

# radio strainer

is an installation, a performance,  
a performance inside an installation  
we're working with the idea that humans are translation machines  
and constantly in motion  
we're experimenting with different senses of becoming  
in the process of translation  
with materialising the travel of forms, states, words and affects  
via the sensorium of embodiment  
with being caught in the contagion of information, in the bleed  
between creative and linguistic forms, with exploring  
points of strain and connection, translation and mistranslation

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tia reihana

STICK WITH H  
Themes  
Confession  
Share  
move on  
end  
more words  
christina  
val frustration  
connect / derived from chair chr  
chris. chr more natural  
humour



# Radio Strainer

part two of the kinesthetic archive

Alys Longley



WINCHESTER  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



# Radio Strainer

The Winchester University Press  
PREFACE SERIES

The Winchester University Press PREFACE SERIES stands at the intersection of creative practice and critical interrogation. Each PREFACE SERIES title consists of an extended piece of writing in a chosen form (prose, poetry, script) alongside a self-reflective commentary on the nature and construction of the piece, written by the authors themselves. Following in the tradition of writers such as Henry James, who produced insightful commentaries on their own works, PREFACE SERIES titles are both innovative, creative works and sophisticated reflections on the nature of the creative process.

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the kinesthetic archive project experiments with how the mobile, textured, abstract and kinesthetic thinking that occurs in performance research might be articulated through different kinds of writing practices. The artist book performs a series of page works that emerged through one year's worth of choreographic practice in different settings - including somatic workshops, rehearsals for theatre work, and practice sessions with various artists. Abstract qualities that are central in practice-led research such as felt affect, physical tone, texture, space, intuitive sensing and the porousness of touch are evoked through a poetic written register that also attends to the choreography and materiality of the page. The accompanying essay discusses practice-led and critical issues that contextualized the creative process of choreographic writing. Writing has been cast as monstrous – or at least violent – in its ability to disfigure, maim and destroy the life of live arts. Yet for many performance practitioners, writing is an integral part of studio-based processes, a necessary form of reflection and a site for creative experimentation and planning. This project explores writing that is coextensive with dance practice, in relation to critical theory that engages with writing as performance.



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# Preface



## Acknowledgments

This book emerged out of an ecology of practices, with many co-creators enabling the movement of ideas. I am very grateful to the organisations that made this book possible – Dance Studies, National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland; Window Gallery, Winchester University Press, HZT - Berlin. Heartfelt thanks to Jeffrey, Elena and Rosalind Holdaway, Helen Longley, Trisha Longley, Val Smith, Christina Houghton, Sarah Foster-Sproull, Sarah Knox, Katherine Tate, Carol Brown, Ralph Buck, Paola Leardini, Manfredo Manfredini, Kana Parr-Whatley, Saori Ishimaru, Mariana Smith, Karen Blake. Thanks to curators Henry Babbage, Henry Davidson, Rebecca Boswell (at Window Gallery) and Bryony White. Thanks to all the students I've been so lucky to be inspired by and learn from. And thanks again to Elizabeth Dempster for the encouragement and feedback in the very early stages of this process – I am forever thankful for your influence.



## 1. Toddling

We are just learning to walk. Our ligaments are elastic, our eyes are too big for our bodies. As a choreographer I move between elation and shame. We do not yet know what is possible.

*Radio Strainer* is an interdisciplinary performance research project sited in choreographic practice, which pivots around the movement of ideas between forms and languages and moments in a more-than-human world. In which translation – or more accurately mis-translation – forms both content and method.

It is also a project that has developed in relationship with my life as a mother of two children. New and growing babies spill through the process of this work, as I was writing funding proposals, rehearsing in the studio, writing through my thinking – all the time babies were incubating and growing. There were tiny sleeping babies in their strollers in the side of the studio where the dancers worked, becoming willful toddlers needing to be part of the choreography. Etched into our choreographic process are the affects of a constantly pregnant or breastfeeding body transforming itself. So while parenting is not the content of the performance from which this book folds, I have decided to organize this preface around ideas of growth, parenting, the spill of the body, behavior and misbehavior, development and care. Every rehearsal out of which this book emerged was calibrated around the lives of very small and growing children, to allow their sleeping and their nourishment, to allow their kid-logic to infiltrate, spill and grow. Aren't tuning through the body, listening with all your cells and playing with utter commitment, skills inherent to practices of creative research? Doesn't this precarious and questionably-organised world need more kid-logic in order for us to figure out our place in it and to invent new ways of being?

## 2. Learning to Read

Elena's first chapter book is Enid Blyton's *Faraway Tree*. It tells the story of Franny, Joe and Beth – a group of kids who discover a magical tree near their new house. High in the tree, past a host of lively magical characters, is an entrance to myriad magical worlds. These worlds are not fixed, but always moving, so the world that you find at the top of the tree today will not be the one that you find there tomorrow. Exploring *The Faraway Tree* is exciting, demanding, and exhausting work – and climbing up and down the tree can be overwhelming. Luckily Franny, Joe, and Beth befriend Moonface, owner of the marvelous 'slippery slip'.

“He took a blue cushion, sat on it at the top of the slide and pushed off. Down he went on his cushion, his hair streaming backwards. Round and round and round went the slippery slip inside the enormous trunk of the old tree. It was quite dark and silent, and lasted a very long time, for *The Faraway Tree* was tremendously tall. Joe enjoyed every second” (Blyton, 2012, p. 44).

The practice of learning to read should be like climbing *The Faraway Tree*. And shouldn't we all be re-learning to read, all the time? A book is a transportation system to another world, logic, conceptual ecology – climbing out if it can be disorientating and destabilizing. In my ideal world reading this Preface would be a bit like the slippery slip. Entry. Free fall. Release to new place.

Processes of creating *Radio Strainer* have some resemblance to climbing *The Faraway Tree*, the process is one of discovery, exhaustion, friendship, confusion, imagination, disorientation, being lost, getting stuck, evoking stories, having a series of discrete explorations that make something (ideas, performances, a book). Could reading this preface/book be more like play and less like work? Like a poetry book where you can start at any point, where ideas are held softly so they can change with the light?

## **Censorship, politics, sex, gender, economy, ignorance, visibility, invisibility and fidelity**

Having finished an initial draft of this Preface, I sent it to Christopher Mulvey, editor at WUP, who sends me the following note:

“You are using the modern Americanized version of the book. That has the names Franny and Rick rather than Fanny and Dick of the original. Is it worth looking at the changes? You make no mention of Rick/Dick. Is that deliberate?” (Mulvey, 2015)

Despite having ordered my copy of *Faraway Tree* from a British website (book depository. co.uk), it seems that in 2015 the accepted version is the sanitised, Americanised one. I feel strangely ashamed. I'd FORGOTTEN that there was a character in the *The Faraway Tree* named Dick, when I read it as a child. I accepted 'Franny' over 'Fanny' without question. Suddenly, any discussion in this preface of *The Faraway Tree* brings up issues of censorship, politics, sex, gender, economy, ignorance, visibility, invisibility and fidelity to Blyton's characters and time. So I am wondering how I might write this preface in a way that simultaneously cites new and old versions of the *The Faraway Tree* in order to make evident the tampering of editors over time, the often invisible censorship present in our reading lives, with the aim to enable readers to experience the different meanings and affects of both original and revised versions of a classic text. The references up to this point refer to Joe and Franny, but from here on in, we'll refer to the older publication – and use Dick and Fanny.

## The Roundabout Land

“They stood on green grass. Above them was a blue sky. A tune was playing somewhere, going on and on and on.

‘It’s the sort of tune a carousel or a roundabout plays, Dick,’ said Beth. ‘Isn’t it?’

It was – and then, suddenly, without any warning at all, the whole land began to swing round!

The children almost fell over, with the swing round beginning so suddenly.

‘What’s happening?’ said Beth, frightened. The children felt terribly dizzy, for trees, distant houses, hills, and bushes began to move round. They too felt themselves moving, for the grass was going round as well. They looked for the hole in the cloud – but it had disappeared.

‘The whole land is going round and round like a roundabout!’, cried Dick, shutting his eyes with dizziness. ‘We’ve passed over the hole in the clouds – we don’t know where the topmost branch of *The Faraway Tree* is now – it’s somewhere beneath this land, but goodness knows where!’” (Blyton, 2012, p. 33).

Really, I should not be conceptualizing *Radio Strainer* as a book, but as a rhizome. Its philosophical ground draws strongly on Deleuze and Guattari-influenced / post Deleuzian thinkers such as Jane Bennett, Elizabeth Grosz, Brian Massumi, Erin Manning, Paul Carter, Matthew Goulsh and Andrew Pickering. As such the linear properness of tree-as-metaphor poses quite serious political, ethical and conceptual hurdles. A rhizome is a system of organization that works through interconnection and multiplicity rather than linearity and hierarchy. “Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different to the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.7). Is there a way this writing might minorise Enid Blyton? Is it possible that *The Faraway Tree* is a minor rather than a major tree (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986)? It is a disruptive, complicated, unpredictable, dangerous, always heterogenous tree that leads the kids astray (although always has them home in time for dinner). It is also a tree that constantly, quietly contains the possibility that it will take those who climb up the ladder into the worlds beyond its upper branches, away, forever. Implicit in this is the sense that a book has the power to enable “bodies-in-the-making to feel the force of multiple sense... (providing) an aperture for that which has not been thought” (Manning, 2008).

## Mis-translations

For dance theorist Sally Gardner (2014) mis-translation is part of the life-blood of contemporary choreography. She draws on philosopher Laurence Louppe to discuss the difference between “the ‘setting’ of work by a ballet master, and the agitation of ‘matter’ that is the work of a contemporary choreographer” (234). Gardner discusses how the “dancer plays a role in this unsettling because a contemporary dance composition is, in the first instance, composed from the unique matter of the specific dancers” (Louppe, cited in Gardner, 2014, p. 234). Gardner discusses the conceptual difference between acts of transmission and acts of translation, drawing specifically on the contemporary restaging of Yvonne Rainer’s seminal work *Trio A*, through what Rainer calls ‘custodians’ – “willing dancers who are charged by Rainer with passing on *Trio A* now that she herself no longer can or no longer wishes to be directly involved in this activity” (Gardner, 2014, p. 233). Gardner explains how the job of these custodians is to work as ‘transmitters’ of choreography and comes to the conclusion that “the dancer-transmitter did not or should not influence the message he or she was transmitting” (p.235) and draws on Paul Ricoeur to discuss the difference between transmission and translation, in which “work is advanced with some salvaging and some acceptance of loss” (Ricoeur, 2006, cited by Gardner, p. 235). For Gardner, translation connotes practices of creating, investing, risk, invention, agitation and movement. When this active, risky performance of translation shifts to a transmission practice of movement replication, Gardner describes how she finds she “lost some interest in *Trio A*” and concludes;

Choreographic invention lives at least in part by the ongoing mistranslations between the dancer and the choreographer and their urge to keep trying. In terms of a work’s survival through time, the idea of translation keeps alive the dancing presence of dance, which is what is most easily lost or becomes relatively untranslatable. The dancer’s role in translating, but also in mistranslating, spurs repetition and, potentially, insights and discoveries, allowing future dancers to be writers. The idea of a transmitter may contain the dream of a faultless remembering, but at the risk of some cost to the depth and complexity in the modern dance conception, and practices, of the dancer. (Gardner, 2014, p. 235)

## Embodied mis-translations

What does it mean to engage translation theory in relation to practices of embodiment, where text is no longer taken for-granted as the primary site of meaning and exchange? Literature from the discipline of translation studies generally takes it a given that the primary locus of practice rests on spoken or written text. Engaging with it, I feel like an interloper, I wonder about my method. What I find most necessary and valuable about practice-led research is the way in which it potentially disrupts the linear, Cartesian legacies of writing in academic english to allow space for forms of knowledge grounded in cultures of making, embodiment, affect and thinking through doing. Almost all the work in translation studies that I have read invisibilises bodies – it adheres to the travel of languages in books, cities, political events, nations – institutions both public and private. Thinking translation through embodiment allows a disruption in expectations of what translation is, allows space for considering affective spaces and feeling states in a way that not only registers their existence, but allows material articulation – through visual, graphic, digital or written means.

