PAGES FROM MY OLD JOURNALS FROM 1998 TO 2009

By Leong Hiew

Photographic scans and transcriptions

Public edition · October 2026

About this document

I'm Leong (Hong Liang Hiew), the founder of Lifespan Education, an Australian organisation exploring what it means to be human and how we are formed through living and our relationships with others.

In October 2026, I prepared this public edition of selected pages from old journals I kept, and made it available through my Founder page at lifespan.education/about/founder/.

These journals were written long before Lifespan Education existed. They were not intended to explain or support the work I do today. I am sharing them as glimpses of my own life and formation, to share with others who may be interested in exploring what it means to be human.

About these journals

This collection contains sample pages from journals and notebooks I kept between the late 1990s and 2009. They include personal reflections, everyday experiences, philosophical questions, creative writing, notes on music and dance, and my thoughts about identity, faith, relationships and being human.

Most of these writings at the time they were written were never intended for a public audience. They are neither a continuous autobiography nor a collection of thought-out positions. Some ideas are in-development, others contradict one another, and many are left unfinished.

What is missing from these pages

Much of my life has been lived through relationships with other people. My family, friends, and people I have loved have all been part of my formation.

I wrote extensively about these relationships in my private journals. However, I have omitted many of those entries, because the experiences I wrote about were not mine alone. The other people involved have their own lives, experiences and privacy, which I wish to respect. I withhold names and identifying details where appropriate. In most cases, removing a name would not be sufficient to protect a person's identity.

As a result, some of the relationships that have been most significant in my life are barely show up in this collection. Their absence from these pages should not be mistaken for their absence or the lack of recognition about their importance in who I have become.

Even where my reflections about other people remain, they represent my own thoughts and perceptions at the time. They should not be taken as reliable accounts of those people's experiences.

Some difficult passages

Some of these writings are uncomfortable for me to revisit. They reveal personal struggles, unhelpful patterns of thought and behaviour, mistaken judgements, and aspects of myself that I have come to understand differently.

I do not offer my life as an example of how others should live, nor do I claim that I have resolved all the difficulties reflected in these pages. I remain responsible for my actions, past and present.

These writings should not necessarily be taken as expressing what I believe today.

Why I am sharing them

My reason for sharing these writings is to make something of human formation visible.

These pages record moments of a life being lived, instead of a story constructed with the benefit of hindsight. They reveal to me the person who is experiencing, questioning, imagining, struggling to understand, making mistakes and sometimes changing.

There is no complete account here of how I became who I am today. Nor do I wish to construct one from these fragments of journal entries.

I hope these pages offer an opportunity to encounter something of the ordinary, complicated and sometimes uncomfortable process of being human.

About this edition

This is an edited public edition. The notebooks are presented in approximate chronological order, although I sometimes wrote concurrently in several notebooks during the same period.

The transcriptions were prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence (GPT-6, October 2026), that were used to extract the text from photo scans and transcribe the text. The transcribed text contain editorial notes such as [unclear] and [crossed out]. Transcription errors may remain. The handwritten originals are the authoritative source.

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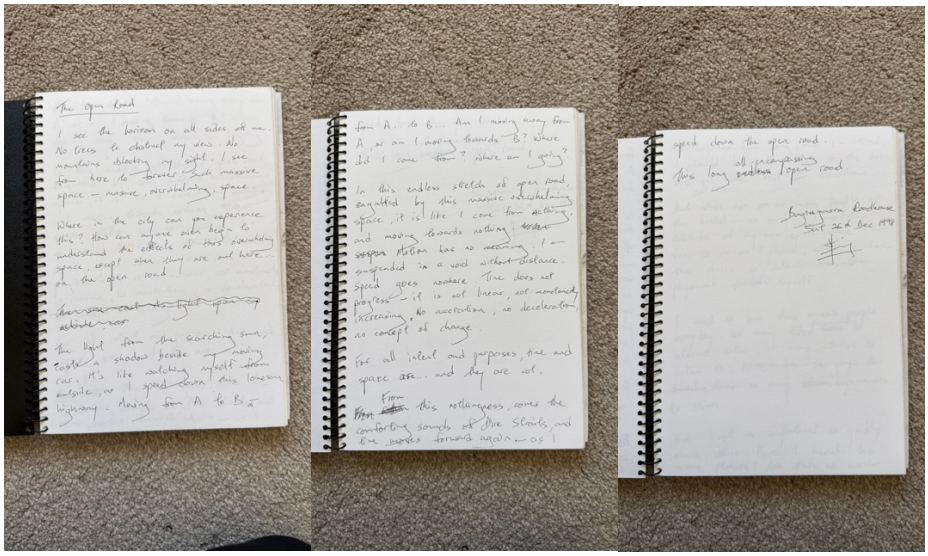
Journal F · Black notebook (2003)

Journal A – Black Spiral (December 1998 to January 1999)



Black Quill spiral-bound notebook.

Green note attached: “Dec 1998 – Jan 1999”



The Open Road

I see the horizon on all sides of me. No trees to obstruct my views. No mountains blocking my sight. I see from here to forever. Such massive space — massive, overwhelming, space.

Where in the city can you experience this? How can anyone even begin to understand the effects of this overwhelming space, except when they are out here... on the open road.

[One sentence crossed out.]

The light from the scorching sun, casts a shadow beside my moving car. It's like watching myself from outside, as I speed down this lonesome highway. Moving from A to B — from A... to B... Am I moving away from A, or am I moving towards B? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

In this endless stretch of open road, engulfed by this massive overwhelming space, it is like I come from nothing, and moving towards nothing, where motion has no meaning. I am suspended in a void without distance. Speed goes nowhere. Time does not progress — it is not linear, not monotonically increasing. No acceleration, no deceleration, no concept of change.

For all intent and purposes, time and space are... and they are not.

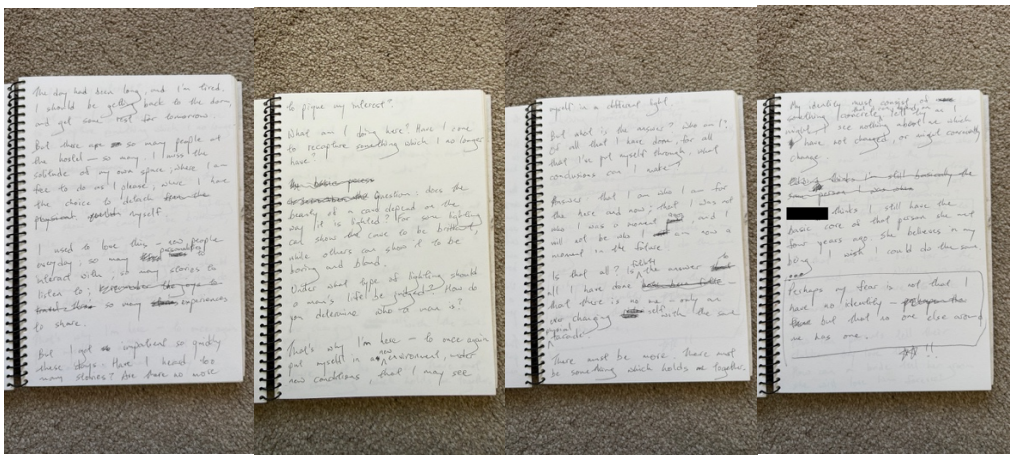
From this nothingness, comes the comforting sounds of Dire Straits, and time moves forward again — as I speed down the open road.

This long all-encompassing open road.

Bagingarra Roadhouse

Sat 26th Dec 1998

[Signature]



The day had been long, and I'm tired. I should be getting back to the dorm, and get some rest for tomorrow.

But there are so many people at the hostel — so many. I miss the solitude of my own space, where I am free to do as I please; where I have the choice to detach myself from the physical world.

I used to love this — new people everyday, so many personalities to interact with, so many stories to listen to; so many experiences to share.

But I get so impatient so quickly these days. Have I heard too many stories? Are there no more to pique my interest?

What am I doing here? Have I come to recapture something which I no longer have?

[Crossed-out passage.]

Question: does the beauty of a candle depend on the way it is lighted? For some lighting can show the candle to be brilliant, while others can show it to be boring and bland.

Under what type of lighting should a man's life be judged? How do you determine who a man is?

That's why I'm here — to once again put myself in a new environment, under new conditions, that I may see myself in a different light.

But what is the answer? Who am I? Of all that I have done, for all that I've put myself through, what conclusions can I make?

Answer: that I am who I am for the here and now; that I was not who I was a moment ago, and I will not be who I am now a moment in the future.

Is that all? Is that [crossed-out words] all I have done — that there is no me — only an ever changing self with the same physical facade.

There must be more. There must be something which holds me together.

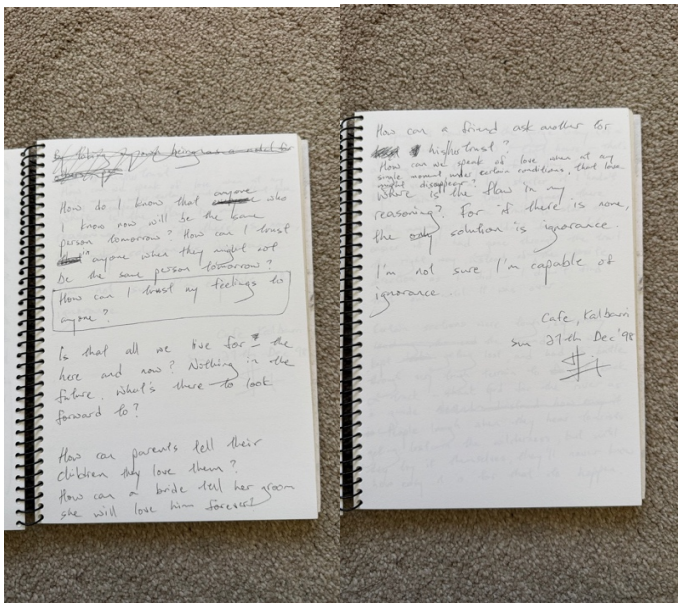
My identity must consist of something that I can identify, something independent of [unclear] as I might see nothing about me which have not changed, or might conceivably change.

[Two lines crossed out.]

[Name removed] thinks I still have the basic core of that person she met four years ago. She believes in my being. I wish I could do the same.

[Boxed reflection:]

Perhaps my fear is not that I have no identity — but that no one else around me has one.



[Crossed-out sentence.]

How do I know that anyone who I know now will be the same person tomorrow? How can I trust in anyone when they might not be the same person tomorrow?

How can I trust my feelings to anyone?

Is that all we live for — the here and now? Nothing in the future. What's there to look forward to?

How can parents tell their children they love them? How can a bride tell her groom she will love him forever?

How can a friend ask another for his/her trust?

