



IONTAS

C R E A T I V E M A G A Z I N E

Issue 01:
Bloom

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A Note From the Editor

And finally, I pass this magazine on to you. IONTAS Issue 01: BLOOM has made its way into your hands. BLOOM is a celebration of becoming; to honest-to-god trying. It's a collective of people who genuinely care – they care so deeply that they can't help but let care spill into everything they do. They care, and so they create.

We, as creatives, are especially intimate with failure. We know what it's like to plant yourself at the pottery wheel; the gentle hum of the machine thrums, coaxing you into a meditative state like a lover. You realise that for the first time in a long time, you have been thinking about absolutely nothing. It's noiseless. It was so tranquil in fact you hadn't even realised an hour had passed. You haven't really been focusing, too tired and drawn out from the day, and you didn't notice the slight tilt your vase-to-be has. The vase splats. It makes a mess. You are too tired to start over. You make a mug instead.

You may have a different pottery wheel but you know what it's like to try and consequently fail. You learn from it, and you centre the clay again. Next time, you sculpt the most wonderful, intricate vessel for your blooming flowers. That is what separates a hobbyist from an artist.

I want to thank you for trying. Thank you for continuing to share your art with the world and tending to the garden of your creativity. The world needs more of us creating, not because it's easy, but because it is yours.

You have something priceless to share, and I am privileged to feature almost 80 different artists, designers, poets and creative souls. Much like our ancestors in Ireland, the Seanchaí, I hold the greatest honour of presenting to you this collection; eighty voices, blooming.

Le grá,
Holly Evans
Editor of IONTAS Magazine

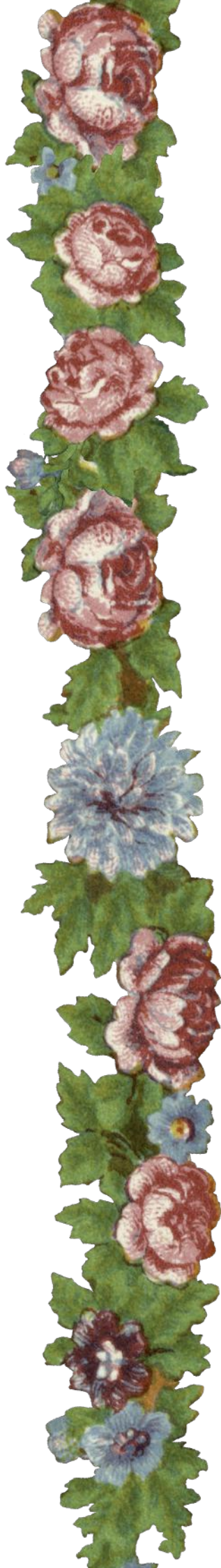
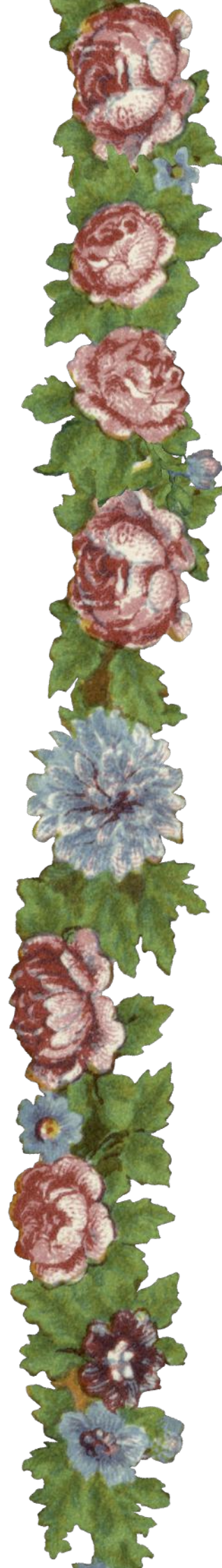


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A transparent hand points the way
Towards *Iontas*, the blooming of a brighter life.

- Rónán Hasson

Rónán Hasson



Rónán is a Belfast based poet and Gaeilgeoir. His work tackles the human condition, romance and the reclamation of Irish language and identity. Sometimes some shouty punk poetry if the mood takes him.

Editor Note: *Rónán Hasson is a truly remarkable poet. He blends both Irish and English together seamlessly, a powerful and moving act to reclaim the native Irish tongue. After performing on the same stage at a spoken poetry event, he was the first person I reached out to to be featured in IONTAS; before I even had a website or a submissions call. I knew that his work had to be a part of it. Is iontach an chuideachta é!*

Agallamh le Rónán Hasson

Tell us who you really are - not the polished bio, but who your loved ones know you to be.

I would describe myself as both a Bairdín and an Aonarán. This dualistic way of existing probably has something to do with my Gemini moon and at times it can be quite difficult to balance wanting to be the life and soul of the party and also wanting to live in a cabin somewhere in the woods away from all human contact. My loved ones would describe me as caring, energetic, sometimes a little troubled, sometimes a little fiery but ultimately – craic ar dóigh.

Bairdín: a little friendly talkative man

Aonarán: a man who enjoys solitude and his own company

Craic ar dóigh: great craic, a good time

Do you remember the first time writing felt sacred to you? How does that moment influence your current work?

Writing, particularly filíochta became sacred to me when I was in my late teens. I was diagnosed with both anxiety and depression around the age of sixteen and continue to battle with both to this very day. I found back then that writing my thoughts down helped me do my best to make sense of it all. I also loved poetry and music from a very young age, so it was only natural that I leaned towards writing mo chuid smaointe in verse.

Filíochta: poetry

Mo chuid smaointe: my share of thoughts

Where I came from poetry wasn't considered a "manly" or "masculine" thing to do, and I certainly felt that pressure to be "one of the lads" so I for the most part kept my writing to myself (I did have a little secret tumblr page for all you legends who remember tumblr) Eventually I suppressed my creative side to the point of not writing at all, in a bid to "fit in".

I'm very grateful that I chose to get back in touch with my creative side to really allow it to flourish and bloom the way it has now. Especially in the past two years of my life which were probably the hardest for me to endure. My mental health really hit rock bottom and if I hadn't filled notebook after notebook with my thoughts I don't think I'd be here today.

Your work interlaces language as Gaeilge agus Béarla. What does each language give you that the other can't?

Ceist iontach! Tosóidh mé leis an Ghaeilge ar dtús, reconnecting to ár dteanga has really changed how I view the world around me, myself and my emotions. It is a different headspace for sure. In Irish, our emotions are “on us” e.g. tá tuirse orm (there is tiredness on me). If we have a liking or love for something that preference/adoration is “with us” so the phrase is grá liom filíochta literally means: “is a love with me, poetry.”

When it comes to possessions as well, instead of having them, they are “at us” e.g. tá leabhar agam (there is a book at me). Irish also allows us to “be” in a state. So instead of saying I am running, you could say: tá mé i mo rith which literally means “I am in my running.” Which sounds so much more poetic and astral.

As a poet, Gaeilge is the best literary weapon that I have in my arsenal, a language that is full of poetry, wit and resistance. English is the language I was born with because: colonialism, so I have a stronger grasp of it and will tend to use it if I want to discuss topics in a little more depth or for when I write something really unhinged or zany

I like blending the two languages together, and this particular style of poetry is a style that I try to push as it holds the door open for those who are curious about An Ghaeilge without having to feel overwhelmed / still be able to understand the poem and also pick up a new focal or two. It is also a reflection of my every day usage of both languages. No matter who you are, if I speak to you in English, I will speak to you in Irish as well, because I believe Irish is for everybody who walks on Irish soil or those who are in foreign lands with Ireland in their heart.

@gairdindigiteach.roni
@romicjo.hasson

Gaeilge agus Béarla: in Irish and English

Ceist iontach! Tosóidh mé leis an Ghaeilge ar dtús:
Great question! I will start with Irish first.

*What does your creative process look like?
The unfiltered version.*

Every poet / writer has a notes section in their phone full of words and I am no exception. If somebody says something that turns on a lightbulb in my whacky brain I will type or jot it down to plant a seed that might bloom into a poem. I do also like to dedicate time when I'm not working to go to a café, read poetry, study Irish and write (some white boy with tattoos behaviour).

I find doing something like reading poetry or doing an Irish comprehension exercise gets my brain flowing and puts me “i mo fhile” (in my poet). Music heavily influences what I write about or if there is something I want to discuss I will tend to whack on a playlist or radio that matches the vibe.

At present I am growing a “digital garden” on Instagram (get all over it). When I was at university I made an art page to share my art on but I stopped posting on it and making any art because it never “went anywhere”. I definitely got sucked up in feeling like the worth of my art or writing was attached to social media likes/peer approval and that is not healthy of course, so with my digital garden I am reclaiming that space, posting my art and some of my poetry purely for the grá and to give people some art and poetry to view for free and resonate with.

An Interview With Rónán Hasson

*If your work was an Irish county, which
would it be and why?*

Doire. Is gan dabht! I was born in then I moved out to Cill Ria with Mamaí which is in south Derry, however we were brought up in a Doire household with Doire inár gcroíthe. I love visiting Free Derry and really identify with the unrepentant and defiant energy that lives and breathes through the city.

Speaking Irish is an act of resistance. I chose to reclaim and relearn Irish as an act of defiance to the colonial oppression that still hangs over Na Sé Chontae like a stinking wet cloth. The majority of Irish people had their pagan tongue – their true tongue – stolen from them before they were even born. If it wasn't for the bravery and determination of the people of An Ghaeltachta who have fought tooth and nail to preserve the Irish language, people in my position wouldn't have the opportunity to take back what is rightfully ours, so I am extremely grateful to them for that. Anois, táimid ag glacadh ár dteanga ar ais.

There is a seanfhocal in Irish: Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam which means “a country without a language is a country without a soul”. If you ask me, right now, more than ever it is; tír agus teanga, tír agus anam! I see An Ghaeilge being used so much more by everyday people in everyday settings, freedom begins in the heart and soul and if you are Irish, to speak An Ghaeilge is to set her and yourself free.

Doire. Is gan dabht!: Derry, it is without doubt!

Ros Earcain, Contae Aontroma:
(Rasharkin, County Antrim)

Cill Ria: Kilrea

Doire inár gcroíthe: Derry in our hearts

Na Sé Chontae: The Six Counties

Anois, táimid ag glacadh ár dteanga ar ais:
(Now, we are taking our language back.)

Seanfhocal: Proverb

Tír agus teanga, tír agus anam!
country and language, country and soul.

i mo Bhláthú

Rónán Hasson

*Tá mé i mo bhfolach, i mo codladh
Faoi an talamh.*

I was rendered limb from limb,
Reassembled the wrong way
Then sent scurrying into a hole
By the command of *An Mór-Ríoghain*.

*Tá sábháilteacht agam anseo, as amharc,
Agus táim sásta leis, le firinne.*
Fetal once again, stripped of
What I previously mutated into,
I shed my skin in the black
Over and over again, trying to perfect myself.

*Ní féidir liomsa dul amach mar seo, fanfaidh mé
Go dtí go mbeidh mé i bhfad níos fearr*
Snug in this pit of darkness,
The lone sound of dripping water
Is my lullaby as I drink my milk and
Take delight from hibernation. (continues)

*Sílim go bhfuilim i mo shuaimhneas, ach
Níl sin fíor, tá mise i mo bhfolach.*

Áine is outside in the sky,
She is looking for me and
Furrowing her brow as her
Rays rake the land trying to find me.

*Tá mise caillte, ar strae ar fad agus
Sin maith go leor liomsa, is éasca a bheith caillte.*
So Áine decided to melt the earth,
To soften the soil above me, gently it
Crumbles into an earthy shower
That drizzles over me and cleanses.

*Tá Áine ag rá liom, “Éirigh! Éirigh Gaelic duine!”
“Tá sé in am a bheith i do fhíle! Éirigh anois!”*
The earth rests on my skin as
The heat of the sun ignites the
Timber within my very core,
My eyes are shining rubies, my heart is a diamond.

*“Amharc anseo, Gaeilic duine! Tá an Domhan díreach
Anseo i do lámha agus i do chroí fosta, amharc!”*
Flowers bloom within the
Curls of my hair, everything has an
Infrared filter, the clouds are purple
The trees and fields are blue.

*Sna spéir, tá Áine ag cur solais ar fud na háite,
Tá an Domhan ina loinnir, tá mise i mo fhíle.*
A whisper in the breeze extends
A friendly invitation to step forward,
A transparent hand points the way
Towards Iontas, the blooming of a brighter life.

*Bhí mé faoi an talamh bhí síol mé,
Ach anois is bláth mé. Tá mé i mo bhláthú.*



Tapestry - Sophie Coxon

Root Talk: Specimen Notes on Bloom

Natalie Harveld

I. Root

Beneath the surface, the system spreads unseen.
Fine filaments thread through compacted earth,
seeking what has already been buried.

Nothing begins at the surface.
All growth is fed by what is hidden,
what has decayed into usefulness.

There are names down there, though not all are recorded.

II. Stem

Upward movement appears singular;
a clean insistence towards light
but the stem is only a conduit, lifting what it did not make
from depths it does not remember choosing.

Cut it open and you will find, not emptiness, but passage.

III. Branch

Divergence gives the illusion of freedom.
Each new direction feels like a decision.

Yet every angle follows an older logic:
a shaping long set in motion,
a pattern written before the first leaf split open.

What grows outwards still answers to what lies below.

IV. Bloom

At last, the visible promise:
colour, softness, a brief, persuasive beauty.

But bloom is only the surface event,
a flare sustained by older work,
by pressure and patience beneath the soil.

It carries the trace of everything that fed it.

V. Specimen

Subject presents as whole, unremarkable.
No immediate sign of strain.

Closer inspection reveals:
fine lines of tension,
subtle irregularities in form,
a tendency to return to certain shapes.

When placed in open ground,
growth continues along familiar paths.

Conclusion:

The bloom appears self-made.
The roots suggest otherwise.



nowhere, endless

Salem Paige

the prairie gulls cluster
around rusted plows mid-field;
boards on homes are sun-
bleached and water-warped.
transport trucks rest their
empty heads, trees convene
around pockets of water, green
against the endless yellow
and beige and spots of
brown cows lethargically chewing
the infinite grass that stretches
to the horizon, oblivious to the
endlessness of the sky.





between the world & I

Salem Paige

I open my arms to her,
the natural movement of Things.
the shallow stream of what is meant to be,
if we take down the dams
we thought were protection and
let the water flow.
everything in abundance, always refilling,
like the stream that runs, the pond that
never overflows no matter how heavy the rain,
how constant the downpour of spring
shedding its tears.
the water will always land where it needs to,
find rest where it is most needed, nurture
the soil and the plants, the moss, the trees.
I trust that like the rain, I will fall
where I'm meant to. I follow the current,
float down the river the way it flows and
I do not fight the world's plan, a secret
to be shared between the world & I
only when I get there.

