



**Drawing by Local Artist Michael Buckland**

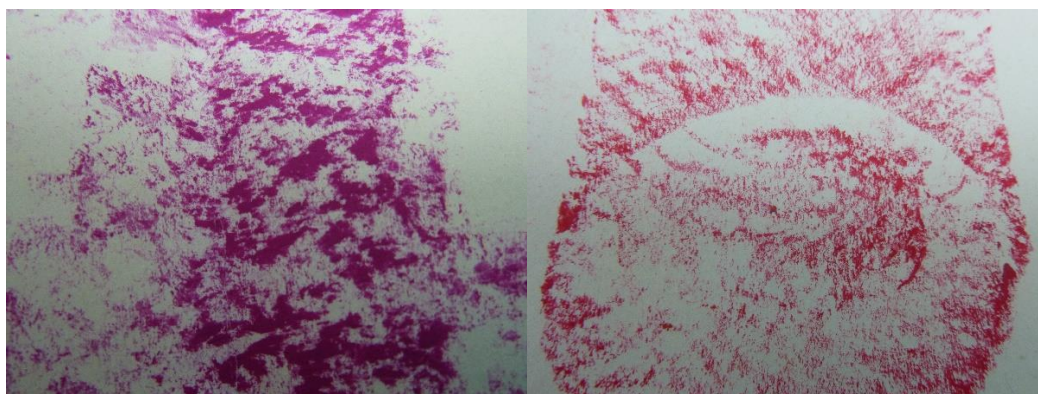
# **BODY & SOUL**

**MONDAY MORNING POEMS & DRAWINGS**

**IN RESPONSE TO MOVEMENT**

**FACILITATED BY MICHELLE WILKINSON**

## **Introduction**



**Body & Soul somatic movement sessions were seeded in Budleigh Salterton, Devon during the year of 2009. Although participants have flowed in and out of these sessions, at times staying for years, four members of this original group remain.**

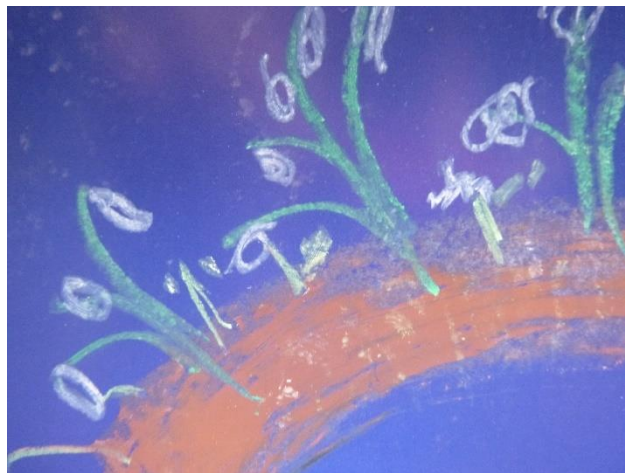
**These Monday mornings provide an opportunity to dialogue with our bodies through breathing awareness, touch and movement. For instance, when a breeze touches our skin it may stimulate a movement, conjure a memory or deepen an intake of breath.**

**Each week focus is given to a different bodily system such as bones, muscles, nerves and organs. Emphasis is given to our relationship with the earth and like our human beginnings it might take considerable time to journey from the floor to vertical. Returning to upright and moving through the space can feel very different after significant contact with the ground.**

**The final third of the session is a period of reflection through drawing and writing where the soma finds insights and other mediums of expression. Within this book Jenny Gray's Monday morning poems are interwoven with the drawings of Lesley Davies, Pauline Dyer, Carol Greaves and Sheila Skinner in celebration of a decade of Body & Soul exploration.**

**Michelle Wilkinson 2019**

**Today it is still and calm**  
**A silent silvering of light rain**  
**The wind softened to a breeze**  
**After four long months of stormy weather**  
**Down onto the mat**  
**O' bliss...O' dawn...O' blessed morn!**  
**The earth below**  
**The red deep roots...sticks...stones**  
**The sand...pebbles...gravel**  
**The granite...the firry depths...sulphur...fire...brimstone**  
**Downwards...held...enfolded...gorgeousness**  
**Speechless now**  
**There is where I want to go**  
**Or with the flowers in the field**  
**The animals...the birds in the sun and its healing wonders**



**Twin lights scour the moon**  
**Energies so high...roar amidst the planets and the stars**  
**Gentle hare, alert, head up moon gazing, still**  
**The pebbles glisten in the wet of the sea mists**  
**Mermaid tails gentle partners soothe the energy of pain**  
**Dance to the music of time**  
**Move to the wild earth's call**  
**Sleep to the stillness of the wind**





**Landscape of the body...tone, muscle, shape**

**Arm, colour, heart, air, breath**

**The curve of the thigh, the breast, the calf**

**Colour in the negative space**

**Curve becomes line, triangle, square, rectangle, straight**

**Impressionism...cubism**

**Pain mainlines the body's length**

**Searches lay-lines...crosses at junctions**

**Screeches at nerve endings...crashes muscles**

**The curve of the bongo...the curve of the drum**

**The curve on the sound...the curve on the air**

**Lines, angles, curves done; paysage du corps**



**Drop Relax...Fall into the earth's support**  
**Wide swung arms come up to hold deep embrace**  
**Breath...still...silent...sound...steady**  
**Pelvis...limbs...chest...ripple...rock...roll**  
**Energy flows easily today**  
**The warmth of the sun remembered still**  
**Soul...Heart...Love...Expands**  
**At last after a long winter's retraction**  
**In the garden a daisy-chain adorns the little dog's head**  
**My princess...my love**  
**Across the diagonal birds fly fast**  
**Such precision into crooks and crannies**  
**Bush...tree...shrub, nests are being built**  
**Summer is at hand**



**Today I can hardly breathe a single breath  
A mountain heartbeat, vital essence  
Meanwhile, up through the seabed...the pebble-bed  
And out through the rockface...red cliff-side  
Out through the tall grass, gorse-bush, wind-stunted trees  
Come the creatures of pre-history  
Press, struggle, crawl, climb, creep  
Upwards towards the sunlight...starlight...moonlight  
Fighting for the air that frees  
Swish, swish to the cry of the gulls**



