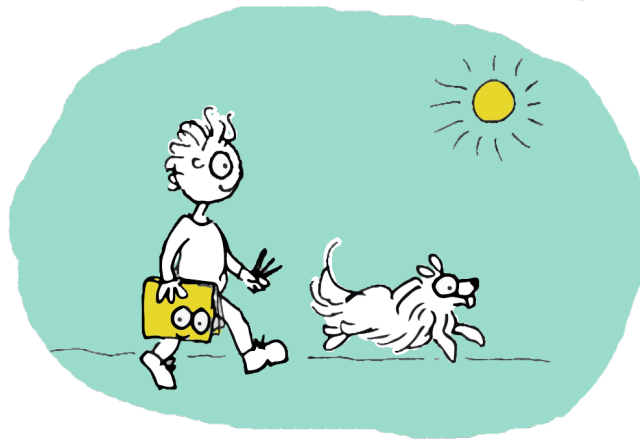
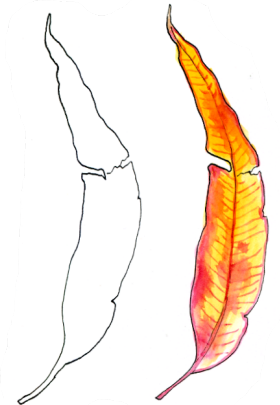


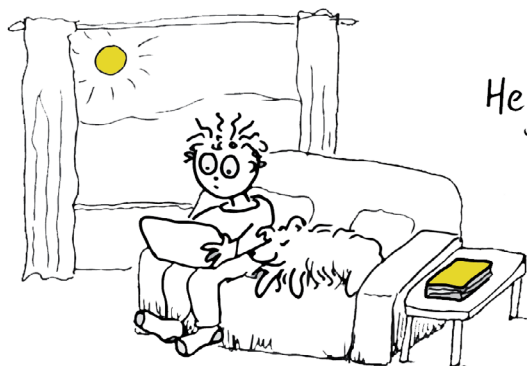
Paula Peeters

Draw &
write in
the book!

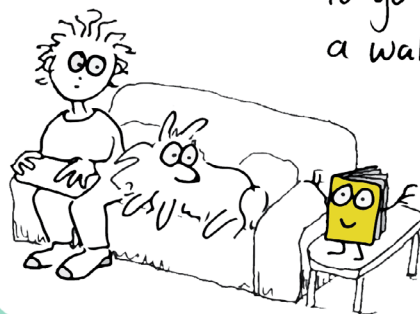
TAKE this BOOK for a Walk



A step-by-step guide to
nature journaling



Hey!



I want
to go for
a walk!

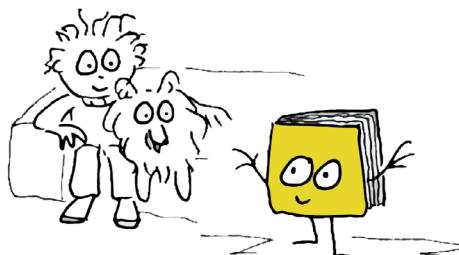
Did you
hear that? The book
was talking!



Hi!
Yes I'm your book.
But once I was
a tree.
I spent my
whole life
OUTSIDE.
So I want to
go outside!



The sun is
shining!
What are
we doing
inside?



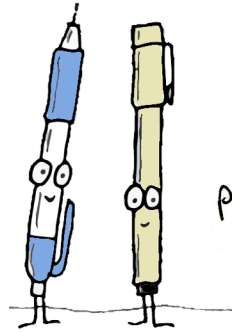
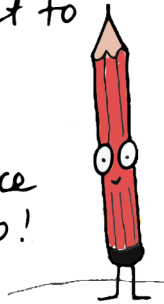
I feel happy when
I'm outside,
in nature.
Maybe you will too,
since you are
animals, and part
of nature too.



Take me for a walk, and I'll show you some amazing things!

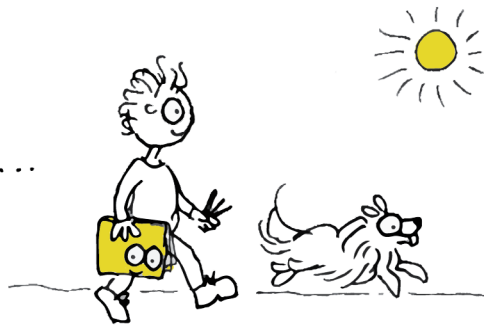
Don't forget to take us!

I was once a tree too!



The plastic parts of us are made from prehistoric plants and animals!

And so I did...



And here's what the book showed me...

