

pneuma lamentare



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Kunstuniversität Linz, July 2022

## **Video**

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Video realised with the help of *Förderungs-Stipendium Linz*

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Composition: Andreea Vlăduț and Christa Wall

## **Book**

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Instructions: Christa Wall

Laments: Teodora Manolache, Ioana Mutu

Funeral Songs: Dorel Langă, Tariful din Morunglav

Proofreading: Daria Nedelcu, Răzvan Olariu, Christa Wall

# acknowledgments

*Pneuma Lamentare* doesn't represent a work by one person. It frames three years of collaboration with **Christa Wall**. During this time, we developed every aspect and direction of the project. I, thereby, thank her for everything!

It represents my grandmother, **Evoneta Băbărelu**, and my grandfather, **Ion Băbărelu**, who inspired me to open the discussion about the profession of mourning and to respect folk customs. I grew up with my grandparents in an environment where the pagan elements of the spiritual world were frequently practiced: from birth to funerary rituals. Superstitions, folk stories, and magic interpretations of the world were always present. I am very thankful to **Ioana Mutu**, **tanti Dorina (Teodora Manolache)**, **Dorel Langă**, and **familia Enache** (Morunglav's Taraf), who helped me to understand more about the importance of the cult of death in Morunglav, Romania.

I am very grateful to my coordinators: **Gerlinde Schmierer**, **Christoph Nebel**, **Gitti Vasicek**, and **Dariusz Kowalski**, for their support, guidance, encouragement, and understanding.

The video wouldn't have been possible without the help of **Florine Mougel**, **Sara Piñeros**, **Bon Alog**, **Sheida Ramhormozi**, and **Julia del Rio**.

This project wouldn't exist without some important people that are part of my everyday life: my parents, **Nicoleta** and **Smarandache Vlăduț**, who helped with the whole field research and drove me around Olt county for two months, and **Răzvan Olariu**, who helped me and supported me over all the years and stayed awake days and nights, listening to my struggles.

I would like to hug **Daria Nedelcu** for numerous book recommendations, proofreadings, and translations. A big thank you goes to **Diana Popovici**, who translated the field research's interview.

Over the last year, the project was financed by *Förderungsstipendium Linz*, the *Austrian Cultural Forum*, and *Förderungsverein*.

a dialogue about grief

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Voice as a

*I am watching a blue screen. There are no images, just voices, and music from the broken speakers of my laptop. I continue watching the blue screen. There is nothing else besides a blue appearance. I couldn't understand you, Blue, but I cried together with you!*

*Watching Blue, I transcended to my grandfather's funeral, shivering at the tremendous act of mourning performed by my grandma.*

*I stayed with blue in my ears for a long time until I decided to discover more about the practice of mourning.*

*In front of a vulnerable topic, it is essential to take time to learn the act of mourning by practicing it. I wished that my grandmother had taught me the practice, this almost forgotten act. For her, mourning was intense. It was a huge respect for the loved one and a way of reducing her own pain.*

*(excerpt from a personal diary on mourning, 2019)*



***Pneuma Lamentare***'s project represents multiple attempts to understand the various aspects of grief and mourning: performative, feminist, political, poetical, and psychological. I started the project with the biography of my grandmother, collecting her stories about the act of lamentations and the burial rites in Morunglav village, Romania. Furthermore, I focused on the profession of mourning from different social and political contexts throughout history, continuing with a reenactment of the ritual of mourning through voice and electronic music together with Christa Wall. Due to our interest and feminist, activist view on folk customs, we extended the practice of mourning, reinterpreting it through a sound performance and an audio-video installation.

Theorizing the ritual of mourning brings up various aspects that must be defined and revisited. Why is there still a need to open discussions about the ritual of death from numerous perspectives: philosophical, psychological, sociological, ethnomusicological, feminist, and performative? Many scholars and artists have already covered this need, but there is a necessity to continue the speech about the importance of the ritual of mourning in a world in ruins, that is undergoing an ecological and climate crisis, a war, and an ongoing pandemic. The discussion about grief can go further in the digitized world, where the practice of mourning has the potential to achieve a political shift within social media channels. The discourse on grief is vast, waving through different cultures and historical eras. I chose to write about ritualized mourning, focusing on the performative perspective, analyzing the poetry behind it and the importance of the social and political aspects of grief.

The book is structured in two parts:

**The first part** offers an overview of *How to Cope with Loss*, capturing the importance of the embodiment act of *moirologia* in a contemporary context and defining a vocabulary of grief in a broader historical and social context. The chapter *Performing Individual and Public Mourning* concentrates on the body, an invisible and vulnerable body, and its variable socio-cultural meanings. The voice as a tool of resistance focuses on the feminist aspect of the act of mourning, on the powerful utterance of the professional mourner's discourse. One of the most sensitive phases of the thesis is represented by a dialogue between *tanti* Dorina (Teodora Manolache), Ioana a lui Mutu, Dorel Langă and *familia* Enache, who shared their knowledge about the funerary practices in the village of Morunglav.

**The second part** contains the process behind the audio-visual work: a visual representation of the DIY instruments, schematics of voice practices, the choreography of the non-linguistic aspects of grief, and poetic steps of the video's dramaturgy.

Most of the research is based on Judith Butler's approaches to mourning and loss, Peggy Phelan's sensitive way of writing, and the performative, theoretical method of Guy Cools. Regarding a broader understanding of *moirologia*'s culture, two books always stayed open in front of my eyes: Margaret Alexiou's *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* and Ion Ghinoiu's *Cartea Românească a Morților* (The Romanian Book of the Dead).

All of the chapters bring together the importance of the procession of mourning in a world occupied by rage, violence, and socio-political injustices.

*Mourning as a collective practice is a tool of resistance in the current world situation. Through the mourning ritual, we can also reflect on the societal restrictions and codes that shape our emotions, especially in the public sphere and beyond. Additionally, it can provide an alternative to a sanitized or eerie view of death. Mourning is a social and cultural practice and process that teaches us to accommodate the loss.*

*The act of mourning is holding space for slowing down, falling apart, and responding instead of merely reacting to states of emergency.*

(excerpt from the article: *From Tears to Ideas: A dialogue*, published in Revista Arta on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2022, written by Christa Wall and Andreea Vlăduț)

# How to cope with loss

Language is limited and restricted when it comes to a vocabulary of grief. English doesn't offer rich terminology on the meanings of loss. Grief and mourning relate to each other, but it is necessary to distinguish between the two terms as the language requires. Guy Cools in *Performing Mourning. Laments in Contemporary Art* explains that grief is the interiorized state, a privatized attitude towards loss, while mourning is an exteriorized process, an external expression of loss. Mourning is the utterance reaction of grief to the loss of a loved person or *the loss of some abstraction (an ideal, liberty, departure, etc.)*<sup>1</sup>, as Sigmund Freud described it in *Mourning and Melancholia*.

The encounter with the loss of a loved one makes us, as an individual, more aware of the power of mourning and the importance of practicing it. There is not a defined prescription on how to cope with loss. Even though many scholars question and analyze altered states of grief and loss, offering philosophical, anthropological, psychological, and performative points of view, I believe that the terminology of mourning and grief cannot be reduced to academic discourses.

The profession of mourning and all the rituals related to the funerary customs represent an oral transmitted culture. Loss and grief should be defined as knowledge respected in the sense of culture and understood as a potential act of mourning out of the academic discourse.

Mourning is about breathing, grounding, holding, and slowing down. Grief is circular.

Even though psychologists have tried to define grief and its stages, I believe there is not a prescribed formula for how to cope with loss. In the *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*<sup>2</sup>, after Tom's death, Mark receives in the mailbox a book called: *How to Survive the Loss of a Love*, a book that made Mark laugh about the theorized concept of grief and its systematic stages: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance*. The suffering and the act of mourning are circular and constantly imply remembrance and recollection. Maybe when

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1. Sigmund Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 243

2. *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* (1993), directed by Tom Joslin and Peter Friedman and published by Peter Friedman and Florence Fradelizi

using words like coping, learning, and understanding, I make a terrible mistake. Perhaps there should not be any written language attached to mourning and grief because words can distort and create various meanings that can be misinterpreted. From my experience, I can relate to the fact that there are no charts or plans for successful mourning. Judith Butler claims that successful grieving doesn't apply to an ending of loss to an end or finding a substitute for it.

*Perhaps, rather, one mourns when one accepts that by loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly for ever. Perhaps mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say submitting to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance. There is losing, as we know, but there is also the transformative effect of loss, and this latter cannot be charted or planned.* (Judith Butler, *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning*, p. 21)

Roland Barthes, in *Mourning Diary*, realized that mourning could not be generalized or defined, and the process of mourning has a discontinuous character. In Barthes's case, writing becomes a tool for coping with death. R. Barthes offered a personal and intimate approach to mourning. All the encounters and struggles of his everyday life after his mother's death are collected in one book, where the reader can discover an intense process of grievance. Barthes experienced mourning as an acute phase of suffering, narcissism, egoism, chaos, and instability.

*Moments when I'm "distracted" (speaking, even having to joke)—and somehow going dry—followed by sudden cruel passages of feeling, to the point of tears. Indeterminacy of the senses: one could just as well say that I have no feelings or that I'm given over to a sort of external, feminine ("superficial") emotivity, contrary to the serious image of "true" grief—or else that I'm deeply hopeless, struggling to hide it, not to darken everything around me, but at certain moments not able to stand it any longer and "collapsing."* (Roland Barthes, November 1, 1977)

Writing is a safe space where mourning can be expressed and delivered through storytelling. It allows access to grief. Edgar Allan Poe's literary reveals a continuous *effort with death from every possible angle*<sup>3</sup>, indicating unsuccessful mourning.

In *Bruges - La Morte*, the protagonist, Hugues Viane, lives in acute grief and mourns her dead wife every day, praying and mourning with a fanatic obsession in front of an altar dedicated to her.

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3. Darian Leader, *The New Black, Mourning, Melancholia and Depression*

Georges Rodenbach, the book's author, brought the unachievable substitute of loss in front of the viewer. The replacement of his lost wife with another woman produced more sorrow until a tragedy happened.

In *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*, Max Porter emphasizes the experience of grief by each character, bringing to the surface the discontinuous aspect of mourning.

## DAD

Introduction: Crow's Bad Dream I miss my wife

Ch. 1. ~~Magical Dangers~~ I miss my wife

Ch. 2. ~~Reign of Silence~~ I miss my wife

Ch. 3. ~~Unkillable Trickster~~ I miss my wife

Ch. 4. ~~Aphrodisiac Disaster~~ I miss my wife

Ch. 5. ~~Tragic Comedy~~ I miss my wife

Ch. 6 ~~The body (God) in the Lake~~ I miss my wife

Ch. 7: ~~The song~~ I miss my wife

Conclusion: Recovery and Growth I miss my wife

(Max Porter, *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*, p. 42)

The experience of grief is translated through somatic practices. Coping with mourning is a process that cannot be praised. The experience of grief is translated through somatic practices. The outburst of pain translated through extreme corporeal manifestation shapes emotion. It offers a space for expressing the intense grief but also channeling and regulating it.

Ritualized grief and mourning practices are carried out as a performance providing a given structure for those in grief, offering a framework on how to fall apart, encompass a changed reality, and an environment that welcomes vulnerability.

