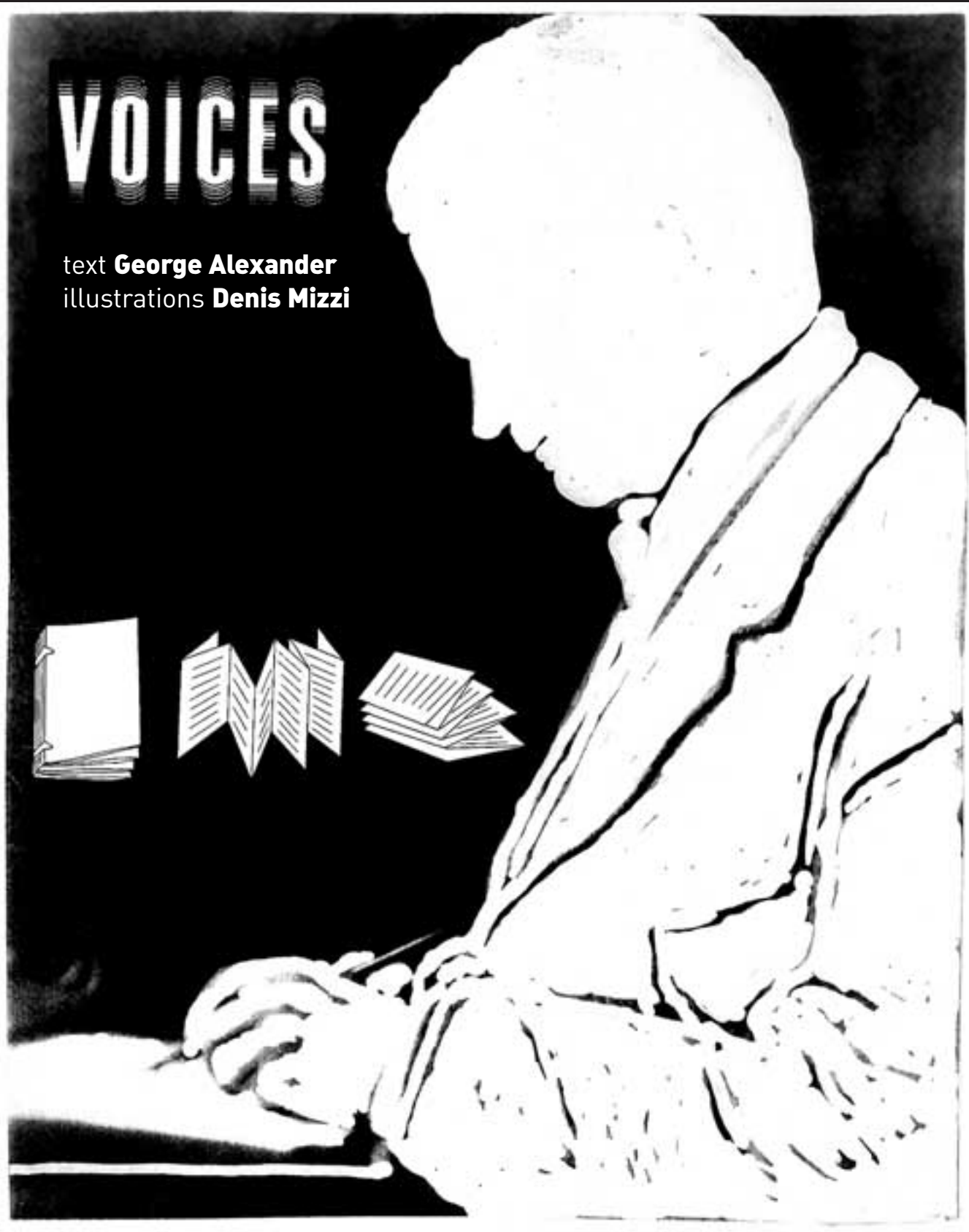
