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A loose transcript of a past and future walk along the Maribyrnong River.

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A loose transcript of a
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1

I want to remember the moment when the river became visible to us, as we walked from the car park at Highpoint. As one path became two paths, and directions seemed to reach out in front of us, it seemed important to get our bearings. Maybe it was now that we looked down the hill into the water. Or maybe above the trees we could see the shadow of the city in the distance. We walked further and direction became apparent. The river seems to offer only two ways, if we're willing to accept the river as a line of flow.

2

Walking down I was hyper aware of our surroundings - I had never been to this park before, and wanted to pause over the pipes that were arranged and lying about. I refocused on the task at hand - finding the swamp, eventually finding the river, following it to the sea. In hindsight, the pipes would have been interesting to pause over as a human made structure that moves water into rivers, swamps and oceans.

3

Before reaching the river we circumnavigated the first swamp. A lookout offered a view of a dead tree at the swamp's centre; an axis produced in reverse, with the tree dying as a result of the swamp's uncompromising presence. From the beginning of our walk there was a tension between visibility and invisibility, with the water of both river and swamps moving in and out of our fields of vision as we attempted to make sense of what we were doing. The long grass growing out of the swamp, and the expanse of warehouses and factories along the river, meant that shorelines became obscured. This littoral space was always just out of reach.

4

By re-walking, we will be entering into the unstable precariousness of being between walks. We have already done one walk but will do it again, so are halfway, even though we have finished. While walking we re-determine the first walk, adjusting our memory of it and smudging our past footprints with the new ones. Or perhaps we will take the greatest care to re-tread the same steps, matching our own footprints and not stepping in the footprints of the other.

5

We began our trip with a moment of introversion. I thought about what it would be like to fall in. I imagined my feet getting stuck in the mud.

6

In this space of introspection,
I thought about swamps and
how there is always something
cinematic about them. Even when
they are ugly, which this one is
not, they recall a hidden lurking
danger or romance, a place to fall
in or emerge from or hide in. An
ecosystem of tiny noises.

7

I remember a while ago you talked
about mouths. The mouth of the
river, and our mouths getting
caught in conversation; ideas
flowing freely. Or maybe not freely.
Yes, not freely, that's for sure.
What did you mean when you said
that the water was getting faster?
The water was moving, moving into
more water, this water runs into
that water, and then it runs back.
If it speeds up, then what came
before, and comes after are also
hurrying, forcing their neighbours
into haste, while struggling to keep
up themselves.

8

Today I was writing about an artist and a painting of hers that she showed me in her studio. Though she is about to show the painting for the first time, she told me that this painting has been around her studio for years, and that it originally was a painting of a mountain, which was finished around 2008. We spoke about painting and how a work is endlessly scrubbed away, painted over, blurred, worrying and wobbling the image, endlessly unsettled. She mentioned the Ship of Theseus and I still am undecided if a boat with all its parts replaced new would be the same boat - it seems to depend on which "boat" I am thinking about, what it carries or pretends to carry.

9

Coincidently I've been thinking about the Ship of Theseus a lot recently. I keep finding it popping into my mind whenever I think about things being replaced with their own replica, and what shape this replacement might take. When I was in Germany six weeks ago I was talking to some archaeologists about a method of preserving timber that involves impregnating it with wax. A few years ago some timber from some Byzantine ships was found in Turkey. The wood was partially rotten, and falling apart. Wax was used to stabilise and preserve the fragments of ship, and then hot air was blown on each piece. As the wood heated the wax softened. The liquid wax caused the wood to become temporarily malleable, and it could be manipulated to re-form the curve of the bow of the ship. The ships were then partially re-built, through the process

of excavation and preservation. This feels like a re-performing of Theseus.

10

That's funny, something about that makes me uneasy, like the hot wax is being used to reshape history, even though it is an attempt at preservation. Is this like the silent mountain that is known about but not seen? I was recently in Japan and wanted to see Mount Fuji, but there was a typhoon on the day I was going to, so I didn't go. I was disappointed even though I didn't make the journey, and feel that perhaps by pre-empting my inability to see the mountain by not going and trying to see it, I set some chain of relations in place in which the mountain would always evade me.

11

I recently began re-reading Moby Dick. There's something very special about re-reading a book. My eyes move over the words with a sense of familiarity. I find it comforting, like a new conversation with a grandparent, where they surprise you by saying something they've said before in a way you're only now able to understand.

12

My grandad died in the month it took me to get to this - he was a beautiful man that raised me for a time and used to push me about in a wheelbarrow. He would always tell the same joke to everyone:
Did you ever hear the story of the three holes in the ground?
Well, well, well.

13

The words wash around me. I think you're right, Jacqui, we should do the walk again. I've been imagining what we might talk about.

14

We walked from the swamps along the river to the ocean and spoke about a bit of everything, as a gesture of walking from Therese's practice to my own. We've spoken a lot about the recurrence of bodies of water in both our works, and how the water we are each drawn to is so different. For Therese, it is often still, stagnant bodies of water, like swamps and wells. For me it's water with movement like tides and rivers. Neither of us really has an idea as to what this "means" beyond the gravity of the water in our bodies being drawn different ways (like a drop of rain on the windscreen that changes its trajectory to meet up with and join another drop). We felt a walk between the two would be a good way to begin to approach this "theme" or even distinction in themes.

15

From the peaceful sunny calm of the swamp to the windy chaos of the jetty pointing to the ocean – without addressing difference head on, this traversal of the different territory, taking in the industrial areas along the river, seemed to perform the amphibiousness of researchers Therese spoke about in the text about my work, despite the fact we didn't get wet. We still moved in and out of this knowledge we sought and for a lot of the walk didn't know the way.

16

My brain feels a bit foggy this morning. I guess sometimes the air is thicker than others, and today it is very, very thick. I just finished listening to a radio-play online. There was a mention in it about going into a deep hole underground, and the air becoming laden with moisture. That's what my head feels like at the moment. Word tried to auto-correct hole with whole. A deep whole.

17

I'm glad you called earlier. It's been one of those days that start with no direction and end with potentially even less. Thinking about direction, if there is none, or "no direction," surely that means standing still, and having "even less" than "no direction" surely means losing ground, or going backwards, which is a direction in itself.

18

For a long time I felt we were at the centre of the jetty, not moving forward or backward, despite continuously taking steps.

When driving afterwards, it is like the rain washed away the need for amphibiousness and traversing difference. Difference in practice, in water bodies, this binary of situations, bodies, terms, that research clings to often. Often clinging most to a "opening" "unpacking" "moving beyond" binaries, a "questioning" or "challenging" of binaries. Binaries as a result of language and research that draws lines between what something is and something is not, and then the subsequent desire to continually push, through language and research, the binaries put there in the first place. Rain fell on everything without exception; fell on sea and on land. It probably even fell into my truck as I know it's not watertight.

20

Ultimately, rain is the process for bridging sea and land – the evaporation of water into clouds and the deposit of this water onto the land or sea somewhere else. That rain could have water evaporated from central Australia or from Northern Asia. I know enough about weather to know it's not so simple, not a bucket of water picked up somewhere and dumped somewhere else, but I'm writing informally and will pretend otherwise. It was nice, if stressful, because we walked to bridge and navigate this difference but the rain reminds me that as much as difference is unavoidable, no entity is the same as another, difference is also a product of the need to categorise and that ultimately if we stopped thinking of things as "different" or opposing, as known or unknown... it wouldn't all be the same but it also wouldn't be this difference we were so caught up worrying about.

21

As I read this, the rain that has been falling constantly for the past couple of days has just stopped (momentarily at least), and there's a stream of sunshine pouring through the thick clouds. I'm sitting at my desk in my studio, just beneath the window. I've spent the past hour looking out at the sky and the water falling down. I think you're right. The distinction between binaries is never clear-cut, and the rain is the perfect reminder of a fundamentality of water.

Anyway, I was thinking about driving through the storm with this water falling from the sky onto us and what that meant in the context of our walk. We walked from the swamps of Pipemakers Park along the Maribyrnong to a jetty of sorts in Newport. The jetty couldn't have been more than 3 metres wide by the end and was made of bits of concrete, rubble, stone, land, it had bushes spotted on it and a cushion from a couch that was bright pink. It reminded me of Spiral Jetty except made for industrial purposes, and not spiralled. It was like a finger that pointed out towards the ocean, as we were at the mouth of the Maribyrnong, and the further the walked along the finger the windier it got. We followed the direction the finger pointed us towards. Unlike Spiral Jetty, this jetty had the purely functional purpose of protecting the shore from the waves caused by the big "shipping ships" (um) wake.

Walking out to the far mouth of the river, the extension of the mouth with a long pile of bluestone rubble, the break, breaking the waves, while creating a walkway into the water. I felt like I might fall in. There's a moment when land and water swap places, where the contained becomes the container. The ground felt less solid, as we scrambled along the break, water blowing around on either side of us, as our runway became narrower and narrower, and the earth felt further and further away. We walked and walked, but never got to the end. I could see where our jetty dived into the water, but it seemed to resist our attempts to find a neat resolution, continuing to reach out in front of us.

