



M.33

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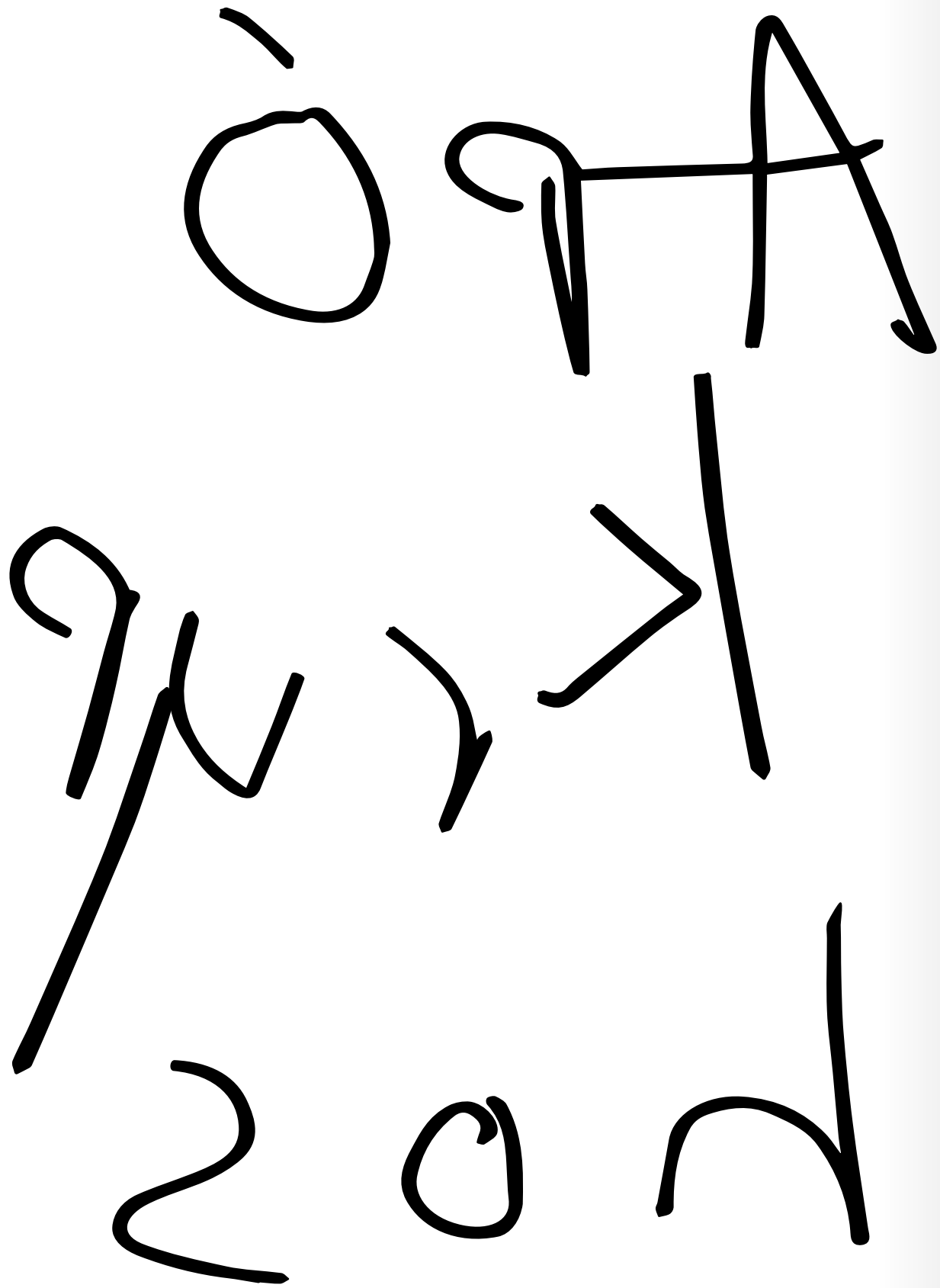
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A P O

M.33

K R V P

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- 1 . These Photographs of Mourning.
2. Apókryphos (from the ancient Greek) to mean hidden, concealed, secret, unknown.
3. Who was the photographer and what was his name? I have imagined his face over the course of the last seven years. I have wondered what he looked like. Arabic or Mediterranean in appearance, that is certain. Was he tall or short, fat or thin, young or old, professional or amateur, married or single, happy or sad? Is he still alive or dead? What camera did he use?

4. What if he could see his work reimagined by the granddaughter of the deceased? Hung on the wall of the gallery, a thousand percent larger than what he had printed in 1975. 5 x 7 inch. Did he print himself?

5. I have asked about him to the one person who was there, my father. Understandably, after 43 years, he can't recall the photographer's name, or who he was related to, and how he ended up taking the images. He did vaguely recall that he was not a professional in that he did not do it for money, rather he was a photo enthusiast who always had a camera with him and was always taking photographs. He was a friend of the family, someone from the village most likely, not hired by the funeral company. But he can't recall his name.

6. I should have asked my grandmother while she was living, but I was too afraid to recall her past, too afraid to make mention of the photographs that she had covertly bequeathed me, too afraid to say, "hey Teta, I saw the photographs in the envelope that were buried under the other more ordinary photographs you gave me. I saw your grief and how terrified you were to be left alone and I saw you collapsing, weeping, mourning. I have never seen you like that before. By the way, who was the photographer?"

7. How could I have lived with this woman for half my life and never known her grief. She would have been my age when she lost him. No doubt it is the way in which she lost him that is captured in the photographs as a thick emotion, a grief-stricken expression.

8. These photographs were her secret, hidden and left out of the family album and yet, once revealed, they explain all that has been inexplicable. They explain my father to me. He is 26 in these photographs. I read the weight of the future in his posture, in his heavy burdened shoulders, slumped, the mechanisation of a hand held out to shake the hands of those in attendance. The firstborn is now responsible. The photographs show my mother at 24, heavily pregnant with my sister, tired and ready to give birth.

9. I wonder what sort of chemicals—hormones, adrenaline, cortisol—were released into the womb.

10. I am not in the photographs. I am 22 months. Where was I on that day? Perhaps with cousins.

11. Roland Barthes died when he was hit by a laundry van. My grandfather was hit by a panel van. It is very 1970s Australia to be killed by a panel van. The love machine, the Sandman.

12. These photographs hint at what it must have been like to be Lebanese and living in Sydney in the 70s. Who are they who wail and flail? What is this gothic theatre; what is this theatrical performance; who are these dark skinned, dark haired people? Why do they all wear black? The shame in over-expression, the shame in showing grief, the shame in losing control of one's emotions, the shame of throwing oneself onto the coffin. The shame of screaming and crying. The shame of migrants.

13. We look at photographs. Photographs are made to be looked at. When we pose for a photograph, we know we are posing for the other: we are to be gazed upon, our eventual objectification. But what does looking *actually* involve? Can we pull apart the act of looking (at a photograph)? Looking involves reading the image. When I look at a photograph, I convert the image and its subject, the details, into an internal dialogue:

- . A white woman stands under a Hills Hoist holding her new born baby (it is okay to be white)
- . A rainbow
- . A family holiday (are they really that happy?)
- . A wedding (I bet they are divorced by now)
- . A birthday cake with three candles
- . A baby crying (thankfully photographs are silent)
- . The sea and the sun rising (over a beach in Surfers no doubt)
- . A mushroom cloud (no one was killed)
- . Twin Towers falling; aerial view of a school building in a shooting (60 children dead); a celebrity with fake boobs, nose, lips; porn; two people fucking (the free world).

