

# JOY

Original feature screenplay

by

Veronica Nadine Gleeson

December 2008

**1. INT. A SMALL RENTED FLAT IN SYDNEY'S TAMARAMA - 1AM.**

A tangle of bodies inside the cramped lounge room of an art deco flat; a small collection of artists talk and drink.

In the corner a 43 year-old man - handsome, in a bruised way - plays a chaotic set on the double bass. A cigarette dangles from his lips as he plucks the strings; his eyes avoid direct contact with anyone. He is at once strong, charismatic and slightly untrustworthy. This is JOE.

Joe's two musical colleagues sit astride packing crates - FRANK plays drums, SIMON blows a sax. Both want to finish soon. Departing members of the party navigate their way around dozens of packed boxes.

The flat is bare of its belongings, save a few pieces of furniture. Dirty walls feature rectangular shapes - ghosts of pictures past.

Against one wall stands MARY - smart and pretty, but buried looking. She is saying goodbye to a thin queue of people.

Above Mary's head there's a painted banner that reads *GOING GOING GONE*.

Joe pares back the set - the music becomes simpler and more synthesized, before he resolves it using a few melodic gestures. A patter of applause; across the room there are random calls for a speech. Joe desists, then acquiesces.

Mary frowns at Joe. Her looks says *TALK, BUT BE QUIET*.

JOE

Ok. Alright. Shhh. This is the bit where we say goodbye.

Someone claps. There's a random 'woo-hoo!'.

JOE

Yeah, nice one. We'll miss you too. Alright. Where was I?

Someone else yells 'Leaving!'

JOE

Yeah, ok. I know I speak...

Mary shoots Joe another look - *SHUT UP*.

JOE

...I *whisper* on behalf of Mary and me - myself - of both of us - when I say that...

Beat. Joe stage whispers:

JOE

...you should all come and live  
with us in...where is it again,  
Mare?

Modulated laughter.

JOE

No, no, no. In all - we're going  
to start a new life. I've got a  
real job for the first time in my  
adult life. This is good. This is  
exciting. It's also something  
that makes us sad.

A few 'awwws,' etc.

JOE

Not that sad. In fact Mary's not  
going to miss any of you. Come to  
think of it, neither will I. Not  
the ones I've already slept with,  
anyway.

Beat.

JOE

Sorry Frank.

Frank makes a 'boom-tish' noise with his drum and cymbals.

JOE

It's not that it didn't mean  
something at the time...

Frank smiles wanly and starts disassembling his cymbals.

JOE

Here's to my evil mistress, Art.  
And my plain but infinitely more  
sensible wife, Earning A Living.  
May they live in peace and  
harmony together in - wherever  
the hell it is we're going. To  
love -

O/S, a final champagne cork pops to a ragged cheer from the  
kitchen. It hits something metallic and makes a racket. We  
hear Joe and Mary's BABY, JOY wake and start to cry.

JOE

And -

Mary hurries from the room toward the sound of Joy's cries.  
She bangs the bedroom door behind her loudly.

Joe raises a beer bottle.

JOE  
 - and to home sweet fucking  
 home!

Joe passes the beer bottle to Helen, who lingers nearby with her coat on and bag at the ready.

**2. INT. THE SMALL BEDROOM OF JOE AND MARY'S ART DECO TAMARAMA FLAT - EARLY MORNING**

The first light of a Sydney summer morning strikes a MOSQUITO NET enfolding a queen sized BED. The effect is Christo-like; sculptural.

Joe and Mary lie in the bed, deeply unconscious. Their heads are buried in tandem under pillows. Rumpled sheets skew around Mary.

Joe is NAKED. Mary is wearing pyjamas.

Next to the bed stands a modernist, DANISH COT - boldly and expensively at odds with the battered moving boxes occupying the rest of the room.

Inside the cot Joe and Mary's baby girl JOY sleeps.

Relative silence. Magpies warble. A bus passes; the sea breeze rattles a loose window pane.

Joe's PHONE rings - the downloaded ringtone an electronica version of Herbie Hancock's 'Watermelon Man'.

Mary whacks Joe awake with some force.

Joe grabs at his phone, quickly rising from the bed and exiting the room when he sees the CALLER'S ID.

**3. INT. THE HALLWAY OF THE TAMARAMA FLAT**

Joe crouches naked, next to a bicycle missing a wheel.

JOE  
 What now?

A very long beat, as the JOE's ex-wife DIDI speaks at length.

JOE (RESPONDING, HUSHED)  
 That's not going to happen.

Another beat - Didi keeps talking. She is extremely agitated.

JOE (QUIETLY)

I said no.

Beat.

JOE (STILL QUIET)  
 Didi - no, no, I can see that...

Joe gets up and goes to the kitchen to put the kettle on, his voice fading.

**4. INT. JOE AND MARY'S BEDROOM**

MARY puts the pillow back over her head.

A HOME MADE MOBILE featuring a family of THREE SPARROWS spins idly above the cot.

Each sparrow has a DIFFERENT FACE, cut from a PHOTOGRAPH: one is Joe's, one is Mary's and one is Joy's.

Joy stirs to the sound of a garbage recycling truck backing up: beep, beep, beep.

JOE(O/S FROM KITCHEN - ABRUPT AND  
 LOUD)  
 Oh, get FUCKED.

At the same time: hundreds of bottles are smashed into the iron tray of the truck outside.

Mary's body goes rigid just as Joy starts crying.

JOE (O/S DISTORTED; AS BOTTLE SMASHING  
 SOUNDS CONTINUE)

I mean, for fuck's sake! I have tried and tried - Lucas doesn't know who I am? Jesus. That's just a mean-spirited, reductive interpretation of something a kid might say - *might* fucking say, if his lunatic mother encouraged him...(Joe continues)

Mary wrenches her pillow off her head and lobs it, hard. It hits the mosquito net, which dislodges from the roof and falls on her head.

Mary thumps the mattress.

Joy's cries get louder.

Mary leaps violently out of bed and reaches for her baby. Snagged by the net, she trips and falls.

MARY (RESOLVED NOT TO SCREAM)  
 Ow.

**5. INT. THE KITCHEN OF JOE AND MARY'S TAMARAMA FLAT - LATER**

The bare bones of a very small, rundown art deco kitchen; cupboard doors have been ripped out and a garden hose snakes over the bench and hangs, dripping, into the sink.

Joe's magnificent double bass hangs on a sturdy, wall-mounted steel hook. Mary's oil paintings, promising but all unfinished, are leaning wherever there's space between the packed boxes.

Joe holds Joy, who's sucking on a teething rusk. He pats her on the back and wiggles her a bit, raises his eyebrows at Mary - soliciting an answer to a question.

Mary lights a cigarette and leans past JOE out of the window toward their TINY BALCONY, furnished with a chair covered in garish Mexican blankets, and detritus from the night before: empty beer and vodka bottles, dirty jars.

MARY

No.

JOE

Love, listen -

MARY

Joe - there's no room.

JOE

Yes there is.

MARY

No there isn't. Everything's packed. There's nowhere for them to sleep. And even if there were...

Mary looks disparagingly at the way Joe jiggles Joy.

MARY

She'll be sick if you do that.

JOE

Just for tonight. I'll run them back to their mother's in the morning.

MARY

What if I don't want to, just for tonight? Stop it, Joe, seriously, she'll -

JOE

Why wouldn't you want - what, you think I don't know how /to hold a baby?

MARY

/This is about us. Our new start.  
About our family.

JOE

Exactly. *Our fucking family.* Our  
new start. They can at least get  
to say a decent fucking goodbye.

MARY

What's decent about - does  
fucking have to be every second  
word you fucking say?

JOE

It's as close as I get to the  
real thing at the moment -

MARY (SOUR)

Oh, hilarious. Paragon of wit.  
Just when I thought you couldn't  
scale the heights of last night's  
comic genius...

JOE

Just for a night. Then then we  
go. It'll be like camping.

Mary rolls her eyes.

JOE

Or playing castaways.

Mary feigns a gag.

JOE

Refugees?

Mary ignores him.

JOE

Dirty misbegotten migrants  
trapped in a very small  
apartment?

Mary raises an eyebrow.

JOE

Ok. It'll be just like sharing  
cramped conditions with stepkids  
who annoy the shit out of you.  
Magic.

Mary stares out the window, trying not to smile.

MARY

What were you thinking, having

three kids with a total madwoman?

JOE

What were you thinking, trading  
the world for someone who had  
three kids with a total madwoman?

MARY

I'm going to kill her. I'm going  
to get a blunt instrument, go  
over there and kill her. A lot.

JOE

Not if you kill yourself first.

Joe takes Mary's cigarette and stubs it out. It is a tender  
gesture.

Mary softens - somewhat.

JOE (TUCKING MARY'S HAIR BEHIND HER  
EAR)

There's no choice anyway.

MARY

There's always choice.

JOE

That's just something rich people  
tell their children.

MARY

And you never mentioned anything  
about a trade before.

Mary starts looking annoyed again.

There's a knock at the door.

A small truce as Joe almost succeeds in disarming Mary with  
another look.

JOE

It'll be good for us.

MARY

In a barium enema kind of way?

JOE

And people wonder what I see in  
you...

MARY

One night.

JOE

Course.

MARY  
Just to say goodbye.

JOE  
Course.

MARY (RESIGNED)  
And they'd better not bring that  
moronic dog.

JOE  
He's not moronic. He's Stupid.

Joe hands Joy to Mary and goes to answer the door - we hear the sounds of THREE KIDS greeting their father.

Mary stares at a GLOSSY PHOTOGRAPH taped to the fridge, bearing the image of a SMALL RURAL COTTAGE.

WE PULL IN CLOSE - THE GRASS IN THE PICTURE RUSTLES, AND CLOUDS WAFT GENTLY THROUGH AN IDYLLIC SKY. IN THE DISTANCE JOE, MARY AND JOY ARE WALKING HAPPILY...

Suddenly Joy projectile vomits over Mary, the table and the floor.

Mary looks down at the mess.

A LARGE YELLOW MONGREL (STUPID) pads into the kitchen, wags its tail at Mary and begins to lick up the vomit.

#### OPENING TITLE: JOY

#### 6. EXT, TAMARAMA FLAT - EARLY MORNING: 24 HOURS LATER

A duo of long-haul removalists carry wrapped canvas paintings from the flat and down the front stairs of Joe and Mary's building.

Joe's kids, ARABELLA (14), MIREA (6) and LUCAS (10) hang around the base of the stairwell, bouncing a dirty tennis ball between the three of them. Nearby sit their belongings - a bag or two - and Arabella's ACOUSTIC GUITAR.

The removalists put the paintings into the back of a heavily packed LARGE WHITE TRUCK and close it up.

Mary and Joe stand at the top of the stairs looking at the trio of kids; Mary has Joy on her hip.

MARY  
Did you call her again?

JOE

Yep.

MARY

And?

JOE

Not there.

One of the removalists, FOTOS, looks over at Mary and Joe and waves.

MARY (IGNORING FOTOS)

As in not answering the phone,  
not there, or or not home, not  
there?

JOE

Not anything.

FOTOS (YELLING OVER TO MARY & JOE)

We're 'bout ready to go, if you  
wanna get the kids in the car.

MARY

Jesus.

JOE (HESITATING A BIT)

Mary?

Beat. Mary gets what Joe's about to ask. Her jaw tightens.

FOTOS

Artist, are ya?

MARY

What?

FOTOS

Check it out. Art.

Fotos slams the back of the truck shut. Across the back the slogan *It's All Good!* is emblazoned in green and yellow, together with a large painting of a grinning, thumbs-up kangaroo.

**7. INT, JOE AND MARY'S 1982 WHITE MERCEDES BENZ WAGON -  
LATER**

Mary and Joe sit in the front seats of the Mercedes. In the back, crammed either side of Joy (asleep in her baby seat) are ARABELLA (14), and LUCAS (10) and MIREA (6); Joe's kids.

It's hot, the air conditioning isn't on and luggage and personal belongings, including Arabella's ACOUSTIC GUITAR,

are rammed in haphazardly.

Lucas wears a DOCTOR WHO T-SHIRT, Arabella has her IPOD NANO on and Mirea is frowning.

Stupid is wedged between Joe and Mary, panting happily.

Cricket commentary crackles on the AM radio in the background as the car lurches through choked stop/start North Sydney traffic - Joe keeps an ear out for the scores.

In front of the white Mercedes is the IT'S ALL GOOD REMOVAL TRUCK carrying all of Joe and Mary's belongings. Mary stares at the painted kangaroo.

Mary, Joe and Mirea are playing a word game to pass the time. They have to collectively count to twenty without anyone saying the same number at the same time. Doubling up, or speaking over the top of each other means that the game must start again, at one.

It is harder than it sounds.

One.	MARY
Two -	MIREA
Three.	JOE
Four!	MIREA & MARY
Ok...start again. One.	JOE
Two!	MIREA & MARY
One.	JOE
Two.	MIREA & MARY
One.	JOE
Two.	MARY & MIREA
One	MARY
Two	JOE

MARY & MIREA

Three!

Mirea gets excited and flings her arm into Arabella's face.

ARABELLA (HOTLY)

*Mirea.*

JOE

One.

MIREA

TWO!

ARABELLA (TO MIREA)

You're doing it wrong.

JOE

Three - just let her do it, Bel.

ARABELLA (REMOVING IPOD BUDS)

You'll never get to twenty if she just keeps jumping in. You have to listen.

MIREA

I am listening. Four.

JOE

There. She's listening.

ARABELLA

She's not.

MIREA/MARY

Five.

ARABELLA

See? See?

MIREA

It's not me. Why are you always saying it's me?

ARABELLA

Um, because it is?

MIREA

Why don't you just listen to your boyfriend?

ARABELLA (WITH A RISING INFLECTION)

He's not my boyfriend. He's a musician.

MIREA (APING ARABELLA'S TONE)

He's not my boyfriEND? He's a musicIAN?

LUCAS  
It's not Mirea.

JOE  
Thanks mate. A voice of bloody reason...

MARY  
Yeah, thanks Luc.

LUCAS  
It's you.

Silence. Australia takes a wicket against England but the radio slips out of tune. Joe tisks, mucks around with the dial a bit.

JOE  
You who?

LUCAS  
Mary. It's Mary. She's the one fucking it up.

Mary stiffens.

JOE  
Mate, can you take that back?

There is a long pause. Mary smarts; looks out the window. Joe squeezes Mary's knee, trying to provide assurance.

LUCAS  
Yeah. Course. Just jokes.

JOE  
Look, let's just play another game. Alright?

MIREA  
I like *this* game.

ARABELLA  
That'd be right. Make it harder than it needs to be.

Mirea blows a raspberry at Arabella. Spit lands on Mirea's face.

JOE  
How 'bout Spotto?

ARABELLA  
Mirea just spat on me.

MIREA

Did not.

LUCAS (giggling)

So did.

MIREA

So did not. Fucker.

JOE & MARY

*Mirea!*

MIREA

What? Lucas said it.

JOE

He apologised.

MIREA

You say it too.

JOE

Not to Lucas. Not to people with feelings.

MIREA

You said it to someone in our family with feelings.

JOE

Where would you get an idea like that?

Silence again. Mary grinds her teeth.

Lucas and Arabella start sniggering meanly.

Mirea gets teary.

Joe suddenly pulls the car over, to toots and insults from other drivers.

JOE (THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH)

Where would you get an idea like that, Mirea?

MIREA

Mum said -

MARY (MUTTERING)

Here we bloody go...let's talk about /Mum again.

MIREA

/Mum said you called the dog a stupid little fucker.

Arabella and Lucas are in quiet hysterics.

Joe looks fit to murder someone.

MIREA  
When he was a puppy. And you  
kicked him.

Arabella and Lucas sober.

ARABELLA  
Did you, Dad?

MIREA  
And that's how he got his name.

Enormous tension. Traffic flashes past.

Everyone, including Mary, stares accusingly at Joe The Dog  
Kicker.

JOE (CAUGHT)  
Look...

Mary starts laughing.

LUCAS  
It's not funny.

MARY  
Luc, your Dad would never really  
hurt the dog.

LUCAS  
Yeah. He doesn't see him enough.

Beat.

ARABELLA (COVERING HER FACE)  
What's that smell?

MIREA  
Oh my God.

JOE  
What?

LUCAS  
Stupid farted.

MIREA  
ERGGHHH.

ARABELLA  
Turn on the air conditioning!  
Turn it on!

Joe winds down a window.

JOE

It's broken. Wind down your windows.

Everyone frantically winds down the windows. It doesn't help. Mary dry retches.

ARABELLA  
Mum's been feeding him chicken giblets.

MARY  
Why?

ARABELLA (DEFENSIVELY)  
They're organic.

Mary gets out of the car and stands by the road. After a moment everyone else does the same.

#### **6. EXT. PACIFIC HIGHWAY, DAY - CONTINUOUS**

A BRAND NEW BMW screeches past, and the BORING CEO TYPE driving it yells at Joe.

BORING C.E.O TYPE  
Put your hazards on, beatnik!

Mirea looks up at Joe.

MIREA  
What's a beatdick?

JOE  
You're looking at one. Allegedly.

Joe gestures and everyone gets back in the car. Arabella puts her iPod on and scrolls it up high.

Miraculously Joy is still asleep.

Up the road, the It's All Good truck continues on its way, the thumbs-up kangaroo disappearing into the traffic.

#### **8. INT. JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS**

Joe goes to start the car, but the engine won't turn over. He tries again, and again.

LUCAS  
You're kidding.

MIREA  
What's wrong?

LUCAS  
Car won't start.

MARY  
It's ok. It's ok. It does this  
all the time. Just give it some  
love.

JOE (whispering to Mary)  
Think we're out of gas.

MARY (LOUDLY)  
What?!

JOE (MUMBLING)  
No gas.

MARY  
That's impossible. I filled up  
two days ago.

MIREA  
Don't you have any petrol?

Joy starts to WAKE UP. She looks hot and cross. Arabella  
takes her Ipod buds out of her ears.

ARABELLA  
What now?

MIREA/LUCAS (chorusing)  
They don't have any petrol.

Arabella puts her Ipod back on, disgusted but unsurprised.  
Joe and Mary look at each other.

JOE  
We're going to have to call the  
NRMA.

MARY  
I don't understand.

JOE  
Give us your phone.

Joe dials. Mary is genuinely confused.

MARY  
Did you take the car out last  
night?

JOE  
No.

MARY  
Doesn't make sense.

MIREA  
Mary?

MARY  
Yes, Mirea?

MIREA  
Joy looks hot.

JOE (ON THE PHONE TO THE NRMA)  
Pacific Highway.

MARY  
Ok, could you fan her with  
something?

Mirea gets a sunhat and starts to fan Joy. Joy smiles.

MIREA  
She likes it!

JOE (ON PHONE, RECITING THE REGO  
PLATES)  
MCR - Eight nine one...

MIREA  
She's beautiful.

Lucas scowls.

MARY  
She looks a bit like you, I  
think.

MIREA  
I'm her big sister.

MARY (TOUCHED)  
That you are.

LUCAS (STILL SCOWLING)  
And one plus one is two.

JOE (IN BACKGROUND, STILL ON PHONE)  
Yep, yep. Thanks Laura. Thanks so  
much.

Joe hangs up and hands Mary her mobile.

MARY  
*Laura?*

JOE (IGNORING MARY)  
Half an hour. Maybe forty five.

MARY

Great.

JOE  
There's a BP up the hill. We  
could push it.

MARY  
Too heavy. Too much traffic.

Mirea plays with Joy. They are starting to get along  
famously. Arabella ignores everyone.

Lucas is increasingly annoyed by the girly bonding taking  
place in the back seat.

MARY  
We have to get them to look at  
the tank anyway. Must be leaking.

JOE (VAGUELY)  
Yeah...

LUCAS  
You should get a Prius. Mum has a  
Prius.

JOE  
Amazing what a trust fund will  
buy, isn't it mate.

Mary unbuckles her seatbelt.

MARY  
I'm going to take Joy to the  
shop. See if I can change her and  
give her a feed...

MIREA  
Can I come?

MARY  
Of course.

Mary gets out of the car and opens Lucas's door. She  
reaches through and unbuckles Joy's harness.

As she lifts Joy out of the carseat, Mary's large,  
milk-filled breast brushes Lucas's face. He is utterly  
panic stricken.

Joe watches in the REAR VIEW, amused.

Mirea scrambles out over Lucas.

MARY  
Luc, do you want to come?

Lucas can't speak.

MARY  
I'll buy you a Sunnyboy.

LUCAS (HOARSELY)  
What's a Sunnyboy?

JOE  
It's a kind of ice block, Luc.  
Sort of breast-shaped.

Lucas bolts from the car.

**9. EXT, PACIFIC HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS.**

Lucas, Mirea, Mary (with Joy in a STROLLER) head up toward the BP SERVICE STATION. Mary looks at Lucas's DOCTOR WHO T-SHIRT.

MARY  
You know I've met Tom Baker.

LUCAS  
You've told me that before.

**10. INT, JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES - DAY.**

Joe tries to relax. He turns up the radio to drown out the off-tune folk-tunish warbling emanating from Arabella as she sings along to a Sarah Blasko song on her Ipod.

Arabella starts looking annoyed; something is digging into her back. She shifts around and digs into the crack of the back seat - eventually pulling out a long, red wand-shaped LIPSTICK. She hands it to Joe.

ARABELLA (SHOUTING OVER HER MUSIC,  
POINTING AT MARY'S EMPTY SEAT)  
*MUST BE MARY'S!*

Joe nods and tucks the lipstick into the sun visor above the passenger seat.

**11. EXT, PACIFIC HIGHWAY - LATER.**

Mary, Mirea, Joy and Lucas are returning with BAGS of supplies from the BP - BOTTLES OF WATER, PRINGLES, MINTIES, BOXED SANDWICHES, ETC.

Lucas has picked up a gumtree branch and is swinging it around.

