handle with care



Acknowledgement of Country

Handle With Care was created by many people working from their homes across Darug, Dhurawal, Cabrogal and Bidjigal lands. This photo was taken on Gundungarra land in the Blue Mountains.

This zine was produced by CuriousWorks, whose office is located along the Toggerai/Georges River in the Casula Powerhouse. We would like to acknowledge the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land. We acknowledge that this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dhurawal and Darug Nations.

We are migrant-settlers living on stolen land. We pay our respects to the traditional custodians and story-tellers of the lands where we live, work and create, and to their elders, past, present and emerging. Sovereignty was never ceded.

None of us are free until all of us are free.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

Handle with care

Editor's note

Handle With Care is a collection of curated works around the themes of healing, thriving and collective power. We created these different works in monthly workshops where we spent time exploring how these concepts lived in our everyday lives through collage, short stories, playlists, and more.

This was my first time facilitating a workshop series like this, and I wasn't sure what to expect. I wanted to create a safer space for artists to experiment, reflect, and push themselves out of their comfort zones. I hoped that it would be a cozy, monthly sanctuary for creativity.

We entered lockdown again after our first meeting. Our now-online workshops became a vital means for us to stay connected and creative. When the news was overwhelming and our brains were filled to the brim with anxiety, we at least had this monthly opportunity to reach out and hold space for each other - and ourselves. We found pockets of joy even when the world was a dumpster fire. We came out of lockdown, still healing, still bruised - but together.

In this space of digital care and consideration, we were able to create *Handle with Care*.

These works are not a series of lockdown diaries. These workshops didn't heal all our trauma and stress. This zine is definitely not a slick coffee table book about how we reached our most enlightened selves. Instead, *Handle With Care* is an invitation.

These are our stories, our photos, our art. These are our questions and the answers we're still developing. This is a gift for you. (Yes, you!)

Read, reflect, respond, or just vibe. Just remember to handle (the zine/our stories/yourself) with care.

Guidelines

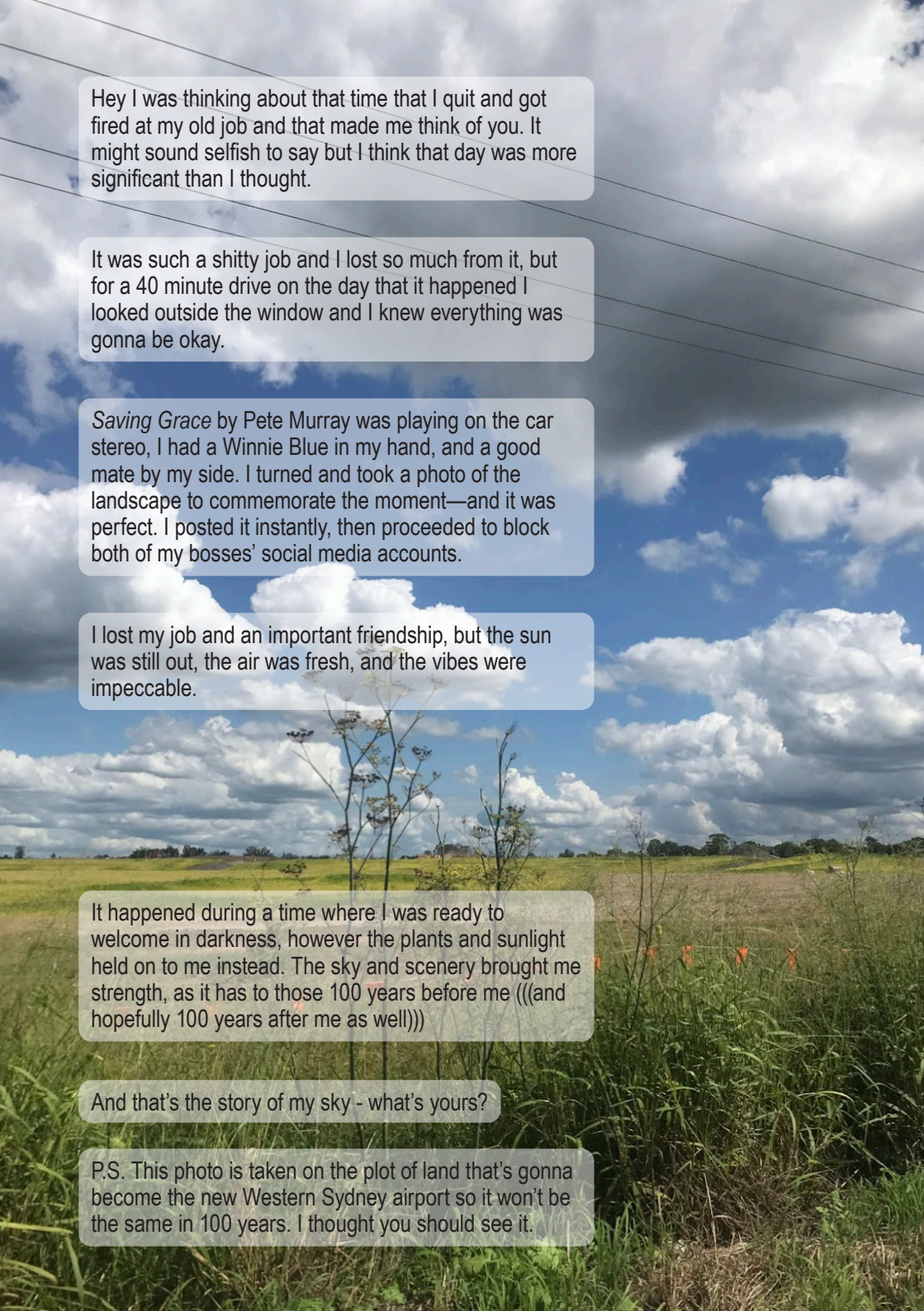
When we first came together, we developed a list called How We Treat Each Other. Everytime we met, whether in-person or online, we had this set of promises visible to remind us of the kinds of artists we want to be: artists who listen; artists that care about honesty and transparency; artists that affirm each other, and encourage each other to be fun, be silly.

