

in bed

I cut words



Corina Duyn

Artist in care

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For Desktop choose Two-page view

For Mobile choose Single page

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In bed
I cut words
until I can rest
in a world
where loss and pain
live alongside
beauty and hope





8/10/2022 - Corina, The Treehouse, Room 30.

'Home'.

A question I have been pondering for a while.

What does Home mean. Where is it?

It isn't my very much missed home in Lismore.

That simply isn't there anymore. Or possible.

It isn't here either.

Is it 'back home' as in my native Netherlands?

Is it a desire to go back in time?

A fellow artist said or wrote that 'home' is where one is safe.

True.

My creative explorations, even tearing words and images from the weekend newspaper supplements, and positioning them in my sketchbook* continue to accidentally (is art ever accidental?) engage with my inner conversation.

This is what appeared:

"Home is complicated

I am"

I am complicated

I am home

But as for a clear answer, I am none the wiser. It's complicated.

Shockingly, even weaving paper was too complicated now.

An accidental right format.

*Sketchbook is A5, which I continue to fill with thoughts, 'poems', and imagery about life (in care).

A perfect bed-accessible-art.



05/10/22

The Context

Corina Duyn has been living with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) for 26 years: ‘a severely debilitating complex, acquired, multi-systemic, neurological disease with pathological dysregulation of nervous, immune and endocrine systems and dysfunction of cellular energy metabolism and cardiovascular abnormalities’.

For Corina this includes profound exhaustion, widespread body pain, severe issues with mobility, chewing, swallowing and digestion, as well as cognitive dysfunction and an increasing loss of motor skills.

The defining symptom of ME: Post-Exertional Neuroimmune Exhaustion (PENE, also referred to as PEM) can be caused by any ‘activity’ e.g., communicating, not being able to lie flat, experiencing excessive noise/light/movement/scents/touch/temperature fluctuations, as well as (un)related infection/inflammation. When going over limited energy supply, adrenaline clicks in and makes it possible to keep going for as long as necessary. However, the longer in the adrenaline state, the harder the PENE crash, the longer it takes to recover back to baseline.

With her pragmatic and creative mind Corina always aims to remain part of the narrative of her life. Due to the ever increasing demands of ME, as well as the failings of a care system to support people with long term illness/disability in their own environment, Corina made the major decision of moving into a nursing home in April 2021. Aged 59.

Being able to view trees, birds and other wildlife she called her room The Treehouse.

This small selection of the collages created on her bed between April 2022 and April 2023 were spontaneous, intuitive responses to the artist's situation of life in care.

All written contributions are personal views expressed by the authors. ©2024

Further reading:

Moving into the Treehouse:

<https://corinaduyn.blogspot.com/2021/05/my-tree-house-moving-into-long-term-care.html>

600 days:

<http://corinaduyn.blogspot.com/2022/12/six-hundred-days.html>

NHI Awards:

<https://corinaduyn.blogspot.com/2023/11/nursing-home-ireland-care-award.html>

ME info:

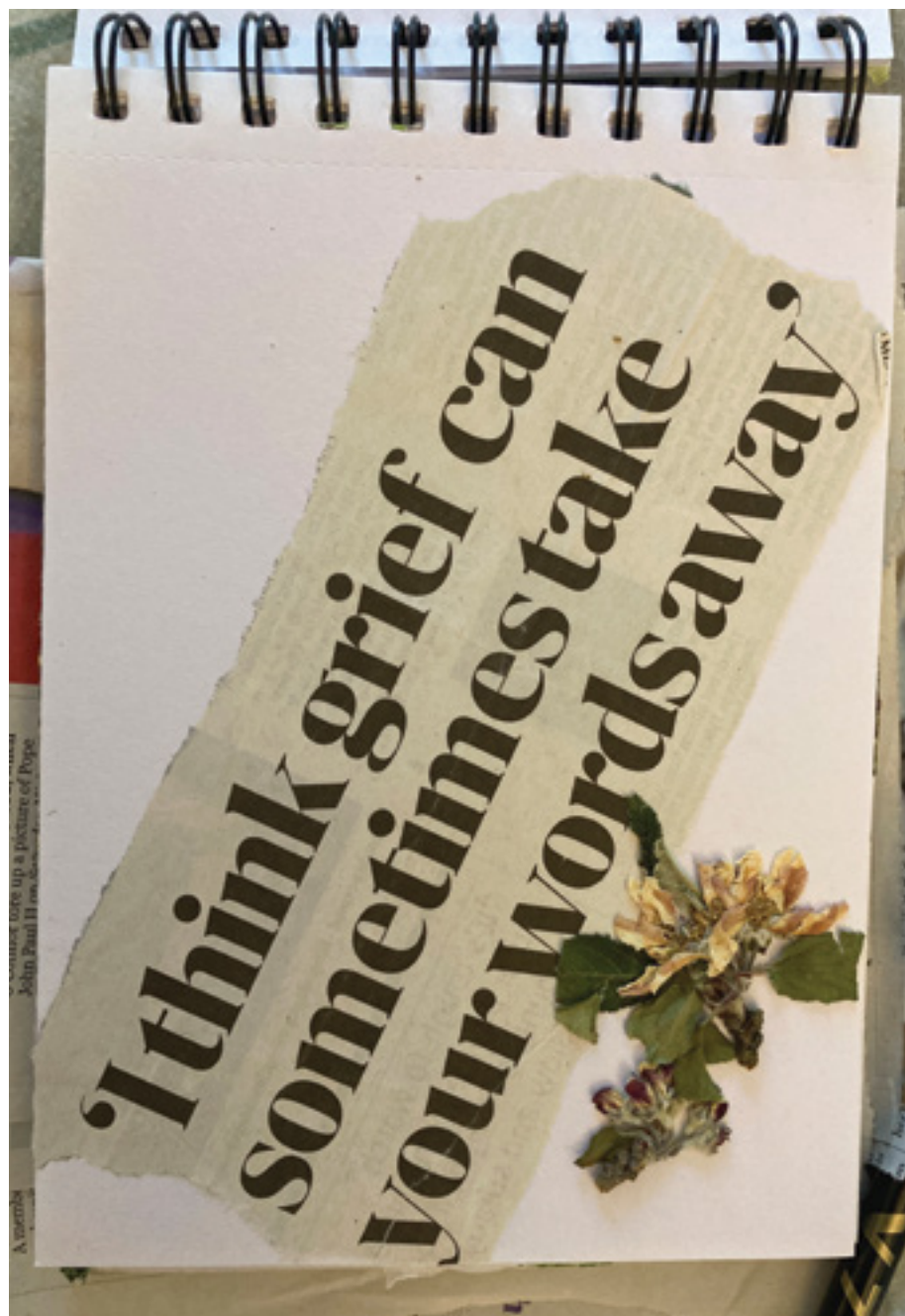
<http://meadvocatesireland.blogspot.com>

For more information on this book visit:

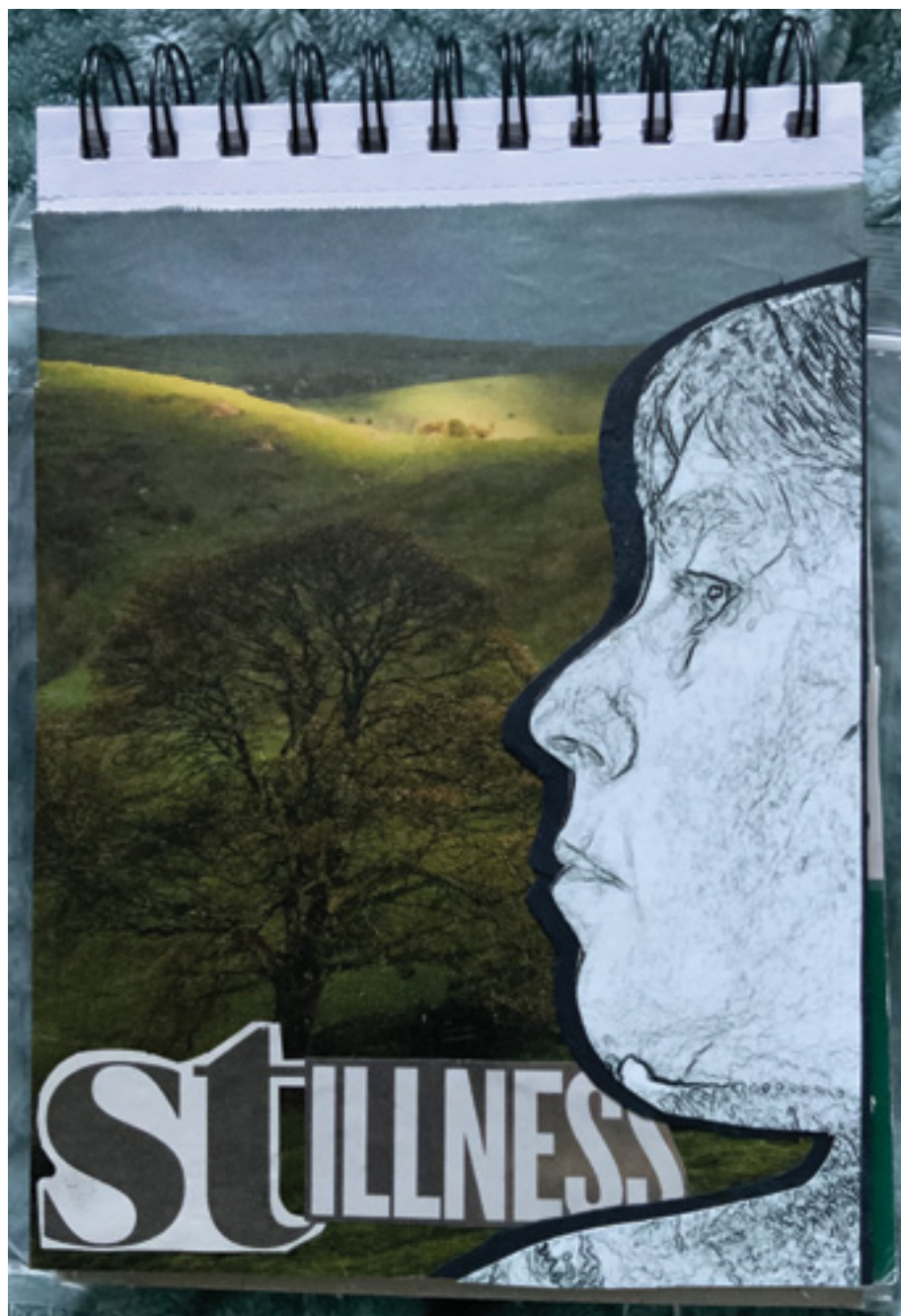
<https://www.corinaduyn.com/site/in-bed-i-cut-words>



21/08/22



On the one year anniversary of moving from home Anne Devine posted an apple blossom from my tree in Lismore. The last photos I had taken 26/04/21 was of the blossom.