24

Like a dream where you are running for the door but get no closer to it, it feels like a treadmill, and I have this image in my head from The Shining.

25

A container ship swam past, making ripples so large that they washed over the bluestones behind us, and momentarily fractured our connection to the mainland. The mainland, the main-land, the main land. Our peninsula became an island, and our island – made of small fragments of rock – threatened to collapse under the pressure of the water crashing against it. I could barely hear what you were saying. The conversation continued. As we wandered around the mouth, the water swirling around us, we talked. It was gossip really, but disjointed as the air moved between us, and blocked the mumbles coming out of our lungs. I looked down, watching my step. I stumbled. My hair flicked into my eyes, and out again.

26

We were about halfway along the jetty when a big ship went past, loaded with shipping containers, and it was just like the scene from All Is Lost where "Our Man", Robert Redford, is lost at sea and waves to the big ship to be saved, but shipping containers don't have eyes.

27

The film begins and ends with a shipping container. A loose container spewing children's shoes into the water tears through the side of the yacht. I had never been so close to a container ship before. I felt very aware of being at sea level, like we were on equal footing with the water, but that it could overpower us at any moment.
A one sided truce.

28

Only of course it wasn't like that because we were on the jetty and didn't need saving. But I felt it was appropriate in the context – T showed me this movie last year when I was feeling quite lost in all my work, and the expanse of blue was so relatable at the time. Sometimes I felt like "Our Man," though I really doubt I'd be quite as resilient. The movie moved me due to the extended silences and openness, surrounding the confined immediacy of the boat's cabin, or the blow-up lifeboat he later ends up in. Just a small lonely guy in the expanse of the crazy ocean, left to the elements. (Actually, T and I spoke about research, and research and walking as process, but maybe thinking about Our Man, research is just trying to hold on and figure your way through it all. A terrible analogy but I mean this quite literally.)

29

One night late last week (maybe it was Thursday, or maybe Wednesday) I had a dream about whales. It was the kind of dream I only remembered a day or so later, when images suddenly fell back into my mind, on the train home. In the dream I was on a boat, or in a canoe, or maybe it was some kind of raft.

Over the past month it's taken me to return to this, I've been on a number of boats. Nothing like the raft you describe and nothing like the huge container shift we saw, just smaller ferries that carried me slowly between islands. I like to imagine that I was on these islands while you had this dream, I smush together the different contexts we are thinking from. One of the islands I visited was Ogijima, a small island in Japan near the Takamatsu port. This island inspired the island that Battle Royale is set on, and I imagined myself arriving at this tropical overrun tiny island after hours on a boat. It did take hours and it was probably one of the most physically challenging times in my life - the humidity was about 80% and it was at least 35 degrees, and although the island isn't big it's very steep and hilly. But it wasn't overrun, just populated by a small

fishing community, and I wandered around the tiny streets and wooden houses, stepping into overly sweaty tea houses just to escape the sun for a brief respite, I wondered what it would be like to be a fisherman and live there.

Part of me thinks I was actually on a small island, made of earth, but floating somehow. I can't really remember. I just remember the feeling of my face being close to the water, and moving along the currents while the whale, or whales, rose out of the dark waves before diving back down.

32

As a kid, we lived in Texas for a bit and had the luxury of a backyard pool. I used to put my face under the water near where the water spilled from the spa to the pool and the bubbles as the water broke the surface tickled my face gently and got stuck in the hair on my face.

33

The force of their bodies in the water made ripples, and swirls so large that the surface I was resting on got swept up in their dance, and responded in turn by moving to or from the whales, or orbiting the spot where the huge body had just dropped out of visibility, leaving a shadow of water washing over water. I was lying on my front, with my head up so that my eyes coasted just above sea level.

34 Also while in this pool, my dad used to play a game with us that he was a whale, and us kids would hold his shoulders and ride on his back as he swam slowly along the bottom of the pool. I could never hold my breath as long so had to come up for air, and my lungs would ache as I broke the surface. I used to love trying to swim in the way you describe, with my eyes coasting above the sea level. I imagined I was a sleek seal swimming fast or a secret agent that no one could spot. Some people I know will find this funny as we recently all did a "spirit animal" test which is based on your birth date, and I am (apparently) an alligator. This test described me as being sly, cunning, and someone that is patient and waits for the perfect opportunity to make their move or attack. Make of it what you will but I feel I generally have terrible timing.

35 The fins of the whales rising and falling mirrored the undulations of the water, to a point where I stopped distinguishing between the two.

36

The other day, or probably more than a month ago actually, I was going for a run near my house and as I ran past a neighbour's driveway I saw two huge kangaroos in their front yard. I thought they were statues they were so huge and I stopped when I saw their ears move. It's as though through the sweat and endorphins I was hallucinating these huge animals – they stood on their back legs much taller than me – who had just moved in down the road, bought a Ford Falcon, and were trying for a baby.

37

I just got home and am sitting on the couch, drinking tea, and writing this. Yesterday I was in my studio, and realised that for the past month or so I've been moving materials around, doing a few crappy drawings, and generally pretending to be far more productive than I actually am. I decided I needed to take a day off, so today I walked from my house in Petersham into the city. It was super sunny, and I walked through the gardens and along the waterfront.

allo

hey there!

how are you going?

did tim read any of the text?

i don't know - i havent spoken to him yet! will see him tonight. and i'm well, just waiting for skype plugin to install for calls

haha. cool. I'm curious to hear what he thinks!!

me too!

chances are he hasn't read it yet i reckon

yeah - totally no rush!

so the other day as I was thinking about whales I remembered this article that I read a few years ago

cool!

sorry - is that too jarring a segue?

not at all

haha

heh

i got there first

no i did!!!

so anyway, back to the whale...

I read this article a few years ago about a dead whale on a beach in Victoria

I don't remember where it was

that rings a bell

and I don't remember what type of whale

maybe a humpback

or maybe a southern right

i know next to nothing about whale species

I think it washed up already dead, rather than beaching itself

I just looked up a southern right they are beautiful!

The melb museum was coveting the skeleton

it's rare to find a dull whale skeleton

full, not dull

not dull at all

but then there was the question of how to transport it, and how to clean it

http://whalespotter.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Web-SouthernRight-Profile.jpg

great pic!

what they ended up doing was leaving it in situ, and burying it on the beach

because they wanted to transport the carcass as a whole?

they buried it with sand from the beach

they wanted the skeleton as a whole, but wanted the flesh gone...

so they buried it, and left it there, for sand mites to do their work, eating away all the flesh

eventually, all that would be left is a perfectly cleaned skeleton

bones are difficult to clean, and are damaged very easily if you try to cut away the meat.

but mites do the same job, but more gently

I don't know if the whale

is still there, or how long it takes for mites to eat a whole whale

I think about it every now and then, and wonder how the whale is going, buried in the sand on the shore

I imagine it would take a long time for sand mites to eat a whole whale, but then again if that is what they do, and the whale is decomposing at the same time, and if there are a lot of mites

this makes me very uncomfortable thinking about when ive been bitten by sand mites

yes, sometimes when I get out of the water at the beach I feel so itchy

I'm sure that as they are scientists this isn't an issue and they have thought of all variables, but are they not worried the skeleton will be damaged in some way, or stolen, or even a bone taken by a dog etc??

I wonder if they guard the beach

I wondered that too

like, I imagine it needs to stay there for a number of years, being so huge

I was worried about the movement of the sand, and the tide coming up and down every day, slowly eroding the blanket of sand covering the whale's body

have you googled it to see if it has been exhumed

I thought of that too, but I imaging it is pretty deep

I tried googling it about 6 months ago, but couldn't find it

also, the tide deposits sand just as its takes it away

so it could also be getting buried deeper?

yeah, true

someone read a passage from a book to me yesterday about sand

I'm just looking it up

I think you'll like it!

Do you remember when we started a

'philosophy reading group' and we read man and the seashell

yes! I was thinking about that essay the other day

I keep meaning to reread it!

you should. it's worth it

ok so because I'm feeling a bit at a loss of what to say its my turn to make a weird segue

haha, don't worry about it!

last night it rained heaps. like heaps, the creek across from my house that I can normally step over was 10 metres wide

heaps of roads in the area were flooded and I was pretty lucky not to be stranded, but at the same time I probably would have loved that

mum has been sending me pics and videos of her place! so much water!!

Oh hers must be the same of course!

our landlord called and I had to check the house for leaks but I couldn't find any. Except one of the storm drains had overflowed and the cover had come off and heaps of leaves had been sucked in and blocked the

pipe, I had to pull them out and fish around in the water for all the leaves and I was really worried I'd find a dead mouse or snake

Anyway, sometimes our septic system is weird and makes gurgling noises in the middle of the night, like an air bubble is coming up from the bottom.

Last night I got woken up by them at around 4 am, and they were so loud and continuous! It was like my house was burping really loudly and wouldn't shut up. I was a little worried about it but nothing was overflowing, but I couldn't do anything to stop it making that sound. I think the sheer volume of water it was taking on from the storm just couldn't enter the tank fast enough.

