

why did my brother take this photo? I wish I knew. I only found it after the war. And he was on holiday in Australia when it all kicked off, so... it's not like I've had the chance to ask him since. I hope he's okay. I hope he made it through. I hang onto this photo because it reminds me of better times. Just a photo of the café we stopped at on that big road trip way back in 2017. Nothing special about it.



Of course, I never would have noticed back then that it was a photo of a Bakehouse Café. Nothing special about a bloody Bakehouse when they're not the only goddamn cafés in existence! I still don't know what happened back during the Ghost Wars that left them untouched. I don't even know if there's anyone else out here. There has to be something else out here besides Bakehouses.

27/05/40

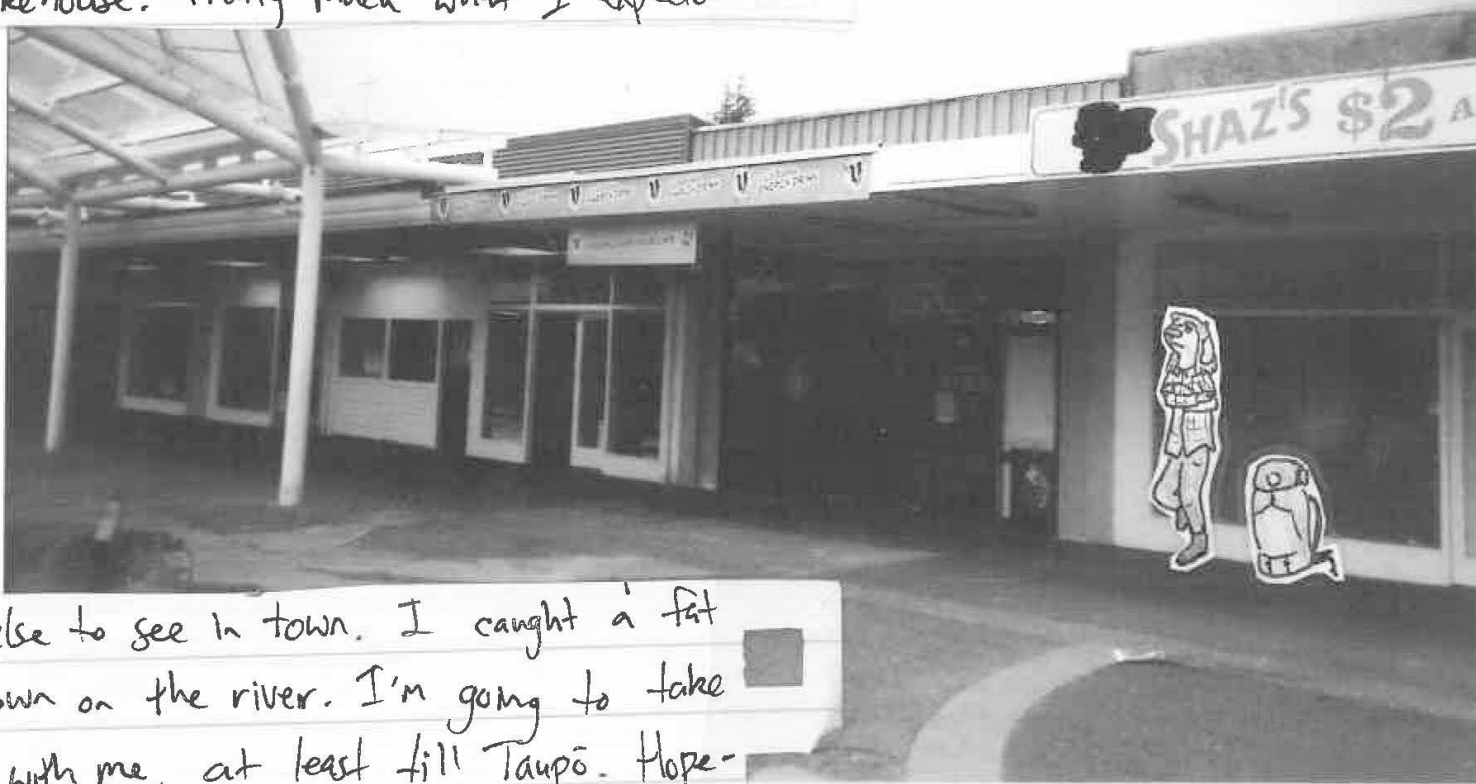
Made the "pilgrimage" when I got into town. I hate coming to these places - they creep me out almost as much as the spectres. Better to ask a scientist (or a priest!!) how there's always food in them, but it's the only break I get from cans and whatever I can forage along the road. I didn't notice the car moving until I left. How the fuck did these things figure out how to make that work?



