

# THE Apparition

*"your voice as hollow*

This spectral sound reaches out to you, friend, across our spheres of isolation.

*The Apparition* - so called because it will come and go on a whim, and is liable to fade away entirely - will consist of short articles about a range of topics.

It will unearth enjoyable oddities within the realms of art, literature, horror, medical humanities, the nineteenth century and neo-Victorianism, folklore, and cabaret, and will feature some illustration, photography, or other art.

Welcome to the sixth number!

Fair maids and ghost ships: musical traditions in Shirley Collins' *Heart's Ease*

*Ease*

Essay - *Heart's Ease* (2020), by Shirley Collins

Last Lughnasadh saw the release of *Heart's Ease*, the eighth solo album from folk queen Shirley Collins.

The record, named after the wild pansy flowers which adorn the album's cover, contains both traditional folk songs and original works collected by the artist, who was a key voice in the English folk revival of the '60s and '70s.

Much like in the artist's 2016 comeback album

*as the hollow sea*"#

- C. G. Rossese

*Lodestar* - which I reviewed [here](#) -

many of the tracks on *Heart's Ease* have deep

historical roots, inspired by songs and tunes handed down by voice or on broadside over hundreds of years.

Collins' collective body of work, which spans decades, explores the concept that music links generations (it was her own grandfather who introduced her to the tradition of folk singing); undergoing, in her own phrase, 'the process of being handed down by word of mouth'.

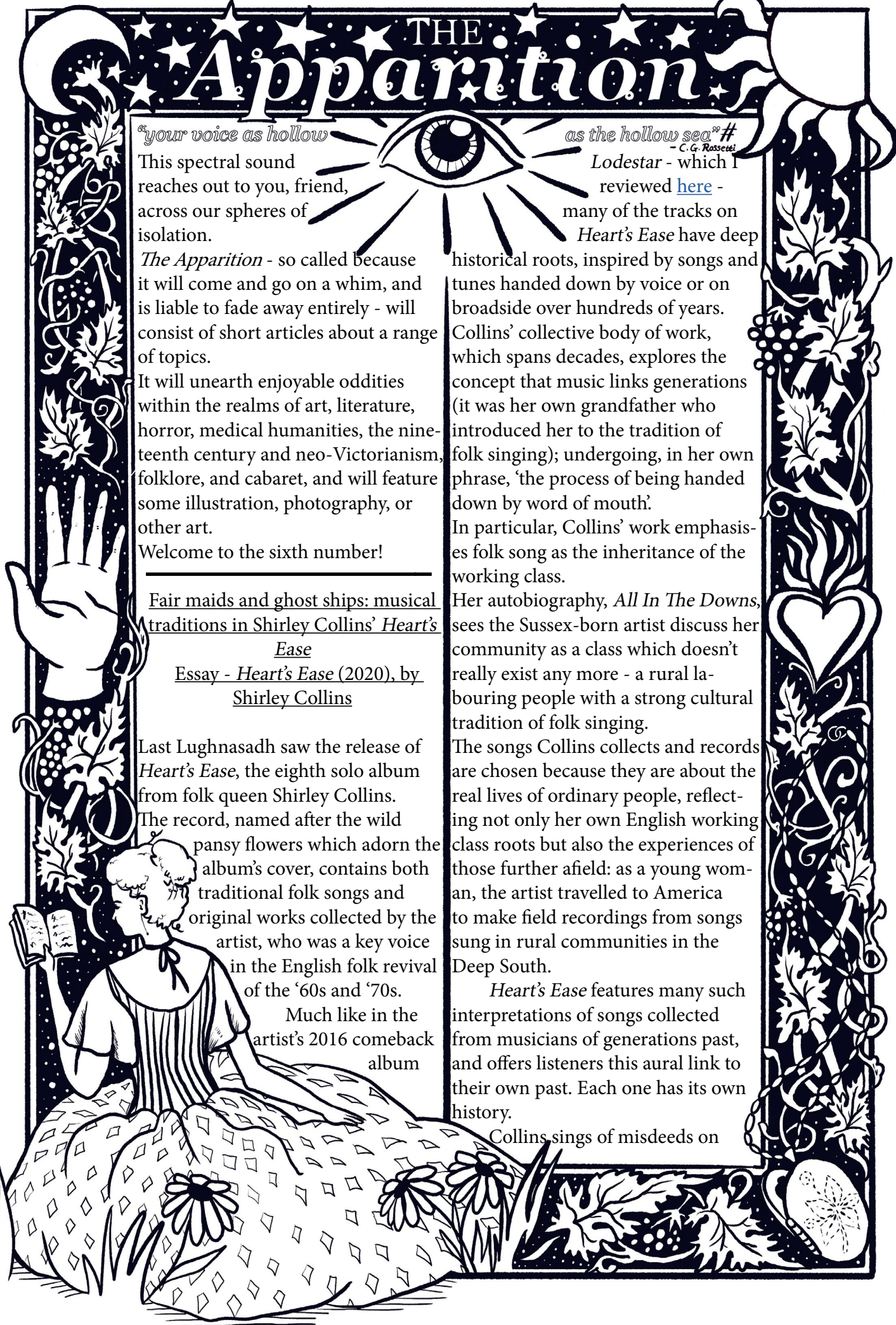
In particular, Collins' work emphasises folk song as the inheritance of the working class.

