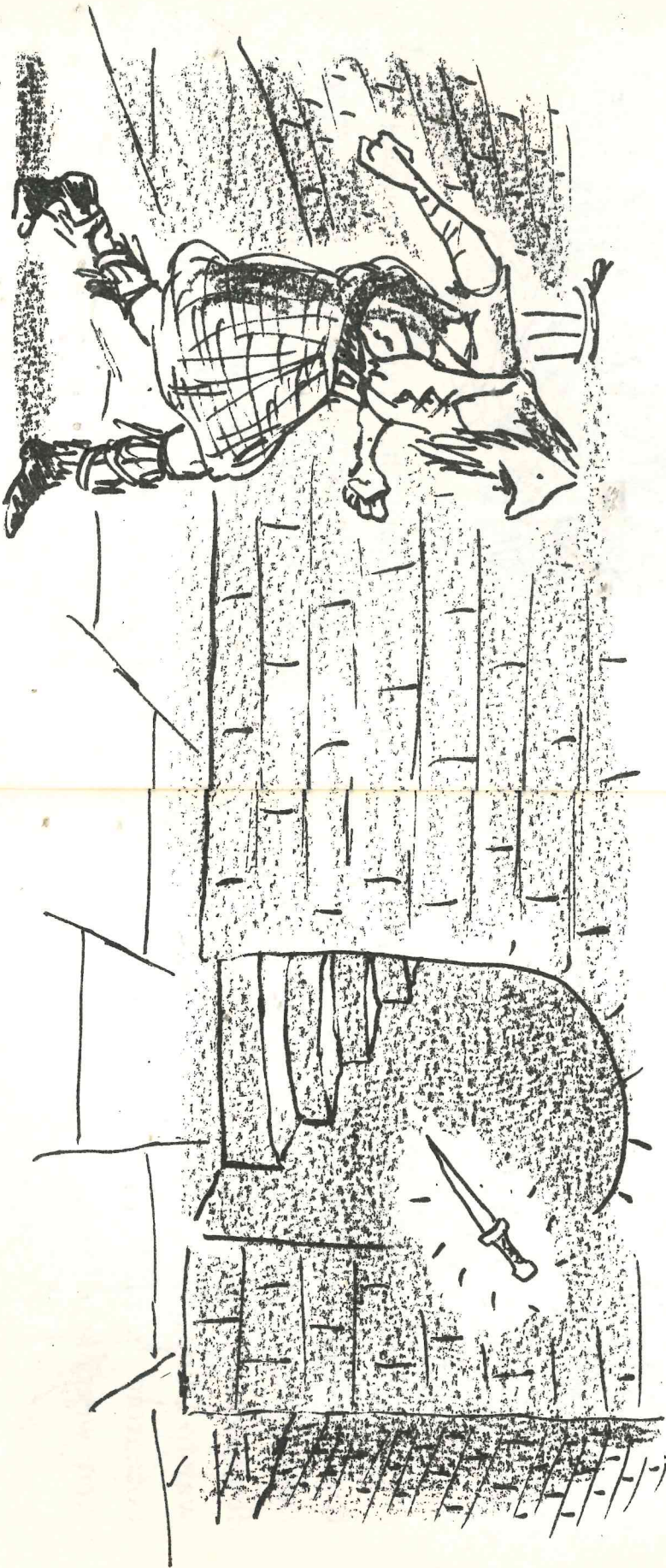
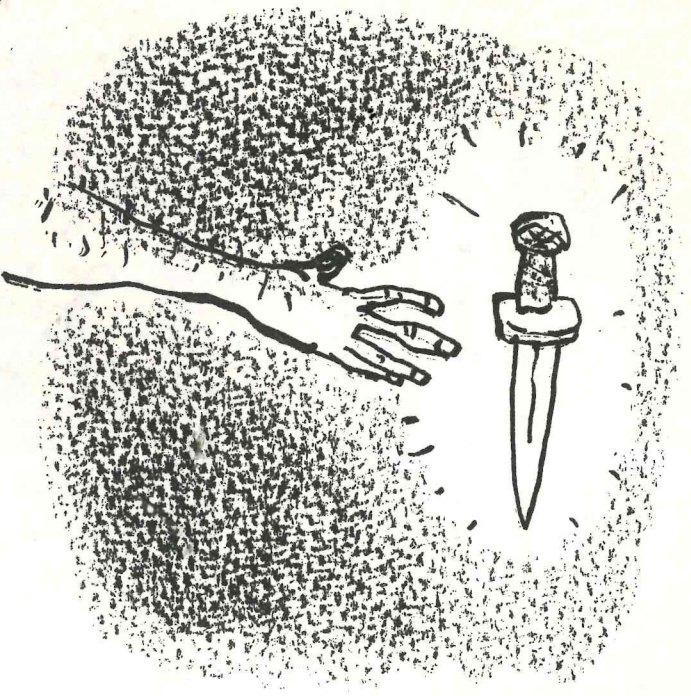


