

Plymouth After Dark



HELLO! THIS IS
MY CONTRIBUTION
TO THE 'AFTER DARK
PROJECT WITH
THE BOX.

IT'S ABOUT WHAT I
GET UP TO AFTER
DARK AS AN EVENT
PRODUCER, PARENT,
ROMANTIC PARTNER
AND PONDERING
PERSON...

About Me - Chi Bennett AKA Queen Chi

It's a wonder that all these years have gone by
And I'm still in this body, living this life
From there to here, I've made it this far
We're all in the gutter, but I look up at the stars
I know life's secrets, I know who I am
I'm not who I used to be, I've opened the dam
I'm no longer stagnant, adrift in the mire
I'm a risen phoenix, an unquenchable fire!
I can love myself when once I could not
This is my sacred vessel, this is my lot.

Like a flower, I blossom

Like a bird, I fly

I spread my wings and reach for the sky
Like the ever-changing marvel of the
ever-changing Now, I marvel at myself
and will never again cower to ideas that
stifle the minds of many

I am whole and I am free
I'm more than this moment, more than
this form. Limitless and boundless,
Divinely Reborn. Here to live, lust and love,
I enjoy being me - a multi-dimensional
cosmic entity.

Life is my treasure and I have been
blessed. I'm a self-renewing source of
happiness.

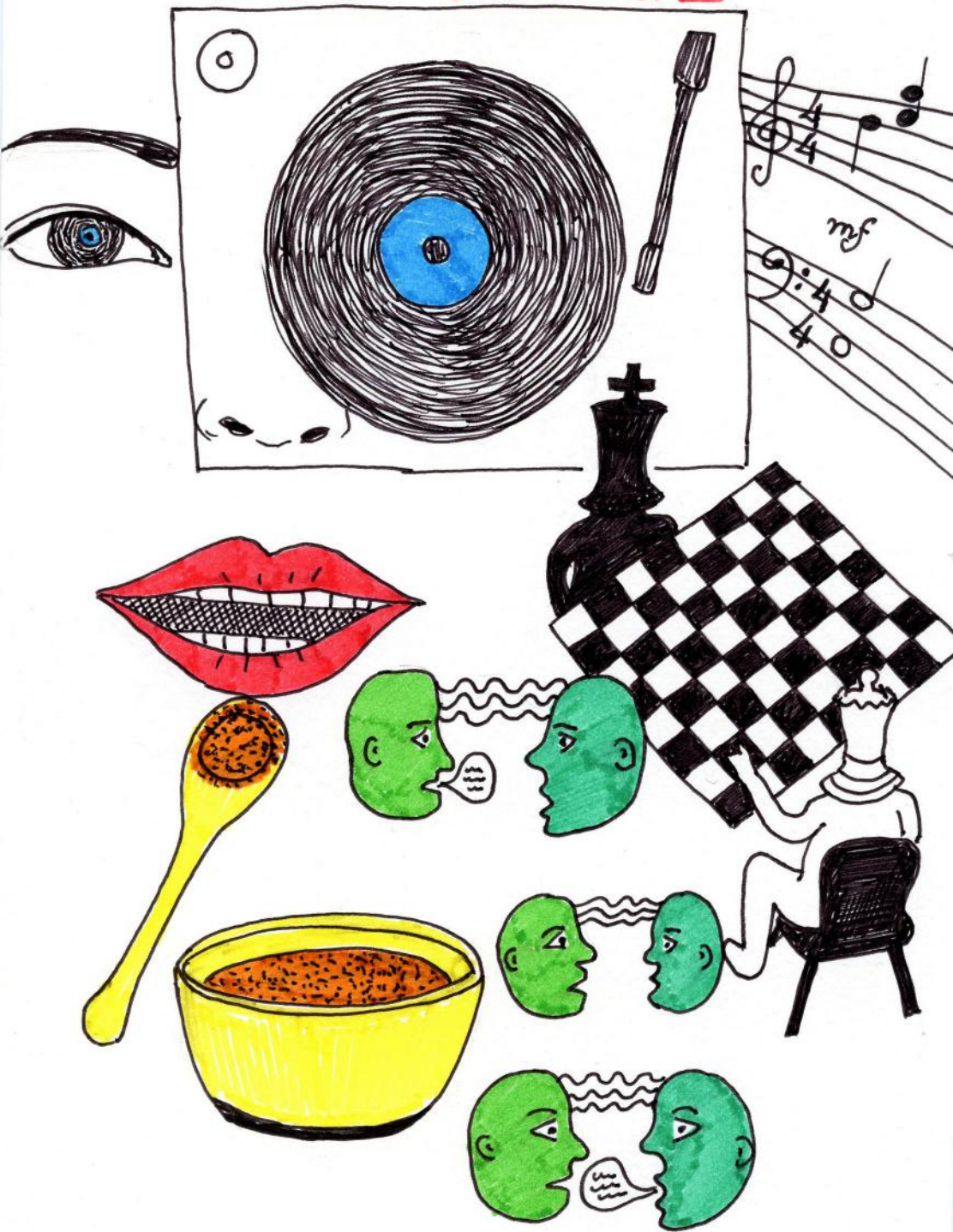
I'm the master of my fate, the creator
of my dream

