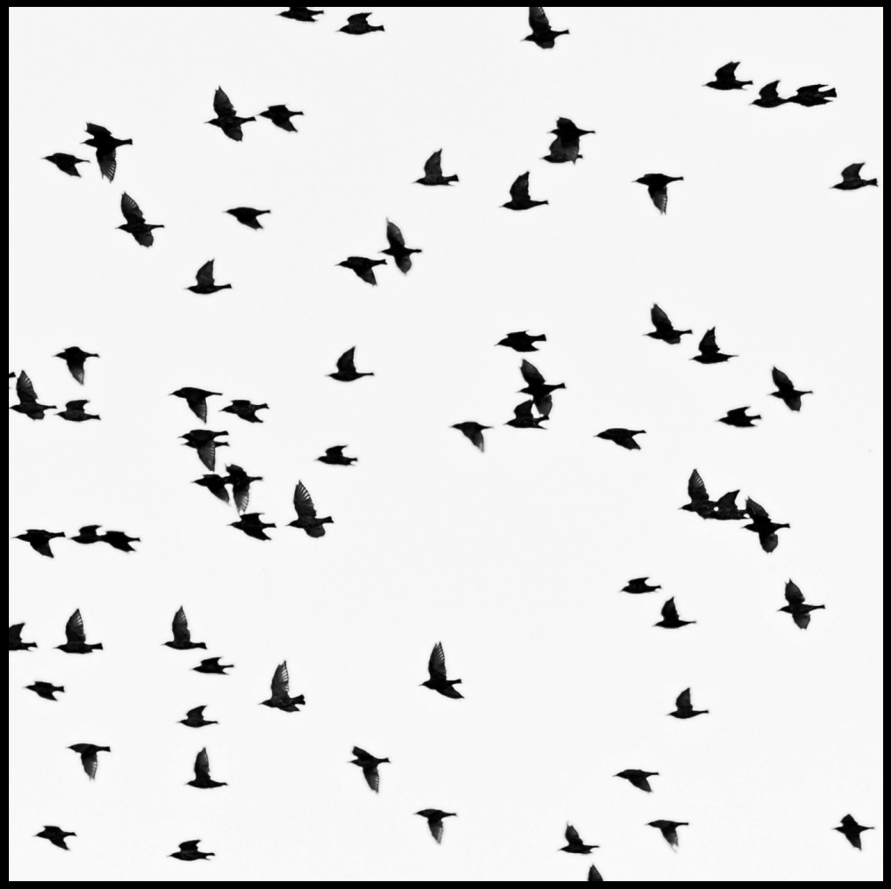


Project Hai-Q

I have said on many occasions that my great fortune in this life is being surrounded by more goodness than I know what to do with. Friends, family, colleagues, mentors - people who genuinely care for me and with whom I have developed valuable, ongoing relationships - have helped me survive and thrive over half a century. My gratitude to them is boundless. So, as I approached my fiftieth birthday this year, I tried to think of a way to celebrate those who have helped me become the person I am today.

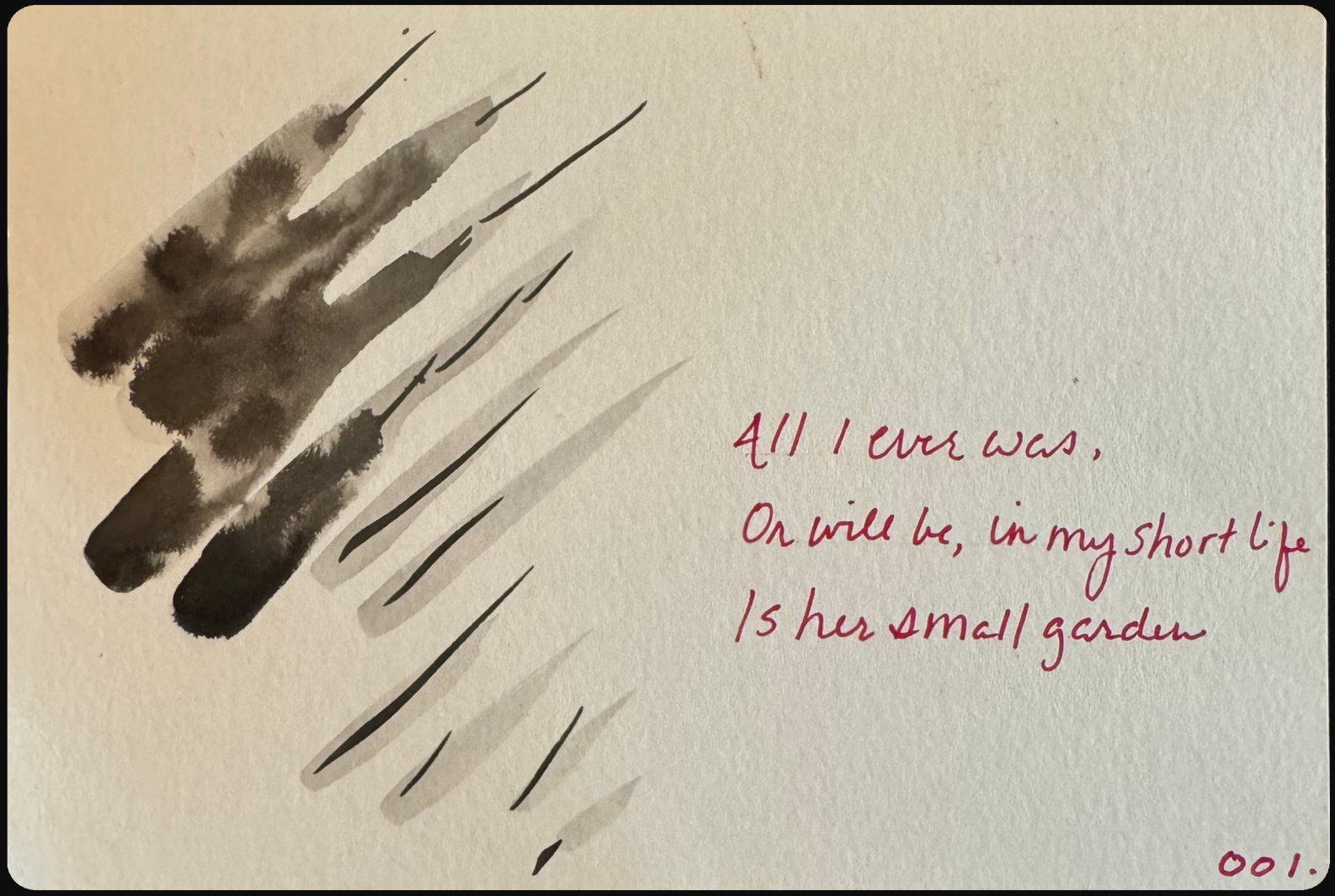
In 2023, I began painting postcards inspired by Japanese 'sumi-e' style brushwork and making a list of fifty people I've known during my lifetime who have inspired, influenced, or otherwise shaped me. Once my cards were completed, I began writing hai-Q that represented each of these people, with the goal of sending the cards out during 2024.

I've chosen to incorporate some of the elements of traditional haiku in the poems. That is, I use a 5-7-5 syllable pattern, and I've made reference to nature or seasons. Each hai-Q has been thoughtfully composed to reflect the lesson or impression that its recipient has gifted me. In some cases, the artwork reflects the poem, and in others, it reflects other aspects of the person to whom it is addressed.

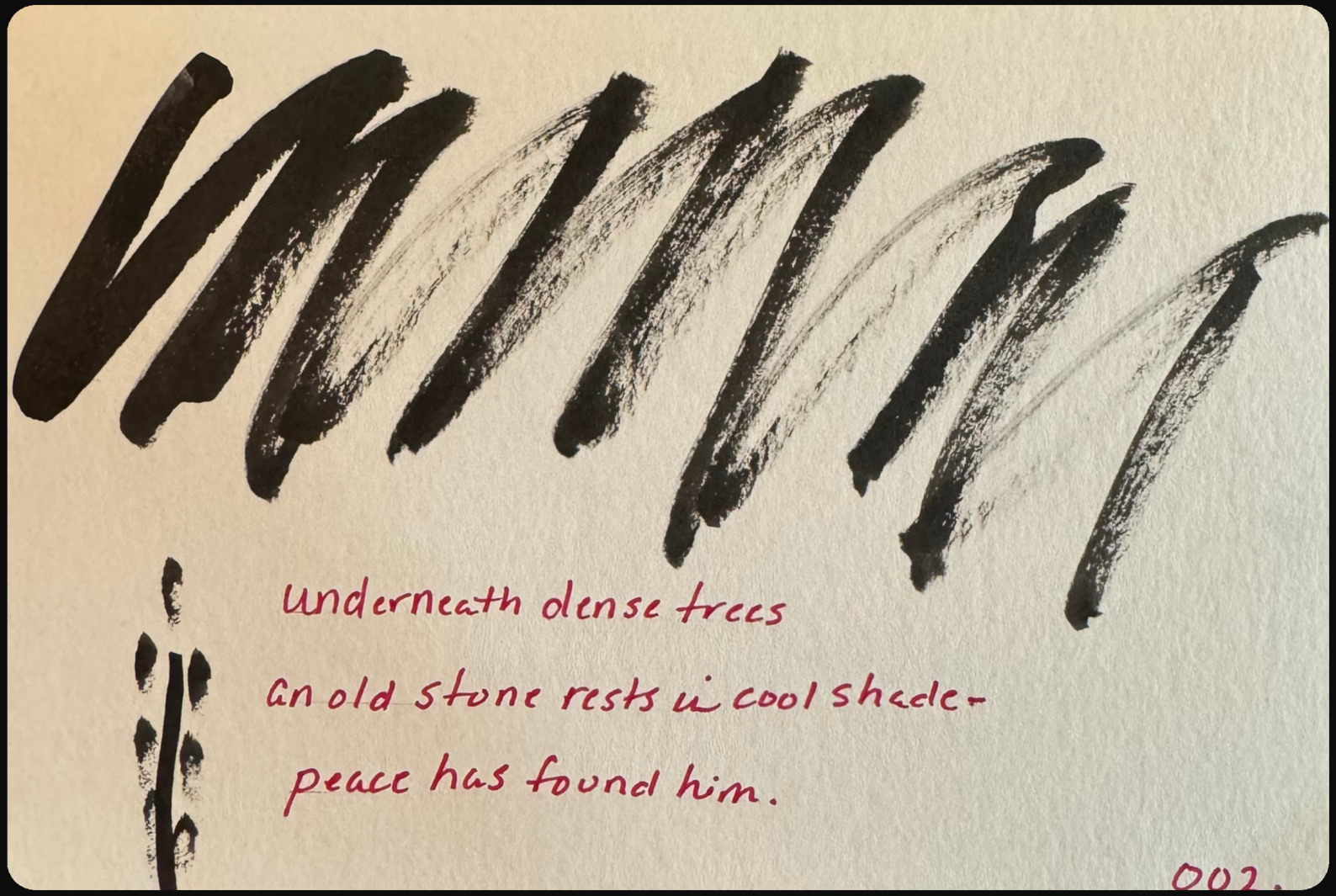
It should be noted that I have excluded my immediate family from this project, as I have other ways of honoring those relationships. I also had difficulty selecting the fifty recipients, and this group is by no means exhaustive or exclusive.

Finally, this is a project that comes from the heart. I don't consider myself gifted as a visual artist or a poet. My hope is that the hai-Q recipients will overlook the flaws in my creation and cherish these cards for what they are: a small, tangible representation of the deep appreciation I feel toward them.

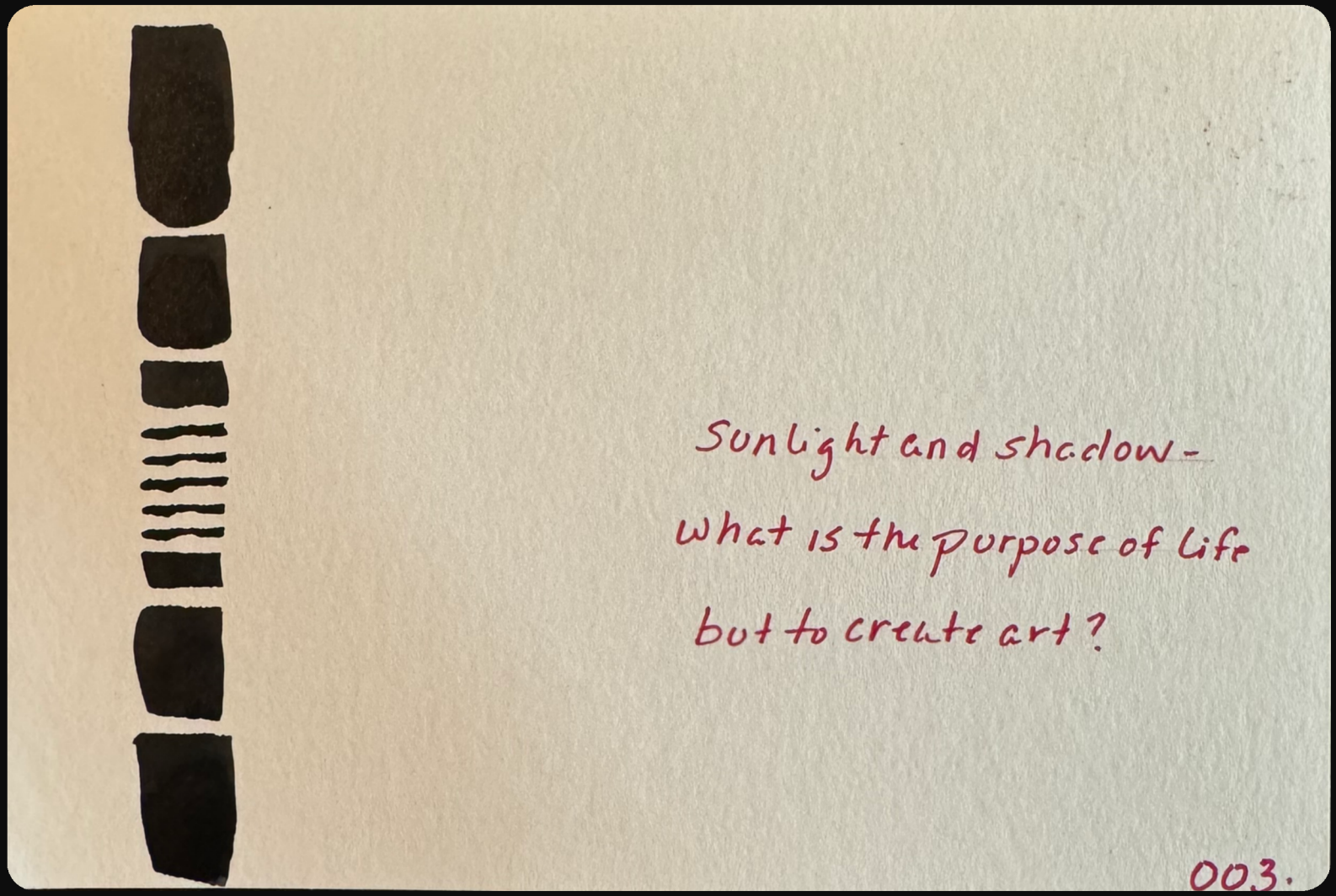
August 2024


All I ever was,
Or will be, in my short life
Is her small garden
001.

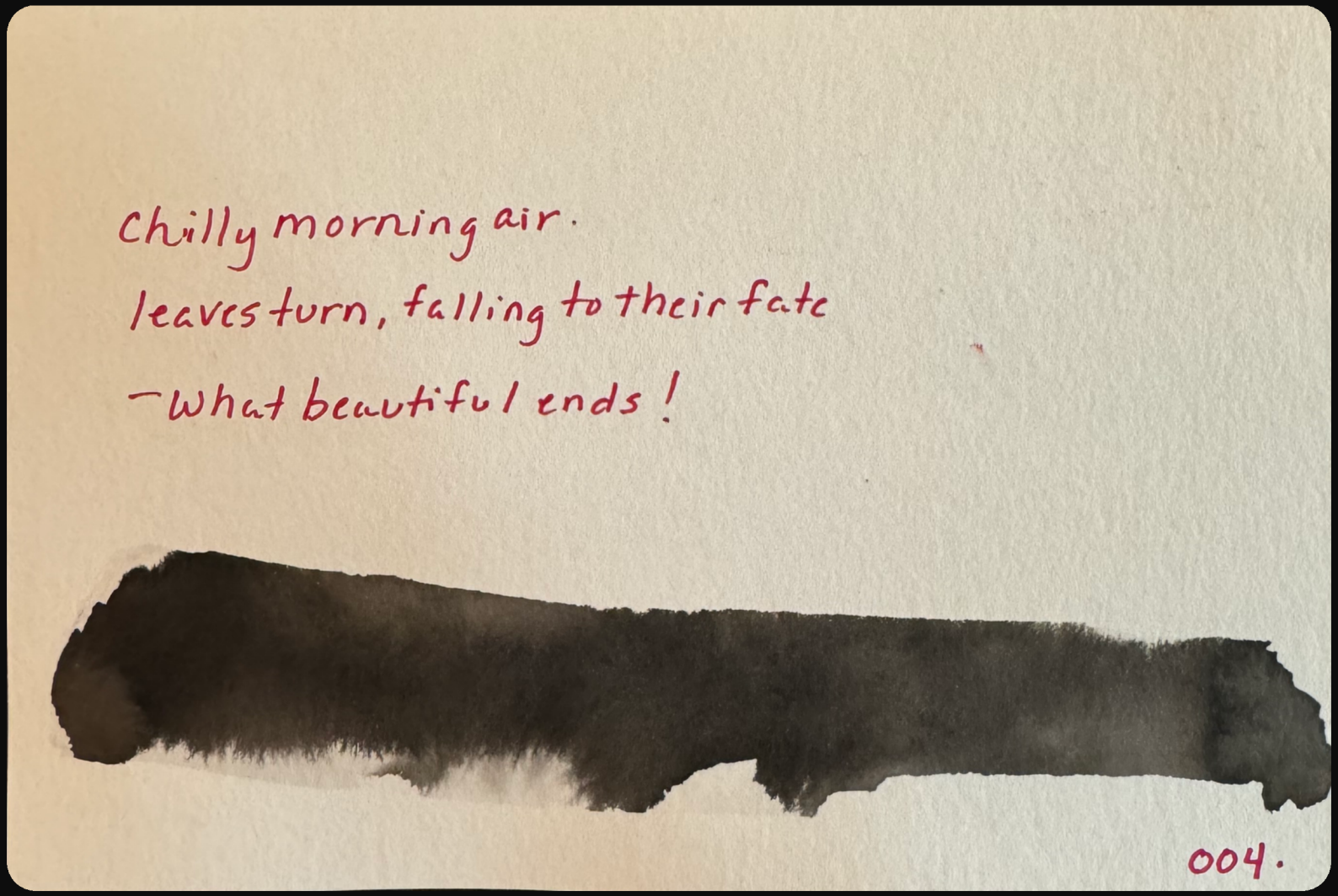
001


underneath dense trees
an old stone rests in cool shade-
peace has found him.
002.

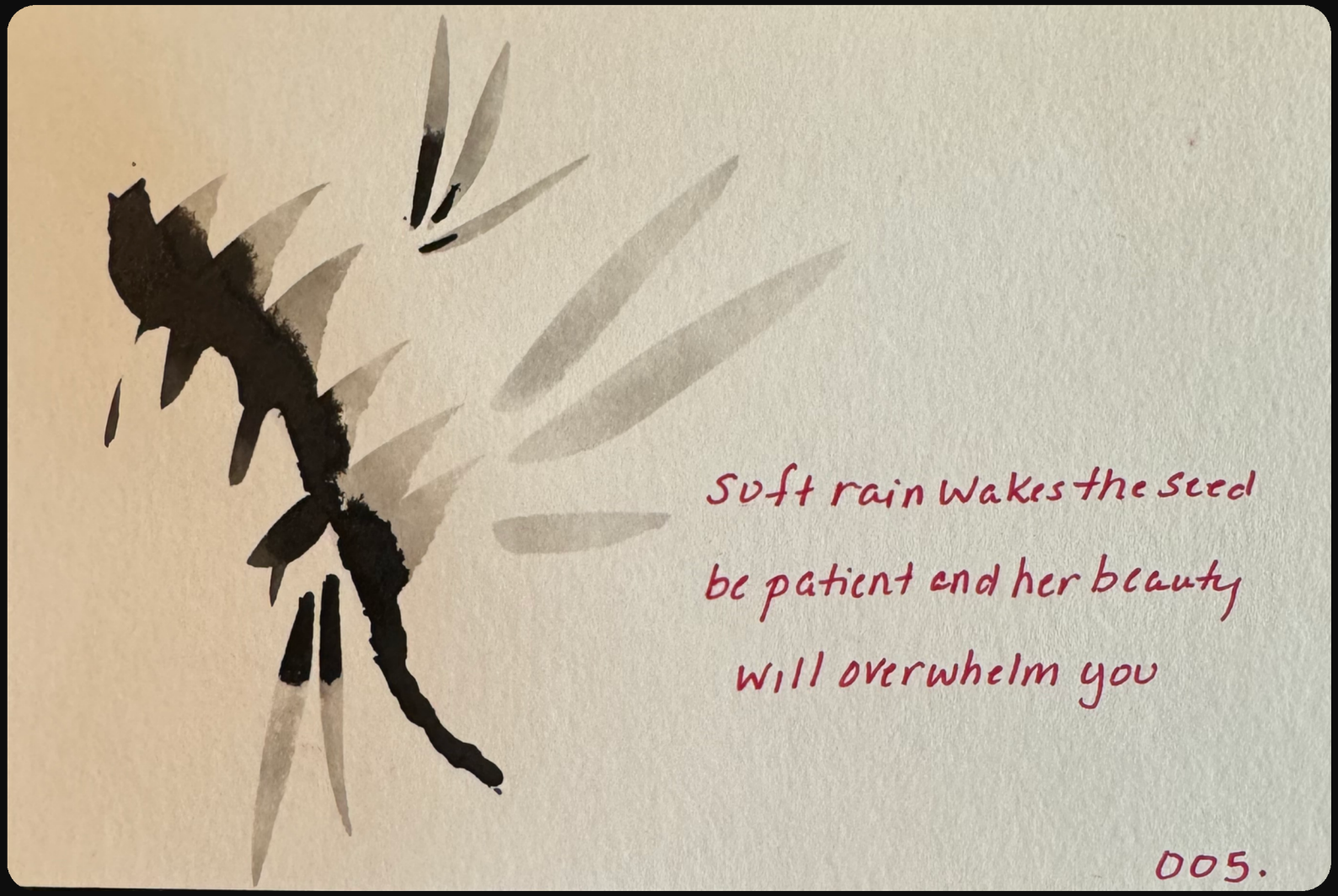
002


Sunlight and shadow -
what is the purpose of life
but to create art?
003.

