

AnoMaly Street:

poetry with a difference



A twice-yearly collection of poetry
that creates jolts for flatlined minds

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Tom Adair

Adrian Brookes

Jo Curtain

Jennifer Griggs

Judy Harvey

Garry Kinnane

Jenny Macaulay

Jean Pearce

Quinlivan

Guenter Sahr

Fern Smith

Victoria Spicer

Ivor Steven





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Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Anomaly Street: poetry with a difference!*

The idea for *Anomaly Street* began with a seminal conversation in late 2021 and its development was inspired by a desire to create a publication for resonant, contemporary poetry, to encourage poets to experiment and challenge conventions of form, format, and voice.

Anomaly Street is dedicated to the members of Geelong Writers Inc. It is a publication proudly open to the diversity of writers' experiences, circumstances and backgrounds.

Anomaly Street would not have been possible without the generous support of Guenter Sahr and Victoria Spicer, and specifically, the time they dedicated to supporting me in selecting and editing works for the publication.

Thank you to all poets who submitted their work. This collection of poems embraces the everyday aspects of life in dramatic and powerful ways, seeking to explore feelings of place, social inequality, power, politics and the visceral qualities of love.

I hope you enjoy the inaugural issue of *Anomaly Street!*

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land from which *Anomaly Street* has germinated, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Jo Curtain

June 2022

Christchurch

by Jenny Macaulay

THE 'F' WORD

Fifty followers
faithfully facing eastward
shot in the back.

Today, riding the Waiheke Ferry

The rapid fire -
A fusillade -
on a passenger's fucking phone.

Dawn struggles to fracture the foreboding sky
sending tentative fingers through the pohutukawa
shivering at my window.

In the tree, I see a leaf dragon,
its fictitious jaws
flirting with the flickering light
dancing on its ferocious fangs.

A tui rides a neighbouring flax flower
and fantails flit between the toe toe feathers

unaware of these fraudulent branches.

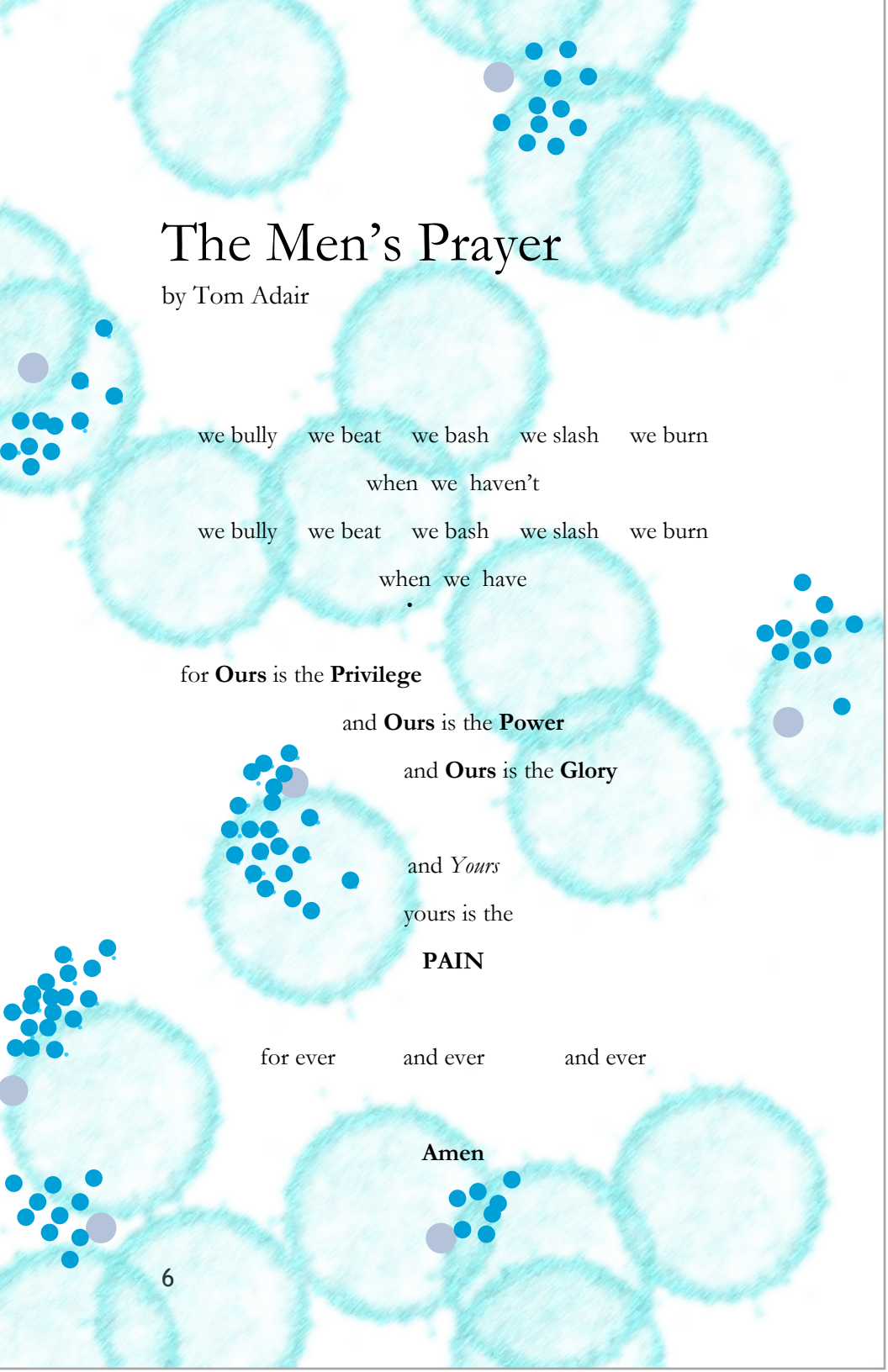
We are not who we seem to be.

