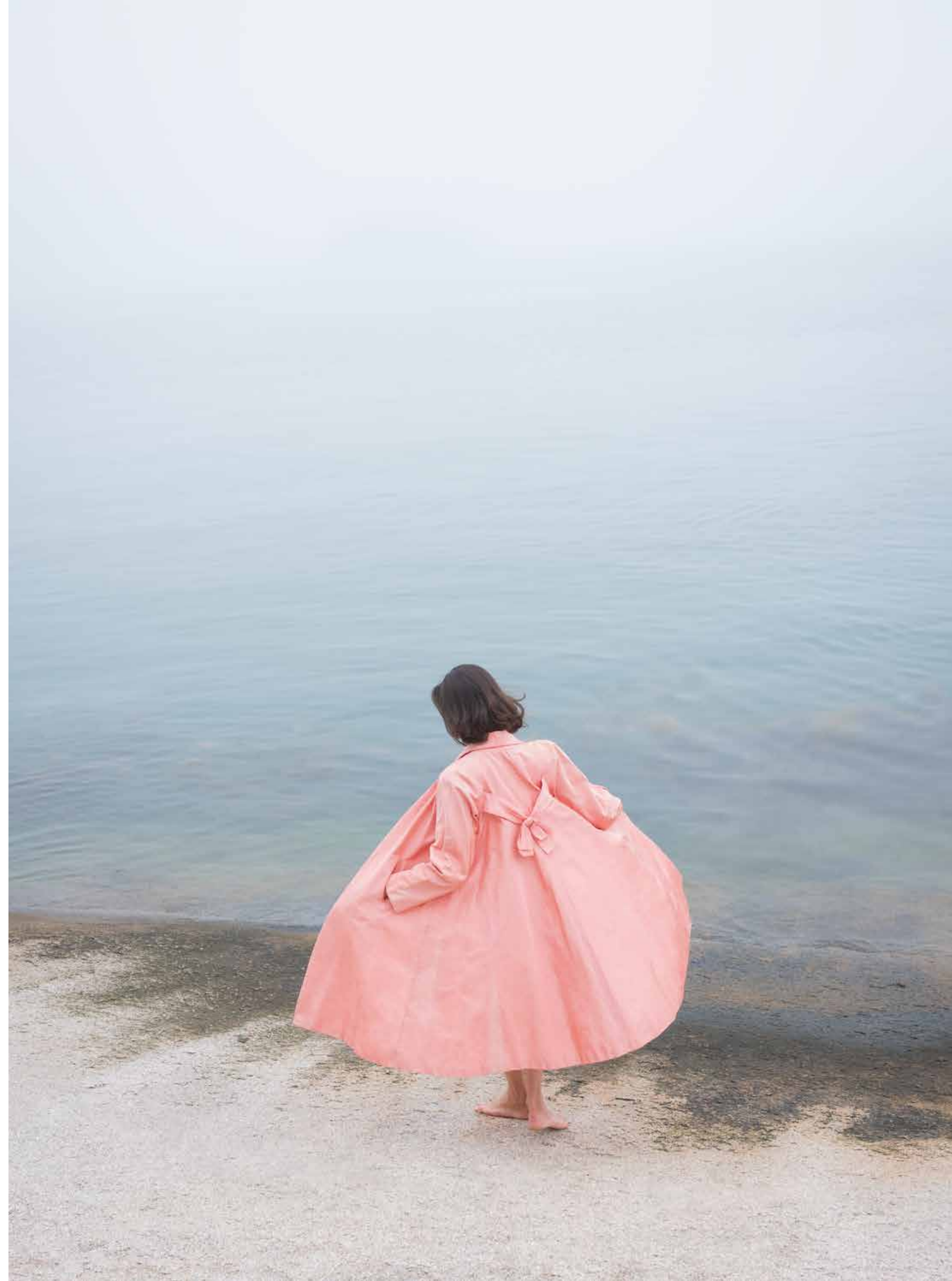


# WE ARE ORCHESTRAS

*Cig Harvey's photographs present a lucid and powerful journey towards existence, the sense of belonging, relationships and daily miracles. Her narrative is rooted in mankind's natural habitat, allowing you to hear your own inner whisper... whether you're an optimist or a pessimist.*

