



ZOE'S PAGE Birth date: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Happy birthday Zoe, this your 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
I hope you like my present.

It was lovely to meet you when I came to Melbourne. I always wondered what you looked like and the sort of person you are. You were a bit under the weather with Covid. I understand that. I also know you, and all the family, have had a scary time from Ryan's illness. I wasn't there and I was freaked out. Wow! I just wanted to say that unexpected shocks like that should be acknowledged. They are like zombies coming down the road you're walking on and you have to face them and find a way past them. You can't ignore them and hope they go away. They won't - and that is why they are so scary. You have to deal with them (the illness I mean, not Ryan). So once you get past the shocking bits, the long term hopes, dreams and wishes you had need to adjust to the new normal. Of course, Ryan has the biggest job, but everyone has to adjust in some way.



Most people fear change, but I say fear only makes things more complicated, so I try to face up to the Zombie of Fear and actively search for the good things that are still there and don't need adjusting. And there's lots if you look for them. Sam is the same doggie who gets hungry and wants cuddles for example. I guess you've been through a lot this past year with Covid and Mum's illness but you have all come through as a family and I'm very proud of you all. It must have been a very difficult year.

Perhaps next time we will all be well and we can go out and have some fun in the sunshine with Sam. And what about Ari and Nathan's new baby? Even the good things in life need us to adjust and problem solve in some way. They will most probably need a bigger car for example. Best wishes to our expanding little family!

And a birthday for you.....well....that's lovely. I hope you like my present to you. I'm hoping Mum has a nice frame to put it in. I wanted to give you a closer view so you could see how I created it. It is a watercolour painting with washes and splatters in the background. I got a photo of a girl sitting like that from the internet and used it to draw up my own version. Another photo gave me the idea for the hair and another for the flowers. Bits of this and bits of that.

The painting is called "Far Out" because she has just seen a long lost friend and shouts 'far out' in joy. I made a pencil drawing of her first, editing out all the mistakes and problem solving along the way. I made a new arm for her and had to solve the problem of how the fingers look when pointing. Also how the mouth looks when saying 'far out'. I trashed

quite a few draft drawings that didn't work and kept going with different poses until I got the nice one. I photocopied the drawing and blew it up to size (It's quite a big painting) before tracing it onto the canvas. I made a few mistakes laying it in the right place so had to clean off the pencil a few times but I kept problem solving. I chucked the first background I did because I used the wrong paint and it soaked in very dark.

I then found the transparent paint and started again. Laid the tracing on top and got to work on the body. The face was really difficult to paint and I was lifting watercolour paint off before trying yet again. I love the hair and flowers.

I was happy with all the skin colours, but I was intending to make her a naked hippy but the legs across her private parts were too shocking, so I gave her pants. I messed up the brown pants bigtime, so I threw the whole lot out and started again shifting how her bum was on the ground.

I got the blue pants right this time. And now I love my hippy girl, but think her nose is too dark and mouth too big, but I'm not changing now.

Art is a whole series of experiments, editing and problem solving....lots and lots of problem solving and keeping on going until you get it right. Craft work is like that too. I watched you making the craft set of drawers and noticed you seemed to lose interest when the glue stuck badly and you had to sand it down to make it work. I thought you might like to know that everything in the arts and craft field of work have this kind of problem. You see something you want, but there's problems in getting it right. That's the fun of it for the artist/craftsperson – it's in the creative problem-solving that the reward comes. The scrap heap is much bigger than the finished product, but if artists gave up on the first or even thirtieth time, nothing would be created at all. Creating something out of nothing has an astonishing array of problem-solving and it is truly amazing that the finished thing exists at all.

That's why we love our artists and craftspeople so much. They have the courage to keep trying when their products look ugly and are not perfect and they keep trying until they finally create something that is perfectly beautiful. At least, it is perfect to the artist. The viewer may see something different. But artists don't have to worry about the viewer, just themselves and what skills, materials and techniques they used. So my message to you is: "if at first you don't succeed - try, try again."

That's a little saying from my mother, your great grandmother. Her sister was an art teacher, so we have art/craft in our DNA. My father worked on a forklift system for his truck. He wanted a system for lifting very heavy beehives onto his truck so he made one out of winches and bike chains and it worked really well but it took a number of prototypes and trashed machines before the final one. We went into the Patents Office and looked through all the other forklift systems to see if he could patent the design and sell it commercially. Unfortunately there was already an Inventor who patented the system, so he just used his own machine for his own bees. It was perfect for him.

