

Smokescreen

She hated confined spaces she said. Always
used the fifth floor stairs, avoiding
the closeness of the lift

The MRI scanner reminded her of the butcher,
the way he pushed meat through the machine
into the waiting skins

Think of it as a time machine, the doctor had said
Think about what year you'd like to go back to
or even forward

While the scanner beeped and drilled she drifted
back to the days when *wrinkled* referred
to the bottom sheet

a *scarred* face was just a misspelling and *deaf*
in parent speak was another word for
teenager

No, backwards didn't interest her. Besides her
partner always said the scars added
character

She mulled over the butcher scenario. Would she
be churned out as pork, veal, smoked or dried,
Andouille, Bockwurst, Chorizo

With a final fart-like beep she emerged, stunning
the attendant by saying, *Salami thanks, I'd like
to be cured*

Weekend at Governor's Bay

Voices rowed across the night accompanying
the moon as it skinny dipped in the sea
Her shortbread skin, prickly

and baked by the afternoon sun, bathed in the
evening's coolness. Comforting creaks
signalled the house

was easing into the darkness. Just as the knife
struck her third victim, a breeze fanned
the room. Shivering,

she got up and locked the door. Before the police
reached the park, he was dead. And then
the tin roof

played host to a light rain of nonpareils. Closing
the window she watched their colours
bleeding

across the terrace. Relieved Central Park
was some distance away, she tumbled
back into her book

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After winning the Robbie Burns Poetry award (published poet) in 2006 Ruth Arnison has gone on to be published in literary and online journals in NZ, Australia, the UK and the US. This year she is coordinating a pilot programme, "Poems in the Waiting Room", in Dunedin and, writing under the guidance of a mentor - a New Zealand Society of Authors award.