

THE TATTOO.  
THE ONE ON HIS HAND,  
A SAILOR JERRY SWALLOW.  
CURVES AND  
CARTOON CLARITY.

BEAK IN STANDARD  
BLUE-BLACK-GREEN,  
REGULATION  
RESTING HUE  
OF A WORN TATTOO.

BREAST FADES,  
SUNBURN SIENNA.  
SCISSOR-SPLIT TAIL  
LINES CURL BACK.  
DARTING, SLY QUICKNESS,

FOREVER SOARING,  
FOREVER STILL.

SHE CHOSE FROM  
MARITIME THEMES.  
HE AGREED.  
NOT KNOWING,  
AT JUST EIGHTEEN,  
WHAT IT WOULD MEAN.  
ENLISTING  
IN THIS MAN'S NAVY.

INK NESTED ON HAND,  
"SO YOU'LL SEE."

(SHE LEFT UNSAID  
'AND THINK OF ME.')



AND HE DOES.

THINKING NOW  
OF FRAGILE WINGS,  
KEPT ON HAND.

HOLDING  
SUBWAY POLES.

IN FLICKERING  
FLUORESCENCE.

BLUE-WHITE LIGHT.

INDIFFERENT  
STATIONS,

PATCHWORK  
PLATFORMS,

SCREECHING BRAKES,  
WALLS OF NOISE.

HEAD-DOWN PASSENGERS  
NAVIGATE ASH ISLANDS.

CROWDING CLOSE.

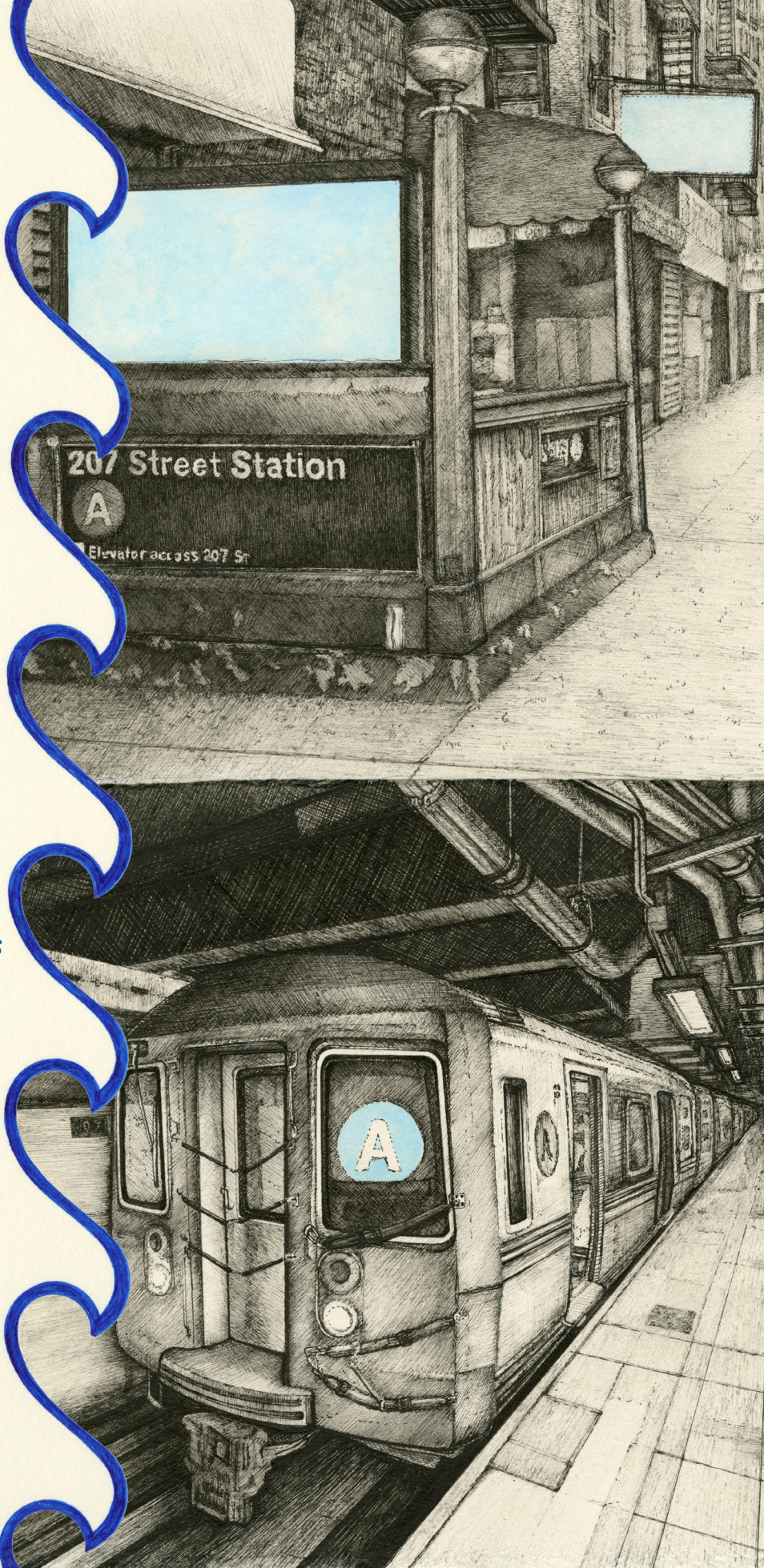
INTIMATE.

