

the way of
Water

THE MONTHLY IMMERSION INTO THE WORLD OF

Móin &
MARROW

ISSUE I
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FROM
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A DEEPER WORD

móin

(móin)

gen. móina

n. bogland,

peat/moss,

moss

MÓIN & MARROW

Language creates the soundtrack of my life. When I am scared, when I am excited, when I am intimidated or nervous, when I am joyful, through all the emotional seasons of life, letters and sounds build my safety net. When words themselves threaten hard-won peace, I've discovered comfort, like that of a soothing lullaby, in uncovering ancient meaning.

Learning that the original definition of rape, for example, meant to seize, to carry away helped me overcome the shame caused by the word. It was easier to say yes, something was seized or carried away by force- innocence, virginity, trust- than to say someone penetrated me without consent because, in the modern definition, worth questions were attached: why didn't I tell, why didn't I fight harder?

Móin & Marrow is more than the title of the new book. These words braid history, science and fiction.

Móin is the Irish word for "peat/turf." It is found in Ireland's peat company, Bord na Móna, and shows up in other references. Peat kept the shape of the woman whose remains were found in a bog in 2023 and inspired *The Way of Water*. Peat preserved her for two thousand years. Bog bodies are famous for being so well preserved that Oldcroghan Man, whose remains were unearthed in 2003 in County Offaly, Ireland still had fingerprint whorls "as clear as a living person's."

Móin preserves a body by
sealing it from decay.

Móin tells us geography. The remains of these "bog bodies" were protected by locations formed over thousands and thousands of years. Science can walk us step-by-step through the process of preservation.

But it cannot tell us about **the marrow** of any of them.

A DEEPER WORD

móin

(móin)

gen. móna

n. bog and

peatmo

moss

MÓIN & MARROW

Where and how the Ballymacomb Woman was discovered is only part of the answer and, arguably, the least interesting. When crafting the title, I was still ruminating science, specifically, the human body. I spent an unholy amount of time researching things like *how does the bog preserve soft tissue but annihilate bone (soft tissue is resistant to acid and tans to become leathery, but the acid eats bone) and when would a body have to be placed in a bog in order to be preserved? (Winter, Spring).*

It was here, earning my pseudo-scientist degree, that I ran across the word *marrow*. Soon, the history of the word sent chills down my back. There are two readings to talk about here. The first is the easiest. *Marrow* is the inner-most substance of a being, the part whose job it is to create life **from the inside**. Phrases like “chilled to the bone” suggest that something has reached your inner core. Móin works on the outside, preventing decay, while the marrow of someone fights to keep them alive from the inside.

Marrow is aliveness working
from the inside out.

But *marrow* doesn't stop there.

It can go deeper.

There is an old word native to the Scots, English and Ireland: *marrow*. It is not the same as the *marrow, the innermost substance*. Instead, this *marrow* was once used to describe someone's *counterpart*, her spouse, the person she shared a bed with. These are two separate words who collided into the same spelling but with different meanings. When I paired them, what I read was *marrow* can **refer to the essential thing at your core and the person who is your equal**.

A DEEPER WORD

móin

(móin)

gen. móna

n. bog and

peatmoor,

moss

MÓIN & MARROW

Language makes the clearest, most poignant, and sharpest argument of the novel. Deep down *in her marrow*, in the truest part of who she was, Bréaca was not an object to be won. Etymologically, she was an **equal to her husband**. Her *marrow* was always counterpart-shaped, never possession-shaped.

Bréaca marries a man who believes, and who tells her, **she is his** but her truest self cannot be tamed or owned. As survivors, our *marrow* is revealed when we do things others don't want or expect us to. It's revealed when we do things we ourselves didn't think we could. The marrow inside our bones **is the architect of life**. It has a unique and crucial role in keeping us alive: it makes our blood. It creates the red blood cells that carry oxygen from our lungs to every other tissue in our body. It creates white blood cells which actively prevents us from getting sick.