(Pohutukawa= NZ coastal myrtle. Tui= NZ honeyeater.

Toe toe=looks like pampas grass.)



photo by Jo Curtain



The Men's Prayer

by Tom Adair

we bully we beat we bash we slash we burn
when we haven't
we bully we beat we bash we slash we burn
when we have
.

for **Ours** is the **Privilege**

and **Ours** is the **Power**

and **Ours** is the **Glory**

and *Yours*

yours is the

PAIN

for ever

and ever

and ever

Amen

Hull2

by Jean Pearce





Worth Knowing

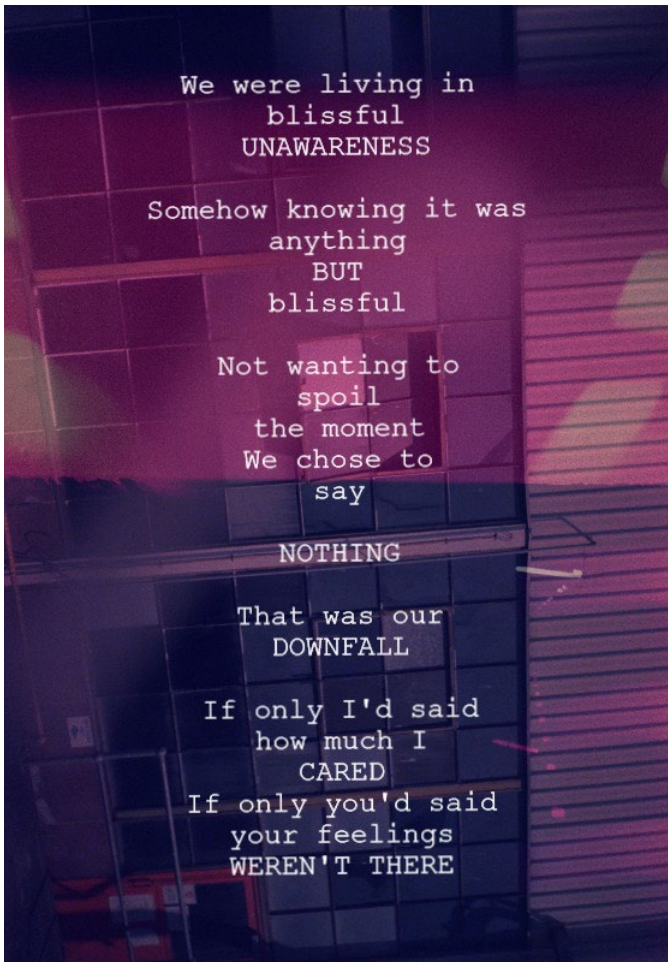
by Jennifer Griggs

What I didn't know before
was how the quiet little town
in a dusty fragile space
can harbour,
large ships,
and stowaways, and
sheep.

What I didn't know, was that
underneath the concord
of muted mallee scrub
lives a kaleidoscope
of shifting
shades, shapes, and
sand.

Blissful Unawareness

by Quinlivan



Climbing a Rabbit-Proof Fence

by Ivor Stevens

One of those days,

I walk a marathon,

feet are shuffling, scraping on the hot
pavement, and tiredness overcomes me.

I am searching for the good Dr Who.

Under a wall, I collapse.

The Great Wall of China

The Berlin Wall

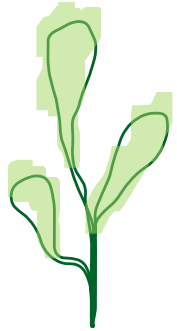
Israel's Palestinian Barricade

The Iron Curtain

Trump's Mexican Wave

Australia's Rabbit-Proof Fence

My neighbour's Red Brick Wall.



Bulldozed by them all

I am in a barrel leaping off Niagara Falls

I am a sperm whale beached at Bondi

I am an angler at a dry Buckley's Falls

I am a spawning salmon with no rapids to swim

Have I lost the battle?

Waiting for a new tomorrow, they tell

me to be patient, to obey,

walking shoes are ready, a good

night's sleep,

nothing more to be said





Vacancy

by Judy Harvey

Like a spider slinking toward its prey, fingers inch their way towards

HIS side of the bed.

Consuming cold seeps upward from the sheet invading every pore,
every cell,
every...

Fists clench. Nails drill into palms, crescent-shaped pain being willed to engulf,

distract,

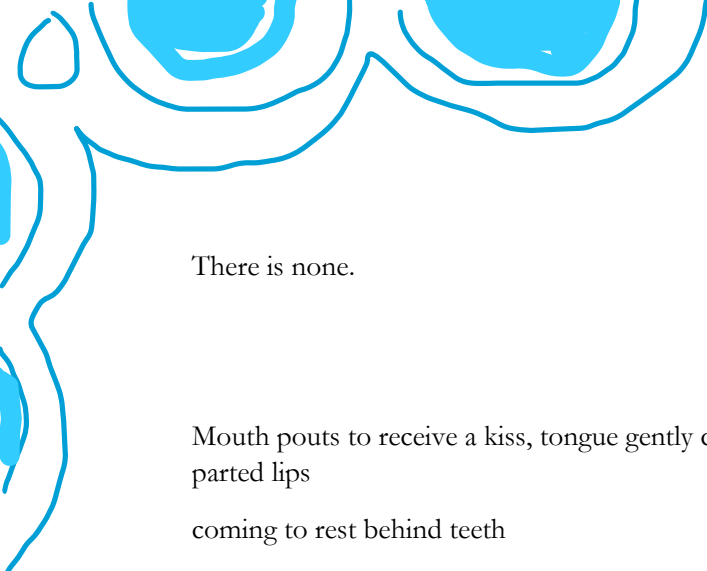
numb all consciousness,

defeated, she unclasps.

