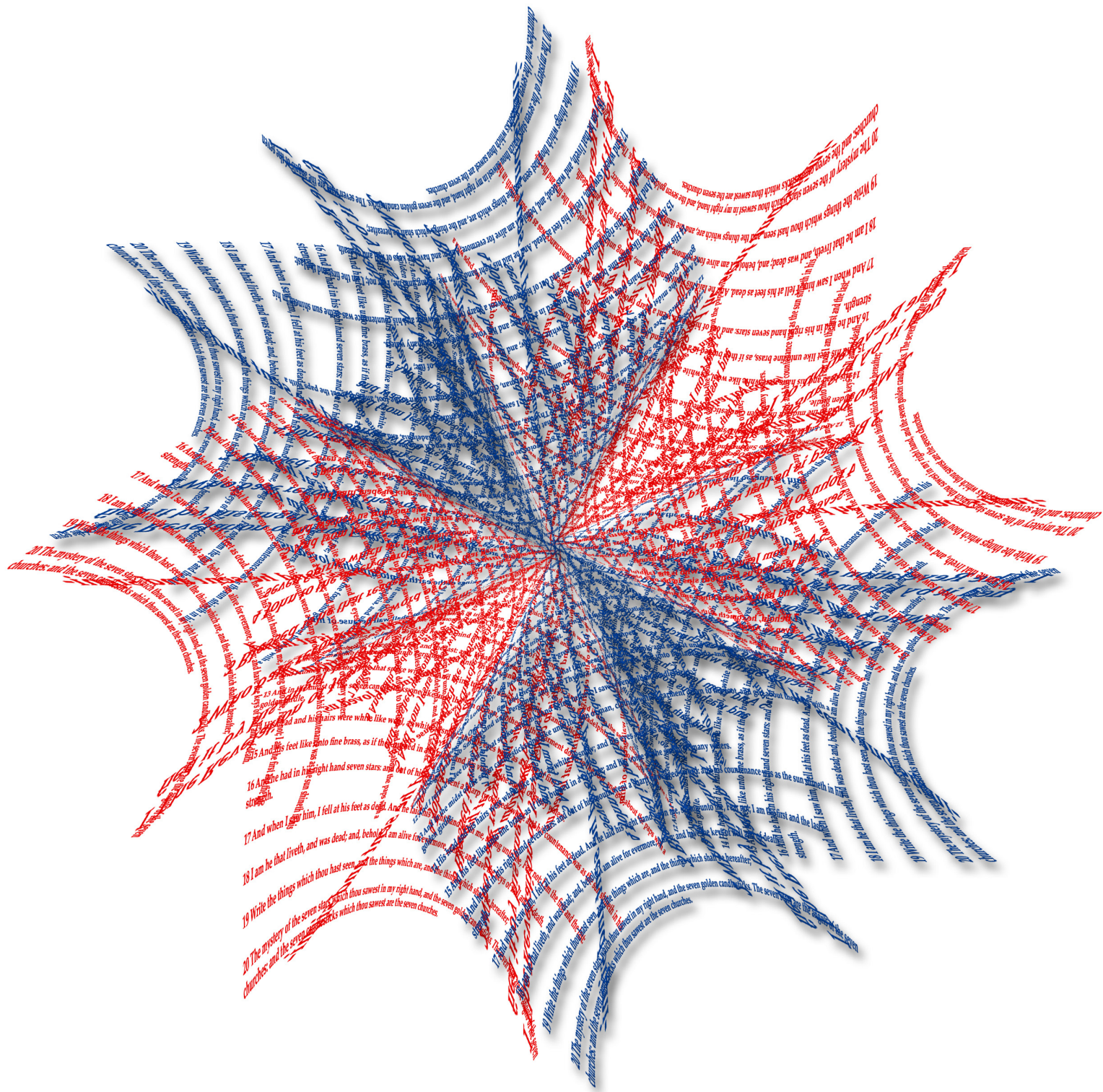


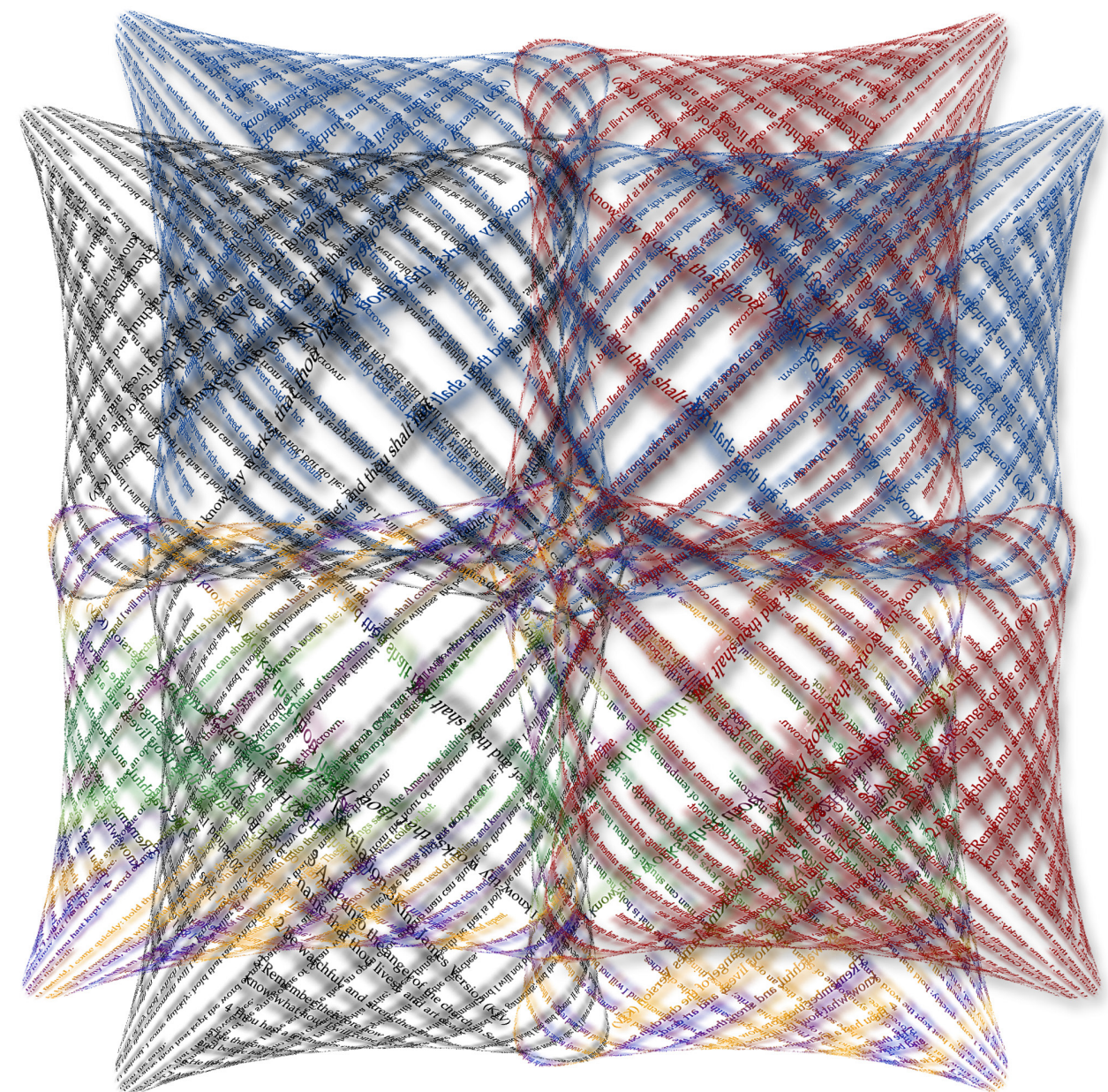
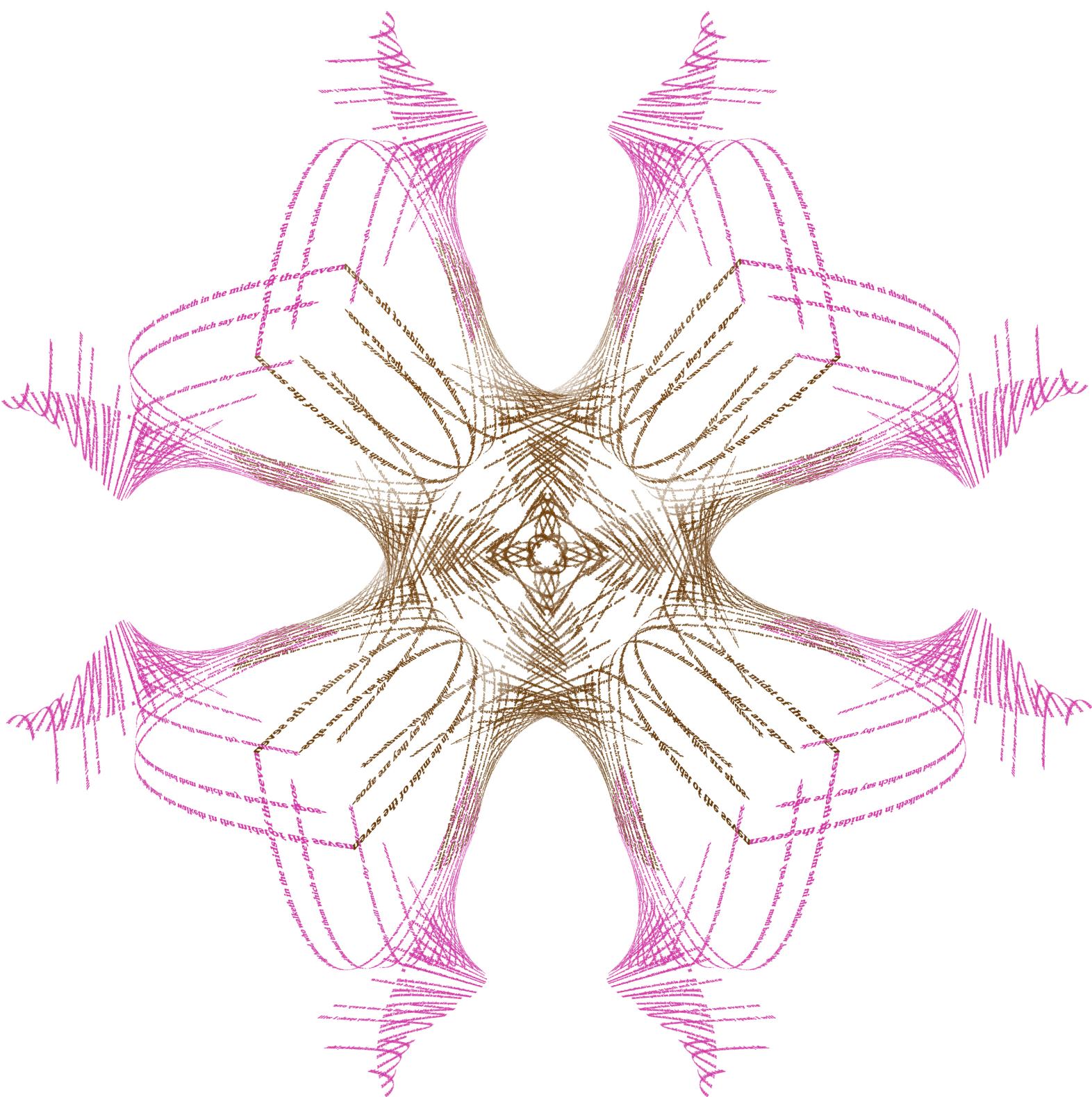
