



P O I E S I S

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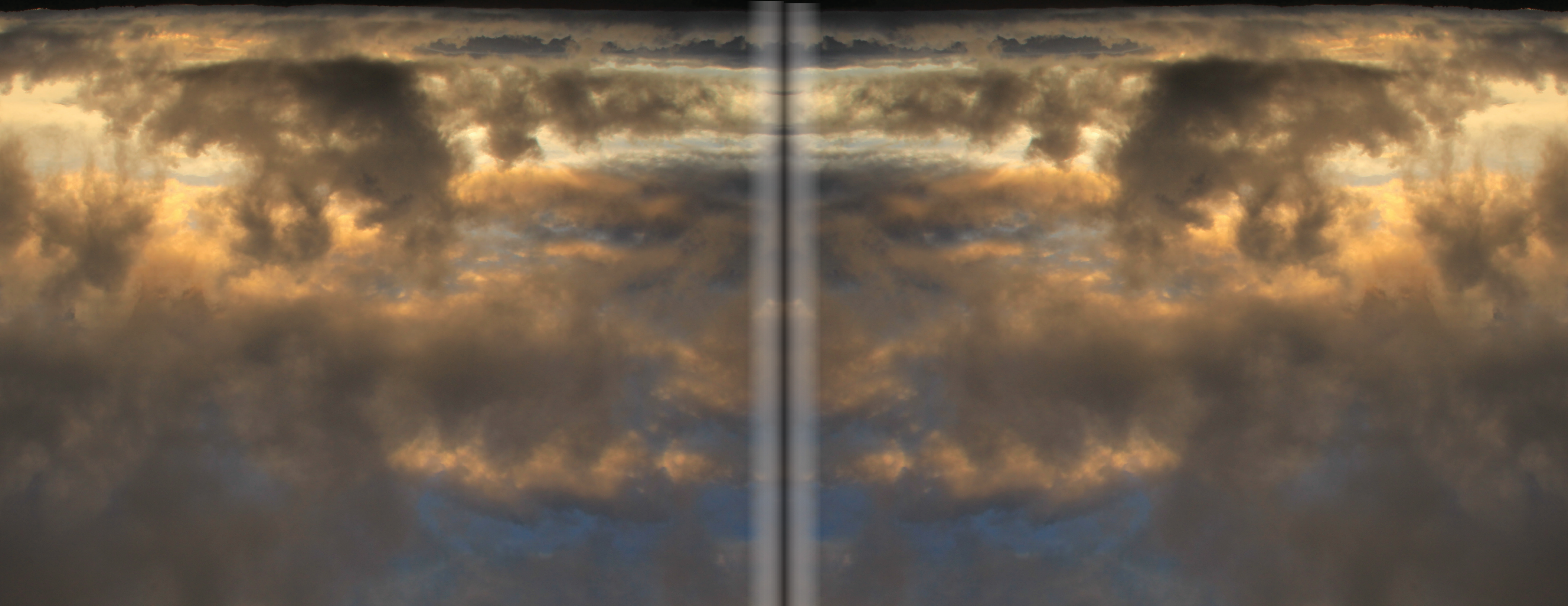


I A T Y D O B O D N Y T A I













The last essay explored the ways in which language semantically frames and informs the way identity is understood and practiced, specifically the differences between noun and verb based languages. This time we aim to explore the way that place and ‘other’ fits into this process of experiential interactivity. We will look specifically at work of the Japanese Philosopher Kitaro Nishida, and his logic of basho [place]. We will need some foundational context in order to get there, so as they say, let us begin at the beginning, which for us is pure experience, and that means William James.

James, is often considered the father of American psychology. He is most often identified with his philosophies of pragmatism, radical empiricism, and functionalism. Though there is much crossover between each of these trains of thought, here we will concern ourselves solely with radical empiricism. The basis of this philosophy was the foundation of empirical belief, that reality needs no extraneous or transcendent being who knits the objects of experience together but instead is comprised of one holistic substance. In other words there is no distinction between mind and body, there is only body and the universe, and we are all fashioned from the same things. However for James this fell short as a perfunctory explanation for experience, as he believed that the phenomenological or for him pragmatic component of day-to-day experience was missing, mainly what things mean. To be clear this is not to paint the pragmatism and phenomenology as the same, but to identity that James used his pragmatism in much the same way that others used phenomenology.

He championed that the relational meaning between objects was just as important to a given ontology as the objects themselves, in other words, meaning is an integral and even foundational part of reality. This inquiry led James to seek a method of reframing the way that we describe and interact with experience and thus, make mean-



ing, catalyzing a process more in line with our environments.

