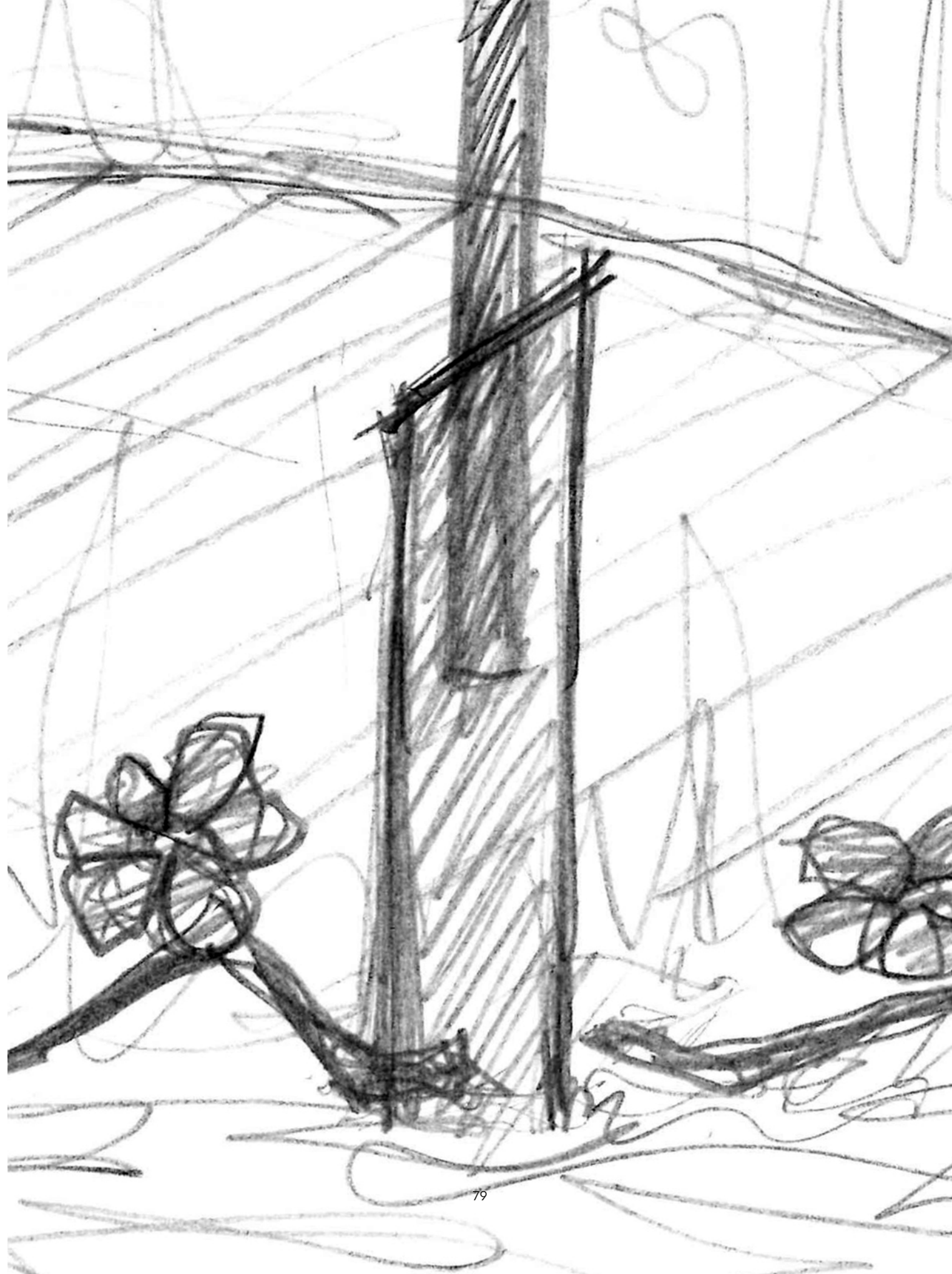
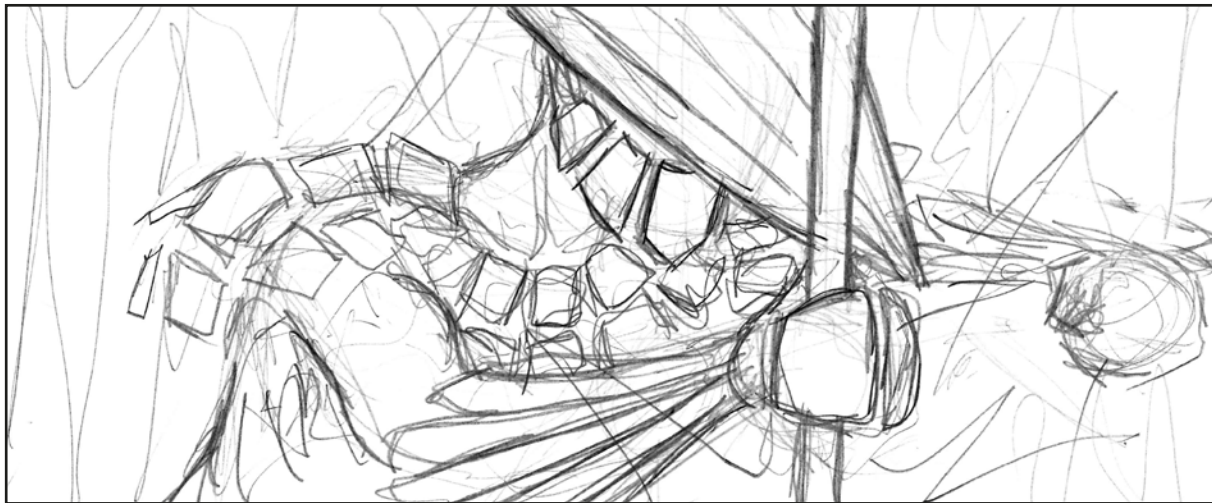
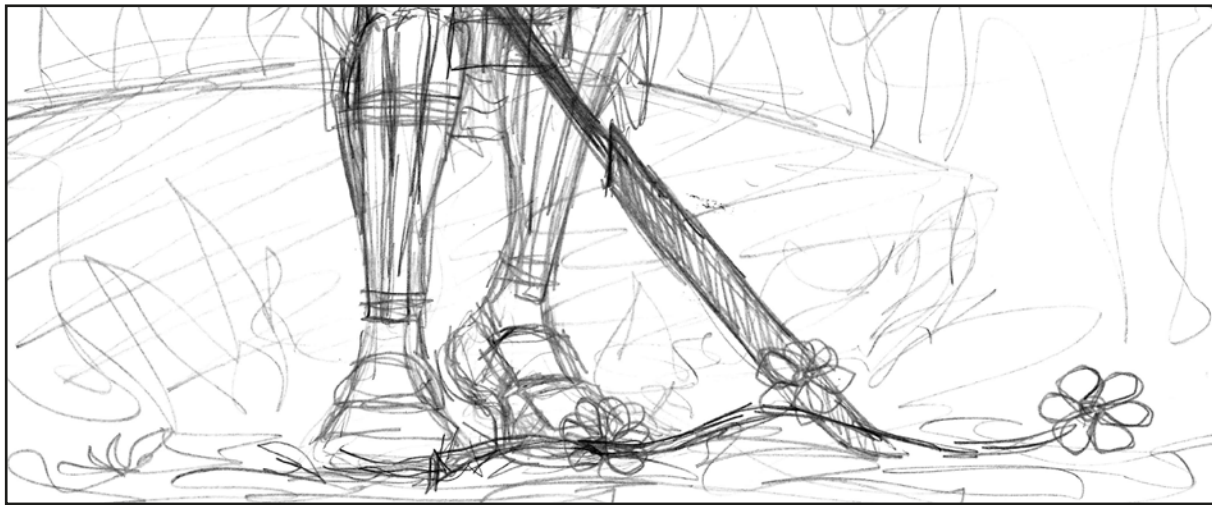




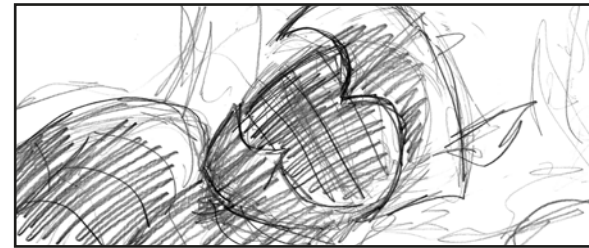
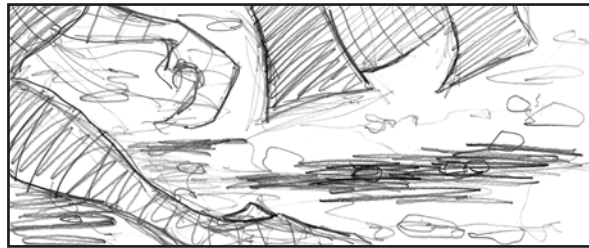
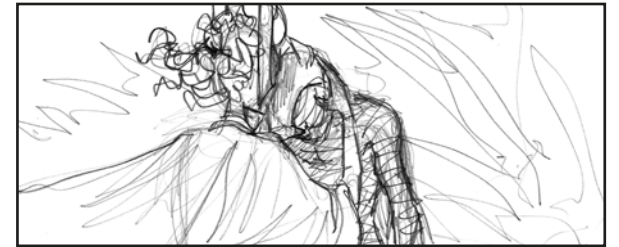
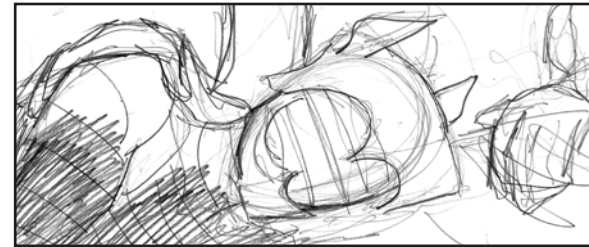
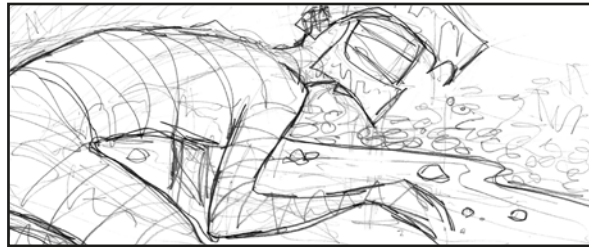
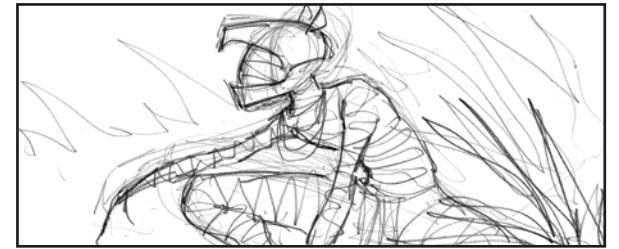
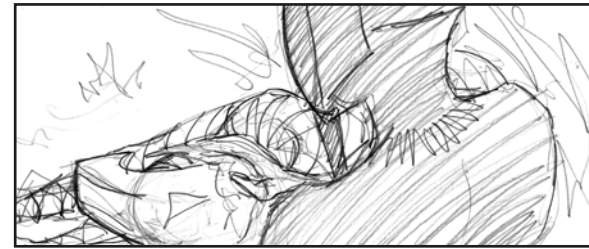
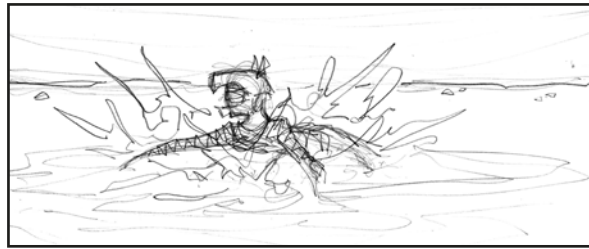
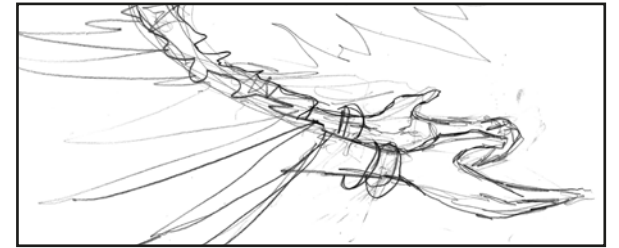
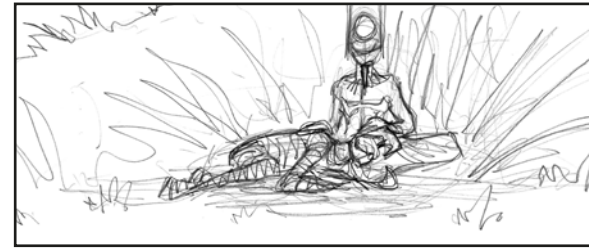
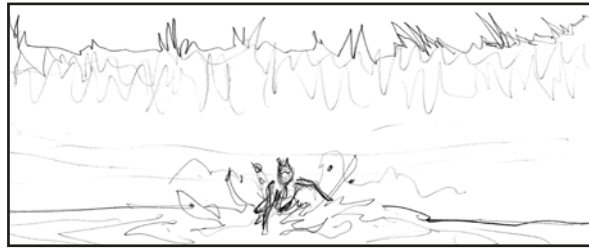
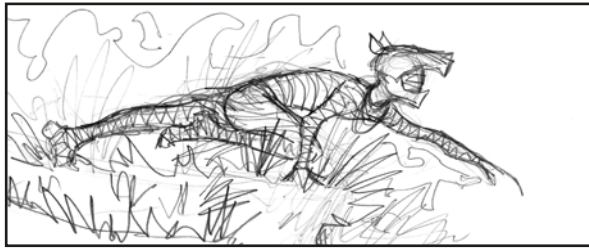
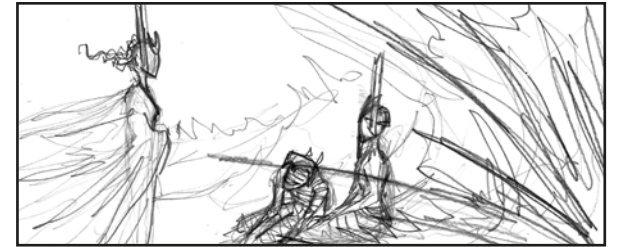
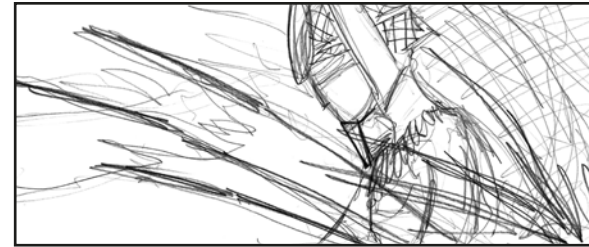
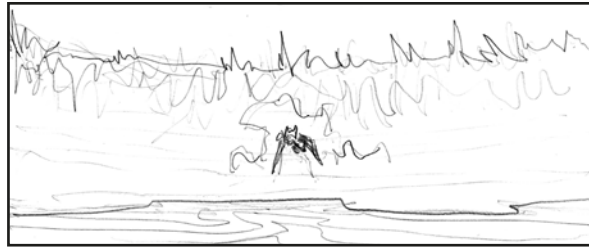
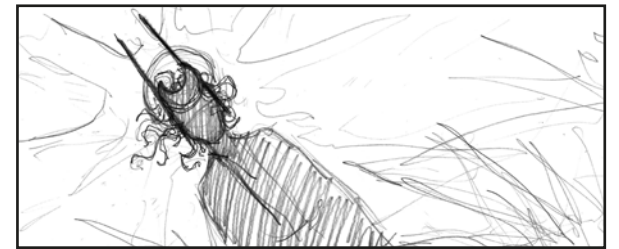
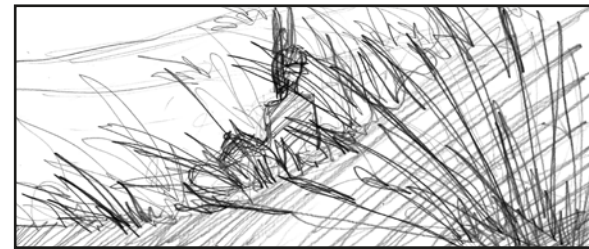
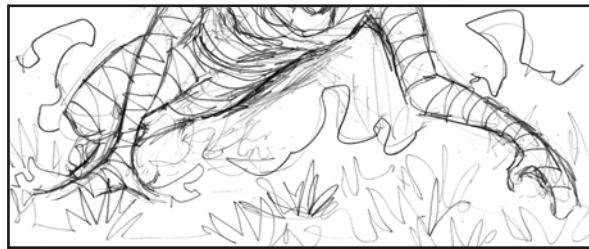
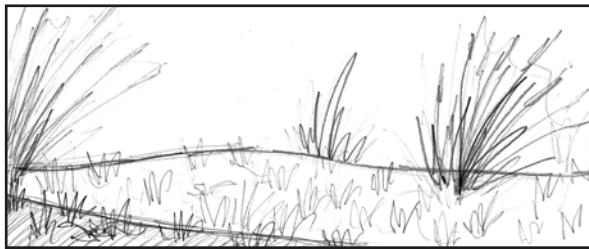




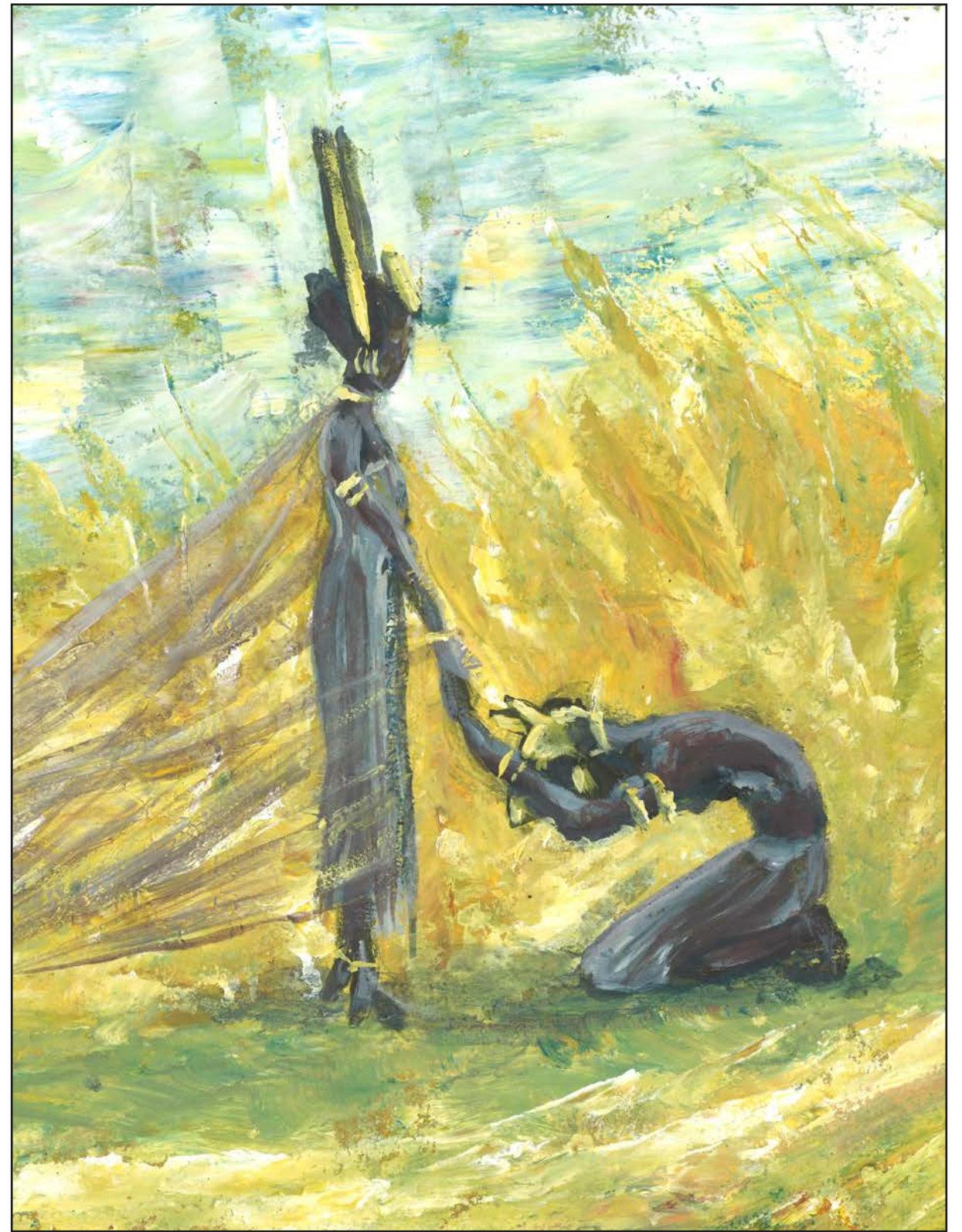








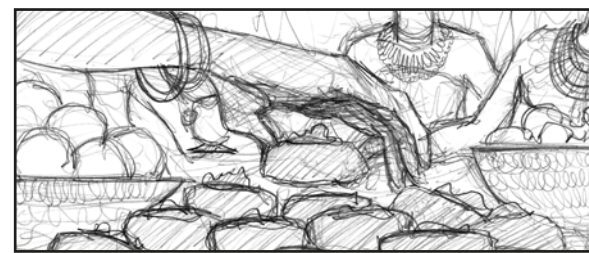
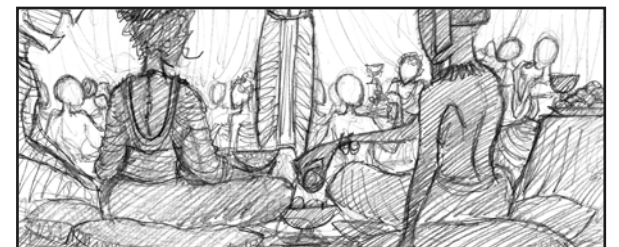
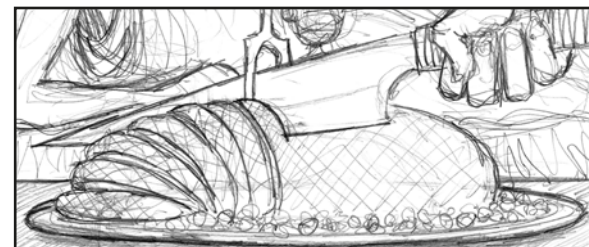
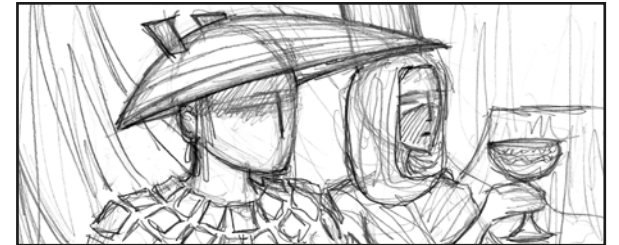
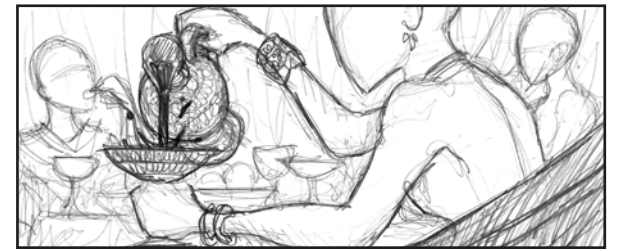
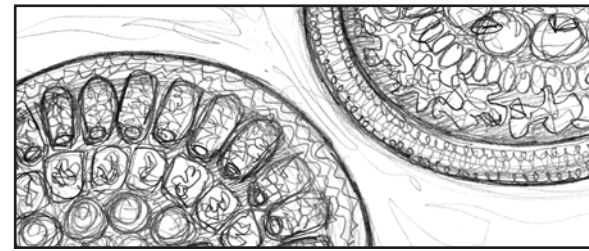
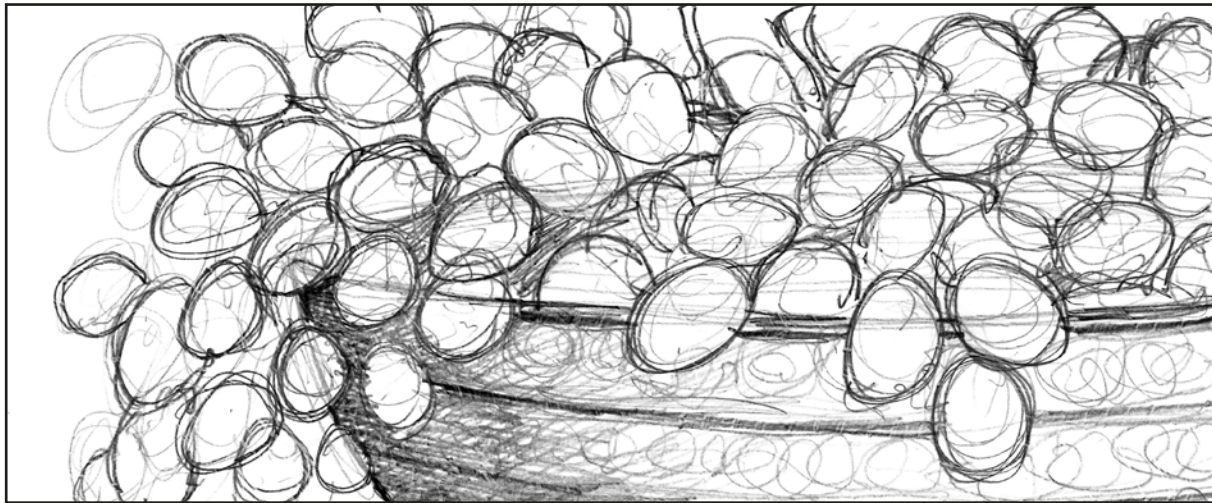
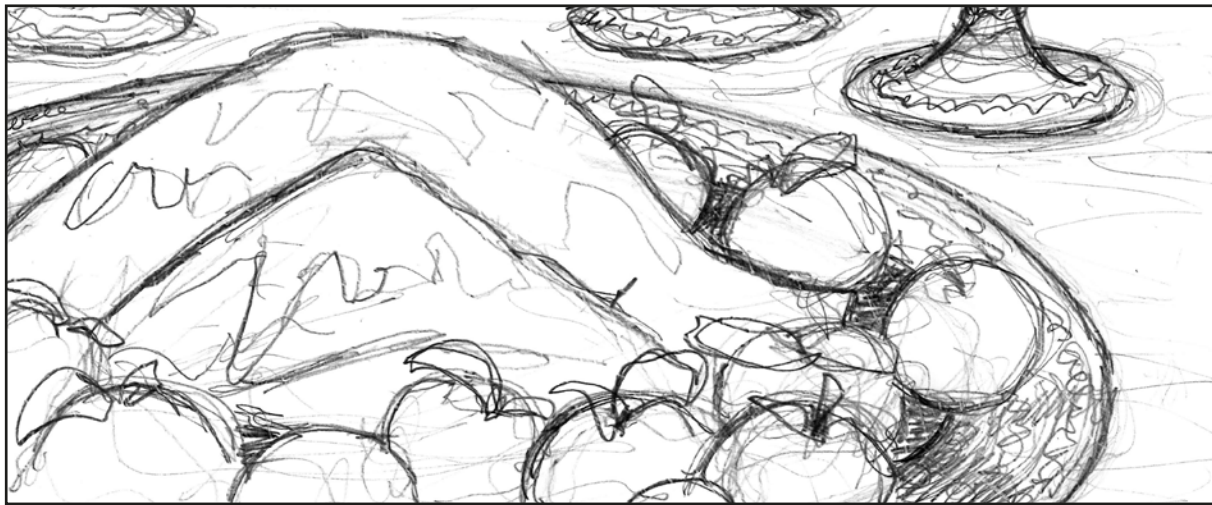




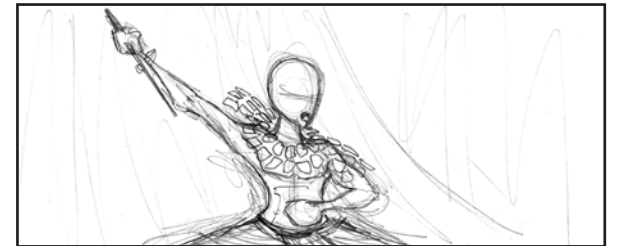
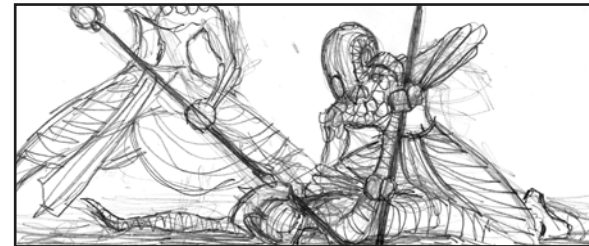
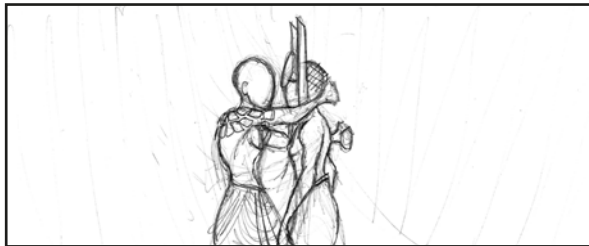
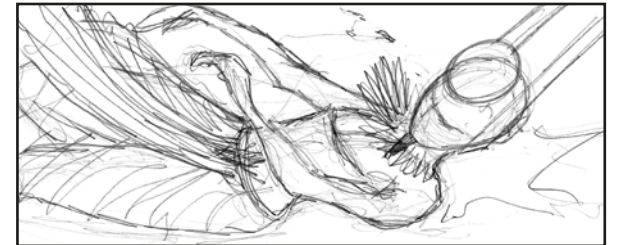
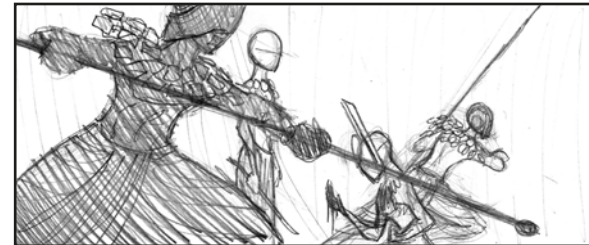
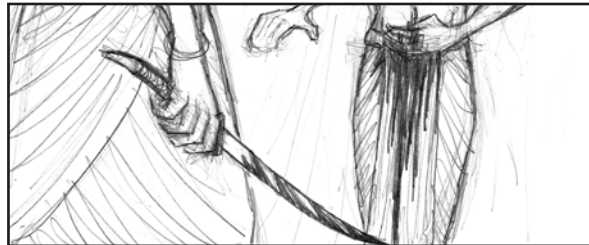
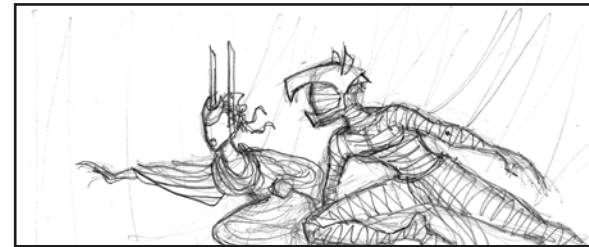
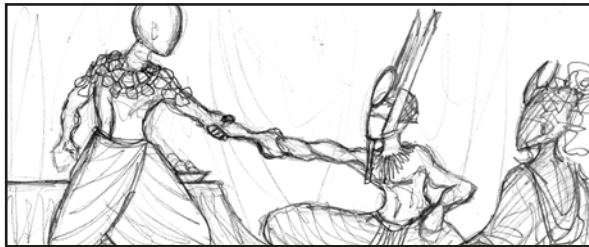
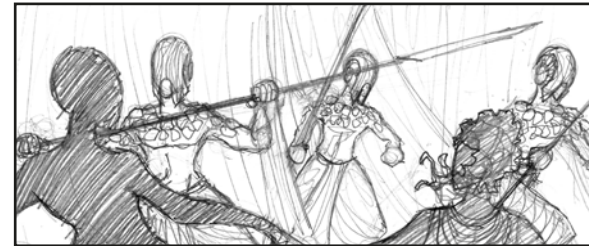
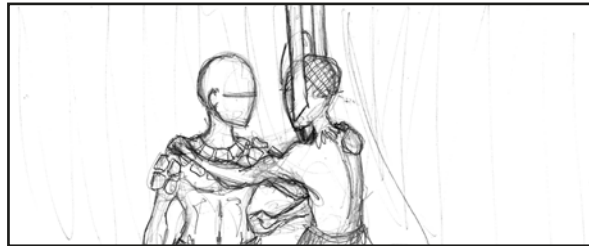
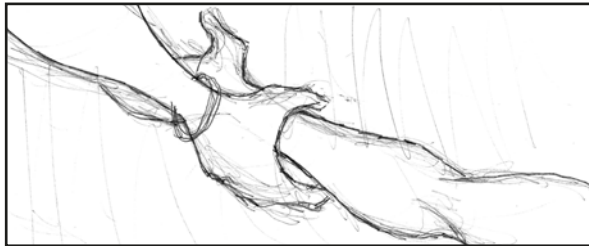
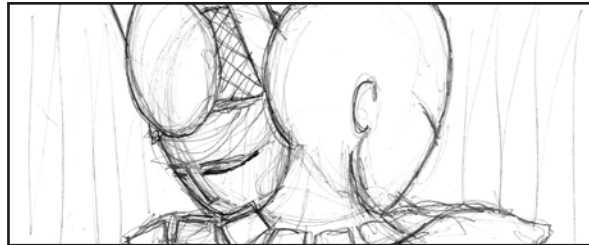
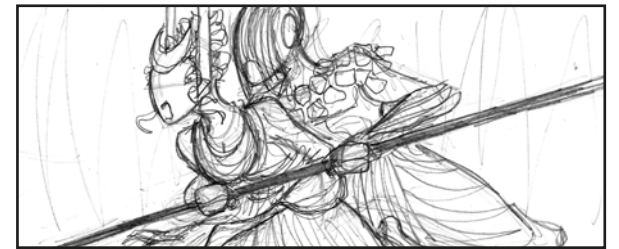
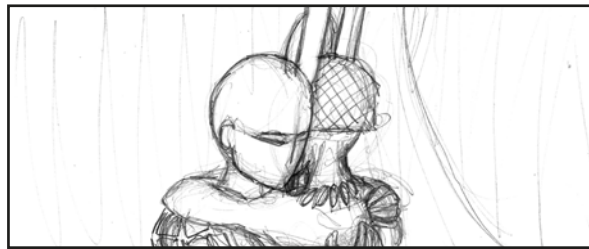








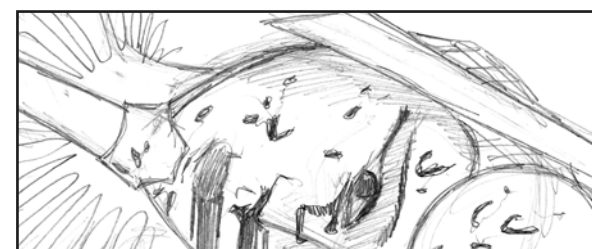
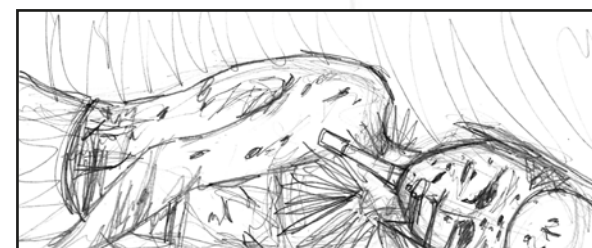
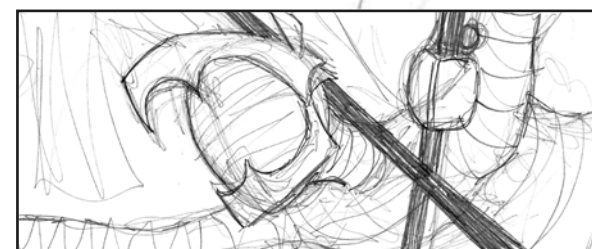
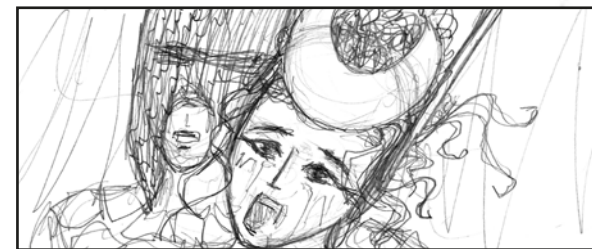






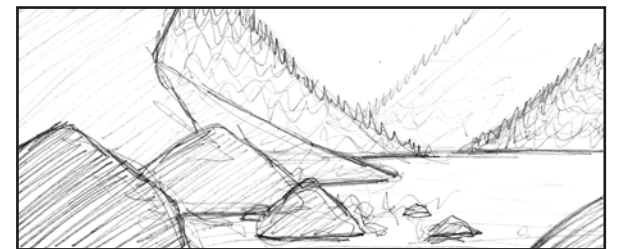
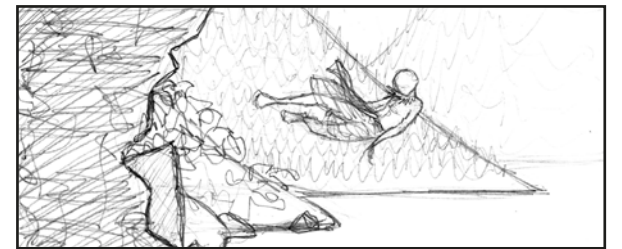
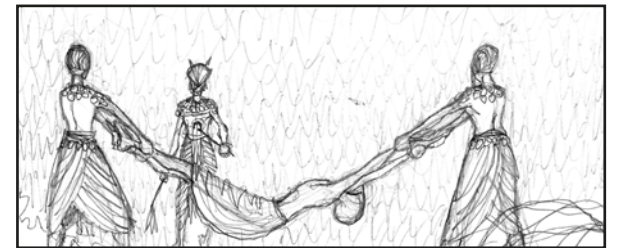
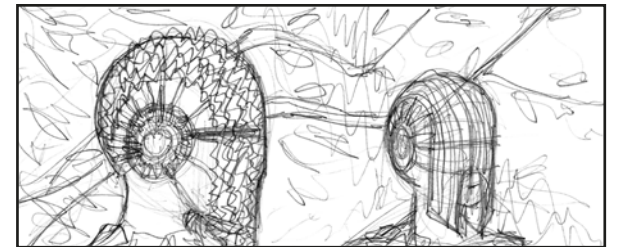
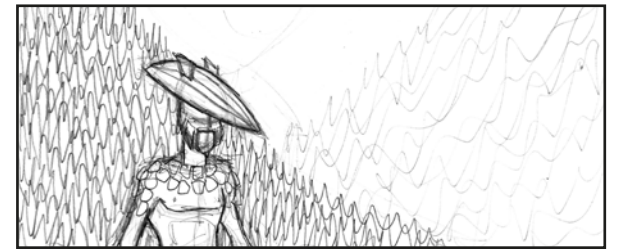
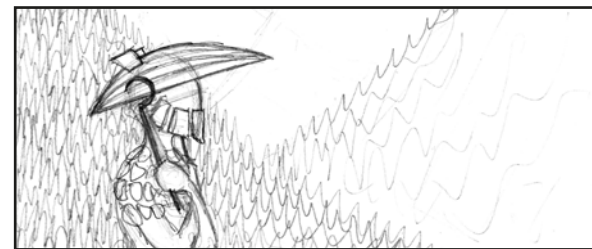
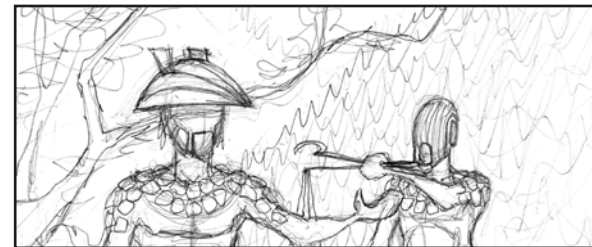
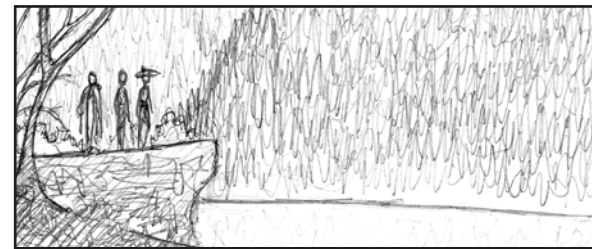
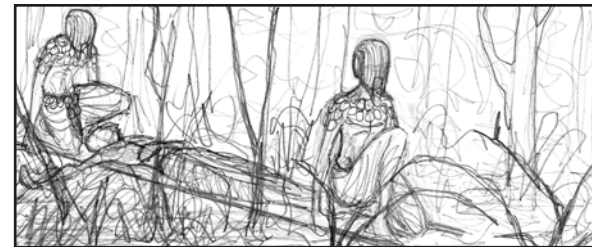
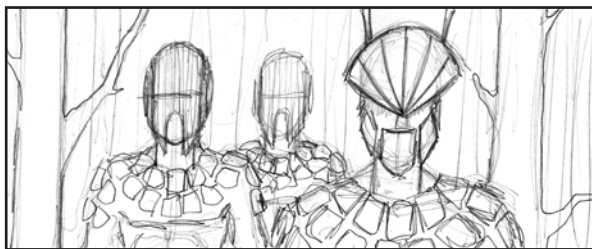
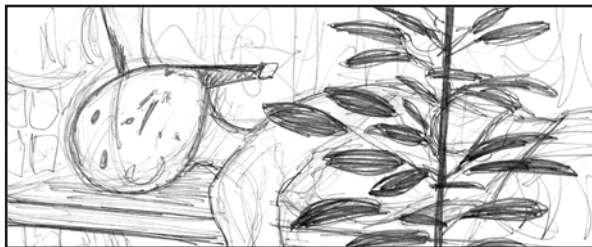
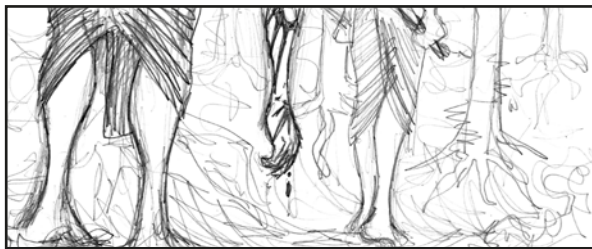
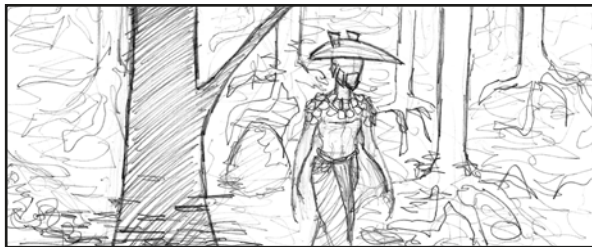
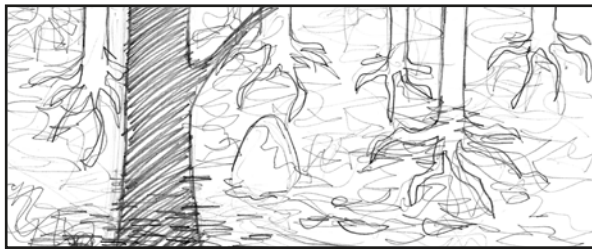




