

(Our State Years 8 – 10)

Her Legacy Kelsie Realf (Year 10) Miriam Vale State School

The woman's fingers handled the small square of paper with an intense caution. She fixed her eyes upon its colourless, faded front. The small square was as aged and lined as the woman herself; the paper had thinned, and held creases from the many years it sat folded in cupboard drawers. Its edges were rough, its corners torn or missing.

Though mourning the years that were now hazy windows in her memory, she felt as close to that day as she felt to this one. She could remember the soft, rotted wooden posts beneath her hands. The way her reflection danced as the wind teased the water. How the thick coils of rope were stiffened by the salty air, and felt coarse in her firm grasp. Now, closing her fingers around the frame of her walker, she noticed with contempt how different this metal support felt in her hands...

The breeze had picked up, she recalled, as she had walked out over the pier. It had whipped her dress, lifting it, the same way it carved waves in the sparkling water. That dress, the beautiful flowery creation. It fitted around her lean body snugly, flaring at her waist. Her bare shoulders had held a proud stance. The heels of her polished vinyl shoes added to her height. The faint clip-clop of their soles making contact with the wooden pier worked a rhythmic pattern in her mind; heel toe, heel toe...

The intrusive shrill of her telephone jolted her back to this different world. She tottered a little as she woke from her reverie. She folded the small photograph gingerly, reluctant to see it part from her grasp. She held it to her chest, before placing it back into its dark wooden home, and turning towards that persistent ringing.

She did not sigh in contentment, nor smile wistfully. Instead, she raised her hand and used that satin-soft skin to wipe a small tear from her eye. Tears of joy or grief, they were not distinguishable. She did not tell another person that she kept the photograph preserved in that drawer, in the hope that it might live on longer than her; that it might just join her spirit in a future beyond hers, watching her grandchildren grow; that it may give them a small window into their past, bring them a little closer to the way she wanted herself to be remembered.



Image – State Library of Queensland , Image number: 181588

Link: [Strapless dress being modelled on a young woman at North Quay, Brisbane, ca. 1951](#)