

foreword

There is a soul. One alone or, perhaps, two. Two souls stretching, pushing, yearning, digging, hoping, barely coping. Or just one, watching its own reflection. It is almost like a dance but a dance in which the body remains utterly still. No, not still. It drags itself around aimlessly, as though it is lost. I look closer and it cringes, shrinks inwards and pulls its cape down even further over its eyes. Its head falls, eyes to the ground. It stays that way. I walk around it, try poking it, nudging it, feeding it but nothing happens. It remains silent, eyes to the ground. It stops moving. It is dead. No, not yet. Its heart still beats but it is hurt. I wonder how badly hurt. We wait, the soul still casting its eyes to the ground, hidden by the cape. I look on, still wondering. We wait, not sure who is waiting for who.

Much later I'm still here. It is still here too. It feels like we have spoken about everything but we haven't. We haven't shared a word but so what? 'Words', after all, 'collide and break into letters, lines and dots, grains that ebb away,' writes Giulia Privitelli poignantly in Poem No 42. So, what are we left with? Beyond words, how do we speak? The soul tilts its head just slightly, trembling just slightly, hoping – just slightly – that it can trust me. We begin to walk.

In a corpus of reflections that is so much about being alone and being lost in a 'homeland' that is no longer recognisable, Giulia Privitelli's poems and Steve Bonello's drawings provide a symbiotic dialogue that invites us into their circles. As they walk and weave their reflections on tradition, art, light and darkness, the sea, death, and the self into word and image, we are invited to walk alongside them. This walk is not a stroll, a sport or an escape but rather a moment of connecting with gravity. The walker is never light-headed, carried away by the feeling of lightness that comes when the mind