



Kew the Delicate Jungle (MN oils)

Plants, Gardens and Public Spaces

Plants

‘Flowers will soften the stiffest lady’ Mary writes a nice observation of a woman coming round the corner in her Sunday best on Metfield aerodrome. She meets a bush of dog roses, smells them then ‘removes her jacket revealing a blouse of the softest yellow’ and continues on her way, one senses feeling better.

Mary was not a gardener that was not her art. After a cup of tea she would put on rubber boots and go out to hack at nettles, rather desperately, with a small sickle she kept by the door. She kept a border for her flowers as country people always did and dealt with the vegetables Godfrey brought in. Their shared interest was things they grew as well as their animals. She knew her plants and if she did not she would have looked them up, she would have loved Google. All was observed, not just the Latin families but the way the seeds scattered, the pods twisting etc but also the way the sun changed their colour, the shadows moved, all was noted down maybe to appear later as part of a painting or the subject of a painting. Sometimes flowers were painted just as themselves. Tulips in a large black and white pot were just that or sometimes they became a poem, I have one of clusters of white flowers on a dark paper with a new moon is called ‘Each flower wishes the moon to name her Queen’

Public gardens

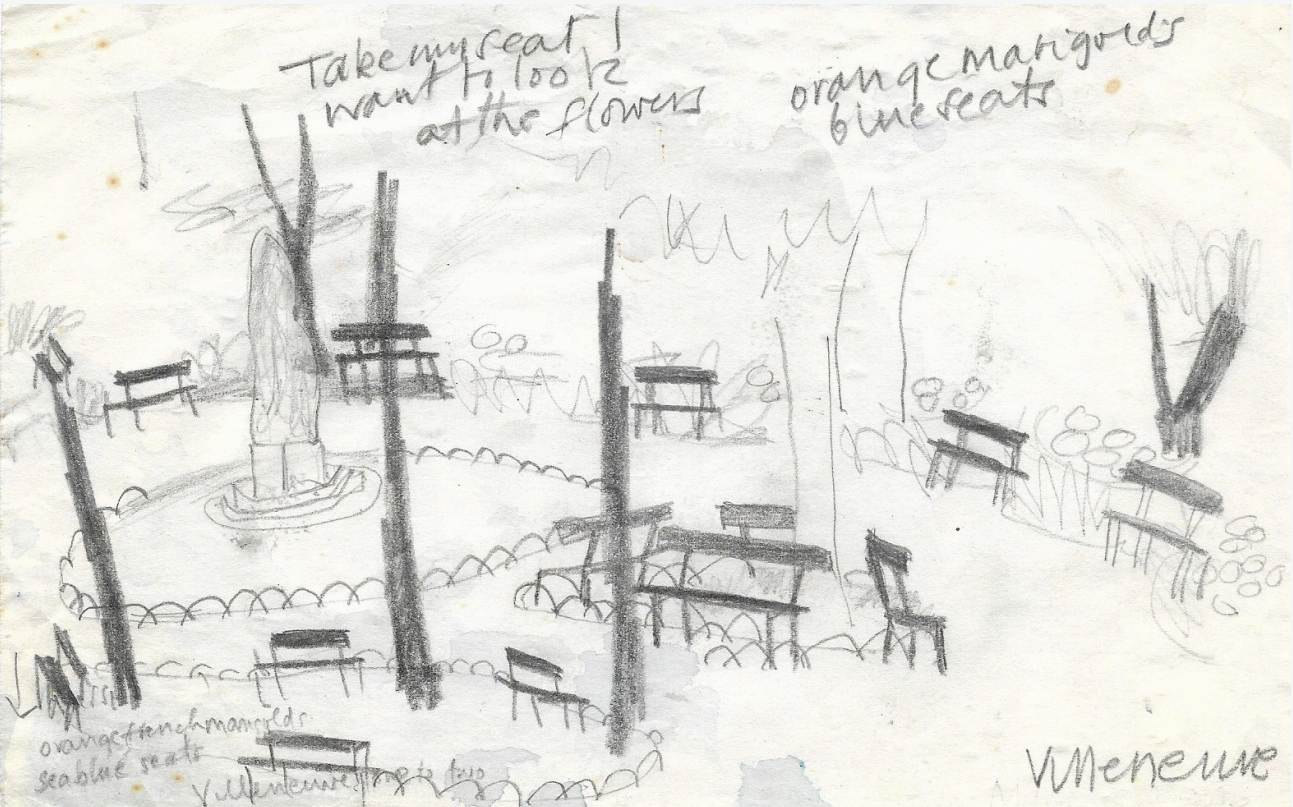
Public gardens, more urban, they are structured and peopled. Here Mary was not at home, she was a visitor there to look. Structure was observed. She had to work out how it was made in order to reconstruct it in a painting. Sometimes the structure takes over. With intense observation you become so aware of things that they loom larger. ‘The watching urns, I myself overwhelmed by ornament’ is written on one from a group of drawings of a terraced garden. On another of those a small person braves very large steps. That garden was in Aldeburgh terraced, ornamented and public. It’s still there but no longer public its ornamentation going on behind closed doors.

