

# FREERANGE VOL4: ALMOST HOME

*Sydney*

*Wellington*

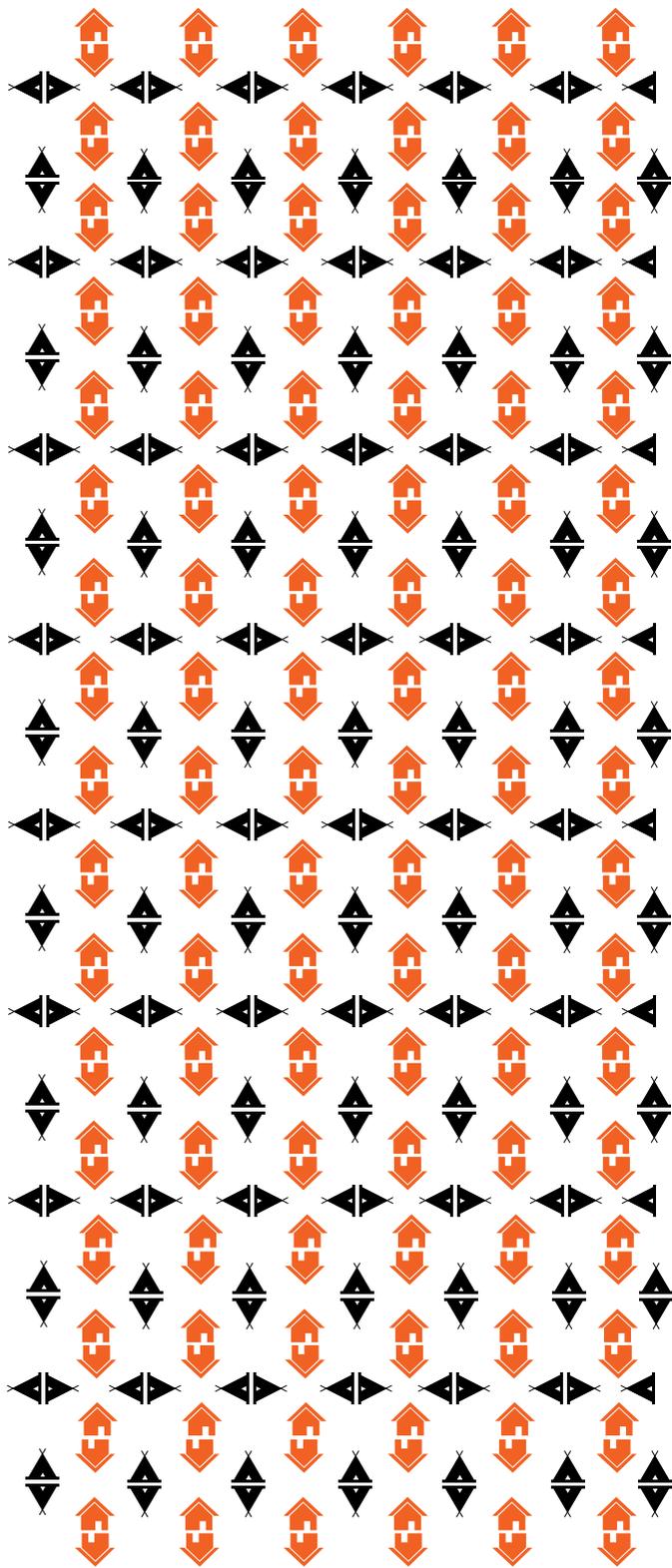
*New York*

*Kiribati*

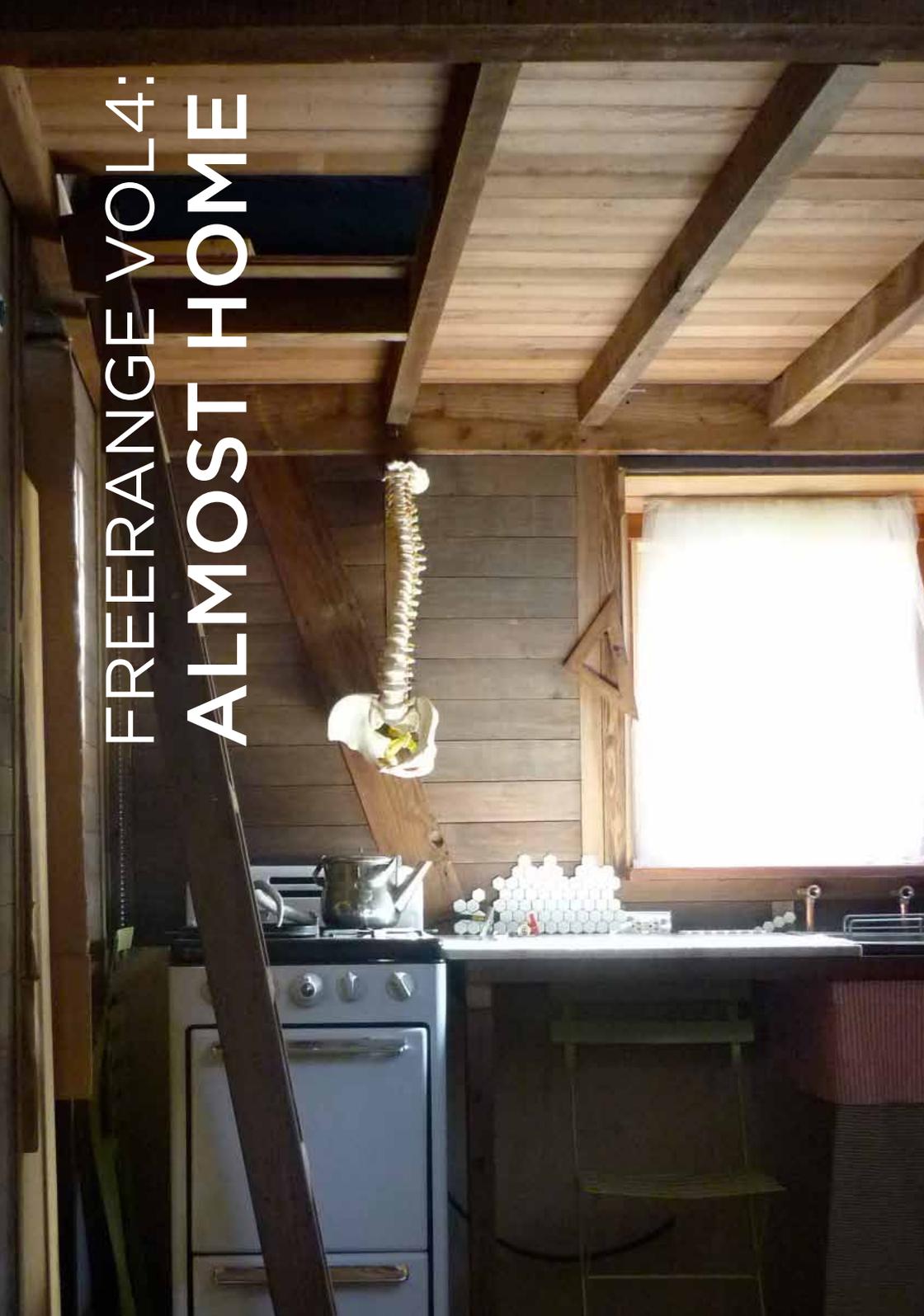
*Melbourne*

*Bhopal*

*Christchurch*



# FREERANGE VOL4: ALMOST HOME



***Freerange Vol4: Almost Home***



Published by Freerange Press  
*Aotearoa, Atlantis, Australia & etc*

This material may have previously appeared on the FR website  
[www.projectfreerange.com](http://www.projectfreerange.com)

Print: 978-0-473-20075-6  
Digital: 978-0-473-20076-3

**Freerange Journal**  
Print: ISSN 1179-8106  
Digital: ISSN 1179-8114

Freerange 4

*Almost Home*

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It is estimated  
that the human  
population will reach  
9.2 billion by the year  
2050. We've reached  
7 billion now.



# INTRODUCTION: UNSETTLEMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

By  
**Hana Bojangles:**  
**Wellington**

*Hana Bojangles is a journalist who celebrates the good things. She also teaches people the soil secrets of backyard food production, plays drums in exchange for dinner, makes props, puppets and costumes for whoever's game, and is still figuring out how to really be in many places at once, in a beneficial, community-creating, wonder-reviving, kind of way.*

*"What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on? — If you cannot tolerate the planet that it is on?"*

Henry Thoreau, in a letter to Harrison Blake, 20 May, 1860.

Well, what is the use of a home if the planet we make it on can't tolerate us?

It is estimated that the human population will reach 9.2 billion by the year 2050. We've reached 7 billion now.

Based on the rate of greenhouse gases that have already been released into the atmosphere, we will reach nearly two and a half degrees of warming in the next 20-30 years, causing more than 50% extinction of the planet's biomass. Some places will become uninhabitable. Millions of people will become displaced as 'climate refugees', a new demographic to go with 'economic migrants' and 'political refugees'.

This is just one of many unsettling thoughts that we are faced with in this century. So as it is in any relationship, we are going to have to make some serious commitments if we are to continue calling this planet home. And with conditions unlike ever before, we can't simply revert to living simple lives on self-sufficient quarter acre farmlets. There just isn't enough room.

We gotta embrace ways of the future. It's time to support, engage with, and keep our eyes on innovative systems that might seem complicated and new fangled at first. We have ourselves in a delicate and complex situation here – it's not going to be easy but it doesn't have to be hopelessly overwhelming either. It can be difficult to know when not to interfere and when to get amongst it. It's a process that comes with any conscientious decision, whether it's about landscaping your garden or legislating the genetic modification of crops. We begin to ask, what is 'nature' doing, what are we doing, and how can we work together?

The very concept of home is even more complex now than it has ever been before. It is so many things: a house, a place, a country, an idea, a memory, a feeling of comfort or familiarity, a group or population of people. It is a place where you belong, a place you can return to, 9.

a place where you've settled. It is a lot of places. It might not even be a place at all.

In this issue, our contributors explore home – as a place and a sense – by literally climbing their local landmarks, by poking around the concept of shelter as a human right, by questioning our cultural interpretations, and more. Some of these enquiries seem timeless, stretching back to before humans were even humans, others are very much topical, predicaments of the 21st Century.

I offer myself as an example of someone who is always settled and unsettled all at once. I've never had that one 'childhood home' where I grew up, or even a 'home town' for that matter. I am one of those kids who you meet more and more of these days. One of those kids who, when you ask them where they're from they might tell you that their mother is from here, their father is from there, but that they grew up here and there and all over the place. As a result, I don't feel any more at home at my actual home than I do anywhere else. Equally, I feel just as at home anywhere as I do at my own home. I don't really know what it feels like to be 'settled' somewhere. For me, there's only getting settled, which is a constant, ongoing and so far, lifelong pursuit.

I'm a child of the developed world meeting the third world, a child of the golden age of oil and affordable global travel. I'm used to being a foreigner no matter where I am. I don't take borders seriously. There is not one single place in the world where I blend in as a local, whether it's because of my accent, my language, or my context.

For the past two years I've experimented with settlement. I've settled into a home where I have made long term plans for things such as a windmill, where I have archetypes like chickens and a garden to anchor me down.