It wasn't a set of rules. It was an expression of what we value, and how we want to embody those values. It's not about dictating how we act, but giving us guides to best bring our whole selves into our practice. We want to bring you with us.

These are our suggestions for reading this zine. Feel free to add your own.

1. Healing isn't linear. Neither is this zine.
2. Read with openness and curiosity.
3. We hope the works resonate, but it's okay if they don't
4. The playlists are good. Try a QR code.
5. Being vulnerable is weird and scary and okay. Multiple things can be true at one time.
6. Take your time.

“Healing is a gift. What would you like to offer people?”



Hey I was thinking about that time that I quit and got fired at my old job and that made me think of you. It might sound selfish to say but I think that day was more significant than I thought.

It was such a shitty job and I lost so much from it, but for a 40 minute drive on the day that it happened I looked outside the window and I knew everything was gonna be okay.

Saving Grace by Pete Murray was playing on the car stereo, I had a Winnie Blue in my hand, and a good mate by my side. I turned and took a photo of the landscape to commemorate the moment—and it was perfect. I posted it instantly, then proceeded to block both of my bosses' social media accounts.

I lost my job and an important friendship, but the sun was still out, the air was fresh, and the vibes were impeccable.

It happened during a time where I was ready to welcome in darkness, however the plants and sunlight held on to me instead. The sky and scenery brought me strength, as it has to those 100 years before me (((and hopefully 100 years after me as well)))

And that's the story of my sky - what's yours?

P.S. This photo is taken on the plot of land that's gonna become the new Western Sydney airport so it won't be the same in 100 years. I thought you should see it.

You walk into the charity shop. You know, the shop that most of your clothes came from as a kid (and now). The store with endless options, but sometimes no options at all. The one where you used to hide behind the pants rack when you thought you recognised someone from school walking past the front window. The one you usually walk into with confidence and a sense of purpose because you knew that op-shopping was cool before it was cool.

Today is different. You slouch through the shop's door, looking down at your shoes as they drag across the old, worn out carpet. You want to avoid what is waiting for you at home: your depression room. You left your stuffy, empty water bottles lining up your bed frame, mountain of clothes on a chair, tissues-in-every-corner bedroom to go into this shop and hope to find something new to you. Something that can fill the empty void that lays hollow inside of you. Something to add to your organised chaos.

As you browse every section, something special waits for you patiently in the CD and DVD area. You usually skip past this area because it's always the same music or movies that nobody wants to buy anymore, but this time, you're being called to it. You're drawn by something wedged in between a 70s top disco hits and an ABBA CD. As you pull it out, you're perplexed by it's simple cover, a paper with messy writing shoved in the plastic cover reading:

LISTEN TO GET HYPED UP AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF AS YOU CLEAN YOUR DEPRESSION ROOM.



This oddly-specific-to-you title makes your arm hair rise up as if they are giving a silent standing ovation. You need to take this home. It's only 50c. Your curiosity is peaking so you rush to the cashier to buy it, hoping that it does what it claims to do. On your way home, you examine the outer shell, searching for a list of songs, but nothing seems to be written down except the title. "I've been scammed haven't I?", you ask yourself. You start to doubt your decision the whole bus ride home.

You're finally in your space, the space you've been avoiding all day, all year. You look for the old CD player your family has had for more than 20 years and plead with it to still work as you plug it into the power outlet. You slide in the mysterious CD, but before you press play, you take a look at your surroundings and feel overwhelmed by your mess. You release a sigh that has been brewing up in your lungs since you got home and press play.

What followed was not something you expected, but was definitely longed for: Motivation and energy to clean your depression room. All thanks to the mysterious playlist. A surge of dopamine was released by your brain each time a new song would play. Songs you've heard of but never really heard. Songs that you would have never come across if it weren't for the mystery curator of the playlist. Was it a guardian angel or a dope, avoidant person that knew that someone like them would need it one day? Whoever created it, you are eternally grateful. Even though you don't finish cleaning your room by the end of the day, you still feel hyped up and good about yourself, just as the title claimed it would do. You dance your little heart out and feel the best you have in months in your messy room and in your solitude, something that you always try to run from. All this because you decided to step foot inside the store today. This is why you love charity stores.