Also by Paula Peeters:

Nature journaling

A walk in the mountain forests (2023)

Make a Date with Nature: An Introduction to Nature Journaling (2016)

Fiction

Stories from the Wildworld (2018)

Colouring books

Bimblebox Wonderland (2015)

Riverina Grassland Ramblings (2016)(with Matt Cameron)

The Southern Bell Frog Story (2019)(with Helen P. Waudby)

Wondrous Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands (2022)(with Jed Pearson and
Martin Henery)

Dynamic Lagoons (2023)(with Manu Saunders, John Hunter and
Deborah Bower)

Copyright © Paula Peeters 2020

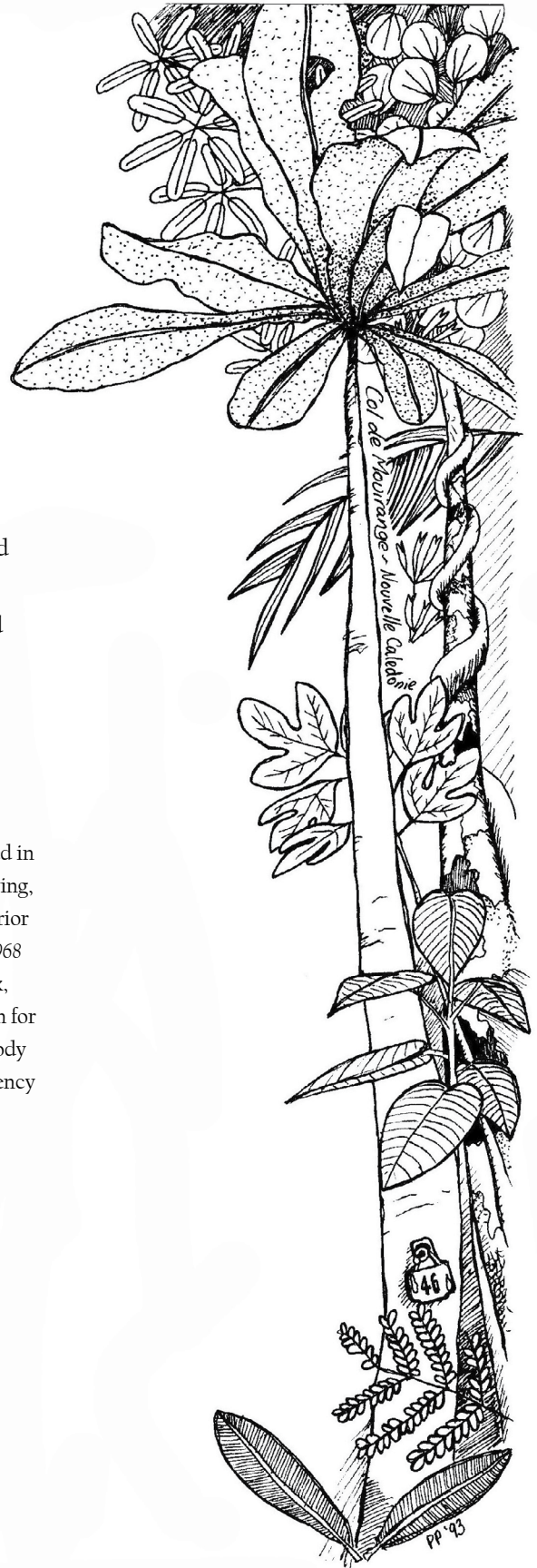
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher. The Australian Copyright Act 1968 (the Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10 per cent of this book, whichever is the greater, to be photocopied by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to the Copyright Agency (Australia) under the Act.

First published in May 2020 by Paperbark Writer,
PO Box 1136, Nerang QLD 4211, Australia
Reprinted 2020, 2021, 2023
www.paperbarkwriter.com

Cataloguing-in-Publication details are available from the
National Library of Australia
www.trove.nla.gov.au

ISBN 978-0-9946394-5-5

Printed in Australia on recycled paper



TAKE
this
BOOK
for a
Walk



A step-by-step guide to
nature journaling

Paula Peeters

Contents

What is nature journaling? 5

Why do it? 6

Getting started 7

Seeing - the key to everything 7

Learning to see 9

Anyone can draw, Anyone can write 12

Finding your groove 12

Best pens/pencils/paints for this book 12

Contour drawing 13

Draw a leaf 16

Colour mapping 18

Write about sounds 20

Sound maps 22

Get curious 24

Nature journaling prompts 24

Thumbnail drawings 28

Free writing 30

Find something that's... 34

Have a conversation 36

How to draw things that move 39

Reflecting on place 40

Explore 42

Pets 42

Birds 44

Insects 46

Other animals 48

Plants 50

Wild herbs and weeds 51

Vegie garden 52

Favourite tree 54

Shapes and textures of trees and shrubs 56

Fruits, cones and gumnuts 58

Flowers 60

Leaf types 62

Fungi 64

More adventures 66

Maps 66

Transects 70

Six-colour challenge 72

Favourite place 74

Travel journal 74

Birding journal 74

Journal on a theme 74

Detailed study 74

Make a date with nature 74

Want to draw better? Draw with ink! 75

Materials for nature journaling 76

Some further reading 76

A conversation 77



What is nature journaling?

