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Charts & Soundings

some small navigation aids

Sue Fitchett & Jane Zusters -

For Aushla

in the hope of books to come
may the next one
be ours. - Kia-ora

June Zuster

London

13/12/99



Charts & Soundings





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some small navigation aids

Sue Fitchett & Jane Zusters



Spiral

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Foreword

For years I have messed about in boats. The sea is my element. I am at home in islands. I love the outline of coasts, the swell of water marking the place of rocks. I am drawn to charts and maps and sound imaginary journeys across waters. I delight in metaphor.

Today I have embarked on a new voyage of discovery with two experienced sailors whose skills I've known for a long time. I admire their courage, the exhilaration of their pursuit into the new millenium - the year 2000. I watch them stand at the bow of *Te Aroha*, gliding away from the 'quiet surfaces', the 'stillness of the inner harbour' and 'the house squatting in sea mist'. I see them 'working to ride *I* waters rough white *I* fending off / rock throat walls' and head out for the rolling 'swell of the channel' and the 'turbulent seas'.

Their 'small navigational aids' are words and pictures - 'the book of myths and a loaded camera'. With these they trace the rich expanse and treasure of past, 'making connections / which shine *I* map a way to the / heart of matter.'

In this tradition, Sue Fitchett and Jane Zusters are not entirely alone on their course. Others have taken this route before them - and in these seas alone, the journey of artistic co-operation brims with endeavour and a listing of fellow travellers too large here to encompass. Suffice it only to mention Hotere, McCahon, Brown, McWhannell; Baxter, Manhire, McQueen and all the others giving 'us back abundant syllables /... birdsong / birdsong'.

But *Charts & Soundings* is somewhat different - 'other', 'balancing on / the margins /... new frontiers ...' also in complexity and nuance, the

subtleties of evocation. In a sense, there was no 'collaboration'. The visual images had already been taken independently, without knowledge of the poems. But 'read' with the work they accompany, summon Hans Arp's *Das Gesetz der Zufall*.

The combination of verbal and visual imagery resonates with connections, and works to extend, to elucidate, to detail, and constantly energise a kind of 'bi-lingual' inter'play' with the larger themes throughout the work - light and dark *I* life and death. Even where links seem momentarily tenuous, there are evocations of larger worlds and shared experience, intriguing new ways of 'sounding' re-enactments of journeys made historically, spiritually and metaphorically.

The 20 poems and 22 images that comprise these mappings / chartings /, this 'spirit of place', are full of literary allusions, references and 'classic' art readings. Everywhere 'glimpsed worlds' / dangerously / licked by shadows', a complexity of vision honed by a psychological edge, an acknowledgement of a wider reality accessed through time, through history. And throughout this 'journey's centre', always the 'presence' of water, the elemental, ambivalent symbol suggestive of deeper layers of psyche, and signalling associations both with life and fertility, destruction and death and the travels of the spirit to the underworld - the 'dark shapes / rising & falling as one'. Everything "beginning again & again & again".

Riemke Ensing

September 1999, Auckland



Boning Up

On the bones of your arse
says it all
when you strip away flesh
what have you got left
bare essentials

some people dig
up their dead
after a time
by then the flesh has
fallen off

with an archeologist's touch
the bones are lifted up
placed on a smoking brazier
slowly they dry out
until their whiteness has
a pure brilliance

even if we're not dug up
purified by fire
our bones will be found one day
by someone seeking roots

bones are the bottom line
at the end
we can be sure
there'll be a ske'leton
connections
which shine
whitely in murk
map a way to the
heart of matter



TIRITIRI MATANGI

On the chart

only this

Fl.15 sec.

(ash in
the mouth

flash 15 seconds

all night

a sharp star
sparkling

flash 15 seconds

flash 15 seconds

each dusk
as we draw curtains
 come in cold
unbalanced by
 winter's dark ferry
take one last look
at the world before
sleep & when we can't
sleep night after
night
after

in dawn's thin wash
I spread the chart
rub out Fl.15 sec.
write

in fire

warm

&

safe

&

home on the island.



Mapping the Waitemata

a French navigator saw a handful of pebbles in the distance
on his chart wrote
Noisettes

by a later chart
the 'tts' had gone
Noisies

today a sailor's eye
finds one less 'i'
Noises

“Time has rubbed off the Frenchness”