'St-Illness - Saint of Illness?' Quote from my book 'Into the Light' 2015.

Stillness is so minimalist and powerful - genius in its title and that patch of sunlight and tree with you looking out really speak to me:

Stoicism, frustration, joy, pain, resilience, imprisonment, grief, embodiment/being part of the cycle of life...

Katie Ash

Fellow Artist living with Severe Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Tekker eten



20/09/22

Humans shape their environments. We are natural home-makers, creating spaces in which to be ourselves.

Moving into a care home does not diminish that fundamental craving. The careful placement of an object, the positioning of a piece of art, helps define personal space. We aim to create a place of safety where being ourselves and expressing our preferences is not an issue for daily scrutiny or judgement.

There is an undeniable culture difference between living in our own home in the world and living in a personalised room in a care home. Everything is magnified in the microcosm. Pain, loss and fear co-exist more intensely with love, hope and beauty. But our focus is influenced by external events. Dealing with hunger and complicated access to food, gets in the way of focusing on feeling safe. Corina, like many great artists, manages to navigate a way through the challenges with introspection, nature and creative self-expression.

Karrie Marshall

Author, Speaker, director for compassionate care programs and socially engaged arts.

authentic
storytelling



Poetry of **pain**



disappearing

**IN THE SHADOW
I BEGAN TO SEE**

a good way to be heard is
writing what I know well
as nobody would listen



24/09/22

'Genius':
UCD
awarded
Hilary Mantel
an honorary
doctorate
for her
contribution
to literature.

Irish Independent 24-9-2022 p17

PHOTO: COLM
MAHUGH /
PENNELLS

Hilary Mantel dies aged 70

Mantel had suffered from
ill health throughout her
adult life, stemming from
endometriosis, which went
undiagnosed for many years.

"There was always a slight
aura of otherworldliness
about her, as she felt things us
ordinary mortals missed, but
when she perceived the need
for confrontation she would
fearlessly go into battle," he
said, adding that she dealt
stoically with chronic health
problems.

In her final interview,
published two weeks ago in
the *Financial Times*, Mantel
was asked if she believed in
an afterlife.

"Yes," she replied. "I can't
imagine how it might work.
However, the universe is
not limited by what I can
imagine." (© Telegraph Media
Group Ltd 2022)



03/10/22 - day of chaos, illness, fear, 'let-us-spray' noise, lots. Watching a leaf dwindle down, self care, letting go. And sorting the many words collected. Even that was chaos and overwhelming



05/10/22



sunny side
moments that matter

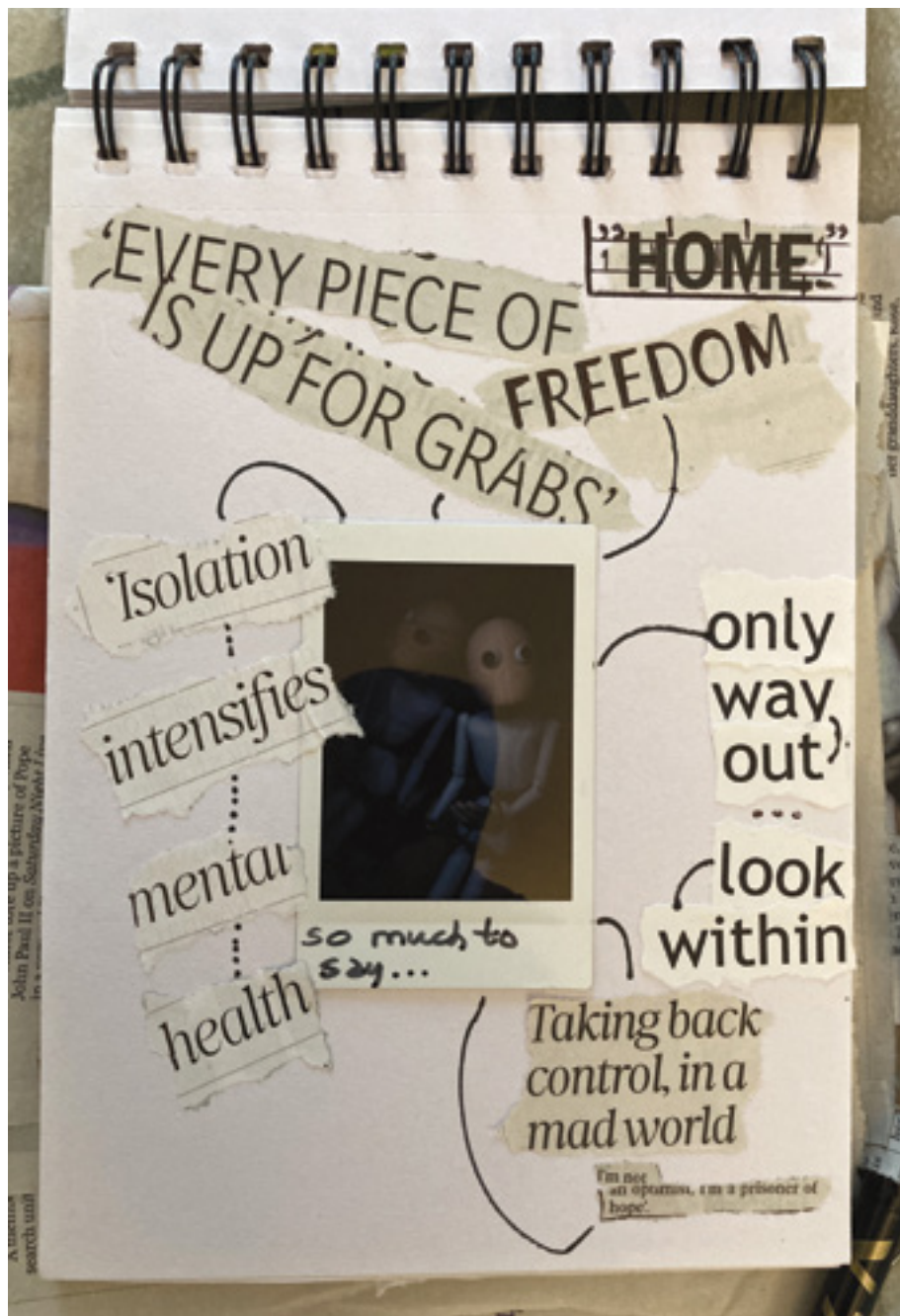


be resilient

05/10/2022



05/10/2022 - parcel with snacks from Holland



05/10/2022



05/10/2022



23/10/22



23/10/22

Home Sweet Home - *Caroline Schofield*

Home ... is a sanctuary where we feel safe and comfortable. Emotional attachment to this space cultivates a sense of security, both physically and emotionally. When we feel emotionally connected to our surroundings, we can relax and be ourselves without fear of judgment or threat.

I worked with Corina as an artist for over two years. We were introduced by Waterford Healing Arts and we began our engagement to explore what Corina could do creatively from a room in a nursing home. It was a learning experience for both of us, getting to know each other and the artwork we could physically make. As our conversation and the work evolved it became clear that while Corina was making work, she had a lot to say about her move from her own home into a nursing home.

There were many difficult conversations and at times Corina found the process hard. The artwork she was making brought up the sadness of her loss of home and at one point she thought she should stop, but the collages and ideas couldn't be contained and they needed to be voiced.

We decided to make the exhibition 'I brought the dream of flying' with the support of Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts and Creative Ireland. The time given to Corina and me was a gift. It gave us a chance to get to know each other and our ways of working. It became a collaboration. We developed an understanding of the work and a rich exhibition. I as an artist in Arts & Health learned about Corina, her every day, good and bad, her health and her incredible mind. I was immersed



10/10/22

in her world. When we installed the work in GOMA Gallery of Modern Art, Waterford, I was present in the physical space and Corina from her room via zoom. Even this was difficult and took time as Corina finds it difficult to manage moving images and I had to remember not to move the screen too quickly. The fact that Corina managed to do this work is amazing.

Corina is an artist and an activist. In her collages and art work she tells us about the injustices, hurts, annoyances, lack of autonomy in her life....because her life is her art.....she is reflecting what she is going through and what other people in nursing homes are also experiencing.

She is holding up a mirror to us, showing her experience of living in a nursing home, the everyday small things that happen and what is ahead for many of us. In these collages she is asking to be heard, not in the sense of management of her and older people, but asking what is home at an intrinsic human level.

When viewers of the exhibition **‘I brought the dream of flying’** looked at the installation of the room Corina lives in 24/7, I watched the emotion on their faces, the faces of the staff, families of loved ones who were in nursing homes or those who might need these facilities in the future. The emotion from the room ebbed through everyone who stopped and looked – who understood the enormity of home and the displacement of those who cannot be minded in their own home.

