

This Family of Things: Reflecting on the significance of objects in poetry

By Lisa Julie

Student number: 3359903

Masters in Creative Writing: Mini Thesis

University of the Western Cape

Department: English

Student number: 3359903

Supervisor: Prof Kobus Moolman



Abstract:

The creative project is a mini-thesis. It is made up of a collection of poems, titled *This Family of Things*. The collection consists mainly of narrative and descriptive poems which explore the relationship between people and objects and objects and space. The poems explore the day-to-day experiences of a mother and her young son. The poems exhibit certain elements of the narrative poem. The poems tell a story, and there are two distinct characters and instances of dialogue.

This mini-thesis also includes a reflective essay in which I discuss the functionality of objects in poetry. In the essay, I discuss the potentiality of objects in creative work. I discuss to what extent objects illuminate space and how objects can potentially disrupt space. I also discuss the separation of *objects* and *things*. I discuss creative influences and the various processes involved in the formulation of the creative project. I highlight the challenging areas, and I discuss the process of drafting.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a stylized classical building with a pediment and columns.

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Kobus Moolman for his continuous support. I must thank the English Department at The University of the Western Cape for their continuous support.

Lastly, I must express a most profound gratitude to the Mellon Foundation and the Centre of Excellence in Food Security at UWC for funding and sustaining this academic achievement.



Contents:*This Family of Things:*

5. Leaving
6. Sounds
7. Fish and other animals
8. Nothing is a mere *thing*
9. An uncomfortable silence
10. I am the matchstick
11. Weight
12. Translucency
13. Saying
14. On swimming
15. The mouth
16. Photo day
17. Telling
18. Small victories
19. Balance
20. Pressing questions
21. The curator
22. The archaeologist
23. In my hands
24. The sketch artist
25. Counting
26. Sleeping patterns
27. Stories
28. Every day
29. Every night
30. Essay: Reflecting on the Significance of Objects in Poetry



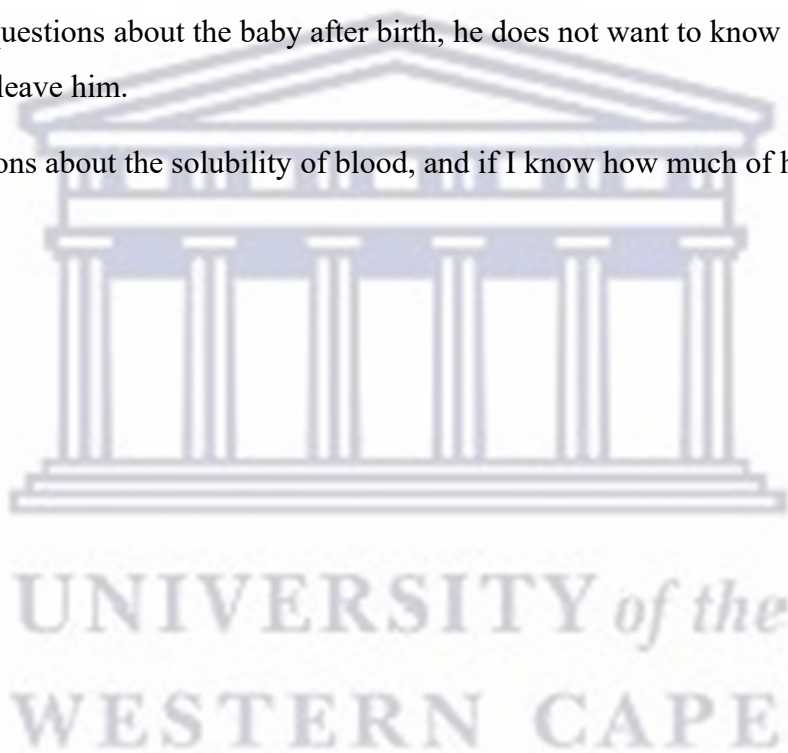
Leaving

He wants to know how long the DNA of a foetus remains in its mother's body after birth, how long it takes for the cells to exit the bloodstream.

He wants to know if she felt the doctors pull on the umbilical cord to remove the placenta after birth, if she felt them cut into her skin.

He does not ask questions about the baby after birth, he does not want to know how long it took for his mother to leave him.

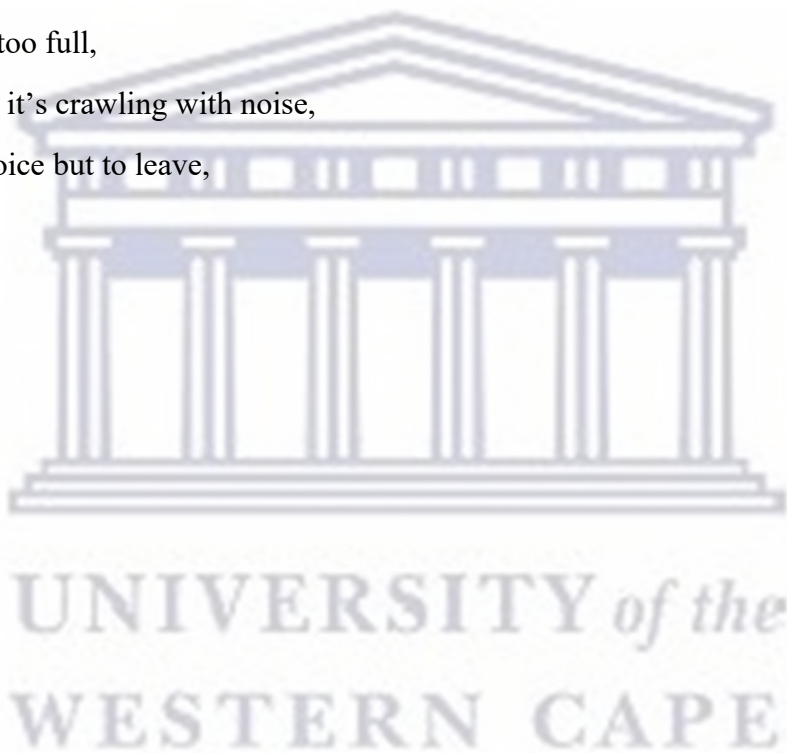
So he asks questions about the solubility of blood, and if I know how much of him was left behind.



Sounds

He says honeybees are wired to a sound threshold,
And that vibrations spark the construction of the hive.
He says it is a sound that is felt and not heard that signals danger,
And that he sometimes hears with the ears inside his belly.

This is how I learned about the frustrations of a misophonic child,
When the hive is too full,
When it feels like it's crawling with noise,
Some have no choice but to leave,
To run.



Fish and other animals

I would not want to be a fisherman

Or the man whose job it is to pick up

Dead animals on roadsides

I am uncomfortable around animals

Dead or alive or in between.

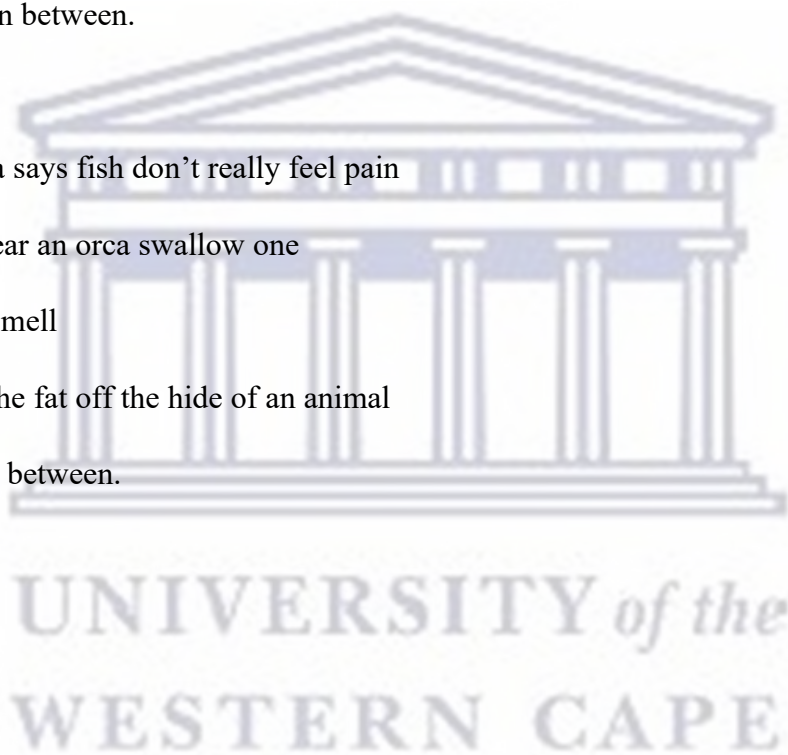
Although mamma says fish don't really feel pain

I would hate to hear an orca swallow one

I would hate the smell

From skimming the fat off the hide of an animal

Big or small or in between.