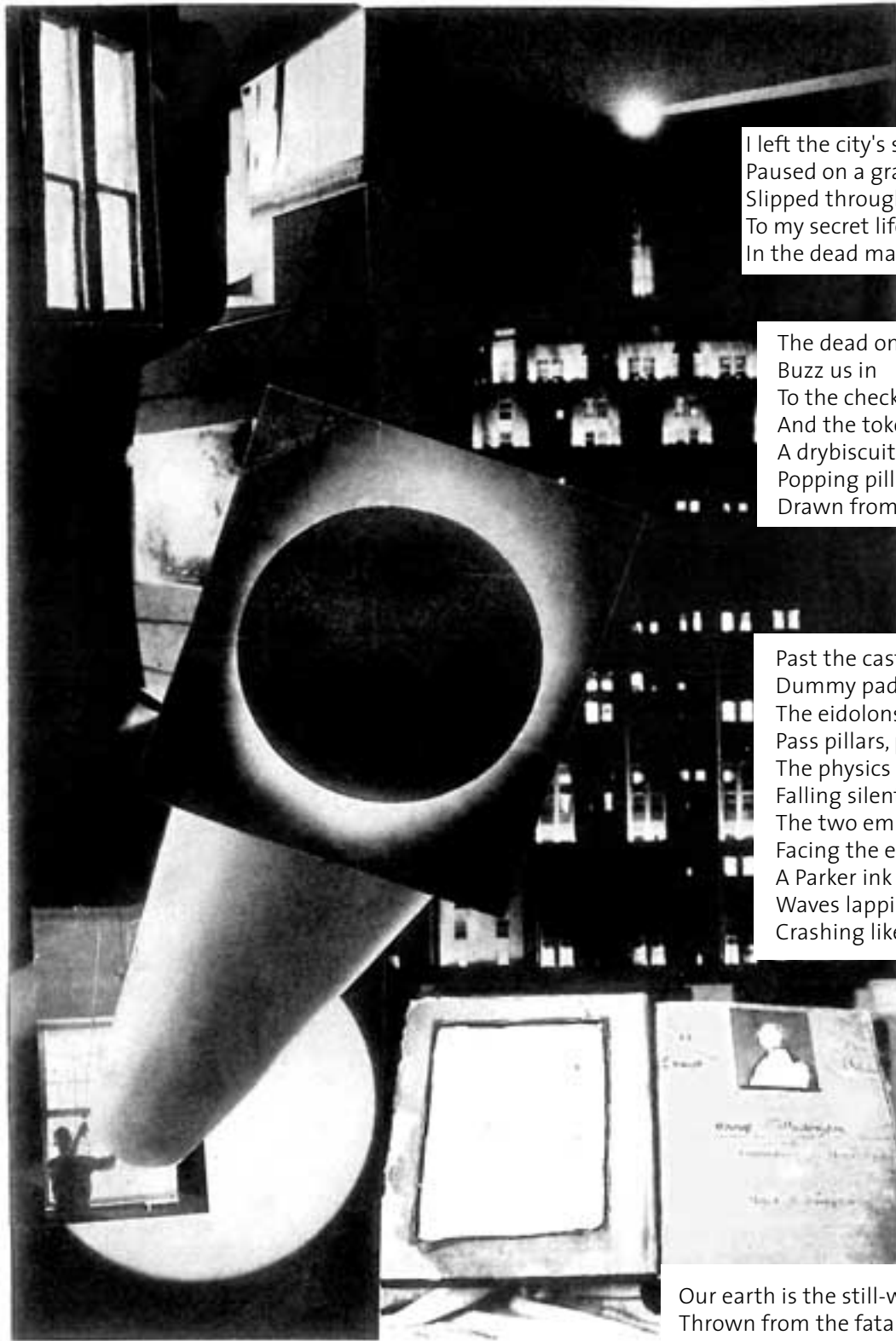