I give thanks for the pleasure of simply
Being.



WonderZoo is a massive
menagerie of meanings.
Word in all its forms, explored,
expressed and elevated.
Art and community connecting
and merging
Laughter, catharsis, pain,
beauty,
Witnessed and held.
Hearts and minds opened further,
Mysteries Revealed.
Beings welcomed into the
ever-shifting whole.
WonderZoo is a multi-dimensional
spacecraft, traversing quixotic
realms, experimenting with
the boundaries of Reality.
Will you come along for
the Ride?

VINYL LOUNGE



As you get through each day
With not much fun to be found,
There's a place that you can come to,
We'd love to have you round.

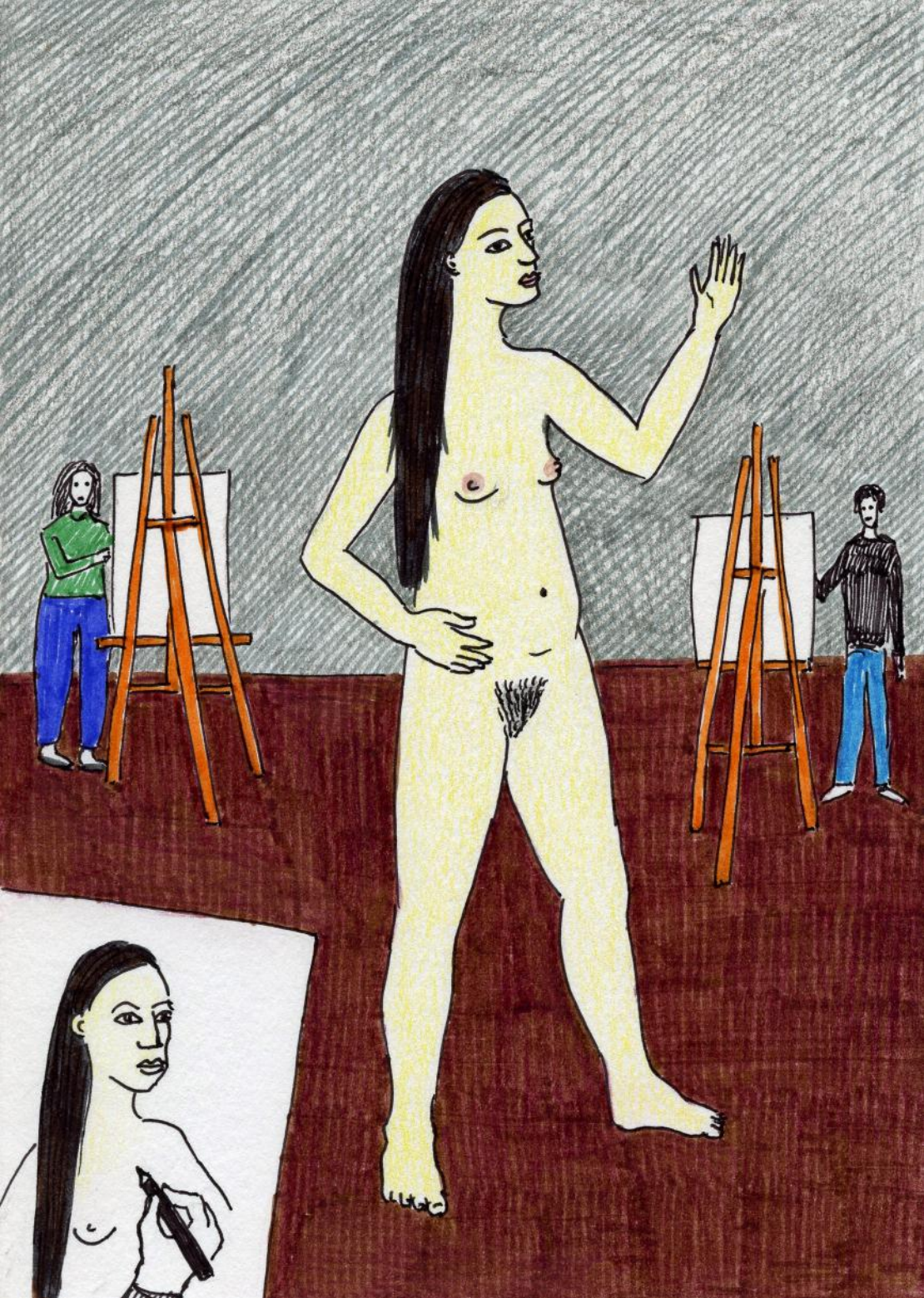
Vinyl Lounge at Union Corner
Twice a month events