Nothing is a mere *thing*

Everything has a name, even the twelve phosphorescent stars glued to the ceiling. Like the disciples, they live and breathe in his world.



An uncomfortable silence

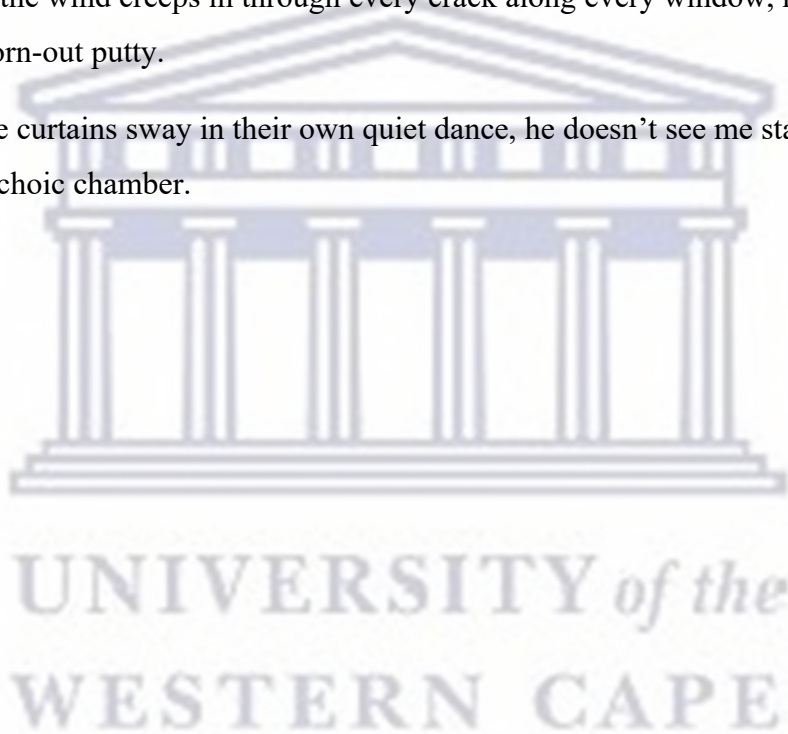
He runs his fingers through the wind chimes hanging from the living room ceiling.

He says he must separate the knocking bamboo rods because tangled wind chimes mean the spirits are busy.

I watch as he pleads with the spirits, I watch him study each string as if he were choreographing the movements of a puppet.

He doesn't know the wind creeps in through every crack along every window, he doesn't see the crevices in the worn-out putty.

He doesn't see the curtains sway in their own quiet dance, he doesn't see me standing in the corner of this anechoic chamber.



I am the matchstick

I have to be careful with my words

There are no terms of endearment

I can only call him by his name

Anything else is kerosene

There can be no judgement

Judgement melts him into silence

I must praise his efforts

To suffocate the fire.



Weight

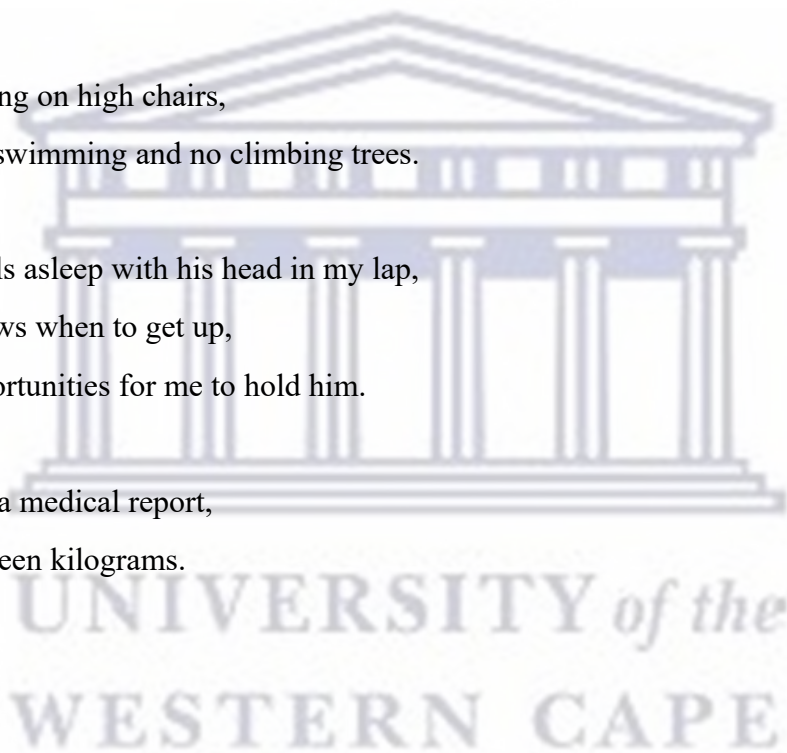
I don't know when last I carried him,
He wants to feel his feet on the ground.

All he really needs from me is to hold his hand,
When stepping onto escalators,
Or from the platform onto the train.

So there's no sitting on high chairs,
No swinging, no swimming and no climbing trees.

Sometimes he falls asleep with his head in my lap,
But his body knows when to get up,
There are no opportunities for me to hold him.

Today, I read off a medical report,
He weighs seventeen kilograms.



Translucency

When he pretends not to hear me,

He points to his ear.

When he'd rather not speak about his day,

He covers his mouth.

It all looks like an exercise in body parts:

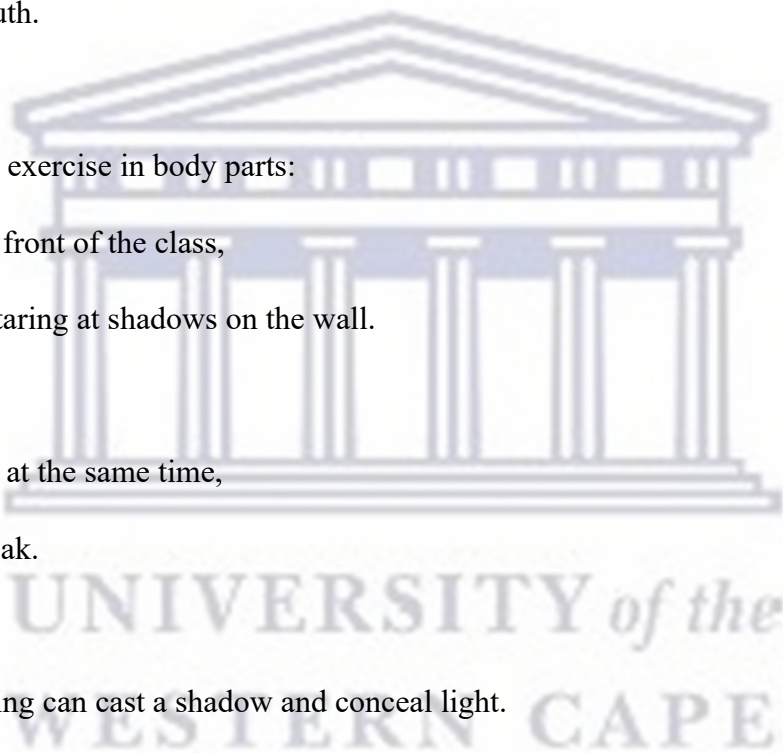
I'm the teacher in front of the class,

He's in a corner staring at shadows on the wall.

