

On grief and loss (a poetic reflection)

Urszula Donovan

The swell of the sea lives deep within me

I am not my grief

I am not my loss

Today I choose to be with the gentle ripples, and

Bright specs of light begin to move with me like golden butterflies

calming the swell



Figure 1. Urszula Donovan, *On grief and loss*, 2021, acrylic, gold leaf, seaweed on cotton-rag paper, 270 x 210mm.

Creative arts therapist statement

Alongside the natural world, creative expression is a lifelong companion to me. This two-part multimodal piece emerged from a year-long inquiry into my own grief for my parents through painting and printmaking with both traditional studio materials and collected organic materials, including sand, seawater and seaweed. Alongside art-making, poetic reflection is a therapeutic tool I often use as a container to hold what I am coming to know of my lived experience. I have come to trust the creative process to help me move grief from an internal to an external place in a safe way. Reflecting on my process has been important and includes the sharing of my work with others, which has helped to inform how my inquiry has moved forward. It is also through touch and connection – to my late dad’s imagined hand, my mum’s hands in the advanced stages of Alzheimer’s disease, and the materials in my own hands which help guide me – that I have found a way to be with my grief that feels nourishing. Slowly over time, this has allowed me to welcome my grief. I feel deep gratitude to be able to make sense of grief in this way and trust my own experience will help me to companion, facilitate, and collaborate with others on their healing journey.

Published: August 2022

Issue: Vol.17, No.1

Word count: 264

About the author:

Urszula Donovan

BA (Hons) Creative Writing, GradDip Journalism, GradDip Therapeutic Arts Practice

Based in Wadawurrung Country on the Bellarine Peninsula in regional Victoria, Urszula (she/her) is a Polish-Australian multimodal artist-writer and creative arts therapist in training making meaningful marks that are personal and also hold universal themes, such as grief and loss, trauma and joy, hope and strength. Currently in her final year of the Master of Therapeutic Arts Practice at the MIECAT Institute in Naarm (Melbourne), Urszula is completing a year-long arts therapy placement in the Children's Cancer Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital. She is also currently studying the Certificate in Initiatic Art Therapy at the Institute for Sensorimotor Art Therapy. Urszula has a special interest in working with children and young people and their families using sensorimotor and trauma-informed creative arts therapy. She welcomes vulnerability as a strength in her arts-making, gently staying with discomfort while remaining open to all the poetic possibilities in healing through multimodal forming.



This work is published in *JoCAT* and is licensed under a CC BY-NC-ND-4.0 license.