The Room and Collages hold up a mirror to society about what ‘home’ is.



15/10/22

Corina and I became good friends during our journey together. We still meet and talk creatively, and when we need to figure something out, we mull it over together.

Further reading:

Arts+Health case study:

<https://tinyurl.com/yp9y3k26>

Caroline Schofield

Visual Artist



10/10/22 - Caroline Schofield and Corina Duyn, art session in the Treehouse, Corina's room.
Further reading of our collaboration see Arts+Health case study (link above).



13/01/23 - Puppet Room Interior and Puppet Room by Corina Duyn & Caroline Schofield, and 'In Shadow' (wall art) by Caroline Schofield.



03/11/22 - see credits



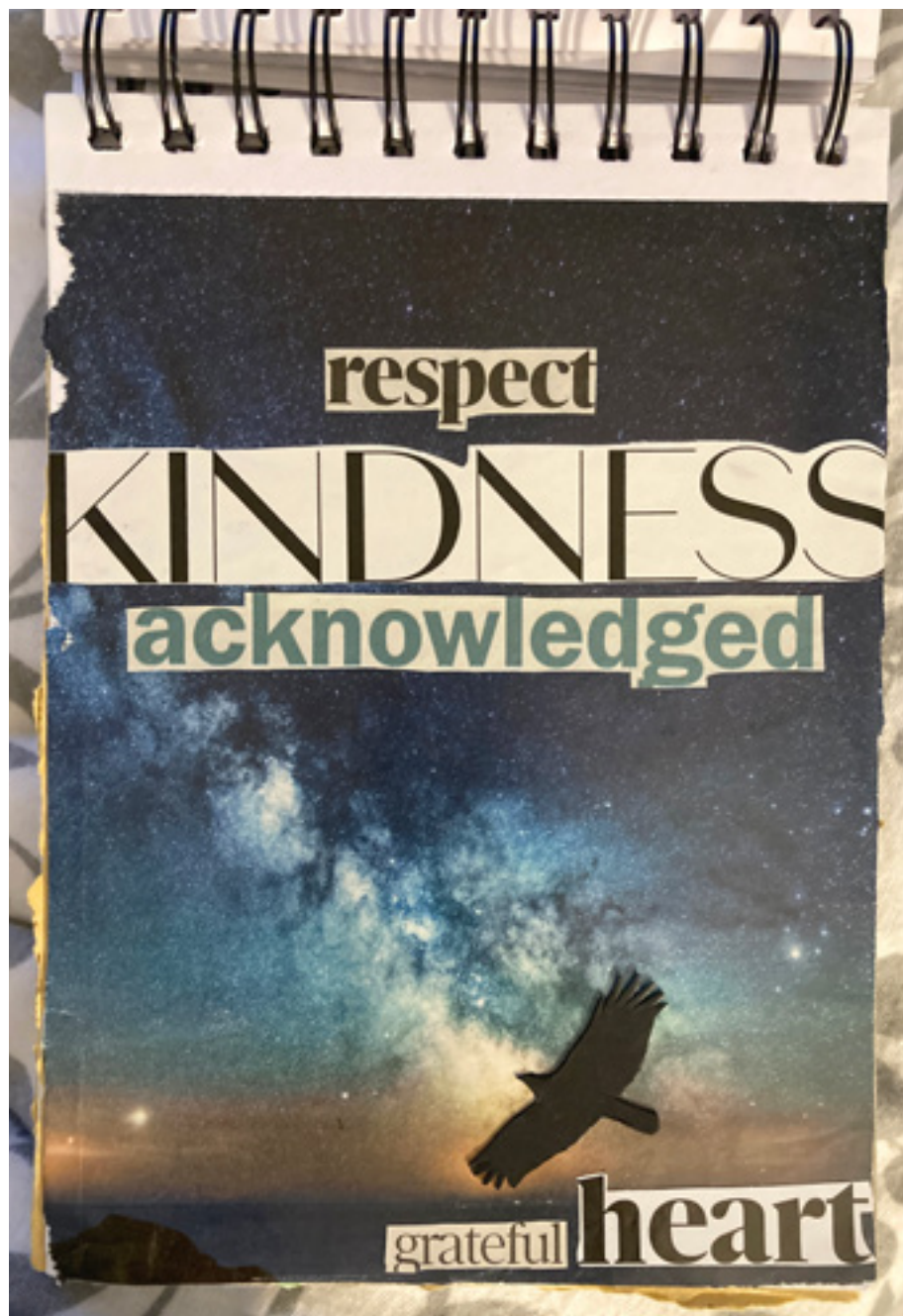
03/11/22 - see credits



6/11/22 - 'Forget-me-not' - from Lismore garden. Negative print, art session, Caroline '21
Buddha Lismore (now under my tree)



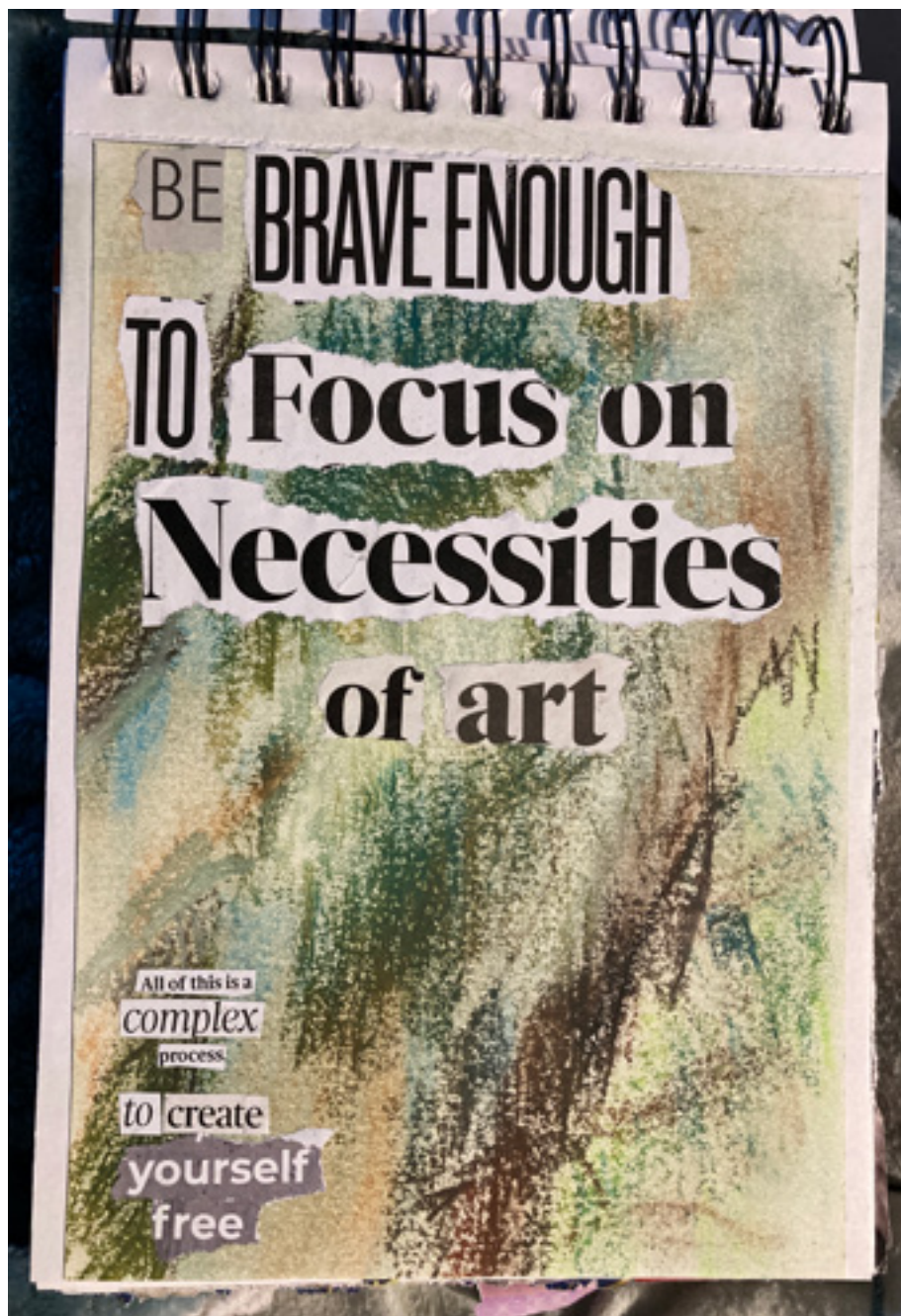
06/11/22 - Acer leaf (Lismore) and 'negative' print made with Caroline
Fledgling Blue Tit in my hand (Lismore)



