

The Story Of The Seasons

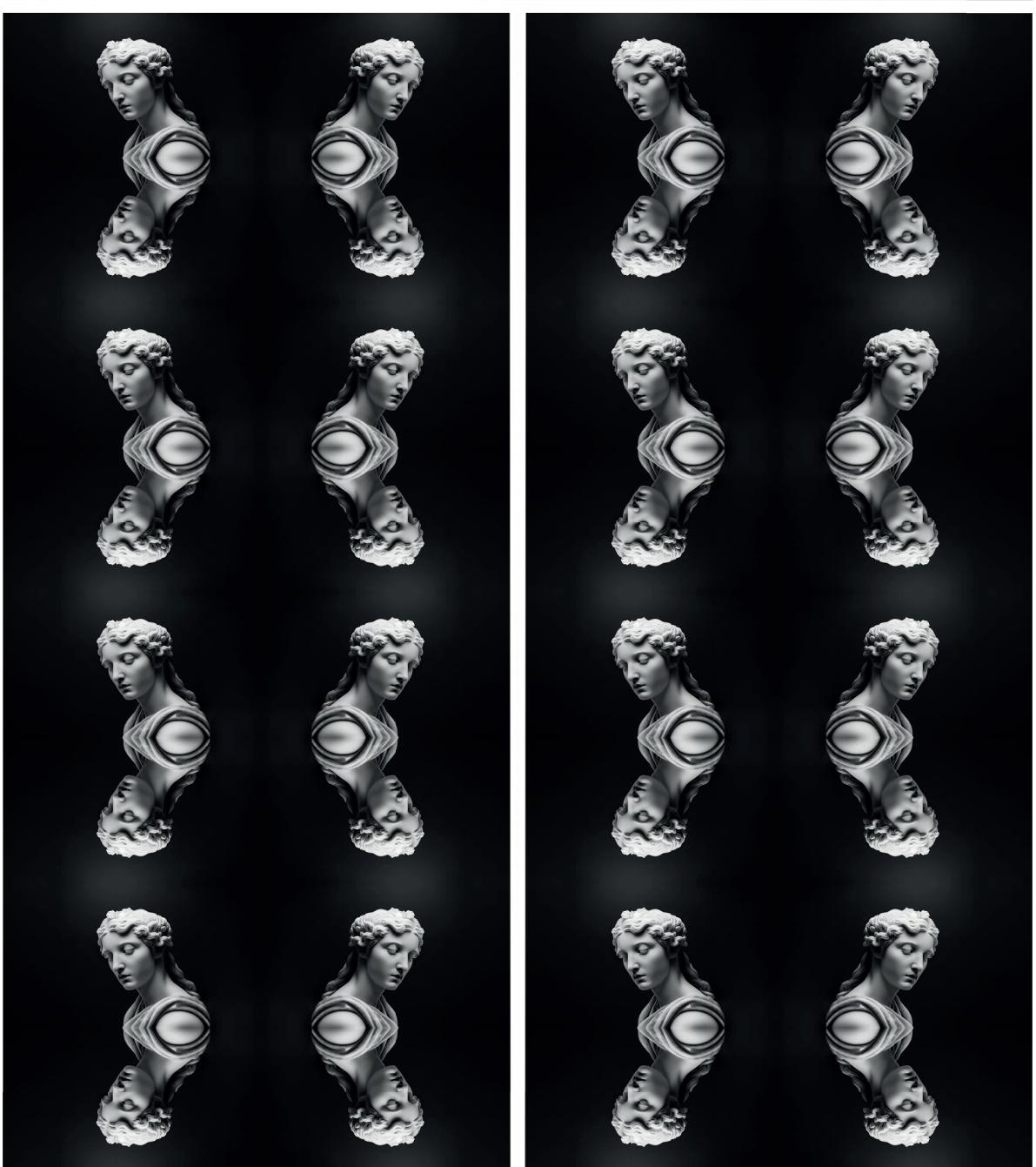
Lisa Kuiper

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Hades was not often seen above-ground, but on one of the rare occasions that he was, he saw Persephone, the beautiful daughter of Demeter and Zeus. He fell instantly in love.

