

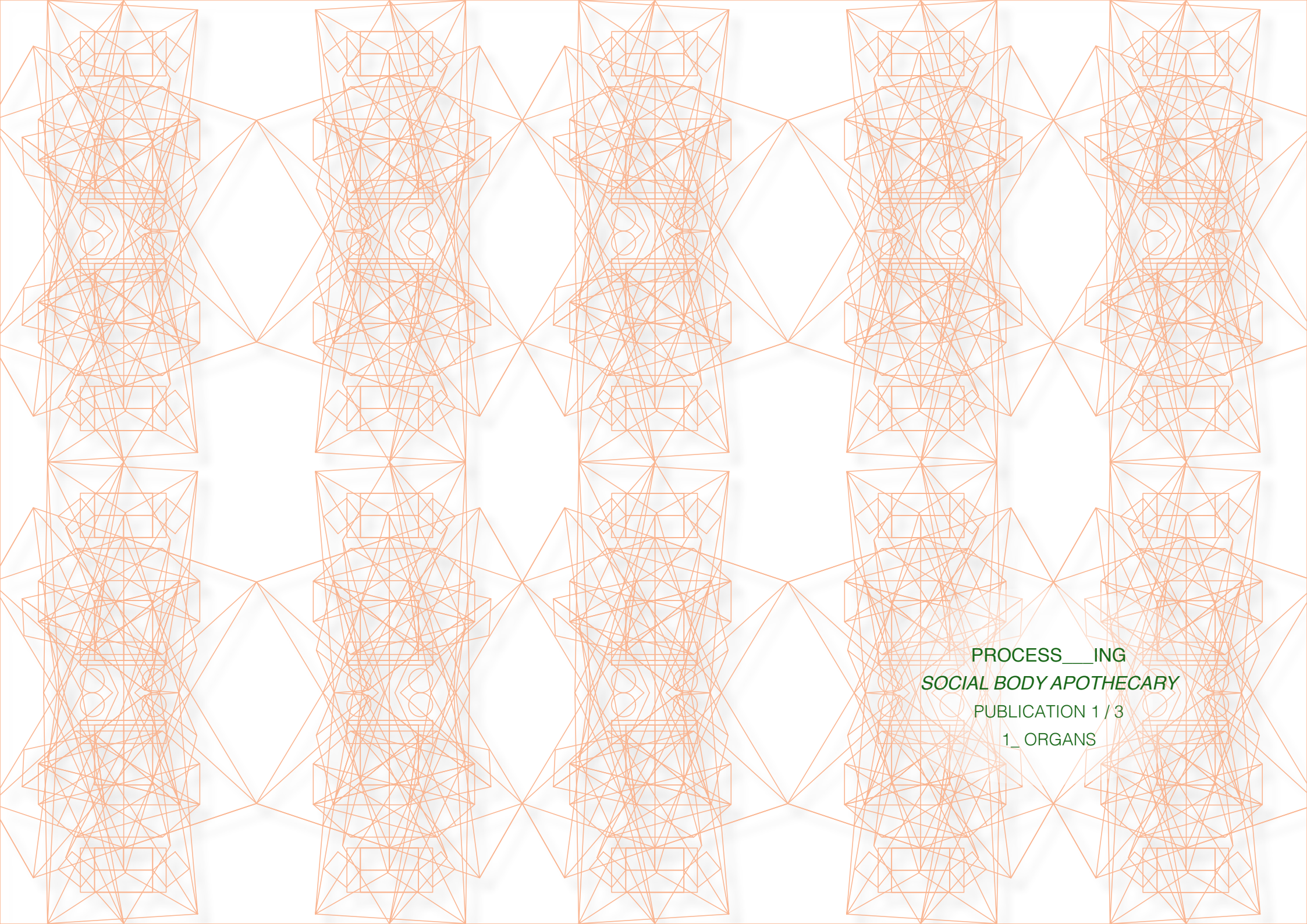


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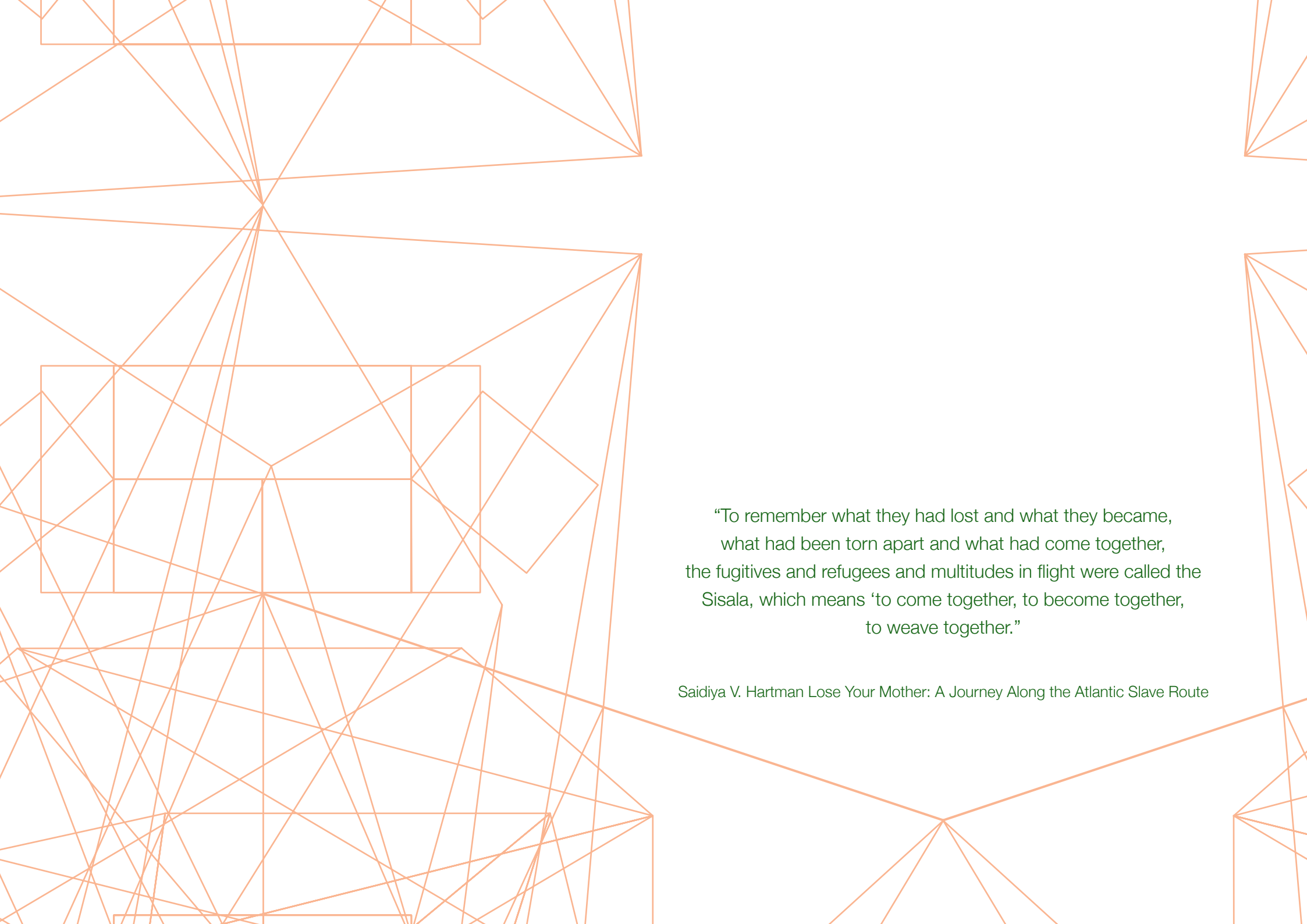
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*SOCIAL  
BODY  
APOTHECARY*





PROCESS\_\_ING  
*SOCIAL BODY APOTHECARY*  
PUBLICATION 1 / 3  
1\_ ORGANS

The background of the entire page is a light blue color. Overlaid on this background is a complex, abstract pattern of thin, orange lines. These lines form a series of interconnected rectangles and triangles, creating a sense of depth and geometric complexity. The pattern is most dense on the left side of the page and becomes sparser towards the right, where the text is located. The lines vary in length and orientation, creating a dynamic and somewhat chaotic visual effect.

“To remember what they had lost and what they became,  
what had been torn apart and what had come together,  
the fugitives and refugees and multitudes in flight were called the  
Sisala, which means ‘to come together, to become together,  
to weave together.’”

Saidiya V. Hartman *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*

# GARDEN AS BODY\_\_\_\_ AND\_\_\_\_BODY AS GARDEN

The Social-Body Apothecary works with the body as garden and the garden as body. We combine intercultural plant knowledge with bodywork and create space for questions around systemic violence, resilience and regeneration. Through this process, medicinal encounters take place that address the social body.

The body that we are proposing is not strictly anatomical. It is mixed, hybrid, queer, monstrous, multiple, relocated, a holistic being that defies norms.

## *What is the social body?*

The apothecary that we are proposing values the knowledges and resources stored in our bodies and lands. Making medicine together is a practice of resistance against structural violence. By building community we can understand the connections between symptoms that appear in individual bodies as indications of what might be rooted in systemic injustices. Through coming together, exchanges and conversations arise that reveal how the experiences we often feel alone with are personal and collective, shared and different. In this process, we come to understand that our experiences are never isolated, but rather exist within a wider context and can meet our bodies in the presence of others as well as the plants of the garden through their medicinal insights, engaging in healing as a collective process.

The 'apothecary' originally referred to both a storage space for the medicinal resources and a role in the community, the person who held these knowledges and

was available as a resource to distribute them. We propose bringing these back together by acknowledging how these intuitive knowledges are held in the body as a living and intelligent repository. As such, we can reconnect our bodily navigational systems with the living world we are embedded in.

## *How does place guide us?*

The first incarnation of this project took root in a former garden school in Berlin that was closed and overgrown, then temporarily revived as a social centre for art, ecology, and cultural practices, dedicated to the local neighbourhood. The site is coordinated by Berlin Mondiale, a citywide network of cultural practitioners and artists of urban practice in the context of migration, asylum, and exile. At this intersection, the Social-Body Apothecary offers bridges to be built with the living knowledge and stories of migration and integration of the community through embodiment, art and healing practices. This process involved collaborations with women ranging from ages twenties to eighties, many from the neighbourhood coming from migrations backgrounds throughout the SWANA region. 'SWANA' stands for South West Asia & North Africa, a less colonial term for the incredibly diverse geographic area with cross-pollination of crossroads ancestries, articulated by the archival hub for the re-membrance and reclamation stewarded by River Rose Remembrance. We worked with groups of children, with visual and theatre artists of mixed abilities, among others. The hope is to provide a space



where people can reconnect with their ancestral knowledge of plant life and share horizontal practices for collective health.

To begin with, the garden is mapped through organ centres, with the vagus nerve as a medicine cart that circulates among and throughout these, integrating the entire garden-body and extending into the local neighbourhood. This book is intended to open up that methodology of relating the body to the ecosystem, informed and guided by what is already growing there so that potential forms of social healing can arise from within the complex layers of that particular place. There may be references to the situated context from which we have been learning and practising, meant to acknowledge and ground in the source ecology that we write from. However, we hope these maps, questions, and medicinal plant intelligences can support your own process of adapting and applying this living framework into the places you are in relation with.

## *Why organs?*

Each of the organs specialises in particular processes, serving their role in the whole, but never acting in isolation. The organs operate in concert with one another, collaborating and conspiring together towards the holistic vitality of the organism. We see this in the individual human body, in the garden, and potentially in movements working within wider social systems.

Organs are delicate yet resilient, they are subtle yet massive, crucial for the operation of the body yet tender. Being with the organs invites porosity, vulnerability, and resilience.

Each of the organ-dwellings is situated in relation to particular areas of the garden

that correspond and plants that ally with its actions. The kidney with its filtering, relating, detoxing, and absorbing actions is situated in the water region, by the ponds and willow tree. The heart who works on connecting, pumping, circulating, orientating is situated in the wild field of goldenrod, where all directions towards the edges of the garden are in view and brought together. The stomach whose work of digesting, metabolising, processing, breaking down, and catalysing align with composting processes. The lungs who enable breathing, releasing, circulating, resonating, and grieving are matched with the moist microclimate of the greenhouses, a transparent otherworld that makes life possible in a unique way. And the liver, with its transmuting, transporting, metabolising, and detoxing actions lives in the underworld forest adjacent to the orchard, among an old oak tree and sea of evergreen ivy. The organ-dwellings are spaces to encounter these processes taking place within us, seemingly invisible but vitally palpable.

As you will see, many of the plants appear in multiple organ centres, true to their multiple relationships. The vagus nerve as a flow that roams among all the organs and its allied plants are marked to indicate their partnerships with both this particular organ and the workings of the nervous system.

## *What are medicinal processes? How we relate to the plants*

All the plants are always many. They are beings of complexity, rife with contradictions, extending across spectrums, their themes speaking in subtle nuances beyond the scope of polarities. These plants support multiple aspects and systems within the body and socio-ecological context simultaneously. While we

focus on the organs here, the actions of the plants work in concert with other layers. The point is not to divide them, isolate, or extract their components, but to see how this multiplicity indicates that there are many ways to aid or support the social body from different perspectives. The plants work to address what is needed through medicinal dialogue. We value engagement with these plants as healers, teachers, collaborators, and allies, to work reciprocally, dialogically and dynamically. We provide questions as openers for contemplation and (re) consideration in hopes that they foster more questions rather than offering cures, promises, or solutions. Here we focus on story-telling that weaves together many different sources and streams of information and experiential knowledge. We draw guidance from feminists of colour, whose voices we honour throughout this collection. Our intention is to offer these as seeds and pathways for you to enter into relations with the plants that grow around you, whether these ones or others and hope this resource can support and enhance your own capacity to perceive and read your body within context.

### *Why dwellings? Structures - architectural and social*

The organ-dwellings, and the practice of dwelling within our organ environments, invite experience from another perspective. Though the organs seem outwardly invisible and untouchable, we can connect with internal experiences supported by architectural re-imaginings; spending time in these spaces, among the allying plants, offers another possible experience of the internal. Simultaneously, they serve a particular function, offering particular modes of being with/in the garden.

