

Kayaking the 1981 Macquarie Dictionary

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Affectation: *to make a show of; put on a pretence of; pretend; feign; to make a show of liking or imitating.*

Allowing for the rise and
Fall of the moon again and again,
Forgetting everything
Except how you pull, pull me into a
Consciousness filtered
Through polarised shades.
All is not what it seems,
This corridor of ageless mangroves -
Invented by the guttural edge of a bulldozer blade
Over and over washed by outboard motors,
Nothing left now but the comfort of my imagination.

Bouffant: *puffed out; full, as sleeves, hairstyle, or draperies.*

Mangrove patterns flow over the dancefloor
billowing, ballerina-like
then
retreating with the wet air's inhale
the mirror shattering under my kayak

Canard: *a false story, report or rumour; a hoax.*

A forest of putrid ugliness.

you think it
you say it
but I hear
whispered pulses of the rising tide,
soothing hands stroking the casuarina,
a heron's beak striking the fingerling,
a lone mangrove seed falling,
falling.

Duologue: *a conversation between two persons; a dialogue.*

Its just you and me.
I've tied my restless kayak to your trunk.
I'm listening.

Eskimo dog: *a breed of strong dogs used by the Eskimos to draw sledges.*

my kayak skates and shimmers,
drawn along by the current.

depending on the tide I may be
going north
or south
to the right
or in between.

sometimes I paddle
but often I just pause
my eyes
my ears
my taste -
I am this moment.

*See also: **Laxation***

Fling: *to throw, cast, or hurl; to move with haste or violence; rush; dash; a spell of unrestrained indulgence of one's impulses.*

mullet
throw yourself out into the world
breach the boundaries
gulp the unknown
make a splash

Gangway: *a passageway.*

why is it
that when the journey ends
my mind settles into its favourite spot on the lounge
but my heart lingers amongst the prop roots and cicada song

- *time doesn't let me forget*

Hoard: *an accumulation of something for preservation or future use.*

My studio is a space for storing thoughts –

A library of flotsam floating past my kayak, an overabundance of tangled mangrove roots lashed together with seaweed string, a boxful of bog rush, an assemblage of toadfish hanging around the ramp, a compilation of casuarina melodies, a shelfie of periwinkles, a collection of sand collars, and an aggregation of blue blubber jellyfish stashed at the back of the top shelf.

Interfold: *to fold, one within another; fold together.*

I fold into my kayak
like an A4 letter into an envelope.
One leg after the other - right leg first
keep it steady!
adjust my sit bones
stand up my collar
firm my hat onto my head
pull the cord to my right - deploy the rudder
check
grasp my paddle
crease my anticipation into a smile.

Jupon: *a close-fitting tunic, usually padded and bearing heraldic arms, worn over armour.*

Gortex hat, with strap for when its blowing more than 25knots
Sunglasses, polarised
Sunscreen, applied to face and neck, SPF50, preferred brand Nivea
Lip balm, SPF50, unscented
Watch, BabyG, digital, white, stained
Tissue, folded into a square, placed in top pocket of shirt
Long sleeved Katmandu beige shirt, collar up
Waterproof shorts, or if ordinary shorts, a small towel to place on my lap to catch drips
Life Jacket, neon pink, especially designed for females, with safety whistle attached
Old cycling gloves, also pink but faded
Clogs, also pink and also faded and also stained
Insect Repellant, sprayed with gusto over clothing and exposed skin, avoiding eyes

Knife edge: *the edge of a knife; anything very sharp.*

knife EDGE
concrete EDGE
EDGE of stability
rock L EDGE
shadow EDGEs
EDGE of days end
slowly EDGE away
a creek EDGED with boat wash
Microsoft EDGE
water's EDGE
the EDGE of my body
serrated EDGE

Laxation: *a loosening or relaxing.*

*See: **Mainspring***

Mainspring: *the principal spring in a mechanism, as in a watch.*

Time flows in.
Pause.
Time flows out.
Pause.
Repeat.

*See also: **Jupon; Noose.***

Noose: *a loop with a running knot, as in a snare, lasso, hangman's halter.*

What if I was kayaking in the movie 'Groundhog Day'?

The same time.
The same place.
The same direction.
The same reason.
The same distance.
The same clothes.
The same distractions.
The same eyes.

What would be different?

Different tide.
Different birds.
Different fish.
Different waves.
Different clouds.
Different winds.
Different mood.
A different perspective.

See also: Voltmeter

Obloquy: *the discredit or disgrace resulting from public blame or revilement.*

I wonder.... how did the toadfish get its name? Genetically it's got nothing in common with a toad or a frog. It's a fish. Although.... toads start out like fish - tadpoles swim like fish, maybe more like paddling from side to side than swimming. A toadfish *does* have some toad-like features – a bit ugly with a squashed in face. Blotchy like a brown hyena. Spiney, ugh. Poisonous. Interesting fact: the toadfish is also known as a 'dogfish', which isn't flattering to dogs. Well, most dogs anyway because a toadfish is *not* a labradoodle.

