

On Preferring Life

B Winter enfolds and warms within the closeness of the low, scudding clouds, there is no doubt that — in most temperate climates — we eventually become ready for the surprise of Spring. There can be few things as giddy as feeling the last rays of thin, Winterish sunshine catching the bursting buds of Spring's first crocus blossoms.

This was not the Spring, however, to which I had first become accustomed. That was a Spring which saw its incubus in September in the Western Australian bushland: wetness on the eucalypt leaves and droplets sliding down the slender tendrils of a blackboy bush; the furry, green-petalled, red-stemmed shoots of the kangaroo paw; the rich, abundant blues of leschenaultia; or the royal indulgence of purple hovea climbing over tree-stumps . . .

The Indian Ocean, harnessed by the prevailing winds of the Roaring Forties, still rose strongly against beaches of infinite gold. Clouds gathered in an accumululus of perfection on vastly distant horizons. The sky would begin to open to its full majesty; the Spring clouds arranged to give scale to the scope of its greatness.

Spring in London was an entirely different experience.

Spring: On Resuming Life

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the lessening
Of moisture on the streets,
And take a passing pleasure
That the suddenness
of crocus fields
and daffodils
is past discreet.
It is dark Winter's end.
Cautious, as the dawn is always cool
Lest April rains
make optimists the fool.
But see the blossoms
bolder than the trees —
Which pause hesitant,
restraining yet their leaves —
Then take that joy
and unrestricted heart
That with the end of stormy months
There is yet life to start.

London, March