One of my diehard goals in life is not to be a tourist. Part of this endeavour is learning how to make myself at home in the most efficient way possible. First step, go buy a loaf of bread at the local bakery, or a bowl of soup from the local street vendor and make friends with the people who work there – observe, listen and exchange. Remind myself that there's nothing else to see but this. Lay that FOMO to rest.

Today I believe that it's possible to contribute to a place without being a full-time, lifetime inhabitant of that place. We joke about teleportation devices but technology has made it virtually possible for us – sometimes without us even knowing – to be in more than one place at once, and a part of communities in places where we've never even set foot.

Maybe this is a good thing. Maybe it's not. As long as we get off the wide web and spend an equal amount of time in our actual local environment. Because settling means taking responsibility for a place and contributing to a community. But seeing the world as a stranger can also mean appreciating it, acknowledging the transient nature of being human and our time on earth.

We have to redefine what home is. It's not somewhere or something we can get too attached to, yet it is something that we must be committed to.

Ultimately home is the whole planet, the universe and beyond. We share our home with billions of other humans, and billions upon billions of other species. As we "make ourselves at home" here, let's not forget we're not the only ones. Maybe it is best for everyone if we remain always and evermore "almost home," always in that place that is never entirely ours, from where we are committed to earning a real sense of belonging.

# GUIDE

TO REMOVING STUBBORN  
COMMON HOUSEHOLD

# STAINS

WINE  .....

 BLOOD

BLOOD  .....

 MILK

TEARS  .....

 MORE TEARS  
(TRY SPILLING MILK)

MOTOR OIL  .....

 RUB WITH CHOP,  
LEAVE OVERNIGHT

POO  .....

(OR "DOO-DEE")

 +  MILK AND  
AVOCADO

AVOCADO  .....

 CARDOMOM

JAM  .....

 +  SET FIRE TO  
REGION AROUND  
STAIN, THEN  
DOUSE EMBERS  
WITH MILK.  
REPEAT IF  
NECESSARY

MILK  .....

 MILK

A  
**GUIDE**  
TO PICKING WHAT KIND  
OF COMMON HOUSEHOLD  
TOOL YOU ARE:  
BASED ON GENERIC  
PERSONALITY TRAITS

- OFTEN ANGRY,  
PROBLEM DRINKER..... Mallet  

- BORED AT WORK..... Hacksaw  

- SAD. POOR DRIVER..... Butterknife  

- COLOUR-BLIND,  
MINOR PEANUT ALLERGIES..... Diamond-tipped  
Hand Drill  

- FOND OF CATS,  
FAIRLY HUNGRY..... Tennis Ball  


A

# GUIDE

TO AVENGING YOUR PARENTS' DEATH AT THE HANDS OF A WILD ANIMAL

— VOLUME I: —  
SELECTING A WEAPON



# GOING... GONE: KIRIBATI AND THE HUNGRY TIDE

By Tania Leimbach

*Tania Leimbach writes for exhibitions and journals, keeps up her own print-media work, and likes to collaborate on public art projects when the stars align. She's currently working on a thesis at the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney. Her research questions what it means to live sustainably, how to make it happen and what art has to do with it.*

Tom Zubrycki: *Tom Zubrycki has earned an international reputation for his substantial and widely-respected body of documentaries. He works mainly in an observational style and his films are narrative-based and strongly character-driven. In 2000 he won two Australian Film Institute Awards (Best Director and Best Documentary) for a documentary called 'The Diplomat' ([www.tomzubrycki.com/films-director.html#Diplomat](http://www.tomzubrycki.com/films-director.html#Diplomat)), about Jose Ramos-Horta, the exiled East Timorese freedom-fighter.*

Tom's latest film *The Hungry Tide*, is about the Pacific nation of Kiribati – one of the countries in the world most vulnerable to climate change. Leading up to the Copenhagen Climate Change conference in 2009, Tom spent time getting to know the local Kiribati community in Sydney and met Maria Tiimon, who became the central character for the film. Maria lives in Sydney, supporting her extended family in Kiribati through work as a climate change advocate. The film weaves Maria's trips to Copenhagen and Cancun to capture recent international events with a close look at life on the remote islands of Kiribati.

Tania interviewed Tom in July 2011 to talk about his film, and hear his thoughts on the slowly disappearing islands of Kiribati.

TL: *The main character in the film, Maria Tiimon, works between Sydney and Kiribati, campaigning for climate action for the Pacific. She's a strong woman living between two cultures. How did you come to meet Maria and find your way into the story and the culture?*

TZ: I met Maria at an event put on by The Pacific Calling Partnership, out of the Edmund Rice Centre in Sydney. It was a day devoted to issues around the Pacific, particularly climate change. I've been interested in Kiribati for a long time and felt that meeting people directly affected would be the way to make this film.



We went to Kiribati twice together. The first shooting trip was with Maria after her mother had just passed away, so it was an emotional time.

*TL: Your film shows changing environmental conditions – rising sea levels, brackish water, drought – on the islands of Kiribati. I'm wondering about the speed of change and whether it's increasing?*

*TZ: Yes, it's exponential. Most climate scientists are giving up hope in temperatures being kept to a 2° rise by 2100. As temperatures rise the Greenland ice sheets will melt, and already scientists predict that in 20-30 years time the North Pole won't exist as such. The rate of the melt contributes to sea level rise and recent analyses are predicting more than 1 metre rise in sea level by 2100. The implications are pretty disastrous, and it could be that vast numbers of people will perish.*

*TL: So the islands of Kiribati will disappear?*

*TZ: Not completely, but they'll be seriously inundated. The maximum height on the main island of Tarawa is about 2 metres, and the average height across the islands is 1-2 metres, so large sections of the atolls will be covered at high tide.*

*TL: The President Anote Tong talks about long-term goals of relocation for the people of Kiribati, as well as raising and channelling funds for short-term mitigation. He's talking about really difficult decisions – many which have no precedent.*

*TZ: Deliberations are beginning, although*

*those decisions are not happening right now. As the years go on, they'll have to be made as the sea level rises. Most people in Kiribati are living day to day. The income level is generally very low. On the outer islands it's subsistence living – fishing, copra, breadfruit and taro.*

*TL: What is your understanding of climate refugees?*

*TZ: It's interesting how the phrase is being used now. The problem is you talk to a lawyer and they'll say that 'climate refugee' doesn't exist as a category in international law. That's because refugee implies persecution – you might imply it was persecution by the environment, but that's tough to make into a salient argument right now.*

*TL: It seems that people may want to move, but it's getting close to a point where they don't have a choice, where it's just about survival – is that right?*

*TZ: That's right, so that's why the president has said, "ok we are going to move with dignity, we don't want to call ourselves climate refugees, we don't want to go cap in hand." He aspires for the people of Kiribati to have something to contribute to their host country and he's talking about building new skills and knowledge in preparation. But it's also very utopian. You have a mass of very unskilled people, who mostly fish for a living.*

*TL: In the short-term, efforts to improve living*

*conditions and address the impacts of climate change are happening in Kiribati. Did Copenhagen help at all in moving things forward?*

TZ: Copenhagen was a huge disappointment. At the conference the Pacific nations were calling for carbon emission reductions to slow temperatures to a 1.5-degree rise over the century. This seems like a dream now, there's so little agreement internationally. Promises were made and money was earmarked at Copenhagen for Kiribati, but it hasn't been received. In the short term, public infrastructure is in a bad state. Currently, there's only enough money for four out of eleven proposed projects and the central government can't really help the smaller communities. Health and good safe drinking water is the priority. The money promised at Copenhagen was planned for building up the sea walls and for better drinking water, and that money hasn't arrived yet.

*TL: How has the government of New Zealand and Australia related with Kiribati in recent years – are they supporting relocation?*

TZ: At the moment migration is a long and drawn-out process. Kiribati is kind of stuck out there in the Pacific without the strong ties of other Polynesian islands. That's partly why the future prospects for the nation and its people are so troubling. The

reason that we filmed the 'Pacific workers' in Robenvale, Victoria, is that they represent people who are potentially new migrants working in the horticultural industries in Australia. But they are only temporary guest workers, and they have to go back to Kiribati.

*TL: Can you talk about the cultural dimensions of relocating to New Zealand or Australia and how you think that may play out?*

TZ: Well, it will be difficult. You can see that now with the small number of people from Kiribati in Sydney and Melbourne; There's a high level of unemployment, and a lot of single women with kids, which is a particular fact of marrying Australian men and divorcing them after a short period of time. Another aspect of the migrant experience is that the first generation really struggles but the second generation often do very well, generally through education. You see that with Afghan and Hazara refugees and what happens to the younger generation, they just blossom.

In the case of Kiribati, it's going to be more difficult for the people who come from the remote islands. For those on the main island Tarawa, they are already living in a semi-urbanised environment where the cash economy is important, so the transition won't be so hard. The old people of Kiribati

cannot entertain the idea of moving – it would be tantamount to dying; Maria’s Dad talks about this. Younger people are generally more adaptive and moving may not be so threatening. If you’ve got a family and aspirations for education and work, you’ll move anywhere there are opportunities.

The big question is one of culture and adaptation. You can see Kiribati has a strong communal culture – they like dancing, eating, cooking – doing everything in community. So transplanting yourself to a new environment where you don’t have that to fall back on is going to be difficult. The only thing that helps is if there are other people around who are in the same position. Like any group that migrates, there’s great strength in numbers.

*TL: The film brings home the hard reality of climate change for certain communities. The ‘island paradise’ is a pretty strong collective image, the tropical warmth, slow-pace and easy beauty, and we see it is gradually sinking under rising sea levels. It’s a sad reality to watch.*

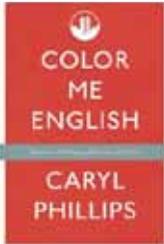
TZ: It is, and for the people of Kiribati it’s unlike the situation of other refugees from Sudan or elsewhere, who can return home eventually. The problem for people from Kiribati is that over the next century their homeland could become extinct. That is an unsettling thing; especially since,

traditionally, there is a strong connection with past generations. Family burial sites are built close to communities, and the idea of living with your ancestors is important, so when that link is broken things will inevitably be different. In the film, Maria visits her mother’s grave and this has particular significance for her, living between Sydney and Kiribati.

*TL: There are no practical solutions for that kind of loss. Do you think the psychological impact of climate change will be taken more seriously over time?*

TZ: No doubt the rate of population migration through climate change is going to increase over the next century. That’s going to create an incredible sense of psychological dislocation, with many more people who are feeling like they’re pulled two ways. If you can’t go home, and you can’t get back to that link with your past, it will be a question of something in the memory, in the individual and collective psyche and that’s it. The full dimensions are going to be hard to measure.

