

# memory.

an exploration of memory through collaborative sculpture

## anthology of works

curated by Sadie Askwith



My paper-clay sculpture ‘memory’ was made by collecting over 20 individual paper artworks from friends, family and strangers, both over the internet and via post, nationwide and worldwide. These artworks were then printed off, soaked in water, and the separated fibres of the paper were then combined with clay. Over a two week period the clay was moulded, dried and photographed and exists now as an artwork available to view in the online zine. Thank you to everyone who got involved – from the humorous and light-hearted jottings-down to the beautiful drawings and thoughtful tributes to family and friends; I hope you feel my work has done your memories justice

Sadie

May 2020

# Memory

Quite a thought provoking word on an ordinary day  
But today especially  
Amid lockdown  
Everything seems so much more elevated  
At the forefront of my mind  
My thoughts are of one specific memory  
And many other lifelong memories

Memories of Gary-our best friend  
7 whole years have passed since that day  
April 3rd 2013  
Devastating  
Phil  
370 miles away  
Broken  
Jo  
Australia miles away  
Unreachable  
Me  
Oldham  
His hometown

Thoughts of that day evoke special and profound  
memories  
Football matches  
Home and away  
Glory days  
Latics and Liverpool  
Eating pies  
Chinese  
Dancing  
Dreamers  
Bowie  
Drinking too much  
Laughing  
Always laughing  
Crying  
Pure emotion  
True friend  
Never forget  
Especially today





It's funny how vividly I remember  
Yellow daffodils popping up to my heels  
As I pranced around on the lawn in  
my aboriginal days of childhood  
Yet I have no recollection of last night  
It will never be in a pocket  
of my brain  
Waiting to be fondly  
recalled.



I HOPE THIS PARALYZING  
FEAR OF INTIMACY + PHYSICALITY  
DISSIPATES BEFORE 100.

AND THAT SHOULD THE EVENTUALITY  
OCCUR, HIS IMAGE BE NOT BURNED  
UPON THE BARKS OF MY EYELIDS  
OR HIS STICKY TOUCH LINGERING  
ON NEWLY BURN SKIN, FRESHLY  
SPOTT.

I PRAY FOR MYSELF AND SUCH  
LIBERTY FROM GRASPING  
RESTRAINTS OF MEMORY SO  
SOUR AND CONTROLLING.



Wetsuits, wetsuits... put on your wetsuit,  
It's warm outside but it's ice in the sea,  
Don't forget the sun cream.  
Empty beach, cold sea, ice cream.  
The perfect trio.  
But this won't last forever,  
A little 2 week escape every summer,  
The whole family -  
Will it ever be the same?

All grown up,  
No more beach, sea or sun cream,  
Instead family means more,  
Family is partners and nieces,  
And that's okay,  
Summer has changed,  
And that's okay.



*"Can you imagine? There's a butterfly fluttering against the window" - A response to Ingmar Bergman's 1978 film, Autumn Sonata*

The butterfly chimes. Its monarch wing dusts the beam of sunset slipping through the hulking, dark curtains. Steaming pools of wax buoy the candle sticks, each one lit for the years passed by. All those eternal years absent of a mother's love now ingrained in the wrinkles around Eva's melancholy eyes. She sighs and pushes her round glasses back onto her nose, traipses towards the kitchen to be greeted by a sink brimming with dirty dishes.

The Steinway piano looms large in the next room, its shadow lurking on the wine stained carpet. Mother has gone again, along with the smell of her cigarettes and stale perfume. When dawn breaks Eva will long for her once more. She'll sleepwalk through these rooms and dream she is there, arms wide and ready to scoop her up, laying Eva back into bed and planting a tender kiss on her forehead.

*Mama, please don't go this time.  
Mama, please hold me like you used to when I was a child.*

Mother presses a finger to her mouth and *shhhh*. Sleep envelopes Eva, tightly bound like the letter she will send in the morning, regretful for her unforgivable words. Apologising for her grieving of a childhood that browned and drooped like dead flowers. And her Mother will go on, like an endless train journey she'll relive each moment. Each breath she regretted not being nourished into kind words for her grief-stricken daughters. Each performance she pined for, her name on the lips of everyone watching.



When explaining what happens to memory in dementia it can be useful to use the bookcase analogy:

Imagine memories are stored in a bookcase with the earliest memories being stored on the bottom shelf of a bookcase and the most recent memories stored on the top shelf.



In dementia it is like the bookcase is being shaken, the books at the top of the bookcase are less stable and therefore the first to fall out – so the first memories to go are the most recent.

