

AUDACIOUS
WOMEN
FESTIVAL

AUDACIART WEEKLY

How Wild It Was

29 May 2020



Photo: © Jannica Honey

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An Audacious Women Publication



AudaciArt – How Wild it Was

This week's theme, *How Wild it Was*, was suggested by a quote from Cheryl Strayed:

It was my life - like all lives, mysterious and irrevocable and sacred. So very close, so very present, so very belonging to me. How wild it was, to let it be.

AudaciArt

Hallo Everybody

Here we are with the 8th AudaciArt publication: a weekly collection of words and pictures inspired by a quotation by an audacious woman. Women are invited to create and submit any type of work inspired by the theme.

Many thanks as ever to all our contributors and to the Audacious Women Collective Members and volunteers who helped to make this possible.

The theme for Friday 5th June @ noon is: The Warrior Within

And for the following Friday 12th June: Dying On Your Feet

Still Connecting

During this period of physical distancing Audacious Women is running a series of [online events](#) to help build women's community, and to keep in touch with each other and our audacious natures. We will keep these going even now lockdown is starting to be eased as it will be quite a while until things are back to normal.

If you would be interested in running an event, send us an email to info@audaciouswomen.scot.



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What happens when you head into the woods?

Jannica Honey

What happens when you head into the woods?

What does your "woods" look like?

Is your forest big and dark with starry skies or vibrant green, full of wildlife?

One thing for sure: when you find this space of true wilderness something authentic will unfold, something true... or perhaps it is just nature? ... Common as muck, just doing what nature does best: growing, dying and changing.





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Of Solitude and Wild Places

Jo Cameron Duguid

Alongside the challenges of the coronavirus lockdown, there is surely an opportunity to reflect on our feelings about solitude and withdrawal from the world. I have long been puzzled by two apparently conflicting aspects of my own personality, which I often express by saying that one half of me wants to be a stand-up comedian, while the other longs to be a nun in a contemplative order. As I have grown older, I have learned to accept that both of these facets are real, and acknowledged that the woman who seeks aloneness and silence is now longing to be given more space in my life. It comes as no surprise to me, therefore, to find that the isolated life during this time rather suits me. At times, it can feel a little like being on a silent meditation retreat, providing a little compensation for the fact that this year's retreat was inevitably cancelled.

When I look back on my earlier life for indications of this search for solitude, three memories stand out:

Scene One: I am about nine years old and spending the summer holiday in Ireland with my family, at the home of my mother's sister, in a rural part of County Kerry close to a beach that was usually deserted. I have been at the beach for the afternoon with my older sister and some of our cousins. They have all left me to walk back to the farmhouse, and I have said I'll follow on when I'm ready. I can't really explain my feelings, nor why they were happy to leave me. But as I walked on the beach on my own, listening to the roar of the waves, I felt more contented than I could ever remember feeling before. I was completely on my own for what was probably the first time ever, unobserved and happy.

Scene Two: I am in my mid-twenties, on holiday in the Isles of Scilly, which are scraps of land in the Atlantic, off the coast of Cornwall. I am sitting on my own on a rock in my favourite place in all of the islands – Hell Bay in Bryher, where the full force of the ocean batters the rocky coastline of that tiny island. Again, I have that sense of solitude, enjoying the wildness of the sea, answerable to nobody. Some melancholic ache was always eased by the inclemency of nature in that spot.

Scene Three: I am in my early thirties, and am spending a few nights on my own in Lyme Regis in Dorset. At this time in my life, I am living in a flatshare in London, and I am finding it really difficult to live with other people but am telling myself it is “good for me”. Lyme Regis is famous for its harbour, known as The Cobb, which has existed in its current shape since the sixteenth century. There is a wide wall which goes around the harbour, and it's possible to walk right out to the end of it. The Cobb features in John Fowles' novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and the film



version has a famous scene where Meryl Streep is standing at the end of the wall in stormy weather, looking wistfully out to sea. I probably had that image in mind as I made my own way out along the wall, getting soaked right through as the waves crashed over the wall. After experiencing the peace of being in a small studio flat in Lyme Regis, I went back to London and left the flatshare, living on my own contentedly for many years.

These memories are still vivid in my memory, several decades later, and reveal something significant about my life experiences that has often prevented me from having what I really want or even believing I might be entitled to it. I was trained from early childhood to always set aside my own needs, and adapt myself to the needs of others. How many other women could say this too? My default setting now is to please, entertain and be responsible for other people's wellbeing. Now that I'm older, I'm learning to listen to that woman who wants to be alone, unobserved and unappraised. For the past 18 months, I've taken regular breaks on my own in a small coastal town called Dunbar, where I love to just be by myself and spend hours watching the sea. I prefer it to a similar, more gentrified, nearby coastal town called North Berwick. I was talking about this preference with a friend who has answered her own inner call to a more contemplative life by moving to a mobile home in Dunbar, leaving her husband of over 50 years in the city. I said I liked its unpretentiousness and how raw the weather is there. "Oh yes", she said, with a gleam in her eyes, "It's wild!"

