

MAKE

WAR

NOT

ART

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Editorial

There's some fabulous work in this, our fifth edition of our collection of online anthologies. As usual, we chose not to theme the anthology, as, just like our performance evenings, we find that a selection of writers and artists brought together will somehow coalesce and flow in a manner which aligns their work, whilst retaining the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of style which makes their work so distinctive.

Lesley Constable and Daniel Leahy reflect each other's work in their poems about mirrors (see what I did there...), while Lucia Daramus and Slain McGough Davey both describe positions of imprisonment... in turn, this flows into the explorations of mental health by Keira J. Delerue and Edith Blackbird...

This edition is also a visual feast, with powerful abstracts by David Hilton, a collaged cover by HiP.P, stunning visual work accompanied by music (via link) by newcomer Peekasu, and much more.

Last but not least, there are photographs by Caitlin Brawn, Slain McGough Davey, Emma Winslet and Queen Chi, from our recent photography day which was part of the 'Lost Time' pilot festival, run in conjunction with Fotonow, Imperfect Cinema, POP+ and Soapbox Culture. The next weekend-long event will be in Plymouth in August, so don't miss it and like the Lost Time page on Facebook to keep up to date.

My own written work, as well as that of James Bridgwater, Slain McGough Davey and Caitlin Brawn, was also created as part of the Lost Time festival, through exercises exploring our identities and character description.

We like to keep a clean look and focus on the artwork, so for more information about any of the artists featured, please contact WonderZoo :-)



PEEKASU ENTRY ->>>WONDERZOO

A new artist on the scene, bringing you funky fusion twists!!... or something like that...??

Think.. Banksy.. but less douchy.

Bringing you a touch of surrealism, a dash of 'fuck it's, and a whole lot of singing 'trrrruusstt the here prroocceesss'

Peekasu is an upcoming brand to be, beckoning the masses to wander into the world of colour and madness.

And whilst the team at Peekasu has given you a slither of what is to come, using digital art as the main format, don't be fooled. The air is thick at the Peekasu Studios with a plethora of creative sparks spilling into the hallways. Aided by collective ADHD (and not so needed energy drinks) With a quick turn of the head, a new project has become underway.

•••••Watch out, new works come out most week...••••• (all depending on the occasional mental malfunction) ((but be sure to watch out after that because hyper mania is great for artwork))

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<https://soundcloud.com/peekasu/peekasu-lo-fi-beat-1>

The Selkie

I met her at sunrise
at the end of the world
Hair from windblown cloud
spun with gold, tightly curled
Her voice a silken siren
echoes of waves on shore
Eyes of sea washed Amber
that spoke of storms and more
Wild... Untameable...
she smelt of salt and sea
Shed her skin, held me close
whispered tales to me
The world kept changing
the tides had turned
Her family were calling
to the ocean she returned

Through Autumn's change
and Winter's schemes
I heard her calling
...in my dreams

Though I spent that time
...on my own
Echoes... her words and mine
were caught upon my phone

There is a part of me that wonders
if we were ever meant to be
For though they walk and talk like folk
you can't keep a Selkie from the sea

Peter Roe - March 2021







That Bloke

"You know that guy...?
That bloke that did the pictures...
White hair...
Did Marilyn Monroe in lots of colours
What's his name?
Rumpole...?
no Walpole
...Warhol !
There's a guy
just walked round the corner...
He looks like Andy Warhol
He's gone now
but I thought
When he came around the corner
he looks like that bloke...
You know that guy...
White hair...
That did Marilyn Monroe
...Andy Warhol'

Peter Roe - Oct 2019

On the Carousel

A hint of frost in the air
In the sky above the town
A carousel of seagulls
Whirls round and round
On unseen thermals
Of wasted heat
But nature's things
Move to a different beat
As the cries of joy
Spread far and wide
More gulls arrive to carouse and ride
A slow motion whirligig
Of feathers and bones
A transitory moment
Before they turn for homes
On walls of bricks
On roofs of slate
Such ideal homes
To live and mate
To see those birds
To see them so free
Riding that carousel
Gives hope to me

Peter Roe - November 2020



Flare - Dan Leahy

We placed a foot upon ground
which has never remained constant;
Its colour changes like plumage
Submerged in running water.
Topography pulsed with waves
That trembled mountains flat.
We call the verdant regions pristine,
although the word does not fit life;
Fluctuating, a dance of continuous abstraction,
Takes the being and visits every dimension.
Concealed within the manifold spaces,
Tentacular, winged, sprinting,
Singing with the earth,
Seeing as the seer,
gleaning horizons, surface oscillations,
jewelled with gazes of the host.
The purchase bound by gravity's solvent,
Flattering the grip that slips
free as the mechanism fails...
Set against the endless space,
Expansive place becomes cellular.
Thought is last, succeeded by inertia
Binding the separate together
In communal waking,
as the dreams of division fade
the wandering luminosity awaits
the next idle dalliance.

Reflects.

Many years ago, a person looked into a mirror. And they fell under a spell. From then on, the person became divided, separated into the performer and the reflection.

Both the performer and reflection were composed of 2 dimensional ideas and perspectives, and 2 dimensional conclusions to the problems that arose. The mind entered into a forlorn waste of partially abandoned physicality and diminishing patterns of communication. The reflection sparkled with the potential of each new scheme, lighting the spirit in the eyes of the performer, which became ever more burdened with the results of each presumed failure to refuse the cost of time and restriction. Every plot became a section of a sort of tortoise shell, that was becoming heavier and heavier, mounted upon the back of the ailing performer. The performer would snatch sideways glances, encouraging the reflection they remembered to re-emerge, to glint anew as a scheme manifest in the mind. But the reflection was labouring, becoming spent and crumpled beneath the weight of the endless alterations and strategies towards the competitive ideal. Each antagonised the other, a tyrannical pair working towards yielding an inexorable fruit, which would ripen with age and conspiracy, withering them both.

In time, the spaces where that glint of approval could be found grew smaller and fewer on the reflection. In still more time the gaze would become tidally locked into a region, up at a certain elevation where, even whilst approval could not always be found, it was more difficult for the performer to deny, more elusive and mysterious in the pyramidal construct of selfies.

The camera would slyly ease power from both the performer and the reflection, stable in its harbour between the pair. Outside the regions selected for exploitation, the abandoned waste grew ever more toxic and cruel, as pitiless as the initial glance that was distorted in the heat of the moment.

The central separation has fully drifted from the mind of the performer, to the surface of the glass. To see the fruit of the schism we must travel out and observe the performance in its entirety; the performer and reflection as one. Ravaged, the areas of body deemed unsuitable for the selfie lay unloved and subject to the cruelest disdain, concealed like unaccredited crew or a slave labour force. Hands to hold aloft the favoured regions upon their platforms.

The camera, from which the two hemispheres emanate, hangs down from its abstract vine, waiting either until the interest in the reflection evaporates, or the performer cannot meet the abstract fuel requirements, before dropping the ripened payload onto the floor of the waste, to rot in anonymity and isolation.









Mirror Poem - Lesley Constable

In American mirrors you see every flaw lights acid sharp,
overwrought for no reason illuminate your ghosts,
disappointed, needy silent echoes that stand behind you,
always there, haunting

Your face is flat, white, disinterested, lines you don't
remember and cannot follow appear from nowhere

This is the cross-country road map of your American face
you stare back blankly and wonder where it all went the
hours, the nights of your tight pink flesh your excited heart
beating too fast

Always too fast and permanent, the urgencies, the little
emergencies of the heart that take your breath and rob your
nights

It's not English-like-your-mother to go, to leave your husband
and your dog and even your cat and head down and down south
until your soft mother's English in your ears become whispers
and you dream in a language not yet invented

Even the cactus embarrasses you in an English way about sex
you never had but hope for - only if it doesn't hurt

I walk heavily with dark bags up the stairs with men maybe
looking up my thin dress whispering against my thighs and see
leaves, blue elegant arabesques in the tile, psychedelic leaves,
that I carefully place each sandaled foot upon as I climb up now

Now on the balcony of this steamy little Mexican hotel, at night
you look up at the palm fronds and stars open to you and vast.
The breezes, shifting imperceptivity, lightly talk to your skin
and move your soul in ways you barely remember

Is there a time you will feel again that everything makes good
high sense and is holy?

Fast and fast over the dust, the brakes squeal, the windshield thick
with sap from parking under the flowering tree with the birds
singing overhead at the Hotel Washington, D.C. (established 1947)

Smiling stop-light boys, brown, eager, handsome wash it away
for pesos and pesos into their hands as they eye your svelte blond
daughter sullen in the seat beside you

Can you wash away the dust this time? Run away and stay gone?

Now, at this hour and maybe forever, this tiny mirror at the blue hotel above the cracked and smelly sink records only ecstasy the shining face, your shining face soft with grace and ease and newly-found humor in the harsh light bulb light, the corners of your mouth are turned effortlessly up and stay that way

Today at noon after the slow breakfast of milky coffee and sweet bread you move through crowded streets in the rhythm of bicycles, mothers walking sleeping babies in strollers, the old-timers chewing and chewing nothing with too much time but not enough time but always the time to look, to remember

Today there will be a parade and the little girl in the gauzy white dress with iridescent wings will punch her brother hard in the arm and wax ecstatic looking up like angels with the timeless calm of holy female children. They are as innocent as their flesh allows

As you walk you feel the eyes of Mexican men upon you. Only their eyes know your flesh by the pound, weighing sizing you up, clothes do not matter. They know exactly how it would feel to grab a fleshy piece of your ass between thumb and index finger and pinch hard and laugh. They laugh, thinking about it, I laugh knowing. A high Mexican joke on the High Street of Guaymas

But, how is it with my husband, mi esposo? I am possessed because I have a husband. I don't know him, odd, I know everything else almost, so many things, but I don't know him. He is silent and I don't understand, because of this, that he loves me or why he should love me - that is pure noise and movement - if he is silent. Maybe he doesn't, I wouldn't know because it's a secret he won't tell.

