

# Work Week in July: A Daily Practice of Written Recall

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*for Jónína*

i.

I catch two rooms of the dream but barely scratch the surface. I scribble them down using the notebook and pen beside my pillow. I consider shaving my head bald so I can know my scalp better. I participate in another online webinar for writers. **I listen for relation** I am struck by the image of braces and the movement of teeth into formation at the beckon of a steel backbone. I sit with nausea before a phone call about anti-Blackness in my community. I play hooky from a second webinar. I play with different names for my collection of small poems for small revolutions. I touch my belly with two fingers in a clockwise fashion and listen for responses. I fall asleep at certain intervals. I transport to different places with different people. I ask a poor question during the Q&A after a friend's livestream performance. I write myself a list of better questions. I try a version of this dance as an interview. I try a version of this dance as a love letter to my mentor. I turn on Cantonese Netflix to warm up my mother tongue. I turn it off when it gets too stressful.

## ii.

I choose to skip a gathering I am available for. I envision anti-racism work like the choreography of rearranging a bookshelf. My hands squeeze aside old narratives to make room for new knowledge and the spines are still stiff. I perfect an egg scramble with aged havarti. I start bleeding at the wrong time of the month. I read for warm-up. I tan one inner thigh as I watch the sky. I write of where dance and shame meet. My posture shifts when my roommate joins me on the deck. I do High Intensity Interval Training naked beside my window. The Post-it reminders on the glass are from Octavia, Dionne, Maya, Carissa, Cathy, and Trinh. I walk with a friend and they walk too close. My mother tongue twists and turns ungracefully for an hour. I listen to the podcast episode about trauma in bodies for the fourth time. The server's name is also Natalie. My mother argues with me. I watch her body. I notice mine. I pick the wrong movie and feel her squirm in the cultural dissonance. **I sit in complexity** I stand aside as the shower scalds. I write about the miscarriage that my mom keeps bringing up.

## iii.

I fail to catch the dream. My mom peeks into the elevator just as the door slides shut. I bike from Metrotown with a knapsack of raw meat and seafood defrosting on my back. I stand in the wrong line at Starbucks with my lover on the phone. My collaborator flakes on a company video call. It feels like more space for me. There is nowhere to sit at the mall. I suck on leftover Peking duck from a container and eat all the mats of greasy fat that separate from crispy skin. Beads of sweat course down my back. I bike so fast the wind drowns out the new EP I'm listening to. I choose not to shower. I am constipated. A friend cancels on our gathering at the park and I feel relief. My plants respond to my songs and the soil. I wonder about available spaces in town to practice screaming. **I ready for revision** I write at a dank pub in a booth hoping to crack this dance. Two beer glasses shatter on the ground and everyone's ribs freeze. On the phone with my lover my knee-jerk defensiveness feels like a fist on fire in my solar plexus. I stare into my bigoted impulse. I wake up ten minutes after falling asleep to respond to my editor.

#### iv.

I fail to catch the dream. The freewrite is brief and humid. I sweep religiously and leave the pile in the corner. My friend and I head to the mountains. Orange diamonds guide us the entire way. Whisky Jack claws clutch at my index fingers. On three separate occasions we think we have made it to the top. **A tree cradles me** We bring each other snacks. There is no echo up on the peak when I laugh hard and cry loud. I don't look at the scenery much for fear of tripping. Thrice I trip anyway. I play hooky from Somatics class. I momentarily forget why voice and why breath. I rewatch the video of the birds landing on me. I revise micro-poems on race, class, and dreaming. I eat slowly without facing my phone. I envision the spine as a whip. I am struck, mid-dance, by the possibility that ocean waves are caused by the whipping motion of serpents the size of the universe. I wait up all night for inspiration. I forget to change the ancestral water.

#### v.

I jot down a list of residual scars from a past creative experience. I feel residual gin in my system. I fix my hair up to feel emboldened at my desk. Sweat collects from my temples, moves sideways across my forehead, and then drops to the mat. I shadowbox. I read up on how to care for my new hanging Pilea Crinkle. Its draping skeleton changes the architecture of my entire bedroom. The cat's nails rip through the yoga mat. I ask to speak first during an online dance rehearsal to avoid self-censorship or diluting my no. My mom's chicken brines and bakes during the three digital hours of negotiating boundaries and desires. The squash on the kitchen table is the same colour as the tablecloth. I cancel on a friend in order to meditate on a new approach for this dance. On the pub patio I wave to the same man I waved to last time. With a ballpoint pen I draw my pelvic bowl. **The bowl is full of diamonds** The oven dings. My voice on the recording sounds metallic and constricted. The wine makes it easier to practice stubborn loving conflict with a best friend. The cat drinks from the ancestral water. Over and over into the phone I sing yoo-hoo.

## vi.

I worry about why the dreams have been absent. I roll a lacrosse ball along my tightened jaw. The summer hotboxes my room. Google tells me I need to defrost my mom's prawns. I watch my skin and flesh fold up against itself as I exercise. I try this dance as a set of lists. The toaster emits smoke. I reheat the coffee in the microwave. I notice immediate resistance in my viscera when we are asked to introduce ourselves. I water each plant and touch the leaves one at a time. The cat cleans herself while laying on top of me. A fly bounces along the surface of the ancestral water. I am quiet and focused. I kill a spider on my desk and watch the birds outside my window with the cat in my arms. I type a thousand-word course reflection and avoid asking exactly where does our money go? I press my finger into the soil. I trip over the cat. I finish a draft of this dance and it feels bad. **I start over again** The woman outside my window laughing through the night irritates me. The tub of ice cream reveals its bottom. I hang up the video call with my lover once he is asleep so that I can dream-focus.

## vii.

I catch the dream but only after I fall back asleep. I scribble it down with one eye open. I watch bad news on the news. I sit still by my bedside thinking of the floor. My roommate's bedding waltzes along the clothesline in the backyard. My face feels different to my fingertips. I put on the same summer dress and fix my hair to feel a sense of arrival. I long to pick blueberries. Tea is prepared for the ancestors because I have time to go the extra mile. **A form for this dance finally lands in my bones** I forget if I have rotated Pilea Crinkle. I sit on different benches around the neighbourhood and stand still in an alleyway. I am trying too hard so I take a five-hour break. I follow my mom's orders: butter and garlic at high heat. I mistake the tea leaves in the ancestral water for flies. The cat does figure eights around my ankles and crawls under me during Cat-Cow. The moon sits directly above the middle of the road while the sun sets. A short stint of rain surprises my skin. I ask to meet my mentor in person for the first time. I watch myself think in the mirror. I spend hours splitting my split ends. I hide them in books. I scold the cat and roll up the yoga mat. I avoid sleep. I still set up the pen and notebook by the pillow in case I catch them in the morning.