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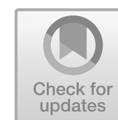

CHAPTER 14

Searching Shadows, Lighting Bones: Commemorative Performance as an Open-Ended Negotiation

A Chapter in 27 Fragments

Emily Orley

Introduction

In 2016, I finished developing a solo performance called *Searching Shadows* about my Russian immigrant grandfather, the early days of the X-ray, and the precarious nature of memory. It was an hour long and arranged in 27 fragments to reflect the 27 bones that make up the human hand. I used spoken word, old family photographs, X-ray images and clips of recorded sound, relying on a single desk lamp, an old 35 millimetre carousel slide projector and an array of other analogue machines to conjure a tale about a man I barely knew. I was prompted to make the piece after discovering a jumbled collection of my grandfather's

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letters and memoirs at the back of a filing cabinet and inspired by the idea that John Berger explores in *Here Is Where We Meet* (2006), that the dead are still with us.

I used very little of my own words, but relied heavily on found images and texts: sections of the uncovered memoirs, historical reports about X-rays, newspaper clippings, poetry, documentary and fiction. Some of the 27 parts consisted of read passages, some of only sound and some of only gesture. Sometimes they included all three. The story of my grandfather's life as he travelled around Europe before, during and after the First World War and trained to become a radiologist, and the many strands of history with which he was involved, were only gradually pieced together, as if I were reassembling the bones of an exhumed hand. Thus, the bigger picture only made sense at the end. I intentionally kept the narrative fragmented and non-linear. It was, I think now, a commemorative performance, although that is not necessarily what I set out to make. I will explain.

Archaeologist, Laurajane Smith, writes that heritage is 'something vital and alive', 'a moment of action, not something frozen in material form' (2006, p. 83). I approached my grandfather's papers as heritage objects and explored how to celebrate their vitality and aliveness by engaging with them in ways that I tried to keep creative and open-ended. In *Uses of Heritage* (2006), Smith elaborates on her definition of heritage as a cultural process of meaning and memory-making (and remaking) rather than a thing but she also acknowledges the critical reality that there are physical things and places that we like to call heritage (p. 74). Referencing Arturo Escobar she argues that heritage, much like place, can and indeed should be viewed as both 'a category of thought and as a constructed reality' (Escobar 2001, p. 140). I took this dual definition of heritage as my starting point when making the performance as I began to experiment in how to engage with my chosen personal heritage objects while trying not to fix or preserve them. I wanted to perform a remembering that was open-ended and unbound, negotiating my here-and-now while dealing with a memento from the past. This became not only an unofficial practice of heritage but also a means of honest reflection and knowledge transmission. All the while, I attempted to honour Smith's description of heritage as a 'multi-layered performance… that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present' (p. 3).

So I engaged in a process in which place, meaning and identity (my own but also my grandfather's) were actively created and recreated.

Sociologist, David Turnbull, writes that ‘we create space in the process of travelling through it and in creating narratives of journeys we construct knowledge’ (2002, p. 133). I sought to create new space as I sorted through the found pages, creating a narrative of my own journey, which, I hoped, would open up new spaces for new narratives. Cultural geographer, Doreen Massey, defines place as an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories that cannot be neatly contained in time and space (2005, p. 151). They are ‘articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings’ (1994, p. 154). She writes:

> What is special about place is not some romance of a pre-given collective identity or the eternity of the hills. Rather, what is special about place is pre-cisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on a history and geography of then and theres); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman. (2005, p. 140)

I chose to view the pages written by my grandfather and then stored by my father in a filing cabinet, as places themselves, ‘throwntogethernesses’, which were calling for a negotiation. As places, they were still changing (still are) and could not be bound to a particular era or location (the very paper he wrote on itself, for example, had its own history and existed before he wrote on it). The performance I made was commemorative because it provided a platform for such negotiation.

