**IN // OUT OF BLOOM
PLAIN TEXT AND IMAGE DESCRIBED VERSION**

**COVER**

**Image Description:**
A collage, the main image is of multiple illustrations of pansy flowers all layered over each. The pansies are in overly saturated, bold, unnatural colours.

Hidden amongst the pansies are male torsos, legs and bodies. All appeared to be in good shape. The image is collaged in such a way, that it looks as if the image of pansies has been cut into revealing the shape of the male figures.

In the centre of the page is the title.

IN // OUT
OF
BLOOM

The font is clean, straight and modern looking. (The same font is used through-out the zine)
It is in a turquoise colour. The text is edited to make it look as if it is glitching, the letters are sliced horizontally then roughly stacked back on top of each other. Some parts of the text are translucent, and others are solid.

**PAGE ONE AND TWO

Image Description:**A double page spread, comprising a collaged background and text over the top.
Background.
Is made of a photo of some wildflowers growing in a crack in the pavement. The image has been flipped and mirrored to create a kaleidoscope pattern. The colours and contrast have been altered so the image is very bright and highlighted with purple, blue and green.

In the centre, a translucent circle highlights the unedited image, hidden under ghostly edits of the image which are see-through and slightly off-set from the original image. Creating a blur, shadow effect.

**Text:**On the left-hand side of page one. The title text:

THE EVENING BOTANIST.

The text is oriented vertically, running from the bottom of the page to the top. Is in bold orange font.

All other text in the same but in black and formatted in standard paragraphs. It reads:

If you hear one of the following words or phrases used to describe a character in movie made before 1970, odds are good that they’re trying to tell you they’re queer;

A perplexment.
A sunset lover.
Not quite up-to-code

Rides the carousel.
Dines at the downstairs restaurant.
Walks on the shady side of the street.
An evening botanist. (This text is highlighted in yellow.)

Nature and queerness have always felt linked to me. Often, we are outside.
Moments of queer history that’ll be lost. But will live on. It’s all in the subtext.
In growing, desire, if you look closely. You’ll see the seeds and the fruits.
Everywhere. No matter how icy the environment.

I’m a proud evening botanist (The text is highlighted in yellow.)
Figuratively. But now also literally. I ordered some seeds and bulbs. Plants that have been used to signal “we are here and we are queer” throughout history.

I’ve planted them in gaps, cracks, accidental beds near places of queer importance in this city.

The flowers might thrive, they might not. They might bloom out loud or prefer to stay in the warm safe dark of the soil. But like our queerness they’ll be there. The memory, the desire to grow, the potential for surprising beauty against a mostly grey world. Do we need to show out petals, leaves and stems to be out?

Pride is deep rooted. It’s underneath everything; the tender veins that nourish us. Remember. You’ll find Pride all around as long as you know the signs to look for.

**PAGE THREE

Image Description:**Collage. A photo of the underneath of a rail bridge. A large concrete column is the centre of image. Surround by a cracked concrete pavement. There is a brick wall in the background and in the foreground a low metal railing. Growing around the whole scene are various dead looking weeds, shrubs and grasses.

The colours of the original photos are hard to distinguish. Layered over it are the same image but in pink and yellow. Slightly translucent and warped with a wave effect.
Over this is a simple line drawing of a Calla Lily in white.

**PAGE FOUR**

**Text:**In the centre of the page, shaped into a tight box not touching the edges of the page is the following text. The font has been edited to make it look distressed and worn.

CALLA LILIES
Artist Georgia O’Keeffe’s paintings have widely been thought to have a double meaning.
O’Keeffe’s delicately painted lilies have been referred to as an erotic lesbian symbol – an intimate depiction of the vagina.

**PAGE FIVE

Image Description:**A purple vase holding calla lilies drawn in cartoon style with the same translucent shadow effect as the previous pages in blue, pink and orange. Positioned top and centre of the page with the text wrapping around it. **Text:**R . I . P to feeling S – E – X – Y

People usually forget to tell you embracing your queerness can also mean you no longer feel desired. Not really. You can be fetishized or misinterpreted. All together ignored. Not understood. Or sometimes the worst is placated. When someone says they see you but then the way they hold you is so clumsy, so disconnected.

