

## Redgum "Working Girls"

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She said she came from Portland  
Where the ashen skies and leaden ocean  
Left her like the local boys, barren of emotion  
As we talked we watched the raindrops  
Running down the window  
Laundromat in Darlinghurst,  
Like a fish shop from the past.

And her mother called her Mary  
After Mary Magdalene,  
To deny her beauty  
Would have been the greatest sin  
It was a profile in the neon and a Kings Cross Doorway  
lean  
To half an hour of tending someone else's tangled  
dream.

There were lines of sailors, lines of speed  
Lines upon the Footpath where she stared  
When things were quiet, as night deferred to dawn.  
And the coke cups played red rover  
In the breeze that scuttled through the streets  
Taxis left for greener fields  
While Sydney stretched and yawned

And her mother called her Mary  
After Mary Magdalene,  
There were virgins in the morning,  
She had sisters in the pain;  
And the wives would clutch their husbands  
Perhaps they shared the shame,  
'cause working streets and Weddingrings are  
sometimes much the same.

She tap-danced with the buskers  
Near the subway shouting blues songs  
They remembered from their teenage years of  
dreamtime radio.  
And the years withdrew behind her eyes  
To let the little girl look out  
In simple childish innocence  
At drawings in the sand.

And her mother called her Mary  
After Mary Magdalene,  
She had long dark hair and massage oil  
And a key to let you in;  
And the lines upon her face were maps of roads she'd  
travelled,  
Lined with people throwing stones because they didn't  
understand,  
That a half an hour of tenderness (perhaps they shared  
the same)  
'cause working streets and Weddingrings are  
sometimes much the same.

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