For this James looked to Kant's division of experience into the numina [what there really is] and phenomena [our interactions and subsequent categorizations]. He then used this distinction to lay the framework for his idea of 'pure experience.' He expounds on this concept by describing it as follows:

"Experience on an enormous scale, undifferentiated and undifferentiable into thought and thing, a phenomenal field prior to interpretation and thus bifurcation into subject and object."

He believed this was a way to finally solve the paradox of immanence [experience as an internal process and end unto itself] and transcendence [experience as a path to understanding and connecting to that which something greater cannot be conceived]. James was not convinced that either could subsume the other, and thus worked to preempt the subject/object division so as to achieve the namesake: a truly pure experience.

Kitaro Nishida, would take James' idea of pure experience as the cornerstone for developing though a distinctly Japanese philosophy, one both open and inclusive to Western and Eastern traditions. Born of a schoolteacher and a practitioner of Judo [True Pure Land] school of Buddhism, Nishida was raised among both Japanese and Chinese ideologies, and was greatly affected by the concepts of the 'ideal person' and dao [the way]. As he matured and began to practice rigorous philosophical inquiry, Nishida turned his attention to how identity is manifested through time and in experience. Through his reading of James, he was able to explore his influences of Zen and overlay them with the Western interpretations of direct experience. His focus was geared towards how someone could foster a deeper awareness in one's life. For Nishida, as opposed to James, pure experience was the jumping off point of a deep and cathartic interconnection between body and other. He wasn't interested in facilitating a purely objective analysis but instead on the ways in which unity could be developed between perceived and perceiver within the field of experience.

This can be best understood through fudo as it grows out of basho [place]. Fudo roughly translates to climate







or topography, but the way we mean it here is much more akin to the something like Guy Debord's 'psychogeography,' or the ways in which the landscape affects us. The phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, describes it as the 'flesh' of the world, and defined self as an 'ambiguous' body, in that it 'breathes' its surroundings in and out, and thus, for all intensive purposes, becomes both I and Other. He retrofit the semantic concept of 'chiasmus' or relational reversibility, to contextualize this process, in which something is pragmatically divisive but paradoxically, and simultaneously seamless.

In a similar fashion, Nishida attempts to pay close attention to reflexiveness and it's relationship to the body, specifically to claim that sensation is an intentional act. He believed that before we move to abstraction [cultural conventional e.g. category/language] there is a reciprocity that is taking place e.g. moving from "I feel the breeze" to "the I who is feeling the breeze." This may seem like a passive or simple statement but for Nishida it was the revelation on par with Heidegger's nothingness. Heidegger introduced nothingness into philosophy to disprove that metaphysics was the sole property of subject. He posited that self or subject was defined not by substance but the absence of all the other exponentially common activities of the cosmos, in which a particular set of phenomena arise [I], temporarily sustain, and then fade back into the fabric of that same cosmos.

For Nishida, in making the statement: 'the I who is feeling the breeze,' we are able to move away from egoist distraction and commit willful self-negation, to become as it were empty vessels, and to grapple with the real and tangible idea of our interiority. In this way both 'I' and "Breeze" among all the other sensible material within the horizon of perception come into the body on equal footing as one unified substance. Each of these hyperbolically resonates with the underlying universality already within us. This can be best understood through the Aristotelian idea of hypokeimenon or the 'underlying thing.' Self is thusly created through a taking in of the world as one's contents, and in this way one's worldhood is reflected through shintai [one's individual body] both thereby achieving universality.

Nishida plays with the term zettai [absolute/breaking through] to illustrate this. What he means by breaking through is a co-emergence of self and place, that moves past the solipsistic 'I,' where both I and Other are immersed and enmeshed within each. This event causes the inescapable death of shintai, or better said its ambi-



guity. For Nishida, shintai or the ‘ambiguous body,’ dies at the moment our ability as sensationally free beings that can volitionally acknowledge holding ends, and cognition begins. It is at this moment that the process transforms from sensational input into creative output, in short we acknowledge ourselves as momentary points in space in which all things through all times are exemplified, articulated, and uniquely manifested. In summation, the world is reflected within us and then we together are reborn through cognition and interpretation through the act of integrated creativity, art makes the world.

The contemporary philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy in dealing with this same process coined the term ‘transim-mance,’ in that it is a breaking through, but one that happens within the field of experience. He also brings art to the forefront of this interdependent liberty, in his description:

“Art is the transcendence of immanence as such, the transcendence of an immanence that does not go outside itself in transcending, which is not ex-static but ek-sistant. A transimmannence. Art exposes this. Once again, it does not ‘represent’ this. Art is its ex-position. The transimmanence, or patency, of the world takes place as art.”