And **marrow is not passive**. In the average healthy adult, marrow produces **several hundred billion new blood cells every single day**.

The body is the home to the
architect of life.

So then - to say, *They marrow under their Maker by morning* is a silent reminder that the two people swearing oaths to one another are not defined by cultural practices. Face price is irrelevant. Part of the tension of the story is the pull between who Bréaca is and who others want her to be.

But, no matter what a husband says, the body itself fights for life. And, if breath ceases, the móin shields - from decay and from untruths.

THE CURRENT'S LETTERS

We aren't tame.

We aren't even what you think we are.

Before you see us, you hear us. Behind the chatter of the forest birds, beyond the dusty hill, around the hidden bend, you can hear us. We rush forward; we never stop; we never rest. Our color changes by the weather and where on the map we live: sometimes we're a deep teal, like the blue-green back of the skin of the kingfisher, while at other times, we look more like the morning sky, pale and clear. When we're in a hurry and rushing, streaks of white follow our windy path, but then, come see us a few hours later, and you'll think we're still.

*You'll think a lot of things that aren't so, but this is perhaps the one that bothers us most. You'll walk up to our edge, put your muddy toes in us, and think how **still** we are. It angers us because that more than foolishness; it's an unwillingness to look beneath our glassy surface to the vibrant, if sometimes violent, life teeming below.*

You simply assume we're here to cast your reflection back up to you, as if you were some sort of god, and to quench your thirst. But that is also foolish. We're not here merely to serve you; we're here to change you.

UNEARTHED

There have been no surviving voices from Iron Age Ireland. We do not have photographs, cave carvings or any written communication that would tell us more about people who lived then. But we know they did live: radiocarbon dating confirms animal and human remains belonging to the period. So, when Bréaca wakes up on a misty morning, how do I remember a world I've never seen?



Pollen tells us landscape was not an unbroken forest. Hazel being cleared shows evidence of mixed farming. Farming was localized. Ireland was being reshaped by humans



Seeds show they cultivated wheat and barley. Cereals were processed, stored and cooked. Weed seeds mixed with grain show their fields looked nothing like today's.



Homes were timber built, circular. Walls have disappeared but load bearing posts left circular stains in the soil. Wood, wattle, daub and thatch were used as materials. Their footprints remain.