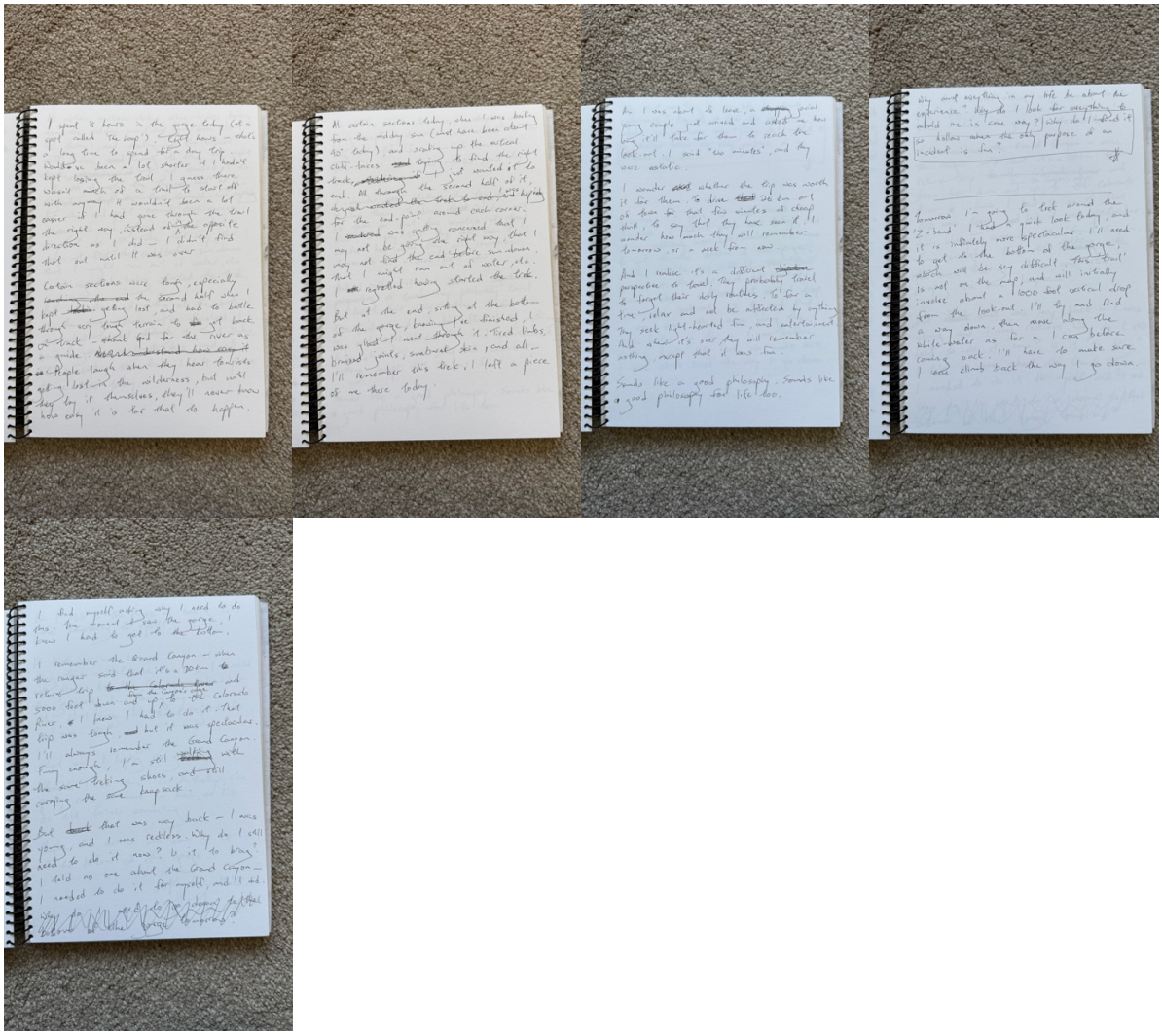
How can we speak of love when at any single moment under certain conditions, that love might disappear?

Where is the flaw in my reasoning? For if there is none, the only solution is ignorance.

I'm not sure I'm capable of ignorance.

Cafe, Kalbarri

Sun 27th Dec '98



I spent 8 hours in the gorge today (at a spot called "The Loop"). Eight hours — that's a long time to spend for a day trip. Would've been a lot shorter if I hadn't kept losing the trail. I guess there wasn't much of a trail to start off with anyway. It wouldn't been a lot easier if I had gone through the trail the right way, instead of in the opposite direction as I did — I didn't find that out until it was over.

Certain sections were tough, especially the second half when I kept getting lost, and had to battle through very tough terrain to get back on track — thank God for the river as a guide. People laugh when they hear tourists getting lost in the wilderness, but until they try it themselves, they'll never know how easy it is for that to happen.

At certain sections today, when I was boiling from the midday sun (must have been about 40° today) and scaling up the vertical cliff-faces trying to find the right track, I just wanted it to end. All through the second half of it, I was hoping for the end-point around each corner.

I was getting concerned that I may not be going the right way, that I may not find the end before sundown, that I might run out of water, etc. I regretted having started the trek.

But at the end, sitting at the bottom of the gorge, knowing I've finished, I was glad I went through it. Tired limbs, bruised joints, sunburnt skin, and all — I'll remember this trek. I left a piece of me there today.

As I was about to leave, a jovial young couple just arrived and asked me how long it'll take for them to reach the look-out. I said "two minutes", and they were ecstatic.

I wonder whether the trip was worth it for them. To drive 26 km out of town for that few minutes of cheap thrill, to say that they have seen it. I wonder how much they will remember tomorrow, or a week from now.

And I realise it's a different perspective to travel. They probably travel to forget their daily routines. To for a time relax and not be affected by anything. They seek light-hearted fun, and entertainment. And when it's over they will remember nothing, except that it was fun.

Sounds like a good philosophy. Sounds like a good philosophy for life too.

Why must everything in my life be about the experience? Why do I look for everything to mould me in some way?

[Boxed reflection:]

Why do I find it so hollow when the only purpose of an incident is fun?

Tomorrow I'm going to trek around the "Z-bend". I had a quick look today, and it is infinitely more spectacular. I'll need to get to the to get to the bottom of the gorge, which will be very difficult. This ‘trail’ is not on the map, and will initially involve about a 1000 foot vertical drop from the look-out. I’ll try and find a way down, then move along the white-water as far as I can before coming back. I’ll have to make sure I can climb back the way I go down.

I find myself asking why I need to do this. The moment I saw the gorge, I knew I had to get to the bottom.

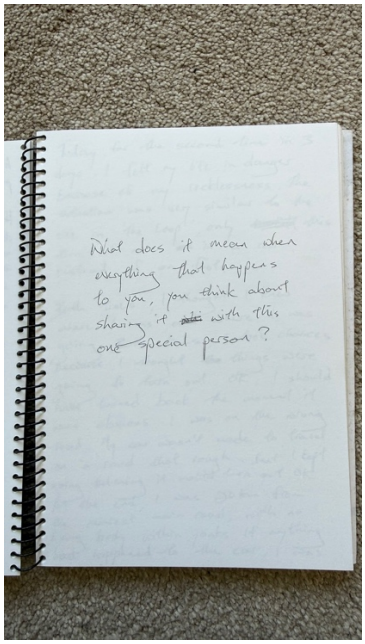
I remember the Grand Canyon – when the ranger said that it's a 20km return trip from the Canyon's edge and 5000 feet down and up to the Colorado River, I knew I had to do it. That trip was tough, but it was spectacular.

I'll always remember the Grand Canyon. Funny enough, I'm still walking with the same trekking shoes, and still carrying the same knapsack.

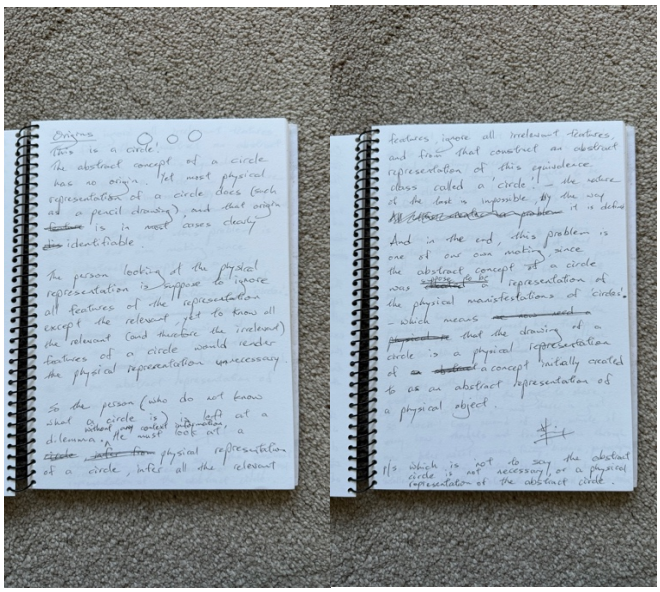
But that was way back – I was young, and I was reckless. Why do I still need to do it now? Is it to brag?

I told no one about the Grand Canyon – I needed to do it for myself, and I did.

[Crossed out “Why do I need to go down to the bottom of the gorge tomorrow?”]



What does it mean when everything that happens to you, you think about sharing it with this one special person?



Origins

[Three hand-drawn circles]

This is a circle!

The abstract concept of a circle has no origin. Yet most physical representation of a circle does (such as a pencil drawing), and that origin is in most cases clearly identifiable.

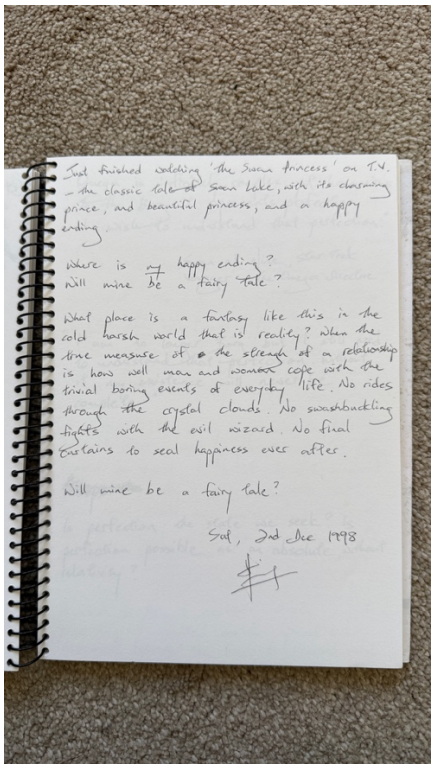
The person looking at the physical representation is suppose to ignore all features of the representation except the relevant yet to know all the relevant (and therefore the irrelevant) features of a circle would render the physical representation unnecessary.

So the person (who do not know what a circle is) is left at a dilemma. He must look at a physical representation of a circle, infer all the relevant features, ignore all irrelevant features, and from that construct an abstract representation of this equivalence class called a 'circle' — the nature of the task is impossible by the way it is defined.

And in the end this problem is one of our own making since the abstract concept of a circle was suppose to be a representation of the physical manifestations of 'circles' — which means that the drawing of a circle is a physical representation of a concept initially created to be an abstract representation of a physical object.

[Signature]

p/s Which is not to say the abstract circle is not necessary, or a physical representation of the abstract circle.



Just finished watching 'the Swan Princess' on T.V. — the classic tale of Swan Lake, with its charming prince, and beautiful princess, and a happy ending.

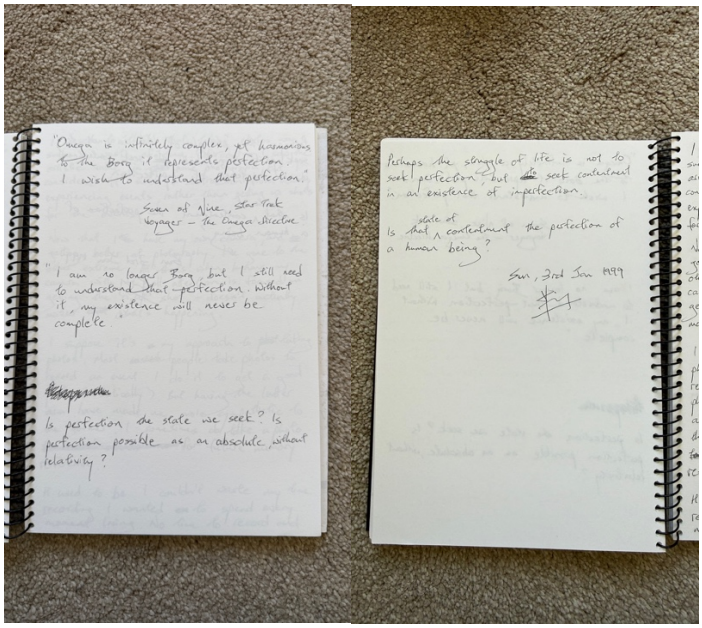
Where is my happy ending?

Will mine be a fairy tale?

What place is a fantasy like this in the cold harsh world that is reality? When the true measure of the strength of a relationship is how well man and woman cope with the trivial boring events of everyday life. No rides through the crystal clouds. No swashbuckling fights with the evil wizard. No final curtains to seal happiness ever after.

Will mine be a fairy tale?

Sat, 2nd Dec 1998



"Omega is infinitely complex, yet harmonious. To the Borg it represents perfection. I wish to understand that perfection."

Seven of Nine, Start Trek Voyager – the Omega Directive

"I am no longer Borg, but I still need to understand that perfection. Without it, my existence will never be complete."