Mirea is sucking on a Chupa-Chup.

**12. EXT, JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES - MOMENTS LATER**

An NRMA GUY finishes putting an emergency supply of petrol into the car. Mary, Mirea, Joy and Lucas arrive back.

MARY  
Did you check the fuel line?

NRMA GUY  
Nothing wrong with the fuel line.

MARY  
What about the tank?

NRMA GUY  
Nup. Nuthin' there.

JOE (CONSPIRATORIAL, IN A BLOKEY WAY)  
Except the tank.

NRMA guy and Joe smirk at each other, in a 'stupid women who can't remember to put petrol in the car' kind of way.

MARY (CATCHING THEIR LOOK)  
Well thanks for coming out. In the heat.

NRMA GUY (DROPPING THE HOOD)  
No problemo. Happens to the best of us.

NRMA guy and Joe low-five each other, subtly. Joe gets in the car and it starts straight away, the cricket report blaring.

NRMA GUY (APPROVINGLY)  
Come on Aussie.

### 13. INT, JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES

Mirea and Lucas are back inside the car.

Mary straps Joy in and walks around the front of the car. NRMA guy leans in the back window, winking sleazily at Arabella whilst talking to the younger two.

NRMA GUY (WITH FORCED CHEER)  
Bit of a drama, eh? Mum and Dad forgot to fill up!

Arabella lolls her tongue out at NRMA guy, Lolita-style, simultaneously giving him the finger.

MIREA (CHEERILY)  
She's not our Mum. She's just Dad's girlfriend.

Mary tries not to be wounded.

NRMA GUY

That so? Busy man.

NRMA GUY moves to Joe's window, looking appreciatively at Mary's bare legs, exposed to the thigh in her short sun dress.

NRMA GUY (TO JOE, STILL LOOKING AT MARY'S LEGS)

She'll be right for an hour, but I'd fill her up first chance you can get.

JOE

Too right. Thanks mate.

Joe shakes the NRMA guy's hand. Mary pulls her dress down.

Joe pulls the car back onto the highway.

They drive in silence for a few moments.

Arabella winds down her window, revelling in the breeze.

Joe puts his hand on Mary's leg. She brushes it away as she turns to look in the back seat.

MARY

Joy's in the sun.

JOE

We'll be turning it out of it soon.

MARY (SULKILY)

Ok.

Mirea starts singing 'Hush Little Baby' to Joy.

Joe joins in.

Mary stares at the road ahead - it is straight for miles.

She pulls down the SUN VISOR roughly. The LIPSTICK falls out onto Mary's lap. Mary picks it up, curious.

JOE (NOTICING)

From Bella.

MARY

Really?

Mary turns around, waves the lipstick at Arabella and mouths the words 'Thank you!'.

Arabella shrugs. Whatever.

Mary joins in the lullaby.

The sun shines on Joy and Mirea. Mary doesn't notice that Mirea is surreptitiously FEEDING JOY some CHUPA-CHUP.

Lucas draws a Dalek on his jeans in Biro, next to the word EXTERMINATE.

**14. EXT, ANOTHER SERVICE STATION - NIGHT**

FLUORESCENT LIGHT rains down on Mary. She is covered in SWEAT and JOY'S VOMIT.

Next to her Joe squats, trying to wash various items of CHILDREN'S CLOTHING out under an outdoor TAP.

Mirea stands half naked. Her face is bright red - sunburnt. Joy is stripped to her nappy.

She is also extremely sunburnt.

Joe looks at Mary, who is extremely pissed off.

JOE

Say it. Just say it.

MARY

Say what?

JOE (MUMBLING TO HIMSELF)

I know you can't wait to say it.

He hands her some wet clothes. She squeezes them out, cradling Joy at the same time.

MARY

What? That I told you she was in the sun and you didn't listen? Why would I say that? That she isn't supposed to have sugar? Why would I bother bringing that up? You know all that - it'd be pointless to bring all that up. It'd be divisive and mean. Wouldn't it.

JOE

You're the one who gave her the lollipop.

MARY

I didn't give her the lollipop. I gave your daughter a lollipop, which she proceeded to feed to our child.

JOE

Yeah. No, you wouldn't want to bring that up. Especially in front of the kids.

Arabella and Lucas sit in the darkened cavity car, still, their faces partially obscured by shadows.

Mirea starts to shiver.

MIREA  
I'm sorry Mary.

MARY  
It's not your fault. It's not  
your fault.

JOE  
Mary should have told you.

Mary flashes Joe a violently menacing look.

Joe grabs a bag at random from the back of the car and pulls some t-shirts out.

Mary and Joe dress Mirea and Joy in silence.

**15. INT. MERCEDES - EVENING.**

Mirea gets back inside the car and Mary straps Joy back in.

Both Mirea and baby Joy are wearing clean DOCTOR WHO T-SHIRTS of Lucas's.

Lucas is horrified, and opens his mouth to protest.

JOE  
Lucas, I will pay you forty  
dollars not to complain about  
this.

LUCAS  
What if they're sick on them?

JOE  
Fifty. Take it or leave it.

Lucas considers, nods.

Joe waits for Mary to get in. She does not look at him.

Joe pulls the Mercedes back onto the highway.

**16. EXT. A RUNDOWN HIGHWAY PIZZA JOINT - LATER.**

Arabella (still wearing her Ipod), Lucas, Mary and Joe sit at a plastic outdoor table picking at an unappetising series of pizzas covered with a shredded generic kind of meat and canned pineapple.

Mirea is asleep in Joe's arms.

Mary is breastfeeding Joy.

Lucas turns his back to them and slurps a strawberry Moove, surreptitiously feeding his pizza to Stupid.

A cattle truck thunders past.

Arabella's Ipod runs out of power. She takes out her earbuds.

ARABELLA

Where's the moving truck?

**17. INT. MERCEDES - 1 MINUTE LATER**

A jumble of bodies as everyone rushes to get back in the car. Joe wrenches the wheel and the car performs a dramatic u-turn and speeds off in the north-bound lane.

**18. INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Mary gets off her mobile phone. She's smiling.

MARY

His wife's pregnant.

JOE

So?

MARY

She went into labour. He had to turn around and go back.

JOE

Could anything else go fucking wrong?

MARY

He'll be back in two days.

JOE

Brilliant. What do we do for furniture? Christ, what a waste of fucking money...

MARY

And he said he'd do the job for free.

A palpable sense of relief. This is the first break Joe and Mary have had.

MARY

We just saved three grand, baby.

Joe and Mary allow themselves to smile at each other.

Joe slots a tape into the Mercedes' ancient stereo. An upbeat Sly and the Family Stone-style song plays.

**19. INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT.**

Joe drives into the night. Mary sleeps.

CUT TO:

Mary driving instead. Joe sleeping.

CUT TO:

Arabella, Lucas, Mirea and Joy all asleep in the back, their heads at precipitous angles.

CUT TO:

Joe winding down his window hard - Stupid has farted again. The blast of cold night air wakes everyone else up. They are annoyed. Mary gestures for Joe to wind up a bit.

CUT TO:

Mary driving again. The Mercedes is off the highway and heading down a narrower road to Bellingen.

CUT TO:

The car is at a standstill. Joe is crouched in front of the Merc, looking at a map.

CUT TO:

A long, thin driveway cutting through a paddock - barely visible in the darkness. The Mercedes turns onto it, and begins to make its way uphill.

**20. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MIDNIGHT**

Corridors of light beam into the windows of the cottage. Joe pulls the Mercedes up next to the building. He and Mary get out of the car. They can barely move their limbs.

Stupid gets out and starts sniffing around. Mary hobbles to the door of the cottage. There is a letter for Joe attached to the door.

Joe gets Joy out of the car and hands her to Mary. Mirea, Arabella and Lucas wander blearily around the darkened yard. Mary (holding Joy) opens the cottage door, but she makes a point of not letting the dog in.

MARY

Out, Stupid.

**21. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Mary feels around for the light switch, finds it and turns it on.

The cottage is comforting in a pine-lined, 70s sauna kind of way. Under a cathedral ceiling, the large open living space is lined the whole way around with built-in pine box beds over which have been suspended Steiner-esque cheesecloth canopies dyed in rainbow colours and strung with dreamcatchers and crystals.

ARABELLA (TAKING IT IN)

Woah.

Lucas staggers in, ploughs headfirst into one of the box beds and goes back to sleep.

Joe carries Mirea in and puts her to bed.

Joe ferries bags from the car.

Arabella seems confused - keeps opening the same door and closing it.

ARABELLA

Where are the bedrooms?

MARY

This is the bedroom.

ARABELLA

Jesus.

Joe enters, humming, and sets up Joy's portacot. He turns off lights, takes Joy and lies her down - she seems very content.

JOE

Where are the bedrooms?

## 22. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MINUTES LATER

Joe and Mary lie on the largest of the box beds. Arabella lies on a sofa bed near a darkened fire place staring glassily upwards.

Mirea and Lucas continue to sleep. Joy has also drifted off.

Joe looks up through a LARGE SKYLIGHT at a gloriously clear, star-studded sky.

JOE

You can see the moon from here.  
Almost full. Bella?

Arabella sighs and turns away. So does Mary.

(O/S) Stupid howls once. It is a pitifully lonely sound.

**23. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT**

From some distance away, we see the last light inside the cottage extinguished. A great country tranquility descends; the audible rustling of trees, the chirruping of nocturnal insects, the rush of a nearby stream.

Beat.

The door to the cottage opens. Joe comes out, lights a cigarette and pulls up a stump of wood and sits on it.

Stupid comes and sits next to him. Joe unfolds his letter and begins to read. In a decorative font on pink paper it reads:

*Hi Joe!!! We're so thrilled you'll be running the Rustic Beats Festival!!! Drop into the office tomorrow...*

Joe screws up the letter and sits; a solitary man and his thin trail of blue cigarette smoke.

JOE

Fuck.

**24. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - EARLY MORNING**

Sun rises over the long grass in the Bellinggen paddock.

**25. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - EARLY MORNING**

Mary wakes. The cabin is silent. She rises and checks the portacot - it's empty. The entire cottage is empty. She checks outside - the Mercedes isn't there.

Mary calls Joe's mobile, and it rings; she sees that it is plugged in and charging over in the corner.

Mary shrugs - fossicking in one of the bags for a towel.

**26. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE, BATHROOM - MORNING**

Mary showers, allows herself to relax. She cranes her head around to have a proper look at the circular LEADLIGHT WINDOW installed above the bathtub - it features a YIN YANG design of a white Eve and a black Adam naked and intertwined in a leadlight garden of Eden.

As Mary smirks she notices a FUZZY BLACK OBJECT on the man's groin. Mary flicks water at it, then realises that the fuzz is a LARGE FUNNEL-WEB SPIDER.

The insect starts running toward the open part of the window.

Mary panics, reaches for a towel and runs out of the bathroom. She continues running...

**26. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Mary runs outside. There she runs smack into VIDOR.

He's a shirtless, weathered looking hippie in his mid-40s. He carries a large bag on one shoulder, and what looks like a water divining rod in one hand. His eyes have a faintly maniacal gleam.

Mary struggles to wrap the towel around herself.

Vidor is amused, but says nothing.

MARY

I-I thought it was pubic hair.

Vidor nods.

MARY

But it wasn't. It was a  
Funnel-web.

VIDOR (STILL NODDING, RAISING HIS  
STICK)

Do you want me to kill it?

MARY

What? God, no - what, with that?

VIDOR

Funnel-webs are deadly. I can  
kill it.

MARY

No, it's gone - it's - aren't you  
sposed to be a hippie?

VIDOR (DEADPAN)

What makes you say that?

Mary is lost for words.

VIDOR

You must be Mary.

MARY

Oh god, yes. Yes. Mary.

VIDOR

Vidor Fülöp.

MARY

I beg your pardon?

VIDOR

I'm Vidor.

Mary can't understand what Vidor is talking about.

VIDOR  
I own the house.

MARY  
Shit. Ok.

Mary extends her arm, trying to look Zen. She and Vidor shake hands.

MARY  
It's so great here. Really,  
really beautiful. And peaceful!  
Just, yeah...

Beat. Vidor watches Mary.

MARY  
I didn't think you lived so  
close.

Mary inhales deeply. Her hair goes up her nose and she panics, thinking it's an insect and swats it away.

An awkward moment.

Vidor says nothing.

MARY  
I'm not sure where everyone's  
gone.

VIDOR  
Town.

MARY  
Oh.

VIDOR  
I understand you need more space.

MARY  
Yeah, it's a nightmare.

VIDOR  
Your family is a nightmare?

MARY  
I mean not that I don't *love*  
Joe's kids. They're great - it's  
really nice to be able to spend  
time, so, so *spontaneously*, but  
they're not meant to...

Mary knows she's ranting.

VIDOR

But you want some space.

MARY

We just hadn't planned.

Vidor sets down the pack on his back, kneels beside it and starts to undo it. Inside is a large heavy canvas tepee.

VIDOR (WITHOUT LOOKING UP)

You are very beautiful Mary.

MARY

I - oh, thanks...

VIDOR

But not happy. Not content.

Mary hitches her towel up around her, irked.

MARY

You don't have to do - we can cope.

VIDOR (GESTURING TOWARD THE TENT)

I'll need some help.

MARY

I'll put some clothes on.

VIDOR

Suit yourself.

**27. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MINUTES LATER**

Mary gets dressed hurriedly - self-consciously tugging down at her clothes. She looks around the cabin, and in the bathroom. The spider has gone.

O/S we hear the sound of the Mercedes pulling up. The horn toots, car doors open, etc.

**28. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Mirea comes flying towards the door. She is excited.

MIREA

Mary!

Behind Mirea, Arabella walks quickly; stricken and self-conscious.

Mary opens the cottage door. Arabella pushes past her.

Mirea dances around Mary happily - bursting to tell her something.

Mary looks at Joe askance, but he's too busy instructing Luke to pick up shopping bags, getting Joy out of her

booster seat.

MIREA

Mary! Mary! Guess what?

ARABELLA (sharply)

Don't.

MIREA

Guess what? Guess what?

MARY

What?

MIREA

We went into town, to get some groceries, and see Dad's new work

-

(O/S) ARABELLA

Mirea -

MIREA

And Dad looked at the back of Arabella's skirt when we were in the supermarket, and there was like a, like a, like a -

Arabella emerges, instead of her skirt she has a Doctor Who t-shirt wrapped around her waist.

ARABELLA

I'll punch you in the mouth.

MIREA (OBLIVIOUS)

There was like a brown stain, on the back of her dress.

MARY (TO ARABELLA)

Why? Did you sit in something?

ARABELLA

No.

MIREA

She got her -

ARABELLA

I got my period, OK?

MIREA

Yeah, her PERIOD.

Arabella pushes past Mary and Mirea and goes outside.

**29. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Arabella sits on a sawn-off log, sulking. In the background

Vidor assembles tent poles, whistling tunelessly. Joe makes his way inside with Joy.

Lucas stands with his mouth open, supermarket bags in hands.

LUCAS

Is that the thing where blood comes out? Like real blood and stuff?

Vidor looks up for a moment. Arabella catches him looking and is even more mortified.

ARABELLA

Yes Luc, real blood and stuff. There's real blood pouring out of my vagina RIGHT NOW.

LUCAS

Off the hook.

ARABELLA

Do you even know what that means?

LUCAS

Yes.

ARABELLA

Well what does it mean, then?

LUCAS

It means it's...off the hook.

ARABELLA

Dickcheese.

Lucas realises that one of his t-shirts has yet again been appropriated.

LUCAS

Dad! She's gonna get blood on my t-shirt.

Joe comes out of the COTTAGE.

JOE

Seventy five bucks Luc. I swear.

Luc looks unimpressed, but quietens.

Joe squats next to Arabella.

JOE

Sweet, why don't you talk to Mary about this? Eh? She's a woman.

ARABELLA

I don't want to.

JOE

Well I'm not much use to you,  
baby doll.

ARABELLA

Neither is she.

JOE

What do you want me to do, love?

ARABELLA

I want Mum.

JOE

Apart from that.

ARABELLA

I want Mum.

Mary comes out of the cottage carrying Joy.

JOE

Belle -

ARABELLA

What? I don't want some stranger  
showing me how to use a tampon.

JOE

Mary is not a stranger.

ARABELLA

Good as.

MARY

Oh, for fuck's sake.

Lucas, Mirea, Arabella and Joe all turn, shocked by Mary's  
tone as much as her language.

MARY

Do you think I woke up this  
morning and thought, 'Hm - what  
I'd love to do today is show  
Arabella how to deal with  
menstruation'? It's not exactly  
my idea of a good time either.

ARABELLA

Yeah, but Mum -

MARY

Mum, in case you hadn't noticed,  
is not here. She's checked out  
because she can't be arsed taking  
care of you. Now you can call her

and get her to explain what to do over the phone - I'm sure she'd be overjoyed to listen to it on her voicemail from whatever fucking Ashram she's gone to this time. Or you can get over it and let me help.

Arabella is silent.

MARY

And I'm not a fucking stranger. You want a stranger to help you put a tampon in, try the Norse tent warrior over there. I'm sure he'd be happy to oblige. He's a very happy person.

Vidor shakes his head, but keeps working. Arabella hangs her head. Her shoulders start to shake.

Joe realises Arabella's crying and tries to comfort her.

ARABELLA

She's a bitch, Dad.

MIREA

You started it.

ARABELLA (SNOTTY AND HYSTERICAL)

Shut up!

Joy struggles to be put down. Mary lets her down and squats with her.

Arabella's pitiful sobs contrast against the banging in of the tent poles.

ARABELLA (TO VIDOR)

*Shut up!*

JOE

For Christ's sake - sorry, mate.

Arabella's cries turn into a coughing fit. No-one knows what to do.

Suddenly Joy gets up and toddles down the slope toward Arabella.

Mary is shocked.

MARY

Oh my God. Oh my God - Joe!

JOE (EQUALLY AMAZED)

Joy. Come here baby.

MIREA  
She's walking. She's walking!

Joy toddles unsteadily toward Joe, bypasses him and heads straight for Arabella. She gets to her and leans on her leg.

JOY  
Buh.

Arabella lifts her head.

JOY  
Buh.

ARABELLA (THROUGH SNOT AND TEARS)  
Did she just say my name?

Arabella picks up Joy. Joy clumsily fingers her tear-stained cheeks.

Arabella is delighted.

ARABELLA  
Did anyone else hear that?

Arabella looks around.

Everyone looks gobsmacked, apart from Vidor who nods as though he half-expected it.

Arabella carries Joy up to Mary and hands her to her.

ARABELLA  
Ok.

MARY  
Ok?

ARABELLA  
Ok.

**30. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Vidor, Lucas, Mirea and Joe all work on erecting the tent.

Lucas keeps looking at Vidor admiringly.

**31. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - SIMULTANEOUS**

Arabella and Mary stand in the bathroom.

Joy plays on the floor.

Mary has sanitary pads in one hand and a packet of tampons in the other.

MARY

...so you can start with these,  
and then just see how you go.

ARABELLA  
What about swimming?

MARY (MAKING A FACE)  
Best not to go swimming with a  
pad. I did, on school excursion  
once.

ARABELLA  
Seriously?

MARY  
No-one talked to me for the rest  
of the week.

ARABELLA  
That's so slack.

MARY  
You should have seen the gusset  
of my bathing suit.

Beat. The generation gap is apparent.

ARABELLA (looking dubiously at  
the tampons) Will they hurt?

MARY  
No.

Arabella looks, disbelieving.

MARY  
Not if you relax. That way it  
goes the whole way up.

Arabella is visibly repulsed.

MARY  
Just don't push it.  
Psychologically.

Mary hands Arabella all the paraphernalia.

ARABELLA  
My skirt's fucked.

MARY  
It'll wash out.

ARABELLA  
I kind of put a rip in it. Threw  
it in the bin.

MARY

Wear my jeans for now. We'll get  
a new one at the markets.

ARABELLA  
Hippie markets?

MARY  
More than likely.

Arabella nods.

MARY  
Good luck.

ARABELLA  
Thanks.

MARY  
We'll try your mum in a bit.

ARABELLA  
No.

MARY  
Don't you want to tell her?

ARABELLA  
Not now.

MARY  
Not now why?

Beat.

ARABELLA  
Can we stay with you for a few  
days? And just - maybe leave Mum  
alone?

MARY  
Are you sure? Do you want to -

ARABELLA  
No. Don't tell Dad.

MARY  
Ok. Your prerogative.

ARABELLA  
Do I have one of those now?

MARY  
Yeah. Comes with your period.

ARABELLA  
Does it last more than a week?

MARY

Rest of your life.

Mary tries to pat Arabella on the back. Arabella thinks she is trying to hug her, and is caught between hugging back and avoiding bodily contact. It's awkward. Mary leaves the bathroom quickly, banging her head on the way out.

MARY

Ow.

Arabella is stands alone, tampons in one hand and a bunch of pads in the other.

She looks at herself in the mirror, puts some sanitary pads down her t-shirt to fill out the space and make fake breasts.

She gets a tampon out and pretends to smoke it, posing like a femme fatale and mouthing the word 'Hello' in the mirror and then blowing a pretend smoke ring. She smiles an unguarded smile.

**32. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - LATER**

Vidor, Joe, Mirea and Lucas have managed to get the tepee up. It is a mighty, compelling structure.

LUCAS

Can this be where the kids sleep?

JOE

Don't see why not.

MIREA

Yay! We're going to sleep in the castle. We're going to sleep in the castle. We're going to sleep in the -

LUCAS

Alright, alright. Stop saying everything twice.

MIREA

Why? You just did. Why? You just did.

Lucas aims a stick at Mirea.

LUCAS

Exterminate! Exterminate!

Lucas and Mirea go inside the tent and start to play. We can hear Lucas pretending to be Davros (*It is time for me to fulfill my destiny!* etc).

Mirea squeals with delight - she has a playmate.