Her autobiography, *All In The Downs*, sees the Sussex-born artist discuss her community as a class which doesn't really exist any more - a rural labouring people with a strong cultural tradition of folk singing.

The songs Collins collects and records are chosen because they are about the real lives of ordinary people, reflecting not only her own English working class roots but also the experiences of those further afield: as a young woman, the artist travelled to America to make field recordings from songs sung in rural communities in the Deep South.

*Heart's Ease* features many such interpretations of songs collected from musicians of generations past, and offers listeners this aural link to their own past. Each one has its own history.

Collins sings of misdeeds on

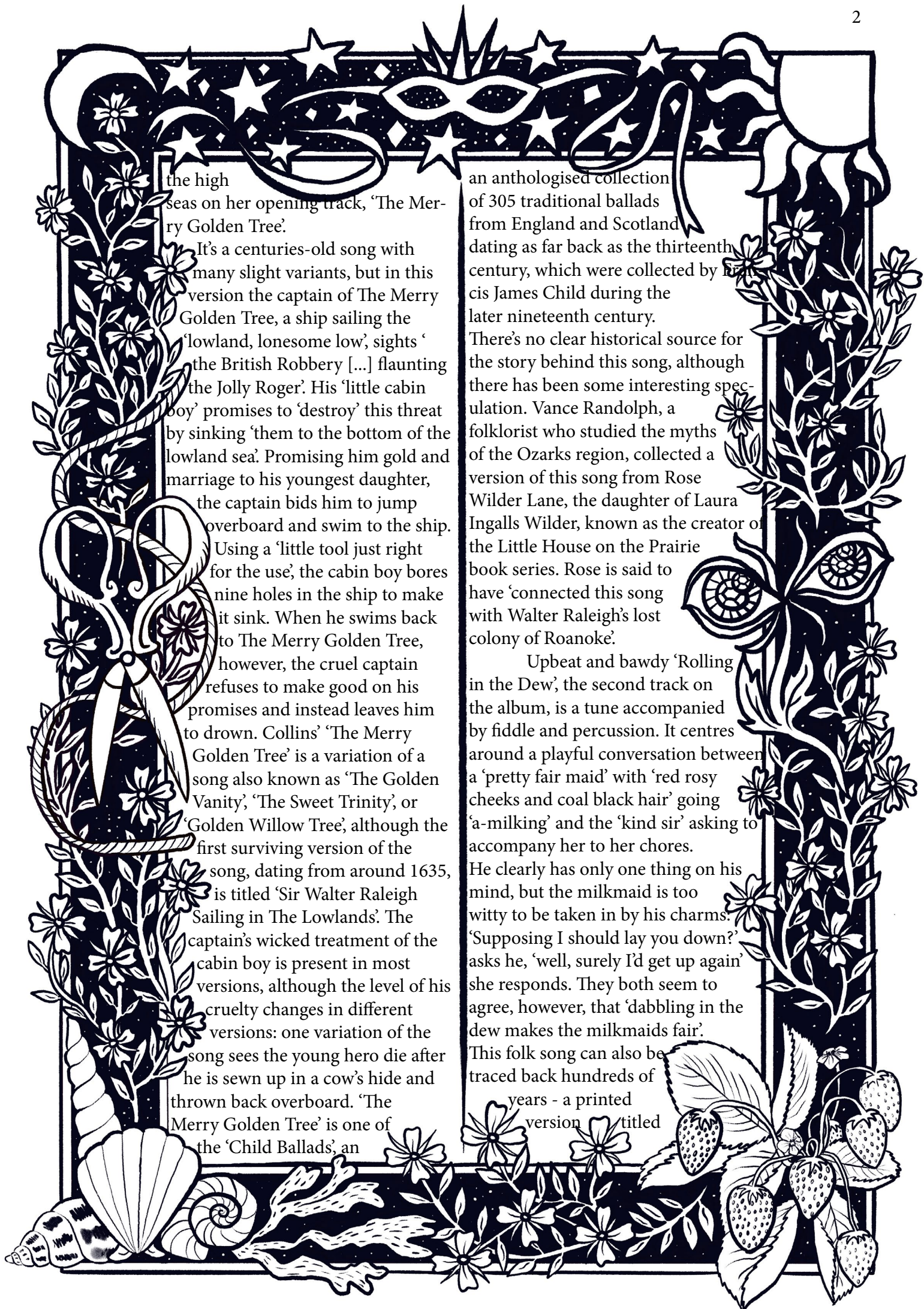


the high seas on her opening track, 'The Merry Golden Tree'.