**Deep night and the still Aegean, Homer's wine dark sea**

**Long strong arms to the oars**

**Empowers strong free, cool to the air, to Zephyrs of the heavens**

**Eyes ahead, ears alert to the whispers of the Gods**

**Blown down on a southern wind from Mount Olympus**

**Clytemnestra, Odysseus, Dionysus, Apollo, Pan**

**On the shore-sand call**

**Stand still...hold firm...ease the breath...steady the heart**

**Feel the rebirth... the magnificence...the beauty**

**Touch the water the sublime the divine**

**The high blue skies...the cool still sea**

**Gentle breeze from the western horizon**

**Pebbles from northern France**

**Shells from the orient, the southern ocean**

**Glisten...glow...warm...speak**

**In Budleigh Bay night moves towards dawn**

**Around my gently rocking boat**

**Jellyfish purple, mauve, silver, white, gently rock**

**As rose pink fills the early morn, angels fly heavenwards**

**The nightwork done**

**Then as now we are all the same, revealed in the fullness of time**



**First session of the new year, later and lighter as spring approaches**

**Our teacher bright and full of life**

**Cliff walking, sea breezes, early birdsong, fallen berries**

**We are lovely, happy, warm and welcoming**

**As is the earth as we drop to greet it**

**I think of flowers primrose...snowdrop...daffodil**

**There is an energy about and soon the body speaks its mind**

**Bones crunch, hinges creek, shouts of pain, sharp twangs deep**

**But today there is a task to do**

**My upper arms so painful always carry the tension**

**Stress...pain...fear...anger...love**

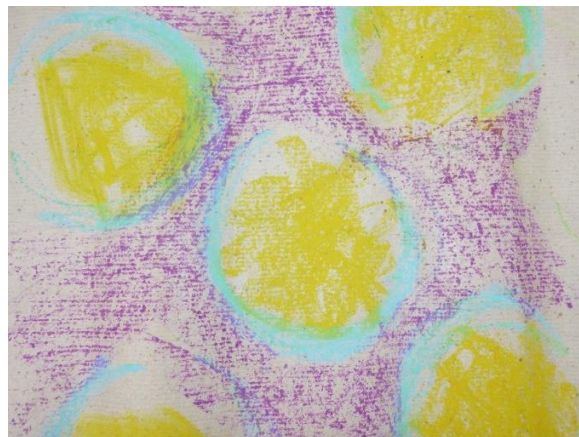
**They are only human after all, but present today at every move**

**And I can't map the density of feeling, grit my teeth, relax into pain**

**45 minutes down, I am longing for my bed**

**The softness of the quilt, fur rug, a hot water-bottle**

**And all the deliciousness of an afternoon sleep!**



**Back again in the big room full of light and warmth and sunshine**

**The healing caring calm of these lovely gentle women**

**Back now onto, into the earth below, abandon to its strength**

**Safe in the arms of its unchanging holding**

**In the past the tall trees of the Vendee**

**Fields golden from cut corn, night of owl cries**

**Donkey crying plaintively for lost love**

**The white cows: blanches d'Aquitaine**

**The beautiful geese blue eyes, orange beaks**

**Back now to the sea the turbulent waves, wild winds**

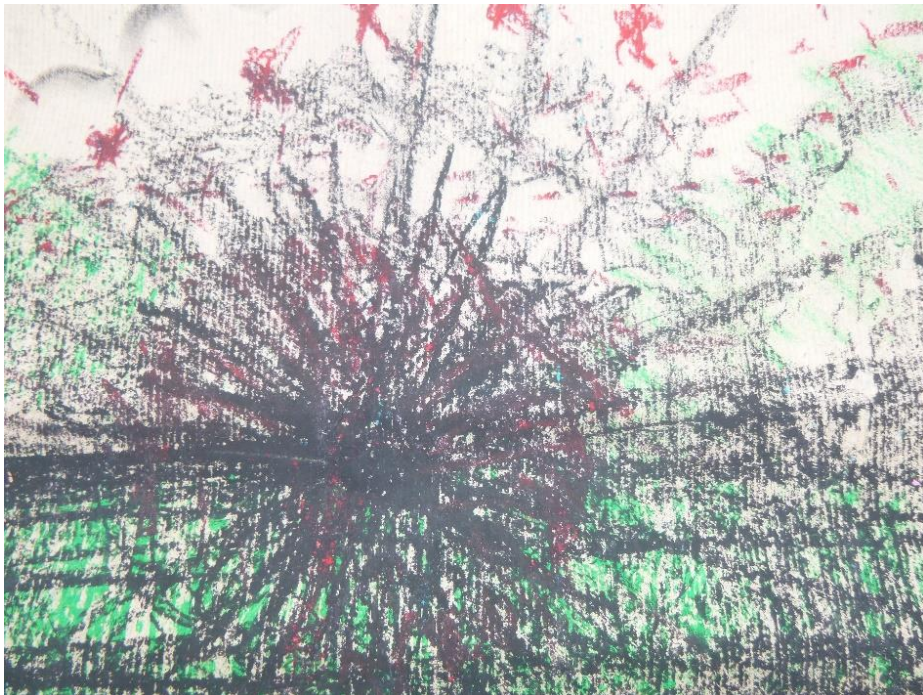
**Yet some diamonds amongst the sands**

**Shining light, loving arms, soul sisters**

**And me...still and more, the falling fallen**



**No gentle lines of poetry today  
Of kind mankind, animals and flowers  
Rave and rant inside and out  
No, absolutely, to it all  
No to demands, requests, invitations  
No to time and telephone  
No to those and them  
Given all my love  
And now need some kept for me  
Emotional and spiritual  
Sometimes I feel like a service industry  
To the whole wide world in a way  
No more please, at least not today**



**Waking in the tiny cabin**  
**High at the top of the house**  
**Comfy cosy little bed**  
**Tiger print sheets, cool American cotton**  
**All around the beautiful walls, hummingbirds**  
**Butterflies, large colourful blossoms, tendrils, creeper**  
**And from a small window**  
**A view of the sea, the Budleigh Pines**  
**Below a large earthen-ware jug**  
**Filled with gladioli**  
**Deep purple, vibrant yellow**  
**Filling a huge space on the table**  
**On the bottom of the floor chaos reigns**  
**A needy boy...a needy girl**  
**A vicar in a collar**  
**Outside lovely girls paint the house**  
**The little dog sits in her bed**  
**Exhausted by the petting and love**  
**How the body was wanting the mat**  
**The quiet voice, the gentle woman**  
**The space the peace the cool air**  
**But today the body on the mat wasn't mine**  
**It moved and stretched without me**



**Long ago in far distant, ancient China**  
**A garden by a river under high mountains**  
**Craggy peaks, gorges**  
**The sun smiling through the heaven**  
**Lights across the dial**  
**Organs, chi, meridians**  
**Peony, prunus, paired ducks, bamboo**  
**The moon gazing hare**  
**Deep pools of carp swimming**  
**On a perfumed breeze**  
**A haiku blown from the scholars table**  
**Lie Po, Li Chi, Wai Fang**  
**Beautiful girls of my heart**  
**Hanzhou Sung Dynasty**  
**My Ancient Home**