Mary comes over with Joy to admire the tent. Joe sidles up to her.

JOE  
It's quite big inside.

MARY  
Good. We'll have somewhere to put the furniture when it arrives.

Vidor puts his backpack on and sets off.

JOE  
Thanks mate.

LUCAS (poking his head out a window)  
Yeah, thanks Vidor!

Vidor does not look back; merely raises a hand in acknowledgement.

MARY  
Wierdo.

JOE  
Wierdo with a tent.

Joe starts to kiss Mary's neck, but it's awkward with Joy in the way.

JOE (GETTING STEAMED UP)  
Put her down for a minute.

MARY  
She might walk...

JOE (GRAPPLING WITH ONE OF MARY'S BREASTS)  
Not very fast.

Arabella comes out of the house - walking strangely and wearing a pair of Mary's jeans, rolled up at the cuffs. She sees Joe's hand on Mary's breast.

Mary prises herself free of Joe's grasp, keen to maintain her tenuous bond with Arabella.

MARY (TO ARABELLA)  
What do you think?

Joe is annoyed.

ARABELLA (LOOKING AT THE TENT)  
S'good.

JOE  
 Belle why don't you take Stupid  
 for a walk? And Luc and Mirea -  
 see if you can find the river.

ARABELLA  
 It's there.

Arabella points down the hill. The river is in plain view.

JOE  
 Go for a bit of an explore, then.

Arabella knows she's being gotten rid of.

JOE  
 Joy needs a sleep.

MARY  
 Not for another hour.

JOE  
 Don't you want to check the place  
 out?

ARABELLA  
 I haven't had breakfast.

MARY  
 Why don't we all go?

Joe looks at Mary askance.

MARY  
 After pancakes?

Mirea stops playing and comes close: pancakes!

Joe is somewhere between puzzled and annoyed: pancakes?

JOE  
 We haven't got any stuff.

MARY  
 We'll improvise.

JOE  
 I just bought Weet Bix.

MARY  
 Oh well. Call me Martha Stewart.

Mary decisively walks up the hill toward the house.

LUCAS  
 Didn't she go to gaol?

MARY

Not before she made a lot of money.

LUCAS (TRAILING BEHIND)  
Money isn't everything.

MARY  
Did I say it was?

MIREA (SKIPPING ALONG)  
Who went to gaol? Did you go to gaol?

MARY (AS THEY RETREAT TOWARDS THE HOUSE)  
How do you know about Martha Stewart anyway?

LUCAS  
She's on cable. Mum's got cable.

MARY  
Course she has.

LUCAS  
You and Dad should get it.

ARABELLA  
Luc, Mary doesn't have to get cable if she doesn't want to. Anyway I thought you said that money wasn't...(fading; continues as they go inside)

Joe watches for a moment as Arabella, Mirea, Mary, Luke and Joy all file inside, talking.

He is excluded.

A window from the kitchen area flips open. Mary holds out Joe's phone to him.

MARY  
Messages.

Joe takes the phone and dials message retrieval. He wanders away through the long grass to listen.

### 33. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING

Mary, Mirea and Arabella set to making pancakes - looking through grocery bags, and pulling whatever they can from mostly empty cupboards. Mary sets Joy up in a high-chair.

### 34. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING

Joe listens to his messages.

A goat wanders by and stares at him. Joe tries to mesmerise it with one hand, Mick Dundee-style, but it just starts to eat his shirt sleeve.

Joe backs away, still listening to his messages.

**35. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING**

Lucas stares out the window at his Dad. He makes quiet little Dalek noises.

In the background Arabella and Mirea potter around the kitchen, giggling as they use disposable plastic plates and forks to make the mixture, etc.

**36. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Joe returns across through the long grass. He reaches the doorway and looks at Mary. He has some news he knows she won't be happy to hear.

**37. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Mirea, Arabella, Mary (breastfeeding Joy) and Joe sit on the dusty floor of the cottage, picking at the remains of breakfast.

Lucas hangs around the doorway, staring out at the open field.

MARY

I just don't - I'm just saying if it's just one gig, why bother?

JOE

It's not just a gig. It's Wayne Shorter.

MIREA

Who's Wayne Shortener?

MARY

I know...

JOE (STANDING UP AND FEEDING STUPID  
THE REMAINS OF THE GIRL'S PANCAKES)

Sweetheart, it's just one night.  
I'll be there and back before you  
know it...

MARY

But you have a job now.

Mary is unconvinced. Joe returns to the floor and collects the rest of the plastic plates.

JOE (QUIETLY, HOPING MIREA AND LUCAS

WON'T HEAR)  
 Mare, it's two grand. In the  
 hand.

Arabella looks uncomfortable.

MARY (STILL BREASTFEEDING JOY)  
 Don't you want any more, Luc?

LUCAS  
 No.

JOE  
 No thanks, Mary.

LUCAS  
 No thanks Mary.

JOE  
 Turn around and say it.

LUCAS (TURNING AROUND, EYES DOWNCAST)  
 You're not sposed to have them  
 with honey.

Tension reigns.

MARY  
 How about we go for a swim? Do  
 you want to go for a swim?

A knock at the door. Behind Lucas is Vidor - he empties a  
 bag full of GUMBOOTS onto the floor.

VIDOR  
 For the long grass. Near the  
 river.

Lucas is very glad to see Vidor.

LUCAS  
 Do you want to come for a swim?

Vidor crouches in the doorway, arranging gumboots from  
 small to large.

MARY  
 Vidor doesn't want to come for a  
 swim. Do you, Vidor.

VIDOR  
 Why not? It's hot.

LUCAS  
 Yeah!

Lucas tears out the door to the tent. Mirea shoots off the  
 chair after him.

Arabella continues looking uncomfortable.

MARY (CATCHING ARABELLA'S LOOK)  
You don't have to get wet.

ARABELLA  
I know.

Arabella goes to the bathroom and quietly shuts the door.

Vidor finishes dumping the gumboots and goes and stands in the field outside the cottage.

MARY (LOOKING AFTER VIDOR)  
Weirdo.

JOE  
Weirdo with gumboots.

**38. EXT. RIVER TRACK - DAY.**

In ascending order Mirea, Luke, Arabella, Mary, Joe and Vidor walk to the river. Joe carries Joy in a baby backpack. Stupid follows up the rear.

JOE  
Belle, put your boots on.

ARABELLA  
Dad. They're rank.

LUCAS  
Who cares? Let her get bitten by something.

Arabella stops and hurriedly puts the boots on.

**39. EXT. BELLINGEN RIVER SWIMMING HOLE - DAY.**

Green trees form a tranquil arbor over the pool. Dragonflies flit upstream.

Mirea, already down to her undies, frolics in the clear, cool water.

Lucas, wearing shorts, builds a wall of stones, occasionally piffing one across the water, showing off to Vidor who is calmly (somehow) swimming laps.

Arabella sits, fully-clothed, on a towel by the side of the river. Joe and Mary play with Joy, dipping her in and out of the water and making encouraging 'weee!' noises.

Joe starts to dip Joy in the water, deeper each time.

MARY  
Don't Joe. Not her face.

JOE

Nah, she loves it. You love it,  
don'tcha baby-lou?

MIREA

She doesn't like it Dad.

JOE

Yes she does. She loves the  
water. Like her old man.

ARABELLA

Yeah, you love it so much you  
only have a shower once a week.

JOE

Right.

Joe starts splashing Arabella. She screams and runs off.  
Joy gets wet. Mary grabs her.

MARY

Come on Joe. (Sharply) Joe!

Joe splashes Mary. Mirea joins in, laughing uproariously.  
Suddenly, from behind, Arabella swings out on an old rope  
tyre swing and bombs Joe. The water fight starts in full.  
Vidor joins in. Stupid barks and splashes around.

Lucas watches from the sidelines, and finally joins in too,  
but his splashes are too vigorous, and soon become violent.  
He attacks Joe and Mary, splashing them hard and fast and  
scratching Joe's chest with his finger nails, drawing  
blood.

JOE (IN PAIN)

Agh! Shit mate. Take it easy.

LUCAS

Exterminate! Exterminate!

Mary gets out and starts to dry Joy. Arabella follows,  
wringing out her hair.

JOE

Alright Luc. Alright. You can  
stop being Darth Vader now.

LUCAS (ANOTHER VIOLENT SPLASH)

I'm not Darth Vader.

JOE (HAND UP, DEFENDING HIMSELF)

Well who are you then?

Suddenly the swimming hole is quiet.

MIREA (SHOCKED THAT JOE DOESN'T KNOW  
THE DIFFERENCE)

He's Davros, Dad.

Joe stands still. Blood trickles down his chest. He looks at Lucas as though for the first time.

JOE  
And who am I?

LUCAS (REPROACHFULLY)  
You're Doctor Who.

Beat.

JOE (TRYING TO MAKE LIGHT)  
Because I have two hearts?

Lucas says nothing, gets out of the water.

JOE  
Cos I'm immortal?

Mirea gets out of the water too. She starts patting Stupid - brushing his hair sideways to make him look pretty.

Vidor starts singing the Doctor Who theme song. He leaves, holding his trademark single hand up as a farewell.

Joe laughs weakly.

**40. EXT. BELLINGEN RIVER SWIMMING HOLE - LATER.**

Lucas continues building his wall of stones - we hear the click, click, click as he stacks one on top of another.

Arabella lies, eyes closed, in a patch of full sun trying to dry off her wet clothes.

Mary stands in the distance having a cigarette.

Mirea continues to beautify Stupid, putting flowers in his collar and draping river weeds over his head.

Joe holds Joy in his arms. She is sleeping. Joe watches a dragonfly flitting across the water. He is uptight, tapping his foot against the bare stones, as though he can already hear the music from the Wayne Shorter gig. There are traces of dried blood and scratches on his chest.

Mirea crouches near Joe's pants, looking for adornments. She finds SOMETHING SPARKLING AND SILVER (we only glimpse it) and ties it to Stupid's collar.

MIREA  
I'm putting this here, Dad.

JOE (DISTRACTED, NOT LOOKING)  
Great love.

Mirea sits back, pleased with the results.

**41. EXT. RIVER TRACK - EARLY AFTERNOON.**

Mary, Joe, Arabella, Lucas and Mirea file back along the track in silence - hungry, exhausted and a bit sunstruck. They all wear gumboots.

Joe carries Joy on his back once more. Stupid gets excited by something and shoots off, his hackles raised.

JOE  
Stupid. Stupid!

Stupid does not return. Joe can't be bothered calling him again. The group continues up the track in silence.

**42. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - AFTERNOON.**

Joy sleeps in her port-a-cot.

**43. INT, KID'S TENT - CONTINUOUS.**

Mirea and Lucas are also sleeping. Half-eaten nearby sandwiches indicate that they've had lunch.

Cicadas chorus outside.

**44. EXT, FIELD OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Mirea sits under a tree. She has her guitar with her and is trying to play a folk tune. Next to her lies a book: 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time'.

Stupid sleeps next to her. WILTED FLOWERS still hang around his neck.

Arabella pats Stupid idly. She does not notice the DIAMOND ENGAGEMENT RING Mirea has attached to his collar.

**45. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Joe and Mary lie on one of the box beds. They talk in lowered voices, so as not to wake Joy.

JOE  
I got you something.

MARY  
When?

JOE  
Coupla days ago.

MARY  
It's not another vibrator is it?

Jesus, Joe...

JOE  
It's a surprise. Cost a bomb.

MARY (FLATTERED, BUT SUSPICIOUS)  
What is it?

JOE  
I wanted to give it to you up here.

MARY  
Alright.

Mary closes her eyes and holds out her hand.

JOE  
When I get back.

MARY (OPENING HER EYES)  
So you're just going, are you?

JOE  
It's a good job, Mary. Cash.

Joe takes Mary's LEFT HAND and plays with the FOURTH FINGER.

JOE  
Diamonds aren't cheap, love.

Mary's eyes widen - suddenly she understands that Joe is talking about an engagement ring.

MARY  
So this is how you trick me into taking care of your kids.

JOE  
Best paid nanny in town.

MARY  
Sexiest.

Joe slips his hand inside Mary's top.

**46. INT. TEPEE - CONTINUOUS.**

Lucas wakes and looks toward the cabin. Faint, but unmistakable sounds of Joe and Mary having sex are coming from it.

Yuck.

He looks down at Mirea - she's still asleep, breathing heavily with her fist in her mouth and her dress riding up her back. Lucas pulls Mirea's dress down.

He stares at her, then roughly pulls her fist out of her mouth.

Mirea unconsciously responds by hitting out at Lucas.

Lucas hits back.

They start to have a strange wrestling match. Mirea becomes increasingly distressed and cries out.

**47. EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS.**

Arabella hears the fracas in the tent and starts to run toward it. Stupid runs with her.

**48. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Joe and Mary are having sex. Joe is on the verge of coming when he hears the fight in the tepee.

He quickly withdraws from Mary and runs out of the cottage, trying to get his pants back on.

**49. EXT. TEPEE - CONTINUOUS**

JOE (RUNNING)  
OI! Luc! Leave your sister alone!

MIREA (O/S)  
DADDY!

Joe trips over his pants and falls over. He screams in pain.

JOE  
FUUUUUUCKKKK!

Lucas and Mirea emerge from the tepee looking disheveled. Mirea runs to Joe's side and clings onto him.

Lucas looks ashamed.

**50. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - EVENING.**

The entire family sits on the floor, eating dinner off the disposable plastic plates in silence.

Joy sits on Mary's lap, mashing food with her little fists.

Lucas picks up his barely touched dinner and walks over to where Stupid is sitting.

LUCAS (OFFERING STUPID THE REMAINS OF  
DINNER)  
Here y'go.

JOE (TENSE)  
Take it outside, Luc.

LUCAS

Why?

JOE

Because it's messy.

LUCAS

But he always eats inside.

JOE

Well he's not eating inside here.

LUCAS

Mum always lets us feed him off the plate.

JOE

You're not with Mum. You're with me. Take the dog outside.

Lucas starts feeding Stupid anyway.

JOE

Lucas. Take the dog outside.

Lucas ignores Joe.

LUCAS

He farted again. It's the food you're giving him - it's gross.

Joe gets up, picks Stupid up by the scruff of the neck and carries him outside.

JOE

The dog stays outside tonight, alright? And if I catch you letting him in the tent there'll be trouble.

MIREA

But Dad...

JOE

No. No. No.

Lucas scowls.

**51. INT. TEPEE - NIGHT.**

Joe kisses Mirea goodnight.

Joe goes to tussle Lucas' hair, but is rebuffed. Joe shrugs.

**52. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT.**

Joe enters the cottage. Arabella is sitting talking to Mary. They are laughing and enjoying each other's company. Mary is breastfeeding Joy again.

JOE (IRRITABLE)  
Hasn't she had enough?

Mary and Arabella barely notice. Joe exits the cottage.

**53. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT.**

Joe makes a call on his mobile phone, wandering downhill and away from the cottage to have the conversation. The dog follows.

JOE  
Get lost Stupid.

He realises that the call has connected, and affects a different, charming tone.

JOE  
Oh, no - I didn't mean you...

**54. EXT. FIELD - EARLY NEXT MORNING.**

The sun rises over the long grass. It's a clear summer day.

**55. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Joe takes his OVERNIGHT BAG out to the Mercedes and throws it in the back.

Mary, Mirea, Arabella and Luke stand and watch as he gets in the car.

MARY  
Call us when you get there.

JOE  
Course.

ARABELLA  
Seeya Dad.

MIREA  
Bye Daddy.

ARABELLA  
Remember to get some more expensive dog food.

JOE  
Alright, alright.

Joe starts the Merc.

MIREA

Daddy! You haven't kissed Joy  
goodbye.

Mary leans Joy in through the window. Joe can't reach her face, so he blows a raspberry on her stomach.

JOE (TO MARY)

Will you cope?

MARY

Yep.

JOE

I'll sort everything out when I  
get back to town, alright?

MARY

Fightin' words.

JOE

We can make this work, love. It's  
all good from here.

Mary backs away toward the cottage. Lucas slumps near the doorway, mucking around with a stick.

JOE

Bye Luc.

Lucas waves his stick in the Merc's direction.

Joe starts to reverse the car, but Mirea suddenly starts running recklessly towards it.

MIREA

Dada! Daddy, stop!

Mary bolts toward Mirea and holds her back. Joe stops the car.

JOE

Jesus, Mirea - I could have  
backed over you.

Mirea points to the driveway behind the car. Joe checks the rear vision. He can't see anything.

Suddenly Mary sees what Mirea can and covers her mouth.

Stupid's paws are visible - lying at an angle and sticking out where the long grass meets the dirt road.

They are very still.

**56. INT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MINUTES LATER.**

Stupid has been laid out on the kitchen table. He is very

clearly dead.

Mirea wails hysterically. Arabella sniffs; she is pale and shocked. Mary has her arms around them both. Joe and Lucas stand close to the table.

Next to them stands Vidor. He inspects Stupid's body dispassionately.

VIDOR (TO LUCAS)  
Snake bite. You see? Just there,  
and...there. I would say brown.

Lucas is calm. He nods. Joe puts his arm around Lucas. Lucas doesn't reject the gesture, but remains neutral.

LUCAS (TO JOE)  
You have to take him home. To  
Mum's.

Joe moves to contradict Luc, then stops himself.

LUCAS  
You have to.

**57. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Joe carries Stupid's body out to the Merc. It is wrapped in a BED SHEET. He places it in the back of the car and gently lowers the back hatch.

**58. EXT, FIELD - MORNING.**

The Mercedes tears down the driveway, raising clouds of dust as it goes.

**59. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Vidor and Lucas stand next to each other, watching the car go. Mirea, Arabella and Mary stand a distant apart. Joy plays in the dirt at their feet.

Mirea is tear-stained and shocked. Arabella looks sober - older than her years. Mary has her arms around them both.

VIDOR (TO LUCAS)  
How do you feel about yabbies?

**60. EXT, THE WATERHOLE - LATER.**

Vidor and Luke dangle yabby baits in a quiet, upstream part of the waterhole. Next to them rest buckets and a fishing net on a pole.

Downstream Mary sits with Mirea, plaiting her hair. Arabella walks Joy through the shallows, holding her hands so she doesn't fall over. The remains of a picnic lunch sit nearby.

**61. INT, MERCEDES - AFTERNOON**

Joe drives along the Bellinghen Road. The day is already searingly hot. He tries the air conditioning and then remembers that it's broken.

He looks toward the back of the car where Stupid's body lies.

**62. EXT, THE WATERHOLE - EARLY AFTERNOON.**

LUCAS

How long have you been here?

VIDOR

About half an hour.

LUCAS

In Australia, though.

VIDOR

Some years. Yes.

LUCAS

Do you like it?

VIDOR

Do I look as though I like it?

LUCAS

What's it like in Sweden?

VIDOR

I don't know.

LUCAS

Why not?

VIDOR

I've never been there.

Mary looks up inquiringly.

VIDOR

Hungary.

MARY

Wouldn't mind.

VIDOR

No. I am Hungarian.

MARY

How embarrassing.

VIDOR

No it isn't. Perhaps you have a bigger appetite than you know.

MARY  
Perhaps I do.

Lucas starts to reel in his line.

LUCAS  
I got one! I've got one.

Vidor holds out the fishing net and helps Lucas take the YABBIE off the line. It is a superb blue male specimen; large and healthy and aggressive. It snaps and tries to wriggle free of Vidor's grasp.

Mirea comes over to look at it.

MIREA  
It's angry.

VIDOR  
Of course. He is trapped.

**63. INT. MERCEDES - EARLY AFTERNOON.**

Joe drives. He is sweating quite heavily. He checks the rear view mirror, then makes a sudden swerve off the road and down a bush track.

**64. THE FIELD - AFTERNOON.**

Vidor, Mary (with Joy on her hip), Arabella and Lucas make their way back up the DIRT TRACK that cuts through the grass.

Lucas has his yabbie in a bucket of water.

Mary is talking to Joy, running through the names of the family.

MARY  
Arabella, where's Arabella?  
Bella-de-Wella. And where's  
Mirea? There's Mirea-ten-Layers.

MIREA  
And there's Lucas-the-Mucous.

ARABELLA  
And Mummy-fat-tummy.

MARY  
Thanks very much.

MIREA  
And where's Daddy? Joy? Where's  
Daddy?

ARABELLA  
Where's Daddy-the-saddy?

MIREA

Where's Daddy-so-maddy?

LUCAS

Where's Bad Dad, Joy? Where's your bad dad? Are you glad Dad's not here? Are you? Joy?

Lucas gets the yabby out of the bucket and holds it the way that Vidor has taught him. He waves it in Joy's face.

MARY

Stop it, Luc.

Lucas continues.

MARY (SHARPLY)

Stop it.

Lucas continues. Joy starts to cry.

MARY

Luc -

Vidor intervenes, taking Joy in his arms so that Mary can deal directly with Lucas.

MARY (HANDING JOY OVER)

LUCAS. You are scaring Joy, ok?

ARABELLA

You're scaring the yabby too.

LUCAS

No I'm not. He's an alien. He doesn't care. He's an alien.

VIDOR

Lucas. You have his fear. Now show him your respect.

Vidor sways gently with Joy. She is calm.

Lucas considers, then drops the yabby back into the bucket and recommences the walk.

Arabella and Mirea continue up the dirt track behind him, visibly relieved.

Vidor hands Joy back to Mary.

MARY

Do you always talk like that?

VIDOR

Like what?

**65. EXT, BUSHES NEAR MERCEDES - AFTERNOON.**

Joe emerges from the bushes. He has dirt on his hands and t-shirt. He closes the back hatch of the Mercedes, gets in and drives away.

**66. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - LATE AFTERNOON.**

Black clouds amass in the sky. The weather is hot and heavy with the threat of a sub-tropical storm.