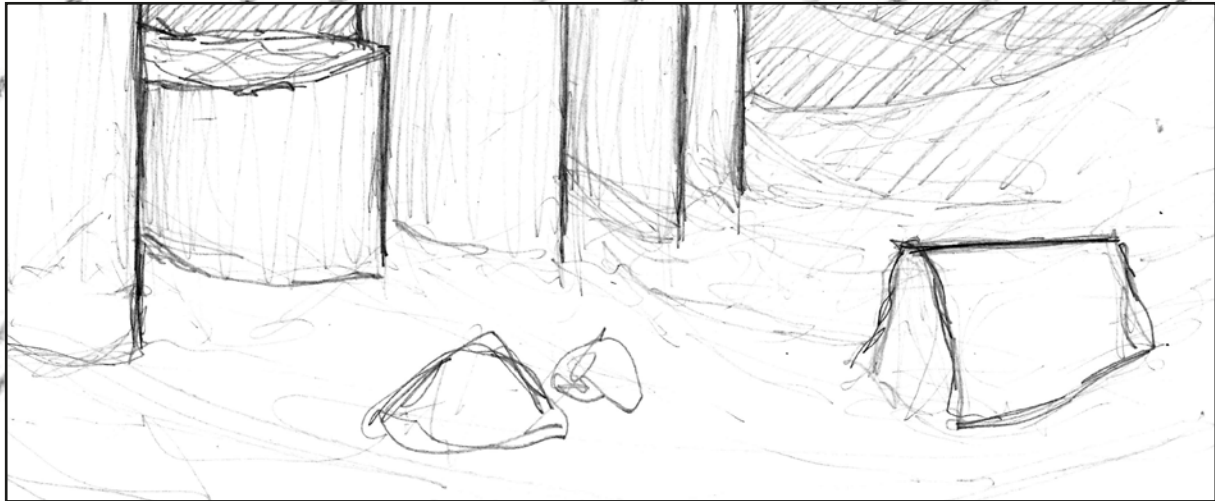
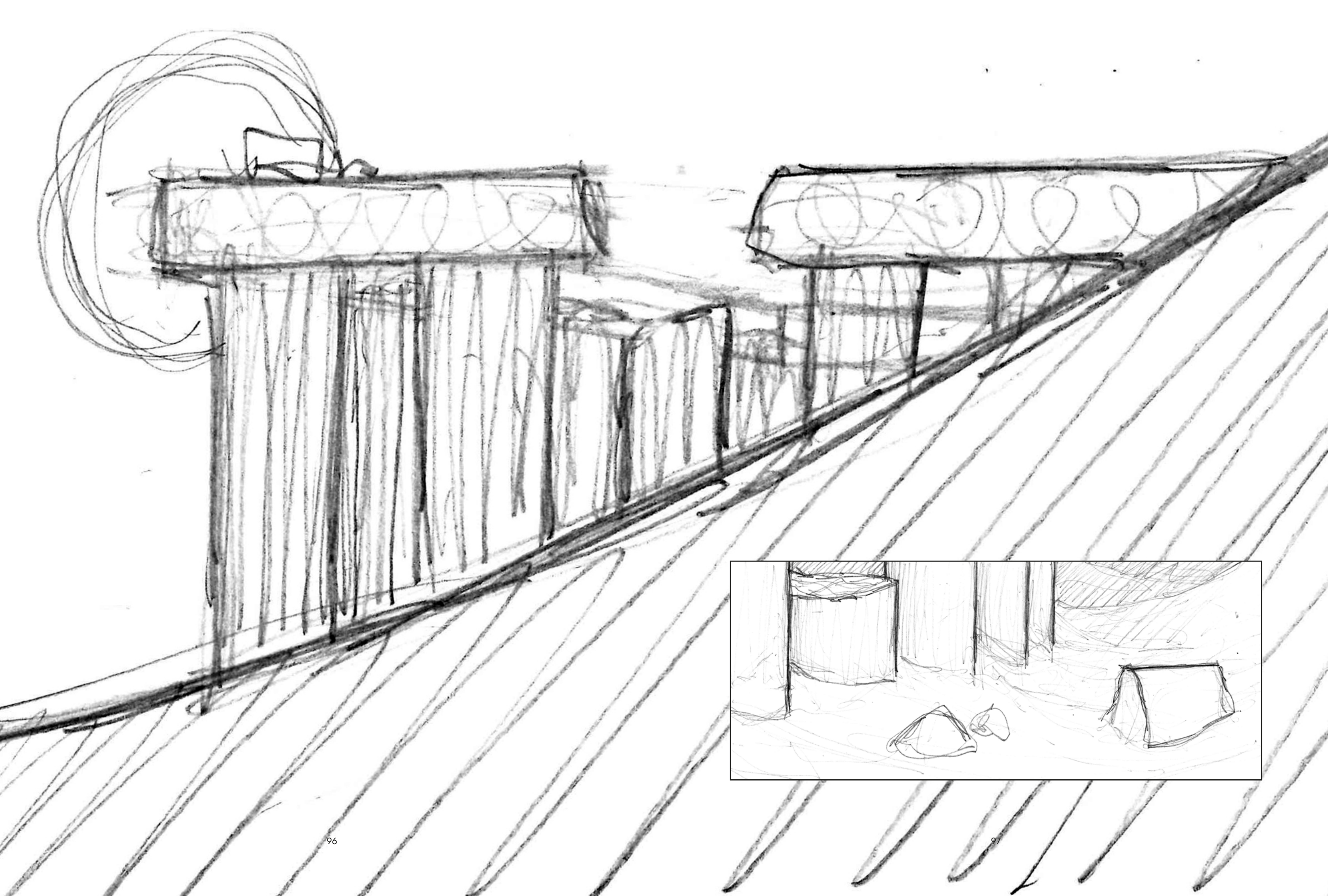


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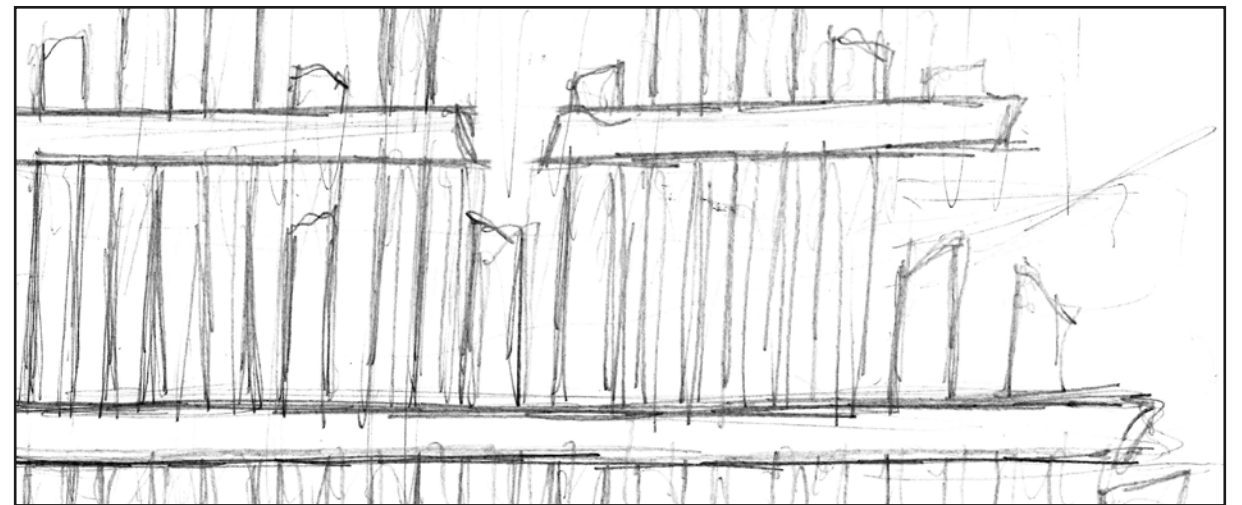
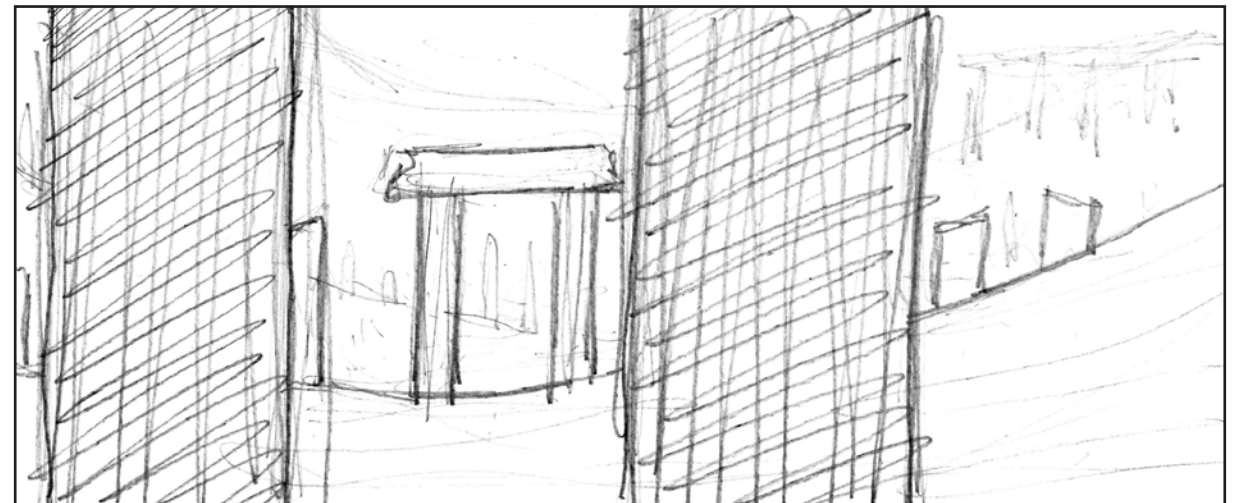
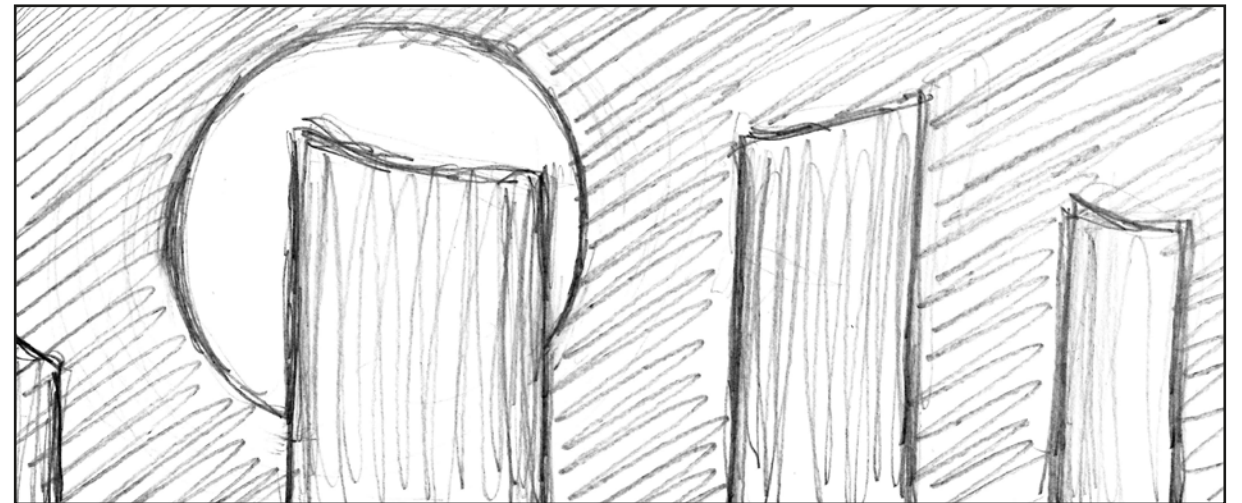
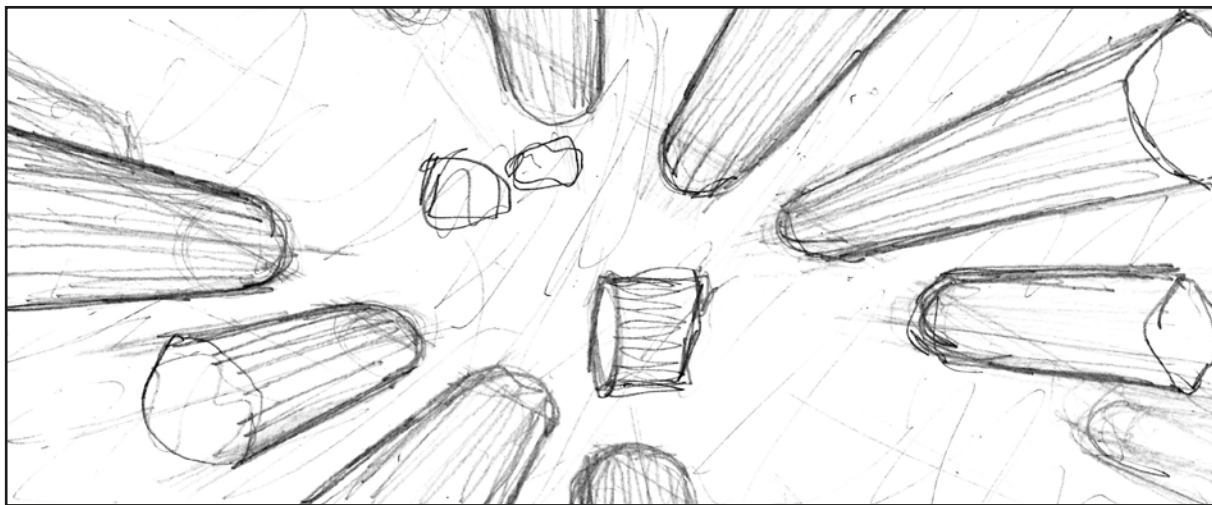
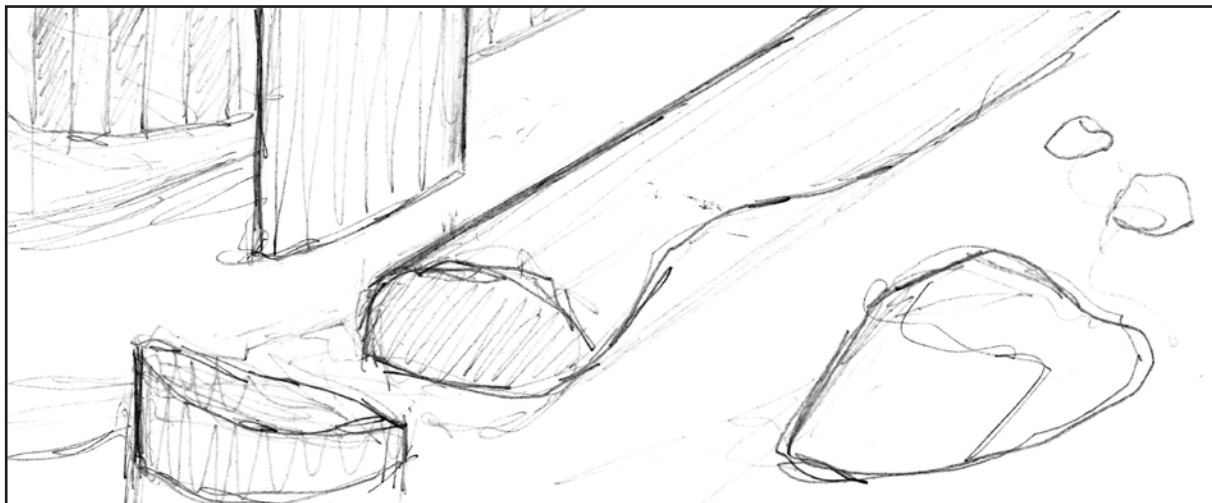
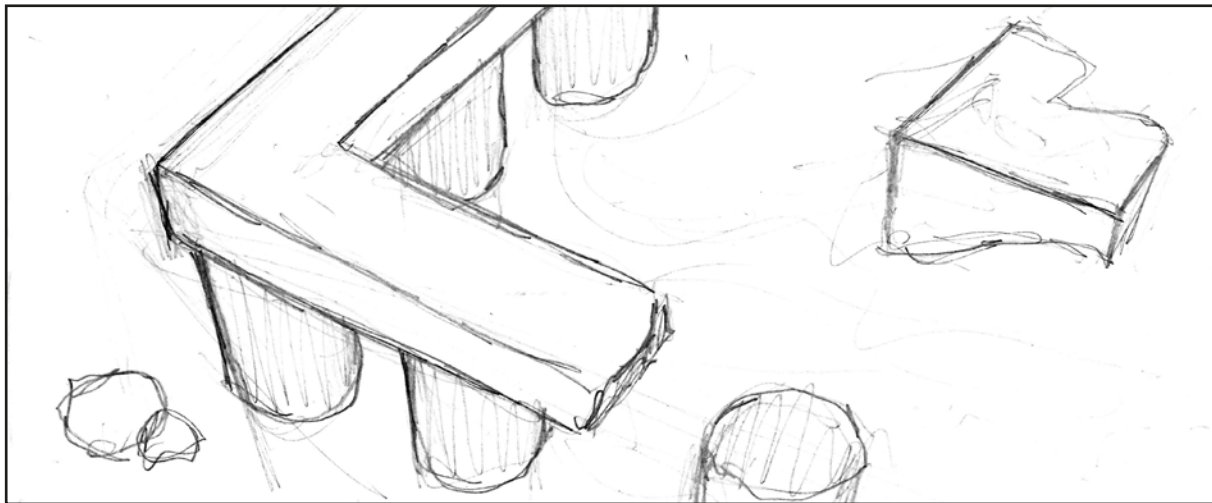




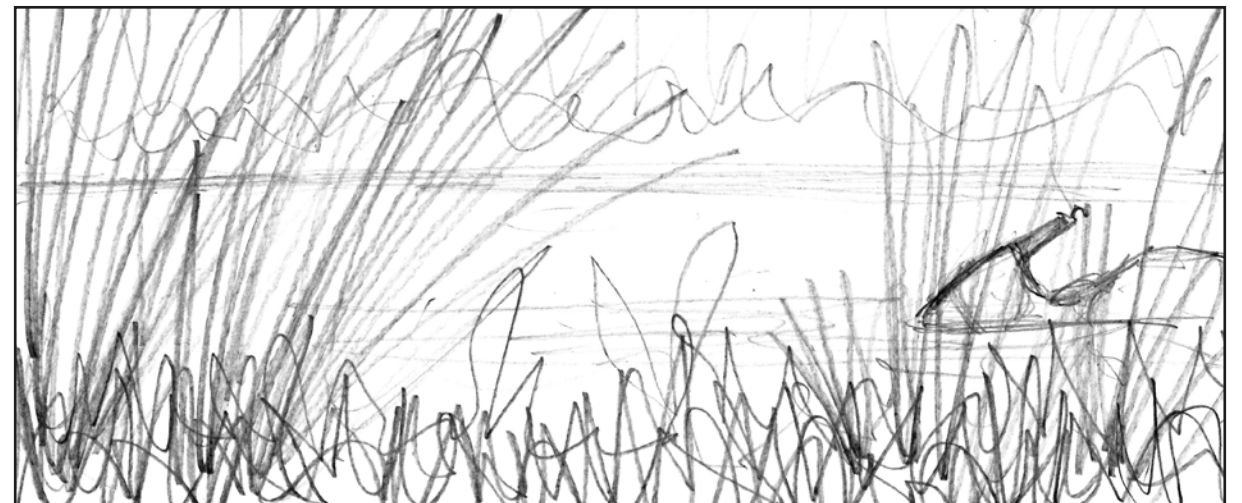
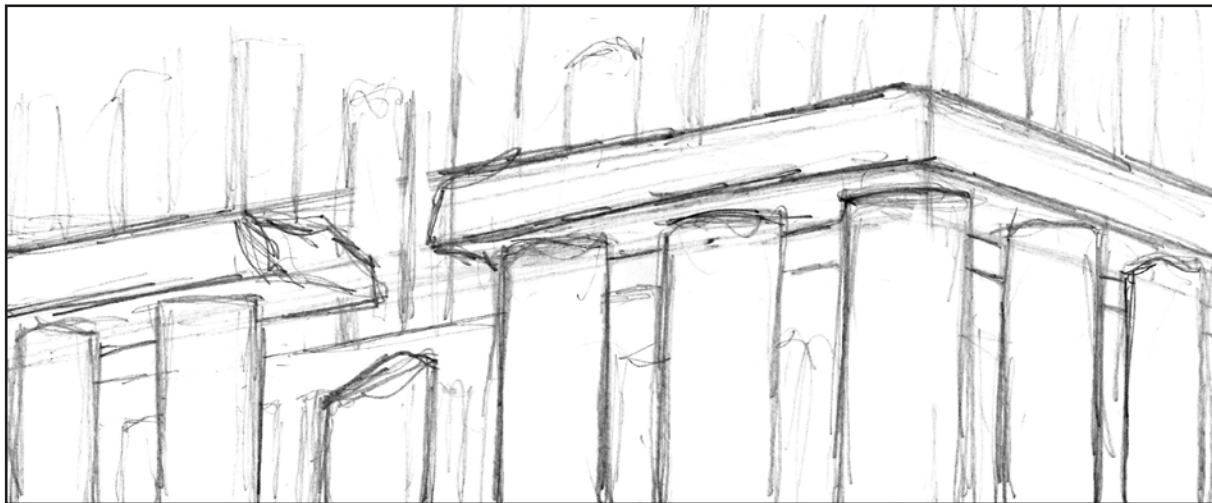




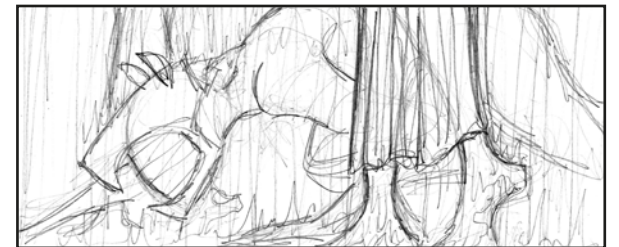
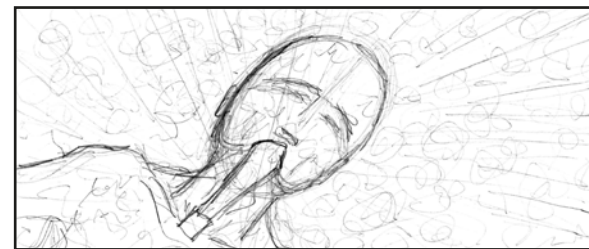
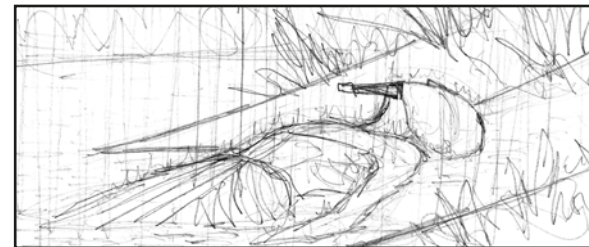
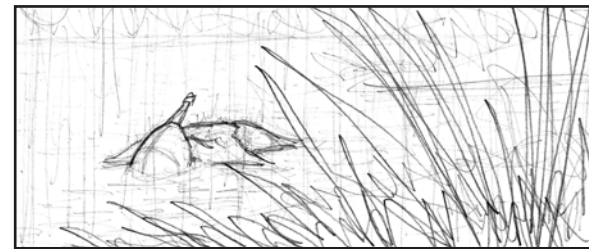
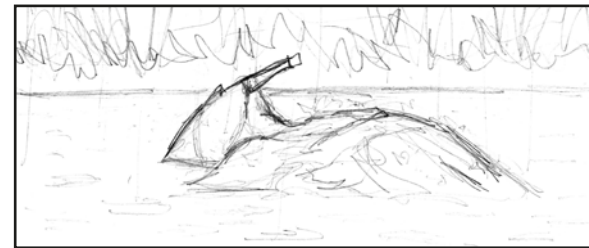
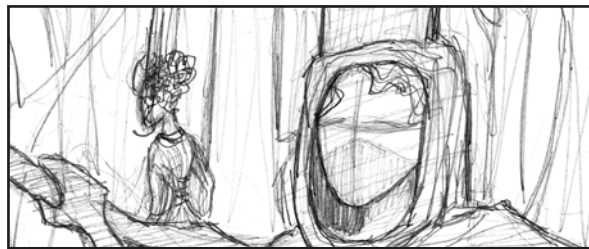
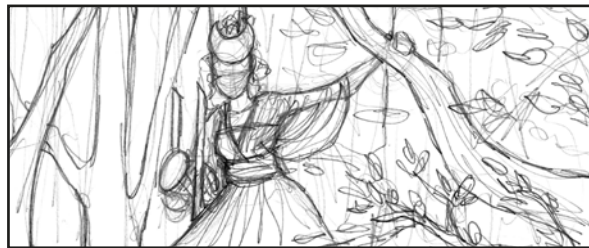
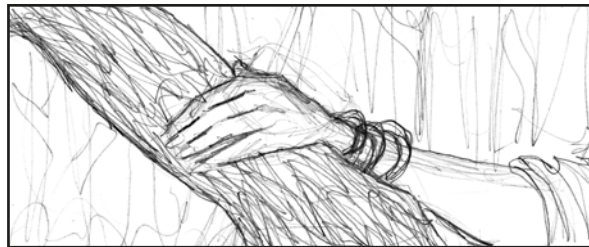
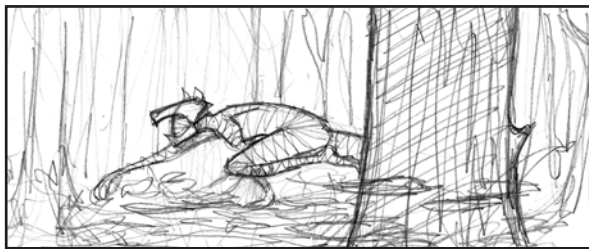
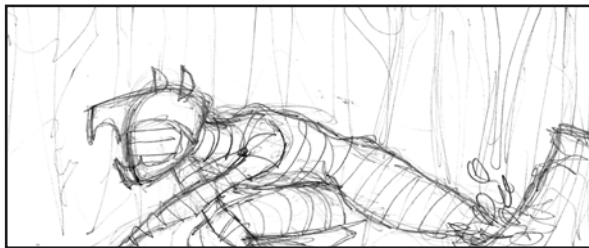
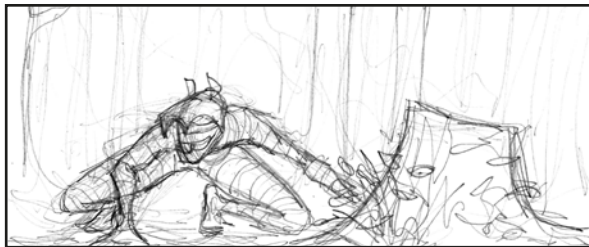
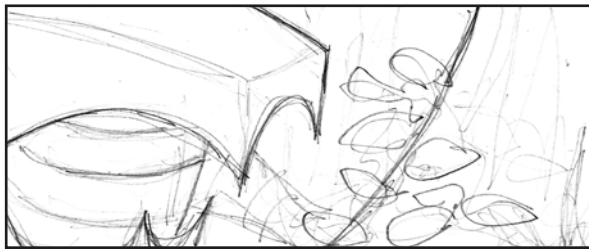




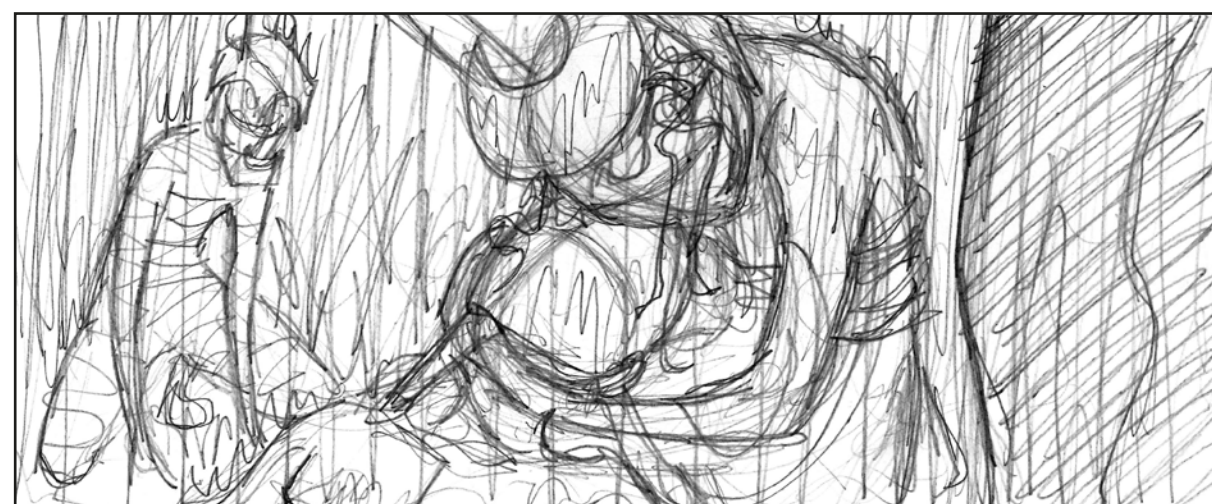
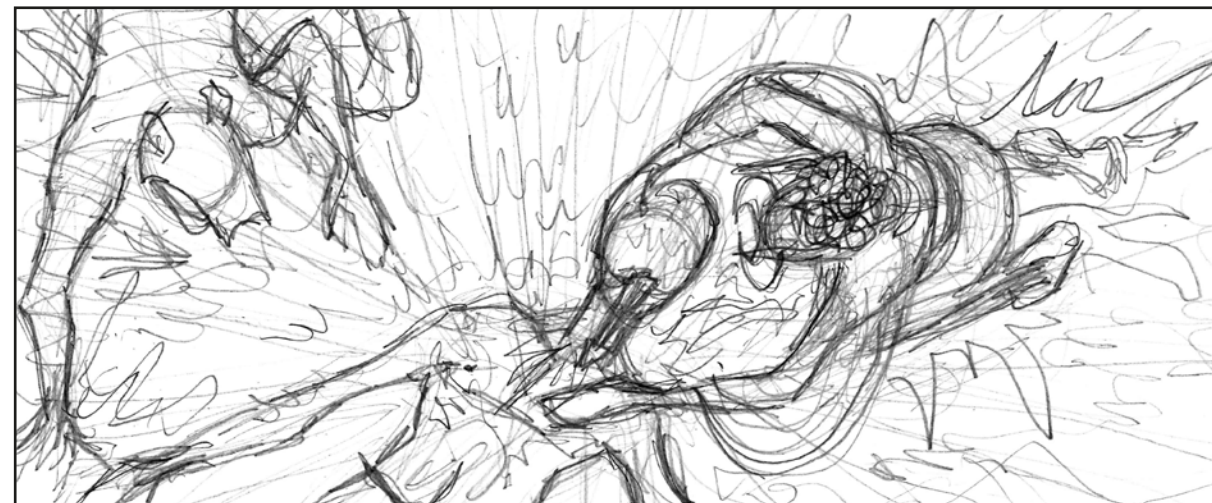
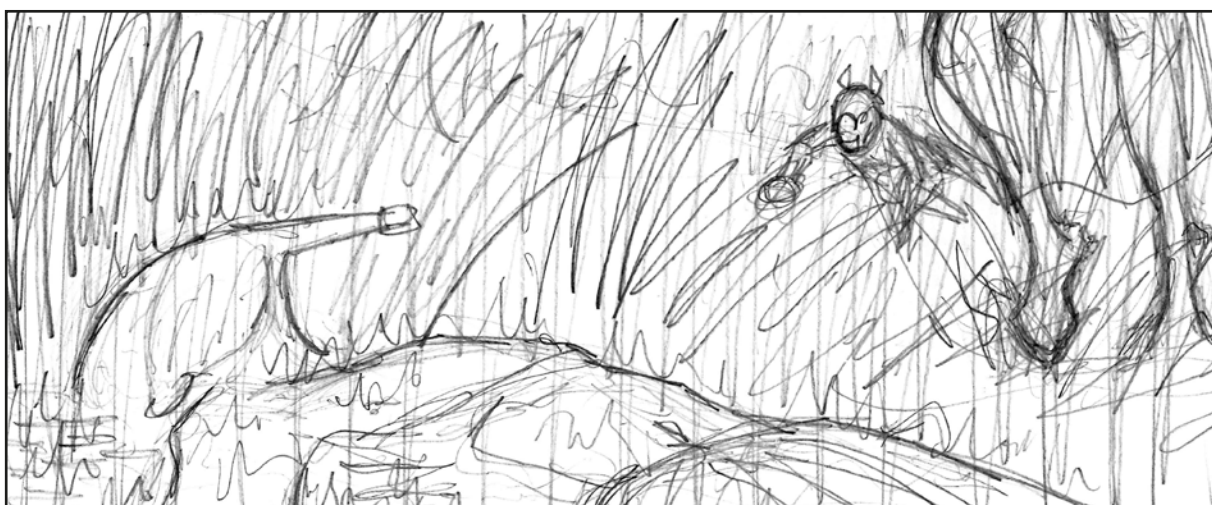
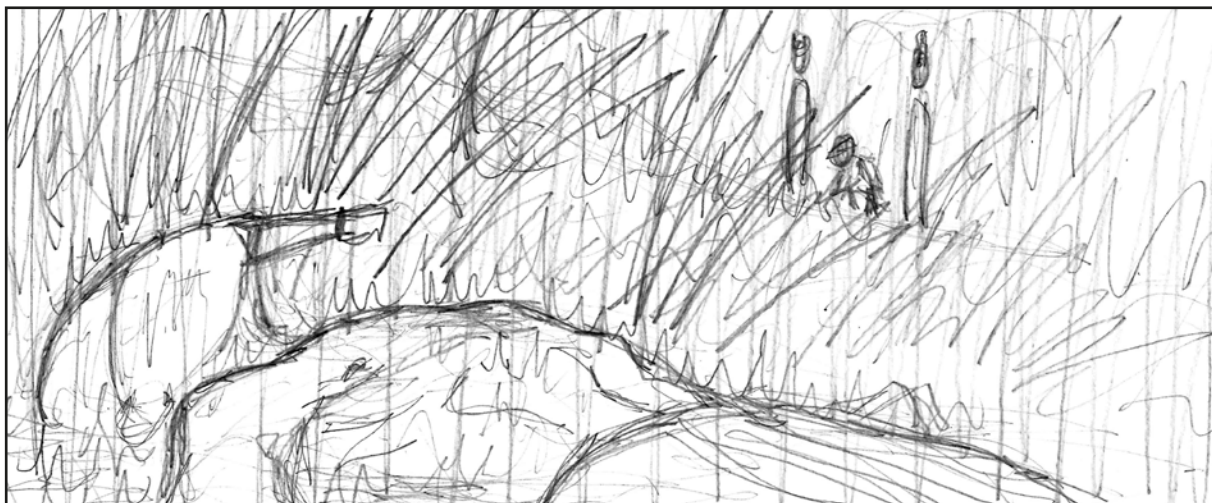




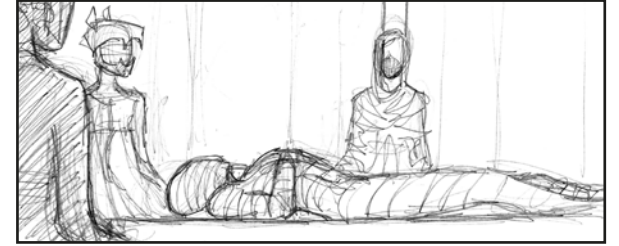
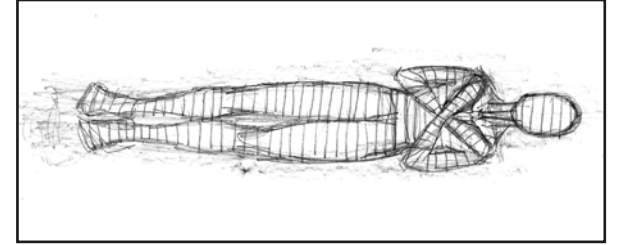
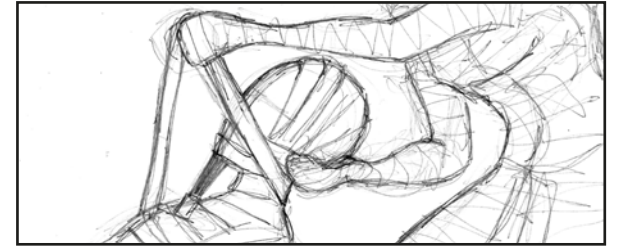
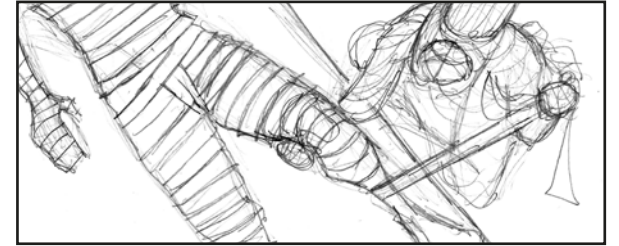
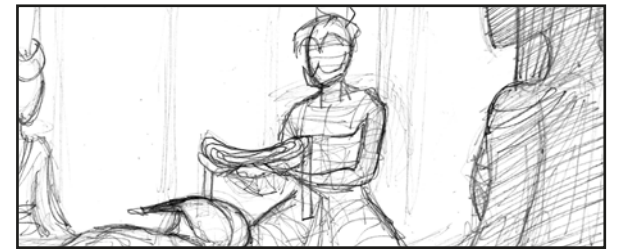
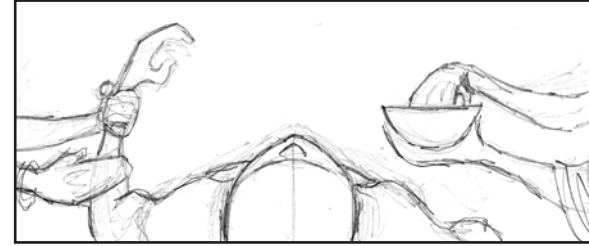
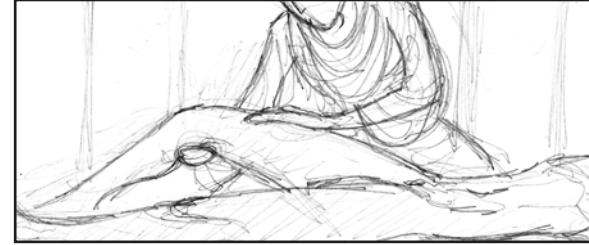
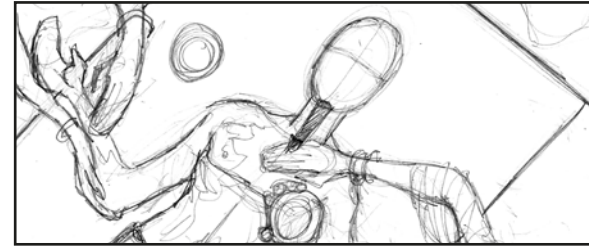
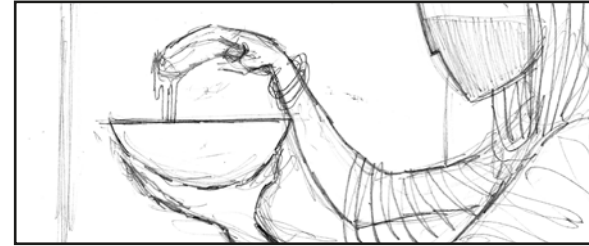
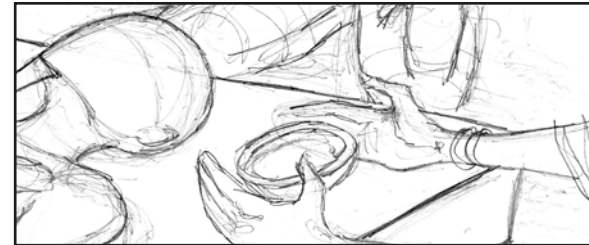
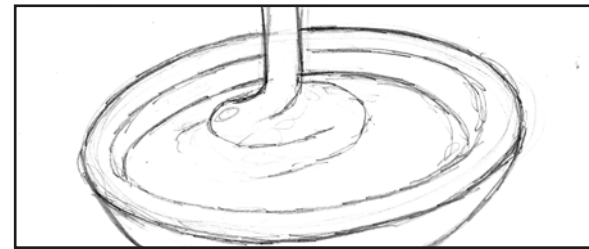
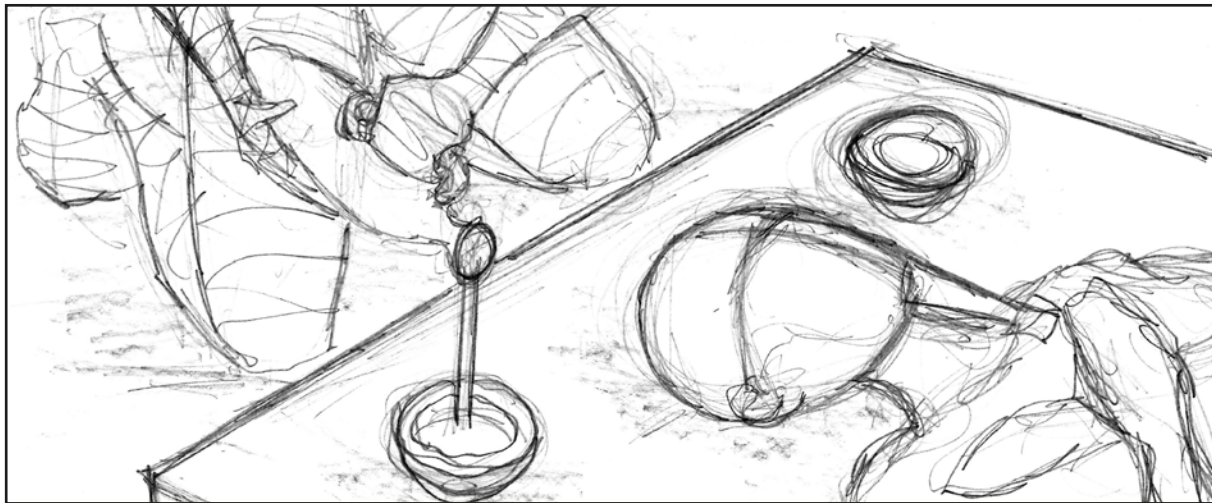
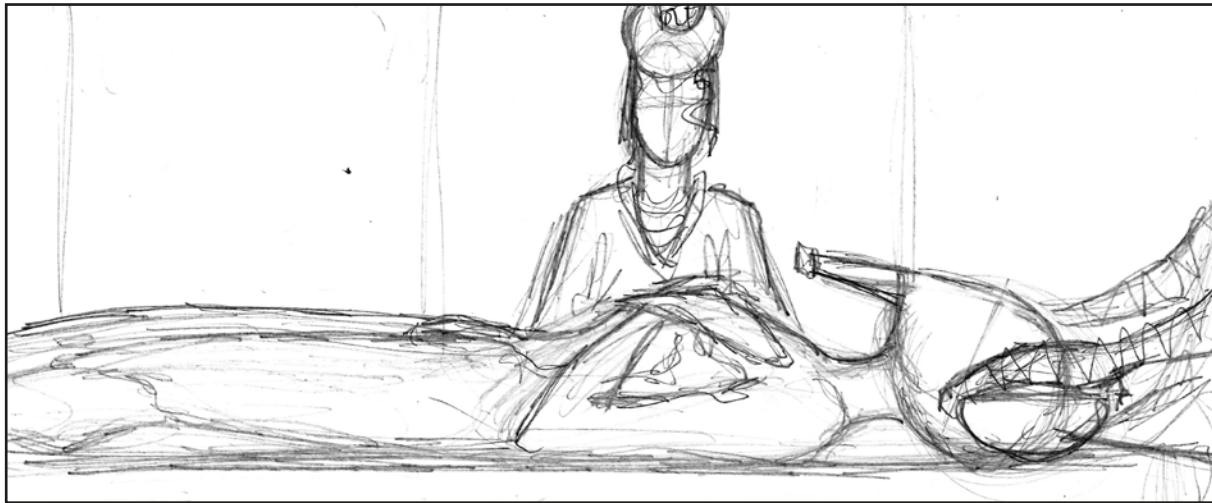
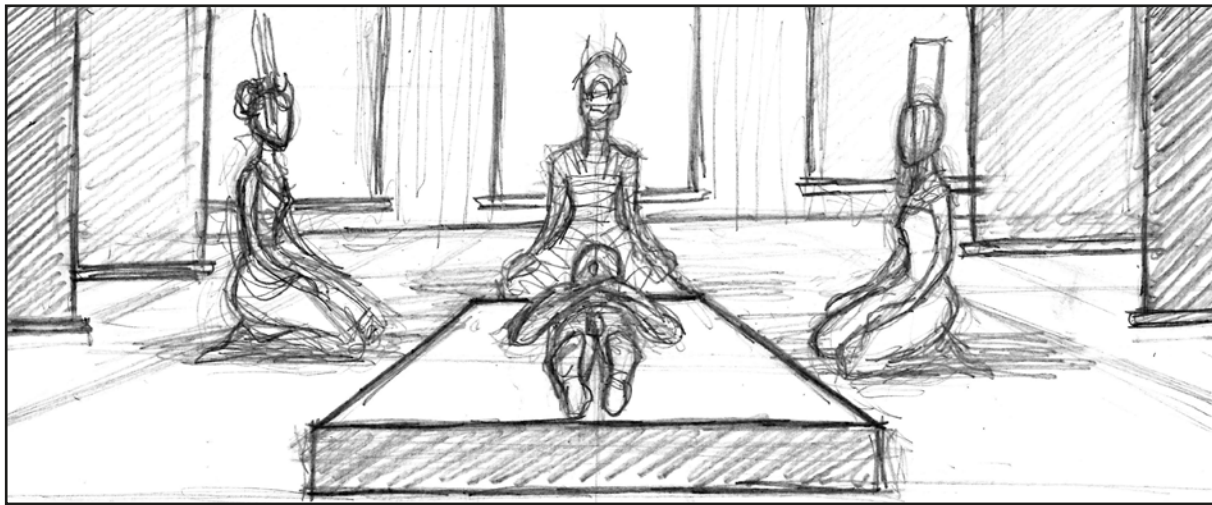




