

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

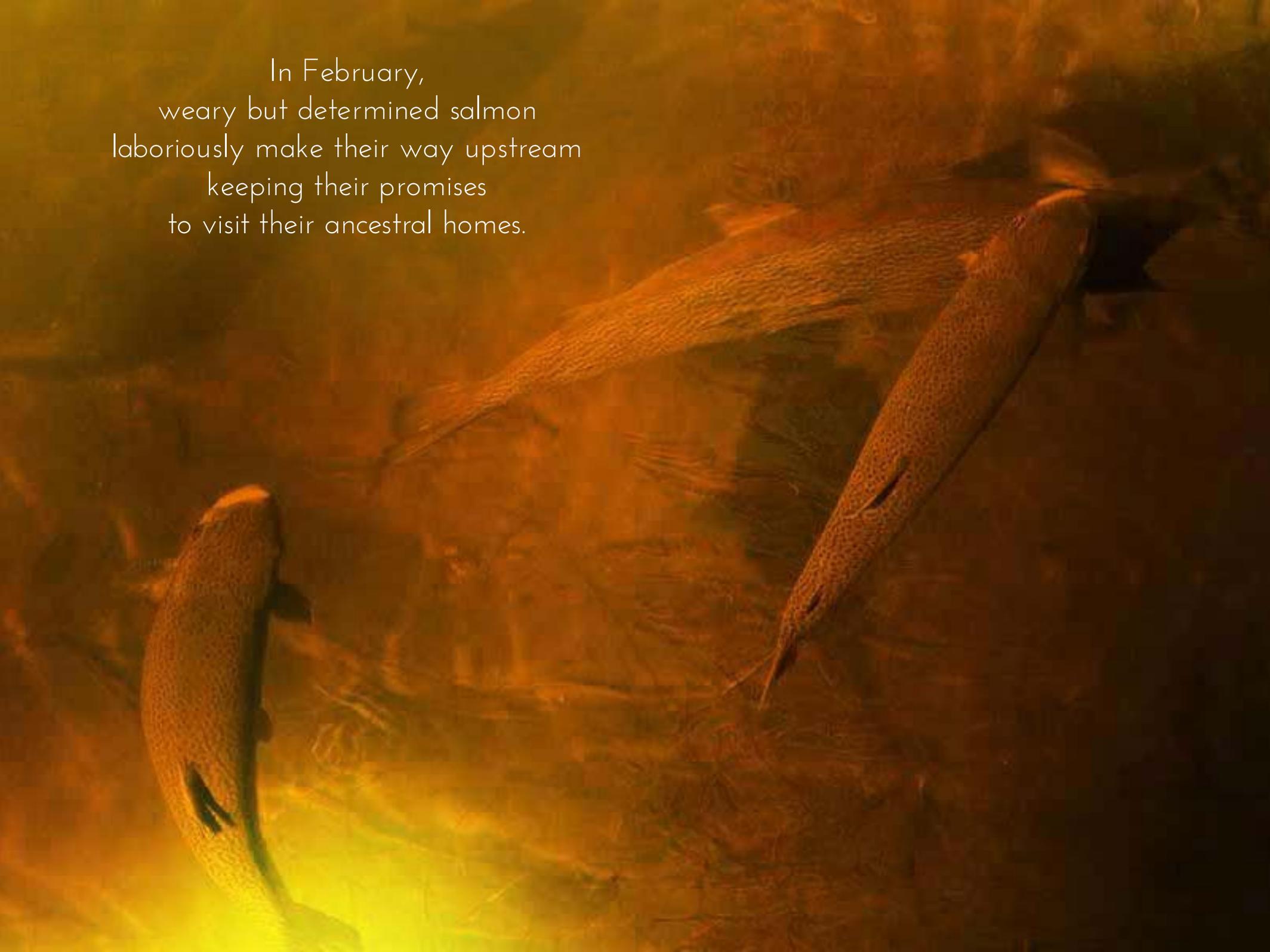
Today, Pena Creek is a living necklace
whose diamonds are pools of
never-repeated shapes.

