

Tae Pent

COVID-19 Art Tasks - Week 12: Self-portrait

Create a portrait of yourself that reflects your inner personality. Any materials can be used.

There's somethin' about these cauld April days that maks ye want tae bide indoors an' wait fer the wairm wather. Ah was no at aw blithe when ah read the airt task an ma maw said, "Ach Eilidh, ye cauld dae yon airt task ootside, an' dae yer drawin' wi' yonder sheep. Ye coud fill the staw whilst yer thare."

I kent ma maw wantit me oot o' her way. Ah'd spent tae pandemic slotching about the hoose, greetin' fer ma pals. Weel, ah'd gae an' dae ma airt wi' thon sheep, thay'd listen tae ma gurning wi'oot compleenin'. Ah fand ma pents in thair wee reid boxie an' daudent up tae glen taeward the sheep.

Thae sheep belang tae oor faimily: ma grandfaither wis a hirdie, as wis his faither, as wis his faither an' sae on. Ma faither dee'd whan I wis jist a wee bairn, greeting in ma cot. Ma maw's leuk'd ower thon sheep sin, but a'boday kens she's juist daein' it 'till ah'm auld eneuch tae dae it masel': syne she'll be aff tae Glesgae or somewhaur big. Ah kent that Maw's stey'd in tae Hielands jist 'fer me tae bide whaer ma forebeirs bide'd. Ma faither wantit me tae. Whan maw wis a wee bit fou efter a wee dram, she'd moot about ma faither, "Dinnae fash yerself Molly," he'd wisper, "Oor laund's in Eilidh's bluid, it rins 'ithin her saul, an' thon sheep traik ower her hert."

Ah sit doon, among the sheep, ma anely pals throu thae lang, lanely months. An' ah'm still no fain o' thaim. Ah coud gurn tae thaim but it's no richt, sheep dinnae ken whit it is tae hae yer forrit an' ayont tied doon tae ane wee bitte o' laund, afore ye wis e'en a bairn. Ah thump doon on the heather an' tak ma airt beuk oot o' ma wee baggie. Ma pents are laid doon on the heather an' ma brush in ane haund. A roond wee face appears on the paper. Ma ain wee face, wi ma wee airms an' legs. Ah'm sittin' doon on a rock. Blae eens an' a' ma ither faiturs leap ontae ma wee face. It's beginin' tae leuk like something guid, the anely guid thing ah've duin in months. Ah coud be onything that ah want tae be.

Aw' o' a suddent, ma pictur's drount in green pent. The heather o' the glen coverin' me wi' it's stupit tradeetion an' faimly pride. Ma wee face is' buiried in green, ma airt ruint. Wullie, the maist muckle great sheep o' the flock pads awa blithe as iver. Ah staund wi ma airt beuk ower ma heid, fire burnin throu ma bluid. Thay sheep dug-drive awthing; airt, money, twalmonths, dreams, futurs. Wi'oot thair bleetin' sels ah coud be leevin in Glesgae wi' ma pals in twa years, readin about the history o' Americae or something. But ah'm tied tae the laund o' ma forebeirs, or ah'll be facein makin Maw's saicrifeeces pointless an' disappintin' ma faither's memory.

"No fair!" ah yell a' Wullie, "It's no fair, hou is it me wha hae tae leuk ower ye fer the lave o' ma life? Hou dae ah, a wee lassie wi' ma hale life aheid o' me, no get a chice in whit ah can dae? It's no fair!" Wullie gaups as ma airt beuk rattles ontae the grund neist tae him. The fire in ma bluid dees an' cauld chivers intae ma heid: ah awmaist hurt ma ain sheep, ma faither's sheep, that he left fer me, His feenal giftie. Ah clyte ontae the heather, greetin'.

Ah'm wauken frae ma sabbin' bi a soft nudge. Ah open ma reid een tae see Wullie an' Hairy footerin wi ma airt beuk. Thay demmle thair huifs intae ma pent an' waulk ower ma beuk, leavin thair tracks ahint. Sheep can pent an aw. Ah walk taewarts them an' find ma brush among the heather. Wullie an' Hairy watch as ah cairy thair airt tae a sauf rock an' sit doon. Straik by straik, ma wee roond face appears agin wi' ma een an' ma lugs. *'Reflect your inner personality'* the task said, sae ah straik an ootline o' mysel, sittin' on this rock. Green pent an' sheep tracks glent throu ma skin. Quate peace poors ower me like wairm rain.

Whan ah gae inside ah ken whit ah'll say tae Maw: 'Thanks fer awthing, fer leukin' ower the sheep fer me an' aw the ither things.' An' syne ah'll tell her that ah beet tae gae tae Glesgae or somewhaur else but anely tae lear how tae leuk ower sheep richtly. An' syne ah'll back-come tae ma ain wee bitte laund, and ma ain sheep. Fer this laund, ma faimily's laund, bides in ma banes an' hides in ma heid. An' ah ken noo, that ah coudna leave it foriver, ma hert belongs tae ma sheep an' ma laund. Ah dae hae a chice, ah ayeways haed a chice, an' ah ken noo that ah will wale't richt here, still an' on. *'Oor laund's in Eilidh's bluid, it rins ithin her saul, an' thon sheep traik ower her hert'* Ma faither wis a cannie man richt enough.