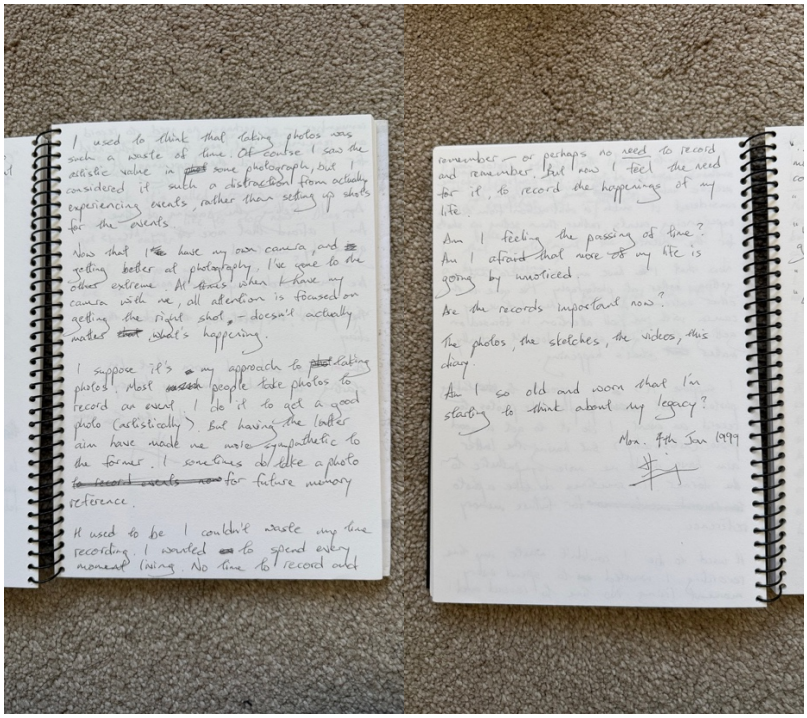
Is perfection the state we seek? Is perfection possible as an absolute, without relativity?

Perhaps the struggle of life is not to seek perfection but to seek contentment in an existence of imperfection.

Is that state of contentment the perfection of a human being?

Sun, 3rd Jan 1999

[Signature]



I used to think that taking photos was such a waste of time. Of course I saw the artistic value in some photographs, but I considered it such a distraction from actually experiencing events, rather than setting up shots for the events.

Now that I have my own camera, and getting better at photography, I've gone to the other extreme. At times when I have my camera with me, all attention is focused on getting the right shot — doesn't actually matter what's happening.

I suppose it's my approach to taking photos. Most people take photos to record an event. I do it to get a good photo (artistically). But having the latter aim have made me more sympathetic to the former. I sometimes do take a photo for future memory reference.

It used to be I couldn't waste my time recording, I wanted to spend every moment living. No time to record and remember — or perhaps no need to record and remember. But now I feel the need for it, to record the happenings of my life.

Am I feeling the passing of time? Am I afraid that more of my life is going by unnoticed.

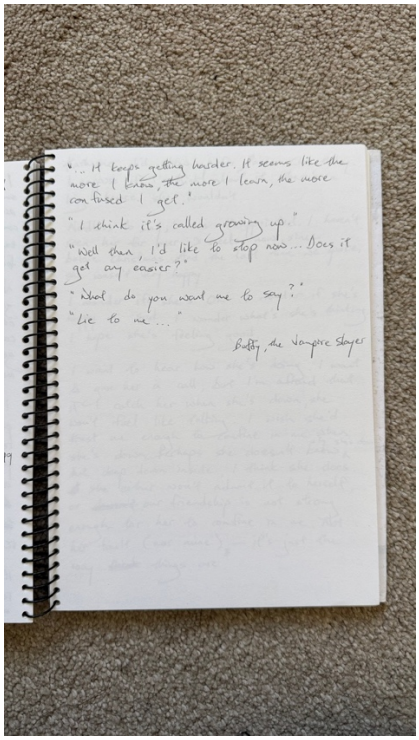
Are the records important now?

The photos, the sketches, the videos, this diary.

Am I so old and worn that I'm starting to think about my legacy?

Mon. 4th Jan 1999

[Signature]



"… It keeps getting harder. It seems like the more I know, the more I learn, the more confused I get."

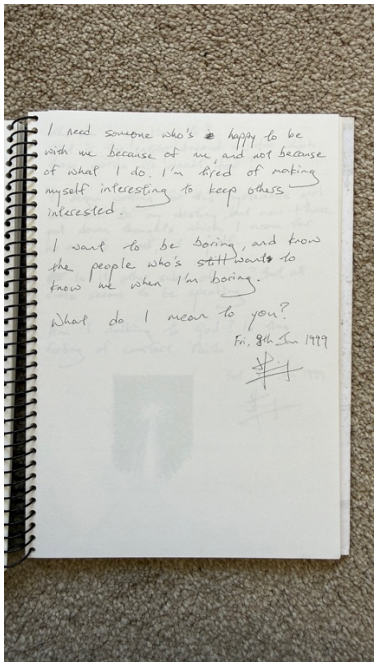
"I think it's called growing up."

"Well then, I'd like to stop now… Does it get any easier?"

"What do you want me to say?"

"Lie to me…"

Buffy, the Vampire Slayer



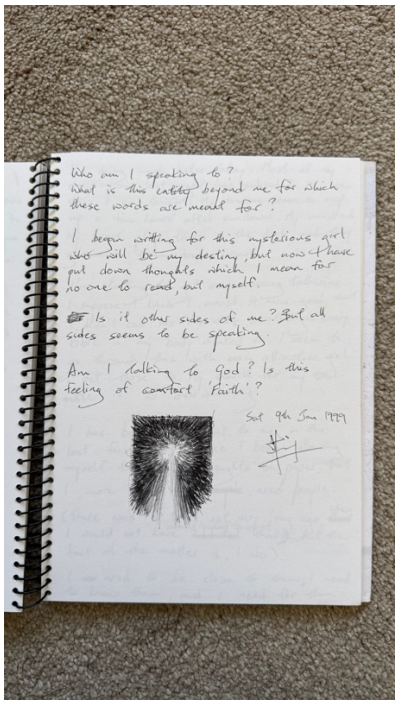
I need someone who's happy to be with me because of me, and not because of what I do. I'm tired of making myself interesting to keep others interested.

I want to be boring, and know the people who's still wants to know me when I'm boring.

What do I mean to you?

Fri, 8th Jan 1999

[Signature]



Who am I speaking to?

What is this entity beyond me for which these words are meant for?

I began writing for this mysterious girl who will be my destiny, but now I have put down thoughts which I mean for no one to read, but myself.

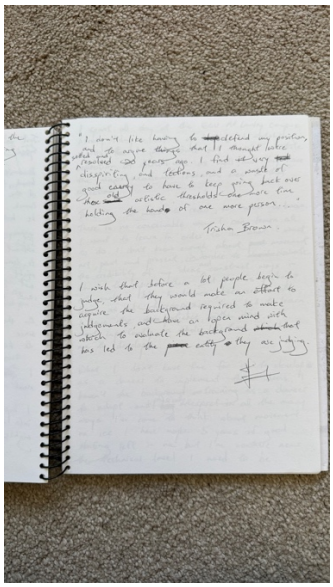
Is it other sides of me? But all sides seems to be speaking.

Am I talking to God? Is this feeling of comfort 'faith'?

Sat 9th Jan 1999

[Signature]

[Pen-and-ink drawing of a bright, radiating light against a dark background.]



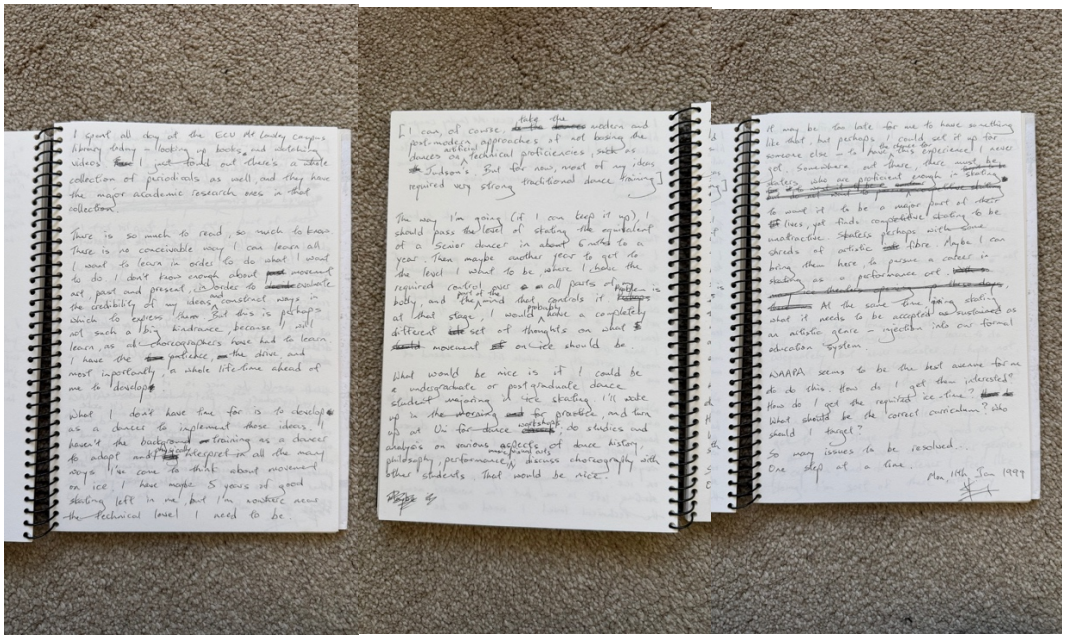
[Extended quotation attributed to Trisha Brown withheld from the public edition.]

“I don’t like having to defend my position, and to argue things that I thought were settled and resolved 20 years ago. I find it very dispiriting, and tedious, and a waste of good energy to have to keep going back over these old artistic thresholds one more time holding the hand of one more person…”

Trisha Brown.

I wish that before a lot people begin to judge, that they would make an effort to acquire the background required to make judgements, and have an open mind with which to evaluate the background that has led to the entity they are judging.

[Signature]



I spent all day at the ECU Mt Lawley campus library today — looking up books, and watching videos. I just found out there's a whole collection of periodicals as well, and they have the major academic research ones in that collection.

There is so much to read, so much to know. There is no conceivable way I can learn all I want to learn in order to do what I want to do. I don't know enough about movement art, past and present, in order to evaluate the credibility of my ideas and construct ways in which to express them. But this is perhaps not such a big hindrance, because I will learn, as all choreographers have had to learn. I have the patience, the drive, and most importantly, a whole lifetime ahead of me to develop.

What I don't have time for is to develop as a dancer to implement those ideas. I haven't the background or training as a dancer to adapt and physically express in all the many ways I've come to think about movement on ice. I have maybe 5 years of good skating left in me, but I'm nowhere near the technical level I need to be.

I can, of course, take the modern and postmodern approaches of not basing the dances on artificial technical proficiencies, such as Judson's. But for now, most of my ideas required very strong traditional dance training.

The way I'm going (if I can keep it up), I should pass the level of skating the equivalent of a Senior dancer in about 5 years to a year [unclear]. Then maybe another year to get to the level I want to be, where I have the required control over all parts of my body, and the mind that controls it. Problem is at that stage, I would probably have a completely different set of thoughts on what movement on ice should be.

What would be nice is if I could be a undergraduate or postgraduate dance student majoring in ice skating. I'd wake up in the morning for practice, and turn up at Uni for dance workshops, do studies and analysis on various aspects of dance history, philosophy, performance, musical arts, discuss choreography with other students. That would be nice.

It may be too late for me to have something like that, but perhaps I could set it up for someone else — to have the chance to experience I never got. Somewhere out there, there must be skaters who are proficient enough in skating to want it to be a major part of their lives, yet finds competitive skating to be unattractive. Skaters perhaps with some shreds of artistic fibre. Maybe I can bring them here to pursue a career in skating as a performance art. At the same time, giving skating what it needs to be accepted as an artistic genre — injecting into our formal education system.

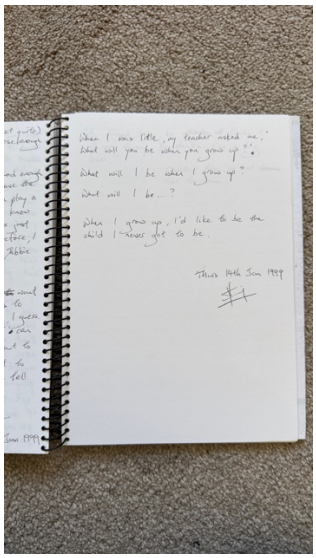
WAAPA seems to be the best avenue for me to do this. How do I get them interested? How do I get the required ice-time? What should be the correct curriculum? Who should I target?

