

from time

to time

I wake

in SLEEP



From time to time,  
I wake in sleep.

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WTZTAL001





They do not deceive,  
they do not distort or  
disguise...

They are invariably  
seeking to express  
something that the Ego  
does not know and  
does not understand.

- Carl Jung

### Introduction

When delving into the dimension of dreaming, I recommend proceeding with caution. The one who seeks rationality will be driven mad by the quest for something that cannot exist, and yet, this does not mean that one dispenses with reality.

My approach to this body of work was not necessarily to understand or interpret the dreams, the way psychoanalysts might have, but rather to investigate the dual nature of their reality and unreality.

To do this, I needed a record of my dreams.

feeling back skin  
so that I can hide.  
I could see into the  
future. Sometimes blood  
would spill out of the  
future and stain the  
butter. Most stores I  
liked had closed.

- An excerpt from  
my dream journal

### Dream Journaling

When I began keeping a dream journal, I felt I had unlocked a hidden reality outside of reach.

The more diligently I recorded my dreams, the more this other world became a figure on my periphery that slunk away when I turned to take a closer look. I was capturing the vestiges of my dreams. The remnants of these dreams are like the stain of light behind your eyelids after you have looked too long at the sun.

Something was lost in the process of the dreams crossing over to reality. I came to visualise a membrane of some sort that separated my dreams from my reality and was semi-permeable. If dreams could cross this threshold, undergoing a transformation process, reality must cross over in the reverse direction.





I can't tell you.  
Because it's real.

- An Excerpt from my  
dream journal.

### Translating Unreality

Does the transformation when crossing this membrane alter the validity of the content and render it unreal? What is real and unreal when we speak of dreams?

What causes something to be real? Does reality rely on the physical presence and existence of something? Of course not. Nobody denies the existence of emotions. Emotions are unseen and have no physical presence in themselves. So what causes them to be real? What consigns dreams to the world of illusion and imagination?

Did my dreams need to occupy physical space to become a reality? If human engagement and response were required to firmly apply the distinction of reality, I intended to create a dreamscape that people could enter. If it could not simply exist as a reality to me alone, then I would make it a reality for others.







It was challenging to articulate my dreams. Dreams are irrational, yet I felt compelled to rationalise their existence in the physical world. Sketching in my dream journal helped break the dependence on rationality. I became absorbed by ensuring the physical reality of my dreams. This meant, for a time, I had set aside the converse of my theory. How does one affect unreality? Where do dreams come from? If they are not real, how do they exist?

Dreams are made up of fragments of our daily lives and context, and then somehow, from seemingly unconnected pieces of information, our mind creates the dream. The reality is distorted into unreality.



What does it matter  
whether you call it  
real or dreams.

It's all one isn't it?

- The Lathe of Heaven  
by Ursula K. Le Guin.

He was aware that in  
relegating a major  
portion of the only  
reality, the only  
existence, that he  
in fact did have,  
he was running the  
same risk the insane  
mind runs: the loss  
of the sense of free  
will.

