

Rescue Remedy

The standard 'message in a bottle' format calls for a desperate writer (desert-island stranding; rich-kid abduction), an ocean, a beach, a reader.

The second format is simpler: the writer still desperate, but writing only to themself. It's a diary entry, with the grand, violent gesture of bottle-throwing retained. The commitment of it! The extravagance, when in fact the act's a humble thing; a kind of prayer to the world, or a god.

Not long ago I climbed a mountain:
recognised the old fear. Pushed on.
At the peak the sunset arrived, radiant and
precisely on time, but casual:
I do this every day. We exchanged smiles. I
bowed my head.

Then I saw it: my bottle, with message—
years old. Thrown into the sea,
now on a mountain top (don't ask!) It could
only be mine: a cough-syrup
bottle, stupid narrow neck and a round or
two of ribbon I'd plaited.
How I cradled it now, thinking of that dear
younger self. No need
to break the glass: what difference now,
those words from way back then?
I've learnt when I need rescue, and at that
time—at that right time precisely—
I turn up.



By Paige Jenkins

July 2nd



Today is your birthday and I forgot.
I could've gone the whole day without the knowledge ever
pressing against the forefront of my mind.
I had re-purposed the day.
Other exciting things in my life are occurring.
Today was always your day, but you're not a part of me anymore.
Today is just a day to me now.
A phantom ghost.
Phantom pain,
a limb you tore off and let
rot in a secret drawer.
The smell coated the walls,
intertwined with the thread count of the carpet and sheets.
Acid melts the wallpaper, flakes of paint scatter in haphazard piles
on a love that
once filled me with all the sunshine and warmth in the entire solar
system.
It was unbearable.

Burning away the lining of my stomach,
bubbling in my oesophagus, smothering my lungs and
splitting every valve in my heart.
The memories that clung to the destruction
in tungsten frames and splintering glass,
pretending everything was fine and we were
Happy, and you were
Here, and you took me with you.
But like the parasite you told my friends I was,
our living room was filled with succubi and
all the blood we swore upon was
replaced with the cold and empty termite-eaten structure that I
Finally
moved out of.

MY SILVER

silver tears disintegrate
my platinum facade
seeking to erase
your gold grin.
the soft trickle
melts my slate skin.
graphite flesh
grotesque, deformed.
i was your ring,
your item of possession.



INDY GORDON



unconsciously awake
emotionless, relentless
slate tinted memories,
hues of mauve.
your forced electrum
and my ghastly gasps.
i was always your silver
you were my gold
until i realised
you were just pyrite.

THE END



BOB

By

INDY

GORDON

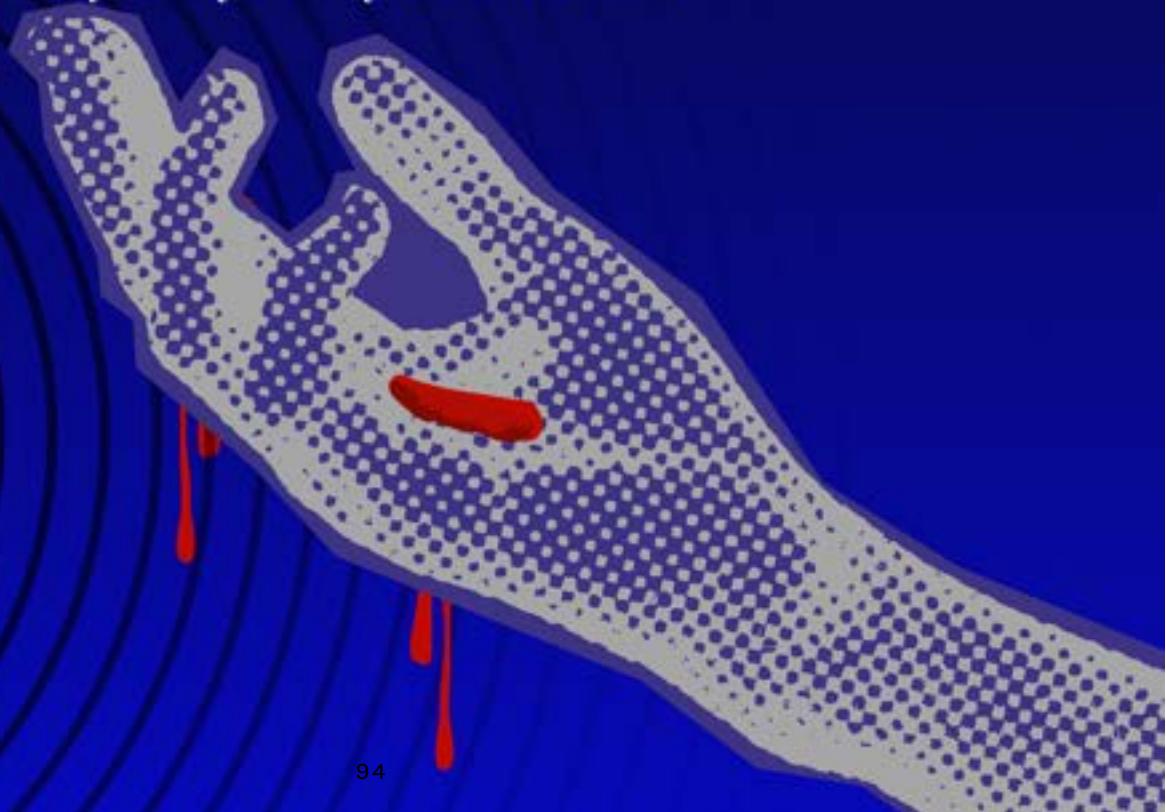
a piece of reflective glass
with a rusted frame fixed
in place. my body bends
in the reflection — shoulders
first, then arms, then hands.
each ripple of light shines
upon the curve of my waxen
skin. the glass folds my
shape into itself, my fingers
trail the air, and the
reflection trails me.
i lean closer. my thighs press
against themselves in the
reflection, thick and heavy like
tonnes of lard, cellulite pooled
in soft shadows, like melting wax.
but now, i caress those marks.

