

The Outer Hebrides

Captured

Artist Ruth Bond
Poet Peter Rees



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Limited First Edition of 200 signed by the Artist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cover image, "Croft Antique Gold" Oil Painting 30x30cm

My grateful thanks to: the lovely people at Harris Tweed in Tarbert,
at Talla na Mara Gallery, and at Harris Gin, on the Island;
Diane for her skill and endurance;
and Phil and Pip for their infinite patience and support.

There are Limited Edition Giclée prints (extremely limited, only 10 of each size) available of most
of the paintings included in this book.

To order a print please contact the Artist. www.ruthbond.com ruth@ruthbond.co.uk

There are Greeting Cards available of some of the paintings included in this book



Falling in love with the Hebrides is the familiar experience of all of us who have ever come here - and we carry away, when we force ourselves to leave, glorious memories of sky, sea and sand, deep draughts of sparkling air and vivid colours - regardless of the time of year.

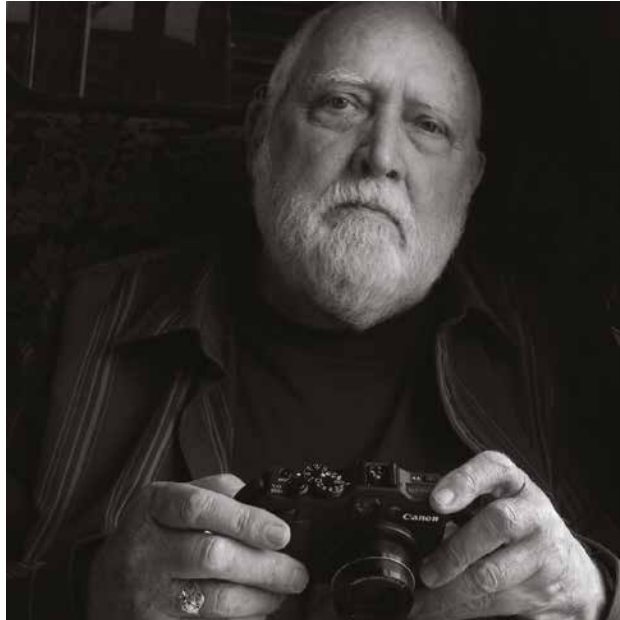
In this book, two artists offer a way, perhaps, to recapture the magic of the islands when far away.

Ruth Bond and Peter Rees became acquainted via a chance encounter. It turned out to be classic serendipity. They share a love of wild, wide land and seascapes, the emotional impact of changing light and weather and a love of the Hebrides in particular, each expressing their feelings in a very personal way, Ruth in paint and Peter through his poetry and photography. They have worked in creative collaboration for several years in exhibitions and now this book.

Ruth's instinctive response to the rich colours in the Hebrides, in the landscapes and echoed in the traditional island tweeds, produced a profound effect on her work. Each painting in this collection is based on a particular Harris Tweed swatch, the starting point limiting the paint pallet mixed from just these colours. As a result, her landscapes resemble not just the purple, peaty rivers, vibrant turquoise of the seas, blindingly white beaches, and heathery moors but also the natural ingredients that went into dying the yarns. Her joy in being there as often as she can, expressed in her paintings, has made her work much loved and sought after. Her paintings are now collected world-wide.

Peter the photographer has a lifetime of delicate, sensitive and startling work, finding beauty, mystery and humour in what he sees. Now Peter the poet, working with words, continues to find, with that keen discerning eye, delight in both the smallest detail and the vast immensity of the islands he loves, complementing the paintings with the wisdom and warmth of his writing.

Personal thoughts and feelings for a land remote, unique, and always profoundly inspiring.



ABOUT THE POET

PETER REES

A Geordie by birth and upbringing, Peter Rees was born in Wallsend and although, by profession, he was a Health Service manager, by inclination he was a poet/photographer. His passion for photography led to him being awarded the distinction of Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society in the year 2000, and he is known in photographic circles as a lecturer, judge and exhibitor of many years standing. His poetry first saw the light of day when published in his school magazine in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Peter is the author of a number of books on photography, but in recent years, he has enjoyed combining his photography with poetry, giving a new dimension to his artistic output. Most recently, his books "Return to an Island" and "Sing to me of Luskentyre" give examples of this fresh approach to his work.

www.farcountryphotography.co.uk



ABOUT THE ARTIST

RUTH BOND

Born in Zambia, raised there and in Northumberland, Ruth trained in fashion and built an award-winning Interior Design business in Newcastle. Having worked and travelled in many countries across the globe, absorbing cultures, colours and the beauty of the natural world, she now works happily painting in oils, always from experience of the countryside she loves - the Northumbrian coast, Scotland, Canada, Italy and the very special Outer Hebrides.

She is lucky to have a base in Alnmouth and a border collie, Pip, to walk with along the coastal paths delighting in the changing patterns of light on land and sea. The quirky puffins on the Farne Islands inspired a painting that was shortlisted for the David Shepherd Wildlife Artist of the Year in 2019. She has exhibited widely in the North East, with solo exhibitions in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Ruth has paid visits in many seasons to the Outer Hebrides where the covid-postponed exhibition is now scheduled to be held in June 2022, at Talla na Mara on Harris.