My mess

On first glance I instantly spy a big mess
And think about how I can't handle the stress...

A second look though, I think and reframe;
What is it I see here? Oh, I see a game.

I spy assistance when I need to breathe;
It comes with me all of the time when I leave.

I spy something I roll, that helps me with chance.
In fact, I see two, on a second glance.

I spy some glass that helps both my eyes,
Finding them when they're lost always takes a few tries.

I spy something I do when words just can't speak,
It seems black and white, but there's more underneath.

I spy something beautiful; makes me think of the sea,
The place I go when too much happens to me.

I spy what I swallow when I am in pain,
Which is far too often, but I hate to complain.

Okay, just for fun, I'll give you one more:
Can you spot a rocket and three paper clips (or four)?

What can you find that helps you do what you do?
Maybe, if you want, give it a quiet 'thank you'.

IS IT TIME
FOR GIN
NOW?
STABILO BOSS
4 006381 335641
CREATE
ART

Healing' ~ ✨🔥

The person who finds this playlist really feels fortunate to have a job where they can be their own boss. However, they also have a tendency to overwork and struggle with work/life balance. So, after a frank and intimate discussion with a best friend on how imposter syndrome and burnout has really been affecting their mental health, they finally decided to set aside the weekends on self-care and indulging in simple, screen-less chill times, rather than overcompensating and doing everything to increase their income and perfectly complete their work projects.

The garden began in recent months as a hobby with their fellow plant-enthusiast friends who finally talked them into growing their own veggies and other fun, unique plants. They've had their home for a while, but they were always too busy to do little home projects if it wasn't somehow work-related. Hanging out with their more positivity-minded friends has helped them learn to savour things such as tea, snacks and music instead of seeing them as only things to keep them working more efficiently.

They find this playlist as they're digging up a little bottle in their garden. Dawn fills the sky with an orange glow chasing away the deep blues and purples. The bottle has star charms tied around the bottle's stout neck with baby blue ribbons and a paper tape that has 'For you healing~' scrawled across it. Within the bottle is a scrap of paper with a QR code and some paper stars and cute spa miniature models: rolled up fluffy towels, a glass drink dispenser with little rubber fruit slices floating in water, and a mask with cucumber slices affixed on the cheeks. What dedication! It all seems homemade.

They listen to the playlist out of curiosity at what the QR code would entail. They open their phone's camera while drinking tea with Lady-Fingers, a quaintly old-fashioned name for a snack, and not the typical taste of the usual sweets they ate. The link leads to a google doc:

'Hello, finder of my little DIY project. I was trying to have some fun with aesthetics, and I made this playlist linked below. It embodies the rollercoaster of having people tell you things you need to hear and internalise without the pressure of them doing it directly, from the upbeat motivating side to the more melancholic nature of healing that is a slow and non-linear process. I don't know you, you don't know me. But we can only get better if we reach out to each other. So, here's hoping this little bottle and playlist helps you on your healing process wherever you are currently on it.



P.S. I didn't know which order is best so feel free to jump around and listen to the songs that resonate more with you in whatever current mood you find yourself in when you listen to it~!'

“What if it was impossible to not be wildly in love with yourself?”


DON'T DREAM IT
DO IT!
NEXT 5 KM
tell a story

untitled

i saw a list
on the ground
a
list
of
songs

after a glance
i
kept
walking

i had somewhere to be, after all

but then
something pulled me back
a nagging feeling
that it had been left for me
my list
mine

and i thought to myself
well, why not?
so i created a playlist of
each
and
every
song
and i put my earphones in
knowing what would come next
the usual
echoes of melancholy

but then
the strangest thing happened
as I closed my eyes
bracing myself

i started to move
to *sway*
to … dance?

i opened my eyes
and the world shone
awash with colour
swirling around me as i spun
the sun
that had been setting just seconds before

