



TRANSCENDENCE

The train pulsed towards Brisbane. It lulled Aileen cocooned within. She would alight at South Bank Station. Journey's end would be QPAC. This Sunday morning she longed for mystery. Mystery had gone from religion. Mystery had gone from Science. Now her soul was derailed in this carriage. "Quiet Carriage", the sign said. And the world blurred past the window. There it was pixilated just beyond reach. Its superstructure beckoned and morphed. Surely it was just a fabrication. What was she to believe?

She knew this was an age of understanding. She was supposed to understand herself. She was supposed to understand her surroundings. She was even supposed to understand society. She surmised intellect had taken over everything. That meant everything could be explained. That meant everything could be understood. Everything lies within humanity's horizon of comprehension. But understanding must not be confused with knowledge. Indeed should phenomenon appear mysterious she'd know. She'd know how to deal with it.

Mysteries aside, (her train had arrived on time and disgorged its passengers at South Bank and pulled out of the platform within minutes) Aileen, who had dodged Grey Street's unpredictable traffic, briskly traversed the South Bank cultural precinct (traditionally home to the Jagera and Turrbal people), pas de veauxed through a foyer of mincing champagne toting patrons, temporarily suspended independence of balance and propulsion to the assistance of the cold impersonal chrome handrail in a marble stepped stairwell, checked her ticket and exchanged pleasantries with the dark suited middle aged usher at Door 9 whilst being assured her seating was B 10 in the stalls now sat, "Music on Sundays 2, Romance and Passion" program resting on her lap in the Concert Hall auditorium, a space which was not something she generally reacted to, merely registered, for she knew too well that in contrast to the complexity and drama of the seductive external architecture, contemporary concert halls like this were statements of compromise, triumphs of technical and acoustic enhancing space construction, packing (in this case 1600 seats) into a time honoured format of stalls, balconies and boxes but today reaching celestially to the "gods" the grandiose organ with its lofty gothic pipes that Robin Gibson in harmony with organist Robert Bougen had juxtaposed upon his design seemed benevolent, paying homage to a consecrated platformed - stage upon a stage - stage setting- a plethora of timpani and percussion instruments including piano and celeste, dais, chairs affronted by music stands to receive the strings, woodwind and brass players trickling from the wings to tune in, in deference to their individuality to the concert master's satisfaction, a preparation that may well conjure spirits from the past and thus as the lights dimmed to a silence that's a

presence Aileen submits and waits, yearning, hoping that with bewitching sensitivity and magic of gesture the conductor will enter the collective musical heart of the orchestra and a mystical symphony will reign not to be understood – *transcendence*.