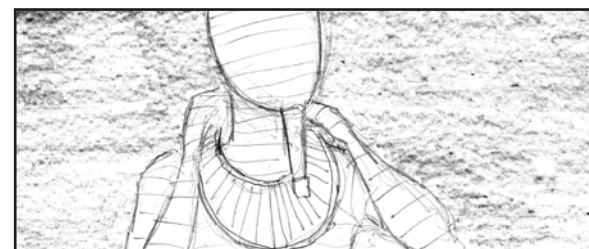
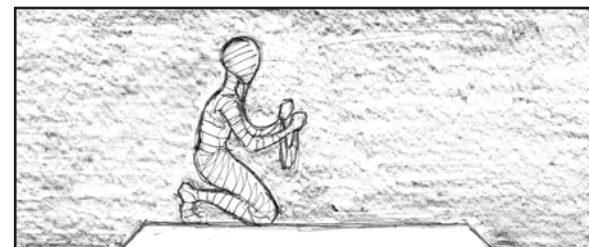
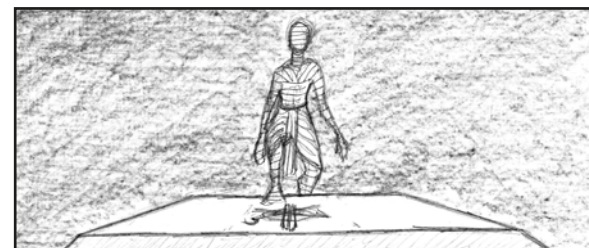
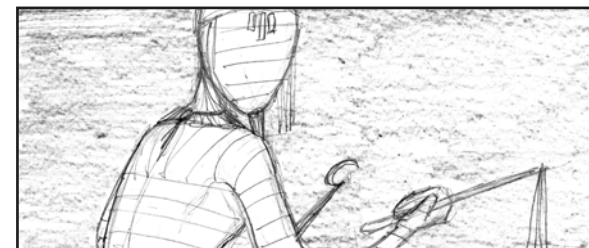
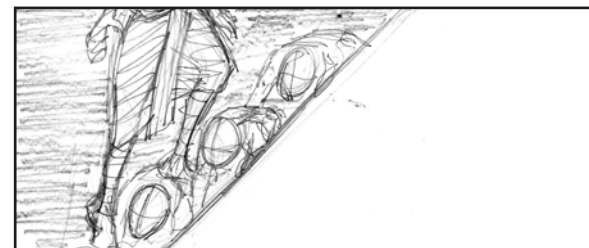
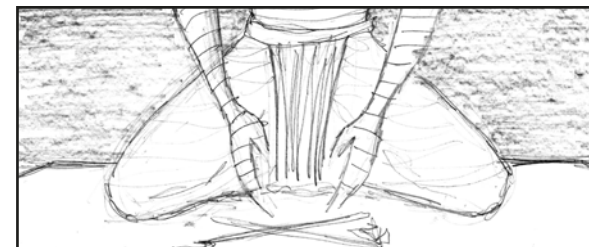
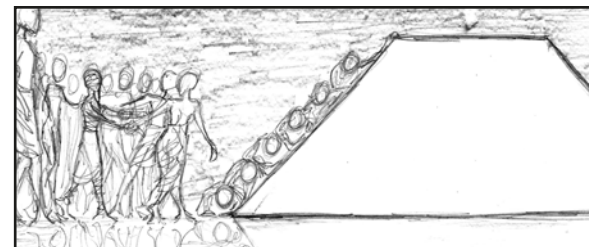
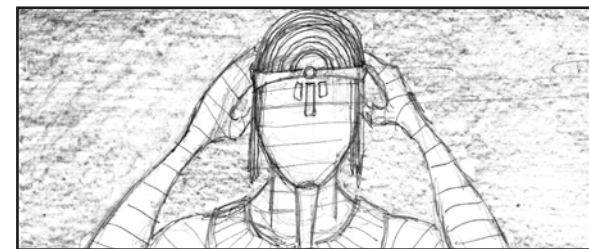
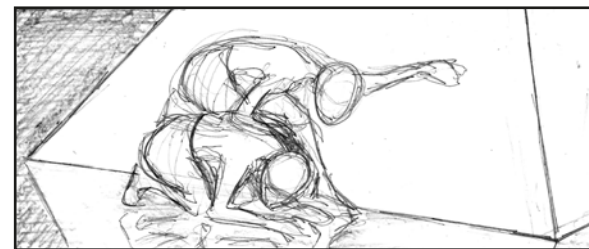
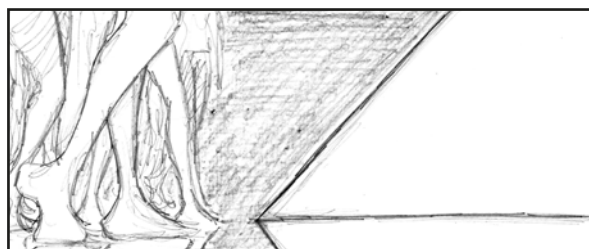
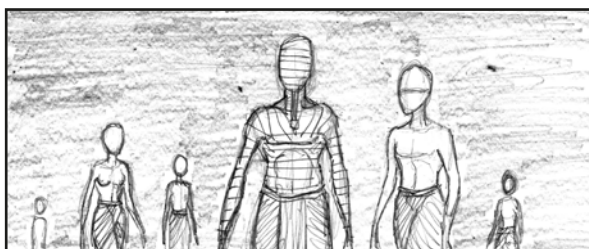
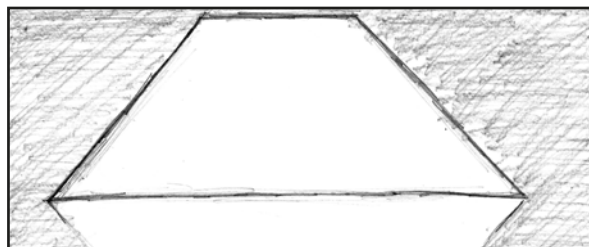
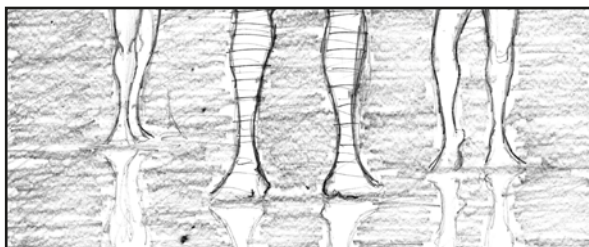
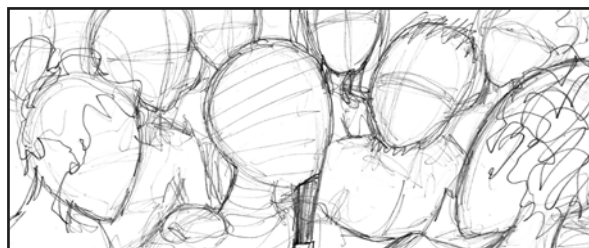
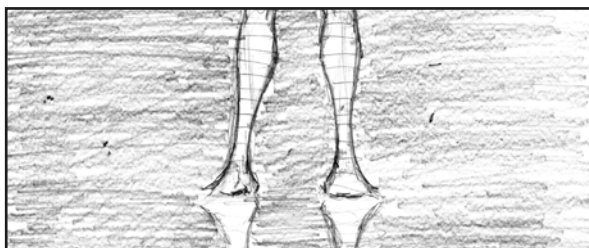
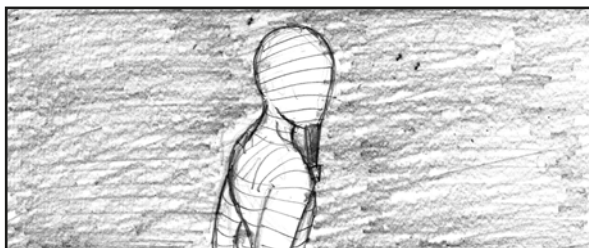
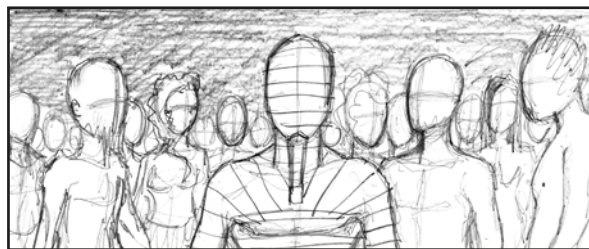
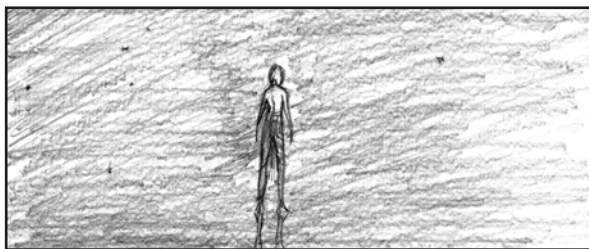








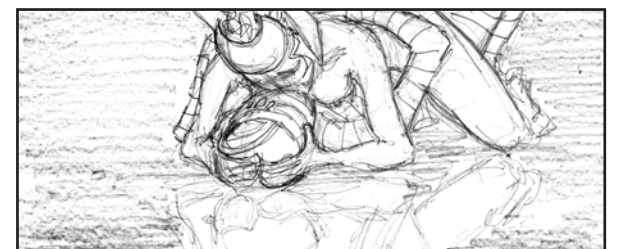
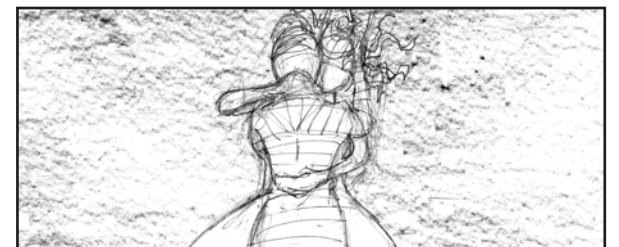
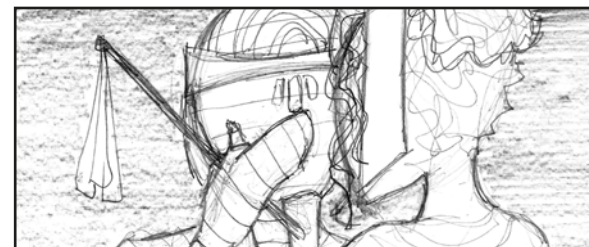
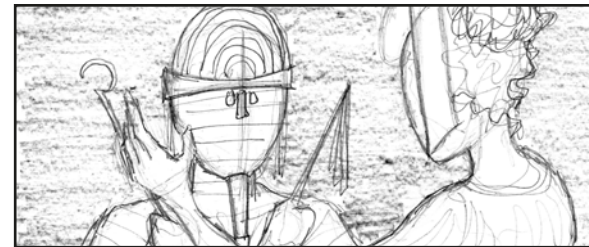
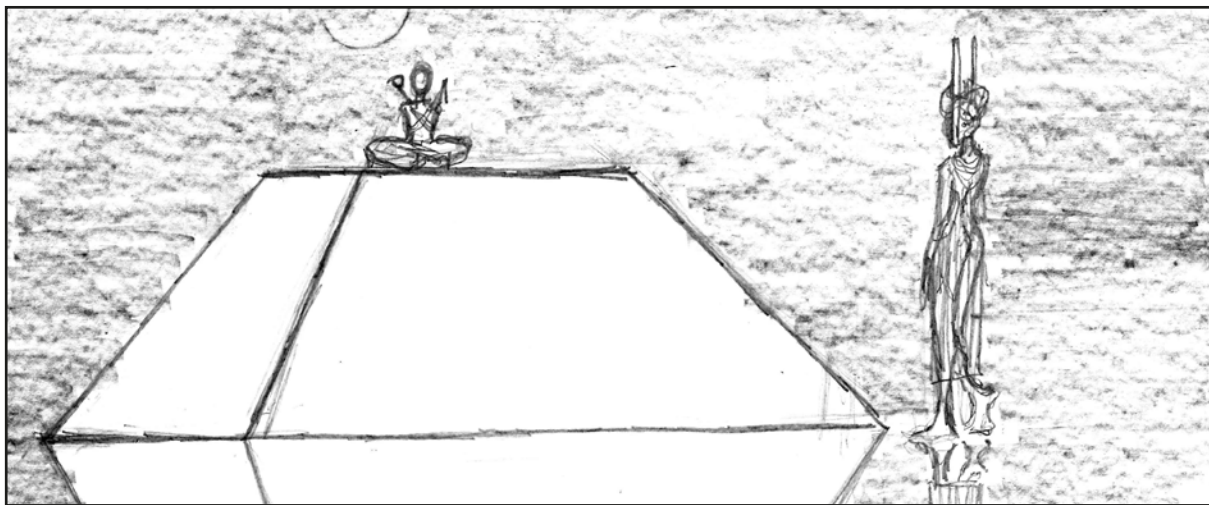
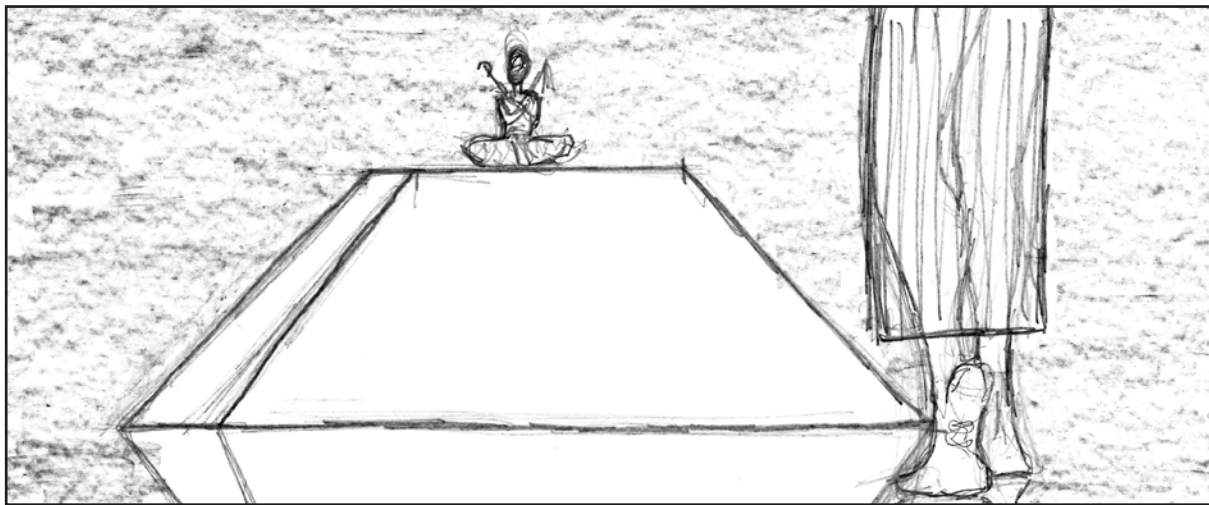
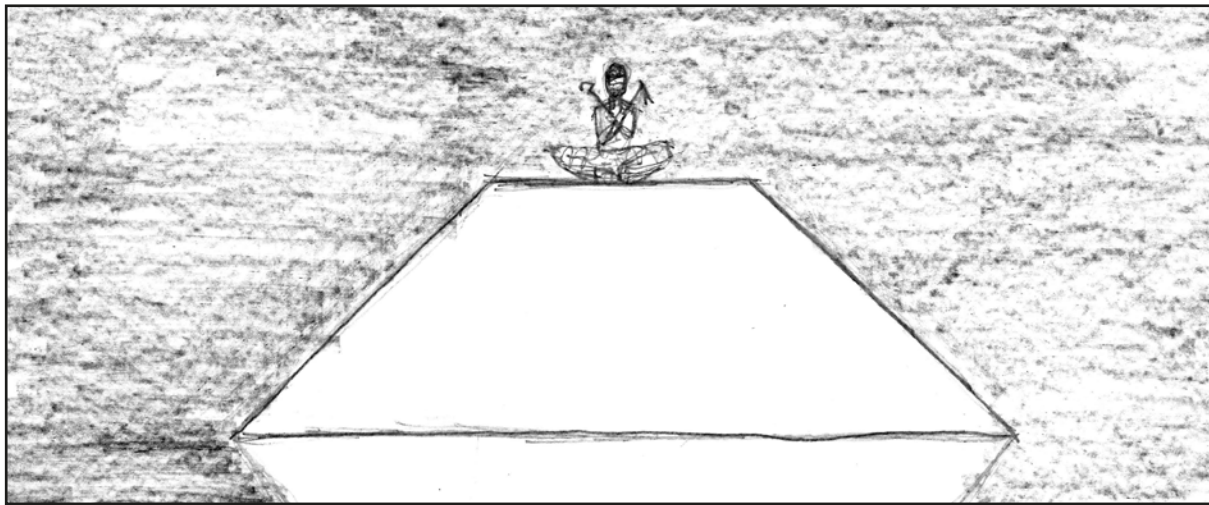




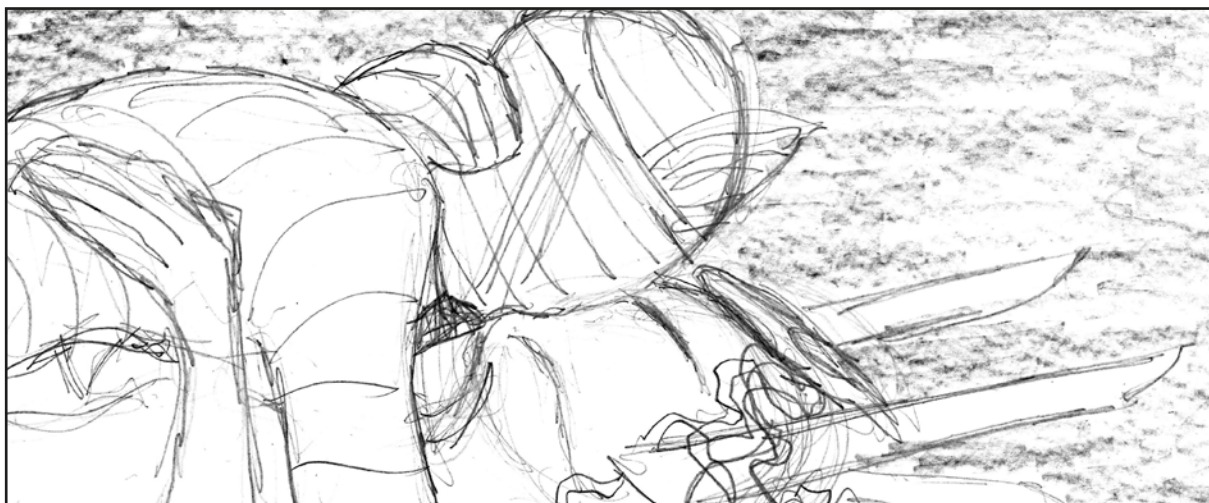




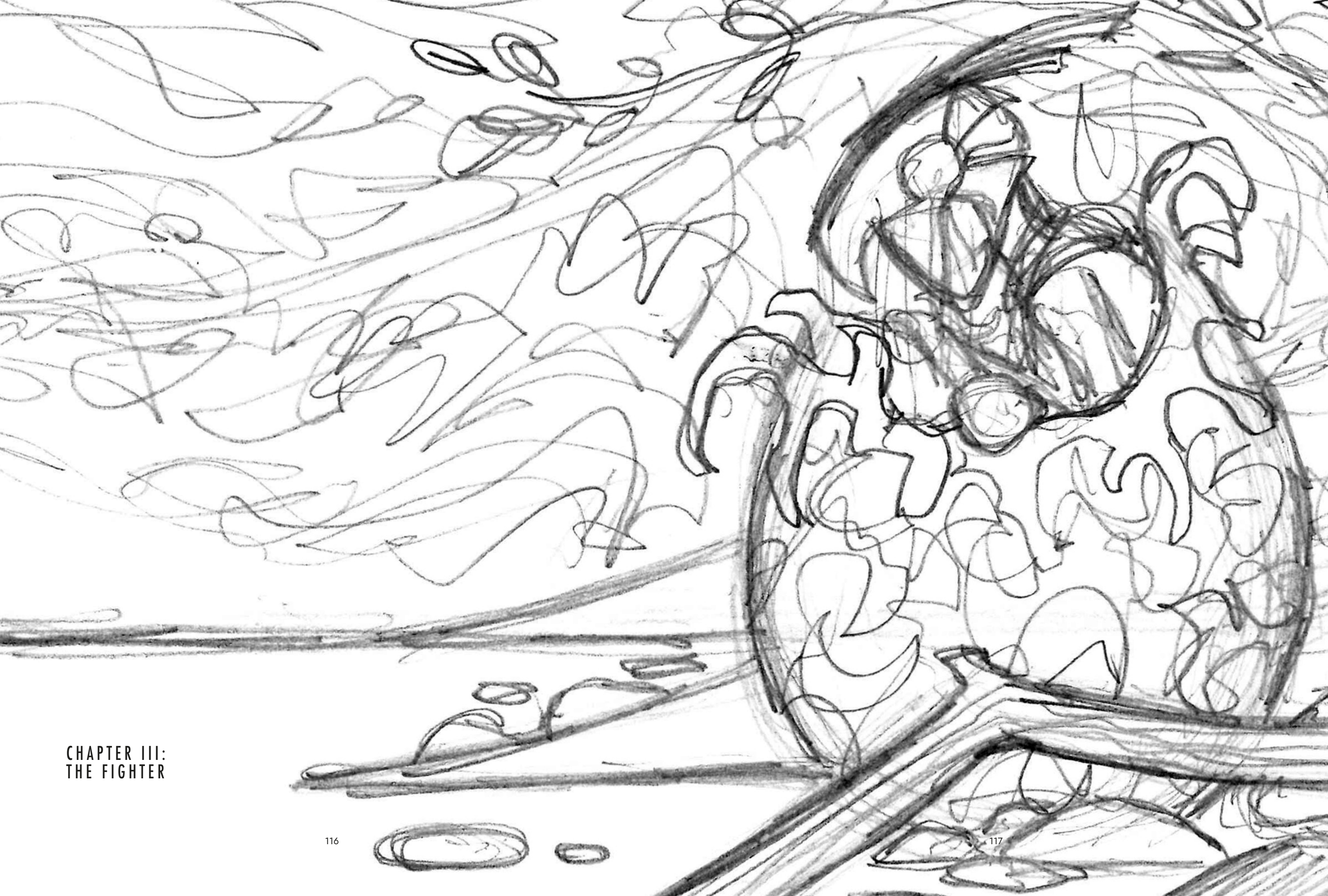






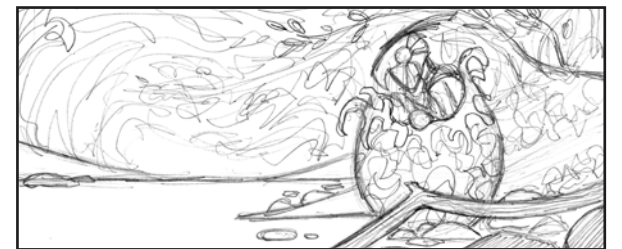
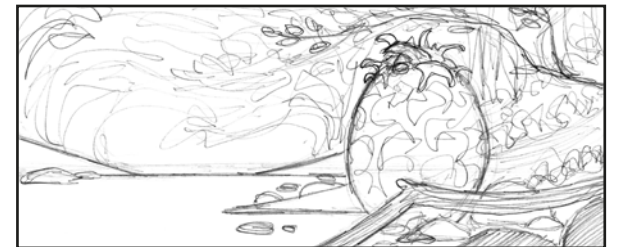
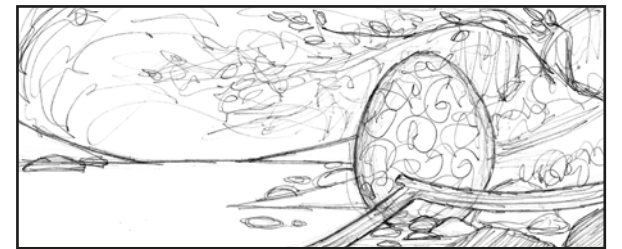
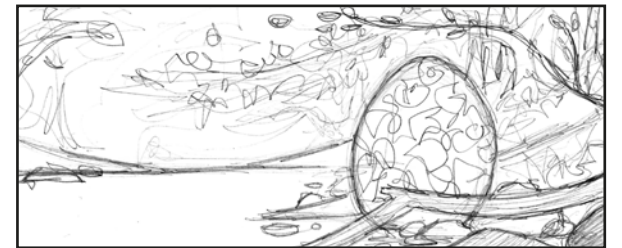
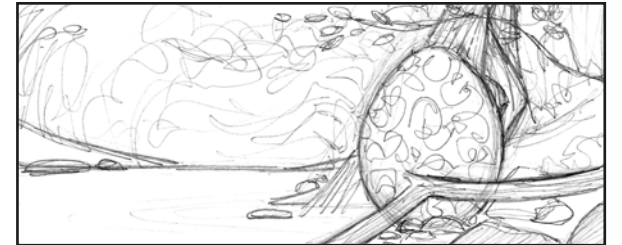
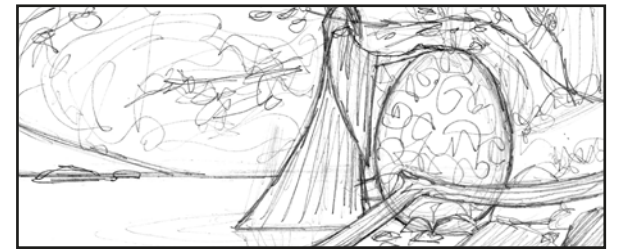
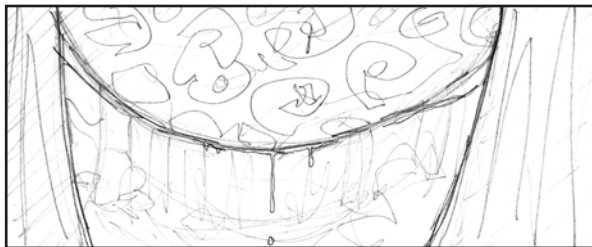
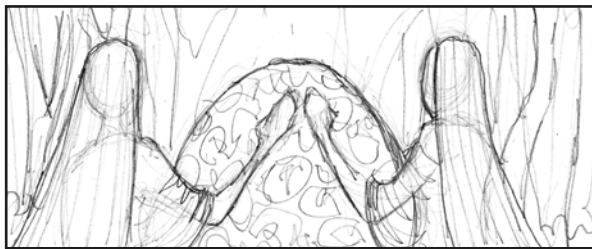
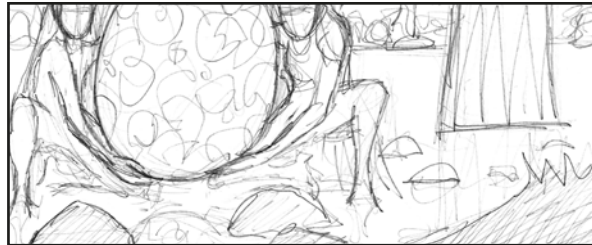
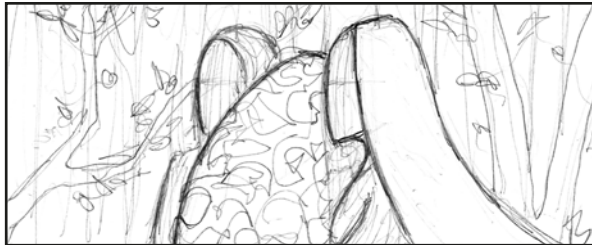
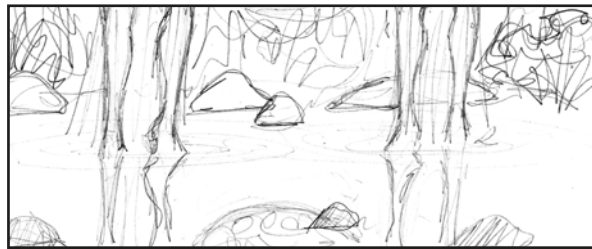
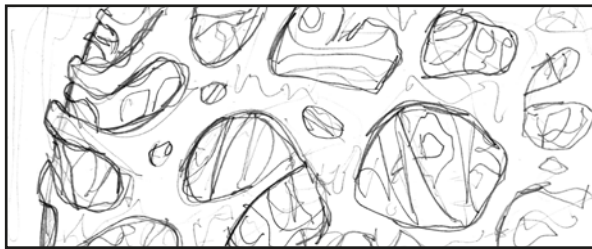




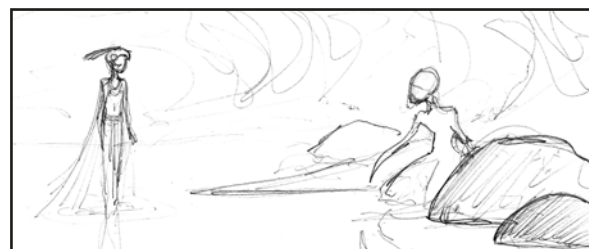
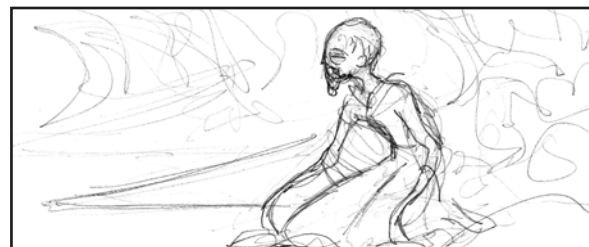
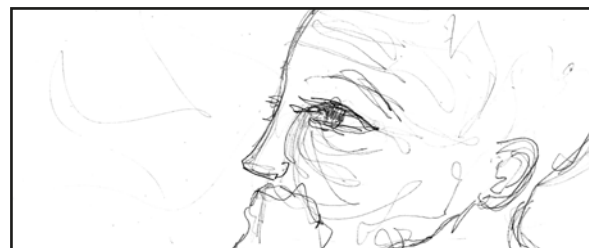
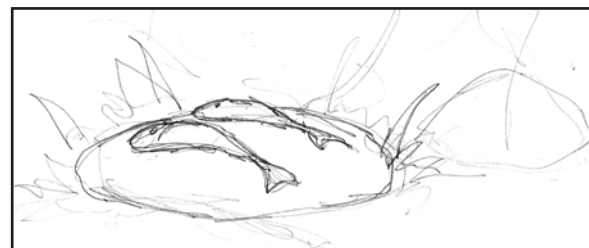
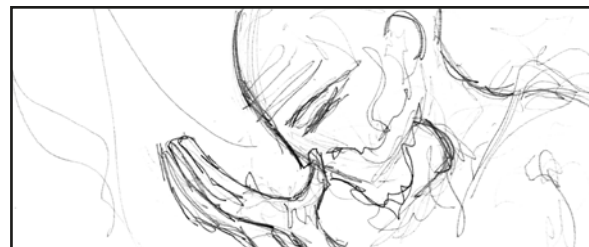
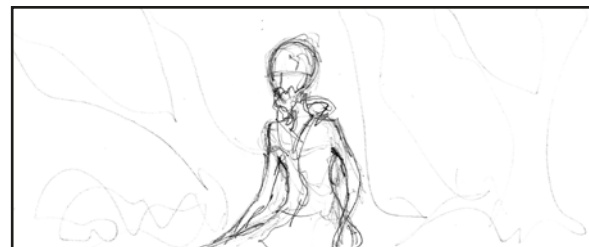
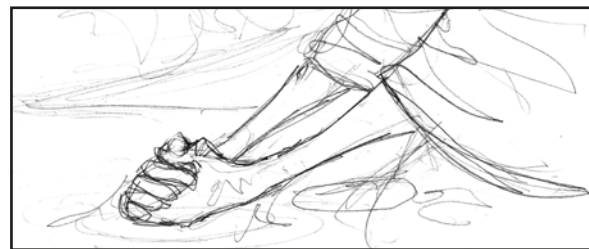
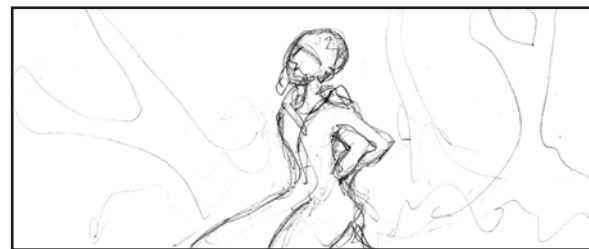
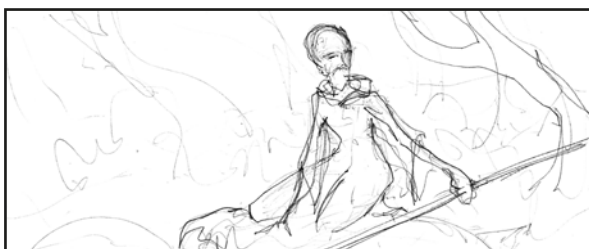
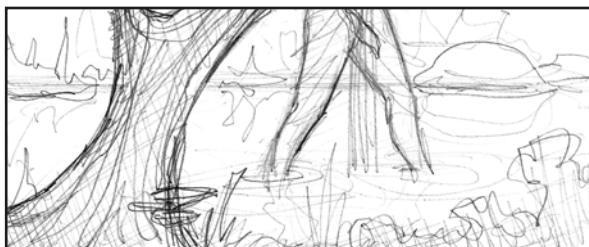
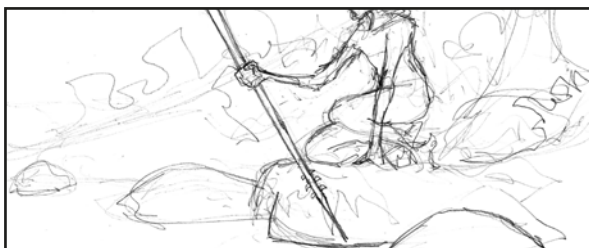
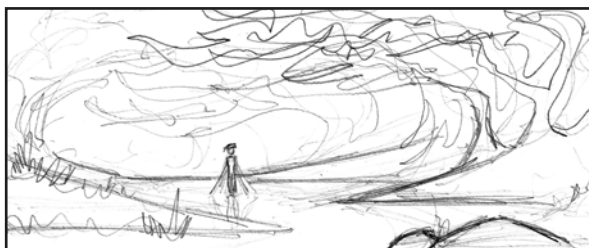
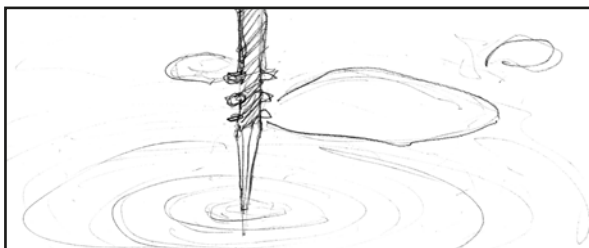
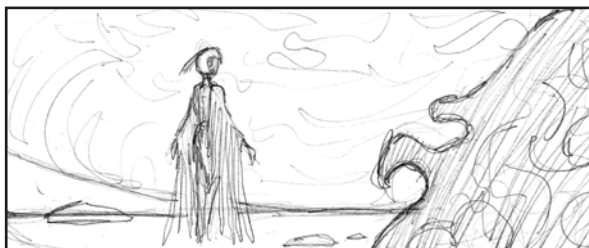
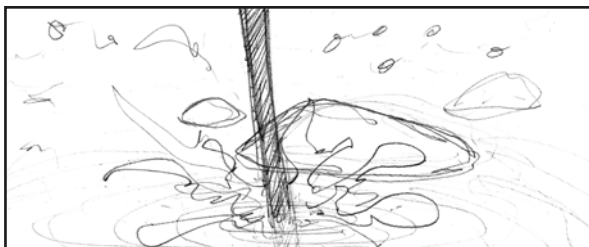
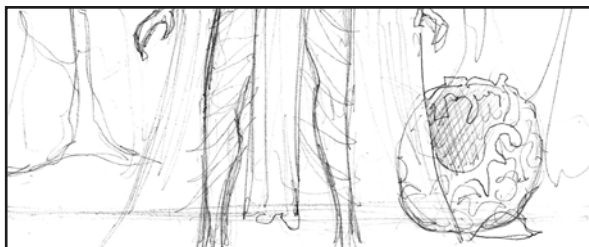


CHAPTER III:  
THE FIGHTER

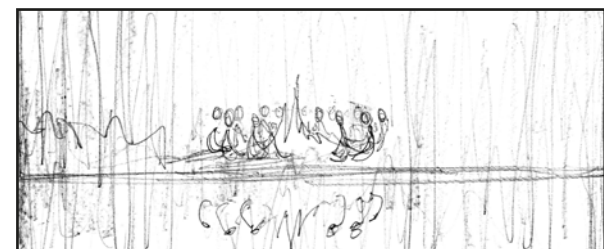
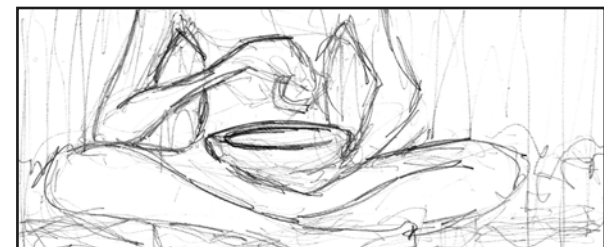
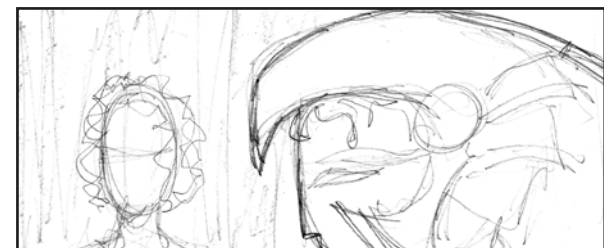
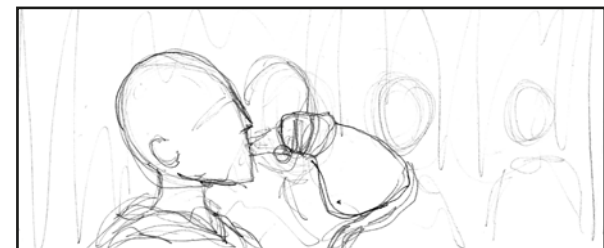
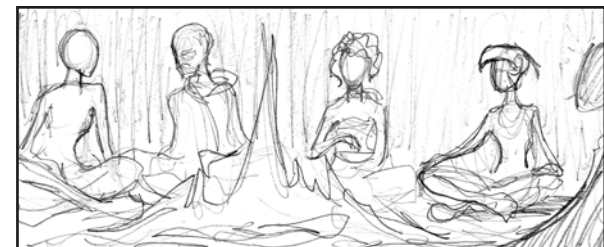
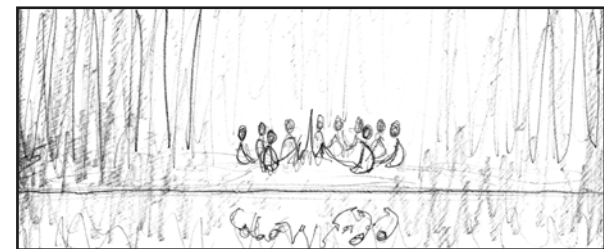