the glass does not hide them, it holds them.



REMEMBER

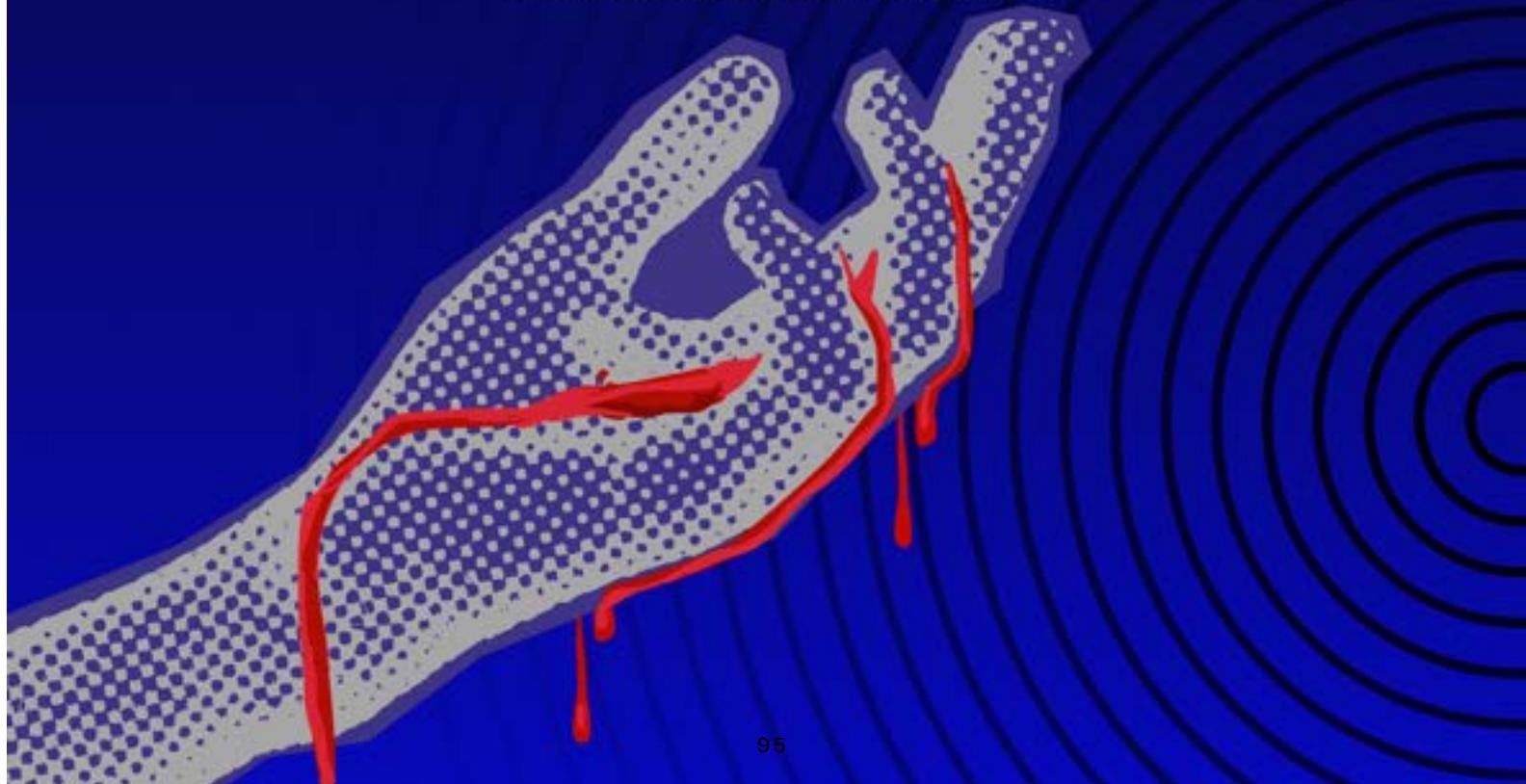
harder, restricting myself from diving in
further, i brushed my fingertips upon the
slate water, a desire to remember, as my
palm softly caressed the surface, i grew
eager to delve deeper, amongst the
ripples, my stone laid on the lake bed.
my forehead throbbed, as blood trickled
into the murky liquid, my memories are
merely images, a rippled blur of stained ideas,
tales which drowned my reality, the stone, like
my memory, is close, yet so hard to reclaim



