

LA FLORA

## Already Here

A letter to the listener.

*Before you begin — The meditations were written to be met without explanation. If you have not yet listened to the album, you may want to do that first. The letter will be here when you want to know more. But there is no wrong order — some find the meditations deeper once they trust where the album is taking them.*

*Already Here* is an album of seven meditations, built to be listened to the way one listens to music — in any order, at any moment, or, if the listener wishes, from beginning to end. The meditations do not descend from a single book or teacher. They descend from a posture — a way of being alive that refuses, quietly, the idea that contemplation requires effort, arrival, or improvement.

That posture came from a life of reading, and from the particular voices I have carried inside me long enough that they no longer feel separate from how I think. Books and songs and sentences that arrived at different ages and stayed — not as quotations to remember, but as company. Felt experiences as much as ideas.

The voices in *Already Here* are not a tradition I went looking for. They are the voices that made me. The most-present voice is Clarice Lispector.

I came to her young, and *Água Viva* is the book of hers I have returned to most often. It is not a novel, and not exactly an essay — it is something closer to a sustained noticing, a writing that does not try to hold itself together so much as to remain attentive to whatever appears. “*Não se compreende música: ouve-se. Ouve-me então com teu corpo inteiro.*” “*You don’t understand*

*music: you hear it. So hear me with your whole body.*” That sentence sits at the foundation of the album’s opening meditation, and Lispector’s presence runs underneath several others. *Água Viva* is a book I expect will continue to enter *La Flora*’s work over time. It is a way of being attentive — patient, undefended, willing to be changed by what one notices — and that is much of what *Already Here* is reaching for.

The album also carries two voices that arrived later in my life and have stayed. Leonard Cohen is the heart of the third meditation. His understanding of love as a kind of disappearance, rather than a possession, gave the meditation its shape. Nina Simone, through *Everything Must Change* and her memoir, gave the sixth meditation its name and its underlying knowledge. Other lines and writers appear in the *Field Notes* that accompany each meditation. They are kept company there.

*A brief note for those arriving here without context: La Flora is a contemplative practice — a library of guided meditations, organized into albums, and a newsletter called Field Notes. Already Here is the first album. The letter you are reading or listening to is its companion.*

The album was made to be a door — the first one a listener might open, and the first one I built. The meditations do not assume the listener has done this before, or knows anything in particular, or is trying to arrive somewhere. They meet the listener where they are. The meeting is the thing.

The seven meditations form an arc: from the first breath taken inside a living world, to the last recognition that there was never a seam between the listener and it. Each meditation stands alone; the album holds together however a person meets it. But the closing lines of each meditation quietly hand something to the next opening, for anyone who listens from 1 to 7. Not a story. A through-line.

The album makes a single recognition, approached from seven different directions: *that you do not need to reach for what is already here.*

The aliveness, the inclusion, the company of other living things, the kindness already moving through you — these are not things to be achieved. They are conditions already met. The meditations do not ask the listener to arrive somewhere. They ask the listener to notice they are already there.

None of this is accidental. *La Flora's* whole practice refuses to explain. The plants explain themselves through their growing. The poets through their lines. The meditations only by being met. This letter is the one place where I name what the meditations were built from, and why. The meditations themselves stay quiet. They are the experience. Explaining would diminish them. But the work behind them is real, and I would like you to know about it.

### *Track 1*

*Hear Me With Your Whole Body* is the album's opening. It begins not with an instruction but with a recognition: that the listener has already arrived. Nothing needed to be prepared. Something was already listening.

From there the meditation moves the listener from observer to participant. Lispector's line — "*hear me with your whole body*" — proposes that hearing is not only an ear's job. The skin hears. The spine hears. The heart hears. The border where the body ends softens. By the end, the meditation has named what it has been showing the whole time: *you are not inside the world, you are occurring with it.* That is the album's first proposition. Everything that follows rests on the listener's willingness to consider it.

### *Track 2*

*The Intelligence of Surrender* stays near the unanswered. The questions it sits with are the ones the meditation does not pretend to resolve: why this, why now, why me. Instead of answering them, the meditation proposes that a question, held long enough, becomes a kind of company. The intelligence the title names is the body's. The heart has never once asked permission to continue. The lungs do not wait for belief. Most of

the listener is already living by trust — and surrender, in this meditation, is not defeat but a quiet recognition of that fact.

Lispector again, from *Água Viva*: “*nothing is more difficult than surrendering to the instant. That difficulty is human pain. It is ours.*” The meditation does not erase the difficulty. It stays beside it. Its closing line — *and still, life arrives* — is the one I keep returning to.

### *Track 3*

*In Love We Disappear* takes its title from Leonard Cohen: “*we are so lightly here; it is in love that we are made; in love we disappear.*” The disappearance Cohen names is not loss. It is the dissolving of the position from which the listener stands apart.