I'm camped down by some stream near ~~Feilding~~ Feilding (my map says Taonui). I just had to get out of town.

10/06/40

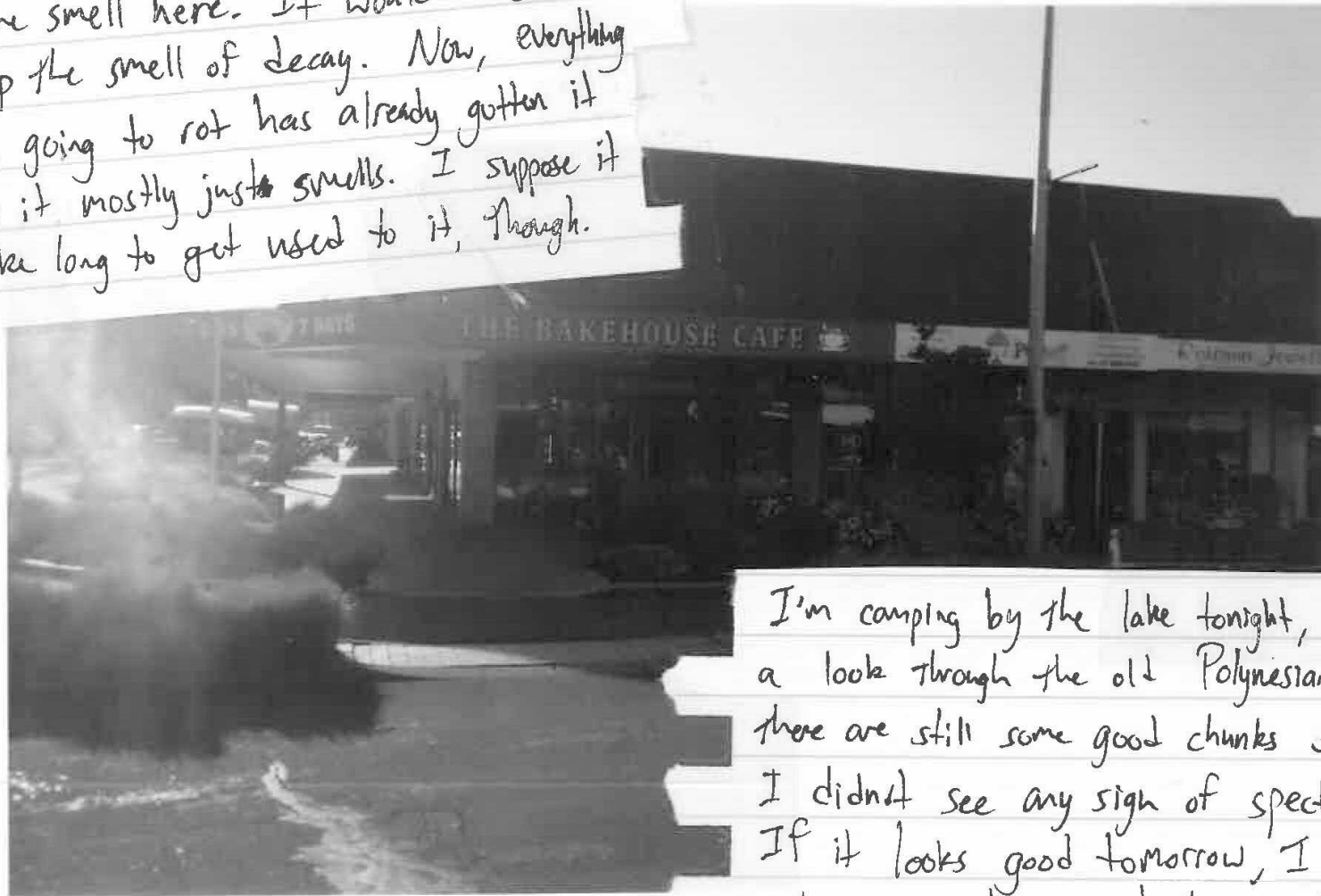
I managed to find a good fly rod tucked into the back of one of the shops on the main street earlier. Stopped by to check out the Bakehouse. Pretty much what I expected.



