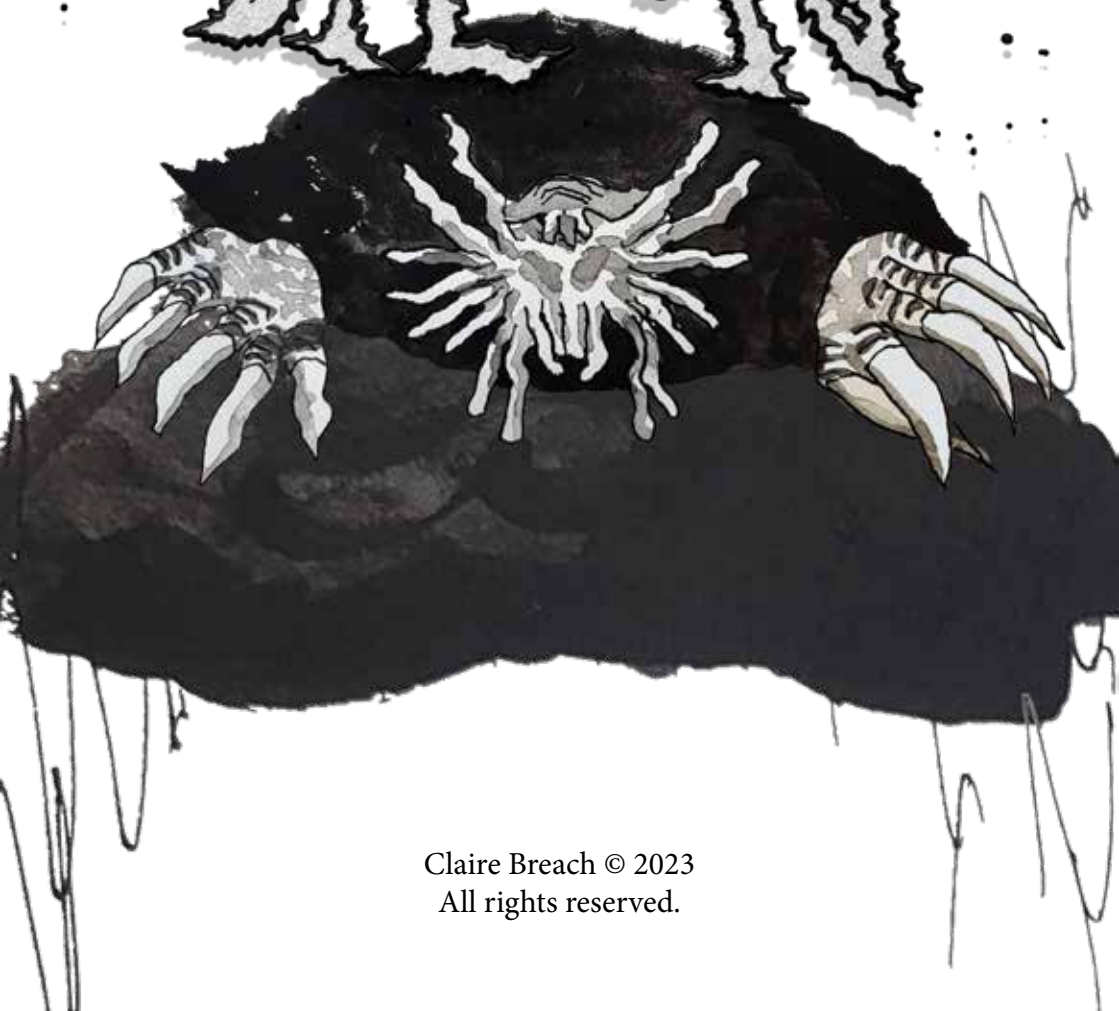


HILLS TO DIE ON



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FORWARD

“You take the boring pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the mole pill, you stay in the underworld, and I show you how deep the mole hole goes.”

Molepheus from the Mortrix

Consider the mole. Is it friend or foe? If you chose foe, then know your battle with moles is futile; for if you destroy a molehill, another one will inevitably pop up. Must we condemn ourselves to this eternal game of whack-a-mole? In our temporary existence, we trip over molehills because we evade sitting with our own mortality.

If we inspect, we will see that these forts designate passageways to the underworld, inhabited by the blind and burrowing undertakers.

Welcome to “Hills to Die on”, a project about moles I worked on as a student at the Royal college of Art.

It was originally a performance involving wheeling around on a “moleboard”, eating “soil”, and playing whack-a-mole. It was performed in multiple versions, there was one version which involved collaborating with my coursemate Xieni, where she recited her own thoughtful “molenogue” on the subject of soil. This zine only includes the transcript I wrote for this performance alongside my illustrations, as the independent version of the project. There also exists a version featuring both her and my “molelogues” available in circulation which I recommend reading if you find yourself in possession of a copy.

