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The Shelters of Imagination: Logos, Franklin Street, St Peters, Marion and The Dreamhouse

Abstract:

‘The Shelters of Imagination’ is a series of five poems, ‘Logos’, ‘Franklin Street’, ‘St Peters’, ‘Marion’, and ‘The Dreamhouse’, which explore the relationship between a writer’s place and the phenomenological aspects of literary composition. Each poem examines how a place from which I have written has impacted, driven, or impinged on the poetic imagination. These poems destabilise the boundary between where the material world the writer inhabits ends, and the fringe of poetic imagination begin. These poems are heavily informed by Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (1964) where he examines the relationship between place and the phenomenology of poetic imagination. Along with creative engagement with Bachelard’s writings, auto-ethnographic reflections from my recent relocation from Sydney to Adelaide are woven through these poems as they move from the sterile cityscape, to a garden-lined eco-flat shaped like a chapel in St Peters, towards the rural sites of an artist residency space in the Adelaide Hills, and then conclude with a meditation on the imagined space.



Biographical note:

Georgia is an award-winning writer who publishes fiction, non-fiction and poetry and is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at The University of Adelaide. In 2018, her creative non-fiction novella, *Holocene*, was runner-up in the Scribe Non-fiction Literary Prize. In 2021, her short story, *New Balance*, was a fiction winner in the Ultimo Literary Prize. In 2022, her short story, *Beyond the Marram Grass*, was a shortlisted finalist in the American Association of Australasian Literary Studies (AAALS) Prize. Her debut literary historical novel, *The Bearcat*, is forthcoming with Picador in 2024. She is currently working on a book length collection of poems, *The Languid Hours*, and her second novel, *The Aesthete*.



Keywords:

The writer’s place, poetry and poetics, phenomenology of literary composition, creativity and place, the poetics of space.



Logos

Arrival began with anticipation.
The *next* hummed on the fringe
of an unseen bearing
only dreamt of and googled—
elongated and layered over
itself like tufts of a blouse
burying the percussive keyboard
thumps and cuts of iridescent visions
propagated in dimpled jars.
The HR-approved flat was
cool, sleek, and a-historically modern.
A bionic skeleton wrapped in
brittle storm-cloud flesh.
Feet webbed and flat as a duck,
pavement as pale as
mushroom stems, sprouting.
The x-ray of its innards hung on
the wide-armed embrace
of the elevator;
steadfast as its steel encasement—
obdurate, light eater,
bone-white and oesophageal,
skeletal in its Karman line reach.

Franklin Street

The room opened like a furnace to
the geometric stilts of the city.
It was an optical fish tank illusion—
clear glass folded into black ceramic
bordered by the smile of a metallic gleam.
White walls trampolined light
rinsing the room paler
than an overexposed image.
The paintings hung sideways.
The lounge turned an overripe
shade of lime.
On the nights I couldn't write,
I paced the carpet's race car stripes
and longed for
slowness and lucidity,
beside the portrait of night that
faded, but never fully darkened.
Weekends passed in a blink.
I told a joke; as the only way to
survive the surgical sterility
seemed to be, to lean into
the laughter of others,
and forget the winged creature within
that'd forgotten me.
I still believed in Beauty,
and the tenderness of imagination—
but when I listened to the howl
of a jackhammer crack through
the ribs of construction-site cement,
and the shrieks of drunken youth
bleeding through the tapestry of early morning,
I got up and watched the sun hatch
through two tall buildings—
the orange yolk of
its molten skull, weeping.

St. Peters

Buried like the secret of shame
in an Edenic enclosure of green.
Safe from the ambush of life,
the hermit hut, shaped like a chapel,
invited a new geometry of dreams.
The fertility of the surrounds hummed
on the fringes of my imagination.
In the nest, I became an inhabitant
of the world again. Vibrant and
alert to the quick shifts of light as
the thick foliage and absence of others
pulled taut as an embryonic sack.
I noticed the strength of the walls
and a new luminosity—
hot, tender, and heavily weighted with
a thick snare drum-pulse.
Poetry met me at the doorstep
in the immemorial hue
of childhood memory.
The world took roof in me.
Again, I smelt the arrival of rain
and noticed the purple hipped
tilt of the saffron petals.
Again, I noticed the moon between
the parted fingers of the trees and
configuration of wonder in the stars.

Marion

A wide landscape;
flat like a telephoto lens
with a laundry tub depth.
Even broader houses.
I watch you at ease amongst
the modesty.
Walking, assimilating,
in a way that I can't
caught in the outer periphery
of the resurfaced roads,
fluorescent vests and
mud crusted boots.
Beneath the buttery
wash of mall lights,
a child reaches one
pink finger towards
the buried fear
of never being ready,
or, enough,
for suburban ordinariness.
Life's automations—
the quick-witted spontaneity of birth.
The tender jolts of ageing piercing
through the fog of distraction.
The full stop of death.
But we go on,
sinking into the hum
of a borrowed vehicle,
pressing towards
the tall shoulders of the hills,
ears popping,
as we rise to some
unknown
precipice in the blue distance
where
the space between
houses
parts wider than
a yawn,
and the days arrive as
effortlessly as the melt of
morning frost and
midday arranges itself
like a flight, readying
to disembark

somewhere
even less remarkable
and thus bewildering.

The Dreamhouse

Who has not deep in the
recesses of their mind:
four walls, an oxidised spade, leaning,
on a navy shed, the sun leaving
gold spores on the muddy green
of autumn's cool aloofness,
falling, clear and brutal as air.
An image—beyond pleasure.
Eternal still days and unending
paths winding through the woods,
giving way to valleys.
Smoke bleeding from the
nostril of a chimney.
The quick lilt of fire—
the room hugged with warmth.
This must be the place.
Out beyond dreaming,
where the only noise is
possums scuttling across the
iridescent slate of rooftiles.
Beyond the rapture of solitude,
the house expands
around you, elastic, golden,
moulding to meet the
shape of your longing.
Diaphanously yours.
Transcending the violence
of your past carved into stone.
The walls cast a net around
the universe of your mind—
taking in the landscape,
taking in the creased surface
of the lake, flickering with light,
and the rain falling on the dirt,
beginning to speckle like rust.
The only real shelter the faint
glaze of the window and
creeping baldness of the sky
drifting towards you like sound.

References

Bachelard, G. (1969). *The poetics of space*. Beacon Press.