Your flesh can burn with gentle touches of a hand. Your stomach burn with lust. But somehow you will feel disconnected from it all, invisible to it all.
“We have rather been invaded.” newsreader Sue Lawley calmly stated when four lesbians disrupted a broadcast of the BBC Six o’clock news on May 23rd, 1988. It was the night before Section 28 became law. The law that banned the promotion of homosexuality by public authorities. (aka access to education) They never made it in front of the camera, but their shouts and chants filled the studio along with the sounds of them being wrestled to the ground.

In 2019 a Birmingham school suspends / censors / removes LGBTQIA+ sex education after complaints.

**PAGE SIX

Image Description:**The same vase of lilies from Page Five but this time enlarged, upside down and cut in half. On the left of the page disappearing into the spin of the zine. It’s partially obscured by a see-through circle in green and text.

**Text:**In 2019, homophobic slurs; abuse directly aimed at an openly queer teacher are sprayed outside a Primary School in Heaton. Overnight the school gates are covered by a colourful array of rainbow hearts and flags.
In 2019 the “debate” about if children should learn about the existence of LGBTQIA+ people is back on the BBC six o’clock news.
In 2021 trans\* women are painted as predators, cannot go a single day without having their right to exist debated. Trans\* Men are basically ignored, unless they can weaponised

So many of us lost years, got trapped because we couldn’t talk about the ways we wanted to connect. How we would build relationships. Because of a law passed 32 years ago.

Calla Lilies are sombre, pure. Placed on the grave. But also, Calla Liles are lust, sex. (Scorned by Venus for their beauty.)

**PAGE SEVEN

Image Description:**Grey background with a photograph of two lilies, the stems of which are nearly touching. The photo is cropped into a circle. It’s in bright, highly saturated colours. Powder Blue. Yellow. Acid Green. Again, the images have a see-through quality and layered on top of each other.Text is aligned to the left of the page. Framing the image.

**Text:**R.I.P feeling S-E-X-Y.

I lay lilies to mark the passing...
I lay one for all the times I wasn’t into it. And didn’t know how to say what I wanted.
I lay one for my twenties, which I wanted to be full of experimentation,
I lay one for a stagnant thirties that could be.

I lay one for years wasted to insecurity, fear of rejection.
I lay one for every fear of being rejected that leads to rejection.
I lay one for all the words I did not say. The texts I did not send.
I lay one for the times I hoped to run into you.
I lay one for not telling you that I needed, I wanted you.
I lay one for the belief that this would have changed anything.

I lay one for this feeling of being undesired.
I lay one for queer kids feeling invisible. Not anymore.
I lay one for those who have tried to erase trans\* people. (we’re better off without you)
I lay one for those who try to keep us ignorant. (we won’t be hidden and silenced)

And after that.I go back to just eating stale pringles and trying not to cry.

**PAGE EIGHT

Image Description:**Photo of Lavender fields that has been rotated and mirrored to look as if it’s folding in on a central point. The colours have been edited so the flowers are yellow, pastel pink and red.
In the centre of the page is a title:

INTERLUDE 1

This is in a bold green font and has blue shadows behind to contrast the text against the busy background.

**PAGE NINE

Image Description:**The same background image as the previous page but with the brightness raised so the text over the top is easier to read.
The text is shaped into a circle, each new line of the text is spiralling towards the centre of the circle. **Text:**You are pulled from fuchsia,
you flow and leak in inky pink.
I run my thumb across your face
and see trenches emerge and erased;
a pink rose petal falling in reverse.
You are old and young all at once for me;
your seasons fade and break quick.
Blotted across this bed like a hazed sunrise,
blotted across me, you are a hot orchid shade.

**PAGE TEN

Image Description:**Collage. A photo of the side entrance to Five Swans pub in Newcastle City Centre. The colours of the original photos are hard to distinguish. Layered over it are two photos of the same building from the 1980’s, these images are edited to look ghostly and are in green and red. The sign of the bar that used to be in the building is just visible, it reads “The Senate Bar” you can also just make-out a marquee with the same name over the window.

In the bottom left corner, a small circle cuts through the layers to the original though, highlighting a patch of weeds. An oversized simple line drawing of Violet flowers in blue, placed as if growing from the weeds.