started to rise

and so did i

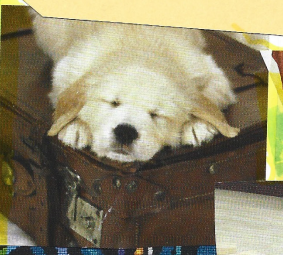








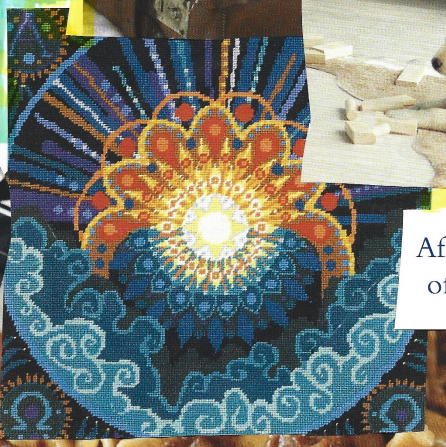




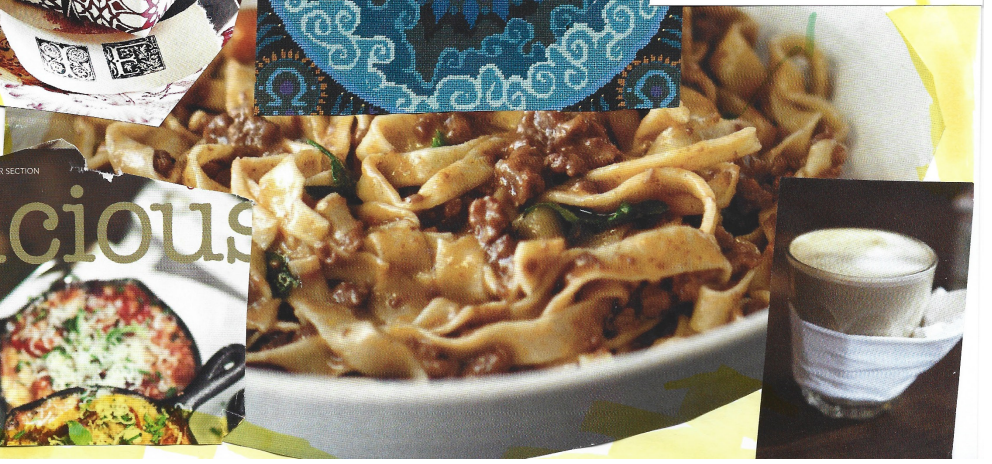








After all, the world is full of amazing discoveries,



Leema's lesson

Leema, the genius mathematician, couldn't figure out any problem without deep analytical reasoning. However, Leema could never calculate the sequence of steps to…dancing. From a family of dancers, Leema was the lemon in the orange tree. Even with this in mind though, the determined little Leema didn't give up and continued to seek to solve the dancing equation.

After thorough researching, experimenting and collating, a list of the best songs that are suited to Leema's preference was made. The cure has been found. With Leema's commitment and the motivated songs curated, a set now needed to be placed. No better opportunity could have the come than the upcoming family gathering, but was Leema really ready?

So there it was, the dance floor and the family and the PLAY-LIST about to start. As it was playing, Leema was staying still with a mind racing. Factoring and equating in her mind, Leema still couldn't understand or reason with how to dance. As the song continued to play however, Leema began to let go of thinking and found something unexpected to happen. Soon Leema's legs were found bouncing to the algorithmic beat. Moving the body first, Leema still couldn't understand but didn't want to stop. Leema continued and suddenly it was happening.

It was beyond what calculation could compute but with the family cheering on, Leema was dancing more and more. Dancing, dancing and then dancing. Dancing^2.

“You are an important piece of an ecosystem that nourishes and is nourished by you. What are you growing together?”


COLOURFUL SURROUNDS
POWER
U-HIRE
Tocopilla
Antofagasta
Chilicetoc
Valparaiso
Santiago
Rancagua
Curico
Talca
Chillan
Temuco
Valdivia
Osorno
Puerto Montt
Chiloe I.
Chonos
Archipelago
Wellington I.
Queen Adelaide Archipelago
Str. of Magellan
Pto. Natales
Sta. Ines I.
GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (ECUADOR)
Fernandina (Narborough I.)
Isabela (Albemarle I.)
Santa Cruz (Chaves I.)
San Cristobal (Chatham I.)
On the same scale

Which hero are you?

In the land of Bundaberri, there is a dark force at work threatening to destroy it. Sam the Wise Wizard has paid you a visit, but this is no ordinary visit. He explains that you are the chosen one to defeat the Malevolent Overlord.... but you can't do it alone. Before you can start your quest you will need to form a fellowship to help you.

Pick the first member of your fellowship

a. Troll: a warrior with incredible brute strength

b. Centaur: a healer and valiant sword fighter

c. Werewolf: a speedy shapeshifting spy

Pick the second member of your fellowship

a. Dwarf: a talented crafter who knows how to wield an axe

b. Elf: an agile archer with magic power

c. Ghoul: a powerful demon with the ability to regenerate

Now that you have your fellowship, what is your special skill?

a. Leadership. You bring people together no matter their differences

b. Magic. You have just discovered your magical powers and need others to help you harness your strength

c. Intelligence. You are too smart for your own good andare skeptical of others

Everyone has a flaw, what's yours?

a. Stubborn

b. Gullible

c. Dishonest

You come across a cozy inn to stay for the night. You don't have enough gold and silver to pay for both a room and a meal. The innkeeper makes you an offer: if you tell them knowledge about your quest you can have both. What do you do?

a. You try to use brute force to get both the room and the meal, even though your fellowship advises you not to use your strength. You tell them this is the best way, so they follow your lead. The enemies who are disguised as guests attack you and your friends. One of your friends gets hurt as you escape.

b. You tell them about your quest, even though your fellowship is suspicious. You gain the room and a meal, but the innkeeper leads the enemies to you. In the early hours of the morning, you awake to find yourselves surrounded by the enemy forces.

c. You give in and tell half truths. Your fellowship are disappointed in you and don't want to stay. As they leave, they run into the enemy forces. Now you have to save them.

