

To the boy who thinks I know everything:

Before I moved to London I didn't know what a union banner looked like, or Trafalgar Square. Not in real life. But here I am waiting in the cold for the banner to arrive. You're here too, smoking a roll up.

'Thought you quit?'

'Did.'

So together we wait for a demo on a Saturday that probably won't come to much. I know you know the feeling as placards pass us: 'Britain Needs a Pay Rise' and '£10 an hour', and I think are these the best dreams we could muster? Before I moved to London I didn't know about Windrush, Groundnut Stew or the way the sky at twilight turns Oyster card blue.<sup>1</sup> I didn't know how to stick a key in a meter to turn the lights on, that if you don't have ten shiny pounds weighing your pocket down and a nearby Tesco then you get out the candles. When the candles run out you chat louder, laugh wilder and wider to stop your teeth chattering, to keep out the dark. Didn't know about how to write a novel, or Occupy or how to drink cups of tea all the live long day. Kettles whistling all over this town and boiling in the streets as they keep us at bay. Didn't know Billy Elliot existed in real life but he does; I taught him to read. Didn't know much about much except the red of the desert, some of what it means to come from a broad flat stolen land. Knew something of 'And through Vincent's fingers he poured a handful of sand'.<sup>2</sup> Won't forget that. Didn't know what 'we have everything you want here provided you're prepared to do anything for it' meant. Didn't know that's what sings through the blood of this city, what makes her rain water sting on my tongue, makes my window box bloom and fills us all up and empties us all out. That and fried chicken. Banner's here now and someone's got coffees. You touch my hand and give me a drag and I didn't know I could love anyone against these different stars or on a picket in the cold but then you unroll my hand put a coffee in it, uncurl the banner and start the chant, link my arm, walk with me, be with me, stand on my feet for company, raise your fist with me and do it all again to keep out the austerity chill.

We're marching now, marching still,

Love,  
Rosa.

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 We're marching now, marching still,  
 love, Rosa.

<sup>1</sup> The two blues used on the Transport for London Oyster card are Pantone 072U and Cyan U.

<sup>2</sup> This quotation is from the song *From Little Things Big Things Grow*, by Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly (1991). The song tells the story of the pivotal eight-year-long strike of the Gurindji people against the British Vestey mining company for the right to their land. Vincent is Vincent Lingiari, a Gurindji man and strike leader. The Gurindji won but the struggle for Aboriginal land rights, recognition, justice and sovereignty continues across Australia today.

Originally from Sydney, Australia, Rosa Campbell is a London based writer, artist, activist and teacher. She's just finished her first novel. She writes for theatre and page and builds art work collaboratively.