This inner dialogue constitutes my reading of 'ordinary' images. My eyes scan the surface of the image unconsciously gauging its materiality. But more consciously, and more urgently, I am reading the subject: what is this picture of? A person, an object, a place, an event.

14. The picture make us witness to an event. Is this event fictional—such as a Fellini film or a Hollywood Mafia film? Or did this event actually occur? The event in this case took place on the 29th October, 1975: a funeral, and a burial, of a man who was hit by a car on the evening of the 26th October, 1975. He died in hospital on the 27th October, 1975 (he doesn't know this at the time, but his great grandson will be born on the same day in 2009).

15. The first time I cuddled my son I knew I had cuddled him before. His touch was so familiar. My son was born three weeks early on the 27th October, 2009.

16. In one frame, my grandmother is holding the hand of a stranger, the grave digger. Like the other men in the frame, he assists to keep her body from tumbling onto the coffin as it is lowered into the grave (one that she will eventually share with her husband). Has she been sedated?

17. What remains hidden? The body in the coffin. My grandfather resides in the limits of the wooden box. The photographer is also hidden. The photographer who looked upon the scene through the viewfinder of his camera is hidden by the apparatus, which shields his face. He is hidden out of frame. Not even his shadow clumsily appears. There is nothing in these pictures that can offer a clue to his appearance, his visage.

18 . The church. I have been able to fill the photographer's shoes. I have stood where he stood in the church at St Joseph's Riverwood, the church of my school days. I know that he must have certainly stood upon a step ladder to get a bird's eye view of the congregation. I know a step ladder was positioned under the banner that announced the hymn numbers. An altar boy would often stand on it to change the numbers at the start of mass. I know the church so intimately. I have spent thousands of hours inside its apostolic architecture. My father, my uncle and aunt, my siblings and I have communed, confirmed and confessed in that church. Forced to spend Saturday nights and Sunday mornings under its tawny lights, nodding off to the priest's never-ending homily.

I have spent Easters, Christmases, christenings, weddings in that church, but never a funeral. The stained-glass windows are yellow, and fill the church with an amber glow. These are what the photographs can't tell you, what the photographs don't show, what remains concealed in a black and white picture.

- 19 . Roland Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, (2009)
- 20 . Simone de Beauvoir, *A Very Easy Death*, (1964)
- 21 . Edwidge Danticat, *The Art of Death*, (2017)
- 22 . Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, (2001)
- 23 . Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, (1992)
- 24 . Maurice Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*, (1999)
- 25 . Alain Badiou, *Black: The brilliance of a non-color*, (2016)
- 26 . Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, (2004)
- 27 . John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*, (1984)
- 28 . Kate Zambreno, *Book of Mutter*, (2017)

29 . The grave digger is evidently so. He wears King Gees, a work coat and thick boots all splattered in mud. Digging a grave leaves traces on his clothes. The soil must have been wet at some point. Does he change out of this attire before returning home?

30 . On a recent trip to Varanasi, India, I visited the renowned burning Ghats along the River Ganges, where the dead are brought for cremation. I was reluctant to visit. Firstly, because the ceremony of cremating is reserved for men, and I felt out of place both as a woman and a westerner. Secondly, visiting as a spectator seemed pathetic, and turned what was an ancient Hindu ceremony into a touristic spectacle. Thirdly, it was burning hot. The immense fires added further heat to the 38-degree weather. Smoke plumes filled the surrounding laneways and buildings, ash was fluttering into the air, into my eyes, into my mouth, up my nose. I was inhaling the burnt bodies of human beings. I have not touched upon the smell.

31 . "What reconciles me to my own death more than anything else is the image of a place: a place where your bones and mine are buried, thrown, uncovered, together. They are strewn there pell-mell. One of your ribs leans against my skull. A metacarpal of my left hand lies inside your pelvis...With you I can imagine a place where to be phosphate of calcium is enough." (John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*, Vintage International, 1984, 101.)

32 . Heaviness of something. Melancholia of a lifetime. Sandbags filled with rainwater. Mosquito larvae, worms, maggots. My festering skin. Red scratches on ankles, right on the bone where the skin is thin. It hasn't rained for months; the dusty soil beckons rain. The dark sky threatens. It will thunder this afternoon.

33 . Noise, arguing, shouting, crying, screaming, nagging, incessant whinging, clutter, chaos, bags full of stuff, bits of paper, rubbers, pencil shavings, drink bottles leaking, snot, spit, the smell of urine, illness after illness, conflict, despotic rage, dirt, filth, mess, constant work, worry, fear, they make you vulnerable, they make you feel like anything and everything could go wrong any minute.

34 . What is this book that beckons to be written?

35 . She messaged me today. Her brother died. Another of the boys are dead.

36 . The event is embodied, visible in the hands that reach for and clutch other bodies, tissues, handkerchiefs and hands that cover eyes in tears, that hold heads up, that clutch arms and shoulders. Hands also stop her from falling, collapsing onto the rubble of Rookwood that is yet to be lain with a lawn. There is a lovely grass there these days.

37 . The Big Empty was dark and bottomless, you'd fall into it at night and, if you didn't catch yourself quickly, there was no coming out. The Big Empty was not knowing what was next, not having control over whether you lived or died, or whether your children lived or died, or whether your husband would have a heart attack or a mid-life crisis. All these things filled the mind and body with dread.

38 . Preparing for the worst meant that some drama or another always plagued. Another theory was that she must have decided, unconsciously, that she better not get too happy, too comfortable because that was sure to provoke something terrible to happen. She was like most Catholics—superstitious. Who could blame her? Even I had noticed at the rare times in her life when she felt happy, almost immediately in response to her joy, someone would die, suicide, get cancer, have an accident or get dementia.

39 . Her feet are squeezed into those compression stockings they give to people after operations to stop blood clots. Her once beautiful legs are bloated, and swelling steals her ankles. For weeks I could see the fear in her eyes. She wanted to say to me, "I'm scared", but instead just looked down towards the kids playing on the rug amongst all the bright saturated primary colours of plastic toys.

40 . My feet are flopped to the side. His were tense. Even while he was half sedated, full of painkillers and pain and needing to sleep, his feet held this constriction, holding on: couldn't relax, couldn't stop. My feet rub against each other. I can feel the thickened, coarser skin that needs to be scrubbed off. But I love my body. After all these years, I love my body. Having wreaked havoc on it, it is still my friend. Thankfully. I tickled his arm, just the forearm because they had a blood pressure monitor strapped to the upper part. I tickled alongside the front of his arm with its beautiful fluff. I remembered he would relax when my great-grandmother tickled him as a child. She would sit on the couch next to him, and stroke his forearm in one of those beautiful acts of

affection that I love about my family. He likes his arm tickled at night. It helps him to sleep.

41 . I remember the day after I found out they killed themselves (not the event in these pictures, another event unphotographable). I drove to the bookshop at Bondi Beach, gave the girls who worked there my 3-month-old daughter to look after. I gave them her bottle that was filled with s26 formula. I had to stop breast feeding from the shock, I had nearly lost all my milk and I was worried that the milk that I still had would become toxic from the filth of my emotions: rage, despair, horror, disbelief, and back to rage again. I recall M encouraging me to go, “don’t worry, she’ll be okay, you go”. I went. I ran. I ran as fast as I could down Hall Street to the edge of the north beach and ran into the cold clear blue sea that was Bondi. There was only one other woman in

the surf near me. I swam out with my head under water screaming, shouting abuse at the two of them. Shouting “how could you not want to ever do this again? How could you never want to swim in the ocean again? Why would you never want to do *this* again? How? Why? How? Why?” By *this* I meant swimming, swimming in that beautiful sea, the ocean, earth. How could you not want to be here on earth?

