



not this house

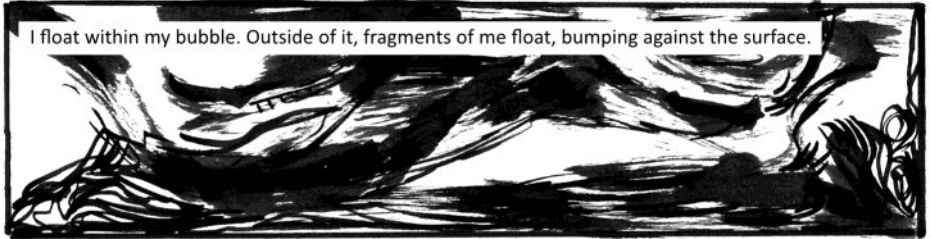
I conjure a bubble of energy around me.



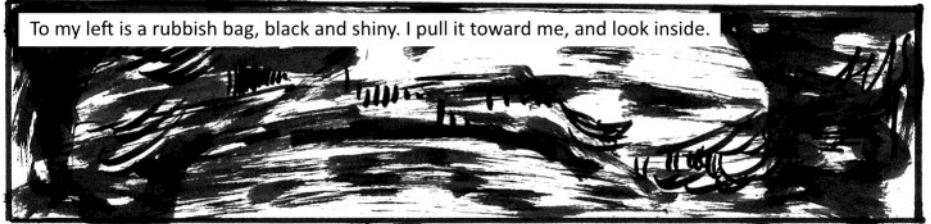
While this bubble exists, I am safe.



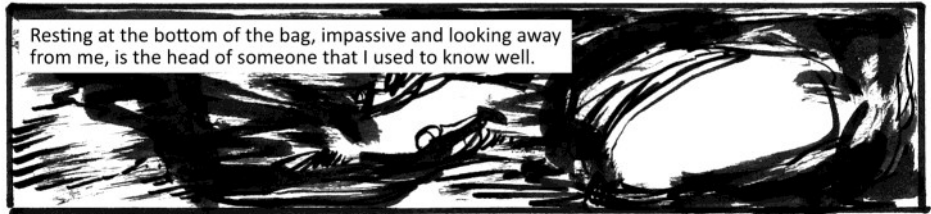
I float within my bubble. Outside of it, fragments of me float, bumping against the surface.



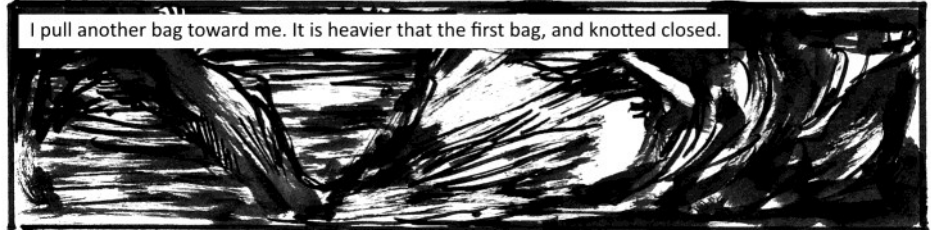
To my left is a rubbish bag, black and shiny. I pull it toward me, and look inside.



Resting at the bottom of the bag, impassive and looking away from me, is the head of someone that I used to know well.



I pull another bag toward me. It is heavier than the first bag, and knotted closed.



A label is attached to the bag, and on the label is a question. I wrote the label, I realise, but I have nobody to ask that question to.

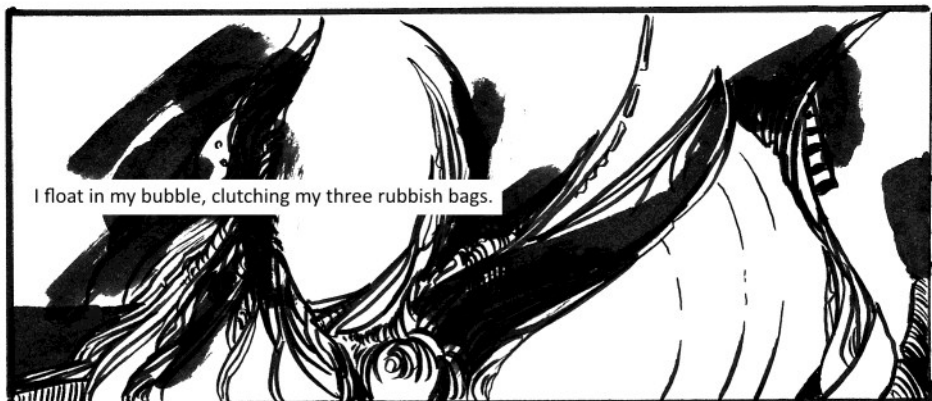


My attention is drawn to my right-hand side, and I notice a new bag, which is much older than the previous two.

I pull it toward me, and open it.

I don't look inside, but from within it I can hear the sound of gravel crunching under somebody's footsteps.





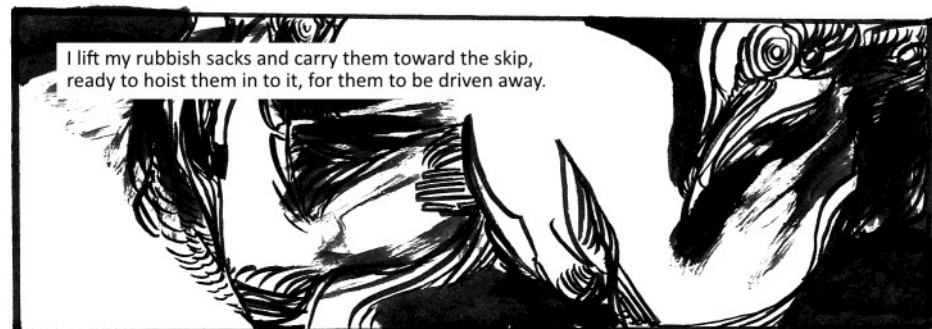
I float in my bubble, clutching my three rubbish bags.




