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THE LAST HARMONY: POETRY BOOK ILLUSTRATION AND
DESIGN

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Title

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Abstract

The purpose of the following thesis is to describe the process of illustrating and designing a poetry book. The task was a part of a collaboration with a Lebanese writer who holds a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature.

The implementation of the project required knowledge in several fields as well as the ability to make personal observations and utilize them in practice. The theoretical part of the written report examines the function of illustration and the basics of book design and discusses the stylistic and technical influences at the basis of the illustrator's works. The practical part of the thesis demonstrates the various stages of illustration and the book design process and provides insight into the challenges faced during decision making, as well as the illustrator's personal approach to visualizing the written word.

The outcome of the project is a prototype of a poetry book. It is important to note that the project is incomplete, as more poems and illustrations are likely to be added to the book in the future. No definite plans regarding publishing have yet been made.

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1 INTRODUCTION

People have used image as the primary form of communication since ancient times. It is the international language of storytelling and representing ideas.

Illustration is a versatile and effective means of expression, which has not yet acquired a firm position in the marketplace or become a topic for elaborate analysis (Hofstede 2012, 4). Illustrations differ from regular artwork in that they usually serve a purpose that goes beyond mere decoration and often require an accompanying narrative; consequently, they are frequently found in books and articles.

An image can serve to capture attention and make the first impression; the cover of a novel might compel a potential reader to look further into it. This is why the design of a book often serves as an important tool for generating interest in its written contents.

Character design and illustration have long been my primary areas of interest. Working in those fields, whether professionally or not, is immensely helpful in increasing one's observational skills and getting familiar with various drawing techniques and styles through practice. I wanted my thesis to touch upon the topic of illustration in one way or another; therefore, when I was offered the chance to illustrate a book, I considered it to be a valuable opportunity for realizing that goal.

The idea of starting a book illustration project came up in 2014 during my visit to Lebanon, when a friend suggested that I illustrate the poems she has been working on lately. As the negotiations continued, we decided to go through the full process of designing a book. The first step of the project was selecting an artwork style that would correspond with the book's written contents. The rest of the process was mainly focused on improving the drawing style and technique while simultaneously gaining more knowledge in the field of book design and applying that knowledge in practice. The thesis serves as a means to analyze and justify the choices and methods that aided in achieving those objectives.

2 THE PROJECT

The Last Harmony is a compilation of poems written by Reem El Ahmad. The book is mainly targeted at young adults who are discovering the world of poetry. The written works are relatively short, and mostly carry a romantic, often dark, tone to them. While mostly told in first person, the stories portray the struggles, thoughts, and experiences of various individuals, whose lives the author embodies and talks about like her own, making those tales more personal and engaging. The poems cover topics related to nature, death, loneliness, affection, and music, and often remain open-ended, leaving the reader the option for own interpretation and conclusions. They are written in English and are partially influenced by the works of Finnish rock artists, despite the fact that the author has lived in Lebanon her entire life.

Due to the overall mood of the poems, the author and I have decided that it would be appropriate to make the book design in black and white. The illustrations for the poetry and the cover of the book were done using ink and paper, with some digital retouching applied at the later stages of the process. The task required familiarity with drawing styles and techniques, along with insight into the basics of book design and publishing. Throughout the process, I relied on previously acquired experience in the field, as well as using relevant sources in order to gather new information.

Since I mostly carried out my part of the project while in Finland, communication with the author had to be mainly established online. While I prefer receiving feedback and carrying out negotiations in person, the author and I managed to achieve a good level of understanding and exchanged our ideas efficiently due to our long-term knowledge of each other.

While we are planning to get the book published at some point in the future, no concrete arrangements have yet been made. It is likely that work on the project will continue, and more poems and illustrations will be added to the book.

2.1 Cultural influences

Reem El Ahmad was born and raised in Lebanon, where she has been surrounded by the Middle-Eastern society and traditions, Arabic literature being one of them. Curious in nature, she wanted to discover new genres as well, and after being introduced to rock and metal music in her teens she immediately became indulged in the new and unfamiliar culture. While the melodies amused her, Reem was also highly interested in the concepts behind the songs. As she listened to bands such as Sonata Arctica, Tarot, and Nightwish, all of which usually use English in their lyrics, she would try to guess the words and their pronunciation and then translate them in order to comprehend the broader meaning. Reem became fascinated by those messages and in order to appreciate them even more, she decided to study the language more seriously. She acquired the basic skills on her own and then majored in English literature in college.

As she got more proficient in the recently learned language, Reem became even more compelled by the talents of the songwriters and the imagery they used. Having had experience in writing poems in Arabic, she tried to do the same in English and discovered that it gave her more comfort and pleasure, which led her to pursue that path. *The Last Harmony* combines works written at different stages of Reem's development as a poet.

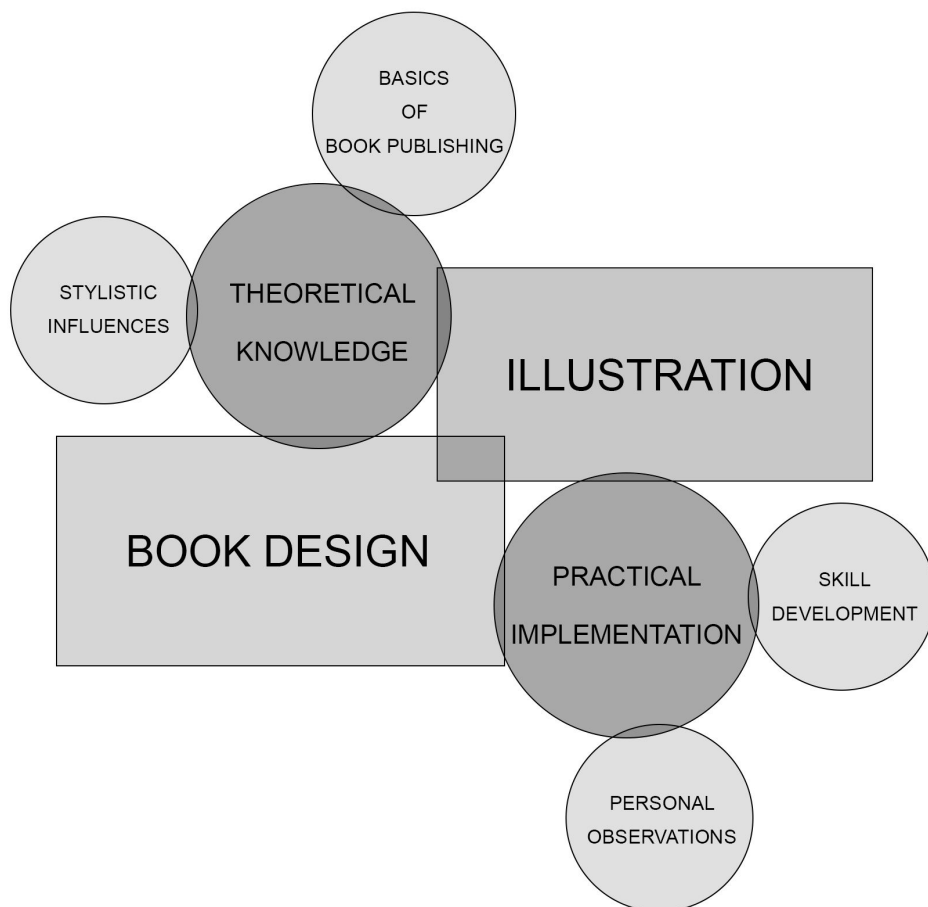
2.2 Target audience

Due to the fact that it is written in English, the book has the potential to be published for audiences outside the Arabic countries. While its genre could find appeal among various groups of people, it is mainly targeted at readers from the same age group as the author—young adults who appreciate literature and yearn for self-expression.

I am targeting young adults by dealing with universal themes that matter to a large group of people. I care to share some of my humble experiences among an audience with similar interests. Especially in my country where the popularity of reading is growing. I also want people of all types to enjoy reading poetry because the pleasure that you get from it, its images, its ideas... You cannot find it elsewhere.

3 FRAMEWORK

Book design is a multidisciplinary field, and working on *The Last Harmony* required a sufficient degree of understanding in several areas. While the thesis is mainly concerned with a demonstration of the steps taken to create the illustrations and layout, it also touches upon the theoretical knowledge that supported the process. The execution of the tasks relied not only on researching frequently discussed topics such as typography and the basics of book publishing but on more abstract concepts as well, including my personal approach to the visualization of the written word and stylistic influences that the works of other artists have had on my illustrations. The visual framework (Picture 1) demonstrates the interconnection of those aspects.



Picture 1. Visual framework.

4 BOOK ILLUSTRATION

Before discussing the techniques, colors, and media that would be used to illustrate a story or poem, one should keep in mind book illustration's primary function: a visual depiction of text. Although far from being solely utilitarian when it appears in poetry and story books, an illustration differs from a stand-alone artwork and represents more than just a visually pleasing decorative element. That being said, an illustration does not have to come in the form of a “screenshot” of a particular scene in the text. Quite the contrary, an image has the capability to complement and enhance a written work by offering additional elements to it, all while remaining relevant to the original storyline.

When choosing the subjects or themes of his illustrations, the illustrator is not merely ‘selecting’, but inventing images that could accompany the text. Even when he chooses to visualize as faithfully as possible a scene described in detail by the author, his imagination, fed by individual memories and associations, will visualize that scene in a personal way--- Not every element in the resulting illustrations will therefore necessarily be traceable to a passage from the text. (Hofstede 2012, 28.)

I personally felt that illustrating poetry especially applies to the above statement, given that poets, similarly to songwriters, tend to use allegorical expressions in their work, providing readers the ability to interpret the text in more than one way. That factor turned out to be both a perk and a challenge while illustrating; while I had a chance to explore various ideas and give more freedom to the imagination, the number of possibilities to choose from might have made it harder to select the concepts that would be used in the final works. The decisions had to be made with a careful consideration of the implications behind certain words and expressions. What is the general mood of the poems? How does the narrator feel? Is there a particular element mentioned in the text that should be emphasized through visual portrayal? The lack of a concrete set of rules for tackling those issues challenged me to look beyond what is easily observable and make decisions within a specific time frame.