How can you see from inside? How does your experience of seeing out shift your senses? How might that inform your readings of bodies in place? How can the act of dwelling be resourceful, an anchor point to work with the flow of the whole, rippling into wider social scales, and all the connectivities within those layers? The size of the structures invite you to place yourself inside, they invite you into an embodied experience of being within the organ itself. The different seating positions creates different relations by the positionality of your body in the place. Providing a frame, the dwellings offer particular postures to relate with your own body, with the place, and with others.

The design strategy we embraced involved minimal structures that are held together with the minimal crossings needed to create stability. The lines of wood always form a skeleton which leaves space for others – for air, for sun, for plants to take over, for unknown experiences. The structures are meant as a helping hand, to facilitate encounter, enabling embodied knowings to become more available and palpable. The wooden structures offer clarity, with the minimal geometry to hold you. All the while, these constructions are vulnerable themselves. They are impacted by weather, by visitors, by wear and tear, by the unexpected and uncontrollable autonomous life within the place.

### *How do we construct structures?*

Squares create more squares but triangles always come together to form different shapes. Triangles are the strongest structures because they are the most simple form serving the fundamental need for stability in order to allow growth, expanding towards all directions and dimensions through multiple geometries.



Varying angles shift geometrical realities and construct different feelings to dwell within. There are no right angles here. Making structures with triangles requires flux in concentration and adaptability; while building, each angle and each point is uniquely coming together. Triangles do not demand consistent measurement or normative directives that must be replicated. Triangles cannot stand in isolation, they build architectures that allow for more, for unknown forms. How can straight lines create flow?

### ***CONSTRUCT LAB and other collaborators***

#### ***Nothing is done alone***

These dwellings were created in close collaboration with practitioners from Construct Lab, who bring expertise in supporting communities to design needed infrastructures in appropriate forms for the site. For conceptualising the structures we collaborated with Phase 2 Youth Club, inartist/tikwa werkstatt and their participants of different ages and abilities. The construction itself was done in collaboration with ConstructLab, which is devoted to constructive intelligence, with the desire to design spaces of togetherness, of collaborative learning, spaces in which a new (or rediscovered) sense of place may be experienced, a laboratory of conviviality.

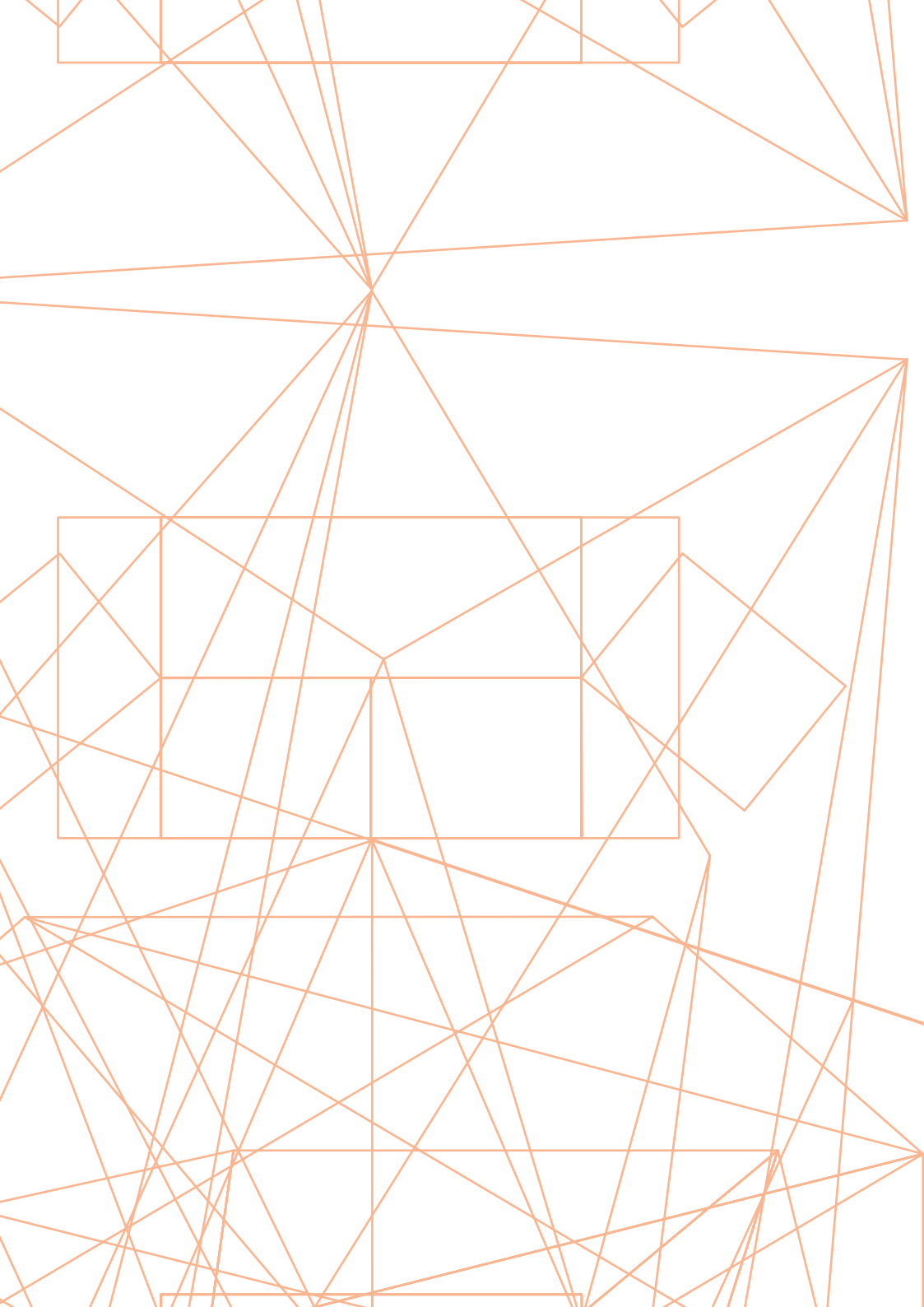
### ***\*Invitation to practice, apply to your context***

The roots of this process in a specific place and context while the methodology and perception-reading-building approach can be applied or translated or transposed with sensitivity to other contexts. We invite you to take this as a grounds for your own thoughtful transplantations.

Movement from one ecology to another is demanding. It requires resourcefulness in adapting and is a precarious process. When a plant or person is uprooted, whether by choice, by force, or by necessity they need time to negotiate new ground. They need water, support and patience. Sometimes this involves a phase of wilting, releasing and letting go, before new growth can emerge. We invite you to accompany the transplantation of these practices, impulses, and perspectives in ways that are responsive and nourishing, accountable to the context you are in.

### ***Names and Terms***

All plants have many names in different cultures that speak to their relationship with people. Here we include one of their English Latin names.

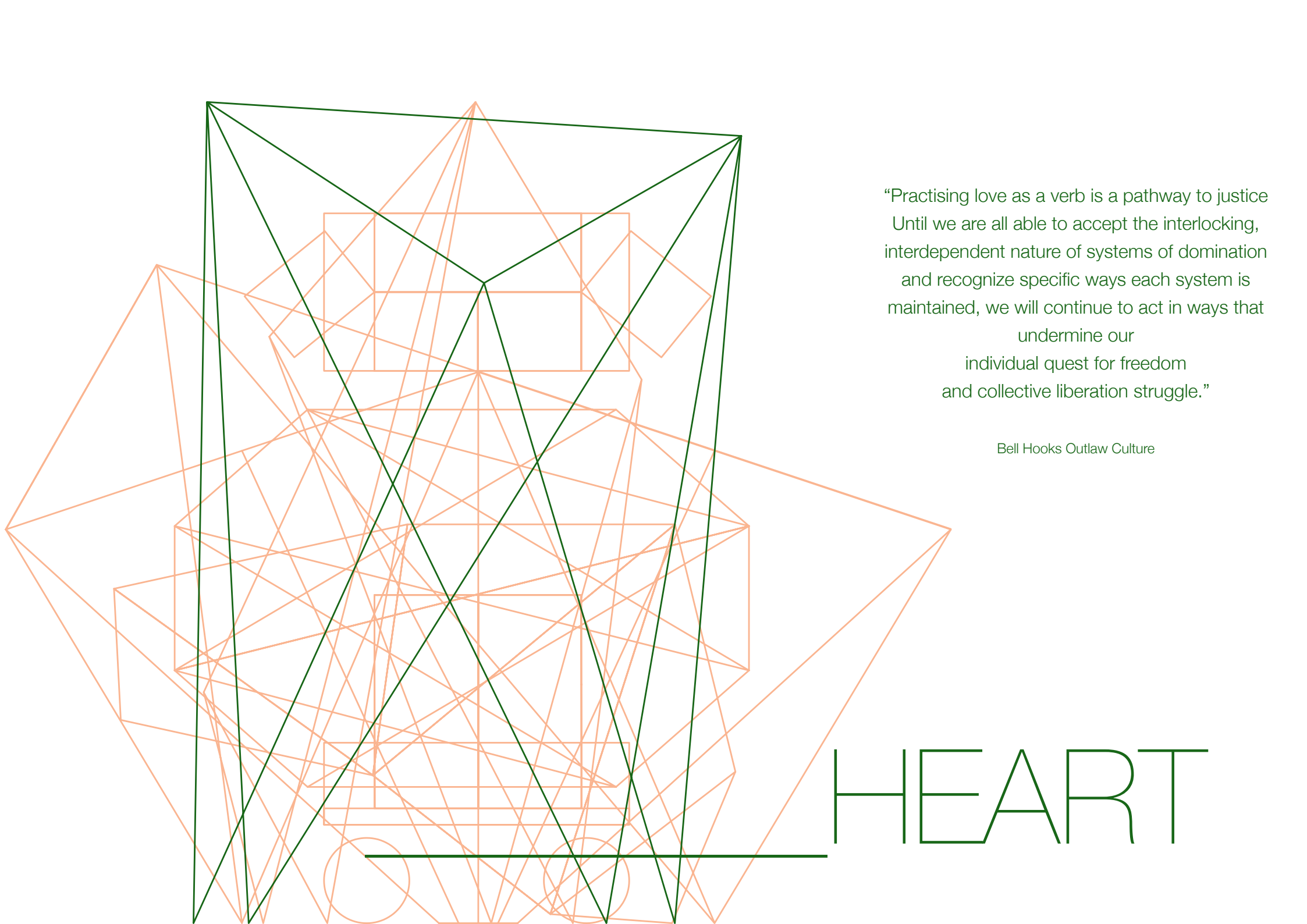


“Inflammation is triggered when tissues and cells are damaged or threatened with damage. A complex and intricately coordinated response of the immune system, inflammation mobilizes resources to ultimately heal what has been injured. In a healthy, balanced system, once the mending has occurred, inflammation subsides. When the damage keeps coming, the repair cannot fully happen, leaving the inflammatory response running. A system of healing then turns into one that creates more harm...

...The inflammation in your arteries and the inflammation of the planet are linked, and the causal connections are becoming increasingly clear; your physiological state is a reaction to social and environmental factors. Racial violence, economic precarity, industrial pollution, poor diet, and even the water you drink can inflame you. ...But inflammation itself isn't a disease— it's a sign of a larger problem...Inflammation is a biological, social economic and ecological pathway, all of which intersect and whose contours were made by the modern world.”

Rupa Marya and Raj Patel *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice*





“Practising love as a verb is a pathway to justice  
Until we are all able to accept the interlocking,  
interdependent nature of systems of domination  
and recognize specific ways each system is  
maintained, we will continue to act in ways that  
undermine our  
individual quest for freedom  
and collective liberation struggle.”

Bell Hooks Outlaw Culture

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# HEART

connect\_\_ing      circulat\_\_ing

orientat\_\_\_\_ing      pump\_\_\_\_ing      invert\_\_\_\_ing

The four-chambered heart is a nexus, a central intersection where the blood comes to be pumped throughout the body and through which blood by the cardiovascular system. It is a living metronome of polyrhythms. The heart participates in oxygenation, in collaboration with the lungs and brain, and distributes resources from the centre to the peripheries of the body. The heart is a pump that cares for the margins and marginalised and in Chinese Medicine is connected to the tongue, a willful anatomy that articulates the sensitivities felt by the heart.

A wild field of hops, goldenrod, evening primrose, and others sprawl out between the human-made structures. Yellow, the colour of the sun and the heart, lights up the meadow like drooping lanterns in late summer. Below, an underworld of tunnels burrowed by a family of foxes is hinted at by gaping holes here and there. This small patch of meadow feels eternal when inside of it, but turning slowly to view 360 degrees around, one can see what is situated around this heart.

The desire to dwell in this field along with a carefulness not to trample it leads us to carve a path just wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through. There, the heart is a multi-tiered space with seatings facing the different directions, a compass composed of triangles. One can of course sit in solitude there, but as a social space it allows for several people to come together while facing different directions, integrating outlooks and circulating those within the heart space. There are no ladders to climb in from the outside, so negotiation is needed amongst those co-existing within that heart, shifting positions, and trying out each other's perspectives or by active circulation freely throughout the whole structure, as embodied by a group of children.

Depending on your need, one can sit close to ground level and be shielded by the goldenrods looming in full bloom above while another can sit among them, at plant height, and another occupying the bird's eye view, exposed and floating while open to the wider context. As one of the most powerful connectors in the body, the heart of this place brings circulation between the ground level processes of the garden and the social housing neighbourhood units that surround it and ascend towards the clouds.

The building of the heart is a balancing act, bringing triangles together to connect at particular points. This process requires group collaboration and cohesion as shapes come together, raising something larger. As the different directions join with pointy tips facing down, the heart is inverted. Upside down, it anchors into the ground so spaces can open in the upper chambers. The four legs leave open a space for accessibility, so the heart can be a space for accompanying each other with/in and across differences. Inversions of the heart are happening all around us, like the directionality of a bird soaring down from sky to earth or a baby suspended in amniotic fluid or the plant's orientation with its sexual organs floating in the air and expanded mind in the root system. Like the impulse of an EKG machine, the triangles create a zigzagging up and down rhythm, a pulse of the place, the heart is a sculptural chart of our lifeline.

