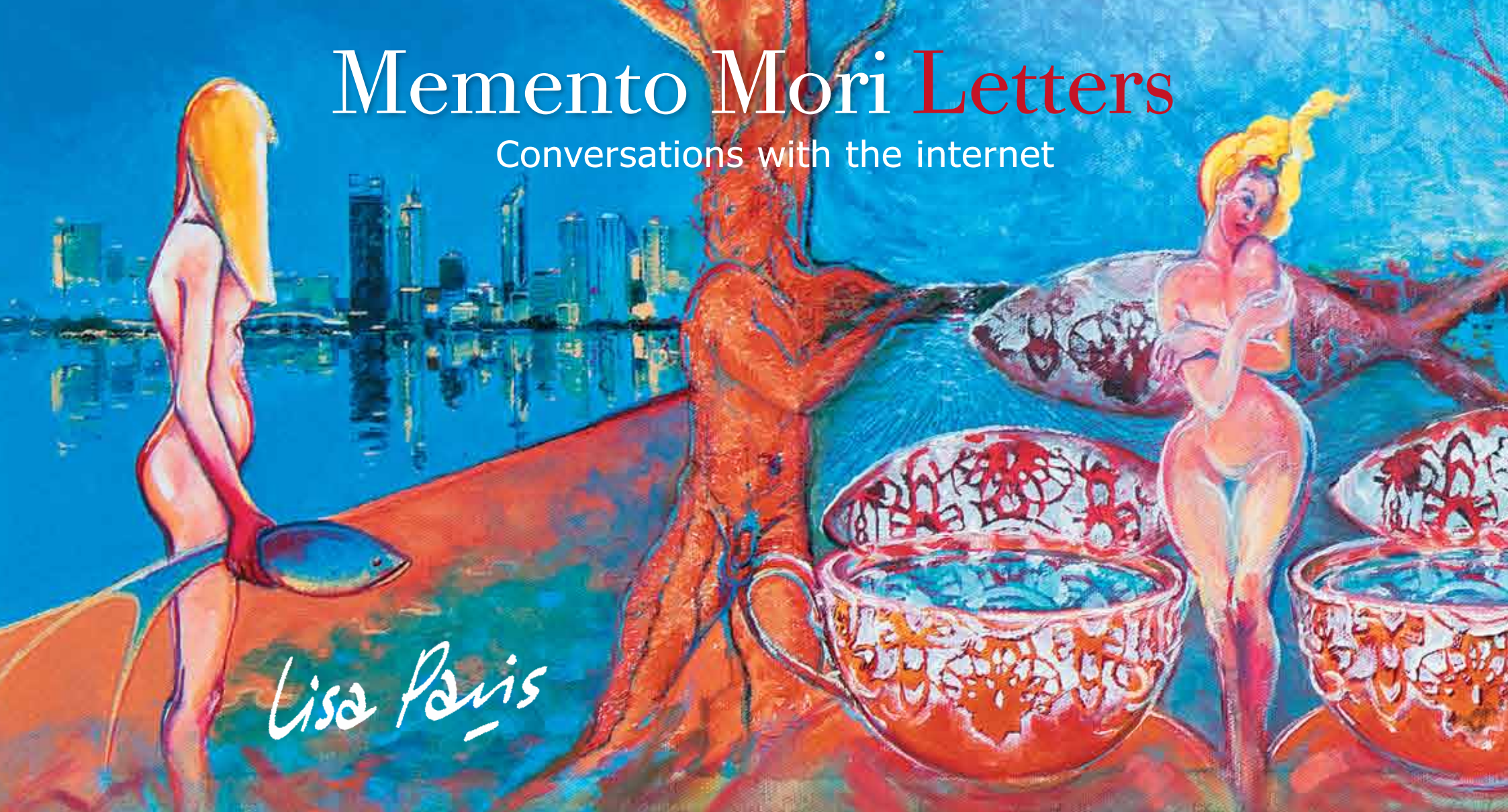


Memento Mori Letters

Conversations with the internet

Lisa Paris



Memento Mori Letters

Conversations with the internet





Memento Mori Letters

Conversations with the internet

The paintings and free verse poetry that follow were inspired by the stories, postings, images, advertisements, and crowd funding campaigns that appeared on my social media stream during 2014. They are essentially my emotional (rather than intellectual) response to what others have said as I sat nodding in agreement or shaking my head in disbelief:

- ... the sensory assault
- ... the over-sharing
- ... the self-surveillance
- ... the hyper surveillance
of everything by everyone.

The glimpses of things that made me laugh and cry as I sat alone remotely viewing the lives of others and also of myself. The images I simply neither needed to see, nor wanted to see. The sense that something precious is being made disposable. The understanding that I am privy to what should be concealed. A sense of community yet isolation and disconnect:

- ... the something
- ... and the nothing of it all.

Memento Mori Works

Memento mori is a Latin phrase meaning 'remember you must die'. A basic memento mori painting would be a portrait with a skull but other symbols commonly found are hour glasses or clocks, extinguished or guttering candles, fruit, and flowers. Closely related to the memento mori picture is the vanitas still life. In addition to the symbols of mortality these may include other symbols such as musical instruments, wine and books to remind us explicitly of the vanity (in the sense of worthlessness) of worldly pleasures and goods. The vanitas and memento mori picture became popular in the seventeenth century, in a religious age when almost everyone believed that life on earth was merely a preparation for an afterlife. However, modern artists have continued to explore this genre.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/m/memento-mori>

After a year of daily participation in Facebook and the social media phenomenon, I find myself both satisfied and frustrated with the paintings and free verse poetry I have created. I am torn between the sense that I have wasted so much time over the last year sitting in front of my computer typing 'letters to no-one' about things of varying importance (and reading the postings of others in reply), yet profoundly aware that these interactions have allowed me to 'speak' with others I barely knew before, who now seem like friends and important people in my life.

Twelve months on, the overwhelming experience I have had is one of conversation and letter writing. Participation in social media has become a habitual, almost ritualistic, part of my daily life ... except on Saturdays. On Saturdays, I have religiously 'unplugged' from contemporary technology, turned off my phone, turned off my laptop and ipad, and disconnected from the internet and social media. I have made Saturday a 'Digital Sabbath' (de Botton, 2014) ... simply to think, to reflect, to reclaim my life.





As a result, my paintings and free verse poetry in this body of work 'appropriate' the visual language and sentiment of the Memento mori genre, and encapsulate my understanding of the experience of letter writing – the importance of words, and the value of taking time to consider what should be said. Unthinking postings in social media spew forth rapid fire, almost like gunfire in a war zone; my poems/ letters, like my paintings, take time. 'Mark-making', is a sensory experience that calls upon the writer to reflect on the meaning she wishes to convey.

I hope the time I have invested in this project counts for something and was not a waste of precious life ... but that is for you to decide.

Lisa Paris





Memento Mori

a love letter to the past



The melancholy that walking sometimes evokes,
as memories and images of people much loved in another life
take shape momentarily and fade,
settled on me today.

I stopped and watched my city change at sunset,
fragments that echoed coffee and conversation and connection,
orphaned by the realisation **that I miss you.**



Beauty Languishes

Beauty languishes
all chocolate and changing form
couched up and slung wide
Her luscious fragrant plump unruly bloom
asserted over angles and hollow sockets
cold kisses and petulance
put down by boredom
and disinterest
and the realisation
that the changing aesthetic
is an unfaithful lover
whose fickle eye
obviates all possibility
of happiness

**That
Should
Be
Put
Down
Like
The
Mad
Black
Barking
Dog
It
Is
!**

a letter about the endless pursuit of the
unattainable cult of the body beautiful