It's a centuries-old song with many slight variants, but in this version the captain of The Merry Golden Tree, a ship sailing the 'lowland, lonesome low', sights 'the British Robbery [...] flaunting the Jolly Roger'. His 'little cabin boy' promises to 'destroy' this threat by sinking 'them to the bottom of the lowland sea'. Promising him gold and marriage to his youngest daughter, the captain bids him to jump overboard and swim to the ship. Using a 'little tool just right for the use', the cabin boy bores nine holes in the ship to make it sink. When he swims back to The Merry Golden Tree, however, the cruel captain refuses to make good on his promises and instead leaves him to drown. Collins' 'The Merry Golden Tree' is a variation of a song also known as 'The Golden Vanity', 'The Sweet Trinity', or 'Golden Willow Tree', although the first surviving version of the song, dating from around 1635, is titled 'Sir Walter Raleigh Sailing in The Lowlands'. The captain's wicked treatment of the cabin boy is present in most versions, although the level of his cruelty changes in different versions: one variation of the song sees the young hero die after he is sewn up in a cow's hide and thrown back overboard. 'The Merry Golden Tree' is one of the 'Child Ballads', an

an anthologised collection of 305 traditional ballads from England and Scotland dating as far back as the thirteenth century, which were collected by Francis James Child during the later nineteenth century. There's no clear historical source for the story behind this song, although there has been some interesting speculation. Vance Randolph, a folklorist who studied the myths of the Ozarks region, collected a version of this song from Rose Wilder Lane, the daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder, known as the creator of the Little House on the Prairie book series. Rose is said to have 'connected this song with Walter Raleigh's lost colony of Roanoke'.

Upbeat and bawdy 'Rolling in the Dew', the second track on the album, is a tune accompanied by fiddle and percussion. It centres around a playful conversation between a 'pretty fair maid' with 'red rosy cheeks and coal black hair' going 'a-milking' and the 'kind sir' asking to accompany her to her chores. He clearly has only one thing on his mind, but the milkmaid is too witty to be taken in by his charms: 'Supposing I should lay you down?' asks he, 'well, surely I'd get up again' she responds. They both seem to agree, however, that 'dabbling in the dew makes the milkmaids fair'. This folk song can also be traced back hundreds of years - a printed version titled



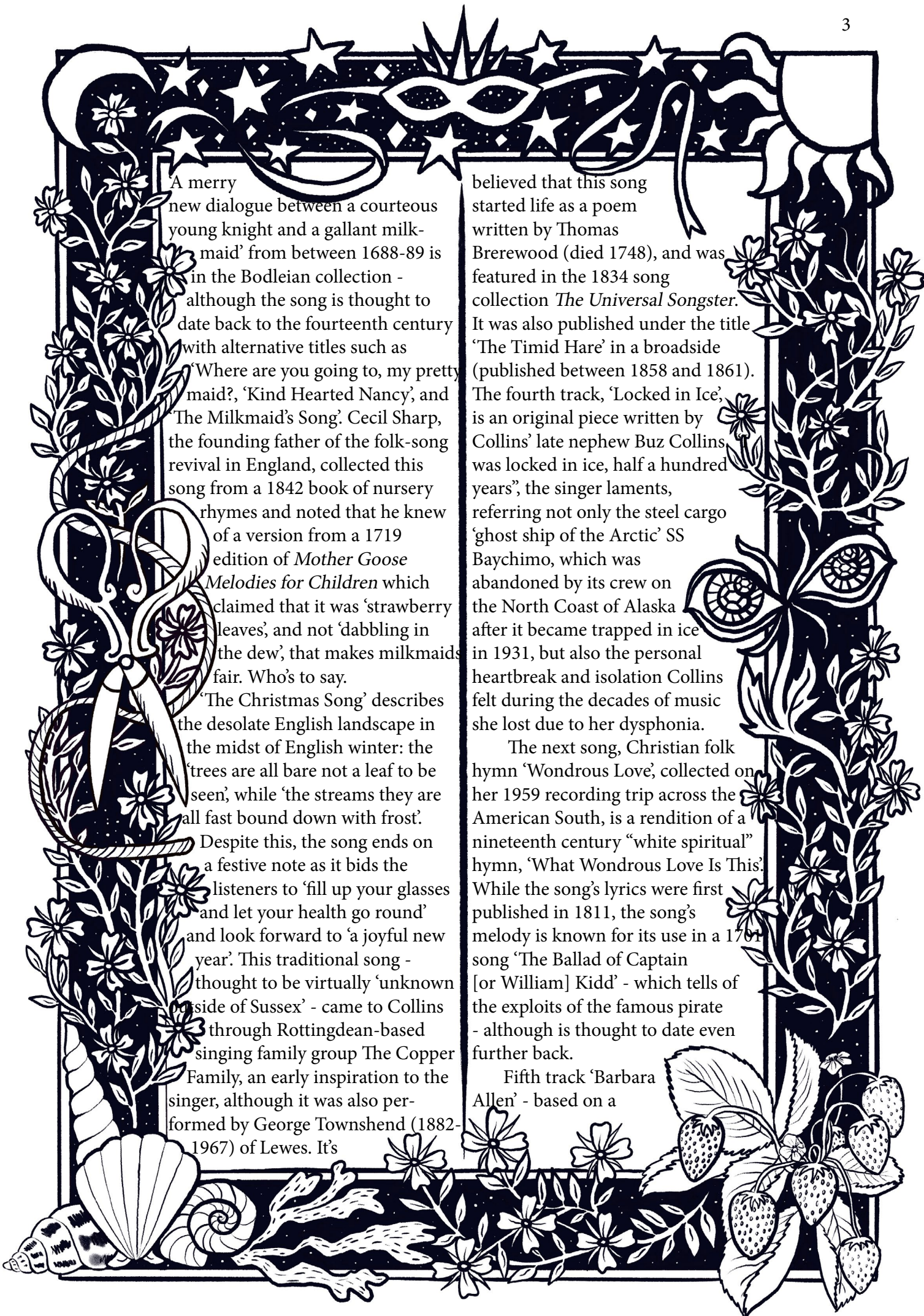
A merry new dialogue between a courteous young knight and a gallant milkmaid' from between 1688-89 is in the Bodleian collection - although the song is thought to date back to the fourteenth century with alternative titles such as 'Where are you going to, my pretty maid?', 'Kind Hearted Nancy', and 'The Milkmaid's Song'. Cecil Sharp, the founding father of the folk-song revival in England, collected this song from a 1842 book of nursery rhymes and noted that he knew of a version from a 1719 edition of *Mother Goose Melodies for Children* which claimed that it was 'strawberry leaves', and not 'dabbling in the dew', that makes milkmaids fair. Who's to say.