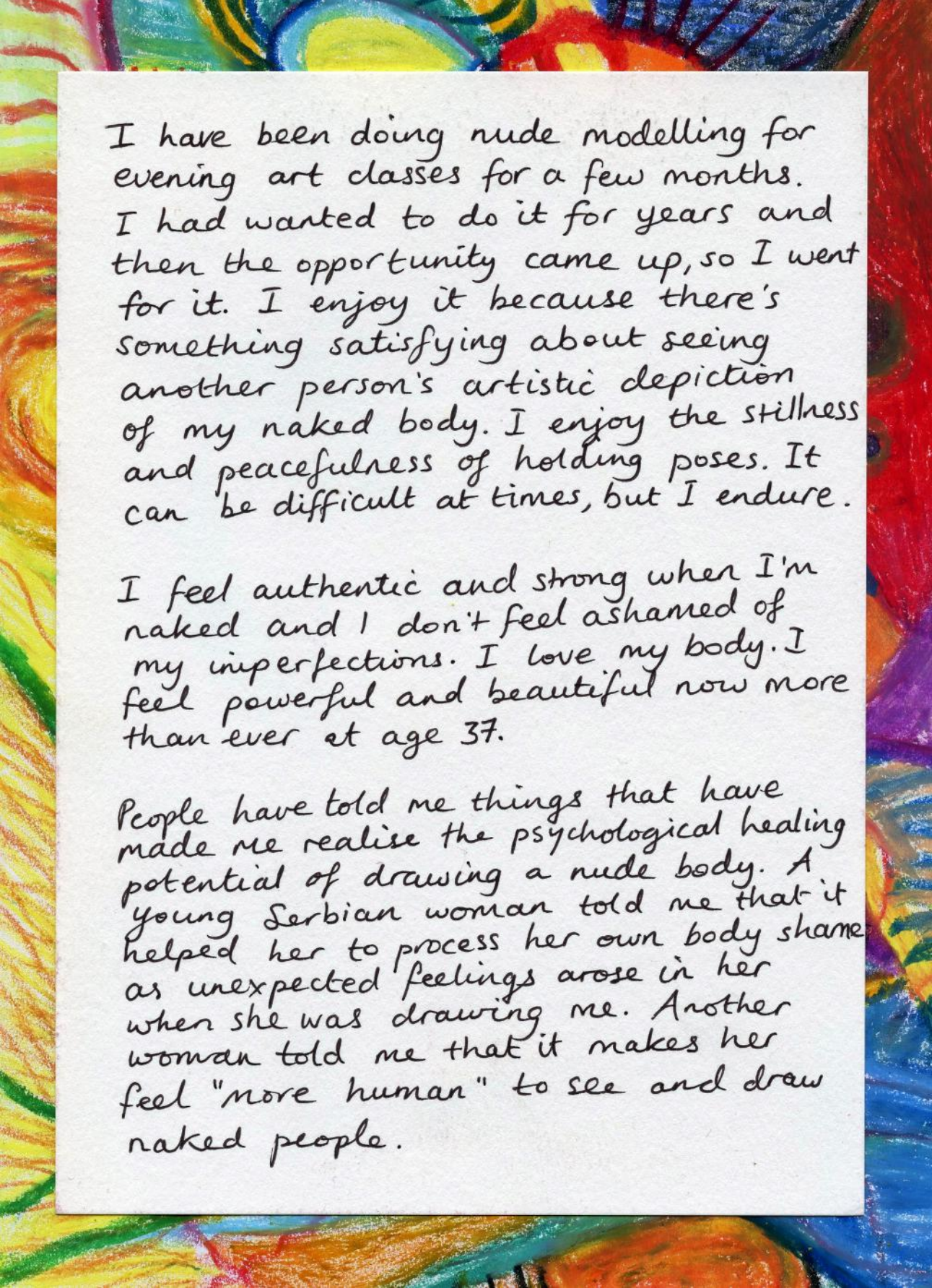
Evenings of music and games
A place to chat and make friends
With homemade vegan soup
Grab yourself a bowl

