



Source: Oliver Poole, 'Freed men 'refuse to help rescuers'', *The Telegraph in The Age online*, 26/03/06.  
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"Number 14" nasalled across the bar. The man with the spiky hair leaned forward, stretching to reach his beverage of choice with one hand, slipping his spectacles further up his nose with the other. The white haired woman moved effortlessly to the bar to retrieve the tray of ordered sustenance and returned to the plastic table we occupied in the half empty alcove at the back. The memories of past experiences and sonic constructions loomed large in the conversation. Recalled journeys with rooms white-walled and wooden floored, partitioned and reverberating in a warm Queensland week. The long flight, the sleep on the floor of the long legged girl's new house in Sydney, all of us exhausted but preparing to make the next leg north in a car. The drive with the nervous balding one at the wheel, six of us squeezed into the rent-a-bomb—endless. Wire haired one directing, the American with the hand-me-down pork pie hat, making jokes. Did we really eat burgers with relish? Our gathering around the plastic table recalled moments and memories of a long haul from Perth to Brisbane, the first time we met the redheaded woman/girl with red lips boldly painted and parted with smiles and smirks. Our objects, photographs and constructions hand-luggaged with us to display, to discuss and to perform.

Long hauls, driving and driving across flat terrain, conversations so surreal and personal, making pit stops, waiting for exhaustion to leave, weave in and out of thoughts from decades past.

A solitary traveller,  
crossing the border from the south,  
loaded up with comforts and complaints from a southern city,  
destined for the coast.  
A divergence to spend  
a night and a day  
with the red-lipped girl and her bald-headed man.

After hours of the same but not the same, the road points east. Hours of singing and grabbing breaks, of revving up and slowing down, north bound on the same stretch, finally the road turns east. Hills appear, the road bends, the trees thicken, but with fallen leaves. The skeletons spindle outwards in shrieks of spread-fingered fear. Lost on roundabouts, taking wrong turns and finally berthing alongside the factory of glass. What relief, what calm, what warmth, where exhaustion and the long journey evaporate.

Tightness, anchors to the past, cutting loose the bonds of phrases and driving towards the west, the long flat horizon stretching all around dotted with the scrub of survivors. Rest stops along the way where we drink in draughts of fuel for chariot and soul. We search for the perfect bacon and egg toasted sandwich on a journey from the south to the west, leaving perfect coffee and companion cats buried in memories of years of blandness and confusion. Back to the past and familiar spaces. Sounds of home within bond stores, around lakes and on rocky outcrops. Bells, big and dusty, journeys north to scatter ashes and complete covenants, journeys to get to people.

The woman with white hair asked the question again. What sort of space or building or environment would the man with spiky hair most like to fill with sound? He looked at her through circular spectacles and said, 'take me on a journey and we'll find another room, another space. Each room, each space, each journey is a new way to a new sound, a cacophony of possibilities.' The man with wire hair started drumming the plastic table with his fingers, sending a rhythm of ripples through his beer.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Patsy Vizents.*