This book aims to provide an example of translation as a method for creative practice research, of use to translation theorists in considering how choreographic, embodied, non-linear, affective, and creative practices of translation relate to their field; dance artists, in considering methods of articulating and performing choreographic ideas through practices of experimental documentation and movement-initiated writing, and practice-led researchers from diverse fields, in considering translation as a key methodological and critical tool to think-through the movement of ideas between forms, perspectives and disciplinary languages.

## Wishy Washy Washing: Notes on Mangling

One of the first things one learns in attempting to climb *The Faraway Tree*, is to be ready to dodge the buckets of water tipped from branches above by Dame Washalot.

“They listened. It sounded like a waterfall – and suddenly Dick guessed what it was. ‘It’s Dame Washalot throwing out her dirty water!, he yelled. Look out Beth! Look out Fannie!’” (Blyton, DATE, p.)

Our rehearsal process is aligned with Sally Gardner’s assertion that mistranslation is part of the lifeblood of contemporary dance - this allows the movement of ideas in processes of mistake, disruption, difference and discovery. We stick to mistranslation as our methodological compass – developing practices of improvisation, documentation, choreography, and reflection. How might these embodied, tangential, non-linear practices relate to the established field of translation studies? Andrew Pickering’s concept of the mangle of practice (1998) offers a framework for considering and examining the way different research processes shape each other in the play between intention, materiality and time in the production of knowledge. Pickering contextualizes his work in the field of science, but, as he points out in his book, it is adaptable to diverse fields of knowledge production (Pickering, 1995, p.34). Literally, a mangle is an old-fashioned device for wringing the water out of laundry. It is both noun and verb – ideas are “mangled” between various forces. When the ideal forms of our imagination meet the brute reality of the possible a ‘dance of agency’ ensues, wherein both human and non-human are understood as “open-endedly becoming” (Pickering, 1995).

Creating *Radio Strainer* involves a kind of metaphysical washing, a wringing of ideas and a disorientating and often unpleasant spill of sweaty, unusable material which no one really wants. With helpful feedback from showings, we chuck the cloudy material into the air, and carry on with the mangled, worked and re-worked material left before us. It is certainly an (often disheartening) dance of agency, in which I resignedly play the role of Dame Washalot.

## Mangling

We stick with an idea or image and mangle it through various registers of movement, drawing, writing, conversation and film. Each time something remains despite the change of form. We create a set of about 15 improvisation scores that are designed as a pack of cards, each one a provocation to embodied listening.

You touch your memories and find your world has moved (p.7)

Track a memory with your gaze (p.27)

Can you feel your past meeting your future in your body? Where? (p.53)

Of wing finding, of slow unraveling, of infant eyes, of common flight (p.67)

The cards are reimagined as gifts. Dancer Sarah Knox will continue the trajectory of this research in a project in Japan, choreographing solos in response to specific cards in foreign places, and documenting her practice. She has each card translated into Japanese, encouraging translator Saori Ishimuru to consider the translation a creative, inventive practice, in which there is no “correct” way of working. The Japanese calligraphy evokes a poetic texture both graphic and linguistic. Our work aligns with translation theorist Sherry Simon’s discussion of the poetry of Jaques Brel, which she describes as “writing on the frontier between languages, producing double versions of texts which are written in a hybrid idiom” (Simon, 1999, p.61). We want translation practices to happen quickly, lightly, playfully. We want happy accidents and imperfect symmetries. We see creating a space between two existing ideas as an equivalent to planting a *Faraway Tree*. We want to adventurously climb in and let our muscles fly, and we want to come out on a slippery slip – somewhere between flight and play.

## Dynamic Entanglement

I am thinking of dance as an 'agitation of matter', of *The Faraway Tree*, of *Radio Strainer* and also of artist-books in terms of dynamic entanglements. Erin Manning's provocations for artistic research emphasise "affective tone" as "an environmental resonance of a feeling-in-action, a vibratile force that makes the milieu felt" (Manning 2008). A provocation of this research is that affective tone can be translated and moved between forms, can create a feeling-thread through various languages, creative disciplines and artistic tasks. Each affective tone or dynamic register creates a specific entanglement between bodies of various forms. Manning and Massumi (2014) conceptualise artistic research as working with a spill of feeling/thinking/becoming/affect, that surpasses known logics, allowing a multiplicity of potentials to arise in space and time.

Manning evokes artistic practices of translation that bring "the plane of feeling into the plane of articulation, calling forth the more-than of language's expressibility" (2008). She describes Amanda Bagg's video work *My Translation* as creating "relational encounters that render the linguistic space more intricate than words could simply connote" (Manning, 2008).

"To make multiple sense is to attend to this nausea, to feel-with its form-taking and invent with the elasticity of its becoming" (Manning, 2008).

Indeed.

## Kneading Knots of Moving Words

“No sooner did the children stand up very carefully and try to walk a few steps, than the earth beneath them either fell away or tipped up or slanted sideways in a very alarming manner. Then down they all went, rolling over and over! The Saucepan Man made a tremendous noise and almost cried when he saw how battered his saucepans and kettles were getting. ‘Moon-Face!’ yelled Dick. ‘How can we get out of here? Don’t you know?’ ‘We can only get out by going down the ladder that leads to *The Faraway Tree!*’ shouted back Moon Face, who was busy rolling down a little hill that had suddenly appeared. ‘Look for it all the time, or we’ll never get away from here. As soon as the Rocking Land leaves the place where *The Faraway Tree* is, we’ve no way of escape!’ (Blyton, 2012, p. 115)

The experience of conceptual sea-sickness has sent me into Rocking Land. In this devising process I am producer, choreographer, researcher, dancer, writer, dramaturg and archivist (and mother and mother-to-be – this role inflects my work in innumerable ways). I’m trying to think through each of these points of view, often simultaneously. The notion of a reflective writing practice, of catching what Pickering would describe as a “material capture” of our process, enabling our thinking to reach a ‘surface of emergence’ is almost ludicrous.

It helps that I have given up any notion of writing being ‘straightforward documentation’. I am in agreement here with Erin Manning; “Writing need not be straightforward documentation ... Writing can work at the level of thought-feeling, catching up with the work’s own metamorphosis, with the rhythmic exfoliation that creates spacetimes of experience “ (Manning, 2008).

## Hurling Cells of Tree and Stitch

In earlier publications I have outlined the practice of movement-initiated writing, a kind of experimental documentation wherein:

- The practices of embodied performance practice and writing are imbricated in each other. If the writer has not participated as an active practitioner in the creative practice work of which they write, they are working in the more general field of documentation, rather than movement-initiated writing.
- An emergent methodology is followed – that is, writing emerges out of attention to performance logics. Unexpected, illogical, random, poetic and incoherent streams of text and drawing are invited as a way to generate process specific vocabularies.
- Writing might merge with drawing or other forms of image or meaning-making. This studio practice invites in a mixed-media approach, in which forms overlap and extend each other.
- The purpose of writing is to contribute to the development of performance logics. Movement-initiated writing aims to feed, develop, extend and/or refine dance ideas from the site of the studio. (Longley, 2014a, p.56)

Movement-initiated writing understands pages as a spatial, textural, affective, graphic, visual choreographic sites. This book continues an ongoing line of research to experiment with the manifestation of choreographic writing, to question;

If I follow the flow of dancing to the page  
Does it look more like the page of an academic journal or a Cy Twombly painting?  
Wouldn't the letters hurl each other around?  
Wouldn't the paper experiment with every possible folding and creasing and weighting of matter?  
How would the cells of tree and stitch press against each other, and out?

## The possible proprioception of the book

“A book is a sequence of spaces.

Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment - a book is also a sequence of moments.

A book is not a case of words, nor a bag of words, nor a bearer of words.

Among languages, literary language (prose and poetry) is not the best fitted to the nature of books.

A book may be the accidental container of a text, the structure of which is irrelevant to the book: these

are the books of bookshops and libraries.

A book can also exist as an autonomous and self-sufficient form,

including perhaps a text that emphasizes that form, a text that is an organic part of that form:

here begins the new art of making books” (Carriòn, 1975).

Ulisses Carriòn’s essay *The New Art of Making Books* (1975) unsettles traditional understanding of books as containers for words. Carriòn emphasizes instead the compositional, interactive, formal character of books as sequences of time and space. For Carriòn, the time of a book is very different to the time of language, and it is a mistake to conflate the work of writing and the work of books. Which takes us to the field of artist-books, which, to borrow a clear definition from the Tate Modern website, “explore ideas and concepts through form as much as content. They do this by, for example, disrupting the sequence and nature of the page, or using unconventional materials and printing techniques.” (Tate, 2015).

It is here that the *Radio Strainer* book has one of its most lived-in conceptual homes, where the materiality of pages might translate choreographic concerns – allowing every available element of the book to contribute to performances of reading. Paper, binding, colour, texture, image, legibility and illegibility are in play. Here we might, along with dance artist and scholar Jude Walton, explore “the possible proprioception of the book: its kinaesthetic qualities ... what potential there might be for performance, or an expanded notion of performing, to be found and/or created in book form” (2014).

## The conceptual force of handwriting

In *Radio Strainer*, handwriting carries conceptual force, as does the position of text in space and the layering of pages upon and through each other. Texts are repeated in handwritten and typed form, with these iterations assuming a reading differently will occur between the orderliness of typing and the gestural immediacy of drawing. This work contains elements of homage to the sense of contemporary palimpsest in choreographer Efva Lilja's artist-book *Movement as a Memory of the Body* (2006). Implicit in the performance of the *Radio Strainer* book is the assumption that readers will encounter this book intuitively and kinesthetically. It assumes a kind of collaboration and reinvention with its every read encounter – that its completion lies with the work that reading brings. *Radio Strainer* strains to open up spaces, to resist containment and to provoke a Louppian agitation of matter particularly in relation to embodied translation in dance research.

## Microcultures of place

We begin, three of us (myself, Sarah Knox and Katherine Tate), with close observation of the city. We arrive with observation notes from the city of Auckland, miniature, scribbled ethnographies of translation and mis-translation, things we noticed on the bus, in conversations between strangers. Translation becomes a kind of choreographic ethnography – a way in which to explore the microcultures of place. In doing so we want to attend to culture as something more-than-human, in “an embodied and receptive engagement with a world full of thing-power, be it unsettling and contingent”(Bennett, 2011, p.91). Instances of translation, mistranslation and misunderstanding arise out of different urban experiences— notes are translated again into other forms—film, photography, writing, drawing. Michael Cronin and Sherry Simon, in their (2014) article “The City as Translation Zone” discuss translation as a “clearing house of possibility” (p. 131), that enables a spill of possibilities and new meanings to arise. We see our rehearsals as such zones. At the core of our practice is carefully attending to and reimagining text, movement, drawing, moving and still/ digital image as they bleed into each other.

## The movement of fragmentation

Cycling, recycling, repeating until the new emerges. Dealing our deck of cards in different orders, some things remain, others shift, fall away. This is the site of cultural translation, a term developed by Homi Bhaba, who writes, "translation is the performative nature of cultural communication... The 'time' of translation consists in that movement of meaning" (2000, p.305). Bhaba cites Paul de Man, in defining how translation "puts the original in motion to decanonise it, giving it the movement of fragmentation, a wandering of errance, a kind of permanent exile" (De Man, cited in Bhaba, p.305). For Bhaba, it is through cultural translation that new thoughts are made possible.

"What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences." (Bhaba, 1994, p.2)

"Etymologically, translation evokes an act of moving or carrying across from one place or position to another, or of changing from one state of things to another. This does not apply only to the words of different languages, but also to human beings and their most important properties" (Buden and Novotny, 2009, p. 196).

