



Issue 17
Home
August 2020
Melbourne, Australia
Edited by Freya Alexander, Tegan Iversen & Anna MacNeill
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Cover art: *Home* by Nani Puspasari
Illustrations & photographs accompanying text
by Freya Alexander & Tegan Iversen
femszine.com

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Kulin Nation
& pay our respects to elders past, present & emerging



FEMALES* FOR EQUALITY MAKING STUFF

* THIS INCLUDES FEMMES, AGENDER, NON-BINARY, WOMAN-ALIGNED,
FEMALE-PRESENTING OR -READ, TRANS, GENDER NON-CONFORMING
PEOPLE & A RANGE OF GENDERS IN BETWEEN. ♡

ABOUT F*EMS

& a letter from the editors

F*EMS began in early 2015,
with the aim of creating an opportunity for women
& non-binary people to creatively express themselves.

We felt the need for a space where our voices could be heard
& from this came the idea for the zine.

We welcome & encourage women & non-binary people to use our zine,
along with the accompanying events we organise,
as a platform to share their stories.

The theme of this issue is 'Home' & we would like to firstly acknowledge the difficulties
that this year has brought for many people. Despite these challenges, we were so pleased
to see how many submissions were sent. This is our biggest issue yet, suggesting that
having a kind of creative outlet was valuable & perhaps of some comfort, to many of you.

We would also like to recognise that 'home', while seemingly a simple prompt, comes
with many connotations & an array of varied emotions & memories (again, especially
during the strange & collective period of isolation we've been navigating).

We hope this zine functions not only as a comfort, but as a kind of time-capsule,
encapsulating both the weight & the beauty that comes with being 'home'.

Be safe.

Love,

Freyja, TEGAN & Anna



THANK YOU THANK YOU

F*EMS would like to thank:

everyone who contributed to our previous issue, Issue 16;
all of our lovely exhibitors (Bella Johnson, Fi Douglass, Isabel Lee, Naomi
Barnes, Olivia Brooke, Pey Chi, Sam Stevens, Savi Ross & Shae San
Sim) at the launch; Sepsi for DJing; Maribyrnong City Council &
Phoenix Youth Centre for hosting both the event & the workshop;
& Lay Low for hosting the after event.

F*EMS would also like to thank everyone who has supported F*EMS
by purchasing a zine, making a donation or attending a launch.

You are a vital part of our community
& we couldn't do this without you.

Thanks for reading! xx



CLARIFICATION

E for Equality

We recognise that not all feminists strive for 'equality' in the literal sense, but some aim instead for liberation. We'd therefore like to invite our contributors & extended community to question, challenge, shape & define what this element of F*EMS means for them. All feminist approaches & beliefs are welcome (as long as they are non-harmful & non-exclusive).

F*EMS, not 'Femmes': a recap

As mentioned in previous issues, we understand that the word 'Femme' is often used to describe individual gender identities in the LGBTQIA+ community & that femmes have often been ignored & excluded from various groups & societies on account of this identity. Femme has now become a popular abbreviation for feminist or feminine & on account of this, femme identities & their use of the word is once again being overlooked. This is why we would like to make a clear distinction between the word femme & the title of this zine, 'F*EMS' - which stands for Females* for Equality Making Stuff & in no way condones the erasure of femme identities.

If you would like to contribute any feedback or suggestions for F*EMS in relation to our approach on these matters, please contact us at femszine@gmail.com

Any views or opinions expressed in this zine are personal & belong to the artist/writer.

Content Warning

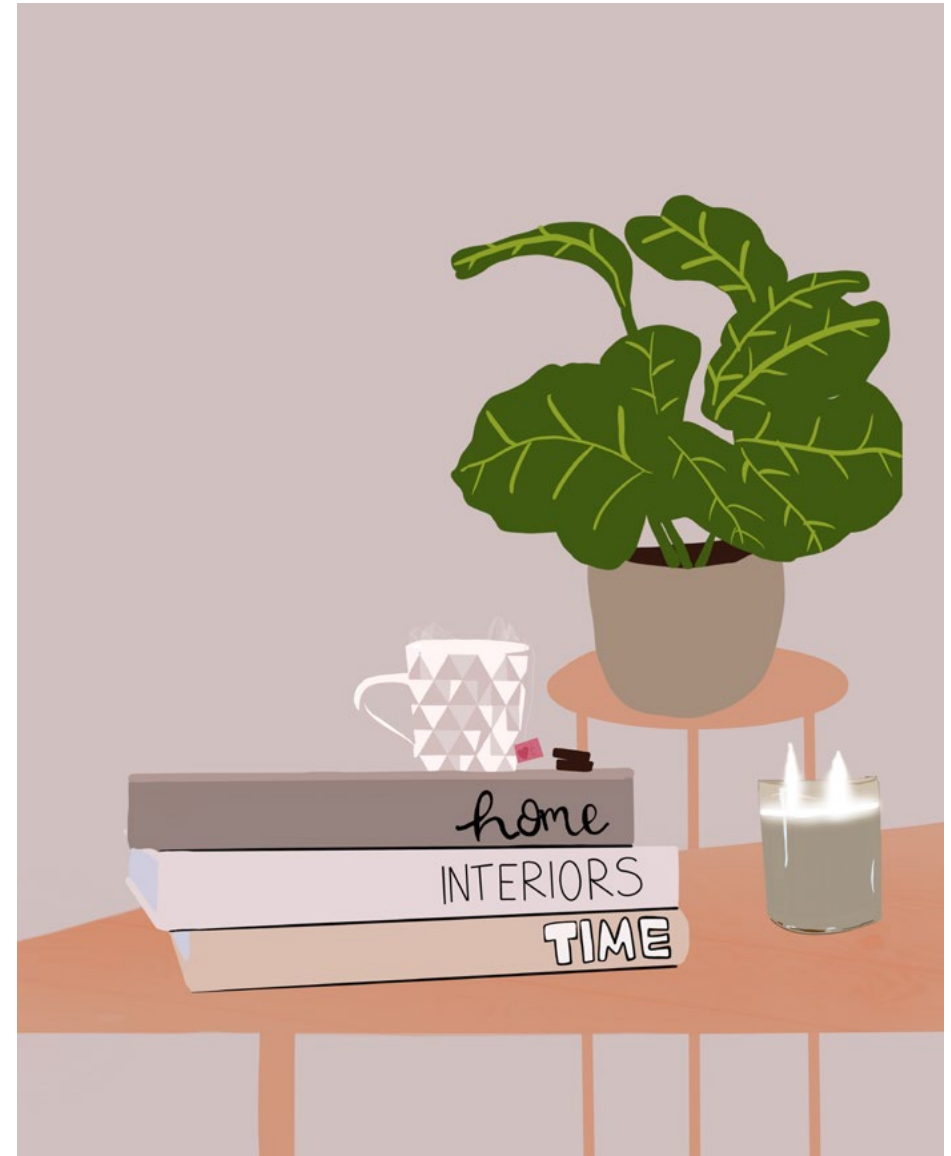
This issue contains explicit language, references to death & domestic violence.

JAMIE BINNION

Australia

5pm

Digital



BRIGIT ANNIE LAMBERT

Australia

Morning coffee

35mm



OLIVIA SHENKEN

Australia

The Story of an Hour

Nestled into the cushions of a second-hand couch, a young person watches the sunset. The window is open, the breeze as soft as freshly laundered pillows. They hold in their paint-speckled hands a small hardback journal and pen.

I'm by the window, in our spot. 6:43pm here, and 6:13pm for you. Sunset. Wearing that jumper with the stain, and shorts – a bit cold, so got my legs tucked under me on the couch.

The window frames the sky like a canvas. The whites and golds are thick strokes of paint.

No photos of us sitting here. No diary entries. But this time there'll be a record, so I'll read it and feel near you. The sunset won't last, but words will. They'll live in these pages, and dwell in our eyes.

You're always forgetting about the sunset until just after it's over, Blue – I'd carve it in marble for you, so you'll have it forever. But the colours of the clouds just keep changing. First apricot, now peach and nectarine – this still-life won't keep still.

The moon isn't out tonight – took a photo of it last week. Not a painting then, but crayon, pastel pink on blue cardboard. The moon a white-gold ring. Should send you the pic. Wish the moon was hanging there, in the corner of the window. The composition would be perfect.

Just noticed the light got lower – must've been like that a while. It's over already.

The diarist sighs. They click their pen, once and then again.

It's a charcoal drawing, now.

Here and now, the show of light is over; the cast are bumping out. Soon the stars will peep between the night's velvet curtains, warming up for their slow ballet.

And now, but *there* – over the horizon and one border to the west – the show has just begun, the house lights dimmed.

Amongst the audience is a woman, leaning on the balcony railing of a second-storey flat. Her glasses are smudged, and she rubs away the mist with a small cloth. Her eyes are soothed by the liquid breeze as she watches the play of light, keeping very still. The warm colours wait offstage – it is the metals, silver and gold, who have the spotlight.

Her phone hums an alarm in the back-pocket of her jeans, and without looking she reaches back and clicks it off. The alarm is labelled 'sunset.'

As the minutes pass, bronze strengthens to reds and purples – and then they wane, the stage-lights set low.

The show is almost over, now. The principal dancer has had her hour upon the stage – but there will be a matinee in the east, and encores every evening. The show may change, but it cannot die.

Tonight, a special guest performer: the crescent moon, with an edge so thin she almost isn't there. Flickering with white fire, her moonbeams kiss the shifting sea of colours below.

The woman notices and smiles. Her partner always sends her photos of the moon. She murmurs a beloved name, and smiles as the colours change.

HAYLEY MARTIN

Australia

gum trees guide me home

Gouache, greylead & collage

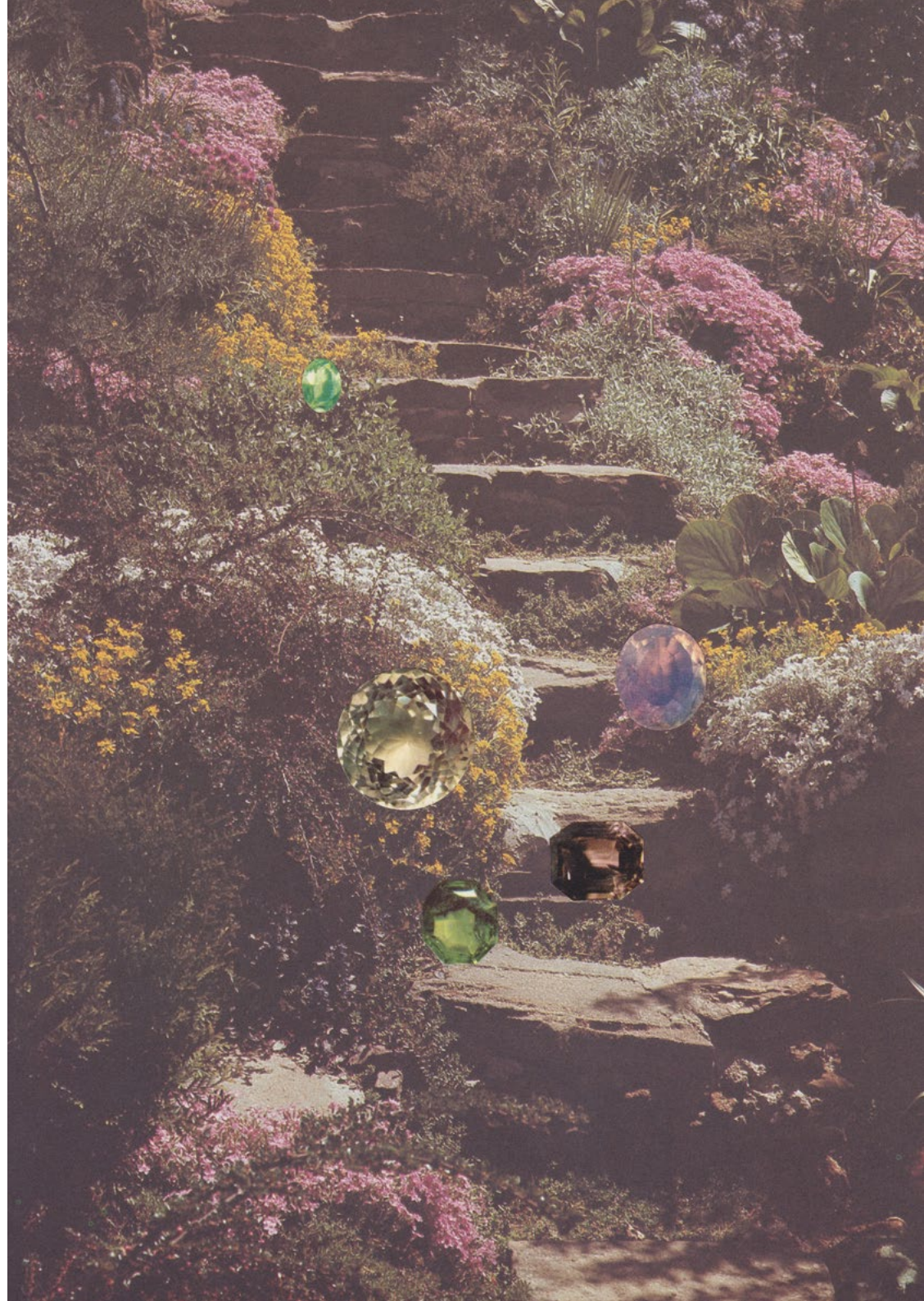


STEPHANIE HICKS

Australia

From the *The destiny of flowers* series

Collage



BECKIE STEWART

Northern Ireland / Spain

Kiwi Jam

Your heart is a Barcelona apartment.
It's not safe to breathe but I can't leave
and the landlord won't return my calls anyway.
I tried to hang my art in there but hooks couldn't penetrate walls
and all slid off, the cheap panes shattering on
that thick viscous floor. Pulmonary girl,
the key broke in the lock.

