

Bandwidth

“We're both looking at the same moon, in the same world.
We're connected to reality by the same line.
All I have to do is quietly draw it towards me.”

— Haruki Murakami, *Sputnik Sweetheart*

0.

You say you'll pay for it; I am concerned.
Don't tell me the priority here is dragons.
That's people's dreams; this is an important issue.
We all speak desire. We all speak elation.
You're very pretty and I hope we see you again.
Tomorrow we'll go for a walk in the woods,
this is pretty much at the point I want it to be.

He says 'centrifugal forces' and 'screaming hot pan' and she says "I always wanted..."
Where were you when they were hawking culinary narratives?—
the *magic* of polenta; a *marriage* of flavours; this *match made in heaven*;
a rue with complements and an added cracked egg...
Can foodstuffs become *heroes*?
Twist, microplane, whisk, gurgle, drizzle, pinch.
Don't tell me I'm being stingy with alchemical cuisine.
Sometimes there is too much cheese and garlic for mid-afternoon lethargy.

5.

I was spreadeagled on the couch during the small business hour.
I was spreadeagled when stomachs were jiggling on screen,
when stairmasters and vibrating platforms were interrupting
channel 7's investment updates, an assortment of skins and suits.
I was spreadeagled. And where were you?

[where were you when
still water was reserved

passed the Hawaiian salt
sucked the bone's marrow
followed avocado etiquette]

10.

Dedicated staff become part of the family
remind us that we're all Australians
it's hard to believe someone can live like this and still be so miserable.

Pointless
might be more pun
than quiz–
contestants identify
ballet dancers
from a list–the answers
surprise
to a total of 4000
pounds
ahead of pink animals:
how many
said 'Elephant Hawkmoth'?
how many
said 'Pigmy Seahorse'?
did you know
the French say 'April Fish'
instead of 'Fools'?

15.

I thought of you when I flicked channels–
a boy in Fauntleroy pants, standing
beside a tombstone. Sometimes
there is no clear connection between
the thought and the moment,
though I know we have both endured
stormy skies, raging over water

and tense music swelling.

I admit, I have longed to say “I must offer myself up to be executed for ridding the world of a tyrant.”

I have never wished to say: “I should like to be a wife to you in every way”.

I thought of channels when I flicked you–

I really want to rob this place

(I have to put something back)

it’s actually really good for your skin

(never turn your back on crazy)

You told them you were from uptown not royal woods

(I’m still a city girl – falling down a manhole)

I’m sorry boo-boo bear – where were you

when I cried cartoon tears on a single bed?

20.

So the Book of Mormon founded Las Vegas.

Keep me near that cross - hands raised under an auditorium roof full of good pregnant Christian women. Did you see the exultant goatee man in fluoro in the front row? Where were you when we put the appreciation back (the nitty gritty of succession planning)?

Do you ever feel like you are missing out on something special because you’re not that keen on country music?

25.

I’ve finished a lap and returned to filo pastry and a scallop pie– vomit with a crispy lid.

I remember the brass ashtray on a coffee table
close-ups of a wedding ring at a pawn shop
a couple on a couch

game show shame
game show hands to the mouth
game show awwwwwww
I'm fingering the remote
while Liz from Middlesbrough
humiliates herself for 200 pounds.

40.

Magnum ice creams.
Special K.
Bunnings powerstack drill by DeWalt: 10% off competitor's price.
Insurance premiums.
Superannuation.
Felling dying trees for a new road.

Mimes don't talk, they pour water into glasses.
Where were you when the monkey
chased an octopus wearing a bucket?

45.

I need to get in touch with the feeling of being trapped in a box
(trying to support talent in their hour of need)
Clearly, this isn't your first time doing acapella.
Did you see the man talking authoritatively
in front of a bookshelf of red-bound books?

Are you watching Grand Designs
where Rocket the dog
puts his footprints in fresh concrete?
Sometimes I'm so bored
I could watch anything.

50.

On the lip of the ocean, a turtle is

released into tide. The turtle is
a resilient animal. The turtle is
tentative and off it goes.

The turtles were here long before we came.
At the bottom of the clutch, you can get one that's not quite right
hatchling sand between toes the release of the animal.
Sunset is the time to set small things free

55.

What is the word 'beast' worth in Scrabble?
John's old enough to know better—
caramelized sausage in a pan
is still sausage in a pan
(everything is presented by Harvey Norman)

The prime minister bowls over a small boy.
Most of the time I feel that
most of us are spending
too much time doing
very little that is
worthwhile.

*Note: the piece was co-constructed from transcriptions and found dialogue whilst
watching free-to-air television channels on Thursday 19 May 2023 between 230-330pm*