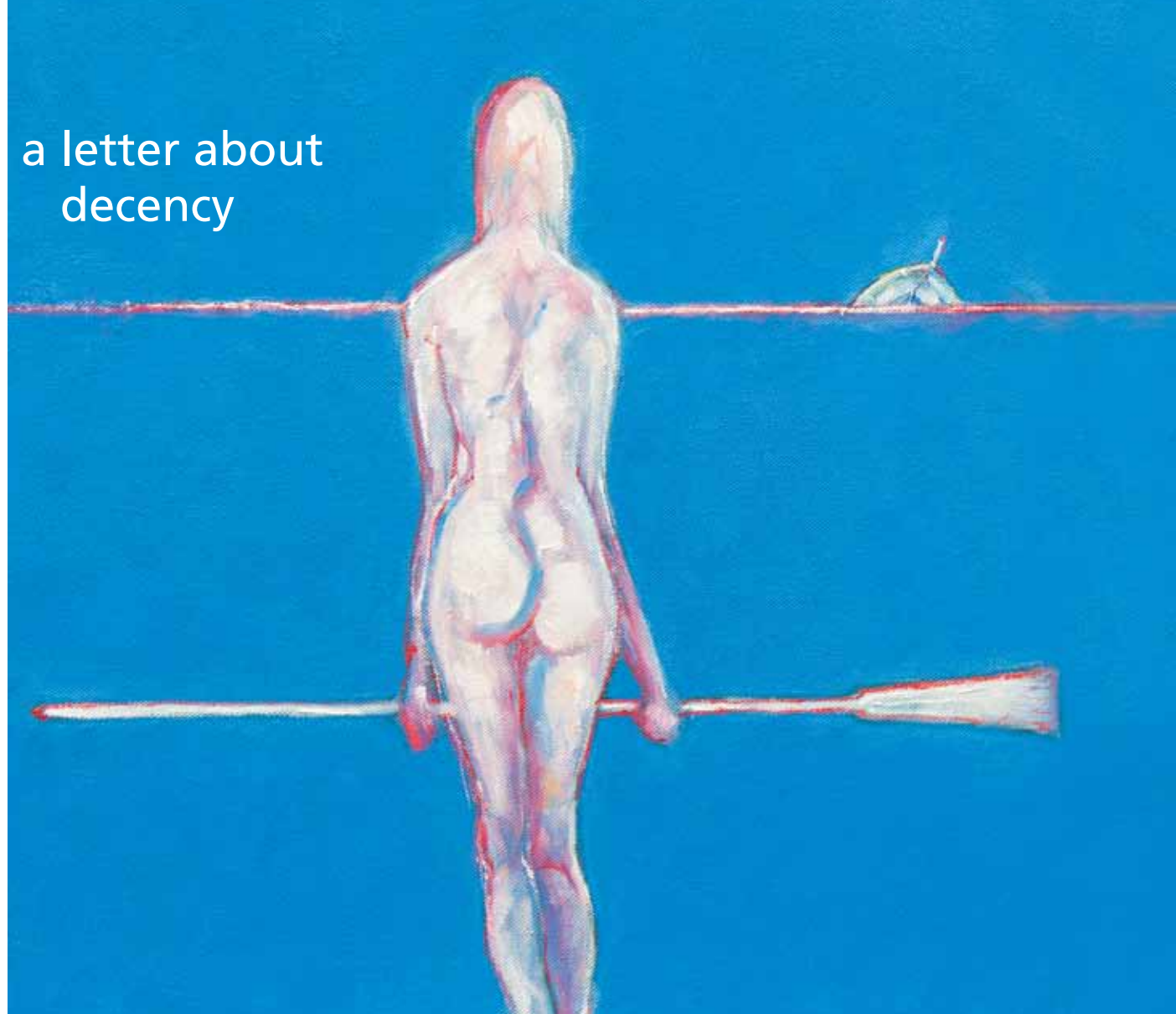
Arcadia

a letter about decency

Borders and boundaries go over the side
and bits and bobs shimmer a while
'fore Crimson Alizarin replaces the blue
and the lines on horizons simply consume
the remnants of things, something so small
time capsules and memories of people before.

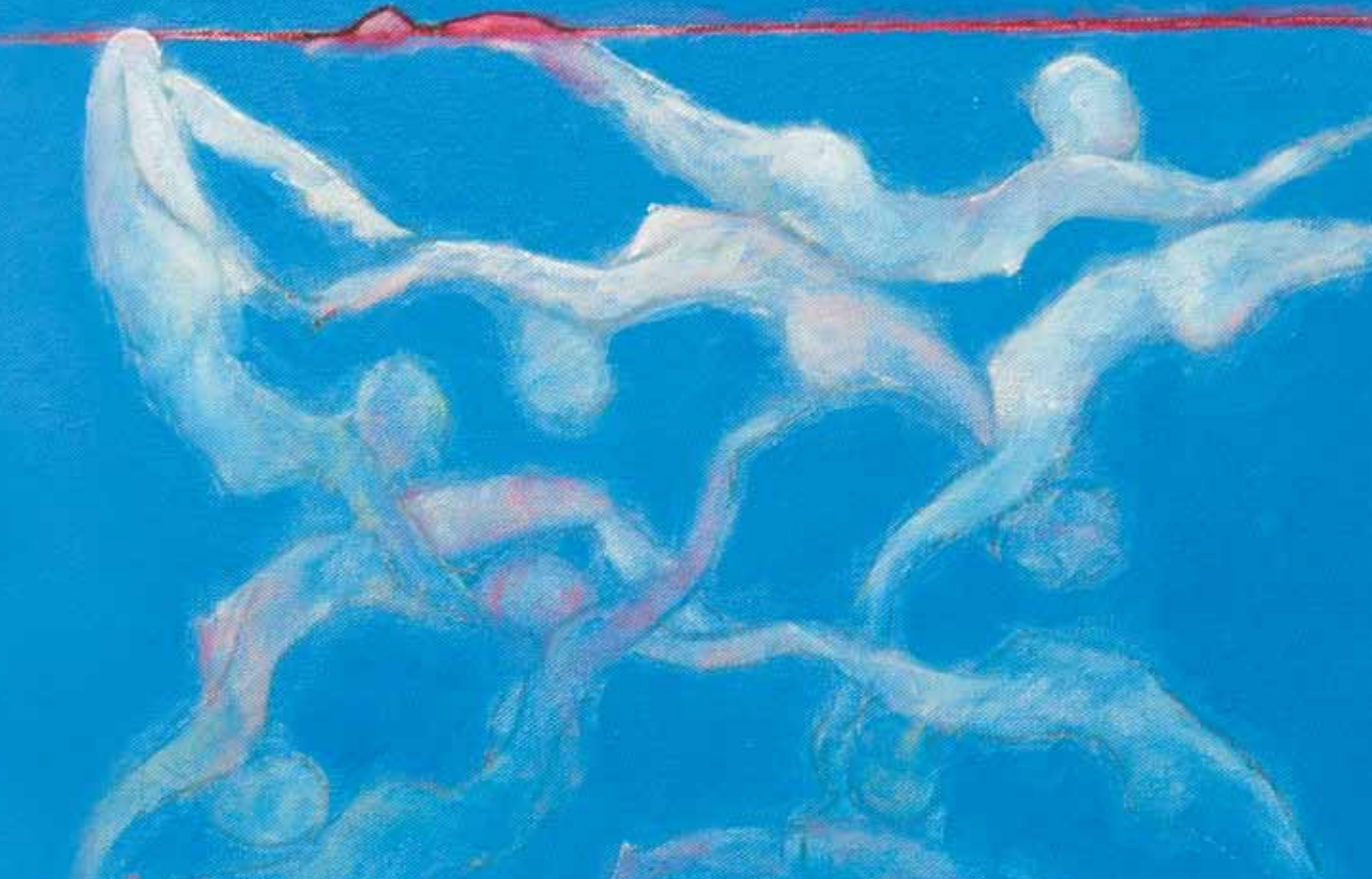
And we, in our comfort, our collective shame
the 'nothing' we do for fear of new names
that would follow that door once opened – then more
there'd simply be more
THERE'D SIMPLY BE MORE!!

And another plane falls and our gaze moves on
and the NEW news is served accompanied by tea
and children in dark spaces cry comfortlessly
and strangers, faux distressed, do nothing at all
in suburban lounge rooms while a mother gives more
to bad men and bad things follow of course
AND BAD THINGS FOLLOW INEVITABLY!!



“and sometimes things don’t come full circle... Arcadia”

(The Kite String Tangle, Lyrics-Arcadia, 2014).



And festivals and poetry and ‘Splendour’ distracts
our collective discomfort and shame from the fact
that our shoes and our jewelry and iphones are more
than people who wait and knock at our door
while we turn up the volume and set to repeat
new songs so inspiring about love and defeat
and pull from our minds what cannot be rid
and try then to hide what cannot be hid
AND TRY THEN TO HIDE WHAT CANNOT BE HID!!

NARCISSISM, ENTITLEMENT, RANCID AND RAW
and dust somewhere is blown with its time
archaic ideas that afflict our minds
as we shake our heads at the TV tonight
tut tut cry cry, that cannot be right?
TUT TUT CRY CRY THAT CANNOT BE RIGHT!!

But the fact is that perchance it just might!
And the fact is that the fact is right
and closed borders are simply a war crime (Australia)

**Closed Borders
Are Simply
A War Crime**



Time

a letter about aging



Women

are like architecture
with the passing of time
they tatter at edges
and fit less fashionably
function less efficiently
and rub at the heel
new form finds favour
in summer sales
and all that was valued
is traded away
new texture, old colour
detail surpassed
no longer sufficient
in the craving of new
soil to make brick
mineral for iron
silica for glass
silicone for skin
form begets function
and the cycle renews
grateful for earth
envious of bell tower
that sees the new century
when she will not.

What's a man to do?



a letter about hope

The rush for wasteland at so great a cost
gathering all that mattered most
cast aside boxes and hollow rings
in the darkest pit where details spring
toward some breach and black dog's creed
struggled back toward surface bright
drowning for air drowning for light.

For the sake of need that pleaded for this
despite a vow to stand and resist
and never again to willingly ply
the loss of self in the selfless life
walking that way, pregnant plight
regretful convinced that wrong was right
into the fray a thread pulled tight.