Poor Dad. He used to sell his honey to the co-op until the big companies took over and wrecked his business. To this day I will not buy Capilano honey because it is a mixed blend of blossoms and therefore a mix of poor and good quality honey.

Well, lovely one! Another birthday. Good on you. I hope you are doing well down there in the cold, old Melbourne. I hope you have a lovely party with your family and friends and I wish you well!

Love always

Jessica/DeeDee/Grandma

[Happy birthday Zoe, this your 8<sup>th</sup> birthday. I hope you do like bananas.](#) Another year has passed and I am still in my house. After the fires I wasn't allowed into the National Parks, so I held off the house sale. Then I looked up my astrology books and they all pointed to a very unusual and significant event in January 2020 with worldwide instability. So I waited to see what January would bring and it was Covid 19. I'm so glad I stayed in my little house. My life would have been in lockdown in a strange place, but here I could still see the birds and trees and scoot in to the shops and scoot back without contacting people. Lockdown life here was pretty much the same. I felt sorry for folks who lived in tiny highrise units. It would have been very lonely. And schoolchildren, like you, would have a hard time with home schooling and not being allowed out. Hopefully the worst has passed for Australia. You've got to feel sorry for those in other countries with such high rates of illness. You take care and follow the guidelines won't you, Zoe, because a little lockdown is thousands of times better than catching the illness. I wonder if you or your friends have come up with some lockdown jokes. Maybe it's too soon for that.

So Happy Birthday, Zoe. I'm sure there are still some ways of celebrating in Lockdown. At least there will be a lovely birthday cake. I wonder how it will be decorated this year. You will at least get a big sloppy kiss from your lovely new hairy dog. Reminds me of Hairy McClarey – loved those books.

I wonder if you will be back at school soon. It will be good to meet up with your friends again. I think it might be hard to concentrate again on school work in a classroom. No matter how good parents are at home schooling, I reckon school will be really welcome as you wind down for the Christmas break. You'll have lots of stories to share with your friends about Lockdown. Perhaps that's where children's jokes will be created – when you get together again. Well you Victorians have been doing a great job in Lockdown so there is an end in sight. Coming soon! But everyone will have to be very careful over the next year or so too. One Lockdown is enough for anyone. I often used to cross the NSW/QLD border for beaches, art gallery, native plants and art supplies but it's closed now. Even Brisbane (an hour away) is closed off at the moment. Well won't be long.

I have two mulberry trees that are chocka block full of big fat juicy berries. For the past few years I'd play a game with the birds to get some, but I only ever got a mouthful or two. I even woke up at 4am to beat them, but I never did. It's quite light at that time, so birds and bats got there first. All day and into the night there were so many they'd squabble and break branches and fight each other.

But this year, there are only 1 or 2 birds and Me and my neighbour collected big bowls of juicy berries. I had so many I put some in the freezer. And they are still ripening as we speak. There's sure to be another huge bowl out there to pick. I was wondering why so different this year and I thought it might be because we had a wetter spring, but others in the valley noticed the same. We think it's because so many birds were lost in the bushfires which were very close (we had the smoke) last year. So the berries are bitter-sweet this year and I eat them remembering the beautiful creatures that lived in this area and I miss hearing them squabbling in the trees.

It has been an unusual year, but there are always things we can point to that are worth their weight in gold. I have had some beautiful moments with the moon, shining into my lounge room at 4am in the morning, sparkling through the dense tree canopy, sliver of new moon serenely showing above a mountain range just before setting and of course rising over the ocean at full. These are images I'll never forget and I've started painting the images. Here's one.



I saw this late one night. The half moon sitting behind the palm tree lighting up just some of the branch tips. (There's a creamy coloured moon in that light) It was lovely.

This year, I discovered fireflies at my house. I looked out the window at 6pm just before I turned all the lights on, and there they were a half dozen in amongst the undergrowth. They flew a circuit around the house. Out of the dam they came, up behind amongst the wild weeds, down to my back door and around the front down to the creek line and back to the dam. They flew right up to my face! I've been out looking for them for years. Perhaps the wetter Spring made it better for them. Or maybe I didn't see them because they shy away from my kitchen light. But every time I went to the car for a Firefly hunt down the road, I always looked along my creek. This year I found them outside my back door. I was absolutely thrilled!

