

An E-Book extract from

Hidden Capacity

A poet's journey...



Frances Macaulay Forde © 2000

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The Return of Rainbows

Driving down Alexander,
(early morning rush hour)
lecture on documentary film.
Eager for knowledge, I noted
low, broad bands of colour
spanning the sky above Uni.
Ignoring the grey clouds,
I welcomed the return
of rainbows to my life.

Inspiration

Why do I now prefer writing in my bedroom when I have a perfectly good study - a space cleared for thought? I feel inspired to dream while I'm awake in here - not there.

Is it because I've just coated the room and everything in it a lilac pink? Is that the colour of my inspiration?

Or does it illicit forgotten memories from my childhood? The baby-pink bedroom of my spoiled youth, the dear faces of my parents, still missed after so many years. I've been through so many colours since then.

But perhaps I need to visit them once again, in my imagination.

Maybe this shade is my mood-connection to the past. I'm alone now, responsible for the world I live in and my painted walls.

Or could it be something to do with the womb - a protective colour - a safe haven for my dreams.

Help that I need in a harsh world, often too overwhelming for someone totally unprepared or never expecting to be the 'Bottom Line'.

A softness, which evokes feelings and comfort, which allows my mind to wander and explore, knowing I'm enclosed and private, separated from others who see too much.

Or is it the large mirror with its elaborate edge reflecting my thoughts surrounded by soft, gentle, allowing colour?

I look at myself in the frame and from the 'truth' of distance - an inner 'truth'? Is that what empowers my exposure? Is distance enabling me to write such secret, forgotten feelings in my journal?

My teenage bedroom was a similar pink - total colour - enshrining girlishness and innocence... protection, before adulthood and reality hit me.

Instinct

There's no place for love at this time in my life.
I envy those who achieve the balance of need.

Opportunities ignored in the interest of
safe-ness, flying toward my ability's

determined focus. Children gone in their own
living-dreams direction, their lessons learnt

and heeded. My job's complete. Is this my way
of avoiding the 'empty nest' syndrome?
Gathering materials for comfort as I settle to
old age?

Cynical Cinquains

1. She lay
prostrate. Waiting.
Will he stay a while when
their beating hearts have calmed down?
Never.

2. You glow
with love for me.
Accepting all I give,
never questioning if I love.
I don't.

3. Tears fall
like rivers of
pain. Rejection will hurt.
Just touch him and say goodbye to
your heart.

4. It glows.
The safe ribbon
of light, meandering
on toward home. But my path was
unlit.

Call Waiting

I killed you!
I took away your power to insult.
Never again will your strident, insistent beeping
intrude on intimacies between friends.

No. I struck you off.
I pressed the buttons that devoured you.
I ended your reign of terror.
Then Pauline rang
'A new baby? Wond....'
Beep - Beep! Beep - Beep!

You didn't die!
From happy jubilation
brain switches,
buttons pressed,
retreating "Call me back."

I lost the war.

I don't blame Pauline.
Rudeness is forgiven under pressure
from the mighty "I wonder who it is?"

Someday I'll explain
and continue my campaign
for courtesy.

I died a little.

Aren't I important too?

Website Walking

When keyboard-bashing signs and space,
I seldom see a familiar
face. Though it's possible now to
meet, see, hear, your dream (but not touch)

drift mouse o'er icons – double click.
Life-secrets revealed through Window
layers. Welcome to my website!
Cerebral sex, flirting on-line,

erases the risk of truth. Be
anyone for everyone on
the safe World Wide Web of deceit.
Construct a distant mirage for

the lonely, scared, ugly, who
can't fit the ideal, to compete.
Click here – Click where? Comment. E-mail.
Enter my world and 'know' me there!

A Found Memory

Dry. Smooth? Not smooth – rough. Light!
Weighs-nothing-wood. I move my finger
to slip over the top end and find smooth.
A clean cut. A harsh chopping off.

A crack has appeared in this fossil.
It's old - dirt-encrusted, making
the fissure stand out from the beige
of light and dark mottled skin.

