

Alba down to Nippon

James Alexander McKenzie



A meditation on Japan experienced by a Scotsman

James Alexander McKenzie (born 1994, Harare) is a Scottish painter working within the expanded field of painting, encompassing sculpture, installation, collage, found objects, music, poetry, prose and performance in his impulsive and therapeutic practice. Spontaneity is essential to his methodology and permeates whatever output he finds himself working towards. His methodology is ungoverned and non-complacent and through it he meanders with themes and expands his understanding of the degrees of his identity. He is heavily influenced by his work with children and people with disabilities and rejoices at their uncomplicated nature, and endeavors to attain the fullness he so often finds they have with his artistic practice.

McKenzie considers his writing to be painting in an expanded field given that his painting and writing practices are unified; with both he exercises an intuitive, fluid therapeutic technique. Sometimes finding ease in painting, sometimes in writing poetry, sometimes in a different mode altogether, McKenzie challenges what constitutes a painting.

Looking around me, all these people
I'm a fragment of their lives in the
grand scheme of things

Ah,

I can feel the freedom

I can taste the freedom

Getting out the house for a few weeks!



Here's to the mysticism of it all.
-He's got the strong arms that heavy-
weight boxers might have
-He's drunk
-He's sleeping
-He's the pilot
Show me the sentient buffalo video,
I want to reach for the stars.



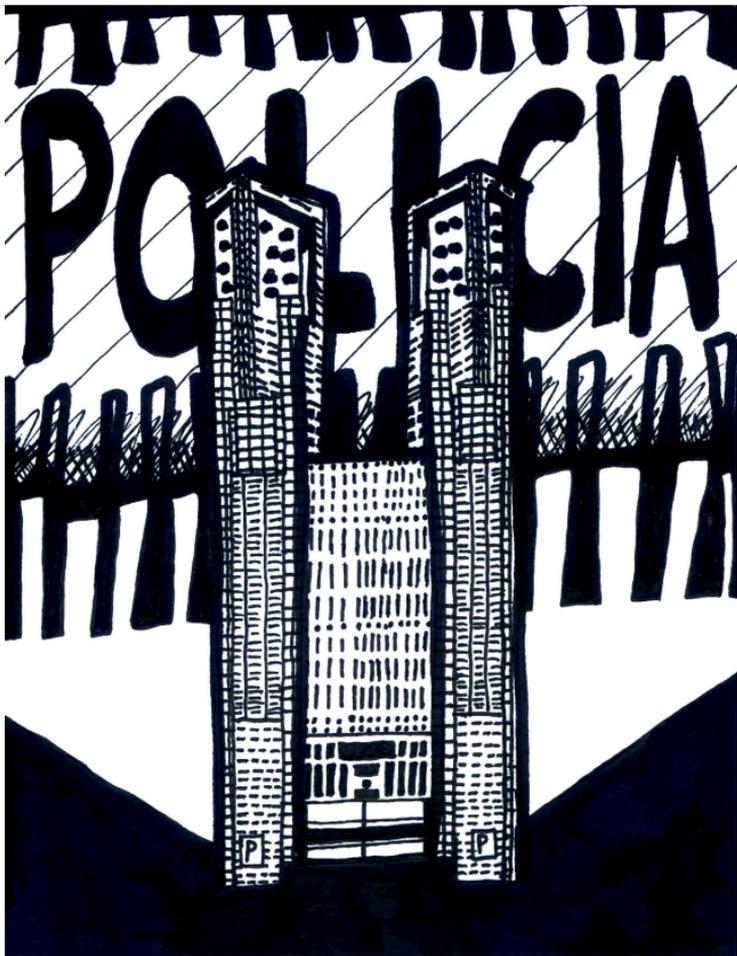
‘We should go to Golden Gai’
‘Getting cosy in the tiny, ramshackle
bars of Shinjuku’s literary and artistic
hangout spot.’
‘That’s perfect for us,
We’re literally artistic.’