**I was a UFO flying through the air**

**A bubble hovering above**

**Looking down**

**Happily floating through timelessness**

**Oh! olive groves**

**The voice of circadas at nightfall**

**Tall Cyprus trees and perfumed evenings**

**The wine, dark sea and angels**



**A little twisted body on the mat today**

**Limbs back front**

**Crumpled enmeshed helpless alone**

**Every point aching**

**As it contacts the earth**

**A crab apple**

**Distorted dry bruised**

**Apple branch lifeless dead contorted**

**Pounding the high seas**

**Wild winds**

**Relentless roaring rain**

**Bruising even within the cosy bed under scented sheets**

**Night stars**

**The crippling pain of emotions**

**This morning her gentle voice soothes**

**Hand on navel**

**My hand?**

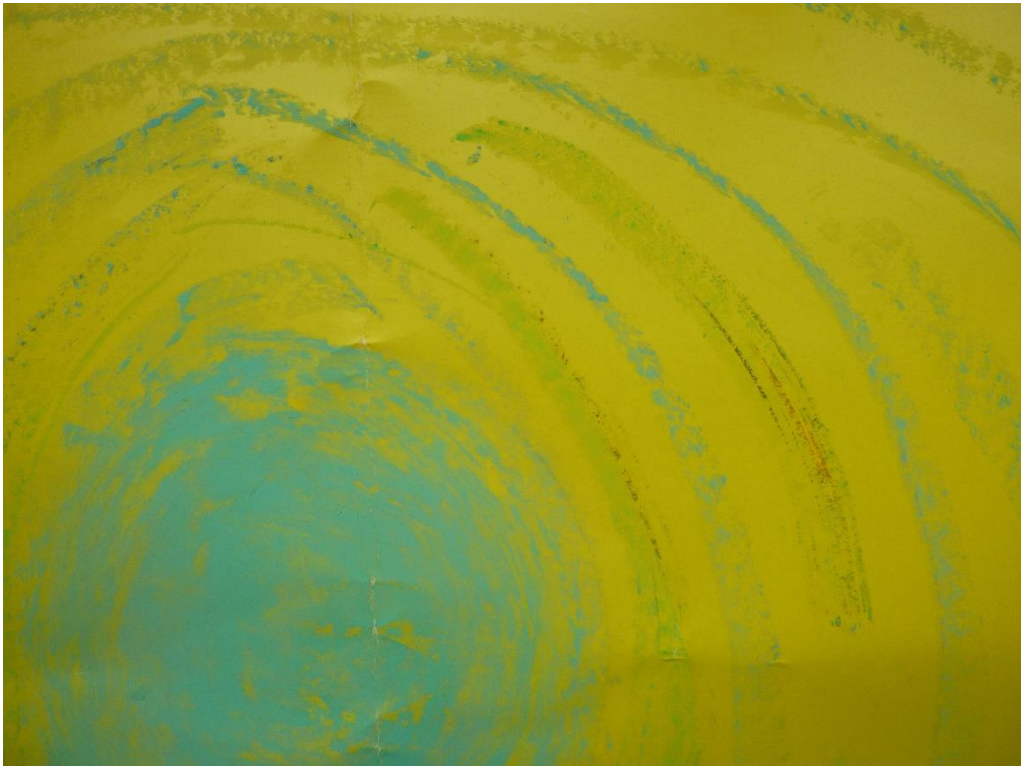
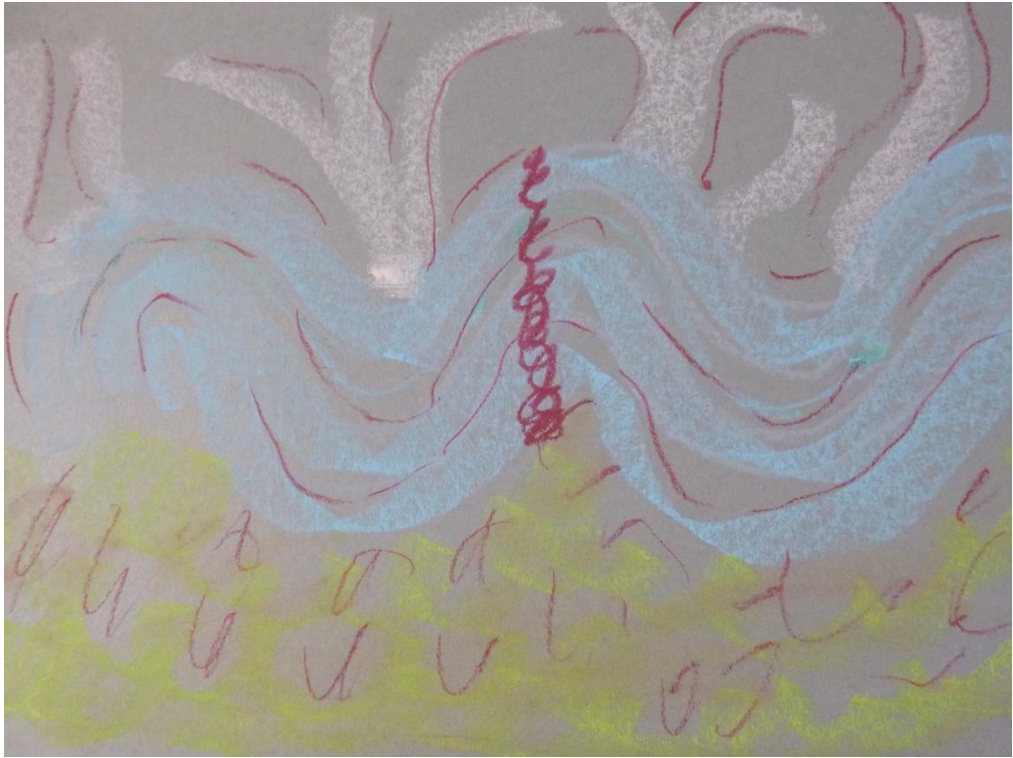
**I touch it with the other, soft...alive...strange**