*The Hungry Tide is screening on SBS (The Australian Special Broadcasting Service) in late 2011. It’s doing the international festival circuit and can be accessed via [www.thehungrytide.com.au](http://www.thehungrytide.com.au). This is the edited version of an interview in July 2011.*



## COLOR ME ENGLISH: MIGRATION AND BELONGING BEFORE AND AFTER 9/11

*Reviewed by*  
**Minna Ninova:**  
**New York**

*Minna Ninova strives to always look on the bright side of life, as suggested by the 1979 film Monty Python's Life of Brian. Failing that, she makes maps and writes...or is it takes naps and fights? She's not sure. She'll get back to you. In the meantime, she lives in Brooklyn, USA*

At the beginning of her 1967 essay *On Home*, Joan Didion takes care to clarify that “by ‘home’ I do not mean the house in Los Angeles where my husband and I and the baby live, but the place where my family is, in the Central Valley of California. It is a vital although troublesome distinction.” You have to take her word for it unless you’re intimately familiar with California’s regional quirks, but her last words ring true no matter where you come from or where you’ve been: there’s your house and then there’s home and sometimes the difference between the two is so great it hurts.

In *Color Me English: Migration and Belonging Before and After 9/11* (The New Press, August 2011), the St. Kitts-born British author Caryl Phillips suggests that the distinction between house and home is even more troubling if your family is from the West Indies or Southeast Asia or Africa and your house (or flat, as the case may be) is in England. A young Caryl Phillips – the only black student at a Leeds high school – learns quickly that white Britons don’t always mind their manners when it comes to dealing with people of color (or is it colour? We Americans discriminate against extra vowels). “The first time one is called a ‘nigger’ or told to ‘go back to where you came from’”, Phillips writes in the essay *Necessary Journeys*, “one’s identity is traduced and a great violence is done to one’s sense of self”. It makes Didion’s distinction feel almost quaint by comparison, if only in the sense that it’s hard to imagine anyone in Los Angeles yelling at her to go back to where she came from and calling her names...but you never know. It was the 60s, people were on edge.

Phillips attempts to do for race in the 90s and 00s what Didion did for American cultural identity in the 60s with *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*: to capture something elusive, broad and complicated by way of the essay collection, a format that can make a complicated issue slightly more accessible, like sitting down to a meal of non-fiction tapas. Phillips’s collection is about race and racism, yet he doesn’t quite write about those things. He writes about displacement of peoples and notions of home. He writes about cultures and identities formed in the crossing of borders. He writes about the song *Strange Fruit* as it relates to lynching in the American south. He

writes about Luther Vandross, the movie *Bullworth*, E.R. Braithwaite (whom Sidney Poitier portrayed in the film adaptation of *To Sir With Love*) and the Chinese American author Ha Jin. He writes about African immigrants in France and British writers in Japan. He writes about Israel, Leeds, Sierra Leone and New York City. Shakespeare's Othello makes several appearances. Indeed, rarely does he demand that we read his words exclusively through the prism of race and I suspect that coming across one of these essays in the Guardian (where the author is a frequent contributor) is an uplifting experience: Phillips's writing comes from a place of deep compassion and a belief in society's ability to correct injustice. It's only via repetition of certain themes (institutional racism in Britain, mistrust and assimilation of immigrant culture, the African American experience) that the collection begins to gain a cloak of melancholy seriousness that doesn't always suit it.

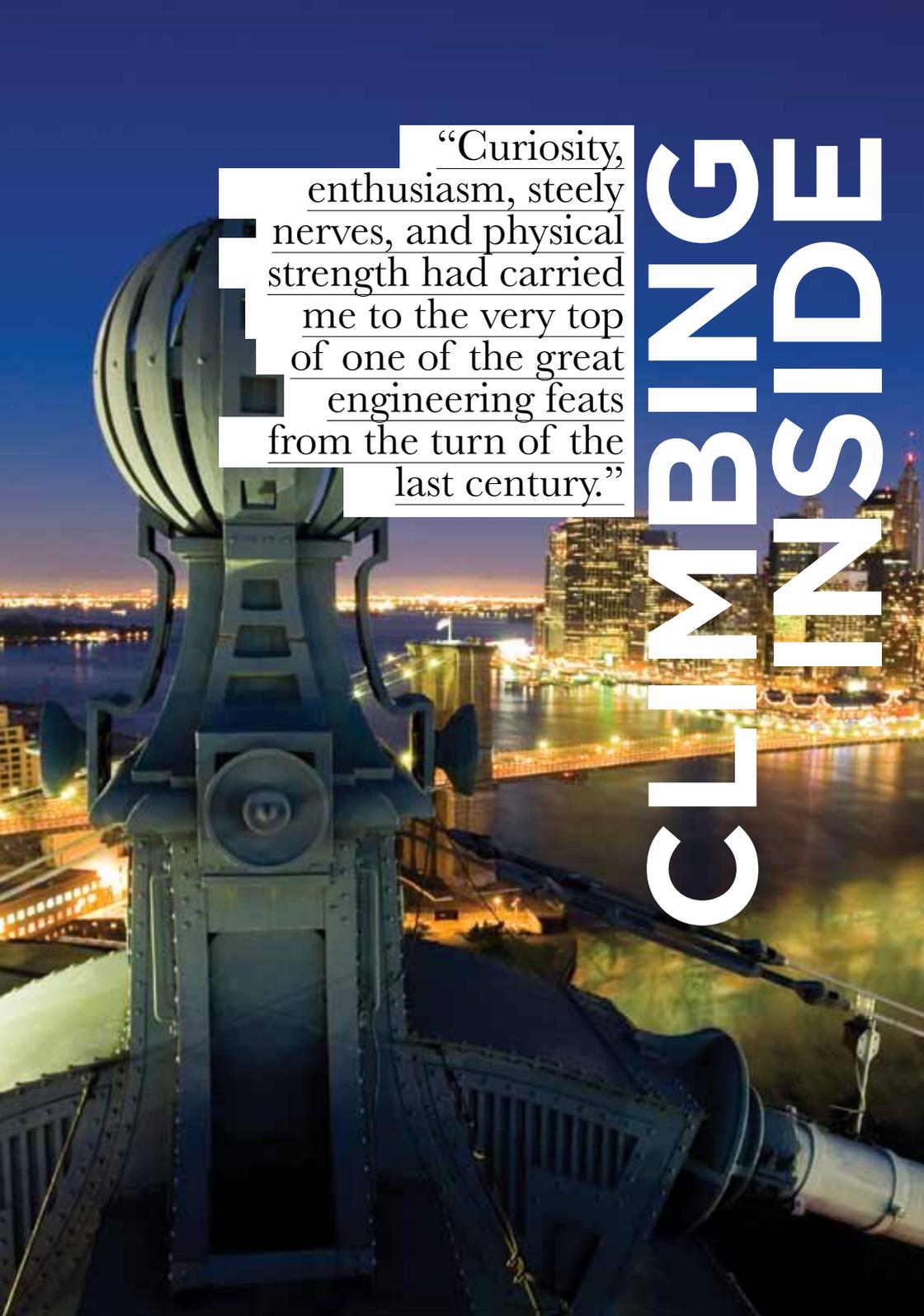
The 38 essays, written between 1993 and 2009, show a talented, curious writer growing into his convictions while turning personal and societal trauma into elegant prose. They also demonstrate Phillips's commitment to the idea that writing in general and story telling in particular can help us grapple with difficult problems. Literature for Phillips isn't just a cultural artifact, it's "a force for change" and a device for locating ourselves in time and space. "How does one have a black face and be European? This has been one of the great essay questions of my life," he writes in the introductory essay and it's true that his own life makes for some of the more compelling essay topics. Writing for him is a journey not to be taken lightly or underestimated which probably helps explain

Phillips's penchant for profiles of esoteric literary figures like Lefcadio Hearn. Along with the somewhat arbitrary, non-sequential ordering of the essays, these portraits rob the collection of some momentum. The subtitle, too, is misleading\*. Phillips witnessed the devastation in New York City on September 11th, 2001, and wrote about it eloquently in the moving piece *Ground Zero*. However, there is nothing in the structuring of the essays to suggest a "before" and an "after", especially since *Ground Zero* and three other post-9/11 pieces are placed at the very beginning of the volume. No doubt intended as a lure for American readership, the flimsy reference to the attacks is nevertheless superficial and a wee crude. The reader is advised to quickly navigate around such distractions and to chart his or her own course through the volume.

A helpful hint: save the essay on Leeds for last. Here you'll find Phillips returning to his first English home and meditating on the physical and psychological landscapes of the city which makes for a nice sendoff, especially after a summer that many Britons will remember for its destructive riots and public debates about cultural difference, assimilation and social order. The events highlighted the need for writers like Phillips whose work, if anything, stands for the value of cultural difference and the acknowledgement that few of us get to choose the bonds we form with our houses, streets, cities, countries and – for lack of a less troublesome term – our homes.

***The New Press, \$25.95 (American)***

\* This fulmination applies only to the American edition. The British edition is properly vowel-ed and features an image of white people on a red bus. Go figure.



“Curiosity,  
enthusiasm, steely  
nerves, and physical  
strength had carried  
me to the very top  
of one of the great  
engineering feats  
from the turn of the  
last century.”

# CLIMBING EDSIDE

# THE GIANT

By *Elizabeth Rush:*  
*New York*

*Elizabeth Rush's work has appeared in Granta, Le Monde Diplomatique, Asian Art News, the New Orleans Review, and the Seneca Review. A member of the Makoto Photography Agency you can see more of her work at [www.makotophotographic.com](http://www.makotophotographic.com).*

The metal girders of Manhattan Bridge still held the warmth of the sun. It was well past midnight and the summer was coming to an end. For the previous month, I'd been having fever dreams. I made my body crescent shaped, turned it in the direction of the fan and tried to sleep. And sleep I would, for an hour or two, seeing some form of the apocalypse. Then wake, sleep, and wake again. On and on till morning. The days themselves waivered like heat-lines rising off the pavement. It was my second summer in New York, and it was delirium.

"Kiss me," Steve said, just before we scaled the chain-link fence that separated us from the north tower of Manhattan Bridge, "for good luck."

Suddenly I understood how easily a human body could slip into a structure that I had always thought of as impenetrable. Girders ran up the tower's outside wall. Like over-sized X's, the hot metal crossed once every ten feet or so. I kept my back pressed up against the inner wall, which was solid, and climbed, hand over fist, using the girders like the rungs on a ladder.

I had been living in Brooklyn for a year and still felt like an outsider. I wasn't a tourist, but the city also wasn't mine. I did not belong to it and it did not belong to me. People say it takes ten years before you can call yourself a New Yorker. The funny thing was that after a year of living on 10<sup>th</sup> street I didn't even know if I wanted that title.

