

Public.

Open.

Space.

Kate
Larsen



FREMANTLE PRESS

This collection is about power and abuse of power, control and how it is resisted, protested and endured. It includes references to gendered harassment and violence, stalking and murder, internet trolling, political overreach, human rights abuses and censorship. Please take care.

For the people of Hong Kong – in solidarity.

For the people of the Kaurna, Noongar, Wodi Wodi, Yuin and
Gabrielino Tongva lands on which this book was made –
with respect, gratitude and acknowledgement that
those lands were never ceded.

To those who've found safety, community and voice on the
internet, and to those for whom it continues to be unsafe.

And for my partner and my family – with all of my love.

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Public / Private

Named

We were silent

Though we were not told to be silent.

We gave them our names

Though we were surprised when they called.

One by one, we waited

To be called.

Lost

What's public? What's private?

What's open? What's closed?

What's vanished?

What's silenced?

What's lost?

Civil / Disobedient

'... the disobedience in Hong Kong was very civil indeed.'

- Timothy O'Leary⁷

your hands
are tied /
your hands
are bound

will you: bite
(or) loose your tongue
(or) lose your tongue?

will you: persevere
(or) protest?

will you: ask
(or) take
be im/polite
(or) rude?

will you: sing in tune
(or) discord /
your own song?

will you: dis/believe
(or) question?
will you: stay the same
(or) change?

will you: keep
(or) breach
the peace?

(or) stay
(or) leave?

(or) stay
(or) leave?

are you:
civil? /
disobedient?

are you:

free-ish,
free-er
free enough
(or) free?

Tense

Calculate:
the tense
of <insert poem>.

The sum of:
always here (yet)
always here-then-gone.

The less-defined
by character
than word count:

(a)
plus (b)
plus (c).

By if
(or) not.
(or) product of.

The formula of frequency.
The minimum
of what we need.

The stream
and stream
and stream

and stream
of consciousness
goes on. (And on).

Cell count: sign
of things to come.

Same (or)
more (or)
less than?

What it equals.
What is true.
A valued proposition. False.

The positive. The absolute.
A variance
accounted for.

The average
that's not average
any more.

The Words We Use

When no-one else
is listening (we hope).

The words we want

(and don't want)
to be heard.

Virtual Private Network

We may as well be naked here.

Our every whispered word
between the whisper of our sheets.

Our every morning watched:
a nod in passing,

quiet notes observed.
Each (mis)placed step recorded,

all our choices overheard.
Our every moment counted

and contested, over-served.
The moment when you take my hand.

The words I use when no-one else is listening but you.
The sigh of fallen clothing on the floor.

Barely Lit and Barely Heard

Sometimes shade is all you get
from trying to shine a light.

Sometimes words are spoken
in the dark.

To Varying Degrees

You can speak.
But someone else controls
the volume.

You can ask.
But someone else provides
the words.

You can tick a box.
But someone else will choose
the candidates.

You can write it down.
But someone else will tell you
what you mean.

You can try to hide.
But someone else will place
the cameras.

You can try to run.
But someone else will block
the way.

You are free
(to varying degrees).

Terms and Conditions

Here is where you sign.
Here are the terms,
the layers of words.
Here is the full stop.

Here is where you decide.
To follow or not.
Dissent. Or agree.
To tear apart. Or leave.

To consume;
subsume;
(OR) make
something new.

To bind or break.
To obfuscate.
Consent.
(OR) acquiesce.

To give your digital consent.
Here is where we see
who has complied
and who has lied.

Here is what we carry
in our hands.

[This Connection Does Not Exist]