Nature journaling is the practice of drawing or writing in response to nature. This fun, relaxing practice helps you to connect more closely with nature, and results in the creation of your own unique nature journal. Both the practice and the end product are important.

The practice calms your mind, and increases your attention to detail and appreciation of beauty. It improves your recognition of different animal and plant species, and your understanding of where and how they live. With time, it also improves your ability to observe, to draw and to write.

A journal allows you to capture the moment (a sunset, a view, a critter, a flower, a fungus...), and recall observations that would otherwise be forgotten. The entries in your journal can give you inspiration for other creative projects, such as writing, painting, textiles, music, other crafts... the opportunities are endless. A nature journal can also be used to compile species sightings and other scientific observations that are of great value to citizen science projects.

A journal can be anything you want it to be. It can be a record of facts and dates. An expression of feelings. Or it might be a series of precise observations and analytical questions. And of course there's no reason why you can't include all of those approaches in your journal, depending on your mood.

The drawings can be realistic, but remember that drawing realistically is only one way to draw. Drawings can be impressionistic, cartoony, abstract, very vague or highly detailed. A journal might be all writing, or all drawing, or a combination. With nature journaling, there is no right or wrong. It's your response to nature.

Your journal entries are for you, and no-one else.

They're not created to hang in a gallery or to pass some sort of test. This gives you complete freedom to create whatever you want.

But a journal should never be an onerous chore, one that you feel under pressure to complete every day, or that you feel needs to contain only perfect pictures or writing. That's not a journal, that's a rod for your back.

A journal should be a playful, helpful, adventurous, extension of yourself. A sandpit for exploring your response to the world. Something a bit untidy, a bit lop-sided, a bit ramshackle at times. But at other times it will resonate with a rare quality. It might be beauty, it might be insight, it might be as simple as two lines that perfectly capture the bird you glimpsed flying by. But you will catch your breath, and be quietly amazed at what you've created. That sentence or story or picture will be yours: your unique response to the world.



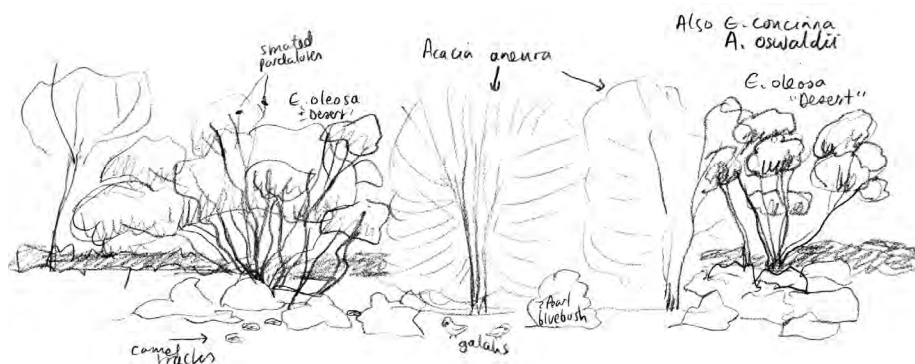
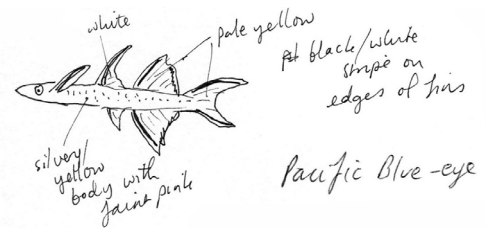
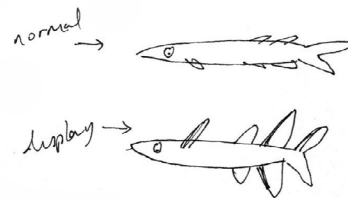
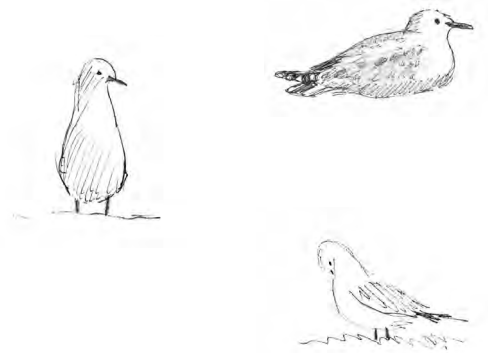
Why do it?

