



Dear Reader,

This zine is a collection of images, letters, and annotations which document Correspondence as Care, a collaborative project involving RCA postgraduate researchers from the MRes Arts and Humanities pathway.

Meeting each other for the first time in September 2021, researchers introduced themselves and the work they had come to the RCA to do by choosing an object connected to their individual projects that required ongoing care. There were found objects and made objects, treasured objects and toxic objects, natural objects and leaking objects, objects from the 'graveyard of a desk drawer', objects discarded and then retrieved. Researchers explained the significance of these objects to themselves as artists, and to the world their work was engaged with, and then, they exchanged them, entrusting their care to one another.

But how could they care for each other's things? Over the course of some weeks, researchers wrote to one another about the objects, coming to know their own and each other's work by articulating many, many different practices of care (carry it, water it, sit with it, listen to it...). In the process of sending and receiving letters, researchers came to an understanding of how correspondence in and of itself might operate as a practice of care within arts and humanities research: a way of reaching one another, and responding to one another; of foregrounding mutuality, reciprocity, and solidarity.

My thanks to all involved, and to all who engage with this work,

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Bryony James

Betty & Dane

✓

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

Dear Betty,

I am writing to express what the object means to me and to provide suggestions for the preservation and care of the artefact.

I have chosen to share, give and shed light on a wood carving of a candle and candle holder. The object was made in the spring 2021 and is made from tulip wood. The base was made using a lathe, and the stick and flame was carved using a chisel. At the time of the work's fabrication, I was interested in exploring notions of time in relation to capitalism where I utilise text and traditional joinery techniques to create a 'carrier' for modern day stories. I gave the object the title of 'Cyn Bo Hir' / 'Before Long' (2021) which was inspired by John Brown's method of working. Brown was a renowned Welsh chairmaker who often used to keep a candle on the edge of his studio bench. The candle would be lit each time he began working on one of his chairs, and this would enable him to keep track on how long a chair took to make so he could price each job accordingly. Furthermore, Brown was anti-machine, therefore the candle and candle holder is carved from tulip wood which references the material of the chair. Additionally, the process of hand carving is an anti-capitalist act as it abandons the machine and its association with mass production and efficiency. I feel a strong connection to the stories that surround the object as I was born and raised in North Wales, and cultural identity is an important aspect of my work. The word 'light' in Welsh is 'golau' which can mean bright, light, or fair depending on the context.

The object relates to my current project because candles are often considered as missing artefacts to archeologists. I am interested in the belonging and absence of historical artefacts as well as the act of restitution and returning lost or missing relics. Due to the properties of candles, they did not survive in the material record and thus failed to be archived. This fact raises some interesting questions about consumables as artefacts. Candles can tell us much about the material culture of urban life as nearly everyone would have been a consumer due to light being necessary for nocturnal living, particularly during the winter months in the UK. Moreover, objects and artefacts associated with candles and oil-lighting reflect subtle changes in both consumption and production. Even though vast developments with lighting did not occur prior to the eighteenth century, they allude towards a society making the most of an antique technology, which has been utilised in Europe since the Roman period. Traditional wood carving is a process used to restore certain museum artefacts. Prior to archaeologists' adoption of the word "artefact," the word was utilised to describe skilfully made objects. The 1981 definition reduces an artefact to an object that is artificially produced and can include "anything made or modified by human art." The object that requires care can be described as an artefact as the word derives from the Latin word "arte," referring to anything made by skill.

I do not wish to prescribe to anybody how to exactly care for this object but instead make some practical suggestions as I believe this should be decided by the carer of the object. Firstly, it can be advised to keep the artefact away from fire as well as the

rain as tulip wood is prone to rot. Even though this wood has low bending tendencies and is solid for its weight, it may reshape or warp after drying out from being wet.

Therefore, the object belongs inside, within an interior space. Apt locations for the candle and candle holder could include a room with a fireplace as this would reference the natural light source as well as the natural material from which this artefact is made from. Additionally, the object may need to be cleaned occasionally with a feather duster or such alike as it could collect dust or remnants, particularly in the bowl of the candle holder. When moving location, it may be necessary to wrap the object in bubble wrap, tissue paper or other suitable protective materials to avoid damage. If the artefact is no longer on display, it may be required to store the wood carving in a cardboard box or bag, with its contents clearly labelled. Furthermore, there are some particularly fragile parts of the candle/candle holder. For example, the handle is thin and could break with heavy-handedness. Additionally, the candle shaft is not firmly connected and thus could easily break off the base. Ideally, the object would be positioned on a flat surface or object such as on a shelf, book or window ledge. The sculpture specifically emulates the shape of a chamberstick which would have normally been used when reading, writing or for providing light when moving from one part of the home to another. This would have been the case particularly prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the absence of electricity and the light bulb. Further, the word "chamber" in chamberstick alludes to the notion that this specific candle holder would have been used to take to the bedroom. Therefore, the bedroom may also be another suitable location for the object.

I hope that this letter encapsulates what the artefact means to me as well as its connections to ideas, stories, histories, and archaeology. I also hope that the suggestions provided within this letter for the object's maintenance and care are clear, achievable, and allow room for you to make your own judgements in relation to the care of the object.

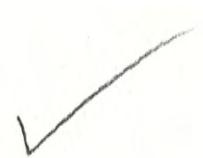
Best wishes and take care,

Dane

D.Briscoe



Betty + Dane



Dear Dane,

I hope this letter finds you well.

It has been three weeks since we exchanged our sentimental items. From you, I received a wooden candle. I write as I look at its unextinguishable wooden flame, the molten wooden wax, and the circular dish the candle sits on. Although wholly made of wood, and although there is no luminous halo around the flame, it still manages to bring warmth into the room. Perhaps it is the material; wood does tend to have a calming effect on people, or perhaps after three weeks of gazing at it, I have come to believe that it is no less than a real candle.

I often use a candle as an object that keeps time, the constant flame and its self-sufficient cycle of keeping itself alive through, ironically, burning itself. But yours, this wooden candle you beautifully carved, managed to throw time keeping off balance. The undying flame and the unshortened height defy the law of time. As the unwavering fire blares in my imagination, I lose myself in deep thought, travelling through different moments of my life.

- accurate  
by skill

You received a few postcards in exchange for the wooden candle, one containing some Japanese Fuji Sencha. I realise that there is concise instruction on how to brew the tea on the back of the postcard tea, but if I may, I would like to provide some tips and tricks on how to get the most out of tea drinking.

milled by hand

Sencha  
(thin, straight  
needles)

Significant to  
culture.

- consumable

warmth  
time  
paradox

Additional  
instructions  
tips  
suggesting  
knowledge +  
experience.

Chado =  
tea ceremony  
generally  
longer process

I don't have  
the correct  
equipment for  
matcha and  
thus have  
reached  
Sencha  
instead.

an aim or  
objective?

Serenity not  
rigour or  
constraints or  
rules

closed  
eyes

Additional  
instructions

- stay quiet  
during  
extraction

meaning

The setting / Environment shared event or "ceremony"

postcard please do not worry about precision. This process should introduce a sense of serenity. Rigour is an ordeal that is encouraged to be left behind. Although there may be only you, Dane, who would be participating in drinking this tea, or perhaps you would kindly invite your family or friends to join. May I humbly request that you proceed, from preparation to drinking, in a quiet space, somewhere you and your guests would not be disturbed, somewhere you feel calm and safe. And if the weather allows, let the comfortable breeze of the autumn wind travel through the window's opening and onto you like a longed and full embrace of a loved one. Without music playing in the background, allow the natural sounds of the environment beyond the window to play as an organic tune. Once you are ready, let all the elements of your surroundings lead you into a calm meditative state. - at peace, mindful with nature?

As you infuse the sencha into the waiting water, patiently provide around 45 seconds to a minute for a tasteful extraction of the tea's essence. During this time, perhaps stay silent, notice and appreciate the environment you had placed yourself in. Once you pour out the tea from the spout of your teapot, bring your teacup to your nose, close your eyes and smell the aroma of the green tea. Let the steam warm up your face and take a sip. Hopefully, you would find the tea gliding down your throat comfortably, kindly warming up your body and soul. Steam warmth - water cycle

While repeating the process of sipping, if you are by yourself, direct your attention to your body and mind. Use this time to reflect and notice your thoughts, discomforts, emotions. Let this be an extrinsic and intrinsic reflection, let go of the impurities or unwanted feelings. Relinquish ties to the superficial and return to your soul's original and purest state. If with your guests, appreciate this moment of gathering as this may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Through the tone you talk in and through the gentleness of your pouring, treat your guests with respect and hospitality.

Despite not holding this tea drinking in a traditional setting with proper tools, it is in the end, the sincerity that matters the most. I hope you will find this process enjoyable, calming, and fruitful in better understanding yourself.

As for the postcards, please direct one to you, Dane. Write on it the words that you wish to tell yourself, perhaps of encouragement or maybe appreciation.

I hope this letter is not overstaying your welcome, and please forgive me on instructing you how to brew tea and proceed with preparations. My intention was never to tell you how it should be appropriately done and what emotions it should evoke, but rather guide you to create your understanding of it.

Conditions /  
environment  
for drinking  
the tea  
- A quiet  
place  
without disturbance  
- calm +  
safe  
- no noise

Additional  
equipment  
(Ceremony)  
- tea cup  
- tea pot  
- silent  
environment

Sincerity  
over  
technique  
or process  
materials

Kind regards,  
Betty

Betty

Dane

✓



Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2021

Dear Betty,

Thank you for your previous letter which clearly and carefully outlined instructions for how to prepare and make a cup of Sencha tea. It was very thoughtful in the sense that you were considerate and aware of the fact that the utensils and equipment used to make Matcha tea may be absent in my kitchen and many other European households. I remember the presentation you gave on the cast iron teapot and was impressed with its age, history, stories and sentiment attached to the object. I know that the ritual that you described would not be possible to conduct within my space, and therefore thank you for providing me with an alternative. I am also grateful for the insightful description and analysis of the object that you received to care and for highlighting the parallels between the object you gave and what you received. It was also fascinating to read the connections that you made between the wooden artefact that you received and the notion of time. As you mentioned, unlike a normal candle flame used to keep track of time by ironically burning itself to remain lit, the carving of the candle "managed to throw the time keeping off balance" as the shortened height of the candle "defies the law of time." Indeed, time and ritual are also important subjects regarding your own object, where the build-up of minerals at the bottom of the tea pot enhances the overall experience of the tea drinking process. I will ensure that I redirect my energy on the body and mind when sipping Matcha tea, to create a more meaningful and soul enriching experience.

As you described in the previous correspondence, the thought of the flickering flame allows you to "lose [yourself] in deep thought, travelling through different moments of [your] life." I was interested in elaborating on the role of memory in relation to my current research, as my practice currently investigates the acts of unearthing, storing, and remaking historical artefacts. Additionally, the slowed down process of tea making, and the anti-textbook approach that you mention allows time for a moment of catharsis and for the time and space for memories to unfold. As well as the finding comfort in memories, I am also interested in the unreliable and inaccurate nature of memories. For example, humans' ability to fill in the gaps in history, or overly prioritise or underrecognize certain aspects of history to create a historical narrative. Paul Ricoeur's book entitled 'Memory, History, forgetting' is a key text when exploring the required relationship between remembering events and forgetting them. As well as analysing memory and its selective nature, it will also be important to consider how memories are shared and versed. Different sources of receiving information vary considerably from relying on folklore, stories told through word of mouth, mythology, colloquial stories, tales to archaeology reports in order to understand a version of our shared history. It is also important to remember the fact that memories and stories are always shared by a person with a unique perspective and differing past experiences.

People are prone to inadvertently inaccurate story telling when recalling the details of past events. This is done by filling in the gaps of stories which do not happen to be true, but the storyteller becomes convinced by the untruths used to finish the story without intent of deception.

The tulip wood carving could be a product of inaccurate reproduction as its making relied on hand tools (with the absence of machine) and the unreliable nature of memory to re-call and re-create the shape and texture of the original candle holder, handle, and flame. During the carving process, some strikes of carving would have been made using the naked eye, and others made using guesswork. Thus, its remaking could reassemble the original, yet remain erroneous in its details. As mentioned earlier in this letter, as well as relying on the individual's memory to inadvertently create inaccurate productions, relying on unreliable sources also runs the risk of creating erroneous reproduction or restoration. This fact evokes the problematic and paradoxical restoration attempt of the ancient city of Knossos (in Crete, Greece) in 1899 by the city's discoverer, Sir Arthur Evans. The restoration relied on ancient drawing, and subjective sources such as Greek Mythology to 'complete' the city. However, it is important to consider that restoring the city and its monuments in the very first place can be problematic as objects of the past could have been intentionally broken, and thus attempting to restore them could be an act of destruction. Additionally, seeking to fill in the gaps of stories and histories through acts of restoration ignores the notion that sometimes the absence of stories or relics can offer more insight into history than what is present, and thus shedding light on aspects of history that was previously forgotten about.

I hope that I have been able to draw on both the object that I have given to you as well as the objects that I have received when discussing the importance of analysing memory as a subject in relation to the unearthing, interpreting, and restoring or remaking of historical artefacts. Additionally, I have summarised the fact that artefacts and objects such as your tea pot or the candle and candle holder that you received can act as vessels for stories, memories, and ideas. I look forward to conducting my own ritual with the tea that you kindle gave me, allowing time for calm reflection, recollection, and for the unfolding of memories.

Best wishes and take care,

Dane

D.B. Bruce.

Betty

Dane

✓

Dear Dane,

Thank you for your kindly detailed letter regarding how to take care of your artefact, which I will gladly start calling 'Cyn Bo Hir'. May I begin by saying just how beautiful the name is and the meaning 'before long' is indeed quite adequate for the naming of your candle? Before long... the ambiguity of time flickers within the unwavering of the candle's flame.

Your inspiration for John Brown's method of working is intriguing, as if I recall correctly, I also stated in my letter we had exchanged a fortnight ago that I also often use candles as timekeepers. I am not comparing myself to the well-respected Brown, of course, but interesting how at different stamps on a seemingly linear timeline, candles are used synonymously by different people in different geographical locations to start a burning stopwatch, to measure the beginning and the end of an activity. While their flames burn on, these candles branch out of the main timeline and create their own. I suppose the only difference is that they can be stopped and resumed at the wishes of their owners and affected by the finite amount of wax remaining. Whereas the timeline that we have subconsciously subscribed ourselves to is never ending, never pausing. In a way, I envy candles; they have the power to control time, to tell time at their own pace and will. But what also fascinates me is that while your *Cyn Bo Hir* and Brown's chairs are both crafted in at the will or with the idea of the candles, the concept of time control has also been crafted into your objects through the workings of your chisels - *Cyn Bo Hir*'s unwavering flame, and Brown's everlasting chairs.

Through the photos of Brown's marvellously crafted Welsh stick chairs, I felt the enticing power that lures me to sit on it, to use it. This feeling made me realise that within the successfully and meticulously crafted objects, or as you say, artefacts, every single detail measured by the craftsmen will make you want to utilise it, as they are objects of daily use.

I recently read *The Beauty of Everyday Things* by Soetsu Yanagi, which entails detailed assessments of folk arts, aesthetically and skillfully made objects by artisans. In Yanagi's words, everyday objects handcrafted by craftsmen have hearts, forbearance, wholesomeness and sincerity. Unlike capitalistic machine mass-produced objects, which encapsulate only "standardised beauty [which is] calibrated and fixed", folk crafts exceed standardised aesthetics and embody utilitarianism. Craftsmen such as John Brown eschew individual ambition, lost in time to creating practical artefacts, unself-conscious and unself-aware.

