

T H E I N K W E L L

// Artwork by Anonymous

2021/22

AUTUMN / WINTER

GEOGRAPHIES

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2021/22

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C O N T E N T S

Papilio — Troilus // Anjali — Klinder
= Pg 7

New — York // Jess — Blanksteen
= Pg 10

Train — Rides // Niamh — Carey-Furness
= Pg 11

Stuck // Grace — Oeth
= Pg 14

Continental — Drift // Will — Stavely
= Pg 18

My — Life, — Your — Life, — Our — Life //
— Callum — Osment = Pg 20

Landscapes // Rosie — Harrison-Nirawan
= Pg 25

Stupid — Plastic — Chairs // Dalia — Impiglia
= Pg 28

Heart — and — Cartograph // Alisa — Fraser
= Pg 31

If — Holst — Was — a — Poet — and — an — Obsessive — Skin — Picker //
— Lucas — Sheridan-Warburton = Pg 35

// Artwork by Anonymous






E D I T O R ' S N O T E

J u l i a n n a R i t z u

It's strange trying to solidify the concept of geography following a period in which everyone remained stuck inside. Geography traditionally inspires ideas of travel. Visiting new destinations, interacting with new faces, and broadening one's horizons, or at the very least having the opportunity to have a pint (or four) outside of your own home. But definitions are themselves changeable and if 2021 has taught us anything, it's that flexibility is a virtue. Recovery is hard. This year has resembled how I imagine coming outside for the first time after a tornado must feel. Slowly looking around, shaking the dust off, making sure everyone around you is okay. Things may not appear how you remember them but you're still there. Good.

No one focuses on the clean-up. The piecing together period following a collective trauma in which uncertainty dominates and people are at the very least forced to confront a reshuffling of their routines, priorities, and relationships with others. Although hindsight may be 20/20, it doesn't make the sting hurt any less. Geographies are often used as a proud marker of difference, a self-categorisation signifying the affinity one has with a certain location and the peculiarities of that place. But what to do when a global pandemic proves such geographic nuances irrelevant when compared to collective experience? Sure, perspective (and privilege) is undoubtedly shaped by geography, but as we reflect upon the challenges which have characterised the preceding two years and our collective clean-up begins, it's become clear that the lessons learned and bonds formed as a result of shared experience are the





most powerful healing remedy. They build the kind of hopeful sense of community that transcends physical boundaries and remains assured that there is a light at the end of this incredibly long and winding tunnel after all. Even if you can't always see it. Even when you squint.

This edition of the Inkwell was created joyfully. It turns out that as a surprise to no one, you don't do your best work hunched over a laptop screen in hour three of a seemingly never-ending Zoom meeting. We did it when we had to, but when it comes to collaboration, real human contact with people whose contributions aren't dependent upon the strength of their WIFI connection is preferred. The excitement of being back in-person has buoyed our entire team throughout this process and we are thrilled to present this anthology of truly outstanding work to you, showcasing the diverse and distinctive voices Edinburgh University is so lucky to have. These pieces are as compelling as their authors and it is a privilege to publish them.

To everyone who submitted work to this edition, thank you so much. While creativity is too often an unlucky victim during periods of palpable anxiety, the submissions we received demonstrated an inventiveness and enthusiasm that was inspiring to witness, and knowing that people still had stories to tell, and told them so well, during this time reminds me that it'll all be alright. Keep on doing what you're doing.

And to our readers, it is your interest and support which makes this entire publication possible and we appreciate you dearly. So thank you, and we sincerely hope you enjoy 'Geographies.'

See you soon.



I DREW STORMS

from summer clouds,

AND VOLCANOES

from turbulent seas.

P A P I L I O T R O I L U S

A n j a l i K l i n d e r

In my younger years - if I can ever call them that - I think I was obsessed with impressing you. I think every stone I formed with the cupped palms of my hands was meant to be given to you, shown to you, loved by you. I raised plants like children from the dry cracked soil of my brother's making. And I think you liked the devotion I had to you - the desperate yearning for pride. But the stones were plentiful, the meaning must have got lost in the numbers. And anyway, those stones were far from beautiful - the pale grey shades and the imprint of my fingertips where I pressed too hard. I was just figuring out how to use my limbs, my fingers, my toes, my lips.

My brother told me that you would never love me like I wanted you to. And I didn't mind, in the beginning. I liked your company, and I liked watching you form creatures from the severity of your soul - bears and tigers and things with sharp claws and fangs and feelings like the night. I miss the evenings we spent lounging on the boulders, the bubbles of my father's laughter. I miss you trying to teach me how to build crows and bats from the darkness in my mind, and me - in turn - trying to show you how to coax a fern to grow through the warmth in your fingertips.

We were young gods, learning how to mould our world, and our creatures were not so different as we thought they were.

Your laugh, your smile, your eyes, your mind. I think I fell in love with you along the way. Somewhere between your frustrated attempts at making something beautiful, and the languid strokes of your pale hands as you brushed spiders from the mess of my hair. You frowned when you found I could not bring a darkness about like you could. You gave me insects to hold on to, and promised that one day I would find the pain to give them life.