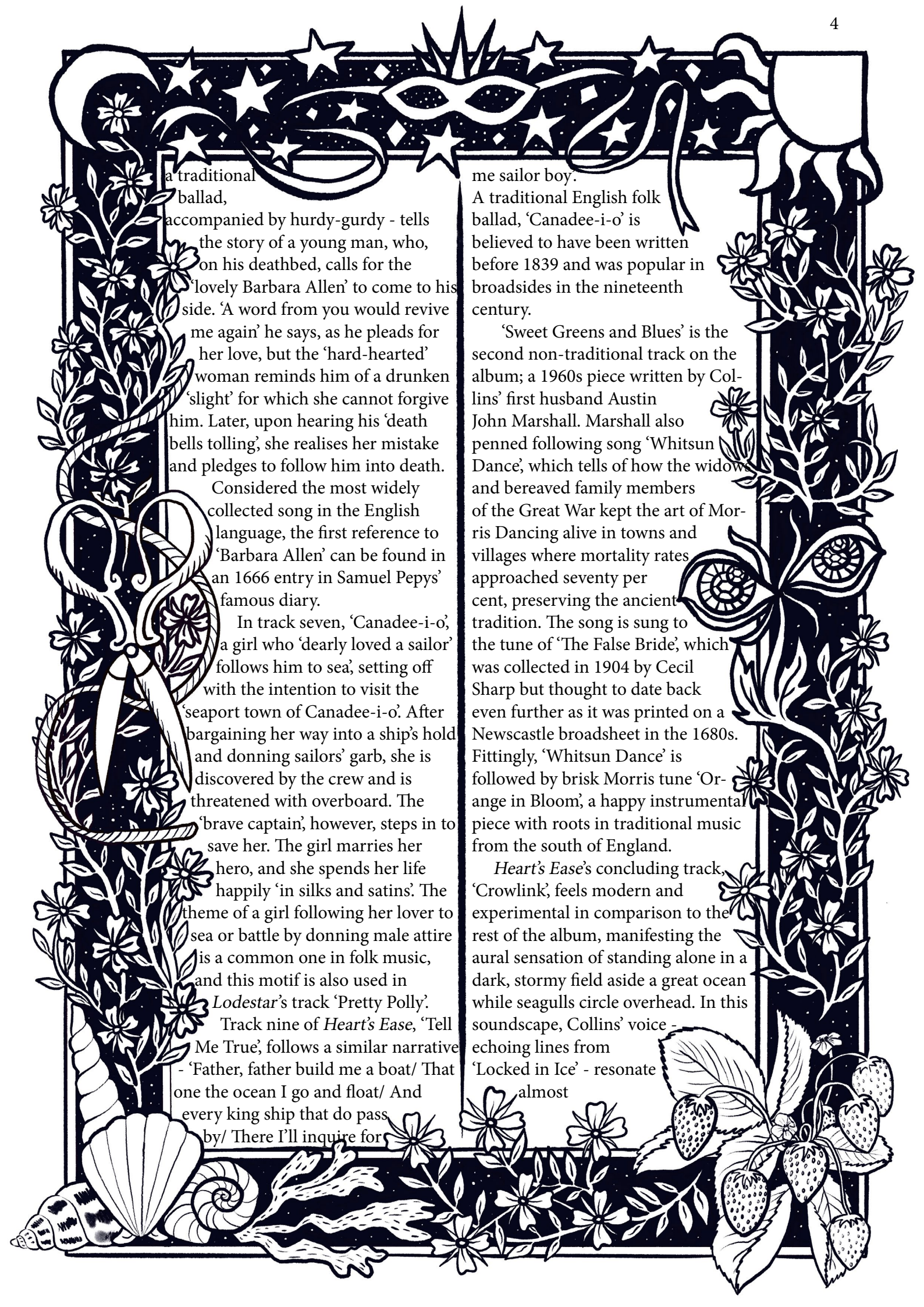
'The Christmas Song' describes the desolate English landscape in the midst of English winter: the 'trees are all bare not a leaf to be seen', while 'the streams they are all fast bound down with frost'. Despite this, the song ends on a festive note as it bids the listeners to 'fill up your glasses and let your health go round' and look forward to 'a joyful new year'. This traditional song - thought to be virtually 'unknown outside of Sussex' - came to Collins through Rottingdean-based singing family group The Copper Family, an early inspiration to the singer, although it was also performed by George Townshend (1882-1967) of Lewes. It's

