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ISSUE 1



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THIS IS AN
UGLY
FINE
MADE BY
QUINN

Despite its many faults,
I'm sad to be leaving
Footscray. I've grown to love
this weird little town. I recent-
ly realised I've lived here for
the majority of my time in
Melbourne (4 out of 6 years).
It's shaped me as a person,
as an adult, & as a
survivor.



The West Side really is
the best side. ♥

♥ FUTURE ♥

My new house is a short-term place for five or six months, when I'm planning on moving in with some dear friends I've known since high school. This place doesn't really reflect any of the aspects of intentional community I talked about above, but they're good friends and I trust them. And I need a place to live, quick, and this is better than living out of a suitcase in someone's guest room.

I'm re-learning how to take things one step at a time. I need a new home base while I work with doctors and psychologists to get a proper diagnosis, and I function far better when I have a stable place where I

can unpack everything and have my books on a bookshelf and all my art supplies easily accessible.

I'm looking forward to having my own desk, my own little corner to make and write and a place to put my typewriter. This house has room for a dining table where I can set up my sewing machine. I'm



30

Writing this zine has been a great way to reflect on my time in Footscray and the progress I've made. I get down on myself a lot for not being where I wanted to be in life by this age, but when I think about it I've gained a lot of ground in unexpected ways. I might not be the brilliant, globe-trotting university graduate I imagined myself to be when I was younger, but I am still proud of the resilient, creative, caring, assertive person I am now, and continue to grow into every day.

Thank you for reading my zine, and I hope it's given you a little window into the the weird and wonderful world of Footscray and the West Side.

♥ OUTRO ♥

looking forward to purging my stuff, shedding the collected remains of my old lives and moving on to something new, something relevant. I've learned not to put too much stock in the concept of new beginnings, but shaking things up a little is something I'm excited about. I've become a more articulate person, with a thicker skin, and I'm excited to see who I become and how I approach these new situations as I am now, to notice the developments in the way I respond to changes and challenges. I can't control the situation around my needing to move so quickly, but I can change how I handle it. I'm choosing to search for positives and opportunities, to do my best not to be afraid of new things even if they're scary, to ask for help from the people who say they're there for me, to learn to trust people again. These are challenges I am getting better and better at meeting every time they come up, and I'm really proud of the way I've grown to handle them.

29



1

Strange Devices #1 comes at the page turn between two chapters of my life. I'm moving out of the sharehouse I've lived in for several years, away from Footscray & heading north. This zine is a reflection on my time here, as well as a love letter to Footscray, all its quirks, & how it's shaped me as a person.

♥ INTRO ♥

In this issue I talk about the culture shock I experienced after moving from the East Side of Melbourne to the West Side, how living here has shaped my political views, my idea of Melbourne as a city, my desire to dig deeper & figure out what makes a home, what makes a community, & what makes someone with a chronic case of itchy feet feel like they belong somewhere.

2

Elsternwick is a very middle class area. It was very clean, old-fashioned, full of old people and cafes where they would meet for tea. Strangely hipster-less for such a place, but I think that's mostly because it has a reputation of either being full of orthodox Jews or sex workers due to the brothel on Glen Huntly Rd.



I've lived in Footscray for something like 4 years now. Moving here was the first time in my life I've moved purely because I wanted to, not because I was homeless and needed somewhere to stay, or because I needed to be closer to support services. This was a choice would bring both regret and contentment over the next few years, particularly in the contrast between Footscray and Elsternwick, the south east suburb I was moving from.



♥ BEGINNING ♥

• THE BAD BITS •

CW: INTIMIDATION, HARRASSMENT

I've had more hairy experiences in Footscray than I have most places apart from the time I got mugged on the train to Cranbourne.

One afternoon I was at the bus stop on Paisley St coming home from Coles with bags of groceries, & a group of huge, very obviously drunk dudes in trakley daks & hoodies surrounded me.

One of them started flinching with me, repeatedly shaking my hand & asking what I was up to, what my name was etc. while the others gathered behind the bus shelter

This is a priority for me, and I want to create spaces where I can take the time to learn these things about new people I meet, and where I can explain these things about myself without feeling like a freak or an overly sensitive crybaby for using they pronouns or having a lot of sensory processing difficulties.