Mururoa M ruroa Moruroa here's hoping



in smoke

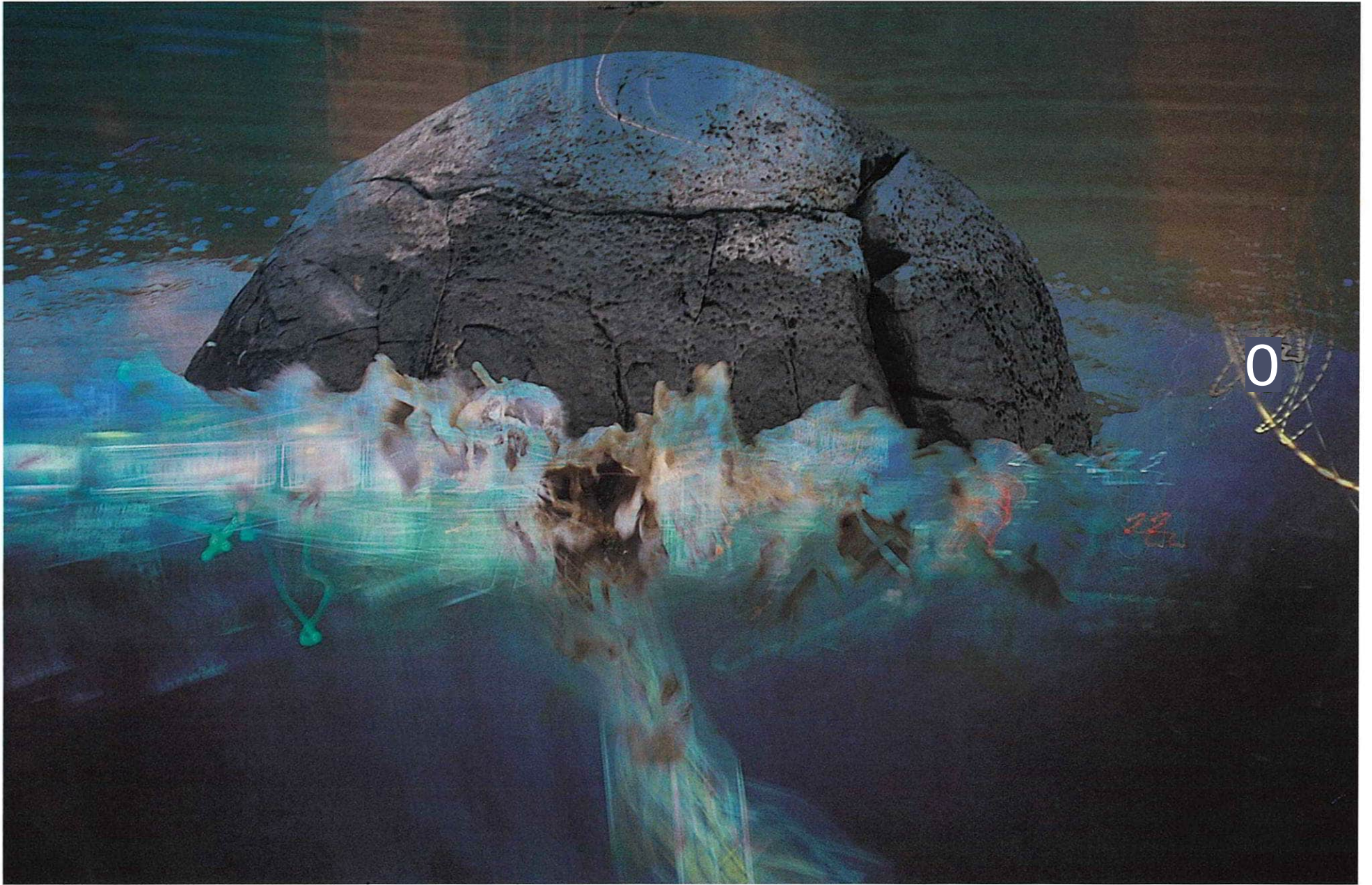
ghosts rise up
freed

I remember this
from somewhere
your name
warm marshmallow still
in my mouth
watching our campfire
release another
blue shape

matching
 this
 river's
 S
 bends
upstream to its snow rich source
 Tongariro Ruapehu
already shape changing
before sky swallows the blue

& I squint through wet lashes

catch
 a last
 pale
 flutter

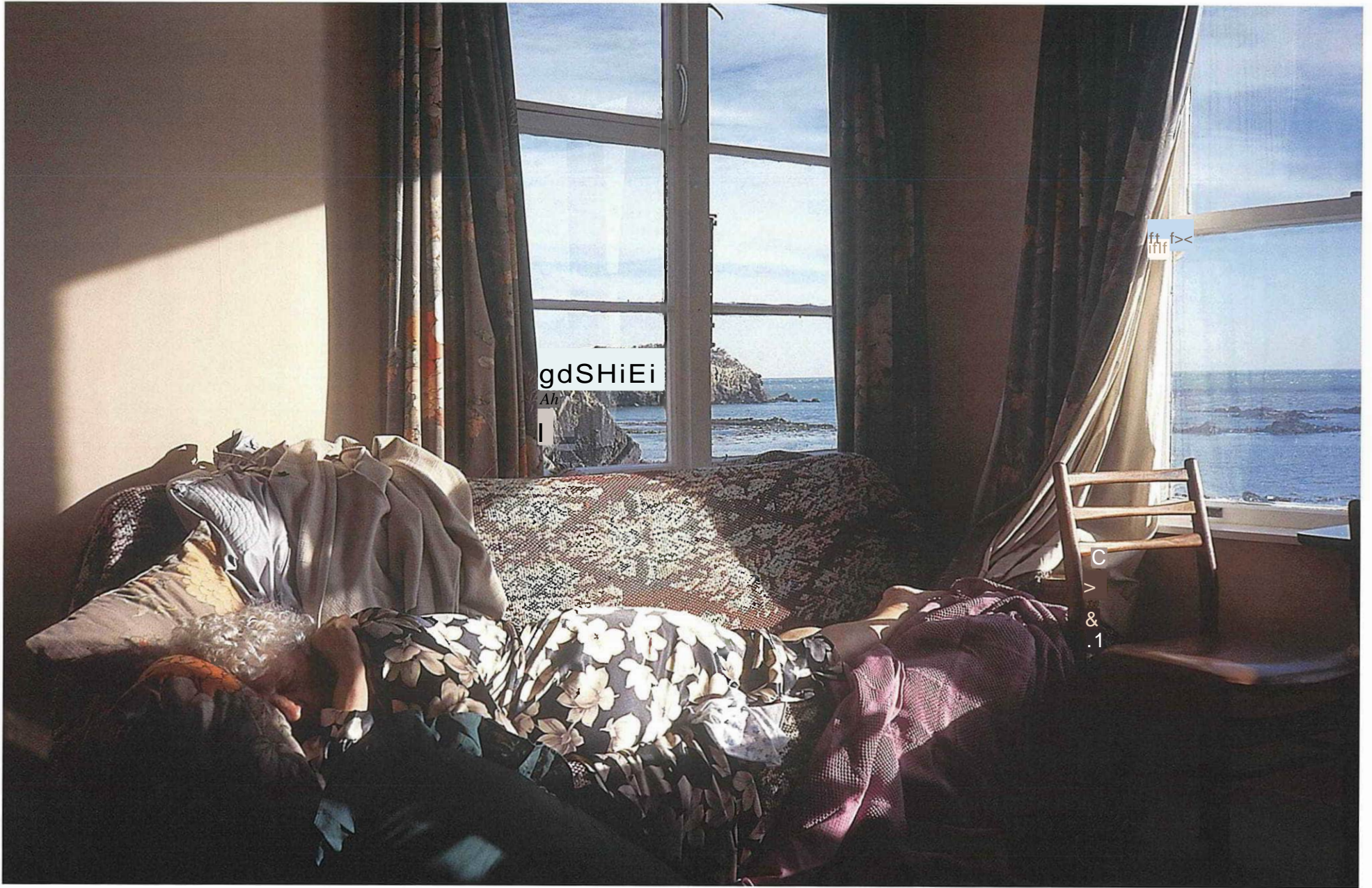


poem 5 of *on the other side of Moehau (sleeping wind): Coromandel*

The Spirit of the Place

If I could breathe
some words
into this rock
it might tell
who sat before in this hollow
facing the mountain
Moehau
& questioned *I* petitioned
cloud tinged peaks

Moehau
an Hassidic father
covers me
with silence.