42. It has rained for 5 weeks and there are mushrooms growing in the grass adjacent to the pavements. I am frightened the dog might eat them and die. Are they poisonous? Will they make him sick? The house is dank, damp, mouldy, wet. Horrible, in other words. The roof leaks and there are buckets and towels all over the house. The towels get heavy and swollen like corpses.

43. I ask myself (and now you), what is the role of the witness? Am I (and now you) witnessing what you should not be witness to?

44. Lying face down on the sand she could feel the warm earth. She knew that when she arose she would be encrusted with sand on one side of her cheeks and nose. She didn’t care what she looked like. She was just happy to be alive. To have swum and to have screamed into the swell of the underwater world. Screamed in anger at them for being quitters.

45. She had surgery on Monday morning. While I was giving a lecture, she was being sliced open. That night I dreamt my daughter was riding a dolphin through the waves near the shoreline. She was happy, smiling with that exuberant life lending smile, hair awash in sea spray as the dolphin flew through the surf like one of those jet skis that are popular these days. In the dream, both she and my daughter were the same person. When I awoke, I knew immediately that she would be alright. This didn’t stop me from holding my breath for the next four days, waiting for the biopsy results. The dream lingered though, enough as a reminder that I could breathe, and that in my guts I already knew the results would be clear.

46. I won’t pretend to remember anything from being inside her uterus, but I do recall details of life once born. My grandparents owned the corner store, which was a fruit shop that wrapped around Baumans and Meadowlands roads. They also owned the supermarket next door on Baumans Road that sold groceries and cigarettes. We would develop our film at the corner chemist. The photographs came printed in a paper bag.

†7 . I don't want to die. I want to live forever, for the simple reason that I want to be with my son when he is an old man, and with my daughter and her friends when they are creating the new world. Will my children be on the earth at a time when I will not? And what about their father? We will have to end the life we created together and freely. So much attachment, the Buddhists would say.

48. A lifelong dream to be a pilot.

†9. I was powerless but to listen.

50. I used to love the way she knew the names of all the fruits. She especially liked naming the apples: Gala, Jonathan, Fuji, Red Delicious, Granny Smith, Pink Lady.

51 . We have such different feet. Mine are like my grandmother's. I know her feet so intimately. She lived with us for twenty-six years. When I turned fourteen, my mother had her fourth child and, needing the extra room upstairs, I moved downstairs to live with her. I took her room and she moved into the larger room that used to be my parents, before they renovated the small house into a two-story brick palace. Living downstairs had its perks. I had a small amount of privacy when my grandmother wasn't skulking around and going through my things. Of an evening I would sit with her, and watch television. *Sons and Daughters*, *Prisoner*, *Cop Shop*, and later, shows such as *Magnum PI* and *Hey*

Hey It's Saturday. Oh, and I mustn't forget, *A Country Practice*. She used to rest her tired legs on the coffee table, full of varicose veins, bulging and blue, ready to burst. We'd drink a cup of Bushels or Lipton's tea, with milk and one sugar. I'd watch TV and chat, while her feet would catch my attention. There was nothing unusual about them, nothing out of the ordinary to describe or tell. They were just white strong feet, older versions of mine. It's the fourth toe and the small toe that are particularly similar to hers.

52. How to create a lasting memorial. Lawn grave 4 Grave: 1739

53 . Kablan George Fahd. 27.10.1975. 53 years. Beloved husband of Lody, loving father of George, John & Yvonne, loving father-in-law of Gilda and grandfather of Cherine. Photographer unknown.

- 1 . These Photographs of Trauma.
2. Apocrypha: writing of doubtful authorship or authority (writer unknown).

3. 8 January, 2018. Cherine Fahd and I meet at a pub in Redfern. Friends and collaborators since 2007, I had called her a week earlier to see if she would speak on the panel I was organising about collecting practices and vernacular photography. The topic was a shared passion, one we had spoken about at length in the past. Cherine insisted we meet up asap, she wanted to show me an envelope of photos taken at her grandfather's funeral. By numinous coincidence, I had an envelope of photos taken by my deceased grandfather that I wanted to show her. In the lead up to our meeting, I searched for these photographs. Misplaced somewhere at home, they refused to be found. I was soon to understand why.

4. Every page in this book represents a day of our lives. As the book is being written, my feet leave a trail of language down south. Fragments of a story tossed aside from the main event, footnotes recording what the hand cannot hold.

5. On the 26th he was hit the 27th he died buried on the 29th 1975.

A compassionate friend, a photographer once known, bears witness to a family cloaked in a uniform of mourning. Established 107 years earlier, Rookwood is desolate and remote in these pictures. Distant powerlines float, like suburban bunting for a party exhausted and spent. A rope dangling at the mouth of the grave, loaded and knowing, becomes complicit in its freeing of the dust. The dirt of a million old and new recruits is alive in this city of the dead. Time hovers like weightless residue or DNA, snapped into the present by the stench of mothballs heavy on their suits. Tears fall hot on the cold ground, mixed with sweat: a burden five decades in the making. Octobers will never be the same again.

23

6. Each story is reconstructed from fragments mistaken for memory. Curatorial revisionism for purists. Mixtapes for the unsung, unloved and undone.

7. My grandmother developed and printed domestic photographs at Pacific, a lab on Railway Street in Carlton, a nondescript southern Sydney suburb. Previously the site was the Odeon Theatre. These days it is a 24-hour gym.

8. My grandfather was an amateur photographer who built a darkroom in his house. He taught me how to take photos. Loading a gun with Kodak Professional T-Max 400 - 135 (35mm) - 36 exp.

9. Aim, point, shoot. Taking a photograph; taking a life. Photography has carried the burden of its violent metaphors since its inception—mute witness and captive audience all at once. The camera saw it all: every unspeakable horror of human suffering, an inheritance of pictures.

10. Too young to attend the funeral, the granddaughter retrofits her presence 44 years later through an index of pseudoscientific affect. Reconstructing the memory of her family's trauma and grief, the granddaughter sits inside and outside of the experience. The church that day is a portrait of gendered orthodoxy: women on one side, men on the other. The coffin is on a trolley in the aisle in-between. How do we measure the period of time between when we die and the funeral, days later? The body in suspension, this limbo of restless nothingness. A creeping anxiety of what awaits. The aphasia of whiskey and Valium in the no-time between Christmas and New Year's Eve.

11. “November 29
Mourning: not diminished,
not subject to erosion, to
time. Chaotic, erratic:
moments (of distress, of
love of life) as fresh now as
on the first day.” (Roland
Barthes, *Mourning Diary*,
Hill and Wang, 2010, 72.)

12. The lines tattooed on her
skin link where we found
ourselves in the past with
what comes next. Analogue
amnesia sealed tight in a
paper pocket; postcards
from a reconstructed
afterlife. Active listening, a
deep read, the family chats
on WhatsApp, carving sad
face emojis into caves for
the future granddaughter
to discover and decode.
Shame is the same in
every language.

13. How is intergenerational
trauma passed down? Two
of Mum’s youngest siblings
died young. Two of Mum’s
youngest sons died young.
“The littlies, they didn’t
make it.”

14. Fear of looking. Is this why
she takes photographs?
Keeping them hidden is
the hardest part. Dancing
naked, with chance in the
corner of my eye.

15. Narcolepsy in the park
is catalogued in Cherine
Fahd’s *The Sleepers*
(2005/2008). Bodies
arranged and ready for
burial. Asleep in the
daytime, vulnerable and
exposed, grass cushions
an underworld of softening
bones. Yesterday’s cemetery
is a civic mattress shaded
by colonial instincts, new
worlds dreamt into being
by the chosen few.