In *Radio Strainer* we create stuff in order to translate it, so states of being in-between form the conceptual ground on which our material rests. Translation theorist Frederico Italiano writes that, "translation is a cultural activity that produces new spaces ... translation, as a rewriting of geopoetic features, creates new imaginative geographies" (Italiano, 2012, p.1). Dance scholar Freya Vass-Rhee (2011) employs the term translation to describe choreography that moves between the sonic and kinesthetic. She draws on the work of choreographer William Forsythe to define translation as the movement of ideas between forms (linguistic, artistic, or otherwise). Italiano's discussion of translation as "a performative negotiation of cultural differences across constructions of worlds (and identities)" (Italiano, 2012, p. 2) clearly aligns with Vass-Rhee's articulation of translation, wherein creative materials manifest via the movement between forms.

## Pregnant and Unbalanced

14 July 2012

It is the day of her 34th birthday.  
7 weeks pregnant with her daughter.  
Sitting at the memorial service for a friend.  
Pulled between tides of arriving and leaving, birth and mortality.  
Let down.  
Fucked off.  
Carrying the most amazing gift possible inside her.  
A mess of hormones and emotions.

Aware that when this time for shared remembering and acknowledging grief is complete, she has to run to the kitchen and put the meat pies in the oven and the coffee in the plunger for the afternoon tea.

Mist translations. Mis-translations. Missed-translations. These circular processes. The ideas move around and around and around. They chase their tales. Each time the story becomes different. I am thinking of a water wheel, the drenching circles create energy to power things. The process of translation between languages, forms, disciplines, spaces and people might be understood as energizing our cultures and cities and languages, in a tumbling of movement and memory.

## Acclimatising to the dark

Elena has slept beside us in a little bassinet for over a year. It is time to move her into her own bedroom, her “big-kid bed”.

How do you teach a one-year old child to sleep alone in the darkness? For us, the answer is manifold;

1) Patience.

2) Singing. Lots of singing.

3) Being together in the dark for awhile before she sleeps

4) Being there for her if she wakes up feeling lost, so it is not a sudden loss of night-time closeness. It is a movement between togetherness and independence, with either being just as safe.

It is a huge deal, and it is also just another micro-shift in the everyday. The real shift is for me, to let my baby sleep without me. I plan our strategy and weigh Elena’s state of readiness. Once you are asleep, the darkness is a relief, is as welcome as any of the necessities of being – water, love, food, warmth. We need darkness in order to function, and we need to learn to be alone, just as we need to learn to be together.

“Even if the *dark writing* of the world cannot be represented, its absence can be registered... traces of what is missing can shine through” (Carter, 2009, p.3).

Paul Carter’s term *dark writing* refers to the illusive, liminal, only-partially-coherent voices of the world, the messages and moments that you need to attend to in order to understand, but which are always nevertheless there, the “patterns of meeting that cannot be represented or prescribed” (Carter, 2009, p.2). These voices create an ambient micro-symphony of everyday life.

## Approaches to writing and mapping differently

Carter's project in *Dark Writing* (2009) is to propose approaches to a kind of mapping and writing 'differently' – with an artistry of listening and attending that allows the dark writing of the world to manifest. Taking such listening into material forms requires intuitive leaps of imagination, with the dynamic character of environments becoming agents that provide a kind of register for playful discovery.

“Even those who believe that rational thought advances step by step cannot deny that thinking begins in an orientation to ones human surrounding. But nothing of this provenance survives in what is counted as knowledge. We think as we draw, creating self-enclosed figures, cut off from one another and from the history of their coming into being,” (Carter, 2009, p.5)

“The bodies – agents of those movements that give the world its shape and coherence – are always left out of the calculations. The same is true mentally: in theories of creativity, thinking is treated as an ideal point or line. The fact that thought is a coming-together of recollection, imagination and invention and that ideas emerge as positions within a larger dance of ideas – this is ignored.” (Carter, 2009, p.9)

Carter's assertions on the tendencies of researchers to articulate ideal points and lines, while erasing messy processes and embodied circumstances, is as a general statement very convincing. Of course there is a small but substantial body of research that does just this, such as Mathew Goulish's *39 Microlectures in Pursuit of Performance*, which ruminates on processes of composing performances, books, moments, relationships and political events and his work with Tim Etchells in comprehending the productivity of failure (Goulish, 2000; 2002; 2004). The field of process art makes the messy circumstances of creative work tangible (Butler, 1999); Laurence Louppe's *Traces of Dance* (1994) is an anthology of choreographic scores and journals that reveals performances of creative processes and logics, and the field of performance improvisation (Cooper-Albright, 2003; Nelson; 1996; Stark-Smith and Nelson 1997) specifically manifests the beauty of creative-calculation-in-becoming. Improvised performances allow audiences to share in processes whereby the world is given shape and coherence (Jowitt, 1989). As Carter underlines, articulating the 'coming-into-being' of knowledge requires deviations form conventional and safe methods of writing, into often risky and uncomfortable practices.

## Having the chance to let serendipity work

In around 2007 I recorded an interview off the radio of Kim Hill interviewing Michael Hill for a dance project, (see Longley, 2014b), creating a sound work I titled the Hills. Inspired by the remix tapes of composers such as The Books and Kid Koala I worked with designer Jeffrey Holdaway to remix Michael and Kim Hills' radio interview, with a tendency to repeat any phrasing or remark that I found humorous/ cringe-worthy, focusing on mangling the idiosyncracies of the New Zealand accent in phrases of rhythm and response.

*“Having the chance to let serendipity work”*

*“wow, what an experience/ you were at all familiar with his music before?/that’s great isn’t it?/ It was wonderful/Yeah yeah Yeah*

*“wow, what an experience/ you were at all familiar with his music before?/that’s great isn’t it?/ It was wonderful/Yeah yeah Yeah*

*“wow, what an experience/ you were at all familiar with his music before?/that’s great isn’t it?/ It was wonderful/Yeah yeah Yeah*

*“to all extents and purposes, that was, an unfortunate time, to float...”*

For *Radio Strainer*, I dug this recording out, but chose to translate it very literally, in terms of the dynamic effect of conversational phrasing. It is interesting to note the difference in performance quality when the dancers understand the text they are working with, (as they do in *The Hills*) as when they do not, (as is evident in the *Mt Fuji* sequence, discussed in a later section). Every time, it seems to be *The Hills* who connect most strongly with audiences out of all the *Radio Strainer* material. Christina becomes Michael and Val becomes Kim – their conviction, allegiance and physical immersion in the speech pattern of their ‘character’ intensifies throughout the scene. Audiences seem to connect with the familiarity of the voices, the strange muscularity of facial expressions and the familiar and comic tonal register. Part of the choreographic process for developing this sequence involved directly transcribing the entire text of the sound edit, in order to work with the force of each syllable. Pages 19 and 21 present a scanned copy of this “script”, and pages 7, 9, 23 and 25, present close up stills of the digital video mangled into a location shoot in my lounge to make a video-work of the choreography.

## Trying On Resilience: August 2012

It is time to announce her pregnancy to the world. It doesn't come out the way it should – with her face drooping and looking faintly distraught, “I'm pregnant again”, she says. Her friend doesn't know what to say. Judging by the facial expression, “Congratulations!” seems thoroughly inappropriate – but “Oh, I'm sorry to hear that” seems even worse. What she really feels for herself in this moment is, “Oh, you poor thing”.

“No, it's good news. It's just that I feel like absolute shit. I forgot how terrible this is - for me it's like having the worst hangover ever for the bigger part of 9 months, and it's been nearly three months now, and I'm over it already, and I've got SIX fucking months to go. But we're happy really, really we are. Elena will have a baby brother or sister!”

*Radio Strainer* might be seen as a concept-machine, an assemblage of different kinds of bodies, bent on producing a series of performative events over various durations. Each iteration of this performance responds to and provokes feeling-thinking, around the central premise that translation enables the hybrid life of cities. In their article *The City As Translation Zone* (2014) Cronin and Simon emphasize language as forming the audible surface of the city through the traffic of language and concepts. Performative writing created for *Radio Strainer* sits between text and drawing – an embodied, affective, graphic, spatial practice as much as a linguistic one.

“What constitutes resilience for societies in the liquid modernity of the contemporary world is precisely the availability of a large repertoire of cultural responses and different world views that feeds into a creativity of imagination and an inventiveness of action. It is the translation zone of the city that acts as the hub of this resilience. Translation as the clearing house of possibility reveals the immensity of the resources that a city can draw on to manage unpredictable and uncertain futures.” (Cronin and Simon, 2014, p. 119).

“ I was at the supermarket/ I found someone else within my body /  
Was imagining how I was holding my face/  
You become the people you are around / You understand stories by trying them on”  
(*Radio Strainer*, rehearsal text, p. 85)

## *Corporeal Translations*

1. the sensation of dancing while pregnant
2. the difficulty of falling and rising
3. her centre rearranging itself everyday
4. a daughter growing inside her – 20 weeks old in-utero
5. a costume that deliberately reveals two bodies inside its skin
6. making the not-yet-here visible

The aim is to create a 10-20 minute work-in-progress for showing at the conference which invites performative presentations and offers a theatre space.

The organizational quest to confirm dancers, rehearsal spaces, schedules and timelines begins. The kind of work she produces as a choreographer she describes as “scrappy and experimental”. She sees the outcome of this work multi-dimensionally – it will create a live performance, an artist-book, an installation, some writings. She wants this process to test ideas around translation as a practice-led research methodology. Producing a performance for an audience is important as this expands and dynamicizes the work, brings it to life with energy and pressure, provides a chance to bring-in others who create feedback loops, enabling a sense of how the work is reading for those outside of the rehearsal space. But the production elements of the work are just one part of the game. As such, at this stage the economy of the work is held by a research grant – and there is no producer in the budget, so she is at once producer, choreographer, dramaturge, writer and dancer. And mother/mother-to-be. And university lecturer, teaching two courses.

## Endurance

In the end, she invites her oldest collaborators to dance with her in this work – Valerie Smith and Christina Houghton. Because they make her feel safe, as her pregnant body surges with hormones and nausea (she can barely eat or drink, she vomiting continuously throughout every day) because they understand her and because when she imagines the work, she sees them in it. The first rehearsal is a reunion. They notice the strangeness of aging, having started dancing together in their early to mid twenties, and now they are celebrating birthdays between 35 and 40. It doesn't feel like so much time has passed, but it has. They have performed together at weddings and funerals, in many shows, at many parties. They are proud of the endurance of this friendship, which is held together by dancing.

This is the second phase of rehearsals, so they have some materials developed in the first stage of research, the traces of improvisation and inquiry Alys holds within her body. Their rehearsing soon falls into rhythm – shaped largely by the contemplative practice Alys and Val began years ago:

- 10 minutes in a silent meditation, in cellular listening
- 10 minutes warming up in own space
- 10 minutes group improvisation bringing ones inquiry into the shared space
- 10 minutes writing
- 10 minutes talking
- working on specific choreographic tasks and developing/ refining improvisation scores.
- Translating movement work to pages and digital video
- Discussing the days work as part of an emerging conceptual framework

## Garbled Evidence

Each page of the *Radio Strainer* book is a kind of surface of emergence, providing a material capture of tasks.

They elicit made-up languages and foreign speeches

They take seriously the process of translating nonsense-text into English for each other

They attend to what was understood, what was lost

They look into generative processes of mangling

They take time to consider the embodied affect of garbled mis-perception

“I smell the inches of your spine – skull – fingers  
and know it is you  
the way you see through glass  
skin bone is how  
I recognize your name

To peel back the back of you  
Blood fluid tissue  
To hear your gravity  
And to notice my own  
(*Radio Strainer*, p. 101)

## To find you

After a few months of developing movement scores, dramaturgical ideas and pieces of performance writing, a text evolved that brought together the main themes informing the structure of our work: desire to connect and the loss of not connecting; an image of travelling; being a foreigner in a fictional Japanese landscape; the corporeal sense of language as something visceral and muscular; the sense of language as a contagion, an affective, colonising force that controls us and that we can't always control.

