

MEMORIES and SECRETS.

By Maggie Reeve, Artist member, SSA.

(Chance meetings and everyday observations lead to stories, in words and painted marks.)

It's hand in day and the paintings are in the car.

I spent a lot of time wrapping them up so they wouldn't get damaged in transit.

Can't be too careful.

It's hard to let them go, the thought of never seeing them again weighs heavy.

Grow up, I say. They're over, done, time to start afresh.

However, if they come back, I'll find a place to hang them at home. Maybe work on them some more. Sometimes having seen them in a different space makes you want to make alterations.

I was looking at the floor in the kitchen yesterday. It has black floor tiles, some sort of plastic I think. They're flecked with grey to resemble marble and they never look dirty, unless you spill sugar or salt. Or rice. The black cat hairs don't show on it, but I still don't like it. I'd change it if I could afford to. But then I think about all the upheaval. Is it even possible to put new flooring under fitted kitchen units. I doubt it. I'll keep the black floor for now.

D.H. has an Exhibition on in Paris just now. I met him a long time ago when he came to the Slade, UCL. to visit us when I was a student. I liked his how he talked. It made me feel at

home. It's often the simple things that make you remember people, the things they do and how they talk. Now my mind jumps to A.B.

A.B. lived just along the road from where I grew up, although I didn't know it at the time. Perhaps the age gap between us made our meeting unlikely. He said in a TV interview, that once, when he was sitting on a bench in Leeds Art Gallery a woman walked up to him and said, Can I have your autograph please, I love your paintings.

This must have amused A.B., or he wouldn't have made a story out of it. It sticks in my mind possibly, because I can see how the woman got them mixed up. Both D.H. and A.B have similar hair styles, short, fair and straight. They have similar builds and their accents are similar too. And they are around the same age, although, if you saw them together, in front of you, you'd certainly know who was D.H. and who was A.B. They both have a sense of humour that I can relate to. One of them being a painter and the other a writer interests me too.

D.H., A.B. and me. We paint - and write - and use colours - and words.

And another thing we all have, is what they call hearing issues. It's frustrating, annoying and disabling, but we just get on wi't.

A.B. left home and went to Oxford then to London.

D.H. left home and went to London then to L.A.

I left home and went to London then to Glasgow.

We all took our ways of expressing ourselves with us. And each one of us came across people who were rude enough to make derogatory comments, about our accents mainly.

But we just got on wi't.

The garage is full of boxes. Some of them contain things that I'd forgotten about. I wonder why I kept them. Just to be tidy, I suppose. When you look at some of the things you've kept, well, to put it mildly, you think you must have been mad.

Sometimes we put our thoughts and dreams into compartments in our heads. We don't call them secrets, but they are.

Secrets can often be the source of great ideas, and can be made into art.

It's the dentist tomorrow, a filling fell out. It gave me a fright, What's this? Damn, a filling. I manage to get an appointment. In the meantime the empty tooth is sharp and makes my tongue sore.

I've been doing a bit of bird watching from my window using binoculars. It's a big, lone nest in a mature tree. It's a crow's nest I think. I can make out the head and beak in silhouette against the sky and sometimes the partner joins it maybe bringing food, or maybe just dropping in for a chat. It's exciting to watch all the activity, wondering if they're sitting on eggs, or chicks even. The tree has barely any leaves on it so I'm making the best of the time I can see them. We have hardly any birds in our new garden, so we miss the hundreds of birds we watched at the previous house. I once had a close encounter with a sparrowhawk. Our paths crossed as I went one way and she was making a beeline for the little birds that were feeding on the nuts and seeds we'd put out. I had to duck as she shot past me in the opposite direction, landing on top of the clothes pole then turning her head to look at me at the same moment I turned to look at her. Our eyes met, hers fierce and mine, disbelieving. I was in awe that this predator could spend even a split second focused on me. I felt honoured that such a magnificent being would bother to look at me. The savagely beautiful

eyes and beak, the layers of different feathers and the enormous yellow claws. I looked at her through the window, crouching and huge on the clothes pole, her back to me now. Still hungry.

And three fox cubs playing hide and seek, on the grass in the sunshine under the trees. I watched them too in our old garden, a while back. It was out of this world.

Today's Your Birthday, the Beatles song, playing in my head. On my birthday. Imagine. That's one of theirs too. Funny how your mind works. A song is playing in your head. You can hear it but no one else can, until you tell them you have it in your head, then you can both hear it. In your heads. Then you laugh. You're sharing it.

The leaves are growing round about the crows' nest in that old tree and they're still tending to their young. I wonder how long it takes for the chicks to fledge? I could look it up on Google, but I've heard it's not reliable. The parent birds will know what they're doing. They're just getting on wi't it, like we all do. Maggie Reeve.

References;

D.H. (David Hockney)

A.B. (Alan Bennett)