Tea and coffee, help yourself
It's time to soothe your soul

Different albums every time
Rock, Jazz, Reggae and more
Gain some cultural nourishment
While playing Connect Four.

Chess or scrabble you may prefer
Or just relax, talk and observe
Social fun and laughter is what
we all deserve.





I have been doing nude modelling for evening art classes for a few months. I had wanted to do it for years and then the opportunity came up, so I went for it. I enjoy it because there's something satisfying about seeing another person's artistic depiction of my naked body. I enjoy the stillness and peacefulness of holding poses. It can be difficult at times, but I endure.

I feel authentic and strong when I'm naked and I don't feel ashamed of my imperfections. I love my body. I feel powerful and beautiful now more than ever at age 37.

People have told me things that have made me realise the psychological healing potential of drawing a nude body. A young Serbian woman told me that it helped her to process her own body shame as unexpected feelings arose in her when she was drawing me. Another woman told me that it makes her feel "more human" to see and draw naked people.

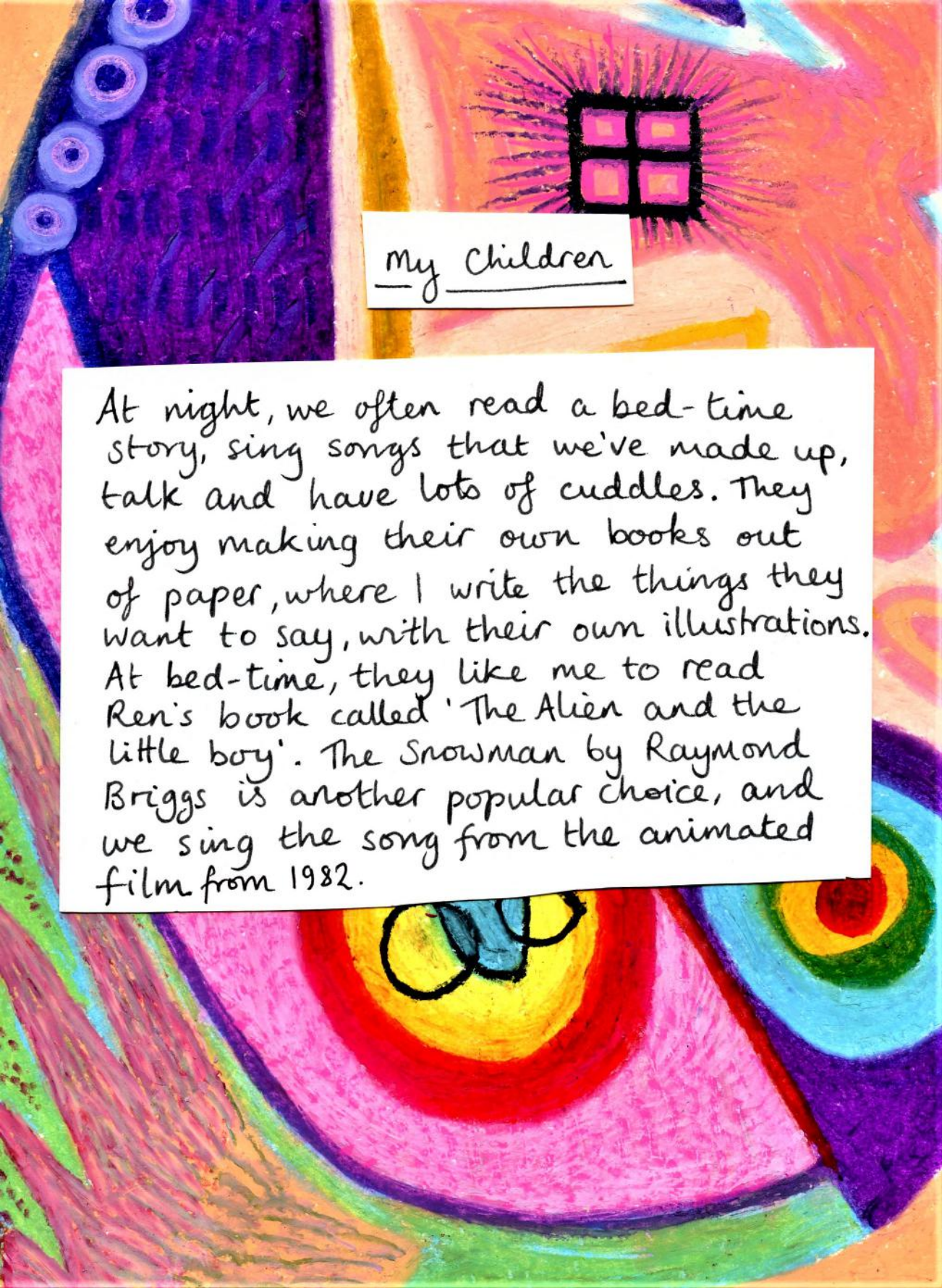
I like how being nude removes all reference points that come with clothing. I become just a vulnerable human body, alone in the world with no status symbols, words or gestures. I sink into a meditative daydream, engaging with my own memories, thoughts, feelings and imagination as those around me engage with their own creative processes.