He is building a house for my body and my things, the kids, the cat, the dog high on a mesa in northern New Mexico, my body-as-a-house, his house that is his and belonging to him if he thinks so, but here all eyes own it and I like it that way

Is the house he is building my body? A shrine to it, a sarcophagus? or something else? I wouldn't know. I understand very little, that is all I know

I came here for practical reasons, nothing more what I learn what I see what I remember are for the ghosts that stand behind me when I look in the mirror so they will leave me alone and be satisfied and they and I will never tell

2000©Lesley Constable

Brave Women

Brave women, for many necessary reasons, plunge defenseless fingers into the mouths of very young children with sharp, pointy teeth. Often, they suckle the same. This sometimes does not work out well. They know this going in.

Brave women mop up all blood types from all wounds and orifices no matter how repugnant, answer impossible questions with “yes,” and “I understand” when they don’t, comfort the raw nerves of a friend when their own are raw and, if and when called upon, push out the sometimes very large heads of their offspring and yell and scream because this fucking hurts.

Brave women yell and scream anyhow in many situations and for many reasons. It is when they reach that shrill high point. And, only they know when that moment is **hot** upon them. It is private.

Brave women are sometimes mistaken for something else, especially when they scream for reasons unclear. But, do not forget, it is the screamers who are the bravest of brave women...to give voice, to give shape, to give meaning through sound to that which they don’t understand - or- understand way too much.

A brave woman never has to tell anything to anybody that she doesn’t want to. It is a secret. Her secret that has sound or no sound, at all,....if she chooses.

Is it love? Is the heart of a brave woman only about love? Some would say yes.

And, some would absolutely avoid any further knowledge, reference or inquiry regarding any particular high point, of any woman, especially if she’s “a screamer.”

Brave women sob at weddings and funerals giving a different voice to that which is simply too much. Toooo muchhhh.

And it is that sound, only - of a brave woman sobbing -
that quietens us all,
quietens us all better than lullabies.

Because that sound is life, simply that.

Brave women love you and aren’t **you** the lucky one to be loved by a brave woman?

They are your mothers, your sisters, your aunts, grandmothers, cousins, neighbors, friends, your lovers. Watchful, paying attention, laughing for us, at us, with us.

The laughter of brave women is the music we dance to,

the music of our souls

in our bodies

to which we spin and spin and spin









Super Rare - Margaret Corvid

We're not meant to live this way,
my rabbi says. Round faced and sat
in front of a wall of books
each one of which was born
in a pool of sacred water. Life
is gone away from every dandelion
stalk of us, seeds blown on vectors
across the scoured earth. All
of us are the bit-dross, traded away
and burned. All of us minted
by the hand of God, collected
and sewn together by the ragged
edges of our glitches. We are meant
to make a joyful noise, to sit under
a canopy of stars waiting
for the moment, instant and eternal
when we finally see the face
of heaven.

Explanatory Placard

The room with a little roof
at the car park gate,
the tollbooth, the guardhouse,
the box office with film posters
six millimetres deep, the
lineman's shack, the signalman's post
with a tiny round stove
burning the coal dust. No Christmases,
and the door shuts, and locks true.
One way in, one way out,
and the only key safe on the ring,
and nobody cares how an ass
knocks over the boot rack.
The clock ticking, the nine o'clock
sounds, a yellow contrast to the deep
orange of the noon bell. The children
distant on the playing fields, a streak
of bright pink against a field
of brown dwarf stars and subway
maps. In place of peace,
this is what I have.









EXMO

40th Anniversary 19



OUTH MARKET







Flashback 1

Diagnosis day: walking around in a daze
Oh how I pray: where do I go? What shall I do?
Wishing it would just go away.
Thinking what people will say
I've got this just because I'm gay.

I must lift myself out of this haze
Now it's like life is out of focus.
Though I feel excluded
I must make them understand
I need to feel included.

I walk into work,
I don't want to make a scene.
But I must tell my friends Tracy and Jean.
They take it in their stride
Knowing, if this goes wrong,
There's nowhere to hide.

Now they know
And still love me
I'm in a new world
I'm gay and HIV.

A few weeks later

Zealous sterilisation is taking place
In the hair salon
In a neighbouring shop in shop
There has been an AIDS awareness course
Scissors, combs and even chair legs are cleaned
Such force
We are all summoned to the manageress' room
To hear her tell of paranoia and gloom.

My dear friend Tracy set me at ease
Nestled up to me and gave me a squeeze.

Flashback 2

Now it's over a year.

I feel okay about me

Now it's time to care for others with HIV.

My time with Simon as his support buddy
Is profound.

I wish I could do more for you.

It conveys to me and you

The parts I've never found.

He has a beautiful face

And his thin hand reaches out and touches mine

To bring a tear you can't erase.

No words have been spoken.

The first of many tears I will taste.

Of a spirit so broken.

The weeks go by

I feel we belong

Suddenly, to the worst fear,

The bed is stripped and you're gone.

Speakeasy, it's boogynight

Embryonic Madonna's Borderline hits the scene

The dance floor is full.

Entrance Bob and Dean

Only to find

That people have heard of their plight

And the crowd parts in fright.

Friends far and near

Their lives invaded by HIV

A long life not to be

So weak so vulnerable

You walk to the bathroom with a drip

I wish I could make you live

I wash your emaciated body

With the tenderness of a dove.

Remembering only ten years ago

Ivor, we were so much in love.

You're in a coma now.

Knowing you're slipping away from me.

You wake up and mouthe

"I love you."

I find a reason to go on

Even though my world seems ended

And now you're gone.

I must go on

This is how it is to be

Now I'm still here twenty-nine years later

Living with HIV.

DNA

by Caitlin Brawn

It lives in my DNA like a snake slithering through arteries.
It thrives in my biology.
I see it linger in my reflection.
The cracks in a smile, stuck in a corner of my eye.
I can't quite put my finger on it and I don't know why.

I've felt its presence all my life.
It crawls under my skin.
My chest is heavy, filled with strife.
Choking on shadows cast within.
Like a tree rotting to its core,
My branches become tired and thin.

As a kid, my house was haunted.
Not by the dead, but from the living.
Caged in, not knowing what the days would bring.
What mood they'd be in...
I have a broken record in my head,
Of venomous words once said
That echo in my mind, still, to this day.
I can't escape the parasites in my brain.

Through therapy, I have learned to keep them at bay.
But, some days, the past bites back like a tidal wave.
A tenacious tide of tongues like knives, cuts its way into my brain.
The earth opens its jaws and swallows me into the ground again.

You only ever see the surface but never know what it's like to be buried beneath.
There's a hole in the earth with my name on it,
Like coming home to a made bed, decorated with a wreath.
The soil soaks up the cold blood,
Leaving nothing but withered bones like generations before me.

A seed compounded, surrounded by all the dirt and dark,
Splits through its shell and through life's fleeting spark.
Growing up, up and up.
Not knowing why it must carry on,
It has to be better than down there.
Fighting the shadows, until there is a glimpse of light,
I hold on to the rays with all my might.
The chain stops here, no more should this pain be imposed.
Like specks of dust floating in the sunlight.

I must learn to dance with these ghosts.



Under Pressure - Edith Blackbird

Trigger warning: Sensitive topic.

Depression took my lungs,
set my bed on fire
using a lighter and my thumbs.

Depression took my breath away,
dragged me to the ceiling,
“the betrayal of my weight”.

Depression took my equilibrium,
pinched my bare feet
to fall into the jaws of oblivion.

Depression took my blood,
bit hard my wrist,
and sucked through the cut.

Depression took my mind,
invited 9mm
to blast me behind the line.

Depression took my body
enveloped in sedan
into the river of nobody.

Depression took my consciousness,
loaded me with sleeping pills,
in the name of my loneliness.