16. Beautifully contorted faces
are a match for hands that
slow dance in the space
between our bodies. As
children, we never pulled
faces in case the wind
changed. On this wretched
day, the crease on your
brow is a tear in the flesh
where the wind holds
you tight.

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17. At the heart of Cherine
Fahd’s practice is a tension
between documentary
and drama. The staged
and unstaged. *The Chosen*
(2003/2004) presents
anonymous figures cooling
down in a Paris heatwave
on the grand sandstone
banks of the Seine. The
artist’s camera freeze
frames the heat affected
populace, who seek a
momentary reprieve under
the spray of fine mists.
Influenced by historical
images of spiritual rapture,
The Chosen constructs
spiritual wonderment from
ordinary secular life. Her
camera converts the wash

of relief into depictions of
intense feeling—visualising
emotions that cannot be
verified or fact checked.
Apókryphos (2018–2019)
reinstates the chosen few
as the faces of her elders,
picturing an emotional
tightrope between grief
and relief.

18. The house is a camera for
hiding. We live for slow
exposure. It hasn’t rained
in days.

19. Rod Stewart, *Sailing*, (1975)
20. The Bangles, *Eternal Flame*,
(1988)
21. The Dubliners, *The Rocky
Road to Dublin*, (1964)
22. Meat Loaf, *Heaven Can
Wait*, (1977)
23. Alice in Chains, *Down in
a Hole*, (1992)
24. Moby, *Porcelain*, (1999)
25. Prince, *When Doves Cry*,
(1984)
26. London Elektricity, *Rewind*,
(1999)
27. Elton John, *Rocket Man*,
(1972)

28. “Music plays such an important part in people’s lives that it now acts as the theme tune to their passing. Modern funerals are very much about personal choice, which can be reflected in the choice of music, dress, coffin, flowers, hearses or memorials.” (Andrew Trendell, ‘Top 20 Most Popular Funeral Songs Revealed’, *Gigwise*, 21 November, 2014)

29. The coffin is being lowered into the ground at the scenic country cemetery. A light aircraft appears out of nowhere and swoops overhead as her funeral song plays. I return 14 years later, and *Fast Car* is the song set to the montage of photos that wrap up her young life in 4 minutes, 59 seconds. Her arm is wrapped ‘round my shoulder in one snapshot, as if the song is being written at that moment.

30. September 2013. I was a pallbearer for my brother. Someone took a photo of six loosely related men delivering a dead man to a hole in the ground; compost for robbed futures. I lug the coffin on the left side, at the front, feetfirst. 12 years earlier I was a pallbearer for another brother. No photos were taken ... did it really happen?

31. I’ve made a lot of work about death, and I think in a way it’s been an attempt to try and quarantine death within the realm of representation, so that it’s far away from me. It’s like that idea that you’re lessening the odds of it happening or something, because the more you talk about it, it’s not going to happen. When people die unexpectedly it’s like, “Oh that was such a shock, it was such a surprise.” I think if I’m conscious of it all the time I might have a really long life. Look, I have a fear of death. But I suppose as you get older you become a little bit more robust in the way you think about it.

27

32. The grim reaper on TV upheld the AIDS hysteria typifying the time. I couldn’t face getting tested for years even though I knew deep down. Collecting scripts for PrEP, today, is yesterday’s AIDS joke.

33. She was always late in life. Late, now that she’s dead. Remembered and eulogised for existing within time differently to the norm. For many years, we saw her as a floating being, chronically late like she was always lost in transit. Her last years were consumed with grief for her mother’s death; it made her see time anew. The chaos of her sorrow made her seek order and punctuality, like she needed control over what was happening around her.

34. The final eulogy concluded by calling for a standing ovation. On our feet we applauded her life, joyously clapping her into the afterlife.

35. How much time should pass before I delete dead friends and family from my phone contacts? After I found out she died on Facebook, I unfollowed her on Instagram. Please delete my Twitter when I die.

36. “Writing is how I attempt to repair myself, stitching back former selves, sentences. When I am brave enough I am never brave enough I unravel the tapestry of my life, my childhood.” (Kate Zambreno, *Book of Mutter*, Semiotext(e), 2017, 103.)

37 . Why are tear and tear spelled the same?

38 . I get a kick out of you. Kick out of life. Kicked out of school. Kick in some money. Kick back and relax. Kick the door down. Kicked off the team. Kick by INXS. Kick the habit. Kick the dog. Kick the bucket. Kick the stick. Spirit sticks.

39 . New to motherhood, she came back to her practice through walking and wood. A camera swings on her neck as she takes her firstborn for a walk in familiar parklands that are now strange and remote. The click of the shutter, the kick of the stick.

Fear of being a bad mother.

40 . Will I regret never having children? I've left it too late. I tell myself the measure of human narcissism can be traced by its relentless pursuit of reproduction. A family line photocopied by photocopies of photocopies. After nagging for details, she admitted I was unplanned, we all were. All children are accidents or miracles.

41 . "A 16-year-old Loftus boy was killed when he was hit by a train between Loftus and Engadine railway stations on Monday. Police said the boy ran across tracks and laid his head on the track in front of an oncoming 115km/h express train from Wollongong just after 4pm. The Jannali High School student was killed instantly, police said. Just five minutes before his death he had been with two friends who said he was behaving normally. The dead boy's parents told police he had been attending a Pentecostal church and had become obsessed with the idea of going to heaven. Police say there were no suspicious circumstances." (*The Leader*, 29 March 1990)

29

42 . I'm sitting there reading a novel. I know the ending because I've seen the movie.

I'm sitting there reading the novel, and I'm wasting my time because I've seen the movie.

I'm sitting there reading the novel, of my life, knowing how it ends because I've seen the movie.

43 . "January 30, 1979 We don't forget, but something *vacant* settles in us." (Roland Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, Hill and Wang, 2010, 227.)

44 . Collection management is a career in fear against landfill. Incinerate my things and scatter the ashes of my distractions somewhere warm and nice.

45 . The gentle othering of the anonymous grave digger pictured. A whole world is built around him: he assumes the central role in the death ritual, holding the widow's hand as she collapses. Alone but not lonely, he is a collector of experiences he's yet to understand (born in the suburbs, he became a death apprentice after leaving school at 15). Decades later, his dirt stained khaki overcoat is oversized and unflattering, turning his muscular mass into a casket-ready rectangular form.

46 . Told stories, took photos. Favourite on his knee. Runaway with a new name, new town, new sound. School retort, police report. The books under my arms are heavy. Take me to the back lane near the almond tree with the swing. Hit the skin, feather pluck, say cheese. Photochemical acne romance bucked toothed uncircumcised miracle mile never smiled. Unstuck.

47. I once caught her by surprise in the kitchen stuffing her face with bread and dripping. It filled her with shame, being witnessed privately comforting herself with a nostalgic signifier of the poverty from which she came. I recall how the bottom shelf of her fridge was always stocked with coffin-like rows of margarine. When one was finished, it was fast replaced, cold chemical tokens of life in the lucky country.

48. After the funeral, I tried and failed at initiating sex with my now ex. Fucking in rhythm and sorrow.

49. "I was powerless but to listen."

50. Another one gone. I try to contain his memory, but it fades fast like a dream outshone by morning. High tides and flood haunts recurring dreams I've had since childhood. Will I drown? Shoes are draped over powerlines in a nearby street and I can't remember what I did with your boots, your shoes.

31

51. If every page in this book denotes a day in the life, where do I put the endnotes? I never recognised him except in footnotes.