LUSKENTYRE

O sing to me of Luskentyre's white sands,
Sing of the distant Hebrides,
And in each note I'll hear the whispering wind
Searching the machair in a soft lament,
On memory's wings to carry me away
To a land where sea and sky hold sway,
Where the sound of waves on a windblown shore
A wearied soul may wondrously restore.



"Searching the Machair" Oil Painting 76x76cm

R.B.



LUSKENTYRE

O sing to me of glistening Luskentyre,
Changing with light, now pastel soft, now bold.



"Glistening Luskentyre - Isle of Harris" Oil Painting 40x40cm

R. B. d.



"Shifting Bands of Multi Hues" Oil Painting 40x40cm

LUSKENTYRE

With shifting bands of multi-hues, sky blue
Or shades of grey reflecting an approaching storm.
Sweet Summer's shades to monochrome give way,
Relentless storms sweep in across the bay,
As winter skies release a deluge drear,
A chink of light will offer welcome cheer.





LUSKENTYRE

O sing yet more of Luskentyre's fair strand,
My heart uplifted at such sweet refrain,
The haunting melodies of a thousand years,
Etched deep within my soul, there to remain.



RBI

"Luskentyre's Fair Strand" Oil Painting 40x40cm



LUSKENTYRE

With indigo-tinted Taransay in view
Across the silver sands, I dream anew.
The wild Atlantic beating on the shore,
Here would I gladly bide to roam no more.



"Indigo Tinted Taransay in View" Oil Painting 40x40cm

R.B.




"Peat Purple Rivers with Boats - Isle of Harris" Oil Painting 40x40cm





SOLITUDE

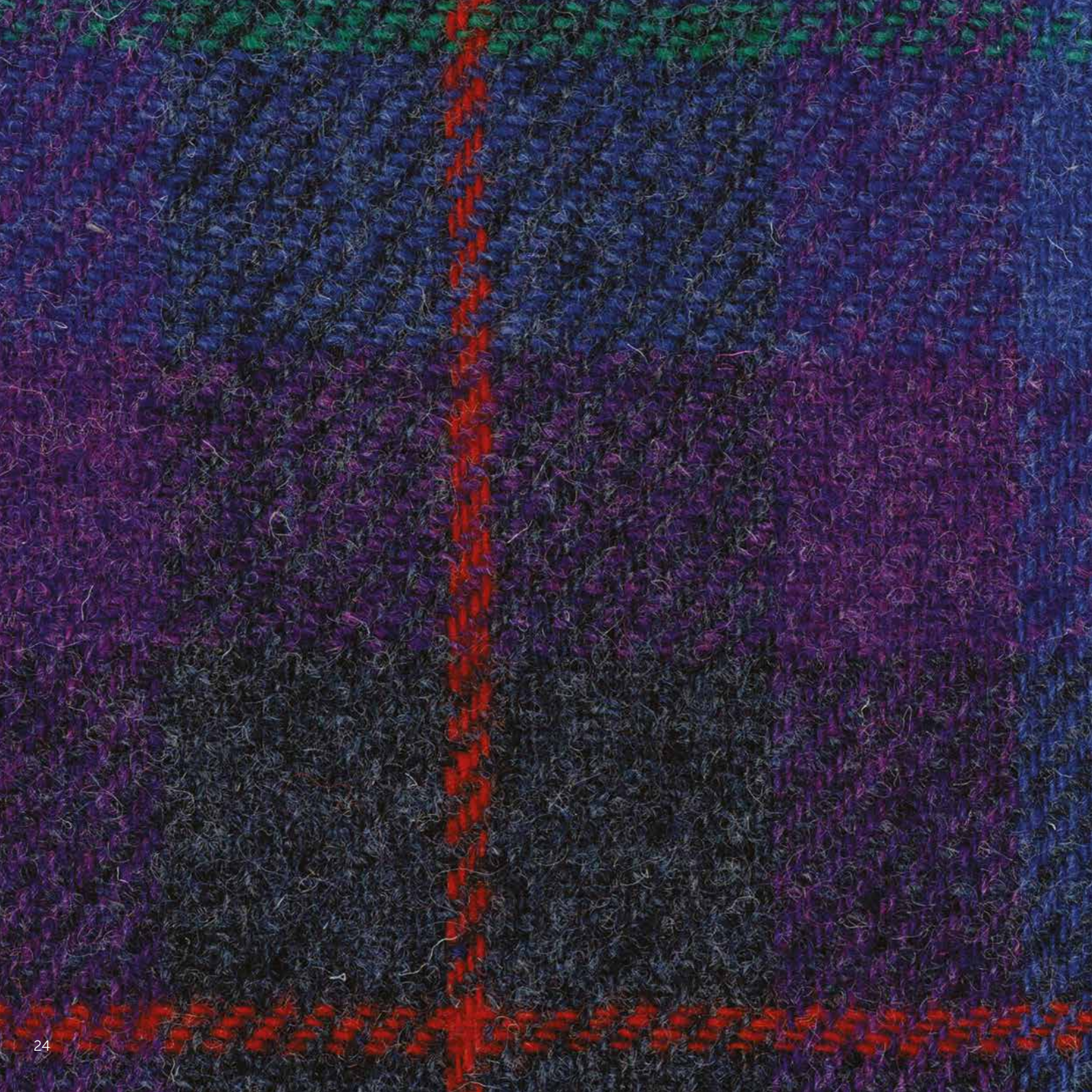
A song that echoes from a distant land,
Yet close, white-crested, lapping at my feet.
Sunlight and shadow, dancing on the strand,
Is this the place where Earth and Heaven meet ?
In quiet solitude, though not alone,
I sense the universe amidst the foam.