Both Brown and Yanagi are anti-machine, recognising the values of handcrafted works. Such qualities could also be found in the items I had passed onto you. Firstly, the tea leaves; handpicked on the slopes of Mount Fuji by Master Akiyama and processed in his relatively small workhouse. Master Akiyama is not a commercial tea farmer who produces tea for profit; his limited 10-acre farmland is manageable by him and his trusted assistants and sold only to those who seek true indulgence in tea. Through his persistence and attention to the minute details during the creation of

tasteful natural tea, he manages, without artificial additives, to produce a natural and well-balanced floral and fruity aftertaste.

Secondly, on the postcards print my tetsubin, the cast iron pot made hundreds of years ago, by the intricate hands of blacksmiths from an era I long to exist in, the age of folk art and culture. The tetsubin was adorned by turtles ... may I interject with intriguing information... I have recently come across the word *tetsudinal*, an adjective relating to, or resembling a tortoise, turtle or the shell of said animal!! Perhaps a coincidence, but I felt an excitement when I realised the relationship between the animal adorned exceeds the cultural symbolisation of longevity and wisdom. But yes, back to the topic of folk crafts, the tetsubin did not receive machine treatment, as there were no machines back the Meiji period, only skilled and knowledgeable blacksmiths. The idea of mass production and capitalism has not yet infected the minds of artisans. Their job was simple, repetitive, but challenging handcraft, to a uniform but high standard, an object made of quality material, its beauty and form not conforming to trend but made absolute sense and function. With this principle in mind, the craftsman had created my tetsubin; its material has allowed it and supported it to outlive its former companions.

My tetsubin is a symbol, much like your *Cyn Bo Hir*, Brown's Welsh Stick Chairs and Master Akiyama's sencha, of craft and of timelessness. Through our objects and references, I had the pleasure to experience a temporary pause in time. I travelled, through imagination, to the branched-out timelines of each of these items, and appreciated the warmth that the craftsmen had transferred through care, attentiveness and touch. And before long ... I felt a sense of peace, of the warmth delivered through the flickers of fire that radiated out of your *Cyn Bo Hir*, my tetsubin and tea.

Kind regards,  
Betty  
10<sup>th</sup> November, 2021

Krysia

Wengji

✓

**telescope**  
/tel'skōp/  
Greek  
tele- "far" in space or time  
+  
skopos "watcher"

**microscope**  
/mīk'roskōp/  
Greek  
Mikros - "small"  
+  
'skopein' "to look at."

**globe**  
/glōb/  
Latin  
"spherical object"

**planet**  
/plānēt/  
Greek  
"wanderer"  
noun: a celestial body moving in an elliptical orbit around a star.

intricate web of metabolic processes billions of years ago so that it could become conducive to the evolution of other forms of life.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, our guts are filled with anaerobic bacteria that existed before the world even had oxygen, therefore we are planetary.

I read an interesting scientific article this week which discussed the community composition of microbes colonising aquatic plastic debris and other forms of anthropogenic litter.<sup>4</sup> It described the plastic surface as being a raft for microbial communities and wanted to characterise these in contrast to sea water or glass colonising communities for example. In plastiglomerate, we see the blending and merging of different types of plastics with sediment, lava, rope, wood and coral to create a plastic-rock hybrid. In doing so, we are bringing together different communities of microorganisms to live together as global communities on strange miniature planets that we have created. Different organisms that wouldn't usually interact are being brought together in a biofilm, which is when lots of different types of bacteria and other microbes are grown together on a surface, and are known to cooperate and even communicate with one another. They are forced to adapt and respond to the strange new handheld worlds we have created. There are so many plastiglomerates that we have almost created a universe. We are witnessing symbiosis from a god-like perspective.

Like Eames' seminal 'Powers of Ten' video<sup>5</sup>, I propose we fly through the scales to focus on these tiny inhabitants; from the telescopic and the global to the microscopic and the planetary. These handheld universes are interesting specimens for microscopic exploration. Will these plastiglomerate planets become timepieces helping us to express the whole?

Please see the microscope slides enclosed as representations of the worlds you need to care for. You have become its omnipotent, omniscient and hopefully omnibenevolent steward.

"Where the telescope ends, the microscope begins. Which of the two possesses the larger field of vision?"  
Victor Hugo<sup>1</sup>

As I think about plastiglomerate, I find myself envisioning massive swathes of swirling ocean and the mammoth voyages of tiny plastic fragments, journeys incomparable to their size. Ebbing, flowing, circling. I find myself viewing it from above; looking at maps, analysing global simulations, tracking oceanic current patterns and locating dispersing nodes.

During the space race, we viewed the world from beyond for the first time. We saw mesmerising images of a suspended orb which we felt other from. This has now been translated into a globe, an abstract ball of latitudes and longitudes held within digital systems<sup>2</sup> for us to analyse and view from multiple angles, to feel like we have full comprehension of it. The globe is a cartographic reading, but we are planetary creatures rather than global agents. Within in, rather than above and beyond it.

The Gaia hypothesis considers the earth and its biological systems to behave as a single entity that is controlled by self-regulatory feedback loops that maintain conditions that are favourable to life. Gaia is symbiosis, symbiosis is Gaia. According to microbiologist Lynn Margulis, the Gaia theory pays special attention to microorganisms, the molecular pieces of the puzzle that are actually the most critical in modulating the biosphere in which we live. Bacteria, the most basic form of life, covered our planet in an

<sup>1</sup> Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), in OverDrive <<https://ofis-732e1866a2fb8b80ba637cad9645c541.read.overdrive.com>> [accessed 25 October 2021], p.1,254.

<sup>2</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p.72.

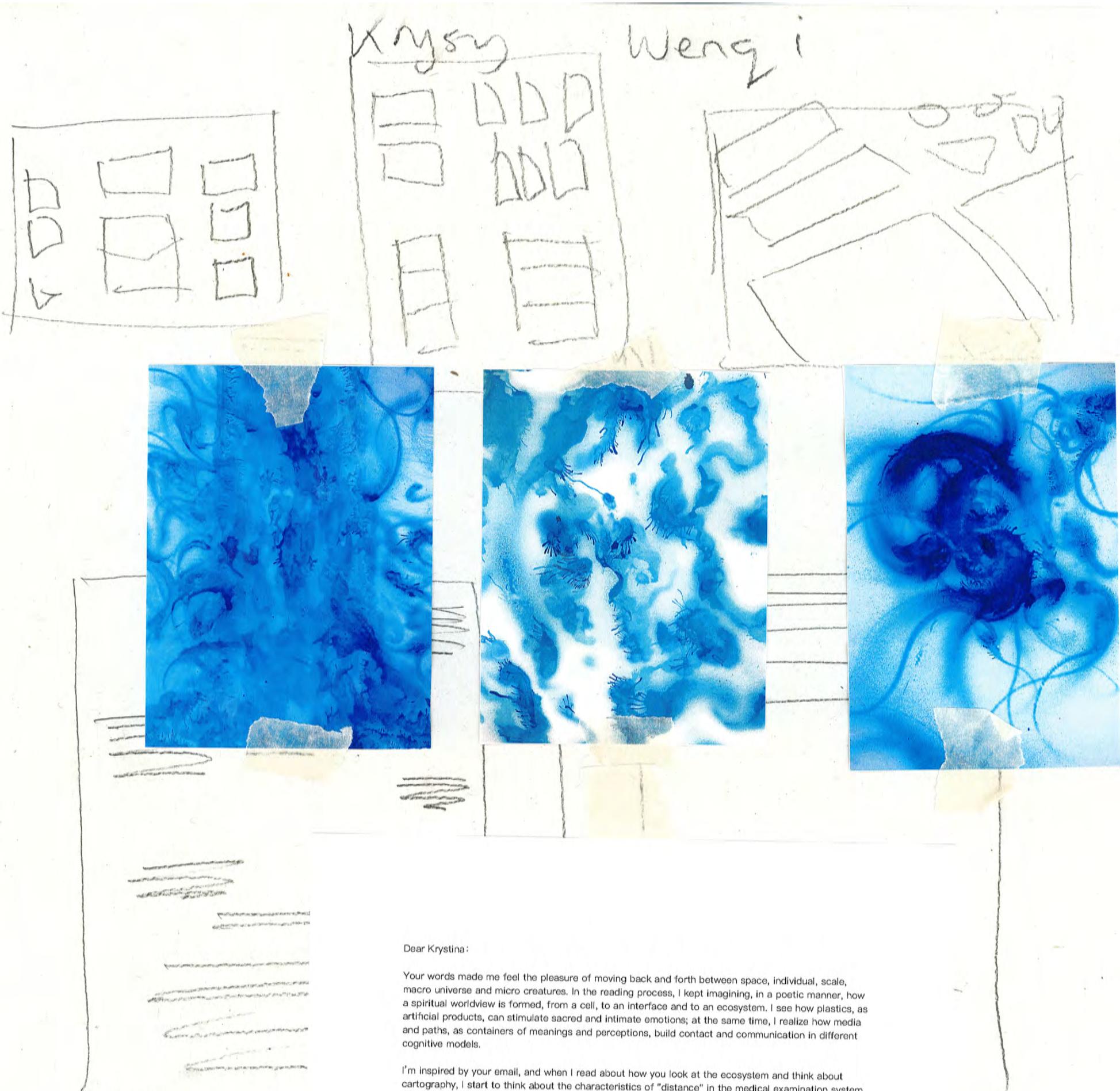
<sup>3</sup> Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi, *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.351.

<sup>4</sup> Sonja Oberbeckmann, A. Mark Osborn and Melissa B. Duhaime, 'Microbes on a Bottle: Substrate, Season and Geography Influence Community Composition of Microbes Colonizing Marine Plastic Debris', *PLoS ONE*, 11, 8 (2016), 1-24 (p.1)

<sup>5</sup> Eames Office, 'Powers of Ten™ (1977)', online video recording, YouTube, 27 August 2010, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fKBlvDjuy0>> [accessed 12 October 2021].



Kelly Jazvac, *Plastiglomerates*, 2013, sculpture. La Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy. Photo credit Jeff Elstone



Dear Krystyna:

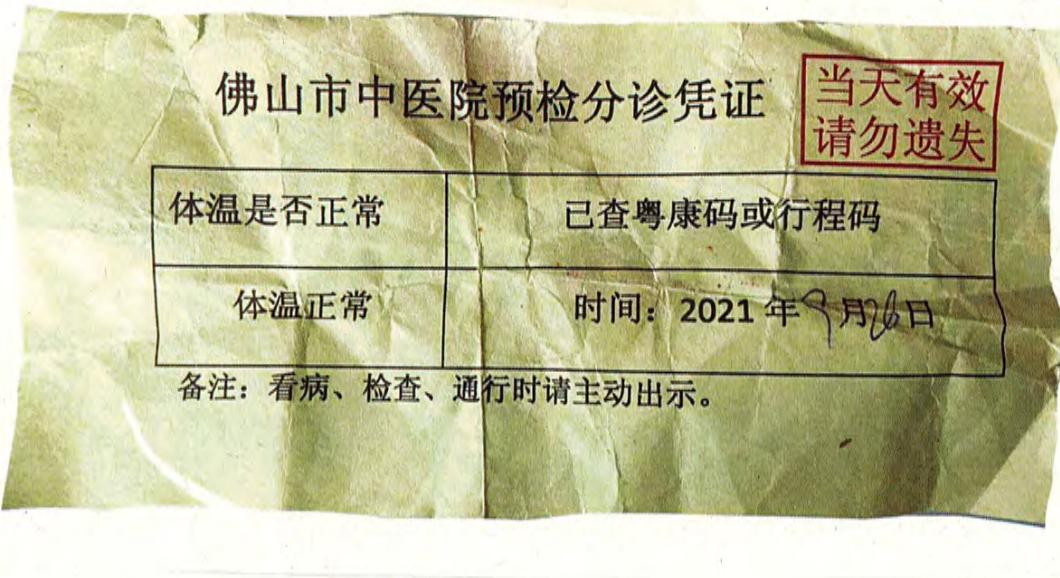
Your words made me feel the pleasure of moving back and forth between space, individual, scale, macro universe and micro creatures. In the reading process, I kept imagining, in a poetic manner, how a spiritual worldview is formed, from a cell, to an interface and to an ecosystem. I see how plastics, as artificial products, can stimulate sacred and intimate emotions; at the same time, I realize how media and paths, as containers of meanings and perceptions, build contact and communication in different cognitive models.

I'm inspired by your email, and when I read about how you look at the ecosystem and think about cartography, I start to think about the characteristics of "distance" in the medical examination system and records. Since the end of the 18th century, doctors began to eliminate the "distance" from patients when doing visual inspections. Thanks to the development of new clinical tools, medical diagnosis did not stop at the surface of the human body, and instead, it could inspect the internal organs directly. This "clinical distance" has been much shortened. Michel Foucault describes this situation as "directing our eyes to a continuously visible world." Now, the images produced by virtual technology once again manipulate the scale in the medical gaze, bringing it into a bodily universe constructed completely artificially.

Britta Schinzel believes that the human body is becoming more and more porous, be it in symbolism, imagery or in reality, human biomaterials continue to circulate as de-individualized materials, and the boundaries of identity and the unity of organisms are once again being abolished by technology. As you said, the earth is abstracted and integrated by the geographic mapping system, and the body in disease is being completely represented by mapping and data. It becomes fixed, objective, quantitative and linear. Nowadays, medical examinations allow doctors to study an object (human body) only from the perception of an image. When I observe these examination reports that cannot be interpreted by my cognitive experience, the unknown aspects of the disease stimulate my obsession and fantasy towards the sacredness and spirituality of technical images. Rethy K. Chhem believes that the medical cartographic system is a process of imaging and imagination; and in Plato's allegory of the cave, if those who find freedom from the cave will always be the ones who understand the shadow and cannot construct reality, then what kind of boundaries and spaces could the patient's fantasy be taken to and retained in?

My imagination of the microscopic level of the body comes from the term "perfusion" in medical terms, which refers to the movement of fluids to organs or tissues through the circulation or lymphatic system. As the circulation of the blood in the diseased area is closely linked to my feeling of pain, the severity of pain becomes the only way for me to perceive and imagine this microscopic "path". In addition to the spontaneous pain, the pain during the examination often troubles me. In fact, the doctor's visual inspection of the patient body, allows other senses, especially the sense of touch, to come along; Foucault once proposed the concept of "tactile authority": when the doctor uses transvaginal sonography to examine a woman's body, he is exercising medical authority on her body. I try to recall and feel the touch during the examination, or the process when the doctor applies sonography. Afterwards, I began to simulate the process, by controlling the spray of the airbrush when applying color on paper. In this way, I imagine and reproduce the sensory characteristics of the invisible. When tactile authority and medical data dominate the diagnosis, when the female body becomes a public space, can these sensory paintings that replace traditional medical records re-empower my agency and perception of disease? I hope that in the painting, you can put yourself in my gaze, follow my gaze, and feel what I feel. It is inevitable that during observation, your own gaze will intervene, and it may or may not direct to the imagination of my pain.

Wenqi 2021.11.7



Dear Krystina :

When I wrote you this letter of care, I was meditating on the piece of paper in front of me. In fact, as the holder of this pass, I have not fulfilled my duty to take care of it. It has been forgotten, as if it did not belong to anyone. At first I thought its value ended the moment I showed it to the nurse. It was often quickly folded up in embarrassment and quietly in the pocket of a particular garment. I chose to ignore or care for him because I had lost the courage to record the number of days of illness. Or because I couldn't cope with the fact that chronic illness took a long time to recover from, and these passes, like the slices of time I went through, carried certain moments in my illness. In fact, this nodeized, fragmented material record also partly symbolizes my perception of the time of disease: disease has replaced my personal will as the dominant person in physical activity. And my life has begun to be dominated by fragmented time plans. As Alison Kafer mentions in her book <Feminists, Queers, Crisps>: "Rather than bends disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds." So when I'm in good shape, I try to double the amount of work I can do to earn the freedom to rest at any time in the "sick time" that's possible at any time.

