

*In My Room* is a square book with each turn of the page opening to a double page spread of artwork and text, so imagine a fold down the middle of the following pages . . .

## Inside

### 1. Growing up

When I grow up I want to be – you'll never amount to anything. p.6

### 2. Loves me loves me not

Who am I? I didn't know, I just didn't like who I was and who I wasn't. p.14

### 3. Losing it

It was the painful sense of failure I couldn't bear, my inability to meet the expectations of others, or worse – my own. p.21

### 4. On the inside

Imagine entering a space that offers insulation from a world where you struggle to find a place. p.24

### 5. The voice

As I allowed myself to feel the anxiety, I accessed what was driving it – made a connection with the voices in my head. p.35

### 6. Dark spaces

All of this I escaped in alcohol, food and impulsiveness - they transported me far from my troubled mind. p.42

### 7. Dying for peace

Like a macabre meditation, the anticipation of an end to my suffering created moments of peace. p.51

### 8. Prisoner of secrets

Fear of what I'd always sought to forget and fear of the unknown were the barriers that prevented me from creating change – I was stuck between the two. p.55

### 9. Pain Magnet

Bullying initiated me into the world of emotional pain – relentless self loathing. p.60

### 10. Happily ever after

He told me how beautiful I was, how talented I was – how fat, ugly, dumb and stupid I was. p.66

### 11. Mirror, mirror

Counselling my love hate relationship with the window of pain. p.76

### 12. You just don't get it

When I was angry with someone we were at least connected by something. In the absence of anger there was often nothing. p.80

### 13. Rock-a-bye-baby

I held him as the warmth left his tiny body – he was beautiful, but he wasn't going to wake up. p.84

### 14. Buckets of tears

It took more strength and courage to connect with my pain than push it away. p.89

### 15. Space invaders

Anxiety, like bottled adrenalin, spread rapidly through my body – smashing against my fingertips, churning in the balls of my feet. p.92

### 16. Army of Ink

The inky black figures helped me untangle my experiences – put a face to my pain. p.97



EV (a young reader) says;  
“Amazing poetry, images and narrative are morphed together giving the story a soul.  
Hard truths are shouted, pictures exist in pictures if you can find them.”



little girls

Searching through what had  
been taken from me when I  
was growing up -I reunited  
with what I'd left behind . .

In a moment,  
a place,  
a day,  
I pick a little girl  
and she helps me  
understand  
who I am . . .

I write about how I feel  
and it helps me see.  
Draw from memories  
long forgotten and  
it reminds me of my place  
Embrace an image and it  
holds me when nothing  
else comes close.  
Explore with curious fingertips  
and my pain ceases  
to exist.



### Moral of the story

?

We do have choices.


*We do, we do, we do*

Although we can't change what's happened in the past, we can seek to understand how those experiences influence our lives now . . .

. . . choose whether or not we continue to be controlled by those experiences . . .

. . . choose to challenge our beliefs and thoughts and by doing so, change the way we feel and react and . . .

. . . live reasonably happily ever



Once upon a time there was a little girl who was bitten by a black dog, so she believed— black dogs were bad – they hurt you.

Once upon another time there was a different little girl who had a black dog as a pet so she believed—black dogs were really nice.

## black dog story

One day when the little girls were older and walking down the street together, a black dog appeared.

The little girl who'd been bitten by a black dog thought – 'Oh no! A black dog!' She felt scared and ran for her life.

The other little girl who had a black dog as a pet thought – 'Fantastic! A black dog!' She felt excited and ran ahead to give the dog a pat.

This was exactly the same situation but both little girls thought, felt and reacted completely differently . . . w h y ?

The two little girls had different past experiences with black dogs, so they'd formed different beliefs about them which affected the way they thought, felt and reacted to black dogs long after the incident was over.



## Come out and play

Sometimes the voice in my head won't stop. I'll help you control it.



### 'The voice' is ...

... the storyteller in my head, the **creator of self-doubt**, the instigator of fear. Dialogue echoing bullies and put downs I experienced growing up. Amidst this head noise I lose a sense of what thoughts are my own, in the present—what's history repeating itself. Writing down what's going on in my head brings clarity—enables me to expose the brutality and self-destructive nature of **unchecked thoughts**.

When it's on the page, its presence is caught, it's visible, tangible - challengeable.