So many issues to be resolved...

One step at a time.

Mon, 11th Jan 1999

[Signature]



When I was little, my teacher asked me, "What will you be when you grow up?"

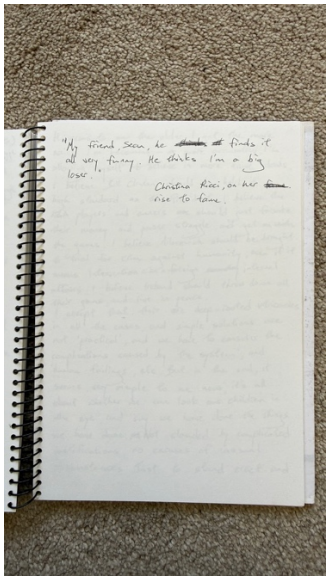
What will I be when I grow up?

What will I be...?

When I grow up, I'd like to be the child I never got to be.

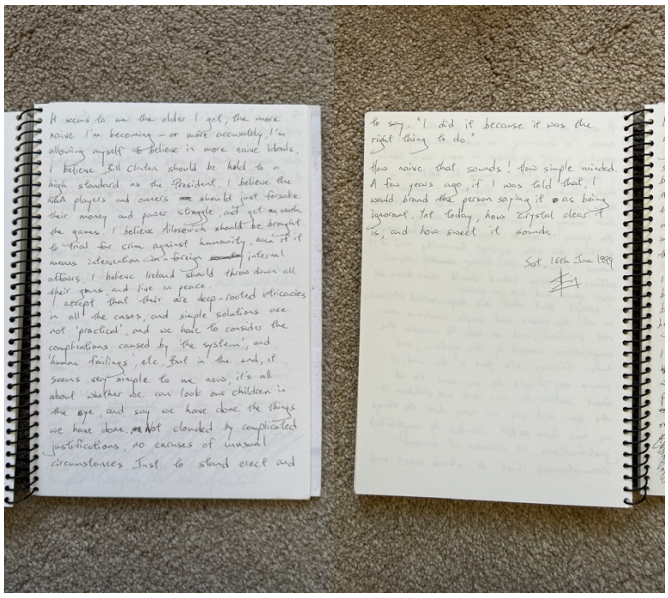
Thurs 14th Jan 1999

[Signature]



"My friend Sean, he finds it all very funny. He thinks I'm a big loser."

Christina Ricci, on her rise to fame.



It seems to me the older I get, the more naive I'm becoming — or more accurately, I'm allowing myself to believe in more naive ideals.

I believe Bill Clinton should be held to a high standard as the President. I believe the NBA players and owners should just forsake their money and power struggle, and get on with the games. I believe Milosevic should be brought to trial for crime against humanity, even if it means intervention in a foreign internal affairs. I believe Ireland should throw down all their guns and live in peace.

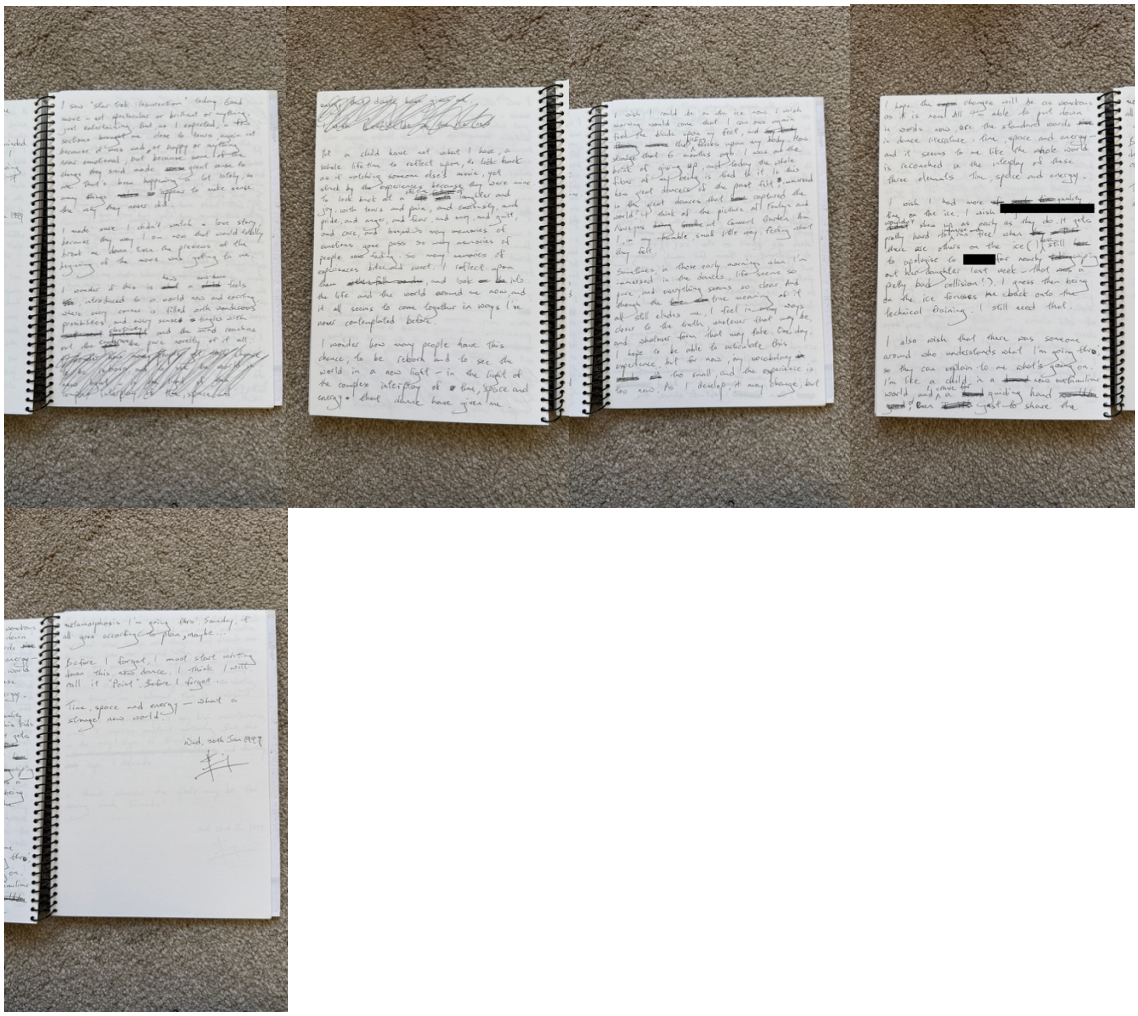
I accept that there are deep-rooted intricacies in all the cases, and simple solutions are not 'practical', and we have to consider the complications caused by 'the system', and 'human failings', etc. But in the end, it seems very simple to me now, it's all about whether we can look our children in the eye, and say we have done the things we have done. Not clouded by

complicated justifications, no excuses of unusual circumstances. Just to stand erect and to say, "I did it because it was the right thing to do."

How naive that sounds! How simple minded. A few years ago, if I was told that, I would brand the person saying it as being ignorant. Yet today, how crystal clear it is, and how sweet it sounds.

Sat, 16th Jan 1999

[Signature]



I saw "Star Trek: Insurrection" today. Good movie — not spectacular or brilliant or anything, just entertaining. But, as I expected, a few sections brought me close to tears, again not because it was sad or happy or anything near emotional, but because some of the things they said made great sense to me. That's been happening a lot lately, so many things appear to make sense the way they never did.

I made sure I didn't watch a love story because they may [unclear] one that would totally break me down. Even the previews at the beginning of the movie was getting to me.

I wonder if this is how a new-born feels introduced to a world new and exciting, where every corner is filled with wondrous possibilities, and every sense tingles with electricity! And the mind reaches out to embrace the pure novelty of it all.

[Several heavily crossed-out lines.]

Yet a child have not what I have, a whole lifetime to reflect upon, to look back as if watching someone else's movie, yet struck by the experiences because they were mine. To look back at a lifetime filled with love and joy, with tears and pain and curiosity, and pride, and anger, and fear, and envy, and guilt, and care, and loving. So many memories of emotions gone pass. So many memories of people now fading. So many memories of experiences bitter and sweet. I reflect upon them, and look into the life and the world around me now, and it all seems to come together in ways I've never contemplated before.

I wonder how many people have this chance, to be reborn and to see the world in a new light — in the light of the complex interplay of time, space and energy that dance have given me.

I wish I could be on the ice now. I wish morning would come that I can once again feel the blade upon my feet, and the forces upon my body. How strange that 6 months ago, I was at the brink of giving up, and today the whole fibre of my being is tied to it. Is this how great dancers of the past felt, immersed in the great dances that have captured the world? I think of the picture of Fonteyn and Nureyev doing Giselle at Covent Garden. Am I, in my humble, small little way, feeling what they felt.

Sometimes, in those early mornings when I'm immersed in the dances, life seems so pure, and everything seems so clear. And though the meaning of it all still eludes me, I feel in many ways closer to the truth, whatever that may be, and whatever form that may take. One day, I hope to be able to articulate this experience, but for now my vocabulary is too small, and the experience is too new. As I develop, it may change, but I hope the changes will be as wondrous as it is now! All I'm able to put down in words now, are the standard words in dance literature — time, space and energy — and it seems to me like the whole world is [unclear] in the interplay of these three elements. Time, space and energy.

I wish I had more of [crossed out] quality time on the ice. I wish [Names removed] wouldn't show up as early as they do. It gets pretty hard to run free when there are others on the ice (I still have to apologise to [Name removed] for nearly wiping out her daughter last week — that was a pretty bad collision!). I guess then being on the ice focuses me back onto the technical training. I still need that.

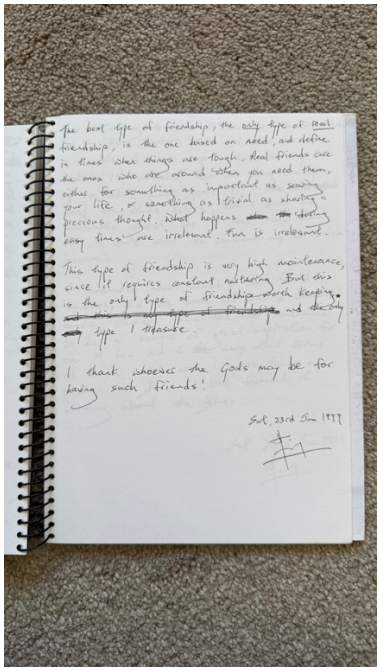
I also wish that there was someone around who understands what I'm going through so they can explain to me what's going on. I'm like a child in a new unfamiliar world, and crave for a guiding hand, or even just to share the metamorphosis I'm going through! Someday, if all goes according to plan, maybe...

Before I forget, I must start writing down this new dance. I think I will call it "Point". Before I forget...

Time, space and energy — what a strange new world!

Wed, 20th Jan 1999

[Signature]



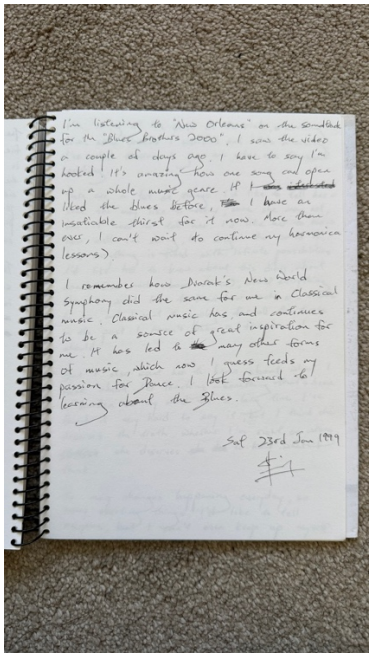
The best type of friendship, the only type of real friendship, is the one based on need, and define in times when things are tough. Real friends are the ones who are around when you need them, either for something as important as saving your life, or something as trivial as sharing a precious thought. What happens during easy times are irrelevant. Fun is irrelevant.

This type of friendship is very high maintenance, since it requires constant nurturing. But this is the only type of friendship worth keeping, and the only type I treasure.

I thank whoever the Gods may be for having such friends!

