Vignettes: The Emerging Writers’ Festival Podcast

Season 1, Episode 3, ‘Plant’

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| Ruby-Rose Pivet-Marsh: | Hi!  You’re listening to Vignettes: The EWF Podcast.  My name is Ruby and I’m the Artistic Director here at EWF. I am coming to you from the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.  For our third episode, we’ll hear from artists Jesse Oliver and Jazz Money with their creative responses to the theme ‘Plant’.  From houseplants to forest floors, we invited them to reflect on their connections to the green, moving, breathing things we are so lucky to co-exist with.  We hope you enjoy listening to these pieces as much as we did.  First up, here’s Jazz Money. |
| Jazz Money: | Yiradhu marang ngindhugir. Jazz yuwin ngadhi. Wiradjuri yinaa baladhu. Darkinjung ngurambang warra-nha.  I want to acknowledge and pay my respect to the custodians of all Indigenous nations where this recording may reach. I am grateful for the ongoing unbroken care of the lands sky and waters that extend across this continent.  My name is Jazz Money, I’m a Wiradjuri woman living off country, recording this piece from beautiful sovereign Darkinjung waters. I live on the land of the Darag and Gundungurra in the place now known as the Blue Mountains in a sweet little yellow house full of books, plants, art from friends and the smell of baking bread. I live with my partner and three friends, a funny dog and two spectacular chickens, and am grateful every day for this sweet, happy, tranquil little home that we’ve have made. The space where I work is full of many parts, depending on what’s keeping my hands busy at any given time. At the moment there is potato stamps, cut out poems, weavings, embroidery and the things that I use for my job.  I write poetry and make films. A few months ago I quit my full time job as a digital producer at a Sydney art institution to pursue freelance work and to undertake a masters of creative writing. It’s been a really fun time.  Today for Vignettes by the Emerging Writers Festival I’m going to read two poems written over the past few months. The first one is called ‘gadi’ which I wrote while dreaming of my homelands on the Murrumbidgee river  *gadi*  I float translucent  upon  within the river  whisper home three times  *ngurambang ngurambang ngurambang*  \*  a snake appears  beyond my skin it watches  though  this snake is made of sky  *gadi* I ask  are you real  *gadi* responds  waiting  I become another  \* the river is star sky country  *bilabang*  as we gaze below  our ancestors gaze deeper above  from within the snakes  tip toe  ribcage  I am small  and the world is only made of dark  we wind  *gadi* carves me home  *ngurambang ngurambang ngurambang*  \*  water tells a secret slowly  a snake listens as water  and all this will take  medicine  smoke  and time  \*  as *gadi* together we gather  grasses leaves small sweet shoots  in my soft mouth  I carry careful  spreading seeds along a river home  *bila*  every seed a forest  to make more water  from which old bodies rise  \*  do you hear that sound  it’s the stars singing down  *ngurambang ngurambang ngurambang*  *the young men are singing*  the young men are singing along the bridges of the city  wearing face masks  they’re walking into the highways  eyes to the sky  six lanes stopping to hear their songs  the men and the birds  will rise up in their chorus  to gather below the moon  translucent  dissolving in the milky glow  the steel scaffolds and iron harnesses of the grid  will soften  dissolving into song  wherever notes swell or those gentle fingers touch  and slowly the city will rise  into the air  into the mist  a mirage of yellow cranes  unfinished sky scrapers  mismatched wires dangling below the exposed concrete belly  the birds will stay below  two legged  to pick at the naked insects left  at the edges of the flattened grass  Mandaang guwu, thank you so much for listening. If you want to learn more about my work or connect you can find my instagram at @jazzmoney\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with 7 underscores at the end, like a kinda sassy tail. |
| Ruby-Rose Pivet-Marsh: | Thanks, Jazz.  Next up, here’s Jesse Oliver. |
| Jesse Oliver: | Hi..  My name is Jesse Oliver, I’m currently recording on Wurundjeri lands but I was raised on Whudjuck Noongar country.  In the past couple of years, I’ve worn a few exciting hats. I’ve been a Co-Director of the National Young Writers Festival, an Australian Poetry Slam Champion and Creative Producer with Express Media – where I’ve recently become General Manager. You may have also seen me slamming on recent HSBC bank ads.  But closer to home, I’m usually in the dining room of my terrace house – or COVID office for 2020 – sharing with my partner Jack and some lovely housemates. I have a few plants around me, but I’m mostly proud of a celery that I’ve been trying to grow from a store cutting.  I wanted to pay my respects to Elders past and present who’s unceded lands you might be listening from, and I also want to offer my solidarity in the acknowledgement that any climate crisis activism or solution – like what I talk about in my poem – must be First Nations led.  