Morning Report

dolphins
threading early morning chop

And the boat
the boat is late
And the hollow in the pillow was warm
the sharemarket has fallen
again
a tanker has been hit in the Gulf
entering the inner harbour
two dark shapes
rising & falling as one

they
curve into the morning

quietly making up for the rest



Whanganui Taniwha

this river

 takes some of us by surprise
thrown under a thick surface
its presence fills our mouths
powers into our nostrils
sucks out long soft city words
leaving only hard quick ones

 dump shock

 snag fear &

canoes

 untamed sleek water ponies

 extending our words & bodies

we enter a mouth full of teeth
over a tapered green tongue
& now

 feather gliding
 working to ride
 waters rough white
 fending off
 rock throat walls
 spat out to rest on a wide belly

 all the gorge

 reflected in

 skin rich & silky

at last this river

 gives us back

abundant syllables

 blessed exhilaration

 docile ponies &

 quietness embroidered

 birdsong

 birdsong



COUNTRY ROAD TAKES ME

this road is a comrade
I know well

its lines
petrified

first forty kilometres
thin green snow

although a blue sky promises
something larger & warmer

at the journey's centre
winks a very different colour

a place of cunning
& feral possibility

there are risks
murder is painted on one

face my breath quickens
hairlets stand up on arms

then he appears
The Red Fox

but today
the pub pales

before an icon
on the other side

a real russian woman
wider than a blue promise

carrying a week's provisions &
a smile to melt Siberia's winter



the thin men

on a day of no sun
the ground ice caught
in Auschwitz
a very thin man
threw a yellow star
into the sky
where it blazed
briefly
Maccabees were heard
on the horizon
& air smelt of life

for a thin man
stilting along a beach
life's not over
he snaps his lens at birds
sleeves wingbeat his wrists
circulating air round bones
tomorrow he'll process the film
shoot off another letter
"give me my money
a key to the camp
& mesh of regulations
you've sewn around me"
a marked man
he types on yellow paper
underlines in red
his cavalry words ride out

tattoo

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AT ROBIN MORRISON'S EXHIBITION (A NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHER'S RETROSPECTIVE)

people's feet praying round his images	place & people classic icons our country pinned to the walls	a red boat reflected in a South Island lagoon	& empty hills necklaced in shining wires
she slides in over the hills water hills	beside a tall grey haired woman beside Norm Smith & Pebbles	beside Bill Lord at Waiheke Island's dump she	& the grey haired woman swallowing quietness
unprepared for 1981 a PR 24 baton catching her eye	move move move		
	moving	a face in the dirt her face in the dirt	Hamilton July 25th people touching each other pushing against each other
	glued together on a rugby field under a cross a frame	too small to hold sweaty fear the palpable hate just out of sight	voices weaving <i>irr shall not</i> <i>ivf shall not he moved</i> again someone passes her a hand warmed mint
& his accompanying video voice			
<i>you see</i> <i>/ found myself</i> <i>on the side</i> <i>of the demonstrators</i>			a fistful of photos nail her to this corner raw her throat
she turns her face away falling back onto quiet surfaces	tiptoeing between still lives		niising a shadow of spearmint in her mouth



birdkilling house

the space of radio signals
a stretch of imagination
& Rwanda's in my eyes

whales are coming ashore
everywhere sometimes
no one knows why

we wind these hulks in silence
switch off fill our bellies
with honey coated words

still the dead semaphore
us over no man's land
worm into our tongues

"two dead birds in two weeks"
you say "on the deck"
rigid bundles of feathers

"sell" I say quick
off my tongue
onto the table

between us
a repugnance
frames from a B grade movie

your house squatting in sea mist
windows barrelling open
the crack of a door

somewhere inside
& a sycamore fall
of another small body

Fresh coffee brewing
green shoots glaze new dug garden
old friends arriving.

by torchlight the path
stretches dangerously
licked by shadows



looking at photographs

looking for my mother in old photographs
i find myself younger than twelve
my mother is not there
her early mother

skin remains a rumour
i cannot see touch or taste it
my mother is not here
my mother is

dead skin
is untouchable
i touch my skin
my mother is here
i am more than a snake

growing into a skin
a skin containing my mother
i pour my mother into this conversation
my body

my language tells it all
the tics the holding of the mouth
my mothers smile flicks out
weaving

in the breaks in my
stories

we sit & knit
my mother & i
we are knitting
skeins are going round
are going round

