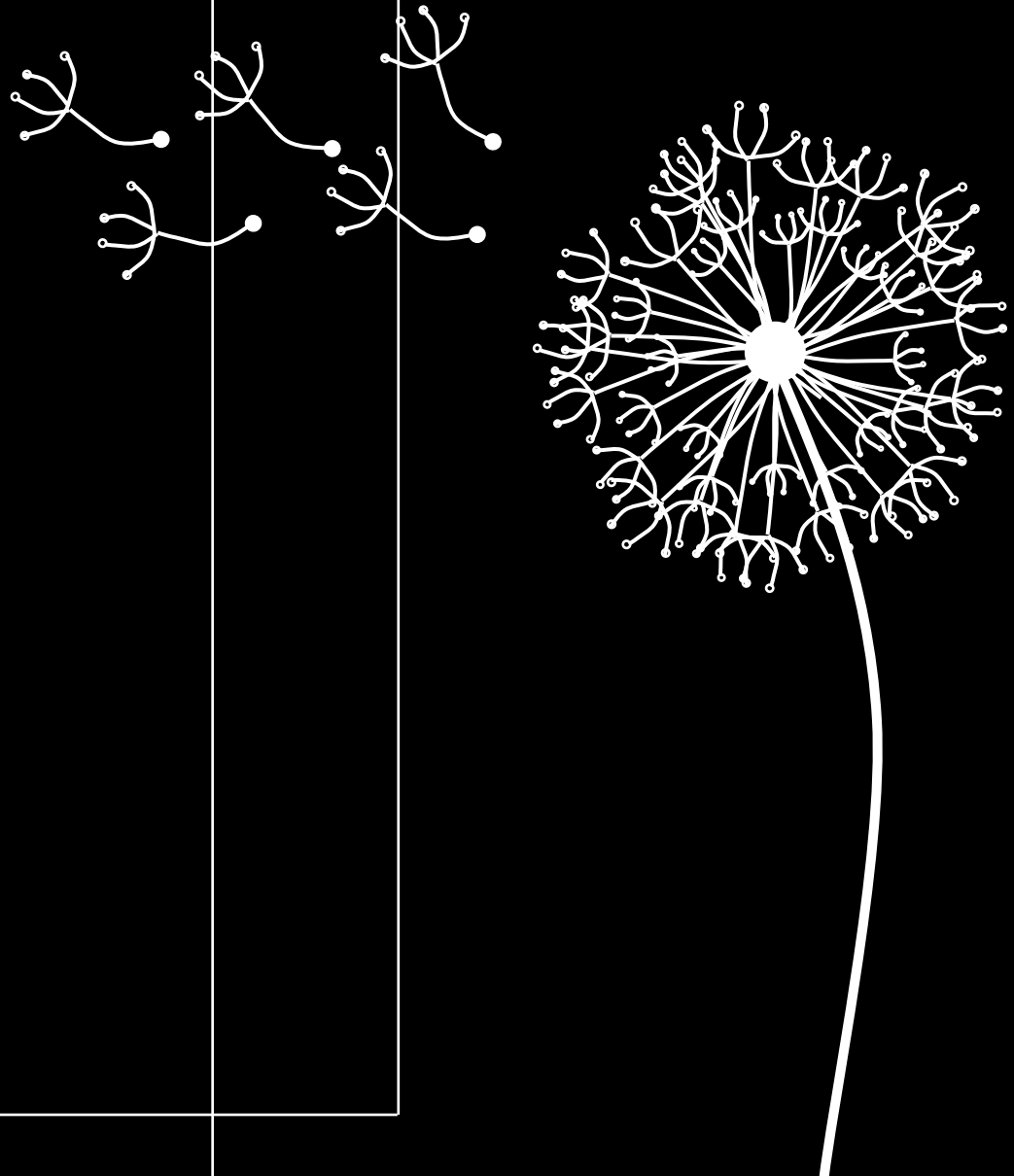
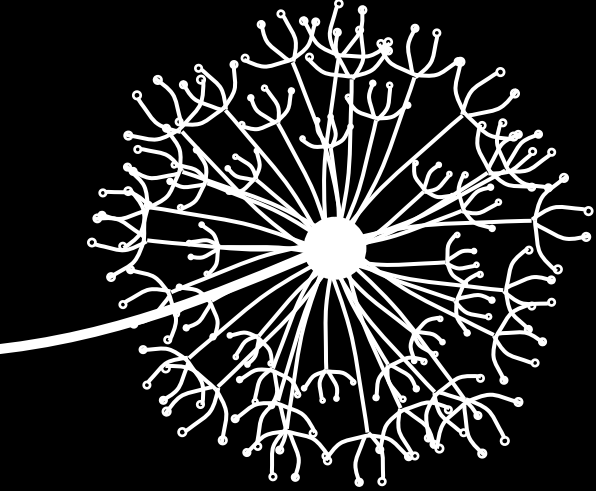


What is a poem?





