



Source: Richard Boudreaux, 'Alliances between enemies may not be enough to make peace', *LA Times* in *Sydney Morning Herald* online, 27/11/07.
Tags: [husband/wife](#), [disenchantment](#), [home](#)
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The building had 32 floors. Inside the building there were two elevators that had been installed in the '70s and that were, at the time, a revelation. The walls inside the elevators were stencilled with one-word stories and declarations of love realised in thick black ink.

Inside the building it was summer all the time. Insulation bats were to have been installed in the '90s. The body corporate could never agree who should get the contract so summer was sticky and lulled along to the sound of white ceiling fans.

Inside the building lived dysfunction, unfulfilled dreams and a woman petrified by her own loneliness.

Inside the building lived Georgia.

Georgia was a 58-year old woman. She was all primary colours and gold-capped teeth.

She owned a wardrobe full of polyester twin-sets. Most were patterned with pink, red and white hibiscus flowers or ships setting sail to the horizon. On her feet she wore white Kumfs. Occasionally she would get about her home in flip flop thongs—but very rarely and never in front of guests. The days were hot, beads of sweat would line her forehead and by the afternoon she could catch a whiff of the sour sweat between her legs.

She would outline her lips with lip liner to give the impression they were fuller than the ones she'd been born with. She painted her face with plenty of blush and blue eye shadow. She shaved her legs, her arms and her armpits and since having her varicose veins stripped in the late '80s she clipped her pubic hair down to a number one.

Georgia had a lot of beginnings. She had collected her beginnings and sorted them by colour, trying to make sense of the times she started over, trying to make sense of misplaced dreams and mismatching delusions, trying to make sense of the small tin box which played home to her memories.

Inside the box there was a single black and white photograph of Georgia and her husband in their twenties. A photographer friend had taken the picture. They looked glamorous in that old black and white photograph kind of way. They were dressed in bathing suits and black sunglasses, riding in the back of a speedboat, wind getting caught up in their hair. She could remember singing *Good Night Irene*—slipping and slurring the words with her husband. And always wondering, who was Irene?

She sat silently looking at the photograph. She wondered what had happened. She remembered the day when two lives became one. They used to be so together. Lives woven in and out, a history plaited down her back. They had slept in the same double bed for more than 35 years. For the last 15 she had managed to keep her body separate from the man on the other side. She would lay her motionless body next to his and drift in and out of sleep. Together they had become stale. Now they lived alone together.

Georgia had married a man whose hours were filled with royal flushes in vacant rooms on the other side of town. He carried a small black case wherever he went. Inside the case were magical tunes. Most days a cigarette sat precariously on his bottom lip. He would stumble on words and mumble out sentences. He dressed in a pre-loved suit with brown leather shoes, his hair a puzzle, each strand gone awry. He loved the ocean—a man of the sea—wild dreams cast far out to the horizon.

3.00 p.m. most days was cocktail hour. At 3.00 p.m. Georgia would pour herself a small glass of brandy with a splash of dry ginger ale and sit by the front door. Georgia would sit, sip, think and wait. To ease her thoughts she would play songs from a 'Best of Judy Garland' album. Sitting, sipping, thinking and waiting. Sitting, sipping, thinking and waiting. Sitting, sipping, thinking and waiting. And waiting. And waiting.

The wait had become an integral part of her afternoon ritual. She stopped asking herself for whom she was waiting. It didn't really matter anymore. Waiting gave her something to do. It was a job that needed doing and she was in every way qualified to do it. Each afternoon she would try and begin again. Start over. Ask a question. Search for an answer, shape-shift the monotony of her day.

The afternoons slipped by. The evenings were signalled by the sound of a key in the front door. He was home.

Georgia stopped talking on the 8 August 1992. It was the day she realised she had married a man whose dreams were too grand and who lived life as a fake. It was the day she realised she had woven in and out with a man who could never say no. Georgia stopped talking on the 8 August 1992. On that day she carved out a truth and discarded the lies.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Rosie Dennis.