This portion of dead branch has been
Displaced into my open, mature hand.
It is bowed, perhaps with the weight
of brilliant blossom in fertile times.

But with age and exile, the object
bears no hint of past profusion.
No scar of leaf or flower on this twig,
only grooves carved into dry, brittle skin.

Viewed from the polished top, a solid
golden core exposed betrays its strength.
Marred by a red blemish - perfect oval,
tree blood showing the pain of severance.

Where did you come from, severed arm?
I muse that once, you stood in proud
grandeur. High, looking down on sheep
grazing red/green grounds beneath

your ghostly mother. Her children
housing nests, hollows, where new life begins.
Waving in the sweeping wind. Bowing
to earth's elements. Dressing for season's ball.

Perhaps a young boy climbed your sturdy
limbs seeking adventure, chasing the sun
to knock a parrot's nest – not caring
about fragile eggs of new families.

You remind me of my mother. Strong
soft arms. Her honesty. Loveliness with
no frills – truth beauty. Lines of age,
welcomed, ambition nixed for proud duty.

The shiny core of subtle strength always
known. Intelligence when winds buffeted.
Fissures evidence damage – results of force
against will or wanting. Life wasn't always easy.

My mother has been gone for a long time now,
but hugging this piece of dry, light branch,
comforts me. Memories of easy protection.
Naturalness seasons of promise and
acceptance.

I remember her hands at the end. Dry, mottled,
beige and brown. Raised for swift relief, clutching
mine in death. Cold. Clever hands, now unable.
Heat - my warmth trying desperately to infuse life.

Lotto Life

It unites us,
 this dream to have choices.
Whether to work or laze,
 decide our futures
 instead of waiting for opportunity.

The universal language of need
- not greed.

We've lost control.
Caught up in the flow
 of magazine lifestyle.
The one we desire and reality...

 to walk through town
 not asking the price,
carrying the labels
which define our success,
 purchases we don't need.

It's universal
 the conviction that money
 will right all our wrongs

and make the world spin
in our direction.,

When we buy a ticket
 we've planted the seed.

The seed of our fantasies.

Doors Closing

How often has the door closed on
opportunity for me? And
how many times have I shut it?

'Well, open it again.' You say.
Not so easy when it's wedged
with prejudice, locked with lies

about your femininity,
jammed with judicial errors....
I am an opportunist and

I do truly believe as one
door closes, another - you know...
But sometimes, for my sanity

I take the easy way out. My
heart's the same. I'm not brave in
letting that door stand ajar, the

solid barrier protecting
my comfort zone... A jack-hammer
wouldn't be heard now! I'm deaf to

desire and numb to need. Wrap the
woollen blanket 'round my feelings,
keep me warm, lock the door, pocket

the key - work and love in secret.

My Car

Red used to be my favourite colour.
I'd just get Tinkerbelle (my 1983 Mitsubishi Colt)
cruising nicely at sixty kilometres an hour
then red.

I'd have to slow down.
Pump the brakes.
Change gears gingerly in case her clutch drops
out....

An old girl now, she needs TLC...
takes her time to build up speed,
then I see red. (Or orange.)

Bugger!

But, once she's there (sixty K.'s) she sings like a
bird.
I think it reminds her of her youth.
I've tried dressing her up (covering the rust).
The silvers don't match and I know she feels the
shame.

The petrol pump makes her feel better.

Once I insert that nozzle,
she almost smiles.
Her seat greets me tenderly
and we smoothly swing away,
high on fumes.

Yesterday,
a young man washed her windows.
She sparkled and purred.

Yes. Red used to be my favourite colour.
Now mottled shades of silver have loyal appeal!

Telephones Again.

Trendy shades that click to match.
Invisible.
Except for what looks like a hearing aid
turning us all into
business buskers barking at buildings.

And it's natural to turn
when someone says *'Hello'*.