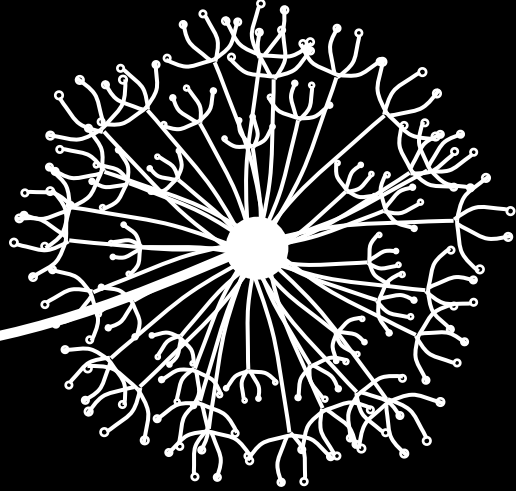
#1

I AM WASHING MY FACE BEFORE
BED WHILE A COUNTRY IS ON FIRE.

IT FEELS DUMB TO WASH MY FACE,
AND DUMB NOT TO.

IT HAS NEVER BEEN THIS WAY, AND
IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY.

SOMEONE HAS ALWAYS CLINKED A
COCKTAIL GLASS IN ONE HEMISPHERE
AS SOMEONE LOSES A HOME IN
ANOTHER WHILE SOMEONE FALLS IN
LOVE IN THE SAME APARTMENT BUILDING
WHERE SOMEONE GRIEVES. THE FACT
THAT SUFFERING, MUNDANITY, AND BEAUTY
COINCIDE IS UNBEARABLE AND REMARKABLE.



#2

Dear Basketball
by Kobe Bryant
November 29, 2015

Dear Basketball,

From the moment
I started rolling my dad's tube socks
And shooting imaginary
Game-winning shots
In the Great Western Forum
I knew one thing was real:

I fell in love with you.

A love so deep I gave you my all —
From my mind & body
To my spirit & soul.

As a six-year-old boy
Deeply in love with you
I never saw the end of the tunnel.
I only saw myself
Running out of one.

And so I ran.
I ran up and down every court
After every loose ball for you.
You asked for my hustle
I gave you my heart
Because it came with so much more.

I played through the sweat and hurt
Not because challenge called me
But because YOU called me.
I did everything for YOU

Because that's what you do
When someone makes you feel as
Alive as you've made me feel.

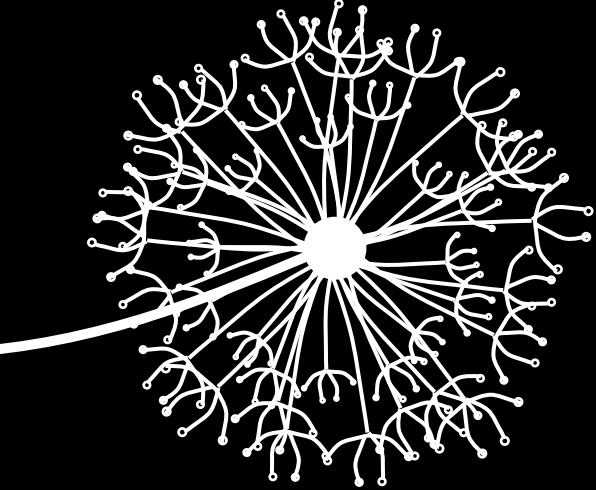
You gave a six-year-old boy his Laker dream
And I'll always love you for it.
But I can't love you obsessively for much
longer.

This season is all I have left to give.
My heart can take the pounding
My mind can handle the grind
But my body knows it's time to say goodbye.