Nothing else to see in town. I caught a fat trout down on the river. I'm going to take the rod with me, at least till Taupō. Hopefully I can catch a few more over the next couple days.

17/06/40

Back in the early days, I would have been glad of the smell here. It would have covered up the smell of decay. Now, everything that was going to rot has already gotten it done, so it's mostly just smells. I suppose it didn't take long to get used to it, though.



I'm camping by the lake tonight, but I had a look through the old Polynesian Spa, and there are still some good chunks of it intact. I didn't see any sign of spectres either. If it looks good tomorrow, I think I'll set up in there and stay a few days before I head on. I just really need a goddamn break.

26/06/40

Too close, too damn close! I was getting food at the Bakehouse and when I left I didn't see the spectres until I got halfway across the road. They must've been just sitting in the cars or something. I should have been paying more attention. Just careless, is what that was. I'm staying in the old pumphouse. I don't think I'm going to sleep well tonight.





27/06/40

Well, I was right when I wrote I wouldn't sleep well. I had a strange dream last night. In the dream, I was hungover at a big house the morning after a party. It was raining. Someone had a strange red egg, and they said they needed "power" to make it hatch. If I put my hand between the egg and this woman, red energy got sucked out of

me into the egg. I offered to go get more "power" from something inside the house so we could hatch the egg without me dying. Yeah...

Pretty uneventful day except for the Korangbake Gorge. A few big slips and washouts along the road, but nothing worse than what I saw a few weeks ago on the Desert Road.

29/06/40

I only had one Bakehouse marked on my map for Thames. Came across it pretty quick when I got into town this morning. Something was different about it, like it was brighter, or more well-stocked than usual. More... alive, I guess. I found a second one though. Right on the main street, just like the first one.

But it looked just like any of the other shops - dark and abandoned. I don't know, it's like one fed off the other or something. Spooky fucking shit. I suppose I don't really need to say that I stocked up and got out of town as soon as I could. I found an intact house up the coast in Tararua and managed to get a fire going. I found



some good wood to burn in here, which is pretty damn lucky. It's really bucketing down out there.

02/07/40

Really rainy this morning. Bad squally thunderstorm came through around noon. The weather finally cleared up afterwards, and I had some good views across the Firth in a couple spots. The tide was up when I got into Coromandel and the sun was out, so I



went for a quick swim in the harbour. I finally got around to giving my clothes a good wash, too. Everything's drying in the sun as I write this. No sign of people anywhere in town. The lights are off in the Bakehouse here. But I checked, and it's full of food. There's nothing else for me on the Coromandel. I'm going south again tomorrow.



!!!

07/07/40

Oh, I can't tell you the last time I felt like this! I'm not alone! There's someone else out there! And if I'm lucky, maybe even something that's not a Bakehouse.

I left Te Aroha this morning after checking out the Bakehouse, and just down the road I saw a sign attached to one of the road signs. I drew a picture of it. ↘



"Salvation in Kihikihiki".
That's what it said! Written by another person! It looked pretty fresh too.

I have something to aim for now. I'm camping out between ~~the~~ Waihou and Morrisville now. On my way to Kihikihiki!

