

**THE UNNAMED FLOWER***(with original paintings by the author)***KENGO KURIMOTO**

Things are never quite how they seem.

What first appears to be a quaint sequence of botanical paintings turned out to be a turbulent story of love, grasping and being forced to let go. It all began with good intentions.

I never even found out her name.

I first came in contact with her when sauntering in the sunny herb garden. Anne skipped towards me holding a tiny violet flower and it was love at first sight. Smaller than a fingernail, she confidently spread her tiny royal velvet petals revealing two bold white marks leading up to her open mouth. Her tailored cut was so sharp she would have been intimidating if not for her curious puppy-ear-shaped petals on top.

Anne led me to the spot where she had found the flower, nestled in a tight gap between cracked stone paving slabs. I was surprised that she was one of many, a profusion of hundreds of violet faces as gorgeous as hers looking past me towards the south sun.

As I looked closer, amongst the bloom of the maidens, I could see tiny lime green buds awaiting their moment aside old dresses that hung shrivelled and dry. It was then that I saw the motion; every moment in the flower's life was captured like frames of celluloid in the deceptively still faces of her sisters.

Enthused, I set about studying her in more detail. I began with a quick pencil sketch recording the transformation from bud to flower. I looked at each bud, each flower and everything in between, ordering them into a sequence like a jigsaw puzzle in time.

The most striking moment for me was an intermediary stage where the bud had swelled to what looked like a neatly folded parcel prepared by an origami master. I extrapolated how the parcel would unfurl, lengthening and darkening in colour, each unfolding making way for the next before reaching out to her full, gorgeous stature.

It quickly became clear that my line drawings were inadequate to record what was happening here. The transformation of colour for one; from primal lime green to baby pink to the striking royal violet that had first caught my eye. The forms of the delicate folds also needed the play of light to give them form, as too did the succulent, translucent stems and the waxy sheen on the leaves.

After numerous failed attempts, having exhausted "how to paint" books and run out of mediums to blame, I lay on the cold damp slabs for one last try. Autumn had come and I was anxiously aware of the short window before the frost might end it all. I had chosen a dependably overcast day since sun in autumnal Devon could not be guaranteed and a change of light half way through would spell disaster.

Progress was painfully slow, with a crick in my neck and my front ached from cold of the ground. The wind was picking up with sweeping waves of rustling leaves. The tiny bud I was painting bobbed around as I dizzily tried to focus on her, until I was forced to hold her still.

Then, without warning, everything intensified into an orgasmic dazzle of pinks, violets, lime greens, as she frolicked provocatively, veiled by layers of dancing shadows from distant trees.

"Blast! The damn sun's come out!" as I looked down at my drab, flat looking painting for which I had spent the last two hours in the freezing damp. I looked up at the sky and the reassuringly solid block of cloud had begun to break up, along with my hopes of capturing this devious plant. At that moment, I plucked her from the ground and stomped into the warmth.

I placed her in a small vase from the kitchen table, propped up with blu tack, and arranged in a perfect composition on my windowsill. A white sheet of card blocked out the background and the window would only be opened if the wind behaved. Now I could capture her true beauty. The irony niggled at the back of my mind, but I felt more confident of the task.

Indeed it was easier. My window gets little direct sunlight and the monochrome background contrasted her sinuous shape, but most importantly she was still. There were long, painful periods when I despaired that even this setup would not save me, but at one point I sat back and saw traces of her aliveness in my painting. What a relief.

I loved her attitude; leaves outstretched in a jaunty, youthful pose, head cocked to one side with five punk-rock sepals and a glimpse of a pert pink bud inside. She caught the light on the tops of her leaves with a slightly bumpy, waxy sheen, but the rest of her had an iridescent translucency that made her glow like a lime green lantern as the light infused her. I was excited by her watery potential, free and not yet defined.



With a new found confidence, I moved onto the next painting. I aimed for seven in total, with the full bloom in the centre. I was excited by this one since it was the stage of the pink origami parcel that had captured my imagination in the first place.

Her bud had now swelled to a hundred times the size with a full rosy blush, her folds sharply defined like the face of a cat. Having outed herself, her five sepals, darkening to purple at the tips, now formed a spiky ruff around her slender neck. I sensed the energy of coiled spring in her tightly packed form. In a bold stride outward, she breathed air into her body. Her tightness released into lightness as her taut violet robes cracked open like offering hands. Those five sepals, darker still, formed a fitting crown and her stem bowed to the weight of her royal head. The last curtsy before going to the ball.