**PAGE ELEVEN

Text:**In the centre of the page, shaped into a tight box not touching the edges of the page is the following text. The font has been edited to make it look distressed and worn.

VIOLETS:
Violets: Viola sororia, known commonly as the blue violet and ‘the lesbian flower’ - dating all the way back to the 600s BC, violets have been used as a symbol of lesbian love. The Greek poet Sappho, best known for her lyric poems about love and women, described herself and a lover wearing garlands of violets.

**PAGE TWELVE

Image Description:**In the bottom left corner of the page is an image composed of Classical Grecian bust of the poet Sappho. In a bright yellow, with a violet-coloured shadow off-set behind it. The Background of the image is tower blocks rotated on their side in a deeper purple. A vibrant pink, violet flower covers the mouth of the Sappho bust. The text is formatted in columns and wraps around the image.

**Text:**There are times when the city feels too weighty.
Tall corridors of long flat grey planes, relentlessly cutting across each other.
Train snakes through the wasteland.
She sees the tower blocks sprout between the trees.

From the train she keeps her eyes
on Fairy Towers
dubbed for all the queers
who were housed there.

She remembers a story
of three who lived together.
Shared a bed because they had no other choice.
Driftwood to one another; buffers to the wind, rain and snow.

There are hills in the distance.
This is a truth she knows.
There are hills in the distance.
This is her affirmation.
There are hills in the distance. They are mauve against the sky.
Regal purple. Towering reassurance.
There are always hills in the distance.

**PAGE THIRTEEN

Image Description:**The same image of the Sappho bust, and tower blocks is layered on this page also. Down the left-hand side of the page. There is one bust upside down with two bright pink, violet flowers on the face of the bust. A larger bust sits above with face entirely covered in the pink, violet flowers.The text is placed next to the image in a single column.

**Text:**There are times when living feels too light.
too ghostly
And in a nice bit of juxtaposition;
it’s flesh that anchors her.

When she feels like a wisp,
lays in the valley between two legs
and stares across the city of your stomach
There are hills in the distance,
warm and delicate.
Thoughts and fingertips snake like trains.

Thoughts about pushing a finger into wet soil.
Thoughts about water bouncing from a wet leaf.
Thoughts about dew on the hills.
Drinks it all in.

Palm her violet
Balm her to violence
A stream runs from the hills, no longer in the distance.
Now up close, up closer and personal.

**PAGE FOURTEEN

Image Description:**Collage. The bottom layer is a photo of Exhibition Park, Newcastle on a grey January day. You can see the sky and the silhouette of trees at the top of the page.
Underneath this is an edited photo taken in the same spot during the Pride March, 2017. You can see a silhouette crowd of people in black, flying above them is a Rainbow Flag.

Over these are translucent images of the crowd in yellow and bright green. These are warped with a wave effect and off-set creating a glitch effect.

The final layer, at the bottom of the page and over everything else, is a simple line drawing of five pansies. Four of them are in fuchsia and a smaller one in cobalt blue.

**PAGE FIFTEEN

Text:**In the centre of the page, shaped into a tight box not touching the edges of the page is the following text. The font has been edited to make it look distressed and worn.

PANSIES. I’m gonna get a tattoo of a pansy cos I am one. Gonna get two cos one is you. Get a whole bunch for all the beautiful pansies I wanna meet. Wanna love. I am a pansy in the garden of Eden baby, I drawl like Marilyn Manson in *(S)aint*.\*

\*Note: I’m hoping you too had a teen-goth phase otherwise that reference is useless.

**PAGE SIXTEEN

Image Description**:

In the centre of the page rotated slightly to left is the image of pansies from the cover. Cut into this is a simple drawing of a torso with a pansy where the head would be. The text frames the image. Some lines of text overlap the edges of the image. **Text:**Pansy is a slur. Most often weaponised against effeminate gay men or those perceived to be effeminate gay men. I think, perceived is the wrong word here. Those who are forcibly identified by others due a rigid notion of sex, gender, and sexuality.

I don’t remember ever being called a pansy. But then who has the resilience and time to remember every violent word that’s been hurled against them? But I was aware of it. Aware that it was a bad thing to be before I knew exactly what it meant.