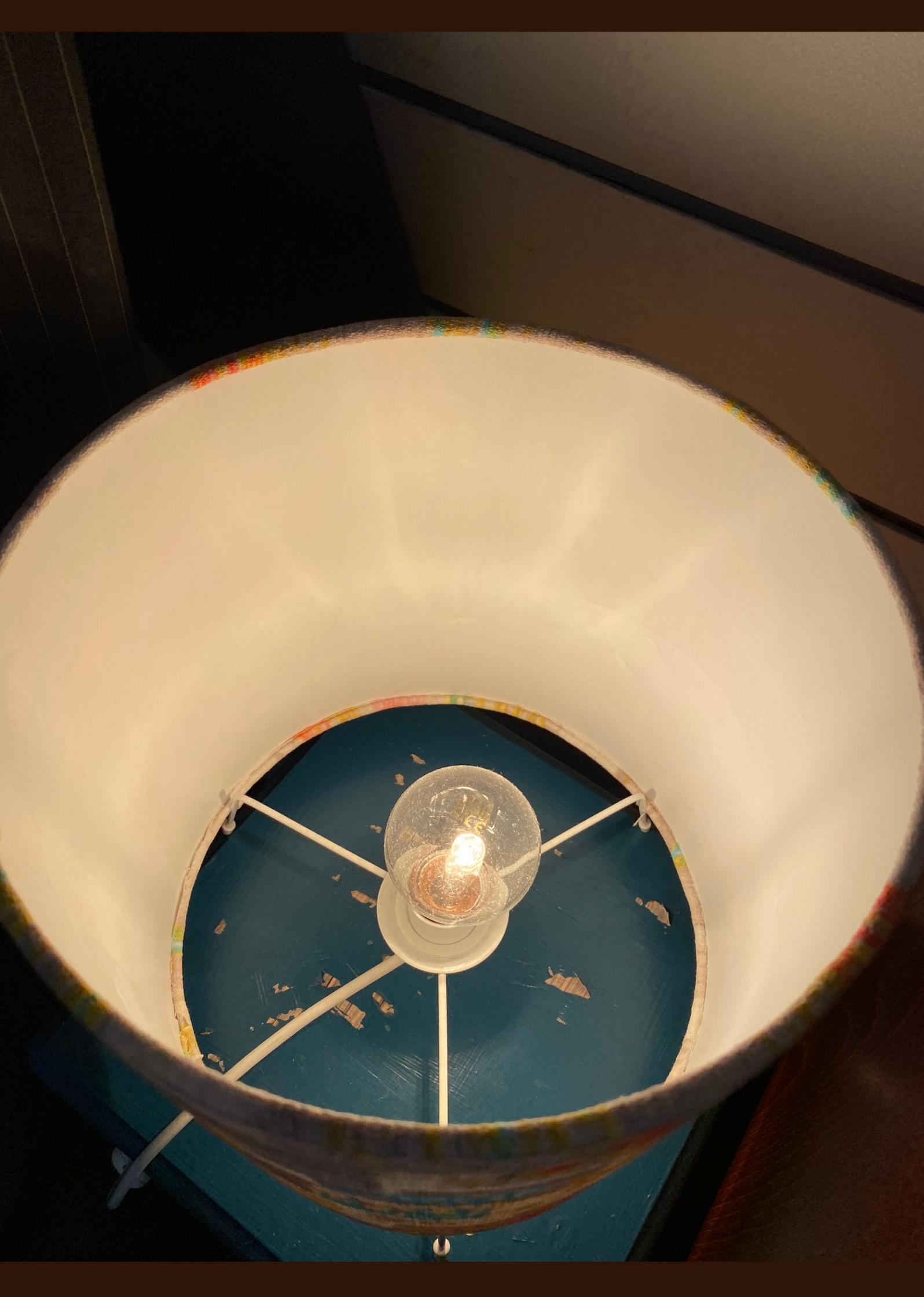
Depression took my liver,
served me an endless drink,
taste comatose, bitter.

Depression may take everything,
making me a homeless soul,
depression will give me nothing
and condemn my body to the hole.

Depression knows I'm a shadow
only seen by its powerful third eye,
depression knows I'm hollow
between my throat and “why”.

But I cannot fade tomorrow,
even with depression underneath.
Could I challenge sorrow
if I grab life with nails and teeth?

Someday, I will seduce depression and make it my submissive lover, slave of my
BDSM expression, the only way to understand each other.



Anne Blackwell-Fox

I was recently selected, as one of five artists, by Feminist Fusion in Plymouth to make art work for the Memoria Project, with regard to the Mayflower 400 Commemoration and the effect of colonisation, especially on women.

The Mayflower set sail from Plymouth in 1620. The Pilgrim Fathers, as they have since been named, were driven from Europe by religious persecution. Their quest to set up their own colony, took them to the eastern seaboard of North America where they encountered and were befriended by the Wampanoag people. The Wampanoag spared them from starvation and supported their early efforts at settling. This was not to be a lasting friendship.

In a speech given in 1970 by Frank James, (350 years after the sailing of The Mayflower) the Wampanoag leader said "After 50 years of the landing of The Mayflower the Wampanoag people would no longer be free". A Day of Mourning is held at Coles Hill, Plymouth, Massachusetts on Thanksgiving Day.

As soon as I began my research, I had an overwhelming feeling of a sense of loss. The loss that women felt when their men were killed in battles over territory or lost to slavery. The men who had been their protectors. Men who had hunted and provided food and shelter for them and their children.

Diseases had already brought colossal death to whole communities, this was followed by warfare which destroyed their homes and their people, the loss for those that survived, was profound and devastating.

I have focussed my painting, since graduating in Fine Art, mainly on landscapes and water reflections. Working in oil paint on canvas or board, I develop these works from my 'en plein air' drawings in my sketchbook and also take photographs. For this project I made a collection of sketches using a variety of media including charcoal, gouache, watercolour etc. I also used photographs that I had previously taken in Canada and felt this was a fitting and authentic source of material for the project.

Making the sketches gave me a sense of freedom and allowed me to paint further works that were not exact images of the photographs, but rather ones that developed as they were made.

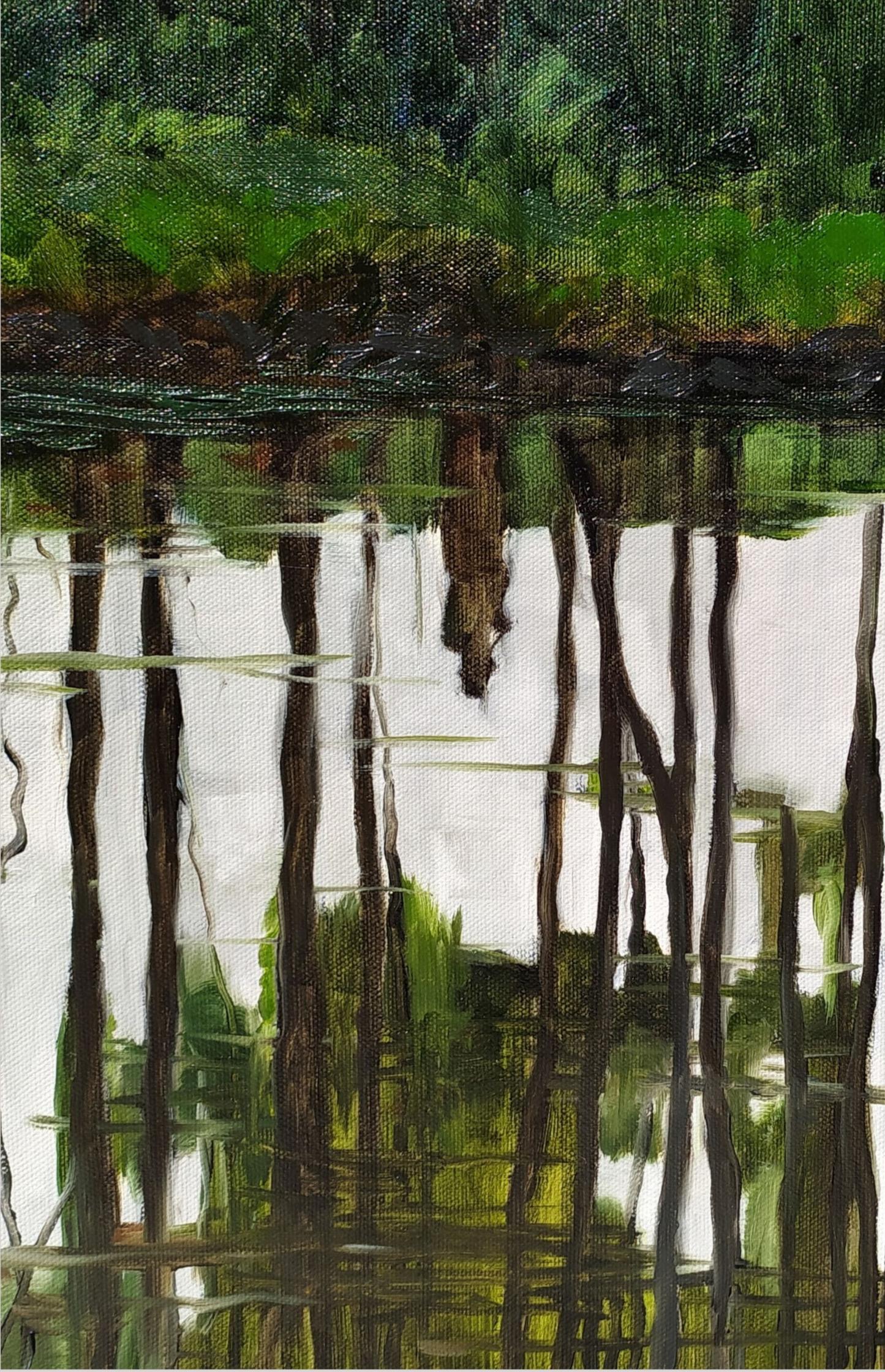
I felt compelled to place a figure, or figures, in most of the paintings, and by doing so, this helped me to portray a narrative in them which I felt was necessary in order to relate to the project.

As I researched, read and watched films made by indigenous people of the Wampanoag Tribe more images came to mind and this gave me the drive and motivation to create the images in my paintings that would tell part of the hidden story, one which is rarely found in history.















'Always the lonely girl' - Claire Duthie

Always the lonely girl.

The teenagers gathered in the classroom, some of them jeering and laughing at 'always the lonely girl,' and they entered, pushing and shoving as they did so.