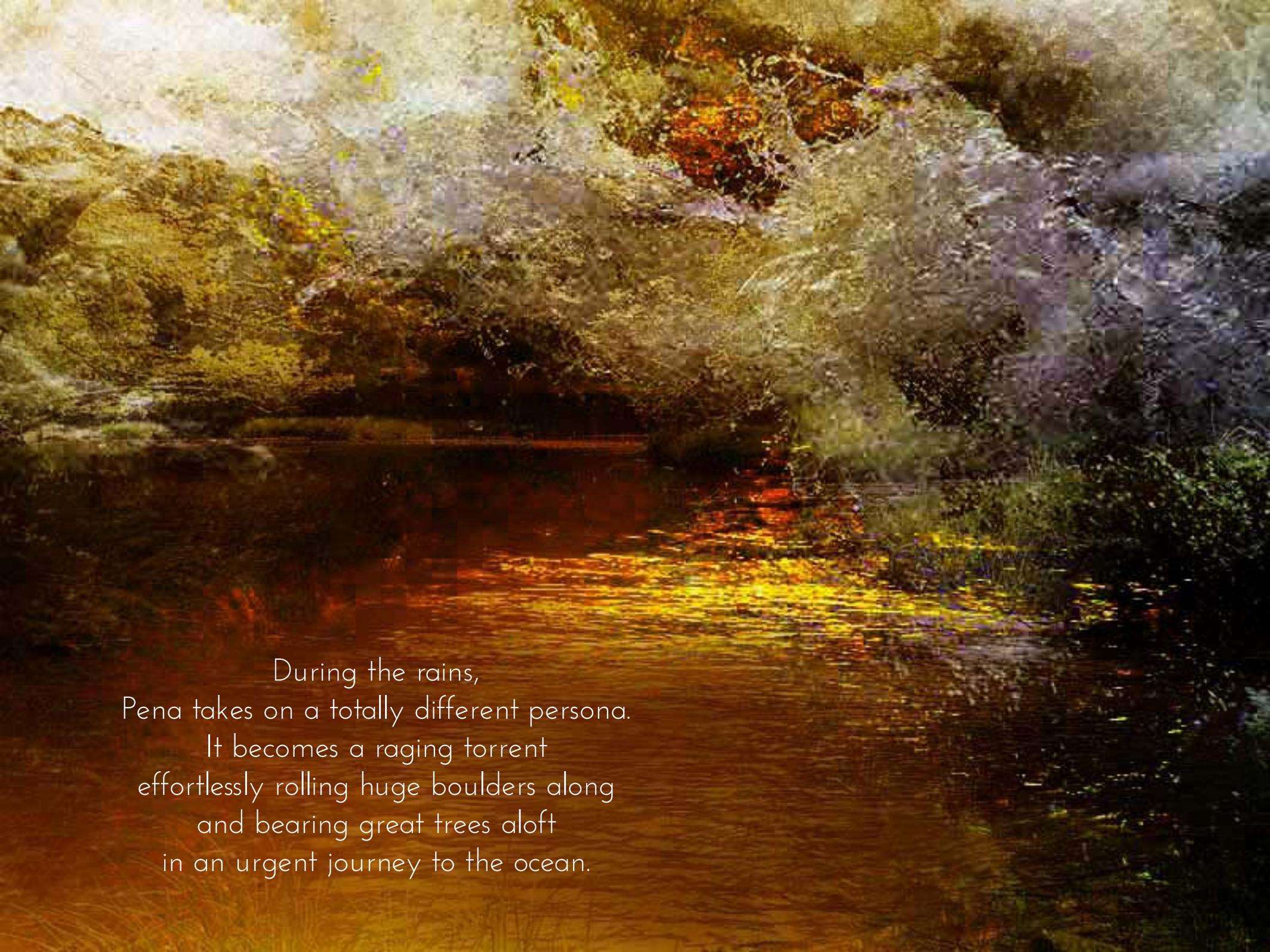




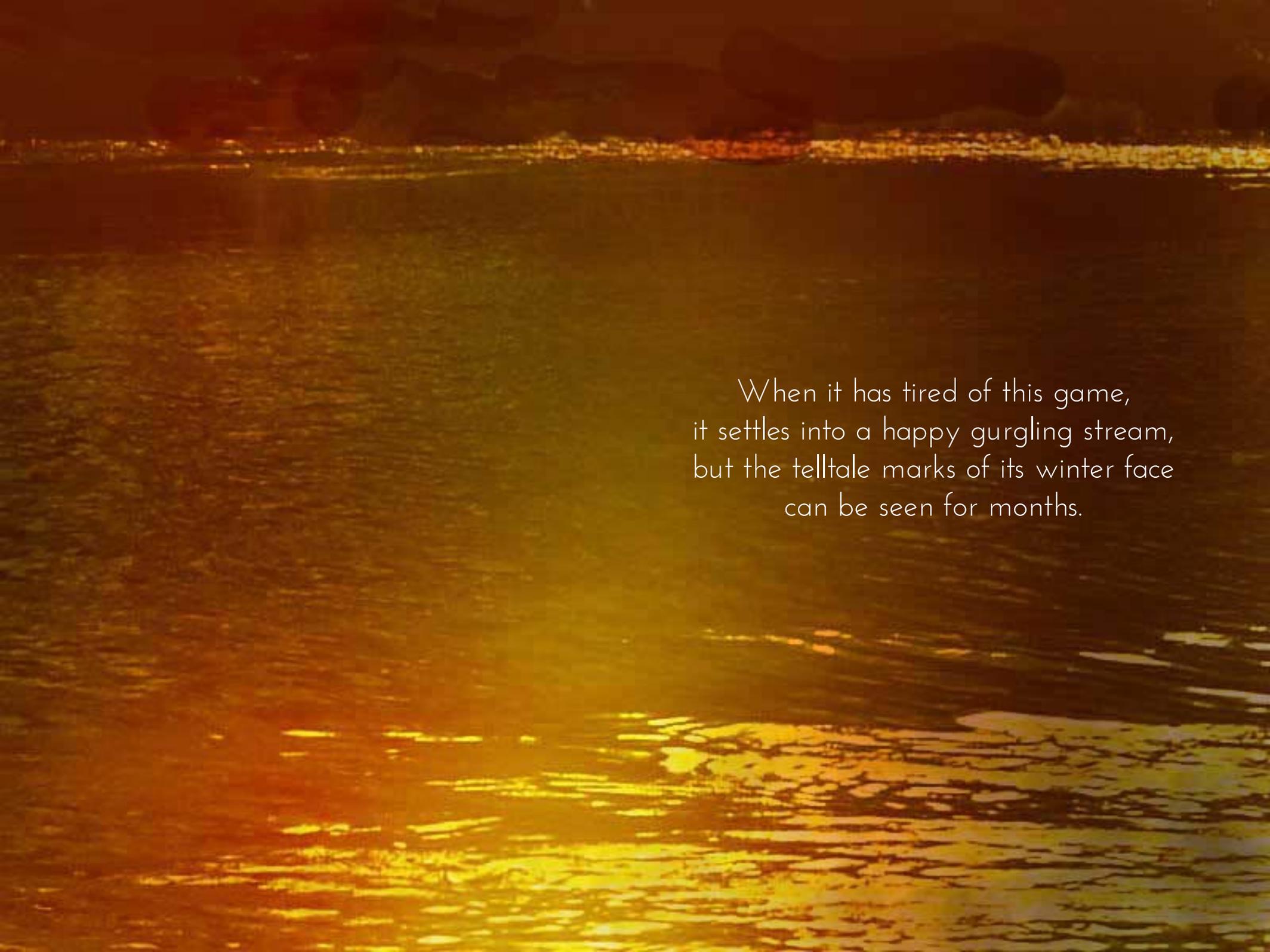
Steelhead trout,
crawfish, salamanders
and frogs play there.

