

STOPOVERS

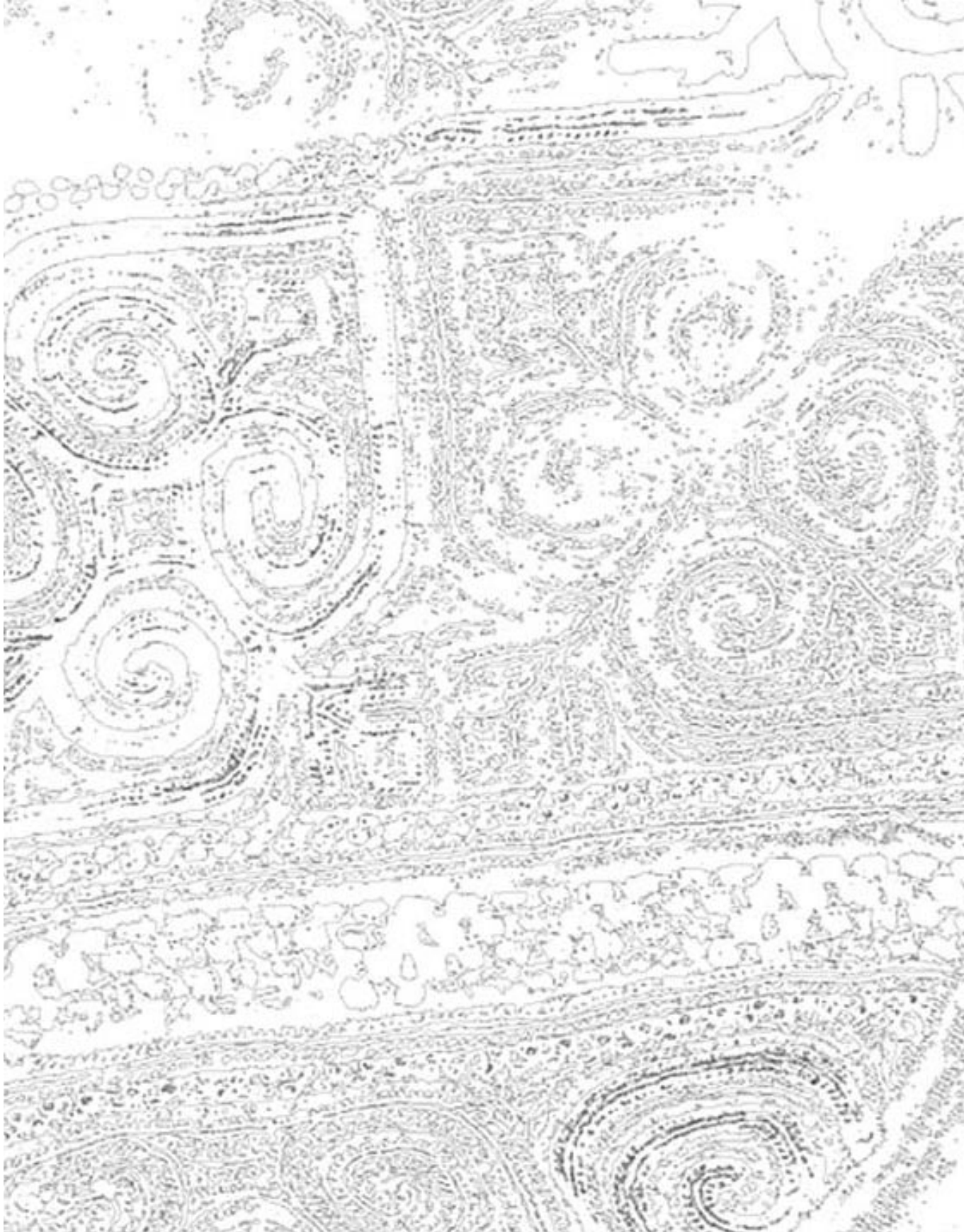
Lamis Mawafi

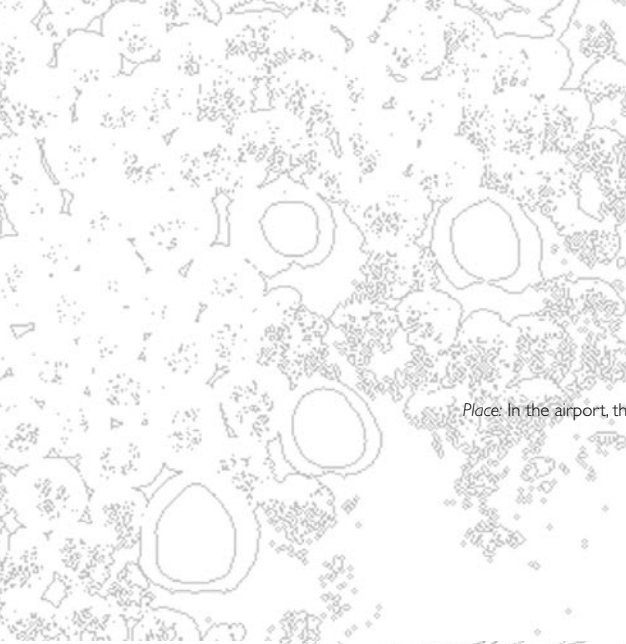
It is no wonder – in our time of mass migrations and culture collisions and easy jet travel, when the whole world lies below us every time we rise into the skies, when whole countries move by like bits of checkerboard, ours to play on – it's no wonder that in this time we've developed whole philosophies of cultural relativity, and learned to look at whole literatures, histories, and cultural formations as if they were toy blocks, ours to construct or deconstruct.

(Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language*, New York, Penguin, 1989: 209.)

It's clear there, as I see it from my window, in this place where I can process my thoughts, while sitting on this uncomfortable chair and getting filled with this feeling of being simultaneously nowhere and everywhere. From this place I can calmly observe the world as I watch it below me every time I fly. As for countries, I visited many, and lived in few. I flew over seas and deserts; flew over my own story, watching the patterns of my life changing while all the processes of adjusting are happening in my soul. We sometimes travel in order to go somewhere, and at other times we travel to go home, but is home still a place that contains a bed, a kitchen, and our things? Words started to have whole new definitions as things around me keep changing while my life unfolds. I write some of the words that stood out through this journey and overlay them with drawings I made to suggest the moving patterns and lines of my travelling life.

Lamis Mawafi completes her Master of Fine Arts project at the Otago Polytechnic School of Art in 2007. Her writing investigates immigration, travelling and memory and her studio work attempts to give material form to these experiences and interests by using woven textiles made in strips, and also informal drawings. Lamis holds a BA in Graphic Design and worked as a graphic designer in Jordan before immigrating to New Zealand.





Place: In the airport, they planted some trees, trying to make the place a bit friendlier
...more familiar. Poor trees, I bet they are forced to stay there.



Points: I am flying to Amman, floating over Christchurch, just landed in
Auckland, I am not yet in Sydney, but soon I'll be on my way to Singapore,
heading to Dubai, but not home yet, never really again.



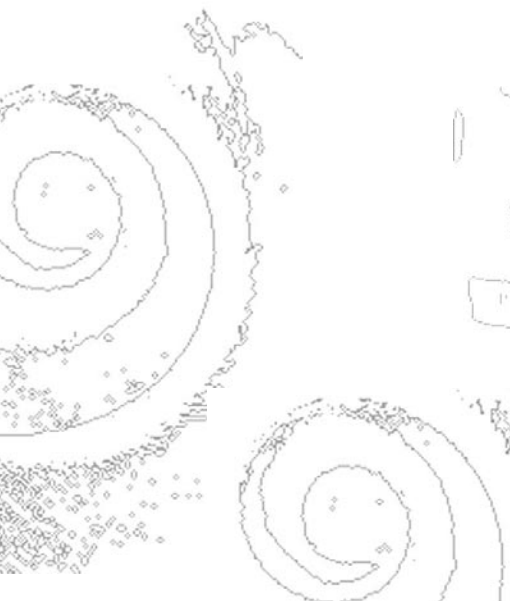
Memory: As long as I can still move

freely in my memories,

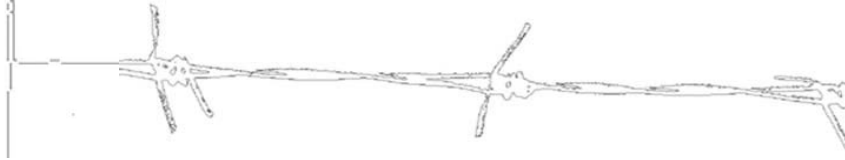
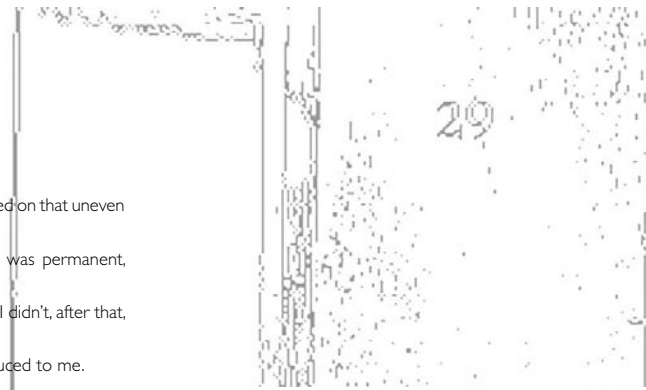
I am never alone. Who said I need

to cross oceans to visit the familiar

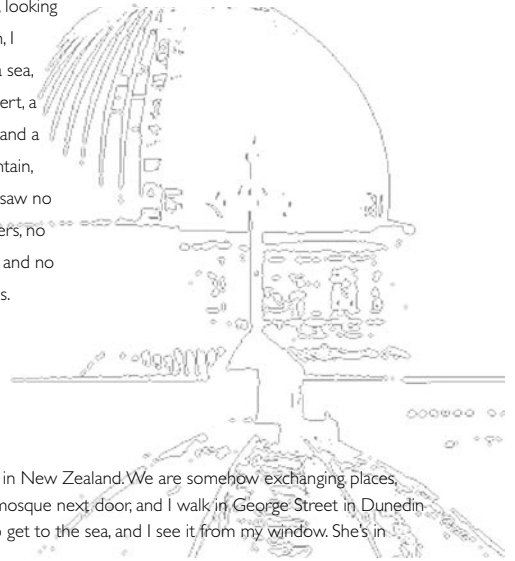
streets of my hometown?



Home: 29 was the number fixed on that uneven wall, for a while I thought it was permanent, I stopped looking at it, I wish I didn't, after that, the word 'change' was introduced to me.



Travel: I was floating over countries, and over lands, looking down, I saw a sea, a desert, a river; and a mountain, but I saw no borders, no walls, and no fences.



Dwellings: There's a New Zealand woman living in my country, while I am living in New Zealand. We are somehow exchanging places, she wakes up every morning in Jordan to the call for prayer coming from the mosque next door; and I walk in George Street in Dunedin hearing the bells of Knox Church. She drives four hours through the dessert to get to the sea, and I see it from my window. She's in spring and I'm in autumn.