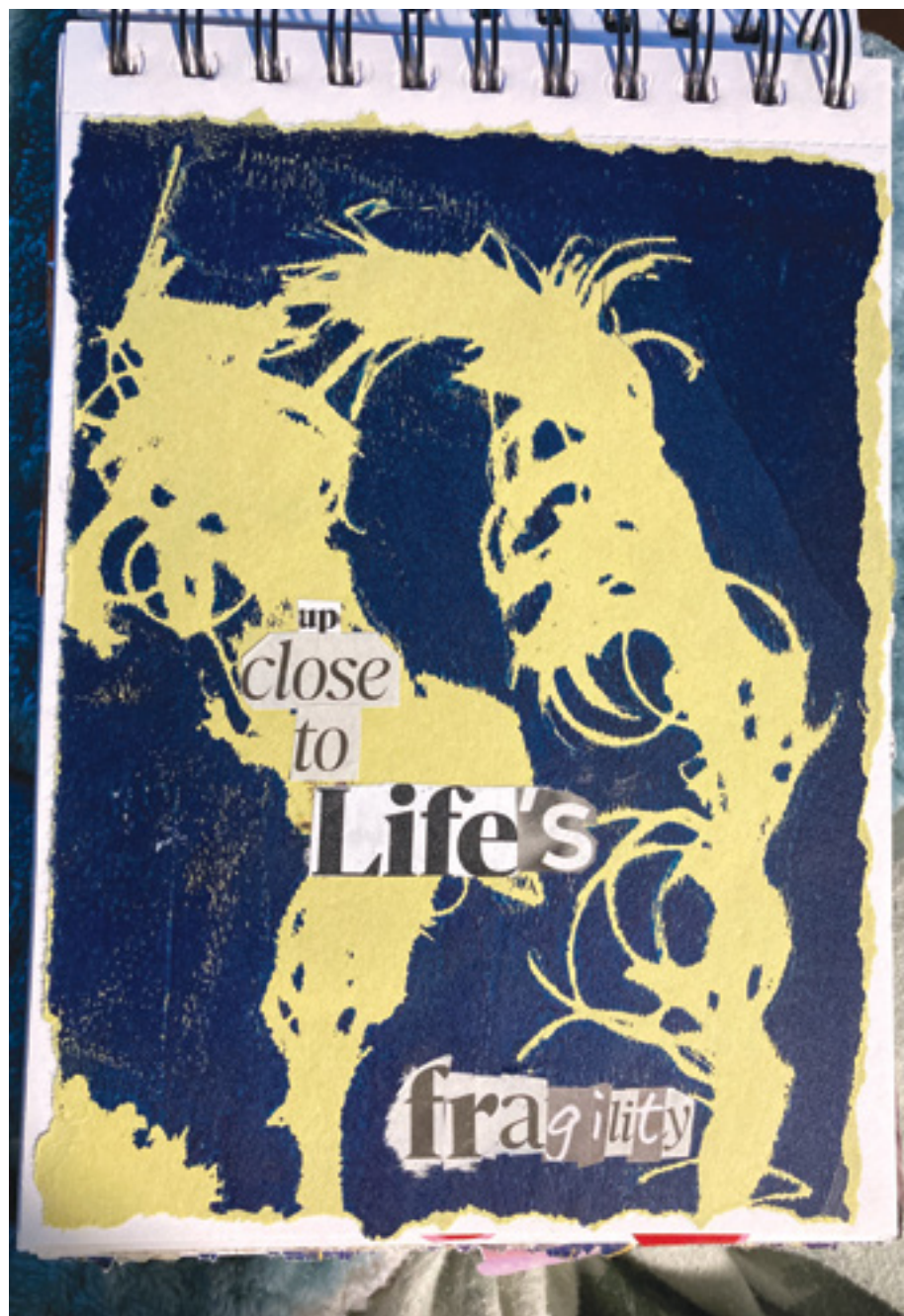
10/11/22



13/11/2022



21/11/2022



22/11/2022 - negative print weeds/seeds, sessions with Caroline.

voices

I wasn't afraid

creating
alternative
solutions

and

researched contribution

Nothing beats being

heard

05/10/2022

‘Maybe I need to show how it is’ Corina said. ‘Maybe I need to write it out. Perform it. Be a witness.’

It seemed like a fabulous idea.

Articulating the experience of life from inside a care home is a rare learning opportunity for all involved. Perhaps it would help identify what supports and what hinders high quality care? This could benefit people living in care homes as well as care staff. Corina had a profound sense of possibility based on intuition, knowledge, creative thinking and a background in healthcare.

As a conscientious explorer, she documented her journey with conversations, recordings and art. Corina encountered staff who really cared, who ‘got it’ and staff who struggled to uphold individual rights and choices. When a well-meaning care system is unaware of its inherent inequalities, people fail to see or hear. For the invisible, unheard people, this cuts deeply.

So, listen well.

Karrie Marshall

Author, Speaker, director for compassionate care programs and socially engaged arts.

Corina Cuts Words To Reach Home - *Moirra Dillon*

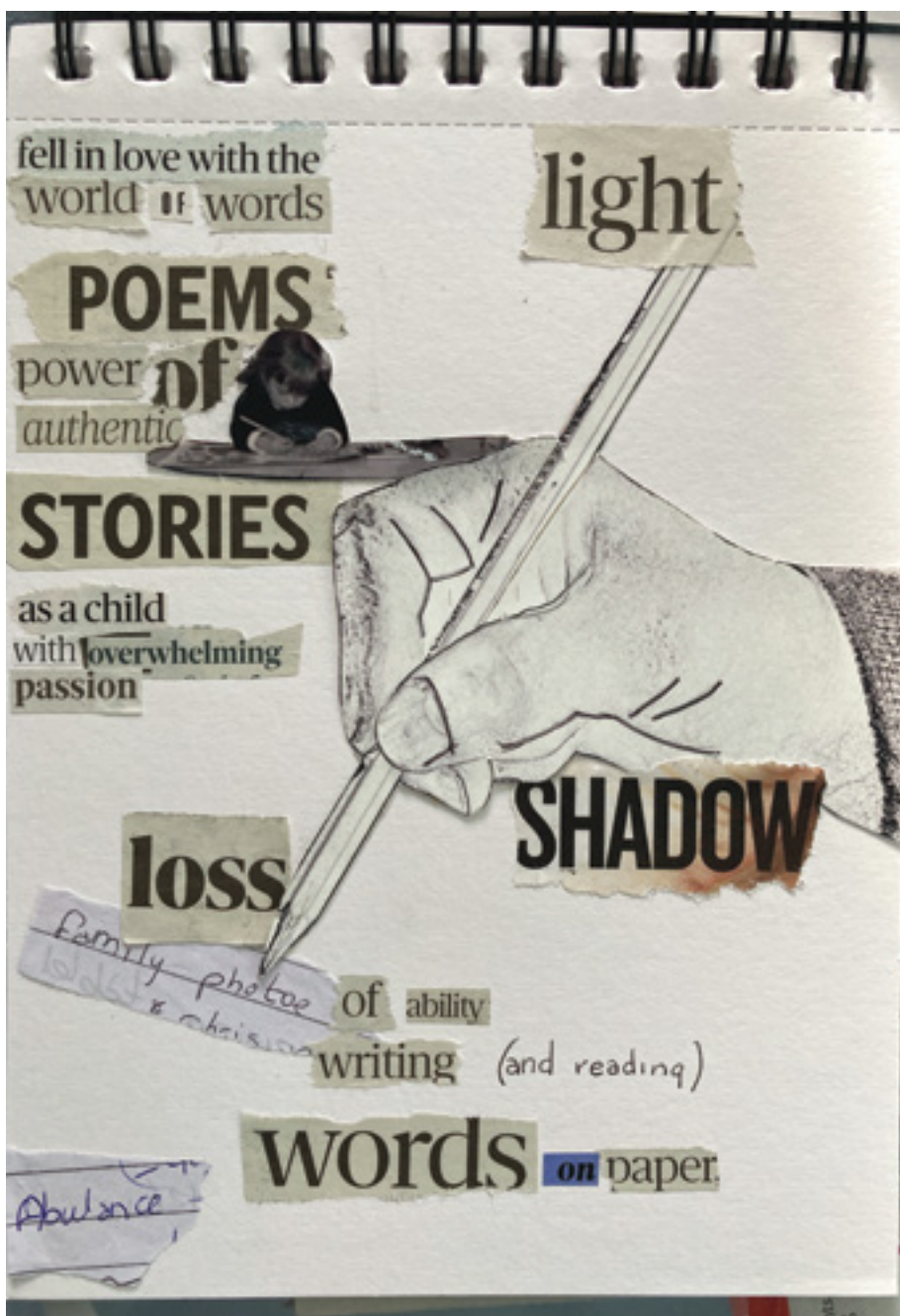
‘In Bed I Cut Words’ is the consequence of capturing words and images from weekend newspaper supplements and positioning them on pages to enable weighty inner conversations. The art grows from a form of rebellion against a challenging life imposed upon the artist. Corina once again seeks redemption through her creative impulses. By transforming discord into art, she is railing against chaos and loss.

Collages are an artistic vehicle to represent her reality. Bold statements are peppered throughout this book. Word choices, together with the images, act as an empowering tool to fully convey the complexities of an individual with Severe ME existing in care. The collages are a fascinating mix of observations, psychologies, exploitations and complications. The messages, both hidden and unhidden, within the collages tell an important story.

At its core Corina’s art is a process of authentic storytelling.

Corina intellectualises difficult experiences to escape them and to find a resolution. The narrative is a testing one but is conveyed with grace. The conceptual work in her collages involves unpacking ‘pain’, ‘loss’, ‘isolation’ and the need to be heard. Meaningful expressions of her confinement and her struggle to find home permeate her book. It is evident that she strives to be still and to find relief.

Stillness comes in short reflective bursts. Relief sounds through her voice in words like ‘joy’, ‘connecting’, ‘resilient’ and ‘nature’. ‘Home’ is the most used word throughout the



16/10/22

book, the very thing that is lost in the capitalism of care.

Corina cuts words to reach ‘home’.