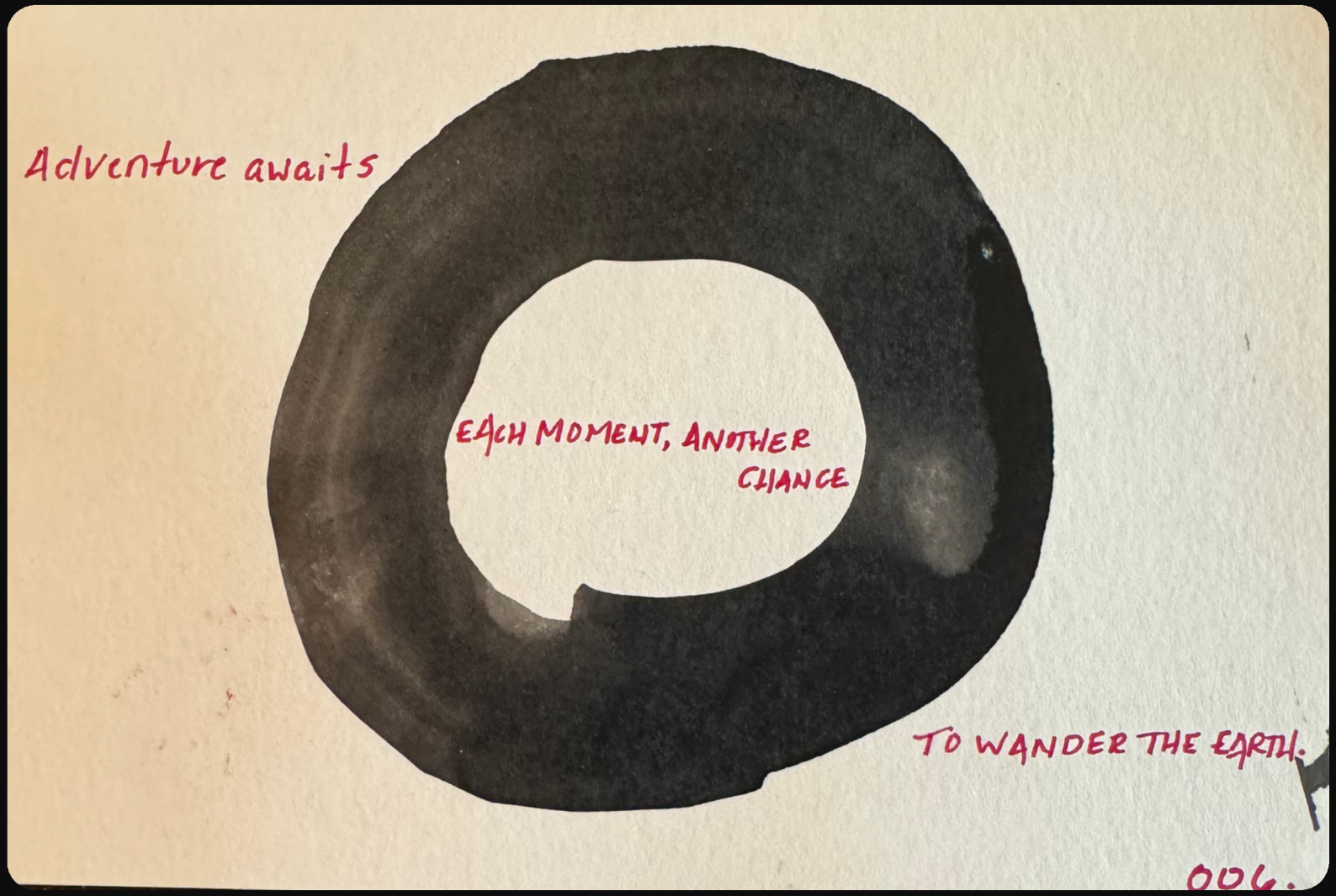
003


chilly morning air.
leaves turn, falling to their fate
-what beautiful ends!
004.

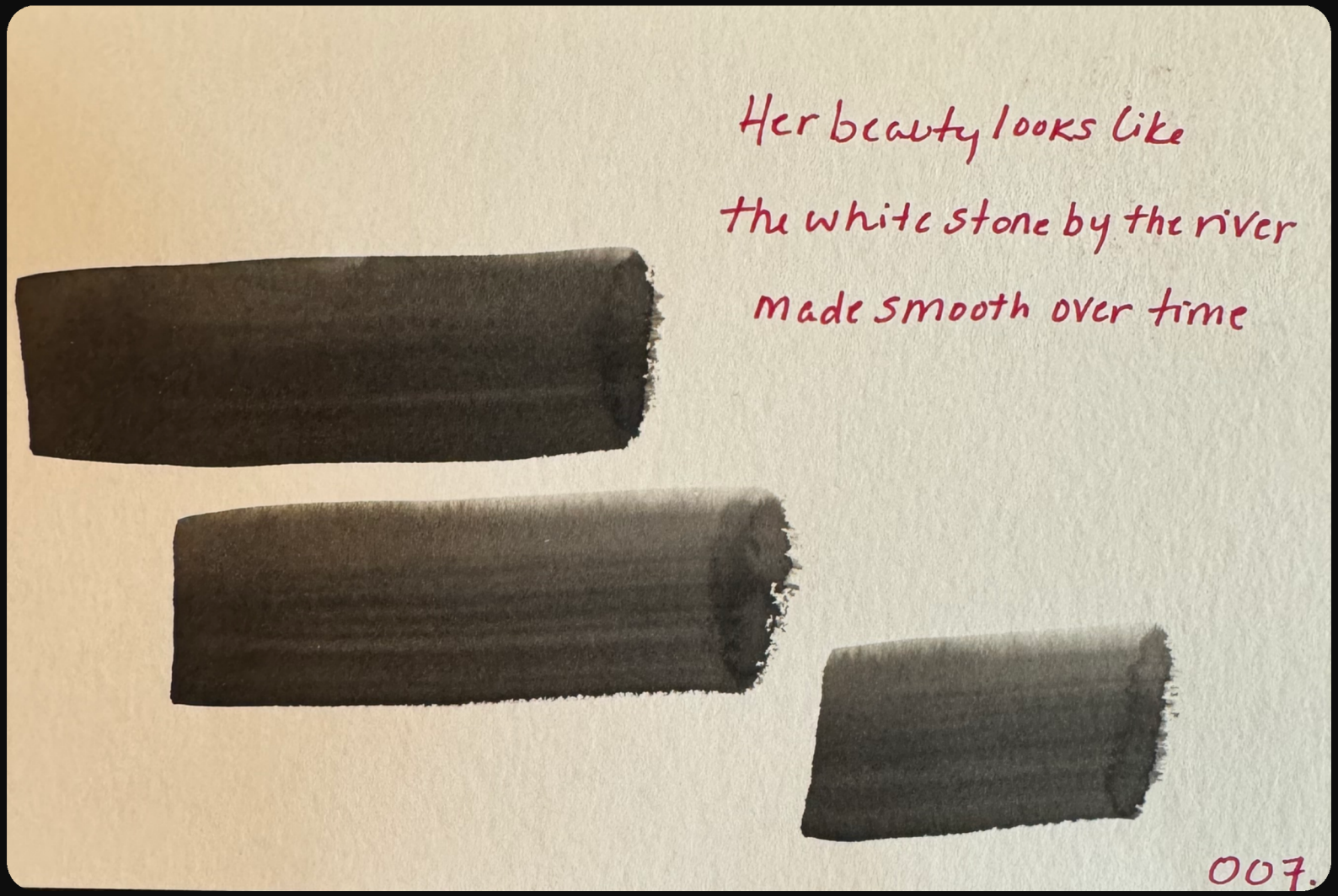
004


Soft rain wakes the seed
be patient and her beauty
will overwhelm you
005.

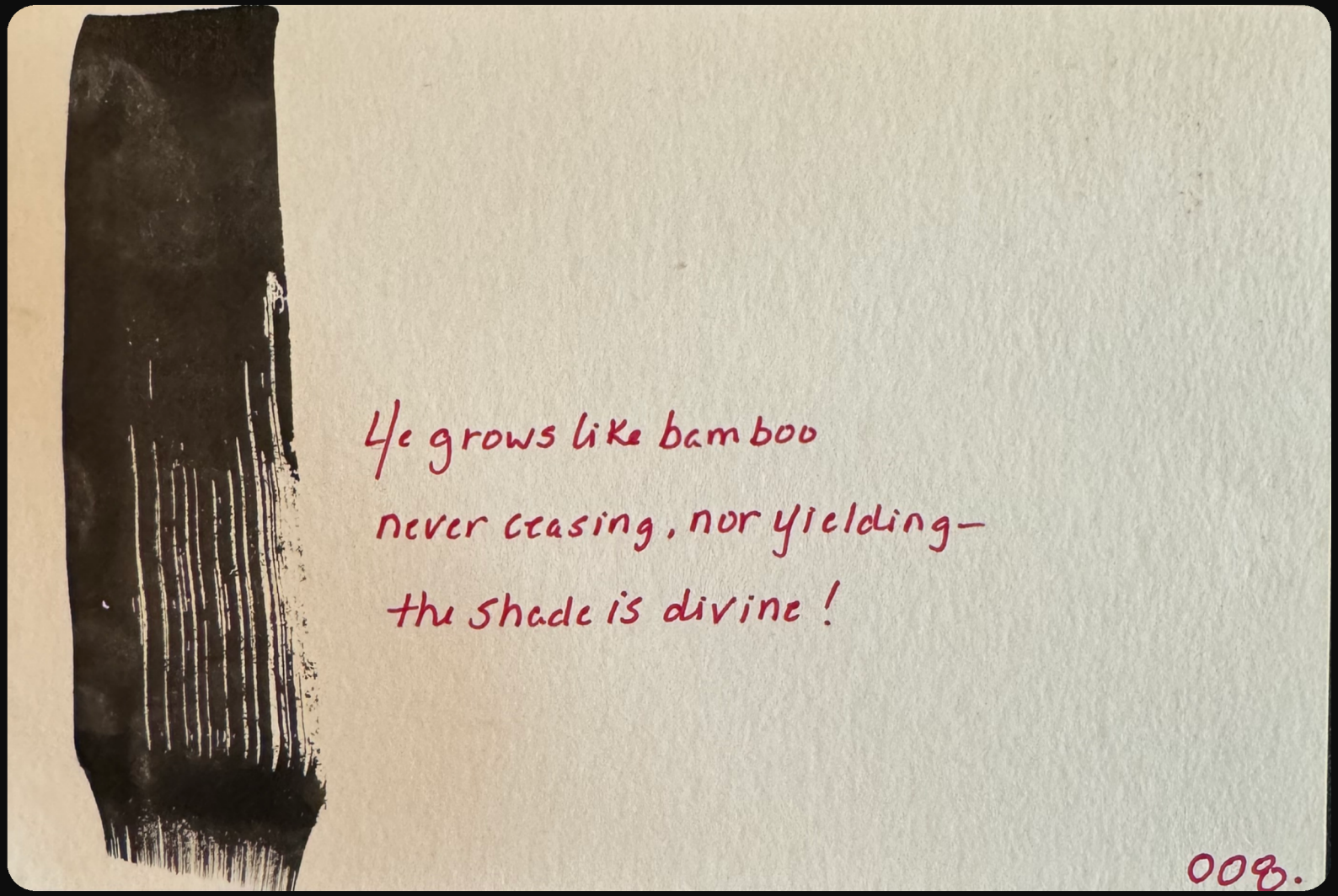
005

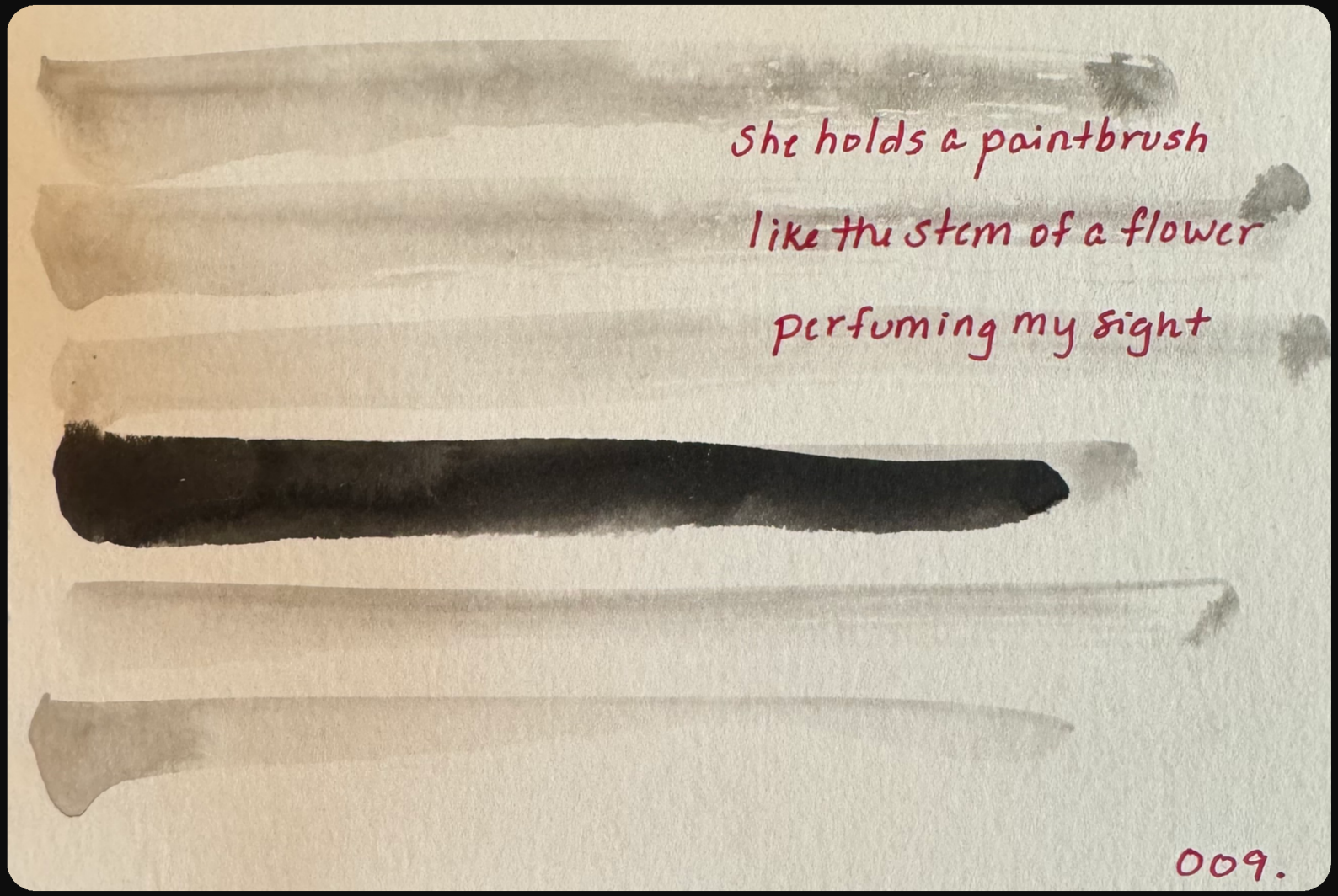

Adventure awaits
EACH MOMENT, ANOTHER CHANCE
TO WANDER THE EARTH.
006.

006

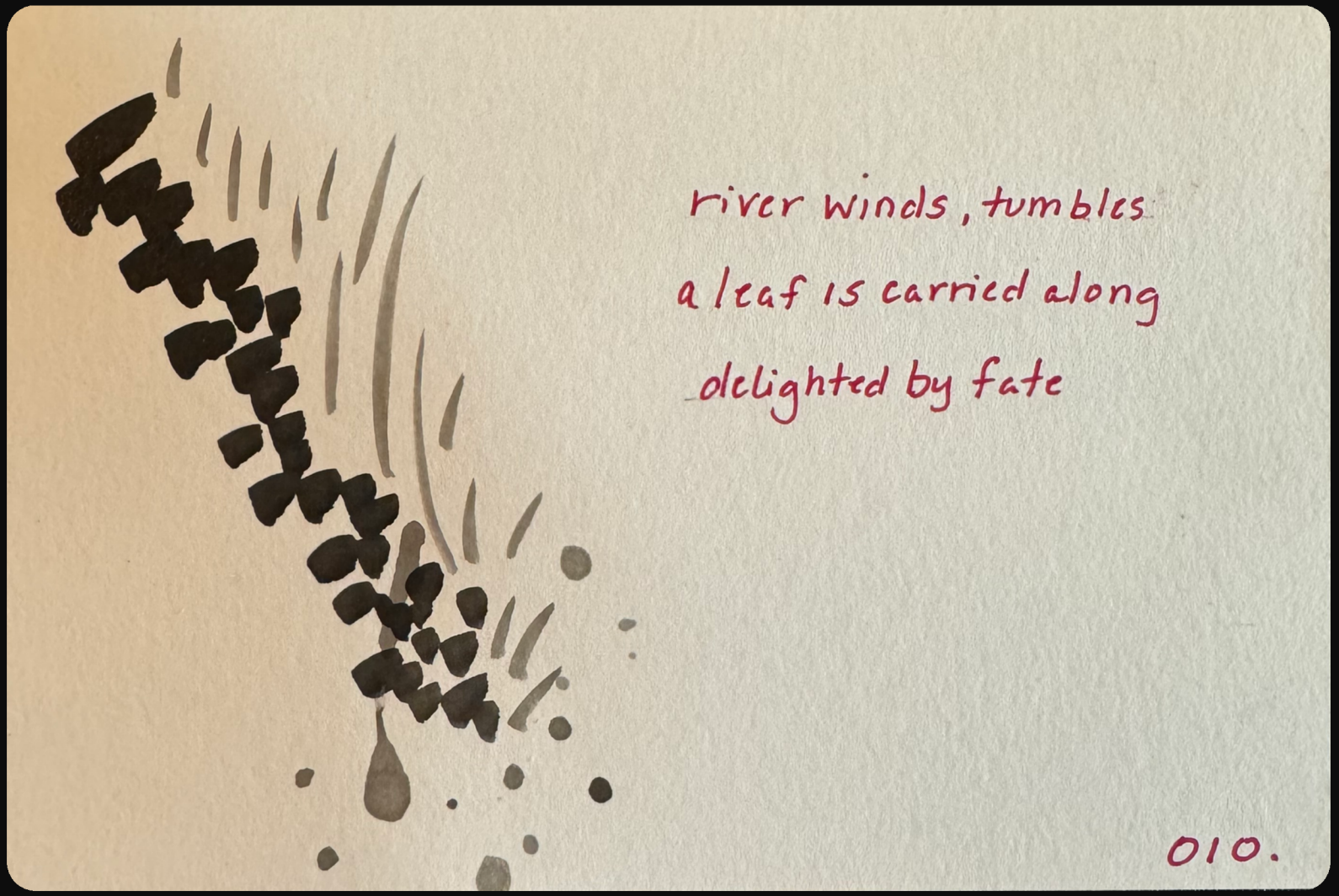

Her beauty looks like
the white stone by the river
made smooth over time
007.

007

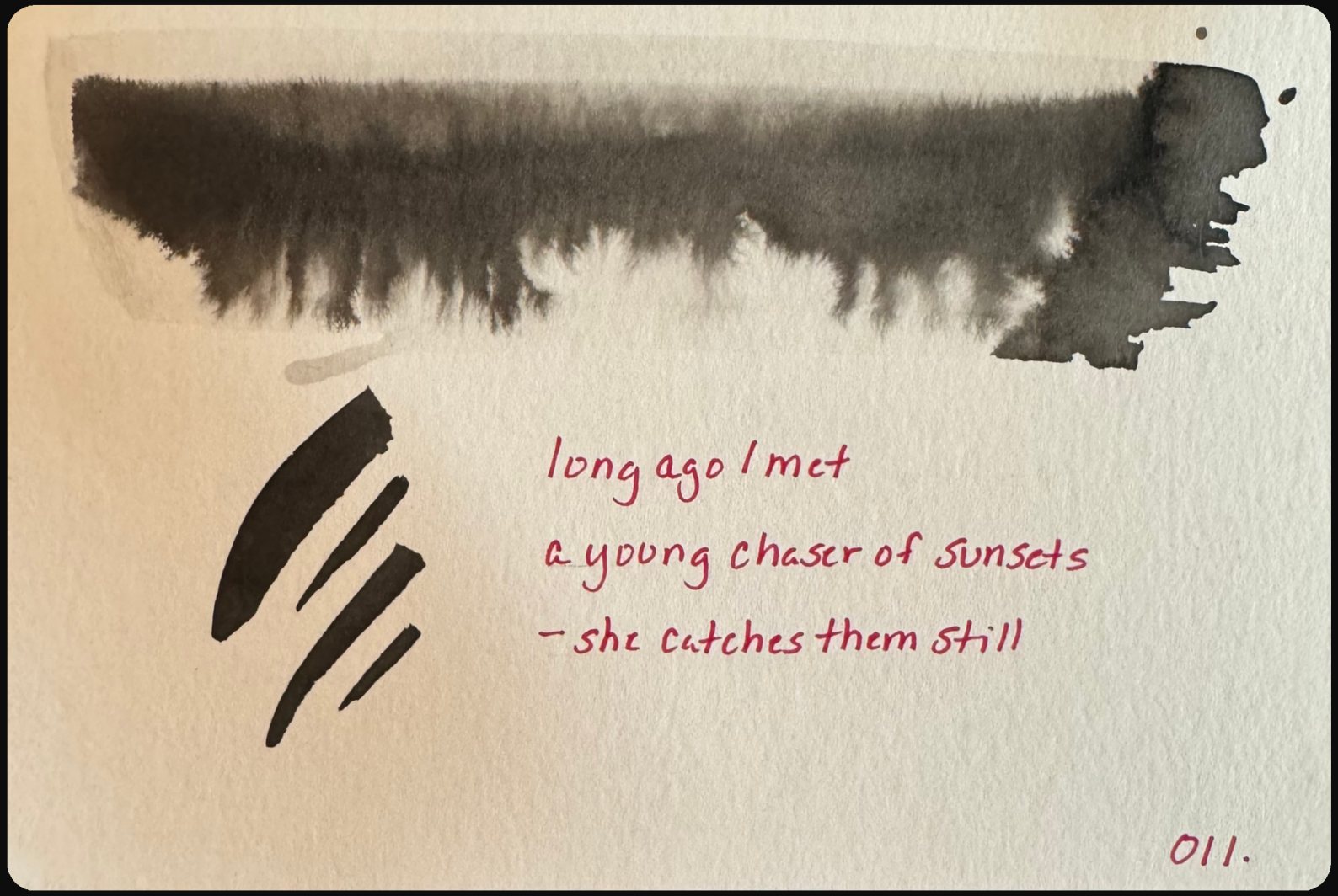

He grows like bamboo
never ceasing, nor yielding—
the shade is divine!
008.