He can do all of it at the same time,

Not listen, not speak.

I suppose everything can cast a shadow and conceal light.



Saying

He covers the moon with his left thumb

He says he doesn't have enough fingers for all the stars.

He holds my abalone ashtray against his ear

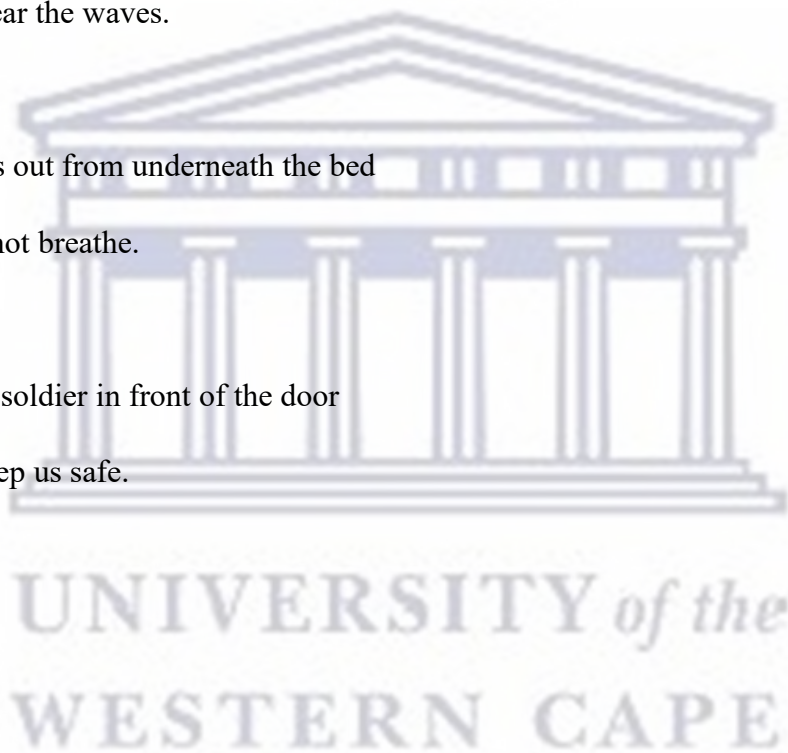
He says he can hear the waves.

He pulls his shoes out from underneath the bed

He says they cannot breathe.

He leaves his toy soldier in front of the door

He says it will keep us safe.



On swimming

He doesn't want to learn how to swim because he cannot stand wet clothes clinging to his body so he promises to practice holding his breath under water in the bathtub we never use and we never use the bathtub because he cannot stand to see the plug that covers the hole that sucks and sucks in all of the water and this is how the boy's mind works he doesn't know he is the polyester against his own skin.



The mouth

I eat everything that you give me, I even eat the things that I do not like.

They are the small evils that my stomach can bear.

But the small evils never touch my heart, they only travel to my bellybutton.

Which you said used to be my mouth.

And you also told me that the mouth of a good child is like a fountain.

And the mouths of the wicked are a bitter cup,

So I drink everything you give me, I even drink the things that I don't like.

I drink the milk that comes from cows which you said have four stomachs.

And I wish I had that many, for all the many small evils.

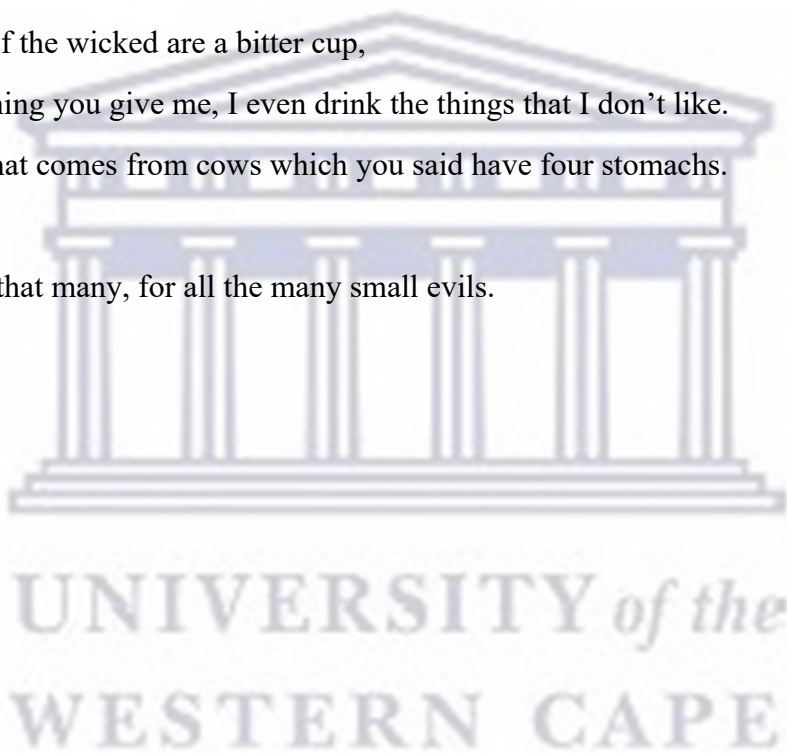


Photo day

He said they told him to smile

And on the count of three

To look straight into the lens.

But what they really asked of him

Was to turn down the volume of every sensation

Every gut reaction

To fidget with a button

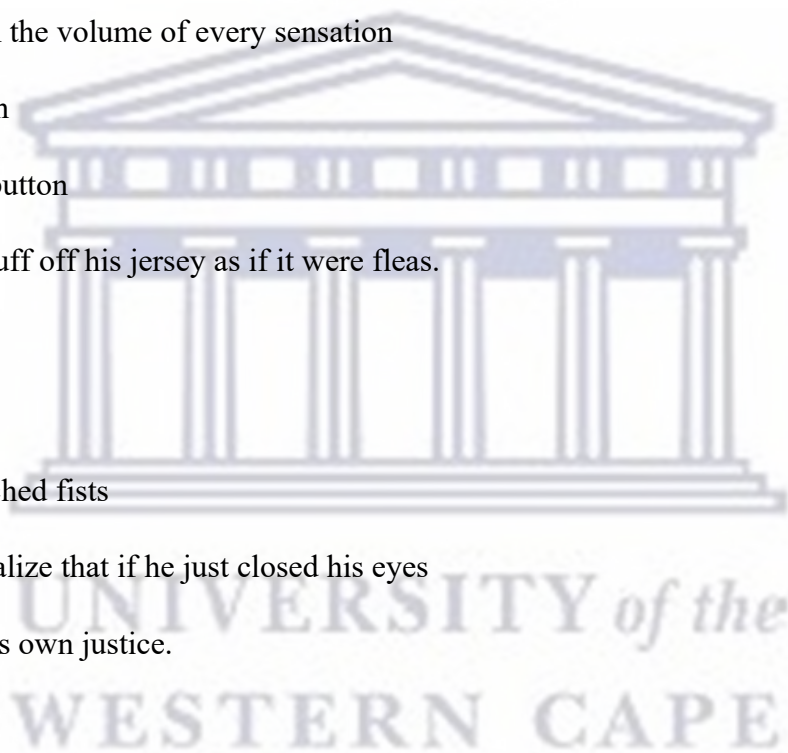
Or to pluck the fluff off his jersey as if it were fleas.

