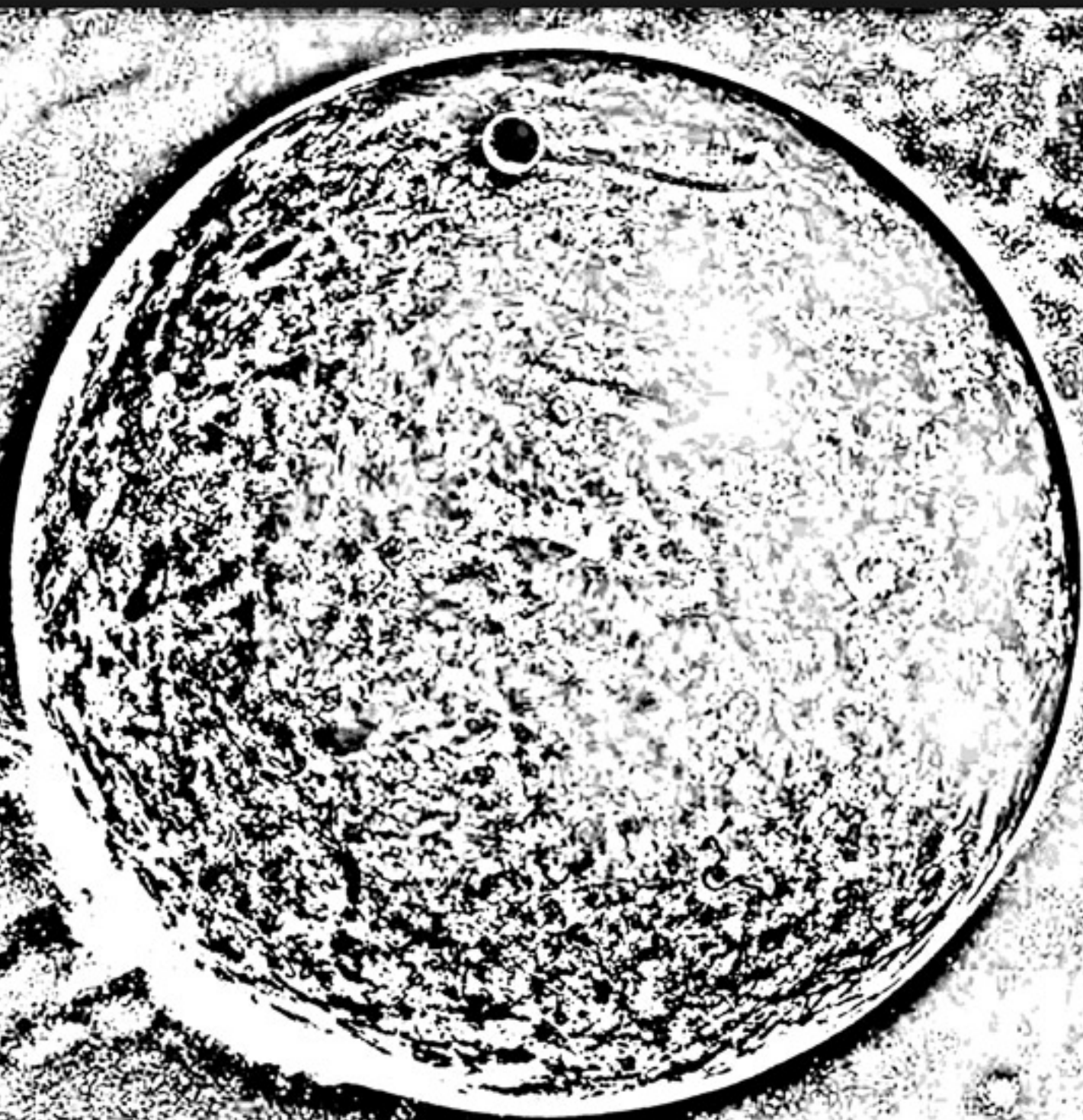


# THE WHITE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

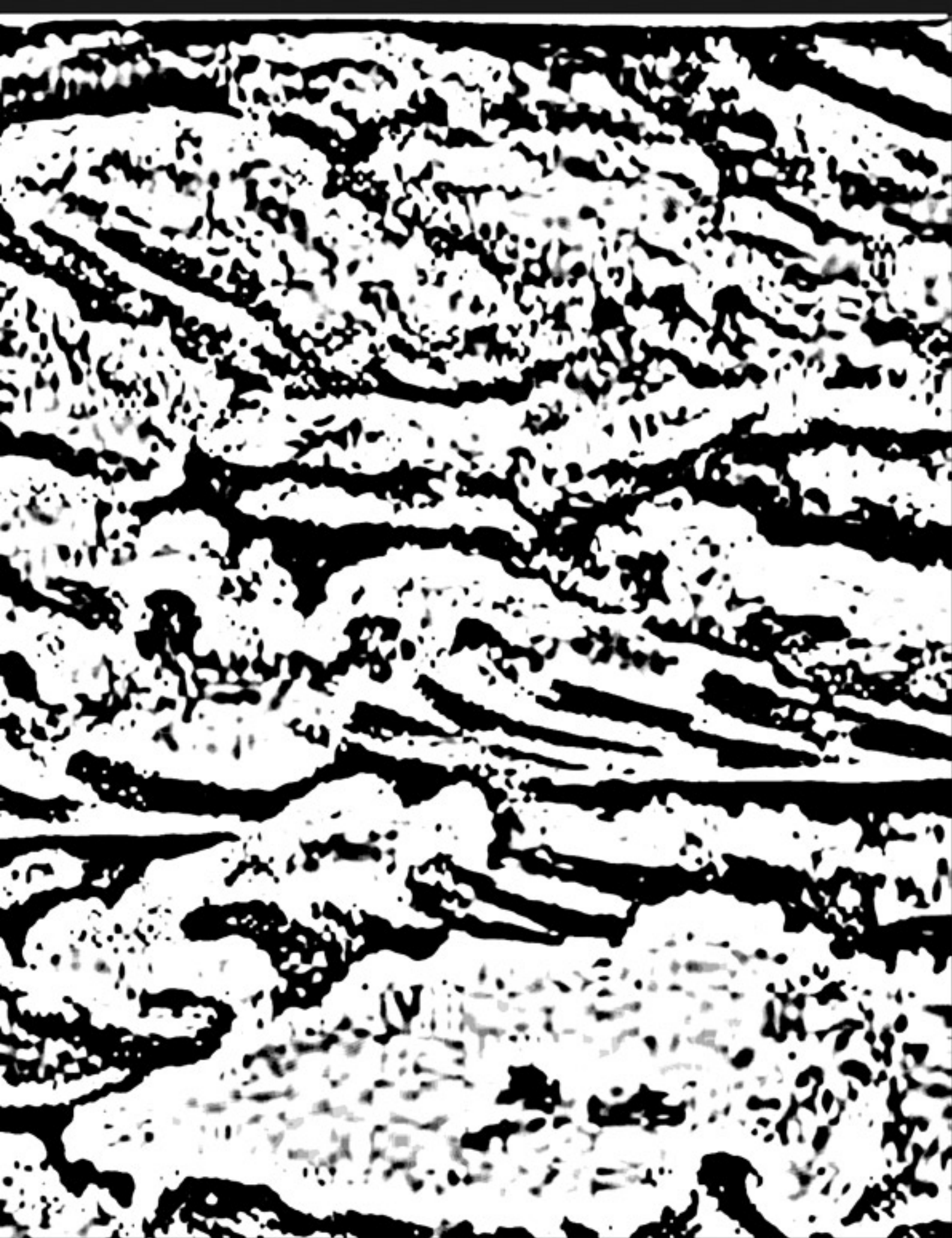


AN EXERPT FROM "THE STONE GODS"  
BY JEANETTE WINTERSON



WE FOUND A PLANET, AND IT WAS WHITE LIKE A SHROUD. THE PLANET WAS WRAPPED IN IT OWN DEATH. WE LOWERED OURSELVES THROUGH MISTS LIKE MOUNTAINS, CRAGGED, FORMED, SHAPED, BUT NOT SOLID. PUT OUT YOUR HAND AND YOU PUT IT THROUGH A GHOST. EVERY SOLID THING HAD TURNED TO THICK VAPOUR.





WE DROPPED THROUGH WINDS THAT COULD NOT SHIFT THE CLOUDS UNTIL WE REACHED A LAND WHERE THE AIR - IF IT WAS AIR - WAS LIKE PASTE. WE WOULD SOON HAVE MADE PORRIDGE OUT OF OUR LUNGS IF WE HAD BREATHED IT, AND BURNING PORRIDGE TOO, FOR THE PLACE, AS WHITE AND COLD AS DEATH, IS AS HOT AS RAGE. THE PLANET IS A RAGING DEATH.