As dementia progresses more and more books are lost from the bookcase until very few are left and those that remain are those that have been there the longest, the books at the bottom of the bookcase.





10 Apr, 7:49 pm

I remember when i was young (3 or 4 years old) we went on holiday to france and my mum did my hair in lots of tiny plaits and we kept it in for the whole holiday to make it easier because my hair was so long when i was little. towards the end of the holiday we went to these incredible botanical gardens and there was a gorgeous japanese style garden with a huge weeping willow that i was obsessed with and my scalp was so itchy from the sun that we took all the tiny plaits out and my hair was massive and curly and i remember thinking i was like the weeping willow because my hair was so curly and wavy just like the leaves on the tree, it's one of my earliest memories of feeling really connected to the natural world and is one of the memories from my childhood that will stay with me forever







- I remember sitting on the toy tractor at the top of the hill.
- I race down the hill and suddenly I swerve
- I then, before I know it, hit a real tractor
- Apparently mum still has nightmares about it.



Saturday 21st March

To see Baptine to me, Poppy, mum and dad to my orphanage, on the way I felt very excited because I was going to find out some more information about when I was born. I met the director and the doctor who looked after me when I was born. He met some of the babies and took lots of photos and videos. They took us for lunch and I felt very happy. When we got back the kayes came with us to have a boat ride along the canal and we saw lots of lanterns. Tonight it had my name painted.



We sit, a makeshift family in the shittiest pub in Winton. Dissertations submitted, the year is over.

Cider and black is half price so of course, we drink double. The boys play pool with one hand to give me a chance, I still lose.

Sitting in the beer garden we chase the sun, moving from table to table, smoking, laughing and crying because we never truly believed we'd make it this far.

We'd prayed for it all to be over, wished away those last few months.

Now sat, in the shittiest pub in Winton, wishing we could do it all over again.



When I was young  
my Mum used to play  
the piano  
while I had a lie in on  
a Saturday morning.  
Chopin, Schumann  
Debussy and Brahms  
would float up the stairs  
to my bed.  
Now I am 49  
and she has dementia.

Ali Bell



An early and happy childhood memory I have is of being 9 or 10 years old and walking miles through the Gloucestershire countryside with a gang of around 6 kids. It was the summertime and we spent whole days walking from our town towards the River Severn. Our meeting point was behind an old Castle where Henry VIII had stayed and we followed an ancient cart track behind the castle towards small villages and farms. Some of us brought sandwiches and biscuits or a lidded Tupperware cup with warm orange squash. We trekked like mini sherpas through cornfields filled with red poppies and along dry farm lanes- about 5 miles, one way. The countryside was beautiful, the weather warm and days long. On our route, there were farms selling cider in churns outside their gates and we crept into orchards & stole apples. We paddled in gullies & looked for silvery stickleback fish in streams. Our final destination was at an old pub called the Windbound which sat right on the River Severn's bank. We all felt excited and quite triumphant because we had made it and we sat on the bank for ages looking across the river to Wales feeling like true explorers. But we were frightened to play on the beach below having heard the legendary deadly grey quicksand that could suck you down and swallow you up. Those summers were balmy and free. No one knew where we were. We met early in the morning dressed in 1970s summer clothes oranges and purples, pie hats and daps. Some of our gang were as young as 7 or 8 years old. We always made it home exhausted at tea time or dusk, hungry and filthy and ready to do the same all over again the next sunny day. No one knew where we had been all day and no one ever asked.



I STILL MISS YOU.

THERE'S A PERIOD EVERY MORNING  
WHERE I WAKE AND FORGET YOU  
NOT ASLEEP NEXT TO YOU.

I'M STILL FOND. EVEN THOUGH  
EVERYTHING HURTS SO MUCH.

EVERYONE LEAVES.



## I HAVE FORGOTTEN MORE THAN YOU WILL EVER KNOW

*Title after Skeeter Davis*

I was once shaped like a window sill. Straight and breastless,  
panting after running circles, barefoot in the yard. Begging  
at the screen-door to be let in. Nightly, I would scald my body  
in hot shower water to practice for hell. I cried silently, the first  
time I saw at my labia with a handheld mirror. Flesh, writhing  
with culpability. Something that looked like a wound or a mouth.  
Relived shatter of youth. The exact moment my hymen became  
a torn flag waving at half mast. Virginity is a bodily cavity full  
of fake pearls and I can't stop spitting. My tongue, still buried  
like a secret. Remembering still feels like stirring the dead.  
Each detail: an exhumed body. So much of life is just filling  
and emptying. Once it stops it'll never start again. I don't  
remember the first ten years of my life. My therapist calls  
this a psychic kindness. I call it a robbery and he doesn't  
understand. I tell him that childhood was a hostage situation.  
Coca-Cola in a baby bottle. Henny in a paper bag. Those boys  
chewing tobacco in their red pickups. The day after Micheal  
was found dead. I watched moths electrocute themselves  
against. The porch light, and I understood. Now, each day  
curdles into its end, and I am ravaged. Grief is a mouthed  
prayer repeating. Suffering is recursive and inherited.  
A collective writhing. When I feel myself dissolving into  
nothing again. It feels like I am returning home.