I remember when I was at your house we heard that noise...

so strange!!

it's like your house has indigestion!!

So after I checked to make sure nothing was overflowing and I couldn't do anything I tried to go back to bed. But I was really creeped out. Because the house kept burping and gurgling, and although normally the rain is lovely to listen to when in bed as it was so heavy and we have a tin roof, this sound seemed really sinister

exactly!! ha!

was this your first storm since moving to Chewton?

No I don't think so, but first big one. It wasn't a thunderstorm and there have been some of those, but it was definitely the heaviest rain and I think the creepiness had to do with the fact I was there by myself

I got spooked by the rain!! But I think it was in fact the rains voice, or the voice of the rain in the throat of the house, I'm not sure, it was so gutteral.

Yeah, that makes sense. I think there's something about being out of a city that makes the clouds feel closer or something.

like the house is really like a shell

which echoes the ocean, but in this case the sky

or the guttural sounds of the rain in the pipes was like the sky sobbing

I liked what you wrote the other day about spring and crying, often in the morning when I wake up and if I get up and leave the house pretty quickly my left eye waters uncontrollably, and I'm always wiping it away

Sometimes people think I'm crying, but its just weird leakage

I think its a hay fever thing, but maybe its a sleeping thing or a hungover thing (I had it while I was hungover the other day)

Sometimes I wake up and my eyes are really watery

Anyway all of those states act like a screen between me and the world

Its weird

I wonder why they do that

I finally found that sand quote... wanna hear it?

Sorry to cut you off!

yes!

This is from Rachel Carson's book 'Edge of the Sea'...

"We think of rock as a symbol of durability, yet even the hardest rock shatters and wears away when attacked by rain, frost or surf. But a grain of sand is almost indestructible. It is the ultimate product of the work of the waves - the minute, hard core of mineral that remains after years of grinding and polishing. The tiny grains of wet sand lie with little space between them, each holding a film of water about itself by capillary attraction. Because of this cushioning liquid film, there is little further wearing by attrition. Even the blows of heavy surf cannot cause one sand grain to rub against another."

That's kind of nice. I don't know why I have a sort of weird reaction to it, I can't explain it

what kind of weird?

the word I think of is "distrust" but that makes no sense at all. what is that directed towards? to the rock/sand/author? not sure

Maybe its to do with it being such a poetic quote but also so seated in fact

distrust, wow! that's full on!

I know!!

Don't take that the wrong way, its a great quote and really interesting, I don't know why!

hahaha, I'm not worried about that

Yeah, I think I kind of know what you mean

Maybe I'm not convinced by the cushioning liquid film of the sea I think, because the sea is not so cushioning even if it is liquid, it has minerals and tiny creatures and saltiness

I'm reading this book at the moment about 'making', and I find myself getting irrationally annoyed by it...

maybe buffer is a better word than cushion?

And sand ultimately is always breaking down, which is why on some beaches the sand is finer than others, I suppose dependant on how much sand is deposited or how long it has been a shore?

buffer is a slightly better word

What about the making book irritates you? I'm curious!

I think it's something about the language, or phrasing the author uses to talk about making.

like it's too warm, or too nostalgic, or too something

I can't even explain it

it's not the content

it's the way it's talked about

I feel like I'm being unfair though

yes that's how I feel about the sand quote

like I need to give it more of a chance

it's like sappy or something

I don't think so, that you need to give it a chance that it. It can be weird - and I think thats why I say distrust - when something so simple or straightforward is told in flowery language.

but I think I do that too!!

haha

Like the sand thing – I feel the idea of that is great and beautiful in itself, without describing the sand as being hugged or whatever by the water, and how the grains are non abrasive

I know, I definitely am guilty

I think I use too many words sometimes, and get attached to sentences based on a pleasurable assemblage of words, rather than their meaning

I think I just use too many words in a way that isn't pleasurable for readers, but I know what you mean, and I don't think you do

I think the water is actually the most indestructible thing. It still erodes the sand but the only way to erode water is to freeze it and break it

unless you use chemical/ lab processes

a while ago i was watching ice road truckers...

this has a point, I promise!

my dad loves that show

the climax of the episode I was watching was a point where the trucks had to cross an enormous frozen lake

the trucks are huge, and with cargo they weigh A LOT!

(I'm sitting here thinking isn't that always the climax?)

haha, probably

as the truck moves across the lake, the ice shifts, and creaks, and moves around

ha I'm being very cynical

like the sound of footsteps in snow

thats cool

then suddenly, there was a loud crack!

a big fracture had appeared in the frozen lake

and the truck couldn't continue

so what the trucker did, was repair the crack in the road of the frozen lake

he did this by pouring water over the crack

it's strange, because the crack appeared as the ice weakened and softened but to repair the crack, you need melted ice - water – to act as a kind of mortar

it felt very counter-intuitive!

it's like repairing something with the thing that was causing the break

woah thats amazing! now I think about it it makes sense logically, but to think that broken ice is melded with water, I mean there is water underneath it.

But its like melding metals, a hotter, melted metal is used

but then too much water would surely melt the ice...

like there's a balance that needs to be achieved

hey, I wanted to respond to what you said about father/farther/further, and the supreme court.

I'll respond more fully later

I just wanted to say that this discussion is funny, because my dad actually works at the Supreme Court, as a judge!

So maybe he's the father

or my father at least

I didn't put two and two together till I saw your note! I knew he was a judge, but I completely removed it from the farther/father discussion!

I often think about the temporality that he engages with in his practice

like the reading of the judgement being a moment that creates a before and after

it's kind of like the crack in the frozen lake

But no water can really repair that

Actually, no

just because a crack is repairs doesn't erase its past existence

exactly

so that crack could be repaired by a sort of continuity that is formed over his judgement

and if you want to continue the analogy, there are appeal processes and stuff

yes

but I've always found this moment of reading a passage like a judgement, and the affect that act of reading has, really interesting

and that it needs to be read allowed

to people

in a particular place

aloud/allowed

wearing particular clothes

hahaha! aloud!

I hadn't thought about the clothes actually... hmmm

it is seperated from everyday judgements and seen as a greater judgement

and all of these conditions need to come together, for the passage of writing to be given its meaning

yes

which is interesting, because I normally think of words as the things that have the meaning

but maybe that's too narrow of me

and maybe if I thought about it more, I would disagree with myself

I suppose words have meaning, but that is determined by their context, and the costuming and location contribute to the context

Like it is not words themselves that hold meaning, it is what they represent

maybe I mean affect, not meaning

hmmm yes

like the affect of the words of the judgement comes through its context

yes

The words are considered heavy and weighted with implication but it isn't the words themselves that are acting, it is what is behind the words, and because we can only understand that through language the words are placed in this context to really underline that they are IMPORTANT words etc

I think I already told you I saw Pierre Huyghe's The Host and the Cloud in Tokyo, and in that there was a trial

I'm listening to 'sorry' by justin bieber on youtube...

which of course isn't a judgement, but precedes it

I love that song!!!!!!

yeah, I want to see it!

haha! me toooo!

it's like painfully catchy!

I meant I want to see the Pierre Huyghe work, not Biebs

can you describe it to me?

well, there is a bit in Huyghes work where the music is catchy, where Wuthering Heights is played backwards, and it is during an orgy scene where it seems that animals are involved. Not quite Bieber level catchy

trial scene reenacts the prosecution of the French radical group Action Directe in the late 1980s. Toward the end of the film, another trial invokes the 1993 case of virtual rape in the online community LambdaMOO

and the, I suppose judges, in the trial, are wearing these masks made of lights

Actually I'm looking at a still the accused are wearing the masks too

oh I think I know the work you're talking about

And from what I saw in the film, the trial of this radical group was interrupted by the group as they passed comment/ made a speech, which I think (I THINK) was about refusing the trial

http://www.moma.org/d/assets/W1siZiIsIjIwMTUvMTAvMTQvNXg0bGVkd3djMl96b29tXzE0MzM4MDA0NjZfaHV5Z2hlXzJ4LnBuZyJdLFsicCIsImNvbnZlcnQiLCIiXV0/zoom_1433800466_huyghe%402x.

I saw part of it when it was on that online video/ film art club mailing list thing...

I didn't watch all of it though

Oh yes I was on that but never watched anything

I think my attention span is shorter on my computer than it is in galleries

yes definitely

yeah, I hardly watch any of them

and never watch the whole way through... so bad!

yeah I often probably hardly hit a minute

it was interesting what you said the other day about walking into the gallery half way through the video

sometimes I start tv series halfway through, and then go back and watch the beginning

sometimes I just watch it totally out of order

I kind of enjoy it

the narrative forms itself
in a different way

oh I would never do that!
I take my tv watching way
too seriously

I should try though

I don't watch tv for the
surprise, so I'm totally up
for spoilers

yeah, sometimes I'll catch
the second half of an ep
on tv, and then later on go
back and watch the start

it does strange things to
the story

I wonder if I could do it
with a book

maybe I should give it a go

hey - should we call it a
day??

