

Pandora on the Eve of Destruction

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There's a rerun of Homicide on morning tv:-
milk bottles clink,
a coffee pot boils over (blurb blurb)
& a housewife gets red streaks in her hair. In the kitchen Richard throws open the cutlery drawer
and tosses the knives
one by one
at the fridge (too many trips to India, and too many trips). I turn up the television;
he begins on the pencils in a jar by the phone. Later we sweep the knives into piles
and while the Chippendales dance on Donahue
he gently stacks a bowl with weet bix,
pours milk slowly up to the edge &
sprinkles it all with a fine even powder of sugar. The house surrounds us like a set of sheets
(continuous coverage),
we make love on the floor
(young, bold, beautiful & restless). In the night sky, far off, cameras
follow a little light endlessly,
obsessively, their talk fills the airwaves
(click click). I reach out and touch the fine tuning.
Wheel of Fortune spins into the living room
tongues of fire from every spoke,
& questions answered weeks ago
(a delay button for everything). I grip the remote and pass it to Richard,
who runs to the kitchen to get some coffee. We serve it topped with Ian Turpey's moustache,
go on a Supermarket Spree -
trolleys careening around corners
bashing into shelves full of tomato paste and kitty litter. 'You watch these important words,' Ian says.
'No spread works harder than Becell!' I take my string bag when I visit the shops,
and push 'pause' before I leave.
(Under the sink: a small forest of paper bags,
a strip-mine of aluminium bottle-tops.) Then one of Mr Douglas's 3 sons
has another lot, who'd each be
big enough to have three more
if this was real. -The world never stops! It keeps ticking, ticking. I lay out my lives (nine, ten, a dozen)
in a long straight line...
or I channel flick and take them all at once.
 Laugh,
 cry,
 go red
with excitement
till my heart
click, clicks:
a small
time bomb. (Pure emotion. 'How does it feel
- your house burnt down?') I want a red car,
so I jump up and touch the ceiling rose with my fingertips.
The dust, the artificial pink... Then oil wells flame in a desert storm,
a sea turns black and thick
& fish belly up, while we ring for Pizza
and sink balls of icecream
into glasses of Coke
and watch them fizz. It's like Being There I guess
(but not funny),
cheaper than the Olympics.
Ash from one part of the world
comes down on the alps of another. I check the windows and lock the doors.
Switch the channels, quickly, when no-one's looking.
(Richard burns the toast.) Then we dream of Jeannie and travel a Big Country.
Visit Burke's Backyard,
get a warm glow

watching kelpie dogs run across the backs of sheep.
Laugh at the Goodies doing everything wrong... I am Pandora's daughter, you see
and this is my task:
to keep the world safe
in a box. I rearrange the chairs and tables
when things get messy;
put out the garbage;
grow potatoes on the couch. I am green fingered (red where I bite the ends)!
I grow my hair over my eyes,
I like its softness
the way it spins around when I shake my head. I leave little droplets of blood
when I tap on the furniture
(Richard follows me with Mr Sheen). & I keep my sanity,
while the world goes mad.