

# AUTITUDE!



INFO AND ADVICE!  
MOVIES! ART!  
AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

# WELCOME!

**Welcome to the latest issue of Autitude!**

**Don't forget, if you have any artwork, photography, poetry or stories you would like to share, or perhaps an autistic idol that you think should feature as our Spectrum Superstar send them to us at [autitude@scottishautism.org](mailto:autitude@scottishautism.org).**

**To make sure you are updated when the latest edition is released please sign up here – thank you!**

**Scottish  
autism**

**WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE  
ARE VALUED**

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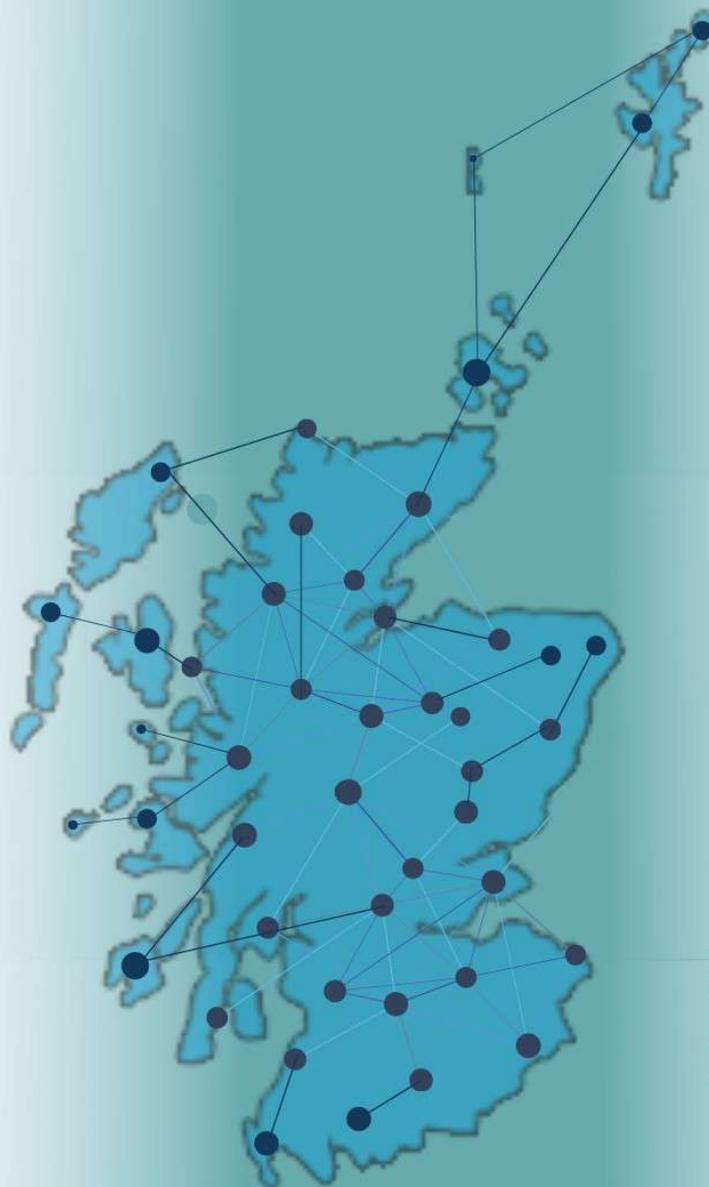
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Scottish  
autism  
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE  
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Book your place for Click & Connect Block 6 taking place from July to September!

These online events aim to help the autistic community and families in Scotland to stay connected.

All group sessions run via Zoom and are free to join.

## **Mindfulness for Autism**

**Mindfulness for Autism is a strengths-focused mindfulness approach that provides recovery and counteracts the negative sensory impact of the world for autistic adults and their carers. It also aims to reduce the impact of stress, isolation and fragmentation in autistic people and family members/carers of autistic people and aims to break this negative cycle, helping people to live a more self-aware, empowered and fulfilling life.**

**The group will take place every Tuesday morning\* from 19th July until 20th September, 10am - 11am. \*excluding 23<sup>rd</sup> August.**

## **Online Art Group**

**The Art Group is open to autistic people and their families and aims to bring people together for creative expression in an informal and safe environment. It offers the chance for a mindful break from the day's worries and can help to reduce stress. Join our online Art Group taking place every Wednesday from 20th July until 21st September, 5pm - 6.30pm.**

## **Virtual Choir Group**

**If you're a music lover who enjoys singing, come along and share music with others in a fun, no pressure environment. This group is for autistic people and their families in Scotland, and all ages and abilities are welcome!**

**Join our Virtual Choir group taking place every Thursday evening from 14th July until 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 5pm - 6pm.**

## **Autism Support Group**

**This is a guided support and dialogue group that uses guided mindfulness meditation and group conversation as a basis for stress recovery and improving relaxation and wellbeing. Come along and join our Autism Support Group for autistic individuals and family members of autistic people in Scotland. Run by Jonny Drury, the group will take place every Thursday\* 21st July until 22nd September, 1pm - 2.30pm. \*excluding 25th August.**

**Don't miss out, find out more and book your place now:  
[www.scottishautism.org/click-and-connect](http://www.scottishautism.org/click-and-connect)**

## Have Your Say on the Scottish Government Commissioner Proposal

We're calling on your views to shape the  
Commissioner proposal

Together with the National Autistic Society Scotland, we are collecting the views of autistic people, families and professionals on a new independently appointed Commissioner to promote and protect the rights of autistic people.

The survey aims to collect views which will be compiled into a report to influence politicians and the Scottish Government, as to the commissioner's role and responsibilities.

Take part in the survey today to help influence your  
Commissioner's role and responsibilities.

Visit:

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AutismCommissionerScotland22](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AutismCommissionerScotland22)



Take part in  
the survey!



National  
Autistic  
Society  
Scotland

Scottish  
autism  
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE  
ARE VALUED

## My Neurodiversity Journey Part 7

Darwin's book, "The Origin of Species" introduced the scientific theory that populations **evolve** over the course of generations through a process of natural selection. The book presented a body of evidence that the diversity of life arose by common descent through a branching pattern of evolution.

Darwin's theory consisted of two main points;

1) diverse groups of animals **evolve** from one or a few common ancestors;

2) the mechanism by which this **evolution** takes place is natural selection.

Given that humans were on all fours away back then, **evolving** to standing on our own two feet.

The names, labels and language used to describe Neurodivergent's may have changed over time; and will probably change again. **Evolving.**

The Mental Health Act 1983 (England & Wales) *"provides a legal framework to authorize the detention for assessment and compulsory treatment of people who have a mental health disorder and are considered at risk of harm to themselves or others"*

The Mental Health Act 1983 England & Wales (as amended, most recently by the Mental Health Act 2007):

*“Is designed to give health professionals the powers, in certain circumstances, to detain, assess and treat people with mental disorders in the interests of their health and safety or for public safety”.*

What are the main principles of the Mental Health Act 2007?

*“Least restrictive option and maximizing independence. Empowerment and involvement. Respect and dignity. Purpose and effectiveness”*

Does the mental health act 1983 apply in Scotland?

*“Only the parts of the Act defined in s. 146 have effect in Scotland. The care of mentally disordered people in Scotland is covered by the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003”.*

Click on link below for more info on Scotland Mental Health Act.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-mental-health-act-easy-read-guide/>

So, the Act is **evolving** in England & Wales with the consultation now concluded Reforming the Mental Health Act:

*“Changes to legislation: Mental Health Act 1983 (England & Wales) is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 05 August 2022. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date.”*

The two Psychiatry “Bibles” for mental global health diagnosis are: -

1) (DSM 5) The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, is the 2013 update to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,

2) (ICD-10) The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision is produced and maintained by the World Health Organisation (WHO). It was first mandated for use in the UK in 1995.

“The science is settled” is a saying that has been dropped into mainstream consciousness over the last few years.

The science is never settled as science is all about debate, testing theories, hypothesis, speculation and assumption based on quality and quantitatively researched and then peer reviewed, passed and implemented into legislation for better or for worse. etc.

After this protocol has been exhausted the “Experts” will disagree or offer alternatives or different perspectives. A healthy approach. **Evolving.**

However, we have to start somewhere. There are pros and cons in the diagnostic model currently used.

Like Darwin's theories which is still being debated today. Will the language and descriptions for Neurodivergent evolve too?

The science is never settled.

Nevertheless, we have already been labeled or stigmatized in some cases due to the language and descriptions used in the DSM 5 and ICD 10

Below I have copied and pasted an extract from Dr. Lucy Series Socio-legal academic at Cardiff University.

Currently researching problems of empowerment in mental capacity law. The complete article can be found by clicking this link at the end of the extract. Well worth a read.