# VOICES

text **George Alexander**  
illustrations **Denis Mizzi**





I left the city's surface and went below  
Paused on a grating  
Slipped through a cracked wall  
To my secret life  
In the dead man's house.

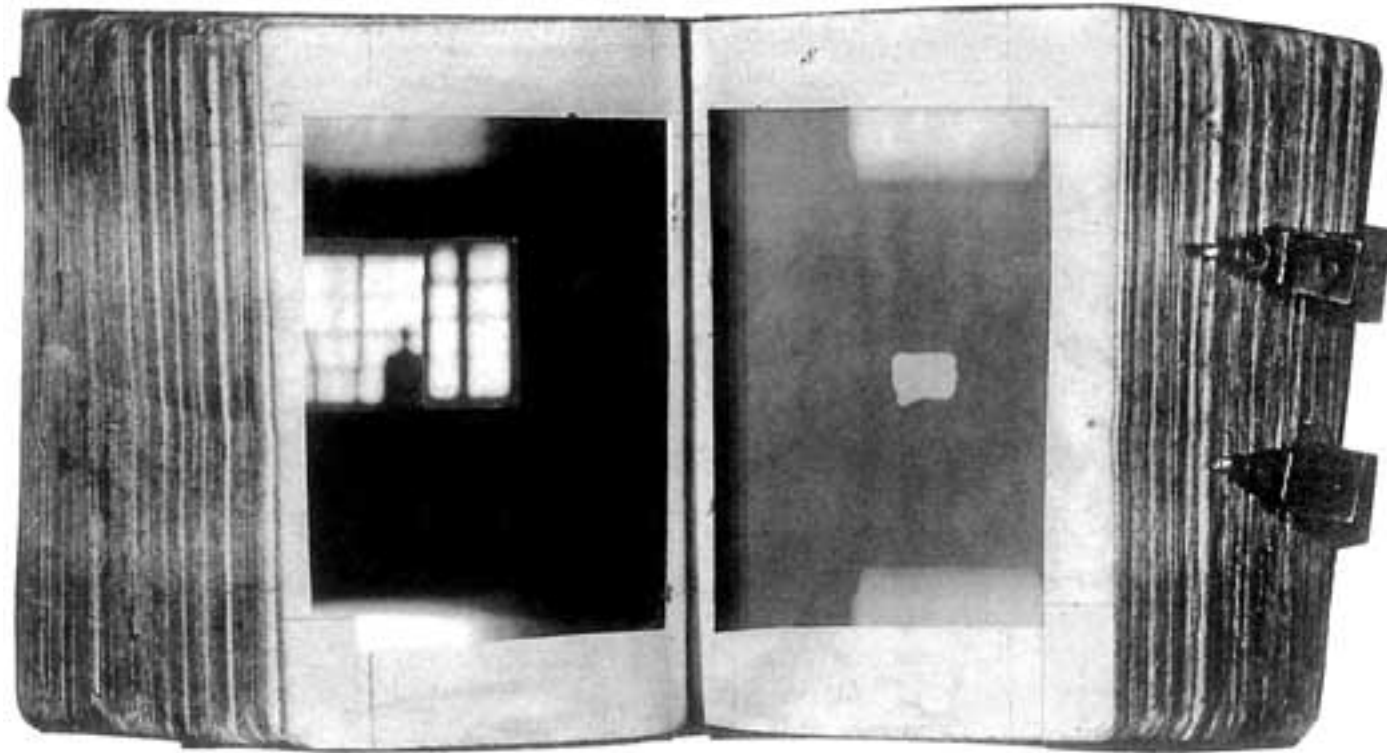
The dead ones call the shots  
Buzz us in  
To the checkout counter  
And the token clerk  
A drybiscuit cocking an eyebrow  
Popping pills like M&Ms  
Drawn from a broken drum.

Past the cast-iron gate,  
Dummy padlocked.  
The idolons playing pétanque  
Pass pillars, pylons, dead forms;  
The physics of bounce  
Falling silent in the schoolrooms.  
The two empty chairs on the beach  
Facing the exhausted sea  
A Parker ink blue.  
Waves lapping like glassine bags  
Crashing like sections of glass.

Our earth is the still-warm loaf  
Thrown from the fatal car crash  
Some passing poet picked up  
The moon is dead broke  
The clouds carry  
out of State plates  
The shadows traffic back  
and forth at your feet



Turning to climb the stairs  
In an overcoat of lava  
To give the book back its hands  
To give the letters back their lining  
of flesh  
To find a pillow for my head  
A pillow filled with manu-  
scripts  
To find her again  
Among the tangled sheets  
With her cascading hair  
And her teeth cracked in an in-  
verted V.  
And her hand in the mudra of  
Old Wounds.



