

Richard's Disasters  
*A true story*

Richard Lewer

Introduction text

oil on brass  
500mm x 500mm



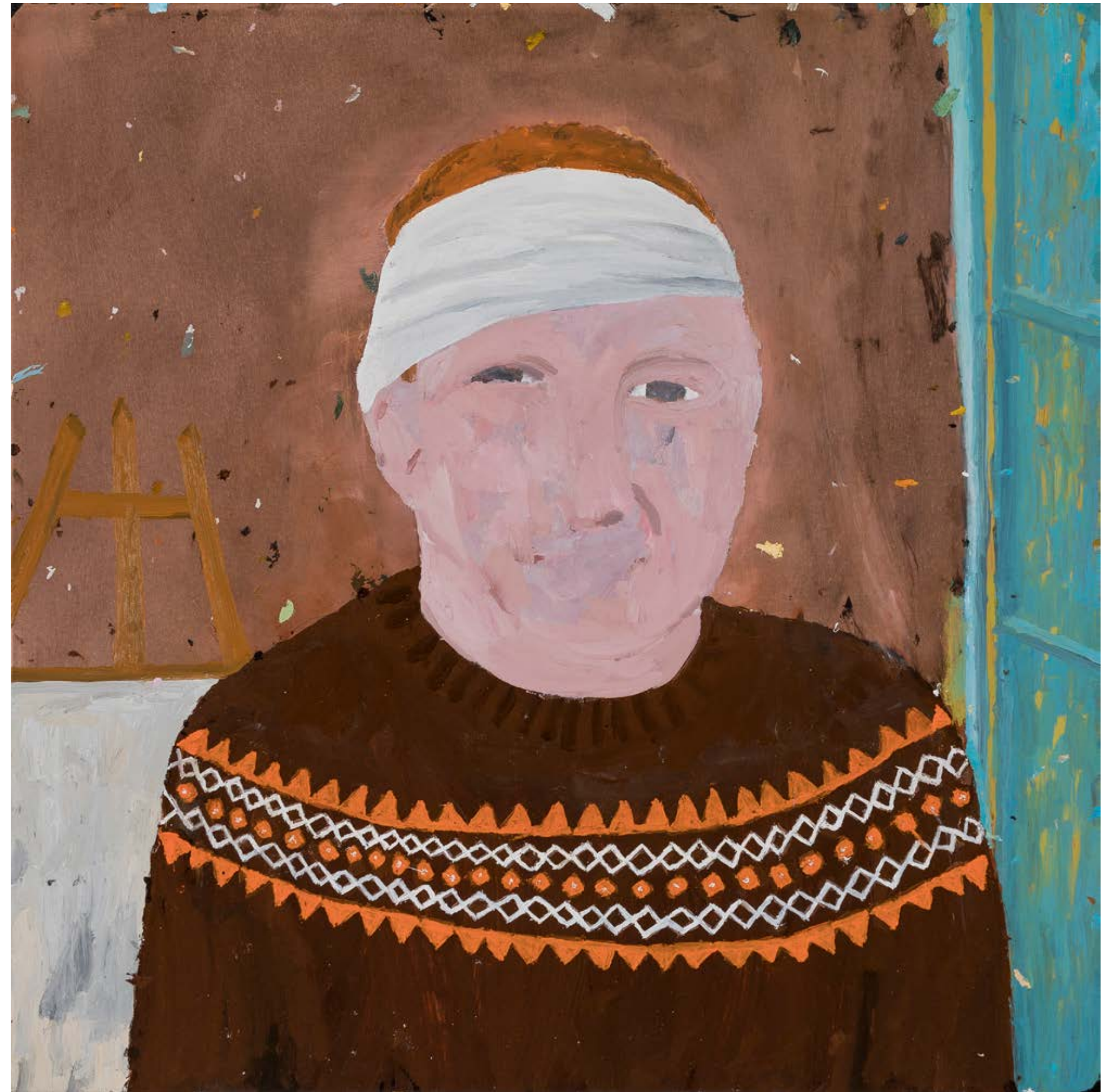


First recollection of pain.





After art school my friend Charlotte and I were heading off on our big OE, but before we left I had a lump on my ear removed so left Auckland with a big bandage around my head. On the stopover at Abu Dhabi I removed the bandage as it was hot and uncomfortable, but just before I got back on the flight I was followed and stopped by some serious looking airport security guys with guns. They proceeded to ask me about the whereabouts of the bandage I left Auckland with and my reason for its removal. I was very relieved when I was allowed to reboard that flight to London.





