

**Jane Rawson's opening speech for *Day Dreamer / Night Thinker* at Megalo Print Studio 12 July 2023.**

I'm Jane Rawson and I write books. Thank you so much for coming tonight and thank you to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people who have cared for this country where we meet since time immemorial. I acknowledge your elders past and present and hope that we are at least beginning to listen to and learn from you.

This moment feels like a time of sadness. Maybe it's just because I'm getting old and my parents are getting old but it does seem like more than that. There is a feeling in the air of grieving for something we've lost or something we feel on the brink of losing. Maybe it's nature, or democracy, or maybe it's just the buildings we grew up with or maybe it's the idea of a future. Everywhere, it feels as though we are getting ready to abandon this place, filling our memory suitcases with all the moments we can't bear to leave behind. Though I'm not sure where we're headed. Mars? Extinction?

It's a tragic feeling, but it's also an exquisite feeling, that, as Saskia says, we are all ephemera, this is all ephemera. Its beauty is in its fragility. This beautiful planet; this beautiful life. The uniquely beautiful shape of one particular person loving another particular person, a character all of its own that grows to fill in the space between them. What happens to that negative space when one person goes: when the edge loses its definition. To lose a person is to lose a whole world.

When we love people we collect things because we have to. What else can we do? We cannot hold onto what we most want to hold onto. We can only go back over and over and over the remnants of a life. When we lose someone, all we have are trinkets; we will never again be surprised.

What Saskia has shown us is that the end is not the end. The remembering makes new beauty. The shape of love between her and her Nan continues to grow, even though her Nan's body is gone. The trinkets take on new forms, become surprises. We can't have the thing we lost but we can make new things. We can always make new things. As Caren Florance says in her exhibition essay, the new things you see here are made as 'an exquisite expression of love and care and respect'.

I have been friends with Saskia for 36 years. We are both getting old. We are both just starting out. We are both trying to make new things from the things that we have lost. I'm so happy to be here with her today and to see this beautiful work. Thank you all for coming to the opening of *Day Dreamer Night Thinker* – I declare it launched!