Jagaimo (Potatoes)

Leila Matsuura

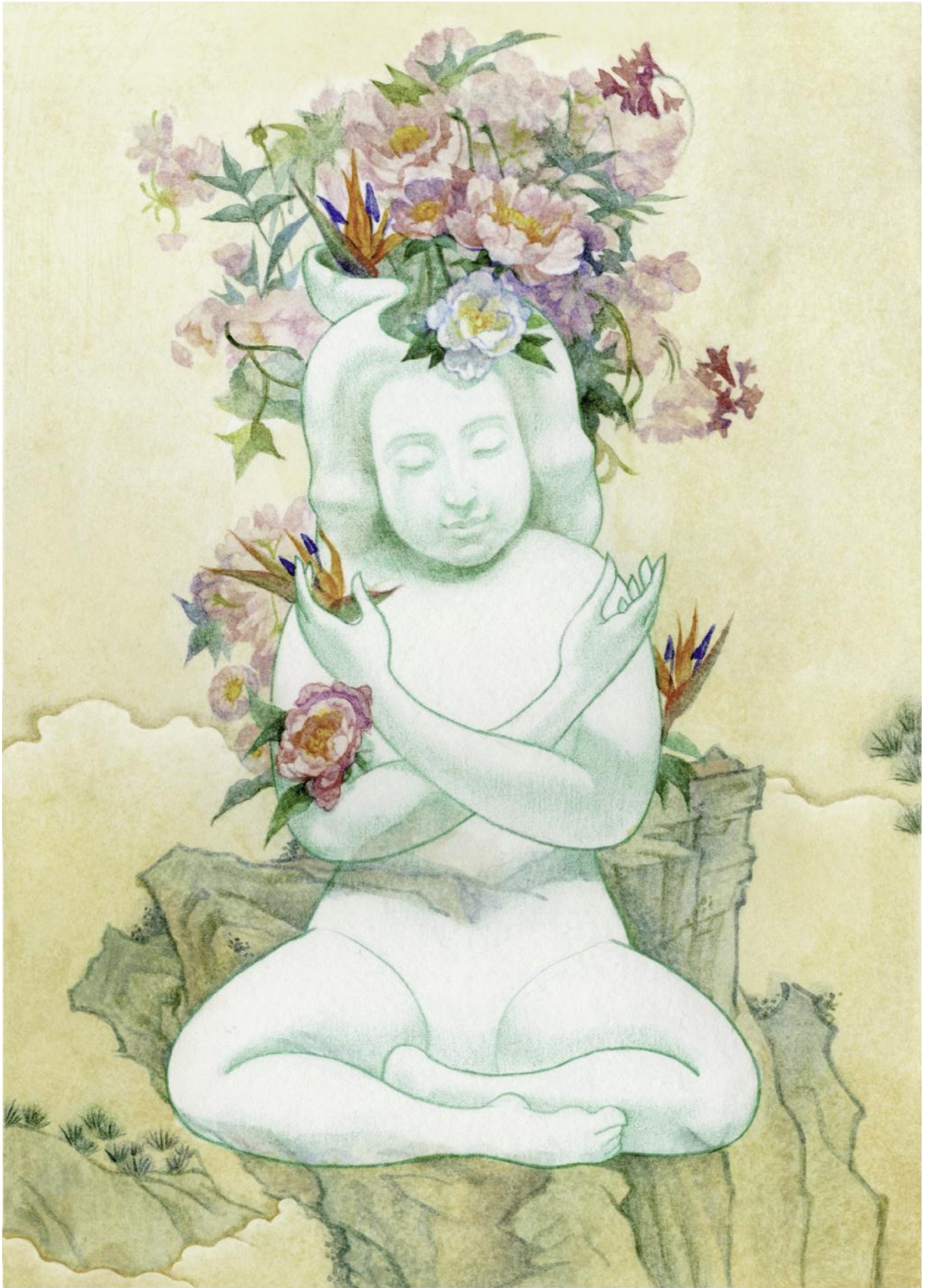


Cultivating

Salem Paige

open-faced time grows
in the fields, seconds
sown into the fertile
soil last autumn bloom
with fresh rows of hours,
to be shared aroundw the
city square in small boxes
tied with wribbon. I pick
a moment from the vine
and hold it in my mouth,
sweet and crisp. I am not
punished for my indulgence.
the breeze stops, then continues, a barely perceptible
pause in my day alone.





Flourishing

Qinyunyi Zhang

Until I Bloom

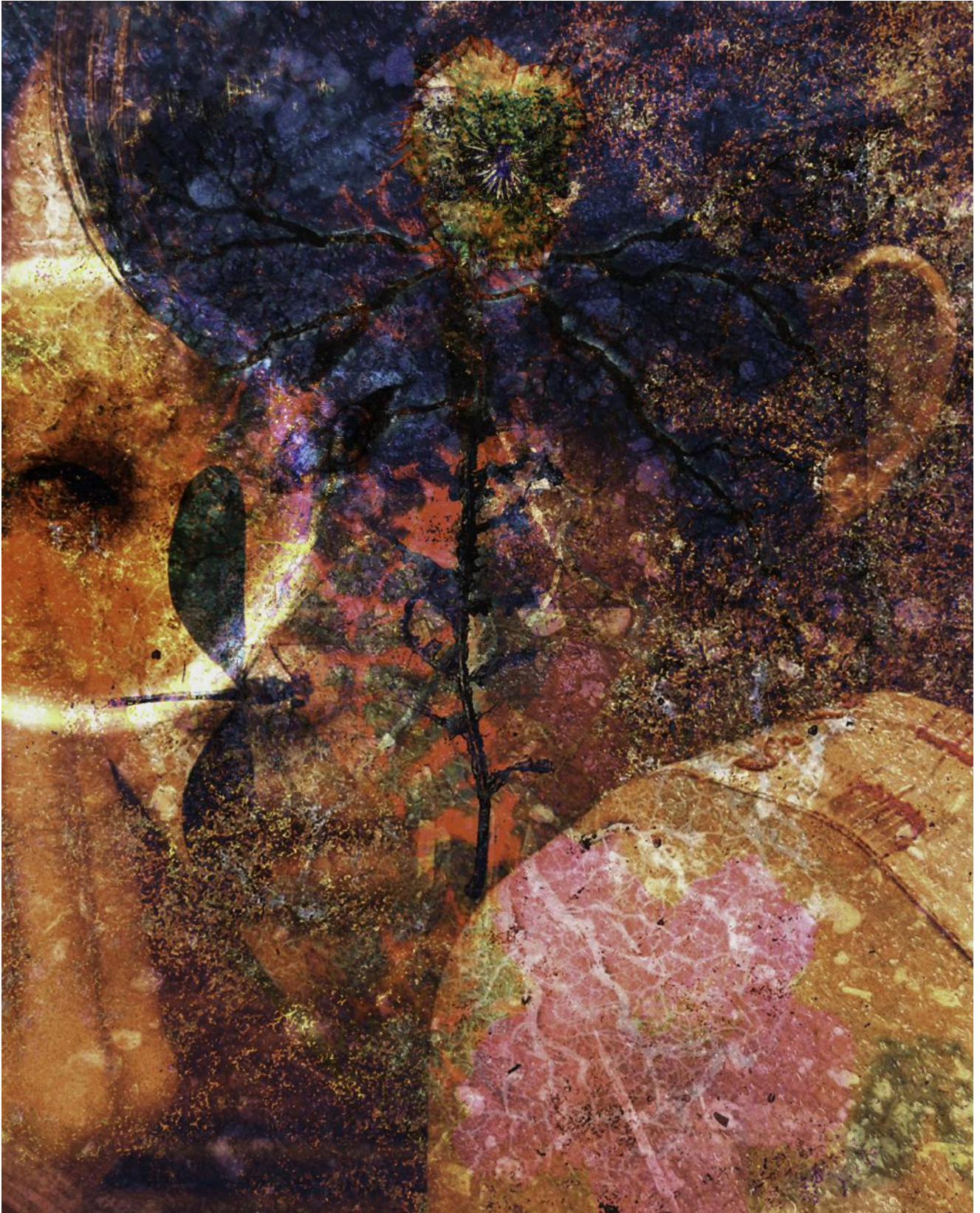
Juno James

I am a lonely cactus
In my sandy solitude
In the night I stand
isolated, alone with gloom
Admiring, desiring to hold
heaven's silvery loom
The dark is soul crushing
With a beauty so cruel
I am in need of nursing
Dear Dawn and Dew
Please water and
nurture me soon
Nourish me until I develop shoots,
Until I sprout roots from dust's womb—
Until life is restored from
the core of withered wounds—
Until I am reborn, adorned
With frosting flowers and fruit—
Alive, Thriving, Renewed



SPECIMEN 20 - Riccardo Ferrero

SPECIMEN 21 - Riccardo Ferrero



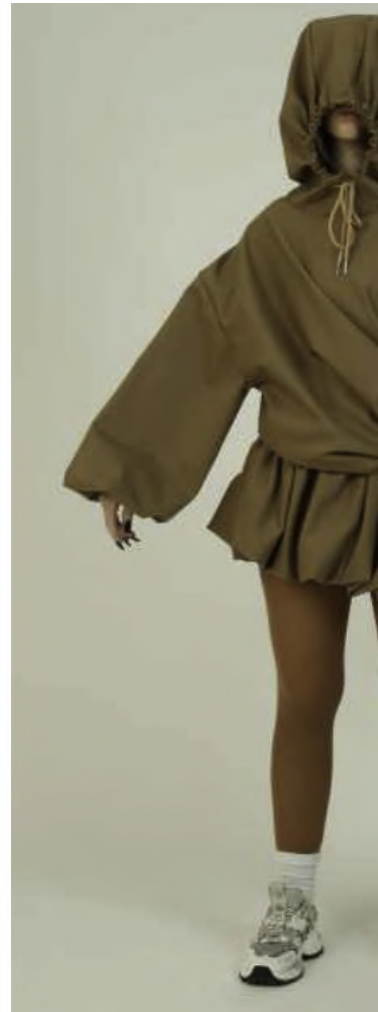
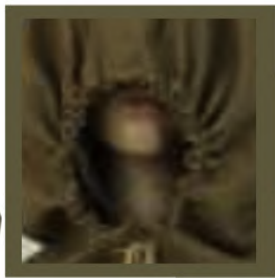
A photograph of a pond with lily pads and two turtles on a log. The pond is filled with water and numerous lily pads of various sizes. A large, dark log lies horizontally across the middle of the frame. Two turtles are perched on the log: a small turtle on the left and a larger, darker turtle on the right. The background is a soft-focus view of the pond and more lily pads.

propagation (haiku)

Stephanie Griffin

bleeding chlorophyll
from a cut beneath the rib.
from water, new life.







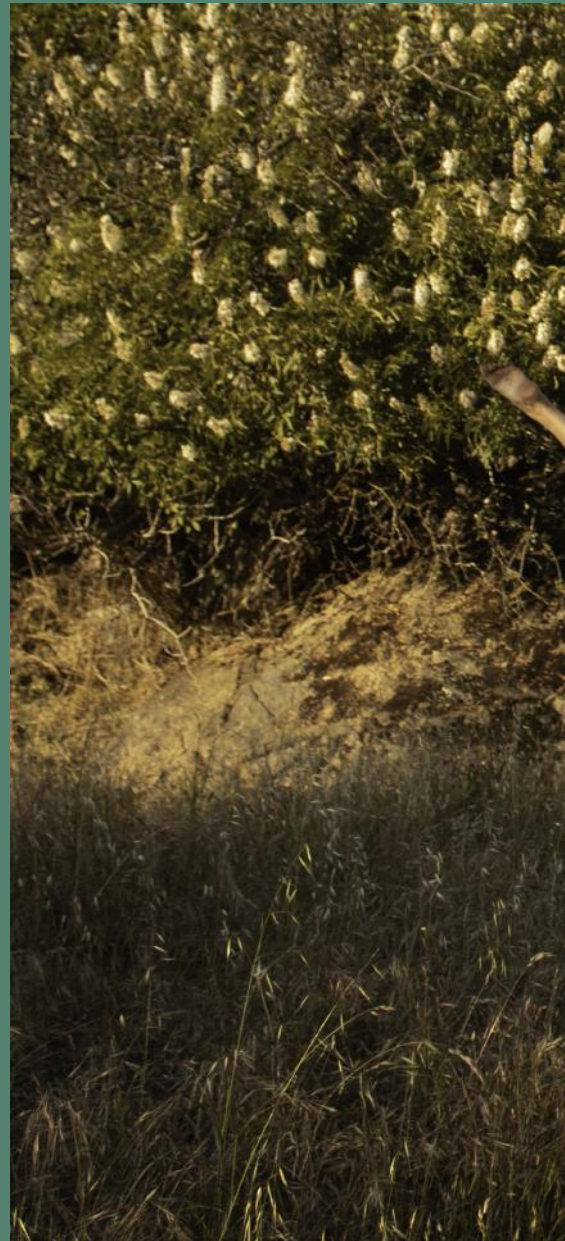
Inas Hussain

Stems

Jude Finn

I could not keep all of the flowers that I would pick
While on my way to see you
The daisies, violets, lilies and roses I would find
Sage leaves, tulip lips, bouts of wildflowers I would pick as I walked.
Clovers I would search through; waters I would wade for the perfect bloom.
So many I would find that I may become flowers and poetic words.

Stones I cross and earth I touch, leaving the flowers behind
With each one, I tell them what they were chosen for.
So if I meet you, forgive me for the journey
I only hold a handful of stems,
But I have spoken to every flower about you.



Threads, Parallels of Us - Elias Cervantes





Pillars - Elias Cervantes

Tulip Ocean

Ty Dunn

Sun coral dress. A tulip field wider than the Pacific.

Bare feet brined with dirt and pressed weeds.

Medusa asks: *What would you do if I was a worm?*

If you were a worm, you'd dine on gourmet compost. Slushy rotten apples stuffed in shriveled bell pepper. Served on a magnolia leaf.

I respond: ***You would not know the definition of hunger.***

Cornflower blue jellyfish earrings shrouded by tumbling wind and saltwater hair. Seaweed strands sticking to glossy lips.