PUBLIC GARDENS AND LAKES

April

We walk in the vivid green
animals can now stand on their own shadows
animals carry green upon them and carry shadows

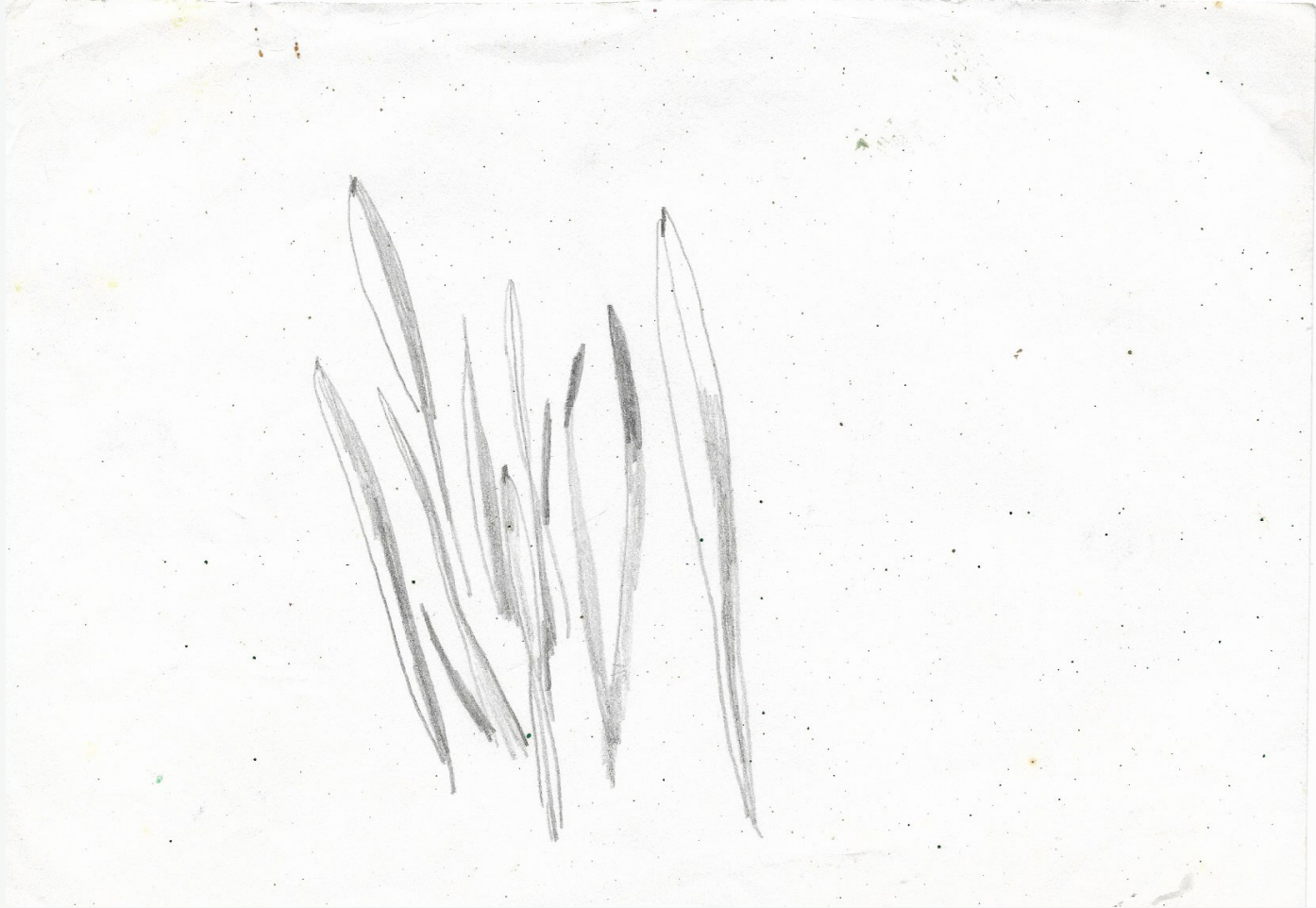