I feel like we're reaching
a lull

I thought of something I really wanted to write about earlier while in the shower (the fake rain rinsed it off). I just went and stood in the bathroom for a bit to try and remember but it didn't help. Then I came into this document and saw the last line – "I feel like we're reaching a lull" – I am feeling quite lullish. I've been thinking a bit about the different form of writing we did the other day via Skype; I haven't read back through it so that will be interesting to do. It felt like a really different way of writing as often as I write ideas or thoughts come to me that I put down, but in the context of the conversation these streams of thought are interrupted by your parallel thoughts, which jut in and I don't have the opportunity to follow the direction of my own thoughts. I noticed that I think the same thing happened both ways. In some ways, this form of writing

was really generative as I think we considered and thought through things together that individually we wouldn't have tied links between, yet we didn't allow ourselves to go further into our individual thoughts and bounce off one another in that way. I don't know if there is a solution for this, and perhaps it is due to the conversation being typed. I feel when we talk live or face to face this isn't such a problem and ideas are pushed further into interesting spaces. I wonder if it had to do with the screen(s) between us, both literally and metaphorically I suppose, or how things are slowed down by having to read and type. When reading and typing it is hard to "interrupt" someone or cut them off in the traditional sense, you can still do this but the sequence of typing slots this injunction into the dialogue in a neat position with a timecode, so that it reads

sequentially in an ordered conversation. Voices cannot overlap when they are ordered sequentially with timecodes.

39

A lull is supposed to be a temporary interval or quiet lack of activity, but in the middle of a lull one can feel like it is eternal, I can't see the end of a lull if it hasn't arrived yet. The eternal lull. The eternal numbing off to sleep, a break - a lull both stands for the process of slipping into a break in consciousness and for an interval or break in itself.

40

Perhaps I need to treat this exercise as a lull - both the slipping off (of hopes, desires, projections of what something could be, and letting it be what it is), and a break. The more I think about lull the more I think about the double-lull, the lulling into lull. In lulling into a lull where does one lull ends and the other begin, or is it a constant downhill slide? Approaching something as a comma, a promise for something more and as a moment to take another breath, rather than a full stop that implies completion. A comma is shaped like a strange seed.

41

I need to finish this!

42

I laughed a lot earlier when you described the days you wake up and decide to be "free" or "loose," I can't remember. The amount of times I have gone to the studio and told myself to "not think about things" or "just do," "be intuitive," and all that comes of these days is a self conscious attempt at overthought, over-performed, "looseness" or freedom.

43

Thinking about looseness or freedom as an artist, or following your intuition – well when I'm thinking about these things it's guaranteed that is exactly what I'm not doing. My intuition doesn't follow a line on paper or a shape made with my hand, I guess. For me it always feels like an accident I happened upon, a lucky idea or set of things I ran with and by some miracle worked. Soon I will be discovered as the fraud I am.

44

I remembered a conversation I had with my brother last year, or maybe it was late-2014 (I'm not sure). He told me that per unit the U.S. penny costs more than a penny to make, including the mining of zinc, processing in the mint, and distribution across the country. It's kept in rotation because if penny production stopped the industries that have been built on and around the penny would crash and thousands of people would be out of work, which would put pressure on different areas of the economy, with disastrous consequences.

45

The penny dropped – when one has finally realised the situation that they are in after being unaware of it for a long time. The phrase dates to the Victorian era and penny arcades, or pay phones that required pennies to work. The penny would stick halfway down the slot and the user would have to wait for it to drop or give it a bang to move it down the slot. When I think of pennies I think of America, redundancy, dirtiness, frustration. My grandad showed me an Australian penny once, which judging by its design was minted somewhere between 1911 and 1936.

46

So the penny is essentially redundant, but necessary within a kind of self-perpetuating economy. I sometimes think about this in my studio, as I move stuff around, performing productivity, without actually being productive. Maybe I'm the penny, or maybe I'm the miner, or the mint worker, or someone who buys something at the supermarket for $1.99. I give them a $2 note, and what am I left with? A penny. Then maybe I stash those pennies away and next time I go to buy something for $1.99 I pay in 199 pennies.

Anyway, it's almost 1pm and I've so far succeeded in cleaning the bathroom, doing some laundry, and picking up my mail, as well as watching a few more TV shows than I should have. As we spoke about earlier, sometimes it's harder to approach a task when there is no structure, and I think it is the lack of structure that I at times find stops me when I attempt to approach this writing. Really, it should be easy, and I should just let myself write whatever, as I mostly have been, but it definitely feels egotistical. No one cares for our ramblings? But then again what makes me think anyone cares about the more "structured" writing or work we do, if anything perhaps it's even worse for others to experience as it pretends to be something. At least this writing knows what it is, just an extension of our conversations really. Working on it as an online

document is interesting, it's like an online chat you don't have to be present for, that keeps growing while you are away. Maybe it's also appropriate that it is so rambly, like extending the rambling walk we took into the world of language, and we just keep plodding along alongside each other.

Over the weekend I went to visit my sister. We went for a walk along the cliff top, overlooking the expanse of the Pacific Ocean. It was a sunny morning, and even though it's the middle of winter the heat from the sun warmed our backs while a cool sea breeze stung our faces, as we lent out over the fence. There was a woman not far from where we were standing with binoculars, watching for whales migrating north along the coast. Clare and I stood and stared out at the water. Clare told me that sometimes she sees whales when she's walking or running, but that it's more by chance as she happens to glance across, rather than looking specifically for them.

49

The walk would be very different in spring, or summer. It was reasonably warm last time and at times very windy, and like re-reading a book we would approach the familiar path differently and without surprise. Rather than the unknown path stretching before us it would be a sort of reconnaissance mission to comb through the grass and see what we missed, sifting through the shallows for a misplaced starfish or something.

50

As we continued to scan the ocean I saw a tiny black shape bobbing up and down. At first I imagined the fins of my dream moving in and out of the water, before deciding that it was just a small boat anchored a long way offshore.

51

In response to this image, I want to include some quotes from Old Man and the Sea, and I am imagining the old man in the boat you can see battling for days with the marlin: “Why do old men wake so early? Is it to have one longer day?” “He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy. He never dreamed about the boy. He simply woke, looked out the open door at the moon and unrolled his trousers and put them on."

52

We moved along the cliff, continuing our vigil. We talked about growing up in Warrnambool, and going whale watching when we were kids. I remember climbing the sandy steps up from the car park, to the top of the cliff, and standing there on the decking with other groups looking out across the water, the icy cold wind whipping our faces. It felt like we were there for hours, sometimes catching a glimpse of a kind of living mountain making its presence known, and often not seeing anything more than waves.

53

It took a month to return to this,
weird how the time was so full.
Last night I had a dream my partner
wanted to move to Brisbane and
buy a house in the suburbs, and he
was mad that I so actively didn't
want to. I don't know which is
more bizarre and dreamlike - his
newfound attraction to Brisbane
(we both grew up there or in areas
of central Queensland, so it's not
completely unfamiliar), or my
furious conflicting refusal that
caused such a rift. I've been feeling
strange lately and I'm not sure if
it's hay fever coming on before
spring even begins, the seasons
changing in my body before the
leaves even bud on the trees. My
cheeks and the skin around my
mouth is always dry and inflamed
and my eyes look puffy and red as
though I've been crying all the time.
With the seasons changing, things
turn about and readjust - instead
of trying to adjust multiple layers

of clothes under a heavy jacket I'm replacing the water my body loses through a runny nose, and watering the plants to keep up with their growth.

The sand blew into our eyes, and our cheeks were red from the prickly ocean air. On Sunday, too, we saw no whales, instead imagined them lingering just beneath the surface, aware of the eyes drifting above them, and encouraging us to enjoy the act of searching for searching's sake.

55

I woke up and my legs were heavy from yesterday. I had slept with them propped up on a pillow, a nice idea that turns into disarray and weird lumps in the bed after the quiet chaos of sleep.

56

The weight existed in the act of pre-emption. I thought my legs would be sore, I wondered how sore they would be. I imagined the walk like an imprint on my body, with invisible marks leaving a kind of shadow that could be felt. That night I found a book to read in bed. I remember reading less than a page before realising that my eyes were moving across the lines of words without transporting those words into my brain.

57 I feel this now, after gazing into the computer all day.

58 I quickly drifted into a very deep sleep. As I woke in the morning I had no memory of what I had dreamt. I lay there for a while, enjoying the seal of the doona keeping me warm.

59

I was woken from a dream where I was driving two friends to the beach to see another friend for the afternoon, and in the dream I was anxious I wouldn't get back in time for whatever dream activity I had to do. I have reoccurring dreams about driving, and in them I am never in control of the car, or only just, relying on the handbrake to stop just in time and having to use my hands on the clutch because my feet won't reach, or because I'm strapped into the back seat. As stressful as this sounds, it never is particularly stressful in the dream, more like a vague unease that I know will go away once I climb into the front seat while doing 110 kms through the city.

60

Before I learnt to drive a year ago, I regularly had dreams where I would be driving (sometimes well, sometimes not so well), like it was the most normal thing in the world. I would feel the drive in a way, not in the way that I felt like I was controlling the car, more like I was inhabiting the car, inhabiting the space of the car, rather than sitting in it (if that makes sense?). Since I learnt to drive though, the dreams have stopped.