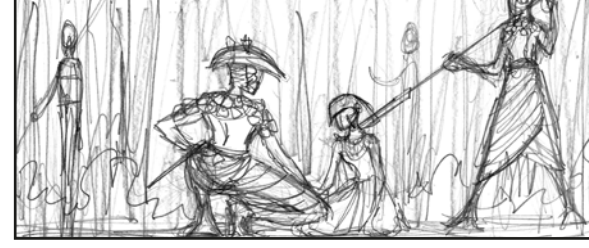
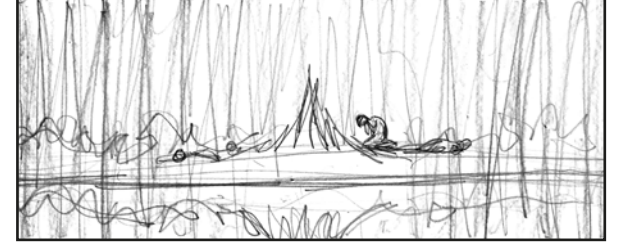
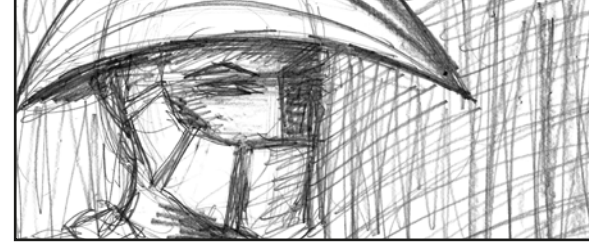
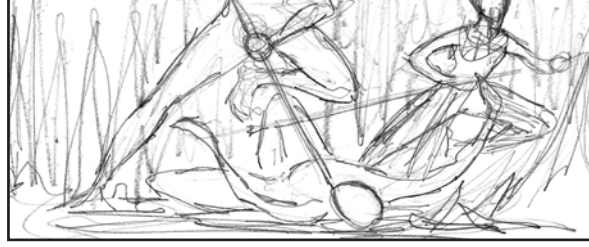
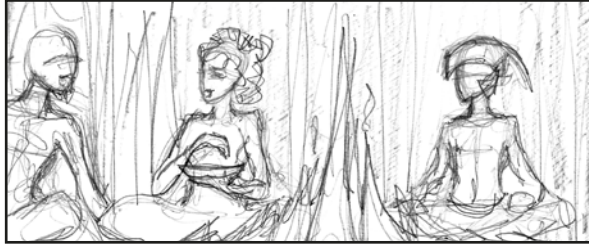
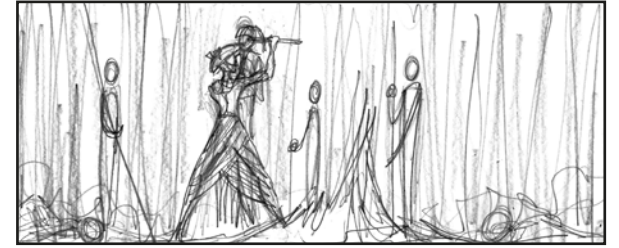
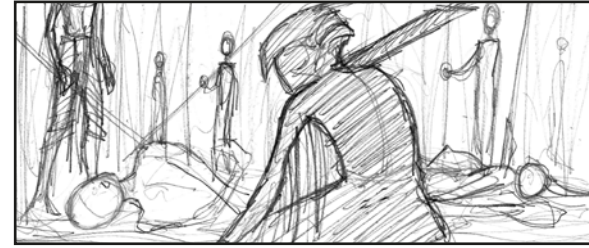
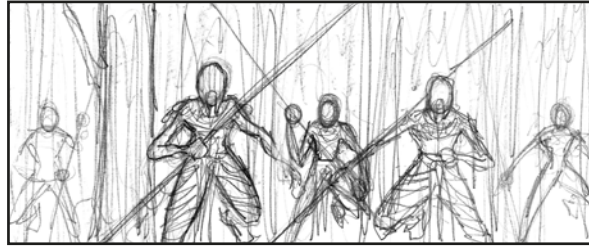
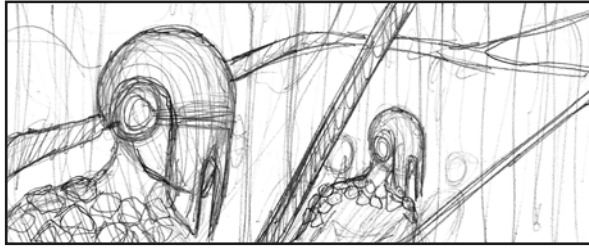
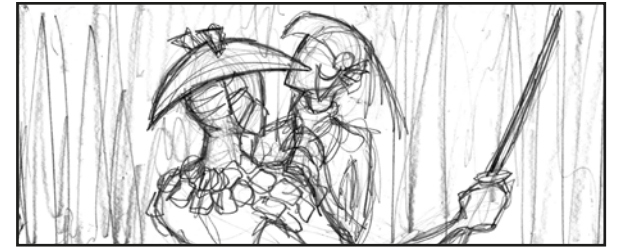
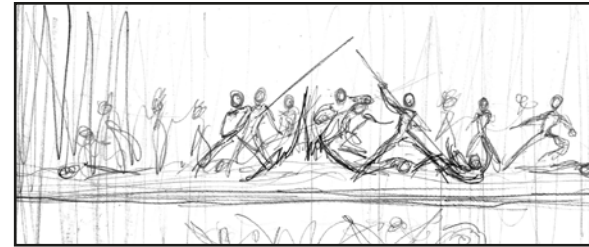
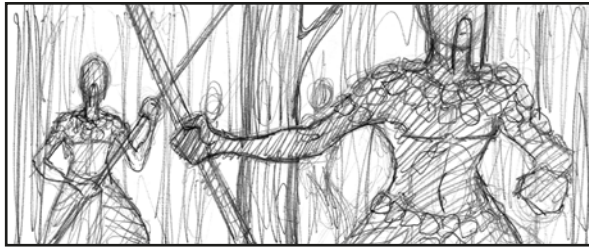
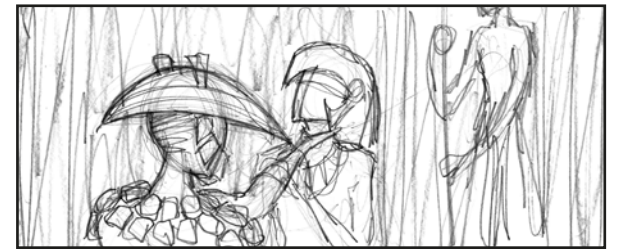
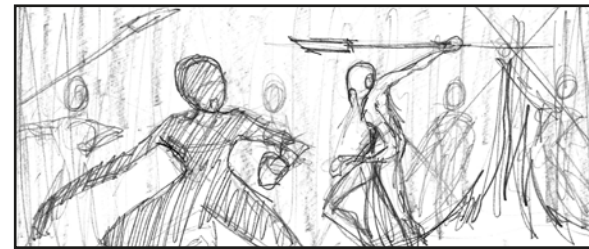
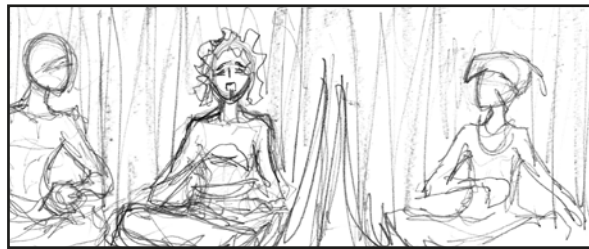
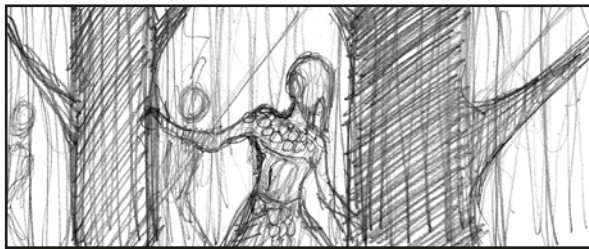








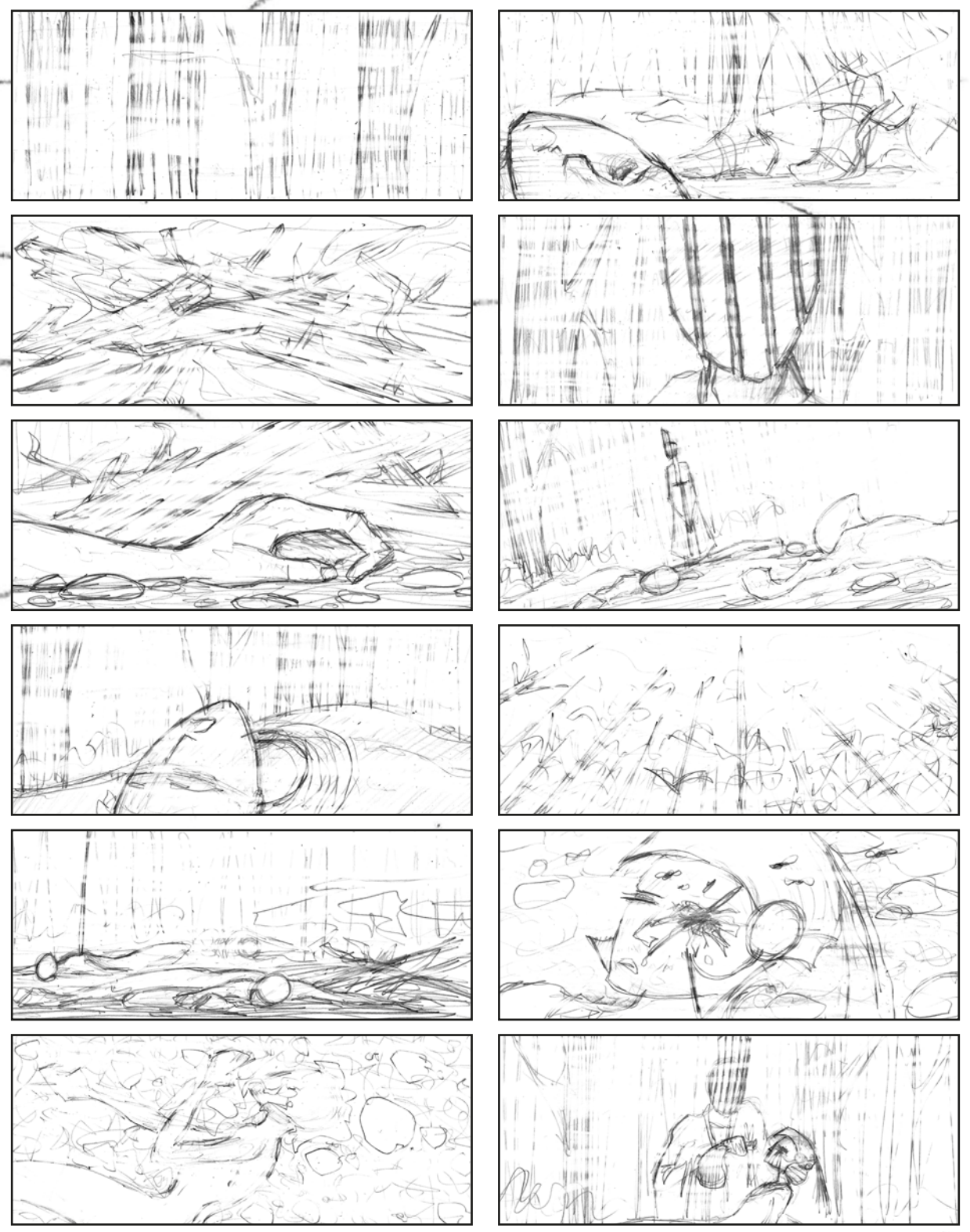




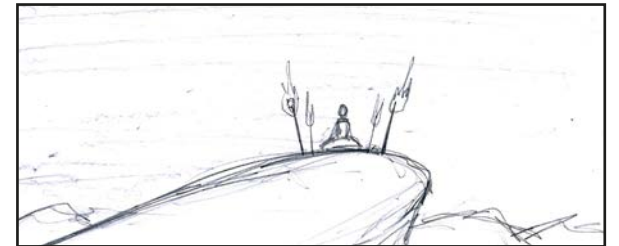
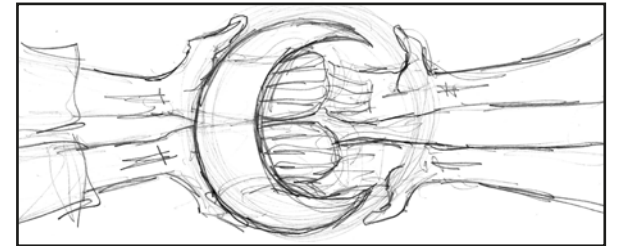
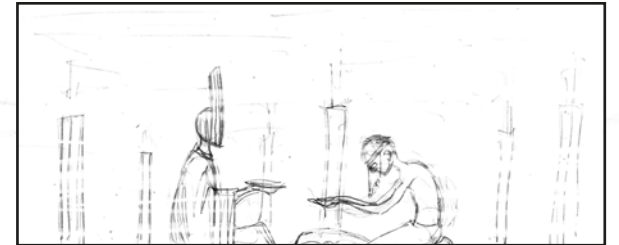
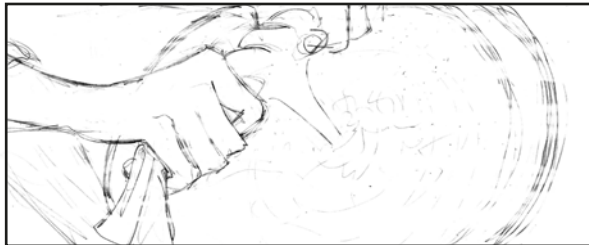
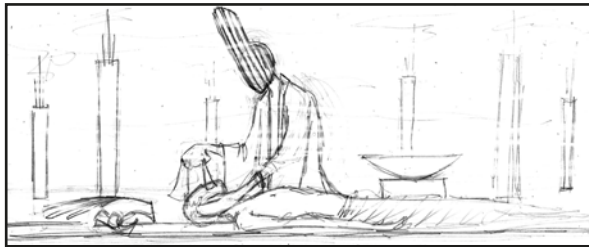
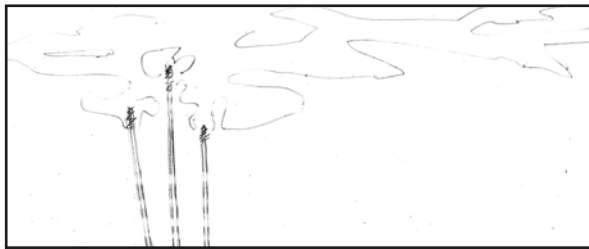




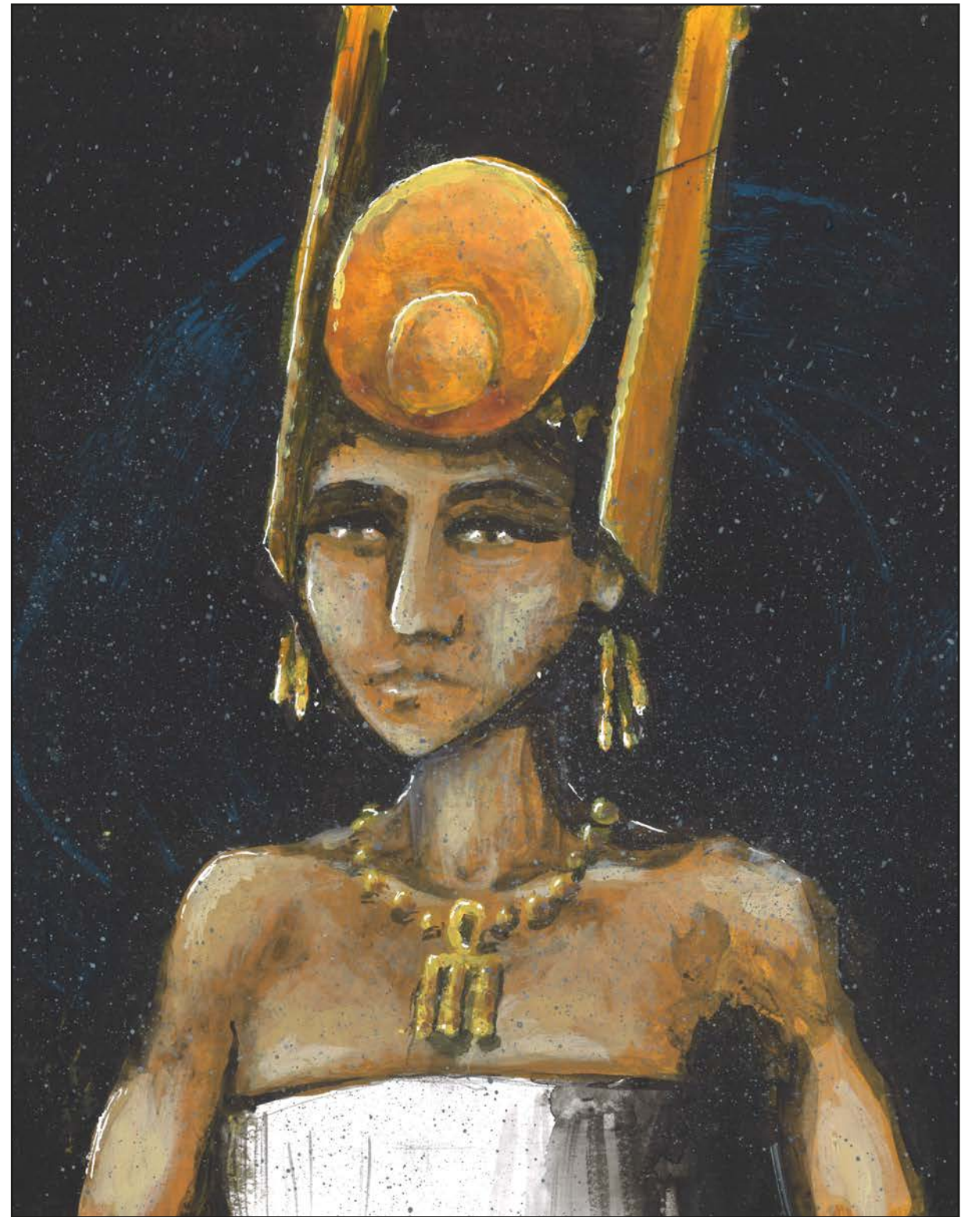














SORTIR AU JOUR

IIIA. THE GREAT NORTHERN  
HIPPOPOTAMUS





## À MI-CHEMIN

*« The Great Northern Hippopotamus and Other Tales based on the Osirian Myth » est une série de textes écrits en 2020 (en anglais) auxquels sont jointes mes propres annotations. À la différence du story-board des pages précédentes, cette étape est marquée par le désir de sortir du mode de l'adaptation. La recherche passe par la pratique, cette fois-ci par le biais d'un autre médium : la (ré)écriture. Il s'agit d'un brainstorming obstiné, dans lequel je tourne et retourne les mythes égyptiens, les observant sous tous les angles dans l'espoir d'y trouver une porte par laquelle m'immiscer afin de trouver en eux l'histoire que je voudrais raconter (« a story worth telling », pour reprendre les termes qui me préoccupaient alors). L'opération se révèle fructueuse, principalement puisque c'est lors de cette étape que le concept d'entropie vient trouver sa place dans le projet et ainsi redéfinir les étapes suivantes de ma recherche.*

*À la manière de Raymond Queneau dans ses « Exercices de Style » (1947), je reprends sans cesse la même trame et lui fait arborer de nouvelles couleurs, découvrant ainsi de nouvelles facettes de ses personnages ainsi que des concepts qui leur sont liés. Les annotations jointes à ces textes ont été écrites au fur et à mesure de mes tentatives, me permettant d'analyser les effets de chacune d'entre elles et par la même de préciser la direction à prendre lors de l'essai suivant.*

*Les textes se trouvent en IIIA et leurs annotations en IIIB.*



## THE GREAT NORTHERN HIPPOPOTAMUS

*Four naked children play on the shore. Two of them are in the Water, the two other ones in the Sand. They wave at a Boat, then go back to playing (the Sun is so bright that it makes every color fade into a blinding grey). They feel the Wind on their faces, the cold of the Water, the warmth of the Sand, and it makes them laugh. They are all on their own, so once they get bored of their games, they start walking, following the shore, until they meet other people.*

S\*\* invited me to one of his parties. I was surprised, since we usually don't have much contact. He is quite a brutal and exhausting character, and although I wouldn't say I avoid him, I can only handle that much of his presence. The thing is, I am too polite to refuse — and I could actually use some time outside of politics. He personally opens the door as I ring; he seems taller and larger every time I see him. He's already tipsy, but rather in control, and hugs me before showing me the way. Huge flat, lots of people, reddish lights, strong smell of weed, aggressive cloud rap at a volume making it almost impossible to hear each other; the atmosphere is orgiastic — it's a warm, sweaty, noisy chaos. I count *soixante-douze* guests. We go on the terrace. "I think you already met N\*\*\*\*\*, my wife?" She smiles at me; she's, in her own austere way, beautiful. Yes, we do know each other; I see her more often than I see him. She's got a high position in a major Real Estate agency. I never got why those two ended up marrying; my guess would be that they somehow felt more comfortable being alone together. I think they tried having a child, and the fact that they couldn't seems to weigh on her (on him as well, maybe... can't tell). We had an affair some time ago. I'm pretty sure S\*\* is aware of it — for there's no such thing as a secret in this world.

"Thanks for having me. What have you been up to?"

— What if I told you that I'm about to bring my career to a political level? I can't share much more details right now, unfortunately, but let's say, to make it short, that I recently discovered myself both a taste and a talent for this sort of games. Divide and conquer, they say; I might be good at that."

Well, so much for staying outside of politics. "When you put it this way... Quite not my perspective, but it makes sense, I suppose.

— Right? I'll tell you more in due time; but first, I'm gonna enjoy my own party and greet my other guests. Get yourself a drink, we'll catch each other again later."<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

Picture yourself the four cardinal points. In the North are the Gods; in the South are all the things you can see, hear, touch, smell or taste. Between those poles goes the axis of Consciousness. From West to East goes Time; from Past to Present. Reason, Intuition, Memory, Imagination — also known as Water, Fire, Earth, Air. In



the North (in the House *Sahou*) is your Soul (*Ba*) and Spirit (*Khous*). In the South is your Body (*Khat*) and your Double (*Ka*). In the West is your Name (*Ren*) and your Shadow (*Khaibit*). In the East is your Might (*Sekhem*) and your Heart (*Ab*). Et tu te promènes aux quatre côtés du ciel. It might seem balanced and stable; but when I took a closer look, I witnessed a war; and we're in the middle of it.<sup>2</sup>

*The four children arrive in the city. They are now older. People kneel before them, and they are happy not to be alone anymore. They feel at home. They are tired of each other, so they split in two groups. That is how it is meant to be.*<sup>3</sup>

I lie on the ground, with, as far as I can count, fourteen broken bones. I am crushed from toes to forehead. My feet are in the water, which carries more blood than I thought my body could contain. But I don't feel pain anymore — I'm just very tired. I try to remember what it's like to actually feel the water on my skin. This is nice. A dog is barking in the distance, two birds circling above it. It's like in the song:

*Oh I can see your face  
Within the Void  
Tell me you can recreate  
What has been lost.*<sup>4</sup>

After a thousand days of waiting, we have sex on the floor.

\*\*\*

The Hippopotamus (*hippopotamus amphibius*) weighs around 1500 kg (although one exceptional specimen reaching the 4500 kg has been reported), which makes it the third biggest land mammal, after elephants and some rhinoceros. It can become extremely aggressive when it comes to protecting its territory, thereby maintaining its reputation of being the most dangerous animal in Africa. Males occasionally fight in violent duels, making use of their ability to spread their jaws at almost 180°, revealing 50 cm long canines and almost equally long incisors (which are used only for those warlike purposes). The Hippopotamus is adapted to both terrestrial and aquatic environments; its nostrils muscles contract automatically when going under the surface, keeping the water from entering into its lungs, and enabling it to stay fully immersed for 15 minutes easily (which is more than almost any other mammal).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, this amphibious creature has a fascinating relation of symbiotic mutualism with Oxpeckers (*buphagus*), which feed themselves out of what they can find on the body of the Hippopotamus; in return, the latter is getting cleaned of all its parasites. However, one can only *presume* that this relation will always stay this way.<sup>6</sup>

\*\*\*

I feel cursed and I feel blessed; which has a certain irony to it, given that I'm supposed, from now on, to be the one to bless and curse. She's above me and does all the work (I'm barely *repaired*).<sup>7</sup> The ground is black and mirrors the absence of light. She tells me everything's gonna be all right, and I choose to believe her. I wish for everyone to be loved this way. The longer it goes, the stronger I feel;



and she *somehow* makes me come inside her, although it is rationally impossible.  
Beside us is a Black Dog.

*Another child arrives in the city, but he does not get older.  
People would like to kneel, but they are scared to — and they  
should be. Those who do get slaughtered, and the child has  
his left eye taken away from him. The Sun is gone now. It's  
a night without Moon. The child is in pain and it makes him  
angry. He goes to the shore and screams to call his enemy.*

Le Réel (dont le Naturel n'est qu'une infime partie) n'est pas nécessairement Rationnel (le Transcendant s'y invite); et l'Imaginaire (aRationnel) s'en détache. Seule une ligature de Symbolique Complexe rassemble l'Horizon du Réel et la vertigineuse Verticale de l'Imaginaire en un inextricable Noeud Borroméen.

\* \* \*

The Boat passes again. This time, it comes closer to the shore, until the hull hits the Sand. Something comes out of the cabin; it is older than conceivable. It looks down on the beach (it stands straight, but it is tired as a parent whose children are fighting). It sets foot on the ground, and looks at the wounded Hippopotamus; its face is of gold. The Hippopotamus says: "I can still work on the Boat. I will heal quickly, for I am strong. I have lost my place here, so please, take me with you." It puts its right hand on the face of the animal and caresses it. "I know, my friend. There's no need to ask. I'll take you with me." And it carries the Hippopotamus on the Boat. "You know, there might be no place for you Above, but neither is there Below. And you need to be somewhere, don't you? Not that I feel forced of anything, though. I'm glad to have you on board."

The Hippopotamus does not answer; it fell asleep.



Mother,

I suppose I need to thank you for your help; I don't know what would have happened without your intervention. I'm also very sorry for my reaction. Sorry and angry: why did you bring me to this? You placed dangerous tools in my hands, and I just cannot go from merciless to merciful as fast as you do. Look at me now, pathetic and bitter under my crown of regrets; was it really worth it? I'm sorry, I don't mean to be too harsh... I know that you had your reasons, and I try to accept that. I think that events only *seem* to be repeating themselves; but in the end, many things are irrevocably changed.

Forever yours,  
H\*\*\*\*8

Thrown into the depths of a kingdom upside down  
Symptom of the fall of a shattered primordial order  
I'm forced to turn my back to the world above  
As the integrity of my carbonaceous structure deteriorates

Maintained conscious by the will of an everloving entity  
My severed limbs swathed in an envelop of incorruptible matter  
Crafted by the claws of a misbegotten brood  
I mourn the ablation of my vitality

Realizing the birth of my second immortality  
I embrace the kite between whose wings I utter my devotion  
And inside a womb of immeasurable potentiality  
I unexpectedly conceive the innocent weapon of my retaliation

Impassive monstrosity hosting absence of life  
Unfathomably convoluted machine of divine computation  
Harkening unto the supplications of the repenting ones  
I, the weigher turn my gaze towards my frail creation and think:

Time is about to resume again.<sup>9</sup>



*I made love with the desert, and it gave me a child,  
monstrous and benevolent. Then I became the  
desert; monstrous as well, but benevolent?*

A couple months later, S\*\* came to visit me in my new office. He was wearing boots made out of some reptile's skin. "It's so damn dark in here. Don't you miss the tower?" I could not tell how sarcastic this was meant.

"Don't you?"

— Not that much actually; it kinda feels good to work outside. You know, get some sun. Without even mentioning that it's rather comfortable to spend my time doing what I do best. But I didn't come to talk about myself: how are you doing? You must have fully recovered by now?

— You've got some nerve asking this.

— Come on, don't be bitter. You're too smart not to realize we're not that different; at the end of the day, I did as much as you to restore the balance." He paused. "Seems like your son is doing well. I kinda pity him though, you didn't exactly make it easy for him.

— Don't all children end up reproducing what their parents did anyway? The way I see it, I only spared him the process of understanding that by himself.

— Whatever makes you feel better about yourself. Look, I gotta go, I have to start my shift, and you probably have a lot on your plate as well. Just wanted to say hi."

Shortly after he left, a client of mine entered. But as he was explaining his case, part of me kept on wondering: could *anything* have happened any differently? <sup>10</sup>



DIVINE APES

*Silence.*<sup>11</sup>



I once went to the middle of nowhere. There, I met an ape, sitting and smoking the pipe. He told me: "Guess who I am." I had no clue who he was. So I replied: "O smoking ape, I have no clue who you are." He said: "Let me help you. I am he, who recognizes corrupted waters." This was the first hint. But I remained unable to guess. "O strange ape, I cannot tell." He said: "What if I told you: I am he, who abandoned fragments of knowledge in the very places of foreign time whose plans I drew." This was the second hint. But it was still not enough. "O you who sit in the middle of nowhere, it seems that this doesn't help much." To this, he replied: "I am in a good mood today, so I am gonna help you even more. I am the tongue of the self-begotten masturbator, the very same tongue through which his children were named. I am the moon screaming the sun in the morning; *la langue de toute langue*. I may be skillful-handed ape, I still remain ibis." This was the third, longest and last hint. I stood there, somehow embarrassed of my own inability to give a satisfying answer: "O riddling creature, I am so sorry to say that I still cannot guess". He told me: "Do not worry too much; this is just a game. You know what? I lend you my voice, so that you can search a bit longer. Give me a sign if you find out."

So he gave me his voice, hesitated a bit, and gave me his pipe as well. Then he stood up, removed the dust from his clothing, and left, going from nowhere to somewhere. I found myself alone, a bit confused, the voice in one hand and the pipe in the other. I smoked, because there was nothing else to do.<sup>12</sup>

### DIVINE APES<sup>13</sup>

*Reverbed, high-pitched, distorted vocal drone.*

She sits on the bench, breathes in deeply, eyes closed and head turned towards a hidden sun. She sighs, and removes a piece of the fabric of her dress, shaken by the wind, away from her face. Another chill gust and the white cotton comes back on her nose. Eyebrows frowned, she shakes her head, unpleasantly tickled; she sighs again, sharply this time. From this bench, on top of a small hill, she can see her two brothers, on the main terrace of the gigantic family house. Arguing again, of course. She cannot hear the two boys, but knows them enough to read their body language like an open book. "The two idiots. What did I do to deserve being surrounded by such morons?" She always found it difficult to have a proper conversation with her siblings, so she quickly got used to talking to herself, often with rhetorical questions.<sup>14</sup>

She knows how it works, she has seen this a thousand times; at first they talk, until one of them find an opportunity to provoke the other — who replies with another

provocation; they start being louder and louder, agitating their arms and hands more and more; then Kane — the rougher one — hits the table, or whatever piece of furniture he can find nearby, with his fist; Chris stands up, his two arms firmly anchored on the aforementioned piece of furniture; their heads get closer and the volume of their voices increases proportionally to the movement of their upper bodies — until their foreheads are almost in contact; most of the time, they finally end up wrestling, but she rarely has the patience to stay long enough to witness this part. She reminds herself not to be contemptuous, and — oh, here comes the hitting-the-table part, which makes her instantaneously forget about the no-contempt thing. How embarrassing... This is so ridiculous that she cannot help but having a quick laugh — nothing mean, somewhat desperate maybe.

She is getting bored, but as she is about to leave, the last one of the four siblings, Sarah, arrives on the terrace. She intervenes, trying to separate the two boys — in vain. Nothing exceptional, this is often happening in this arguing process. She finds her sister rather fascinating in her way of desperately wanting everyone to love each other. And sometimes she thinks that, perhaps, without noticing it, she is doing exactly the same herself.<sup>15</sup>

*High pass filter. Low cinematic brass hit.*<sup>16</sup>

She walks in the dark — not this shy night dark; the real one, pure and absorbing all light.

*Low cinematic brass hit.*

She spreads her arms; they are now covered with feathers.

*Low cinematic brass hit.*

She starts flying; it does not seem unreasonable to have wings when one's task is to search for one's brother's remains through two lands.

*Low cinematic brass hit.*

She screams — it is not a scared voice, it is a call.

*Echoing bird scream. Crossfade to running water, birds and leaves sounds.*

I was fishing nearby the river when I saw two women carrying an egg. A third woman was walking behind; I could see them better as they were getting close. The egg was enormous, or let us say that it could not have been produced by any bird I ever heard of. It was fleshy and dripping with blood. The women were barefooted, they went into the water, where it is not deep, and put the egg between two stones, so that it does not get shaken by the current. The two carriers left, the



third one stayed. She probably heard me, cause she turned in my direction; this is when I recognized her: Mariah.

I was disturbed; not by the monstrous egg, but rather by the obvious similarity of the scene with a distant memory of mine; something hidden so far in my thoughts that I could not say if dream or reality: Two men carrying a body dripping with blood. A third man behind. The two men throwing the body into the water and leaving. The third one staying longer.

It made me curious enough to change my plans. I wanted to witness the next step of the process; so I established a camp, and lived from fishing for a while, hoping that something would happen. And something did happen; the egg was shredded from inside, torn apart, and a boy came out.<sup>17</sup> Small feathers were covering his remarkably thin arms and legs. I could see that he was one of the worms which the eye of the sun had created. He crossed the river; I was surprised that he did not seem afraid at all. He came to me, and I decided that his presence was a good thing. I did not know yet that he was there because his father was waiting for his mouth to be filled with honey.

*Low cinematic brass hit.*

She flies. She completely lost sense of time now, and she has to focus to remember what she is searching. Sometimes she would like to sleep, so she screams again to wake herself up — in these moments she closes her eyes, in the same way one does when having a particularly painful headache. If there would have been anyone seeing her, he or she would have wanted to embrace and comfort her — but she most likely would not have allowed it. And when she comes back to the ground, for the first time in years, she meets with bitter success:

*Female choir.*<sup>18</sup>

She kneels, trying to keep Chris's body together, crying as some parts slip away. She tells him: "Your two eyes will be given back to see. Your two ears to hear what is said. Your mouth for words. To walk, your two feet will walk."

*Crescendo to mezzoforte.*

She tells him: "You will have your two arms circling, and your two shoulders. Your flesh will be firm, your muscles at rest."

*Crescendo to forte.*

She tells him: "May you rejoice in every limb of yours! May you count all your limbs and have them healthy!"

*Silence.*

If nothing would have been missing, the Ka would have replied: "I am alive!"<sup>19</sup>

*Blast beat, heavy low-tuned guitar riffing, followed by mid-range drone.*

"What could possibly be more humiliating than asking for the help of your husband's lover and his bastard son?" is the question on her mind. "To think that being cheated on is enough for some people to lose their shit... If only they knew!" She wonders if she would ever be able to pass on to someone else the role of being responsible for every fucking thing. And realizing that it is on her to give up or not on this responsibility makes her only more furious.

She looks at both of them, the bastard and her rival, as they are doing everything to save Chris. In this moment, she hates them, because of the impression of purity they spread. She wants to yell at them, to make them leave, to tell them they have no right to be there. She wishes that they would never have existed, so that she would not have been betrayed, so that she could have had some rest, so that she would not have had to waste years crossing the two lands, so that so that she would not have had to search in the mud for the genitals of her beloved brother. "Fuck, Kane, do you even realize the mess you did?" — nothing but another rhetorical question. She wants to throw up, and has to make use of all her resources to reach a stabler state. She is disturbed by the neverendingness of her thoughts's flow, which is nothing but another thought adding up to the pile of the other ones. She thinks that meditation, supposedly involving a certain calmness of the mind, is just the name given to the moments one is so overwhelmed with thoughts that one has no energy left for anything else; she thinks that calmness of the body is inversely proportional to calmness of the mind.

They finally get Chris back on his two feet, and she is relieved not to have lied before, and that to walk, his two feet walk indeed. She does not have to tell the others to leave; the bastard comes to her and reaches her his hand, in a gesture that could be either a request for gratitude, either a sign of compassion; it could be that his innocence has a bigger role in calming her than the salvation of her brother. It feels like a hard, cold shower, and for a moment, she is like naked in front of such genuineness. She gives her hand back, as if not doing it would not even be an option; she barely touches his fingers that his mother and he are already leaving.

Then she watches him, who came forth from the uttermost parts of the earth, and received his apparel at the will of the Ape. She watches him, who penetrated into the holy habitations of those who are in their shrines. She watches him, who became helpless in the regions of those who plunder in the underworld, and who was cleaned by his bastard son. She feels sorry for him.<sup>20</sup>

*Running water, birds and leaves sounds.*

The boy introduced himself, saying that he was a vector of cosmic balance, but that he would appreciate not being reduced to this only, that he was also a normal



child, that it was hard enough being abandoned at birth without being considered as a tool. I told him that fair enough, so be it, and I promised that I would never ask him questions somewhat linked to any kind of cosmic balance. He seemed happy with this agreement, and asked me to accompany him to civilization. We started walking; he had an impressive pace considering his frail constitution. He told me that this would probably be the nicest part of his travel, he could imagine, because afterwards there would be a lot of hard work coming, from what he knew, plus this forest is really nice and peaceful, how charming, yes he likes birds very much. Then he stopped talking and stuck to humming some melodies unknown from me for the rest of the travel.

We arrived in the closest town; I introduced him to everyone I knew there, and they were all extremely pleased to meet him. He asked if we had some food, proposed to go on a picnic, said he would love to get to know everyone better, that he was sure one of us knew some nice spot, that it would be good to go right now, that there was no point in waiting, and that yes, his parents were aware of his presence here, do not worry.

*Ethereal guitar melodies.*

We ended up in a park as the sun was slowly starting to go down; we had some food and beer, and a lot of people were joining when seeing the boy. Everything went well, up to the moment when a group of security agents arrived and said that this kind of gathering was strictly forbidden and that everyone should leave right now.

*Additional harmonies.*

Nobody protested. The place got empty in a few minutes. I tried to make the boy stand up and come with me, but he told me that he knew what he had to do, that I did too much already, that we would see each other again soon, and that I should leave with the others — which I did.<sup>21</sup>

*Djent.*

A couple days later, I dreamt of this very park we were in. It was entirely covered with a thin layer of white ashes. In the middle was the boy, lying, covered in ashes as well. He was missing his left eye. I asked him what happened, and he told me that the security agents took it with them, that they did not appreciate him not leaving as it was asked, but that it was fine, that I did not have to feel bad, it was their job and there was anyway nothing I could have done, and see? he told me that it could only go worse after the walk in the forest, and see? he told me that we would see each other again. Then the ape came out of the bushes and took the boy in his arms. He said: "You can keep the voice, but would you be kind enough to give me the pipe back?"

I woke up sweating, cursing myself for not having found the answer to his riddle.<sup>22</sup>

*Synthesizers, vocoded singing. Lyrics:*

*"Come back to me  
Let us be one again  
Don't you hear my 'sorry'?  
Can't you see my pain?"*

*Fade out.*

Nice speech. Mariah and Chris are sitting, watching their son on the small television screen. The distorted sound of his voice is making the silence in the apartment even more obvious. She reaches the bowl filled with nuts on the small table beside her, takes a few of them and eats them without being especially hungry, or even enjoying them. Neither Chris nor she say a word, they do not even look at each other. She notices that seen from outside, they probably look quite pathetic; but given the circumstances, she finds the situation rather normal. They have seen so much already; they have betrayed and saved each other; they have been to places unknown to anyone; what is there left to look at? What is there left to say? Sometimes she thinks that they could have done much better; but then she quickly puts this pointless idea away. Funny how pain can become a form of absolution — like when one thinks of the difficulty in the execution of a task as a guarantee for its quality.

The speech goes on, and when her son faces the camera, it is like he would be giving her a look filled with despise, while still keeping control over his voice to seduce his audience. Chris lights a joint which looks and sounds like a snake; he likes to think that weed helps him fight the pain his scars are giving him. She smokes as well, and hears enthusiastic applause coming from the speakers. She turns to give the joint back to her brother, but he is already asleep.



## JUDGMENT DAY

RA: Is everyone here? Good. So, ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered today to discuss the case of the disagreement between Set, son of Geb, and Horus, son of Osiris, both claiming their right to the crown of the Two Egypts.

ISIS: Your Honor, may I intervene?

RA: Isis, the floor is yours.

ISIS: I already requested quoting both father and mother when calling the concerned parties of an assembly, and as it seems that this has not been taken into account yet, I would like to draw the attention of the jury on this matter.

RA (*sighs*): Thank you for your intervention, Isis, daughter of Geb and Nut...

ISIS: May I?...

RA: Please.

ISIS: Is there a reason for naming the father first?

RA: ...

ISIS: I actually already thought this would become a side issue and have a proposal to submit to the assembly: I suggest naming the mother first in the case of a male, and the father first in the case of a female.

RA: So be it. We will have a committee...

APIS (*shaking his head*): Bullshit.

RA: Apis! Ask before talking please, this is no bar here.

APIS: My apologies, your Honor. May I?

RA: Floor is yours.

APIS: Bullshit, your Honor.

RA: Thank you for your intervention. So. As I was saying, we will have a committee evaluating the proposal of Isis. Thoth, did you write that down?

THOTH: I did, your Honor.

NEPHTHYS: My apologies, your Honor, but I have a question regarding the aforementioned side issue of the proposal...



RA: Floor is yours.

NEPHTHYS: What is the logic behind quoting the father first in the case of a female and the mother first in the case of a male?

APIS (*eyes towards the ceiling*): Come on, can we stop losing time with this nonsense?

ISIS: Glad you asked, this question is legitimate. I do not deny the arbitrary aspect of the proposal, but it at least guarantees some balance in the protocol. It would actually work the other way around too.

RA: Thank you. Can we start?

NEPHTHYS: I do find the other way around more natural and intuitive.

ISIS: Should we organize a pre-committee session to discuss this side-side-issue then?

NEPHTHYS: This sounds reasonable to me.

RA (*hitting the hammer*): Can we start, please?

ISIS: Apologies, your Honor.

