

Andy

This month's homework made me think of a real period in my younger life. I lived in a block of beautiful old brick units in New Farm. There were six units in all. I lived on the bottom floor, Michael (a barrister, and my best supplier of weed) lived above me. The other bottom floor flat housed a big (read fat) gay guy who was a bus driver – he actually fell through the floor of his sun-room once. Not sure if it was his weight or rotten boards. The landlord had to get help to drag him out of the hole. Hehe shouldn't laugh at the misfortune of others Andy. Above him was Toy and the top two floors were occupied but Sara up from me and some telecom dude beside her.

I actually new Toy was a dancer in a gay bar in the Valley (The Cockatoo Bar) from very early in our friendship and there was no mistaking that he was on his way to becoming a woman - (even though he still needed to shave occasionally) – because he used to sunbathe topless out by the clothes line. I found it very confusing..... didn't know whether to ignore his boobs or enjoy the view. ☺ Anyway he eventually went to Europe and had the whole sex change and when he came back as Toy the female dancer, she was hot! Once again I was very confused. So that's why I wrote these pieces. In honour of Toy, who eventually became a local member of parliament or a councillor or some such official.

The Stripper

Iridescent blue and pink light
reflects on metal poles
flashing in unblinking eyes
sparkling from sequins
shining upon littered coins

Loud trance inducing music
pounds the senses
muting unwanted conversation
drowning exclamatory calls
raunchy, provocative, unashamed

Skin glistens with sweat
muscles flex beneath fewer garments
flesh is revealed - slowly
eyes remain focused
on the final scrap

Revelation slams perception
reality shatters fantasy
retrospection becomes uncomfortable
gender becomes incongruous
emotions confused and fickle

Hands fumble drinks
jokes cover residual unease
we turn away from the stage
punch each other's arms
and comment on the barmaids breasts

'Sometimes the neighbours aren't who you think they are'.

Sunday mornings are always quite late for me. I like to ease into the day and out of the previous evening's entertainment. I stood in the lounge of my second floor flat, catching the morning breeze on my still, shower damp skin and lighting my first bong of the day. I inhaled deeply and slowly, held, then exhaled a cloud of smoke through the open window. As I contemplated the morning, I became aware of a series of expletive decorated sentences floating up from the garages below. My mind tried to imagine the positions necessary to perform what the sentences suggested, and failed. I moved to the window and looked down. The first garage was mine and I could just see the tail light of my Suzuki glinting in the sunlight. The next belonged to the new guy in flat 2, directly below me. I hadn't met him yet and as I looked closer I saw that he was working on a 1977 Jubilee edition Triumph Bonneville! I raced back to my bedroom and grabbed a tshirt off the floor – it smelt fine – and then hurried to the kitchen. Grabbing two beers from the fridge I headed out the back door and down the stairs.

I walked casually over to the source of the expletives and introduced myself, as I passed over a beer.

"Nice bike" I said.

"Cheers, names Garry, friends call me Toy".

"Odd", I thought.

“So what’s the problem” I asked.

“This new throttle cable keeps slipping and I’m fucked if I can get it to slot into place.”

“Let’s have a crack at it” I said.

And, as is usually the way with this sort of thing; you let somebody else try and they make you look like a complete idiot – I had it fitted in about 30 seconds.

That’s how I first met Toy and we continued to build a friendship around our love of bikes, beer and bong. He was a way better cook than me and we’d often eat at his place – me providing the weed and him the food.

As time went on I noticed a few things about Toy. He seemed to be smoothing out. Not his personality, that remained just as always, but his skin and his muscularity seemed to go from Brickie’s Labourer to Vogue model. One afternoon over beers he said he was going to Europe for 6 weeks and asked if I could keep an eye on his bike. “You’d have to ride her at least once a week,” he said.

I assured him it would be no problem. “Excellent”, I thought, and I’d already started to imagine sweet early morning rides out to Kilcoy and up to Noosa.

In all the time I had known him I never asked what he did and I suggested to him that he must have a good boss to give him that amount of time off. I was well surprised when he said that he was his own boss... and that he actually owned a bar! In the Valley! And apparently his manager was going to be more than capable of handling the place without him.

“How come we never went to your bar?” I asked.

“Didn’t think you’d be interested” he said.

“In drinking?!” I said incredulously.

“In dancing,” he responded; “I’m a dancer Andy, haven’t you noticed”. “Talk about shattering a girl’s confidence” he said.

“Oh! That explains some stuff”; “I admit I had wondered. Your grooming always left me looking like a bum and your place always looked tidier than mine”.

He laughed and let fly a profanity filled sentence and shook his head disbelievingly.

Toy left at the end of the week and as I rode his bike around I wondered at my feeling for him with this new bit of information. What would my other mates think? What does Sara, the hottie from upstairs, think of me? (This Trumpy was a sweet ride). I knew it wouldn't matter to me what they thought, Toy was a good bloke. I wasn't prepared for how he looked when she came back.