

WAVES

Dusk on a drizzly winter night on Sydney Road, Brunswick. Tram bells ringing as people rush to catch their ride home. Oil kaleidoscopes of colour on the road as tyres rush through sending colourful waves in all directions, to reform momentarily to their colourful wet quilts until the next car again disturbs the pattern.

A doorway light beckons and widens as people enter, letting slivers of illumine into the night. I enter to the chatter and hum of a busy opening night at the art gallery. Greeting the artist, a long-time family friend, I am keen to see what she has created this time. My eye is drawn to a smallish lino graph, outlined in white with a black frame and the waves weaving a pattern reflecting the beach on a moonlit night.

I've always loved waves, the sound of waves tumbling over and over towards the shore, or rippling on still nights and days gently lapping pier poles and rockpools on the coast. I had to have that piece to hang at home. A reminder of both the power but also the stillness of water.

As I contemplate the word waves, it conjures up the many themes of waves; not in the least the brain waves that are necessary to understand the various nuances of the word.

As children we learn to wave early, understanding it is both a greeting and a good-bye. A simple hand movement that can bring happiness in anticipation of a visit or sadness as someone leaves, a word that in our young minds has not yet formed in characters, but only in an understanding, universally understood, that something is about to begin or end.

Wind is the friend of wave in other interpretations. As the wind swirls waves of snowflakes into the excited faces of skiers on mountain tops, it also builds momentum to create untold damage; but as skies clear and sun warms the earth the wind sends gentle waves across fields of blooming crops and flowers and blows the seeds into swirls of future beauty.

Water parks with streams of water and waves create squishing sounds as feet, large and small create voids as pressure disperses the water in waves and the void moves into footprints until small rippling waves again fill the space.

Thunderstorms with ferocious fury create sound waves, as unthinkingly we hold our breath until the crash of lightening splits the sky. If at night, this flash lights the way for the spark to enter the ocean, initially highlighting the wave caps then disappearing into unseen depths below.

An orchestra starts resoundingly with crashing drums and symbols or melodic flutes with each sending different waves of sound into the audience to be interpreted as anger, sorrow or lightness welcoming and calming the listener; telling the story as much as any actors on stage. Creating tension, confusion and anticipation as the sounds move in waves interpreted by ears, a wavy appendage ready to listen.

We may also look at how our lives flow and liken it to riding high on waves, or falling into the depths and shadows, gripped as limbs flail as we are tugged in all directions but fight to become upright and ready to ride high again. In the current under the waves, we can feel the sand, seaweed, seashells and taste the salt as items of doom and as our lungs expand, a confused brain still knows to bring us up and then the warm sand, colourful seashells and seaweed teeming with life tumbles wavelike into a gentle blanket of memories of a great beach day.

And whilst we wave hello to new and old friends, we also wave good-bye to those we loved and those that loved us. If life is contemplated in waves, we know there will always be those moonbeams floating on oceans and sunshine to bring the waves sparkling into the shore and our lives.

The lino graph still hangs on my wall, a treasured piece that reminds me that life propels in waves but always there is a shining, rushing curl on top of the darkest depths.

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