



Source: Hala Jaber, 'Votes may avenge death of mufti',  
*Sunday Times* in *The Australian online*, 12/12/05.

Tags: [corporeality](#), [husband/wife](#), [travel](#)  
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The thing was—or the thing wasn't—I knew her so well.  
The thing was—or wasn't—I—who knew nothing and  
everything—and you—or should I say she—or we—or  
who—who knew enough—or not enough—at least knew  
her so well. So. Well.

And we were divided. By an essence—or existence—or  
oblong—or an unknown. To be divided—fenced  
off—struck down—like a phrasal verb—was to know her  
more. Even if the fence was painted in rose-tinted hues. I  
(me, it, they) when struck down (or fenced off) having felt  
her (its [your]) power, came to know her-it-you. By being  
struck. By her power. To know someone is to know—feel  
—taste—someone's power.

Division is drunken and lonely. The grass is always greener  
on the other side of the et cetera. Even through  
rose-tinted et cetera. Division is self-righteous and  
uncomprehending. A message from one self to herself  
—itself—themselves—myself. Myself. One word. My  
selves. Two words. Mice. One word. Elves.

The thing is—isn't—that once the self has divided  
—molecularly—particularly—quarkly—charmingly—it is  
doing one of two things: meiosis or mitosis.

A door shuts somewhere. Some here. There is someone  
else in the house. Why am I scared? Because that  
is—isn't—the cliché. Because the thing is abrupt. A door  
slamming means she—you—it—they—have come inside  
the fenceline.

By invitation.

By force.

By dint dent dunt—don't!—of random impulse.

So I leant forward. And kissed her. Tongues penetrating.  
Soft porn. Tissues near. As now.

We were on the plane. Above and beyond fences. Doors  
dangerous. Temperature an odd hot cold.

Married. Beyond invitation, force, dint, division and  
selves. On a plane to the Balkans (above and beyond  
fences). Via Paris and London (ditto). In love.

And we were circling the airport.

And we still are.

Or were we?

To make a connection—a Dr Cohen. He knows a thing or  
two, she said. To me Dr C was just a flitting reference who  
might never be made flesh. Another collector. I who  
cannot retain have collected nothing. Except her.

The thing was—or the thing wasn't—I knew her so well.  
The thing was—or wasn't—I—who knew nothing and  
everything—and you—or should I say she—or we—or  
who—who knew enough—or not enough—at least knew  
her so well. So. Well.

I knew her—the thing was—or wasn't—knew her enough.  
And we were divided. By an oblong essence, a fence in  
rose-tinted hues—like a phrasal verb. By being struck by  
her power. To know someone is to know—feel—taste  
—someone's power.

Division is drunken and lonely. The grass is always rosier  
et cetera. A message from one self to herself—itsself  
—themselves—myself. Myself. One word. My selves.  
Two words. Elves.

Divided. Molecularly—particularly—quarkly—charmingly.  
Meiosis—mitosis.

A door has slammed. There is someone else in the house.  
Why am I scared? Because that is—isn't—the cliché.  
Because the thing is abrupt. A door slamming means  
she—you—it—they—have come inside the fenceline.

By invitation.

By force.

By tint tent tunt—don't!—of random impulse.

We were on the plane. Above and beyond fences. Doors  
are dangerous ten thousand metres up. So no slammings.  
Temperature an odd hot cold.

Married. Beyond invitation, force, dint, division and  
selves. On a plane to the Balkans (above and beyond  
fences). Via London. Paris. In love. It's hard to speak about  
the holes. He wondered. Was there a problem with Dr  
Cohen? The danger had been known. But then there was  
a gap. I who can retain nothing. Except a brain injury. A  
broken cobweb of hints hents hunts. In mufti. It was all  
starting to feel like Casablanca. We'll always have Paris,  
even if we've gotten divorced before we reach the  
Balkans.

And we were circling the airport.

And we still were.

Or were we?

The thing was—or wasn't—I—who knew enough—or not  
enough—at least knew her so well. So. Well.

And we were divided. She who sees only shadows. I who  
hear slamming doors. By an unknown. A slammed door.  
Fenced off by rose-tinted hues. Struck down—like a  
phrasal verb having felt her its your power. To know  
someone is to know—feel—taste—power.

Division is drunken and lonely. Myself. One word. My  
selves. Two words. Elves. Mice. Meiosis. Mitosis. The self  
has divided—molecularly—particularly—quarkly  
—charmlessly.

A door shutting some where. Some here. There is some  
one else in the house. Why am I scared? The cliché. Thing  
is abrupt. She—you—it—they—has—have—come inside  
the fenceline, trampled the roses, punched Hugh in the  
noses. Hugh is our billy goat.

By invitation.

By forceful invitation.

By dint dent dunt—don't!

Long pause.

Just give us our fucking roses.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a  
story by John O'Brien.*