

**Sometimes I thought my autism comes only every now and then,
but actually I live with it everyday, I don't know who I am without.**

**Sometimes I thought my cucumber toes comes every now and then,
but actually I live in them everyday, I don't know who I am without.**

I chopped a lot of cucumber's in the main kitchen,
one day I found them really beautiful,

this is an art thought I am having at work.

I would secretly take them into a bag, hide them, put them in the fridge back at home, and wondered...

what can I do with these?

this is an Anna thing,

I've always liked

to collect.

I worked very hard at my job, as food services assistant in Aged Care,
until one day, I got so dizzy, I was overcome with severe vertigo.

My dizziness and headaches did not go away

3 weeks later my doctor asked could this be something related to your autism?
I have no idea maybe it does.

I had many tests,

the blood test was the one,

when something in my brain

split.

My speech slurred,

I wanted silence and a dark room,

my hands flapping,

my head ached,

I was hitting myself very hard.

I thought I was having a stroke.

I had no idea what my autism meant even though I was diagnosed at 5 years old.

My whole life I have taught myself to hide, mask and
be normal as possible

You have had a vassoo...vaa..ggaaall....syyyncc....ccoopp..yyyee....
eppiss...ssoooodeee.

Your autism traits are exaggerated because your brain and body has
no more tolerance for stress, emotionally and physically.

You need to take a very long break from the world

My body had had enough.
What does this mean?

I am still recovering from extreme autistic burnout.

My recovery will take years.

I really don't know who I am.

I have never understood my own needs and I don't even know how to ask for that.

My brain had enough and I've never felt more allowed to be me.

It was a relief.

I feel free.

Sometimes I would think of my cucumber toes, and the deep urge to wear them,

I have the ability to create something for myself that I know I will enjoy.

I asked my manager if I could collect the ends of cucumbers,

I started to get really worried if I was found out for taking the ends of cucumbers home,

I feared that I would come across as very weird.

I asked my manager
I'd like to make an artwork out of this.
Can I take them home?

She laughed and said of course take them home,

I would love to see what you make from it!

Two and half years, and I still felt like I wasn't very good at my job.

I couldn't think, make art or save, my money was slipping through my hands.

I lost most of my money financially supporting my abusive ex,
I witnessed the life of a drug addict up close,
I felt so helpless in his descent,
I had no control.

Life was very hard during this time.

I felt unsafe and unloved for a long time,

So deep in his mess and I couldn't fix my own mess,

I gave so much, I trusted too much, my memory is full of holes.

I have never felt so much shame, I let everyone I love down and
my art was completely

gone.

And I kept pushing,

down. til I broke

I created this video a year before I broke down. Ive always wanted to use it, but how?

I haven't felt this free since I was a kid.

I would collect all the time,
from sides of roads, parks, bush lands, beaches, \$2 shops and op shops

I needed to touch it, keep it, use it, play with it and imagine with it.

I have always collected.

I love it when I encounter something that fascinates me,

My cucumber toes were the beginning of a new collection, allowing myself to obsess about the
ends of vegetables, stems of fruit and study food-related objects.

**My art is thriving, my creativity is unblocking,
I am slowly recovering.**

**I know now that I cannot hide my autism anymore. For my health, my relationships, my work
and my art.**

**My art is celebrating my curiosity whilst deepening my appreciation and love for the way my
brain works.**

Sometimes I used to think that my autism only comes every now and then,

I am autistic everyday, and I don't know who I am without it.

Sometimes my cucumber ends come out every now and then,

I am an artist and I need to trust my process and respect my autistic brain,

I don't know who I am,

without it.