Thank you to:

Cameron Jarvie, Xanthe Horner, Xieni Zhou, Tam Lin, Martin Mcgrath, Ken Hollings, Luke Pendrell, Anthony Breach.
For all your encouragement.

I hope you enjoy reading this zine.

Claire

Find me on instagram @Rhubarcode

“The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awoken in my head.
But I’ve no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I’ll dig with it.”

Excerpt from Seamus Heaney’s *Digging*

What's that`?

There's a mole in my garden.

I remember the last time I saw a mole was when I was a child.

Was it during a revisit to Northern Ireland?

No, it couldn't have been.

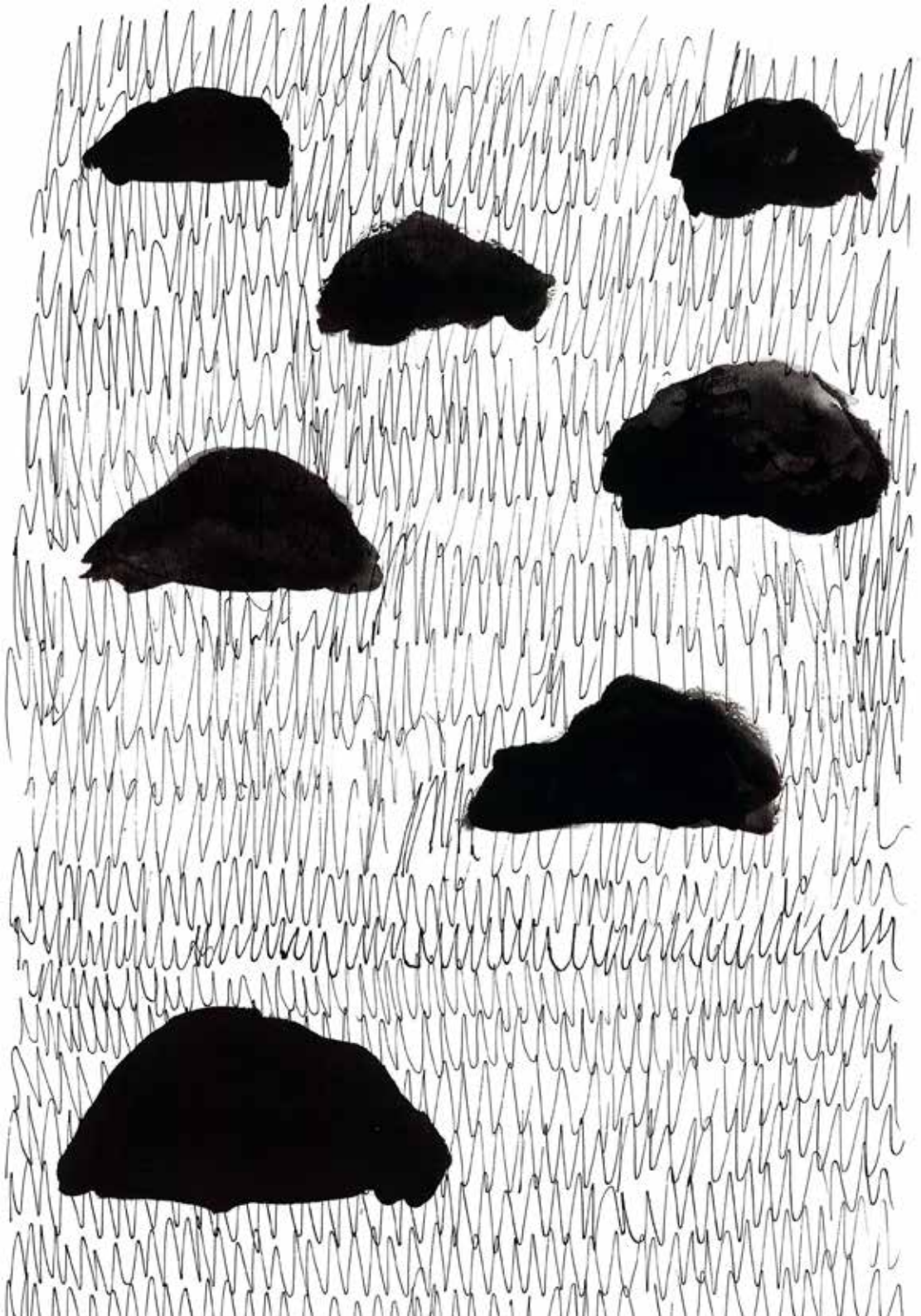
Why?

Because there are no moles in Ireland.

Where are they?

They're all gone...

