



for K.B.

Tuesday 3rd November 1981

Woke at 5 from mosquitoes & Angel came in. Ken woke, then left for his Adelaide interview at 7. Soft rain-mist all morning. Played Buddy Guy up high & walked through house, taking in fact of being alone. Tidied small office then got flowers by Kosloff's. The honeysuckle's shooting – when rain passes will dig some up. Meanwhile gathered blue grass-flowers in the creek, few limbs of plum leaves by the hammock. In the mist suddenly seemed *odd* to be plucking objects out of air: arching grasses; fruit-tree's wet black branches defying gravity with buds & leaves lined up in lines. Wonder if it's to do with Ken's leaving – his absence making things different, more intense. At any rate felt momentarily weird: the yard & tree-limbs full of *living* things, all so *suspended* in air. Cleared this door-desk of a stack of magazines. We never sit here so feels strange. In front – jam-jar of marjoram & freckleface. Outside – red coal-ship in mist. Will leave the chair here & see if it feels less odd over time...'

November 2009.

That desk – a door-panel resting on trestles – was for collating *Magic Sam* and other small press publications. A separate door-desk, opposite, was Ken's sit-down desk – where he typed and drew photo-stencils for silk-screens. His large blues collection was stacked in the corner by the collating desk and in front I put strategic pots and pans if it rained and recall brown near misses on a wood floor still virginally smooth and pale from a lifetime below lino. This same room had a pylon missing from one side and listed noticeably toward Wollongong. I avoided this corner. Going there was like moving downhill only to be suspended

disturbingly mid-air – although returning had a pleasant effect: a definite sense of an ascent to solid ground near the lounge-room door. I can't remember what we put in this listing corner. My younger sister, Lil, thought it was a shelf, made from a packing crate and when I asked Ken he wasn't certain.

'I don't remember that there was anything in that corner, though a big table ran from under the window towards the corner I think. But I don't have a clear memory of the corner. I don't THINK we would have put anything especially heavy there. I find it easy to picture a big cardboard box there, with lots of paper in it, maybe old Magic Sams? But, really, I don't know.'

The collating desk faced a window framing acres of layered greens – overgrown lantana, oleanders, banksias, mulberries and different kinds of vines all bordering a long blue horizon line.

'I recall the view very well, from my big room's window & from further down the yard...'

On our first run south from Sydney by train we passed the abandoned house and joked about its unliveable state. Later we used Rae's old grey car to scour the coast to find somewhere more rentable between Stanwell Park and Bulli.

Unsuccessful, we finally returned to the property which sat hard against the highway in the manner of miner's huts built close to roads all over England. It was apparently the first cottage built in the area, favouring the high level ground set back from the mine and before the steep descent to the beach.



The cottage beside Lawrence Hargrave Drive in upper Coalcliff.
Hand-coloured photo - John Dory, 1980



Sal in Rozelle, 1978. Photo - Pam Brown



Ken in Rozelle, 1978. Photo - Pam Brown