



# *The Rhythm of the Beach*

*By Russell Irving*



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## The Rhythm of the Beach

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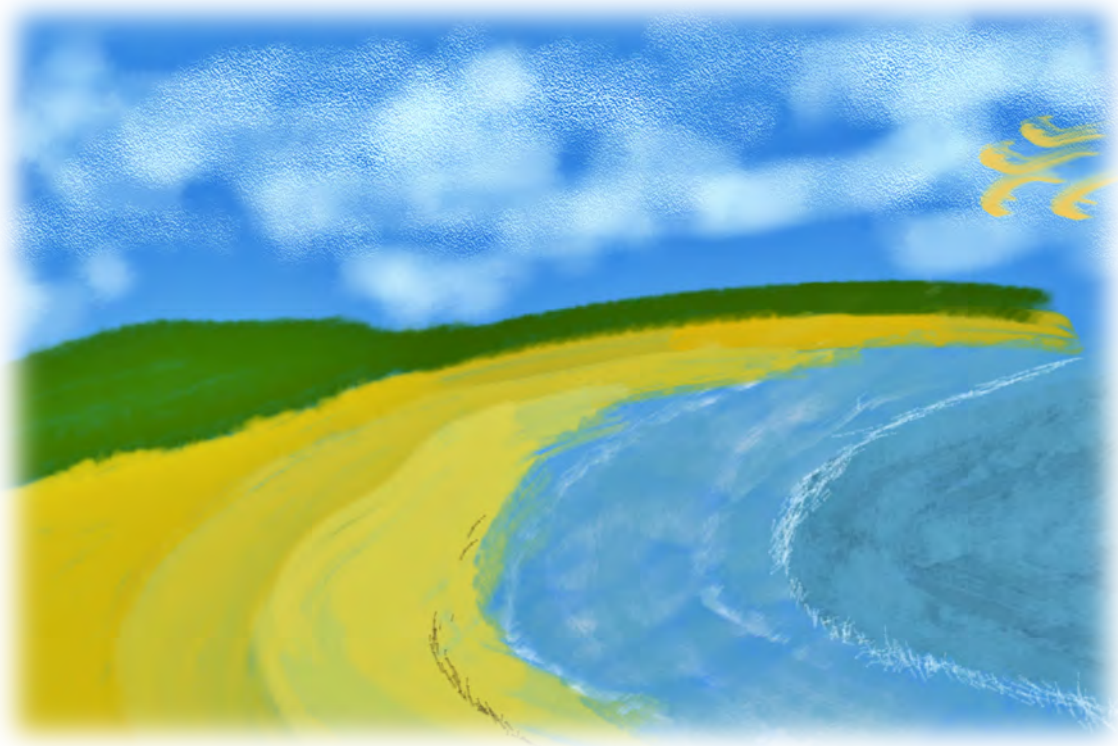
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# Spring

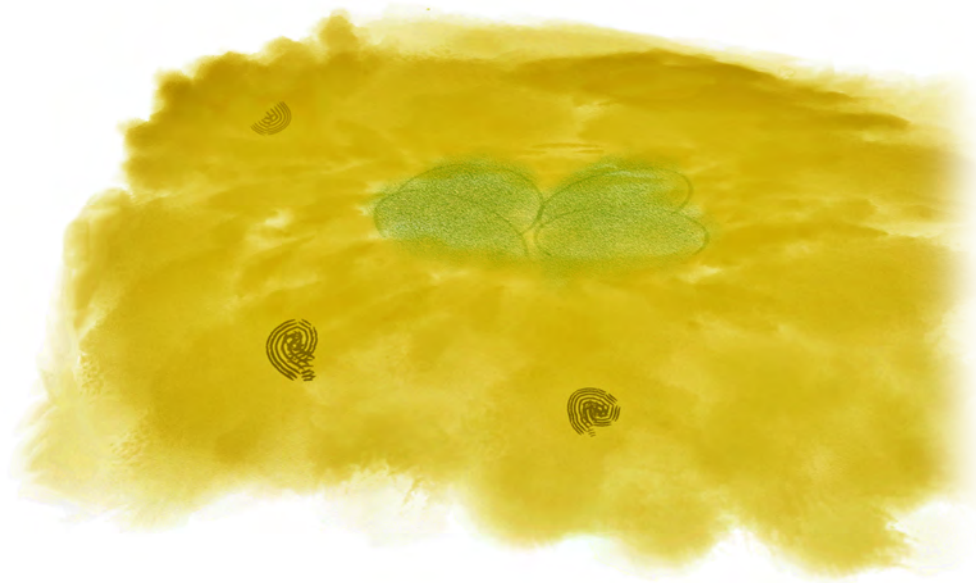
Spring has arrived.



Along a remote stretch of beach,  
a faint puff of warm air  
displaces the cold winter chill.