For the *Staging Loss* symposium, I wanted to offer a critical discussion of my original performance while staying faithful to the creative drive that inspired me in the first place. I could not attend in person, so I chose to send a recording of me reading it. I arranged the discussion in 27 fragments as I had arranged the original performance, and chose to record it on vinyl as people had used discarded X-rays to make illicit replacement vinyl records in the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s (see Fragment 21 below). The critical discussion was written as Jane Rendell-esque site-writing, composed in response to the first performance. By using site-writing, I could critically but also creatively extend and elaborate on the commemorative work I had begun before. Invented and described by Rendell in her 2010 book *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*, it is a mode of criticism that foregrounds the sites of engagement with artworks rather than just the artworks themselves. The criticism then becomes an artwork in its own right. Rendell calls this a critical spatial practice and uses it to explore

the textual and material possibilities of writing, its spatial potential: 'the patterning of words on a page, the design of a page itself – its edges, boundaries, thresholds, surfaces, the relation of one page to another' (p. 17). For her, the critic is 'a particular kind of art *user*', as this term suggests 'a more active and inherently spatial role, one which includes the optic but which is not driven solely by the visual and which involves both interpretation and performance' (p. 3). The critic needs to be creative in her response to the work in order to do it justice and Rendell refers to a wide range of literary and cultural theorists, art historians, feminist thinkers and psychoanalysts to support her argument. She writes that 'the use of analogy – the desire to invent a writing that is somehow 'like' the artwork – allows a certain creativity to intervene in the critical act as the critic comes to understand and interpret the work by remaking it on his/her own terms' (p. 7). Site-writing as a practice, is inherently commemorative (in the best possible and most radical way).

And so here, in this chapter, I present another version of a site-writing of my performance. Once again it is arranged in 27 fragments, which only come into focus as the writing progresses. Each fragment is named after a hand bone. I explain myself in bursts (see Fragment 14). The argument, the final image, the hand, only begins to make sense as the bones are arranged alongside each other. Quotations are placed alongside quotations, alongside descriptions, alongside anecdotes, alongside reports, alongside the beginnings of discussions. My grandfather's auto-ethnographical narrative is juxtaposed with medical and historical facts and lines from stories and novels. What comes below is not coherent, and is full of tangents. It does not seek to fix or preserve what I originally made (which would not make sense to the reader, having not seen the performance), but rather to offer it up again as something to be negotiated anew. Just as I hoped to engage the viewer of my performance with disjointed fragments that pointed to a larger and more complicated set of historical narratives, so I hope this site-writing will also call for active participation from the reader. It is an active participation-negotiation that we might call commemorative (Fig. 14.1).

Fragment 1

Scaphoid: 25 years after my grandfather died I found a muddled collection of memoirs and letters he had written at the back of a filing cabinet. They included tales about his life as a migrant before, during and after the First World War and described, in a fragmented and roundabout way,

Fig. 14.1 Emily Orley, *Searching Shadows* (2016)

his journey from Russia to London where he became a radiologist in the early 1930s. I developed a performance using those papers and a series of old photographs and X-rays. I wanted to see if, by exploring how X-rays were first made, I might X-ray someone who was no longer here, using only a handful of objects they had left behind. I wanted to do a kind of remembering that could be shared and kept open.

Fragment 2

Lunate: After the discovery of the X-ray by Professor Roentgen in late 1895, there came a radical shift in what we were able to see. For the first time, the bones inside living bodies were made visible. Flesh was made transparent. One of Roentgen's first experiments was an X-ray of his wife Bertha's hand with a ring on her finger. Of all his first pictures that were circulated around the world, it was that of the human hand that made the greatest impression on the public (Glasser 1934, p. 32). Everywhere, people began testing the new radiation with their hands.

There was a sudden proliferation of pictures of the bones in human hands.

Human hands contain 27 bones. Among them, the lunate, the scaphoid, the capitate.

Fragment 3

Triquetrum: Many of the following words are not my own. Italo Calvino writes: 'In other words, you and I are only meeting places for messages from the past' (2009, p. 233). Mary Paterson writes: 'Our bodies do not keep us apart' (2014).

Fragment 4

Pisiform: John Berger writes: 'What reconciles me to my own death more than anything else is the image of a place: a place where your bones and mine are buried, thrown, uncovered, together. They are strewn there pell-mell. One of your ribs leans against my skull. A metacarpal of my left hand lies inside your pelvis. (Against my broken ribs your breast like a flower.) The hundred bones of our feet are scattered like gravel. It is strange that this image of our proximity, concerning as it does mere phosphate of calcium, should bestow a sense of peace. Yet it does. With you I can imagine a place where to be phosphate of calcium is enough' (1984, p. 101).