NEPHTHYS: Apologies, your Honor.

RA: Thank you. So. As I was saying, we are gathered here today to discuss the case of the disagreement between Set, son of Nut and Geb...

NEPHTHYS (*quietly*): Son of Geb and Nut.

RA: ... Son of Geb and Nut, and Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, both claiming their right to the crown of the Two Egypts. Set, son of Geb and Nut, do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you the gods?

SET: I swear.

RA: And you chose to talk without an advocate, is that right?

SET: It is, your Honor.

RA: Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you the gods?

HORUS: I swear, your Honor.

RA: And you chose to be represented by Thoth, son of... (*frowning eyebrows while looking at a papyrus*) By Thoth?

HORUS: That's right, your Honor.

RA: Good. Let us proceed.

MA'AT: May I?

RA: Ma'at, the floor is yours.

MA'AT: I find it highly inappropriate for Thoth to be both the defense attorney and the registrar of a same trial.

THOTH: If I may, your Honor; as one of the oldest members of this Assembly, I think I did enough to prove my sense of justice and equity.

MA'AT: Nevertheless, this is highly non-regulatory.

RA: Set, do you agree with the current setting?

SET: I could not care less, your Honor.

ISIS: This is ridiculous. He doesn't even take this seriously.

SET (*sighs*): I agree with the current setting, your Honor. Can we get this over with?

RA: It is therefore confirmed that Thoth will handle both the roles of registrar and of attorney of Horus, son of Osiris. (*He shakes his head*) Of Isis and Osiris. (*He shakes his head*) Of Osiris and Isis.

MA'AT (*upset*): Well, if nobody cares about the rules, is my presence really necessary? I mean, do you know how long it was to conceive all of those law texts?

RA: The jury made a decision. Shall we proceed?

MA'AT (*looking at the floor*): Sure.

RA: Set, son of Geb, can you tell the...

ISIS: Son of Nut and Geb. Nephthys (*simultaneously*): Son of Geb and Nut.

RA (*closing his eyes and taking the highest part of his nose between his fingers*): Set, son of Nut and Geb, and Geb and Nut, can you tell the jury the reason of your claim to the crown of the Two Egypts?



SET: Yes, you Honor. As the brother of the previous king, I am the legitimate successor.

ISIS: Previous king that you plotted against and killed, if I may remind the jury.

RA: Set, do you confirm the accusation of Isis?

SET (*smiling*): I sure do. But I hardly see how this would change anything.

NEPHTHYS: I will have to agree with that.

ISIS: Yes, and I'm sure this has nothing to do with living in the royal palace.

NEPHTHYS: I didn't come here to be insulted!

RA: Isis, this room is not a place for sarcasm. I will ask you to present your apologies to Nephthys.

ISIS: Fine. My apologies.

NEPHTHYS: Apologies accepted.

ISIS (*to herself*): You two-faced bitch.

RA: I'm sorry, could you speak louder so that the jury can hear you?

ISIS: I said: I do not think that my dear sister Nephthys is impartial in this matter, you Honor.

OSIRIS: Come on, darling, literally nobody is impartial here.

ISIS (*screaming*): I don't need your opinion when it comes to your lover!

THOTH: I'm afraid he's right though.

MA'AT: Tell me about it.

THOTH: Except him, maybe. (*He points his finger towards Apis.*) Or him. But he doesn't give a shit.

APIS (*waking up*): What?

MA'AT (*contemptuous*): Forget about it.

RA: Order in the room, please! Horus, son of Osiris and Isis, for what reasons do you claim the crown of the Two Egypts?

HORUS: As the only son of the former king — (*he looks at Anubis*) or shall I say as his only legitimate son, I am the direct heir to the throne.

ANUBIS: Come on... As far as I know, I'm not responsible for our father!

OSIRIS: Ok, ok, we got it. Can we move on, please?

ISIS: What, now? You feel uncomfortable? I'm very sorry to hear that, but maybe you should have thought about this earlier, don't you think? Such nerve!

NEPHTHYS: We all got it, no need to make a scene. Shall we proceed?

ISIS: Nobody's asking you!

THOTH: She's right though, this is not exactly relevant.

RA (*to himself*): Gimme a break...

MA'AT: Oh, please, spare me the I'm-the-only-serious-person-in-the-room shit, dad.

THOTH (*to Ma'at*): You must be kidding, right? (*to Ra*) May I, your Honor?

RA (*to himself, looking at Ma'at*): Something went wrong at some point, but what exactly?<sup>23</sup>

THOTH: Your Honor?

MA'AT (*loudly clapping her hands*): Dad!

RA (*suddenly coming back to reality*): Mmmh? What? (*He is still looking at Ma'at*) Floor is yours.

THOTH (*clearing his throat*): Thank you, your Honor. I wanted to draw your attention on a question of coherence this debate raises. If Set finds it legitimate to take the crown by force, we should acknowledge that my client followed the same protocol and defeated Set by the Book.

SET: This can't be serious — you know very well that I would have smashed his head without the intervention of his mother. If anything, she should be the king then.

NEPHTHYS and ISIS (*simultaneously*): The queen!

APIS: Ah, no no no! Come on guys, I'm willing to make efforts, but I can only be that progressive!

...



## HORUS'S MONOLOGUE

### I. THE ARRIVAL<sup>24</sup>

I woke up alone, too late to even see the back of my mother leaving the shore. I struggled to open the egg which contained me, and I had to bath a hundred times to wash away all of the slimy liquids that kept sticking on my feathers, in an attempt at destroying the absent memory of Isis.<sup>25</sup>

I looked around, and I did not know where to go, so I abandoned myself to the will of the river — pagan Moshe, lost kid — I was frail; I had nothing, fat nor muscles, between my bones and skin, that could have protected me from the cold of the water. I was looking at the sky, floating, trying to convince myself that this was fate, that everything was written for the best. I tried to remain calm, as the current carried me; and from this moment onwards already, I found it difficult to accept having such little control over my life — today still, I cannot get rid of this feeling.

I floated like this until I got taken into a fisherman's nest. The fisherman brought me on the ground, and he didn't seem surprised; he did seem happy though, and I understood that my arrival had been announced. The fisherman gave me food and clothes, and he brought me to his village; people gathered around me, bemused and staring. They organized tables in the city hall, and I listened to their stories. They talked without interruption; they told me about their loves, their miseries, their jealousies, their hatreds; they told me about their struggles, their pains, their joys, their sorrows; they told me about their parents, their children, their talents, their creations; they told me about their history, their legends, their heroes, and it was nothing different from the stories of gods. We were the same; they too had been floating, but I didn't like it, for it was reminding me too much of my own loneliness.

Because they were so eager to talk and to be understood, I didn't feel allowed to tell my own story, so I kept on listening, and every uttered word was adding weight on my shoulders. I was torn apart between despising them for being so selfish, and loving them because they felt so close.<sup>26</sup>

### II. THE VOID

I cannot say how long I kept on listening like this, but at a certain point the doors opened, and a crowned man entered. I, along with everyone else, recognized the pharaoh Set. He made a sign of the hand, and his soldiers came in, masked and armed.

They made everyone leave, pulling people down from their benches, taking them by their collar, carrying them to the door. Those who protested were beaten, and soon the ground was covered with blood stains. The king waited for the last one to be taken out before getting closer to me. His guards took my arms and legs, brought me outside and held me on a large stone. Set told me something about instinct, about having no choice in his actions; the situation was too messy for me to understand his words.<sup>27</sup>



He put his hand on my head, softly but firmly; the exact middle ground between the grip of a workman on a heavy hammer and the caress of a customer appreciating the softness of a cloth. I felt the cold metal of the blade getting deep into my head, then out again, and pain reached a level of abstraction I would never have thought possible. Set cleaned the blood from his knife, and they all left.<sup>28</sup>

I stayed there, on the very ground I fell on; with my remaining eye, I looked at the sun, and I was furious at Osiris my father, furious at Isis my mother, furious at Set my tormentor, and furious at all other gods and humans — I hated them all for making me the symbol of their ideals; I felt used and stolen. I stayed there for days, screaming my pain and frustration, and I hated that my story resembled so much the one of my father; I felt trapped in a machinery adding symbol over symbol, and I was sick of it.<sup>29</sup> I saw an ibis flying down towards me, and I realized that this too happened to my divine father. The bird landed; it was the golden-minded Thoth. For once, he remained silent, he didn't make any joke nor riddle, he wasn't contemptuous, and as his engraved mask was getting closer to my face, I felt accepted, I felt I didn't have to apologize for my weakness and frailty; and this is the last thing I thought before passing out.

In my coma I had many dreams; I dreamt of thousands of insects devouring the earth, I dreamt of having my chest opened, and I dreamt of an orange whale jumping out of the sea, electricity running through its body; my brother and I were fleeing as it was slowly crushing on the docks. I had many more nightmares — including many other animals — which left me convulsing. It struck me that sometimes, my mind was reenacting some of the stories I heard in the city hall.

### III. THE WORLD UNDERNEATH

Then I woke up again, and this time I was not alone. Where my left eye used to be, there was a crescent moon. I was feverish, but all I could think of was saying my gratefulness. I was glad to have such a peaceful moment after everything I went through, and before all the pain to come.

I stayed there twenty-eight days, and after this time I had fully recovered; my body had accepted its new eye. I left a Thoth more silent than ever, and went to the depths of the Kheret-Netjer to find my mother. She opened the doors of the world underneath, and kneeled to embrace me; for one moment I forgot everything, she was just a mother comforting her child; I desperately tried to keep this feeling alive, but it was already fading away like fog at sunrise.

*Mon oeil gauche c'est la Lune  
Je mets cap sur l'objectif  
Pèlerin faucon des dunes  
Sur mes ailes hiéroglyphes<sup>30</sup>*

Soon, everything was normal again, and my blood was cold as I followed my mother through the alleys between the tombs of the Kheret-Netjer; thinking back on it, she was beautiful, but I had no capacity to acknowledge it; I acted mechanically, disconnecting my mind from my body to protect myself. She brought me to the arsenal, and swathed me in steel, in the same way Osiris was swathed in cotton and silk.<sup>31</sup> She made as strong as she could; she put weapons into my hands. I was entirely covered with metal, and I could barely recognize myself in this second skin. Once this was done, none of us knew what to say, because any uttered word would have been nothing but painful. Her mouth was half opened, as if she had forgotten the thought on her mind, and I left her like this, undecided statue trying in vain to break apart with what was meant to be.

*Mon oeil gauche c'est la Lune.*

### IV. THE CALLING

I went to the river, not far from the remains of my opened egg. I called Set, shrieking with all the power of my voice, and this call was relieving, like coming back to action after being tortured by thoughts for a long time.

*Je sors de la Nécropole  
Mutilé je reviens fort  
Le temps s'est arrêté je suis juste à l'heure pour la mise à mort*

*Ça fait longtemps que je n'ai plus d'espoir  
Pour la joie peu d'efforts  
Même quand j'affiche un sourire c'est parce que je ris de mes torts<sup>32</sup>*

And Set heard my calling; he came to me, heavily armed too, and the appetite for destruction that I could feel in his movements was so natural that it was nothing evil nor ugly; he seemed so much more comfortable than me in this situation that it became embarrassing. I was hateful, whereas he simply wanted to crush me, in a way that nothing would describe better than the word "professional". Our fight was resonating through the valley like monstrous percussions; he had the brutality of the hippopotamus. We danced with each other, and my moon-eye was seeing things more precisely than my former eye ever did; I was fast and focused to the extreme. We ended up in the water, trying to drown each other, and our movements were creating waves that took the remains of my egg with them. We wrestled, embracing each other so tightly that from the distant, one could have mistaken us for a single two-headed creature. We both went underwater, keeping each other from heading back to the surface.



*Je sors de la Nécropole  
Mutilé je reviens fort  
Le temps s'est arrêté je suis juste à l'heure pour la mise à mort*

*Ça fait longtemps que je n'ai plus d'espoir  
Pour la joie peu d'efforts  
Même quand j'affiche un sourire c'est parce que je ris de mes torts*

## V. THE BITTERNESS

I realized I could not go without breathing any longer, and simultaneously, Set's embrace became softer, as if this mere thought would have repelled him. I got my head above the surface; my lungs were burning like tongues of fire, ready to explode. I swam to the shore, and as I was trying to pull myself out, I saw a foot before me; this foot was belonging to Isis. I finally caught my breath, and only then I looked at the water, where Set was floating with a spear in his side.

So I looked into the eyes of Isis, and at first I was surprised, because I would never have imagined her to be capable of such brutality, and because everything seemed to end in such an absurd way. We stood there like we would have been sitting on a bench watching the swans on a Sunday afternoon; except that she was silently crying. The other gods were forming a half circle in the sky, and the sun was creating strange shadows, as if they would all have had a grin on their faces. Sitting on their thrones, they were laughing at me; standing in the mud, I laughed at them too: Osiris, my weak father and his pathetic attempt at turning his own passivity into a faked fatalism, the old sun-god Ra and his absurd obstinacy to repeatedly reproduce the same trajectory, Thoth and his contemptuous generosity, Nephthys and her struggle against the current of the consequences of her acts; and I laughed at Set too, whose cynicism had never had any limits; I laughed until choking; but this laugh sounded more like a mirthless chuckle! Then I saw my mother looking at Set, and I saw her compassion. I got jealous, because I wished I were able to fight in such a peaceful way. She kept on contradicting every expectation, relentlessly trying to do what's right, and I saw that I would never be able to do so. In my anger, I took her head off, with the very weapons she put into my hand; in this moment more than ever before, I became the hippopotamus; in this moment I made for myself the tragedy I was trying to escape, and forged the very fate I was trying to deny!<sup>33</sup>



## A (VERY) BRIEF AND NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED IN THE OSIRIAN MYTH

### OSIRIS

Osiris and his siblings (Isis, Set, Nephthys) are born of the primordial entities Geb (the Earth) and Nut (the Sky). Associated with the Nile and fertility, Osiris rules Egypt, his wife and sister Isis on his side. From his other sister Nephthys, with whom he has an affair (unvoluntarily... believe it or not), he gets an illegitimate son, Anubis. Set, the last brother and husband of Nephthys, plots against him. He invites him to a dinner and murders him, cutting him into pieces which he throws in the Nile. Osiris is saved by his sister Isis, helped by Nephthys and Anubis. They gather all pieces of Osiris' body, except the genitals that they cannot find back. Osiris is mummified and resurrected in the Underworld, that he then rules. Despite the loss of his reproductive organs, Isis gives him a son, Horus.

Osiris is one of the main divinities of Ancient Egypt, and a central character of the Book of the Dead. He is not the only one to offer a form of afterlife; Ra, the Sun, has another offer to propose on this market; but the afterlife beside Osiris is much less austere, which helped making the cult of Osiris predominant. He is traditionally represented as a mummified man, crowned, holding the pillar Djed (whose symbolic is debated, but is often understood as representing his spine), the royal fake beard on his chin; he is associated with black (death) and green (rebirth).

### ISIS

Isis seems like quite a figure of purity, and the link with the Virgin Mary is inevitable (the difference between those characters actually blurred at the end of the Egyptian civilization, with the appearance of christian communities in Egypt). She accepts Anubis — born of the illegitimate union of her brother-husband Osiris with her sister Nephthys — as her own son, she saves her husband, resurrects him, gives him a child when it should not be possible, who she helps in his fight with Set; and for the latter, she still has mercy. During this fight, she throws a spear at Set to help her son; it is said that she misses her target (both duelists are in the water) and hits her son; at the second try, she hits Set, but her compassion at this moment achieves making Horus furious, and he decapitates her. Her head is replaced with the head of a cow (it is unclear how). There are also some other versions of this beheading, involving different characters, but those are less directly connected to the myth that concerns us.

Isis is represented as a young woman, wearing a throne-shaped headdress or a solar disk flanked by the horns of a cow, or even the head of a cow (associated with fertility). She can also take the form of a kite, for example when she searches for the remains of Osiris' body.

### SET

Set, brother of Isis, Osiris, and Nephthys, with whom he is married, is associated with chaos, confusion and destruction — although he is also the protector of the



boat of Ra, repelling everyday the fiend Apophis. During a later period of the Egyptian civilization, he paradoxically merges with this fiend. The betrayal and murder of Osiris he organizes finds two reasons (but maybe analyzing the actions of a divinity of confusion from a rational perspective is a mistake): his anger about the affair Osiris has with Nephthys, and his jealousy when it comes to the crown. After this conflict, he faces a new opponent: Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, coming to bring back order among the living. Their fight occurs in two steps: at first, Set takes out the left eye of Horus (who, in some versions, harms his testicles in return). Later on, after the recovery of Horus, they fight again, taking the form of two hippopotami wrestling in the river (this fight can also be referred to as an apnea contest or as a trial). As mentioned above, Isis helps her son in this fight, leading him to victory. The conflict between Horus and Set symbolizes the balance between the complementary forces of order and chaos.

Set is a complex divinity, taking many forms in his different representations; the most common one being the form of a man with the head of an animal which egyptologists assume to be inspired by the aardvark or the jackal. Another important point of Set's character is its confused and brutal sexual behavior, be it hetero- or homosexual. He is associated with the infertile deserts around the kingdom of Egypt, with the pain of labour, with thunder and storm, and much more.<sup>34</sup>

### NEPHTHYS

Nephthys, the last of the four siblings, is the wife of Set. She never has a child from this union, but has an illegitimate son, Anubis, from Osiris; some texts suggesting that Nephthys fools Osiris, making herself look like Isis and taking her place in the marital bed. In the rest of the story, she will follow the steps of Isis, helping her in the search of the body of Osiris, in the process of mummifying him, and in taking a role in funeral rites, thus becoming the goddess protector of the coffin. One could say that the division in two couples of the four siblings is rather asymmetrical, although Nephthys is, like her husband, associated with the arid and desolate parts of the Egypt's landscape. Like her sister, she takes the form of a kite when searching for the body of Osiris; she is otherwise represented as a woman whose headdress has the shape of the two hieroglyphs composing her name, which signifies "the Lady of the House" — a poor translation for a name which could be misunderstood as meaning "housewife", but which actually indicates her function of priestess.

In the overall less understood than her sister Isis, she was nonetheless an important divinity; her sister and she were considered as complementary. Their association with the kite comes from the latter's scream, somewhat reminding of the sound of crying and mourning. Her character includes many aspects, she can be the Nurse of the Pharaoh as well as a warrior; when it comes to funerary rites, she can be associated with decay and putrefaction.

### ANUBIS

Anubis, canine-headed god, son of Osiris and Nephthys, is quite a figure of loyalty. He searches the body of Osiris alongside the two kites and, as god of embalming and mummification, he plays a crucial role in resurrecting his father. It is said that Nephthys abandoned him by fear of her husband Set, and that Isis, helped by dogs, found him and adopted him. He also had a role in the judgement of the dead willing to enter the underworld, comparing the weight of their souls with the weight of Ma'at (truth and justice, represented as an ostrich feather). Master of the Necropolis, associated with the color black, his role seems rather coherent and easy to grasp compared to many other deities.

### HORUS

Horus, although appearing at a late point of the story, plays a major role in the myth of Isis and Osiris, his parents. Successor of Osiris, he fights against Set, metaphorically Order fighting Chaos. This conflict includes several events; the most important in the context of the Osirian myth being the mutilation of Horus's eye by Set, and their fight (as said above, either in the form of hippopotami in the water, either in the form of a trial) resulting in the victory of Horus; but diverse texts describe other events, for instance diverse sexual episodes, involving a Horus not always consenting, and always an explicit language. The fight of Horus and Set is constant, and necessary to preserve the balance of the cosmos.

Taking the form of a falcon, Horus is also a frail child. His left eye, repaired and given back by Thoth, is associated with the moon, while the right one is associated with the sun. He is one of the oldest divinities of Egypt (appearing even before the first dynasties), and evolved to become one of the characters of the Osirian myth. He is associated with pharaonic power, protection of the dynastic order and of monarchy.

### THOTH

Thoth is a minor character in the story of Isis and Osiris; his role mainly consists in healing Horus when his eye is taken away by Set; nonetheless, his role of inventor of language makes him an important figure to be taken into account when *rewriting* the myth. It is said that after inventing hieroglyphs, he left papyri in some temples to be found by mortals. He is scribe, ibis, baboon, architect, scientist, holder of knowledge, and sometimes even demiurge (in the Hermopolitan tradition); it is sometimes mentioned that he likes to talk in riddles. His wife is Ma'at, the truth and justice, or in other traditions Seshat, the wisdom. It is with the help of his words that Isis can resurrect Osiris. In some traditions anterior to the Osirian myth, Thoth is the child of Set's sexual aggressions on Horus.



### **RA & APOPHIS**

Ra, if important in the Egyptian religious system in the overall, is secondary when it comes to the Osirian myth. However, he is worth mentioning in his role of ally of Set, who protects his bark from the serpent Apophis. He is also officiating in the judgement of Set in the context of the latter's conflict with Horus. Ancient divinity of the Sun — whose daily course he leads — he represents life, warmth and growth, and is in the Heliopolitan tradition the creator of the universe.

Apophis, the Enemy of Ra, the giant Serpent Fiend, is said to be born from Ra's umbilical cord. If Set is chaos, Apophis is pure evil and darkness — although they were later on confused and merged.

### **ATUM, TEFNUT, SHU, GEB & NUT**

Atum is Ra under his demiurge form. He masturbates to give birth to Tefnou and Shou (respectively Air and Moisture), who themselves give birth to Nut and Geb, the Sky and the Earth. The latter are said to love each other so much that Atoum had to separate them. Geb and Nut are the parents of the four siblings Osiris, Isis, Set and Nephthys.



## THE GREAT NORTHERN HIPPOPOTAMUS (REVISITED)

### CHAPTER I

We were four naked children playing on the shore. Two of us were in the Water, the two other ones in the Sand. We waved at a Boat, then went back to playing (the Sun was so bright that it made every color fade into a blinding grey). We felt the Wind on our faces, the cold of the Water, the warmth of the Sand, and it made us laugh. We were all on our own, so once we got bored of our games, we started walking, following the shore, until we arrived in the city and met other people.<sup>35</sup> We were now older. People kneeled before us, and we were happy not to be alone anymore. We felt at home. We were tired of each other, so we split in two groups. That is how it was meant to be. Then, I made love with the desert, and it gave me a child, monstrous and benevolent.

### CHAPTER II

S\*\* invited me to one of his parties. I was surprised, since we usually didn't have much contact. He is quite a brutal and exhausting character, and although I wouldn't say I avoid him, I can only handle that much of his presence. The thing is, I was too polite to refuse — and the idea of spending some time outside of politics was attractive. He personally opened the door as I rang; he seemed taller and larger every time I was seeing him. He was already tipsy, but rather in control, and hugged me before showing me the way. Huge flat, lots of people, reddish lights, strong smell of weed, aggressive cloud rap at a volume making it almost impossible to hear each other; the atmosphere was orgiastic — it was a warm, sweaty, noisy chaos. I counted seventy-two guests.

We went on the terrace. "I think you already met N\*\*\*\*\*, my wife?" She smiled at me; she was, in her own austere way, beautiful. Yes, we did know each other; I had been seeing her more often than him. She had a high position in a major Real Estate agency. I never got why those two ended up marrying; my guess would have been that they somehow felt more comfortable being alone together. I think they tried having a child, and the fact that they couldn't seemed to weigh on her (on him as well, maybe... never could tell). We had an affair some time before. I'm pretty sure S\*\* was aware of this — for there's no such thing as a secret in this world.

"Thanks for having me. What have you been up to?"

— What if I told you that I'm about to bring my career to a political level? I can't share much more details right now, unfortunately, but let's say, to make it short, that I recently discovered myself both a taste and a talent for this sort of games. Divide and conquer, they say; I might be good at that."

Well, so much for staying outside of politics. "When you put it this way... Quite not my perspective, but it makes sense, I suppose.



— Right? I'll tell you more in due time; but first, I'm gonna enjoy my own party and greet my other guests. Get yourself a drink, we'll catch each other again later."

### CHAPTER III

I was lying on the ground, with, as far as I could count, fourteen broken bones.<sup>36</sup> I was crushed from toes to forehead. My feet were in the water, which carried more blood than I thought my body could contain. But I didn't feel pain anymore — I was just very tired. I tried to remember what it was like to actually feel the water on my skin. This was nice. A dog was barking in the distance, two birds circling above it. It was like in the song:

*"Oh I can see your face  
Within the Void  
Tell me you can recreate  
What has been lost."*

After a thousand days of waiting, we had sex on the floor. I felt cursed and I felt blessed; which had a certain irony to it, given that I was supposed, from this moment onwards, to be the one to bless and curse. She was above me, doing all the work (I was barely repaired). The ground was black and mirrored the absence of light. She told me everything was gonna be alright, and I chose to believe her.<sup>37</sup> I wished for everyone to be loved this way. The longer it was going, the stronger I was feeling; and she somehow made me come inside her, although it was rationally impossible. Beside us was a Black Dog.

### CHAPTER IV

Thrown into the depths of a kingdom upside down, symptom of the fall of a shattered primordial order, I was forced to turn my back to the world above as the integrity of my carbonaceous structure deteriorated. Maintained conscious by the will of an everloving entity, my severed limbs swathed in an envelop of incorruptible matter — crafted by the claws of a misbegotten brood — I mourned the ablation of my vitality. Then I became the desert; monstrous as well, but benevolent?<sup>38</sup>

Realizing the birth of my second immortality, I embraced the kite between whose wings I uttered my devotion, and inside a womb of immeasurable potentiality, I unexpectedly conceived the innocent weapon of my retaliation. Impassive monstrosity hosting absence of life, unfathomably convoluted machine of divine computation hearkening unto the supplications of the repenting ones, I, the weigher, turned my gaze towards my frail creation and thought: "time is about to resume again."

### CHAPTER V

Another child arrived in the city; but he did not get older. People would have liked to kneel, but they were scared to — and they were right to be. Those who did get slaughtered, and the child had his left eye taken away from him. The Sun was gone. It was a night without Moon. The child was in pain and it made him angry. He went to the shore and screams to call his enemy. Later, he wrote:

*"Mother,*

*I suppose I need to thank you for your help; I don't know what would have happened without your intervention. I'm also very sorry for my reaction. Sorry and angry: why did you bring me to this? You placed dangerous tools in my hands, and I just cannot go from merciless to merciful as fast as you do. Look at me now, pathetic and bitter under my crown of regrets; was it really worth it? I'm sorry, I don't mean to be too harsh... I know that you had your reasons, and I try to accept that. I think that events only seem to be repeating themselves; but in the end, many things are irrevocably changed.*

*Forever yours,  
H\*\*\*\*"*

### CHAPTER VI

The Boat passed again. This time, it came closer to the shore, until the hull hit the Sand. Something came out of the cabin; it was older than conceivable. It looked down on the beach (it was standing straight, but it was tired as a parent whose children are fighting). It set foot on the ground, and looked at the wounded Hippopotamus; its face was of gold. The Hippopotamus said: "I can still work on the Boat. I will heal quickly, for I am strong. I have lost my place here, so please, take me with you." It put its right hand on the face of the animal and caressed it. "I know, my friend. There's no need to ask. I'll take you with me." And it carried the Hippopotamus on the Boat. "You know, there might be no place for you Above, but neither is there Below. And you need to be somewhere, don't you? Not that I feel forced of anything, though. I'm glad to have you on board."

The Hippopotamus did not answer; it fell asleep.



## EPILOGUE

A couple months later, S\*\* came to visit me in my new office. He was wearing boots made out of some reptile's skin. "It's so damn dark in here. Don't you miss the tower?" I could not tell how sarcastic this was meant.

"Don't you?"

— Not that much actually; it kinda feels good to work outside. You know, get some sun. Without even mentioning that it's rather comfortable to spend my time doing what I do best. But I didn't come to talk about myself: how are you doing? You must have fully recovered by now?

— You've got some nerve asking this.

— Come on, don't be bitter. You're too smart not to realize we're not that different; at the end of the day, I did as much as you to restore the balance." He paused. "Seems like your son is doing well. I kinda pity him though, you didn't exactly make it easy for him.

— Don't all children end up reproducing what their parents did anyway? The way I see it, I only spared him the process of understanding that by himself.

— Whatever makes you feel better about yourself. Look, I gotta go, I have to start my shift, and you probably have a lot on your plate as well. Just wanted to say hi."

Shortly after he left, a client of mine entered. But as he was explaining his case, part of me kept on wondering: could anything have happened any differently?



MEHRERE ENTWICKLUNGEN IN RICHTUNG  
GASFÖRMIGES ENDE (MERGE)

**NUN: AN OPENING**

A gong hit resonated.

There was

NUN (the Void).

Then

ATUM (the Demiurge)

gave himself birth. He sat on

BENBEN (the Mound),

and around him was

NUN (the Void).

He masturbated, and from his semen rose

GEB (the Earth)

and

NUT (the Sky).<sup>39</sup>

They loved each other.

ATUM (the Demiurge)

tried to separate them; despite this,

THEY copulated.



*In the high frequency range appeared a melody. This melody was neither sad nor happy, it was just there. In the low frequency range, there were drums, dampened, playing a slow and regular pattern.*

*Those two sections were constructed in such a way that there were never two sounds played simultaneously; sometimes, it was even getting unclear if the two parts were meant to be played together.*

### CLAUSIUS:

Clausius sat on the side of the bed. His sleep had been agitated; in his dream there had been a bull standing on two legs, asking him:

WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?

The bull had repeated the question to a paralyzed Clausius:

WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?<sup>40</sup>

He had been sweating so much that he had become liquid. The bull had run towards him, speaking extremely loud, although not screaming:

WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?  
WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?  
WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?

Clausius shivered, caught his breath, sighed and took his head into his hands. The memories of the evening were coming back, as he floated in this middle state between sleep and consciousness. The fight with Mary. She was so pissed: he spontaneously invited her for dinner, earlier in the day, and forgot to mention that two colleagues of him would also join. Followed a whole discussion about drawing a line between work and relationship, which escalated quickly. He understood what she meant, on a rational level, but never had a feeling for it. Mary was still in bed, sleeping in a different blanket. He thought of this distancing as symbolic, which did not make it less hurtful. It was not the first time they had an argument about this.<sup>41</sup>

His mind hesitated one last time before settling for an awoken state. He kissed Mary's head, softly enough for her not to wake up — which was nothing difficult, she always had had a deep sleep — and left the flat.

As he was walking, he noticed that the temperature was extremely high for a beginning of March. Removing his jacket, he went straight to the local *dojo* where he had been taking *aikido* classes for the last couple years. He showered there, and enjoyed the feeling of the water running around his body; the bathroom went steamy, and it felt like his body would evaporate with the water.

During the traditional greeting of the *sensei*, he thought that he maybe should implement rituals in his love life too, that this could be the secret to organize his relationship in the way Mary was looking for. But he also knew that he would be unable to bring such discipline in the non-hierarchical structure that was his couple — which was exactly the reason why he was not the one leading the class in this very moment.

As a warming up, the *sensei* made his students walk all around the *tatami* for a duration unknown of them. Whenever he would give the signal for it, they had to stop exactly where they were; the teacher would then check on how homogeneously their bodies were spread over the space. This exercise, one of the master's favorites, was repeated until he was satisfied with the result; if it was made more difficult by the varying number of students from one class to the next, Clausius, perceived it nonetheless as a natural expression of the collective body.

To this was following the *aikido* practice strictly speaking. Clausius felt the pressure applied by *Uke* on his wrist, embraced the push, and, reproducing the *sensei's* gestures, shifted his body to the right. *Irimi nage, kote gaishi*. Smoothly executed; for a second, it was like one body moving. *Uke's* hand

*loudly slapped the tatami,*

then everything stood still. Clausius thought that with this noise was fading away all energy.

*The drums and melody started playing again at the slap's cue. Their structures were slowly evolving from one bar to the next. Some notes met, like accidentally, touching each other shyly, without lingering, testing each other's consistence. It was pleasant and touching to hear them come together, they were like those discreet children who are so careful in their interactions. They were taking their time.<sup>42</sup>*

### THE DIVINE SIBLINGS:

The arrival among the mortals of Osiris, Isis, Nephthys and Set was a turning point in the story of humankind. For the very first time, Egypt stopped being an

### ENCLOSED SYSTEM

and started exchanging energy with its gods. The couple formed by Isis and Osiris gave to the Egyptians the knowledge of agriculture, and the latter made the two gods their queen and king. Nephthys and Set were attributed the peripheral parts of the land, dry and arid; they became a reminder of the presence of an Outside. Gods and men arrived at an intermediate state of balance.<sup>43</sup>

But this balance had by no mean reached its optimal point; of all people, Set was the most aware of that. For this reason, he plotted against his brother — although



he likes to pretend that this was because of the jealousy he felt after an affair Osiris had with his wife Nephtys. He organized a great feast in one of his houses at the border of Egypt. He invited many humans and gods, including his three siblings, and even Anubis, the bastard son born of the illegitimate union of Osiris and Nephtys. The feast was mirroring Set's character; chaotic, sweaty, more drinks than food, people everywhere in the house without space between them, people having sex all around the place, men with women, men with men, women with women, men with animals, animals with gods, and every other possible combinations. When the party reached its climax, when everybody was drunk and on the brink of apathy, he pushed the course of the festivities further; he went to his brother Osiris, took him in his arms and cut him into pieces. He went to the Nile and threw all those pieces in it, making sure that they were spread equidistantly across the river. This done, he took the crown and sat on the throne. The Egyptian people accepted that (not because they believed in the survival of the fittest, but because this was the only way to go); those who were still drunk from the party barely even noticed that they had a new ruler.

*When sound made itself audible again, it revealed its last transformations: all notes and hits had gained stability and were taking much more time to decay. Both showing a lot more self-confidence, the drums and melody established a common playground in the medium frequency range.*

Shannon opened the laptop on her desk. Her browser was still open, displaying an article about the melting of glaciers. Although she considered herself a convinced ecologist, she could not help but admitting her shared feelings concerning this topic, alongside a few other ones. For sure, she was sensitive to the ecological discourse surrounding the disappearance of such an environmental heritage; nevertheless, she remained positively fascinated by the Earth's ability to transform itself. She kept this to herself, but the general concern with the melting of ice was somewhat too anthropocentric to her taste<sup>44</sup>, and she always had been dedicating her activist vocation to topics about which she felt more secure (the animal cause for example); she doubted that water would be happier in its solid form. She downloaded one of the pictures of the article — a diagram showing the transformation of the ozone's layer and the impact of the ultraviolet radiations entering the atmosphere — and she made it her desktop's background. She was spending a lot of energy gathering informations about diverse topics, more or less directly related to her studies in linguistics. In the context of her master's degree, she was studying the most recent evolutions of language, neologisms and new terminologies resulting from the intermingling of diverse fields, comparing those evolutions with some examples from the past. She opened the file of her thesis, "dissolution of language.docx", and went to the section "Appropriation of foreign languages: the example of Ancient Egypt". She tried to write, without any success:

THE ROOM FELT LIKE A BARRIER FOR THE THOUGHTS.

She decided to go out and find another work place.

*There were only drums now, and a regular four-to-the-floor was to be heard. The sound tightened, made itself sharper and more accurate. It was self-sufficient.*

#### MAXWELL:

Maxwell took one extremity of the long band of fabric. He started rolling it around the leg, the confidence in his gestures revealing his expertise. He followed the shape of the body lying in front of him, until it got completely covered. He selected a series of various objects, put them on the level of the chest, legs and hands, before taking a new roll of fabric and enveloping the corpse again.

He repeated this operation several times.

Once the last band was wrapped around the body, he stood up, sweating under the leopard's fur covering his chest and back, and looked at the mummy of Nu. He was preventing corruption and decay, and this was satisfying him. Thanks to him, Osiris' integrity had been once more rebuilt; he was the incarnation of Isis, Nephtys and Anubis saving the great god.<sup>45</sup> But he remained humble; he was taking this role because someone had to.

REST IN PEACE, Osiris-Nu.

Maxwell was a smart, educated man; he knew that the reenactment of the primordial events was the only way to constantly actualize the divine status of the gods; if he were to stop, they would diffuse and disappear in thin air. He had to be the reminder of their presence, and his ecclesiastical superiors were clever in finding strategies to do so. Earlier in the week, he had been leading the burial ceremony of Apis, the Bull-God, who took at his death his Osiris form, therefore being put under Maxwell's authority. All gods had a tendency to merge with each other, making it more and more complex for the priests to explain their different roles to the profanes. However, Apis, because physically walking among men, was an excellent reminder of the presence of gods.

*The melody came back. It was not only played legato, it was also reverberating; from time to time, it even dared implementing simple chords, mostly octaves and fifths, maybe a few others; they were hard to recognize, since drums and melody started compressing each other, thereby deteriorating the overall clarity of the music. The resonating sound of the two glasses hitting each other slowly fade away into the ambient noise.*

Shannon had been working in a café the whole day (she felt the most comfortable working with *conversations in the background*); almost without noticing it, she switched to the terrace next door (which had the advantage of allowing the consumption of alcoholic beverages) when the evening arrived.

*It was close to a techno beat.*



Clausius had been going for a drink, assuming that Mary would be willing to get some time for herself, and he chose the same bar as Shannon. Because both of them were alone and were social characters, they naturally ended up talking. Once Clausius felt comfortable enough to make such a remark, he told Shannon that he had been at first mistaking her for a man; to this she replied that she could have been, and, laughing at the sight of Clausius's confused face, she told more about her perspective on gender: at the moment, she felt like a woman, but this was nothing permanent; this was called gender-fluidity. She laughed again when he asked how often it was changing, and she said that there was no rule for that, that it just happened. She explained that she had been a "she" for a while now, but that she could not tell when it would change again. This kind of conception of gender was quite unfamiliar to Clausius, but he was curious, and he listened to her, punctuating her explanations with genuine questions.<sup>46</sup> Then he talked about the physicist's view on fluidity, which led the conversation to the topic of the different states of matter. They decided that their conversation was also fluid, that it was behaving like a liquid, adapting to the volume of the space. Eventually the bar closed, so they left and went to Shannon's. Once there, drunk but not to the point of sleeping yet, they had sex several times. Followed a moment of calm, and Shannon thought that every exchange of energy leads to stillness.

*Long before those events was a time when two kites were writing the score of the music. It was very different back then; Nephthys was not associated with putrefaction yet; music was under a harness made of the combined divine and human influences. Isis would say "drums!", and there would be drums. Humans would say "slower!"; and the beats would increase the distance between them. Nephthys would say "silence!"; and the music would stop.*

Isis and Nephthys, the two divine sisters, were relentless fighters of fate. They decided to

REORGANIZE

Osiris' body (partly because they were in love, partly just to bring things back to their initial order). They spent their energy without counting, and searched for the remains of their brother for years. Exhausted after so much flying in their kite form, they finally found and gathered what was left of Osiris' disintegrated body, which was at this moment rotting, soaking up water and mud, and divided in so many parts that it was at the border between solid and liquid; but it would have taken more than that to daunt the two sisters. They called Anubis, the Black Dog, biological son of Nephthys and adoptive son of Isis.

ANUBIS HELPED THEM AND TOGETHER THEY RECOMPOSED THE BODY OF OSIRIS,

which became the first mummy (only the genitals were missing). In this process, Anubis, Isis and Nephthys got closer.

Osiris stood up, and he became lord of the afterlife, for he had been granted rebirth. The news spread quickly, and soon everyone in Egypt, man or woman, poor or wealthy, governor or peasant, heard the promise of a renewed life beside the great god.

*Later, the melody challenged itself to become more percussive. It decreased its attack, multiplied its harmonics by random factors, went further down in the low frequency range, where notes are hardly recognizable. After this, it could not be satisfied by a mere harmonious pattern; it got bolder and willing to experiment — by no means would it have been possible to forget the existence of the recently discovered playgrounds. The result of those experiments often had something ungraceful, but the melody was too deeply engaged in a process-based research to care about aesthetics.*

A few months after Clausius and she split up, Mary found the man who was going to be her last love. Together with him she organized a very structured life:

EVERYTHING HAD ITS TIME,

EVERYTHING HAD ITS PLACE.<sup>47</sup>

It was enough to make them happy, for they found in each other the ideal partner to

WARD OFF THE AMBIENT CHAOS.

*A gong resonated.*

They were both sensual characters, but they touched each other at very specific times; this does not mean that there was no space for spontaneity, but rather that clarity was the concept to which they hanged on. They talked only when it was needed. Outside their respective working hours, they remained

ISOLATED.

**I AM THE DIVINE SOUL OF RA PROCEEDING FROM THE GOD NU:**

Nu was satisfied. He achieved his transformation into a Hawk of Gold, he achieved his transformation into a Governor, he achieved his transformation into a Lotus, he achieved his transformation into a Bennu Bird, he achieved his transformation into Ptah, he achieved his transformation into a Heron, he achieved his transformation into a Living Soul, he achieved his transformation into a Swallow, he achieved his transformation into a Serpent Sata, he achieved his transformation into a Crocodile, he achieved his transformation into a God, and he caused his Soul and Body to be united. Triumphant, he said: "I am a perfect *khu*, and I have made my way unto the place wherein dwell Ra and Hathor!" He went into the presence of the divine sovereign princes of Osiris. The latter said: "Say our names." Nu was disturbed, because he already did everything right. "O Thou who are eating cakes in the



*Kheret-Netjer*, I have already proved being worth entering the presence, do I really need to recite your names?" Osiris replied:

PLEASE, SAY OUR NAMES!