Western view on death doesn't imply any more death rituals defined through excessive exteriorization of the body. However, it has interiorized mourning, creating a severe *risk of psychological, physical, and energetic blockages in the body*.<sup>4</sup>

The cyclicity of the mourning act has the function of releasing *negative energy or energy blockages*. *In the process, personal experiences are integrated into a larger collective tradition and can become material for creative practice*.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Guy Cools, *Performing Mourning. Laments in Contemporary Art*, p. 51

5. Ibid., p. 51



performing individual and public memories

There was always an essential need to engage in a public discussion about grief as a political asset for understanding and resistance against unequal social injustices. In the Covid-19 context, people worldwide faced a tremendous amount of loss. The pandemic made on-again visible on a global scale the human vulnerability. During this crisis, those already at risk became even more discriminated. In the last two years, scholars have opened up discussions about the politics of grief, underlying the fragility and vulnerability of human (and non-human) life, especially as a consequence of the pandemics. In March 2020, in an online seminar: *The culture of grief - Philosophy, Ecology and Politics of Loss in the twenty-first century*<sup>1</sup>, Judith Butler, Martin Hägglund, Jonathan Lear, Arne Johan Vetlesen, and Simon Critchley engaged in a discussion about grief understood in the contemporary age: the social vulnerability, destructive human behavior causing the aggravation on the climate crisis and the reflection on the human condition seen through the eyes of Ancient Greek Tragedies. The discussion also marked the process of grievance in the vast context of the global violence, framing the invisible public mourning of minorities.

The responsibility of grief and loss is distributed inequal. The minorities (including sexual minorities) were always at a disadvantage regarding public grievance. In *Precarious Life. The Power of Mourning and Justice*, Judith Butler asks an imminent series of questions: *Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And finally, What makes for a grievable life? Can we find another meaning and another possibility for the decentering of the first-person narrative within the global frame-work?*<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to death and mourning in terms of questioning who and what constitutes a grievable life and who decides which lives are more worth living than the others, we need to create a sense of common and shared vulnerability, in which the oppression and the hierarchy amongst human (and non-humans) are diluted. Each loss should engage in a collectively narrative of mourning and become a powerful tool of resistance against any form of violence.

The resistance takes place in mourning, and each individual should allow an outrageous cry and excessive body movements to regress the normativity in gender, sexuality, bodily strength, and diversity.

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1. See <https://youtu.be/0JBPQik2-x8>

2. Judith Butler (2004), *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Justice*, p. 20



## Mourning the invisible body

I started my research on this project with the movie *Blue*<sup>3</sup>, directed by Derek Jarman, released in 1993, the year of his death. I watched and re-watched it, with no scope of research, just for the therapeutic effect and endless breath. *Blue* is not only an inspiration just for the theoretical part of *Pneuma Lamentare*'s work; it embraced most of the artistic approaches on it:

- The sound and the visual narrative – in this case, the removal of the image
- Dissolution of all visual forms
- The emerging of a tangible body through the rising of sound frequencies

*Blue* is a movie where the body is visually removed; there are no shadows, no forms, just a narration of voices and sounds covering a blue screen. *Blue* is an act of lamentation for the body - the sick body - *an infected social body*<sup>4</sup> that is invisible - unable to be accepted within society. The lament is not just heard and shown through the sound and narration; it is also underlined through the absence of the body and the image's awol. *Blue*, in its poetry, becomes a political statement because it reveals the pain of censorship and the sufferings of a body that is not equally mourned. Nicoletta Vallorani in the *Path(o)s of Mourning. Memory, Death and the Invisible Body in Derek Jarman's Blue* attests that the whole process of dying is enforced on the illness due to the sanction of the public view, where the body that does not respect the heteronormativity social rules is removed from society before the actual death. Derek Jarman transcends from an individual to a collective act of mourning that becomes political, emphasizing how invisible the people living with HIV/AIDS have become in the last century.

In *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*, Peggy Phelan remembers Douglas Crimp's words - as mourning as a militancy agent - that gay men used mourning as a political action to respond to the AIDS crisis.

An example of a movie where the body (a sick body - understood in a medical sense) and its transformation are exposed is *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*, an experimental documentary film directed by Peter Friedman and Tom Joslin.

*Silverlake Life: The View from Here* is a love letter, a political statement on the impact of AIDS, and *a thanatography, a study in dying*<sup>5</sup>.

3. *Blue* (1993) directed and screenplays by: Derek Jarman. Music composed by: Simon Fisher-Tuner, Danny Hyde, Momus, John Balance, Peter Christopherson, Erik Satie, Brian Eno, Karol, Szymanowski and narrated by: John Quentin, Nigel Terry, Derek Jarman, Tilda Swinton.

4. Nicoletta Vallorani, *Path(o)s of Mourning. Memory, Death and the Invisible Body in Derek Jarman's Blue*, p. 86

5. Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing public memories*, p. 154

You say to the boy open your eyes  
When he opens his eyes and sees the light  
You make him cry out. Saying

0 Blue come forth

0 Blue arise

0 Blue ascend

0 Blue come in.

0 Blue arise

0 Blue ascend

0 Blue come forth

0 Blue arise

0 Blue ascend forth

0 Blue come in.

0 Blue ascend forth

0 Blue arise in.

0 Blue ascend forth

0 Blue come in.

0 Blue ascend forth

0 Blue arise in.

0 Blue ascend

0 Blue come in.

I'm walking along the beach in a howling gale ~  
Another year is passing  
In the roaring waters  
I hear the voices of dead friends  
Love is life that lasts forever.  
My heart's memory turns to you  
David. Howard. Graham. Terry. Paul ...

You say to the boy open your eyes  
When he opens his eyes and sees the light  
You make him cry out. Saying

O Blue come forth

O Blue arise

O Blue ascend

O Blue come in

O Blue arise

O Blue ascend

O Blue come forth

O Blue arise

O Blue ascend forth

O Blue come in.

O Blue ascend forth

O Blue arise in.

O Blue ascend forth

O Blue come in.

O Blue ascend forth

O Blue arise in.

O Blue ascend

O Blue come in.

The virus rages fierce. I have no friends now  
who are not dead or dying. Like a blue frost  
it caught them. At work, at the cinema, on  
marches and beaches. In churches on their  
knees, running, flying silent or shouting protest.





screenshots from *Silverlake, Life: The View from Here*, dir. by Tom Joslin, Peter Friedman



*Silverlake Life* shows the body, a phantasmal body.

*The film insists that the spectator look at a body, a phantasmal body that cannot be and therefore is not, screened, and therefore is not, screened. (...) Joslin's screened body becomes a means to expose the spectator's screen memory of his or her own encounter (in the temporal phantasm in which past and future are one) with death.*

(Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing public memories*, p. 155)

Describing the topography of mourning resulting in *Silverlake Life*, Peggy Phelan affirms that *the film suggests that time stops without a living, moving body, but that the body itself does not stop moving; cinema is one place where the still-moving body leaves a trace.*<sup>6</sup>

Judith Butler expounds that *the body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well.*<sup>7</sup> We fight for our body's rights, but as Judith Butler emphasized: *the body has its invariably public dimensions.*<sup>8</sup>

We tend to understand the loss by finding a relationship with it, archiving through visual and auditory content, notes and writings, and all the transformative and creative methods of grief. When it comes to an anticipated death, where the patient is already diagnosed, I believe there is an early stage of intense mourning.

Mourning can be found in contemporary art practices dealing with personal losses and individual mourning. In her last two years of life, Alina Popa developed and realized projects on aesthetic healing and performative therapies.

*The Clinic*<sup>9</sup> contains: *Heal the line*, *You are*, *Collapse Yoga*, *Unexist*, and *Artwork*, in which the collective somatic practices are emphasized as a healing factor.

*Heal the Line* and *You are*' performances have a powerful emotional impact due to the importance of revealing the collective mourning and how the element of touch, hands on the body, consists in a healing factor.

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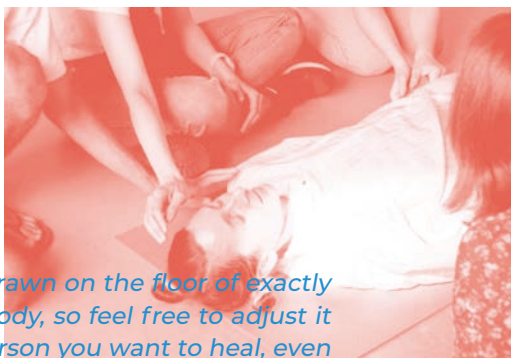
6. Ibid., p. 156

7. Judith Butler, *Prekarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Justice*, p. 26

8. Ibid., p. 26

9. See <https://www.artworlds.ro/2016/04/unsorcery-is-dimension-of-productive.html>

1



*Instead of my body, there is a line drawn on the floor of exactly my height. My body could be any body, so feel free to adjust it in your mind to the height of the person you want to heal, even to your own. Imagine that touching the line you are healing my body, or someone else's, or your own. Please touch the line or come close to it as if it were a real body and perform the therapy that you would like to offer to me, to you, to a sick friend. The therapy is more powerful when it is collective, when the line is healed by as many people as possible at the same time.*

(passage from *Heal the line*  
<https://alinap0pa.blogspot.com/2018/10/heal-line.html?m=1>)

2

2 Alina Popa, *Heal the Line*, 2018, co-curated with Florin Flueraș at Tranzit Bucharest, credit photo by Viad Brăteanu

Not very long ago, I managed to read her last notes, texts, and drawings collected in a small book called ***Square of Will in Square of Love***. She reveals her relationship between herself and the disease.

Alina represented her illness and its metamorphosis through words, lines, and dots. The illness became a new non-understandable creature that had to be endured.

### *Spirula and the Thing*

*When something intimately changes your body, your possibilities to move, your dynamic with the outer world, your identity for many people, your limits as to what you can bear, that thing forces you into inner transformation.* (Alina Popa, *Square of Will in Square of Love*, p. 17)

She plays with the image of the disease, metamorphosing into an unknown planet that waits to be discovered:

*It's like a moon of a distant planet. It has craters and a surface between skin and stone, a stone on a windy shore changing shape in a circular manner. It spurts, it spits idealism it exhausts me. It tells me to be wild. (...) You have to do what it says, otherwise it grows bigger and soon you will be only its satellite.* (Alina Popa, *Square of Will in Square of Love*, p. 20)

Reading the notes accompanying the drawings, written with the eyes closed and with the notebook on the chest, I imagined the act, the movement of her hands on her chest, like the notebook was nonexistent. She was writing and drawing directly on her chest, coordinating her breath with her hands, practicing a ritual in itself, an ode to healing.

Alina also captures a critical factor of grief in the contemporary world: the life-death sentence of a body through a medical diagnosis.

### *Spirula and Medicine*

*We know, human doctors think they know, they go to bed assured that I am a piece of meat. They made a script, imposed it on people like me, we have proof, we know better. Reality follows the script if it is believed and they spent centuries to impose it on us.*

(...)

*Realization: I have never trusted my body and its response. We are thought so by education. Fever needs to be kept at a bay, symptoms have to be read by specialists, you don't own your body, it is like a foreign coat you have to take care of and beware of it, look for signs, gather evidence.*

(...)

*The body is real but what we think about the body is fiction. Medical views are the fiction imposed on us by modernity and capitalism.*

(Alina Popa, *Square of Will in Square of Love*, p. 20-21)

In the last centuries, the medical discourse replaced the religious, ritualistic discourse on loss, and diagnosing mental suffering. We are questioning the meaning of grief and analyzing it, trying to find a cure. A mourning ritual engages in somatic practices, demanding a constant remembrance of the deceased, keeping the grief visible.

*The culture of grief grew out of a research project on diagnostic culture, studying our increased tendencies to understand mental suffering in diagnostic categories.*

(quote from the opening speech of *The culture of grief - Philosophy, Ecology and Politics of Loss in the twenty-first-century seminar*)



About the perception of a specific disease (more exactly cancer), Susan Sontag writes *Illness as Metaphor*. Ten years later, she continues the subject by publishing *AIDS and Its Metaphors*. She underlines how the language can define an illness and be applied to public attitudes towards specific diseases and those who experience them. When she was diagnosed with cancer, she started writing *Illness as Metaphor*, creating an act of mourning in the image of language attributed to the sick body. (fighting against the image, deconstructing, demystifying it). *AIDS and Its Metaphors* fold many points that I tried to reach above: the view on a body condemned to suffer, the individual judged by the social preconception on AIDS as a disease of sexual excess and perversity.

