

Five Senses¹

September 3rd 2021

Curra Moors Fire Trail

Those of us who carry a camera privilege sight over all the senses and, come to think of it, everyone who reads this photographic essay also privileges sight. It's buried in our language. We are the "clear-sighted". For us to be "out of sight" is to be "out of mind". Indeed, as Shelley said, "where eyes are shut, nothing can be seen".

But I am going to ask you to go further today! Most know that I am, amongst many descriptive, a "birdwatcher", another term that privileges sight! Most who have been "birdwatching with me will also know I am more of a bird-listener", attuned to the merest sound coming out of that bush, be it the tiny chirp of a Beautiful Firetail (yesterday, twice) or the loud squawk of the recently-arrived Channel-billed Cuckoo (on September 1st). So, please, after you read the following just close your eyes for a moment and imagine the trill of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo, the warbling of a Grey Shrike-thrush, the screech of a flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos as they move from one location to another! All were present today. Those, and more, and the soundscape was all the richer for their presence!



But I also want you to touch. No, not Prickly Moses, now almost all its flowers over! But who cannot but touch, even fondle, *Persoonia pinifolia* when one passes?

¹ For those with a literacy bent "Five Senses" is the title of a delightful collection of poetry from the much-loved poet and champion of environmental and Aboriginal rights, Judith Wright!

"Now my five senses
gather into a meaning
all acts, all presences;
...."

And I want you to smell! Yes, crush a few leaves of that *Prostanthera* and take a whiff! It's heady stuff!

Ok, you can also taste! There must surely be a few berries left on that *Leptomeria acida*!

Now, they are the "five senses". However, as I headed out today, I had another sense or two: of anticipation with what I might discover; of dread with what I might hear at 11.00am after I emerged from my little slice of solitude.

So let us head out into that solitude with anticipation and use all the senses, even if we are privileging sight as we travel.



Someone is definitely privileging smell and taste at this very moment!

As is our want, we were walking by 8.00am. It was a wise move. While we met two other parties over the entire 2 hours 30 minutes of our "exercise", all car parks in Royal that we drove by were full or beyond full, and this is a Friday!



Definitely a “sight for sore eyes”



Perhaps a sense of anticipation! Of a time when we can gather together once more



Definitely a sense of anticipation. I have been waiting for the *Styphelia triflora* to flower for some weeks. I have another week ahead before seeing them bloom



A sense of excitement at seeing *Caustis recurvata*



And of amazement at the *Kennedia prostrata*



A sense of the familiar in what I call “Sprengel Street”²

² One particular stretch of the track has so many *Sprengelia incarnata* it just excites the senses

You have the idea! We are enriched when we open up all our senses and simply be in the moment, sensing what is around.







And of course, a sense of wonderment.





The road less travelled

Brian Everingham