Chronic illness has brought about a state of physical and mental separation that I used to perceive only during meditation. I have come to realize that normal recording has become a source of stress for me during my recovery. Whether it's a calendar, the structure of a case record form, or a paper pass. These established rules of record allow my disease to exist in a linear model in two-dimensional space, as if it were a metaphor that my condition could only move forward in one direction. Its model is supposed to be a spiral of constant upward, between layers and levels, there are some overlapping retrogressive moments. Linear recording has somehow plunged me into paranoia about my condition. On days when it seems to be getting better, suddenly aggravating pain is like a stick in the head, knocking me out of stagnating time and space.

At the same time this anxiety seems to have been reminding me that pain, as an "outsider", exists, something that needs attention. It seems to be always "special" and unacceptable to other perceptions in my body. As xx says, the advantage of a symbol is that it is close to the body, but its disadvantage is that it is easily separated from the body spatially. Many nights I even question and think about why spontaneous pain causes me sadness and distress, because in fact I can sense that this is what the body wants to say to me. But my brain receives a signal of total resistance. I began to gradually reduce the time I recorded, gradually collecting these cases and notes. And interestingly, this neglect of the archives seemed to gradually open up my acceptance of pain.

I think the common feature of our objects may be that they are fragile and misplaced. Our perception of matter is all about time. I see precipitation, erosion, as a challenge posed by Anthropocene in these fossil images, and the time itself that has formed it and the process that is forming it. Each fossil carries traces of its formation as a slice of geological time, and your research and viewing, as an embedded angle, becomes a cross-space communication. Crosses the boundaries between humans and non-humans. This piece of paper has become so broken by my negligence that maybe you can put it in the book as a bookmark. When I exchanged this piece of paper with you, I realized that I had also surrendered my experience at this point in time, which made me feel less alone in the days of disease.

Wenqi Zou  
27/10/2021

Kryay Wengi

✓

Dear Wengi,

Each time I read your letter, I found myself unearthing new parallels between our work. I was really struck by your description of the yellow slips as a "foreign matter". It brought me back to the plastiglomerate samples and the way that they themselves are seen as foreign matter, not naturally created but formed from all sorts of abandoned components that have been joined together in a Frankensteinian process. I thought of all the abandoned slips in the corner of your room and considered the form they would assume as combined matter; an anthropomorphic representation of your pain, a plastiglomerate of your own.

Sometimes when things are too difficult to process, to consider or to behold they are pushed away, discarded and hidden. We dissociate from them and want to see them as something other, as not a part of us or our world. It is only when they are categorised as possessing that "speciality" you described, that the spotlight suddenly appears. I think of the plastiglomerate's former life, of being scavenged from debris to be carefully placed on plinths in art galleries and meticulously documented and stored in archives around the world. I think of your health on record, an endless stream of doctor's appointments and ceaseless paperwork documenting every physiological development within your body. I think of your slips and the plastiglomerate samples as documenting different types of entropy; of the body and of the environment.

I was also taken by your mention of time slices and these slips acting as milestones documenting certain moments of illness, a marker of your physical body's health. In a similar way I think of plastiglomerate as an anthropogenic marker of the planet's health, documenting the illness we have inflicted on the environment. The phrase "slices of time" reminds me of slices of geological time; periods, epochs, aeons and eras, of layers and layers of time compressed together. I contemplate your body as a geological record in itself, with these yellow slips forming layers and layers of moments which compound together to form a personal stratigraphy.

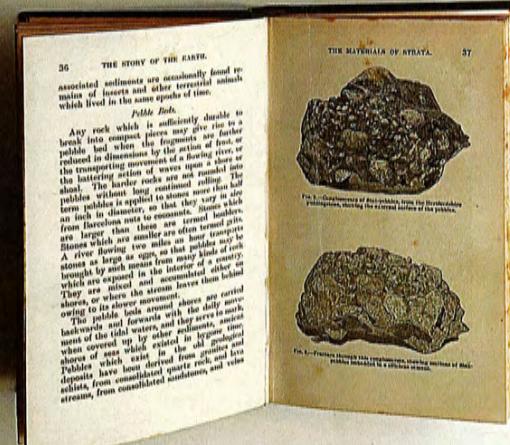
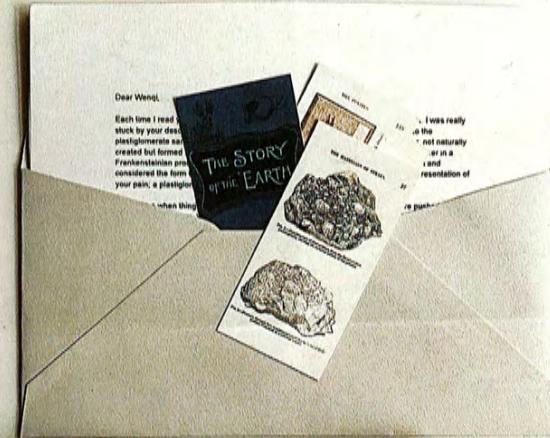
You mentioned that you sometimes struggle to have the courage to face time with your chronic illness. This has stayed with me since reading your letter. It made me contemplate the different theories and experiences of time, particularly nonlinear and crip time. I began thinking about the depiction of the whole of time in Carl Sagan's Cosmic Calendar where he aimed to condense the entire 13.8 billion year history of the universe into a single year to help visualise its chronology. At this scale, humans emerged on the very last day of the calendar year, with life as we know it only appearing in the final second. I find something oddly comforting about the compression and reduction of our entire species into the blink of an eye. Interestingly, earth's history is based on a very subjective reading of rock records. Boundaries vary from place to place and new methods have continually improved the accuracy of timing the formations of rocks, therefore changing the scales of time and our understanding of earth's history. Time seems to be a construct that is easily altered. It is uniquely experienced by everyone and our understanding of it is intrinsically contextual.

I know those yellow slips cause you anguish, so let's make slips of our own to replace them. While the yellow slips document pain and illness, I hope the slips I enclose will document all the interesting things we refer to in our letters, and of our friendship across the miles.

For my slips this week, I've attached some images from a book entitled 'The Story of the Earth' by H.G. Seeley. It's a beautiful book from 1895 that I have the pleasure of owning. There are some beautiful diagrams of earth's history and of geological time that I hope will bring you as much joy as they do me, and will give you the courage to face time when it feels difficult to do so.

Best wishes,  
Krystyna

CARE Post Office  
Close Seminar Room  
Royal College of Art  
1 Hester Rd.  
London  
SW11 4AN





Echo

May or

Echo Wang  
The CARE POST OFFICE  
(CLOSE SEMINAR ROOM)

Dear Echo,

By now you will have had my glasses for a couple of weeks. I hope you have enjoyed having them, and that they have enjoyed their holiday thus far.

Since lending you the glasses I have found out a little bit more about them. I think they belonged to my great grandfather - my namesake - Mayer Sacks. He was a Chemist who also practiced ophthalmology. I am, however, still uncertain whether the lenses in these glasses would have been his own prescription.

The glasses, to an extent, hold sentimental value to me. The great-grandfather that they belonged to was on my late father's side of the family. My dad adored his grandfather, so much that he named his daughter (me) after him. I only have a few living relatives remaining on that side of the family- and they all live in Israel. The glasses act, in some ways, as a way of looking into my family history. The image that they conjure, resting and looking up and down in Meyer's tattered pockets as he walked over to a bookcase, or to fetch his pipe, is one that paints a visual representation of him that is far more tactile than a photograph could ever be.

Although I am confident that you will have cared for the glasses well, and probably given them far more affection than

they have received in the past 100+ years, I attach some  
case instructions for them.

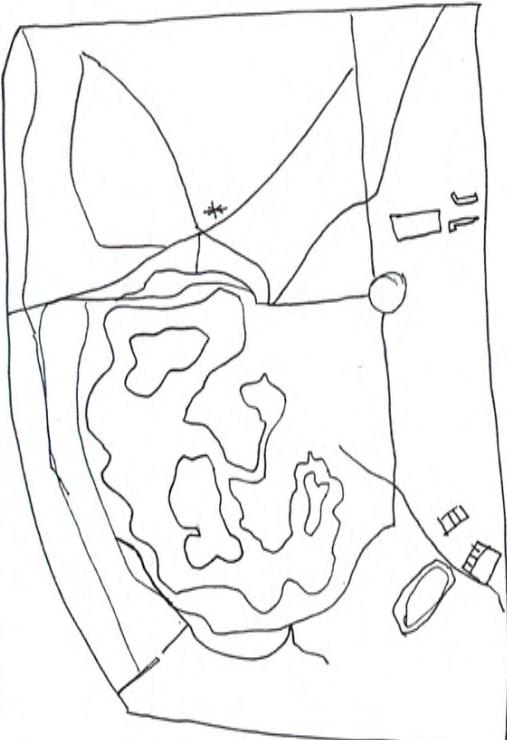
I would like to preface these instructions by saying that, whilst I would be truly touched by the thought and, hopefully reality, of someone else caring for an object which has no immediate meaning to them, if anything were to happen to them whilst in your care, PLEASE do not worry. They are old and have living lived a fulfilling life sitting on my great grandfather's here, and more recently in a drawer in my house. This project has encouraged me to fit them out from a kind of graveyard of items that have been lost by one member of the household and found by another who hasn't, sure what to do with it. They have been brought out and become the focus of a project that without which, they may have remained in that drawer for another twenty odd years. Object one for using, I'd rather they were used & loved, than preserved & forgotten.

The glasses are, however very fragile. Considering their articulated arms, they are susceptible to snapping! (Readily about snap them). When taking them out of their case (which I encourage you to store them in) slowly & carefully twist the lenses apart, and slowly unfold the arms. From this point do as you wish with them. Feel free to wear them, to let other people try them on, or just look at them.

It is also possible the screws will come loose - it has happened before. If this happens, you have two options. You can either keep the parts + screw safe until you return home, or you can attempt to fix it with a tiny screwdriver. Leave this decision up to you.

The glasses come in a sweet little engraved case. I encourage you to store the glasses in their case - especially if you are transporting them around or carrying them in a bag. They are designed to be portable so do not hesitate to bring them outside if you so desire. They are small & vulnerable to getting lost - something to be aware of.  
When you are finished with the glasses, carefully fold the cases, one over the other & bring the lenses back together. I am so glad the glasses were given to someone so excited by them - I hope they bring you lots of joy.  
Thank you for looking after them,

Would you do a bit of rendering of those three leaves every day/week if you wish. Try not to tear them, you can trace around the diary? Translate the leave's color and shape onto a daily / weekly. Could you please return them daily / weekly. Could you please return the chance of returning back to the dirt. The tree is in the best condition for the field. I've attached the map next to the green end. This is a lot to ask. You up to the task? Thank you for keeping them. Please let me know what you think we can do with them. I am not sure how the colors change? In the meantime, keep the leaves detailed. I hope you will find this in your notebook. They are really fragile. Feel free to draw on them picturing a color pick out tool.... or color edges, didn't let them blow here. Could they never have any difference from the day before. That's not for keeping them hide and seek in your notebook. They are



The first tree by the end of the road.

Echo. Maya



Dear Maya,

I feel so grateful that you can share such personal things with me, the story that the glasses contained. The details of the bookcase, the glasses and the pipe really painted the picture in my mind. And brought me closer and had a more intimate towards the glasses.

I was first drawn to the glasses, in the mail room, because the exquisite mechanics. It can be folded and unfold in the most unexpected ways, so small and portable. I spent a lot of time when I was younger, being really ~~more~~ obsessed with mortise and tenon, making trick boxes. And I have studied the glasses's mechanics and trying to make something of a replica of the similar mechanics. The condition of it being still so great just shows back in the days, things are built to last. And how much care and caution have been putted in taking care of this glasses.

From your last letter, the lively description of your great grandpa really resonated with me. My mom always tells me the stories of her grandpa and his study. He was a psychologist and worked at local school. He used to make my mom memorize everything <sup>that are not for touch</sup> on his table, "grandpa's brush are not for touch, grandpa's glasses are not for touch, grandpa's ink are not for touch, grandpa's paper weight are not for touch..." And after learning it for the whole afternoon,



my mom broke into tears and finally realized everything on his study desk are not for touch. And the most surprising thing is that I'm actually named after him as well. ~~His~~ His name was ~~He~~ Kit (Chóng yè), and ~~my~~ My official name at register is FANG HANQ but noone in my family really calls me that (unless they are furious with me). As I was growing up they called my ~~He~~ He (yè yè), which means leaves, and it's the same pronunciation as my great grandpa's ~~He~~ name. Oh, recently I got a cat in my life and I named her after my mom, you can see there's a bit of loop going around.

I was very sorry to hear about your father. I haven't experienced any of my close relatives passed away, and it is often a thought that terrifies me, my grandparents raised me since I was 2 years old. Because of covid, I haven't seen them in two years already. I'm not trying to pretend I can possibly understand what you had gone through, I don't think it's even possible for anyone to emphasize with something that is so personal to you. But I do wish I could let you know that I ~~also~~ acknowledge your pain.

With love,  
Echo Han Wang.  
~~He~~

*Echo Mayer*

✓

Echo Wang  
THE CARE POST OFFICE  
(Clore Seminar Room)

Dear Echo,

I will type this up - but I like writing my letters to you by hand first as it feels more natural.

I'd like to start by saying: I loved your letter. I think it was totally beautiful and so considerate. Your compassion for the leaves was really touching. I have been trying to understand why it was so moving - and I think it lies in the subtlety of your writing. It was by no means an ode to the leaves, but the way you spoke about them has made me so much more conscious of the individuality of each leaf as I walk down the autumn-kissed streets.

I was struck by your use of 'preserve/observe' in your care instructions. I love the idea that the two are related, and that in preservation we are able to fully *observe*, and that in fully observing, we in turn *preserve*. This was particularly interesting for me, as my project is all about looking, observing and perceiving.

The day after receiving your letter I took a trip to the Joint Library of Ophthalmology. It was in the basement of the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology - a dark and slightly dreary couple of rooms hidden amongst the skyscrapers of Old Street. Having read your letter just the day before, I carried with me your amalgamation of ideas of preservation and observation. The library encapsulated this idea. It was a space dedicated to the preservation of observation. Through its countless textbooks and its beautiful museum display, it preserves the history of vision science, of ophthalmology, and of observation. Just as your letter implied, in this preservation, we are able to fully observe the rich history of vision science.