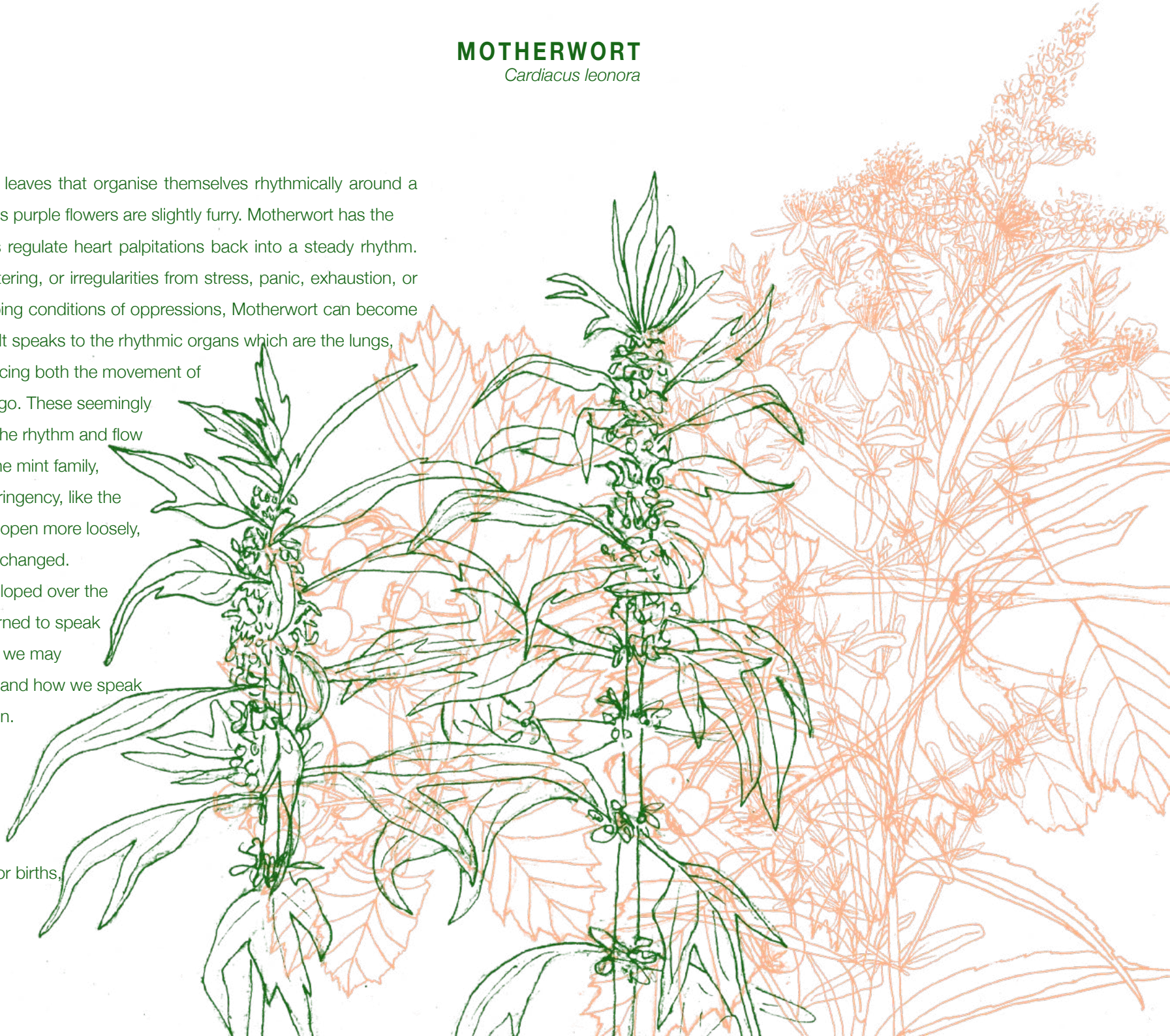
I remember sowing seeds, planting heart allies around the structure, while processing a separation and hitting my head on the edge of one of its beams which sent me toppling onto my rear, a shock that homeopathically matched and mirrored my internal state.



# MOTHERWORT

*Cardiacus leonora*

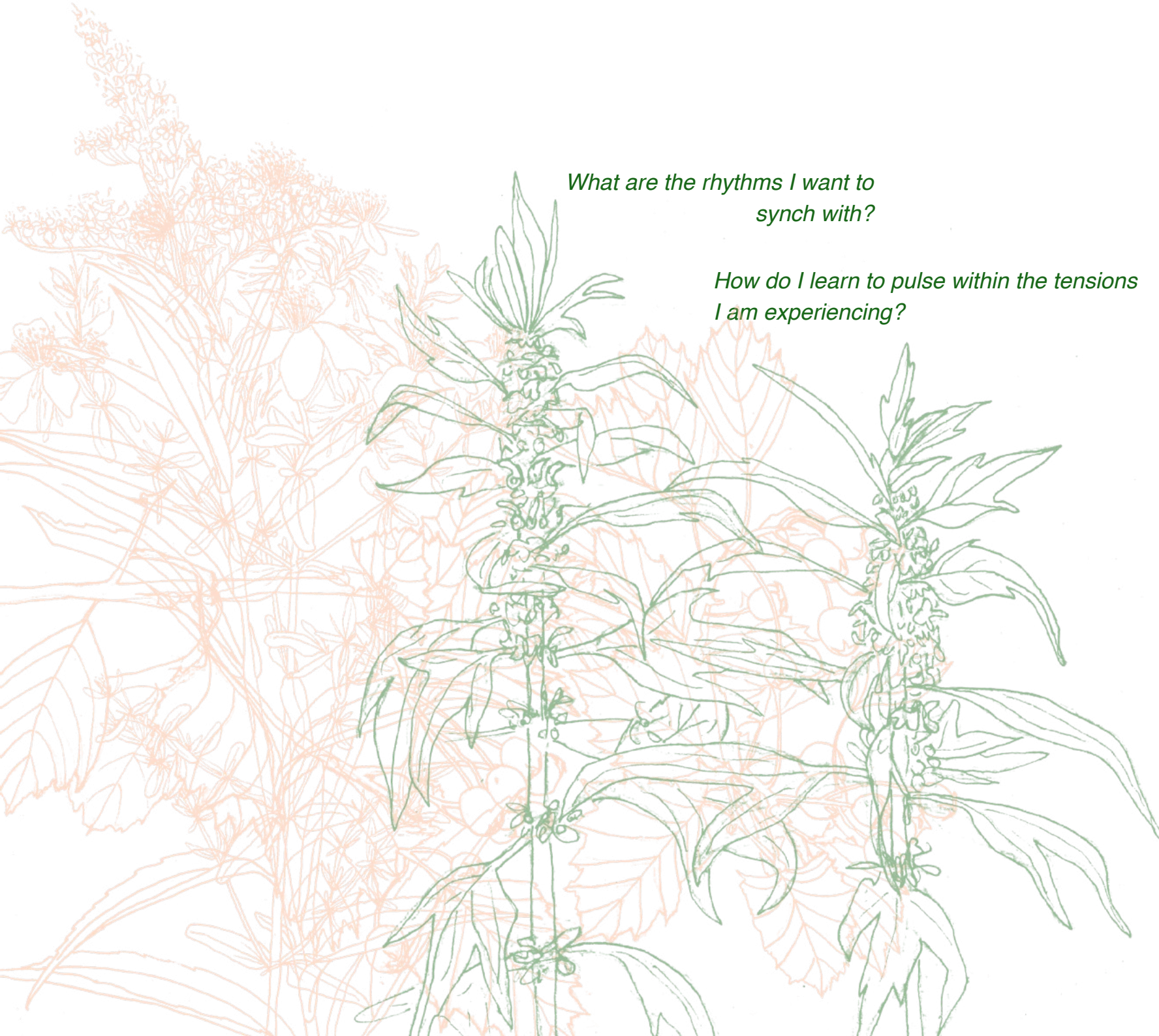
Motherwort has bold, lacerated leaves that organise themselves rhythmically around a firm, almost prickly stem. Even its purple flowers are slightly furry. Motherwort has the capacity to rhythmicise. It helps regulate heart palpitations back into a steady rhythm. When the heart reacts with, fluttering, or irregularities from stress, panic, exhaustion, or anxiety in times of crisis or ongoing conditions of oppressions, Motherwort can become an ally to steady and to soothe. It speaks to the rhythmic organs which are the lungs, the heart, and the uterus, enhancing both the movement of coming together and the letting go. These seemingly opposite qualities are what lets the rhythm and flow reappear. Although it is part of the mint family, its taste is bitter, astringent. Astringency, like the string that can draw together or open more loosely, creates a tension, the tone gets changed. Embryologically, the mouth developed over the heart. Maybe that is how we learned to speak from the heart and as we do so, we may reflect with what tone we speak and how we speak up, with, or for what we believe in. How can we find connection in coming together and letting go? Motherwort has been offered to people with a uterus to regulate menstruation, induce abortions or births, and recover after childbirth.





*What are the rhythms I want to  
synch with?*

*How do I learn to pulse within the tensions  
I am experiencing?*





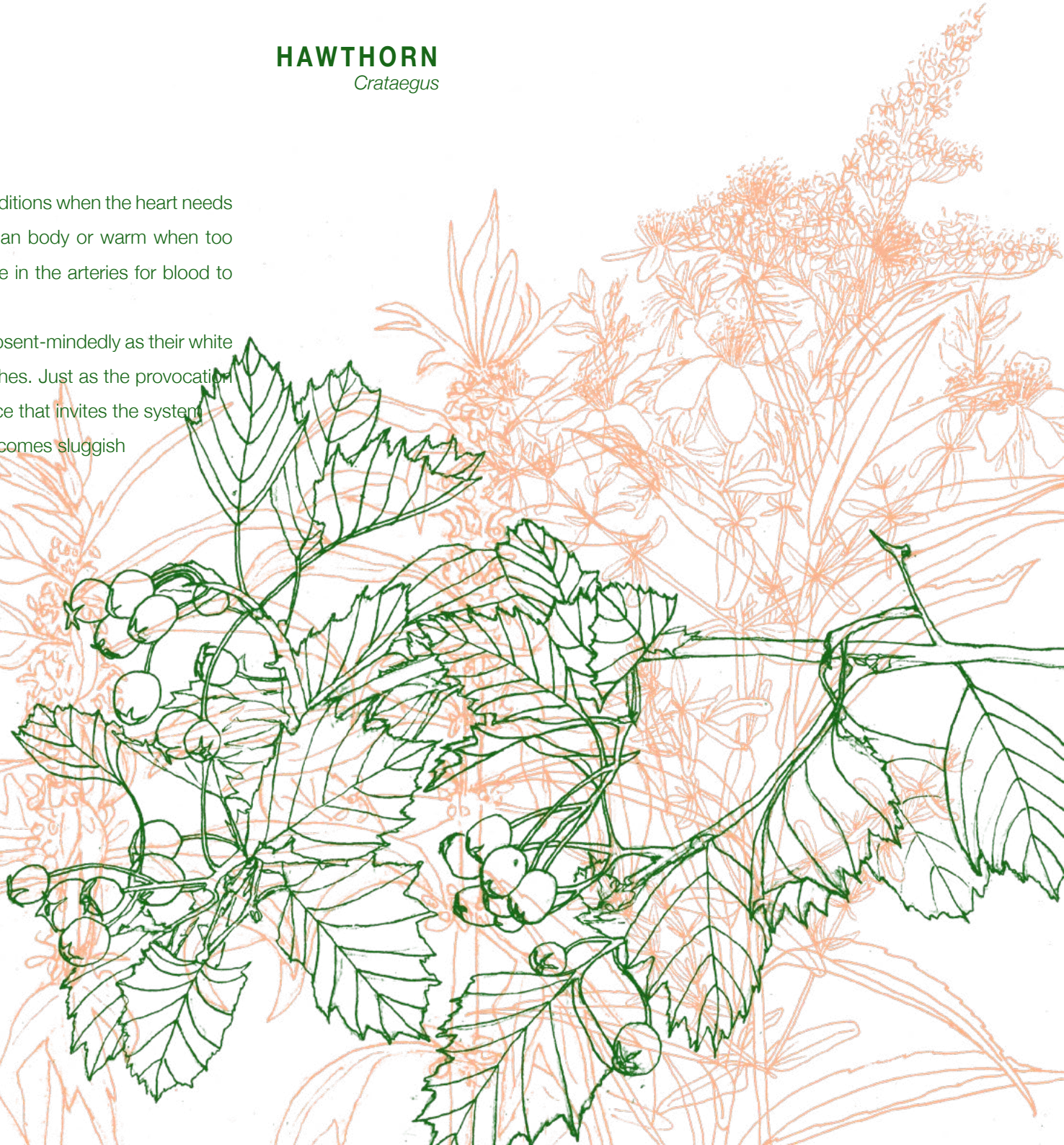
# HAWTHORN

*Crataegus*

Hawthorne is a long-term, ongoing steady companion in conditions when the heart needs comfort as it can soothe heat accumulated within the human body or warm when too cold, rebuild compromised heart muscles, and create space in the arteries for blood to flow more freely.

As a member of the rose family, Hawthorne cannot be met absent-mindedly as their white flowers and red fruits are adorned in thorns along the branches. Just as the provocation of the needle can be stimulating, through a micro-disturbance that invites the system to reorganise, hawthorne can stimulate the heart when it becomes sluggish or tone in case of overactive surge of the heart rate.