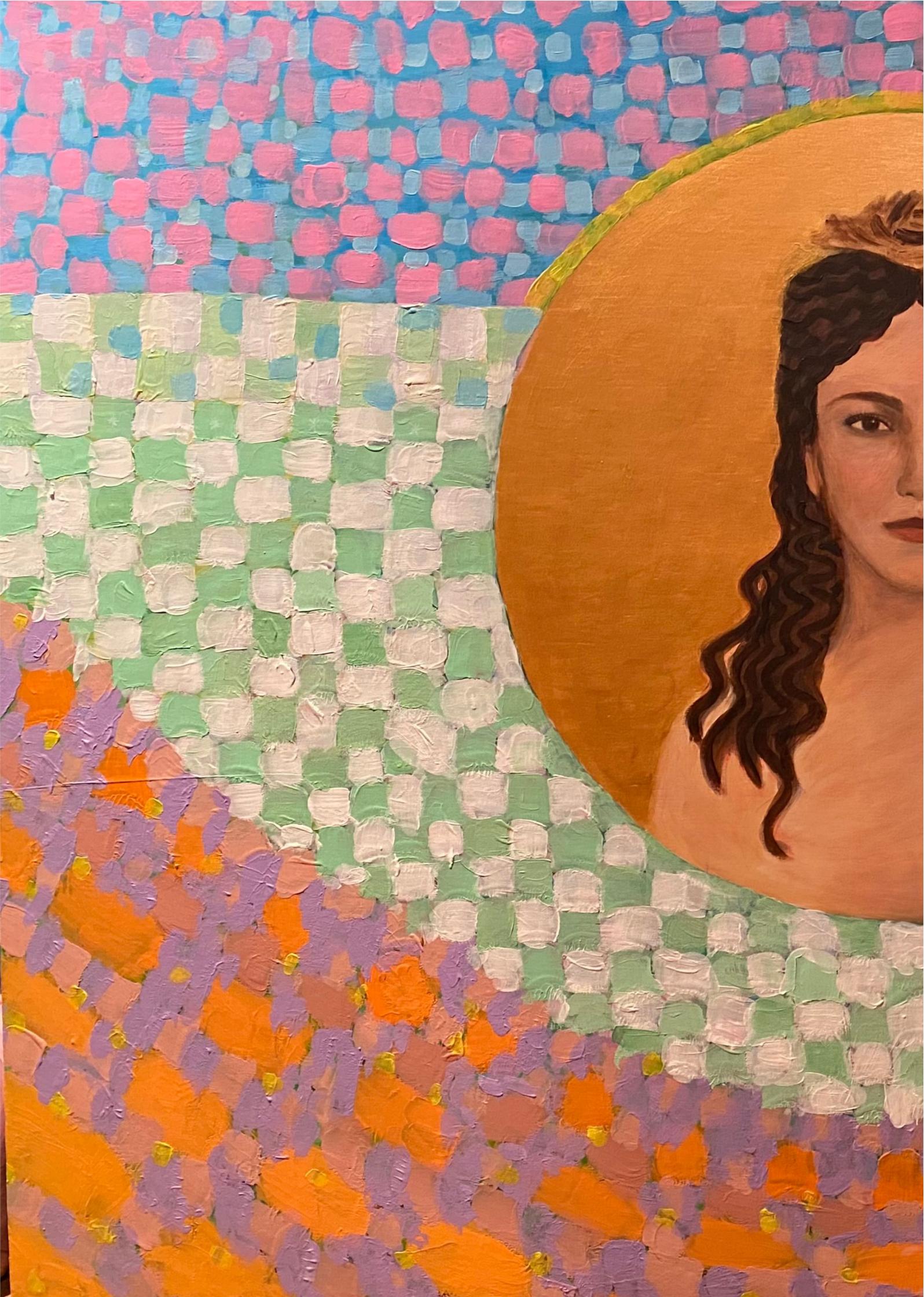
They had another name for her, 'duck, duck, duckie' or sometimes just plain 'duckie' when they wanted to further humiliate her.

She wished that they would show her love but instead they would refer to her as 'the ugly duckling,' tell her that she would never, never grow up to be a swan and promise to hunt her down and shoot her like a duck.

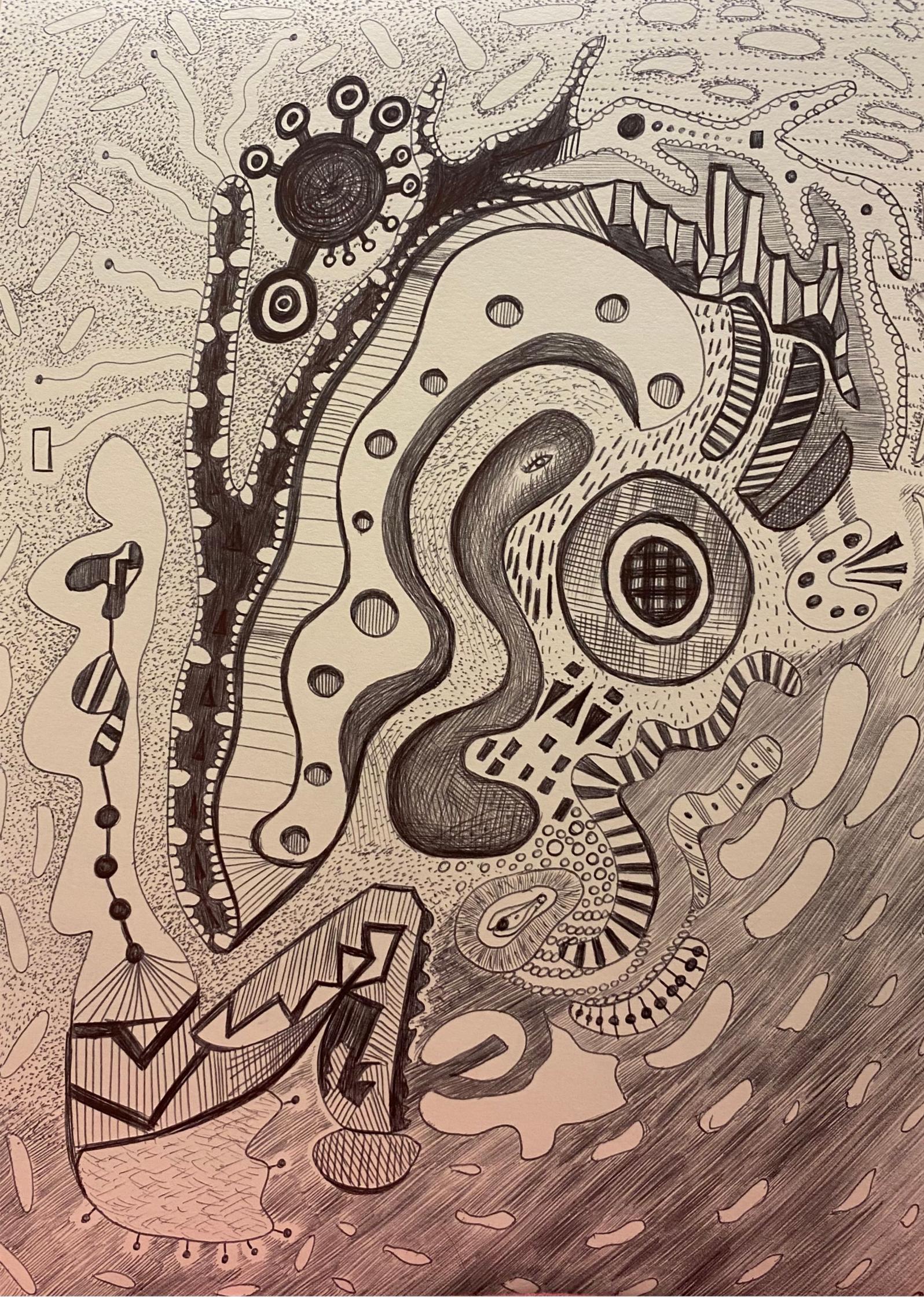
Her reaction? She would build an intellectual and emotionally superior shell around herself as a put down so she could survive with injured dignity.

This went down like a deflated hot-air balloon with them.









A poem for a therapist - Keira J. Delerue

My knee is not shaking subtly.
The first voice is rather quiet,
The second even more so.
A peculiar silence for the evening.
With the arrival of the day,
Came a state of sanguineness.
A jive in my stride,
With an essence of confidence, pride.
A peculiar notion for the morning.
Ah-ha, a pattern, I see it now.
Classic Seamus has sunken in,
No stability for our Seamus.
The fallen have fell and the abyss rising.
Waiting, waiting, waiting
For the second voice to fight, to
Wade through the wonders of a madman.
Only silence remains,
The second voice never came.
Untouched everything remains,
The abyss is only six miles deep, you know...
Resilience remained.
I see now, why I don't see you,
You are not needed, for now.
I miss you and maybe we will meet again,
Maybe not.
It'll be nice to see you again, it'll be nice if I don't.
But I thank you sincerely.

Untitled

99% and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the time I am an alien.

$\frac{3}{4}$ of the time I am this confused human being.

This human entails a whole pack of beings, hence the confusion.

Hamish is the little cynic old man, he grumbles and grains,

Holding the bitterness stored within him, drinking coffee behind a window, a curtain.

He doesn't get out much.

Seamus, now he is the depressive, a regular resident, always comes back, fuelled by red wine, he is a melancholic alcoholic, if you know what I mean.