You made kiwi jam and I had no guts to tell you
that's not a *thing*
at least not in this hemisphere
and I said it was delicious
not out of fear for your empty piso heart but
because I'd let you marmalade the sleep from my eyes
if it would keep you here, sweet Pulmonary girl.

Everything once was a different story.
The body before yours was an old water barge instead
anchored in the Hawksebury river with completely
different parts but, you have that inner city
piso heart. And you're just as stable
and you have no garden but I'm able to plant
seeds in your sockets, your dark little spaces,
those pockets of wetness. Your balcony is only
2 metres squared but I've learned adoration from there,
or at least tried to.

Your heart is in the right place
and that is to say it's slightly left
of centre. You're somewhat a mentor
to me and that is to say I can breathe
when I'm in your atriums
your chambers are my chambers
your labours are my labours
Pulmonary girl, I won't call a locksmith
but I'll sleep in your hallways
until you trust me

I want to take you to the sea
and bathe you when I'm able, I want to
spread you on the table and watch you beat, you,
my bloody pulp of panic,
I can feel you
in my wrists,
and
I am home.

STEPH WATT

Australia

The Great Indoors

Mixed media



'Sky & Clouds above my home captured by Tanja Ross on March 7th 2020'

LAUREN GUYMER

Australia

Indigo Afternoon

Watercolour on cotton paper



Paperbark Swamp

Ink on cotton paper



Being immersed in nature feels like home to me. It's deeply rooted within me and is a constant source of inspiration and happiness. One particular area of interest is just down the road from my house. A native bushland reserve that I've frequented throughout my life and formed some of my earliest memories and appreciation for the natural world. These two paintings are a part of an ongoing series that explores my connection to the area.

SARA CRANE

Australia

Of all the unsaid things

We drive along in my old hatchback past the streets we knew
as escape route playgrounds, fast food car park we pull into

is as littered as our unsaid things, smell of deep fryer oil
hangs thick like the words on our lips, waiting to not be said.

Gets out of my car don't hear from him for three years
like all the unsaid things, they come from somewhere but don't

actually arrive they're never born into the air around us
never hug us, not even goodbye.

Some girls' mothers were alone so long they knew they would be too
some women have been alone so long they will never be mothers

I find him all these years later in the same pub
eyes sweeping upwards from his NRL hat

says we left a lot of things unsaid I tell him I think he said enough
tells me if you pour water on honey it forms hexagon patterns

like the hive it grew up in, that our DNA carries memory
of our traumas even when we change

says he has changed.

We walk back to those old flats, rash glistening under
his shirt, whites of his eyes mustard, have to stop half-way

for me to walk alone and bring the old hatchback around
I tell him I cannot be with him tonight even though I want to

I do not give him any explanation why, some things are so
unsaid they are said like when I saw the message he sent me online

three years late and I just left it there with a read receipt.

Sometimes our silence is all we've got
some women have got so good at being silent

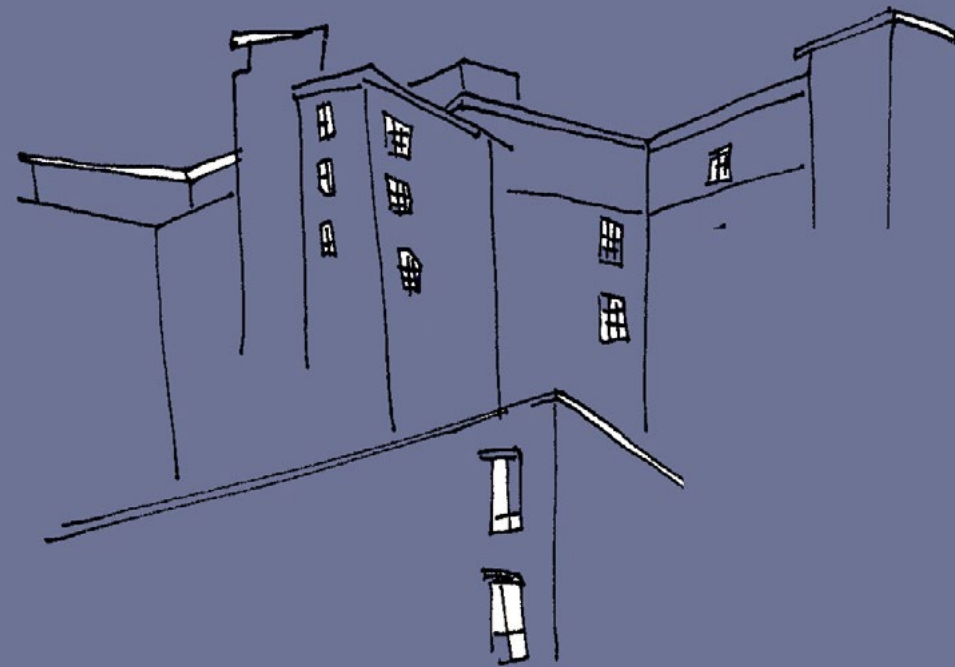
we brush off bullies like crumbs, let shouts
form white noise waiting for needles to drop

days go by where we don't even speak to ourselves
and we know how to get hit in silence.

We've got so good at silent that when he says 'I love you'
it sounds like the gaping emptiness of deep space

emptiness between stars and planets that never aligned for you
swallowed by the magnitude of its absence, too late

of all the unsaid things 'I love you' remains unsaid back.



ANN IVERSEN

Australia

New Beginnings

Mixed media



STEPH LAM

Australia

Birthdays at home

Digital

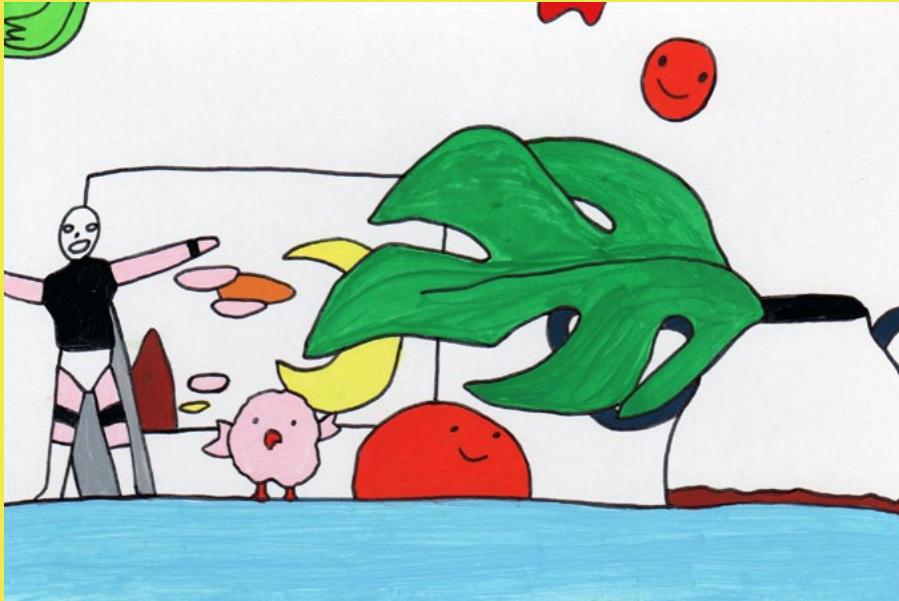


TEGAN IVERSEN

Australia

windowills at home

Gouache



ZOË KARPIN

Australia

A SHIFT IN THE LANDSCAPE

Her new home is a brick house near the River in Parramatta. Despite her mind-numbing jet lag, she's smiling when Sami ushers her into it for the first time. It's larger even than her parents' place with an ensuite bathroom, an unheard-of luxury and a dishwasher. The first night, in bed next to Sami, she hears frogs croaking, out the back where a wide, long greeny yellow park runs down to the river with spicy smelling eucalyptus and some curious semi naked trees; their bits of old bark, lying here and there in brown sheets. Sami says, 'Those trees would be a nuisance anywhere else.' Ani looks them up on her phone. They're called melaleuca trees and the indigenous people used the shed bark for making rafts and roofing.

After recovering from the longest plane trip ever, Ani walks out with Sami on Church St. She's covered in long layers of pink silk and white cotton with not a centimetre of skin showing. Passing quite a few older, wrinkled women dressed in knee length shorts and t-shirts, she's smiling again. Young women let alone older women, would never wear this, not where she comes from. Sami wants to avoid their fellow countrymen until she's all settled, so they go to Aussie Bakers Delight. The older bloke serving her says, 'You can butter my bread anytime.' She giggles. As they leave the shop, Sami says, 'He was way too familiar. Why did you laugh anyway?' She thinks but does not say, Some harmless male admiration. What's wrong with that? Coming back home, they see a man in blue jeans and a woman in a sleeveless midriff top, not much younger than they are, kiss deeply at the bus stop near their house. Sami says, 'Don't be too shocked.' He places his hand in front of Ani's eyes but she moves her head. 'It's nice Sami,' she says surprising herself too.

At the end of her first full day in Sydney Australia, it was as if Ani's past had peeled off and been sucked through the aeroplane windows before she even landed, tossed to the breeze like an old worn garment that no longer keeps her warm. She likes her new home. But the little giggles with Sami are something she didn't expect.

They have to get an electrician for a faulty switch and she emails her family, to tell them some things are very expensive in Australia. Ani's used to being financially independent and she wants to go back to teaching as soon as she can. Sami's fine about that. However, by the time she's ready to sort out her working situation, she has more news for everyone - she's pregnant.

Sami's mother lives with his older sister a suburb away. She arrives at the house with a cooked meal, wanting to stay with them at least till the baby comes and maybe longer. She'll cook, clean and help. 'You can rest up, Ani.' 'It's a great idea.' Sami replies. But Ani says to her mother-in-law. 'No, please don't trouble yourself. I'm strong and healthy, no morning sickness. I don't want to be sitting and do nothing all day.' After his mother leaves. Sami says, 'You should let her stay, Ani. She'll look after you and the baby when it's born and be around for when you're going back to work.' It's true she has to sort out the teaching and she knows nothing about childcare in

Sydney. There's the internet for information, a local library, and community centre but maybe she should accept the help being offered until she's on top of it all. She whispers as he reaches for her as she gets into the bed. 'Let your mother know I'll be happy if she still wants to stay.' He gently enters her. She can't tell him she'll be embarrassed to share intimacies with his mother and is worried their lovemaking will be inhibited with her around.

Her first time was with Sami. He was shy but experienced. She always trembles at what a near thing her marriage was. She might have missed out on knowing this; skin on skin, warm and sweet. Opened up in a way she never dreamt. Nothing or nobody but the experience itself could reveal its significance. Prior to her honeymoon she'd been mistakenly holding onto something she was told was so precious. Her sisters used to tease her, 'Ani's such a good girl.'

She was finally pushed to an arranged marriage, by her father's concern about her future. What would happen to her when he and her mother were no longer around? Her job wouldn't be enough. Ani is cutting bottle brushes at the front of the house when their neighbour on the right leaves her house wearing so little; a black sleeveless t-shirt and white jersey skirt with green rubber thongs. Ani thinks for a tiny second, she's in her underwear. The neighbour stops at the fence between them and says, 'Hi, I'm Caro,' and offers her hand. 'I've been meaning to say hello. And congratulations.' Later Caro drops in with a jar of Vegemite as a present. How friendly and welcoming she is. Though Sami greatly disapproves of Caro and her husband sitting on their front verandah drinking beer in the afternoon.

