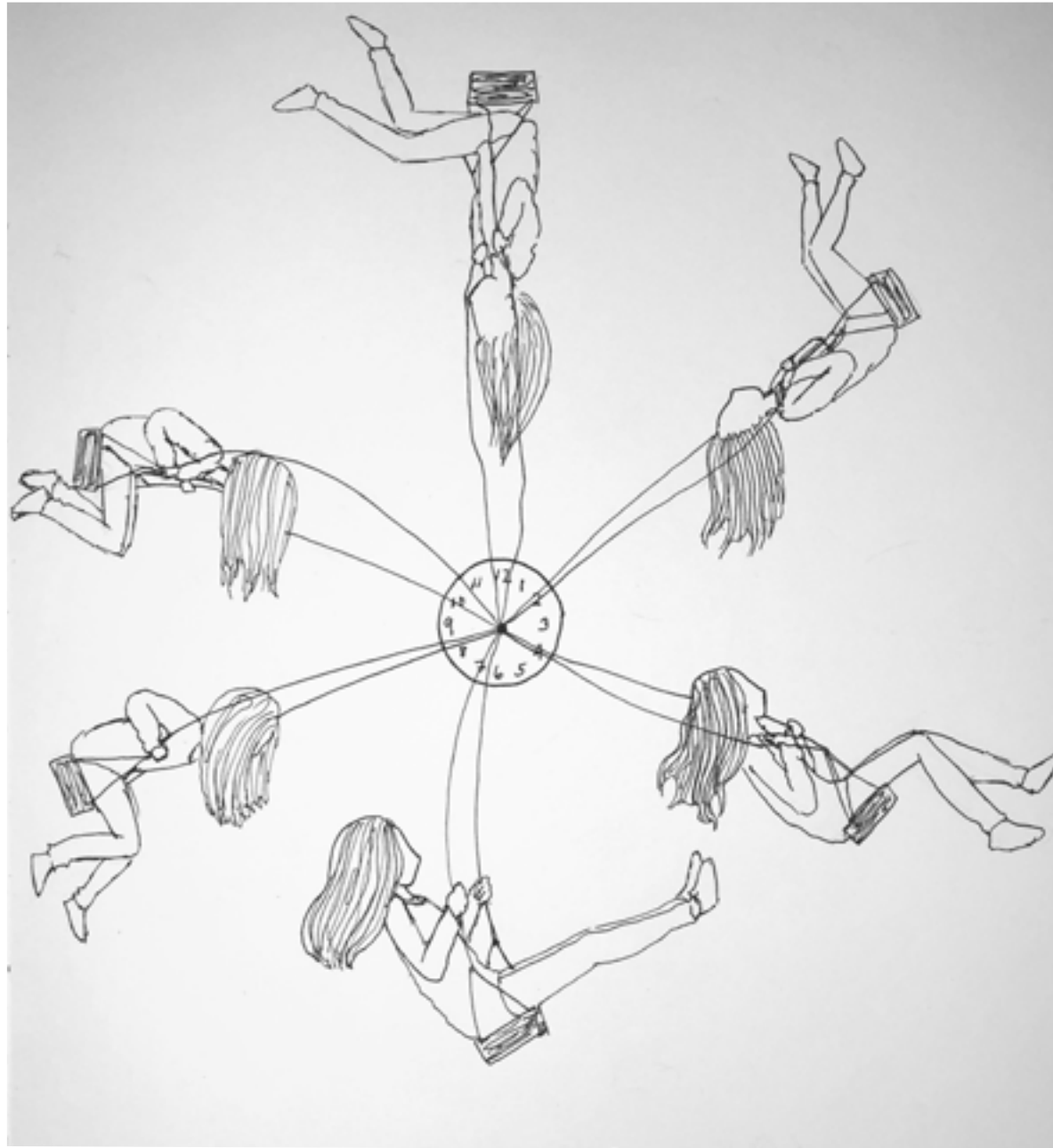

MOOD SWINGS

EMILY ZHAO



A REGULAR TUESDAY

EMMA WINTERS

House. Recipe.
Saltine Crackers.
For soups and salads.
The flimsy packaging tells me all this
And breaks
And slips
Through my small fingers.

The crackers crunch but quickly become like uncooked dough
As they cement themselves to the
Backs of my teeth and the
Roof of my mouth.
The globs of thick dough slide down my throat,
Slowing gliding along its interior walls.
I turn the now empty packaging over to read the ingredients printed in small black lettering.
A few words catch my eye:
Soy.
Lecithin.
Flour.
A light hammer taps on the inside of my forehead, and I divert my eyes to the speckled table below.
Tap. Tap. Tap.
The saltines have settled into my stomach.

Not settled my stomach.
They found their place amid the rumblings.
My stomach tosses
And turns
And ignites once more.
Acid licks the walls of my stomach
And crawls its way to top of my esophagus