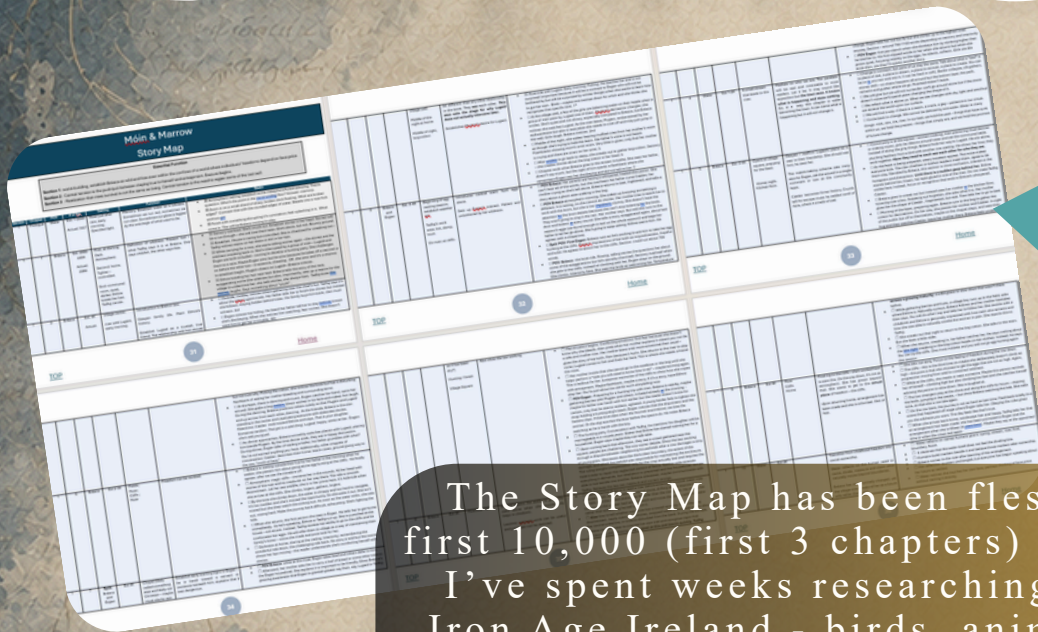


Isotope analysis shows people moved regions. They didn't stay in one area. Bones show evidence of disease, repetitive physical stress showing demanding lives.



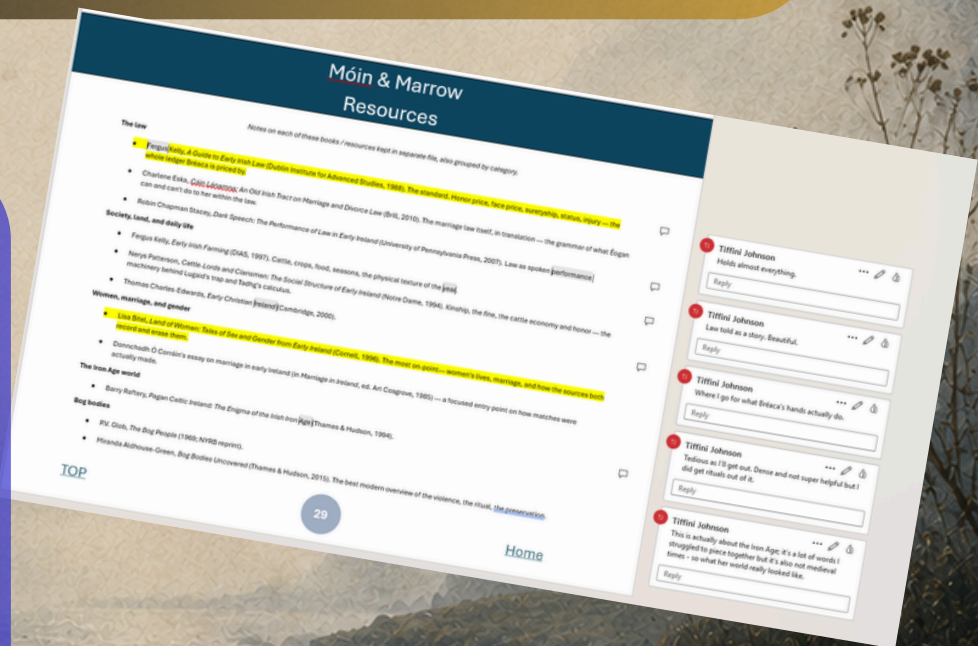
Science offers tantalizing details about life. But it cannot tell us which child hated the dark, which woman sang while she worked, whose hand another person sought or whether someone looked toward the river and wished she could leave. Imagining them is a form of remembrance.

SURFACING



The Story Map has been fleshed out, and the first 10,000 (first 3 chapters) have been written. I've spent weeks researching soundscapes of Iron Age Ireland - birds, animals, geography - and learning about what archaeology can tell us about culture.

Bréaca finds it very amusing to wake me up at 3a with *the best story ever* that she just can't wait to share. The Notes on my phone are full of garbled sentences as my sleep-deprived brain attempts to capture the main point of her story. She makes sure it gets added to the map right away.