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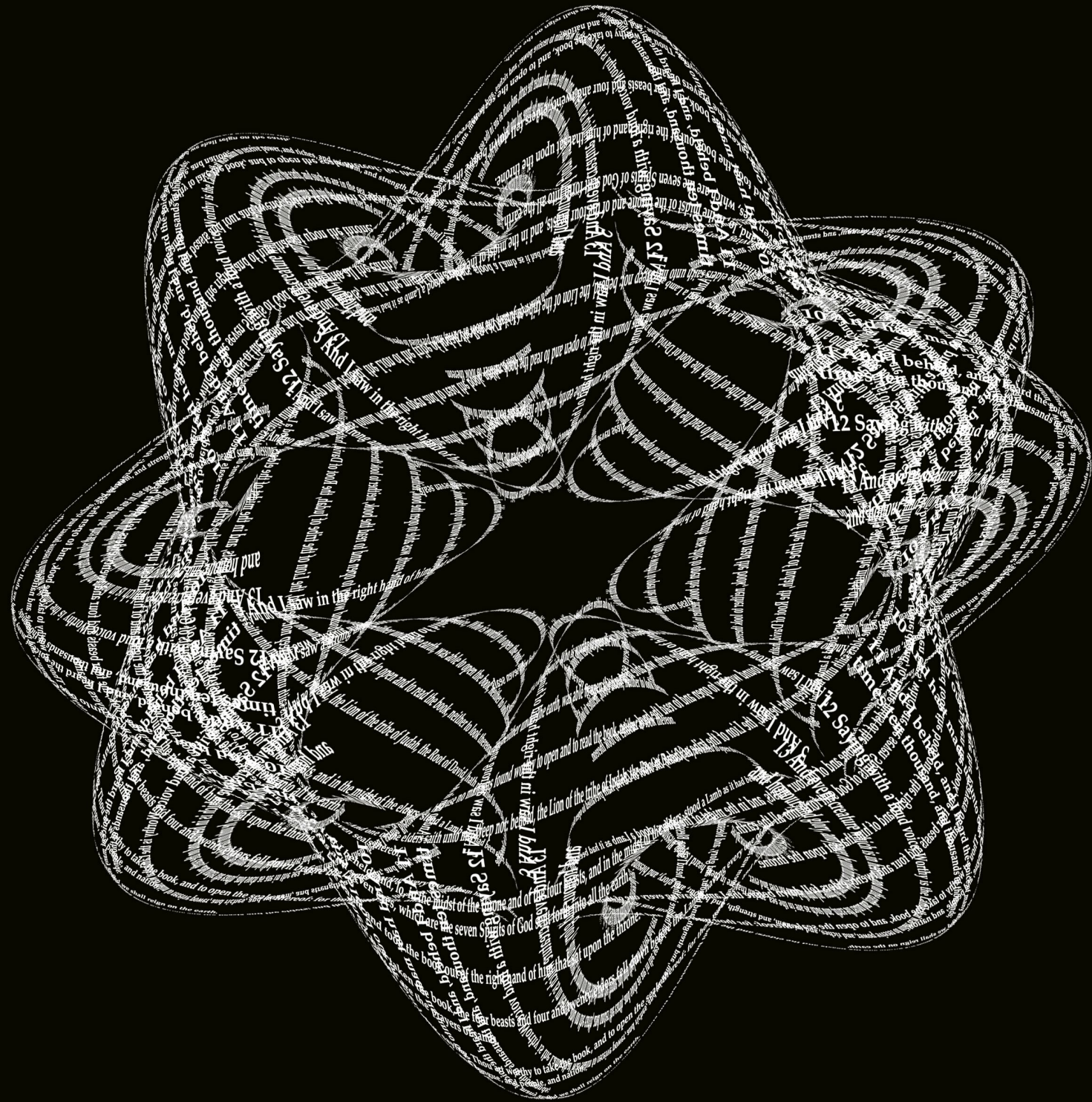
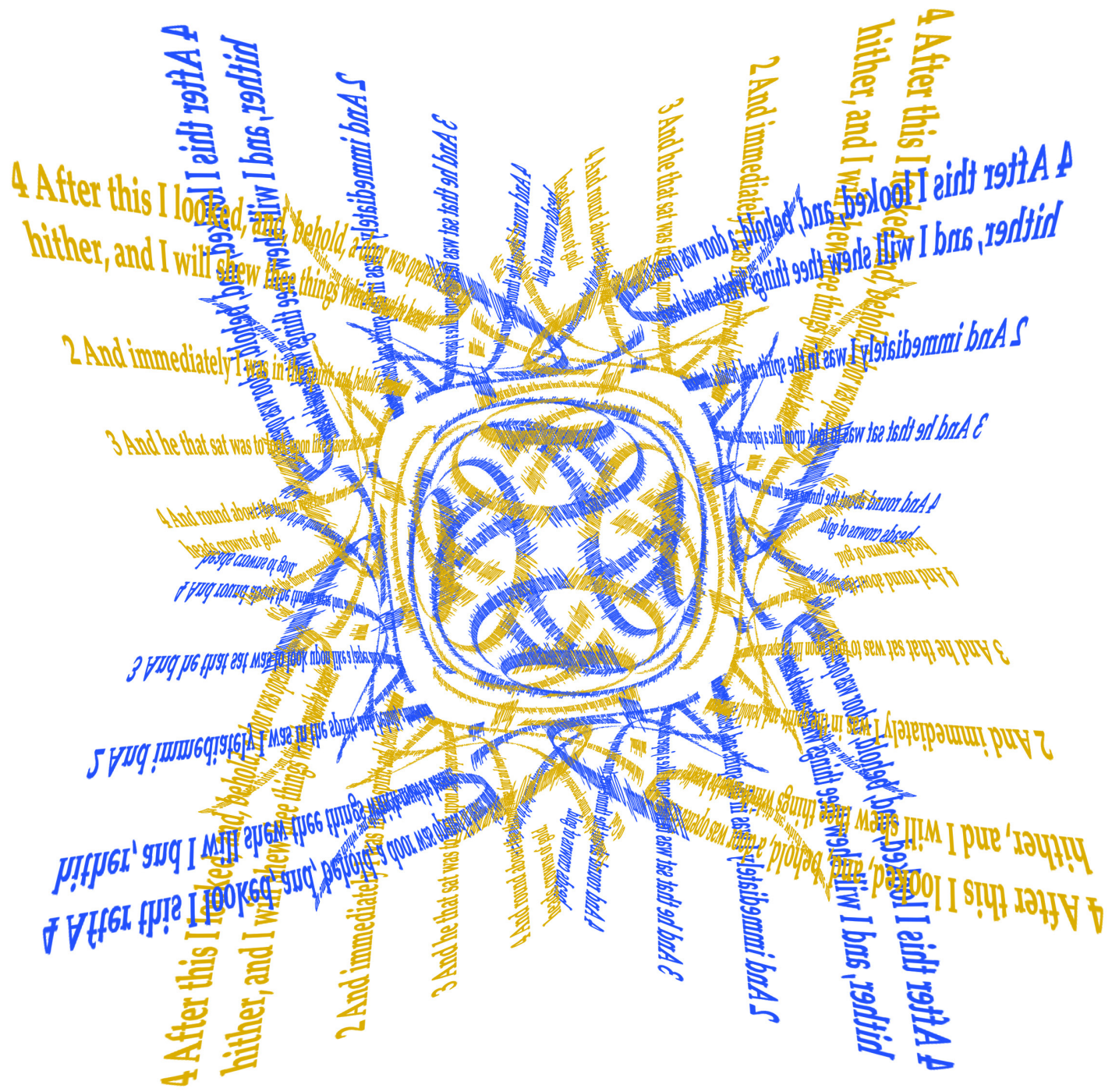
The Vispo Bible

