

Thursday

(for Jenny Bornholdt)

If you look beneath the floorboards
of this poem you might find
endless days of rain and wind
on the Waitākere Ranges.

Between the walls you might see
a garden that needs spring plants.

You might stumble upon
the story of a mathematician
who knits patches for a quilt because she
can never recall what she saw
the month before

or the story of a philosopher
who walks in circles
to seek the meaning of life
or lost things or why the heart
and not the lungs
registers the pulse of love.

My house waits
with its creaking walls
and everything
is the same and then
different.

The wind crackles.
The bouillabaisse needs stirring.
Perhaps it needs more salt.

Bethells Beach

Einstein is eating sandwiches with me
at the lookout point.

He likes the combination of
cos lettuce, pecorino shavings and

anchovy dressing, and the way
the Tasman Sea lifts the imagination

like an old-fashioned washing machine
willing to take any load.

Ponsonby Road

The wind blew
Plato along Ponsonby Road
and into the white bright
of Bambina.

Over green tea
I asked him how the real
beauty of life is found not
in the infinite blue
but in the drizzle of oil
upon fresh rocket or
the smell of washing dried
in the sun.

He looked at me over
Turkish bread with marmalade
and said, 'We must find good things
to imagine as we butter our fish.'

The woman next to me
read tarot cards to explain
the consequences of marriage
to her friend.

Outside a small boy hugged
a big dog with both arms.

New York City

I have packed a theory of falling lemons
next to the guide book
which is next to the hotel address
which is next to *Cloud Atlas*
which is next to the notebook and pens
which are underneath the folded clothes

(such as clean socks, a black T-shirt saying
'Give Peace a Chance'
and a brightly patterned cotton dress).

All this
in a suitcase on wheels because I am about
to go to New York City
with Copernicus and Simone de Beauvoir.

If I had had a coffee table when they came
for afternoon tea to plan my dream trip,
our stacks of books would have left no room
for the dip (broad beans with thyme and roasted
tomatoes) and carrot sticks and radishes.

I plan to test myself
against the edge of New York
because I have no idea
what the place is really like
when it is not a film set
nor on television.

The Garden

Simone de Beauvoir is mowing the lawns;
never straightforward at my place with
those knobbled slopes and cul de sacs.

I want to tell her the world is on the blink

despots drunks abusers stick figures
short cuts easy cuts waste and want
toxic food and toxic rivers greed
the seeds of hate the need to star
virtual love and virtual hunger
the tight frames and the blood stains

but Simone is in the orchard by the lime tree
the mower drowning out the bird song.

I chilled the wine
so we can share the view
with a glass in hand
and smoked fish salad with asparagus
dill sauce and crusty bread.

Simone is dripping sweat
as she catches her breath
and watches me set the table.

Everything I say is subject to gravity
words dropping like flies in the heat –
my thought
that I am born
and I become.

I take Simone on a guided tour
of the house.

She picks up *The Hill of Wool*
and reads a line in a French accent.