Sliding her head sanguinely towards HIS pillow, foolishly anticipating a dent

she knows no longer there

nostrils flare, dragging in air, hoping for a scintilla of HIS scent .



There is none.



Mouth pouts to receive a kiss, tongue gently caressing
parted lips

coming to rest behind teeth

ravenous for the acrid flavour of garlic mingled with
mint—HIS taste.

Despairing, a fractured sob escapes with her next breath
despondently she rolls to HER side of the bed.

Resigned to sleep alone.



Dipeptide Moons

Guenter Sahr



I'm ready to take you on, world.

You world on the take, you, I'm ready.

Pump, pump, pump that blood.

Pump blood/sec/sec.

I'm ready to take you on, world.

Pump, pump, pump that blood.

Pump blood/sec/sec

Pump blood/sec/sec

I'm ready to take you on, world.

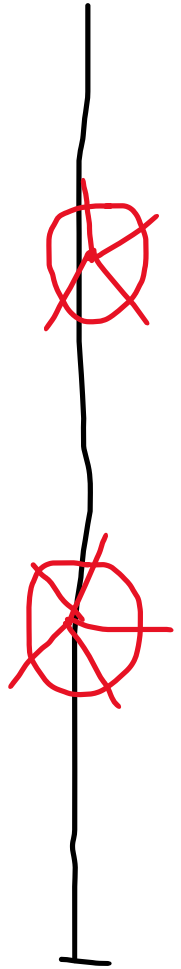
Isolation Cell Port Arthur, 1850

By Garry Kinnane

What can be known in this black,
but the earth underfoot, the walls I touch?
My fingers brush crumbling skin
tenderly
as it were the body of a dead lover.

These coat buttons,
plucked, are useless
as a snowman's eyes;
blindly strewn about the cell,
they wait for redemption
by my saviour hands.

Pulsing sheath, warm in my loins,
and comrade cloth, my only friends.
I would die, but lack the means.
I would penetrate these yard-thick walls

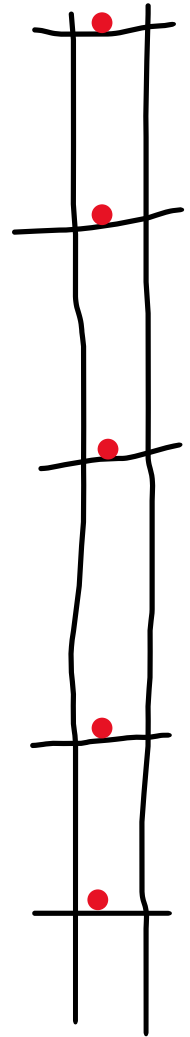


with memories - the white cry of gull,
green feel of grass, blue breath of sky,
whiff of something
whose name I no longer know
over the bucketful of stink
somewhere behind me,
but recall is weak without clues;
there are no clues.

Besides, the shit spoils everything.

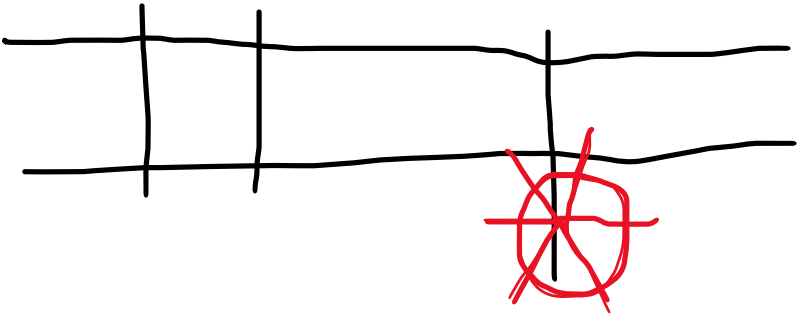
Here no name, no face, no voice;
nothing but the almost-imagined,
almost-alive, almost-dead. Move,
resist, go on, a heartbeat from those graves
somewhere across the bay.