Now it seems haunting, hearing you say those words to me again; the feel of a million dead feet on the sensitive skin of my earthy hands.

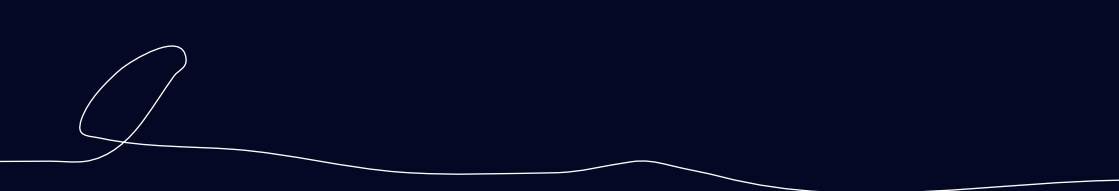
When we were older, you would take me out within the caves and point to your bats and laugh at how you made them sleep. We would sneak berries and bread to the cold, damp eaves of your caverns and watch the bats all day, sleeping in their warm brown clusters and dreaming of things not yet made.

You were convinced there was no colour within yourself. You told me so every time I took you by the hand to the meadows my brother was working hard on. I would press your palms down into the earth and I'd pull a soft patch of grass up from the brightness in my heart. I'd watch for the awe in your eyes - the awe I'd tried so desperately to attain. But you were only ever sad, angry, jealous at the lightness I could create. I caught you staring at a tulip once - a light pink one I had spent all week encouraging. Your fingers twitched in the anguished rhythm of a madman, flickering like the sun behind clouds. I watched as you stormed to the flower and ripped the velvet petals from that joyous green stem.

You were convinced there was a darkness in myself. I began to recognise that longing-ness that mirrored itself in your midnight eyes, and in the curve of your eyebrows. You didn't need it to be me, but I thought you did and so I tried desperately to find that spark of cruelty within my soul - that darkness you were convinced everyone bore. You were a birch tree in a forest of oaks; and I was a sapling just learning to grow.

I was holding those dead insects from centuries ago when you came up to tell me about her. She wasn't much older than us, but she carried herself with the air of an ancient goddess. She had lilac breath and honey-gold eyes. Her fingertips trailed light wherever she walked, and her smile was radiant. She was happiness and kindness and love. You were infatuated by her, and enthralled by the warmth from her heart. She was so sure of everything she created. I felt like a child in her light, but you felt like a mountain, a giant, a cascade.

And she was lovely.

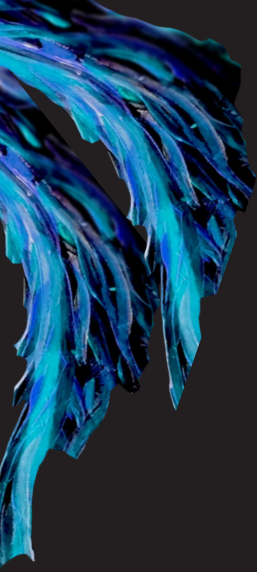


You brought her to the caves to watch the bats with us. You tossed raspberries into her gently parted mouth and you brushed black, silk-winged butterflies from behind her ears - the most beautiful thing you could create, you told me once, your voice thick with distaste. She giggled at the tickle of those beautiful wings, and my scalp itched with the memory of spiders.

She was enchanted with the flowers I could create, the boulders I shaped and flung down rolling hills to where they rested in huddled masses. She loved to sit and watch me grow forests from the naked earth of surfaced ocean beds. She would confide in me her feelings for you, her attraction to the shadowy depths of your soul. She was gentle. And that made it so much harder to hate her.

You and her found a pattern without me. I don't know when it happened. But I noticed one night, a moon within the dark - a bright sphere of blinding light. You told me the next morning, as I was growing gardens, about what you and her had done; and I found that my roses grew thorns. She trailed stars through your murky darkness, laughing and giggling with joy. She drew streaks of beauty in your creatures of night, white stars in the wings of your black-souled butterflies. And all I saw, again and again, was the way you ripped my tulip from its stem.

You came by less and less, and maybe I was to blame, for I avoided you when she was there, adoring you with those golden eyes. I don't know why her joy was more enthralling than mine, why her brightness was more magnetic, more sublime. But eventually, we grew apart, and my plants sprouted with poisonous leaves, my boulders sharp and lonely. I drew storms from summer clouds, and volcanoes from turbulent seas. I don't know when it might have happened, but by the time her stars had speckled your beautiful sky, my brightness had turned to grief.



N E W Y O R K }

J e s s B l a n k s t e e n

Once in a blizzard
I lost myself in the Ramble
stumbled blind in white fog
that swallowed buildings
and swallowed me
in silence.

You will ask why I didn't have a map
and I will say:
I am still searching for the roots
that my mother left for me to find
to bury myself beside
somewhere her soul
the pieces of a woman
with no choice but to fracture.