ALONE.

FADED FEATHERS  
MAPPING THE DAYS,  
AND THE DISTANCE.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS,

THAT MORNING  
WITH HER.





BLUE WINGS,  
THAT DAWN,  
A PERFECT MATCH  
FOR OPEN SKY  
SEVEN INCHES ABOVE  
WEST TEXAS HORIZON,  
43 COLD MINUTES BEFORE  
THE WHOLE SUN ROSE,  
EXHAUSTED,  
AT A DIM BUS STATION.

YOUTHFUL DECISIONS,  
MADE IN HASTE,  
NOT REGRETTED,  
BUT LASTING.

WHISPERED  
PROMISES.

EARNEST,  
HONEST,  
UNFULFILLED.

ONLY LEARNING LATER  
THE SIGNIFICANCE.  
OF FIVE THOUSAND  
NAUTICAL MILES.

A TALISMAN  
CLAIMED AND  
DOCUMENTED,

NAVY SERVICE EARNED  
THE RIGHT TO BEAR.

NOW,  
ON A BLUE LINE,  
UNDER TIDAL ESTUARIES.

DOORS OPEN,  
AND A SEAT,  
EMPTY PLASTIC BECKONS.

HE LEAVES IT  
FOR OTHERS  
MORE TIRED.

STANDS RELIEVED  
AGAINST THE DOORS,  
IN NAVY-BLUE COAT,  
COLLAR FADING.

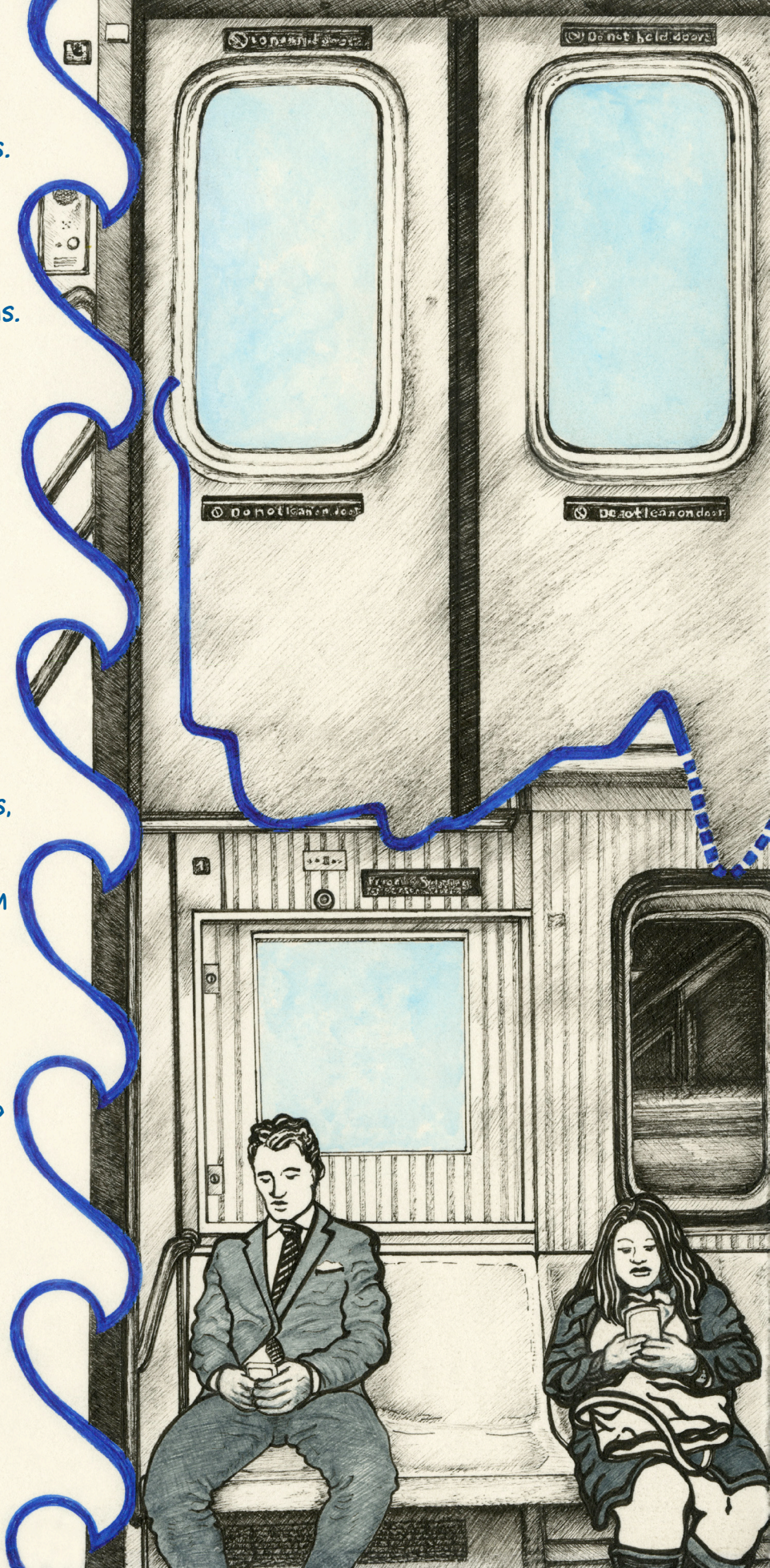
FLASH AND FLAP  
OF UNBUTTONED LAPELS,  
MARKING TIME  
IN UNCONSCIOUS RHYTHM  
WITH THE TRAIN.