She twirls: *Well, I'm waiting.*

Is she even listening? The bedding is lighter than a sponge infused with gizzard grit.

Me, motionless: ***Rain would never touch your satin skin.***

Sargassum eyes. Cordoned eyelids leering across the fuchsia horizon. sunglasses brimming the edge of her nose.

She preens: *Seriously, speak up.*

Medusa, you are not a worm or plucked up stem of a wilted tulip. You are the noxious weeds seeping sweet poison all around us.

If only my stone lips could say it.

Living Lines - Charlotte Butterfield



Living Lines - Charlotte Butterfield





Living Lines - Charlotte Butterfield



A Letter to Those Who Are Blooming on Their Own Terms

A Personal Essay by Ella d'Avoine

Bloom has to be one of the gentlest words to exist in the English language. It carries feelings of soft, springtime flowers; A waft of cherry blossom on the cool breeze; Thoughts of growth and expansion. Springtime is nature's new year, which means it's your body's new year too. This is when animals come out of hibernation (so no beating yourself up if you haven't achieved those new year's resolutions yet. The calendar new year is in the dead of winter, after all).

Personal growth is something so innate and personal to each individual. Not everyone is going to follow the same life path or move as fast as others. Within the concept of blooming, two very integral things come to mind for me: Taking life at your own speed and remembering that nature isn't blooming all year round.

I'll start with the first. Let me use something of my own experience as an example; I never went to university. I had a hard enough time at school, and I knew myself well enough to know I'd just be miserable if I forced myself to go. Miserable for three years and then 90k in debt? No thanks.

Going to university is such a widely experienced thing and I had plenty of moments where I wondered if I was doing something wrong because I didn't want that, or I feared that I was missing out. It's so easy to sit on your phone and see your friends or acquaintances having wonderful times and wondering if you went wrong somewhere. After a year or so however, when I pursued my desire to become an author, I knew with every bone in my body that I'd done the right thing for myself, and that's truly all you can hope for. Some people have an amazing time at university, and that's wonderful. Others don't. That's normal. Take it from me—don't ever let outside noise dictate your decisions. No one knows what's best for you above yourself.

I'm sure all of you can agree that at some point in your life, you've felt the pressure that comes with the expectations of growing up. And it spans far beyond the ages of university students. Marriage, buying your first home, having children. It's easy enough to believe that we have to follow all these rules set out in front of us or follow the masses. The pressure is a heavy feeling that ripples through so much of our hustle and bustle society. But what happens if you want to break out of the mould? What if you want some of that and not the other bits? Or none of it at all?

You do what you think is right for you. It's all you can do in a world like this, even if that means having outside noise turn around and tell you that you're selfish.

Your happiness is not a sacrifice worth making to appease the masses.

Your happiness is not a sacrifice worth making to appease the masses.

This rigid structure, in my opinion, massively holds us

back from taking initiative, turning inwards, and hearing what it is that we truly want. It silences us. Sometimes, I wonder if it dwindles down to one thing, which takes me to my second musing: We're taught to believe that we are separate from nature. We're expected to make new year's resolutions and set goals and plan our entire year... right in the middle of winter, when the rest of nature is fast asleep and resting. We might be a clever species (most of the time), but we are not separate from nature. Our bodies aren't. Our nervous systems feel the seasons change. You don't scream at flowers and tell them to grow faster or bloom all year round. You wait for them.



You wait for spring. And yet, we expect ourselves to be okay all year round? To have constant streams of energy? In our marrow, that is not how we're wired. It's not how we work, even if we're told differently. Nature grows in many different directions, at many different speeds. So do we.

Nature grows in many different directions, at many different speeds. So do we.

It can be a hard thing to integrate after so many years of being told differently, especially because adopting the mindsets and practises that come with remembering we are a part of nature, of remembering that winter is meant for rest and spring is when we can bloom again, it all goes against the mainstream flow in our society. Which is to work eight hours every day. Have busy weekends. Our nervous systems are used to being overworked and under cared for. We're not taught to prioritise self-needs or rest, and when you start flowing with the energy of the seasons, rest and self-awareness of your body and its needs are the very centre of that practise. Our minds rebel against it because it's unfamiliar, and it seems easier to just continue on with what we already know.

So, for those who have broken out of the mould, or those who desperately want to, remember that it's possible. You'll most likely meet resistance, but that doesn't mean you should stop. It doesn't even mean that you're doing anything wrong. It means that you're doing it right. Taking back the control over yourself, your life, and your body is a gift that every single one of us deserves.

So please be brave and let yourself claim back that gift.

Ceramics

Ilia Abramov

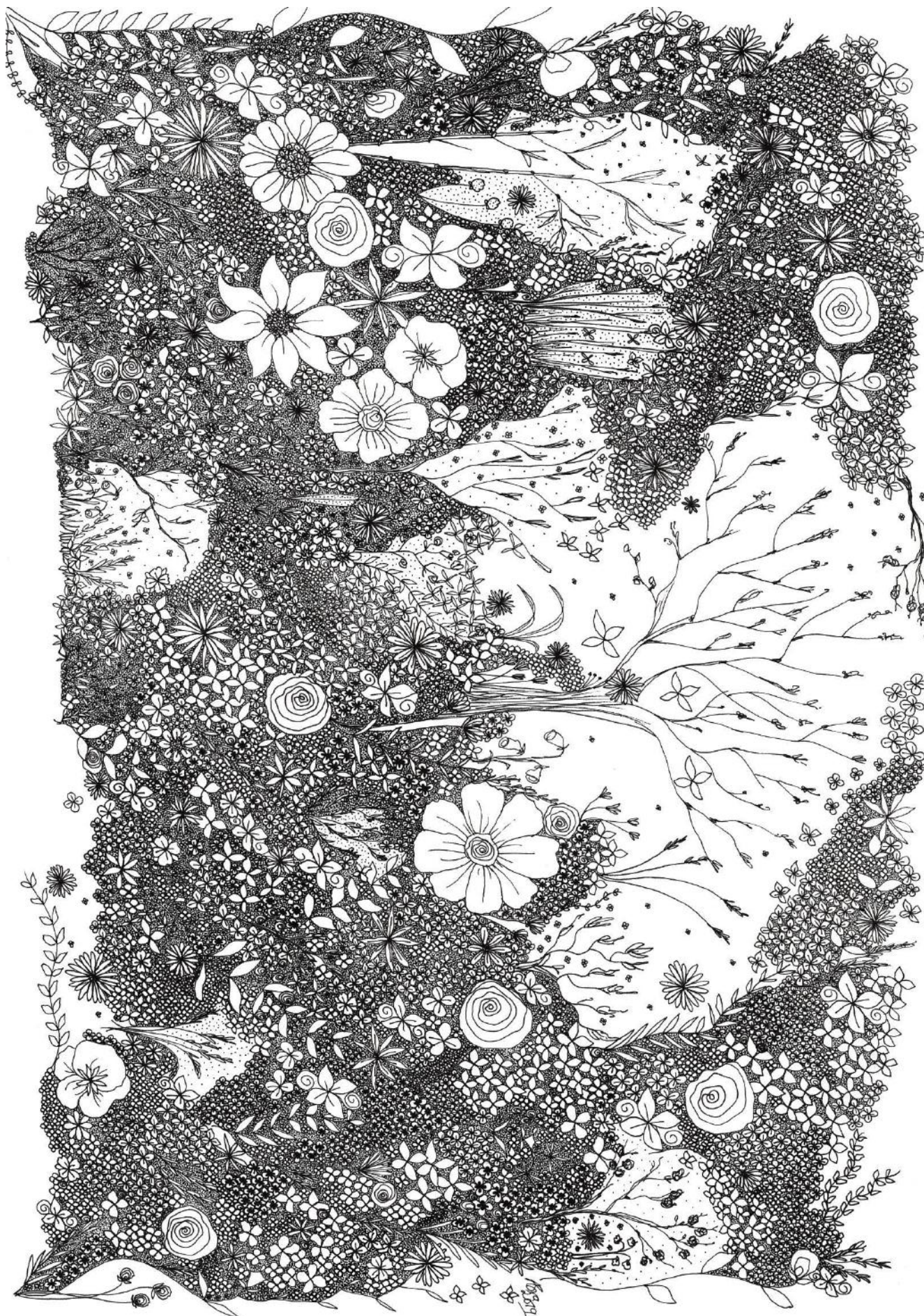




Ceramics - Ilia Abramov

FloralScape

Anureet Sra



The Thread That Refused to Break

Eva O. from GrungeFrugality

A landscape of bruised purples and slate greys, where the air smells of salt and damp peat. Now, imagine a woman's hands: calloused, perhaps trembling with hunger, navigating a thread so fine it seems spun from cobwebs. This is the birthplace of Irish lace: a medium born of paradox, the most delicate finery in the world forged in the fires of the Irish Famine.

Irish lace is, at its core, a document of crisis. The Great Famine of the 1840s hollowed out the Irish countryside with a ferocity still difficult to comprehend. Against that backdrop, a network of nuns, Anglo-Irish landowners, and philanthropic women began teaching lacemaking to starving communities. The intent was pragmatic and urgent: give people something to sell. What resulted was an art form of startling originality — a blueprint for survival, a testament to how creative labor can be leveraged against systemic collapse.

White Gold

The Ursulines and Presentation Sisters imported Italian and French lace samples and took them apart, stitch by agonizing stitch, to understand how they were built. Then they taught what they'd learned to local women and children in cottages and convent halls. A small, intricate piece of lace could be folded into a pocket and carried to London or New York, where it fetched enough money to keep a family out of the workhouse for months. They called it White Gold, and they meant it literally.

What strikes you, knowing this history, is the sheer defiance embedded in the work. Industrial looms were remaking the world at exactly this moment; flattening craft, erasing the maker, turning textiles into anonymous products. Irish lace went in exactly the opposite direction. It slowed down. It made itself more intricate, more human, more stubbornly irreplaceable. Every hour of labor was an argument: a machine cannot do this. I cannot be replaced.

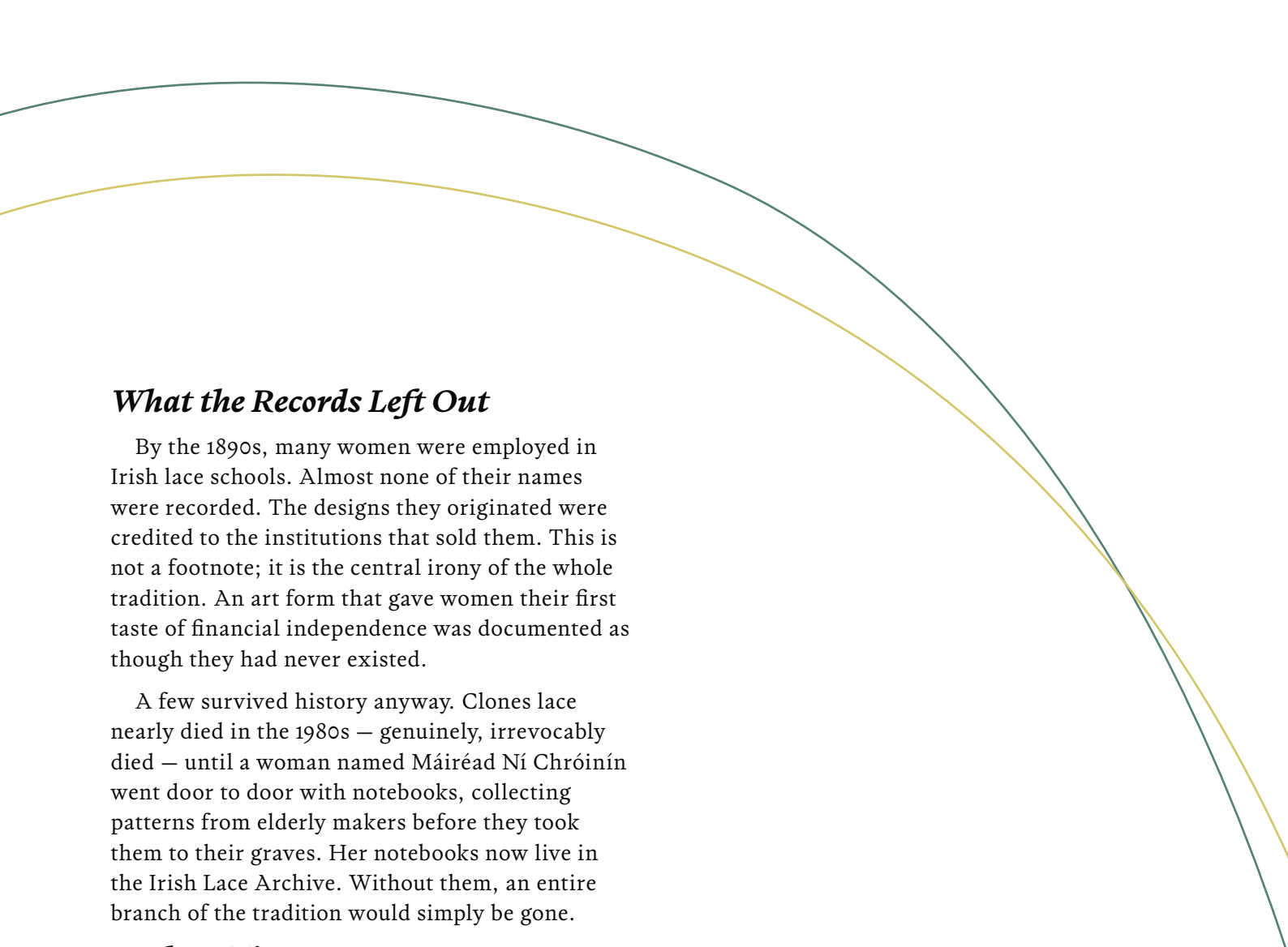
Four Traditions, Four Personalities

The word “lace” flattens what is actually a family of distinct techniques, as different from each other as charcoal is from oil paint. Carrickmacross is appliqué; fine muslin layered over net, stitched into patterns, then trimmed back with the precision of a surgeon. The effect is ghostly, almost architectural.

Limerick lace is fluid, where **Carrickmacross** is rigid; a tambour technique, the maker using a fine hook to pull thread through an existing net in flowering, painterly lines. People often mistake it for embroidery. It doesn’t matter.

Youghal is the one that stops you in your tracks. Needlepoint lace, meaning no supporting net whatsoever — every single bar, bridge, and motif built entirely from thread and a needle and human patience. A single collar could consume months of eighteen-hour days. Looking at a piece of Youghal lace is like looking at a cathedral and being told it was built by one person, working alone, in the dark.