Nature journaling allows you to spend time in nature, just sitting or standing quietly, and *being*. It's an antidote to our busy, technology-infested lives. Spending quiet time in nature is good for our physical and mental health. As the world becomes crowded, and more people are living in urban areas, we are also becoming less connected to nature. This disconnect probably contributes to increasing levels of anxiety and depression in human society. The simple practice of nature journaling can help us to reconnect with nature, and remind us of the resilient and beautiful life that is part of our world, and part of us too.

When you are quiet and still, the animals become less scared, and they forget that you are there. Often you will observe animal behaviour that most other people don't get to see, because those people are too fast, too noisy, or are distracted by something else.

The natural world is always in a state of flux, but right now it's changing faster than ever. A changing climate and increasing pressures exerted by people are having all sorts of effects on species and ecosystems. Paying attention to what's happening around us is important. Nature journaling can help us to record what's changing and what's staying the same.

People everywhere are also working hard to restore ecosystems and nurture what's left. Nature journaling is a great way to record this positive progress, as well as plan future restoration projects.



Seeing - the key to everything



It all starts with paying attention to things. Really looking. Often we need to slow down to do this. Put away distractions like tablets and mobile phones. Forget about telling everyone what a great time we're having. And forget about 'goals'.

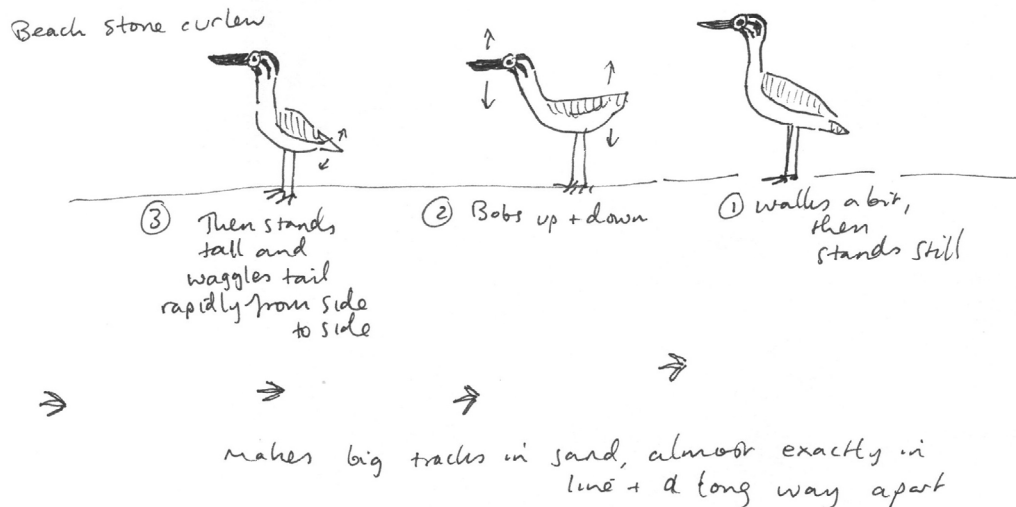
The first thing many walkers check out when they arrive at a trailhead is a sign that lists the walks. Where are we going today? What will we see? How long will it take to get there? (and more athletic walkers might be asking themselves - "Can I beat this time?"). Walk half an hour, and you'll get to the waterfall. Walk 4 hours and you'll get to the top of the mountain.

I like a good walk as much as anyone, but there are so many other ways to interact with nature. Setting a time/distance goal at the start of your walk is a good safety practice but it tends to make you keep moving until you reach your destination. And then on the return journey, your target is the start of the walk, the carpark, maybe you're thinking about what's for dinner, or work or school the next day.

At the end you'll feel a satisfied tiredness in your body and the achievement of walking 2 km, 12 km, 20 km, whatever. And you saw the waterfall! You climbed the mountain! You got back in time for the next scheduled activity!

But what did you see?
I mean, what did you *really* see?

You may have seen a lot more by just wandering much more slowly down the same track for half the distance, and paying attention to the varied life all around. If you had stopped to sketch something, or write down your impressions, your journey would have been rich and detailed indeed. And for a short time, you might have lost yourself in the place and all around you, and forgotten about yourself and your worries for a while. This kind of experience can be a rare treasure in our time-pressured, goal-oriented, mobile-phone-saturated lives.