Long after the castle had fallen silent,  
Macbeth left his room and crept along the  
corridors. His hands trembled, and the  
sound of his pulse in his ears was like the  
beating of a battle drum. 'This is the hour  
of the wolf and the witch,' he thought,



'when evil spirits roam the night.'  
And as the words crossed his mind, a  
ghostly glow gathered in the darkness,  
shaping itself into a dagger that floated  
in the air, shining with a sickly green light.  
Macbeth almost cried out in terror.



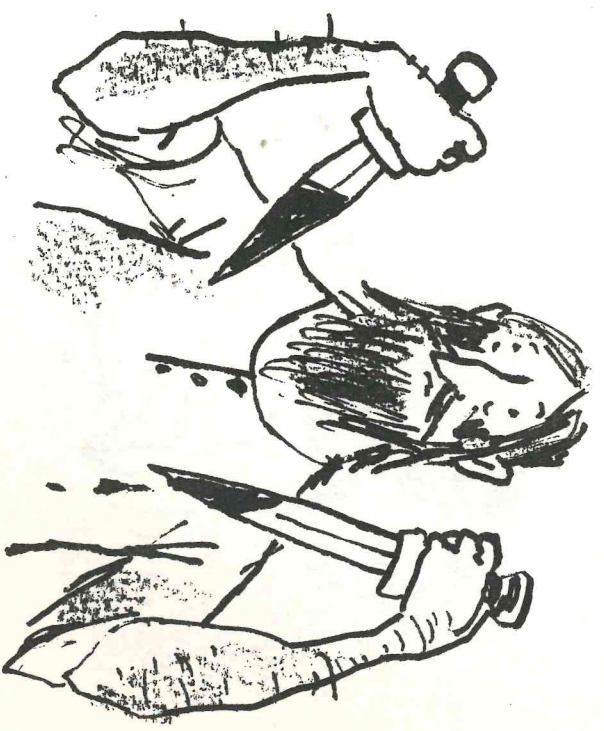


"Be calm!" he told himself. "This is a trick of the mind!" To prove it, he reached out his hand to take the dagger, but it floated away from him and pointed the way to Duncan's door. Blood began to ooze from the blade, as though the iron were weeping red tears.

A bell tolled midnight.  
"Duncan's funeral bell is ringing!"  
muttered Macbeth, and he followed the dagger through the gloom.

\* \* \*

Lady Macbeth also heard the bell toll, and it seemed a long time before her husband returned. There was blood on his face and hands, and he carried two daggers.



"You should not have brought the daggers here!" said Lady Macbeth. "Go back and put them into the guards' hands, as we planned!"

Macbeth's eyes were blank. He shook his head. "I will not go back there!" he said hoarsely.

"Then *I will!*" said Lady Macbeth, and snatched the daggers from Macbeth's hands and left the room.



Macbeth stood where he was, shivering uncontrollably, seeing nothing but Duncan's dead eyes staring. He tried to pray, but his lips and tongue would not form the words.

In a short while, Lady Macbeth came back, holding her red hands up to the candle-light. "I smeared blood over the guards' faces, to make them seem guilty," she said. "In the morning, we will have them tortured until they say that Duncan's sons paid them to kill him!"

Her face was so full of triumph and cruelty, that Macbeth no longer recognised it. He turned away, and caught sight of his reflection in the mirror. It was as if he were looking at someone else – as if he and his wife had become strangers to themselves and each other.

\* \* \*