In his photo

He sits with clenched fists

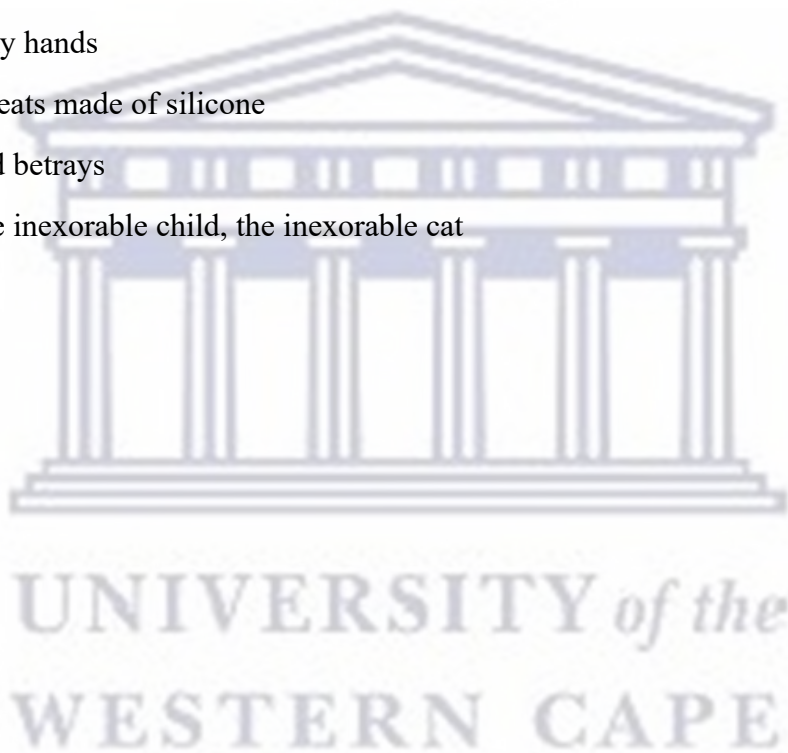
Too restless to realize that if he just closed his eyes

He could exact his own justice.



Telling

For days I struggled to feed the cat
There's no telling it what to do
Except the boy suggested I use my left hand
Because a mother has to switch her breasts when she feeds her baby
But the boy knows little about suckling
Or about being suckled
He only knows my hands
And spoons and teats made of silicone
But even the hand betrays
The caregiver, the inexorable child, the inexorable cat
My hands
Always tied.



Small victories

there are no small victories for me
he cannot know that he is a challenge to my balance
that I am suspended over mercurial water
that he shakes the tightrope underneath my feet
that I must readjust my weight
that I must look with geodesic eyes
that I must calculate the risks
of passing a barking dog
or flushing a toilet
for his sake.



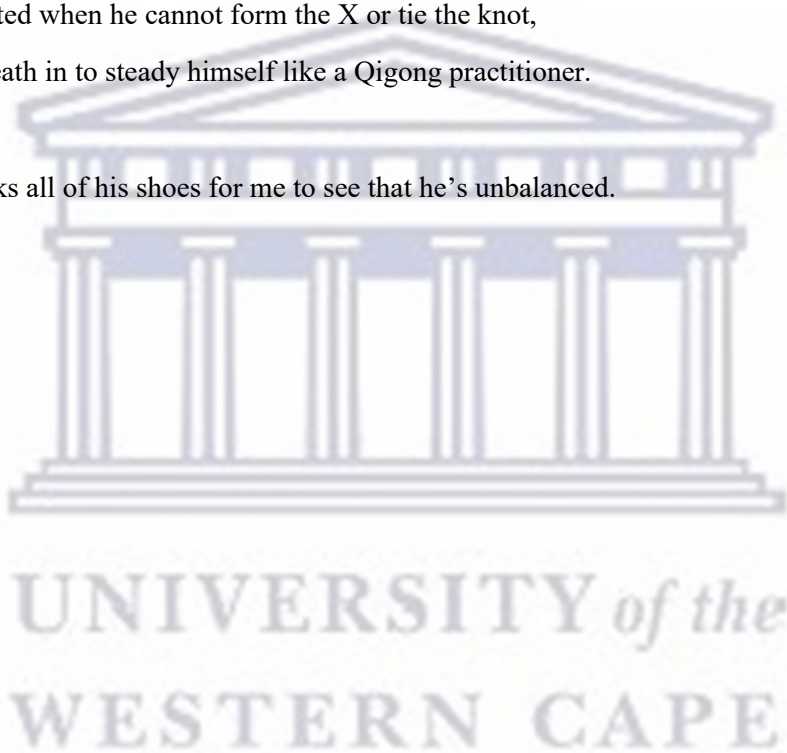
Balance

He is learning to tie his own shoelaces because he's afraid to fall,
So he's committed his time to understanding his shoes but not his feet.

He's abandoned drawing on walls for songs about crab claws and looping bunny ears,
So he sings and doesn't speak because he's afraid to fall.

And he gets frustrated when he cannot form the X or tie the knot,
He takes a deep breath in to steady himself like a Qigong practitioner.

And then he unpacks all of his shoes for me to see that he's unbalanced.



Pressing questions

He wants to know how long it would take for a mattress to burn away

How many bags of ash he could fill

How long it would take before he can touch the metal

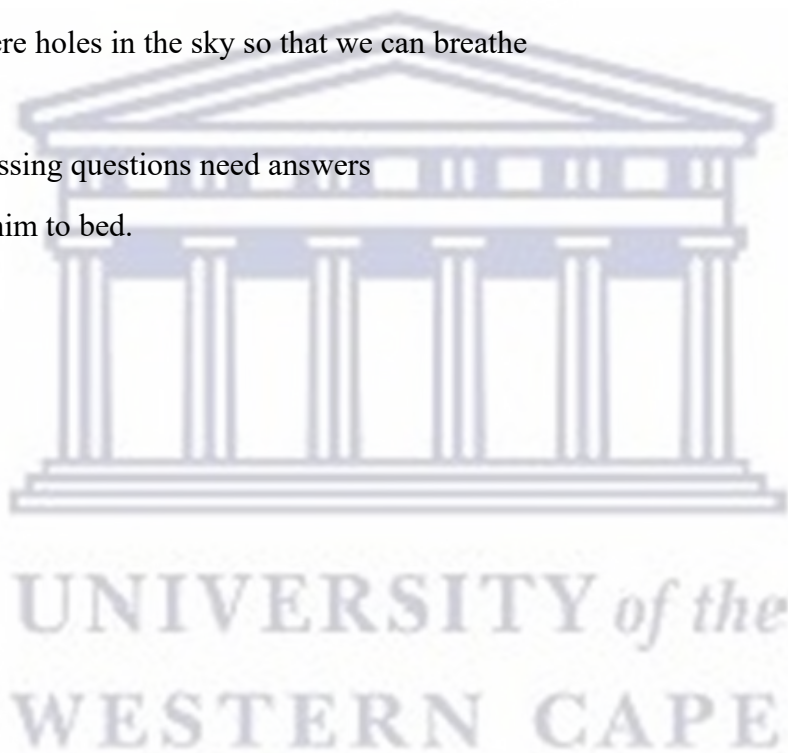
He wants to know if it's painful to breathe in hot air

What it feels like to choke on smoke

If the stars are mere holes in the sky so that we can breathe

And all of his pressing questions need answers

Before I can put him to bed.