She holds a paintbrush
like the stem of a flower
perfuming my sight
009.

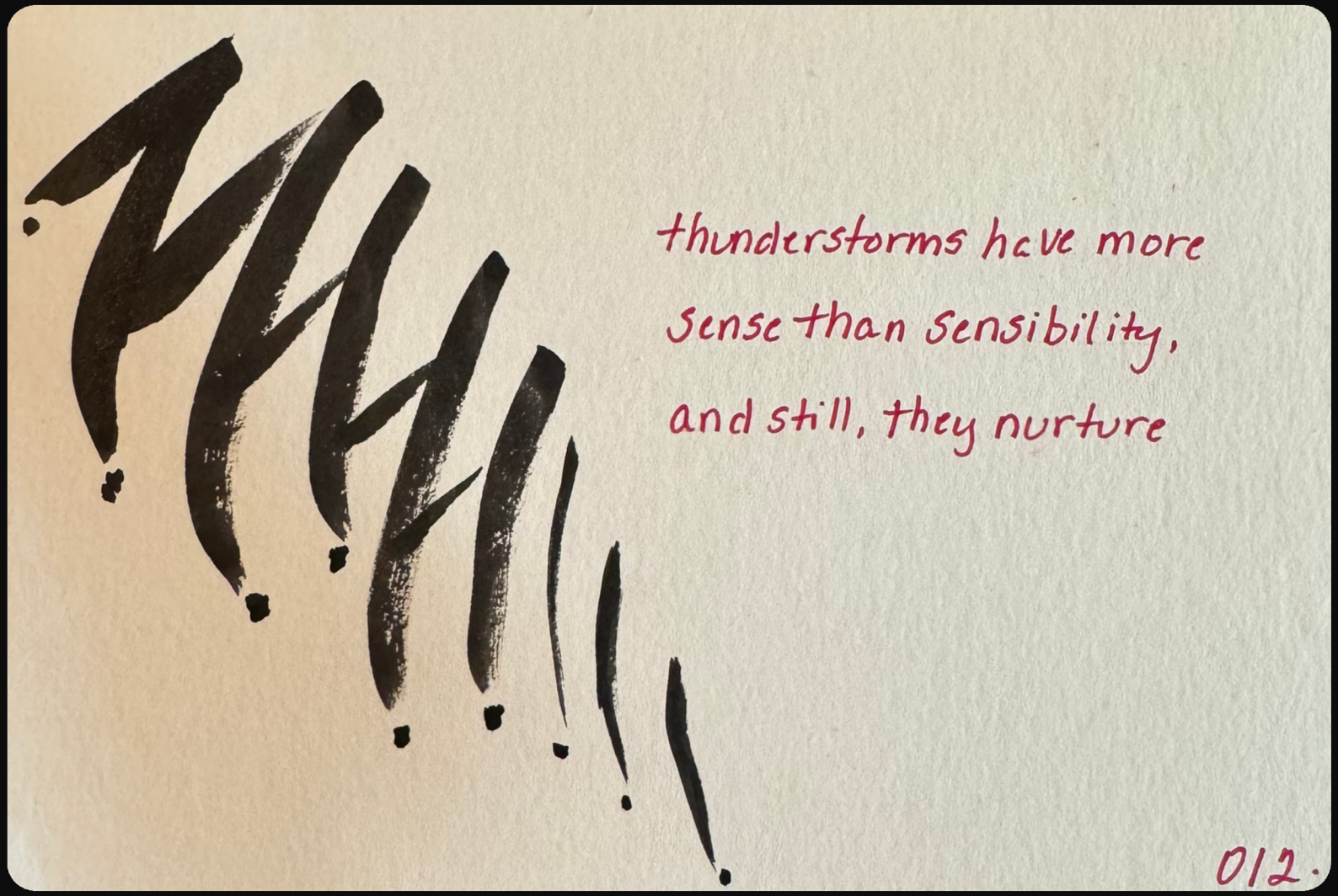
009


river winds, tumbles
a leaf is carried along
delighted by fate
010.

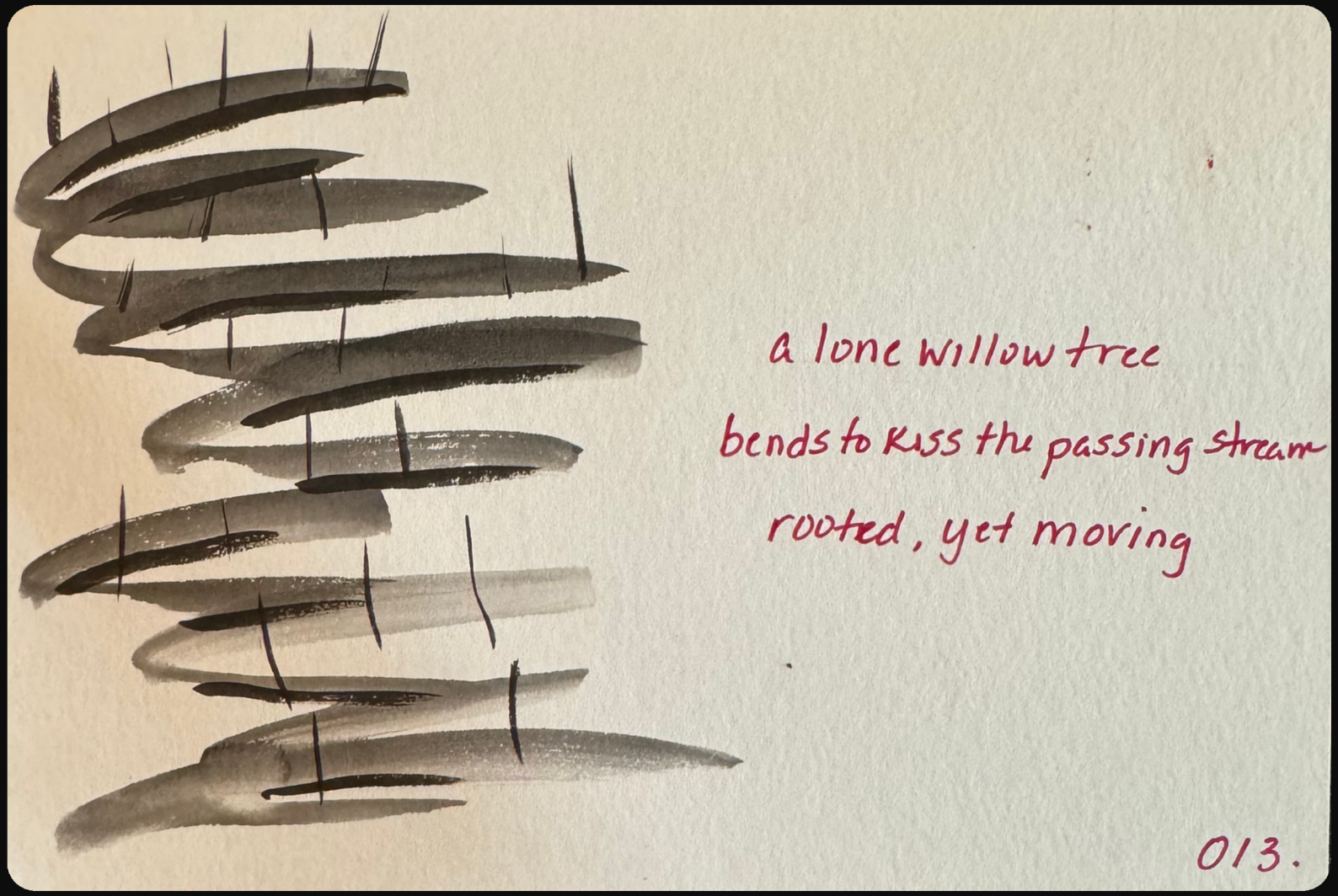
010


long ago I met
a young chaser of sunsets
- she catches them still
011.

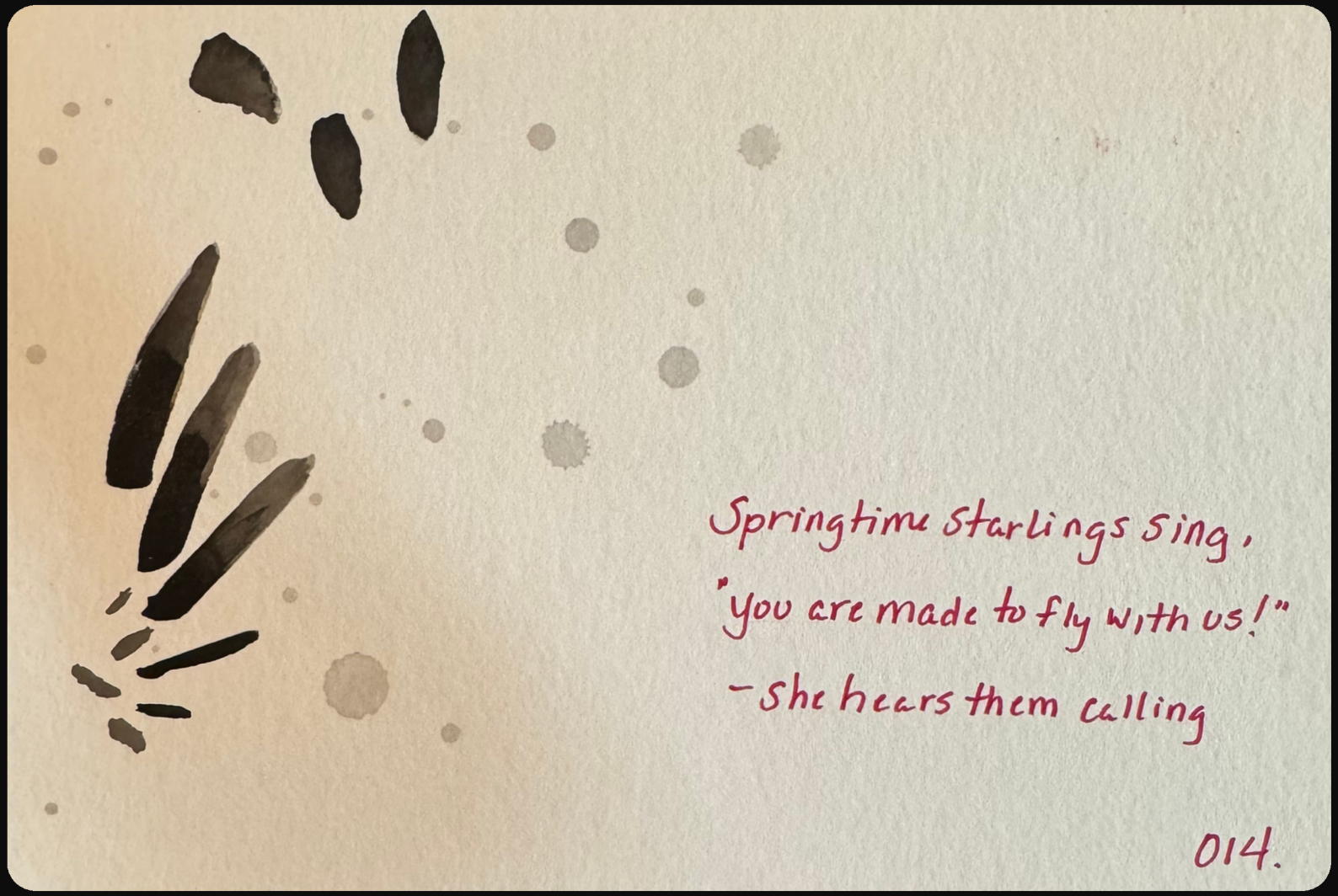
011


thunderstorms have more
sense than sensibility,
and still, they nurture
012.

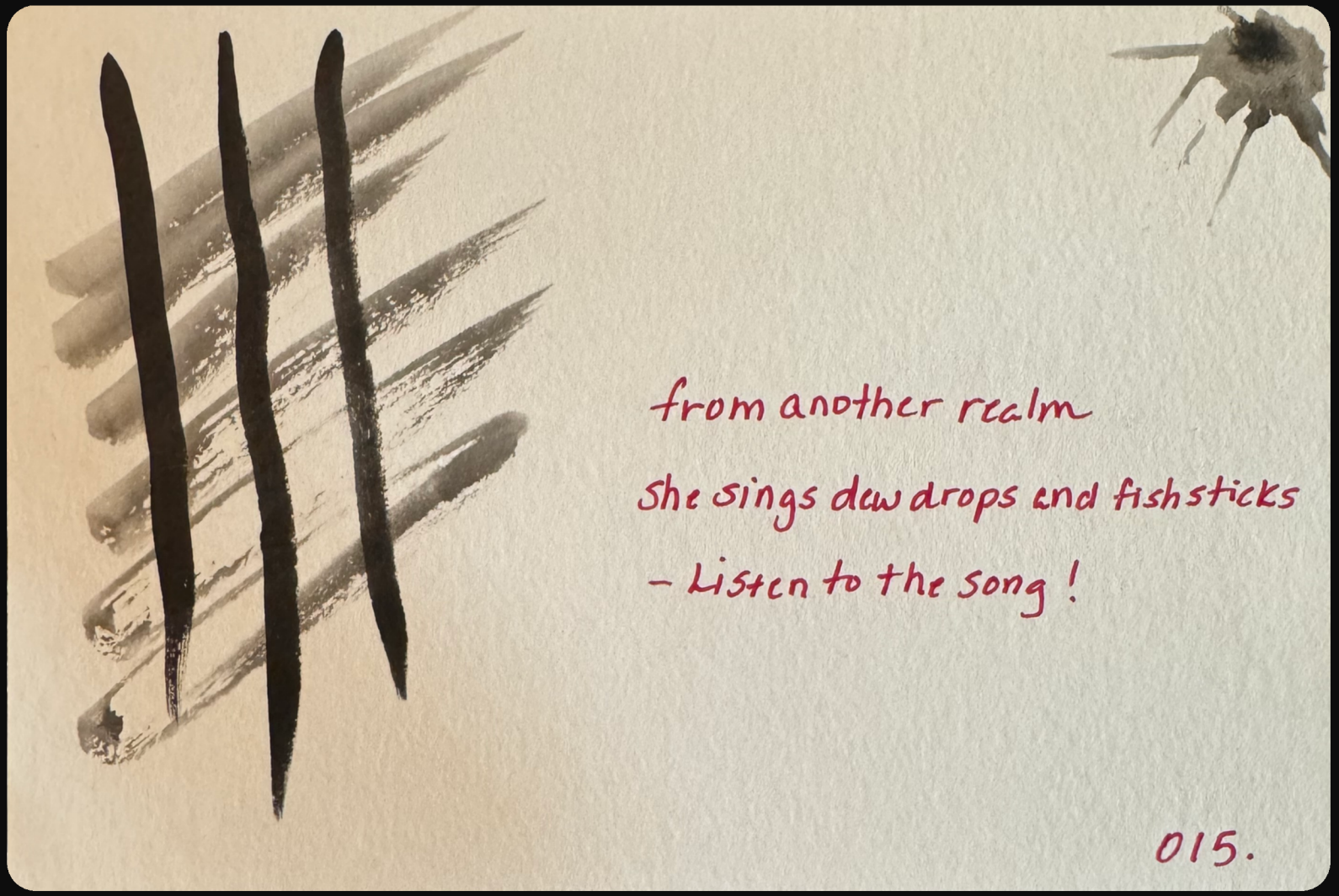
012

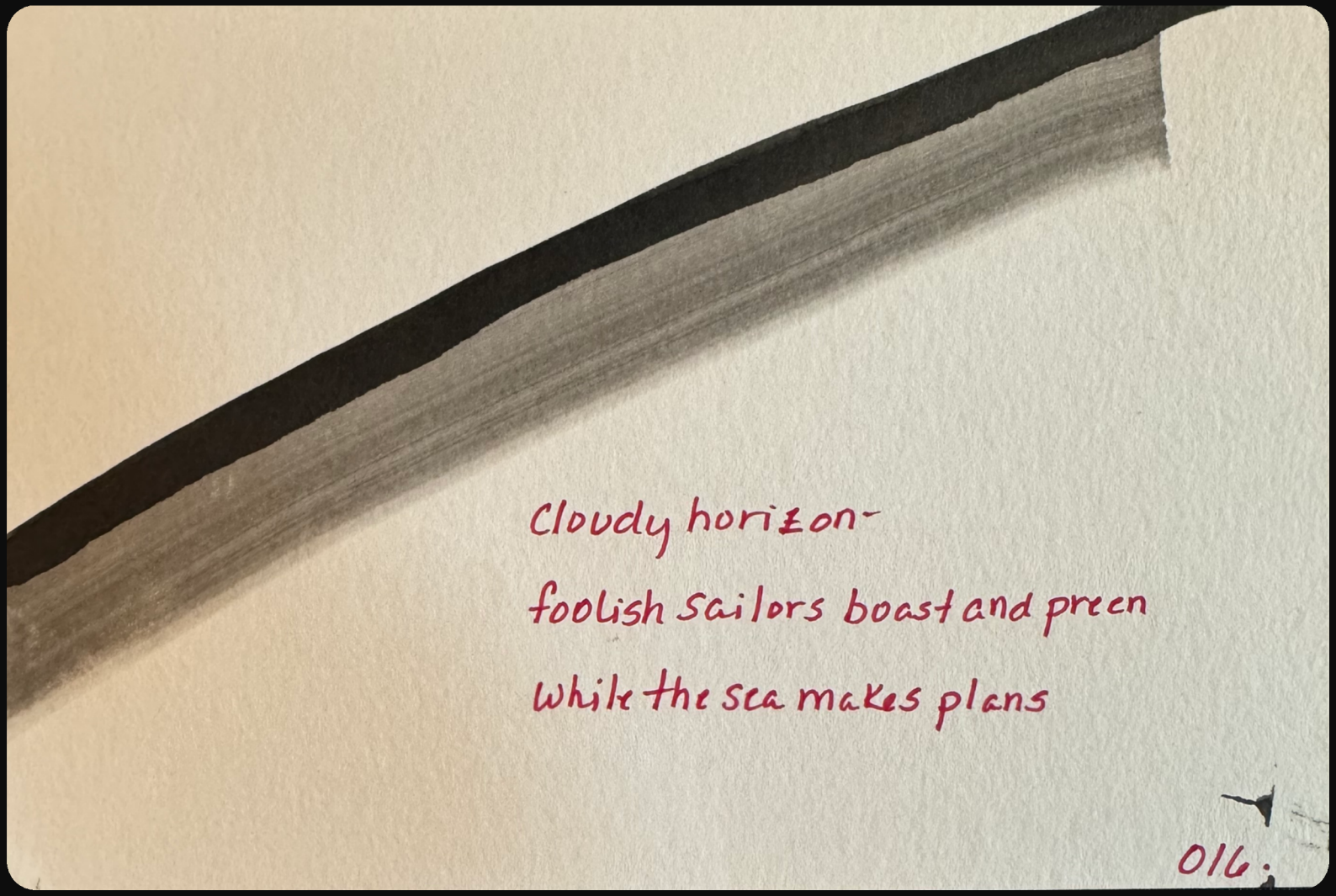

a lone willow tree
bends to kiss the passing stream
rooted, yet moving
013.

013

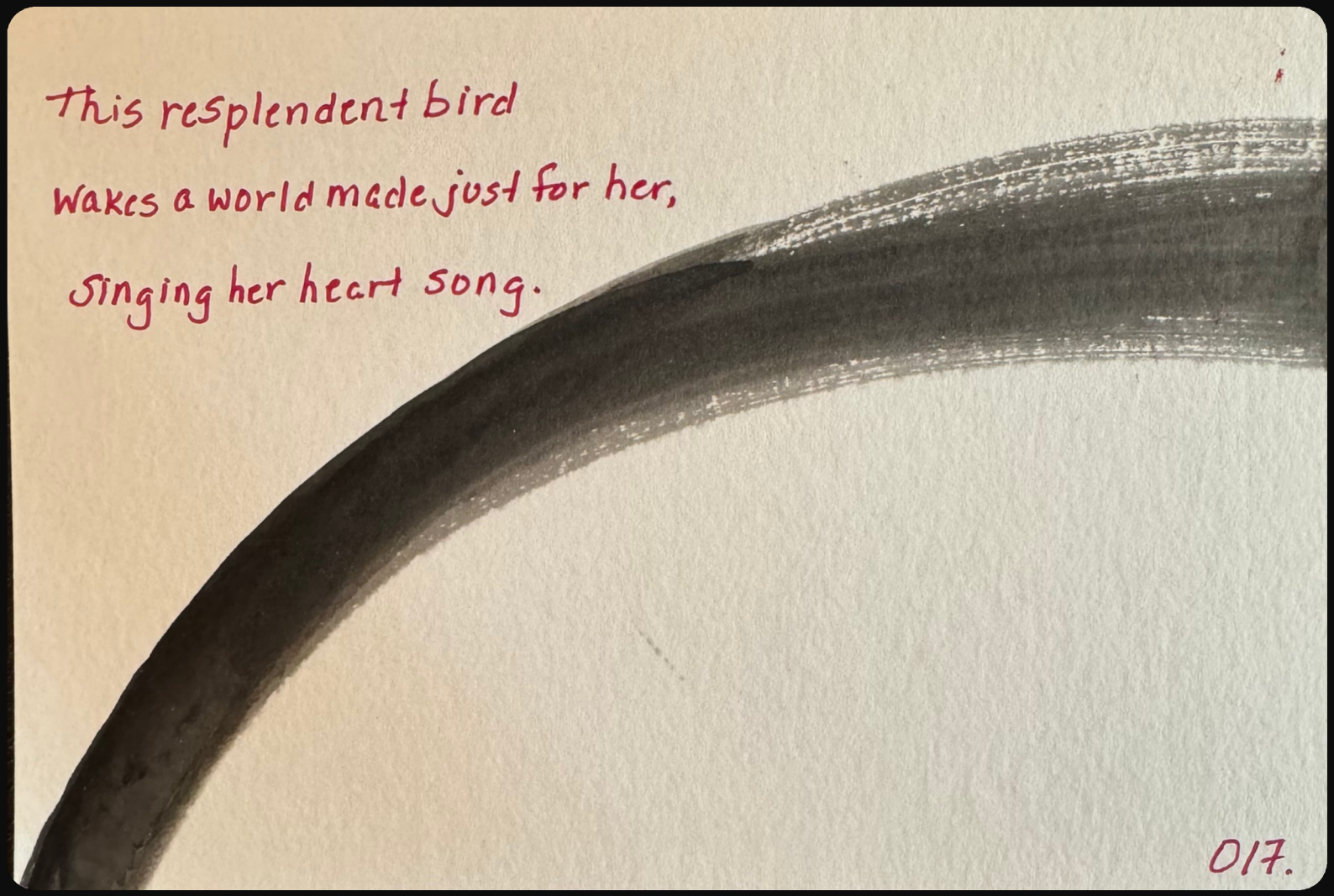

Springtime starlings sing,
"you are made to fly with us!"
-she hears them calling
014.