"Silver Sands of Eilean Siar" Oil Painting 40x40cm

Be





HARRIS TWEED

Look deep within these loosely-woven layers to find
Primeval land with ocean, sky and wind entwined.
Skilled hands and eyes of generations gone before
And peat smoke mingling with a sea mist on the shore.

In old and intricate design you may well sense
A solitary piper skirling a lament
Or view the purple heather blowing on the hill,
Or hear soft-spoken memories echoing still.

Some bold and joyful as a vibrant summer's day
And others tinted as an autumn bride's bouquet,
Some speak of wilderness and yet untrodden ways,
Some melancholic strangers to the sun's sweet rays.

With insight woven and a clarity of mind,
The rhythmic textures of the land we see defined.
With colours of the seasons, each piece of cloth unique
Of planet Earth and nature's harmony does speak.

Revered now far beyond its island home,
A homespun cloth of gold it has become.
Ambassadors for Scotland, yes indeed,
That's whisky, Robert Burns and Harris Tweed.



"Where Sea & Sand Hold Sway" Oil Painting 40x40cm

WHERE SEA AND SKY HOLD SWAY

They gleam and shimmer in the perfect light
of paradise, known to the ancient gods
as hallowed refuge, where the stars at night
pay homage from on high, and from the west
come ocean flower breezes, to a land
where sea and sand and sky hold boundless sway
and pastel multi-hues embrace the day,
where gentle rhythms echo on the shore
and birds exultant in the heavens soar.
These priceless pearls, set in silvered seas,
known to mere mortals as The Hebrides.



PERFECTLY FORMED

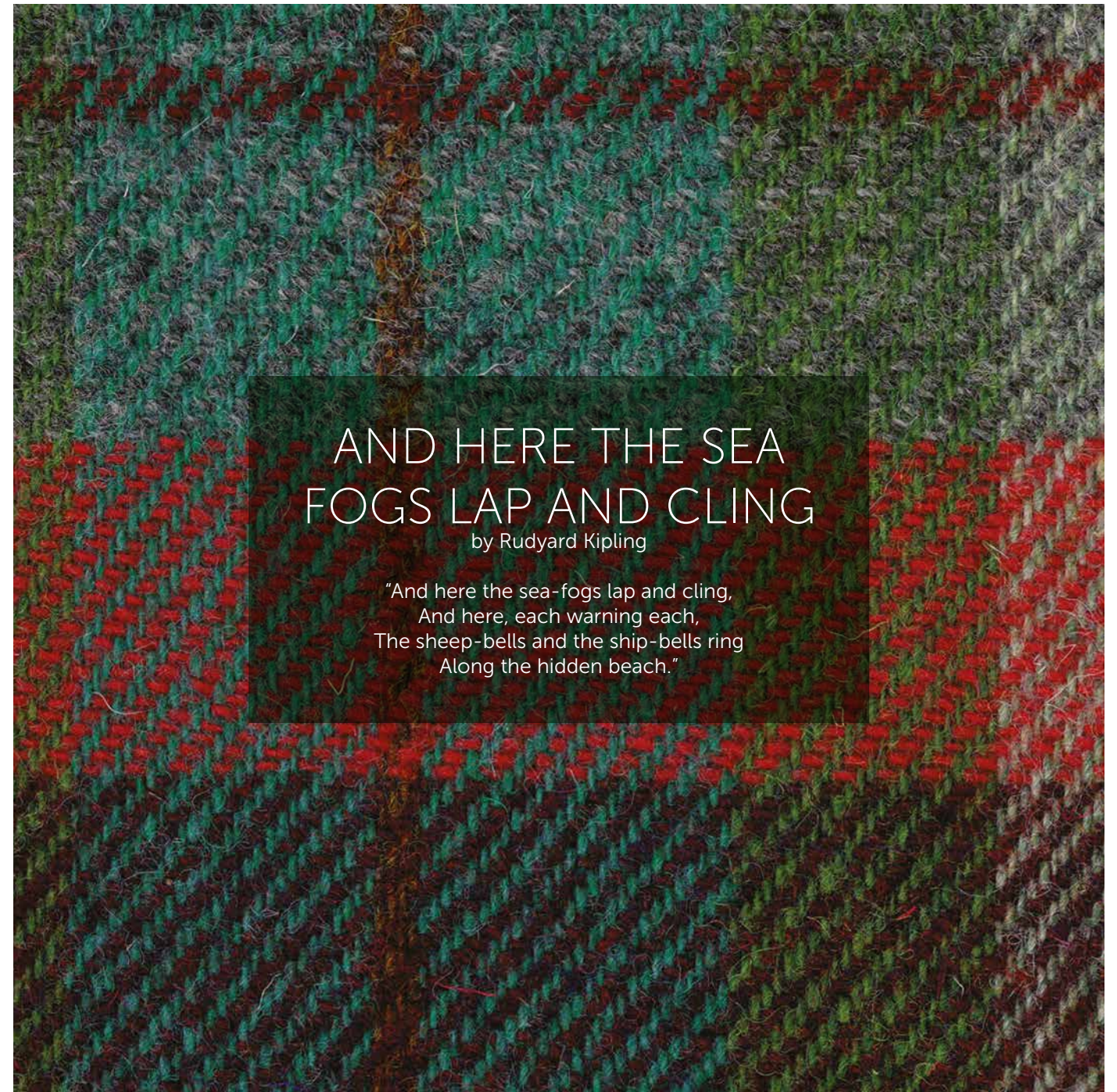
Perfectly formed in a challenging terrain,
low and squat they lie and ever-ready
to shrug off Hebridean wind and rain,
with weathered roofs and walls rock steady.
In days of yore, a refuge from the storm,
Now picturesque, and just a bit forlorn.