believed that this song started life as a poem written by Thomas Brerewood (died 1748), and was featured in the 1834 song collection *The Universal Songster*. It was also published under the title 'The Timid Hare' in a broadside (published between 1858 and 1861). The fourth track, 'Locked in Ice', is an original piece written by Collins' late nephew Buz Collins, was locked in ice, half a hundred years", the singer laments, referring not only the steel cargo 'ghost ship of the Arctic' SS Baychimo, which was abandoned by its crew on the North Coast of Alaska after it became trapped in ice in 1931, but also the personal heartbreak and isolation Collins felt during the decades of music she lost due to her dysphonia.

The next song, Christian folk hymn 'Wondrous Love', collected on her 1959 recording trip across the American South, is a rendition of a nineteenth century "white spiritual" hymn, 'What Wondrous Love Is This?'. While the song's lyrics were first published in 1811, the song's melody is known for its use in a 1701 song 'The Ballad of Captain [or William] Kidd' - which tells of the exploits of the famous pirate - although is thought to date even further back.

Fifth track 'Barbara Allen' - based on a





a traditional ballad, accompanied by hurdy-gurdy - tells the story of a young man, who, on his deathbed, calls for the 'lovely Barbara Allen' to come to his side. 'A word from you would revive me again' he says, as he pleads for her love, but the 'hard-hearted' woman reminds him of a drunken 'sight' for which she cannot forgive him. Later, upon hearing his 'death bells tolling', she realises her mistake and pledges to follow him into death.

Considered the most widely collected song in the English language, the first reference to 'Barbara Allen' can be found in an 1666 entry in Samuel Pepys' famous diary.

In track seven, 'Canadee-i-o', a girl who 'dearly loved a sailor' follows him to sea, setting off with the intention to visit the seaport town of Canadee-i-o'. After bargaining her way into a ship's hold and donning sailors' garb, she is discovered by the crew and is threatened with overboard. The 'brave captain', however, steps in to save her. The girl marries her hero, and she spends her life happily 'in silks and satins'. The theme of a girl following her lover to sea or battle by donning male attire is a common one in folk music, and this motif is also used in *Lodestar's* track 'Pretty Polly'.

Track nine of *Heart's Ease*, 'Tell Me True', follows a similar narrative - 'Father, father build me a boat/ That one the ocean I go and float/ And every king ship that do pass by/ There I'll inquire for

me sailor boy.

A traditional English folk ballad, 'Canadee-i-o' is believed to have been written before 1839 and was popular in broadsides in the nineteenth century.

'Sweet Greens and Blues' is the second non-traditional track on the album; a 1960s piece written by Collins' first husband Austin John Marshall. Marshall also penned following song 'Whitsun Dance', which tells of how the widows and bereaved family members of the Great War kept the art of Morris Dancing alive in towns and villages where mortality rates approached seventy per cent, preserving the ancient tradition. The song is sung to the tune of 'The False Bride', which was collected in 1904 by Cecil Sharp but thought to date back even further as it was printed on a Newcastle broadsheet in the 1680s. Fittingly, 'Whitsun Dance' is followed by brisk Morris tune 'Orange in Bloom', a happy instrumental piece with roots in traditional music from the south of England.

*Heart's Ease's* concluding track, 'Crowlink', feels modern and experimental in comparison to the rest of the album, manifesting the aural sensation of standing alone in a dark, stormy field aside a great ocean while seagulls circle overhead. In this soundscape, Collins' voice - echoing lines from 'Locked in Ice' - resonate almost

supernatur-  
ally from the  
sky above.

As you can see, many recognisable staples of British folklore are reimagined in *Heart's Ease* - fair but canny maidens, frozen winters, and particularly ships and sea voyages, images that have a special place in the oral traditions of our island, and our seafaring communities.

Such songs feel as if they can exist in two places - sung by mythical travelling musicians in some fantastic arcadian land, and simultaneously by real life workers trying to unwind at the pub. Perhaps such songs are meant to evoke such duality, connecting singers and their listeners to half-forgotten, half-invented pasts.

Whether *Heart's Ease* is experienced as an extensively and well researched record of historic folk songs, or simply enjoyed as a sensitively rendered and quietly joyful musical arrangement, the album certainly makes for good listening.