I know it was she
who brought me out
who pencilled the skyline
once more.

June, 2020.

T R A I N R I D E S

N i a m h C a r e y - F u r n e s s

There is low-hanging sunshine
Catching on the wildflowers
Scattered along the train tracks;
There are cats on garden fences
And men without shirts on
Painting backyard sheds;
Here are all the things
I want to point out to you
All the things I would turn
Away from the window for –
With its sunlight and flowers –
Always turning to face you,
Always looking for the reflection
Of the world in your eyes.

I hope you know that I
Would give up many
Sun-soaked train journeys:
Whole fields of wildflowers,
And herds of cats on fences,
Every shirtless man painting
His shed that I could find-
If only to feel the ache of
My shoulder beneath your head
And the stirring of your sleepy
Breath against my hair
On a few more train rides.



W

3.1883°

N,

55.9533°

N



W

E

S



Artworks By Mollie Russell
// @mollie_s_russell

S — T — U — C — K

G r a c e O e t h

Waiting for the train, Dee lit a cigarette. Although the sign above her lone bench was a huge cartoon condemnation of her actions, she elected to ignore it. The only platform in the regional station was completely open and unprotected from the elements, giving the smoke a free path to the heavens. And—apart from a ScotRail attendant hiding behind the small service desk below the platform—there wasn't another living soul for miles. Looking around and over to the green space beyond the car park, Dee noted that there was nothing but leftover mist from last night's rain.

She knew it was wrong. She knew it. She should know it. She does know it. What does she know?

Exhale.

She relishes the sensation of the smoke down her throat and closes her eyes. She has time to, after seeing the train was delayed another 10 minutes.

“Those things will kill you.”

She jerks up in surprise to see a woman walking up to the platform. Remnants of the fog followed the lines of her trench coat, mirroring the cigarette resting in between her own fingers.

“That's what they say,” Dee threw away.

“I never listen to what they say.” The woman sat down on the other side of Dee's bench and moved her hair away from her back so that it could hang freely beyond the wet wood.

Dee smiled at the comment and looked to the electronic sign predicting the arrival of her train: 22 minutes.

Exhale. Flick.

After a few moments of silence, the woman asked, “What brings you out here?”

Slightly annoyed, Dee replied. "Funeral." No use in lying.

The woman left a beat of silence before taking another drag and looking towards her feet. "I'm sorry to hear that. My condolences."

Strangely, Dee felt a little comforted by this stranger's words and let herself feel the heaviness for the first time all week. "Thank you...truly." Inhale.

"Of course. Losing a loved one is never easy."

Exhale.

"What about you?" Dee asked. "What brings you here?"

"Oh, I uh, live here."

Dee nods. "It is beautiful."

"Yeah...yeah, I guess. Very quiet. Don't get a lot of visitors."

The conversation died off again and the intense desire to keep her thoughts at bay struck Dee: "Are you waiting for the same train?"

"Oh, no." The lit end of her cigarette flared as punctuation.

"No? I thought this was the only one coming."

"It is—I just can't leave."

"You can't leave? Are you a fugitive or something?" Dee's back started to straighten.

"No! No, nothing like that. Never did anything illegal." The confusion on her companion's face must have been obvious. "It's because I'm dead."

Shock kept Dee frozen in her seat. "Dead?"

The woman nodded and kept smoking.

"You don't look dead." Dee was now searching the woman's figure, looking for any sign of wounds or transparency.

"A blessing, I assure you."

"So...you're a ghost?"

The woman nodded. "Have been for ages now."

Dee shook her head in an attempt to straighten her thoughts which resulted in a long drag off her cigarette. The end was drawing closer and closer to her fingers. "I'm afraid to ask—?"

“How I died? Well, I’ll save you the breath. I have no idea.”

Silence passed over the pair again; Dee let the weight of the statement pass over her.

“Does everyone not know how they passed?”

“As far as I can tell most people know.”

“Have you met other ghosts?” Inhale.

“Not many, but some pass through. There seems to be two types of ghosts; You either stay with a person or a place you loved.”

Exhale. “Did you love this place?”

The woman shrugged. “I must have.”

“You don’t know?”

“I don’t remember anything from my life.”

Dee takes a moment to ponder her companion’s statement; all that could come to her mind was, “I’m sorry for your loss. My condolences.”

The woman gave a small laugh. “Thank you.”

Dee smiled. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale.

A bird call sounded from beyond the platform, heard but unseen. The mist grew thicker and the clouds above covered the sun’s light. Both women watched the hills beyond, waiting for anything to move. Exhale.

After stomping out the end of her cigarette, Dee looked to the clock. Nine minutes. Her train should have been here by now, but she was now thankful for the delay. She reached into her jacket for her pack and lighter. “I’d offer you one,” she started to her friend. “But I don’t think that would work out well.”

The woman gave an easy smile. “It’s the thought that counts.”