"Croft Red Door" Oil Painting 30x40cm



"And Here The Sea-fogs Lap And Cling - Isle of Lewis" Oil Painting 40x40cm



AND HERE THE SEA FOGS LAP AND CLING

by Rudyard Kipling

"And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,
And here, each warning each,
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring
Along the hidden beach."



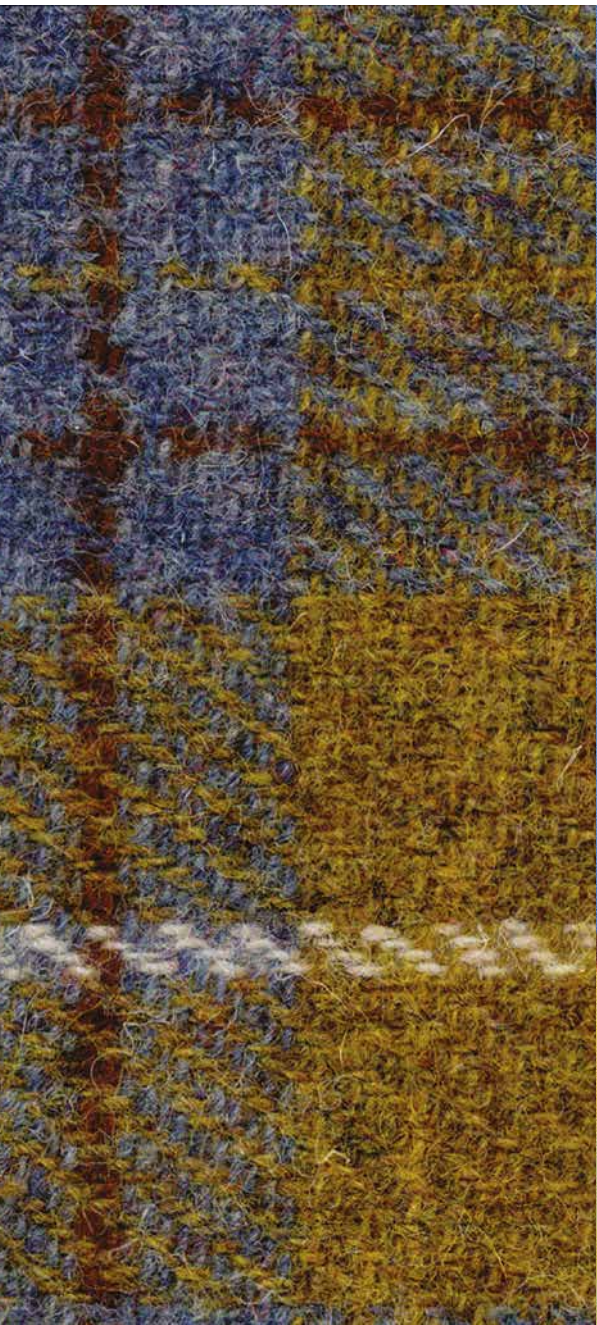
CANADIAN BOAT SONG

"From the lone shieling on the misty island
mountains divide us and a waste of seas.
But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
and we in dreams behold the Hebrides."