After you and the fellowship overcome the enemy forces, you continue on your quest. Together you travel through the ancient woodlands, home to the elves and werewolves; through the caverns, home to the dwarves and ghouls; and finally through the mountains, home to the trolls and centaurs. You learn:

a. To trust in your fellowship to lead the way for once because it's okay to rely on others.

b. To face your fears, and with your fellowship, go through the dark woods, even though it normally scares you.

c. To listen to your fellowships' advice because you can't always know everything.

Now that you and the fellowship have honed your skills, you are ready to defeat the Overlord. How did you win the battle?

a. You climb to the highest peak of the highest mountain and lead the fellowship to victory by combining your awesome fighting skills into a powerful attack to defeat the Overlord.

b. You come face to face with the Overlord deep in the dark forest, with the fellowship's help you unleash an unstoppable spell to defeat the Overlord.

c. You bring the battle to the enemy at the Overlord's castle, using the strengths of the fellowship you develop a brilliant strategy to defeat the Overlord.

What do you do after you've defeated the Malevent Overlord?

a. Continue to go on adventures with the friends you made in the fellowship

b. Settle down with your partner and enjoy a quiet life. Sometimes your friends from the fellowship will stop by for a visit and you'll reminisce about your adventures.

c. You and the fellowship go into business together, using your skills to gain riches and live a life of luxury

Mostly A's—the epic hero

You were born to be a Hero! You have honed your strength and warrior skills to become the hero you were destined to be. But you couldn't have done without your comrades. You led your fellowship to victory by bringing them together.

Mostly B's—the classic hero

You're just an ordinary soul with a special gift. It just so happens that your special gift is what's needed to save the world. You couldn't have done this without honing your magic powers with your fellowship.

Mostly C's—the anti-hero

You didn't set out to be the hero, but deep down you're the only one who can save the world. You are not perfect, but hey, who is? You have plenty of vices, but you'll always protect what matters to you. Sometimes all it takes is to meet new friends to change your perspective and challenge you to think differently.



The rear of this Sydney home is filled with light streaming through a strip of windows along the north party wall, above the kitchen. The **benchtop** in Snow from CaesarStone – (02) 8339 7400, www.caesarstone.com.au – blends seamlessly with the **walls** and polyurethaned **joinery** in Baker White by Dulux, 13 25 25, www.dulux.com.au. Subtle contrast comes from the Ultimo Structured **tiles** in Brown, $80 per sqm, from Onsite Supply, (0[illegible] 9360 3666, www.onsitesupply.com.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

CLEVER USE OF LIGHT, MIRRORS AND MULTI-PURPOSE FURNITURE HAS TURNED A CRAMPED, DARK SEMI INTO A LIVEABLE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOME

WORDS/STYLING **MEGAN MORTON** PHOTOGRAPHS **MICHAEL WEE**

Goss up, Buzz fed!

A creative ‘game’ exercise to process one’s emotions on a situation that’s been on their mind. You can repeat these steps on the same situation and change the format, or try with another situation whenever you don’t know how to feel or what to do.

Decide on a situation you want to focus on and put it in the format of a blog post, buzzfeed article, tweet thread etc. E.g. Coworker talks over a colleague constantly, someone insists on always leaving their trash in the break room etc. You can put real names or made-up ones to distance yourself from the story.

Write a headline based on the immediate focus you have or the immediate attention-grabbing detail you want to show a reader.

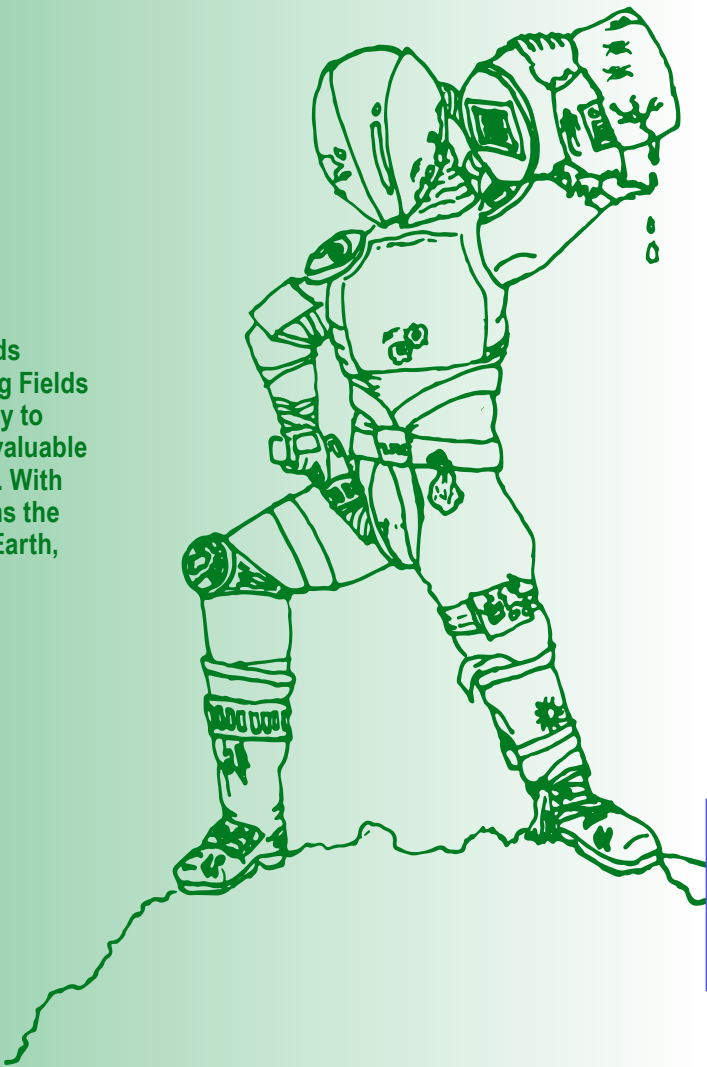
Write a synopsis/summary of the situation in three sentences—just one paragraph. Including the Five Ws—who, what, when, where, why often used in journalism.