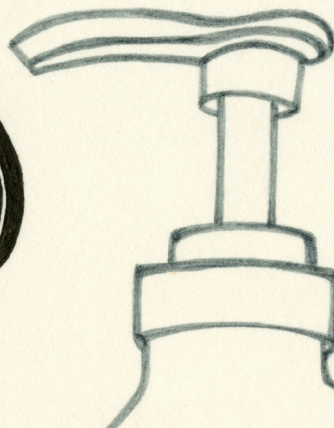
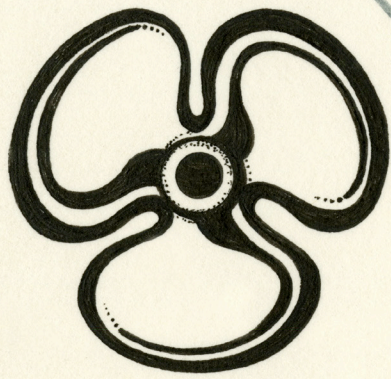
HE STANDS CLEAR  
THE CLOSING DOORS.

REVISITS WELL-CHARTED  
THOUGHTS,

MEMORIES  
OF DEPARTURE.  
CLEAR BLUE DAWN.  
BUS DEPOT DIESEL.

HE NEVER HAD  
THE WORDS.





SHE TRACED LINES  
OF TENDER INK,  
"SWALLOWS FIND  
THEIR WAY HOME,"

(5,000 MILES,  
OVER SEAS,  
MATE FOR LIFE.)

A QUICK KISS.  
A HAND RAISED.  
WINDOW GLASS  
REFLECTED  
HER SAD SMILE.

HE WAS UNPREPARED,  
TO SEE THE WORLD  
THAT LOOKS  
THE SAME  
INSIDE ENGINE ROOMS  
AROUND THE GLOBE.

NAVY-ISSUE SOAP,  
PUMPED OUT  
OF GALLONS,  
ERODED INK.  
SCRUBBED AWAY  
WITH SCHEDULED  
MAINTENANCE  
AND IMPATIENT  
EXPERIENCE.

HE FINDS HIMSELF,  
DISEMBARKED.  
SUBMERGED IN REUNIONS  
AND DEPARTURES,  
THE EBB AND FLOW  
OF TRAVEL.

PASSENGERS SCROLLING  
THROUGH TELEPHONES  
AND TIMETABLES.