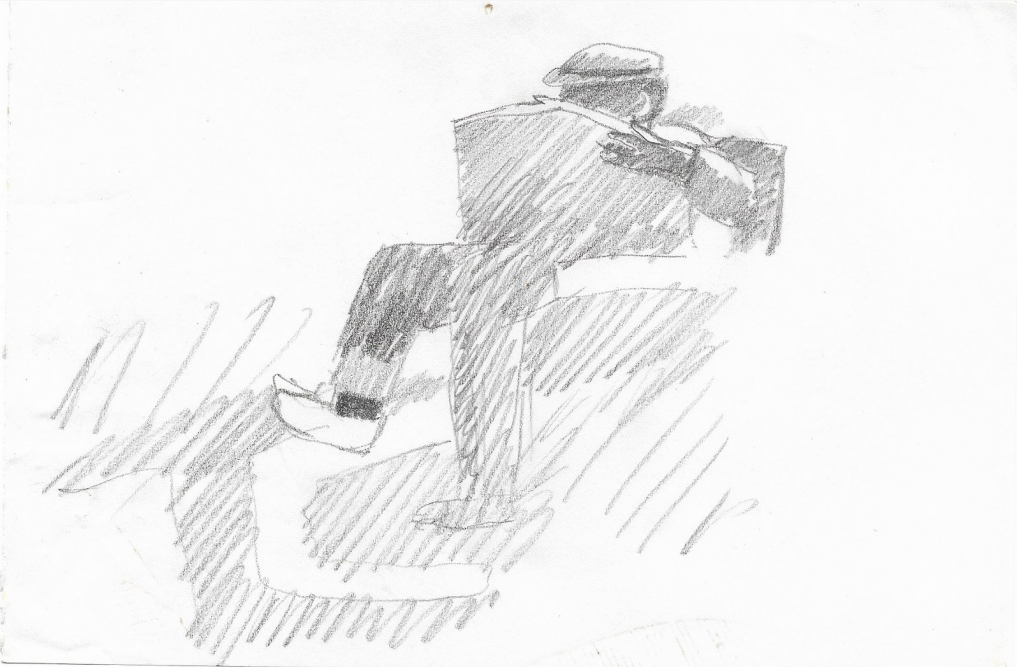
- I wish for a gaudy May





Girl jumping for horse chestnuts (MN works on paper)

plants/gardens text here





Garden above the sea, Le Lavandou (MN oils)