Nu inhaled deeply, because he knew this would require a lot of breath. He was not angry, he was willing to go until the end of the process. He did not doubt being able to recite all of the names without a single mistake; nevertheless, he was disappointed by this additional step, because this was postponing his triumph. It was a long and difficult task, requiring an extreme focus, for the gods had been keeping on multiplying their names since they met humans. The operation took him years. The gods ate the names as he uttered them, and they seemed to be hungry.<sup>48</sup>

*First name.*

*Drum hit.*

*Second name.*

*Drum hit.*

*Third name.*

*Drum hit.*

*Et cetera...*

Clausius and Shannon continued seeing each other, and they were always talking a lot. Clausius learned that she was practicing yoga; so they talked about the similarities and differences between aikido and yoga, but mostly the similarities. They saw in both those practices what they called a soft, transcendence-free spirituality. They continued talking about fluidity, and they figured that a fluid society was spreading horizontally, as water does, whereas a solid society piled up vertically, as in Ancient Egypt. They thought that the pyramids were a perfect expression of a solid society; Shannon said that Egyptian architecture was going hand in hand with writing, and that the hieroglyphs engraved in stone were symptoms of a solid language, whose words and concepts were firmly anchored; whereas digital language, for example, was subject to many more interferences. Their discussions were going from one field to the other, and Clausius thought that he never could have talked like this with Mary; discussions with her were focused on a precise point, which had to be developed until being anchored like the hieroglyphs in the pyramids. He found this commendable, but was hardly able to do so — which was sometimes a problem as a scientist. Osiris turned his gaze towards Earth, centuries before Shannon asked what a gaseous society would look like. The Maxwells were barely able to remember his names. The last deceased arriving in the *Kheret-Netjer* told him that a new religion had been appearing; christianity, they called it. According to what the osiris was describing, he could recognize himself in their god — nothing but another name for a similar thing; he too got close to humans, and thereby quickly got human wounds. The Egyptian gods were always prompt to identify with foreign divinities; they did it with the Greeks, they could do it again. Even his wife and sister Isis started being confused with some Biblical character, apparently, and some christian minorities went as far as worshipping her. "My poor sister", he thought;

"even you cannot help but melting..." He tried to think of something else, and chatted with the freshly arrived osiris.<sup>49</sup>

*The sound was distorted; melody and drums had gotten many common harmonics by then, and the distortion was accentuating this phenomenon. The conversation of the osiris and Osiris found its space between the swelling complex chords, and Shannon's voice made a counterpoint to it; she was in the process of convincing Clausius to come with her to take part in a demonstration to defend animals's rights.*

She told him that this was one of the finest expressions of a fluid society, and he found the argument reasonable enough to follow her. Nothing noticeable happened during the demonstration until Shannon saw a bull walking in the middle of the crowd. Nobody seemed to know where he was coming from, but as he was calm, everyone kept going according to the plan; a couple children started playing around him. It took a while for security to intervene; according to Shannon, one had to call a special brigade for this matter. The security agents separated the crowd to take the animal away from the trajectory of the demonstration. One of them yelled:

LET IT THROUGH, PLEASE!

They brought a harness, on which they attached a rope, and started guiding the animal through the alley formed by the ranks of demonstrators. After a few meters, the bull understood that he was being taken away and he suddenly stopped walking. He wanted to keep on playing with the children. The yelling agent started pulling harder, and since the bull was still not moving, the others joined their efforts. The crowd started whispering. The yelling agent took the stick attached to his belt, and one of the demonstrators got out of the ranks, screaming "Hey, what do you think you're doing?"; followed by another person "Hey, stop that!"; the hard-hitting sun was making everyone sweaty and nervous, and Clausius heard himself screaming "Hey!" shortly before Shannon; people started getting closer to the agents and to the bull, who was getting excited; the situation became more and more chaotic; the Bull started fighting and crushing people around him.<sup>50</sup> On the ground was blood; Clausius felt feverish, and he heard Shannon's voice *within the music*. As the two of them were heading back home, the sound calmed down, implementing more and more silent intervals.

When Clausius finally arrived and fell into his couch, after wishing Shannon a good night, those intervals made themselves regular and took more importance, until there was nothing left but *short noises interspersed with silences*.

The resurrection of Osiris was not enough in the eyes of Isis. She wanted to go further in reversing the course of events. She asked her brotherandhusband Osiris to give her a son. As he was getting upset, finding the request insensitive considering the loss of his genitals, she told him to trust her and to follow her lead.<sup>51</sup> He did as she said, and Isis found herself pregnant indeed. She gave birth to the Hawkchild Horus, which she sent on Earth with the task of getting back control over Egypt.



Horus, insecure and doubting that he would have a single chance against his beast of an uncle, was happy to find humans who welcomed him as one of them. Unfortunately, Set heard of his nephew's arrival and took his eye, as if willing to make mutilation his specialty. This was enough for Horus to make the conflict personal, and as soon as Thoth healed his wound, he challenged Set to another fight. Both of them took the form of a hippopotamus and fought inside the Nile; witnesses at the scene were confused, because the two gods were so close and indistinguishable. With the help of his mother Isis, Horus could survive the fight and even harm his opponent. He was declared winner and sat on the throne of Egypt.

ORDER HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK UPON EARTH,

announced Osiris. He did not know yet that his son would become the father of a series of dynasties which would bring humans to become gods and gods to become humans; in this sense, Set, god of Chaos, was the real winner.

#### LAMENT:

At first, Mary did not answer to the call announcing the death of her companion; she was eating and never picked up at lunch times. She called back later, at a time she found appropriate, and only then she got the news. The absurd cause of death, being walked on by a bull, did not surprise her; she knew that her small apartment was the only ordered place left on Earth. At the funeral, she found herself alone with an old and tired priest, who could barely remember the protocols.

She mourned. Then, from one day to the next, she gave an end to this mourning; but she never stopped going regularly to the cemetery. When she was there, she was pronouncing words that aimed to differentiate her late companion from the mass of people buried next to him. On the grave was written, in the most simple font:

MAXWELL.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, Isis put on her glasses and grabbed the book on the table beside her. Between her feet was lying Anubis, shaking his tail despite the obvious malnutrition. She caressed his head while opening the book at the page where she left it. On the cover stood the words: "Yoga: a renewed spirituality for the XXIst century". She read about the quest for calm and inner peace of the average western individual. She was considering taking a Yoga class: she missed being worshipped, and her prayers to Mary had met with limited success; yoga, which she understood as self-adoration, seemed like an appropriate workaround.

*She switched on the radio and heard the music over which she once had control. She admitted that it was good despite her lack of influence on it; or at least that it had interesting relaxing properties. All sounds were very organic and textured, they were entering into dialogues with each other, and she spent some time trying to find back the precise and docile sounds from her past within the flowing melodies and*

*rumbling percussions. But the structure of the music was ungraspable, and soon she stopped focusing and let the sounds carry her.*

Shannon and Clausius did not talk about the bull; although not directly responsible, they were too embarrassed having been part of such a messy situation. However, they could not escape the overall presence of the topic; the bull was appearing everywhere in the media, be it as a symbol of the fundamental difference between the human and animal conditions or as a symbol of the end of the enslavement of the animal reign. The internet was flooded with memes, the streets covered with posters, often representing a bull standing on two legs and pronouncing diverse catchphrases. On the academic level followed a whole series of seminars, conferences and symposia, which were going to lead to the creation of an Animal Rights Constitution.

Shannon finished her master thesis and was invited to join a team of research in information theory, where he continued exploring the causes and consequences of the corruption of language; unlike most works in this field, this research was aiming to take advantage of signal interferences rather than trying to avoid them. Clausius wrote various papers about loss of energy in thermodynamic processes, which were more or less noticed by the scientific community. The two of them kept on sharing as much as they could, proofreading each other's publications and reports, patiently explaining the whys and wherefores of their respective works; Shannon started practicing aikido and Clausius started practicing yoga.

#### THE BITTER CAKES OF NU:

Nu was furious. He required an audience with Osiris to address his complaint.

O OSIRIS, O GOVERNOR OF THE THINGS WHICH BELONG TO THE TEMPLE OF THE NEMMES CROWN, I HAVE SEEN THINGS WHICH PROVOKED MY ANGER!

I HAVE SEEN DECEASED ENTERING THE PRESENCE WITHOUT PRONOUNCING THE NAMES! THE TRANSFORMATIONS THEY ACHIEVED INDEED,

BUT THE NAMES THEY DID NOT RECITE!

TELL ME, O OSIRIS, THOU WHO CAME FORTH FROM THE UNDERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH, WHY ARE THE DECEASED NOT PRONOUNCING THE NAMES?

Osiris replied, embarrassed: "I understand your frustration, but..." Nu interrupted him:

O OSIRIS, THOU WHO RECEIVED THY APPAREL AT THE WILL OF THE APE, SAY MY NAME!



Osiris said: "O Divine Soul of Ra Proceeding from the God Nu, I understand your frustration, but you have to take into account the changes that happened over the last millennia; humankind has changed, and those changes are irreversible... We cannot refuse the little they know of our names, I am sure you can understand..."

Nu remained silent. He was disappointed. He did his part, and the others did not. He left the room, crying, and took for residence the part of the Kheret-Netjer that was the furthest away from the new generations of osiris.

*The tears of Nu fell inside the Nile, and it created a flood. When arriving at a waterfall, the river made a noise which filled the little spaces left in the sound's frequency spectrum. The notes diluted in the water.*

There were almost no glaciers left on Earth now. The heat had increased and the temperature was becoming more homogeneous over the years and over the globe; the seasons became abstract concepts. The agriculture evolved accordingly: many plants had their genome modified to adapt to the climate change. The ice melted, the level of the oceans increased. Social inequalities reduced proportionally to the weather's homogenization; political systems were evolving towards a more and more direct democracy, thanks amongst others to the progress of telecommunications; the governmental structures were exploding into smaller s u b d i v i s i o n s. From the high throne on which he was sitting, Horus, the Hawk himself, had no idea of this transformation to come. He looked at the priest, confused. "Explain me again. Am I a god made human or a human made god?" Maxwell, still kneeling, replied: "O Lord, you are the divine Horus, but the pharaoh becomes netjer at his induction; only then can you declare that you were god from inside the egg onwards; therefore you must have been a god becoming human before becoming a human becoming god, thereby proving having been a god forever. This is all I say, O divine Hawk!" Horus decided that the wisest thing to do was to pretend having understood. By a gesture of the hand, he signified his priest that he was allowed to leave.

*Rhythm had disappeared. There were only waves of a very rich and full sound, sometimes carrying the distant echo of a lonely name. When they started their afterlife (this did not happen before a long time, thanks to the progress of medicine; nevertheless, reversing the aging of cells had proved itself impossible), clausius and shannon barely noticed having left the living; of course, they had to renew their whole social circle, but this was no problem for such open and flexible characters; they started hanging out with an old couple, isis and osiris; once, as they were meeting around some delicious cakes, shannon said todayidontknowifiamnorwomananymore, and osiris said todayidontknowifiamoneormanyanymore, and clausius said todayidontknowifiamdeadoraliveanymore, and isis said todayidontknowifiamnamedanymore; because the two others were showing little appetite, clausius and shannon finished eating all the cakes; this earned them a reproachful glance from maxwell.<sup>53</sup>*



epilogue: it was half living half dead it was neither god  
nor human nor animal nor plant or maybe was it all of  
those simultaneously it was floating half bodiless in the  
full it was quiet the clausius in it thought:  $\Delta S_{\text{cre}} = \Delta S_{\text{sys}} + \Delta S_{\text{ext}} \geq 0$  which could be pronounced entropy created equals  
delta entropy system plus delta entropy exterior equals  
or is superior to zero here delta stands for the difference  
between the initial and the final state of a system but even  
osiris who never had been in physics knew that because  
he had had a lot of time to merge with multiple scientists then  
everything stopped moving and there was only white noise<sup>54</sup>



## IIIB. ANNOTATIONS

*Pour faciliter la lisibilité du document, chaque annotation est placée entre crochets et précédée par la citation du passage concerné.*

## THE GREAT NORTHERN HIPPOPOTAMUS: ANNOTATIONS

1] S\*\* invited me to one of his parties. I was surprised, since we usually don't have much contact. He is quite a brutal and exhausting character, and although I wouldn't say I avoid him, I can only handle that much of his presence. The thing is, I am too polite to refuse — and I could actually use some time outside of politics. He personally opens the door as I ring; he seems taller and larger every time I see him. He's already tipsy, but rather in control, and hugs me before showing me the way. Huge flat, lots of people, reddish lights, strong smell of weed, aggressive cloud rap at a volume making it almost impossible to hear each other; the atmosphere is orgiastic — it's a warm, sweaty, noisy chaos. I count *soixante-douze* guests. We go on the terrace. "I think you already met N\*\*\*\*\*, my wife?" She smiles at me; she's, in her own austere way, beautiful. Yes, we do know each other; I see her more often than I see him. She's got a high position in a major Real Estate agency. I never got why those two ended up marrying; my guess would be that they somehow felt more comfortable being alone together. I think they tried having a child, and the fact that they couldn't seems to weigh on her (on him as well, maybe... can't tell). We had an affair some time ago. I'm pretty sure S\*\* is aware of it — for there's no such thing as a secret in this world.

"Thanks for having me. What have you been up to?"

— What if I told you that I'm about to bring my career to a political level? I can't share much more details right now, unfortunately, but let's say, to make it short, that I recently discovered myself both a taste and a talent for this sort of games. Divide and conquer, they say; I might be good at that."

Well, so much for staying outside political matters. "When you put it this way... Quite not my perspective, but it makes sense, I suppose.

— Right? I'll tell you more in due time; but first, I'm gonna enjoy my own party and greet my other guests. Get yourself a drink, we'll catch each other again later."

*[I always hesitate about whether or not to mention the names from the Egyptian myth. Writing them down can make the story seem quite distant, ancient and esoteric. On the other hand, giving the names would be a major hint about the source of the narration, which could help the reader by building a web of links and references. I decided for this version that it would be too much of a direct hint, but I also found too arbitrary to replace them; so I just censored them. I am constantly confronted with the difficult task of finding the balance between saying too much and saying too little...*

*This part is a first attempt to facilitate the connection between the reader and the story by translating it into a contemporary context; or shall I say to facilitate the*



identification of the reader (although I find this term so overloaded that it seems delicate to make use of it) with the characters and the story. Anyhow, this is a good example of the process of multiple translations that I use. Nephthys, for instance, goes from being the “Lady of the House” to working in Real Estate; the association of Set with the arid parts of Egypt becomes sterility, and this sterility turns into an assumption from the narrator Osiris; et cetera... The risk is that the story becomes a game of indecipherable riddles, which leads me to the following questions:

— Is it important for the reader to be able to trace the source of the story? If so, what knowledge does he/she need to bring with him/her to be able to trace this origin? And, depending on that, who is my audience?

The text being written at an early phase of the project, this process of translation was thought of as an experimental way to explore the possibilities of the myth — shifting elements of the story in order to see where this brings its meaning and perception by the reader.]

2] Picture yourself the four cardinal points. In the North are the Gods; in the South are all the things you can see, hear, touch, smell or taste. Between those poles goes the axis of Consciousness. From West to East goes Time; from Past to Present. Reason, Intuition, Memory, Imagination - also known as Water, Fire, Earth, Air. In the North (in the House *Sahou*) is your Soul (*Ba*) and Spirit (*Khou*s). In the South is your Body (*Khat*) and your Double (*Ka*). In the West is your Name (*Ren*) and your Shadow (*Khaibit*). In the East is your Might (*Sekhem*) and your Heart (*Ab*). Et tu te promènes aux quatre côtés du ciel. It might seem balanced and stable; but when I took a closer look, I witnessed a war; and we’re in the middle of it.

[Another — simple, but I hope efficient — strategy to get the reader closer: talking directly to him/her. The more distant the narrator gets from the story, the closer he gets to the author. The author being much more graspable for the reader — simply because it is an individual just like him/her — the narrator also gets closer to the reader, as if taking his/her hand to bring him/her into the story. Maybe. However, this part is also meant as a skeleton, a structure given to the reader to which he/she can connect the previous or following parts — I find it helpful to give such a structure a visual, geometric, spatial aspect, so that it can easily be remembered, kept in mind for the rest of the text. And thirdly: this part provides informations on the protocol of translation mentioned above. It is meant as an incitation to read this text as a series of analogies, transpositions and translations.]

3] *The four children arrive in the city. They are now older. People kneel before them, and they are happy not to be alone anymore. They feel at home. They are tired of each other, so they split in two groups. That is how it is meant to be.*

[I have a strong attraction for these parts in italics one often finds at the beginning of every chapter of a novel, especially in science-fiction or fantasy. They are mostly

used to open up the narration, and get out of the structured series of events that constitutes the rest of the text. Here, as my text is already quite exploded and difficult to follow, I use them the other way around; the different parts in italics are following each other, implementing something more fluid and linear in the text.]

4] It’s like in the song:

*Oh I can see your face  
Within the Void  
Tell me you can recreate  
What has been lost.*

[Another example of a translation in several steps. This song corresponds to the moment of the myth when Osiris, cut into pieces by his brother Set, is about to be saved by his sister Isis. During an early step of the project, I did some story-boarding of this sequence. Later on, as I was doing some experiments with vocals, I turned these pictures into the lyrics of a song — a song that I actually produced. In this third step of translation, I use the song in another way, talking of it as if it was part of a memory or culture common to both my reader and characters. A fourth layer can appear to the reader if he/she gets curious enough to search those lyrics on Google — I recommend.]

5] The Hippopotamus (*hippopotamus amphibius*) weighs around 1500 kg (although one exceptional specimen reaching the 4500 kg has been reported), which makes it the third biggest land mammal, after elephants and some rhinoceros. It can become extremely aggressive when it comes to protecting its territory, thereby maintaining its reputation of being the most dangerous animal in Africa. Males occasionally fight in violent duels, making use of their ability to spread their jaws at almost 180°, revealing 50 cm long canines and almost equally long incisors (which are used only for those warlike purposes). The Hippopotamus is adapted to both terrestrial and aquatic environments; its nostrils muscles contract automatically when going under the surface, keeping the water from entering into its lungs, and enabling it to stay fully immersed for 15 minutes easily (which is more than almost any other mammal).

[Finally the reader can connect the title to something... In the Osirian myth, the two gods Set and Horus take the form of two hippopotami as they fight for the crown. One could assume that the hippopotamus is used as a metaphor for aggression and protection of one’s territory; from there, I have been retrospectively wondering about the sense of this part. Am I just shifting the lexical field of this original metaphor? Am I extending it? Or am I doing a metaphor of the metaphor, as another form of translation? In the original metaphor, the theme (the signified) is the duel of Horus and Set; the phore (the signifier) is the hippopotamus; and the common part between those (the tertium comparationis) — the aforementioned aggression and protection of one’s territory — gives the reader a surplus of meaning to the story, by enhancing this specific aspect of the signified while putting the others in the background. After



studying this very specific question, I came to the conclusion that things are slightly different in my version of the myth. Here, the signified is the mythical metaphor I just described; the signifier is the whole set of vocabulary I use, which comes from the scientific, factual discourse. The common point between those two, the tertium comparationis, is the animal itself — and the surplus of signification obtained through this process could be defined as the reconciliation of the mythical and scientific discourses, which allows another entry point into the story.

*This may sound abstract; nevertheless, the idea of a “metaphor of the metaphor” is crucial when it comes to rewriting a story that is already so loaded with symbols.*

6] Additionally, this amphibious creature has a fascinating relation of symbiotic mutualism with Oxpeckers (*buphagus*), which feed themselves out of what they can find on the body of the Hippopotamus; in return, the latter is getting cleaned of all its parasites. However, one can only presume that this relation will always stay this way.

*[Of course, I could not help but developing the metaphor to give a hint about a later sequence, making use of my research about the hippopotamus to establish a connection between the Oxpecker and Isis (often represented as a bird). This was too good of an opportunity to create another bridge between the scientific elements I started implementing and the dramaturgy.]*

7] She’s above me and does all the work (I’m barely *repaired*). [...] The longer it goes, the stronger I feel; and she somehow makes me come inside her, although it is rationally impossible.

*[My use of italics and capital letters almost always reflect the auditive aspect of the text. These are for me things to be heard rather than to be read.]*

8] Mother,

I suppose I need to thank you for your help; I don’t know what would have happened without your intervention. I’m also very sorry for my reaction. Sorry and angry: why did you bring me to this? You placed dangerous tools in my hands, and I just cannot go from merciless to merciful as fast as you do. Look at me now, pathetic and bitter under my crown of regrets; was it really worth it? I’m sorry, I don’t mean to be too harsh... I know that you had your reasons, and I try to accept that. I think that events only seem to be repeating themselves; but in the end, many things are irrevocably changed.

Forever yours,  
H\*\*\*\*

*[Another type of text again: after the tale-like parts in italics, the novel sections, the metatext addressing the reader directly and the scientific inputs about hippopotami,*

*now come a letter and a poem. Looking back on this text, I think it sometimes lacks rhythm; the fact that all those different parts are of similar sizes is not serving the dramaturgy: it has a tendency to flatten the text; some different sets of proportions should be explored.]*

9] Thrown into the depths of a kingdom upside down  
Symptom of the fall of a shattered primordial order  
I’m forced to turn my back to the world above  
As the integrity of my carbonaceous structure deteriorates

Maintained conscious by the will of an everloving entity  
My severed limbs swathed in an envelop of incorruptible matter  
Crafted by the claws of a misbegotten brood  
I mourn the ablation of my vitality

Realizing the birth of my second immortality  
I embrace the kite between whose wings I utter my devotion  
And inside a womb of immeasurable potentiality  
I unexpectedly conceive the innocent weapon of my retaliation

Impassive monstrosity hosting absence of life  
Unfathomably convoluted machine of divine computation  
Harkening unto the supplications of the repenting ones  
I, the weigher turn my gaze towards my frail creation and think:

Time is about to resume again.

*[I was imagining this part as the lyrics of an fictional song that could have been written by one of my favorite bands, Aversions Crown, which is in my humble opinion creating what is probably one of the heaviest, soul-crushing music that can be found as of today. Of course, it is very difficult to imagine what is perceived when this imaginary auditive background is removed; reading this with a regular tone and a soft voice seems almost absurd and ridiculous after imagining a raw, evil, abyssal scream. This raises again questions concerning my audience... Of course, I could protect myself and say that the reader is free to interpret the work how he/she wants, but I find the idea somewhat not convincing; it seems to me that I carry a certain responsibility when writing a text, and that I should to a certain extent keep control over its perception.]*

10] A couple months later, S\*\* came to visit me in my new office. He was wearing boots made out of some reptile’s skin. “It’s so damn dark in here. Don’t you miss the tower?” I could not tell how sarcastic this was meant.

“Don’t you?”



— Not that much actually; it kinda feels good to work outside. You know, get some sun. Without even mentioning that it's rather comfortable to spend my time doing what I do best. But I didn't come to talk about myself: how are you doing? You must have fully recovered by now?

— You've got some nerve asking this.

— Come on, don't be bitter. You're too smart not to realize we're not that different; at the end of the day, I did as much as you to restore the balance." He paused. "Seems like your son is doing well. I kinda pity him though, you didn't exactly make it easy for him.

— Don't all children end up reproducing what their parents did anyway? The way I see it, I only spared him the process of understanding that by himself.

— Whatever makes you feel better about yourself. Look, I gotta go, I have to start my shift, and you probably have a lot on your plate as well. Just wanted to say hi."

Shortly after he left, a client of mine entered. But as he was explaining his case, part of me kept on wondering: could *anything* have happened any differently?

*[How difficult is it to end a story? I would say: it is as difficult to finish a story as it is pleasant to start it. To create some tension that calls for the reader's attention is an easy task compared to announcing him/her that the narration comes to an end, for this is the time when the risk of disappointment is the highest: the reader started building expectations.]*

## DIVINE APES: ANNOTATIONS

11] Silence.

*[Allow me to come back to what I was saying about auditive imagination (see [9]). This time, I tried a different approach, with more control on the reader's perception, simply by giving indications about an actually-not-existing soundtrack. I have been asked if this was meant as a score: to this, I would answer negatively; this is a soundtrack and not the score of a soundtrack — even though it was partly created by writing down scores of a previous performative work using part of this text, and even though I could imagine using this soundtrack as a score in some next performance. This is all part of a translation process.]*

12] I once went to the middle of nowhere. There, I met an ape, sitting and smoking the pipe. He told me: "Guess who I am." I had no clue who he was. So I replied: "O smoking ape, I have no clue who you are." He said: "Let me help you. I am he, who recognizes corrupted waters." [...] I stood there, somehow embarrassed of my own inability to give a satisfying answer: "O riddling creature,

I am so sorry to say that I still cannot guess". He told me: "Do not worry too much; this is just a game. You know what? I lend you my voice, so that you can search a bit longer. Give me a sign if you find out."

So he gave me his voice, hesitated a bit, and gave me his pipe as well. Then he stood up, removed the dust from his clothing, and left, going from nowhere to somewhere. I found myself alone, a bit confused, the voice in one hand and the pipe in the other.

*[This introduction, like in "The Great Northern Hippopotamus", gives some insights on a meta-level of the text (see [2]), but this time through a different approach: these meta-elements are embodied in a form that is much less separated from the rest of the narration — which caused me some confusion, as you will see later in those notes (see [21]). I play with the character of Thoth, an Egyptian divinity which is rather secondary in the Osirian myth itself but interesting in its quality of inventor of language. By this mean, I take the time to introduce my narrator, and through him I talk about the process of writing from a mythological perspective. I got rather good feedback concerning this part, but for a different reason: what came out from the discussions I had was much more centered on its visual, poetic impact. This shows the limit of my control over the text, but on the other hand, I find it reassuring to be confirmed that implementing self-reflective elements still leaves room for poetry.]*

13]

### DIVINE APES

*[Yes, I know, the hippopotami, then the apes... What can I do, the Egyptian myths are full of animals. This specific choice of words was much less rational and much more sensible than the choice of the previous text's title. I saw those "divine apes" appearing several times in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and I found the expression quite touching in its mixture of ridiculousness and grandeur. The character of Thoth in his baboon form made it feel coherent enough, and the fact that it is plural more open, less obvious.]*

*You noticed that the title appears twice in this text. The first appearance is there to make the division between the texts clear in the context of this publication; it is originally meant to appear as it does the second time only: after the introduction, as in a movie.]*

14] She sits on the bench, breathes in deeply, eyes closed and head turned towards a hidden sun. She sighs, and removes a piece of the fabric of her dress, shaken by the wind, away from her face. Another chill gust and the white cotton comes back on her nose. Eyebrows frowned, she shakes her head, unpleasantly tickled; she sighs again, sharply this time. From this bench, on top of a small hill, she can see her two brothers, on the main terrace of the family house. Arguing again, of course. She cannot hear the two boys, but knows them enough to read their body language like an open book. "The two idiots. What did I do to deserve being surrounded by such morons?" She always found it difficult to have a proper



conversation with her siblings, so she quickly got used to talking to herself, often with rhetorical questions.

*[I wanted in this new version to focus more on the feminine characters, to whom my work did not do justice so far; although there would not be much left of the story without them... Isis could actually be a symbol of the uneven repartition of the mental load between genres; she literally does everything: adopting the child her husband has with another woman, saving her husband after he gets in a fight with his rival, healing him, using her magic to give him a child although he literally has no balls, saving her child from his brutal opponent... But it would also be a bit obvious and expected (and maybe even inappropriate considering contemporary feminist discourses) to make her too pure and perfect; so I made myself some room for interpretation and tried to imagine what could possibly be hiding behind this apparent perfection.]*

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15] She knows how this works, she has seen it a thousand times; at first they talk, until one of them find an opportunity to provoke the other — who replies with another provocation; they start being louder and louder, agitating their arms and hands more and more; then Kane — the rougher one — hits the table, or whatever piece of furniture he can find nearby, with his fist; Chris stands up, his two arms firmly anchored on the aforementioned piece of furniture; their heads get closer and the volume of their voices increases proportionally to the movement of their upper bodies — this until their foreheads are almost in contact; most of the time, they finally end up wrestling, but she rarely has the patience to stay long enough to witness this part. She reminds herself not to be contemptuous, and — oh, here comes the hitting-the-table part, which makes her instantaneously forget about the no-contempt thing. How embarrassing... This is so ridiculous that she cannot help but having a quick laugh — nothing mean, somewhat desperate maybe.

She is getting bored, but as she is about to leave, the last one of the four siblings, Sarah, arrives on the terrace. She intervenes, trying to separate the two boys — in vain. Nothing exceptional, this is often happening in this arguing process. She finds her sister rather fascinating in her way of desperately wanting everyone to love each other. And sometimes she thinks that, perhaps, without noticing it, she is doing exactly the same herself.

*[You noticed the change of tense; the introduction was at the past, and this is now present. This has four different reasons. Firstly, there is something logic in having the parts giving informations on a meta-level in a more distant temporality (since it is literally about taking distance) than the story strictly speaking, in which I would like my reader to immerse. Secondly, I wanted the reader to get close to the character of Isis, since this was one of the focal points of this text; the directness of the present was a good tool for this. Thirdly: I tried to do it differently (everything present, everything past, putting the parts at the present at the past, and the other way around), and I felt like this simply did not work. Fourthly; this version is much more coherent and consistent (in the sense of having less different types of texts)*

*than the previous one, so I allowed myself this diversity in all good consciousness. However satisfying or unsatisfying the result may be, the manipulation of different tenses was at least done with more awareness.*

*Another aspect on which I took a different approach: the names. I felt like trying out something different, so I decided to rename my characters. I had to imagine a rule for this; so I decided to find my Egyptian gods some biblical equivalents, and to get a name from there. For example, Set, the murderer, becomes Cain, and Cain becomes Kane; this provided me “contemporary-sounding” names without having to make completely arbitrary decisions (translations again!). But I also did not want to agitate those names like big symbolic flags in front of the reader, so I used them as little as possible (as in those movies where one discovers the characters’s names on a Wikipedia page); just what it takes for the text to be understandable, and for not using too many pronouns. Looking back on the text, I could have been more generous in my use of names, a little more clarity would not have harmed anyone.]*

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16] *High pass filter. Low cinematic brass hit.*

*[I have been told that this could sound too technical; I remain shared between the risk of sounding pedantic (I do not want my reader to be repelled because he/she does not know this terminology and feels the text is not meant for him/her) and my desire to chose words accurately.]*

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17] And something did happen; the egg was shredded from inside, torn apart, and a boy came out.

*[I like to be very brief about the most important events of the storyline; it has something unexpected and confusing, which can be a reminder for the reader that he/she should stay focused, or at least incite him/her to search for meaning in all the discreet or hidden elements. This has something disproportioned, but one could argue that the intense parts lose their strength when spending too much time on them. This is a characteristic of many action movies: the fight sequences last for hours and quickly gets boring, whereas, for example, most of Kurosawa’s duel scenes are all about being efficient and going straight to the point. As I write this down, I realize how much more direct I could be in my texts to come.]*

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18] *Female choir.*

*[I intend to push further this idea of the written soundtrack. The indications I give in this text remain short, and there is a risk that they become anecdotic; strategies should be found to implement them deeper in the narration.]*

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19] She tells him: “Your two eyes will be given back to see. Your two ears to hear what is said. Your mouth for words. To walk, your two feet will walk.”

*Crescendo to mezzoforte.*



She tells him: “You will have your two arms circling, and your two shoulders. Your flesh will be firm, your muscles at rest.”

*Crescendo to forte.*

She tells him: “May you rejoice in every limb of yours! May you count all your limbs and have them healthy!”

*Silence.*

If nothing would have been missing, the Ka would have replied: “I am alive!”

*[The words Isis pronounces are taken from a liturgic text from Ancient Egypt. Direct speech is of great help when it comes to integrating different forms of writing without making the reader nauseous.]*

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20] Then she watches him, who came forth from the uttermost parts of the earth, and received his apparel at the will of the Ape. She watches him, who penetrated into the holy habitations of those who are in their shrines. She watches him, who became helpless in the regions of those who plunder in the underworld, and who was cleaned by his bastard son.

*[Another attempt at integrating texts from Ancient Egypt (from the Book of the Dead), this time through indirect discourse; the result feels more abstract, almost monstrous.]*

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21] We arrived in the closest town; I introduced him to everyone I knew there, and they were all extremely pleased to meet him. He asked if we had some food, proposed to go on a picnic, said he would love to get to know everyone better, that he was sure one of us knew some nice spot, that it would be good to go right now, that there was no point in waiting, and that yes, his parents were aware of his presence here, do not worry.

*Ethereal guitar melodies.*

We ended up in a park as the sun was slowly starting to go down; we had some food and beer, and a lot of people were joining when seeing the boy. Everything went well, up to the moment when a group of security agents arrived and said that this kind of gathering was strictly forbidden and that everyone should leave right now.

*Additional harmonies.*

Nobody protested. The place got empty in a few minutes. I tried to make the boy stand up and come with me, but he told me that he knew what he had to do, that I did too much already, that we would see each other again soon, and that I should leave with the others — which I did.

*[There it got tricky. In the introduction, I made such a character out of my narrator that I could not help but developing him/her (no indication is given concerning the narrator's gender) in this direction, although I was planning at first to make him/her rather neutral. He/she got so much involved in the story that I had a hard time extirpating him/her from the situation he/she got himself into. He/she really got out of control starting to talk to other characters... If I confused for a moment narrator and character, I was also confused between author and narrator — I do identify, to a certain extent, with this person establishing a camp to witness the events of the story. For this reason, it may be a positive sign that my narrator wanted to intervene in the story; some sort of subconscious message saying that I want to renew the story, and not only rewrite it... but I am probably over-interpreting.*

*The absurdly long and chopped-up sentences you read in this same passage are directly inspired from “Les aventures du Petit Nicolas” (by René Goscinny), which I enjoyed very much rereading with someone I currently help to learn French. I am not sure I managed to achieve this effect of genuineness that Goscinny is so good at creating; however, the aim was to make “the boy” an actual boy, and not only Horus the Child-God; this again to facilitate the connection between the reader and the story.]*

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22] Then the ape came out of the bushes and took the boy in his arms. He said: “You can keep the voice, but would you be kind enough to give me the pipe back?”

I woke up sweating, cursing myself for not having found the answer to his riddle.

*[It would not have felt right to have the ape intervening in the introduction only — this character would have stayed separated from the rest of the story, and this new version was all about coherence (formally at least). It was a matter of balance and composition before being a matter of following the original myth (Thoth, inventor of language, is also the one saving Horus when his left eye is taken by Set).]*

## WHAT MAKES THIS STORY WORTH TELLING? A FEW COMMENTS & THOUGHTS

This part of the annotations section is not referring to one of the texts in particular; it concerns a reflexion that took place in-between the writing sessions.

Several elements brought me to the myth of Isis and Osiris. Firstly, I would mention an interest for traditional forms of spirituality in the overall. What is the meaning of those myths that were told repeatedly throughout centuries? What can I learn from them? To what extent do they offer a different perspective on the world that differs from the contemporary myths I hear around me? Secondly comes an aesthetic attraction towards ancient Egypt, or should I say some kind of collective



imagination of Antique Egypt; the gold, the blue precious stones, the sand, the desert, the temples, the columns, the pyramids, the mighty pharaohs... A whole visual vocabulary whose manipulation I found exciting. And thirdly: the fact that I do not understand this specific myth. It has something blurry and ungraspable, with many variations that appeared in the different places and periods of the Egyptian civilization, whose moral codes I am unfamiliar with. Do not get me wrong, I do not have the arrogance to pretend I fully understand the Greek myths, for example, or the Bible; nevertheless, I feel like having a much stronger grip on the direction their narrations take; whereas the “point” of the story of Isis and Osiris remains hidden.

So what can I tell from the base of a story of which I have a (very) limited understanding?

I feel like arriving to a point where I cannot go any further without finding the beginning of an answer to this question, without sharpening my focus on the myth. It seems to me that listing all the elements that I find rich and interesting in this story would be an appropriate first step (to be honest, I cannot think of any other procedure right now — maybe I will come up with something better later on). Before starting this list, I will clarify my view on story-telling, or shall I say my main criterion of what a “good story” is as of today. I consider a story worth telling when it opens up a space for reflexion; when a process of questioning oneself starts during and after the narration — in this sense, I am not interested in entertainment, which I understand as a closed system where nothing more happens than the narration itself. Of course, whether or not this reflexion process is actually happening depends on the reader; the point is to open up a potential space for reflexion, to have this option proposed; the reader can of course decide for him/herself to take the story as entertainment only. I also do not aim to be didactic; if an entertaining narration is closed because of the absence of a potential space for reflexion, the didactic narration is closed because of the finished status of the reflexion it proposes; everything is given ready-to-use, and there is therefore no process of questioning oneself, except maybe the question of whether or not to apply the given reflexion. I have no despise for didactics, but I do not think I have something to learn to the person taking the time to read my stories; rather, I want to share questions — and in the case of this specific project, I need to clarify what these questions are or could be.

### ORDER & CHAOS

A tension between Order and Chaos appears throughout the story of Isis and Osiris. The narration starts with a stable, ordered state, a sustainable system in which humankind enjoys the knowledge of agriculture brought by Osiris; this order is then broken apart by Set — incarnation of Chaos — killing his brother. The salvation of Osiris by his sister Isis, and the fight of their son Horus against Set is nothing but the story of how the world is brought back to a state of Order — although I recently read about other versions of the story in which the fight of Horus and Set ends up on a *status quo* rather than a victory of the nephew over the uncle. Another

element in contradiction with this Order/Chaos structure is the fact that Set, outside of his fight with Osiris, is also the guardian of the Boat of Ra, protecting it from the fiend Apophis, so that the Sun can complete its journey everyday. And what is the sense of the decapitation of Isis by her son Horus, at the end of some versions of the story (this decapitation finds two different explanations: either Horus is furious about the mercy his mother has towards Set agonizing, either his anger is due to a wound his mother causes him accidentally during the fight against Horus)?

Depending on the perspective taken on the story, this opposition of Chaos and Order seems either obvious, either completely irrelevant. This polarity is nothing new, so what are the aspects of it that could raise questions specifically through this myth? It seems to me that the need for a balance between Order and Chaos is something consensual on a conceptual level; maybe there is more space for questions (subversion?) when it comes to how this can or should apply — when and to what extent can we accept this chaos, and what kind of space do we give it; night clubs & carnivals? To be continued.

### FATE & ABSURDITY

Precisely because I am not able yet to explicitly formulate the question I want to ask through this project, the texts I wrote so far revealed a certain absurdity of the story. All characters seem to be floating, acting arbitrarily, as if they were predetermined to act in a way they themselves do not understand. On a formal level, I found many ways to play with this absurdity, and the story as I tell it now sounds often dreamlike, or even senseless — making it hard for the reader to find a space in it for him/her to think. Let me suppose, for a moment, that this “absurdity of life” is precisely the point to be raised through this story; how could it then open some questions, rather than being cynical or nihilist?

Pause. This brings me to something that may be of help; let me get away from the topic for a moment. There is an idea that I always struggled to communicate because it has something paradoxical. Rationally, I tend to think that everything is predetermined; that everything that ever happened could not have happened in any other way; that we live in a sequence of events in which each one of those events mathematically induces the following. But I also think that this model, if it is perfectly fitting for a plant, a rock, a god or an animal, is absolutely unlivable for a human, because it reduces to nonsense the idea of decision-making, responsibility and ethics. I found a personal “solution” to this problem which I would formulate as follows: 1) everything is predetermined, and therefore there is no such thing as making a decision; 2) nevertheless, I make the decision to believe that I am responsible for my acts. It is absurd; but it has many advantages: it forces me to act for the best, and still restrains me to a certain humility, since I never forget that I rationally have no merit for whatever action it is. To put it in a more general way, this inner tension forces me to always keep a certain distance to any idea, since this idea will always be in contrast with at least one of those two poles. Back to the main topic:



What if this was the topic that could appear through a renewed version of the Osirian myth? What if each of its characters was approaching this paradox from a different perspective, thereby inducing the reader to question his/her own position? Isis, for example, would be the one believing the most in the concept of responsibility: she refuses to let both Osiris and Set to die. Set would be the cynical one: he does not have any bad consciousness about any of his acts, be it cutting his brother into pieces, or tearing out the eye of his nephew — he takes the role of being the chaotic one because someone has to, in a sense that the universe naturally keeps itself balanced. Osiris, rather passive, is carried by the events, but without necessarily believing in fate. Horus (but maybe this is more of my imagination here), the child, refuses the idea of being predetermined, and realizing how little control he has makes him mad and bitter. Anubis, on the other hand, is full of acceptance; he plays his role, at ease with himself. Of course, Thoth, scribe and primordial deity, is a good metaphor of the concept of fate itself; although the fact that he shared the power of words with humans makes this metaphor more subtle — did he want humans to “write their own lives”?

### GODS & HUMANS

There is something quite specific to the the Egyptian mythology when it comes to the relationship between gods and humans: The gods are clearly identified as such, as entities from a different dimension, but humans can nonetheless be incarnations of them. According to the Book of the Dead, in the prayers to be recited in order to access an eternal life beside Osiris, the deceased often talks about himself (always a male in the ancient papyri, of course) as the incarnation of one or the other divinity. The human becomes Osiris, Ra or many more, while still addressing prayers to the same divinities. And this is not something that can happen because this man has proved himself worth it: it is something he has to do in order to prove himself worth living next to the gods.

This could be looked at as a form of empathy between gods and humans — the mortals identify with their gods, they recognize themselves in them in a very direct way. They are gods — as if bringing the christian idea of a god making human in his image to a whole other level of intensity (the chronology is not relevant here). This aspect, although I did not develop it so far, has for itself that it puts the focus on the way the reader identifies with the story, which happens to be one of my main issues. A track to be explored.

### CYCLES & RITUALS

The story repeats itself. The more I try to tell it in various ways, the more repetitions I notice within the narration. Two crownings of Osiris (king of the living and king of the dead); three times a character left wounded and saved (Osiris, Horus and Set); two rituals of reconstruction of the body (mummification of Osiris and reconstruction of the eye of Horus); two births (Anubis and Horus); two arrivals among the living (the four siblings, then Horus)... Even the overall structure of the myth suggests

an alternation between the forces of Chaos and Order, with the crown being taken by force twice (Set and Horus). Already in the early versions I did of the story, I (more or less consciously) enhanced those repetitions, accentuating the similarities of the situations rather than focusing on their differences. I see a potential access through the story to a very actual problematic; the idea of progress and of a linear perception of time.

As a first, clumsy attempt at explicitly formulating a question out of this, I would say: what do the promises of a better future (technologically more advanced, intellectually enlightened, *et cetera*) or of a worse future (nuclear catastrophies, climate change) reveal of our relation with time? Throughout all sort of discussions and debates I had over the years, I noticed the underlying presence of the idea that humanity is either getting better and better, or the exact opposite, that humanity is deteriorating. Either case, according to those perspectives, we would be progressing towards a certain direction. From what I encountered, this idea is rarely explicitly formulated; most of the time, it appears indirectly through various topics (just a random example: humankind is better since democracy appeared). There is a need for sense; and this is very much connected to the point I developed under the entry “Fate & Absurdity”. This concept of progress is the equivalent of the belief in decision-making on a larger scale; we need to give sense to our personal lives, and we need to give sense to our evolution as a species (note: when I use the word “sense”, I have in mind its french translation “sens”, which has the triple signification of “meaning”, “biological mean of perception”, but also “direction”).

Luc Benoist writes: “*L’art ne progresse pas. Son début est toujours actuel, puisqu’il se place en dehors du temps, puisqu’il transmet l’image rituelle de ce qui s’est fait à l’origine.*”<sup>\*</sup> The ritual is here understood as a repetition of the world’s origin, whereas in its contemporary daily use, this word is often connoted with the idea of comfort and routine; the ritual is a way to allow oneself to be somewhat lazy, to momentarily stop trying to break with one’s comfort zone, to stop trying to progress. One could argue that there is nothing less comfortable than constantly reminding oneself that there is no such thing as progress, constantly facing one’s powerlessness. In the ancient Egyptian’s religious system, according to Jan Assman<sup>\*\*</sup>, there are two different temporalities: the eternity, reserved to the gods, and the cyclic time, reserved to humans — the idea appears in many different forms of spirituality, but the Egyptian civilization was particularly consequent in this, judging from its exceptional stability throughout millennia (a stability including its conflicts, chaos and wars; stability does not mean peace). One could argue that the main change resulting from the actions of the Osirian myth’s characters is the development of a shift of temporal paradigms: the afterlife offered by Osiris, the agriculture he brought beforehand, the dynastic cycle...

