

## EVERYTHING MUST GO Meredith Wattison

‘Nor is this all. A thing which we saw, a book which we read at a certain period does not merely remain for ever conjoined to what existed then around us; it remains also faithfully united to what we ourselves then were and thereafter it can be handled only by the sensibility, the personality that were then ours.’

Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*

### 1. DRUMMING

Culling my bookshelves

I sit on a drummer’s stool,

the perfect height

as I come to the orange Penguins;

I reread them through my hands.

Charities declined them; no space.

My hardline – to keep (two), to environmentally throw

(a battered, bittered few), to sell (most) to Berkelouw.

Leo and Henry gently sort as I have to walk away,

find a pensive corner (where capacity extends to six)

in a dim café, a small sanitised table, sweet coffee. Sold and bought.

Three IKEA bags full. (repeat next week)

### 2. I THINK OF PROUST’S PAN OF MILK’S MAGNOLIAS/SAILS

It’s been like walking into

an arcade with fire alarms blaring,

a firetruck outside, idling, garbling, flashing,

a new café being fitted out has thrown off sparks.

Helen wrote that my COVID plan (to read all of Proust)

was ‘the perfect solution’ (she has endured the death of a dog and accepted another)

and Judith has returned to the piano

for three hours a day. I walk my dog at dawn

for the shifting twilight, that strange fading indigo,

the nil, its cancelling reveal, our tender,

freeform orbit. I want this poem to barely touch the page.

### 3. D.H. LAWRENCE'S HAT BLEW INTO THE SEA HERE IN 1922

His beach at Thirroul has collapsed under recent pounding waves,  
it is mesh fenced. A man slips through to see, I call out,  
he says, 'I'm only going this far'.

I sit along the coast on an almost empty beach; it is cold,  
a naked little girl, joyously defiant runs/skips past me, she wears  
sunglasses, each lens a plastic daisy, we say hi, her sister follows.

That stale question,

'What would you say to your child-self?', is answered.

Her little brother carried by her mother  
looks like Ed Sheeran, her father lingers  
wringing their clothes.