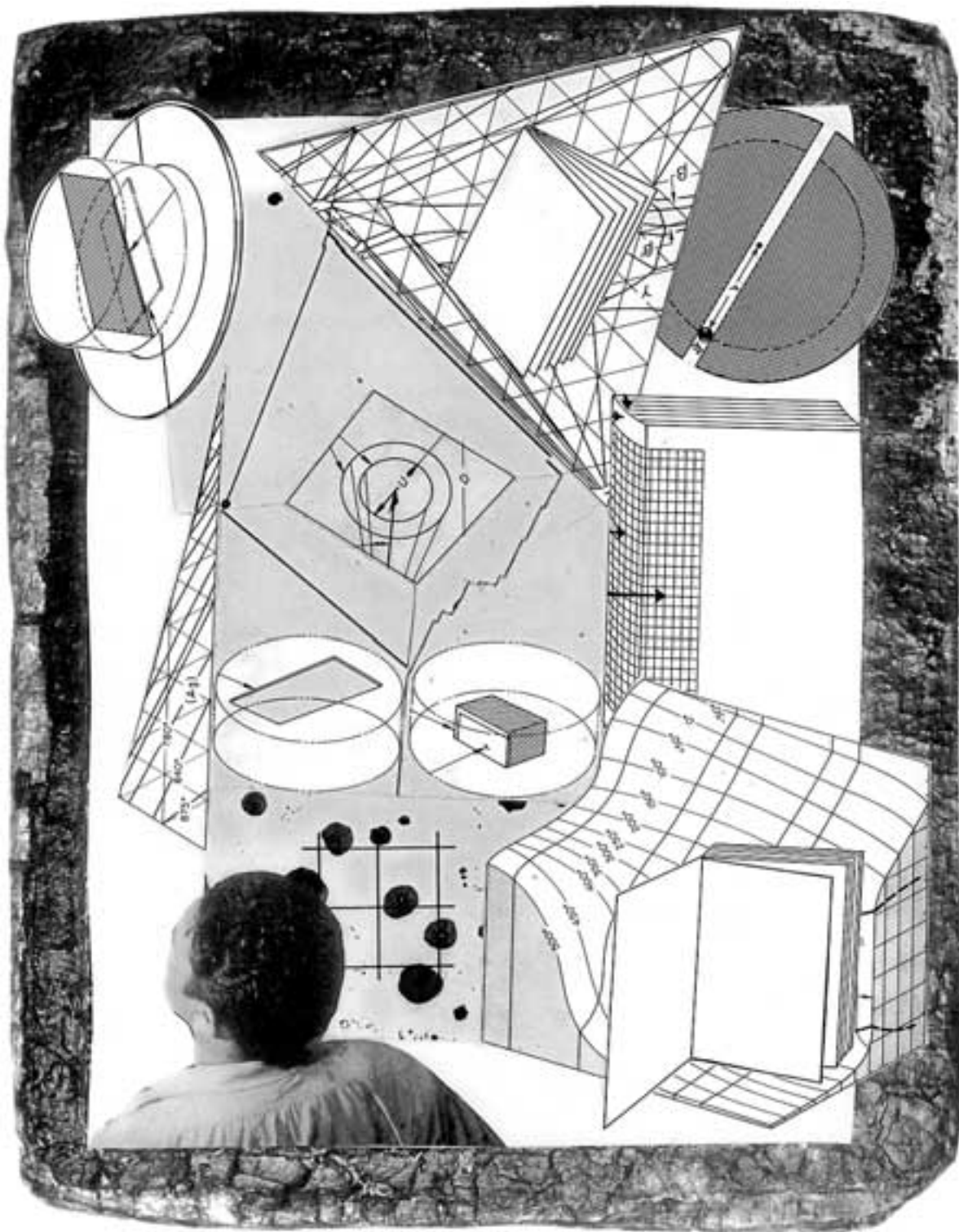
It has always been this way,  
Handing her what I do,  
Tearing down a wall to do it.  
Opening the page like a palm  
Climbing the stairs  
To that night we burnt candles down to the  
stumps  
Climbing in my coat of wax  
My heart carrying a bowl of glue  
My brain perched in a box like a bird  
Lightning marbling my voice  
Singing with my eyes closed and my mouth  
closed  
A lazy shower of quanta mizzling  
From the fisherman's lamp  
Through ventilating ducts

On blackness  
Cracking open the language  
Like limestone reefs with fissures  
Like mouths  
Humming to myself,  
To these snookered gods,  
To these dead parents,  
To these errant lovers,  
To these doomful doctors

Lets me see the room at last  
Through the last door  
Towards the windows papered over  
Books missing from the shelves  
Paintings stolen from the walls

