

A close-up photograph of a butterfly with dark, iridescent wings and a prominent red stripe along the edge, perched on the face of a frog. The frog's large, golden-brown eyes are the central focus, with the butterfly's body and legs resting near them. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and brown, suggesting a natural habitat.

BORN  
to be  
WILD

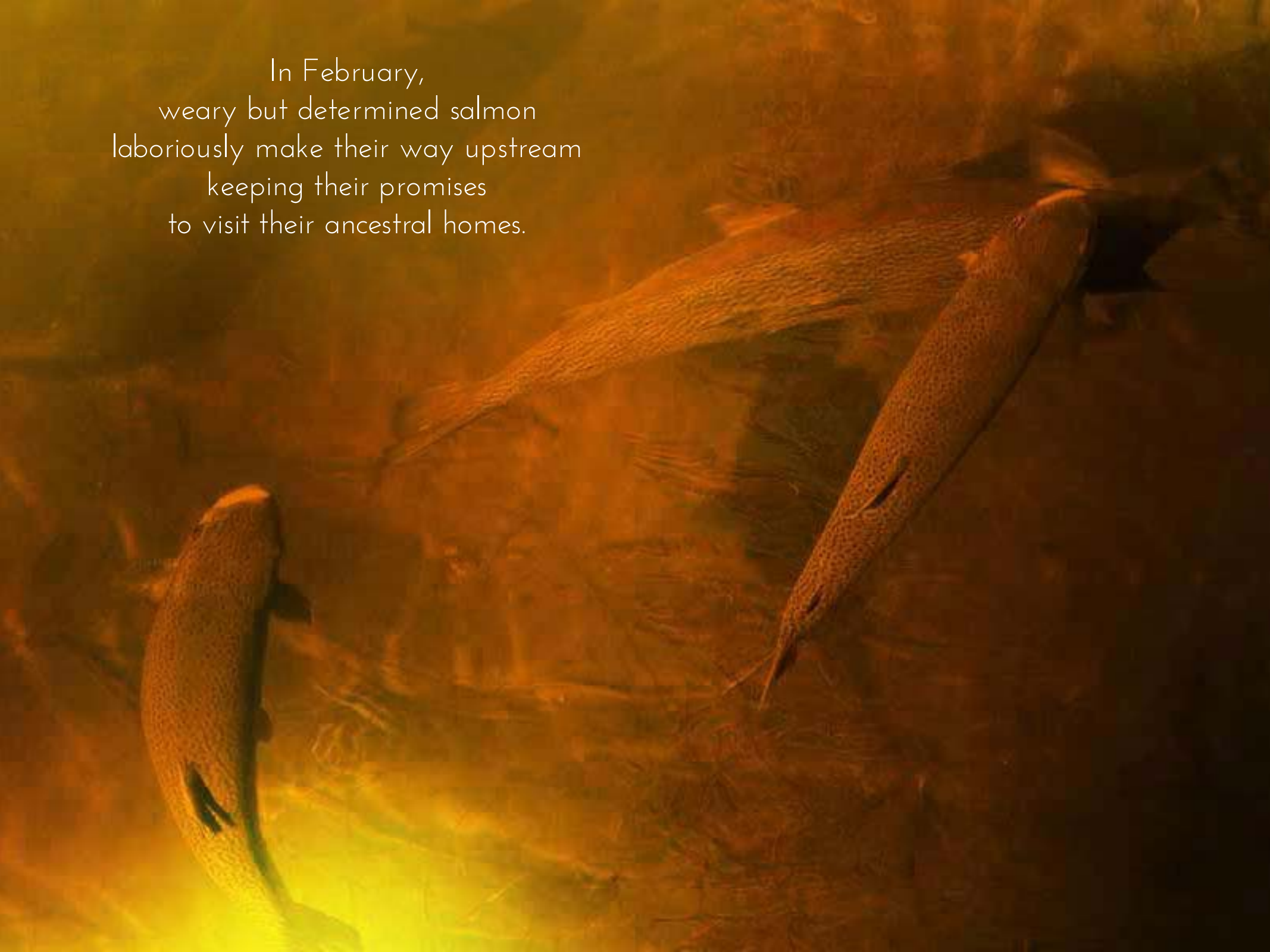
Today, Pena Creek is a living necklace  
whose diamonds are pools of  
never-repeated shapes.