I relax the surface of the bubble, and the fragments float through it and toward me, eager to recombine.



A truck stops in front of me, a skip swinging gently behind it from chains.




I lift my rubbish sacks and carry them toward the skip, ready to hoist them in to it, for them to be driven away.




At the last moment, I look down at my sacks of trash and I think:

Could I use these, though?

Am I really done with them?




And instead of getting rid of them, I drag them toward me, and the truck moves on.




My bubble doesn't pop, it just curls away gloopily.

The fragments of me, which moments ago were eager to recombine, drift away tutting.



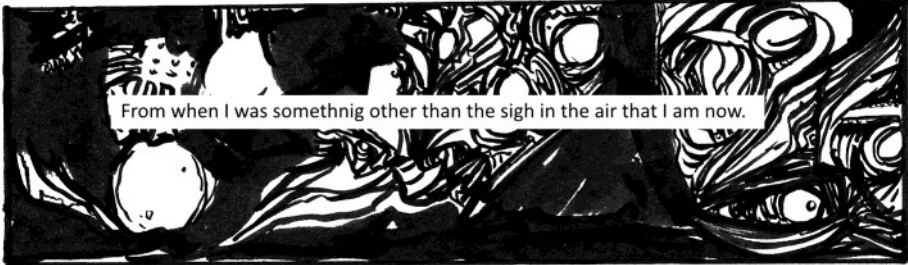
As they settle back into orbit around me, I hear one of them mutter 'for fucks sake'.






That's the last thing I remember from when I was alive.



From when I could dream.




From when I was something other than the sigh in the air that I am now.



My bubble didn't pop, it just curled away gloopily.



Now, I just move from room to room.



In this house, which has become a sea of me.




Armchair.

Carpets.

Pot plants (dead).


Pot plants (overgrown).



Bookshelves full of books I once read.

Piles of books I never got around to reading.


Keys, pens.



Telephones (3)


Televisions (3)

Kitchen sink, full of water, as well  
as one mug and three teaspoons.



Bathroom sink, crusty with stale toothpaste.

Towels on the floor.

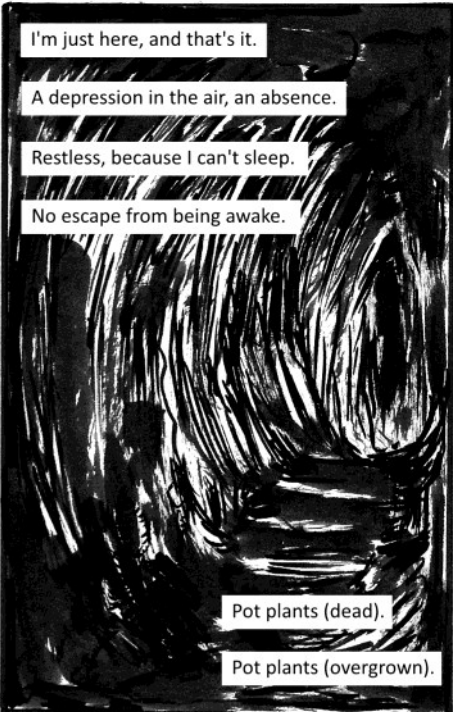


I move from room to room, and that's it.

I don't eat or sleep or cry or shit or sleep.

And I'm not angry or sad about that.

I'm not jealous or offended by the living.



I'm just here, and that's it.


A depression in the air, an absence.

Restless, because I can't sleep.

No escape from being awake.

Pot plants (dead).

Pot plants (overgrown).




And I haunt this house.

But I am not this house.

If this house goes, I'll need  
to go somewhere else.

And by extension: if this planet  
goes, I'll not be on the planet.



I'll be in space. Floating between stars.

A whole universe to haunt.

And maybe I'll have room to sleep again.





I'd be an exhalation, finally.

Counting galaxies, not dust mites.



Still without a purpose, but freed.



I haunt this house.



But I am not this house.





THEY SLEEP NEARLY ALL DAY.

THEY JUST DO NOT REALISE IT.



AT NIGHT THEY RAGE AND WAIL.

SMASH AGAINST THE WALLS.



LURK WITHIN WIRING AND  
FLICKER AT THE LIGHTS.



SIT INSIDE PIPES AND  
STUTTER THE WATER.



**I AM THIS HOUSE, AND NOT A SEA OF THEM.**

**NONE OF THE THINGS THEY LIST ARE HERE NOW.**

**I HAVE BEEN REPURCHASED AND REPURPOSED.**



**THEY SEE ONLY THINGS THAT THEY WISH TO REMEMBER.**



**THEY REMEMBER ONLY THINGS WHICH SERVE THEIR SORROW.**



DESPERATE FOR ATTENTION.

I AM THEIR ONLY WITNESS.

BUT ONE DAY I'LL BE GONE.

AND SO WILL THIS EARTH.

PERHAPS THEY'LL FIND PEACE.

WITH NO HOUSE TO RAGE AGAINST.

BUT PERHAPS THEY WON'T.