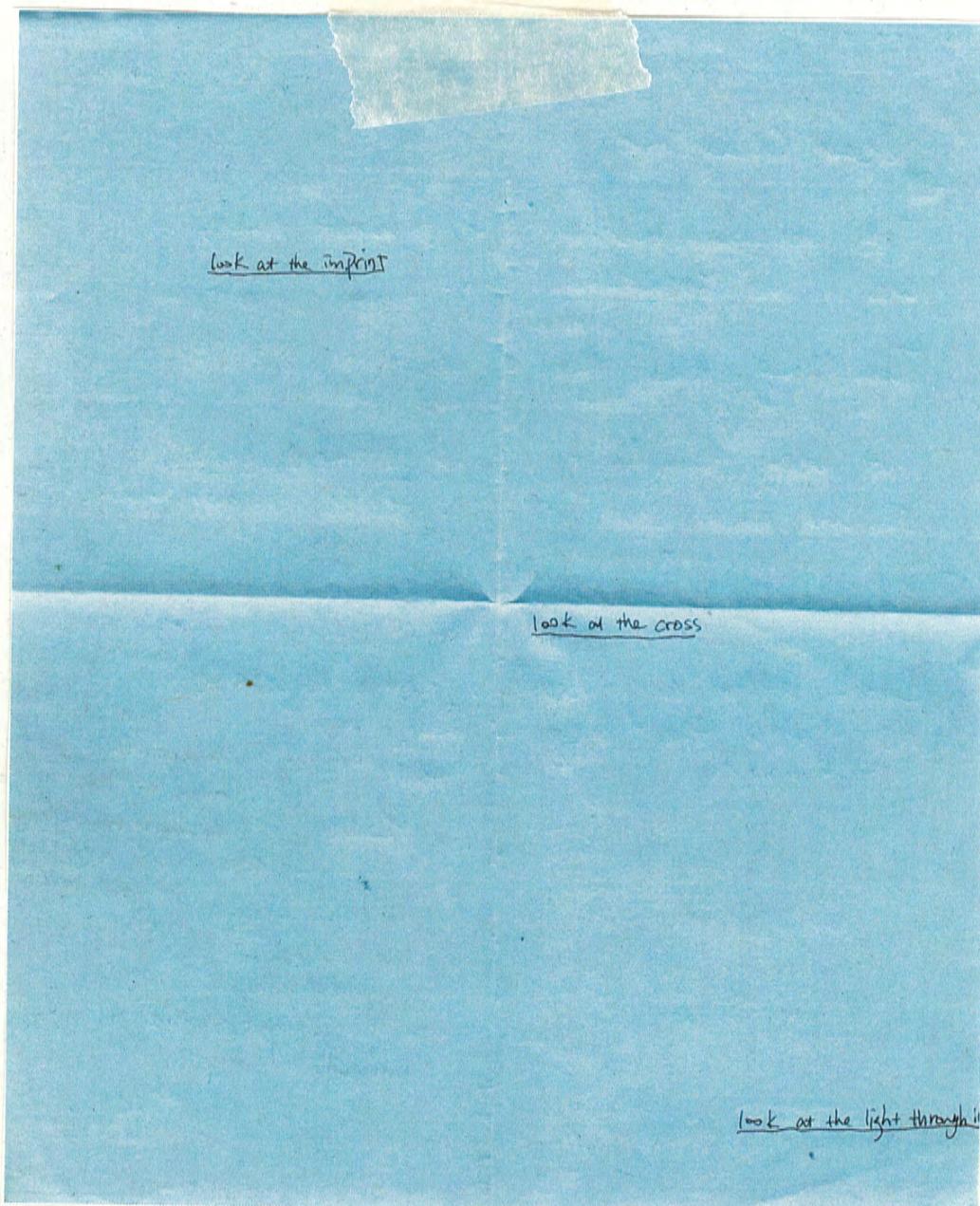
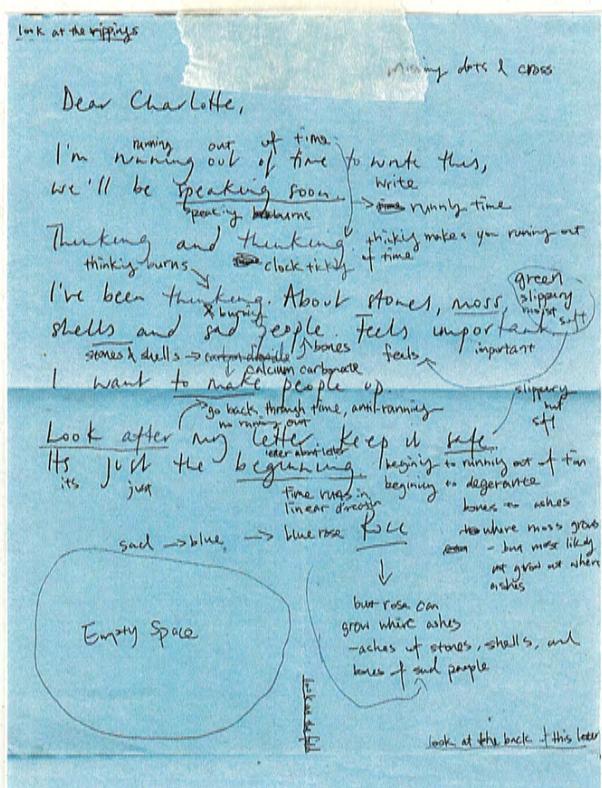
However, this wasn't the only way in which I was struck by the relationship you drew between observation and preservation. I seemed to be the only researcher in this library, everyone else appeared to be a practitioner. This got me thinking of how the space was used: for future physicians and opticians to study and to observe the depth of information available to them, in order for them to apply this knowledge to their patients in an attempt to preserve their eyesight. Through an observation of this preservation of scientific research, opticians are able to preserve patients' ability to observe.

I also noticed that you don't seem to want to preserve the leaf in the traditional sense of preservation: to maintain it in its original state and stop it aging, but that you want to capture the process of natural decay, to instead preserve its memory and life, rather than save it from decay. In 1851 a man named Herman Helmholtz invented a tool called the ophthalmoscope - which allowed physicians to, for the first time, see the back of a human eye. Photography was not very advanced in 1851, so they would hire artists to paint, by candlelight (as there was no electricity) the back of their patients' eyes. The physician would then study this painting, and form a diagnosis. The paintings of these eye problems still exist, preserving the eye's process of natural decay, much like you have asked me to do for your leaves.

I am really excited to scan your leaves, as they change, to document and preserve their natural process of decay, and at the end we can look at them together.

Maya

# Charlotte Rose ✓



Charlotte Rose

✓

makes a charming glaze,  
from 1260° to 1350°; + so does -  
Hawthorn Ash - 4  
White clay slip - 4  
Feldspar 4  
Quartz 1

The quartz brings the temperature  
down, and makes it opaque. Why?  
I've tried it without any quartz  
and it's matt, shiny or more transparent  
as far as pigments showing through are  
concerned. - But except for the patterns'  
sake, the quartz improves  
the quality

were absolutely hopping mad  
with Peter at the moment. She went  
into a nursing home, stepped out  
of it the next day. Has done 3  
weeks treatment exactly and  
I had a letter from her this  
morning saying, in effect  
'Thank you' for your kind  
offer to have me back in  
5 months. I will go into a  
home and get cured. I will  
accept it with pleasure.  
I am not cured and I won't  
go into a home, so I can  
come.

Hi Rose,

You open this letter to find my struggle in the past weeks. It was more difficult than I thought to write this letter about care. And I wonder how this process was to you.

I never thought my object needs to be taken care of before. It is not that it does not need any form of care, such as a shelter, but simply the matter of fact that the idea of care had never occurred in my mind. Obviously, it is not delicate, nor fragile. The frame is a manufactured commercial product, and the prints are low quality that you can print from any printer available. Even those images, to be honest, are not that unique. It's cheap, it's duplicatable, it is sturdy in itself.

So how should I start?

I remember by the time I inserted images into this carousel, I placed it at the window sill besides my desk. During the lockdown, I have spent tremendous amount of time at that little corner of my room. It was always in my sight and within my reach. I would play with it when I got bored with Zoom lectures, watching the fingers pointing to everywhere, and reflect the light that has shine on it. But after I moved into my new flat in September, it was placed somewhere out of my reach. Although it was not a long time, I was surprised by the dust that it has collected by the time I took it to the post office, as if I have neglected it for ages. Maybe it needs more care than I thought.

So, I decided to hand over this task to you.

I want you to look at it but not to look at it for too long, to play with it but not to play with it too often, and tell me how you feel with that. To be honest I don't even want to you to give too much care of it. But I still want you to take care with it despite the fact that I don't know how to take care of it. I'm hoping that maybe you can teach me how to take care of it.

I'm already missing it.

Best,  
Charlotte



Charlotte Rose

✓

Hi Rose,

I sink in your letter,

In my thinking

And in the collection of your

Calcium Carbonate

I used to make a lot of Dried Roses

I was fascinated by how

They remain in shape

Even after their life span was interrupted so violently

By just turning upside-down

By Upside-

down

It last longer

Smells better

But still

It was turned

upside-down

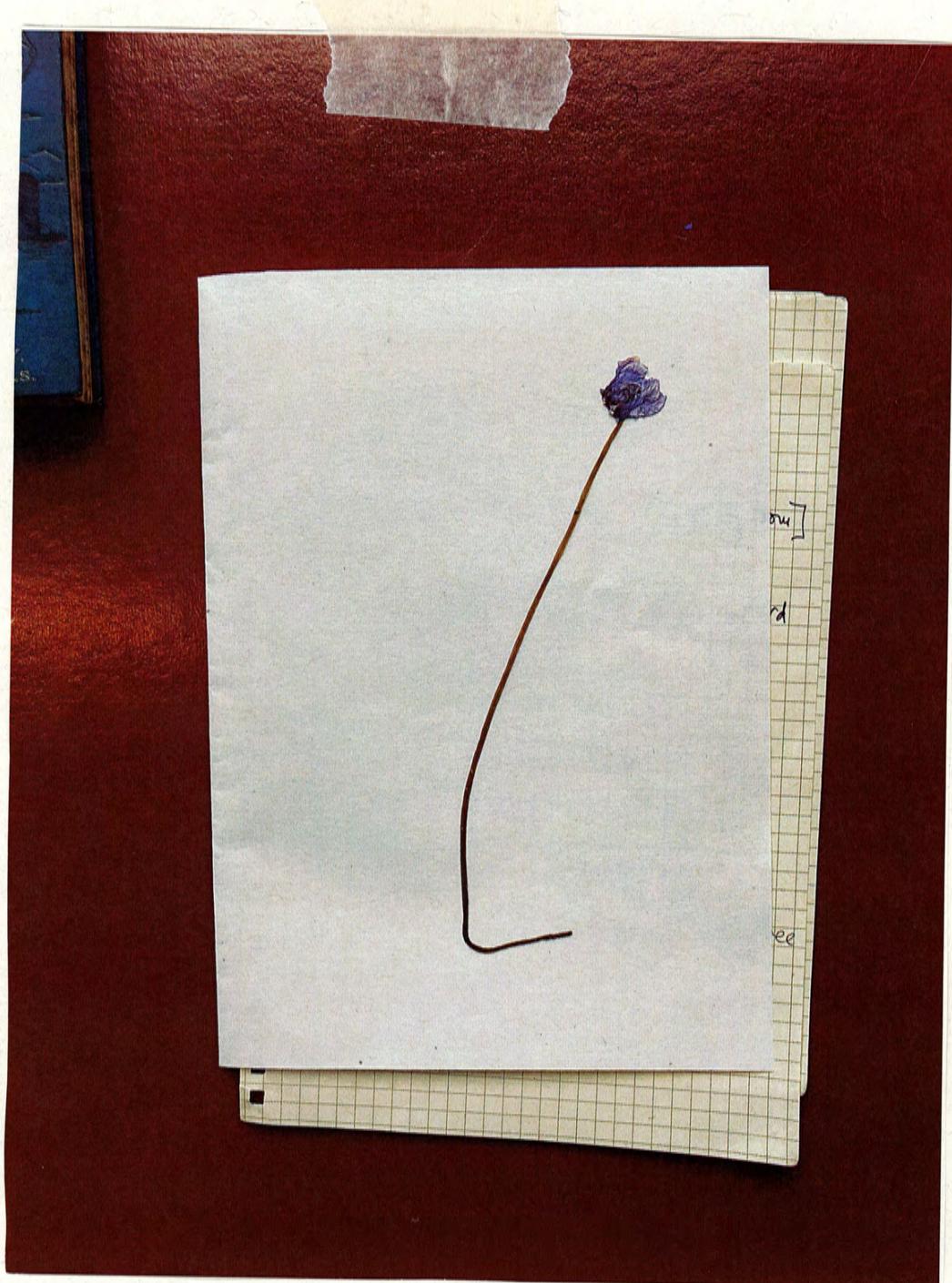
Have you ever felt been turned that way?

Best,

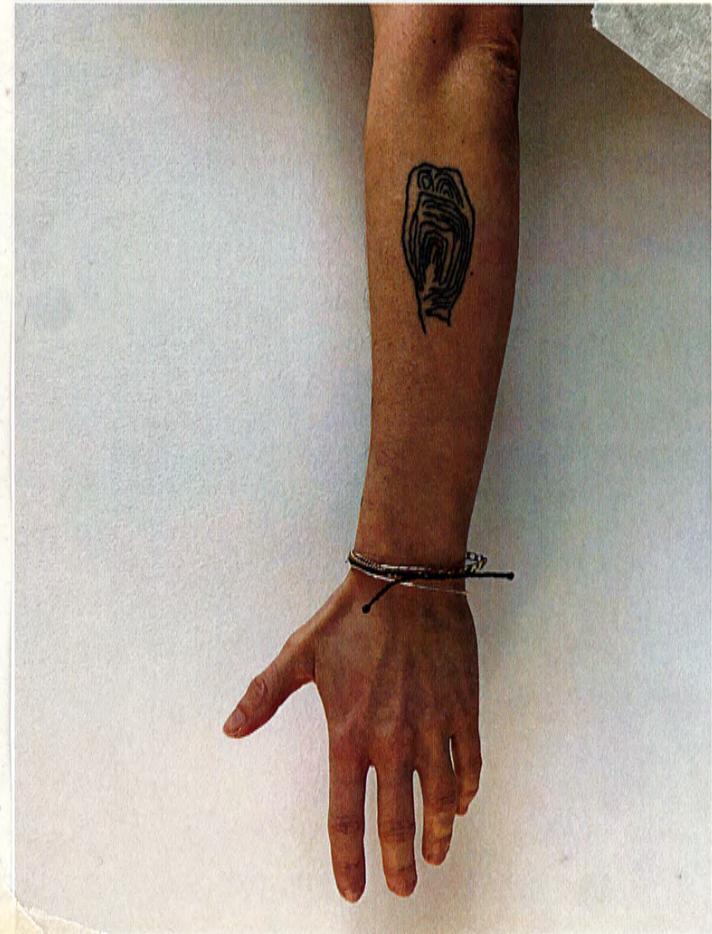
Charlotte

Charlotte Ross

L



Ledor Tabor



CARE LETTER #1

(Start 0:00")

This is a care letter. A letter for you to listen to.

It's been a long time since anybody has listened to what I have to say, for I have been buried beneath the ground since somewhere between 7000 and 3000 BC. For that matter, I also do not yet know what it is I want to say. For I am not only one voice, but all voices, from across all of time. Each voice reverberates the next, creating a continuous cycle of voices, echoing our experiences across both time and space. So I ask, please be patient with me, and try to listen to what it is that we are all saying. As our voices collide and slowly emerge from the depths of the Earth's core and rise to the surface, bubbling between the layers and layers of soil, squeezing between the rocks and other geological debris. It is as we rub our chords against each other, layer upon layer, that the sounds of our collective historical memories will settle on the surface of the Earth.

So hold me close and listen. And when you are done listening, add your voice to ours.

I hope to encounter you again and again.

Yours,

One of many Mother Goddesses

# Leila Tabs

27<sup>th</sup> October 2021

To Leila,

The object I exchanged with you is a terracotta clay model of Trethevy Quoit. I will tell you in this letter what it means to me and how to care for it.

How to care for stones.