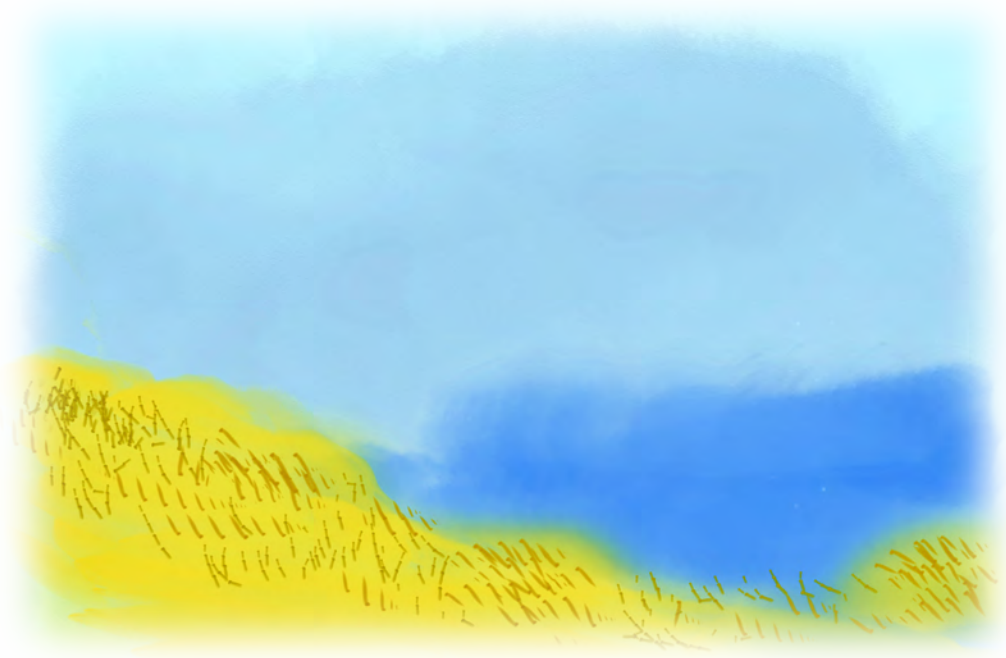
Tiny, hooded plovers return from far away winter homes.  
They fly night and day above the clouds,  
covering vast distances.



To lay their eggs above high tide mark on the beach.  
Expertly hidden in plain sight,  
amongst the washed-up pebbles, shells and seaweed.  
Vulnerable, yet safe.

A joy to behold that lifts the mood with the promise of new life.

## Summer



Everything is alive,  
including the tiny grains of sand,  
who, once stripped away by winter storms,  
are now slowly returning to the beach  
from their offshore resting place.

Little by little,  
with the gentle rhythm of the waves.





The hooded plover eggs have hatched now.  
Babies take their first tentative steps,  
still dependent on their mothers.



Terns dive like jet fighters,  
feasting on the bait balls of small fish.



Dolphins surf and dance on the waves,  
because they can,  
with huge smiles on their faces.

What fun!



On the beach,  
children smile with the dolphins,  
chasing and splashing each other in the shallows.  
Alive, free and spontaneous.

## Autumn



The beach is less crowded now.  
The hooded plovers have returned to their winter feeding grounds  
far across the ocean, to the east.  
Old men walk their dogs.  
They stand silently by the water's edge,  
contemplating the passing of time,  
lost youthful exuberance,  
and a life lived.



They watch the surfers revelling in the  
growing autumn swells.





Storm clouds are building on the horizon.  
It is time to prepare for the coming winter.