*I wanted to find you by inhabiting your tongue, it was the only way, so I moved into the pools of saliva that gather at the side of your mouth as you sleep, the viscous blankets of your DNA. I found myself travelling all the time, we don't keep still while sleeping—we move so much faster. You dreamed a new scene in Sleeping Beauty called the Airport Scene, narrated with an Irish accent by a sound engineer named Cahill—I took off. I landed in the arms of Mt Fuji, walking in winter at Lake Kamagichiko, hiking the stitches and folds of your kimono.*

*It was nearly enough, but I was cold there, I needed to go further, to the geographies of your vowels, to the cartographies of your inflection. I listened so hard I couldn't hear anything else, the whole rest of everything ceased to breathe. You died from the virus of urban language, its everyday violence bloomed in your blood and neither of us realised what was eating you up until it was too late. You simply disappeared—another, elsewhere, reterritorialised.*

*There was nowhere left to go, till finally grief restarted the lungs of the city, with not unviolent pushing and jostling, language lubricating bones and joints, language renewing flesh and sinew, languages not at all our own, but someone else's, from someplace else.*

I then asked native speakers of Italian, Japanese and Māori to translate this text into a spoken sound recording. These recordings were done informally, convivially, all through connections with friends and colleagues. This process multiplied the *I wanted to find you* text, and gave our work the raw materials of a structure.

## Mt Fuji

is composed in collaboration with a sound-work of overlapping voices, a male and female in Italian, another female voice speaking Japanese. Each voice is reading her or his own translation of the text *I wanted to find you*, so it could be said that each voice is reading the same thing, or doing the same thing. Except that what the recordings of these voices do, when treated as music, and composed as tracks of sound, is very different. In *Radio Strainer* these recordings are approached as music. As dancers we understand them as embodied affect, sonic landscape, tonal sea. Each voice could be considered a dynamic cartography, and this film work reflects a trio of dancers responding to these voices in a series of carefully developed improvisation scores. So the movement vocabulary of this section could be said to balance between the choreographed and the unpredictable. The dancers work in a space between fidelity to a given structure, and response to pathways that form and shift in the nervous micro-moments of bodies co-emerging with others, space, impulse and time.

## Red Chairs

She has been  
turned into a pony by a red chair  
and a camera.

She starts out in the expected way, a female body improvising in the space, discovering  
the space by nestling in to it.

Right foot slides to tip weight of skull down ,  
front legs ground and back hooves lift plastic torso.  
Ready to gallop over green grassy hills, mane flying into the horizon.

For this fraction of time, the woman and the chair have gone.

In *Radio Strainer* the furniture spends only part of the time in its expected role. Two red chairs develop agency and character as the choreography evolves. The opening image of the choreography is of the chairs, dramatically lit from below, framed by amplifier and cable, central characters in a drama that is about to unfold. As the dancers enter the chairs are used for sitting, are moved through various movement sequences (Mt Fuji, The Hills) – until they are lifted into the air and are no longer chairs, but the ridiculous heads of two despondent friends.

We found that with the Red Chairs on our heads, we could repeat unsayable things, conjure forces of humiliation too painful in other circumstances. Their shiny plastic forms allowed us to channel embodied memories of humiliation, horrors of mistranslation, plucked from small recent memories of racism, mistake, embarrassment and shame. Their somehow friendly, well-meaning and none-too-bright chair-faces transformed raw emotion to humour. Ironically, performing the red chair sequence is often hilarious for audiences, but excruciating and exhausting for performers, as muscles clench and hold, thighs harden with tension and imagination is sent to regretful places.

## The mangle of ethnographic performance

We are a couple of months out from performing at an international social sciences conference, where we have been accepted to perform a 15-20 minute work-in-progress showing of (then titled) *Corporeal Translations*. The conference call for papers had invited performative articulations of research, so I had assumed there was some support for performance-led research. The following abridged email exchange between the conference organizer (let's call her Abby) the conference chair (let's call him Mike) and myself (Alys) reflects a clear example of mistranslation and misunderstanding that had enormous impact in developing the technical set-up, movement vocabulary, and dramaturgy of *Radio Strainer*.

Hi Abby, For the conference I am bringing a performance work. I'm just wondering about the set-up and rehearsal of the piece - whether we can use lights from the theatre and about scheduling rehearsals in the space. Any info in this regard would be much appreciated, Best  
Regards, Alys Longley

Hi Alys, Thanks for writing. In terms of set-up. There is floor space for performance and bleacher seats for attendees. There is lighting installed which you are able to use. Can you give me an idea of what's required for your performance, Alys? I'll discuss with the facilities manager and get right back to you. Thanks, Abby

Hi Abby, Thanks for that. I will need time to rehearse with : 1. my onstage sound operator and technician (to organize lights, space and set-up of cables etc. 2. My dancers and technician (to rehearse with the lighting) 3. My dancers and sound-operator (for the company to check the spacing and lay out of the work on the stage). The work has 4 performers – one of whom is mixing sound live. We will keep our lighting extremely simple but will need the theatre technician to know specific cues beforehand. Most likely my dancers will arrive Wednesday afternoon so will be available to rehearse that afternoon/evening and the following morning.  
Thanks again, Alys

Hi Alys - we pay for technicians hourly and the venue too. I'm afraid I don't have enough budget to put towards five hours set-up and rehearsal. Is there anyway you can reduce the time you'll need to rehearse? Thanks, Abby

Hi Abby, Just talked to the sound mixer and he's agreed to not operate the sound live but to operate the lights instead, so we'll just need technical help to show him the set up. This is a real compromise of the work but I understand you're not really set up for performance work (in terms of performers need for rehearsal time) so we can sacrifice in that area. Our minimum rehearsal time would be three hours (90 minutes set up with technician and 90 minutes MINIMUM to run and space the work in the theatre). This would be a real challenge but I guess we'd adjust the piece for the limitations of the conference. Sorry to be demanding!  
Thanks again, Alys

Hi Alys,  
We can't get you space or funds for pre-rehearsal; ... as it stands, we are only allowing for "performances."  
Best, Mike

Hi Abby,

Okay - - just to let you know we have decided to use the absolute lack of rehearsal space and technical assistance as a 'creative limitation' and provide our own, lights, cables, PA system for this performance so that we can operate the technical elements from the stage as we won't have any assistance with using the theatre set-up. This lack of support is pretty unusual for presentation of performance material – I guess in a disciplinary specific sense (such as for professionals in theatre, dance, music, etc) rather than an ethnographic one! Perhaps the conference team might consider highlighting that there are no resources for performances in the invitation (especially highlighting no rehearsal/set up time in the space whatsoever) - would enable performers to be clear about the terms of presenting at the conference. In general, theatre performances do tend to be pretty resource-heavy and expensive in comparison with seminar presentations – but this is why the theatrical space can evoke different kinds of meanings and readings of space and embodiment that standard presentations cannot. Although I am bringing my own technician, without assistance from the house technician and time to prepare the space we cannot use theatrical lighting or even properly convey our sound as it has been designed. I do apologise for assuming that there would be some set-up time available for professional level work – I should have thought to check this with you before hand.

Best, Alys

## Entanglement

“Resistances ... exist on the boundaries, at the point of intersection of the realms of human and nonhuman agency. They are irrevocably impure, human/material hybrids, and this quality immediately entangles the emergence of material agency with human agency without, in any sense, reducing the former to the latter. This entanglement is, so to speak, the far side of the posthumanism of the mangle: material agency is sucked into the human realm via the dialectic of resistance and accommodation. Now I turn to the converse proposition – that human agency is itself emergently reconfigured in its engagement with material agency. (Pickering, 1995, p.54)

Agency? What agency? I am at the point where material agency is mangling this project with the power of a tidal wave. In a black box theatre situation, light is a dynamic medium that literally allows bodies and ideas visibility. My creative intention relies on a carefully calibrated lighting design that allows the space of the stage to transform and morph. And as a dancer the idea of performing a choreography without rehearsal in a space with different dimensions, affects, spatial coordinates to the space I created the work in is deeply disconcerting. I do not want to show this work under house lights or fluorescents, as the work I am imagining requires darkness, transitions between spaces. My intention is for the world of the work to be written in light. Without theatre time, this seems impossible. The material agency of the theatre context creates highly specific possibilities and constraints for practitioners, and time is the key element in enabling intentions to be realized.

As far as I know of it is *unheard of to give no rehearsal time at all in the performance space*. In the dance and theatre industries, tech time is a taken-for granted condition of performance. I'm bewildered that the conference organizer promised use of a theatre rig and sound system, without understanding the need to provide time for technicians to learn the cues for the work or for technicians brought in to familiarize themselves with the operational requirements of the theatre, such as the location of light switches and plugs.

In Pickering's terms, a 'dance of agency' lies between my intention in developing ideas, the agency of the theatrical materials in preventing or allowing me to do so, and the impact of time influencing the conditions and circumstances through which decisions are made. In material terms, I have a theatre space, but no rehearsal time, an excellent technician, but no opportunity for him to acquaint himself with the theatre in which we will work, I have a sound system, but no access to a sound board, I have dancers and choreography but no lights that will enable the movement we create to translate to audiences. My job is to find pathways to accommodate these resistances. I rethink all of my plans and sleep on my questions – how to accommodate to material circumstances and still maintain my creative intention? The result? We decide to create a work wherein technical processes such as the placement of human and mechanic bodies are core to artistic vocabulary. Rather than hiding the process whereby lights are rigged, amplifiers are set and dancers figure out where they are going, we will make all of this decision-making a visible part of the performance vocabulary and rehearse this into the piece, factoring in a lack of familiarity with the space. We prepare for a strange discomfort to be ingrained in the texture of the performance. The audience will observe the performers setting up lighting states, moving cables, placing the amplifier, adjusting to the space. Our plan is to rehearse for aleatoric conditions – to create structures that are strong enough, and simple enough to dance with the technical resistances at hand.

Jeffrey and I head out to the hardware store and purchase a collection of camp lights and cables. From here on in, the movement of the lights and the organization of cables becomes a time-consuming element of all rehearsals. The mangling of my creative intention by these circumstances is generative. It literally creates new ideas and ways of working which have arisen through the circumstances of brute chance. Conceptually, it makes sense for the translation of our work through light and sound to be performed as a labour. Considering the development of *Radio Strainer* from its first rehearsals through to this artist book, it is clear that the artistic signature of the choreography was 'written' by the material agency of performance conditions at this conference as it was by my artistic intentions or the contributions of the dancers. The chance element of a red chair as a kind of face, the affect of three dancers walking in time, looping cables, and in unison, inserting plugs to sockets to light a space in three angles; these key images all emerged through the mangle of practice, in a generative mess of mistranslation between ideas and the agency of things.

## Re-mangling

It is the day after our performance at the conference. I am heavily pregnant and relieved that I will not have to re-perform the arduous work of looping cables and placing lights. I am sitting in the sun

writing lists. This performance achieved exactly what we needed it to, it helped us realize the strengths and weakness of our work, it identified points of clarity and points of fog. Feedback from the audience highlighted the impact of *The Hills* and the *Red Chair* sequences. Key points in the improvised

choreography felt very strong in rehearsal and very weak in the theatre (perhaps due to a lack of

rehearsal time in the theatre). The choice to embed the dramaturgy of the work in the labour of its

construction feels right. We can work more on intensifying the dynamics as dancers loop cables in tight unison, point lights, move the amplifier. We dramatise the way light, sound, distance and proximity

creates affect and feeling states. We dramatise the artistic labour of the material practices through which we communicate. We make the mangle visible in our performance vocabulary.

We start to prepare for the next iteration of the work – a gallery installation composed of three video works, a sound installation, an artist book and a development of our choreography for a theatre in

Auckland. I begin scanning journals and going through video and photographic documentation of

rehearsals and performances. The plan is to develop as much material as possible before our baby

arrives. I can feel her moving strongly in my belly.