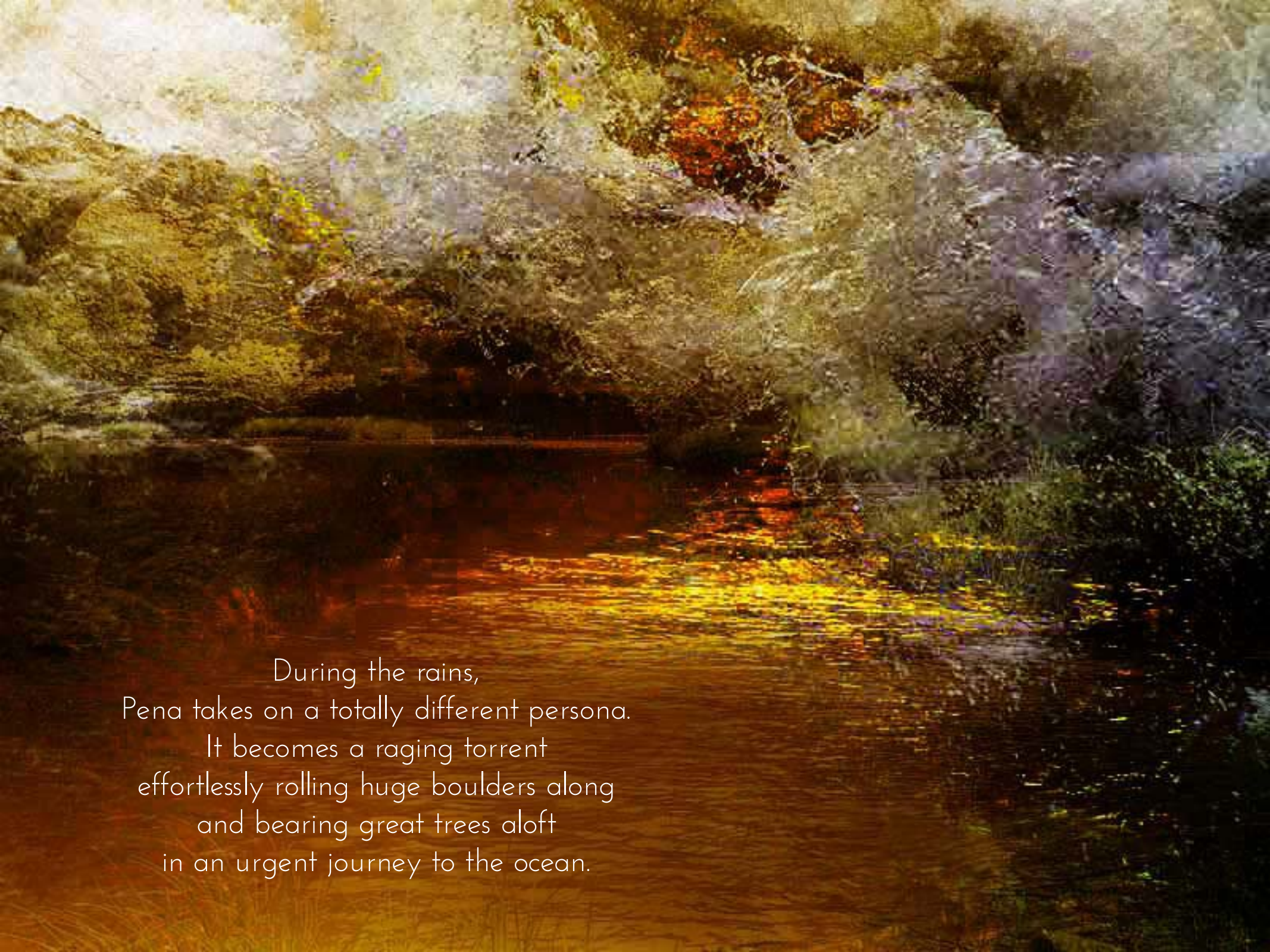




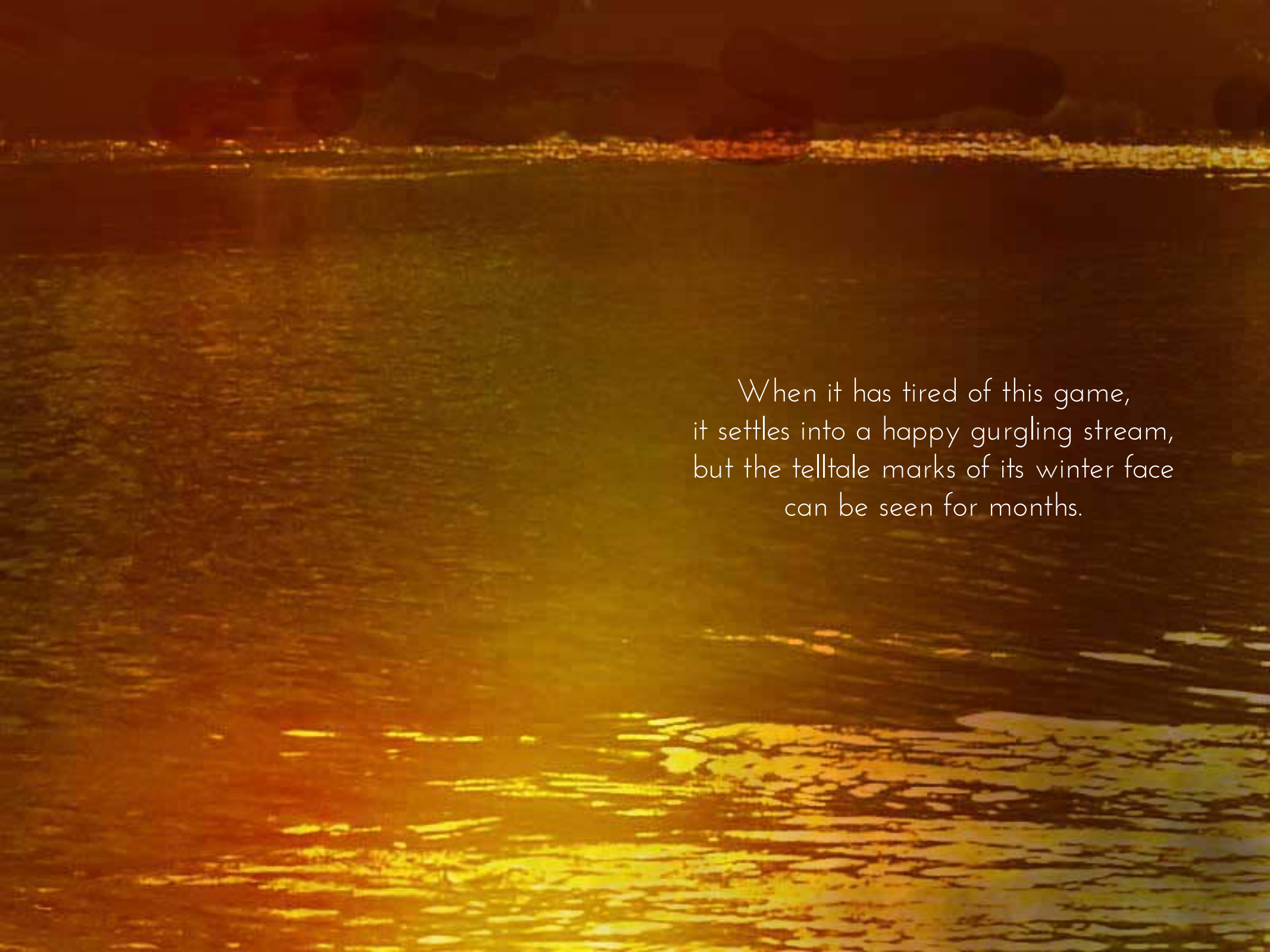
Steelhead trout,  
crawfish, salamanders  
and frogs play there.

In February,  
weary but determined salmon  
laboriously make their way upstream  
keeping their promises  
to visit their ancestral homes.






During the rains,  
Pena takes on a totally different persona.  
It becomes a raging torrent  
effortlessly rolling huge boulders along  
and bearing great trees aloft  
in an urgent journey to the ocean.

A wide river flows through a landscape at sunset. The sky is a deep, dark orange, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. In the distance, a city skyline is visible, with lights beginning to glow. The water in the foreground is dark, with some lighter patches of ice or sand visible. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

When it has tired of this game,  
it settles into a happy gurgling stream,  
but the telltale marks of its winter face  
can be seen for months.

A photograph of a stream with a logjam of sticks and branches on the left bank, and dense green foliage in the background. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery. The logjam consists of numerous thin, light-colored sticks and branches piled together. The background is filled with lush green leaves and branches, creating a dense forest scene.

There are logjams: trunks and severed limbs  
hastily stitched together like the lair  
of a careless dinosaur.

The trees that form  
a guard of honor along both banks  
can't resist dipping their pointed twigs  
into the torrent to spear  
passing leaves and tufts of grass,  
and now they look like  
skewers of vegetables on a B-B-Q.

Today, I came across  
a most exotic  
piece of evidence.  
I waded upstream  
from pool to pool.  
Sometimes the water  
just reached mid calf,  
sometimes it was chest high.

Then I noticed  
a bleached pig skull  
on a branch  
six feet above the water.

Obviously, this, too,  
had been swept downstream  
during the rains  
only to be  
expertly trapped  
by a branch.







However,  
the search and rescue mission  
did not end there.  
Left to its own devices,  
and gravity,  
it would soon have fallen back  
into the river,  
were it not for the fact  
that a spider  
had fastened it  
to the tree trunk  
with great swathes  
of fine silk.