*Every butterfly has a shadow
somewhere on the ground*



INADEQUETLY POTTED URNS

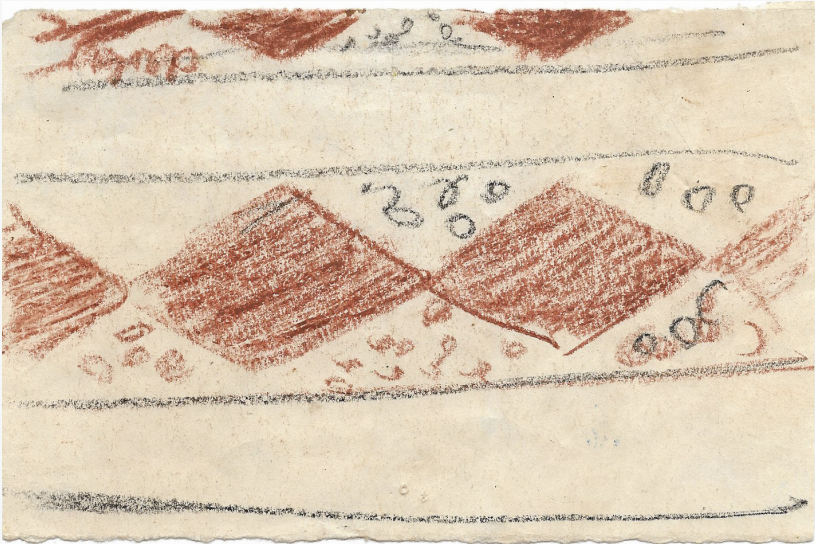


A great many urns in gardens have nothing planted in them. In the winter a tuft of dried grass waves and in the summer the tuft of grass sprouts delicately.

My first painting will be of an urn of overwhleming ornament, myself overshadowed and a delicate tuft of newl green (rounded tuft) grass.
- the next of a large flight of ornamental steps, much patterned (Aldeburgh) leading to narrow terraces all overladen with large bricked urns having converted handles.

April 17th

Watching urns - still and monumental
Hot ginger terracotta
not soft and mellow
lovely textured flights of steps
a little man climbing them



July 22nd



Urns
- inadequate potting
- adjacent walkers
- semi curious visitors
- watching urns
- urns with overwhelming ornaments
- urns too large for their gardens

April 18th



SMALL LIFE

*Today I was looking at a striped insect as it paused in the sun on the terrace.
The shadow it cast was deep and long, stretching ahead from the proboscis.*

*At that moment a large noisy aircraft flew over as they are wont to do here. Its shadow
immediately covered and extended that of the insect, so that it appeared to have an
aeroplane for a shadow,
a moment in time - there is is - or was
I drew it quickly.*

August 20th



*Remember the caterpillar hanging on invisible
threads - seen through the hole in a leaf - in
the distance a football match in progress.*

November 18th

A caterpillar very very close.

*Rows of hairs many more than can be drawn.
The front segments and mouth parts seem to
drop off towards me.
2 red marks like eyes glowing in each segment.
It turns its head towards me, and the shadows
of the spines fall across its body.*

May 19th

*The 1st bee died of cold
The 2nd bee was trodden on
The 3rd bee died in the rain
the 4th bee died of too much blossom
poor dead bee*

*Some bees do not die but remain on their
backs confused.*

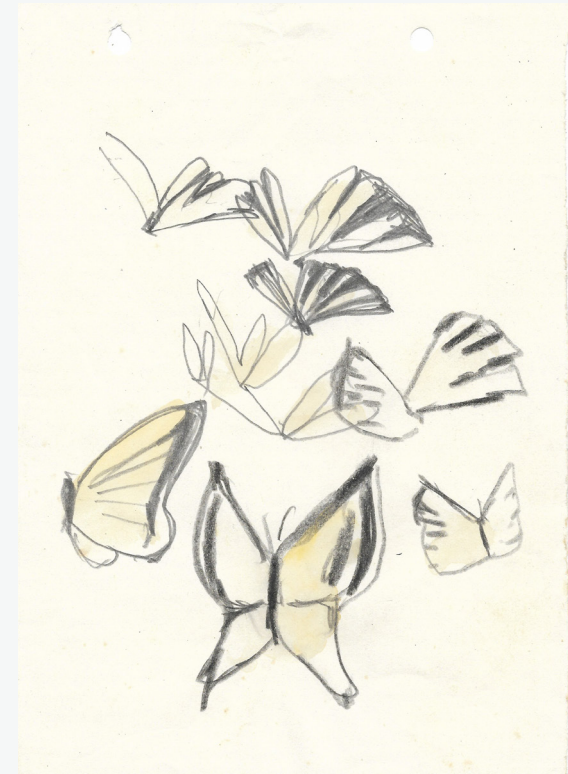
(This reads like a description in a bestiary)

