

Contained and recycled  
Word count: 248

My dad's heart stopped among urban trees. I was 22. An ambulance was called to the Cairns Red Arrow Track but he was gone. For years, I imagined the parking lot to be large and open, with a clean entrance to a basic dry hill and a gravel path leading upward. I often wondered about his last thoughts, final sensations. I visited thirteen years later. There was no sign showing where he'd parked, no familiar set of eyes.

Surrounded by rainforest beauty, the entrance to the track was couched in shade. I walked the length of it. Everything curled and wound and wrapped around itself, contained and recycled within the rainforest. No crazy winds blew, hollers didn't come from above, the ground didn't shake. I stopped several times, searching. I wanted to leave a mark, see what he saw, warn other walkers to mind their health. I didn't because the rainforest doesn't care; belonging to neither of us, she merely sheltered his final moments.

I couldn't find him, my dad, top nerd, lover of chess, eager mathematician, Jewish American financial advisor, father of daughters. As I came up empty, I asked the Aboriginal Ancestors of the country on which he died, the Djagubay people who are the original inhabitants of mountains, gorges, lands, and waters of a richly forested part of the Great Dividing Range in the Wet Tropics of Queensland, to care for his spirit, and I thank them for enveloping him into their rich green forest.