And then there is **Clones crochet**; the rebel of the family, faster and more democratic, using a tiny hook to build three-dimensional motifs that are then stitched into mesh. Roses. Shamrocks. Clusters of grapes. It became a cottage industry precisely because it could.



What the Records Left Out

By the 1890s, many women were employed in Irish lace schools. Almost none of their names were recorded. The designs they originated were credited to the institutions that sold them. This is not a footnote; it is the central irony of the whole tradition. An art form that gave women their first taste of financial independence was documented as though they had never existed.

A few survived history anyway. Clones lace nearly died in the 1980s — genuinely, irrevocably died — until a woman named Máiréad Ní Chróinín went door to door with notebooks, collecting patterns from elderly makers before they took them to their graves. Her notebooks now live in the Irish Lace Archive. Without them, an entire branch of the tradition would simply be gone.

Modern Times

For the independent artist today, Irish lace is a reminder that the most fragile things are often the most resilient. The logic of the stitch, building a complex structure from a single, continuous line, is being rediscovered by many in the creative field: digital artists, 3D sculptors, and high-fashion subversives. The story tells us that art does not need a museum or a massive studio to begin. It needs a thread, a makeshift hook, and the iron-willed refusal to disappear. You cannot rush a bride stitch. You cannot skim a needlepoint motif. There is, as one Limerick practitioner put it,

“No such thing as lace made
inattentively. In a world saturated
with images, Irish lace offers
something genuinely rare: a surface
you have to look at slowly to
understand at all.”





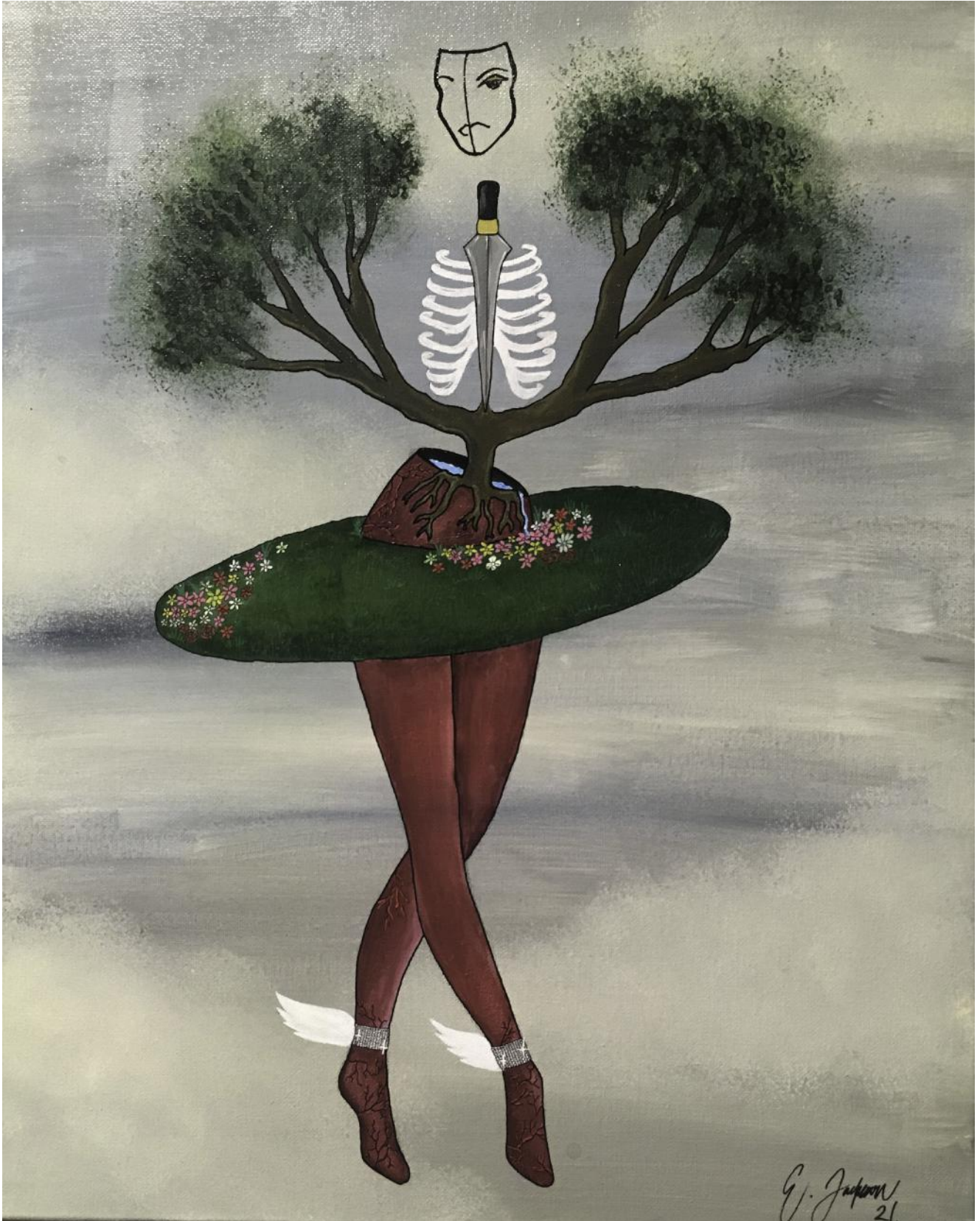
Beautiful Things Take Time

Joanna Melanie Gallery

The leaves will appear, and then the flowers.

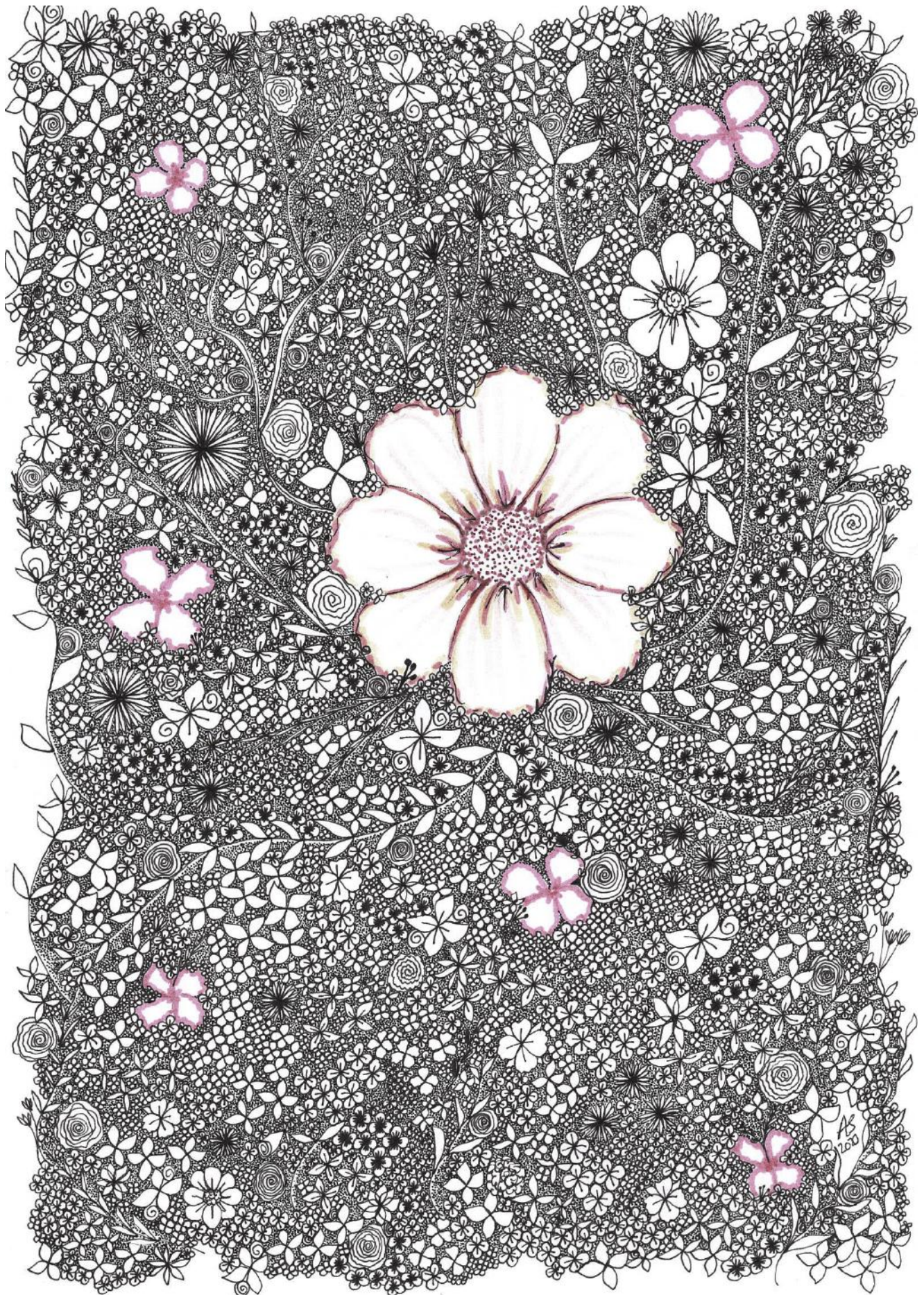
Orla O' Regan





Tree of Life

Eve Jackson



FloralBloom

Anureet Sra

Lucky Me

Molly Murray

Ant by ant
by blossom
by leaf.

I picked one.
I picked another.
I picked one thousand

to feel the four-starred
luck between
my fingers

before it fell,
patches of green
years ago.

I ploughed fields:
rough time, uprooted
knees, skinned hearts –

acres barbed, bristling
with weeds – and I found
you by your starry

eyes, your summer
soul, your green arms,
your muddy roots.

I can't hold
you tightly
enough.

NEW GROWTH

K.D. Bear

variegated softness peaks
beneath your verdant sheath
a slick hollow in your centerfold specked
with quiet hues of white and cream
sun drenched translucent veins
crystallized photosynthesis nourished
from the heat of rain
painted patterns decided
by the mark of each second
as bursts of color are only simple
and briefly attempted
embolden fenestrations slowly deepen
and intrinsically tranced
by the burrowing rooted mystery
of your tantric unfurling dance

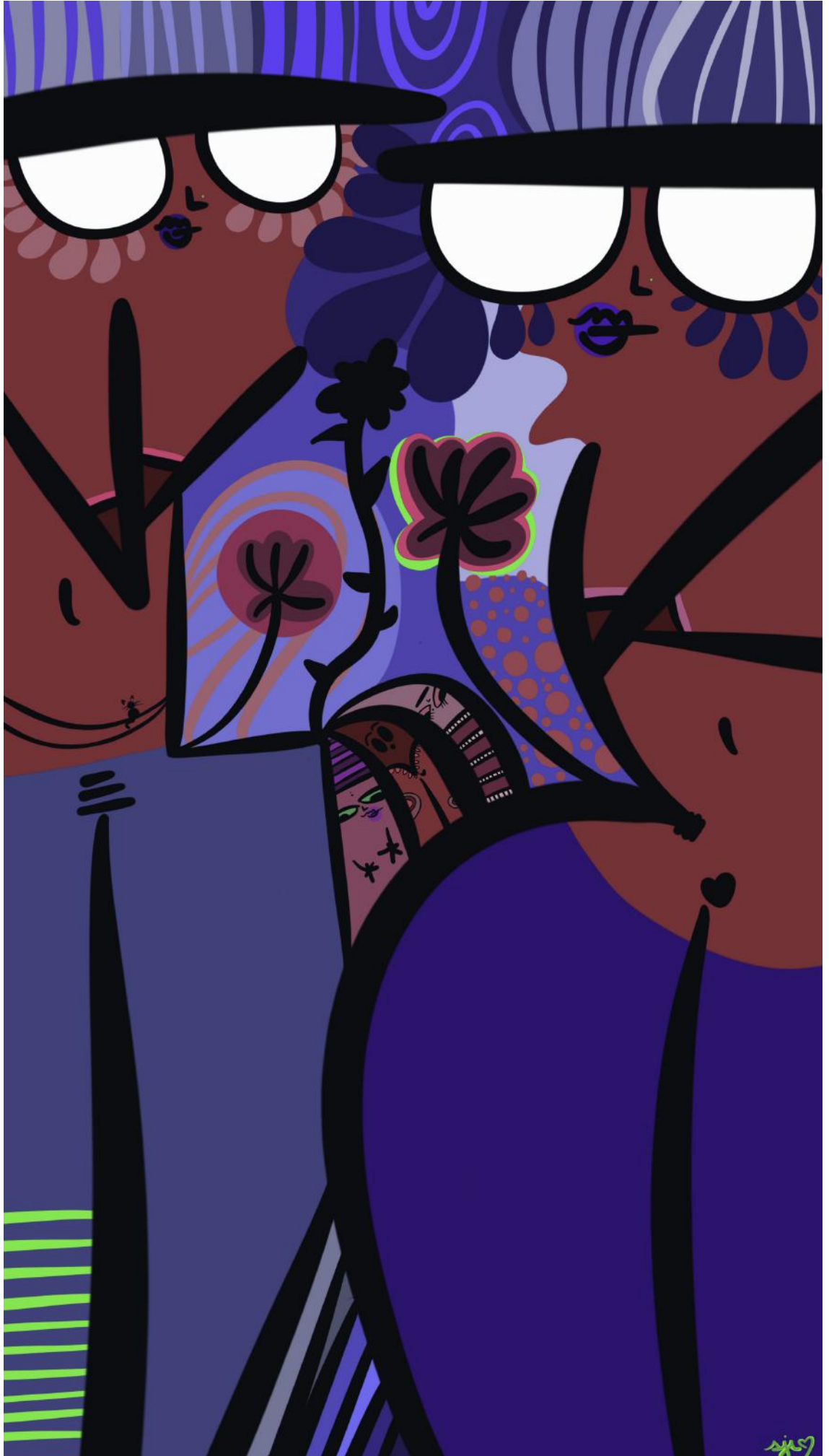


Growversight

Becka Rahn

Once in a Bloom

Shanelle Julis Rosita





Herbarium

Rosalba Di Pierro

Jessika Barone Tietjen

Bee in a Sakura Tree



Morning Buds

Rachel Hedley

Slowly.

Then,

all
at
once.

The fragrance of morning hangs in the air. Toast
pops up, gently placed on plates, laid next to the
previous Sunday's practice of worship. Bright
heads gloating to sunshine - mine, to your figure
entering.