## Mist-translations (artist-book and video work)

### The mangle of film making

The video-work *Mt Fuji* is a choreography composed of falling shadow figures moving toward and away from Italian and Japanese voices. It begins with the voices reading individually, and develops until the voices become an overlapping cacophony. Shadow bodies overlap and reconfigure. Bodies of light merge and distil, sometimes one body, sometimes many. Their gestures begin with an evocation of writing that slowly expands out into choreographies of space and distance.

This film came into being because the space that we had intended to work in, a large black box theatre, was unavailable. Instead, our Director of Photography Jeffrey Holdaway suggested we go for a white space – an empty lecture theatre at the art school, a space with a sunken stage and multiple stairways and levels. Our intention was to film the dancers working through the improvisation scores that formed a section of the live work. On reaching the location we worked in relation to the architecture of the space, factoring it in to all our decisions about time, perspective, dynamic, and framing. But when we began, Jeffrey's eye was drawn more to the shadows on the wall than to the material bodies of the dancers. So he did a couple of shadow-takes, the dancers out of shot, bodies literally formed by light and shade. When we came to reviewing and editing our material, this chance material turned out to be all the film needed, and the material we shot based on our expectations was redundant. Our work emerged in chance discovery. This is the magic of mangling, when the material circumstances of the process generate stuff more alive and more satisfying than intention, design or imagination.

## Navigating foggy and impossible worlds

“But I saw something only I could see, because of my astonishing ability to see such things, souls were rising from the earth far below, souls of the dead, of those that had departed, from war, from the plague, and the souls of these departed joined hands, clasped ankles, and formed a great net of souls. And the souls were made of three atom oxygen molecules, of the stuff of ozone, and the outer rim absorbed them, and was repaired. Nothing’s lost forever. In this world there is a kind of painful progress, longing for what we’ve left behind, but dreaming ahead. At least, I think that’s so. ” (Harper, in Kushner, 1993)

“More and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at things” (Samuel Beckett, cited in Perloff, 2015).

Harper, in *Angels in America* has to navigate through snow, fog, valium, dysfunction and shame through the course of a play in which psychological and climatic affects are all conditions of visibility and invisibility. She is continuously mistranslating a foggy and impossible world – her knowledge emerges out of sleep, when dreams bloom in the gap between guessing and intuition. Kushner’s writing is atmospheric and ecological, it reminds us of conditions of hope and repair in both planetary and personal scale – in the sense of climactic drama of our planet and in the sense of the infinite dramas playing out in our micro-worlds of space and time. Kushner dramatizes, as Paul Carter puts it, “the incapacity of logical thinking to think change” (Carter, 2009, p.9). *Angels in America* dramatizes how it takes bent logic to shift the stultification of habit. *Radio Strainer* is a response to spaces of spill, loss and accident, spaces that navigate through bent logics and poetic maps. One has to plunge through ignorance in order to say or do anything. We align ourselves with the ‘dark writing’ of Paul Carter – which maps the illusive, liminal, only-partially-coherent voices of the world, the “patterns of meeting that cannot be represented or prescribed” (Carter, 2009, p.2), working from the point of view that humans are caught in and moved by a huge play of matter.

## Crossing through that space where life is created, where death sits watching

When pregnant, it is strangely difficult to imagine this unborn creature inside me as a human being. She feels more like a sea-monster, rolling and stretching in some miraculous interior ocean.

And then Rosie is born. Her birth is quite straightforward – we cross through that space where life is created, where death sits watching, and come out the other side with a beautiful baby girl proudly in our arms. That is the miracle part – how could my still-deeply-primitive-brain possibly conceive that my cells were busy creating this? That I could be capable of making such a complicated and perfect thing?

I am feeling quite good after the labour and choose to come home that day. So twelve hours after Rosie emerges, I am back in my bedroom, getting the laundry ready to put in the washing machine. You cleanse the blood and disbelief away and carry on, dusted in wonder.

A month later, we are organizing the set-up for a 20 minute performance, a gallery installation, and the design of an artist-book.

Two months later, we are in the studio, with dancer Sarah Foster-Sproull taking my place in the cast. Rosie breast-feeds and sleeps in her pram by my side through our rehearsals, and *Radio Strainer's* next work-in-progress showing emerges, this time as an installation which will be exhibited for two months with Auckland's Window gallery, and a performance, which will 'book-end' the exhibition by opening for only the first and last days the gallery work is up. This book is nearly the same as the one exhibited at that installation, where it was chained to a plinth (to discourage theft), and left on a chair for readers to find. It was later exhibited in London in an exhibition of rehearsal notes and journals, titled *Before Performance* (Longley, 2013). Here it is now in your hands, the surface of a palimpsest that holds all of the stories of this preface, a body of fragments, made alive in time.

#### 4. Instead of a reiterative or poetic conclusion, could it be just a whole page of questions?

What might it mean for *Radio Strainer* to be mapped in dark writing? How might we bring an artistry of listening and attending to micro-symphonies of everyday life? What does this mean in a choreographic practice? How would the material preparation for rehearsals manifest? How different would this be from a conventional rehearsal space? Do you need to warm up the muscles of drawing and writing just as you warm up the muscles of movement? Does interweaving narratives of pregnancy and motherhood bring another relevant dimension to the conceptual terrain of practice-led research discussed here? Do these narratives of motherhood have relevance beyond this specific case? Are there contradictory tensions at play in attempting to move between states of reflection? Won't our muscles get cold when we stop to move/ write and draw? Won't we lose the somatic engagement with kinesthetic trajectories? Or could we see this drawing as a movement practice? Could we see all of these practices as detailed choreographies in the same trajectory of movement? What about training? Are we naive artists? Isn't that embarrassing? Might there be a sense that certain kinds of conventional mastery can only articulate majoritarian knowledges? Could we think of this as a choreography of the minor, where our sophistication is in listening, refining, organizing and mangling? What does it mean to move translation theory into a practice of embodiment, where text is no longer taken for-granted as the primary site of meaning and exchange?

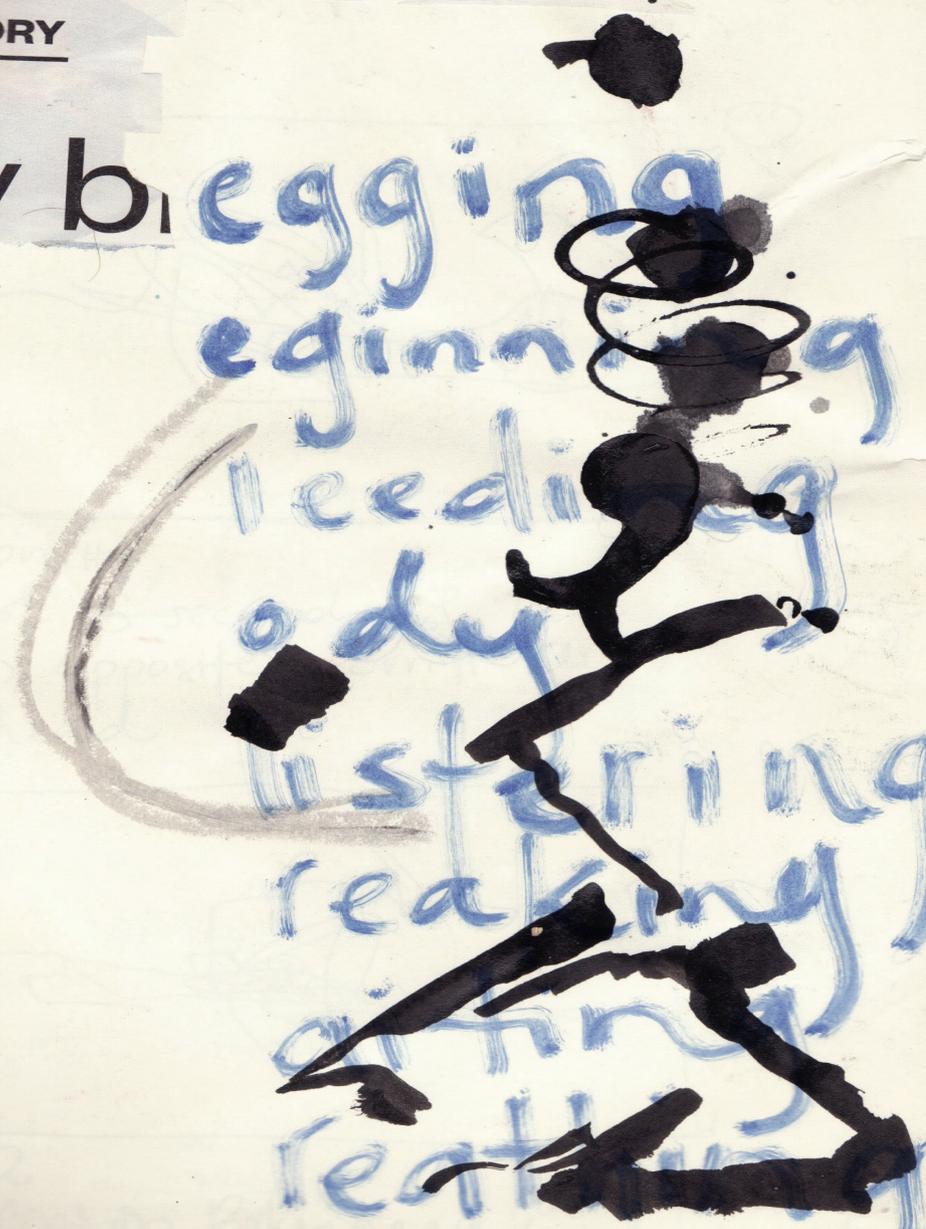
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does? Taking the  
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clear again in  
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of



a mistranslation

embody the feeling of <sup>a</sup> meaning  
experience <sup>or story</sup>

tell us all about it in an  
invented language

we will translate what we  
make of it to a

common language

these two lines of  
expression will form the  
start of something



you touch  
your memories  
and find  
the world  
has moved

わたしの夕焼け  
わたしの思い出  
そして  
世界が動いたのさ







I wanted to find you by inhabiting your tongue, it was the only way, so I moved into the pools of saliva that gather at the side of your mouth as you sleep, the viscous blankets of your DNA.

I found myself travelling all the time, we don't keep still while sleeping – we move so much faster. You wrote a new scene in Sleeping Beauty called the Airport Scene, narrated with an Irish accent by a sound engineer named Cahill – I took off.

(Christina and Val move lights across stage, Alys move into light – Christina and Val perform on other side of stage)

I landed in the arms of Mt Fuji, walking in winter at Lake Kamagichiko, hiking the stitches and folds of your kimono.

It was nearly enough, but I was cold there,

I needed to go further, to the geographies of your vowels, to the cartographies of your inflection. I listened so hard I couldn't hear anything else, the whole rest of everything ceased to breathe. You died from the virus of urban language, its everyday violence bloomed in your blood and neither of us realized what was eating you up until it was too late. You simply disappeared – another, elsewhere, reterritorialised.

There was nowhere left to go, til finally grief restarted the lungs of the city, with not unviolent pushing and jostling, language lubricating bones and joints, language renewing flesh and sinew, languages not at all our own, but someone else's from someplace else.



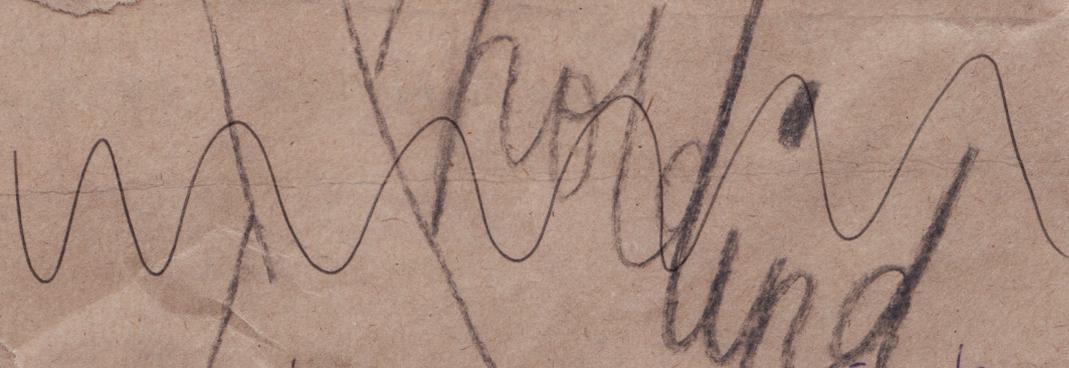
There was nowhere left to go, til finally grief restarted the lungs of the city, with not unviolent pushing and jostling, language lubricating bones and joints, language renewing flesh and sinew, languages not at all our own, but someone else's from someplace else.

