

CLICK

We played 'click' near the shores of Mont Saint Michel.

She was a photographer, you understand - always peering through a lens at some object. On this particular day she had left her camera at the hotel. Sometimes she did so. It was an act of love, her way of letting me know I too was important in her life. We explored the monastery on top of the mount and had coffee in one of the little cafes on the spiralling path of the island village.

I sensed she was missing her camera. So I invented a game.

Click.

She closed her eyes and I took her hand. We walked, me guiding her, until I spotted something of beauty. It could be a tiny detail - a flower growing through tarmac for example - or something huge - a panoramic view. It could be anything that I thought beautiful.

When I saw it I would position her head to face the thing of beauty and I would say 'click' to mimic the sound of the shutter on a camera. Only then could she open her eyes to see.

We alternated. She and I took turns to be camera and photographer. It was a beautiful time we shared that day.

Since then more than 50 years have passed.

This morning when I woke her as usual she did not respond. Her eyelids stayed shut. I had a cup of tea for her in my hand and I put it down on her bedside table.

Claudette?

Claudette!

Not a flicker of an eyelash. I shook her gently.

Claudette!

CLAUDETTE!

CLAUDETTTE!

Oh, click, Claudette.

Claudette!! Click. Click click.

Claudette did not move.