One more time, time for her
that she might reach the very last 'Bern'
that place so bleak and devoid of life
and turn again to something bright

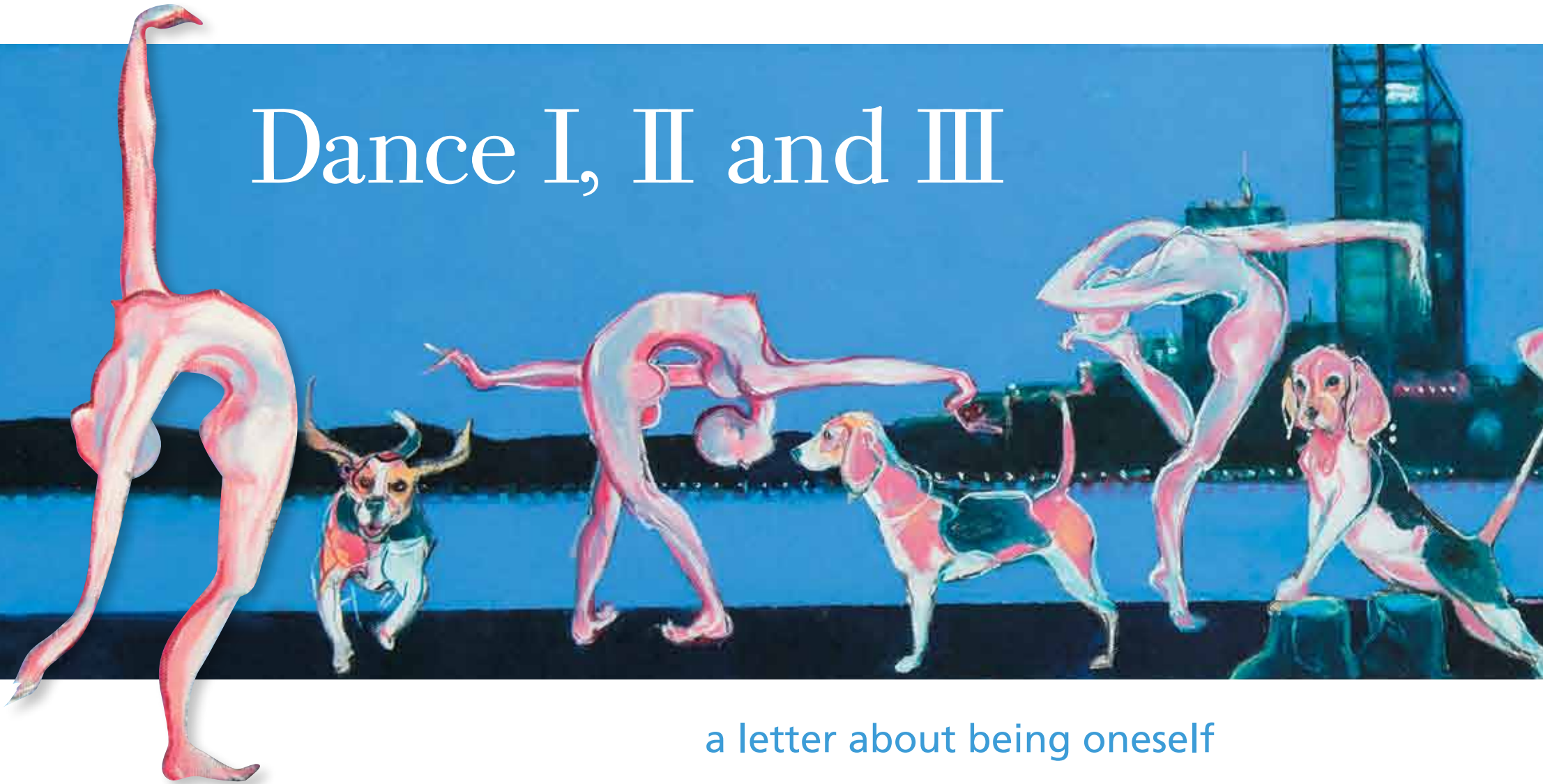
like children.



Florentina



Dance I, II and III



a letter about being oneself



despite the demands to be someone else



Dance II

Almost involuntarily

in the space between the ordinary and sleep
a straight line turns back with deliberate intent
to devour itself.



Arms and legs, like sticky things
that cling greedily to reluctant fingers
push and pull and demand a call to dance

pink tutus and duck-tape and metal things
that simply could not give a flying fuck!





Dance III



Change

a letter about the time before

Once upon a time, a thousand years ago, epidermis, subcutaneous fibres, deep flesh and bone, expressed themselves as stars, and dust, and roots, and routines, and timetables, and shopping trolleys.

All that remains of that time is memory, and numbness, and repetition, and endlessness of hours, and claustrophobia and fierce expectation.

A strange disconnected sensory experience dusted with sickly icing, stuffed overfull into the sprawling jowls of suburbia.

Stasis and metastasis.





Tongues, fat with sugar and sedation, self-criticism and disbelief in the possibility of a life other than this, loud-speakered their demands through days and years of life. Until life itself seemed like something other than itself.

And then, for no discernible reason, an act of heresy.

A small, still-quiet voice spoke, terrified at the sheer audacity of its own intent. An utterance, a whisper, an idea, **a theory**, letters then words indelibly imprinted on the cortex and imagination:

The self and denial of self could no longer coexist in the same body.

And we and us and ours, became me and mine and I. A glorious, terrible, selfish, irrepressible, fragrant, pungent thing, burst forth with a booming voice and little curtsy, pronouncing:

I have changed.





Identity a letter about being the same as before

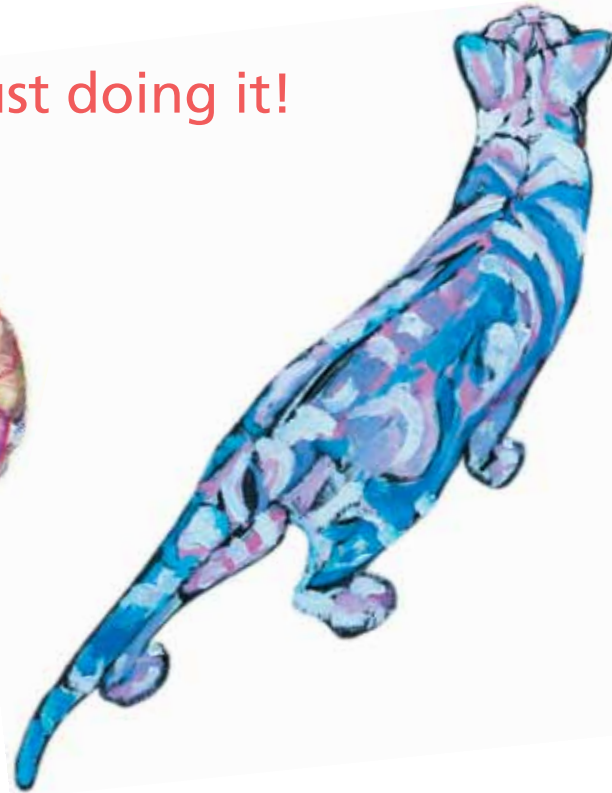


This place of being – cast from another life

'Another Life' looks back and recognises me
an ancient smile, thin lipped and scarred
and wonders how I walked so far
and nods a little just to show
recognition – acknowledgement
it still knows, still knows **Me**

Play

a letter about just doing it!





Some people think little miss should behave
that she's too old to mess up
and act in this way

Old girl
with your stripes, your stockings and shoes
and lines that your colours simply consume
refusing to stay in boundaries defined
by young men who'd prefer
that you not cross the line
that your eye simply laughs at
and then realigns
rejecting the notion
that less is more time
for the time that you are
the point is refined
better dancing alone
than a troupe on a train

to mediocrity.





Sanctuary

a letter about solitude



Dark and angry beyond the view
I/eye could be the moon at night
obscured by the brightest light
two competing side by side
south of city, west of tide
water stream and silver break
steel and glass the mind's estate
a place of safety perhaps to be
of quiet repose and sanctuary
whose past resides outside the gate
but demands a tithe of the isolate
for abandonment and disaffection
and yearning for a 100-foot wall
of silence.

A circular painting of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a pink dress, sitting on a large red heart. She is surrounded by various colorful fish. The background is a solid blue color.