You even get a choice now;
Number display.
Answer or reject.
Interruptions.
(Blasted *'Call Waiting'*.)
Choose to ignore the insistent beeping
and inevitably
others can't resist the burning question.

Favourite songs are ruined forever
by ringing interpretations.

Courtesy has gone out the window.

Lunch breaks deleted.
Performances interrupted.
Moving movie moments spoilt.

Availability questioned
by *"This mobile is turned off"*.

Cockatoo Chorus

"We'll meet in the eucalypts down by the lake.

Discussion is needed - you have to partake!"

Black clouds flew from the oval, park and golf club
to raucously weigh down trees out in the scrub.

*"Juicy larvae and insects prove harder to find
all the spraying and logging - ground being mined
has taken our homes, our gathering sites.*

Together, in numbers we'll fly up for our rights."

From once-sacred ground, now suburbs, they
flew.

From gum-tree nesting hollows, so precious and
few,

hundreds gathered early, in loud morning debate -
the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo parrot's fate.

Discussed at great length in the eucalypt trees
for young; less food, meant less ability to feed.

*"Stop clearing, spraying - playing with our lives!
If we die, what hope have you got to survive?"*

Rail Tales

parallel bars ride the sand
silver bullet steered by hand
expressed in kilometre speed
human flotsam to concrete greed

Priority Seating

Chivalry's not dead.
Young man offers an older
person his seat, but
not the young lady. He stands
silently, matching her sway.

Freeway Sprawl

relaxed - half asleep
compassionately floating past
overheated motors crawling
without air conditioned silence
forced to queue as road workers
widen a future path.

All Stops

I'm tired.

Two hours last night.
Three, the night before.
I want to

green flashes
puddles of gold
blue sky contrast
close my eyes.

The gentle sway
is soothing.

The grey shades
of my eyes
are heavy

as if someone
is pulling,
dragging
them down.

Flicker of sunlight.

Spring back up.

Oh, just a few moments

I'm so tired.

Sit up - deep breath.

The bright pains

skewer the tender

part behind my eyes,

forcing me to squint

and frown

(more wrinkles).

If I succumb,

they'll show

even more

Neck is waving,

chin sinks into throat.

Tongue fixed to roof

of mouth.

Relaxed.

Still

except for the sway

- gentle -

then slight bumps.

A forward push and

I'm saved.

- nearly folded.

How embarrassing!

Sit up - deep breath.

Matchsticks - I need

matchsticks!

(How come everyone

uses lighters these days?)

Drooping

leaning

closing

pulling to

'PERTH STATION'.

The Merchant Coffee Shop

Murray Street teems
with alternative apparel
fascinating glimpses

how others communicate
with the unknown
it's easy to pick out

content and comfortable
angry or work-focussed
corporate black

and seasonal grey
jar with orange hair
and platform-ed extremities

Hands Free Cancer

How stupid do you feel
standing there, talking to yourself?

Immaculately dressed,
the epitome of elegance.

Power stance with eyes distant,
he breathes money!

How stupid does he look emphasizing
his point to the argumentative air?

A noble prize, Kim

'Sunshine Policy'.
The flower has finally
blossomed in peace.

London Court Café

what are you thinking
where are you looking
not at me
why
the times
insecure
scared
private
secrets held
hands grasp bags
pat wallets
life blood exists
reassurance

woman in track-pants
Yakka green
hunt food
nylon jackets
eat and walk
forget manners
quickly - no time
lighter
hidden puffs
blurred singing

sadness
plastic rustles
stumble
life wins the battle
shame bottle

executive black
cash freedom
uniform success
yellow jewellery
sustained work

blood money
comfortable shoes
mushy cardies
link arms
coats in sunshine
meander
disregard fashion
first eye contact

traditional warmth
travelling through life
together
relaxed touch

look into my eyes
I exist
I breathe
friendship
I'm secure
the day is shining
I give
look at me
I'm whole
I'm here.

Where are you going?