She also writes about the racism and discrimination that comes with an epidemic, in which illness *is associated with the poor—who are, from the perspective of the privileged, aliens in one's midst—reinforces the association of illness with the foreign: with an exotic, often primitive place.*<sup>10</sup>

*Thus, illustrating the classic script for plague, AIDS is thought to have started in the “dark continent,” then spread to Haiti, then to the United States and Europe, then. It is understood as a tropical disease: another infestation from the so-called Third World, which is after all where most people in the world live, as well as a scourge of the tristes tropiques.*

(Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and Aids and Its Metaphors*, p. 139)

Her words are relevant today within Covid 19 context. The majority had a racist way of perceiving the Chinese, building a blaming and hateful speech against them. The most vulnerable countries were forgotten in the face of the pandemic. The social distancing, the impossibility of the physical mourning practices, took us further away from each other.

It is essential to find new anatomy of grief by deconstructing the binary gender, the heteronormativity, where the understanding of death transcends the human subjects; it expands to non-living and more than human organisms. We must celebrate the body in all forms, removing the in-depth rooted social constructs.

*If we create a brave space for vulnerability and allow it, our body knows how to express grief through movements, gestures, and voice expression (pitch, tone, timbre).*

(excerpt from the article: *From Tears to Ideas: A dialogue*, published in Revista Arta, January 13, 2022, written by Christa Wall and Andreea Vlăduț)

The performative mode of communication using physical gestures and crying out loud creates spatial and acoustic dynamics and a state of transcendence necessary for coping with loss.

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10. Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and Aids and Its Metaphors*, p. 139

tool of resistance

*Dear goddess! Face-up again against  
the renewal of vows. Do not let me die a  
coward, mother. Nor forget how to sing.  
Nor forget song is a part of mourning as  
light is a part of sun.*

*(Audre Lorde, A Burst of Light)*

voice as a

The powerful voice embodiment of a professional mourner has a transformative effect on the auditory. Their voice utters a narrative of emotional intensity, accentuating the performer's sorrow. Throughout history, the act of *moirologia* became an instrument of protest against all the social injustices amongst women.

The lamentation and the burden of death are destined for women, who take care of the dead body: washing, embalming, dressing, and watching it during the funerary procession. More than that, they have the task of expressing all sorrow through laments.

The act of lamentation has at its ground an individual grievance of the performer because the individual memory can usually mark more intense somatization. The shared/collective grievance ritual helped the women *bond a female bonding*<sup>1</sup> and solidarity, where they could share a common experience of pain. The kinship countered during lamentation is also underlined through the antiphonal structure of the performance. It becomes an observation of the funerary ritual and *a political strategy that organizes the relation of women to male-dominated institutions*.<sup>2</sup> The antiphonal structure and the continuous repetitions also allow the individual grievance to transcend to collective memory.

The professional mourners have the role of a mediator, creating a bridge between the two worlds and guiding the deceased beyond the world. Through their vocal techniques of performing a lament, like *polyphony*, the dirge singers have the power to lead the audience to an ethereal and intangible state.

The strong influence of the professional mourner is illustrated in Ancient Greek Tragedies. Margaret Alexiou underlines the power of women's laments and their social and political effects in Ancient Greek Tragedies. Due to women's public prohibited views on political life, performing the ritual of lamentations became a vehicle of empowerment, sharing their beliefs in a world dominated by male-structure power.

Male philosophers, poets, and dramaturgists of Ancient Greece wrote about professional mourners' discourse and *exploited them in critical narrative moments*.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Andrea Fishman, *Threnoi to Moirologia: Female Voices of Solitude, Resistance, and Solidarity*, p. 273

2. Seremetakis, 1991, pg. IX - excerpt from Guy Cools' *Performing Mourning. Laments in Contemporary Arts*

3. Olivia Dunham, *Private Speech, Public Pain. The Power of Women's Laments in Ancient Greek Poetry and Tragedy*, p. 3

Margaret Alexiou explains that the funeral ritual started to be restricted in the sixth century, emphasizing the perception of the *harmful and offensive character to the newer societies*.<sup>4</sup> In *Life of Solon*, Plutarch describes the laws of Solon, in which the excessive and harmful performance of mourners should be outlawed.

*What is meant by "forbidding everything disorderly and excessive in women's processions, funeral rites and festivals," as Plutarch says? No woman was to go out with-or probably carry to the grave for burial with the dead - more than three garments. (...)There was to be no procession by night except by lighted coach; also no laceration of the flesh by mourners, no singing of set dirges and no wailing for other dead.* (Margaret Alexiou (2002), *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 15)

Plato in *Republica* considers the act of lamentation *weak and feminine* and *remarks that ideal lawgivers would prohibit public outcries at funeral processions*.<sup>5</sup>

In Ancient Rome, in their ethical writings, Cicero and Seneca characterized women's performance as excessive, disorderly, and uncontrollable, unlike men, who mourn *with dignity and self-discipline*.<sup>6</sup>

Women were considered unworthy of public and political opinion due to their excessive uncontrolled emotions. I need to emphasize that a professional mourner knows how to regulate and shape the emotions in a lament, having the capacity to share and express feelings without losing control.

Sophocle's *Antigone* Tragedy exemplifies the political risks of a woman's discourse on grief in times of increased male-dominant society. The protagonist, Antigone, is condemned to death while trying to offer a proper burial to her brother. She sacrifices for the family and her beliefs, allocating more importance to the unwritten laws of gods than to the power of the state law's justice.

The contemporary version of Sophie Deraspe's *Antigone*<sup>7</sup> revises the main topics of the tragic play: sacrifice, resistance, womanhood, and the state's power and questions the cultural and national identity barriers against the other built in

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4. Margaret Alexiou (2002), *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 14.

5. Olivia Dunham, *Private Speech, Public Pain. The Power of Women's Laments in Ancient Greek Poetry and Tragedy*, p. 8.

6. Šterbenc Erker, Darja, 2009, *Women's tears in Ancient Roman Ritual*, p. 137.

7. *Antigone* (2019), directed by Sophie Deraspe, adapted from Sophocles *Antigone*, screenplay by: Sophie Deraspe;

the western society. The movie *Antigone* places the voice empowerment of an immigrant woman in a contemporary context. She fights against the state laws for her incarcerated brother in jail, who is supposed to be deported from Montréal. Sophie Deraspe highlights the resistance of an immigrant woman against a state and condemns laws that disfavor and disadvantage immigrants, refugees, and minorities.

A parallel between another Ancient Greek Tragedy and a contemporary political approach is depicted and made visible in Euripides' *Trojan Women* and *Queen of Syria*<sup>8</sup> movie, where the act of mourning is present as a result of displacement, a plight of women in war.

*The Trojan Women* reveals an essential resistance of women in front of the war and against the hegemonic male national identity. Euripides created a narrative untold until that moment, offering a voice and affected perspectives on women. He did not focus on the great event of war and the bravery of warriors but on the Women of Troy's fight, struggles, and resistance. The laments, performed by Hecuba, Cassandra, Andromache, Helena, and the women's choir, evolve into a powerful political and social statement.

*Queens of Syria* is a documentary that brings together 60 Syrian women exiled in Jordan. They combined passages from the *Trojan Women* with their personal stories. In the documentary, we can observe the strong bonding and solidarity built between the women during the learning process of the lamentations. The Syrian women share a similar sorrow with the women of Troy: the massive loss and the displacement in a foreign country.

The profession of mourning should always be studied from a **feminist perspective**. The professional dirge singers use the act of mourning as a tool of resistance and protest against a sovereign power and a hegemonic national identity. The impressive socio-political discourse of the professional mourners against a patriarchal society is attested in most Ancient Greek Tragedies.

*By embracing the power of a derivative and disturbing voice utterance and by focusing on its potential for resistance, we wish to fathom the voice's spectrum of expression, beyond its boundaries by juggling and stretching its qualities like unexpected pitch, pace, timbre, or modulation. A voice that invites us to inhabit its porous shimmering polymorph landscapes and nonlinear narratives.* (Christa Wall)

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8. *Queens of Syria* (2014), directed by Yasmin Fedda, edited by: Greg Pittard

18:50 - 19:06

**Antigone:** But as for Polyneices, Creon has ordered

That none shall bury him or mourn for him.

He must be left to lie unwept, unburied,

For hungry birds of prey to swoop and feast

On his poor body. So he has decreed, Our noble Creon, to

all the citizens:

To you, to me. To me!

**Officer:** Polynices will be held until his trial.

**Antigone:** For what?

**Officer:** Breaking parole and assaulting an

officer.

**Ismene:** The cop shot his brother.

**Officer:** I'm sorry, madame. It's for the judge to decide.

**Creon:** You there, who keep your eyes fixed on the ground,

Do you admit this, or do you deny it?

**Antigone:** No, I do not deny it. I admit it.

(...)

You: tell me briefly—I want no long speech:

Did you not know that this had been forbidden?

**Officer:** You broke the law for your brother.

**Antigone:** Of course I knew. There was a proclamation.

**Antigone:** I have only one left.

**Creon:** And so you dared to disobey the law?

I have to help him.

**Antigone:** It was not Zeus who published this decree,

Nor have the Powers who rule among the dead

Imposed such laws as this upon mankind;

Nor could I think that a decree of yours—

A man—could override the laws of Heaven

Unwritten and unchanging. Not of today

Or yesterday is their authority;

**Antigone:** Alas, they laugh! O by the gods of Thebes,

my native city,

Mock me, if you must, when I am gone, not to my

face! O Thebes my city, O you lordly men of Thebes!

**Antigone:** I vomit on your proceedings! I'm

O water of Dirke's stream! Holy soil where our

talking to my brother!

chariots run! You, you do I call upon; you, you shall testify

Your honor!

How all unwept of friends, by what harsh decree,

You and your ceremonies are ridiculous!

They send me to the cavern that shall be my

**Judge:** Do you care about getting

everlasting grave. Ah, cruel doom! to be banished from earth, nor

citizenship?

welcomed

**Antigone:** Citizenship?

Among the dead, set apart, for ever!

Citizenship...a piece of paper?

**Chorus:** Too bold, too reckless, you affronted Justice. Now that awful power

You can go wipe your ass with it!

Takes terrible vengeance, O my child. For some old sin you make atonement.

All I see are fancy uniforms and keys and

titles...Let go of me!

Polyneices!

39:57 - 45:55

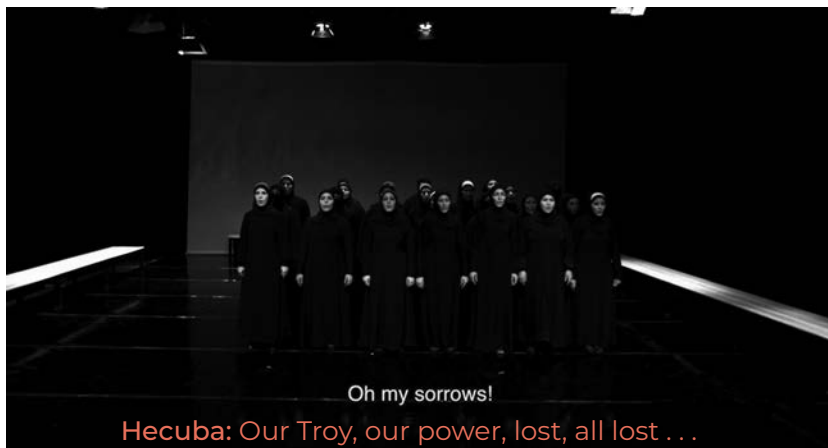
1:09:40 - 1:18:45



The past and present join into one painful moment.