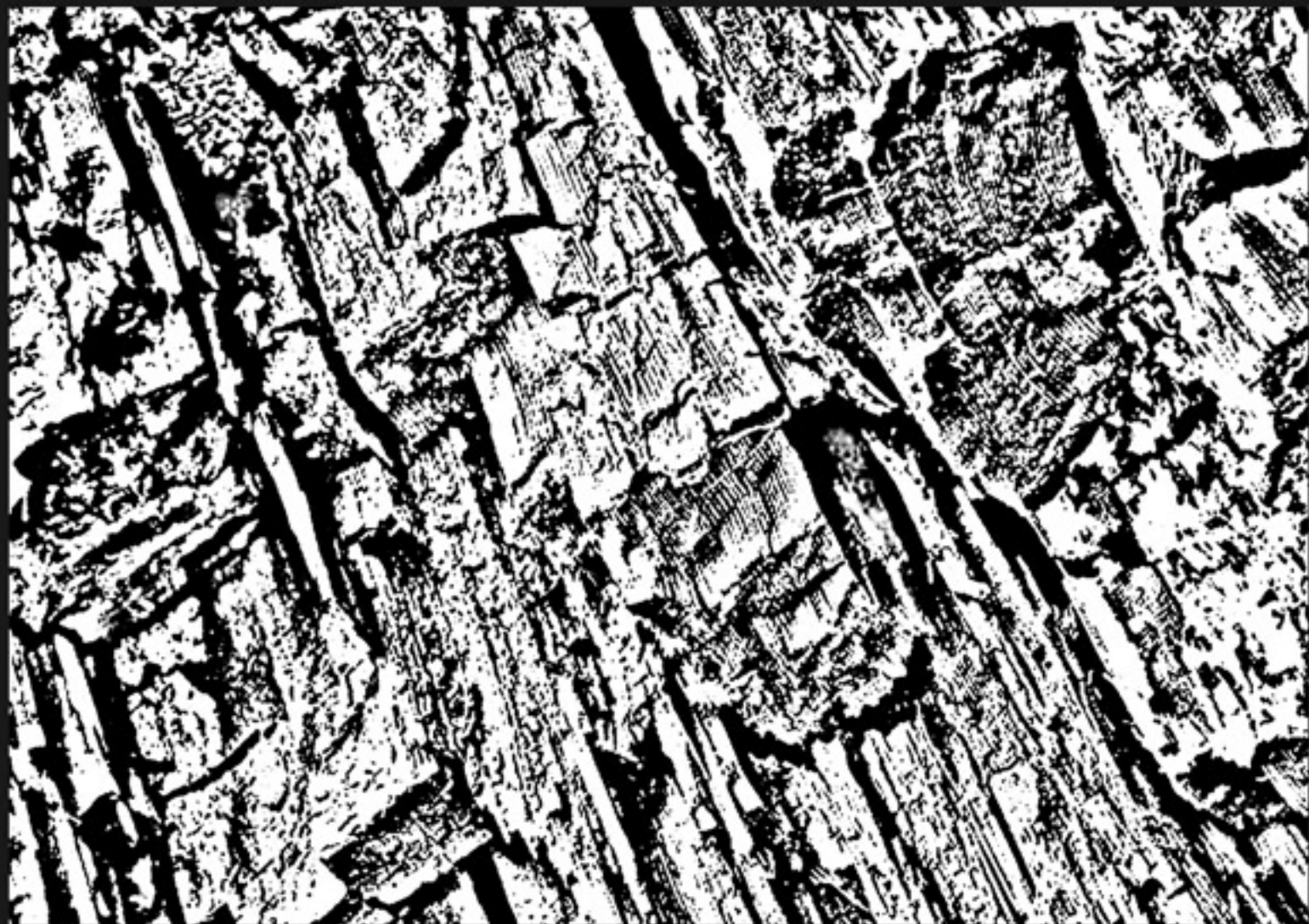
OR IT IS A THING THAT HAS BEEN KILLED  
AND RAGES TO BE DEAD





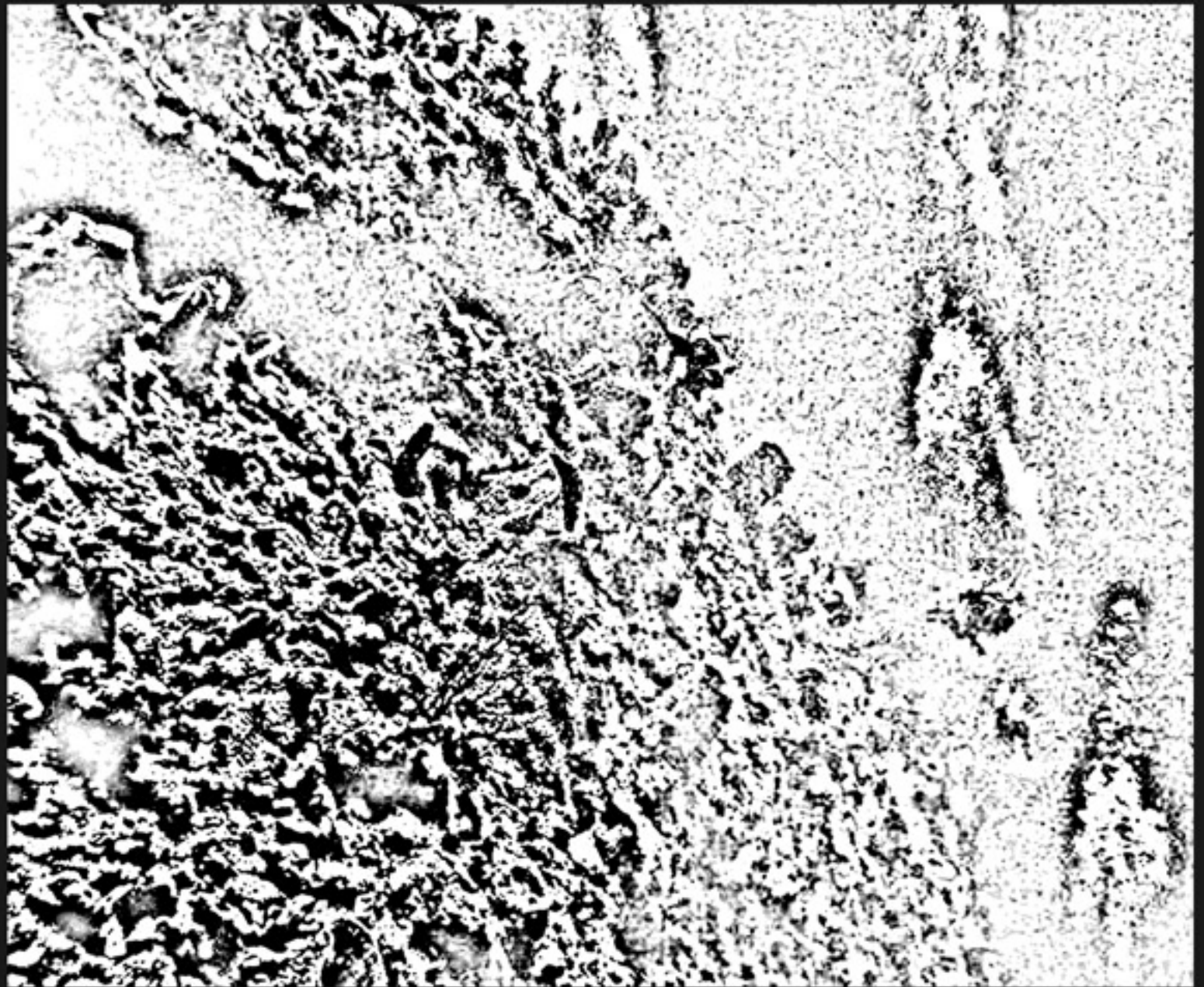
THERE WERE FORESTS THERE - EACH LEAFLESS TRUNK BRITTLE AS CHARCOAL, BUT NOT BLACK, WHITE. WHITE WEAPONS IN BLASTED ROWS, AS THOUGH SOME ANCIENT ARMY HAD RESTED ITS SPEARS AND NEVER RETURNED.