Pencil-sharpener: *any device, usually containing a blade, used for sharpening the point of a pencil.*

On the difficulty of notetaking in a kayak –

The paper gets soggy because my gloves are wet
The 2B pencil has disappeared into the bottom of the drybag

A mosquito is buzzing around my face
The pencil lead breaks (and I don't have a sharpener)
All the pages in my notebook are full
The biro won't work because the paper is wet
The kayak gets caught by the current and surges towards a large snag
The resting cormorant flies away upon approach
C.'s kayak is disappearing into the distance, around a corner
The paddle (balancing on top of the kayak to keep my hands free) falls into the water
The mobile phone in my pocket rings and rings and rings
The great thought I had a moment ago

Quarry: *an excavation or pit usually open to the air from which building stone, slate, or the like is obtained by cutting, blasting etc; an animal or bird hunted or pursued.*

I retreat to the shadows under the mangrove clouds
clouds of salt-laden air sultry, sticky on skin
skin inhaling the haziness of frozen clock hands
hands plunging into mesmeric thick water
water swirling around, caressing the kayak
 stroking
 stroking
like a predator smothering its prey.

*See also: **Noose***

Raw: *uncooked; painfully open as a sore, wound; crude in quality or character; ignorant or untrained; brutally or grossly frank.*

Eight things I need to improve on when kayaking –

1. Executing a 3-point turn in a narrow creek with less than 30 paddle strokes
2. Entering and exiting the kayak gracefully (*See also: **Interfold***)
3. Remembering which way up the paddle goes without C. having to point it out, *again*
4. Looking like a professional when a racing kayak sprints past like a sleek greyhound
5. Staying calm and cool in sappy muddy shorts after I've landed on my butt in front of an audience at the boat ramp (*See also: **Obloquy***)
6. Smiling and pretending to enjoy myself when the current is against the wind, *again*
7. Ducking my head quickly when approaching low overhanging branches
8. Balancing my paddle, notebook, pen, selfie stick, and slice of fruitcake all at once without dropping any of them in the water (*See also: **Pencil-sharpener***)

Salt-lick: *a place to which wild animals resort to lick salt occurring naturally there.*

bottles, empty of taste
the pervasiveness of grease and oil on soiled rags
fish tail trophies withered on the brick wall
fishing rods languishing in the rafters
a scum of salt and silt entrenched in timber
ragged cobwebs clogging corners
jars, barren and aimless
thawed fish frames hanging heavy in grey lace curtains
jumbled rope and dismembered floats
alvey reels abandoned in a wooden crate
faded wit chalked onto a concrete post
size 11 black rubber thongs, worn, crumbling, crumbling

See also: Hoard

Teehee: *the sound of a tittering laugh; a titter; a snigger.*

It dangles its melody from the mangrove canopy.
It rushes over the creek's surface, racing to the other side.
It gurgles and pops
and bubbles up the busyness of crustaceans.
It cleaves it's nails down a chalkboard.
It seeps into the corners of beached crab pots.
It hurries. It saunters. It plunges into dark recesses.
It snags on buttress roots, sprinkling itself like fairy dust
over the thick mud.
It struggles against the tide of traffic noise.
It inhales the decay of fallen leaves trapped amongst the peg roots.
It howls. It broods. It flickers and glistens until the sun retreats,
then settles amongst waning reflections.

Urn: *a kind of vase, of various forms; for holding the ashes of the dead after cremation.*

My casuarina skeleton lies like a bridge
connecting creek water to eroded bank,
my strength devoured by the hunger of a full moon surge,
my roots parched and shriveled, straining
against the ash of salt-laden air
holding both my breath and reclamation.

- I will return to the earth one day

Voltmeter: an instrument for measuring the voltage between two points.

Point A – fold into kayak and push off from sandbank near boat ramp

Point B – unfold onto sandbank near boat ramp

Winnow: to free (grain etc) from chaff, refuse particles etc, by means of wind or driven air; to blow upon as wind does.

Today - Northerly 20 to 25 knots, reaching up to 30 knots during the afternoon.

Tomorrow - Northerly 20 to 30 knots.

Inshore winds up to 10 knots lighter during the early morning.

The chance of a thunderstorm.

See also: ***Jupon***

X: the 24th letter of the English alphabet; a term often used to designate a person, thing, agency, factor, or the like, whose true name is unknown or withheld.

The twenty-fourth letter of the alphabet.

The twenty-fourth time you didn't share your thoughts with me.

The twenty-fourth plastic bottle caught on the outgoing tide.

The twenty-fourth birthday that should have been my twenty-first.

The twenty-fourth time I've smiled when remembering the leaping mullet.

The twenty-fourth time I've touched the clouds from my kayak.

The twenty-fourth elbow-slapper.

The twenty-fourth balloon that has burst.

The twenty-fourth mouthful of fish cake I've stashed in my shirt pocket.

See also: ***Raw***

Yam stick: a long, pointed stick used by Aboriginals in digging for yams.

The mangroves' pungent perfume assaults my senses -
 soft, powdery and sweet with a hint of rotting detritus.
I'm back on the mudflats, gumboots up to my knees,
 following in his giant footsteps,
 following the bucket and aged fork,
 the khaki stained shorts -
 the winters chill icicling my ears.
Sods of mud geology reveals the worms -
 my task –
 wrestle them out and into assured death.
Do you know how I felt about you,
 the love that
 lingered unspoken?
The salty scent of cuttlefish bones and iodine seaweed,
 a sweet telegram
 of longing and regret.

Zest: anything added to impart flavour or cause relish; piquancy, interest or charm; the thick outer skin of citrus fruits.

the stretching of a cotton tree branch through space
in search of light, dappled patterning through which
I slide onto the milky surface of the everyday –
a skin of suspended debris and decay
on unseen sea paths,
time and tide flowing to nowhere
a soundless journey with no end
I pass in meditative motion
dissolving, leaving no trace beyond a wake
across the surface of the everyday.

See also: ***Laxation***