This prickly quality can also draw out the places where we are sharp with ourselves, mentally or emotionally. When we have difficulty breaking through congestion, exhaustion, and depletion when encountering obstacles, Hawthorne invites us to shift from reactivity to adverse situations and supports us to find other strategies for responding. Hawthorne's flowers are composed of five petals, mirroring the five limbs of the body that radiate out from the central node of the heart. The head, the arms, and the legs mobilise us into the world, whether through thought and speech, outreach, or mobility. Hawthorne invites us to align these through right actions, asking how we extend our hearts out into the world. Hawthorne can be a long-time companion for regenerating flow.





*What are the ongoing conditions of adversity that you are implicated in  
and what repetitive reactions do they produce in you?*

*What could be emergent strategies to support another flow  
and impulses towards flow?*

*What are micro-disturbances that bring a different  
impulse, enabling systems to reorganise?*

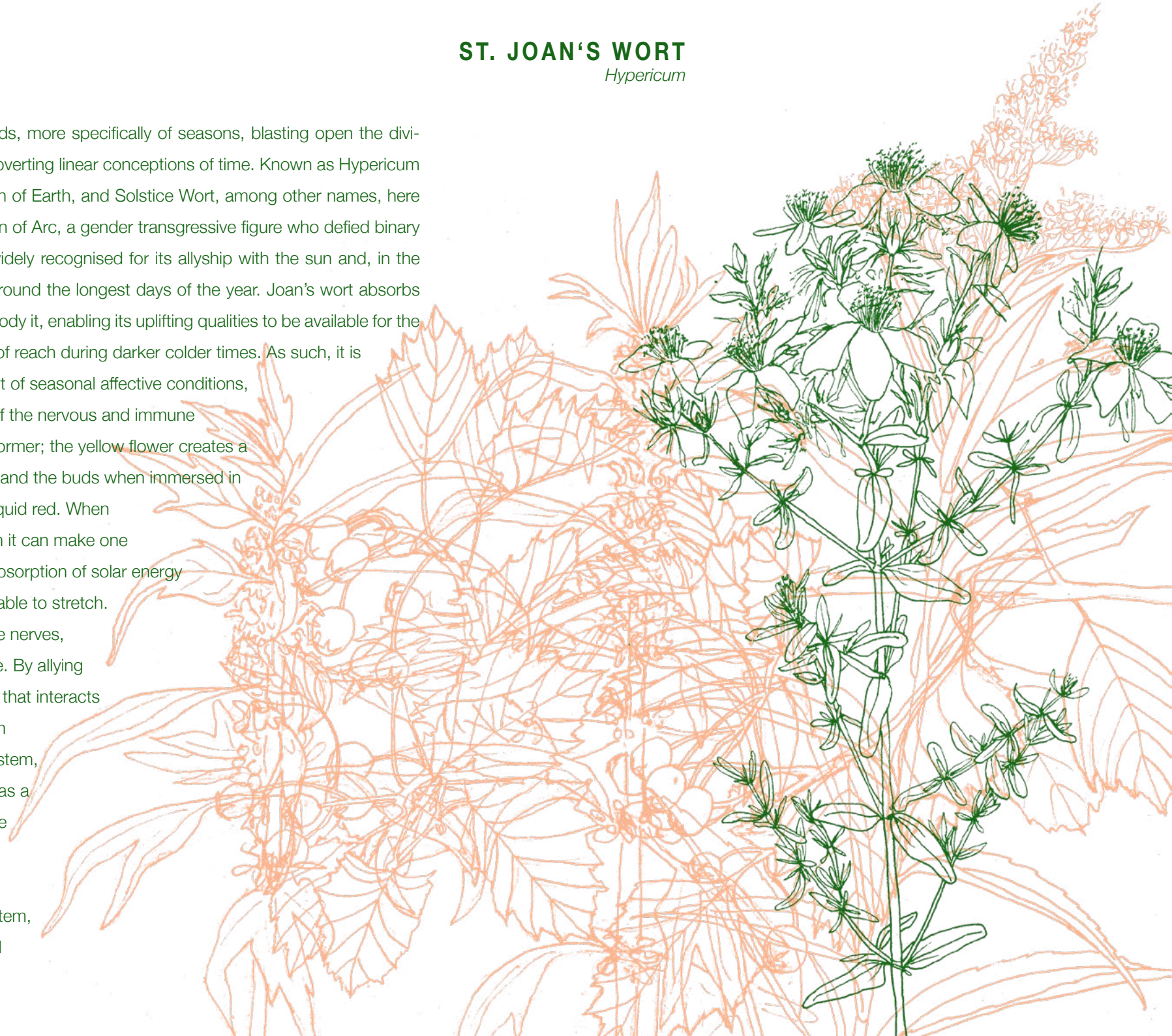





## ST. JOAN'S WORT

*Hypericum*

Joan's wort is a bridger of worlds, more specifically of seasons, blasting open the division between light and dark, subverting linear conceptions of time. Known as *Hypericum Perforatum*, *Sol Terrestris* or Sun of Earth, and Solstice Wort, among other names, here we honour it in reference to Joan of Arc, a gender transgressive figure who defied binary structures. This plant is most widely recognised for its allyship with the sun and, in the northern hemisphere, blooms around the longest days of the year. Joan's wort absorbs light to such a degree as to embody it, enabling its uplifting qualities to be available for the body even when the sun is out of reach during darker colder times. As such, it is known to play a role in treatment of seasonal affective conditions, depression, and overall toning of the nervous and immune systems. Joan's wort is a transformer; the yellow flower creates a purple/indigo dye when rubbed and the buds when immersed in oil and set in the sun turn the liquid red. When this is applied directly to the skin it can make one photosensitive, increasing the absorption of solar energy and softening the tissues to be able to stretch. Joan's wort is also allied with the nerves, supporting healing of scar tissue. By allying with the enteric nervous system that interacts with the immune system through the workings of the digestive system, Joan's wort could also be seen as a mediator, facilitating our adaptive capacity to sense and respond appropriately through this internal and relational wiring system, which is why it has been termed an adaptor.



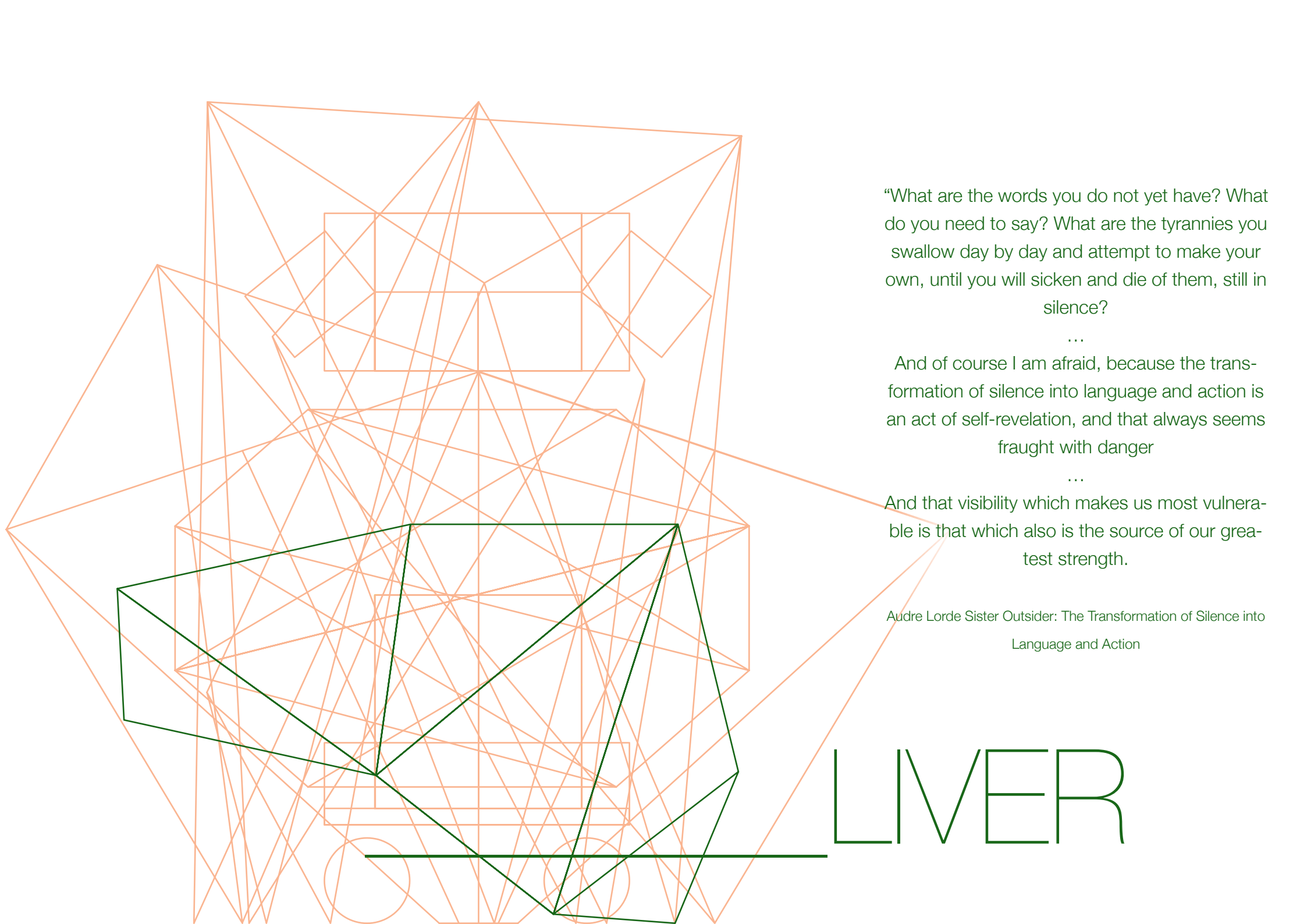


A detailed botanical illustration in the background, featuring a central green plant with small, star-shaped flowers and a cluster of orange flowers in the upper left. The background is filled with various other plants, including a large, leafy plant on the right and a plant with small, round fruits in the lower right. The illustration is rendered in a sketchy, line-art style with green and orange lines.

*How can you acknowledge the scars that you carry physiological, psychological, and experiential care for them towards transformation?*

*How can you serve others with the resources and privileges you have available, channelling your access to sources that might not be available to others?*

*How can you acknowledge the scars of others, even though they may not be visible?*

An abstract geometric drawing composed of numerous thin, intersecting lines. A dense network of orange lines forms the background structure, while a more defined set of green lines creates a prominent, multi-faceted shape in the lower-left quadrant. The lines vary in length and orientation, creating a complex, layered visual effect.

“What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?

...

And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger

...

And that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength.

Audre Lorde Sister Outsider: The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action

LIVER

stor\_\_\_\_\_ing

filter\_\_\_\_\_ing

clear\_\_\_\_\_ing

The liver is a transformer and transporter. The largest solid organ in the human body, its role is essential in digestion, metabolising the nutrients we ingest into forms the body can integrate, storing and supplying them to the cells, and producing bile. Likewise, the liver can transmute toxic substances, breaking them down to produce energy or converting them to become harmless or allowing them to be released. The liver redistributes resources. This powerful ability to mediate what comes in and is let out relates to the liver's connection with the emotion of anger, as articulated in Chinese Medicine, expressed through the eyes as its sense organ. Anger serves a purpose; rage can mobilise our care to be put into action, can clear toxicity and serve as a positive motion towards ushering change. However the accumulation of anger can lead to excess, stuckness or inhibition of its power and, especially if that is turned inwardly, can also become debilitating and destructive. The liver is particularly active in the springtime when the upthrust of the buds push through the soil's gravity, leaning into resistance to allow emergence above ground. The liver mediates the underworld and the

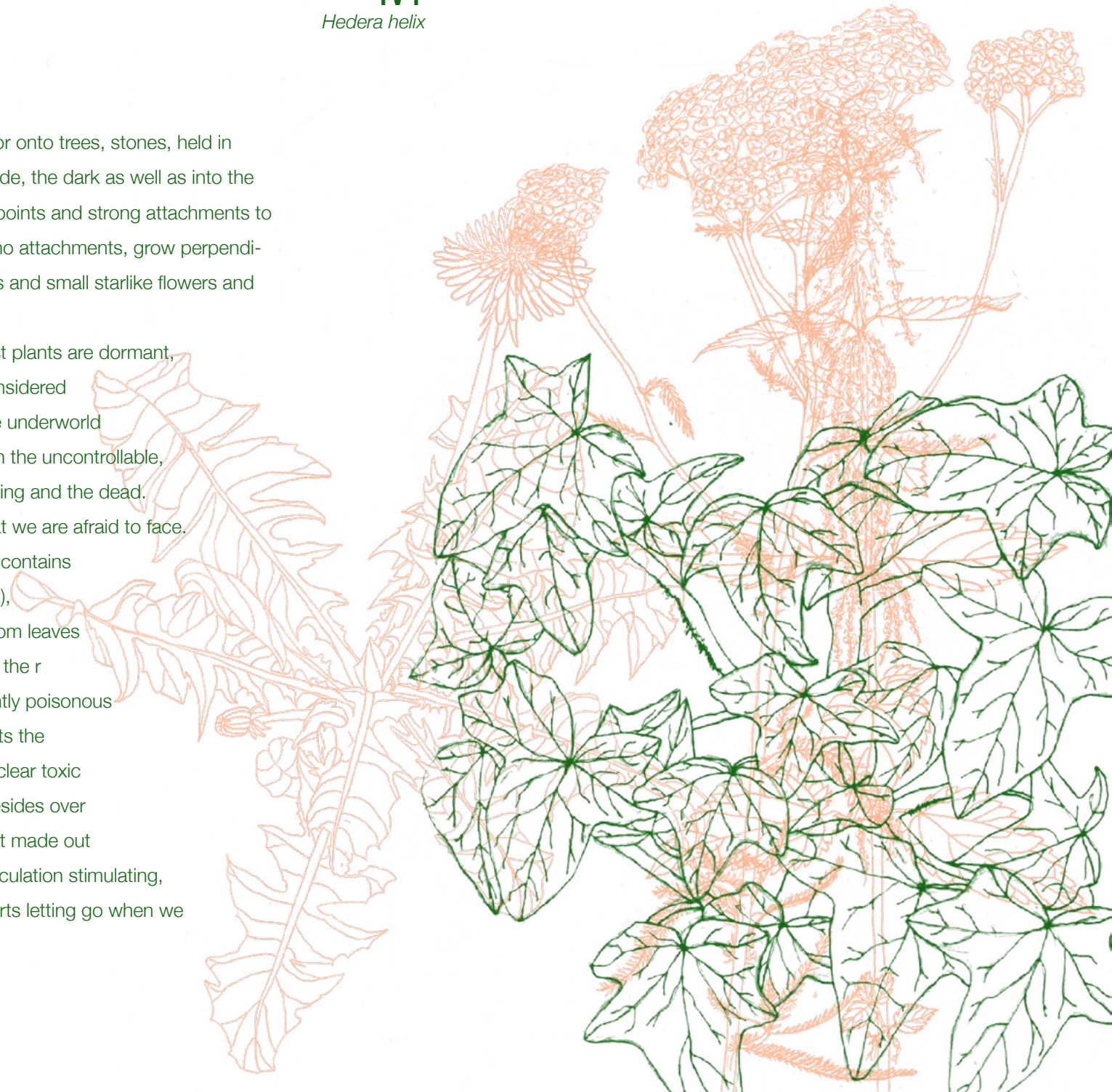


## IVY

*Hedera helix*

Ivy is an evergreen creeper. It can grow on the ground or onto trees, stones, held in place with strong areal roots. It grows both into the shade, the dark as well as into the light. Juvenile shoots produce leathery leaves with five points and strong attachments to the grounds that hold them, the adult shoots produce no attachments, grow perpendicular off the juvenile shoots and produce smooth leaves and small starlike flowers and berries that are poisonous.

