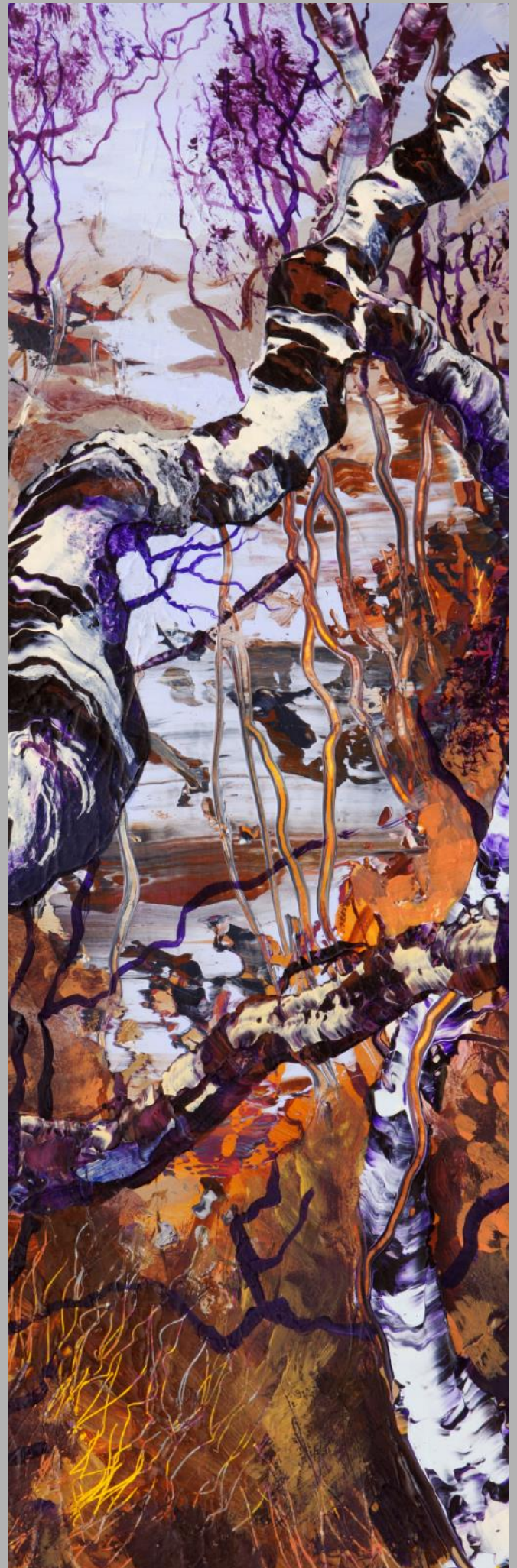


BETULACEAE

the Lady of the
Woods

Paintings by
James Hawkins

2020



Betulaceae

the Lady of the Woods

To our Celtic ancestors the birch tree meant a fresh start, renewal – youth, new beginnings, starting again and purification/cleansing.

It all began with a walk up the river Kirkaig last autumn, there were nine of us, all ages from grandparents to grandchildren and we had a pack of dogs, lurchers, Inuit's and a young English shepherd pup for whom it was quite a long way. It was another glorious day in a particularly fine season, a long wet summer had been followed by a balmy autumn with little wind, the sun shone and the leaves lingered longer than usual on the trees; the colours were extra ordinary, well not really ordinary at all, they glowed as if lit from within.

The Kirkaig is a spate river that tumbles over rocks, through gullies and precipitous ravines for five kilometres from Fionn Loch down to the sea at Inver Kirkaig. The path starts out beside the river and gradually climbs high above it, the glen through which both path and river run is full of birches, rowans, hazel and willow trees; some are young and vigorous and others gnarled and twisted by long years of stormy weather, they cling to precipitous rock faces or gurgle in bogs. Deep still pools in the river give way to sparkling swirling eddies, climbing higher you pass rapids and small waterfalls, then near Fionn Loch the river tumbles in a mighty torrent over the edge of the Moine thrust, roaring as it crashes into the seething black cauldron below.

Over the winter months I have lived with the memory of this and other warm bright days of autumnal splendour, I didn't set out to make a document of that time but somehow it chose the way and I happily followed. Like the best projects it had its own internal legs, I just needed to be still and listen, one thing suggested another and then another again. In the end I only stopped because a project about Eilean Subhainn in Loch Maree has been on hold for so long that I'm going to burst if I don't start soon... hopefully I'll tell you all about it next time!