Living at the Vault has definitely broadened my horizons, while at the same time reaffirming the things I want in my life – quality friendships over quantity, a support network of neurodivergent and queer friendships and relationships based on care and nurturing each other – are more important to me than partying or having a wide group of friends. I don't have the energy to sustain that many social connections, and I'm far too complicated a person to have to try and explain myself to everyone I meet in passing at a party. Most of the time there's barely enough time to learn someone's name, let alone their pronouns and any other information that needs to be passed on in order to make them feel safe in the same space.

surrounding suburbs, probably because it's one of the few areas still affordable anywhere close to the city.

Well, at least it is for now.

I worry about what's going to happen as poorer people keep getting pushed further and further out and away from each other. It's tough enough to seek/proved support from/to my friends as it is, but throw in several-hour long train trips and an isolating suburban wasteland on top of that and I start to feel queasy. I really hate the suburbs and isolation that they seem to be driven by. It's not healthy for me to be so isolated. I don't think it's really healthy for anyone. I have a lot of qualms with the idea of the suburban way of living, but I could probably write a whole zine about that, so I'll leave that for another time.

dreamers, lovers, fighters, makers, and creators. My dream has changed and expanded beyond individual desires, and for this I'm very grateful.

and nurture a thriving community of thinkers, I love, to be able to shelter them when they need it one day hope to be able to build a home for the ones always been big into the idea of chosen family, and I intentional communities that exist around me. I've more interested in the idea of intentional living connecting with one another. I've become much

I really despise the idea of houses and suburbs designed to accommodate the nuclear family. It keeps people alone and lonely, and stops us from I first wanted to admit.

Living at the Vault has really made me reconsider my idea of how living situations should work. I used to have this picture of my own little apartment, just me and my cat with a small garden on a balcony. Now I realised that this picture probably isn't healthy for me, and that I'm a much more social person than

~ DEMOLITION ~

About a month ago we discovered a poster on our fence saying that our house was scheduled for demolition. None of us were surprised, as given that we actually live in the place we're aware of the shoddy state of the building, but it made me sad to think that this was the end of an era.

I was really hoping we could have a demolition party, but it looks like we're all moving pretty quickly. A demolition party would be a fitting end to what has become something of a landmark for the various scenes that the members of our house are involved in. As someone who struggles with severe social anxiety it's been a real struggle living in a house with so many comings and goings, but I've started to love living in a house where there's always someone else around. It's great if you have the room, and the low-pressure socialisation that comes from having so many Housemeats has been really good for me.

was a common occurrence and me and the others I worked with who lived in the area would share stories of such encounters and let each other know which clients worked in the local businesses, so it was an everyday thing for me.

Several of my clients turned out to work nearby, which became awkward sometimes when I went to the local grocer, to see an accountant, or to McDonald's for a greasy burger and a shake. But it

As a sex worker working at said brothel, it was definitely a strange contrast. I lived directly on Glen Huntly Rd, the main street of the suburb, and everyone who lived and worked there knew each other.

None of this was a problem in Footscray though. Even though Footscray has it's own little CBD of sorts, it's not the same tight-knit community as I found in Elsternwick. There are a LOT more chain stores here, mixed in with the strange little local places that sell weird mixes of knick knacks and burnt DVDs. There are a handful of rather hipstery bars and restaurants that have popped up since I've moved here, and they stick out like a series of sore thumbs against the backdrop of graffiti and rubbish and faded signs in multiple languages.

Getting used to the public transport on the West Side was a hell of an adjustment. Going from living in an apartment above a tram stop, a bus stop, a taxi rank, and a train station, to floating about in the suburbs with unreliable buses, no trams, and decent walking distance to a train station was a challenge. It felt isolating and exhausting to have to plan everything so far in advance and leave at least an hour earlier to get anywhere. It still is, and it's one of the things I won't miss about Footscray.