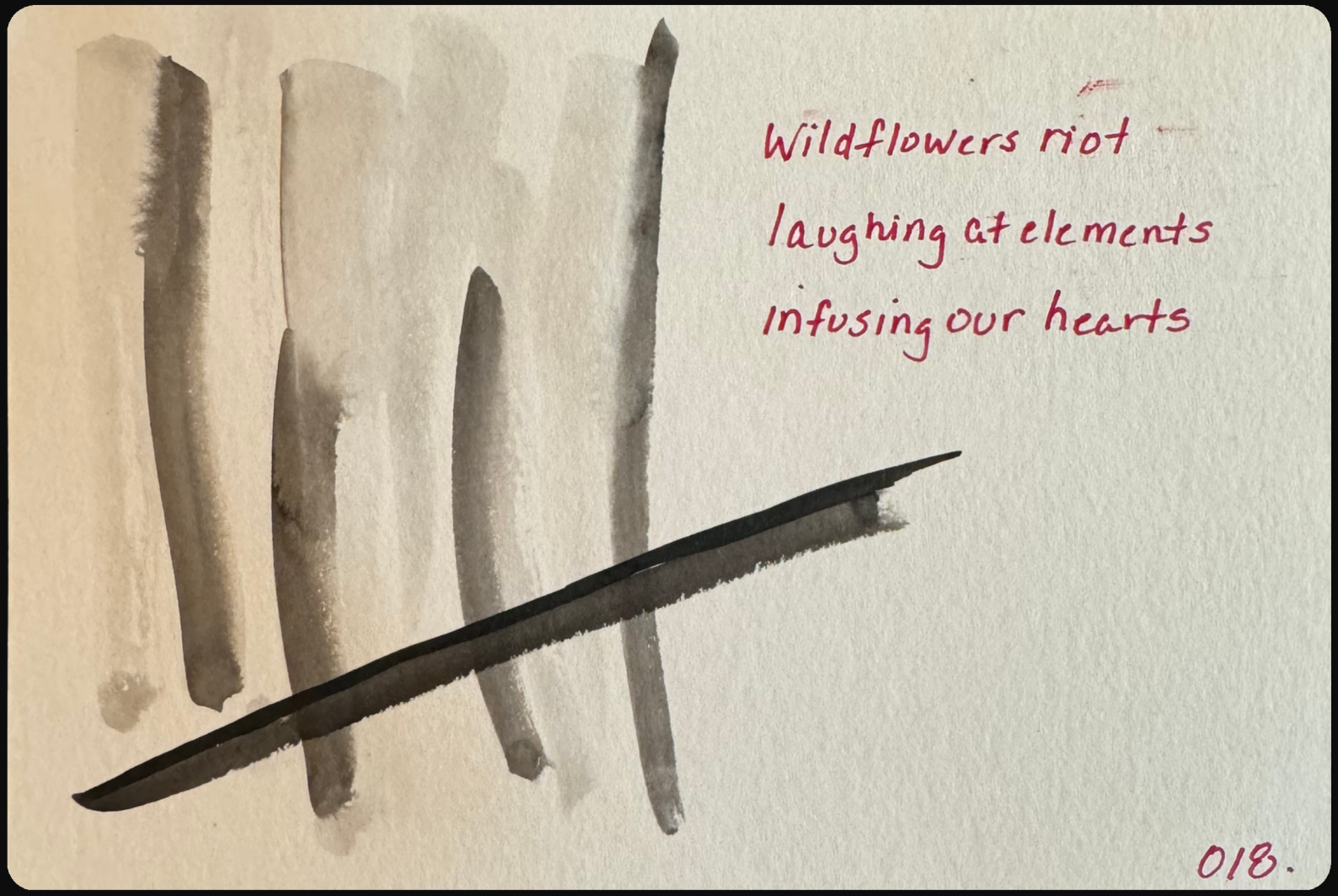
014


from another realm
She sings dew drops and fishsticks
- Listen to the song !
015.


Cloudy horizon-
foolish sailors boast and preen
while the sea makes plans
016

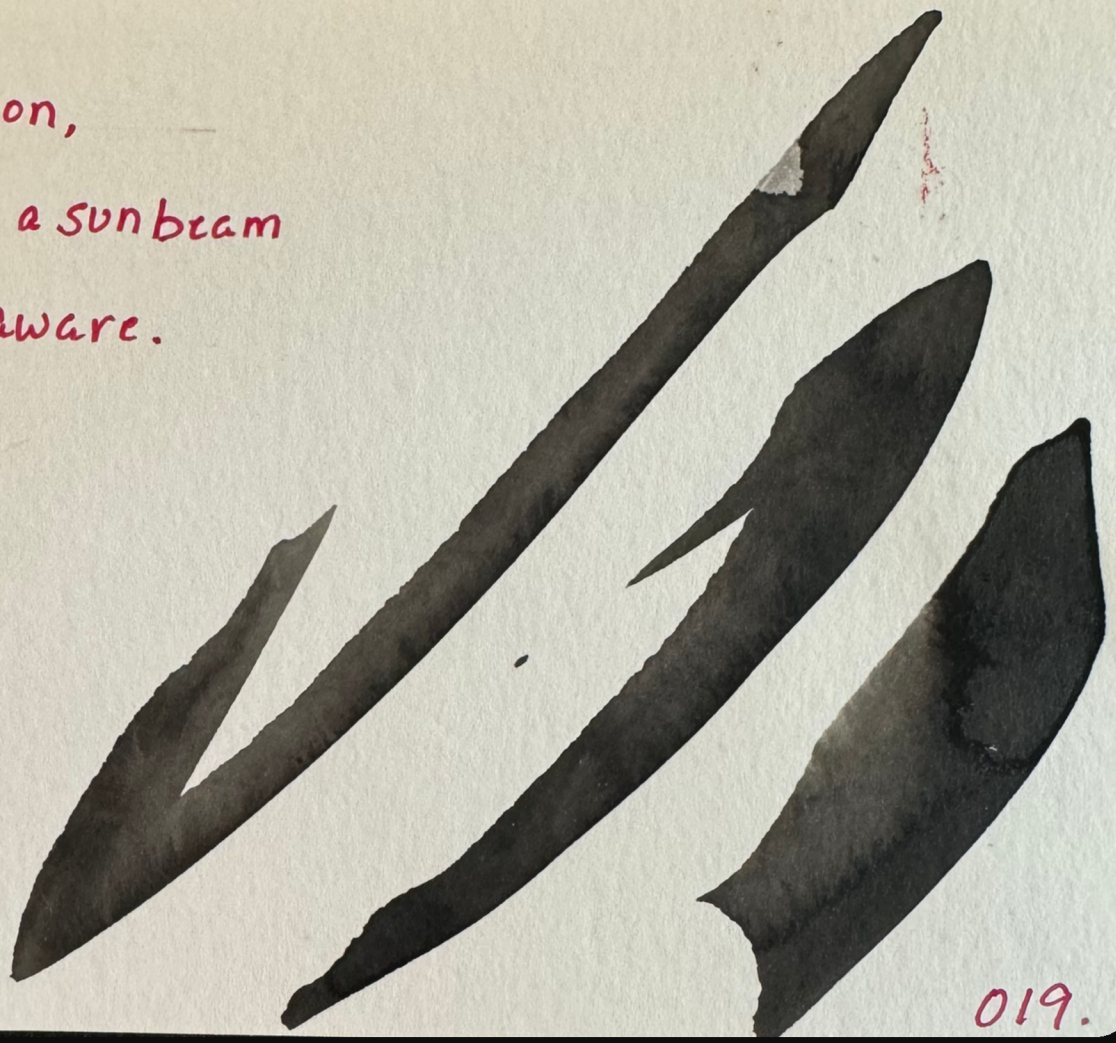
016


This resplendent bird
wakes a world made just for her,
singing her heart song.
017.

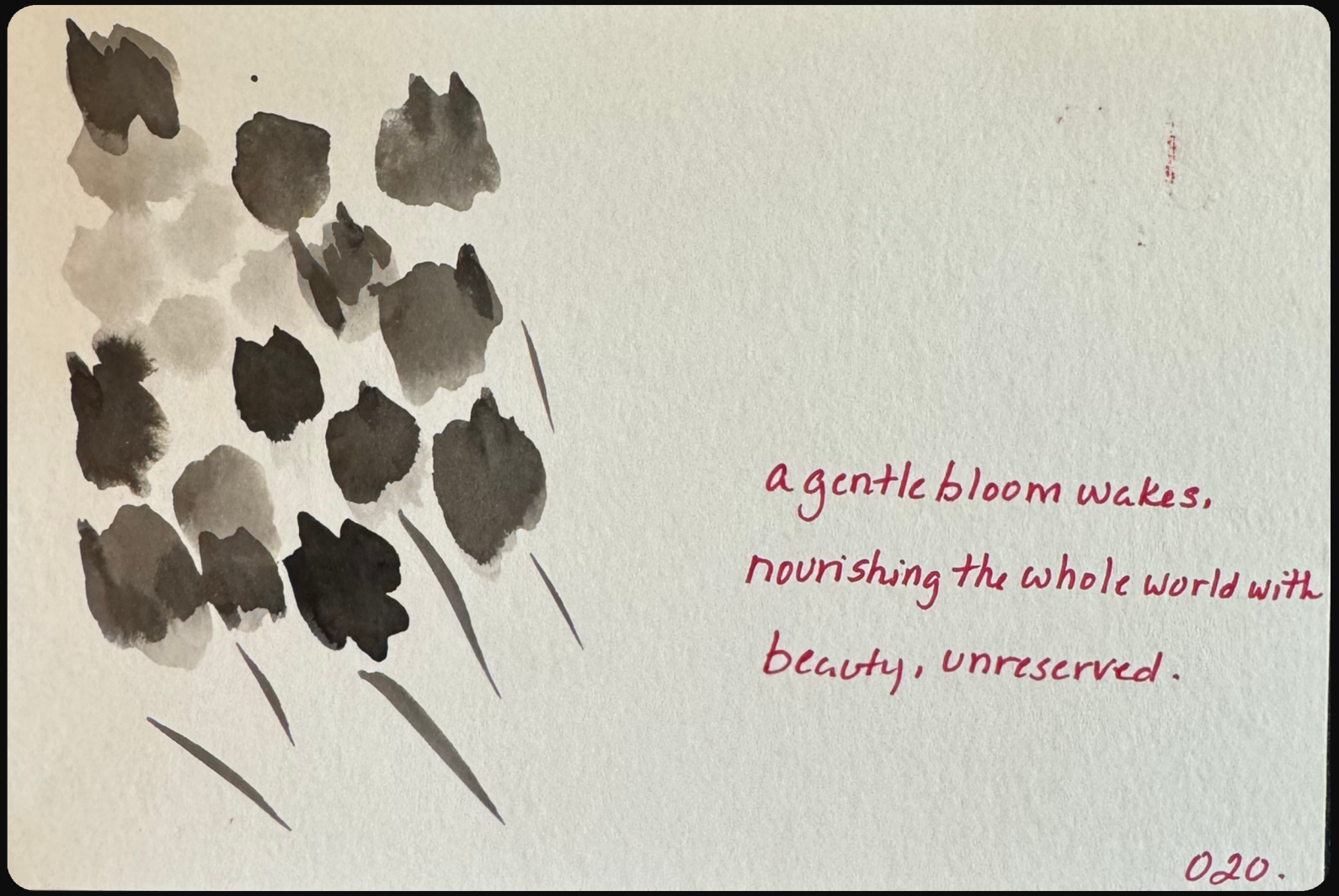

Wildflowers riot
laughing at elements
infusing our hearts
018.

018

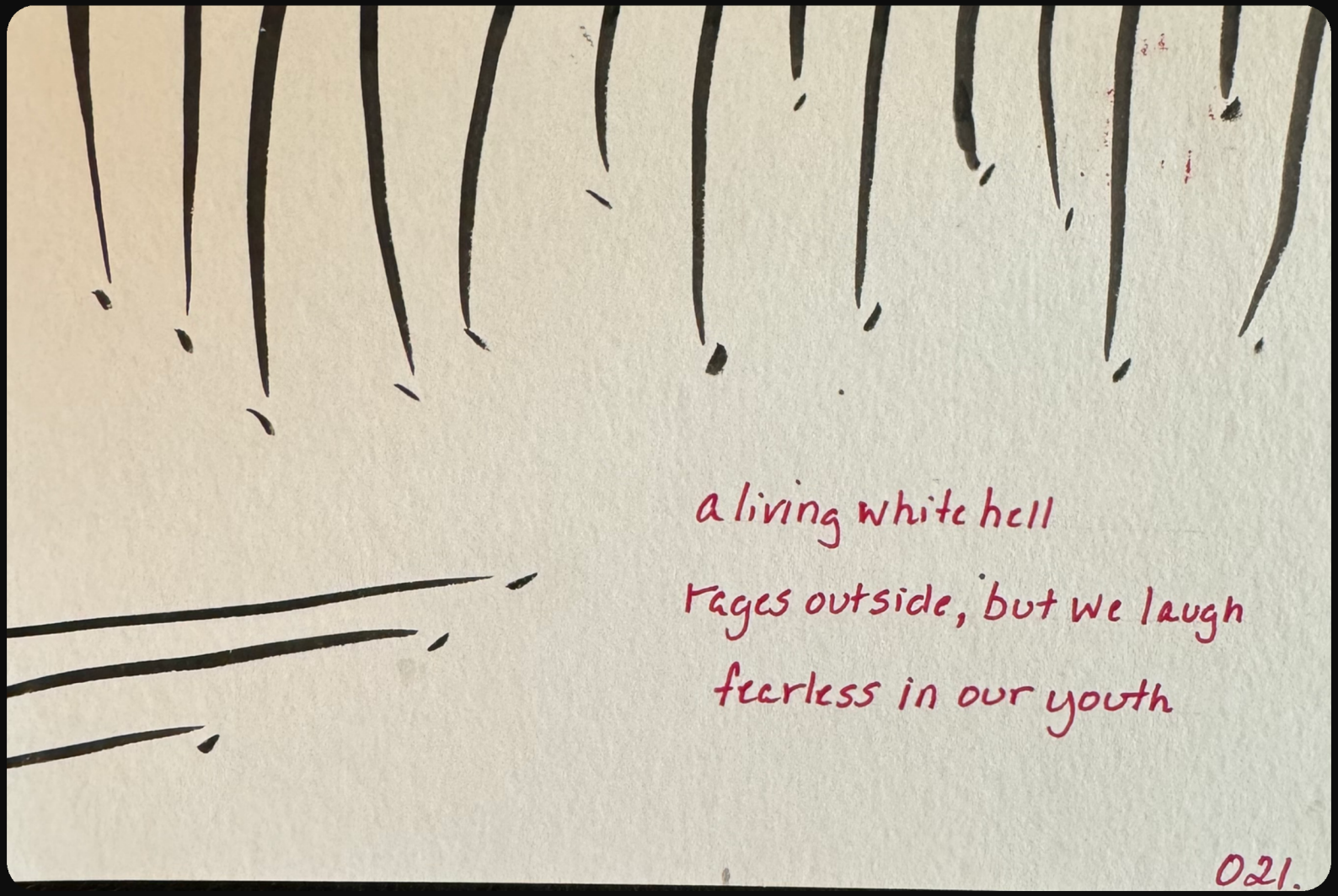
Quiet afternoon,
the cat naps in a sunbeam
Content, but aware.

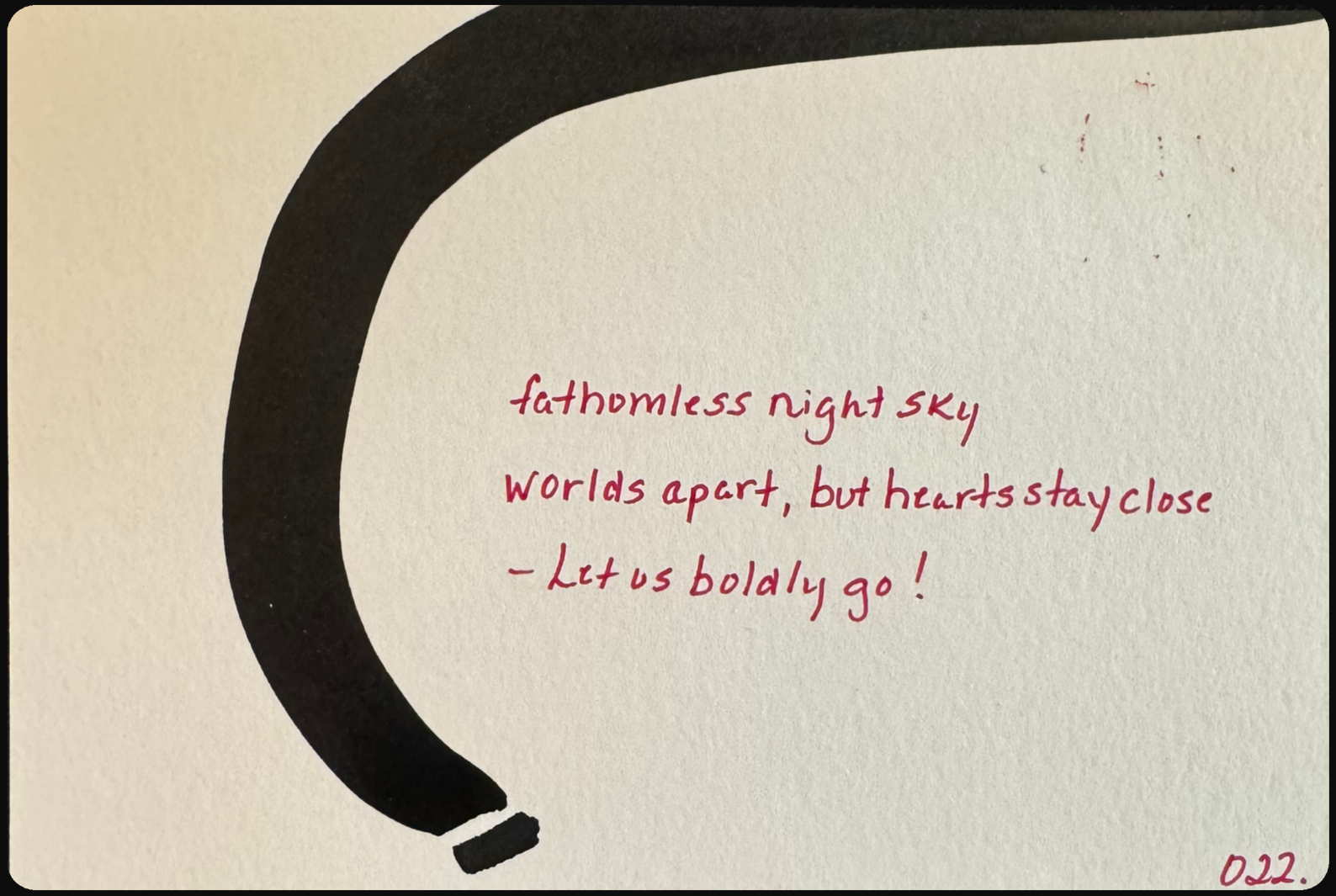


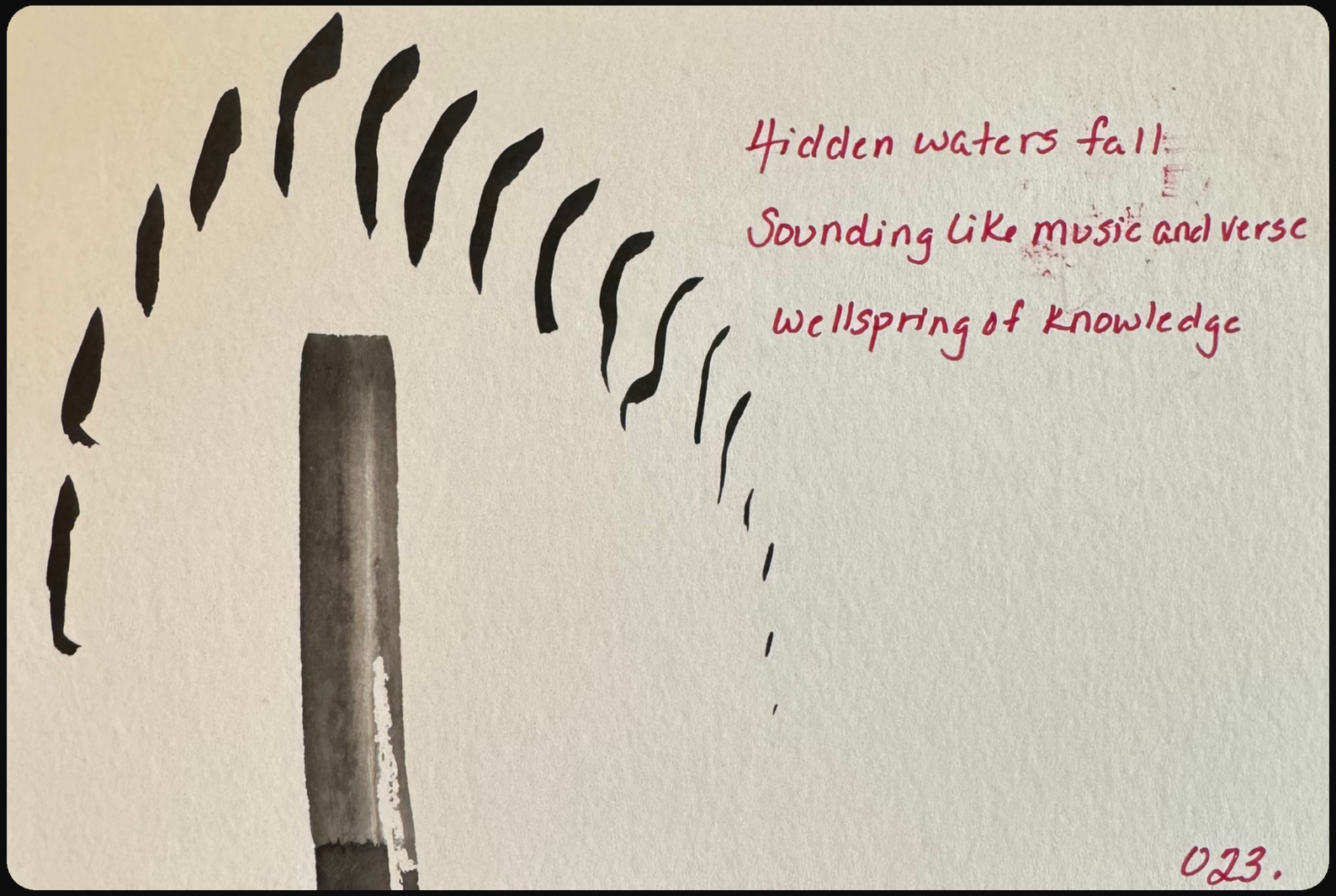
019.