This company becoming habitual:
they place their hand,
interlocking fingers,
planting a kiss upon the back.

Cosy, content and contained as the moon rests and
wakes. Our nest as sanctuary as our arms to each
other, tender branches of these continued Good
Mornings.

Freckles, cracked uneven along the cheeks,
sunny side up, as your demeanour allows it so.

To meet you,
knowing the veins
that travel up
and along your flesh,
a contract between
dust of earth and heaven.

Clouds, framing the blue like soft peonies,
unfurling first greetings and we are shy to meet it
for the lost time, that has collected like petals on
the table.

But,
it is a Sunday.

And you welcome me with:
a fresh bunch,
a kiss on my freckles,
and a coffee-tasting-promise.



Untitled

Aradhya Pandey

Photography

Photographer: Beth Kimber

Model: Kacey Shires

Assistant: Kallum Hancock





Torn - Laura Corless

Blooming Wound

Francis Seville

This was supposed to be it — the final diagnosis.
Instead, I am back to square one,
with fresh scars on my skin.

Fresh cuts, marks,
rose-red blood rolling down my skin,
a garden blooming in my disregard,
cleansing me of my innocence.

The cycle of pain starts over again.

And I feel like an animal exhibit
behind a glass wall
while they call and poke at me
with their clipboards
and their digital responses.

Not knowing what is wrong.

They are doctors.
They need to know
what bloomed in this dark garden of mine.

I need them to know.

I can't continue living
in the unknown.

If they don't find the cause
of this bleeding soon enough,
I may have to lie
deep underground.

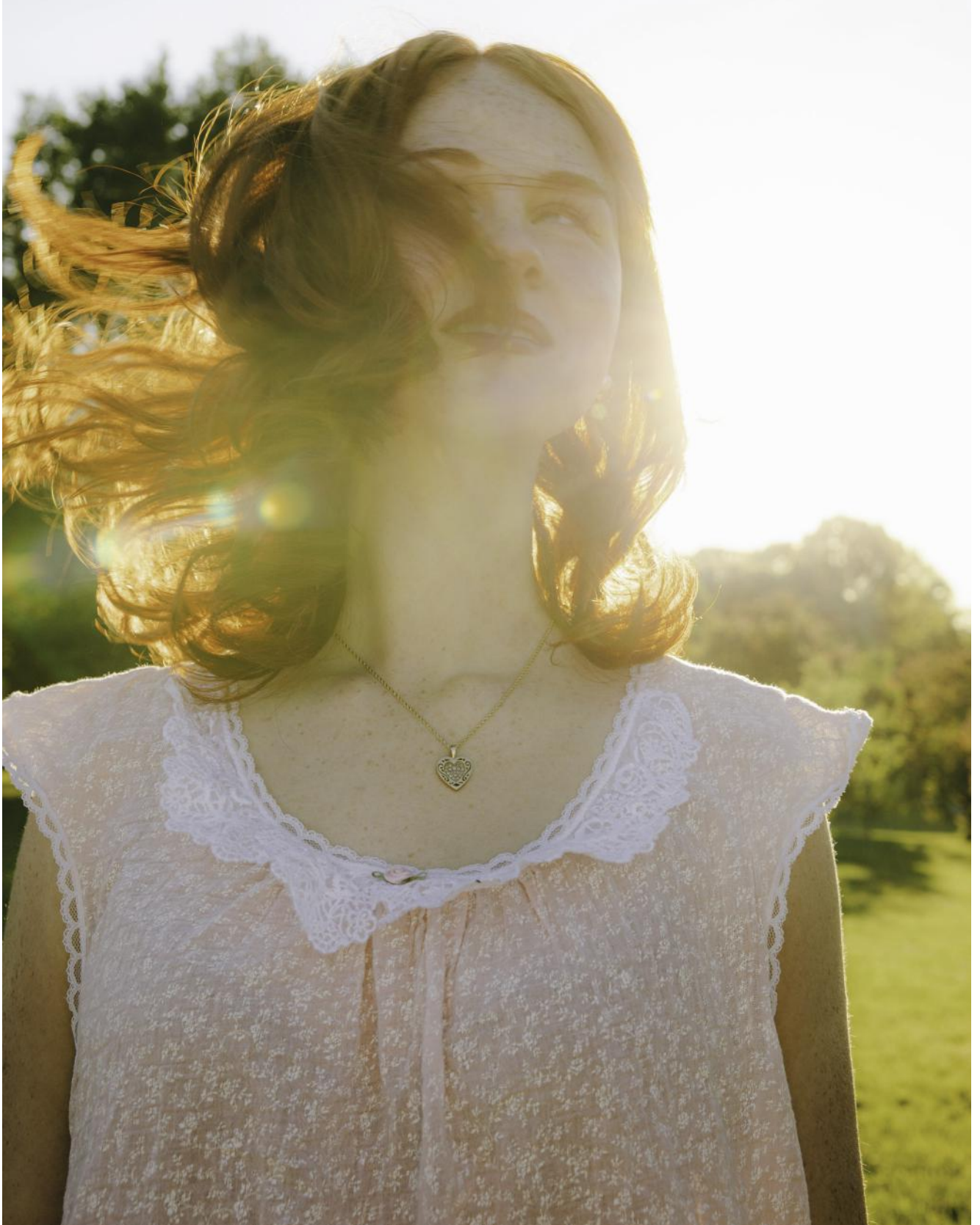
Fashion Design

Stella Duren



Photography

Kiana McHolan







Photography

Kiana McHolan





Abstract

Sian Wei

Bealtaine

J. Patrick Hanley

Help me douse the fires children, Bealtaine arrives,
the lowing's in the winter fields, the buzzing's in the hives.
Beyond the darkened eastern shore the sun with aos sí waits
to grace the dew with starlight; hang a ribbon on the gates,
and place the shells and flowers there upon the hawthorn branch
to keep the fairies happy and distracted in their dance.
We'll drive the cattle down below, toward that magic ring
and offer up a bit of blood, and all the while we'll sing,
to ask the spirits, young and old, to keep the herd in hand,
'til Lughnasadh when, once again, we'll fetch them to our land.

For now we light the summer fires, bless the holy wells,
and string a golden garland to set upon your head.
Lift aloft the blazing wreath, throughout the verdant dells,
and leave a bit of honey cake at the table for the dead.
Beannachtaí na Bealtaine! Ring the sunlight bells!
Banish from your heart, a chroí, what remains of winter dread!



Fashion Design: Ellen O'Donoghue
Models: May Iyster & Carmen Garcia
Photographers: Ava Russell & Ava Paster







Fashion Design

Ciara Darcy

Lime and Sapphire

Christopher Moore

Blue and green are the colours of life. The colours of our planet, observed from the cold, inky darkness of space, a pulsating orb of energy and miracles spinning slowly in a void. Blue sweeps the entire globe, the colour of oceans teeming with life, reflecting back the hue of the protective shield that allows us all to exist. The colour that, on a fine, clear day along the Antrim coast, you can see stretching out before you to the horizon from the shore of the sea, a sapphire purity that feels somehow spiritual. I've been entranced, as I'm sure most people have, by that sight since I was a boy, the breaking waves and the rolling tide almost seeming to call out, to lure me in. The thrill of swimming in the surf as a child. To lie back and float in it as a teenager, gazing up at the sky above. To walk along its edge with rolled-up jeans as an adult, the water splashing over your feet. There's a school of thought that says we all long to return to the sea because all life originated there. During those moments standing on the edge of it, perhaps venturing out to swim, perhaps sailing out on a boat and peering down at its surface as though bewitched, it's easy to believe that. The blue speaks to some yearning that's always there, sometimes dormant, sometimes bursting to life like a wave crashing over a rock.

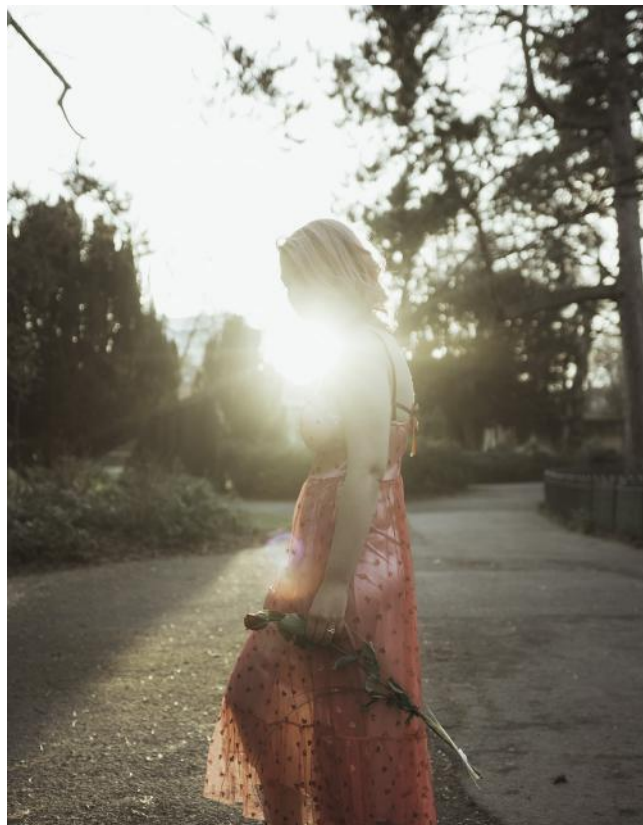
Then there's green. The green of Irish summers, the green that blankets the world in a lime canopy, the green of the leafy suburbs of South Belfast, the sun glinting and dancing through the leaves that hang over Stranmillis and Malone, Botanic and Ormeau. A green that, like the waters of the North Coast, feels spiritual, as though the very leaves have absorbed the memories of university years, of the sense of excitement and freedom, storing them like chlorophyll, imprisoning part of the soul in one tiny pocket of the world, that some benevolent Horcrux that causes pain when away from it for too long, but nourishes and enriches upon return. The wind and cold of Autumn semester giving way to the vibrant colours of spring, and by May, feeling almost like an enchanted glade, some otherworldly clearing in the heart of the city. If those lime-coloured leaves could whisper back the memories they store, they'd whisper of sensations of laughter, intoxication, falling in love, desire, embarrassment, fear, wonder, friendship- the breadth of young adult, and indeed human, experience. It's certainly what they still seem to whisper to me.