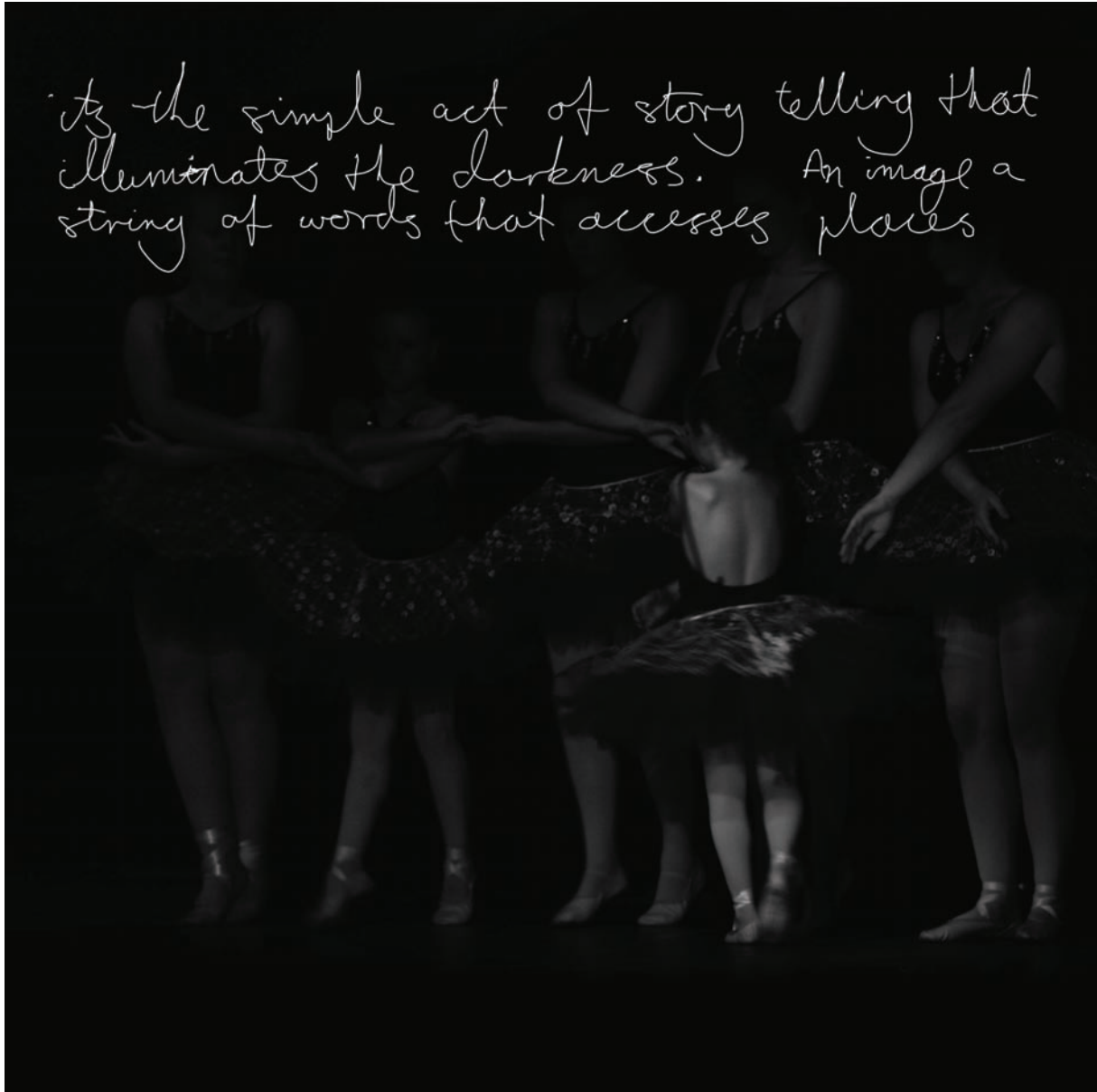
Allowing the words to just spill onto the page in whatever form, without the clog of correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, neatness—being right or wrong. Through this process I discovered that reality is what my mind **perceives or deceives** me to be the **truth**. Truth is what I find when I question reality, challenge the internal and external influences that create it.

My cue to **challenge the voice** is when I'm feeling or doing something I want to change.

I tune in to the voices, the stories in my head—question ... What's going on? Why am I doing this - feeling like this? What's the story? What can I do to change this? What choices do I have?