Again I scatter the buttons to the void,
Listen, catch their rattle,
begin the quest once more,
tentative fingers brailleing the uncanny,
till eight-in-hand, in triumph
I clutch them to my breast, affirmed,



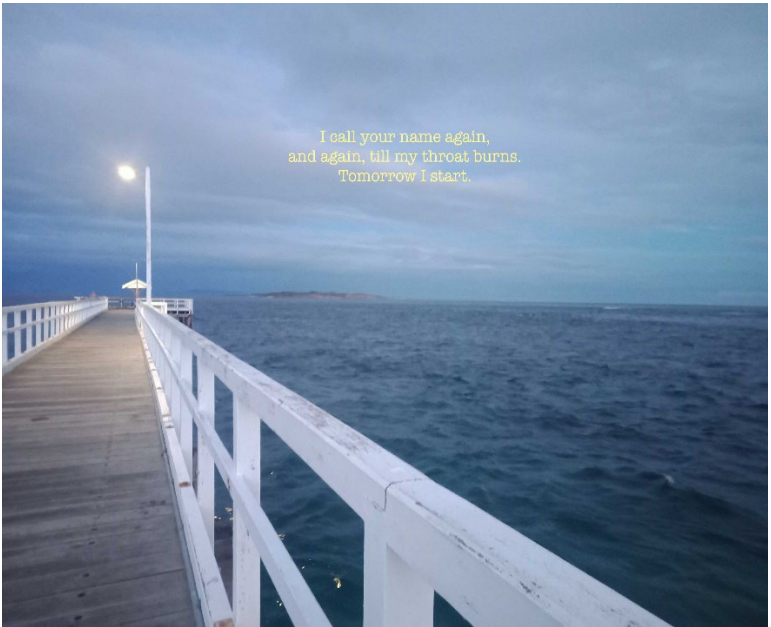
unspeaking,
the story retold.

The isolation cell at Port Arthur prison, created in 1849,
totally deprived the prisoner of light and sound for
anything between one and three months at a stretch.
Prisoners frequently emerged mentally deranged.



Pier3

by Jean Pearce



but here's the secret—

nothing

is not really

nothing

listen!

?

nothing

no, wait!



a sigh

becomes a mist becomes a shape becomes a sense
of something

insensible

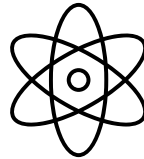
touching without touching

music!

deep space

deep music

music of the spheres!



and no-one yet to hear—

but who sighed?

Walk a Line

by Fern Smith

This heart of mine

shaped and forged
by parents' folly.
Sorrow spills from words unsaid.
Eyes not casting light.
Hands not moulding clay.
Lost in letters forming words.
I walk a line...

rucksack

El Nino

Easy to be true

when dead are cast.
Unfurling shadows' expectations.
Flint struck a million times,
softening unformed edges,
below a mackerel sky.
I walk a line...

dusty

isobar

Night is dark and day is light,

friends pass.
Onions cut, feeling spent.
Pressure bearing down,

track

Antarctica raging hot.
Perspiring, dreams to fusion,
I walk a line...

low pressure

Me on your side,
is that true?


Water the ten gone to dust.
Orange light of autumns angle,
bleeding, flooding out,
contemplate tragedies' acceleration,
my hand cannot hold.
I walk a line...

alone

As Johnny would say

...*Keep the ends out for the tie that binds...*
...*I walk the line.*

anomaly



Inspired by the word 'Line' and the song "I walk the line" lyrics by Johnny Cash, circa 1956. I approached the poem by picking words out of the first line and changing 'I walk the line' to 'I walk a line'. The sentiment arose from the confluence of the unprecedented passing of friends, and the warming of the Pacific Ocean and Antarctica. To be read how you see it on the page, in your mind or if read out loud in columns 1, 2 and 3.

Crane Birds

by Jennifer Griggs

Flightless flocks,
peeking through
sky soup
perch, then
swoop,
assembling concrete nests, where
droppings cluster
as cages, for
harried breathless ants,
labouring in global factories, of
stuff.