Sat, 23rd Jan 1999

[Signature]



I'm listening to "New Orleans" on the soundtrack for the "Blues Brothers 2000". I saw the video a couple of days ago. I have to say I'm hooked! It's amazing how one song can open up a whole music genre. If I liked the blues before, I have an insatiable thirst for it now. More than ever, I can't wait to continue my harmonica lessons.

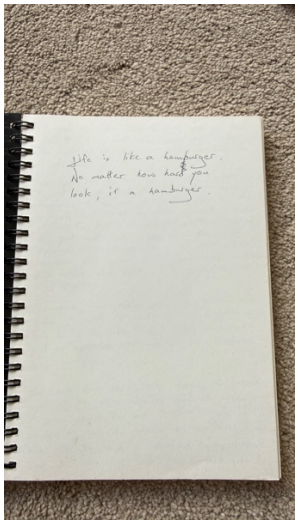
I remember how Dvorak's New World Symphony did the same for me in Classical music. Classical music has, and continues to be, a source of great inspiration for me. It has led to many other forms of music, which now I guess feeds my passion for Dance. I look forward to learning about the Blues.

Sat, 23rd Jan 1999

[Signature]

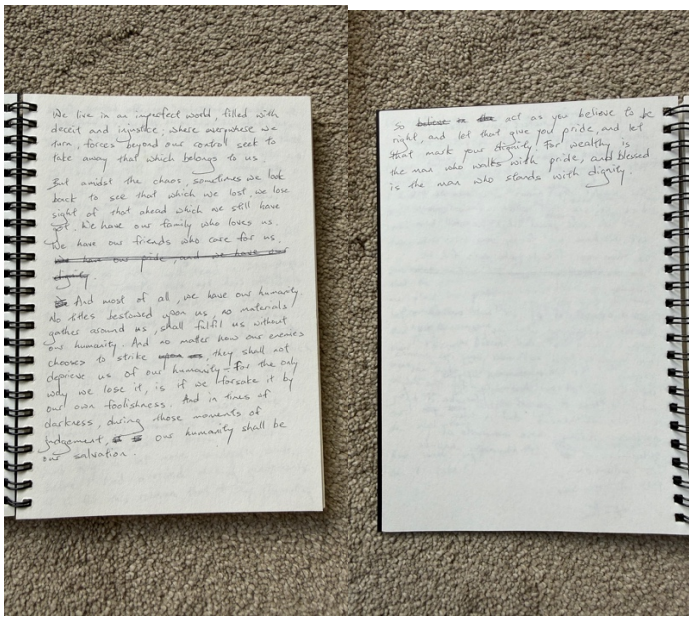
Journal B — Top-Spiral Notebook (1998-1999)

Note: Most pages in this notebook are omitted due to privacy for people I wrote about.



Life is like a hamburger.

No matter how hard you look, it's a hamburger.



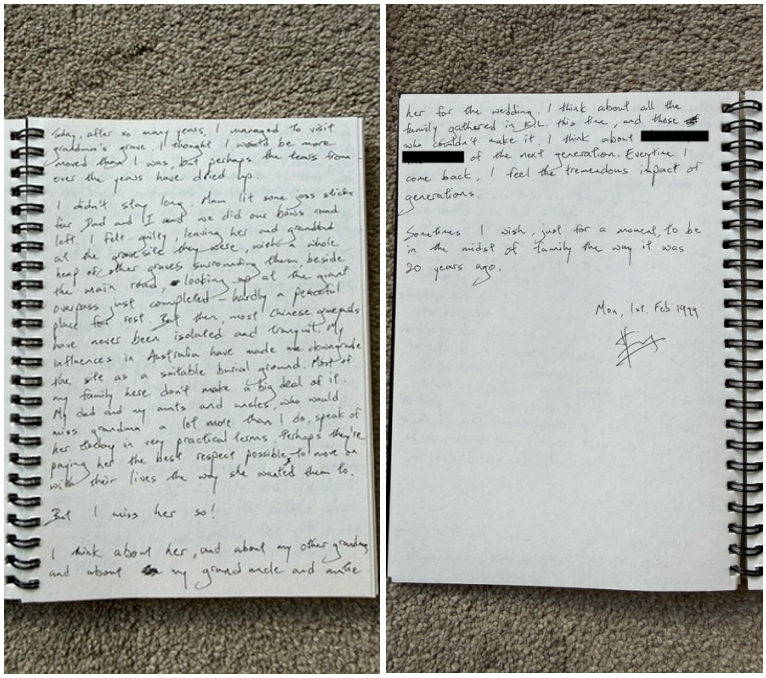
We live in an imperfect world, filled with deceit and injustice, where everywhere we turn, forces beyond our control seek to take away that which belongs to us.

But amidst the chaos, sometimes we look back to see that which we lost we lose sight of that ahead which we still have got. We have our family who loves us. We have our friends who care for us.

[Crossed out: We have our pride, and we have our dignity.]

And most of all, we have our humanity. No riches bestowed upon us, no materials gather around us, shall fulfil us without our humanity. And no matter how our enemies chooses to strike, they shall not deprieve us of our humanity — for the only way we lose it, is if we forsake it by our own foolishness. And in times of darkness, during those moments of judgement, our humanity shall be our salvation.

So act as you believe to be right, and let that give you pride, and let that mark your dignity! For wealthy is the man who walks with pride, and blessed is the man who stands with dignity.



Today, after so many years, I managed to visit grandma's grave. I thought I would be more moved than I was, but perhaps the tears from over the years have dried up.

I didn't stay long, Mum lit some joss sticks for Dad and I and we did our bows and left. I felt guilty, leaving her and granddad at the graveside they were, with a whole heap of other graves surrounding them, beside the main road, looking up at the giant overpass just completed — hardly a peaceful place for rest. But then, most Chinese graveyards have never been isolated and tranquil. My influences in Australia have made me downgrade the site as a suitable burial ground. Most of my family here don't make a big deal of it. My dad and my aunts and uncles, who would miss grandma a lot more than I do, speak of her today in very practical terms. Perhaps they're paying her the best respect possible — to move on with their lives the way she wanted them to.

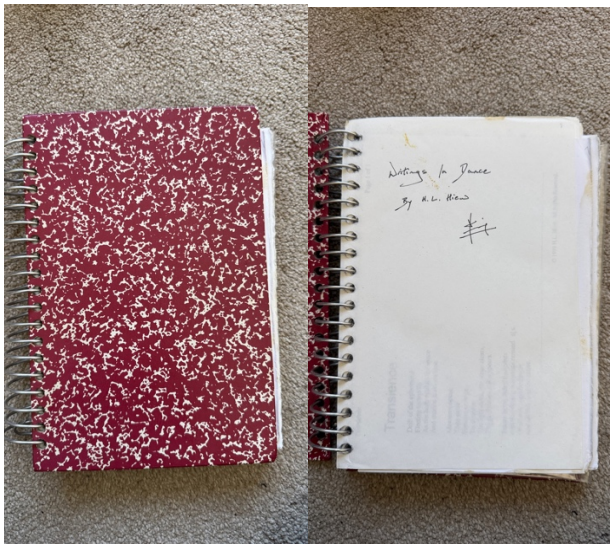
But I miss her so!

I think about her, and about my other grandma and about my grand uncle and auntie here for the wedding. I think about all the family gathered in KL this time, and those who couldn't make it. I think about [Names removed] of the next generation. Everytime I come back, I feel the tremendous impact of generations.

Sometimes I wish, just for a moment, to be in the midst of family the way it was 20 years ago.

Mon, 1st Feb 1999

Journal C — Writings in Dance (1999 – 2009)

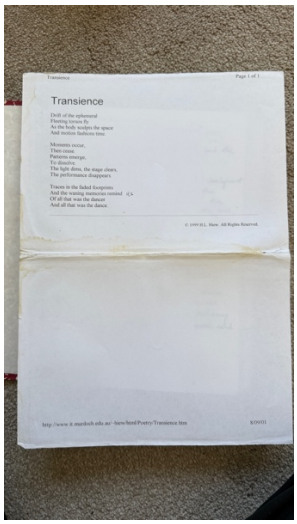


Red and white marbled, spiral-bound notebook.

Writings in Dance

By H. L. Hiew

[Handwritten signature]



Transience

Drift of the ephemeral
Fleeting torsos fly
As the body sculpts the space
And motion fashions time.

Moments occur,
Then cease.
Patterns emerge,
To dissolve.
The light dims, the stage clears,
The performance disappears.

Traces in the faded footprints
And the waning memories remind us
Of all that was the dancer
And all that was the dance.

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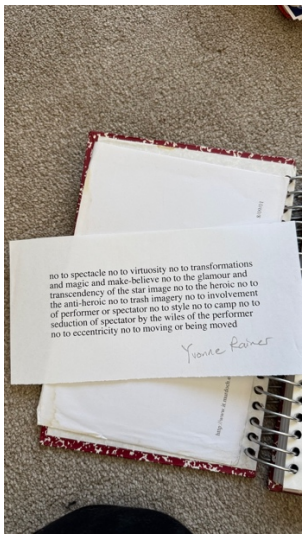
Editorial transcription note: “us” is handwritten after “remind” in the printed text.

Original printed page information:

Page 1 of 1

Printed: 8/09/01

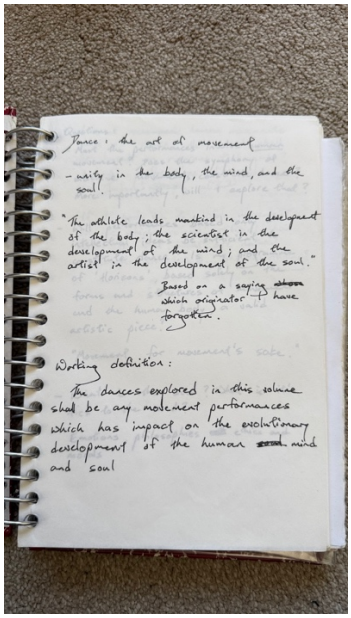
Original web address: http://www.it.murdoch.edu.au/~hiew/html/Poetry/Transience.htm



no to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-
believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of performer or spectator no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving or being moved

[Printed quotation, with the name handwritten underneath.]

Yvonne Rainer



Dance: the art of movement

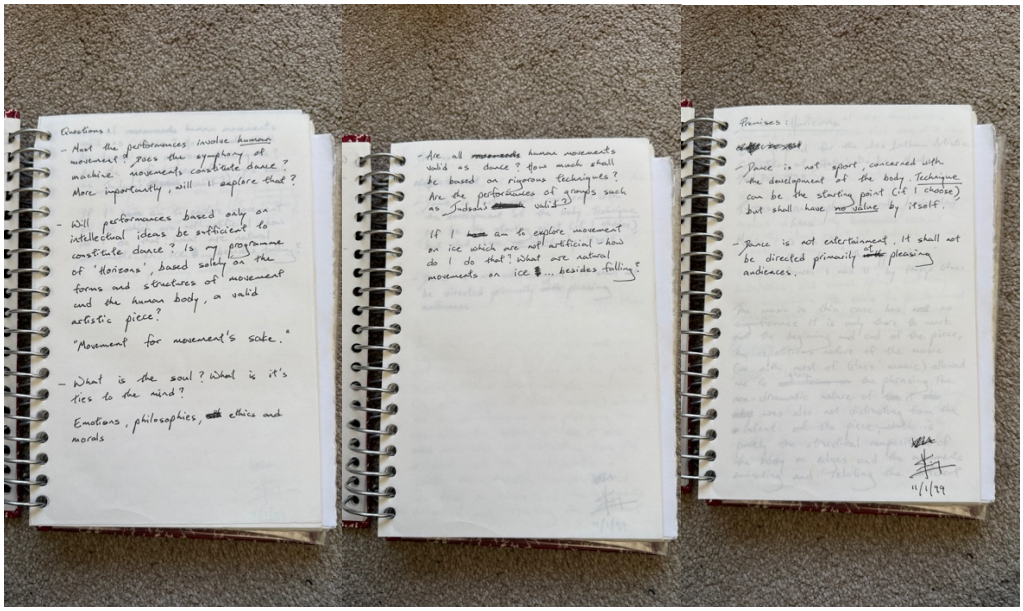
unity in the body, the mind, and the soul!

"The athlete leads mankind in the development of the body; the scientist in the development of the mind; and the artist in the development of the soul."

Based on a saying [crossed-out words] which originates I have forgotten.

Working definition:

The dances explored in this volume shall be any movement performances which has impact on the evolutionary development of the human mind and soul.