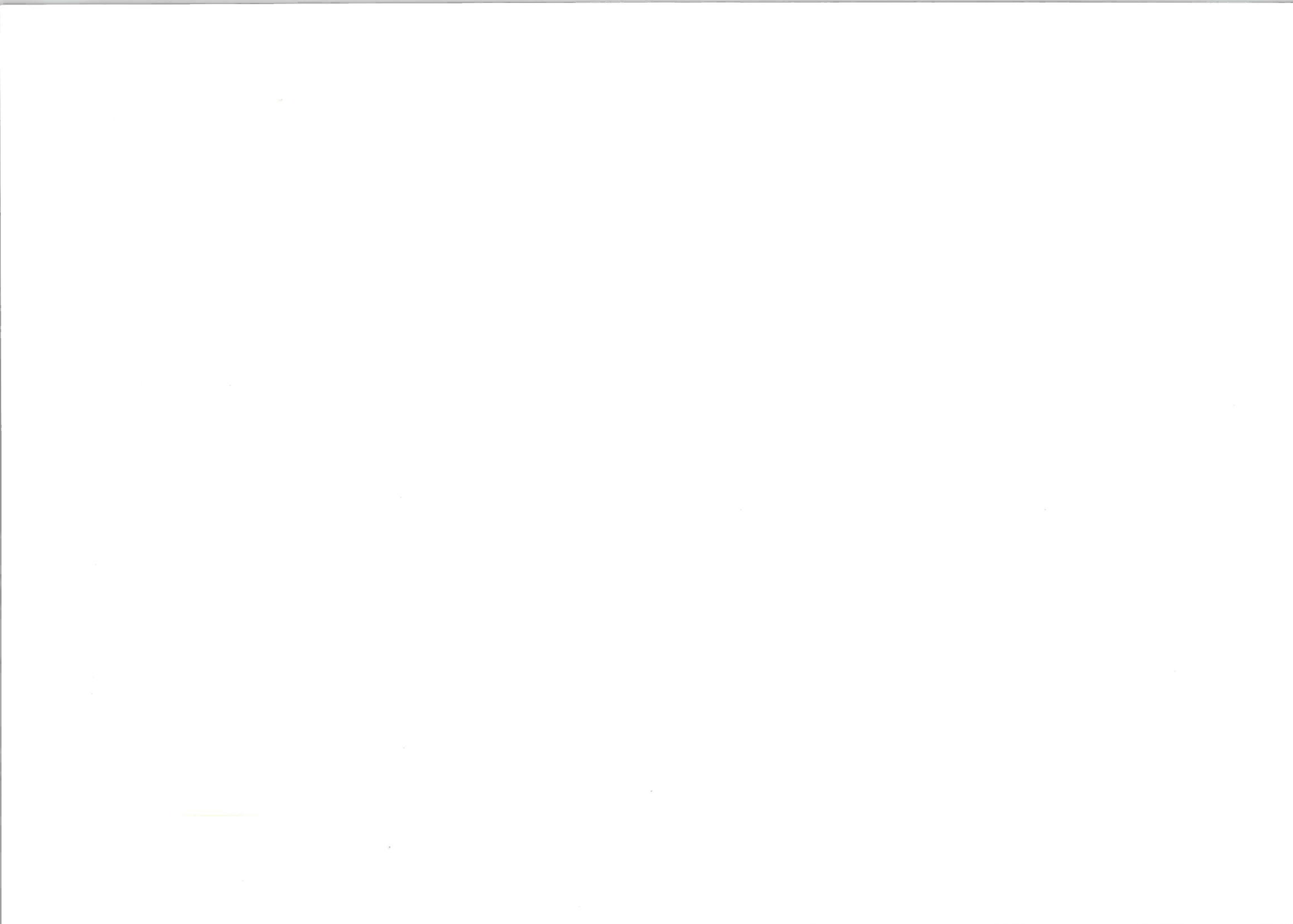
& round &

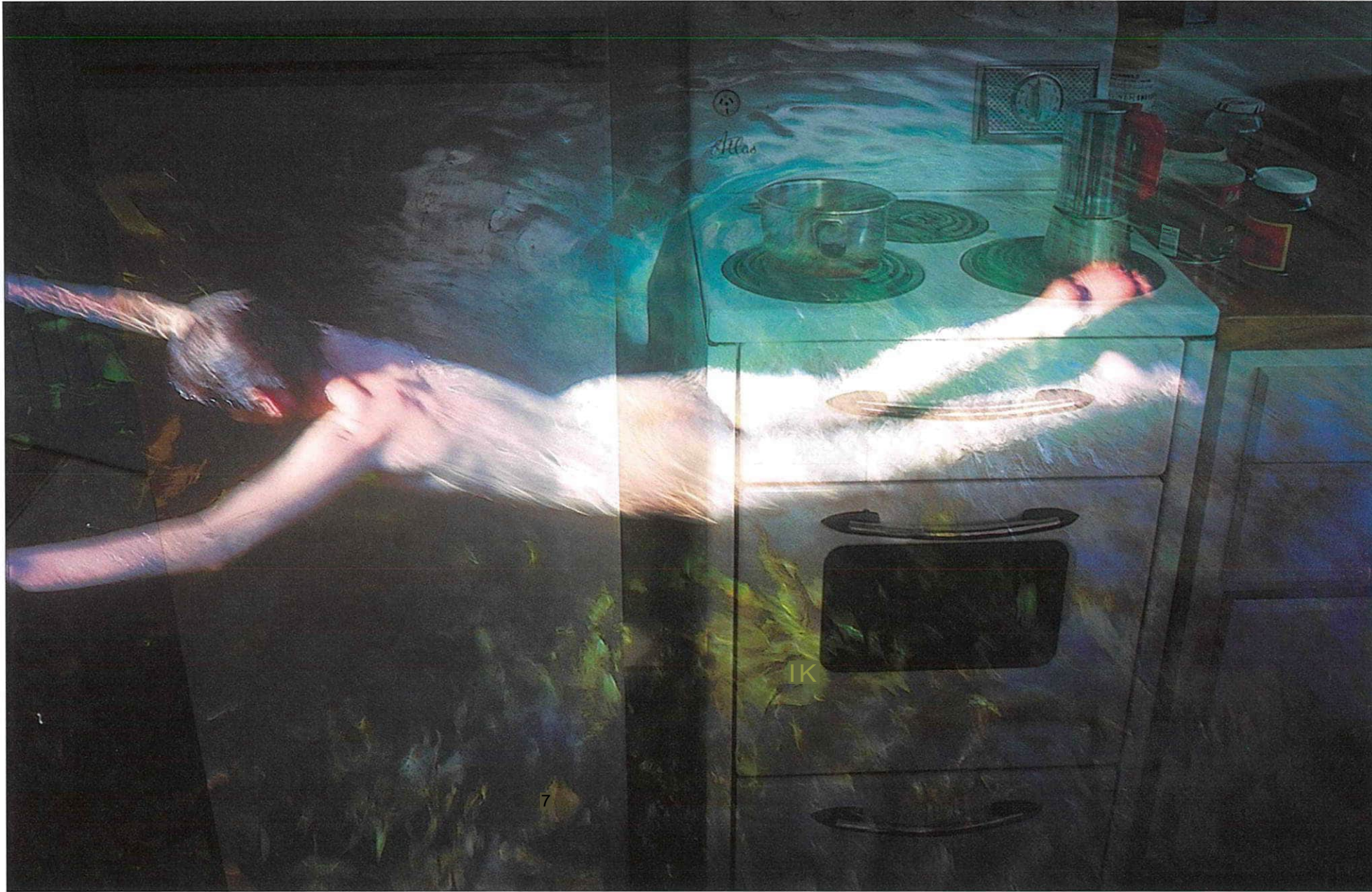
round

&

&round&







7

IK

in my mother's kitchen & the Culinary Arts Institute Encyclopedic Cookbook:1948

The globe artichoke
is cylindrical in shape
with a tapering
'heart'

covered with fibrous

knives

2 case

2 paring

1 butcher

1 chopping

from side to side

rolling pin

mixing spoons

2 wooden (large and small)