When I was trying to think of how to care for my model of Trethevy Quoit I was reminded of some strange clips that I saw in an episode of BBC Buried Treasure (1954) on Stonehenge. You can see some screenshots just to the right. >>

The clips show a series of what seem like disembodied hands touching and stroking sections of the Stonehenge stones. I was struck by how strange but also tender and caring the actions or movements of the disembodied hands were towards the stones of Stonehenge.



Perhaps this sort of caring – touching – approach would help you to care for the stones.

Caring for something gives life to something, personifies it, and animates it. When writing about his interest in found objects, Paul Nash discussed his interest in animism. He spoke of the 'indeterminable and disquieting magic' emanating from objects he came across. Objects that were 'dead' yet had a 'mysterious life' of their own.<sup>1</sup>

When I first encountered Trethevy Quoit I felt this sense of magic and mystery that Nash mentioned. Nash talked about picking up objects, finding things – a found object, for him, is something you can hold. Although I was drawn to Trethevy Quoit in a similar way to Nash and his found objects, I couldn't hold it in my hands as Nash did. I couldn't physically take it with me. My connection with it – my main way of maintaining a thread of connection with Trethevy Quoit was through my iPhone that I held and hold and will continue to hold in my hand.

This relationship between hands, objects and touch led me to Henry Moore's thoughts on holding objects in his hand. Moore wrote that to be able to mentally visualise a complex form he would imagine holding an object, 'completely enclosed', in the hollow of his hand and therefore he would be able to visualize the 'form from all around itself'.<sup>2</sup>

I hold my iPhone in my hand and see videos and images of Trethevy Quoit on the screen. I try and imagine the form from all around itself. Each piece of clay that I used to mould into the shapes of each of the stones that make up Trethevy Quoit weighed the same as my phone.



The capstone especially is of similar dimension and features (hole=camera lens) to my iPhone that I hold in my hand. Perhaps holding the clay models that weigh as an iPhone does, an iPhone that contains images and videos of Trethevy Quoit, can work towards a mental visualisation and virtual/physical memory of the chambered tomb. A visualisation that is made through my hands holding my iPhone.

Hands.

The image to the right >> shows a shadow of my hand and my iPhone-holding hand cast onto the portal stone and capstone of Trethevy Quoit.



In Treatise of the Sensations, a hand for Étienne Bonnot de Condillac is 'an organ which adapts itself to all kinds of surfaces'; it can stretch, contain, bend, grip, do whatever is necessary to identify the surrounding world. 'Hands without bodies' are 'filled with expression', they 'have no need for a body to speak'.<sup>3</sup>

For Rainer Maria Rilke the hands in sculptor Rodin's studio, despite not belonging to a body, are alive.<sup>4</sup>

I wonder how a disembodied hand can touch and therefore care.

Disembodied hands.

In a sense, the hand becomes disembodied when using the iPhone. I would say the hand is more of an extension of the iPhone than an extension of the body. Akin to the way Moore described his hand-held visualisations, the iPhone held in a hand makes the hand connected to a visualisation on the screen that the body is not so closely connected. In many forms of remote connection, the hand is the mid-point between or the thread that ties two things together or initiates the action. Leaving the body as merely a witness to an encounter while the hand plays an active role.

To care for the clay model of Trethevy Quoit is an attempt to care for, connect with the actual Neolithic Monument by means of remote and disembodied engagement with handheld, iPhone-sized objects.

Connecting and caring today is not so much about collecting physical objects and physically holding them in our hands, as Nash did. A more remote, virtual kind of care is more prevalent. Moore gives us a way of connecting to a physically complex, distant, or incongruous object by means of imagining. Rilke and Condillac's thoughts on Rodin's disembodied hands show how even if our bodies are physically disconnected and cut-off, our hands stay alive and able to connect.

Caring

<sup>1</sup> H. Moore Stand, 'Caring and Cared-for', *Gentry Log*, 3 June 1956, p.519  
Lisa Le Feuvre, 'Hands Touching in The Art Studio: The Making of Bodies', ed. by Habiba Abdellah Hadi, Chiaro Arte & Archiv  
Buchbach-Hadi, Berlin/Tar/Publishing, 2021  
<sup>2</sup> Henry Moore, 'Yours are Disjoined', in *The Journals* (ed. ed. by Shirley Evans) (London 1970) p.23. In  
Henry Moore, 'The Life of a Ceramic Object', in *Four Tales*, ed. by Emma Chambers, (London: Tar Publishing, 2016)

<sup>3</sup> Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, 'Treatise of the Sensations', p.130  
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 'Hands', in *The Elegies*, ed. by Habiba Abdellah Hadi, Chiaro Arte & Archiv  
Buchbach-Hadi, Berlin/Tar/Publishing, 2021

To care is to touch, to hold, and to connect, even remotely.

As Moore imagined the complex forms enclosed in the palm of his hand, I connect to Trethevy Quoit through the pictures and videos on my iPhone that I hold in my hand. Now, you can touch, hold, connect, and therefore care for Trethevy Quoit when you hold the terracotta clay model in your hand.

From

Tabitha

## CARE LETTER #2

(Start 0:30")

Am I but a disembodied vessel?

A vulva. A head. A chest. A breast. A voice.

Holding. Holding on to. Being held.

Can you hold my voice?

Once spoken. Never heard.

Is what I said been said and is now silent?

The voice that carries but was dropped.

The speech that was the event.

The echo that was the shadow.

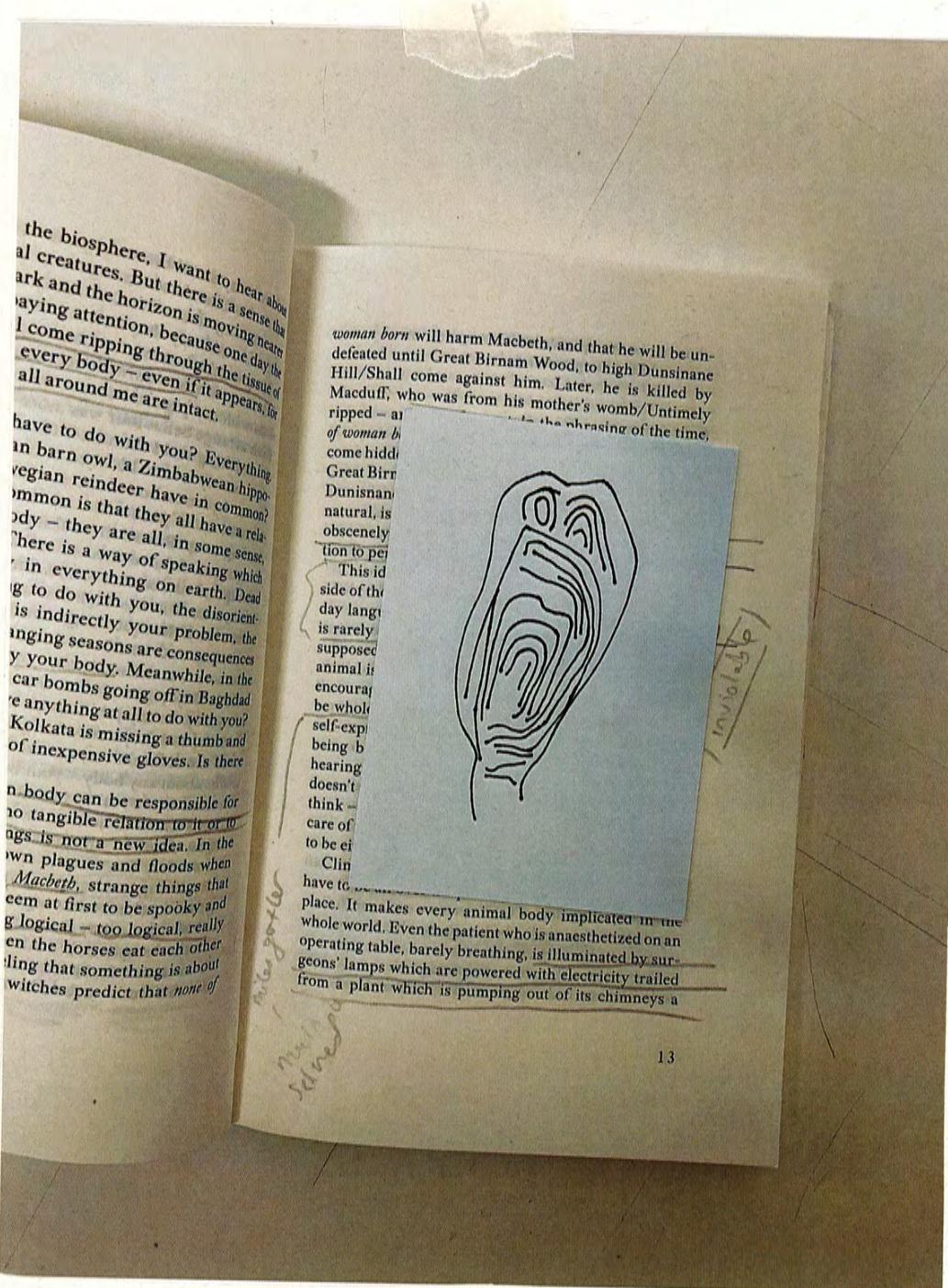
The woman that was she who but never dead.

The vessel that was buried.

to embody a vessel that no body remembers  
whos body embodies the memory  
some bodies somebody forgets  
yet others remembered

the other the father gave birth  
to a mother whos body was vesseled  
then broken,  
disembodied into clay pieces  
and placed beneath the ground  
grounded. muffled. still and silenced.  
still speaking to nobody whos listening.

Leila Tabu



13

12<sup>th</sup> November 2021

To one of many Mother Goddesses,

Reverberations,

An echo that forms an image.

The two women, or perhaps three, in the image to the right >> by Edvard Munch, are echoes of one another. Each figure shifting and morphing into one another. From light, ethereal figure, to dark solid mass with deathly face and finally transforming into immutable rock.

The transcendence of the body, the body longing for the stability of the stone and gazing out to the weightlessness of the light on the horizon.

They are the mother goddesses — reverberating their forms through time and material strata.

There are three mother goddesses in this image to the right, maybe even four. There are even more mother goddesses in the numerous versions and prints that Munch made of this scene. — repetition, reverberation... echoes.

In *The Second Body* (2017), Daisy Hildyard writes about bodies and how there can be no certain separations between the body and its environment. Exploring our bodily entanglements with the mass of the whole world.

Hildyard writes:

'Even the patient who is anaesthetized on an operating table, barely breathing, is illuminated by surgeons' lamps which are powered with electricity trailed from a plant which is pumping out of its chimneys a white smoke that spreads itself out against the sky. This is every living thing on earth.'

Hildyard describes in the passage above the echoes and reverberations that our bodies create. The echoes that bounce off the light onto the patient's unconscious body back and forth, and resonating along the electricity lines and beyond.

Resonating along the electricity lines, morphing, reappearing anywhere and everywhere. The mother goddesses in Edvard Munch's many woodcut prints appear to have travelled along electrical lines from Munch's Norwegian coast to London, to St Pancras.

12<sup>th</sup> November 2021



Edvard Munch, Two Women on the Shore, 1898  
<https://www.bl.uk/about-us/our-story/explore-the-building/the-plants-sculpture> [accessed 9 November 2021]

In the British Library's Piazza there are eight granite, augen gneiss and dolerite erratic rocks sitting in a circular formation (2<sup>nd</sup> image to the right >>). Antony Gormley described *Plants* (2002) as a 'celebration of touch... of embracing... [and] a return to the earth'. I stood, in my body, in the centre of the circle of 8 erratic rocks in St Pancras, surrounded by the echoes and reverberations.

The bodies of the mother goddesses on/in the rocks are described as being incised into the stones — incise — to mark, to engrave, to carve but also to cut flesh.

Inscribed with a 'body silhouette', a shadow cast on the stone. The light cuts through the flesh of the stone to leave a mark on the 'inert material'.

I disagree with Antony Gormley describing stone as inert material, I imagine you do as well.

Gormley writes:  
'...clasp a stone - skin to skin, living body to inert material'

Inert material — lifeless, dead, no vibrations, no reverberations, no echo.

What do I feel when I see and experience my body incised onto the cliff face, my shadow cast onto the rock?

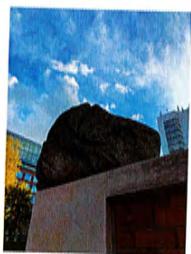
Do I feel the stability of the mother goddess in rock form, immutable, static unwavering stone?

Or do I feel as the light ethereal mother goddess feels in my ghostly shadow form?

Or do I feel how the deathly dark solid mass feels, caught between the longing for permanency and the wish to be disembodied?

12<sup>th</sup> November 2021

To paraphrase Agustín Fernández Mallo: it's unsettling to consider that the inside of a (P $\bar{E}$ ) [rock] is more alive than you are, or I am, that in there (in the rock) everything's (completely) lit up [reverberating and echoing].<sup>4</sup>



The stones that Gormley describes as inert are known as glacial erratic rocks — erratic — not even or regular in pattern or movement; unpredictable, variable, unsettled, fluctuating — reverberating.

Dead inert stones still echo.

An echo that forms an image.

'...the stone wall is a tape recorder...'<sup>5</sup>



Mark Leckey speaks about rocks being alive, having a voice. I heard your voice on a tape recorder. Disembodied from your stone body. I have a representation of you on a piece of paper. Pen inscribed onto a white rectangle.

What would it be like to be in the presence of you, of your form incised onto the stone, the whorls, curds, and resonances of the echo — present, visible, and audible?

From

Tabitha

<sup>1</sup> Daisy Hildyard, *The Second Body*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2021), p. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Antony Gormley in *Plants author by Antony Gormley* [n.d.], British Library <<https://www.bl.uk/about-us/our-story/explore-the-building/the-plants-sculpture>> [accessed 9 November 2021]

<sup>3</sup> Antony Gormley, *MAN ROCK AND PLANETS, 1982 – 2002* [n.d.], Antony Gormley <<https://www.antonygormley.com/sculpture/item-view/id/227>> [accessed 9 November 2021]

<sup>4</sup> Agustín Fernández Mallo, *Noches Duras*, trans. by Thomas Bunstead, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017), p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Leckey, *Of Magic Power of Blackness*, ed. by Charlie Wallis and Elisa Courteau (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), p. 16.

# Leila Tabs

## CARE LETTER #3

(Start 0:49")

Pssst. Are you there? There. There. There.

Sometimes I feel like my echo is stuck within the rock. Stuck next to, beside, on top of or over the many others.

Does my echo replace yours when I speak? Or how else can the layers upon layers of voices collide? The echo is the tape recorder. It is the reproduction of the event of the speech, of the sound. Once it is said, it has been said. I am trying to hold on to your voices but the rock has grasped it, clasped it, eroded it. Rewind. It is alive. I can hold it in my hand and when I hold it up to my ear I can hear the ocean of voices. Yours, mine, we are all speaking on top of each other in chorus. Everyone is asking "she, who?"



Hi Marylynne

I am the puddle of water that yanting cared.

You may not know what it's like to live in a city where water is scarce, and you may have little understanding of the reasons why yanting protects me in the first place.

But have you ever seen a picture or image like this one: a woman in a sarong walking down an unnamed dirt road in the countryside after collecting water, a large bucket of water on her head, perhaps with a baby on her back or holding a child with her? On average, one woman walks six kilometers a day to collect water for her family. The containers can be large or small, but if she is using a waste oil tank, she could be carrying up to 20 kilograms of water on her head. Carrying such a heavy load on her head every day is likely to have long-term adverse effects on her health. Researchers at Live Science said that most of the respondents who experienced pain had been carrying water on their heads for a long time and often had their necks massaged by their mothers or grandmothers when they returned home. Some 3.36 million girls and 13.54 million women worldwide are responsible for collecting water for their families, and each trip takes more than 30 minutes.