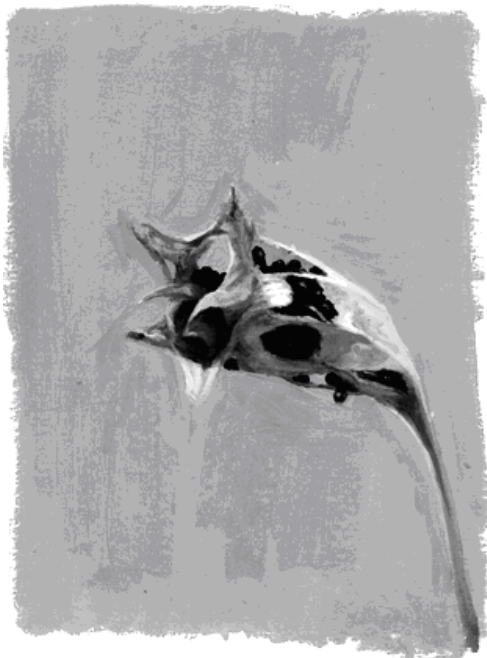
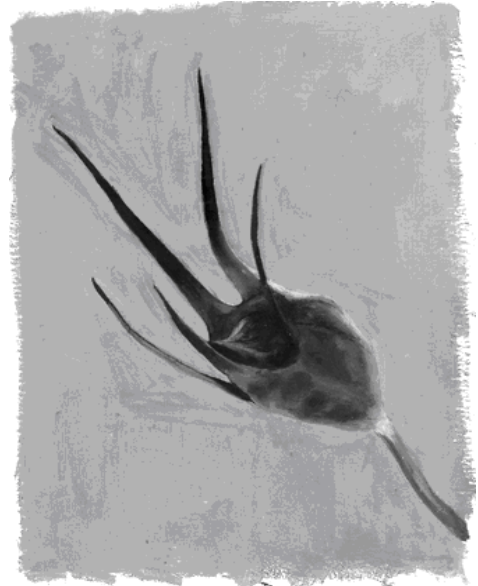


She arrived. Crown wore high and robes outstretched in glorious royal velvet abandon. Those beckoning ears leading down to her open mouth and sweet ultra violet breath, her top lip fluffy with pollen. Those two white marks came last, the final touch for her maiden's gown. Now she was ready for sex.



The moment passed with a fleeting buzz. Her dress now hung dry and shrivelled, sepal crown browned, she had different priorities now. Behind her withered face was a swelling of sap, glowing that same luminous lime green as her watery youth.

Dress fallen and naked again, what was once her crown humbly shrouded her beak-like face. Her skin was becoming thin and leathery, turning red in colour and pulled taut across her ribs. Light shone through her huge swollen body, revealing the brooding shadows within.



A parched, crumbling skeleton laden with jewel-like crimson seeds. The five sepals now a ragged star, and her beak split in two. Ribs exposed, her skin flaked away and as she disintegrated, released her heirs to the world.

I was moved writing this story.

I felt a heavy sadness when I was on the last picture; the loss of something feisty, beautiful and full of life. Here, for such a fleeting moment, before giving herself over to her seeds. That on-going transformation from one form to the next, each change is full of wonder, but some are harder to bear.

I was surprised by my reaction since I did not get this feeling while painting. I was only too aware of capturing her fantastical forms, but that sense of a beautiful fleeting life came just now.

How ironic that it was all just an illusion; that sequence of pictures was not of one flower, but many; each captured at a moment in her metamorphosis. Her glorious floral display would never have born seed, since

locked away on my windowsill, the bee had no chance of passing her by. In fact none of them would continue to transform; having been plucked from the soil, they all faced the same premature fate.

I remember while painting her in full bloom. I cursed as her petals curled inward, her life force ebbing away. Fresh subjects had to be picked to finish the job, and their differences were averaged into one. And upon return from a quick break for lunch, I was horrified to find the rosy blushed bud with her neck limp and head mournfully drooped. In the final painting, a blind eye was turned to my giant fingers holding her head high for the pose.

In my quest for the perfect image and to remove life's unpredictabilities, I found myself instead fending off the inconveniences of decay. And in my attempts to grasp it, I would capture something already gone. Caught up in my hopes and fears, the miracle passed me by.

In the end, all I could be sure of was that life is changes.

I can look fondly at that sequence of the flowers' remarkable lives, their textbook passage from bud to seed.

But there is no denying that her spirit lies elsewhere;

...down between the cold damp slabs, veiled by layers of dancing shadows from distant trees, frolicking provocatively in the sun.



**Kengo Kurimoto** is a visionary, creator and collaborator with a social and ecological foundation. He is currently studying Holistic Science at Schumacher College in order to further ground his design industry experience with a deeper connection to the Earth.

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Online book at: **<http://blur.by/1fpQvkN>**