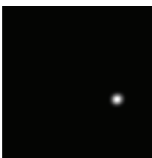


## THESE ARE THE PLACES I'VE LOOKED FOR YOU

On your walls on the walls of shops down Smârdan San Jacopo Trinity  
your postcard art cards in gloss in matt inside the actual Water Lily room  
on Place de la Concorde against the violet canvas slipping down purple  
and scanning or leafing through the hundred-hand books on Ermou Thisseio  
on the trestles of statues scratched in all the wrong places *is she here is she  
here* among your yellowed stock captions collections of cornered anatomists  
of outmoded classicists or earlier and earlier or later and later in dream-time  
in memory-time or online through the engine-room portals the one million  
matches of your sources your footnotes your Old World Eurōpe *are you there  
and where and where* under the stones and the granite down the misjudged  
under alleys the thick coating of your hiding behind time zones the Danube  
Arycanda the hot archaeology of site after site until I can arrange you extract  
you from the pixels the sandpits: tell me the truth: the energy goes somewhere.



## STRATA OF INVINCIBLE BODIES

Dear Natalie, when I started this, I wrote about Gene's leather jacket, his rather unbelievable smoking. If I didn't say something about your slightly cutting manner I meant to, and I certainly mentioned your various bedrooms, like the first one on Aro Street, which was an annex out the back, years ago had been an outhouse, and where you first played me Stevie Nicks and showed me your pet rat climbing up through shirts to reach around your neck.

---

*Unconventional Folk of Aro Valley Are Not at All Ashamed*

Various, 1963-2013

at being the inspiration for a book where one is equal to another where no criminals no officials and no authority exists Does woman recognise her independence? In the 1920s there was a fire which is said to have claimed the life of a Māori maid A mirror flew across the room smashed against the door then the pieces slowly slid to the floor the largest collection of unaltered working class homes sagging open doors and damp musty rooms where glass from broken windows crunches underfoot Sagging stairways with most of the tread rotted away

Then, the rat became a cat, and the outhouse a flat  
in Newtown, to which you returned one day to find O—  
mortally wounded. So you let your hair mat and tangle,  
until the night I took a brush to it and spent hours teasing  
out each knot, and covered the carpet in split strands.  
It was always late when I walked home to Berhampore,  
past the pitch-black park, though sometimes you'd walk  
with me halfway so I'd have to walk you back. And it  
was at that flat, during your birthday, that I motioned  
something to Livia like *take over*, and saw Miller see  
this proprietorial stance of mine (the scalding quick  
exposure), and from there that we met Gene stopped  
at the stadium, when the three of us sat on the grass

---

*Demolition of Millard Stand at Athletic Park*

Ross Giblin, 16 February 2000, Photograph

But before that masonry facade three inches thick  
A filament (the law of contrasts) and single digits  
(the law of counting) 1 8 9 6:1 9 9 6 Cross the street  
cross yourself steer away from monsters lurking  
from the man pulled over and proposing: don't be sure  
don't be clear of this compound hanging by a thread

oval in the centre until he walked customarily away.  
The stadium lights were never on, the zoo was far too close, and so you moved again, and back to Aro Street, precisely up a bank to which I went less often, recall only your blue Tyrian kitchen and returning once from old Bodega bar, the drunkenness, the hearing that you loved me. (And telling Gene the next day, using that weaponry to fell him). Well, you'll know that by the time you were living in that pale one-hundred-year-old house, where you slept most of the time, most everything had ended. Much like the certainty of light after the news that subatomic particles have been found travelling twice its speed

---

*'The Colour of Royalty'*

*The New York Times*, 9 October 2013

Hypobranchial gland    soft and lilac organ    *Murex brandaris*  
sea snail currency    pressed into the parquets of rich settlers  
woven through flags    swiped from sarcophaghi    pink fibres  
separating hair (lovers' wives')    So let's focus on the feminists  
on the Amazons and queens    Cleopatra flew blue sails  
Zenobia dressed right for execution    We brewed tea and singularity  
& I wore purple in the second year of mourning

and how that changes everything. Because if light isn't up ahead, right at the farthest point, then life heads not for supernova but black pitch, and what will have become of Complexion Boy, who sat opposite me in the library, with skin invariable like mercury? Or Gene who'd stare at photos of sculptures like *The Flight*? Yesterday, my sister, nephew, got on a plane and today Mamá mourns their leaving; the coming of the cuts and chemotherapy she'll spend time with while they're gone. Because I know, I know, Gene's father had died years before, and your mum didn't impress you all that much, and mine, back then, was busy drawing blinds against the bursts

---

*Flight from Pompeii*

Giovanni Maria Benzoni, 1873, marble

Victorian in the Greco-Roman style as in fabric falling  
over opium skin or poker faces but on the move  
Will they survive the blast (lava on the chitons kahu  
pulled overhead against the ash)? They are treading  
shards coins & sulphuric breads are fixing the breakout  
route ahead of Fiorelli rebel-artist-archaeologist  
resurrectionist drawn to grafts He will lock you down  
citizens of the valley whether you are shielding or splitting

of friends, like you, with earrings in their noses.

Wiring, re-wiring: can you please tell me why I've been going over the vintage details of your flats? Because from this northern island end, where the rooms for rent are boarded up and the pizzeria's been demolished, the way forward's more like back; and I'm thinking of the park at the end of Holloway Road, in the crease of Aro Valley, the hiding place of the Waimapihi Stream; of *soul* as in *only*, or *solus* as in *lone* or *single* or *extraordinary*; of the solipsism of our damp hearts exposed as if fully grown, but green, and victoriously motherless and vain; the *span*, *espan*, a hand's width length of time (yours, Gene's, or mine), when we could bear the solemnity of love and were still immortal.

---

*'Stream Buried, but Not Forgotten'*

*The Dominion Post*, 5 April 2013

Waimapihi used to wash here    Water ornament of the stream  
when it was a stream    & not a street & not    a petrol station  
i.e. during the Renaissance when Sig. Botticelli was painting his scallop  
shells & *Venus pectinidae Simonetta*    who was by all accounts  
a mapihi maurea object of affection    or ornamental belt  
woven in the tiger shell style    Count the emergences from hulls  
& rills & diggers    (food scraps husks & exoskeletons)    Corner  
Waimapihi the statue and the stream marked out on the forecourt in blue