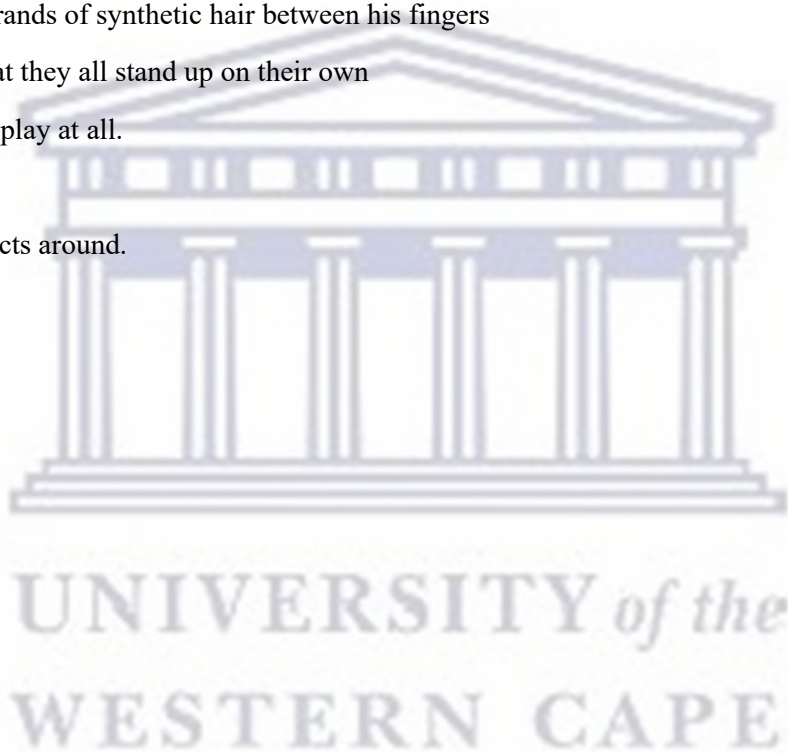


The curator

He's chosen religious ornaments for toys
perhaps he doesn't see the statue praying
perhaps the virgin Mary is the queen in an invisible game of chess
perhaps the makeshift altar is a battlefield.

He prefers the weight of porcelain to plastic
perhaps he hates strands of synthetic hair between his fingers
perhaps he likes that they all stand up on their own
perhaps he doesn't play at all.

He just moves objects around.



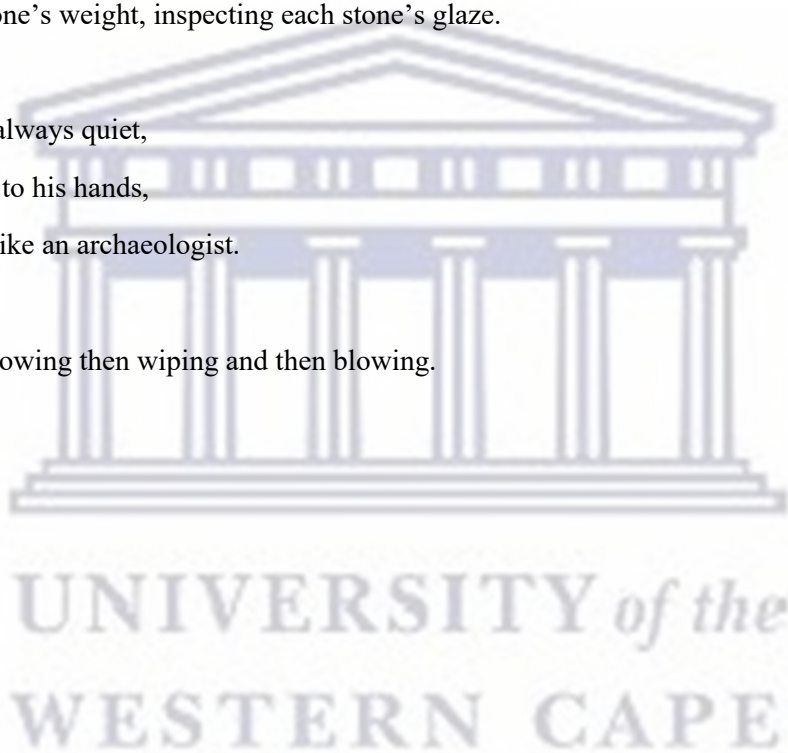
The archaeologist

We walk along the shoreline,
He prefers the hard sand so that he can measure his footprints,
His eyes are fixed to the ground with callipers.

He walks two steps behind me,
Stuffing granite stones into his pockets,
Estimating each stone's weight, inspecting each stone's glaze.

The drive home is always quiet,
His attention shifts to his hands,
He observes them like an archaeologist.

Wiping and then blowing then wiping and then blowing.



In my hands

He lives in my hands;
his insistence
his fears
follow me wherever I go
like a passive tremor

and he chokes
and he holds
and he gives.

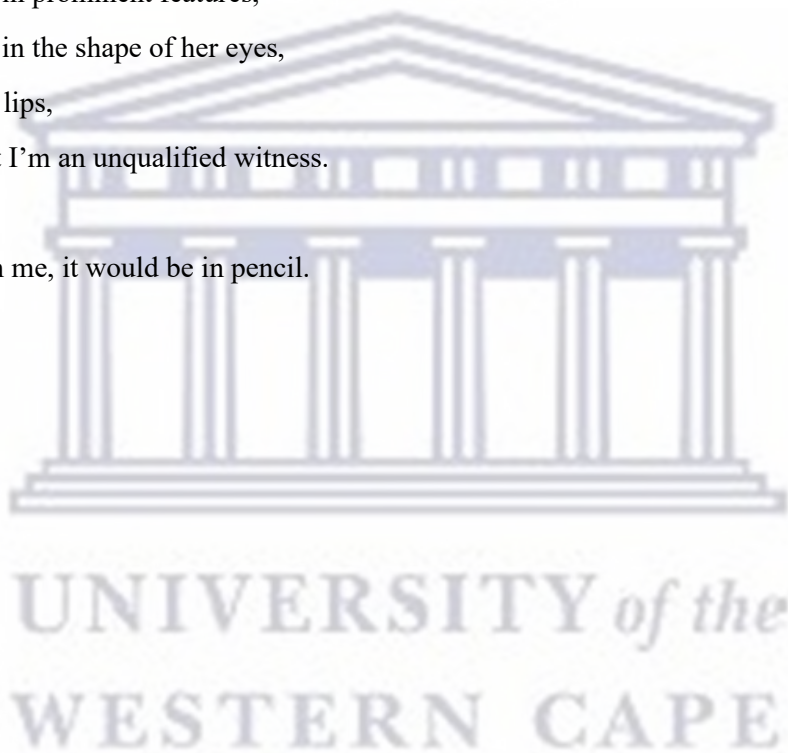


The sketch artist

He wants to know about my mother,
He asks questions about flesh moles,
About birthmarks,
The size of her feet,
What her hands felt like around my wrists.

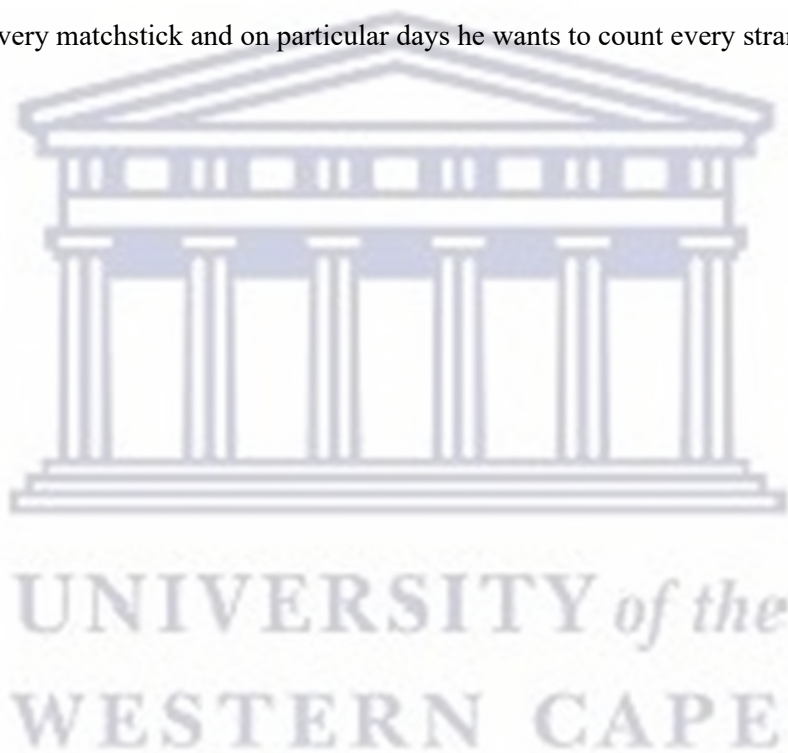
He's not interested in prominent features,
He's not interested in the shape of her eyes,
Or the curve of her lips,
As if he knows that I'm an unqualified witness.