Ani eats a little Vegemite on toast with smashed avocado for breakfast, the combination recommended by Caro and tells Sami who is watching, 'The salty tang of Vegi with the creaminess of avo is yum. Try it.' Sami says, 'Just the yeasty smell of vegemite puts me off.' She's aware he's gazing at her in a mixture of mild disgust and amusement.

Her mother-in-law moves in with lots of poultices and creams. 'Use them straightaway for varicose veins,' she advises but Ani can't help thinking now, her mother-in-law seems extravagant and fussy. However, Ani wants to please her and slops the creamy, smelly stuff on her legs as they all sit in the evenings watching television.

Her pregnancy grows; her body alters rapidly, swelling and bulging with the baby developing and making her very clumsy and awkward. During these pregnant summer months, whenever possible, she escapes the heat and glare down by the river, walking heavily among the eucalyptus and the shedding melaleuca trees, enjoying the heady scents and brightly coloured cockatoos or bossy magpies and yellow eyed currawongs.

But as she's walking she's still hot, suffocatingly so. As if to celebrate the southern sun, she takes off the long blue voile cardigan that she habitually wore during summer back in the country of her birth. The following week she's no longer wearing her stockings. The week after that she is donning a sleeveless white pregnancy

dress with bare legs and green thongs she bought on a shopping trip with Caro who works from home and specially knocks on her door and invites her along one morning. In her new dress, Ani's sore tender breasts are finally relieved by the lack of restricting outer garments.

Late at night in bed, Sami says, 'Well, you're staying cool. But after your pregnancy, I expect you'll go back to dressing like a proper woman.'

She stretches and admires her tanned legs against the whiteness of the sheets and Sami's paler brown legs. Neither of them anticipated she'd be like this.

'I've never been more comfortable.' She wants to say more. It's another wrinkle between them. But it's late and she's tired, she's staying calm for the baby.

Her mother-in-law avoids Ani's eyes, in her unorthodox clothing, but points out the slight sunburn on her arms as if Ani's not aware of it and says, 'You need to wear sun cream.'

'Oh, yes, probably, next time.' Ani says.

In her third trimester, her nights are broken by frequent trips to the toilet to relieve her aching bladder. The heat and humidity are constant, despite a new overhead fan in the bedroom.

In the early quiet cool of a morning unable to sleep anymore, - and before anyone is up, she walks slowly down to the river and further onto the quay where there's a ferry to the city centre. She's never been there by herself. Operators carefully instruct her on how to board the boat and point her to the inside cabin seats but she climbs the stairs. She's surprised by people chatting on the top deck. They may be rich or poor but she can't tell. However, their background clearly is either from China, Iran or Afghanistan, lots of different countries but their accents are Australian so they may well have been born here.

How exciting is the ride on water and fresh cool air.

'Do you know what you're having?' A woman sitting next to her asks.

I found out it's a girl but no one else knows.'

'Not even your husband.'

'No, he doesn't think we should know.'

The woman chuckles. 'What are you calling your bubs?'

'We usually call the first girl after the father's mother.'

What name she has to give her daughter is a very sore point, haunting her as she walks to the QVB from Circular Quay.

Despite following her google maps app she goes around in circles and can't find her way out of Martin place. 'I'm lost,' she blurts out to two young businessmen standing apart from the rushing pedestrians.

'I'm sure you are', one says, gazing at her as if she's floated into the place on a magic carpet. The other laughs.

How silly and foreign she must be to them.

'I'm trying to get to the QVB.' She's saying precisely and crisply English sounding.

'Easy, just follow George St on your left.'

Moving in a solid way she arrives at the QVB on George St. A quaint building but not really that old, and she even goes into its arcades and buys a raspberry milkshake.

Of any place so far she's been to, the city centre is where the crowds of people are the most in number, a tiny reminder of the streets of her birth land. She's noticing mostly only what's necessary so as not to be overwhelmed. Though, it's quiet and colour schemes are neutrals, no yellows, reds or blues. Even a little dull but everything is extremely clean. She'd check out baby clothes and mother's things but she has a lot already from Sami's

sister and her twins. Stuff they never used, even a brand-new stroller.

Opposite the Town Hall outside Woolworths she's working out which bus to catch to the Quay for the ferry trip home, when a young woman with short fair hair and loaded bags of shopping and two toddlers barges into her.

Ani shouts, 'Look where you're going. I'm with child.' She's rubbing her extended life full womb, her coverings seem so permeable.

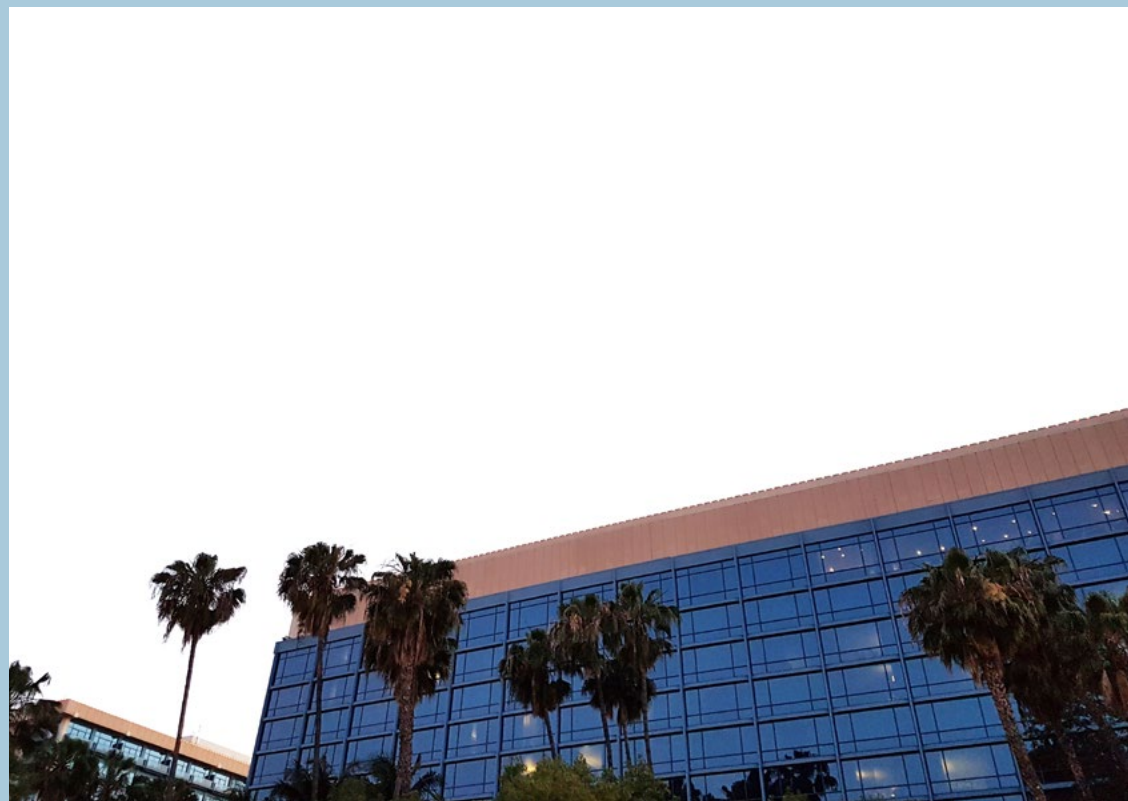
'Silly wog,' says the woman.

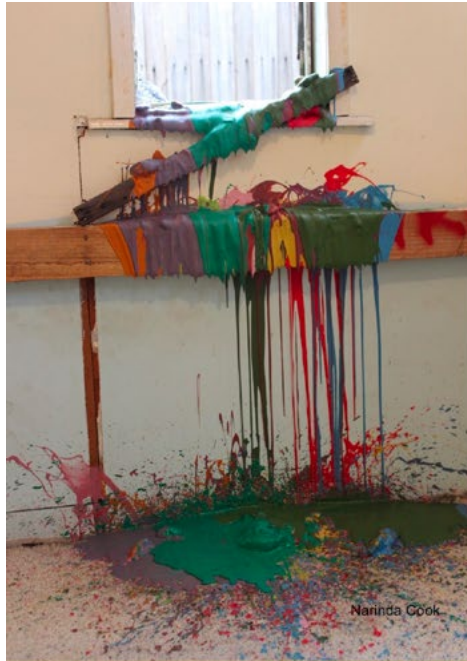
'Wog,' she repeats. She knows what it means along with, reffo and import. At that instant she has a memory of a while ago, when Sami was not yet in the picture.

In her old homeland, she's sitting at dinner with her parents and sisters, commenting on the platters of goat and vegetables, laughing along at some silly joke.

Soon her baby daughter will be born into the bright glaring light of her mother's new place not knowing any other.

On the way back from the city before she goes home, she's walking again among the peeling melaleuca trees down at the park by the river and collecting the bark that's come off the trees. The indigenous people used bark too, to carry babies in. She's chosen to name her baby girl Matilda. She doesn't want to upset her mother-in-law but she'll explain to them it has to be this way, not knowing what she'll do if Sami doesn't understand.





Narinda Cook

House Party '2018'

Curated by Jess Dubblu

In 2018 my childhood home was demolished. To celebrate I invited some artist friends to join me in a loving send off.

Featuring the works of:
Narinda Cook
Jess Dubblu
Shae Rooke
Hahna Blanc
Anne Kucera
Lou Molesworth
Photos: Anne Kucera

Australia



Jess Dubblu



Shae Rooke



Jess Dubblu and
Shae Rooke



Anne Kucera



Hahna Blanc



Lou Molesworth

CAITY CHILTON
Australia
Koala Hug & Pillow Fort
Watercolour



VALARIE K (TEXT)
& VIOLET AISLING MACDONALD (IMAGE)

Australia

And he called: a leprous house

Text & digital collage

The lesion:
dark green or dark red; sunken,
 as if deeper than the wall.
An eruption, spreading – *tzara'ath*.

Take the bricks and the dust,
cast them aside (in an unclean place)

Alas – the house – malignant:
bricks, wood, foundations.



DEIRDRE SOKOLOWSKA

Canada

July of 1997

Watercolour & gouache on hot press paper & text



Flower to my thorns,
Here the wind shows its temper. Bringing the trees down to bow and raise
themselves in sure prayer. They look away from the heather sky as I lead into
daydreams of sticky thighs from summers past. Days fragrant with cinnamon
and rotting moss in the tall grass. Pointed roses, proud lupine and pesky
hawksbeard. All enshrined with saccharine thoughts until I die. I pressed them
between the pages of colouring pads like small closed-mouth kisses. Like
Diana, I kept them for myself.
And as evening broke like a fever the grasshoppers would nag me with their
song. In bed at night I was reduced to a creature of wanting. Already knowing
life will be worse without that day and the day before that to look forward to.
My permanent puberty yawning ahead of me like a bloody wolf. And each day
of summer I would forget and remember this pain in the blue light of morning
and every night by fire.
And here I am. In the salt and damp of March. Tolerating the itch of an old dog
bite. So very far away from summer. There are such wide abysses of space
between me and myself. Forgive me, I have decided to measure it in the
names of flowers and letters to you.

Be sweet,
All your thorns

(Letter to Poppy [30 March 2020])

RACHEL HEHL

Australia
glitterdust

eat peaches on the staircase of the motel complex
with sticky hands and outstretched hearts
and lips that sting like sunburn when you kiss

under streetlights outlined in violet
the boy raises his fists to a sky swimming in neon
daring the stars to fall out of orbit
so he can collect them up for you

heatwaves shimmer like oil slicks along the asphalt
the road melting your shoes to the wet tar
but you dance in the street in defiance
broken traffic lights flashing like cameras

move like snakes through the belly of the suburbs
glittering eyelids and too-sharp teeth
close by, the city is burning
a crimson haze covering its face

push an ice cube along the boy's skin and watch him shiver as it melts
giggle when he bites your lip between his teeth
your face held between hands that could crush you
but he crushes you to him instead

make love in summer bedrooms
with the shades drawn to blot the sun
the world is on fire outside and
two young lovers have struck another match

come violently together and apart
don't waste time on gentle touch
you make him shake when you drop your hands

both of you are made of bone and starlight
fragile beneath the exoskeleton, soft at heart
together you sublimate, shed your layers
like unwanted skin and get real close

one day archaeologists will unearth your bones and see you naked
so for now, you just hope you're discovered together
that you died intertwined, in the fallout from some errant asteroid
and left the whole world covered in your glitterdust

late nights on your roof

iPhone photography



JOHANNA RUTH

USA

you're not alone

Digital



imaginary bathroom

Digital



NADINE RODRIGUEZ

USA

letras a un amor

Medium format photography



VONNE BEYER

Australia

Vase of Geraniums & Wildflowers with Poppies

Oil on wood & oil on canvas



NATALIA LOMAIA

Georgia

Calendar, Medicine and some Bedtime Stories

While trying to clear the already sold huge family house in Tbilisi where I lived for almost 25 years (which has also emptied of people in the last 3 years because of my grandmother passing away, my grandfather moving out and me and my sister moving to Europe for studies) and going through tons and tons of old stuff and clutter, sitting on the floor, my sister, from the mountain of the mess, handed over to me an old calendar, dated year 2000.