Pansy sounds similar to Pensée the French word for *thought*, thinking, idea. Dig down for older roots and you’ll it’s wrapped up with the Latin verb meaning *to consider* or *to weigh*. The word holds a deeper meaning than we’re forced to learn. The pansy flower is a symbol of remembrance.

It’s a cold, icy, November morning in 20 – some when. I’m walking through a park. The raised flower beds are shimmer in spikey dew and glinting in the weak sun. Everything is cold and still. And washed-out. There’s so little colour, it’s like being in that film Pleasantville. A spot of deep purple darts into my eyeline.

**PAGE SEVENTEEN AND EIGHTEEN

Image Description:**Collage. The background image is a photograph of various wildflowers, you can see the purple and yellow petals breaking through the image on top.

Which is an image of a Pride March with parts cut out and outlines highlighted in orange and pink.

You can make out a crowd and in the forefront is the outline of two men carrying a blue banner with the words ‘Let Every Pansy Bloom’ and an embroidered red pansy on.

**PAGE NINETEEN**

**Image Description:**In the centre of the page rotated slightly to right is the image of pansies from the cover. Cut into this is a simple drawing of a curvaceous back with a pansy where the head would be. The text frames the image. Some lines of text overlap the edges of the image.

**Text:**Amongst the barren or still dormant, those waiting for winter’s to thaw. The pansies were flourishing, little bursts of brightness dotted through the grey. Pansies standing strong against the icy breeze and cloudy skies.

As I let the assault of colour wash over me, the sharp blue of the petals jolt a memory into my mind. The image of a drag queen’s eyeshadow; garage doors. A solid wall of blue on the lid. Worn as a barrier to the outside. A look so bold, it’s for sure not the act of a coward. Just like the garden pansies: she had not shrivelled under harsh spotlight light or withered as the streets turned cold.

Looking closer, past the painterly petals, you see the mess of everyday life. Crushed beer cans, plastic wrappers, and cigarette butts. The sharp taste of another slur is bitter on my tongue. Bitterness caused by bullies long past. And I am standing here, gayer than ever and looking at Pansies. I’m moved by their silent strength despite having filth flung in their faces.

*PANSY. A weak, cowardly flower unable to survive in harsh conditions?*

I don’t think. Pansies are hardy and adaptive. They can grow rapidly, even in tough times. Some see them as weeds or pests because they sprawl, dripping hues and shades everywhere. I run my fingers across their leaves’ soft but prickly underbelly, feel the steadiness of their roots. These budding queers aren’t going anywhere.

**PAGE TWENTY

Image Description:**Image of Red Poppy over a Yellow Poppy. Tiled repeatedly over each other to create an infinity mirror effect. So, the image shrinks and fades into the background.In the centre of the page is a title:

INTERLUDE 1

This is in a bold green font and has blue shadows behind to contrast the text against the busy background.

**PAGE TWENTY-ONE

Image Description:**

The same image of Poppies from the previous page. There are two lines of text on the page.

The first in the top right, in capital letters: WON’T GROW OUT OF IT.
The word WON’T is crossed out and underneath is ‘don’t’ in all lowercase.

The second line of text is on the bottom left of the page. On it’s side, running vertically from top to bottom. In all capital letters: DO GROW INTO IT.
The word DO is crossed out and underneath is ‘will’ in all lowercase.

**PAGE TWENTY-TWO

Image Description**

A photograph of The County Hotel, in Newcastle city centre. It’s a grand old victorian building in sandstone. The focus of the photograph is on the entrance which has a black pediment porch in front of the doors. There are two planters lining the path to the door.

This image is edited with the translucent versions of the original photographed layered on top and off-set creating shadows. The two overlays are in orange and very pale blue, they also are warped with a wave effect and off-set creating a glitch effect.

Over all of these images are two simple line drawings of a lavender plant. In a neon purple colour. One is prominent in the foreground and another is oversized and placed as if sprouting from the planter boxes.

**PAGE TWENTY-THREE

Text**In the centre of the page, shaped into a tight box not touching the edges of the page is the following text. The font has been edited to make it look distressed and worn.

