

FARAWAY

Some days, I see the world in flashes through the peep holes of windows and I wonder what I'm doing here. Deskbound, I wish to be dwarfed by trees; to marvel at the flowers and the view; to feel my eyes reaching out and touching something amazing. I wish for a portal through which I can escape from my every day.

Paintings are portals, I think. If we allow them to, they can open up little cracks to our inner worlds. They can take us back to faded memories, rich with emotional resonance and warm light coming through. They can show us things in front of us that we've been missing all along; and they can take us Faraway, to where our childhood wanderings and delighted explorations in nature still exist.

I remember: Evening wanders, Merri Creek. The horizon swathed in yellow, theatrical silk that drapes and wraps around branches. The rippled reflections of trees. Golden light makes me feel better. The sunset is an antidote to days spent paling away under a fluorescent tube.

I remember: I am sitting bare legged on a warm rock, my face tilted to the sun, my eyes closed, my mind Faraway, as I observe the swirling abstract painting behind my closed lids, blood red and fierce and made of life.

I remember: The dance of autumn. My path is a crunchy, auburn carpet. I hold on tightly to long shadows in the afternoon — hold on to the feeling of freedom and flow — as we make a game of trying to catch the falling leaves.

I remember: Early morning by the river. The bright smell of eucalyptus; the river — powerful, slow and tender; the trees like old, friendly ghosts. The landscape is alive, full of lustre, colour and verve. My favourite place, always.

Year upon year, layer upon layer, I paint my memories so that I might hold onto feelings impossible to capture in words. I dip into holidays with golden weather; tree trunks shrouded in white mist; moss green mornings; breezes that ripple the leaves; bell birds chiming; and rain talking pleasantly to the tin roof. I make marks that gesture towards a fragile, fleeting, emotional something . . .

I want to hold onto the depths and shallows; the quicksilver changes and seasonal shifts; the insignificant afternoons spent staring at the changing sky — ephemeral moments to which we can never quite return. I want to be lost in these memories in the same way an artist in her studio may retreat someplace beautiful and lock the gate.

Deskbound, I wish to paint myself as if I were a tree, washed with the misty greys of all of my winters; bejewelled with the warm whispers of all of my summers — layer upon layer, until one day I become an aged old tree with leaves that touch the sky.

Claire Weigall is a Melbourne-based artist and writer. Claire's writing includes poetry and fiction that draws on her personal life experience and her fascination with the human spirit. Her work has been published in *The Big Issue*, presented in exhibitions via video recordings and spoken word performances, and was recently showcased in SEVENTH Gallery's Emerging Writers Program. Claire is also co-director of The Artists Guild in Melbourne/theartistsguild.com.au

Wednesday 26 July —
Sunday 06 August 2017

277 High Street Northcote

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HOURS

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Tuesday — Thursday
11am–3pm

Friday — Saturday
10am–8pm

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2% of all artwork proceeds will be donated to Friends of Merri Creek, dedicated to caring for the creek, its environs and tributaries.

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