**The warmth of the wall**

**I would cry if I could**

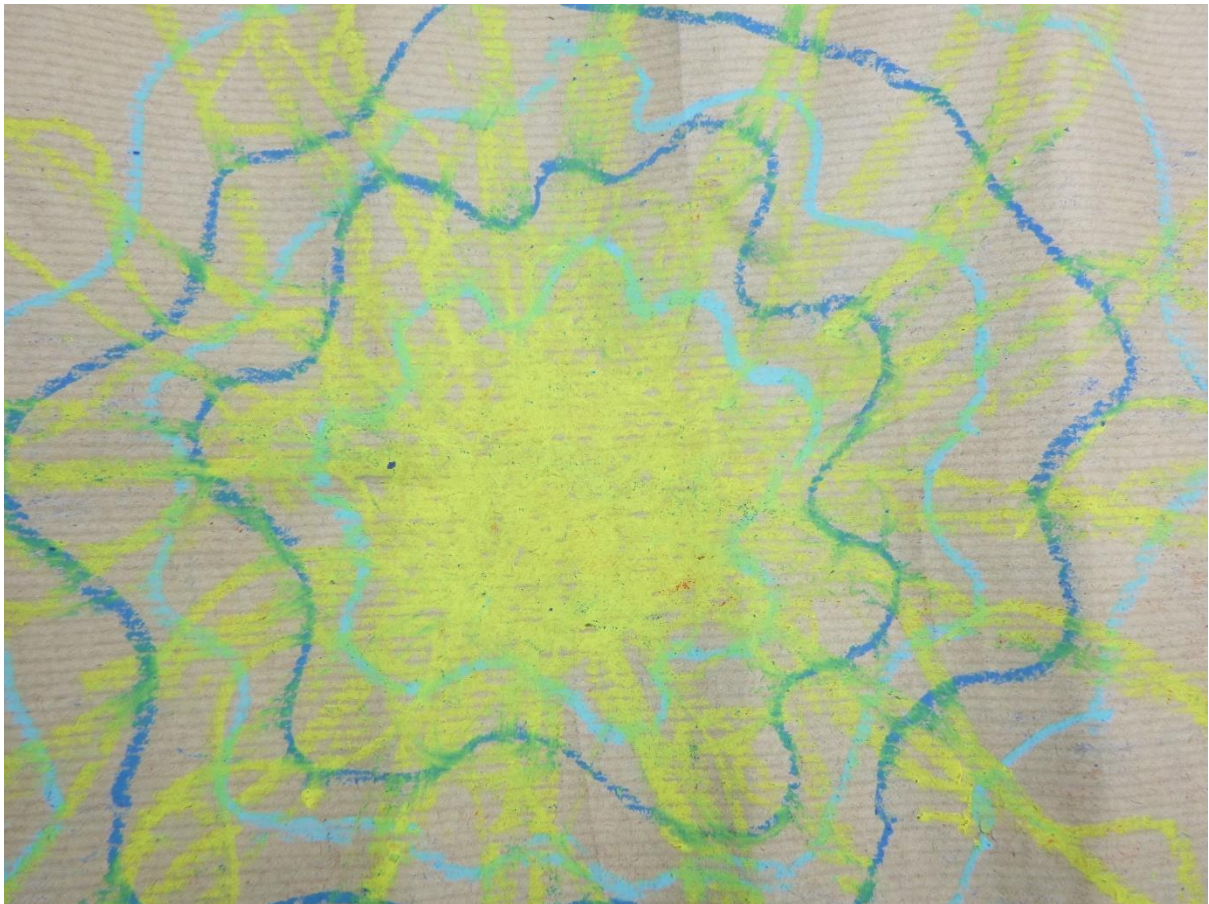
**And oh! these impossible diagonals**

**Isn't life complicated enough without?**

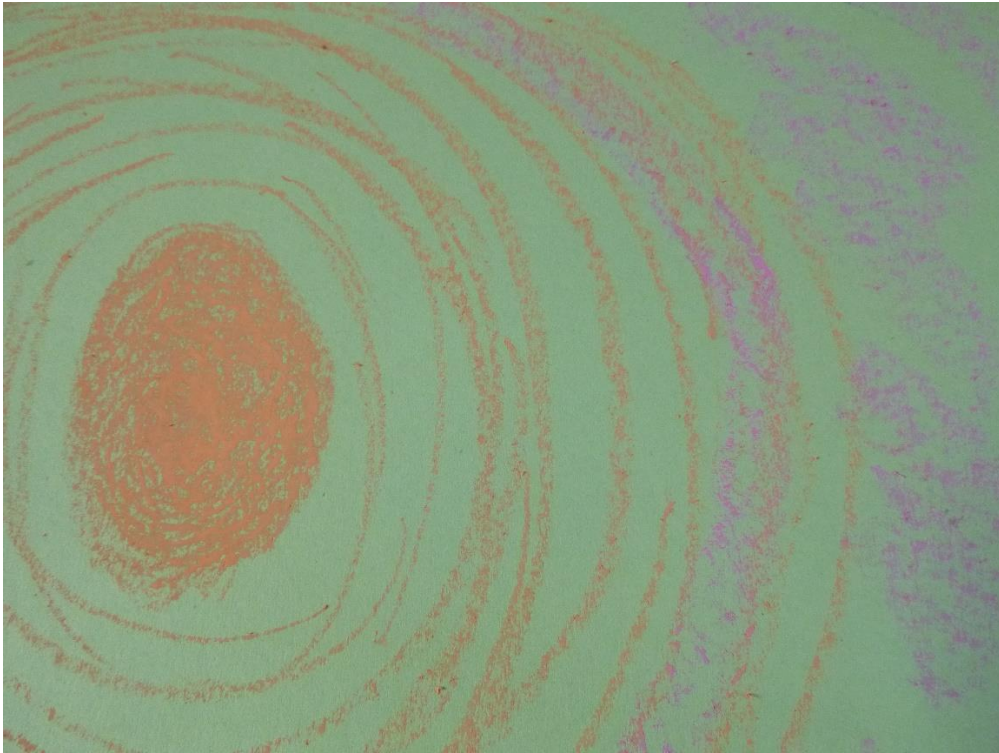




**They say the earth supports...the floor is hard**  
**They say the breath enlivens...it also scorches**  
**The heart feels joy pumps the body's pleasure zones**  
**It also yearns, hurts, breaks, is cruel**  
**Legs tiptoe on cobwebs, kick the life out too**  
**Hands that caress, stroke and calm**  
**Strangle in the dark...O strange dichotomy are we**  
**O complex the man, hugely vulnerable mankind**  
**O Zubaran, O Pascal Lamb this Eastertide**  
**But music brings the change to all of that**  
**Renewal and The Resurrection**



**O these organs of the body  
Hidden just inside the skin  
Do they know that they are mine?  
Or would someone else do?  
An existential question I would say  
On this cool summer's day  
Do they feel as I do when they wake up in the morn?  
Do they want to sleep awhile as birdsong welcomes the dawn?  
If I am sad, are they too?  
And happy singing to themselves as little children do?  
Do they know my thoughts and dreams?  
Understand my pain?  
Lovely organs big and small  
Today I recognise you there  
And thank you for such life-long service to me  
Of course, I know in Chinese thought, tummy holds our pain  
Heart our love  
Kidneys our strength  
Liver something else  
Long live my organs!  
Long may they glow  
Long may they sing and shine  
Inside and underneath and the outside**

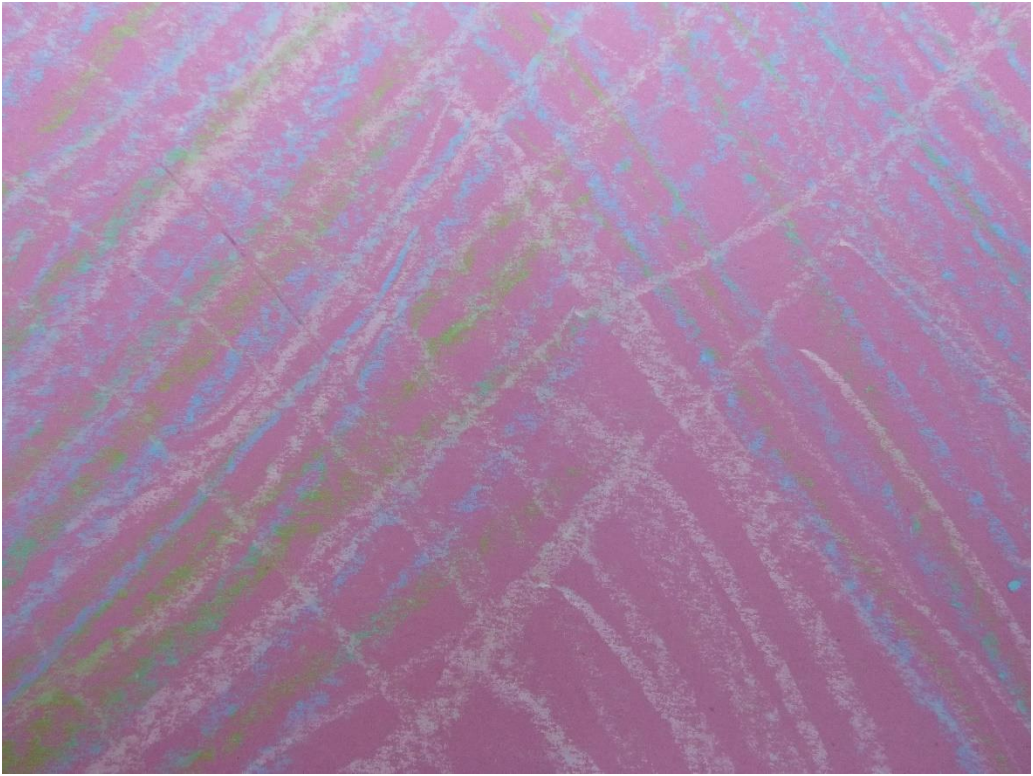


**Along a lane we drive past fields  
Hedgerow languid with summers growth  
Sigh with dusty weariness  
Yellow...,ochre...umber...gold  
Butterflies in lively play  
Flutter white against the cobalt noon-day sky  
The frazzle of dazzling sunshine  
A hot dry wind blows across our heads  
Heavy heat land-lacked  
Ahead the tarmac pools and glistens  
Shining moist as the heads of the sea bobbing seals  
A shake of maracas pierces my mind alert  
Voodoo...Witchcraft...Entrancement  
A rattler slithers past slow and deadly  
In the high summer grass**





