

## Trench warfare

Kenwood House:

an autumn Wednesday,  
woods tame and endless, mild grey sky  
where I wandered, hopeful, one November  
in the belted trenchcoat that felt matronly  
(from a dive in unfamiliar downtown Sydney)  
but of course wasn't on a twenty-something

First time in London  
where I'd lived in my head since I could read

This time, more dogs than I recall, otherwise the same

the barrel-vaulted Stewards' Room rendering glamorous  
cheese and pickle, a pot of tea,  
my heart bursting from my chest

Still happy when we all meet at the Lion  
a drink then The IT Crowd on TV  
the others under the weather

Cath Kenneally. 'Trench Warfare' and 'split or stay'.  
*Transnational Literature* Vol.11 no.1, November 2018.  
<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

(under it, for good or ill, every day

today, held under, as by a mean kid at the beach)

Another time, we stride it out to Swiss Cottage, where Swiss Tony

doesn't live, find the gym and pool in the community centre

The day is brighter, Anna home sick. We stop at the new Camden Arts gallery

check, then forget work email

Euroboy Gabe claims now to prefer Spain to his native land. He shows us

his climbing wall. He'll be at our reading at Australia House,

common territory for now

In Russell Square Garden cafe

select poems to read

Warm again.

Drifting back to Karin Mamma Anderssen's lovely Camden paintings

spiky pines barricading or guarding a wintering house

pumpkin and beetroot tones in warm, cluttered interiors

We bought a gift for Tom in the bookshop:

YoshitomoNara: 'AngryGirl:NothingEver

Happens'

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threatening faux-naif big faces he will like

angry boy arming himself with art

Angry sister ponders the decades:

waves of nostalgia swamping the Heath, inundating Camden

percolating up in noxious bubbles from my ill-sealed Underground

ride it, all you can do

hold on to your sou'wester

belt your raincoat tight

the underrated art of straphanging

***Cath Kenneally***

## split or stay?

Split, an ordinary afternoon,

observed from a bollard, a place to stay being

sought and found at one esplanade agency

after another

We can have

the Mihanovic apartment,

but I have a bad head by now

suave Maria lets us in, I

lie down, the others go out for a meal

Diocletian's city leaves me cold, though that could be the headache  
a certain kind of migraine - the 'white' variety –

that chills the extremities

douses enthusiasm, certainly

maybe tomorrow

(ah, Chrissie, always ready to drop a line)

Yuri and Bianca remain in Hvar,

already I miss those crazy chimneys

I look out across the courtyard, waiting for the diners-out with takeaway

I see this block houses a Gynaecologist and a Friseur  
would a *friseur* do massage or hair?

The wanderers return  
with food and the story of the surly waiter

who denies the existence of all the drinks on the menu  
No Negroni - '*whatever that is!*' - and brings  
cappuccino instead of Campari

in this house of a dozen beds  
we each choose one to lie in

the pillows of sparkling Dalmatia beneath our heads  
the citizens still bent beneath the yoke of Empire

descendants of Roman legionaries serving Cokes  
adding a spit of poison where they can

*Cath Kenneally*