10/07/40

I camped out in the old Botanic Gardens last night. Got a big fish out in one of the ponds - just a carp, but better than nothing. I left a lot of my stuff there this morning when I went out to check out things in the city. I didn't see any spectres, but that's no reason to let my guard down, especially in a ^{former} population centre the size of Hamilton. The Victoria Bridge



collapsed a white back by the looks of it. Claudelands Bridge is still holding out, but it made ~~me~~ some pretty unpleasant creaking noises when I crossed. Checked out the Bakehouse in Frankton, and it's the usual story. Nothing else alive, not that I saw. I think I'll stay a couple days here, see if I can build up my supplies before I head down the highway towards Kihikihi.





13/07/2040

It's my birthday today. I'm 35. Time flies when you're having fun, right? Today was not what I'd call a fun day. This afternoon I came out of the Bakehouse in Ōhaupō and heard a car. A car! This little red car comes around the bend like it hasn't been 10 years since the wars. And I almost decide to flag it down, like maybe whoever's driving this car can help me, like they can tell me what happened to the world, like maybe things can ~~go~~ back to the way they used to be.

But I didn't. I just hid and watched it go by, and as it goes by, I see a spectre in the driver's seat. Not driving it, just sitting while the car cruises along. I thought I had this figured out. Not figured out, exactly, but... I don't know. This last month, things seem different somehow. Well, I found an intact house a little south of Ōhaupō, I've got my delicious canned goods and a bottle of feijoa port I found in Hamilton, so I'm going to celebrate my birthday anyway. I'm 35 after all.

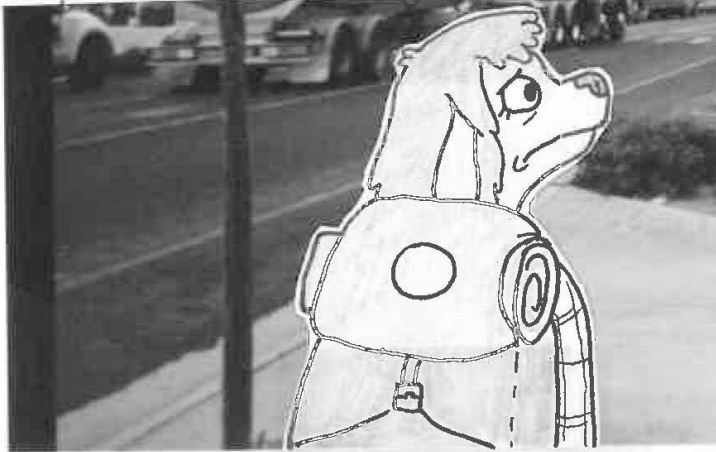


14/07/40

Stopped for a break in Te Awamutu. Everything's empty except for the Bakehouse. My hangovers just about gone. Saw another sign this morning. I think that makes eight since I saw the first in Te Aroha a week ago. Here's hoping I get some answers soon.



I know what the signs are referring to. It came back to me after I left TA. I got down to the Bakehouse, just a couple hundred metres away, then I chickened out. I've been waiting for something like this for God knows how many years. That's why I've been moving around so much. I could have set myself up somewhere, hid from the spectres and scavenged and gotten crops growing and tried to get by. But I need to know I'm not alone. I need to know if ~~there really~~ is nothing left but Bakehouses. I guess



need a little time to prepare. The town hall was clear and that's where I'm staying tonight.
Tomorrow's the day.