Crane birds,
swinging talons
releasing steel larva, while
raucously twittering,
spilling, into
hungry mouths, that
open, and
relentlessly swallow
whilst labouring
in affluenza
epidemic.

Fortified colonies, of
blinking eyes
dazzle on dark, as
lanterns
atop perches
awaiting dawn
roosting silently, in
garrisoned sanctuaries, under
rancid blankets, of
fetid air.
Smothered.



photo by Jo Curtain

Ten-Year-Old Child

by Tom Adair

Content Warning: Sexual violence.

Go next
door.

Pull down your shorts. Bend over a table.

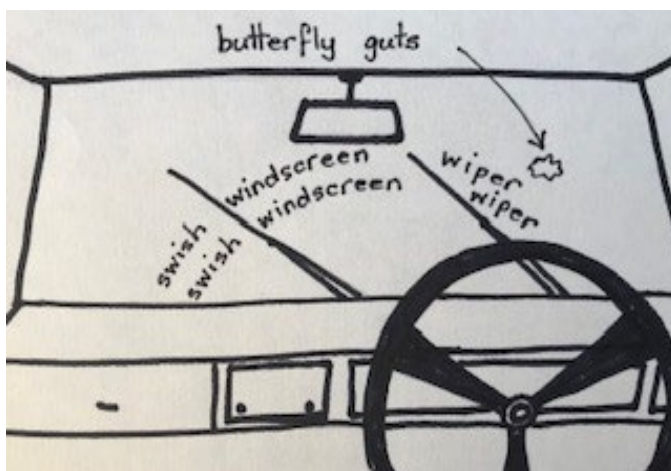
For God's

sake, child,

stop crying.

Butterfly Guts

by Jenny Macaulay



off my skin.

An unpredictable flow, but with such visceral certainty.

I think of returning home, but I don't know where home is.

I've slept in many houses—

dilapidated city chic to where cottage gardens push up against mountain ranges. I want to go home but will I remember it.

Here

I am walking

narrow streets gentrification dislocation

familial connections broken.

Here

in streets unmapped eight years ago—

now same, same, same

white boxes, grey boxes stacked on neat blocks

soaking up the trees and green fields right up to the horizon

silence pervades the space—there is more than one type of barren to imagine.



Blues No More

Guenter Sahr

Blues Train.

It don't have nuffin'
on us,
da Blues Train.
No.

Blues Train.

We seen you adda
Queenscliff Station,
you Blues Train,
you.

Blues Train.

You was wheezin' 'n sneezin'

adda platform

Chuff, chuff

Hu...fff

Chuff, chuff,

Hu...fff.

Just waitin'

you was,
assa big black dog
piss' up 'gainst da
paint-flaked
clap-boards.

Blues Train.

We take off on our
bikes
an', pumpin', we beat

Da Blues Train.

You done us no good,
so now we
on our bikes
and ridin' reg'lar like
to beat that
damn Blues Train
ev'ry day!

Da black dog?

we left 'im
back adda station
strippin' the paint
offa da wall.