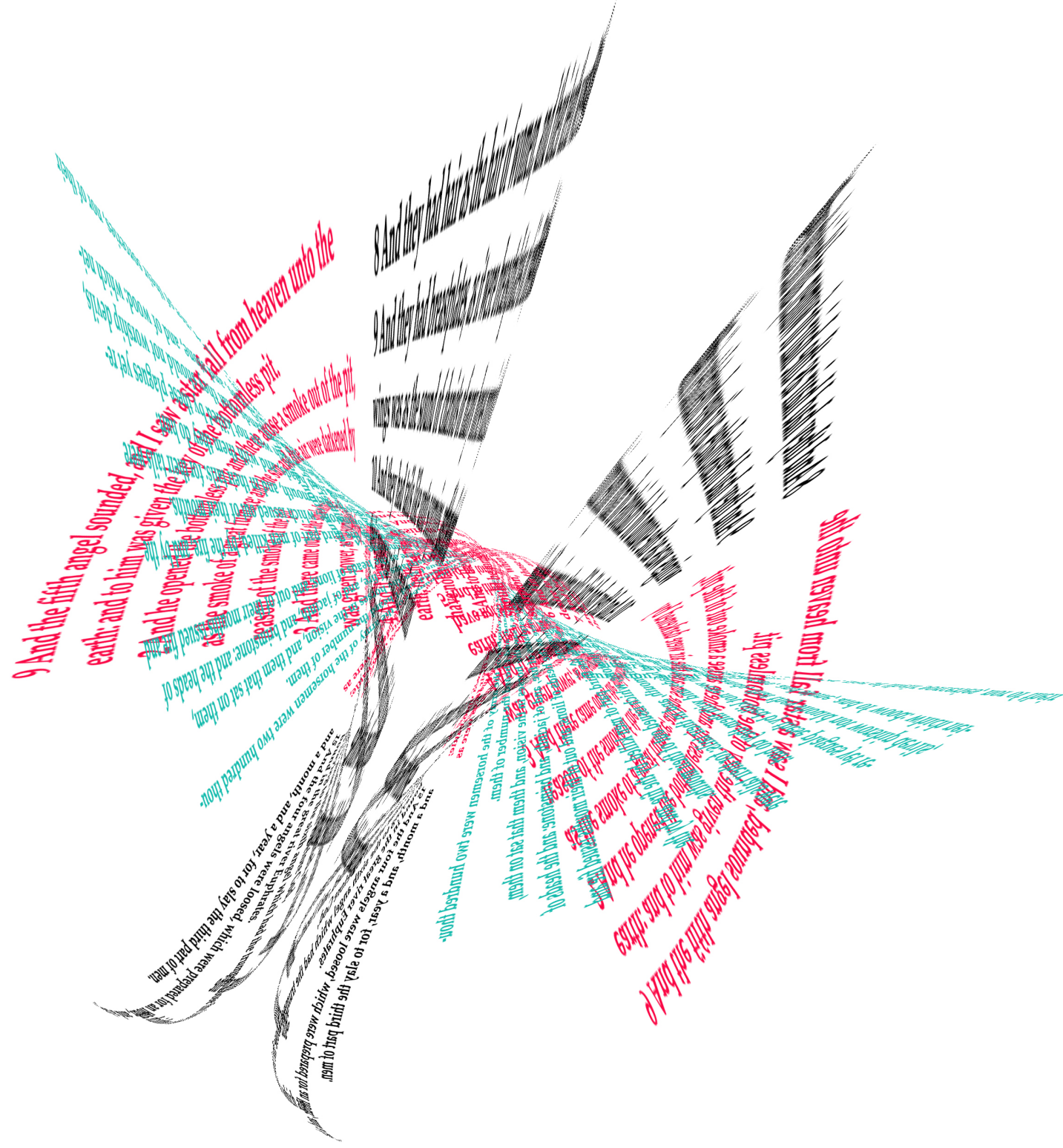
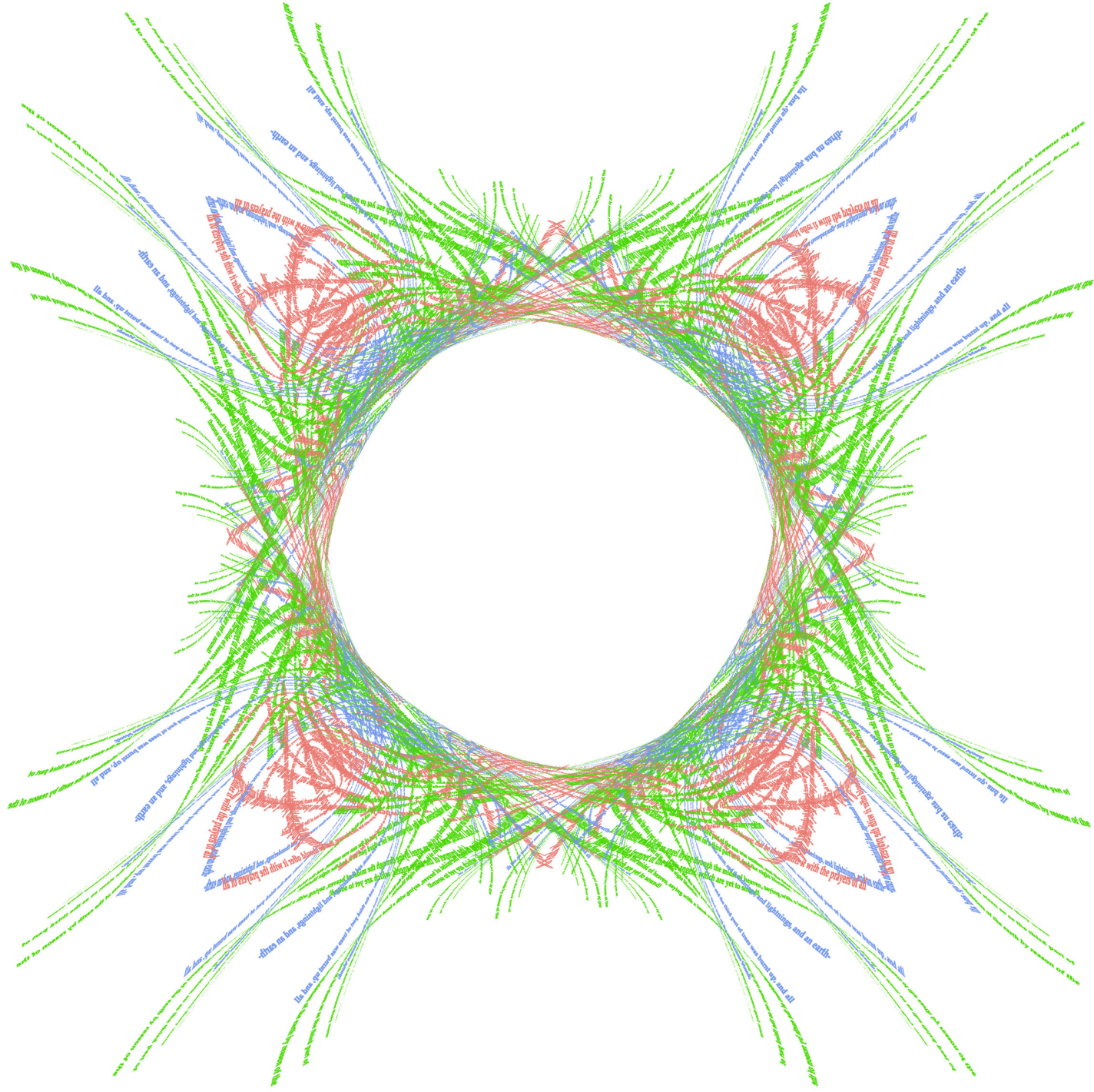