Hades asked Zeus for permission to marry one of his daughters, and although Zeus agreed, they both knew Demeter would never let her daughter marry the god of the underworld.

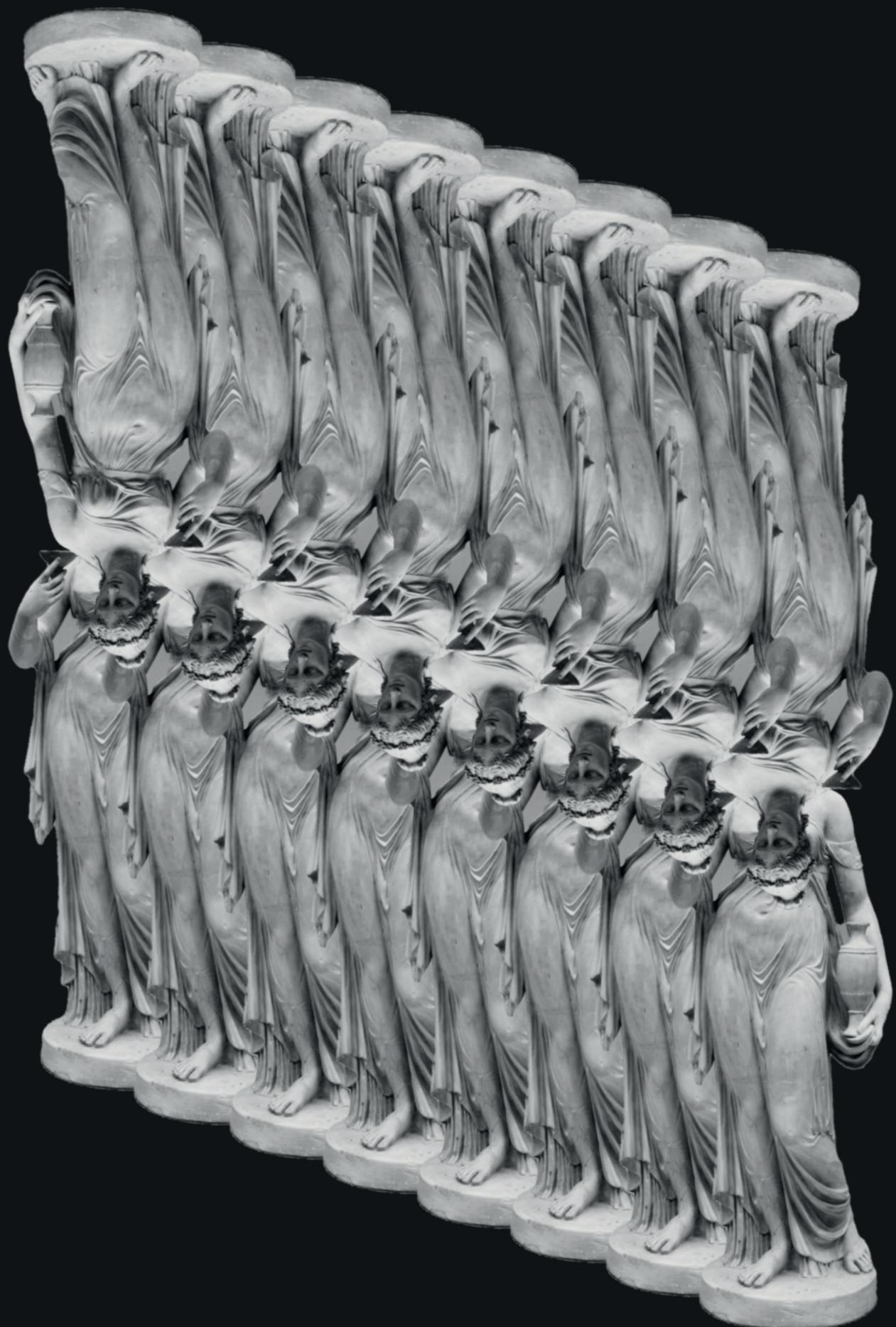
Heartbroken at the idea that he would never be with Persephone, Hades and his brother Zeus came up with a plan, that allowed Hades to take Persephone to the underworld and marry her there.