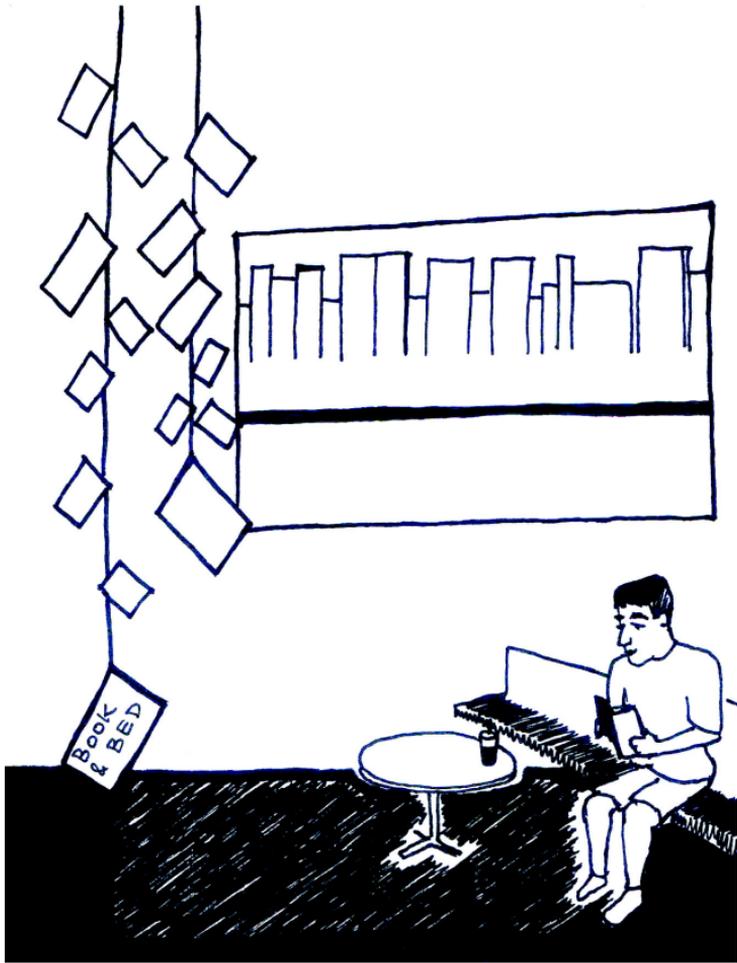
'Do you want to get loose tonight?'

'Nah, I don't want to get loose, like.'

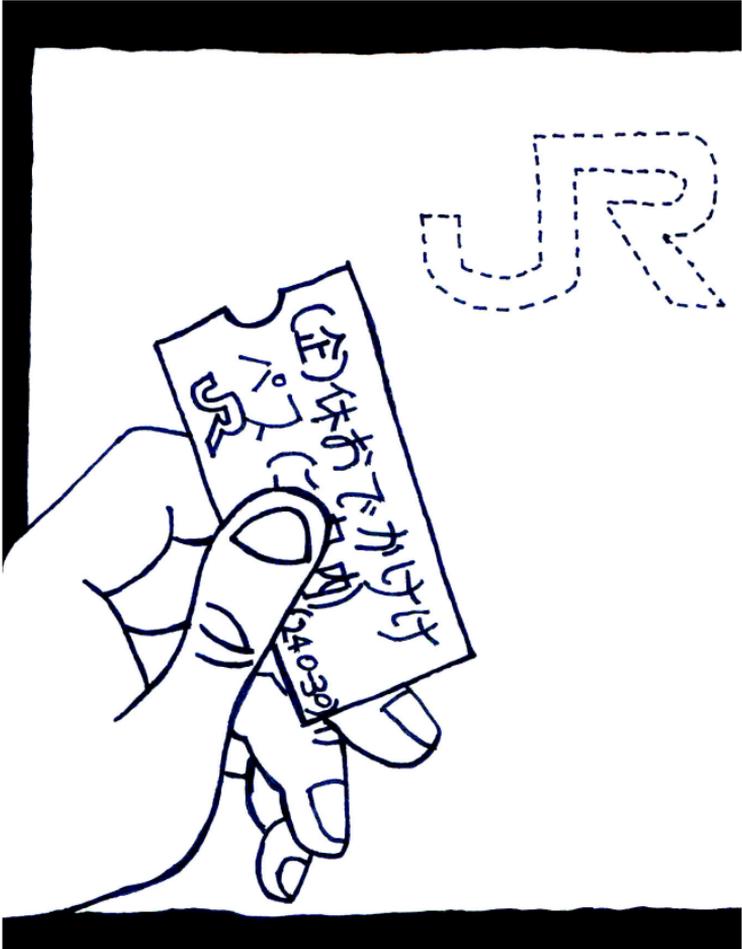
'Okay, well let's go to the Metropolitan
Government Building then.'



