

I collect these unlikely gems, each unique and different. The impossible shine fades to matt after a few days. The seasonal worry beads invite touch. I reach to make contact.

(From "Untold Stories": Mary, 30th September 2021)

Practice: again and again and again. The discipline, ritual and ordered attention, alignment and sequencing. Begin here... falter.... Begin again. Next... and then...

Trust that each is in the right place and that the urgency (is it mine or others?) will dissipate.

In my mind and body, as on the page, focuses overlap and interject, thoughts take off and run at cross-purposes, impressions bend and break, all the pasts come rushing together, ideas are back to front, incomplete, unfinished.

Trust that what is happening makes sense, even if I can't recognise what sense it is making.

(From "Behind closed doors I dream": Mary 1stth July 2021)

All the untold stories – the history, the tree, the fruit, the jam and stewed fruit, the chats with neighbours over the pretext of gifts of fruit, the loss of the name of the fruit, or this pale golden colour, the tedious time spent removing tiny, clinging stones.



(From "Untold Stories", Mary: 30th September 2021)

I am the pebble, interrupting the system that flows around me. Do I shape the system, irritating, requiring adjustment, new paths, new patterns of flow around me? Or does the system shape me, polishing and refining, pushing and repositioning, scraping and chafing, eventually burying me in the sediment or depositing me on the boundary? What is the balance in this push and pull?

(From Recognising and continuing, open and receive, invitation and response, holding and letting go": Mary. 19th August 2021)



Stand in the middle
Look at the reflection.

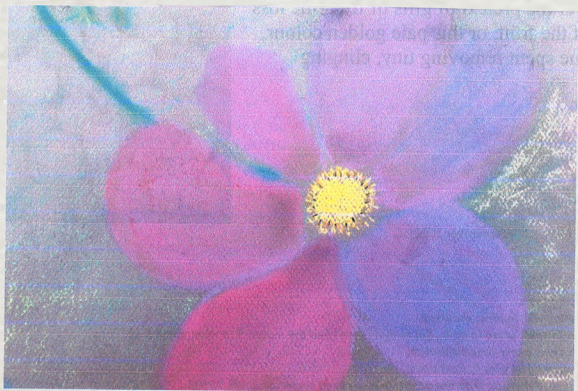
Where does the fracture
start?
What does it reveal?

What does it evoke in me?
What memories, traces,
echoes, shadows?
Follow the line.

From: "Scraps and Scripts": Mary, 3rd August 2021)

... the grain, the wear, the evidence of life. Here, the mould where I left the damp flowerpot for too long; here, the faded red marker where a small boy didn't stay on the page; here, the impression of the cast iron pot too hot to hold; here, the faint rings of the red wine glass; turmeric; blood

(From "Crack in the Landscape": Mary 28th July 2021)



*From Alyson Hallett's poem: "Conversation with a Pebble"

Ideas of what water
Can be. I am hiding
memory, it says.*

(From "Behind closed doors I dream", Mary: 14th July 2021)

This learned script:
trying to catch myself, to catch myself up, to catch myself on
trying not to be caught, not to be caught out
to catch my breath, to catch my thoughts
The to-do list, forever undone, more undone stuff accumulating
Things take time

(From "Time": Mary, 8th July 2021)

Please note:
Our manner of thinking, possibilities, reasoning are included
There is no requirement to revisit that which we may have missed along the way

(From "Coast to Coast": Mary, 19th July 2021)

It struck me how often they must have returned up and down this hill for what must have felt like an endless, repetitive and backbreaking task: a pilgrimage in itself. I remember feeling grateful for the care and the craft of their endeavour. It seems to me to be a curatorial process of sorts - how to find those stones that could be shaped and re-located into a new pattern of relationship, elsewhere.



(From "Re-Visiting/Re-Attuning": Kevin, 18th October 2021)

As I looked back at the 14 written pieces. It struck me that these would not easily release any specific parts from their wholes. Through my eyes, they are not meant for extraction or repurposing. But then again it made me question whether I have the necessary perspective of detachment.