An Unladylike Profession, by Chris Dubbs (2020)

Forward by journalist Judy Woodruff

Review - nonfiction book

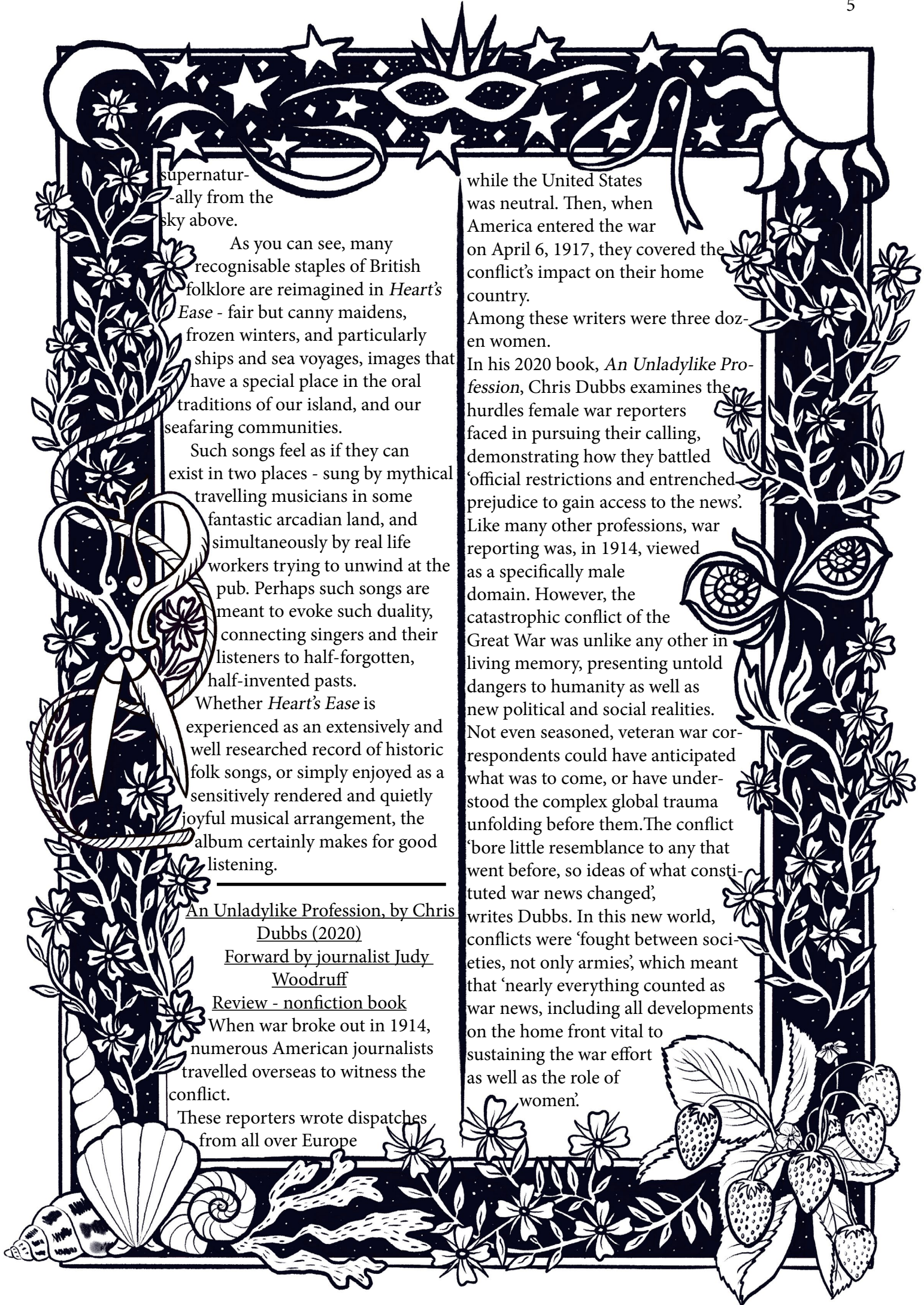
When war broke out in 1914, numerous American journalists travelled overseas to witness the conflict.

These reporters wrote dispatches from all over Europe

while the United States was neutral. Then, when America entered the war on April 6, 1917, they covered the conflict's impact on their home country.

Among these writers were three dozen women.

In his 2020 book, *An Unladylike Profession*, Chris Dubbs examines the hurdles female war reporters faced in pursuing their calling, demonstrating how they battled 'official restrictions and entrenched prejudice to gain access to the news'. Like many other professions, war reporting was, in 1914, viewed as a specifically male domain. However, the catastrophic conflict of the Great War was unlike any other in living memory, presenting untold dangers to humanity as well as new political and social realities. Not even seasoned, veteran war correspondents could have anticipated what was to come, or have understood the complex global trauma unfolding before them. The conflict 'bore little resemblance to any that went before, so ideas of what constituted war news changed', writes Dubbs. In this new world, conflicts were 'fought between societies, not only armies', which meant that 'nearly everything counted as war news, including all developments on the home front vital to sustaining the war effort as well as the role of women.'



## The First World War

thus presented some women writers with new opportunities to use their skills and experience. Human interest stories about life on the Home Front were initially seen as soft news stories for female writers unsuited to writing about topics like violence, politics, or economics. Although intended to restrict the female journalists and leave the "real" jobs for the boys, this limitation pushed women writers towards finding alternative ways of writing compelling stories - innovative approaches that, it turns out, were needed to cover this new violence. When war broke out, these journalists foresaw the potential to contribute towards the reporting of the conflict, and the possibilities that their unique perspective could bring to the story. As correspondents for a number of American publications, they travelled overseas to witness the women and children left to survive in war torn cities, maintaining the war effort in support of their family and friends serving at the Front. Their journalistic work has had lasting impact on the profession, and *An Unladylike Profession* explores how their writing 'helped to redefine how wars are reported'. However, opportunities to tell these dramatic new war narratives were hard won by female correspondents, who were deemed 'novelty journalists'.