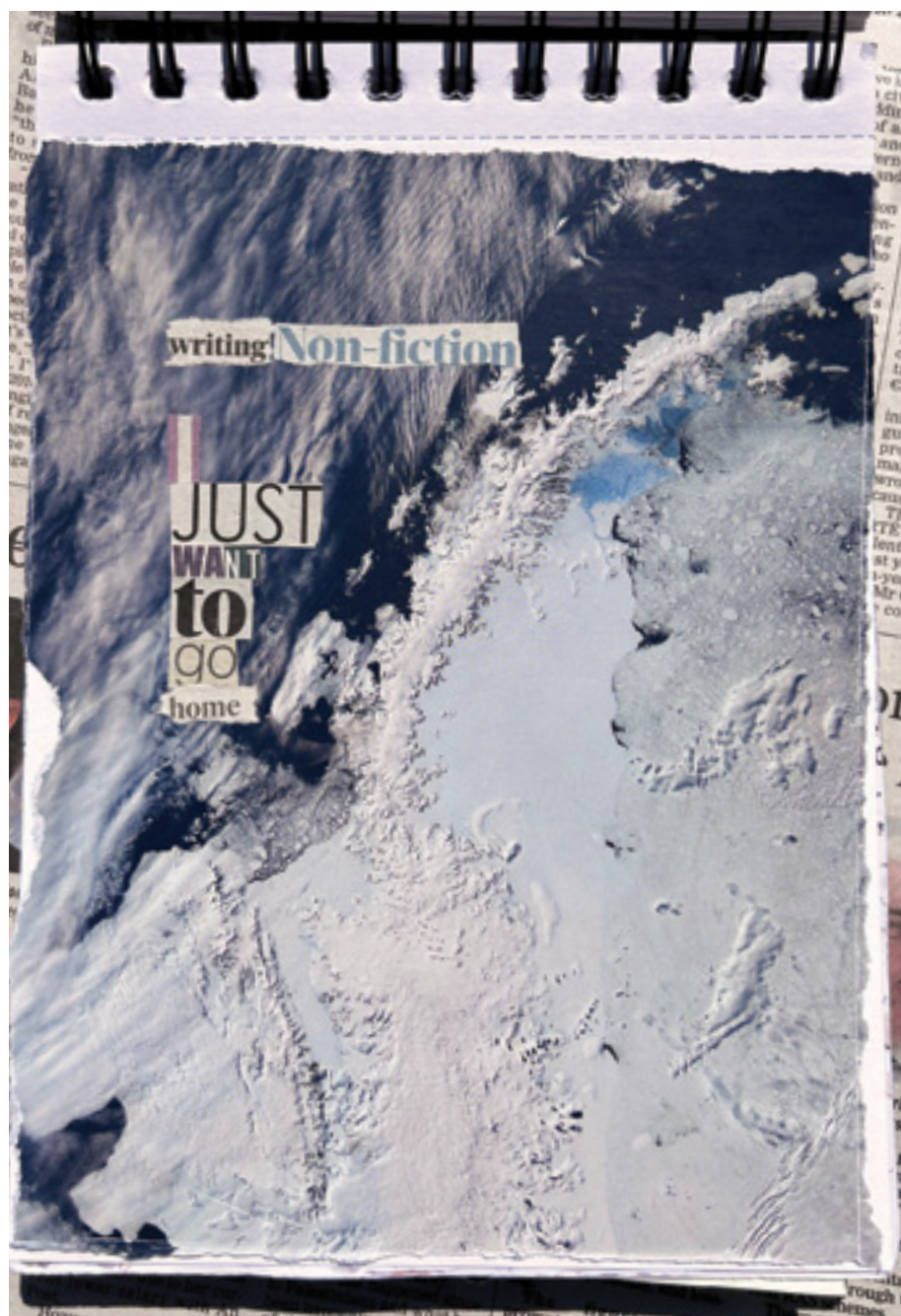
Her work transcends the strictures of her everyday existence. She steers a life as an artist, navigating negative systems, carrying grief, and in doing so advocates for herself and others. Chronic complex illness may keep her physically pinned in one difficult location, but art offers her a cathartic escape from time and place, and a chance to journey the road towards ‘home’.

‘In Bed I Cut Words’ is a powerful call for social inclusion; art that actively resists the reductiveness of ableism through dignity of purpose. A hostage of hope, Corina constantly reinvents her art. Against all the odds she still reigns in her sanctuary. She is brave. She is resilient. She is heard.

Moirá Dillon

Advocate, Patient Rep and Cofounder with ME Advocates Ireland (MEAI)

Further reading on ME <http://meadvocatesireland.blogspot.com>



11/02/2023 - a few days in the making. See credits for composition details.

28-0000





Insider Opinion

Having the opportunity to observe Corina's work has been incredibly inspiring. Her art, especially the collages, beautifully express deep emotions and covers important themes. Each piece Corina designs is a thoughtful blend of images and materials, creating a narrative that reflects her inner world and experiences.

Despite the challenges of her illness, creativity and resilience shine through her art. The ability to turn personal and environmental experiences into stunning collages is truly remarkable.

Corina's work not only conveys her journey but also inspires others to find beauty and strength in adversity. I am continually amazed by how she transforms her struggles into powerful, evocative art.

Allie Lonergan

Carer



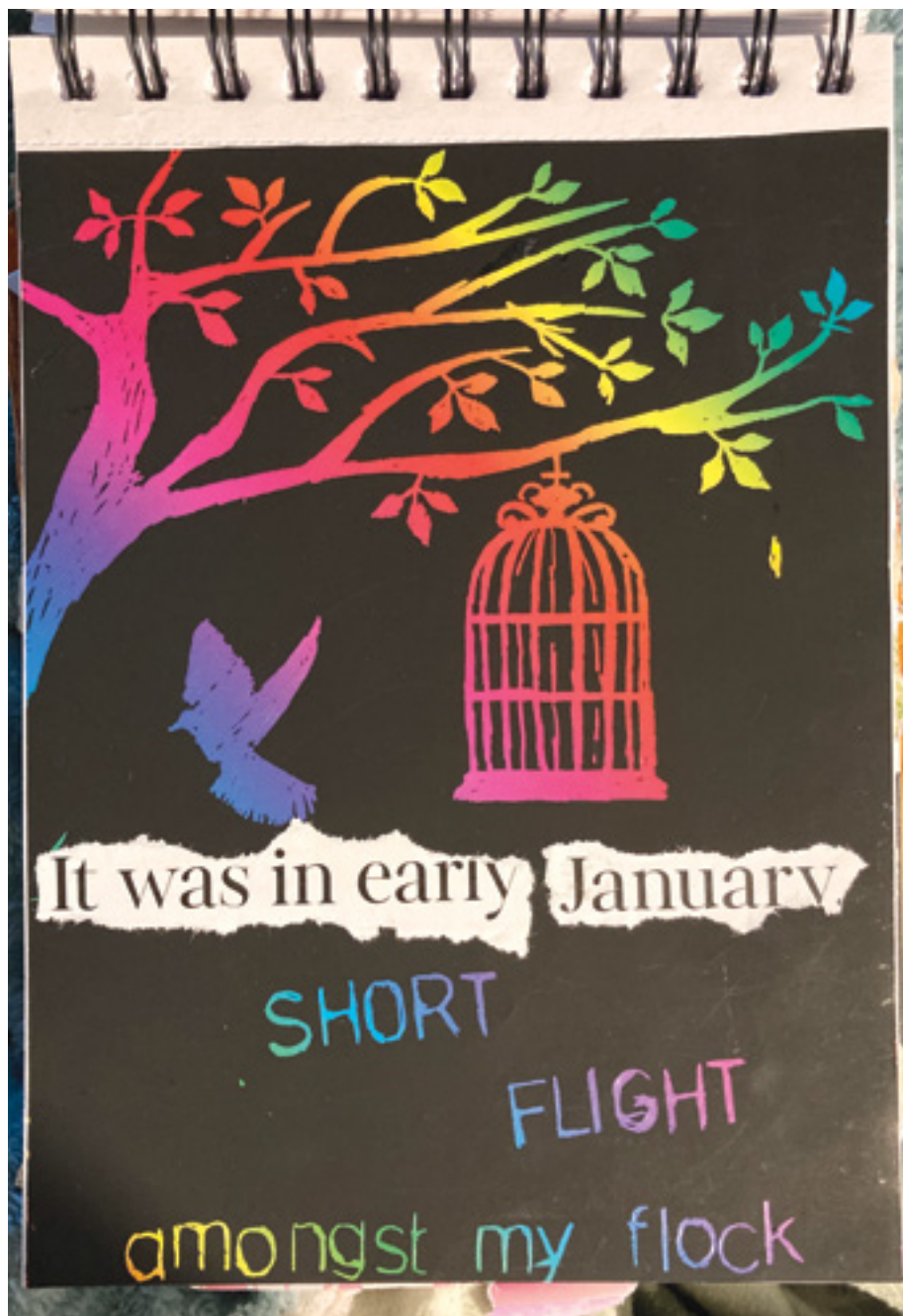
06/03/23



13/12/2022 - On the 12th Dec. 2022 I found cut up Christmas card I used last year on my paper folded book. Card from Elaine B. years ago.



Put together 29th or 30th Dec. 2022. Glued in 21/01/2023. Still feels right.



18/01/2023 - Scratched bird / tree 2021, words 12/01/23. Exhibition opening 14/01/23



24/01/2023



24/01/2023 - Lost was the start... the other words joined in.



24/01/2023 - Little paper me.



poetry

Sharing gathered wisdom

to simplify my ROOM

to embrace the

meditative mind

25/01/2023



25/01/2023

Art... making... writing... - Pascale De Coninck

Is it a hobby they ask? Or ah I see, it's your profession,
or perhaps it's a skill that you've learned and now just do...

It's none of those,
It's as essential as breathing
Or your heart beating, alive
breathing, smiling, living, hurting, loving
Sending nourishment to your whole body and mind

It's an expression of being intimately connected
to your experience,
inner experience of heart, body and mind,
outer experience of environment

It's not being afraid to deeply feel what you feel
It's not being afraid to let life touch you,
to let it really deeply connect
And then it recognises, it sees, it shows, it flows out,
it speaks, it expresses
the pain of the heart
the joy of the heart
the understanding of the mind
the anger, the frustration, the despair, the love, the joy,
the beauty
All
The fullness of life

It is as essential as breathing
A deep intimacy with your own heart-body-mind



09/03/23

And so as the Heart-body-mind changes so does the
expression of it...