And that's OK.
I'm ready to let you go.
I want you to know now
So we both can savor every moment we have
left together.
The good and the bad.
We have given each other
All that we have.

And we both know, no matter what I do next
I'll always be that kid
With the rolled up socks
Garbage can in the corner
:05 seconds on the clock
Ball in my hands.
5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1

Love you always,
Kobe



#3

Footnotes

I loved¹ him.

kristina mahr

¹ per my definition of love, which I know is not everyone's definition² of love

² I know to some people³ love is an undefinable thing, and I do not want to detract from this belief.

³ yes I could have placed a comma here, but for effect I chose not to; forgive me, grammar is fluid in poetry.⁴

⁴ how is this a poem? some of you are asking, and a poem is a poem is a poem (that will not answer⁵ you, but it is the truth as I know it)

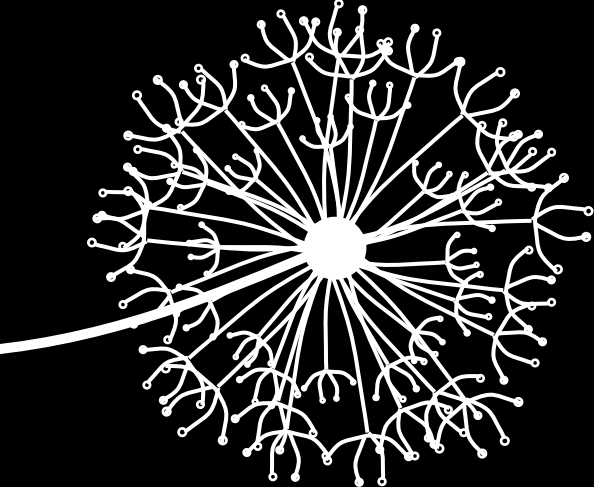
⁵ I know you want answers. I know we all⁶ want answers.

⁶ I can't speak for us all, the truth is *I* want an answer.⁷

⁷ you, the reader, don't know to what, and it is cruel to leave you guessing so—I want an answer to why I loved him.⁸

⁸ that's a lie.⁹

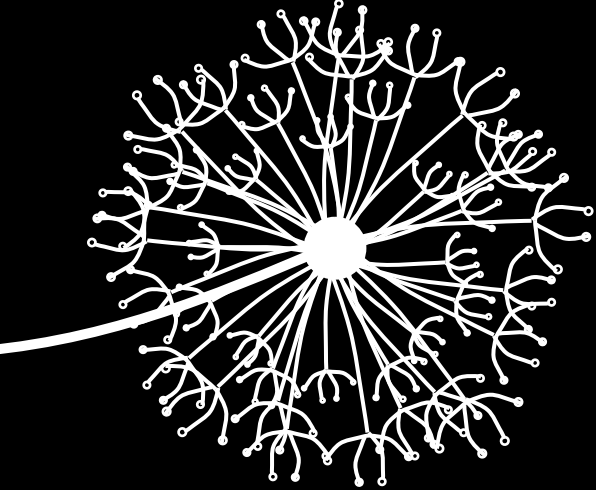
⁹ I want an answer to why it wasn't enough.



#4

To
think
in only
two colors:
Black and
White. To be oblivious
others. only black. or
shallow or deep, high
or fight I only think in
Have you finished your
Then you must not have
at all. How was your
No? Then it must
much have been quite
ball. I ask what color
grass If not green, then it
be red. I ask how your mother must
not well, she must be dead. What is is? If
2 equivalent to? If not 4 then 8 over
be minus 4. Is it it must
love and adore? me that you
one you abhor. I must be the
both length and width. Depth dimensions I see
myth. Like a paper I have is a mystery To me, a
see just one face Its blank stare is one you but two sides. Each time you
if I had finished the job halfway and my day cannot erase. BUT! what
grass looks like a dead yellow and I hear had just been okay. The
mellow. What if one had changed divid- your mother feels quite
lover, we were just friends. These are ends And rather than
life. This is where identity and variety the truly unique colors of
cerulean, and deep pink. are rife. With amethyst, bronze,
like ink. Do not think there is just wr ong, indigo and pitch
cannot think in only black is just wr ong and right For we
for any extremist propaganda. and white. Do not fall
For we are not as

monochrome as an innocent small panda.