61

Yesterday, the drive in our waking hours was actually very intense. In my truck it is like the weather is in the cab with you and the wind tried to push us off the road, as all the peak hour drivers on their way out to Gisborne sped along with their tyres off the road. There was a car that drove along in the dark for a long time without its lights on, I joked to you that it was a criminal on the loose but I think it was probably just someone who's automatic lights hadn't switched on.

62

Even though only six days have passed, our walk seems a very long time ago, and my mind feels a bit muddled (like walking through a thick fog, waiting for images to reveal themselves). Maybe I'm the car in the rain without my lights on.

63

On the walk. I have a very vivid memory of being on the walk, it was at the point where we left the river and had to walk through some industrial estate areas, that I was overly bothered that the footpath was on the wrong side of the road. We were walking with the sun beating down on us and I had crammed my backpack full of the jackets I had brought, and everything was made of bitumen. Where we were walking a fence wandered over right up to the road so we wouldn't fit beside it. I pressed the button on the crossing lights and we had to wait a long time for the trucks to stop, before crossing the road and continuing on the side that had a footpath. We walked along this footpath for maybe a few hundred metres before crossing back to the original side we had been walking on. Again, the path ended, and reappeared on the other side.

64

Now that it is the second time I am following the walk, I am ready for my inappropriate disappointment. The grass is even longer around the sidewalk and the boarded up pub offering parmas for $7.50 is strangely enticing.

65

The flow of the river was replaced with a steady stream of trucks. As the water disappeared from view we had to trust that it was still there, waiting for us behind the cyclone wire, warehouses, and piles of containers. For hours earlier we had allowed the river to guide us, to nudge us in the right direction. Here we still followed its lead, but blindly feeling our way along the road. I felt like shouting out to the river, to make sure we weren't lost.

66

Maybe this time we should try harder to follow the shoreline. We could jump the fence, or scramble along the bluestone edge, or walk into the water and see where it takes us.

67

As you know, my vocabulary is patchy. I think that this, along with my tendency to mispronounce everything, comes from reading a lot when I was younger and just assuming or guessing what a word meant rather than looking it up, just as I assumed how a word would sound. Since adulthood, wherever that begins, I've made an effort to stop reading and look up words that I come across when I don't know exactly what they mean. I'm not sure if this is related to my terrible ability to recall the simplest words either – mid-conversation I'll often stop and need to describe a word for help finding it, only for it to be so simple. The other day I couldn't remember the word "plural" but I also have an early memory of myself as 2 or 3 years old walking around our house in Moranbah wondering what the word hamburger meant.

68

I suspect everyones' vocabulary is patchy - right? When I tried to write vocabulary just now, I swapped the first 'a' with a 'u'. The dreaded red line appeared underneath, and I stared at the word I had written, trying to figure out where I went wrong. 'Meant' in your last sentence has the same red line. I wondered why, so I tried right-clicking on it. The dictionary tried to offer 'meat' as an alternative. Hamburger meat. Very funny. I have an old dictionary on my desk that I refer to as I read. Maybe this is overly conservative, but I still feel like dictionaries need to take the form of a book. Unfortunately, that means it will always be an incomplete collection. What about all the words that don't fit? What about all the different dictionaries? I recently re-read the Library of Babel. Every now and then I find a word, look at the definition in the dictionary, and thoroughly

disagree. So then I check another dictionary, and then I google it, and then I take a bit of one definition, a bit of another, and the opposite of another, and mash it all together to make the meaning that I'm after.
I can't decide if I think this is very good, or very bad practice!

69

The other day, reading through what you had written, I had to look up the word littoral. Whenever I had read the word previously in other contexts, I had situated it somewhere between literal and literature. Without thinking about it too hard this already sets up an interesting tension, between what is taken exactly or up front, and what is literary (to dive into exactly what that entails is too deep a hole for right now).

70

I soon discovered that littoral was in fact relative to the shore, referring to something situated along the shore of a sea or lake (or swamp). Literal/littoral/literature. Almost homonyms. A shifting shoreline between what is literal and what is literature. I almost hate this analogy already, it's seems excessive or affected, I think you know what I'm getting at.

71

When the literal/littoral homonym first popped into my head I laughed. If literality offers a strict truth, then littorality (if that's a word) challenges this with spatial ambiguity. I think it's this unfixed space that draws both of us to different water bodies. A desire to inhabit fluidity.

A few days ago, Thursday, I was in my studio talking to a friend about the importance of stepping away from my work, which I absolutely wasn't doing as I was hanging out with a friend in my studio, rather than some other location. Sitting about drinking tea and eating a whole packet of Iced Vovos, we joked that the whole point of art making was conversation, that that was what my work was about anyway and so I didn't need to worry about doing anything other than having conversations. I paused and thought to myself maybe that was the case on a very literal plane.

Lately I've been finding it more and more difficult to find this form in conversation. Maybe I'm having the wrong conversations, or maybe I'm just in a moody spell, but I've been finding my mind muddled in the swamp of conversation. I'm perpetually confused. I went to Officeworks last week, looking for a solution for the sprawling mass of paper that seems to cover my desk constantly. I tried folders a while ago, but that didn't work. I found a small set of acrylic drawers, perfect for large amounts of a4 paper. They came with sticky labels that I quickly threw out, after dismissing the basic premise of categorisation. A week on, and the chaos of text has found its way back onto my desk. Words are floating across the surface, becoming tangled, and trying to block one another out. Instead though, they simply lie across each other, creating a layering of pages, and meanings. Ps: Iced Vovos... classic!

Later, I was cycling home through the dark, trying to race the rain front that was approaching so I could get my clothes off the line. It occurred to me that all of my works pivot on a conversation in one way or another. I know we have spoken about trying to approach our practices through this process of walking, writing, meandering in this self-serving way. We said that we are trying to figure what role these bodies of water play, without necessarily trying to pin down why we are drawn to them but to give the idea some space for consideration. We tried to approach these bodies of water physically, and our own practices, we symbolically and literally (and littorally) walked from your practice to mine. From that, we have extended the walk into an extended conversation that keeps growing with small stories, thoughts, skype calls.

On Saturday I walked home from my studio, along the water. It was dusk, and although it had been a beautiful spring day, the wind had picked up. Is it right that spring is windy to carry seeds and pollen along its currents? Or is it the other way around? Have plants noticed the wind patterns, and decided to throw their offspring out into the air at this very time every year? Whatever the reason, it was certainly windy as I walked on Saturday evening. I walked quickly, and enjoyed the lingering warmth from the sun. The salty air hit my eyes and made me cry. You mentioned a while ago that your hay fever made your eyes puffy. I kind of think that spring is just a really emotional season. I can't decide if I'm joking about this or not! I'll let you decide.

We spoke about this again, and I was telling someone earlier this morning that the week has felt like running on a treadmill, but feeling that way is completely uncalled for as I'm not even so busy. It's like being stretched in many directions, and I felt this way as well in a crit at uni, for a work I struggled to engage with. Everyone was reaching and I felt I was stretching my art viewing skills to find new entry points that were unnatural to my way of thinking, like I was wearing a mask and speaking through the tiny mouth hole. Eventually something clicked and I felt I had found a way to think about the work that felt natural to me, but by then everyone was caught up discussing whether artists are "allowed" to be obtuse and what they owe their audience. Anyway, this kinda summed up my week - constantly attempting to perform some unnatural role for other people, losing track of myself,

and by the time I came back to myself the dialogue has progressed too far into politeness, accusation, underhanded implications of ownership or rights or unnecessary politeness. It was good to talk together about spring, I keep telling myself next week is another week and I'll forget this one. But spring is only just beginning!

There's something about walking away from my studio that I find really productive. It opens up my thinking in ways that being inside will never do. I talked to a couple of friends the other day about the effect walking has on our ideas, and the desperate need to try (and inevitably fail) to capture this. We agreed that walking with a notebook, or a camera, or another kind of recording device seemed to stunt the expansiveness of the walk somehow. Similarly, to try to write furiously all the thoughts that swam through our heads while we walked as soon as we got home never really worked either. Sometimes I sit in my studio, my mind elsewhere. It's not until I look at a clock that I realise an hour has passed and I haven't moved. This mental wandering seems to occupy a similar place.

In this state sometimes the most thinking happens, but to write it down afterwards or to try and instigate this sort of mental wandering, mental wondering, in order to solve a problem, doesn't work. I often try to, to sit and think, it's hopeless. Only when your thinking surprises me do I get anywhere, but if I try and record it in anyway it's flattened into language.

