



# INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF WORKSPACE

Wendy Erskine

## TO BE FOLLOWED IN ORDER

Should you require any additional guidance, there is no technical helpline  
Please ensure that you check all component parts for quantity and quality  
IMPORTANT! Assembly requires only one person  
Required tools – NOT SUPPLIED

1. Open the door. Slide it up if appropriate, or turn a key.
2. Close the door.

3. Breathe in.

While it is still dark, breathe in.

You know that smell. You know it.

Cold metal.

Old paint.

Cut wood.

Oil. Linseed oil.

Order. Disorder.

Dust. Settled things.

The years. The metal cut yesterday.

Breathe in. Because you know that smell.

Even though you might have been there only once.

Open your mouth, just a little.

4. Reach for the light, which you will not find immediately. The tips of your fingers move across brick and rough cement. Or smooth whitewash. Or wood. Or something else.
5. Switch on the light. Survey what you see. Everything is at rest. It has been waiting for you all along.
6. Go to the paints. They are on the floor. And the floor is what Cement You are starting to know what you are doing. You can see the floor quite clearly. You push, with your foot, something out of the way. It's an old rag. Been used to wipe something. Maybe you lift it, take in its thick smell, see its smears, drop it again. There's a chance you don't lift it at all.
7. Go to the paints. They are on the floor, or on a shelf, whatever you want. Stacked. Calcified drips. You can see some of the names Stony Bridge High Visibility Biro Blue Eraser Pink Grey Day Goosewing Pale Embers. There's one, Goosewing maybe, that you might try to open. But perhaps Stony Bridge. There's a screwdriver right in front of you. Slip it under the lid. Feel its release under your pressure. But put it back again because there are other things.
8. Look at the offcuts, those pieces of wood lying in the corner. Notice the complex geometry of their angles. Offcuts, superfluous to requirements, but what were the requirements, what was made?
9. Move now to the wooden ladder. It only has five rungs. Five rungs that are dusty. Test that bottom rung with your foot.

No! Don't. No need for that. Stop it.  
A ladder is a ladder. Don't think beyond that.  
It's enough for it to be a ladder.

Jacob'sLadderThreeStepstoHeaven  
SnakesandLaddersStepstoSuccessStill  
ontheBottomRungoftheCorporate  
LadderMovingonUpLaddertotheSun  
OnthepandUpLadderofOpportunity

ladder

the

10. up  
Go

11. Go over to the hammers. They are in a line, held by nails. Lift one down and feel its weight in your hand. Take it in your other hand. Touch the metal, the wood. You can't help but swing it. Other hands have held it before. You know that. A vague sense of them might flit through your mind. Their fingers, long, thin, short, thick, their knuckles, the strength of their grip.

12. Cross to the big work-bench. So many things as you scan it – Stanley knife ruler tape measure drill driver vice one pencil two pencils a radio router sander plane mortiser saw. You reach out to lift something, the thing that interests you the most, you wonder why it is that thing that speaks to you particularly, why is that, why pick that thing and not the others, and then you put it back in exactly the same spot.

13. You can leave now, if you want. Take one last look. Breathe in. Breathe in again. That particular smell. You can switch off the light and slide down, close the door.

14. You can stay longer, if you wish, with what you have constructed. Alone with what you have constructed.