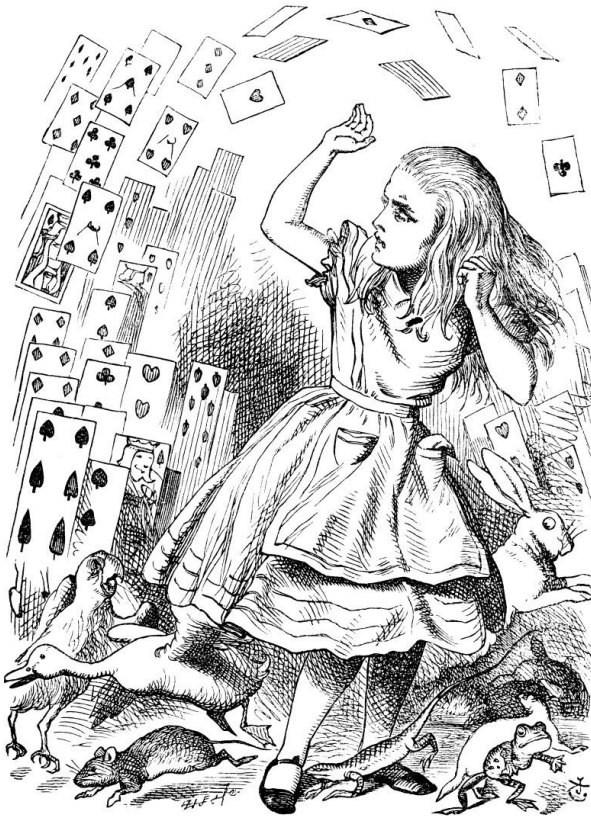
5 DRAWING PROCESS

5.1 Style

My first task prior to making any decisions regarding the potential style of the illustrations was to gain familiarity with the poems and their overall tone. Whilst I had read some of the author's early poems as independent works, now it was time to view them as interconnected parts of a whole and to look for common stylistic and thematic elements that would allow me to determine the tools and techniques I was going to use in my drawings.

While the written works do not fall under a particular, all-inclusive category, the common characteristics present in them become palpable upon reviewing the book. Despite the fact that some poems touch upon the subjects of death and despair, whereas others are more optimistic, those belonging to the latter type are still serene and contemplative rather than upbeat. Furthermore, recurring allusions to loneliness and longing are present throughout the whole book. We decided that an appropriate way to visualize the predominantly melancholic atmosphere of the book would be to make the illustrations in black ink, which has been my preferred artwork medium for about ten years. I have used it for variously styled artwork, and for this project, our choice was in favor of the detailed, dramatic appearance, inspired by 19th century wood engravings.

Wood engraving, a printing technique based on carving images into blocks of wood, gained popularity with the rise in the demand for illustrated material that occurred during the 19th century, despite it having been invented earlier (Streusand 2002, 2). I have been reminded of my childhood encounters with wood engraved illustrations while reading about Franklin Booth, an American artist who practiced duplicating the appearance of the engraved lines as a child, while mistakenly assuming they were ink drawings (Reed). When I used to observe artwork of artists such as John Tenniel (Picture 2), my attention was mainly drawn to the arrangement of lines and the way they create shading and texture, rather than the tools behind them. Eventually, I have grown

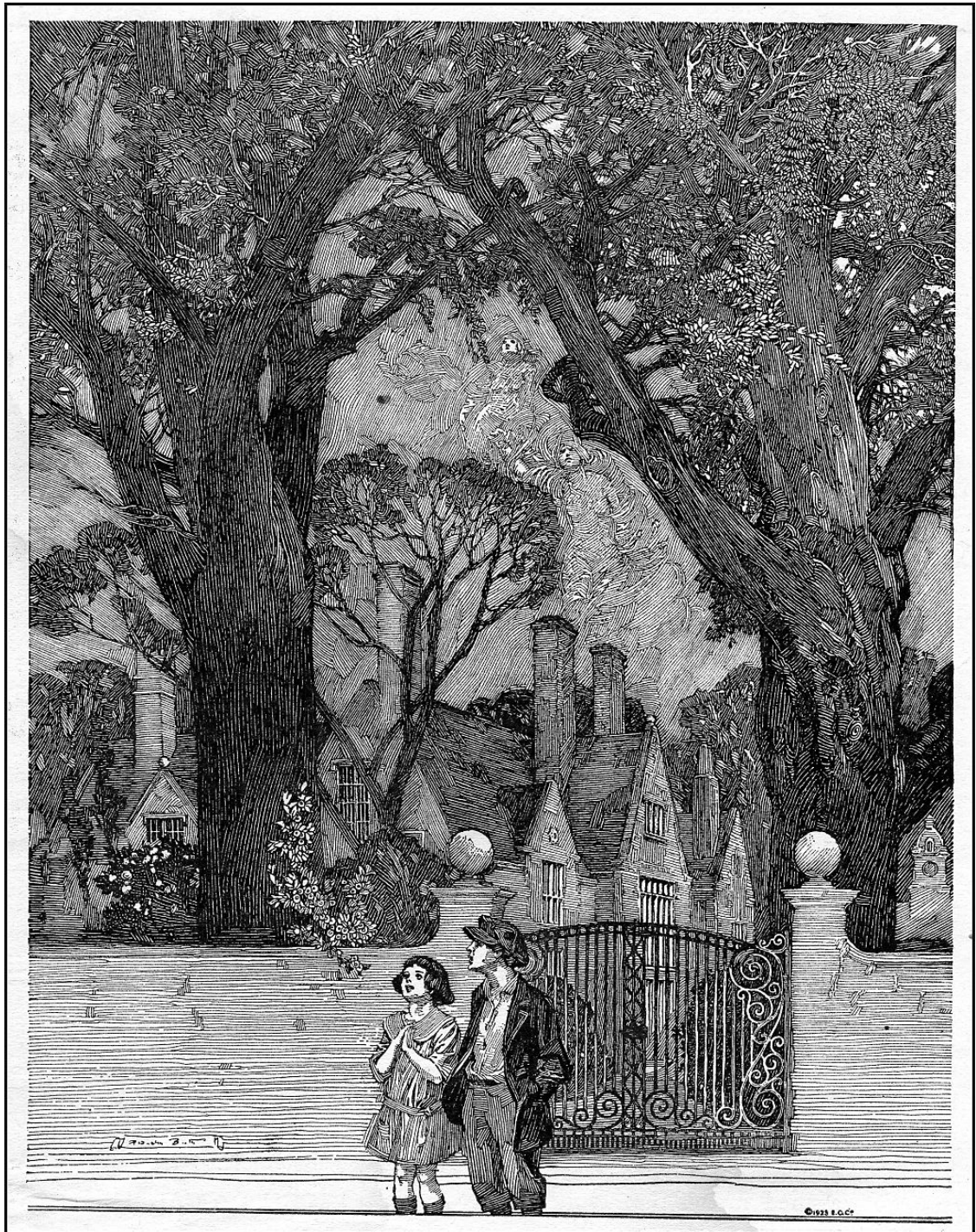


fond of drawings where depth and value are obtained through the use of lines rather than color, regardless of whether those lines were created by hand or a carved woodcut, and have been trying to incorporate the same principle into my own works.

Picture 2. An illustration for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, John Tenniel, 1865.



Picture 3. *The Lion's Kingdom*, John Vernon Lord, 1989.



Picture 4. Franklin Booth, 1923.



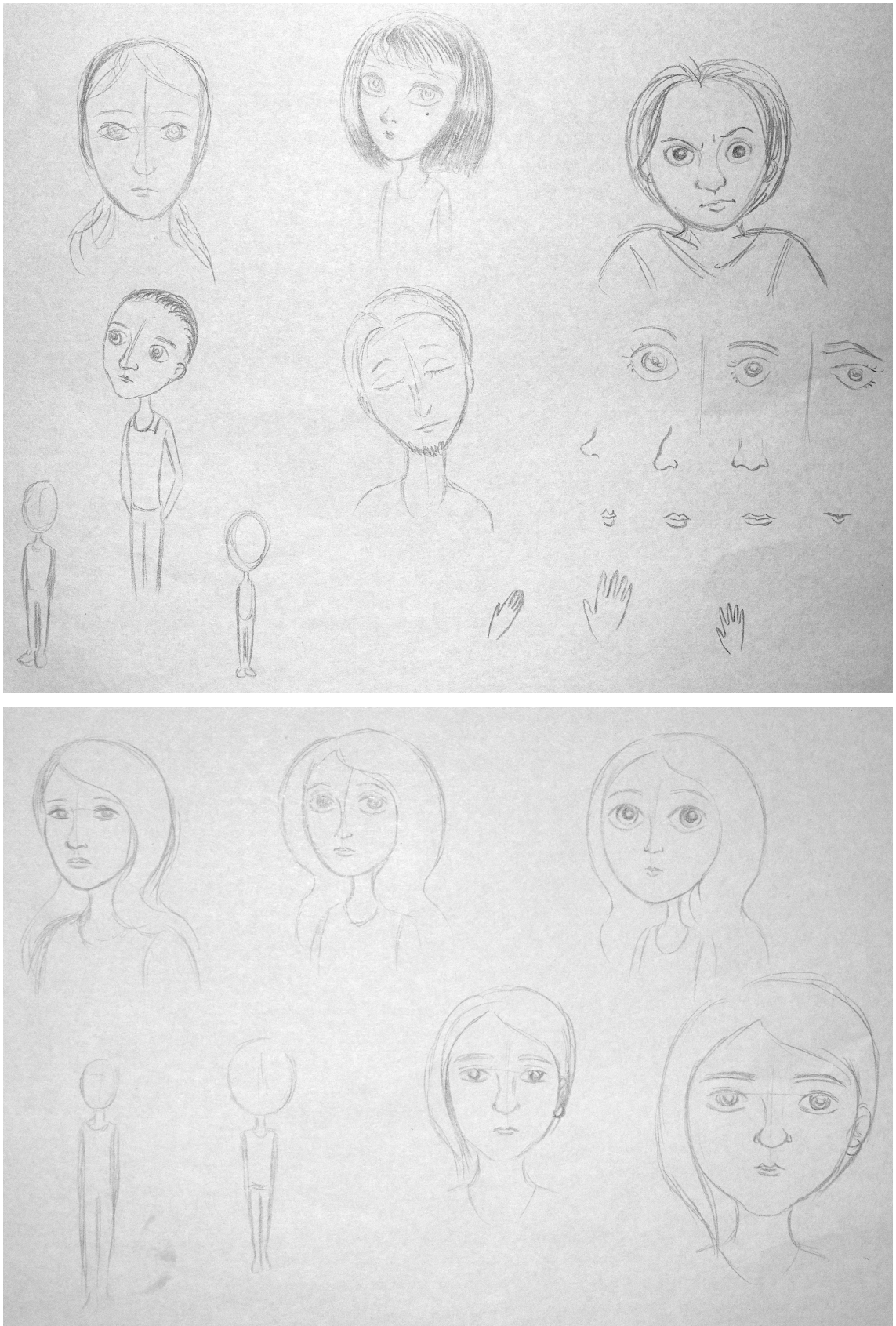
Picture 5. Little Red Riding Hood, Gustave Doré, 1883 Wood engraving.

5.2 Character Design

In addition to the tools and drawing techniques that would be used to create the characters and other composing elements of the illustrations, another factor to consider was the design of those elements. Certain features, such as the outlook and the degree of realism of the characters, are independent of the tools used to achieve them but are equally essential and should not be left inconsistent throughout the book.

Despite initially not knowing how many illustrations will contain visualizations of the protagonists, deciding upon their general appearance was of major importance. Since I planned to make the background and inanimate objects rather realistic, the characters were going to be the most prominent manifestation of the illustrations' intended style. Furthermore, human or “humanized” beings, as well as their facial expressions and poses, play an important role in helping the reader relate to experiences depicted in written stories.