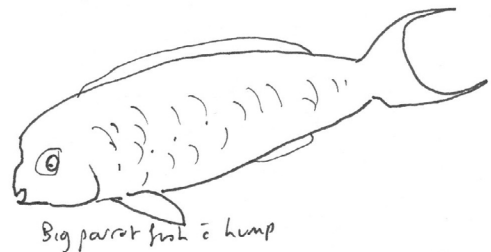
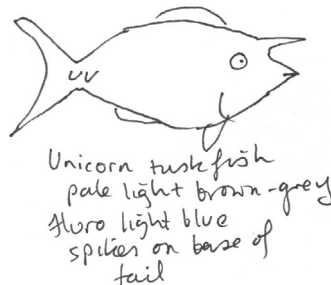
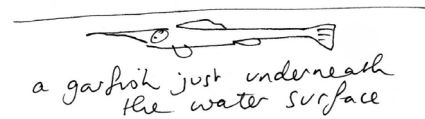
I find walks very good for thinking, for mulling over ideas in my head. But unfortunately, if I'm worried or anxious, long walks can also be taken over by endless worrying and constant chewing on the same problem, or negative thoughts. All the way up the mountain and back again, for hours, if you're not careful. In this state, you don't see the scenery, you don't see much at all. You are trapped in your own head, and may as well be at home.

In a similar, but more pleasant way, walks can be great for catching up with friends, for chatting as you go. And of course this is fine - a lovely way to spend a day. But you won't see much nature unless a creature sprawls itself over the path in front of you, or a leech attaches to your leg, or a particularly bright something catches your eye. You'll remain caught up in the 'me' and in the conversation with your friends.

The first step for truly engaging with nature is an alert attentiveness. This is the opposite to the brain / ego pushing you towards a goal. Or being caught up in your own thoughts. Or distracted by other people, mobile phones, music, etc.

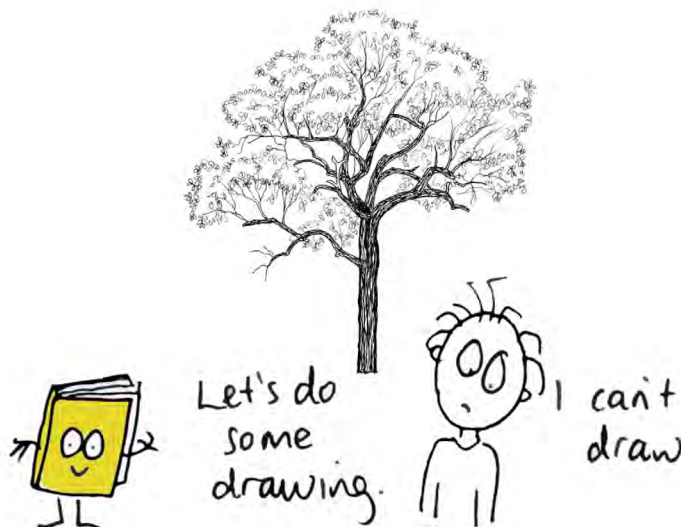
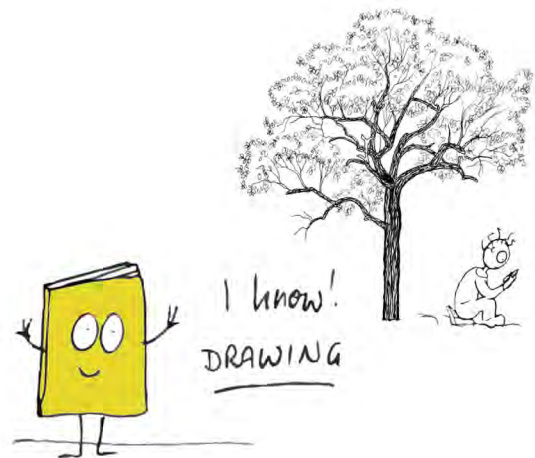
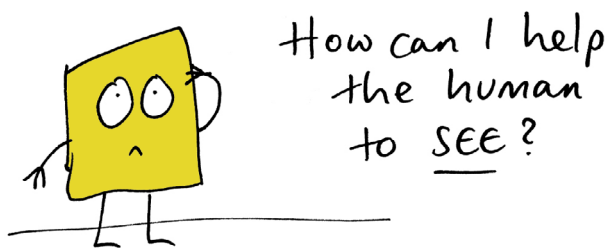
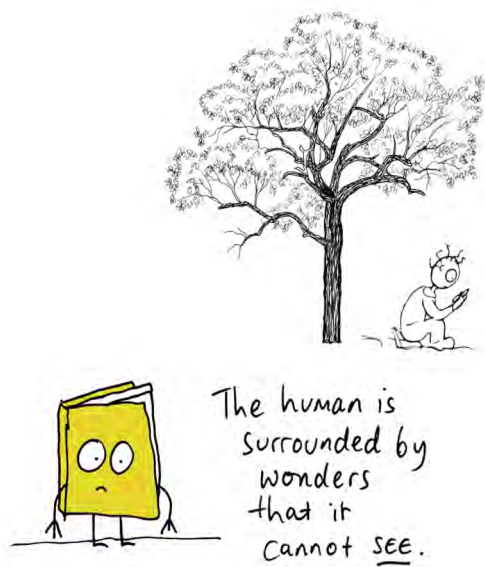
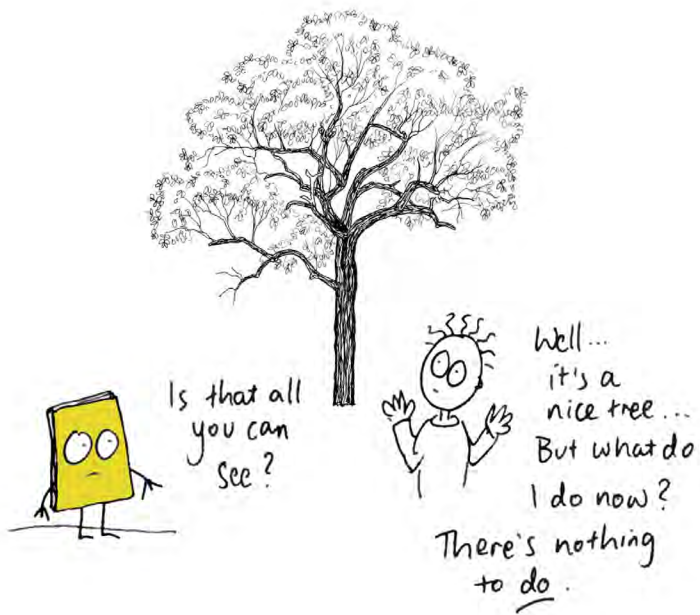
Imagine that instead of climbing to the top of the mountain, you got halfway there and then became fascinated by a pair of nesting birds, or a colourful arrangement of wildflowers, or a stunning view over the valley. And you said to yourself (and your companions): "I'm going to stop here and just become immersed in this for a while. I won't get to the top of the mountain, but I'll go on my own journey, and create my own unique response. I'll sit and look closely. I might do a little sketch, or jot down some words."