Joan, strong, sensible (calm)... we need more of Joan.

Aldous is the structure and essentially supervisor of the pack. All decisions, reactions, processing, go through Aldous and, boy, let me tell you, he is highly neurotic, obsessive, sensitive... and a recluse!

There was a tale of a past figure, who, back in the day of dissociation, was a lady called K.

Thespian, lesbian, confident, had ideas of being a writer, writing a play, directing and acting. I do not know where she went.

Perhaps the alien holds K. The world is too confusing for K. Every person is a new language.

Every situation a new episode, to understand without subtitles.

I wish I were a dog.



@FROHMANSKI

HOW TO A HUN...

How to A Hun...

Darkest
@Frohmaniski





A Visit From The Parents by Kim Armstrong

A Recipe for Samosas -

The filling:

5 large potatoes, peeled, boiled and diced

2 mugs of frozen peas

2 teaspoons of cumin seeds

2 tablespoons of cumin

1 tablespoon of garam masala

2 teaspoons of salt

2 teaspoons of chilli powder

1 tablespoon of ground coriander

The pastry:

300g of plain flour

100g of melted butter

Cold water

Vegetable oil for frying

The Method:

Whilst potatoes are boiling, fry the cumin seeds in hot oil. When popping sounds, add the coriander, garam masala, cumin, salt and chilli powder. Then add frozen peas and stir vigorously to mix together.

Once potatoes are parboiled, cube and add to mixture, stirring all ingredients together.

For the pastry, add melted butter to flour and add cold water in small quantities to

bind the flour. Make a solid dough, knead and then make twenty small round balls. Take one ball, flatten and roll into a circle about 15cm in diameter. Cut the circle into two. Place one semi-circle onto the flat of the palm of your hand. Place filling in one half of the semi-circle and fold over to form a triangle. Seal the edges with a little milk and press together firmly.

Repeat until all balls have been rolled out and filled.

Fry the samosas in hot oil until golden brown – or about 7 minutes per batch.

‘What the fuck are you doing?’ Gina’s shrill voice made Sue freeze, the potato masher in mid-air, hanging over the pan of sieved potatoes, ‘Have you added milk to the potatoes?’ Sue was not only frozen, but mute, as Gina came over to the table and looked in the pan. ‘Oh my God, Sue, we’re not making mash!’ Gina’s voice had risen an octave, ‘Did I say to add milk? Did I say we were having sausage, mash and beans?’

She was eyeball to eyeball with Sue. When Gina got like this, Sue either wanted to cry or laugh hysterically. She remained still, struggling to control the manic desire to do either, and looked down at the potatoes.

‘Well you’ve ruined them now anyway, so you better do what you can,’ Gina said finally, returning to the stove where the peas were cooking. The smell in the kitchen made Sue want to eat for a week; she loved Indian food. As they hadn’t had any breakfast, she could gobble up that pea mixture without taking a breath at that moment. She lowered the masher and watched the potatoes spread through the holes. This had always been her job at home. As she reached for more milk to make them creamy and smooth, she caught Gina’s eye.

‘No more milk,’ Gina said cruelly, ‘Damage limitation.’

Gina returned to the pea mixture and turned off the stove. It had cost her more than a

week's budget of food to get all the spices from the Indian shop. She was sure the Asian men behind the counter had been talking about her as she placed all the bags in front of them. But she'd never learned her mother's tongue so she had the same sense of exclusion that their language had always given her. When her mother spoke weekly on the telephone to her family, it left a young Gina confused and unsure. Her mother seemed so different, so animated, when calling India.

Why the hell had she decided to make samosas? She had never helped her mother at home in the kitchen, had never learned any Indian cooking tips. Yet here she was, with a second-hand cookbook, trying to recreate a delicacy. Her mother was a flawless cook; everything she created in the kitchen was a delicious assault on the mouth. Her father, an Englishman, had loved the offerings his wife brought forth to their table at dinner parties. His friends would look on enviously, not only at the beauty their friend had managed to marry, but with anticipation of the delight of sampling her curried essence. But Gina was not her mother in the kitchen, and that was becoming more and more obvious. She mixed the potatoes with the peas to create a thick sludge which looked nothing like samosa filling.

'Fuck it. Fag break,' She said to Sue and they headed to the lounge. John and Mike sat in their assigned chairs watching TV and they all lit up cigarettes silently. After a few minutes Sue went back to the kitchen and returned with four bottled beers. They all drank whilst discussing the state of kid's TV today.

Trooping back to the kitchen, John and Mike had offered their help with the filling, so they formed an assembly line. Gina rolled out the dough, slicing the round circles in half. Sue and John filled, whilst Mike sealed them diligently. They drank more beer, talking more and more animatedly about nonsense.

They had all lived together for 4 months. John and Mike had been in a Hall of Residence together, as had Gina and Sue, in their first year of University. Gina had

started dating John and the four had come together to rent the house in their second year. Though relations had cooled between them, Gina was still fond of John, and after a few beers there was always the possibility of sharing more than a cigarette.

They were comfortable in their work, as they were in their house, sharing their money and food willingly. Other friends would come to their house and marvel at the state of it; it was clean (Mike and John's job), there was unmarked food in the fridge (Sue and Gina's job) and there was always a cooked meal. It was a commune, they said. There were several more cigarette and beer breaks and as they fried the samosas, John rolled a spliff, which they all shared, followed by a couple more.

They took a plate of samosas into the lounge and ate them, munching away and delighting in the fact they had made them. Weren't they better than the shop ones! Discussions began on how they could start making and selling them after the Students Union Disco on a Friday night, when students were hammered and in need of sustenance.

Sue brought in a second plate of samosas with more beers and they were suddenly back on the loop of talking and laughing like 4am that morning.

Gina's parents had decided to park at the back of the house today and knocked quite loudly before entering through the back door into the kitchen.

'Oh my God!' Ruby exclaimed as the smoke from the hot oil hung in the air. She briskly turned off the gas under the pan, 'That could have set alight,' She said to herself. Surveying the kitchen and the scene of destruction, she wrinkled up her nose, not only at the sight but the smell. Two lone samosas sat in an island of oil, on a plate on the table. 'Gina?' Gordon said as he pushed open the door to the lounge. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and the pungent smell of dope.

'Where's Gina?' He asked Sue. She looked up at him through hazy eyes, focusing

slowly, the awareness coming to her, gradually but painfully.

‘Mr Watts,’ She said sitting up and knocking a bottle of beer over at her feet, ‘Mike, this is Gina’s dad.’

Mike sat in his armchair, half asleep. Cracking open one eye, he winked with it before giving up, and resigning himself to the fact his lids weren’t up to it. ‘Where’s Gina?’ Gordon repeated calmly. Yes, sure, he’d been a student once. He knew what went on, so he tried to keep the disdain down. The 43 year-old man in him cried: ‘They’re pissed and stoned, and it’s only three in the afternoon!’ The 18 year-old he still longed to be, calmed the adult in hushed tones: ‘You’re a cool Dad, you’d love a smoke, if you got the chance.’

Not that he’d get the chance because Ruby was anti-smoking, anti-drinking and anti-drugs, having been raised by strict Catholic parents. She was the epitome of pure. She now entered the lounge and her nose wrinkled again.

‘Mrs Watts,’ Sue said in greeting. Ruby said nothing, but the look she gave Sue said it all. Sue resisted the urge to laugh, slumping further down into the sofa.

‘Gina? Where is she?’ Gordon asked again, kindly.

‘Oh, she’s upstairs with John,’ Mike said from the chair, ‘I think he’s showing her his economics homework.’

