

## **Pete Lind**

*1969 – 2007*

Lind initiated and ran the Red Lion Readings and chapbook press. His mother and father were English migrants who moved to Australia because of work opportunities in the newly opened Holden car manufacturing plant. Lind also worked in the plant for several years, but became unemployed in 2003. He lived in a defacto marriage with fellow Red Lion Shannon Woodford from 1999 to 2005, during which time the couple had two children. Lind committed suicide in December 2007 and is deeply missed.

## **Bloody Poets, 1994**

I am not a poet.  
I'm just a guy who writes poetry, got it?  
I can't stand poets,  
the way they stare  
out of books, yellow and sour.  
As people they might have been okay,  
good for a drink and a laugh.  
Poor sods, getting turned into poets.  
And thank God I am not one!  
If I were I'd have to wear black  
and speak strange unto thee  
and shove my head in ovens  
because I would hate myself  
for being a poet,  
a lie.  
Lucky, then, I'm just a guy,  
a guy who works,  
who comes home  
and goes out,  
good for a drink and a laugh,  
a guy who eats and shits  
and sometimes can't shit,  
who watches too much TV and doesn't care,  
a guy  
just like any guy  
who, it just happens, writes poetry.

## **Girl Friday, 1994**

She keeps leaving me.  
Or I send her away.  
Whichever, I always know she'll be back.  
Two castaways, we can't help but drift  
together. On Friday nights,  
beneath the dim globes of our favourite bar,  
she's sitting, waiting  
for me to find her.

A master of disguise,  
sometimes blonde, sometimes dark,  
skin pale or tanned.  
One week she is tall, the next short,  
but I always know her  
by her eyes.

She wears little grey ribbons in her eyes.

Above the chatter of pokies in the next room,  
she plays her latest lucky name.  
Sometimes Sonia, others Michelle  
or Rona or Lisa or Kristy.  
And what the heck,  
I become different people for her too.  
Keeps things interesting  
for both of us.

I buy her a tequila sunrise  
or a bourbon and coke or a gin and tonic  
or a beer. She gives me a smile  
or a snarl or a kiss on the cheek  
or the neck or the mouth.

We go back to my place. Always my place.  
I've thought about asking her why,  
but then maybe it's me who insists,  
who doesn't want to know  
the colours of her walls her sheets the books on her shelves.

Inside all this civilised clothing  
we are both savages,  
our bodies foreign languages  
we learn through points and gestures,  
stutters and gasps.  
Lisping children, we invent new games,  
new words for only us and only now.

Next week we will have forgotten  
on purpose,  
will learn to speak all over,  
discover ourselves savages again – and again –

This is why she leaves me.  
This is why I send her away.

## **Bruises, 2006**

*(for Brian Lind, 1975-1996)*

You were always strangely proud  
of your bruises. Wore them like medals  
and never went without decoration  
whether learning to walk  
or learning to fly  
off the shed roof  
—you swore you'd do it  
one day  
and though I was older and should have known better,  
a small part of me believed you  
because right from the start  
there was something in your eyes  
that soared higher than the things we can hold.

Sixteen you started talking about the Air Force,  
set Mum into such a state  
—awake all night, grinding her jaw to chalk—  
though you, of course, never noticed,  
already soaring miles beyond us  
in your mind.

It was because of her they wouldn't let you in,  
not that she planned it,  
that night when you were just seven months  
and fast asleep through the blur of streets  
and stoplights, white sheets and stern faces,  
that night when I learned, at four years old  
that valium can't kill you.

But heroin can.

They put you in a grey suit,  
long sleeves to cover your arms.  
I didn't need to see to know  
they were covered in bruises,  
dull black decorations  
from a different type of war.

The last time I saw you, six months before,  
you said you were gonna get clean  
of everything, even the booze,  
and though I was older and should have known better  
a small part of me believed you  
because even with busted teeth and yellow skin,  
there was still something in your eyes.  
Those fucking eyes.

They're closed now,  
no doubt eaten  
by something that'll never tell me  
if you ever did it,  
if you learned to fly.

## **That Sort, 1998**

I'm the sort you see at bus shelters,  
the guy with the tats and the faded black jeans,  
the sort who pays the driver all in five cent pieces,  
who gives up his seat for the blind girl  
then stares and wonders what it'd be like to fuck her.

I'm the sort who actually enjoys baked beans on toast,  
I'm not the sort who owns shares  
or knows what they mean by negative gearing.  
I'm the sort who pays bills – just –  
and knows what they mean by black kiss.

I'm the sort who goes to church  
every Christmas, to the wrestling  
every time it's on,  
the sort who believes it's all real  
even though I know it's not.

I'm the sort who'll drink VB if I have to  
(and yes, I'm the sort that has to).  
Fuck Crows. Fuck Power.  
I'm the sort who goes for Centrals,  
the sort who really does read the articles in Penthouse,  
but would never claim that's why I buy it.

I'm the sort who grew up eating dinner at six,  
meat and no veg, fish and chip Fridays,  
the sort who broke three noses before the end of year six,  
who thought that was the way to get along.  
I cried myself to sleep every night 'til I was seven,  
then not at all for twenty two years.

I'm the sort who listens to the words in songs,  
who listens to Metallica,  
who listens to the blues.

I'm the sort your mother said watch out for,  
the sort who wants to spend hours  
just tasting your neck, unbuttoning your blouse.  
I'm the sort who leaves before sun up,  
the sort who still believes in love.

I'm the sort of person who tells the truth.  
I'm the sort of person who lies.  
I'm the sort of person who writes poetry,  
the sort who can bench ninety-eight-point-five kilos.

I'm the sort of person who gets up and says all this  
out loud, in the middle of the God damn Red Lion.  
I'm the sort who sees the looks in your eyes,  
but keeps on standing here, standing tall,  
looking the fuck straight back and saying Yeah,  
that's right,  
I'm that sort of person.

## She's Not My Type... 1998

...but I like her.

Much more than she likes herself.

I like her black dress, black boots, black looks, black hair  
growing out blonde. I even like her black eyeliner  
smudged from cheek to brow as she sits, shoulders slumped,  
sipping black coffee in my kitchen,  
flicking chips of black polish on the floor.

I like finding them later, tiny fragments that tell me  
it was more than a dream. And the eyeliner too  
on my pillow, a blurred print of her  
watching me

blackly

– sealed tighter than any kiss.

I want to fuck her with the lights on,  
but she refuses,  
says she's ashamed  
of being so big.

I say men have the opposite problem.

But it's hard to ignore the sniggers  
and stares from friends who've known me years,  
who know my type.

My type are blonde,  
tight tops, tighter jeans.

My type have pink nails and suntans.

They like Robbie Williams and Midouri.

My type read their star signs in Cleo  
or New Woman if they're really empowered.

When I try to lend them Fear and Loathing,  
my type tell me they've always loved Gonzo  
– but not as much as Big Bird.

No.  
She's not my type.