



~~Mr~~

Dear Ms Mitchell,

I am writing to you to tell you how much I understand and appreciate your song 'Big Yellow Taxi'. The music is fantastic but your lyrics really moved me. It's an old saying, perhaps even a tad ~~old~~ clichéd ~~but~~ that you don't know what you've got til it's gone' but I think it's ~~rather~~ more relevant than ever these days. I share your experiences when it comes to paving paradise, I live near beautiful bushland, undisturbed and peaceful... Well



if used to be. I ~~remember~~^{remember} as a child wandering through those forests, they connected to three big parks with well-maintained play equipment, the plastic shining in the sun.

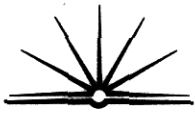
But that never interested me.

There's a limit to things you can do on a slippery-dip and a swing.

I preferred the secret caves I found pushing past the prickly bamboo and vines, yelping when I think I've run into a spider web, until

finally my own personal cubby house appears - leaves for a floor branches for walls and the soft sunlight filtering through my ceiling.

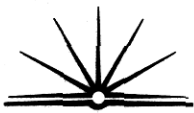
I am completely alone - the world doesn't exist and the only sound is the creek nearby - nearby out of water. I learnt many things



in my cave, I learnt about lizards and their inbuilt tail-dropping defence system, I learnt that if you ~~stare~~ sit still enough, the world can be completely silent, I learnt that getting my socks wet didn't ~~mean~~ REALLY mean I'd catch my death of cold.

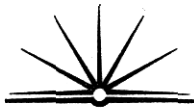
Walking home exhausted and happy from my private wilderness, the thought never entered my head that someday it would be gone, destroyed, stolen from me.

Now cars and trucks drive over my childhood every day, all day. It's called the 'M2' a "necessary part of Sydney's road work system". Well, that came was a necessary part of me - it contained my memories, my laughter, my games...



my leaps. It was MINE. It was the place where I learned to be me and my identity is as much in that one square metre of space as everywhere else I've been.

But the world, it seems is changing - progressing, developing, marching endlessly forward - but towards what end? What do we hope to achieve by gradually supplanting our natural world with one of our own creation. I feel that you understand this frustration, this helplessness, this lack of control and this ~~supplanting~~ ^{vital} need ~~to~~ we have to recognise what we've got here while we've got it. Nothing lasts forever, least of all the physical things in life - and I know I'll always ~~my~~ have my memories of ~~that~~ my place and they define me



in ways I don't even know. But it was a hard lesson to learn, that my humanity ~~wasn't~~, my people, my society valued concrete and cars over my very identity, over memory and ~~even~~ most of all over my teachers. Thank you for listening, if we can keep alive the memory maybe there's some hope.

Yours faithfully,