

**University of Newcastle**

**Keri Glastonbury**

**Three poems**

Biographical note:

Keri Glastonbury teaches creative writing at the University of Newcastle and completed a Doctorate in Creative Arts at the University of Technology, Sydney, in 2004 (where she previously taught cultural studies and writing). She is a widely published Australian poet and has received numerous grants from the Australia Council, including the BR Whiting Residency (Rome). In 2009, she had an Asialink Literature Residency in India. Keri received a Vice Chancellor's Award for Supervision Excellence for the Faculty of Education and Arts in 2011. She has research interests in the emerging writers' community, contemporary poetics and life writing.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Queer writing – poetry

### Exit note to academia

The parallels are striking: the desacralisation, the shitting in their own nests, falling victim to hard arses on the departmental Kool Aid. The question now is how to come back from *persona non gratis*? At trivia at The G last night I learned that pulchritudinous means beautiful, that I can't spell camouflage and that otitis is an ear infection. I'm still haunted by David McDiarmid's 'I want a future that lives up to my past', but otherwise rainbow aphorisms aren't my forte. The beaches have been closed for seven days, though 'ole chompy' hasn't stopped Justin Norris surfing with his grommets – Australian eco-poetics at its finest. Newcastle Council suddenly the go to guys for oceanography and in the comments section it's all fun and games until somebody gets hurt. We're as complicit in our own demise as the dolphin carcasses washing ashore, *at that moment I was a marine biologist!* I've got Sam Wagan Watson's new collection *Love Poems and Death Threats* by my bed tonight & I can't believe you didn't stick around for the ceiling fan.

### Bonny Bundanon

Wombats appear like body weather rocks, forces of *shakti* gathering at dusk. I want to walk among them, in Rick Owens sneakers and my Sea Shepherd t-shirt. Bamarang's up the river, just the kind of place Novocastrian yogis like to retreat, out on the grass with their neti pots, dripping salty fluid out a nostril. There was lots we didn't know then, those months of triangulation, lumps like poached pears on our porridge, hidden in tissue. I haven't felt excluded from a clique for years, but middle-aged women can obviously be just as matey as the Berlin polyamory scene. She's hitting him with a steel brush from Bunnings, coldness and cruelty in Australian national parks: 'Will nature make a man of me yet?' Ask Arthur Boyd. We sit around discussing stumbling block (*stolperstein*) memorials, Indigenous languages carved into cattle bones and red resin filling holes left by mortar blasts in Sarajevo. It's art wank, but I prefer it, like conversational essays dissipating into the night.

How's the serenity?

**Unilaterally headfucky**

You're my dream andro lover: hard of tricep, soft of belly. I would have eaten out at endless nouveau cuisine restaurants, with foams and ox tongues – just slap me now. Let me press those doof doof headphones further in your perilous eardrums, as you ride off on your active transport Brooks seat nestled in your snatch.

I need to learn how to wrangle flesh again, I'm sorry I'm so lazy. It's a bit like working out how people might navigate a city, a weekend of gorilla paving and a dysfunctional council, as I fold my voting slip into an origami crane. As a friend who worked for Buildev said 'If you lay down with dogs you can't expect not to get fleas' and as far as personal bests go less than 24hrs is nothing on a family of five.

What will it take to snuff me out? What will it take to mobilise me? Recycled wood paneling, exposed brick? Finally went in to The Lucky the other day and was impressed with the bathroom sinks

– even McCloy can do hipster better than me.

Clearly, I've got to stop caring.

## Research statement

### *Research background*

My poem 'Perhaps Upstairs' was published in the Australia Queer issue of *Meanjin* (1996). This special issue of *TEXT* responds to that issue of *Meanjin* of which my poem was a part. 'Perhaps Upstairs' was very concerned with an inner-city queer identity and generational difference. The poems I have submitted for the *TEXT* special issue are again concerned with place. These three poems are from a 'sonnet' poetry manuscript I am currently writing which is built around my engagement with the city of Newcastle, New South Wales, where I live and work. In terms of 'queer', they deal with my physical displacement from the cosmopolitan culture of Sydney.

### *Research contribution*

These poems meditate on the relations between the virtual and the actual, and this manuscript deliberately engages with the emerging field of 'post-internet' poetics. Poems in this manuscript have been assembled using the stimulus of Facebook messages, place blogs, Instagram and Tumblr images – as I contrast my ambivalence with Newcastle off-line with my fascination with the way others aestheticize it online. This process paradoxically renews my engagement with the local (including that which can never entirely be encompassed by the virtual) and is perhaps akin to spinning my nose around to find my face.

### *Research significance*

These poems poetically explore notions of place, the local and the virtual and are wholly original creative works. The project for which the poems were produced is currently funded by an Australia Council grant. These poems were peer-reviewed and deemed worthy of publication in *TEXT*, a peak journal for the creative writing discipline.

## Work cited

Berry, C & Jagose, A 1996, Australia Queer, *Meanjin*, 55 (1)