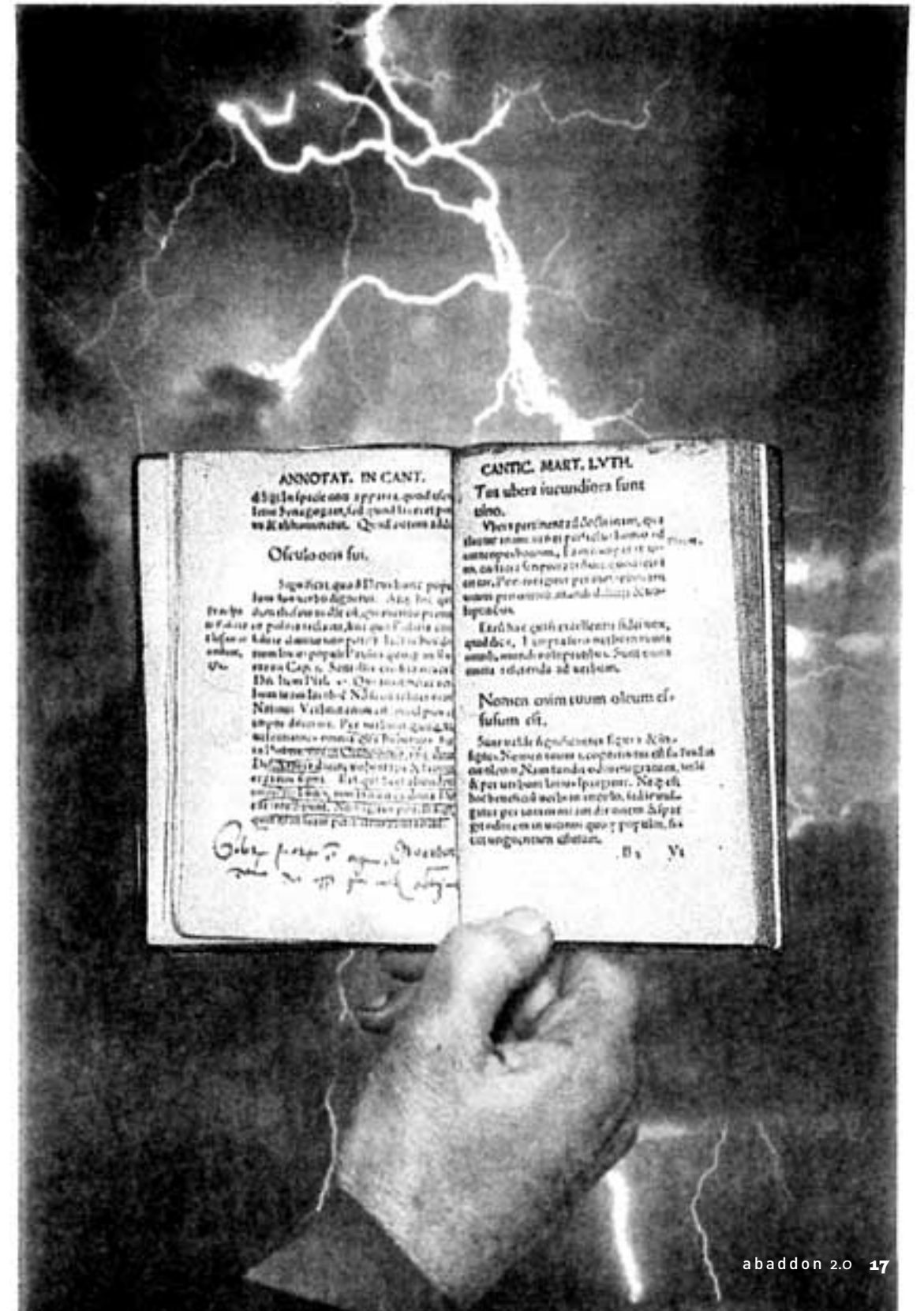
Only she is there at the mirror  
The colour of an electronic console.  
Her ash blond hair, *blond cendre*, it's French  
And her eyes closing  
As the teeth of the comb  
Touches her head  
And the wrist slackens at each stroke  
And her comb magnetises pins.





On a blackboard sketched with chalk  
 The water molecule is  
 A fourcornered fluidity  
 Rubbed out, re-written,  
 Writing in water,  
 writing with water in white dust.

I look again and she's gone.  
 The kite broken away  
 And the twine: these words.





My pen is a doctor's bag with the letters H<sub>2</sub>O.  
 My pen is a rifle covered with feathers.

My pen is a guitar filled with beeswax.  
 My heart is a suitcase emptied on the floor.  
 A suitcase filled with crown of thorns starfish.



These words return my body to the page  
 To the sawdust  
 To a boat with the leaden keel: this book.