It was stained and very dusty. The main photo on it, with the horrible quality print, was of me and my sister in childhood, awkwardly set together on a bench in the only park in my tiny hometown, by a photographer or most likely our mother - holding a camera like it was a gift from aliens or a toy from the future. We looked funny and very uncomfortable - I was obviously forced to hug her and smile in addition. In both of our faces, you can read how desperately we wanted the shooting to end so that we could move freely again.

That was my grandmother's calendar - dates edited and rewritten, full of her handwritten notes and appointments. Turned out, she made those calendars with the up to date photos of us every single year and every year she hung the calendar on the wall in the kitchen. I never really noticed it.

So, I was sitting on the floor of my home and in a town where I grew up, feeling as much ambivalence towards it as you can possibly stuff in a person - looking at the ridiculous calendar with blurry print with my stupid face on it and thinking about my grandmother, without who I do not remember a second of childhood, in whose bed I slept all the nights I had scary dreams (which happened quite often) and remembering how endlessly welcoming and comforting she was every single time. How sweet she was, with warm hands, fluffy cheeks, curly short hair and so unbelievably kind and unlike me, entirely empty of anger, who called me by my name in such a loving, sweet way every single time, and whose death I heard about so unexpectedly when I was already in emigration and whose funeral I did not - or maybe could not - attend.

She passed in late September and in that summer I decided not to fly home during holidays, mainly because of worsened depression. I answered her calls very rarely throughout that period. Of course, I could not have known or imagined that out of nowhere, just like that, someone you love can die. You always imagine knowing in advance. At least days before. But of course, life does not work that way - we do not receive short notices for tragedies.

My uncle, her son, died in a car accident when he was just 21. My grandparents somehow managed to help him emigrate and save him and his youth from the draining horrors of civil war and poverty that was booming in my country. They hoped for a better life for him. I was born just months before his death. He had bought tons of toys but never lived to gift them to me. My grandmother used to call me "a medicine" after his death.



She would always repeat how my birth gave meaning to her life during grief and how I was like a magical cure to her, how I helped her recover. She would lie beside me at night and tell me all the stories about my uncle, about his brave deeds and how kind he was to other people. She would also read me stories before sleep, from many different books, but after having listened to tons of tales, for some reason, I fell in love with Korney Chukovsky's incredibly creepy and scary fairytale "Barmaley" and made her read it to me over and over again, sometimes 3-4 times in a row. And she would not get annoyed or bored. She would read and read, before I got tired of listening and finally fell asleep.

She called me "a medicine". And I did not even manage to be there when she was scared, dying - to make her feel safe and loved and soothed - like she somehow managed to make me feel all my life.

It's such a lonely feeling, to realize that someone who loved you hugely, all your life, in such a crazy, almost comical, bizarre way, unconditionally - who loved you enough to put your stupid face on the calendar every single year and be happy just by looking at it, is gone. For good.

How many people can you really have in life, who can love you in such an absurd, such a gigantic, unimaginable, ridiculous way? In how many people's eyes can you be so flawless and for how many, just seeing you, opening a door for you when you ring a bell - can bring so much joy and happiness?!

Since moving to Berlin, I moved 5 times, 5 different districts, 5 different apartments. None of them felt like home. I never felt even the slightest attachment to these spaces, even the tiniest regret when packing.

I may feel home someday, somewhere. I may find a space that makes me feel safe and cozy, or I may find a person with whom every space, every four walls - hotel rooms, rented apartments or sleeping capsules, will feel like home. In fact, I may find both. But I know, until that calendar with my stupid face on it was "alive" through my grandmother, until it hung on the wall and was updated every single year, until it was taken care of, even if I never noticed it, I had a real home, where - of course, I could never get back to physically, but which, partly, somehow I carry around with me, which stayed with me.

Still, after people who love you in this way die, you start to feel not just lonely, but like something warm and comfortable has been drained out of you - you feel exposed, unprotected - from the world and also from your own death. Or maybe, from your own mortality. What more can a home be? Home is when you are completely protected from the notion of your own mortality by someone who loves you gigantically.

SAM STEVENS

Australia

I Have to Live in Here & This Is My Own

Ink & digital



This is my own.

SOPHIE G. WHITING

Australia

Drifting in Neon

The first thing I missed was the stars. There's too much smog in its place. The Bund glows with new-age bombastic neon. It never has time to stop. Nanjing Road and the colours of consumerism. Even in these odes to progress, there is just enough darkness in the cracks for secrets to seep through.

Far from that chaos, the street underneath me burns a cooler white. Trees line the winding lanes; attempting to shade the businessmen swaying home after a long night of drinking with the office team. The clouds of smog tumbled by, suffocating and lawless. My dormitory room is on the third floor. High enough to be removed from the locals' daily lives, but close enough to catch the smaller things. Especially the small groups of friends who buy snacks at the convenience store next door. I can only cherry-pick a few verbs and phrases from their conversation; I don't catch enough to understand why they were maniacally giggling. I needed to pay more attention in my Mandarin classes. So I tried to find meaning in what's left; the flickering lights and the screaming cicadas.

Heat never affects the locals like it affects us. It creeps up slowly during the day until it burns under your skin without mercy. There's also the humidity, a wet hot we don't get at home. It made thinking impossible. I lazily bobbed my fan up and down near my face. The baijiu helps too, as I cautiously sipped from my shot glass. I could only take the intense bitterness in small doses. It's enough to take a bit of the edge off. My soul yearns for the wintery stillness my father complains about over the phone. I take another sip. It's lilting around midnight now, but it's always busy outside. Everyone I have ever loved is asleep, governed by a different time zone.

I heard the clacking of high heels from the hallway. They stopped outside my door. For a Saturday morning, Camille's home early. I rush to the door to open it for her. Light streams in from the dormitory hallway. She was fumbling with the tiny clasp of her impossibly high heels, but she managed to throw them next to the door. It's a Chinese custom that we both adopted to try and fit in a bit, something that seems so silly in retrospect. As she looked up, I saw her pale skin and smudged mascara. I can't tell if she cried it off or not. I guess it doesn't matter now. A sloppy line of grey and green stained her slinky shimmery dress. She smelled sour, like something rotten in the back of a fridge. 'It's not mine.' Her accent becomes more stereotypical when she drinks.

'What?'

'It's vomit. Zey can't 'old down zheir alcohol 'ere.' Her voice was thick with disgust. Camille immediately started stripping. The sour dress fell with an undignified thump somewhere in the dark. The curve of her waist and lithe shoulder blades were caught by the silvery light from the shared window. She was moving art, a hurricane. I retreated back to my window. At least she's home, or our shorthand for home. I wanted to give her a bit of privacy, I guess. Even though this was nothing new. To her, I was a ghost who stayed inside and stared into nothingness. She flopped onto her

bed and checked her phone for the time. The brightness made her flinch. 'Shit, I forgot! It's dinner.' I could hear the phone purring against her ear. Her parents finally picked up, and she exploded into a barrage of cheery French. Her performance amazed me.

Even her face lit up. I couldn't understand the words. It was probably 'yes, mum, I love it here. Yes, I'm staying healthy mum. I miss you too mum'. It's the standard script between static parents and their wandering children. The call lasted five minutes. As soon as her phone screen darkened, she switched off too. And now we are alone, mind-numbingly alone, in a room together.

The snoring started right away. Soft snuffles followed by a roaring engine. I could very easily tell everyone, destroy her social life and ego. Something stops me when her chair is empty at our morning grammar class. We all need a little thing. That little thing that we tell no one. A silence that makes things a cheap sort of sacred. Camille's thing is how her hedonistic wanderlust is underpinned by sleep apnea and suspiciously perfect grades.

No one will find mine.



MORGANNA MAGEE

Australia

From the *Never it was* series

Large format photography



ANNA MACNEILL

Australia

Wild flowers

Cyanotype & text



This cyanotype is from another home
wild flowers captured through shapes and light

Rushing to place the paper in the sun between clouds
we didn't realise the water would pool as it dried,
leaving soft puddles
of blue

But the flowers and leaves make me nostalgic -

For the many times we picked wild flowers as kids

Of slowly walking around the house with our eyes to the ground,
spotting small orchids blooming, varieties changing over the season

Flying donkey
Nodding Greenhood
Spider

Hidden amongst the leaf litter and debris
Marking the spots they grow with branches,
to protect them from the mower before fire season

Making bouquets to decorate the table for meals with friends,
or garlands of eucalypts and flowers to lay the table for christmas lunch

Picked and gifted as apologies, promises, declarations
In memory of -

ALEJANDRA FONTECILLA SAIEH

Australia

From the 32 series

Digital photography



Before I came to Australia my mom decided to sell the house I had been living in for the past 21 years of my life, and I'm currently 26. I grew up climbing on the trees of my back yard that my grandmother planted as soon as she moved to that house. I learnt how to relate with nature and animals because I lived in the country near to the city in Santiago, Chile, on a little suburb called Calera de Tango, my house was number 32. When she told me she decided to let go of that home my heart hurt, I knew I would never feel as comfortable in a home as I did between those walls. Such weird architecture, it was built around the 80's by a Peruvian architect; my grandparents bought it during the late 90's; my parents got a divorce in 1999 and we moved there. I remember clearly my first week there. I have been very lucky to grow up there. I took these photos before I left to Australia as a way of saying goodbye but also as a treasure to always have a place to look back and remember that space that I called home for so many years, that taught me so much and that saw my grandparents grow old; that gave me the space to be free, comfortable and safe.

NAOMI BARNES

Australia

Plant of Love

Digital



Everything is Temporary

Digital



ELAINE MEAD

Australia

Returning/Ed

Your hands grip the steering wheel as the monotone American voice, turned down low, issues smooth instructions. Not that we need it. We quickly realised these roads had laid tracks in our bodies along our pulsing veins. They're a part of us.

We pass the now-faded sign denoting our hometowns name, and I remember the night we snuck out of bed at eight years old and walked the two miles to it. We were going to run away together, but I chickened out, couldn't go past the furthest point we'd ever been. You drew scratchy specks on the bottom corner with a sharpie, the stringent smell making me feel sick. Wouldn't let me see what you'd drawn. The rising sun pulled our shadows forward across the dark grey asphalt as we turned and walked back.

When I first got in the car, I couldn't stop talking. I tried to explain the term furusato to you, a Japanese word meaning where you are from. Hometown. Birthplace. The idea that these places make us who we are, or perhaps were. Where you go to pay respects to your ancestors. At the words respect and ancestors, you make a face like biting sour fruit. *You always were more interested in words than me, huh?* Your voice still hums with anger, a caged tiger in the back of your throat.

I pulled at the cuticle on my thumb.

Empty fields drag themselves past us with trees bent into shapes I thought lived only in my dreams, inviting more memories of foreheads pushed up against dirty windows, and drawing hearts in the steam left by hot breath.

Your family home is one of the first, on the outskirts of town, a low squat building with a red brick chimney barely clinging to the sky. The yard littered with decades of scrap and junk and lives that don't work any more. Your call surprised me. We hadn't spoken for years when out of the blue, your voice finds me once more, and the hairs on the back on my neck still rise. *He's dead*, you told me, *it's finally happened*. I knew what you needed but hoped you wouldn't ask. I didn't want to scratch at our girlhoods any more than necessary, an itch I feared we would never satisfy once we started. I didn't want to be reminded of the ways I thought we lived just for fun, never knowing it was more than that for you.

You park the car on the driveway, the house a short distance in front, the fly screens dark and ominous. *Remember the river...*, your sentence trails off, and before I can reply, you've unlatched yourself from the seatbelt, door lurching open, moving away from me.

The house is surrounded by dense bush that your back disappears into while I watch from the car. I remember the path you're heading down and feel my heart throb in my mouth. Remember the countless summer days when I followed you down it and watched the patch of sweat spread across your shirt on the small of your back and my mind wandered to your skin underneath. Watched as you paused and turned to face me.

