

Reality Estate

**Dust strewn our bulldozed dreams, crawl from beneath the rubble.
Concrete mixers swirl overhead.
The shadow threatens to engulf our fragility.
Towers block my view. Block my easy passage.**

**I flounder in this brave new world.
Distressed,
Dis-rupted,
Dis-Located.
My fledgling self struggles to become.
Choking, vision blurred, skin raw with particles of memory,
My wings stick to grazed flesh.**

**Filled with loss, my top heavy head, connected to my burgeoning heart by an invisible thread, hangs low.
Tears flow.
A stream of mourning mixes sand and cement.
New edifices are born, buildings called home by others,
Need living in, to be so honoured.
Four shiny new walls do not a home make.
I cannot raise my head to the regenerative light without fear.**

**I hope that vanity does not cloud your judgement. Your high opinion of yourself compels you to the heights.
Please do not tumble, for in your fall lies mine.**

**I would like to fly, to soar and sing your truth, but my estate lies in the reality of my humanity.
In neighbourhood built on years of close living.**

**I am born up, carried on laughter, roared by friendship forged in close proximity.
We laugh our socks off,
And I am lighter.
I know there have been troubles,
But I recognise your need for privacy.
The need for me to capture the thoughtless twitterings of gossip
Before they fly from my mouth.

And you,
Yes you,
You must hush your gums.**

**On Christmas Eve, as they sleep you paint out her windows:
Paint out your anger, your hurt and betrayal.
You obliterate him and her, with your brush and white emulsion.
Eat your heart out Bing Crosby.**

We all cheer, but say nothing.

**Like, a pot of thyme, perched precariously on my balcony,
I will preserve your dignity as I tend mine.**

**They say that Rosemary is for remembrance.
But the smell of yeast in my nostrils
Brings you completely present to me.**

**Unbidden, my floured hands knead you, my lost boy
Into existence once again.
Born too soon,
I hold you close to my heart.**

**Filled with a bright yellow caravan of happiness,
My belly flip flops with joy and disappointment.
Life is for living.
Passions dark and powerful
Tear at my soul
And like a wild barely trained horse striving against its riders touch,
They are held in check by the bridle of duty and care.**

A youth challenged by parents, by friends, by life itself, learns to lie in order to become.

**I have to lie, to be my true self,
To break free the shackles of constraint,
To access all the risk that life has to offer.**

**My thirteen year old self bends the truth.
She is compelled to discover.**

I lie awake at night.

**If I had been given another name, maybe,
Just maybe
I could become, the child, my parents seem to want.**

**I watch as others make my mother cry.
I am powerless.
My heart hardens and I am shocked.
She is a needless victim.**

**Conjuring my shadow self for protection
I lurk in ever more agonising gestures.**

**I am watchful, alert.
I square my shoulders against the onslaught and pretend to be something I am not.**

It is called survival.

**But soon the line between pretending and being, is blurred.
I have the potential to be lost.
To lose myself
In an endless round of make believe invincibility.**

**We watch as others are caught.
They feign insouciance.
A sulky mask,
Constructed from the denial of unbearable hope.
The veneer of street must not crack.**

And so it goes on.

But neighbourhood is built on earth made red by the life -blood of families lived lives. My family is your family.

**In moments,
In the place between,
Knowing that I am watched,
Yet, feeling alone,
My heart flutters like a hummingbird,
As I reveal myself to the redbrick world.**

**Because I live next door,
Across the way,
Up above,
My story, becomes your story,
Becomes our story.**

The history of our community is bound in the intertwining narratives of all our lived life.

**There by the grace of god,
Go I.**