



Source: Ed O'Loughlin, 'Comatose Sharon still fells his opponents', *Sydney Morning Herald online*, 11/03/06.
Tags: [art](#), [disenchantment](#), [language](#), [politics](#), [streets](#), [utopia](#)

Writer/s: [Lionel Bawden](#)

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'Depressed? maybe it's political.'

The simple black text of the street poster circles in my head.

'Depressed? maybe it's political.'

I think about strategies for survival now and strategies of distraction.

I start working on projects.

I roll up an electricity bill into a ball.

As if making a snowball, I wrap this little nugget concentrically with layers of paperwork and junk mail as well as all the newspapers that my mother has collected over the last twenty years.

I use flour and water to hold it all together. Water rates, foreign debt, baby boom, car repairs, student protests, election landslide, desperately seeking, declining resources, lottery win, narrow escape, the perfect cure. Cut and paste.

I am making a new planet.

I enclose little fragments from my life, to give the planet a history, layers of fossilised memory: lock of hair, a handknitted snow-man toy, a silver pocket-watch with a horse's head on it, my uncle's cufflink, the maths text book that is filled with poetry. These objects form bumps and ridges beneath the paper, forming mountains and gorges as they become submerged beneath a thousand layers of paper.

It is like playing 'pass the parcel', but in reverse.

My new world is built around images and words. Pages of green forest, torn fragments of blue ocean, grey rectangles replicating architecture, torn clouds of pink and white, orange rifts of flame. And black silhouettes.

When I run out of newspaper I collect all my correspondence—letters from friends—and paste on a crust of words. All my intimate relationships broken into random poetry and scattered around the globe. Traces of love affairs become seams of precious metal in the earth. Gold and platinum; opal and pyrite. Postcards from friends describing journeys and new experiences forge ancient trade routes and swell into ocean currents: dear, remember, tomorrow, always, lustre, caress, exchange, sorry, soon.

For the surface of the planet I tear up magazines to make a colourful skin: *I-D*, *National Geographic*, *Artforum*, *Dumbo feather pass it on*, *Inches*, *Wallpaper*, *Dazed* and *Confused*.

I am playing with scale.

I get a red and blue tartan blanket and fold it into quarters.

I cut out diamond shapes and make a pretty pattern.

I unfold it in the street and park my car on it.

A doyley on an asphalt mantle piece.

I go to the hardware store and buy a hundred rods of hollow metal curtain rail, a drill bit and a few reels of fishing line.

I cut the curtain rails into short lengths, drill holes through

them and string a loop of fishing line through each rod.

At night I go from backyard to backyard in my street and hang groups of metal rods from each Hills Hoist clothes line.

The next day is windy and the entire street is tinkling. The noise of monster-sized wind-chimes carries me away.

Other people are working on their own projects. There is 'the man that flew into his own painting' and 'the man that never threw anything away' as well as the people who are 'learning to love you more'.

Everyone is developing their own systems for coping.

My friend Tim tells me that he recently made an apology to his neighbour. He hoped the noise of his house renovations was not bothering her too much. She wasn't bothered by it, 'I'll be doing some renovations of my own soon. I need to prepare for the launch of my spaceship.'

'The woman who flew into outer-space through her ceiling'.

'The man who built a utopia inside a mountain'.

'The man who reshaped a crater to gaze at the sky through'.

'The man who blows up buildings and carries Camel cigarettes as an excuse to carry matches'.

'The man who cried'.

'The girl that danced until her legs fell off'.

'The man who mistook his wife for a hat'.

Everyone is developing their own systems for coping and systems for not coping.

'Depressed? maybe it's political.'

I follow the instructions that someone sent me in an email for contemporary voodoo.

I cut out pictures of John Howard, Peter Costello, Condoleezza Rice, Pauline Hanson and George Bush, from the newspaper.

I put them in the freezer.

Hopefully their heads will ache, like when you drink a cold drink too fast or eat ice-cream. They will have to stop work and stay at home in the dark.

The images on the surface of my planet are fading in the sun.

Time seems to be passing quickly. Yellowed newspaper.

If the time comes and I need to move to my new planet, all the imagery might have already faded to white. I will have to start from scratch: a clean slate. I put crayons in my pocket just in case and a Stanley knife with a fresh blade so I can excavate down through the text and pictures, unearthing new fractured sentences and chaotic collage.

I think about strategies for survival now and strategies of distraction.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Lionel Bawden.