52. How to create a lasting memorial. Apókryphos.

53. W.P.C. "Willie" aka "John". 08.02.2003. Estranged husband, father and grandfather. Photographer known.







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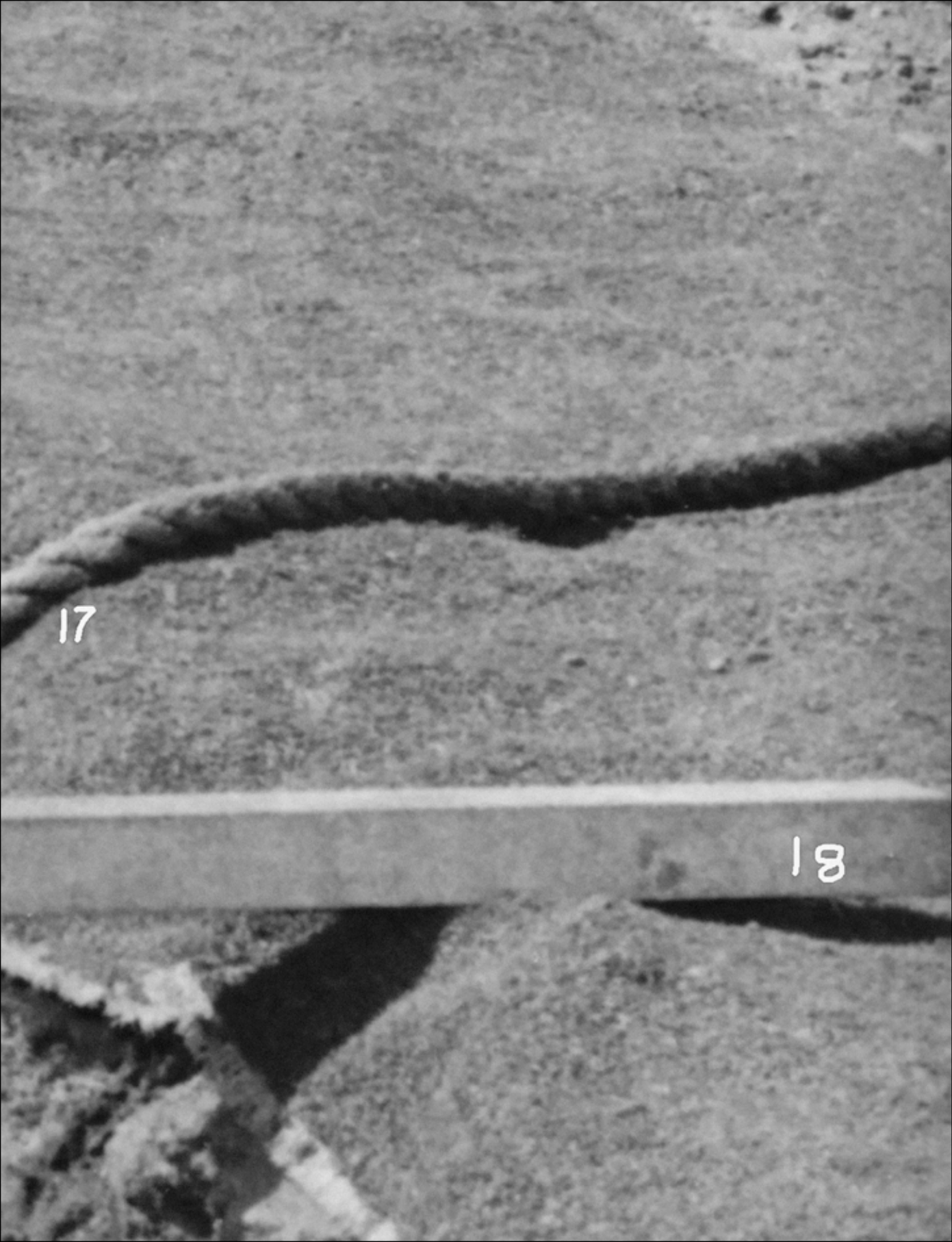
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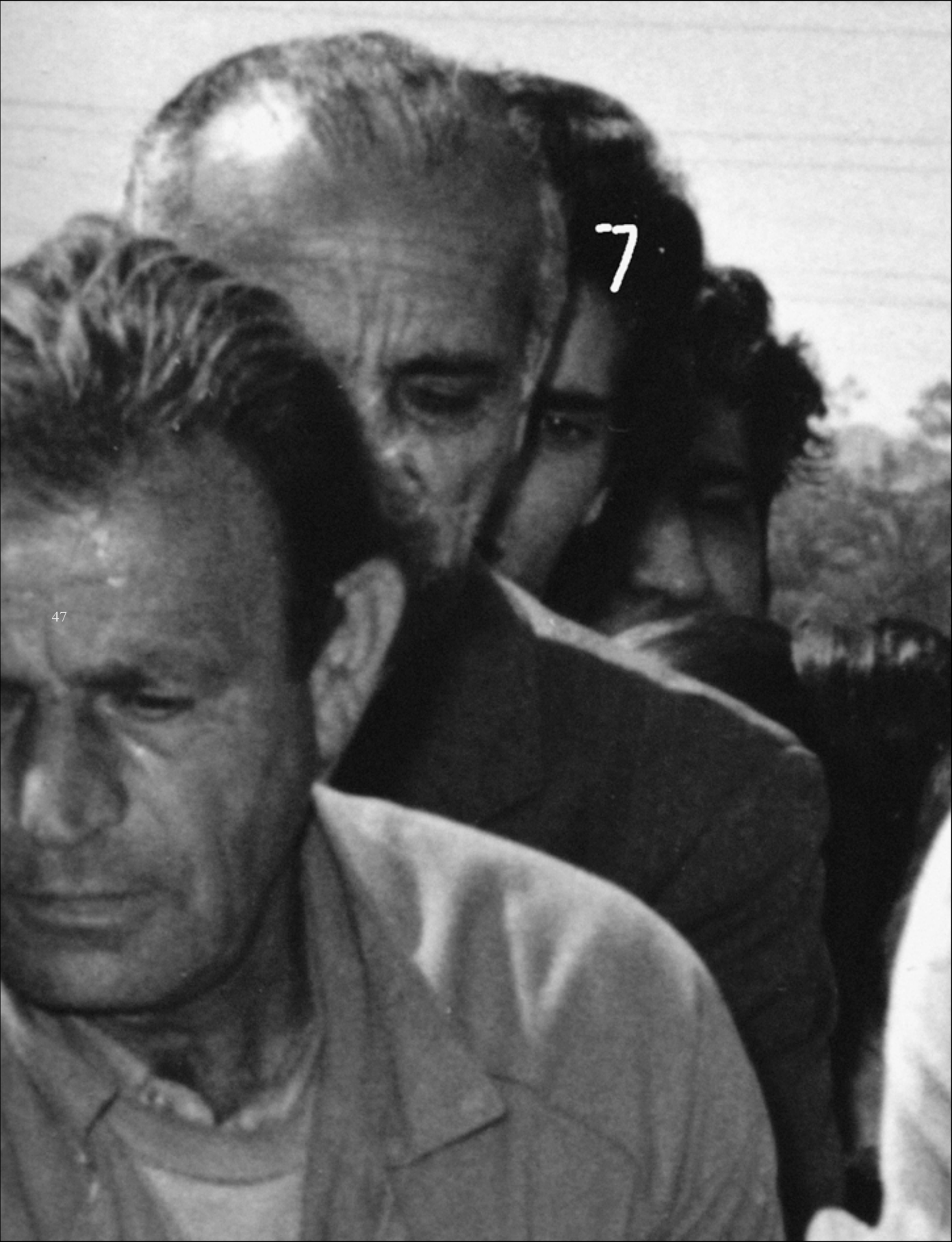
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7