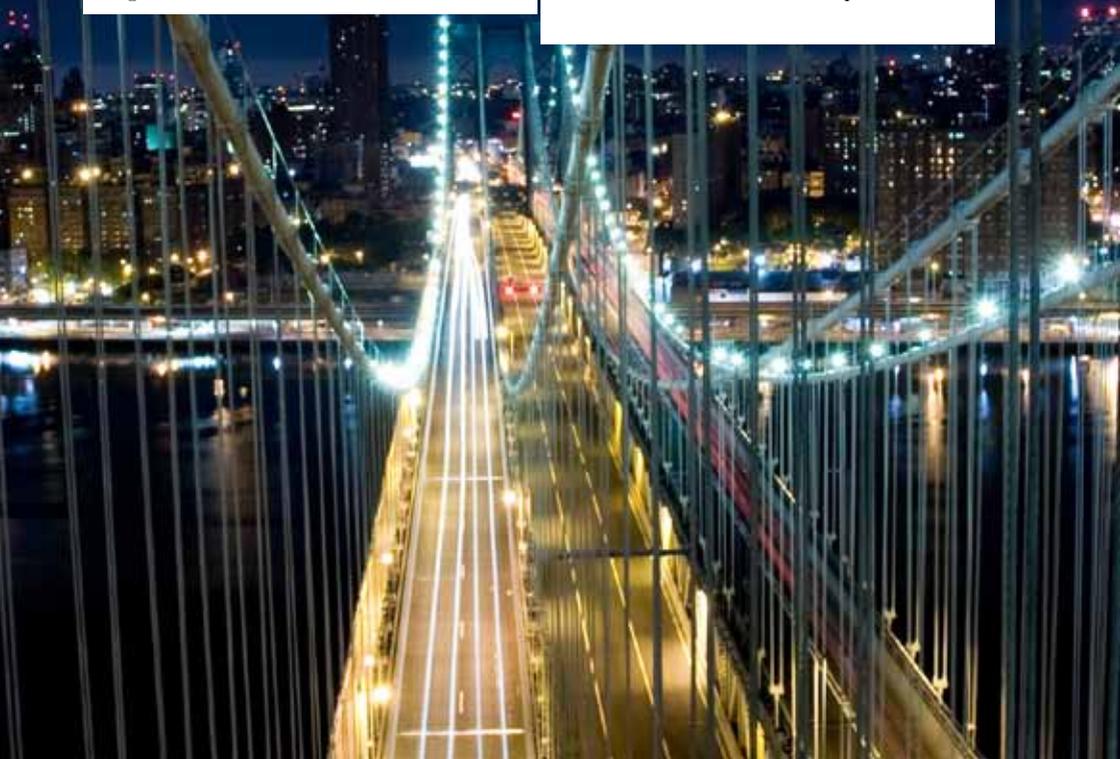
I was a tiny bug. I was clambering up inside the body of a giant. I was a super hero. Then I popped out a little trap door at the top. Steve and I had been climbing for nearly twenty minutes. All it took was 322 vertical feet to crack that city wide open like a pomegranate tossed against a rock. There it was before me: its gleaming insides – windows, and people sleeping, tiny seeds, vital organs – all vulnerable and exposed. I panted and lay on my stomach, pleased with myself and with the large metal globes that decorated the bridge's pinnacle and the sleeping city beyond. We cracked a beer and leaned into each other. Every truck that drove beneath us made the metal hum. In every strong gust of wind I

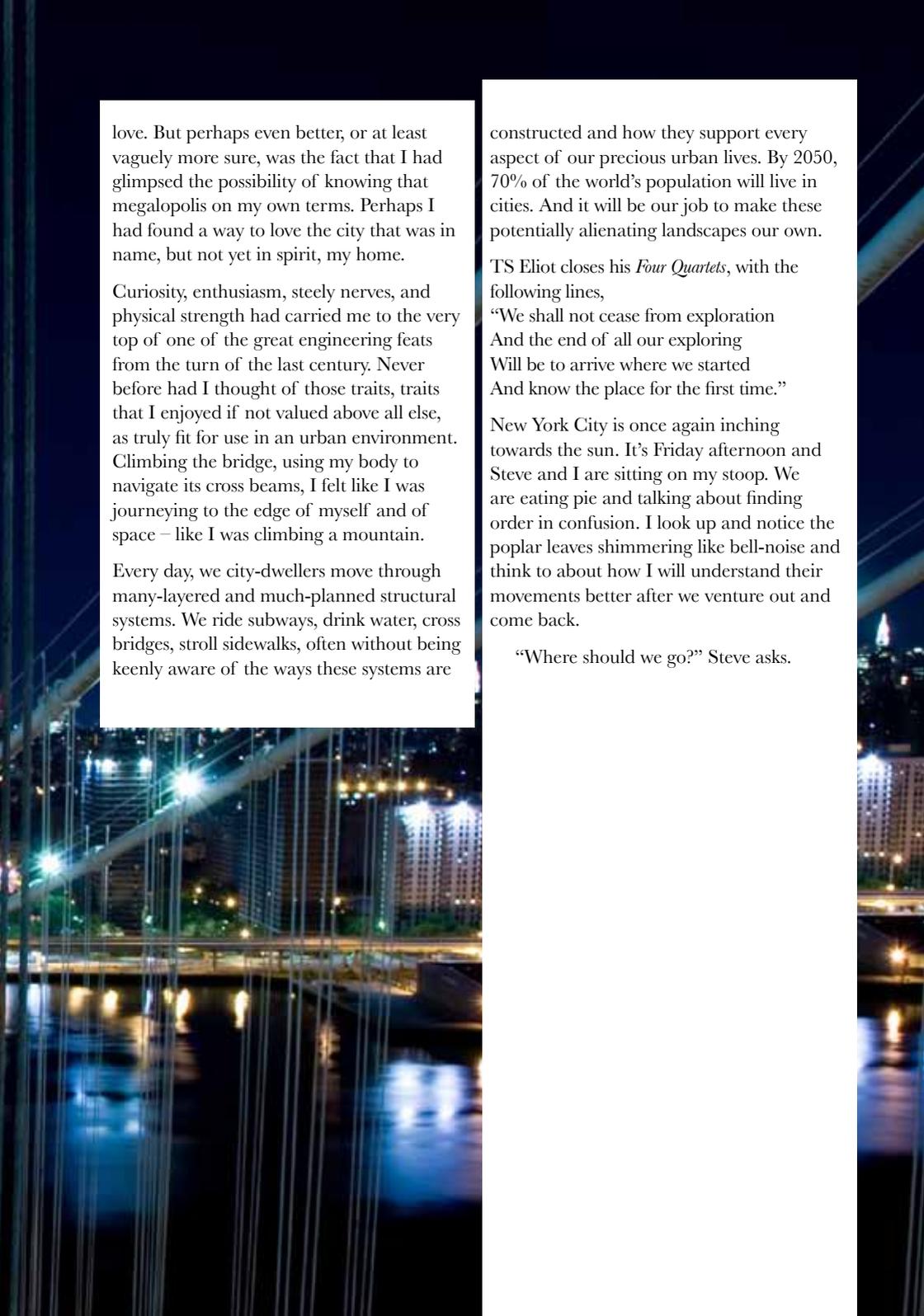
could feel the structure flex. The rivets that were pounded into place some hundred years before were suddenly very real beneath my fingertips. There was the city! Its infrastructure, its people, its history! And there were my fingertips!

I had biked across the Manhattan Bridge many times that summer but never once thought of it as fit for exploration. It's amazing how we are taught to interpret urban structures as fundamentally one-dimensional – they are residential and commercial spaces, places built for the transport of goods or people. Then one night in August, on the insistence of a man I have since fallen completely in love with, I crossed over, clambered in, climbed up, bent my ear to the steel and listened. I heard stories about the ways in which New York and its people change and grow. Stories about how Mohawk Native Americans built the city's skyscrapers because they were less afraid of heights than most; of how it was the husband

and wife team, Emily and Washington Roebling, who got the Brooklyn Bridge finished after its engineer died of tetanus.

Hours later, Steve and I descended from our perch high above Gotham and left the bridge behind. Walking to the F train, we sang some old folk songs – songs of consternation, of trains rockin', and wheat fields drying up, of women and whiskey, songs of the American West, heavy with the loneliness and excitement that comes with discovering a new frontier. We sang softly. The earth spun and the world's dawn-light turned on. I guess you could say that as I carried my bike down the steps at the Jay Street subway station, I knew somehow that my life in the city would never be the same. I hadn't become a New Yorker overnight. What happened was even better. I had stood at the start of something grand and I knew it. Ok, so I knew I might actually fall for Steve, and that carried all of the wonderful sensations that come with the promise of





love. But perhaps even better, or at least vaguely more sure, was the fact that I had glimpsed the possibility of knowing that megalopolis on my own terms. Perhaps I had found a way to love the city that was in name, but not yet in spirit, my home.

Curiosity, enthusiasm, steely nerves, and physical strength had carried me to the very top of one of the great engineering feats from the turn of the last century. Never before had I thought of those traits, traits that I enjoyed if not valued above all else, as truly fit for use in an urban environment. Climbing the bridge, using my body to navigate its cross beams, I felt like I was journeying to the edge of myself and of space – like I was climbing a mountain.

Every day, we city-dwellers move through many-layered and much-planned structural systems. We ride subways, drink water, cross bridges, stroll sidewalks, often without being keenly aware of the ways these systems are

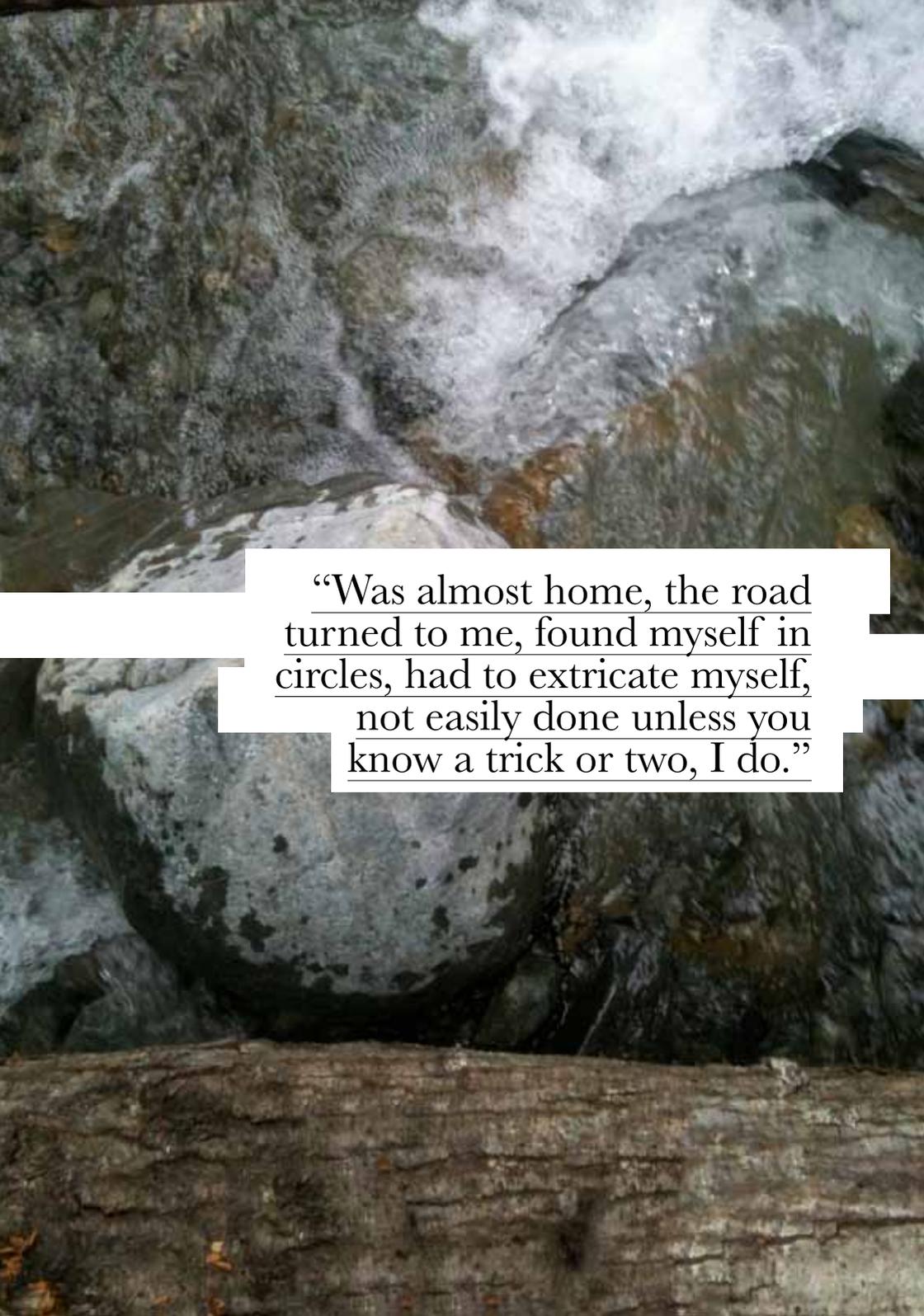
constructed and how they support every aspect of our precious urban lives. By 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in cities. And it will be our job to make these potentially alienating landscapes our own.