Our faces inches away. The bead of sweat on your top lip.

After a few minutes, I get out of the car and follow you, beer cans and food wrappers leading the way. I find you at the other end, where the bush cuts away to a broader clearing, where the river cuts through. Down near the riverbank, an ancient pine we used to climb still clings to the rope your father strung up over one of the lower branches for us to swing from into the water. Frayed and swaying in the breeze.

Remember when..., you start, but I cut you with a shake of my head, take your hand and draw you closer to the riverbank.

It's been a dry Autumn, and the river barely moves. For a moment I think I see us, our imprints still in the dirt. I wonder where else we might still linger in companionable, secret silence. Tricks of light cast us back, and I conjure every person we have ever been in this place. I count them in the shade of the trees and wonder how we could ever find our way back.

Six year old you emerging from the water, dripping river muck and glee.

Ten year old me with orange peel smiles and sticky fruit fingers.

Twelve year old you, jumping from that tree and the fractured collar-bone.

A black eye to match when I saw you three days later.

Fifteen year old us with a secret to keep.

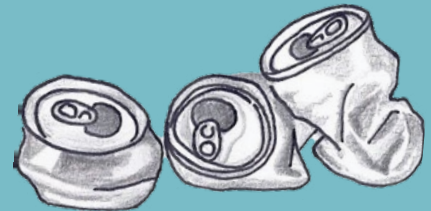
Seventeen year old you declaring love.

Eighteen year old me leaving.

To go home is to mourn the versions of ourselves we left behind. At the edge of the river, you take my hand again, but it's not the same. To go home is to be brought to your knees.

Do you see them? I whisper, and you grip my hand tighter.

The murmur of dusk strikes up around as we turn back, our shadows lengthening, tugging us away.

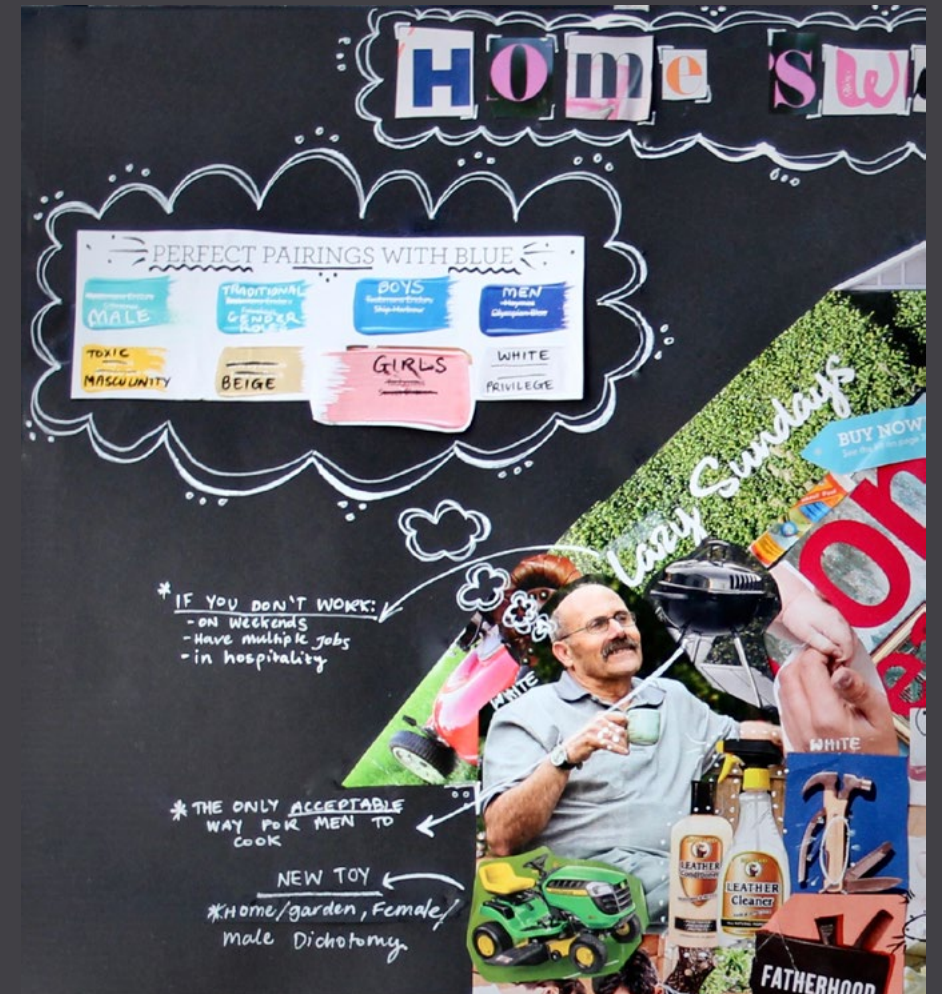


HANNAH VELJANOVSKA

Australia

Home Sweet Home & Home Sweet Home (details)

Annotated collage



JENNIFER FRANCESCA DI LORENZO SCIUCHETTI

Italy

In The Middle of Nowhere

for You, Little Alien Boy

She stood on the shoreline for a few minutes
The day she got off the ferry
That brought her home
From Marsala.

In one hand
A small cardboard suitcase.
It contained clothes, now outworn.
In the other, an old copy
Of a collection of poems.

She put the suitcase in front of herself
Moving aside the long gray flannel skirt.
She pressed her feet on the stones, slightly, arching her back.
Then, she stretched her neck bowing her head on her shoulder.
She turned her gaze to her left
and untied the long brown hair in the cool breeze of sunset.

The air sated
With an intense scent of wild thyme
Sent back the cackles of the fishermen who, at sunset,
collected nets abandoned at dawn on the beach
To return to the sea.

Marettimo, in its simplicity, returned the furtive gaze.
She narrowed her eyes
And squeezed the book even more vigorously in her hand.
By sketching a turnaround, she turned her back on the mountain
And with eyes, shining with joy,
She observed her ferry departing.

I'm back.

To stay.

To no longer run away.

She turned her gaze to the houses
Not far from the shore.
She picked up her suitcase and headed home.

In one hand, the suitcase.
In the other, a book.
In the heart,
Love for her Land.

They will - always - bring you back to me

Photography

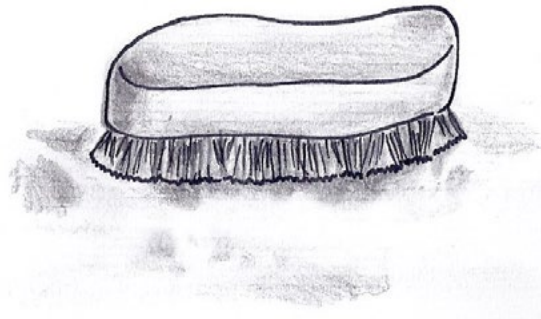


I have been a mother for 14 months and 17 days and this has changed not only the perspective, but also the meaning of what surrounds me. Time and distances have taken on new connotations, manipulated by different rhythms and needs. But there is one thing, most of all, that has changed, subverted its original anatomy. 'Home'. Because if before 'Home' was 'Wherever my Heart is', now this emotional and evanescent space has the coordinates of our Hearts and your legs which, as magnetic vectors, will always bring you back to me.

YASEMIN GUZELKASAP

Australia
scrub

the estate agent came over, in his
blue suit - the same colour as the sky that
night
and said 'you'll have to do more to this room,
it's a bit depressing' i laughed -
he didn't understand why but i knew
the room was haunted and i hoped it wouldn't
hurt the new people that moved in
praying i could leave the memories behind
but it would be a crime to
leave such a mess to unsuspecting people
my mother always told me to clean up after
myself, and i did for her too
when she was unable to shake the
devil from her shoulders, and started to
dissolve into the floor
i haven't been able to wash her from the
floorboards no matter how much i
scrub



MIRFET

France / Cambodia
Les Nanous, 9 rue Claude Bernard 33680 Lacanau-Ocean, France
Acrylic



MAY CAPRA

Argentina
La Maison
Acrylic paint



MEL ANDREWS

Australia
INSIDE

Close your eyes
Breathe deeply
Meet yourself
Inside

Hand on your heart
Breathe deeply
Feel the beat
Inside

Focus on your womb
Breathe deeply
Send warmth
Inside

Hug yourself tightly
Breathe deeply
Welcome comfort
Inside

Dance freely
Breathe deeply
Awaken
Inside

Look in a mirror
Breathe deeply
Send love
Inside

Go home
Breathe deeply
Grow flowers
Inside



LAURA PALMER

Italy / France

Mom

I'm coming back home
I'm in pieces
Fix me, mom.

Let the sun enter through the cracks
Of the broken house
Where my soul lies.

Hold me tight
And, please,
Don't ever let me go
Anymore.

ELIZA STRIBLING

Australia

Growth and togetherness

Collage



CIARA O'BRIEN KIRBY

Australia

Looking Back, Moving Forwards

In autumn, I experienced my first guttering heartbreak at the same time as a global pandemic ripped its way across the globe. My small, internal world shattered at the same time as my outer, external reality was turned upside down, and inside out. In short, I faced what one might call a *fucking unprecedented time*.

He said he had “lost” his feelings for me, and I took this to mean that maybe he just misplaced them somewhere. Maybe one day, the feelings would turn up again if we flipped up and checked over all the corners in our lives. In reality though, while I had thought we were growing closer and closer to each other, he had moved further and further away. My deep seated fear of not being *enough* for someone else, if they really got to know me, had come true. The heartbreak was hurtful, it felt like waves of sharp stabs at my sense of worth. He had really hurt me, but I realised he wasn't a bad guy because of this. In fact he was just a pretty good guy who had hurt me. Somehow, both of these things can be true at the same time. With time passing, I've begun to realise that everyone battles their way through this feeling at some point. This devastating internalization of unworthiness that is based on failed relationships is far too common. As though incompatibility or ill-timing is somehow a direct reflection of our worthiness of character, our capacity for any future success, our *lovability as people*.

Despite the insanity of the hurt however, many of us continue to dive head first into the deep end of vulnerability, heartbreak and relationships too many times over. We do so in search of reaching a home, a place of comfort and acceptance in someone else. Many of us wander through life constantly looking for this next opportunity to find a person who may “complete” us and finally be living proof that yes, we are enough. Why do we elevate and value romantic relationships to be held on such exceptionally high pedestals? Why are we trapped in the idea that we can only be whole, complete people if we have a successful romantic relationship? And why aren't we taught that our own ambitions are key to us becoming our “better” selves? This special, frankly bizarre notion is only reserved for romantic partners. But trust me, my friendships have made me feel the most close to home, most close to my true self as I've ever felt. Aren't our closest friends, and our own ambitions just as valid “forevers”?

Society tells us that future success should resemble growth into some form of ourselves that should be practically unrecognisable. This version of us will be a person changed and rendered better by experiences, jobs, qualifications, money and people that we are yet to gain and yet to meet. Inherent in this ideology is the belief that we are not already enough as we are. And so, we float through life and tend to assume that we are on our way *towards somewhere better*, most importantly we are on our way *towards someone better*. A sense of home, achievement and peace might finally arrive, only if we meet that right person to make this happen for us. In a frenzy of paradoxes and irony, it was my heartbreak that forced me to gradually shake these absurd notions. Being dumped, rejected and emotionally spat back out

into the world had somehow triggered an idea to *click inside my head*. A bizarre and radical idea began to dig its roots within my psyche.

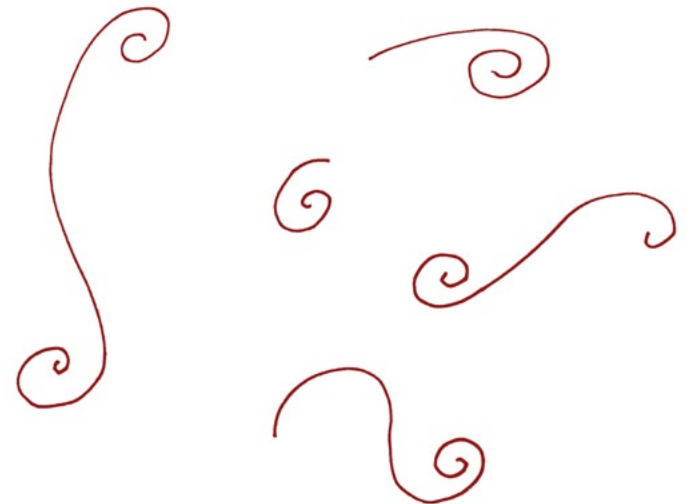
It's as though without any warning, this idea had invited itself into my mind. It sat itself down within my belief system and made itself comfortable here. The idea? Maybe... just maybe... I was already enough? Maybe my worth and ability to be successful in life shouldn't be marked or measured purely by my ability to find another “half” that will form a two-person whole.