- The Lathe of Heaven  
by Ursula K. Le Guin



Peeling

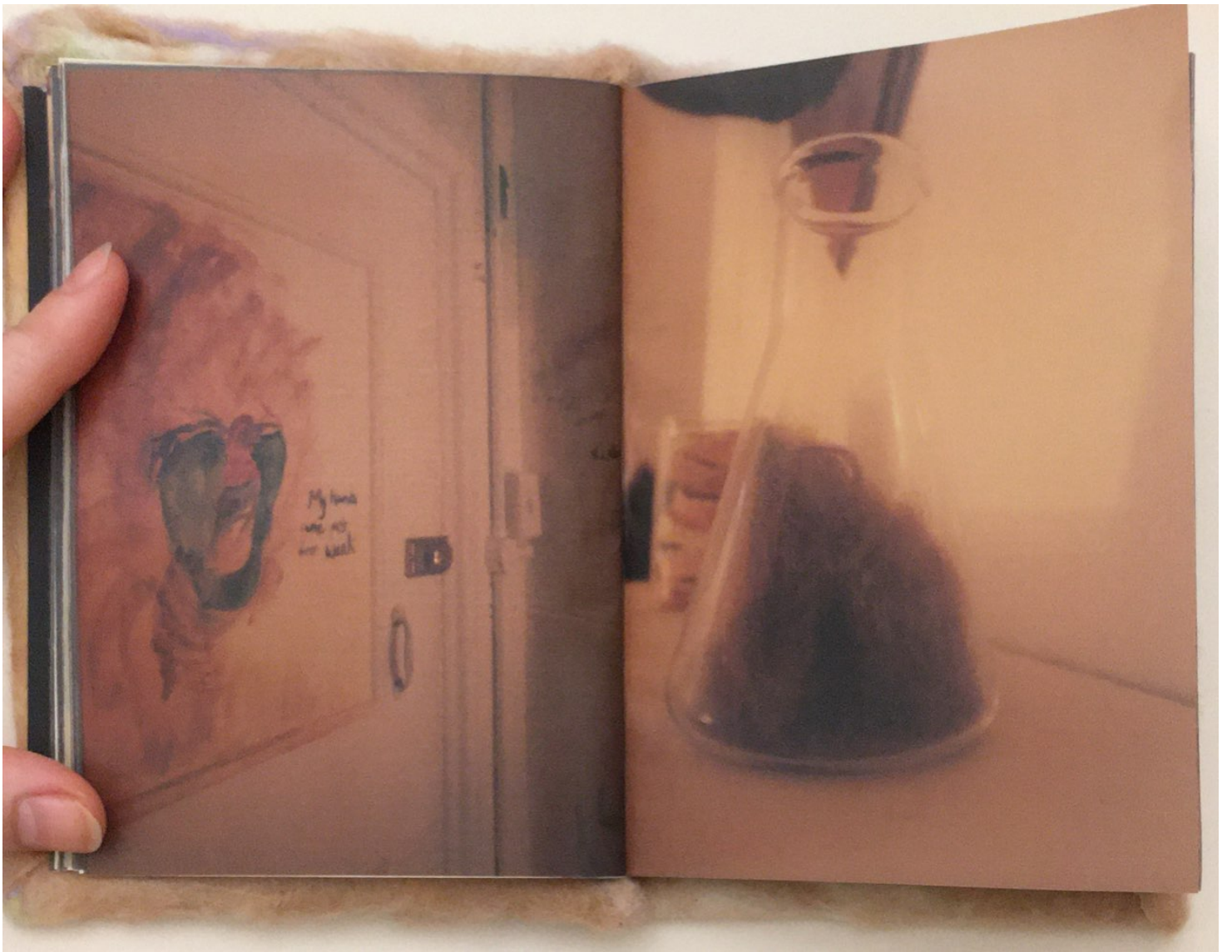
so I can

wide.

