

Rhiannon Hall

## Gemma Unfolds

I hear the tautness in her voice  
at lunch, after class, as she hovers,  
like women before her - embarrassed to be seen.  
Gemma unfolds, rolling

sleeves to show tiny wrists, how a sharp blade  
drawn across flesh made her feel.  
I want to un-see

to escape her weight. I log the welfare concern  
with, I hope, detached exactness.  
The work / home boundaries I set

dissolve. Tonight, I will cry in front of the TV,  
a glass of wine in my hand and my dog's head  
resting in my lap. Gemma and her red,  
raised keloid scars will not be unseen.



## Friday Night Drinks

*Soheil was strutting the spotlight  
with green screen and Adobe Premier Elements*

says Ms Davies, with a smile that looks like it was drawn on,  
watery eyes that speak of marking until midnight  
more than once that week  
and the emotional drain of asking more than one student –  
that day – if they are thinking of self-harming. Her shoulders  
rounded under the weight of an empty bank account,  
counselling too many, with no one to counsel her.

*I haven't used the green screen yet* says Mr Grennan  
whose eyes are already a little glassy on his third Bundy and coke.

*No talking about school* Miss Khatri interrupts  
slopping four drinks on the low table between them.

Grennan and Khatri talk footy as the Tigers  
struggle 8 – nil to the Roosters at half time.  
Ms Davies turns, glancing at the screen above her head  
a cool glass cupped in her hands, she leans into the brown cushions of the couch  
drinking in the footy talk.

Mrs Phan pulls Ms Davies out of the cushions  
she stands too close  
*I'm worried about Gemma* she whispers.

Ms Davies tries to reply, she's  
dry drowning, trying to make room  
there's too much in her chest.

## Still Drowning

Finger (*noun*) – part of the body, slim, jointed

Midnight, wide awake  
my cold fingers on my belly  
deep breaths – in

and

out

Finger (*verb*) – to identify, accuse, point out

2am, awake  
the sharp ssttt of scissors on  
flesh sounds in my ears

Finger (*noun*) – an explicit hand gesture [the finger]

7am, woken  
dog wants out, gold breaks through clouds  
anger eludes

numb

Finger (*verb*) – to give sexual pleasure, using one's finger

Drinking Arctic Fire –  
black tea and peppermint – I  
want to be angry  
or sad for the girls  
who didn't consent, and who  
hurt themselves to feel