That small time of alert attentiveness may well be the most memorable part of the day. If you did something creative as part of it, you will probably treasure those memories forever. While the view from the top of the mountain is likely to be fleeting, and soon forgotten.



Learning to see







No, that's different.
I wrote my name
on the front
page.

Aha!
No, it isn't.

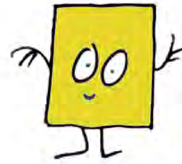
If you can
sign your name,
you can DRAW.



Really?

Yes!

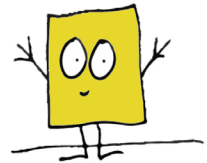
You just need
some lessons,
and lots of
practice.



But drawing is
a skill
that can be
LEARNT, like
any other
skill.



Well
ok,
I'll give it
a go...



The most important thing about drawing
is to LOOK CLOSELY
at the thing you want to draw.



I don't want to
draw it, I want
to EAT it



Study the details

Try to see the thing
you are drawing
as lines, shapes,
light and dark





Anyone can draw, Anyone can write

The ability to draw and to write is not some gift that certain people have and others don't. These are skills that anyone can learn, just like many other skills that are learnt, such as riding a bicycle, or reading.

We assume that most people can be taught to ride a bicycle, or read, if they are given appropriate instruction and the opportunity to practice. Drawing and writing are skills just like these. But for some reason many people think they are impossible to learn.

This is simply not true.

Anyone can draw.

Anyone can write.

If you can sign your name, you can learn how to draw.

If you can communicate in at least one language, you can learn how to write.

The trouble is, most of us have a voice in our head telling us it can't be done.

But you need to ignore that voice, and just try.

Many of us are also far too impatient with ourselves.

We expect fantastic results straight away.

We don't give ourselves time to play, experiment, and have fun practicing.

With practice, you will be able to draw and write, and create pictures and sentences that will surprise and please you.

Finding your groove

Sometimes it can be hard to get started with journaling. Especially when faced with a blank page. Suddenly you are at a loss, and you might be asking yourself: What should I do? How do I start? What should I look at? You may also be telling yourself - cruelly and unfairly - I can't draw, I can't write, why am I even bothering to do this?

Don't panic. Be kind to yourself. Get comfortable in the position you'll be drawing or writing in (sitting or standing). Then close your eyes for a few minutes and concentrate on breathing slowly and evenly. This helps you to slow down, relax, and focus on the task at hand.

Best pencils/pens/paints for this book

To draw and write in this book, it's best to use:

- Graphite (greylead) pencils, coloured pencils
- Ink fineliner pens (e.g. Artline, Copic, Staedler, Pigma Micron) sizes 0.05 - 0.8
- Watercolour pencils used dry, or with water

Watercolour paint and gouache paint can also be used, if you don't use too much water.

Don't use textas or markers because these will show through to the other side of the page.



Sand dollar

Contour drawing

This is one of the best exercises to improve your powers of observation. **Be warned: your drawing will not look like the subject!** The aim of this exercise is to get you to look closely at what you are drawing. This is the first, crucial step in learning how to draw.