TS Eliot closes his *Four Quartets*, with the following lines,

“We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.”

New York City is once again inching towards the sun. It's Friday afternoon and Steve and I are sitting on my stoop. We are eating pie and talking about finding order in confusion. I look up and notice the poplar leaves shimmering like bell-noise and think to about how I will understand their movements better after we venture out and come back.

“Where should we go?” Steve asks.



“Was almost home, the road  
turned to me, found myself in  
circles, had to extricate myself,  
not easily done unless you  
know a trick or two, I do.””

# WAS ALMOST

*By Ben Brown:  
Christchurch*

*Ben once lived in a bigarse volcano, that was cool though, volcano's are generally mellow, until they get impatient, then they kick you out and you have to start writing for a living... which is fuckin funny...*

Was almost home, took a wrong turn somewhere, back road style, new and unfamiliar territory, deemed it necessary to take notice of things, a man could get himself lost in such circumstances. Met an enlightened individual proclaimed himself to be a God, but only one of many, gave me his blessing which I duly excepted with no small element of grace, it's not every day you meet a God. Asked him where I was, he said 'You here'. I said thank you very much.

I came upon a bridge which asked me to cross over it without a toll, bridge built by itself and offers a majestic view of an abyss, don't look down seems sage advice.

Was almost home, came upon a battlefield, dead lovers and weeping dogs in the midst of carrion, bloated crows on high in worthless conversation got that black eye stare reserved for a truly innocent soul. That lets me off the hook. Seeya later crows, I got somewhere else to be.

Was almost home, I met the Mother of the World and she seemed frail to me, as to be expected, heavy load to bear and no one else to carry it, I said 'Mother can I help you?' She said 'No, be on your way son, you have children of your own'.

Was almost home, the road turned to me, found myself in circles, had to extricate myself, not easily done unless you know a trick or two, I do.

Was almost home, I see the light on, be there shortly...

# HOME

# HOME IN THE DRIVEWAY

*By Ruby Usa*

*Ruby Usa was born in a small town. She works as a content gatherer for an international economics talk show while raising her three beautiful children and enjoying her husband.*

Perpetually I am almost home. Which is a silly sort of thing to say when I live in the same tiny rural town I was raised in. Parents down the street.

Thirty years, and the bakery is the same bakery, the high school mascot still the greyhounds, the junior high still the greypups. Often, I hate it here. Beneath the layers, sure, I might hate myself. So naturally, I do my best to love it here. But I can't quite... quite feel that imagined joy of comfort at home. Almost though.

I didn't feel at home living in my parents driveway last year. I built myself a little house, and in it found a place that was so close to home. Then decided to move thousands of miles away. My friends are scattered; my heart is scattered. I try to pull together the kind of wholesome well-being that I witness in those who have a clear sense of home. But when I habitually seek perfection, I can't help but be repelled from my home. This town doesn't reflect me, I think, and I take to the road.

Nevertheless, one beat later and I'm back, this time only nine blocks from the house I grew up in. I try not to sneer, because I am in love, and more than anything anytime, I want to be home.

I try for months.

I take to being consistent: waking up and milking goats, feeding chickens, collecting eggs, turning on the irrigation for our row





“ Then we go home, only  
to find that my perfect home  
is hard to share with someone  
else’s perfect home.”

crops. I dig and sweat, learn to kill and gut and cool down dead animals for eating later, I build again, I do laundry and dishes. The monotony makes my mind spin.

The grind breaks, and with my love we jump into where the creek meets the river. Only then, under water, do I feel perfectly surrounded and like a little stinky fish, at home.

Then we go home, only to find that my perfect home is hard to share with someone else’s perfect home. In the face of this soul-shattering botched romantic fantasy, of all the idiotic and predictable paths, I smoke and drink to feel at home. Nicotine makes my feet feel heavy, and sometimes that’s all I need. I don’t, but do, consider taking harder drugs to feel even more at home, or hopefully have the feeling of being settled last longer. I daydream that just one thing would change: that I could feel at home. Right here. Without being a drug addict.

In the city I saw a man ride by on his bicycle. The back of his shirt read, “TT ALL STARTS WITH ATTITUDE.”

Our car floated me north, and here I am again, with my lover, in our same bakery greypup town. There is no easy home. I cannot think about it too much, it does no good.

I pull it together: I milk the crying goats, I slap my bad attitude, and I am home, almost.

“THE

“Forced migration’ is not a new  
problem, however the potential human

RIGHT

and economic cost resulting from the  
displacement we face in the near future

TO A

is a serious cause for concern.”

HOME”

# A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE ON FORCED MIGRATION

By **Joe Cederwall:**  
**Wellington**

*Studied Law and Anthropology in Wellington, New Zealand and is currently self employed as an Immigration Lawyer working primarily with Pacific migrant and refugee communities. Has a strong interest in advocating for a stronger Human Rights framework in Immigration and Refugee Law.*

## **Article 25. Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948)**

***(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.***

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration sets out a number of key elements that can be said to constitute the concept of ‘Home’. Sadly, we are failing to provide these necessities of nutrition, shelter, healing and a social support structure to all members of the global community. The reasons for this failure are various and interconnected but a major contributing factor is the displacement caused by the endemic problem of ‘forced migration’. How can we ensure that in the future these Human Rights relating to the home environment are truly universal in more than just name?

The term ‘forced migration’, as defined by the ‘International Association for the Study of Forced Migration’, includes a wide range of people displaced either within or outside of their nation of origin by circumstances beyond their control. This definition is wider than the traditional, and often misunderstood, term of ‘refugee’. Crucially, this definition of forced migration includes those people displaced by natural, environmental, chemical and nuclear disasters as well as by famine or development projects. This gives the term far more relevance to the society of the future in which such events may be major drivers in migration patterns.



Forcibly displaced people have a very acute awareness of the importance of Human Rights to the concept of ‘Home’ and of the fact that ‘Home’ relates more to a mental or physical state of refuge than to any fixed geographic or spatial location. With this in mind, it is understandable that simple items, such as this shade netting provided by the Sheikh-Yaseen camp in Pakistan, can drastically

alter the environment and enhance the comfort and lifestyle of the inhabitants.

The first humans started spreading out of Africa around 110,000 years ago.

We have always been a migratory species and seem to have an insatiable curiosity about what opportunities may lie beyond the horizon. Our culturally diverse modern societies of were all created by, and are still being shaped by, successive waves of migration from indigenous peoples through to more recent arrivals.

‘Forced migration’ is not a new problem, however the potential human and economic cost resulting from the displacement we face in the near future is a serious cause for concern. Environmental destruction, resource wars, diminishing food security, rapidly rising populations and developing ‘third world’ economies mean that forced migration will be a major contributor to these growing numbers in the coming years. According to the International Organization for Migration’s *‘World Migration Report 2010’*, estimates are that the number of international migrants worldwide is currently over 200 million and at the current rate will reach 400 million by 2050.

One major accelerating factor in future migration levels will be the acute manifestations of global climate change. Many communities worldwide are facing rising sea levels, extreme storm surges, flooding, drought, insecure food supply and other associated problems causing population displacement at unprecedented levels. According to academics and international agencies, there are currently several million ‘environmental migrants’ worldwide, and this number is expected to rise to tens of millions within the next 20 years, and hundreds of millions within the next 50 years. This phenomenon was recently dramatically evident in Somalia

and in Pakistan where simultaneous drought and floods have left over 12 million people displaced or in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.



A House in Alaska which is no longer a Home.

Such environmental migration tends to disproportionately affect developing nations because their precarious geography, histories of imperialism and unsustainable development leave them without resources to face such challenges. This vulnerability further cements the place of developing nations as victims of the global economic order and as mass exporters of human capital. An example is the current famine in the ‘Horn of Africa’ region where most refuge and assistance is being provided by developing countries while the aid response from wealthy nations has been somewhat slow and underwhelming. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recently stated in his address on World Refugee Day 2011 that: *“Despite what some populist politicians would have us believe, approximately 80 percent, [of refugees] are hosted and cared for in developing countries. To take a current example, only about two percent of the people fleeing Libya are seeking refuge in Europe.”*

Many commentators believe that developed nations should be contributing much more to addressing this displacement problem due to their superior wealth and their greater contribution to creating the

economic and environmental problems we face today. However, the global financial crisis is currently being skillfully manipulated to create resentment against migrants and refugees and to justify rigid national immigration policies and small refugee resettlement quotas. UNHCR has recently expressed concern that the current resettlement programs of the few nations who do offer them are not even keeping pace with the growth of refugees in urgent need of resettlement.

Both permanent and temporary migration to developed nations can play a highly valuable role in development by allowing migrants to achieve safety and stability, to gain skills and experience and to remit money back to their homeland. Current protectionist policies in developed nations fail to promote such valuable development tools and simply guard the wealth and privilege amassed at the expense of underdeveloped nations and the environment.

### *Solutions*

Although organisations such as UNHCR and various NGOs are doing an admirable job with limited resources, the sheer volume of the displacement likely to occur in the future necessitates a new approach. The interconnectedness created by globalization and technological progress means that no migration situation can now be seen in isolation, and also offers us potential solutions to the problems we face. We urgently require a wholesale re-application of our global resources and technology to address the causes of displacement rather than the symptoms.

It is within the power of developed nations to radically reduce the root causes of forced migration by altering the course of the global market and economic system, and assisting democracy and social justice to

flourish. We need proactive policies at both national and international levels that target the poverty, environmental destruction, wars and inequalities causing our current displacement problems.

We must adopt a 'Human Rights' centered understanding of what constitutes a 'Home' and work towards providing all members of our global society with access to these rights without exception. Only a system that respects the rights of all to a stable home environment will allow us to work towards a new age of greater freedom of movement, stability and equality in the area of human migration.