**U**nderneath thin skin, amongst saliva, organs and bone,  
WE ARE ORCHESTRAS. We are blood and Penicillin,  
due dates and meteor showers. We are first loves and  
koi ponds, promotions and orgasms. We are the earth  
from space. We are wedding days and Shakespeare,  
the eagle's wings at dusk. We are homecomings and love letters, fireflies and the  
Northern Lights. We are standing on our pedals flying down hills. / But open our  
mouths, deep down between tears, nerves, and gristle, WE ARE BOMBS. We are  
landfills of audits and mould, turbulence and high blood pressure. We are oil spills  
and swollen glands, lawsuits and fluorescence. We are acres of plastic drowning the  
oceans. We are forest fires and floods, famines and fat. We are texting 'be right there'  
towards head-on collisions. We are phlegm and strip mines, split-ends and traffic  
jams. We are unopened bills piling by the front door and power stations pouring poi-  
son into the sky. We are thirsty. We are sweating. / Now dissect our bodies, pull out  
heart, shit, and eyes, and see each one of us is each other, WE ARE ORCHESTRAS,  
WE ARE BOMBS. We are houses of cooking smells, arms around us and two aspirin.  
We are a normal pap smear, the first violets and meeting the bus from school. We  
are a Tuesday where nothing really happens. We are first cups of morning coffee,  
hand-printed welcome-home signs and community. We are paying attention. We are  
only this moment, the length of a photograph. / ● ●





APRIL FOOLS' I'm flash-mobbed by a *magnolia* in full bloom at the side of the road, and I'm a dog hanging out the car window, panting. A WEEK LATER, there's no sign of it, it's just one more green tree on the edge of Route 1.

A FEW DAYS LATER the *cherry blossoms* open, the baby pink perfect against the blue sky of spring. This pink near that blue is dangerous. This pink near that blue, the memory is enough to get me through the winter.

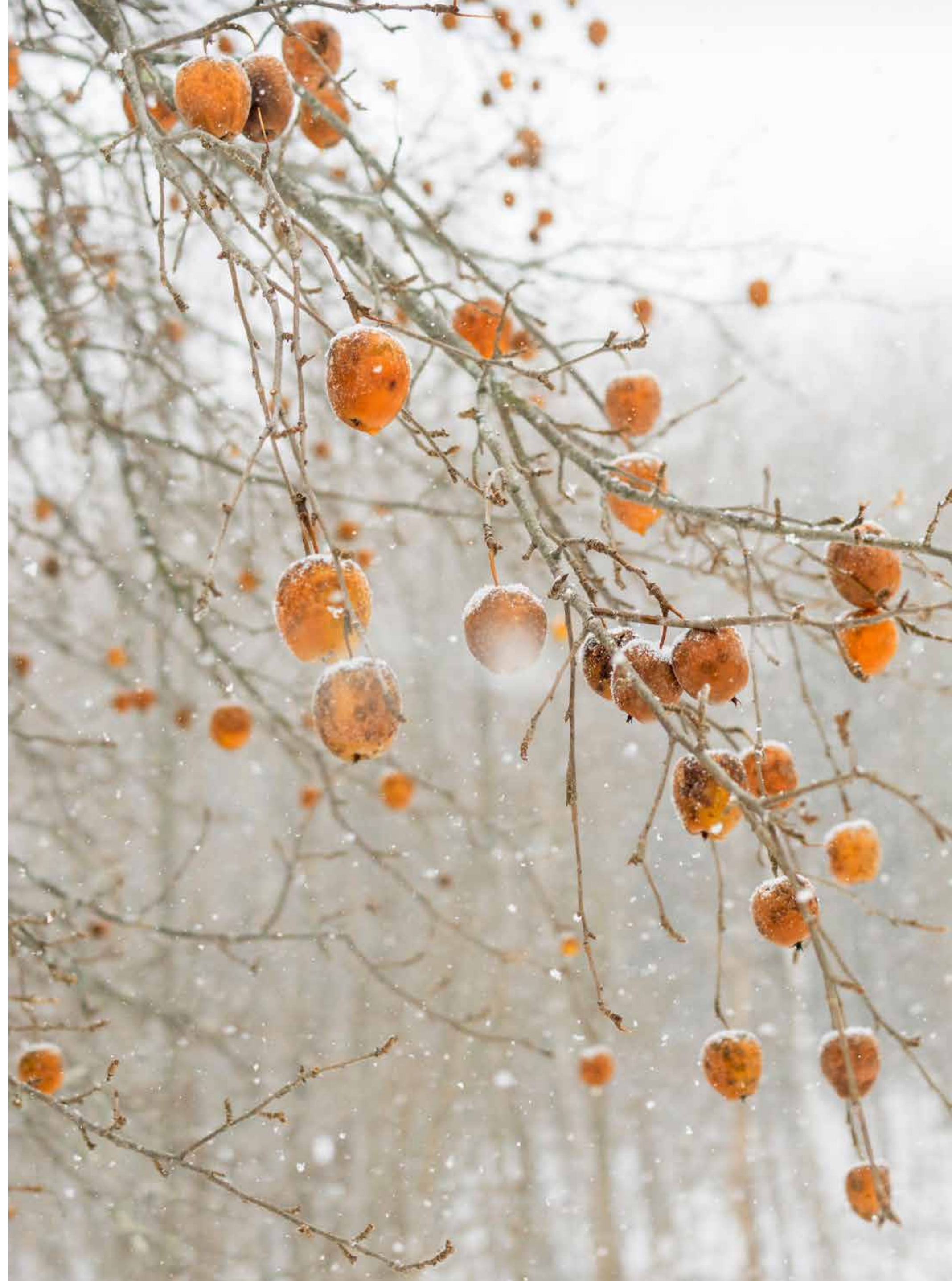
THEN COME the *lilacs*, all waxy stars and heady, their smell making me lick my lips as if I'm eating a doughnut. BUT BY THE END OF THE MONTH I don't even remember where they live in the garden.

THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY, the big-bummed-bell-ringing-magenta-just-at-the-edge-of-purple- *rhododendrons* demand to be photographed before they return to suburbia, and I'm down on my knees screaming, *I believe*.

LATE MAY, I fill the bedroom with blush and coral *poppies*, all this way and that, even more beautiful as they list and swoon. Then come the *cyclamen* with their flat petals of ready-made love notes to slip under your door. And my favourites, hot pink *azaleas*, so brazen with their rude lips pressing up against me. They cannot be ignored.

JUNE come the *peonies*, their soft, heart-shaped petals a bridge to safety, so perfect, with no hint of death until they blanch and faint, dropping to the ground, and I'm left holding the green stalk and standing at the centre of a ring of petals on the kitchen floor, like a portal to another world.

IN JULY the *cosmos* chart an arrow to the heart and BY AUGUST the *roses* remind me that *pink is a smell*. It takes courage to plant roses. There are many ways to be brave.





## *Dandelion Sandwich*

*In the language of flowers, dandelions symbolise happiness. The Latin name for this vivid yellow flower, with its teeth-shaped leaves, is *Taraxacum officinale*, meaning remedy for disorders as it cleanses toxins from the liver.*

Dandelions have a sharp and pointy taste and are perfect with sweet jam. All of the five taste groups (sour, sweet, bitter, salty and savoury) are combined in this sandwich.

*Serves One*  
*2 slices of crusty bread*  
*1 knob salted butter*  
*3 young Dandelion leaves \**  
*5 Dandelion flowers \**  
*1 dollop strawberry jam \**  
*Salt and pepper to taste*

First thing in the morning, go outside and pick three dandelion leaves and five partially opened dandelion flowers. Rinse them gently and pat dry between paper towels. Smear a thick layer of butter across the bread. Arrange the green leaves on top in the shape of a camp fire. Pull the petals from the stem and calyx, and sprinkle the yellow sparks all over the top. Douse with a dollop of strawberry jam, and spread the deep red with your finger. Green, yellow, red. A traffic jam of taste. Top with another slice of bread and eat immediately.

*\*note:*  
*if you're an optimist, double the dandelions;*  
*if you're a pessimist, double the jam.*





Courtesy of the artist. From the series *Blue Violet*, 2021, *You Look At Me Like An Emergency*, 2011, *Gardening At Night*, 2015 and *You An Orchestra You A Bomb*, 2017.