BY INDY
GORDON

DWELL

my memory slowly faltered, like a
stone skipping backward over a
dull reservoir, the stone skimmed, it
grazed the water's surface, tulips tried
to sprout amongst the deciduous
shore, it ricocheted against my skull,
my forehead bled crimson, as the stone
merged into the frigid water, my eyes
were obscured, hands trembled, placed
over my scarlet concussion, every time i
reached into the lake, my head pounded





Black Cockatoo

Emma Pagotto

*I've never liked calm blue seas.
Glassy lakes with picturesque landscapes.
I can't listen to classical music unless it is a symphony of chaos.
Lying in the sun all day with a book seems miserable.
I've never succeeded in meditation.
Storms, however, are like magic to me.
Unruly, vigorous, indestructible.
A phenomenon that turns the sea grey and stirs dangerous waves.
A force that pelts down bullets of rain to disrupt the tranquil lakes.
Its thunderous roar mightier than any orchestra.
And that was him.
A storm I found and let carry me away.*

*I'm doing it wrong.
Idiot.
More soap, less water.
Circular motions.
Non-aggressive scrubbing.
He reminds me
moist breath and deafening voice
eyes disdainful as they watch.
Circular motions, less water.
Circular motions, less scrubbing.
That's how to wash dishes.*

Am I doing it right?
He says I am now.
I wasn't before.
I didn't know how to wash dishes before.
But I do now.
Thank you, thank you for teaching me.
His footsteps echo in my mind
footsteps and my own reprimanding.

I didn't buy the right tahini.
You got the fucken inorganic shit.
His disciplinary voice rattles my brain around –
like a child shaking the toy inside of their Kinder Surprise.
If I stand long enough in silence
him yelling
me staring at the eucalypt tree just beyond his flaying arms
the earth begins to bloom around me.
The critters underneath the shrub
microscopic movements
create a shift in the perfectly trimmed grass.
Mosquitoes and mayflies and moths
with their glorious wings, circle me like a halo.
Their hunger enough to give them courage to land on me
a giant invading their habitat.
Curious is their bravery.
Admirable is their nonchalance.

A black cockatoo leaves its perch from the tree,
and in response, a single, tiny silveryeye sings a soft tune.
Queuing a whole choir of fantails and robins
and the Eastern whipbird's powerful call.
They seem to weep louder with the crying wind.
So many beautifully unique songs I wish I knew by heart
an intimate caress to my soul in a way it's never been touched
before.
And my hair is being taken by the powerful gusts
and my blood is pumping in time with the earth's heartbeat
and I'm so wonderfully overwhelmed with this ethereal, aweing
realm that suddenly I would trade my life to become a part of this
sacred biome.
To become a part of her.



Do you understand?

Do I?

I brought the wrong tahini
the inorganic brand
I should've known better.

Do I understand?

He is looking at me like I'm the ceramic mug I shattered last week –
terribly broken and unfixable.

He tries though.

He's always trying, always correcting.

I love you. You're a danger to yourself. You need me. I love you.

Do I understand?

A magpie swoops down from the tree.

I suddenly crave to be that magpie, plucking a worm from the dirt
silky black wings with a powerful downstroke as it takes to the sky –
going higher and higher, farther and farther away.