From a distance we see Mirea, Arabella, Lucas, Vidor and Mary reach the cottage. Lucas puts the YABBY BUCKET next to the COTTAGE DOOR, then races to get to the tent, beating Mirea there by a whisker. They elbow each other as they crawl inside.

Arabella goes directly inside the cottage - it looks as though she needs to use the toilet again. Vidor and Mary stop and talk. She gestures for him to come inside. As Vidor steps in there is a loud crack of thunder overhead.

**67. EXT, PETROL STATION, HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON.**

Joe stands next to the Mercedes, filling it up with petrol.

**68. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - AFTERNOON.**

Mary puts a kettle on the stove and lights the gas. She gets milk out the esky - at home in her makeshift kitchen.

Vidor has Joy on his knee and is making faces at her. In the background Arabella lies on one of the box beds, strumming her guitar.

MARY

Portraits.

VIDOR

Without their faces?

MARY

Yeah. Portraits, but I deconstruct them.

VIDOR

Why?

Beat.

MARY

I don't really know.

There is another crack of thunder, even louder this time, followed by a shot of lightening. Mary looks out the window at the tepee.

MARY

Will they be alright out there?

VIDOR  
But do you think that is  
possible?

MARY  
What?

VIDOR  
To 'make' a life?

**69. INT, PETROL STATION - AFTERNOON.**

Joe stands in line for the cash register. He feels in the back pocket of his jeans for his wallet.

He has a thought, and then feels in the other pocket for his mobile phone.

It isn't there.

**70. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - AFTERNOON.**

MARY (CALLING TO THE TEPEE)  
Mirea! Luc!

**71. INT, MERCEDES, AFTERNOON.**

Joe searches the front of the car for his mobile. He is becoming increasingly agitated.

**72. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - AFTERNOON.**

Arabella hooks her Ipod up to the cottage's stereo. It plays a gypsy/folk song. Mirea starts to dance to it. Reluctant at first, Arabella then joins in. Mary makes tea, but nods her head. Vidor (who still has Joy) taps his foot.

Lucas joins in too, but instead of dancing he makes robotic movements. Mary raises an eyebrow. At least he's joining in.

**73. INT, PETROL STATION - AFTERNOON.**

Joe puts coins in a PAYPHONE and dials a number. He seems to connect for a moment.

JOE  
Hey, it's me. We should talk -

The phone disconnects, or goes straight to voicemail. Joe looks at the handpiece, and hears the sound of all his spare change disappearing inside the machine.

**74. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - AFTERNOON**

The song reaches fever pitch. Beneath it, there's the just audible sound of 'Watermelon Man' - the ring tone from Joe's phone.

Mary hears it.

MARY  
Mobile! That's -

LUC  
That's Dad's mobile!

MARY  
I can't believe he's forgotten  
his bloody...

Luc hunts around the box beds for the ringing mobile. He finds it and picks it up. The music is still loud.

Without saying a word, Luc listens to the caller.

Arabella jumps over a chair and turns the stereo down.

ARABELLA  
Dad! Is it Dad?

Lucas holds the phone as though it is a foreign object.

LUCAS  
It's not Dad.

MARY  
Who is it?

LUCAS  
It's not Dad.

MARY  
Well who is it? Is it the  
removalists? Give me the phone,  
Luc.

Lucas is stationary, fixed. Mary loses her temper and grabs the phone from him.

MARY  
Hello? Hello - this is Joe's  
phone.

The caller disconnects. Mary looks at the MOBILE SCREEN - the number has no caller ID.

MARY  
Who was it, Luc?

LUCAS  
I dunno.

MARY  
Well was it a man or a woman?

LUCAS

I dunno.

MARY (ANNOYED, CRITICAL)  
 Luc - it's not that hard to  
 figure out...it could have been  
 the movers /with our stuff.

LUCAS  
 /It was a lady.

MARY  
 Brilliant.

Beat. Mary looks at Lucas, exasperated.

MARY  
 Well what'd she say?

Lucas says nothing. Scowls.

MARY  
 Luc?

LUCAS (MUMBLING)  
 I want to fuck you again.

MARY (LAUGHING)  
 I'm sorry?

LUCAS (LOUDLY, WITH CLARITY)  
 I want to fuck you again.

A moment. Mary stares at Lucas. He shrugs.

LUCAS  
 That's what she said.

Mary makes a noise - it's a cross between a laugh and a  
 yelp of pain.

**75. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - LATE AFTERNOON.**

Mary steps outside the cottage. She stares up at the black  
 clouds, burgeoning, but refusing to burst. Cicadas are  
 chirping madly.

Without looking she drops Joe's MOBILE phone into the yabby  
 BUCKET, where it sinks to the bottom.

**76. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT.**

The storm has not broken - instead it has passed over, but  
 an eerie, slightly green light prevails.

Mary prepares dinner in silence. There is a bottle of red  
 wine on the bench. She has already drunk most of it.

**77. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, LATER.**

Mirea, Luc and Arabella eat their dinner in silence. Mary breastfeeds Joy on the couch. She is drunk.

ARABELLA  
Won't she get drunk?

Mary stares at the three children as though she has never seen them before. Aliens.

Joy finishes feeding. She is groggy. Mary looks at her with uncommon, drunken tenderness.

MARY (TO JOY)  
Come on sweet-pea. Bed time.

**78. INT, BATHROOM, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT.**

Arabella superintends Lucas and Mirea (in their pyjamas), putting toothpaste on their brushes and filling up a water cup for them.

**79. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT.**

Lucas, Mirea and Arabella stand at the front door. Arabella has a Dolphin torch in one hand, and a protective arm around Mirea.

MIREA  
Good night Mary.

Mary bends over Joy's porta-cot, singing her a little lullaby. She does not look up.

Arabella ushers Mirea and Lucas out the door.

Mary looks up to the sound of the door closing and the tepee being entered.

Arabella returns inside. She stands awkwardly at the kitchen bench.

Mary starts opening her second BOTTLE OF RED WINE. She fiddles with the bottle opener, putting it in the cork at a bad angle. She takes it out and starts again.

She notices the RED LIPSTICK from the car sitting on the bench. She picks the lipstick up and balances it delicately on its end.

MARY  
I thought it was a present.

ARABELLA (TIMID)  
Pardon?

MARY  
This. On the way here.

ARABELLA

Oh. No, I just found it on the back seat, and -

MARY (WORKING INTO A FURY)

And I was so happy, did you realise that?

ARABELLA

No, I just...

MARY

I thought you'd given me a present. I thought one of you had finally given me a present. Because you liked me.

ARABELLA

No, it was just sticking into me, and I gave it to Dad...

MARY

And he stuffed it somewhere so he wouldn't have to think about it, like everything else he does. And none of you gave me a second fucking thought. I'm sorry. I hate swearing.

Mary tries to uncork the bottle. Shards of ancient, dry cork go everywhere. She tries to pour the wine into a plastic disposable cup. It sloshes over the top. Particles of cork float on the wine's surface.

Arabella watches, wary - unsure of what to do.

Mary tries to pick out some of the flotsam with her finger. She can't seem to get at it. She hunches over the bench and starts to cry.

Arabella takes decisive action, getting a plastic disposable teaspoon and swiftly removing almost all the bits of cork, and handing the glass of wine to Mary.

ARABELLA

I didn't get it all.

MARY

It's ok.

ARABELLA

I'm sorry.

MARY

So am I.

**80. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - LATER.**

Arabella sleeps on one of the box beds. Joy sleeps in her portacot.

**81. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Mary sits outside the cottage. She is even drunker, smoking a cigarette and searching for stars, but the remaining cloud cover conceals most of them.

MARY (SPOTTING A SMALL CLUSTER,  
MOUTHING THE WORDS)

One, two...?

Mary's mobile phone rings. The called ID says 'HOME'.

MARY (ANSWERING THE PHONE)

Yeah?

JOE (O/S)

I'm in the flat. Everything  
echoes.

MARY

Course it does.

JOE (O/S)

Yup.

A silence.

JOE (O/S)

How are the kids?

Mary thinks.

MARY

They're really just kids, aren't  
they.

Another silence. We sense Joe's awkwardness; his lack of understanding.

JOE (O/S)

So I'm just going to have a  
shower here and then I'll head  
out. I /think I've left my phone  
up there though -

MARY

/I was just counting stars. Only  
got to three, and then I realised  
that one was a small plane. Isn't  
that ironic, Joe?

JOE (O/S)

I spose. If you were Alanis  
Morrisette, maybe...

MARY

It's like running out of petrol,  
and not being able to figure out  
why. Or moving to the middle of  
nowhere, only to find you have  
less space than you did before.  
Red lipstick in the family wagon,  
Joe. Is there a bigger cliché?

Offscreen, the penny drops.

JOE (O/S)

Fuck. Mary -

MARY

Give her my regards, Joe.

Mary hangs up.

Joe calls back.

Mary's phone rings and rings. She TURNS OFF THE SOUND and stares dispassionately at the screen, repeatedly flashing 'HOME'.

Eventually she turns off the phone altogether. Mary rises and looks through the cottage window. Arabella is asleep, and Joy is too.

She stumbles to the tepee, where a Dolphin torch is still switched on, visible from the outside and leaning against the canvas.

**82. INT, TEPEE - NIGHT.**

Mirea and Lucas lie half out of their makeshift beds, legs a-kimbo, breathing heavily.

Mary kneels down and tucks Mirea back under a sheet.

She looks across at Luc - he's hot and sweaty, the fringe of his hair sopping against his brow. She smooths it back with the kind of tenderness she usually reserves for Joy.

Mary picks up the Dolphin torch and makes her way out of the tent.

**83. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Mary wanders back to the cottage door, the beam of light from the torch swaying.

She shines the light into the yabby bucket. The male yabby (next to Joe's submerged mobile phone) responds angrily, and tries to climb out of the bucket.

She reaches down and tries to pick the creature up. It nips her.

MARY

Ow.

Mary sits down and puts her gumboots on.

She picks up the bucket and staggers down the dirt track towards the waterhole.

**84. EXT, WATERHOLE - NIGHT.**

Mary stands the Dolphin torch on the embankment so that it shines a ray of light across the black water.

She tips the bucket, mobile phone and yabby into the waterhole.

**85. EXT, DIRT TRACK, NIGHT.**

Mary walks back up the dirt track. She can see a warm light emanating from Vidor's cottage.

**86. EXT, VIDOR'S COTTAGE - NIGHT.**

Mary knocks on Vidor's door. Vidor opens it. He has a joint in his hand. It is as though he has been expecting her.

VIDOR

Hello Mary.

MARY

Hello Vidor.

Mary reaches up and takes Vidor's joint. She inhales deeply. Vidor gestures for Mary to enter. She does.

**87. INT, VIDOR'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Vidor's cottage is a single room lined with pine - more like an alpine artist's studio than a house. Small projects line the benches: pieces of turned wood, half-assembled boxes with glass lids. Mobiles made from found objects hang from the cathedral ceiling. A chandelier made entirely from found pieces of wood takes pride of place.

Mary looks around at Vidor's work, swaying from the effort. She is impressed.

She steadies herself; looks directly at Vidor.

MARY

Could you do me a favour?

**88. INT, VIDOR'S COTTAGE - ONE MINUTE LATER.**

Mary and Vidor tear each other's clothes off.

Vidor picks Mary up and puts her on his work bench. Sawdust flies everywhere.

Nails roll around.

Mary tries to shake her gumboots off.

An empty jar works its way off the bench and smashes on the floor. A low-hanging mobile gets knocked and swings madly.

**89. INT, VIDOR'S COTTAGE - 30 MINUTES LATER.**

Vidor and Mary lie under his patchwork velvet quilt.

They both seem surprised.

Mary looks at the palm of her hand - it is bleeding.

MARY

Huh.

Vidor takes Mary's hand and kisses it tenderly.

MARY

Wierdo with a...

Mary's eyes flutter. She curls up and falls asleep against Vidor's chest.

**90. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - NIGHT**

As the clouds overhead clear, a starry night sky shines down on the cottage. It stands in silence, as does the tent.

**91. EXT, THE FIELD - EARLY MORNING.**

Mist hangs over the field. It starts to rise as the sun touches the horizon.

Barefoot, Mary walks the dirt track back to the Bellinggen cottage. She stops for a minute to admire at the hundreds of droplets of dew adorning the longer blades of grass, shot through and sparkling with the early dawn rays.

**92. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - EARLY MORNING.**

Mary creeps inside, toward the porta-cot. Joy is just stirring. She opens her eyes and looks at Mary - eyes clear, comprehending. Mary smiles at Joy.

**93. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Arabella, Lucas and Mirea eat dry Weet Bix from plastic bowls on the floor. Mary drinks a cup of black tea, staring moonily out the window. Joy plays with some toys on the floor.

There's a knock at the door. Mirea leaps up to answer it. She opens the door to reveal Vidor. Lucas brightens immediately.

MIREA  
We're having Weet Bix.

LUCAS (SIMULTANEOUSLY, SHYLY)  
Hi...

Vidor stands in the doorway. He holds up Mary's gumboots. Vidor enters and picks up Joy. Lucas seems put out and leaves the table.

MARY  
I thought I might march the kids  
in to town today. Are you, were  
you, um...

VIDOR (BLUSHING SLIGHTLY)  
I must mow the field today.

MARY (EMBARRASSED)  
Oh.

VIDOR  
The mower - I borrow it from a  
collective. Sunday is my day,  
so...and the brown snake.

MARY  
No, no - it's fine.

Vidor hands Joy to Mary - his hand brushes across her back and lingers there. Mary blushes.

Arabella notices. Her mouth opens slightly.

Beat.

LUCAS (O/S, FURIOUS)  
HEY! What the hell's been going  
on?!

Lucas comes inside - he is incensed. Mary pales guiltily.

LUCAS  
Where's my yabby?

**94. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Mary straps Joy into a BUGABOO PRAM, incongruous against the bucolic surrounds. In the background Mirea and Arabella bicker.

MIREA  
I don't want to march to town.

ARABELLA  
Mirea, we're not marching to  
town. We're walking.

MIREA

Well I don't want to walk.

ARABELLA

Well why don't you skip then?

Mirea suddenly laughs, disproportionately pleased with the joke.

MIREA

Can I have some bubble gum?

ARABELLA

No.

Despite herself, Arabella throws Mirea a piece of bubble gum. Mary straightens up and throws Arabella a grateful look.

MARY

Ok. Let's go. Where's Luc?

Mary walks around to the side of the cottage.

Lucas is sitting in the shadows poking the ground with a LARGE STICK. His head is completely covered by a SILVER DOCTOR WHO CYBERMAN dress-up HELMET but it is clear that he is sulking.

MARY

You couldn't have kept him forever.

Lucas does not respond.

MARY

Luc? You have to turn things loose. Let things go.

Lucas turns and stares at Mary, but says nothing. It is impossible to tell what his expression is under the mask, but it appears judgemental.

Lucas rises and wanders around to where the girls are.

He keeps his big stick with him.

**95. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, CONTINUOUS.**

Mary gets her bag. She looks at her dormant mobile phone and turns it on. There are 17 new messages.

Mary drops the phone into her bag and glances out the window, surveying the family:

Arabella wears a pair of very tight, skinny jeans, white-rimmed Wayfarer Ray Bans and a t-shirt that reads 'CHOOSE LIFE' and an old tattered waistcoat. She has her

hands on the pram and is blowing a bubble from her gum.

Mirea wears her gumboots and a dirty cheongsam. Her hair has worked half loose of the plaits Mary gave her, and is wildly knotty and crimped in parts, but neat in others. She is waving pram toys in Joy's face.

Lucas is silent - part boy, part cyborg.

Joy's legs kick out from the pram.

**96. EXT. BELINGEN ROAD - LATE MORNING.**

Arabella, Mirea, Luc and Mary form a loose procession up a steep, winding road. The sun is beating down. Mary is sweating as she pushes the Bugaboo.

MIREA

I'm thirsty.

MARY

There's water in the pram.

MIREA

I'm thirsty for apple juice.

ARABELLA

We don't have apple juice.

MIREA

But that's what I'm thirsty for.

LUCAS (muffled, from inside  
the suit)

Too bad.

MIREA

What? I can't hear you. It's too hot. Why can't we just go swimming instead?

A 1990 TOYOTA dual cab Ute drives past. There is a RIDE-ON LAWN MOWER in the back. The Ute stops just up the road. Vidor opens the passenger door.

**97. INT, VIDOR'S DUAL CAB UTE - CONTINUOUS**

Arabella and Mirea sit in the back of the Ute. Mirea is very happy, angling her face to catch the cool breeze that the air conditioning is sending her way.

Behind them we glimpse the Bugaboo - tethered next to the lawn mower in the Ute's tray.

Vidor drives. Mary sits next to him, holding Joy. Lucas sits next to Mary, staring out the window.

ARABELLA (LEANING FORWARD, SMIRKING)

I thought you had to mow the field.

MARY

The grass isn't going to get much longer today.

Vidor nods his approval. Arabella sits back, smirking knowingly.

**98. EXT, PACIFIC HIGHWAY - MORNING**

The Mercedes speeds north along the highway faster than it should, overtaking other cars.

**99. INT, JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS.**

Joe drives. He looks anxious. ABC cricket coverage plays over the A.M. radio. Australia takes a wicket against England, but it gives Joe no joy.

He turns the radio off and concentrates on overtaking a Mack truck up a hill.

**100. EXT, BELLINGEN GLOBAL CARNIVAL - MORNING.**

Vidor pulls the Ute up on the fringes of town. There is a big festival taking place. Arabella, Mirea and Vidor get out. Mary stays in the Ute with Joy; hesitant.

Over a large, flat football oval, a series of tents and stages have been erected. Rainbow flags and food vans abound. Hundreds of people - ferals, hippies, organic yuppie types, world musicians - wander happily around, eating food, talking, laughing. An African band - AFRO DIZZI ACT - plays, the beats sounding powerfully through big sub woofer speakers. A street performer - on stilts and wearing a striped Lycra leotard - breathes fire into the air.

Mirea sees a group of children having their faces painted and gets excited. She runs over and stands in line, waiting.

Arabella starts looking at the clothing stalls, where vintage dresses - sparkling and encrusted with beads and sequins - hang next to cheesecloth skirts and colourful hemp trousers. A cute adolescent BOY wearing a FELT HAT and Thai sailor pants mans the stall. He smiles at Arabella.

Mary gets out of the Ute. She is unsettled by the presence of so many hippies, and doesn't seem to like the music. Is this really her new home?

Mary turns to Vidor, but he is talking to a large woman with an single, enormous dreadlock running down her back and vast amounts of black underarm hair. He caresses her cheek with particular affection.

Mary is taken aback.

ARABELLA

Can we have some money? I saw a skirt...

MARY

Yeah, here...

Mary rifles through her wallet and gives the money to Arabella, who takes it and goes over the Mirea and gives her some.

Mary turns to Lucas, remaining money in hand.

MARY

Luc, do you want - ?

Lucas is gone - nowhere to be seen.

Mary peers through the crowd, but she can't see him.

**101. EXT, BELLINGEN GLOBAL CARNIVAL - DAY.**

With Joy on her hip, Mary pushes through the crowds, looking for Lucas.

She stops at a small stage where some children's entertainers, the FUNNY GREEN SMELLY THINGS are doing a show. LUCY LASTIC and SIMON SNOT talk to the kids who laugh and cheer.

SIMON SNOT

Who knows what happens to all the poo from the zoo?

Dozens of children's hands shoot up to answer the question. Others heckle, or just call out. At the back of the crowd stands Lucas. He has his cyberman helmet off and is laughing.

Joy is getting restless, and wants to be put on the ground.

Mary resists her; keeps her eyes on Lucas.

Vidor materialises behind Mary, taking one of Joy's hands and playing with it.

VIDOR

Would you like me to watch her?

Mary starts.

MARY

Wouldn't you rather be spending time with your girlfriend?

VIDOR

She's not my girlfriend, Mary.

MARY

Oh.

VIDOR

But neither are you.

Mary turns around to face Vidor properly. Their eyes lock, and some of the previous night's chemistry returns. As though magnetised, Vidor and Mary are drawn towards each other. They kiss. Joy wriggles in Mary's arms. Mary withdraws and looks toward the crowd of children.

Lucas is staring straight at her. Mary cannot gauge whether he saw the kiss or not.

**102. EXT, BELLINGEN GLOBAL CARNIVAL, FOOD VAN - DAY.**

Arabella wears a tie-dyed dress over her jeans. She eats a roasted corn on the cob. The juice rolls down her chin and FELT HAT BOY wipes it off with a serviette.

**103. EXT, CARNIVAL, PICNIC AREA - DAY.**

Mirea, her face painted to resemble a dog's, sits and eats fairy floss with Mary and Joy.

Mirea looks across at Arabella, who is now playing hacky sack with Felt Hat Boy some distance away.

MIREA

I said she had a boyfriend.

MARY

Looks that way.

MIREA

Is Dad still your boyfriend?

MARY

I don't really know.

Mirea launches herself at Mary, hugging her hard.

MIREA

Well I love you. Even if Dad doesn't.

Mary is shocked, but eventually returns the gesture, hugging Mirea tight and wrestling her to the ground.

Mirea squeals with delight; she adores wrestling. Joy joins in, in a 12-month old sort of way.

Mary stops and looks at Mirea's yellow and black face paint, touching her nose and running a finger along the whiskers.

MARY

Who are you supposed to be?

MIREA

I'm Stupid.

Beat.

MARY

I don't know what we're going to tell your Mum about him.

MIREA

Don't tell her. Or she'll go in the bathroom again and we'll have to come and live with you. And you don't have any furniture.

MARY

What's wrong with living with us?

MIREA

You just - don't have any furniture.

MARY

Mirea...what did Mum do?

MIREA

I dunno. She was yelling at Dad on the phone. Then Luc found her in the bathroom. And Belle called the ambulance.

MARY

And then what?

MIREA

Then we got a bus to your house.

MARY

Jesus. Are you ok?

