

Urtica something something

Latin names sound so alien and vague, and sometimes come in handy for a title when you don't really know what you're doing yet.

The text is an excerpt from my journal, which I started recently. I want to say yesterday, but it might have been a day or two ago. I never had one before. I also attempted to write in my native Lithuanian which doesn't come very easy to me but now that I have done it, I had to translate it. The English version is a rough translation, feels strange to be accurate on something so mundane and cluttered with unnecessary details. I feel like I am not very good at it.

Tuesday, 30th of April

People usually don't grow nettles indoors but I managed to. Seemed like a happy plant. Bright green and stings when you stroke her. Yesterday she must have had a proper shock. I came in the morning and pulled her out with all roots from a planter which she was sharing with a palm tree. I put her in the plastic bag from Lidl which smelled heavily of wild garlic from the day before. I almost feel more sorry for choosing this bag than uprooting her. I took her on the train to Glasgow. She has never been on one. I didn't buy her ticket, but thinking now, maybe I should have had in the spirit of my residency time during which I proposed to explore stinging nettle consciousness. I would have got her an off peak one to Pollokshields East. Single. When we arrived at Tramway and I finally got her out of the smelly bag, I took her next to the window. It was raining. Something I thought my stinging nettle would like. I didn't take her down to the garden, maybe I was lazy or distracted, I can't recall now. Probably a bit of both knowing myself.

In a bit of a naive manner I brought some compost from home, I thought she might get homesick. But for the time being I just put her in a big tub from Greek yoghurt, again something I got in Lidl. It is quite a spacious container, maybe a one litre or so.

To make things up, I was playing the record which had music for plants on repeat. Yesterday after the day's long listening to "Plantasia", I discovered a new high. My head felt slightly funny and overall I felt dizzy and needed to lay down. I was hoping this music for plants will make me feel a bit closer to my nettle plant. But it just made me feel closer to the ground.

When I am back home I need to remember to put some kind of bucket under the drainpipe tonight. Want to collect rain for my stinging nettle, so I could bring that with me tomorrow.

At this point my translation ends and journaling continues only in English. I figured it was easier.

Wednesday, 1st of May

It hasn't rained. I felt like I couldn't show up empty handed so I filled spray bottle with tap water and gave label saying 'rainwater' and yesterday's date. I think she will know I lied but at least she could see my effort.

I gave her a good spray when I arrived. I also sprayed portrait of her which I made yesterday. Not sure why, probably because it was next to my stinging nettle.

Later on I got a bit bored and tried to get purposely stung, which isn't so easy when you are after it. Got two stung on my left hand. Drew a green circle around them. For the rest of my morning I was sitting on the couch and strangely enjoying the tingles.

Later on I went to the garden downstairs. At very far back, I came across a big planter with a patch of nettles surrounding some plant which now I can't remember what it was but for which I presume that big planter was intended for. I snipped a few tops of the nettles for a tea to share with a studio guest later. I instantly felt bad. Probably because it just didn't sit in line with other things I was trying to do for the last couple of days thinking of stinging nettle as my companion. And now here I am drinking her cousin or whoever.

Tea was nice. And chat with it too. For the rest of the day I had a strong migraine and was lying on the dance floor looking through the skylight thinking that this might be the punishment, which I gladly took hoping we are split even. Although having said that tomorrow my plan is to make nettle noodles. In my defence I will use dried nettles from last year which I picked whilst in England, hopefully this is far enough.

Thursday, 2nd of April

When I arrived in the morning first thing I noticed that my stinging nettle was unwell. Most of her leaves were wilted and in general seemed like she's struggling. I reckon it's too warm in the studio. I tried to rescue the situation. I put the music for plants record on and took her next to the speaker. Then the more practical me decided to changed the water which she was sitting in since Monday. I am thinking if I should put her in the compost that I brought from home, cause the roots got slightly rotten in the warm water.

Before I started to work on noodle dough I decided to had a closer look at my stinging nettle. I separated the branches which had roots on them and put then the compost. I tidied up the remaining and put it in a fresh water. For the rest of the day I kept both containers in a deep metal sink and sprayed fake rain water every 15 minutes or so.

The nettle noodles which I made in the afternoon were hanging on chopsticks taped to the table surface. My stinging nettle still looked rather sad. I ran out of ideas on how to help her and went to catch a train back home.

Friday, 3rd of May

I showed up to the studio with oven gloves. Thought I could give a hug to my nettle, but again upon the arrival I noticed that there was no improvement over night.

The best thing was probably to take her back home. I waited for my studio guests, made the nettle noodles for a picnic to be shared on the dance floor. Soon after that I packed my stuff and put my stinging nettle in a Lidl bag. It started to rain. I thought it was a good sign.