If he were to sketch me, it would be in pencil.



Counting

He sits with his index finger in his mouth scratching plaque off his teeth and in between his scratching he counts from one until seventeen, moving his little finger across every tooth like he's reading braille, until he foretells which tooth will fall out next and then he subtracts, and he hardly ever talks when he is counting because every number is logged into his brain so that he can share with me, even though I never ask, how many times I sip from my tea, how many times I says god's name in vain, he counts every cigarette butt and every matchstick and on particular days he wants to count every strand of my hair.



Sleeping patterns

When I cannot sleep

I stroke my forehead

Like mama does for the cats who don't come near me (except for when I'm asleep)

Mama calls it monkey mind

When I cannot keep my eyes closed even for a minute

And sometimes I can

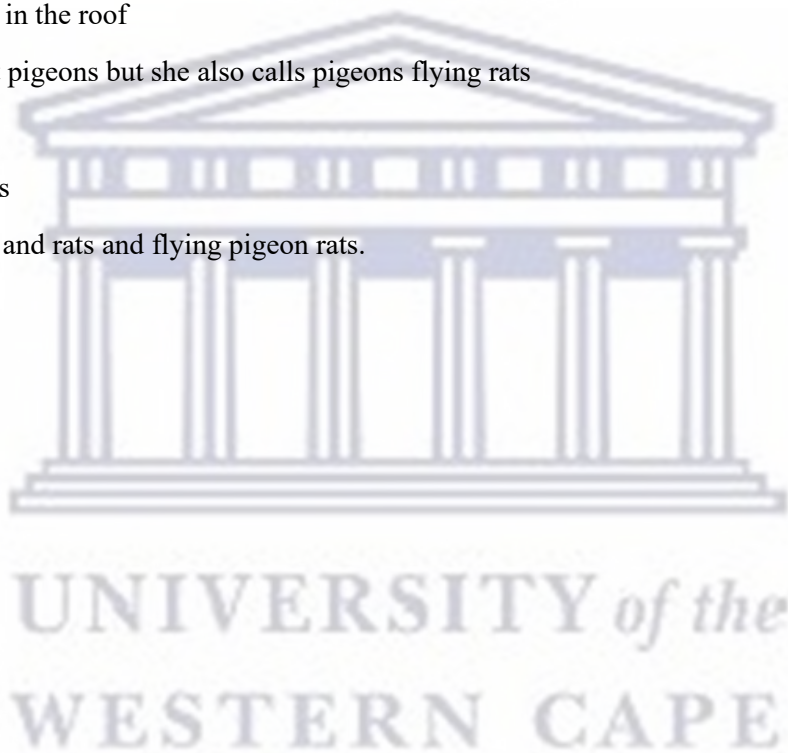
But then I hear rats in the roof

Mama says it's just pigeons but she also calls pigeons flying rats

And I hate cats

And I hate monkeys

And I hate pigeons and rats and flying pigeon rats.



Stories

Before I begin any story,
He will ask if it is make-believe,
He cannot decide for himself if Lucifer is the real Morning Star,
So our stories are short,
And mostly incomplete.

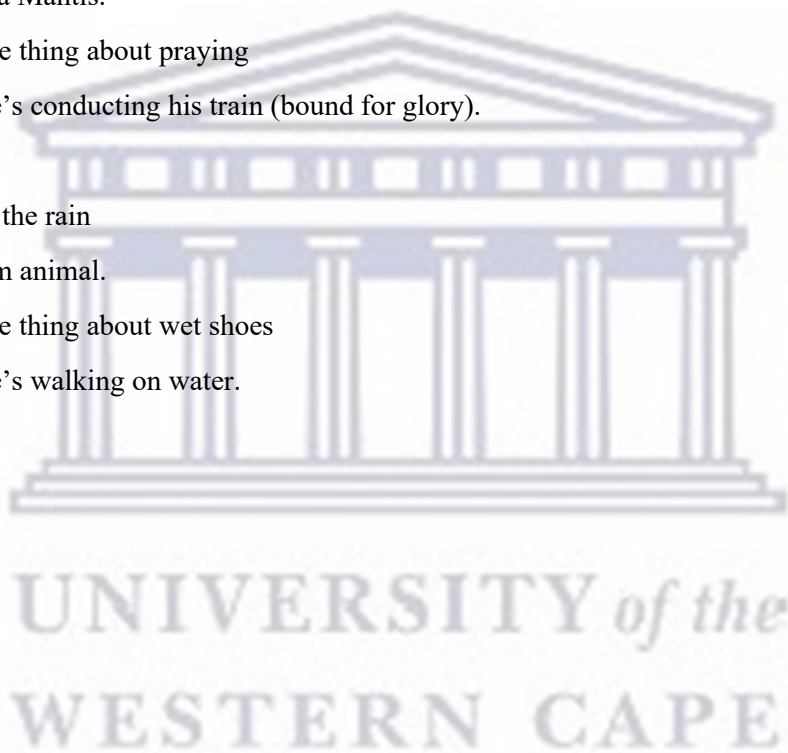


Every day

He won't wear elasticated pants
Or t-shirts with collars.
And then there's the thing about pockets
Except for when he's collecting stones.

He won't eat in large groups
Says he used to be a Mantis.
And then there's the thing about praying
Except for when he's conducting his train (bound for glory).

He won't go out in the rain
Says he's not a farm animal.
And then there's the thing about wet shoes
Except for when he's walking on water.



Every night

I watch him sleep

His fingers twitch

Palms facing upwards on his Peter Pan pillowcase

I brush the sand off his bed sheets

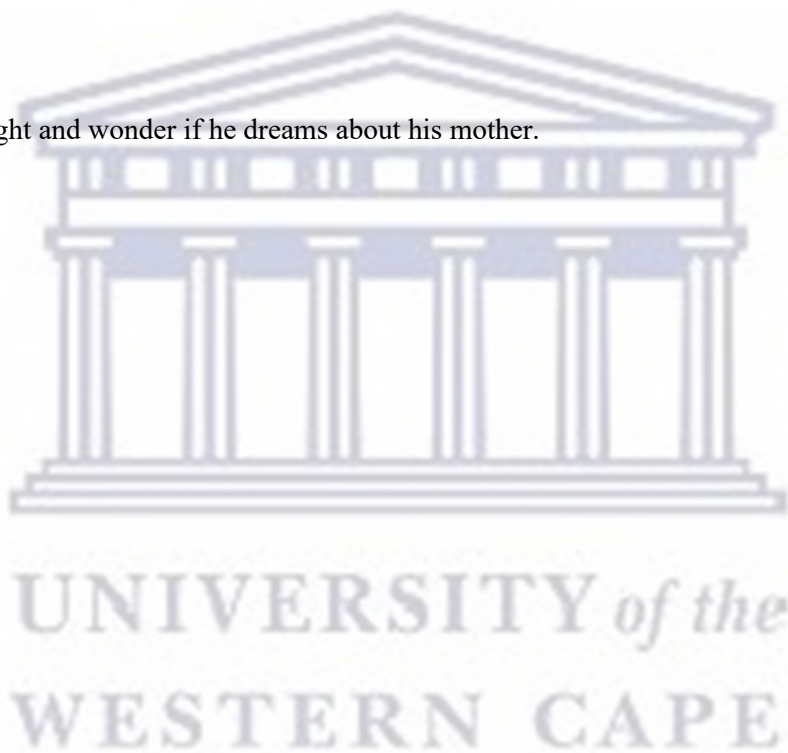
The sand he brings home from his cartwheel days

Of flustered cheeks and sticky fingers

Every night

I stand by his door

I stand out of his light and wonder if he dreams about his mother.



