

**The Swallows** Performance script excerpt  
*Sandra Fiona Long*

1:

Dripping eye of invention  
flap of wings  
Squawking spill of life  
X meets Y comes I  
Dividing then dividing inside hardening membrane  
Laid into a cup of hard mud and grass  
12 days unfurling under warmth  
which comes and goes but mostly stays  
mostly warm, I form  
soft bone into wing  
soft cartilage into beak  
expanding like the universe I am.  
We all are that universe.  
expanding  
till so compressed  
the slightest movement cracks  
all previous notions.

Influx of air.

With no resistance  
I stretch  
this universe open  
broken shell all around  
naked skin against fledgling skin  
first vibration of vocal folds  
*chit chit chit*  
eyes closed  
*chit chit chit*  
wriggling under soft under feathers  
warmth  
baring down.

*Chit chit chit*

Woooooosh  
leaves waving all around me

*Chatter Chatter Chatter*

the tinkle of running water below.

*Chatter chatter chitter*

Children laughing, splashing, chattering.

*Chit chit chit*

Hopping rock to rock across the rushing waters of Innocence Creek

*Chatter chatter chatter chatter CRACK*

And I am that child  
feet red from the tinkling cold water  
smooth river stones massaging the soles of my bare feet  
never a doubt  
I can expand or collapse the universe.

I know exactly where to step  
which rock is stable  
which to avoid  
and which to leap over.

I've done this how many times?

*Chatter chatter chatter*

I crouch to inspect a dragonfly resting on river mint

*Interlinking veins spatially arranged*

First vibration of vocal folds chittering above.  
Saliva ingested worm slipping from parent beaks  
down tiny outstretched throats

I step into the mud  
Feel it ooz between my toes  
squelch, squelch, squelch  
It's a cacophony; rushing water, trees waving  
Mud- squelch, squelch, squelch

I climb up the rock face  
37, 38, 39, 40  
and crawl out onto the overhang.  
I can see the deepest part of Innocence Creek!  
Bending, turning, snaking out it's carved path towards infinity.

*3.145568473847*

Look, there's fish! Little schools of fish darting!  
Yabbies wallowing in the mud.  
Lizards sunbaking  
river rats swimming  
everywhere  
I hear birds singing...

*6.1803398875*

Sprouting wings  
to pass through space and time  
free from polarity  
illusion reality

*3.145568473847*

A sequence of moments unfolding in the cacophony  
The next crack shining from the darkness  
although I can't see it yet.

*6.1803398875*

That's the way it used to feel  
when I was a child  
playing in Innocence Creek

Before they built the toll road over it.

*Vroooooooooom Vroooooooooooooooooom*

2:

Even then, most of the forest where I lived on the outskirts of the city had already become showrooms, shopping strips and sprawling housing estates.

*Vroooooooooom Vroooooooooooooooooom*

Stolen land.

Though at the time I didn't fully grasp it.

*Vroooooooooom Vroooooooooooooooooom*

Everything was just normal.

Even my mother

sitting days and days in her chair

not moving.

Yorkshire Rose.

Perhaps trying to remember

the original crack of the Universe.

Baby swallow circling, circling above her head.

Standing before her in the darkened room

just home from Innocence Creek

mud between my toes and all over my feet

silently watching the baby swallow dip and fall

above her curls.

*Vroooooooooom Vroooooooooooooooooom*

Suddenly she stirred.

What are you doing bringing muddy feet into the house?

Slap.

And the swallow faded from existence.

*Vrooom Vrooom Vroooooooooooooom*

3:

When I travel along Memory toll road  
Innocence Creek  
obediently follows in pipes deep below  
crossing from the other side of town  
to where I live now  
in this densely populated urban area.

I live in a unit. Opposite the petrol station.  
1/45 Acceptance St.  
I have Tristen in 2 next door to me.  
Annaliese on the other side of him in 3.  
We rarely speak at 45 Acceptance St.

But we are lucky we have Honesty Lake Park  
just a 5.000 minute walk away.  
I walk here every day

*Pacific Black Duck*  
*Common Myna*  
*Australasian Swamphen*

On both sides of the path  
noisy minors on guard in branches  
aim their beaks towards my scalp and swoop  
wings clicking over my hair.

*Silver Gull*  
*Australian White Ibis*  
*Rainbow Lorikeet*

Distant and elusive  
little clues beckon.  
The constant yearning  
and lately my shoulder blades have been hurting.  
Almost like they want to sprout wings.

Honesty Lake was made by damming Honesty Creek  
which feeds the lake at the far northern tip.

*Long-billed Corella*  
*Great Cormorant*  
*Australasian Swamphen*

Once settlers used to take a horse and cart  
out from the city to swim  
in Honesty Lake.  
Wouldn't do that now.  
Plastic bags, bottles, motor oil, cat faeces  
everything  
washes along gutters  
into the Honesty Creek catchment  
after a heavy rain.

But right now, it's quite calm.

*Fairy Martin*  
*Pale-faced Heron*  
*Galah*  
*Nankeen Kestrel*

The Honesty Creek catchment and the Innocence Creek catchment interlink  
through a network  
of tributaries, concrete drains and underground pipes  
eventually funnelling their waters into the great Devotion River  
snaking out it's carved path  
past the city  
the docks  
to merge with the ocean

So Honestly lake park is connected through pipes to my childhood