You wretch, lift up your head,  
Lift it up off the ground. Look up  
The Troy before you is no longer Troy,  
The queen of Troy is queen no longer.  
This is the changing fortune  
You must bear. Bear it. Sail  
With the hard current of the strait,  
Sail with destiny,  
Don't steer your life's prow back  
Into the heaving waves;  
Sail as you do, and have, and will  
On the winds of chance. AIAI. AIAI.  
What's not to mourn for in my misery—  
My homeland gone, my children gone,  
My husband? And you, too,  
Ancestral glory, all that opulence,  
You added up to what? To nothing.  
So why be silent now?  
And yet, why not be silent? Why sing  
A dirge? What good can it do?  
Unlucky as I am, my limbs  
So beaten down that they can only  
Lie here on this hard bed crushed beneath  
The crushing weight of destiny.  
From head, from temple  
Down to ribs, oh how my body  
Longs to rock on waves of grief, the spine-  
Keel tilting side to side,  
In rhythm to this long lament,  
These tears, the only music  
Left for the wretched, singing the song  
Of troubles no one dances to.





Hecuba: Our Troy, our power, lost, all lost . . .

Andromache: Miserably!

Hecuba: . . . and all my high-born children . . .

Andromache: God, O God . . .

Hecuba: . . . and all my . . .

Andromache: . . . sorrows.

Hecuba: Pity our city's . . .

Andromache: . . . destiny . . .

Hecuba: . . . now sunk in smoke.

Andromache: Come back, my husband . . .

Hecuba: My son's a shade, my child,  
It's to a shade you cry . . .

(...)

Hecuba: O my homeland, my unhappy  
homeland . . .

Andromache: I weep for you, abandoned.

Hecuba: . . . you see your bitter end come  
round at last.

Andromache: And I weep too for the house  
Where I bore my children.

Hecuba: Children, your mother has no city,  
No children either. What misery, what  
sorrow!  
Our house now just a wealth of tears.  
At least a dead man is immune to grief.

Chorus leader: Only tears can soothe the afflicted,  
tears  
And dirges sung to the melodies of  
grief.

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a dialogue about grief

Every culture has its own communal beliefs and customs. The cult of death occupies one of the most essential events in the people's life and frames a cultural identity of thousands of years. In most of the regions of Romania, death represented an important episode, where the respect for the deceased was spread with utmost care within the funerary customs. I had the privilege to attend traditional funerals and to be conscious of the powerful healing factor attached to them. I decided to extend my knowledge by accessing a vocabulary of grief directly from the people who practiced it.

I chose to do the research in **Morunglav**, my grandparents' village in Olt county. I needed to understand all the mourning and funeral procession rituals from the village where the idea of this project first appeared, **the place where everything began when my grandfather died**.

Even though I couldn't talk to my grandmother because of her health issues, when I mentioned the word *jelire* (weeping), my grandma murmured to me: **Ioana and Dorina**.

### **Ioana Mutu**

So I went to **Ioana a lui Mutu**, my grandparents' neighbor. Ioana was once famous in the village for her mourning style. Having decided not to use a research method, I just went there with a recorder and a desire to get to know her better. She remembered me and welcomed me with excitement. The two hours-long talks were emotional, she recalled many stories about herself, her family, and my family, and **she expressed her grief so intensely through her laments**. While interviewing her about the mourning process and the profession, I understood the difference between various types of lamentations used to be practiced at a funeral: **versified** and **natural lament**.

Ion Ghinoiu mentioned in his book: *Cartea românească a morților* (The Romanian Book of the Dead) that **the natural lament** is a spontaneous manifestation of pain through various intense gestures (tearing the hair, beating the chest, etc.), powerful inner screamings, loud sighs, and cryings. The lament is more of a dialogue and a direct confession to the deceased.

Adding lyrical rhythmic and sung elements to the natural lament, it becomes **a versified lament**. The structure is very similar to a funeral song. Performing a versified requiem evolves more into a dramaturgical way of expressing grief. The lyrics in versified lamentations are short and involve a lugubrious voice timbre full of sighs.

In her mourning practice, she used the natural lament based on improvisation and intensified grief. Ioana was practicing the ritual of mourning because it was inherited in the community:

*A nu plânge la mort, e nerespectuos. Nu oferi respect nici mortului, nici comunității. (...) Păi eu plâng de-adevăratelea când zic câte-o vorbă. Dacă eu vreau, de-adevăratelea, o zic din suflet.*

*Not mourning a deceased is an act and a sign of disrespect within the village's community. I cry heartfully when I tell the story of a loved one. If I want to mourn, I put my whole soul into the Lamento.*

*(Ioana Mutu, excerpt from the interview 17. 04. 2021)*

Many anthropologists touched on funeral practices and customs in Romania, collecting various laments from different regions and trying to find a structure behind the threnodies. During the hours spent with her, I paid attention to the construction of the lamentation. Her first lament was about her husband. When she started mourning, I got confused due to the direct address and acclamation to her parents and not to her husband. She confessed that she always calls a dear one who died before for helping the deceased to find the right path to redemption.

*Păi eu spun mortului meu, ce să spuie la morții mei. De exemplu, eu zisăi părinții mei, și zisăi să-i ție calea, părinții, că ei au murit primii. Sau de exemplu, când l-am jelit pe Ion, că Mărin murise când Ion a murit, și îi spuneam lui Ion să-i ducă lumânare și omului meu, că așa se zice la noi.*

*For example, if you go to a funeral and you need to mourn a person, you start with the people who died before. For instance, I pray to my parents for helping my man to follow the right path. When I mourned Ion, Marin had already died when your grandfather left us, and I was telling Ion to bring light to my man.*

*(Ioana Mutu, excerpt from the interview 17. 04. 2021)*

Her words made me realize the importance of motifs in a lament's built-in structure:

- The direct address to the deceased;
- The revolt and the curse of the death;
- The remembrance of the fateful signs/symbols;
- Announcing the moment of passing;
- Praising the deceased;
- The pain felt by the entire family at the funeral;

- Signaling the dead relatives from beyond to come to embrace the deceased;
- Announcing that the first encounter with those the deceased person leaves behind will take place during the Last Judgment;
- Describing the path that must be followed;
- Praying for the deceased to open the eyes, to say farewells, to visit home once in a while.

I want to emphasize one more important aspect of the funeral ritual that we can remark in Ioana's words: *Sau de exemplu, când l-am jelit pe Ion, că Mărin murise când Ion a murit, și îi spuneam lui Ion să-i ducă lumină și omului meu, că așa se zice la noi.* / *When I mourned Ion, Marin had already died when your grandfather left us, and I was telling Ion to bring light to my man.* The motif/ pattern of the *lumină* (light) and *vamă* (border, custom) are encountered frequently in a threnody. The professional mourners mention these two words frequently in their dialogue with the dead. They implore the dead relatives from beyond the world to bring light to the deceased, to illuminate the path, or are asked directly by the departed to bring light to relatives or dear ones.

*Vămile* occupies an essential and decisive aspect in the funeral ritual. From *Cântecul Zorilor\** (The Dawn Song), we discover the mythical representations that guard each intermediate border until the main one. The deceased needs to follow all the instructions for crossing all the borders. From the laments sung by Ioana and tanti Dorina, *vameșii* (guardians) are represented by the loved ones. Ion Ghinoiu writes that the most important border is situated at Heaven's gate, guarded by *Zeița-Mumă, Moartea, Zâna Bătrână, Maica Precista/Sfânta Maria* (Mother Goddess, Death Goddess, Virgin Mary). He also emphasized that the soul needs a ritual of 40 days for ascension, and the body demands just three days. The ritual of 40 days in Romanian culture is significant to be respected for helping the deceased's soul reach the main important *vamă*.

For example, a tool of guidance is represented by *luminarea de mărimea mortului* (the candle of the dead). In Romania, *the candle wound like a spiral* with a size as long as the deceased measurements is one of the essential elements in the funeral procession. It represents the symbol of the long road that separated this world from the world beyond. It also serves as a compass for the orientation in the afterlife. Ion Ghinoiu underlines the importance of the life-sized candles (the naming of the candle differs from region to region (*turtă de ceară, toiagul, stat, lumină a trupului, vârtej*)), offering a glimpse of the origin of its symbol and meaning:

*You can rarely find in folk culture a ritual object with such a historical value as the candle spiral-shaped like a snake and lighted in meaningful*

moments during the funerary ritual (...) It is the strongest motif left as a reminiscence of Neolithic Art since the times of the Cucuteni civilization. The use of candles has been attested as an artistic motif by archaeologists studying Neolithic Art and evolved until current times. Ethnographers can still find the candle as a symbol present in decorations of pottery on the bread, on Easter eggs, embedded in embroidery, carved in wood or in stone.

(Ion Ghinoiu, *Cartea Românească a Morților*, p. 154, translated from Romanian to English by Răzvan Olariu)

In the two-hour interview, Ioana performed four laments: *Lament for Husband/ Lament for Neighbor/ Lament for Parents/ Lament for Brother*, in which she included the motifs described above: *vămile*, *vameșii*, and *lumina*.

The most touching moment of the interview happened when she completely forgot about the recorder and started to wail her sorrows, bringing all the memories of the lost loved ones in her moaning voice.

I decided at that moment to turn off the recorder.

### **Teodora Manolache**

Afterward, I headed to Teodora Manolache (*tanti Dorina*), my grandfather's cousin. I burst into tears when she started to wail. I knew her voice from church, from when I used to go with my grandmother during Easter, but I wasn't expecting to be so touched, to feel so many emotions while hearing her voice weeping and interpreting the laments.

After performing the laments, she told me that a conversation about grief would destroy the intensity of her threnodies, and I haven't continued the interview. Her way of singing and the lyrics were enough to understand the structure of the lament, representative for Morunglav's village.

The structure of the laments performed by *tanti Dorina* is similar to those mourned by Ioana *a lui Mutu*. The lamentations are based on improvisation and the direct confession to the deceased. In her lyrics, we can find new elements, such: *The pain felt by the entire family at the funeral / Praying for the deceased to open the eyes, saying farewells, visiting home once in a while / The remembrance of the fateful signs.*

In the following lyrics: *Mamă, mamă, mama mea / Întrec mamă pe la poartă / Și îmi văzui ușa-n cuiată / Veni Nina neumblată*<sup>1</sup>, we notice the motif of

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1. Teodora Manolache, excerpt from *Lament for Mother*



the remembrance of the fateful signs. *Tanti* Dorina addresses directly to her mother, revealing a dream with the closed door of the house, and **Nina** (my great-grandmother, who passed away before her mother) was standing in front of the gate, barefoot. In Romanian folk culture, death is always pre-announced through various signs and symbols. There are multiple indications outside and inside the house like the cracking of the beams, the broken mirror, the time freezing between 24 and 4 in the morning, the dogs howl, the song of the owl, and especially dreams that have a unique character: looking in the depths of a fountain, closed gates, a person who predicts death, the collapse of a shore.

The second lament was for my grandfather. In her improvised lyrics, I discover new motifs such as the pain felt by the entire family at the funeral; praying for the deceased to open the eyes, to say farewells, and to visit home once in a while.

### **Dorel Langă**

I knew about Mișu Langă, Dorel Langă's father, from Speranța Rădulescu's book *Taifasuri despre Muzica Țigănească* (Chit-chats about Gypsy Music). So I went to seek **Dorel Langă**, further down in the village, close to the Olteț river, and, fortunately, I found him quickly. He was sitting on the bench in front of the gate. It didn't take long for him to accept my proposal, especially since I come from his village. He gave an overview of what he could tell me about the funeral practice and promised me that he would play the entire repertoire of a funeral ritual the next time we met.

One week later, we met at *Căminul Cultural* (Cultural House). Dorel Langă brought me there because he couldn't play funeral songs in his own house; he needed an extraneous place.

He didn't wait for me to ask a question; he enthusiastically started to present himself.