Dear Max,

As you're laid here in between my legs, resting your head on my thigh, I wanted to write you a letter. I love you. A million times over, I love you. Since I was just six years old, I have looked at you and thought you were just the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. I remember the first walk mum and I took you on a dark evening. You ran as fast as your legs would take you into the bushes to explore, I thought you were never coming back. As tears filled my eyes I cried to my mum, "Everything I love leaves me!". But here we are, 14 years later, and you're laying on me, breathing heavily, and nudging your head every time my sleeve gets a bit too close to the part of your face you don't like being touched. Even when I know your time on this planet is now limited, I understand that you could never leave me. The endless stream of love I have for you can never go. And I know that even when you're not here in your physical form anymore, that I will still feel your love, your calming presence, your patience, your wisdom and your kindness. That can never leave me, even if you in your physical form must.

I am unable to put into words how big of a role you have, and still do, play in my life, Max. One of our most favourite places in the world is the Hagg, in Cotherstone. You've always adored the river as I've always loved to watch you swim. However, more recently you've taken to paddling. You know your body no longer has the strength to carry you against the rapids anymore. I still see the way in which you nostalgically look at the water with glee. This past week we have been taking you to the beck in the middle of 'the big field' next to the river, as soon as your toes reach the water, your tail begins to wag from side to side. Yesterday, your toes didn't touch the water for some time, however as you stood staring at the water, your tail began to illustrate that familiar happiness. I don't know what it is about the river and swimming after stones, but it has always made you light up. Mum even said two days ago that when we see you paddling around in the water with such joy in your face, you wouldn't think that you're an old dog. She thinks that you still get so excited as it brings back all the happy memories of the time you have spent in the water. I hope when you look back at the time your two front teeth were knocked out as you caught a stone thrown by some tourists at Cotherstone river all those years ago, it brings you some joy, and doesn't remind you of the pain you felt. The pain most certainly would have been overridden by the sense of accomplishment you most certainly would have felt, knowing you caught that stone you'd spend years swimming after.

As we sit here, mum has begun to play the piano, I think she's composing your song. That's how she lets her feelings out, she explores the key of the piano with her emotions. I don't think you can hear it anymore, but you have always loved the piano. In recent years, you've taken to laying there, not only when its being played, but when you want to rest. I'm sure this is because of the comfort you feel when you hear it. As you know, it's our mum who looked after you during your gradual deterioration of the past few months. During the cold winter evenings, she would light the fire and make your bed up in front of it to keep you warm. She tells her piano pupils and their parents that you'd be sitting in during the lesson. No one ever minded, I know it's because so many of them enjoyed your company.

As I write now, a few weeks have passed since I wrote the above. Yesterday marked two weeks since you passed. I dreamt of you last night, dreamt that somehow we'd gone back in time and you were still here with us, except you were a few years younger. I cuddled up to you the way I have done since I was a child. I think of you every day, Max. I miss being around your calming presence and seeing your beautiful face. I've always thought you were the most beautiful creature on this planet, from when I first saw you at six years old, to now as I'm sat here writing this as a twenty-year-old.