**Today there is no voice**  
**A head with words inside...thinking**  
**Not a line of poetry**  
**Not a line of prose**  
**Exhaustion...all scintillated out**  
**Inside the body**  
**All boxes ticked**  
**All curves caressed**  
**Straight lines ironed out**  
**Weeks of being**  
**Outside the esoteric**  
**Outside the centimetre of aura**  
**Still...charged...alarm**  
**Smile...greet...sense**  
**Cook...pour...wash**  
**Tune in...tune out to others**  
**Morning noon and night**  
**At midnight the hedgehog and I meet in the garden**  
**It can run so fast**  
**I have a puff of my ciggie**  
**Exhale into the silent stillness**  
**Inhale the beauty of the night**



**Richard of York gained battles in vain**

**Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet**

**The colours of the rainbow**

**The colours of the chakras**

**Whirling swirling glorious energies**

**Base red grounding**

**Orange sacral reproducing**

**Yellow solar plexus feeling processing**

**Heart green loving**

**Throat blue speaking**

**Third eye violet far-seeing**

**White crown the lotus flower**

**Open to the wonderful energy of the universe**

**Today I can only think not feel**

**As the body pain so overwhelming**

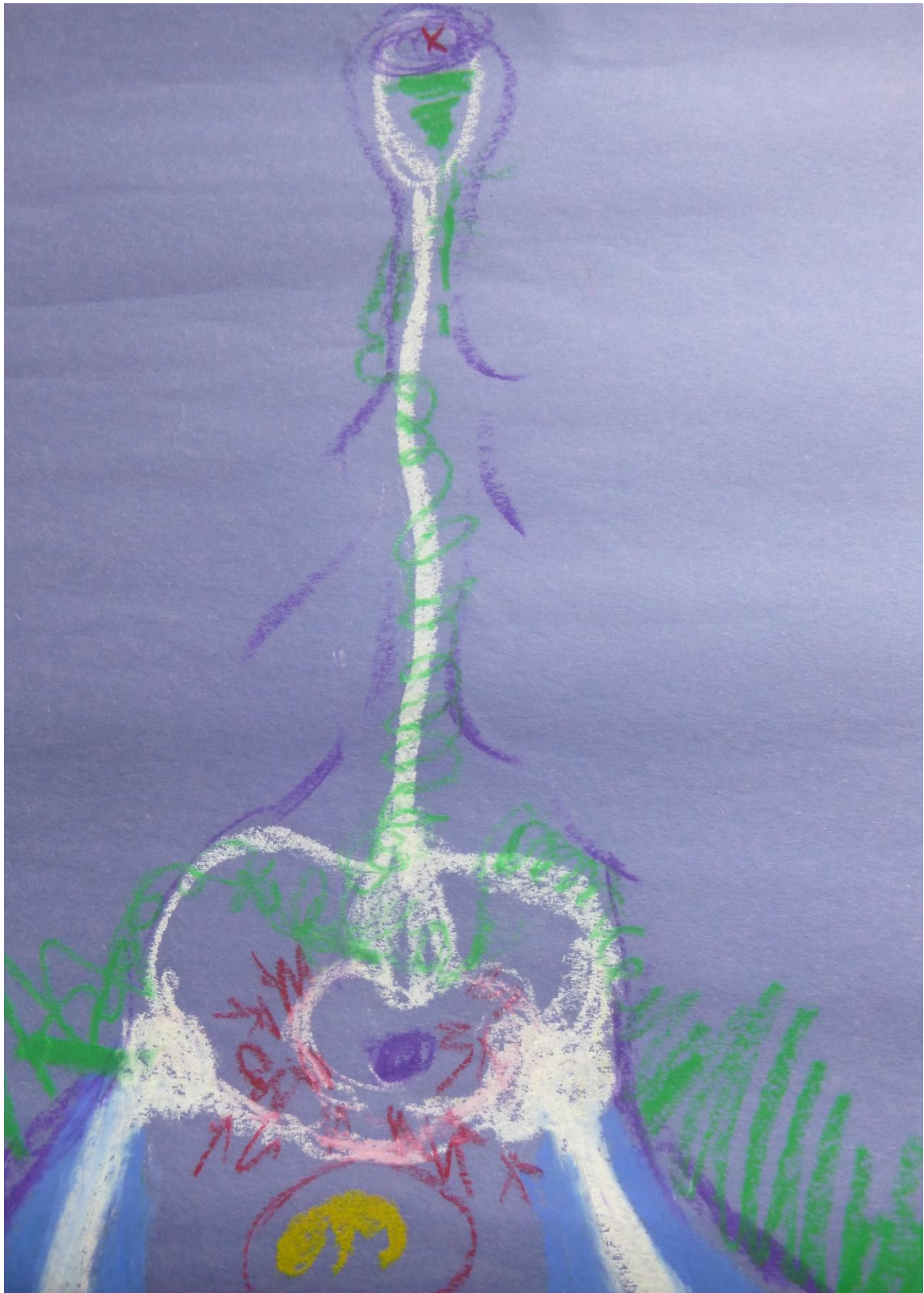
**Let the healing forces of the sun, the moon, the stars**

**And all the planets in their courses**

**Flow through me, heal and protect me**

**We wait for the sunshine and the light**







**Slow onto the mat down through the red carpet**

**Brown earth...deep hard rock**

**Earth's fire and brimstone centre**

**Gorgeous peace now...chill time**

**A morning in the twilight zone**

**Today the body has spoken its needs**

**Upper, middle and lower chambers**

**Shoulders relaxing, lungs cleansing, heart loving**

**Brain nourishing and calm and peace below the navel**

**71<sup>st</sup> year on earth, where is the wisdom**

**the knowledge, the understanding, the acceptance?**

**Why the belligerence, the challenging, the aggression, the CBA?**

**The disconnect, still the wild child**

**But this feels real for once – and at last**

**Into child and down onto the crown of the head**

**A deep re-birthing shudders through my mother's body**

**Always a baby maybe**

**The pain of loss...the disconnect**

**All a memory in this recent experience**

**Strong pelvis, shoulders, feet**

**Propel me forward into the sun-hot day**

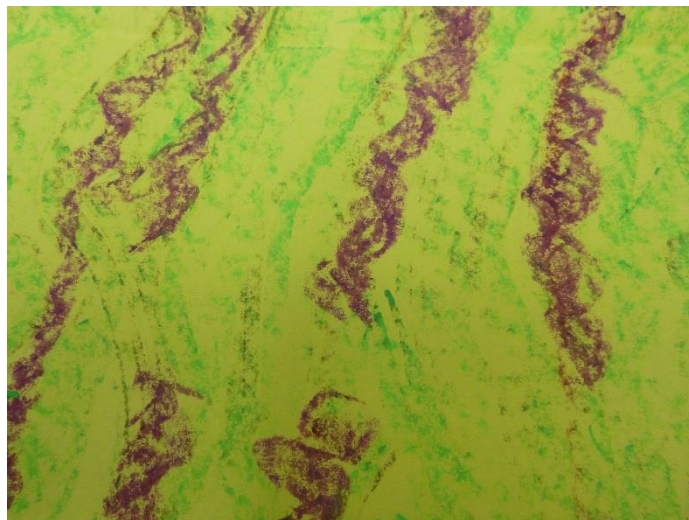
**What cannot be done, leave on the altar today**