Draw or create an image to accompany the news article . It can be an abstract interpretation of the events or a collage of images and photos to best sum up and catch the eye of a reader.

Share the article with another ‘player’ (anyone you care to share with) and ask them what comment they would leave on such an article. Leave your comment on the other player’s article if they so wish.

Reflect on how you feel about the situation before the article you have created about said situation and afterwards with the comments if you decide to share with anyone. Have certain parts become more obvious? Have perspectives shifted? Or have aspects of the situation been revealed by questions raised from the comments of the readers? It’s okay to say only certain emotions or stances were reasonable and others weren’t. Sometimes you have an awful day and project it onto other people. You can still feel that this person treated you unfairly and you need to remove yourself from those situations with them.

GASER



LAST TIME ON GASER: Sol finds Borloctik' Crystals in the Mining Fields of the Asteroid Graveyards, only to discover they're useless, only valuable as used Crystal Memory Cores. With assistance from Croa, Sol learns the nearest Memory Cores are on Earth, now a desolate rock.

After landing on Earth, Sol sets out for the memory cores. After searching for days, Sol finds a Core filled with lewd and crude memories. Disgusted, they bag the core reluctantly. After finding more Cores with similar content, they question the human race: “No wonder they’re so looked down upon. This is practically rubbish, worth as much as a clear Borloctik Crystal”.

Frustrated, Sol decides to head back after another failed expedition. They slam the bag of cores on the ground causing them to glow from blue to red; the damage makes other cores nearby glow green in the distance. Sol tracks down the glow but can’t find its source. Confused, they start to dig and dig. The underground glow gets brighter, eventually breaking through and revealing a ton of Cores and healthy skeletons in an underground city bunker surrounded by relics of the later years of 2060. Sol looks through the Cores and most of them are better: Happy families, forgotten creatures called “Dogs”. Sol feels good about what they’ve found.

As they continue Core hunting, Sol finds themselves descending further underground. Sol finds shelves of mint collectables of the 20th Century including “Jackie Chan’s Greatest Stunts DVD”, and an odd skeleton lying on top of a desk. Inspecting it, Sol sees it’s flesh-like goo on the back of the skull, almost as if it was still fresh. Suddenly, it grabs Sol’s hand, sucking them in. They struggle, but manage to pull it out, finding another Memory Core, only bigger and amber-coloured. It doesn’t have any visual memories though, only scratchy increments of Jackie Chan by Bantu & Dr Chaii playing. Sol grabs the DVD and discovers two numbers on the back.