Magpies, 1984





The phone rang. It was my first real girlfriend ringing from  
Dargaville with the news we were no longer going out.  
She was now going out with Justin. I was dumped.

Mum said 'are you alright?'

I grabbed my Walkman, ran to my car and drove down the  
road listening to Tracy Chapman full bore, crying so hard.  
I will never forget that.





A friend and I were sleeping in a bedsit in Edinburgh

(nothing funny was happening)

when we both awoke to the feeling that something was  
coming from the fridge.

A magnitude of colours.

It then entered my body. I started laughing uncontrollably,  
but wasn't me laughing.

I then felt it leaving my body and returning to the fridge.

We left immediately.









My first job after art school was teaching art at Ruapehu College. I celebrated my first day at the Ohakune pub with the locals. In class the next day, my students said 'Mr Lewer, Mr Lewer, we saw you passed out outside the pub, what were you doing?'



I know horses don't like me. I told my wife that and she didn't believe me. We had gone to sleep in our tent at Whau Whau and woke to the sound of galloping horses circling and circling our tent. There was no reason for this other than their dislike of me. My wife, an animal person, couldn't believe it.

This would not be my last encounter with horses.





During art school a friend and I got a summer job  
beekeeping back home in Hamilton. The first day on the  
job we found out it was on land owned by a nudist colony.  
We didn't know which way to look.





92 Lewis Street





Wheelbarrow sex on a first date caused me a hernia  
and a trip to the A and E.





I was no good at school so my father said I might as well leave and get a job. I was cleaning cars at Barry Heddigen's car yard and mixed up engine cleaner with vinyl cleaner ruining the upholstery of the back seat of a car. Barry couldn't believe it and suggested he had another job for me. He dropped me off at his farm to pick thistles. After the first throw of the pick, I hit a water main. I heard Barry reverse down the road to come and get me. No words were said on the way back home.





I wish they'd told me the dress code.  
I wore my green parka to the black tie announcement of  
a major portrait award. Feeling awkward, I left before  
the announcement, only to receive a phone call the next  
morning, telling me I'd won.









I was in Wanganui doing a residency.  
One of the students was a young female – we both had  
a crush on each other and we kissed on the Wanganui  
Bridge. When I came back to Melbourne, I had to tell my  
then girlfriend what had happened.



My first time in the corner for a televised professional fight.  
Between rounds, I slipped on an ice cube and ended up face  
planting on the ground.