Over the years Corina's life has deeply changed
How she related to the world and how she could relate to the
world ongoingly changing

Her body continuously changing
Her mind and heart continuously adapting
The expression of it all continuously finding new form,
shapes, colours and words
Adapting, from words to puppets to sculpture to weaving to
shadow work to collages and words...

Every moment her body showing her which way it is able
to express in new ways of speaking that voice that relates to
herself and the world

what it is like
to live this human life

This one

This one that is challenged deeply
This one that learns
This one that also knows beauty

So, her art changed,
because it's not something she does,
it's who she is
There have been moments where the challenges were so

immediate, so impactful... so painful...
and not being afraid of it or shying away from it but feeling it,
and allowing it to be heard and seen in any way possible,
kept balance, kept steadiness

There were many moments like that

The moments when we find ourselves not feeling, or protesting,
not allowing or finding the flow of relationship express itself ...
those are the moments we get lost in overwhelm

There were moments like that

As a close friend who is gently present, those were the hardest
to witness.

Those were also the moments where I gently could encourage
her to listen deeply again.

Listen deeply Corina, you will find a way
You will find a way to flow again,
No matter what circumstance
No matter what experience

After moving to the home and everything deeply up-ended
Her body challenged again deeper, further, more,
Her mind challenged, deeper, further, more
Her heart challenged, deeper, further, more

Suddenly her voice connected with scissors and paper,
images and words in a way that hadn't shown itself before

and she could breathe again

Showing, speaking, expressing what it was like
to live this human life - breathe again.

And even that moment passed, that way of speaking passed
Nothing is permanent

Every time.
Every time life changes for Corina.
Every time she finds a way.
She finds a way.

Because she listens
Not shy, not afraid
To be deeply intimate with herself and the world around her
And express it as it is
No hiding, no fanfare, no fluffy blankets around it
Just deep honesty

Deep recognition, deep connecting,
To life just as it is

After the collages now the book
After the book
Corina's heart

Pascale De Coninck

Textile Artist, Mindfulness Teacher



17/03/23



Póilin - my beloved puppet at Martin's studio, Nottingham 2018.



21/02/2023



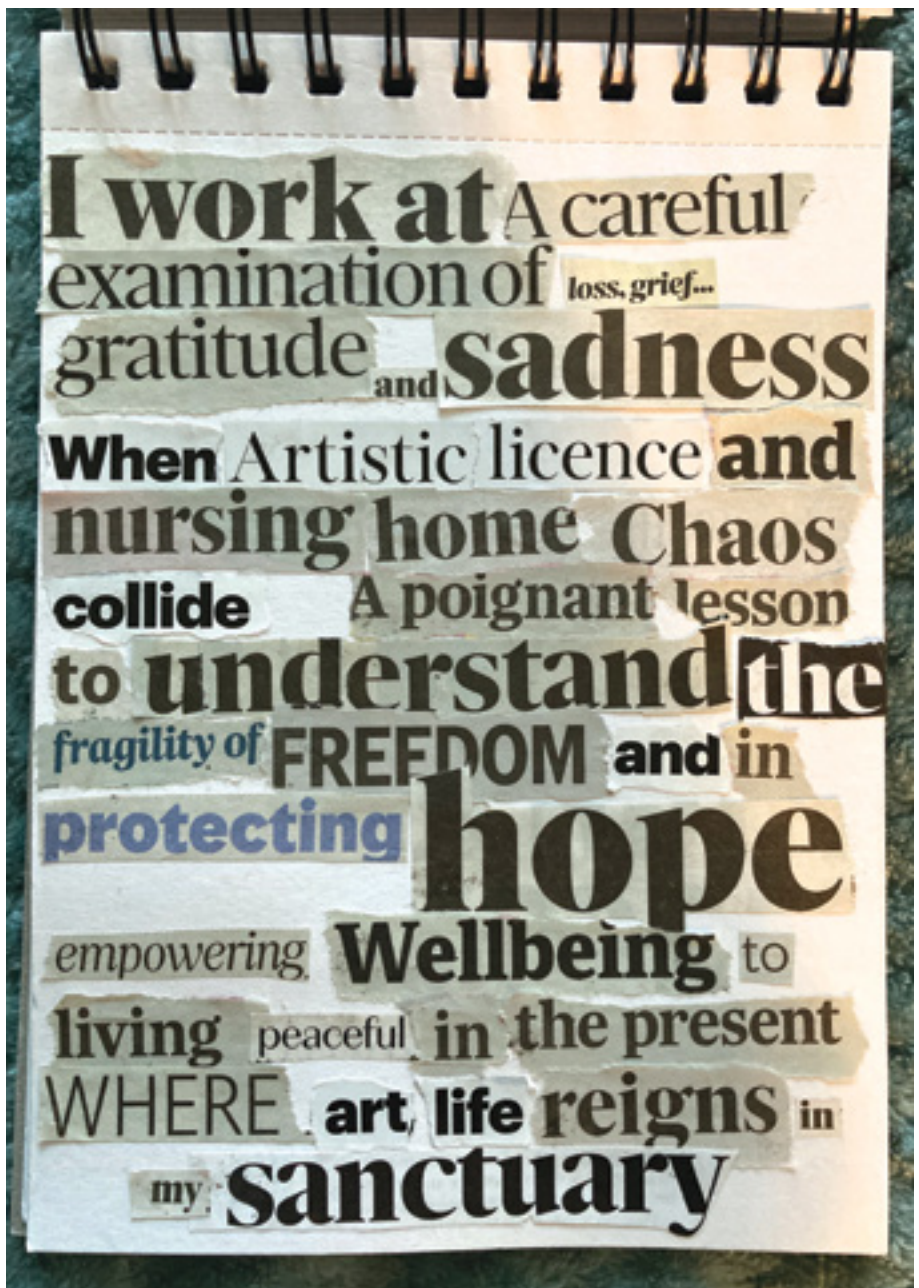
5/03/2023 - 'Surprises' good and bad.
 Reality vs Art - in a way one and the same confused state.



06/03/2023 - Creative Brain Week versus reality of life here



08/03/2022 - (CBW) talk in Dublin - me in bed. This helped!
Made in my bed - PVA glue, tissue, lavender (Lismore) and rose petals - at Treehouse.



15/03/2023 - This broke my brain and I couldn't move from my recliner until done as all the words would get mixed up. This is a response to 'Considering!' applying for age and opportunity writing award. I have to acknowledge – again – I can't actually do that anymore.

New From Somewhere - *Dominic Campbell*

I've always felt art should be, sort of, useful.

Not useful like a ten step plan or a how to guide. More that art could bring you to places less ordinarily visited. So you can see what it is like, there. In case. Things change.

You might travel by yourself. By painting, moving colours, or words and emotions round a page. Or by wandering into a film, floating through a gallery, stepping between the pages of a book. You might travel dramatically with others, trying on behaviour and experiences through theatre.

The places you journey to could be poetic or aesthetic. They might be pretty or darn right concerning. They might bring you to the limit of harsh emotion or produce lovely bubbles of happy for your head and heart.

What Corina Duyn makes works on me like this. I can't really separate what she makes from my understanding of the circumstances in which she makes it. The state of her health. The rooms and buildings she is in. The care that she is held in and helped by. The vitality and essence of her.

Each of her collages seems like a morse code machine, or a fax, one of those early communication technologies which reduced complex situations to short phrases, to better send them across vast distances, intent on cutting to the heart of the matter.

In my mind's ear I hear her written phrases as semaphore's dot, dot, dash, dash. "The News Today". While my mind's eye is beguiled and bewildered by a different form of messaging: The brilliance of an orange boat. The curl of a torn typeface. The texture of pencil mark against choice or paper. Structure against uncertainty. Improvisation against time. The known pushed up against all the great unknowns, in transition to another becoming.

In the space between message sent, and message received, lives magic. A signal. Made by a seemingly random and unique assembly of space dust and energy. The universe talking to itself, in the form of one breathing, feeling, funny, thoughtful human. One Corina. Responding, reacting and reflecting as the time passes, the cards fall and the paper cuts. Arranging images that sit with text. Conjuring messages. As protests, prayers, and spells.

Dominic Campbell

*Co-Founder Creative Aging International,
Arts and Cultural Engagement Lead at Irish Hospice Foundation*

Speaking out can be a painfully vulnerable experience; and yet it matters. When asking for a basic need to be met is misconstrued as a person being awkward, we need to talk. This takes courage. Even an accidental activist runs the risk of being seen as unreasonable.

We need a different perspective provided by George Bernard Shaw: ‘... all progress depends on the unreasonable man.’ The one who dares to question; the one who says this does not work, is making the world a better place.