June 27th





The butterfly arena (the castle ruins, Hyeres), oil on canvas, 1989, 134.5 x 103cm



Shadows in butterfly arena. darker stone warmer sand colour

*Going into great houses, I feel like
a beetle, very near to the ground.*





Butterfly, wax crayon and pencil on paper



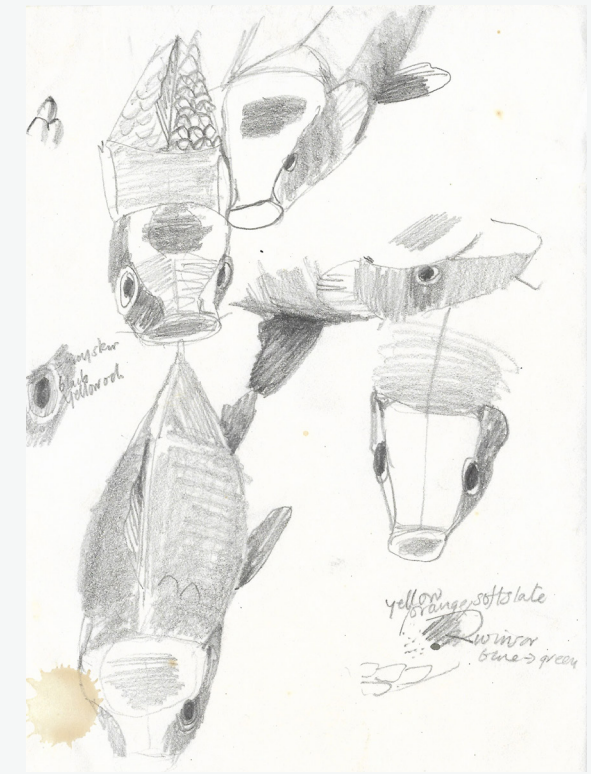
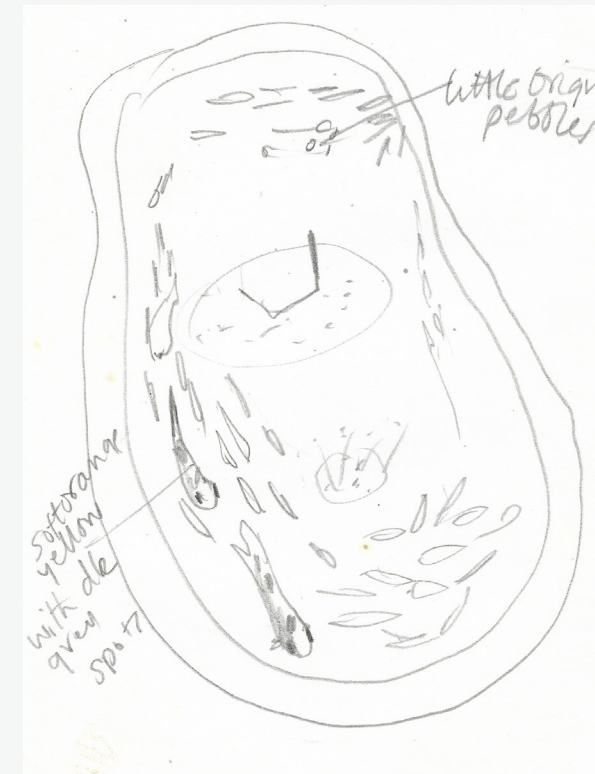
*This is a wormy day,
all leaves standing upright in soft mud,
points downwards.*

*The worm knows how turn a leaf so that the narrow end pulls in
first - are we always so sensible.*

October 30th



The Fish Pond, 1984, Oil on canvas, 50 x 36"



*Little fishes have such freedom
not knowing their hazards.*

September 19th

*New Naples yellow
This bright naples yellow I saw round the eyes
of a frog - inside it a soft orange to ring the eye
- inside that a deep green of the eye itself which
came from the side of the tank. The vertical ridges
of the tank were soft viridian and rain bowing at
the corners.*