The following morning, Persephone was left above-ground, with the Nymphs of the sea as her guides and watchers while her mother Demeter tented to the earth. Demeter was the goddess of agriculture, harvest, and fertility, and Persephone helped her by taking care of the gardens.

Knowing that the Nymphs would never let Persephone out of her sight, Zeus had planted a narcissus flower in a nearby garden.



Persephone went into the garden alone and saw the narcissus flower planted by Zeus.

She was captivated by its beauty and leaned down to pick it up.

Suddenly, the ground shook, and a large crack appeared in the earth beneath her.







Hades appeared from the crack in the earth with his chariot of black horses.
He grabbed Persephone before she was able to scream for help.



One of the sea nymphs, named Sion, witnessed the abduction and tried to save Persephone. However, Hades was too powerful for her, and she failed to rescue her friend.

Overwhelmed with grief, Sion cried until she dissolved into her own pool of tears, which formed the river Sion.



When Demeter returned she found out her daughter was nowhere to be found, and the sea nymphs she had left to care for her were unable to explain what had happened. Demeter was filled with anger and cursed the nymphs with wings, scaly feet, and plumed bodies, and they were thereafter known as the sirens.

It was when the river Sion washed up the bells of Persephone that Demeter knew something terrible had happened to her daughter.

Demeter was consumed by madness and despair over her daughter's disappearance. She wandered the earth tirelessly, neglecting her duties as the goddess of harvest and fertility. As a result, the land became dry, crops failed, plants withered, and animals died due to the lack of food.

The consequences of Demeter's actions were catastrophic and resulted in untold misery.