Earlier this year I decided to try to teach myself how to divine for water. When I was a kid my Mum told me about her Grandmother, who was a water diviner. She said that she would walk around paddocks with a length of wire, twisted around, and held out in front of her with both of her hands. As she walked she would pass over groundwater, deep beneath the surface. When this happened the wire would rotate in her hands so that it pointed towards the earth. Only some people have the knack for water divining, she said. So I got online, and did some reading. Then I watched an endless stream of videos on Youtube, with people using different tools, and techniques to find water. I went into my bedroom and grabbed a couple of coat hangers, and rummaged around in a cupboard until I found a pair of pliers. I cut the coat hangers, to make two

(almost)-identical divining rods. The dimensions are like 'L'. I held one rod in each hand, with the long length reaching out in front of me, running parallel to one another. I tried to keep my mind as open as possible. There are a lot of divining sceptics out there. Before beginning this exercise I had read a bit about how divining works. There are a lot of theories, but they all remain very contested. I imagine it has something to do with the water in my body connecting with the water underground. Or electrical currents somehow using the wires as a conduit between body and earth. Or, the rods might be simply a prop for making visible some kind of intuitive, embodied knowledge of the space between the body and the water under the earth's surface. I'm really not sure.

Coming back to our walk, it's interesting that this didn't come up. We were walking between two bodies of water, following a third, moving body of water, like our bodies divining the path instinctively. I wonder if it would have been different had we had divining rods. I also know it wasn't instinct that guided our way but the path constructed along the river. Remember when we followed the boardwalk out into the river, but we couldn't go any further? We were under the Westgate Bridge and it was very windy and we were raised above the water, just, watching it flow underneath us from when we had come towards where we were going, and I said this was my "spot."

At this point I wasn't even sure what would happen, or if anything at all would happen. So I held out the rods in front of me and began walking slowly. They remained parallel. I walked from my bedroom out into the corridor. As I moved past the stairs the rods suddenly swung around toward each other, forming a perfect 'X'. I looked in amazement, wondering if I had made them move, or if it was only by chance. I kept walking, and they swung out again, back to their original position. I walked into the kitchen, and past the sink. Again, they crossed, and uncrossed as I kept walking. Above the drain in the laundry the same thing happened. I wondered about my own bias, and whether my knowledge of the house's plumbing was affecting the wires in my hands. I decided to go back to the beginning. The unknown space next to the stairs. I walked past the stairs in the

opposite direction. Again, the wires crossed in the same spot. I kept walking and they uncrossed. I walked back and forth, back and forth, a few more times, and each time, the wires pulled themselves together. Later that night I was talking to my housemate in the kitchen, and told her what had happened. She had her doubts. I went to my room and got my new divining rods, to show her. Again, they crossed as I walked past the stairs. I handed her the rods and said she should give it a go. The rods wobbled in her hands for a minute, before she adjusted to get the right angle. Then she walked around slowly, moving toward the stairs. The parallel rods crossed in the same place.

82

I wonder if this potential body of water near the stairs could be something other than plumbing. I've never been to your house so have no idea of the layout, but maybe when the rain is heavy this is the spot it leaks, or maybe there is a underground body of water, an old well, that you are living above.

83

For the past six months, the rods have been hanging on a hook in my studio. Every now and then, when I feel the need to clear, or open, my mind, I take them in my hands and wander slowly around my studio. Sometimes, when no one else is around I walk around the whole building. Over the course of this year I've managed to map out most of the plumbing in the building, using only my rods. I don't really know how accurate it is, and mostly I don't care. The rods have become a way of me to achieve that mental expansiveness of walking, within the confines of my studio.

HI

I don't mind! should we do the same as last time, or a audio chat, or what?

hi!

i don't know...

haha

maybe just write??

and we can proper chat at the end?

yeah that sounds good, and maybe we can catch up after

if we feel like it?

ahh great minds

hehe

I'm making a coffee and dropped a thing in boiling water off to a bad start

gah....!

what did you drop?

anyway, I haven't looked at the document, or seen if you've added anything, but i was thinking how in this i keep writing/talking about the process of writing, and i need to keep reminding myself to come back to water, walking, practice

i dropped the coffee filter thing

as soon as I make the coffee everything will be OK

i haven't had a chance to have a proper read

sorry!

and I haven't added anything yet...

it's on my to-do list!

its ok – all really useless stuff i was thinking of deleting

def don't delete it!!

ok

I know what you mean about the writing thing, like writing about writing

it's like the trap of making art about art

but maybe if we have a task today, like talking directly to the similarities and differences of our practices, or of water, or whatever

yeah exactly

like no-one cares / everyone goes through the same process.

yeah, that sounds great

I'm keen

but at the same time, this project kinda began as being about our practice?

should we make it more about the walk and the water?

i don't know. i have noticed recently within my writing that I've started to adopt very particular watery and geologic metaphors when I'm describing my work and research

coffee complete you have my full attention

that's interesting!

I was actually thinking in my half sleep last night that a way for me to approach my writing is to pretend I'm talking to someone, not literally as in my exegesis etc is a transcript but just more.. conversational, as it's coming to be about the voice. but that would be tricky to get right and not incredibly cheesy

like ideas seeping in,

washing over, flowing, divining ways through, holes in knowledge, digging into books,

I think the idea of these watery/geologic things have a sort of bodily/ guttural feel that I find is really clear in your work

i actually talk to myself all the time!! especially when I'm walking.

so approaching the writing like it's an archeological dig or something

haha

I do. I repeat sentences in rhythms

yeah – exactly

me toooo!

"I'm going to the shop, going to the shop, I'm going to the shop, shoooooppp"

I like thinking about watery/digging writing though

I also do this thing with my hands when I'm repeating sentences in my head, where I tap through all the syllables with my fingers, and repeat the sentence in my head as many times as it takes to form a group of syllables that is equal to a division of 10 – as in 10 fingers – 10 taps

you know I think getting to the studio and writing to you straight away is working well for me I'm not bogged down in tasks or trying to pre-think what we will talk about

good!

oh interesting

I've done it since I was a really little kid

so if the sentence is 9 syllables you repeat it ten times?

and I still do it

yeah – exactly

that would be very satisfying

everyone seems to have these bodily cues that give rhythm to thinking

it is... but also, I think i tend to do it more when I'm anxious!! hahaha

that makes sense! you can literally grasp the sentence in your hands

yeah, I know what you mean

I was reading something yesterday about rhythms, and making

I've forgotten exactly what it said...

I'm going to grab the book!

yes do!

okay – here it is. this is from Tim Ingold's book 'Making':

what did we learn? four things, really: about how the hands get to know materials, or acquire a 'feel' for them; about how they impart a rhythm to these materials in the iteration of their own movements, and how the materials, in turn, carry a memory of their manipulation; about how the forces and energies bound into the materials through these gestural movements hold them together - that is, how the friction of opposed torsions make things stick; and about the correspondence of materials in making.

oh wow

he's talking about an exercise in making string, but I kind of find this more interesting when it's disconnected from the string...

the friction of opposed torsions makes things stick

yeah i agree, it seems incredibly relevant to just processes of working through problems

even if the material is not material in a sculptural sense

yeah, exactly

but also that

torsion is a good word I had never heard/seen it before now

it's another one that works literally and metaphorically.

exactly

in a way, could we apply this to the current process

like a torsion between our work?

torsion as correspondence?

yes a little, and our voices, but I guess I meant the whole quote, like it is us learning and getting used to this very new process of working

yes torsion as correspondence and as working back and forth, between each other, the push pull of each of us

hmm... yes, i like that

torsion as conversation

yes

he wrote something about walking too actually, that made me think about our walk

he said that walking with another person is an act of intimacy, because you're sharing a field of vision. whereas sitting opposite someone, and looking them in the eyes is less intimate because you're able to see behind them, and this makes you both individually vulnerable to one another

torsion seems to refer to twisting which is limited/ not free, like a tension between the twist and what is stopping the twist - it is finite

oh thats amazing

its like we walked together and shared that vision, and then paused and look behind each other, before walking again

maybe we are suspicious of each other

that's a poor retelling of what he actually said, but that's the gist I got from it

yeah

yes, exactly

but i would say that making both individually vulnerable to one another is the height of intimacy? perhaps

yeah - as I was writing it, I thought that too. I think i've messed up the passage a bit... haha

no thats ok, thats also a nice thing to resay the words differently

I was about to look it up, but then thought the inevitable discrepancy in retelling other's ideas might be interesting

i agree

In a way that is what we are doing?

as in, retelling our stories from the walk?

