

Upside down: Danielle Cobley

We landed on an oxymoronic (to me at least) hot January day. The plane door hissed open spitting me out, zombie-like and nauseous, on the other side of the world.

I made my way down the airplane steps; the handrail so hot I couldn't use it for balance for fear I'd burn off my fingerprints. My partner, laden with bags, followed carefully and I hoisted our baby daughter onto my hip. Dizzy from my world being spun upside down I methodically made my way down one step at a time, trying not to trip, trying to put off the inevitable.

In moving from the United Kingdom to Australia, I understood I hadn't fled violence, or terror, or heartbreak. I hadn't come to lose, or find, myself. I hadn't endured a long journey by sea on a tiny, battered boat. I hadn't said goodbye to my homeland or to everyone and everything I knew, never to return. I wasn't forced. I wasn't coerced. I made a choice. And yet, when my foot finally hit the molten tarmac, it detonated my heart into a thousand pieces, scattering them to all corners of the runway.

I watched, bleary eyed and blinking, my free hand shakily shielding my eyes as the blisteringly bright sun quickly seared shut the exposed edges of my exploded heart. They would never again fit perfectly back together.

'This is it!' my partner whispered excitedly in my ear. I turned to look up at him and smiled wanly. Then, adjusting our daughter on my hip, I stepped over my broken heart and into a new life with not a small amount of hope that we'd made the right choice, that this would be our new beginning.