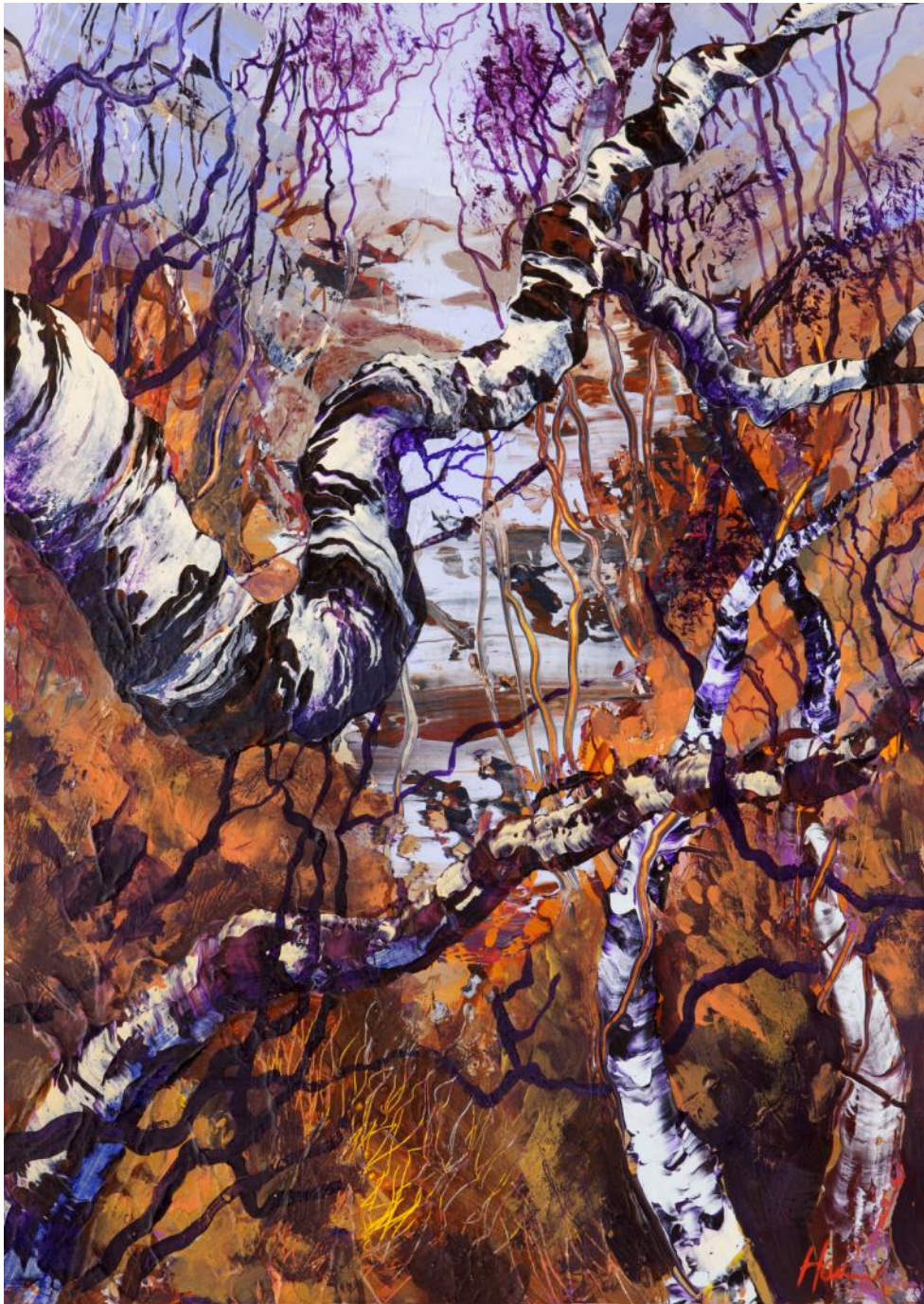
Birches above the Kirkaig

Acrylic on paper 30 x 42 cm 2019



Birches above a Lochan

Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm 2019



Birches above two Lochans

Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm 2020



Big Birch above the Falls

Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm 2020



Birches above a stream

Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm 2019



Two Birches at the head of the Strath

Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm 2020



Sunlit Birches

Acrylic on paper

42 x 60 cm

2020



Birches beside the Kirkaig

Acrylic on paper 60 x 42 cm 2019



Birches above the Kirkaig in spate

Acrylic on paper

60 x 42 cm

2019



Memories of Assynt

Acrylic on canvas 76 x 92 cm 2020



Waterfall at InverLael

Acrylic on canvas

122 x 92 cm

2020



Birches above the Kirkaig

Acrylic on canvas

122 x 92 cm

2020

RHUEART