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

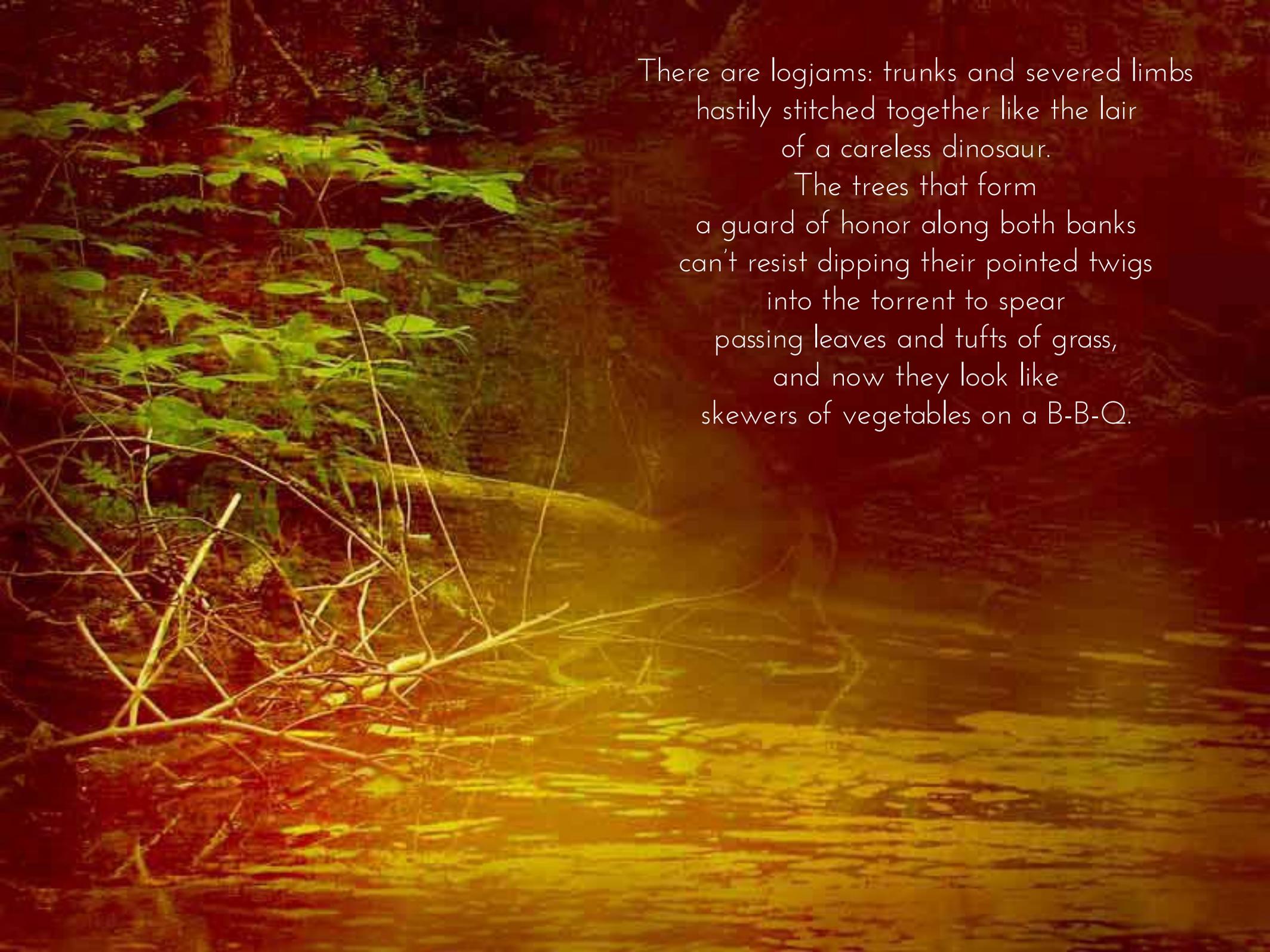




During the rains,
Pena takes on a totally different persona.
It becomes a raging torrent
effortlessly rolling huge boulders along
and bearing great trees aloft
in an urgent journey to the ocean.

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 glowing against the dark sky. The water in the foreground is dark, with some lighter patches of ice or sand visible.

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 many 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.

