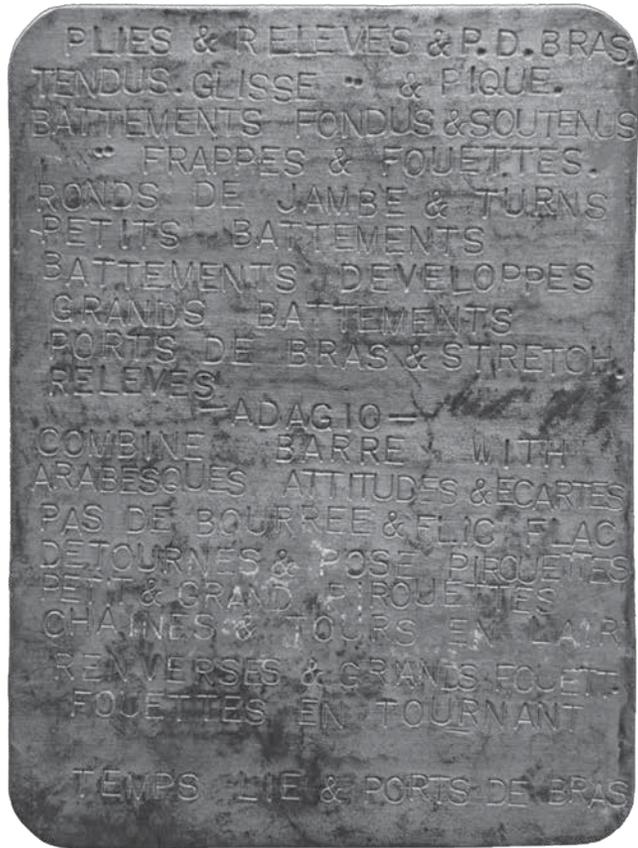


FOSSIL

Wendy Morrow

# Fossil



Fossil comes from the Latin word *fossus*, meaning 'dug up'. Put simply, fossils are formed when a plant or animal dies in a watery environment and is buried in mud and silt. Past life preserved as rock, impressions or evidence of activity.

*Fossil*

pure memory  
 the heart of the thing  
 animal rock carbon  
 losing boundaries  
 skinless  
 disruption  
 destabilising  
 shifts  
 gravity  
 death in the hut  
 return to the earth  
 stillness

*Fossil (waiting to be found)*

Rock layers are deposited from the bottom up.  
She visited a village in the Netherlands once  
where graves were layered upon grave, building up  
mounds metres above the ground - sediments of  
past lives hardening to rock.

Fossil Cove Cave Bay

She wasn't thinking too much, arrived, then  
realised where she was – the place unfolded  
revealing itself.

Surprised by how easily she found the fossil.  
Enjoying the sombre weight of the thing she  
carried it back to the shack – a precious pet left  
by the door.

In the evening her mind roamed, she  
contemplated the patience of fossils, moments  
of coincidence, things missed, a thought, a  
conversation, a moment of resolve - how removing  
reconnects.

Compression, layers, worn and revealed like an  
elbow or heel, the wearing of a dog's pads – a road  
map of their territory, footfall on walking paths,  
the study of interconnected ideas, brain cells and  
neural pathways.

Reflecting on the day, the crumbling cliff edges  
falling in shards, revealing themselves exposed  
and naked, pasts leaking into the present – no  
secrets here.

*Geomorphology – Mass Movement*

*The mass movement process, also sometimes called mass  
wasting, occurs when soil and rock moves down a slope under  
the force of gravity. The movement of the material is called  
creeping, slides, flows, topples, and falls. Each of these is  
dependent on the speed of movement and composition of the  
material moving.*

*This process is both erosional and depositional.*



# Family

In 1855 her great, great grandfather, M. Camille Delsarte arrived into Hobart from Paris to teach music. He established a successful trade and in 1860 built what was claimed to be 'the finest concert hall in any of the colonies'.

In Paris, his brother Francois Delsarte (1811–1871) developed a theory of movement that is thought to have led to an overhaul of the dance world and the beginnings of modern dance.

Francois Delsarte's movement theory focussed on connecting the inner emotional experience of the actor through a set of gesture and movements. In its day the Delsarte system was taught throughout the world, particularly in America where it was studied by late nineteenth century modern dancers such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, Rudolf Laban and F.M. Alexander.

Delsarte's theories laid the groundwork for the re-thinking of the body and the classical aesthetic ideal which represents the dancer's body as a perfected object.

By the eighties and nineties contemporary dance had incorporated the influences of a number of these early systems which focus on internal physical perception like somatic therapies,

*She's a pedigree.*

*Dance runs in her family.*

*On her father's side – an uninterrupted lineage of musicians  
and dancers that goes back over 400 years.*

*She loops into her Hobart and dance connections.*

Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, release and ideokinesis techniques. She trained in these techniques and her practice is in this domain. As in Ted Shawn's book on Delsarte she has an interest in 'every little movement'.

She has spent half her life eliminating her foundations, the codified system absorbed from her earlier training.

Through her re-training into the 'inside body' something else surfaced, an affinity and realisation of re-connecting to her movement lineage. A re-drawing or return to a universal body.

*The actions or gestures run like a stream out from this place.*

*When the connection is lost the movement ceases.*

*She stays attentive to nuances or murmurings of something felt*

*— awake to new directions.*

*Paying close attention to the workings of the body she turns inward, old/new internal spaces, hollows and weights that open up, sensations and shifts become choices for movement, her muscles, nerves and organs — a dynamic balance between one force and another.*

*Within the intimacy of nothing everything rolls out like an evolving sensation, a filmic score. This is the moving image.*

*Instructions*

*Curving your knees under  
 rolling into the floor  
 rolling and rolling so that the floor ceases to be hard  
 your body soft, one surface meeting another  
 a body open to suggestion  
 a body without boundaries  
 a body spilling into the floor with full weight  
 it is only a body  
 a body re-coded for experiential states  
 a vehicle for other things  
 body morphology*

She felt stronger knowing Camille was real.  
 Walking around the oval slowly at night in light  
 rain. She was in labour looking out towards  
 Cornelian Bay Cemetery, reassured knowing she  
 was not alone, she had lineage and connections to  
 this place – there was no going back.

She imagines Camille and his wife, Ann Conroy in  
 Hobart. Their pathways and locations are familiar;  
 the park, the church where they married, the small  
 house, the concert hall.

Inside *The Mercury* building on Macquarie St,  
 overlooking the street, she knows Camille once  
 lived next door, at Ingle Hall.

Going about her business, walking, her history  
 is still in this neighbourhood, in the buildings  
 surrounding St David's Park. Accumulated layers,  
 predictions of the past, it could be then/now.  
 It's raining – is this indulgent melancholy?

She drops away from the moment