

## Poem for Cathy Coleborne

(Fitzroy the early to mid 1990s)

*Bohemia gone mad!*

John Tranter Sonnet 95 aka 'At the Pool'

Put aside your essays, theses  
kids in black, it's Friday night.  
Time to seek out from our species  
Ms. or Mr. Maybe Right.  
Clear the decks and clear the sinus,  
what has gone will come around,  
whilst we peek at Melbourne's finest  
happy het'ro hunting ground.

Early twenties to mid thirties  
see them primp, preen, proffer, prowl.  
From assertors to assertees  
one almighty mating growl.  
Take a brace of Bruegel peasants,  
add hormones from an on-heat hound:  
behold our own post adolescence  
happy het'ro hunting ground!

Every urge deserves depiction  
(pluralists behold, rejoice!)  
even (yes) young adult fiction  
offers no invalid choice,  
whilst, so faintly s-and-m-ey  
micro whipped and lightly bound,  
Fitzroy remains at least a semi-  
het'ro happy hunting ground.

There was once this swingin' couple,  
likeminded duos made 'em click.  
His tolerance seemed mighty supple  
till she dumped him...for a chick.  
'How'd,' he mused 'that option get her?'  
Beer by beer his sorrows drowned.  
The ex meanwhile composed this letter  
from her former hunting ground:

*Please dad didn't want to scare you,  
girl-love though seems quite the rage...  
our word is 'choice' so mum don't dare you  
think I'm going through a 'stage'.  
Been eyed off by heaps of ladies,  
some were jeaned and some were gowned  
and some would sooner head to Hades  
than any het'ro hunting ground.*

Young, gay, proud and inner-metro  
sense the limits, know the load:  
'When Fridays get so mega-het'ro  
here we come Commercial Road!  
Party's over, must say byebyes,  
feel embarrassed hanging round  
XY chromosomes and YYs  
in *your* happy hunting ground!

Then one winter, doped on Codral,  
some poor loser simply sooked:  
'Madame, may I dance this quadrille?'  
'Sorry sport my card is booked.'  
Whither happy? Whither hunting?  
Uppers upped and downers downed,  
his psyche through its manic shunting  
would fill a Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Like martyrs frying o'er a griddle  
or madman in some film noir  
( 'Gentleman with ancient riddle  
seeks lady to replace his ma...')  
this hero's role might suit a canto  
(though they went out with Ezra Pound!).  
O tragi-comic/ soapie-panto/  
unhappy-happy hunting ground!

One evening, blatant as the mulga  
two kids locked their eyes and gaped.  
I might say more but aren't that vulgar  
(it's as if I had them taped).  
Itemise each short 'n' curly?  
Labia and pubic mound?  
Let's just say they went home early  
from the het'ro hunting ground.

Whatever then they did they did right,  
age old normal, on the square.  
Imagine though an hour past midnight  
eavesdrop on this lucky pair:  
'We've been happy-hunting-grounded!'  
'Now are verbed who once were noured!'  
And their carnal joy resounded  
through you-damn-well-know-what ground:

'All praise for this thing between us!'  
Some nights it seems The Builder's Arms  
worships nothing short of Venus,  
whose excursions and alarms  
for postgrad, activist, backpacker  
(careful, don't swoon in a swoond!)  
brings forth that pleasantest of yacker  
whilst Planet Earth turns hunting ground:

L.A. blondes (perhaps their mummies)  
(soft) dealers at their hallowed task,  
darkest koories, palest pommies,  
Sydney 'wits' who smirking ask  
'Can't this town get colder? Moister?'  
Kiwis straight from Milford Sound...  
Fuck the world, *you* were our oyster  
happy het'ro hunting ground!