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Blackbird for Breakfast
Margaret Ferguson Burns

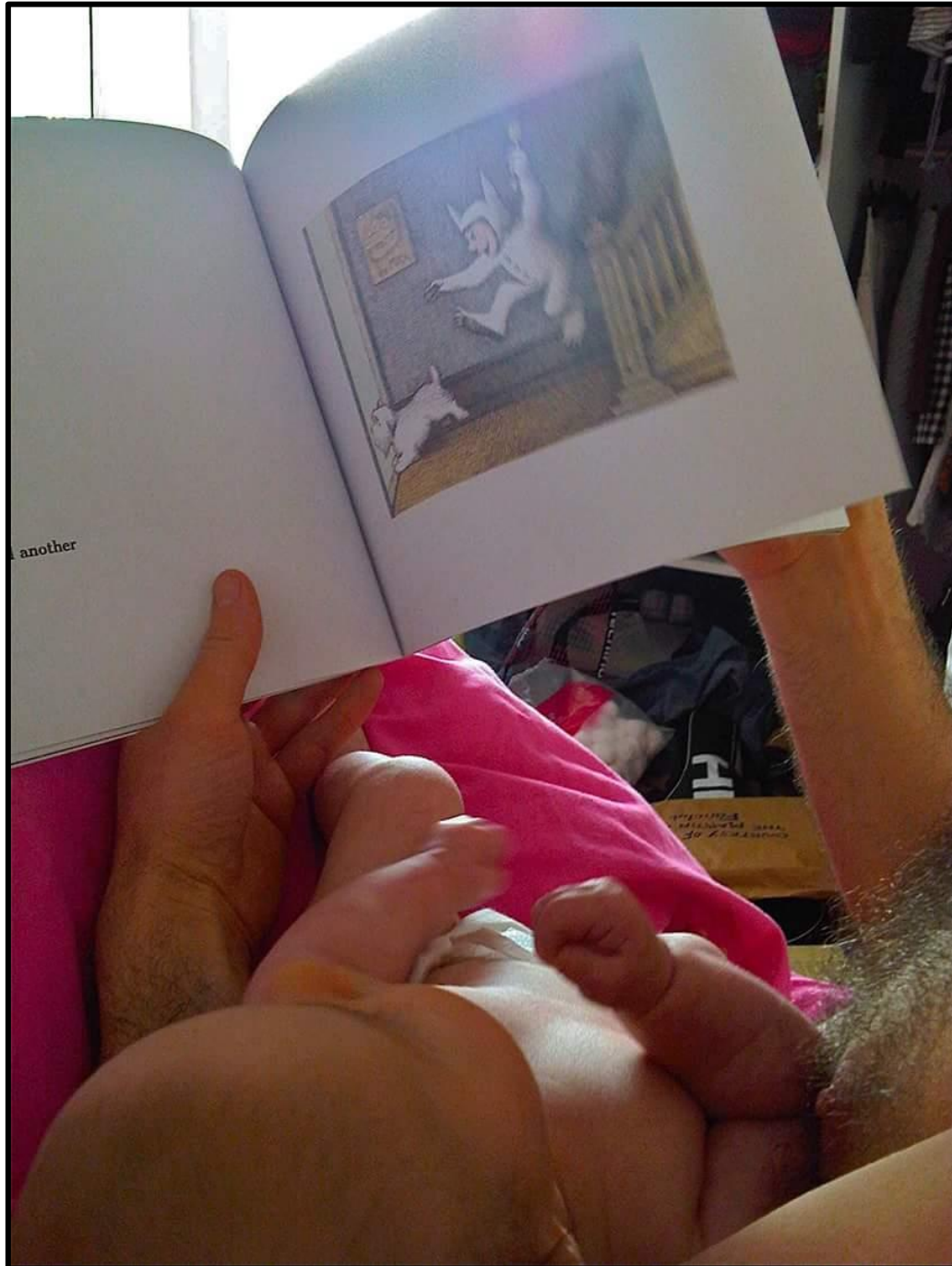


Here is a photograph of a Sparrowhawk in my garden - I opened the kitchen blind one morning and there it was - an amazing sight - and luckily turned away from me or I would have startled it as much as it had startled me. Followed by a mad scramble to find the camera and after quite a time watching it and snapping pictures, it began paddling its feet on the prey and turning slowly as it pulled the bird apart with its talons and beak, -until it was facing me - and then looking straight at me as I held my breath. When I checked later I found it had been a Blackbird - all that was left was the feathers and a tiny wishbone.

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And the Supper was still Hot
Hilery Williams



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Marina
Emma Gibbons

Speeding along the loch
Our Best Boat fills with spray.
We slice our way through
Perpendicular black walls of the wakes
Learning to be brave.

And water runs down the mast,
All five confined with cabin fever
We cover up in our matching brettan stripes.
The heads give little privy
And the wires whine and clang.
Dad's personal crew,
We try not to breathe in your aerosols
From your split lip fag.

A little nip and a kip chez Marina.
Your galley slaves sigh as we skirt the sirens' isle.
Robots wearing masks of compliance,
But our hearts are dull.
Then the sea is awash with crystals
As the doldrums set in.

We drift listless
Playing mental games on the lawn
To the cheer of Borgian lobs.
We have honey on our paps
Not knowing what that might invite
You to do next term.



Your mates are aware,
I don't want to be there.
Then heaving and ratcheting
We polish your bottom.
Echo Charlie Missing.