

St Kilda: Self Portrait

St Kilda: you salty sweet sentence
plum eyes, leopard sea-shell mouth
you wear age like a proud performer
summoning cool as if it was a card trick
getting Mirka Moira to pull up her blouse at a gallery opening
with your art installations & semi silent theatre
remnants of old surf bands & garage psych
still sticking to the bricks of the street
your neon lit pinball places that were scattered along Fitzroy street
You have always tempted me

St Kilda: you've suckled The Palais & Palace
with their imprints of the most growling subversive
jewels in the universe: Bob Dylan, Patti Smith, Nirvana
& the sweetest of private jokes: Cheap Trick.
You've got Dirty Three, Radio Birdman & The Moodists
pounding in your bones. I've got Painters & Dockers, Espy front bar
The Venue, Crystal Ballroom, Prince of Wales in my veins.
I've kissed over Lisa Miller's vocals at the St Kilda Festival
February hot, while getting my bare feet stuck to the summer tar
You've just sat there watching, winking

You hub of both lullaby & loudness
I've lolled around in the Doulton Bar listening to Gene Pitney
laughing at passers by fixing their hair in the window
spent many nights in Greasy Joes talking progress:
mine & yours, while everyone looked ribboned & burlesque
Reeling over the comfy setting of the Gal on a long weekend
with palette perfect mushrooms served on a big plate
All the while you bring in your cavalry of passers by
Sunday after Sunday, in love for just a taste of you

You & I St Kilda: we are like pilgrims
returning to the spiritual land of beauty
bandaged souls of flaking youth
our eyes, tiny apertures capturing
smooth kite gliding & small girls on dads' shoulders
at the beach end of Robe Street
You showing off architecture as if it were a lover's pin:
Victorian, Edwardian, Art Deco.
All periods I could put an exclamation mark on.
We've sat cheekbone to cheekbone, glass to glass,
clinking sweet esplanades of cheer as we both burst into song

I've walked on your grass heaven through the Botanic gardens
taking my shoes off knowing that the white duck would
always come, chase me & bite my toes
I'd throw frisbees, asking a first date to come & kick the Sherrin
Your palms & elms sit stoically in the front yards of your streets
Your distinct absence of lawnmowers & outright bad taste
make this a beautiful haven to write songs in
Flat after flat after flat filling in the neighbourhood skyline
How many people have you lent your homes to?

St Kilda: for so long you have been jamming in back rooms
with curry aroma carpet watching cats curl by the bass amp
With emotional cul de sacs of magical multicolour roads of music
delectable cakes that give girls curves & boys rumpy hips
Café Schehezerade a temple, with so many more in its place
The Veg Out Community Gardens, soul food, manna
Night market dishes that have spilled onto my sandals
I must admit St Kilda, I've had a few parties at your expense
Friends skipping with a drunk Santa down Acland Street
after hiring a fire truck for joy & Christmas cheer

endless balconies & sandy walks & spring conversations
that lasted well into the working week

St Kilda: you tricky flick of light
boulevards of glittered fans outstretched before you
terraces with orchids, canvases & clothes pegs
I've tried to paint you. Saw a rooming house guy
with pleated hair & purple plimsolls rolling his cigarette
a libertine, a crystalline skinny man
He read a long poem in Grey Street about Kismet &
how he wanted to cough up god. I walked up
& down Blessington Street, just for slight hope of seeing
Albert Tucker come out & smile at me
St Kilda: I've always had visions of you flying into the moon

I've picnicked in Peanut park
watching the guy with the bowling T-shirt do yoga
while the women play footy on a Sunday
Adventure playground just twinkling & squinting in the sunlight
kids scuttling across all the colours
I've thrown down a blanket, Luna Park in view
wrestling the old transistor dial between Peebs & the R's
now the iPod on St Kilda Random Shuffle
Still, the same experience: fresh sea air & the smell of relaxation
You have that way of soothing me even through the bustle

St Kilda: you are high-wire, the odd one *in*
a valve of fizz, a peek into the big top
my final gorgeous eclipse, with you
I don't want to ever say, this is a night
I'll never remember. With your late night ice-creams
& reason to hold hands while eating fish & chips
your quip smart bookshops & record store back gardens

your sleeveless afternoons & pool cue chalk
your history & your future & all your in-betweens
St Kilda: you & I have dated, been steady for years
distance only keeps me coming back for more
It's time we made a commitment, firmed things up a little
& admitted that really, this is for the rest of our lives