

I Am By Jamie Brooke Kennedy

There is a place I like to stop on my daily lockdown walks. It's a moment of reprieve from the hard sandy path I usually follow. The walking feels good in my body, but stopping here is the reason I go every day.

I veer left off the beaten path onto a wide and empty stone walkway that leads to a locked gate. I always approach the weathered grey fence in the same way, lifting my arms and leaning against the top rail, feeling the hardness of the solid wood underneath my arms. I carefully rest my chin on the splintery wood surface, tilting my head to one side. A sense of relief washes over me, breaking up the monotony of putting one step in front of another. I give into the moment of the rest. I turn off the podcast I'm listening to and my senses kick in.

I look out across the cropping of land on the other side of the gate, a mortal place with its tombstones in haphazard rows that eventually dip down past the part of the hill I cannot see. I see the towering memorials, the tree line, and then the land falls away to the water below. The deep ocean blue stretches until it meets the other side of the entrance into the Sydney harbour. The whitewash of the ocean splashes against the impeding sheer cliffs of the eastern beaches that climb up to meet the green flora and the white lighthouse above.

I hear the sound of the crashing waves so far away that it becomes one continuous roar. Around me, the birds chirp calling out their gossip of the morning to one another. I hear the rustling of the wind as it moves through the trees and I stop thinking. The thoughts that bubble up now die down. The struggles I label as mine fade away. The personality I cling to daily and the stories I tell myself about who I am disappear. I am not the body that I struggle to keep thin. I am not the face that looks back at me in the mirror daily.

For just this moment, I am only an observer of the world around me. It's achingly peaceful, this feeling of being. I am a soul. At this moment, I am.