



## TIE A YELLOW RIBBON...

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The hour-long walk home of three miles for little feet may seem an eternity. Steps and stepping stones merged with musical interludes, playful soliloquies and the ritual stopping to sit beneath the leafy and welcoming earth of the oak tree by the railway bridge. How tall and imposing and offering unconditional respite that tree always stood. Its significance, keenly felt in childhood and then somehow dissipating for an eternity. A year after his death, I was prompted through a vivid dream to revisit for the first time in more than three decades and pay my respects at this spot where my brother and I would together tie our yellow ribbons around this tree.

The memory of this safe holding space punctuated the inevitable return to a traumatic environment and at once it evoked that childlike ability to create, play, and reach into realms of dream state, fantasy, colour, music—the depth of which is perhaps not

fully appreciated until much later in life when adulthood brings us to access the parts of us which are innately courageous and authentic in both the recovery from early traumas and the changing landscapes of loss, grief and bereavement. I like to think of this as a thread of resilience which the human spirit houses and remains intact even when trauma smothers.

Storytelling and speaking our truth is as much a preservation of lived experience as it is a wish for expression. If we attend only to the text rather than the texture of the communication then much is lost. The underlying narrative is truth. My unconventional journey from law to motherhood to psychotherapy opened the creative gateway to ultimately making art. Therein I found my voice and a desire not only to break many cycles of past experience but to offer the arc of the story through making marks in abstract art and the written word.