Fragment 5

Hamate: My grandfather was born in January 1892 in Bialystok, which was then in Russia. In 1914 he went to Geneva to study medicine and while he was there World War One broke out. One diary entry reads:

> *Russian reservists abroad had not been recalled to Russia, but, caught up in the patriotic fervour of the time, I felt it was my duty to join the Allied forces. As a foreigner, I could not join the French army, but I could join, I was told, the Foreign Legion. The name did not mean anything to me.*

Fragment 6

Capitate: Looking back, I see that the making of my performance was driven by two key concepts. I set out to honour Smith's description of heritage as a 'multi-layered performance… that embodies acts of

remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present' (2006, p. 3). I wanted to find a method for celebrating the dynamic quality of heritage by engaging with a series of objects in a creative, open-ended way (Orley, 2017). I wanted to use them to tell a series of personal stories, to weave a pluralistic narrative rather than present an apparently detached factual account (if such a thing really exists). Oral historian, Alessandro Portelli, writes that 'Memory is not a passive depository of facts but an active process of creation of meanings' (1991, p. 52). Memory, like heritage, is an active process of meaning-making, so I chose to engage with, reflect, recount it, through the time-based form of performance, which changes with each enactment. The other key idea that inspired my performance was the notion that John Berger explores in his 2006 novel, *Here Is Where We Meet*, that the dead are still with us. This is not a macabre idea but one that opens up possibilities for new conversations about bearing witness.

Fragment 7

Trapezoid: Theatre scholar, Freddie Rokem, writes that in the context of performing history, the actor is a hyper-historian, a witness for witnesses now dead, a connecting link between the historical past and the 'fictional' performed here and now of the theatrical event (2000, p. 13). In my performance, I constructed a conversation with my dead grandfather. I commemorated his life, but also the contexts in which he existed. I bore witness now because he no longer could, but I did it as performer. I did not pretend to be him, but in reading words from his diaries, I called the events of his life into the present and into the presence of the spectators. In reading his words, I wanted to recreate something which had been irretrievably lost (p. 13).

Fragment 8

Trapezium: My grandfather did not fare well in the French Foreign Legion. He writes about the limited food they were given and how this made drill particularly exhausting. He was relieved when, as a medical student, he was chosen to work in the infirmary.

> *My fellow orderlies were a Serb, who said he was a Law student, and a middle-aged pharmacist. We lived in the infirmary. As beds we used regulation stretchers, about 18 inches wide. After the bare floor they felt*

> *luxurious. […] I kept on losing weight and must have looked dejected. Our chief, Medecin Major, remarked on several occasions on my poor looks. He was of the opinion, he told us once, that a volunteer should be allowed to change his mind. One day he told me he wanted to examine my lungs. He diagnosed a tuberculous legion in my left lung and recommended my discharge from the Army.*

When he returned to Geneva for treatment, expecting to be sent to a sanatorium, the doctor there found nothing wrong with his lungs. He realised only then that the army doctor had deliberately misled the authorities out of compassion. As a chest specialist in civilian life, my grandfather writes, he could not have made that mistake.

Fragment 9

Metacarpal One: What does it mean, really, to commemorate through, or with performance? To commemorate means to mention as worthy of remembrance, to make eulogistic or honourable mention of, to celebrate in speech or writing. I add: to acknowledge, to honour, to reanimate. I add that to celebrate is to keep alive and vital. For the alive. To call into doubt rather than restore. Scholar and artist, Svetlana Boym, in *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), distinguishes between two different kinds of nostalgia: a restorative kind, which seeks to protect an absolute truth, to 'reconstruct the lost home', and a reflective kind which thrives more on the act of longing itself and calls any absolute truth, or lost home, into doubt. Reflective nostalgia explores inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones. She writes: 'At best, reflective nostalgia can present an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pretext for midnight melancholias' (2001, p. xviii). And then: 'The dreams of imagined homelands cannot and should not come to life. They can have a more important impact on improving social and political conditions in the present as ideals, not as fairy tales come true' (p. 354). The performance I created was attempting to be reflective in Boym's sense and not restorative, to celebrate remembering reflexively and responsibly. The stories I chose to tell and the memories I chose to evoke were only part of a complex, incoherent and multi-faceted set of histories.

Fragment 10

Metacarpal Two: What if the dead were still with us? In the summer of 1914, when my grandfather found himself just outside Geneva at the outbreak of the First World War, I discovered that Jorge Luis Borges, his parents and his sister were also stranded there, while on holiday from Argentina.