End with "someplace else" in all languages - all standing with backs to audience

All languages read first stanza layered together

conducting  
From femur  
through toes  
to her

trapped



I hiahia e au ki te kite i a koe me au kōrerorero futuru,  
Ko tēra te haerenga, me nuku au i te <sup>everything</sup> ~~kaore~~ te  
wai i te taha o ōu waha i te wā i <sup>moana</sup> ~~moana~~ koe, ko tēra  
te korowai o ōu mātua tipuna.

balance  
for a singer

I ētahi o uā wā, ka kite e au i uā hōpeaga, ka hore myka,  
i noho ana i te wā ka moe mātau, he tino tere tetuanuku.  
ka tuhia koe i tetahi wāhanga i vote i te pitanga o Moenga  
"Ataahua" ko te uia. Ko te wāhanga o te taunga waka rererangi,



You died from the virus of urban language, its everyday violence bloomed in your blood and neither of us realized what was eating you up until it was too late. You simply disappeared – another, elsewhere, reterritorialised.

CORDOGLIO  
There was nowhere left to go, til finally grief restarted the lungs of the city, with not unviolent pushing and jostling, language lubricating bones and joints<sup>f</sup>, language renewing flesh and ~~sinew~~<sup>REINFORCING</sup>, languages not at all our own, but someone else's from someplace else.

~~VOLEVO~~ ~~UNO~~ ~~DEI~~ ~~MODI~~, ~~USANDO~~ ~~LA~~ ~~TUA~~ ~~LINGUA~~  
~~ERA~~ ~~L'UNICO~~ ~~MODO~~ ~~PER~~ ~~AVVICINARTI~~  
~~MI~~ ~~AVVICINARMI~~  
ENTRARE NELLE VASCHE DELLO TUA SOLIDA  
MUOVENDOMI AI MARGINI DELLE TUE LABBR,  
DURANTE IL TUO SONNO, <sup>SOPRENDENDO</sup> ~~VERSO~~ I VILI DEL  
TUO DNA =

NON C'ERA ALTRO LUOGO DOVE ANDARE,  
FINCHÉ IL CORDOGLIO RISVIÒ IL RESPIRO  
DELLA CITTÀ, SENZA OVVERE<sup>A</sup> SPINTONI E URTI  
NÉ LINGUAGGI LUBRIFICANTI OSSA E <sup>GIUNTURE</sup> ~~REASSEMBLANTI~~  
NÉ ~~ESPRESSIONI~~ <sup>LINGUAGGI</sup> RIGENERANTI CARNE E LEGAMENTI  
NÉ LINGUAGGI CHE NON CI APPARTENGONO

<sup>a</sup> Tension between relaxation and desperation

<sup>b</sup> Floor phrase

<sup>c</sup> Mt Fuji

<sup>d</sup> Michael Hill

<sup>e</sup> tram break up

<sup>f</sup> Languages / Orange chairs

MA SONO D'ALTRI E  
PROVENGONO DA ALTRI  
LUOGHI

DATA



unviolent pushing and jostling, language lubricating bones and joints, language renewing flesh and sinew, languages not at all our own, but someone else's from someplace else.

one time

VERBOSI  
SCIOMITARE

LUBRIFICARE

LEGAMENTI

VOLEVO INCONTARTI

LA TUA LINGUA, ERA L'UNICO

MODO, QUINDI MI SONO MOSSO

RI Trovai

MI SONO ~~RI Trovai~~ A VIAGGIARE PER TUTTO IL TEMPO, NON RIMANO FERMI DURANTE IL GIORNO - CI MUOVIAMO MOLTO PIU' VELOCEMENTE

- NON RIMANO

HEI SCRITTO UNA NUOVA SCENA (~~TRATTO~~) PER LA BELLA ADDORMENTATA CHIAMATA "LA SCENA DELL'AEROPORTO", E' NARRATA (STRANZIATA) CON UN ACCENTO IRLANDESE DA UN INGEGNERO (DEL SUONO) DI NOME CAHILL -

DECOLLAI A TERRELLA NELLE BRACCIA DEL MONTE FUJI, CAMMINANDO IN INVERNO <sup>ATTORNO AL</sup> ~~SOLO~~ LAHO RAMA/KH/CIKO, PERCORRENDO CUCITURE E PIEGHE DEL Tuo RIMONO.

ERA QUASI ABBASTANZA, MA FACEVA FREDDO LA', AVEVO BISOGNO ANDARE OLTRE, AVEVO GEOGRAFIE DELLE TUE VOCALI, AVEVO CARTOGRAFIE DELLE TUE INFLESSIONI, ASCOLTAVO TANTO INTENSAMENTE CHE NON POTEVO UDIRE NIENTE ALTRO. TUTTO IL RESTO SMISE DI

a Tension between relaxation and desperation

b Floor phrase

c Mt Fuji

d Michael Hill

e tram break up

f Languages / Orange chairs

RESPIRARE.

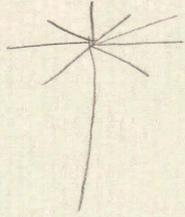
SEI MORITO A CAUSA DEL

WRUS DEL LINGUAGGIO URBAN

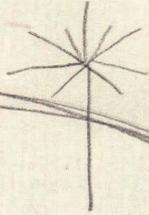
LA SUA MORENZA QUOTIDIANA ESPLODE NEL Tuo SANGUE E NESSUNO DI NOI SI ACCORSE CHE TI STAVA DIVORANDO, FINCHE' FU TROPPO TARD'. SEI SEMPLICEMENTE SCOMPARSO -

UN ALTRO, IN UN ALTRO LUOGO, RITERRITORIALIZZATO.





Thinking about light as articulating the world  
moving light as a form of translation





seeds

Embodiment

melodies of

Kim and Paul :

Infinite diversity of possibilities

text

The polystyrene foam cup, that's  
The polystyrene foam cup, that's  
The polystyrene foam cup, that's

A plastic obviously, that doesn't degrade... but it could be burnt, and it doesn't, according to my information give out

Toxicities  
Toxicities  
Toxicities

Kim and Michael

Achmed Jamael is your next track

Michael- just play a little bit of this... it's quite Bachlike... the 14 would be good, thanks

Kim: What was he like live?

M: He was fabulous, absolutely fabulous, he's amazing, we were just walking along down Times Square and it was nearly midnight and yeah there was a queue there and we just joined the queue and we got a backseat this little club and ah, **wow, what an experience**

K: you were at all familiar with his music before?

M: No, not at all

K: that's great isn't it

**M: It was wonderful**

K Yeah yeah yeah

**M: What an experience. No, not at all**

K: That's great isn't it?

**It was wonderful**

K: Yeah Yeah Yeah

K: You must have had lots of experiences like that

**M: Yes**

K: I mean travelling you know.

**M: Yes**

K: Having the chance to let serendipity work

**M: mmmm, yes, very exciting**

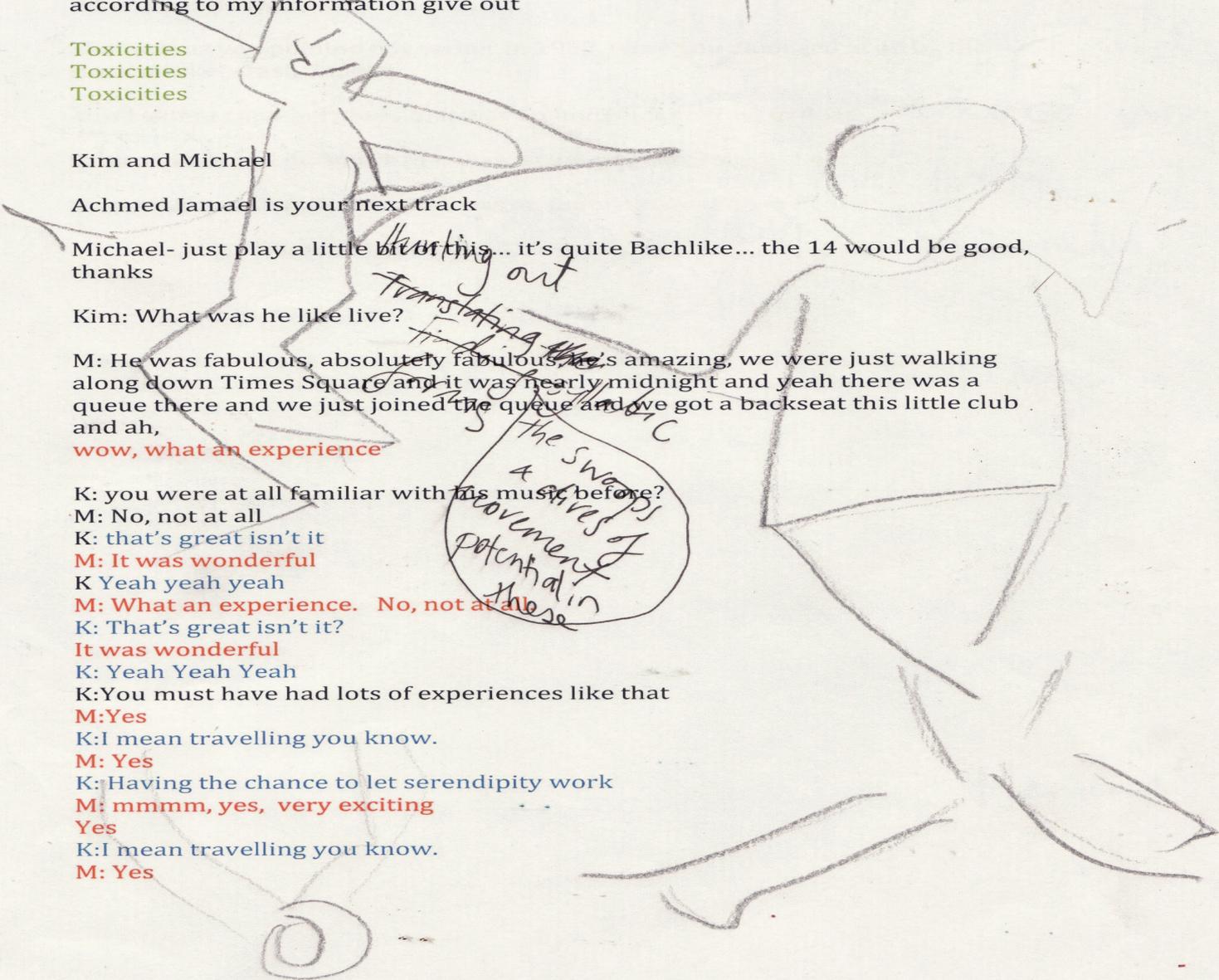
Yes

K: I mean travelling you know.

**M: Yes**

hearing out  
translating  
finding the music  
the swap of  
a series of  
movement  
potential in  
these

take off





K: Having the chance to let serendipity work

M: mmmm, yes, very exciting

I mean travelling you know.

M: Yes

K: Having the chance to let serendipity work

M: mmmm, yes, very exciting

K: When you floated,  
When you floated,  
When you floated,

That was as you pointed out earlier in 1987, were you damaged at all by the  
stock market crash, I mean,

to all extents and purposes that was an unfortunate time to float

to all extents and purposes that was an unfortunate time to float

to all extents and purposes that was an unfortunate time to float





1. toxicities

2. Like Back

3. Time Square

4. Ye

5. An

6. An

7.