Questions:

Must the performances involve human movement? Does the symphony of machine movements constitute dance? More importantly, will I explore that?

Will performances based only on intellectual ideas be sufficient to constitute dance? Is my programme of 'Horizons', based solely on the forms and structures of movement and the human body, a valid artistic piece?

"Movement for movement's sake."

What is the soul? What is it's ties to the mind?

Emotions, philosophies, ethics and morals.

- Are all human movements valid as dance? How much shall be based on rigorous techniques? Are the performances of groups such as Judson's valid?

If I am to explore movement on ice which are not artificial — how do I do that? What are natural movements on ice ... besides falling?

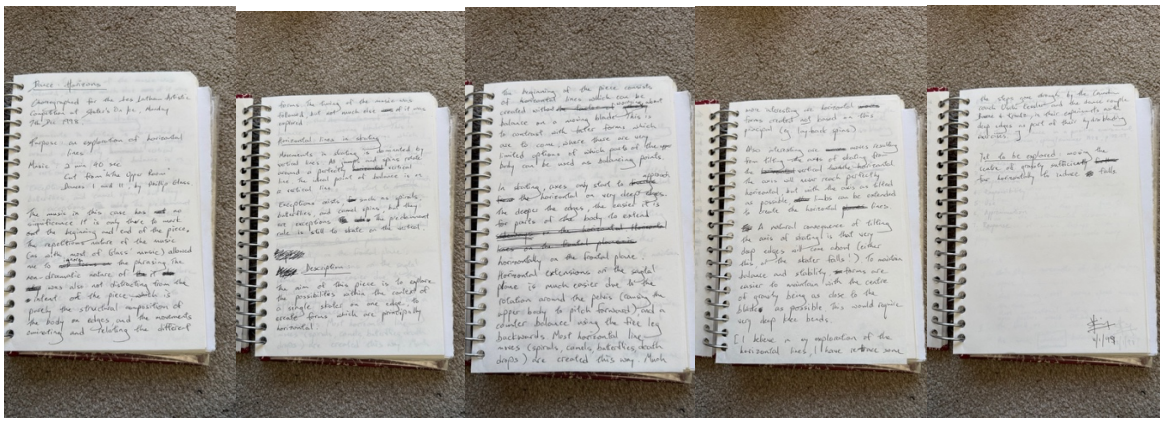
Premises:

Dance is not sport, concerned with the development of the body. Technique can be the starting point (if I choose) but shall have no value by itself.

Dance is not entertainment, it shall not be directed primarily at pleasing audiences.

[Signature]

11/1/99



Dance: Horizons

Choreographed for the Les Latham Artistic Competition at Skaters On Ice, Monday 7th Dec 1998.

Purpose: an exploration of horizontal lines.

Music: 2 min 40 sec

Cut from "The Upper Room" Dances I and II, by Philip Glass.

The music in this case has no significance. It is only there to mark out the beginning and end of the piece. The repetitious nature of the music (as with most of Glass' music) allowed me to ignore the phrasing. The non-dramatic nature of it was also not distracting from the intent of the piece, which is purely the structural composition of the body on edges, and the movements emanating and relating the different forms. The timing of the music was followed, but not much else of it was explored.

Horizontal lines in skating

Movements in skating is dominated by vertical lines. All jumps and spins rotate around a perfectly vertical line. The ideal point of balance is on a vertical line.

Exceptions exists, such as spirals, butterflies, and camel spins — but they are exceptions. The predominant rule is still to skate on the vertical.

Description

The aim of this piece is to explore the possibilities within the context of a single skater on one edge, to create forms which are principally horizontal.

The beginning of the piece consists of horizontal lines which can be created without worrying about balance on a moving blade. This is to contrast with later forms which are to come, where these are very limited options of which parts of the upper body can be used as balancing points.

In skating, axes only start to approach the horizontal on very deep edges. The deeper the edges, the easier it is for parts of the body to extend horizontally on the frontal plane. Horizontal extensions on the sagittal plane is much easier due to the rotation around the pelvis (causing the upper body to pitch forward), and a counter balance using the free leg backwards. Most horizontal line moves (spirals, camels, butterflies, death drops) are created this way.

Much more interesting are horizontal forms created not based on this principal (eg. lay-back spins).

Also interesting are moves resulting from tilting the axis of skating from the vertical towards the horizontal. The axis will never reach perfectly horizontal, but with the axis as tilted as possible, limbs can be extended to create the horizontal lines.

A natural consequence of tilting the axis of skating is that very deep edges will come about (either this, or the skater falls!). To maintain balance and stability forms are easier to

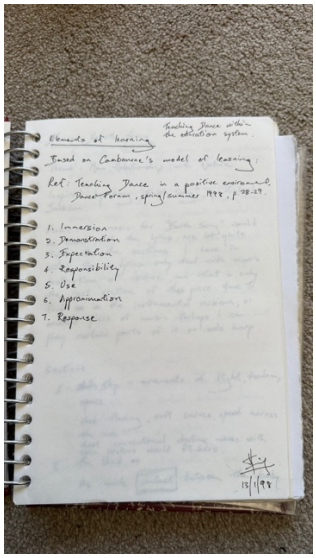
maintain with the centre of gravity being as close to the blades as possible. This would require very deep knee bends.

[I believe in my exploration of the horizontal lines, I have retrace some the steps gone through by the Canadian coach Uschi Keszler and the dance couple Bourne & Kraatz, in their experiments with deep edges as part of their hydroblading exercises.]

Yet to be explored: moving the centre of gravity sufficiently far horizontally to induce falls.

[Signature]

11/1/99



Elements of learning

Teaching Dance within the education system.

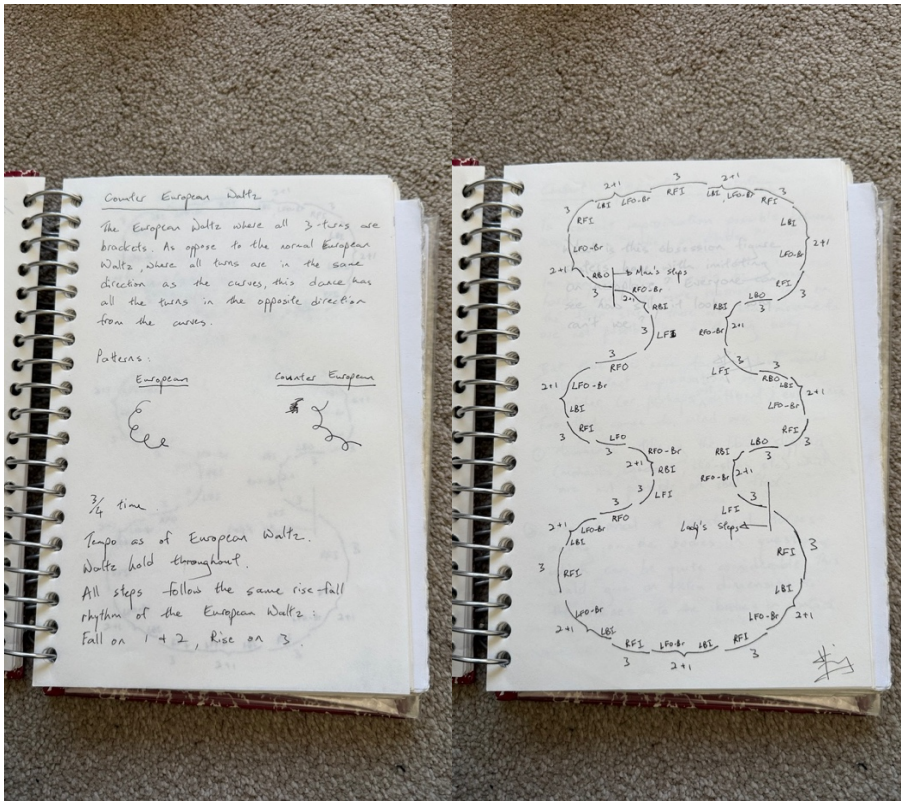
Based on Cambourne's model of learning:

Ref: Teaching Dance in a positive environment. Dance Forum, Spring/Summer 1998, p. 28–29.

- Immersion
- Demonstration
- Expectation
- Responsibility
- Use
- Approximation
- Response

13/1/98 [year as written, uncertain]

[Signature]



Counter European Waltz

The European Waltz where all 3-turns are brackets. As oppose to the normal European Waltz, where all turns are in the same direction as the curves, this dance has all the turns in the opposite direction from the curves.

Patterns:

[Two small diagrams comparing the European Waltz with the Counter European Waltz.]

3/4 time.

Tempo as of European Waltz.

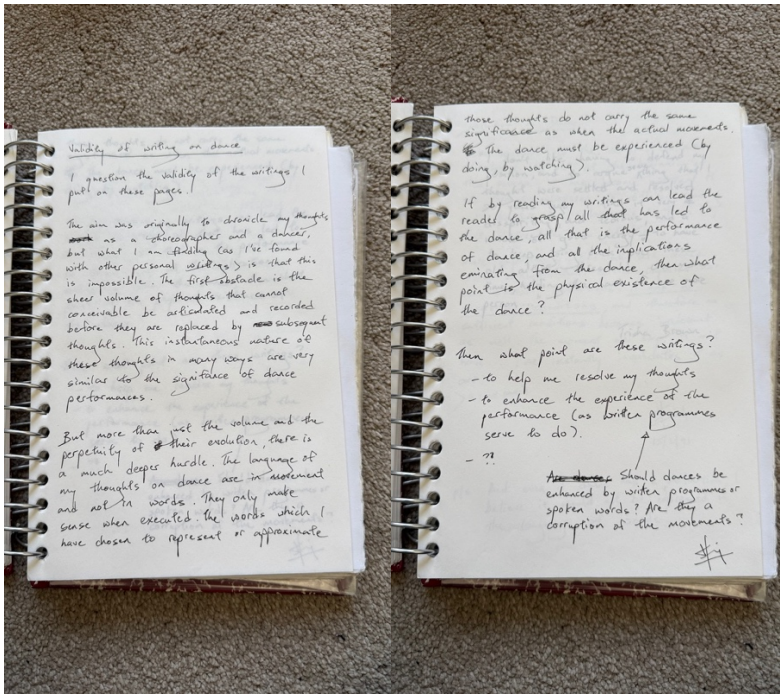
Waltz hold throughout.

All steps follow the same rise-fall rhythm of the European Waltz:

Fall on 1 & 2, Rise on 3.

murdoch[Full-page ice-dance pattern diagram with two interlocking, approximately oval paths, labelled "Man's steps" and "Lady's steps". Edge and turn annotations include RFI, LBI, LFO-Br, RFO-Br, RBO and LFI, with rhythmic counts of 3 and 2+1. The precise spatial arrangement is retained only in the original photograph.]

[Signature]



Validity of writing on dance

I question the validity of the writings I put on these pages.

The aim was originally to chronicle my thoughts as a choreographer and a dancer, but what I am finding (as I've found with other personal writings) is that this is impossible. The first obstacle is the sheer volume of thoughts that cannot conceivably be articulated and recorded before they are replaced by subsequent thoughts. This instantaneous nature of these thoughts in many ways are very similar to the significance of dance performances.

But more than just the volume and the perpetuity of their evolution, there is a much deeper hurdle. The language of my thoughts on dance are in movement and not in words. They only make sense when executed. The words which I have chosen to represent or approximate those thoughts do not carry the same significance as when the actual movements. The dance must be experienced (by doing, by watching).

If by reading my writings can lead the reader to grasp all that has led to the dance, all that is the performance of dance, and all the implications emanating from the dance, then what point is the physical existence of the dance?

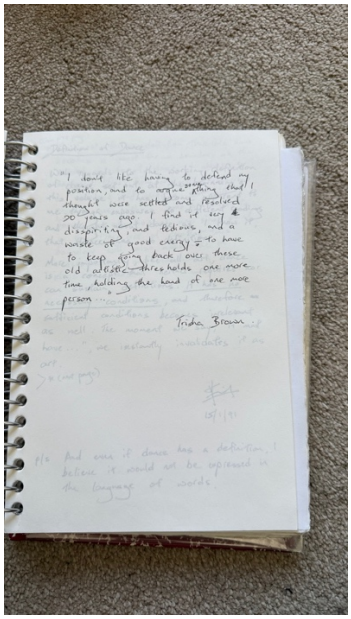
Then what point are these writings?