Dorel Langă is an accordionist from Morunglav, known for being a music professor for 28 years, a former conductor of the *Călușul Ensemble* from Scornicești, and the director of the House of Culture in Morunglav. During the interview, he played the repertoire of a funeral rite and talked about all the important aspects of it through the eyes of a fiddler. He is trying to keep the tradition alive and spread it among the young fiddlers.

From him, I found out about the entire funeral repertoire and the regional funerary customs.

The fiddlers arrive at the deceased's house on the third day. They start playing the main song from the entrance - *a funeral march*, which will continue to the cemetery.

He interpreted three vocal songs usually played in the courtyard until the priest arrived at the deceased's house. All the funeral songs are played in SOL minor.

Dorel Langă and Enache's family mentioned that besides these songs, they also played romances and waltzes: *Pe lângă plopul fără soț, Să-mi cânti cobzar, Valurile Dunării*. The introduction of these two genres in a Taraf's repertoire shows how western music influenced the Romanian funeral at the beginning of the 20th of centuries.

### Overview of the interview

In Morunglav village, when there was a funeral, there were as many fiddlers performing as you would believe there was a philharmonic orchestra. Usually, 15 violinists, 3-4 cymbalists, 3-4 contrabasses players, and 2 or 3 accordionists. As mentioned above, all the funeral songs are interpreted in minor tonalities. The first song starts at the house's entrance and is repeated several times during the funeral procession. They also interpret three main vocal pieces: *Bulgăraș de gheață rece, Arz-o focul viața*, and *Strânge omul ca furnica*<sup>2</sup>.

*Eu v-am dat prima piesă instrumentală. Aia se cântă. Dar fiind așa drumul mai lung, să nu fie plictisitor, se mai cântă și alte piese. Care sunt aceste piese? Valsuri: Valurile Dunării, Să-mi cânti cobzar, Mugur Mugurel, piese vechi. Și la intersecții, noi lăutarii, spre deosebire de fanfară ... noi nu întrerupem, decât la intersecții.*

*I gave you the first piece (the instrumental one). This one is played the entire way to the cemetery. Due to the road, which is long, to not get bored, we are also interpreting others' chants. Which are these melodies? Waltzes: Valsurile Dunării (The Danube Waves), Să-mi cânti cobzar (Play to me, dear kobza player), Mugur Mugurel...Unlike the fanfare, we, the tarafs, are never interrupting, except at the intersections, to let the priest preach his text.*

(Dorel Langă, excerpt from the interview, 24. 04. 2021)

As well there is also an instrumental *marș* (march). At the cemetery, prior to the burial, it is played *Nuneasca*, the last song that connects the wedding motif with the death.

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2. Unfortunately, there is no any possible translation

*Își ia adio de la nunta care a fost, dumneavoastră știți foarte bine, că cântecul funebru are locul lui, iar cântecul de nuntă, are iar locul, după cum și botezul și cântecul de bocet.*

*The deceased says goodbye from his wedding. The funeral, together with baptism and wedding are all important moments in the Romanian folkloric heritage with their own repertoire of songs.*

*(Dorel Langă, excerpt from the interview, 24. 04. 2021)*

The encounter with Dorel Langă was a familiar one, and the valuable information he gave, helped me to develop the instrumental part of *Pneuma Lamentare*.

Three months later, I went to record *Taraful din Morunglav* (The Morunglav Taraf in the same place where I recorded Dorel Langă, in *Căminul Cultural* (Cultural House). They waited for me with all the instruments: two violins, one double bass, one accordion, and one cimbalom.

*Taraful din Morunglav a fost construit tot pe osatura unei familii, cu ani în urmă. Acum 40 de ani a fost înființat de Ilie Enache, pentru că tatăl meu este băiatul lui Ilie Enache, bunicul meu. El a cântat la țambal. Ei au cântat într-o formulă. După aceea am venit noi, din spate, cei mici. Eu sunt Liviu Enache. În momentul actual taraful este format din șeful nostru, care este tatăl meu, Mircea Enache, din nepotul meu, care este Stan Eduard Enache, băiatul meu Ciprian Enache, vărul meu Enache Cornel. Mai avem în taraf și pe Alina Enache, fiica mea. Am preluat de la bătrâni toate cântările bătrâne, tot ce se puteau cânta. Și așa, cum eu am preluat, încerc și eu la rândul meu, prin copiii mei, să nu lăsăm să moară aceste nestemate ale folclorului nostru muzical.*

*The Morunglav Taraf was built entirely on the backbone of one family years ago. It was founded by my grandfather Ilie Enache 40 years ago. He played the cimbalom. They played in a set-up. We followed afterward, the young ones. I am Liviu Enache. At the moment, the Taraf consists of our boss, who is my father, Mircea Enache, my nephew Stan Eduard Enache, my son Ciprian Enache, and my cousin Cornel Enache. We also have in the band Alina Enache, my daughter. We took over from the elders all the old songs, everything that could be played. And thus, as I took over, I am trying in my turn, through my children, not to let these precious gems of our musical folklore die.*

*(Liviu Enache, excerpt from the interview, 14.09.2021)*

The information provided by the Enache family was the same as Dorel Langă's content: the funerary repertoire, the instrumental set-up, and the important moments of a funeral.

The funerary customs differ from region to region. The most representations in this text are from the Olt region, specifically Morunglav village.

The cult of death in Romania is an ode to grief and an ode to healing. Ioana Mutu mentioned in the interview that the world modernized, and the funerary practices are almost forgotten. The capitalization of the funerary customs canceled a culture of thousands of years, with a rich history and a significant healing factor amongst the community.

At a funeral, there was always a commonly shared responsibility for the losses, as a respect for the deceased. The profession of mourning maintained a strong female bonding that helped women to raise their voices within a patriarchal society the community.

*\*additional short book:*

- ***Cântecul Zorilor***
- ***Cântecul Bradului***
- ***Petrecătura***



# BULGĂRAS DE GHIAȚĂ RECE

Bulgăras de ghiata rece  
 Tarba vine, iarna rece  
 Și vi-ave eu cine pe tace - s/s  
 Căci pe cine mi-ave avut  
 S-a dus și nu-a mai putut  
 Mi-a pus spate la pârșut } bas  
 Și fata la rândărit



Plăgeți voi patru fereti  
 Că de mine răzăriți  
 Cu m-a duc în alta casă  
 Intr-o groapă întunecată  
 Bucură-te Mănașire  
 Că într-o gară u tunc  
 Mă intră să înflorască  
 Și intră să putescască



# STRĂNGE OMUL CA FURNICA

Toate rețede ca spica  
Strănge omul ca furnica  
Când moare un ca răuica - și  
Patru scânduri prînse - n' are



Să vedeți și voi de voi  
Cum am văzut noi de voi  
Ca-m' renuțăreți cu ~~noi~~ <sup>noaptea</sup>  
Și să le-am face pe toate.











Ioane, Ioane, vărul meu  
Ioane, vărul meu al cuminte  
Mamă, verișorul meu al vrednic

Ioane, Ioane, vărul meu,  
Deșteaptă-te, vărul meu  
Să mai vorbesc cu tine  
Ioane, când ne întâlneam  
Ioane, ne povățuiam, Ioane

Oh, Oh,  
Verișorul meu, Ioane  
Că mi-ai crescut, vărul meu  
Singurel, fără tată

Mamă, verișorul meu, Ioane  
Că tăcutul tău iubit  
S-a dus și n-a mai venit  
S-a dus, Ioane, în război  
Să ne ferească de nevoi

Ioane, Ioane, vărul meu  
Că veneam, Ioane, la tine  
Și-mi spuneai vărul meu  
Că degeaba mi-ai muncit  
Degeaba casă ai făcut

Ioane, copilașii mei  
O să mi-i lăși singurel  
Oh, vărul meu  
Unde s-or uita prin casă  
Și pe scaun stând la masă

Copilașii mei iubiți  
Or pleca nemulțumiți  
Oh, vărul meu  
Că mama lor e bolnavă  
Tot ca mine, mamă

Vărul meu, vărul meu  
Mult mă rog vere de tine  
Că să mă iei și pe mine  
Să fiu vere lângă tine  
Că poate ne-o fi mai bine



Oh, vărul meu  
Că mă uit pe drum lung la vale  
Și nu te văd, loane, în cale

loane, verișorul meu, loane  
loane, mult m-ai ajutat  
loane, mult m-ai îngrijit  
loane, loane, vărul meu



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pneuma lamentare



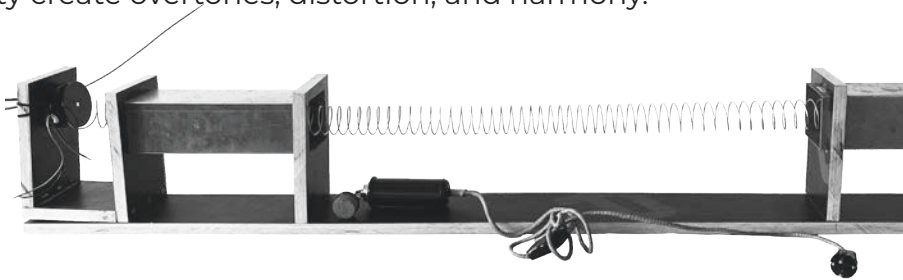
instruments

the choreography of the non-linguistic aspects of grief

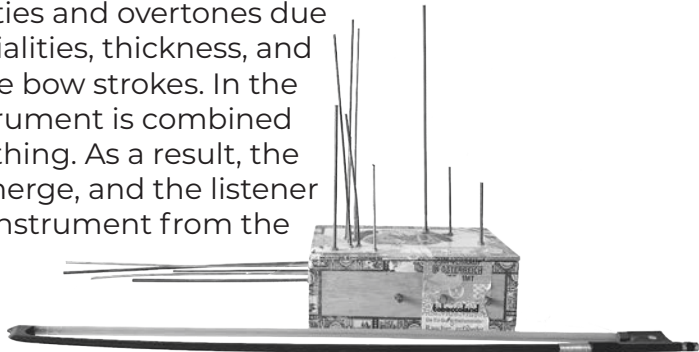
poetics steps of the video dramaturgy

## instruments

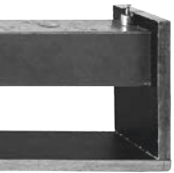
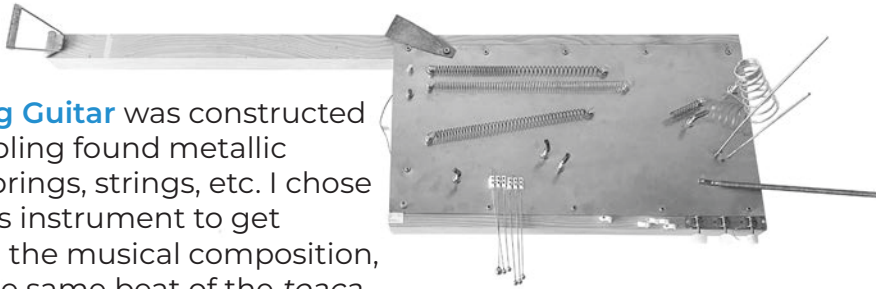
The **Spring Reverb** was built especially for the *Pneuma Lamentare* project that displays a sound similar to a cello. I play this instrument by using a head massager that generates a continuous movement of the spring through its vibration. The uninterrupted motion and the metallic sound generated by its materiality create overtones, distortion, and harmony.