2 metal

grater

sieve

egg beater

bread pans

green leaves

dice - cut into

small

pieces

saute -cooked in a

small quantity

of fat

shifting the food

frying pans

(2 sizes)

the kind of beauty

that women want

about them in their

work-a-day

world

salt and pepper shakers

meat thermometer
basting spoon
skewers

place on rack
breast up

until tender
serve on hot platter

Father
carves
the fowl

700 menus
for every day
of the year

ready to roast poultry
should be rinsed in cold
water and patted dry

stuff lightly
with any desired stuffing

and truss







CORRESPONDING WITH LORINE NIEDECKER: A QUARTET

Marsh Wren

“Homely little bird”
 unnoticed
by all but
poets “and children”
hear her reedy summer song

rattle the moon

small quiet notes

“falling”

in the trees

leaves

a sharp edge

some times

a new view

Cream (thick)
Bac. (2 rash.)
Bones (from Butch.)
White Wine
Fresh Cabb.

(& "don't be afraid")

Zukofsky
was
 (Ezra's boy I think)
'onto a good thing'
 (our diction)
when you offered
yourself
 to type
love over
 & over
his poetry



NEW ANGLES

\t's t'un driving in ponsonby

the q*^aVM & q^oee

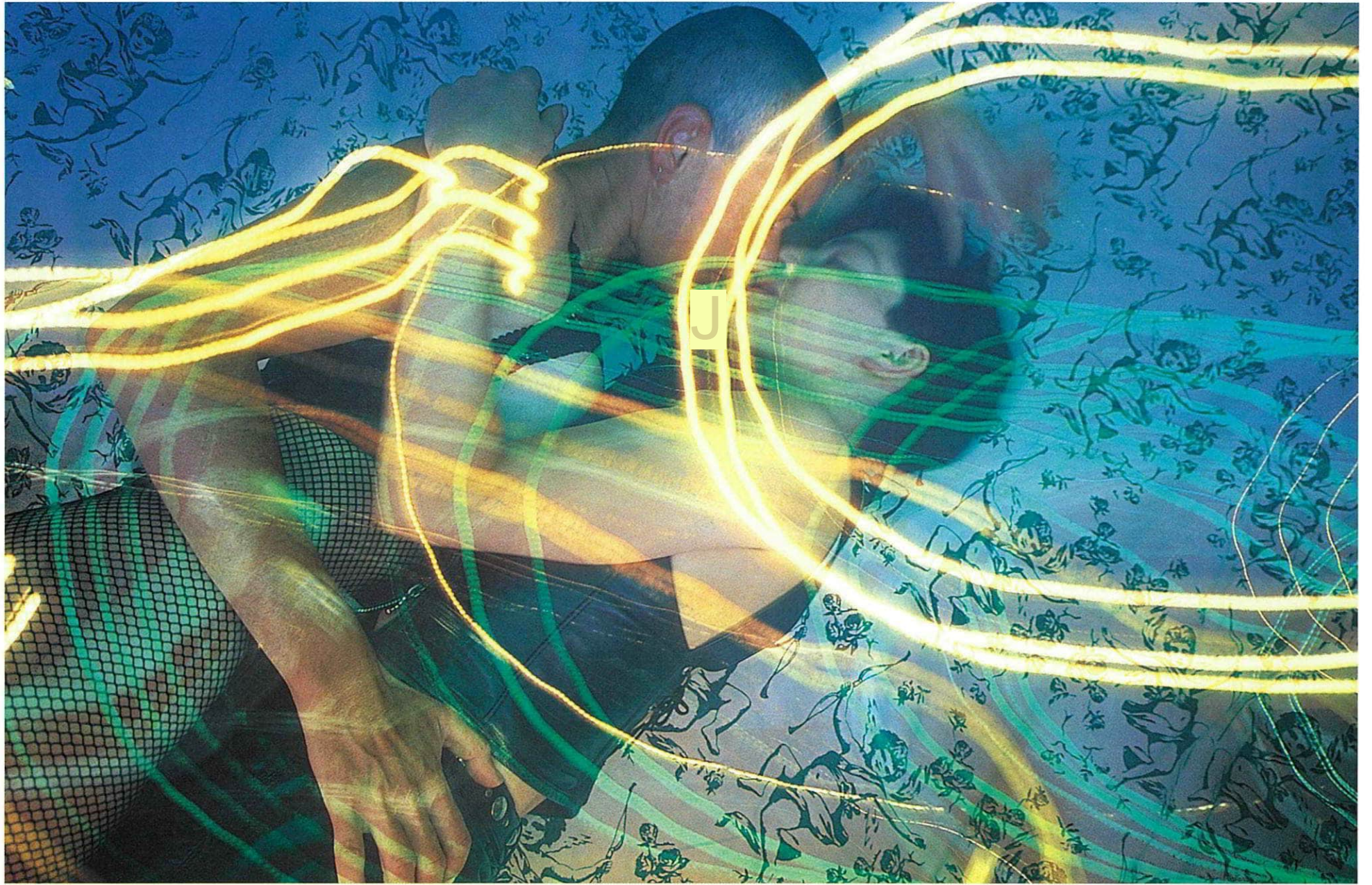
sights break thro"gh Stra'ght

lined four co er@d do>e.?

Yesterday i saw two huge

dO^cs 8t one small girl.