So I did a painting of my backyard. Here they are as I first saw them with constellation Scorpio (along the top) in the sky with Jupiter and Saturn (R side). You may have to enlarge the image to see the stars and fireflies.



I'm going to do more paintings like these. I really had fun doing them.

But first I have some writing to do for the Spring Equinox next week. I'm writing a script for my friends and a guided meditation called The Pathway through the Forest. We meet on the solstices and equinoxes and act out the scripts to have fun, then sit around a fire and have our dinner. Lovely! So life isn't too bad here in Lockdown. You have to find the little things that make you happy now. Best wishes to you on your birthday.

Send my love to Rose and Jasper and Vincent too.

Bye for now

Jessica, Dee Dee, Grandma, your Mother's Mother

**2019 Happy birthday Zoe. Hope you had fun with all the relatives and some lovely presents.**

Well a lot has happened this year, but I'm still here in this lovely house getting ready for sale. I have to save up to pay for people to help me so it slows everything down, but I've made good progress. I have just about everything packed up and



stored into my shed, I have a new car,

a new driveway and a new dining room (I took out the pot belly stove)



and the landscaping is nearly finished.

I have to save some money for the handyman to finish off some jobs and then I'm ready. I feel really good to have all my stuff sorted and cleared out of junk.



Here's a photo of me after I lost 10kgs (see my jumper is too big now) and after getting a horrible haircut and trying to get a good selfie in my bathroom. I'm feeling really healthy now after some surgery in May. I can walk really well, even up stairs, now. My arthritis is progressing well and each day of my plant based diet, I get better and better. I only have to sort out my fingers now, the rest is under control. If you change your diet, you change your life! Yes!!! My health outlook is very positive now.

So my little birds are having a really hard time in this drought. They have to dip into muddy puddles for a swim nowadays. They still use my wheelbarrow pond, but it is also muddy because my small tank is getting very low and I can't fill the pond up properly.

We recently had a bushfire through the hills west of here. We were lucky it didn't come our way and it could have quite



easily. Thank you Firefighters. What was so shocking about the fire (Saraban fire which burnt out the Binna Burra Lodge) was it burnt into rainforest. That's very interesting and you probably don't know about it.

We have great swathes of forest here that are very wet and humid because of high rainfall but also because of the way trees grow into dense shady canopies which hold onto rain and don't let it dry out. The trees you have in Victoria are different but there's still some rainforest in secluded gullies down there.

Well our rainforest dried up so bad that the rainforest dried up (very low humidity) and all the moist undergrowth dried up so that millions of insects, grubs, crawly things and bugs had no food. Everything was so dry that a tiny spark set off the grasses which the winds whipped into a frenzy of fire which took off across the dry landscape and dry forest straight into the rainforest along the hills and gullies. Rainforest never supports a fire because it's so wet, but with drought, it was now dry enough for fire.

All the koalas, wallabies, snakes, spiders, possums, flying foxes etc are now hungry because their food has been burnt to



black dust. The Wildlife people are building hundreds of nesting boxes for birds and creatures to shelter in. People



are leaving out dishes of water and garlands of apples are hung up in trees for the little bats. The Wildlife people walk in the dead fireground searching for critters struggling to survive. People are sending in blankets and sheets to make



little warm nests for babies and the bigger animals are sent to the sanctuaries set up in the forest. The rainforest fire is a huge catastrophe as it so rarely happens (like once maybe in over 100 years).

So everyone is talking about Climate Change and next week schoolchildren across the world will be on strike from school to attend the marches and hold banners for our politicians to take notice and do more work to help our planet survive the droughts and fires. I wonder if you went on the march with your friends. I think it is really interesting that our Prime Minister Morrison is in the US while the march is on. Both he and the US President Trump don't believe climate change is a problem. No wonder they are ignoring the schoolchildren. I think it is sad. When you are an adult in a few years' time, you will be able to vote and help your country to do a better job of looking after our beautiful wild animals and forests.



It will be very hard to leave this lovely little house in the forest, but I know the new owner will love it just as much as I do. May I find the new owner before Christmas 2019! Then I'm hoping to go camping in the National Parks for awhile (to do some paintings) before I search out my new home.