50

led out of

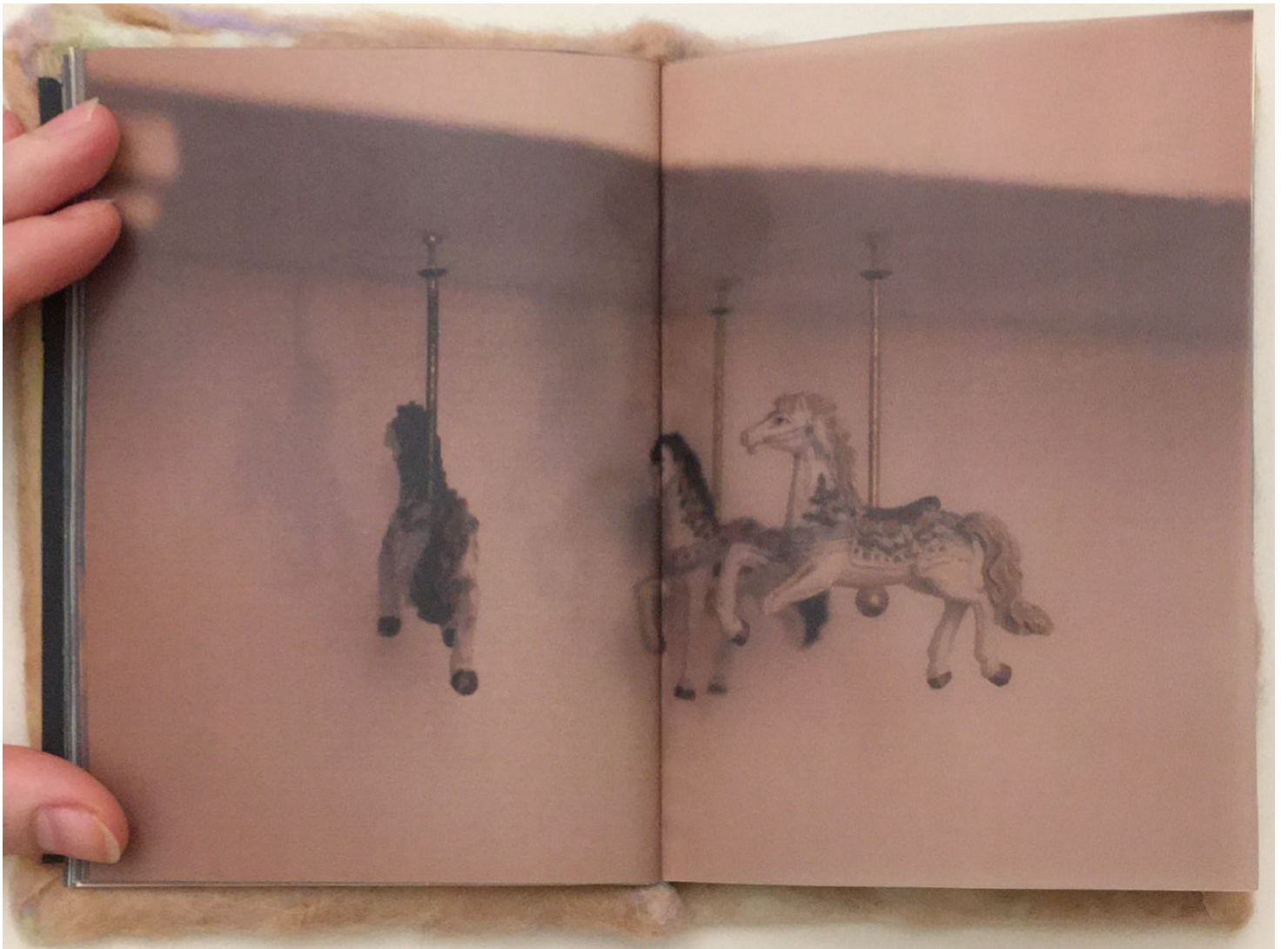
future











## Threat Simulation Theory

Somewhere around the halfway mark of my project, I experienced the trauma of being assaulted at gunpoint. I had experienced trauma at multiple junctures of my life and had already been diagnosed with PTSD. However, those wounds were old and scarred, whereas the fresh hell that plagued me had a distinct advantage over my subconscious. I was keeping a record of my dreams.

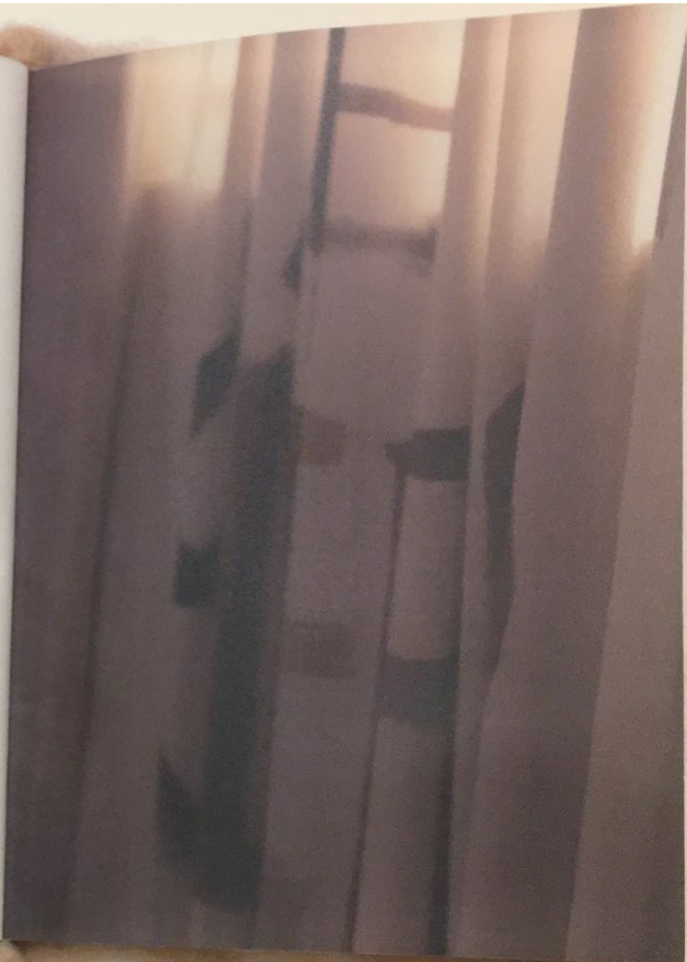
I only once dreamt of the assault precisely as it occurred. However, my dreams were undeniably affected. They were characterised by violence, death and helplessness. Revonsuo hypothesises that these dreams have an adaptive function. This hypothesis is termed the Threat Simulation Theory. The emotions and memories of that traumatic event were pulled across the membrane into my dreams.