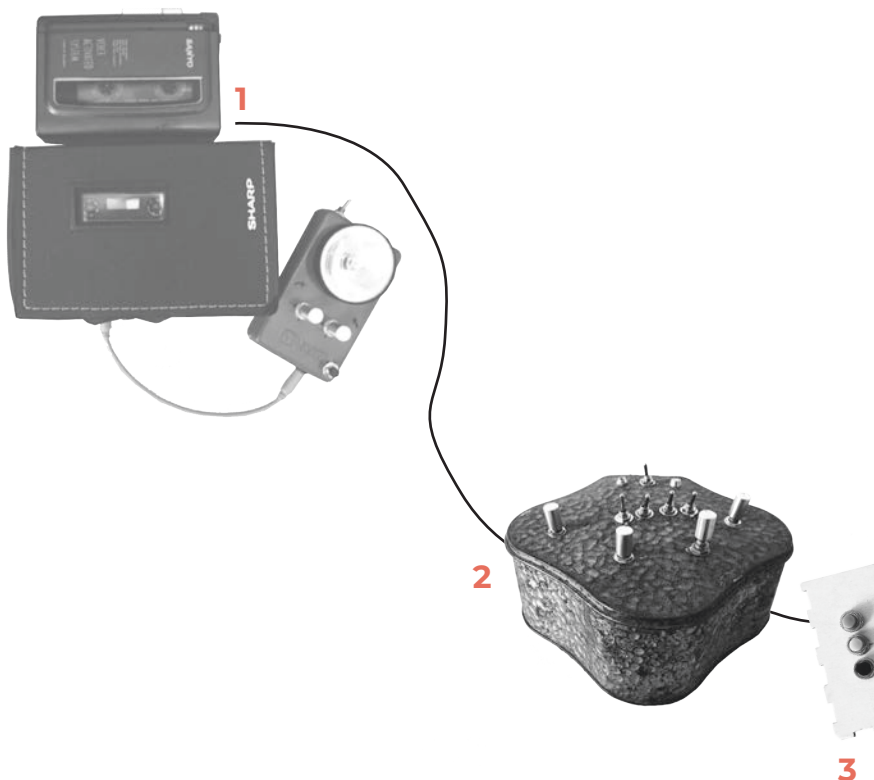
The **Bow Box** is an instrument with many steel wire springs of different thicknesses screwed onto a wooden box. A piezo is attached to the bottom of the box, which is plugged to a delay effect. I play this instrument with a violin bow, aiming to achieve various tonalities and overtones due to the different materialities, thickness, and varying pressure of the bow strokes. In the composition, this instrument is combined with continuous breathing. As a result, the two specific sounds merge, and the listener can't distinguish the instrument from the human voice.



The **Spring Guitar** was constructed by assembling found metallic objects, springs, strings, etc. I chose to play this instrument to get accents in the musical composition, getting the same beat of the *toaca*.



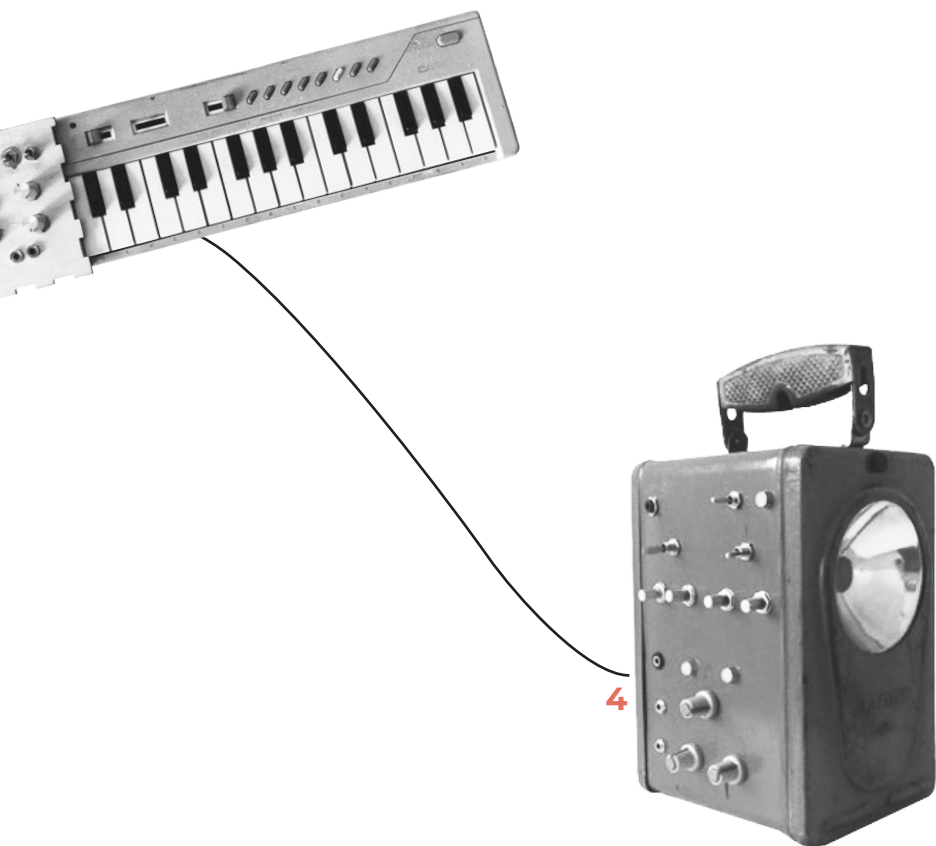
**Toacă** - One informs the others that someone from the community has died by sending out particular sound signals – by either beating the wooden *toaca* or by ringing the church bells. The sound of the *toaca* represents in the composition a key transition element in the performance, marking the progression from stillness to the powerful sounds of the beats and voice.



1. Tape Player connected with an Echo-Delay;
2. Phonic Taxidermist 47.2b, Maplin Voice Vandal clone, circuit designed by [circuitbenders.co.uk](http://circuitbenders.co.uk);
3. Circuit-bent Casio, built and designed by Florine Mougel;
4. Modular Synthesizer / built and designed by Andreea Vlăduț and Florine Mougel.

### The electronic sound section

transitions from the serenity and introspective part to the powerful techno beats, and the variety of frequency ranges, having an immediate impact on the body.



# the choreography of the non-linguistic aspects of grief

Lament has an antiphonal structure, which functions as a mnemonic device and alternates between sobbing and discourse, between language and non-language. In a lament, the mourner creates a bridge between the sorrow for the deceased and the previous losses. The performance of the professional mourners requires not just a discursive expression of pain but also non-linguistic features - **crying out, swaying the body rhythmically, sobbing, sighing, whispering**. The lamenting stirred by inner emotions evolves into a powerful embodied expression.

The professional mourners have the essential task of helping the deceased find the right path beyond the world. Their performance is theatrical, through the dialogue with the dead, crying and screamings, and their out-of-control body movements. Professional dirge singers, in their excessive performances, know how to regulate their emotions, conducting the listener to a cathartic state.

**Excessive breathing** is an element that the listener/viewer can encounter in *Pneuma Lamentare*'s audio work. **Breathing is circulation**, an extension of our body reminding us of our kinship with forests on land and the underwater, more than human lifeforms. For the listener, it creates an immersive space through the sensation of circularity. Working with the breath is a practice. It is also essential to the mourning ritual, which invites grounding to slow down, allow vulnerability, and open up space for various cries of pain and grief, inviting our somatic memories. (Christa Wall, a quote from the article: In a dialogue about grief)

**Sobbing** is a cyclical component with different variations. It punctuates important passages of the lament and it goes from the high to low register.

**Sighing** is hearable when the breath becomes audible. There is a blurred line between breath and sighs.

A dialogue between all the elements incorporates a somatic process.

imagine  
you are are sinking into soft soil



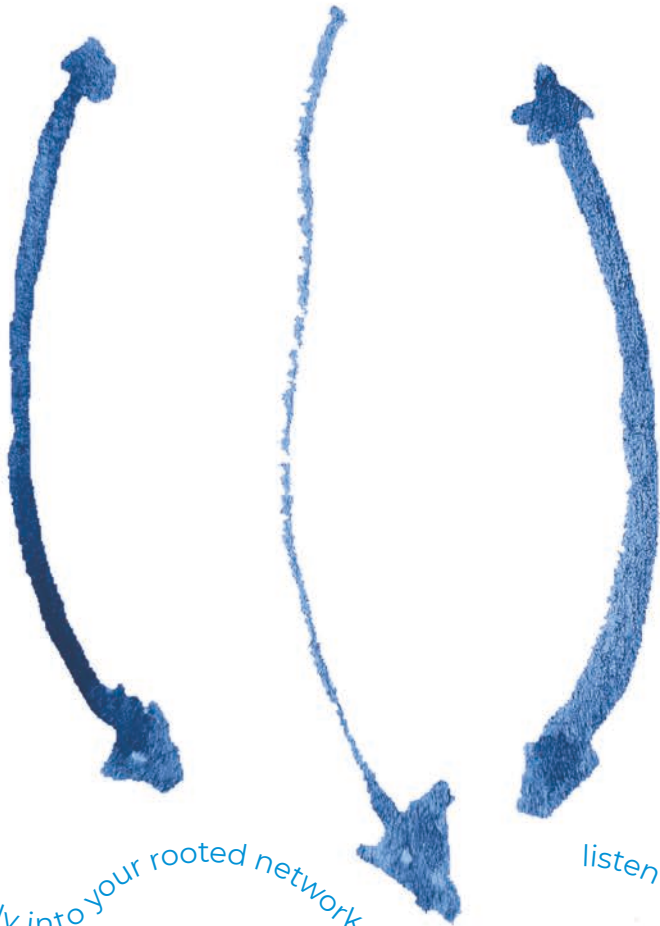
you  
are becoming part of  
entangled circles of  
compassion care and  
compost