In Europe where the winter months are barren and most plants are dormant, ivy with its green leaves and ripe fruits in winter was considered a miracle plant, carrying powerful forces connecting the underworld with the upper world and the spiritual realm dealing with the uncontrollable, mitigating between the known and the unknown, the living and the dead. Ivy supports facing the thing hidden in the shadows that we are afraid to face. This fear might literally lead to holding one's breath. Ivy contains saponine (which makes it a wonderful natural detergent), iodine, expectorant, antispasmodic. Ivy syrups made from leaves are great against congestion or chronic inflammation of the respiratory tract. (Don't do this at home as they are slightly poisonous and dosage is difficult to determine). The iodine supports the thyroid gland. Traditional Chinese medicine uses ivy to clear toxic heat in the liver and to calm the shen, the force that presides over our mental, spiritual and creative forces. An ivy ointment made out of dark green adult leaves has skin tightening, blood circulation stimulating, wound healing and anti-inflammatory effects. Ivy supports letting go when we cramp up out of fear and anger.





A botanical illustration featuring several plants. In the foreground, there are large, green, lobed leaves with prominent veins. Behind them, there are several tall, thin stems with clusters of small, orange flowers. The style is a fine-line drawing, typical of botanical field guides.

*What are the connections that you want to keep  
with the shadows?*

*How can you learn to observe and see differently in  
the dark?*

*What are the conditions that make your body cramp up?*

*How can you honour the intelligent response of that  
tension and also allow for detachment from that  
contraction?*

*Rather than unearthing the underworld, those things hiding in the  
spaces that are harder to look at, how can you create the conditions  
in which you can face them?*



## YARROW

*Achillea millefolium*

Yarrow is an expert in navigating the spectrum between porosity and protection.

The plant grows skywards on a tall stem with feathery leaves and an umbrella of tightly knit white flowers that form a dome shape on top, open from a bird's eye view yet cave-like if one would hide underneath its flowers. Physically, yarrow works with the expansion and contraction of the blood vessels, thickening or thinning flow, bringing flow out towards or away from the surface of the body according to the needs of the moment.

The bitterness of yarrow along with its carminative, sweat-inducing capacity can aid a healthy detoxing fever. Navigating contraction and release, yarrow can also support the appropriate degree of relaxation for the muscles in the gastrointestinal tract, stimulating the digestive juices while firming and toning the tissues in the digestive organs. A great wound healer, yarrow can support the knitting together of the physical skin or the energetic body if one feels too open and absorbent.

Many skin conditions are indicators of liver and kidney health, the outer layer allowing us to read the inner dimensions, as such yarrow works externally on the pores and internally in the cleansing organs.

Porosity is a shared trait, however devised racial hierarchies have made grave consequences of differences along particular lines of power. These passageways need discernment to navigate their sense of flow and safety. The reality of skin as a mediator, our largest and most encompassing container, literally holds it all together as a life-giving boundary and serves as a medium for filtration and being with difference, tightening and opening accordingly.







*How are we both containers and boundless beyond measure?*

*When is it appropriate to hold things in and when to let them out?*

*How can you negotiate the ambivalence of toxicity that you might be absorbing?*

*How might this ripple onto wider layers, queering social formations fixated on individuality?*



# DANDELION

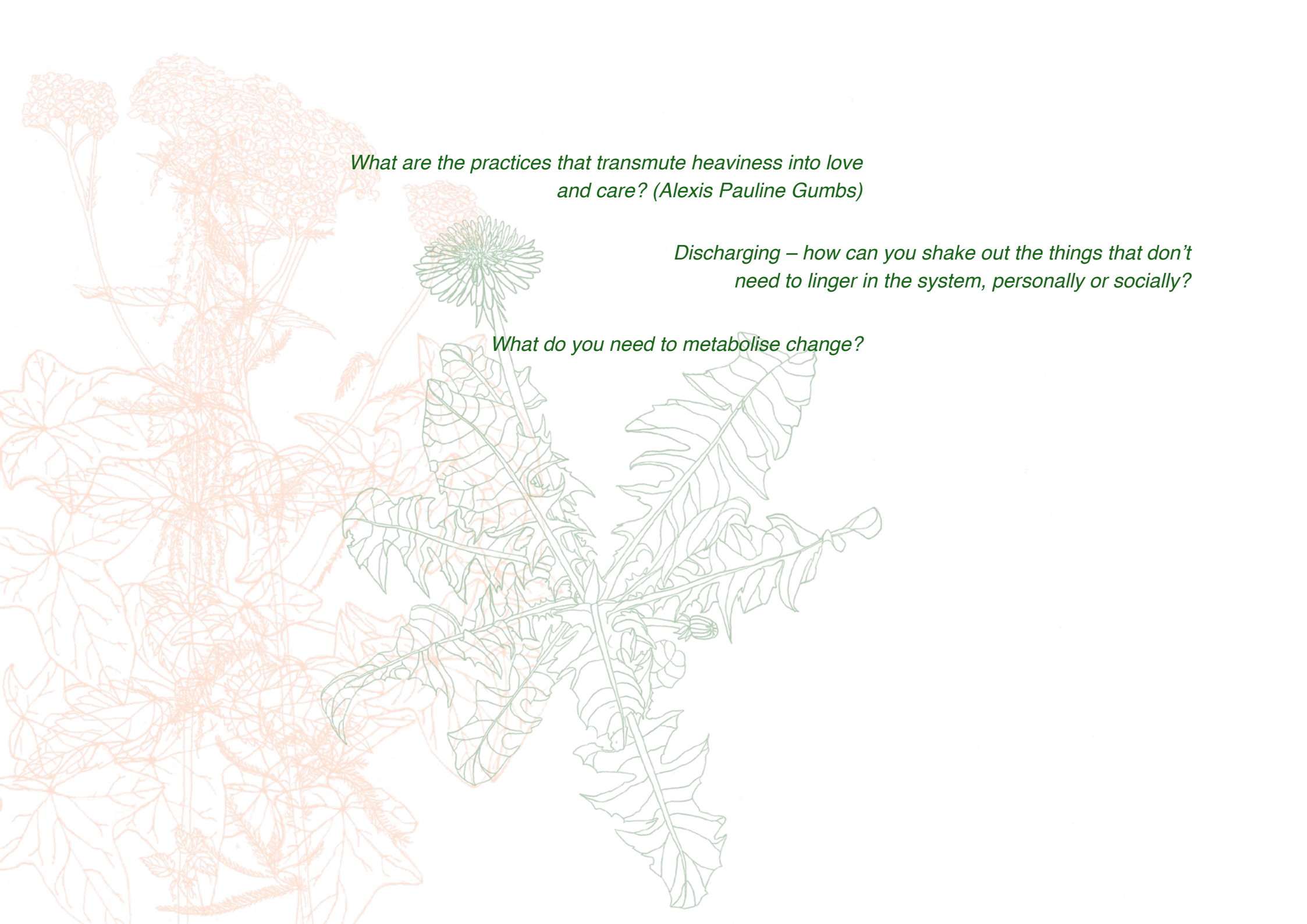
*Taraxacum*

Dandelion is one of the early bloomers, indicating the arrival of springtime. It is tenacious; it can push through cracks in concrete, thrive in soils ranging from compacted gravel to moist tundra. The long taproots of dandelion act as an elevator, bringing calcium and other minerals from the deeper soil layers, making them available on the surface to enrich depleted top soil, while offering a shaft for earthworms to transport downwards. Just as it mediates within the soil, dandelion is a strong tonic for the liver. It stimulates the flow of bile and other digestive juices which support the breaking down of fats and clearing waste and harmful bacteria while integrating vitamins, minerals, and sugars, improving blood filtration. It is a diuretic in relation to the kidneys and urinary tract; it can clear infection and replenishes minerals released by the urine.

Dandelion is a skillful cleanser, with a bitter taste that allows us to break through stagnations, whether physical, emotional, or structural and transmute heaviness into more flow and ease. Dandelion's bitterness stimulates and cools, allowing the heat of resentment to be cleared and metabolised in order to embrace change, transform solidified patterns, and dream towards another reality. This quality is embodied by its range from the thick deep root, jaggedy green leaves, white sap in the stem, bright yellow radiating flower, and fluffy seed head of spores. We might be familiar with the invitation to pick a dandelion seed head, make a wish, blow and watch the seeds disperse into the air. This is dandelions offering; clearing the depths to allow for lightness, sending our dreams out in every direction from the position where we stand and breathe.



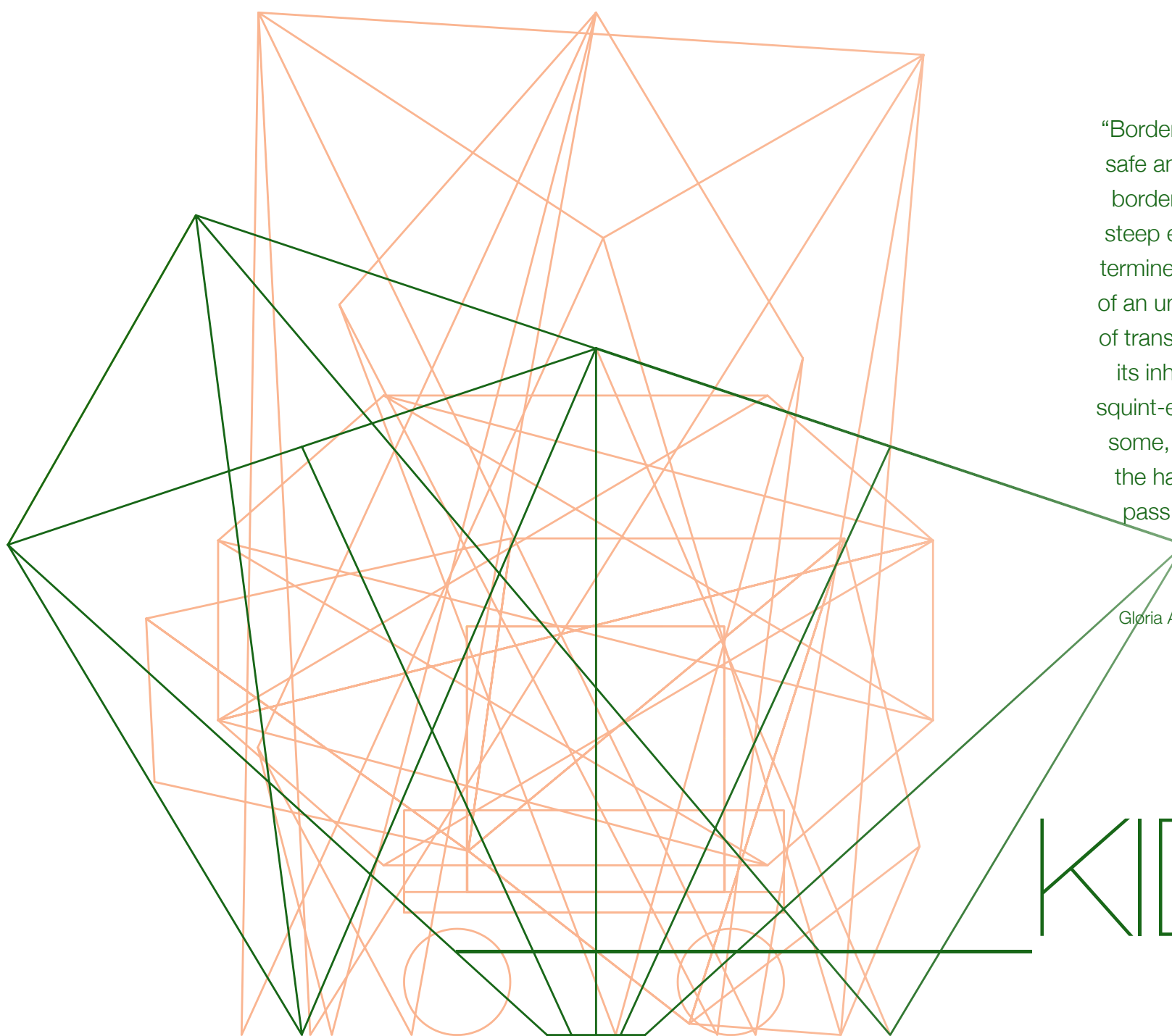




*What are the practices that transmute heaviness into love  
and care? (Alexis Pauline Gumbs)*

*Discharging – how can you shake out the things that don't  
need to linger in the system, personally or socially?*

*What do you need to metabolise change?*



“Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. Los atravesados live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half-dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the ‘normal’”

Gloria Anzaldua Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza

# KIDNEY

filter\_\_\_\_ing      absorb\_\_\_\_ing

relat\_\_\_\_\_ing      detox\_\_\_\_\_ing

In human anatomy, the function of the kidneys is filtration and detoxification as well as maintaining, harmonising fluids, and distributing minerals within the fluid system. In Chinese Medicine, the energy stored within the kidneys is inherited from ancestral sources and can be sent to uplift other organs in times of need. Many indigenous medicine systems situate kidneys in relation to fear, an emotion that arises through engagement with others, with individuals, groups, and social systems, and helps us to discern danger and safety. The connection to the adrenal gland links the kidneys to the hormonal system and thus the fight and flight impulse. Kidney conditions such as the accumulation of stones or sand that produce pain and inflammation, are often due to deterioration of the relational systems in one's life, indicating the importance of replenishing our kidneys when we may be cut off from or devalued within wider social structures.