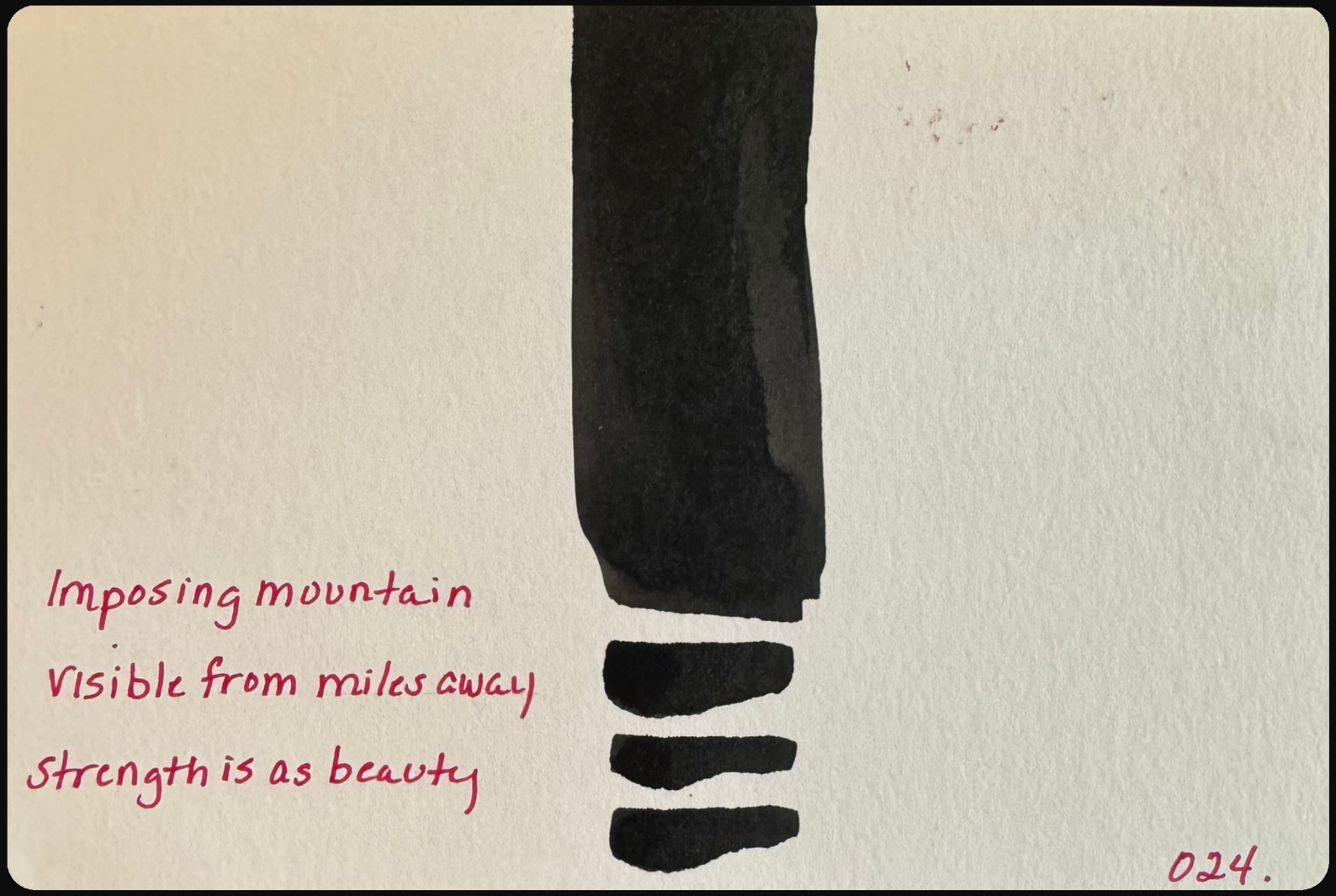

a gentle bloom wakes,
nourishing the whole world with
beauty, unreserved.
020.

020

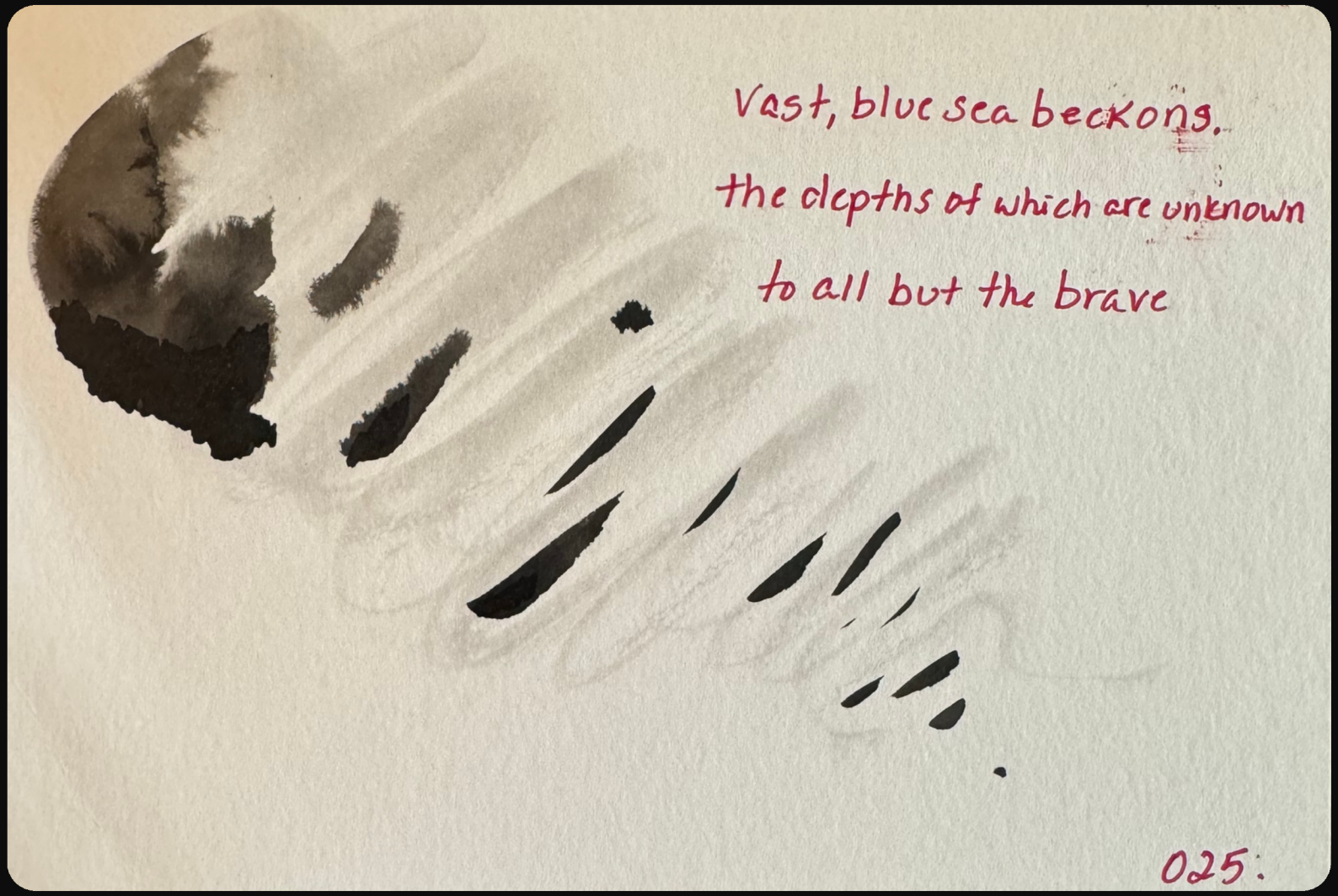

a living white hell
rages outside, but we laugh
fearless in our youth
021.

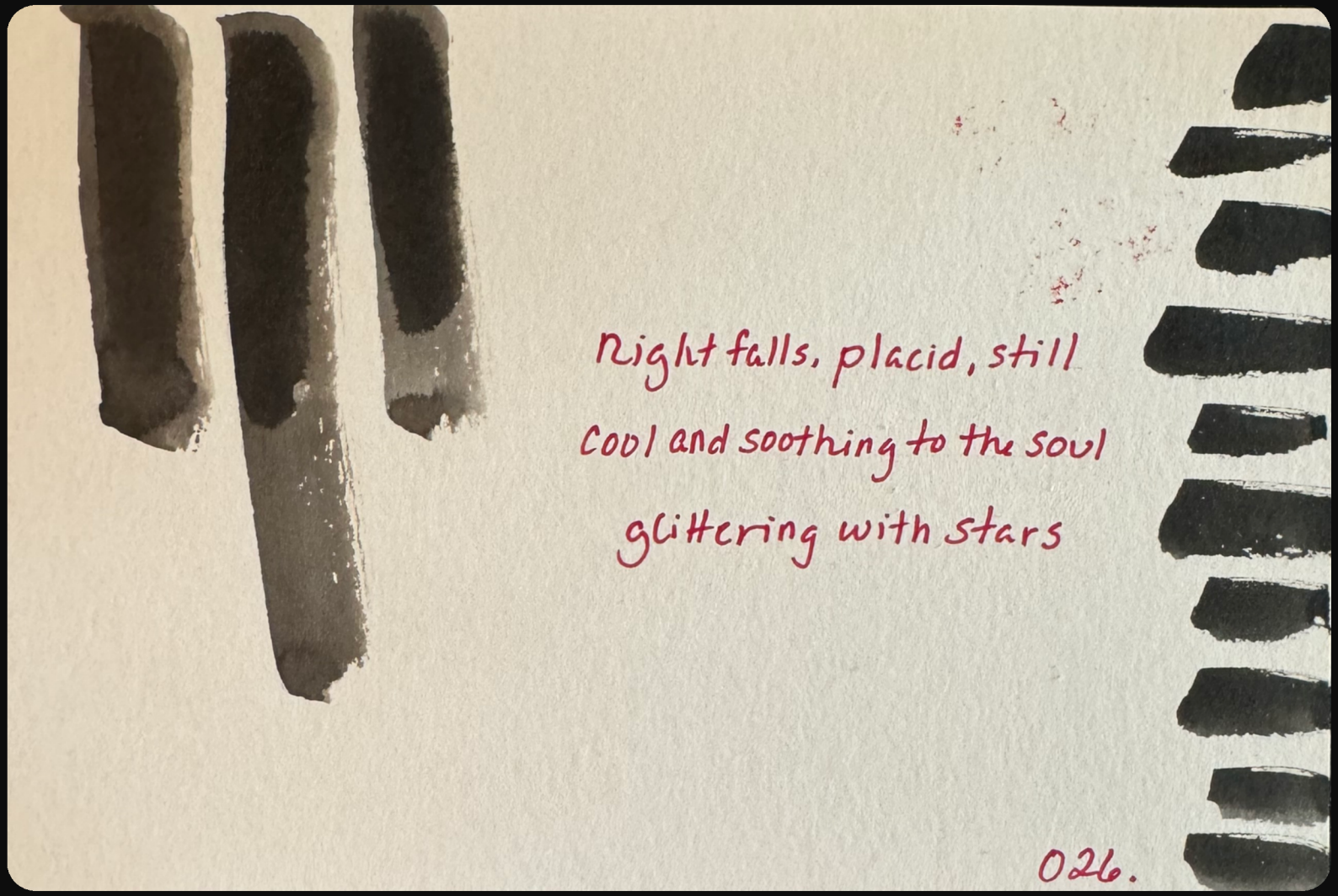

fathomless night sky
worlds apart, but hearts stay close
- Let us boldly go !
022.


Hidden waters fall
Sounding like music and verse
wellspring of knowledge
023.

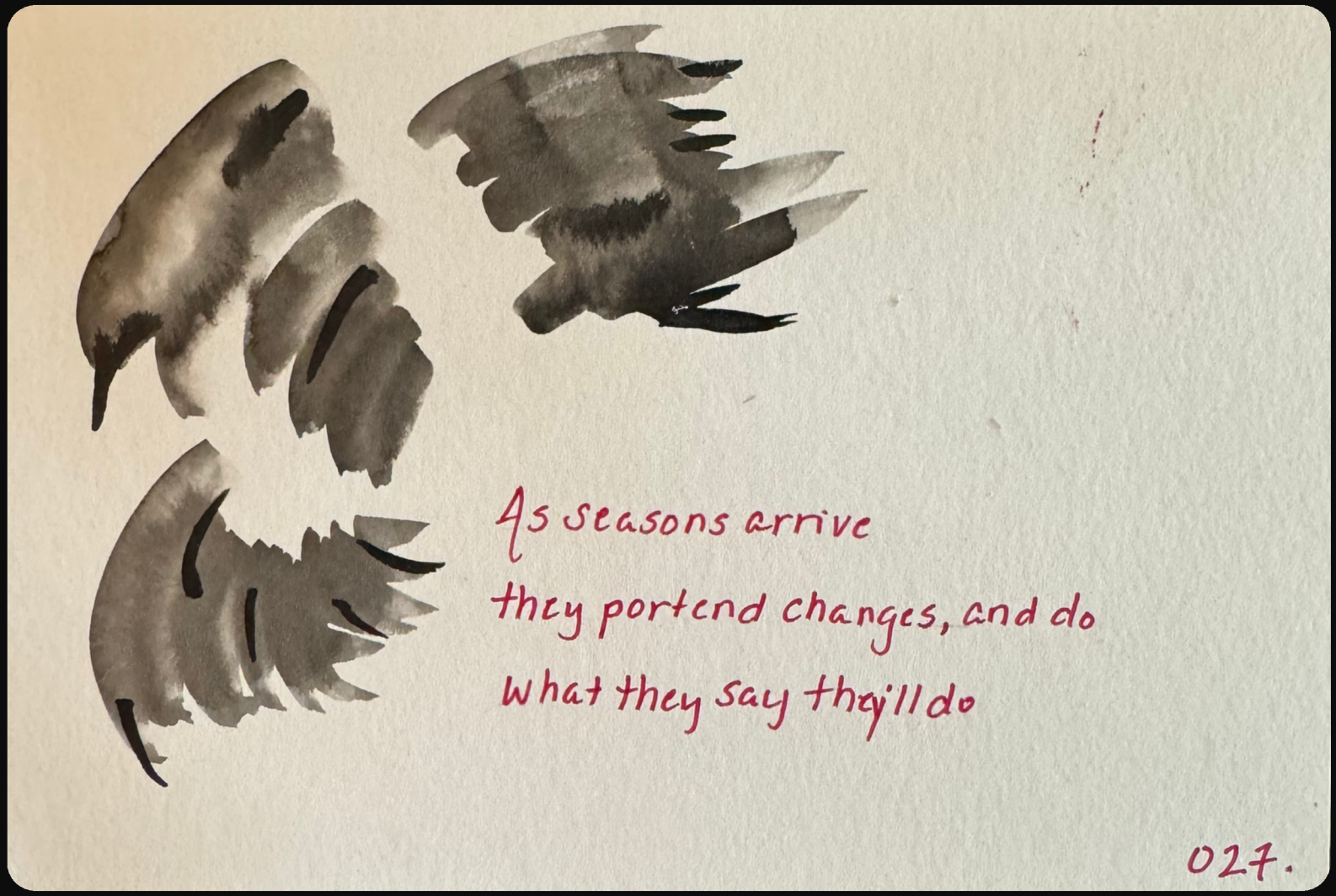

Imposing mountain
visible from miles away
strength is as beauty
024.

024

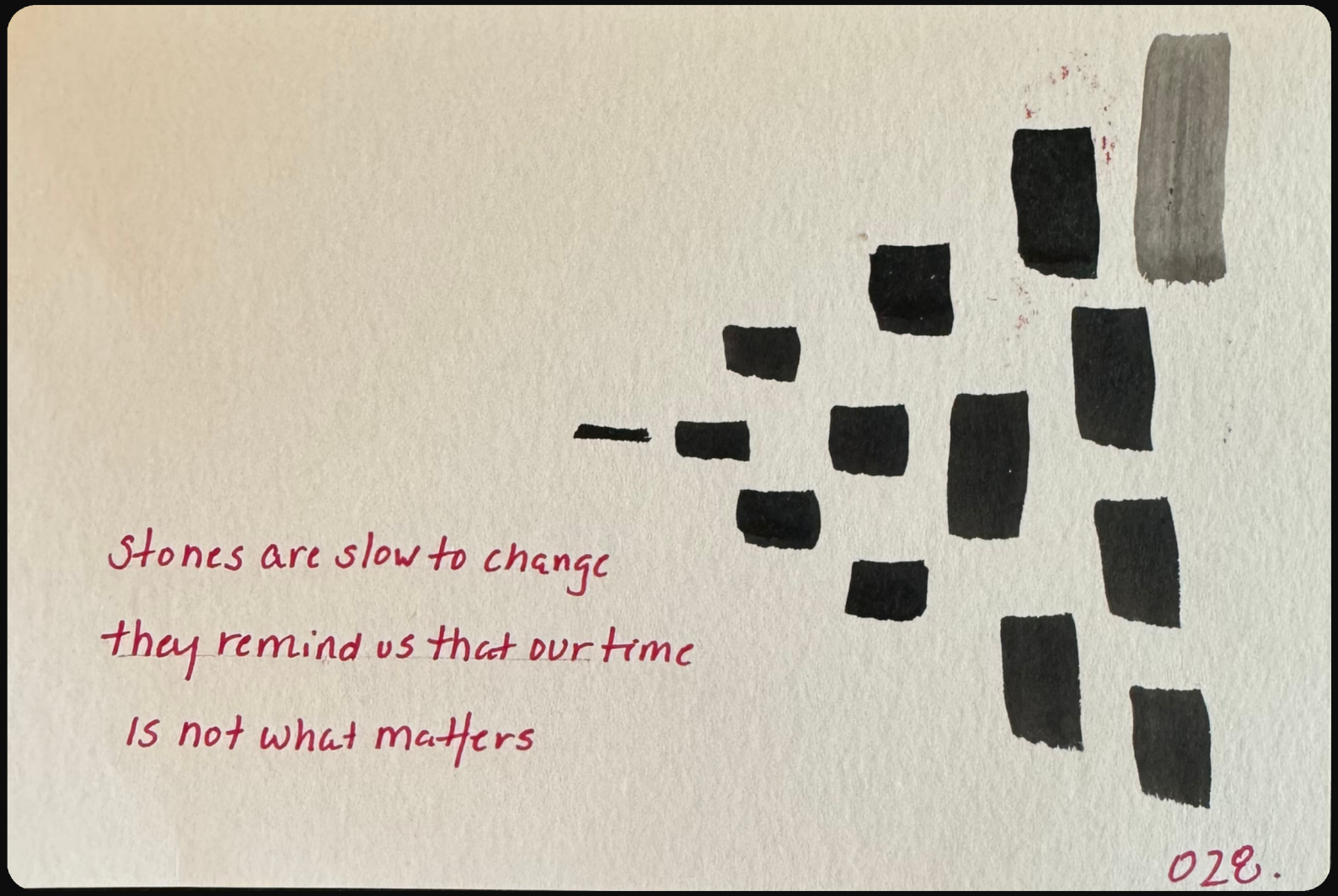

Vast, blue sea beckons,
the depths of which are unknown
to all but the brave
025.


night falls, placid, still
cool and soothing to the soul
glittering with stars
026.

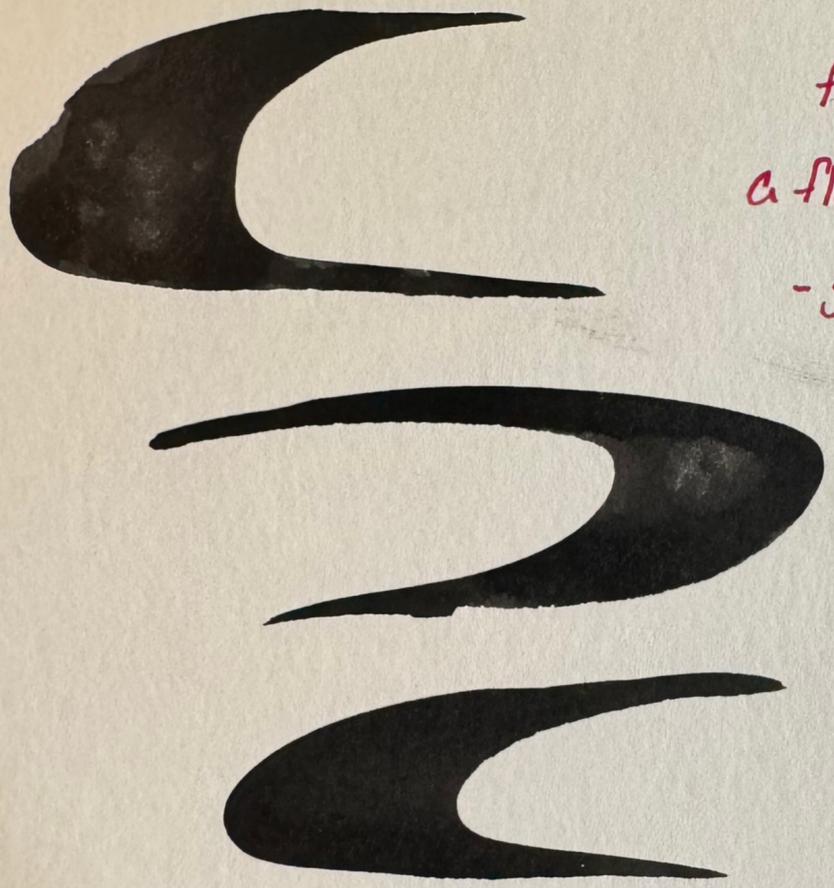
026


As seasons arrive
they portend changes, and do
what they say they'll do
027.

027


stones are slow to change
they remind us that our time
is not what matters
028.