21

|

51

23

24





3

1

2

5

55



- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Paternal grandmother
the new widow | 1. She may be about to flee |
| 2. Grandmother's sister
comforting her | 2. Unconsciously imprinted upon her |
| 3. Mother twenty-four
wearing Jackie O glasses
and heavily pregnant | 3. What is the place of the witness? |
| 4. Maternal grandmother
(mother's mother)
newly arrived | 4. Mirroring one another without looking
at the other |
| 5. Grandfather's (the
deceased) sister | 5. The photographer must have used a flash
because those in the front pews have
whiter faces than those in the middle
and back |
| 6. Grandfather's other sister | 6. Olive skin of the mourner's faces |
| 7. The deceased's niece | 7. She does not wear black, everyone is
wearing black |
| 8. His sister-in-law | 8. Face of sorrow |
| 9. Relative | 9. It is late October but there are no
spring dresses |
| 10. Another niece | 10. The older girls must have been taking
care of me, I am not there |
| 11. A mug | 11. A cinematic prop |
| 12. Leather bag | 12. Vinyl perhaps? |
| 13. Coffin | 13. I would like to make my own when
the time comes |
| 14. Fresh flowers | 14. Cut flowers |
| 15. A wedding ring | 15. Where is the widow's ring? |
| 16. Another wedding ring | 16. She wears the ring for all of her
remaining life |
| 17. Friend | 17. A face unadorned |



$\frac{2}{1404}$

1. Catholic priest
2. Crosier
3. Priest points his finger to the heavens (obviously to God)
4. Microphone
5. The Holy Book
6. Candle
7. Tabernacle
8. Offerings of oil and wine

1. Acknowledge the need to grieve
2. Exodus, And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs
3. [...] why have you abandoned me?
4. [...] you take away the sins of the world
5. Perhaps he was an unbeliever
6. A performance ritual I rarely questioned until I was in my twenties
7. Cloaked cave
8. Had he been while crossing the street?



3
1404

1. Father of the
Lebanese
Maronite Order
2. Ditto
3. Ditto
4. Ditto
5. Ditto

6. Unknown man
7. Ecclesiastical ring
8. Watch to keep time
9. Klobuk
10. Maronite Christian
necklace or medal

1. In special attendance
2. Emotional composure
3. Repetition
4. Derrida asked himself
5. "But then what, silence? Is this not another
wound, another insult?" (Derrida)
6. I was not there
7. Precious stone
8. A long, long time
9. Gothic
10. I asked myself a question



45
1404

1. Teta
 2. Grandmother's sister (empathy)
 3. Mother carrying sister
 4. Teta Mado
 5. Grandfather's sister
 6. Grandfather's other sister
 7. Teta's brother
 8. Her sister-in-law
 9. Woman gazing
 10. Father's cousin
 11. White mug
 12. Black bag
 13. Box
 14. Cut flowers
 15. Men on one side
 16. Father's head
 17. Relative
 18. Aunty Y
1. I was unaware all this time
 2. Never to rest
 3. What did she receive in the womb?
 4. An unfamiliar mode of being, uncomposed
 5. Most archaic
 6. He laughed
 7. Disclosed how the years following
 8. I assumed the photographs came as part of the funeral service but alas they had not
 9. In the details that "revelation" occurs
 10. Albeit, the absence of information
 11. With humor
 12. As well as sadness
 13. My mortality comes to my mind
 14. They too die
 15. Women largely on the other side
 16. We looked at the photographs together
 17. Viewing session
 18. Too young



5
1404

1. Monk
2. Ditto
3. Ditto
4. Ditto
5. Shiny black shoes
with white socks

1. Roy Orbison glasses and arms folded
2. Arms signal
3. Addressed to you
4. Ditto
5. Order



$\frac{6}{1404}$

1. Father
 2. Father's uncle
 3. Ditto
 4. Ditto
 5. Ditto
 6. Father's brother
 7. Father's uncle
 8. Mother's brother
 9. Father's cousin
with the same
name as father
 10. Father's cousin
with the same
name as father
 11. Father's cousin
with the same
name as father
1. Eternal return
 2. Tradition and ambivalence
 3. Long live
 4. The only reason to be there
 5. He exclaimed
 6. Love ya dad
 7. Whether he ever did or didn't
 8. End here
 9. The first son is called

 10. George

 11. Ditto



79
1404

1. Father
 2. Father's father's coffin
 3. Father's mother (widow)
 4. Grandmother's brother
 5. Father's uncle
 6. Another uncle
 7. Father's aunt
 8. Another aunt
 9. Relative
 10. Holy Water for self blessing
 11. Flowers
 12. Candle

 13. Maternal grandmother's shoes and ankles
 14. Mother's partially visible shoes and feet
 15. Confessional box for priest
 16. Confessional box for parishioner
 17. Stations of the Cross
 18. Relative
1. Despite his slenderness he looks heavy, not ready for what lays ahead, this is my reading
 2. First in the pew, closest to the coffin, forced to take his new position
 3. Neck hangs limp to one side collapsed
 4. Looking at you looking at us

 5. The photographer knew how to shoot
 6. Under difficult lighting conditions
 7. "instant" or instances
 8. Their hands clutch
 9. Knowing the history
 10. Aquarius is the water bearer

 11. Examples that signify death
 12. History littered with documents and studies of what may be loosely described as 'post-mortem photography'
 13. I shared them among friends

 14. Hidden under my bed I understood that I was continuing what my grandmother started in the concealment
 15. We all recognize family snaps

 16. Death and its by-products

 17. The absence of such images
 18. And therefore not public



80
1904

1. Father
 2. Jido's brother
 3. Ditto
 4. Uncle J
 5. Jido's brother
 6. Uncle O
 7. Candle
 8. Coffin
 9. Jido's nephew
with the same name
as father
 10. Confessional box
1. I am feeling
 2. Forget it all
 3. Interrogate
 4. He tried to establish is he...
 5. Beyond the photographic frame
 6. Posing as if alone
 7. It will eventually be put out
if it doesn't blow out
 8. Box
 9. A new kind of life
 10. In a dark room



9
1404

1. Coffin
 2. Father's sister
 3. Mother hidden
 4. Father's aunty
 5. Ditto
 6. Ditto
 7. Father's cousin
 8. ?
 9. ?
 10. ?
 11. ?
 12. Father's knee
 13. Wheels
 14. Handle
 15. Speaker
1. I'd rather burn
 2. Position of the subject
 3. Signified The Mother
 4. She suggested
 5. Mimicry
 6. Always the female
 7. Performing her gender
 8. Like the faces in an Evans
 9. Or a Weegee
 10. Who looks directly at the lens
 11. But does not know why she cries
 12. This sliver of a body detail
 13. Functional accessory
 14. To hold on always in flight
 15. To say what we know not what we unreliably feel



10
1909

1. Teta
2. Teta's sister
3. Teta's brother
4. Jido's sister
5. Man standing amongst other men
6. Relative
7. Coffin
8. Sunlight
9. Stations of the cross

1. Reclaiming the dead
2. Seeing
3. Cultural meanings for who, us, them? You?
4. What is implied by the gesture, the face?
5. What is hidden is hidden and hidden
6. In secret
7. Treasure chest
8. Photography
9. Wonderful to be here