Facing West – Going North

Two trains pull away from Perth Station at once.
We run parallel. Will we collide?
The other train passengers are watching.
We slow. They race. They rise. We fall into
darkness.
High-pitched scream as wheels force attachment.

Comparative silence.
We pick up speed. Whoosh. Whoosh.
Narrowly passed concrete pylons of bridge over.
Inverted V's painted flat white.
Rising rails of pathway to higher crossings.
Speeding, trees animate - cars blur.

A chuckle; *"Sweet baby – very happy."*
Bump, jump, squeak. Slight screech increasing.
Brakes take hold, grip with purpose.
(This silver bullet will take some stopping!)
Sway towards the left - jerk back. Stop.
"Doors closing." Whir. Electronic hum.
Sleepy, warm, still. Halfway home. Good!

Painted numbers 4449333. Osborn Park.
Hutton Street exit. Stirling. *"Train stops all*

stations."
Clunk. Switch rails. Brakes slow. Stand ready.
Doors open.
Escalator up. All face the same way.
Except a young man, eyeing the girl following.
Motionless, holding the rail, rising up effortlessly.

Trains pass under the bridge at the same time.
Pick up speed. Trees, orange roofs.
All the same suburbia. All the same.
Westland Carpets. Concept Exhibitions.
Bridge. Trees mask industry. Rooflines change.
A single date palm rises.

Stone walls. Red metal escalator. Warwick.
Native shrubs, yellow sand. Manicured gardens,
quiet streets.
White flowers, yellow bushes. Dots of purple
Geraldton wax.
"Next station: Whitfords." Bridge. Multi-coloured
flora.
Nearly home. Stand ready, press button.
Watch road rise to the bridge, and Bunnings.

'Next station, Edgewater.' Home.

Exploring Possibilities...

Memories,
cling-film wrapped
fresh
and clean for whenever.
Weighted
with life's necessities,
baggage
that I cannot leave behind.
Snap on my seat belt (I'm not a good traveller)
and ask the flight attendant “ *When do
we arrive?*”

Hidden Capacity *April 1974*

*Yesterday, we met.
For the first time,
we actually spoke to each other.
How long have we been together?*

*And yet, yesterday,
was the first time we showed
what we might be, deep down inside.
If you had only let me see.
Why all the intrigue – why the mystery?
My every-second thought is yours.
Let yourself trust in me, now and then.*

*It's too hard not to let feelings go below,
Under the mountainous ice-cap
that only shows a very small part of itself.*

*Do you think you could find it
in your heart, to love me? Just a little?
Show a third of your hidden capacity...*

*We are fractions of a second in Eternity.
You and I aren't important*

*Except to ourselves.
Let life be.
Let love be yours and mine.
Here and now.*

*Don't worry about how hard you fall,
I'm already there.
I don't even know, because
You hide things so well,
whether you care...*

In Australia... No. 1. - November 1974

*You give all you have and take nothing.
Because you love so much, you are secure.
Certain that all your feelings must be returned.
You never suspect that one day, love will leave.
One day you turn around and you are alone.
Hollow, empty, an echoing shell, where love was...*

Screenplay

How will this story end?
My script is now written
But you're the Director...

Eros strikes again!

Valentine's Day. You
pierced me with the past.
Forced me to recall
feelings suppressed...
and reminded me
of my ability to love...

Blue Moon

The wavering moon
Coaxes lines of poetry
From an uncertain heart

My Knight

in the afternoon of my life
settled
content and comfortable
in my aloneness

you question me!

you destroy
my strong defences
obliterate
my sense and reason
to let you in

for my heart
bow wave of confusion
tense terror times
of doubt and fear

unknown
risk everything
my ordered now
the colours of my life

changing to a
different hue

you terrify me
wanting needing
arms that enclose
a broken heart

Senses...

hear

tender words
questions answers
your current reality

see

furtive glance
visual dance
clever hands and fingers

touch

tentative press
to shy flesh
still clothed in other loves

smell

breathe you in
where've you been
through all my loves and life

In Australia.... No. 2 - July 1974

*I can hear the sea outside my window
and the beat of the waves against the sand.*