As hard as it was for male

reporters to gain access to the front, women correspondents faced additional hurdles before they had even made it to the country affected by war - they had limited opportunities, faced dismissive employers and patronising officials, and had to work disproportionately hard to convince their editors (and later the US Army) of their capabilities. Again, they turned these disadvantages into new possibilities: often not permitted to be attached to the army, women journalists volunteered with aid organisations to gain access. The vantage point of hospital work, Red Cross and YMCA assignments gave women journalists privileged access to the war, allowing them 'to get close to the action when Americans entered the fight in the summer of 1918'. This became a point of contention for male journalists who did not follow similar routes to get closer to the story, thus missing these crucial opportunities.

*An Unladylike Profession* moves chronologically, following writers on their travels throughout Europe in pursuit of a story. Dubbs documents the work of Mary Boyle O'Reilly, the 'eyewitness to atrocity' who saw the Belgian city of Louvain in ruins following the early German invasion of the country, and wrote about the 'civilians executed, homes burned, priceless artifacts of



of civilisations intentionally destroyed.

The author later draws a comparison between original gonzo journalist Nellie Bly, who came to the profession untrained and inexperienced in the 1880s, and Alice Rohe, who in 1914 'represented the new generation of newswomen, college graduates, who were intent on pursuing careers in journalism, not just freelancing on women's topics.' Despite their differing backgrounds, both contributed important coverage of the conflict. Rohe covered Italy's entry into the war, while Bly, who travelled to Vienna to 'gauge the mood in that warring country', became 'a Dantesque guide on a descent into hell'.

Another chapter considers the reporters sent to Europe by *The Saturday Evening Post*, a publication which was increasing in popularity after it widened its appeal to women by supporting suffrage and featuring female writers. Adelaide Neal, appointed in 1909 and the first woman on the paper's editorial staff, travelled to England as part of a wider tour, as did fellow *Post* writer Corra Harris, who Dubbs says 'redefined the image of women in the war'. Harris's first war article, 'The New Militants', examined the work of the Women's Emergency Corps, having volunteered with the organisation at Liverpool Street rail

station. The Corps, the 'most energized visible force in England', comprised 160,000 women who undertook humanitarian endeavours such as raising money for war relief, equipping hospitals in France and Belgium, and supporting refugees.

Mary Roberts Rinehart, a popular novelist and writer of mystery fiction, took the very first interview Belgium's King Albert granted during the war. Fellow novelists Edith Wharton and Gertrude Atherton also lent their pen to war correspondence. Wharton lived in Paris during the conflict and ventured into the war zone to publicise the work of the Red Cross. Atherton, who spent half of every year in Germany, initially shared her German friends' rationale for war in letters to US newspapers. She changed her mind after the sinking of the RMS Lusitania and the release of the Bryce Report, an investigation into German atrocities during the first month of the war. *An Unladylike Profession* also looks at the work of Maude Radford Warren, who was invited to report on Canada's mobilization for war, and Mary Isabel Brush, sent to Russia as it mobilized for war and struggled with the recent introduction of prohibition. *The New York Tribune's* Ernestine Evans was also sent to Russia to cover how the war



was affecting women; she wrote about the nurses rushed through training to meet demand.

While Florence MacLeod Harper and Mildred Farwell reported from pre-revolutionary Russia, the March Revolution which deposed the czar brought in a new crop of American journalists who felt sympathy for the socialist value of the revolution, such as Louise Bryant, who made her name covering the Bolshevik revolution.

Suffragist and writer Rheta Dorr visited Russia's famous women's "Battalion of Death", led by Maria Bochkareva, who was dubbed "Russia's Joan of Arc".

Sophie Treadwell, of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, having built a career writing about women's issues - penning stories about sensational cases of women plotting to murder their abusive husbands, and posing as a sex worker to expose the hypocrisy of Christian organisations that were supposed to offer help to such women -

wrote about the 'war mood' in Paris. Jessica Lozier Payne of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* arrived in Liverpool in 1916