“Dreams are systematically biased towards overrepresenting negative and threatening elements; that most recurrent dreams and nightmares are simulations of primitive dangers (pursuits, fights, attacks); that real threatening events encountered during waking invariably modulate subsequent dream content; post-traumatic nightmares simulate past threats over and over again, even for years after the original trauma was experienced” (Revonsuo, 2000).

The emotions and memories of that traumatic event were pulled across the membrane into my dreams. My dreams were characterised by striving and failing, by aggression and self-defence.

I am living  
in a nightmare  
from which,  
from time to time,  
I wake in sleep.

- The Lathe of Heaven  
by Ursula K. Le Guin





It's higher than the  
others. And so pink.  
I mustn't forget the  
change for the Laundry.  
Something should have  
been kept in the  
secret hatch but  
the map kept changing.

- An excerpt from my  
dream journal prior to  
my assault

The bite marks  
in the flesh petrified.

They will  
never fade away.

- An excerpt from  
my dream journal  
after the assault



THE FLESH  
WAS ROTTING  
ROTTING, PUTRIFYING  
PETRIFYING, A PUTRIFYING FLESH

I pick up the baby  
and I run. I run so  
hard, but I know  
she is dead.

I know I am too  
late.

- An excerpt from  
my dream journal

In several dreams, I found myself with a weapon in hand, Yet, always my weapon would fail me. My gun would be plastic. My baton would turn into woven palm leaves. A hosepipe would be an ineffective garrot. This frightened me. I am not a violent person by nature, yet I was given a weapon in every dream and used it. My dream self became aggressive and violent, and I could not stop it. The remnants of reality twisted and formed these dreams.

The symbol of innocence and vulnerability, a baby, is manipulated and becomes the reason for unease. Did I see my own vulnerability as the cause of my distress? Is this why I dream of dying babies that I cannot save?



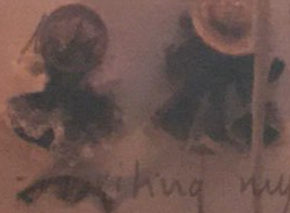


I knew when I saw  
the label "6" on her  
small dress that  
she had been  
taken. I was too  
late.

- writing my dream  
from memory.



I knew when I saw  
the label "6" on her  
small dress that  
she had been  
taken. I was too



bringing my dream  
from memory

I saw the  
number 6  
on the small  
dresses and  
a rupture opened  
my chest.