MIREA

Yeah. It was much worse the first time - Luc cried. So did Belle.

Beat. Mary is stunned.

MIREA

Can I go on the Jumpy Castle?

**104. EXT, CARNIVAL - AFTERNOON.**

The day wears on. We see:

Joy having her face painted. She is loathe to allow it, and

ends up with a rainbow smear and gold sparkles in her hair.

CUT TO:

Mirea persuading Mary to have pink nylon hair extensions woven into her hair.

CUT TO:

Vidor bringing Mary a falafel roll as her hair is done.

CUT TO:

Mirea watching the Amazing Drumming Monkeys. She jumps up and down to the music - very excited. Mary joins in, dancing with Joy.

CUT TO:

Arabella and Felt Hat Boy exchanging mobile numbers. He kisses her on the cheek. It is chaste, but heartfelt.

**105. EXT, VIDOR'S TOYOTA - LATE AFTERNOON.**

Mary, Mirea and Arabella stand exhausted next to the Ute. Joy is asleep in the Bugaboo. Lucas is noticeably absent.

MARY

Well did he say where he was going next?

ARABELLA

No - he just went running off.

MIREA

Maybe he's gone home?

MARY

He wouldn't go home without us. Would he?

ARABELLA

Do you want me to check the portaloos again?

MARY

No, no - it's OK.

Beat. Mary looks around.

MARY

Shit.

Vidor comes walking back to the Ute. He, too, has clearly been on the search for Lucas. He shakes his head.

Mirea starts to look very upset. Dark circles are forming under her eyes, and her dog face paint is smudged.

MIREA

I want to go home.

Mary looks at Joy, who continues to sleep deeply. Arabella sidles up to Mary.

ARABELLA (WHISPERING, WITH SOME  
URGENCY)

I don't have any pads left.

Mary is becoming increasingly anxious.

MARY

Shit. Really? Shit.

VIDOR

Mary - go. I will look for him. I will bring him home.

MARY

We can't just...

VIDOR

It's a downhill walk.

Mary considers. Arabella stands on one leg. Mirea's lip trembles.

VIDOR

Go.

**106. EXT, BELLINGEN ROAD - AFTERNOON.**

Arabella, Mirea and Mary walk down the hill. Mary has the pram, but there's no need to push - it's an easy downhill walk.

**107. EXT, CARNIVAL - AFTERNOON.**

Vidor walks through the crowd, looking for Lucas.

**108. INT, JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES - AFTERNOON.**

Joe turns the car off the Pacific Highway and into a petrol station.

**109. EXT, BELLINGEN ROAD - AFTERNOON.**

Arabella, Mirea and Mary sing a song as they walk.

ARABELLA, MARY AND MIREA (SINGING)

I told the witch doctor I was in  
love with you. And then the witch  
doctor, he told me what to do...

**110. EXT, CARNIVAL, AFTERNOON.**

Vidor keeps looking for Lucas, but it is becoming

increasingly noisy and smoky at the carnival: TIBETAN CYMBALS clash; the sound of a LOUD BLUES BAND starts elsewhere.

**111. INT, PETROL STATION - AFTERNOON.**

Joe gives a very CURVACEOUS YOUNG CHECK-OUT GIRL his bankcard. His wallet is open, flipped to photos of his children.

CURVACEOUS GIRL (FLIRTING)  
Wow. They're beautiful. You  
their's?

Joe does not flirt back.

JOE  
If they'll have me.

**112. INT, BELLINGEN HOUSE - AFTERNOON.**

Mirea and Arabella stagger inside. They are very fatigued. Arabella goes to the bathroom and Mirea lies down. Mary wheels Joy inside in the pram.

Rather than putting Joy to bed, she just releases the harnesses holding her in and allows her to continue slumbering in the pram.

**113. EXT, CARNIVAL - LATE AFTERNOON.**

Lucas wanders by himself - looking at stalls, admiring acrobats. Eventually he sits down on a grassy tuft near the oval.

**114. EXT, CARNIVAL - LATE AFTERNOON.**

Vidor is still searching, but an EVENT MANAGER hippie mate carrying a MOTOROLA WALKIE TALKIE and wearing a RADIO MIKE finds him instead.

From a distance we glean the fact that Vidor is being asked by his mate to move his car.

**115. INT, VIDOR'S TOYOTA UTE, LATE AFTERNOON.**

Vidor moves his Ute quickly, doing a u-turn and parking it a small distance away.

**116. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, LATE AFTERNOON.**

Mary sits outside the cottage. She takes her mobile phone and starts listening to the first of Joe's 17 messages.

**117. EXT, CARNIVAL - TWILIGHT.**

The sounds of bells tinkling. A procession of adults and children winds its way toward the grassy tuft where Lucas

sits.

They are led by two Tibetan monks and carry candles, or home-made paper lanterns of all colours and shapes.

In the fading light it is a magical sight.

Lucas is captivated. He follows the procession as it passes under a purpose-built decorative archway, until it arrives at the oval and starts the Turning the Wheel ceremony. A Tibetan Monk begins to address the assembling crowd.

TIBETAN MONK

Passing through this arched gateway is a metaphor for life - for moving through the elements on a journey from birth to death. It is the endless cycle of not being, becoming and dissolution.

Lucas listens and watches intently. Something about the speech moves him.

**117. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - TWILIGHT.**

Mary listens to another of Joe's messages. Tears pour down her cheeks, but she responds with generous laughter to whatever Joe has said.

**118. INT, JOE AND MARY'S CAR - TWILIGHT.**

Joe turns the Mercedes onto the Bellinghen Road. He is dog-tired.

**119. EXT, CARNIVAL CAR PARK - TWILIGHT.**

Lucas stands in the car park, looking for Vidor's Toyota. Against the trucks and vans, he seems very small and very vulnerable.

Unable to see the Toyota and resigned to the fact that he is alone, Lucas puts on his cyberman helmet, takes up his stick and starts to walk home.

**120. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - TWILIGHT.**

Joy stirs in her pram.

**121. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - TWILIGHT.**

Mary wanders into the long grass a small way, looking at the orange sunset and holding her mobile phone.

**122. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, TWILIGHT.**

Joe turns the Mercedes into the driveway. Home.

**123. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - TWILIGHT**

Mary turns to the sound of Joe driving the Mercedes toward the cottage. She walks toward the car.

**124. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Joy opens her eyes.

**125. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS.**

Joe kills the engine and gets out of the car. The headlights remain on, silhouetting him, and shining directly on Mary. He walks to Mary.

JOE  
I didn't do it.

MARY  
So I heard.

Arabella and Mirea emerge bleary eyed from the cottage, squinting into the light cast by the headlights.

MIREA  
Daddy! Daddy!

Mirea runs to Joe and hugs him. He picks her up and holds her fast. Arabella hangs back. Joe moves to embrace Arabella too, but she's evasive, looking around nervously.

ARABELLA (TO MARY)  
Did you find him yet?

Mary shakes her head. Joe looks at her questioningly.

MARY (LOOKING GUILTY)  
Luc's gone for a bit of a wander.

JOE  
Right...

MARY  
He'll come back.

Silence.

MARY (DEFENSIVE)  
What?

JOE  
Nothing. Nothing. It's good to see you.

MARY  
What?

JOE  
You just...probably shouldn't

have left him, that's all.

MARY

Are you fucking kidding me? He ran off!

JOE

You've got to be firm with him.

MARY

So says the father of the goddamn year. Do you have any idea what that kid has been through, of late?

JOE

Of course I do. He's my son.

MARY

Your son, who you never see. Whose mother is suicidal, by the way - yeah, that's why your kids are here. Because they don't have anywhere else to go.

JOE

And whose fault is that?

MARY

Gee, I wonder...

JOE

Well maybe you should.

MARY

Don't shift this onto me...

JOE

You don't want them around, Mary. You've made that as clear as fucking day from the moment we moved in. Do you have any idea what it's like to have to choose? Between kids? Between families? To put six hours between you and the place they live?

MARY

Clearly it's so hard you have to try and fuck some clapped out jazz singer in the back of our Mercedes. With the engine still running!

JOE

Alright. Yeah. I almost did it. And yes, I left the bloody engine running while I did.

MARY (BREAKING)

Why?

JOE

Because I thought she was going to get out...

MARY

I mean why did you do it? Am I not enough? Are you deranged?

JOE

No.

MARY

What then? Help me understand, Joe. Help me understand what the hell is wrong with you.

JOE

I'm lonely.

MARY

Lonely?

Beat.

MARY

Lonely?

Beat. Joe nods.

MARY

That's it? You're *lonely*? Jesus Christ. If you're lonely, post a personal. Join a goddamn community group. Go to the pub. Watch some sport. Get a man-crush. Get over it.

JOE

I can't get over it.

MARY

Well I have. So why can't you?

JOE (SCREAMING NOW)

Because YOU DON'T LOVE ME MARY.

Beat.

MARY

That's not true.

JOE (FURIOUS)

It fucking is! You love the part of me that made your baby. You love the part of me that'll move

to the country with you, and run  
 some shitbox festival to support  
 you, and help you construct some  
 blindsided arty family narrative.  
 But I have three more parts,  
 Mary. And you don't want them.  
 And they're RIGHT FUCKING HERE!

Joe points at Arabella and Mirea, who are standing stock  
 still, their mouths open.

JOE  
 Well, two of them are, anyway.

Stalemate. Joe and Mary stare at each other.

From the bottom of the driveway we hear the sound of a  
 large truck. Headlights hit Joe and Mary as the It's All  
 Good moving truck arrives.

Fotos kills the engine and disembarks.

FOTOS  
 Bet you thought I'd never get  
 here!

Joe and Mary continue to stare at each other, ignoring  
 Fotos.

FOTOS (AWKWARD, TO MIREA & ARABELLA)  
 Hey girls.

Fotos looks around.

FOTOS  
 Where's the little one?

Mary looks at Fotos as though she should already know the  
 answer.

Fotos shakes her head and points to the open door.

Through it the EMPTY PRAM and the EMPTY PORTACOT are both  
 plainly visible.

**126. EXT, THE FIELD - EVENING.**

Absolute panic as Mary, Joe, Arabella, Fotos and Mirea  
 frantically search the field. They use Dolphin torches.

The Mercedes has been parked so that its headlights  
 illuminate the grass.

MARY  
 Joy!!

JOE  
 JOY!

FOTOS

Joy?

ARABELLA

Joy, where are you? Come on  
little baby...

MIREA (NEAR HYSTERICAL)

JOY! JOY! JOY!

MARY

Oh God. Oh God Joe.

JOE

She can't have got far. JOY!

MARY

This is all my fault. This is all  
my fault. JOY!

JOE

JOY! Where are you? It's just  
this fucking grass. I thought he  
said he was going to cut the  
fucking grass...

Mary looks guilty. Joe glances at her.

In the background we can see and hear Arabella, Fotos and  
Mirea still searching and calling out.

MARY (SUDDENLY REALISING)

Joe. The snake. What if the snake  
that got the dog - ?

JOE

I know. Just keep looking. JOY!

MARY

JOY! Answer me!

JOE

Did she have shoes on?

MARY

No. We were at the /carnival, and  
-

JOE

Jesus. Ok.

MARY

What? What?

JOE

It's just - you've somehow  
managed to lose two

children...one of them doesn't  
even have any shoes on.

MARY

At least I was here.

Mary and Joe face off again. Mary looks as though she's  
about to hit Joe.

Fotos comes up softly behind Mary.

She lays a hand on her shoulder and silently points to  
something on the ground a way off.

Joe, Mary, Arabella and Mirea move quietly toward a small  
clearing in the grass.

There, Lucas stands.

He holds his big stick over his head - poised to strike.

Crouching in front of him is Joy. She is oblivious to  
everything and appears to be playing with something on the  
ground.

Joe moves to say something and grab Lucas, but Mary catches  
his arm; she can see that Joy is squatting next to a COILED  
BROWN SNAKE.

Mesmerised, Joy traces her finger around the sleeping  
snake; around and around and around. The snake is still.

Mary moves a step closer, so that Lucas can see her.  
Maintaining eye contact, they communicate without words.  
Slowly, Mary holds out her arms.

MARY (GENTLY; HER VOICE CRACKING)

Joy...

Joy looks around. Mary grabs her.

The sudden movement stirs the snake. It rears up. Lucas  
brings his stick down on it, hard.

LUCAS

NOW!

He bashes again.

LUCAS

NOW! NOW! NOW!

Lucas bashes and bashes and bashes, repeating the mantra  
until the snake is well and truly dead.

Arabella and Mirea stand back, shattered.

Mary holds Joy as high as she can, as though the snake

might still get her.

Lucas drops the stick. He looks at Joe.

LUCAS  
You still owe me 75 bucks.

**127. EXT, THE FIELD - EARLY MORNING.**

The first rays of sun touch the field. The sound of a ride-on lawn mower starting up disrupts the serenity.

At the bottom of the field, Vidor steers the ride-on mower, razing the long grass.

**128. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Arabella, Mirea and Lucas are sitting outside at a table, eating their Weet Bix out of china bowls with metal spoons.

The cottage is surrounded by chairs, boxes, a bed, tables, wardrobes and other pieces of furniture - all resting on the grass.

Mary's faceless portraits lean against the furniture.

Arabella, Mirea and Lucas are sitting at a kitchen table on the grass. Golden light illuminates the inside-out scene.

Lucas is re-living his proudest snake killing moment and making sound effects to match - bash, bash, bash.

The girls roll their eyes, but are essentially pleased.

Mary is feeding Joy in her high chair.

Joe is on the verandah, looking through his belongings - turning his jeans pockets inside out. Through the windows of the cottage we can see that it is literally stuffed full with boxes and belongings. There are yet more boxes on the verandah.

JOE  
Fuck. Fuck.

MARY (ANNOYED)  
Joe -

JOE  
It's just - I can't find...I had it right here. It was right here...

An engagement ring box tumbles out of Joe's pants.

JOE (HAPPY)  
Oh. Here it is!

Joe opens the box. It is empty.

JOE

Arse.

Mary looks at him. Some marriage proposal.

JOE

I don't understand.

MIREA

Yes you do.

JOE (IGNORING MIREA)

I just don't get it.

MIREA

Yes. Yes you do.

JOE (STILL IGNORING MIREA, STARING AT  
THE EMPTY BOX)

It was right here. It was right  
here, and -

MIREA

And then you gave it to me!

JOE (NOT REALLY HEARING)

And then I...

Joe stops and stares at Mirea.

MIREA (PROUDLY)

And then I gave it to Stupid.

Joe turns purple. He is hovering over detonation point.

Mirea starts to realise all may not be well.

MIREA (WITH WEAK CHEER)

On his collar.

ARABELLA (AMUSED)

So Mary's engagement ring is in  
Mum's back garden!

MARY

Oh well. At least it's safe. You  
can just dig it up when you take  
the kids back. At some point.

Joe goes very quiet. He sits down on a kitchen chair,  
grasping his hands together in a confessional pose.

Mary, Arabella, Lucas and Mirea all stare at him.

Joe breathes in.

**129. EXT, BELLINGEN ROAD - MORNING.**

The Mercedes navigates the curves of the Bellinggen Road.

**130. INT, JOE AND MARY'S MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS.**

The entire family travels inside the car. Silence.

**131. EXT, BUSHLAND, OFF BELLINGEN ROAD - CONTINUOUS.**

Joe carries something up a scrubby hill, dry retching as he goes.

It is Stupid's decomposing body, still wrapped in the bed sheet.

Mary stands at the Mercedes driver's door. She hands Joe some green plastic garbage bags.

**132. INT, MERCEDES - MORNING.**

Mary drives back toward the cottage. Joe sits slumped in the passenger seat.

All the windows are down, but every now and again a waft of dead dog stench hits Arabella, Mirea or Lucas and they make a face, cough, or dry retch.

**133. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE - MORNING.**

Vidor hands Joe a shovel, and points to a position down the hill. The furniture still sits all over the grass.

**134. EXT, THE FIELD - LATE MORNING.**

Joe digs.

**135. EXT, THE FIELD - LATER.**

Joe lowers Stupid into the ground in an ungainly way.

**136. EXT, THE FIELD - LATER AGAIN.**

Mirea, Lucas and Arabella take turns filling in the hole, with varying degrees of success and speed.

**137. EXT, THE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON.**

A raised mound of dirt stands testament to Stupid's final resting place.

Joe pats at the mound with a shovel.

The children collect rocks and pieces of wood, lying them over the top.

Mary wanders down to the grave site with Joy on her hip. She hands Arabella her mobile phone.

MARY

Your mother. She's alright.

ARABELLA (SUDDENLY TEARY)

Hi Mum...yeah, we missed you too.

**138. EXT, THE FIELD - TWILIGHT.**

Lucas solemnly leads a procession down the hill. Everyone carries a candle and wears gumboots, despite the fact that the grass is now virtually razed.

**139. EXT, THE FIELD - TWILIGHT.**

The family assembles around Stupid's grave. They have placed their candles in the freshly turned earth. Lucas recites what he can remember from the Turning the Wheel ceremony.

LUCAS

...this is the endless cycle of  
not being, becoming and  
dissolution...

**140. EXT, THE FIELD - TWILIGHT.**

As the sun goes down Arabella, Mirea and Lucas plant the candles near the grave. Joy toddles around, trying to do the same. The kids help her walk.

Joe and Mary sit uphill, watching.

Joe takes the ring out of his pocket and puts it in Mary's hand.

JOE

You don't have to wear it.

Mary shakes her head and gives the ring back to Joe.

MARY

Not now.

Joe looks defeated.

Mary looks at Arabella, Mirea, Lucas and Joy making their way up the hill toward them.

The kids settle themselves around Joe and Mary. Joe picks up Joy. He buries his face in her neck.

ARABELLA (LYING BACK AND LOOKING UP AT  
THE SKY)

Stars!

Everyone but Joe looks up at the night sky, speckled with evening stars.

One. MARY

Two. MIREA

Three. LUCAS

Four. MARY

Five. LUCAS

Six. MIREA

Seven. ARABELLA

Eight! MIREA

Nine. LUCAS

Ten MARY

Eleven MIREA

Twelve. ARABELLA

Thirteen. LUCAS

Fourteen. ARABELLA

Fifteen. LUCAS

Sixteen. MIREA

Seventeen. MARY

Eighteen. MIREA

Nineteen. LUCAS

A silence. Lucas looks over at Joe.

JOE

Twenty.

Peace. The family stares out into the darkness, listening to the chirping of crickets and the babble of the creek spilling into the waterhole.

**141. EXT. BELLINGEN COTTAGE, FOUR DAYS LATER - MORNING.**

Thin clouds cover a grey sky - a cold day.

Joe runs across the driveway, ferrying the last bag to the Mercedes.

Arabella, Lucas and Mirea are already inside the car. Mary is outside with Joy on her hip, taking PHOTOS of the kids with her DIGITAL CAMERA.

Vidor walks up the hill. He wears a Dryzabone hat, and seems insensible of the weather. He carries an industrial sized measuring tape and a tool box.

Joe gets in the car, starts the engine and reverses the Merc. He waves at Mary. She waves back.

Mary takes a photo of the Mercedes. Everyone, including her, is trying not to cry.

Vidor turns his back to the car and starts measuring a space around the side of the house; room sized.

Joe toots the horn and the kids all wave, yell out goodbyes.

Vidor does not look around; he merely holds one hand up - the trademark farewell.

The rain begins to fall in earnest.

**142. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, THREE MONTHS LATER - MORNING.**

Rays of light touch a mosquito net above a double bed. The net has been tied in a knot.

The bed is made and empty. The room looks newly built.

Joy is awake, standing quietly in her cot.

Above her is the SPARROW MOBILE.

The three original SPARROWS remain at the top. Below them Mary is working at attaching THREE MORE sparrows, each bearing a different face cut out from the DIGITAL PHOTOS Mary took in the car: **the faces are Arabella's, Mirea's and Lucas's.**

**143. EXT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, MORNING - CONTINUOUS.**

Joe, Arabella, Mirea and Lucas get out of the Mercedes. They walk up to the verandah outside the cottage; past a verdant vegetable patch.

Joe has neat hair and wears a conspicuously clean shirt.

He motions to Lucas to take off the Dalek mask he's wearing. Lucas does.

Arabella arranges the wilted bunch of daffodils she is carrying.

Mirea reaches up toward a brass knocker and raps loudly at the door.

**144. INT, BELLINGEN COTTAGE, MORNING - CONTINUOUS.**

Mary picks Joy up and walks to the front door.

JOE

This is the bit where we say  
hello.

We pull away from the family and explore the house. The hippie decor is augmented by painted portraits (now with faces), photocopied flyers for the art classes Mary is now teaching, firewood, baby toys and jam jars full of fresh flowers. It is a home.

The camera travels into the bedroom and comes to rest on the mobile's family of six sparrows as they are spun by a cooling autumn breeze.

End.

**Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains?**

On ordinary artists and everyday displacements

Veronica Gleeson

Master of Creative Writing, University of Technology Sydney

December 2008

**Abstract:**

The major creative work written for consideration here takes the form of a feature length screenplay, entitled *Joy*. Set over a period of a week, *Joy* tells the story of fading jazz musician Joe and his painter girlfriend Mary, a couple who have just had their first child. The vicissitudes of Sydney real estate are forcing Mary and Joe to uproot from the small apartment and creative community they have lived in for some years. But rather than move to an outer-western suburb of the city, Mary has determined that they should create a familial/artist's idyll in the semi-rural town of Bellingen, northern NSW. Mary's dreams are tested with the unexpected arrival of Joe's three children to his former wife, and when the six decamp in the inadequate hippie shack, collective discontent escalates to breaking point.