In the meantime, Zoe, grow up big and strong, learn lots of lessons that interest you so you can take your place in the adult world and contribute to the wider world in an area you love and have passion for. I wonder if you are still interested in body movement. It's always good to have a healthy body and if you don't use it you lose muscle strength, so I do hope you are enjoying it. I'll be thinking of you at the full moon and sending my love along with its moon shine.

Love always Dee Dee, Jessica Blythe, Grandma, your Mother's Mother.

2018 Hello Zoe, seems I'm late again this year. I have been busy trying to sell my house this year. I've just finished with a very hectic period of buyers making offers and real Estate Agents bullying me to sell at a much lower price. I said NO NO NO! because I would have to choose a new house that was much cheaper too. If I said YES, the buyers would be happy with a fabulous cheap house, the Agent would be happy because he got two commissions (buyer \$ seller) and I would be left with a \$70,000 debt, so I would NOT be HAPPY. So I made everyone unhappy saying No, but I still have the house and I will find a new Agent next year. So I am happy I don't get bullied anymore.

I am waiting for a phone call from Jarod and Alison (my nephew and his wife, Ryan's cousin) to say they are on the Gold Coast for a week. We meet up usually every year for an afternoon catchup with his two girls, Gabrielle and Eden. They are just a little older than you and bright and cheery girls. They showed me their achievements with paper cup stacking and chanting and together they were quite amazing. They had a complicated routine that lasted over 5 minutes and had practiced so well they made no mistakes. Wow! I wonder if the papercup stacking game was one you tried. It's an indoor game and you may be too busy playing outside or at the beach.

This is the season for jacarandas to bloom. Can you see the red tree behind? That is a flame tree and I love that they come out at the same time each year. In between is Ariele's Mango tree and a guava tree. The little green box is my letter box which Ariele painted when she was here. This was taken in 2009 and the second one in 2018. Look how those trees have grown? I have people stop and take selfies in front of these two trees. Funny eh? Thomas reckons it's the best Jacaranda in the whole valley.



Your Mummy might be interested in these photos too.



She may remember the times when she was here. I have given up selling this year, but will put the house back on the market in Autumn or Spring next year. I can do some more fix-it jobs to improve the sale price. I think I'll leave the garden beds mulched as our climate here is too unpredictable and I may lose the lot in a heavy storm or drought. It won't be too long before I'm settled in my new place so I can enjoy growing vegies again. I bought some sweet peas for this season though. In the picture below you can see my little house, the vege garden with it mulberry tree and my new old blue car.



Way in the distance you can see the Spingbrook escarpment shining blue in the sky.

Yes it is very hard to leave this place. I do love it so. But to get that house photo I had to walk up the hill and my ankle hurt for a couple of days afterwards. I can't walk up there every day or so and I can't do the heavy lifting of wheelbarrows and garden tools on that big hill, so I should be Ok if I buy a new house on flat-ish land. VIC and NSW have very high selling/buying fees so I think I'll stay in QLD if I can. Weather is much nicer here than down south and you get to beaches through winter and don't freeze your toes off in the water.

I wonder if you have enjoyed the beach life down there. I wanted to join the Sailing club and sail little boats on the bay. I wonder if you are doing that. Perhaps you are involved with the Nippers and learning beach safety and doing competitions on the beach. Maybe you've joined the girl Guides and learned bush skills. Maybe later when you are older you can take on the Duke of Edinburgh Award and follow your own challenges. Well whatever, I hope you are enjoying the outdoors and getting to know the storms and winds and waves in your area. I think of you at every Full Moon and there was one yesterday. I hope you saw it rise over the sea or set into the morning mists. Keep well, Zoe. Study well and learn the things you love. Your life is ahead of you and there's a lot of exciting things to do if you learn some good skills now. I send my love to you with this letter. Till next year!

Jessica/Dee Dee/ your grandmother.

2017 I'm sorry, Zoe, I just found out that my message didn't get posted to the website and you haven't got your birthday wishes yet. If you are reading this then I fixed it.

Hello and Happy Birthday 2017!!!!

