

Illustrating and Writing



I grew up on the east coast of Scotland, born to Irish parents. My earliest memories all revolve around drawing, encouraged by a mother who was also an artist. For me, drawing and painting are critical forms of communication – and meditation.

I trained in Design at Cardiff Art College in the early seventies and then went on to train as a teacher for primary age children, with art as my specialist subject. My creativity – when the pressure of work allowed – has evolved in many different ways since that time through different stimuli, professions and occupations: teaching art to children and young people of primary and secondary age, adults with severe and profound learning disabilities; teaching gardening to children; working in community and domestic gardens and working around twenty years as a Social Worker. In addition, I worked as a library assistant for four years in the early eighties.

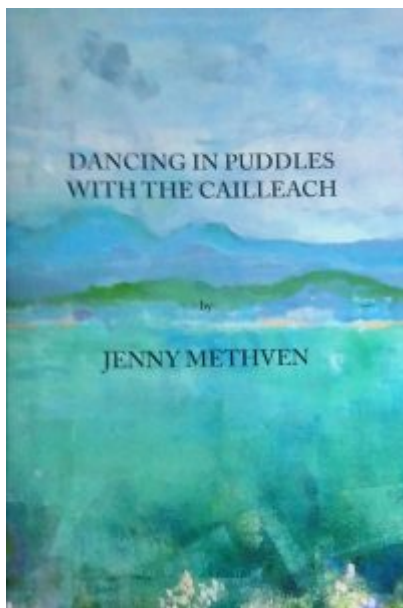
Now retired, I have returned to my first love – drawing and painting. I am now a full-time artist who also writes.

Much of my artwork and writing is based on themes relating to nature, my connection to it and to the animal world. In the past, I used words purely in note form to guide me in painting, but it was just shorthand for my eyes only. Over the years I have let the words expand into poems. Other work has begun purely as a series of visual images without words; the words come later.

It can be difficult to explain why some ideas become poems or other pieces of writing, while others are so visual they become paintings or drawings. I just know what is right for me: I see some experiences as strong visual images suited to artwork only and others demand the written word.



The *Moon Hare* poem was one of my poems accepted for Poetry NI's *Panning for Poems*, issue 4, Jan 2016. I initially created it as a poem on its own but later the image of the hare came to me and the two were combined.



My book – the collection of poems, *Dancing in Puddles with the Cailleach* – is illustrated with my own paintings and drawings.

I have created 'glyphs' (small black images – above) for chapter headings and illustrated maps for my husband's historical novel, *The Hare's Vision*. The glyphs are a means of adding interest and highlighting a general theme of the chapter; the maps provided detail of the journeys in the story.

I love books. I spent a year working in a bookshop and four years in a library. It was close to being a chocoholic in a chocolate factory. I have grown interested in the book as an art form in itself, much like the early books created by Medieval scribes.

At the moment I have several projects underway. One is creating illustrations for a children's book I am writing. I began this when I was still teaching. I am also using linocuts mixed with other media to create small books to illustrate particular poems I have written.



Jenny Methven