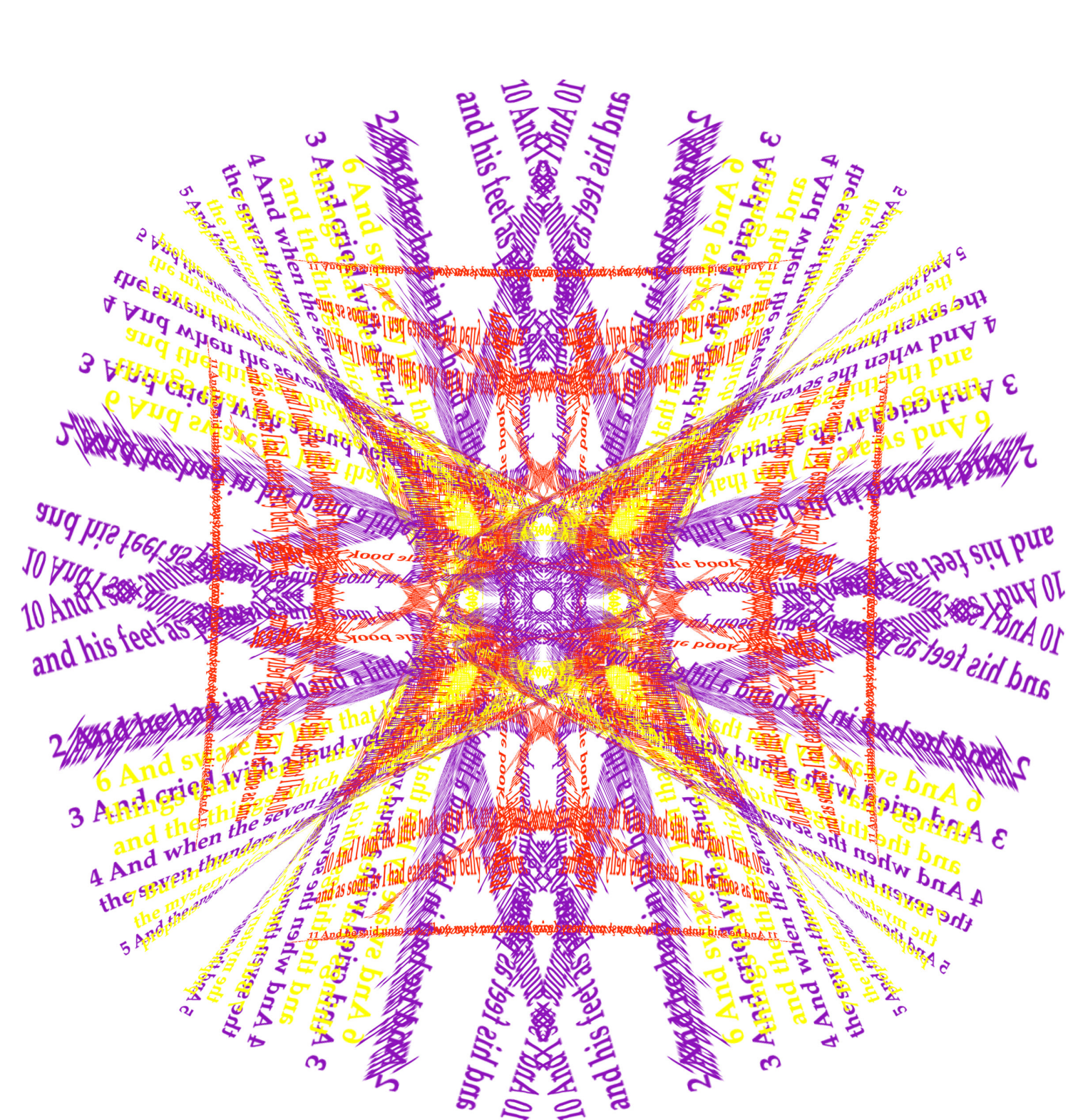
AMANDA EARL

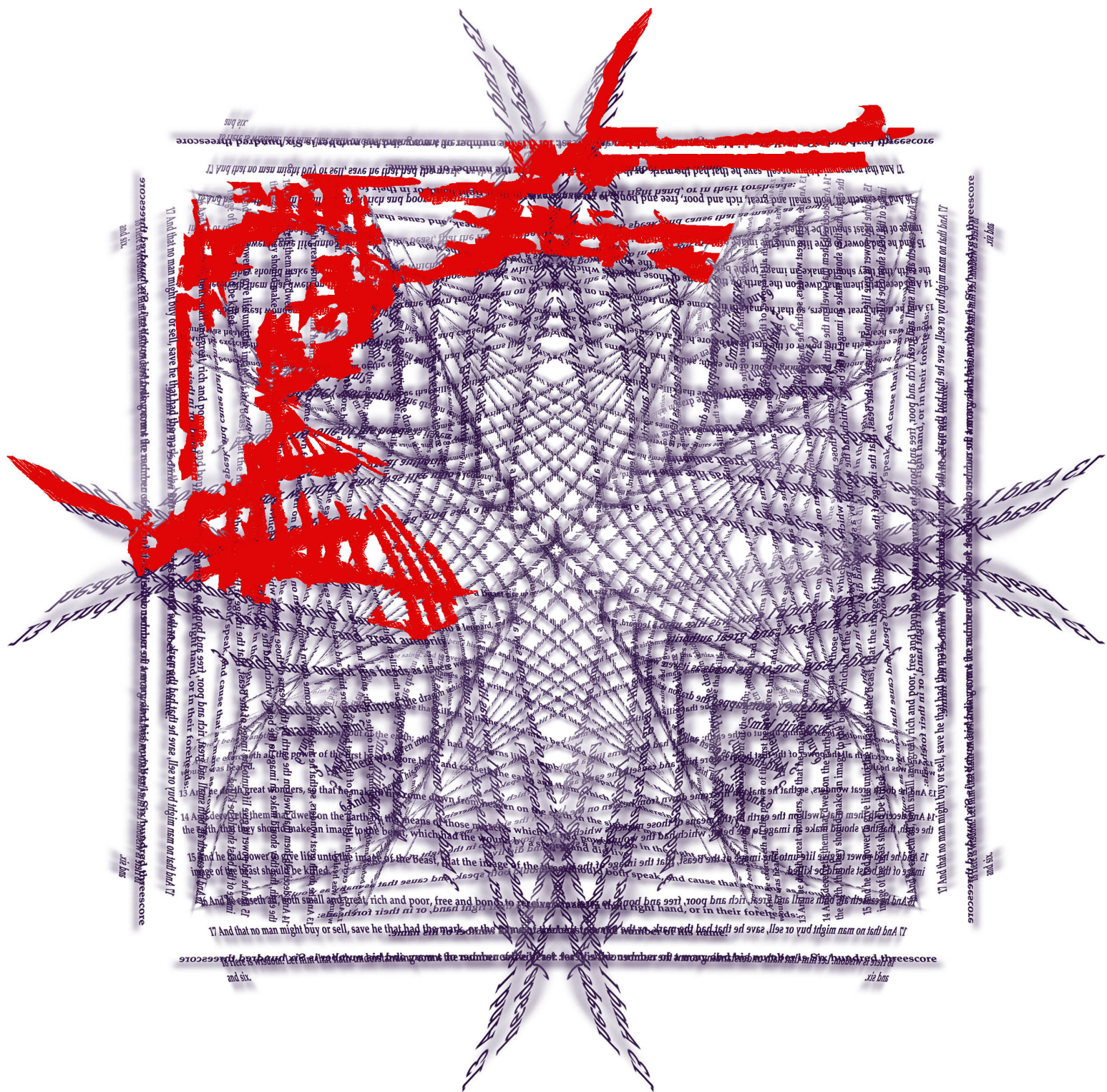