A lone sheep emerged from the fog beyond, crossing one end of the field towards the other. Slowly, as the sun peaked out from its gloomy shade, a cascade of light deepened as the sheep was followed by another. Then another, and a few more, until the whole flock emerged.

Dee took lighting her cigarette as an opportunity to look away. Seeing something so beautiful, so comforting, felt criminal. Inhale. Inhale.

“It was my mother.” Exhale.

The woman next to her nodded slowly, showing she had heard.

“She was the best person in the world, and one of my best friends. And she was gone in an instant.”

“Did she suffer?” the woman said softly.

“I don’t think so. It was very... very quick.”

The woman took a drag of her ever-lasting cigarette. “I can tell you one thing: we don’t feel any pain on this side.”

Exhale. “That’s good. I’m glad.”

Her friend paused before saying, “I feel worse for those we leave behind. Grief is one of the most painful experiences anyone could ever endure, and it can materialize in any form. But people have been grieving since the beginning of time.” The woman looked to Dee. “And what you’re feeling right now for your mother, is wholly different and unique to you.” The woman turned towards the empty tracks and took a drag. “Magnificent, but lonely.”

A faceless woman’s voice announced that Dee’s train was arriving in five minutes. “A small part of me wishes you could come with me.”

“Trust me,” the ghostly woman said. “I wish that too.”

Dee’s cigarette dwindled before her eyes. The two women sat in a comfortable silence and watched as the clouds blocked the sun once again, and the flock of sheep departed over the crest of a hill to a world beyond their sight.

Two minute announcement.

Inhale. Exhale. “Do you think I will see her? As I see you?”

The woman shrugged. “I have no idea. But I will say I was surprised you could see me, so that’s one thing on your side.”

Dee could hear the train getting closer and used that as a way to force herself off the bench, stop herself from crying, and then stomp out the cigarette. She looked towards the woman, who was also standing up. “Thank you.”

“Didn’t scare you too much, I hope.”

“Not in the slightest.”

“Damn.” She shrugged. “I tried.”

They both smiled at each other before Dee stepped onto the train. Dee still looked out of the window as the train departed to see if her friend was still on the platform, yet she wasn’t surprised to see nothing remained. Just the mist, inhaling and exhaling.

C O N T I N E N T A L D R I F T

W i l l S t a v e l y

*The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza,
and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other,
or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking...*

T.S. Eliot

Against each other we stood facing
this sociation of sent stability
a scission of diagnosis has meant fragility
after another unforeseen and seismic event.
Neither of us knowing
which had jumped across
with collapsed compasses
half-heartedly indicating
in witness-proof light a
dissociation of sensibility
the only knowledge that ground is shifting.
Each of us against each other
looked back, or forward some
or else swayed in held stare
or else perished for a Pangaea
stolen and locked away

before reactionary eyes
had time, or the abrupt rainbow
of lack thereof
to notice the dissociation of
sensibility and sense
for to survey from the summit
is a bloated and pompous task.
What was always coming
will come
what can never happen
will never
and here and everywhere in continental drift
what have I to give to you
my anchor and ballast
when so many extensional words
strike and slip and carve
the widening

void of love —

questions,

solely answered by a look,
no words, but an old look
that used to play upon the cracks in your olden face.

MY LIFE, YOUR LIFE, OUR LIFE

C a l l u m O s m e n t

We moved into the new flat today. It is small and boxy and if I stand on my toes I can almost touch the ceiling. It was advertised as modern and functional, perfect for a couple of young professionals, but it already feels too cramped for us. Paul is milling about picking through the boxes; boxes with stuff that used to be mine and used to be his, but will now be ours. Our stuff, our flat, our life, for the rest of our life, forever.

I look out the window and down onto the rowdy student pub down below. I don't know how I didn't notice it when I signed the lease. I make a note to buy earplugs. I shove my hands deep into my pockets, and I feel the ring I had stuffed in there weeks before. Was tonight the right night? Was any night the right night? I flinch as Paul's slender arms slither under mine from behind, constricting me in an embrace. I make myself another note, to tell Paul I don't like it when he does this. The ring slips back into my pocket. Forever will have to wait one more day.

-where have you been hiding this? In his hand is an old picture in an old frame.

I take the frame from him, moving to the sofa to study it further. It is a photo of me as a young boy on the beach in Cornwall, looking away from the camera towards the sea, with thick, puffball clouds greying the sky above. There are other children too, playing on surfboards and flying kites, but they are far away from me.

-it's from one of our holidays when I was a kid, I tell him

-the cottage you used to go to?

-yeah

-it looks amazing

-yeah

-do you think we could go

-well, when

-whenever, soon, didn't we say we needed a holiday
-we've only just moved in paul
-i know, but, just at some point, i've always wanted to see where you
grew up
-it's really not that great
-oh, right ok, why are you being like this
-like what
-forget it

This is how it often goes with me and Paul, too afraid to argue with each other so we just end up leaving things unsaid and huffing about for a few days. I do want to tell him about the cottage, and my family, but instead I just rest a limp hand on his shoulder, and he turns away from me and I feel useless. I make another note, to call my Uncle Alan, the only family member whose number I still have, to ask him if he still has that spare set of keys.

