Pulling, Digging, Tumbling

by Brooke Hogan, Lyneham High School



This tin pushes through sucking waves, and I'm gripping on a taut line as I'm tipped into the water. My bleary eyes turn to slits, adjusting to murky water. Slipping between strands of silken slime, I pass under my cool rocking boat. I suck at passing specks, pushing them through my fluttering gills. Something is calling, and I swivel my fleshy neck and the hook in my mouth, but all I can see is that there seems to be a root, dripping milky sap –

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sticky, the shovel is pulling and digging, flecks of soil, pulling up weeds into a neat little pile. My bones are hollowing; my words are meandering on a map in my mouth, but still, I push on - pulling weeds out of the soil. My grasping skin tears, fragile and cracking.

Softly mewing petals crush, marbled resin interiors of the flowers - hang on - splintering. I keep pulling, pulling the chunks of weeds out of the soil. Is that ceramic, or a dandelion's basal rosette? Jagged glass, or an unwanted reflexed outer bract? I'm perhaps in the kitchen, pulling my marbled weeds out, out of the tile.

My daughter is calling, but I'm lost in a fog. I was the first woman to wear trousers on my street, but now I can't tell the difference between green stems and this damn rotting grouting.

I hold the shovel - or is it a ladle? - and make sure I focus on gripping the –

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saliva ejector in my hands, sucking in spit with a whoosh and I crane around my mask, poking at bits of this sugar eroded squirming child. My eyes glimmer and sparkle with small talk, throwing words at a father sitting uncomfortable. He is tilting on the edge, as the reddened blood on his child's gum continues to wrinkle. I keep digging, and applying fluoride, stroking silver against calcium with my paper mask steaming up my vision.

A blistering headache thumps into my cap, blurred images of a sickening child at home pushing numbers into a phone that I can't take, because my plastic-lined hands are digging into this squirming child's –

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mouth is yawning, distorted with self-consciousness. The cool girls flip their burned hair and straighten their pleats, talk trash interspersed with likes and actuallys and literallys and drink their sloshing two litre bottles of milk loudly. They giggle nonsensically after every sentence, with their milk-frosted maws.

I stare at my visual art diary, and relinquish my stained tools.

I stop pulling, and digging, and tumbling, and disappear into the sodden and waiting piece of A2 sketching paper.