**Today my mind away, full of butterflies, colour and flutter  
Unable to settle, thought, idea, instruction caught in a wing  
Then just in time inspiration from my clever teacher  
Our energy centres through the central line of body spine  
Glorious whirling colours vibrate, shake, rattle and roll  
Ground...calm...centre  
Far seeing, open to the radiant light source  
Arms outstretched from heart, become angel wings  
Feathered joy, holiness is there  
Here in the room the whispers come  
I love me, really? I love me, are you sure?  
I love me, this is hard. I am love; o.k.  
I am all love, yeah!  
All you need is love, love is all you need  
Love and peace man...oh om, Shante, spacey!**



**This has been a time of disconnect  
Vision...world...walls and winds  
Lottie dog, gorgeous boy, toxic friend  
All dsconnected from my connect  
Glorious St Ives  
Russian song from the banks of the Volga  
Cendrillon magnificent from The Met  
I was there but where was I?  
Little fish that I once was, can you feel my pain?  
Connect to the earth, I am invited  
Surface to surface, front...side...back  
Rolling across to eternity  
Connect to the breath in and out, long...deep...slow  
Filling and emptying the body's shell  
Connect to the brain sensory, neural along the lay lines  
All is pain today**





**Get me quick! says the stick...Be mine!**  
**Right ho! I reply and crawl across the wood**  
**Into my sharp little teeth, I take my branch**  
**Beautiful, it is and mine**  
**Over to the corner fast, away from those others**  
**Predatory casting eyes enviously at my sticky branch**  
**It lies before me in all its non-glory**  
**Who would want a stick? I hear them say**  
**Well, I would for one**  
**I love you stick with your buds and your fragile limbs**  
**Down under the table we go**  
**Safe away from the others and their totems and growling teeth**



**Drop your body through the wood**  
**Greet the density, earth coming up to meet you**  
**Springs energy rises**  
**Pulsates up from the molten heartland of the earth**  
**Here there is spring tide**  
**Blossoms open in gardens**  
**Fridays Dartmoor, blooms in my mind**  
**Hedgerow banked with primroses and violets**  
**Clusters in damp and shade**  
**Red earth, blue sky, white sheep, black lambs**  
**The scurrying of clouds**  
**From deep within the frozen womb of a 15<sup>th</sup> century church**  
**We glimpse across the painted Rood screen**  
**Jewel images of Christ and the Saints**  
**Gold and red and green**  
**From outside cow and cuckoo call**  
**Awake my soul Christ has arisen**  
**Spring Awakening**



**O pebble of the pebble-bed**  
**Dog of the East**  
**Star of the North**  
**Winds of the West**  
**Sands of the South-West**  
**Rising wave, falling**  
**Gull, circling...calling**  
**Dark night of the sea**  
**Hush silent epiphany**  
**It has been a year now**  
**These images of life**  
**Fading into sepia**  
**Rusted by the salt**  
**Wetted by tears torn by gales**  
**So up through the rain**  
**Down on the mat**  
**Into the disconnect**  
**What was once a joy, now a chore**  
**Staying an hour in this body**  
**A bitter ennui**  
**O body, this body of mine**  
**This body of pain**  
**Spirit cemented firmly in the brain**





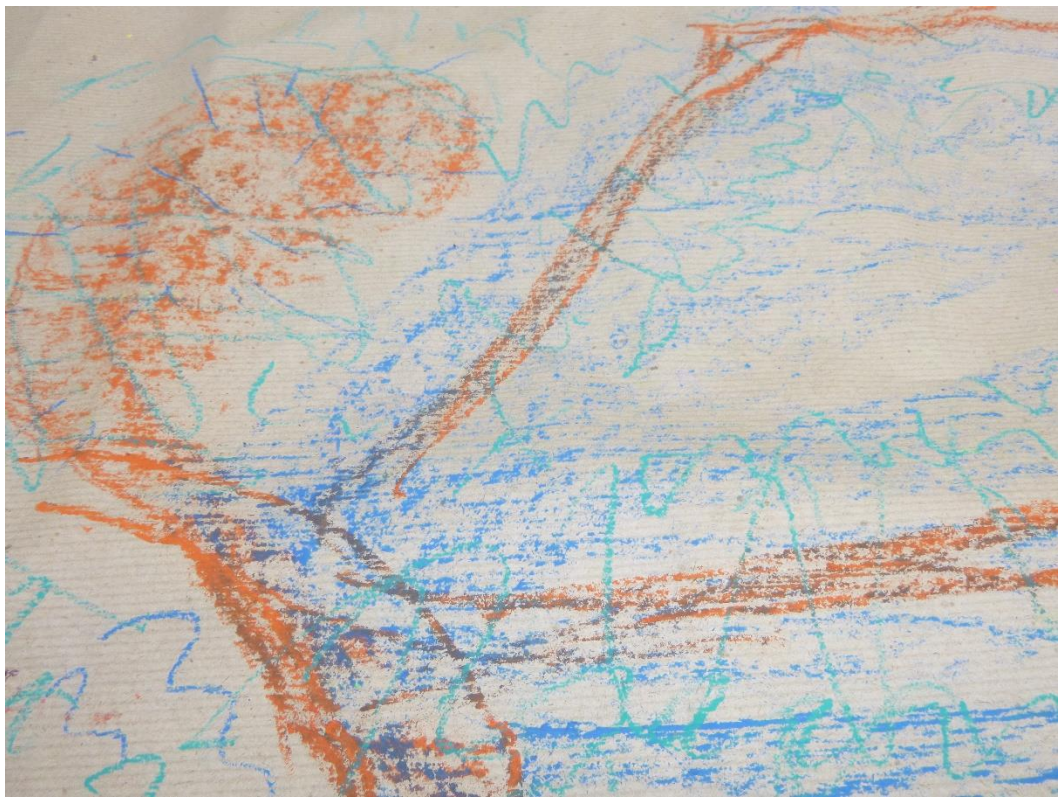
**Long ago when we were young**  
**Deepest rural France**  
**God knows where**  
**A girl and a friend, a boy and his bicycle**  
**Picnics...wine and wood fires**  
**Francoise Hardy singing**  
**Gauloises cigarettes**  
**A sudden moment in a field of freshly furrowed earth**  
**Red...moist...crumbly...bliss...**  
**The moment became a long while**  
**As I lay in its wondrousness**  
**Happy as never before**  
**Under the bluest of skies**  
**And the sweetest sunshine of youth**





**We are moving through September**  
**Fierce rain outside**  
**In the hall, all is warm and calm**  
**Someone is singing, mood upbeat**  
**On the mat we move through the body**  
**At the pelvis a poignant tender memory**  
**The children I did not have**  
**At the navel there was Marjorie**  
**My beautiful, intelligent bad-assed mother**  
**She and I, Atilla the Hun meets Genghis Khan**  
**Yet, deeply loved**  
**The leg and arm tendrils in the deepest seas... swish...swish**  
**Shoulders...Ribs...Dorsal Fins**  
**And the heart, always**  
**Once beating scarlet, alive...pulsing and throbbing inside my chest**  
**Now small withered...gnarled, yet budding green**  
**With hope of energy and growth**  
**Fish...Dolphins...Unicorns...Chimps...Monkeys...Orangutan**  
**Marsh...Seas...Rivers...Fields and Woods**  
**No standing, please...No walking**  
**Let me stay awhile...an animal in this innocent bliss**