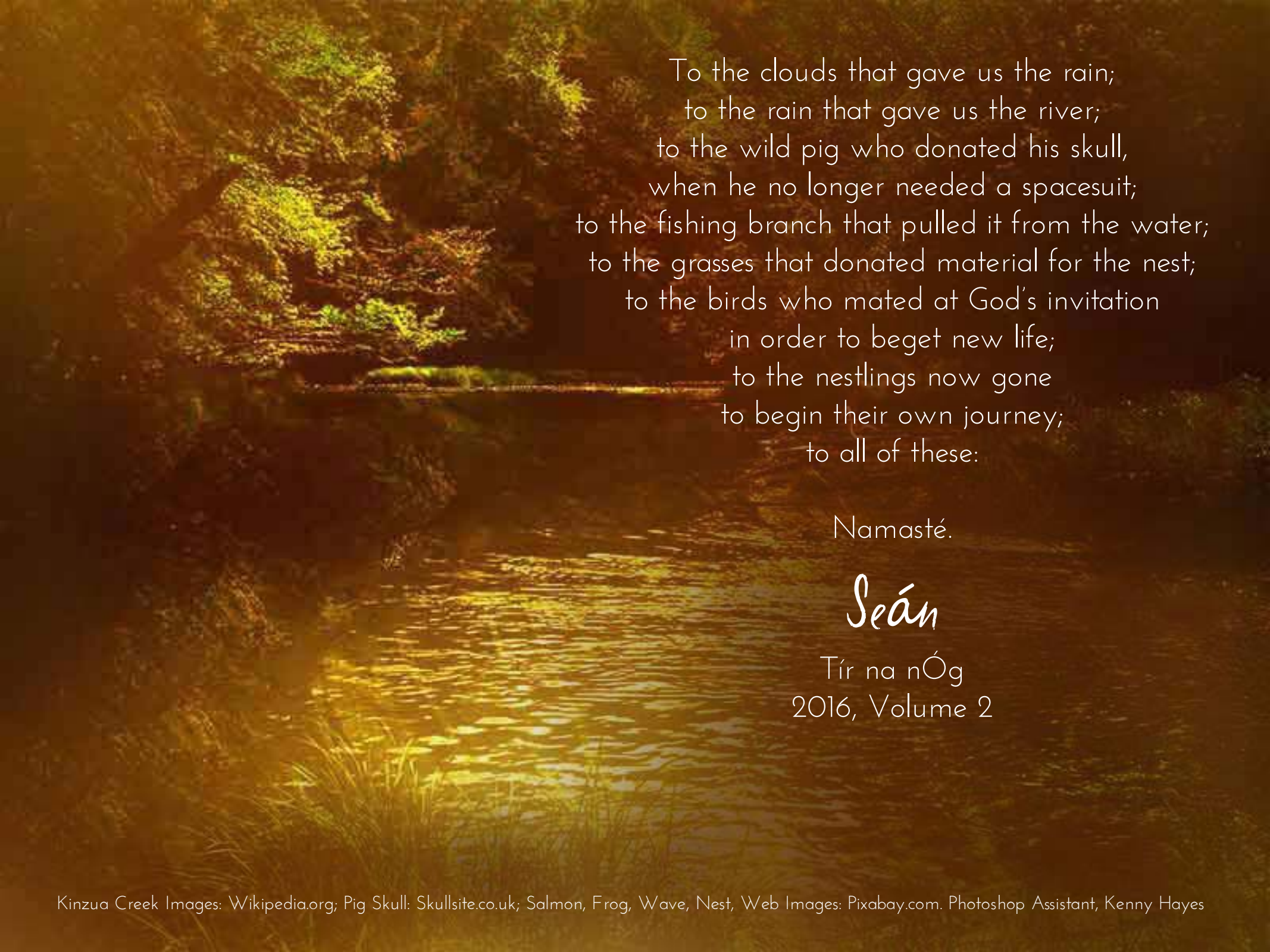
She did as fine a job  
as the Lilliputians of old  
when they trussed up  
the unfortunate Gulliver.  
Here was the skull  
tightly moored  
and sitting bolt upright.

And then,  
the piece-de-resistance,  
a bird had built a nest inside it –  
a small, perfect,  
semi-spherical home  
whose interior was soft  
and downy.

Some stray pieces  
of the building material  
were sticking out  
through the vacant eye sockets.  
It took my breath away.

If I had wanted  
a simple, elegant lesson  
in recycling, here it was.  
If I had needed further proof  
of nature's symbiotic agreements,  
I had it literally  
before my eyes.





To the clouds that gave us the rain;  
to the rain that gave us the river;  
to the wild pig who donated his skull,  
when he no longer needed a spacesuit;  
to the fishing branch that pulled it from the water;  
to the grasses that donated material for the nest;  
to the birds who mated at God's invitation  
in order to beget new life;  
to the nestlings now gone  
to begin their own journey;  
to all of these:

Namasté.

*Seán*

Tír na nÓg  
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