AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC RELATIONALITY THROUGH PARADOX, PARALLAX, AND METAPHOR

All you need now is to stand at the window and let your rhythmical sense open and shut, open, and shut, boldly and freely, until one thing melts in another, until the taxis are dancing with the daffodils, until a whole has been made from all these separate fragments… That perhaps is your task—to find the relation between things that seem incompatible yet have a mysterious affinity, to absorb every experience so that your poem is a whole, not a fragment; to rethink human life into poetry. (Virginia Woolf, 1932, p.22)

I like to bake and make things with my hands. Special moments with my children are memories of working together in the kitchen, filling the house with smells of home; going out together and then coming back to the smell of cinnamon buns and apple or pumpkin pie. The aroma holds us; we cannot hold it, only imagine—a drawing together of fragments and memories that make love real. This is the same way I feel about my tile mosaic art practice. I pull together shards from other lives and make something new. The pieces lay down paths to new places. This metaphor further extends to the way I research as an a/r/tographer. I think about connections and situations from multiple frames. I like to dream, to imagine, to write fiction.

PARADOX IN APPLE PIE

the knife easily slides through the white meat
of the tart granny smiths
the peels fall zealously into the sink
coloured happiness haphazardly strewn
discarded shells
shiny and waxed
impenetrable in the natural world
but not immune to me

the knife is sharp
I close my eyes
and blot the dark away

S. Springgay et al. (eds.), Being with A/r/tography, 45–56.
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I chop the slices quickly
I have to finish before the next song
Jade is getting ready for the recital
she can’t remember the notes
she can’t see the pattern
how it repeats, only with a tempo change
the speed and rhythm masks
what she has already memorized
what she already knows
I chop faster, throw in the flour, sugar, and cinnamon
never with a recipe
stir it fast
my body knows
I can smell if it’s right
no, I need more zing

Jade is ready
She’s played all the other songs
it's Winnie the Pooh that needs my help
I tell her to play it with the sheet music
“don’t try to memorize it yet
just keep looking at the notes
and your fingers will begin to remember”
is that true? is that proprioception?
or is it only my body that remembers?
your skin, your touch, your lips
I try to stall her
“play it again
it needs to be perfect, with no mistakes
before you can play it off by heart”

by heart?