Women! Pain! Oppression! The actual image of patriarchal society in Africa is revealed to you!

Have you ever wanted to experience what it's like to protect me too? To experience the hardships of an African woman trying to protect the source of life? Experience the pain of an African woman in oppression and bondage?

How to care for me?

Do you know He Yun Chang's work 'In and Out'? Since 2007, he has been chopping wood and writing the date on it every day, which he has continued for 14 years. He says: many things are uncontrollable, but the act of cutting his own firewood is controlled within certain limits. Performance art is instantaneous and cannot be preserved; all we get are videos and pictures of the moment. However, while performance art and NFT are combined, NFT can make these recorded images valuable.

More importantly, at this exhibition of He Yunchang's work, someone bought a piece of wood with a date written on it and crushed it with a crusher on the spot. Afterward, the video of the crushing and the photograph of the wood became part of his collection. In this way, collecting art as NFT is a way of gaining 'eternity,' as the wood rots and deteriorates over time and then disappears, but the virtual images do not decay.

I hope to gain immortality in this way. After all, most objects in this world will eventually return to dust. To become digital, to go back and forth between networks, to speak to

countless people about the suffering of women in Africa, to make more people aware that there is a group of people in need of care in the corners of a good society, to call for people to resist the oppression of women in a patriarchal society, is precisely what I want.

Instead of not letting me evaporate, it would be better to record my existence and turn me into a number or a 'thought' to keep me alive forever.

Moreover, it is as essential to care about me as it is about what I care about.

Go care for those who are oppressed by a patriarchal society! Deliver them!  
Care about nature! Care the water resource! Care me!

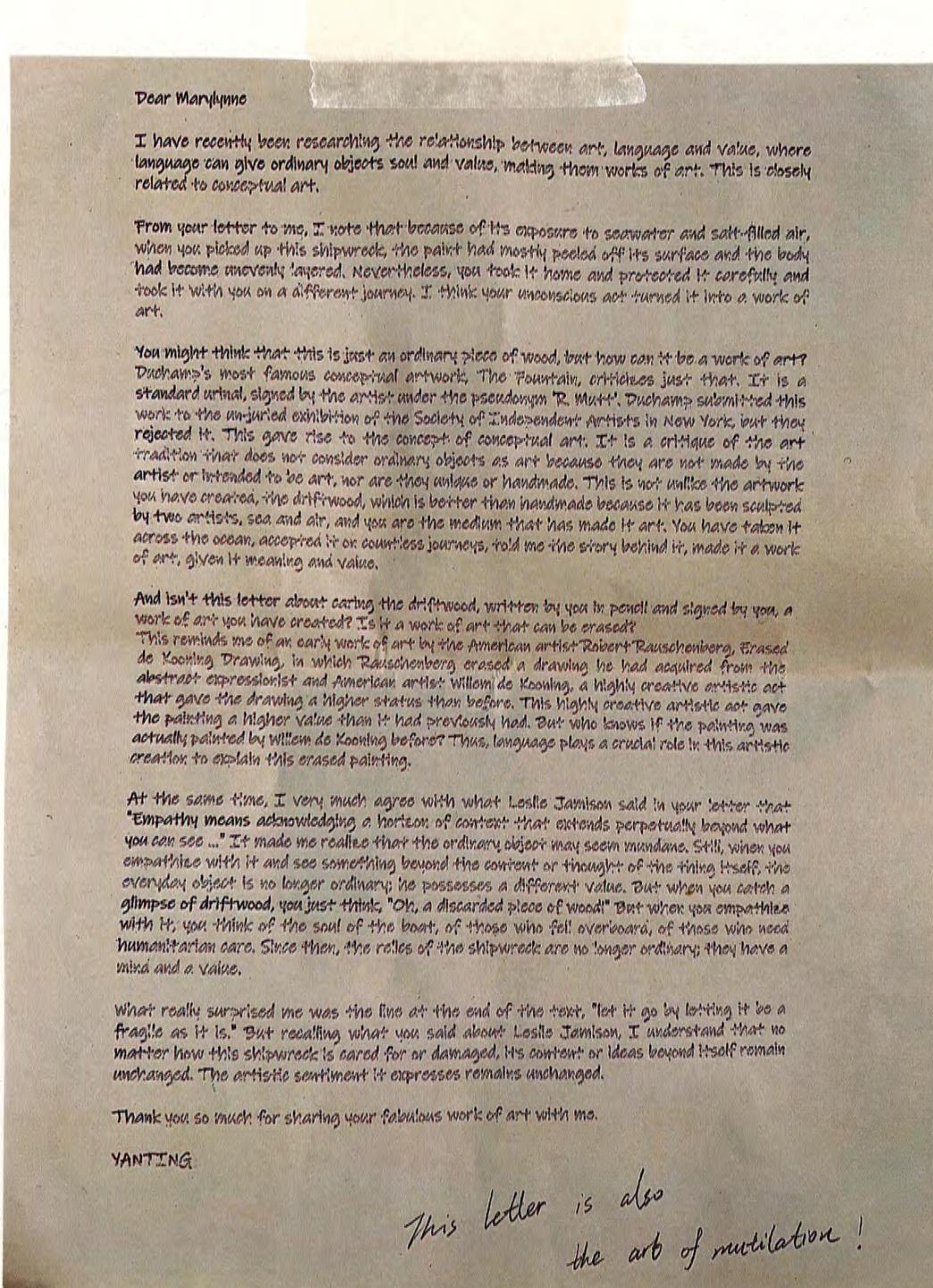
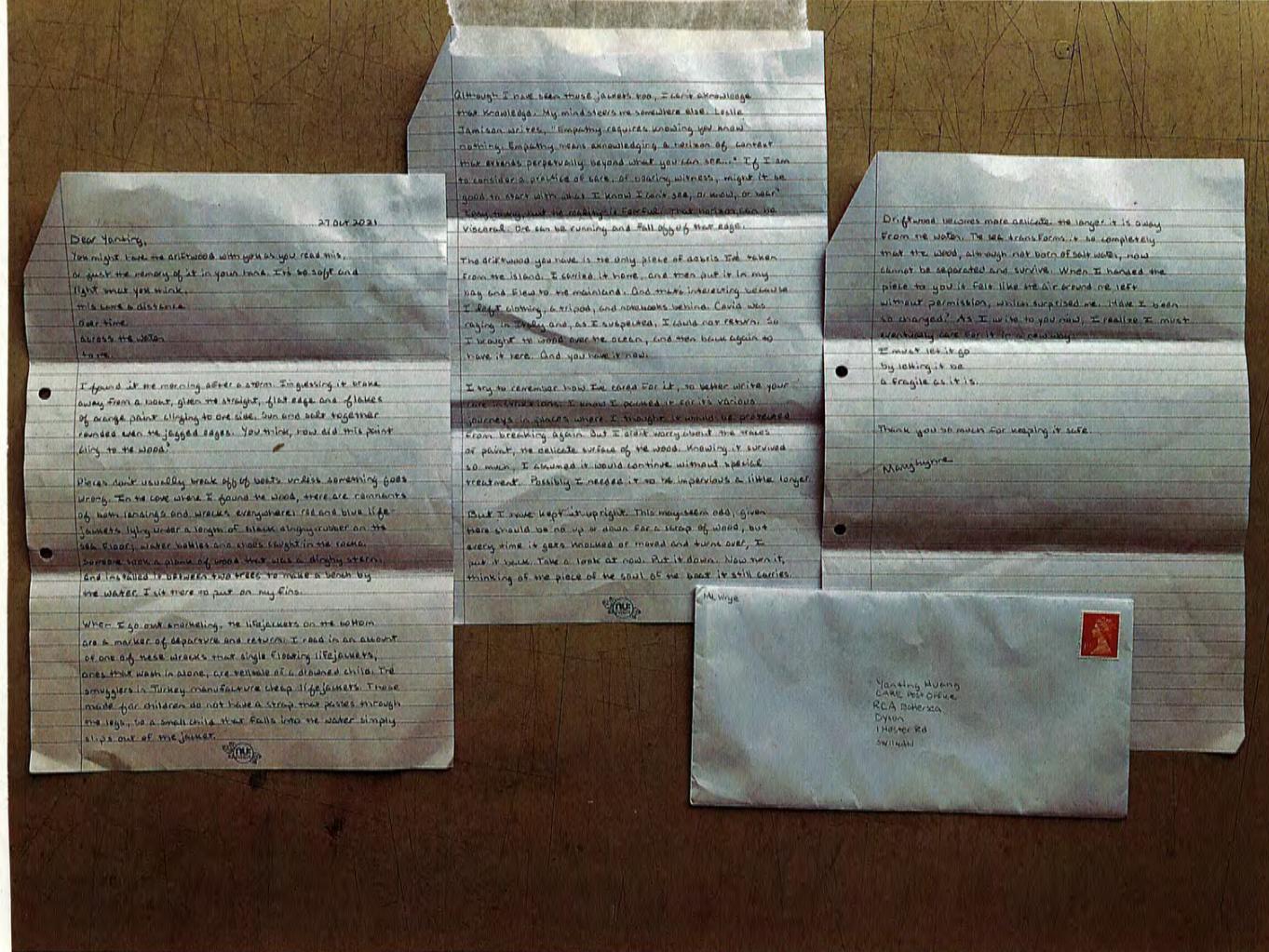
See you in Post Office.

Yanting's puddle! !



Yanting

Marylyne



Yanting ML

Dear Yanting,

Thank you for your letter. I am writing to respond to small fragments that speak to me. Your words are in italics. I feel as if your puddle and my driftwood are related: by water, by wood, by sky, by earth, by loss, by hope. When will they meet?

*Collective life needs...to survive...be taken care of in this way.*

My hand is a lake. The water is clear; the tiny ridges and lines of my palm shift in the light. The leaves are trees standing on slender trunks. They change as time passes over the water.

*Many matters are uncontrollable. My whole body has been... intercepted and returned.*

My hand is a reservoir. I attend to how I walk across a surface, to how the motion of my body moves my hand. Even when I hold my breath the water escapes. I am running out of time.

*Mere digits record my existence. Observe me with great care.*

Yesterday we pushed the boat out into a flood tide. Did I hold the river in my hands? In the shadow of Hammersmith bridge the cooler air steals the sound from our blades as they catch and release, and scatters it like confetti. How long does that sound drift over the water after we leave the bridge behind?

*This ballast fragment. Deteriorates over time. Record my existence.*

"The dynamics of poverty, food insecurity, climate change, conflict, and displacement are increasingly interconnected and mutually reinforcing, driving more and more people to search for safety and security..." —UN Refugee Agency 2020 Flagship Report

Thank you again for your care. I've enjoyed very much my time with your puddle and leaves.

~W)

# Molly Sophie

Care Instructions to Molly from Sophie

Molly,

I want to talk to you about ruins... What if I said that they are not the fate of great architectural feats nor the inevitable demise of our homes. What if I said that in fact they do not fall but reassemble.. Would you care more for them?

I think I've been thinking about geology all wrong. I've recently arrived at the understanding that geology is cyclical, and we are an ephemeral blip in such a cycle. Because of this, I now cannot unsee ruins differently. I've been connecting links between architectural, biological, and geological processes that I think could be useful. The object that I shared with you, that folded rubbing of a limestone Georgian lintel? Well, that I guess is my first step towards the redevelopment of an architectural design methodology that considers this very idea of cyclicity. That house, my family's old home now rests only in the form of fragmented memories like history, we can select what parts we hope to preserve.. And ruins? Unlike those dissolving mental moments, ruins return but they do not stand static or still.

Architecture, just like you or I is made up of minerals out on a temporary loan, borrowed from but, more importantly returning to the earth. I guess, it's matter that operates at such a vastly different speed to us that I find it difficult to wrap my head around. It's a difficult thing to grasp, the different entanglements of time and materials. This idea that humans are but vestigial memories.. memories to whom? Along with our buildings, all becoming part of geology, calcifying within the stone, with the stone as an alternative architectural network of the land... I'm whirling around these ideas out loud or at least in this written form to you (.sorry), thinking about how all materials including ourselves, we belong to this much larger timescale, and I know it's not necessarily new but shit, it's a lot.

Anyways, what I thinking about is how matter- whether it's the Colosseum in Rome or my eventual decomposing body, it all engages with this *processual sedimentation*. An accumulation of material, depositing and layering one epoch on top of another. A geological process that at it's very core mirrors touch? Physical contact, the thickness of which feels ever evolving.

The touching of matter to me feels like this moment of intensified relation, intimacy even that is essentially something that has a reciprocal or reversible nature. It has the power to blur the boundaries between the self and other. Really with little effort, it can emphasize the matter between subject and object interactions.. *intra-actions*?

That drawing to me at least, was a mode for engaging in this process of collaboration of sorts with the objects surface. It's an exploration of a new concrete house that I spent so much of my life in but probably even more so with the material that its exterior parts were made from. Making those marks on the haptic engagement with the object which felt like an encouragement for action to be crafted through this very sensorial mode of touch- in touch, deepening it that place and it's matters.

Can touching architecture endorse a greater respect for matter? Removing breaking it down to a consideration of one surface touching another? Touching in a way, no but in an appropriate, caring way. Touching, with its compelling power to restore gaps, caressing as this mode to intensify my awareness of material's immanent engagement.

It reminds me actually of the concrete inside the Tate? You know, on the ground floor, the staircase on the left? For some reason, I'm often compelled to walk straight past the huge pillars! Just like one would with a tree? I've done it the last few times I've been there, such a kick out of it! You should try it! This huge, overwhelming sense of insignificance consumes me in all the most brilliantly thrilling and frightening ways.

