

The science of loneliness: Writer's note

This play started in the depths of Melbourne's 120-day lockdown in late 2020. You know what it was like. Unable to see or do the stuff we loved doing, I started to think about the impacts of loneliness - of this time – on our lives and relationships. Old friendships and relationships bubbled to the surface, bringing ghosts and unfinished conversations with them, and I tried to find a way to make sense of it all. (Not something you want to spend too much time on in the middle of a pandemic, trust me.)

I started to dream of everything that might be possible once we started reopening (we weren't to know we'd be thrown back in the deep end again six months later). I dreamt of kindness and honesty, of bigheartedness and chance encounters, being scared of jumping in headfirst too quickly but also desperate to not keep living the iso-life. I dreamt of emotional bravery and selflessly opening, giving someone your heart – what would happen if it backfired; more importantly, what would happen if it didn't?

Around the same time, I was watching all of Wong Kar Wai's films, and I think a bit of them rubbed off in this – all those neon lights and lonely rooms, every frame and pore saturated with emotion; so tender and heartbreaking and poignant.

I don't know what it means for the play to have been written between the February and May '21 lockdowns, but it feels significant. Strangely, very little has changed since then. Of the plays I've written to date, this is hands-down my favourite. I hope you love Leo and Art as much as I do.

GS

November 2021