Assemble

Concord Centre, Dumbarton

15/09/23

There is a bit of a funky beat

You’re welcome to get a drink of course.

The seating bank rings and clanks like a bell.

Someone sips an irn bru.

She clutches a hot drink as she slowly walks across the floor.

Someone waves a hello.

Someone takes a biscuit.

In front of me:

REMEMBERING THROUGH GATHERING

Behind me:

ASSEMBLE

There’s a chat about the room.

GP Screening room.

Drugs films covid mass vaccination centre.

This casual place.

The lights flicker.

The room goes quiet.

We are gathered here to share together

But we haven’t really worked out what that means yet.

How do we remember?

He shuffles his papers.

His hands sculpt the air, like clay.

We’re gonna get a bit interactive.

Dredged up from the ground,

A common story.

Same same different.

Ship shape and sturdy

Fragile shells.

Belly laughs.

Heavy breathing.

Terror filled tsunamis.

I want people to feel comfortable. So that we take this in.

He mentions tubes and hospitals and loneliness.

There are 13 people here.

The season submerges us.

Who needs to hear these stories?

This love will defeat dragons.

This one is written.

We’re all in this together.

But you’re coming in at a really weird point.

Alcoholism or toilet paper?

He takes the stand away.

A person speaks without saying anything.

And they dance.

We remember in their gathering.

We gather around their remembering.

Their eyes flick wide at us.

What does this mean?

We are watching as remembering.

The space between the movements spills images.

What does that mean?

Remembering is different than memory.

But here is both.

One of her feet stays still while the other does little movements.

The music stops while she bounces backwards on the ground with a leg in the air.

People clap.

I hear a bottle open.

Someone else comes up.

Is there a satisfaction in the effort of remembering that provides it’s own nourishment?

This is about the act of remembering.

What do you do when you remember?

The light glows from under the seating bank. We’re all sitting on the sun.

Do you have capacity?

Is someone crying?

I remember by:

Sitting in nature in stillness and silence

Hearing voices in my head

Waiting for the picture to reveal a moment in time.

Opening my brain and having a look around

Listening to your favourite band.

Daydreaming about places and the stories they hold

Singing

An act an action a pausing from every day.

Trying to find space but sometimes I don/t want to find the space and sometimes spaces find me

Speaking to my loved ones

Well I don’t really remember. My thoughts give me anxiety and I retreat into myself. But I do know I relax after a shower with bakers scented shower gel

By looking for moments of silence, glimmers out of a single day.

Let’s not make this too sentimental.

People talk in hushed tones.

Little pairs and triplets.

I think about reading this out later, and think of it as a future memory.

This has all just happened.

Where has it all gone?

What remains?

Does the past haunt you?

People have gathered round the biscuit packets.

There is talk of anger, and hot chocolate in the garden.

And how we’ve entered a new frontier.

I’m being critical of this writing and I shouldn’t be. But i’m also just really wondering about what matters? And how we know that.

Someone is talking about breakfast cereal.

We’re gathering.

And if nothing happens we’re gonna wait in silence.

In this space we’ve just said its ok to gather, and that matters. Maybe we don’t need much else. Are the songs, poems and dances things to hang our gathering on.?

Because gathering matters, and they’ve gathered around John.

They’re getting him to his feet.

Unexpected beauty.

You and I will soon hold hands.

Someone shook an etcha sketch back to the start again

Something beautiful.

In the chaos of the night.

What would be if we were in a different place?

She looks up with flickering eyes.

And gives her words.

He says thank you for helping him up.

The voices outside the room have grown loud.

There are more people gathering.

Do they know we’re in here? To them we could be doing anything.

We’re sitting in silence, but we could be doing anything.

She reads a poem about starting anew.

Those outside don’t realise we’re starting anew.

And that we’re gathering.

That we’re doing something really special.

Like the hebrews who sang the same songs as they went back to Jerusalem.

Or like hitting rock bottom.

Or tasting the sea in our mouths.

Or feasting at his table when we least deserved it.

He’s staring down at his words

About moonlight and flickering flames and dark barricades.

In the light of the stage lights alone on the stage.

But he’s not there now, is he.

The stage is empty.

She has taken away the microphone.

And the music stand.

But she brings on a box of bells.

And empties them into a circle around her while the clapping and singing happens outside.

She’s talking about marking moments with bells and about thresholds.

Everyone’s getting up to grab a bell.

They sound lovely, in a 5 minute bell concert.

Ring something in to your life.

Or ring something right out.

Ring it for somebody,

Something else

Joy

Sorrow.

Anger.

They’ve gathered to ring bells, they’ve assembled a circle.

But there’s two of us still sitting over here.

They’re ringing their bells.

The people outside must think santas here, and the grim reaper, and a bunch of fairies and a little cartoon mouse, or that lots of doors are being met by guests.

There are smiles and sad eye brows, and stillness and strangers. The ringing sounds out the silence between, and its like a pillow for my head.

The bells have stopped ringing, and they are not here anymore.