

The background of the page is a photograph of several wooden shelves filled with numerous glass jars. The jars are of various sizes and some have labels, suggesting they contain different types of condiments or preserves. The shelves are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth, with the jars in the foreground being more in focus than those further back. The overall color palette is warm and rustic, with the brown of the wood and the clear glass of the jars.

Compartmental Condiments

By Áine Budds

In the furthestmost corner
Of this weary mind
There is a well-stocked larder
Brimming with feelings in brine

Line upon line
Of sterile glass jars

Laden

With the intimate cravings
Of my tempestuous heart
Acidulated and sweetened

I keep them submerged

Separate and tamed

To be leisurely observed

I have salted my grief

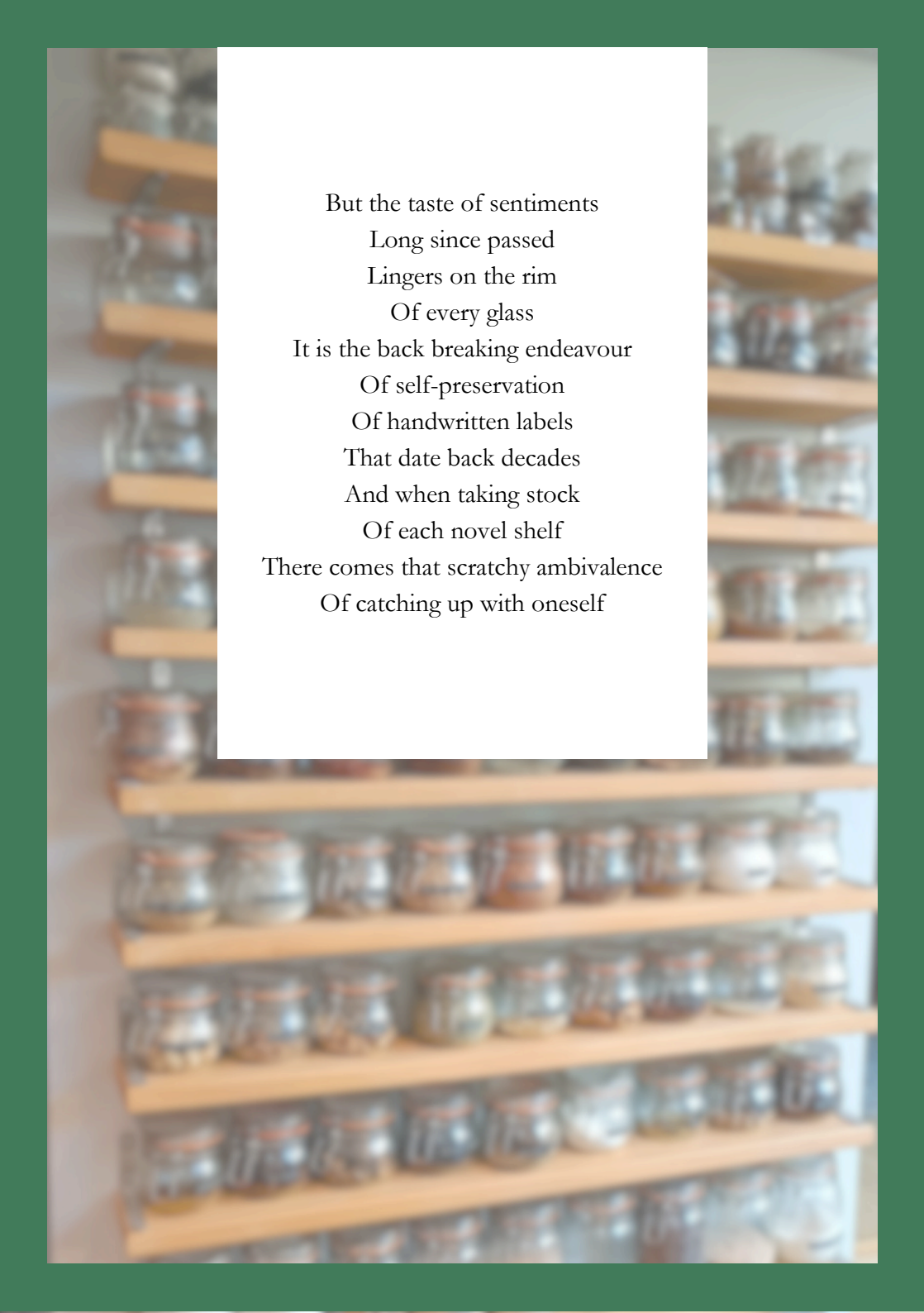
And pickled my joy

Bottled their essence

So to soften the edges

And leave them wholly unspoiled

The aches are less potent



But the taste of sentiments
Long since passed
Lingers on the rim
Of every glass
It is the back breaking endeavour
Of self-preservation
Of handwritten labels
That date back decades
And when taking stock
Of each novel shelf
There comes that scratchy ambivalence
Of catching up with oneself