The curator by necessity can see fragments and concepts (meta-themes?) that the creator cares not to see. It brings the possibility of reframing and new juxtapositions. It too is sacred work - a different kind of pilgrimage towards something new. But it needs the stones to be released from the earth of which they are part.

I am left wondering about the nature of creativity and what is experienced as a release or a continuing tension. I am curious too about our relationship to time. In my practice I have noticed how it often becomes the chief architect of our fantasies and our constraints and yet we rarely stop to notice it. It just sits there unquestioned with its authority, and its hold over our existential sense of being, when we are trying to find a way through together.

(From "Time takes a...", Kevin: 8th July 2021)

"Your turn. Now yours. Now yours.... Are you done? Ok let's move on"
This virtual working feels unreal. Talking to initials and frozen faces.
Where's the flesh. Where's the blood? Where am I in all of this?

(From "Untold Stories": Kevin, 1st October 2021)

It puts me in mind of the gentle storms and downpours in our lives that we keep patching up - those we say we will one day attend to before the cracks reappear again.

And then we get to the point where we decide we might as well live with it. Put the buckets out if needed. Perhaps this is what I have learned to do. As if I know just where to position them so that any damage is minimised.

(From "A Crack in the Landscape": Kevin 31st July 2021)

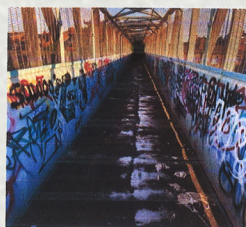


And I remember how impressed I was that the builder had somehow allowed a lot more space for the tree to 'breathe'.

And yet within a year the gap had disappeared again. The tree had been drawing the wall back in as if to say:

"You are missing the point, you fools!"

(From "Compression", Kevin: 2nd July 2021)



My trace was the metallic resonance of the echo from the over pronounced scraping and thudding of my feet. Then I was gone. Back down the steps onto the concrete mundanity of the street on the other side.

Somehow it felt liberating to make a conscious noise and to exaggerate it with no one to witness my childish stomping.

From: Total Recall": Kevin, 17th June 2021)

It is pathetic. Yet it's my ordeal. And I'd miss it if it was no longer there.

(From "Staying the Course": Kevin, 16 Sept 2021)



(From "Behind closed doors", Kevin: 9th June 2021)

At the end of last Summer, I ended up with this.

It cost £2.99 in a sad looking gift shop in Bideford.

It is smaller than it looks. Fits in the palm of your hand.

Two miniature painted birds sat on a spring perch.

With their 'shit'/shit between them on the floor of a small wicker cage.

They even tremble a little.

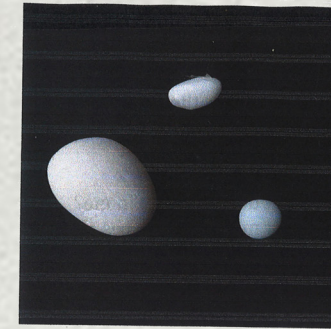
But where might it lead me if I were to continue with the thread of 'cages', of 'birds on a wire' or even the effluent of our lives that seem impossible to discard with any grace?

From "The Great Doubt": Kevin, 24th June 2021

And see how its movement in reverse reveals new patterns and equilibriums.

(From the side line, Marie, 14 nov 2021)

And the pebbles recur in my practice as scraps and scripts at the same time. Scraps of material tying together affective memory, physical spaces, times, walks, thoughts. Pebbles are sites where times and scales jiggle. Another poem echoing here.



(From "scraps and scripts, Marie)

I now know that the specific of time and space is unique and will result in a unique expression. Trusting that uniqueness is the best I can do to come into a flow. Trusting that each moment has a potential for expression if I'm able to concentrate and listen. Listening to what fills the moment; listening to how it resonates in conversation with the archives I'm part of conscious ones and unconscious ones.

(From "Where do I start", Marie)

The lake is squeezed in between the highway and the airport, and yet, its space breathes time.

