

WILL TO KEEP // Teelah George

Beautiful sunny morning we were laying on the jetty waiting for a K Boat to get alongside. Dapper well-dressed passengers lined the ships rails looking at the rough wharfies. Propellers go hard astern and bring up a body that's been on the bottom for a couple of days. Just disappeared on night, no suspicious circumstances, Coxswain Freddy Reid recovers body, not a nice job early in the morning or anytime. "What's that silly bugger up to" George Pucci asks Malcolm Norman "It's that wog bloke and he is swimming gone to Europe" says Norm as the swimmer heads out towards Forrest River. Crocs, sharks and tides make this trip one to be avoided. State ship alongside launched a lifeboat, chase is on - swimmer very elusive - boat crew jacked off - oar used as a sedation - swimmer hauled aboard - gets trip south in straight jacket. Another day - afternoon "what's that coming up the gulf Norm?" asks George. "Must be something" replies Norm. Next morning it's on the ramp, an old catamaran under sail or tide. Vic Mac, croc shooter, had arrived from parts unknown at his own time. Mac used to call in every couple of years and build a new boat usually one a little larger or more modern, this year he put a motor in. Mac was a loner and he liked it that way, Jim Likend was into boats also, he tried to mate up with Mac, but the big bloke wasn't having any and he took off to Derby.

*Excerpt taken from, *Wyndham-with a ton of salt* by Ken Mellowship, 2004, Hesperian Press. This memoir, written in Ken's later years, recalls the lives of Meat workers in Wyndham, WA, in the Mid 1900s and became the departure point for Teelah's solo exhibition *Meatworks Mens Qrtrs* (2013) Ok Gallery, Perth.

Teelah George is a Perth based artist.