breathe  
cyclically  
unfolding



pause, rest  
and restart  
the circle

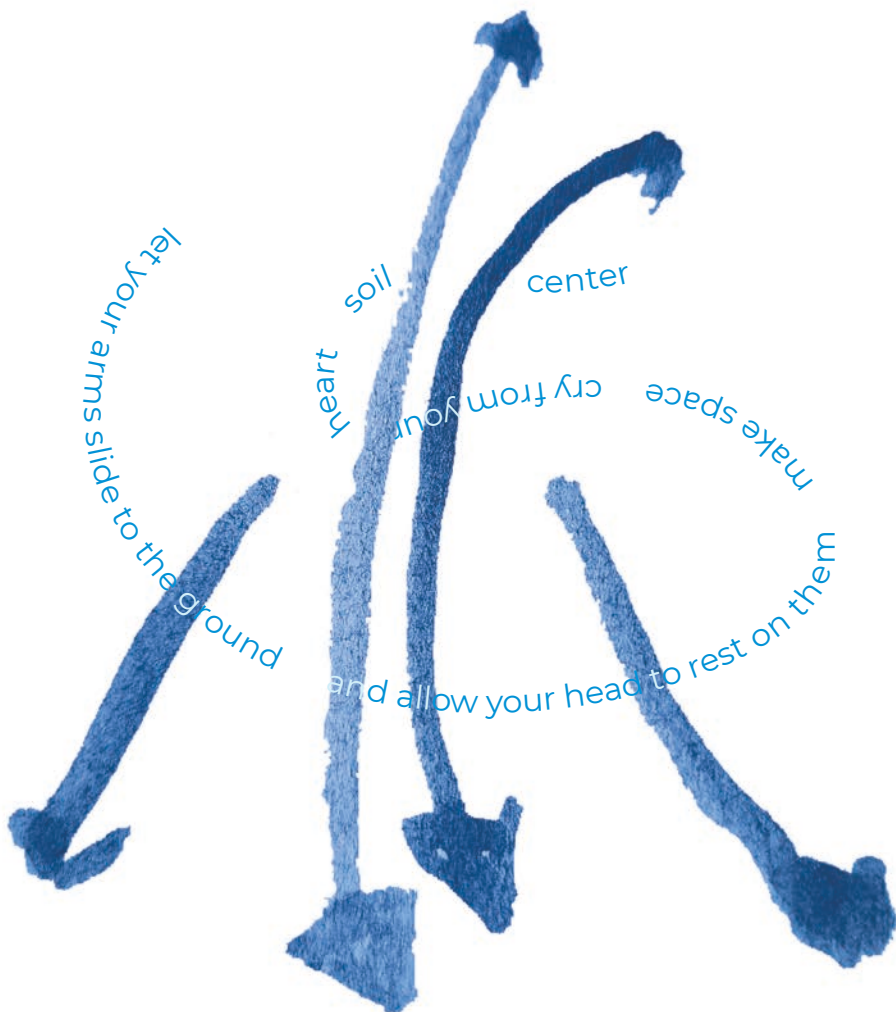


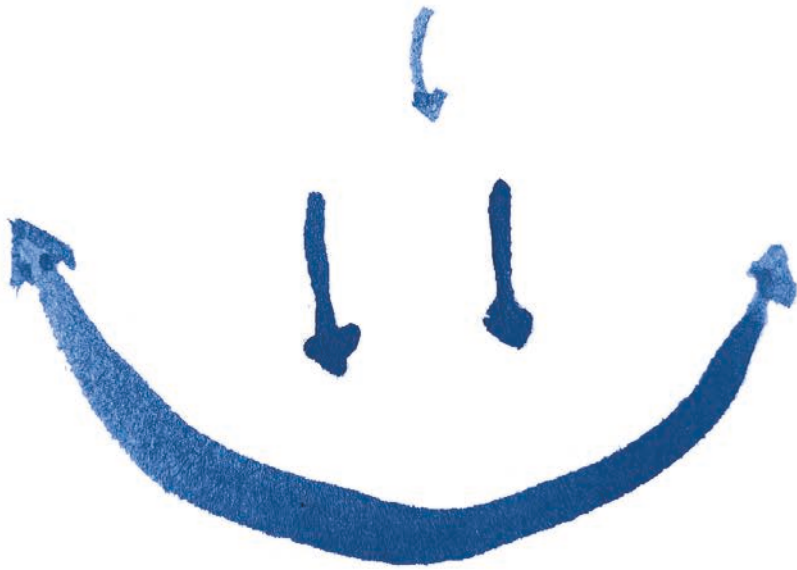


breathe deeply into your rooted network

listen

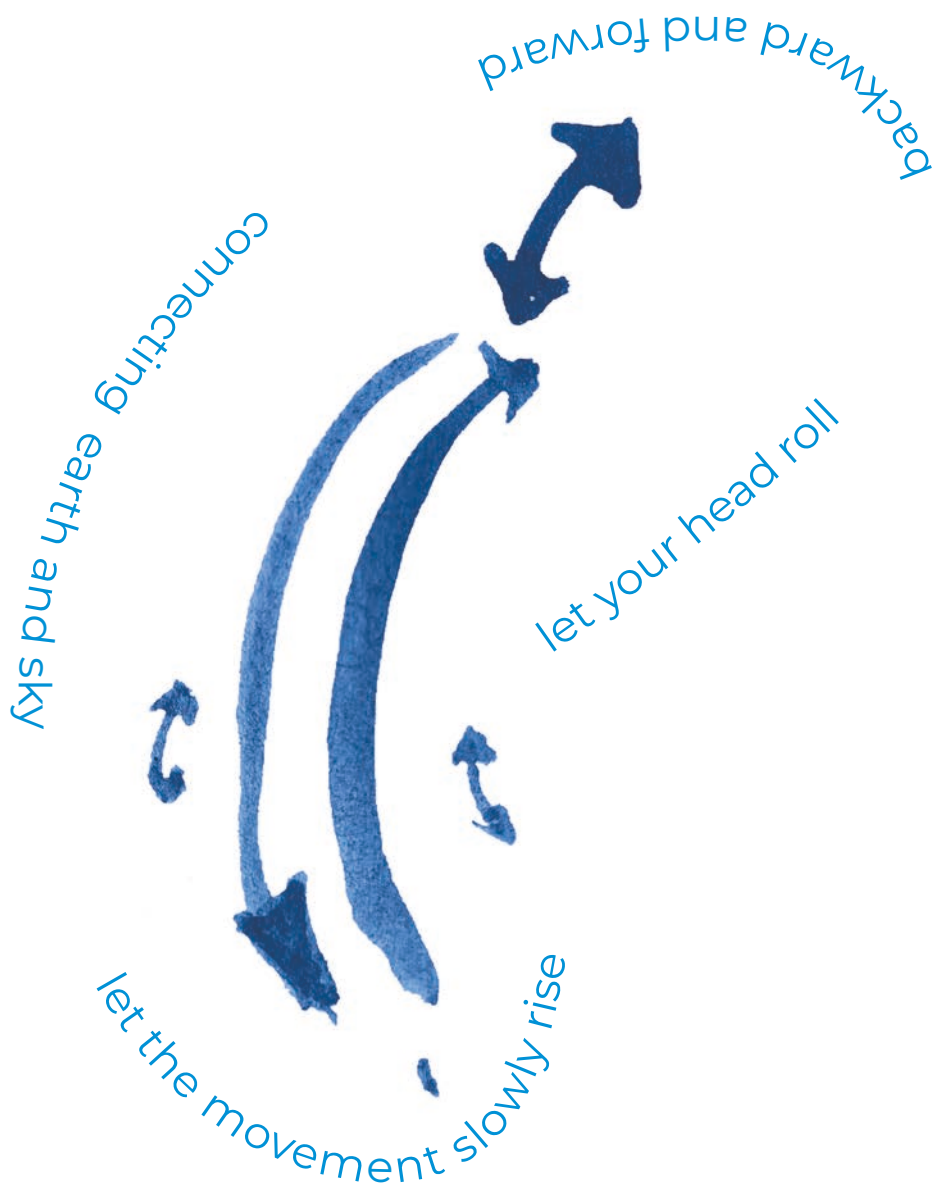
its full of dancing microorganisms





fall into the sound of your sail of breath

eroding linear time grids of worlding



imagine  
your arms as a prolongation of  
your heart  
eventually drawing circles  
on the floor  
slow down the movement  
caressing the ground  
softly



open up  
embodying cyclical processes of  
time

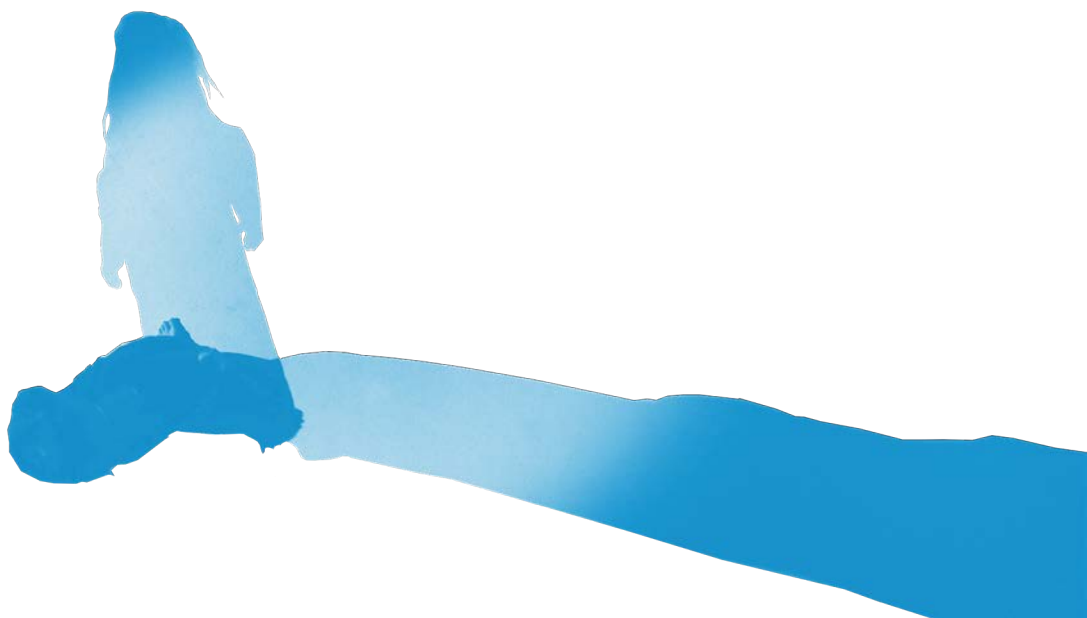






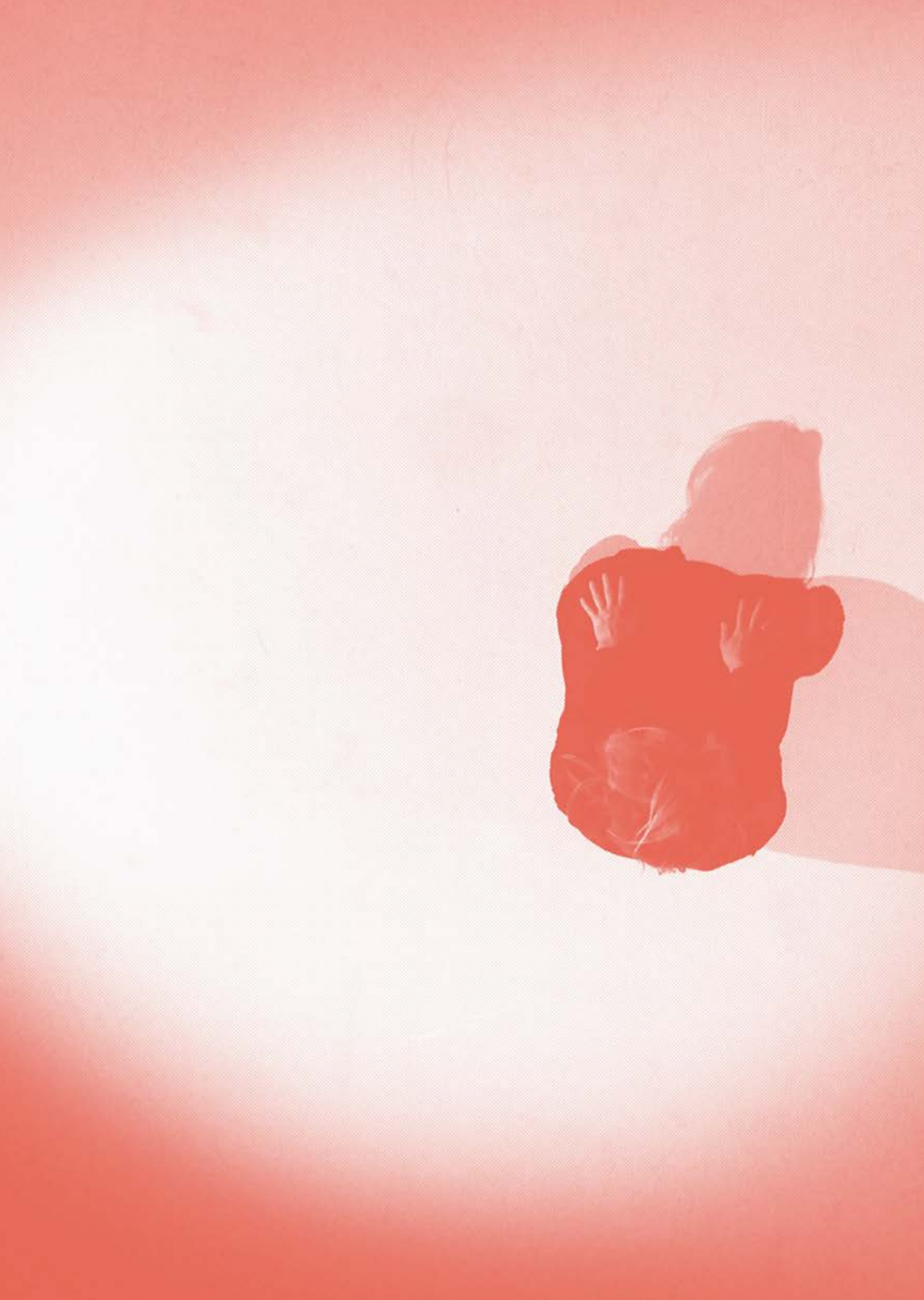


passageway

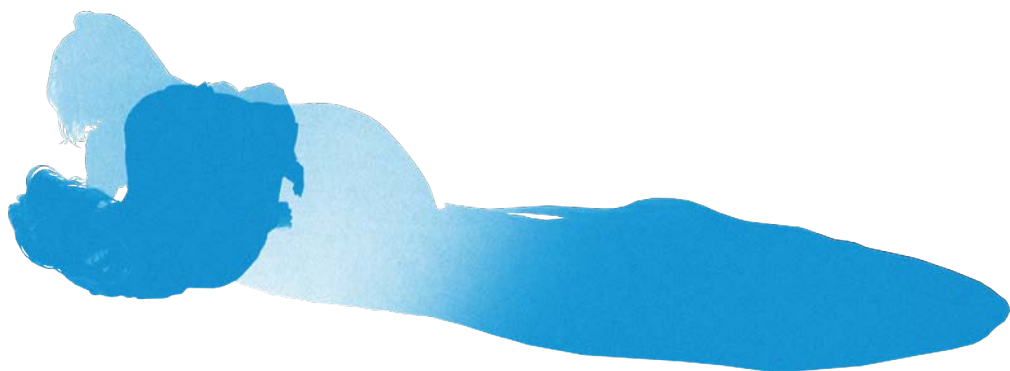


The image features a minimalist design with a white background. In the top right corner, there is a solid blue shape. In the bottom left corner, there is a white shape with a blue outline. The word "passageway" is written in a red, serif font, oriented vertically in the center of the page.