Untitled 1, 2, 3

Mariah Pearl





Photography - Leah White & Joe Cardwell

Untitled - Caroline Murphy



Take Care of Your Head

Paul-Adrien Carrère

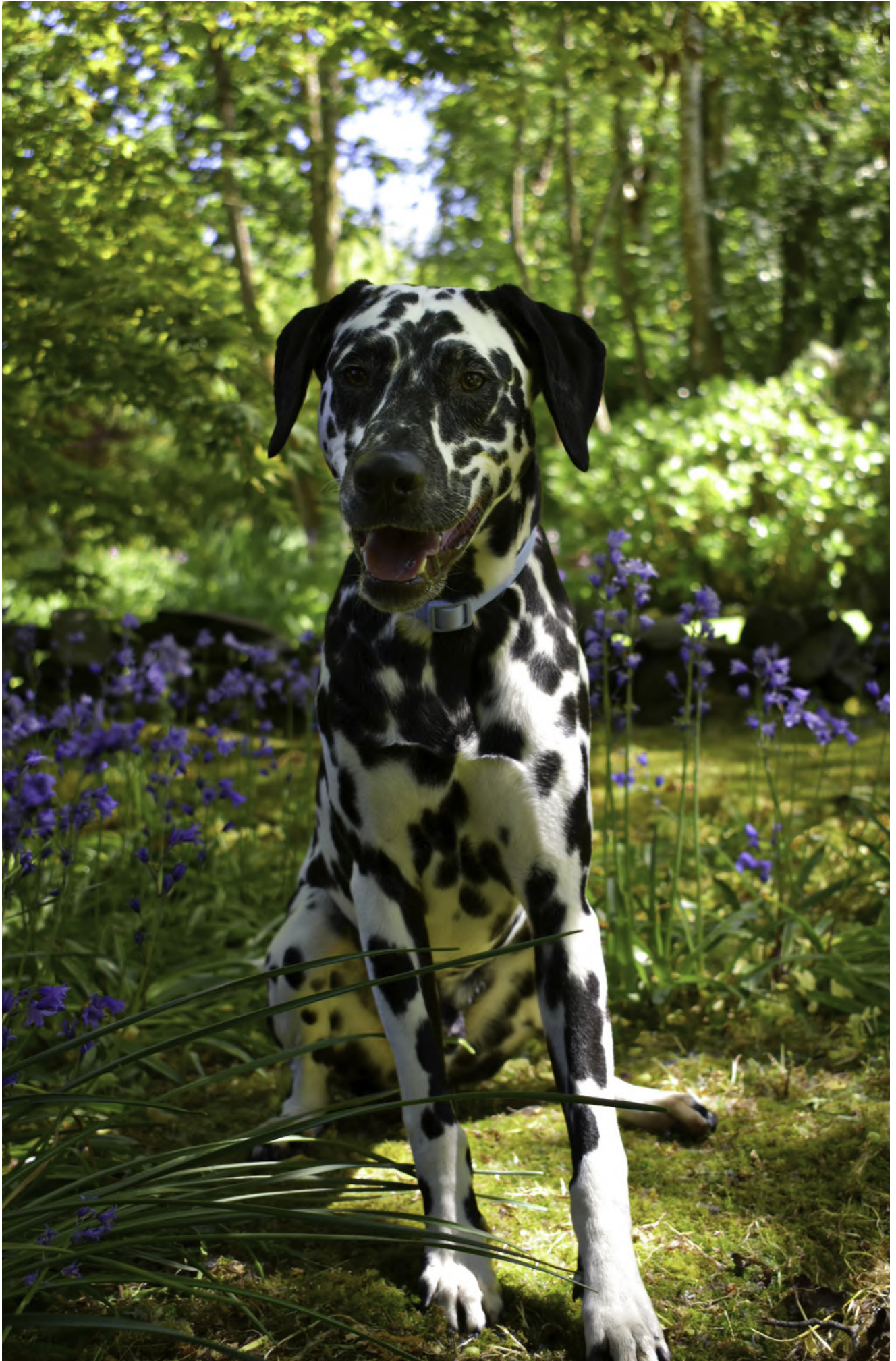


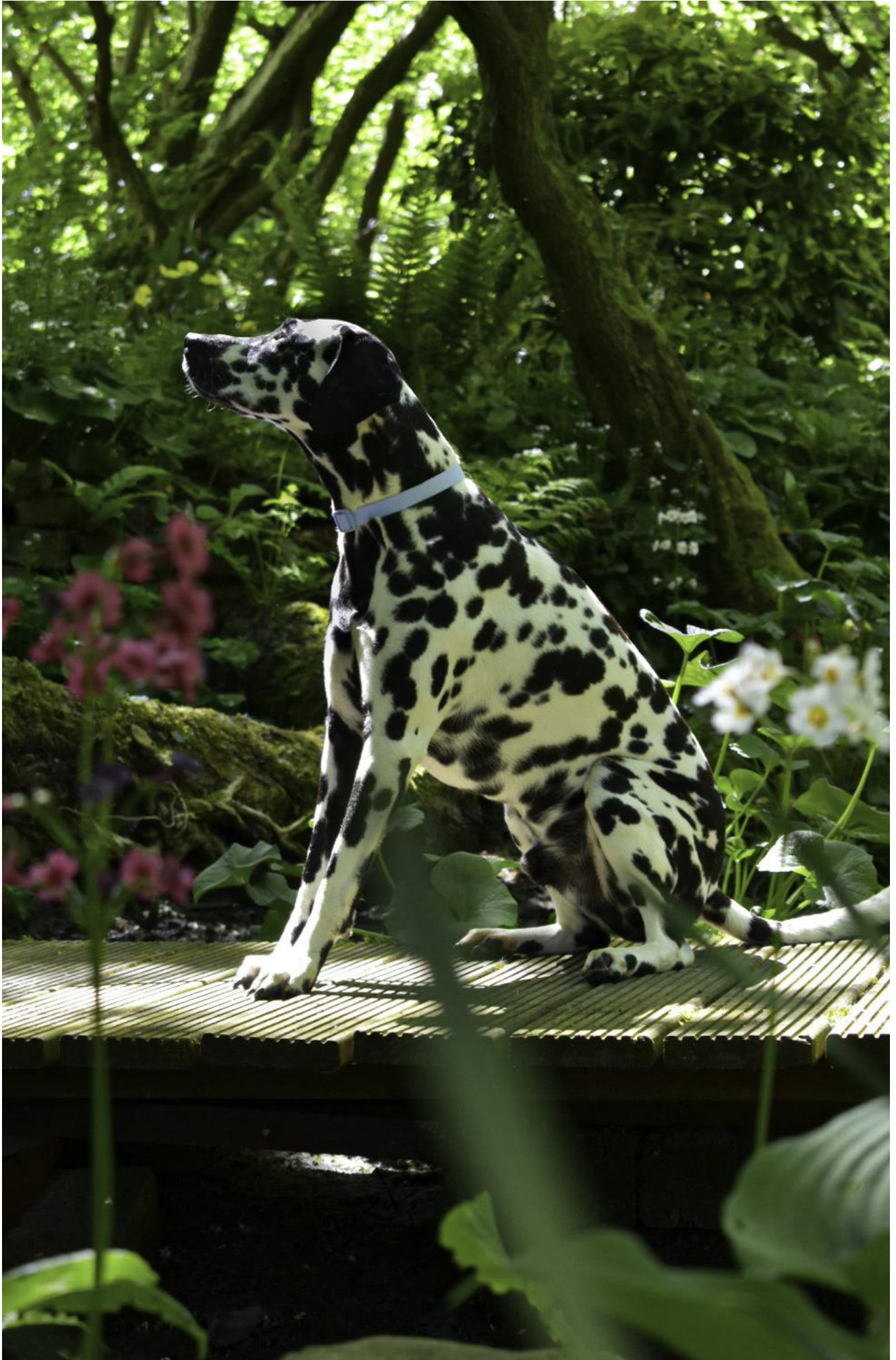
Cherry Blossoms and Books - Cora Beimesche



Untitled - Kenta Kobayashi







The Seed That Did Not Bloom

Gerry Polland

It is morning and I am sat with the land, watching the first signs of spring unfurl. She reveals herself slowly. One sun soaked petal at a time. Softly swelling against what winter has stripped bare.

I think of the seeds that didn't make it. Placed into fertile soil with tenderness, yet never witnessed in colour or form. I think of you, little love, buried somewhere among them. Held in some sweet, unseen place where the world can do you no harm.

I am no stranger to death. I have wept by granite as loved ones return to the earth. I have laughed through slow demise, watching bodies turn to bone. I've known illness and near miss. The loss of young and old. Yet I'd never truly tasted decay upon my tongue. Never worn my own skin as a casket, carrying death within it.

I can still feel the cold tiles pressed against my bones. My back sliding slowly down walls that loaned me their spine. The pulsing ache of loss rippling through my limbs. Jaw locked. Fists clenched in protest. As though trying to grip onto what little of you remained.

I remember dissolving into an unknown current, body limp with sorrow. Slipping beyond memory toward the flicker of your trembling light. Like a pendulum swinging too quickly to catch, I bounce against conflicting realities. Drifting from this world to the private spaces only we shared.

I recall the first shower and the ache of washing you away. Gently brushing my fingers across crimson thighs, as though trying to reach toward you. The water rattled down from the heavens, drenching skin that remembered too much. I scrubbed and scrubbed but the feeling would not leave me. Washing away what could never be fully erased.

Two swans sing out to one another from across the lough. Plucking me from memory into the now moment. I breathe into the morning mist, damp upon my skin. The world carries on, oblivious to the weight of what goes unseen.. Sunlight warms petals. Water curls around the willow. And here I am, held by it all, wishing I was holding you.



Sepia Skin

Will Fields





RIBCAGE ROT

Maria Corcoran

Who will eat that shrunken thing?
Mush bruised, way past its spring
A mere touch would squelch it in
On itself— watch it cave and sink
Who would pick that wilted rose-apple
From the hollows of a crumbling castle?
Slippery excavation, a grisly pursuit—
Such labor for such putrid produce?
Let it sit untouched in that bloody cavity,
Beating out its final breaths of vitality
Alas! Not every fruit will be picked or eaten
Some grow simply as superfluous to the seasons
Though among the new ripening buds,
Each thinks tomorrow it will be loved
Some end up in warm hands, between teeth
Some are left on the soil, bleeding youth and grief

Dinner - Alison Chambers

Untitled

Annabell Larsh



Untitled

Annabell Larsh



On a search history showing “Japanese knotweed removal near me” – Ireland

Amy Ferguson

Fluffy white spines smudged in garnet,
steeped in green, stoop towards sovereignty
dipped in ochre as stone cracks under
the weight of forty thousand heels
with a field in mind. Sphagnum shivers,
whispers of dropped shoulders
against carbon sinks, minus stomach
sacks full of coins and rings. Some days,
in spring, shrapnel bounces off boundary
walls, chips soar over seas into scapulas
centuries old. Home, skin of sessile oak
swears an oath of slogans spat from swollen
gums. Saliva drips on boobs unfurling
from fingers of rowan, druid's blood licks
dandelions as grounded as skyward souls.

Amy Ferguson had recently read “An Irish Atlantic Rainforest” by Eoghan Daltun, which meant the strangulation of Ireland’s native flora at the hands of colonialism and colonial aesthetics in nature was at the forefront of her mind. Thus, this piece is an exploration of the resilience and ability of Irish nature and Irish people to bloom, regardless of what they’ve been through in history. The final stanza speaks of the return of native floral blooms and the Irish people’s connection to the land, even when they’ve chosen to migrate in search of their opportunities to bloom; grow.



Untitled - Anna O'Gara



Starved

A Novel Excerpt by Naomi Kelly

A full moon, cloaked in fog and wispy clouds, perches high in the sky above the distance Dark Forest. Like a beacon, it beckons me home but I cannot return to my cave chamber just yet. I may not know how long I slumbered for, yet I know I've wasted far too much time in there even as an immortal.

Trailing a hand along the drystone wall, I set off across the recently reaped field. Brittle, hollow stalks scratch at my ankles as I pick my way through the remnants of the cornfield. As I ascend the rolling hill of the land, a familiar fragrance floats upon the night breeze. Though I recognise the smell, I cannot for the life – or death – of me recall how I bloody know it.

I shadow to the far end of the barren field, like a bloodhound chasing the scent. I shadow again, and again, skimming like a smooth stone across a serene lake as I skip my way across the entire plantation. And just like a skimmed stone, I suddenly lose all momentum and sink onto my knees when I finally find the source.

A rolling pasture brimming with carraig stretches out before me and even with my heightened sight, I see no end. Paper-thin flowers in varying shades of cream, lilac, and deep violet dance upon the gentle breeze, and are surrounded by bees and butterflies. The wind is laden with the scent, so thick I could nearly chew it.

Slowly rising to my feet, I carefully tread my path into the meadow, not wanting to trample the foliage. The previous pasture may have been barren, but this one? This one hums with life. I may be a creature of death, but even I can respect such an abundance of life – a sight that Carraig an Chroí has been without for too long. Not quite believing my eyes, I wrap my hand around a nearby leafy stem and tug upward. Without protest, the damp earth releases a carraig. It's no bigger than my fist and not ready to be harvested, but there it is. Shaking off the clumps of mud, I examine every inch of the crop.

Not a single blemish.

No rot.

No disease.



I do not realise I am crying until the Dubhling silently shadows to my side. Removing his pristine doily, he dabs away my blood-stained tears. Usually, the inequity of him always knowing where I am whilst I never know his whereabouts irritates me to no end, but for once it is a small mercy.

'How long?' I sniffle, my voice little more than a whisper, 'How long was I gone for? How long since we first struck our bargain?'

The Dubhling remains still and silent. His now red again eyes convey an internal battle as he debates if I'm ready to know.

'We struck our bargain five years, seven months, four days and...' The Dubhling glances to the constellations above us, as if the entire world were his clock, '...six hours ago, give or take. And this realm has been without you for almost two years of that time.'

His words should shock me, yet I am far too numb for that.

'Y – you recall the exact hour at which we met?'

'I remember everything.'

Lowering to a crouch, I carefully replant the carraig to finish its growing. I will not be the one to harvest nor eat it, but I recall all too well how desperate I was for a single carraig and I refuse to waste one. How different my life could have been had I stumbled upon a healthy pasture like this. 'Five years. Five years means nothing to me now, but how could I have suffered on for five more years whilst waiting for this tiny bloom?' Time has slipped away like autumn leaves – gradual and trackable at first, but then months – years – fluttered away all at once.

'You did not have another five days in you, Méabh. Your tissues were wasting, and your organs were failing. I may have a theatrical flair, but I was not being dramatic when I called you a three-quarter's dead girl when you dragged yourself into the woods.'

I find myself envious of the butterflies floating between the blooms. How glorious it must be for your entire lifespan to occur during a bountiful time, to never fear hunger.

'It was a long trudge alright.'

The Dark Forest may be frightfully close to where my cottage once stood, but the journey to the Dubhling started long before that fateful night – and judging by the solemn nod he gives me, he fathoms the true meaning of my words.

'I wonder how many others died waiting for the carraig to return? Or how many abandoned all hope and sailed away?' My questions are rhetorical, and though I do not expect an answer, I cannot help but notice the stiffening of the Dubhling's spine. 'Wait, do you know how many?'

'Not an exact number, but yes.' The Dubhling runs a hand along his tense jaw, 'There is far more silence, more shadows, on this isle than before. Even as the King of Darkness, I was humbled by the magnitude of your people's pain.'

Your people. I am no longer even a person, but I will always be Chroísh.

'How many?' I repeat.

'A million dead, two million fled.'

My tears make their presence known this time. A deep sob wracks through my entire body,

causing me to double over. Black dots darken the edges of my vision and a sudden urge to vomit twists in my guts. The Dubhling moves closer, placing his hand on the small of my back. He remains silent, simply stroking my back as I wretch over and over again.

Once I have somewhat recovered, I right myself, sniffing as I say, 'You probably hate this right? I'm still far too human for your liking.'

He shifts his hand from my lower back to my waist and tugs me a little closer. His eyes roam over my blood tear-stained face, 'I dislike how much pain you feel, but no, I do not hate your remaining humanity, Méabh. It is a testament to your resilience that you maintained your empathy when most would have shut it off to feel nothing.'

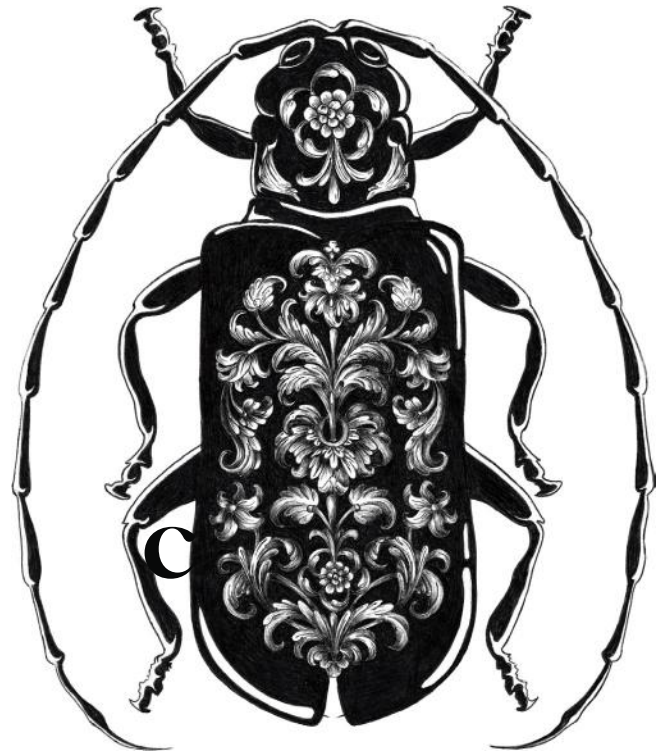


Prototype Death

Francis Seville



Oculomancy



Ornate Beetle



Sublimation

ROS



Nocturnal



Untitled

IE MOON

The Walk

Celsey McFadden





The Walk II

Celsey McFadden



Lilies

Conor Courtney

Sometime after he had died
When the dust had settled
You finally let it out, after so many years
With stifled laughter, “I hate lilies”.

Birthdays, anniversaries, Mother’s Day
Somehow, he had tricked us too,
We shared in the mass delusion,
That it was your favourite flower.

Peonies. Now we get you peonies
And, to rub salt in, to cement the joke
You bought a vase of fake lilies
So we’d know, forever, you don’t need more.

Lilies, I’ve learnt, are a funeral flower.
They symbolise restored innocence and peace
I’ll remember to ask for peonies though
Because you don’t need any more lilies.