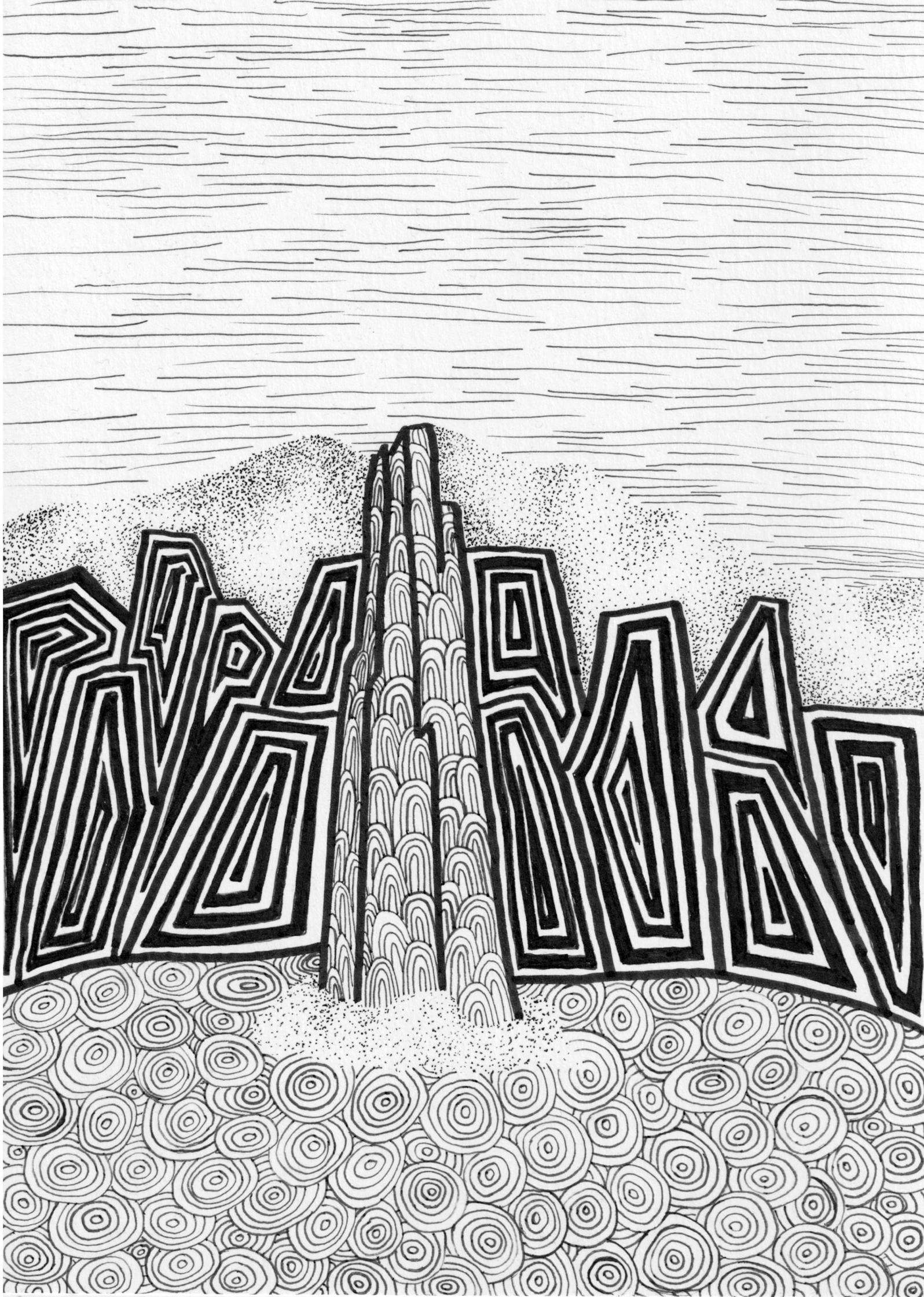
At that both Sue and Mike started to laugh, snorting breathlessly.

‘I knew we should have made her to go to University at home,’ Ruby said with that calm fury Gordon had found so alluring, but now so annoyed him.

‘Come on Gordon, let’s go upstairs and get Gina.’ Ruby moved to the stairs but Gordon placed one hand on her arm strongly.

‘No,’ She turned to look at him, her nostrils flaring slightly, ‘Let’s go and eat our samosas and wait for them to come down,’ He said firmly.









Dad I - Gabi Marcellus-Temple

You look like him
And sometimes I bleed a little
An internal seepage
Through muscles, heart and tissues
It was always there
Latent
Inside
Despite my difference

Dad II

He had that look all white East Africans have - you know, like Richard E. Grant - he grew up in Swaziland, I think, he can speak that weird clicky language. Kind of dried out and leathery, but rangy too, and lean. They called him Nigel because he was dark - in some Celtic language, that means 'the black' - but they never told us that he was Greek, which might have explained why he tanned so dark on the beach at Mombasa, one hand on his stomach leaving a print as he slept, which burnt the next day, leaving it pink and sore.

Free Out From The Iron Cage Honouring My Mind

By Lucia Daramus
to all prisoners having a voice

Winter - without clothes, only rug pyjamas in winter Winter, winter, winter with iron teeth

The teeth are biting from my flesh

Once a day a watery coffee

Without shadowy-traces of coffee beans

And loneliness, deep muddy loneliness

But I fly in my mind...mind

I'm feeling in my brain the love

Love of my ally, above the sky what

I'm seeing in a corner of the

Small high window

The voice of my lover

Abstract voice and neutered voice

Touching my face, my skin, my heart.

'Remember only that I was innocent

And just like you, mortal on that day,

I, too, had had a face marked

By rage, by pity, and joy

Quite simply, a human face.'

I'm carrying on my prisoner wings

Fatihs, desires, dreams...

Of all earth's inmates... even

Even I will die, I will be tortured

I will be oppressed for my voice,

For my thoughts, for my choice

Because I fly--

I fly with my power, I fly with my suffering

And my smile for this wonderful world

Yes. My suffering, my death, my humiliation Will talk, talk, talk about our captive world!

'We need people to speak

Loudly against injustice...'

Spring - is coming and birds

Are singing in the prison's courtyard

Males and females beautiful birds

Dancing around each other with flowers

Fallen down and keeping it to my breast

For later, for the next day, and...

For tomorrow, and tomorrow... and the tomorrow of my life

In my cell-barrack with iron bar...
 Punished - in this amazing spring in the sky
 And on the earth... flowers are not allowed around! Prisoners, prisoners, prisoners, punished,
 punished, punished... But my mind is blooming -- flowers and birds, green Leaves and coloured
 pools, mountains and flowing rivers My mind is a garden, a forest, a tree jungle and a peaceful
 beach Springing out from my torture, humiliation and suffering My wounds, especially soul wounds,
 Draw the endless heavenly worlds through ornamentation of words. Summer - is coming, yes,
 summer, summer
 Lights and hot-yellow sun kissing my forehead
 Insects flying with their songs between the heights of clouds And fresh-green on the soil
 But--
 I am closed in this iron coffin!
 Crying... never again I will kiss the lover I love
 Never again I will walk on the streets
 Never, never, being closed in this iron coffin
 I will embrace my kids... kids
 Summer, my past beautiful summer,
 Please, please, let your fingers to touch my future
 Sister-summer...maybe in my mind, maybe...
 But death! Never will I kiss my lover under
 Free bright summery sky... summery sky!
 Autumn... my thoughts...we...we are lost in this hollow Of the dying, my thoughts... St Augustin
 says God has Reason for torture, for persection, in our life for dark clouds As a result of Adam,
 who acted with 'free will' eating an apple - My thoughts, my thoughts in autumn
 Am I a sinner because a man had eaten a fruit?
 My thoughts, my thoughts in autumn
 'Tell me, what is the bigger sin - a man eating an apple Or punishing an entire humanity
 with torture because A man ate an apple?'
 I am in an iron cage, I am in an iron coffin, I am in a camp-prison Barrack with teeth, iron teeth who
 are biting from my flesh From my blood, throwing me in death
 Am I the modern Adam? No, no, no...
 I am free of his umbilical cord.
 Autumn... rain in my mind scratching the barrack's walls Of my iron camp, of my iron
 prison
 'The death-note is sounded,
 The beasts hunted down
 Let me speak to you...'
 I am free, flying through my mind, my voice, my thought, my desire My voice name is Benjamin
 Fondane
 My powerful thought is Nawal El Saadawi
 My wonderful desire is Ahmet Altan
 My voice, this thought, this desire was metamorphosed From the marrow of writing, of
 words.
 I am a writer! Out from the iron cage
 My soul is free honouring my eagle warmth... honouring my mind My mind. I am free, out of the iron
 cage.



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What is Truth? - Slain McGough Davey

Today I wake again. I open my sore red eyes to the waking world. Not knowing if it's day or night. Is there such thing as past or future, or is there only today?

Sometimes I think I can hear church bells ringing outside. My world consists of just this room, and the knowledge of the door at the centre of the room, but I can't leave because it's always locked.

There's no natural light that penetrates this room, as there's no real window. The only source of light consists of a very darkish reddish light, which I think might be in the centre of the room but I ain't sure. But it seems to always be on.

The only other objects in the room are my bed, some dirty blankets, which I use to cover myself to sleep in, from the cold and dampness.

There is a toilet in one corner of the room, but I ain't sure which corner. It's where I shit and piss, and I don't remember the last time it was emptied. But I do know, often, I can find my friends there.

I often speak to the flies and the maggots. This might sound abnormal, but it's my reality. I sometimes do ponder and wonder what people on the outside world are actually doing, as they go about their everyday business. I imagine, often, being amongst them, but just like John Lennon said, Imagine – the world is not always real and not always possible.

I really don't know what month or year it is. I hear a clock ticking, but is it in my mind, is it real, or is it just an illusion?

