

To see the world in a grain of sand

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I needed time to think today.

Yesterday was harder than I thought it would be. Clearing my late father's home following the death of my stepmother awoke far more memories than I expected.

Alex Salmond's death was also shocking in a number of ways, not least because I just presumed we'd carry on talking and working together for some time to come, and now we won't. We all know we're mortal, but sometimes fate seeks to remind us of it.

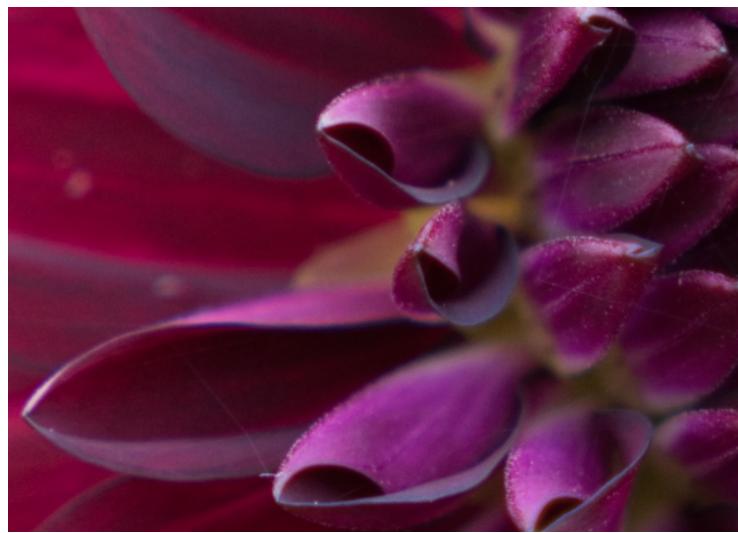
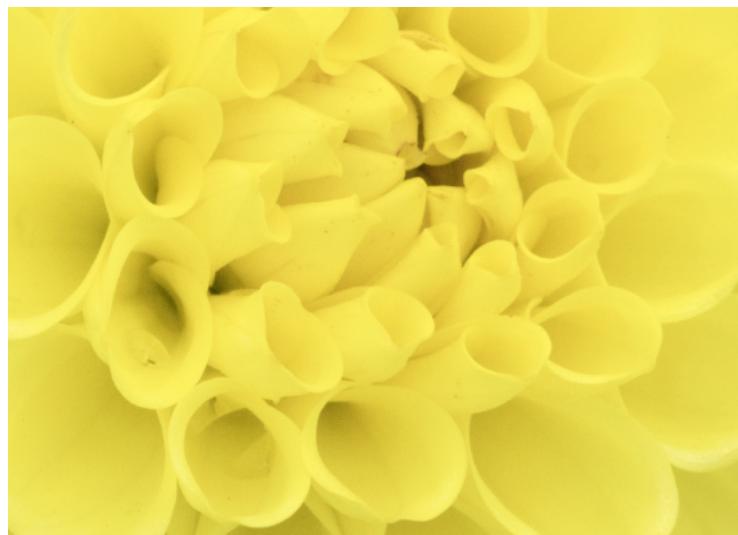
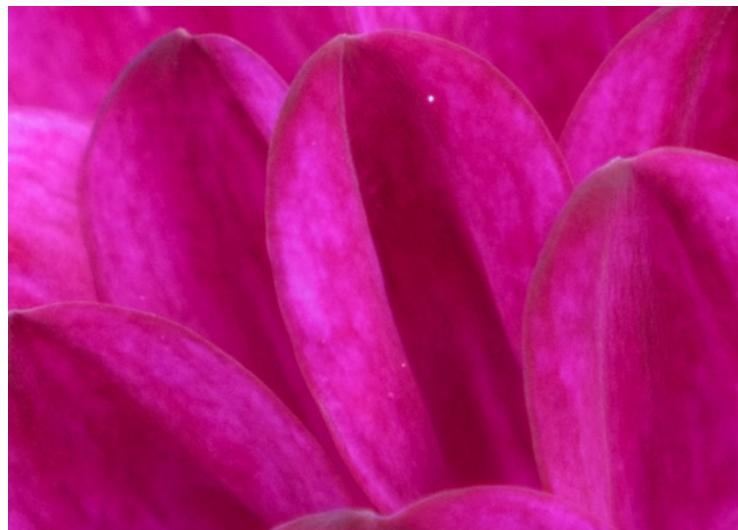
So, I was out walking today. We had tea this afternoon in the shadow of the cathedral here in Ely:



And I took pictures of dahlias in the border at the bottom of that photo:



And then I began to play with those photos:



Each flower was amazing, but the photos let me see them in a different way, and isn't that the point of taking pictures?