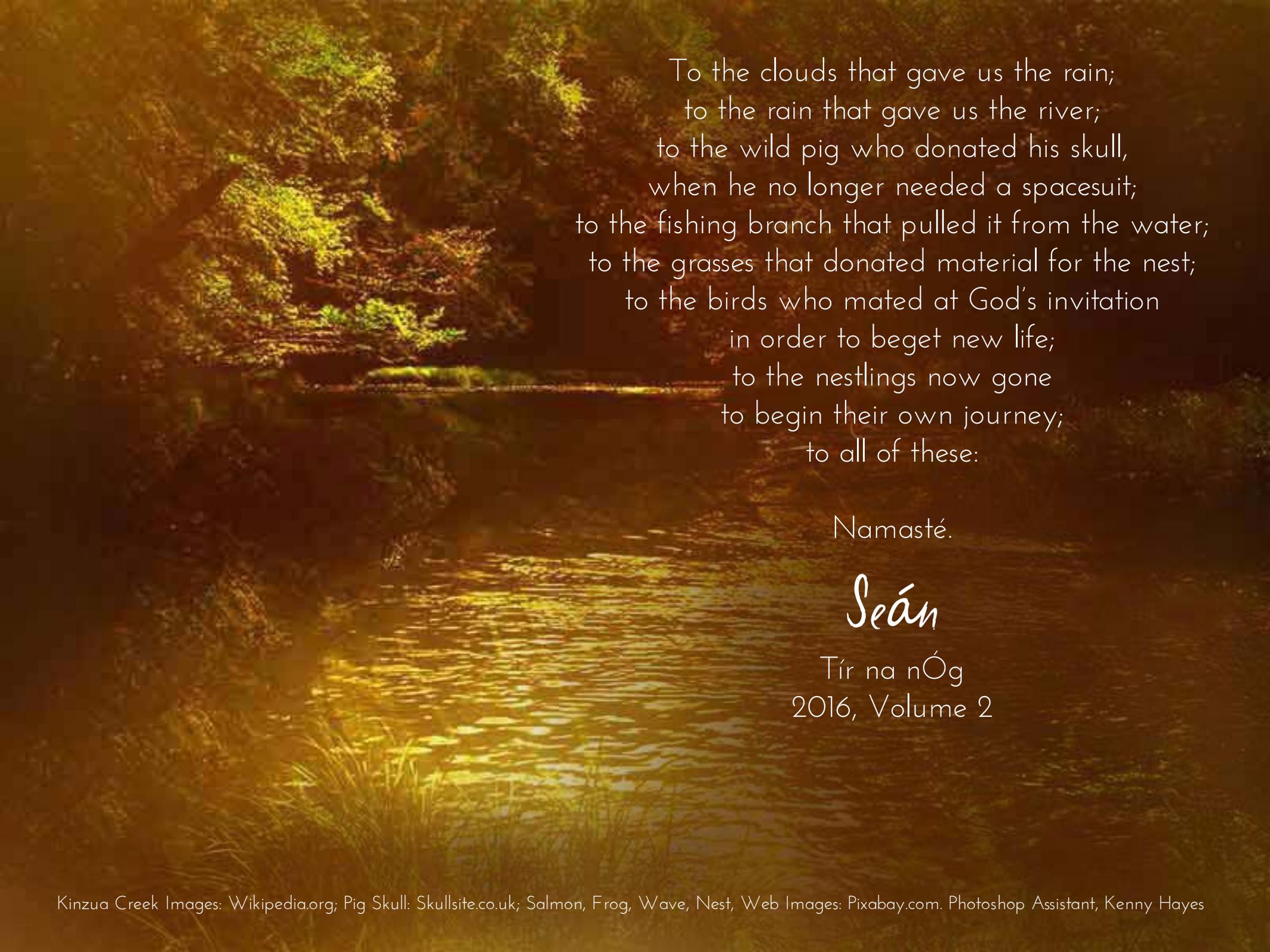
She did as fine a job
as the Lilliputians of old
when they trussed up
the unfortunate Gulliver.
Here was the skull
tightly moored
and sitting bolt upright.

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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