

Home: Jamie Kennedy

It was March 16, 2020. I watched the landscape whirr by as we raced to the San Francisco airport. I could feel my heart pounding uncomfortably in my chest; the tempting anger of anxiety swelled in my throat.

Moments before, I had hugged my Mom tight. A quick snap of a photo that would live in the Cloud forever, and then we were off. My husband and I, alone again, left to navigate the journey back to our home in Australia.

But this time was different. Something was coming.

I could feel the tendrils of the unknown racing alongside us all the way into the airport, wrapping themselves around us as we discovered our flight was cancelled. I sensed the foreboding unease as we waited in a long queue of angry Australians just wanting to get home before well, we didn't know. The mass confusion licked at our feet as we slept in the airport hotel that night, wondering, waiting, as the world shut down around us.

I felt the darkness follow us on board. The anticipation silenced us all. Fourteen-and-a-half hours later, we landed in Sydney. There was no time for relief. And then. Chaos in complete silence as the streets emptied and humans retreated deep into their homes.

But this isn't a story about Covid. Not really.

This story is about when we arrived in San Francisco two years later.

As the wheels touched down on the country I grew up in, the place where my parents raised me, I felt a lump rise in my throat and my eyes wet with emotion. As we taxied to the gate, the view before me felt tired. I felt tired.

As we disembarked and I felt the gust of chilled wind brush my cheeks, my body gave an uncontrollable shiver of excitement.

Rental car, check. Right side of the road, check.

The airport disappeared into the distance as I picked up speed on the freeway.
The tendrils of the unknown licked at me softly, gently, eagerly.

I was going home.