15/07/40

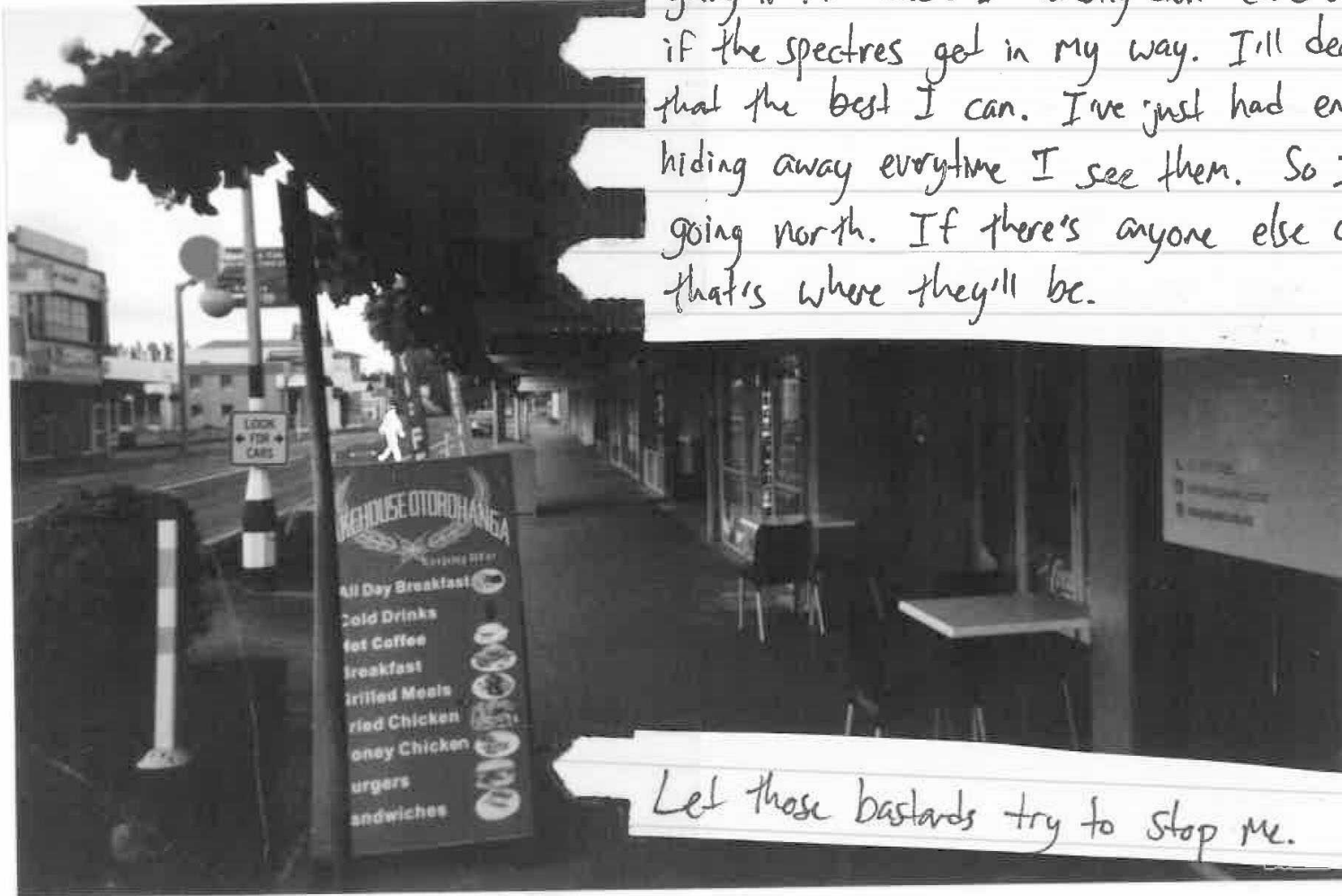
IT'S NOT FUCKING FAIR!
The bastards blew it up. Spectres, or
whoever was leaving the signs, I don't know.
Did they leave the signs for me? The wars
weren't enough for them, huh? They just
had to dangle a little hope in front of
some poor woman and the FUCKING BLOW
IT UP practically in front of her.



I can't let this ruin me.
I can't let them beat me.

16/07/40

I've been doing some thinking since yesterday. I'm going to Auckland. I honestly don't care anymore if the spectres get in my way. I'll deal with that the best I can. I've just had enough of hiding away everytime I see them. So I'm going north. If there's anyone else out there, that's where they'll be.



Let those bastards try to stop me.



Written and drawn
by
Miles Davitt

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 @milesdavitt