They were both walking her.



playing leather

she puts on a growl
a second skin
takes hold of her

she ventures out
butch butch
people gaze shout

“a cute butch”
purrs a woman
at a party

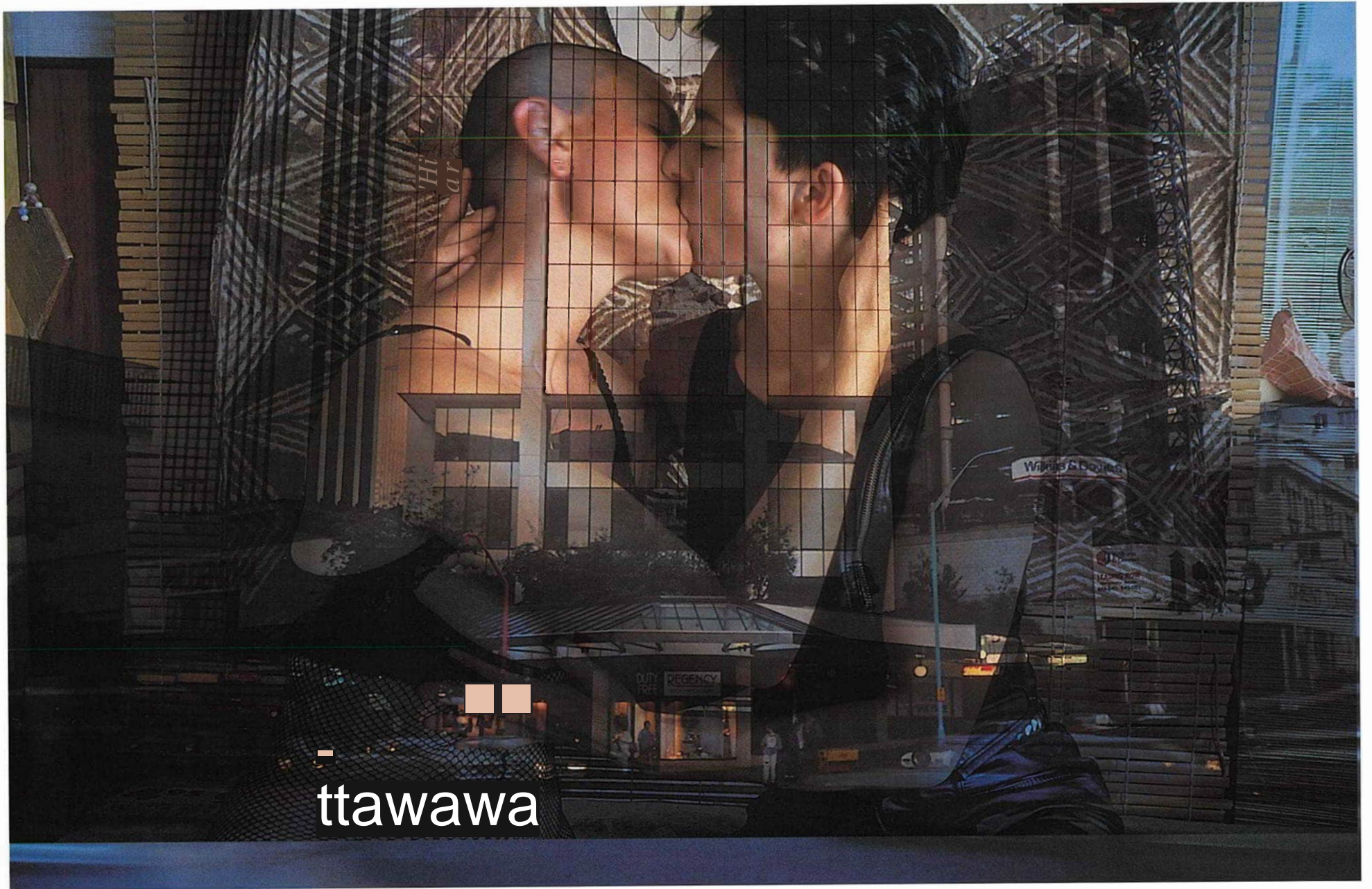
she grows new toes
feet binding the earth
no longer a pushover

she likes her feral smell
her sharper teeth
biting at boundaries

a small nibble
just enough spice
to jog her pulse &

torch her music
take pleasure in her
own hard arms coming

home at twilight easing
off her great coat
bedding it with a wet kiss



-
ttawawa

Miss Furr & Miss Skeene are not laughing anymore

“gay is no longer
a nice word”

a woman wrote
in a letter
to The Listener

(& she wsn't Miss Furr
& she wsn't Miss Skeene

“gay used to mean

light-hearted

sportive

mirthful”

Gertrude please tell her tell her gayly
gw has become very nice
in the nineties
a fashion accessory
& all the stars are coming out

slipping off the tongues *gay*
of announcers into
every living room

buddy, gay buddy of mine
blancmange in my mouth

(& Miss Furr & Miss Skeene are crying
it's not funny anymore

a cipher
morse in the dark

to outlaws

balancing on

the margins

little closets one side

new frontiers on the other

(Gertrude was a bowler
there
bowling over

straight

fences

winning wick(et)s
showing them

our tits

“beginning again & again & again”

1981

“the gals in ponsonby
doing their bit”

& we all sang
the topp twins chorus

“graffiti raiders”
graffiti writers

my ears still play
the same trick

I like it better
& this grainy

black & white photo
women’s bodies
& motorcycle helmets

leaning into each other
easy arm across a shoulder
thighs planing thighs
a line more solid than a jumbo bin