### *Further Reading*

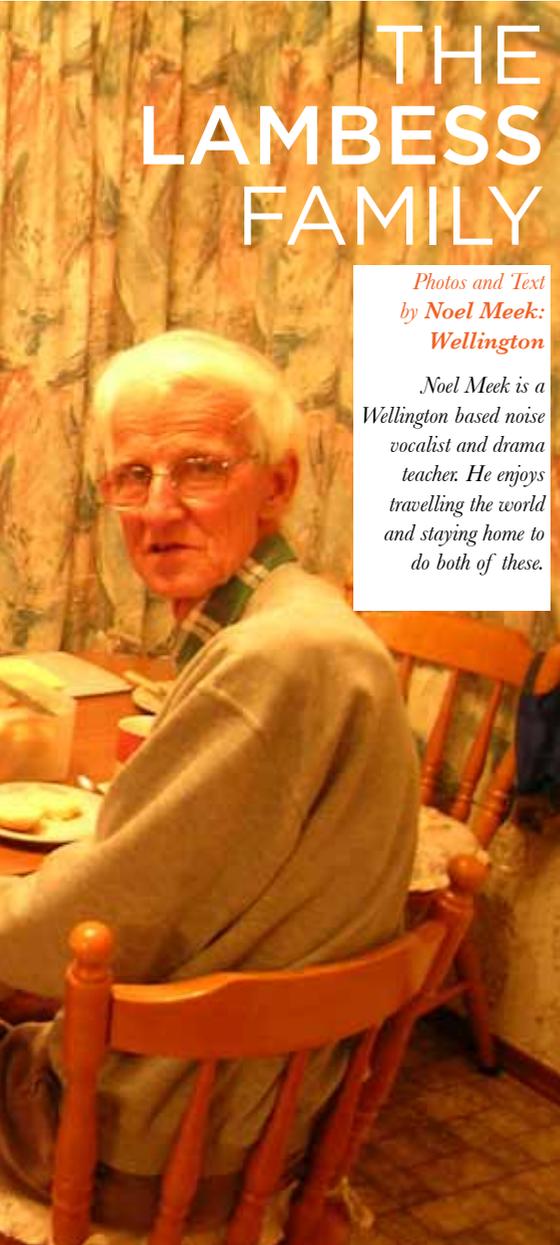
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations and proclaimed on December 10, 1948. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

'What is Forced Migration' Online <http://www.forcedmigration.org/whatisfm.htm>

'World Migration Report 2010 – The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change,' International Organization for Migration, 2010. [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/WMR\\_2010\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/WMR_2010_ENGLISH.pdf)

'United Nations High Commissioner's message for World Refugee Day, 20 June 2011' <http://www.unhcr.org/4e033be29.html>





# THE LAMBESS FAMILY

*Photos and Text  
by Noel Meek:  
Wellington*

*Noel Meek is a  
Wellington based noise  
vocalist and drama  
teacher. He enjoys  
travelling the world  
and staying home to  
do both of these.*

The Lambess family live in Tikipunga, Whangarei, New Zealand.

The son, Neil Lambess, collects mainly science fiction films and memorabilia. His collection fills two rooms, top to bottom, and one hallway.

Alison Lambess, the mother, collects dolls. They fill most of the rest of the house.

Terry Lambess, the father, is one of New Zealand's only accordion repairers. His passion is vintage cars and motor bikes, though his collection, in the garage, is not as large as those of his wife and son.

They live across the road from my old high school. I've known them for nearly two decades and love them dearly.

*The Lambesses at dinner.  
The empty place is mine.*





*Clockwise from left:*

*Neil Lambess in his movie viewing room.*

*Terry Lambess with one of his accordions.*

*Alison Lambess in the lounge with some of her dolls and Biggles.*



# GRIHA AND GRAHA: WHERE DO WE BELONG, WHERE IS OUR HOME?

**By Rajarshi Sahai:**  
**India**

*Raj is an Architect, Urban Development Planner, Development Economist and Environmental Planner. His professional work includes consultancy on issues of Sustainability, Gender, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation, Water Supply and Sanitation, Architecture and Urban Planning.*

‘Griha’ and ‘Graha’ are a homophonic pair in Hindi and Sanskrit. The two words taken together represent the duality of life - the different frames of reference in which we live and traverse in the universe.

Griha, literally meaning ‘home’, represents the feeling of home and belonging in space. Graha, on the other hand represents the heavenly bodies, constantly in motion relative to others. The system of such movements triangulates our position with respect to other ‘heavenly’ bodies and is deeply related to the astrological premise that the position of planets affects our lives on earth.

The relationship between Graha and Griha becomes apparent once we shift our frame of reference to sit outside the earth. Once seen from the universe, it is clear that we are not truly stable in our homes, but are moving around the sun in an ever-evolving path. We see that even the position of sun relative to other stars/solar systems is constantly being redefined and expanded. Suddenly, the difference between Graha (home) and Griha (heavenly bodies in motion) ceases to exist.

In our post-modern lives, we are often faced with the challenge of defining ourselves. Globalization and Internet bring us all closer and as some would say, make us ‘place independent’. It is increasingly difficult to define where we belong. On one hand, place matters and the global capital and knowledge centres remain stagnant in certain places, like world cities, knowledge cities and finance capitals. At the same time, we are all travelling more and living in multiple places. We are meeting people from all over the world and feeling at one with them. We are still identified by our citizenships, faith and race. Increasingly our identities are blending through multi-citizenships and multi-race. It is becoming difficult to segregate ourselves into defined subsets and the question remains – where do we belong, where is our home?

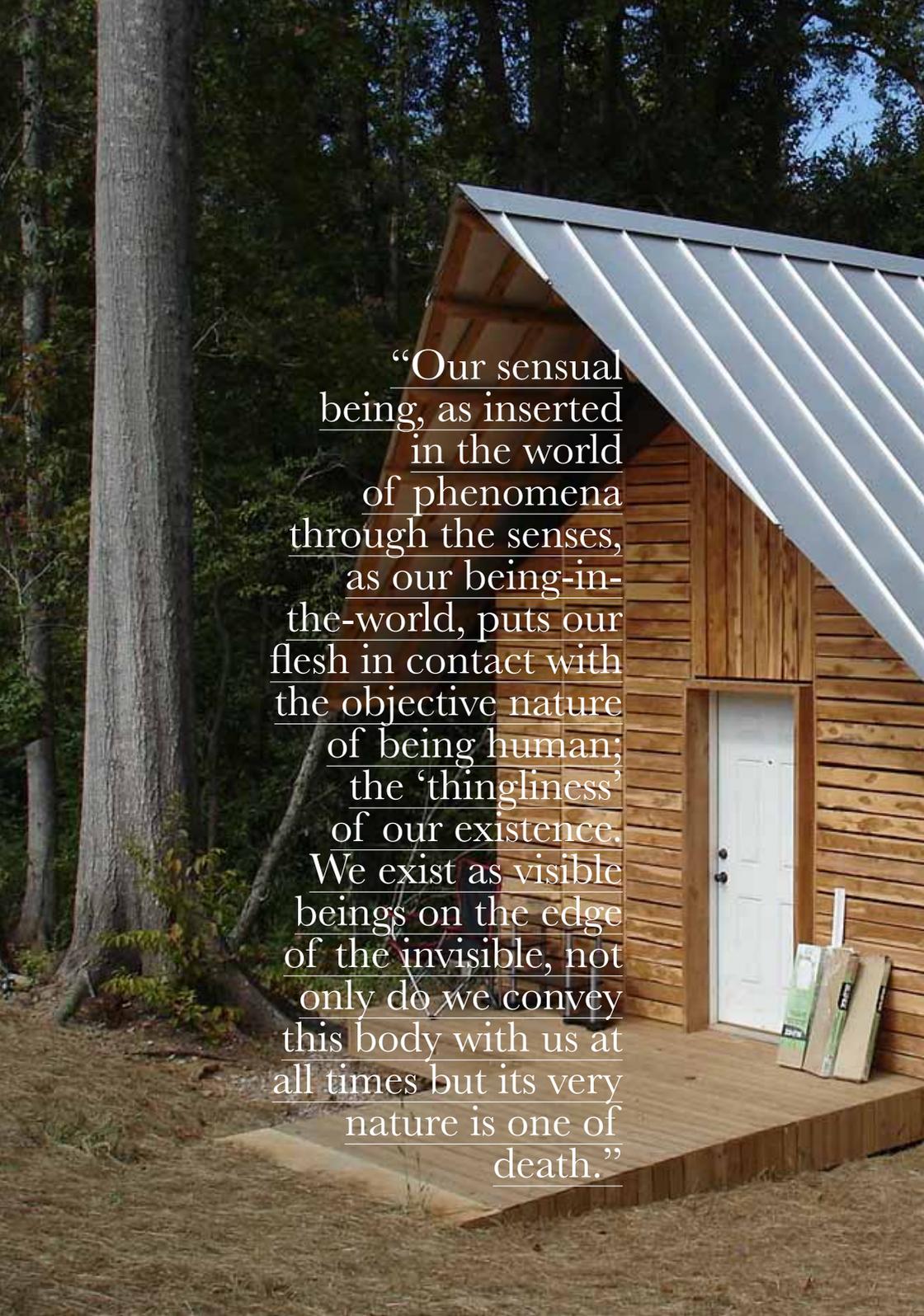
Perhaps an answer can be found by looking at Indian culture, and the very Indian concept of “*vasudhev kutumbakam*”- the world is our home. Central to India’s cultural fabric is its history



“Griha, literally meaning ‘home’, represents the feeling of home and belonging in space. Graha, on the other hand represents the heavenly bodies, constantly in motion relative to others.”

as a nation created by a melting-pot of cultures. Generations of migrants from the entire world have come and found a ‘home’, It is difficult to separate the ethnicities, customs, religions and races that have contributed to define contemporary India. It is this unique culture that has allowed Indian people to constantly move between the dichotomy of attachment and detachment. When we know that the ‘Griha’ or home is not permanent or stationary and that we are equally related to the distant ‘Grahas’ or heavenly bodies, the only things of importance remain the pursuit of excellence, and making our lives meaningful, irrespective of where we are. The success stories of global India are a testimony to this cultural value and will continue to inspire and fascinate humankind like no other.

Being able to frame things from this perspective means everyone belongs, however mobile we are – as long as we let ourselves belong as global citizens.

A photograph of a small wooden cabin with a corrugated metal roof and a white door, set in a forest. The cabin is built with horizontal wooden planks. A white door with two black handles is centered on the front. To the right of the door, there are several cardboard boxes stacked on a wooden deck. The cabin is surrounded by tall trees and a large tree trunk is visible on the left. The ground is covered in dry grass and pine needles.

“Our sensual  
being, as inserted  
in the world  
of phenomena  
through the senses,  
as our being-in-  
the-world, puts our  
flesh in contact with  
the objective nature  
of being human;  
the ‘thingliness’  
of our existence.  
We exist as visible  
beings on the edge  
of the invisible, not  
only do we convey  
this body with us at  
all times but its very  
nature is one of  
death.”