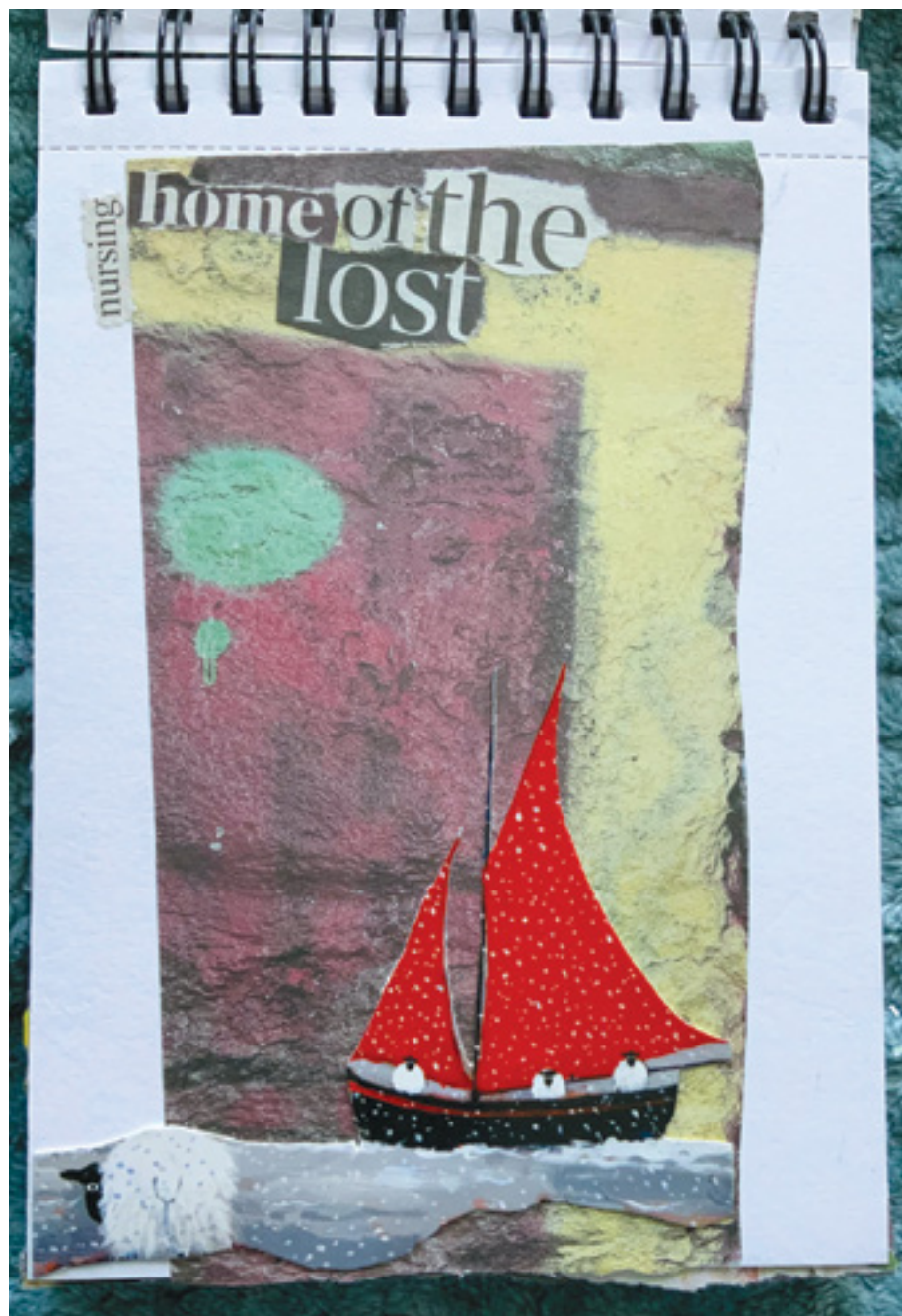
Corina offers insights into the way tiny acts can impact people’s sense of identity and self-confidence. The manner in which a person enters a room or says hello can help shape or break the day. That’s an important concept.

Corina’s book of collages is poignant and joyful. It inspires dialogue, within a context of hopefulness that can help shape compassionate and respectful care systems.

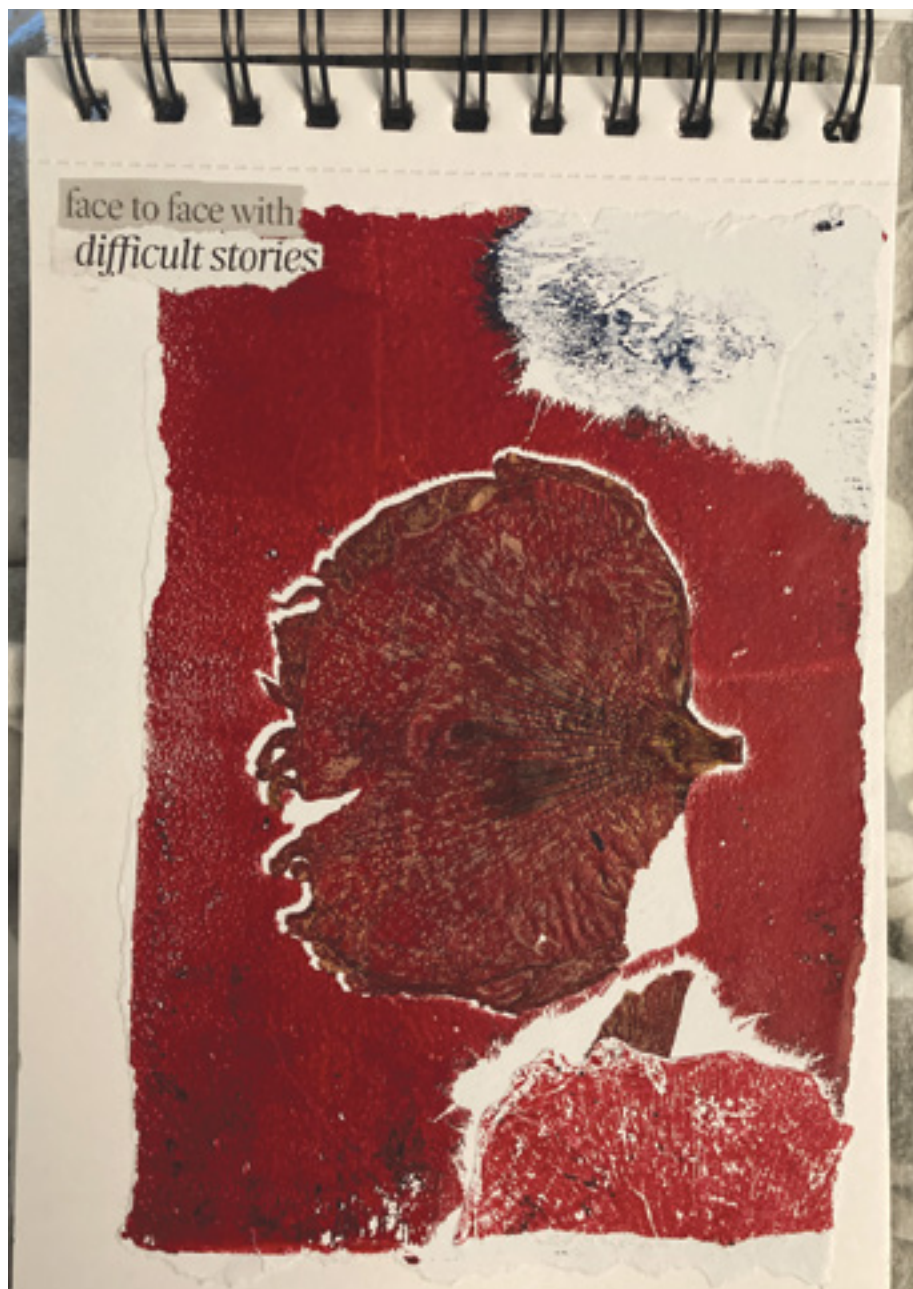
Karrie Marshall

Author, Speaker, director for compassionate care programs and socially engaged arts.

Contact: karrie@karriemarshall.com



29/02/2023



*16/03/2023 - Prints from 2021.
Actual Poppy flower from my home in Lismore.*



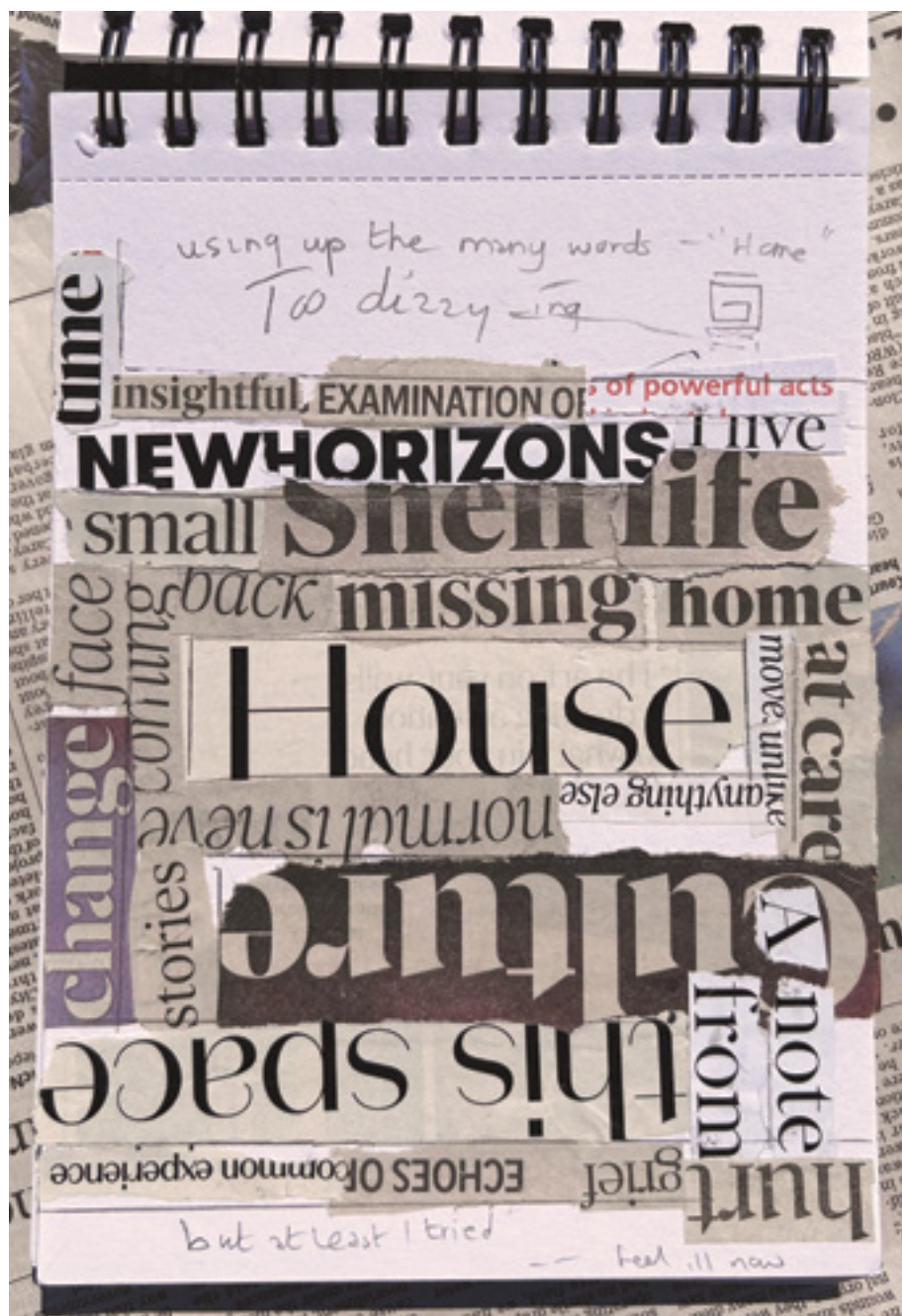
19/03/2023 - Made this with tears running down my face. I'm trying to stay awake but I'm so utterly tired. Noise also during night. Woken up several times doesn't help. Can't give up. When I close my eyes again, my mind can feel both hands movements of turning the paper and cutting image (or letters) precisely.