## Winter

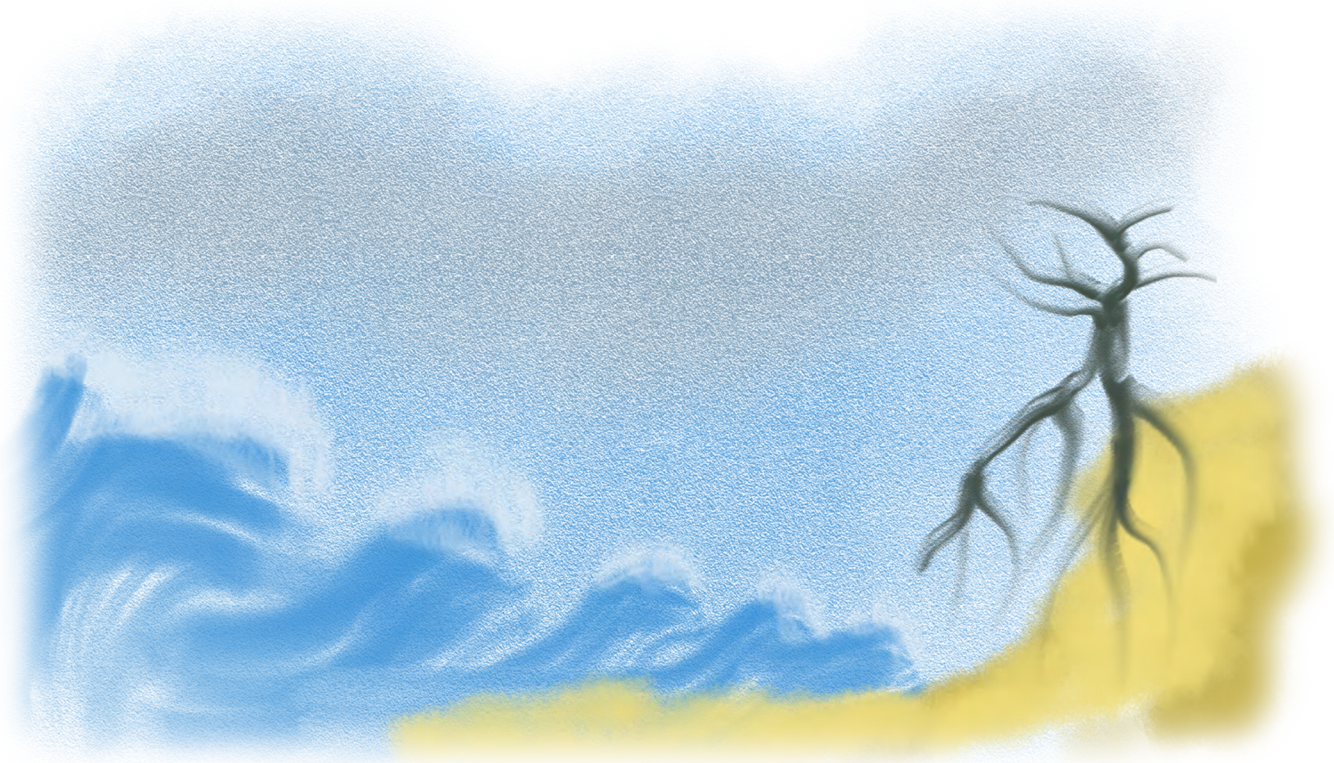


There are only a few brave souls on the beach,  
rugged up in woolly jumpers and hats for warmth.  
It is far too cold for swimming.





Instead, they build mighty sandcastles to house a growing empire.  
They are adorned with shimmering shells  
and other treasures washed ashore.  
Protected by an impregnable moat to keep the sea enemies at bay.



Fierce storms whip up giant waves that lash the shore.  
Scouring the beach,  
stripping away tons of sand from the dunes.  
Peeling back and exposing skeletal remains.  
Revealing elemental truths.

## Mid-Winter

Dusk arrives early each day.  
It is time to retire home, rest and take stock.



Soon the mid-winter solstice will be celebrated,  
marking the earth's holding of its deepest breath, its darkest night.  
Lanterns will be lit to illuminate the path toward dawn.  
Songs will be sung to lighten the mood.





Celebrating the imminent return of spring,  
and,  
the hooded plovers.

A new awakening,  
alive to the rhythm.

## *Finding Your Rhythm*

Take rambling walks in nature with no outcome in mind.

Find time and rituals to observe your daily and seasonal rhythm.

Find the wonder of your world.

If you're wondering where you belong that's ok.

Be patient,

wait,

take each day as it is,

then,

heed your call.

## **To Stand in a Puddle of Water**

To stand in a puddle of water. Or not.

Common sense and your parents would say not.

It's too cold, its too muddy, unseen tapworms will drill into your sole,  
and maybe your soul.

And yet there is some hesitation, a yearning.

To stand in and step into another realm, even if only for a moment.

To be with yourself.

To bare witness to and learn from the spotted tree frog,  
the lace winged dragonfly,  
the helmeted honey eater.

To feel the sun and the breeze on the back of your neck.

A call to past lives, an ancient time, and way, that still beckons,  
and is strangely felt.

So, submit to that yearning and stand for a moment in a puddle of water.

Feel the cold, the sharp pebbles beneath your feet.

The sun and the wind on the back of your neck.

Heed the call of the wild, your wild

### **About the Author**

Russell Irving has worked for many years as an environmental educator and manager, including with Indigenous ranger groups at the Kimberley and Northern Land Councils in Broome and Darwin respectively. He currently works with the Bandjalang Rangers on the North Coast of New South Wales, one of the most biodiverse regions of Australia.

This experience has reinforced his passion for educating people, and children in particular, about the many benefits of building meaningful connections with nature. This is a core theme of his writing and drives his continued production of high-quality, educational children's books.

## *Summer*

*The hooded plover eggs have hatched now.  
Babies take their first tentative steps,  
still dependent on their mothers.*



A joyful, poetic exploration of the changing seasons,  
moods and, natural wonders to be discovered at the beach.

A celebration of the serenity found when we  
connect with ourselves through nature.

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