

You leave the car and walk towards the sea. All you feel is loss. You mourn one loss and then all the others follow. One disappearance after another. Losses that are yours alone. Losses that are universal. You can see what is going. You see what is gone.

Some leave in a flash, a sudden vanishing, a violent death. An unfathomable absence. Others fade, wrestling inevitability, and enter a final slow decay.

Information, noise, relentless, tight in your chest. Every under-told tragedy, every over-told distraction, every betrayal and untruth, every intervention missed – ringing in your ears.

You feel like a city collapsing. Everything buzzing around, yet you cannot track a single vehicle, map a single thought. Cracked, overgrown, lonely. Your open avenues and dark hidden lanes; your

parks of quiet contemplation; your traffic noisy and futile; your broken infrastructure; and abandoned works. Pollution, weeds, seeping into every corner. In ruins.

Randomly, you think of your Gran. She has been gone for ten years. It is hard to remember her voice or see her face. Like a drawing in the sand, the waves have all but washed her away. Each tide a generation. Yet, she is still inscribed in your memory. She is still a young girl playing in granite rock pools at The Gardens. She is still ashes scattered there seventy-five years later.

One thing she said always returns. One tragic line, she told your brother. Still haunts you. Breaks your heart whenever you think of it.

She was so wrong, so unbearably wrong. And yet, you have been thinking about it lately. You hear it in the news and on the socials; you see it in vacant teenagers and numb marriages; you feel it in the prognosis for the land, seas & air. You fear it for your children. 'Life is just about pretending', she said.

And yet.

And yet...

Some say they tell of rain coming when they are on the move, but as four black cockatoos pass over you, the only rain is the rain that falls inside your head. They are carrying something above you, some ancient wisdom, some ancient grace. Somehow their calm purpose pierces the restless noise enclosing you, and you notice the crunch of the dry twigs and leaves under your feet as you move through the sparse coastal bush toward the granite shore.

You sit. On ancient stone. Hunched over from the weight of it all. You watch as the clear water breathes in and out below you, lapping at the stone. Popping and splashing, playfully. Calm. Unhurried. Every little wave a brush stroke beginning to paint a different picture. A gentle breeze, a caring hand on your shoulder. A new image

forming. A new power generating. Your breath slows to the rhythm of the sea. Your back straightens, your shoulders slide back.

Sitting on a rock, patiently shaped by millennia, listening to the sounds you think form silence, but are so far from it, you begin to feel sure again - she was wrong. You are reminded of important things. Fundamental things.

You have memories that bring joy with each reliving. Memories – the best investment you will ever make. To create them. To bank them. Proof of life. Proof of living. Proof of possibility. Proof of hope.

Each wave rising then falling gently below you reminds you that your species is not yet gone. And there is always one more amazing human, one more extraordinary act. You are one of the lucky ones. You have agency. You have choice. When it is all too big, you can just make each next choice. Each tiny right decision, each little wave slowly shaping the shore - the meeting place of two worlds.

You remember that your children experience moments of joy every day, and they call for you when they are hurt, wake in terror, or need to share wonder.

You sometimes wake to the sound of wattlebirds.

You can walk in the rain and breath the perfume it makes when it cools the forest.

You can shrink the world to your immediate view and time will shrink to the moment you are living.

You sit, feeling the warmth the granite has been gifted by the sun and now gifts you, feeling gratitude, knowing you can leave little legacies every day, and hoping they might all eventually join up, like drops of new rain, and quench some piece of dry earth.