\*] Benoist, Luc. Art du Monde : La spiritualité du métier. Editions Orientales, 1978, p.24

\*\*] Assman, Jan. The Mind of Egypt. Traduit de l’allemand par Andrew Denkins.

Metropolitan Books, 2002, pp.15-18



From there, what strategies can be developed to open up a space for reflexion? I have a tendency, in the forms I use, to put two contradictory affirmations next to each other rather than directly asking questions — that a story raises questions does not mean that its characters are formulating them. This can be a strength, because it allows to open reflexion in a unique way, differing from what can happen in a discussion or an essay, and hopefully bringing the reflexion away from preconceived positions. On the other hand, it can also be brutal for the reader: metaphorically, if he/she receives strong impulses from opposite directions, he/she needs all the more a landmark, a reference point, a handle to grasp, otherwise he/she will be repelled. The reader should be watching the storm without being crushed by it. The more brutal the piece is, the more explicit the invitation to watch it should be; this could be done in many different ways, but essentially, it means giving recognizable elements to which one can hold on.

### CONCLUSION?...

One of my biggest fears is to realize that I would have been desperately trying to give sense (what did I write about giving sense again?) to something that is nothing but a purely formal experiment. Writing down my thoughts has been on that level comforting: everything is yet to be done, but hopefully there may be something to be done.

## JUDGMENT DAY: ANNOTATIONS

23] HORUS: As the only son of the former king — *(he looks at Anubis)* or shall I say as his only legitimate son, I am the direct heir to the throne.

ANUBIS: Come on... As far as I know, I'm not responsible for our father!

OSIRIS: Ok, ok, we got it. Can we move on, please?

ISIS: What, now? You feel uncomfortable? I'm very sorry to hear that, but maybe you should have thought about this earlier, don't you think? Such nerve!

NEPHTHYS: We all got it, no need to make a scene. Shall we proceed?

ISIS: Nobody's asking you!

THOTH: She's right though, this is not exactly relevant.

RA *(to himself)*: Gimme a break...

MA'AT: Oh, please, spare me the I'm-the-only-serious-person-in-the-room shit, dad.

THOTH *(to Ma'at)*: You must be kidding, right? *(To Ra.)* May I, your Honor?

RA *(to himself, looking at Ma'at)*: Something went wrong at some point, but what exactly?

*["Judgment Day" comes from a wish of taking distance with my topic; of checking my ability to keep my working process under control; of making sure that I am able to take some distance from my characters as well as I can be close from them and be immersed in the story.*

*Ridiculing them seemed like a good strategy for this purpose. Sarcasm has its limits, but it has proved its value as a tool for distanciation. This was also an opportunity to breathe after all the pathetic or oniric elements I manipulated previously — I also used this chance to implement some new secondary characters, to whom I did not pay attention so far.*

*Manipulating sarcasm led me to comedy — and this text became an exercise for direct discourse. I did not finish the piece; maybe this was too far from my main focus for me to dedicate more time to it. However, I might get back to it next time I get tired of my own seriousness...*

*This distance taken towards the characters is not relevant for me only; the reader can also perceive it, and it can be a way of keeping my discourse from sounding dogmatic (which, based on my experience, can quickly happen when with topics such as religion, mythology or spirituality). A next step of the research could be to implement humor and sarcasm in my future writings (or any other production) — at a smaller degree, just as a sign for the reader to understand that those writings should not be taken as a "finished reflexion", but as opened questions (see "What Makes This Story Worth Telling? A Few Comments & Thoughts").]*

## HORUS'S MONOLOGUE: ANNOTATIONS

*[Horus's Monologue is the only one of those texts that was thought of as spoken more than written, although it became a text work before becoming a sound piece. Let me explain: this text was entirely thought of as a (very) theatrical monologue; I was interested in the tension voice can build up, in first person discourse, in having a narrator closely touched by the events of the story — I wanted to imagine, so to say, a recited autobiography. But if I had a clear, precise imagination of what this could sound like, I had no idea about what the content of this recitation could be. I needed a character, and I chose the one that appeared through my previous works as the most tortured: Horus. I started writing, and it was close to describing a dream: the overall picture is clear and sharp, but as soon as one tries to grasp the elements separately (in this case, the words), they seem to be slipping away. However, I ended up with a first version of the monologue; then, I used this text as material for a sound production. In this process, confronted to the physicality of the*

voice, to rhythm and diction, I made a series of small changes; the version given here is the latest state of the text, including those modifications.]

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24]

## I. THE ARRIVAL

[A first example of these amendments: the separation in different parts, which came from a need to give a more tangible structure to the text when recording it, a need to implement breathing and clarity in the rhythm of the recording. For the same reasons, I had to divide the paragraphs in smaller subsections.]

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25] I woke up alone, too late to even see the back of my mother leaving the shore. I struggled to open the egg which contained me, and I had to bath a hundred times to wash away all of the slimy liquids that kept sticking on my feathers, in an attempt at destroying the absent memory of Isis.

[I decided this time to use the actual names of the characters, something that I had so far done in "Judgment Day" only — a text which has quite a specific status compared to the other writings. This seem to have several consequences:

— The text is much more "readable", much clearer.

— The reader has access to the source of the text, and therefore has more space to think of an interpretation of it. To put it differently, the effort that is not put into searching the root of the story can go in opening up a reflexion.

— On the other hand, it can also make it impossible for the reader to get rid of the weight of this source; it becomes crucial to make it visible that the perspective taken on the myth is chosen, specific, and therefore that it carries a personal reflexion — that it is more than another (entertaining) adaptation of the Osirian myth.]

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26] I floated like this until I got taken into a fisherman's nest. The fisherman brought me on the ground, and he didn't seem surprised; he did seem happy though, and I understood that my arrival had been announced. The fisherman gave me food and clothes, and he brought me to his village; people gathered around me, bemused and staring. They organized tables in the city hall, and I listened to their stories. They talked without interruption; they told me about their loves, their miseries, their jealousies, their hatreds; they told me about their struggles, their pains, their joys, their sorrows; they told me about their parents, their children, their talents, their creations; they told me about their history, their legends, their heroes, and it was nothing different from the stories of gods. We were the same; they too had been floating, but I didn't like it, for it was reminding me too much of my own loneliness.

Because they were so eager to talk and to be understood, I didn't feel allowed to tell my own story, so I kept on listening, and every uttered word was adding weight

on my shoulders. I was torn apart between despising them for being so selfish, and loving them because they felt so close.

[I started to implement the question of the relationship between gods and mortals which I was mentioning above (see "What Makes This Story Worth Telling? A Few Comments & Thoughts", entry "Gods & Humans"). This attempt is not satisfying yet — it lacks depth and needs to be pushed further. Still, I decided to leave it, as a clear sign for the reader that what he/she reads is meant to be connected to his/her own world.]

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27] [...] the situation was too messy for me to understand his words.

[Another modification done while recording the monologue, and maybe a possibility for the reader to identify on a very simple level with the narrator.]

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28] He put his hand on my head, softly but firmly; the exact middle ground between the grip of a workman on a heavy hammer and the caress of a customer appreciating the softness of a cloth. I felt the cold metal of the blade getting deep into my head, then out again, and pain reached a level of abstraction I would never have thought possible. Set cleaned the blood from his knife, and they all left.

[This text has something much more direct than the previous ones. This has some good aspects, especially making the storyline clearer, but it also makes what was oniric, absurd or dreamlike in previous texts quickly become over-dramatic. Here is a previous version of the same paragraph:

"He put his hand on my head, softly but firmly; the exact middle ground between the caress of a father on the forehead of his feverish child and the grip of a man holding his dog being euthanized."

In order to avoid for this kind of parts to become a steak of pathos in the sandwich of this tragedy, I had to rethink my vocabulary of metaphors; I needed to make those less frontal and hollywood-like, and to become more open, so that they can shift or displace the discourse. Maybe this is also the point where the implementation of a certain humoristic distance (see [23]) becomes necessary.]

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29] I stayed there, on the very ground I fell on; with my remaining eye, I looked at the sun, and I was furious at Osiris my father, furious at Isis my mother, furious at Set my tormentor, and furious at all other gods and humans — I hated them all for making me the symbol of their ideals; I felt used and stolen. I stayed there for days, screaming my pain and frustration, and I hated that my story resembled so much the one of my father; I felt trapped in a machinery adding symbol over symbol, and I was sick of it.

[Since the beginning of my research, I started making of Horus the most human character; this Child-God has more and more of the rebellious teenager. This



*distortion makes it a character with whom it might be easier to identify, creating a more accessible entry point into the story.]*

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30] *Mon oeil gauche c'est la Lune  
Je mets cap sur l'objectif  
Pèlerin faucon des dunes  
Sur mes ailes hyéroglyphes*

*[All parts in italics were added during the process of turning the text into an audio piece. I noticed during the recording that keeping the text dynamic despite its strong unity was becoming challenging, and I felt the need to implement some disturbances in the voice. If this was more obvious in the audio work, it is still valid for the written version: those parts correspond to sung — rather than spoken — sections. In this precise case, the lyrics and recording came from another production of mine, which happened to be in French; as I like those connections between works that appear from themselves, I decided to keep it exactly as it was; I wrote the next sung part in French too in order to obtain a rhythmical pattern from these disturbances.]*

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31] She brought me to the arsenal, and swathed me in steel, in the same way Osiris was swathed in cotton and silk.

*[After writing about the idea of a cyclic perception of time (see "What Makes This Story Worth Telling? A Few Comments & Thoughts", entry "Cycles & Rituals"), I developed more awareness of my own play with analogies and repetitions. At this stage, this meant focusing on enhancing the contrast between what is to be repeated and what is irrevocable.]*

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32] *Je sors de la Nécropole  
Mutilé je reviens fort  
Le temps s'est arrêté je suis juste à l'heure pour la mise à mort*  
  
*Ça fait longtemps que je n'ai plus d'espoir  
Pour la joie peu d'efforts  
Même quand j'affiche un sourire c'est parce que je ris de mes torts*

*[Another sung section; in the audio work, this one was quite a tool for making visible a certain distance to the work, since it was a ridiculously autotuned part; it brings less contrast when written. I therefore hesitated about giving a textual indication for this audio processing, as I did it in "Divine Apes"; but I did not want to do a one-to-one translation of my own audio work — translation as I use it is meant to enable shifts and evolutions.]*

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33] [...] I laughed until choking; but this laugh sounded more like a mirthless chuckle! Then I saw my mother looking at Set, and I saw her compassion. I got jealous, because I wished I were able to fight in such a peaceful way. She kept on contradicting every expectation, relentlessly trying to do what's right, and I saw

that I would never be able to do so. In my anger, I took her head off, with the very weapons she put into my hand; in this moment more than ever before, I became hippopotamus; in this moment I made for myself the tragedy I was trying to escape, and forged the very fate I was trying to deny!

*[Here, I turned some periods into exclamation marks after the recording; I had tried so hard to build up a dramatic tension that mere periods seemed desperately flat.]*

## A (VERY) BRIEF AND NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED IN THE OSIRIAN MYTH: ANNOTATIONS

34] Set, brother of Isis, Osiris, and Nephthys, with whom he is married, is associated with chaos, confusion and destruction — although he is also the protector of the boat of Ra, repelling everyday the fiend Apophis. In a later period of the Egyptian civilization, he will paradoxically merges with this fiend. The betrayal and murder of Osiris he organizes finds two reasons (but maybe analyzing the actions of a divinity of confusion from a rational perspective is a mistake): his anger about the affair Osiris has with Nephthys, and his jealousy when it comes to the crown. After this conflict, he faces a new opponent: Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, coming to bring back order among the living. Their fight occurs in two steps: at first, Set takes out the left eye of Horus (who, in some versions, harms his testicles in return). Later on, after the recovery of Horus, they fight again, taking the form of two hippopotami wrestling in the river (this fight can also be referred to as an apnea contest or as a trial). As mentioned above, Isis helps her son in this fight, leading him to victory. The conflict between Horus and Set symbolizes the balance between the complementary forces of order and chaos.

Set is a complex divinity, taking many forms in his different representations; the most common one being the form of a man with the head of an animal which egyptologists assume to be inspired by the aardvark or the jackal. Another important point of Set's character is its confused and brutal sexual behavior, be it hetero- or homosexual. He is associated with the infertile deserts around the kingdom of Egypt, with the pain of labour, with thunder and storm, and much more.

*[Being so focused on raising questions, it sometimes become difficult to write down affirmations. As a remedy for this, I decided to be, for a moment, on the objective side of things — by this I mean, very literally, to see my characters as objects, with shapes, colors, and functions. Facts: this is what "A (very) Brief and Non-Exhaustive List of the Characters Involved in the Osirian Myth" is all about.*

*As a secondary function, this listing forces me to go back to the basics of the myth, and therefore it makes me more aware of what comes from mythology on the one hand, and from my own interpretations on the other hand.*

*There is not much more to be said about this part, since the writing speaks very clearly for himself: there is nothing more to be read than the words themselves. However, from this I notice the relieving aspect of such factual writing; facts are like solid ground on which the unknown can be explored, and it makes me wonder if I have been in my previous texts making the task of my reader impossible by not providing enough of this tangible basis.]*

## THE GREAT NORTHERN HIPPOPOTAMUS (REVISITED): ANNOTATIONS

*[I have already mentioned the idea of a translation in several steps. Here is a small exercise going further in this direction; I decided to translate one of my pre-existing texts (which is itself constituted of pictures formed through many steps of translation) into a different format. From an experimental, exploded form of writing, I went to something closer to the novel format.*

*For this, I had to define a protocol; I decided to stick to the rules defined in the following annotations:]*

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35] We were four naked children playing on the shore. Two of us were in the Water, the two other ones in the Sand. We waved at a Boat, then went back to playing (the Sun was so bright that it made every color fade into a blinding grey). We felt the Wind on our faces, the cold of the Water, the warmth of the Sand, and it made us laugh. We were all on our own, so once we got bored of our games, we started walking, following the shore, until we arrived in the city and met other people.

*[— Coherence of narrator: everything had to be told through the same voice. In a novel, having a narrator which is also a character and having a narrator which is not are both pretty common; so I still had to choose one of the two options and went for the first one. My narrator had to be Osiris, since he was already the narrator in many parts.*

*— Coherence of tenses: everything had to be written at the past, which is the most common perspective for a novel (based on my experience as a reader — I don't do statistics here).]*

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36] After a thousand days of waiting, we had sex on the floor. I felt cursed and I feel blessed; which had a certain irony to it, given that I was supposed, from this moment onwards, to be the one to bless and curse. She was above me, doing all the work (I was barely repaired). The ground was black and mirrored the absence of light. She told me everything was gonna be alright, and I chose to believe her.

*[— Coherence of chronology: all the elements of the story had to follow their chronological order; even if this meant dividing paragraphs. This also induced the removal of all "meta-elements", intemporal and outside of all chronology.]*

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37] "Right? I'll tell you more in due time; but first, I'm gonna enjoy my own party and greet my other guests. Get yourself a drink, we'll catch each other later."

## CHAPTER III

I was lying on the ground, with, as far as I could count, fourteen broken bones.

*[— Coherence of structure: to make a novel out of my text, I had to give it a structure which respects the codes of the genre. I decided to open a new chapter for every ellipse in the narration.]*

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38] Thrown into the depths of a kingdom upside down, symptom of the fall of a shattered primordial order, I was forced to turn my back to the world above as the integrity of my carbonaceous structure deteriorated. Maintained conscious by the will of an everloving entity, my severed limbs swathed in an envelop of incorruptible matter — crafted by the claws of a misbegotten brood — I mourned the ablation of my vitality. Then I became the desert; monstrous as well, but benevolent?

*[— Coherence of punctuation: everything had to be written in prose, and should be punctuated accordingly (except in the case of a quote).]*

## MEHRERE ENTWICKLUNGEN IN RICHTUNG GASFÖRMIGES ENDE (MERGE): ANNOTATIONS

*[Mehrere Entwicklungen in Richtung Gasförmiges Ende (MERGE) is an attempt at making a synthesis of all the reflexions that appeared throughout the previous texts, formally as well as content-wise. Therefore, I needed to list the things to be kept in mind before getting into the writing strictly speaking. The list consisted of the following elements:*

### 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GODS AND HUMANS

- Narrator as non-divine character?*
- Connection to the contemporary world (aesthetically and discourse-wise)*
- Exploring the traditional description of this gods-humans relation*

### 2: POLARITY BETWEEN CYCLIC AND LINEAR TIME



- Each character having a clear position in regard with this matter
- Formally playing with ellipses, flashbacks, chronology, repetitions
- Implementing elements of contemporary discourses

### 3: DYNAMICS, RHYTHM & READABILITY

- Playing with the proportions of the different types of text
- Making radical decisions concerning names and narrator
- Making radical decisions concerning what is or is not supposed to be understood by the reader

### 4: ROOTING OF THE TEXT IN VARIOUS FIELDS

- Developing what is already there: elements of novel, theater, sound, scientific discourses...
- Using those forms pertinently according to the purpose of the different parts (linking form and content)

*But these reflexions were not exactly new, they were only clearer than before; I still missed the key element that could connect them. Followed a research step which was focused on the question of time perception, in the continuity of my reflexions about cyclic and linear time. Through a chain of various online articles and other sources (see bibliography), this research indirectly led me to the concept of entropy: as a matter of fact, when reading the Wikipedia article "Arrow of time", one quickly arrives at a subsection entitled "thermodynamic arrow of time". If the Osirian myth is a line, the concept of entropy is a second, non-parallel line that crosses it; and they cross at a very interesting point. From a line to a point, my writing practice had found a preciser, more tangible base. Rereading Asimov's short novel "The Last Question" as I was starting to write finished convincing me of the potential of this focal point.*

#### A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE CONCEPT OF ENTROPY:

*In physics, thermodynamics to be more accurate, entropy is a measure of the degree of unavailability of a system's thermal energy for conversion into mechanical (useful) work. The second law of thermodynamics (which appears at the very end of the text), states that entropy can only increase: for example, in an enclosed system, a block of ice placed on a hot surface will always melt, and the plate will get colder; it cannot happen that the ice becomes colder and the plate hotter. Therefore, if two pictures of this system are taken at two different points in time, one knows which one preceded the other — the process goes in one direction only.]*

39]

#### NUN: AN OPENING

A gong hit resonated.

There was

NUN (the Void).

Then

ATUM (the Demiurge)

gave himself birth. He sat on

BENBEN (the Mound),

and around him was

NUN (the Void).

He masturbated, and from his semen rose

GEB (the Earth)

and

NUT (the Sky).

*[The great thing with entropy is that it gives guidelines on both conceptual and formal levels. It is a theory which has an impact on the concept of fate, chaos or destiny; but it is also a matter of organization, separation, homogenization; a series of formal elements of which I took advantage throughout the text. I played with punctuation to manipulate the degree of clarity of the text. The introduction (announced as such to enhance this very clarity), describes an initial state whose entropy is (metaphorically?) extremely low; therefore, it needed to breathe, to have its elements easily separable. A first line in italics mentions the sound of a gong...]*

40] *In the high frequency range appeared a melody. This melody was neither sad nor happy, it was just there. In the low frequency range, there were drums, dampened, playing a slow and regular pattern.*

*Those two sections were constructed in such a way that there were never two sounds played simultaneously; sometimes, it was even getting unclear if the two parts were meant to be played together.*

#### CLAUSIUS:

Clausius sat on the side of the bed. His sleep had been agitated; in his dream there had been a bull standing on two legs, asking him:

WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?

The bull had repeated the question to a paralyzed Clausius:

#### WHY CAN'T YOU KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS ORDERED?

*[... and here is any possible doubt erased: the parts in italics gives auditive indications about sound. Clarity remains optimal. Those sound elements were the last ones added to the text, which was first written as a combination of two narrative lines: an "Egyptian line" (itself divided into a "mythical" and a "religious" line), and a "contemporary line". This additional layer, more abstract, was meant (not only to continue the research started in "Divine Apes", but also) to provide the material required to enhance the play with (dis)organization of the text. Those sound indications are clearly, visually separating the two levels of narration, before the entropy of the structure itself starts increasing.*

*"CLAUSIUS" stands in the same font as the one announcing the introduction in the previous page; message is once more clear, this indicates the beginning of a new part. One of the entries of the list preceding the writing process stated: "Making radical decisions concerning names and narrator"; this has been done indeed. As seen in the previous page, the names of the Egyptian gods were not modified. They did not need to: because the interplay of the narration's different levels already give a form to the connection of the myth with the contemporary reader, there was no need to make this connection by changing the mythical names — on the contrary, my interest lied in making the initial state clearer; only then could I develop a strong evolution from an organized to a disorganized system. The name "Nu" also comes from the Egyptian tradition, it is one of the deceased going to the Underworld in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. All I had left to do was finding the names of the characters of this "contemporary" narrative line: Clausius, Shannon, Mary, Maxwell. Clausius and Shannon are symptoms of a major increase in the world's entropy level; they took the names of the entropy concept's inventor (Rudolf Clausius) and of the person who implemented it in theory of information (Claude Shannon). My position as an author had to be clear: it is easily possible to trace the origin of the names once the text read (since the word "entropy" appears only in the epilogue), but the reader does not need to know about this origin to understand the story. Mary and Maxwell are characters making a temporal link with the mythical Egypt; they are reluctant to accept the world's change and regret its primordial order. Following the logic of the other characters from the contemporary timeline, the name Maxwell comes from the physicist James Clarke Maxwell, who came up with a thought experiment ("Maxwell's Demon") which was supposed to refute the second law of thermodynamics by demonstrating the possibility of its violation. The temporal link with the myth comes from the presence of his namesake in Ancient Egypt. The name Mary expresses this link in a different manner, by taking the name of the christian Virgin, understood by Osiris as an embodiment of entropy because of her identification with Isis. Concerning the narrator, I chose a neutral, omniscient voice; the logic behind it being the scientific base of the story. The narration had to express the idea of being the result from an objective process; this is "pure causality" in process, not some divine performative verb. I stuck to this rule throughout the text;*

*the choice of the past tense is also relevant, since the story essentially deals with the concept of irreversibility.]*

41] The memories of the evening were coming back, as he floated in this middle state between sleep and consciousness. The fight with Mary. She was so pissed: he spontaneously invited her for dinner, earlier in the day, and forgot to mention that two colleagues of him would also join. Followed a whole discussion about drawing a line between work and relationship, which escalated quickly. He understood what she meant, on a rational level, but never had a feeling for it. Mary was still in bed, sleeping in a different blanket. He thought of this distancing as symbolic, which did not make it less hurtful. It was not the first time they had an argument about this.

*[About the dispute of Clausius and Mary, and the other relationships between the characters: In the shift between different scales (from the relationship between gods and humans to the love relationship or to the Uke-Tori setting in aikido) lies the idea of a phenomenon valid at any size: the increase of entropy deals with the duality between an inside and an outside, not with a matter of quantified size. Additionally, the love or friendship relationship is a wonderful tool for the storyteller, since it has a huge identification potential (a tool which might be perceived as "too easy" if it was not put in a dialogue with the other levels of the narrative?)]*

42] To this was following the aikido practice strictly speaking. Clausius felt the pressure applied by Uke on his wrist, embraced the push, and, reproducing the sensei's gestures, shifted his body to the right. *Irimi nage, kote gaishi*. Smoothly executed; for a second, it was like one body moving. Uke's hand

*loudly slapped the tatami,*

then everything stood still. Clausius thought that with this noise was fading away all energy.

*The drums and melody started playing again at the slap's cue. Their structures were slowly evolving from one bar to the next. Some notes met, like accidentally, touching each other shyly, without lingering, testing each other's consistence. It was pleasant and touching to hear them come together, they were like those discreet children who are so careful in their interactions. They were taking their time.*

*[The aikido element was brought in relation with my research concerning the "contemporary forms of spirituality", or to put it differently, it is seen here as a form of spirituality with a high entropy value. The fact that aikido is practiced by a character who we suppose is from the western world is meant as another layer of the metaphor describing the exchange of energy between systems that used to be closed. Since it is the beginning of the story, entropy should not have reached its optimal point: I found relevant to implement and highlight its specific terminology. The reader hopefully feels the presence of an outside to which he still has limited access.*



*In this part, the reader witnesses a small interference between two levels that he/she thought were separated: the sound elements and the “contemporary” storyline (the quotation marks stand for the fact there is no actual time indication; “contemporary” refers to something “close to now”). A discreet interference, which the reader can retrospectively see as a harbinger of the transformations coming later in the text.]*

43]

#### THE DIVINE SIBLINGS:

The arrival among the mortals of Osiris, Isis, Nephthys and Set was a turning point in the story of humankind. For the very first time, Egypt stopped being an

#### ENCLOSED SYSTEM

and started exchanging energy with its gods. The couple formed by Isis and Osiris gave to the Egyptians the knowledge of agriculture, and the latter made the two gods their queen and king. Nephthys and Set were attributed the peripheral parts of the land, dry and arid; they became a reminder of the presence of an Outside. Gods and men arrived at an intermediate state of balance.

*[The storyline of the Osirian myth strictly speaking is told in a straightforward way, without all the ellipses and untold elements I used in the previous versions (except in “A (very) Brief and Non-Exhaustive List of the Characters Involved in the Osirian Myth”, see [34]). Part of me regrets the poetry that such omissions could create; but I think this has also (not only, but also) been a strategy to hide my insecurities concerning the “point” of my adaptation of the myth. Or perhaps should I say “use” rather than “adaptation”, since it appears to me more clearly now that the Osirian myth is here not only adapted to a different language, but also used to reveal elements that were not part of the initial story. In this sense, the myth becomes a tool, and a tool does not have to become poetry through ellipses and other figures: it has to be used.]*

44] Shannon opened the laptop on her desk. Her browser was still open, displaying an article about the melting of glaciers. Although she considered herself a convinced ecologist, she could not help but admitting her shared feelings concerning this topic, alongside a few other ones. For sure, she was sensitive to the ecological discourse surrounding the disappearance of such an environmental heritage; nevertheless, she remained positively fascinated by the Earth’s ability to transform itself. She kept this to herself, but the general concern with the melting of ice was somewhat too anthropocentric to her taste [...]

*[I keep on wondering if I have been trying to implement too many elements in this text; or should I say if I took enough time to reveal their connection to the main focus. Take the case of ecology; I tried to multiply the hints, for instance with references to the liquid state of matter, but the risk that this element loses itself within the narration and is read as anecdotic remains. Two different strategies could be applied in the future to reduce this risk: taking more time to develop each element (positive strategy), or reducing the number of elements (negative strategy).]*

45] Maxwell took one extremity of the long band of fabric. He started rolling it around the leg, the confidence in his gestures revealing his expertise. He followed the shape of the body lying in front of him, until it got completely covered. He selected a series of various objects, put them on the level of the chest, legs and hands, before taking a new roll of fabric and enveloping the corpse again.

He repeated this operation several times.

Once the last band was wrapped around the body, he stood up, sweating under the leopard’s fur covering his chest and back, and looked at the mummy of Nu. He was preventing corruption and decay, and this was satisfying him. Thanks to him, Osiris’ integrity had been once more rebuilt; he was the incarnation of Isis, Nephthys and Anubis saving the great god.

*[The story of Maxwell and Nu is crucial: it provides a religious perspective on the story, thus making the connection between the Osirian myth itself and its perception; it puts the myth back into human hands. This indirectly led me to explore the topic of the ritual, in a way that slightly differs from my usual manipulation of this concept. The rite is more than a way to remember and reenact a mythical event; it is the construction of a cyclical temporality which is used against the world’s tendency to increase its entropy level (against a linear, unidirectional time). When it comes to this tension, the Egyptian religious system is an interesting base, since it has in itself a tension between ritualization and identification with the gods. From the perspective I take here, the pious Egyptian is simultaneously the one who constantly actualizes the divine status of its gods and the one who damages their status of separated, autonomous entities.]*

46] The melody came back. It was not only played legato, it was also reverberating; from time to time, it even dared implementing simple chords, mostly octaves and fifths, maybe a few others; they were hard to recognize, since drums and melody started compressing each other, thereby deteriorating the overall clarity of the music. The resonating sound of the two glasses hitting each other slowly fade away into the ambient noise.

*Shannon had been working in a café the whole day (she felt the most comfortable working with conversations in the background); almost without noticing it, she switched to the terrace next door (which had the advantage of allowing the consumption of alcoholic beverages) when the evening arrived.*

*It was close to a techno beat.*

Clausius had been going for a drink, assuming that Mary would be willing to get some time for herself, and he chose the same bar as Shannon. Because both of them were alone and were social characters, they naturally ended up talking. Once Clausius felt comfortable enough to make such a remark, he told Shannon that he had been at first mistaking her for a man; to this she replied that she could

have been, and, laughing at the sight of Clausius's confused face, she told more about her perspective on gender: at the moment, she felt like a woman, but this was nothing permanent; this was called gender-fluidity. She laughed again when he asked how often it was changing, and she said that there was no rule for that, that it just happened. She explained that she had been a "she" for a while now, but that she could not tell when it would change again. This kind of conception of gender was quite unfamiliar to Clausius, but he was curious, and he listened to her, punctuating her explanations with genuine questions.

*[The border between the elements referring to sound and the others starts to be seriously blurred. The narrative role of this confusion, on the other hand, gets clearer. In the following lines, the reader finds back several elements connected to the previous parts (the meeting of two separated entities, the references to the liquid state of matter); but the question of gender — or at least the direct reference to it — is new to him/her (in the context of the story, of course). I hesitated about including this question into my writing, for the many discourses surrounding this topic and its presence at the core of contemporary problematics are making it heavy to manipulate. Nonetheless, I found it extremely relevant, and I hope it finds its place in the text without giving the impression of a superficial approach, which it is not — but I already mentioned the fact that the most important elements do not necessarily need the most words (see [17]). However clumsy my inclusion of this topic may be, it remains central in the sense of drawing connections with contemporary discourses (see the introduction to my annotations for this text).]*

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47] They decided to

REORGANIZE

Osiris' body [...]

ANUBIS HELPED THEM AND TOGETHER THEY RECOMPOSED THE BODY OF OSIRIS,

[...]

EVERYTHING HAD ITS TIME,

EVERYTHING HAD ITS PLACE.

*[The reader was until now confronted with what could seem like diverse uses of sections in capital letters; at this point of the text, he/she has all keys in hand to understand the criterion for their use: are written this way the sections that refer directly to the fight against entropy. I hesitated about multiplying the typographical tools (change of fonts, underlining, et cetera); but I found it more elegant to try and do the most out of a reduced palette. Limiting myself may be a mistake in the context of an experimental practice; but, in the use of such formal elements,*

*there is a balance to find between 1) thinking of form and content as one coherent (rather than undifferentiated) ensemble; 2) avoiding repetitions between those two levels (basically avoiding being illustrative). If this balance is needed, it can still be created in many different ways; writing a version of this story where "the form says (relatively) more about the content" could be an interesting next step.]*

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48] He went into the presence of the divine sovereign princes of Osiris. The latter said: "Say our names." Nu was disturbed, because he already did everything right. "O Thou who are eating cakes in the Kheret-Netjer, I have already proved being worth entering the presence, do I really need to recite your names?" Osiris replied:

PLEASE, SAY OUR NAMES!

Nu inhaled deeply, because he knew this would require a lot of breath. He was not angry, he was willing to go until the end of the process. He did not doubt being able to recite all of the names without a single mistake; nevertheless, he was disappointed by this additional step, because this was postponing his triumph. It was a long and difficult task, requiring an extreme focus, for the gods had been keeping on multiplying their names since they met humans. The operation took him years. The gods ate the names as he uttered them, and they seemed to be hungry.

*[The names are here thought of as symptoms of the duality contained within the Egyptian religious system: the names have to be ritualistically repeated to keep the gods alive, but humans also take them for themselves, emancipating from their divinities. Giving and Taking. Additionally, focusing on the names creates an elegant connection with the text medium, which is developed further in the discussions of Clausius and Shannon, thereby bringing content and form to be even more closely intertwined.]*

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49] Their discussions were going from one field to the other, and Clausius thought that he never could have talked like this with Mary; discussions with her were focused on a precise point, which had to be developed until being anchored like the hieroglyphs in the pyramids. He found this commendable, but was hardly able to do so — which was sometimes a problem as a scientist. Osiris turned his gaze towards Earth, centuries before Shannon asked what a gaseous society would look like. The Maxwells were barely able to remember his names. The last deceased arriving in the Kheret-Netjer told him that a new religion had been appearing; christianity, they called it. According to what the osiris was describing, he could recognize himself in their god — nothing but another name for a similar thing; he too got close to humans, and thereby quickly got human wounds. The Egyptian gods were always prompt to identify with foreign divinities; they did it with the Greeks, they could do it again. Even his wife and sister Isis started being confused with some Biblical character, apparently, and some christian minorities went as far as worshipping her. "My poor sister", he thought; "even you cannot help but



melting...“ He tried to think of something else, and chatted with the freshly arrived osiris.

*[The transition from Clausius and Shannon’s discussions to Osiris looking at Earth is the most counter-intuitive so far; while the characters continue building a network of connections between diverse topics (language, fluidity, contemporary society, christianity...), the net holding the different storylines together gets tighter. The attentive reader can find additional hints concerning the direction the story takes: “Kheret-Netjer”, for example, is not written in italics anymore, like it was earlier in the text; Osiris is not only a name but also a noun... This is part of my attempt to form a scale-free system: story, paragraphs, sentences and words should all follow the same process.]*

50] [...] she was in the process of convincing Clausius to come with her to take part in a demonstration to defend animals’s rights.

She told him that this was one of the finest expressions of a fluid society, and he found the argument reasonable enough to follow her. Nothing noticeable happened during the demonstration until Shannon saw a bull walking in the middle of the crowd. Nobody seemed to know where he was coming from, but as he was calm, everyone kept going according to the plan; a couple children started playing around him. It took a while for security to intervene; according to Shannon, one had to call a special brigade for this matter. The security agents separated the crowd to take the animal away from the trajectory of the demonstration. One of them yelled:

LET IT THROUGH, PLEASE!

They brought a harness, on which they attached a rope, and started guiding the animal through the alley formed by the ranks of demonstrators. After a few meters, the bull understood that he was being taken away, and he suddenly stopped walking. He wanted to keep on playing with the children. The yelling agent started pulling harder, and as the bull was still not moving, the others joined their efforts. The crowd started whispering. The yelling agent took the stick attached to his belt, and one of the demonstrators got out of the ranks, screaming “Hey, what do you think you’re doing?“, followed by another person “Hey, stop that!“; the hard-hitting sun was making everyone sweaty and nervous, and Clausius heard himself screaming “Hey!“ shortly before Shannon; people started getting closer to the agents and to the bull, who was getting excited; the situation became more and more chaotic; the Bull started fighting and crushing people around him.

*[After the hippopotamus, the kite, the hawk, the dog and many more, I could not help but bringing another animal into the story. The presence of the bull has two functions. Firstly, it gives the “contemporary“ narrative a climax, therefore supporting the dynamic of the text. Secondly and more importantly, it builds an analogy between the human-god relationship and the animal-human relationship; as Clausius, Shannon and their contemporaries bring the gods closer to them, they*

*also bring animals closer — hence the appearance of both “bull“ and “Bull“. This is as a logical step of the increase of entropy; an enclosed system always ends up exchanging with another system.]*

51] She asked her brotherandhusband Osiris to give her a son. As he was getting upset, finding the request insensitive considering the loss of his genitals, she told him to trust her and to follow her lead.

*[After some very serious writings and the grotesque beginning of a comedy, I had to try conciliating gravity and humor (see [23]). Or am I the only one to find this funny? In this part are also appearing some new typographical confusions.]*

52] She mourned. Then, from one day to the next, she gave an end to this mourning; but she never stopped going regularly to the cemetery. When she was there, she was pronouncing words that aimed to differentiate her late companion from the mass of people buried next to him. On the grave was written, in the most simple font:

MAXWELL.

*[Of course, it is because of the disappearance of Order, rather than the loss her companion, that Mary is mourning. Nonetheless, she accepts this loss, because this is the only way she found to keep her own life ordered.]*

53] Meanwhile, Isis put on her glasses and grabbed the book on the table beside her. Between her feet was lying Anubis, shaking his tail despite the obvious malnutrition. She caressed his head while opening the book at the page where she left it. [...]

*She switched on the radio and heard the music over which she once had control. She admitted that it was good despite her lack of influence on it; or at least that it had interesting relaxing properties. All sounds were very organic and textured, they were entering into dialogues with each other, and she spent some time trying to find back the precise and docile sounds from her past within the flowing melodies and rumbling percussions. But the structure of the music was ungraspable, and soon she stopped focusing and let the sounds carry her.*

Shannon and Clausius did not talk about the bull; although not directly responsible, they were too embarrassed having been part of such a messy situation. However, they could not escape the overall presence of the topic; the bull was appearing everywhere in the media, be it as a symbol of the fundamental difference between the human and animal conditions or as a symbol of the end of the enslavement of the animal reign. The internet was flooded with memes, the streets covered with posters, often representing a bull standing on two legs and pronouncing diverse catchphrases. On the academic level followed a whole series of seminars,

conferences and symposia, which were going to lead to the creation of an Animal Rights Constitution.

[...]

O OSIRIS, O GOVERNOR OF THE THINGS WHICH BELONG TO THE TEMPLE OF THE NEMMES CROWN, I HAVE SEEN THINGS WHICH PROVOKED MY ANGER!

I HAVE SEEN DECEASED ENTERING THE PRESENCE WITHOUT PRONOUNCING THE NAMES! THE TRANSFORMATIONS THEY ACHIEVED INDEED,

BUT THE NAMES THEY DID NOT RECITE!

TELL ME, O OSIRIS, THOU WHO CAME FORTH FROM THE UNDERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH, WHY ARE THE DECEASED NOT PRONOUNCING THE NAMES?

[...]

He looked at the priest, confused. "Explain me again. Am I a god made human or a human made god?"[...]

once, as they were meeting around some delicious cakes, shannon said todayidontknowifiammanorwomananymore, and osiris said todayidontknowifiamoneormanyanymore, and clausius said todayidontknowifiamdeadoraliveanymore, and isis said todayidontknowifiamnamedanymore; because the two others were showing little appetite, clausius and shannon finished eating all the cakes; this earned them a reproachful glance from maxwell.

*[There is something scary in arranging the different parts of a text which I wrote at first separately; once I finished my corpus of writings, I had to find a suitable (dis) order for its different parts. Which is extremely delicate: this step, where I find myself doing diverse cuts and pastes, gives me the feeling of being rough and clumsy; it seems that there is constantly a risk of damaging the small words patiently arranged in sentences in this process of carrying huge blocks of text in different positions. The main dilemma was the following: should I arrange everything chronologically, which would make the most sense considering the concept of entropy, and has a satisfying radicality to it? Or should I find a more dynamic, less expected arrangement, which would allow me to enhance the parallels between my different storylines?*

*I obviously opted for the second option, taking once more the risk of confusing the reader. However, I dare thinking that this switching between different stories is this time much more kept under control. Firstly, the different stories are all following a chronological order; or at least, anything like a flashback is clearly indicated as such ("Long before those events was a time when two kites were writing the score of this music."). This allows me, to a certain extent, to keep the radicality that the*

*first arrangement option would have provided. But more importantly, it gives a form to the idea of scale-free process mentioned earlier in those notes (see [49]): the increase of entropy is revealed in the different parts, but also in the relationships between those parts.*

*I will not go further into the details of the text; apart from a last outburst of the forces of Order, in the form of Nu's Anger (who, as opposed to Mary, does not accept the world's change), the narration follows the direction it has taken. The connections between its different elements are multiplied, the increase of entropy accelerates, feeling more and more unavoidable. Environment, society, spirituality, gods, animals, humans, sounds: everything is melting and evaporating in a homogeneous mixture. The indexes of this transformation become more and more present: capital letters disappear, what was in italics becomes straight, spaces between lines or letters are missing...*

*What does this story say? Should we accept decay? Should we embrace it? Fight it? How? Should we try to slow it down? Should we take advantage of it? Should we remind ourselves of an ordered time? Should we think of ourselves as physical systems? This is not a dogmatic story; this is not a moralistic story; this is not a didactic story; this is not entertainment, or at least not only. What is it then? A tale? A myth? A metaphor? A question? What makes this story worth telling? I believe, despite all its imperfections, that it does have the potential to open up a space for reflexion (see "What Makes This Story Worth Telling? A Few Comments & Thoughts"). Not because it has anything revolutionary — Isaac Asimov told a similar story long before I did, and much better than I did (see bibliography) — but rather because it takes an unusual, unconventional perspective; and between this perspective and the reader's one, a field may open up.]*

54] epilogue: it was half living half dead it was neither god nor human nor animal nor plant or may be was it all of those simultaneously it was floating half bodiless in the full it was quiet the clausius in it thought:  $S_{cre} = \Delta S_{sys} + \Delta S_{ext} \geq 0$  which could be pronounced entropy created equals delta entropy system plus delta entropy exterior equals or is superior to zero here delta stands for the difference between the initial and the final state of a system but even osiris who never had been into physics knew that because he had had a lot of time to merge with multiple scientists then everything stopped moving and there was only white noise

*[Entropy finally reaches its optimal value. Even the announce that this part is an epilogue is visually merging with the epilogue itself. This final part has two functions. Firstly, the state of the narration is embodied in a strong, impacting image — an impact enhanced by the contrast of this part with the introduction. None of the grammatical barriers against decay are left: neither spaces, nor comas, nor points, nor capital letters. The forces at stake in the story are crystallized in a single paragraph; form*



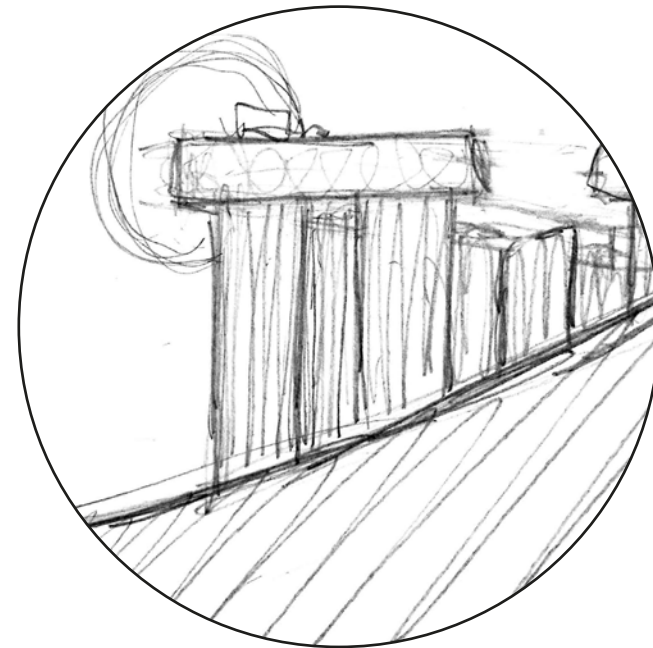
*and content fused like so many other things did. Secondly, this epilogue reveals the source of the story, inviting the reader to a second, renewed reading.]*

## CONCLUSION

When writing the last text of this series, I took the following note: "Our contemporary practices and philosophies are not the result of a gain of intellect, but the result of a physical process of entropy." I was trying to summarize the purpose of this story, which is the best thing to do if one wants to make a few months of hard work sound absolutely ridiculous. However, the mere fact that I was able to write it down already shows a lot; words are so heavy, and in this sentence I see the control I gained over my respectful fear of them. When I will try to sum up my reflexions again, somewhen in the next weeks, months or years, I will most certainly write a very different sentence; but at least I will be less afraid to write it down.