January 2nd



THE BEACH AND HARBOUR

Need beach and harbour text from diary - good images



By ferry to the lighthouse (MN oils)



Mary, with Tessa and Hannah

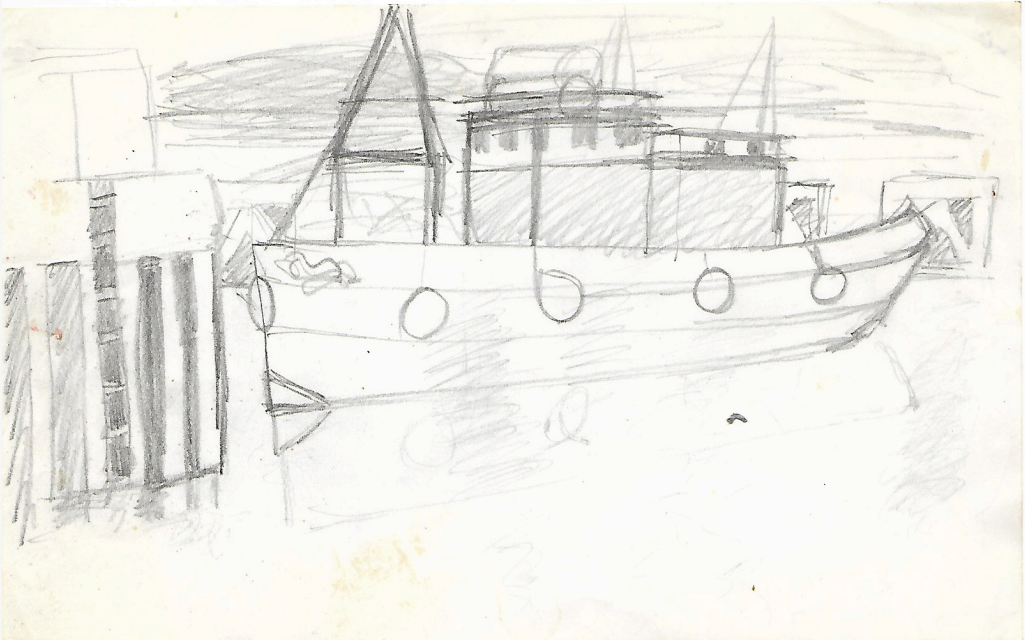


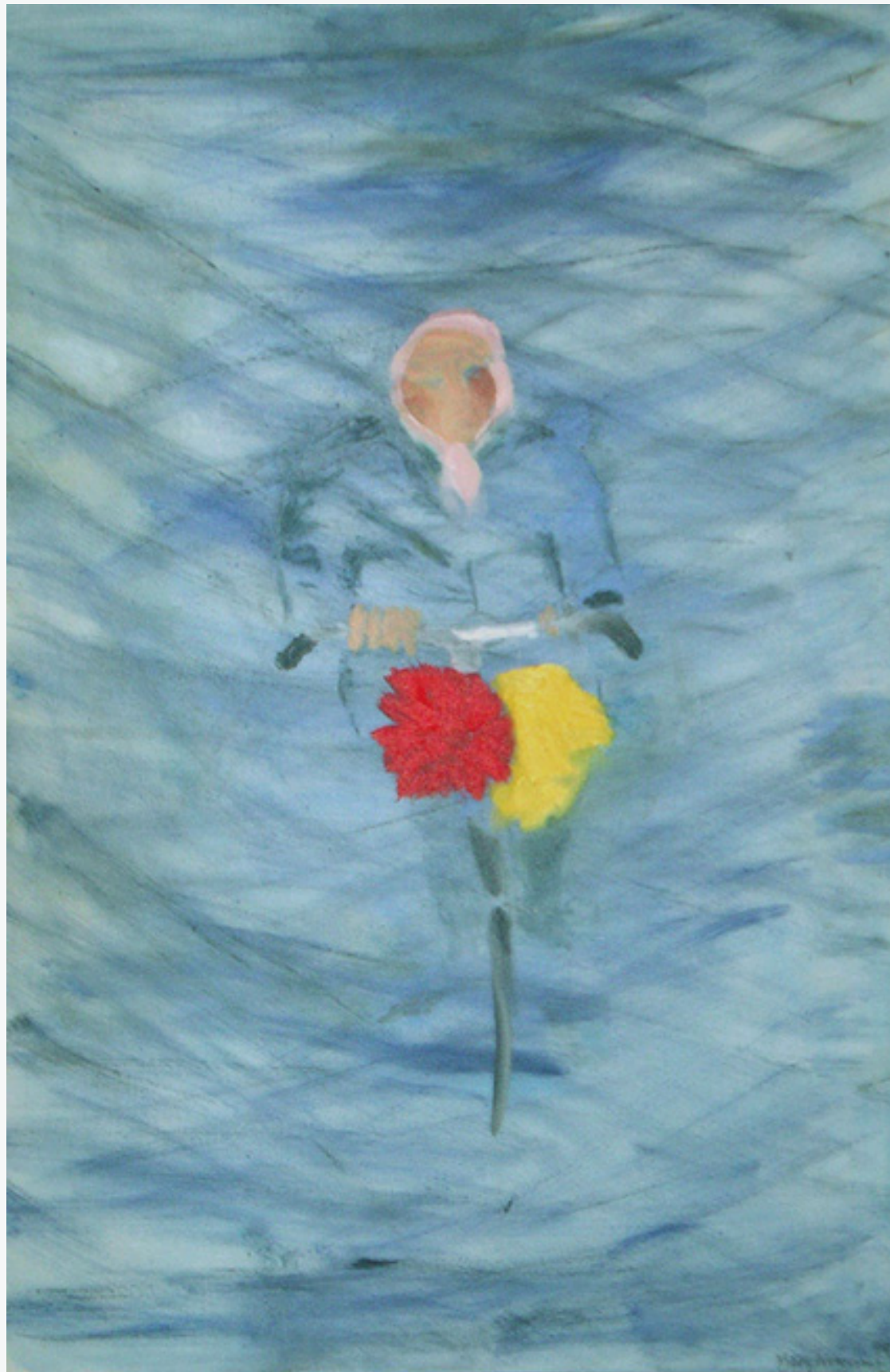


Need beach and harbour text - good images



Cork Harbour (MN oils)





FLOWERS

Tivetshall long mile - all grasses flowing in a pink.

Again I have seen a man with a bicycle holding a large bunch of sweet williams.

*Man seen on next visit in the same lane,
(walpole church spire above the bank).
Coming round the corner, in the distance,
towards me wheeling a bicycle and carrying
on his handlebars a large bunch of flowers.*

*It seems country people visit each other on
bicycles still and take with pride a bunch
of flowers, that they have grown, to their
friends. Often in the country garden a row of
flowers is grown for cutting e.g. sweet williams,
gladioli, chrisantherum, sweet pea (in
abundance).*

A sea of bloom.

*What better than a bunch of flowers. Your
friend will love them and will give you some
in return. I wonder what they will be.*

July 5th





Poppies, date, oil,





To Diss by bus.

At Gissing a man stood hiding his bicycle with a large bunch of sweet williams clutched at the centre of the handlebars.
Behind him the round towered church and lovely cockerel up in the sky
At his side, on the corner the little chapel with new bright yellow door in a clearing. in a copse.

I'm interested in the way people stand with bicycles and flowers.
Often is is necessary to walk as the flowers are precious and may break.
Country people often walk with their bicycles. They are an aid to rely on when tired.
The great things the contact with the roadside and hedgerows and the slowness of progress is relatively unimportant.

July 7th

Dog roses an individual one dose(?) up is a dramatic arrangement of pink-white-yellow.
a bank is like a fabric
or in detail like the background flowers
of a mediaeval enclosed garden ref. Kenneth Clark 'Landscape in art
or the details of a subdued French tapestry

Along came a lady stiffly dressed in beige silk, a suit and prim because it was a Sunday. She rounded the corner of a large bush and was picked out in sunshine. She didn't see me - a phrase came to mind:
'Wild flowers will soften the stiffest lady'

June 2nd