The meditation places the listener among other living things. Somewhere a tree is breathing through its leaves. Somewhere roots are holding in darkness. Somewhere water is traveling unseen. The listener is no different from any of them. The same world that moves the rivers moves the listener’s blood. This does not diminish anyone. It places them. Not at the center. Not outside. Within. The meditation closes with what may be its quietest claim: *the world has not changed. Only your distance from it.*

### *Track 4*

*Everything Began With a Yes* is the album’s longest meditation, and its loving-kindness practice — but built differently than most. Most loving-kindness practices ask the meditator to generate good wishes outward. This one begins by noticing that goodwill is already moving through the world.

The phrase comes from Lispector’s *The Hour of the Star*: “*everything in the world began with a yes. One molecule said yes to another molecule and life was born.*” The meditation opens before the listener was named, before they were expected. Life was already underway. The consent that began everything was quiet, ordinary, unheroic — and has not stopped. From that recognition, the wishes flow. *May all that lives be held in some measure of gentleness. May*

*all that trembles find some shelter. May all that is wounded meet some tenderness.* The wishes are offered outward — to sleeping things, to small lives hidden in grass, to those who grieve, to those who keep watch through the night.

Then, near the end, the wishes are turned toward the listener too. The meditation's closing line returns to where it began: *everything is still beginning.*

### *Track 5*

*Sometimes Kindness Is Simply Staying* is the album's most intimate meditation. If *Track 4* widens to all that lives, this one narrows to one person — or to one's own self. The listener brings someone to mind. Someone they love. Someone carrying something heavy. Or themselves. The person is not approached as a problem to solve, or as someone who needs to be fixed. Only as someone who is alive and deserving of gentleness.

The wishes follow — quiet, unhurried, the kind one might make privately, for someone who cannot hear them. Then the same wishes are turned inward. The meditation's closing line names what the practice has been the whole time: *sometimes kindness is simply staying.* Attention, offered without ceremony, is itself a form of love.

### *Track 6*

*Everything Must Change* is the quiet center of the album, carried by Nina Simone. The song gave the meditation its title. Her memoir, *I Put a Spell on You*, gave it the line underneath: "*what kept me sane was knowing that things would change, and it was a question of keeping myself together until they did*". The meditation does not console. It does not ask the listener to accept anything. It asks the listener to look.

What it looks at is change. What alters, what passes, what cannot be kept. The voice in this meditation is different from the others — observational, plain, sitting near what moves without trying to steady it. Nothing here is fought, and nothing is resolved. Only witnessed. The meditation closes by naming where the listener has been the whole time:

*not outside change. Inside it.*

### *Track 7*

*One Living Field* is the closing meditation, and the only one in the album that begins with eyes open. The listener is asked not to look for anything — only to let seeing happen. The field arrives with the inhale. The boundary loosens with the exhale.

What the meditation does next is ask the listener to look for the watcher inside. To notice whether there really is such a place, or whether it is mostly a habit. And if the habit relaxes, what remains.

What remains is what the album has been pointing toward from the first breath. One movement. One openness. Appearance and awareness without a clear edge between them. The meditation closes plainly: *and you are here.*

*That is the album.*

What the album does not do is part of what it is. The meditations will not coach the listener on posture, or breath, or attention. They will not say what should be felt. They will not deliver transformation, or arrival, or any of the outcomes meditations nowadays tends to promise. The familiar phrases that have come to stand for contemplative practice — “*letting go*”, “*being present*”, “*noticing without judgment*” — appear nowhere in them. Not because those phrases are wrong, but because they have been spoken so many times they no longer arrive anywhere.

The meditations also will not interpret themselves. They will not state their argument, or announce what they are doing, or tell the listener what to take from them. That work happens here, in this letter. The meditations themselves remain silent.

What they do, in place of all that, is sit alongside. The listener is trusted to be present because they are. The meditations ask for nothing — no agreement, no belief, no understanding.

This is the first album. There is more work to come. But the first album is the beginning of being here, and that beginning is its own task. The meditations do not announce what is next. They keep company. They let the listener feel what it is to belong to the world without having earned the belonging. In this first album, we are just settling in.

If the album has done its work, you will not need this letter to have been moved by the meditations. You will already have been moved. The letter is for the part of you that wants to know what the meditations were built from, and why. That part deserves an answer. This is the answer.

What is being spoken of through the seven meditations — the aliveness, the inclusion, the company of other living things, the kindness already moving through you — does not live in memory. It lives in you. It has always lived in you. The album is only a reminder.

You may stay.  
— Iara

[ Listen ]

— May the body listen with everything it knows —