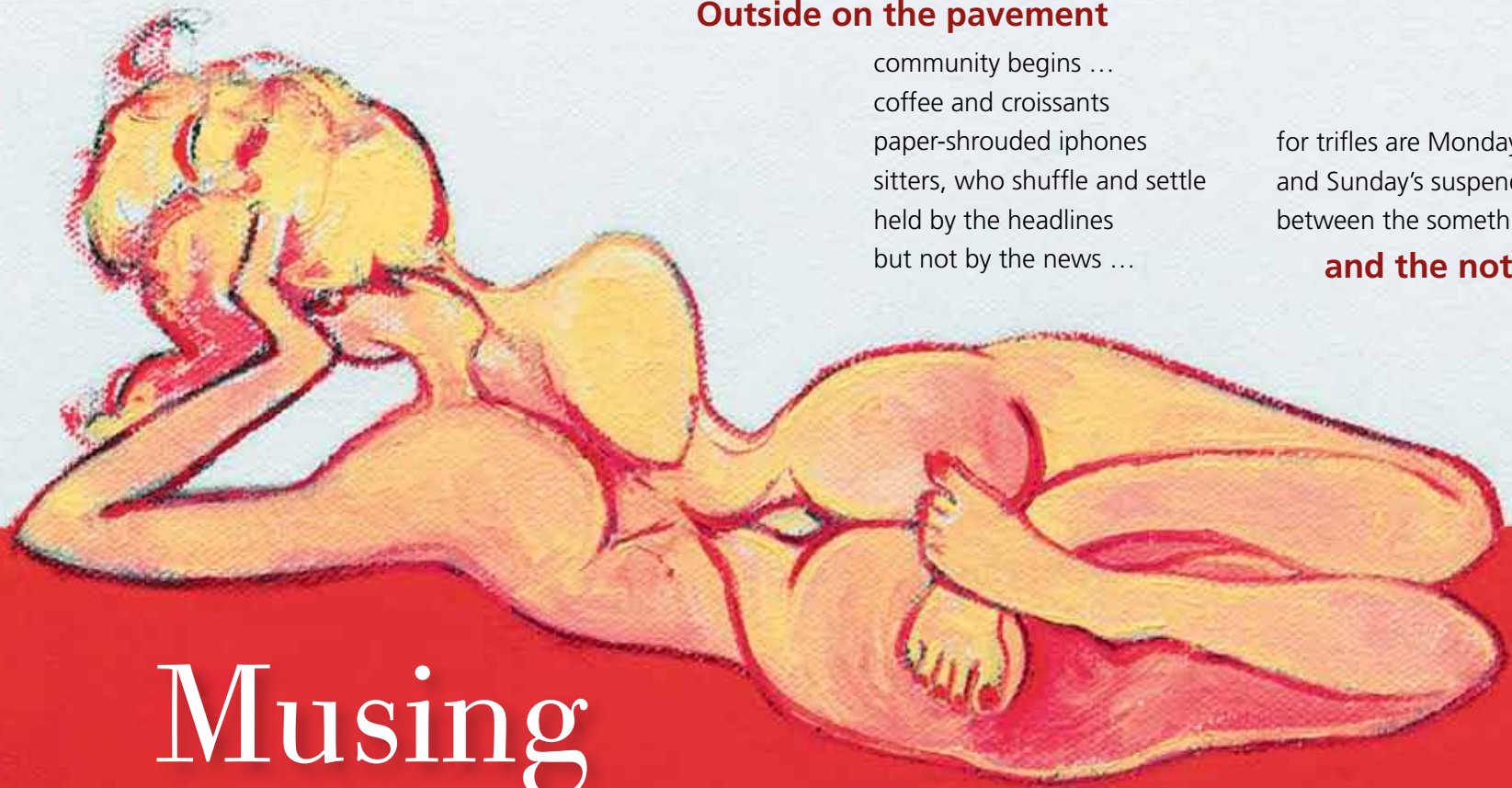
All Eyes On Us

a letter about regret

An open door invited him in
defences proud, he mirrored his own
but would not move – faux lack of interest
... or courage skewed.

Those who observed, rightly surmised
rewards are few with ambivalence's bride
for a choice is a choice – leaving few
... and the moment passed

on pause.



Outside on the pavement

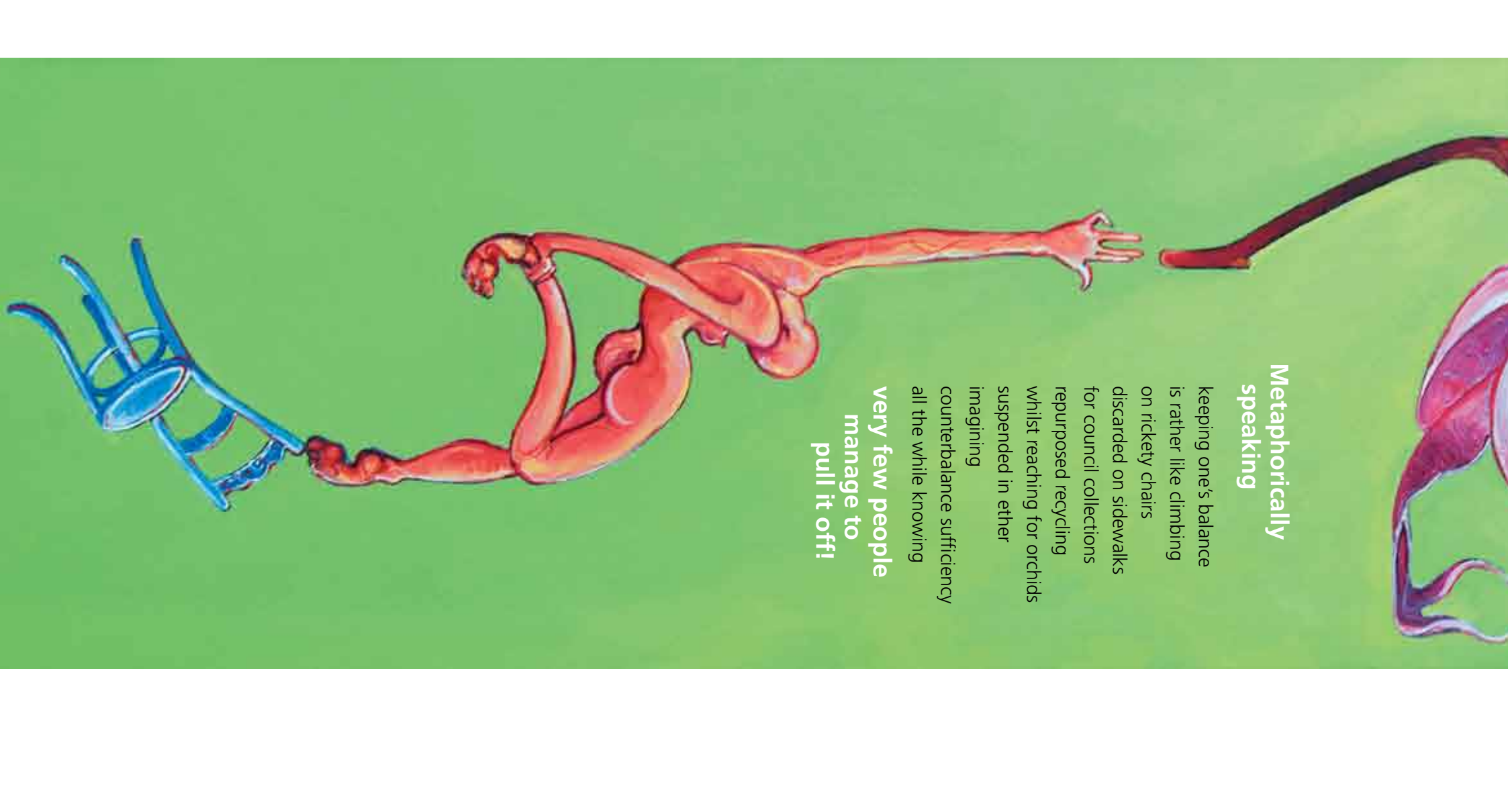
community begins ...
coffee and croissants
paper-shrouded iphones
sitters, who shuffle and settle
held by the headlines
but not by the news ...

for trifles are Mondays
and Sunday's suspended
between the something ...

and the nothing of it all.

Musing

a letter about coffee
and conversation



Metaphorically speaking

keeping one's balance
is rather like climbing
on rickety chairs
discarded on sidewalks
for council collections
repurposed recycling
whilst reaching for orchids
suspended in ether
imagining
counterbalance sufficiency
all the while knowing

**very few people
manage to
pull it off!**



Counterbalance

a letter about holding one's own

Fly Fishing

a letter about strategy

noun ... an angling method in which an artificial "fly" is used to catch fish. The fly is cast using a fly rod, reel, and specialized weighted line. Casting a nearly weightless fly or "lure" requires casting techniques significantly different from other forms of casting.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fly_fishing



"And so, the first thing is to excel in my career; and then meet an attractive man, as I want pretty babies. Get married; have two kids – a girl first and then a boy. I must have a girl and if sex selection is required then so be it!

Next I'll divorce the husband, as there is no way I will be with the same man for the rest of my life; that's just unrealistic!

After the divorce it'll be the single parent lifestyle, but that's OK; at least I'll have plenty of child support. After all, that was the point of marrying a man with prospects!

I'll name my girl Aylah, after my best friend Kayla. I haven't decided on the boy's name yet, but I've got plenty of time for that. My kids will attend private schools, because we all know public schools breed feral children!

I'll live out my prime in a great big mansion close to the city, featuring gorgeous views. There will be shopping! Champagne will be sipped as I watch the Skyworks each year.

This is the life ... and it will all happen according to plan!"