We've all been taught all along to move through the world in search for romantic compatibility, without ever considering the possibility that the one person that will hold the capacity to complete us or bring us home is us. In doing so, we often move worlds away from our true selves. Though it may seem a bizarre cyclical process, we need to look *backwards*, to gain true direction *towards* ourselves. Ironically this will always be a hard process, an ever-present effort to stay still- despite society's pressures- and believe that home is here within our own skin. Looking back, I can now understand that I've been so consumed with looking for the approval of someone else to prove my own worthiness, I haven't thought to look around at where I've been the whole time.

Here.

As I am.

I'm already *home*.



JOSIE/JOCELYN DEANE

Australia
auctioneering

You take photos
of the auction, the world's
straightest mardi gras. They
fill the street like
the opposite of rubble. You
have no skin here; you raise
100 000\$ and watch the boomers'
eyes burst, who is this
piece of shit? until a guy in aviators
tops you, smirking. It
is a fine property; it used
to be a tram depot; the courtyard
smells of persimmon. Heritage
listed etc. It would've made
a wonderful transqueer share-house.
We'd lay out
a huge cuddle-puddle mattress
in the living room, the blinds
open, resplendently.
It's quiet/ vertical, a ship's prow
made into a fantasy tavern/ boutique
clothes store, with only
us as proprietors, and we say fuck
your propriety. Vines
drink from the balcony, thirsting
after water troughs left out deliberately
for them. Butcher
paper lines the walls, where
we don't simply paint over
everything. We
watch the rain in woven
deck chairs, after
the end of the world, resting. Sold
someone says, and the aviator's
fist pumps. It was
a beautiful poem, wasn't it? Someone
said a novel is like a beautiful, perfectly
furnished house, and poetry
is a person, on fire, tearing through it.



ZETH CAMERON

Australia
One Day
Digital



One day I will be able to live with my girlfriend and her cat and we will
always be able to afford food and we will never have to have the gas
turned off and the place will need fixing but we will be happy.

SAVANNAH VAN DER NIET

Germany

Tall

Some days
when I ask myself the question
the answer is
yes. You are broken.
Probably
you are not enough.
You are the burning hum
of a faded bee sting.
You are clay
malleable but strengthening.
You find the scribbled lines on your doorframe
they tell you you're inches shorter
than you hoped you would be by now.
Your hands are soft
underworked.
Your tongue is silenced,
a shell of the self you used to know.

When you are your own carbon copy,
when there are parts of you
laid to rest.
And, after all,
you come home to
a friend who says
you look taller.

EDWINA COMBE

Australia

Bathroom photobooth

35mm



ZOE CLOTHIER

New Zealand

Home is where the Heart is

Watercolour



CHANTELLE GOURLAY

Australia

Home is...

Home is the curve of his lip,
As it shapes into a warm smile,
Reeling me in with its charms,
And my legs turn gelatinous.

Home is the hand brushing my hip,
Running softly along my thigh,
The whisper of its ghost upon me,
Making my body shiver happily.

Home is the mouth placed on my neck,
Planting butterfly kisses across my cheeks,
Causing the laughter to erupt from me,
And making me feel safe for a bit.

Home is him, all of him,
His warmth and his kindness,
His never-ending love for me,
That makes me feel safe again.

LUCETTE MOULANG

Australia

the space between

we wore yellow once
and danced along tarmac to
the beating hearts of crickets
and the tolling of the hours that slipped back out to sea

long, humid summers spent learning who we were
and you'd eventually leave again
lost in the heaviness that no rusted fish hook
could haul back to land

I try to remember the upturned ends of
your cracked, salmon smile
or the bristles of hair that grew in spinifex tufts,
two friends growing upwards, along and apart

these days you're in my coffee cup, looking back at me
occupying the space between
each uncharted turn of phrase I can't begin
to u

n r

av el

MILICENT FAMBROUGH

USA

Missing you

Digital



A home isn't always made of four walls. Sometimes it is the familiar things that make us feel at home. Friendships, family, and familiarity is all you need to, "feel safe".

SABINE TONKIN

Australia
again?

whoever said that life isn't narrative
has never lived the same tale on repeat.
left on loop and abandoned,
a grating song fills my head.
same shit, different setting

it was only yesterday that I came to the conclusion that
I don't belong anywhere.
it started when I sat on the floor of an unused hallway -
an interstitial place -
where no one has thought to sit before.

this is where I live.
just as much as my bed -
the sweat and tears I bank to afford it
just as much as smell of food and gas and vomit
that I moved here for.

and I'm sad
but undeniably free.
I don't belong anywhere
so I guess I'm free to sit where I please.



ANA PADILLA FORNIELES

Spain / China
Home Fits in My Chest
Printmaking

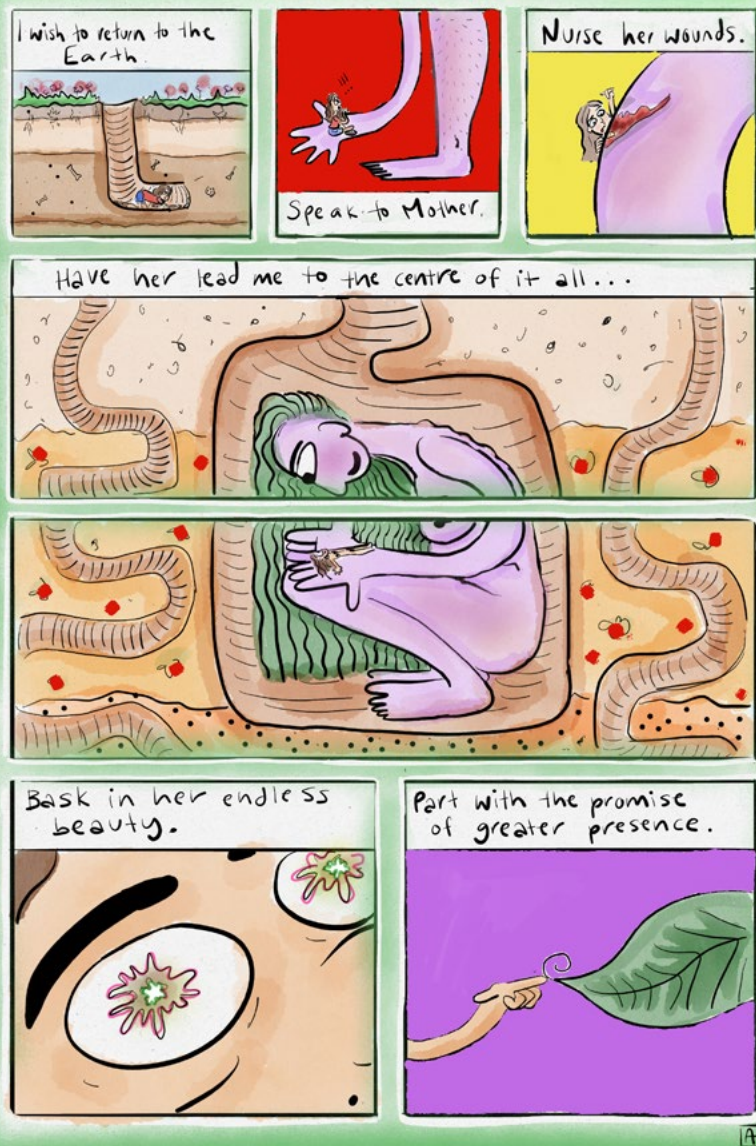


KIKI HAVOS

Australia

I Wish to Return

Digital



MONICA RENAUD

Australia

Untitled (night for day stairwell), Feb 2020

Inkjet pigment print on fine art 100% cotton textured paper



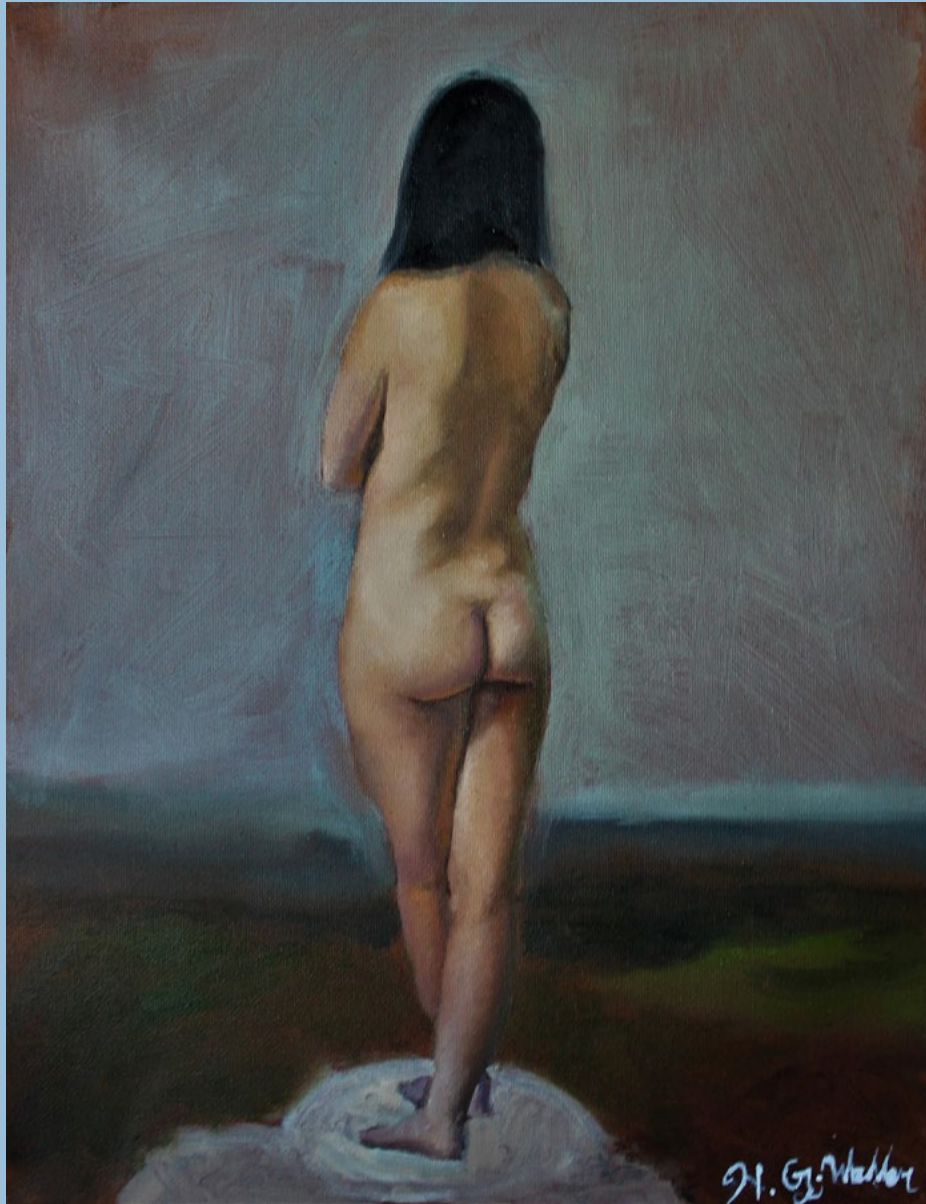
The only constant is our connection (ad Inf.), is an ongoing series of abstract photographic works made in response to the domestic landscape by capturing shadows and light as per traditional photographic means. I aim to further explore the binary oppositions of the transcendental and the chaos that co-exist for Mothers, using long exposure or slow making as mediation. All works from the series have been made within our home. Colour, line and composition continues to inform the painterly abstractions which combines traditional photographic techniques with the body movements characteristic of painters. By turning inwards (emotionally and geographically), I am able to explore an abstract making process and practice which was once usually solely focused on the external or simply capturing that which already exists. Far from the male, lone genius out in a sunny field, my landscapes interrogate the feminine through the lens of a Mother within the domestic realm. Susan Sontag said that whilst "a painter constructs, the photographer discloses". I somewhat disagree. Photographers can also paint, we paint with light, and also construct – we may construct complex, surrealist parallel universes, or the portals which connect them to us - if we choose to.