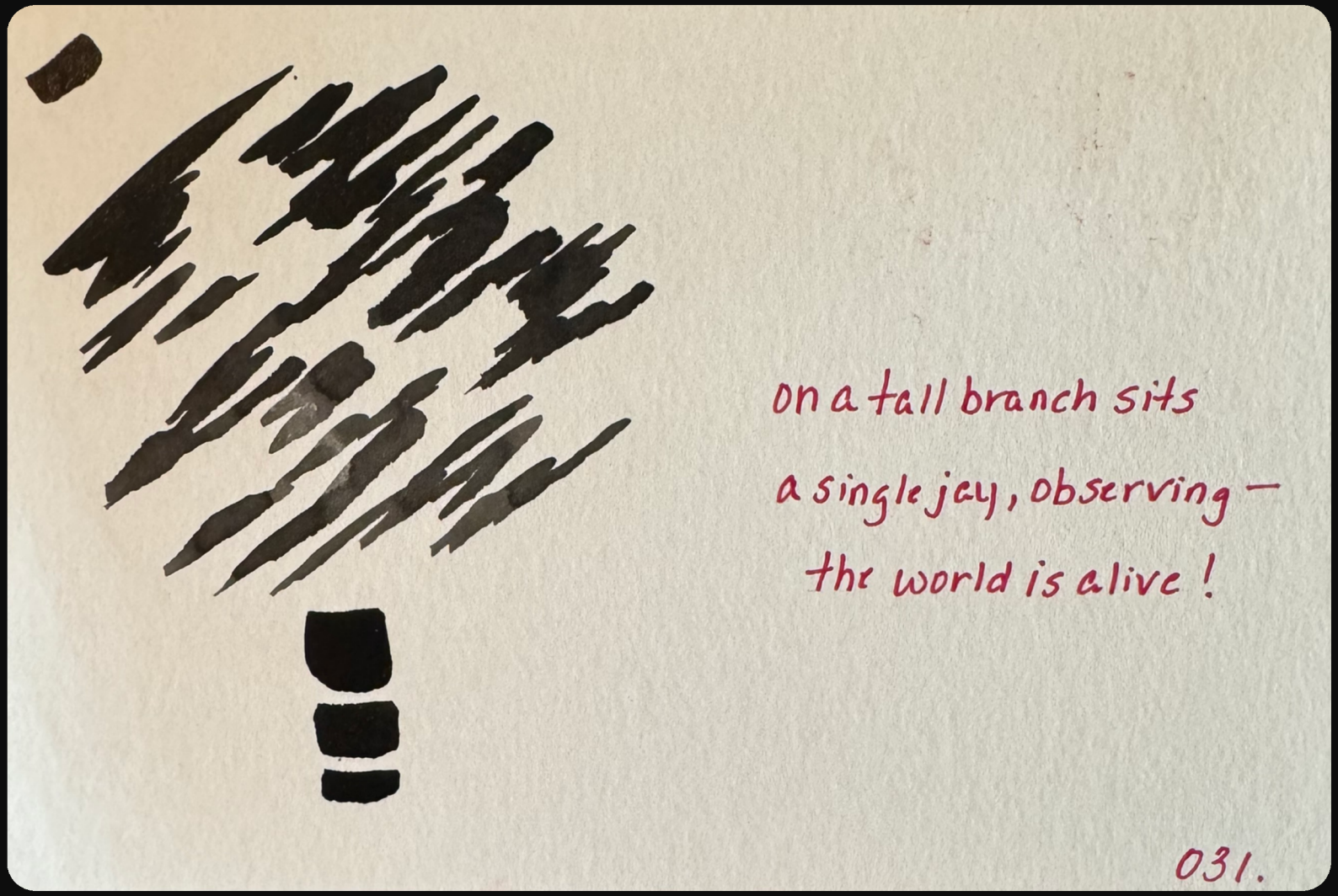
028

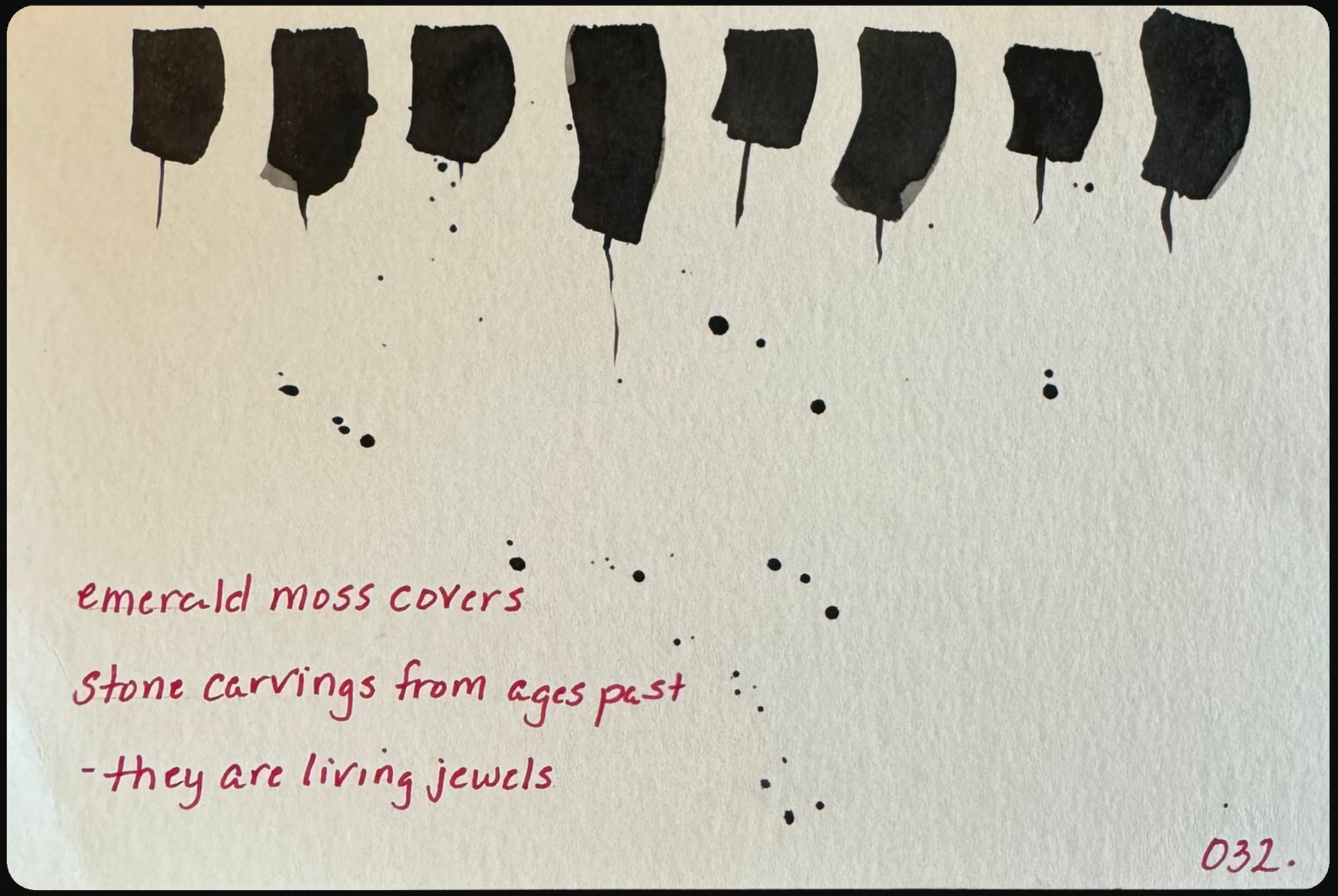


fire on the mountain
a flash of light gives meaning
-Suddenly, we see!

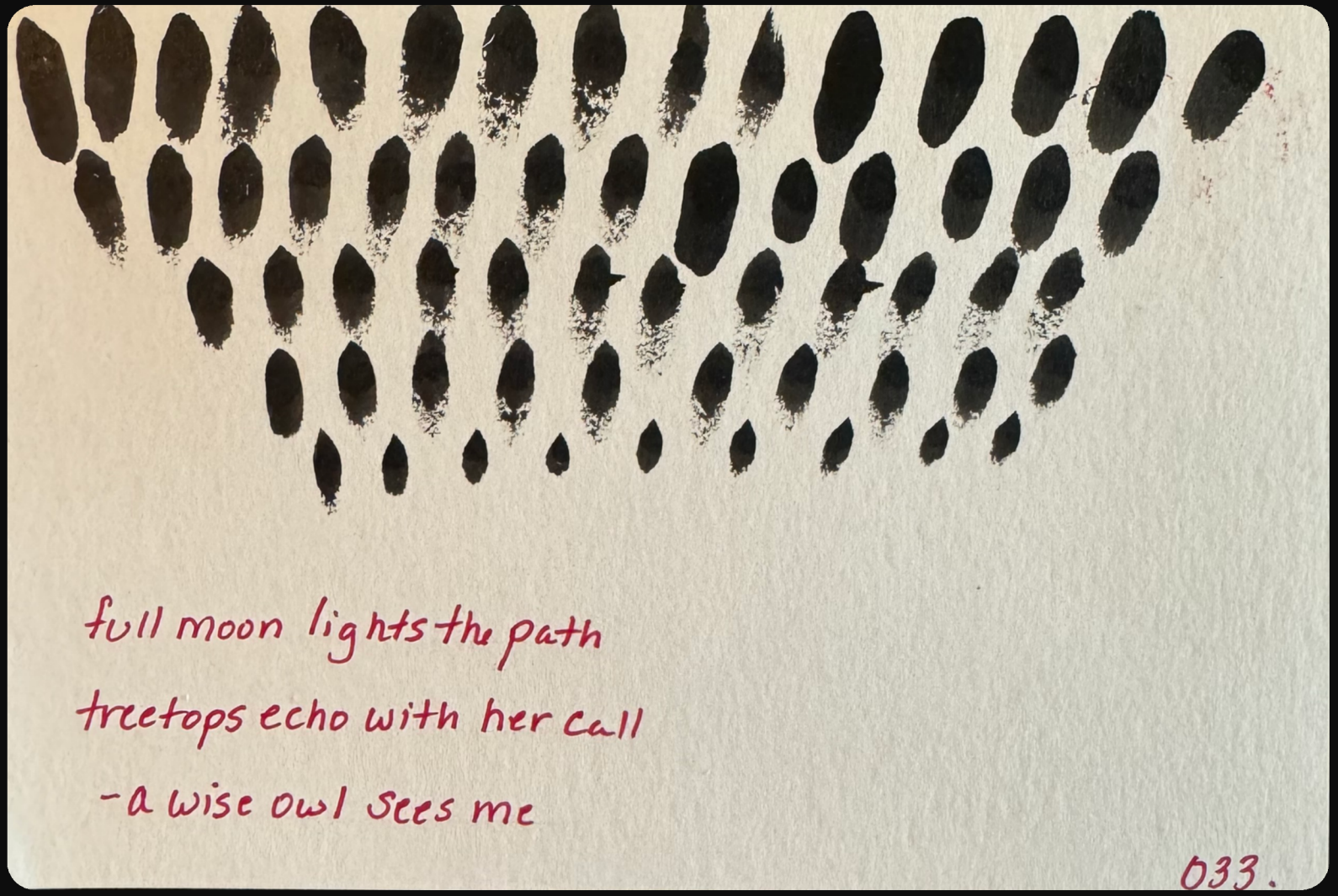
029.

mango tree provides.
it is most beautiful when
it offers its' fruit
030.

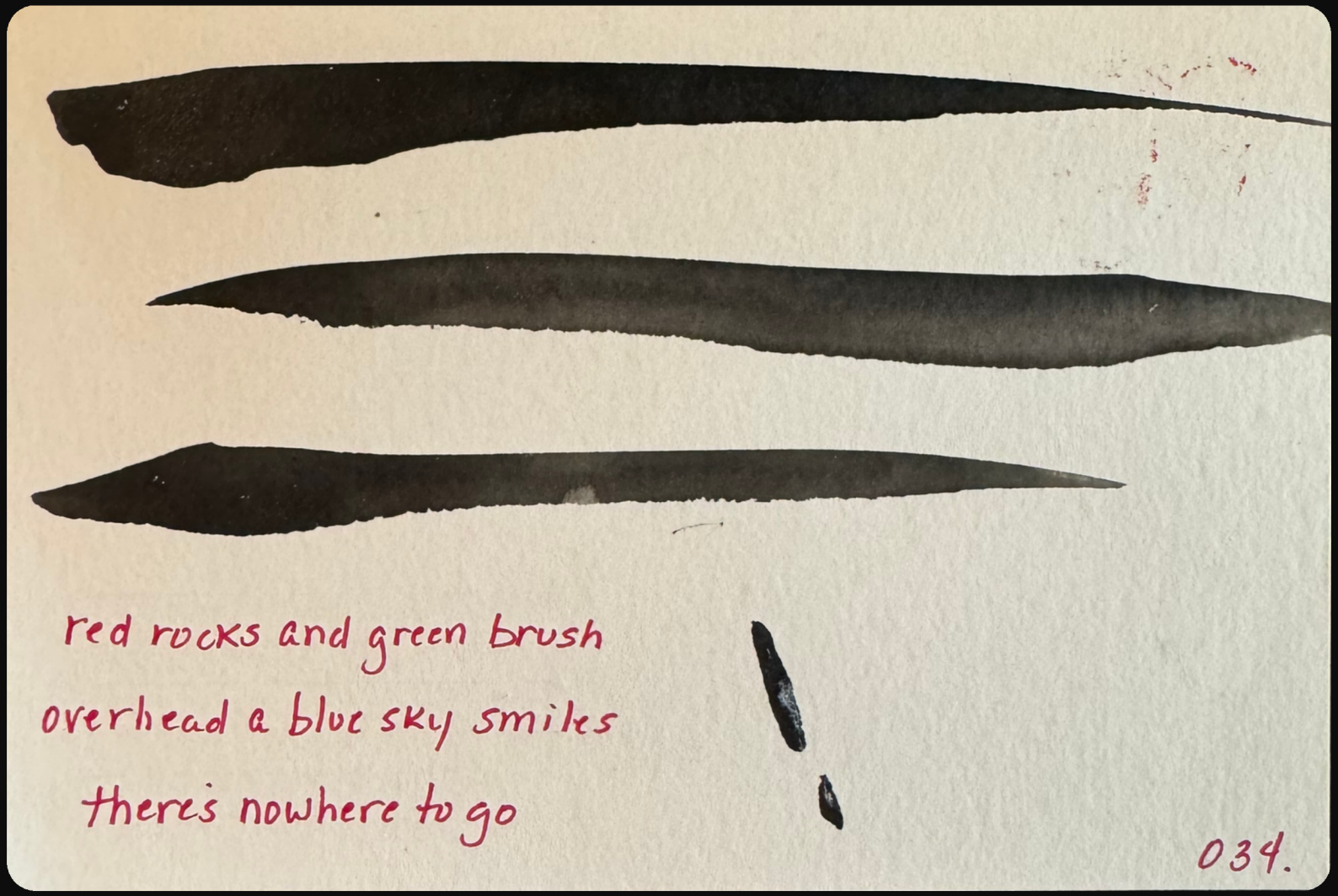

on a tall branch sits
a single jay, observing —
the world is alive !
031.


emerald moss covers
stone carvings from ages past
-they are living jewels
032.

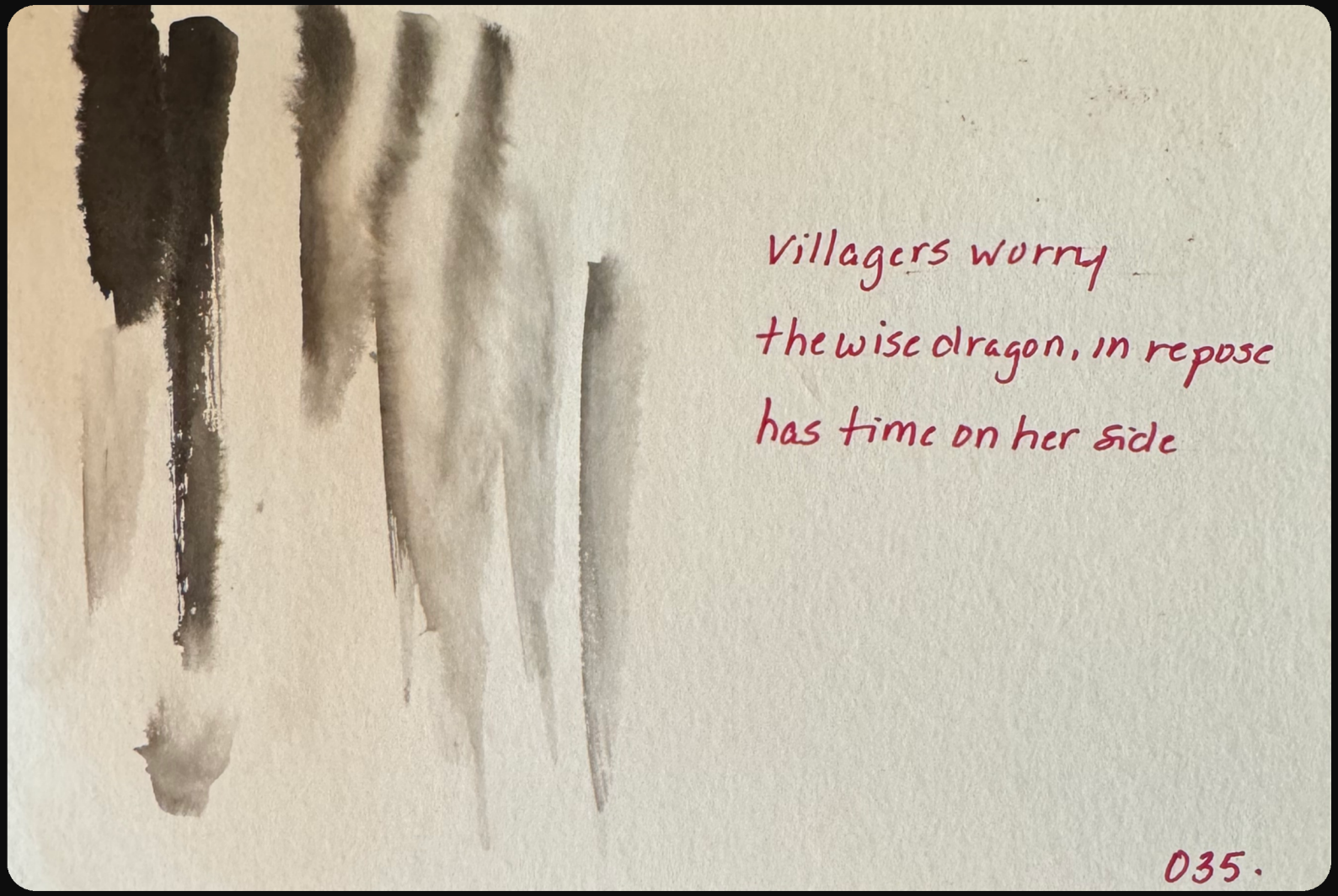
032

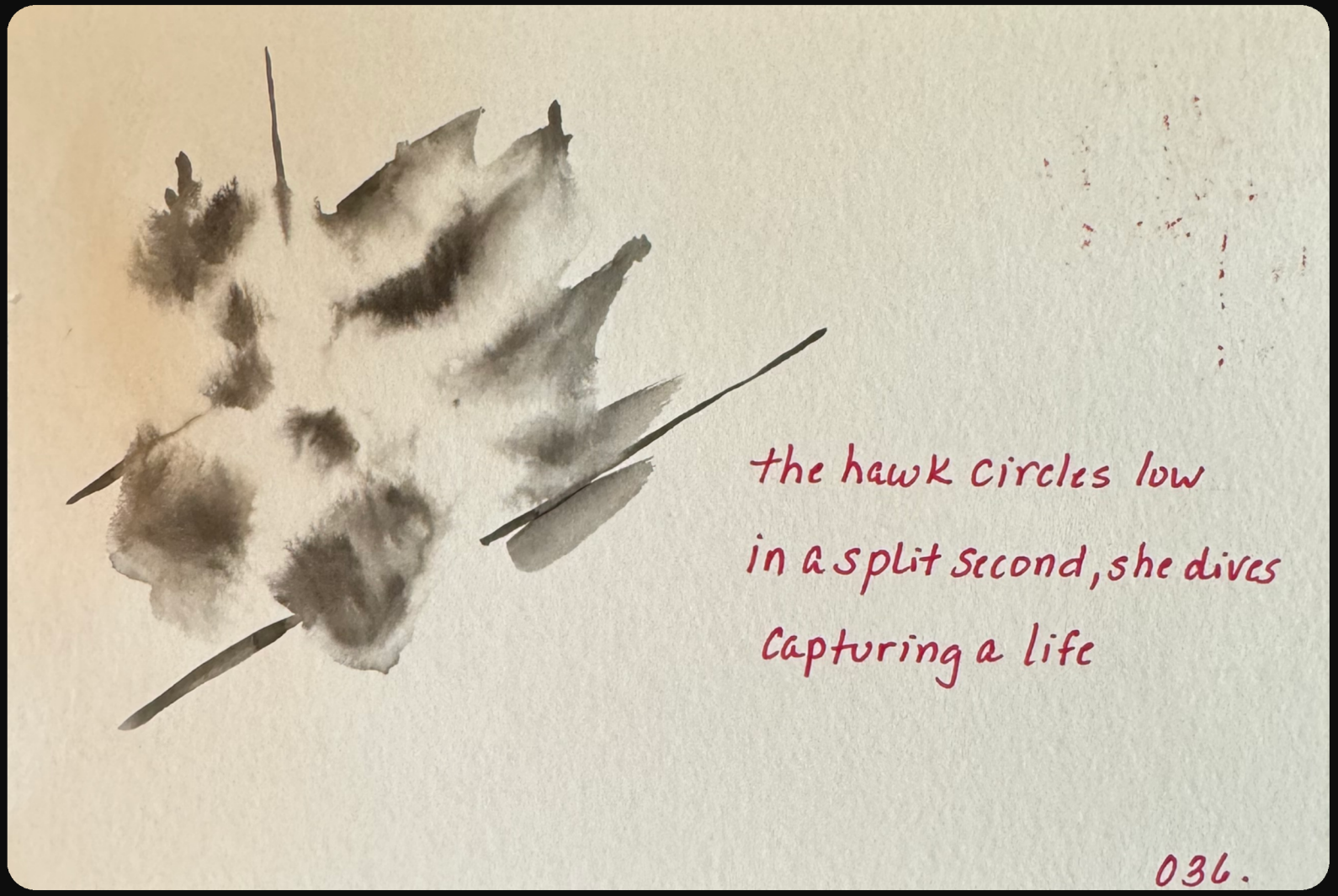

full moon lights the path
treetops echo with her call
-a wise owl sees me
033.

033


red rocks and green brush
overhead a blue sky smiles
there's nowhere to go
034.