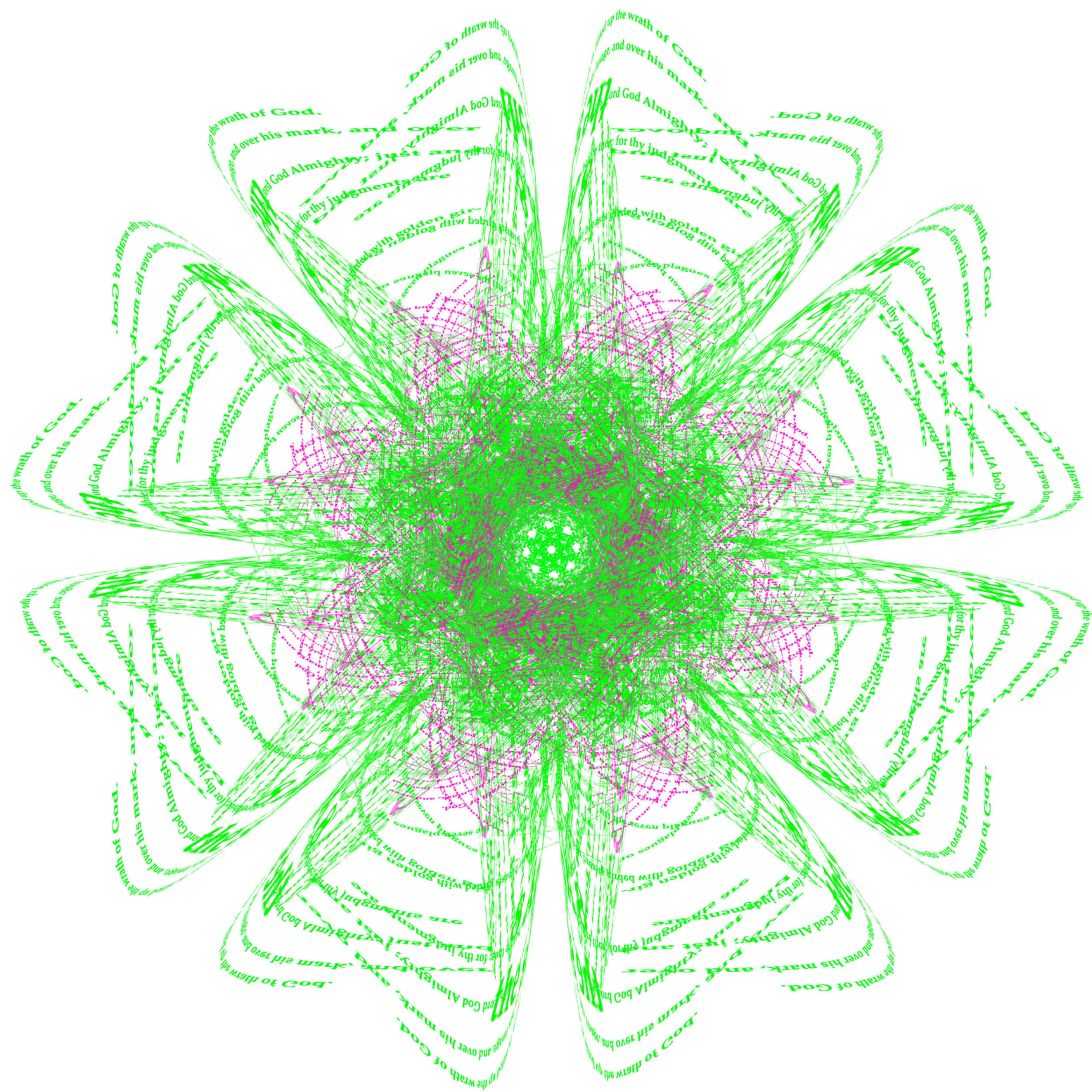
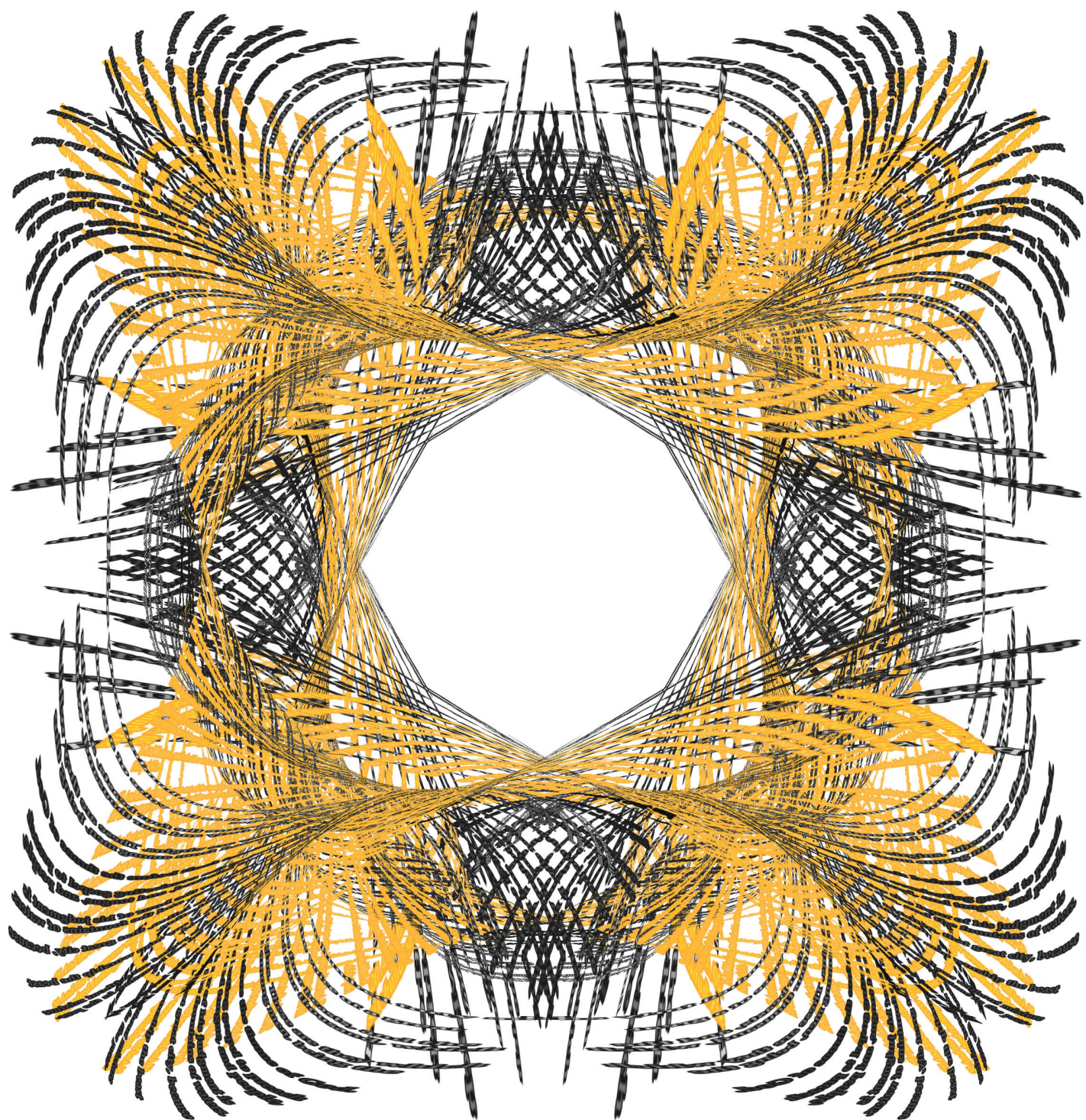