In the water region, many streams are coming together. The traffic rushing on the street, movement down the pathway entering the garden, the ancestral influences and lineages, the fluids in the body, the frog-inhabited pond covered in algae, the dried-up pond alongside it, and the piss of various animals. Entering this biotope, how can all the multi-layered systems of relations (material, spiritual, historic, energetic, political, and ecological) inform a consideration of the net of relations you are growing within? How can you find flow through this matrix?

How can we incorporate the remains we inherit, previous incarnations of this place, to create a dwelling space for the future that can embrace us, like a hammock? How to stay in the threshold though the impulse is to escape the noise of

the city. How can we give you shade and shelter, to soften our way of being? Can this space allow you to listen differently as the kidney opens into the sense-organ of the ears?

It's not always easy to encounter the ancestors when the places we move through are so marked by time, are sometimes rotting, full of multigenerational trauma, joy, and resilience or when the conditions may make access challenging. How can we include discomfort and resources within the ancestral field, offering a minimal structure for hospitality? Filtration systems are needed to discern what to let go and what to keep, like the role of the kidneys in excreting waste while absorbing what is nourishing.




# NETTLE

*Urtica*

Nettles are prevalent and often disregarded, unwanted and called a weed. Nettles are strong relational plants, they have the capacity to bind toxins in the soil and thus make nutrients available for other plants. As they decompose, they themselves release nitrogen serving as fertiliser and helping regenerate the soil, thriving in wet thick growing spaces. They host larvae of butterflies and moths. In the human body, they bind toxins and support the kidney function as well as the cardiovascular function. They work anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial, bringing iron, minerals, vitamins, and more protein than lentils to the body. Nettles remind us of the boundaries, the openness of our skin to its surroundings, the immediacy of impact when boundaries get trespassed or are dealt with carelessly. It offers itself as an ally for regeneration through aggression as a creative force. The stinging experience when we brush against the nettle are hollow glass fibres that break and lacerate the skin and inject the same venom that red ants hold, causing a temporary rash.

I think of my grandmother's bare arthritic hands with which she was picking them as a medicine against the stiffness. Nettles are both the remedy and the poison, causing inflammation in the skin and helping to ease inflammation inside the body. She is a complex companion to help you deal with toxins.



A botanical illustration of a plant, possibly a member of the Urticaceae family, featuring a central green stem with opposite, serrated leaves. The background is filled with faint, overlapping orange outlines of similar plant structures, creating a layered, ethereal effect.

*How to build constellations that are enabling integrating of the inheritance of histories, of the ways this place has been marked and imprinted?*

*What toxic situation will you address next?*

*How to weave in the ancestral influences more intentionally, allowing for filtration that mediates what is to be absorbed and what can be detoxified and released?*



## GOLDENROD

*Solidago canadensis*

Goldenrod (*canadensis*) stands tall and never alone. The long stems (150-200cm) end in wafts of plentiful small flowers arranged in a pyramid shape, starting their blooming at the edges of the flower waft and moving inwards. Their rhizomatic root system is what makes them spread efficiently. Goldenrod is by many considered a pest and an 'invasive' plant. In Europe, Goldenrod was mostly used as a wound healer. *Solidare* in Latin means to grow together which gave the plant its Latin name *Solidago*. The word 'solidarity' has the same etymological root.

Much later xxx realised that it was helping to dissolve kidney sand and stones as well as regenerate kidney tissue, which made Goldenrod into one of the most used plants in relation to kidneys. *Solidago* dissolves blockages in relations with living and non-living alike. Supporting the kidneys, it allows flow to return to these relationships, helps to detoxify and strengthens resilience.

The mature plant is so tall and its blooming head heavy with flowers, that every wind would blow it over. *Solidago* doesn't like to stand alone. They grow in groups patches and fields and together they support each other against adverse winds. There are more than 400 varieties of *solidago* and because of their continuous migration they are ever-evolving. *Solidago vigaurea* one of the European cousins has an irregular petal pattern in their tiny individual flowers, of which Paracelsus said, that if you look at one flower alone they look incomplete.

Only perceived as a multitude the flowers seem fully developed.





*What are mechanisms that create a sense of belonging and what insights do migratory processes offer towards negotiating the making of home(s)?*

*What are blockages in relationships that you want to address, with the living or dead, with individuals or social systems?*

*How to stand together and support each other in adverse winds, in situations that are dense and demanding?*

*What containers or structures enable you to do that?*



## WILLOW

*Salix Alba*

The weeping willow, the whispering willow. Can you hear its movement among the periphery through its many tips? A fountain form, willow pours out from itself, spreading and distributing its presence without losing its integrity. Willow thrives in the margins, living on the edge spaces between land and water. As such, it navigates the practice of boundary-making through its capacity for flexibility with dignity. Throughout many times and places, willow has woven containers and vessels, curving yet sturdy such as baskets, wheels of fortune, or living hedges to mediate in-between spaces. Its bark contains pain-relief properties, and anti-inflammatory qualities offering soothing relief when the body is signalling need for support through the communication of pain. The flower essence of willow supports processes of forgiveness, transmuting past injustices and harms. Manipulation, a force that can integrate and disintegrate, willow teaches us how to bend without breaking.

The willow is guiding a weaving of a boundary with its own branches, a mix of living and dead, an ode to the ancestors and the next generations. The malleability of the willow allows for an entanglement to encompass and contain the space – the more you twist parts of it into itself, the more integrity it has, while also supporting the flow of movement.



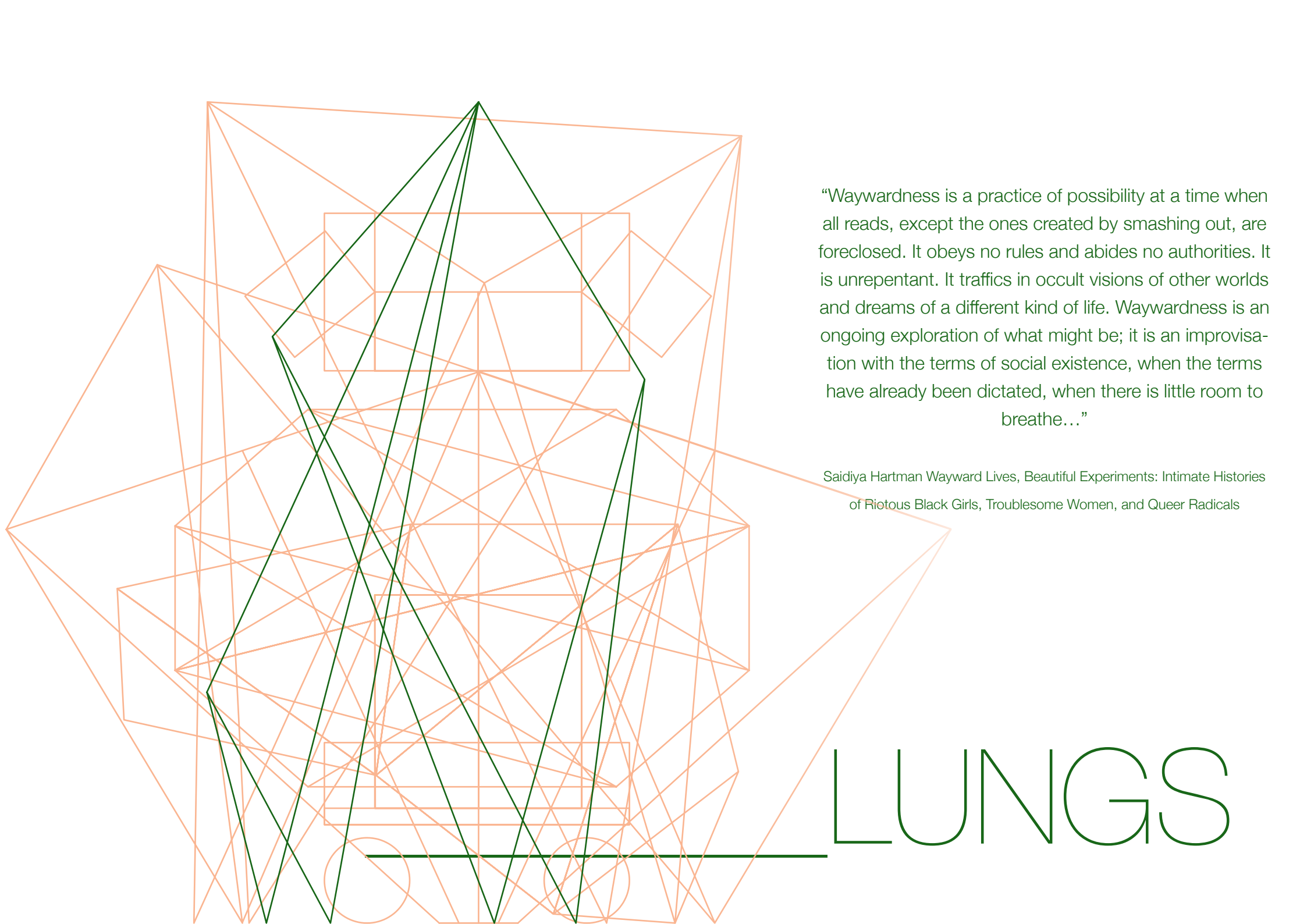
A botanical illustration featuring two overlapping plant species. The foreground plant is drawn with green outlines, showing elongated, lanceolate leaves with prominent venation and a terminal panicle of small flowers. The background plant is drawn with orange outlines, showing similar but slightly different leaf shapes and a more dense, rounded panicle. The plants are positioned on the left side of the frame, with their stems and leaves extending towards the center.

*How can I bend without breaking?*

*How to build constellations that are enabling integrating of the inheritance of histories, of the ways this place has been marked and imprinted?*

*How to weave in the ancestral influences more intentionally, allowing for filtration that mediates what is to be absorbed and what can be detoxified and released?*



An abstract geometric drawing composed of numerous thin, overlapping lines. A dense network of orange lines forms a complex, multi-layered structure. Overlaid on this are several sharp, dark green lines that create a more defined, angular shape in the center. The overall effect is one of intricate, chaotic geometry.

“Waywardness is a practice of possibility at a time when all reads, except the ones created by smashing out, are foreclosed. It obeys no rules and abides no authorities. It is unrepentant. It traffics in occult visions of other worlds and dreams of a different kind of life. Waywardness is an ongoing exploration of what might be; it is an improvisation with the terms of social existence, when the terms have already been dictated, when there is little room to breathe...”

Saidiya Hartman *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*

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LUNGS

resonat\_\_\_\_\_ing

releas\_\_\_\_\_ing

breath\_\_\_\_\_ing

reverberat\_\_\_\_\_ing

circulat\_\_\_\_\_ing

aerat\_\_\_\_\_ing

The lungs cannot help but take in the atmospheres they are surrounded by and as such are one of the most direct portals between inner and outer realms. A paired organ, the lungs sit on either side of the heart and rest on the diaphragm, the dome-shaped membrane that mediates between the upper respiratory and lower digestive regions of the body.

The greenhouses create a microclimate that can contrast the outdoor conditions to such a degree as to alter one's sense of geography. Moisture accumulates here. Heat condenses. The valves of the windows and doors allow air to flow in and out, accumulating and releasing. The rolling hills of grass allow for resting while the mulched beds allow for possibly growing aromatic plants from the culinary traditions of warmer regions, places people have migrated from, the spices and herbs that are being cooked in the kitchens of the neighbourhood. These are often the same plants that ally with the lungs, infusions can be smelled or inhaled to clear blockages (think of mint, thyme, basil/tulsi, eucalyptus, and others.)