# RAISE THE EARTH; returning home, quietly.

**By Ross T. Smith:  
Melbourne**

*Ross T. Smith is a PhD candidate in architecture at the University of Melbourne, and is also a photographic artist who exhibits internationally. He is a New Zealander; and a very good horse rider!*

It was October 2008 when I first met Juhani Pallasmaa at his office in Helsinki. I asked him, ‘what is the one big question about your life and work?’ His answer, ‘what is my place in the world?’ From this question to himself Pallasmaa returns to the sensuous body, the domestic and interior, to silence, memory, and imagination in many of his writings on architecture; a return to home, the place of primary dwelling, one’s site of belonging. Pallasmaa is a Finnish architect and theorist and juror of the Pritzker Prize in architecture. He says, ‘our domicile is the refuge of our body, memory, and identity.’<sup>1</sup> Not only is his response a claim for the physical and humane in the built environment but also one of metaphysical enquiry; that which is inexplicable, ephemeral, invisible, and mostly out of reach, yet amuses and envelops the mind. Our sensual being, as inserted in the world of phenomena through the senses, as our being-in-the-world, puts our flesh in contact with the objective nature of being human; the ‘thingliness’ of our existence. We exist as visible beings on the edge of the invisible, not only do we convey this body with us at all times but its very nature is one of death. Pallasmaa says, ‘architecture is deeply engaged in the metaphysical questions of the self and the world, interiority and exteriority, time and duration, life and death.’<sup>2</sup> By building we remain present, phenomenologically, through our senses and mind, that is to say, without them we would make no connection to, or with, the physical or ephemeral world we inhabit.

Embodiment is a primary consideration in architecture, whether it be domestic or commercial, a bus shelter or an airport – the body is the reason we build. The body desires a physical dwelling with comfort, delight and haptic satisfaction. Whereas the perceiving mind, being the repository of experience and the keeper of records, provides us with the psychological interpretation of our lived world, memory of events, and an imagination of possibilities; a poiesis –

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1. Pallasmaa, Juhani. *Stairways of the Mind. Encounters: architectural essays*. Ed. Peter MacKeith. (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2005.) 61.

2. Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin*. (Chichester, UK: Wiley Academy, 2005.) 16.

the bringing into existence of something that was not already there. Pallasmaa adds: 'What is missing from our dwellings today are the potential transactions between body, imagination, and environment.'<sup>3</sup> Although phenomenology deals with phenomena of the physical world it is necessary, through our mind's agility, to interpret these in our own and unique way in order to make sense of the world and what it presents to us.

A building is the raising up of the earth in order that the stillness of the Earth may be inhabited. It becomes a remodelling and reconstruction of the Earth, and in this way of thinking, architecture is a concept and the building is the result of that idea; that result being man's dwelling and shelter in the world. Yet our domestic dwellings are needlessly becoming dissociated from the earth (and sky) and our inhabitation is being reduced to a prefabricated samelessness. Pallasmaa adds: 'Home has lost its metaphysical essence and become a functionalized and commodified product.'<sup>4</sup> Pallasmaa has strong views against the way in which building is reinforcing this isolation and narcissism: 'In my view the task of architecture is similarly to maintain the qualitative articulation of existential space. Instead of participation in the process of further speeding up our experience of the world, architecture has to slow down experience, halt time and defend the slowness of experience.'<sup>5</sup> Silence in architecture is not a condition of nothingness, of empty space and noiselessness. Silence captures the essence

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3. Pallasmaa. *The Eyes of the Skin*. 40.

4. Pallasmaa. Identity, Intimacy, and Domicile. *Encounters*. 122.

5. Pallasmaa, Juhani. Lived Space. *Sensuous Minimalism*. Ed. Fang Hai. (China Architecture and Building Press, 2002.) 184.

of one's self, encountered as a singular being, who is as present as an arrow in time.

An architecture of silence and deliberation is more disquieting than the absence of anxiety in that the sound of silence becomes a deeply spiritual, if not existential, experience of facing one's self in the world. It is a realisation of one's aloneness and microscopic insignificance in relation to the infinity of endless space and to the multitudes who also exist on this fist of dirt spinning around the sun. As our physical, natural world can never be silent, the stillness of architecture is finer than tranquillity, it is more profound than quietness and more important to our spiritual well-being than time-out; silence, as with quietude, is self-imposed. Without having the vastness of infinite space contained within the bordering function of walls and roofs we would, like the Earth, tumble through space, although held down by gravity, yet without gravitas. Home is our refuge and works to ameliorate an increasing insecurity and internationalised nomadism by ensuring a place for our body and mind to rest, to dream, and be still. Let us then, return home, quietly.

# HOMEBODY

Although Giardia made an appearance, it became apparent that he was just passing through.

By **Claire Hollingsworth: Melbourne**

*Claire has been a Free-Ranger ever since she was old enough to open the front door by herself, cruising the neighbourhood and dropping little bits of old cabbage from the bottom of the crispier so there would always be a trail leading back home. The police would have had far less trouble find her, had they noticed the trail. You have kept your wits about you, Detective.*

The neighbourhood was abuzz with the news that a house up for sale by real estate agency “Living Homes” was open for inspection. A crowd was gathering, hoping to acquire something beyond that which they had already secured. A cell, a womb, a mansion, a tomb...

This home had a lot to offer, be it for a few minutes, or for a lifetime and beyond. Needless to say, there was plenty of interest as neighbours and strangers gathered to envisage the life that could be theirs.

C. Mann was one of the first to arrive and was hoping to secure the house thanks to a deposit from his father. He had plans to develop, then vacate and acquire many more homes in the world.

The expertly kind Pro. Biotics and the “white army of do-gooders” (led by Sgt. Luke O’Cytte) were hoping to secure the home for the long term. They would take very good care of it and would be vigilant in regards to maintenance and repairs. With the assistance of B cells they would set up a home alarm system and neighbourhood watch, fighting to keep the house free of unwanted guests. In case of their arrival, T cells would assist in removing.

Other do-gooders present at the inspection included sunshine, a rainbow and a barrage of happy thoughts. They believed they could create a positive atmosphere in the house and also thought they could play a role in keeping out unwanted guests. Some mocked their optimism, laughing at how ridiculous it was for a rainbow to assume it would still be throwing around colour after a few

encounters with darker forces. As cynical as the skeptics may have seemed, they appeared to change their tune after a warm cup of peppermint tea and a big hug.

Although Giardia made an appearance, it became apparent that he was just passing through. He was asked to leave after he fouled-up the bathroom, and when he showed resistance, he was escorted from the premises by the White Army.

Some of Giardia's para-posse were also present, including "Hooka", "Roundy", "Pinny", "Tapey", "Trichy", "Schizza" and "Whippa". They only attended the inspection because they had heard that there would be free food. When they found that there was none, they paid a visit to the neighbours.

Syph, Gono, Chlammy, Crabba and all the gang liked the idea of making the house their home, and were also keen to get to know the neighbours. While the neighbours were tempted to party with them, they really didn't want them hanging around.

The DSM Collective of Wayward Thoughts had plans to take over and to run it as a chaotic share house. They would irritate and inspire one another with their uncouth habits and their obsessive, repetitive or unpredictable ways. Their emotional states would oscillate between moods reminiscent of the Munch, Van Gogh and Picasso paintings that lined the hallways. Depending on these moods, the house would be either eerily quiet, or would blare what the neighbourhood deemed to be "offensive" music at high decibels. The Collective would argue that nothing in their music

collection could possibly be as offensive as the neighbour's leaf blower on a Sunday morning. Mornings would be difficult for the Collective as they would be tired from late night meetings in the attic where they would devise grandiose plans as the neighbours slept. The plans which would come to fruition would offend, astound, or be completely lost on the neighbours.

While sometimes associating with the DSM Collective, The Black Dog would prefer to live alone. He would like to make the house his home and would work very hard to obtain it, but upon moving in would find himself exhausted. Unable to give any more, he would leave it empty, close the shutters, and take a nap for the foreseeable future. Some of the neighbours would bring lamb shanks and try to gently wake him; others would whisper to each other and close themselves from him in turn, puzzled and a little frightened by his sadness.

Our Heavenly Father, the Prince of Darkness and Nature's Ploughmen were competing for the home as a long-term investment. They had plans to lease it to transient life forms, who would treat it according to their own will. As landlords, they would watch the house withstand many tests of time, then in turn, deteriorate with the passing of life – until that moment when it could no longer serve anyone but them.

Living Homes agent Des Thai-Knee confirmed everyone's suspicions that one of the latter three parties would bear the keys in the end. As to which of the three it would be, the neighbours could only speculate.





**HOME IS  
A TIME  
NOT A  
PLACE/  
MAKE  
YOUR-  
SELF AT  
HOME.**

By

**Barnaby Bennett:**  
**Australasia**

*Barnaby is the Chief*  
Egg of Freerange Press.  
Nuff said.

I recently discovered a journal I had written while travelling a few years ago and found this passage: “*part of my desire to travel, is that one of the more intense emotions I’ve felt is homesickness; this incredible strong desire for home and the perfection of it all is an amazing manifestation which weirdly is activated only by extensive travelling. I think this homesickness is as close to meaning as I’ve ever found.*”

### **Part I**

*A house, a garden*

*Are no places*

*They spin, come and go.*

*Their apparitions*

*Unfold in space*

*Other space*

*Other time within time*

*Their eclipses*

*Are no abdications:*

*We would be scorched*

*By the living flame of one of those moments*

*If it lived a moment longer*

Octavio Paz

Home is not a location, a point on the earth with a longitude and latitude, it isn't the house we grew up in, or the land that holds us; it's an ever-fading memory. It is a house of experiences; of tender discoveries, fresh hurt, and comforting arms.

Our movements in life turn us towards home, through it, and away again. Our paths are circular and tangential, away from



one home and towards another. As time passes this centre shifts, relocates, dislocates, and splits into multiples. Everything is in movement. Home is created by departure and separation, what was once one becomes many. The self peers back to a time before this painful birth, of unity lost and fragmented. This separation is the illusion that space plays on time.

Homesickness is badly named: it's not ill health, disease, misfortune; it's a condition of existence. It's the felt absence of that which created us. Homesickness grows out of physical dislocation, a spatial separation. It is the hereditary affliction of a wandering humanity; the sweet horror of freedom or the bitter curse of forced migration.

## Part II

*"As if you could kill time without injuring eternity."*

Henry David Thoreau, *Economy*,  
Walden, 1854

Homesickness is an extension of absence. Australian author James Cowan writes about contemporary artwork created in the Balgo Hills area, deep in the desert in Western Australia. The artwork created here is an amalgam of many different influences: the presence of the landscape, the metaphysical context of the Dreamtime, modern art practices, and, specifically for the Balgo artists, the absence felt by the dislocation from their from their geographical homeland hundreds of kilometres away.

*"...absence is the central tenet of Balgo art, and a preoccupation of its artists. It is not the art of presence, of cultural homogeneity, of Dreaming certitudes which determines how they paint. They are living a kind of Dreaming vacuum which can only be overcome by 'going back' to the country of their imagination. Imaginary distance becomes the hallmark of their work; it alone enables them to return to the old nomadic trails of the past, to ritual centres that are now rarely visited, to psychic outposts that ensure collective and individual spiritual renewal."*

It is in this unique context that the artists respond with their own experiences of loss and absence, and in doing so enact what Cowan calls one of the great acts of late twentieth-century art. This is their strand of the story that unites humanity, our collective walk away from home. As heirs to perhaps the oldest unbroken tradition in the history of humanity their story resonates powerfully. The sense of absence, and loss, is in this circumstance a result of early globalisation and the powerful forces of colonisation, but the story is an archetypal one repeated frequently throughout our shared history.