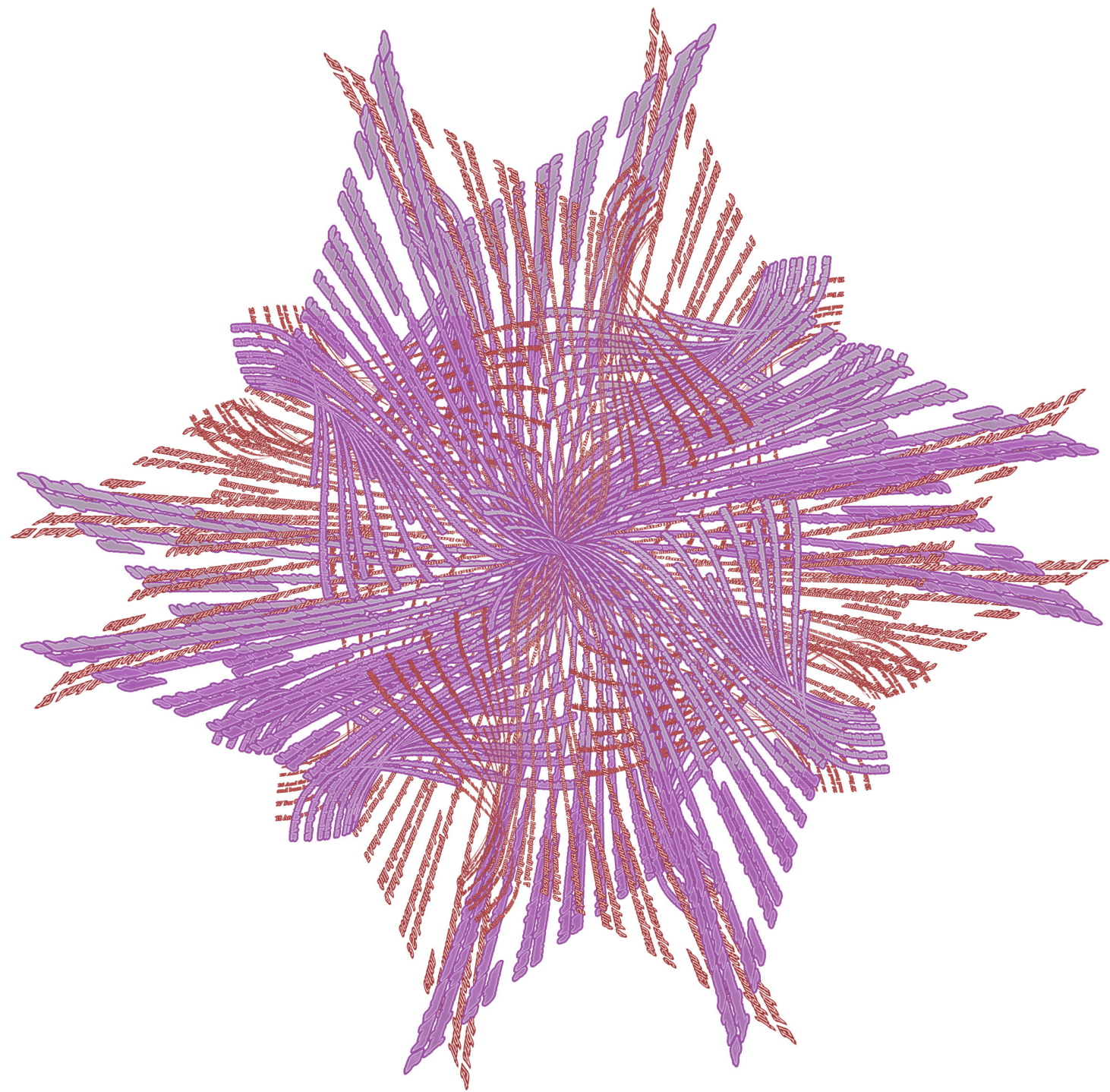
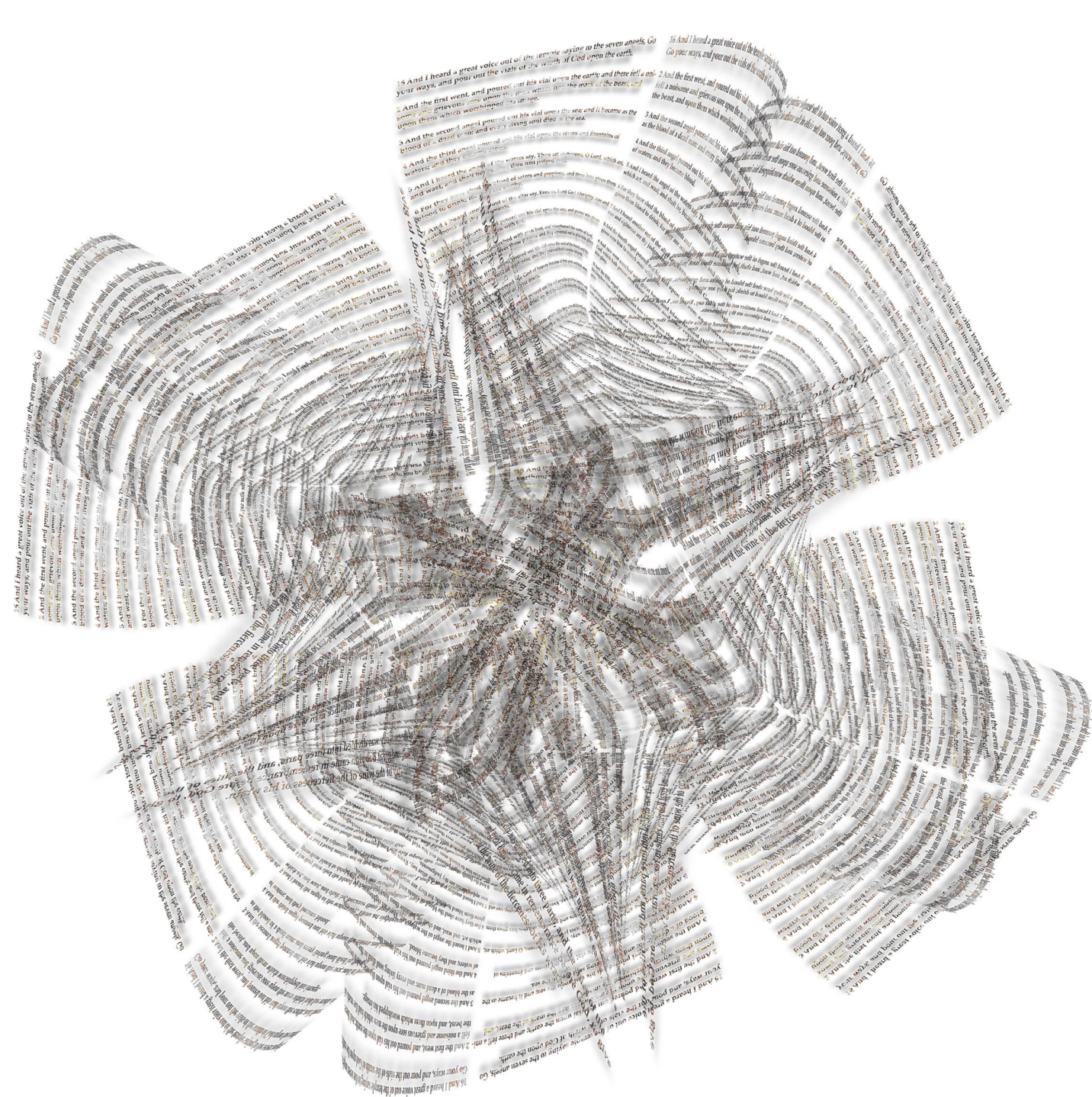