The lungs of this place mirror each other, reflecting that you are not alone and don't need to feel alone with what you're holding, particularly in capitalist societies that encourage individuality. A window can be a place for looking out or being seen and witnessed. When you breathe onto a window it becomes misty and

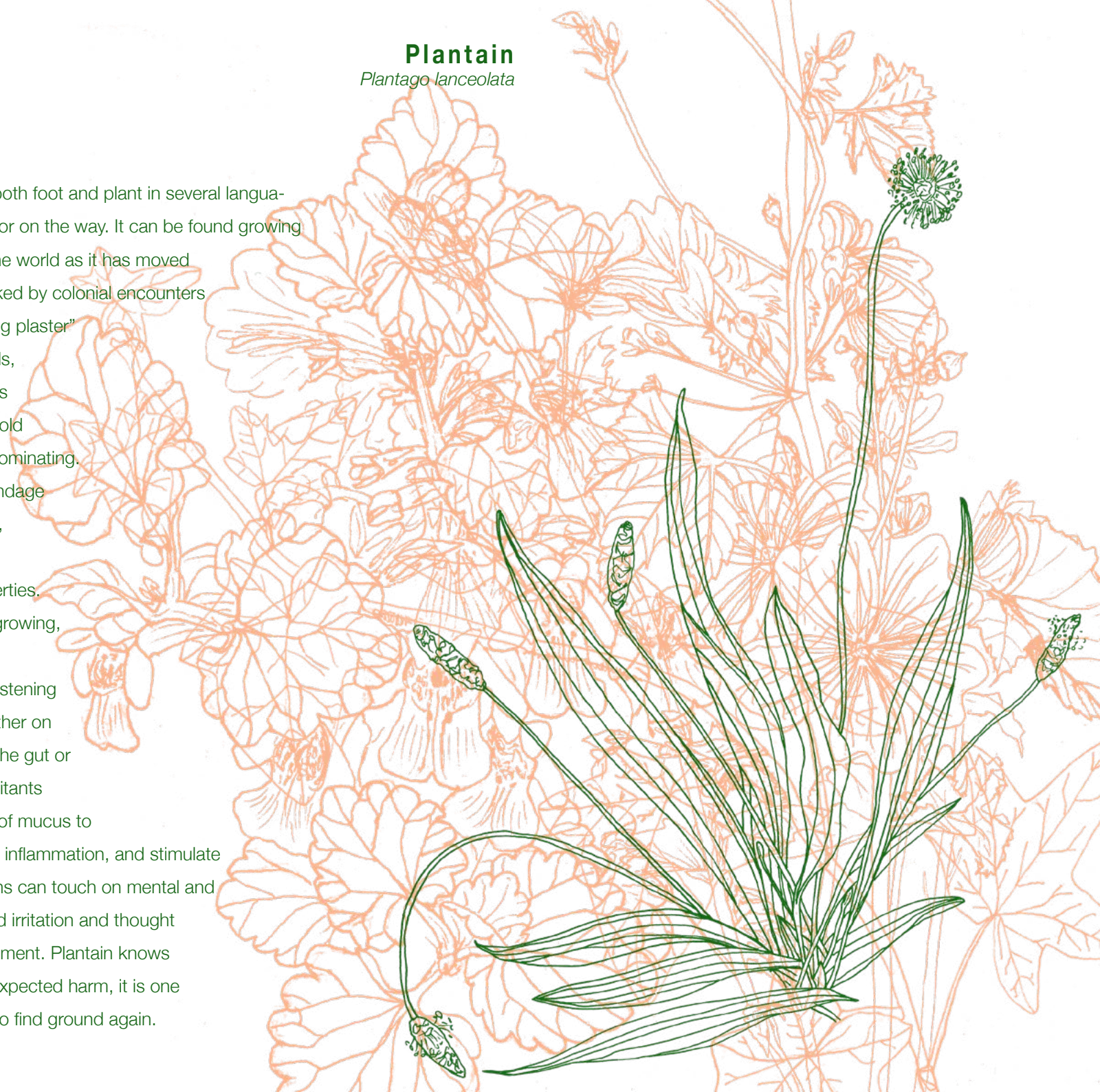
when the droplets flow, a clearer view is sometimes possible. The lungs facilitate grieving in different forms. They can be a space to sob, wail, cry, or scream allowing the echoes to expand the sound waves beyond your body or they can be a refuge for stillness and silence. How can the lungs teach us to accompany each other through loss, through experiences that are often hidden, marginalised, or taboo? The rhythm of the lungs supports processes of letting go.



## Plantain

*Plantago lanceolata*

The name plantain is rooted in 'planta' meaning both foot and plant in several languages. Its German suffix 'wegerich' points to 'weg' or on the way. It can be found growing beneath our feet across many different parts of the world as it has moved along pathways with people during voyages marked by colonial encounters and migrations. Sometimes called the "land's living plaster" plantain can be found in bare soils of various kinds, those domesticated, grazed, or eroded, as well as those left to wilder processes. Plantain helps to hold the soil together and heals compaction without dominating. In the human body, plantain can also act as a bandage and cleaner, drawing out dirt, splinters, infections, stings, or poisons, cooling burns and cleaning wounds with its antibacterial and antiseptic properties. If you are in a moment of need and see plantain growing, pick a leaf and chew or crush it – you will see the mucilage in this plant that makes it juicy. This moistening quality softens and soothes irritated tissues, whether on the outer layers of the skin or the inner linings of the gut or lungs. In cases of dry coughs or environmental irritants entering the lungs, plantain can support the flow of mucus to produce a cough that can expel infection, reduce inflammation, and stimulate local immunity. These calming and drawing actions can touch on mental and emotional layers as well in times of stress-induced irritation and thought patterns that, when uncleared, can lead to resentment. Plantain knows where to place itself so that often, in times of unexpected harm, it is one of the most common 'first aid' plants helping us to find ground again.







*How can you offer yourself towards soothing processes  
of inflammation or irritation without suppressing it?*

*What are the states of inflammation that you can notice,  
for yourself and others?*

*What forms of aide might you be passing by, walking on,  
or overseen along your routes every day?*



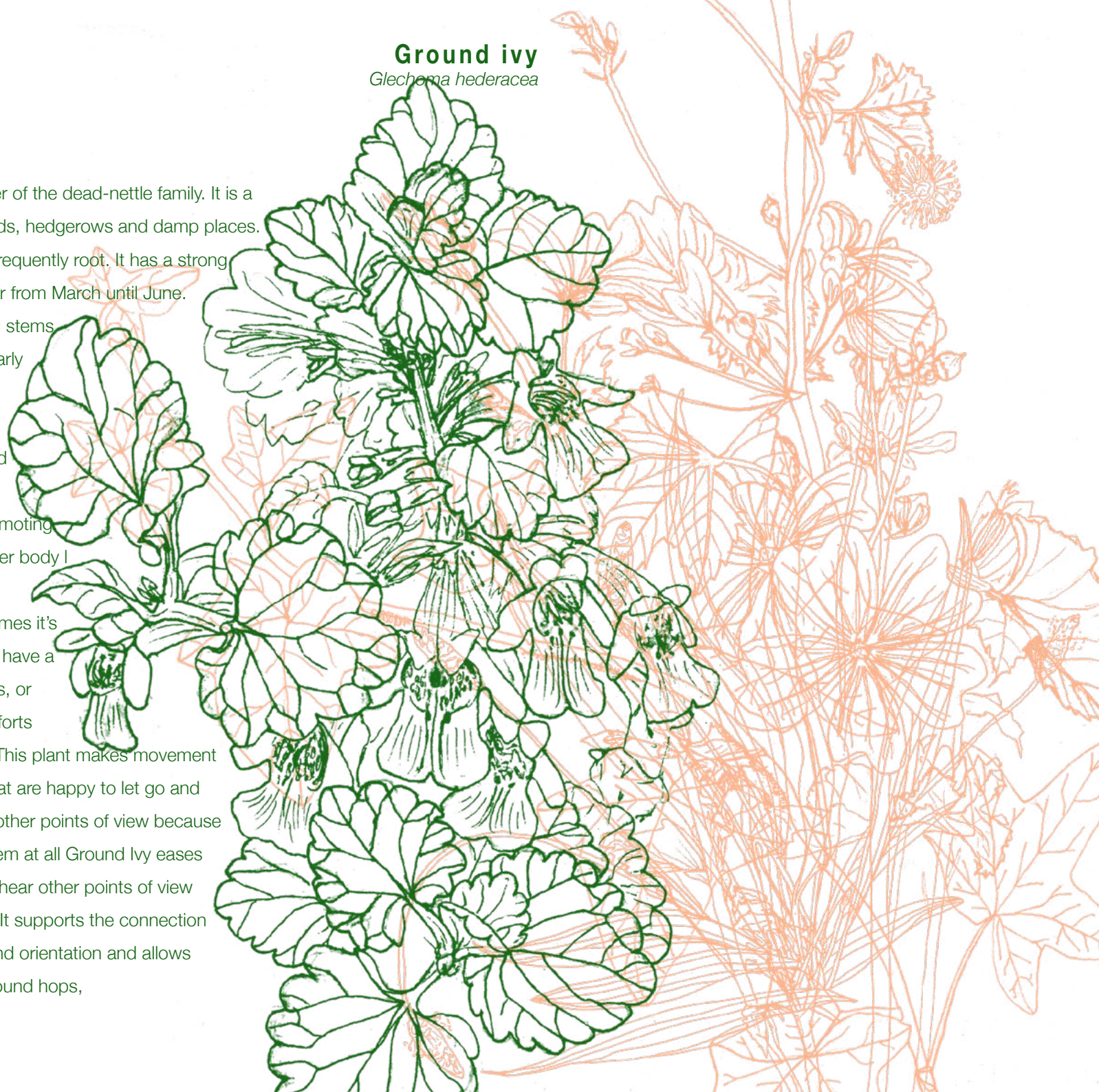
## Ground ivy

*Glechoma hederacea*

Despite its name, Ground-ivy is actually a member of the dead-nettle family. It is a clump-forming, aromatic plant that likes woodlands, hedgerows and damp places.

It spreads by means of overground runners that frequently root. It has a strong smell and violet funnel shaped flowers that appear from March until June.

Ground ivy is a persistent plant whose leaves and stems stay green under the snow, allowing it to flower early in the spring. It often grows low to the ground, spreading horizontally instead of vertically – but if it's in an area that isn't mowed too often, it'll stand up for a quick look around. Its essential oils are anti-inflammatory, expectorant and metabolic promoting. Hildegard von Bingen recommended it as an upper body lymphatic system supporting drainage of fluid stagnation in the lungs, sinuses and ears. Sometimes it's hard to hear. This might be literally true when you have a cold and blocked sinuses or in the case of tinnitus, or metaphorically when emotional or mental discomforts are making it difficult to listen to another person. This plant makes movement possible. It finds its way with light attachments that are happy to let go and reorient. When someone has difficulty accepting other points of view because they cannot bring themselves to acknowledge them at all Ground Ivy eases some of this resistance and allows the listener to hear other points of view without their own reservations getting in the way. It supports the connection between our sinuses and our sense of balance and orientation and allows things to move again. Its Finnish name means ground hops, a reference to its use in making beer and wine.



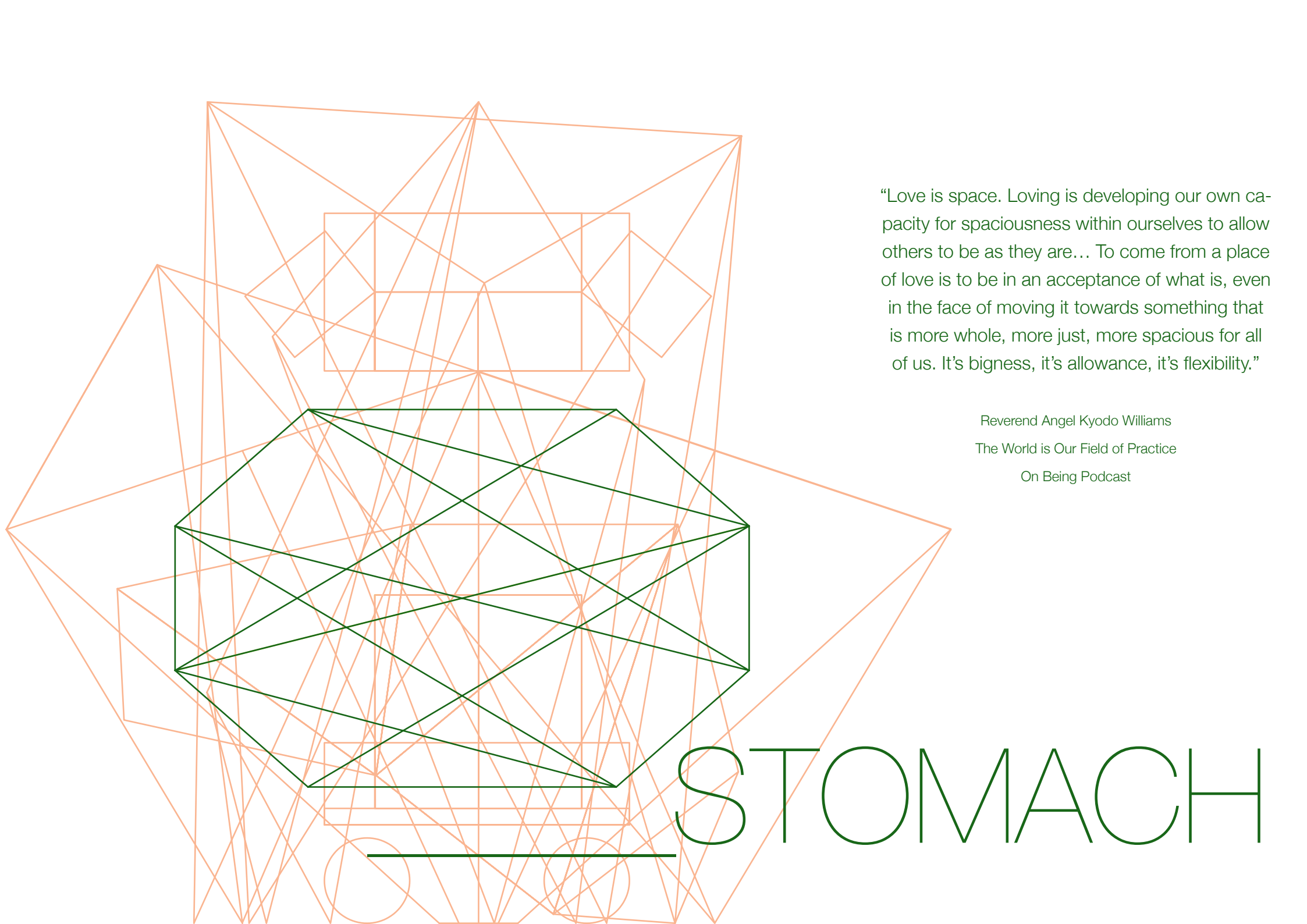




*How to let go of attachments to one's own point of view, conditioned by one's positionality. How can you transform your own attachments to find new possibilities for connection, to learn to listen differently?*

*How can our movements grow laterally and allow for moments of standing up and blossoming?*





“Love is space. Loving is developing our own capacity for spaciousness within ourselves to allow others to be as they are... To come from a place of love is to be in an acceptance of what is, even in the face of moving it towards something that is more whole, more just, more spacious for all of us. It’s bigness, it’s allowance, it’s flexibility.”

Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams  
The World is Our Field of Practice  
On Being Podcast

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# STOMACH

digest\_\_\_\_\_ing

metabolis\_\_\_\_\_ing

compost\_\_\_\_\_ing

catalyz\_\_\_\_\_ing

stor\_\_\_\_\_ing

contract\_\_\_\_\_ing

The stomach is a metaboliser, a transformer along the journey our sustenance takes, from the mouth's ingestion all the way to the release of the anus. The stomach processes and breaks down matter, contracting and relaxing to facilitate the pumping and digestion process, serving also as a storage space for the integration of nourishment. Different rates of metabolism are happening simultaneously, just as in the compost pile decomposition processes create multiple generations of soil.

can rock evenly while enabling freedom and autonomy of pace, potentially enabling it to attach securely to other limbs in other times and places.

In human childhood development, taste is one of the earliest modes of perceiving the world around us. The mouth as a portal to the stomach and spleen link in Chinese Medicine to the emotions of worry or over-thinking, digesting emotions and thoughts through those feelings of butterflies when speaking in front of a crowd or a heavy stone when needing to acknowledge something weighty.

Asking the children, 'what kind of place would you need when your stomach aches?' they sculpted embracing, swinging structures where they can feel held and soothed by movement. The stomach as a swing combines child-like joy and playfulness and the self-regulation of one's own nervous system rocking back and forth, a cradle suspended in the air – the feeling of flying while anchored. The stomach invites a process of finding balance points, minimal attachments for stability so that the structure



## WILD CELERY

*Angelica*

To grow you need wings but also roots. Angelica has both. Her sprouting seed leaves unfold like a bird or angels wings. Some say that's where she got her name from. Others refer to the archangel Michael, slayer of evil forces, who was said to appear to a doctor in times of the bubonic plague and advised him to use it when visiting patients. In her second year tall hollow stalks grow high up to 200 cm into light-green umbells of flower. The flowers, differently then other Apiaceae (Umbellifers), create almost perfect spheres. Angelica functions as a protector plant in many ways. She heightens the immune system with antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties against infections. She is a warming aromatic stimulant from the northern european countries. Essential oils, cumarine, amino acids, tannins, enhance good digestion in your body, mind and spirit. The hollow stem points to its clearing the tubes of the body getting stagnation into flow again. The root, acrid in taste is an antispasmodic, detoxifier, and the flower essence creates personal connection to the spiritual world. Angelica mitigates forces between worlds. When in times of exhaustion, loss, grief, shock, and overwhelm it seems impossible to discern what is inside and outside the boundaries are blurred, Angelica can help turn this feeling of being beside oneself into a feeling of coming back into one's body while holding connection with ancestral guides. Creating space in her hollows stalks and spheres she teaches us to create space inside of ourselves to hold space for ourselves and for others in processes of transformation, disorientation and insecurity. Angelica root contains furanocumarine which can lead to photosensitivity.







*How do you find ways of holding space for others and how can you let others hold space for you in times of grief, loss, or transformation?*

*When you are beside yourself, out of your body, or experience structural exclusion, how can you find accompaniment to stand alongside you and by whom?*

*How can you recognise different ways of holding space?*

*How might this facilitate a shift from estrangement to a position of relation that enables your sense of belonging?*



## MUGWORTS


*Artemesia*

Mugwort grows in the in-between spaces such as the sides of the road or places where the soil has been disturbed, and as such can accompany us across thresholds. One of those that we navigate each day and night is the transition from waking to sleeping. Mugwort supports clarity and lucidity in dreaming while it can also be grounding for those who might drift too far away into their dreamworlds. Mugwort teaches us how to thrive in varying conditions. Mugwort is a navigator, regulating processes in the body through the nervous system and aiding circulation and blood flow through the digestive region, including the liver and gallbladder through both its warming and cooling actions. The taste of mugwort is bitter, which activates the digestive processes and allows us to catalyse our bitter feelings and process them. By dialoguing along the pathways between the nervous and digestive systems, mugwort can act as a stimulant or soothe according to the present condition of the nerves.

A member of the Artemisia family, with cousins including wormwood and absinthium, it honours the Greek goddess Artemis, associated with the moon, animals, and rites of passage. The underside of mugwort's leaves are silvery, a signature of lunar connection, which speaks to its capacity to support cyclical phenomena of the body, including puberty, menses, menopause, abortion, hormone replacement therapy, and various hormonal rhythms. Whether ingested, infused, smoked or experienced as incense, mugwort is a companion for journeying through shifting states of being.





A detailed botanical illustration in the background. It features several plants. In the foreground, there are two green plants with thin, upright stems and small, dense clusters of flowers or leaves. Behind them, there are larger, more complex plants with orange-tinted flowers and leaves. One plant on the left has large, rounded, daisy-like flower heads. Another plant on the right has large, flat-topped flower clusters. The overall style is that of a scientific botanical drawing, with fine lines and a focus on the structure of the plants.

*What thresholds are you encountering and how  
can you navigate them?*

*How can you imagine and dream futures otherwise?*

*What companions can you seek out to support and promote  
your experience of transformation?*



## HOPS

*Humulus*

Hops climbs easefully over fences or other plants. As a climber it always finds its way to the surface and the light. It stretches and reaches and lets itself flow over obstacles. Its active components are antioxidants like bitter acids and their derivatives, polyphenols, and essential oils held in the female cone-like fruits. They are so-called secondary metabolites who help the plant to survive by protecting it from stressors. They generally serve roles in physiological processes that improve plant tolerance to environmental stresses. It has antiviral and anti-aging activities and has become a helping ally for conditions that let us cramp up because of stress. Physically, some know the taste of hops through beer, but beyond this form it is an alternative that supports relaxation into easeful sleep, and can soothe stomach cramps, nervous bowels, anxiety, and panic attacks. Hops has its own chemical protective shield that helps focussing on the growth within. As a nervine it nourishes and restores the central nervous system back to balance and allows for restfulness in the body. Hops is also a phytoestrogen, which may be supportive for particular hormonal shifts. Hops relaxes muscles and nerves and supports the digestive functions of the body and mind.





A detailed botanical illustration in line art style. The background features several plants in orange, including dandelions with their characteristic seed heads and tall, feathery seed stalks, and other leafy plants. In the foreground, there is a prominent green line drawing of a hop cone (humulus lupulus) with its characteristic scaly structure, and a large, serrated leaf, possibly from a strawberry plant, with a small insect (like a ladybug) on its underside. The overall composition is a layered, artistic representation of nature.

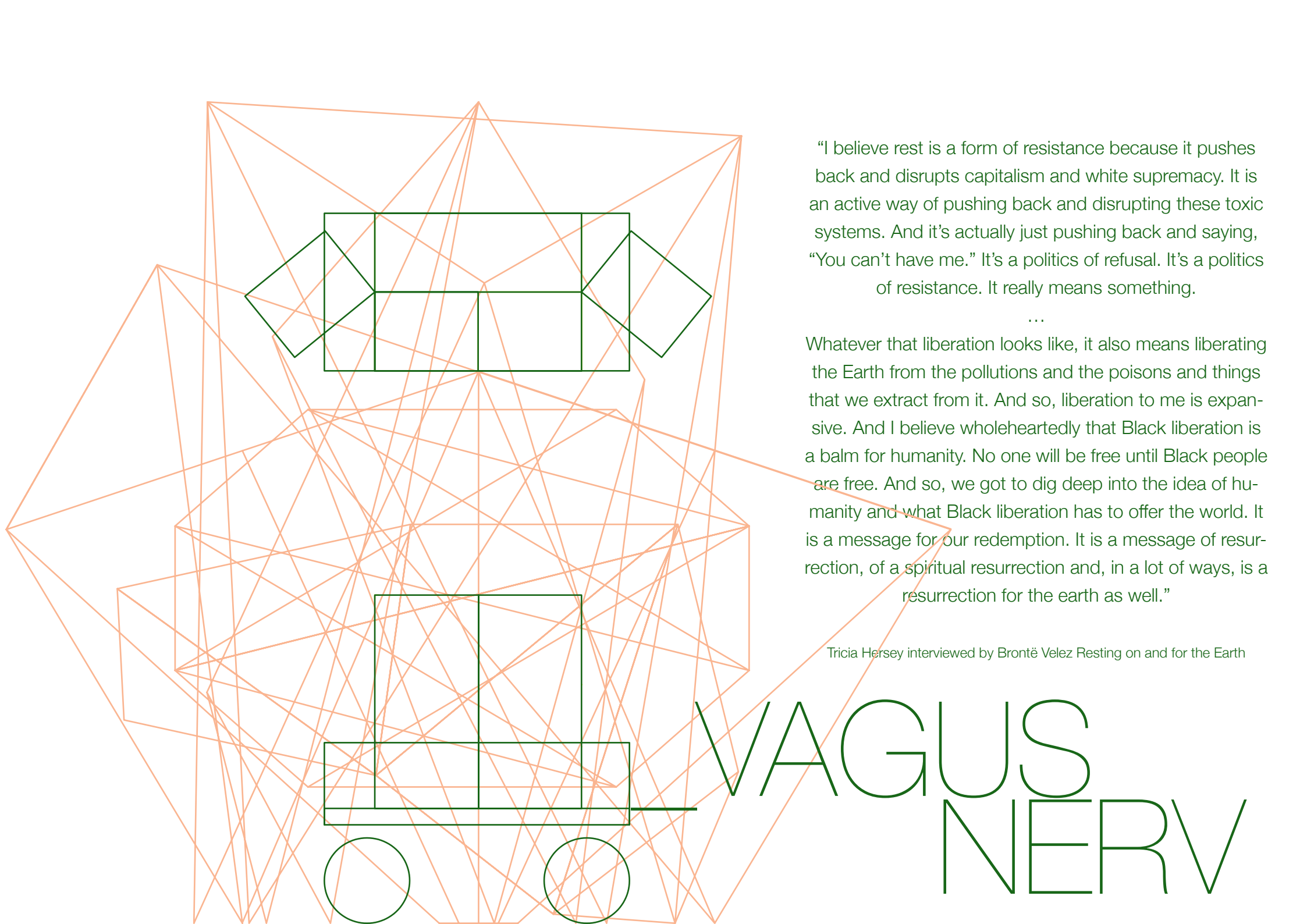
*In what situations might waiting serve to allow things to emerge rather than forcing them into being?*

*How can we conspire in different paces?*

*What practices do you rely on for resting?*

*How can you find restfulness in and among the entanglement?*



An abstract geometric drawing featuring a dense network of thin, intersecting orange lines that form a complex web of triangles and polygons. Overlaid on this network are several green-outlined shapes. At the top center is a horizontal rectangle divided into four equal sections, with a triangle attached to the left and right sides. Below this, towards the bottom center, is another horizontal rectangle divided into four equal sections, with a triangle attached to the left and right sides. At the very bottom center are two circles, one on the left and one on the right, positioned below the bottom rectangle. To the right of the drawing, there is a block of text in a green, sans-serif font.

“I believe rest is a form of resistance because it pushes back and disrupts capitalism and white supremacy. It is an active way of pushing back and disrupting these toxic systems. And it’s actually just pushing back and saying, “You can’t have me.” It’s a politics of refusal. It’s a politics of resistance. It really means something.

...

Whatever that liberation looks like, it also means liberating the Earth from the pollutions and the poisons and things that we extract from it. And so, liberation to me is expansive. And I believe wholeheartedly that Black liberation is a balm for humanity. No one will be free until Black people are free. And so, we got to dig deep into the idea of humanity and what Black liberation has to offer the world. It is a message for our redemption. It is a message of resurrection, of a spiritual resurrection and, in a lot of ways, is a resurrection for the earth as well.”

Tricia Hersey interviewed by Brontë Velez Resting on and for the Earth

VAGUS  
NERV

# connect\_\_\_\_\_ing

# regulat\_\_\_\_\_ing

# communicat\_\_\_\_\_ing

The vagus nerve, named for its meandering movement, traverses throughout the body with many branches sprouting into communication with every organ. It lives in and among everything. Here, the vagus nerve travels throughout the garden, the neighbourhood and this entire text. ‘Nervines’ are medicinal plants that support the adaptability, balance, and resilience of the nervous system.

Resembling a rhizomatic root system, growing from the brain all the way through into the gut mind. The information travels in both directions; changing your mind changes your body and vice versa (except it's not an either/or.) Balanced vagal tone enables the nervous system's capacity to sense and respond appropriately as an internal and relational wiring system. Just as a string instrument needs to be stretched enough so that it resounds when plucked, but loose enough not to snap, similarly the nervous system is a place of resonance and responsiveness, of action and reaction, it is a reading device to discern danger and sense safety. The vagus nerve dialogues with the sympathetic fight/flight/freeze/fawn response through the regulating work of the parasympathetic nervous system that enables soothing, resting, and digesting. The nervous system responds to situations by triggering associative memories that inform the body's intelligent reactions in a particular moment. How can the vagus nerve support a more resourced range of choices to navigate engagement within these situations?

At first it seems like the pathways throughout the garden could serve as the vagus nerve of this place. However, the practice and process of coming together through medicine-making is itself the vagus nerve – it allows us to connect with

everything present, to communicate, exchange, and resource ourselves through collective social health. The medicine cabinet – a repository full of resources for healing is placed on wheels, enabling its mobility beyond the private confines of any single home, appearing alongside one organ today, another organ tomorrow, or journeying through the local commons of the neighbourhood. It opens when it can and closes when it needs to. This vessel is able to contain itself for storage, protecting its contents stocked with a multitude of vessels, each containing particular plants in various medicinal forms that connect the streams of information in the garden with the bodies who may ingest, absorb, inhale, taste, or dwell in the presence of these plants. It is an unassuming treasure box, a living archive, it opens to offer an inner reality not otherwise apparent. When open to being shared, the limbs extend out, the shelves and compartments are available spaces for receiving and giving, and it unfolds out as a table, a surface for encountering, exchanging, gathering, and resourcing co-creatively. This capacity for containment, expansion, mobility, and stability allows the vagus nerve to be a mode of hosting medicinal processes within the garden and beyond it. The contents move throughout the place and throughout the bodies that engage with it.



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[The Spirit of the Herbs Tarot](#)

[Ancestral HUB](#)

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