I know

I’d “cross that road” again
Islingtono’neillpompalier

orargyle
eyeball the red squad
AMANDLA with you

wheeling above the gluepot
on a toppie yodel



..vdjW

iu

today you are this other

queer face

this David

across a ferry's table

braced

(like me

for the chop

of the Gulf

between us

another David

Firenze

Freda & I discovering 'amore*

young enough

to be awed by a man

big in his nakedness

"superb" said Freda

I looked

into a distant stone gaze

(are those hearts

stroked pale unblemished marble

shivered

we roll into the swell of the channel

Motuihe

Motutapu

I look at you

Florentine nose

strong chin

single ear-ring

the sun nets your hair in angel's gold

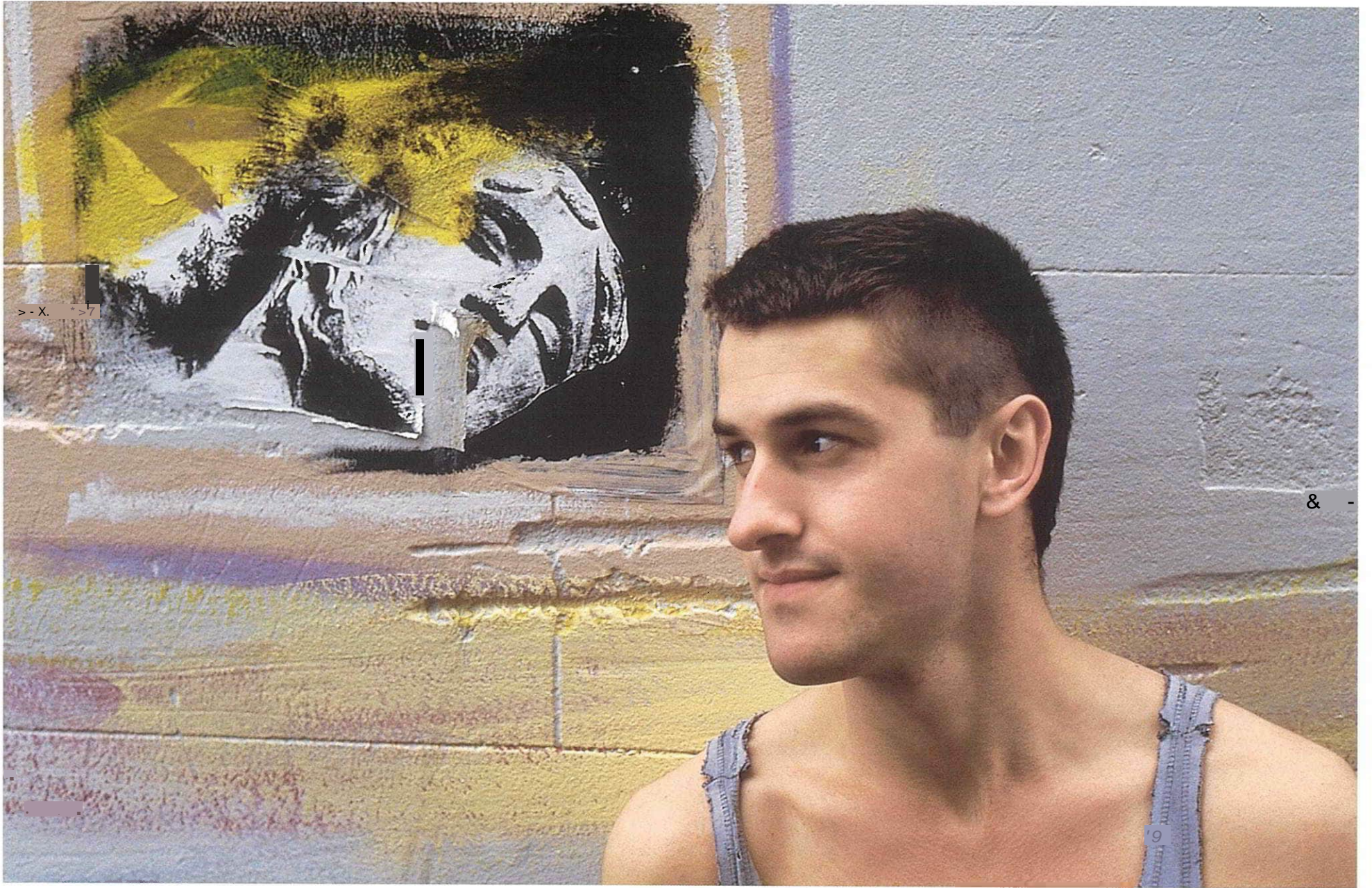
not one muscle moves in your face

you're someone's beautiful boy

& I'm a dyke

with lined & marbled hands

(warm to the touch







Biographies

Sue Fitchett, born in Lower Hutt, New Zealand, is a Waiheke Island poet and clinical psychologist working for Waitemata Health. She has a life-long passion for poetry and in recent years developed a curiosity about written text as a visual object, and the page as a textual field. She became interested in the possibility of a collaborative project with a visual artist through discussion with poet and scholar Michele Leggott. Her work has been published in literary journals, periodicals, selections, anthologies and she was co-author of *Drawing Together*, with Marina Bachmann and Janet Charman (Spiral/New Women's Press, 1985). She recently co-edited the lesbian companion volume, *Eat These Sweet Words*, of *The New Zealand Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Poetry* with Marewa Glover, Cary McDermott, Rhona Vickoce and Jonathan Fisher (Giant Press, 1999). She was co-winner of the 1998 New Zealand Poetry Society's International Poetry Competition.

Jane Zusters was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, and has had a life lived in making art. She is a painter as well as a photographer. She was first introduced to photography while a student at Canterbury University, Ham Art School. Rhondda Bosworth was her mentor and their friendship the catalyst in her exploration of the medium. In June 1981 Jane's photographs were the first colour portfolio published in *Photo-Forum*. Her manifesto at the time said she was interested in colour, light and love. These themes continue today. Over the years she has done much voyaging from her Waiheke Island studio/home.

*"photography is an ongoing passion of mine which continues
to reflect my own interior worlds" 1990*

(Catalogue, Sarjeant Gallery - photographic award)

Notes

Page 13 Quote from *Islands of the Gul/* by Shirley Maddock; Collins. Auckland; 1983; p. 73.

Page 36 Found poem: From *The Culinary Arts Institute Encyclopedic Cookbook*: Ed. Ruth Brolzheim; Pub: Culinary Arts Institute; Chicago; Dist. Grosset & Dunlap; New York: First pub. 1948 (Book Productions Industries Inc.) Rev. 1950. 1959, 1962.

Page 40 Quote from *Birds of America* by John James Audubon (*Marsh Wren*); Abeville Edition, 1990.

Quoted word used by Lorine Niedecker in correspondence with Louis Zukofsky. Referenced in *Niedecker and the Correspondence with Zukofsky 19a/-197(7)* by Jenny Penberlhy; Duke University Press; Durham, North Carolina. 1993. Correspondence to word in poem by Niedecker (*For Paul; Group 8, I (fall): From This Condensers: The Complete Writings of Lorine Niedecker*). The Jargon Society; Highlands. North Carolina. 1985; p. 69.