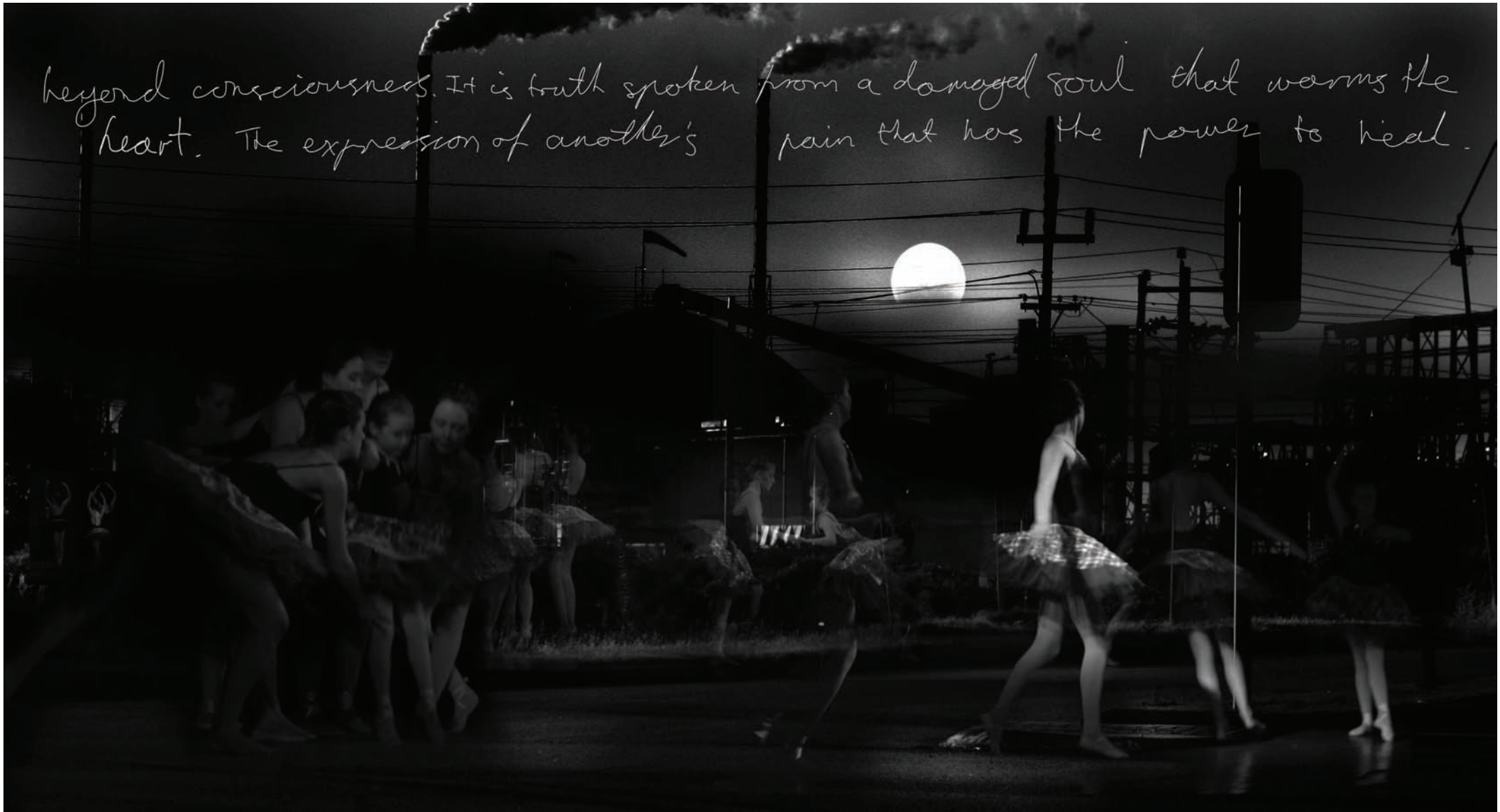
Through this process I **discovered** I am the source of my own misery, therefore also the source of my own happiness. An **empowering** revelation because it places my destiny back into my own hands.

It's the simple act of story telling that  
illuminates the darkness. An image a  
string of words that accesses places



This is the first page in the book  
which flows on to . . . .

beyond consciousness. It is truth spoken from a damaged soul that warms the heart. The expression of another's pain that has the power to heal.



# 12 You just don't get it

'The greatest pleasure in life is  
doing what people say you cannot do.'

Walter Bagehot