*“Removing people with learning disabilities and/or autism from mental health legislation has been a policy goal for organisations campaigning with and for these groups since the mid twentieth century, with roots in the late nineteenth century.*

*There are, broadly speaking, two main reasons for this. Firstly, a sense that properly speaking mental health legislation is not properly ‘about’ this population; that the ‘mental disorder’ defined in [s1 MHA](#) refers to people with ‘mental illnesses’ such as schizophrenia, bipolar, depression etc,*

***and not*** *lifelong disabilities such as learning disability and autism.*

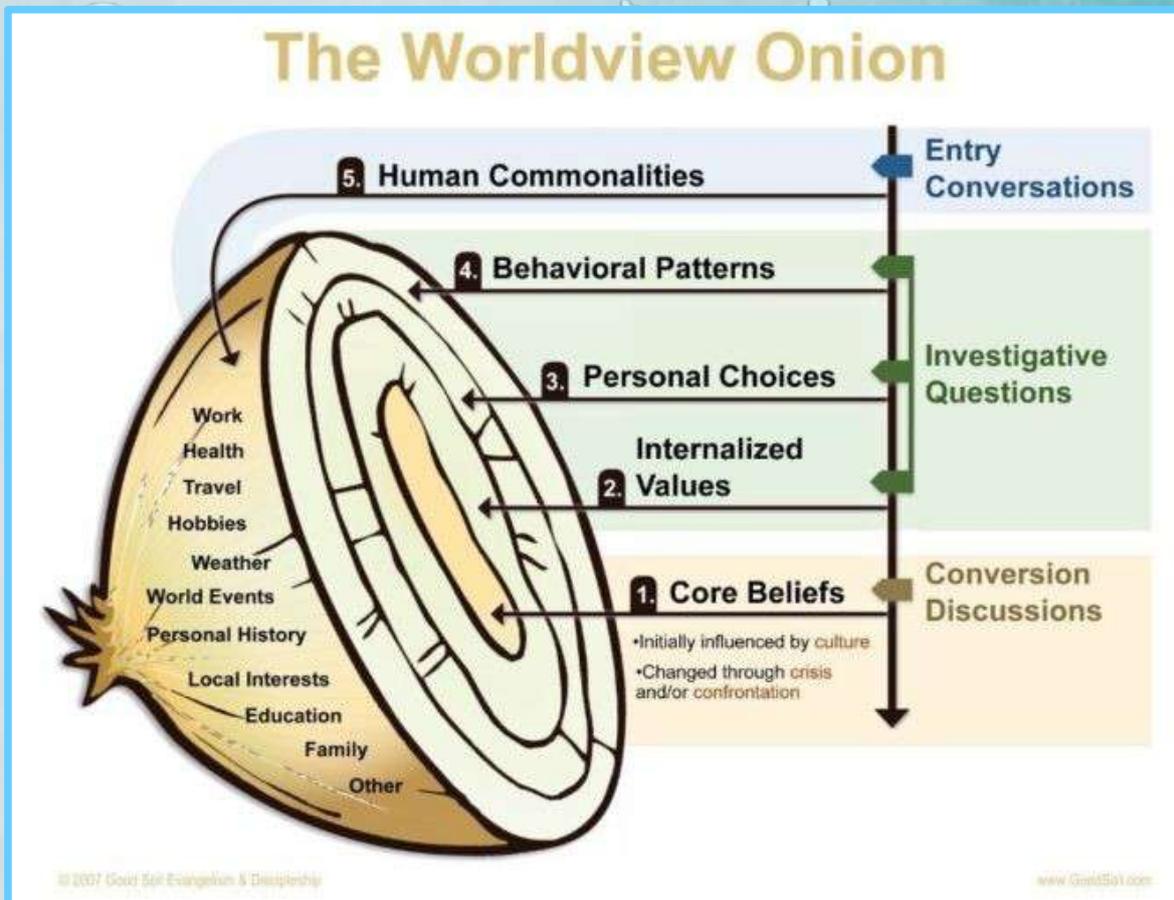
*That it is therefore wrong to apply 'mental health' legislation, with all its stigma, to people who are disabled and not experiencing 'mental health' issues.*

*The second concern is that too many people with learning disabilities and autism are still incarcerated in inappropriate hospital 'care' - ATUs (Acute Treatment Units) like Winterbourne View and Whorlton Hall.*

*Today, many of these people are detained under the MHA, so it is natural to assume that if people with learning disabilities and/or autism are removed from scope of the MHA, they might be free to leave."*

<https://thesmallplaces.wordpress.com/2021/03/18/unintended-consequences-of-taking-people-with-learning-disabilities-and-or-autism-out-of-scope-of-the-mental-health-act-1983/>

Like the onion we have to peel back the layers to EVOLVE



In the last issue I wrote the following requirements.

Since then, I have thought of a 4<sup>th</sup> requirement that encapsulates and packages a new way forward for all Neurodivergent's.

I strongly believe the narrative should now move on from the successful campaigns of: - **AUTISM AWARENESS OR ACCEPTANCE**

TO: - **ACCOMMODATION Plus +++ Adopting the Social Model.**

We all have a role to play in seeking the appropriate **ACCOMMODATION** by **Adopting the Social Model**

**The 4 A's**

**1) Awareness**

**2) Acceptance**

**3) Accommodation**

**4) Adopting Social Model**



Scotland is **evolving** too as the Scottish Government stated in their last Manifesto.

*“The **Scottish Government has pledged to create a Learning Disability, Autism & Neurodiversity Commissioner in this Parliament**, as well as bringing forward legislation that will delineate support & services from existing mental health legislation & ensure that human rights are protected & promoted”.*

Personally; I would wish an Autistic Lawyer who specialises in social care and mental health. The Pre-Consultation has started.

Wholly independent with a panel of lived experienced specialists in their field with executive powers and authority to ensure Scotland’s neurodivergent’s human rights are protected.

Would Darwin be saying “Scotland is **evolving**”? I hope so.

Until the next issue, stay safe and be kind to yourself and gentle to those around you.

David Yeoman – Blogger & Volunteer; Scottish Autism, Contributor @ Autism Advisory Forum, Consultant at Dyslexia Scotland. Advisor / Consultant Autistic Knowledge Development.

## All A Blur.

Hi all, Ash here with a short aside now that might – or might not, it's your choice, I'm not your mum – be of interest to those wanting a wee peek into the fabled 'Arty Autistic Mindset'.

Or more likely just interested in art in general.

Either way, knock yersel' oot as they cry up here.

Top music-type fella – and all round nice bloke – Paul Laird has recently released a new book entitled *The Birth and Impact of Britpop*.

And why are you telling me this? I hear you ask.

Well type but you get the picture.

It's because I did the illustrations for it and it's kinda interesting as to why I got so excited when Paul approached me.

You see when I get approached to do a project the one thing I need to find (in order to actually do it) is a personal 'hook' – no matter what the subject matter or style it has to be something that gets me excited.

Simply put if I don't feel I 'get' the subject (even in a small way) then I can't do it because I know it'll turn out utter rubbish.

Which is possibly why I'm not rich seeing as the thought of drawing something just for the money scares the life out of me, I have images of the ghost of Jack Kirby angrily wagging a pencil reminding me that "With great power comes great responsibility..." or something.

Things like Frightfest or Cine-Excess are a no-brainer (I dig horror flicks!), with Get Your Genki I'm basically given free reign (robots! cuteness! cool fashions! obscure fonts!) but when it comes to projects like my installations for Glasgow museums it gets a wee bit interesting.

Take the Glasgow refugee and asylum seekers project for example.



The daunting prospect of trying to encapsulate (however briefly) some of the experiences/feelings of the refugee/asylum seekers group I worked with was made easier when I found out one of the members had briefly worked in West Bromwich – as I had as a teen....that 'click' moment and his realisation that I wasn't from Glasgow either opened up a great avenue for chat that – for me – made the project much more personal.

When it came to the Castlemilk Parish Men's Group project (on the regeneration and development of Castlemilk from 1950s to the present day) the thing that first struck me was the huge fireplace upon entering Castlemilk Stables.

The ornate wooden carved knights engaged in a bloody battle seemed at odds with a project about urban renewal so I just had to ask about before diving in to research it myself.



Turns out it depicts the siege of Orleans in 1429 where Sir William Stewart (Stuart) of Castlemilk and his brother, Sir John, both died in the service of the Dauphin who later became King Charles VII of France.

As we all know, Joan of Arc's victory at Orleans was her first battle within three months of her initial meeting with the Dauphin and is regarded as one of the decisive battles of world history.

You can read more about it – and the Cassiltoun Trust – [here](#) by the way.

Putting being a huge Joan of Arc fanboy (no really) aside for a second, the history of the fireplace – and the fact that it was rescued from a flooded lock-up (!) – just made me want to draw everything about it.

I think you get the idea.



Anyway, with that in mind let's go back to Britpop and what spark fired in my brain to make me jump into the project when Paul asked.

And it may not be why you think.

And possibly way more convoluted.

You see one of the things I've always done, from when I was first bought a chunky Walkman-style cassette player as a kid is, whenever going on trips/out shopping etc is to put together enough music to cover the entire length of the journey.