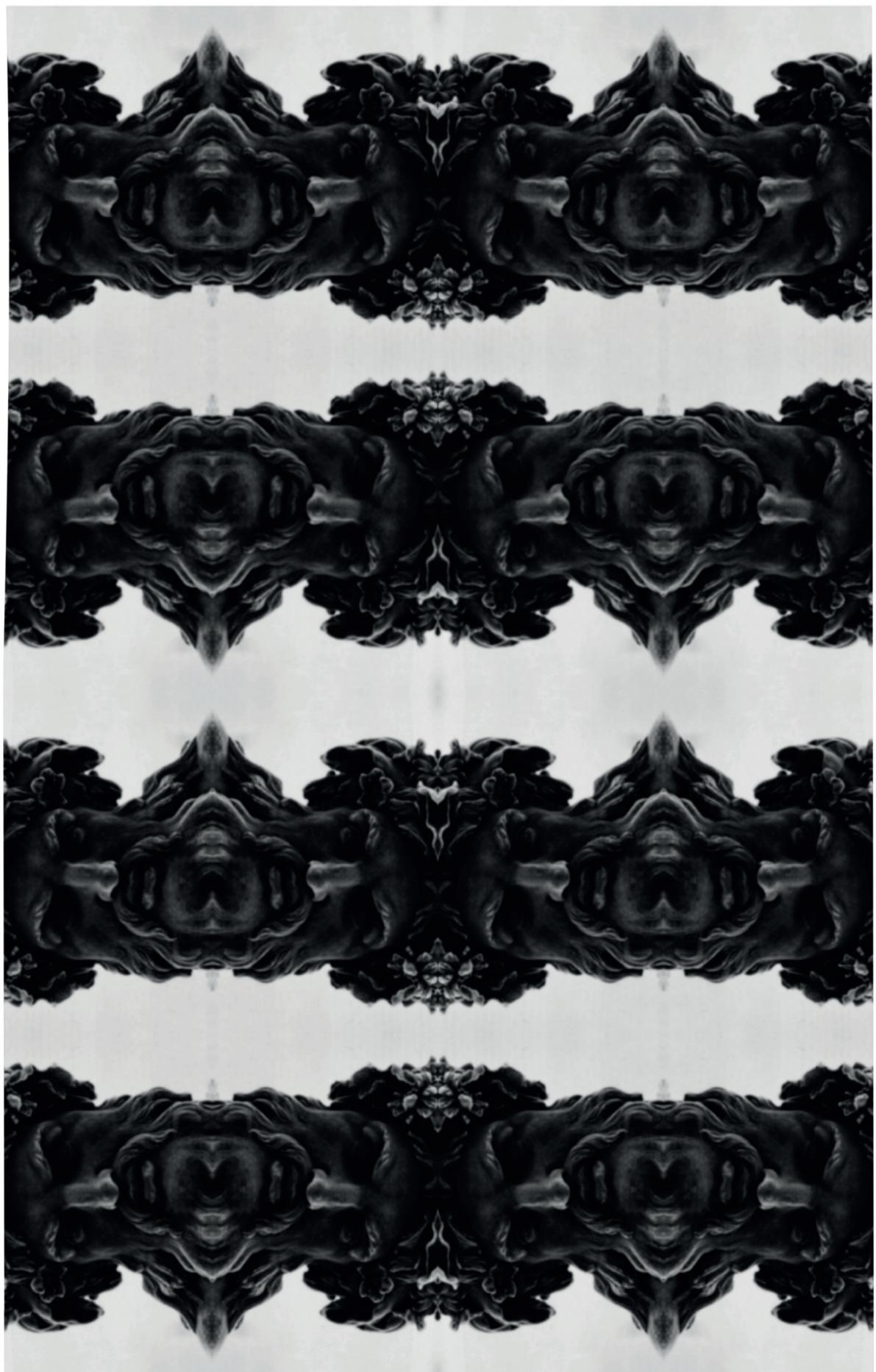




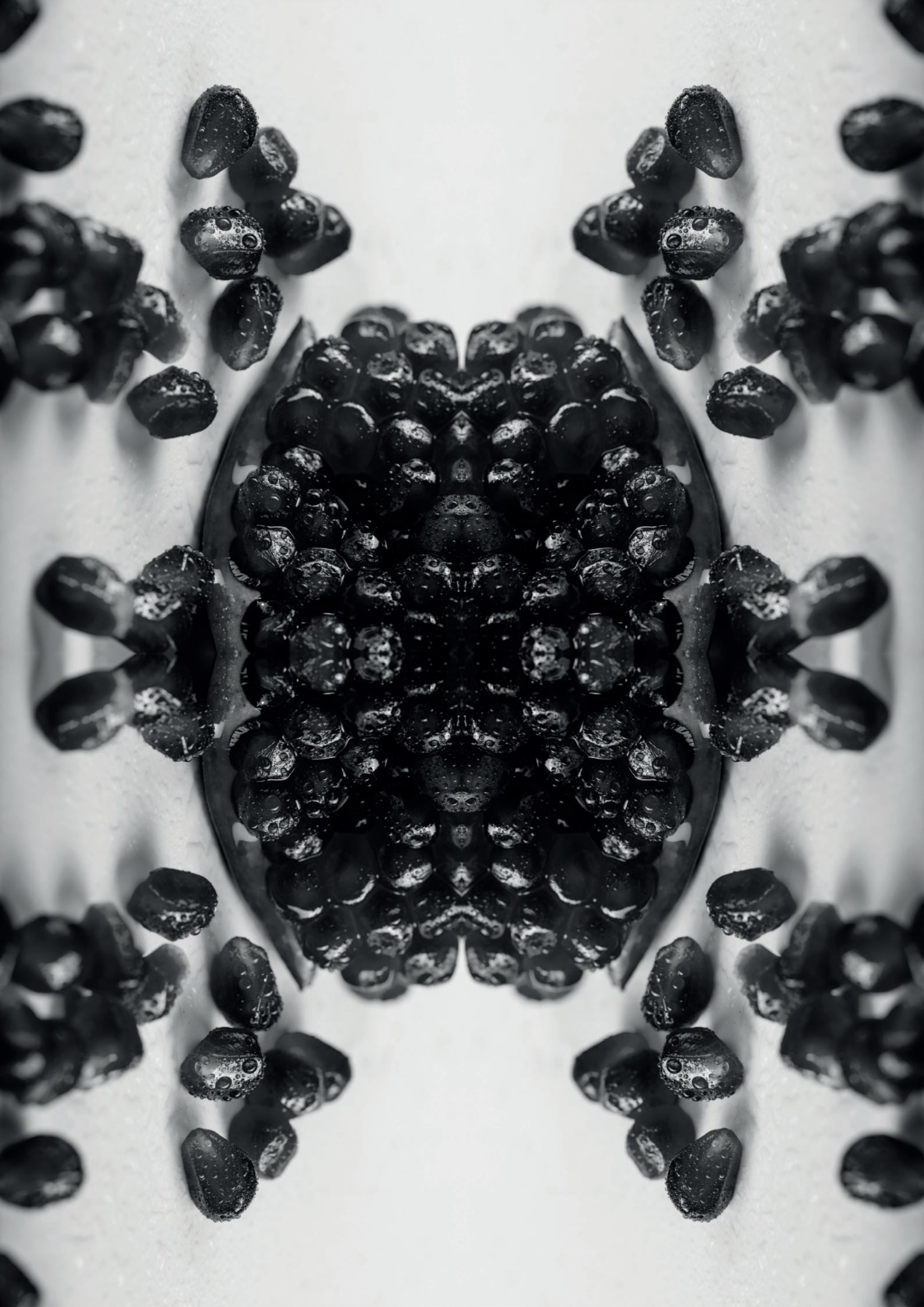
The anguished cries of the suffering could be heard even on Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece and home of the gods.

Zeus realized that if he did not calm Demeter's anger, the consequences would be huge, it would result in the extinction of humankind.

To prevent such a catastrophe, Zeus vowed to bring Persephone back from the underworld, but only if it could be established that Hades had abducted her against her will.



During Persephone's time in the underworld, Hades had built beautiful gardens for her and treated her with kindness and respect, revealing a side of himself that no one else had seen before. As a result, Persephone began to develop feelings for him. Hades had heard what Zeus proposed and readied his chariot to return Persephone but he was terrified that when given the choice, Persephone would not return to him and so he gave her one last gift. A pomegranate.



After being rescued from the underworld, Persephone expressed her desire to stay with Hades, in the underworld.

However, Demeter was furious and accused Hades of deceiving her daughter. After a heated discussion Demeter made it known that if her daughter did not return, she would never make the earth fertile again.

Zeus decided that Persephone would spend the portion of the year underground with her husband, Hades, and the rest of the year above-ground with her Mother, Demeter. Since Persephone ate six pomegranate seeds, she would spend six months with Hades and the rest of the year with Demeter. The arrangement pleased neither Hades or Demeter but they were forced to accept it.

If one ate the food given to them by their captor, he or she would always return to that person.

The seasons of the year started since then. In the six months that Persephone was not with her mother, the land was not fertile and crops struggled to grow, as Demeter neglected her duties due to her sadness. These months were and are still known as autumn and winter.

However, when Demeter and Persephone were reunited, the land once again became fertile and fruitful, creating the seasons of spring and summer. All together known as the cycle of seasons, the death and rebirth of nature.