Sycamore Lullaby

Duada Darc

Roots of hemlock that brought me to you
Sycamore temples rising for you
I knew if I met you my hunger will cease
I found my ocean in your forest and grew
I grew with the trees and become one for you
Wrapped in my arms, safe, my baby, you’ll be
Wrapped around the earth my roots will be yours
Monastery of heavenly light as a home
Branches of white clouds cradle your sleep
I can’t promise virtue but I’ll let you breathe
Wrapped in my arms, safe, my baby, you’ll be
Wrapped around the earth my roots will be yours
Sky of amber that brought me you
In me you’ll grow from seed to sun
Baby, from my womb, I’ll feed you the love
That grows inside me and looks just like you.

Questions for Our Front Porch

Tarah Burrows

Did my Grandma have soft soles? She dashed kitchen to garden, plucked spices for dinner, refilled the hummingbird's lantern. She wore you a path, a bowing plank here, a chip in the wood there . . . creaks and groans as familiar as her name. How many coats of paint did she roll over your splinters, one summer changing her mind three times? Purposefully spontaneous, she'd say. You were so many shades. Sky, mint, rust. Did you have a favorite bird? A favorite bee? She put out bottles and bowls and hanging baskets of syrup and fruit. She'd sit by the living room window—knitting or braiding silver—watch birds flit. I bet you remember twenty of us kids running around, splattering hot chocolate over you, like a canvas. She kept the stains for a while, rocking on her hammock chair, reading, rubbing her bare feet over those imperfections. She tended and turned the soil each week. It must have been so lovely, those roots growing like fingers and cupping the dirt to their bodies. The perfume of every petal wafted over you all day, all night. Did it soak into your pores and stay? Could you taste the butterfly weeds or lilac-blue asters? When Grandpa died, we sprinkled his ashes in a campfire next to her house, made s'mores. She held me and said this is what he would have wanted—more messy chocolate and warm snaps of fire. I sat on the log, just wanting to burn my hands. She put sparklers in them instead, and we braced them over the flames, let them light in a frenzy. The smoke lingered a few hours, and we bent over your railings, just breathing. Were you breathing with us? She had stones from every country, charms from her mother, beads from her grandkids. Her ankle bracelets jangled when she was on the move and even when she wasn't. How many garnets and diamonds and clasps fell between your grooves? In your undergrowth, rings on stems, pearls in buds. I marvel at how she managed to touch the blooms even there. When she died this year, I was in my apartment—I stared at the floor during the phone call, the poorly laid laminate with flecks of spackle. All I could hear was the pound of her feet on your deck.



Home

Fahreen Rahmani

Home begins in the hour the sky loosens its dark hair,
when the constellations blossom one by one
like ghost-orchids opening underwater.
Every star a tiny lantern of remembrance,
every flicker the afterglow of a hand
that once touched you with enough tenderness
to alter the shape of your loneliness.

The night knows your name still.
Carries it in its jeweled mouth
like a prayer too holy to swallow.

And somewhere between the stars,
belonging waits for you,
patient as moonlight gathering on water

It is not made of brick or timber.
It is made of soft survivals.
Of people who gather the shattered blue glass of you
without asking why you broke.
The friend who holds your sorrow
like moonwater trembling in a silver bowl,
careful with every trembling edge of it.
Who sits beside your ruin
as though it were a garden in winter
bare, sleeping, still worthy of devotion.

The one who teaches you
that belonging is not something earned through perfection,
but something offered gently
to the trembling parts of us first.

And slowly, beneath the frost of being alive,
something begins opening.
Home is the silence between souls
who have loved each other long enough
to speak fluently in stillness.
A silence moss-green and velveteen,
spreading gently through the room like ivy reclaiming an abandoned ruin.
The air itself turns golden there,
thick with all the things no longer needing language:
trust, grief, forgiveness, the quiet astonishment of being chosen again and again.

It is the girls you once were in the sea,
sun-drenched and luminous as small gods,
playing mermaids beneath a burning heaven.
Salt jeweled your skin.
The waves lifted you like a blessing.
Your laughter scattered across the water
like handfuls of pearls thrown toward the horizon.

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sun-drenched and luminous as small gods,
playing mermaids beneath a burning heaven.
Salt jeweled your skin.
The waves lifted you like a blessing.
Your laughter scattered across the water
like handfuls of pearls thrown toward the horizon.

How sacred it felt
to belong to the tide for a moment.

The ocean carried your bodies softly,
teaching you the sacred art of surrender.
Teaching you that love is not a cage
but a current
something that holds without gripping.
You drifted there together,
weightless as petals torn from the mouth of summer,
your girlhood glowing around you
like phosphorescence beneath dark water.

It is the sister discovered later,
the soul that arrives wearing the face of recognition.
Her laughter is candlelight spilling across cold floors.
Her presence, a woodland fire in the dead of winter.
Beside her, your grief removes its heavy coat.
Beside her, even your aching learns to sing.

She reminds you
that some people feel less like meeting
and more like returning.

It is a table lit amber with candle flames,
where wine-dark sorrow and joy sit knee to knee,
sharing bread from the same trembling hands.
Where wounds are touched so tenderly
they begin mistaking themselves for miracles.
Where laughter rises warm as bread from the oven,
filling the room with the perfume of survival.
Home is the brush of fingertips against your shoulder
soft as moth wings.
The gaze that meets yours across a crowded room
and says, without speaking:
there you are.
I have been waiting for you to arrive. (continues)

And perhaps this is the deepest magic of all:
we do not come into bloom alone.

We are gardens grown in each other's keeping.
Cathedrals stitched from borrowed light.
A constellation of every kindness
that ever laid its warm mouth against our bruises.
You are made of seafoam and starlight,
of wind threading through open windows,
of moonlight pooling in the hollows of cupped hands.
Of every person who looked at your trembling heart
and called it beautiful before it believed them.

So when the world asks you the question,
close your eyes.

Tell them:

I am from the tide and the constellations.
From saltwater hymns and hands that stayed.
From the soft mouths of women speaking love
like it was something sacred.
I am from every place I was held gently enough

to finally, fearlessly, bloom.

Cover Photoshoot - Ola Dalek



BLOOM IRISH GLOSSARY

Translations by Ruairí Ó Cléirigh

Seanfhocail (Proverbs)

Is binn an chré san Earrach

Translates to: The soil is sweet in Spring

Meaning: Young people are optimistic and full of wonder

Anáil na beatha an t-athrú

Translates to: Change is the breath of life

Meaning: Change is vital to living

Níl sa saol ach gaoth agus toit

Translates to: Life is but wind and smoke

Meaning: Life is fleeting

Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí

Translates to: Praise the youth and they will flourish

Tar éis gach stoirme tagann aiteall

Translates to: After every storm comes a clearing

Meaning: Things will always get better

Is iomaí lá sa chill orainn

Translates to: We are in the churchyard many a day

Meaning: Carpe Diem/live life to the fullest

Cúpla Focail agus Frasaí Úsáideacha (A Few Helpful Words and Phrases)

Faoi bhláth	To Prosper/Flourish/Bloom
Loinnir	Light/Brightness/Brilliance/Radiance
Breac an dhá néal	Waking of the two clouds (Sunrise)
Indibhidigh	Individuate (To become a unique, independent entity)
Féin-achtáil	Self-actualisation
Iarmhaireacht	The lonesomeness of dawn/the early morning
Blás	Bloom

CHAINED FIGMENT



Chained Figment is a queer, woman-owned small business based in County Down, North of Ireland specialising in handcrafted chainmaille pieces made from stainless steel and often including semi-precious gemstones such as labradorite. You can purchase pieces online at chainedfigment.com or in person at the beautiful, mystical shop, Kapricorn, located on the Beersbridge Road in Belfast. Chained Figment also attends markets throughout the year, such as the Oracle Thrift Market based in Bangor.



The work of Chained Figment aims to blend the medieval craft of chainmaille into wearable art. Each piece is constructed entirely by hand with the goal of transforming links of strong metal into something expressive and personal, allowing an ancient craft to 'bloom' beyond its origins. Chained Figment often draws inspiration from alternative subculture and practices a core belief of equality, inclusivity and the importance of identity. Individuality should be celebrated and Chained Figment understands the importance of providing a space to blossom with pieces that reflect your true self, from offering bespoke customised pieces to one-off collections designed and crafted in their in-house studio. You can stay up to date and browse Chained Figment's online portfolio on their Instagram page '@chainedfigment'.

Rachel (they/them) is a Cork-based elopement photographer and planner, specialising in nature-focused, outdoor weddings. They're drawn to "hidden Ireland", places off the beaten track that are magical enough to carry memorable elopement experiences. Rachel is a self-proclaimed nerdy introvert who brings hobbit-like wonder to everything they do, and whose goal is to give people a glimpse into how incredible Ireland can be.

Get in contact for enquiries here:

<https://solarroseco.com>

hello@solarroseco.com



SOLAR ROSE ELOPEMENTS

Spotlight Credits

Ola Dalek – Cover Photography

London-based photographer specialising in music and event photography. This year, they are working on expanding into creative direction and more studio shoots.

Creative Direction & Photography: @dauxdaux-
Stylist: @keekydiii

Models: @gggoldbart @gracee.thornton @bellao.111

Spectacle of Abundance is a conceptual photo-shoot set around a spring picnic scene, where the food is replaced entirely by flowers. What initially appears soft and idyllic quickly reveals a sense of excess, as the flowers begin to overwhelm the setting, spilling into drinks or entangling in hair. The shoot explores themes of overconsumption and performative beauty in the modern world, where abundance exists primarily for display. As the atmosphere shifts from serene to suffocating, the women start destroying carefully constructed setup, rejecting the artificial spectacle surrounding them. Spectacle of Abundance is pictured on the cover of IONTAS Magazine, Issue 01: BLOOM.

Rónán Hasson – Irish Artist Feature

Rónán is a Belfast based poet and Gaeilgeoir. His work tackles the human condition, romance and the reclamation of Irish language and identity. Sometimes some shouty punk poetry if the mood takes him.

Where to find his work:

@gairdindigiteachroni , @romicjo.hasson

Chained Figment – Business Spotlight

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Solar Rose Elopements – Business Spotlight

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Lillian Bak – Magazine Designer

Lillian is a graphic designer based out of New York City, USA, working across brand identity and editorial design. She designed this first issue of IONTAS. A designer driven by curiosity and my background in the humanities. I enjoy the puzzle of design: taking a complex concept and finding the best visual way to express it. Drawing on my degrees in world literature and psychology, she turns abstract ideas into tangible expressions. She believes that design goes beyond aesthetics and centers around communicating the heart and soul of a project. She is also a writer, and her work has been published in literary magazines “Half and One”, “mOthertongue”, and “Jabberwocky”.

Find her at:

bak.design

lillian@bak.design

Contributor Credits

Aaradhya Pandey

Aaradhya Pandey is an emerging artist specializing in narrative-driven fantasy scenes, particularly solitary knights set in richly detailed forest environments. Their work emphasizes emotional contrast through colour, combining deep shadows with vivid natural tones. Their work is shared on their Instagram - @_artcore.1 and continues to explore fantasy-driven storytelling.

Adriana Galaxe

Adriana is from Brazil. The lack of formal training has led them to develop their own way of drawing. Adriana glides their lines through their pieces as if they were skating through the page and feelings are the guide. In the end, they never know what the outcome will be.

Alison Chambers

Alison Chambers likes to create surrealist art with mythical themes and inspirations. They are building up their available collection stocked in Kapricorn in east Belfast.

Amy Ferguson

Amy Ferguson (she/they) is an emerging writer living in Omagh. When they're not rolling on a rugby pitch or blogging about books (@bookishbarista), they're writing prose and poetry which centres working-class existence, as well as the intersection between ecology and queerness.

Anna O'Gara

Anna O'Gara is an Irish illustrator currently living in Edinburgh. They have just finished an illustration degree at Edinburgh College of Art and have had work published in the Edinburgh student magazine as well as self-published books.

Annabell Larsh

Annabell Larsh is an acrylic painter focusing on fantasy themes and exploring their favourite aesthetics through physical art. They first started their business when they were 17, beginning with sculpting then moving to their true passion of painting. Annabell's paintings aim to bring the viewer a sense of calm nostalgia through the subjects and mostly cool toned leaning palettes.

Andrėja Dikšaitytė

Andrėja Dikšaitytė pictured by photographer Augustė Morkūnaitė.

Anureet Sra

Anureet Sra is a British artist, obsessed with creating intricate floral patterns. They mainly work with fineliner pen to create their signature floral design.

Becka Rahn

Becka Rahn is a full-time teaching artist who works in a micro-studio in Minneapolis, MN. She specializes in fabric design, paper sculpture and illustration using recycled papers and hand embroidery. Becka is the co-author of The Spoonflower Handbook, a guide to designing your own fabrics, and holds a book arts certificate from the MN Center for Book Arts. She is passionate about helping artists conquer technology barriers to make their work more accessible. Her super powers are breaking complex ideas into simple steps, inspiring creative thinking, and incorporating puns into everything she makes.

Beth Kimber

Beth is a portraiture and fashion photographer based in Cardiff, Wales. Whether working with individuals, brands, or creative teams, her focus remains consistent in crafting images that celebrate identity and confidence. Beth's work is often described as having a calm energy; an atmosphere she cultivates through thoughtful direction, a collaborative mindset, and an emphasis on making her subjects feel seen.

Caroline Murphy

Caroline Murphy is a graphic designer, illustrator and mixed media artist based in Belfast. Caroline works with a variety of mediums including paint, pencil, collage and digital illustration. They have had their work published in EASCAIR magazine Vol.2, ROSA 'We Only Want the Earth' Zine and 'Hide and Seek, an Anthology' published by Faerie Press.

Celsey McFadden

Celsey McFadden is a Galway based composer, producer, guitarist and digital media artist. More here www.celsey.net

Charlotte Butterfield

Charlie is a London-based graphic designer working across material practice, biodesign, and image-making. Their work explores how living systems, growth, and material behaviour can shape visual communication. Recent projects include Living Lines and workshops hosted at Lifefabs and the Lethaby Gallery.

Christopher Moore

Christopher Moore is a graduate of English from Queen's University Belfast, and of the MA in TV Fiction Writing at Glasgow Caledonian University. Alongside a number of playwriting achievements, including being longlisted for the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting in 2019, and shortlisted for the Bread and Roses Playwriting Award in 2024, he has had several pieces of short fiction published in magazines and journals in the UK and Ireland.