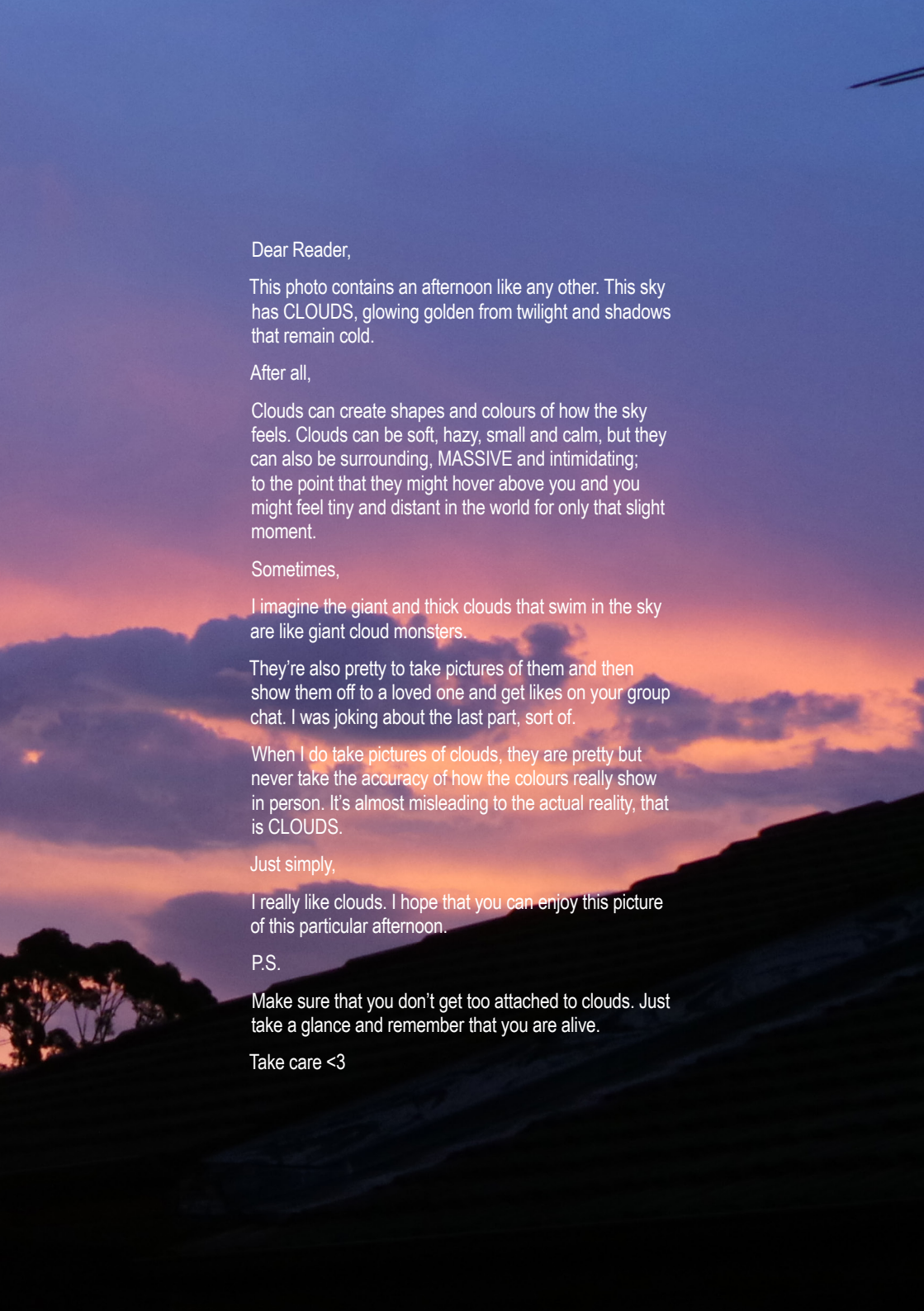
With every step Sol takes, they hear the song dimming, and another song becoming louder and clearer. They follow the music, but accidentally activate a trap panel that rotates the room like a Rubik’s cube. Sol activates their boots to grip to one of the rotating surfaces and finds themself hanging upside down as the room stops. The song Upside Down can be heard, so Sol looks down and sees another two numbers. Journeying further, they see flags blowing mysteriously underground as the song Wavin’ Flags starts playing.Sol runs to the flag and starts climbing the pole looking for the numbers. Upon inspection, the flag poles give way and fall down. A tube shoots out of the pole, and Sol pounces on it just as Steal My Sunshine starts playing. Hearing that, Sol looks for the number on the tube. Finding nothing, Sol tries opening it and a ball of light shoots out and flies away. Sol shoots at it, but it escapes. Sol pursues the ball of light … to a dead end.

Annoyed, they start to head back but then hear a faint sound. They take a step towards it and accidentally set off a tube chute, falling backwards. Travelling 1000 miles, they see many remnants and objects of Earth’s past. Sol thinks about the fond and happy memories they’d seen earlier and wonders how it got so bad, so fast. They wish they had been there for Earth’s better moments. Suddenly, they notice the ball of light ahead of them. Sol tries to catch up and captures it, before falling out of the other end of the tube.

The ball struggles in their hands, pulling Sol across the ground. They hear a cough from the shadows. Shocked, they release the ball of light illuminating the mysterious figure from the shadows, shrieking, “Well, well…”.

To Be Continued...





Dear Reader,

This photo contains an afternoon like any other. This sky has CLOUDS, glowing golden from twilight and shadows that remain cold.

After all,

Clouds can create shapes and colours of how the sky feels. Clouds can be soft, hazy, small and calm, but they can also be surrounding, MASSIVE and intimidating; to the point that they might hover above you and you might feel tiny and distant in the world for only that slight moment.

Sometimes,

I imagine the giant and thick clouds that swim in the sky are like giant cloud monsters.

They're also pretty to take pictures of them and then show them off to a loved one and get likes on your group chat. I was joking about the last part, sort of.

When I do take pictures of clouds, they are pretty but never take the accuracy of how the colours really show in person. It's almost misleading to the actual reality, that is CLOUDS.

Just simply,

I really like clouds. I hope that you can enjoy this picture of this particular afternoon.

P.S.

Make sure that you don't get too attached to clouds. Just take a glance and remember that you are alive.

Take care <3

“Reach forward 100 years to your descendant. What will you give them?”