Anon



"Dawn Drench over Fisherman's Hut Isle of Lewis" Oil Painting 40x40cm





'Shades Of Kelp & Peat- Harris' Oil Painting 40x40cm

SCOTLAND'S ANTHEM

Love of my mother's Scotland knows no bounds,
Yet she, like me, was destined far to roam.
Her wistful music of the isles surrounds
My everyday, her voice so soft and low,
Sweet songs of love, and yet forever sad,
With veils of deepest melancholy clad.

A lonesome piper plays a slow lament
Or, boldly rousing, urges men to war,
From kith and kin they were so often sent
Their mist-clad hills and glens to see no more.
Or else to unknown futures overseas
A greedy and uncaring laird to please.

Today, as Scottish hearts still strongly beat,
Proudly as ever do they wave their nation's flag
Untrusting of the powers that would deplete
Their unity, their centuries old resolve
To be a sovereign nation once again.
"O Flower of Scotland" their heartfelt refrain.

DELUGE DREAR

Cushions of mauve piled high
above a lingering letterbox of light,
slow-shifting shades of darker hue
descend to deepening black upon the sea.

And all around is silent, still,
no birds, no wave-sounds, dried – up winter leaves
now cling as crisp and lifeless remnants
on the trees, mute in breathless air.

The purple backdrop drains to grey,
the fading light retreats and finally gives way.

A slight and almost-friendly breeze
ripples the water, rustles the trees.

A faintly muffled rumbling in the gloom,
a first few raindrops, innocently sparse,
Blown in upon a quickening wind.

The clouds converge, their prelude done,
Across the bay is launched a sudden storm,
A tempest from the wild Atlantic borne.
The huddled shoreline dwellings disappear,
Engulfed within a winter deluge drear.



"Deluge Drear - Isle of Lewis" Oil Painting 40x40cm



"Croft Purple Shadows" Oil Painting 30x60cm

HARRIS DAWN

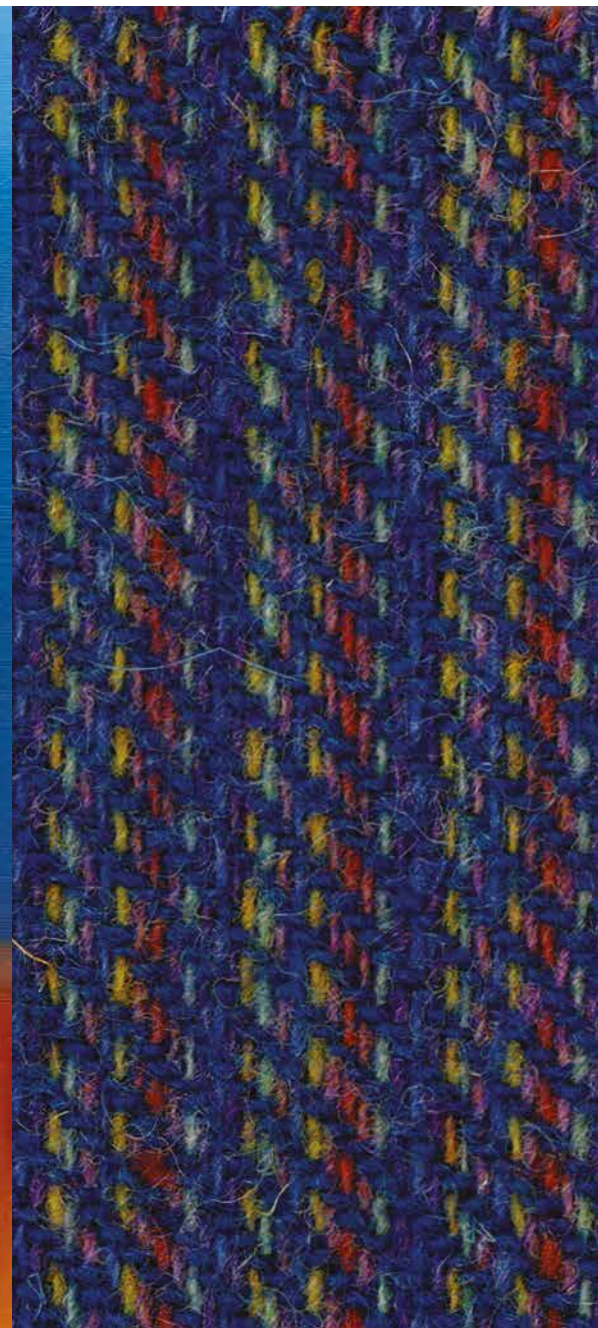
Peat smoke drifting in the frost-chilled air,
snugly a crofthouse slumbers in its lair.
As starlight sparkles on the hills around,
it drowsily awakens to a sound
from down the years, an infinite encore,
the ocean's heartbeat lapping on the shore.





"Croft with Montbretia Flowers - Isle of North Uist" Oil Painting 30x30cm





"Croft Black Roof Against Brooding Skies" Oil Painting 30x60cm

LIFEFORCE

I never thought that one day I might be
So separate and distanced from the sea,
And grey-blue mornings offering a cloak
Of cushioning velvet, where once I woke
So long ago, to watch the gannets dive
As silvered arrows from a tight-strung bow.

