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An intimate portrait of life with MS revealed in new memoir

A fragile hold: Living with multiple sclerosis and other uncertainties — A MEMOIR BY RUTH COTTON

KEY POINTS

- Meeting the challenges of multiple sclerosis with a more mindful way of living
- An intimate portrait of family life
- Life in lockdown

ABOUT

When Ruth Cotton walked out of her neurologist's office in 1997 with a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, her life changed irrevocably. At the peak of her career and with three children still at home, all she could think of were the uncertainties – especially whether she'd become wheelchair-bound. But Ruth continued her full, active life and it wasn't until her retirement that multiple sclerosis exacted its greatest toll – slowly taking her balance and mobility. In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic confined Ruth indoors, news came that her husband's cancer – melanoma, diagnosed years before – was accelerating. Overwhelmed by a sense of life's fragility, Ruth turned to writing to make sense of it all. As she gives close attention to her immediate environment, a more mindful way of being and thinking unfolds. **A Fragile Hold** reveals with warmth and unflinching honesty the daily, intimate scenes of a life with multiple sclerosis.

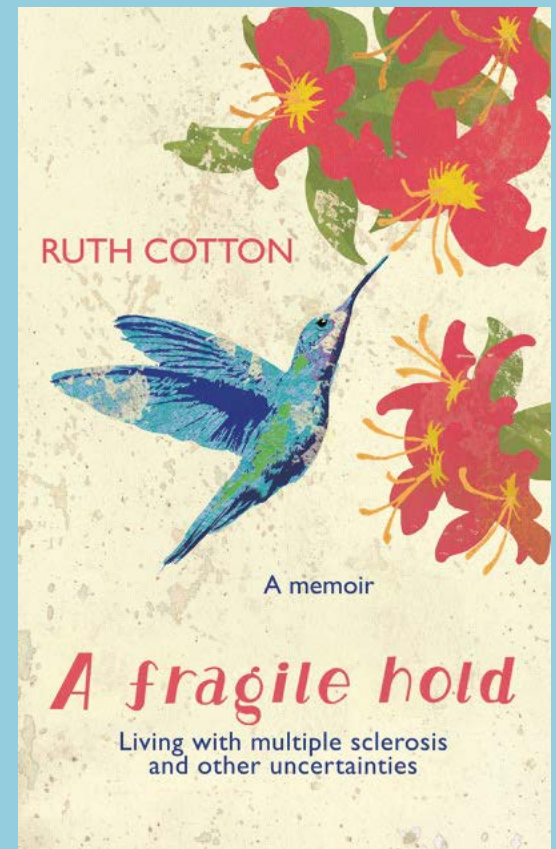
THE AUTHOR

Ruth Cotton was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1997, when she needed all her capacities to care for her family and achieve her life goals. **A Fragile Hold** is the first time she has written about living with chronic disease and its impact on her life. Ruth is the author of five books, including the popular Newcastle history series *Hidden Hamilton: Uncovering stories of Hamilton, NSW* (2014) and *More Hidden Hamilton: Further stories of people, place and community* (2016).



If we're lucky, some of us will meet someone like Ruth Cotton. If we're really lucky, we'll pause our own busy lives long enough to listen.

CAROL DUNCAN, COUNCILLOR, CITY OF NEWCASTLE AND FOUNDER OF LOST NEWCASTLE



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MEDIA CONTACT

CONTACT RUTH:

Email: lightleaf95@gmail.com

Mobile: 0411 702 521

www.ruthcotton.com.au/lightleaf-press