Shopping trips to Birmingham, day trips to Blackpool – you name it, I'd figured out the journey time and popped enough cassettes together to last.

Originally I used to do it with Doctor Who stories recorded off the TV (yes, I know) but that meant I was either stuck to 90 minutes and would have to replay bits or I'd be left hanging when the journey went over/under the episode time.

Music, therefore was much easier to manage.



So, let's head back to late 95/early 96 and I'm running an arts/play session 3 times a week in 'sunny' Pollok which means a subway and bus journey there and back, sometimes at rush hour but always around the same length.

Mix tapes ahoy.

The same ones.

Every. Single. Day.



The fact that I still didn't have a diagnosis at this point kinda makes me worry for the medical profession if I'm honest.

As you can imagine, at the same point (give or take a minute or so) I'd hear the same song as I passed certain landmarks or buildings and as the bus went by a certain street near Kinning Park This Is A Low by Blur would be playing.

3 times a week for 3 months.

Luckily it's my favourite Blur song.

I mean come on it takes a certain type of songwriter to write something so amazing using the shipping forecast as inspiration.

Now this is where it gets really interesting...or bizarre, take your pick.

You see, on Valentine's Day 1996 (3 minutes past midnight to be precise/really Autistic) I met my wife Rho for the first time and much excited chat and coffee drinking ensued.

During one of those late night chats (that we still have) Rho admitted that she found it really hard to sleep if the room was silent so she'd listen to the world service at night to remind herself that the world still turned even during the night, adding that her favourite bit and the thing that was most likely to ease her into sleep was Sailing By, the music that proceeded the shipping forecast, the actual forecast itself – full of mysterious phrases like High Forth 1030 expected Dogger 1032 midday tomorrow and In east, moderate. in west, smooth at first in shelter otherwise slight to moderate only added to it's dream-like effect.

Cool 20-somethings bonding over the shipping forecast post-clubbing in a world where Born Slippy is the track of choice?

Who'd have thought it?

That's not all though as – and here's the really spooky bit – the street I would travel by as This Is A Low played?

That, it turned out was the street she lived in when we met.

Told you.

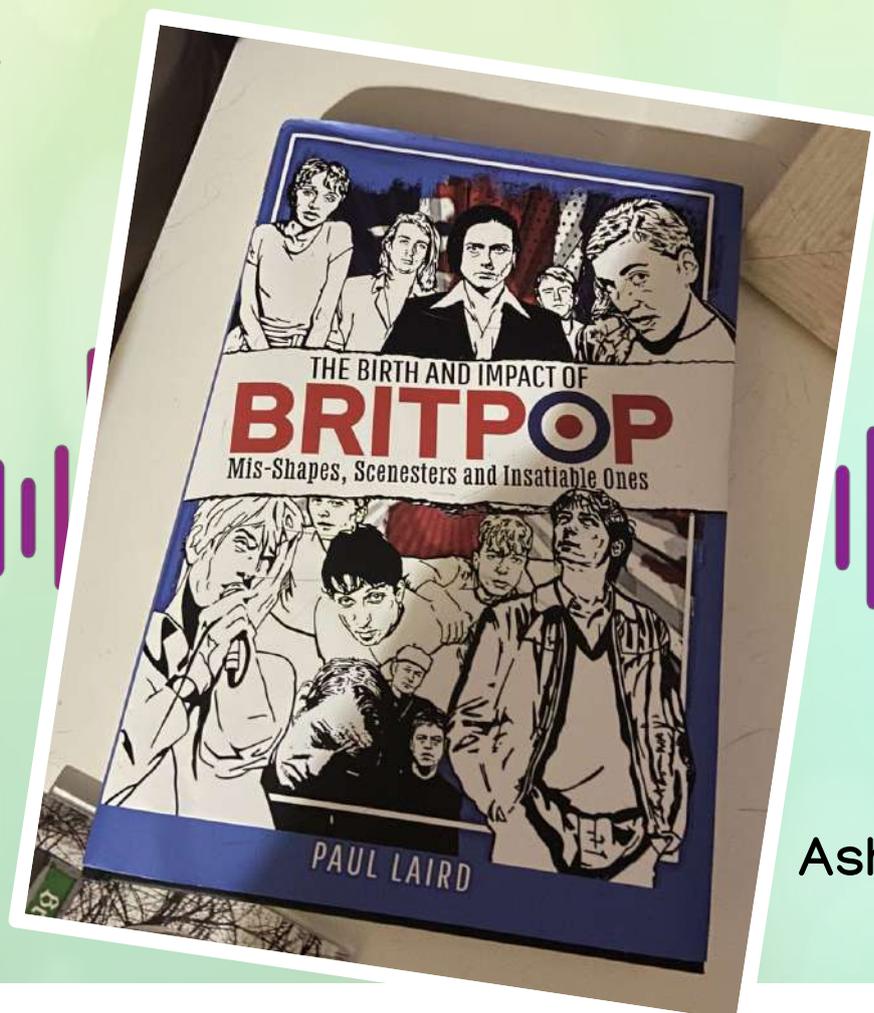
So when Paul asked me if I'd be interested I leaped at the chance as Britpop to me holds such a strong emotional memory.

Yes, to others it means a defining moment in pop culture but to me it will always be how that one song and that one monotonous bus journey actually fitted in to something bigger and utterly life changing.

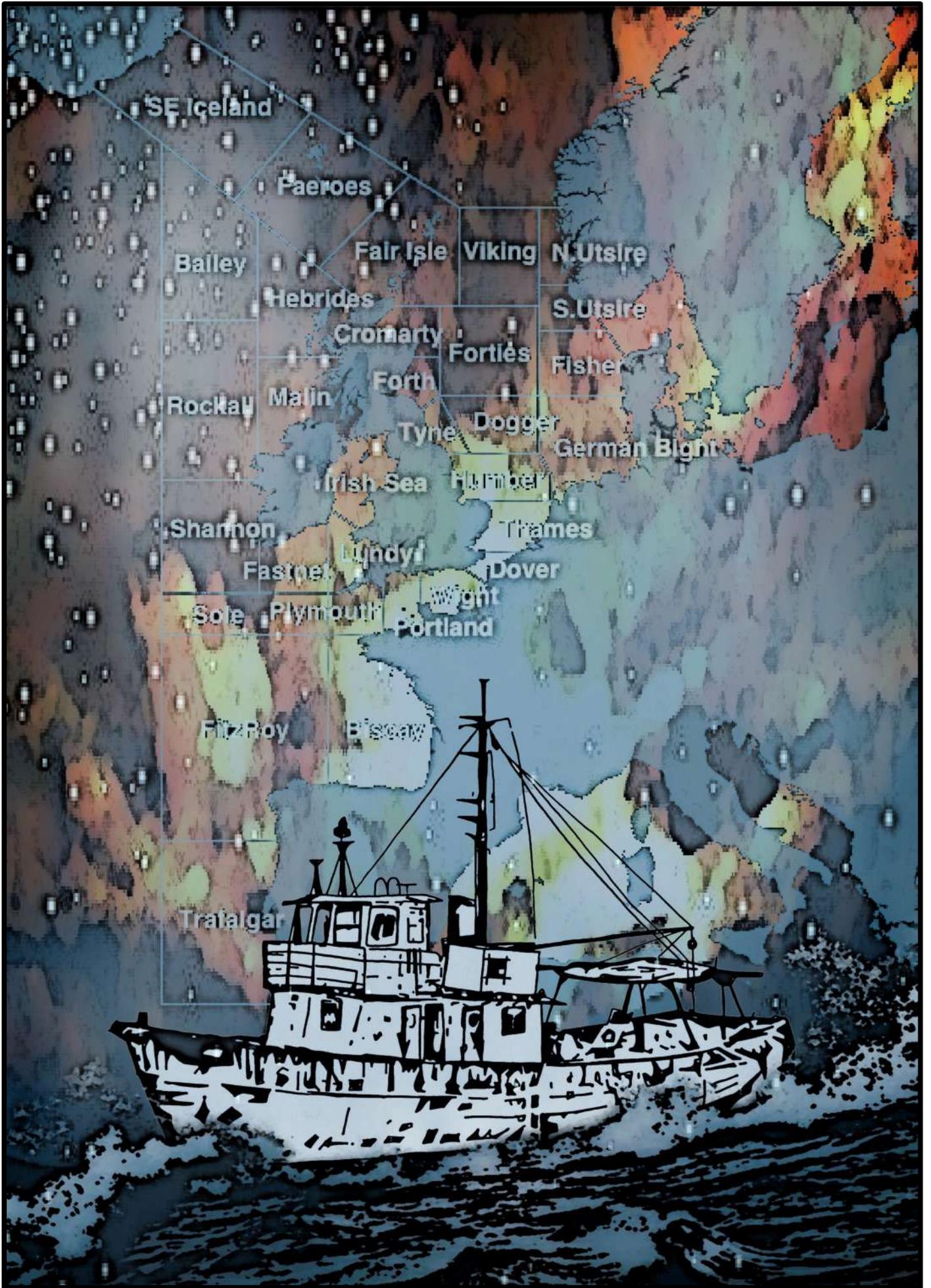
Maybe that's the power of music that people often talk about.