Weeks later we end up at the cottage. Paul runs his fingers along the chipped granite countertop, letting them go into the divots where bits have been broken off; he chuckles. He admires the wooden beams that prop up the ceilings, stomping his feet and watching the little splinters fall to the floor, shooting me a mock-worried look as he continues to lurch excitedly through the house. Later he watches me stoke the fire in the pit, as the sparks drift away into the night, and he tries to hug me as close as he can under the small blanket we share, but there isn't enough room for us both.

For whatever Paul sees, all I can see is myself being cast to the floor with the blood running down the back of my neck, as my father stands over me. I see myself banging my head again and again against those wooden beams, letting my howls resound throughout the house, not caring who heard me. I see myself sticking my hand into the hot embers of the dying fire, and keeping it there until the skin begins to char and burn, just to feel a different kind of pain. I only ever told Paul the half truth about the scars - dressing them up as cooking accidents or falls from tall trees. Paul and I often see things differently.

Paul takes lots of pictures on his smartphone when we walk down to the beach. I don't see why, because it's just sand and water. When we were

younger me and my brothers would play hide and seek here, and I would run as far away as I could until I was sure nobody was around and I would lie somewhere quiet and pretend I was the only person in the world. But they would always find me eventually.

-let's go for a swim, Paul suggests

-it's too cold, i say

-it'll be fun

-we'll get all sandy and we'll bring it into the house

-fuck me, what's the matter with you eh

-nothing

-yes there is, something is the matter, and you won't tell me

-i just-

-tell me peter

-i can't

Paul grew up in the city, surrounded by concrete and plastic, so he must feel totally free here. I watch him wade into the water as I sit on the dunes, shivering and buffeted by the wind. I recall a time when I sat here and watched my brothers playing in the sea like Paul, and I had argued with my mother, screaming hard at each other, and she had stormed away. How I had been jeered at by a group of kids smoking joints around a fire who had used insults I couldn't understand. I remember how much I had hated my life back then, how much better it really is now.

Paul is a dot in the distance now. I feel again that I should be close to him, though this time it isn't an obligation. I peel off my clothes and run towards him. The dot turns into the face of a man, the one that I love, and I wonder why I was ever scared. I may never see the world as Paul does; but I also don't need to see it how I used to, because we can see it together now. Paul is waiting for me.

-paul

-it's ok, i'm sorry

-i'm sorry too

-you don't need to tell me anything

-thank you

He wraps his arms around me, pulling me tight against his chest, and this time I don't flinch. Instinctively, I reach for a pocket that isn't there, to feel the ring that is back on the beach. Forever, I realise, is going nowhere, so Paul and I just float in the water, and I pretend we are the only two people in the world.

// Photography by Aiyah Sibay
@ i n n _ p a s s a g e



// P h o t o g r a p h y b y A i y a h S i b a y //
@inn_passage



L A N D S C A P E S

R o s i e H a r r i s o n - N i r a w a n

When Adam first announced his trip to Thailand, the rest of the Bembridge family sat awkwardly on the settee, wondering what each of them would be expected to say. His mother was inundated with a flood of anxieties regarding his health, his safety, and even his decency. Meanwhile, Adam's father mentally flipped through some things he had heard down the pub about that country. Tony's Uncle Ian's new wife that he had seen in big Asda once.

Adam thought of how happy his mother had been on the beaches of Skegness... But that was how the Bembridges operated and how they had always operated. Two Christmases ago when someone had had a strange notion that gifting the family an Ancestry account would be exciting, they discovered that the long line of Bembridges had in fact lived in the same village of East Keal since 1506; before which they had lived 1.2 miles away in West Keal.

Having undertaken a crazed bout of research, Googling such things as 'Brits crime Thailand' and 'how many Brits die in Thailand every year', all of the Bembridges had warned Adam against the hypnotic dangers of the countryside. The family's reaction to his escape had buttressed the long-standing theory that he was in some way different from the other Bembridges. He knew that this had awkwardly translated as snobbery to the rest of his family and perhaps this wasn't entirely imagined. But at the nadir of all his nerves was a restless excitement to *experience*.

Two months later, a flight attendant was pointing Adam to his nearest exit as he taxied out of Heathrow.

"I *hate* that feeling of like...you know when you've like just come back from a holiday and you can just *feel* your tan fading away, that's literally the saddest thing in the world," a raspy voice jarred Adam out of the fragile sleep he had unknowingly fallen into.

Across to the aisle were three teenage girls. Strange, Adam thought, to find teenagers travelling so far away, and with the funds to do it...

"Yeah, but like, if we're in Asia for like four months our tan is gonna be *so* deep by the time we get back that it'll take longer for it to fade."