... Fly Fishing

(Text Grab: Sara O'Neill, Facebook, 2014)



The Navigator

a letter about courage

Compass rose spinning

ephemeral boundaries
hydroponic poppies
red smudges, green fields
outward, up and onward
anywhere but here
to other maybe futures
driven out in fear
razor rocks and shards
miles of frozen seas
clinging to small children
broken dreams and needs
hand that steers direction
brought them then to here
ends of all the earth
to plant a clutch of seeds

in Australia.

Destiny and Fate

a letter
about
chance

Fate turns her back

Destiny adjusts her pose
each one a mirror
for the other
and for us.





Hyper Surveillance

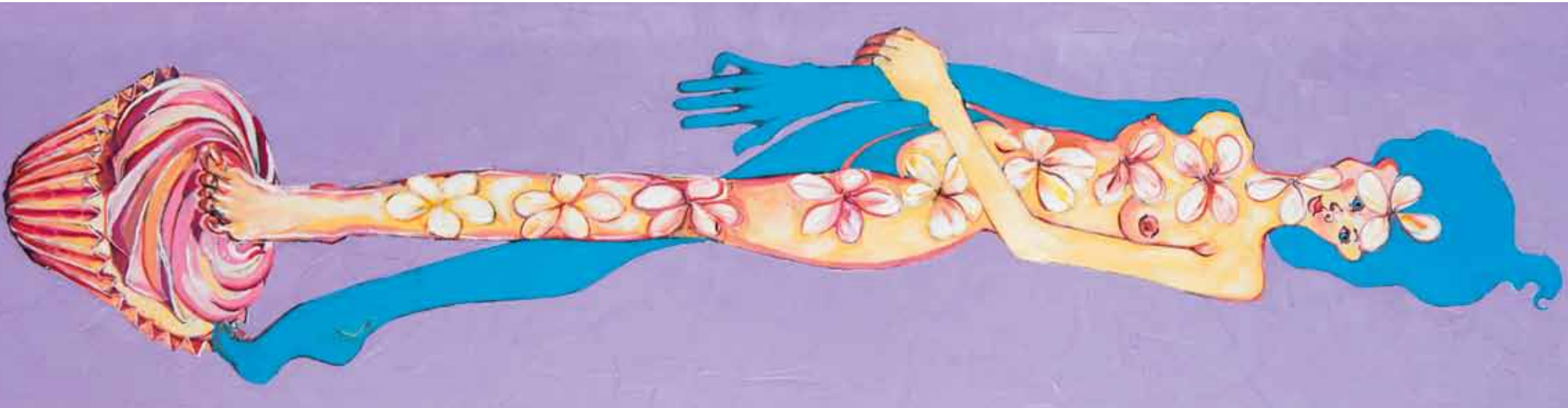
a letter about stupidity

Unthinking and emboldened

space devoid of boundaries
or any consequence
a special kind of stupid
ego's mulligan stew
stuck between teeth
a bitter aftertaste
and then, predictably
self-surveillance renewed

every imperfection
debated ruthlessly
by invitation
or home invasion
... terrorism
of a different variety:

suicide blonde.



To mothers group, Daisy
I told you before
no time for the swings
I'm working at 4.

I feel like chip pack
turned inside out
scrunched on the floor
get in, close the door!

This is all just too much
and my mental's not great
doctor said he could fix me
on his list I could wait.

But don't think I can
cause coping I'm not
and I'm so goddamn tired
from not sleeping at night.

And there's no one to talk to
cause daddy has gone
and you're only so little
and I can't find my phone.

Sprinkles! Stay focused
and recipe for cake
and eyes on the road
ah my gosh we're so late.

Sweetie I know that!!
I know what you need
Mummy will do that
just one moment please.

Cup cakes!!

Cup Cakes

a letter about
multitasking

Yes, sweetie I know that

I know what you need
Mummy will do that
just one moment please.

Yes honey I heard you
keys, wallet and watch
where on earth is my list
or it'll be forgot.

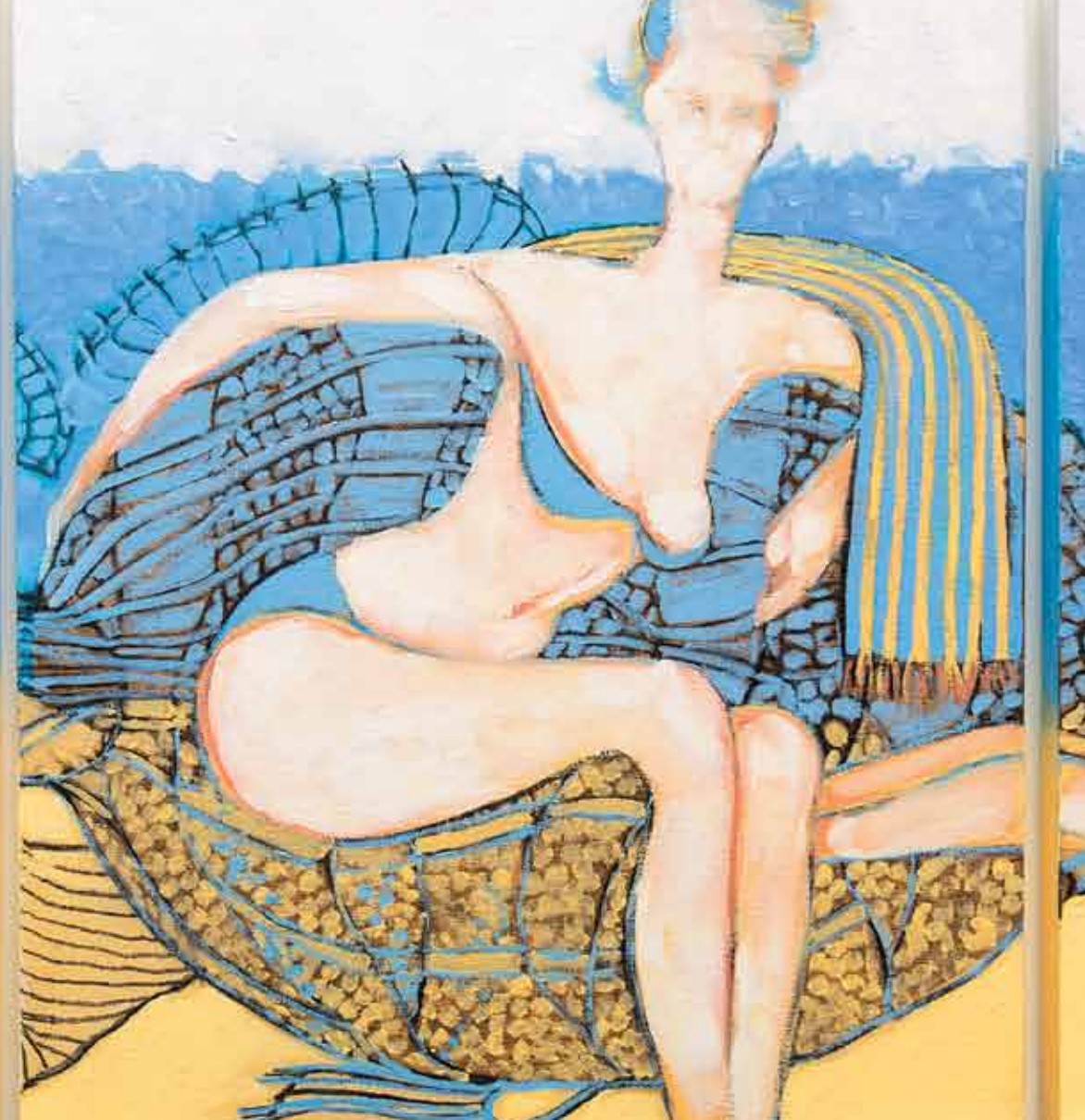
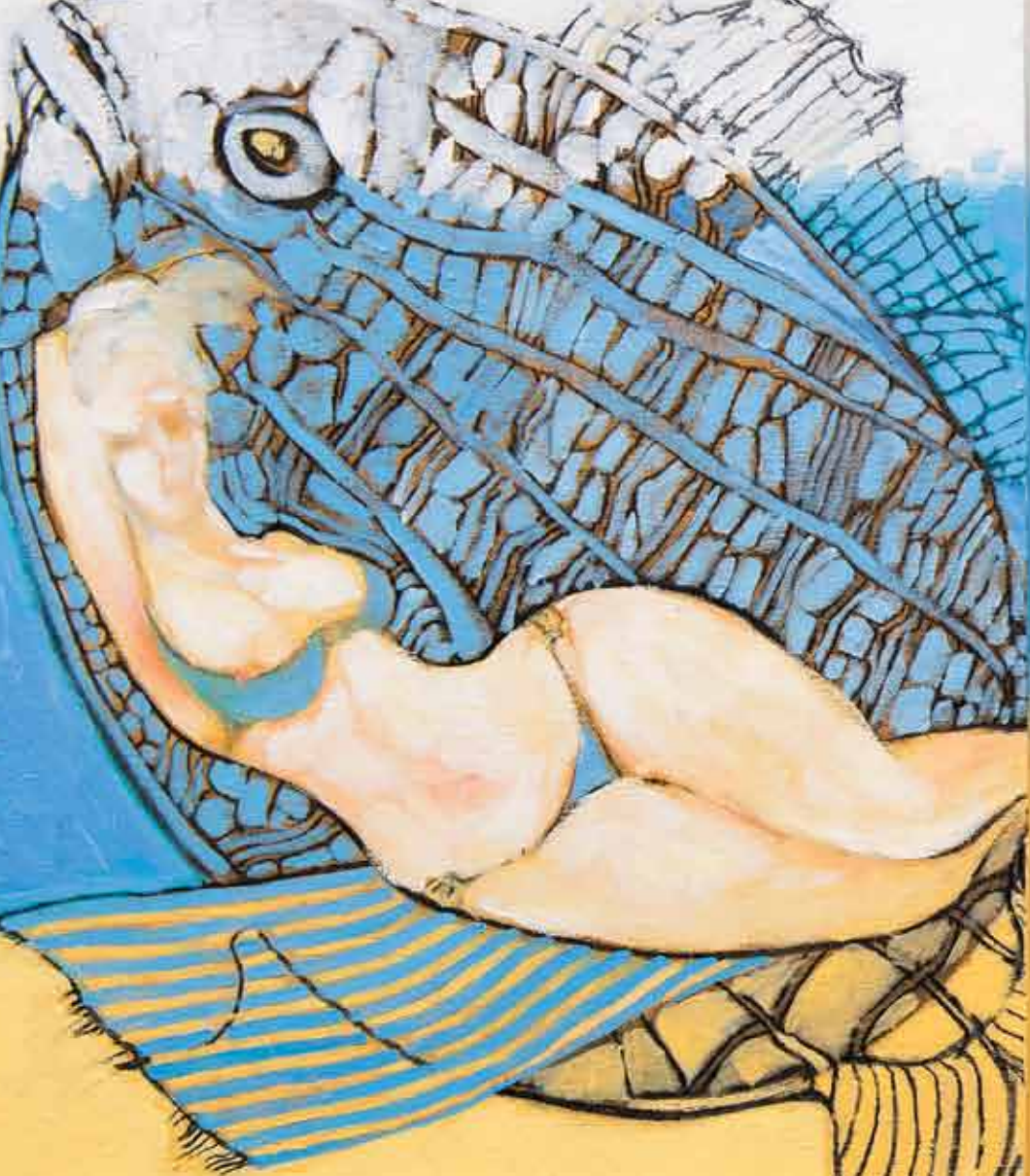
Yes tee ball and ballet
permission slips too
art class and bread
lunch money cue.