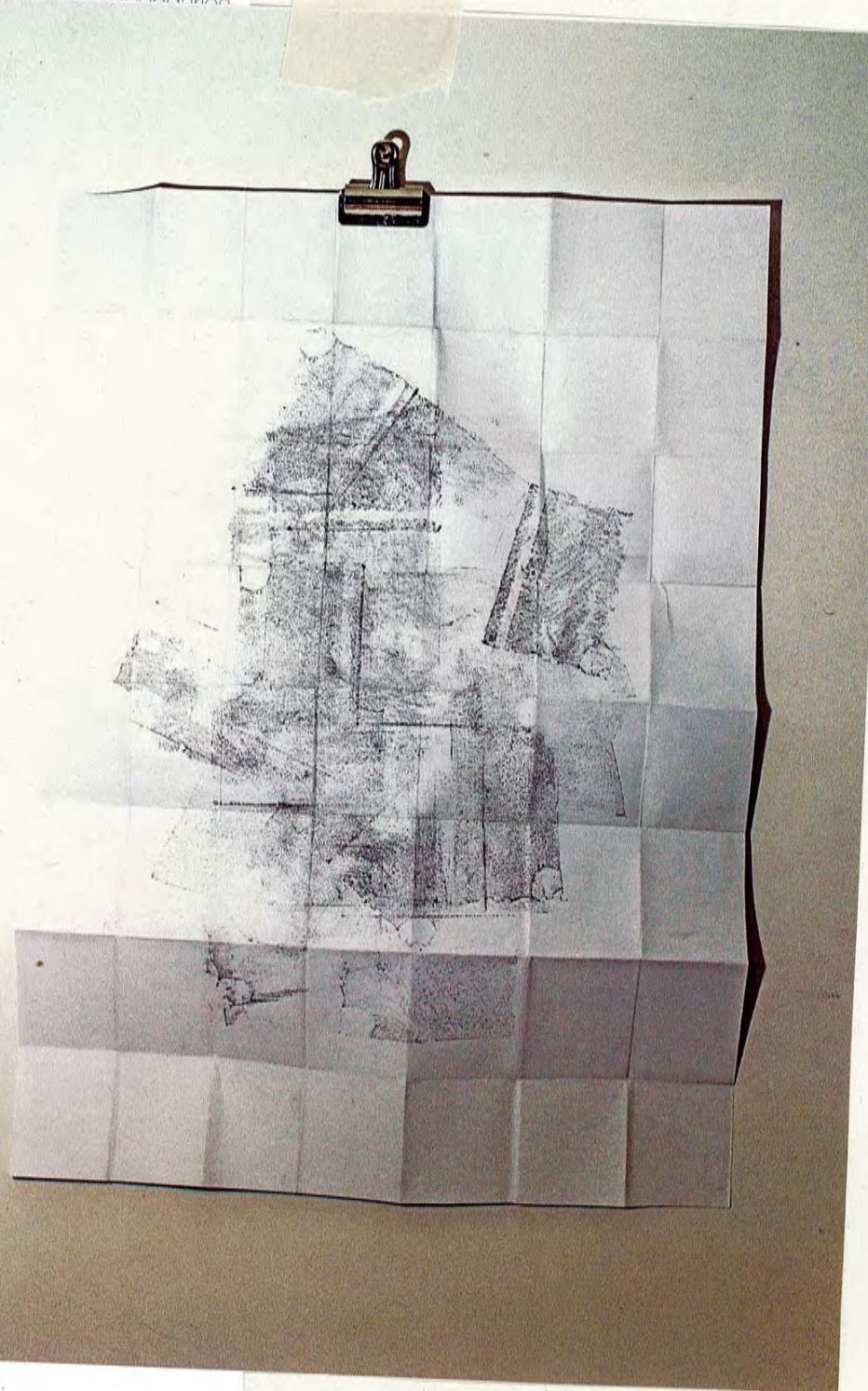
What I'm getting at in relation to the ruin is not a new suggestion either. Take for example, or – better still Antonio Sant' Elia. His work of the early 1900s was a remedy to Modernism's disconnect from lived experience. He believed architecture was fundamentally transitory, with each generation having to rebuild their own version of it. Why do we keep trying to build things that outlive us?

With the progression of time and cultural developments, maybe the expiration date of built structures should be set and understood prior to their making as a kind of framework to reach a more caring mode of ruination... A mode of returning the ruin back to the earth? Could this give rise to a new form of architecture that traces or manifest new struggles for future beings? It feels silly too to consider the future tenants of our spaces. Similarly, does it not feel like a ridiculous preservation of time when we look at architectural fragments of Pompeii in a vitrine? I dunno..

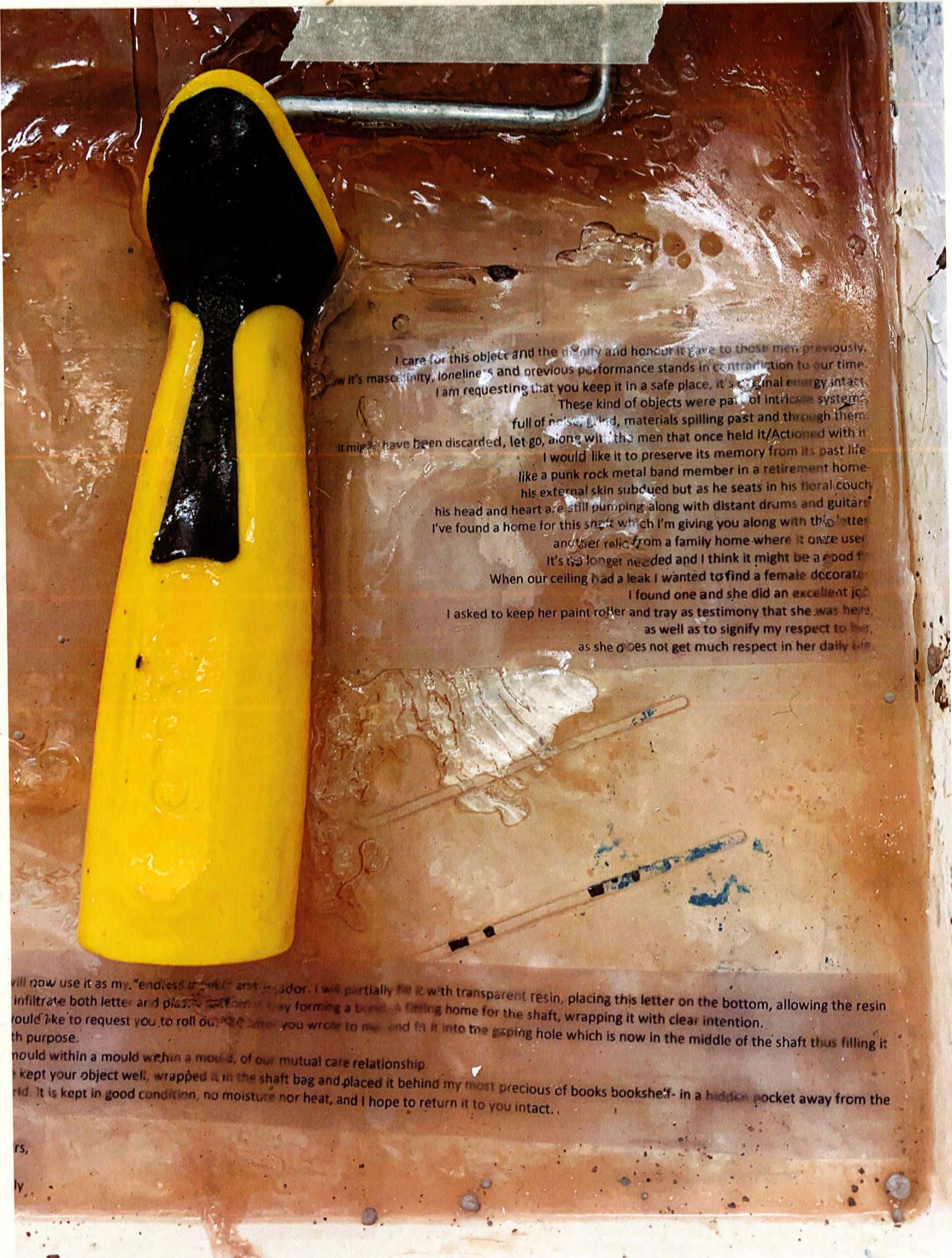
I think ultimately we need to build better if we truly care about the planet and all the beings on it. Currently we are unlawfully colonizing the earth's resources with no regard for kindness. How we preserve this planet now will be instrumental for bright futures. I think a more embodied method of preservation must consider the architectural agents of the landscape, we produce constructive and destructive histories, immediate environments, and eventual futures of all beings.

Thanks for reading Molly.

sophie



Molly Sophie



Molly Sophie

Dear Molly,

I must admit some weeks ago, I felt so detached to this thing.. this half-a-mould. I kept it on my studio desk where I would glance over every so often to make sure that it still sat where I left it. It made me anxious- all this responsibility for something that I couldn't connect to. It felt like an intruder in my own home, an experience quite strange really when I knew I was supposed to be minding it so carefully.. my responsibility to care of it and yet, I felt nothing. This was alarming to me. Was I doing it wrong? How am I supposed to care for this thing when I don't even know what it needs?

(I wonder if that's how it feels to be pregnant?  
This simultaneous want and indifference to take care of something other

This space feels pregnant

My kitchen, at the time of writing feels profoundly altered, filled now with moments of radical intimacies and alienation... Ready to burst.

If I'm honest I was troubled by this experience and perhaps, by your letter too. It felt grossly possessive and your words, hefty with pessimism. All this talk of a defunct object, its uselessness because it is not whole was upsetting.

We struggle with leaving things alone in a state of mute materiality. I sensed in your letter the intellectual labor that this piece of wood in its singularity weighted you down with.

You could say rather there is a notion of growth and increased wealth within its lonely disposition. This wealth is not a financial one, but one of new knowledge - of possibility.

I'm trying to tread carefully with this idea of production. I think it can be harmful.

When thinking about the politics that are involved with production I think it's a responsibility of ours to question and rethink the dynamic relations that unfurl within this very act of creating output. I say this because I'm not so sure casting half a rod or any rod is a chosen objective of this mould?. To fully explore this intention of deep diving into what it means to generate, I decided to leave the object alone for a moment. Float it temporarily in a phase of thoughtful and protracted observation oscillating between an object that I must care for and care with. I wanted to wait and see what might happen if, before acting immediately to fix it, I let it just be.

I placed it the kitchen to dine with me every day. Its dark wooden surface dashed with the lighter wooden shade of my table so every evening I would have a mild freak out thinking feck! I've lost it!! The panic. It was hard to see at times.

(It's been ages since I've had to mind anything other than myself).

After a few really involved weeks, the time spent together has really allowed me to see the object for what it is. By trying "to fill it with purpose" I now feel would be unfair and wrong. You see, I think it has already found its purpose. I think it might have chosen to be alone. So, I must confess, I did not do what you asked me to. I did not fill its centre crevice with your letter rolled up. This I promise, I did out of care. Care to nourish its new latent aura.

You wrote about it as half-of-something and suggest to feel fulfilled if we need to be complete. Complete - what does that really mean. Because you could say then that I am incomplete, I am less-me because I am not 2? I don't feel incomplete. I feel pretty good on my own, just me, no second or third parts.

And actually! Maybe it's not half-a-mould maybe, it's Halfmould.

Now, after the first weeks my bond with Halfmould really strengthened spending 3 meals almost every day in this shared space, we've gotten pretty close! Emotionally, physically, abstractly..

(I'm troubled now. How can I care for this object whilst not objectifying them?

Halfmould is now an independent agent. It's a responsibility of my own to nurture and explore this thickness, the ethico-political baggage that surrounds the very process of understanding the other agentic states of matter that exist with us.

(Thinking needs to be emerging.  
This has become a matter of concern not fact, that now thrusts my ambition to connect with the object. How does it- Halfmould M29H, want to exist? I wish it could tell me).

It now has cast itself in an entirely new space, one of emergent aesthetics and concepts. And the pregnancy of this I'm finding so exciting.

I'm allowing the notion of function to become subservient to form and substance.  
I don't believe that something that is displaced mean it is devalued. I hope after reading this that you might agree.

(Would you feel devalued if you could not produce?)

By holding this object in a state of detachment Halfmould can merely transgress a whole set of binaries: nature/culture, power/vulnerability, potential/purposeness, presence/absence .. This empowering status of free-ness ensures that any stabilized meaning can be challenged. Is that not crucial while existing somewhere with any other?

If I learned anything from this pandemic, I think it's our ability to adapt. To acclimate to new intrusions within our personal space. Acclimatization or acculturation? Or both? Which occurs first?

I mean.. Between these moments of stimulus and response I feel like there could be an alternate space unfolding and in that space is ~~my~~ our power to choose our response. In our very response lies the potential for growth (and ultimately, our freedom).

I hadn't realized but I think this realization stems from the very testimony you speak of - in your gesture to choose this woman.

(It is a choice. ...  
Was it her choice?)

There's a vitality in respect, no object needed but action. She knows you care and that too was reciprocated in the top job she did for you.

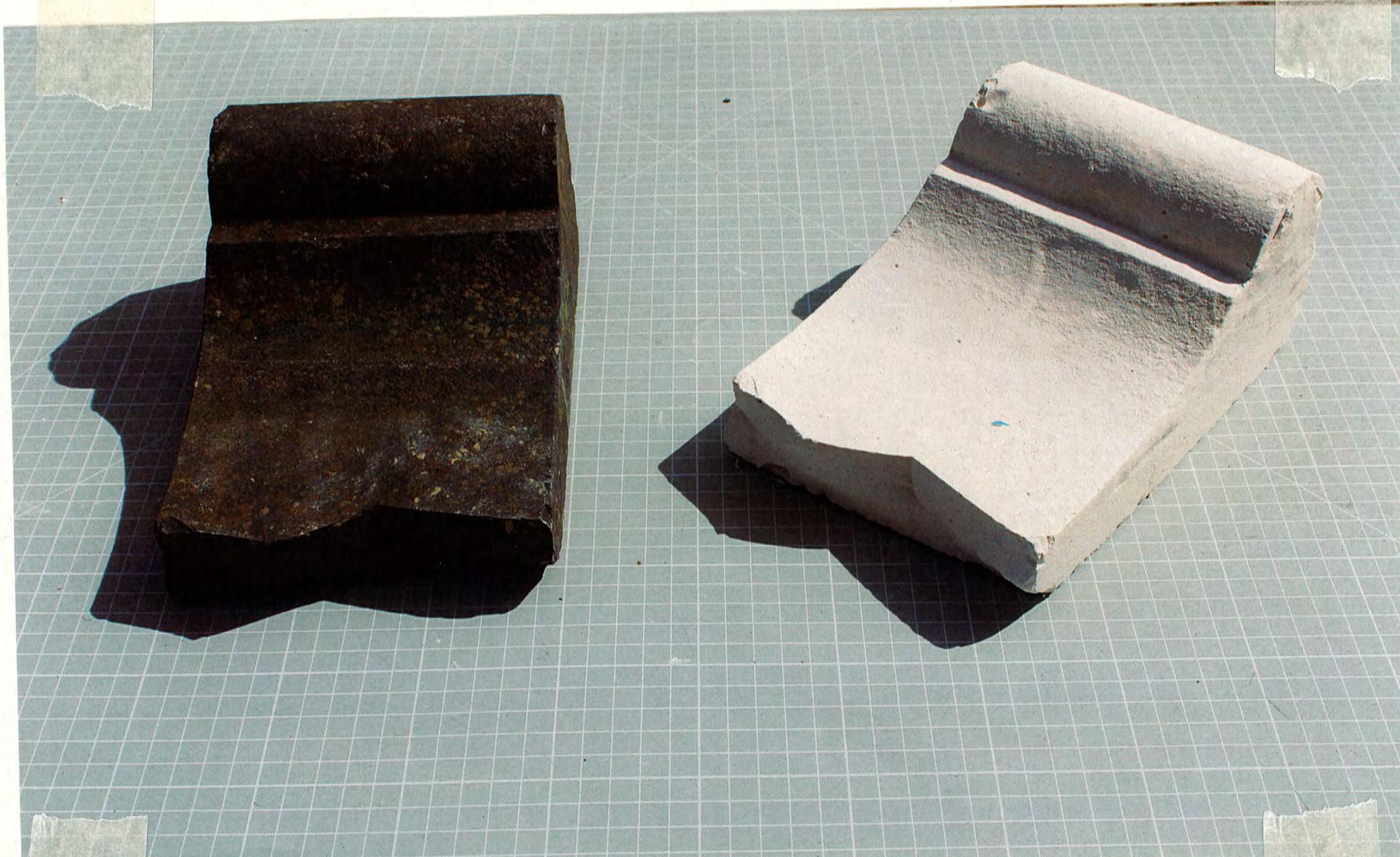
(Care is reciprocal, like touch). One can sense it.

I'm acutely aware that this caring exchange doesn't fix the troubling times we still find ourselves in. But there is great power suppressed in these small acts; of yours and mine. Whether this is my naivety speaking or the inner romantic of me, I believe this.

I hope from reading this I can challenge for you the dominant ways we relate to the past. Through my ascription of agency to the wooden fragment, perhaps together we can lean more optimistically towards this expanded future.