Page 41 Quote from poem. Lorine Niedecker (*Consider at the onset: My Life by Water: Collected Poems 1936-1968*); Fulcrum Press. London. 1970; p. 96. Ingredients referred to in poem are also in Niedecker's poem.

Page 47 Quote from lecture. Gertrude Stein (*Composition as Explanation*) Lecture given to Oxford & Cambridge literary-societies 1926. First published by the Hogarth Press. London, 1926.

Reference to material in *Another Mother Tongue; Gay Words. Gay Worlds* by Judy Grahn; Beacon Press; Boston. 1984.

Page 48 Quotes from songs with permission: *Graffiti Raider* Jools & Lynda Topp; *Paradise* Lynda & Jools Topp.

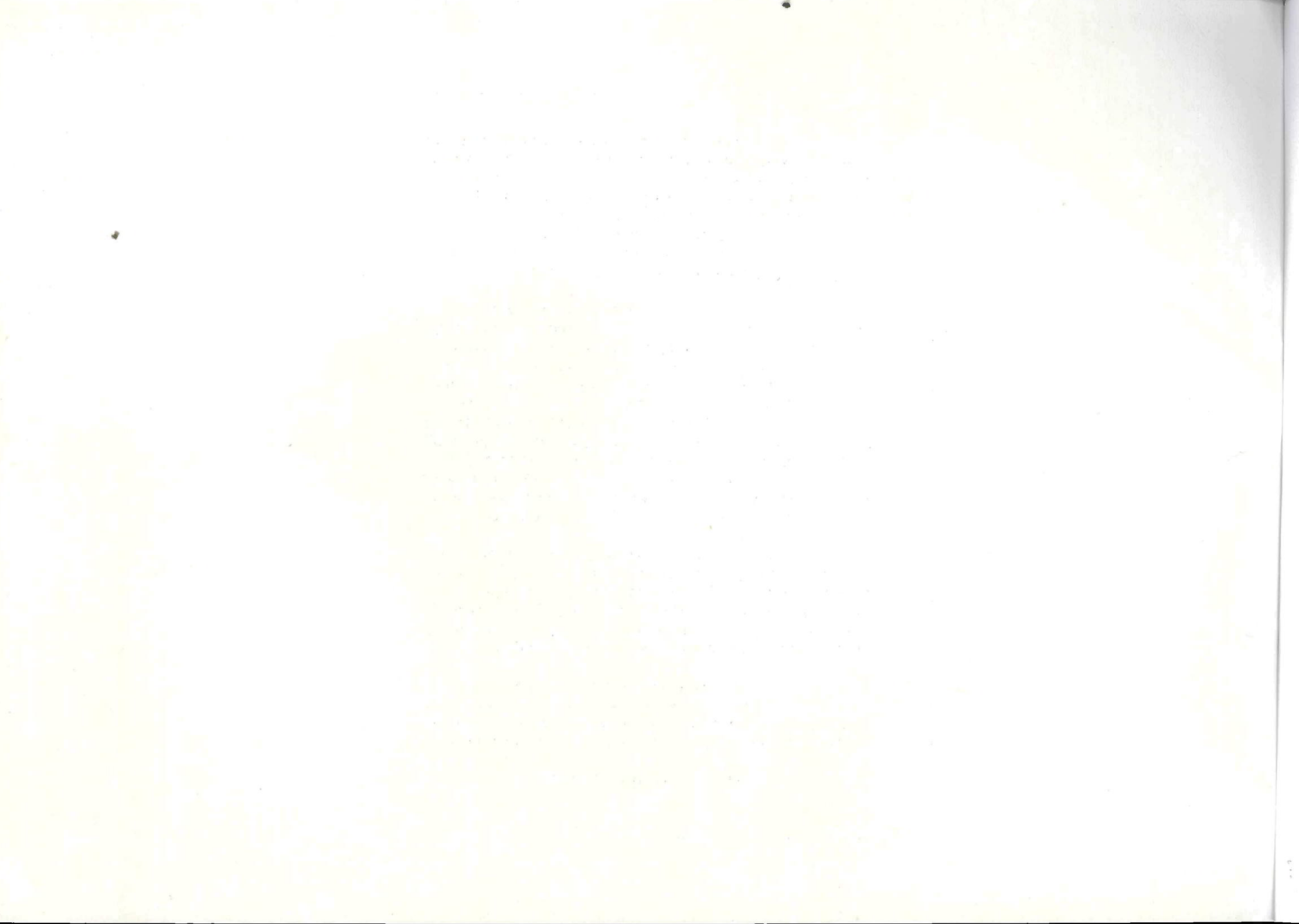
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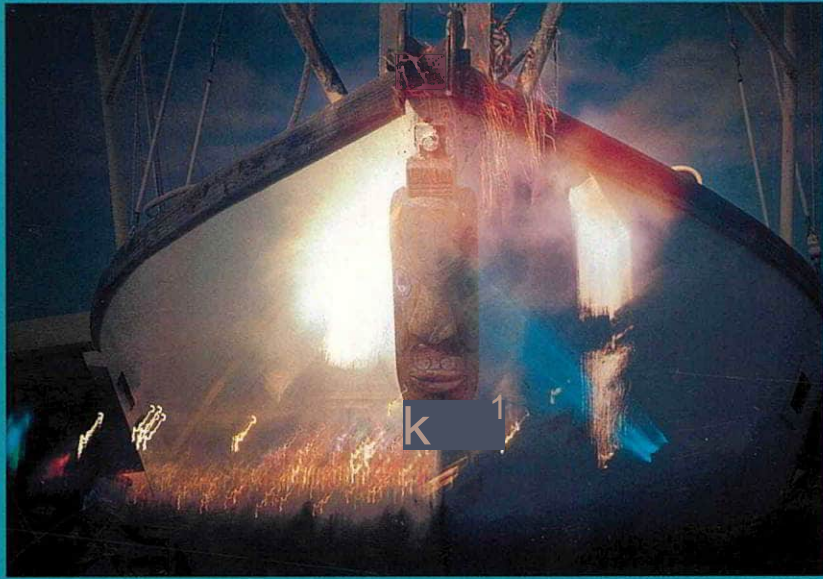
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