Favorite Quotes:

When they step into us, their toes sink into muddy, waterlogged earth and leave something behind: a print that aches

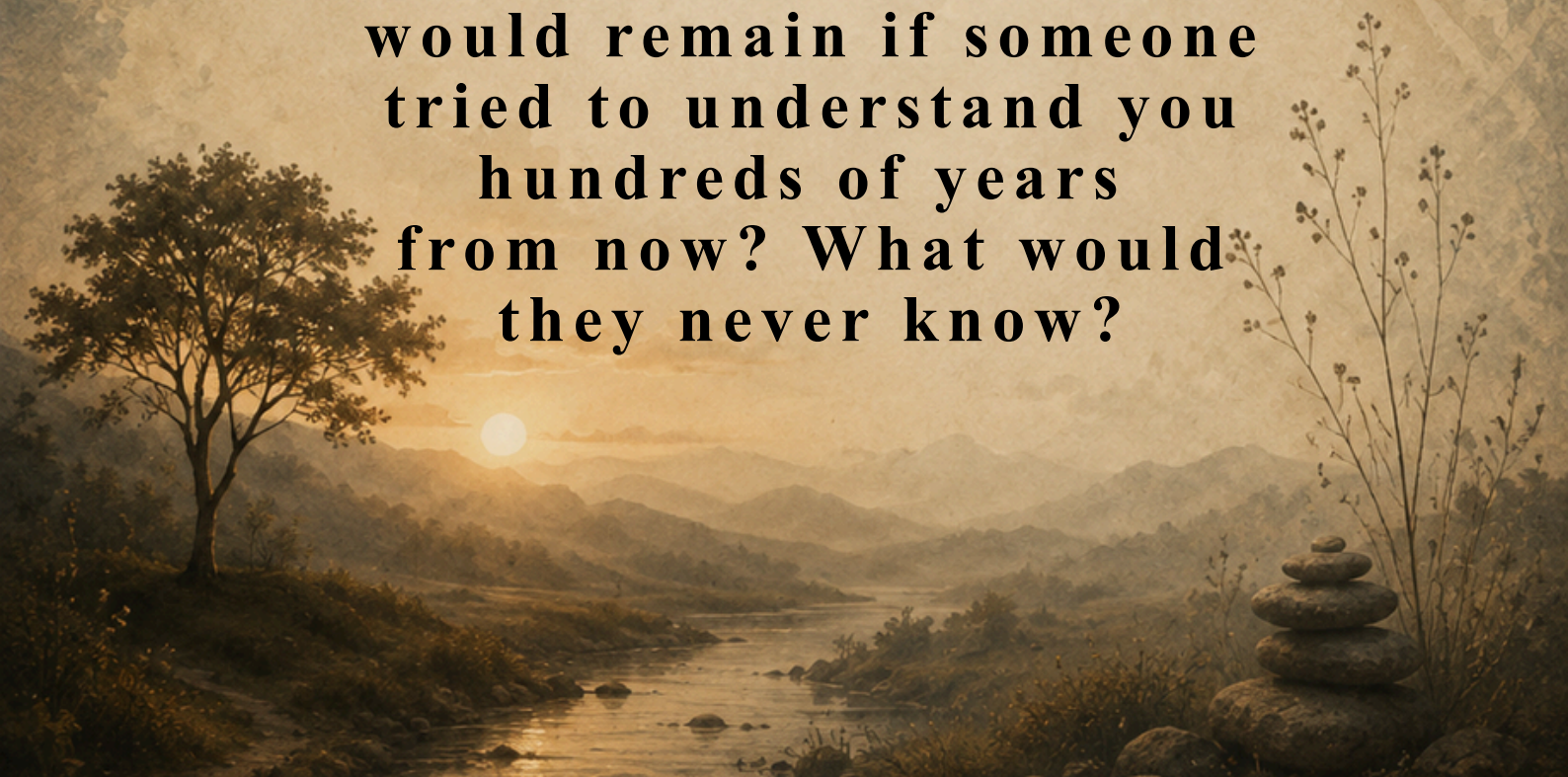
The bogs are places the water forgot to sink low.

WHAT WE CARRY

**What have you mistaken for
stillness in yourself that was
actually survival?**

**What part of your story is
preserved on the outside and
what part exists only in the
marrow?**

**What evidence of your life
would remain if someone
tried to understand you
hundreds of years
from now? What would
they never know?**



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COMING SOON

FOLLOW ALONG

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