Or maybe it's me being totally Autistic!

Who knows?



Ash Loydon.

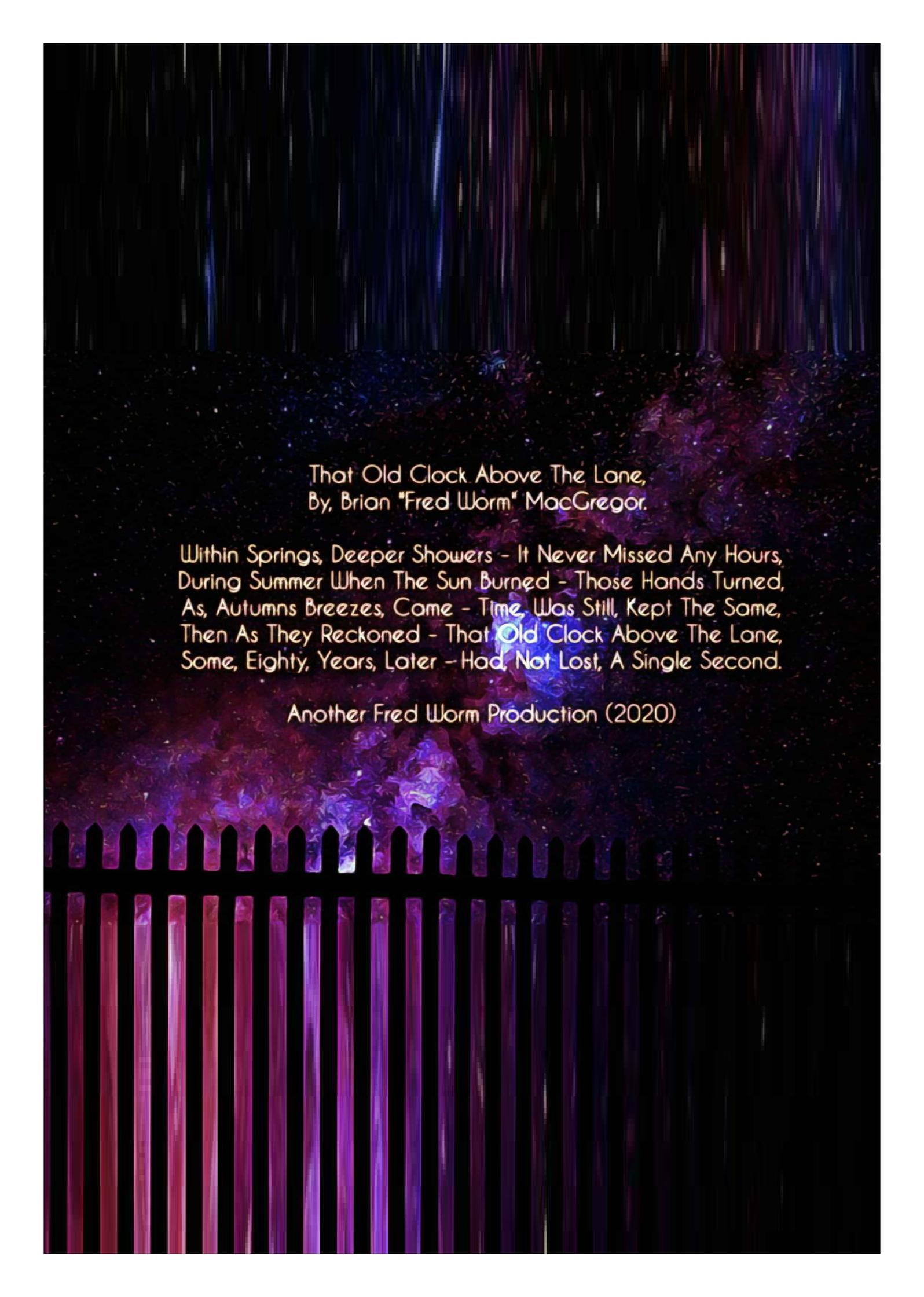


This Is A Low.



**A Great Critique Offers The Advice  
Those Worst Critics Criticism Wont.**

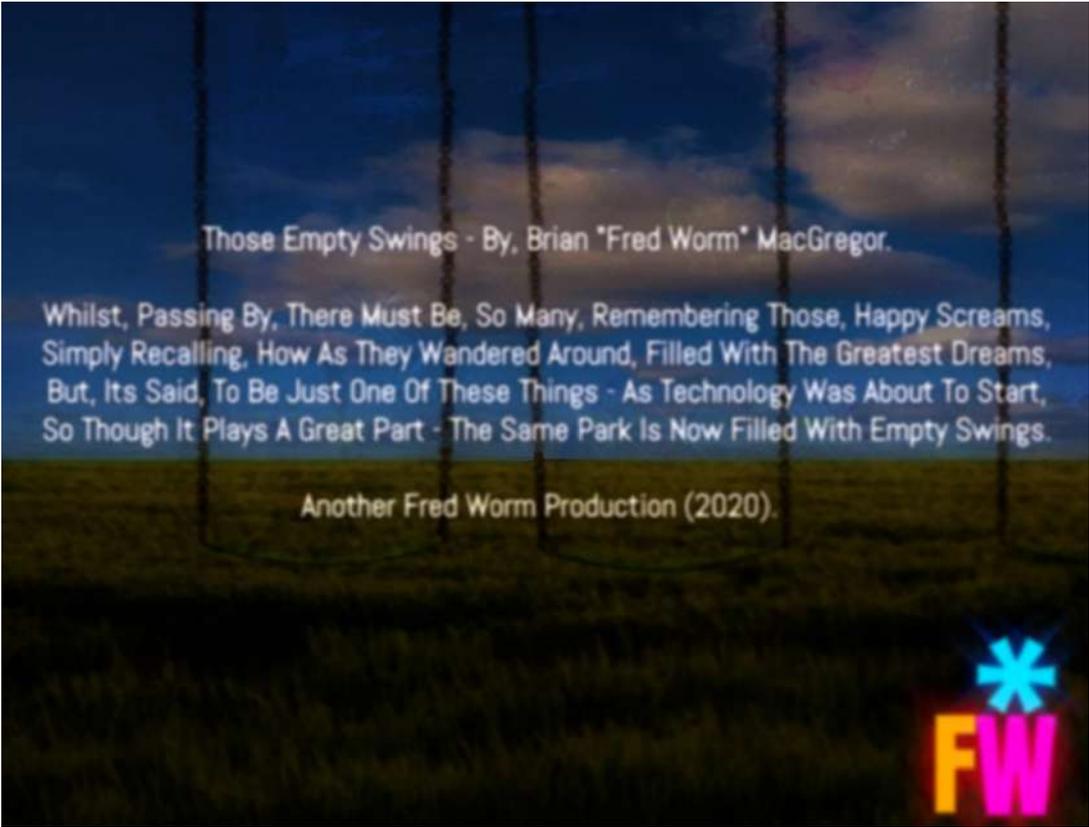
**Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.**



That Old Clock Above The Lane,  
By, Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

Within Springs, Deeper Showers - It Never Missed Any Hours,  
During Summer When The Sun Burned - Those Hands Turned,  
As, Autumns Breezes, Come - Time, Was Still, Kept The Same,  
Then As They Reckoned - That Old Clock Above The Lane,  
Some, Eighty, Years, Later - Had, Not Lost, A Single Second.

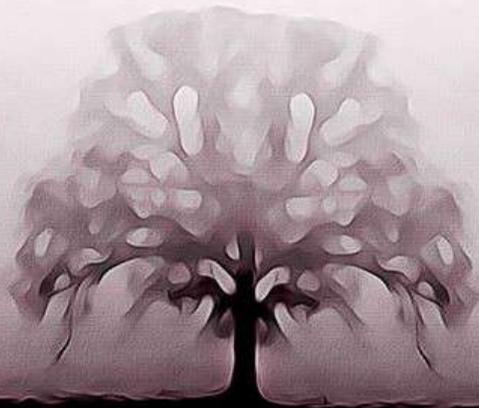
Another Fred Worm Production (2020)



Those Empty Swings - By, Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor.