I'm floating on the lake, attuned to my breath, to my weight, to the water mass carrying me. This practice of attunement enables me to find the rhythm that will keep me floating, feeling my body sink as I exhale, attuned to the water rising on my face, then inhaling again before the water reaches my nose and mouth, and feeling my body rise to the surface. In that rhythm, time expands in the presence of the moment. I do not know how long each breath takes, I only know the feeling of falling and rising, as if the water catches me in free fall, pushing me back towards the sky, ready to catch me each time.

(From "Time", Marie)

A start is a response of some sort.
... Trusting that not knowing will, in time, show me.
Not knowing is an uncomfortable place to be in. But in that place I find the material to work things out.
Each time, it feels like this was a one-time inspiration.
Each time, I wonder whether I'll be able to do it again.
But I know that the practice is stronger than the doubt. And so I keep responding.

(From "Where do I start", Marie)

Compilation of accidents: a poem

The rain makes the world creak, unfold

I stand still, words
escaping me. I stand
still because of the violin,
the flute, the cymbals. I stand
still because of the noise that moves
up the hall like wind before the storm. Everything
is put to the side. Everything is there to nag me, to yell at
me, to draw me in, but tonight, I'm not interested. Tonight, whatever
the orchestra says, I sit still, looking by the window at the water and the sky.
The rain makes the world creak, unfold, and it seems for a while that missing in the count
now counts as one. One symphonia. One that stands, there where false members fall while every
name goes up. Mimicry is the oldest trick in the book, or perhaps I should say collage, bricolage,
this flow depending on a list of words staring on the white screen next to me. We have one
life, why spend it being feebly decent when juxtaposing the words of others creates
this tapestry that makes me smile, bringing a note of play at the end of a day
when daily chores threatened to close on me. There is a trap door
I've seen before, and if ninety percent of what's wrong with
you may have to do with the world standing in a
harness for too long, my grief awaits me
right here, underneath my feet,
where the ground disappears
in a whoosh_

The ground disappears
in a whoosh, right here, underneath
my feet. My grief awaits me, the world harnessed
for too long, the trap door of daily chores that threatens to close
on me. Juxtaposing words creates this tapestry that makes me smile, bringing
a note of play. We have one life, why spend it being feebly decent, when collage and bricolage
are the oldest trick in the book. Names go up while false members fall. A symphonia where missing
in the count now counts as one, just like when the rain makes the world creak, unfold. Tonight,
whatever the orchestra says, I will sit still, looking by the window at the water and the sky.
Everything is there to nag me, to yell at me, to draw me in, but tonight, I'm not_
Everything is put to the side, except for the noise that moves up the hall
like the wind before the storm. I stand still because of the violin,
because of the flute, the cymbals. Words escape me
at the threshold of time_

(From: "stay in confusion long enough for clarity to emerge, Marie, Amsterdam, 14/07/2021)

I came out of the sea with new hair on my head. These algae were mesmerizingly beautiful in their wildness.

(From "from coast to coast", Marie)

OPEN II

This issue is a development of work which started on the Tavistock Institute's 'Deepening Creative Practice with Organisations' programme:

<https://www.tavinstitute.org/what-we-offer/professional-development/deepening-creative-practice/>

Marie Beauchamps, Kevin Power and Mary Rafferty, participants on this programme, have continued their collaboration since working together to produce OPEN Issue 1 in May 2021.

"We have deepened our creative practice using a mixture of formal structures and emergent processes"

OPEN II started with accidental scripts. We used the practice and discipline of meeting every week and producing written work between each meeting. A body of writing and images was created over time, in an ongoing rhythm of gesture and response. We made a selection from this body of work, noticing the patterns that emerged. The curatorial work of ordering and re-ordering the elements revealed new aspects of our work together. Metaphors of musical forms helped us to think about the work as a series of movements, with distinct characteristics and themes within each movement and with different movements in conversation with each other, mobilising and revealing different kinds of attunement.

We stay with the experiment to see what emerges, paying attention to the influence of time, trust, availability and other constraints.

The work continues.

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