I was talking to a friend last night. A group of us were having dinner, and talking about moments where we have encountered an artwork, and felt it change us, or felt some kind of shift. My friend said that she often has those moments more when she has had people describe performances to her in detail. like that act of translation between the performance (which she hasn't encountered herself) and the retelling of the performance somehow becomes imbued with all of this other weight that can be very affecting

or perhaps that makes no sense, as it is ours

hm yes

because it is not the performance but the experience of being in/witnessing the performance that is being relayed, its subjective and in a way revealing of the person telling you

yes, I've been thinking about archaeology, and practices of researching, and writing histories, within a similar frame

interpretation, and translation

yes

that was actually a huge interest of my research for a bit, before i changed it, again, but I'm sure will be within it

translation is interesting in a non-linguistic sense, taken as how things are filtered

yes yes

it is like a shifting between definites, perhaps, as this project/ exercise is

though, not definites

yeah – not definites

hm

sorry I am trying to find something which is why I'm so silent

I remember a conversation I had with a farmer a few years ago, after a flood in rural vic. there was an area of enormous red gums at the edge of one of her paddock. the water came up about a metre above their roots. she told me that she was worried about the trees, because they don't like 'wet feet'. it was the first time I'd heard that term in relation to plants, and have since heard it a lot of times. I don't know why I'm bringing this up now. maybe I'm thinking about whether or not I like wet feet, or you like wet feet, and how our walk might have been different in water, instead of along water

I don't know what this means, it was just a memory that popped into my head

no I think that is very interesting

to think about plants roots as feet, that tie them to the ground, and how free we are that our roots are what allow us to move

I initially don't like the idea of wet feet, but it is raining here and I imagined wet feet in shoes and cold. But if it is warm and the bed of the water is sandy and i have bare feet it is nice

yes yes

perhaps the next walk will be in summer and we will try and make contact with the water as much as possible

and we can consider our feet drowning

like when you are in running water and you sink

yes, and I was thinking after our last walk, when we had to leave the river momentarily and follow the truck route, maybe we should have been more invested in that connection to the water, and done some wading

true

did you find what you were looking for?

though, I find it interesting to think about how we were side tracked, and strayed from the path of the water, and followed the trucks. especially as the Maribyrnong used to be used to transport many of the things the trucks now carry

totally

I thought I had a relevant thing about translation and difference but can't find the right thing... but still randomly scanning stuff!

haha

cool

as in, scanning with my eyes

I'm sitting beneath the window in my studio, looking out the window - which is open. when we started this conversation the sky was blue, with a couple of wispy clouds, but right now I'm watching dark grey clouds wandering across. it's meant to rain later today

i think there is an excellent potential for empathy and thinking across difference is translation is treated differently, not as an equaliser but as compassionate thinking through others. if that makes sense? Like rather then using translation to make same-ness and understand something in a way you are most comfortable, it on the other hand allows for you to approach an experience in a different way, you are forced to adapt and take on different knowledge

it just just finished raining heavily here

yes, I like this.

maybe the rain is on its way to you

(very speedy rain)

looking at the clouds, they certainly seem speedy!!

I need to go to the loo... I'll be back in a minute!

ok

back!

alright!

ok i reckon.. lets try and do a task or something, like address a small thing in a really specific way

good idea!

(oh also, while I remember, will you be at your mum or dads when you are down because we could work for the day in chewton? or at my studio?)

I was thinking about going to mum's place on monday night, so maybe I'll come to chewton on monday morning, and spend the day with you? and then we can have dinner with tim, if that's still a goer? and then I can

head to mum's later that night?

does that sound good to you?

i need some country air!!!!

stat!!!!!!!!

THAT SOUNDS PERFECT

I'm very glad because I'm away for a bit next week and want to maximise country time

excellent!

let's lock it in then!

great!

do you have any ideas about what this 'small task' might be??

no, um

describe how the others practice relates to the water they like? discuss what it means to physically move between practices - via walk/ bodies of water?

i think it is important to bring this back to why we are doing it, and give it some direction

i totally agree

so maybe it should be about the walk

and maybe this is a task we do separately and put in the document rather then as part of the chat also

hmm... yes. can i ask, what are you doing in your studio? what are you working on? maybe this will help to find that connection. we're both in our work-spaces now, and perhaps we need to be present in that, together?

yes thats a good idea!

I am procrastinating around writing a script for the liquid architecture performance in queenstown, and I'm thinking about this scripts being part of a script for a video work, which is like an extended conversation that doubles back on itself, is repeated by different characters in different situations. But I've done nothing, except a pretend conversation with the site, I'm not sure what to get me going. Also I've been researching sites for TNBW as it won't be at the court, like perhaps the archives or the card catalogue at the library, or I was thinking about the ballroom at flinders bc of thinking about rehearsal, practice, yet transitory – like who would go to a ballroom at a train station. I don't know

I'm basically procrastinating by thinking, and of course I'm wanting to write for us. And I'm tossing out whether to sublet some of my studio space to save money

what are you working on

yeah, i saw that idea of the state library briefly in your writing. I had a very quick skim

(i also am reading celebrity gossip hmmm)

I'm also procrastinating... or maybe not. I think I've spent the past couple of months just busying myself with material experiments in my studio, but without any clarity, or direction, or anything resembling a half-decent idea! i've also started some writing about what it's like to weld. I did some welding yesterday. I've started using the welder to make drawings in steel. I enjoy the process, but the outcome

is less rewarding. I don't know. I'm having a bit of a shitty week. I'm also reading an obscene amount of celebrity gossip. it's so addictive, and weirdly calming when I'm feeling stressed.

I'm not that interested in brangelina though, so I think I need to find a new hobby for now! haha

I know what you mean, I find those mindless things a great way to calm down. and yeah, i definitely relate to what you're going through, sometimes i find i busy myself and I'm so busy making, almost stressed, but part of me know none of it is anything, just terrible embarrassing drawings or videos. but i try and remind myself that that is a process of thinking anyway, even if what you are doing is nothing, you have to be present and doing and in the studio so that when the inspiration or right idea comes, you are ready to receive it. corny, but

yeah, I know what you mean, and I agree... on a pragmatic level at least. ha

i find the majority of the time in the studio is useless and mindless and unproductive. I'm being cynical

and I think given you are going through confirmation, that s a really hard time to work

yes, it's funny, I think most days in the studio don't result in any kind of tangible outcome, but I still get anxious on days where I can't go to my studio for whatever reason, which is kind of silly, because it's not like I'm super active when I'm here anyway!!!!

yes definitely

like today i need to call the bank. terrible

omg—I hate calling people like that. it takes me a good 48 hours to emotionally ready myself to call someone I don't know...

yeah just, i know I will need to push my point or something

yuck!

anyway... do you want to perhaps have a chat now? and set a task we can go away and do (no matter how minor?)

Yes, sounds good.

Call started

So I realised that my work seems to rely on or come from conversations (whether fictional or real), and this writing exercise is an extended conversation, between us, our practices, and even between these bodies of water (a dance of the shore and the ocean, as you have previously written in another text). I think to address these bodies of water we need to approach them peripherally, via our practices or habits of making, so I have been considering conversation's place in my practice over the past few days (peripherally, while doing other things). I want to spend some more concentrated time thinking about it today, but wanted to get these messy thoughts down, and tentatively tie the connection between conversation as it exists here, as it exists in much of my work, and the processes of voice and voicing that I have been looking into in the concentrated project my work.

85

The voice as I look at it is a site of performance, agency, silences and confusions, difficult to grasp (yet easy to swallow), both inside and outside the body at the same time and as intangible as it is socially and politically weighty. The voice cries, speaks, creates noise and song, sense and nonsense. When voice is mentioned I immediately think of articulation, how people are often embarrassed by their own spoken accent, but voice quite literally refers to, speaks to, performativity and action: it can name things, give demands, scream or sigh or hiccup.

86

Today, I am sick, and my voice is heavy with phlegm, it is even more bodily than normal, and speaks to my physical state. My vocabulary is perhaps even more patchy than it ordinarily is as the phlegm physically prevents words from coming out my mouth, or my blocked sinuses prevent thoughts travelling from my brain to my mouth. I will spend today thinking about a littoral voice - in my case on the shore of a sea of phlegm, but I'm kidding really - I mean a peripheral voice that exists literally on the shore of an expanse of water.

87 It is very nice to write and not have to make sense.

88 Last Saturday I went for a swim on my way to the studio. I generally prefer to swim at the end of the day, but for some reason it made more sense to begin my day by walking to the pool, and doing some laps. Do you swim? I think I remember you telling me that you do, but I can't be sure. In the crisp morning air on Saturday the outdoor pool felt especially cold. It sometimes takes me a few moments to work up to putting my head under. This was definitely one of those times. As I started swimming I thought about my studio, and what I might work on later that day. The rhythm of laps helps me to think.

89

While reading aloud a short story for recent research and rehearsal, I noticed the homonym farther/father:

—Paying no attention to any of this and having advanced no farther than the threshold, my father started telling what he had heard.

It was surprising I hadn't noticed this earlier, as I've been reciting this story all year. It comes down to the fact that when I initially memorised it, I learnt the story wrong, and was saying "further" instead.

90

Further/Farther: I looked up the difference. Apparently, farther is used for physical difference, and further is for metaphorical or figurative distance. I had been telling and teaching the story for so long as though this threshold that was crossed was metaphorical or figurative, whereas it was really just a distance, a physical space between outside and inside, a single step that the father didn't take. By reciting the story differently, as though this threshold was metaphorical, perhaps I was inadvertently trying to push the story into a realm of consideration it didn't quite fit, forcing it to fit to my supposed reasoning. I should have left it alone - this threshold is really just the bottom edge of a hole in the wall that is approximately human sized.

I've been trying to figure the best place to tell this story. Initially, it was going to be at the Supreme Court, and I found myself thinking a lot about how laws are memorised rhetoric, where the difference between farther and further could have great affect/effect. In the language of laws there are small areas of wiggle room, which lawyers use and recite as part of further courtroom rhetoric, both sides of the (bench?) circumnavigating the exact same text to argue in opposition. But it is also so exacting and closed, and to consider whether the law is further away or farther away is to get distracted by its inaccessibility, which evades in completion even the highest judge. Even justices of the Supreme Court will preside over cases about which they are "not sure," and ultimately the ruling comes down to the multiple justices differing interpretations of the law.