034

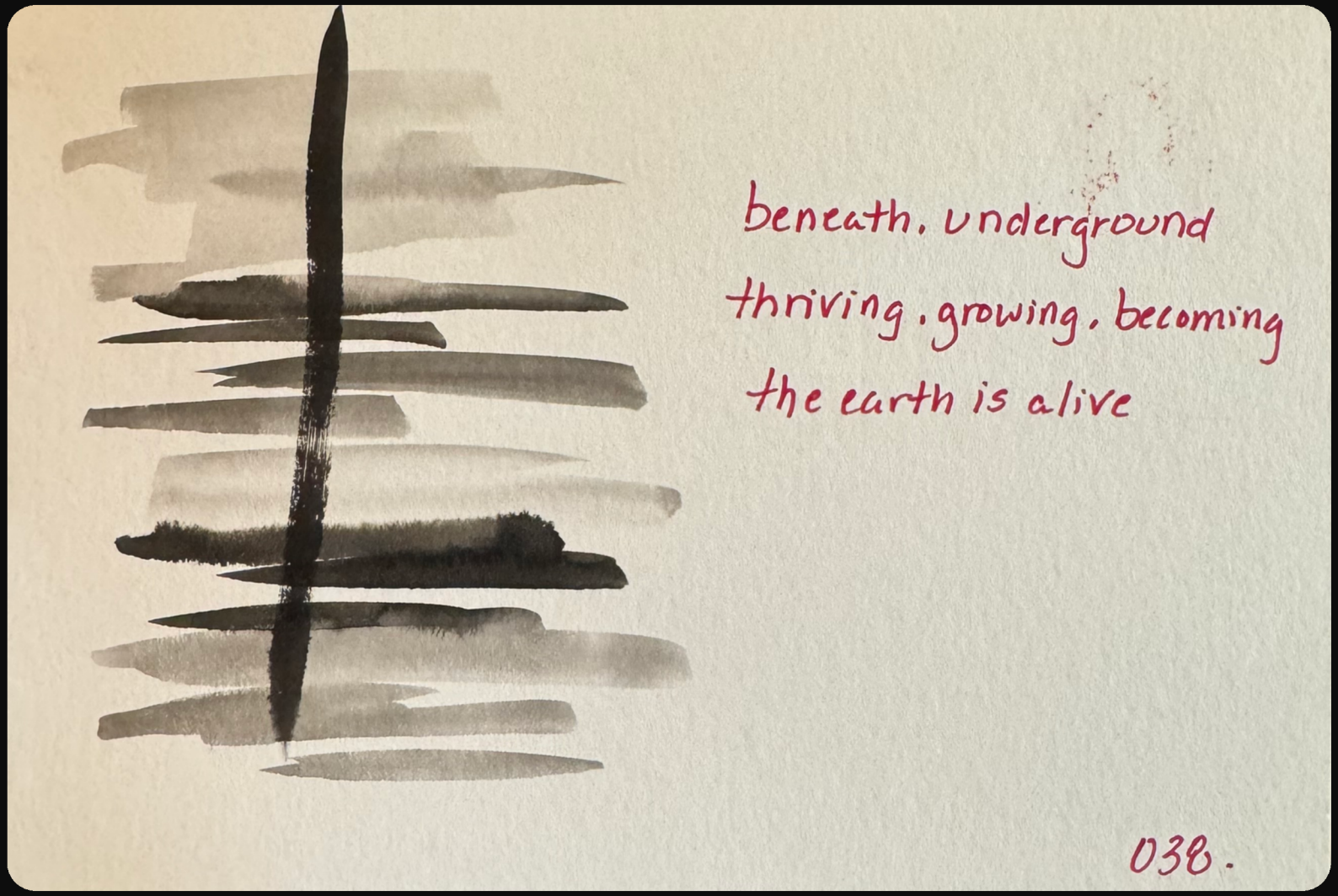

Villagers worry
the wise dragon, in repose
has time on her side
035.


the hawk circles low
in a split second, she dives
capturing a life
036.

036

dappled light through leaves
moving with a gentle breeze
each moment, perfect
037.

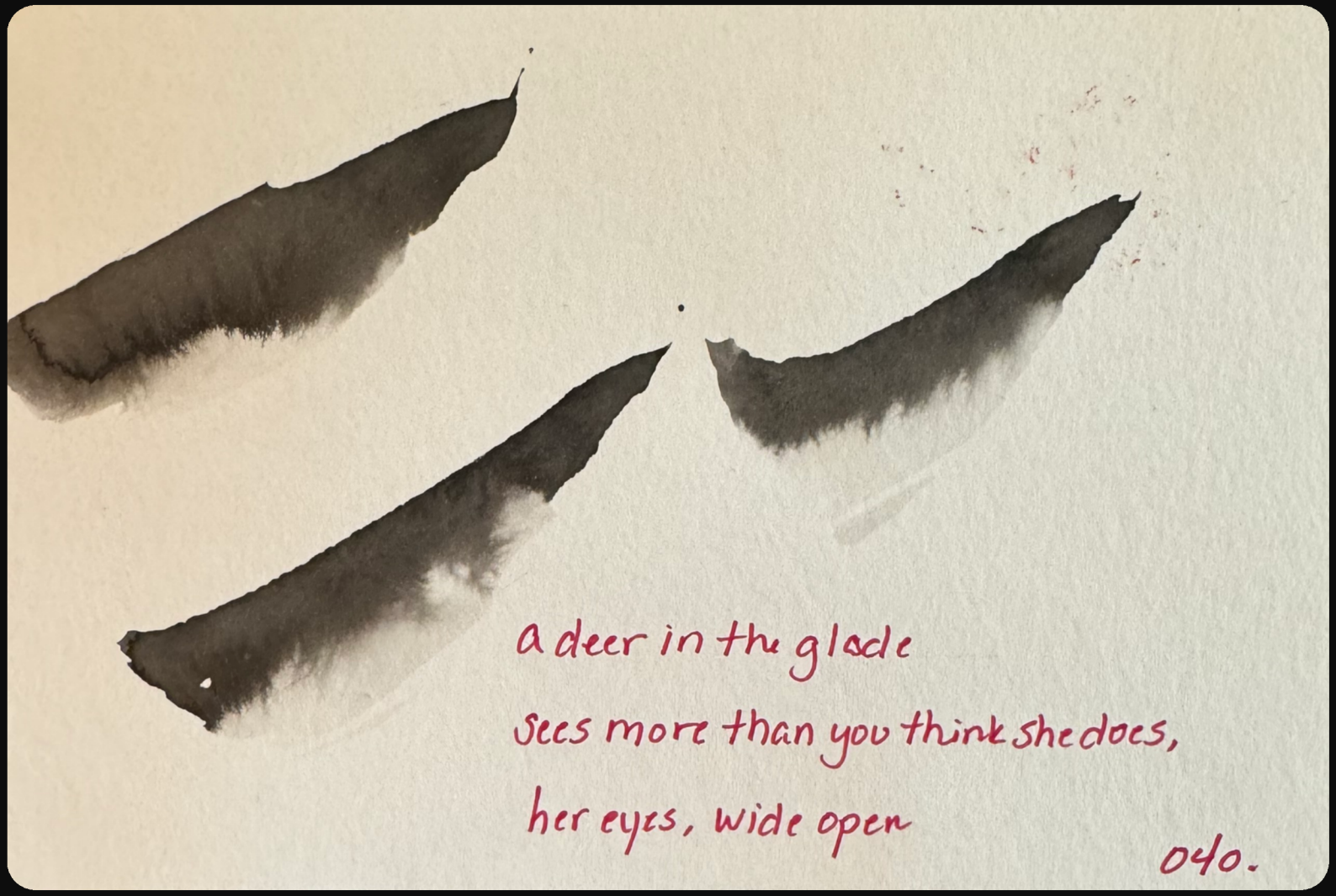
037


beneath. underground
thriving. growing. becoming
the earth is alive
038.

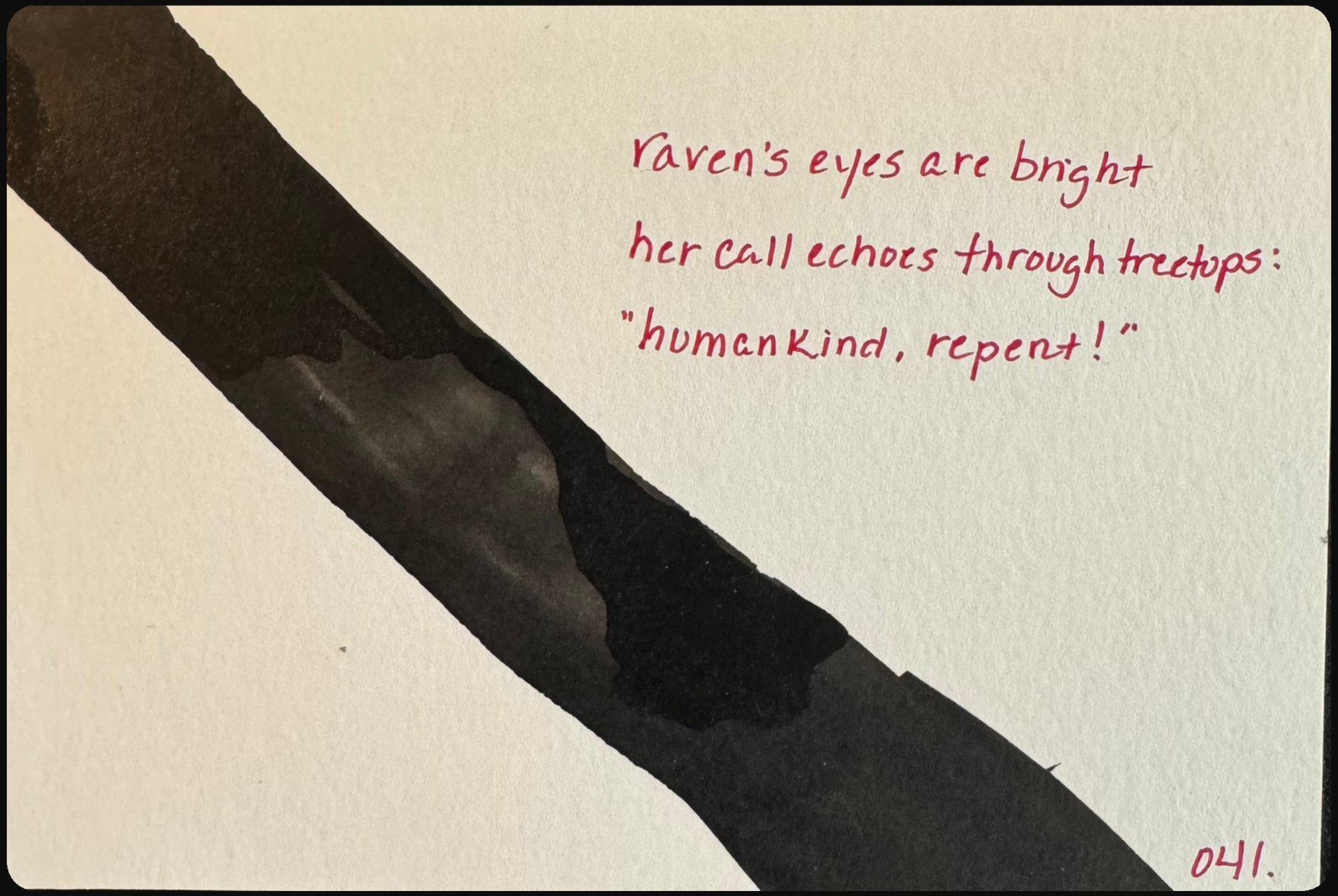
038

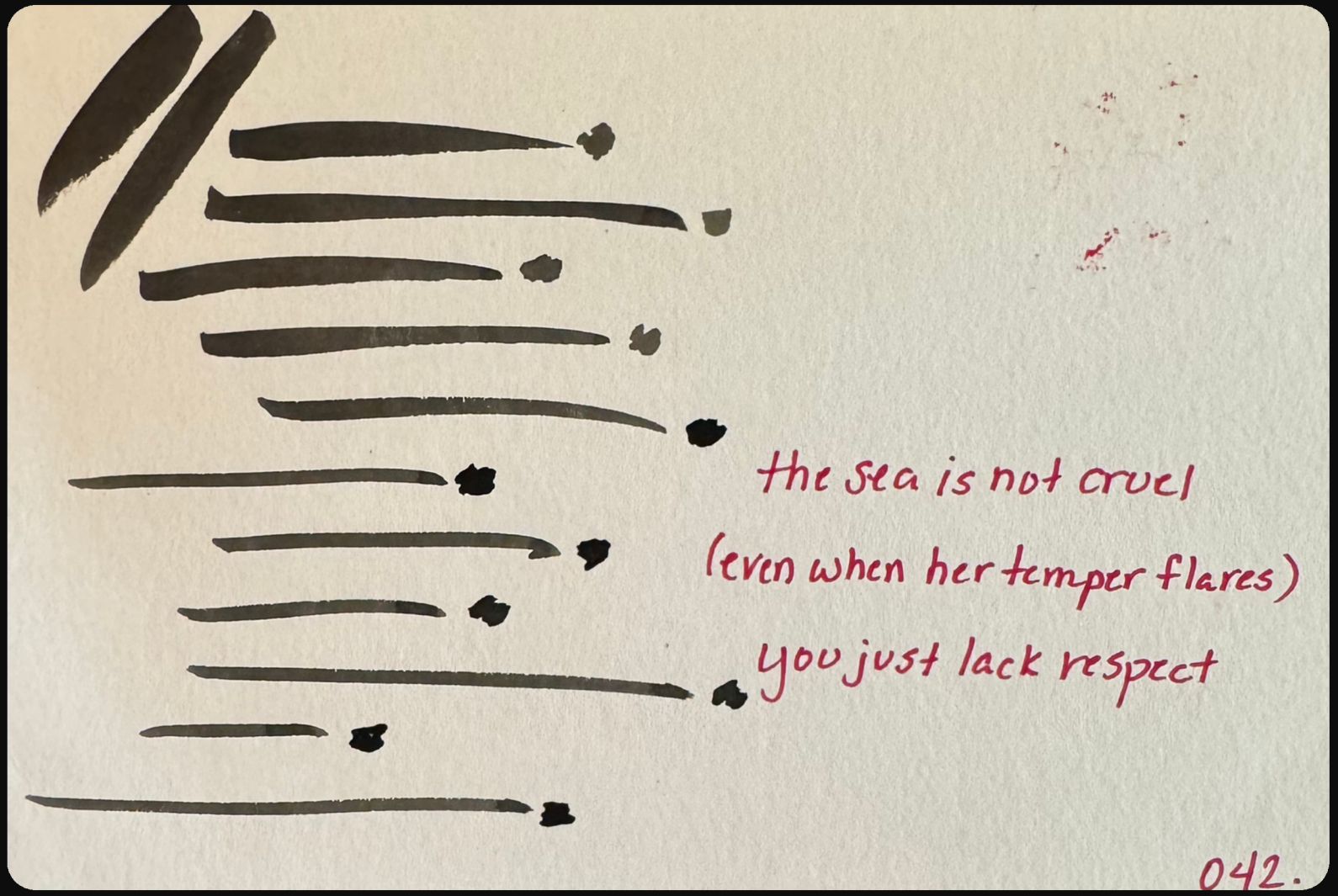
Pale, pink roses bloom,
unashamed of their beauty
– Irresistible!
039.

039

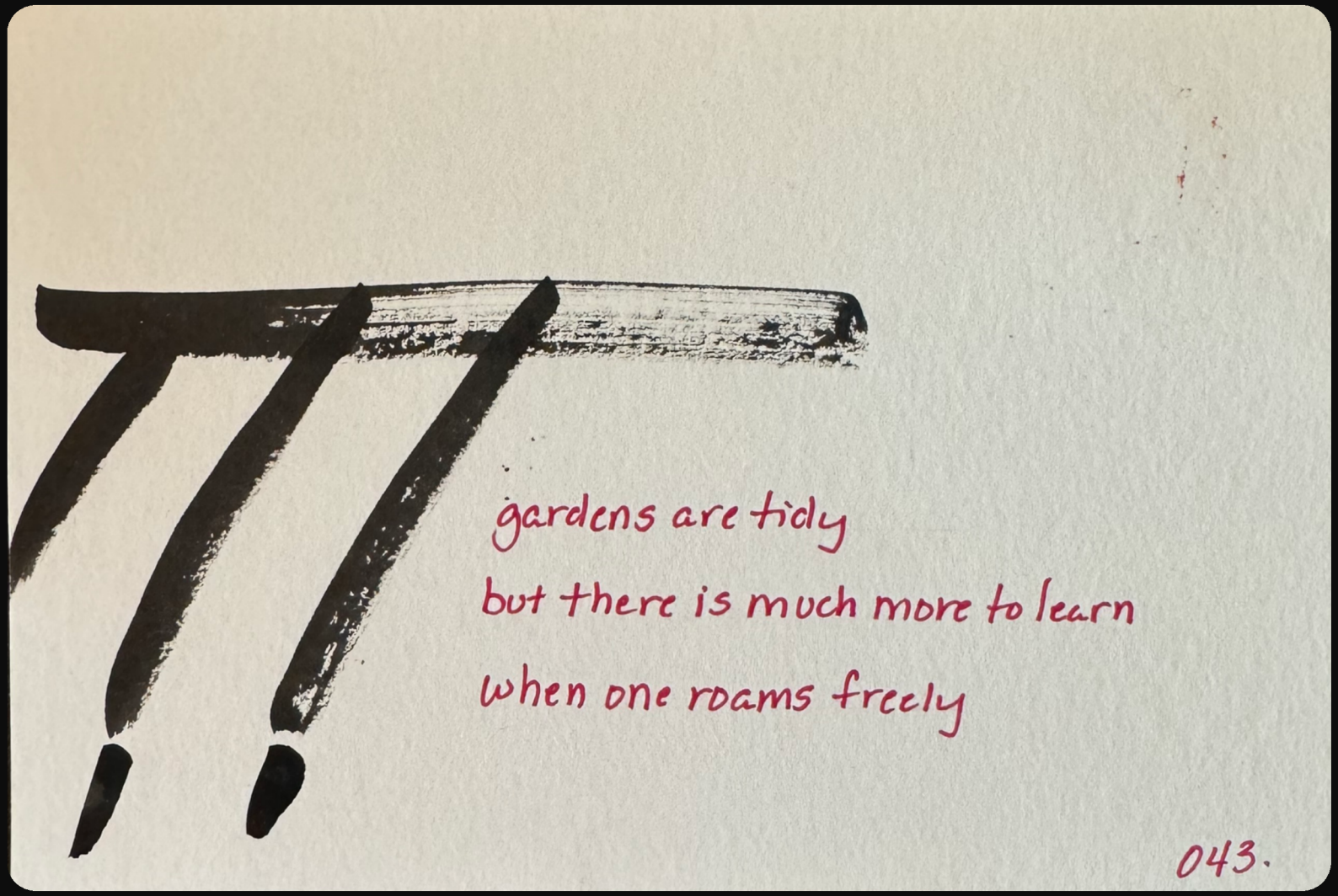

a deer in the glade
sees more than you think she does,
her eyes, wide open
040.

040


raven's eyes are bright
her call echoes through treetops:
"humankind, repent!"
041.


the sea is not cruel
(even when her temper flares)
you just lack respect
042.