Or maybe I would be the worm
to wriggle about blindly through dirt
until I am abruptly and brutally trapped in the sharp beak of a bird.
Or to become a small sediment in the nutrient-rich soil
home to a web connection of roots and mycorrhizae that provide
existence to all like a network of veins, the ebb and flow of blood
which pumps oxygen into each organism.

I've never liked calm blue seas.

Glassy lakes with picturesque landscapes.

I've never liked to sit with my own mind.

I thought this storm would release me.

But the push and pull has become beastly.

I thought a storm could transform me.

But maybe there was already one deep within me

The sound of the wind changes.

Three black cockatoos screech as they fly overhead
as if someone nudged the tonearm on a record player.

An army of raindrops pelt down in the distance
almost like the sky is one huge monster moving as one toward me.

He doesn't notice, cutting eyes locked on me.

Behind him, the line of gum trees creak with fear.

Parachutes of leaves spiral down, perfecting a twirl ballerinas take

years to master encapsulating the grief of a great loss, akin to the black swan in Swan Lake.

I wanted to go to the Australian ballet last year.
I had been once when I was nine with my mum
she loved it, and I loved it because she cried as she watched them.
I remember she'd never looked so happy.
He said it's a violation of the human body to be pushed so harmfully.
I haven't been to the ballet since I was nine.
I wonder if I would cry?
I wonder if I would feel happy?

*I have always liked the rain
Everything changes. Transforms.
A concrete path
usually a thoughtless slab of artificial material
suddenly becomes beautiful.
As water accumulates into a puddle
creating a reflection distorted by the pattering raindrops
you are mesmerised by something you walk over every day.
I have always liked the rain
the way people hibernate in their safe shelters
as if the water could kill them
as if it's an inconvenience to their very important day.
I have always loved storms
Unruly, vigorous, indestructible.
An unpredictable phenomenon that changes its path for nothing.*

A twig snaps
His odour infiltrates me.
Sweat. Sage. Mulch.
Do you understand?
Is it concern in his taut lips?
Disapproval? Or disgust?
You're a danger to yourself. You need me.
Do I understand?
I love you.
Do I understand?
You need me.
Do you understand?





I've never noticed that plant.
Leaning over the wood fence.
An acacia *longifolia* I think.
Its yellow flowers are just starting to peek out of their buds.
We used to always have yellow flowers on the kitchen table.
Billy buttons
mum's favourite.
A praying mantis walks along one of the spindly branches.
Like an acrobat on a tightrope.
I saw a documentary on TV once.
About praying mantis reproduction.
I was waiting for him so I flicked through the channels.
And I was enraptured by a female chewing the head off of a male
as they were mating. Slowly biting through the soft flesh of her own
species. Her mate.
Apparently many species in the animal kingdom do this.
Spiders, fireflies, crickets, octopus –
the female octopus even strangles the male first.

