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Captions for Figures:

Figure 1: One Tree Hill/Maungakiekie summit (photo R.A. Kearns)

Figure 2: 'Small Icon: Auckland Rider' by Nigel Brown (1986) (Reproduced with the artist's permission)

## Notes

- 1 To provide two recent, if geographically disparate, examples of this phenomenon: public outcry surrounded both the felling of trees in Vancouver's Stanley Park to allow for highway-widening, and the removal of cherry trees, purportedly for 'safety reasons', from the main street of Pukekohe, a town south of Auckland.

## JACK ROSS

## SITUATIONS

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### Contents

### Situations

Situations I: Albany

*Edge City*

Between OR and Main Campus

Situations ii: CBD

*Auckland nach dem Regen*

Between "The Newton Boys" and "The Big Hit"

Situations iii: Tauranga

*Poetry Festival*

Girls on Film

Situations iv: Coromandel

## The Perfect Storm

Fire  
 Grating your hand...  
 The Storm  
 Don't want no plot ...  
 Fusion  
 Not the butterfly-collector ...  
 Poetry Live

## Situations I: Albany

### *Edge City*

No *this-ness*  
*In planned landscapes; my effects*  
 Depend on being smelt – felt – heard.  
 "Don't pull that city face." So  
 Julia, six months ago:  
 No flame-trees in my garden,  
 Rosebud gone: "dark fields  
 Of the republic." Is it time  
 To shoulder wood, blue sky?

Albany signs –  
 A long jog to the light.

### *Between OR and Main Campus*

But I walk faster  
 asphalt oyster –  
 catcher tracks            turned cracks  
 forbid

enamelled synaesthesia  
 of landscape after  
 rain            shoulder-slung  
 jacket  
 outdistance me  
           the sun goes out  
 grey storm-front coming yes  
 outdistance me

## Situations ii: CBD

### *Auckland nach dem Regen*

NO VACANCIES  
 At the "City of Sails" motel.  
*It's hard to convey how strange that is:*  
 Dark, skid-marked streets; day after day  
 Of grey ...  
           Who the fuck's there?

Two loonies  
           Standing by the road  
 (blue parka, beige kagoul)  
 not waiting for anything  
           - just waiting.  
 By a roundabout.

It's ten at night.

*Rain-slick streets are cool.*

## Between "The Newton Boys" and "The Big Hit"

**Ground Zero:** *The line between*  
 Man and machine  
 Should never be erases ....

Look at your faces, children of  
 the glass arcade – leaf-brittle.

Chantal's eyes look past  
 me, pupils to one side.

Two friends stride by,  
 waving, laughing; I've never seen them  
 look so happy.

We trade more remarks:  
 life - jobs – art.

Her skin is chapped  
 in patches, underneath pale eyes.  
 I want to kiss them.

We talk for an hour.

## Situations iii: Tauranga

### Poetry Festival

Futility is a kind of dislocation  
 too, whatever Bill  
 may say – cover yourself  
 with ordure, vomit in  
 the gutter; fail to  
 come on time.

That last time,  
 sweating, I scarcely  
 saw in a hollow-check'd child  
 - Sleepyhead mattress torque -  
 myself, self-satisfied with  
 Speights.

Look forward to  
 A morning of revelations:

lightning blasting buzzards from the sky.

## Girls on Film

Stress Relax  
 like the JANSPOUT blue backpack  
 strapped over your shoulders  
 your black *pull*  
 grey trousers  
 ponytail

Don't frown  
 Sun's out, tickets  
 in hand. We talked till four  
 the other night –  
 voyeur.

You carry  
 a green fabric dinosaur

## Situations iv: Coromandel

Who cares what happens when they're dead?  
*It's bad enough now.*

Or good. Who knows?  
 Swimming at Opito,  
 arguing

Emmanuelle Beart  
 with an old friend:  
 L a Belle Noiseuse ...

Refusing to hear  
 the story of the ghost  
*again*  
 at the Brian Boru in Thames –  
*the carriage trade*  
 a monstrous cat.

The title *Situations* is cribbed from Jean-Paul Sartre. I was trying to apply the idea of getting a *fix* on a particular time or place by putting different (contradictory?) impressions in italic and roman script, roughly corresponding with negatives and positives.

The other settings are Albany University, The Tauranga Poetry Festival, and the Auckland CBD. The allusions in the last are to Max Ernst's *Europa nach dem Regen* (Europe After the Rains), that strange, melting, apocalyptic landscape from the mid-forties; as well (of course) as our first meeting in that Lorne Street Café, Alba.

The Coromandel poem is here mainly because of its reference to *I a Belle Noiseuse*, a four-hour film starring Emmanuelle Béart, which I didn't then realise was based on Balzac's *Chef-d'Oeuvre Inconnu*, so minutely – somewhat inconclusively? – analysed in that Christmas present you gave me, Dore Ashton's *Fable of Modern Art* ...

## AFTERWORD

### W.H. NEW

## FOLDING INTO PLACE

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### 1) *Folders*

Tourists collect them, those glossy brochures that advertise the wonders of elsewhere. British folders advertise history, castles, quaint cottages, royal regalia, and clan tartans. Americans advertise urban glitz: Las Vegas showgirls and the blinking lights of Times Square. Canadians feature alpine lakes, and Mounties on horseback. There is something iconographic about these landscapes: a projection of cultural belief – which always has *something* to do with the lives that ordinary people lead in these places. But often not a lot. The USA does not shine brightly everywhere; North Dakota, as the film *Fargo* suggested, glitters less than Hollywood, for all its latent tensions. Soho and Putney are not exactly “quaint.” A lot of Canadian lakes are no longer pristine. And most Mounties drive sedans.

The first time I travelled to New Zealand – in 1968, the first of more than half a dozen visits – I had already read a sheaf of New Zealand folders and seen at least a couple of film documentaries. Mud pools bubbled like grey porridge. Glowworms