I like being centre of attention and being immortalised into art. It's a performance of sorts. Even though I'm staying as still as possible, I'm actively checking and maintaining my positions to ensure that the artists get the most out of the sessions.

I have made several friends through these classes - it's a great way to meet interesting and creative people.

I model for teachers Kathy Wray and Tess Leyreloup.





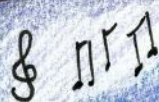
my Children

At night, we often read a bed-time story, sing songs that we've made up, talk and have lots of cuddles. They enjoy making their own books out of paper, where I write the things they want to say, with their own illustrations. At bed-time, they like me to read Ren's book called 'The Alien and the little boy'. The Snowman by Raymond Briggs is another popular choice, and we sing the song from the animated film from 1982.

"We're walking in the air..."



"We're floating in the moonlit sky"



Films

One of the things I enjoy doing with my partner, artist Slain M'Grough Davey, is going to the cinema. In 2021 we saw the 1971 film, 'A Clockwork Orange', directed by Stanley Kubrick. It was the first time I'd seen it on the big screen, though I'd seen it several times on DVD and read the book by Anthony Burgess. I really enjoy Kubrick's artistic style and brilliant imagination.

When we have the time, Slain and I enjoy watching films at home in the evenings, either on DVD, Blu-ray, Netflix or other streaming sites. My favourite director is Andrei Tarkovsky. In particular, I love his film 'Stalker'. A quote by Tarkovsky: "Modern mass culture, aimed at the 'consumer', the civilisation of prosthetics, is crippling people's souls, setting up barriers between man and the crucial questions of his existence, his consciousness of himself as a spiritual being."



My Relationship with Slain

Sometimes in life we are lucky enough to find love and like-mindedness with another soul. I have been blessed to find such a special person, with so much care in his heart for me, always wanting the best for me emotionally, physically, mentally and sexually. Our lives can be high-pressured, stressful and exhausting, which can bring out the worst in us both. We were only together for 5 months before going into lockdown, so things weren't easy for us; like with many couples, we've been pushed to the brink of splitting up several times, but I'm glad we didn't. Slain is an incredible talented performer and producer with encyclopedic cultural knowledge and a tenacious drive to achieve his visions. Before I met him I always felt alone, but now I have a fellow artist, intellectual and activist to share a life and home with, which is a miracle ♡.



To Hold You - by Chi Bennett

You are tired, my love
And this world has gotten you
stressed
You know, indeed, that it's all such a
mess
And yes, we may be going to a different
place after this
Wherever that is in this vast emptiness
But until then
I just want to hold you whenever you
let me
And if I die before you do, please
never forget me
That we had this time of living and
breathing under our dying sun
We were young for a while and had
our moments of fun.
Let me wipe your tears, my dear,
just let me hold you tight,
Unburden your fears on my ears
And fall asleep in my arms tonight.

Books

Before going to bed I like to read. It's something I wish I had more time for. There just never seems to be enough hours in the day. I buy second hand books, in the hopes that I'll one day find the time to read them all. If I don't, my hope is that my children will, or someone else. Life is so short, with not enough time, and there are so many things I want to do, so much I want to learn, discover and experience.