“This Family of Things”: Reflecting on the significance of objects in poetry

The twenty-five poems that make up *This Family of Things* explore the day-to-day experiences of a mother and her young son. The poems all exhibit certain elements of the narrative poem. The poems tell a story, and there are two distinct characters and instances of dialogue. I suppose what separates this collection from the conventional narrative poem, is that there is no single plot. The poems, instead, unfold in a particular sequence. I cannot express or reflect on every aspect regarding the formulation of the collection. I cannot (in this essay) delve into each and every ‘literary device’ employed as I have been restricted to only three thousand words. I therefore hope to reflect on creative influences, certain overriding themes, my use of concrete imagery, and the general process of drafting. I hope not to simplify my intentions for this creative project, but rather, to provide a starting point (an embarkation) for the intensive processes involved in the making of this creative project.

My decision to write about the figure of the boy began after an interesting (but informal) discussion about ‘the seriousness of a child at play’. I do not recall any conversation about the work of Nietzsche or anything particularly philosophical. Instead, I was engrossed by the idea that child play is crucial for the development of attentional circuits and that it is unequivocally responsible for the development of personality. I then came across the work of a photographer, Gabriele Galimberti, who published a book of photographs titled, *Toy Stories: Photos of Children from Around the World and Their Things*. The collection of photographs, in short, captures young children with their toys. In my opinion, there is a sense of clarity about each photograph. I was struck by the sense of pride that each child demonstrated in their possessions. I was also struck by the intentionality regarding the placement of each toy for the individual

photographs. One photograph left a more resolute impression, that of a five-year old boy from Alaska. In the photograph, he is sitting on a small trampoline with approximately one hundred plastic and wooden Lego pieces in front of him. The pieces are placed strategically according to size, colour, and function. I imagine that Galimberti would have given the children the agency to ‘exhibit’ their toys in whatever fashion they preferred. I suppose the sheer fastidiousness of this child’s ‘display’ unsettled me. I wondered if he has many friends and if he has developed the capacity for sharing and empathy.

I then decided that I would base my collection on the idea of capturing the psyche of a young child. I decided that I would do this through astute observation. My intention was to paint a picture of his idiosyncrasies. I wanted to demonstrate his grasp of his surroundings (ideas of materiality) but also his thoughts regarding the metaphysical. At the same time, I wanted the language used by the primary speaker to outline aspects of her own life and her own particularities. Lastly, and not to reveal too much, I wanted to write about a mother’s love and devotion for her child. The title, *This Family of Things* intimates that a family is at the core of the collection. It also suggests that there will be some ‘meditation’ on *objects* and *things*. I will begin the reflective process by speaking about how I employed the use of *objects* or *things* in this creative project.

I developed a curiosity for the objects that children form attachments to. I developed an interest in what arrests a child’s attention. Apart from exploring the psyche of a child in this collection, I wanted to place an emphasis on objectivity and materiality. I also wanted to explore the idea that there are distinctions between *objects* and *things*. In the poem “An uncomfortable silence” my intention was for the object to disrupt the space. I wanted the object to be the subject of contention. The poem is about the boy’s strange obsession with the wind chimes. He is

uncompromising in his belief that the “tangled rods” (2-3) signify that spirits (potentially ominous spirits) are moving within their (his and his mother’s) living space. The speaker watches him in his attempts to compose himself. To refer back to the idea of the ‘seriousness of a child at play’, I suppose this idea echoes aspects of that sentiment, except the boy is not playing in the conventional sense. Instead, he is executing a kind of personal obligation to appease himself. The notion of play is therefore ironic. Throughout the formulation of the collection, I continued to think about ways in which I could use objects to paint a picture of the boy’s personality through his all-round engagement with them. As I was drafting “On swimming” (see below) I had a specific tone in mind. I wanted the tone to be somewhere between sheer frustration on the speaker’s behalf and to display a sense of acceptance.

On swimming

He doesn’t want to learn how to swim because he cannot stand wet clothes clinging to his body so he promises to practice holding his breath under water in the bathtub we never use and we never use the bathtub because he cannot stand to see the plug that covers the hole that sucks and sucks in all of the water and this is how the boy’s mind works he doesn’t know he is the polyester against his own skin.

I began the pre-writing process by thinking what is it about a bathtub that could potentially scare a child. I do believe that many children (and perhaps even adults) fear bathtub drains because it leads to this dark underworld of unspecified waterways. I suppose this phenomenon lent the poem a degree of actuality. I therefore needed to find an object that could continue the ‘suspension’ between frustration and acceptance. The plug therefore seemed fit to perform this function. In other words, the boy’s fixation with the plug is both frustrating but entirely comprehensible for the speaker. This is what I essentially aimed to do with the rest of the poems.

I wanted to express how much physical and mental space objects take up in our daily lives. I then began reading about the philosophy surrounding *objects* and *things*, in fact, I was looking for a sense of philosophical encouragement. It was inevitable that the writings of Heidegger would feature in my research. The question of functionality is at the core of his analyses. I suppose one way of understanding Heidegger's argument is that it suggests that an object undergoes a 'reduction' and becomes a 'thing' when it no longer serves its ordinary function. I then began thinking about the role of ontology in the separation of *objects* and *things*. This brought me to the work of Bill Brown who is at the forefront of an entire school of thought called Thing Theory which is a branch of critical theory focusing on human-object relationships or interactions in literature. Bill Brown writes:

Objects are materialized by the (ap)perceiving subject, the anterior physicality of the physical word emerging...You could imagine things, second, as what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects –their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idol, and totems. (The Thing, 5)

I suppose what this means is that objects are everything in our recognition, and within our ontology. In other words, we know the names and qualities of objects. This also suggests that things represent an ambiguity. I am interested in what happens when we know the names and qualities of objects but instead opt for the word 'thing'. I am interested in the 'reduction'. In the poem "Nothing is a mere *thing*" (see below) I explore this idea by alluding to the significance of naming.

Nothing is a mere *thing*

Everything has a name, even the twelve phosphorescent stars glued to the ceiling. Like the disciples, they live and breathe in his world.

The poem is intentionally short because I wanted to create a kind of visual representation of the ‘reduction’. I played with this idea by the use of symbolism as well. The “twelve phosphorescent stars” (1) can be read as symbols for the boy’s credence and an indication of his fascination with Catholicism. The poem deals with the concept of attachment and ‘sentimental value’. I am drawn to Anthony Hatzimoysis’ interpretation of sentimental value:

The notion of sentimental value is at the centre of a triangle whose points are defined by emotion, memory and the self. Tracing the lines that connect these points would show how a non-reflective sense of oneself is generated when consciousness encounters objects whose past life give rise to certain emotions in the present. (Sentimental Value, 373)

Apart from attachment and what arrests a child’s attention, the use of religious ornaments in the poems, in itself, is a reoccurring feature. The poem “The curator” (see excerpt below) is the most suitable example.

The curator

He’s chosen religious ornaments for toys
 perhaps he doesn’t see the statue praying
 perhaps the virgin Mary is the queen in an invisible game of chess
 perhaps the makeshift altar is a battlefield

The poem deals with many topics; it deals with the psychology of constantly being surrounded by religious ornaments and about the boy's 'atypical' way (s) of playing. However, I think the poem is mostly concerned with how intensely the boy is observed by the speaker. I wanted this poem to generate certain questions about the speaker's potential intrusiveness. I therefore repeated the word "perhaps" to engage or activate the reader in this 'informal debate'. There are other ways in which this idea of 'activating' the reader is employed. There are three poems in the collection, "Fish and other animals", "The Mouth" and "Sleeping patterns" in which the boy is the speaker. I wanted to create an opportunity for the reader to corroborate the main speaker's observations. I also wanted to substantiate the boy's voice in the narrative.

If I were to think of poems that demonstrates the potentialities of objects in poetry, I would begin with Anne Carson's "Father's Old Blue Cardigan" from the collection *Men in the Off Hours* (see excerpt below).

