

The sounds had been manageably cut into large rectangular blocks – they are firm, gelatinous, milky-white, opaque. Half a metre by half a metre by one metre. A crew of roadies help stack them into place inside a huge weathered white hall. Heavy work – each block requires two people to stack them on top of each other. Ladders and scaffolding are required to stack the blocks up to the roof around the edge of the space. Grunting and squeezing blocks into odd corners. When the sounds are all arranged we close the doors and leave it for later.

Earlier that morning before light, we heard the men saying prayers, then their panting and rustling as they run past the building we sleep in. By midday their bare feet stamp the earth so hard that the thumps reverberate off the hills behind echoing through our throats and chests.

She has the same name as my great, great, great grandmother. When she asked I told her I can use sound to describe textures. “Patuparaiehe”, she said, “I heard them – they came around me singing – they sounded like greenstone becoming crystal.”

I had my heart set on clean pure sound but there is a fluttering in my speakers. I’ve checked the cables, connections, everything with electricity flowing through it in the room, but I still can’t bring to light which part of this chain is whispering uncontrollably.