

On being faithful.

A plumb line is a building measurement tool used to determine whether or not something structural is perfectly vertical. It is essentially a piece of string with a heavy weight tied to one end. The metaphor of the plumb line appears in the Bible as a measure of the faith of God's believers. Their uprightness or righteousness, according to God's standard, the Bible.

About a year ago I bought a bible at an op shop for two dollars. It had this really nice inscription in the front from Aunty Rya to George, 1923. Aunty Rya tells George of the riches the Bible contains and how he must follow its teachings. I was recently flicking through this bible in my studio thinking of this upcoming show and I turned to the book of Amos where the verse referring to the plumb line is. The verse was marked with blue pen. The only text highlighted in the entire book.

I used to pray to a God when I was a kid. He was an old bearded man sitting up in the clouds. I prayed for all sorts of things. I prayed for good things to happen to me. I prayed to keep my family safe. I prayed because I was told I had to or else when I reached heaven the gates would be closed and I would be sent down to spend an eternity in fire with devils.

I used to go to confession where I would tell the priest all my wrongdoings. I was told if I said sorry then God would forgive me and I would be safe. The only problem was I had to make up lies about all the bad things I had done so I had something to say to the priest. Making up sins to be absolved from? A strange irony in that surely?

My Dad worked for the same company for twenty-eight years. A workmate made him a green plate-metal lunch box. Plate-metal is definitely not used in fabricating for its weightless qualities. Dad used to carry this box to work with his lunch so as not to offend his thoughtful colleague. He used to always pack the most elaborate lunches and take a big thermos of coffee. Mum quite fancies Catholicism and so as a kid it was important for me to be 'raised a Catholic'. Dad never attended church with us as a family. He came to the church for a wedding, a funeral or the occasional baptism. We figure Mum is safe and should get to heaven. I wonder if Dad and I can hang out together with the devil in eternal fire. Maybe Dad can bring a picnic lunch.

My Grandparents are from Poland and I have an interest in all things Eastern European. Lately I have been fascinated with old Polish wayside shrines (*Kapliczki*). Originating from ancient Pagan traditions and Christian beliefs, these structures are built to house religious statues, images and objects. Every village had their own shrine, built on the edge of woods or fields where the familiar area ended and the kingdom of supernatural powers began or at major crossroads where it was thought evil spirits lurked. They were created for many reasons: to keep away natural disasters or wandering evil spirits, thanksgiving, to commemorate lost family members and help their salvation or mark battle sites. They were a place to make offerings. A reminder of past and a marker of faith and hope.

For hundreds of years this tradition continued and the countryside is now littered with these monuments. I thought it would be nice to make my own. Markers of faith in faithlessness.

The other day as I was driving down Guildford road a little blue *Proton Satria*¹ with a smashed front windscreen pulled in front of me swerving wildly. On its back windscreen was the word *Faith* in an abnormally large medieval gothic font. I watched as it sped off into the distance. I had to laugh.

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¹ I have since discovered *Satria* is the Sanskrit word for knight.