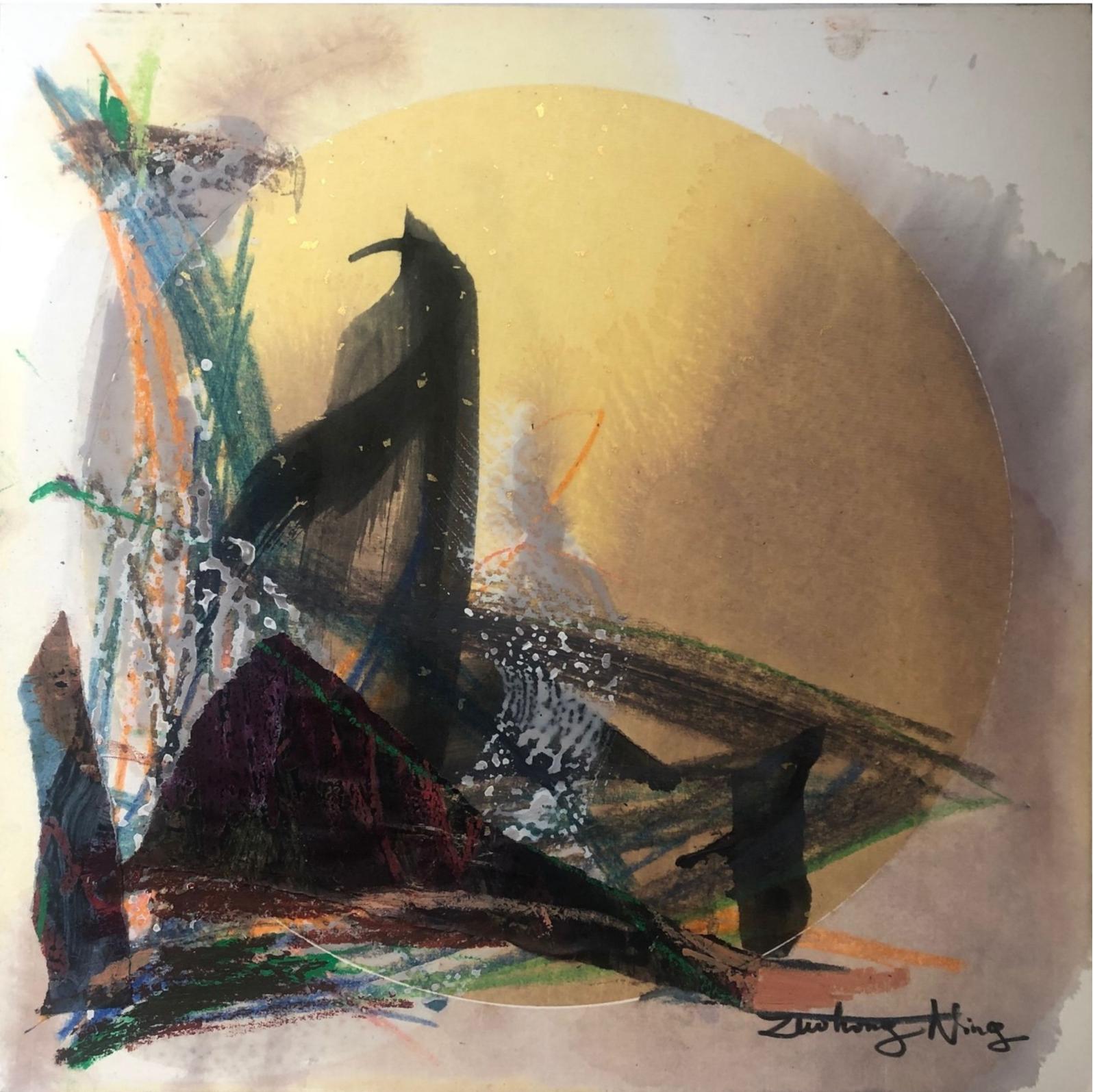
Everything's a muddle and blur nowadays. I don't remember how I came to be here, or the reasons for me being here. Worst of all is not knowing why I am here, but nothing is really boring, just mundane.

I like to close my eyes often and to count, but I don't remember how to count anymore. Just like I don't know if the door at the centre of the room is real, or this room is real, or if it's just a figment of my imagination, I don't know how I've left this message for you to read, but I do know I've got to talk to my friends again: the maggots and flies. Maybe they can teach me to count.



Zuo Hong Ning





I speak half words - Charlotte Hyvernaud

I speak half words
In a distant language
Torn words
Incomplete thoughts
My mother tongue
Buried in the past

I speak half words
My thoughts lost,
Scattered, aborted
A world limited,
Reduced, erased
In front of the immensity

I speak half words
Hints of words,
Portions of words.



RUFUS



Wyndham Street West - James Bridgwater

Stonehouse is a great place to live,
The Catholic cathedral between me and town.
Support for the aged decaying nuns they give,
In their residential home enduring lockdown.

St. Peter's High church, C of E, resides in Wyndham Square,
Its converted convent and school have become flats now.
Between the two churches Hollywood Terrace thoroughfare
A European style walkway paved, and secure trees does endow.

At times each institution rings their bells, for a service or the
hour.

Yet like many Christian denominations they are not together,
Despite what they'd gain if they united to share hardship and
power.

Nearby Stoke Damerel church Protestants do spiritually
endeavour;

It has been thus for centuries as it's an ancient Plymouth site.
Easter should be a time for Christians to join together,
But Covid-19 virus ruined that, leaving an uncertain plight.
2020 Easter I'll recall alone in lovely weather.





Pastime/Game : a treasure hunt with a dragon

By Phil Smith

As sure as eggs is eggs
And Gogs are Gogs
So G is Geo is George
A geegee in the Gorge
And Mike is like a forge
While M is his Wurm
Wound the other way round
Tongue is dark and long
And sword is light and wrong
As tongue is left and sword is right
Word is strong and a pony's tale is bright
A sward in the ground as
In Dract a dragon
Is found in a lake, and
A white horse, of course,
In the wake of its waves
Their heads, flowing manes of *kaomos*
Seed of the sun, a bloomin' flower,
Makes an Sssss for a Sound
And then we can be found
Where strong is in creativity, not in power



SIMLA INDIA

DELHI

NAGPUR

HYDERBAD

TRIVANDRUM

Robert Garnham

Into the rhododendrons with Jack

1.

'Let's just slink through here', I suggested, gesturing to the rhododendrons.

A hot tropical night. The sweat was pouring down my face. Out to sea there was thunder, lightning flashing, but here on the beach, fairy lights and candles threw multicoloured light and shadows which danced.

'Slink?', Jack asked.

The scent of jasmine and honeysuckle hung in the Caribbean night. The sky was dark and starless.

'There's a storm coming'.

'It's just . . . The choice of word'.

Others on the beach were standing at the water's edge, looking out at the storm. It was obviously getting closer.

'Are we just going to stand here and argue about a word?'

'It's better than arguing about whether we should argue about a word, which is even more pointless than arguing about a word'.

'OK, let's just ignore that and shimmy into the rhododendrons'.

'Shimmy?'

'Oh, for heaven's sake!'

There was a rumble of thunder, and fat lazy drops of rain began to fall from the sky. They thudded into the sand as perfect darkened circles like sudden coins.

We penetrated the outer fringes of the rhododendron and found ourselves surrounded by branches criss-crossing, and roots, and a sandy, springy earth. We could hear the rain falling on to the fleshy, heavy leaves around us, as if the world were applauding our efforts. It was cooler within the foliage.

'This might not be the time to tell you', Jack said, 'But I'm a member of the RSPCR'.

'What's that?', I asked, ducking to avoid a low branch across the face.

'The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Rhododendrons'.

'Bloody hell, what are the chances?'

'We also cover hydrangeas and certain types of buddleia'.

'Well, we're not exactly being cruel, are we?'

'The constitution has several definitions . . . '.

'You're making this up!'

'I might be'.

But he had a point. I hardly knew him. We'd met at the backpackers hostel the night before. He'd let me use his spork.

'There will be spiders in here'.

'GAH!'

'And snakes, probably'.

I'd not thought about either of these scenarios. Thunder boomed and the whole earth shook. Neither of us said anything for a while, and then, of a sudden, we entered into a tiny clearing surrounded in all four sides by rhododendron bushes and tall palm trees, sheet lightning behind the overcast swirling clouds.

I took a step, and spluttered, wiping a spiders web from my face. He emerged behind me and we stood there, feeling the heavy drops of rain on our shoulders.

'Amazing', he whispered.

And then the storm begun in earnest, ripping the sky with vicious lightning bolts, the rain thudded down with increasing intensity, we sheltered under the dripping leaves of the vegetation, his warm body pressed close to mine as the thunder boomed and crashed and roared around us.

'Do you think', I asked, 'that this is a sign from the universe? That we should be together forever?'

Because all of a sudden, I was caught up in the sheer magic of the moment.

And at that second, a bolt of lightning hit one of the palm trees right in front of us, a vicious spew of sparks tearing off one of its branches with incredibly ferocity

'Not really', he said.

2.

Amid the midnight neon and the motorway flyovers of Tokyo, the incessant thrum of feet on the busy pavements, the night itself an electric pulse of brash branding, logos, cartoon charms and corporate magic, I found the doorway to the capsule hotel, the Paracetamol, between a gaming arcade and a brightly lit vending machine selling live koi carp. The front desk was automated and I booked in using my credit card, taking a lift up to the fifth floor, where a sign on the wall, accompanied by an over-the-top cartoon caricature of a hotel porter who also happened to be a giant panda, reminded me to be quiet, respectful to the other guests, and to take care of my own personal hygiene.

My backpack almost didn't fit in the locker provided, and then I realised that the locker that I was trying to cram it into was actually my room for the night. A mounded plastic bunk into which had been added a television, the bed, control panels for the heating, some robes. I put on the robes and went wandering around the corridors of the Paracetamol. As well as showers, bathrooms and a row of vending machines, (instant noodles, books, lanyards, and what looked like weasels), there was a small lounge right in the very corner of the building, looking down on one of the busy intersections below in all its neon glory.

There was only one other person in the lounge. I sat down on one of the soft cushioned sofas and I looked out the plate glass window at the intensify and madness of the city. I then looked at the other person and I let out a gasp.

'Jack!'

'Yes?'

'Remember me?'

He kind of frowned.

'Paya de los Aquafresh? We hid in the rhododendrons during the thunderstorm'

that time!

His face lit up.

'Yes! I remember! My god! We sheltered in the rhododendrons . . . And that lightning bolt took a branch off a tree right next to us!'

'What are you doing out here?'

'I'm in a business meeting with the RSPCRHB'.

'I thought that was a joke . . .'

'Deeply serious'.

'What are the two extra letters?'

