

Dear slopes of Mount Lofty,

My home is here, where the slopes of your highest peak look east towards Uraidla.

Home is more than just a house; it's an attachment to living in this land, with its own sense of place; a place and community that I care about, respect, and feel I belong to, the place in my heart that I think of as home.

My days are spent here, digging and tending my garden, and in summer, harvesting raspberries and alpine strawberries that grow so well in a cooler climate.

Walking through your gullies and over your hills, I am grateful to live where I live.

I love how your days ebb and flow with the changing weather. One minute fog and mist drifts in over Piccadilly, pierced by ethereal shafts of sunlight, and later it rises above the hills and disappears into sunny, blue skies. On days like this we get two seasons in one day.

Long ago farmers turned your fertile valley near Uraidla into a food bowl, so close to the city. Now, cool-climate vineyards stretch as far as the eye can see, with apple and cherry orchards, market gardens, and fields where strawberry pickers gather to start their days' work. In summer, we fill our baskets at roadside stalls, and sip cool whites at the local pub or cellar door.

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The cold nights and warm days of autumn turn your landscape into a kaleidoscope of colours in deciduous trees and row after row of golden vines. And when rain falls on your dry, parched ground for the first time in months, the air is filled with the earthy smell of petrichor, of rain and eucalyptus. The almost-forgotten sound of water dripping accompanies a cacophony of birdsong and frog calls.

The obelisk on top of your tallest peak reminds me of a lighthouse that keeps watch over the city on one side, and hills and valleys on the other, a guardian of ancestral lands of the Peramangk people.

We are only passing through on a journey in a timeless story. And if, in the passage of time, we contribute to the collective memory of place in the Adelaide Hills, and leave it a little better than it was when we found it, then it will not be for nothing that we came to be here.