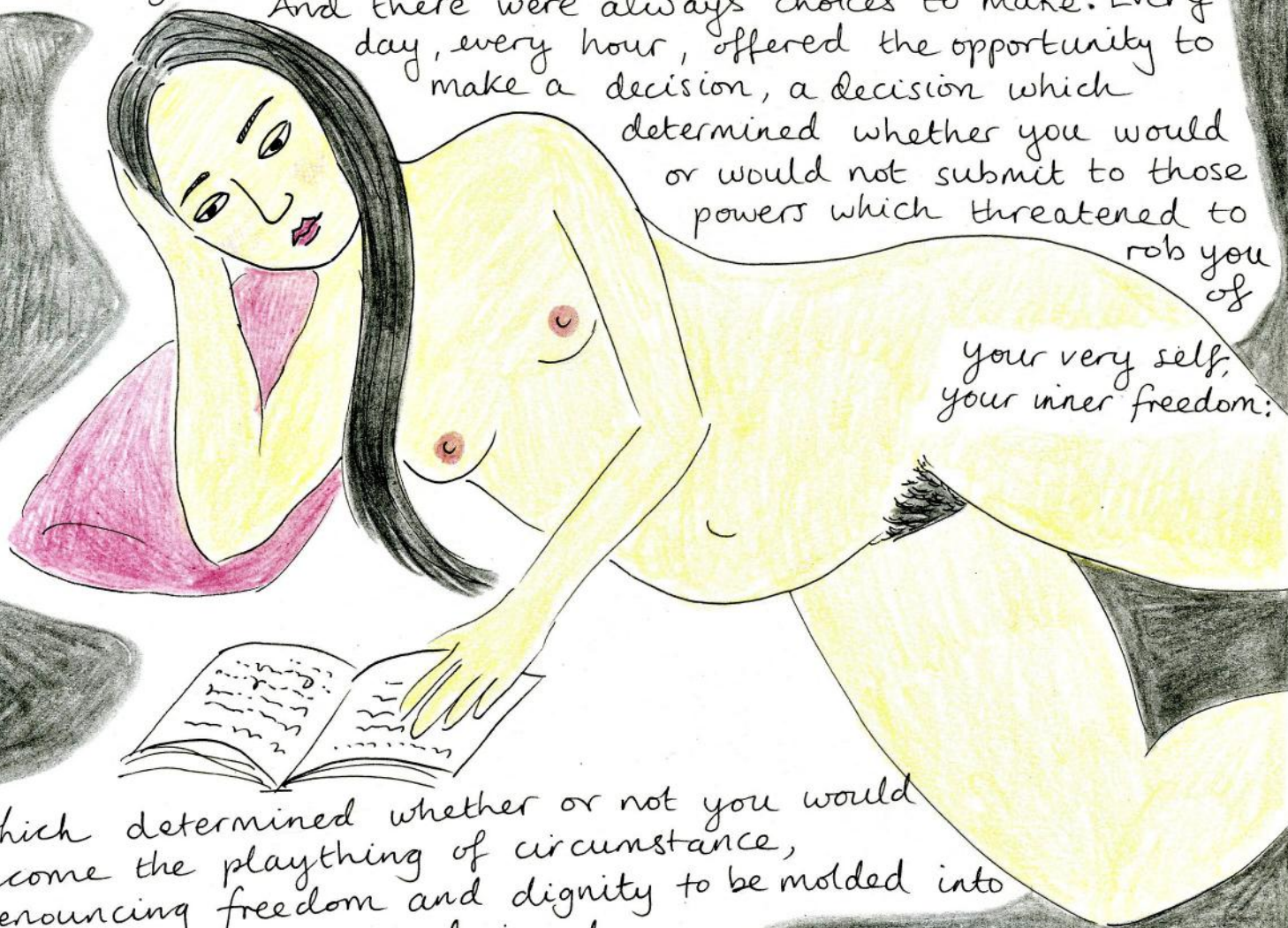
I suppose it's a privilege to feel this way - to have curiosity, desire, joie de vivre. It's taken years for me to feel love for this world and feel the will to live. My ever-growing love for the Arts has been a big reason for my happiness. The creative expressions of others have given me strength and guidance amidst difficult circumstances, which is why I'm committed to being an artist and supporting the arts generally.