Four months seemed like a terribly long time for someone so young to be away from home with just the company of friends. God, he could sound just like this mother sometimes. But Adam was nearing on twenty-eight and this was the first time he'd been on a plane for longer than two hours, and the first time he'd ever been on one without his family. The girls had an overall attitude of ease that Adam could not empathise with.

"I just *needed* a holiday..."

"Yeah, honestly Verity, I think what you need to do is find your *real* self here..."

Twelve hours later, Adam was welcomed by the immediacy of the thick, hot, fragrant air. *Everything* was different: the sing-song sound of the language, hand gestures, the way the women walked with their ankles narrowly compact, and a strange male fashion for long, sharpened nails growing on their little fingers that Adam was beginning to observe.

"You! Taxi!" A small man with thick sunglasses pointed at Adam with an aggression that was completely at odds with his sales aim. The upper half of his garish car was painted pink, the lower half yellow. He sat down in the backseat whilst the driver struggled with the suitcase behind, the two being almost the same size; the magnificently sad music from the radio was almost enough to calm Adam out of the panicked realisation that there was no seatbelt.

"Don't need," the taxi driver said as he observed Adam's flustered search within the folds of the seats. He gestured towards the ceiling of the car, onto which was drawn an elaborate set of symbols and signs that were completely undecipherable to Adam. The various squiggles and dots formed a triangle that covered the entirety of the ceiling; along the bottom were lines of scripture. It was not immediately obvious to Adam as to why the symbols should act as a substitute for a seat belt, but he was given so little time to consider this before they were speeding down a central motorway and was given the entire concrete city to observe instead.

By the next evening, Adam was on the overnight train. The short hours he had spent in Bangkok were enough to justify his decision to leave it: he disliked the chaos of it all and had feared for his life so severely in that taxi that

he felt inclined never to get in one again. The train, though, was like nothing else – incomparable to the LNER service from Grantham. This old, tinny train with its pleated pink curtains and poor air-conditioning had absolutely no sense of urgency or sterility. It had not left Hua Lamphong station before everyone was asleep, toes spread out against the floor, having already feasted on an array of multicoloured snacks. He mentally kicked himself for his English culinary habits: in keeping with tradition, he was governed to select something practical that would ensure a stable tummy.

The train chugged out of Bangkok; and as slums heavy with corrugated iron roofs and makeshift Disney towel walls slowly ebbed into the past, so began the satiation of Adam's hunger for change. Later, a woman got on the train with baskets hanging from almost every limb, filled with neon pink, green and blue sweet treats that had been neatly moulded into tiny squares. Driven by an impulse of curiosity, Adam purchased a bag that was full to the brim with the bizarre puddings. Soft, chewy bursts of unidentifiable flavours paired seamlessly with a newfound view of the amber sunset and sound of roaring locusts.

Just as the sun began to rise and the blue air started to warm, the train pulled to a halt at a tiny station. There was just one platform, no people, but filled with sleeping dogs. One of them looked slightly like Beckham, the odd reminder pricking Adam into an uncomfortable realisation that East Keal had existed phenomenologically just a few days ago. It seemed like a past life.

As he took his first steps out into this new, solitary place of a tranquillity, Adam felt his pulse ease into what he understood to be a new state of being. How could a change in geography, no matter how dramatic, shift one's entire anatomy into an ease of life that drenched everything prior into a cloud of deceit, of half-living? A small boy on a bicycle passed languorously against the scenic paddy field, still glowing with the remnants of sunrise. Adam thought of all of those Bembridges, living out their lives in and amongst the cowpats of the fenlands in the ice of the 1500s, never moving. Indeed, what a thing it was to *move*. What a thing it was.

W

S T U P I D P L A S T I C C H A I R S

D a l i a l m p i g l i a

3.1883°

stranger silence slits the heat in two
and these stupid plastic chairs
for petty lovers to hold hands
stay empty over the red city sky
they're screaming for conversation
screaming for a sweetness to cover the desert
whose volcanic memories shard the portrait
of our tender escape
still shy,
we won't sleep for shit

N,

so I wash my skin
the pearls slip down the drain
my flesh falls and I let it glow
with subtle pleasure dips
I can still love myself
hiding beyond window panes
watching you move from under water
where my voice loses chances to reach you:
do what you want to!
speak how you want to!

55.9533°

spinning the church bells in my head
I am stuck up, but I won't bite
with shivers creeping inside towelled grace
I offer you a bargain:
a framed love affair for your eyes to take
to take to take!

just wake me up with your hands
only speak to me with sly breath
invade quietly and smoothly
like the sun that's scratching these walls
that's sweating in its desperate calls
for a break
for a break in this racing stress of the unsaid...

the pleasure drop!
the pleasure drop that plummets
and marbled apologies run back home
scattered like voiceless wounds
to again make space,
as here finally erased
is the light of the dying day:
I know that only then do I wait for time
only then do you get on your knees,
only then do you speak for me.

It's a love contest and the bed's a mess.