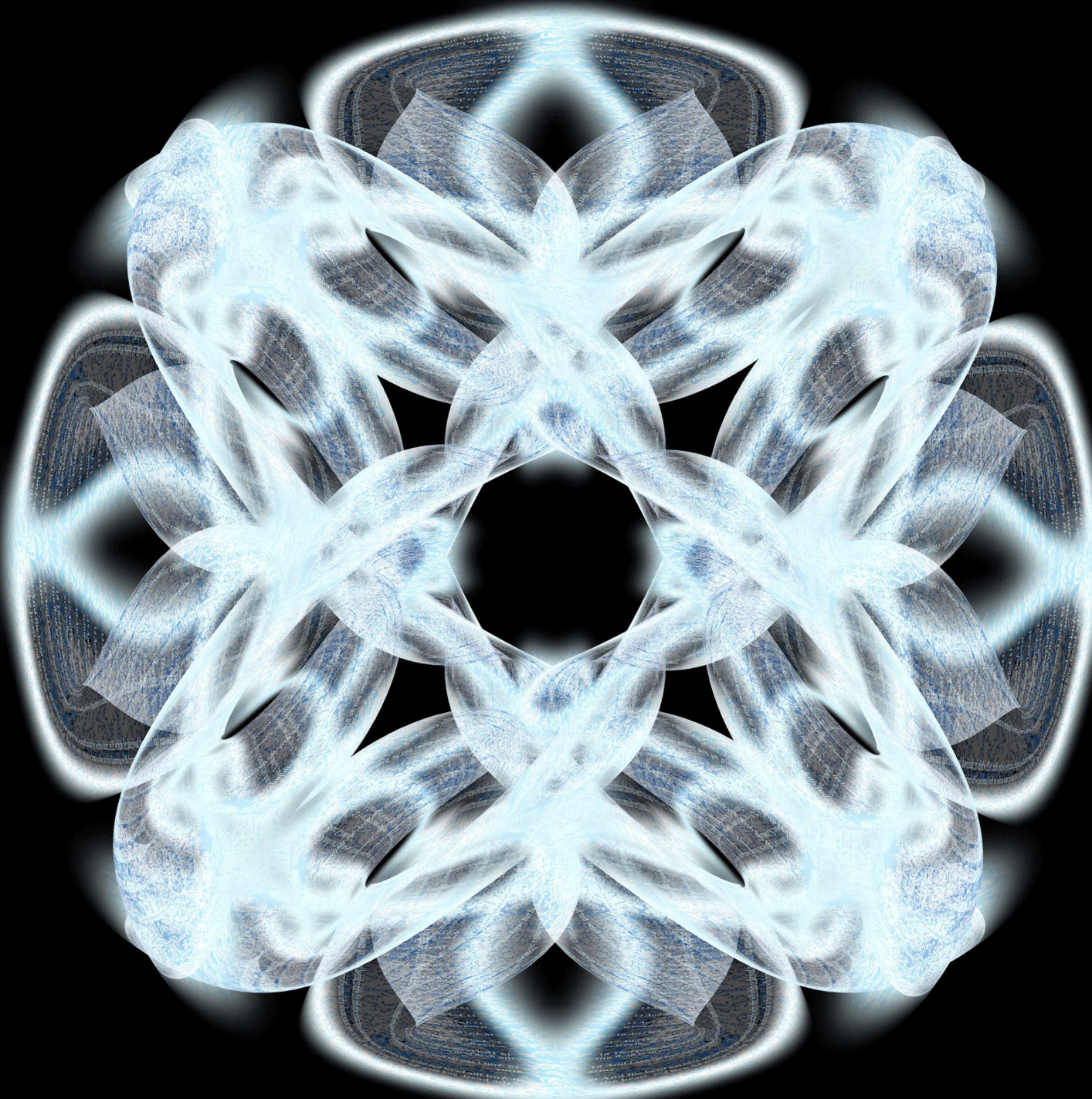


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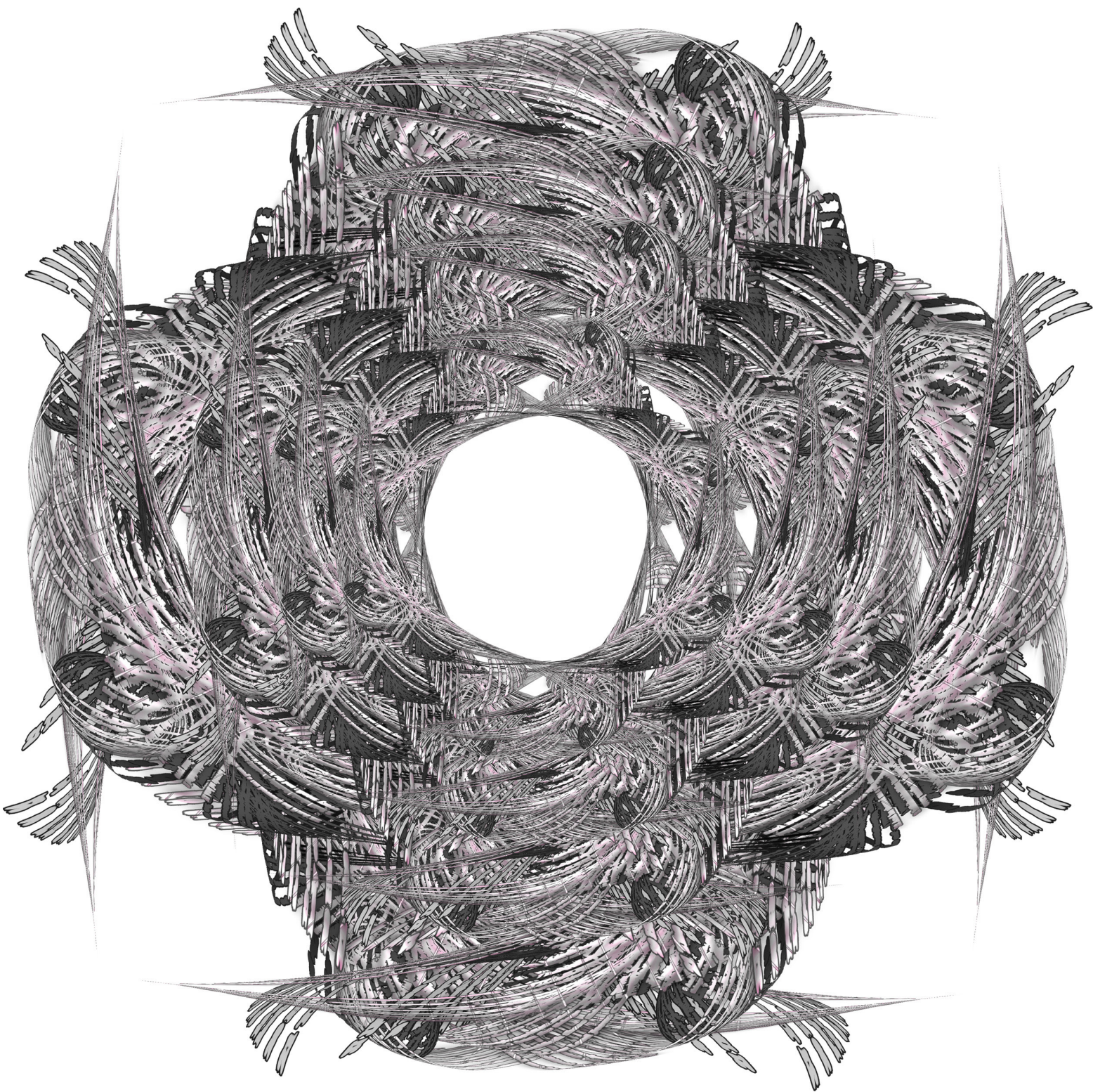






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The Vispo Bible: Revelation

Each piece represents one chapter from the *Book of Revelation, New Testament*. The text is taken from BibleGateway.com, King James Version. The Vispo Bible is a life's work to translate every chapter, every book of the Bible into visual poetry. As of time of printing, Amanda has completed from the Old Testament: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus* and *Esther* and, from the New Testament: *Jude, Revelation* and *Mark*. The work began in June, 2015. Amanda is grateful to the Ontario Arts Council funding received for some of the work on the Vispo Bible in 2018.

A few relevant bits from *The Vispo Bible: One Woman Recreates the Bible as Visual Poetry*, an artist talk given as part of Kanada Koncrete: Material Poetries in the Digital Age, University of Ottawa, May, 2018:

What attracted me to visual poetry and still does is that it is playful and unfreezes text from linearity. Meanwhile I was also starting to take an interest in movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Kurt Schwitters' collages, the surrealist paintings of Leonora Carrington, and Joseph Cornell's boxes. My newly discovered interest in art was part of a general self-awakening in my thirties, to the visual, the physical and the sensual, a personal renaissance. I wanted to play.

The Vispo Bible is part of my general poetic practice of chance operations from the dadaists and Jackson Mac Low's *Light* poems, cutting up, reshuffling, remixing existing sources: words, phrases, lyrics, titles, objects, geographical and psychological landscapes to unlock fixed propaganda and repurpose it.

I have grapheme synaesthesia where numbers, people's first names, names of the month and week, and pain have colours. It is satisfying to me to be able to assign the proper colours to these words.

In his introduction to *The Last Vispo Anthology: Visual Poetry 1998–2008* (Fantagraphics Books, 2012) Nico Vassilakis says, "Our aim here is to foster the young fidgeter of letter construction, either abstract or traditional, and to inform them that Vispo is a viable poetic form."

Being part of a discipline that makes people question whether it is a viable form appeals to me. Playing around with the Bible feels taboo, like I'm getting away with something considered sacrosanct and prescriptive, and yet the sacred and the divine to me equals play, having access to the full range of the imagination.

I am interested in the materiality of text, both as something that has social and cultural impact and as a physical manifestation of such, its pliable nature. I'd love to see this work published as an actual Bible with a leather cover and gold lettering, onionskin.

"The material of alphabet is letters/images – the material of a letter/image is line & curve & angle & shape, etc. – an expression of both intuition and mathematics." Nico Vassilakis.

The word is a graphic unit, but a block of text is also a graphic unit: the amount of space it takes up on the page, words between spaces, layout and design, negotiation of blank space and text, length of words, sentences, paragraphs.

