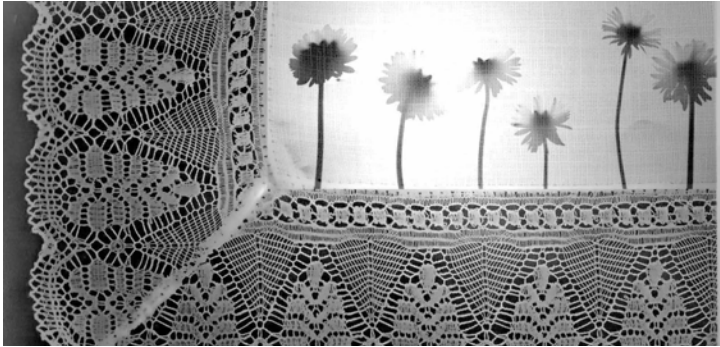


Sheena Graham-George

REQUIESCAT



The forgotten mothers in the cillín





REQUIESCAT

The forgotten mothers in the cillín

*A grey damp day, the sky heavy over the cillin. Standing in
this cold, desolate field gazing down at the stones by my feet
I wonder how many mothers lie buried in these sites, silent,
anonymous and innocent, and what their lives had been like.*

Teetering on the edge of the sea, or sometimes situated on a lonely windblown hilltop or maybe secreted away amongst fields, trees and farmland, the cillíní lie hidden; clandestine graveyards silently folded away within Ireland's rural landscape. From medieval times up until as late as the 1970s these children's burial grounds were once the final resting place for un-baptised babies, the stillborn or miscarried.

Yet the cillíní are also where some adults were laid to rest. Both adults and babies alike, refused burial in the consecrated churchyard as they lacked the spiritual credentials, or in the case of the adults, they had broken the religious or social rules which held sway at the time to enable access.

These individuals included strangers and those whose religion was unknown, suicides and shipwrecked sailors, murderers and murder victims, sometimes the famine dead and those with mental disabilities and women who died in childbirth.

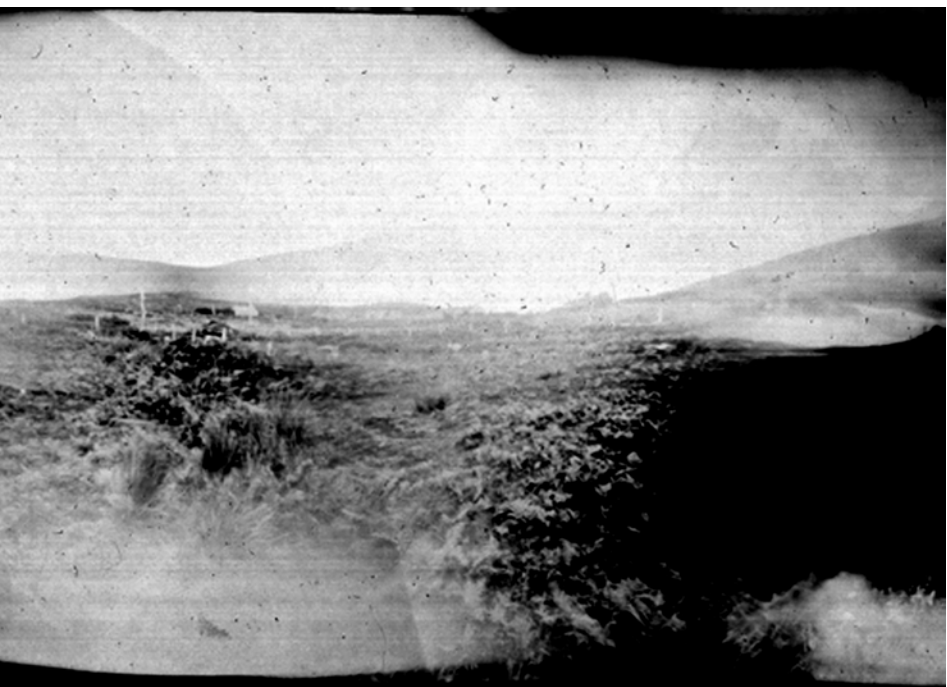
It is this last group that *Requiescat* remembers and goes in search of - the mothers who died in childbirth. These women have almost been erased and eclipsed from the present-day story of the cillíní even though threads of oral history handed down to us recalls that these mothers were buried in the cillín.

But why would a woman who died in pregnancy, childbirth or shortly after giving birth be buried in a cillín? *Requiescat* is an art sound work which attempts to answer this very question of who these women were and the social and religious circumstances which might have precipitated their burial within a cillín.

Using audio interviews with individuals from County Kerry, field-recordings, and archive audio from the National Folklore Collection, *Requiescat* traces the story behind who these women were and why they might have been buried here. Using personal memories and narratives the sound-work explores motherhood, birth, death and the cillín.

REQUIESCAT





Tread lightly, she is near





Under the snow,





Speak gently, she can hear





The daisies grow.

Acknowledgements

I am eternally grateful to everyone who has been part of this journey. My heartfelt thanks go to all those who were generous enough to share their time, stories, memories and endless cups of tea with me. You know who you are.

Without you *Requiescat* would not have happened.

Poem - The lines of the poem are from Requiescat by Oscar Wilde.

Photos - All pinhole photography and photograms by Sheena Graham-George.

Sound-work - Fiddle music composed and played by Anne Wood. Archive audio courtesy of the National Folklore Collection, UCD. Field recordings, composition, soundscape, mixing and editing by Sheena Graham-George. Extra sound effects Zapsplat and Freesound.

CD printing and Typeetting – Angelica Kroeger

Sheena Graham-George is an artist and researcher. Since her first encounter with the cillini in 2009 during a residency at the Heinrich Böll Cottage on Achill Island she has researched and created work about the cillini. Requiescat is part of her doctoral studies at Glasgow School of Art.



the sound of memory