Our choice was in favor of people having doll-like features, with exaggerated heads, large eyes, and small bodies. I started off with various sketches of the characters and their features, where I experimented with the extent to which their designs could shift from realism without the book losing too much of its seriousness (Picture 6). The characters were not going to necessarily be included in the book; the sketches were mostly done to provide an idea about their overall style and help me get accustomed to it.



Picture 6. Experimenting with character design.

To some extent, the visual style of the characters has been derived from a subset of the entertainment culture that is based on a fascination with the eerie and supernatural. The main sources of inspiration lie in the mysterious side of the circus with its magic acts and freak shows, as well as puppetry—a performance art based on bringing marionettes and other dolls to life, all while remaining anonymous. I have always associated particular puppets and dolls, mainly the ones with large, expressive eyes, with a certain sense of mystique and sentimentality, and have sometimes tried drawing characters that exhibit similar attributes. Both the author and I felt that the emotionally-charged nature of the poems could be conveyed by applying such features to the book protagonists as well.

Some aspects of the character design were loosely influenced by the works of Tim Burton, a film director and animator whose “cinematic universe is indebted to German expressionism” (Conterio 2015). Burton's work is characterized by the abundance of dramatic lighting, strong contrasts, dark colored themes and surrealistic perspectives—qualities intrinsic to German Expressionist cinematography. Expressionism, a cultural movement that emerged in the early 20th century, aimed to convey subjective experiences through distortion and exaggeration. While having debatable origins when it comes to art and literature, its experimental nature in the motion picture industry was rooted in Germany's isolation during World War I and the government's ban on foreign films. (Darsa 2013.) The aesthetics of Expressionist cinema are noticeable in Burton's work, as his characters often exhibit exaggerated proportions, and the geometrical shapes of buildings and others structures in his movies deviate from architectural conventions. Despite being influenced by a style that mainly covered serious themes, he almost always incorporates humor into his works. Similarly, our idea behind having characters with more cartoon-like features was partly a way to add a less serious element to the generally gloomy content.



Picture 7. Still from a German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920.



Picture 8. Still from Tim Burton's *Vincent*, 1982.

5.3 Idea implementation

One rather challenging aspect of the project was coming up with ideas for the illustrations within the provided time frame. Our goal was to explore possibilities beyond images that are a literal depiction of the text, as well as to avoid making them resemble each other too much. The project gave me a valuable opportunity to illustrate a book, and creating images that are merely "screenshots" of the text did not seem like the most efficient way to use that chance, especially given the nature of the written works I was offered to illustrate. Poetry is generally characterized by the use of symbolism and metaphorical expressions, and Reem's works were no exception.

While the ability to create abstract images provides more freedom to try out various ideas, narrowing them down to the ones that would eventually be used could sometimes prove to be difficult. Symbolic or otherwise indirect visuals should leave room for thought and serve as an addition to the story without losing relevance to the text. My goal was to come up with illustrations that either depict the overall setting of a poem or have their idea based on a particular element mentioned in the text, as long as the significance of that element extends beyond the sentence in which it appears.

In this paragraph, I am going to demonstrate my personal approach to text visualization by briefly explaining the ideas behind illustrations for the poems "Affectionate Bosom of Nature" and "Behind The Scene" (Pictures 9 and 10). "Affectionate Bosom of Nature" talks about the pleasures brought by an early summer morning. The poem puts an emphasis on the senses and has a peaceful, soothing tone. My aim was to convey the overall feeling present in the poem, and I decided to do it through the protagonist's facial expression by showing him enjoying the breeze and the sun's first rays while appearing content and relaxed. This is one of the most straightforward drawings in the book, as it basically forgoes the symbolism that is present at least to some degree in the rest of the illustrations. "Behind The Scene" tells the story of an actress who conceals her personal sorrows through the use of her theatrical skills. The illustration for the poem depicts two versions of the heroine: the performer who is about to appear before the audience, and the actual person behind the roles who has to remain in the shadows.



Picture 9. Affectionate Bosom of Nature.

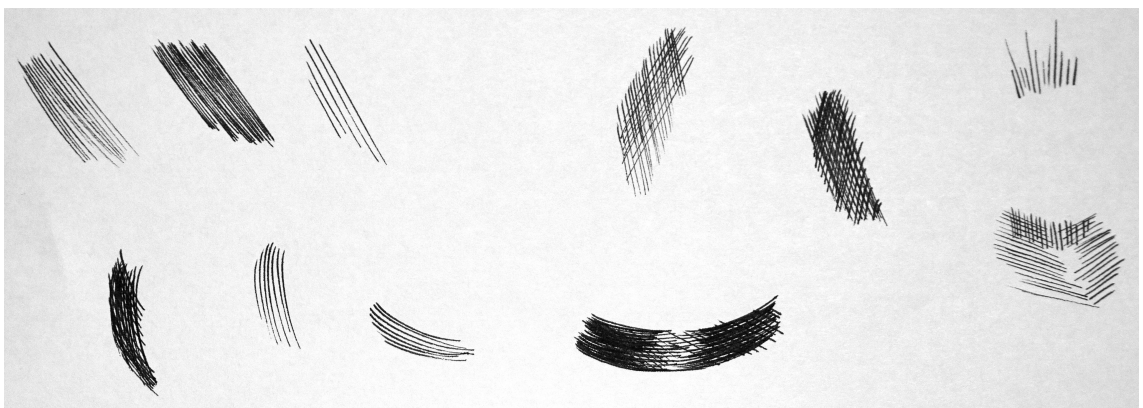


Picture 10. Behind The Scene.

5.4 Technique

Ink drawings can take many forms, from simplistic images created using light, delicate lines to dramatic, highly detailed scenes. I started making comic strips using ink liners when I was about 13 years old. The hobby has helped me learn to visualize motion and imitate shading using solely black lines. The aim was to create images that are simple and dynamical, and there was mostly not much depth or detail to them. Later on, as I have started using ink for independent drawings, I began experimenting with various methods to imitate texture and give a sense of volume to the objects and characters. The techniques I use usually vary depending on the context of the drawing. Some of the works are intentionally simplistic and “light”, whereas others are more intricate. Pictures 12 and 13 demonstrate some of my ink drawings that were made within the past 10 years.

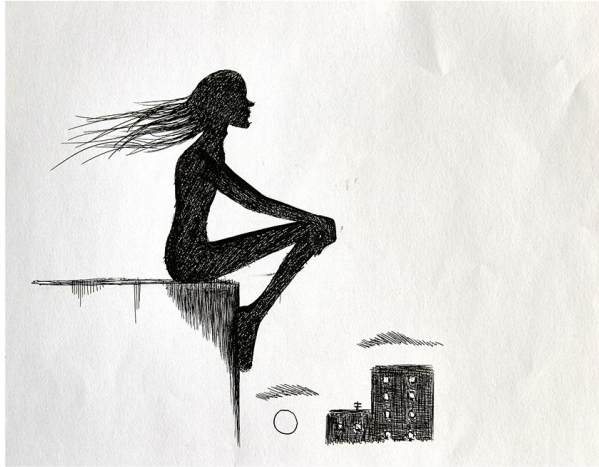
There are several ways in which ink can be applied to control contrast and generate texture. What distinguishes this medium is that transitions in value are made by arranging lines in a particular direction and distance from one another. Hatching, the technique I most commonly use, is based on using either straight or cross-contour lines and altering the spaces between them to regulate the density of different areas. Cross-hatching, which is also frequently present in my drawings, relies on the same principle but uses lines that cross over each other. (Fussell.) The project proved to be a good way to utilize and develop my technical skills in the area by obligating me to regularly practice in order to achieve the desired result.



Picture 11. Various forms of hatching.



Picture 12. Examples of my ink drawings (1).

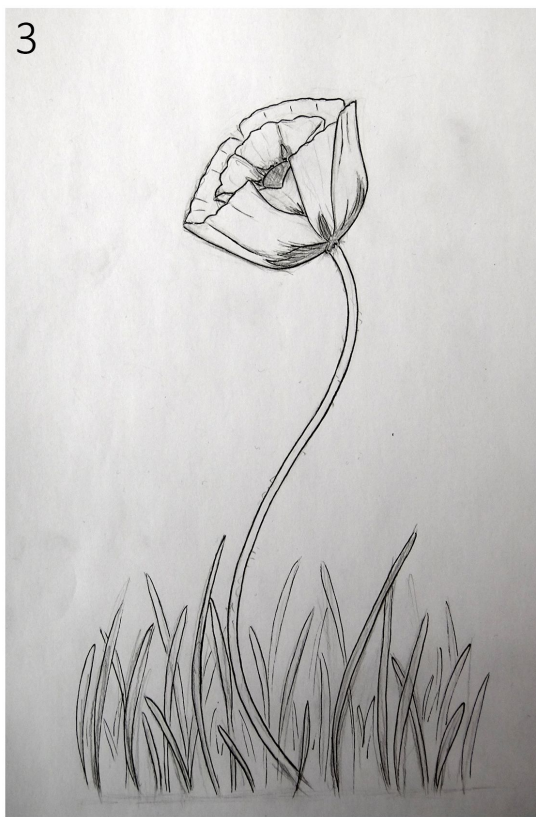


Picture 13. Examples of my ink drawings (2).