Go out into nature and find something to draw that won't move. A leafy branch is good. Or a flower. If you're in an open area and can view a whole tree, that's a good place to start too. After pausing, with eyes closed, for a few minutes, open your eyes and look closely at your subject. Then place your pen or pencil on the paper and begin to draw.

**Do not look at your drawing on the paper.
Do not lift your pencil or pen off the paper.
Draw every detail you can see, in one continuous line.**

For example: If you are drawing a leaf, follow the outline of the leaf, including any little teeth or lobes or nibbles something has taken out of the leaf. Also draw the veins, including every little vein you can see, and also any little blemishes or spots or folds. **Take your time. Go slowly. Don't look at your drawing until you are done.**

When you've finished, you will have produced a 'contour drawing'. It won't look much like the subject, but a contour drawing contains its own special beauty. It's a record of all the fine details you observed in whatever you were drawing. Most people discover many little details they never noticed before. Once you are able to see these details, then you can set about drawing them.

A contour drawing is fun to do any time. It takes the pressure out of drawing because - hey - your drawing isn't going to look like the thing you're drawing anyway! How can it if you don't look at the page? So just relax and enjoy looking at the subject, and feeling your pencil moving over the page.

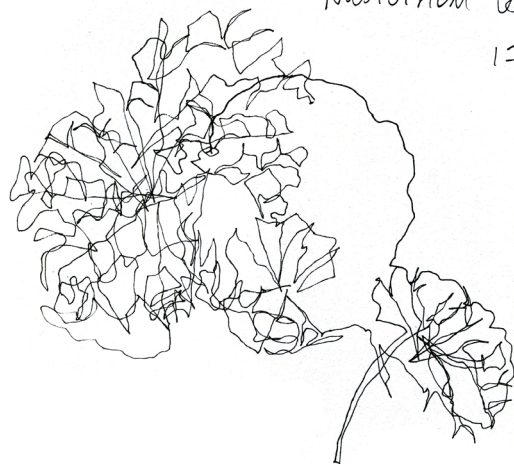
If you can get into this relaxed state every time you draw - of not really worrying about what your drawing will look like - I guarantee you will have so **much more fun** drawing!



Fill these pages with contour drawings

Contour drawing of
Nasturtium leaves

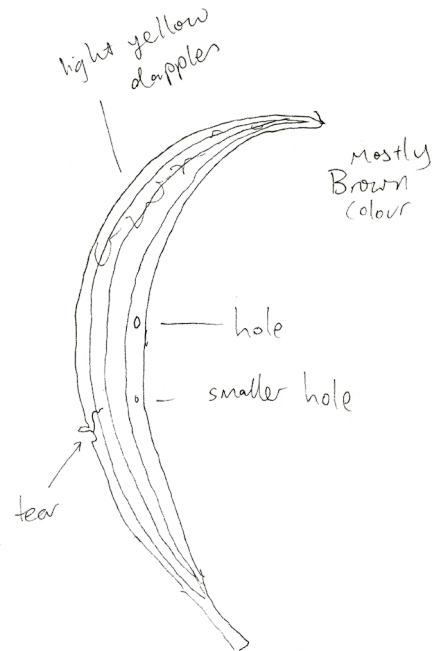
17/4/16



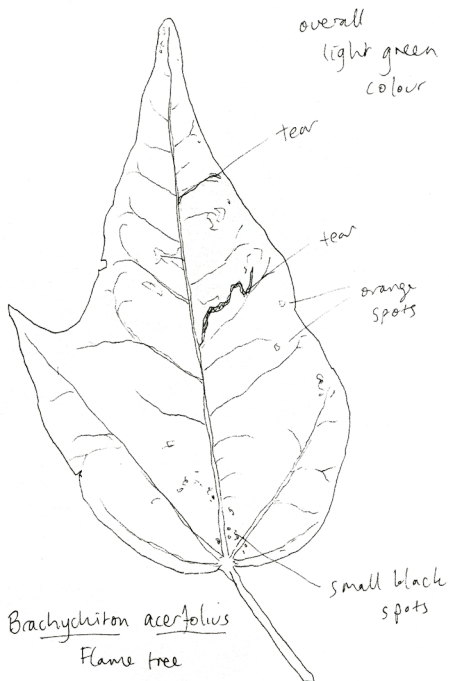
Draw a leaf



Golden brown



Mostly Brown colour



Brachychiton acerifolius
Flame tree



Find some leaves - draw and label them. Add colour if you like!

Colour mapping

Go out in nature and find something that you can observe closely. A leaf, a tree trunk, a shell, or a fruit are good subjects. Then try to find at least 5 to 10 different colours in it.