1. Teta now a widow
 2. Stay by her sister's side
 3. Mother, sister to be born in thirteen days
 4. Jido's sister
 5. Jido's other sister

 6. Priest

 7. Maronite monk
 8. Father's cousin
 9. Father's cousin
 10. Father's cousin
 11. Father's cousin
 12. Sister-in-law
 13. Sister-in-law
 14. Unknown woman
 15. Father's sister

 16. Unknown
 17. A mug
 18. The black bag
1. Saying goodbye
 2. By sharing

 3. The secret here is fear

 4. The secret here is grief
 5. It is inevitable that our end should include a photograph
 6. Or are we witnessing the cultural differences of grieving at a certain time and place?
 7. Everyone is wearing black
 8. Focus on the future
 9. Full of potential
 10. Possibility
 11. The question of the future itself
 12. Told and retold
 13. I have understood
 14. I was not there
 15. There is not a single image of the dead man
 16. Contemplate these images
 17. The protagonists
 18. The symbolism of the colour they wear



12
1404

1. The customary black hearse
 2. Flowers
 3. Where the coffin will ride
 4. Pallbearers, carrying casket into hearse
 5. A Hills Hoist
 6. A brick chimney
 7. Procession vehicle boot is open
 8. Procession vehicle
 9. St Joseph's
 10. The Cross
 11. Father
 12. Jido knew a lot of people
1. Carried by many hands
 2. The above scene continues
 3. Elicited from photography's inherent voyeurism.
 4. I asked myself a question
 5. He posed similar questions of himself
 6. Their rightful place
 7. Constituted in this writing and in making these difficult
 8. But why do I insist?
 9. The most archaic
 10. A central story (or at least one story)
 11. This shared act of looking
 12. Signifies a change in the archive



1. Paternal grandmother the new widow
 2. Grandmother's brother
 3. Relative
 4. Grandfather's (the deceased) sister-in-law holding their heads up to help them to look away from the deep hole
 5. Grandfather's sister
 6. Grandfather's other sister-in-law
 7. Another sister-in-law
 8. Grandfather's brother
 9. And another brother
 10. Another brother
 11. Son of the deceased
 12. Friend
 13. Dear friend holds face into tissues
 14. Dear friend
 15. Dear friend
 16. Hessian or carpet lining the grave
 17. Rope coursing down into and out of the grave
 18. Piece of wood straddles the opening to the grave to rest the coffin on top
 19. Grave
 20. Hole in grandmother's stocking
 21. Straight line of mourners
 22. Rubble where there is now grass
 23. Factory warehouse in Lidcombe
 24. Poles and wires
 25. Sister-in-law
1. Descending from the cross. Iconographic. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003)
 2. She mustn't fall
 3. Ask a question of me, please
 4. Scene of sorrow and redemption
 5. Does she think of her own?
 6. The blinds were pulled down
 7. Face it
 8. Over what are we keeping watch?
 9. One after another
 10. And another
 11. Concealed
 12. Look away
 13. Weeping woman a scene in art
 14. One day she said to him
 15. Recalling a Hollywood character
 16. To rest the knees upon which they shall kneel on, fall upon
 17. A prop from a film scene, or a board game like Cluedo
 18. Limbo, a party game
 19. de Beauvoir, If you love life immortality is no consolation for death
 20. A symbol of her quiet ruin
 21. Dress rehearsal
 22. Earth, of the
 23. Oz-trull-ya
 24. Where does all the energy go?
 25. Never to swim again



1. Teta
 2. Father
 3. Teta's brother
 4. Relative
 5. Dear friend
 6. Unknown
 7. Father's aunty
 8. Father's aunty
 9. Another aunty
 10. Father's uncle
 11. Another uncle
 12. And another uncle
 13. And another uncle
 14. Jido's cousin
 15. Father's cousin
 16. Friend
 17. Relative
 18. Friend
 19. Friend
 20. Friend
 21. Friend
 22. Flowers, are they in plastic?
 23. Rope
 24. Looks more like carpet
 25. Grave
1. But what of more difficult images?
 2. Photography's storytelling capacity
 3. What I am saying again here
 4. It is said that mourning, by its gradual labor, slowly erases pain (Barthes)
 5. Migration from a small village, fellow villagers
 6. I will come to explain
 7. Later, on the 27th October
 8. 48-hours of disbelief, despair and exhaustion
 9. My ethical obligation
 10. Once removed from the experience of death
 11. This complex position as one of being both "inside and outside" of experience, an "experience of the unexperienced." (Derrida)
 12. The fictional 'testimony' of Maurice Blanchot in *The Instant of My Death* (1994: 2000)
 13. You are looking upon an "instant" or instances, experiencing them without having experienced them (Derrida, 93).
 14. Speculation plays a partial role
 15. Nevertheless
 16. Combines fact and guesswork
 17. Separating the present from the past
 18. Twenty-four images
 19. Intimate eye
 20. These photographs of mourning
 21. First dwell
 22. Better to describe the appearance of rich shadows
 23. Grey scale perfectly achieved
 24. 5 x 7 inches
 25. Details such as the sky, the rubble and the ...



3
1405

1. Coffin
 2. Grave digger
 3. Funeral director
 4. Funeral attendant
 5. Pallbearer
 6. Maronite monk
 7. Brass Censer
 8. Father's uncle
 9. Father's uncle
 10. Father's cousin
 11. Mud on King Gee's
 12. The rope
 13. Carpet or hessian?
 14. Wood
 15. Relative adjusting his belt
 16. Friend watches on
 17. Pallbearer
 18. Funeral attendant
 19. Poles and wires
 20. Flowers
1. His life (forty-three years ago)
 2. I know he is the grave digger because he wears work pants that are covered in mud and clay
 3. Carry the coffin forth to the edge of the grave
 4. An action shot
 5. As if to crowd the dead body
 6. Clergy amongst other learned men looking upon the deceased at a burial
 7. Cycle of life
 8. At the end
 9. They also wanted to know who everyone was and which of the men their grandfather was
 10. A woman in the background is weeping, her face is contorted.
 11. The harsh Australian sun
 12. Another hidden scene
 13. Had quickly reached a dead end
 14. Photographer, grand-daughter and daughter
 15. The men's eyes gaze
 16. Look of detachment and reserve
 17. Pushing up against the surface
 18. And what a beautiful life I've had all because [of] you all [...]
 19. Rise
 20. Saturday is flower day



4
1408

1. Grave digger
2. Coffin
3. Woman no cry
4. Man helping
5. Funeral attendant
6. Teta in the background
7. Uncle partially in view

1. Spectator with empathy it seems
2. Jewellery box
3. Don't cry
4. Community
5. What was he thinking?
6. Disappearing act
7. A history of concealment



1. Grandmother holds the grave digger's hand
 2. Grandmother's niece screaming
 3. Father's cousin weeping
 4. Sideburns
 5. ?
 6. Father
 7. Carpet or hessian
 8. Dusty gown
 9. Grandmother's sister wiping nose
 10. Grave digger
 11. Mud
 12. Rope
1. Have you always been drawn
 2. Message of joy as an artist
 3. Powerful
 4. Over and over again
 5. What are we putting out in the world?
 6. I want to be light
 7. The message I send out
 8. Through love
 9. Have understood the power behind her
 10. Not a tribute
 11. Offering
 12. We have love to offer you