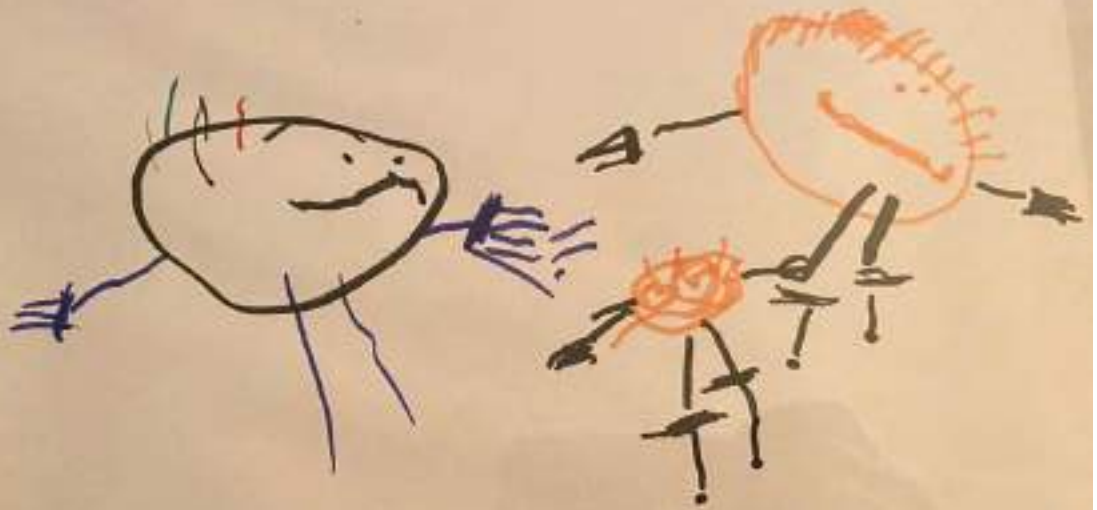
I could go on and on, but I'm going to leave it at that. I hope it's not weird to say but I talk to you everyday, reminiscing old memories and telling you how much I miss you. I don't think it'll ever stop, the missing.

I love you Max, I always have and always will.

Until we meet again my boy.

Yours, Scarlett x





By

# [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

age 0 0

Gorse Bushes - MAKE ME THINK OF  
BEING DRAGGED INTO QUICKSAND,  
AND HUNG ON TO A  
PRICKLY BRANCH UNTIL MY  
GRANDPA RESCUED ME.  
I WAS ABOUT 5 AT THE TIME!



## Past selves.

curled up in each other, under my covers,  
our covers, her covers, mine,  
I slip in next to them,  
Rest my head with them,  
Flip back inside of them

They sit with me, beside me, inside me,  
overlapping and familiar,  
I look through their eyes and they look through mine,  
So changed now  
I can see now  
The pinhole fell away one day and let me see myself as  
me,  
But they still sit inside their eyes,  
Not quite present,  
Not quite alive.

This self and I share teenage years  
That self and I share childhood  
All of us share each others feeling  
specific feeling of moments, passed

I want to hold them in my palm  
make them warm, held,  
stop the cycle,  
Lay them to rest.

memorials of moments,  
A self that was lost here,  
A self that was born here  
stays here, has been here ever since she was born here,  
Sage under my quilt,  
Hiding in my bedroom, waiting for me to come home and  
peel away the pinholes.

We sleep within each other  
our chests rise and fall and our hands don't quite fit  
But I can fit it,  
The feeling of them, of me, of w  
Linedirty fade  
And we hold each other



past selves 2 - Ode to 17.

Bumping into her on the corner of my road  
She's walking down to the Lodge  
Going for drinks with Skye and might end up in town later,  
She doesn't know yet but she's all dolled up and she's  
got a fiver for a taxi just in case,  
Probably got some kind of flower in her hair,  
At least some glitter on her cheeks,  
17, sunken and shiny.

Takes me by surprise when I bump into her at Tesco,  
She's grabbing some chewies and a pack of fraggles,  
sounds like lunch,  
She's listening to something like Lou Reed or no maybe  
something like Forbidden Fruit,  
Lou Reed was 15 and she's 17 now as she brines  
shoulders with me on her way to the checkout.

Her face is plastered on my wall,  
Toxeth Tesco photobooth,  
mmu ready baby it's time to spread those wings,  
Her legs are knocking on the side of my bed as I climb up  
to sleep,  
Arms lock into place as we both stare at the ceiling for  
hours,

Bump into her on the train  
18 now! foundation year!  
Sounds like bitterness and the edge of a new beginning,  
I brush shoulders with her often, the last of the pair  
seems to be born in Liverpool,  
The last me to live here,  
we sit side by side on the East Midlands train,  
makes me smile knowing she'd meet him soon,  
fall in love, become new

She's still wearing the plaites,  
doesn't even know she's wearing them,  
Doesn't know what it's like to be a body, not just a inside on  
she'll know soon though,  
she'll be me soon.

Last of the past selves what a funny thought,  
That I've outgrown those selves,  
I've stopped shedding skins in these streets  
I'm all together now  
I can sit with them knowing I'm what they become  
knowing I'll change, but I don't think I'll ever slip  
back into my skull,  
I'll never feel 17 again.

Bevved middle aged women clambering up Keith's window,  
posing for a photo,  
feels funny to be home, weird knowing it'll never  
feel the same as when I lived here,  
But nice knowing it does anyway, feel like home.

- Ella Fradgley.





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