5.5 From a sketch to an illustration

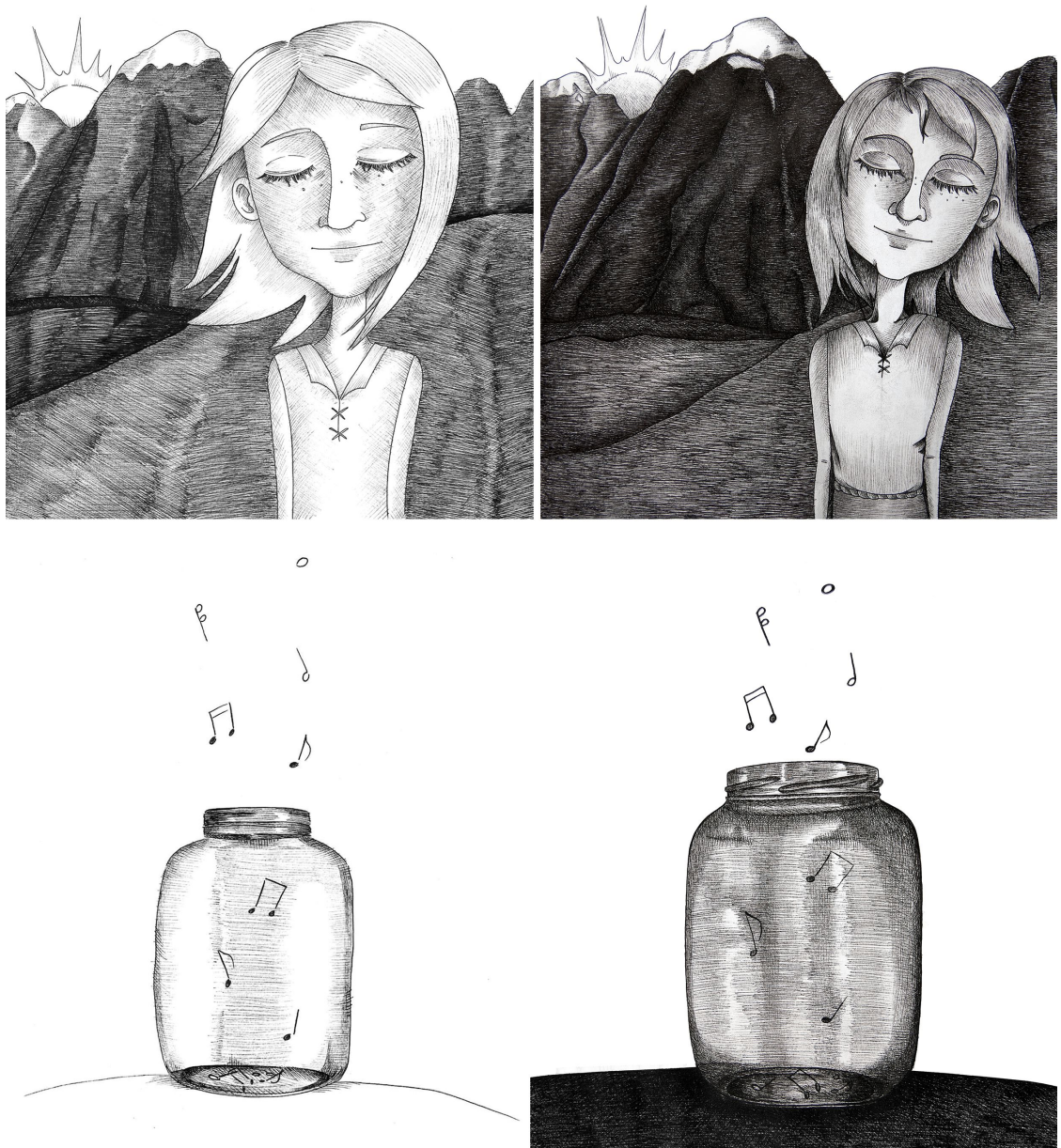
To me, sketching serves as a brainstorming method; therefore, it was one of the first steps of the project even when I still had a very vague idea about my course of action. Instead of waiting to come up with a concept before applying it on paper, I often use sketching as a way of arriving at that concept. The initial drawings might have little to do with the final version and can include seemingly random representations of my thoughts regarding the subject at hand (Appendix 1 1). The later stages of the process can involve choosing between several entirely different images or having one that gets altered and developed while the original idea is maintained. All those scenarios applied to my work on *The Last Harmony* as well.

Instead of working on each poem one by one, I went through all of them from time to time, to see if I could view any of them from a different perspective, or discover new details that could be incorporated into my drawings. After setting my mind on the idea that would be developed in the final illustration, I made several versions of the same setting, with variations in composition, perspective, and the poses of the characters. When the desired outlook was determined, the next step was to produce clearer, less sketchy pencil outlines, to make it easier to trace them with ink later on. Often, even while making a more finalized drawing, I still found room for experimenting with the outlook of the characters and the positions of elements. Upon finishing the tracing, I used hatching to create different textures and shades and give a sense of volume to the objects. The pencil traces were erased once the ink settled. The final illustrations were photographed and digitally adjusted to preserve the original appearance. Picture 14 demonstrates the steps of the drawing and the editing process.



Picture 14. Drawing process.

In the later stages of the illustration process, I noticed a change in my drawing style and development of technical skills, which led me to completely redraw some of the earlier works. The newer versions demonstrate an improvement in the shading technique and have more depth to them as a result of a better control over contrasts and transitions in value (Picture 15).



Picture 15. Technical improvement: before (left) and after (right).

5.6 The Girl In Crimson

I will finish this section by providing a descriptive example of the drawing process and the decisions that might affect it. For that purpose, I am using my artwork for the poem “The Girl in Crimson”.

In this short poem, the narrator is reminiscing about an encounter with a girl dancing in the field. Emphasis is placed on the gracefulness of motion and harmony with the natural surroundings. I wanted to visualize those things without using an actual person as the subject, so I decided to do it through a flower instead. As the title suggests, the object of the writer's fascination is dressed in crimson. Since the mentions of the gown color make it an important element, and the illustrations are in black and white, the flower of choice would have to be of the kind that gets associated with the color red and its hues. While that applies to roses—despite there being roses of other colors as well—I wanted it to be something else due to how often roses are used in various types of images. Eventually, I chose a poppy, which is lighter, more simple and sways more easily in the wind—qualities that allow for more effective depictions of movement.

In order to avoid making the image either overly cluttered or too empty, I decided to use simple clouds and some birds as a background. My initial idea was to draw the birds during migration, but after doing some research it turned out that poppies usually bloom after the migration season is over. As a result, I ended up drawing the birds in a regular flock instead of a V formation.

The finalized illustration exhibits a shift towards realism. The shading on the flower and the grass is created using fine cross-hatching, as I did not want the surfaces of objects in this particular image to appear too crude. The presence of contrasts helps give volume to the elements. The curve of the stem prevents the flower from appearing stiff, makes an otherwise simple composition more dynamic, and portrays the girl's dancing moves. While the birds appear far in the background, they interact with the flower by following a similar line.



Picture 16. The Girl In Crimson.

6 BOOK LAYOUT

I chose InDesign as the desktop publishing software for designing the book layout. The program is convenient in that it allows an easy placement of elements and a possibility to adjust the document setup during any point of the process. The first step after creating a new document was to determine the basic settings, such as the size of the book and the approximate number of pages. While choosing the latter, I took into consideration the length of the whole book — that is, the main contents in addition to the front and back matter. I had already saved the poems as separate OpenOffice documents, so all I needed to do was to place them in InDesign while leaving blank spaces for the illustrations. Images were placed on the right side, making it easier to see them while skimming through the book. While most of the drawings were meant to occupy the whole page, some were going to include text above them. Those illustrations have no visible borders so that they would appear drawn directly onto the page.

Book layout design requires attention to detail and consideration of factors that might not be obvious at first. Therefore, simply placing the images and text within the document is not enough. After having assigned approximate positions for the illustrations and the written works, I made several adjustments to the format by altering the font size, leading (line spacing), and margin width. In books, outer margins are intended to allow room for the reader's thumbs, while the inside margins prevent the ends of the text from getting lost in the gutter, which usually increases the thicker a book is. (Friedlander 2012.) The positive side of adjusting the margins for this particular book was the format of the poems; the short line length gave me more freedom to move the text around and experiment with white space.

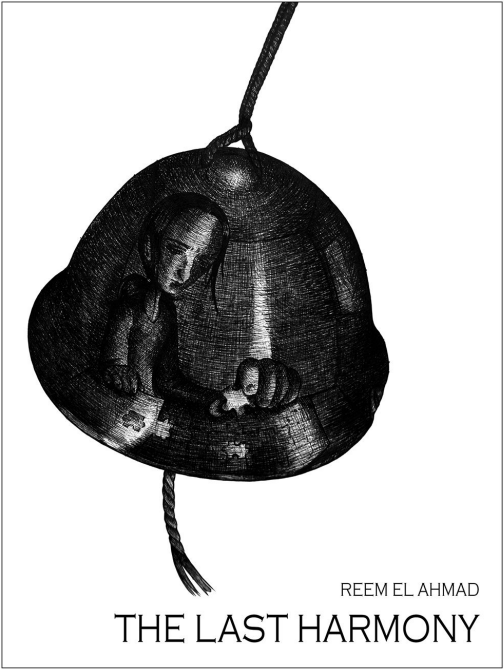
I placed the table of contents in the back of the book because it felt less obtrusive that way. The front matter contains an epigraph following the title page and it felt like placing something “technical” between it and the body of the book would interrupt the flow of the text. The decision required some degree of consideration; while all the online sources I found stated that the table of contents should always be put in the

beginning of the book, the books at my home library have more than a few examples where it is placed in the back as well, so I ended up holding onto my original decision. Furthermore, in cases where the table of contents is placed before the main text, it has several pages preceding it; therefore, one does not find it upon opening the book. In cases when it is placed at the end, it is usually located on the very last page and is thus easier to find.

The design of a book cover serves a function opposite to that of interior design; while the latter is aimed at providing a good reading experience while attracting minimal attention to itself, the exterior is meant to be noticed and remembered (Friedlander, 2012). One way of standing out is through simplicity; as with the rest of the book, I made the covers in black in white, which, while being seemingly uncomplicated, involves the usage of strong contrasts. The front cover includes an illustration for “The Last Harmony”—one of the poems included in the book, and after which the book has been named. The back cover is black and is intended to be used for the author's biography and information about the book upon the project's completion.

One thing I do not see mentioned often is that the book spine can be as important as the cover in getting the customer's attention. Not all books get put on display; therefore, the spine can sometimes be the first thing a potential reader sees. My criteria for designing this part of the book were the same as the front cover's: simple, easy to read, and consistent with the rest of the book's style. The size of the current spine might get altered in the future, depending on the thickness of the final version of the book.

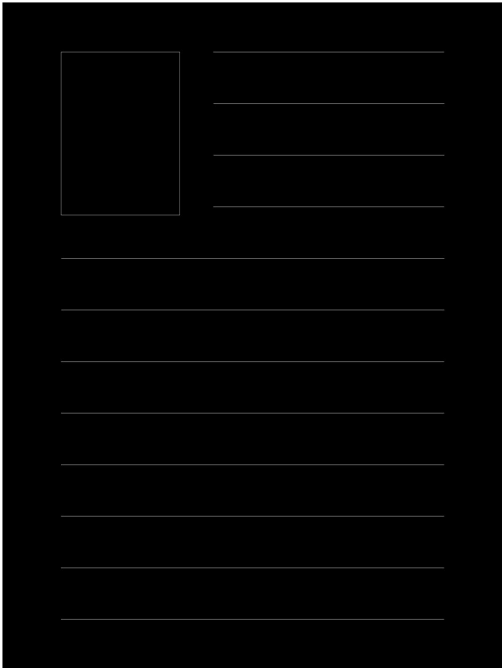
Picture 17 shows how the outer parts of the book would look in the finalized version. Therefore, it does not take factors such as the bleed into account. The lines and rectangle on the back cover indicate where the author's photograph and biography would be placed. The font used for the title and the spine is Copperplate Gothic Light. The book is intended to be a paperback of 165 mm x 220 mm. The given size is both compact and appropriate for the length of the poems and the dimensions of the illustrations.



FRONT COVER



SPINE



BACK COVER

Picture 17. Book spine and covers.

7 CONCLUSION

We are surrounded by books and other printed materials in our everyday lives. The fields of book design and illustration require knowledge of various disciplines, as well as an effective use of that knowledge to create a pleasurable experience for the reader while conveying the tone and themes of the written contents. Some aspects of what constitutes a good layout design might not be obvious at first, but their importance becomes understood upon closer analysis. This is why working on a publication requires great attention to detail.