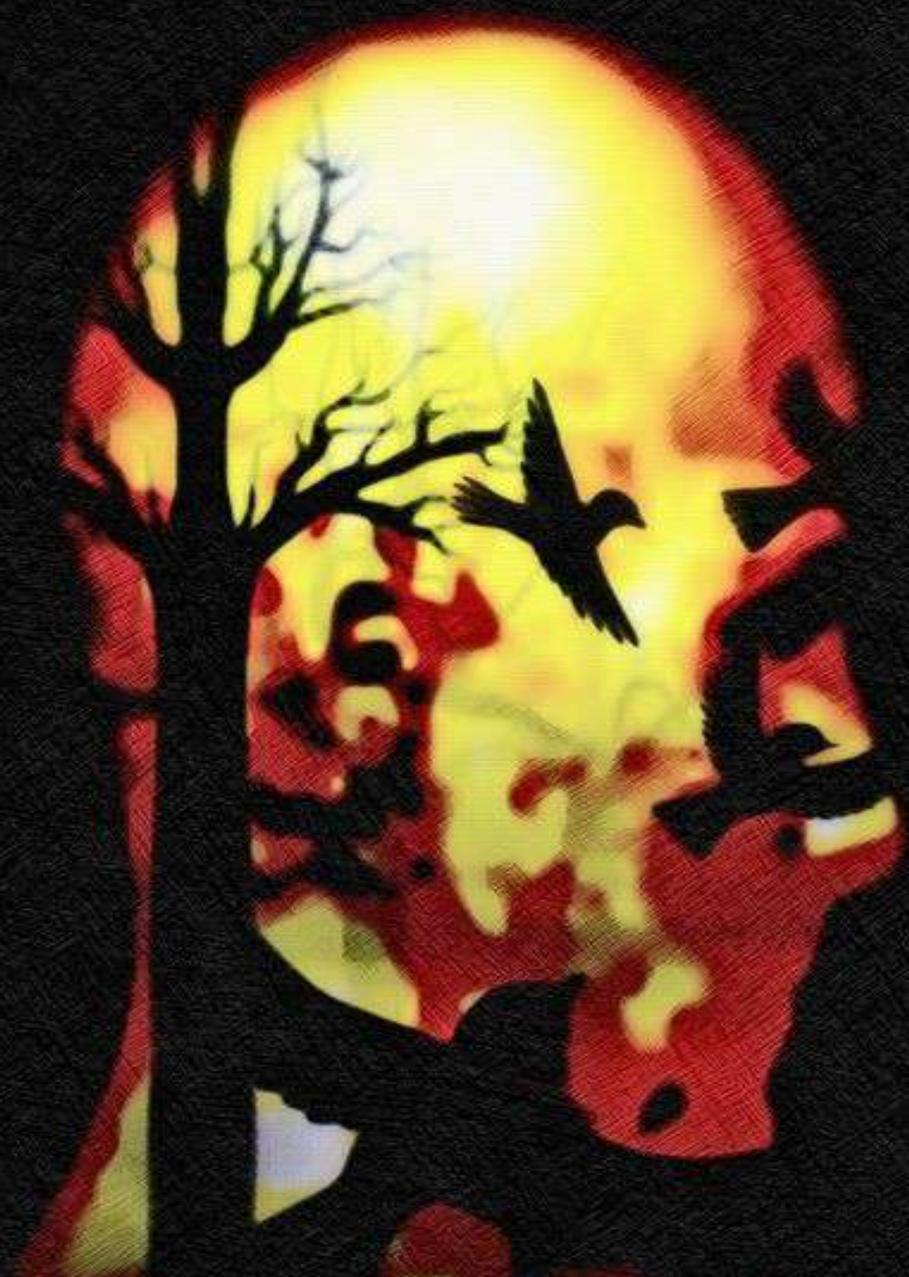
Whilst, Passing By, There Must Be, So Many, Remembering Those, Happy Screams,  
Simply Recalling, How As They Wandered Around, Filled With The Greatest Dreams,  
But, Its Said, To Be Just One Of These Things - As Technology Was About To Start,  
So Though It Plays A Great Part - The Same Park Is Now Filled With Empty Swings.

Another Fred Worm Production (2020).



I Live Only To Strive – And, In This – I Am Alive...

Brian "Fred Worm" MacGregor



KNOWING IS WORTH NOTHING

# WHERE

NOTHING IS WORTH KNOWING

A FRED WORM PRODUCTION (2019)

# ARTITUDE!

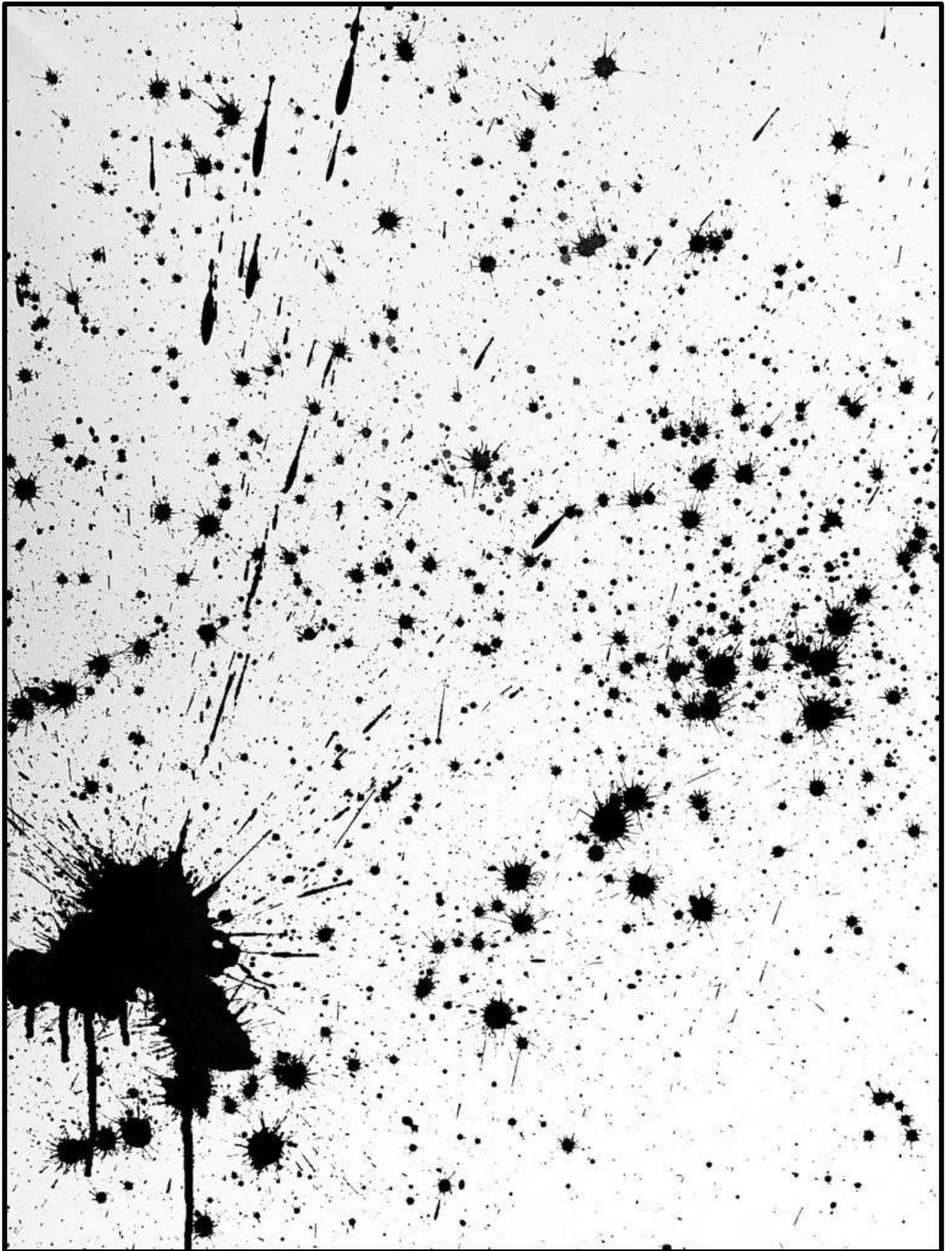
More readers art and photography for your viewing pleasure!