- to help me resolve my thoughts
- to enhance the experience of the performance (as written programmes serve to do).
- ??

[Handwritten note connected by an arrow:]

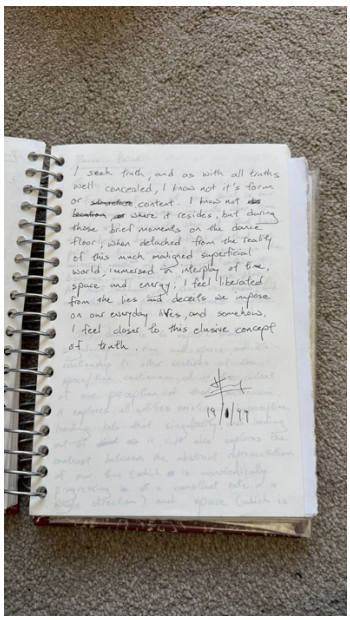
Should dances be enhanced by written programmes or spoken words? Are they a corruption of the movements?

[Signature]



"I don't like having to defend my position, and to argue things that I thought were settled and resolved 20 years ago. I find it very dispiriting, and tedious, and a waste of good energy – to have to keep going back over these old artistic thresholds one more time holding the hand of one more person…"

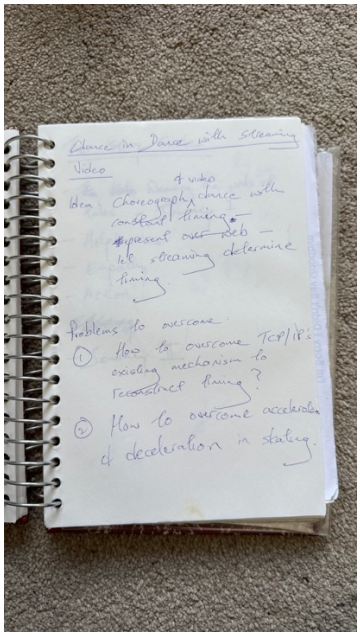
Trisha Brown.



I seek truth, and as with all truths well concealed, I know not its form or context. I know not where it resides, but during those brief moments on the dance floor, when detached from the reality of this much maligned superficial world; immersed in interplay of time, space and energy; I feel liberated from the lies and deceits we impose on our everyday lives, and somehow, I feel closer to this elusive concept of truth.

[Signature]

19/1/99

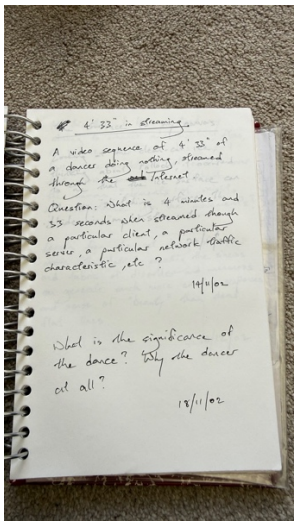


Chance in Dance with Streaming Video

Idea: Choreograph a dance with constant timing — present over Web — let streaming determine timing.

Problems to overcome:

(1) How to overcome TCP/IP's existing mechanism to reconstruct timing?
(2) How to overcome acceleration & deceleration in skating.



4'33" in streaming

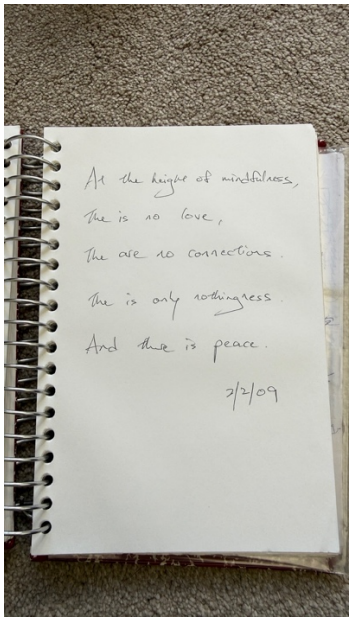
A video sequence of 4'33" of a dancer doing nothing, streamed through the Internet.

Question: What is 4 minutes and 33 seconds when streamed through a particular client, a particular server, a particular network traffic characteristic, etc?

14/11/02

What is the significance of the dance? Why the dancer at all?

18/11/02



At the height of mindfulness,

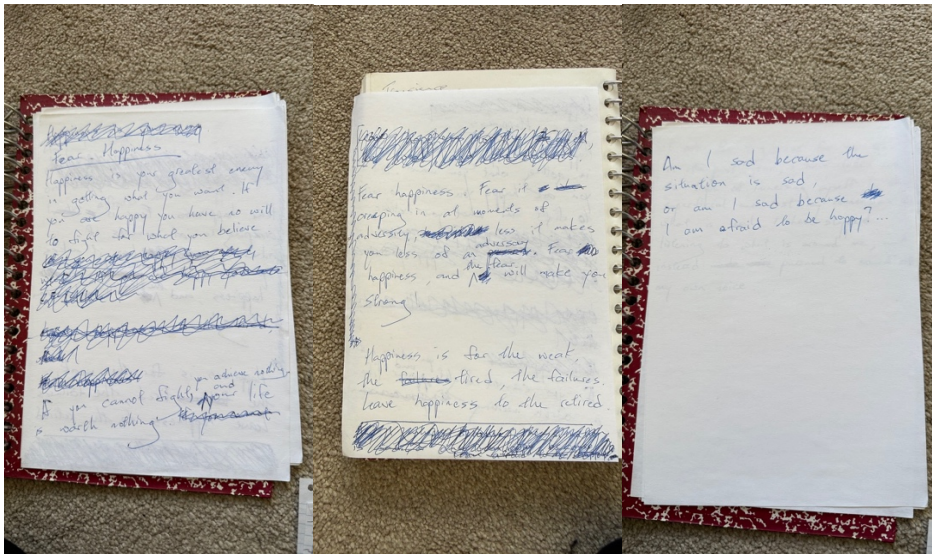
There is no love,

There are no connections.

There is only nothingness.

And there is peace.

2/2/09



[Several lines crossed out.]

Happiness

Happiness is your greatest enemy in getting what you want. If you are happy you have no will to fight for what you believe.

[Several lines heavily crossed out.]

If you cannot fight, you achieve nothing, and your life is worth nothing.

[Paragraph heavily crossed out.]

Fear happiness. Fear it [crossed-out words] creeping in at moments of adversity, lest it makes you less of an adversary. Fear happiness, and the fear will make you strong.

Happiness is for the weak, the tired, the failures.

Leave happiness to the retired.

[Concluding lines heavily crossed out.]

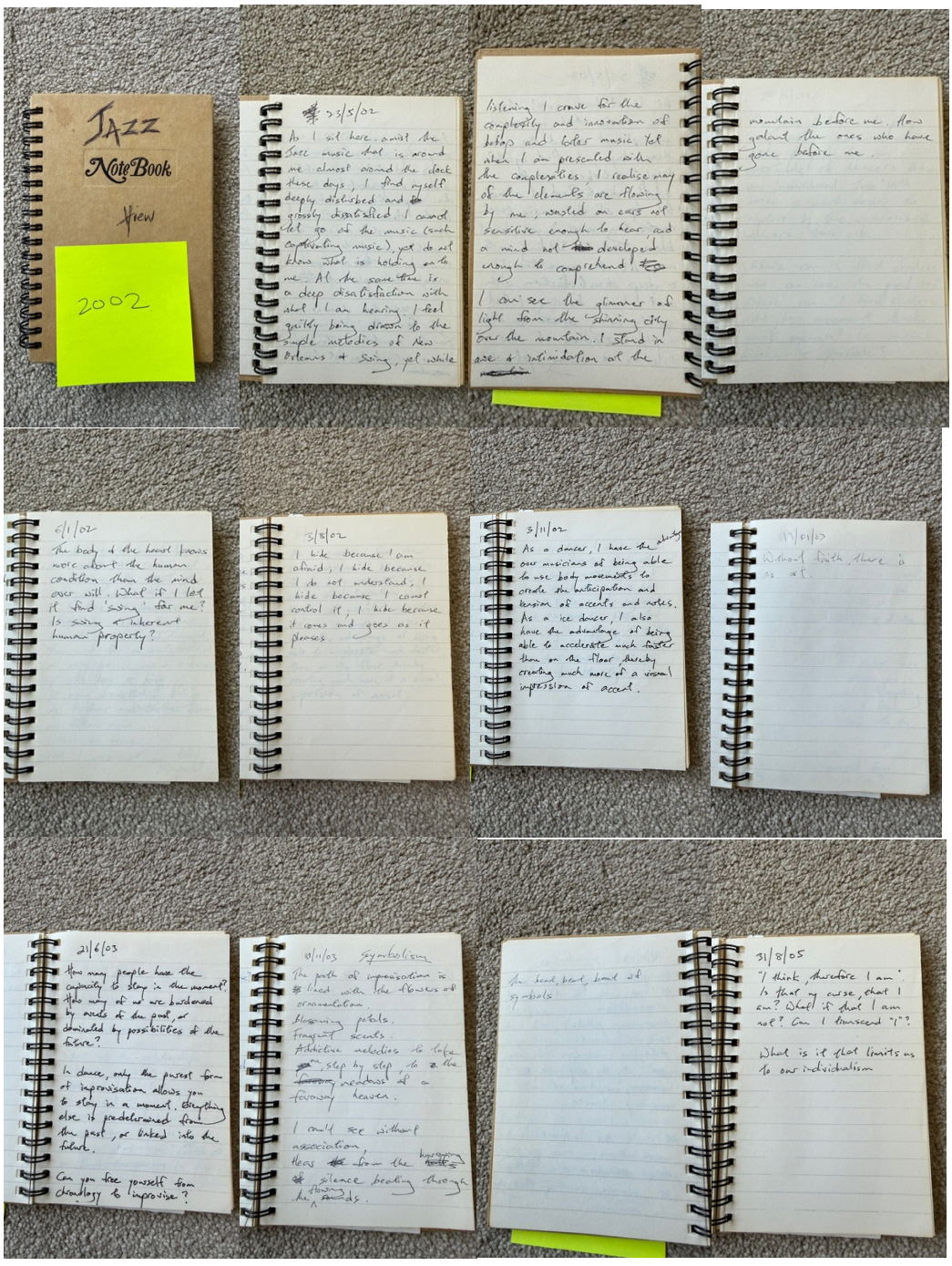
Am I sad because the situation is sad,

or am I sad because

I am afraid to be happy? ...

Journal D — Jazz Notebook (2002 – 2005)

Cover: Jazz — Hiew — 2002



23/5/02

As I sit here amidst the Jazz music that is around me almost around the clock these days, I find myself deeply disturbed and grossly dissatisfied. I cannot let go of the music (such captivating music), yet do not know what is holding on to me. At the same time is a deep dissatisfaction with what I am hearing. I feel guilty being drawn to the simple melodies of New Orleans & swing, yet while listening I crave for the complexity and innovation of bebop

and later music. Yet when I am presented with the complexities, I realise many of the elements are flowing by me, wasted on ears not sensitive enough to hear, and a mind not developed enough to comprehend!

I can see the glimmer of light from the shining city over the mountain. I stand in awe & intimidation at the mountain before me. How gallant the ones who have gone before me.

6/1/02

The body & the heart knows more about the human condition than the mind ever will. What if I let it find "swing" for me? Is swing an inherent human property?

3/8/02

I hide because I am afraid; I hide because I do not understand; I hide because I cannot control it; I hide because it comes and goes as it pleases.

3/11/02

As a dancer, I have the advantage over musicians of being able to use body movements to create the anticipation and tension of accents and notes. As a ice dancer, I also have the advantage of being able to accelerate much faster than on the floor thereby creating much more of a visual impression of accent.

19/01/03

Without faith, there is no art.

21/6/03

How many people have the capacity to stay in the moment? How many of us are burdened by events of the past, or dominated by possibilities of the future?

In dance, only the purest form of improvisation allows you to stay in a moment. Everything else is predetermined from the past, or linked into the future.

Can you free yourself from chronology to improvise?

10/11/03 — Symbolism

The path of improvisation is lined with the flowers of ornamentation.

Blossoming petals.

Fragrant scents.

Addictive melodies to take me, step by step, to the meadows of a faraway heaven.