1. Teta
 2. Father
 3. Grave digger
 4. Grandmother's brother
 5. Relative with sideburns
 6. Relative
 7. Relative
 8. Relative
 9. His sister-in-law
 10. A cousin's husband
 11. Uncle
 12. Friend
 13. Relative
 14. Bottle of white wine?
 15. Monk
 16. Friend
 17. Friend
 18. Casket
 19. Flowers
 20. Rope
 21. Rosary beads
 22. Friend looking fiercely at the photographer, wears strong moustache
 23. Watch - is it 10.20am?
 24. A stain, his sister's tears?
1. Another religious composition
 2. He is kneeling on the dry dusty ground, his head resting on the edges of the coffin
 3. Men all around trying to prevent her from falling in
 4. This scene vaguely recalls the El-Greco painting, *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz* (1588)
 5. Looks angry, he could be asking, "why are you here, how dare you be photographing this?"
 6. She too looks at the camera hopelessly
 7. Never takes his eyes off the photographer
 8. The 'who' telling the story
 9. Testimony
 10. Like time capsules
 11. A tacit response to gazing upon
 12. Generations to follow
 13. Silence
 14. Trying to persuade father to leave
 15. Simply look at them and study every detail
 16. Who his friend was
 17. Recollection
 18. The coffin must be lowered
 19. per se
 20. We are trained to read certain expressions
 21. These are just some examples
 22. Reveal hidden details
 23. Hysterically
 24. (on an emotional level)



1. Grandmother
 2. Father
 3. Wine?
 4. Grandmother's brother
 5. Rope
 6. Carpet
 7. Coffin
 8. Incense burner
1. My relative distance from the event captured
 2. We can continue to create
 3. Between generations
 4. Chinese-whispers
 5. Focus on the future
 6. How to write an obituary
 7. Tomorrow
 8. That is life, but not the end that is death



1. Man weeps
 2. Grandfather's brother
 3. Ditto
 4. Ditto
 5. Man
 6. Man
 7. Man
 8. Uncle concealed
 9. Tissue in hand
1. People that exist and once existed and who exist now and will one day not exist
 2. This story desires to be a happy one
 3. Many of the people depicted who could have given an account of the event in question are no longer living
 4. I had only heard of in hushed murmurings and sensed
 5. In the thickness of the silence
 6. I searched #funeral, #burial, #mourning and #grief
 7. Frown lines on her forehead belie her anguish
 8. Her secret
 9. Father's grief



1. Father
 2. Mother
 3. Aunt
 4. Grandmother
 5. Father's uncle
 6. Father's aunt
 7. Grandmother's uncle
 8. Grandmother's brother
 9. Uncle
 10. Friend
 11. Relative
 12. Hole in stocking
1. Tired, his hand held out, mechanically awaiting to shake the next hand
 2. Asleep standing, she cuddles into him eyes closed, face swollen either from tears or from the swelling some pregnant women endure in the final days of gestation
 3. Compressed
 4. A final image
 5. The family, giving personal condolences
 6. Mourners acknowledging
 7. Queue to give
 8. Lay hidden for forty years
 9. To move on
 10. Hidden from the family itself
 11. Apókryphos, to mean hidden
 12. A fixation on the allusive 'expression' that emanates from the hole



10
1405

1. Grandfather's brother
 2. Man with his back to the camera
 3. Woman with her back to the camera
 4. Used tissue
 5. Ditto
 6. Ditto
1. Intimacy or intensity from the photographic moment
 2. This trick of talking
 3. I have drawn on an unconventional source to discuss
 4. Determined by individual desire to prescribe to...
 5. May be concerned they cannot give the photographer what they want
 6. Presented to and for the camera



11
1905

1. Aunty
2. Uncle
3. Great uncle
4. Great aunty
5. Mother concealed
6. Uncle
7. Great uncle
8. Grandfather's brother
9. ?
10. Cork platform shoe with pebble wedged in sole
11. Black patent leather platforms

1. Nothing left to say
2. As we reach the end of this
3. Many lives still
4. Babe in arms
5. English as a second language
6. New Australians
7. A vulnerability
8. He had no proof
9. Human subject
10. My body related to her body and to their body, to all of them
11. Higher and higher and higher



12
1405

1. Father's aunty
wiping nose
2. Father's aunty
calling out
3. Weeping woman
4. Man concealed
by handkerchief
5. Reflection on car
6. Grandfather's
brother

1. Those lives that are honoured
or left unattended
2. What did you say to me?
Come here and say it!
3. Body life, life of Arabs
4. We cannot see his face
5. See ourselves being seen from
the outside (Silverman, K)
6. Phoenicians not Arabs



Abjection

Absoluteness

Accursedness

Acquaintance

Activeness

Advantageousness

Afflictiveness

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Aimlessness

Alliveness

Anxiousness

Apathy

Awareness

Beatenness

Blandness

Blankness

Bleakness

Briefness

Bottomlessness

Boundlessness

Brevity

Centeredness

Closeness

Cohesiveness

Coldness

Completeness

Concreteness

Connectedness

Comprehensiveness

Cosiness

Covertiveness

Cruelness

Cunningness

Daintiness

Darkness

Decidedness

Defectiveness

Deflectedness

Depthlessness

Descriptiveness

Detachedness

Dimness

Directionlessness

Disconnectedness

Disinterestedness

Disruptiveness

Distinctness

Docility

Downrightness

Drumless

Dutiness

Eagerness

Earthiness

Easygoingness

Effortlessness

Elaborateness

Empiness

Endlessness

Entireness

Eternality

Everydayness

Faithfulness

Fancifulness

¹¹¹ Fathomlessness

Fearlessness

Fictitiousness

Firmness

Fleetingness

Fluidness

Forgetfulness

Formality

Formlessness

Freedom

Fruitlessness

Gladness

Graciousness

Graspingness

Credulity¹¹
Credulousness

Guardedness

Harmless

Heaviness

Hiddenness

Humanness

Humanness

Hyperawareness

Idleness

Illusiveness

Imaginariness

Immeasurability

Immediateness

Immovability

113 Incompleteness

Infinity

Interconnectedness

Interrelatedness

Invincibility

Inwardness

Joyfulness

Justness

Lovingness

Learnedness

Lifelessness

Lightness

Limitlessness

Liveness

Magnanimity

Mindfulness

Mindlessness

Moistness

Multifariousness

Nakedness

Nearness

Newness

Nothingness

Oneness

Openness

Otherworldiness

Ovalness

Painfulness

115 Pathosness

Patience

Playfulness

Pointedness

Pointlessness

Possessiveness

Potentialness

Precariousness

Profoundness
Purposefulness
Purposiveness
Purposiveness
Questionableness
Quickness
Quickness
Rapturousness
Rawness
Recklessness
Reclusiveness
Recklessness
Reflexiveness
Relatedness

Relentlessness
Repetitioniness
Reservedness
Restlessness
Roundaboutness
Scarciness
Seamlessness
Senselessness
Separateness
Shiftness
Significance
Sleeplessness
Slipperiness
Smoothness

Softness
Solidness
Spontaneity
Squariness
Statelessness
Stillness
Straightforwardness
Subconsciousness
Suddenness
Symbolism
Tactfulness
Tearfulness
Tedium
Thinginess

Tiredness
Timeliness
Togetherness
Unaffectedness
Unawareness
Unbecomingness
Unboundedness
Unchangeableness
Unconsciousness
Uniqueness
Unobtrusiveness
Unquietness
Unsteadiness
Usefulness

Uselessness

Vastness

Verticalness

Weakness

Weightlessness

Wetness

Wholeness

Wishfulness

Wonderfulness

Wordlessness

Zealousness

Family snapshot of
Kablan Fahd kissing
Cherine on her first
birthday.

Photographed by
George Fahd on
26 January 1975.

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Photographs Unknown (or perhaps 'Jilal')
 Texts Cherine Fahd
 Daniel Mudie Cunningham
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