A present for the party
a new dress for that
pay the electricity
where's my phone at!

Quick out to the car
Mummy is late
stop hitting your brother
oh for goodness sake.

A quick dash to the market
for sprinkles I need
little green cup cakes
must make some treats.







Fish Bathers

a letter about family

Feminism? she scoffed almost choking on the word as if it were a piece of something unsavoury found floating in her latte. **You must be joking!** the sun shimmering across the surface of her cool predatory skin echoed the disbelief in her voice.

Like last year's cast-off clothing, I have shoved her rotting carcass in black plastic into a charity bin. The poor, and the stupid, and the ugly, and the overeducated can wrap themselves in her dead skin like an abandoned towel on a Bali beach.

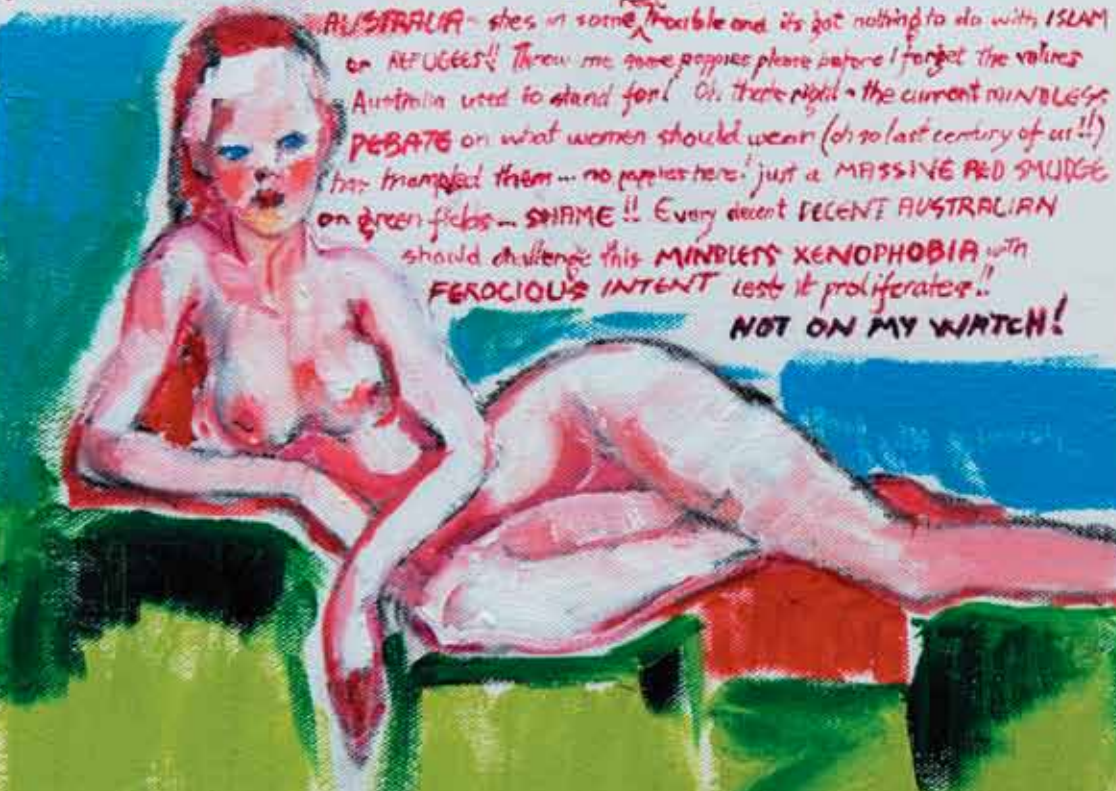
I will not exist in disaffection and an online chat room amidst the stinking poverty of isolation and TV dinners!

I know where I fit: I am a wife, and a mother, and a homemaker, and a personal shopper, and a café aficionado! I am the mistress of my own kitchen – you should see my cupcakes, they are a thing of beauty. I am a thing of beauty! I am a wild thing in silk stockings and I have no need of last century's philosophy. I worship at the altar of the individual and I manage my husband and my children like all my assets – decisively!

**I am a monster of my mother's making ...
and I will make more monsters.**

If a woman wants to wear a short skirt and thong it's NOT YOUR/OUR BUSINESS!
If she wants to wear a nun's habit it's NOT YOUR/OUR BUSINESS! IT'S NOT YOUR BUSINESS!!
If she wants to wear muffs/leg jeans three sizes too small it's NOT YOUR BUSINESS! IT'S NOT YOUR BUSINESS!!
This grossly intrusive and disgusting debate is really annoying me. Focus on your OWN BUSINESS!
Get the hell out of other people's business and start contemplating the more important question of
WHERE IS WILLIAM TYRETT? Or what the hell is our government doing sending unaccompanied minors to Cambodia!!!
Or what the hell have we done to this planet!!! If your intellect can't cope with that, then for God's sake
just deal with the 'oh so important' question 'DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS?!!' God save us

AUSTRALIA - she's in some trouble and it's got nothing to do with ISLAM
or REFUGEES!! Throw me some poppies please before I forget the values
Australia used to stand for! Oh, there's right - the current MINDLESS
DEBATE on what women should wear (oh so last century of us!!!)
has trampled them... no poppies here! just a MASSIVE RED SMUDGE
on green fields... SHAME!! Every decent RECENT AUSTRALIAN
should challenge this MINDLESS XENOPHOBIA with
FEROCIOUS INTENT lest it proliferates!!
NOT ON MY WATCH!



DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS?



MY FRIEND MATT observed the
following on this topic... I think he
has a point: I THINK I UNDERSTAND
NOW how the NEANDERTHALS died
out. Homosapiens got so sick of the
Neanderthals making RACIST SEXIST
and HOMOPHOBIC assumptions
and strutting around like they were
the ONLY bipedal life form on Earth
So the Homosapiens organised a CULL.
Ridding the world of the monosyllabic
frog-dodger, their coarse and offensive
voice and garish, culture-less ways
Of course you can't completely Wipe
OUT a species as hardy as the
NEANDERTHALS, but you must
endeavour to keep the numbers down,
as they breed like rabbits.

TIME FOR ANOTHER CULL IT SEEMS!

another letter about stupidity

If a woman wants to dress in a short skirt and stilettos

ITS NOT YOUR/OUR BUSINESS!

If she wants to wear a nun's habit

ITS NOT YOUR/OUR BUSINESS!

If she wants to wear muffin top jeans three sizes too small

ITS NOT YOUR BUSINESS!