Reading relaxing poetry in an ambient
haven
eight floors above Shinjuku's red-light
district.



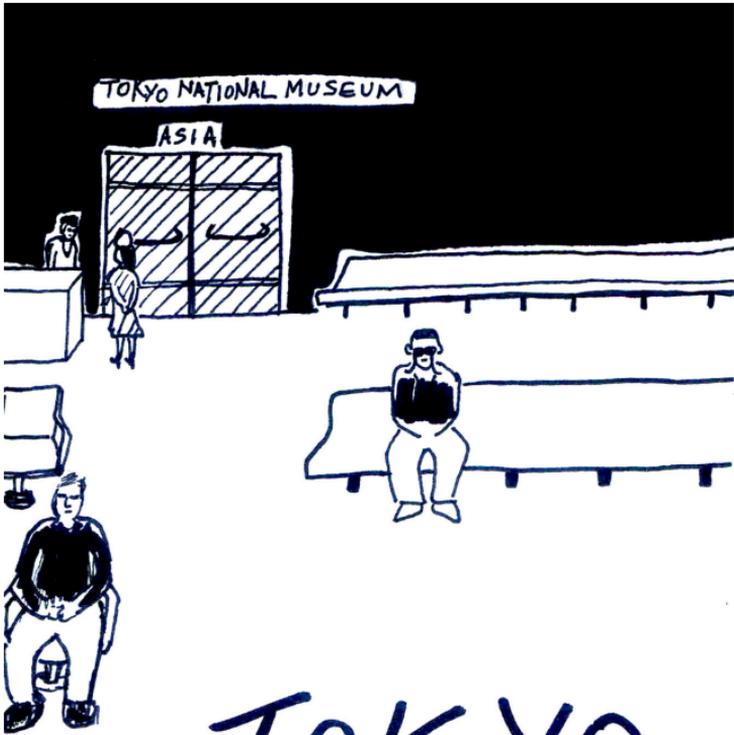
That's a single use ticket, mate;
You're trying to get several tricks out
of a one-trick pony
Good luck with that, mate



Always take the stairs;
53 floors of carbon-neutral content
Hostel lethargy;
three sleepy studs missing most of
their movie
Louis Vitton;
they look like they've been spending
doe
Solo research ventures;
sacred images of ancient Japan
Stoic Samurais;
Warlords of court nobility
Curving statues;
Buddhist deities radiating light
Five-storied-pagodas';
interiors not for public consumption
Contemporary artists;
meditating on the modern world using
the modern medium
Ineffable temples charged with belief,
unified by serenity.



Comfortable silences,
reflective spaces always around the
corner.
Sleeping anywhere without being a
spectacle,
waking up and seeing Japanese men
sleeping on the lobby's chairs too.