While the project covered in the thesis was mainly concerned with creating a book, the final results were not the only significant part of the process; working on the task has helped me analyze my personal approach to the visualization of ideas, develop my prowess with the pen, and acquire a higher degree of competence in the area of book design. This progress, as well as the observations made during the project implementation, will definitely be of use when tackling similar assignments in the future.

Although the author has her personal vision regarding the poems, according to her, my illustrations have managed to reflect most of what she intended to say in her works. She did not make specific requests for the illustrations and instead accepted the ideas I offered because she wanted to witness new interpretations of the text and discover what images her poems would inspire in another person's mind. She considers her writings to be a more literal translation of the images she had in mind and feels that my illustrations, which are more ambiguous, could enhance the poems by adding a degree of mystery to them.

Overall, the project has been a great contribution to my personal development as an illustrator and has enabled me to help an author by providing my services as a designer. The author has been pleased with the results, and we are planning to continue working on the book by adding more written works and illustrations to it.

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IMAGE SOURCES

Picture 2: <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/tenniel/alice/12.3.html>

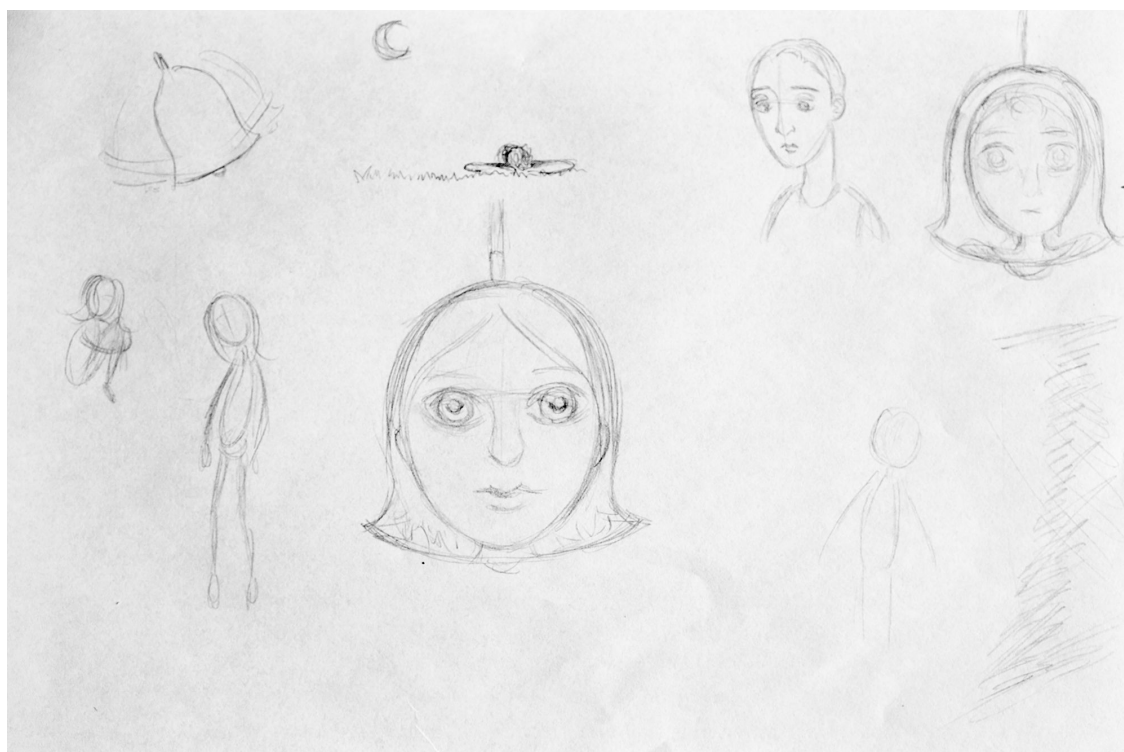
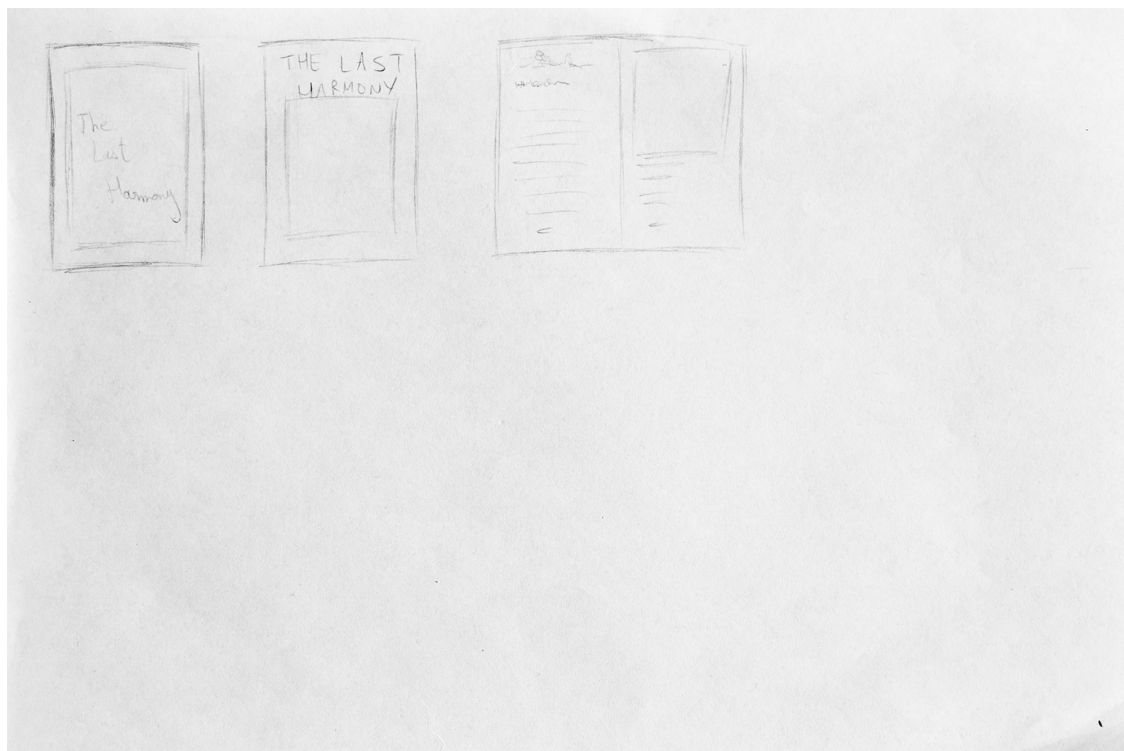
Picture 3: <http://johnvernonlord.blogspot.fi/2014/08/the-lions-kingdom.html>

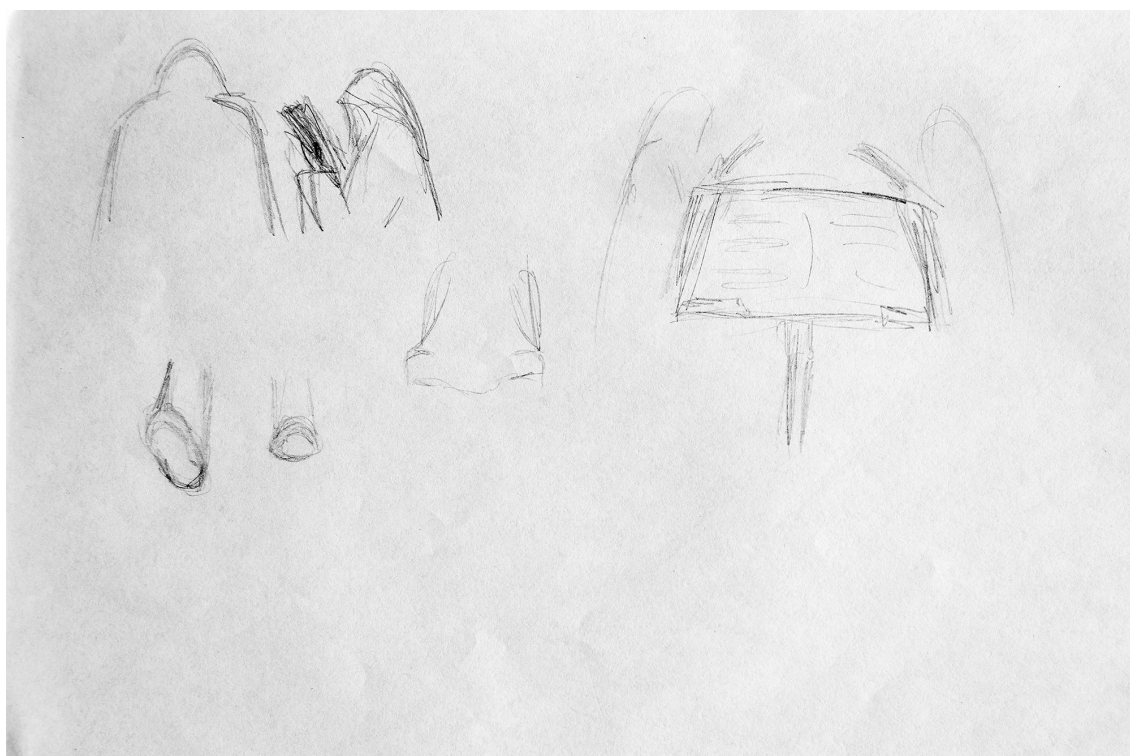
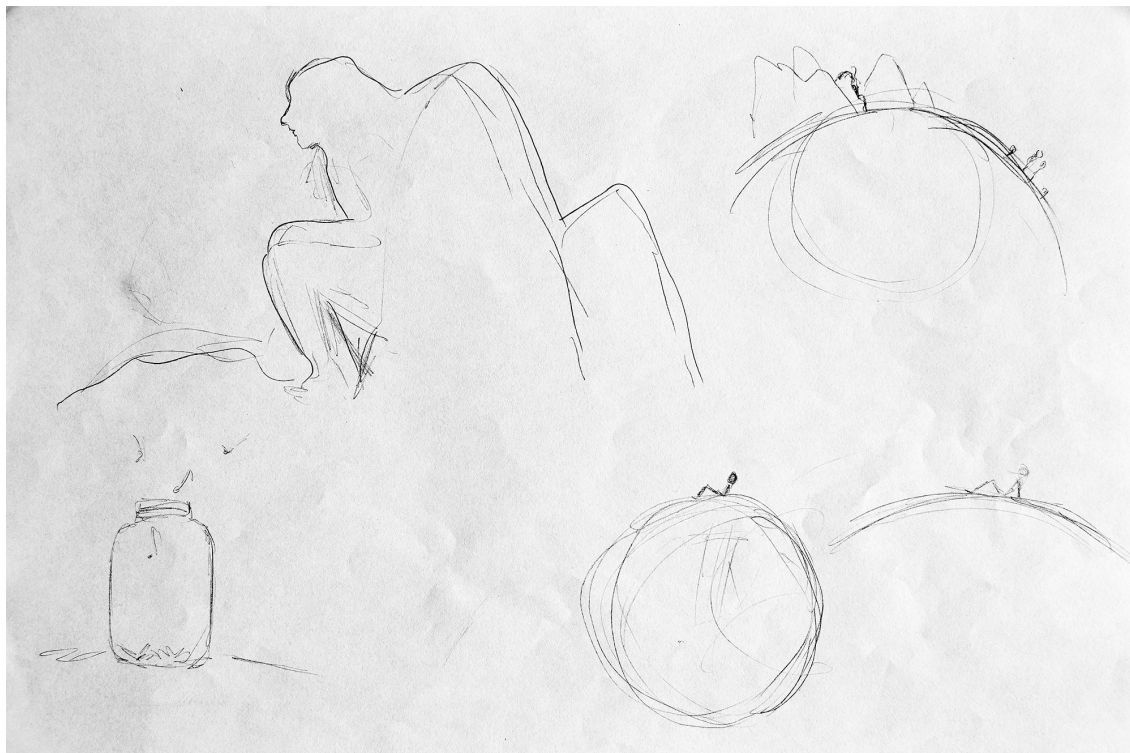
Picture 4: <http://outsidelogic.com/franklinbooth/>