This is not to say this is the ‘only’ way to attempt to perceive or sense the world but to play with our perception, so as to be in more active relationship with it. A useful reference point might be the way in which Karate uses the idea of kumite, or ‘partner sparing.’ On the surface one might not see the relevance. However, upon really delving into the dogma surrounding kumite you will find the deep mutuality of what it means to share the push and pull of energy and force utilized within the sparing process. Each partner meets the other one connected point in space, instead of two and thus using the praxis of sparing itself to instill in each opponent a sense of unity much like Ponty’s idea of chiasmus, One’s opponent, specifically within the realm of opposition is the catalyst for through force to achieve mutual unity.

It’s of course important to note that one cannot simply step outside of reality to be able to sit back at some rarified level of consciousness and wax philosophical about the nature of existence. It follows however that the more we can







think about ourselves as partners with the places we inhabit, and indeed that they do inhabit and speak through us, the more equilaterally inclusive relationships we will develop with them, and in turn, each other.



# FEATURING 'THOSE TINY GRAINS OF SAND'

Performed by **The Southern Tenant Folk Union**


Written by **Pat McGarvey**

The song came to be because I wanted to have an a capella track for the album and for the live show. I was reading Frank Herbert's Dune series of books all through that year and one of the characters is very long lived (in Dune Emperor I think) which made me think about what someone having that sort of perspective would think of humanity.

The books had already given me the idea that a dystopian future with a return to the land (back breaking labour work camps, etc.) and those in power using archaic power titles for themselves (Duke, Earl, Baron, etc.) was a possibility, and this unpleasant future scenario would have an acoustic/folk style.

Making the sound of the STFU relevant to the story following from those ideas was paramount to the album as most of its other songs were written specifically to fit in with it all and 'Grains Of Sand' was meant as a lament/ballad possibly sung by those living on the 'farms' - a song that simply depicts how in history the wheel turns and nothing really changes.

**[STFU on the Web]**



If I lived for a thousand years,  
If I was, to stay remain  
The bloodshed hopes of many a man,  
Would be to me as grains of sand  
Be to me as grains of sand,  
Fly past in their decades  
All would be ants upon the land,  
I'd cry, declare, for shame

If I lived for a million years,  
If I was, to stay remain  
The land would roll into the sea,  
The earth would crush those grains of sand  
And the grains of sand would fly between,  
Fly fast yet unseen slow  
All would be ants upon the land,  
I'd see them quick below

If I lived for eternity,  
If I was, to stay remain  
The secrets of the darkened heart,  
Would open up to my refrain  
I would sing of murdered souls,  
Of cold death past and clear  
Oh the little, grains of sand would stain,  
In their number I would stay right here





# AND 'SLIGO'

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**Written and Performed by The Wires: Alternative Strings**