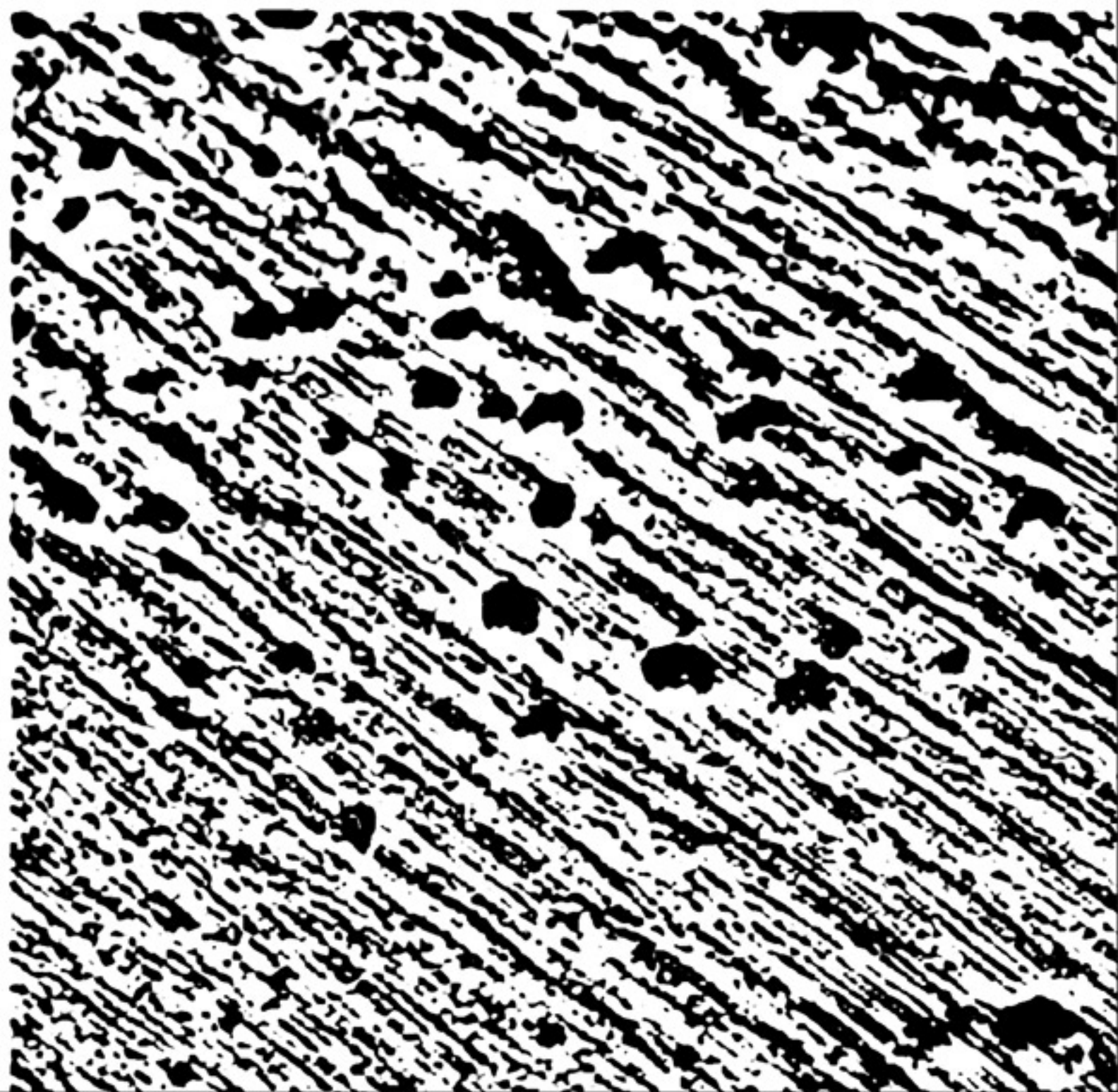


WE MOVED SLANT-WISE THROUGH THE BLASTED SPEARS THAT DWARFED US. OUR BOOTS SANK INTO THE WHITE, CRUMBLLED ROCK OF THE PLANET'S SURFACE. LIKE CINDERS IT WAS, CINDERS BURNED SO HOT THAT EVERY BLACKNESS HAD BEEN BLEACHED OUT OF THEM. DIG A SPADEFUL, AND THERE WAS NOTHING SOLID BENEATH. VAPOUR, CRUMBLLED ROCK, AND THE TREES RIDDLED THROUGH LIKE WHITE HONEYCOMB, LIKE SOME DESPERATE THING HAD FOUGHT FOR A LAST HIDING-PLACE, AND NOT FOUND IT.

THERE HAD BEEN OCEANS ON THE WHITE PLANET.  
WE FOUND A SEA-FLOOR, RIDGED AND SCOOPED,  
AND SHELLS AS BRITTLE AS PROMISES, AND  
BONES CRACKED LIKE HOPE. WHITE, EVERYTHING  
WHITE, BUT NOT THE WHITE OF A MORNING  
WHEN THE SUN WILL POUR THROUGH IT, NOR  
THE WHITE OF A CLEAN CLOTH; NOT THE WHITE  
OF A CHEESE WHERE YOU CAN SMELL THE GREEN  
OF THE GRASS THAT FED THE GOAT, NOR THE  
WHITE OF A HAND THAT YOU LOVE.