Those days were ever tinged with disbelief
That fate had held my hand, though all too brief,
And led me to this cherished place, where grace
And beauty did my other world replace.
It was, I know, with age now bittersweet,
The greatest gift that fortune could bestow.

In memory now I hear the ocean speak
Of all its moods when, waking or asleep,
I see and hear that lifeforce long forgone,
As to its beating heart forever drawn,
I ponder on the change it wrought in me,
And things that are, and things that weren't to be.



'Low Tide Shades of Purple Peat' - Luskentyre, Harris' Oil Painting 40x40cm



"Croft Spring Grasses" Oil Painting 30x40cm

THE CORNCRAKE

From deep within encroaching night there sounds
A solitary corncrake in the gloom.
His rasping never ending call surrounds
And echoes far beneath a cloudy moon.

A very private bird, he still must tell
The world at large of how he seeks a mate
To woo and win and then with her to dwell
In this his covert place inviolate.

Flag irises bloom in June out in the west,
The machair colours the Atlantic shores,
It's here the corncrakes choose to build their nest,

But she alone her tiny brood ensures
And sees them grow and ready to take wing,
For her sweet mate has gone philandering
And yet again before the summer's through,
He'll call to seek a new love to pursue.
Such is the way with corncrakes.



"Barra Corncrake Breeding Grounds" Oil Painting 40x40cm



"Abandoned Croft Sandy Bay – Isle of Harris" Oil Painting 40x40cm



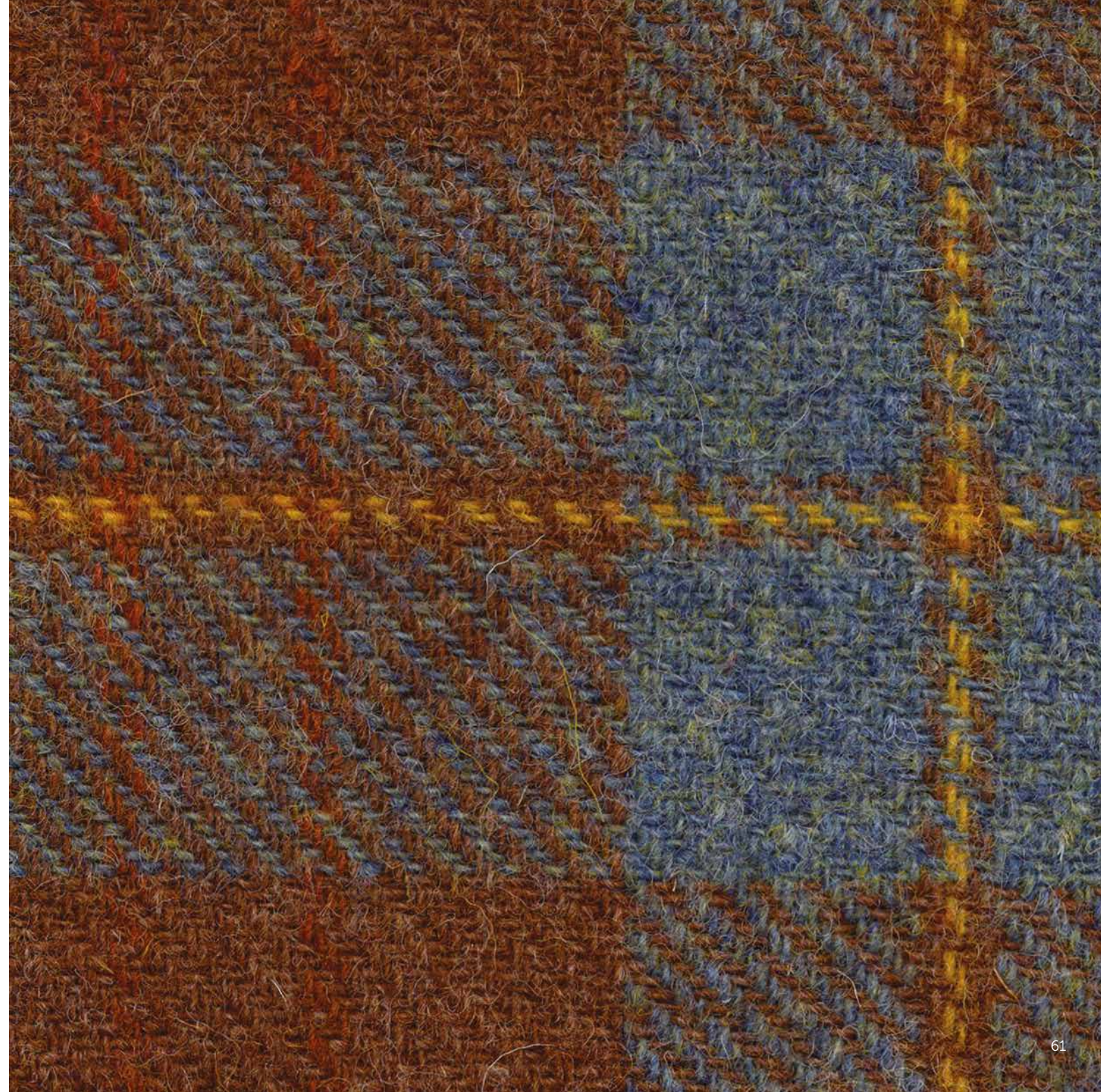


"Croft No Door" Oil Painting 30x40cm



THE LOCH IN WINTER

Stark shape defined against a winter sky,
A dormant beauty perfectly outlined,
Stripped bare of leaves, I cannot just pass by.
I pause to contemplate this scene sublime
And thank the Artist who, perhaps with me in mind,
To such effect these wintry elements combined.