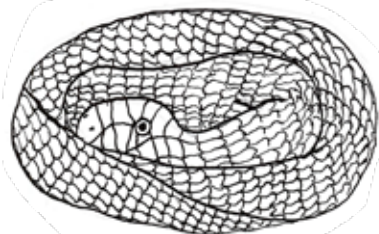




It's a complete myth you know,
that Saint Patrick chased out all
the snakes of Ireland.

Instead, he chased out all the
moles.

And the snakes naturally followed
the moles for their
dinner.





Now, why did St Patrick not like moles?

These good moles.

It was because they got on his nerves.

See, they would

pop up

in his garden and he would use his long staff...

To whack em!

But then another one would

pop up.

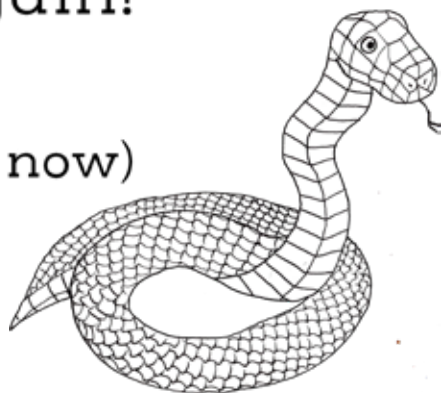
And so he would use his long staff...

To whack em again!

And again,

(you get the picture now)

he'd whack em!





And so that was how the game *whack-a-mole* was invented.

But *whack-a-mole* was not the legacy that Saint Patrick wanted; He wanted to be remembered for *Saint Patricks Day*,

This holy day



of the sesh.

So he banished all the moles then went down the pub to buy everyone a round.



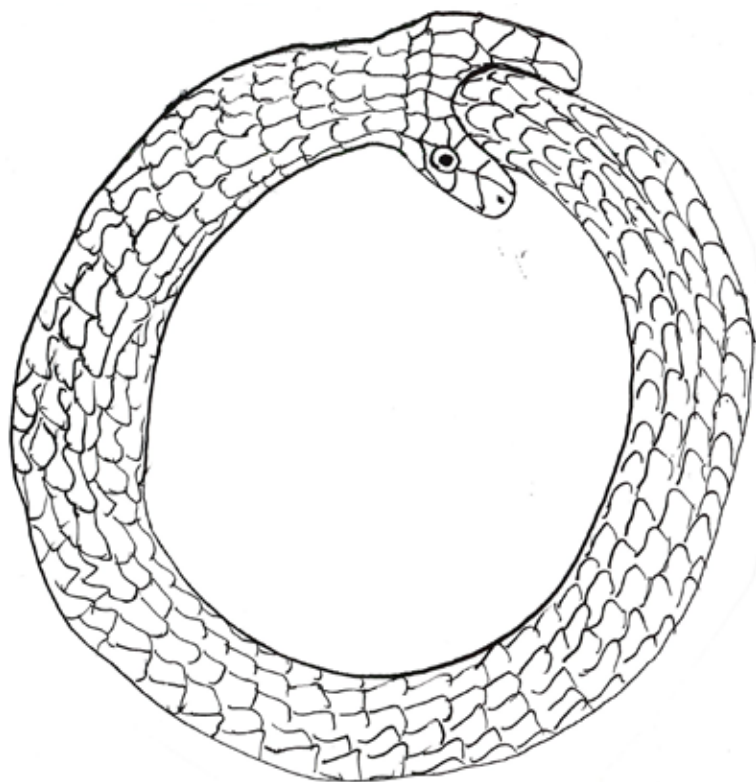
Because of misconceptions of
St Patrick chasing out the snakes
alongside his invention of
whack-a-mole,
this is how the American tradition
of *snake-whacking-day*
originated.

As seen in the popular
American anime series
The Simpsons.

It all comes full circle you see.
Like the *Orris-Borris*
The snake that ate itself
because it mistook its tail for a

mole.

itself, it comes full circle you see like Orris-Borris the snake that ate



Returning to this mole I saw as a
child,
it wasn't in Ireland so it must have
been Scotland.

And I remember this mole
lying on the ground.

It was dead.

A

minature

velvet

cushion



So I sat on it and wrote a poem.



Hills to Die On

There are moles in the ground

And moles on your skin

See those moles in the sound

They're moles from within





Now for a real history lesson:
If we were to go back in time,
We could witness the mole that killed a king.

One day when William III was out on horseback in
Scotland, his horse struck a molehill and he fell off,
injuring himself.

By this accident the king broke his collar-bone, a
Severe illness followed, and he died a few days
later.

For this reason the Jacobites would make a toast to
This murderous mole.
They would say
Raise your glass to the wee gentleman in velvet!



There once was a mole in a mound
Who kept disturbing Irish ground
So St Pat got his staff
And whacked the mole's gaff
Now that mole's UK Bound