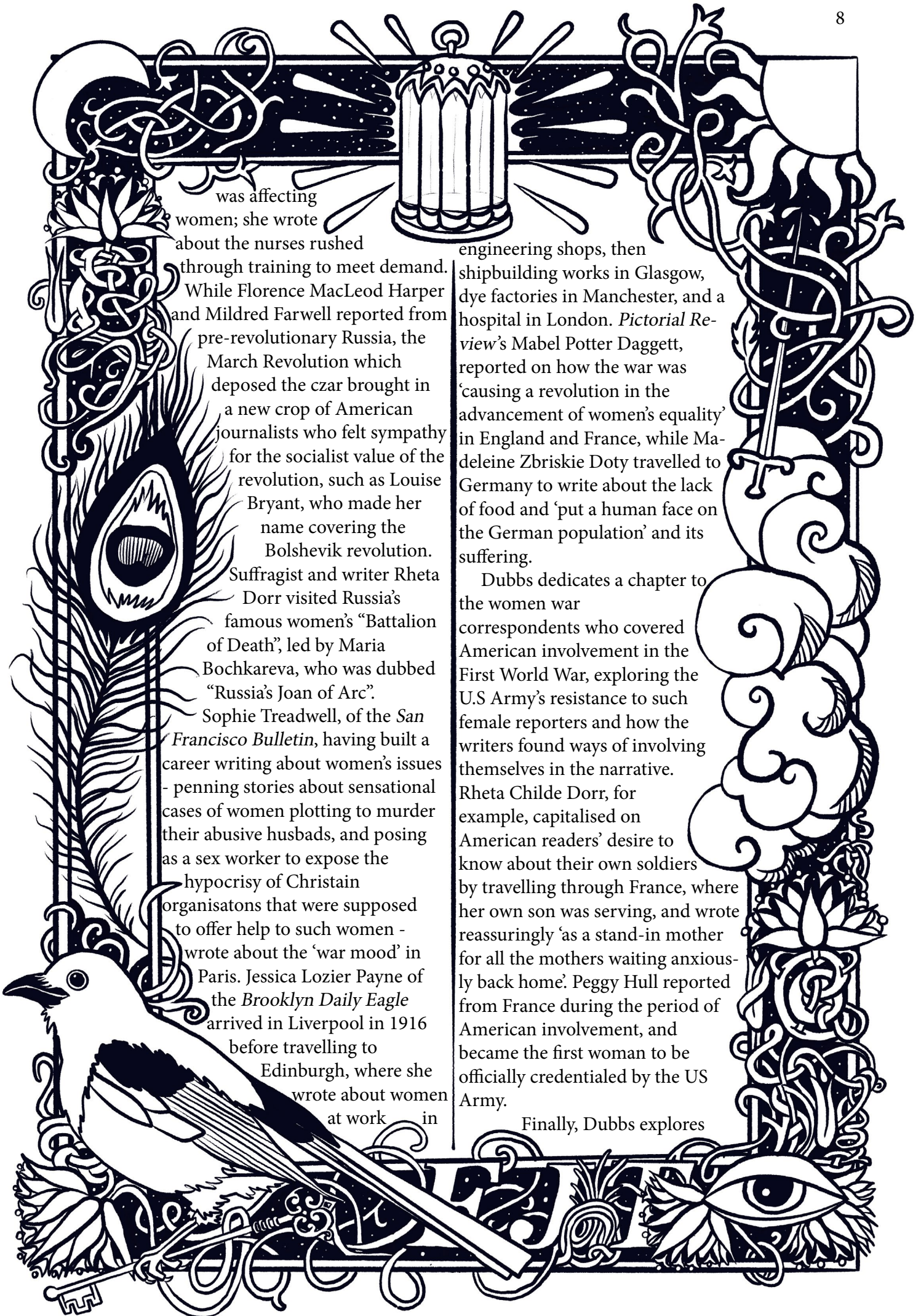
before travelling to Edinburgh, where she

wrote about women at work in

engineering shops, then shipbuilding works in Glasgow, dye factories in Manchester, and a hospital in London. *Pictorial Review's* Mabel Potter Daggett, reported on how the war was 'causing a revolution in the advancement of women's equality' in England and France, while Madeleine Zbriskie Doty travelled to Germany to write about the lack of food and 'put a human face on the German population' and its suffering.

Dubbs dedicates a chapter to the women war correspondents who covered American involvement in the First World War, exploring the U.S Army's resistance to such female reporters and how the writers found ways of involving themselves in the narrative. Rheta Childe Dorr, for example, capitalised on American readers' desire to know about their own soldiers by travelling through France, where her own son was serving, and wrote reassuringly 'as a stand-in mother for all the mothers waiting anxiously back home.' Peggy Hull reported from France during the period of American involvement, and became the first woman to be officially credentialed by the US Army.

Finally, Dubbs explores





women  
journalists'

involvement in covering the aftershocks of war, and particularly their role in international aid. Mabel Potter Daggett took responsibility for the donations given by readers of her paper, ensuring that they were spent on the desired purpose and then reported the 'beneficial results of readers' philanthropy'. Her readers had adopted two French villages, so she wrote monthly articles to form a connection between the readers and 'the individual victims of war who benefited from their generosity'.

Despite the surprising number of women war correspondents, Dubbs dedicates enough space to each individual, allowing the reader to form a clear sense of each writer, what made them unique, and their professional accomplishments. *An Unladylike Profession* also manages to communicate much of the character of the disparate European environments and social-political circumstances each journalist found herself in, often in only a handful of words. A fascinating and extensively informative read.

I also spoke with  
Brighton

band frontwoman Izzy B.

Phillips ahead of their new album release about feminism, pop culture, and lockdown gardening. Check it out the interview [here](#).

I've been working with [Folklore Film Fans](#), a fantastic project exploring and celebrating folklore in cinema, to create a series of designs which are now available as stickers over on [my Etsy store!](#) There are six designs: Medusa, Death, Onibaba, Shield Maiden, Vampyre, Baba Yaga's Hut. I've written more about each design in a [blog post here](#). Sales of these stickers support the Folklore Film Fans project!



*The Apparition* is written and illustrated by Emily Jessica Turner. Find her at @emilyjessturner. Would you like to have your work reviewed or feature in *The Apparition*? Email it to [ejturner2412@gmail.com](mailto:ejturner2412@gmail.com).