Now it hangs on the back of the kitchen chair
 where I always sit, as it did
 on the back of the kitchen chair where he always sat.

I put it on whenever I come in,
 as he did, stamping
 the snow from his boots.

I put it on and sit in the dark.

He would not have done this.

Coldness comes paring down from the moonbone in the sky (47)

In my reading, I am struck by Carson's ability to inject life into the inanimate object. The poem is a narrative poem which conventionally relies on perceptiveness and observation opposed to imagery. However, Carson does both. She tells a painful story about her father's succumbing to dementia, and at the same time she feeds life (scents, smells, sounds) into the inanimate object. The object (the old blue cardigan) thus stands as the reminder of the life that used to possess it. I am compelled by the sensitivity and the sense of intimacy (the closeness) in Carson's descriptions. It is her deliberate use of language that connects Hatzimoysis' theory of "emotion, memory and the self" (373) to the object. Carson's ability to form these connections is evident in the opening lines, "Now it hangs on the chair/where I always sit, as it did/on the back of the kitchen chair where he always sat/I put it on whenever I come in" (47). There is a slight allusion to an absence, which is supported by Carson's use of the past tense. However, Carson's use of language does not only persuade the reader that the "he" is "no-more". Instead, the language outlines the connection between the speaker, the father and the object.

The second poem that in my mind demonstrates the potentialities of objects in poetry is Ayanda Billie's "Primus Stove" (2019). Billie's poem demonstrates how the object in a poem can be used to explore the conjunction of time and place. Billie's use of the primus stove both delineates the space but it also alludes to ideas of how we perceive and speak about poverty.

I came across the work of Michael MacGarry somewhere in the formulation of this creative project. MacGarry is a South African born multidisciplinary artist whose work largely explores the narrative capacity of objects. He makes use of repurposed materials to create entirely new structures without completely erasing the original objects' aesthetic. I was engrossed by the idea of the object's 'narrative capacity' and I think the idea speaks to my

objectives for the collection. I wanted to express the potentialities of objects in their own capacity as well as address what they represent for the user and the observer. At the same time, I wanted the collection to express the profundity of narrative. The very first poem in the collection is called “Leaving” (see below) and it provides an oblique introduction to the two main characters and how they came to be together. It is the first intimation that the boy is adopted. Although this piece of information is never explicitly disclosed, the use of language in the other poems persuade the reader to form the conclusion.

Leaving

He wants to know how long the DNA of a foetus remains in its mother’s body after birth, and how long it takes for the cells to exit the bloodstream.

He wants to know if she felt the doctors pull on the umbilical cord to remove the placenta after birth, and if she felt them cut into her skin.

He does not ask questions about the baby after birth, he does not want to know how long it took for his mother to leave him.

Instead he asks questions about the solubility of blood, and if I know how much of him was left behind.

I am drawn to the narrative poem because it allows for descriptiveness, for elements of a plot and shifting points of view through dialogue. The narrative poem is, of course, a very old poetic tradition which can include a range of genres from epics to ballads. Some famous narrative poems include Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Raven” (1845) and more recently, Anne Carson’s

Autobiography of Red. The writing of Anne Carson captured my interest in the potentiality of narrative poetry alongside the potentiality of objects, referring back to “Father’s Old Blue Cardigan”. In its traditional sense, a narrative poem tells a story: it has characters, a plot, instances of conflict and resolution. In my own collection, I was able to maintain elements of the conventional narrative poem, namely, the recurring characters and instances of dialogue. I suppose the most challenging aspect of producing a collection based on narrative, is the idea of developing one coherent storyline. It seemed an ambitious task throughout the writing. However, I soon realized that certain elements of the writing could be modified to fit the narrative. This process of remodifying resembled elements of drafting. To provide an example, the poem “Saying” (see below) was reworked from another poem initially titled, “Brother” (see appendix 1). The obvious alterations include the changing of the pronouns and the title. The changes meant that the boy would no longer speak for himself. I wanted the subject matter to be “light-hearted” and I wanted to give the speaker the opportunity to describe certain ‘regularities’ of the boy. In other words, I am aware that the moments in which the boy is portrayed as “challenging” stem from her observations. I wanted this poem to complicate the narrative to a certain extent. I wanted it to allude to the idea that her ‘representation’ of the boy is merely subjective.

Saying

He covers the moon with his left thumb

He says he doesn’t have enough fingers for all the stars.

He holds my abalone ashtray against his ear

He says he can hear the waves.

He pulls his shoes out from underneath the bed

He says they cannot breathe.

He leaves his toy soldier in front of the door

He says it will keep us safe.

I am constantly inspired by the poetry of others. The work of Sylvia Plath, the confessional qualities that she is known for, and her intricate descriptions, need no real introduction. However, I am quite interested in the idea of observing daily life in Plath's writing. I am interested in how the reader is able to visualise a specific setting through descriptive language. Plath's "Finisterre" (1961) paints graphic images of a geographic landscape. Another poem which highlights Plath's skilled control of descriptive language, is "Pheasant" (1962). I am interested in the potentiality surrounding the normalcy of observing 'arbitrary' encounters. Another influence is the work of Yehuda Amichai. His work explores the ingenuity and the resilience of children. Walt Whitman's words – "You objects that call from diffusions my meanings and give them shape!" (27) from "Song of the Open Road" (1865) – have also imprinted themselves in my memory. However, I can comfortably state that Sylvia Plath's "Mirror" (1961) was the catalyst for thinking about the various ways I could employ objects in this creative project. In the poem, Plath goes beyond the norm of using an object to delineate a specific space. Instead, the mirror (the object) is the speaker in the text. Plath's ability to create a narrative from an inanimate object validated (for me) the potentialities of objects in poetry.

I hope to have demonstrated some of the many ways that objects can function in poetry. My intention was to explore the relationship between people and objects and objects and space. I wanted the poems to express complex personalities through strange yet arbitrary encounters. I

wanted the poems to explore the profundity of narrative. In this reflective essay, my goal was to highlight the moments of incidental magic; the moments in which the writing produced questions. I hoped to deliberate on instances in which language needed to borrow from art, and when philosophy and social theory lent itself to my imagination.

Bibliography:

Amichai, Yehuda. *Selected Poems: Yehuda Amichai*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd, 1971.

Billie, Ayanda. *KwaNobuhle Overcast*. Deep South: Grahamstown, 2019.

Brown, Bill. "Thing Theory." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 28, no.1, 2001, pp.1–22.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344258>

Carson, Anne. *Autobiography of Red*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998. Print

.....*Men in the Off Hours*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001. Print

Galimberti, Gabriele. "Toy Stories." *Gabriele Galimberti*. 2014. Web. 01 March 2019.

<https://www.gabrielegalimberti.com>

Hatzimoysis, Anthony. "Sentimental Value." *The Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 53, no. 212, 2003, pp. 373–379. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9213.00318>

Heidegger, Martin. *What is a Thing?* Gateway Books, 1968.

MacGarry, Michael. "Michael MacGarry." *Zeit MOCOA*. 2019. Web. 03 October 2019.

<https://zeitmocaa.museum/artists/michael-macgarry/>

Plath, Sylvia. *The Collected Poems*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967. Print

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Raven." *Poetry Foundation*. 1990. Web. 03 October 2019.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48860/the-raven>

Whitman, Walt. "Song for the Open Road". *Poetry Foundation*. 1990. Web. 01 November 2019.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48859/song-of-the-open-road>

Welfing, Johannes F. "Nietzsche and the Knowledge of the Child at Play: On the Question of Metaphysics" Purdue University Press: *Comparative Literature and Culture*, vol. 1, no.3, 1999, n.pag. <http://www.thepress.purdue.edu>

Appendix: 1

Brother

He covers the moon with his left thumb

I don't have enough fingers for all the stars.

He holds my abalone ashtray against his ear

I can hear the waves.

He pulls his shoes out from underneath the bed

I don't think they can breathe.

He leaves his toy soldier in front of the door

It will keep us safe.