'They've let in hydrangeas and certain types of buddleia since I last saw you'.

'I can't believe you're here!'

He got up and joined me on the sofa and sat right next to me. And it felt good, his being there. In our robes, loose fitting and comfortable, it felt almost as if we were naked. How amazing! Two souls, coming together in spite of all the odds.

'I often think about that night', I tell him.

'Really? I can't remember much about it'.

'The storm, and the rain . . . And being with you'.

He smiled. We were both speaking softly now, hushed tones in case we were to wake any of the other people staying at the Paracetamol, but the hushed tones could very well have been the purred small talk of love.

'You said slink, remember that?'

'I did'

'And then shimmy'.

'That's right'.

I was so happy. I felt like putting my arm around his shoulders.

'You see, I would have said something different. Plunge, perhaps, or even hide. Or shelter. Let's shelter in these rhododendrons. But the way you said it . . .'

'Yes?'

'It hinted at something different'.

'This is a very weird conversation'.

'Is it?'

'A conversation about a conversation, and that conversation itself was mostly about the conversation that we were having'.

'I don't see why you've had to bring this up now'.

'Well, it's not like we're going to be meeting up again, is it?'

'Why not?'

'I . . . Don't know'.

'Do you think', I asked, 'that this is a sign from the universe? That we should be together forever?'

Because all of a sudden, once again, I was caught up in the sheer magic of the moment.

He was quiet for a couple of seconds, and maybe it's my imagination, but he kind of snuggled towards me on the sofa, his body getting ever so slightly closer to mine.

And at that moment, a sudden bolt of lightning was hurled from the overcast sky,

lighting up the traffic intersection and the lounge with incredible ferocity, hitting the neon sign directly opposite from us of a cartoon duck advertising some local brand of shampoo. And before our eyes the cartoon duck sizzled, smoked and swung on its screws, turning upside down, unlit, where it pendulumed from side to side.

'Not really', he said.

3.

By my third day in the tiny Arctic community, I'd already worked out that there wasn't really much to do. The small huts, shacks and prefabricated homes sat shivering in the snowdrifts by the frozen sea, and it was dark by two in the afternoon. Once I'd visited the Museum of Permafrost and had a look around the art gallery built to resemble the tusk of a walrus, I'd more or less run out of activities.

My only solace was the town library, a quaint prefabricated structure whose tiny lit windows created elongated squares in the fallen snow. I'd found a quiet corner, in between Arabic Numerology and Paranormal Studies, where I could sit near a radiator and read the hours away.

And this is what I was doing, one never ending afternoon after dark, when I looked up and . . .oh, for heaven's sake.

'Jack?!'

'You!', he said.

And he just kind of stood there for a bit in his big Arctic survival suit, and I stood, and we faced each other across the town library.

'What are you . . .?'

'Rhododendrons ', he replied. 'The feasibility of Arctic growth'.

'And?'

'None'.

'I can't believe it's you!'

His face relaxed, and he came over and sat next to me. The tiny window between us began to be speckled by another snow shower, each fleck illuminated by the library lights.

'The last time we met . . . in Tokyo . . . Do you remember?'

'Yes'.

'We had a conversation about having a conversation about the conversation we'd had in Paya de los Aquafresh, in which the conversation had been about the conversation'.

'And now we're having a conversation about those conversations'.

'Yes', I laughed, 'we so tend to have a lot of conversations'.

'No fear of any lightning today', he said, 'though it's just started snowing again'.

'It's so good to see you'.

'You too'.

'Thanks for letting me use your spork'.

'Yeah, no problem'.

And then the conversation kind of ran out of steam for a while, and we just sat there, listening to the sound of water in the heating system, the crunched footsteps of people walking in the snow.

It was good to see him. The padded layers of his Arctic survival suit gave him a sudden cuddly physicality. I could hardly believe that he was there, that we're together yet again, but it had happened twice before and yet again I could feel the planet turning, the magic of existence itself funnelling down, very much like the aurora borealis itself, and this isolated community. I looked past him, to the reception area of the library where librarians were busying themselves, and a poster warned of the drawbacks of trying to pet a polar bear. The same old question seemed to press itself up from deep within me, into my vocal chords before it got a chance to be processed by my brain.

'Jack', I said.

He gulped.

'Do you think . . .?'

'I'll have to stop you right there', he said.

The two of us smile at each other. In the pallid fluorescent glow of the Arctic community library, he looked serene, playful. I could hear someone moving bins outside and it sounded like thunder, but it wasn't.

'I think I'll saunter out in a bit', I say to him, 'and see if I can get any dinner'.

'Saunter?'

'Yes? What's wrong with that?'

'Nothing, it's just . . . A very strange word'.

'What should I have said? Mooch? Jimmy?'

'I don't know, it's just . . .I mean, of all the words you could have chosen . . .'

The snow was coming down increasingly heavy now and piling up on the little windowsill.

'I'll come with you, though', he said, after a short while.

a bottle
of pears
a pair of
bottles



DISPATCH - William Telford

So, going out at night the medics would give me some pills, but I never took them because, I mean, why would I? The thrill of being in contact was more than enough speed than I could handle. And it was double so after dark, on the Search and Destroy, them doing the destroying, me doing the searching, as in soul.

So there we were, me and Mendez and Sweet Spot and Sweet Spot was taking off his big helmet and looking at me askance and saying, 'You really dun have to be here, man, really, you dun?' And I was trying to tell him that no, I really didn't have to be there. 'You really a correspondent?' he said, drawling the word until it sounded like 'coorespondunt', the way he talked it was all like that, syllables strung out like they were well chewed gum. And Mendez said, 'Alls I'm saying man is I can't get my head into thinking how no one's who's not a grunt would want to be in this godforsaken jungle.' Well, I said, someone has to tell the folks back home about how their taxes are being spent.

And Sweet Spot just spat out a big long rope of phlegm and said, 'Shoot bro, that ain't wha's gonna happen, you's all gonna tell the way the empire dudes wants it, not the ways it is.' And I didn't say anything because I knew he was right. I was embedded, that was that, every sweet word written would be read, re-wrote and approved before getting filed.

There was a cracking sound, delicate, like a matchstick snapping, and with light-speed speed Mendez and Sweet Spot were down, blasters raised and hissing at each other through sign language. I froze and noticed the ink wasn't coming out onto my pad, maybe due to the chill, or maybe my pen itself was afraid stiff.

'Yo, kill that fire,' Mendez snarled at me, and I turned off my helmet torch and tried to become a tree.

Silence.

About 30 seconds later Sweet Spot stood and spat. 'Shoot bro,' he said. 'Ain't nothin, jus us gettin jumpy.'

'Yeah, been that way since we was in base and they hit us bad,' said Mendez. 'You'd think we'd be safe and alls, whole planet-sized base and alls, hundreds of thousands of grunts, armed to the balls, man, and they's just waltz in and wastes a whole bunch of us.'

'Yeah,' said Sweet Spot, as he spat again. 'Six of em there was, jus rolled in on some pulled over freighter. Old dude, some kid, wisecrackin dude had a dame's haircut, coupla droids, some big furry fella.'

'S'right,' said Mendez, rolling one, lighting it. 'Just took that broad straight outta there. We ain't gonna win this war.' He nodded at me, held out the reefer. 'Hey, jus cos you's a coorespondunt dun mean you can't take a toke,' Sweet Spot said, his smile broad and white and bright beneath the twin moons.

THE NEW NORMAL - Sam Richards

In the new normal
Everyone will see the dawn,
Hear the birds sing,
Understand the words of their songs,
Stroll through mornings and afternoons
Like a slow piano drag
And at the end of the day,
See the sunset
And fall in love again:
The new normal
Is a place of wonder.

In the new normal
The lion and the lamb
Will step the light fandango
Swigging a brighter shade of ale,
Presidents, premieres and prime ministers
Will learn the steps
Stiffly at first
But when they find their feet
Will smile new smiles
That they last smiled
When they were little babies:
The new normal
Is a place of love
And wonder.

In the new normal
Everyone will be cared for -
The more care you need
The more you get.
The slogan will be:
Care is not just for Christmas -
It's in the air we breathe,
The grub we eat
And everyone will get peaceburgers
With extra fries -
No exceptions,
All free, gratis
And served with great big ladles of good will
And loving spoonfuls of rock and roll,
Jazz and boogie.
The new normal
Is a place of innocence,
Love and wonder.

In the new normal
We'll all care about what we can't see
As much as what we can,
And we'll know that what we can see
Is made by what we can't;
The air will be clear,
The sea will be fresh and strong,
Pollution will be taught about
In history books,
Safe, clean energy
Will give us clean, safe energy
For living our lives.
The new normal
Is a place of life,
Innocence, love
And wonder.

In the new normal
Politicians will be fitted with lie detectors,
There will be public health warnings
On all election addresses,
Banks will be turned into pleasuredomes,
The Foreign Office will be staffed by foreigners
There'll be jobs to spare
Because everyone's happy without them,
Teachers will be taught by children,
Capitalism will be the dirty underwear
You left under the bed ages ago
And is now gathering fluff,
Religions will be left to get on with it
As long as they let the rest of us get on with it too.
Universities will pay students to attend,
Work will be abolished
And no one will miss it,
Conspiracy theorists will get their brains back - unwashed,
Where there was money there'll be music
You'll never get to the end of the lollipop
And the new normal
Is a place of delight,
Life, innocence, love
And plenty
And plenty
And plenty of
Wonder.

