

# — night and day

"Why."

"Cause I can search you under suspicion of drugs." I gave it to him. There was nothing in it.

"Where's your badge," I ask.

"I don't have to tell you," his badge number was not visible.

"What's your badge number," I ask again. He hesitated.

"7573," he says.

"Thanks," I begin to move away.

"Dave Barker's the name, 7573."

I turn around, "right... Dave Barker 7573".

The walk around town that followed was only watching police cars drive up and down the street. So I decided to go home.

About 3am I walked to the station, people were still around, some at the portable take-away stand. Others sitting on the chairs as if waiting for something to happen.

At 4.30am Sunday morning as I was walking home, a young girl came out of a street and looked around. She saw me then went back into the darkness of the street.

I walked down further then stopped and waited for her to come out again.

After a few minutes she comes out again looks up and down the road. She then walks over to the dairy and grabs a bundle of newspapers and runs back into the dark street. I had taken the papers to be the dairy's delivery of New Zealand Times.

I decided to follow her up the street and see where she was going. Just as I turned into the street I saw her little body go into a garage halfway up the road.

I walked past and looked in.

"Piss off ya bastard," a boy's voice said from inside. I kept walking. I had seen three bodies, young people lying in the garage with newspapers spread out over them.

Tiredness and sore feet began to take over and I felt it was time to make my way home.

As I was going through Newtown I was again stopped by the Police, the same thing happened. This time they were more insistent and said.

"If you don't give us your name we'll have you taken down to central."

There were two one on either side they made sure I was unable to move away. I gave them my name and occupation and they left.

5 in the morning and I've brought it all back home.

by Samson Samasoni

"Do you think he'll let us in?" I asked, eyeing the uniformed guard on the other side of the revolving door. We all inspected each other, clad in humble jeans, jackets and sneakers.

"I don't know, but there's only one way to find out," was my mate's reply.

I had never been through a revolving door before, so that in itself was a new experience. Having lived in Wairoa all my life — where the buildings are never more than 2 storeyed and traffic lights are a thing of the future — I had been totally overwhelmed by the dominating past life of the city.

Wellington. At first I feared it; even avoided crossing the road. Then I began to loathe its loneliness, hated its complexity and confusion, wanted to go home to the security of a town where the faces I knew outnumbered the ones I didn't know. Only during the last few days of my week-long stay did my feelings about the capital begin to change.

The guard returned our anxious expressions with ones of suspicion. My three friends and I quickly made our way to the polished, marble stairs, not because we knew where we were going, but more as a form of escape. The stairs led us to another uniformed, middle-aged man, only this time more friendly.

"I'm afraid you can't go in there, girls. That's the Speakers Gallery." The other three girls were blushing too. "You can watch from in here, and if you want, you can go across to the other side."

"Thank you," we mumbled. What had started as a joke had developed into quite an interesting experience. We in turn took seats at the edge of the balcony and peered over the rail in anticipation.

Below us they sat. Correction. Below us they sprawled themselves; the men who controlled Aotearoa; the men who made all the big decisions about us, about me. Some were writing, others just slouched in their sheep-skin lined seats, most reading the evening papers. A couple were fast asleep.

Below us they sat in their green vinyl seats surrounded by green velvet curtains protected by green-clothed veterans; all with very, very bored expressions on their faces, similar to that of an eight year old boy during a Beethoven concert. Even the man wearing the wig at the head of the room who banged the baton and groaned "order, order" looked like he'd have more fun doing crosswords in a cemetery.

Some of them would wave to wives and children in the gallery, sometimes

taking more interest in them than in the affairs of the country. In a style they labelled "debating" they snapped and bickered, argued and growled in a childish manner. While one speaker was in the process of trying to deliver his speech, the opposition would boo and baulk him into embarrassment with such rebuttle as "aah shut up, you've lost the debate anyway", "sit down, you don't know what you're talking about," "boo hoo, whooey", "blaa blaa blaa", "bull", as well as a number of loud exaggerated yawns.

Parliament wasn't as I expected it to be. It was hard to believe that these men were full-blooded 100% New Zealanders; they seemed of a foreign culture, spoke in foreign language, and I began to understand why so many Maori and Pacific Island people find it so hard to fit into the system. Where was the aroha?? The friendship that kiwis are so famous and well know for?? Was it just a gimmick to attract tourists??

As we turned our backs on the cold grey of Parliament building and begun the slow decent down the stairs, a light shower shadowed windy Wellington City.

Fiona Hamlin.



Two of the participants in Wellington's Summer City programme, Nikki Ratahi and Rosana Love pose in costume during cultural activities.