

I set out in 2023 to document my mother's resilience. I have seen her battle with her diabetes and various autoimmune diseases throughout my life. I have seen her struggle with continuous low blood sugar, lost pregnancies, and the death of her son. I have also watched her swim, drive, cook, laugh, and dance with a persistent joy. I have seen her fall, and I have watched her get herself back up. In my attempt to document my mother and the shape of her chronic illness, I recognized both a witness and a mirror in the California landscape.

This project, with a working title *where flowers won't, time will grow* (2023-present) is an ongoing exploration into the changing landscape of California as well as a personal study about the changing landscapes of my own family and the inherited traumas of the body. In this growing collection of photographs, this project seeks to equally position the landscape and my familial subjects as both a witness and the witnessed to the ways the ecosystem of our bodies, our families, and our landscapes are shaped by what is ongoing and chronic.

Growing up in a home touched by chronic illness I have learned it is human nature to avoid looking at what is killing us. It is common for families to uphold silence over confrontation that might be difficult and vital. I have come to recognize this same familial avoidance in our societal unwillingness to look at the present effects of environmental disaster. This project began with my own experience and learning that avoiding confrontation with destruction equates to death. Through my documentation of the persistent traumas on the California landscape and the effects of illness on my mother's physical body and my familial unit, I attempt to capture the creative and innovative nature of healing. My photos are exploring what is revealed and what emerges when we acknowledge and actively witness one and others' pain.

*where flowers won't, time will grow* is a project that is, in all aspects, interested in the close inspection. My photography focuses on patterns and textures. I intentionally play with scale and vantage point in order to confront and blur imposed divisions between the past and the present and between our own bodies and the natural world.

Northern California is a wild and majestic place that is consistently devastated by wildfires, drought, and earthquakes. This project pairs landscape photographs with portraits of my family, particularly my mother, in her wild strength, battling her diabetes and various autoimmune diseases. Both broken and beautiful, striking and muted, resilient and soft, the landscape of the northern coast and the landscape of my mother's body are ever changing. I am, and will be, continuing to document this project over the coming years as my mother ages and the effects of climate change on the coast continue and worsen.

I pair these familial images with Northern California landscapes that I grew up in—taken in San Simeon, Pacifica, Carmel, Santa Cruz, Half Moon Bay, Pacific Grove, Pescadero, Palo Alto, Monterrey, Davenport, Big Sur, Los Altos, Sea Ranch, and Mountain View.

Untamable wildfires, increasingly harmful droughts, and rising sea levels have changed many of these places, yet the land persists. Many native California plants have fire-resistant seeds, and others store nutrients in their root systems. It only took a few months before new green needles of redwood trees began to sprout in Big Basin after the uncontrollable 2020 wildfire. This project is an ongoing exploration into the changing landscape of Northern California as well as a personal study about the effects of chronic illness, addiction, and the perseverance of familial love.

Through this project I have come to know the landscape not just as the backdrop of my childhood or a resilient character navigating the violence of western consumption but as a material witness to our lives' events & a system of memory. I have come to know witnessing to be a revolutionary act. In my investigation of the landscapes innate witnessing of human movement I have begun to root through my own role as a witness and the ways in which actively looking at the things I want to turn away from, *my mother's suffering, the forest burning*, can be a vehicle towards intimacy, love, affirmation, and resistance.

These images are taken in places that hold a significant history for my family. The landscapes I am documenting carry both personal memory and physical testimonies to the ongoing effects of environmental disaster. I am documenting the ways in which I am unable to separate the story of my family and my memories from the Northern California landscape and the natural world. I am unable to look at my familial grief, love, and regrowth and not recognize it as nature/something I have witnessed the forest do time and time again.

In my acknowledgement of the landscape and humanities' mirrored experiences and inseparable fates, I am examining the body as its own environment. This collection of photos positions the landscape, the body, and our created/industrial world as all being a part of nature. The ongoing nature of this project allows time to be a vital character in this work. I am documenting the ways my family, my mother's body, and the land I grew up in are responding to time and the inevitable wreckage, reprieve, and rebuilding it offers us.