*The glimpse of your face in the shadows,
tears down my cheek, splashing on my hand.*

*My paper's all covered with lines that I write
trying to express what countless poets have said..*

*To put into different words how I fight the emptiness
of my room and the loneliness ahead.*

*I'm making my own unhappiness as punishment
for leaving you because I was proud*

*Waiting for a letter you may have sent,
trying to be happy with what surrounds.*

*There's nothing that means very much to me.
What I want I can't have – I did it to myself.*

*You're not to blame because you couldn't see
how serious all the little things were, that I felt, to me.*

Trust Cinquains

1. I have
taken your words
folded both hands over
then held them tightly to my heart
Have you?
2. Don't
let me drown
in a cruel sea without
that life raft of honesty.
Promise?

Coots

Lakeside, I watch
the Coots bouncing
on the top of the water.

They throw their heads
with intention and abandon.
Plunging - immersing themselves

I want to bounce.
Immerse myself.
Plunge into you....

The Vampire

I am finely tuned to you still
all my senses hungry - insatiable
starving for your loving words

more of your gentle laughter
smiles that resonate inside and out
zinging hot sensation through my veins

like a vampire, I want to devour you
suck your goodness into my depths
replenish my soul with your essence.

Shear Love

You sever my reason,
shape my feelings with your
steely blades of perception.

You use the twin edges
of measured analysis
and practical application,

to rotate on my axis of impatience,

defining our new existence
with that swinging efficiency
of open – closed action.

You manipulate me
with metal precision,
held in a warm moulded grip.

My paper reality
waiting for words
that define an Us.

Computer Messenger...

Banter that backfired because
literal interpretations got lost
in considered connotations,
(re-read a thousand times)
of what went way-back-when...

Juxtaposition of judgements.
Hastily harnessed how-comes?
Stopping me still, seriously!
Making me question us both.

My passionate banshee tears
initiated by tactile responses
to words type-tapped carefully.
Sometimes in casual jest
to test my reactions?

Is it natural to anticipate
disaster - dismissal and defend?
Not normally for me – I search
for more of your positive essence,
confirmation of my impressions.

I want you – all of you – now!
Every nuance of normality
shared secretly, sensually...
But other stuff too – thoughts,
reasons, why you do what you do...

I can't 'see' the whole of you
touch your skin - breath you in.
Sense your hands on my breasts
holding me, stroking me softly.
I want – I need – I crave to.

Insecurity inserts itself
firmly forcing doubt-feelings
to well and grow without witness,
until you answer; you calm; you claim,

cover my heart and soul with caring.
Linger in my love, lay there
until we're both sweetly exhausted
by this power, this perpetual passion

Beach Babe

rippled by rolling heart-waves,
inexorably advancing -
constantly,
consistently -
toward our Us.

This resurgence,
pounding our shifting shores,
destroying sandy barriers...

A rapid relentless tide,
washing,
wiping
our beaches clean
to start anew....

Far too strong and
absolutely,
positively,
undeniably
irresistible.

I Know You

I know you.
We have loved before.
We have explored
each other's landscapes
then visited different shores.

Committed Skin

I crave committed skin

Pale, pink tones of a fragile heart.

Silky strands that tantalise.

A forest of words - thoughts,
forcing careful continuation
of forward movement.

Actions.

Soft, subtle reassurances
given under pressure,
refusing to provide more
until...

Making absolutely sure
when the two surfaces
eventually meet -

rub together...

no other skin will suit.

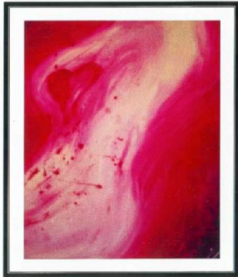
*Thanks for reading all the way to the end
of this sample of poems from my book...*

Frances

Frances Macaulay Forde ~ Hidden Capacity ~ a poet's journey...

Hidden Capacity

A poet's journey...



Frances Macaulay Forde