Picture 5: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustave_Dor%C3%A9

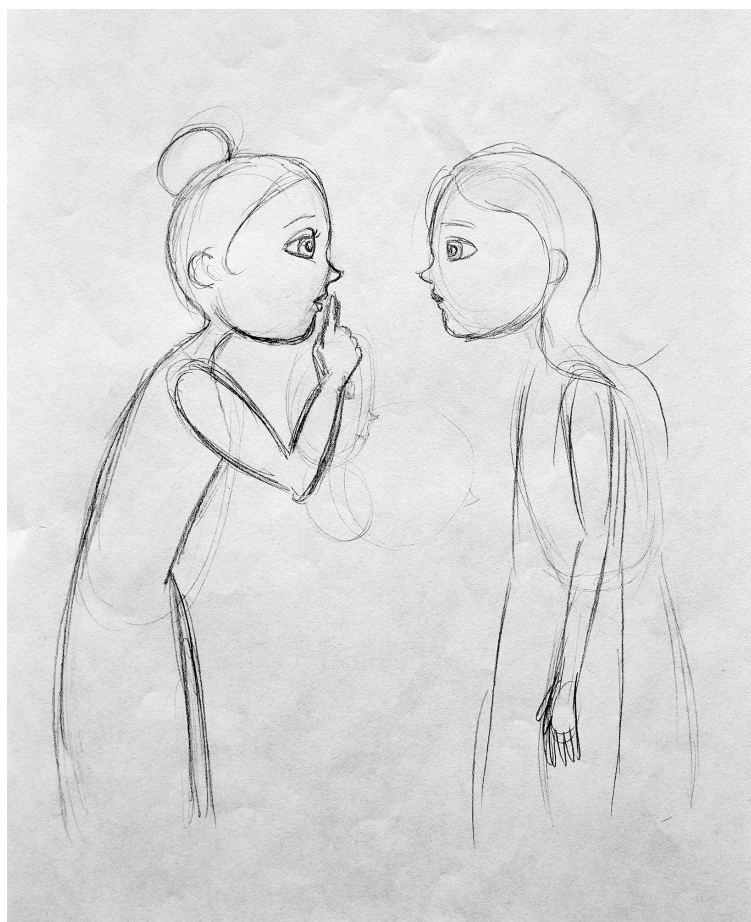
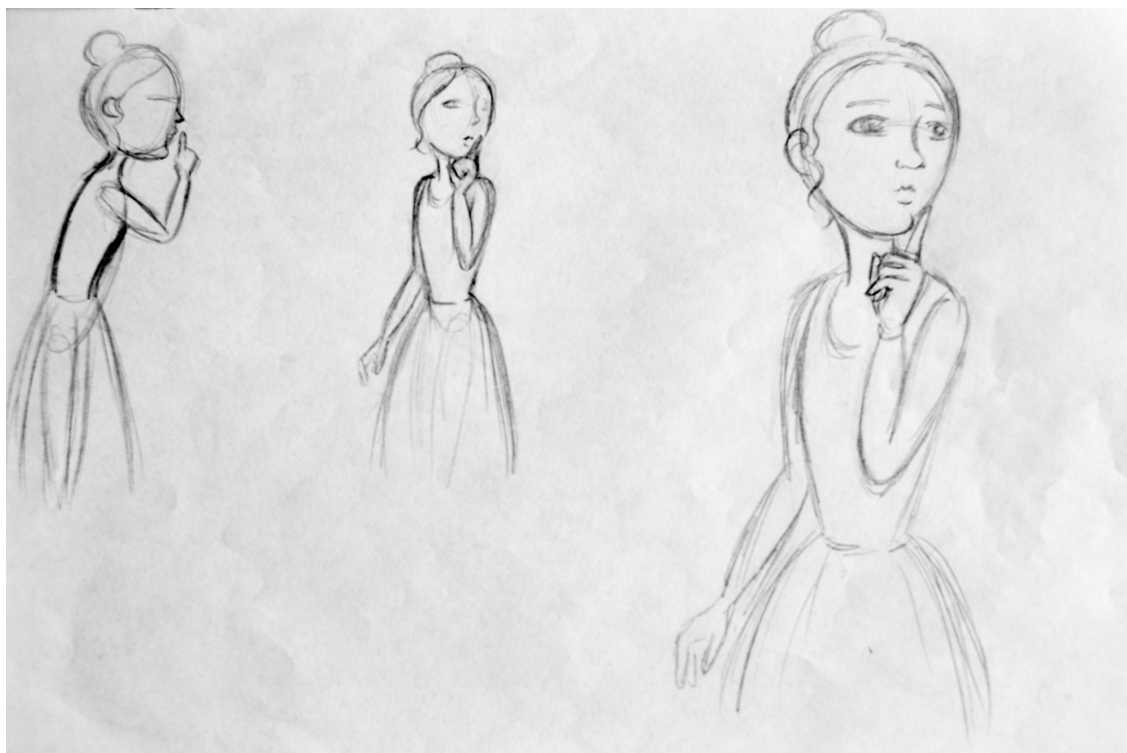
Picture 7: <http://athenacinema.com/the-cabinet-of-dr-caligari/>

