

My day starts like this, a photograph:

A striped business shirt and baby-blue shorts stained and creased with memories, leather belt, fishing rod in hand, a silver bream held triumphant in the other; sometimes when I am riding my bike or paddling my kayak or hiking through tall lanky forests my mind untethers itself from what is happening tomorrow and the day after that and next week and next month and I am surrounded by a million shades of green, khaki, olive, lime, apple, pistachio, asparagus, and I think about my friend who drove me to the fish and chip shop not by the main road but all the backroads that she could find, weaving and meandering between strips of suburbia and pot holes and abandoned cars, and many of these streets I've never been on before even though I've been to the same fish and chip shop many times by car and bike, and I wondered why she prefers the backroads, maybe because she likes the curviness of it all as she is a yoga teacher but I do yoga too so what does that say about the way my mind works, so as she weaves and meanders I adopt a sitting corpse pose and in my mind's eye I stare at the bobbling of the bobble-headed buddha stuck with the alliteration of baby-blue blue-tac (not the white tac) on the dash of her car and try not to scream why, why, why; this week The Bureau of Meteorology says that we are heading into a La Nina weather phase which means we are going to get more rain which is better than no rain which is how it has been this year, so dry, dry, so very dry that walking on our grass is like eating Kettle potato chips but not as satisfying; Dad wore the same type of clothes no matter where he was, baby blue shorts to work, to dinner, out fishing, a constant cycle of repurposing, of re-categorising from clean to not-so-clean to dirty to the rag pile to the bin, a lot of baby blue shorts but there also was the baby blue safari suit that he wore to weddings and funerals, there were lots of weddings, not so many funerals until after he died then after that his brothers and sisters started dying so Mum and I went to lots of funerals but Dad's baby-blue safari suit stayed at home and I think Mum still has it because she thinks it will be worth a lot of money one day or maybe because it reminds her of Dad but she would never tell me that; why, why, why; nowadays when I go out into the world (usually Woolies) my world turns into lines, arrows, crosses, hazard tape, do this, don't come in if you're sick and sniffing, and yes I'm sniffing but I'm not sick because I have sinus so I go into Woolies and try not to sniffle or dribble my way through Woolies, discrete with my tissue, feeling guilty as I reach into my pocket to reuse the tissue I used just a few minutes before, and I reflect that this year is hell for people with allergies who sniff and dribble like I do but need to go out into the world to get food and more tissues like everyone else; that bream is not the biggest he has ever caught and he's not looking at the camera with a forced smile and guarded eyes like other photos but it's the way he is looking down at that bream in his hand that captures me, the cow-lick like mine, the grey hair fringing his tanned lined face, the overwhelming pungency of salted worms and fish scales blowing across the photo frame with the south-east sea breeze, and I want to remember so I can forget about my tears and anguish when the waves reached out to me with the sea's angry foam whipping into the air as we weaved and meandered through the turmoil, back to the baby-blue calm of the creek, back to a million shades of green and the safety of the land's straight lines.