Ciara Darcy

Ciara Darcy is an artist and designer from County Tyrone working under the name "beaded by ciara". She creates one of a kind accessories and garments using 100% repurposed beads, making unique and sustainable pieces. Her work has been featured in the Belfast Telegraph, amongst others.

Conor Courtney

Conor Courtney is a poet. Originally from Dublin, he is currently working as a solicitor in London.

Cora Beimesche

Cora's mother was an artist, painter and sculptor, so they grew up around studios and foundries. Cora discovered their own talent at 30 with abstract art and then more recently oil painting. They prefer impressionistic work and strive to abstract the details so that the viewer becomes a part of the creative experience.

Daniel Palmer

Originally from the UK, Daniel Palmer works from a home studio in Zagreb, Croatia, creating unique one-offs or small batches of dynamic and functional pots with aim to instil with plenty of character as an antidote to anonymous and generic factory-made products. He takes a lot of inspiration from Japanese and Korean ceramics, both historical and modern, but he is seeking his own path with every firing of his self-built gas kiln.

Duada Darc

Duada Darc (@duadadarc) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Europe (right now in Copenhagen,

but have lived in many different places). Though they are keen on many art forms, they are a writer through and through. Duada Darc is most interested in exploring the depths of human emotion. For example, in their exhibition, *A Limerence Story*, they explore the fleeting but intense nature of limerence—desire, fixation, and the emotional spaces in between. Through color, sound, text, and striking visuals, they invite audiences to step into this emotional landscape, experiencing both the personal and universal in every moment. You can find out more on @alimerencestory and website: duadadarc.com

Elias Cervantes

In the summer of 2024, Elias Cervantes began their dance training for the first time at Modesto Junior College under the direction of Kim T. Davis, a longtime faculty member and Director of Dance who leads an extensive training program encompassing ballet, modern, jazz, contact partnering, movement composition, and performance. The program's immersive exposure to diverse dance styles and artists has paved the way for their artistic vision to flourish and continues to serve as a constant source of inspiration in their work.

Elias' artistic vision later expanded into dance photography, which they began developing in March 2026 through the curation and documentation of abstract physical shapes inspired by the partnering techniques learned throughout their training. Working closely with duets and trios from the Innovate Dance Company — of which they are a current member — allowed them to explore movement, weight-sharing, and sculptural composition through photography. Their prior performance and partnering experience with fellow company members created an environment of trust and familiarity, making experimentation more intuitive and the creative process deeply personal. Influenced by the modern and contemporary foundations of their training, Cervantes Captures emphasizes the physical and emotional dynamics of contact partnering between subjects. The human body carries unique capabilities, and through intentional weight transfer and placement, new points of support — or "shelves" — emerge between dancers. These moments capture the essence of trust, strength, vulnerability, and balance.

Ella D'Avoine

Ella is a witchy fantasy author from a small forest in the UK. Following the release of her debut novel *Midnight Blood* two years ago, she's since let loose more fantastical stories and poetry for the world to consume, and proudly has her work in Waterstones even as an independent author.

Ellen O'Donoghue

Ellen O'Donoghue is a second year Textile Art and Artefact student in National College of Art and Design, Dublin Ireland. Her textile fashion practice is a vibrant exploration of pattern construction, embroidery, print, and embellishment, resulting in work that is both playful and conceptual.

Her approach is characterized by a bold use of color and texture, creating pieces that invite interaction and spark joy. The conceptual underpinnings of my work often stem from observations of everyday life. Her wearable art pieces delve into the ephemeral beauty of floral cycles, specifically focusing on the unfolding of petals and the poignant process of wilting.

Eva O.

Eva O., founder of GrungeFrugality – a green de-influencing media platform that wholeheartedly appreciates craftsmanship, sustainability, and mindful consumption through the lens of visual storytelling and ethical research.

Eve Jackson

Eve Jackson of Eve Epoch Artistry is an intuitive mixed media artist rooted in devotional practice. With a background in fashion and textiles, they explore texture, layering, symbols and materials that hold their own story. Art as a portal and art as a mirror.

Farheen Rahmani

Farheen Rahmani is a Belfast based author, poet and artist. Her work centres on themes of identity, belonging, feminism, freedom and human connection. She is the creator of diasporapoetscollective and she is currently working on her debut collection.

Francis Seville

Artist/Photographer based in Toyohashi, Japan

Gerry Polland

Gerry Polland is a muse, mystic and mentor, working alongside women to help awaken creativity, sensuality and aliveness.

Ilia Abramov

Ilia Abramov is a ceramic artist. They make mugs that are meant to be touched, and also make vases that you can turn upside down and use as candleholders. Instagram is @by.decay

Inas Hussain

Inas Hussain is a fashion designer who focuses on comfort while also being able to express yourself through clothing. Inas likes to work with cosy material and add an element of playful textile expression within their clothes. E.G. pleating, ruffles, touching.

Indranil Sanyal

Indranil Sanyal is a technology professional based in California. Born in India, they love visiting new places and relish the local cultures. Photography and penning short stories in their pastimes.

J. Patrick Hanley

Patrick is a writer, educator, and accidental horse doular. His work can be read in *London Fog*, *Literary*, *Hearth Stories* and *The Bloomin' Onion*. He lives in France.

Jessika Barone Tietjen

Jessika is a multidisciplinary artist gathering inspiration from the natural world around us. Her works often feature wildlife, flora and fauna, and an array of textures. She is currently working on a photography series exploring nature as a reflection of the self.

Joanna Gillespie

Joanna Melanie Gillespie of Joanna Melanie Gallery is an emerging artist based in Portrush, County Antrim. Joanna Melanie's aim is to derive a unique emotional connection with each piece, she paints seascapes and flora with intuition and a courageous use of colour. She has sold over 70 originals and completed commissions for clients and collectors across the UK, Ireland and USA.

Jude Finn

Jude Finn, a poet since they were a child. Jude Finn has been published in a few national contests and won awards for poetry about grief, love, and art. They now write their own newsletter called *Amongst the Ink*, where they hope to inspire others and help them find magic in the world with the power of words.

K.D. Bear

K.D. Bear's work brings to life moments and feelings of deep thought and reflection, and sometimes those quick thoughts you somehow get stuck on. Focusing on seconds and the visuals of these moments, they try to paint feelings through tactfully selected words and break lines where emotion will sit the most.

Kenta Kobayashi

Kenta Kobayashi is a photographer based in Tokyo, Japan. His work explores peripheral vision, memory, and the unreal qualities hidden within everyday reality through reflections, translucent surfaces, and spatial silence.

Kiana McHolan

Kiana is a photographer based in Kentucky, USA. They love the outdoors, travel, and fashion. Kiana tries to recreate fleeting moods and feelings through their photographs and aesthetics.

Laura Corless

Laura Corless enjoys depicting the beauty of human emotions and everyday scenarios within their work, taking inspiration from nature and the body to create illustrative paintings that share gentle stories. They are based in North-West England and mainly use painting, sculpture and printmaking in their practice.

Leah White

Leah White pictured by photographer Joe Cardwell.

Leila Matsuura

Leila Matsuura is an American-Iranian artist residing in Japan. Within Tokyo, they have exhibited with a few clubs. Atelier Baabara for watercolour and Komazawa Toge Kai for ceramics. Additionally, a member of a local creative community, WIP (Weird Ideas People)

Maria Corcoran

Maria Corcoran (@_mariacorcoran) is a poet whose work has appeared in The Raven Review and Flowermouth Press, and is forthcoming in Aetherium Literary. She writes formal poetry influenced by classical mythology and Gothic literature. She delights in rhymes.

Mariah Pearl

A Hope College and further Glasgow School of Art graduate, Mariah's art has accompanied upwards of eight novels and novellas to date. She is a working illustrator who loves creating uplifting moments

through her art. You can always find her at your local bookstore browsing.

Mia Mercer

Mia Mercer is a pet photographer capturing dogs in natural light and scenic outdoor locations. Focusing on personality, movement and honest moments to create soft, lifestyle-led imagery with a calm, authentic feel.

Mina Wynter

Mina is a transgender, neurodivergent writer and therapist living in London. Their work deals with themes of queerness, nostalgia, love, and grief across various media.

Molly Murray

Molly Murray is a writer, editor, Creative Authority Architect, and the former owner of Seahorse Bookstore. Molly is the author of two books, and more than thirty of her poems, stories, and essays have appeared in publications such as Litro and Third Wednesday. She is the former outdoor editor of Panorama: The Journal of Travel, Place, and Nature, and one of her poems was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Naomi Kelly

Naomi Kelly is an indie author from Cork, and has written fantasy novels such as Meraki: A Syren Story, and Starved.

Natalie Harveld

Natalie Harveld is a British poet exploring themes of motherhood and identity. Her work has been published in Free the Verse digital magazine.

Olivia Grant

Olivia Grant is particularly interested in the tension between beauty and harm: flowers that suffocate, softness that bruises, and growth that emerges from emotional ruin.

Orla O' Regan

Based in County Cork, Orla O Visual is a ceramicist who creates a very unique Porcelain offering. She believes that words awaken what time forgets. 'Words in Porcelain', is an emotive collection of Porcelain art, which aims to stir the senses through meaningful words, forever immortalised in porcelain. Through selected and bespoke words of love, reassurance, motivation and of memory, hand imprinted into clay with vintage letterpress, 'Words in Porcelain' is an ideal gift for every occasion.

Paul-Adrien Carrère

Paul-Adrien is a Honduran-French writer and filmmaker based in France. He explores storytelling through film, writing, and drawing. He has directed two horror short films, written short stories, and worked on various audiovisual projects as an editor.

Qinyunyi Zhang

Qinyunyi Zhang is a Chinese illustrator currently pursuing an MA in Illustration at Camberwell College of Arts, UAL. Her illustration series Illustrated Guide to Fantasy Creatures was shortlisted for the 12th Hiii Illustration International Competition (2024) and featured in an interview published in Visual Art Journal, Issue 44. In 2026, her series Vessels of the Mind was selected for the cover and back cover of FlowerMouth Press, Issue 5.

Rachel Hedley

Rachel Hedley is an Irish writer. Her work navigates relationships, friendships, changing identity as a woman, and what that means in the environment she is in. She was resident poet in the Green Room for 2025, has produced her own visual projects such as a poetry video for Men's Mental Health during International Men's Day, and has had collaborated with various Belfast-based groups for performances such as Regards and Lit(erature) to the Tit x Women Of Colour Belfast x Mental Health Arts NI.

Riccardo Ferrero

Riccardo, aka sotkua, is an Italian audiovisual artist whose practice explores the relationship between organic matter, digital perception, and emotional memory through immersive image-making and real-time processes. His work moves between 3D environments, generative systems, and cinematic visual composition, creating spaces where texture, light, and distortion become narrative elements. Recent projects include SPECIMEN and Diffrazione, two research-driven works investigating transformation, fragility, and the tension between natural and synthetic forms.

Rosalba Di Pierro

Rosalba Di Pierro is a visual artist born in Italy and currently working in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She took her Master Degree in Visual Arts – Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts of Bari (Italy) in 2017. Her artistic practice explores organic forms and materials, producing sculptural and installation-based works that investigate

connections between vegetal, animal, and landscape realms. She also works with drawing, woodcut printmaking, and cyanotype.

Rosie Moon

Rosie Moon is a visual artist inspired by art nouveau, fantasy, and esotericism. Her primary mediums are ballpoint pen and acrylic. She has designed merch for multiple bands and local events.

Salem Paige

Salem Paige (they/he) is a queer poet and designer living on Coast Salish territory (so-called Vancouver, British Columbia). Their works revolve around identity, discomfort, time, space, and the places where technology and Nature intertwine and can be found in their debut collection of poetry, *The Third Self* (2023, Sunday Mornings at the River Press) and their chapbooks *miraculous dead things* (2025, above/ground press), *evolution artificialis* (2025, Anstruther Press), and *to grow roots* (2023, bottlecap press), as well as publications including *Antifragile* zine, *Ariel* Chart literary magazine, *Beyond Words* magazine, *BiPan* magazine, *Bywords* magazine, *corporeal* magazine, *flo* literary magazine, and many others. Paige can be found at salempaige.com or as @corpseofapoet on instagram.

Shanelle Julia Rosita

Shanelle Julia Rosita is a Brooklyn-based abstract artist whose work explores emotional presence, self-discovery, and the stories the body holds across change. With expressive linework, layered color, and intuitive composition, she creates pieces that feel both intimate and expansive. Her practice invites viewers into reflection, tenderness, and the evolving process of becoming.

Sian Wei

Sian Wei is a China-based artist and illustrator exploring the intersection of abstraction and realism. Her practice centers on narrative illustration and painting, with watercolour as her primary medium, drawn to its unpredictability. Through graphic novels and two-dimensional paintings, she explores storytelling inspired by close observation of everyday life and personal reflection.

Sophie Coxon

Sophie Coxon is a marine biologist, artist and writer from north Scotland, and spends her time basking in (rare) sunlight, reading, painting and watching the hens scratch the earth. Sophie hopes to connect and engage people with nature and to see the beauty around them, through artwork and writing, and to inspire people to prioritise being outside, breathing fresh air and looking at the sky, listening to the birds, experiencing what is real and realising that we too are animals, and our existence, at its root, depends entirely on ecosystems. Other works can be found on their Instagram @sophie.coxon, or at the-kingfisher.org/author/sophie_coxon.html

Stella Duren

Stella Duren is a university art student from Alabama. Their art, in any medium, draws from the swampy world Stella grew up in, and all the weird and wonderful magic in the world. You can find Stella online at www.curioptica.com

Stephanie Griffin

Stephanie Griffin is an emerging writer based in Pennsylvania. Though not yet officially published, she is passionate about her work and enjoys sharing it with new readers. When she isn't writing, she's watching her favorite comfort shows, reading, listening to music, or tending to her Tamagotchi children.

Tarah Burrows

Tarah Burrows is an emerging speculative writer and poet from Mississippi. She's obsessed with everything cyber, fairy, robot, and galactic, and she is working on her first fantasy novel. Her work appears in fifth wheel press and The Streetcar.

Ty Dunn

Ty Dunn (she/they) is a Black Southern writer pursuing a Creative Writing MFA at the University of Alabama. She enjoys writing about the body, race, and finding yourself in a world of chaos. Their work can be found in The Anti-Misogyny Club, The Eyre Magazine, and Screen Door Review.

Will Fields

Will Fields is a fine art landscape photographer based in Phoenix, Arizona. With over four decades behind the camera, his work explores stillness, presence, and the emotional experience of place.

A Special Thank You to Our Supporters

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Coming Soon: Issue 02: Folklore