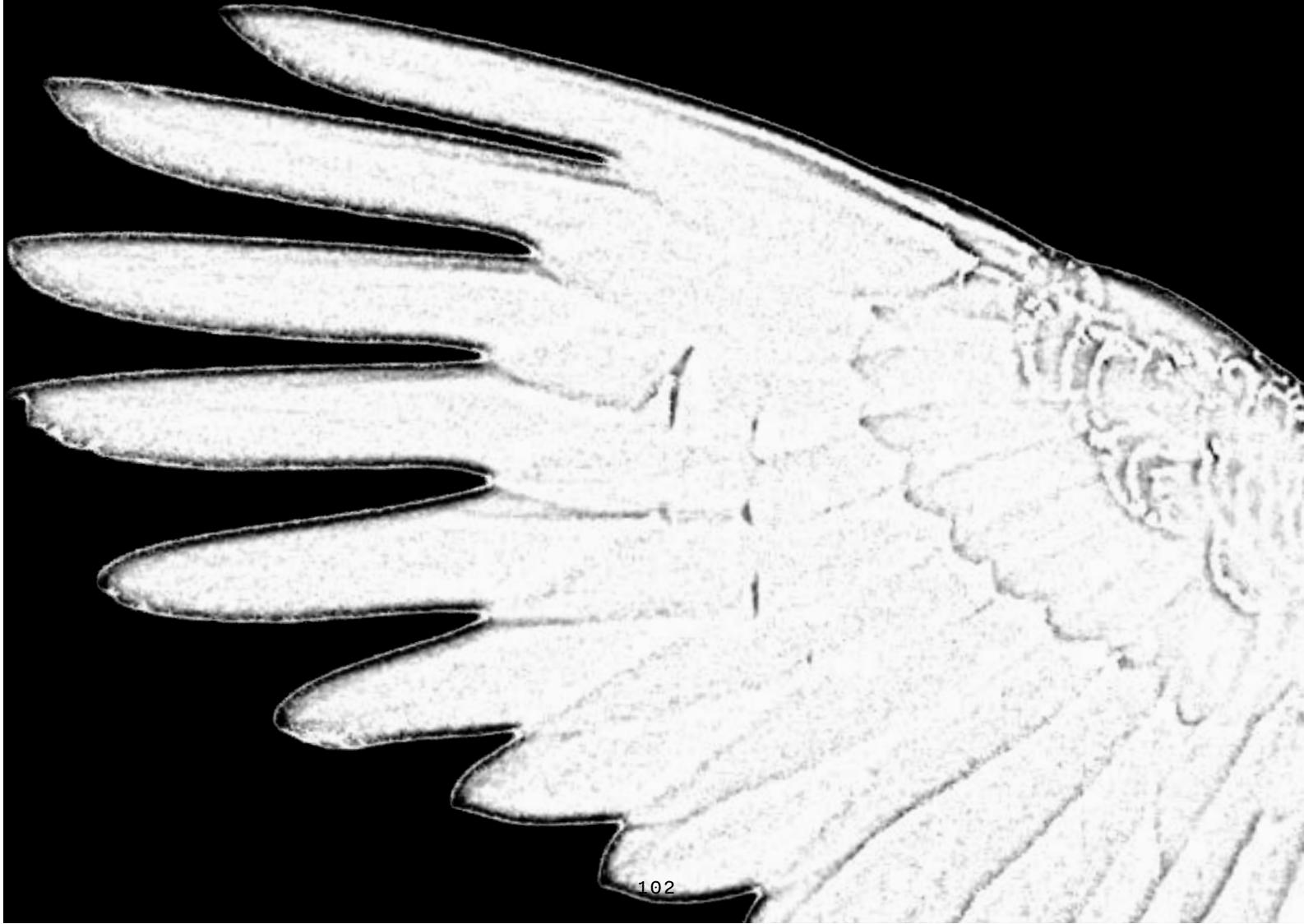
I wonder how it would be if women started killing men during or
after sex? Would it be so outrageous?
Would we be considered murderers?
Or just classified as a sexual-cannibalistic genus?
What separates us from these other species anyway?
We're all animals.
He hit me.
That time when I

He said his testosterone was especially high that day.
He was angrier than usual and it wasn't his fault.
Therefore he couldn't blame me if I got the urge to decapitate him
after rolling off of me. Or while he's mindlessly fucking me with his
hands around my throat. It's just instinct.
Purely animalistic.
He would understand.

Do. You. Understand?
Do I?
The clouds above us are darker.
Without the sun to cast shadows I can see his own underneath his
eyes. Eyes I once thought to be mysterious. Penetrating.

But maybe there is no answer behind them
maybe they're just hollow.
I can smell it.
Natural oils oozing into the atmosphere.
The eucalypt has become stronger.
And the soil released from its barren compaction.
I can feel it too.
The slightly denser air.
The way the pores on my skin open up.
And that sound?
(she smiles)
Yes.
I understand.

*I've never liked calm blue seas.
Picturesque landscapes with glassy lakes.
I've never succeeded at yoga.
And the thought of journalling makes me squirm.
I've always liked the fog that encroaches before rain.
The way it makes life feel ominous and unpredictable.*



*The way you can no longer see the beauty of the world.
I've always liked the fog.
People let their fear show of the unknown.
Like the mystery of life is the most terrifying concept.
My hair is clinging to my face.
And my shirt has morphed to my skin
I can feel the cotton fibres expand to let the water through.
Black cockatoos shriek in the distance,
glorifying their advance against the storm.
My laughter merges with the sheltering kookaburras. The beat of
the rain syncs to my pulse
and my body begins to float.
Like a feather.
A feather of the black cockatoo.
Moving in time with the storm.*

*I've always been hot blooded.
Constantly in search of something to cool me down. A murdering
blow to my candlelight, coal for my lava. A cold-blooded creature to
soak up my radiation. I've always been a firecracker.
Continually buzzing, repetitively sparking and exploding. I've always
been a moon.
Attracting tidal waves.
Altering the gravity of those around me.
I've always been the black cockatoo.
Forever in a race against storms.
I've always been a storm.
Unruly, vigorous, unstable.
Untameable.*