This grossly intrusive and disgusting debate is really annoying me. Focus on your own business! Get the hell out of other people's business and start contemplating the more important question of where is William Tyrrell?! Or what is our government doing sending unaccompanied minors to Cambodia? Or what the hell have we done to this planet? If our intellects can't cope with that, then for god's sake let's just deal with the 'oh so important question'

My friend Matt observed the following on this topic and I think he has a point:

I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW how the **NEANDERTHALS** died out.

Homo sapiens got so sick and tired of the Neanderthals making RACIST, SEXIST and HOMOPHOBIC assumptions and strutting around like they were the only bipedal life form on Earth. So the Homo sapiens organised a CULL. Ridding the world of the monosyllabic troglodytes, their coarse and offensive voice and garish culture-less ways. Of course you can't completely WIPE OUT a species as hardy as the NEANDERTHALS, but you must endeavour to keep the numbers down, as they breed like rabbits.

TIME FOR ANOTHER CULL IT SEEMS!

(Text Grab: Matthew Jackson, Facebook, 2014)

Does My Bum Look Big In This?



Flora Magnificata

a letter about grief





My friend died recently, and I am sad. I do not understand.
They burned what remained, I read too late, filled with regret.



I looked to find something - ash on escarpment, peace perhaps.
But the place where he rested, albeit momentarily, was empty,
save memory, **and some flowers.**

The Garden

a letter about social media

Sometimes in light, sometimes in shadow, later in some half-light, suspended between today and yesterday, here and there or elsewhere, we bear witness as complex scenarios play out across the fields and fabric of daily life. Figures move in alternating time zones, and shift position in response to one another like tectonic plates; keyboard continents rise and fall, a turn at a time, then recede like bone bricks stacked in an underground catacomb.

Costumes and cakes, cats and dogs, families and couples, singles and other exotic creatures, are fodder for emoticon expletives, heightened sensitivities and diminished sensibilities; mere flotsam and jetsam in the ebb and flow of data to elsewhere and some virtual cloud. The imagined halcyon days of staying in touch, emotional connection, information sharing, open minds, and empathy for each other, compromised by ego and 3 seconds of fame.





Words and images drift disembodied like flower petals, separating, shrivelling, falling and flying weightlessly on some breeze toward ionisation and meaning or commentary. *The virtual becomes a vapid replacement for real life and an escape from loneliness. A tool of procrastination, a time waster, a soul sucker, and an addiction.*

(Text Grab: Vanessa Allen, Facebook, 2014)

In half light, trolls and advertisers maraud the small private tragedies of ordinary people, personal narratives shared too quickly with a thousand unknown strangers, 50 acquaintances and a half dozen friends – themselves too paralysed by fixation with technological devices to respond as the moment passes, on pause.

**The world, it seems, has changed
whilst we were sleeping.**

Memes inspire, groups chastise, discourse pulls us sideways and dances through bend-backs, and vertical splits, and handstands, and crouch-swirls, and ricochet-collisions, catapulting ideas and experiences made transparent by the enormity and insignificance of it all:

The colour

The fame

The tragedy

The stupid

The banal

The amazing

The warm

The heart wrenching

The just plain wrong

The informative

The sad

The silly

The funny

The crying

The bizarre

The gross

The too much

The cheering

The tearing

The lost

The yes

The maybe

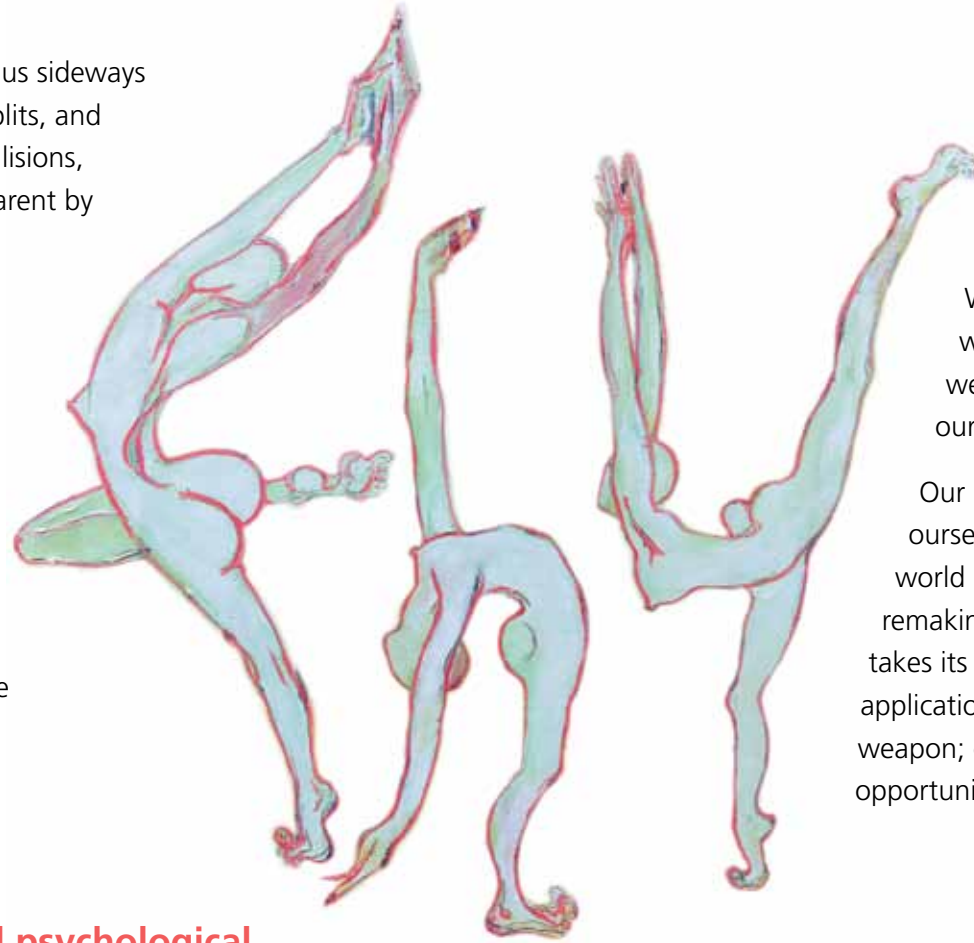
The possible

The impossible

The no

The nothing

The never



We watch each other;
we watch ourselves;
we watch our government;
our government watches us.

Our naïve desire to share
ourselves more fully with the
world in some contemporary
remaking of past relationships
takes its form from military
applications – a stealth
weapon; or nature – an
opportunistic predator.

And the most compelling visual and psychological phenomenon remains the voyeur – the other – ourselves.

We are a cat sunning ourselves in a spring garden
waiting for prey:
a cricket
a rat
a butterfly
a baby bird
a smaller cat
a cancer survivor
a fat woman
a gay teen
a burqa wearing a person
a tasty morsel of this or that
our own tail – chased until we are dazed silly
our own bodies rendered unrecognisable by the speed of spinning
devoured by our own mouths
our words working as teeth
grinding gristle
and bone
and flesh
and memory
and life



Memento mori ... more



Lisa Paris

✓ Friends ▾

✓ Following

Message

⋮

Timeline

About

Photos

Friends 5 Mutual

More ▾

 Photos

Photos of Lisa

Lisa's Photos

Albums



[Dedication](#)

I dedicate this book to my three little grandsons Tyler, Noah and Daniel. Being a nanna is surprising and more than a little bit cool!

 **About**

Lisa Paris has held the position of senior lecturer and secondary art education coordinator within the School of Education at Edith Cowan University Perth (ECU) since 2004; she oversees both undergraduate and postgraduate degree completion for all specialist art teachers at the university.

Her own teaching background includes 20 years as a visual arts specialist in Western Australian schools followed by 11 years at ECU in teacher education. Her work as an academic in tertiary education necessitated the completion of a PhD in 2008 in the area of mentoring of beginning teachers, which in turn inspired her interest in quality discourse in the online environment.

Lisa has maintained her own art practice since graduating with a Bachelor of Education (visual arts) from WAIT/Curtin University in 1984, and has completed a number of private commissions; periodically she has participated in group art shows with other visual arts staff at ECU and regularly with other art teachers.

She had her first solo show of paintings in December 2014 at Gadfly Gallery and this little book of free verse poetry and creative writing is the companion to that exhibition.

Lisa considers herself to be at an early stage of her career as an artist and is looking forward to the journey ahead.

 **CV**

- 1983 B Ed (visual arts), Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT).
- 1983 WAIT/Curtin University Graduate Exhibition.
- 1984-2013 Various private commissions.
- 1994-2004 Visual arts specialist K-12 (Perth and Bunbury Schools).
- 2000 M Ed (visual arts), Edith Cowan University.
- 2001 Equestrian Exhibition – Spring in the Valley (participation by invitation).
- 2001-4 President, Art Education Association of WA.
- 2004 Senior Lecturer and Course Coordinator, Secondary Art Education, Edith Cowan University.
- 2004-2012 Curator, Graduate Exhibition, B Ed Secondary Art Education, Edith Cowan University.
- 2004 First Love Exhibition - Art Education Association of WA.
- 2006 First Love Exhibition - Art Education Association of WA.
- 2008 PhD, Edith Cowan University.
- 2012 City of South Perth Exhibition.
- 2012 City of Victoria Park Exhibition.
- 2012 Spectrum Gallery Group Exhibition - ECU Visual Arts Staff Show.
- 2013 Spectrum Gallery Group Exhibition - ECU Visual Arts Staff Show.
- 2014 Gadfly Gallery (first solo show), Memento Mori Letters.