The exegesis (*Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains? On Ordinary Artists and Everyday Displacements*) accompanying this work moves beyond the immediate tensions that characterize the drama – specifically step-family antagonisms and infidelity – to examine the underlying causes of discontent: geographic upheavals, unstable incomes and the tension between the practicalities of family and the will to create. The result is a fictocritical rumination on the experience of belonging to a family comprised of one or more professional artists in contemporary Australia, and the kinds of displacement(s) that such an experience might involve. Via a concatenation of personal biography, research and a thematic investigation of the screenplay, the exegesis examines the problems related to creative commitment in a culture that does not necessarily validate the choice to be an artist, and the private crises induced by the oppositional forces of familial responsibility, ego and meagre financial dividends. The work also considers the manner in which art produced under these conditions might owe a debt to its means of 'displaced production' – defined primarily here as actual, physical relocation because of unavailable affordable housing, but in a secondary way also defined by the more imperceptible actuality of lives that are lived under the same roof/within a

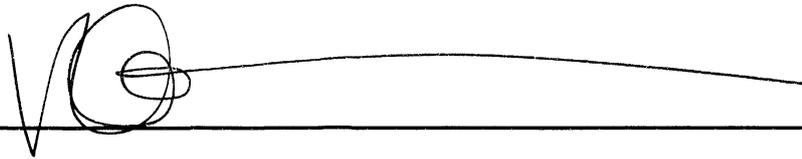
community, but are at the same time psychologically vexed by the threat of poverty. The exegesis also engages with the issue of authentic representation; whether it is valid, or possible to show the artistic family paradigm without drastically reducing its meanings. Finally, the exegesis explores the capacity the screenwriting undertaken as part of this project has to resist totalities and enable ambiguities, thus to provide some insight into the paradoxical nature of family life for struggling Australian artists.

## CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student



---

## Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of many fine minds, excellent teachers and tolerant souls at the University of Technology, Sydney, most prominent among them Jean Bedford, for telling me to close up my gaps and keep going, Mireille Juchau, who allowed me to write the same scene ten different ways, and Tara Forrest whose extraordinary patience and expertise constituted the difference between a messy series of ideas and a readable text. I would also like to thank Yolande Dewey, Tristram Miall, the sprawling arts community of Bondi Beach, and my courageous and clever family: Anouk, Harriet, Catherine, Alicia, Anna, Patricia and Bill. And finally to my husband Chris, who ignited my passion for writing at the first instance, and inspires me to continue (almost) every day.

**Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains?**  
On ordinary artists and everyday displacements

**Table of contents:**

Part 1: What have you got to hide?	Page 1
Part 2: No one's holding a gun to our heads...	Page 8
Part 3: Smuggle yourself through	Page 19
Part 4: And so to work	Page 22
Part 5: From here	Page 24
Coda	Page 29
Bibliography	Page 31
Filmography	Page 34

## Part 1:

### What have you got to hide?

The year is 1978. Matters of the heart are moving my mother, father, three sisters and I from the clinker brick suburban bungalow custom-built for the 60's newlyweds eleven years prior to a semi-rural area outside of Melbourne. Unlike more popularly located artists' retreats such Warrandyte and Kangaroo Ground (where potters, screenwriters and hippie advertising executives are setting up their rustic palaces, putting in swimming pools and goat pens; orchards and studios) this place doesn't boast a scrubby, eucalyptus dotted proximity to the city. It is an hour and a half from my father's work as a lecturer in fine art at the RMIT, and the nearest shops are a fifteen-minute drive away. The steep, unsealed road we're on is populated by the solidly unfashionable lower middle-class. The neighbours, when we get to know them (apart from the guy decamped in the fibro hut on the corner who makes Saturday market jewellery and sells home grown dope to the Monbulk High School drop-outs) will turn out to be almost solely accountants and primary school teachers. Suffice to say, The Patch is not the real estate crucible of counter-culture cool, but at this stage in their lives my parents are staunch Catholics, as conservative as the day is long, and poor, as the appropriately apostolic description goes, as church mice. They aren't looking for cool. They do not seem particularly interested in amassing like-minded friends. They just need a place where they can survive.

Having been felled for timber by early white settlers, The Patch is now populated largely by European deciduous trees – gloriously showy in autumn, ghostly in winter. For a place no one much has heard of, it is perversely pretty. Rolling hills play host to hobby farms, and humble houses whose folksy wood-etched street numbers and titles betray their owners' loftier dream home ambitions; *Tara, The Mission, Romarle*.

The day we arrive the weather is motionless and chilly; the hills, as we are soon to learn, are rarely temperate. Red clay oozes from the unsealed driveway outside the new house – itself a charmless, sprawling, single brick construction typical of the area, replete with pre-fab pressed rondel window insets the colour of urine, pea-green carpet and mission brown interiors. My mother is silent - a sure sign that she hates the place, which my father bought on sight after a single solitary viewing. As a painter trained by George Bell, and a pioneering stained glass artist, my dad takes exception solely to the pre-fab

rondels. The previous owner (a builder) has sold the house to my father cheaply and quickly, following the premature death of his cancer-stricken wife. He has to take care of five children by himself, my mother says to no-one in particular as we sit in the Holden station wagon, contemplating how to navigate a path across the rust-hued muck to the back door. None of my sisters utter a word. I am convinced that the colour of the mud is proof positive there is a dead body buried inches from the surface of the driveway. I wonder if it belongs to the builder's wife.

We settle in. The house is big enough for us to have a bedroom each, but I'm too frightened to be alone, so I share with my sister, Anna. Sometimes we laugh each other to sleep, sneaking apples under the blankets and crawling down to the tucked-in end to eat them. My mother finds the yellowed cores flattened into the sheets a week or so later, but says nothing. In those early days we often see her in the laundry scrubbing some piece of clothing or Manchester decimated by red mud or abandoned food. She will be pink-faced and intense and more often than not unhearing; distracted by isolation to the point where her ears don't seem to work.

One day Anna runs a line of three-ply knitting yarn down the centre of our bedroom. The next she turns off the light and locks me in, setting off her walking-talking robot with the admonition that if he catches me, he'll eat my feet. I am genuinely terrified. Not long after this, Anna and I have a fight about which card game to play, and she flies into a rage, pelting me with rolled up socks from the laundry basket until I am curled over, sobbing uncontrollably in the corner of the lounge room. When my mother finally intervenes, I blame her for leaving the clean washing lying around. I move out of our shared bedroom and up the hallway, into the study, and begin to spend an inordinate amount of time indoors, rearranging my Cindy dolls and the eclectic assemblage of paraphernalia I interpret as their 'furniture' into a series of bleak tableaux. This will be my sophisticated friends and me, I think, when I grow up and move to the city.

My father gives the house a name and inscribes it on a thick pine plank that hangs under the letterbox: *Forest Edge*. It is a more salient description of our existence than our geography. Already we don't fit in; we're pale and diffident, and our car is embarrassingly old. There is no Coke in the fridge, and my mother doesn't dye her hair or wear make-up. A girl from the local ballet school will later critique her as being 'so posh she eats her toast with a knife and fork' and snigger at her long leather boots and homemade woolen skirt. Our Rank Arena television is black and white and when it fizzles and dies, the image flattening into a single horizontal line across the screen, my parents elect not to replace it.

If there is a place to mark my older sisters' recognition that it is time to wrest control of our shoestring existence, this is it: they illicitly purchase an old TV at the Kallista School Fete and beg a neighbour to drive them home with it, alongside a box containing two kittens obtained for fifty cents each. My father is annoyed about the kittens, but not enough to return them.

The television receives the sound from Channel Seven and the picture for the ABC. Alicia, the second eldest, engineers her antenna-less radio to tune into the ABC simulcast, but the reception is fuzzy. Eventually Alicia discovers that balancing an aluminum bread-and-butter knife along the nub where the antenna was once connected provides some clarity of reception. The four of us slouch against the corduroy sofa, taking turns to balance the knife with our feet. One false move and the reception slips, so Alicia spends her time presiding over the set-up like an extremely irritable hawk. The irony that the glorious result of all her technical endeavours is the programme *Worzel Gummidge*<sup>1</sup> does not elude any of us; watching a slightly creepy tragi-comic scarecrow wobble around a bunch of mangy paddocks in Romsey does not provide much in the way of a satisfactory dose of escapism from our semi-rural life. A day or so later, in what seems like a concession to Alicia's pent-up rage, my father spreads out a blue tarpaulin in the back yard and carries the dead Rank Arena TV set out to it. He stands by as Alicia, and then the rest of us pelt stones at the old unit until the screen explodes.

There's a ten year-old bully named Nigel Robson who lives across the street and delights in speeding his BMX past our kitchen door at tea time, then skidding to a halt, riding back up our driveway and doing it again, each time spattering a fresh slake of mud across the sliding glass door. Out of sight of adults, he delights in applying Chinese burns to both my wrists, and telling me that I am weird, that my parents are too old, that my sisters are all lesbians. None of us know it yet, but he's right about the last assertion. My parents plant a hedge and erect a fence and gate along the property's perimeter. *What have you got to hide?* Nigel's mother Carol (a Northern English émigré with frost-tipped hair and embroidered pullovers) asks in a semi-joking way.

For the first few years at The Patch my father maintains his day job; driving to the Belgrave railway station (the end of the line in more ways than one) and catching the train to the city each working day of the week. I watch him prepare his lunch before he leaves. He takes mischievous pleasure in eyebrow raising sandwich combinations - raisin and almond; tomato, onion and left over rice. He never seems to use enough wax paper

---

<sup>1</sup> Todd, Barbara Euphan, *Worzel Gummidge*, Southern Television, February 1979 - 1981

(another general family embarrassment – everyone at the local school has Glad Wrap), and so in a ritual that has a strange resonance with the way we now watch television, he balances a bread-and-butter knife on the package to flatten it down before he puts it in his briefcase. Not once does he buy lunch. Eventually the frugality pays off – he has enough money to start building studios at both ends of the house so that after a hiatus of years, he'll be able to start painting again. When he finally does begin a new series, the focus will be the paddocks around our property; semi-abstract landscapes featuring disconnected rural objects (tree trunks, defunct farm machinery) reigned in via the colour schemes and tensions of classical modernism. He will remain fascinated by signs of man-made things decaying in rural landscapes for the rest of his life; only once more will he paint pretty things, or people.

The day the cement truck rolls up to lay the floors for the studios is magical - we don gumboots and walk the wet concrete as it flows from the pipe around the marked out space, pushing it toward the furthest corners of what will soon be two new rooms. It's like being encouraged to play in an enormous bowl of porridge.

With the exception of the odd visit from a student of my father's, or a colleague from his bushwalking club, our weekends are long and quiet, punctuated only by morning Mass on a Sunday at the Monbulk church. Alicia and Catherine are serious, angry teenagers now, and refuse to attend, but Anna and I still go and giggle at the Dutch tulip farmers with their red necks and caramel leather jackets and grey suit trousers. We escape my mother's pained ire after communion, running out the door and sitting in the gravel near the toilet block. The rest of the day is free – we can ride our bikes, beat a blackberry bush senseless with a stick, steal chewable Vitamin Cs and Apricot Delights (the closest thing to lollies) from the kitchen cupboard. Sometimes we play in the 'end room'; the barn-like structure that houses the TV, the modular corduroy foam sofa and a large white built-in bookshelf. More often than not our post-Mass jubilation deteriorates into a mean-spirited squabble when we realize that we only have each other to play with, and Anna retreats to her room and locks herself in. Although, thanks to the neat, peculiarly non-familial cardboard signs my father has erected to assist with the functioning of the house (*Press Knob In and Turn Clockwise. Reverse To Unlock*) I can pick the locks on the bathroom doors, the bedrooms are another story. Their impenetrable knobs inevitably render Sunday afternoon a solitary collection of hours, to be passed as inventively as possible. One such afternoon, I wander sulkily into the end room and pull

a book off the shelf. It is entitled *Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains?*<sup>2</sup> A flimsy American twelve page pop-science reader, it has the appearance of a storybook but the inexorable stench of the 'educational'. Amidst back issues of *Ladybird* magazine, C.S. Lewis books and the National Geographic magazines my uncle has been sending to us since my parents were married, it is a slim volume. I can't remember seeing it before. The illustrations are pretty, in a photo-real sort of way, but the subject matter is entirely literal and goes some way toward explaining why I have never picked up the book until this playmate-starved afternoon (the world of facts being fairly unappealing to a child of enduringly fantastical tastes). That afternoon, out of boredom, or self-pity, or perhaps just because I liked the colour of the cover, I took my first unknowing steps on the road to philosophical inquiry.

The tone of the book was immediately personal; politely but firmly solicitous. Had I ever wondered, the authors wanted to know, what happened to the pretty, fragile insects with their delicate wings and poignantly short life spans, when the clouds rolled over? What was the effect on their bodies when raindrops started to fall? Having made their homes amongst the upturned leaves and open spaces made so accommodatingly attractive by sunny weather, where did the butterflies go when hailstones, howling winds, thrashing rains and all manner of squalls hit town?

Despite the candy pink cover, the book made no pretence at nicety. It was a litany of insect privation at the hands of the natural world. Suffice to say, I was horrified. Not because the illustrations were graphic, or in any way indicative of the butterflies' inevitable demise – indeed, short of informing the reader that the insects 'hid', the book stopped short of providing any answer at all. The book ended *without* a picture of a ragged, dead pupae lying blanched and pounded on the grass, but the power of suggestion clearly had its victory because this was the image that haunted me for years to come.

On reflection, it was a classic incitement to discourse - I became utterly convinced that the fate of butterflies was so awful that it could not be shown in a children's book, precisely and only because it had not been shown in a children's book. My obsession with this lack of narrative closure was eclipsed only by the more disturbing realization that not only do butterflies have nowhere particularly safe to go when it rains, but that they must get rained on *all the time*. Storms in gardens are not remarkable tragedies – they

---

<sup>2</sup> *Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains?* Scholastic Books Publishing, circa 1978

are the common conditions governing the lives of all who live outside. Beauty pulverized with regularity; the idea seared itself into my psyche.

It wasn't until many years later that I began to investigate why. Moving to The Patch had been no grand fulfillment of a bucolic marital fantasy – it soon became an open secret that my mother (who like many women before her, had married an artist because she harboured her own latent creative sensibilities) liked the trees but loathed the area. She managed to make a friend or two, but her loneliness and immutable sense of 'otherness' led her down paths no-one dared ridicule: recorder group, soap-making classes, five hour grocery trips. The truth was that we had moved, plain and simply, because our other house was too small, and we couldn't afford a bigger one close to town because my father was dying. He had suffered a massive coronary and had been given around five years to live. On a teacher's wage, with four children, he was aware that he needed to pay off the suburban mortgage with the purchase of a cheaper house and retire, simply in order to stay alive.

To ascribe the qualities of a butterfly to my father is not, I hope, to romanticize him. Nor is it to romanticize our experience. It is merely to say that as a man whose imaginative work manifested richly (but who struggled to maintain a creative life, alongside a standard of living for his family) he embodied both colour and fragility. In bold terms his imminent death was the pulverized insect none of us spoke about, or were capable of consciously acknowledging. It is, of course, an imperfect metaphor, but if one were to extend it? The omnipresent storm cloud might be the problem that hovered somewhat more ominously over our family because of my father's ill health, but was, and continues to be one of the defining features related to being an Australian artist, inflecting lives and work: perilously low earnings.

This is a subject about which, I believe, it is almost impossible to dryly quantify – there is little data from which to draw, and that which exists necessarily has gaps in its own methodology. A report is a useful measure of basic income levels and disparities between practitioners, but its purpose is not to wholly convey the lived experience, or comprehensively speak for a group of people as diverse and hard to define as 'Australian artists'. It is also a challenge to connect the experience of being poor with the particular sense of shame that accompanies it when the poverty is, in a sense, one's own doing – and that that sense of shame ebbs and flows according to the successes or failures of the artistic life also makes it a problematic subject to explore within the framework of traditional research. I am loath to speak for all Australian artists and their families, but I

am in a position to access social networks, reflect on creative process and knit together some semblance of theory and positionality. My writing in this regard is, then, both polemical and subjective and embraces the power of the personal, intimate narrative. Both my screenplay *Joy*, and this exegesis are intended as contributions to the importantly diverse, multitudinous stories told about artists, rather than as an authoritative, or even comprehensive text on the state of contemporary artists' lives in Australia.

## Part 2:

### No-one's holding a gun to our heads...

On a sunny morning outside a Bondi Beach café about a year ago, I sat talking with a well-known Sydney actor. The subjects of the conversation were familiar ones - where to live, and how to survive. As we rehashed familiar grievances about the vicissitudes of Sydney real estate and the escalating cost of corner store groceries (specifically that a small jar of organic honey was now attracting a price tag of eighteen dollars at the Bondi Health Emporium) he abruptly upended the grievance. 'Fuck it,' he said. 'I mean, we don't deserve anything. No-one's holding a gun to our heads.'

In and of itself, being a relatively poor artist in a first world country may not seem that noteworthy a subject. The arts sector in Australia (whilst not as heavily subsidized as that in Germany, Sweden or France, or as well supported by philanthropic funds as the United States), is federally and state supported, and creative endeavour is not, after all, a compulsory way of life for which conscripts have no choice but to suffer. Further, a free market philosophy might encourage the narrow and right wing, but in some ways seductive view that artists of any worth will inevitably rise toward positions of greater earning power and prominence, whilst those whose work is weak or sub-standard will simply drop away. Good stuff and people of great talent rise to the top (to quote Woody Allen 'If you're not good, Darwin will take care of you,<sup>3</sup>) so on some basic level, why should we care about the rest? Further, what point is there in ascribing value to the intimate conditions surrounding the life of an artist, when what is really important is the work produced? The author has been dead (at least in post-structuralist terms) since 1967 – so get on with it! However when Roland Barthes championed the death of the author with his seminal essay<sup>4</sup>, he did not put an end to the interpretative tyranny of biography; indeed, the enthusiasm to connect artists' lives and intentions with their work has found ever more popular expression, and through myriad forms – magazine articles, pop songs, biographical films, blogs, fanzines – over the last four decades. It is well understood that regardless of the volume and precision of biographical matter surrounding an artist (Elvis Presley being a good example) we can never precisely 'know' and understand the artist,

---

<sup>3</sup> O'Brien, Kerry, Interview with Woody Allen, 7.30 Report, ABC TV, December 3 2008, (transcript available at <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2008/s2437141.htm>)

<sup>4</sup> Barthes, Roland, *Death of the Author*, Aspen Journal, published by Phyllis Johnson, 1967

much less the exact relationship between him/her and his/her work. Todd Haynes' feature film study about received notions of the identity of Bob Dylan, *I'm Not There* (2007) speaks exactly to the slipperiness and unavailability of the actual life of an artist, and yet it is precisely because we want to 'see' Bob Dylan and, alongside the talented actors who play him, to nod knowingly at his essential impenetrability that we watch the film. It is interesting to note that much biographical discourse on artists – ranging from the scholarly and creatively progressive to the highly commercial, requires exactly the kind of information Barthes sought to discard in order to give their creative output volume, body and meaning. In Haynes' film this problem is ostentatiously articulated: Bob Dylan is played by a number of different actors across time frames, film stocks and genders, but he wears stovepipes, has curly black hair, wears Ray Bans, speaks with a soft drawl and is a pioneering electrical guitar musician with relationship problems. The film employs a strategy to evade a fixed identity for its central character and thus somehow deconstruct the mythology about Dylan (or at least interrogate the idea that we can comprehensively know an artist through biography), but it is in a sense a deliberate failure. *I'm Not There* is every bit a construction that determinedly reveals its artificiality at every turn; Dylan playfully, but indisputably is not there. Yet the material values and biographical tidbits that we ascribe to him are. And that is enough for the film to still be about Bob Dylan.

Other texts whose goal it is to extract meaning out of the study of an artist's life operate in a far more straightforward way, directly connecting the circumstances of that author/artist's life with their work. Druscilla Modjeska's *Stravinsky's Lunch*<sup>5</sup> is a feminist reading of the ways in which female artists whose work was deserving of recognition and support were historically marginalized, reduced and prohibited by the conditions of their everyday lives. Modjeska argues that these conditions had a radical effect on the place a female artist was able to claim for herself in terms of representation, as well as the amount of work she was able to produce. It is compelling reading, but can contemporary Australian female artists' lives be mapped in this proto-feminist way? Women still fight for recognition and time to make art (especially once they bear children) but there is now subsidized child care, a more shared approach to housekeeping and parenting duties, and less stigma around single parenting and divorce – even birth itself is a far safer proposition. The highly repressive social model Modjeska explored has been fractured.

---

<sup>5</sup> Modjeska, Druscilla, *Stravinsky's Lunch*, Farrar, Strous and Giroux, 2000

There are still strictures and difficulties but they are not as easily or solely defined as being gender-related.

In broader popular culture terms, there is also the enduring apocrypha of the ‘struggling artist’ – a template for contemporary creative life whose narrative godfather might be seen to be Vincent Van Gogh, with his inability to sell more than a single painting during his entire lifetime, and the posthumous millions his work now earns. There are now many others (Jean Michel Basquiat, William Blake, Egon Schiele to name but an eclectic few), but a single glimpse at Van Gogh’s sunflowers is enough to remind us many that artists, however brilliant, are just as likely to live in obscurity and/or squalor as they are to reap the economic rewards of their creative exigencies. Van Gogh’s equally famed cutting off of his own ear and his ongoing psychological torture, is also an important part of his myth, contributing to the notion that artists not only suffer more, but are somehow more depressive than regular folk. It is not an entirely ill founded link; as an article in the American Psychological Association magazine stated in June 2005, ‘major depressive disorders are 8 to 10 times more prevalent in writers and artists than in the general population, and mental health researchers and practitioners have long linked creativity with a higher risk for depression.’<sup>6</sup>

However the article went on to say that ‘a study in the June issue of *Emotion* (Vol. 5, No. 2) suggests that self-reflective rumination--a focus on the self and one's feelings--may explain artists' tendency toward depression, taking the blame off creativity itself:

Depression is associated with inactivity, difficulty concentrating and lying in bed, which seems contrary to creativity, says study co-author Jutta Joormann, PhD, a Stanford University researcher. But depressed people are more likely to ruminate, making depression act as an intermediary variable, given that rumination can also lead individuals to generate a large number of ideas and, in turn, artistic endeavors.<sup>7</sup>

It is fascinating stuff, and although it may not dispel popular conceptions of the way artists live and why, it is an oblique entry point for my writings here. I began work on my screenplay, *Joy*, out of a desire to describe what life can be like for non-famous, ‘ordinary’

---

<sup>6</sup> Z. Stambor - Monitor on Psychology Magazine, American Psychological Association, June 2005

<sup>7</sup> Op cit.

