

A Feathered Visit: A Story Close to My Heart

Today, I am sharing a little piece of my heart — a story about loss, hope, and the quiet comfort of a bird's visit.

Losing a loved one is never easy, and for many of us, there's comfort in believing they find ways to send little 'notes' to say, "I'm still around."

How often have you seen someone bend down, pick up a feather, and smile, connecting it back to a loved one who has passed on?

Speaking from experience, I wanted to share our family's very personal connection to a bird — a small but meaningful sign that has brought us comfort in the toughest of times.

We now live in a complex, so while our garden isn't huge, it certainly makes up for it in the number of feathered visitors it attracts every morning. A few years ago, we noticed an African Olive Pigeon (formerly known as a Rameron Pigeon) drinking from our birdbath. It wasn't long before it was joined by a second one — its partner.

It felt so special seeing such large, beautiful, and detailed birds becoming regular visitors. Day after day, we would watch them arrive together, perch quietly at the bath, and drink before flying off again. It became part of the rhythm of our mornings, something we all looked forward to without even realising just how much they meant to us.

This carried on for a few years until one day, we heard a loud bang against the lapa window. Wondering what it could be, I went to investigate — only to find one of our pigeons lying motionless on the ground. It had flown into the glass and sadly died.

Feeling so connected to these birds, it was heartbreaking. I gently picked it up, dug a hole in the garden, and laid it to rest under the trees it had often perched in. After that day, we didn't see the surviving partner for a long time. It felt like an empty space had been left behind, and somehow mornings weren't quite the same without their quiet presence.

Fast forward to the 7th of June 2024 — a date my family will never forget.

That morning, we received devastating news: my aunt, who lived in Australia, had been found dead in her car at a beachfront carpark in Noosa. The circumstances around her passing were unclear, and we suddenly found ourselves dealing with Interpol, endless phone calls, unanswered questions, and a mountain of heartache. It broke our family. There are simply no words to prepare you for that kind of grief.

As we sat around the table that day, heavy with sadness and uncertainty, something truly special happened.

An African Olive Pigeon landed on the birdbath right outside the window where we were sitting. But it wasn't alone. With it was a recently fledged young one — a youngster clearly being shown the ropes by its parent.

They sat there in the water for what felt like forever, quietly watching us. It was as if they were delivering a message we so desperately needed: *Tracey is here. She's okay.*

In that moment, something shifted in the room. Our grief was still there, but so was a flicker of warmth, of reassurance, of knowing that somehow, even in the depths of loss, we were not alone.

Since that day, almost a year later, the two pigeons — the adult and the youngster who has now grown into a strong, beautiful bird — have visited our garden every single day without fail. Rain or shine, no matter what life throws at us, they arrive and perch together at the birdbath. It has been a daily reminder that even though our loved ones may leave us physically, their spirit never truly leaves our lives.

It's hard to explain, but somehow, in that quiet moment of shared space between the pigeons and our grieving family, we found a little bit of peace. Their continued presence feels like a quiet promise that we are being looked after, that love transcends even the most final of goodbyes.

These days, when I see the two pigeons arrive each morning, I can't help but smile. They have become a symbol of hope, resilience, and connection — and a daily reminder that the bonds we have with the people we love can never really be broken.

Loss is never easy, and the pain of missing someone you love never truly disappears. But sometimes, it's the smallest, most unexpected moments that help you cope — a feather on the ground, a familiar call in the trees, or a bird visiting the garden just when you need it most. While we know that Tracey is no longer with us in the way we wish she were, we find comfort in knowing that she is free now, dancing among the stars like the beautiful angel she always was.

Have you ever shared a special connection with a bird that made you feel a loved one was close by? I would love to hear your story.