HEATHER WELLER

USA

This Could Be Home (Study)

Oil on canvas



ARI MOORE

Australia

Phantom

I'm always big spoon.
You're larger than me but I
Curl in, backpack snug
In the ravine of your shoulder blades

You sleep on the side
Knees up to belly,
Wrapped cat

Today the hangover is
Just depression and I
Flip my blankets off
The bed I bought for us
You've never slept in because
The borders are closed

I have been alone for half a year

Returning to my room
With coffee in hand
The lumpy sheets
Are curled with
Wrapped knees
And for a cruel second you
Are sleeping in our bed



MARIA ILONA MOORE

UK

Schlamm

If I describe a smell as swampy, as kind of sewagey, you'd imagine this as a negative. And yet, there is a smell that is both these things but is also comforting.

If I wrinkle my nose it is only through an expectation of how I should feel because, actually, I kind of like that slimy smell. The smell comes from the water in the canal near my grandparents' house that leads to Neusiedler See. It's green, dark, almost thick looking water that, to anyone unaccustomed to wild swimming, may look uninviting, but to me means summer and sunshine and long afternoons spent running to and jumping in and splashing about and clambering out, only to do it all again.

The smell is damp and warm. It's probably rotting leaves from the reeds that border the canals and maybe also the brothers and sisters of the little fish that once got caught in the strap of my swimming costume. Part of the smell must be because of the foot of schlamm that covers the floor of the canal. The English word 'mud' doesn't do justice to this oozing, sticky sludge that sucks at your toes when you get too close. To me, mud is inherently British – it's dirty wellies after a long walk in the English countryside and it's that splatter you get up the back of your calves when you've been walking in the rain. Mud is wintry, desaturated, cold. *Schlamm* is a different beast entirely. Perhaps the distinction comes because the German-speaking part of me is the one that spent my summers in Austria baking on brightly coloured towels in 30 degree heat, while the summer holidays I spent at home are never as technicolored in my memories.

When we were younger we'd dive down to scoop handfuls of the greyish, smelly clay and throw it at each other, trying to avoid the sloppy spatter that ricocheted back in our direction. We'd stand straight in the water to plunge into it and pull ourselves out of the water carefully so we could see where the dirty watermarks lay on our legs, so we could see how deep the muck really was.

Further out from the canal, when we bobbed on the surface of the lake in my grandfather's pedal boat, he told us how the schlamm was nourishing. Like a dead sea mud spa, the schlamm was full of minerals that were good for the skin, he said. And perhaps he was right, out there, where the water was more milky blue-grey, but I'm not sure I ever believed him.

Funny how we were so unafraid back then – or only afraid in a playful way, when we were the ones being splattered and not the other way around. A bit like how I get grossed out by bugs now, but I used to keep woodlice in a margarine tub and name them all, thinking of them as pets. Sure, I remember avoiding the shady parts of the water, because that was where the fish hung out, and being alarmed the first time I saw a snake skate across the surface. But other things didn't bother me at all; I was happy to get dirty and pull bits of algae soaked leaves out of my hair.

These days I swim carefully, steady breaststroke conscious of keeping my legs raised as high as possible, my stomach sucked in to straighten my body. I think of my pilates class back in London where the teacher tells us to 'activate the core' and I feel strong as I swim a bit further each day I'm there. When the soles of my feet do touch the schlamm, I recoil without any of the playfulness I used to have. Instead, I think of all the concealed things, all the decay, in the slimy layers beneath me. Above the water things are peaceful and bright and idyllic. Underneath there is a hidden murkiness, where memories are trapped along with detritus.

I wonder about all the things lost in the water – a pair of sunglasses, an earring, a watch, a towel blown off the washing line. I think about the objects that tell the stories of the people who live here, now strewn through the decomposing goo beneath us. I think how so many things have changed since the school breaks I spent here, not least my new fear of the unknown below, but that despite all this it's still one of my favourite places to be.

And then I carry on swimming.

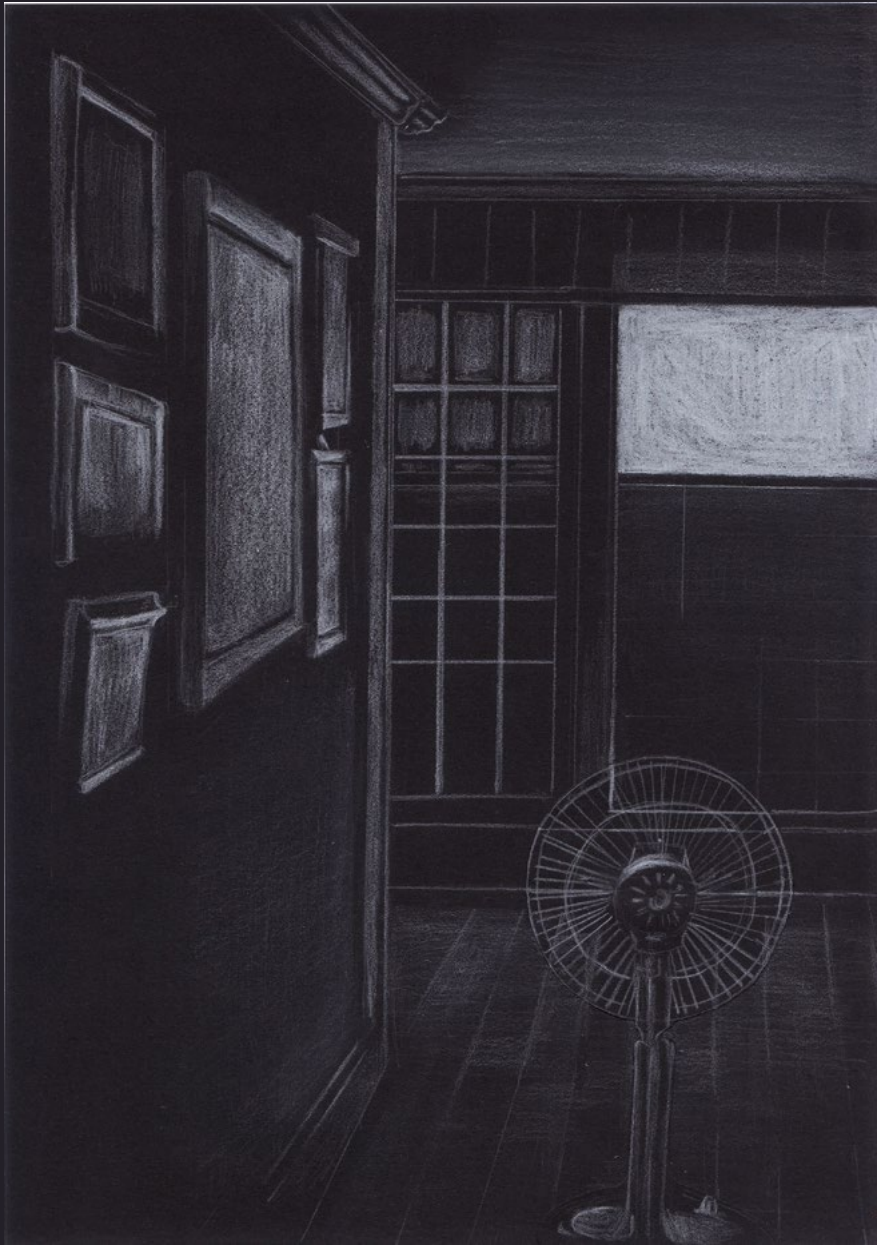


APRIL JY KIM

South Korea

June 2020, Seoul

Chalk

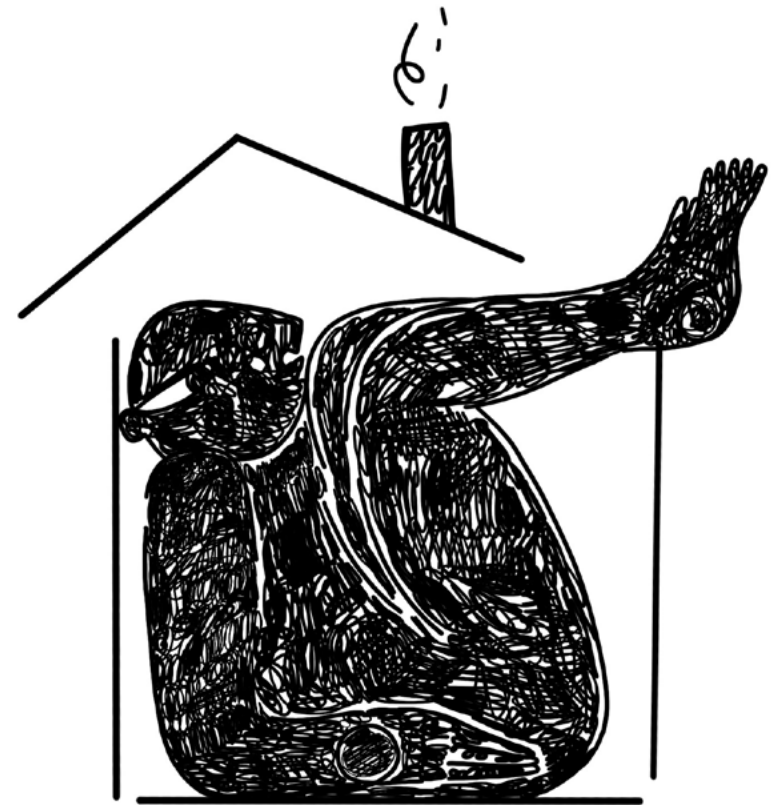


ALMUDENA ROCCA

UK

Home

Digital



ARIEL CAMERON
Australia
From the *Back Home* series
Photography



I keep falling into reflections.



By accident, or perhaps a twist of fate, I found myself at my late father's house as the world went into lock-down. Thousands of miles from a life I had put on hold, I found myself confined to the borders of his remote property that had been empty since his unexpected passing in late 2019. I had never planned to be here this long, but as the borders around me closed, I found myself calling my childhood home, home. During this time I photographed, filmed and recorded memories and moments of grief, loss, love and joy. I think everyone experienced a level of grief during the time of Covid-19. It was (is) a time that some of us struggled through, often apart from those we needed most. Others found peace and happiness in the slowing down of life. I was lucky, to be 'stuck' in a place that allowed for movement and exploration, buffered and kept safe by circumstances brought on by my father's passing. Sometimes I think he orchestrated the whole thing, my being here.

CLAIRE MCVEA

Australia

These pigeons are resting

35mm print, gouache & film strip on canvas paper

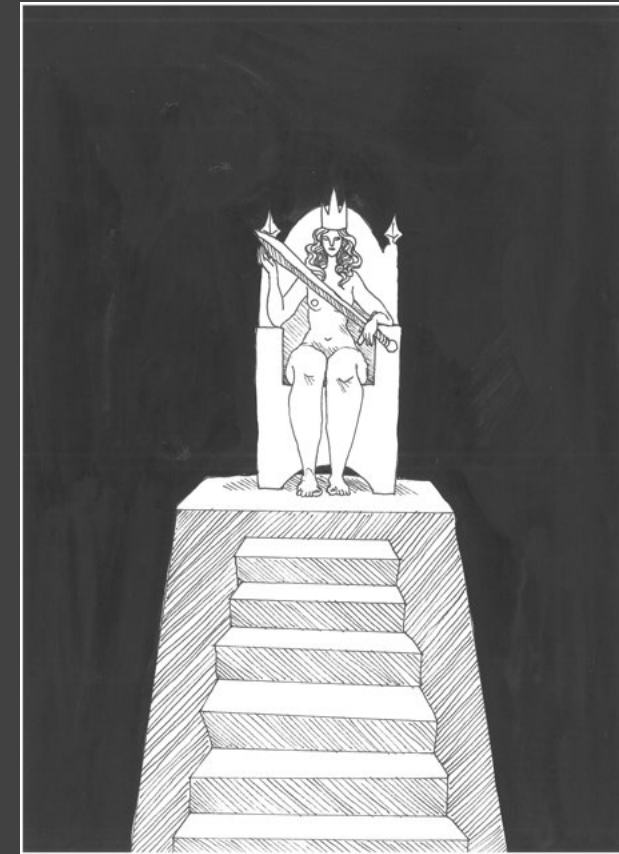


REMI CHYNOWETH (IMAGE)
& SAMANTHA HAFEY-BAGG (TEXT)

Australia

Nests to Kingdoms

Fineliner & text



You are beautiful darling,
beautiful beyond
belief he whispered.
but she had
stopped listening to him,
she already knew his words and she did not want to make a nest in them,
for she had already made a kingdom in her own.

