

Janie Conway Herron

Trust Me & Other Poems

↳ Trust Me ↵

Trust me,' you said
as you held out your hand
and beckoned me over
the narrow wooden plank
that bridged the space between
dry land and your tiny country cabin.

'Trust me,' you said,
and I hesitated,
staring into the pitch darkness
that stretched so infinitely below me,
as you gently coaxed me
towards your circling desire.

'Trust me,' you said,
and led me into to a room
lit with the light of a dozen candles
that flickered and winked
at our naked skin on scarlet silk sheets
as I opened my trembling self to you.

'Trust me,' you said,
curling yourself around me
as I described all the bruises and hurts
that had toughened the walls of my soul
in the hard-hearted city
I had come from.

'Trust me,' you said
and I could feel the strings of my heart
release just a little,
sighing with relief
as you stroked the aching space
between my breasts.

'Trust me,' you said
in a dozen or more letters
after I left the paradise
you made for me
and travelled back
to my hard-hearted city

'Trust me,' you chanted
as you rode your bike
down country roads
and crowded highways
to cross the arching, city bridge
and knock at my door.

'Trust me,' you said,
eyes twinkling
as you stood smiling
on my door step
waiting for me
to let you in.

'Trust me,' you said
as you lay beside me
in my big double bed,
the hot whisper of your breath
promising,
'you and me forever.'

'Trust me,' you said
as I told you
I didn't believe in forever,
that it was safer and surer
to see everything
as impermanent.

'Trust me,' you said
more than a hundred times a year
over eleven long years
and forever turned into infinity
while the eternal sun
shone on us both

'I trust you,' I laughed
as we travelled back to paradise
to live together, forever.
'I trust you,' I murmured
as we walked along the ocean's edge
waves lapping at our happy feet.

'I trust you,' I said
as warm sand crept
between our naked toes
and you held my hand and told me
you would have to leave paradise
to work in that hard-hearted city.

'I trust you,' I said,
over and over again
as you came and went
between city and paradise
as regularly as the lazy waves
that lapped at our shores.

'I trust you,' I said
as you turned your bike south that day,
but there was something in your smile
as you revved the throttle,
something in your eyes,
as you drew the helmet guard down over your lips.

'I love you,' I yelled
over the roar of the engine as you rode away
'I love you,' I whispered
to the twinkling stars
as I stared into the night sky
and waited for your return

'Trust me,' you said,
that evening when I called,
but your voice was tight and strained,
short sentences stretching
down the line between us
as our love began to unravel.

'Trust him,' I wept
as I tossed and turned
between our forever sheets.

'Trust him,' I screamed
at my foolish heart
for refusing to believe.

'Trust me,' you yelled into the wind
with me on the back of your bike
the speedometer pushing
200 kilometres per hour
pitching angrily down
the steepest hill on the mountain road.

'Trust me,' you whispered
at the airport
as you headed south once more.
'I do', I lied softly
as we kissed a chaste goodbye
and silence screamed our deception.

'I love you,' you said, on your return,
'but I love her more;'
then dumbly watched
from our bed
as I ranted at the infinite darkness
that threatened my heart once more.

We met just once more
in our hard-hearted city
and talked like old work-mates
discussing disconnected days,
while distance turned
everything to stone.

'This would never have happened,' you said,
your hand lightly touching mine.
This would never have happened,' you repeated,
as you smiled from the café door.
'This would never have happened,
if you had trusted me.'

🏠Home🏠

You are home early.
The front door clicks open
then slams shut
Your familiar footsteps
echo on the wooden floor
your happy greeting
lights up the air between us
Words come and go
lost on the vapour
of your unannounced
entrance.

You are home
and I am glad.
But things have been disturbed.

Your talk
shatters
the quiet place
inside myself
where I have been.

That silent place
where my own words
flow

↳Glenroy↳

I sit
on an ancient hillside
looking out across a landscape
once inhabited by my ancestors
and feel the wrench of their departure.

I walk
on an old stone bridge
and sense
an ancient lover's kiss
in the cool breeze that brushes my cheek

I hear

whispered passions

in the intensity

of the rustling green-leaves.