For some reason we have two toilets, in individual rooms directly beside each other like cubicals. One has a weird box-shelf cut out of the wall and ridiculous patterned tiles, while the other is clean and white and modern. This is one example of the flat-out fucking quirkiness of this house.



a round capsule type thing with several levers and knobs and exposed pipes that make it look like something out of a sci-fi movie. The bathroom and one of the living areas have wooden ceilings, while the rest have these art deco kind of details in the middle. All of the ceiling lights are fluorescent, and I hate it. That is something I will not be sorry to leave.

HOUSE #3 THE VAULT

The next house I lived in is my current place, the one I'm leaving soon. There are 6 of us Housemeats, and two cats called Molly and Glossy. We called it Vault 84, and it was a hub for goths, doofers, hippies, and metalheads from all over. It has a kumquat tree in the front yard, and every now and then a little old Asian lady who's name I still don't know will come knock on our door and ask if she can pick them. Sometimes she leaves home made plastic beaded bracelets on the doorknob.

I think our house is just a series of extensions on an originally very small house, as nearly every wall in the place is made of a different material. There are windows between rooms where the extension was built on without covering the window. Our shower is

My first housemate in Footscray was a grade-A asshole who thought that a 3D printer and a drone were a substitute for a personality, and screamed at me one night while I was having a panic attack. He spiked my friend's drink one night, stole her booze, served us raw duck and never cleaned up after himself. The spice shelf above the oven was encrusted with I don't even know what, and the counters had layers of dried up coffee all over them. The house was old and had slugs in the shower, cockroaches in the kitchen, and mice everywhere else.



HOUSE #1 THE CRAPSHACK

One time a friend of mine came over, got really drunk and threw up in several places all over the house. I lived with a dear friend there for a few months before the shit hit the wall with the asshole housemate, and it was where I first started seriously dating my long-term partner.



I haven't thought much about that place until now, but I'm trying to find the positives in the threads of my story, and looking at it in hindsight, there were a lot of good experiences in that house as well as the awful, harrowing ones.



I lived there when I decided to take a break from sex work, when I went to my first Burning Seed (which was a life changing experience worthy of it's own zine), and while I first started to branch out and develop a social life after being in an extremely isolating abusive relationship.

12



Footscray proper is still a pretty depressing place to hang out in all honesty, but it's interesting. I have such a love-hate relationship with this town, and part of me wonders if I've had to romanticise living here to deal with it's down sides.

{ HOUSE #2 }

{ THE DOLLHOUSE }

The second house I lived in was a very over-priced unit with a slightly dodgy landlord who would come into our property without telling us. It was small and clean and I lived with two friends who were lovely.

I lived here for something like a total of 4 months, and in that time I dealt with a LOT of upheaval. I had taken time off from sex work and then found that I just couldn't go back to it, and I didn't have a backup plan because I'd gotten into sex work out of desperation, so it WAS my backup plan. I burned

through my savings while suffering daily panic attacks (which I now think may have been PTSD

15

14

I will miss the chaotic architecture of this house. I'll miss early morning breakfasts after a late night out, where we'd bring home half a dozen people and my boyfriend would make eggs for everyone before we all crashed, exhausted and happy, on the various

alignment slightly.

of the house sinks and throws the door out of edges of the front door every few months as one side the last couple of years we've had to shave down the One side of the house is falling into the ground. Over water without having to leave the studio. Oh well. enjoying a vintage style cheese toastie or a glass of has the sink, so we've never had the pleasure of

cheese toasties. It's never worked though, and neither seems to be specifically designed to just make includes a built in grill (Circa 1977. Probably.) that music studio has a weird little bar set-up that tried, and the extra living area we've been using as a bedroom's worth of furniture in, not that we've ever Our laundry is big enough to fit a kind bed and a

related) and figuring out how to take care of myself again after being reliant on my abuser for so long. Being in a safe environment was really weird for me,

because I'm so used to living in dangerous situations where I'm scared to leave my room. Living here was a challenge because I had to really examine those fears and why they were still there even though I was safe.

Here I learned to make coffee with a French press plunger thing, lived in a giant room without windows, got rid of a huge amount of belongings I'd accumulated because of my shitty ex, and learned how to make poached eggs.

The Dollhouse was where I took my first steps towards recovery.

