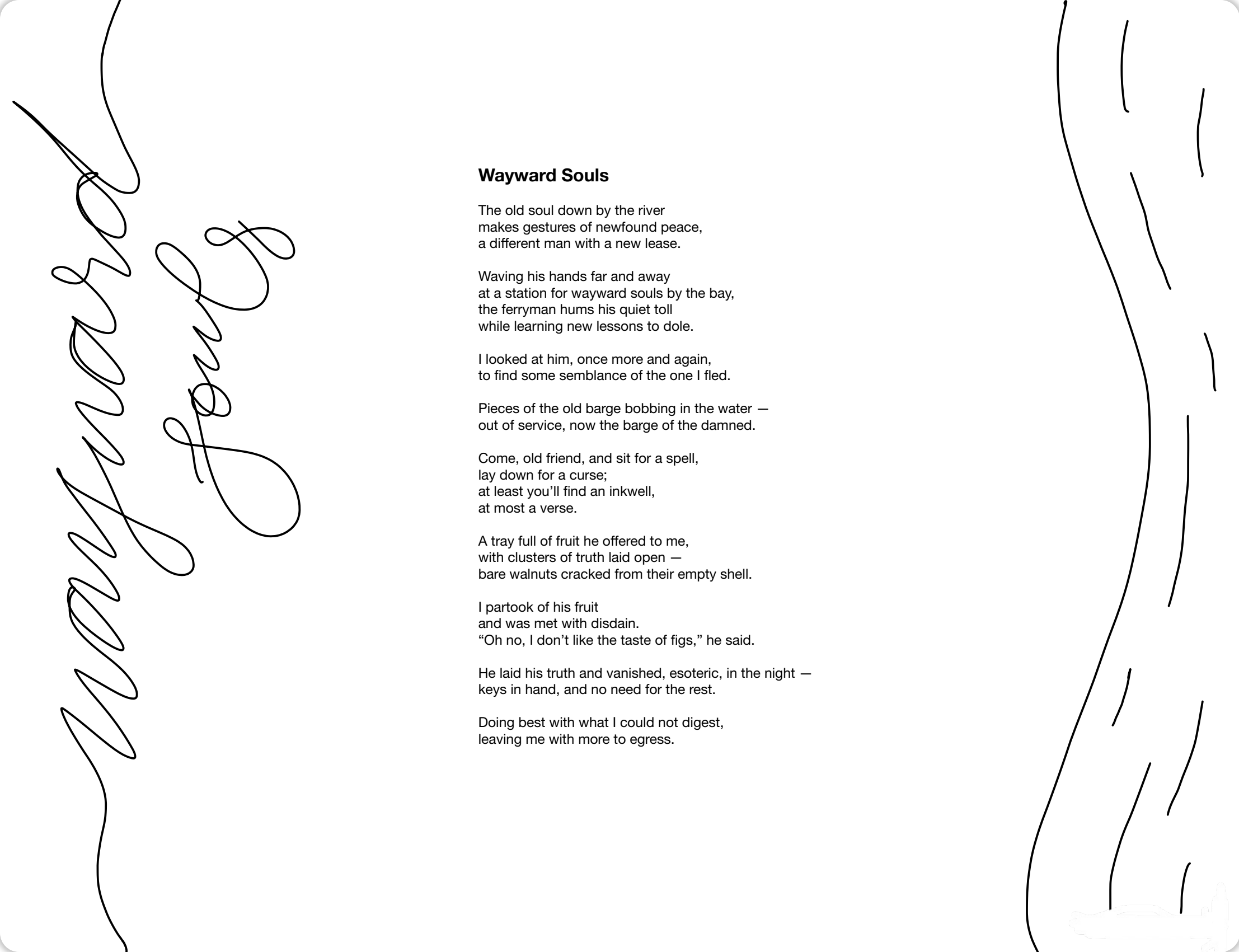




Wayward Souls

The old soul down by the river
makes gestures of newfound peace,
a different man with a new lease.

Waving his hands far and away
at a station for wayward souls by the bay,
the ferryman hums his quiet toll
while learning new lessons to dole.

I looked at him, once more and again,
to find some semblance of the one I fled.

Pieces of the old barge bobbing in the water —
out of service, now the barge of the damned.

Come, old friend, and sit for a spell,
lay down for a curse;
at least you'll find an inkwell,
at most a verse.

A tray full of fruit he offered to me,
with clusters of truth laid open —
bare walnuts cracked from their empty shell.

I partook of his fruit
and was met with disdain.
“Oh no, I don't like the taste of figs,” he said.

He laid his truth and vanished, esoteric, in the night —
keys in hand, and no need for the rest.

Doing best with what I could not digest,
leaving me with more to egress.