"The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress.

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of

your very self,
your inner freedom:



which determined whether or not you would become the plaything of circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity to be molded into the form of the typical inmate....

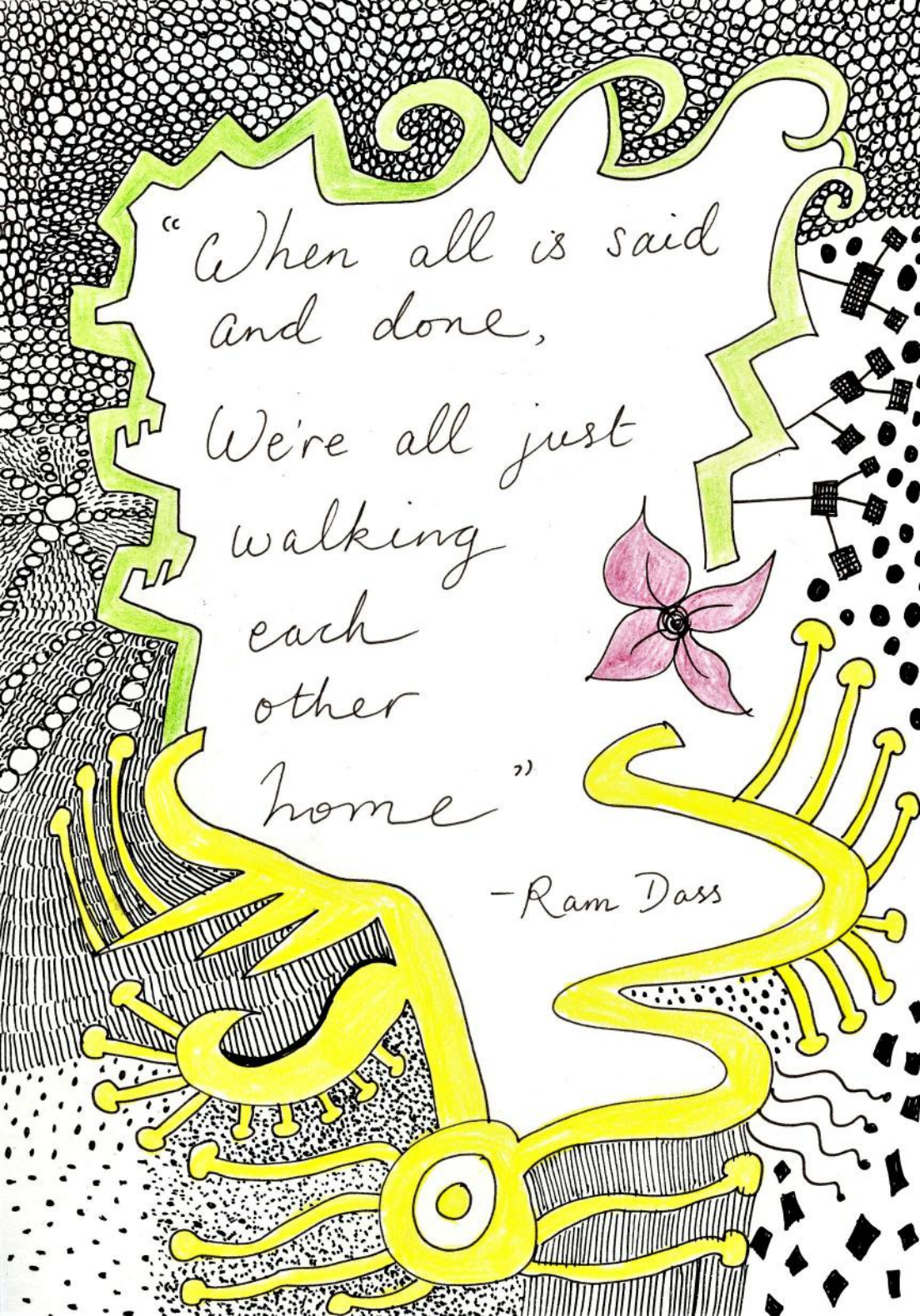
It is this spiritual freedom which cannot be taken away - that makes life meaningful and purposeful...

If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete."

VIKTOR E. FRANKL - MAN'S
SEARCH FOR MEANING.



An evening stroll -
Devil's Point, Plymouth



"When all is said
and done,
We're all just
walking
each
other
home"

- Ram Dass

[illegible]