// P h o t o g r a p h y b y E m i l y P r o c t e r
@ d r _ e _ p r o c t e r



Artwork By Mollie Russell
// @mollie_s_russell

H E A R T A N D C A R T O G R A P H

A l i s a F r a s e r


You always had a sketchpad in your hand and a terrible sense of direction. Perhaps that was enough to create what you did. Precise paintings of the hills out of your window at night, the North Star gleaming bright and central. The thousands of scruffy ink drawings of corridors stretching towards a dead end, carpets rich and indented underfoot, the walls laden with photos and arrows that you'd sketched out with your mind. Even the bird's eye view of your childhood street was a piece of art: each house and who owned it picked out in acrylics like Easter eggs, burst pipes illustrated in shatters of ink.

It was what I first saw when you invited me into your flat after our second date: walls each painted differently, the rugs vibrant and not at all matching. You glugged yourself on colour. It hurt my eyes, but I couldn't not look at the neat rows of picture frames that clustered among it all.

If there was an order to them it wasn't obvious at first. Your style seemed to grow bolder and smoother with each one I passed so perhaps it was age and progress, but perhaps not. In some you used watercolour: hues jewelled and glowing, while others were the scratch of black fine liners on white paper, complex and moody in a way I couldn't put my figure on. A mountaintop flashed with printed monochrome lightning; a sea view shimmered, branded by sunlight, in vivid oil pastel.

I asked what they were, and you said home. Homes.

You travelled a lot. As a child, when your parents' jobs moved you around the country and beyond. And you set down roots each time to keep from blowing over in the storm, but those roots had to be cut or pulled every time, and repotted elsewhere. It was a while before I realised what your art was.



It was like your carefully curated flower patch. From the crayon sketch of a garden in Sussex you barely remembered- in a time when you were barely a person- all the way to the straight, simple sketches of your latest messy flat... It was your way of taking clumps of the earth with you.

We lived in a few places together, didn't we? Not as many as you lived in, and certainly for much longer than you'd ever stayed in one place before. But it was a lot for me, and I was grateful for the old homes you integrated into our new ones. The garden we lost in a cliff fall no longer exists; it's hard for me to remember anything in detail nowadays, but your drawings keep the image strong. Photographs wouldn't do—well, perhaps yours would—but you can capture how it felt, as well as how it looked. And how it felt is how I know it was real.

Do you remember when we moved to the country, our last home together, and you went for a walk on the first day? You got lost. Of course you did. You wandered into a valley and lost signal on your phone.

I was panicking, calling you for hours wondering where you had gone. And then you stumbled back at sunset, the light gleaming amber off your hair, and gave me that stupid wide grin. You held up your camera.

You had photographed things on the way there and you had retraced your steps with the photos taken, the memories pressed behind its lens. You'd come back to me through glistening dew, pears falling out of orchards, the blueish loom of hills beyond the gate you walked through. The world grew more beautiful when you perceived it.

I like having your art around me, now. Even the diagrams sketched just for utility purposes. Annotations read *turn left here* or *if you see this, you've gone the wrong way*, makeshift maps to the places you could never remember; I smile.

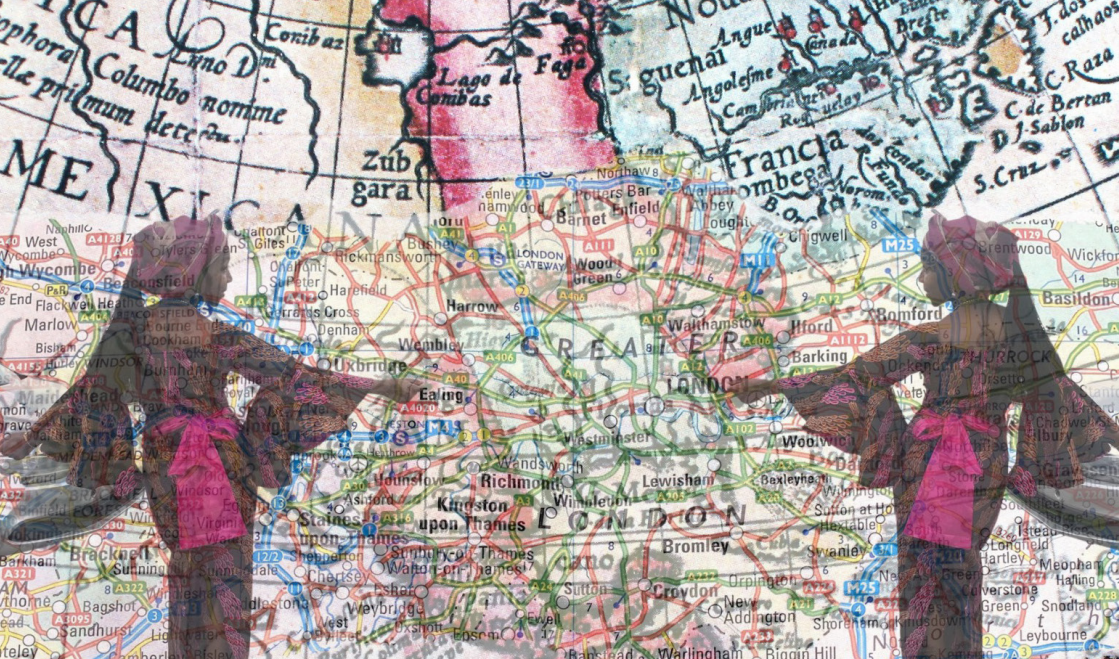
I just have to look up to the mantelpiece, the painting over the fireplace, the frames on the dresser, to remember where we went. The lives we built. The places we left behind.

