

Racing Dusk | Morning Light

D'Entrecasteaux National Park
March 2022

Your son had just stopped crying and fallen asleep when you left. As you reach the car park, it's already getting dark. Your focus is singular: getting to the peak of the monadnock before the sun goes down. It's a short but relatively steep trail to the summit, cutting through the forest and over wooden boardwalks that lead onto stone.

Your breath is heavy and your calves bear the strain of your body's weight as it makes its way up the incline. The surface of the granite is dry and there is less chance of slipping than there is of a rolled ankle. Triangular markers set into the stone's surface guide you upwards.



At the peak, the golden glow of the setting sun beams out over the tufts of grass that have made their home in the monadnock's depressions. In the far distance, you see the white wash of waves crashing against the western and southern coastlines.

The ocean breeze, careening over the Chudalup Plains via the Southern Ocean, is fierce and cold against your skin, and it blows the hat off your head. You can smell the salt in the air as the sun dips below the horizon.



Today you woke up to your 37th birthday and blue skies streaked with wispy cloud. Carpeting the cliffs is a sea of coastal heathland, lit up in bright green by the early morning light.

The trail is compacted limestone and sand, an innocuous surface that demands little of your attention. Looking ahead, a structure – a tower or weather station – is perched atop the highest point of the coastline. The trail weaves its way through the heath towards this point in the distance, guiding both your gaze and your steps.

The air is crisp and has a lightness to it, and it causes your skin to break out in goosebumps with its chill. You pull your hoodie over your head, feeling warm and soft and protected. The sea stretches out into the horizon, a gently coruscating layer of blue that merges with a dull white band of clouds.

There is a sense of profound freedom that comes with walking the coast: an affect that emerges from the unique combination of frigid air, clear light, the salt smell of coastal plants, and of course, your body and its heightened senses as it moves within this vast open space.



On the return leg, you encounter some kangaroos, feeling happy having shared this space and time.



* sulphur *