I can't see without association,

Hear [unclear] from the [unclear] of silence beating through the flowing sounds.

The beat, beat, beat of cymbals

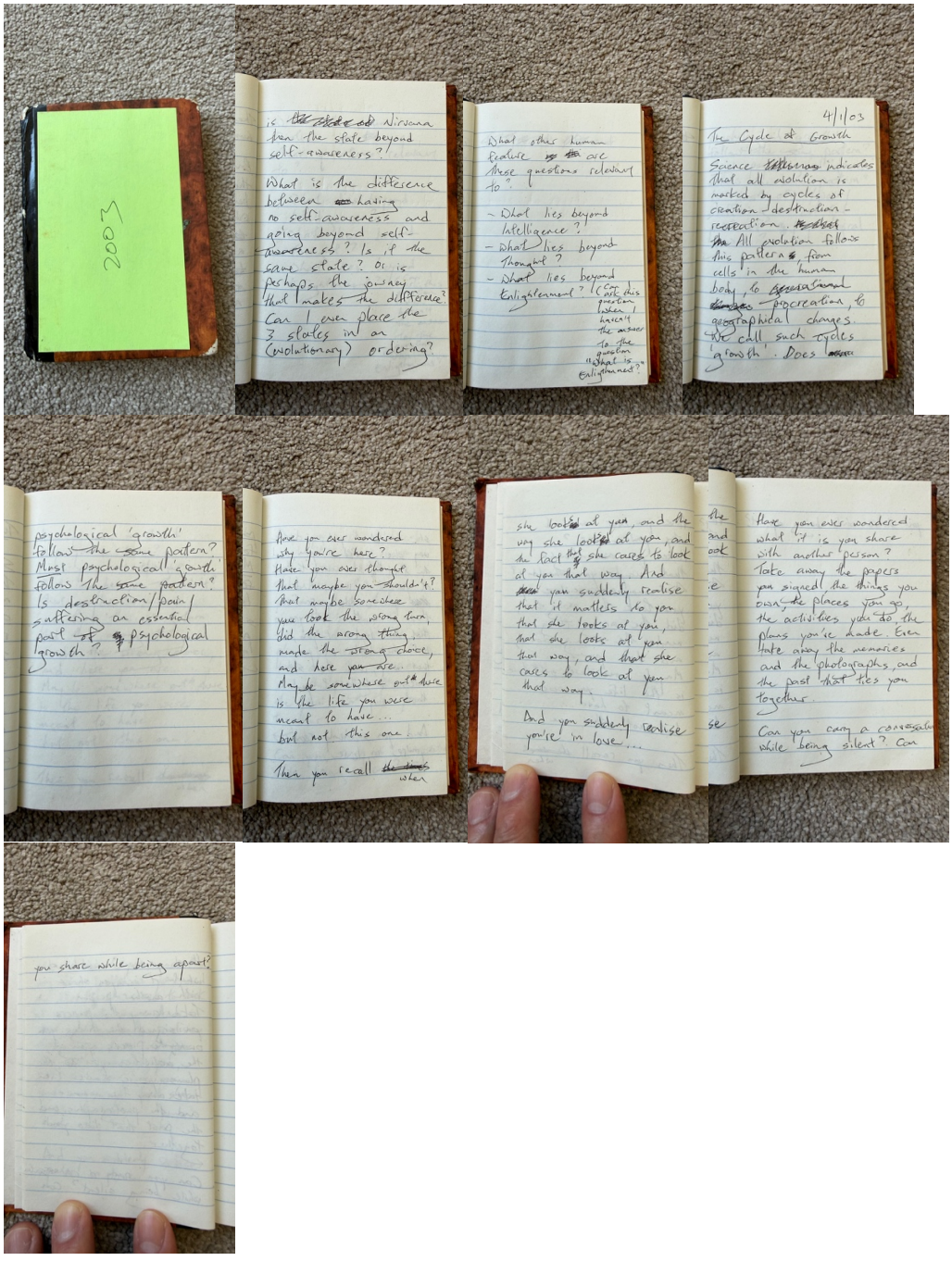
31/8/05

"I think, therefore I am". Is that my curse, that I am? What if that I am not? Can I transcend "I"?

What is it that limits us to our individualism

Journal E — Brown-covered notebook (2003)

Cover: Brown notebook with green note marked "2003"



Undated — Self-awareness

Is [crossed out] Nirvana then the state beyond self-awareness?!

What is the difference between having no self-awareness and going beyond self-awareness? Is it the same state? Or is perhaps the journey that makes the difference? Can I ever place the 3 states in an (evolutionary) ordering?

What other human feature are these questions relevant to?

- What lies beyond Intelligence?
- What lies beyond Thought?
- What lies beyond Enlightenment? (Can I ask this question when I haven't the answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?")

4/1/03 — The Cycle of Growth

Science indicates that all evolution is marked by cycles of creation–destruction–recreation. All evolution follows this pattern, from cells in the human body, to procreation, to geographical changes. We call such cycles "growth". Does psychological "growth" follow the same pattern? Must psychological "growth" follow the same pattern? Is destruction/pain/suffering an essential part of psychological "growth"?

Undated — Being here

Have you ever wondered why you're here? Have you ever thought that maybe you shouldn't? That maybe somewhere you took the wrong turn, did the wrong thing, made the wrong choice, and here you are. Maybe somewhere out there is the life you were meant to have ... but not this one!

Then you recall when she looks at you, and the way she looks at you, and the fact that she cares to look at you that way. And you suddenly realise that it matters to you that she looks at you, that she looks at you that way, and that she cares to look at you that way.

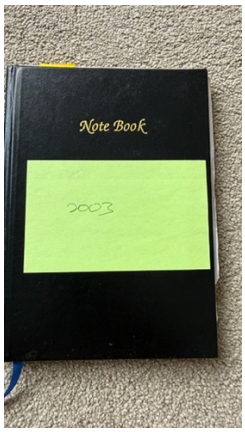
And you suddenly realise you're in love ...

Undated — What people share

Have you ever wondered what it is you share with another person? Take away the papers you signed, the things you own, the places you go, the activities you do, the plans you've made. Even take away the memories and the photographs, and the past that ties you together.

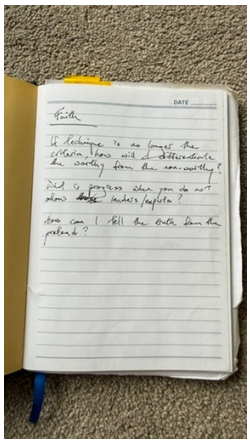
Can you carry a conversation while being silent? Can you share while being apart?

Journal F — Black Notebook (2003)



Black notebook with gold lettering: “Note Book”

Green note attached to cover: “2003”

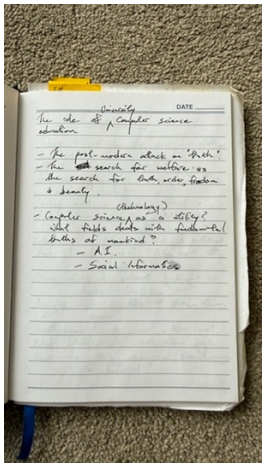


Faith

If Redemption is no longer the criteria, how will I differentiate the worthy from the unworthy?

What is progress when you do not allow [crossed-out word] leaders/laggards?

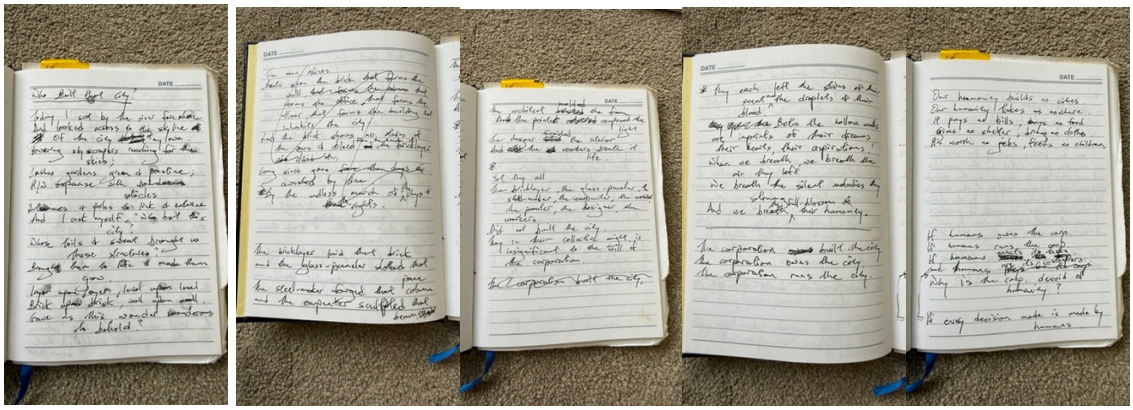
How can I tell the truth from the pretend?

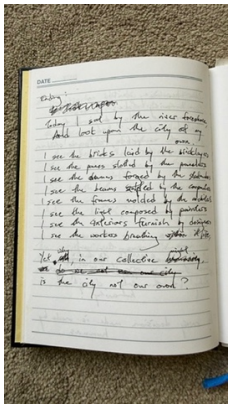


The role of Computer Science education

“University” written above “Computer Science”

- The post-modern attack on “truth”.
- The search for welfare vs the search for truth, order, freedom & beauty.
- Computer Science as a utility? What fields deal with fundamental truths of mankind?
    - A.I.
    - Social Informatics





<u>Who Built the City?</u>

Today I sat by the river foreshore

And looked across to the skyline

of the city of my own.

Towering skyscrapers reaching for the skies;

Lush gardens green & pristine;

H/W expanse with [unclear] vehicles

[Unclear] & poles to link & entwine

And I ask myself, “Who built this city?”

Whose toil & sweat brought us these structures?

Brought them to life & made them grow.

Layer upon layer, level upon level.

Brick upon brick, wall upon wall.

Gave us this wonder wondrous to behold?

[Several lines crossed out concerning the people who built the city.]

Long since gone, [unclear] away by time.

By the endless march of days & nights.

The bricklayers laid their brick

And the glass-panelers slotted that pane

The steelworker forged that column

And the carpenter sculpted that beam

The architect moulded the frame

And the painter composed the light

The designer furnished the interior

And the workers breathed it life.

*

Yet they all

The bricklayers, the glass-panelers, the steelmakers, the carpenters, the artists, the painters, the designers, the workers

Did not build the city.

They in their collective might, is insignificant to the will of the corporation.

The Corporation built the city.

They each left the stains of their sweat and the droplets of their blood.

Below the hollow walls are imprints of their dreams, their hearts, their aspirations!

When we breathe, we breathe the air they left.

We breathe the silent melodies they strung

And we breath the full-blossom of their humanity.

The corporation built the city.

The corporation owns the city.

The corporation runs the city.

Our humanity builds no cities.

Our humanity takes us nowhere.

It pays no bills, buys no food

Gives no shelter, brings no clothes.

It's worth no jobs, feeds no children.

If humans own the corp.

If humans run the corp.

If humans enacts its tasks

And humans are its sustainers

If every decision made is made by humans.

Why is the corp. devoid of humanity?

Ending:

[Crossed-out heading]

Today I sat by the river foreshore

And look upon the city of my own.

I see the bricks laid by the bricklayers

I see the panes slotted by the [unclear]

I see the columns forged by the steelworkers

I see the beams sculpted by the carpenters

I see the frames moulded by the architects

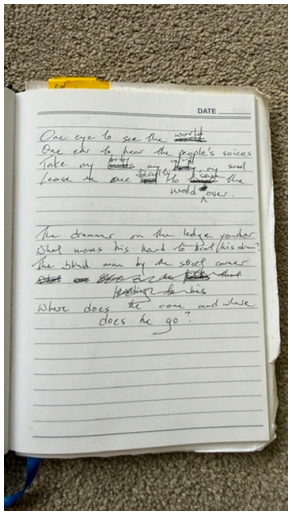
I see the light composed by painters

I see the exteriors furnished by designers

I see the workers breathing it life,

Yet, in our collective might,

Is the city not our own?



One eye to see the world.

One ear to hear the people's voices.

Take my [unclear], my [unclear], my soul

Leave me [unclear] the world [unclear].

The drummer on the ledge yonder

What moves his hand to beat his drum?

The blind man by the street corner

[Crossed-out passage]

Where does he come and where does he go?