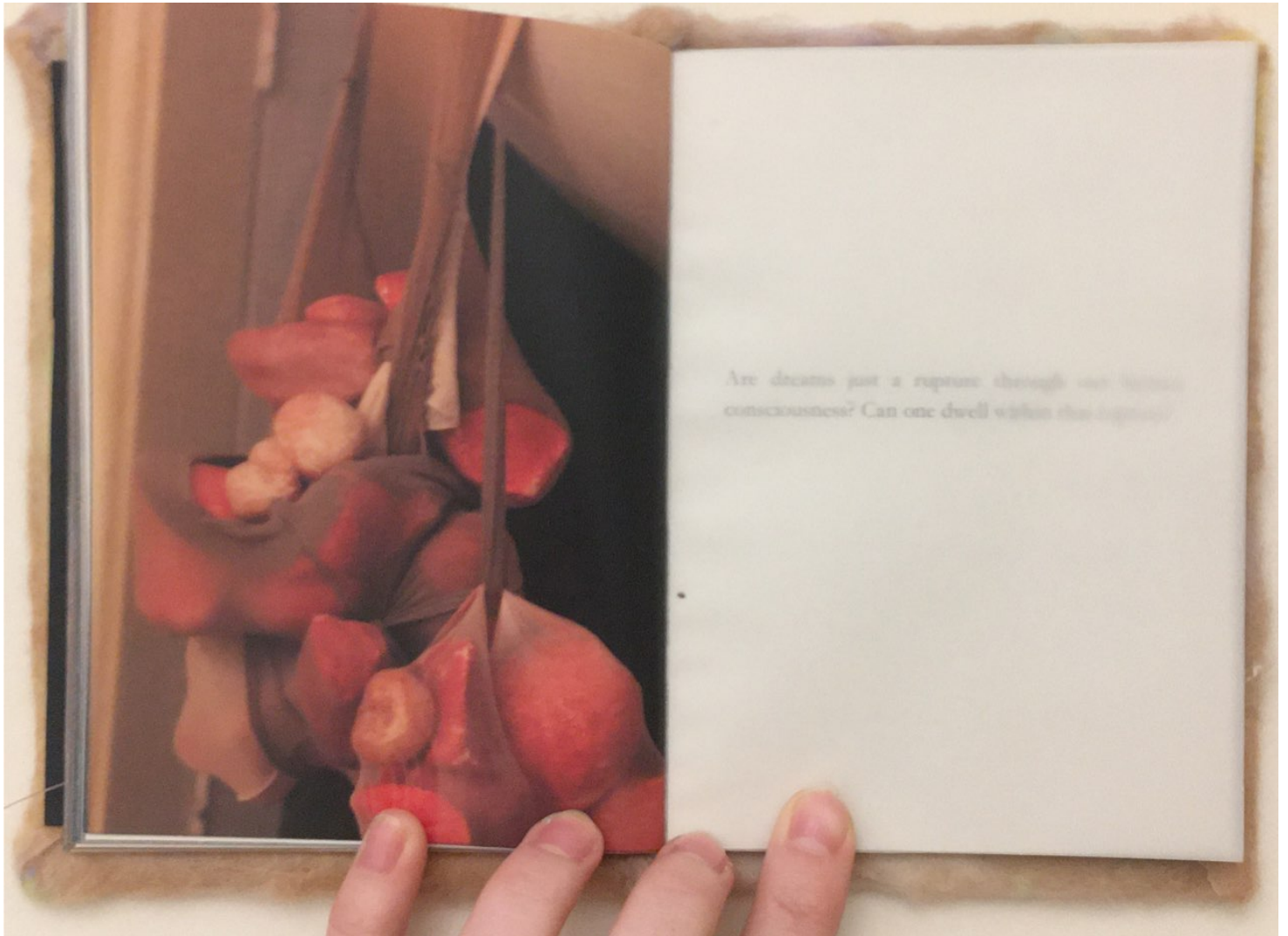


This life lacked  
realness; it was  
hollow; the dream,  
creating where  
there was no  
necessity to create,  
had ~~work~~ thin  
and sleazy. If this  
was being, perhaps  
the void was better.  
He would accept the  
monsters and the memories  
beyond reason.

- The Lathe of Heaven  
by Ursula K. Le Guin



Do I render them  
unreal as a way  
to protect myself  
from my pain and fear?



Are dreams just a rapture through our limited  
consciousness? Can one dwell within that rapture?



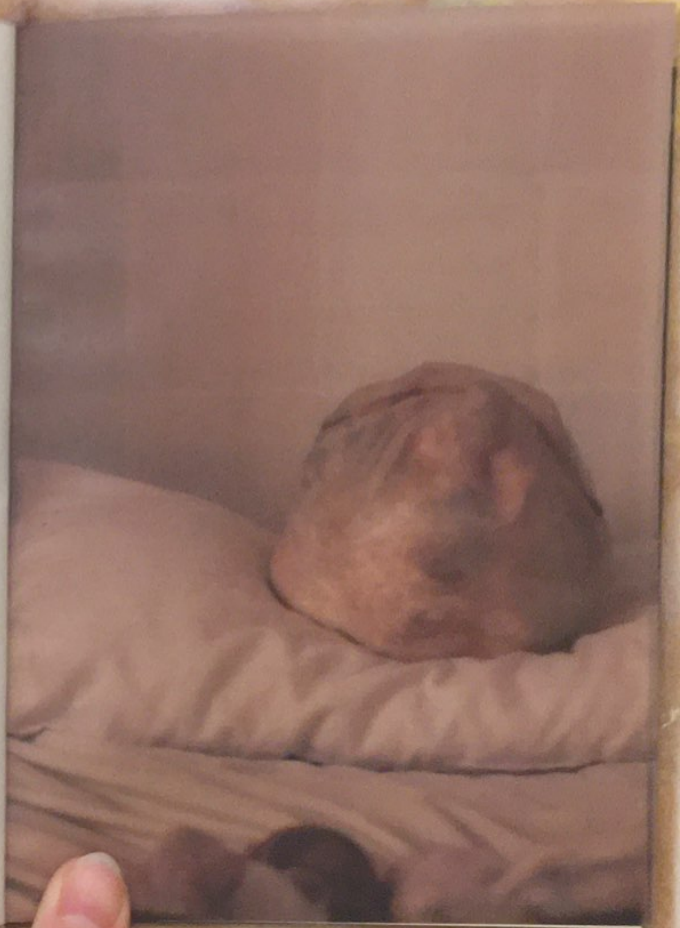


"But I can't choose my  
dreams. Nobody can"  
she sagged. "I forgot.

As soon as I accept  
this thing as real,  
I keep thinking it's  
something you can  
control. But you can't.  
You just do it."

"I don't do anything," Orr  
said morosely. "I never  
have done anything.  
I just dream. And  
then it is.

