

FOR FINLEY VICTORIA,  
AND YOU.



“...to be led calmly down the stream of time  
to the ocean of futurity, which has no boundaries.”

(Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul & Virginia*, 1849)



## THANK YOU

To create something from nothing, let alone from the vacuum of an unformed identity such as I was when writing this, takes a lot of push. I literally would not be at this stage if it were not for Chris Hemmings – the man who phoned me up out of the blue one evening having read my first piece of public writing, and passionately encouraged me toward the possibility of becoming a great writer. Whilst day after week after year has gone by – he is still here – still championing my words, and giving advice in the form of perfect haiku emails.

With great emotion, supreme gratitude goes to the very special Mark Vassallo. He once gave me the opportunity to speak openly, and now here it is, on a page in a book, for all to see. It is what makes me truly happy and alive, to be able to share what is in here, out there. Mark, you have given me wings as well as the wind to fly upon. Thank you.

I would like to also thank my favourite English teacher, Brenda Walker; who taught me the metaphors of writing, and inspired me to give of myself. I have always wanted to make her proud. She knows that her words have given me immense courage, without which, I might not have continued.

To all the other influences who have had inexplicable impact on my psyche while writing this, I send you my love and joy. They include my family; particularly my diamond-strong sister Gemma; my parents, who allowed me to roam; and my brothers Henry, and Oscar, I love you; my friends in Sydney and Perth, Lauren Brown, Dion Carnell, Sonya Kukainis and Tiah Eckhardt, you are all perfect. Thank you to Blake Bertuccelli for his support; to Laura Cassie for her editing; to Danny Roberts and family in Los Angeles – who have been a perpetual encouragement and source of incredibly bright sparks; and the wonderful Jon Ramos who knows exactly what he does to me.

Thank you to my treasured readers: You are the space that allows for my voice to be heard. I am so thankful to have your eyes and ears, and do promise to look after them for the many years that you lend me your hands. Welcome to Paper Castle Press!

Last but not least, I would like to thank the friend and mentor I am blessed to have met on this path in life, Simon Keenlyside. It was while I was under his roof that I came to the hilt of this inexplicable journey, and it was he who showed me the way through the fog. I am continually inspired and enamoured by his approach to life, and thoroughly believe I would not be the person I am today without having had contact with spirit such as his.

May all of your journeys lead you home.

My love,  
Sophie





**YOU MUST KNOW** that I did not go on this journey for any other reason but that I felt compelled to expand. This book is not necessarily about me, or my life. It is about a vibrance that moves through me which I cannot control nor apologise for.

I went into the heart of the world, took a sword, and left it behind. I came out the other side of this world's heart, soaked through with the things I have collected. These are the things I collected. This is what fell out when I wrung the towel of what my soul saw. This is my soul soaring. This is the essence of the journey.



## WHAT I REMEMBER, BEFORE I BEGAN

Whispering, a breathing out laugh.

I watched his heart beat under his belly button,  
under taut marbled boy skin, skin veined blue and white.

I looked at the curve of his calf, that beautiful flip  
upwards from his ankle, his smooth, pale skin luminous  
over collated ribs. I saw his hand reaching out away from  
him, experiencing threads of sand fall through fingertips,  
blinded by closed eyelids. This is what I remember of him,  
Oscar asleeping, awake to the world.

Pink lightning, or a hallucination.  
Constellation of Luna park lights.

Warm water on my ankles, trekking through beach jungle.  
White green moss on vine strangled boulders  
clamped with fern.

A ghost man swimming on the horizon.  
Golden sand, bluegreen water.

Her brown, oiled body an extension of the beach  
half naked.

The line of red blood, stationary, on her ankle. The red  
reformed after the wash of the ocean, seeping quietly red  
in the sea, of the sea.

A beautiful surfer boy, startled.

Uncoloured sand and magnified sunlight  
before a grey approaching drizzle.  
The grit of the beach, the bite of the breeze.  
Men, and t-shirts.  
An old surf champion jogging with the memories of his  
youth to kneel before churned white wash and lead sky.

Cloud like matted sheep wool, shorn and spread,  
juicing the sunlight through and through.  
Learner surfers scattered and split up the beach.  
Inky black spider children in wetsuits  
churning up circles of sand.

Our shortbread bodies, coconut oil.  
The sugar silt sand.

Night driving in the smudged wet warm  
of a meandering summer quiet.  
Glossy, sweet rain.

The rumble of glass in a bin dragged over ground.  
The dome of blue sky, deeper to light.  
Ripped pumpkin flowers in a milky sink.  
Awakened contact.

Long long hours of light.  
Storms brewing.