Statement of Intention

Throughout my piece inspired by 'Ashes', in Cate Kennedy’s short story collection ‘Like a House on Fire’, I aimed to focus on the impact of internal struggle and ultimately how the individuals works to deal with this. Replicating the style of Kennedy, I too have created an overall mood in the beginning of the story to allow the reader to feel a particular atmosphere. An overall sense of alienation should be felt as I aim to focus on the inarticulated life of a man in a state of disappoinment and regret toward his past actions. My piece follows the internal monologues of the father in ‘Ashes’, providing a his perspective toward their dysfunctional relationship, prior to his death. Dwelling on pivotal themes, I have focused on the matter of internal loneliness and coping with inner struggle as the father is further in the father’s state of mind is further explored. I have used the lake as a focal setting within my story, especially considering it holds a major focus in ‘Ashes’, and Kennedy’s writing appears to lack in detail toward it. Paralleling the thoughts of Kennedy, I have explored the abused feelings of a stereotypical man, isolating himself with his own emotions. This is contrasted when he discovers a sense of empathy toward Chris within him, and it is here that a great moment of
self-change can be identified. I have added the title "Charred," which is the stage before burning wood turns to ash. This supports the storyline of a man who has recently been diagnosed with a terminal cancer, dwelling on the thoughts that follow this reality, like a stone thrown with an undeniable outcome. In aid of this, I have also incorporated the themes of fire and flame with the words "poker." The lack of dialogue from Chris is the piece purposefully lacks in dialogue from Chris as I believe this is well provided for in "Poker" and therefore "Charred" creates balance between the two perspectives. This also enforces the idea that Chris had little to offer during the time they spent together, further heightening his partner's frustration. The addition of language devices such as similes, adjectives and adverbs creates deeper description, providing imagery and greater forms of insight as seen in "Poker." Colloquial language allows for a decrease in formality and adds a sense of familiarity for the reader. I felt this while increasing elements of connection and reliability. My story finishes with a similar style to Kennedy, as I show the partner "kneeling" placing down the poker. This creates greater familiarity for readers of Kennedy's short story collection.
with a crinking silence like the squawk of a gull, I turn to the ignition and find my hazy eyes pirated on the glimmer of blue that fills my windshield. Listening to my thoughts stick like clockwork, restless and struggling, they are so easily engaged by the surroundings, that find myself in. The evident beauty of isolation and calming nature that fills the campground is so heavy, contorted by the thoughts that run through the restless thoughts that have pressed play in my mind, with no option to pause, let alone rewind.

I recall back to the thick sultry air that enclosed the part of the car, photographing Chris and I hugging, an unnecessary blanket that hangs over the bed in early summer. That summer atmosphere created between us became a constant reminder of the failing attempts to ignite a stereotypical father-son relationship for years. I tried to recover the distorted remains of deficit left in me by my old man, but too many questions of identity hanged over my head as I watched him prove on and off the rugby field. No matter how hard I tried to tell myself Chris and I were different, I just couldn’t be re-formed by him. He couldn’t see I was only trying to raise a son who could not only reflect on a fulfilling
upheavali but like a satisfying lift, I couldn’t understand.

As I walk along the path that leads the ramparts to the lake’s edge, the familiar sound of scraping gravel beneath my feet remind me of the heavy sense created within the car as our tyres crawled off the security of the bitumen.

"You start with the pin, I’ll handle the gear", I’d suggested.

A shoal would be offloaded and the remainder of the afternoon would be spent dragging through attempts with attempts of noisy conversation while Chris maintained all concentration on the meaningless words that filled the white pages on his lap.

"Tonight, less than two days; Come on mate, at least pretend you’re interested.”

Another strand, eyes drilling further into the page.

The time to throw in a line would come upon us and we’d sit above the pin — lacking arcane blue depths of water, like convicts awaiting their offshore disposal. Shimmer of the struggling rays of light, hiding into the final hour of dusk while the drifting line ran teased the shimmering edges of the water. Scarcely, they’d call it. But the lingering light of a bloodsome discomfort once again wrapped around the dingy, creating contrast between two
oblique worlds.

Before long we'd be back in our young, camp chairs, accompanied by the hum of mosquitoes, rain in my hand, same novel in chin. He surely asks a question about his fishing conditions, last night's party game or once again being the only one of us, sense of discomfort in the camp. He'll surely ask a question about today's fishing conditions, or ever bring up last night's party game. I remember thinking.

The constant yearn for a mutually interesting conversation became such a battle that I'd let my probation win and settle it with a furrowed brow, subconsciously, a需求 gust of tempers if would lead my nostrils, each filling the obstrusive silence around us. Defeat. That was the look in those eyes he gave me. Empty and overcome, like a member of the losing pro-wrestling team, his eyes locked down to the ground, following the circular dust formations his feet so frizzly made.

Now staring out across the horizon of the lake, I feel a longing sense of compassion toward the kid. A connection I've never been able to reach, something that often lingered in the back of my mind, but I could never identify with. Sympathy? No, empathy. A response most of the parental attributes that
so unreasonably red in front of me. I'll never forget how much I let that desire to have a son who could think talk and just be like his father become the prevailing purpose of those trips.

The strong eucalyptus in the air tickles the sensibility of my nostalgia as I walk out along the timeworn dock that sweeps across the lake, like an outstretched hand, firmly holding onto the groundhog of its socket. Taking a seat on the rough timber boards, I feel a blockage dividing the material of my years from the splintered surface. Peeling to pull out the forgotten notebook and pen, I'm overcome with a rush of nervousness, perfectly stoned with the rustling of petrol that plucks through the quarter hanging above. I stare down into the man that reflects back on me, questioning the diminishing days that will make up his last.

"Around two years at this stage, that's all I can say": I'm surprised, yet computed that after mercilessly leaving the white walls of that white wash walls of the doctor office, it was here that my car took me. I can't even evoke the ten minutes of speech he delivered, everything was a blur until I pulled up here.
During the drive, a spark had developed into the course of the trip, and had then reached a point of ignition, using Chris not in the passenger seat to throw flame all over.

"For God's sake, what's wrong with you?"

How quickly those words now turned to ash in my mouth.

Without much conscious thought, the pen hit the paper, supported by my right thigh and the words leak through the ink with ease. Every thought, sentence, and word that I longed for him to know were poured onto the page like a bucket of soapy water over a carpet stain, trying to cover up a damage that could so easily turn permanent.

As the insincere water surrounding me begins to change to hues of orange and tangerine, merging with the descending golden globe, I witnessed all the latter into the glass jar I brought along and make my way to the "signature" spot that sat by our campsite. And with the desperate hope that one day a spark of nostalgia and a sense of significance toward this place will cause Chris to return, I form a gap between two crumbling bricks and tenderly, implicitly place the jar on down.