"Oystery Light of Oh So Many Shells " Oil Painting 40x40cm



NO BOUGAINVILLEA HERE

For when the earth relents
As now it surely must,
A universal sigh is breathed
Across the waiting dormant land.
As expectation stirs, the great unveiling,
A curtain raised upon a glorious stage,
As now the islands of the west
With glorious spectacle are blessed.
To my mind, and for what it's worth,
The flowering of the machair
Is the greatest show on earth.



"Croft on Beach South Uist" Oil Painting 40x40cm



"Searching the Machair Study" Oil Painting 40x40cm

MACHAIR

Again the machair blooms. Again these wild
Atlantic shorelines, battered but unbowed
As the marram grass, survive the wayward
Blasts of winter, the silver sands endowed
With dancing colour, greeting the splendour
Of the budding year. A close bound repertoire
Of nodding harebells, celandines and thrift,
Clover, thyme and tiny eyebright, near and far,
A sweeping backdrop to the wave-washed shore.
Sea campion, marigold and silverweed,
Majestic iris, buttercup and mayweed,
Bashful wild orchids and a myriad more,
Each in their order pays homage to the sun,
Bedazzling the eye, High Summer has begun.

LEWIS DAWNING

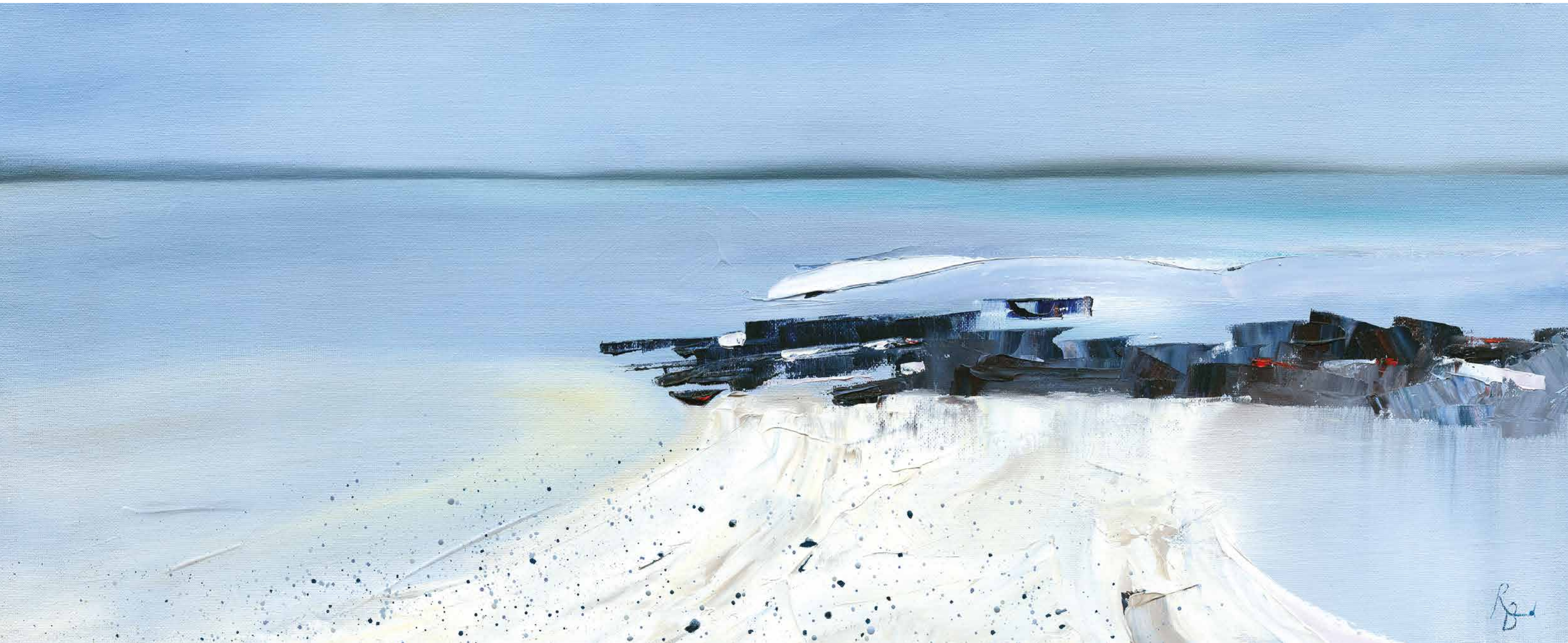
The wind is moaning
Mist forlorn and low.
The hills are softly sketched
In monochrome.
The village blinks awake
From Sabbath slumber.
A bleating lamb is huddled at the field's edge,
Uncomprehending,
It wonders at its birthright.
No silver light is falling from the sky
To ease this cloak of grey,
And yet, on this bleak, dreich
Hebridean dawn,
A sound to cheer,
Delight, surprise,
Just as the rain is
Falling, falling,
I hear a cuckoo -
Calling, calling.



