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 riverwhisper home three times*ngurambang ngurambang ngurambang* \* a snake appearsbeyond 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 waterand all this will take  medicine  smoke  and time\* as *gadi* together we gather grasses leaves small sweet shoots in my soft mouthI 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 skysix lanes stopping to hear their songs the men and the birds will rise up in their chorusto gather below the moon translucent  dissolving in the milky glowthe steel scaffolds and iron harnesses of the grid will soften  dissolving into song wherever notes swell or those gentle fingers touchand 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 bellythe 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 rainstormsand leaves become drum the sound of us is silencedthe canopy concert calls us and we listen to it’s guidance I pray I wake tomorrow in this future coloured evergreensmall, but planted firmly in the earthly systems that birthed usToo long, since I stepped out of this watery womb where home meant love, and love meant lifeAnd life was everything worth living forDid you know.. Plants (People)…dance to poetry and musicPlants (People)..listen, and grow in the direction they choosePlants (People)breathe, and breathe, and breathe lifeuntil they don’tToo long, since lungs held my bodyin the mid-summer watersof Boorloo, Sun kissed breathrising in warm wavesrocking me until I was stillStill enough to freeze time, Still enough to listenFloating on my back, I closed my eyeswhispered gratitude for life And felt the greatest power known to meBut now this breath escapes meI see the stars we shoot for, yetfall into clouds of carbon dioxidewe fall like investmentsand lives in an eco-suicide sidelined by politicians, lungs, full of gas. Floating above a canopy, above the treesplaced above the need to breathe we are invasive species…. growth without rootswe are unconnected to footprint by bootsmarching for money, on forgotten gravesWe fell all thoughts of failed futures, abuse the truth of historythat brittle branches, now breakingare bound around ourselves, taking breath from blood, and blood from stonelike 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, blocksof ice melting outside the continent and esky keeping economy cold, to have us looking so fresh.We are splendour in no grassthe profile picture picked last,Smiling with a fish that is dead.We are fuel to the fire like tinder,or Grindr, liberated in our blindnessthat love is by subscriptionAnd the void is the space between copper wiresInstead of lung.I learn.. that no one can hold themselvesconcerned, in the system we told ourselvesis “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 breathNo breath to last time. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_I hope we choose the future coloured evergreenthrough the rose-coloured binoculars zoomed on the horizonWhere sunsets are beautifulAnd not a coming age of humanityWhere we decide a plan to bea little more than humanPeople (Plants)…dance to poetry and musicPeople (Plants)..listen, and grow in the direction we choosePeople (Plants)breathe, and breathe, and breathe lifeuntil our lungs are shared with earthStill enough to listen, Still enough timeStill enough to hear the canopy concertsAnd Respond with the heart beat drum between lung Breath whispers gratitudegratitude becomes destinyAnd destiny, who we areDopamine, the greatest power known to mesilent, 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.  |