The physical dislocation of a few hundred kilometres in a country the size of Australia is not much, yet it is enough distance to create a temporal division, a generational rupture. As time marches on, this last generation of artists with the lived memory of their home in the desert begins to pass, and their own individual acts of



creation will become points of departure for a new generation of artists. The creative potential of this separation is beautifully described by Cowan:

*“Clearly distance had given a new poignancy to conception. A painting was no longer a re-creation, but an act of reverie.”*

### **PT III**

*“Time is what prevents everything from happening at once.*

*Space is what prevents everything from happening to me!”*

John Archibald Wheeler

I sit down, gingerly fold one leg over the other, and wedge a pillow or cushion under my bum, gently cup my hands together, close my eyes and slowly and carefully watch as the world around me closes and my awareness settles on the in and out of my breath.

In the precious moments before my short concentration wanders and my back starts to ache, I feel a profound sense of return and comfort, of homeness. It is remarkable that the simple act of sitting quietly with eyes closed can create such feelings of protection and stability, like a snail with a portable home. The world and all its charms and chaos becomes a gentle stream flowing over and around the rock of quiet observation.

This is home with no fixed abode. The English word *abode* means home or place of

residence, but interestingly it has another meaning shared with the word *abide*, which is defined as an *act of waiting*. Buddhist texts use the word *abode* to describe different states or characteristics of meditation.

The seminal Buddhist text the Brahma-Viharas (which translates as Abodes of Brahma, or Divine Abodes) explains four Buddhist virtues and the meditation practices made to cultivate them: Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Empathetic Joy, and Equanimity. German-born Sri Lankan Monk Nyanaponika Thera writes *“They are called abodes (vihara) because they should become the mind’s constant dwelling-places where we feel “at home”; they should not remain merely places of rare and short visits, soon forgotten.”*

We dwell, for a time, in our own mind and body. If our eyes are the windows to our soul, then the body and mind are the home where this soul resides. Make yourself at home.

#### Referenced Texts:

1. Cowan, James. *Balgo: New Directions*. Sydney, NSW. Craftsman House, 1999.
2. Thera, Nyanaponika. *The Four Sublime States: Contemplations on Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity*. The Wheel Publication No. 6. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1993.

# INTERNATIONAL POSTAL SYSTEM

The first postal systems were said to have begun in Persia five thousand years ago, and while this method of communication was choice, it was not yet cheap.

Regional postal systems in Mongolia, Egypt, Italy, China and India developed through the millennia but were said to suffered from slowness and problems from payment being required by the recipient.

The first well documented postal service was that of Rome. Organised at the time of Augustus Caesar (62 BC–AD 14) the service was called *cursus publicus* and was provided with light carriages called *rhede* and drawn by fast horses. Additionally, there was another slower service equipped with two-wheeled carts (*birolæ*) pulled by oxen. This service was reserved for government correspondence.

Genghis Khan installed an empire-wide messenger and postal station system named Örtöö within the Mongol Empire. This system also covered the territory of China. These stations aided and facilitated the transport of foreign and domestic tribute, and trade in general. By the end of Kublai Khan's rule there were more than 1400 postal stations in China alone, which in turn had at their disposal about 50,000 horses, 1400 oxen, 6700 mules, 400 carts, 6000 boats, over 200 dogs and 1150 sheep.

Today, it is astounding to think that if you have the correct address and attach the right amount of stamps to a letter or package it will get delivered to almost anywhere in the world. Prior to 1874 international post was sent only to countries that had treaties establishing rules with each other. Imagine how complex this would be now with 194 countries, if each of these countries had to have a separate treaty with every other country for delivery -- there would need to be 18,818 treaties!

*In 1874 the Universal Postal Union was formed which established that:*

- 1. There should be a uniform flat rate to mail a letter anywhere in the world.*
- 2. Postal authorities should give equal treatment to foreign and domestic mail.*
- 3. Each country should retain all money it has collected for international postage.*

The UPU is the 3rd oldest international organisation and is a

shining example of the efficiency and efficacy of global co-ordination.

The original treaty guaranteed that each country would send the others post, and was changed in 1969 so that countries would compensate each other for the weight difference to allow for variations in sending and receiving between countries.

Nearly 150 years after the beginning of the UPU, letters are steadily becoming a thing of the past. However, the international system set up for posting letters has set the standard for the delivery of all physical goods, which is growing with Internet usage.

As humans continue to move around the world, away from home -- and often not back again -- the postal system is an example of the best of human ingenuity and, more often than not, efficient management of an incredibly complex system. Choice and Cheap!

The world's  
**postal  
systems**  
employ  
more than  
**5 million**  
**people,**  
annually  
delivering  
**435 billion**  
**letters** and  
**6 billion**  
**parcels.**

*Flag of the Universal Postal Union.*



# FREERANGER OF THE ISSUE:

# CAIN THE MURDERER/ FARMER/ INNOVATOR



*Image details:*  
William-Adolphe  
Bouguereau  
*The First Mourning*  
1888

The moral of Cain and Abel is peculiar. Adam and Eve give birth to two sons: Abel and Cain. They grow up. Abel goes off to work across the land and raise sheep while Cain goes to work on the land and plants crops. They present the results of their work to God who is for some reason pleased with Abel and not with Cain. This dismays Cain, who later finds Abel in the field and kills him (some speculate that the true reason for the murder is that Abel had the hots for Cain's wife). Cain and God then have their famous conversation:

*The Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"  
"I know not," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"*

*Then He said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground! So now you are cursed from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed. If you work the land, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."*

Abel is often referred to at the first martyr; the first person killed by the evil of humanity, a foreshadowing of the story of Christ. Strangely, God then promises to protect Cain, saying: "*whosoever slayeth Cain vengeance will suffer vengeance seven times over.*"

Where is the moral in this? Abel pleases the Lord and finds himself dead in a field, while Cain displeases him and is marked with a sign that promises him God's protection.

Cursed, marked and banished, Cain wanders off to the east to the Land of Nod where he settles down and marries his sister, Awan. This results in their first son, Enoch, whom Cain names the first

city after. He builds a house, and lives there until it collapses on him, killing him in the same year that Adam dies (who was approximately 196 years old).

It's hard to find a moral in this fable, yet it is a story that reminds us of our violent history, of the steady rise of the city and the implicit death of our ancestor's life styles. A death that we continue to reap on those humans that still live directly off the land. It reminds us of the origin of our greatest creation, our best work of art, the city. The surplus provided by agriculture (and the need to defend it) are often cited as the reason for the creation of the city, and the story of Cain and Abel also has this seed.

Cain also reminds us of the potential evil present within us all and within all creations, the city included. He is a murdering trouble-maker, and an agricultural, urban and building innovator.

Cain-the-wanderer? Cain-the-farmer? Cain-the-agriculturist? Cain-the-builder? Cain-the-failed-architect? Cain-the-murderer?

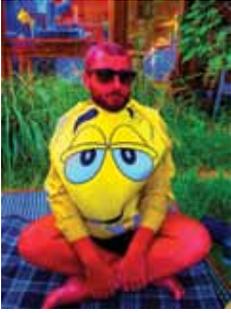
*"I mean, Every one of us under some circumstances could be a gas chamber attendant and a saint."*

Noam Chomsky

## AUNG SAN SUU KYI

A quick nod to Ann Yung Sung who was released from house arrest in November 2010. She Yung Sung has spent 15 of the past 21 years under house arrest at her home in Rangoon, Burma, after her party won the general election in 1990. We at Freerange admire and acknowledge her strength and resilience. It's interesting that the effect of restricting someone to their own home is similar to banishing them -- it is a restriction of a fundamental freedom, and is unacceptable when it is for political reasons.

*Freerange Vol.4 was brought to you by:*



***Barnaby Bennett.***  
***Chief Egg and Editor***



***Irina Belova.***  
***Designer***

***Sub-edited by:***

***Emily Hollosy: Melbourne***

Emily is interested in stories, cultures and identity. She lives in Melbourne and is involved in writing, editing or producing various works for festivals, theatre, arts and social commentary publications.

***Kate Shuttleworth: Auckland***

An interest in people is probably the reason Kate works as a journalist – the ability to build a rapport and a level of trust has meant many a good story has been told about true New Zealand characters. While at home in New Zealand, Kate is as easily at ease on any distant shore and is known to indulge in a bit of sun, sand and heat along with the odd bit of rock climbing.

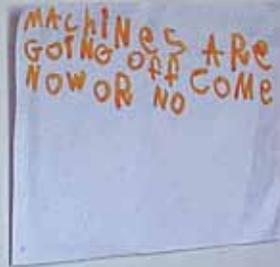
***Gina Moss: Wellington***

G-Unit emerged on the New York scene by independently releasing several mix tapes. She has been writing and editing for Freerange since it's conception and likes to

***Contributors:***

*Minna Ninova (New York), Tom Zubrycki (Sydney), Elizabeth Rush (New York), Joe Cederwall, Rajarshi Sahai (Bhopal), Ross T Smith (Melbourne), Claire Hollingsworth (Melbourne), Ben Brown (Christchurch), Hana Bojangles (Wellington), Ruby Usa (California), Noel Meek (Wellington), and Shakey Mo (Melbourne).*

***Photo Credits:***



*Pg 2-3:* Interior shot of small house on trailer built by Jenine Alexander. Find more information at [www.ForgeAhead.org](http://www.ForgeAhead.org)

*Pg 8:* Exterior shot of small house on trailer built by Jenine Alexander. Find more information at [www.ForgeAhead.org](http://www.ForgeAhead.org)

*Pg 11-13:* Illustrations by Shakey Mo.

*Pg 15:* Screen shot from *The Hungry Tide* directed by Tom Zubrycki.

*Pg 16-17:* Photo of Horizon.

*Pg 20-23:* Photos by Steve Duncan. ([www.undercity.org](http://www.undercity.org))

*Pg 24-25:* Photos by Byron Kinnaird.

*Pg 26-27:* Photo by Shakey Mo.

*Pg 29:* Photo by Ingrid Macdonald in 'Forced Migration Review, No 34, 2010'

*Pg 30:* Picture from Robin Bronen in *Forced Migrant Review No 31, 2008.* <http://repository.forcedmigration.org/>

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*Pg 33-35:* Photos of Lambess Family by Noel Meek.

*Pg 37:* Chillies. Creative Commons.

*Pg 38:* 20K House, Rural Studio. Ross T. Smith. 2008.

*Pg 40:* Photo by Shakey Mo.

*Pg 42:* Illustration by Claire Hollingsworth.

*Pg 44, 46:* North Otago A & P Show - February 2011. Alexandra Clark.

*Pg 49:* Flag of the Universal Postal Union.

*Pg 50:* William-Adolphe Bouguereau. *The First Mourning*. 1888. oil on canvas.