## **The Audit**

**I made a list of those I love**

**There were five and the dog**

**I made a list of those I like**

**There were many**

**Then there was the one I wish would rot in hell**

**I prayed for those I loved**

**I prayed for those I liked**

**I prayed for the other one**

**These long months of darkness**

**Trapped inside sticky constriction**

**A cry...all's waiting to evolve**

**To break out into the light...the warmth of the sun**

**Renewal...to find again**

**Bones...muscles...tendons...organs**

**To feel again the magic**

**The mystery...the freedom...the bliss**

**Music of the movement**

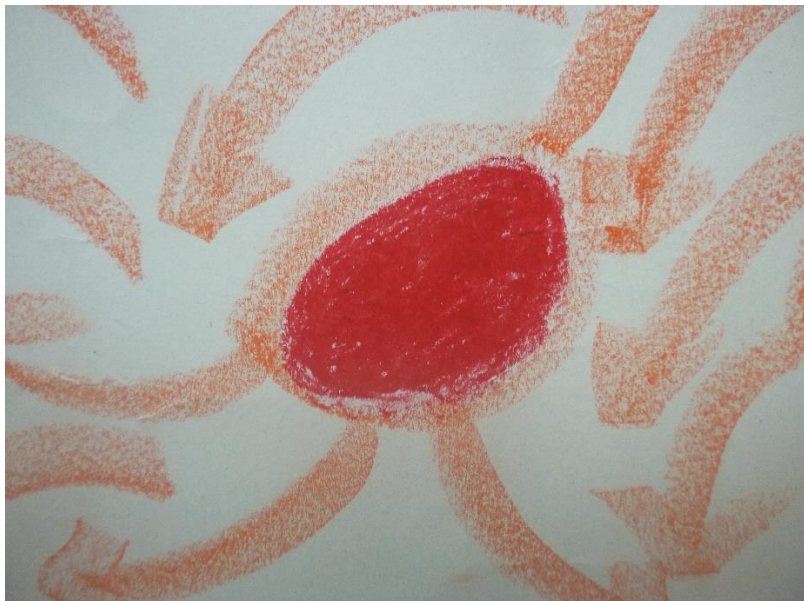
**And from all this energy starts to form**

**The chi...the life-force**

**The stars and moon**



**It has been a while**  
**And I have missed these Monday morning times**  
**Today I bring you a story**  
**About love and God and light**  
**A lady came from Dartmoor**  
**She brought with her arc angels and a unicorn**  
**Raphael of the green rays for healing**  
**Shamuel of the pink rays for heart protection**  
**Gabriel of the white ray**  
**Michael blue for protection, strength**  
**And her unicorn from Atlantis**  
**Glowing in all its glorious crystal colours**  
**She filled our green house with the gold of God**  
**And spoke to the little dog who spoke to her**  
**All these wondrous healing rays I bring to you today**



**In the room on the mat  
I follow the words insidiously  
It is hard finding bits beneath the flesh  
Muscles, tendons and Chinese points  
An act of faith  
But I believe and trust and see them there  
My empty bones  
Lie at the sea's edge  
Bleached by the summer's sun  
Brought in and out again by summer's tides  
Chasing a fleeting moon  
Shells...Pebbles...Driftwood...Weed  
My bones lie quiet and still  
At rest at last, used up...undone  
Hollow crab-shell...Lifeless sea  
We shared a summer and you emptied me**





**Coming in on the turning tide**

**Early morning...new day**

**Black sky meets black sea**

**Velvet...still...deep...asleep**

**Bright stars stud the above**

**A moon shadows cold little pebbles below my feet**

**Under the massage table the wonderous dog**

**“Put her on me” I say**

**“Let me feel her lovely curly coat chestnut brown, amber eyes”**

**I held the chicken so light and fragile**

**Its little neat eyes responding to my coos**

**Into the room...onto the mat**

**I bring my human-self**

**Body of bones and anatomy, reluctantly**

**So difficult today to come out of my animal-self**

**And so painful, here we go again**

**Birthing...feeding...sucking**

**Being born into this painful world**

**Poor little baby, helpless child**

**Stop the flow, let the angels in**



**After some days of darkness and pain**  
**The morning walk brought lots to love**  
**The dappled sea and brisk wind**  
**A tortoise-shell cat greenest of eyes**  
**Some lovely dogs to pet and kiss**  
**A friendly hello**  
**Newly-blown blossom...flowers in bloom**  
**Warm and cosy room and gentleness**  
**Dropping to the floor was not the same**  
**There has been a big change**  
**The plague...the black death**  
**Purdah and rest, my world so different now**  
**No epiphany, but a slow revelation**  
**And now I wait patiently for enlightenment**  
**Fish...egg...the crucifixion**  
**My friend is fear**  
**An incubus at night**  
**Love...Death**  
**The one world and the other**  
**Mystical...Mysteries...Prayer**