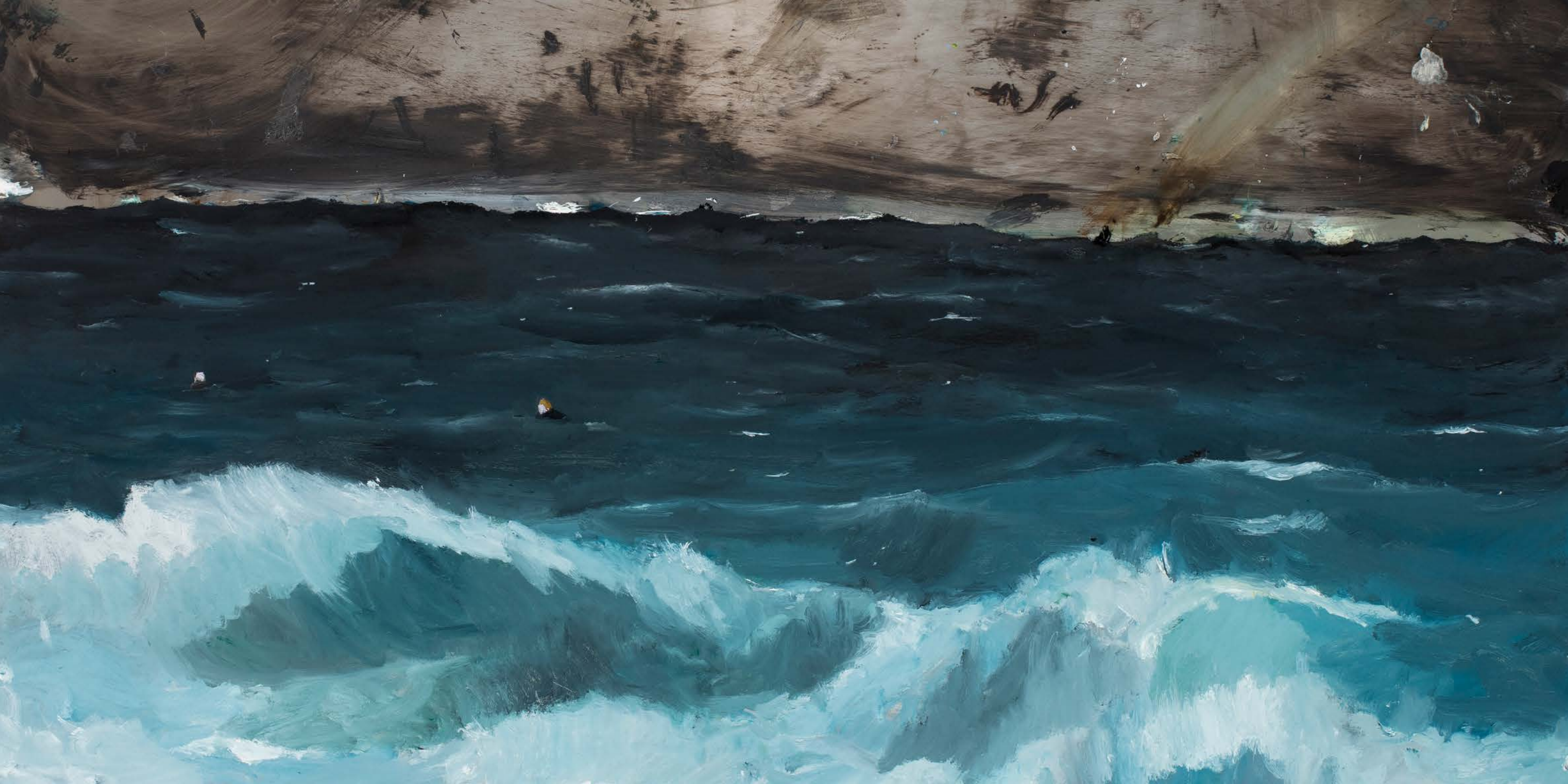




Stoned and drunk for the first time,  
my friends buried me in the sand up to my neck  
and watched as the tide came in.









Near drowning experience, Raglan, 1989.

Matt and I went surfing at Raglan when the beach was closed due to swell. The rescue helicopter couldn't reach us in the surf. I was at peace with drowning as my life flashed before my eyes. We eventually came to shore five kilometres from where we entered. The police gave us a major dressing down and when I came home, my mother said I looked as white as a sheet.





My Dad got me a job at the Inland Revenue after art school. I realised I could look up my student loan details; perhaps I could delete them. A silent alarm went off; access denied. My last day in this job.





I was trying to break up with my girlfriend at the time.  
Realising that that we were no longer boyfriend  
and girlfriend we embraced, an embrace that could only  
mean goodbye. A white-tailed spider jumped from nowhere  
and bit my arm.





Horses don't like me.  
My friend Steve forced me to confront my fears on a blind,  
deaf, old horse. The owner held the lead.





I was a bed wetter as a child.

After many different specialists, they came up with the idea of a sensor that sounded a big alarm and gave me a shock when I started to wee... it made me want to piss myself with fright and never go to sleep.





In my final year at Hamilton Boys High School  
I was staring out the window during my end of year maths  
exam watching a crazy storm roll past when  
I saw lightning strike a group of about twenty boys  
sheltering from the rain. Eleven were knocked to ground  
and one had to be resuscitated.





Dog attack 2018.





Straight to the sin bin again.





Accused of threatening to kill, mistaken identity.  
WA police shining their torches at the door asking  
my wife for the whereabouts of Richard Lewer.  
I'm in Karratha, two hours away.







At primary school, Mum dressed me in a grey school  
uniform when there wasn't one.





On a day out in Margaret River with my in laws,  
I hooked a nine-year old girl standing 30metres away on  
the timber jetty at Gnarabup Beach.





Circumcision 2019





I woke one night to the sound of my new flatmate giggling  
and the smell of smoke. Fire! After the fire was put out,  
the fireman said it was deliberately lit.  
'You are living with an arsonist.'





2013. I woke with screaming chest pains in the night. The 24 hour call nurse said to immediately go to hospital, as this was a cardiac arrest. I arrived to find out this wasn't correct. A week of tests revealed it was pancreatitis. To this day the doctors and I don't really know why I have this condition but I have not touched alcohol since.







Lighting does strike twice.

The second time, we were travelling over the Kaimais  
going to the Mount for our annual holiday.  
We were travelling along in our orange Hilman Hunter  
when bang - out of nowhere lightning hit our hub cap  
and it went flying ...

I'm hoping things don't come in threes





As a bald man, I miss going to the hairdressers.





Dr Robin Wong, thank you for your continued service.