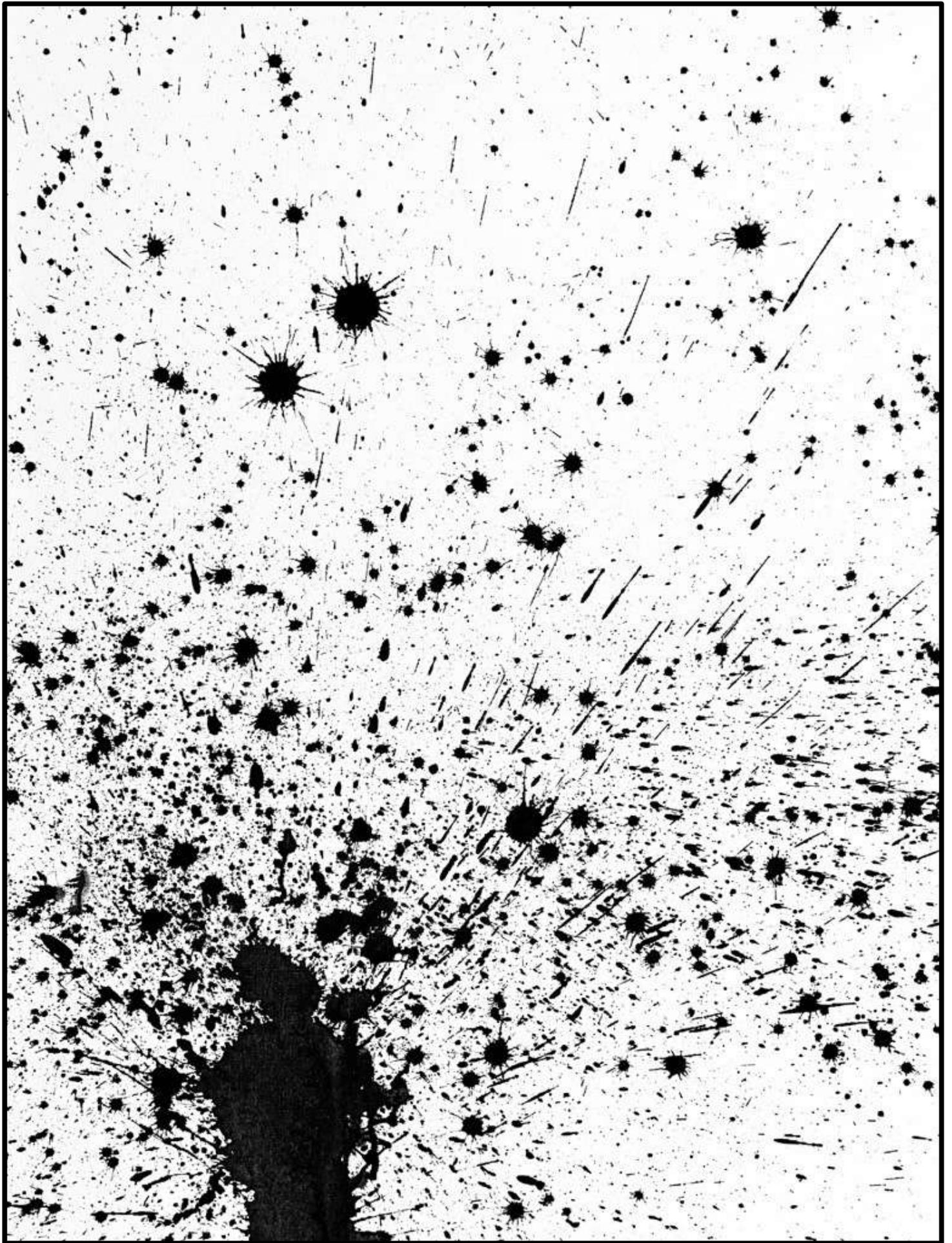
Hi, my name is Barry and I live in Lochgelly, Fife. With support and guidance from my staff team I have taken up art as a fun activity. I hope to use different types of mediums and techniques enabling opportunity for creative expression and communication. My artwork is abstract and non-representational, tactile and sensory.

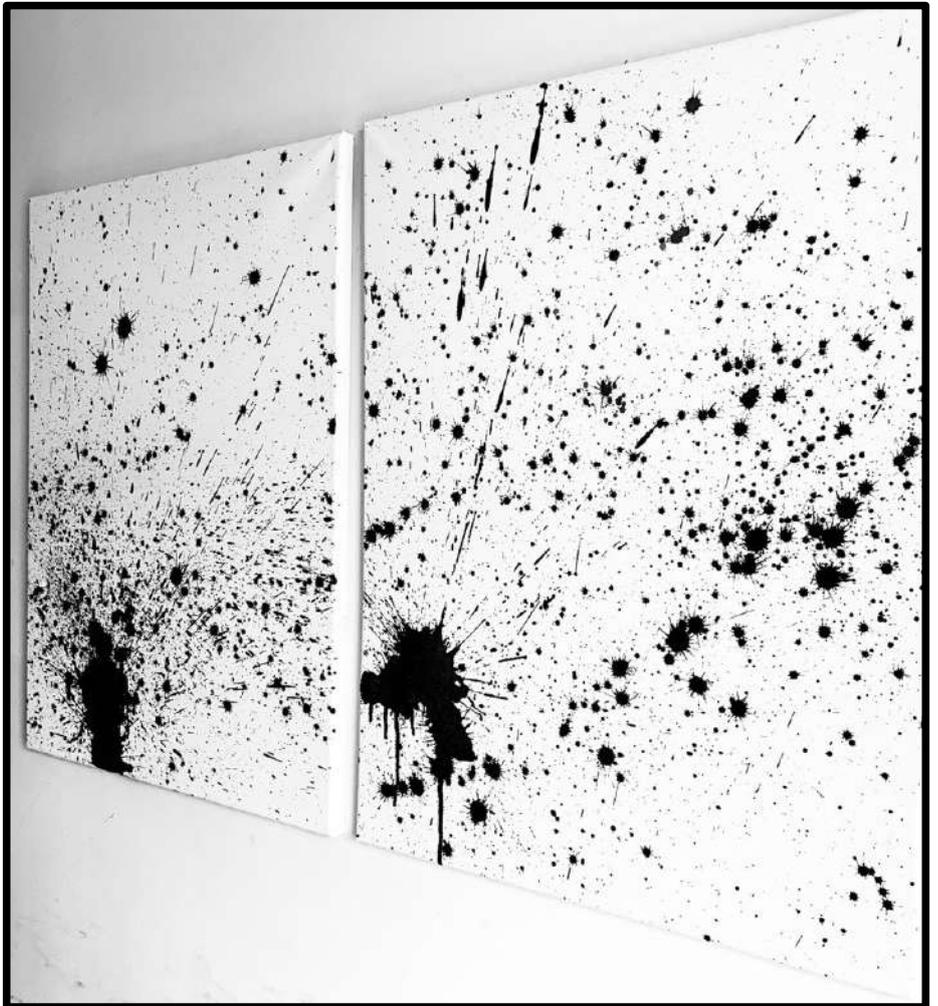
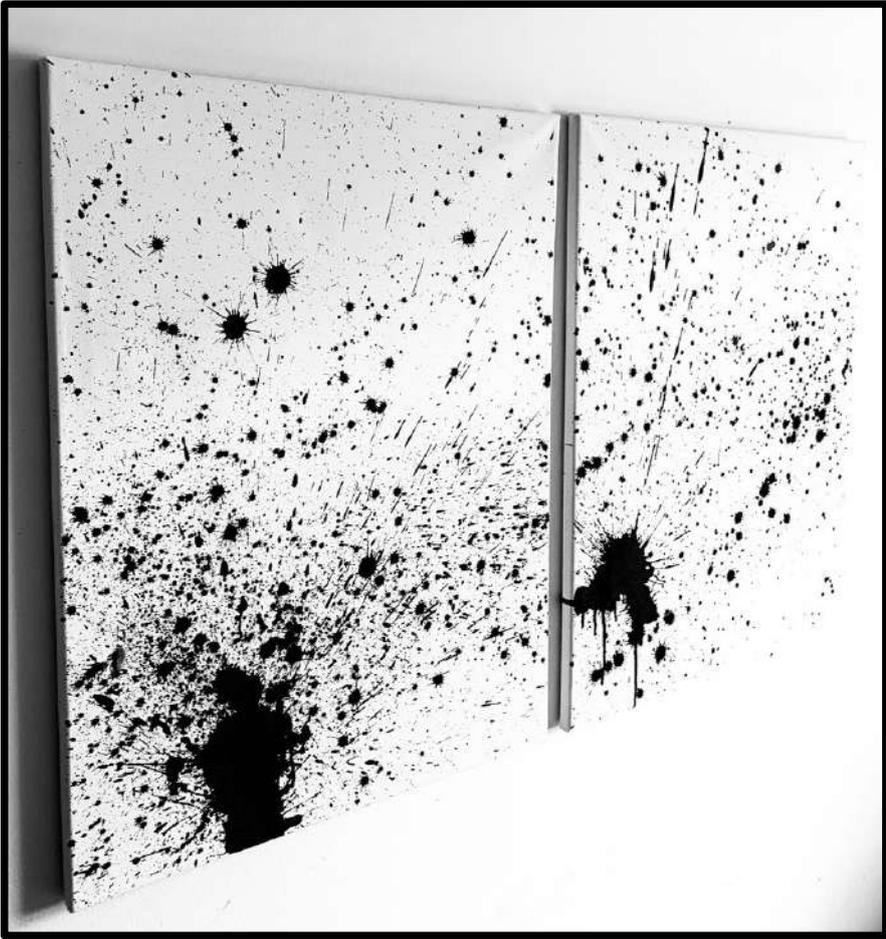