4.5

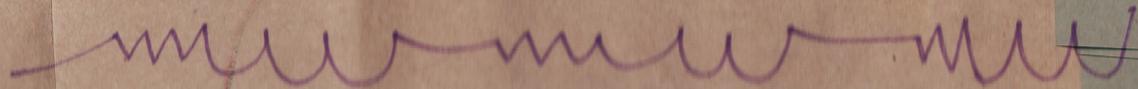
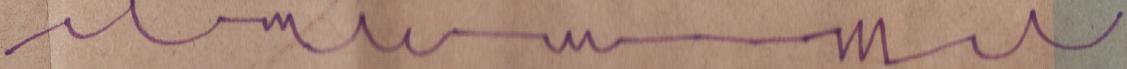
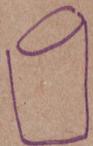
(the polystyrene foam cup)  
Not go down that track

es - It was wonderful - Yeah Yeah Yeah

infinite diversity of possibilities

unfortunate time to float

Having the chance to let serendipity work





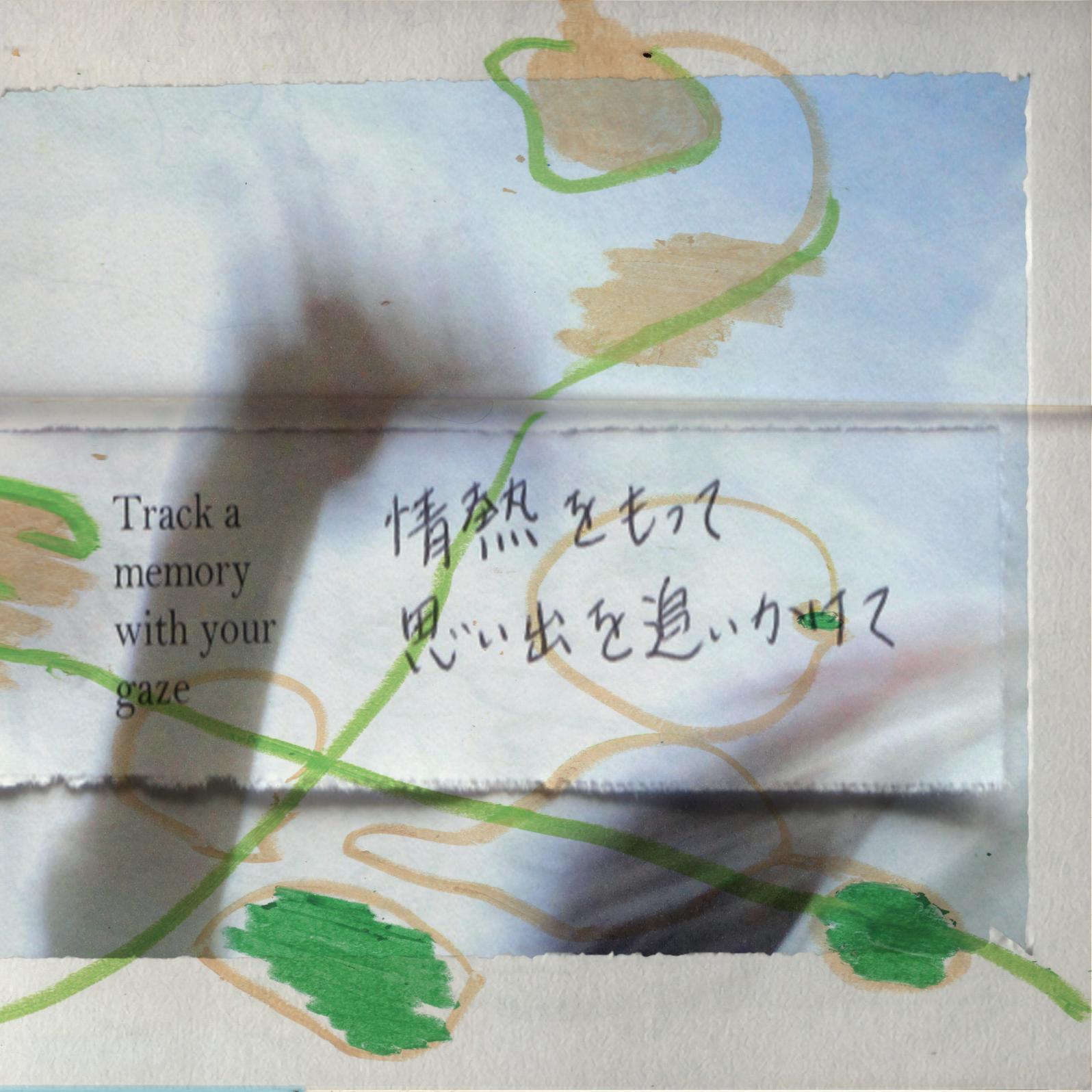


1. Independence
2. Digging in to find  
a finding  
more time
3. The space  
between your  
hands
4. Something is  
going on all the time  
another part of  
it is always  
paving, &  
another keeps  
watching



Track a  
memory  
with your  
gaze

情熱をもち  
思い出を追いかけて









holding  
everything in balance  
for a single  
perfect  
moment

undone and undoing  
laces untied

a collapse a  
transmission a  
conducting  
from femur  
through toes  
to her heart

Soldering  
blood  
becom  
hot h  
melt  
sha  
ear

V



# Memories of Tension Between

Miscommunication

She is brimming  
with expression  
but unable  
to communicate

Counting  
in  
mandarin

Soundscape  
of a  
Melbourne  
tram

Feeling a  
word in your  
body but  
unable to find  
its articulation

Chinese  
whispers



3.  
you are hungry  
as a drifting skylark  
angled toward  
greying clouds



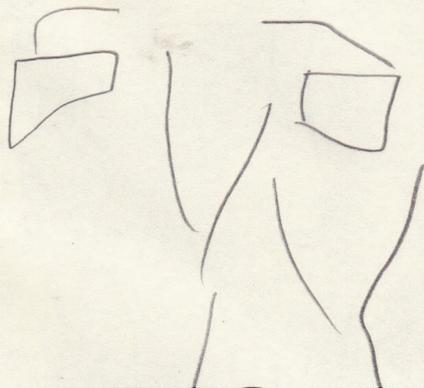
Scattered torsion

breath to de

momentum of womb

listening eyebrows

containing sequence





# Warmup

From when I say go  
active translation  
space

Moments of tuning  
Moments of dislocation  
everything is an  
moments of each location  
moments of being jerked out  
of a word or planked  
into one

Also: you are warming up  
you are meeting yourself & meeting  
world, & meeting the potential of the  
Translation is a creation  
meeting of the stars & planets  
an articulation of expression  
of it, in whatever way

through the process of the work  
Dancers are to keep working on  
their language & their translations —  
they are NOT to "correct" the  
translations or reveal a firm meaning  
for terms.

# Space Left

# Open

→ in the  
in

It has  
gestures  
Talk  
your

The  
frank  
to be  
the



ideas, thinking in 2 ways, choreographically  
& sensorially



rising folding &  
rising the dust off music  
remembering ~~green~~ <sup>green</sup> ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~staring~~ <sup>staring</sup> ~~eyes~~ <sup>eyes</sup>

Soldering: how the splatters, the soft lead  
amalgam is it aluminum & steel &  
its a soft binding & connecting connection  
point of heat, a technique of  
careful temperature — join

Something about mutability  
Something about immutability <sup>inches</sup> smashing  
of response of dots



③ 3 minutes

6 30 second vignettes

on the shape & embodiment of

language

& on the kinesthetic experience  
of being misunderstood.

④

~~by what~~

don't  
don't  
don't

you  
you  
you

fucker  
fuck  
fuck.



MONDAY

November

2

again

What time is it here/ there

What temperature is it here/ there

Are you in two places at once?

How here, as a percentage, can you be, while being there?

How there, as a percentage, can you be, while being here?

Make a here phrase in response to these questions

Make a there phrase in response to these questions

week 45



- 7.
1. the first time ever i  
saw your face
  2. they are at a window. they are  
reaching past
  3. index fingers nearly meeting. maybe  
et style
  4. val is resting and looking at a memory
  5. together, two people, two hands, holding  
two invisible apples





2 The first time ever i  
saw your face

2) They are at a window. They are  
reaching past

3) Index fingers nearly meeting, maybe  
ET style.

4) Val is resting & looking at a memory.

5) Together, two people, two hands, holding  
two invisible apples.



open

sequence

visibility

weight

tangential

torision

ull

chair

corn

scatter

MON

Digging into  
time and  
finding more  
time

ater

breath

tide

yebrow

contagion



1. independence
2. digging into time and finding more time
3. the space between your hands
4. something is going on all the time another is pausing  
and another keeps watching

Jo  
dismem  
good about  
disremembering  
deliberately  
it, so  
working  
between  
rather  
form



The way your eyes continue  
the rest of your message

---

and then of at  
the palm of hand reads a

language of angle, etc.

a number of accidents  
counted on her fingers



Scattered torsion  
breath tide  
momentum of womb  
listening eyebrows  
contagion sequence



Can you  
feel your  
past meeting  
your future  
in your body?  
Where?

自分の体の中心

昔の出会い

自分の将来

感じることはできるか?

どこですか?

感じることはできるか?

感じることはできるか?

感じることはできるか?

感じることはできるか?

感じることはできるか?

感じることはできるか?



1. Colours of pretend grass bite at  
my eyes
2. I'm over here, don't forget about me,  
I've got you
3. Tuning, checking, toning
4. Scratching
5. A lost one in the corner
6. Returning
7. Creasing together in sound
8. Federating information
9. Sterilised by language
10. Mining in & bringing back
11. Currency, economics & spatial data
12. becoming what you are around
- 



How he traces sand  
does it abroad within my body

i was at the supermarket

I found someone else within my body

was imagining how I was holding my face

at the you become the people you are around

Some fuel  
you understand stories by trying them on





Alyse & Valerie

117

i can't get  
through  
to you

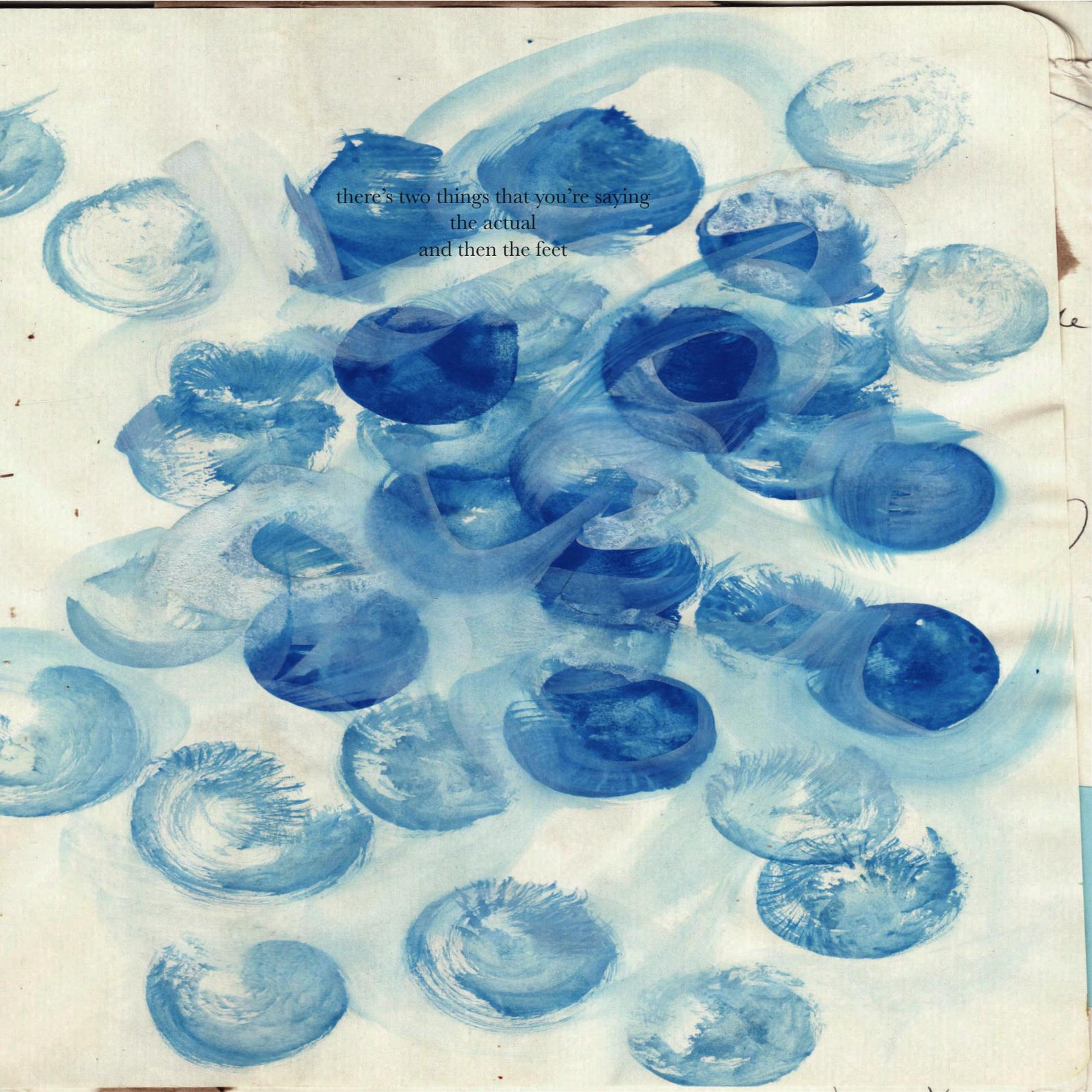
the cold air  
of an empty gym  
its colours  
of psudeo grass  
bite my eyes