OLIVIA WOOD

Australia

HIDING & Manipulating My Surroundings

35mm



ELMIRA

Australia

V

Text & watercolour

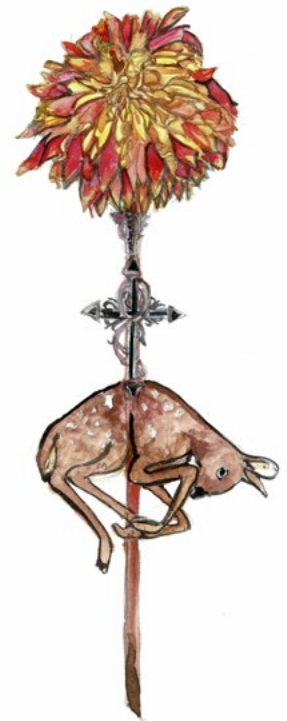
I am a matyr
Who killed herself
To lay in bed
With a man

Maybe he
Assisted her
Or maybe he
Killed her first

Is she in Heaven?
If she is
I wont ever
see Her again

Either way I
know she is gone
The particulars
Do not matter

O if only,
we did not
blame fawns
For fornicating



LUCY DAVIDSON

Australia

Home Demolished

Mixed media



VICTORIA CATALINA

Netherlands

Friday

Watercolour & pencil



SARAH MCDONALD

Australia

Home(sick)

Digital



EVA MIKELIN

Australia

Unprecedented

Photography & scanography



LOUISE LATTER

UK

Inner city scum

Digital



HAYLEY BARKER

USA

Home?

Book board, fabric & thread



CHIARA TALLARINI

Italy / Ireland

Moving Home

Digital



AMELIA SAWARD

Australia

Sanctuary (home)

Text & ink, acrylic, pencil & fineliner

The idea of a sanctuary is one that is old and enigmatic. Derived from the word *sanctus* - meaning holy - broadly speaking a sanctuary is a place of safety or refuge. The Latin *sanctuarium* referred to a container of sorts, for keeping holy, spiritual or supernatural items, possibly even cherished people. In medieval times a sanctuary was the sacred space of the church where, when reached, a fugitive was free from arrest. More recently a sanctuary has been used to refer to a place that brings someone comfort and relaxation. A feeling of peace and safety.

As a place and a concept, the idea of a sanctuary envelopes us, drawing us in and offering an emotional and physical respite from the material realities of the physical world. It is a warm blanket that wraps around the body shielding it from the cold of the air that circulates the space. A room filled with the most meaningful and precious trinkets of one's past and present. The feel of a warm cup of tea between two hands. Listening to music while lying on your back with your eyes closed. The smell of the trees after rain. The feel of winter sun reaching through the clouds. An open field with flowers floating across it, making the ground appear like a floral cloud drifting across the earth. The beach on a cool day or a warm one. Sand beneath the feet and a chill as the wind gently whispers across the face.

A sanctuary lies in the spaces we hold dear and cherish - where we are free from the persecutions of the troublesome world around us or merely from the challenges of the benign everyday. It is a cocoon that protects and provides the chance of soothing comfort. The feeling of peace and renewal. A sanctuary is personal and unique. No sanctuary is inherent or the same, as no person is the same. Whether enclosed in a man-made structure or in the depths of the natural world - it evokes an inner calm and sense of peace. Maybe this is because our place of divine comfort is not a place at all, but a space unseen? No matter how it is labelled, it is boundless. It is a feeling within that anyone can reach, if allowed the time and space to search and find. Now more than ever we need to give this gift to each other.

NEA VALDIVIA

Australia

Home Routine

Digital



KATE TANDOC

Australia

Untitled (Home)

Watercolour, pencil & fineliner on mixed media paper



SANNA WEI

Australia

Home (dream of Ro)

Near the end of the year, I had a dream of Ro. They were helping me move house, but the dream was not about the old place, or the new, but living together in this liminal space. Sometimes a caravan, sometimes a house, it existed in that way where dreams don't have to specify, and in-between are whole things of themselves.

In a similar way, this dream was both viscerally vivid and imprecise. Moments were linked in time but not space, some senses were substituted for another. But through it all, there was warmth. I remember we went to the market, and there were aunties and grandmas and choy sum and morning sun. The crunch of caramel peanuts, the experience of our laughter not as a sound, nor as a noticeable absence of sound, but as a feeling.

Back home, we cooked together, discovering domesticity in the details. I remember one moment zoomed in on the ends of our phone chargers, head to head, discovering they were different. In another moment which I wrote down but have now forgotten, we were "figuring out what music to listen to". But mostly, I remember the touch of a hand and the shifting of bodies in tight space, navigating around each other as we swapped places in the kitchen.

One day, I went out to see a new place, looking for a home. I had in my head a list of all the things I was looking for. I was shown around a poorly lit room, a common area kept spartanly clean. Then the head of the sharehouse started lecturing me threateningly on the rules of communal rice use. What should have struck me was a sticky feeling of mercenary transaction, of a lack of trust and anxious rules. But I kept on convincing myself things were okay, the house was okay, the people were okay, in that way one gets lost in the negotiating, the weighing and maximisation.

But then, in the middle of that lecture, my phone rang and it was Ro calling me back. And I was flooded with relief. Colour returned to the dreamworld as I returned home to Ro. And the warmth of our laughter, the crunch of the peanuts, our bodies in the kitchen, reminded me of everything a home should be. Home in the in between, home that sustains you, home to return to.

And then I woke up. But instead of being sad, I was glad. Glad that this feeling endured beyond my dream - there was no caravan house, there was no time when I actually lived with Ro. But much like a caravan that transitions to a house and back again, home was something that could go with me anywhere, set down a stable and strong foundation where I needed, and give me a haven to return to.

In the morning after the dream I called Ro to tell them what they mean to me. Over the sounds of them making breakfast in their kitchen, the click of a spoon, the chew of fried rice, I heard their voice as another presence in between. And I knew that, in those moments between transition and space, dreaming and waking, nourishment is found.

REGAN BRANTLEY

Australia

Be Gentle With Me & Last Night

35mm



FREYA ALEXANDER

Australia
Love poem

She kisses my tears and holds me
I think of her full lower lip, her teeth
How she leans over me and envelops me in her soft pale hair
It fans out around me like a silky waterfall,
dancing lightly over my skin
I am safe within that circle
We fit together like two clams
(perfectly)
We curve and loop like a cursive 'L' when we lie together
We share clothes and kisses and friends and stories
She reads me a poem about me, and I let her read one about her
We sit in the grass with the flowers and the bees
For the first time in my life,
I think I believe in fate
(and I know it's because of her)

Katie at home (detail)
Oil on canvas



ELIZA FREEMAN

Australia

Birthday Bushwalk, West Coast, December 2018

Digital photography

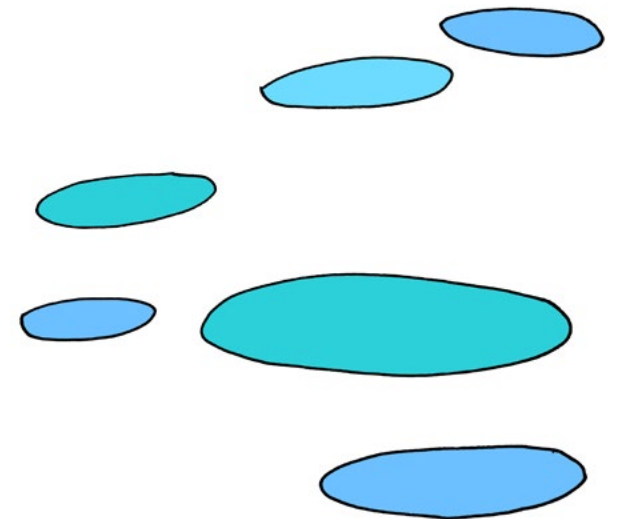


ZHANA MATIČEVSKI

Australia

I'M HERE (BUT I'M GONE)

you left and now I'm homesick
the forest walls are talking to me –
I need a friend to take me with them.
I'm eating peaches off trees I don't own
(no one owns) I exist / I exist / I exist
in temptations and patterns I exist.
the forest lies wide awake and slips
untruthful dirt into your pocket.
I'm tired but I'm walking, I'm here but
I'm gone. you left me homesick (and lost)
in the forest: it's never alright.



NESS MERCIECA

Australia
Lightview

I can see the hill's skin
Through the spears that slayed it;
Gulliver pinned down
A beast from the age of megafauna
That had hidden itself under a blanket
that was ripped away
'wake up beastly- wake up for January'

Now in the inertia of New Years
The colours shift daily
As some things grow back
And some things continue to fall apart

Glass Shore

tide lines of black leaves overlap
sand marbled by ash

a storm at sea (years ago)
washed up a coast full of dead birds

they must be part of the sand now
the beach must have digested them

fine grains of marrow
that held us up on New Years Eve

because
the beach cannot burn;
it would just become glass

CATHY, NATALIE & CLAUDIA FLETCHER

USA / Australia
Ma's Double Exposure Left Her Stuck
35mm



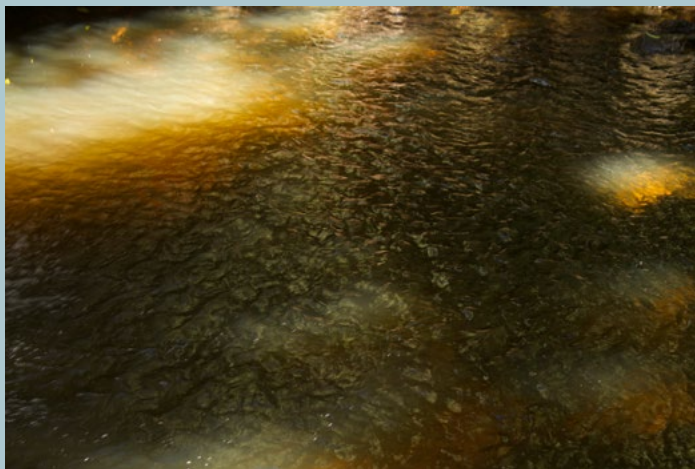
MICHAELA MCHUGH

Australia

wanderer & murk

Text & photography

wanderer of the bush lands lead by the thunder cracks in the dusty loam,
Wild grass grounds gave voice leaving clearings to freely roam
Tethered by the nutrition from the great grey gums that stand
Wild lessons not to squander,
but to conclude with the making with our hands,
Power to change the place that surrounds,
Power to give and take what amounts,
An ability to squelch through the scape that provides,
Can we attune to the seasons and honour what it decides
Support our needs to build foundation upon the earth,
connect to the elements that developed our very birth.
Wanderer of this land, wanderer on this land, what on this land?
What wanderer does this land mean to you?
More importantly wanderer
what does the land think of you?
The land an active observer set in this flow,
Allowing the balance of these systems to thrive
and from this we begin to know,
Take course to operate not juxtaposed but in rhythmic strides,
To interpret feedback and put in place systems that coincide,
Living in a harmonious regulation,
Not deciphering based on speculation.
Integrate above, along and in the earthen ground,
In a cooperative interaction is where generative action is found.



BELLE FORMICA

Australia

Golden hour

Watercolour, acrylic & fineliner



Australia
I'd be home with you

I'd be home with you

Hand embroidery on recycled denim



Australia
Messy Bedroom
Collage

Messy Bedroom

Collage



MICHAELA OTTONE

Australia

Grandma's chair, Lenin at home & Chilean family

Medium format photography & 35mm



EMERALD COONEY

Australia

Homecoming

Watercolour, pencil, wool, cotton & collage



RIITTA OITTINEN

Belgium / Finland

Hello again, world (Brussels, April 2020)

Photography



EVANGELINE STOIOS

Australia
BELOW

I orient myself towards the eternal,
in a room made out below shades of amber.
A constructed temple glistening in colour
& plants that share secrets when I sleep.

Lingering, the concept of myself healing,
wrapping it's fingers of love around
words that envelop me in my grief.
Rocking the body away from sadness.

Mimicking each undulating wave
my spine curves towards night.
Reflecting ripples in the bathtub.
Hold me in embrace, as I unravel.

Distant autumnal leaves cascade downwards,
a deluge of collective transformation.
Hibernation and a time to unfurl
into the past, so we can be finally present.

I embalm my body with candlelight
as skin begins to tingle &
there calls, the sound of the ocean
flooding from the windowsill ajar.

As winds caress leaves under the sky,
my eyes turn to meet the outside world.

I am reminded of you.

Laughter, bellowing between four walls.
Embodied, an excitement that once shone from your gaze.



ANNIE YUCHEN SONG

Australia
Today was hard to get through; I recall the past with a soft focus
Digital photography



ELIZA JUNG

Australia

But I'm one with the house and the house is with me

Digital



ABIGAIL ALEXIS

Australia / Indonesia

Eye'll be at home

Digital



OLIVIA BROOKE

Australia

Feels like infinity

Acrylic on watercolour paper



INFINITY.

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