passageway







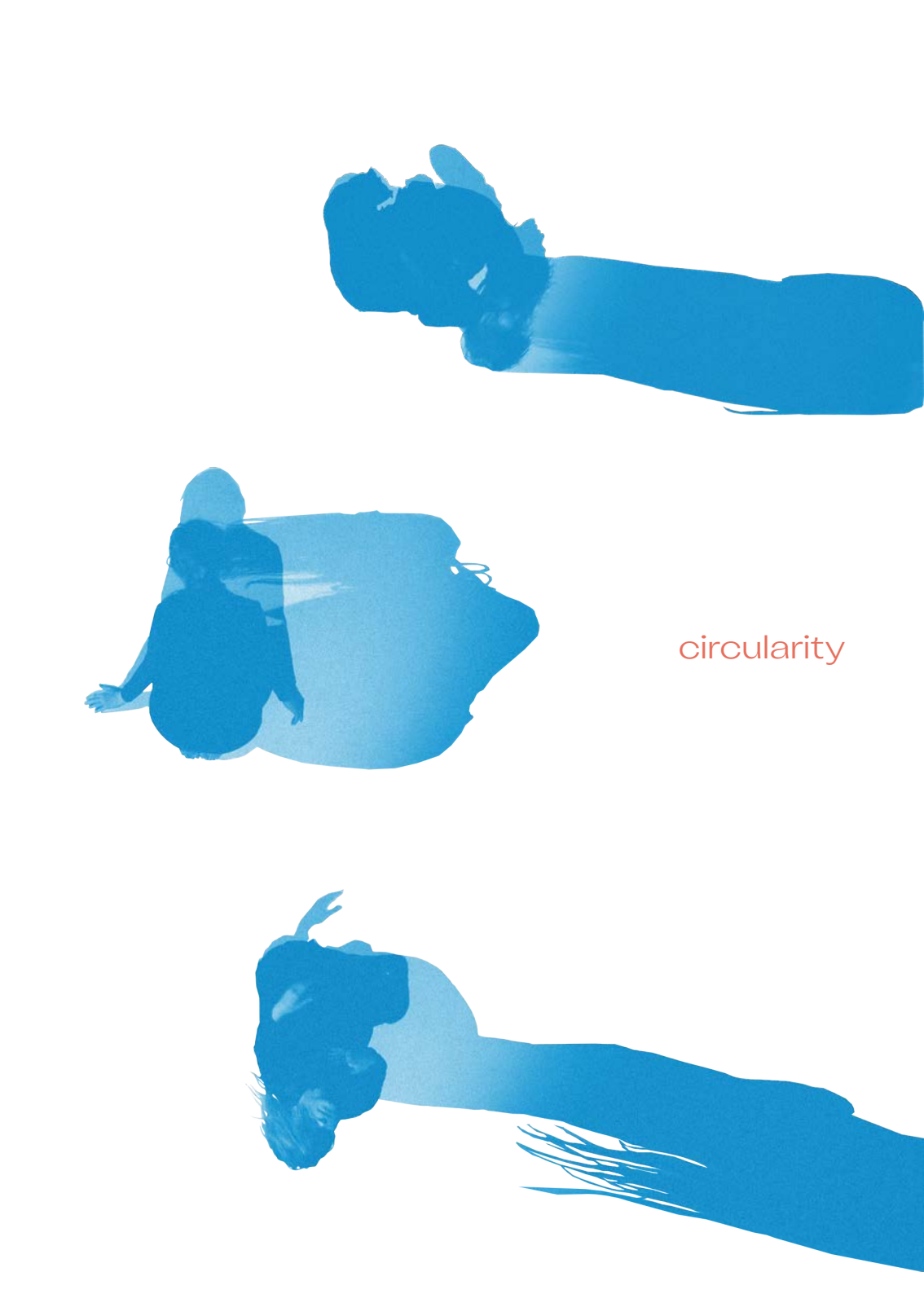
sway





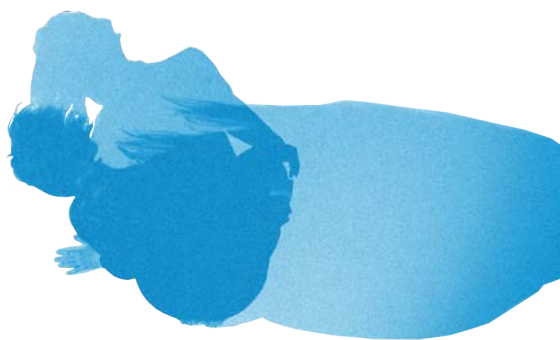
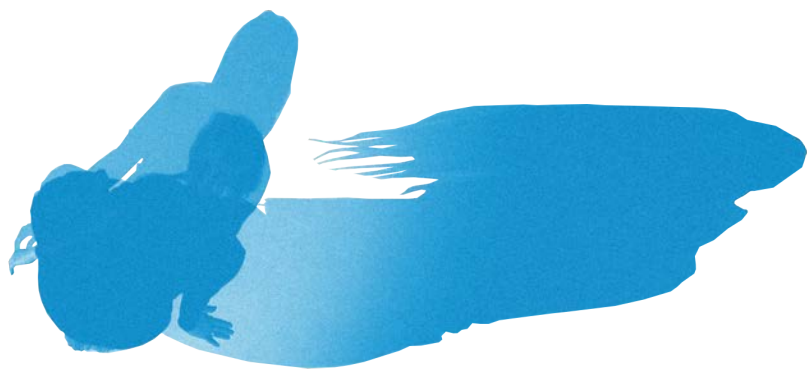
sway





circularity





circularity







anchor





in between sky and earth





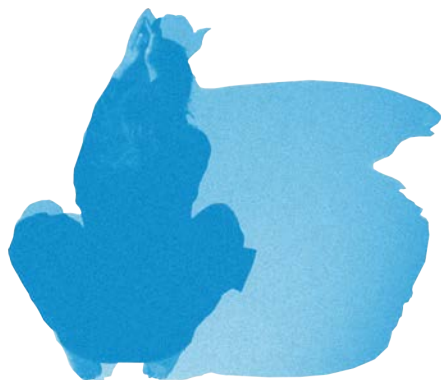
in between sky and earth











retracing  
circles



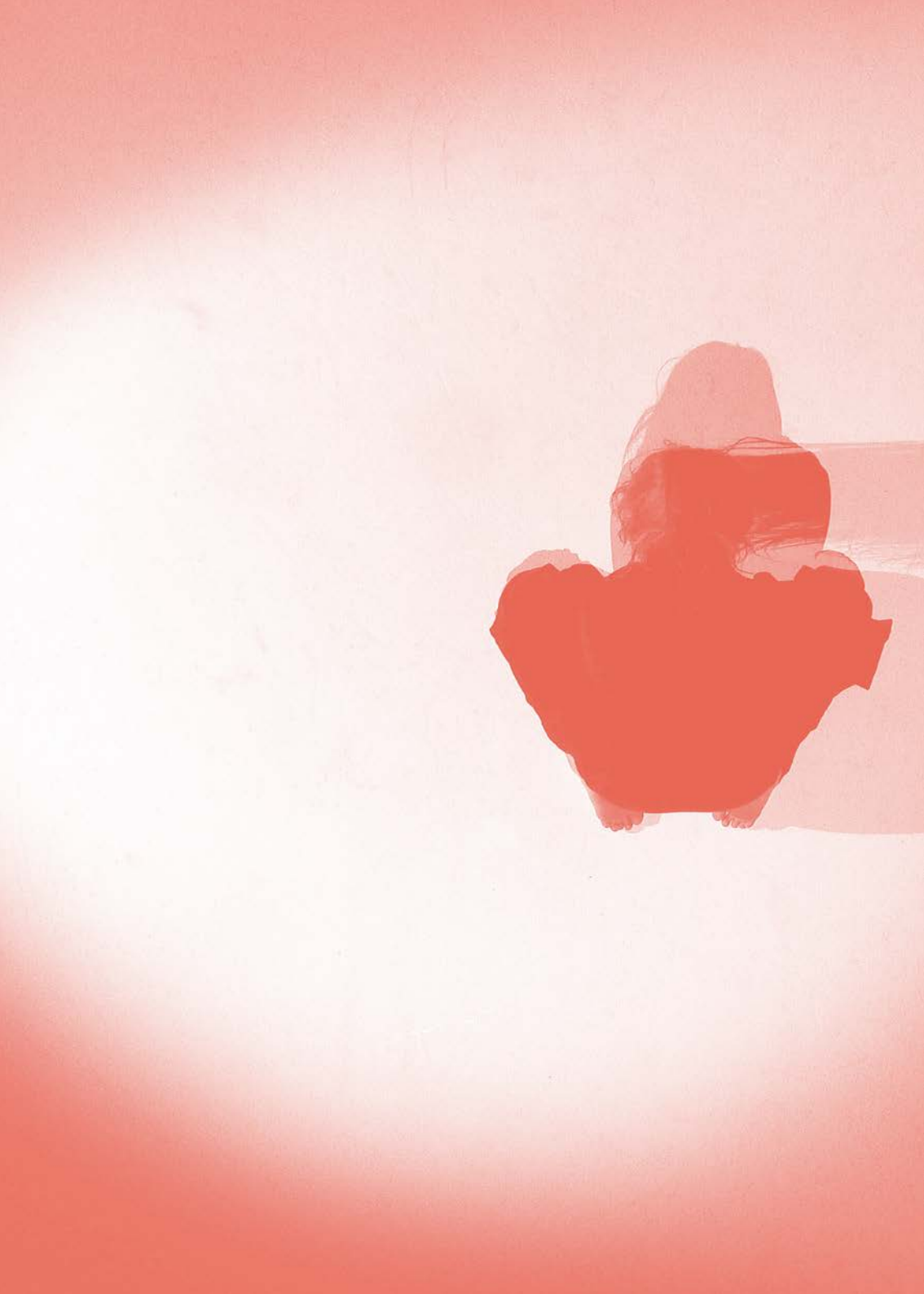
retracing  
circles













a dialogue about grief

pneuma lamentare

tool of resistance

tracing h



How to cope with loss

performing individual and public memories

Voice as a

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# colophon

## font

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