In Borges' short story, *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* (originally published in 1940), he writes: 'Things duplicate themselves on Tlön; they also tend to grow vague or sketchy, and to lose detail when they begin to be forgotten. The classic example is the doorway that continued to exist so long as a certain beggar frequented it, but which was lost to sight when he died. Sometimes a few birds, a horse, have saved the ruins of an amphitheatre' (2000, p. 20).

What does it mean to remember? And what does it mean to forget? How far does our responsibility extend?

If the dead were still with us, I would like to think that they would keep us on our toes. They would remind us that their lives were not as one-sided as we might remember. That our memories of them are mere fragments. That they were more complicated. That events were more complicated. Involved more people. That the past was multifaceted and subjective and we have reduced it to something flatter. The dead might remind us that they were not one thing or another but many things all at once. In remembering my grandfather, I keep something of him alive, but I also deaden other parts of him, associating him with only certain expressions, colours, positions. In remembering some things, I am forgetting others. My responsibility then, is to remember that my memories are fragments of a much bigger, unruly and unpredictable picture. A complex, incoherent and multifaceted set of histories.

Fragment 11

Metacarpal Three: Rokem writes that theatre that performs history 'seeks to overcome both the separation and the exclusion from the past, striving to create a community where the events from the past will matter again' (2000, p. xii).

How do we keep things in sight without fixing them?

By making them matter again now.

Fragment 12

Metacarpal Four: John Berger writes: 'The visible brings the world to us. But at the same time, it reminds us ceaselessly that it is a world in which we risk to be lost' (1984, p. 50).

X-rays made the bones inside living bodies visible for the first time. Apparently, Roentgen's wife, Bertha, was disturbed by the radiographic image of her own hand and exclaimed: 'I have seen my death' (Macfarlane 2010). It is a world in which we risk to be lost.

Fragment 13

Metacarpal Five: Anthropologist, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, writes: 'Any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct these silences will vary accordingly' (1995, p. 27).

A commemorative performance is just one particular bundle of silences.

In my piece, I chose what to sound out and what to keep quiet. What to remember and what to forget.

Fragment 14

Proximal Phalanx One: I chose to use fragments as my method. Fragments in my performance and here in this chapter 27 of them. Because the fragment or modular form, as poet and scholar Peter Jaeger calls it, is a disruptive practice, disjunctive and often paratactical (2014). Words, images, ideas are placed side by side without conjunction. The explanation is implicit.

The fragment offers an alternative mode for cultural production. It allows for silences. It stimulates the imagination. It is a resistance to thought as purely outcome to the exclusion of process and engagement. I am inspired by the works of modernist poets (Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky and Lyn Hejinian for example) but also, particularly, by Walter Benjamin's modular, citational methodology in *The Arcades Project* (1999) as a formal approach to critical writing. He believed that 'philosophico-historical constellations could be represented by a dialectical image rather than by dialectical argumentation' (Buck-Morss, 1989, p. 67). In other words, montage and dialectical juxtaposition might be

able to say more than the traditional logic of a sustained, historiographical argument. Or it might just say it better.[1]

Fragment 15

Proximal Phalanx Two: The hundred bones of our feet are scattered like gravel (Berger 1984, p. 101).

The inherent incompletion of a fragment renders it a sign of the movement beyond itself whereby it would be completed (Clark, p. 234).

Any commemorative performance can only ever be a fragment.

Fragment 16

Proximal Phalanx Three: Fragments, assembled, disrupt.

Seeing living bones, assembled, for the first time, was disruptive.

Fragments made visible.

To disrupt, as a method, keeps history open and non-fossilised. In creating my performance, my challenge was to celebrate objects that used to belong to my grandfather, pages that were written 40 years ago about a time 100 years ago, without fossilising them. I wanted to acknowledge that how my grandfather's pages are read (by me or by someone else) is an ever-changing reality. My embodied knowledge of the pages changes as my present changes. As I transmit this knowledge, which combines my own rememberings and those of others (such as my father's) and my own associations and imaginings, so my knowledge changes. As does yours, the reader's. And so the remembering process continues. What