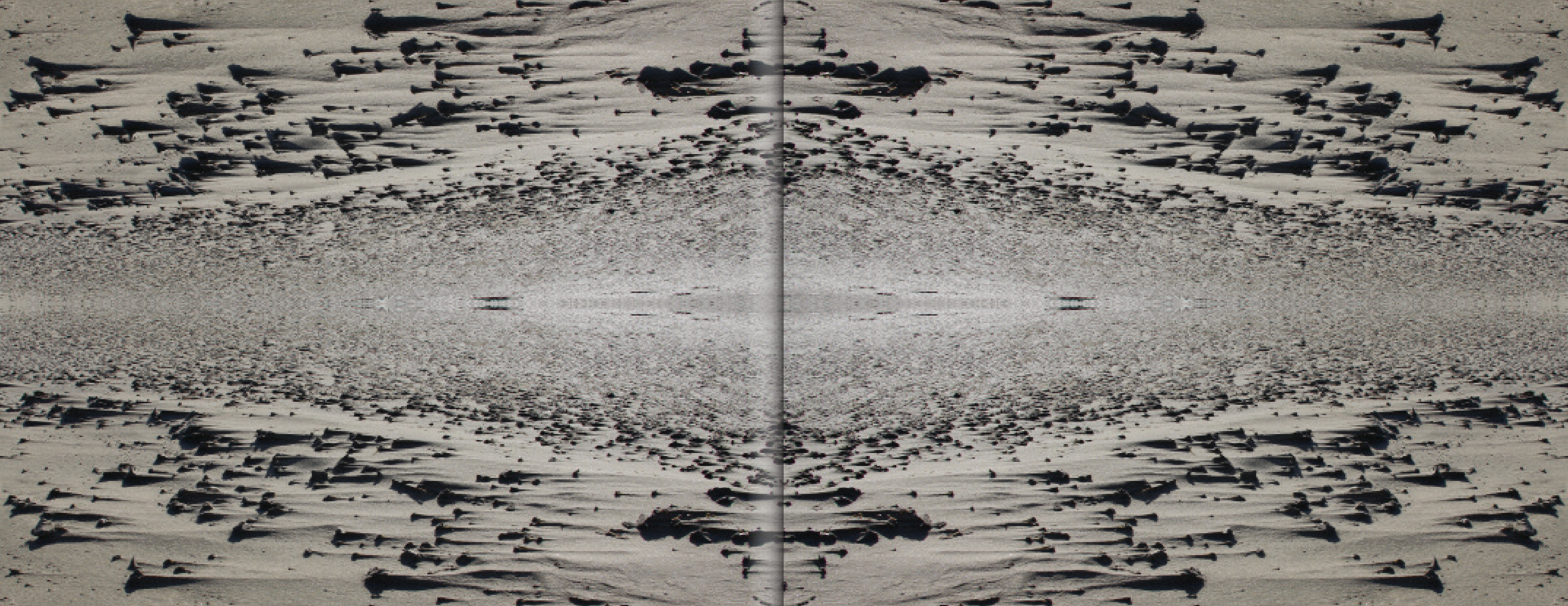
Sligo was composed in 2011 and was named for a small town on the coast of Western Ireland where Sascha (cello) went on her honeymoon. Both of us listen to another fantastic string duo, Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, who specialize in traditional Celtic music, and Sligo was inspired by those ancient modal melodies. This piece is perfect for the Summer Solstice, as the middle section is driven by an ostinato bass part that brings to mind images of working in the fields under a golden sun.