If You Are Reading This

by Quinlivan

You found a way to view my life

Even after I'd ~~blocked~~ you
out

How does it make you feel
Knowing I'm doing better without you

Thriving with you as my muse

I've created more art
Thanks to you

And the awkward situation you
put me in

Than I would have made
Without knowing you

You will always e x i s t
in my world

But not the way you wish

I'll drain every last D
R
O
P

Out of my feelings for you

To make my art have soul

Thank you

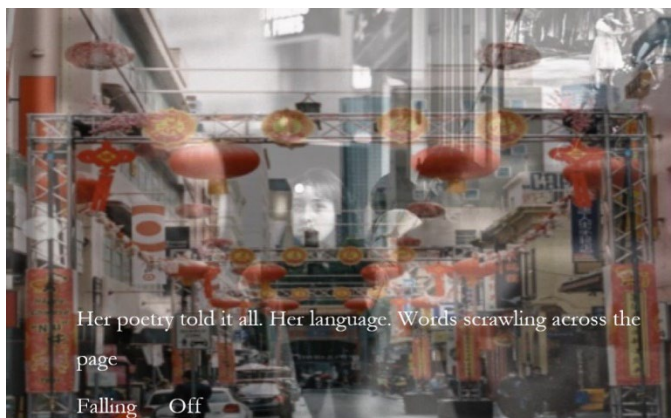


image by Jo Curtain

Raspberry Red Ripper

Kissed Lips

by Jo Curtain



The Edge.

In the mirror eight-hole black boots, push-up bra,
Raspberry Red Ripper kissed lips.

her glamour—her armour.

Mother says they're close.

Well! That was a long time ago. Anyway, it is not the word
she would use—

What then? Great friends? Knuckle-cracking Lip-smacking.

No. Entangled.

Walking. A car is useless in the city. Grace hears murmuring,

thoughts seep, impenetrable walls, locked doors,
desires unfulfilled, not belonging but trying to create, a home.

Plague her, follow her, on the hum of the traffic.

Protection. Grace seeks out the river, brown and beautiful, soundlessly flowing. All morning

crazy high Grace and Margot meet at the new dumpling house. People talking,

playing mahjong, drinking the sun. Grace side steps

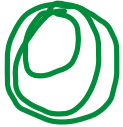
chicken bones and empty bottles. It is the happiest she has been for months.

Sinking. Mother worries. She remembers the last time Grace and Margot were friends—but Grace doesn't care her mind is elsewhere. But does anyone know?

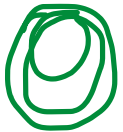
— Grace can't swim.

The Refinery Across Corio Bay

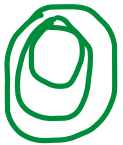
by Garry Kinnane



Distance does magic: a note
of measure between fact and eye,
when either too close or too remote,
makes humans monstrous or puny.



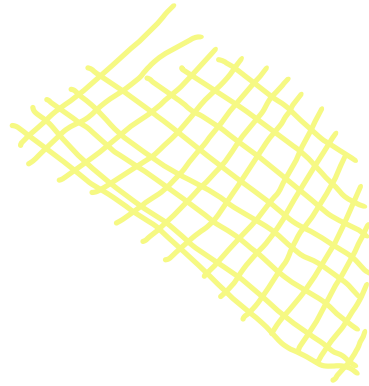
Gazed-at over river or sea,
'more fair' only shows sublime
if you can't hear the beggar's plea,
or see the carcass in the river slime.



On these lovely sunlit mornings
we may fall into risky spells when, aching with Cavafy's
longings,
we imagine Alexandrian walls,
ivory mansions trimming the Corniche,
across the bay, within eye's reach.



Yet by noon, when the mist has burned,
and the sun has opened up the angle,
the scene is clear and brazenly zoomed: now raucous zinc
bellies dangles skeleton arms and legs and whang their
inorganic toxic racket,
and we know the whole packet
lies - a swindling kilometre long.



Sleep

by Victoria Spicer

cocooned in 3,000 threads of cool comfort / rustle down, rollover, twist and turn / ~sigh~ / stiff limbs slacken, soften / an amnesiac wave, like a gossamer web / like a shroud / ~! surrender~ / subconscious sorrow seeps and mingles / faded bliss dissolves in the labyrinth of familiar strangeness / faces fade-out / blind alleys lead to verdant fields / stamped with aimless paths / endless horizon morphs into mazed streets, instantly recognisable, weirdly changed / once they marched at / right-angles - now they twist and cross and merge and die, leading puzzled pedestrians a way / rooms filled with children and unruly / meet a house that's my home / but it rambles, it sprouts rooms / into the languid light / books / as I embrace the glorious chaos, it evaporates / faces fade-in, faces fade-out / faces fade-in, faces fade-out /

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