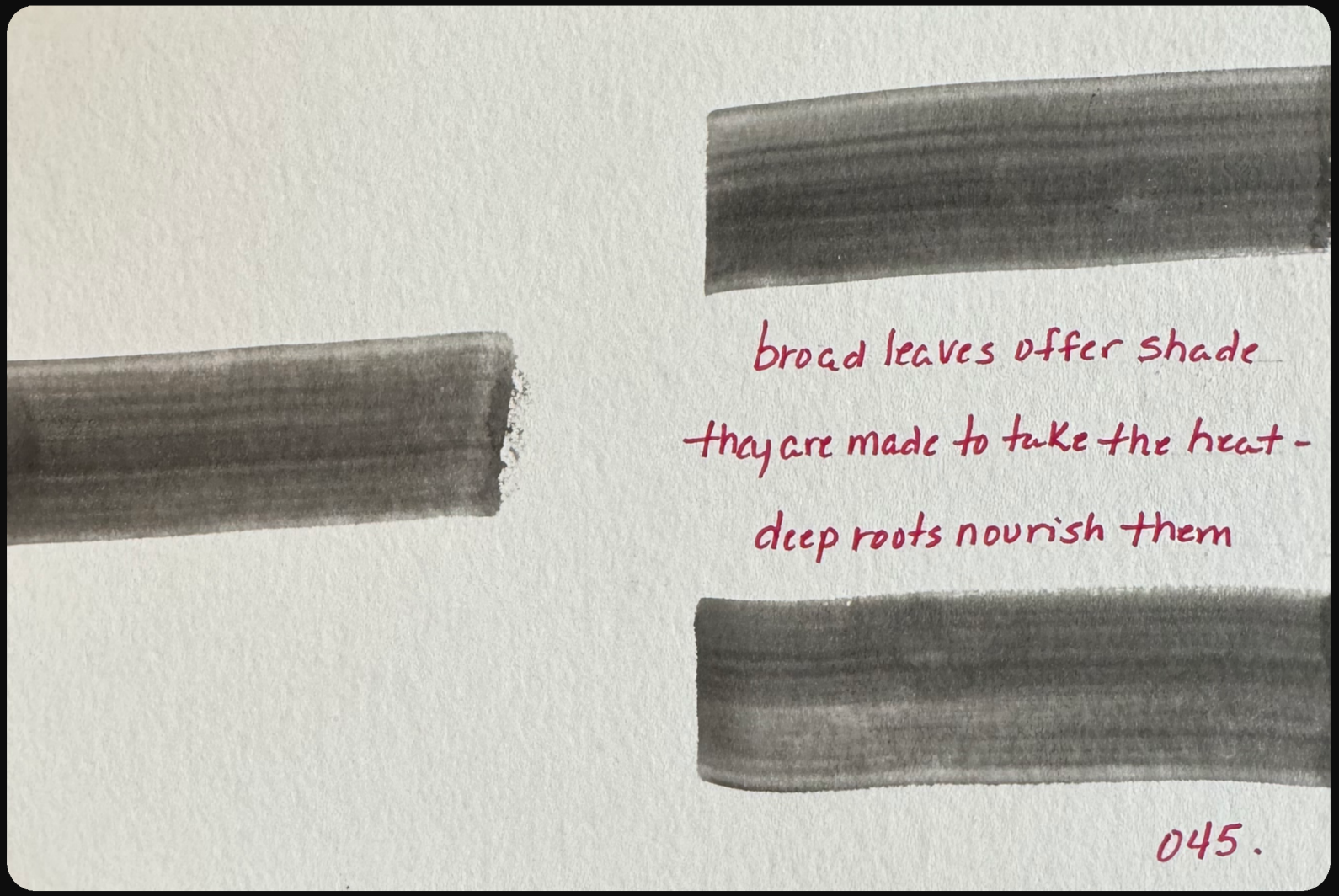
042

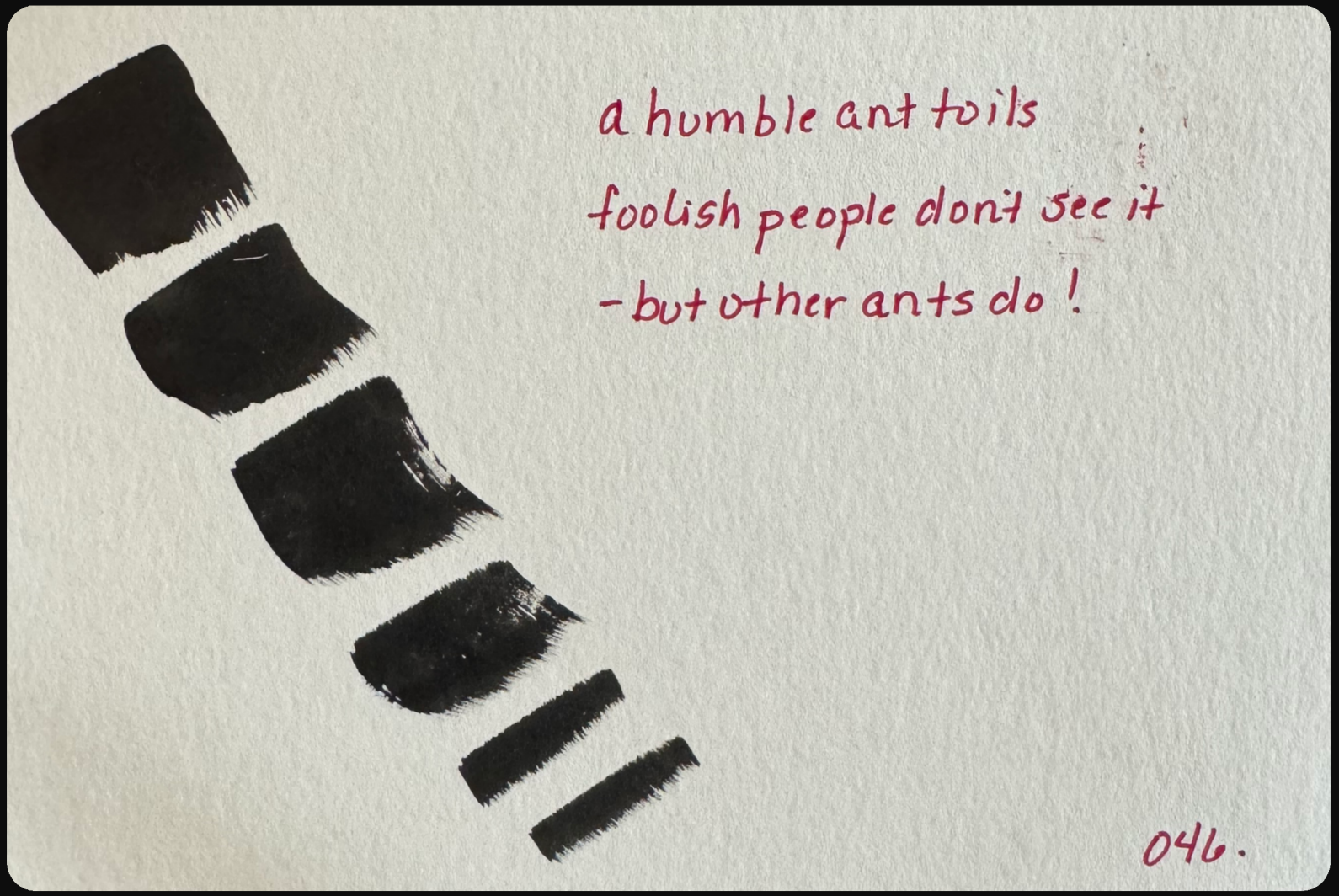

gardens are tidy
but there is much more to learn
when one roams freely
043.

043

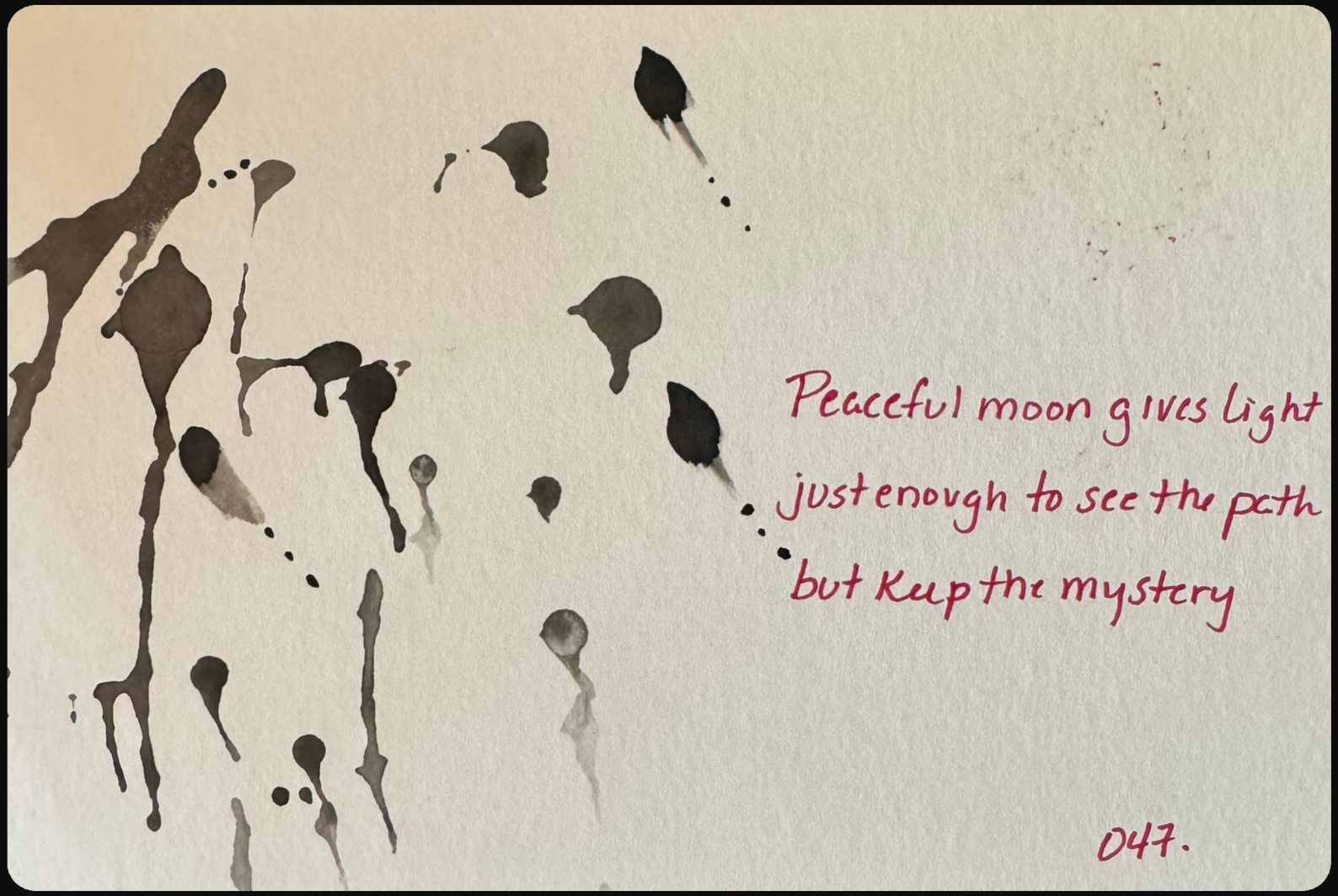
gentle waves lap sand
hibiscus flower opens
– this life is a dream!

044.

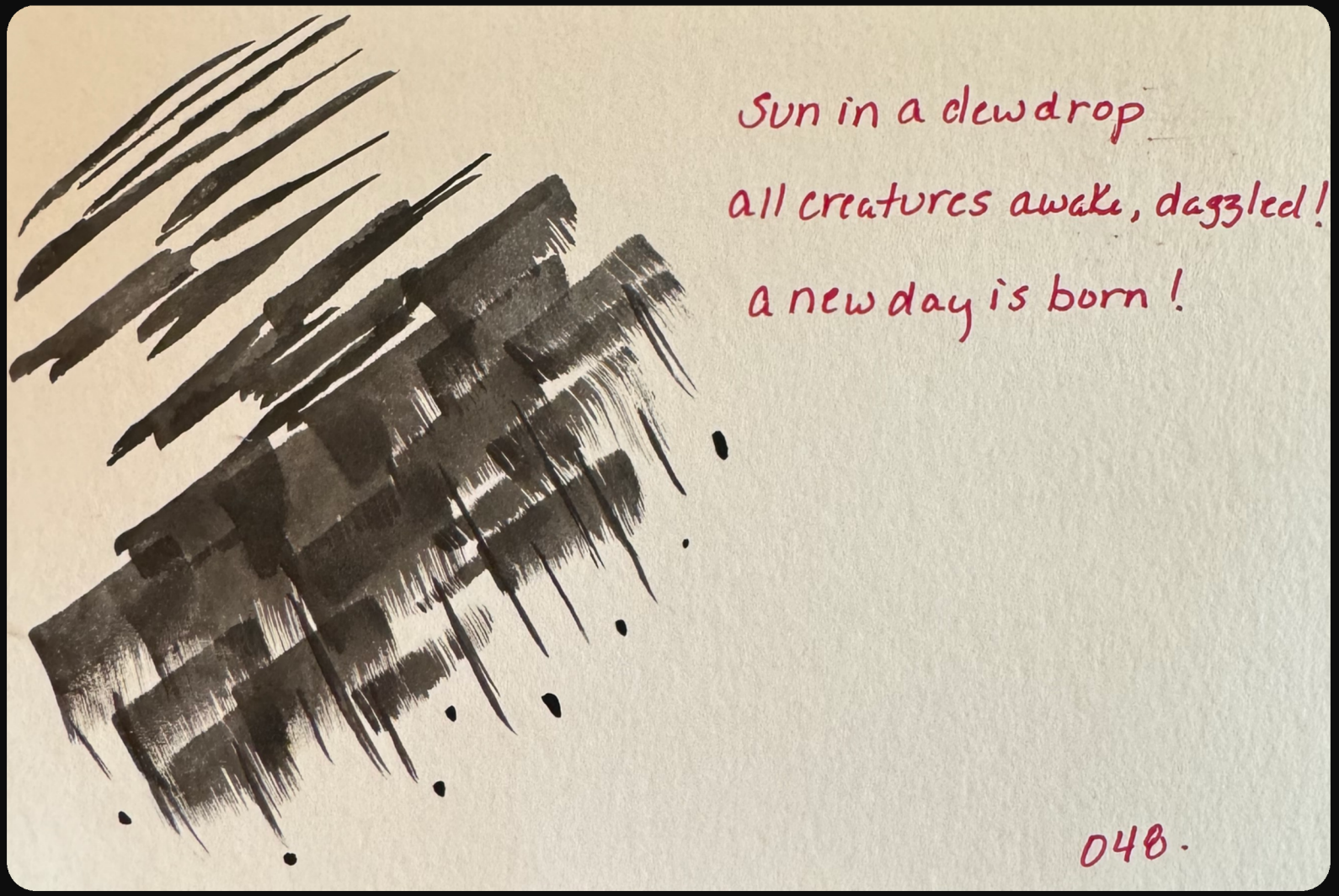

broad leaves offer shade
they are made to take the heat -
deep roots nourish them
045.

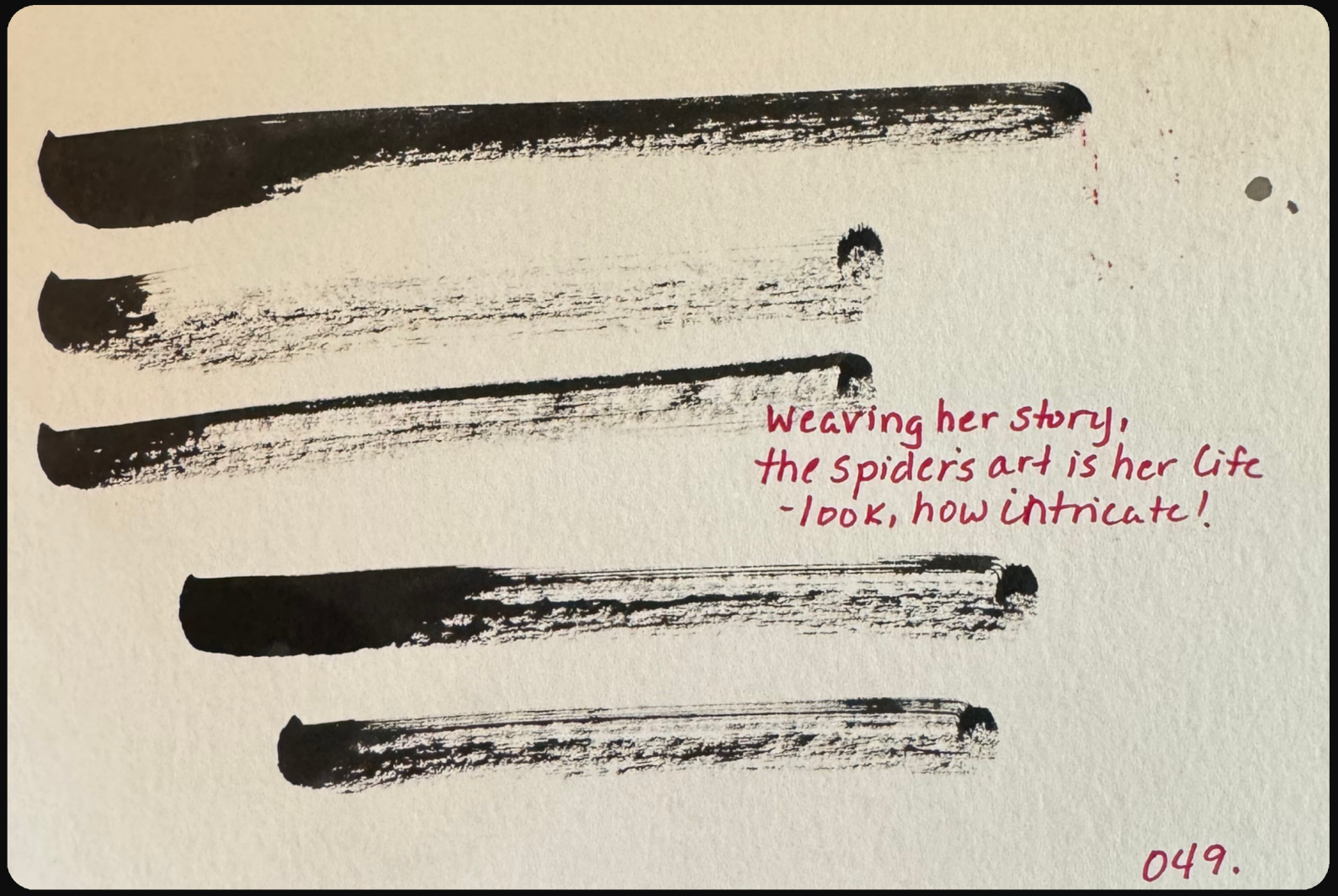

a humble ant toils
foolish people don't see it
- but other ants do !
046.

046

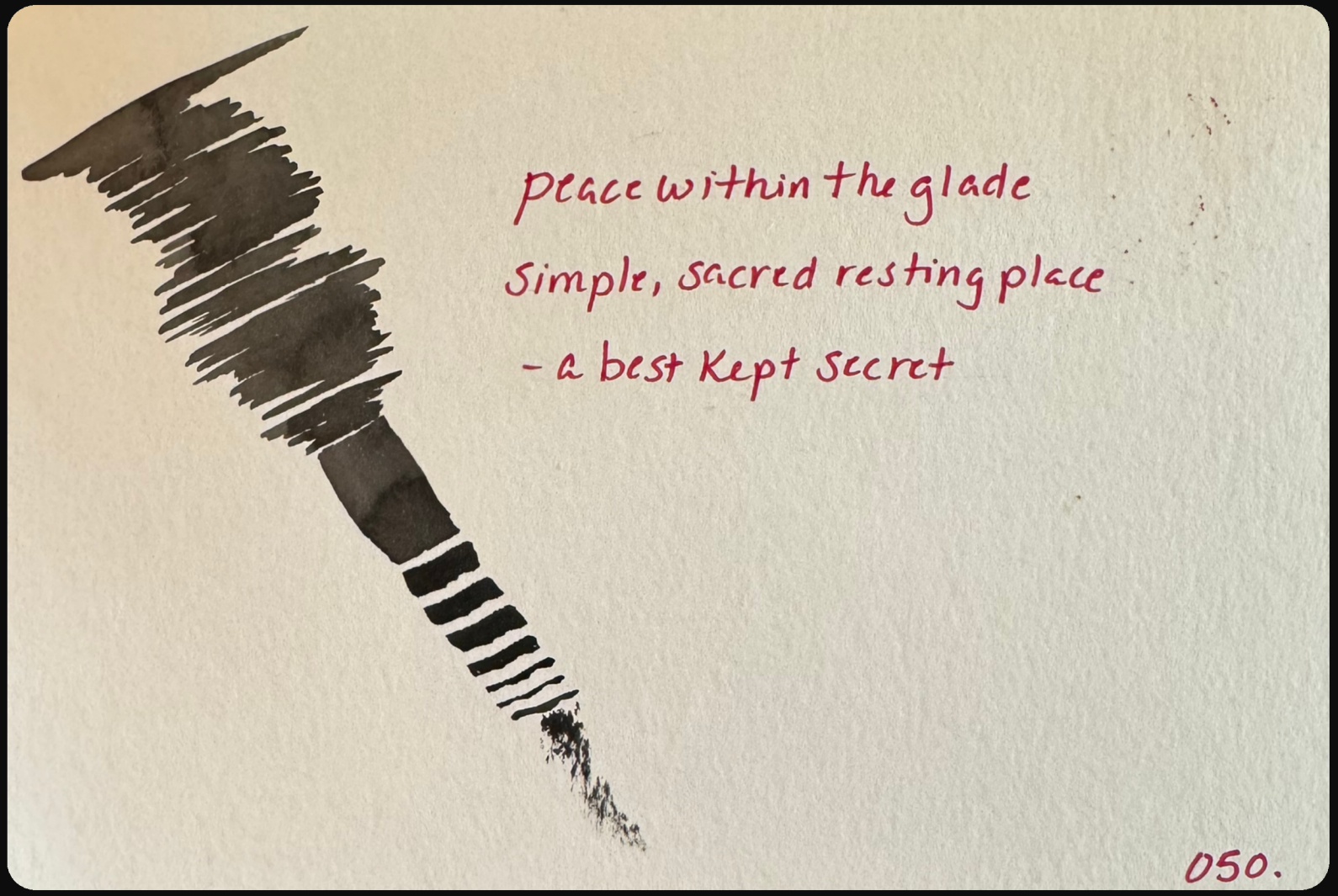
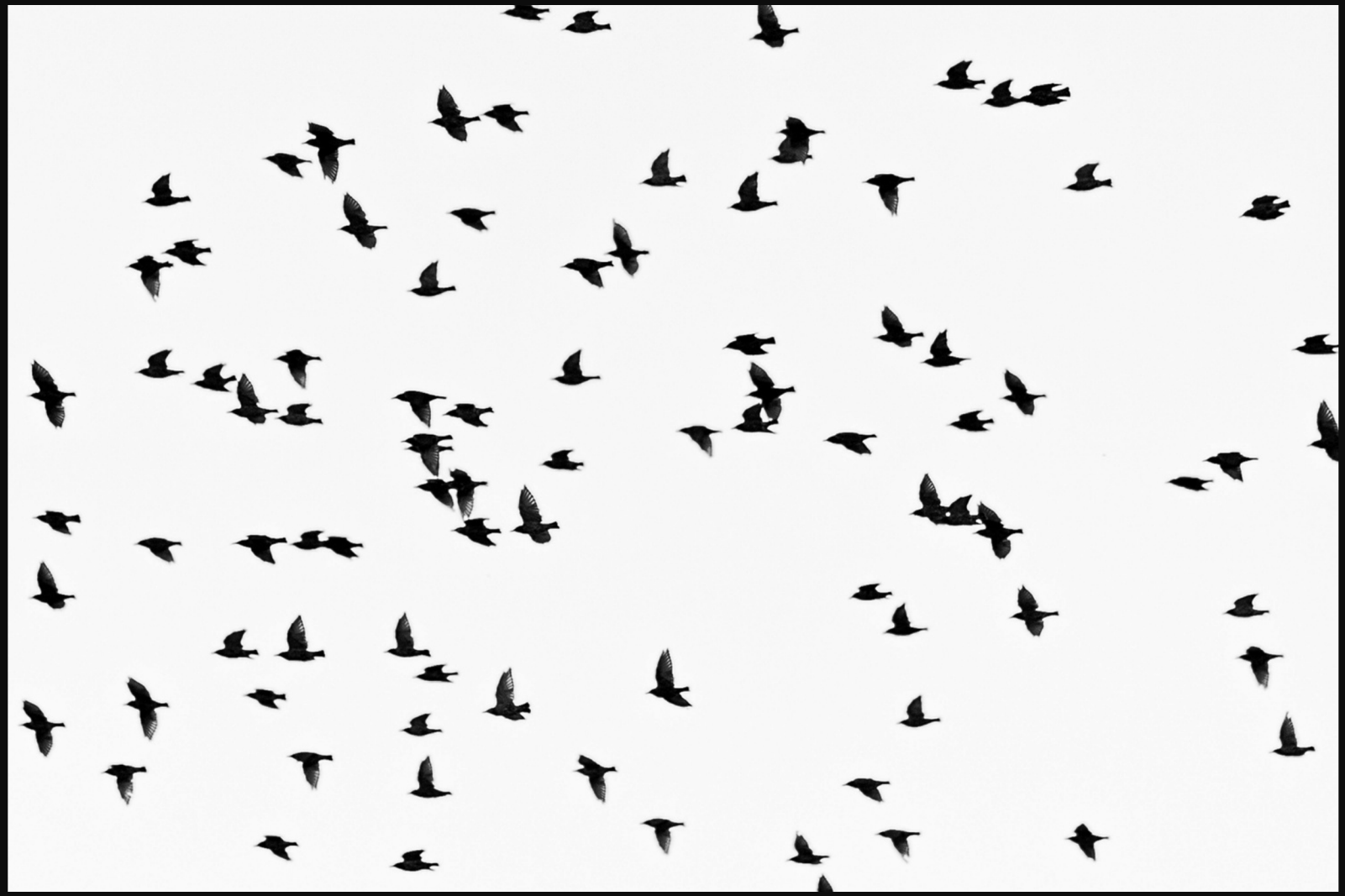

Peaceful moon gives light
just enough to see the path
but Keep the mystery
047.

047


Sun in a dewdrop
all creatures awake, dazzled!
a new day is born!
048.


Weaving her story,
the spider's art is her life
-look, how intricate!
049.

049


peace within the glade
Simple, sacred resting place
- a best Kept Secret
050.

050