I read the text for mention of colours, numbers, content within text. I considered popular culture and knowledge of biblical themes and figures, but whatever images or shapes people read into the work is mostly serendipitous. I'm not trying to turn the work into specific symbols or shapes, but somehow

there are locusts, moths and spiders, a rose of sharon, scrolls, soot, swarms of living creatures, angel wings, a crown of thorns, vines, fearsome teeth, the blood of the lamb and the holy ghost.

I also repeat and layer the text, often according to a repeated number in the original text, such as the number 7 in *Revelation*. *Revelation* is full colour because of all the colours and textures mentioned in the text. I am concerned with colour, shape, scale, texture, and composition.

In 2009 I nearly died from an out-of-the-blue health crisis. I developed pneumonia and full body sepsis. I had to have my colon removed. I was intubated and placed in the ICU of the Ottawa General Hospital. The expectation was that I would die. But I didn't. In my state of ICU psychosis I had delusions, most of them horrifying and painful. One of these could have been the angel of death. These angels and ghosts are with me still. And I am grateful to be alive.

The full text of the talk can be found on AngelHousePress.com under Essays.

Publications from *the Vispo Bible* include
Ruth, Simulacrum Press, 2018, Hamilton, Ontario
Mark, above/ground press, 2018, Ottawa, Ontario
Esther, Puddles of Sky Press, 2017, Kingston, Ontario
Revelation 20, No Press, 2017, Calgary, Alberta
Leviticus XII, Penteract Press, 2017 UK

with *John* forthcoming from the Blasted Tree, Calgary, Alberta, and *Romans* from where is the river, Toronto, Ontario.

Additional individual pieces have appeared in h&; our teeth, illiterature, Brave New Word (Ukraine), Dreamland Magazine, untethered, Utsanga.it, Chaudiere Books NPM 2018, and are forthcoming from a small magazine in Germany, and Not your best visual poetry from Knife Fork Book.

Revelation 19 and *20* will be exhibited as part of the Concrete is Pourous show in Toronto between November 3, 2018 and February 26, 2019 at the Secret Handshake Gallery, and will move to the Common Ground Gallery in Windsor afterward.

Thank you to the Ontario Arts Council 2018 Recommender Grant for Writers program for funding part of the creation of *the Vispo Bible* this year.

Amanda Earl's visual poetry has been exhibited in Canada, Brazil and Russia, and published in *The Last Vispo Anthology: Visual Poetry 1998–2008* (Fantagraphics, 2012), *Of the Body*, (Puddles of Sky Press, 2012), *Bone Sapling*, a collaboration with Gary Barwin, (AngelHousePress, 2014), *a field guide to fanciful bugs*, (avantacular press, 2010), *Montparnasse: This is visual poetry*, (Chapbook Publisher, 2010) and in the magazines, Untethered (2017) and Dreamland (2016). Amanda's visual poetry also appears in online journals Brave New Word, Angry Old Man, Utsanga, h&, Our Teeth, Otoliths, Tip of the knife, ffooom, The New Post Literate, Logalia.com, DrunkenBoat, and the Bleed. Gary Barwin gave a lovely write up of Amanda's visual poetry on Jacket2, "What kind of [sic] sense is that?: Amanda Earl & the synaesthesia of reading" (June, 2013). For more vispo, please visit EleanorIncognito.blogspot.ca.

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