Creative Research



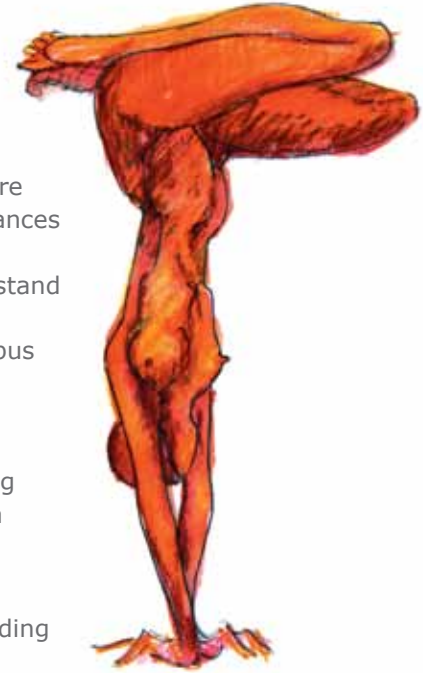
Creative and visual research is a relatively new field of inquiry about contemporary social experience. People in universities increasingly employ social media, including Facebook, to promote their teacher education courses. This use of social media reflects the changed communication landscape and the fact that Facebook is the preferred social media platform for many students. Anecdotal evidence suggests many tertiary students have a Facebook page and regularly use it to connect with peers and others throughout their university education. This usage is particularly noticeable for pre-service teacher education students during their practicum placements in schools. Notwithstanding their official use of the medium, people in universities in Western Australia have yet to offer guidelines for students' behaviour in online environments (although policy documents are in development). In early October 2013 Facebook announced that all privacy settings for users aged 13-17 would be 'opened' as a default setting, replacing a previously strict policy quarantining children from interaction with adults. The new policy setting now effectively places all Facebook communication in the public domain; as a result, it is now possible for adults and children to interact freely in the Facebook environment, necessitating appropriate duty of care responses from agencies such as pre-service training providers.





The change to Facebook's privacy settings policy heightens adult users' exposure to risk in the event that inappropriate material appears on their Facebook page, or interaction between children and adults is deemed to fall below professional standards. To date, each school sector (i.e. Department of Education WA; Association of Independent Schools WA; and Catholic Education Office WA) has developed a policy direction for staff for the use of online communication; however, these are only guideline documents, not legislation. In light of the above circumstances (and especially university participation endorsement of Facebook in professional life), there is a need for tertiary institutions to better understand student user patterns, and importantly to provide students with clear professional guidelines about appropriate use of social media in off-campus learning experiences (e.g. on practicum) and on an ongoing basis. The resultant risk mitigation arising from early intervention is likely to better prepare graduates for their transition to work and life beyond university. Moreover, the use of social media and online learning communities during the period of pre-service training affords new support opportunities for a range of professional challenges (subject, curricular and pedagogical).

Through the twin inquiry modes of creative and traditional research, I hope here to make a contribution to my students' and others' understanding of the importance of quality discourse in the social media environment.



Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank Edith Cowan University, and particularly Professor Christopher Brook, for supporting my creative research endeavour that led to this exhibition of paintings and book of free verse poetry. I am grateful for the opportunity to experiment with newer forms of knowledge generation through creative research practice. Over the course of 2014 I have discovered that the social media environment is a fascinating space that can be stupefying, mind-numbing, frustrating, annoying, informative, deceptive, sad, exploitative, uplifting and occasionally more than a little dangerous. Words can be powerful things and a picture is still worth many words... hopefully, the two together are deeply evocative. In an era where visual culture, self-surveillance and hyper surveillance proliferate (often just under the radar of individual freedom of expression, national security and law and order), the conversations that play out in the digital environment, and particularly in the social media, have the capacity to enhance or diminish the discourse in which we engage and therefore the way we think. As a teacher educator, I worry about the things my students post to the digital environment, and I hope this body of work in painting and word shines a little light on the strange and wonderful things that people say. More than that, I hope those who see/read this work might pause for a moment to wonder what it all means. Such a pause might be the beginning of a new line of thought.

Sources

Digital Sabbath: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LWZkL5Xsno&list=UU7IcJI8PUf5Z3zKxnZvTBog
Memento mori definition: www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/m/memento-mori
Einstein quote: http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein

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Social media text-grab contributions

Sara O'Neill (Fly Fishing); Matt Jackson (Does My Bum Look Big In This); Vanessa Allen (The Garden); The Kite String Tangle lyrics (Arcadia).

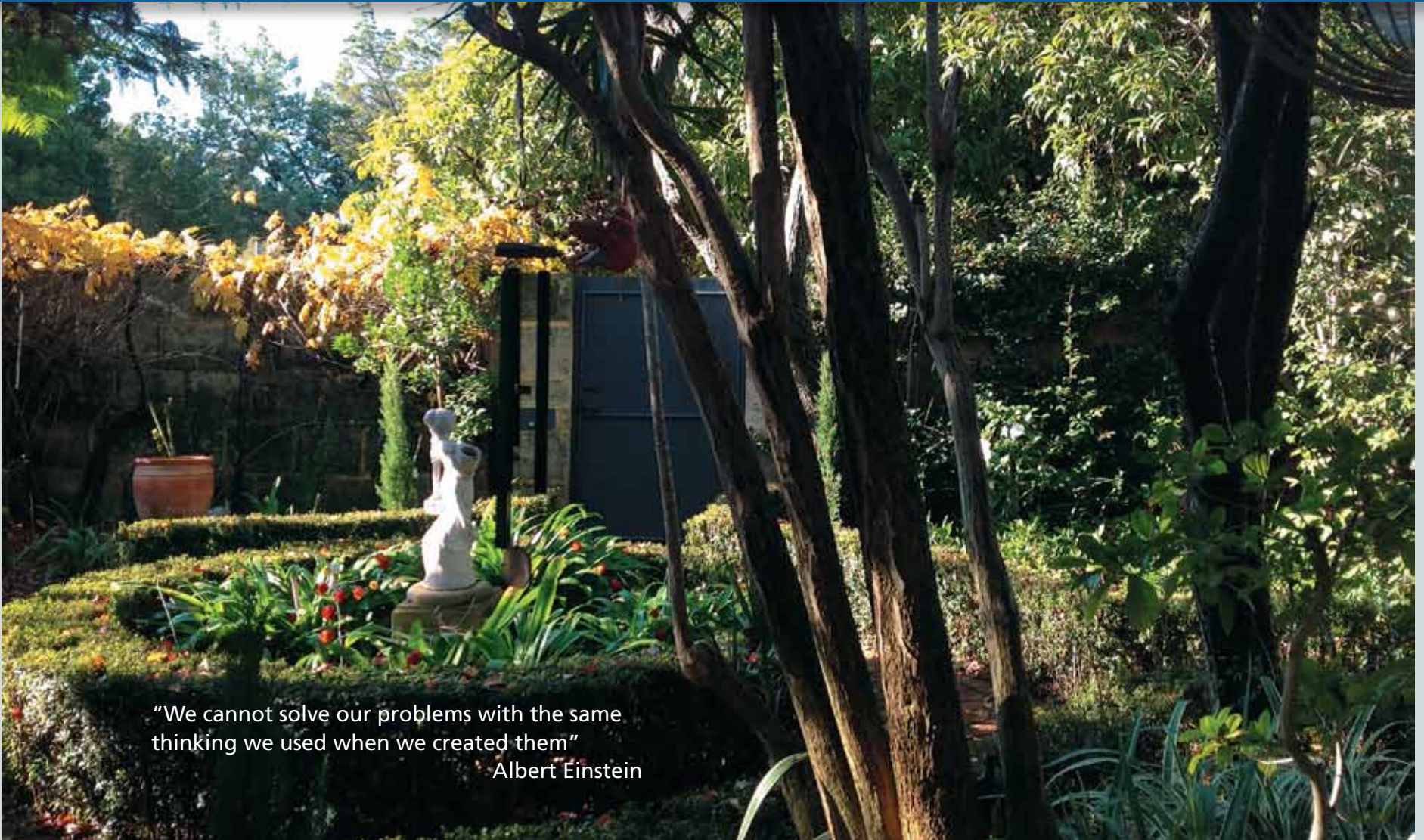
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And anyone else who has listened, critiqued my paintings and writing (in person or on social media) or generally made a contribution to this project – Thank you!



"We cannot solve our problems with the same
thinking we used when we created them"
Albert Einstein



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