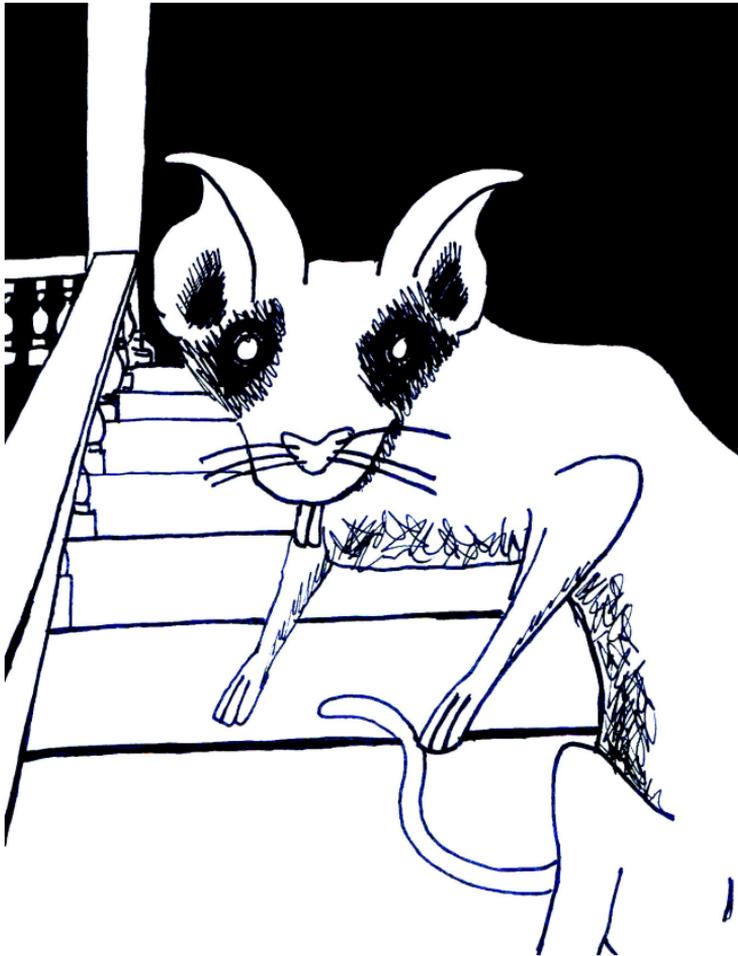


TOKYO

Japanese Spirit and Western Knowl-
edge,
perfectly balanced eyebrow-raising
consumerism
mixed with humble courtesy
contrasted against angry weapon-man
in Leith,
sat with a pint,
wrestling with the degrees of his enti-
tlement.



The stairs at Tokyo's National Museum
mimic the ones
at the foyer of Edinburgh College of
Art and the Samuda River
isn't so different from the Clyde.
I wouldn't jump in either,
Have you seen the rats?



Don't drink the blended whisky, all the
barley's imported
I've heard seventy percent of Glenmo-
rangie's barley is exported to Japan,
get the single-malt stuff.

J.A.M

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We all met in Dundee
but I'm from Edinburgh,
Glen's from Fife which is in between
Edinburgh and Dundee,
Frankie's from Dundee
and Dan's from Liverpool

FRANKIE

FLYNN

Have you ever been to Scotland?
Oh, you should, it's beautiful
It's very small, but it's beautiful
If you go you should go to Edinburgh
and Glasgow,
but you should also go up North.
It's very mountainous up North and
there are lots of Lochs -
you know, natural bodies of water,
and we have about two hundred and
eighty-two mountains.



My postcard reads like the abundance
of a Chagall painting,
it's like a party,
whereas yours reads like a Wikipedia
article.

ME:



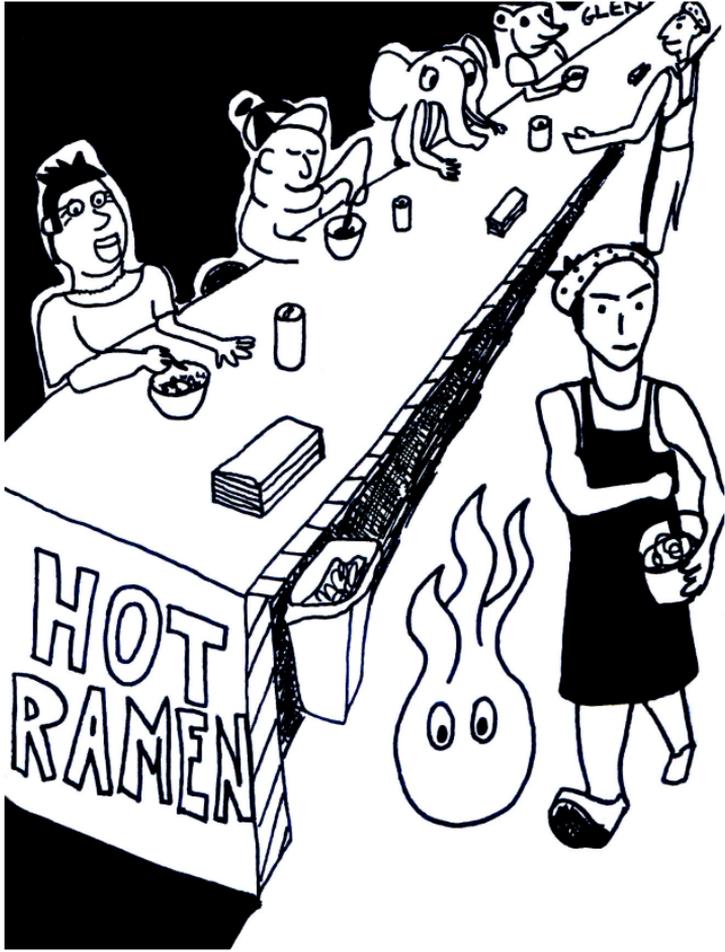
You:

Dear [REDACTED]

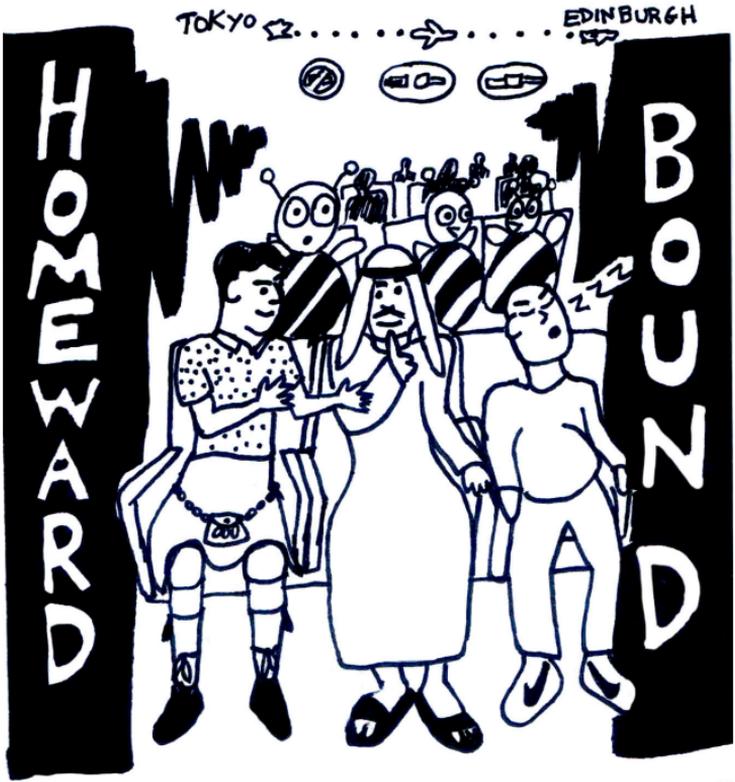
Today's featured article

The Pilgrim Tercentenary half dollar was a commemorative fifty-cent coin struck by the United States Bureau of the Mint in 1920 and 1921, to mark the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims in North America. It was designed by Cyrus E. Dallin. Massachusetts Congressman Joseph Walsh was involved in joint federal and state

Getting wheeled about from gaff to
gaff like some sort of commodity,
Approachable generous faces all
around me delighted to eat their food
But here's not home, though there's so
much I'll take with me -



Fondly musing the wholeness of Ben
Lomond
humming The Parting Song;
watching Local Hero on the plane
home;
comparing the rolling marshes of
Rannoch Moor to the plains of Inner
Mongolia with a passenger from the
Middle East.



Be patriotic with humility, there's no
need to be chauvinistic.