PARADISE

Dear my beloved family,

Embrace yourself and be ready to cross over many hurdles life will give to you. Beaming with utter happiness as I write this letter to you all. Growing up my mind narrowed to what society wanted me to be. Always dreaming big but always unhappy thinking about the norms and values instilled onto individuals. You are all reading this letter and I am feeling radiant as I can say that my legacy has passed through to you. I say this because I was scared I was never going to be able to do this. With the letter accompanied I leave with you three photographs of joy, comfort and strength. As my descendants, I am feeling jovial that this all began with two queer lovers, myself and my Saarah.

Healing, the process of restoration, I need you to know that your well-being matters.

Picture yourself from when you were younger and picture yourself now. Note the similarities and differences and tell yourself that you have been resilient and still are. I give you a picture of when I was 3 and I give you a picture of when I was 23. The lesson to be learnt and engraved onto your heart is: be true to yourself. You trust many individuals on your journey in life. Friends, the people who you share mutual affection with are people who supply an abundance of bliss and elation. My friends, they are people who I have met at my alma mater, continued to be together at the same workplace and will still carry on to trust one another with respect and loyalty. These are the people between the images of when I was 3 and 23. I ask you to learn to maneuver and steer your path into the direction where you surround yourself with people who are not ignorant. Always remember to thank the ones who've helped you.

A sense of personal wholeness is what we all desire and deserve. I say to you to channel your healing energy and exert that force to open up. Make an effort as no one else will, but only you. Thrive, flourish your mindset and renew your perspectives on what you used to know. Everyday is a different day, so visualise something that you feel proud about and keep feeling prideful. I give you an image of a cat. His name is Leo, he made me rediscover comfort. I sought solace in his presence. He is not my cat but Saarah's, your great ancestral Bad Bitch of a QUEEN grandmother. I never grew up with animals but being with someone who has, I can say it provides a great sense of ardour in your life. His adorable paws and petty personality, his glaring hazel green eyes and the warmth he offers, I can never forget him.

Thrive what you find comfort in. I thrive because I find relief. The pain of hiding and being afraid to be vulnerable makes you spiral into a deep abyss. Keep yourselves grounded and be confident in who you are.

Times have changed, we all say.

Time is manipulative and time devours.

Time will tell and time will heal. You sit there thinking when will I have a say, a voice, support, triumph or even a sense of belonging?

To be frank, you never know. What I can tell you is to find who you feel courageous with. Build yourself. Strength is holding true to what you believe in, the intensity of power. To me power is love. Power is complicated but picture yourself with someone you feel powerful with. I have mine, do you?

Love is patient and love is kind, she is my strength of love and laughter.

What does it feel like? When the moon shines, I break the strings of light and make a veil of this radiance. Together we suffer and together we walk leaving behind a trail of queer gleam.

Keep being you and don't let anyone dull your sparkle.

Yours lovingly,

Sivani Yaddanapudi

To my descendant,

With this letter are attached three photos representing my comfort, joy and strength. I hope this serves you well and you look back to it when needed.

As you can see the first photo is my best friend of many years and she represents Joy Finding friends who care for and cherish you are rare, finding friends that you can experience such a beautiful emotion with is a miracle. My best friend over the span of our friendship has given me joy in my darkest moments and with just her presence I can feel the light and happiness she holds - pierce through the pain and hurt I was experiencing. Looking back on this photo tugs at my heart but makes me smile, the lesson being to spend as much time as possible with your friends and hold them close before it all fades. The joy she brings is overwhelming and warming, even as spirits we will be sat at a tree, bellies full of laughter, sharing the joy that has enriched our friendship and held us together.

Now the second photo is a bowl of homemade mushroom risotto and this represents comfort. This bowl made up of rice, vegetable stock and mushrooms may seem like nothing but it is everything. This bowl nourishes my soul and heals what medicine can't. Each bite envelopes me in a blanket of calm and peace. Food and comfort are a delightful pair, be sure not to take it for granted as not many can experience it. The smells of my mother's cooking waft throughout my body and hug my heart, I can see the memories from the past on every stream of hot steam. I cherish time spent over food with family and friends, the comfort we share together can be seen on our faces and felt in our stomachs. I know you will probably have many new foods in 100 years and many ingredients, however at the end of the day it is all a bowl of love and comfort.

The final and third photo is of my beloved, Sivani, she represents strength in all its entirety. We are the moon and the tide, she is the light that brings me up and I am the water that calms her. As you look at her photo you can see that strength is found in her eyes and smile, she is my strength and my only hope is that you, as her descendant, inherit her strength and compassion, please don't forget to be someone else's strength when they need it as well as yours. Without her I would not have made it through my coldest of nights and I know with her by my side I will achieve everything I wish for. She can put me back together with just her hug and her voice, transferring her power to me and even as my own strength dims, hers continues to uplift me. Life will throw adversity and heartbreak at you like it's playing catch, remember you hold generations of power and strength in your bones.

Kind Regards

Saarah Hanif
(your ancestor)

Editor's note

Handle With Care is a CuriousWorks anthology project created through a series of experimental art-making workshops from June—November 2021.

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This zine was edited by Miranda Aguilar
This zine was designed by Huy Nguyen.
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Internal Back Cover: Photo by Diego Murillo



A little thing can mean a lot, like this little thing.

CURIOUS
WORKS