"The Lathe of Heaven  
by Ursula K. Le Guin



The creative and  
therapeutic resources  
of the brain -  
whether waking or  
sleeping or dreaming -  
are practically infinite.

If we can just find  
the keys to all the  
locks. The power of  
dreaming alone is  
quite undreamt of!

- The Lathe of Heaven  
by Ursula K. Le Guin.

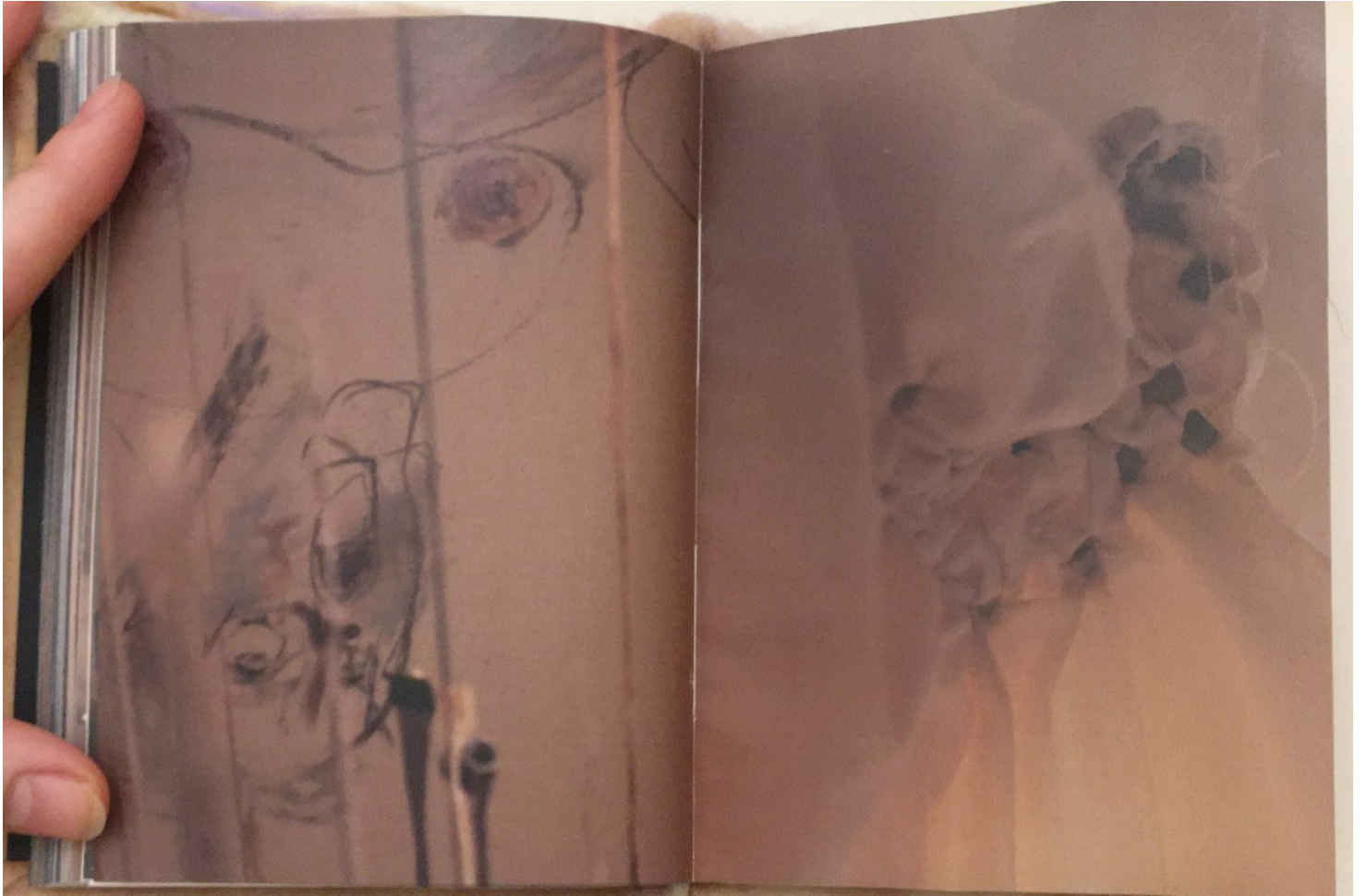
### Crossings in Mist

The term "crossings in mist" from Ursula K. Le Guin's Novel, *The Lathe of Heaven* put a name to the membrane between wakefulness and dreaming. That which comes out of the mist and recedes into it undergoes a transformation. The mist is the no-mans-land between our conscious and unconscious minds where both reality and unreality collapse into one another. It is a space of potential. My work manifests there, in the mist, and is meant to be met there. When people step into the mist, there they can exist and not exist at the same time. There they are both a dream and a reality. There is meaning, and they are rendered meaningless.

