



Source: Suna Erdem, 'Christians killed in Turkey knife attack', *The Times* in *The Australian* online, 20/04/07.
Tags: [dreams](#), [workplace](#), [home](#), [literature](#), [politics](#)
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There's not much to tell you. Banging on about the state of the government and the war is boring. I guess now, for me at least, everything's happening at my house.

I have a grey cat called Kevin, I'm stripping the floor in the lounge room, I'm online a lot and I'm now spending one night a week with a group of women, most of whom are high achievers and smart and generous and crime fiction nuts.

The nights after the group sessions seem to encourage powerful thoughts, so I've started to make an account of some of them.

The reading group is made up of eager converts who report each Wednesday on the latest doings of psychotics and forensic scientists. Plots, it seems, are now only places to pile up corpses.

The group established itself in homage to a popular TV book show and the discovery that several of us were reading the same authors. We now meet at my place, because it's central.

After a tough bout of 'textual analysis' the girls and I usually break out the vodka and pear juice. It's fun to kick back, forget another meaningless day at the shop, and listen to the academic gossip, news about wayward children and spiralling house prices.

When everyone leaves, I read for a while and try to get an early night. I find sleep helps with the after-effects of vodka and contemporary fiction.

It's possible I had a dream of nullity. The burnt out ends of days congealing into someone else's blank life. Or maybe I had another dream, one that followed a river upstream until it reached a whitewashed wooden church where children ran on rolled grass and ate sandwiches under a bank of fern trees. There's laughter like someone vomiting and the smell of sawdust.

Of course, memory doesn't work well under strain. It works best when you're 'dynamically relaxed', when you instinctively let go.

In this projection-presence of sleep, books are absent. However, I believe the following are present: salads (potato and fetta), several children under ten, various animals (dogs, horses, Kevin the cat), television (six free-to-air channels, 43 cable), music (Leonard Cohen, Jessica Simpson, Amici Forever) and party politics (endless

characters, many sub-plots).

There are enemies on the Left, enemies on the Right. Every minute I identify new enemies. The boss comes on television to talk about the profiteers and 'agents of destabilisation'. The next day, after a cabinet meeting, he addresses the assembled journalists. Expected to talk of other things, he announces, abruptly, that he's disheartened and fed up, that if he doesn't get a bit more cooperation and obedience he will hand over the government to people who think they can do better.

I'm eating potato salad, when the news passes around that the boss has left politics. There's barely suppressed hilarity everywhere. Dogs are singing, children laughing.

He's gone and a new world of possibilities is before us, or behind us, if you listened to the boss's farewell speech. The dreams squandered, the opportunities wasted, his vision abandoned simply through the manipulated desire for change, a fresh coat of paint on the ship of state. 'The great experiment is now to be magnified', says the interim leader, 'the question is can we conquer our self-destructive habits of tradition?'

Out of these reveries, I usually wake at 2am, Thursday morning and go through folders of old stuff on my hard drive.

Tonight I find an image of me sleeping on the top of an apartment block in Kirribilli listening to a transistor radio, antenna up, circa turn of the century, sun brightening my ankles. A ferry slips past Pinchgut chasing a flock of white yachts towards Watson's Bay.

The harbour's dark plain brings to mind the vast, flat country that used to be here, where I now live in an ever-expanding suburb.

Once it was a region where small towns emerged from the khaki earth, where slow-moving horses and dogs coughed up dust; salt flats, streaks of water on the horizon. A place where leaving was the uppermost thought in everyone's mind.

Now, I'm free in this replacement city, living with hope in a house stuffed with memories, harried by images—trying to climb back into a warm bath of dreams.

At least, for the time being, free of books.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Brent Clough.