Picture 8: <http://agim-ci.com/gnu/university-of-wisconsin-madison-essay/>

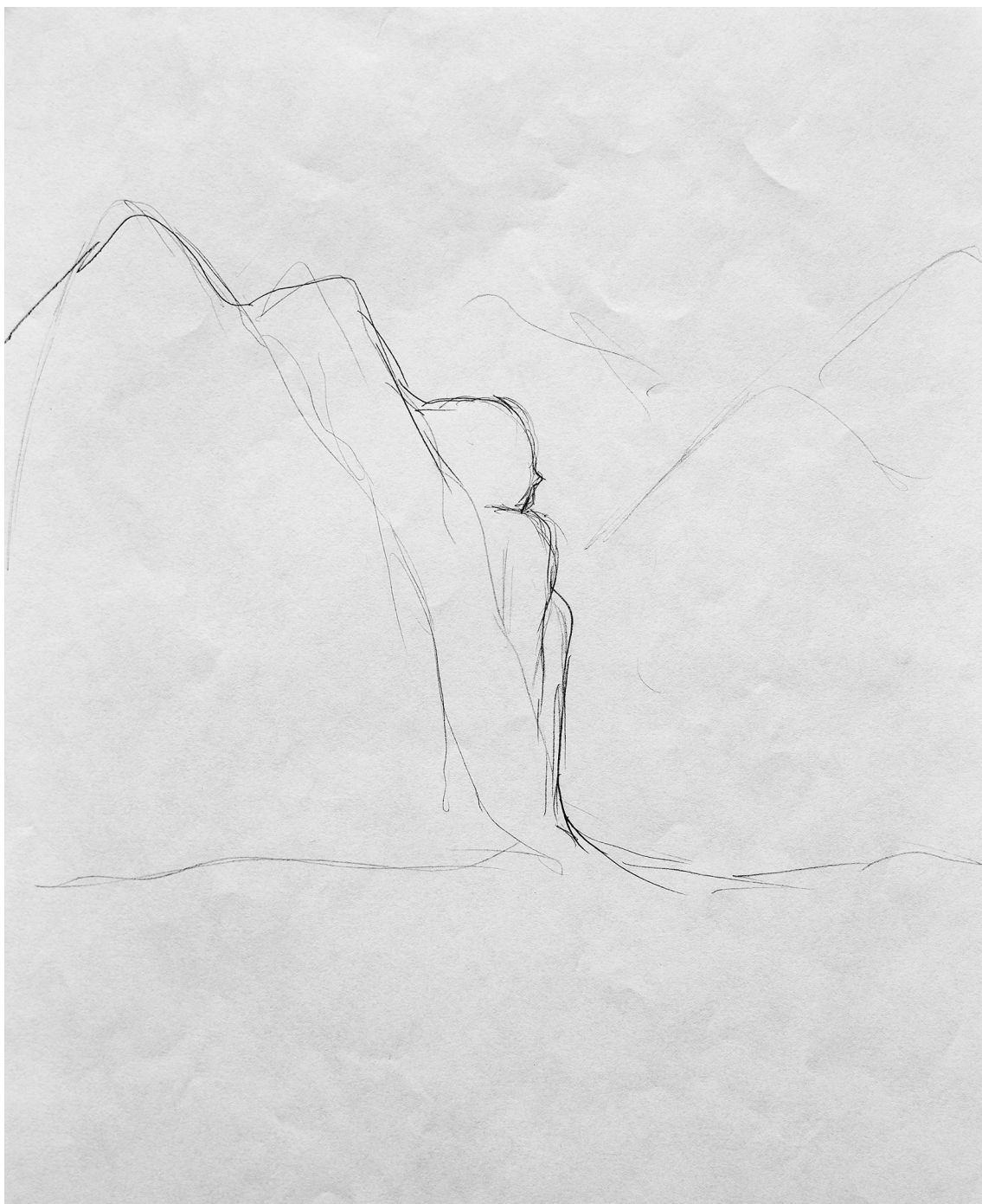


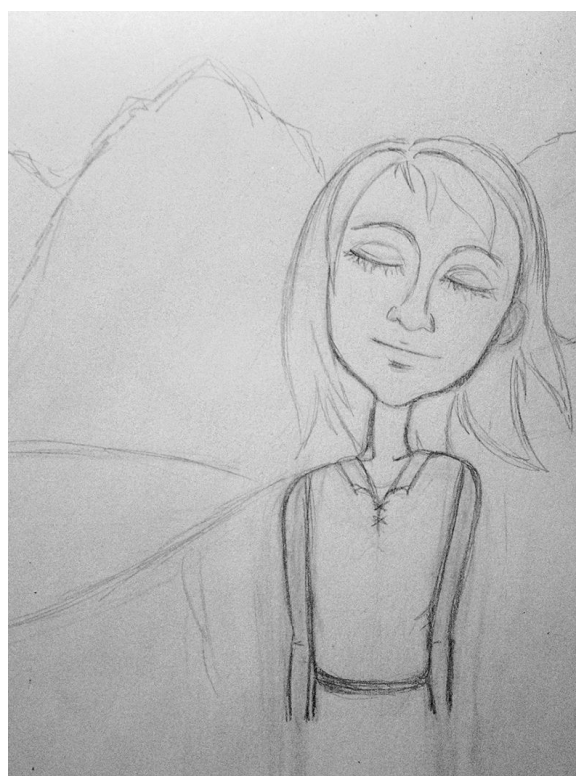


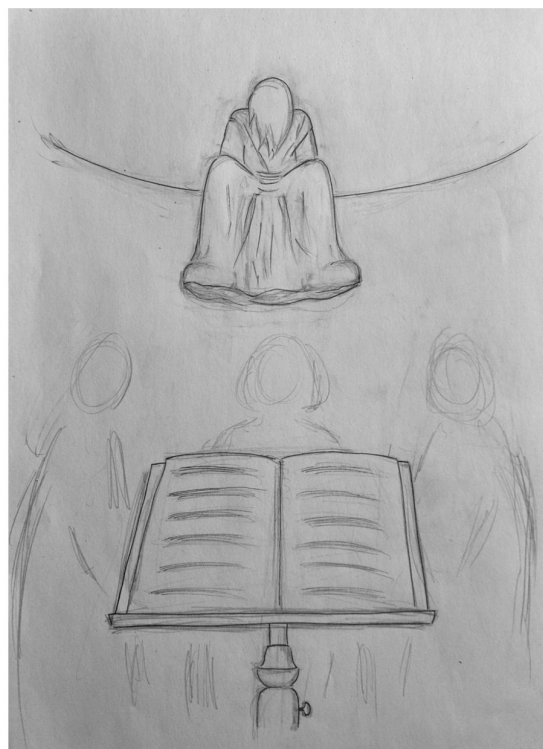
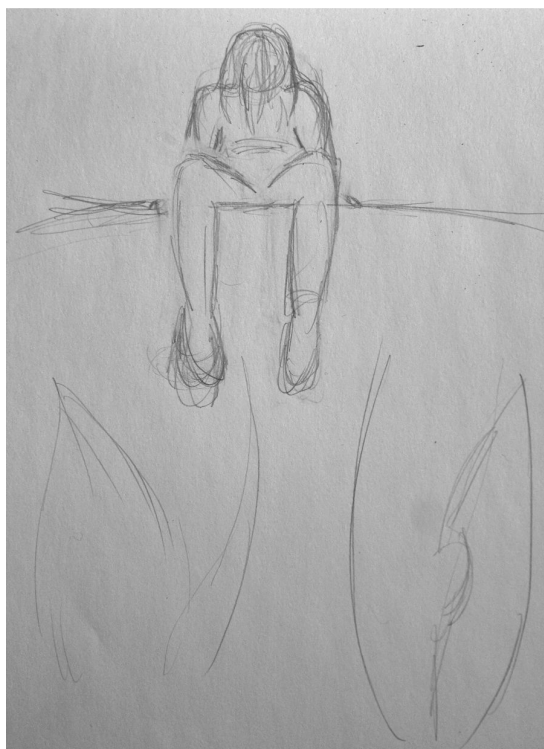


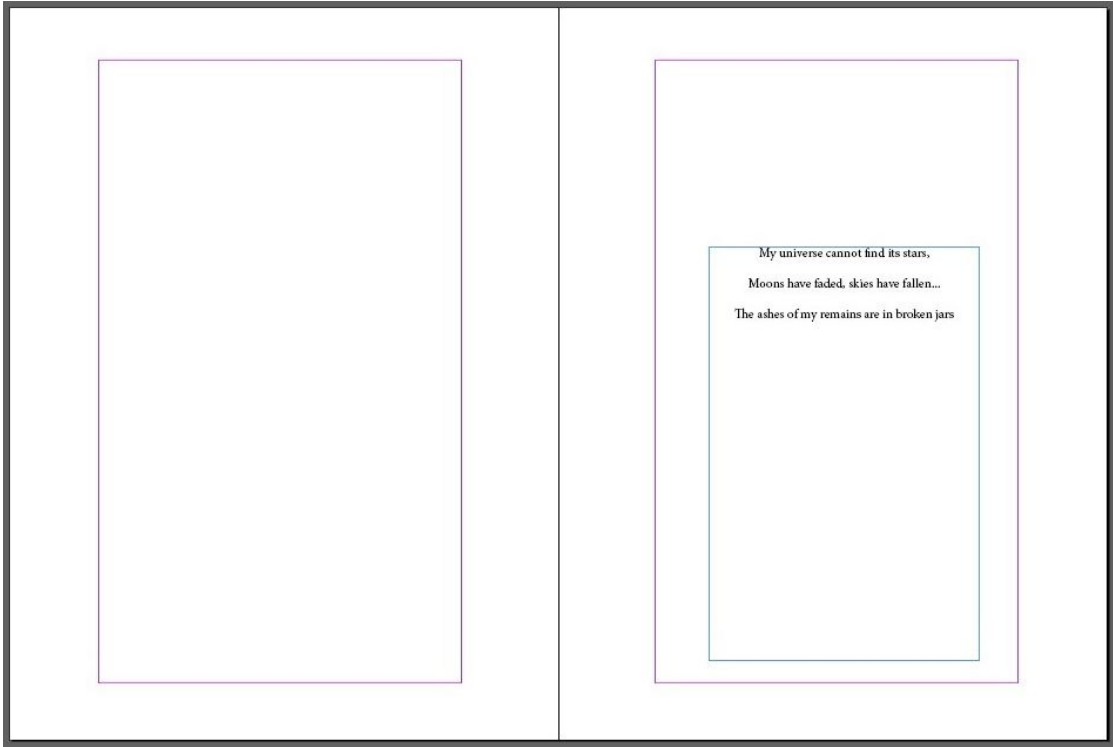
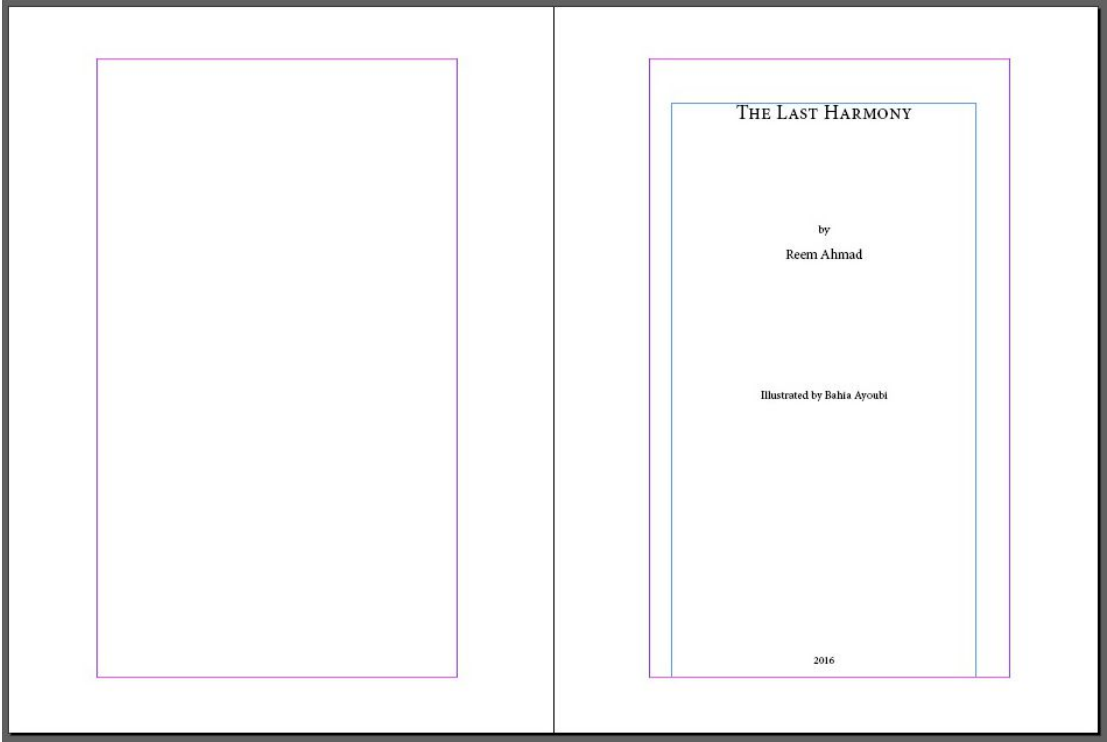












BEHIND THE SCENE

She is beautiful,
Serene
Owned the scene with her moves and smile.
She played her role as required.
While the choir was ending the play,
She took a bow for the crowd
And walked to her dormitory
Alone.

With a simple wipe she removed the mask
Painted by expensive makeup,
To reveal her sad face.
Took off her wig
Along with her master pretense
Of happiness.
Instead of her acting dress
Wore the wounds she would never confess
And fell asleep until the following day.