Just as the law is inaccessible in its entirety, the site was inaccessible for my work.

—"Everyone strives after the law," says the man, "so how is that in these many years no one except me has requested entry?"

The gatekeeper sees that the man is already dying and, in order to reach his diminishing sense of hearing, he shouts at him, "Here no one else can gain entry, since this entrance was assigned only to you. I'm going now to close it."

93

Was this entrance that the countryman encountered in Before the Law a threshold of distance or a figurative threshold? The law is not a building that contains the answers which one can gain access to. The buildings that signify the law, for instance courtrooms or libraries, are only spaces from which the law is practiced, though the law escapes and works its influence everywhere around us. It is easy to conceive gaining or not gaining access to a building, but that says nothing about access to the law.

However, in the story, the law is presented as an inaccessible entity that is guarded by many gates and gatekeepers:

—At the moment the gate to the law stands open, as always, and the gatekeeper walks to the side, so the man bends over in order to see through the gate into the inside. When the gatekeeper notices that, he laughs and says: "If it tempts you so much, try it in spite of my prohibition. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the most lowly gatekeeper. But from room to room stand gatekeepers, each more powerful than the other. I can't endure even one glimpse of the third."

In this instance the law is not a building or site to be entered but requires one to pass through many pre-requisite spaces of access, potentially infinite spaces. The father is prevented from going farther over the threshold by his desire to share his news, yet the country man that tries to access the law via its open gate is prevented from doing so due to a prohibition - a law in itself. If the countryman were to enter through the gate, moving towards accessing the law, he would be breaking the law of the prohibition. This is probably why he stays in place; he is before the law, both physically presented before or in front of it, and figuratively existing before it - before entering it, before breaking it, existing on the periphery and latently obeying the law by not entering it.

96

He has advanced both no farther and no further than the threshold of the law. But where does this leave me, who has also been "prohibited" from this space? After reflection I don't think a court is appropriate and that the Supreme Justice was right - the heightened anxiety and emotions that people attending court to see their loved one's sentences, their accused let off, etc.

97

This is not writing, I just need to make some notes about things that I want to write, but that I keep forgetting about...

—Whale buried on beach
—Water words
—Uninhabitable spaces
—Father at Supreme Court

98

I wonder why we don't watch videos in full on the internet, is it less patience or more important things to be doing?

99

Walking into the workshop with gloves and mask in hand, I pulled an orange jacket off the wall. They hung on a row of hooks; armour for the makers. I placed my new uniform on the bench, next to my steel sheet, before pulling the yellow plastic curtain closed behind me. In this short wave, I became disconnected from the rest of the world. There were others working just metres away, but the thin, translucent film created a barrier more solid than the six doors I had walked through on the way down from my studio. I picked up the jacket, and slipped it on, doing and undoing the Velcro a couple of times before I was happy with the way it sat. I found two chocks of wood lying on the ground and propped up my steel, like a drafting desk. I flicked on the power, and opened the gas line. The machine hummed. It's a pleasant hum – even and content.

I walked around the bench to the wall and turned on the extractor fan, drowning out the purr of the welder. Returning to the task at hand I put the large mask over my face. It was more like a helmet, shielding most of my head, down to my neck. There's a screw on the back, so I adjusted it to fit my head. I was reminded of the bolts in the neck of Frankenstein's monster, and wondered if the mask would ever come off. There was a long stream of wire coming out of the gun. Using the pliers I snapped it off, before pulling on the two long gloves. The gloves had a dual purpose: protecting my hands, and removing me further from my surroundings by minimising my sense of touch. The gloves were made of leather; skin dried, and treated with chemicals before being remade into the shape of a hand. Was I covering my hands with the hands of another? My whole

body was cloaked, I could barely see through the small window in the mask, and the sound of the fan – and soon the welder itself – blocked out any ambient noise. Had someone else been present, communication would have been difficult and disjointed. I glanced over at the welder and wondered if we might be friends. I held the gun in my right hand. Dragging the cord behind it, the gun was heavy. I positioned it above the steel, and as I pulled the trigger a current ran through the sheet and the bench, to the earth clamp clipped at the other end, returning to the welder to create a perfect circuit. The glass shielding my eyes darkened, and all I could see was green glowing flecks of molten metal jumping around on the surface of the steel sheet. I held my hand steady, and the heat from the current quickly burned through the steel, extinguishing

itself with its own energy. I tried again, this time moving my hand faster. I knew that I was drawing a line, but could only see and feel the mark as it was being drawn. After that moment of connection the line disappeared into the darkness of the mask's lens. All I had to focus on was the bright light where the welding wire, being constantly fed out through the gun, hit the surface of the steel. The sound of the welder is sensitive to shifts in hand gestures, and crackles or fizzes depending on the quality of the weld. It was like entering into a conversation with the welder and the steel. We spoke to each other about isolation, and animation. As I continued my drawing I became aware that the small luminous orb in front of me was an instrument for connecting not just steel with steel, but also offered up a conduit for my thinking. Welding became a way to make through a reduction

in the senses of touch and sight. As a result other feelings revealed themselves, and the difference in welded lines were the effect of shifts in internal bodily rhythms. Everything became internalised. I soon forgot about things that existed outside of the circuit that joined the welder, the steel, and – for want of a better word – my consciousness. Through this strange inhabitation I thought about what it would be like to hibernate, or to be frozen, or to occupy a state of stasis. Maybe I was already doing all of these things. Welding was an attempt at suspended animation.

Bringing my hand across to the bottom right-hand corner the glass shielding my eyes darkened, and all I could see was a small green glow, where the wire was connecting with the plate and forming a circuit. I held my hand as steady as I could, and allowed it to wander slowly across the surface of the steel. The steel plate seemed never-ending. I lost all sense of direction and scale as I continued along the line, forgetting about a beginning and ending. The air was hot and thick, and my breathing became shallow. I blinked once or twice, and my eyes re-focussed. In the moment between my eyes closing and opening again, I looked directly into the glass shielding my eyes, rather than through it. I saw myself looking back at me, and my right iris aligned itself with the green glow behind it. A minute later a flood of light behind the dark shadow of my own head hit the

glass of the helmet. Still welding across the vast steel plane, I twisted my head so that I could see what was going on behind, and above me, in the reflection of the glass. It took a few moments for my eyes to adjust to the glare. The blue sky came into view. From the bottom of the well it felt like a long way away. I suppose it kind of is, although I'm never sure where the sky begins, but maybe that's a discussion for another time. Looking above myself from behind, I was confused. The closeness of the air, and the closeness of the walls of my safety gear, made the openness of the sky, and the drifting clouds, feel like another dimension.

101

I think my writing has been coloured by the fact that I'm always writing from home, and in this context it makes me write casually and conversationally. I think that's fine, as I'm not necessarily great at putting great imagery and description into writing. However, I think you are good at it, and perhaps (hopefully) this will work well as our different voices bounce back and forth. I keep thinking about the imagery of you walking from your studio in the spring wind, and your hair whipping in your face, and how that is similar to when we walked along the pier into the ocean. Instead of springtime pollen it was ocean spray flying around us. In the present-future it is perhaps dry heat blowing, or still and heavy with humidity.

I've been reading a lot about the voice, in various artistic practices and theoretical writing, or even just in conversation between people and the constant negotiation of expression and repression. I have the words "The conversation/speech (act)" circled in my notebook. There are so many exercises of preparing for a dialogue in the future, a conversation that is bound to happen, without yet knowing what it will even be (about). I am alternating between writing things here and reading our previous conversation. I think it is really interesting, the cracks as cause for pause, the cracks separating before and after. The judgement of the judge is a crack but so is the crack in the ice, yet they work so differently - the physical, material crack which is fixed with water (but isn't erased). And the crack of judgement is caused by language but isn't a crack in language it is more a crack in...

This morning I was looking out across the open ocean. The denseness of the water became more and more visible, the longer I looked. There was a handful of container ships on the horizon. I remembered the end of our last walk, and how close the ship was to where we stood. These ships didn't seem to move. Or maybe they moved so slowly that it was impossible to see. I can't tell you for sure. As I looked over the choppy morning sea at them, I wondered what it would be like to sit on the horizon, a place that exists only through distance. They were as far away as they could possibly be, while remaining visible from the shoreline. As I looked, and wondered, the ships remained motionless. In response, I also stayed as still as I could. It was like playing a game of dead-fish, like we were egging one another to make the first move. Even my breathing

slowed. Like the shoreline, the horizon is ungraspable. How do you think our walk would have been different if the ship that passed us by gazed at us from the skyline? I remember that last ship seeming totally impenetrable, even within such close proximity. So maybe near or far isn't a relative description when it comes to looking at ships from the comfort of land. As I continued in my standoff with the ships, I thought of them as a close, just like last time we went walking, the sitting ships offered a kind of distant resolution.

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