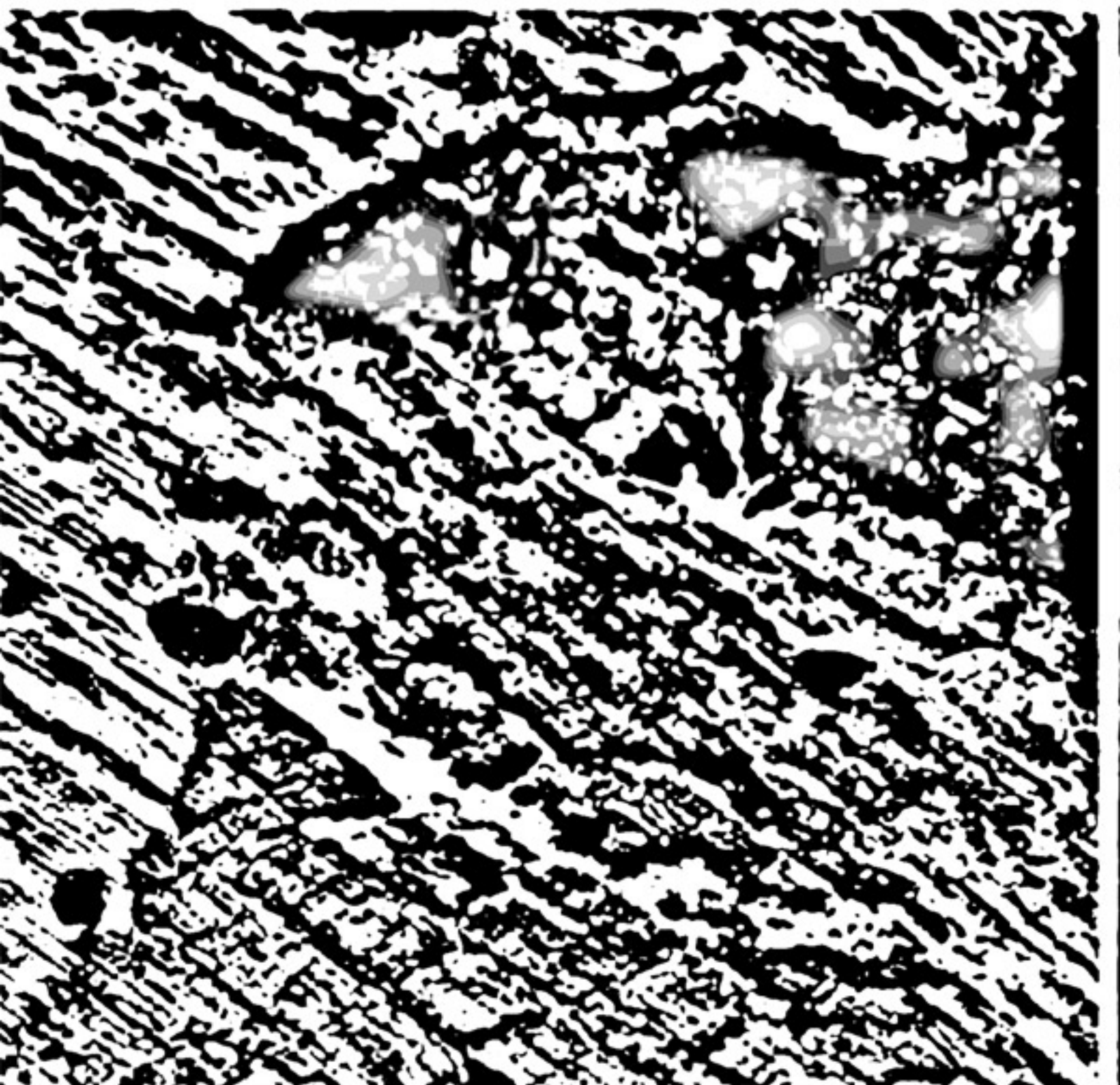






THERE IS A WHITE THAT CONTAINS ALL THE COLOR  
MOCKERY. THIS WAS THE WHITE AT THE END OF THE  
NOT THE PRESENT AND, MOST FEARFUL OF ALL, NOT  
BLEACHED AND BOILED PLACE. NOTHING, NOT WILL  
THING, NO BAD, COULD BEGIN LIFE AGAIN HERE. THE  
THE EXPERIMENT WAS DONE.





OURS OF THE WORLD BUT THIS WHITE WAS ITS  
HE WORLD WHEN NOTHING IS LEFT, NOT THE PAST,  
NOT THE FUTURE. THERE WAS NO FUTURE IN THE  
LD, NOT STRANGE, NOT TINY, NOT VILE, NO GOOD  
WORLD WAS A WHITE-OUT.

WE FOUND THE RUINS OF A CITY, AND THE RUINS OF A ROAD THAT RAN TO IT. A PROUD PLACE THIS HAD BEEN, ONCE UPON A TIME, ONCE UPON A TIME LIKE THE WORDS IN A FAIRYTALE. THE RUINS OF A CITY, AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SITTING UNDER THE SEA, FOR THE PRESSURE OF THE SURFACE OF THIS PLANET IS AS GREAT AS THAT HALF A MILE UNDER THE SEA. THE WEIGHT OF THIS WORLD IS ITS OWN DESPAIR.