With love for all things fragmented and contentedly alone,

S



Molly Sophie



2.11.21

Dear Sophie,

At first, I wrote down what I perceive to be the text on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October in letter format. I then took the empty paint tray and the roller and placed the roller in it in a way that will form a place for the shaft, a square bit of air on the left. I then changed the text's formation to match the empty spaces left in the tray and cut the new structure into 3 pieces. Function follows form.

I poured amber coloured resin on the bottom of the tray, covering 1/5 of it. The result reminded me of Jurassic type fossils. trapping a mosquito within its sticky jewel essence. I wondered if similarly, to the dinosaur's DNA retraced through mosquito's blood, will they be able to trace my own through paper? The dry paint scattered onto the resin in a cloud formation. Energies colliding. I then poured the 2<sup>nd</sup> clear resin layer, 24 hours later, on the 21<sup>st</sup>, followed by another clear layer on the 23rd. By now the paper was morphing into an otherworldly entity. Frozen, ragged, and weightless. It was floating in a sea of forgetfulness and sorrow.

Memory, sedimented.

The deeper part of the tray is the abyss. It represents memory in all its cruelty. The first part of the letter floats there, obscured by dissipated paint and harsh realities. coming out of that slippery slope and upwards, the remaining two pieces are lying flat. Grounded. Soiled, Beached whales on memory's coastline.

This is not about beauty, not about desire. I am cleaning my pipes, removing all traces of prior perception I may have had in my arteries.

Let's call this cementing a method.

Mould within a mould within a mould.

Endless care.

The amber resin traces of my DNA are in the letter, surrounded by Margot's paint brush and tray surrounded by cement and containing another letter for you. The wooden half shaft will be placed on top, in a missing space awaiting to be filled. I hope you shall take on my request and become a "shaft filler": place your DNA, energy, in a form of a letter that fits into the empty shaft shape. The cherry on a layered cake.

I already told you I would not want to taint your view as I find it clean and curious.  
I drew you, eyes closed, hugging the pillar you've mentioned. You seemed happy.

I requested of you to place your second letter into the empty part of the shaft thus completing the final island of emptiness and sealing the process. it will then be done.  
A still care machine, particles dysfunctional, yet essence complete.

Yours,

Molly

Poppy

Vixen

It's the key I found in front of the building where your flat is, on the terrace above the ground, in the middle of way to the steps of being away, I take it with me as the souvenir of the adventure in this summer, as the evidence of our connection being in the experiment to view another world narrated following personal archive.

It's a key left there at the night when I was leaving his space, at the dimensional boundary where we accidentally fall into the circle of essential trace belongs to a tunnel into personnel memory. It's like a key of moment capture, at the second on the way when I left the flat with pink curtain, I see this key as accidence, as coincidence, as transience moment of my personal life.

Out of my imagination at former stage about you, the scene of chaos in your room in front of my eyes clicked at my memory of my old place, where you stayed with me for several days and nights, cozy and small, with warm light, you are lying on the blanket, surrounded by the music we shared together.

In that beautiful small town, blue sky, cooling wind, mild moisture, when we didn't know each other that much.

or real physical life, it captures the moment till I found the lost key as an object of witnessing the story happened between us?

Our journey started long time ago, it's later after the key I recall the first time I went to your place, the first time we met in Coventry, we took the night bus through the wood with accompany of dark blue sky. It was a halcyon journey. We have kept silent for a while, until we stepped into your space, where we opened the link to play music. It was a long journey for me, with the in tranquil, tensions, between us. When we sat on the floor, you showed me a square pillow on which written the 'X', the abbreviation of my name. It's an adventure to be in your space, and it's uncertain to get clues from your words to know about your feelings about me.

We lie down on your bed together, again, finally, after these many years.

Is it a chance the key appearing as one visible, physical object to be present with the possibility of transferring to another world? I remember before its appearance some terrible news on network we have received, the flood rushed into a city, destroy, reconstruction, people floating in the water, died, this triggered our talk about some dark memories from childhood. And at that night my friend had dreamt of

If this key is not seen and taken up, it could be gone with waste. I wondered if someone would return searching for it, if the action of taking it causes someone's loss. Will there be a person be regret about losing the key?

I took it with me, then it becomes a part of my memory as a sign, into my personal archive, when I was with you, to feel the connection with the world at another side, by little chance, to get the chance of opening a door that exists but we may never find, of a new world, that could be constructed by the conscious connection.

It's at the juxtaposition that I jumped into this secret hole, I found objects on your table, white snake, nude Barbie doll, cute ceramic ghost, it reveals the other side of whom that I haven't received completely before. The moments of being together, connects me within my subjectivity hided under the surface of the linear narration in my ordinary life:

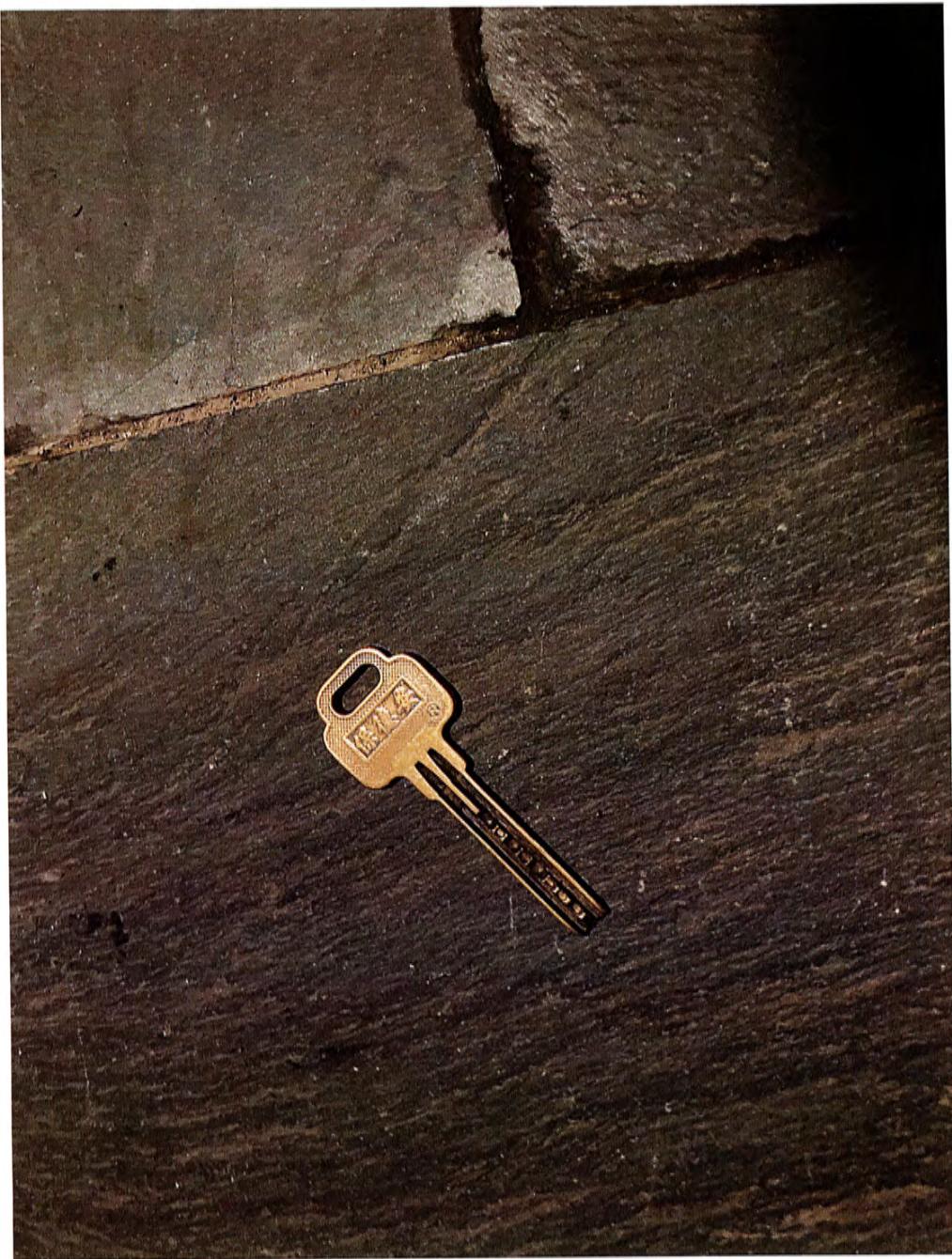
In the long-time memory, constructed in virtuality of fragmented documents, chat history, pictures, and, by encounters of finite times that we saw each other, being together, without touching the other. Is the reality in the middle of narration and memory, in the virtuality

a scorpion wrapped by frost and bite her, while she was not meant to beat it. Waked up in the second morning with you, I instinctively feel that scorpion connected with me as hidden in the ice age, from punishment of being prisoned from long-time ago.

I wish I was brave enough to ask you to let me be in your arms, we looked into each other's eyes, I see your clarity and puzzles, and we fall asleep, I could hear your breath. We were close, while we were also keeping the distance for our own safety.

The key was there, it might be lost by someone else, or deserted by a stranger, who is not with the locker of it anymore. Look from its appearance, it might not be functioned anymore, part of its grinders disappears.

But it could be functioned as the object to unlock the chained emotion buried underneath the skin, as one section of representation from intimacy, the vulnerable feelings that are suppressing under the plane of ordinary narration, once if we were willing to open the door let the light be at night, for keeping the warm memory there.



Letter to Yuxuan.txt

Dear YUXUAN,

Thank you very much for your object and the loving words you have written about your connection with it.

Maybe it was your intention, or not, that the reader should feel transported to a different time and place. Maybe you've already read about the practice of psychometry, a psychic transmission of knowledge and memory through touch. Reading into your object felt like a refuge or a personal magic conjured in the memory of a home, a safe space, and in the spirit of protection. An object like this, beyond its original function has now been imbued with new life, totemic purpose, and personal magic. This is a wonderful timeless gift for a lost object.

A part that struck me from your writing was in unlocking of emotion or vulnerability chained, captive and buried beneath the skin. In everyday life we most generally take our skin for granted, a first line of defence against the world. Psychometric touch suggests we consider the soul of things in the connections we make with them, but also the exchange of vulnerabilities in that touch. Some objects, like your key, can be imbued with a magic that activates memory, sensation, emotions that are valued or cherished or feared. Alone they are simply objects, but when touched they become something new that begins at the sensory reactive surface of the skin. A magic reaction. What is involved in that electric reciprocity? What is involved in that transaction of touch?

My object is not lost or broken, the more I look at it the less I believe it has a soul of any kind. My object has been manufactured and marketed to sell a safety and psychometric magic that cannot be fabricated. My object is Disciple's CBD Miracle Patch. Try one if you like. The product is mainly made up of natural starches, adhesives and CBD extract. Instructions across the back of the packaging will tell you absolutely that it is "not a medicine". As such, nothing is guaranteed. Within the awkwardly torn packaging now there is somewhere between 0 and 30 of the little patches remaining. When I place one on me, I will place it on my left shoulder blade, sometimes next to its B12, D-complex or nicotine cousins. I bought this product because I find that the transaction of touch is frequently fraught for me. Frequently, I find transactions of touch are painful, or unpleasant and magic of memory as you describe it, is something I watch from the other side of a glass screen. A 'Miracle' is what I purchased, but a patch is what I received. The reciprocity of touch is a fact, when we touch a thing- it touches us back. I'd hoped that these patches would be able to ease some of the pain in the damage to the nerves in my hips and legs.

I put my hope in an adhesive cure. This object that is supposed to give more than it takes. Beyond that I put my hope in a chemical cure. I will take multiple medications for the rest of my life but I hope that out there somewhere there is still that magic medicine, that miracle product that will smooth out the edges of interfacing with the world. I visualise the molecules entering my bloodstream when I apply the patch, I materialise wellness in my shoulder blade and realise positivity in my mind, I create the 'Miracle' myself. Maybe this will work better for you than it did for me or maybe not. Let me know if you notice any difference.

To take care of my item, really, is to take care of yourself. All the money I've earned I've spent on miracle cures. Looking at the world through psychometry I wonder if some objects steal energies as well as or instead of giving it. I wonder if you can tell from my object how much time and money I have invested in being 'well'. In handling my object, please be careful with yourself, and in application-should you choose to apply. I believe this object has the potential to take more than it gives.

All the best,  
Poppy

Poppy + Yuxuan



Letter for Yuxuan 2.txt

Dear YUXUAN,

I'm sorry that this letter may find you late.

I am reading your letter, and starting to write my response from inside the Cambridge University Library.

I'm here to kill time, to wait- surrounded by books too old to have much academic relevance anymore. Everyone is on their phones, their computers, their tech. There are six floors inside this surreal building, each turn is blind inside the narrow corridors and stacks, incipiently cold and quiet. The quietness is the kind that I once heard described in a ghost story as a 'deadening' of sound, where there are no living frequencies to be heard running wild like they do in the city. The library is peaceful in a way that is bigger than one life; neither happy nor sad, good nor bad, just the echo of whispers and footsteps lost around every turn, a tall soundless absence of life in every stack and unread words on every still shelf. It makes me think about the cities described in your last letter, and your dream. I carry your descriptions with me as I walk around trying to find my place here, in this new shifting landscape.

Of "...uncertainties as a usual part of the ordinary..." is something that you wrote in that last letter and the "energy passed away" from your body being far from home. These things resonate with me, the feeling of an ache for home, for safety, for rest, never seems to go away. For me it feels like a lesion that is open to the elements, changing and crusting with the weather, hurting more or less in the cold or the sun but never seeming to repair itself and ever, invisibly, present. It makes the warmth that you describe so much more important, a brief respite from exposure. I hope you have managed to find a way of keeping yourself safe and warm, creating for yourself a home away from home.

My own home is lost in time, although I can never say for sure whether it is ahead or behind me only that my home is not here, now, anymore; a feeling of a warm place of acceptance and belonging that is caught in a web of people and places that no longer exist. Bonds severed and floating free like electrical wires in a snow drift. I think that is why I like lonely places like this, like a hotel room, where there is no one to tell you that you don't belong, that you cannot make your home here and rest for a while. Your letter makes me think about how these landscapes become dreamscapes and collected little homes suspended in time. How we populate our minds with myths and figures of fantasy and archetype, creating dreams for ourselves, defining ourselves when no one is looking, and how our minds meddle with us when we sleep.

There is an artist that I think about very often; Julie Becker. I first saw her work when I was very ill in 2018. She created huge installations that merged fantasy and reality- doll houses and refrigerator boxes- she created homes and futures for the lost children of pop-culture. One of her rooms, is called 'The Waiting Room', an amalgamation of all clinician, psychotherapist, estate agent offices. A generic realisation of a 'waiting' space. I find that I go back to that room of hers quite frequently in my mind and sit in it, I don't know what I'm waiting for. Julie Becker had killed herself at exactly my age at the time I saw that exhibition. I like to think that, when I'm in her 'Waiting Room' in my mind, at the bus stop or before I go to sleep, I have added a room from her home to mine. That maybe if I go on long enough, I can bring her with me. I hope that we can bring all the sad people with us in our minds, keep them warm in our movable homes.

I hope that this isn't a sad letter, more nostalgic. I think again about your key to an invisible and unknown place, a key with an invisible lock. I like the idea of a key that will never lock something away again, that just remains as a character in the memory of a time and place and a temporal marker of coincidence. I'd like to know more about what those snakes and dragons mean to you. For me, to dream of snakes has always been a good thing, and so if anything is true of premonitions I can only imagine that you have some good luck headed your way.

I hope this letter finds you well,

All the best,

Poppy

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