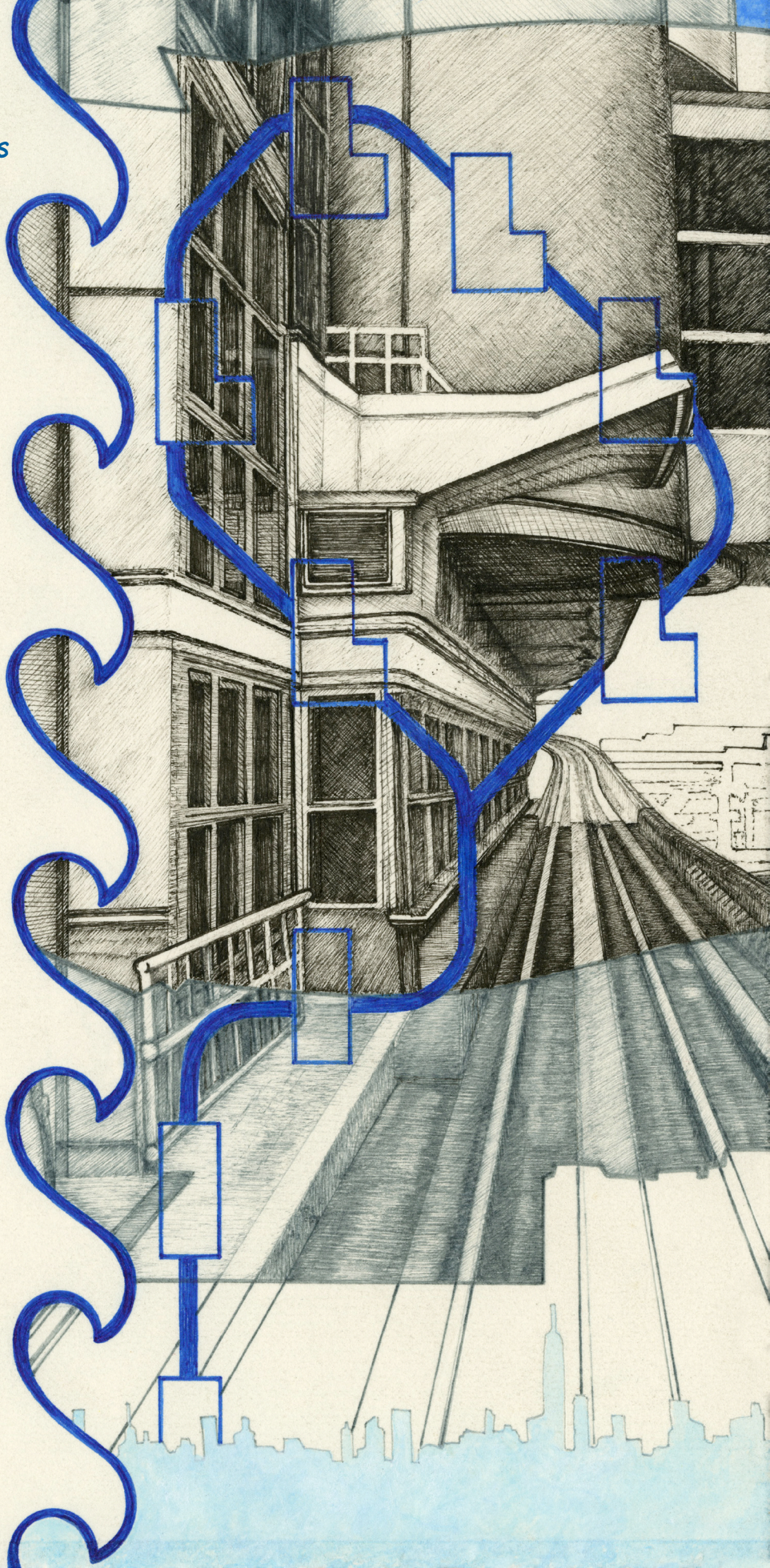
IN SILENCE,  
HE LISTENS TO ECHOES.  
LONG DISTANCE STATIC.  
SHORE-LEAVE  
LAND LINES.