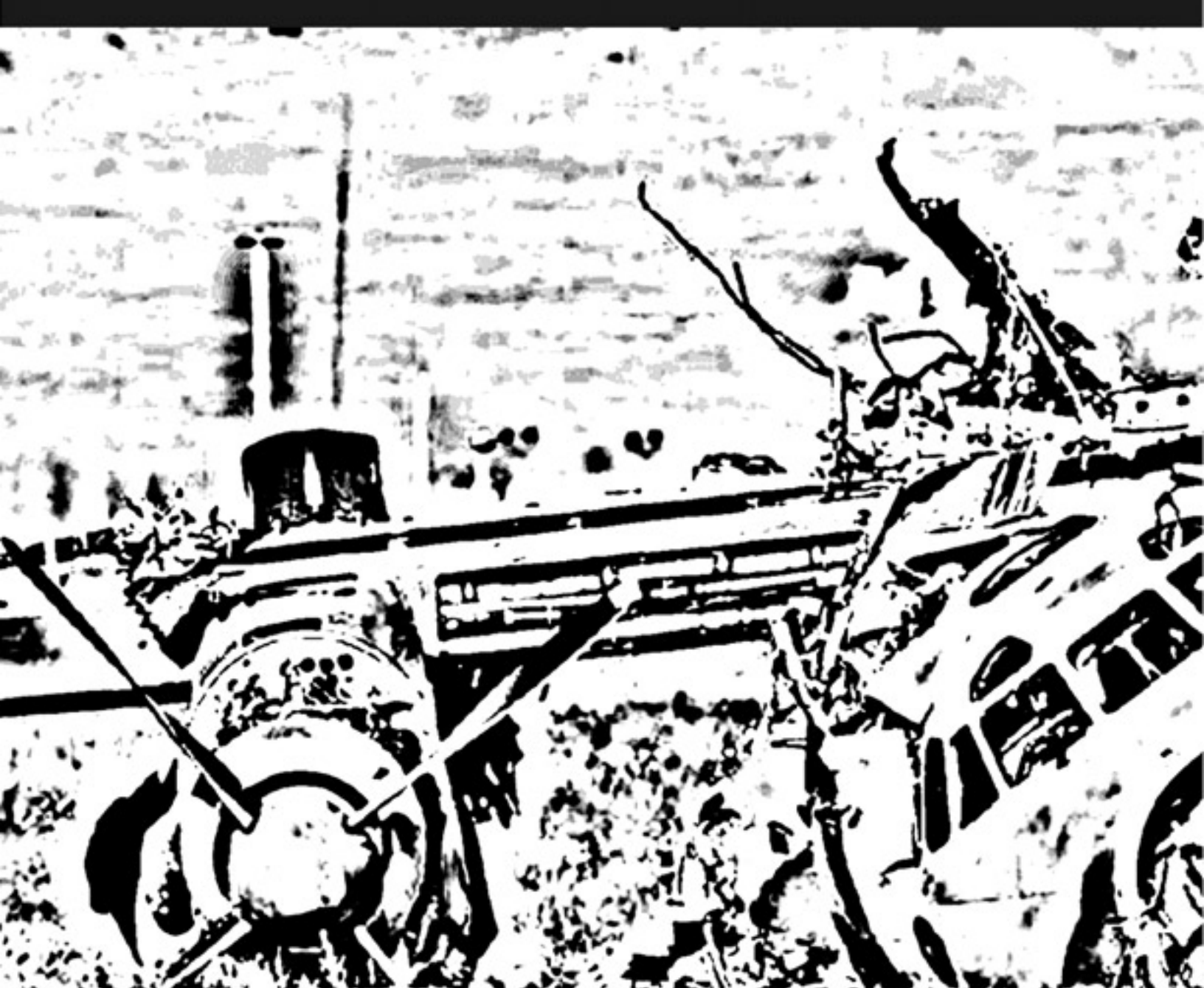




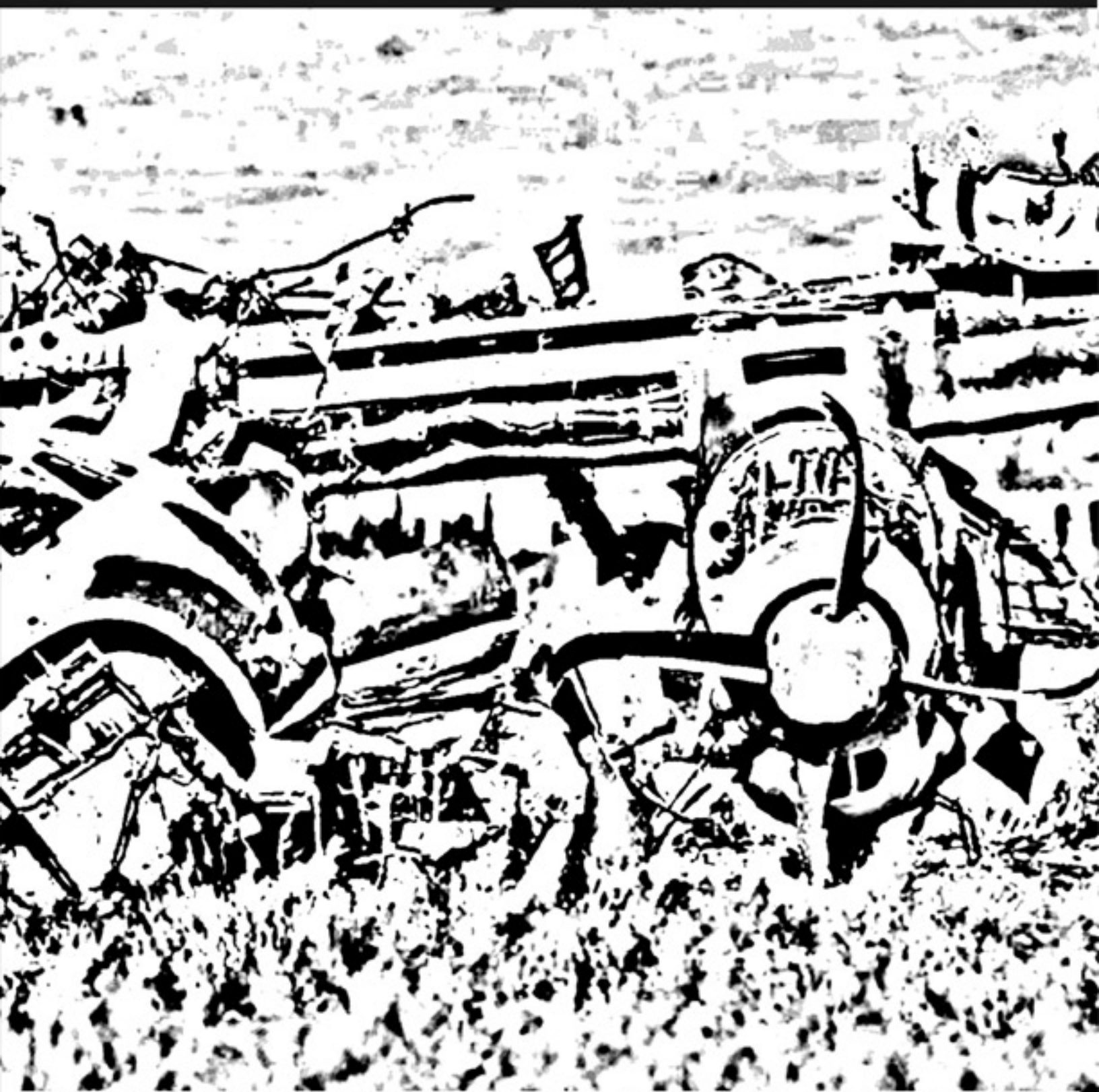
WITHOUT ARMOUR OF A KIND, ANYONE WOULD BE CRUSHED. WITHOUT OXYGEN, NO ONE HERE CAN BREATHE AT ALL. WITHOUT FIREPROOF CLOTHING, YOU WOULD BE CHARRED AS THE REST OF WHAT WAS ONCE LIFE.

AND YET THERE WAS ONCE LIFE HERE, NAKED AND FREE AND OPTIMISTIC.





WE WALKED THROUGH THE SUNKEN CITY, AND INTO THE CRYPT OF THE PLANET AND THERE WE FOUND A THING THAT AMAZED US. LIKE AN ELEPHANT'S GRAVEYARD, THE CRYPT WAS STACKED WITH THE CARCASSES OF PLANES AND CARS THAT CONTINUALLY MELTED IN THE INTENSE HEAT AND THEN RE-FORMED INTO THEIR OLD SHAPES, OR SHAPES MORE BIZARRE, AS THE CARS GREW WINGS, AND THE PLANES COMPRESSED INTO WHEELLESS BOXES WITH UPTURNED TAILS.



SUCH HEAT WITHOUT FIRE IS HARD TO IMAGINE, BUT THIS WAS THE INFERNO, WHERE A CIVILIZATION HAD TAKEN ITS SACRIFICES AND PILED THEM TO SOME EYELESS GOD, BUT TOO LATE. THE SACRIFICE WAS NOT ACCEPTED. THE PLANET BURNED.



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FEEL FREE TO EMAIL ABOUT  
THIS OR WHATEVER AT [CODY@CHUDCHUD.COM](mailto:CODY@CHUDCHUD.COM)