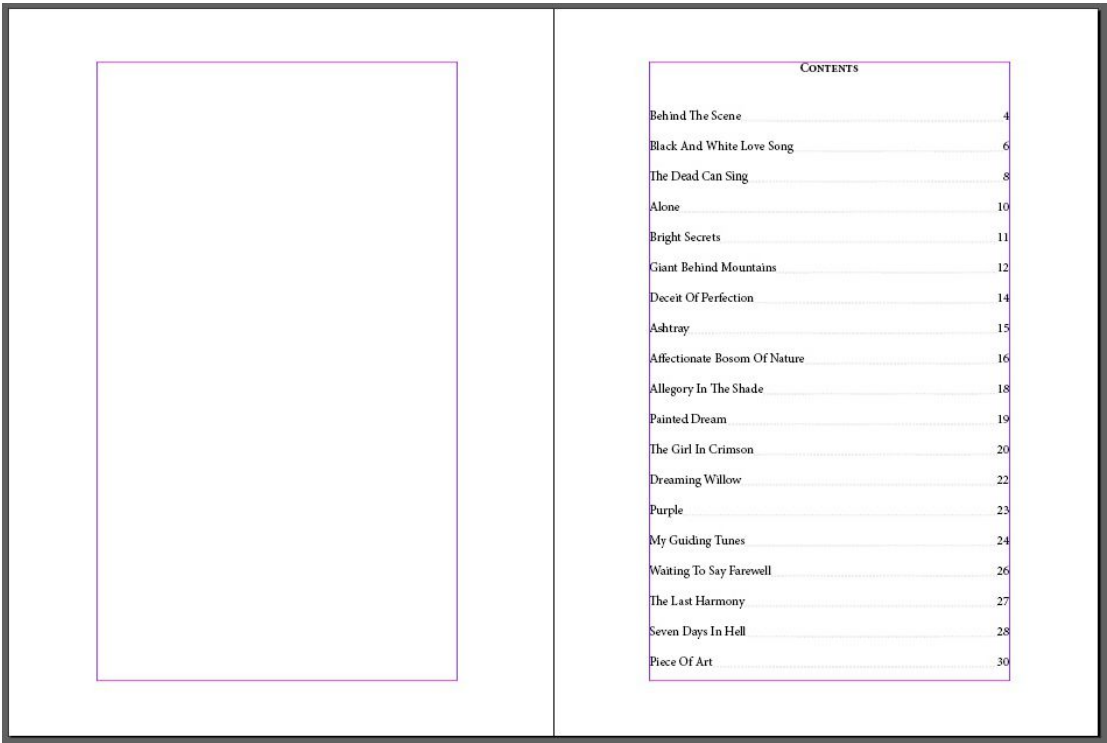
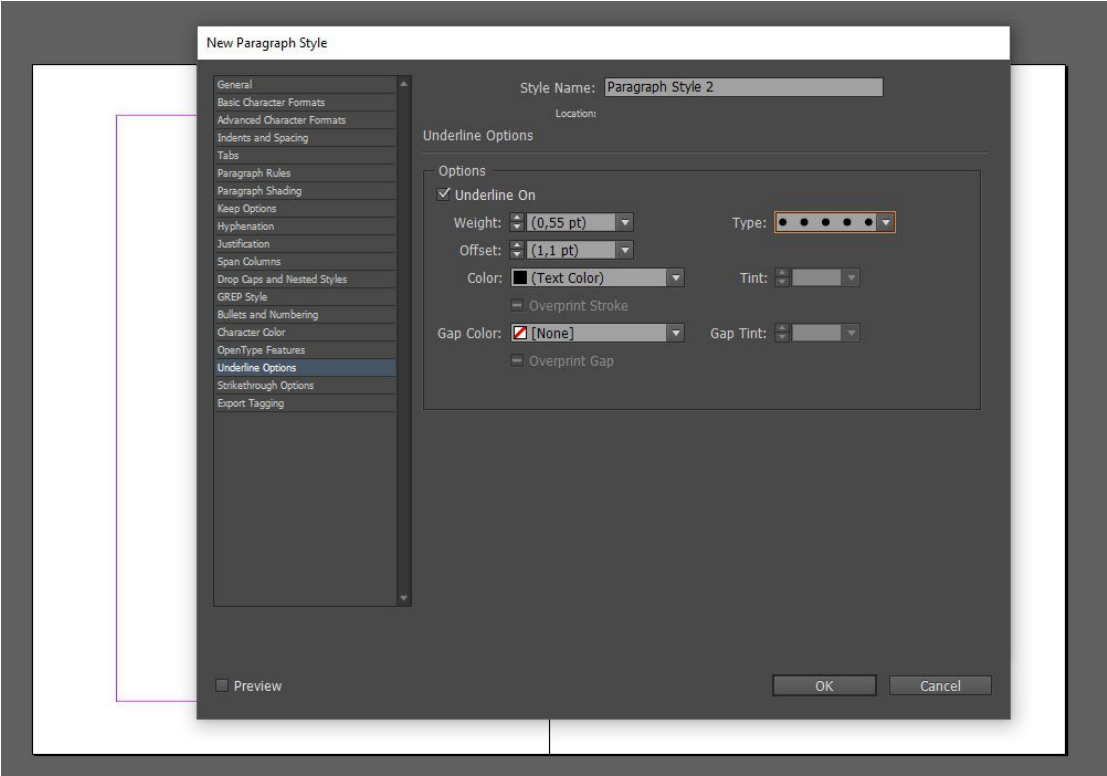
She prepared herself to fob the audience,
Stepped on the stage to tell what is written on a page,
With a fake smile and a tear on the cheek
She didn't show she was weak.

She can do with her kink
Things you cannot even think about;
Make the ink come to life.
In this, she has no rout.

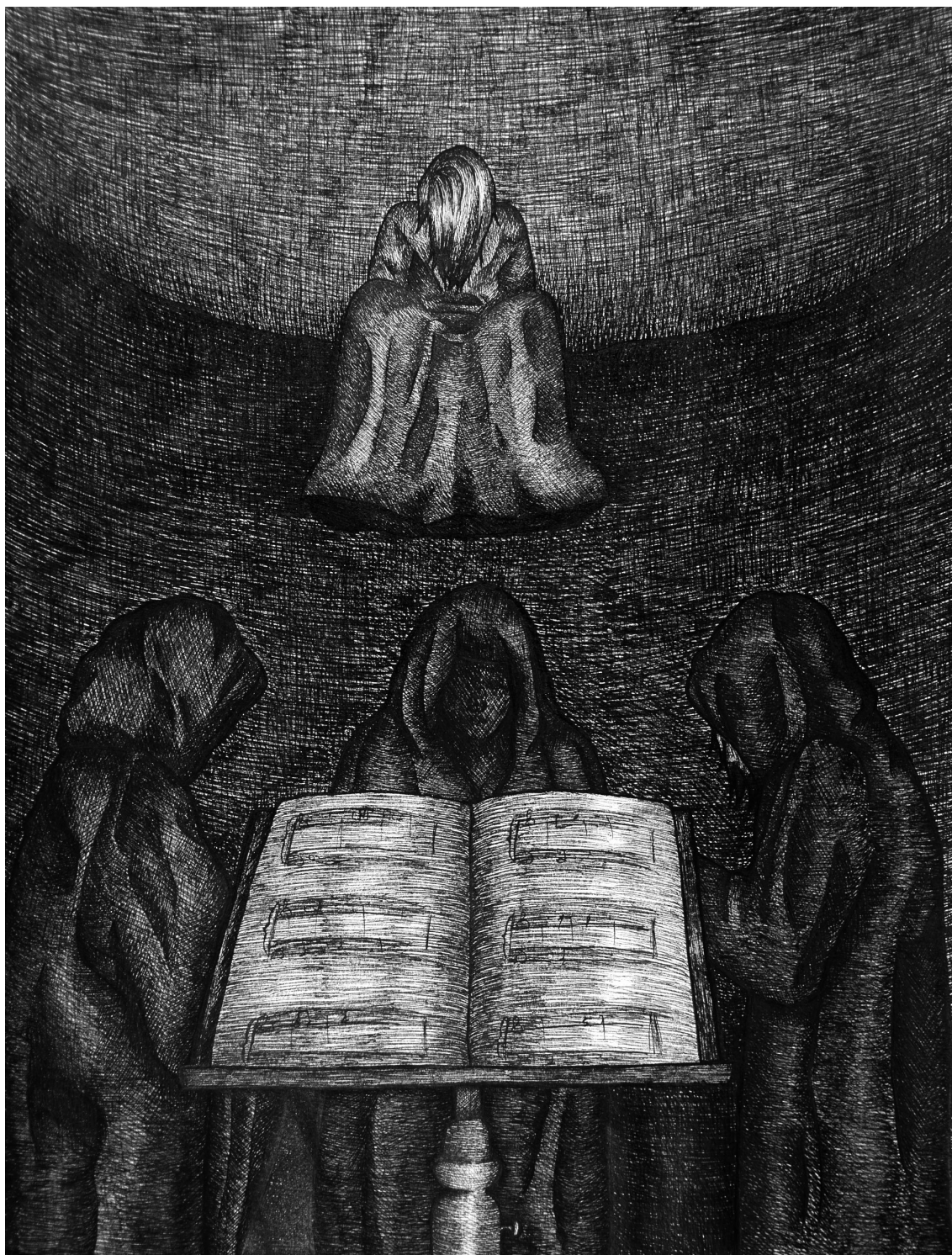
But she got defeated,
One against many.

Maybe the fantasy world can make up for her broken dreams
And memories.

















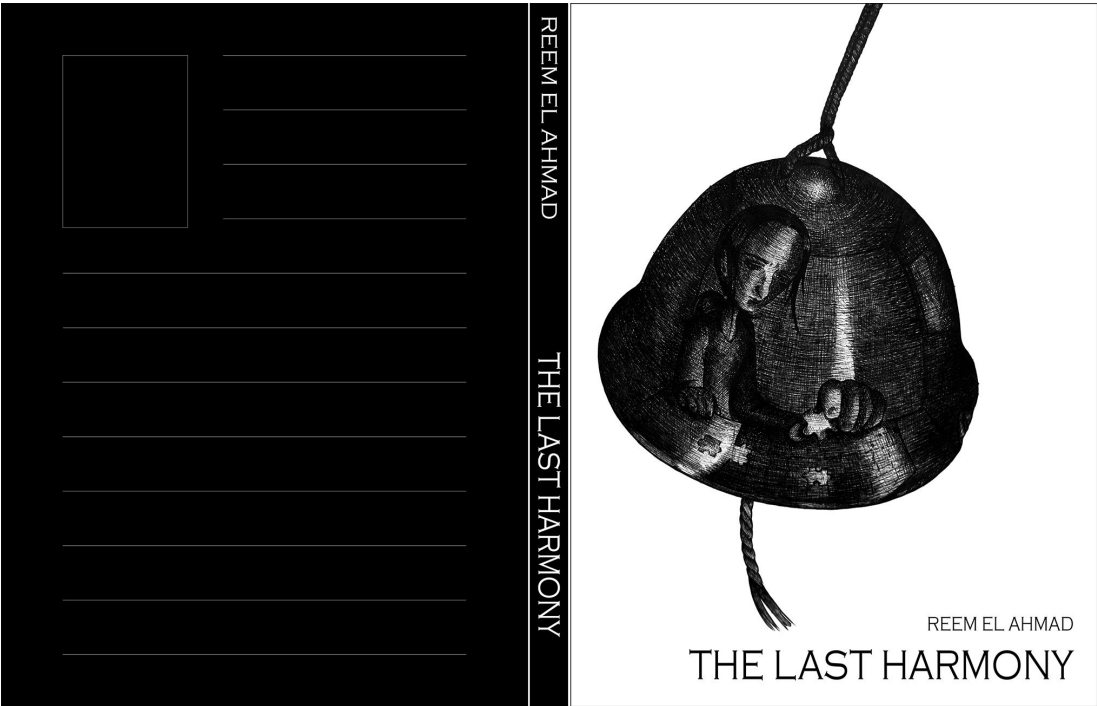






REEM EL AHMAD

THE LAST HARMONY



	<p>THE LAST HARMONY</p> <p>by Reem Ahmad</p> <p>Illustrated by Bahia Ayoubi</p> <p>2016</p>
	<p>My universe cannot find its stars, Moons have faded, skies have fallen... The ashes of my remains are in broken jars</p>

THE GIRL IN CRIMSON

I was wandering in the green fields,
Carried by my everlasting questions,
And there, right by the yield,
Was the girl in the crimson gown.

She had beauty beyond understanding,
Her divine features took my breath away,
She swayed and the blossoms were blinding,
She was held by the creature of dawn,
She looked at me and paved the way,
To join her in the colored motions.

If only I can relive that day,
I'd dance with her on the twinkling lawn,
And there, right by the yield,
Is the girl in the crimson gown.
Amazed and blessed
I sit every dawn,
And watch her dance,
All alone.



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