Write down descriptions of these colours, and be specific. e.g. olive-green, reddish brown, pale blue. You can also draw a simple sketch of the object (just in pen or pencil), and label on the sketch where those colours can be found.

This is a good exercise to get past the pre-conceived ideas such as 'a leaf is green' or 'a tree trunk is brown'. We often learn these stereotypes in our childhood, and just assume them without really looking.

By looking closely, you will discover all sorts of new colours and details in everyday things. A simple sketch of something, with notes about its different colours and markings, can help with identification and can also be used to create a more detailed picture later on.



Create some colour maps

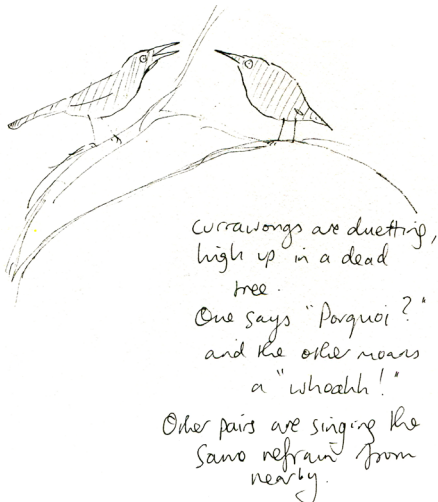
Write about sounds

Find a place in nature where you can sit or stand comfortably. Then close your eyes and listen for 5 minutes. Try to distinguish as many different sounds as possible. What direction are they coming from? Are they coming from nearby or far away?

Then open your eyes and write down all the sounds you have heard, and what was making them. Perhaps you noticed some sounds for the first time. Maybe you

became more aware of a variety of things happening in the local surroundings. Or perhaps you were struck by the silence (lucky you!).

A friend of mine can identify every bird call he hears. When he goes camping, he can complete his bird list while dozing in his tent in the morning – without even getting up!





I can hear
a rose robin
"did-diddy-did-dee"
DEEE-DEEE!

Write about the sounds you can hear



Sound maps

Sounds can also be described using lines, shapes and even colours. You can also add the directions the sounds are coming from. This is called a 'sound map'.

You don't need to draw the thing that's making the noise (I just added cartoon birds to this journal page because I couldn't resist).



What can you hear? Use shapes, lines and colours to describe the sounds

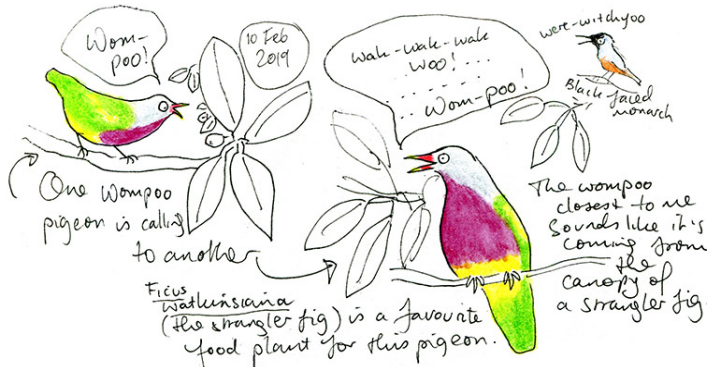
Get curious

Another approach to nature journaling is to simply be inquisitive. Look around you, and ask questions of nature. What bird is that? What's the name of that flower? How old is that tree? Who made this path?

With careful observation (make notes and sketches) and a bit of research, you can probably answer many questions. Other questions will be harder to solve. Many questions about Australian nature remain unanswered, even today.

There is still much to discover about some of our most common native animals, plants and fungi. Basic information about behaviour, reproduction, diet, population size and distribution is scarce for many species. The complexities of ecology - how different species interact with each other and their habitats - can be even more of a mystery.

Getting curious is the first step in any discovery, and it is no coincidence that many scientists, inventors, designers and explorers keep detailed journals of their observations and ideas. This is another reason why nature journaling is such a worthwhile and engaging pastime. Not only does observing and asking questions fire the intellect, but the records and discoveries thus made can make a real contribution to our understanding of the natural world.



Nature journaling prompts

Use the following prompts to generate lots of observations, questions and reflections:

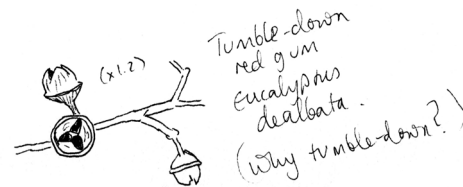
I notice.... it has green fangs

I wonder... what it eats?

It reminds me of... an alien

It makes me feel.... a bit scared!

(thank you to John Muir Laws for the first three prompts)



This is the end of the preview sample of

**Take this Book for a Walk:
A step-by-step guide to nature journaling**

By Paula Peeters

To read on, order your copy from

www.paperbarkwriter.com