**[Wires on the Web]**





























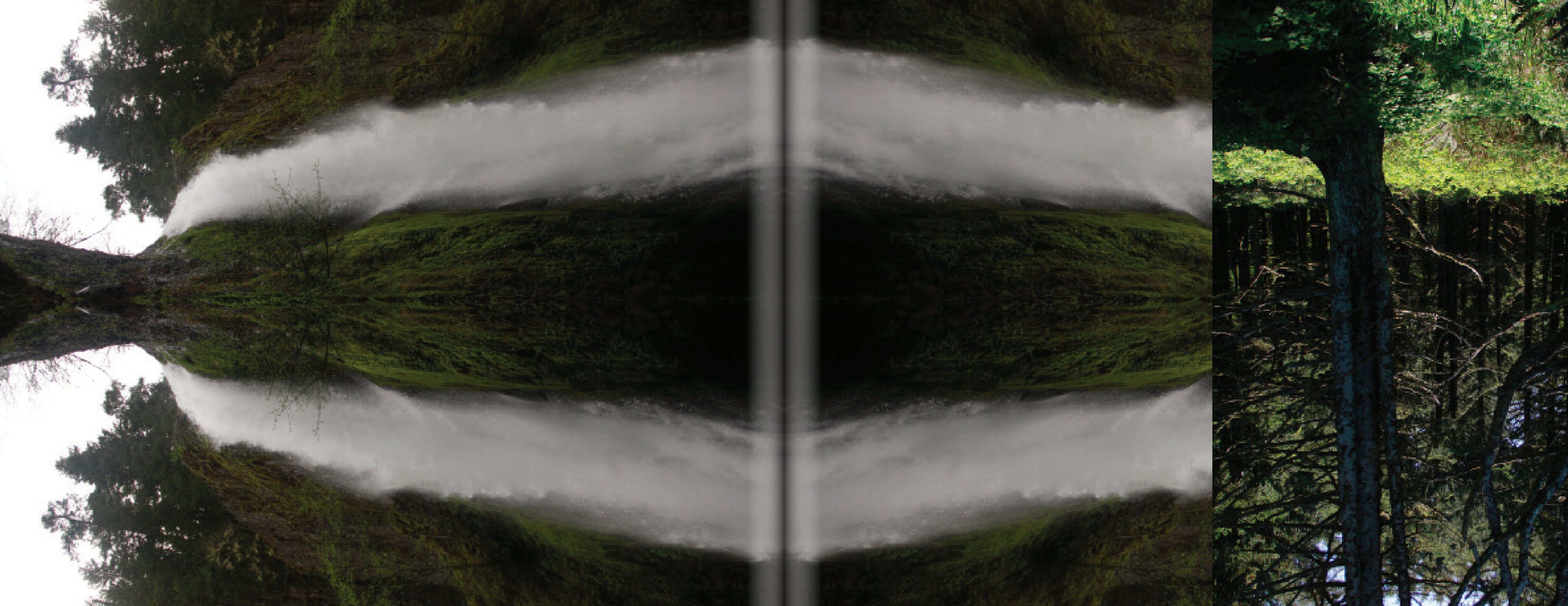






















A UNIVERSE DWELLS  
WITHIN YOU









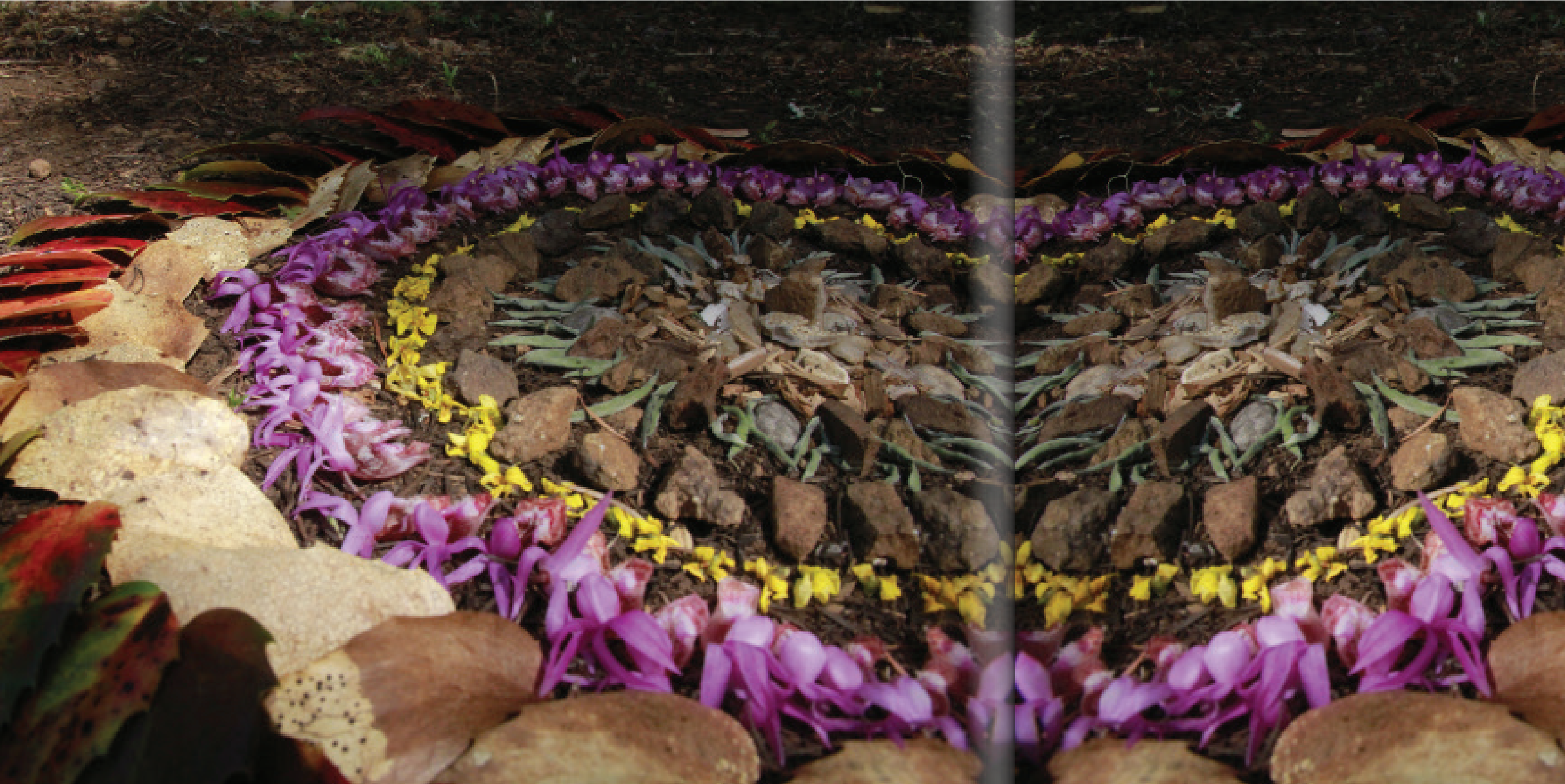


























IT SAYS  
'THERE IS NO END,  
ONLY HERE.'