Annnnd.. If you wanted to check out some of my work, you can find me at jesseslamoliver.com.  If you wanted to hang out on the gram, I sometimes post a bit of poetry there. I’m at @unsolicited\_anchovy.  This is my poem for the theme of plant, I hope you enjoy:  When dopamine flows  like thunder though rainstorms and leaves become drum  the sound of us is silenced the canopy concert calls us  and we listen to it’s guidance  I pray I wake tomorrow  in this future coloured evergreen small, but planted firmly  in the earthly systems that birthed us  Too long, since I stepped out of this watery womb  where home meant love, and love meant life  And life was everything worth living for  Did you know..  Plants (People)… dance to poetry and music  Plants (People).. listen, and grow in the direction they choose  Plants (People) breathe, and breathe, and breathe life until they don’t  Too long, since lungs held my body in the mid-summer waters of Boorloo, Sun kissed breath  rising in warm waves  rocking me until I was still  Still enough to freeze time,  Still enough to listen  Floating on my back, I closed my eyes whispered gratitude for life  And felt the greatest power known to me  But now this breath escapes me  I see the stars we shoot for, yet fall into clouds of carbon dioxide we fall like investments and lives in an eco-suicide sidelined  by politicians, lungs, full of gas.  Floating above a canopy, above the trees  placed above the need to breathe  we are invasive species…. growth without roots we are unconnected to footprint by boots marching for money, on forgotten graves  We fell all thoughts of failed futures,  abuse the truth of history  that brittle branches, now breaking  are bound around ourselves,  taking breath from blood, and blood from stone  like those in Pilbara caves  I see executives shake hands, exchange congratulations  in front of paintings purchased with their raise.  But man, after 2020.  I’ll crack a cold one with the boys, blocks of ice melting outside the continent and esky  keeping economy cold, to have us looking so fresh.  We are splendour in no grass the profile picture picked last,  Smiling with a fish that is dead.  We are fuel to the fire like tinder, or Grindr, liberated in our blindness that love is by subscription  And the void is the space between copper wires  Instead of lung.  I learn.. that no one can hold themselves concerned, in the system we told ourselves  is “probably the best one that we got”  A COVID normal doom scroll, where dopamine flows like thunder and the world is silenced, but thanks to Google algorithms you are pre-aligned with guidance.  and we have no breath to ask why,  No trees to share breath  No breath to last time.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  I hope we choose the future coloured evergreen through the rose-coloured binoculars zoomed on the horizon  Where sunsets are beautiful  And not a coming age of humanity Where we decide a plan to be a little more than human  People (Plants)… dance to poetry and music  People (Plants).. listen, and grow in the direction we choose  People (Plants) breathe, and breathe, and breathe life until our lungs are shared with earth  Still enough to listen, Still enough time  Still enough to hear the canopy concerts  And Respond with the heart beat drum between lung  Breath whispers gratitude gratitude becomes destiny  And destiny, who we are  Dopamine, the greatest power known to me silent, and flowing through the trees. |
| Ruby-Rose Pivet-Marsh: | Jesse also did the sound design for his reading. Thank you Jesse, thank you Jazz and thank you, for listening to *Vignettes: The EWF Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode, please drop us a review, recommend us to your friends and hit ‘subscribe’.  And if today’s episode left you feeling inspired, perhaps you can take a leaf out of Jesse and Jazz’s book to write your own creative piece in response to *Plant*. We’d love to see what you come up with, too.  Tune in over the next couple of weeks for the final two episodes of our first season of *Vignettes.*  We’d also like to remind you that artist applications for the 2021 Emerging Writers’ Festival are still open, and closing very soon on the 9th of December.  So please make sure to get on to our website at emergingwritersfestival.org.au and get your applications in before then! We can’t wait to hear from you.  This podcast was produced by EWF Program Coordinator Millie Baylis. Our audio producer is Jon Tjhia, and our theme music was created by Thu Care (Thao Ly). You can find out more about the team behind this podcast and the artists featured in this episode on the EWF website.  This podcast was created and edited on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge that First Nations peoples are the first storytellers of this land, and that their sovereignty has never been ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to the Elders of the lands this podcast reaches. It always was, always will be, Aboriginal land. |