[1]The use of the fragment in literature and philosophy has a rich history, and can be traced from the Pre-Socratic philosophers (whose thoughts come to us in fragments); to the Romantics (for example Friedrich Schlegel and Samuel Taylor Coleridge); to Friedrich Nietzsche (for example *The Will to Power* (1968) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2005)); Walter Benjamin (whom I mention above); Roland Barthes (see for example *Roland Barthes* (1977, pp. 92–95)), the successive entries 'The circle of fragments'; 'the fragment as illusion', 'From the fragment to the Journal'; Jacques Derrida (for example his chapter '52 Aphorisms for a Foreword' in A. Papadakes et al. (1989)); to Maurice Blanchot (for example *The Step Not Beyond* (1992) and *The Writing of the of the Disaster* (2015); to the modernist poets (as well as the ones I have mentioned, T. S.Eliot and Ezra Pound). For discussions on the use of fragments, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy (1988), Timothy Clark (1992), and Simon Critchley (1997, pp. 105–117). See also *Creative Criticism: An Anthology and Guide* (Benson and Connors 2014, pp. 12–13) for a brief discussion of the use of the fragment in literature and criticism.

I attempted, then, was an action rather than a passive commemoration celebrating the vitality and aliveness of heritage. I wanted to perform a remembering that was open-ended and unbound, negotiating my here-and-now while dealing with a memento from the past.

Fragment 17

Proximal Phalanx Four: Commemoration, then, is a moment of action. The commemorative performance is something to be negotiated, again and again, in the ever-changing present. What is being remembered (person, object, event) cannot, should not, be restored in Boym's sense (see Fragment 9), but rather might conjure up a particular set of associations for the user. Associations that lead elsewhere, inevitably. Memories that point to other times and places, that suggest a different order of temporality and space. To animate the past in the now is, of course, to change it. In using fragments of my grandfather's story, but also other stories, histories, accounts, I wanted to keep the narrative multiple, personal, plural. By unearthing particular stories, I sought to encourage the invention of more. And the more stories that are created in relation to a past, the more that past remains multiple and unfixed. Vital and alive.

Fragment 18

Proximal Phalanx Five: On 21 August 1920, from Bialystok, my grandfather (now medically qualified and working in a hospital) watched the Russian Army advancing on Poland. There is a brief entry in his diary:

> *I was curious to watch the invasion and shall never forget the sight. The first to come into view were Cossacks mounted on fine horses. They were followed by a detachment of horse artillery. Then came a string of laden peasant carriages, drawn by the small Russian horses. A caravan of loaded camels came next, to be followed by a file of elephants carrying loads on their backs. I left because I had to be in the hospital in time for the morning round of the wards.*

Fragment 19

Middle Phalanx One: Trouillot writes: 'Narratives are necessarily emplotted in a way that life is not. Thus, they necessarily distort life whether or not the evidence upon which they are based could be proved correct' (1995, p. 6).

Any commemorative performance can only ever be a fragment.

Fragment 20

Middle Phalanx Two: We are born with about 300 soft bones. During childhood and adolescence, the cartilage grows and is slowly replaced by hard bone. Some of these bones later fuse together, so that the adult skeleton has 206 bones. We lose 96 bones along the way.

A commemorative performance is just one particular bundle of silences.

We choose what to sound out and what to keep quiet.

Things get lost along the way.

Fragment 21

Middle Phalanx Three: Singer, producer and film composer, Stephen Coates, in a book called *X-Ray Audio* (2015) writes: 'Many older people in Russia remember seeing and hearing strange, spooky vinyl type flexi-discs when they were young. They were called bones or ribs and contained music forbidden by the Soviet censor. They originated in the period from about 1946 to around 1964, during which the sound of such forbidden music became associated with images of the human skeleton. For, in a time when the recording industry was ruthlessly controlled by the state, bootleggers had discovered an extraordinary alternative means of reproduction: they were repurposing used X-ray film as the base for making bootleg records' (p. 9).

The recordings were produced laboriously one by one, the X-rays often cut into circles with nail scissors and then burned in the centre with a cigarette so they could be placed on turntables.

'They are images of pain and damage inscribed with the sound of forbidden pleasure; fragile photographs of the interiors of Soviet citizens, layered with the ghostly music that they secretly loved' (p. 9).

One of the first men to encode music onto exposed X-rays from medical archives and hospital dustbins was Ruslan Bogoslowski, who spent a total of 15 years in prison, at least five in Siberia, for his daring.