There is much unknown about the nature and purpose of dreams. If they belong in the realm of reality or not is not quite so easily answered. However, through my installation I hope to cultivate that space of potential, where all is simultaneously real and unreal for a time







you have to  
make art that  
means something.  
But now the child  
is dead.

- An excerpt from my  
dream journal







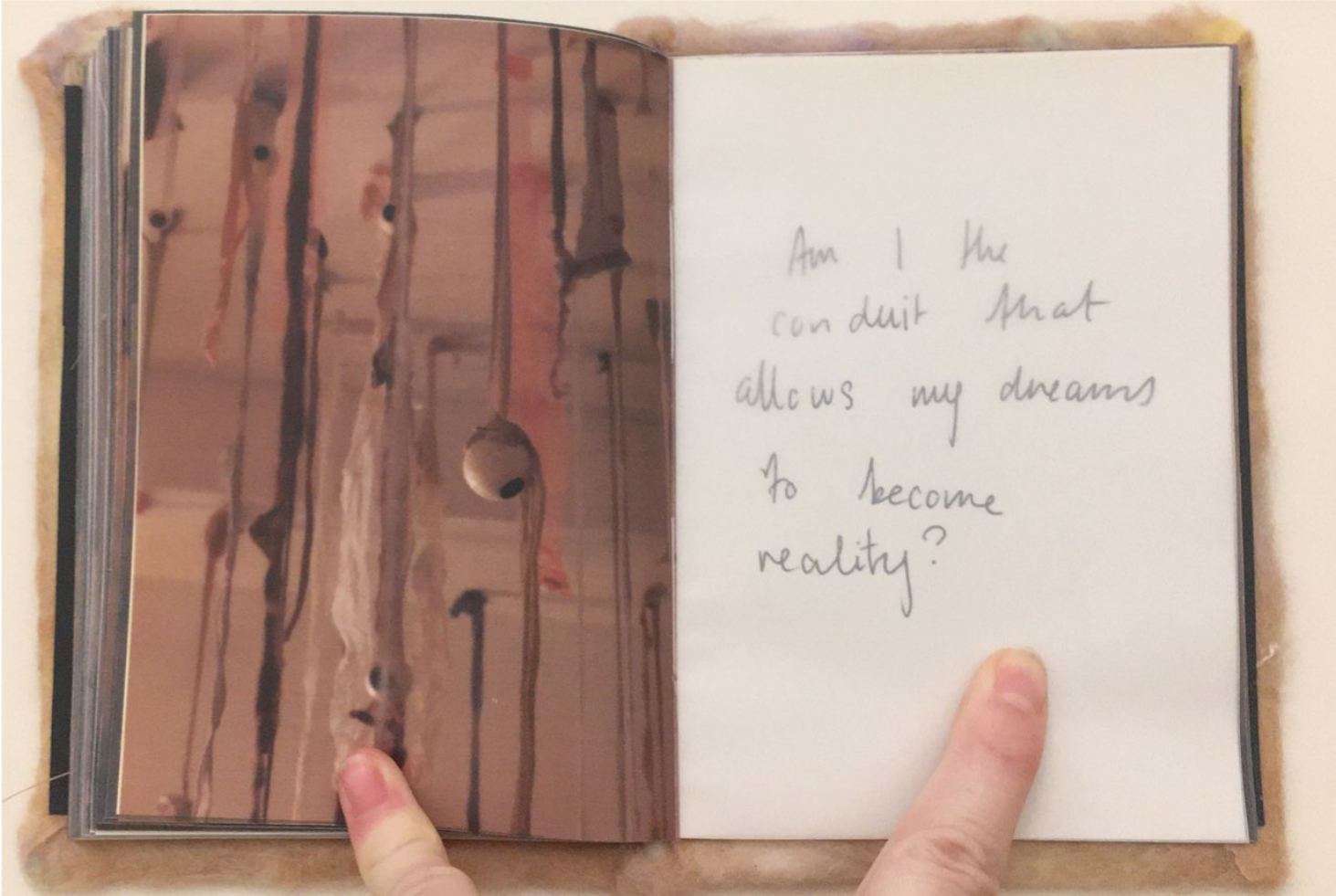




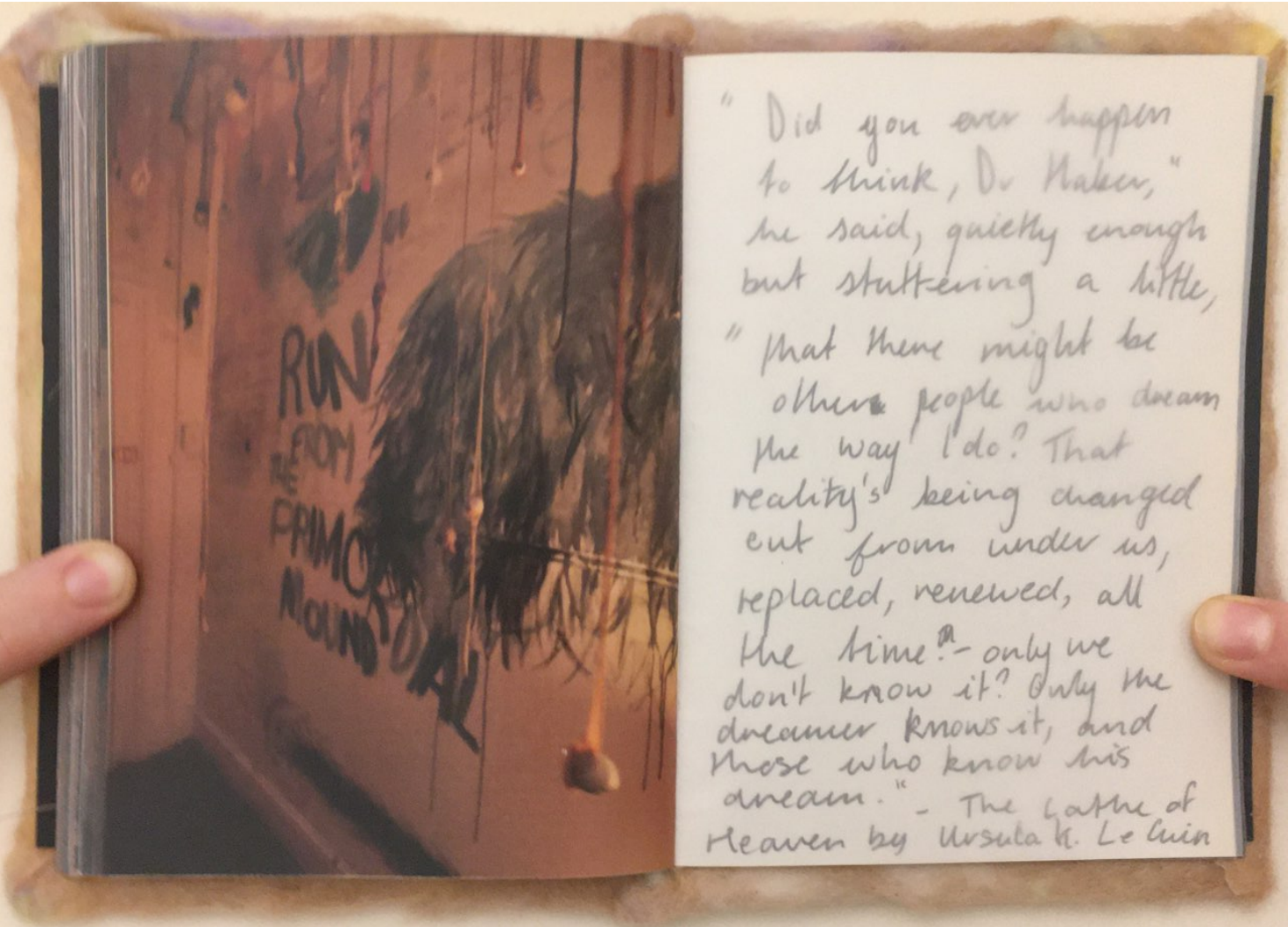








Am I the  
conduit that  
allows my dreams  
to become  
reality?



"Did you ever happen to think, Dr. Haker," he said, quietly enough but stuttering a little, "that there might be other people who dream the way I do? That reality's being changed out from under us, replaced, renewed, all the time? - only we don't know it? Only the dreamer knows it, and those who know his dream." - The Lathe of Heaven by Ursula K. Le Guin





### Acknowledgements

To my God who sees me— who sees my dreams and my waking: Thank you for being with me in the mist.

To my parents who sacrificed so much to give me this opportunity: I am so grateful for your love and endless support.

To my darling Ben: Without you I'd have fallen apart ages ago.

To my supervisor, Johann Van Der Schijff: Thank you for all the countless hours spent in discussion. I promise we can discuss your art next.

To Lindsay: Your friendship and support means the world to me.

To my campus friends and confidants: Thank you. Lunch at 12?



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