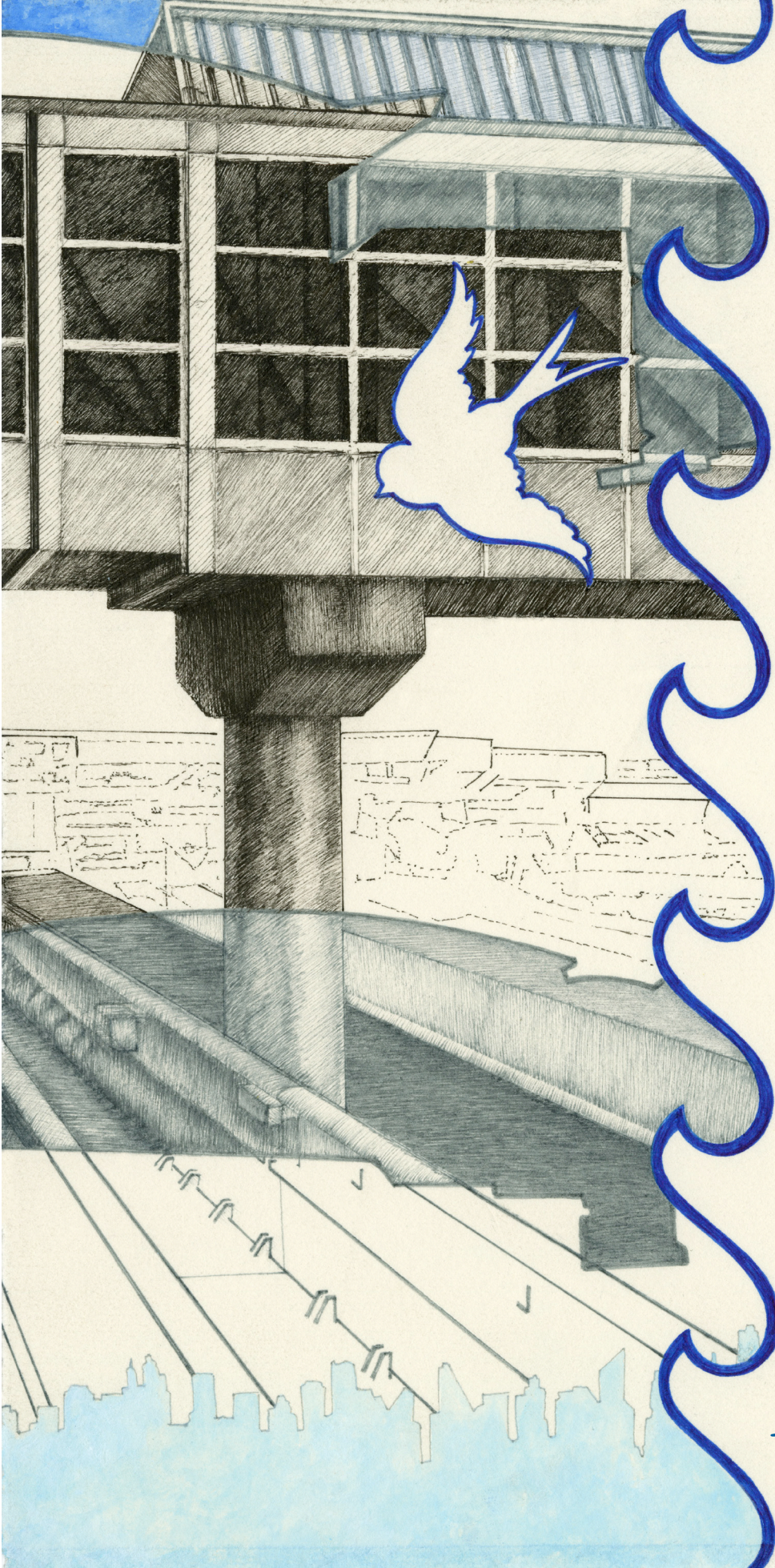
DISCONNECTED  
MEMORIES  
OF HER LAUGHTER  
AND HER SIGHS.

A BETTER LIFE.  
SOME FUTURE HOME.

BLOWN OFF COURSE  
BY TIME AND  
APPARENT WINDS.

HE FOLLOWED  
MIGRATORY PATHS,  
GUIDED BY  
MAGNETIC FIELDS,  
AND SIREN CALLS.





SHE WAS MARRIED.  
AND THEN SHE WASN'T.  
HER OWN SON,  
NOW GROWN AND GONE.

THERE HAD BEEN  
OTHER GIRLS,  
AFTER A TIME.  
A FEW WOMEN  
HE TRIED TO LOVE.

NONE LEFT HIM  
DREAMING OF HOME.

AT AN AIRPORT.

DISCHARGED  
FROM A CITY  
WITH A SKYLINE  
BUT NO HORIZON.

WHOSE BUILDINGS  
OVERWHELM,  
BLUE-WHITE  
IN DAWNING LIGHT,  
ANY GLIMPSE OF SKY.

NURTURING A  
FLEDGLING HOPE  
OF FOLLOWING SEAS,  
AND EFFORTLESS AIR.

HARBORING  
THE SPACE TO BREATHE,  
AND TIME TOGETHER.