Every story is part of a complex, incoherent and multi-layered set of histories. Imagine your broken wrist, your lungs, inscribed with the music of Ella Fitzgerald or Elvis Presley. *Heartbreak Hotel* pressed onto your elbow.[2]

'One of your ribs leans against my skull' (Berger 1984, p. 101).

[2] See https://x-rayaudio.squarespace.com/x-rayaudiorecords/ for images of X-ray ribs and audio samples.

Fragment 22

Middle Phalanx Four: In 1921, when the Russian Army was defeated at Warsaw and practically annihilated, my grandfather wrote in his diary:

> *The defeated Soviet Army was now making its way back through our town. Wounded soldiers in ambulances and un-sprung peasant carts kept on arriving at the hospital and soon, not only all the beds, but also the floor between was occupied. We could take no more and I had to stand in the hospital yard turning away exhausted drivers… Our Russians were leaving. Somehow, the Commandant managed to organise a Hospital Train and the District Polish Medical Officer and I were ordered to accompany the train to Russia. We hid as patients in a hospital ward and emerged [as] bosom friends only after the Russians had left. Later on, he helped me to leave Poland, unaware of the false pretenses for my journey abroad.*

He managed to make himself invisible. And then visible again. These details get forgotten.

Fragment 23

Distal Phalanx One: Theatre scholar, Rebecca Schneider, writes: 'When we approach performance not as that which disappears (as the archive expects), but as both the act of remaining AND a means of re-appearance and 'reparticipation' […] we are almost immediately forced to admit that remains do not have to be isolated to the document, to the object, to bone versus flesh' (2011, p. 101, my emphasis). She re-thinks performance not as ephemeral but that which 'remains differently' (p. 101), transformed into knowledge that resides in the body, in memory, ready to be communicated to other bodies. This knowledge has immaterial repercussions we cannot measure or account for.

To commemorate is to reparticipate is to negotiate.

'In other words, you and I are only meeting places for messages from the past' (Calvino, 2009, p. 233).

Fragment 24

Distal Phalanx Two: In 1921, my grandfather managed to convince the local Polish authorities to let him go to Germany to pick up some important medical equipment for a new medical centre. He never returned.

He never saw his family again. He settled in Berlin for six years, married his first wife and then moved to London where he became a radiologist.

He had a daughter who he does not mention. She appears on a deed-poll notice when my grandfather changed his name from Avram Orlianksy to Alexander Orley in 1931. Her surname changed too. He writes:

> *My wife began to show symptoms of insanity and after a few months had to be confined to a special institution. I obtained a divorce during one of her 'lucid periods'.*

He says no more about her. Although my mother told me that once he found her talking to a spoon.

Fragment 25

Distal Phalanx Three: 'Remains do not have to be isolated to the document, to the object, to bone versus flesh.' (Schneider 2011, p. 101).

Fragment 26

Distal Phalanx Four: Looking back on a life after it has finished, a pattern emerges that often was not visible before. Once the flesh disappears, the bones mark out a particular map, a series of choices, strange coincidences, unlucky accidents and lucky escapes. The collection of diary entries and memoirs that I found, had been put together, edited, written and rewritten by my grandfather in his later life, after his second wife had died. Out of the countless episodes he describes, I have chosen only a few to mark out a particular map of his life. The other years, the ones I do not talk about, dissolve like flesh under the radioscopic glare.

As performance-makers, we choose what to keep quiet. What to forget.

Fragment 27

Distal Phalanx Five (the tip of the little finger):

Here ends my site-writing, which, it turns out has been an experiment. An experiment in trying to commemorate a performance that was trying to commemorate a life. In my original performance, I wanted to

Fig. 14.2 Emily Orley, *Searching Shadows* (2016)

approach my grandfather's memoirs, his work and the histories of which he was a part, in as fluid a way as possible, by allowing for silences, tangents, repetitions, incoherences and multiple voices. Rendell's spatial critical practice provided me with a frame to try and do this again, differently, on paper. But on paper, as in performance, as I grapple with what it means to commemorate again, I find that it has something to do with trying to keep the past alive and vital. Something to do with accounting for different perspectives and challenging one-sided historicity. I decide that, in the end, to commemorate is to invite re-participation and negotiation. To offer new possibilities (Fig. 14.2).

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