

Story for performance #605  
webcast from Sydney at 07:48PM, 15 Feb 07



Source: Martin Chulov, 'Blood fills divide Hariri tried to bridge', *The Australian online*, 15/02/07.

Tags: [poetry](#), [politics](#), [streets](#)

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Two hands hold a wooden pole at an angle, an oar steering the air, above it a Koori flag ripples like a small stream curling around a rock.

~

The microphone feeds back, a sine wave held for ten seconds.

~

18% grey housing commission towers like mineshafts turned towards the sky (the world turned upside down?)  
Windows soft-cornered like the square photographic prints my parents took.  
From behind a curtain, an old woman peers out.

~

Badges for sale, Socialist newspapers, *Spartacist*, *Workers Vanguard*—50c a copy!

~

Days of hats and terraces, and roll-your-own cigarettes.

~

In finger-height Old English font, from shoulder to shoulder, *FUCK THE LAW*.

~

(Each notebook has a story)

~

A girl's bag made of Popper-sized Tetra Pak pineapple juice containers.

~

A congregation of bicycles.

~

Behind the old police station, a man claims to be almost 90 years old,  
someone in the crowd yells out, 'Stick to the topic!'

~

At primary school there was an event where the students built replica boats; it was called 'The School Regatta' or something like that. After weeks of building and photocopied notes sent home to parents, each group transported their boat to school, and we gathered on the oval. Standing inside our replica boats made of scrapwood cardboard, we hoisted them up and raced each other around the oval. One boy, whose parents obviously hadn't helped him, wrapped his mid-section in newspaper and taped it up with masking tape, and then ran around the oval by himself.

~

Midday, midweek, we move past terraces. Inside them: someone is following a yoga DVD,  
someone is standing on the stairs wondering whether to go up or down,  
someone is chipping out floes of ice from the freezer with numb hands,  
someone is writing their shopping list, all the cupboards in the kitchen open.

~

I move my mouth along to the chants as I did to hymns as a child.

~

We turn onto the main street, lunchtime crowds stand watching from outside:

the pub,  
the chemist,  
the chicken shop,  
the Lebanese deli,  
the Aboriginal Medical Centre,  
the x-ray surgery,  
the Thai takeaway,  
the clothes shop,  
the sheltered workshop,  
the newsagent,  
the hair salon.  
A woman with pieces of Alfoil interlaced through her hair stares.

~

We are a burning boat, prickly with flags, moving down the main street.

~

Slick cars slide past, nimble as otters  
(whatever happened to all the shitboxes?)  
One opens its window and breathes out,  
matching rhetoric with rhetoric, GET A JOB!

~

The new guilty pleasure: *spontaneous unbridled national pride (!)*  
A megaphone slipped over a muscleshirt.

~

As John Pilger starts to speak,  
an Aboriginal waves the constitution in his face.  
John Pilger recoils, as if the constitution were a shoe that had just stepped in dog shit.

~

People lean in with mobile phones, with chrome cameras, with hooded telephoto lenses. I think of a poem by John Mateer:  
'a world floating on the canals and rivers that pull our images away.'

~

Walking away is like walking off a stage, passing through an invisible forcefield, back to everyday life, which seems strange.

~

A few hours later in Myers  
things feel stranger  
Everything's sharp  
brightly illuminated  
and faintly dangerous.

~

The next day, Redfern is the same as before,  
the streets as smooth as scars.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Tim Wright.*