**First paint technique: B/W and colour, a peak into artful hand swirls onto floor surface.**

**Second technique: B/W paintbrush, spontaneous splatter on canvas capturing the moment.**

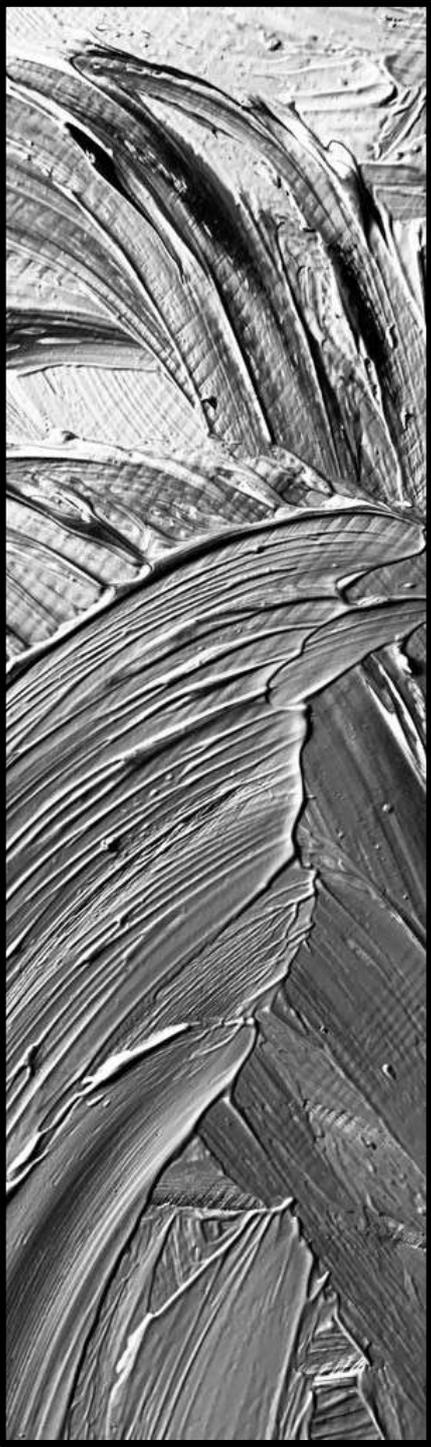




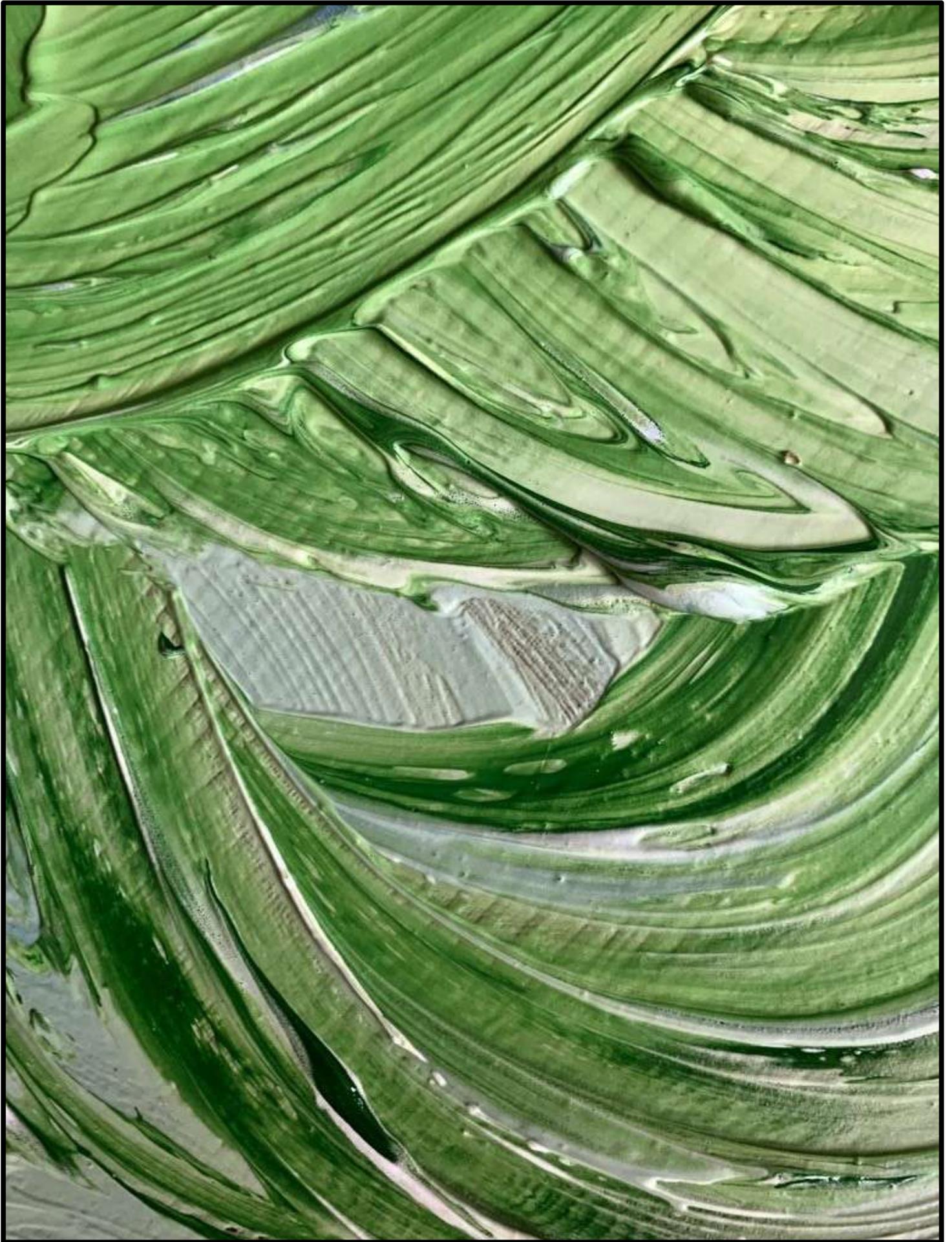












Poem on "Autistic Burnout"  
by Sandra Louise Smyth.



"I wake up! but sleep doesn't restore

anymore

Lots of aches and pains, I can't explain!  
Exhausted by the smallest task, everything!  
Too much to ask!

I would love to leave the house today, but  
heightened anxiety, makes me stay, I can't  
face people today!

"A self care day? lots of music and art, I  
do love this part!

I wrap my blanket around me, it feels so  
snug,

like 2 arms around me, giving me a great  
big hug!

"I've been told I'm lazy! That's just crazy!

"If they walked in my shoes for just one day,  
this, they would never say!

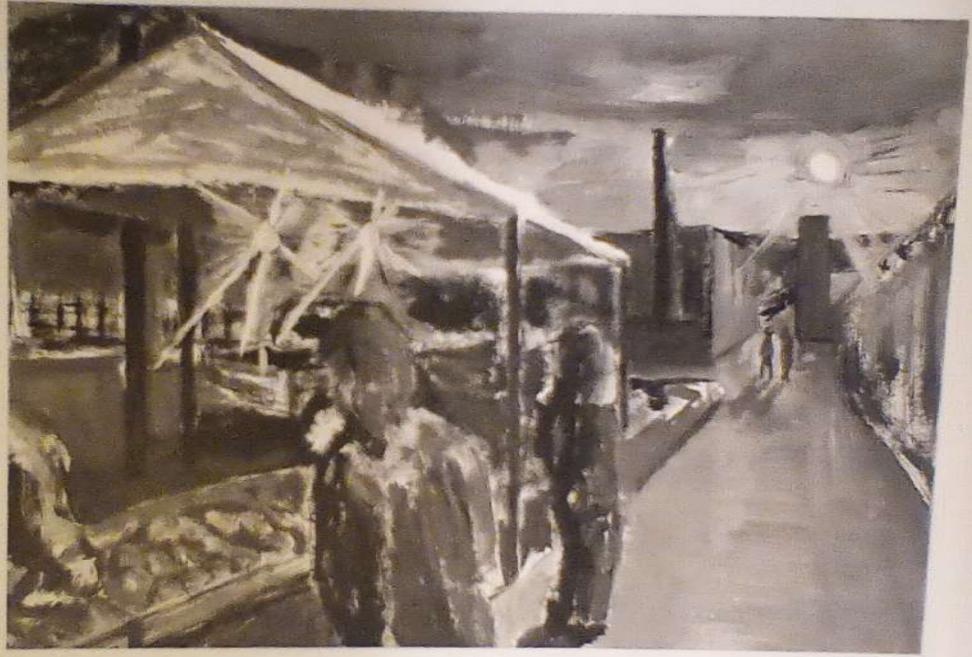
I hope these opinions change one day!