Lavender has a long history as a euphemism for queerness. The use of this flower as a symbol is thought to come from the purple colour of the plant, since this vibrant lavender is the colour you would get if you mixed pink and baby blue, both culturally positioned as ‘gendered’ colours. It’s a true non-binary bloom.

**PAGE TWENTY-FOUR

Image Description**

On the left side of the page; a clean line drawing of a sprig of lavender, in white. It’s upside down. With the bottom touching the very top of the page. Behind this is the same drawing but in purple and neon green and warped with wave effect.

The page has a charcoal background with three semi-translucent circles in indigo scattered.

In the top right-hand corner. In a font that looks handwritten and is worn is the subtitle: A scrappy and contentious history of Lavender and queerness.The rest of the text is in the clean modern font that has been used throughout the zine and is in a single column in the centre of the page.

**Text**1920s
We see the first uses of ‘Lavender boy’ as a term for gay men, with any man showing femme (or not-quite-hetero) characteristics described as having a ‘streak of lavender’.

1950
The "Lavender Scare" was a moral panic during the mid-20th century about homosexual people in the United States government and their mass dismissal from government service. It contributed to and paralleled the anti-communist campaign known as McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare.

1960’s – 1970’s (?)
Lavender is often used to describe an older gay gentleman. Rumour has it that they use to quite like the ambience of Nancy’s- what is now The County Hotel. Rumblings of a vague memory tell me, that it was there that the Tyneside Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) had its first meeting. Gossip says that as a group they were much squarer than those who want to form a branch of the more radical Gay Liberation Front (GLF) who drink with the punks over at The Senate bar. XOX

*(The bracket question mark and XOX at the end of this paragraph are in the same handwritten font as the subtitle)*

May 1, 1970.
An informal group lesbian radical feminists name themselves ‘The Lavender Menace’ The group is mainly formed to protest the exclusion of lesbians and lesbian issues from the feminist movement at the Second Congress to Unite Women in New York City.

21st August 1982
The Lavender Menace Bookshop opens in a basement in Edinburgh. In the first 10 days of being open the bookshop took nearly £1300 of sales, despite homosexuality only being legalised in Scotland in 1980.

The Lavender Menace started life as a bookstall called Lavender Books in the cloakroom of Fire Island gay disco on Princes Street. The name of the stall was taken from the Lavender Menace radical lesbian feminist collective which was active during the 1970s.

**PAGE TWENTY-FIVE

Image Description**Collage. A photograph of an art-deco office block taken on grey January morning. In the foreground is a wet and crack pavement. The image is in black and white.

Over this are two translucent images of the same facade,close up. One is pink and the other in turquoise. You can just read the sign above the doors. It says ‘Rockshots’ - an old nightclub. Again these images are edited to look like they are glitching.

In the foreground is a line drawing of Carnation in a deep blue colour.

**PAGE TWENTY-SIX

Text**

In the centre of the page, shaped into a tight box not touching the edges of the page is the following text. The font has been edited to make it look distressed and worn.

Green Carnations; considered an ‘unnatural’ colour for a flower. It has become a symbol of Oscar Wilde, his life and his relationships. He asked friends to wear them to the opening nights of one his plays, a witty nod perhaps to how homosexuals are often considered unnatural.

**PAGE TWENTY-SEVEN and TWENTY-EIGHT

Image Description**On the left page the background is a flyer for ‘Rockshots’ anywhere there would be black is cut out and you can see small pink flowers peeking through. The Rockshots logo and a drawing of a muscled man taking off his t-shirt most noticeable. Over this image is a pale pink translucent circle, which has text on.

On the other page is an obscured photo of two people. Again these have had any blacks lines cut out to show pink flowers peeking through. Over this is a mint green translucent circle which has text on.

**Text**

ON PAGE TWENTY SEVEN:

DEREK JARMAN: I was in Newcastle . . . it'll be seven years ago this October . . . on the panel of the Tyneside Film Festival. Keith kept appearing in the front row. He was very well - expensively - dressed; you couldn't not notice him because everybody else had anoraks and sweaters and T-shirts. I went up to him to say hello, and said we all wanted to go to this club called Rock Shots. But he said: 'I never go to nightclubs.' I asked him if he would show us where it was, as we didn't know. Lies, of course, all lies.