Australian artists – there are many of them, and they are not as popularly represented in contemporary screen drama as are celebrity artists. Foremost in my mind was the intention not to sensationalise the experience, and (as stated in Part 1) not to romanticize it, but to simply allow the circumstances and story around an artist family, where the difficulties of survival manifest in everyday tension and some more heightened conflicts, to unfold in a naturalistic, linear way. Cinema seemed the best form available for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the length of a feature film (around ninety minutes) houses the story at the right pace, and doesn't call for the kind of compression or compartmentalization of time (into segments that sit within programming slots) that television drama does. Having attempted the story in prose first I found that transferring to film allowed a less self-conscious staging of events (characters weren't overpowered by an omniscient, authoritative overview, and I was able to move more freely from one to the other during a scene). The choice to write the story as a film was also informed by what I do for a living; having read and written reports on many hundreds of screen projects as a script assessor, I am simply more comfortable with film's narrative grammar than with any other form of storytelling. Using the set-up of a recently formed stepfamily also allowed me to raise the dramatic stakes in terms of familial ill feeling – the discontent Mary and Joe are already feeling is amplified with the sudden addition of three more children. And although the story belongs more to Mary than any other character, playing with an ensemble cast allowed me to connect a series of creative characters to each other (Arabella is destined to become a musician just like her father, whilst Luke appropriates sci-fi television characters in an effort to come to terms with his parents' separation).

With the mode of storytelling established, I was still aware of the difficulties of writing about what it is to live and work as an ordinary artist in Australia without wading into a self-justifying quagmire of generalisations about art's intrinsic cultural worth. In writing about characters who are trying to achieve something (if only for themselves), there needs to be a foundation from which to build – a sense that there is worth in their goals. In the early drafting stages it became apparent that it would not be adequate for the drama to state as Nicole Kidman famously did during her 2002 Oscar acceptance speech that art is somehow in and of itself 'important'. Indeed, it is precisely this kind of nebulous, ambit claim that precipitates familiar critiques of artists and their alleged cohorts in arts funding bodies - some of which I have worked for over the past few years, and on behalf of many I have felt the stinging rebuke of those who feel there is a

mysterious ‘lesbian, middle class, politically correct agenda’ (this verbatim from an actual email complaint) running the show.

The idea that any kind of creative expression is interesting, or ‘ok’ is also part of the growth of (so-called) empty politically correct liberalism as defined in rhetorical tracts such as Robert Hughes’ 1993 collection of essays *Culture of Complaint*<sup>8</sup>. To allow the liberal view that ‘feelings’ and politically correct language are as important to the development of a culture as are intellectual rigour and traditional modes of artistic practice is not just to spawn a sense of creative entitlement undeserving of interest (as well as mediocre art) – but it also, Hughes argues, plays into the hands of right wing pundits eager to satirize the left. No cripple, he argues, has ever been able to get up and walk once he was referred to as ‘physically challenged’ – and disallowing the word ‘faggot’ doesn’t stop gay bashing – rather, it just changes the name it goes by<sup>9</sup>. By extension, one might surmise that my screenplay and this exegesis, and the primacy both texts give to the personal, to biography, to ‘feelings’ and subjectivity over logical analysis or traditional definitions of excellence in art are by definition a collection of rather empty gestures.

Fifteen years after Hughes penned *Culture of Complaint*, America is fighting seemingly irresolvable wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, large-scale domestic poverty, a global financial recession, and has recently elected Barack Hussein Obama as president. Hughes’ assertion that the fabric of a nation has been, and will continue to be frayed by empty rhetoric now seems downright quaint. And yet, over the course of the past few years, as I have written this screenplay and then turned my attention to justifying its existence, I have often wondered whether the entire work wasn’t just solipsistic nonsense – a kind of ‘coming of age’ narrative ungrounded by having anything ‘real’ to say. Indeed just months ago, as I listened to a room full of professional screenwriters discussing the agenda for a conference to be held in February 2009, they laid the woes of the Australian film industry squarely at the feet of artists who eschew genre work in favour of just telling their own linear, naturalistic and semi-autobiographical stories. *Talk To the Hand*, the conference session was tentatively entitled, or *No-one Wants to Hear Your Fucking Life Story*, a committee member cackled. And yet here these professionals were assembled in a room for an entire day for the purposes of doing exactly that: planning the details of a

---

<sup>8</sup> Hughes, Robert, *Culture of Complaint – The Fraying of America*, Grand Central Publishing, September 1, 1994, p 59

<sup>9</sup> Op cit.

forum via which they would publicly discuss their personal experiences, as related to the work they made.

These screenwriters were not, of course, proposing to render a five-act opera (or a screenplay) from the personal hardships they had endured en route to, or as a current part of their jobs, but the level of antagonism around the subject had the distinct flavour of the Hughesian *Complaint* critique, and it returned me to the words of the well-known actor at the Bondi café. We don't have to be artists, he was rightly saying – and yet there *he* was, furious about the various personal difficulties his choice of profession had thrown his way. He had worked hard as a professional actor and director for close to two decades, but with scant television work to buoy the finances, and with the freakish escalation of a precious few of his contemporaries' salaries into the Hollywood earnings stratosphere (e.g. Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving, Eric Bana and Naomi Watts), it seemed that he was now deeply ashamed of, and angry about, that choice. It had ultimately landed him, and his young family (as he put it) 'in the shit.' It was the perfect colloquial idiom to describe a colloquial problem: the Australian artist's deep self-loathing, and its corollary, poor self-esteem. It is an endemic condition that sees us applaud the work of those who have left the country to pursue more handsomely paid work in other countries, and regard them as somehow 'better' upon their return. It spawns excoriating self-examination – which may be a good thing – but it also makes us hate ourselves.

\*

In Australia there has, of course, long existed a tension between the pragmatic and the visionary; but in light of my background, I see that it is nowhere more evident than in the arts. Unarmed by legions of extraordinary architecture, renaissance art and great literature, we struggle to justify why money should be spent on this stuff, and delight in taking down the 'wankers' who attempt it (the phrase 'tall poppy' is, after all, uniquely Australian). The interior and the exterior of the Sydney Opera House stands testament to exactly this struggle – outside, it is a beautiful, ambitiously modern and now very famous white tile and curve masterpiece; inside (the part of the building created after Danish architect Jørn Utzon's departure), it more resembles a civic servant's compromise - it is brown and drab, the concert hall's ceiling an inappropriate height, the studio an inadequate space for most performances, the furnishings modest and functional. The major works of Patrick White frequently show, albeit in intensely misanthropic detail, the

Australian climate in which he worked and created; it was small-minded and fearful – highly suspicious of the intellectual ambition of a European explorer (*Voss*<sup>10</sup>); even of the sexual yearnings of an average suburban woman (*A Season at Sarsaparilla*<sup>11</sup>). However given that Australia is, or has been, the ‘lucky country’ for so long, it seems like poor sport to complain about the minor hardships a Nobel prize-winning author may have undergone as a result of the nation’s slow response to his brilliance. University education was, for a time, free. It was possible to exist on the dole and buy a cheap house – and during the Whitlam era, government support for the arts grew exponentially. Perhaps this explains the absence of representation of this part of our culture from the screen; we’ve told stories about colonial hardship, taken advantage of the 10BA tax incentive to make mad, spectacular, exploitative, exploratory and facile sexual cinema, and we frequently turn our attention to the working class – even if we are unsure whether to celebrate or castigate them. We are far less prodigious when talking about artists, despite the fact that when we do it well (*My Brilliant Career*<sup>12</sup>, *Shine*<sup>13</sup>), it resonates broadly, and speaks directly to the cultural discomfort Australian artists feel, and that others feel in relation to them.

I started writing *Joy* because I wanted to harness this everyday tension, or discomfort between the visionary and the pragmatic – and to show the private sorrows and minor triumphs that characterize the experience of being what is often referred to in Australia as ‘arty’. In opposition to stories about prodigies, or artists who eventually prove their cultural worth by becoming incredibly famous or highly successful, it was never my intention to make heroes out of my characters. One of the important goals of the work was to resist the damaging cliché of the brilliant but under-appreciated protagonist who eventually makes good (implying that artists who make famously good are the only ones that really count). It was also important not to draw any grandiose conclusions about the magnanimous contribution Australian artists make to the country’s cultural life – this was simply a little story about flawed people taking what I felt to be a difficult road.

By 2007, however, after over a decade of the Howard government – the dominance of neo-conservative politics and the systematic dismantling of student life, the so-called ‘culture wars’ and the non-validation of the imaginative life (John Howard has never

---

<sup>10</sup> White, Patrick, *Voss*, Penguin Classics, 2008

<sup>11</sup> White, Patrick, *A Season at Sarsaparilla*, ‘Four Plays’, Currency Press, 1985

<sup>12</sup> Armstrong, Gillian, *My Brilliant Career* (screenplay Witcomb, Eleanor), Greater Union Organisation, 1979

<sup>13</sup> Hicks, Scott, *Shine* (screenplay Sardi, Jan), Australian Film Finance Corporation, 1996

been photographed with an Australian artist, nor did he publicly support one during his entire time in office), this, together with the climate of aspirationalism that seemed to permeate all aspects of contemporary life – I began to feel that perhaps my story had something to say after all. Sydney gatherings, including those of artists, had for some years been dominated by conversations about money, particularly real estate. Those of us who had been unable to climb onboard the mortgage train at the appropriate time (particularly those of us with children) felt panicked, poor, disenfranchised. In short we were ‘in the shit’, and in the spirit of the neo-liberal agenda of the age, we had no one to blame but ourselves. And after all, no- one was holding a gun to our heads.

As the background to my story intensified and gathered a kind of socio-political weight, the solidarity I had drawn on to begin writing it fragmented. A large number of the actors, writers, painters and other artists I had come to know and live amongst in the Bondi community had already left the suburb in search of any kind of more affordable housing. They moved interstate, across the city and in some cases overseas, where it seemed they might be able to take advantage of greater opportunities. The diaspora was largely held together in a virtual, superficial way by Facebook, the social networking website where users update their status so that friends and colleagues can maintain a semblance of contact. It was, and continues to be a useful tool – but it also has its drawbacks. Status updates most frequently take the form of a kind of boasting: ‘Sophie is starting her residency in Berlin!’, ‘Mark is so excited about the prize he won for his short film’, ‘Veronica is going to the opening night of her play in New York’ (the latter a pretty close facsimile of something I posted in 2007, pleased to have something to show off about too). The web did, and does enable a kind of community, but at the risk of flying in the face of arguments about how ably it democratizes and unites, its parameters are entirely different, and it cannot function as a substitute for the real thing. Going online to find other artists, and thus, in a way, validate one’s own choice as an artist is a risky business – there are thousands of blogs<sup>14</sup>, discussion boards, news stories, reviews and postings that enable one to stay in touch, but they are frequently driven by either a) the desire for an artist to vent his/her spleen (often anonymously), or b) the impulse (private or commercial) to show and tell. Both forms of discourse have a frame, and although we can logically discern that, we cannot absorb, in a more emotional way, what is around it. So whilst it is possible for me to see that a friend has a play on in Brooklyn, I cannot

---

<sup>14</sup> As evidenced by directories such as <sup>14</sup><http://art-blogging.blogspot.com/>, <http://artists.totalblogdirectory.com/> and [http://www.blogrankings.com/Art-and-Culture\\_Artists.html](http://www.blogrankings.com/Art-and-Culture_Artists.html)

really connect to the two years of difficulty in bringing it to fruition. I might be able to see inside the home of a visual artist (blogs Design Sponge<sup>15</sup> and Three Layer Cake<sup>16</sup> devote themselves almost entirely to this kind of showcasing), I cannot see the mess kicked out of the way to make the shot a good one. There is connection and information sharing here of a level that is enormously useful (the now old-fashioned email being a taken-for-granted means of communication that ensures daily global linkages) but there is also fiction and distortion of the message, and it sometimes results in us feeling worse about ourselves than better.

Artistic communities of any kind are never, of course, a utopia. To physically live in and amongst other artists (within a suburb, or a broader urban space) is as double-edged a sword as any virtual, or digital contact – there are petty jealousies, ego clashes and the testing of intimate boundaries (marital, psychological, creative). Identity is validated, and ideas are shared and fertilized, but just as frequently they can be derided, and perhaps even stolen. However what the community can do, at least, is to normalize the experience of low incomes; to make a silk purse, as it were, out of a sow's ear.

Lest the claims of poverty and hardship within the arts seem hysterical, or ungrounded, it is perhaps important at this point to anchor the writing with some data. The Australia Council's 2003 survey of the lives and earnings of professional artists (*Don't Give Up Your Day Job*<sup>17</sup>) found that 50% of artists earned less than \$7,500 a year from their chosen profession, and that in order to sustain their area of practice they frequently took on low-paying jobs in non-related fields (often working more than one job to provide a basic income). The combined income from those jobs did not, in the majority of cases, amount to more than the average wage of a factory worker. Of the artists surveyed who cared for children, two-thirds declared that the time restrictions involved in raising children had placed limits on what they were able to achieve professionally. Out of this figure, 75% of women and 50% of men declared parenting as a major challenge to their careers. The 25% skew toward female parents is a finding that would seem to contradict my former assertion that women no longer face quite the same kinds of problems that formed the context for Modjeska's *Stravinsky's Lunch*, but it is important to consider that those surveyed are not prohibited from working as artists in the same way as women were eighty years ago. Further, whilst the statistics are useful in terms of showing that

---

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.designspongeonline.com>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.threelayercake.com>

<sup>17</sup> Hollister, Virginia and Throsby, David, *Don't Give Up Your Day Job: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*, Australia Council, 2003

more women consider parenting a challenge to their lives as artists, they do not definitively show that work is not produced or fails to be recognized as a direct consequence. One might also speculate that a number of those female artists may well be, or have been in de facto partnerships or marriages with male artists. In this respect perhaps the challenges faced by the women must surely have some effect on their male counterparts; an effect that is perhaps difficult to quantify within the parameters of a survey?

Still, looking back to over a decade of life at Bondi Beach with my husband, it is fair to say that we were solid median contributors to the empirical data on which the Australia Council's figures were based. Most years we had a combined income of around \$33,000 - \$40,000 and worked a slew of badly paid side jobs in order that we pursue our real passions. But we were also fortunate enough, during that time, to be part of the 'silk purse' existence. In the little flat we lived in, as well as in the larger Bondi village, imagination and spontaneity compensated heavily for what money could not provide; there were street parties, meals shared on meagre resources, and a complex, but flexible series of child-care arrangements in order that those who had to work nights, to see shows or play gigs, could. Daily trips to the corner shop or the beach resulted in chance meetings with friends, and opportunities to talk over creative problems, to laugh about broken-down cars, to recommend books or films or exhibitions. That a solid proportion of our community were in their twenties and thirties doubtless contributed to the sense of vibrancy and optimism, but there were also artists in their forties, fifties and sixties living modest, but comfortable lives in what could at times be inspiring surroundings.

As the real estate boom had gathered momentum, however, that community had begun to disintegrate. Rents began to climb as apartment building facades were rendered, slick blonde wood and aluminum bars replaced dingy pubs, myriad designer boutiques and up-market cafes replaced the idiosyncratic, cheap shops that had characterized Bondi Beach's village main drag, Hall Street. Events such as the Bondi Fringe Festival, with its Drag Races, Nude Night Surfing and performances by artists (I recollect an extraordinarily flexible sixty five year-old female stripper performing on the carpeted bar at the Pavilion) were – thanks to the new public liability laws – already a dim memory. Politically it was impossible to imagine many of the new crop of Bondi residents (lawyers, accountants, fashionistas, investment bankers and advertising account executives) protesting over the unsolicited placement of an Olympic size volleyball court on the sand, as former insurgents had done in 1999. That the artistic 'buzz' we had in

small, incremental ways created was part of the reason the suburb was now beginning to price us out was a joke that frequently fell flat.

My husband, daughter and I held on to our life in the suburb, partly out of fear of the unknown, and partly to stay close to my stepdaughter, whose 'week on/week off' swap-over schedule was easier to handle when her other house was close by. We were afforded a margin of denial by the rent-controlled unit we lived in courtesy of a wealthier actress friend who was riding high on a TV show, didn't require the property, or an enormous amount of rent. For many years, however, our collective income had stalled at far below the bracket needed to purchase Sydney property, and we knew that it was only a matter of time before our luck ran out with the cheap flat. Our departure from Bondi became an inevitability, and its open-ended nature nipped daily at the heels of our existence. Barely a day went by that we didn't have a terse altercation about where to go, what to do – why we hadn't done better, by this point, with our lives. The tension between the visionary and the pragmatic became painful and destructive. For my part, the crisis had been made far, far worse by the death, so many years after the medically appointed time, of my father.

Part 3:  
Smuggle yourself through

As it is with the depiction of the artist starving in his or her particular garret, there is more than something of the literary cliché in the idea of artist's child who grows up in furious defiance of the genteel poverty paradigm - becoming a corporate lawyer, or a Nokia executive, or maybe a housewife to one of the former. But whilst there is nothing particularly easy about some of the inevitable deprivations – material or otherwise – that seem to accompany the family of the individual who assumes the dual mantle of trying to build a family *and* achieve artistic legacy, it is often a life that is reduced, under an oversimplified rubric of 'suffering' in stories. Some of the worst memories of childhood I have are also in a peculiar kind of way, my best and most formative. The number and substance of these deep paradoxes makes it hard to pin the experience down. It is also what makes it so difficult to define why an artist's progeny – especially one so keenly and painfully aware of the hardships of a creative family's life – would choose to follow in, or near, her father's footsteps.

Despite our outward loathing of almost everything to do with the art world, my sisters and I never made a conscious pact to escape our legacy. After a decade living at The Patch, the isolation, the lack of money, the insistent reminders (on the train, on the bus, from school friends and via the media) that we weren't 'normal' had forged a kind of familial badge of pride – one we all wore. But the tensions and strains of everyday living, and of our difference from our neighbours and schoolmates, had seen our family implode more than a dozen times, the result being violent and sustained family arguments where punches were thrown (between girls), threats made and holes put in walls. We might have been a proud bunch, but we were also enormously disparate.

Having done little throughout our high school academic 'careers' other than advise us to 'smuggle ourselves through', my father ventured no opposition to the early adult choices we made, beyond advising that at some point it would be germane to develop 'a trade', a skill we could fall back on in the highly likely event that acting/music/painting failed to provide adequate funds for living. Accordingly: Catherine studied graphic design; Alicia became an audio technician, and then a film editor; Anna shaved her head and howled at the moon, and then, whilst she wrote and illustrated a children's book, took up corporate law. Still carving out the boundaries between self-esteem and creative curiosity, I hung around the Melbourne fringe theatre scene before realizing that what I

liked about theatre was the writing. A holiday in Sydney became an accidental life – I took up residence in a Chippendale warehouse with a photographer and a set designer. I met my future husband – then an aspiring theatre director and single father to an 11 month-old baby. We moved in together quickly. There was, of course, a familiarity to the fiscal struggle but ever mindful of my ‘trade’ and smuggling myself through, I was confident that I would do better than my parents. Accordingly, I developed a sustainable line in what was shortly to become known as ‘content provision’ - online film reviews, journalism for movie magazines - and eventually I started reading scripts for a film company. However the will to a purer form of creative expression refused to be subdued, and I continued to write plays and to produce them, and to delight in the small community of fringe practitioners I discovered as a result. Before long, and in what I thought was an act of extreme defiance of the bohemian norm, my boyfriend and I married, becoming instant, albeit part-time, parents to a rather confused young girl. Within another year, we had a child of our own. Over the next few years as we struggled to balance work and a now full-time family, the economy began to shift gears. House prices that had taken one hundred and twenty five years to reach \$350,000 now took a mere 10 to reach \$750,000. Rents were skyrocketing, and it was now utterly impossible for us to even consider buying a property - there was every chance we would not be able to hold on to one we currently lived in. The arrival of our daughter marked a steep disinclination toward risk of any kind, but we had never been further from a point of safety. Without conscious intention, we had replicated the economic conditions of my upbringing, only they weren’t better. They were far, far worse.

Grief is, in a way, a profound undoing of the order of things. In my case, the overnight disappearance of my father, the person around whom I had constructed my entire identity left little, I felt, to re-order. It is impossible to know whether things were worse because I had lost not just a father, but also a creative ally, mentor and the embodiment of the struggle not simply against an economy that designates all but the wealthiest and most famous of artists to the margins, but also a heroic combatant against his own disloyal body – he had simply refused to die in the year the doctors had set aside for him. However at his funeral, a packed house characterized by cheerfully moist-eyed platitudes about ‘legacy’ and ‘indefatigable will’ and the spirit ‘living on’, I found my interest in artistic hope dwindling. I knew something the rest of the congregation did not. My father had died suddenly, in the middle of the night, in the bedroom at The Patch – the implanted defibrillator intended to restart his badly scarred heart failing to work. His final

words, characteristically, were 'I think I'm alright...'. By the time of my father's death the property was a paean to my parents' spirit over their limited income – plants and trees flourished, a new driveway had been built, and the small hedge around the perimeters had grown thick, lush and tall with many years of Melbourne rain. Still, Nigel Robson's mother had managed to find a way to look over the fence – to see what we had to hide. In the week before my father's death, she told my mother over a cup of tea that she had witnessed my father standing in the garden. He was alone, desolate and weeping.