I'm putting them in boxes now that you're gone. Five to ten homes per crate, shoved millimetres apart despite the miles between them. Albums overflow, and when I need to remember you I get out the diaries you left behind.

It's not a clear line between how you shaped the world you saw and how the world you saw shaped you. But you are twisted up in it all the same. And sometimes I see a detail—the loose paving stones that taught you your careful walk, the bright sun that reddened your flaking skin—and I've found you again.

These geographies of yours will be safe. They're the last pieces of you that I have, and I'll keep them close to my heart. Perhaps, if I put them together, they'll show me the road you walked, and I'll be able to follow it to wherever it ultimately led. So, make sure you haven't moved to a different world by the time I find the next one, alright?

I'll bring you paper. I don't want you to get lost.



these days it's hard to find the innocent, fearless parts of myself



I F H O L S T W A S A P O E T A N D
A N O B S E S S I V E
S K I N P I C K E R

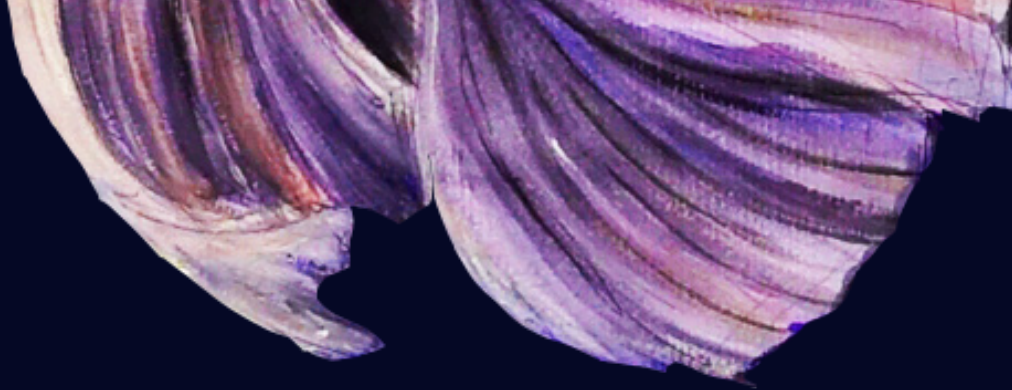
L u c a s S h e r i d a n - W a r b u r t o n

My hands are planets.
Next to knuckles, craters coalesce
with histories that I spend evenings
digging into. I go a layer deeper,
discover liquid on mars. Then I inhale
lonely gases whilst considering the
red planets, and the blues.

I always think this will atomise
my thoughts, until I'm holding
a part of the universe
and watching it bleed
along fissures, fingers
and creases in my palm.

I can no longer tell
what part of me
orbits what
and the way blood falls
in space is lost
to the infinite nature
of spinning in a vacuum.

I always thought
space would be calm,
like a silent montage
of the sunrise on the ISS.
Instead, I find that
if I look closely enough
I see everything pretty
is burning through itself.



P R E S I D E N T ' S N O T E

E m i l y H u g h e s

“Under the present brutal and primitive conditions on this planet, every person you meet should be regarded as one of the walking wounded. We have never seen a man or woman not slightly deranged by either anxiety or grief. We have never seen a totally sane human being.”

-Robert Anton Wilson

Before the theme of this magazine was ‘Geographies’, a committee member suggested the theme ‘Emotional Geographies’, dealing with the relationships between emotions and geographic places and their contextual environments, a topic which became increasingly relevant during the pandemic, with so many of us stuck inside at varying intervals, and a lingering standstill concerning social activities and travel.



In the wake of the pandemic, we've been trying to negotiate exactly the right level of sociable, a level that satisfies both university room capacities, as well as our need to get back to a productive and healthy level of interaction.

As per tradition, we started the semester with a rather chaotic 'Bookshop Crawl' and then continued to host a creative writing workshop as well as working with the Society of Young Publishers to offer talks on freelancing and jobs within the publishing industry.

I'd like to thank our wonderful committee for bearing with us whilst we painstakingly tried to get event venues, fill other committee roles and of course, publish another magazine, and I'd like to thank our members who stayed keen to attend our albeit chaotic events when they did happen.

I'd like to wish the best of luck to our next president, I know I've left the committee in good hands.

With love,
Emily

E

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= EMILY HUGHES

E

VICE PRESIDENT
= EMILY TENNANT

T

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