**Sometime last week**

**I turned over and rolled into my seventy-third year**

**No full moon major eclipse**

**Venus in Libra Jupiter aligned with Mars**

**A lot of love which could not reach my heart**

**Down onto the mat in an altered state**

**And there behold, a beautiful pebble brought down from the cliffs**

**Born from the earth not the sea**

**It was love at first sight**

**The connection immediate**

**Darling little ovoid**

**Smooth brown thing**

**A perfect fit in my palm**

**All and only mine**

**My pebble egg had cracks and fissures**

**Had it just been born or about to give birth?**

**The existential question**

**Does my pebble give birth to a creature or to another pebble?**

**This treasure I will not part with**

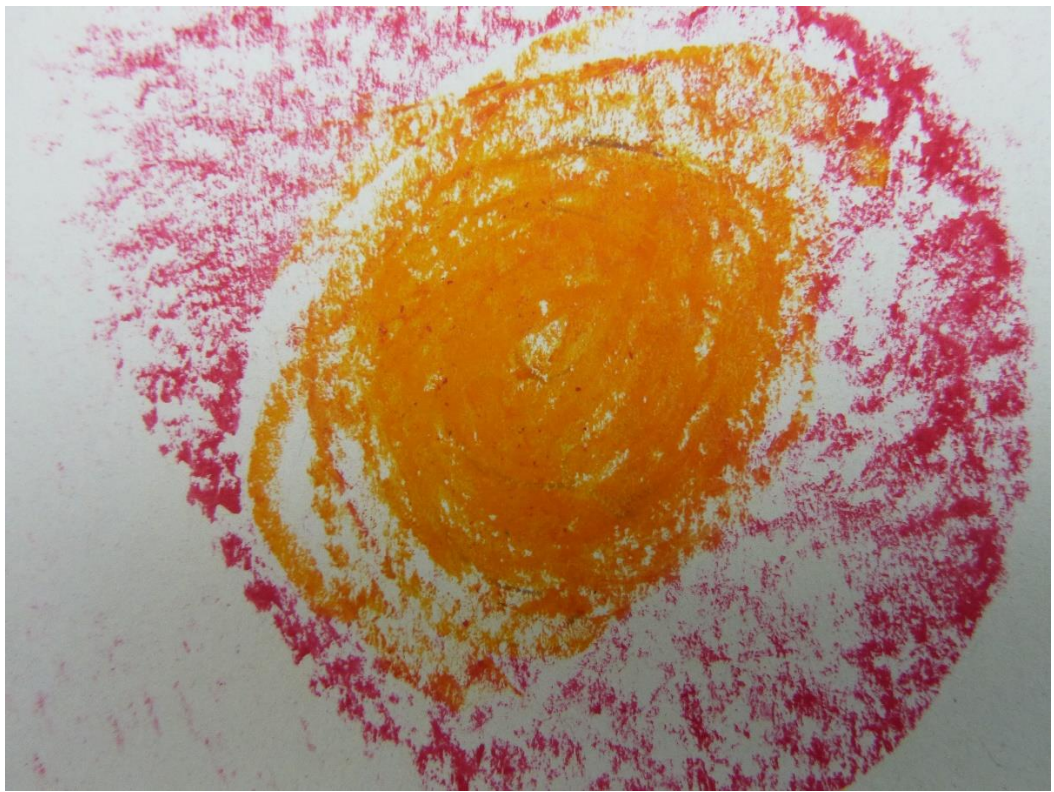
**Now I have three things to love**

**The little dog, the young man, the pebble egg**



**Out into the morning light**  
**A fresh sea breeze, blue skies**  
**Leaving the yard, I bumped into Mr Hilary Mantel**  
**Scuttling up the road for a morning paper**  
**I scuttle behind carrying my mat**  
**Into the hall full of warmth and sunshine and love**  
**An array of autumnal leaves gathered early from the cliff path**  
**The oak leaves dead almost dying**  
**As beautiful, as arresting as summers green**  
**Fragile yet perfect still in form and grace, the ancient oak**  
**Buds on the branch look ready to bloom**  
**But the sap has not returned to the deep earth**  
**The perfumed smell of musk and green still**  
**My heart was a branch like this tight gnarled knotted**  
**And everything I thought decay**  
**As the branch and leaves brush my body**  
**I realise that age can be gentle, soft, beautiful**  
**My branch of leaves talking to the wooden floor**  
**There has been a lesson**  
**Imp, elf, spirits of the woods**  
**Sleep amidst my branches...my limbs**  
**Protected, sheltered, magical self**







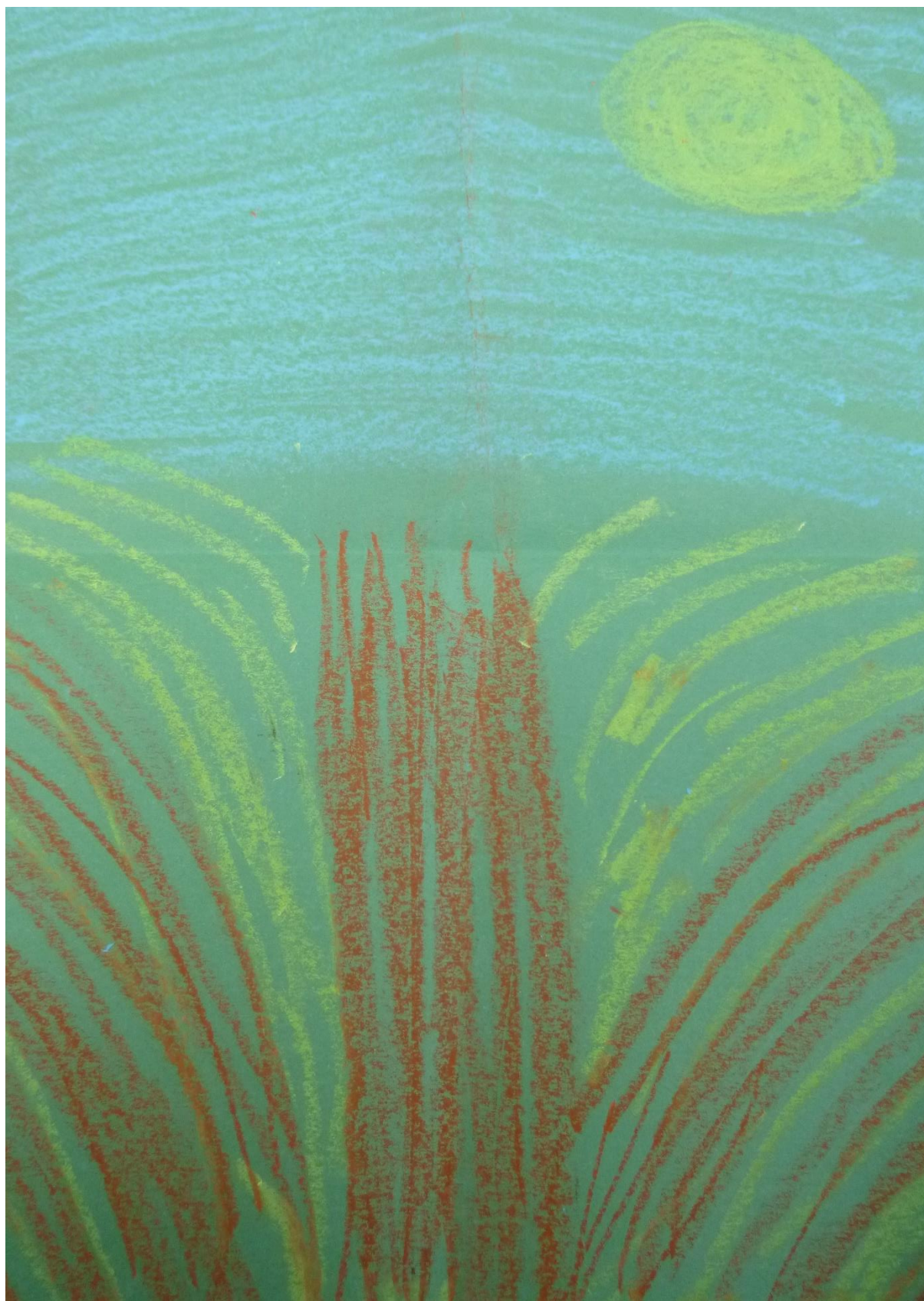
**Waking from a week deep-long sleep**  
**Finding the town metamorphosed**  
**Into its ghastly pre-Christmas glory**  
**Once more the room...the harem...the seraglio**  
**The feminine enclave...lovely**  
**And down onto the mat...the ground...the earth**  
**Heavenly holding, supporting, grounding**  
**Sink deep into the depths**





**Lying today beneath the sparkling Xmas tree**  
**Baubles, lights and a star**  
**Under some glistening strings around the room**  
**Glittering prettily in the morning light**  
**Little bones of toes and fingers**  
**Flutter in the air**  
**Swoop, rise and fall like little birds**  
**Swallow...starling...robin...wren**  
**Holly...ivy...bay and oak**  
**The Lent rose white as snow**  
**Violet hyacinth glow**  
**Frankincense...myrrh...incense...cedar...sandalwood**  
**Perfume the holy air**  
**As in Bethlehem's stable**  
**Here in the Masonic Lodge**  
**The light of the lamb**  
**The new-born Christ**  
**The godhead the saviour with us today**  
**As we gather in peace and joy**







**On the mat**

**A warm room**

**Sunlight from a high window**

**Today I bring you angels and arc-angles**

**In all their glory iridescent ephemeral light**

**Soft whispering shimmering of feathered wings**

**Strength...protection...healing...guidance...love**

**Today I bring you gold and silver balls**

**The evening star...night star...falling star**

**The morning sun, the moon in its lunar strength and power**

**Today I bring you an oak leaf, a pinecone**

**A rosehip a cyclamen**

**A gull on the wing**

**A shoal of mackerel**

**A salty shining sea**

**The energy of the universe**

**Today I bring you the perfumes of Arabia**

**Desert sand...oils of anointment...bells of joy**

**Today I bring you the glory of God**

**The wisdom of the prophet, the Buddha of the East**

**I bring healing protection to our beautiful planet**

**And to all spirits and souls in our Monday room**