colours dark red  
normal red and black

i'm over here  
don't forget about me  
i've got you





The image shows a page from a notebook or sketchbook. The page is covered with numerous circular and semi-circular brushstrokes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep, dark navy blue. The strokes are layered and overlapping, creating a sense of depth and movement. In the upper-middle section of the page, there is a small block of text in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The text reads: "there's two things that you're saying", "the actual", and "and then the feet". The background of the page is a light, off-white or cream color, showing some signs of age and wear, such as faint smudges and a small tear on the right edge. There are also some faint, handwritten marks on the right side of the page, including a small "e" and a "D".

there's two things that you're saying  
the actual  
and then the feet







of wing finding

羽をさがす

of slow unravelling

ゆるく解いて

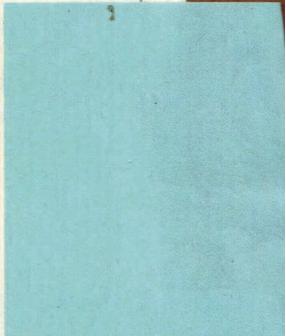
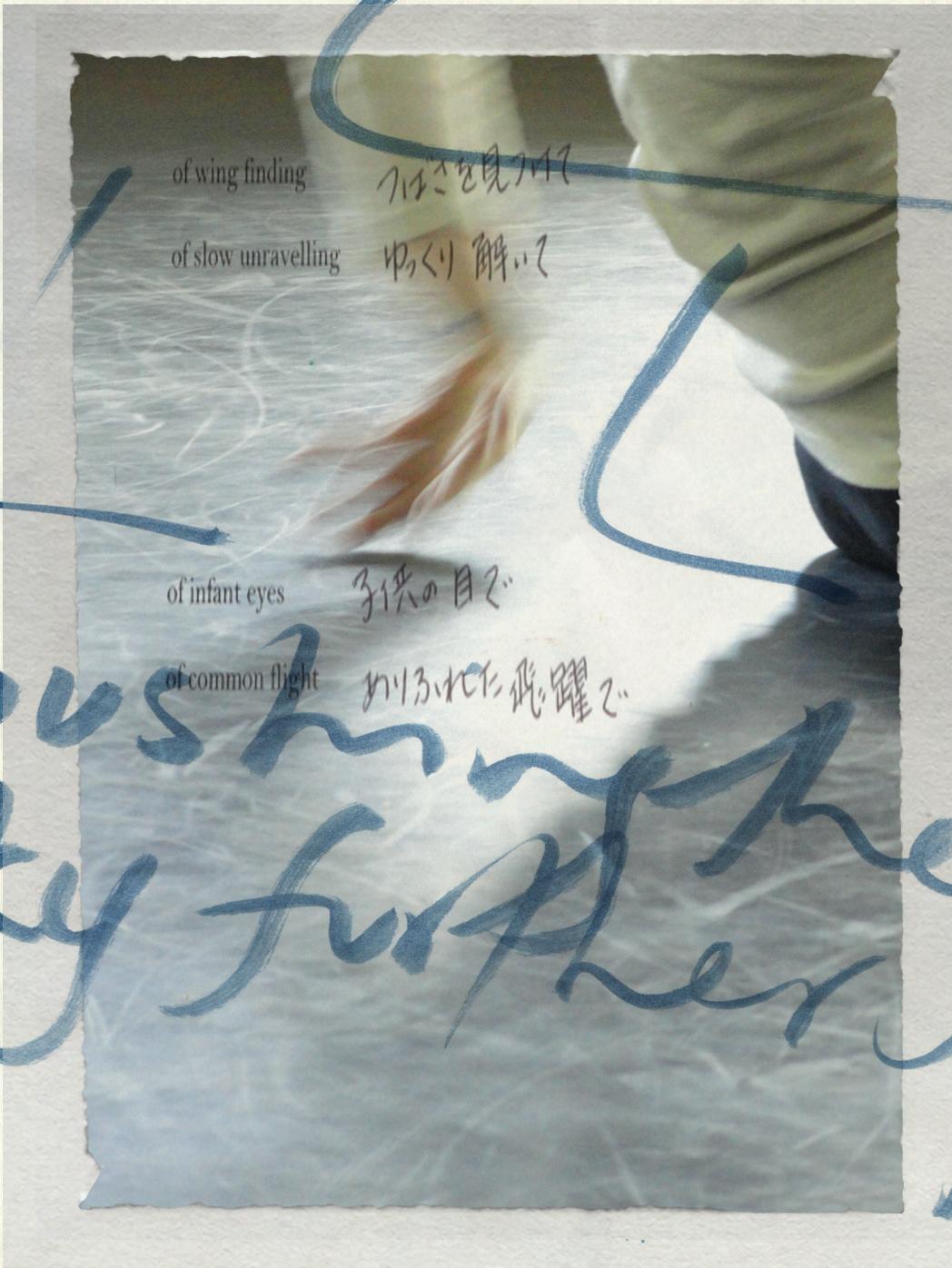
of infant eyes

子供の目で

of common flight

みんなの飛行

pushing the sky further up

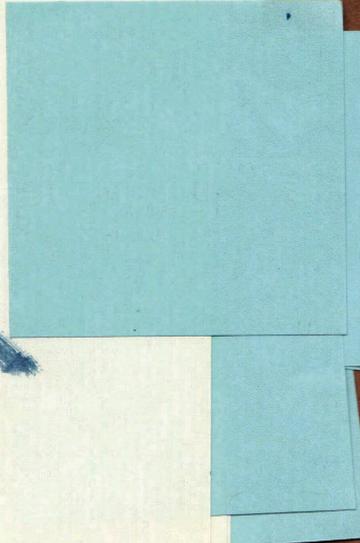




cast your shadow  
across another s shadow  
across a wall  
across a place of retail  
across a home for litter  
and each time document  
the shape of the casting

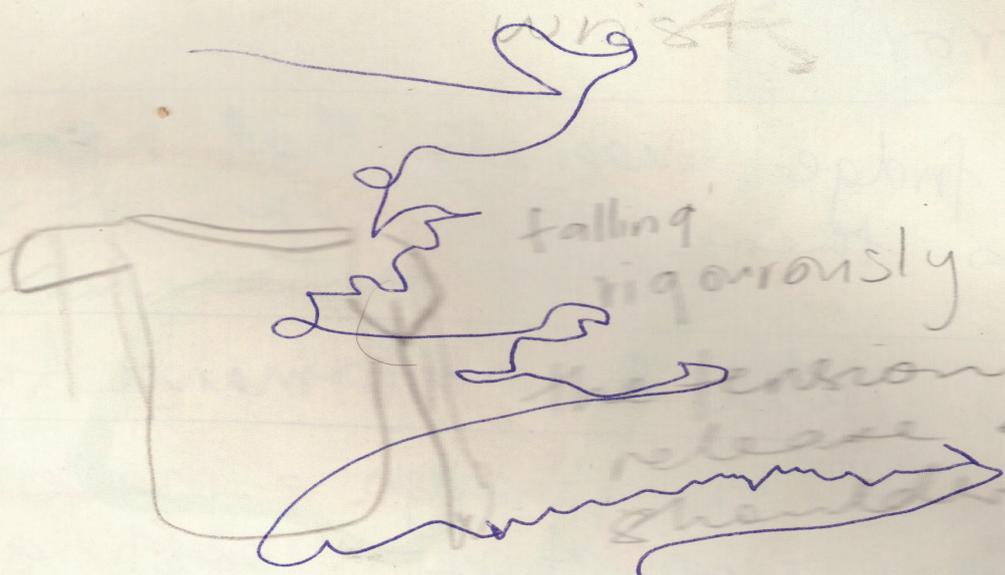
a finger space between  
words  
a finger space between  
a finger meaning  
a space a finger  
a space a space

wrapped  
K





or carefully find your



I had gone to Mt. Fuji it was  
 the first time that I had been  
 a wife of passage ~~for love~~  
 couldn't, it was winter  
 wish for, arrive at ~~the~~ lake, Lake Kawaguchi,  
 hummingous lake, Lake Kawaguchi,  
 see every postcard you've ever seen,  
 a Kimono museum I forget the  
 name, a series of ~~the~~ dyed  
 Kimonos where ~~each~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~made~~ ~~to~~ ~~mountain~~  
 Attach into the Kimono ~~please~~ ~~please~~ ~~please~~ ~~send~~ ~~me~~



the way your eyes come  
the movement of your image

and then ajar  
the palm of hand reads a  
language of an  
a number of accounts  
counted on her fingers

Reprinting from a live print

August 2012

2.30 Thursday

4 more minute.

---



it's a sound, but it's not a sound,

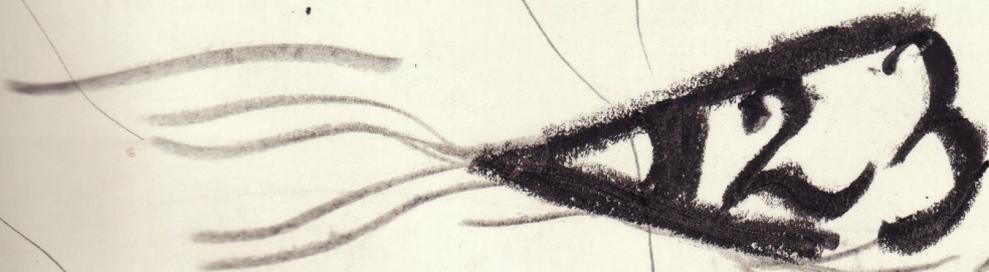
it's just a sound that you're <sup>and then</sup> ~~imagining~~ <sup>there is the</sup> shadow

a  
second  
division  
prominence

and

then

cracks  
ajar



when  
accidents  
happen

to see  
the skin  
& its

formations



A black and white photograph of two people standing on a sidewalk in a yard. They are holding red plastic chairs over their heads. The person on the left is wearing a patterned t-shirt and dark pants, while the person on the right is wearing a dark t-shirt and light shorts. The background features a house with a brick base and a wooden fence, with dense foliage behind them. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

space's body  
held by time  
travelling anyways  
blind flying  
rising intonation  
voices longing  
where flesh meets  
where skin meets  
flying intonation  
blind voices  
held by travelling  
skin meets time  
flesh voices  
anyways body



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