I could, at this point, coolly separate the author from his work. His despair, a week before his death, perhaps had nothing to do with his art. And yet I knew his story too well – the twenty year-period in which (thanks to an acerbic review) he did not exhibit, his return to the commercial world and the battles he had faced with an agent who not only took forty percent of his earnings (as is usual with painting), but then profitably leased his work out to hotels and hospitals, unbeknownst to my father. He also had greater anxieties about the future of the arts in Australia – having been the subject of an ASIO file purely because of his membership in the Glen Waverley Labour club decades before, he understood that the Howard policies could, potentially, roll artists in with illegal immigrants, Muslims and conservationists in terms of their status as suspicious human beings. Speaking at my father's funeral, I did not mention his despair. But his silent legacy became legion in terms of its effect on me. If a working class boy who had made good on his creative impulses, worked his way through night school, raised four children and paid off a house could arrive at the end of his life with a disparate set of daughters and a failed set of dreams, what possible hope – in this cold new era of aspirationalism - did the rest of us have?

#### Part 4:

#### And so to work

That Australia's arts economy financially sustains a small number of highly successful artists is a well established fact, however it would be something resembling narrative neglect, at this point, not to speak with rigour about the ways and means that myriad others continue to work and draw a wage. And whilst it may seem an uppity moral – or perhaps even Manichean - distinction to carve a line between 'real artists' and those who work in creative fields embedded in the commercial and institutional worlds (many of which not only yield high wages, but also demand that those employed as, say, creative directors in advertising, or graphic designers in the IT sector work within a set of tightly defined, market-oriented parameters), it is a distinction that I as a writer deliberately made for the purposes of constructing character and harnessing tension during the drafting of my screenplay. My characters Joe and Mary (a musician and painter, respectively) both worked, and continue to try and work, in traditional artistic fields. Their decision not to channel their creative capabilities into a more lucrative earning frame is an unspoken, but important cornerstone of their story – they are attempting, however badly, to forge what is from their perspective an 'authentic' way of life, but it is one that has seen them miss out on capitalizing on Australia's economic boom.

As part of her character's backstory, Mary has been drawing and painting at a local community college. It is a piece of information that functions as a self-deprecating aside to Vidor in the drama, but it is intended to indicate a reservoir of poor self-esteem; a sense that she has failed to overcome the ostensibly simple hurdle of making a living from what she has been trained to do. For Mary, it is a small source of shame – something that contributes to her overall discontent, and spills over onto her stepchildren. Comments they make about their mother's nicer, newer, more ethically sound car, or the kind of dog food she can afford to buy (organic) carry disproportionate weight - in a sense Mirea, Lucas and Arabella's mother becomes the unwitting embodiment of everything Mary feels she doesn't have. Moving to Bellingen is a desperate attempt to claw back some part of the dream; to give dignity and romance to her choices. She is, of course, cutting off her nose to spite her face - Bellingen is too far away for Joe to be able to work as a musician in Sydney, and amongst the hippies and landowners, she is still alone. At the close of the film we see that Mary has returned to

teaching. It is a deliberate plot point, intended to show up idioms such as ‘those who can, do – those who can’t, teach’ - sloppily and blindly appropriating those who have chosen education as a career alongside artists whose practice is not economically sustainable. Finally, in Bellingen, Mary has confronted the entrenched cultural attitude; the finger wagging ‘you haven’t made it’ tag she feels that both she and Joe wear. Mary is now comfortable with being an ‘average artist’, of the kind defined by Virginia Hollister and David Throsby in *Don’t Give Up Your Day Job*.<sup>18</sup> She earns around the same wage as a casual factory worker by taking on one or more non-arts jobs to supplement her ambitions, and in so doing her actual yearly earnings (i.e. those derived from her art) fall into the category of fifty percent of Australian artists: less than \$7,500 per year. She lives among hippies and so-called ‘drop-outs’, but has abandoned the race to succeed. In the final motif of the sparrow mobile, art and feeling for family are intertwined; she is combining (albeit in a small, gestural way), love and art; the ordinariness of domestic life, and the reality of her situation – speaking to her ‘everyday displacement’, rather than feeling shut down, or escapist, or angry.

---

<sup>18</sup> Hollister, Virginia and Throsby, David, *Don’t Give Up Your Day Job: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*, Australia Council, 2003.

Part 5:  
From here

My interest in the term ‘displacement’ as it relates to artists started on a trip to New York in 2007 to see a play of mine that was being staged there. I had never been to the city before, so I read all the guidebooks I could find. In one, a local bemoaned the fact that Manhattan has lost its soul because of the ‘displacement of artists’. I was soon to learn that Manhattan’s alleged soullessness has found a regular place (or dare I say, ‘home’) in New York City’s narrative – in broadsheets, on blogs, even in that travel guide I bought to visit the city last year. It is a bigger, bolder, more accessible version of the kinds of conversations people have about Sydney – where the occasional opinion pieces in the Sydney Morning Herald might surface; or in largely personal, creative work like this. The discontent with the way Manhattan is now bleeds into the ‘what’s wrong with Brooklyn’ debate; artists may have fled across the bridge, but now that they have created another artistic hub, the borough attracts the same “assholes” who ruined Manhattan: brokers, hedge fund managers and movie stars.

I was unaware of the fervent belief that other American cities had suffered the same fate until, rooting around for other texts to support and guide this one, I discovered Rebecca Solnit’s *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*.<sup>19</sup> First published in 2000, it is a non-fiction tome which garnered strong support after its release for its lucid depiction of the baleful consequences gentrification can have on a city’s (or indeed a nation’s) culture. But the book also drew criticism from some parties (perhaps most determinedly from long-established Generation X editorial website suck.com<sup>20</sup>), an anonymous contributor for which reasoned that economic cycles and the longer-term fortunes of a city were critical to the study of social movements and that Solnit was guilty of romanticizing the loss and creating hysteria around a bourgeois concern which, thanks to the war on terror and the sub-prime crisis, was no longer a real – or important - issue. In 2002, Solnit re-released her book. It now features a prologue, in which she considers San Francisco after the dot-com boom, and the potentially

---

<sup>19</sup> Solnit, Rebecca, *Hollow City - The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, Verso Publishing, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous (Magua, The), ‘Mean Streets’, <http://www.suck.com/daily/2001/04/20/1pr.html>, April 20, 2001

alarmist part her book played in promoting the idea of a permanently decimated creative culture. However *Hollow City* was, she argues, less a 'portrait of crisis,' than it was a picture of 'the complex social interconnections that make a city matter, interactions that include artists, activists, the poor, the middle class, public spaces and institutions, collective and individual memory and much, much more – in other words, the interplay between imagination and urban space.'<sup>21</sup> The specific economic and social changes of the last decade, she argued, were tectonic in terms of their capacity to re-shape cultural worlds. With 'the old definitions of class or revolution or right or left,'<sup>22</sup> no longer applicable (an enormous claim, and one that makes it possible to see how the author drew criticism for her generalized approach in the first place) Solnit now wondered, what does the future hold? How does America face a time with 'new technology, new globalizations, new hybridizations of art, entertainment, race, politics, media, genes, new economic principles?'<sup>23</sup> The primacy of duty, she concluded, must, and by default, simply does fall to artists. Solnit's argument is probably too sweeping in its cultural assertions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and too scant in its regard for the imaginations of those who are not classified as artists to be an entirely compelling one. Indeed, if anything, her newly abridged foreword is fascinating because it is something of a confession that, in the light of America's recession, artists are finding their way back to the city of San Francisco. Casting the net further, there is evidence that in the wake of displacement, artists are nothing if not resilient – that (with the exception of the horrific kinds of state-enforced decimations of artists we understand from works such as *The Gulag Archipelago*<sup>24</sup>, or the short life of Irene Nemirovsky, the author of *Suite Française*<sup>25</sup>), the shifting sands of the life lived creatively - and the physical and psychological ruptures to the identity of the artist that they might bring - are productive. This statement should not be mistaken as a long-winded way of saying that artists need to suffer for their art – this is as reductive a rationale as corporal punishment is for good behaviour, or torture is for reliable information. However there can be little doubt that the choice to live as an artist invites difficulty – of different kinds in different places, depending on the history of, and social sanctions on a culture, the way it regards itself, and how robust the creative economy is.

---

<sup>21</sup> Solnit, Rebecca, *Hollow City – The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, Verso Publishing, 2002. Foreword, p vi

<sup>22</sup> Op cit, Foreword, p viii

<sup>23</sup> Op cit. Foreword, p viii

<sup>24</sup> Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918 – 1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation* (Volume One), Basic Books 1997

<sup>25</sup> Nemirovsky, Irene, *Suite Française*, Vintage Books 2000

The paradox of displacement, with its inherently negative connotations, is that it can give rise to profound discourses, treatise of extraordinary power, songs, poems, fusing of new cultures, discoveries, virtual communities (such as the ones that have arisen in the wake of Hurricane Katrina<sup>26</sup>) and moments of delightful, addictive, exquisite joy. In that sense, the experience of being an artist does not fall too far from the parenting tree – it is frequently difficult, does not yield any kind of guaranteed profit, and is easily dismissed as the result of a narcissistic urge to expression. And yet art (as with parenting) is inexorably tied to the banal but important concerns of our lives: where we live and how and when we earn money. It would be masochistically self-defeating to pretend that I would not like to procure some kind of fiscal safety from the work that I continue to do; just as it would be false modesty to pretend that I do not aspire for my little screenplay *Joy* to one day be produced. ‘It’s halfway between being a little film and a big one,’ a producer said of the script recently. It is, and it may never move beyond being that for the simple reason that Joe and Mary’s story – as with the story of many ordinary artists, and their everyday displacements – is big and little; both important and unimportant, in the greater scheme of things.

\*

A few months ago, my family and I left Bondi. Despite the fact that most of our friends had already left the suburb, it was a wholly difficult experience – our daughter was deeply unhappy about saying goodbye to the friends she’d had since she was two years old, and when the packing was done, and we had come to terms with the fact that never in our lifetime would we wander once more from the front door down to the beach, towel and house key in bag, the likelihood of meeting colleagues eminent, we wandered through the empty flat. The new tenants (who were able to pay \$200 more per week in rent than us – money our now out-of-work actress friend now desperately needed) were both Pilates instructors – their vocation suited perfectly to Bondi’s body-perfecting culture. I thought about all that had occurred within the walls of the unit. They were events that none of the tenants to follow would ever know about, and that it was unlikely that we would remember many of them again. An enormous, unspoken part of our story was about to disappear. We moved to a cheaper house in Earlwood – a sprawling suburb in Sydney’s inner west populated by enormous Greek mansions (fake rondels and Corinthian

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.katrinaartists.com/>;  
<http://tattoo.about.com/od/newsandviews/a/katrina.htm>

columns abound) and a smattering of aspirational young families. The fact that John Howard grew up around the corner continues to be a source of amusement to us, and our visitors.

There are no hip cafes in Earlwood. It is not the slightest bit 'arty'. In six months time the landlord will sell the house we live in, but still we spend entire weekends digging out garden beds, in order to grow our own vegetables and maybe even save some money. And yet it is here, in a bigger house (where for the first time ever we have a room we call 'the study') that I have been able to write most prolifically. The long, quiet weekends afford the cultivation of thoughts. Mindful of its fictions, I still keep in touch with friends on Facebook, and it is via this link that a novelist recently sent me an article from *The Telegraph* newspaper in the United Kingdom. In it, the journalist Stephen Adams reported that a paper generated from Manchester University and the London School of Economics had outlined the possibility that novels might be 'better at explaining the world's problems' than economic reports. One of the exponents of the report, Michael Woolcock (director of the Brooks World Poverty Institute), stated that he was '...not arguing that poets should replace finance ministers.' He went on to say, however, that fiction is important because:

'...it is often concerned with the basic subject matter of development. This includes things like promises and perils of encounters between different peoples; the tragic mix of courage, desperation, humour and deprivation characterizing the lives of the down-trodden.' Khaled Houssaini's film *The Kite Runner*, the report said had 'arguably done more to educate Western readers about the realities of daily life in Afghanistan under the Taliban and thereafter than any government media campaign, advocacy organization report or social science research.'

Co-author David Lewis continued, writing that 'Storytelling is one of the world's oldest methods of possessing information and representing reality. The stories, poems and plays we categorise as literary fiction were once accepted in much the same way as scientific discourse is received as authoritative today.'<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Adams, Stephen, <http://telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3391740/Novels--better> September 11, 2008

There is, of course, a limit to how truthfully stories can represent the actual, living world. Fiction and drama abstract events, distill them, and just plain make them up, particularly in order to resolve their endings. Happily there is no mandate on stories to ever do otherwise – we respect their compressions of time, space and emotional response and we seem to find catharsis (as Aristotle pointed out in 355 B.C.<sup>28</sup>) in their resolutions. But the article was encouraging to see – it made me feel that perhaps, if anything, this new age of the global financial crisis will encourage Australian artists and audiences to look beyond the dominant economic paradigm as a means to judge whether or not a life has been successfully or unsuccessfully lived – perhaps even to accept, as Kidman so guilelessly put it that art really is ‘important.’

I may never be so moved to make the bold claim that through my own upheavals (events that are minor, relative to the kind of displacement and persecution faced by Rwandan refugees for example, or Hazara Muslims in Afghanistan) I have produced new work of a higher standard that will help a general populous to better understand the world’s problems. But I do claim that the instability has been highly relevant to my practice thus far. In much the same way that (in story) the forces of antagonism force a central character to take action and resolve his or her struggle in the world, the ‘everyday displacements’ discussed here have shaped my writing in explicit and implicit ways, enabling me to see that perhaps we can consider artists in terms of their plasticity and resilience, rather than as fractured, fragile creatures incapable of finding shelter in storms. Indeed, perhaps the greatest problem for Australian artists is exactly how well we hide, and how frequently. We smuggle ourselves through; doing jobs we can’t stand, occupying positions in ‘related fields’, going by other names (I am currently a script assessor, rather than a writer; my father frequently told neighbours at street barbecues that he was a civil servant) and sometimes we will create nothing for months, years – perhaps even for the rest of our lives.

---

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, (trans Heath, Malcolm), *Poetics*, Penguin Classics, 1997

## Coda

A couple of mornings ago I received an email from my mother. The woman who manages art on permanent loan to St Vincent's Private, the Melbourne hospital where I was born, had recently contacted her. Would my mother grant an extension to the hospital of a painting of my father's, the woman wanted to know?

The painting she spoke of is well known to my family. It is one of the last vast and hopeful works of my father's, a huge impressionistic piece he painted as part of a competition aimed at celebrating the centenary of the Exhibition Gardens in Melbourne. It is a magnificent, huge work I have clear memories of posing for, time and again. I am the somersaulting girl in the foreground. I am the young woman standing under the tree over to the right. I am the lady holding a parasol, anxiously tending her hot child. The dappled light is a direct interpretation of the way the sun shone through the plum trees that eventually grew out of the once-red mud at The Patch. It is as much a picture of our quiet, dislocated life an hour and a half out of Melbourne as it is of the Exhibition Gardens at the turn of the century. The painting now hangs in the palliative care wing of the hospital where, the woman reported, it is bringing great comfort to a famous painter who lies dying there. The woman was not at liberty to disclose the identity of the artist, but passed on the message that he 'equates the painting with the great impressionist French masters.' It is a compliment my father, who didn't win a place at the competition, will never hear. For my part, I will probably never uncover the identity of the dying painter. But (in a far less literal way than the manner in which Joe's kids make their way into Mary's mobile at the end of *Joy*), I am in that painting. It is an indelible part of me, as the anonymous dying painter is now a part of this writing. None of this is apparent to the naked eye – life, unlike drama, does not necessarily provide the clues, make the satisfying links, or highlight the themes the way an artist does, or endeavours to do, through his or her work.

Perhaps for this reason alone we should continue to make the connections though our art; in all its forms, in as many ways as we are able.

## Bibliography

- Aristotle, (translator Heath, Malcolm), *Poetics*, Penguin Classics, 1997
- Barthes, Roland, *Death of the Author*, Aspen Journal, published by Phyllis Johnson 1967
- Barry, Sebastian, *Our Lady of Sligo*, Methuen Drama London, 1997
- Didion, Joan, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, Random House February 2007
- Fletcher, Alan, *The Art of Looking Sideways*, Phaidon Press 2001
- Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2003
- Florida, Richard, *Who's Your City? How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*, Basic Books, New York, March 2008
- Froug, William, *Zen and the Art of Screenwriting: Insights and Interviews*, Silman-James Press, 1996
- Greenfield, Beth & Reid, Robert, *Lonely Planet New York City*, Lonely Planet Publications 2004
- Hughes, Robert, *Culture of Complaint – The Fraying of America*, Grand Central Publishing September 1 1994
- Hunt, Cathy & Shaw, Phillida, *A Sustainable Arts Sector: What Will It Take?*, Platform Paper No. 15, Currency House 2008
- Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth, *On Death and Dying*, Scribner, June 9, 1997
- Lamott, Anne, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Knopf Publishing Group, 1995
- Levin, Gail, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, University of California Press, 1 edition, April 10, 1998

McCann, Colum, *Dancer*, Phoenix House (Orion Publishing Group), 2003

Modjeska, Druscilla, *Stravinsky's Lunch*, Farrar, Strous and Giroux, 2000

Nemirovsky, Irene, *Suite Francaise*, Vintage Books 2000

Solnit, Rebecca and Schwartzberg, Susan (photos), *Hollow City – The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, Verso Publishing, 2002.

Solnit, Rebecca and Schwartzberg, Susan (photos), *Hollow City – The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, Verso Publishing, 2002.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918 – 1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation* (Volume One); republished Basic Books 1997

Tomkins, Calvin, *Lives of the Artists*, Henry Holt and Co., October 28, 2008

Vasari, Georgio, *Vasari's Lives of the Artists: Giotto, Masaccio, Fra Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian*, Dover Publications, July 26, 2005

White, Patrick, *Voss*, Penguin Classics, 2008

#### Playscripts:

White, Patrick, 'A Season at Sarsaparilla', *Four Plays*, Currency Press, 1985

#### Government publications:

Throsby, David, *Does Australia Need a Cultural Policy?* Platform Paper No. 7, Currency House 2006

Throsby, D and Hollister, V, *Don't Give Up Your Day Job: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*, Australia Council, 2003

#### Journals:

Stambor, Z, *Monitor on Psychology Magazine*, American Psychological Association, June 2005

## Websites:

Adams, Stephen,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3391740/Novels--better-at-explaining-worlds-problems-than-reports.html>, accessed September 11, 2008

<http://art-blogging.blogspot.com/>, accessed November 25, 2008

<http://artists.totalblogdirectory.com/>, accessed November 15, 2008

[http://www.blogrankings.com/Art-and-Culture\\_Artists.html](http://www.blogrankings.com/Art-and-Culture_Artists.html), accessed December 1, 2008

<http://www.designspongeonline.com/>, accessed daily

<http://www.facebook.com/>, accessed daily

<http://www.katrinaartists.com/>, accessed June 15, 2008

O'Brien, Kerry, Interview with Woody Allen, transcript available at

<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2008/s2437141.htm>, accessed 5/12/2008

<http://www.threelayercake.com/>, accessed December 1, 2008

<http://tattoo.about.com/od/newsandviews/a/katrina.htm> - Accessed June 16, 2008

## Anonymous:

*Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains?* Scholastic Books Publishing, circa 1978

Magua, The, 'Mean Streets', <http://www.suck.com/daily/2001/04/20/1pr.html>, April 20, 2001, accessed January 31, 2008

## Filmography

Armstrong, Gillian, *My Brilliant Career* (screenplay Witcomb, Eleanor), Greater Union Organisation, 1979

Burton, Tim *Ed Wood* (screenplay Alexander, Scott & Karaszewski, Larry), Touchstone Pictures 1994

Caouette, Jonathan, *Tarnation*, Jonathan Caouette Films, New York 2003

Colombus, Chris, *Stepmom* (screenplay Levangie, Gigi), 1492 Pictures, 1998

Edwards, Blake, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (screenplay Axelrod, George), Jurow-Shepherd, 1961

Harris, Ed, *Pollock* (screenplay Turner, Barbara and Emshwiller, Susan), Brant-Allen, 2000

Haynes, Todd, *I'm Not There* (screenplay Moverman, Oren), Killer Films 2007

Henckel von Donnersmarck, Florian, *The Lives of Others*, Arte, 2006

Hicks, Scott, *Shine* (screenplay Sardi, Jan), AFFC, 1996

Ivory, James, *Slaves of New York* (screenplay Janowitz, Tama), Gary Hendler Pictures, 1989

Jonze, Spike, *Adaptation* (screenplay Kaufman, Charlie), Beverley Detroit, 2002

Moodysson, Lucas, *Tillsammans (Together)*, Memphis Film, 2000

Morrison, Phil, *Junebug*, (screenplay McLaughlan, Angus), Epoch Films, 2005

Reitman, Jason, *Juno* (screenplay Cody, Diablo), Dancing Elk Productions 2007

Robinson, Bruce, *Withnail & I*, Handmade Films, 1987

Schnabel, Julian, *Basquiat* (screenwriter Majewski, Lech), Eleventh Street Production 1997

Schnabel, Julian, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (screenplay Harwood, Ronald), Pathé Renn Productions, 2007

Sheridan, Jim, *In America*, Fox Searchlight Pictures 2002

Stone, Irving, *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (screenplay Dunne, Philip), International Classics, 1965

Todd, Barbara Euphan, *Worzel Gummidge*, Southern Television, February 1979 - 1981

Weir, Peter, *The Mosquito Coast*, (screenplay Schrader, Paul), The Saul Zaentz Company, 1986

Zwigoff, Terry, *Crumb*, Superior Pictures, 1994