SORTIR AU JOUR

## IV. STILLS





## MISE EN FORME

« Sortir Au Jour » prend la forme d'une installation vidéo composée de deux films de 45 minutes (Sortir Au Jour I & II) diffusés en boucle de manière synchronisée. Le public est libre de circuler dans l'installation au rythme qui lui convient. Le dispositif présente deux variantes en fonction de l'espace d'exposition :

Variante 1 : les deux films sont projetés sur les murs opposés d'une même salle. Les deux bandes-sons sont diffusées à la fois via des haut-parleurs et via des casques audio, de telle sorte que chacune d'entre elles puisse être isolée ou se superposer à la deuxième. Variante 2 : les deux films sont projetés dans deux salles connectées par une porte. Les deux bandes-sons sont diffusées par des haut-parleurs dans les salles correspondantes de manière à être toutes deux audibles lorsque la porte est ouverte. Dans les deux cas, il y a donc un jeu de porosité entre les différentes parties de l'installation, en résonance directe avec le récit.

Les pages suivantes incluent des images tirées de ces films, des transcriptions de leurs voix off ainsi que des descriptions de leurs bandes-sons. « Sortir Au Jour I » comprend les séquences suivantes : *Cosmogonie*, *Devenir*, *Ce Nom Qui Est Tien*, *L'Ouverture De La Bouche*, *Kheret-Netjer*, *Le Limon*, *Nourrir le Ka*, *L'Étreinte* et *Noun*. « Sortir Au Jour II » inclut : *Djed Solide*, *Djed Érodé* et *Djed Liquide*.

« Sortir Au Jour » sera diffusé pour la première fois le 13 janvier 2023 à Toni-Areal (Zurich).

## CRÉDITS :

**Emmanuel Michaud** : Direction, Performance (*Devenir*, *L'Ouverture De La Bouche*, *Le Limon*, *L'Étreinte*, *Nourrir Le Ka*), Caméra & Lumières (*Djed*, *Ce Nom Qui Est Tien*, *Nourrir Le Ka*), Texte, Voix Off, Composition, Sound Design, Scénographie, Costumes, Accessoires, Montage

**Jana Duenner** : Danse (*Cosmogonie*, *Kheret Netjer*, *Noun*)

**Nina Ritter** : Danse (*Cosmogonie*, *Kheret Netjer*, *Noun*)

**Kara Leva** : Chant (*Cosmogonie*, *Noun*, *Djed*) Performance (*Nourrir Le Ka*)  
Caméra (*Devenir*, *L'Ouverture De La Bouche*, *Le Limon*, *L'Étreinte*)

**Tim Wettstein** : Caméra & Lumières (*Cosmogonie*, *Kheret-Netjer*, *Noun*)

**Timothée Schaeffer** : Caméra (*Nourrir Le Ka*)

## COSMOGONIE

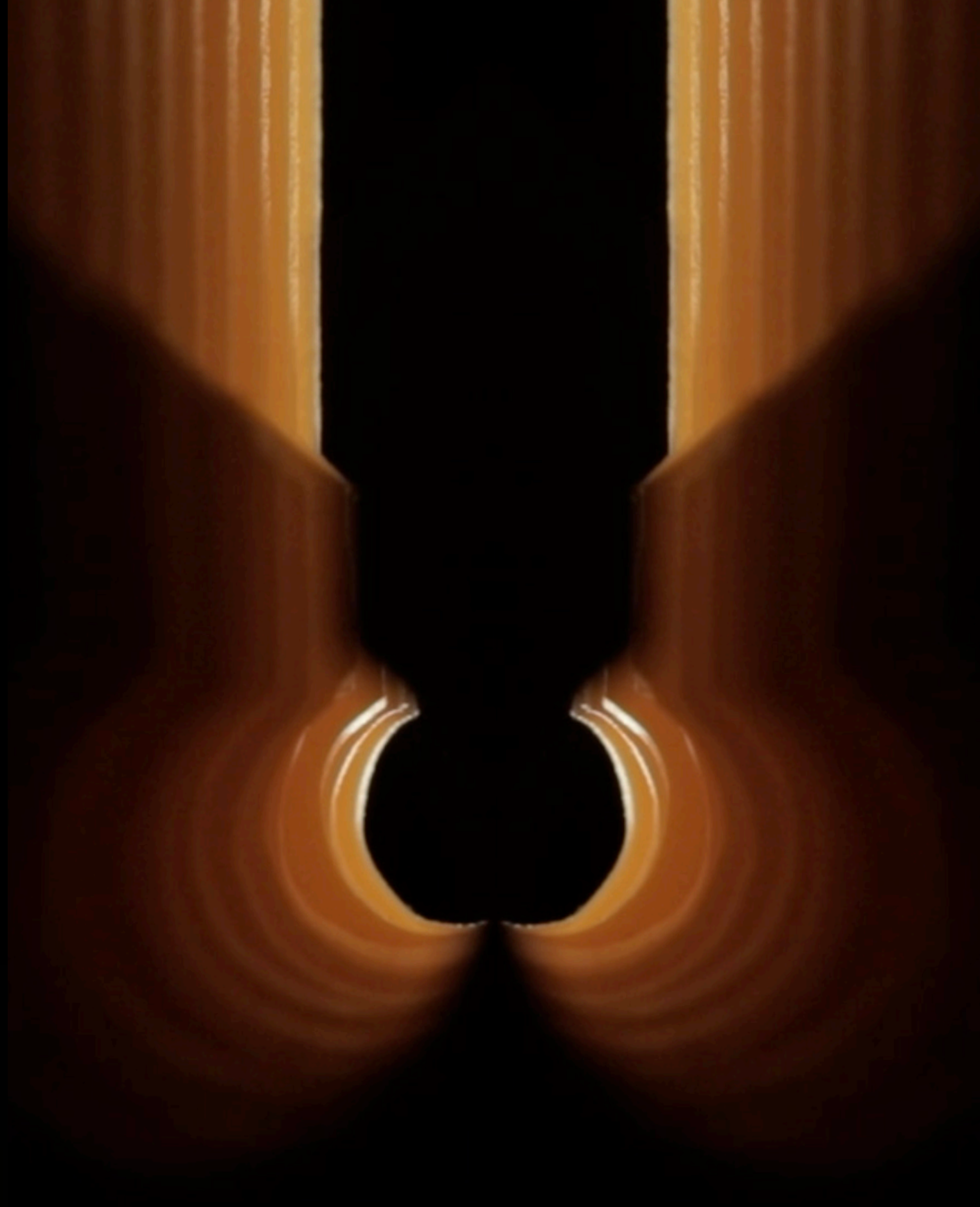
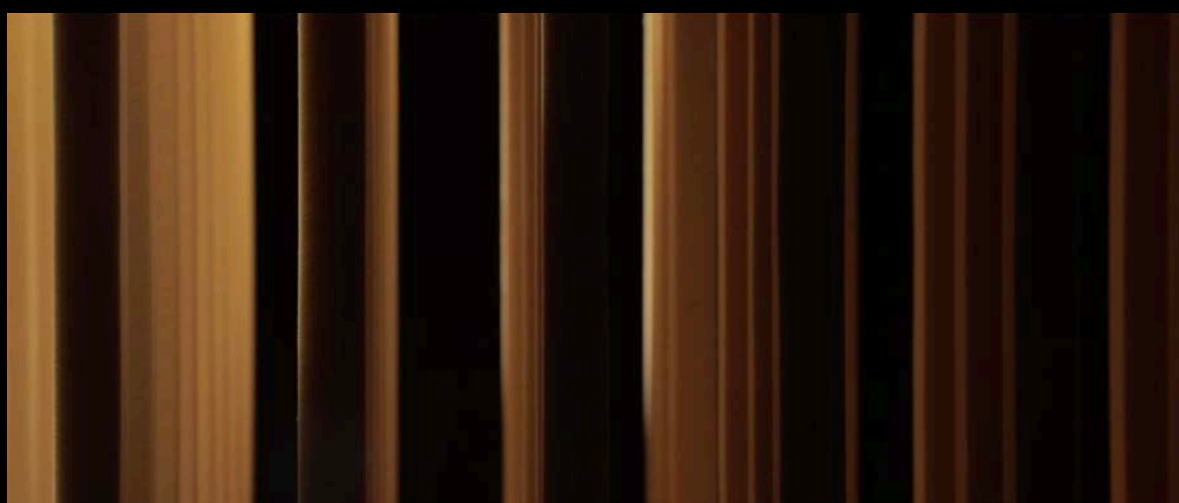
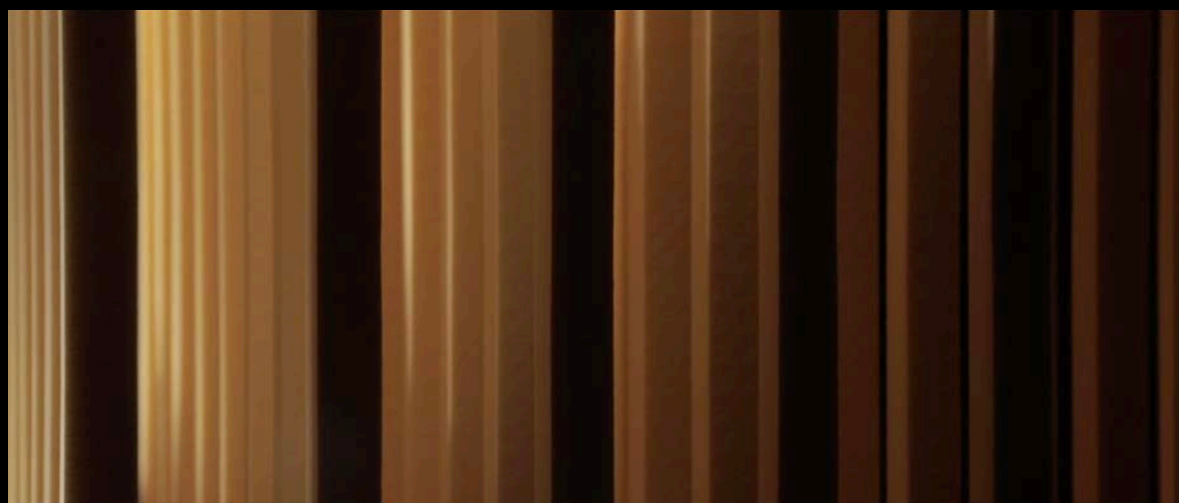
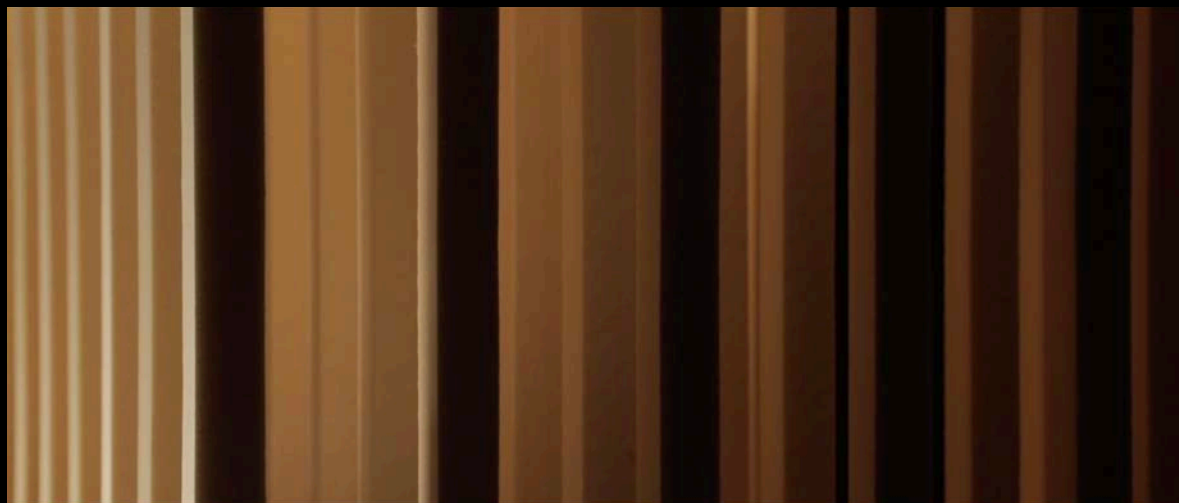
*Isis et Nephtys chantent ; le Ciel et la Terre prennent leurs places respectives, accompagnés par ces deux voix que l'harmonie sépare.*



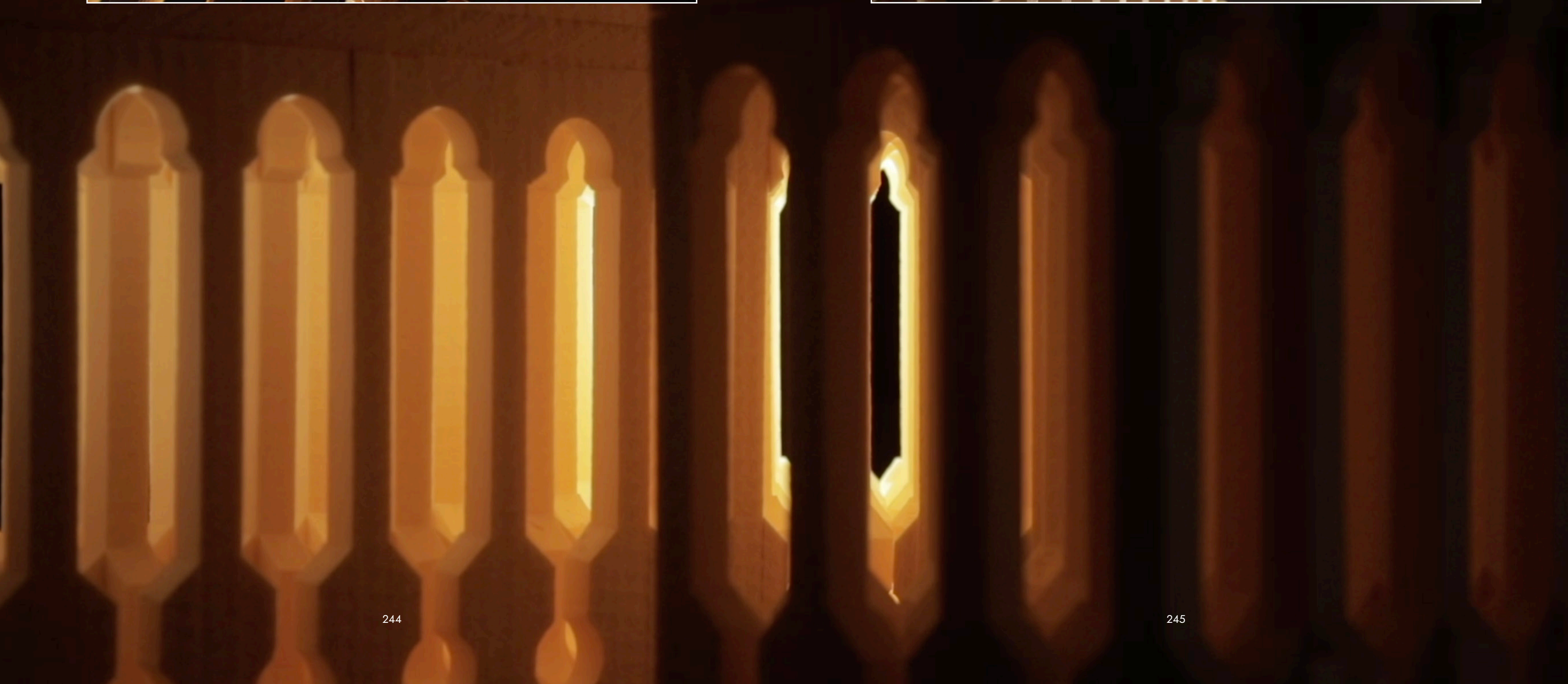
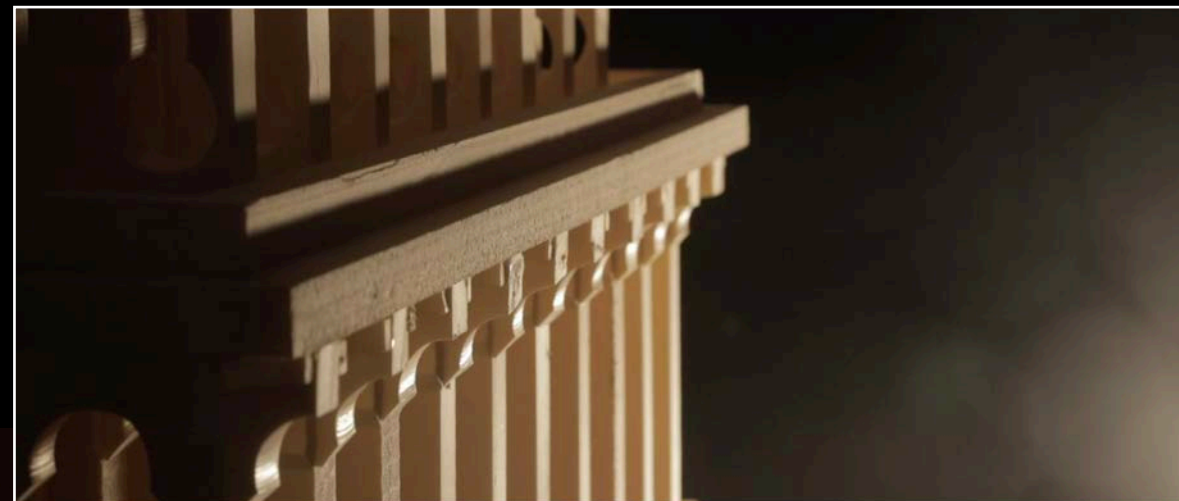
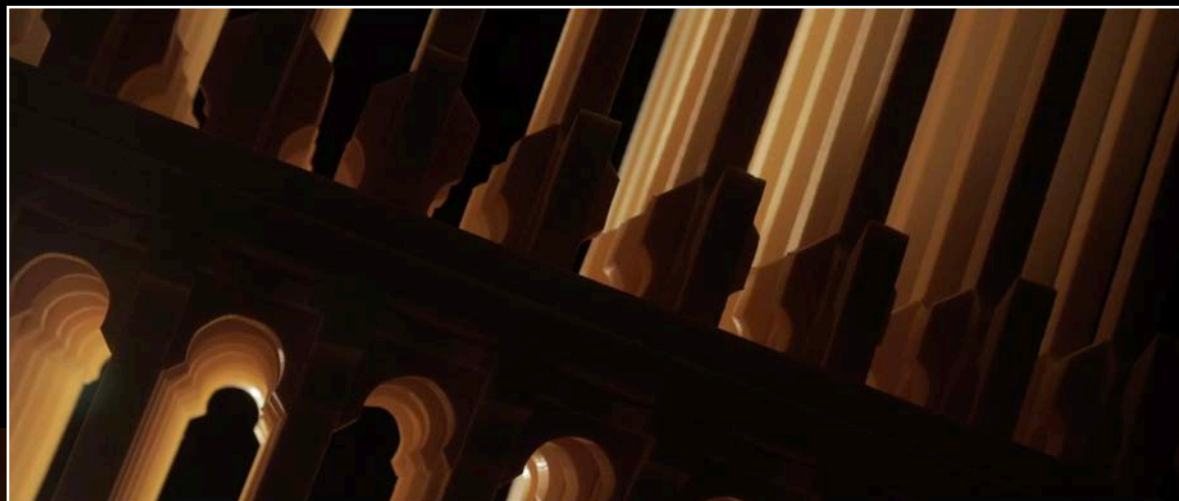


## DJED SOLIDE

*Le vide et le plein résonnent.*















## DEVENIR

« Empédocle décrivait la matière comme étant constituée d'éléments éternels et indivisibles ; des éléments dont le comportement serait régi par deux forces, l'une unifiante, qu'il appelait l'Amour, et l'autre divisante, qu'il appelait la Haine. Entre ces forces se jouerait la complémentarité de l'un et du multiple. Originellement, l'univers aurait été un *sphairos* sous la domination de l'Amour, dans lequel le mélange des éléments était homogène. Selon ce modèle, le devenir s'inscrit dans l'alternance des forces présentes à l'intérieur du monde. La domination de la Haine seule permet d'accéder à une différenciation, telle que puisse s'opérer une hiérarchisation en sphères concentriques, répartissant depuis le centre, la terre, l'eau, l'air et le feu (de sorte que se produit à ce moment l'attraction du semblable par le semblable). Lorsqu'advient le retrait de la Haine, ayant produit l'hétérogénéité complète des quatre racines, la croissance de l'Amour à nouveau relance le processus. L'univers actuel serait donc situé au point de jonction où s'opère l'accroissement d'une force. »\*



\*] Paraphrase de : Houelle, Thierry. L'Eau et la Pensée Grecque. L'Harmattan, 2010, p. 143



## CE NOM QUI EST TIEN

*Qu'elles empêchent que tu te décomposes  
Selon ce nom qui est tien.*

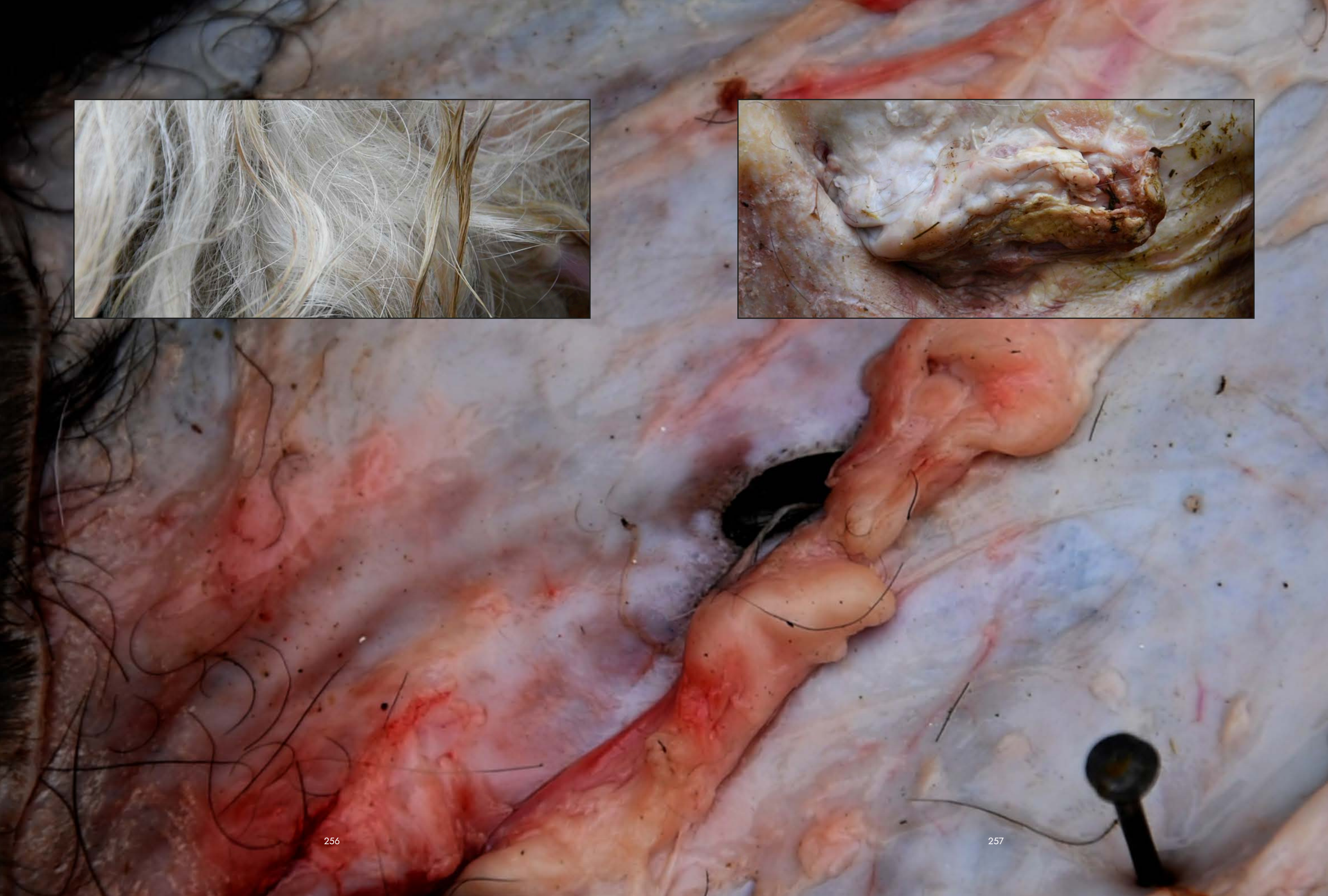
*Qu'elles empêchent que ta putréfaction ne s'écoule à terre  
Selon ce nom qui est tien.*

*Qu'elles empêchent que l'odeur de ton cadavre ne devienne mauvaise  
Selon ce nom qui est tien.*













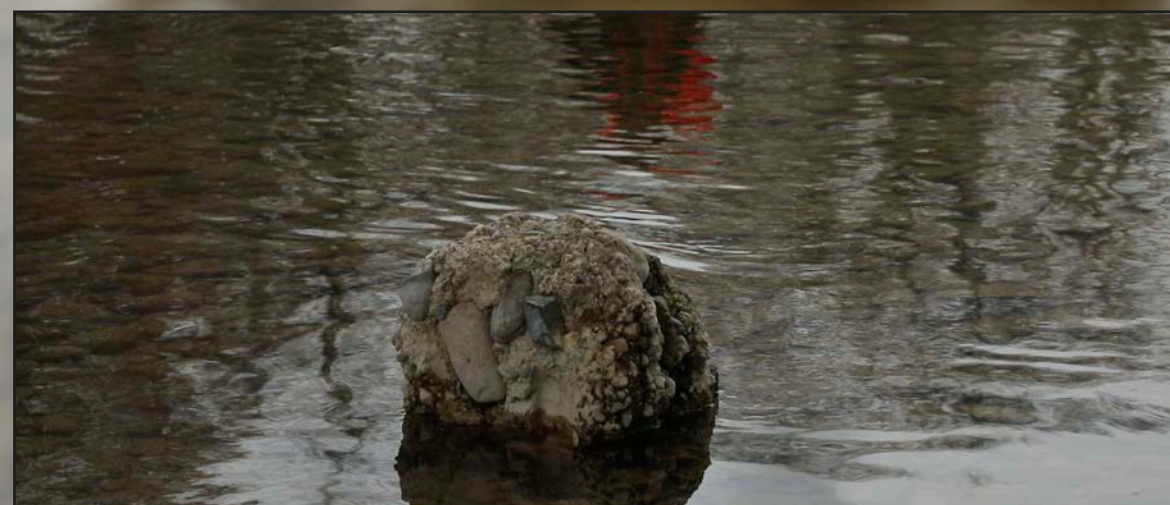


## L'OUVERTURE DE LA BOUCHE

« Je te parle, et avec chaque mot c'est une partie de moi-même qui s'échappe, afin que je la retrouve métamorphosée. Je performe l'ouverture de la bouche, traversant des frontières qui m'étaient interdites. Le doute s'insinue entre mes lèvres ouvertes, et se glisse chaque jour plus profondément dans les recoins de mon être. Créature aimante entre toutes, il écrase mes certitudes une à une dans son étreinte. Il brise la géométrie de ma pensée qui change progressivement d'état, tout comme l'eau change d'état au fil de la modification de sa structure moléculaire. La matière est fluide et coule comme un ruisseau. Je me liquéfie, je fonds et je confonds.

Dans cette incertitude grandissante, j'écoute la source couler ; une collection d'octets dont la signification glisse entre mes doigts. La nostalgie d'un message monosyllabique m'étreint contre mon gré : le souvenir lointain d'une terre aux mêmes mots. Faisant le deuil de la redondance, des pleureuses aux visages voilés versent des pluies torrentielles ; et je me surprends à me baigner dans un océan de symboles équiprobables.

« Faisons-nous un nom, afin que nous ne soyons pas dispersés » scandaient les sujets de Nemrod, clamant leur certitudes jusqu'à ce qu'elles crèvent la surface du Noun, comme la langue du Dmiurge vociférant sa création. Ils virent en songe que leur langue de chair parlait avec le même souffle dont fut animé la bouche des hommes pour converser entre eux. De tous les possibles ils n'en avaient vu qu'un. Se sentant forts de cette unicité, ils en oublièrent leur liberté de choisir; lorsque cette dernière les rattrapa, leurs rêves de briques aux contours définis s'écroulèrent. « Prends mon nom », murmuraient des dieux métamorphes, semant la surprise dans les âmes des défunts vagabonds qui réalisèrent leur incapacité à identifier l'information générée par une source et s'effritant dans les canaux du Delta. »



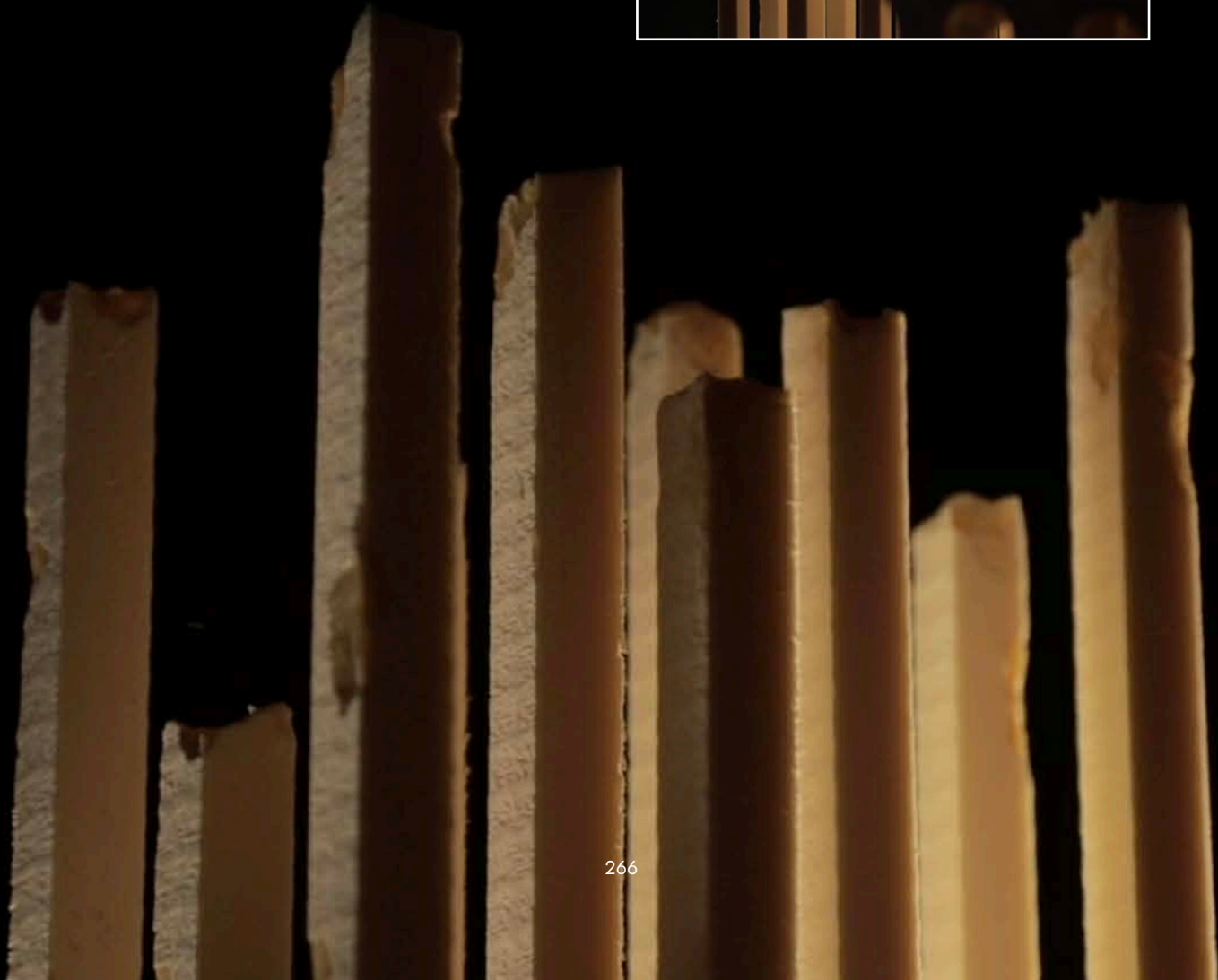






## DJED ÉRODÉ

*Le contraste devient diffus. On distingue dans le lointain les vestiges du chant d'Isis et Nephtys, noyés dans le grondement d'une entropie en augmentation.*

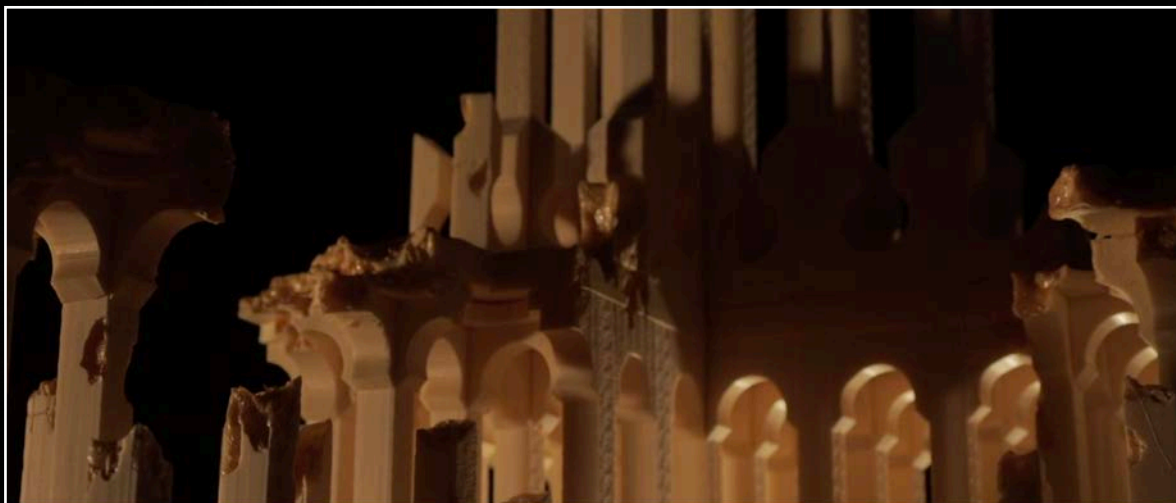














## KHERET-NETJER

*Les percussions frappent sans relâche :  
des tentatives répétées pour réduire  
la dilution de l'harmonie au silence.*





















« Je passe les frontières, les rendant chaque fois un peu plus poreuses. Je te croise au fil de mes allers-retours, et j'effleure ta main quand elle est assez proche. Les prophéties ne m'intéressent pas; mais force m'est de constater que les mots s'entremêlent. Vivant, je prononce le nom des dieux. Mort, je le leur prends. Ils vivent et meurent avec moi. J'ai prié longtemps sans comprendre pourquoi; maintenant je discerne les brèches qu'ouvrent la sémantique. Prier comme une question de vie ou de mort, mais pas seulement de la mienne. Parler devient difficile alors que ma langue s'engourdit, alors je te regarde. Dans tes yeux, le reflet net d'un futur trouble. Dans le ciel, une marée montante me parle d'un océan de matière inerte. J'écoute.

Je me tiens debout dans le marécage, et soulever un pied me demande un effort considérable. Alors je ralentis. Si mon énergie est intacte, il devient difficile de l'utiliser pour accomplir un travail. L'air est humide, l'horizon flou; l'atmosphère lourde, le sol fluide. Comme un enfant, je joue dans la boue; je construis des tours qui s'affaissent une à une sous leur propre poids; plus la tour est haute et plus l'observation de ce processus m'égaie, jusqu'à ce que je rie aux éclats. La Terre et les Eaux furent séparés, puis se rencontrèrent de nouveau pour former le limon dans lequel le corps d'un dieu démembré fut jeté. Mais la vase dans laquelle je me débats ne ressemble plus à ce lointain parent: cette boue a perdu de sa fertilité, et je dois chercher plus loin les fruits dont je pourrais me nourrir. J'ai faim, et cette faim me fait mal. Un démon se tient sur mes épaules, et me susurre que cette faim n'est qu'une illusion. « Joins tes lèvres », me dit-il. Il enroule mille bandelettes autour de mon visage, alors je ferme la bouche. Mais sitôt cette porte fermée, une autre s'ouvre, deux fois plus grande et béant sur l'inconnu. Le démon ne peut retenir sa frustration; je lui caresse la tête entre les oreilles. Il est si vieux qu'il est devenu difficile pour lui de vivre avec son temps; il appartient à un autre monde, plus tangible et plus précis. Il fait partie de ces êtres dont le pouvoir, par le passé immense, décline.

Deux oiseaux s'envolent en criant; on croirait entendre des pleurs. »





## NOURRIR LE KA

*La bouche est ouverte, et à travers elle circulent la matière et l'énergie – Kaou et le souffle.*

















## L'ÉTREINTE

*Pour moi aussi la peur est là. Comme le démon, j'ai bâti des barrages pour contrecarrer le flux des eaux ; je voulais stopper le cours de la gestation d'un inconnu, et j'ai pleuré quand ces barrages ont cédé. Je me suis muré dans le silence pour éviter que mon âme ne dégouline entre mes lèvres ; j'ai fui du regard et prié pour que le temps s'arrête. J'ai rêvé de terre ferme ; j'ai cherché le Ben-Ben, l'île sur laquelle je pourrais maintenir le statu quo. Je voulais que les choses restent intactes ; j'ai refusé de pousser la porte, et j'ai maudit des dieux qui se tenaient en moi. J'ai refusé de me disloquer. J'ai refusé de me perdre.*



*Aujourd'hui je fatigue, et je me surprends à accepter ce qui m'était impensable. Je suis tombé amoureux, sous l'effet des lois rigides de la gravité. Ensemble, nous tomberons jusqu'au fond du gouffre, et au fond du gouffre il y a un océan dans lequel nous pourrions nous dissoudre. Nous tenons les objets de nos désirs dans une étreinte thermodynamique, et ces objets sont indénombrables. Nous ferons l'amour jusqu'à ce que le monde disparaisse.*

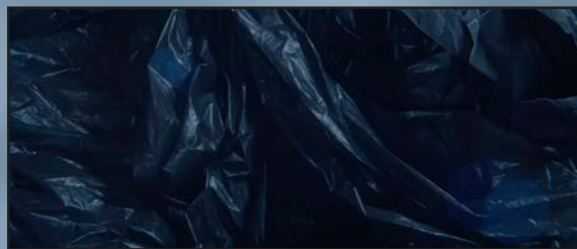




**NOUN**

*Les voix d'Isis et Nephtys s'attirent et s'entremêlent ; le Deux devient Un, dans l'Espace et dans le Temps.*



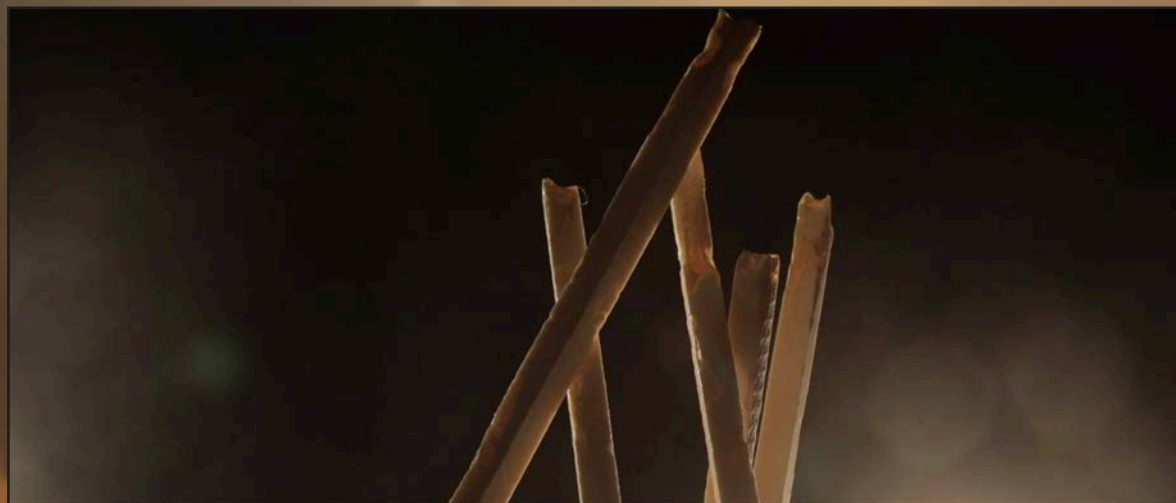




## DJED LIQUIDE

*Le Noun se déploie, présence incertaine  
et indifférenciée. Ne reste que*



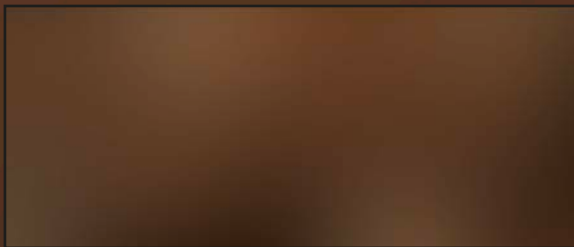
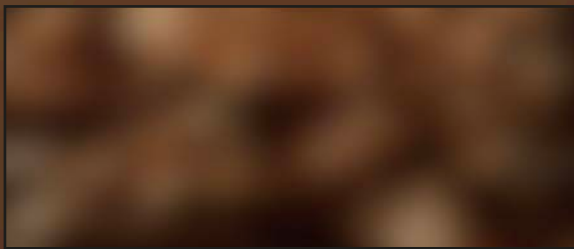


*le bruit.*











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