#5

r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r

r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r

who

a)s w(e loo)k

upnowgath

PPEGORHRASS

eringint(o-

aThe):l

eA

!p:

S

a

(r

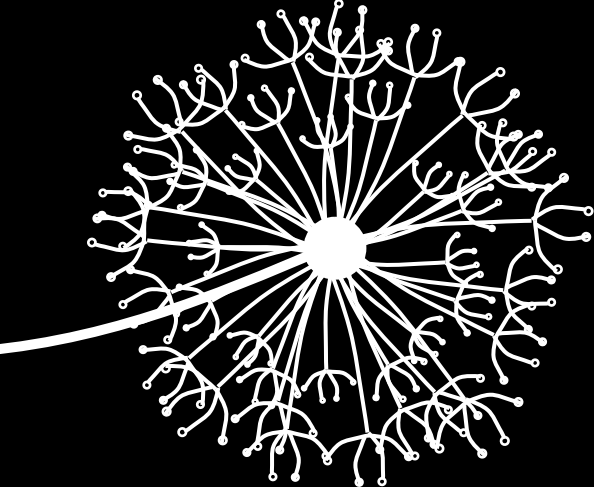
rIvInG

.gRrEaPsPhOs)

to

rea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly

,grasshopper;

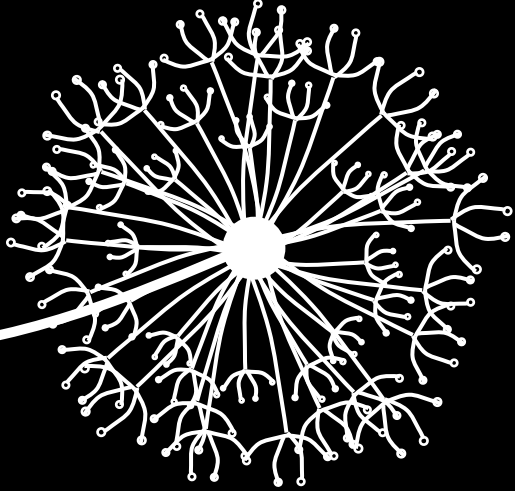


#6

01.05.16

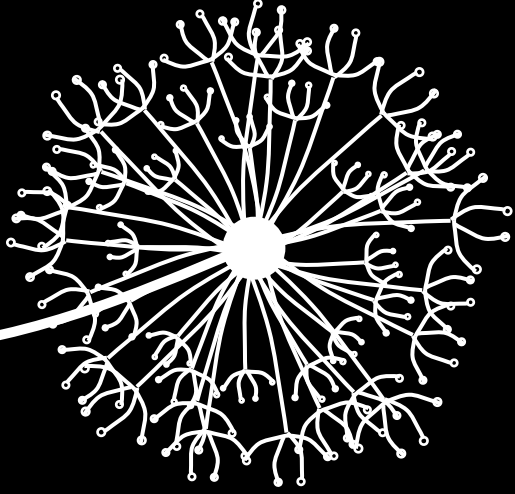
By Laynie Browne

1. Misplacing the year is useful.
2. Pretext may grow into medicine.
3. Ignore numbers until they become secret persons.
4. Pour out this metal thermos. But it isn't a thermos, that's just an image to help you physicalize an intellectual process.
5. If you want to transform a book you'll need ingredients.
6. Read lines from an enchantress when you want to be a bird.
7. Ingest liquid prose when you prefer to be fluid.
8. A good title only proves you have work ahead of you.
9. Remembering your potency impels me further. I want to be impaled by a poem.
10. Beginning is always precarious. Avoid snow-covered terrain and long-haired ponies. Avoid skipping ahead, as I've inadvertently just done.
11. Return to certain constitutional texts when you need protection.
12. Refuse to look at detailed maps. You don't need to know the future.
13. Your headache isn't fake — but pretend if you can.
14. Fantasize that for the next six hours you will not stop.
15. All pain will end almost immediately.
16. If you are able to endure forgetfulness.
17. Welcome imperfection as you would a cup of tea served to you by a beautiful, devoted attendant.
18. Your attendant will stay as long as you like.
19. When lost, reread these instructions.
20. Don't speak.
21. Ecstatic impulse is now.
22. Continuously — you.



#7

what they have said
about us
doesn't mean a thing
I want you
to shine in my arms
and the rain
to never stop



#8

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

- William Carlos Williams