Discussing this, we were reminded of a [poem by Blake](#) that begins:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand And a Heaven in a Wild Flower

Those dahlias are not wildflowers, but they are like grains of sand in a world that too often just walks on by.

I was going to leave it there, but having re-read the poem I think it worth sharing in full. There's a lot in it:

Auguries of Innocence

By William Blake

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour
A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Pluts all Heaven in a Cage
A Dove house full with Doves & Pigeons
Shudders all the regions
A dog starv'd at his Masters gate
Prides in the ruin of His State
A horse misus'd upon the Road
Calls to Heaven the Hurt he had
Earth to Heaven the Hurt he had
A Prey from the Brain does rear
A Skyfank wounded in the wing
The Cherubim goes cease to Sing
The Game Cock finds a arm'd for fight
Does the rising Sun affright
Every Wolfe & Lions now
Bares from Hell a Human Soul
The Wild Deerwanding here & there
Keeps the Human soul from Care
And yet forgoes the Butchers knife
The Cat that sits at close of eve
Has left the Brain that won't believe
The Owl that calls upon the Night
Speaks the unbelieve now
Who who shall hurt the little Wren
Who who the Ox to Wrath has mov'd
Who who never be by Woman had
The Wanton Boy that kills the Fly
Shall feel the Spiders enmity
Who who torments the chafers Sprite
Weaves a Bower in endless Night
Repeals as for her the Mothers grief
Kill not the Moth her butterly
For the Last Judgment draweth nigh
Who who shall train the Horse to War
That never pass the Polar Bar
The Beddars Pod & Widows Eat
Feed them & thou wilt grow fat
The Gnat that sings his Summers Song
The poison gets from the Snake & Newt
The poison of the Fly's Foot
The poison of the Honey Bee
The Princes Rides & Beggars Rags
Are Roads to Oss on the Misers Bags
Are Truth & Trials told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent
Mis'nt it should be so
Man was made for Joy & Woe
And when this we rightly know
Thro' the World we safely go
Joy & Woe are woven like
Under every grief & crime
The Babe is more than Swaddling Bands
Tools were made & born were hands
Every Farmer understands
Becomes a Babe in Eternity
This is caught by Females bright
And returned to us of woe & light
Are Waves that beat on Heavens Shore
The Babe that weeps the Rod beneath
Whose revenge is realms of Death
Does Beggars hands Heaven's tear
The Soldier rids the world sword & Gun
The poor Mans Earthly Sun more
Than all the Gold on Africa's Shore
One Mite wrung from the Labours hands
Shall buy & sell the Misers Lands

Or if protected from on high
Does the whole Nation set & buy
What will be bought at the Angels Death
He who shall teach the Child to Doubt
The rotting Grave shall never get out
He who respects the Infants faith
Thou art the master over Hell & Death
Are the Fruits of the two seasons
The Questioner who sits so sly
Shall never know how to Reply
Dost thou replies to words of Doubt
Dost thou put the light of Knowledge out
The Strongest poison availed to none
Name from Caesar Laurel & Town
Bought an Arrow in the Human Race
When Gold & Gems adorn the plow
A peaceful Arts shall Envie Bow
A Riddle of the Crickets Cry
The Emmites Inch & Eagles Mile
He who Doubts from what he sees
Will never believe in what you please
If the Sun & Moon should Doubt
Theyd immediately Go out
Dost thou in a Passion Go Good may Do
But no Good can Passion is in you
The Whore & Gamble by the State
Licensd to build that Nations Fates
The Harlots Cry from Street to Street
That Weave Old Englands winding Sheet
The Winners Shoot the Losers Curse
Dance before dead Englands Hearse
Every Night & every Morn
Some are born to Misery are Born
Some are born to sweet delight
Some are born to endless Night
We are led to Believe at the Eye
Which we see not through the Eye
When the Soul slept in beams of Light
God Appears & God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in Night
But does a human Form display
To those who Dwell in Realms of day