He left us at the door and the next day, I came back to London. I really wanted to meet him again. In about December, I thought: 'This is crazy', so I rang Peter Packer who ran the festival, and said: 'Do you know that young man who was in the front row?' 'Oh,' he replied, 'Him. He's trouble.' He gave me his number and I rang him on New Year's Eve to say Happy New Year. There was this deathly hush, but I said: 'If you ever come to London, you're welcome to stay . . . ' and two weeks later he did.

The other thing about Keith is he never goes 'out'. I'm not certain about Newcastle - I've never asked. He says he sits in and watches TV. I used to go 'out' - Hampstead Heath for one thing - but I don't any longer. We really are the most anti-social people you could possibly meet.

ON PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT:

KEITH COLLINS: I was sitting three rows from the back at the film festival, not flaunting myself in the front row. I was wearing a suit because I'd come from work, and I wouldn't go to the club out of principle, because I'd been queer bashed with a friend once and they wouldn't let us in to ring for an ambulance.

Derek handed me a piece of paper which said: 'Don't disappear. Derek', with his phone number on it. What a strange thing, I thought. Anyway, about a fortnight later, I got a letter from him inviting me to stay. I showed it to Peter Packer and he said,

'Oh, don't go, Derek is heavily into S & M'. So I wrote back saying: 'Sorry Derek, I'm busy for the next five years.'

I was going down to London for a job interview, I went to visit him. It was seven o'clock in the morning when I knocked on the door.
Before I went in, I said: 'Are you into S & M?' and he said 'Oh I'm sorry, no' - as if I'd be disappointed - so that was a relief. But, as I went to give him a kiss, he turned his head away and said 'You can't kiss me, I've got HIV', and I said: 'Well, that's all right. I haven't come to London for that, in any case.'

He also has this really irritating habit of calling me 'Hinny Beast'. *(HB, for short)* Hinny's a Geordie endearment.

**PAGE TWENTY-NINE AND THIRTY

Image Description**Spread across two pages are two black and white photographs. One of a young man with dark hair. His hair looks damp and the strands are falling over his eyes. He’s wearing a plaid button-up shirt and staring apathetically straight in the camera. His eyes are dark but full of warmth. The background is out of focus.

The other photo is of a shingle beach. In the middle of the image is a thin piece of driftwood stuck into the pebbles as a make-shift garden stake. In the background plants are just breaking through the shingle and growing amongst other bits of debris.

On top of the photographs, obscuring them are several ghostly neon green caramations.

In the top left hand corner, along the edge of the photograph of the young man, in handwritten and very worn text are the words: HB (left) Prospect Cottage Garden (right)

Written along the bottom of both pages in the cleaner, modern font is the following:
“I am much more certain where my feet are planted today – and the garden blooms as never before, all the flowers of the wilderness”
Derek Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*

**PAGE THIRTY-ONE**

**Image Description**Digital painting of bouquet of flowers falling. Abstract in style. The shapes are bold and round. In bright orange, purple, blue and yellow. In the middle of the page is the title

INTERLUDE 3

This is in a bold green font and has blue shadows behind to contrast the text against the busy background.

**PAGE THIRTY-TWO**

**Image Description**

The background image is the same from the last page with optical lowered to make reading the bold black text which is placed over the image, easier to read.

**Text**

whilst writing this zine, themed around plants, flowers, growing, desire, sun basking,
I realised that

the one that got away,
the one I over-watered,
the one I left in the sun too long,
the one that withered,
the one I thought was a fake, but 10 months later realised it was real
but only when it started to die

they work in , actually they might own a shop that sells houseplants …
it’s a pretty tenuous link, but I let a little hope bloom.
I’m not even sure
if they’ll see this

(i’m pretty sure they won’t)

but hi

**PAGE THIRTY-THREE**

**Text**In the centre of the page, shaped into a tight box not touching the edges of the page is the following text. The font has been edited to make it look distressed and worn.

GARDEN
There is always a mythic past. If they can’t destroy you they will destroy nature. They’ve cut down the glades of holly and cleared the undergrowth in Hampstead so that spring looks like a desert.
Nature abhors HetroSoc. The wounded glades are healing.
Nature is queer.