Well another year has passed and it happened so quickly to me. When you saw me last, I was very ill and I got so bad I couldn't walk without great effort and pain, but since then I have worked really hard to get better...and it worked. Now I am very careful not to eat red meat and always choose fresh food and vegetables to eat. I never drink bubbly drinks or coffee or alcohol. I am getting stronger and better every day but I still have trouble walking on my land because it is not flat, it is sloping down the hill wherever I go. Well it happens to all of us, we get old and now I'm 65 years old, I will have to leave here and find a house on flat land. I love walking and I can't walk up and down hills anymore, so there it is. That's Life, it always makes us change.

So what are you up to Little One?

I wonder if you still do gymnastics. You seemed very good at it. I wonder if you are going to school with your big sister now. I do hope you like it. Doing school work is one of the most important things you can do in your life. I didn't like the schools I went to much, but I loved learning about the ideas. I went on to University three times to study as an adult and I loved it. I still do a lot of research when I am designing my paintings or writing my books. I wonder if you will enjoy it as much as I do.

I am doing a lot of paintings at the moment. That has always been something I love doing through my whole life. I belong to a Facebook group of valley residents and this year I asked them to go out and find the fireflies in their area and tell me about them. Well fireflies only make their light for a few weeks in Spring (around now) and only for an hour at sundown, so you have got to be clever to catch them.

So lots of people went on the Firefly hunt. And lots of people told me where to find them in their area, so I got in my car and went to their houses to chase fireflies. I took photos of the firefly homes and sketches so I could do paintings. I have 4 or 5 good sketches which I will paint up big like the one I did called 'Where the fireflies Live' which you can see on my website here (<http://jessicablythe.com.au/PageFireflies.html>).

Do you know where your fireflies live? perhaps they don't like the beach, but Dragonflies live near the beach. I saw huge swarms of dragonflies when I was on the beach in Melbourne. Spring time is when they all come out for a Gathering.

Well Zoe, I know you will have a lovely birthday with your family. I'll be thinking of you and sending my love on the breeze. I think of you often through the year and hope to see you again one day. I thought you and Rose might like a recent photo of me. I've been practising with my little camera doing a selfie. Hope you like it.



Love Grandma Dee Dee.

2016: It was lovely to finally meet you Zoe and give you a hug. I guess you are wondering why I haven't seen you in Melbourne. Well, I live on the Gold Coast in the hills away from the beach. I hope one day you will be able to see it before I

have to leave it.



Here is a photo of the hills from the airport. Do you see the twin peak t? I left a note about them below. Here is



my car parked under the jacaranda tree that I planted for my family. my letterbox.

The green box was painted by Ariele. It is

I love it here and this is why...because every day, the birds come to visit.....

.....sometimes for a swim



and sometimes just to say hello.



I also get visits from the wallabies. Sometimes they come right up to my window at night and grunt to say hello, so I say "Hello Wallaby" out loud and they grunt back until they jump along the track to the sweet grasses down the hill.

Did you know the wallabies sleep during the day? Well all except the Mummy and baby Joeys. They play on my hillside (when the dogs stop barking) and I get to take photos,

like this...



...from my bedroom window. This is the Daddy wallaby who grunts hello.



Every year, in Spring, I have this visitor.



She comes to the roof to shed her skin which is too small for her. She keeps vermin like bushrats away and tells the nasty

black and brown snakes to go away too.



She is a carpet python around 20 years old and she comes every year and keeps my house safe.



Joey is having a drink from her Mummy after scampering around the hills. She's now hungry and tired and will climb into her mummy's pouch and have a sleep for a few hours.

These are views from my place. I have to walk along the hill to see Springbook Mountain in the West.



...but these below are South from my lounge room window.



Every year we have heavy rain from Summer storms and cyclones and my little creek rushes with muddy water from the hillside above.

This is where my friend lives. Do you see the tall mountains to the Left? They are the same Twin Peaks you see in the first photo (from the Airport)



I walk to the right and follow the track to the waterfall "Twin Pools" where I like to swim.



I always hoped I could take you to see all my places for adventure. Perhaps one day.

I took this photo when I was in Melbourne, of Ariele and Rose on an adventure at the beach. It is one of my favourites.



Love always Grandma Dee Dee (Jessica Blythe)

*Remember always that absence makes the heart grow fonder.*

*I love all my family (even those not mentioned here) and  
Am always sending blessings and greetings to you all.*

*No matter where you are, just remember, when you see the full moon,  
You will feel me thinking of you and sending my love to you on the breeze.*