16

I've somehow developed the ability to keep my cool in these situations, but I don't exactly have nerves of steel. I'd like to live somewhere where I didn't have to deal with it every day, or just be able to get over it and go about my day without the panic attacks and hyperventilating.

triggering for me.

There are always some scary people hanging around Paisley St, usually drunk or drinking, even in the afternoons when I'm taking the bus home. It's been really difficult to deal with that, particularly because I grew up around a large number of people like that back in rural parts of Queensland, and a lot of things about them - the slurred speech, the smell of alcohol, the sudden angry outbursts - are very

They sell orchids. And insurance.

but with an enormous cage-like carpet out the front & heaps of pet plants spilling out everywhere.

this during the day, in front of the supermarket white parents were shopping with their children. It. Was. TERRIFYING. But I survived.

When I first moved here the whole place felt scary & dangerous. Absolutely everything is covered in graffiti, & there's rubbish everywhere you look. A lot of shops have been there so long their signs have just

faded off, & they sell weird combinations of knick knacks, wigs, foreign groceries, & imitation designer handbags

There's one place called Orchid Insurance, which reminds me of my grandparents' old house

They continued apologising all the way down the driveway. I think they went the wrong way because they passed by the house in the opposite direction, & spent another 20 seconds apologising as they did so.

A few hours later, maybe 2 or 3 am, C, D & I were chatting & drinking whiskey on the porch when the hipsters passed by again on their way home, paired up with people they'd picked up & cheerfully shoozzled. We waved & called to them, & they waved back, but I think they thought we were just happy strangers.

About a week ago, I was at home on a Saturday night, alone, watching TV on the couch in my P.J.s. When a trio of hipster-looking twenty-somethings walked in the front door. I assumed they were friends of a Housemate that would appear soon, & thought I recognised the guys overall.

They each said "Hey, # I did too, before they continued through the litter. 5 seconds later they came back with a chorus of "sorry, sorry, sorry house, so sorry!"



family members.

I'll miss the routine that I've finally managed to develop, and watching familiar landmarks I've discovered pass by through the bus window on the way home. I'll miss the cute café around the corner where old women with grey, avant garde haircuts come to discuss politics alongside middle aged men discussing football and people from the retirement home across the road having lunch with visiting

long.

beds, mattresses and pull-out couches scattered around the house. I'll miss watching my cat play in the long grass, and flop around on the pavement. I'll miss chatting with the Housemeats on the front porch until the early hours, and all the familiar little annoyances that come with living somewhere so

as well as the ways the affect me.

the ways I perpetuate these things without thinking, conscious of classism, racism, and xenophobia and having to face it every day has made me much more

Footscray makes it hard to ignore inequality, and

exercise, and honestly it's pretty tiring. But I prefer it to living in a rich suburb with no homeless people or poor people and just living it up in some ivory tower.

It's become a daily

I don't end up in their position.

process I make a list of steps I can take to make sure

that cycle, but when I get stuck in that thought

like them and I'll never be able to pull myself out of

Sometimes I get caught up thinking how I'm just

♥ COMMUNITY ♥

There's a house full of crust punks down the street, and I'm surprised that there's never been any alliance between our houses, but they never make eye contact. I always feel a little tickle of joy when I see them walk past on their way to the shops, or when I get off at the same stop as the chick who looks like a crusty Cyndi Lauper.

It seems like the bus route here is the place to be, and I run into people on the bus to and from uni all the time and chat about small things. This is definitely something I'm going to miss about Footscray. I've never really felt part of a community before, but little things like this made me feel like I'm a part of something. There seems to be an unusually high concentrations of goths, punks, queers, and other weirdos in Footscray and the

tapped on the glass # made leissy noises at me. The flirty dude was super trashed but happy, & I'm familiar enough with this sort of tension to be able to take

my way out of it, but in truth I honestly thought I was going to die that day.

It was 7:00 in the afternoon during summer, in a very public place, while the sun was high in the sky. According to colloquial wisdom, this should have been a time when it was safe for me to be outside alone. There are always people hanging around on Paisley St that seem dodgy to me, but I never thought anyone would try something like