**PAGE THIRTY-FOUR**

**Image Description**Photograph. The exterior of a bar. The building is pale yellow and the ground floor has large windows facing onto the streets.The windows are covered in large decals of the bar’s logo which reads: THE YARD in a neon sign style font and has a background of an orange circle, along the bottom of the window are decals of grass. White signs above the double door and windows read: Welcome To The Yard Est 1980. Around the door is a black metal arch. It’s adorn with bouquets of bright flowers and cards.

**PAGE THIRTY-FIVE AND THIRTY SIX

Image description**

In the centre of the two pages. Where they meet at the spine. Is part of a painting of a cottage on a shingle beach. With a wild garden growing around it. The image is cut up and reassembled in such a way that lines don't match up. It’s divided into six chunks - all in different colours. From left to right: Brown, Red, Orange, Yellow Green Blue.

The background on both pages is solid black. And the text on both pages is aligned to the outer edge of the page. In chunks.

**Text**

ON PAGE THIRTY-FIVE:

“At any time you are both in full-bloom and quietly closed off.”
 …
“Well I’m just guessing; I don’t really know you. But I have an idea of you.”

This is what I say to you as we sit on the shingle beach in Alnmouth; we’ve talked about how it reminds me of Derek Jarman’s garden. You could ask me who Derek Jarman is. That’s a definite possibility. And I’ll gently tease that you should “Google it” and you’ll ask me how when we’re on a cold cobble beach like in some sort of indie darling melodrama. We both smile in a soft way, the corners of our mouths like curling shoots breaking the soil.

It’s actually likely that you’ll know who Jarman is; we’ll both have seen his films. And that’s cool. For a minute or maybe two we don’t say anything, the wind whistles and I shift the shingles with my feet because I start to feel nervous that we’re not saying anything. Am I boring you? Maybe this is just what being comfortable is.

Are you open now? Or still a bud?

You start to realise nothing with me is ever certain. You decide I am full of sometimes, kind ofs, maybes. The jury is still out whether you’re into this or frustrated by it.

So I say, “I think I probably loved too hard when I was teenager. I’ve been reading about plants that only flower once a decade or whatever. I think that’s what happened to me, I think that’s what my love is … those flowers are usually called things like ‘corpse flowers’ and when they bloom … they literally smell rotten … and that’s not sad; it’s really funny. My love the rotted houseplant. My love that, if nurtured and cultivated rewards with a sweaty, fleshy stink. “

ON PAGE THIRTY SIX:

A little bit more about you.

You’ve got that laugh; it happens only sometimes but it shocks and pleases you how quickly it swells in your chest. How loud and clear it is. People really like that it’s just pure joy; other people are annoyed that in dares to take up space. I am always swept up as it fills a room.
Even though you know it’s pointless, you can’t help but list one of your interests as coffee in your dating app bios. And it’s not so much an interest just a part of a routine but that’s how the game is played. At least you didn’t go with a cliché here’s me in a suit, at a wedding, ‘don’t I scrub up well?’ photo.

You are fantastic, and nervous. You like to talk but hate busy crowds; you’re the usual mix of contradictions. Which is heart-warming. There are moments of still in your life when you really can’t decide if everything is right or really wrong. A closet minimalist, because honestly, the world’s too chaotic and you really don’t have enough patience to be an out and proud one. You will never know what ‘Fragment (Consider revising)’ means.

There’s a life you have outside of this interaction that couldn’t / won’t be told. You are more than a love interest in someone else’s story. And this will go on, and on and on.

So we turn our attention back to the garden instead; immediate wild flowers amidst the shingle. Blooming in a hostile environment is a big queer mood. I heard that the garden started by accident; a piece of driftwood was used to stake a rose. And as it grew Derek used jetsam plus broken up pieces that washed ashore to protect and make a place for the plants.

We can’t help but think how that sounds kind of familiar(?)

**BACK COVER**
**Image Description**

The rest of the painting from the last pages, again cut up and reassembled in such a way that lines don't match up. It’s divided into three chunks - all in different colours. From left to right: Blue, Indigo, Pink.

In the very bottom right corner, in bold white font is written:

END.