29/03/2023



01/04/2023



02/04/2023



16/04/2023 - Postcard for Christine

Unspoken Words

Months after knowing I could no longer make collages I worked with Caroline on what became ‘Unspoken Words’.

Using a puppet head from 2018, brought with me to the Treehouse in 2021 in a wooden box with other puppet making materials. Always believing I would finish my puppet.

I couldn't.

We used papier-mâché to make a bust from collected newspaper clipping finishing with brown envelopes. We, as in, the physical work done by Caroline while sharing our creative minds.

I did touch the gloriously tactile wall-paper-paste to fill the base with petals, leaves, feathers. My hands later unhappy with the experience. A bird as heart: a necklace presented by my Finish Art students just months before I became ill.

The remaining newspaper clippings were shredded. For a few days I mixed one handful with PVA glue to make ‘tumbling of words’ hair.

Due to many memories and hidden stories I was unable to have this beautiful piece in my room. It is with Caroline to celebrate our collaborative arts practice.

Corina



09/08/2023



Head from 2018. Box at GOMA Exhibition 2023.



01-07/08/2023



Both images 31/07/23



09/08/2023



Thank you

So much to say. So much has been said. Except to express my immense gratitude to all who supported me in the making of **'In bed I cut words'**. Although all collages were out of sight, out of my room, they simply wouldn't let me rest until this book came into being. Through the extraordinary words by several contributors, I understand my work in a new light.

My creative life in care would not have been possible without the support from Waterford Healing Arts who brought Artist Caroline Schofield into my little room. The story of our unique and beautiful collaboration ventured out, to GOMA, Creative Brain Week, now this book. Funding from Creative Waterford has indirectly made this free publication possible, to be shared with those who wish or need to hear my story.

If you wish to help me go full circle please make a donation of your choice to Waterford Healing Arts
<https://www.waterfordhealingarts.com/how-to-help/>

Be well.

Corina Duyn

Artist in care

Website: <https://www.corinaduyn.com/site/>

Blog: <https://corinaduyn.blogspot.com/>

Collages by their very nature use existing images to create new work.
We endeavoured to credit the artist if source was known.

- 05 See details on 'Home' on my Facebook page at <https://tinyurl.com/bdcmrycm>
- 08 *Púka vs the Public*, Sunday Independent Life Magazine, Patricia Harrington.
- 10 Stillness background landscape image - 'Ascension' by Demi Oral.
Corina - from shadow puppetry.
- 12 *Lekker eten* image by Ernst Karl - 'Sie ist; wie sie isst'.
- 17 Hands from giant bronze statue 'gangnam' style in Seoul.
- 19 Post card from Marga Vermeulen. Image - Hank Walker / Getty Images.
- 22 'Claudine' - Kees van Dongen ca. 1950. 'My friends rabbit' – Yuko Murata 2021.
Background - David McCarthy.
- 28 Caroline Schofield and Corina Duyn, art session in the Treehouse, Corina's room.
For further reading <https://tinyurl.com/yp9y3k26>. Photo credit: Keith Currums.
- 29 Images from the exhibition 'I brought the dream of flying' which took place at
GOMA Gallery of Modern Art, Waterford from 14 January to 11 February 2023.
Puppet Room and Puppet Room interior, by Corina Duyn & Caroline Schofield.
'In Shadow' (on wall) by Caroline Schofield.
Photo credit: Keith Currums.
View a video of the exhibition here: <https://youtu.be/sBFMabTxprI>
- 30 Dominic Couzens and Mike Langman - *The Mitchell Beasley Pocket Guide to
Garden birds* 1996.
- 31 *At home in Lismore: Goldcrest, Chiffchaff, Linnet, Pheasant, Siskin, Red Poll,
Green Finch, House Sparrow.*
- 43 *The Antarctic peninsula*, 2018, Aqua-Modis, 01/08/16 by Michael Benson.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

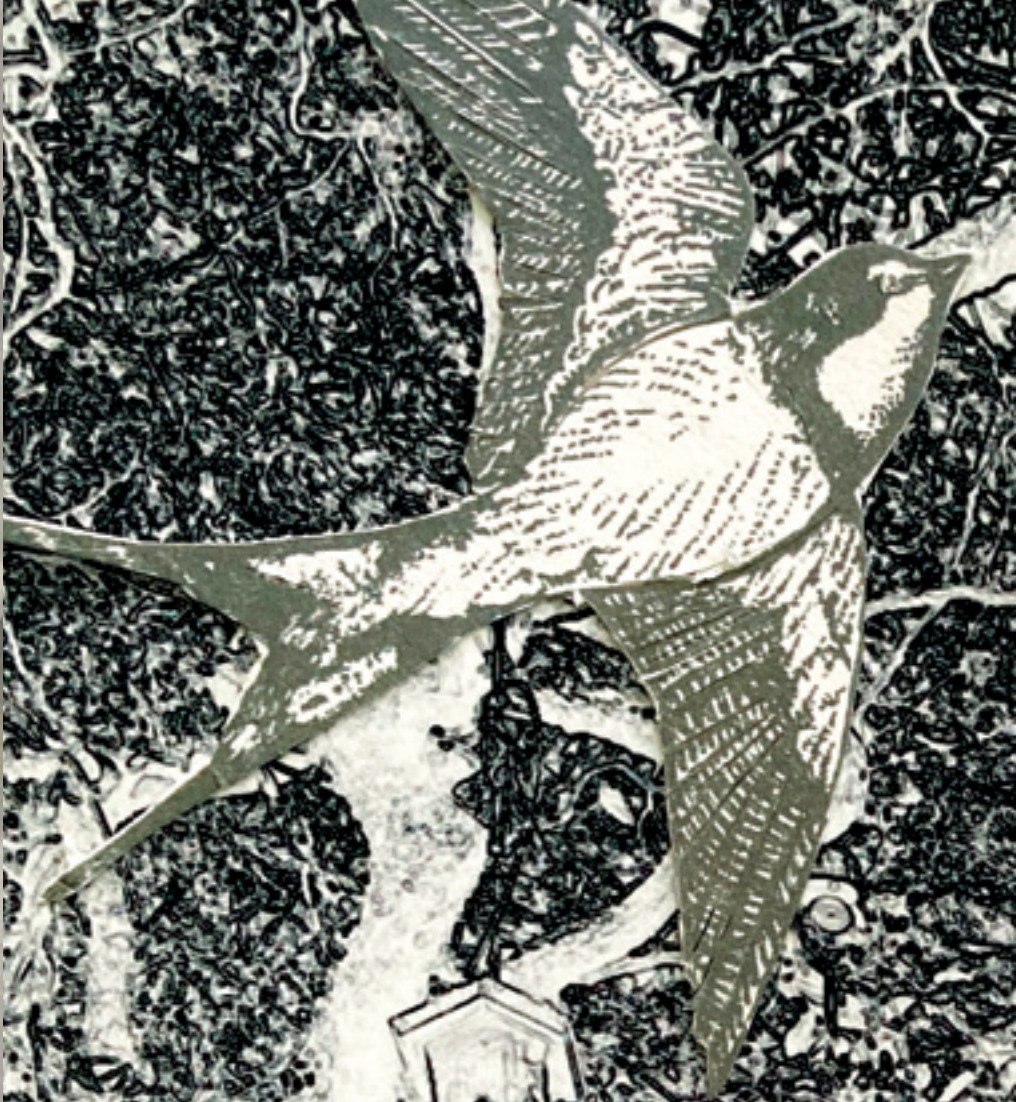
The team at Creative Waterford are honoured to support Corina's wonderful work which gives us insight into the necessity of creative expression and her feelings about moving into a care setting.

Katherine Collins
Creative Waterford

Supported by
Irish ME Trust

Design:
David Murphy - Red Heaven Design
www.redheavendesign.com

Printing:
City Print, Cork.



Funding from Creative Waterford has indirectly made this free publication possible, to be shared with those who wish or need to hear my story. If you wish to help me go full circle please make a donation of your choice by visiting the 'How to help' page at www.waterfordhealingarts.com

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