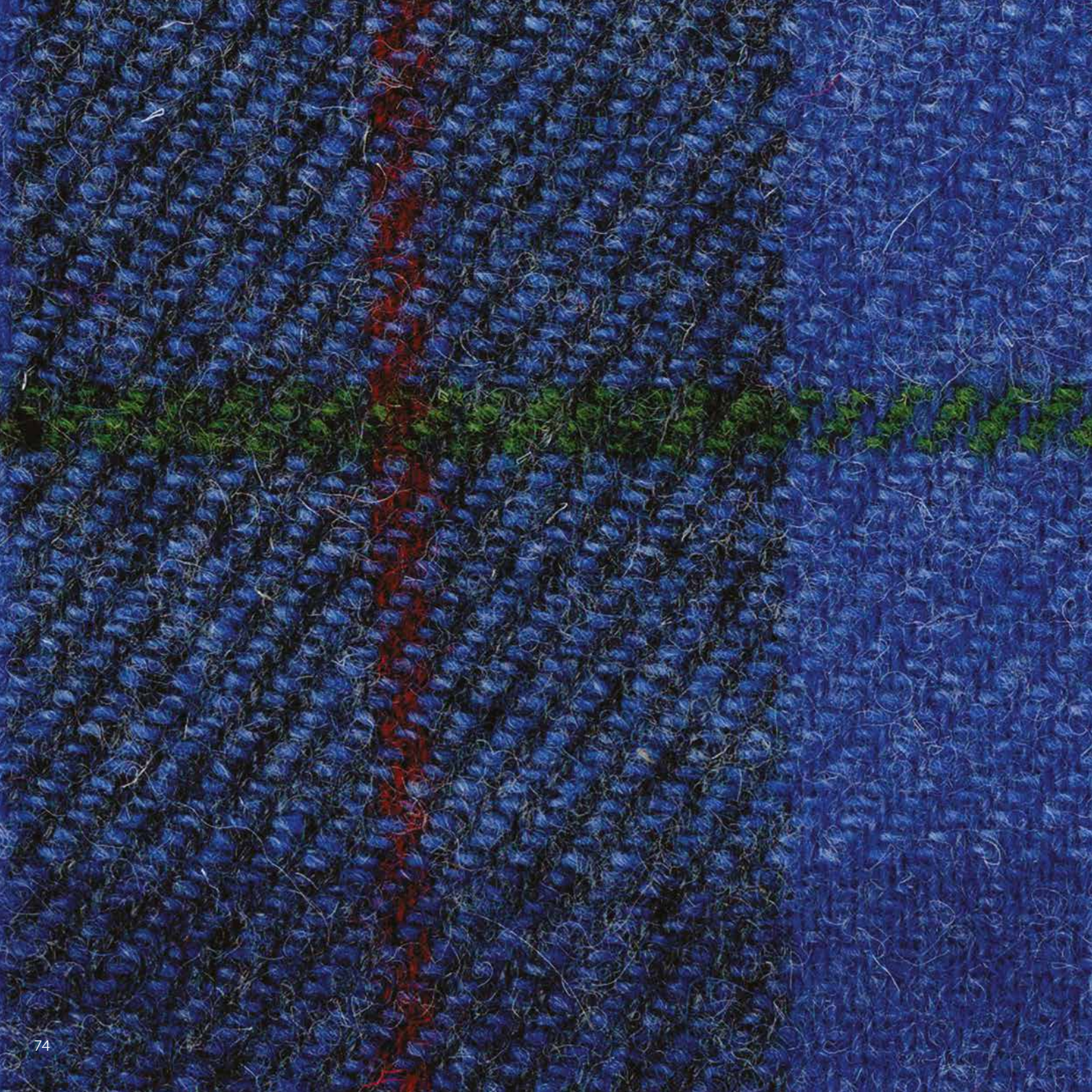
"Deep Within The Misty Heath - Isle Of Lewis" Oil Painting 40x40cm



"Searching the Machair" Oil Painting 40x40cm



"Turquoise Waters Reveal Oyster White Sands, Harris" Oil Painting 30x80cm



BRIEF VISITATIONS

Brief visitations with each restless tide,
Mysterious creatures with outstretched wings
Or fairy ballerinas ruby-eyed.
Such ocean denizens each new wave brings
So soon to be erased, to vanish without trace,
To reassemble in another time and place.





£20