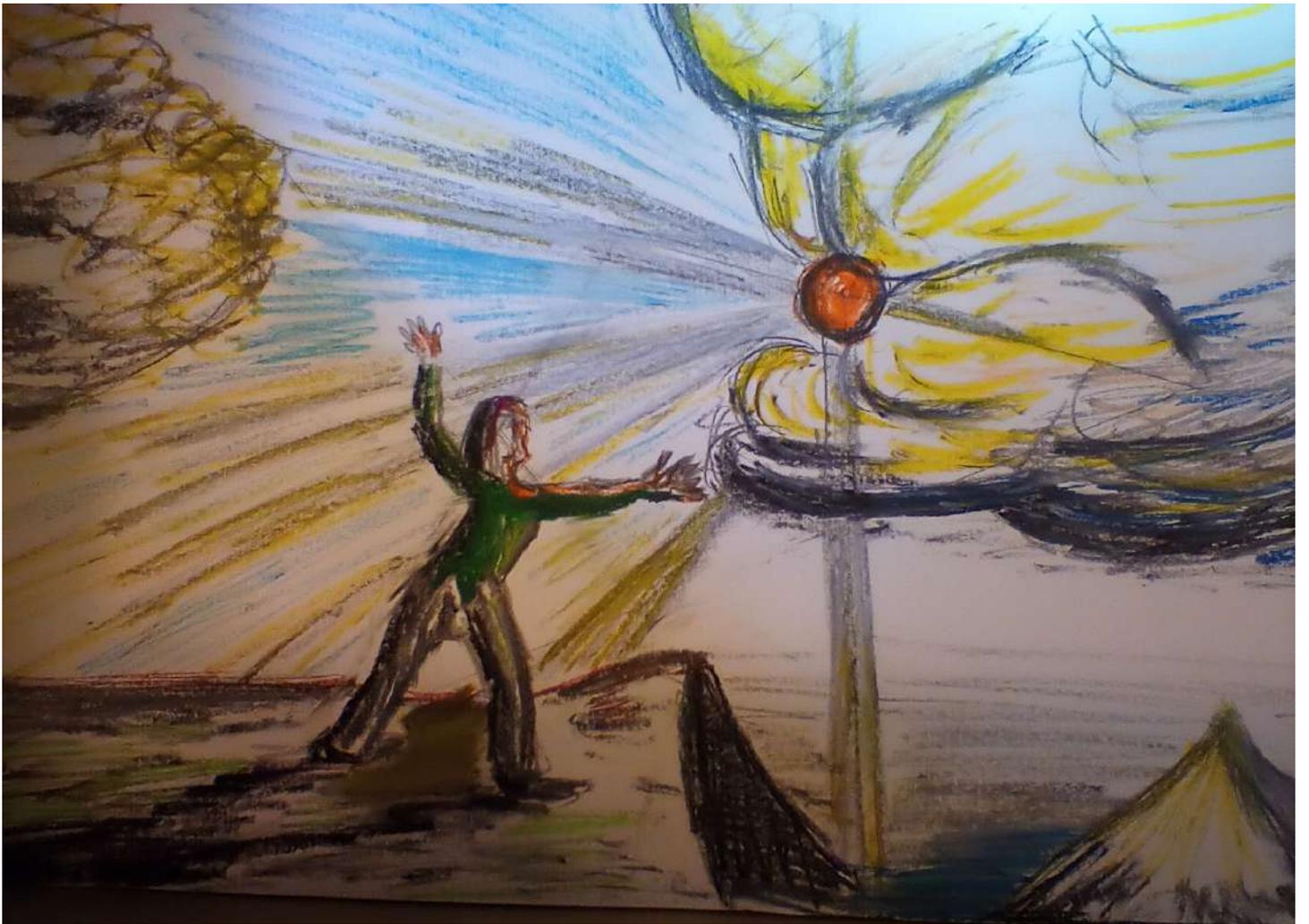
Sandra Louise Smyth

QUETZAL COATL



John o'Roin's artwork.





My name is Elaine Bowman, I was diagnosed with Autism at age 44 years, after complete burnout. I am now 48 years old (nearer 49!) and these past few years have involved some immense personal learning for me. I now know who I am, have insight and understanding into why so many things are beyond me. My life makes sense. I am still in a process of ordering all the jigsaw pieces.. but at least I have all the pieces now!

# Awaken

I am stripped back,  
a basic version of me...

The veneer has cracked,  
leaving these gaps,  
filled with tears.

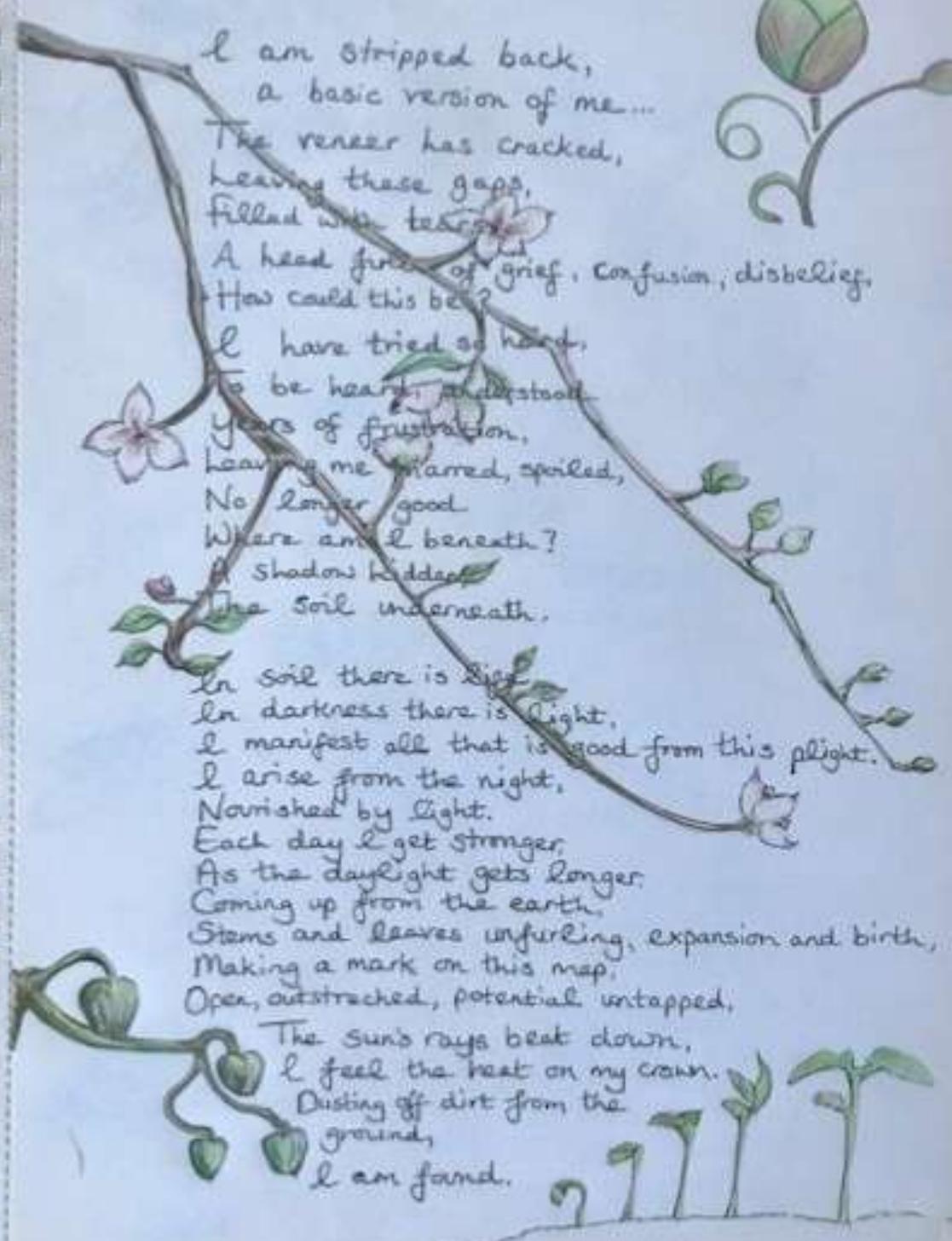
A head full of grief, confusion, disbelief,  
How could this be?

I have tried so hard,  
to be heard, understood  
years of frustration,  
leaving me marred, spoiled,  
No longer good  
Where am I beneath?  
A shadow hidden  
The soil underneath.

In soil there is light,  
In darkness there is light,  
I manifest all that is good from this plight.

I arise from the night,  
Nourished by light.  
Each day I get stronger,  
As the daylight gets longer,  
Coming up from the earth,  
Stems and leaves unfurling, expansion and birth,  
Making a mark on this map,  
Open, outstretched, potential untapped,

The sun's rays beat down,  
I feel the heat on my crown.  
Dusting off dirt from the  
ground,  
I am found.



# SPECTRUM SUPERSTARS!



**Name: Naoki Higashida**

**Born: 12 August 1992**

**Occupation: writer best known for The Reason I  
Jump, Autistic advocate.**

# AUTITUDE NEEDS YOU!



Well that's it for issue 18!  
Hope you've enjoyed it!  
Don't forget to send your contributions to  
[autitude@scottishautism.org](mailto:autitude@scottishautism.org)