And the wind in my hair

I listen

to the river gurgling through the glen

and hear

the laughter of young children

at play.

But,

there is no-one here

only black-faced sheep

deemed more important than people

by 18th century invaders,

a bright red phone box

made quaint by the mobility of the 21st century

and an empty hut

its broken down walls

wreaking of loneliness and shattered dreams.

'Wait for me', I cry

as if they have gone

somewhere,

leaving me behind.

And surely they have.

One-hundred-and-fifty-years

after their leaving,

I breathed my first breath

in a crowded city

in another ancient land

so changed

by the footsteps of my ancestors

that it is hardly recognisable

to the spirits

of this, my birth place.

Forced to the edges of their country

by the settlers and their sheep

they whisper to their descendents,

so they know their dreaming place.

But I do not.

'Wait for me', I cry

for I do know I am mortal.

But, when I die,

where will

my spirit go?

↪ **Australian Rules** ↪

'I barrack for the Magpies,' I said,

my eight-year-old chest puffing up with pride.

'I barrack for the Magpies,' I repeated,

my eight-year-old heart beating with excitement.

'We barrack for the Demons,' chorused my brothers,

their eyes brimming with hope.

'We barrack for the Demons,'

their flexed muscles showing me

that next year they'd back the winning side.

In Melbourne in the 1950s Australian Rules, ruled

And all of us kids barracked for

The Magpies

The Demons

The Saints

The Blues

The Tigers

The Cats

The Bulldogs,

or the Roos.

We had never heard of mangurt

the sport the Wurunjeri played

not far from where we lived,

We had never heard of

The Garchurkas or white cockatoos

who thrashed the Bakyangals (the pelicans)

long before the whitemen came

We had never heard of

gunawarra the black swan, or burraimal the emu.

I called them kangaroos not kuyin or marram

and my eight-year-old tongue was

more familiar with the thump of a wallaby than a wimbirr,

with the hiss of a snake rather than a gummil.

In Melbourne in the 1950s white Australia ruled
And white Australian kids were ignorant
of the ways of the Wurunjeri,
we didn't know that they had walked the land of our backyards
thousands of years before we'd been born
and played games just like we did.
But, in the Melbourne of the 1950s,
if I'd have barracked for the Garchurkas
I'm sure they would have won the premiership.

👉In Your Dreams👈

In your dreams, the words slip out
between the straight iron bars
and over the barb-wired prison walls.
Passing machine-gunned sentinels
in lofty turrets, they tumble
into narrow streets
and gather in town squares.
'Listen, listen!' the words say
to anyone with half an ear for freedom
'Look, look' they cry,

pointing at the prison wall,

that towers before them.

'There are innocents in there,

guilty of nothing but dreams

of peace and hope and harmony'.

But life in a crowded cell with nothing

but the cloying closeness of cell mates

And the stench of bucket toilets

requires more than dreams.

So you conjure whispered words

into the late-night pinpricking of plastic bags,

while you plan a stealthy exchange,

with visitors and family

who bring food, laughter, comfort

and news of an outside world.

As you clutch your pinpricked words

and the rustling plastic bag

in the sweaty palms of your deception,

a profusion of goodbyes hides

the rushing of your heart's blood.

Then the words pass unwary guards.

A smile, a nod, a clicking of stiff, leathered heels

and they are on the streets.

Running down laneways,

past brightly lit market stalls

brimming with exotic fruit and salty fish,

and beggar children with pining eyes.

Past the tea shop on the corner,

and the secret garden of delights,

where the scent of steel flowers from prison

sways under a wretched darkening moon

There, under a harsh neon light,

ink turns pinpricked plastic

into words on a naked page.

And suddenly you are free.

Like the stars that sparkle in a moonless sky.

Like the dawn that wakes the fighting peacock.

Like the sleeping citizens of the world

as they greet the coming of a brand new day.

Author Bio

Janie Conway-Herron has extensive experience as an academic, novelist, poet, musician, lyricist and scriptwriter. Her work has been published extensively in journals and anthologies. Janie's novel, *Beneath the Grace of Clouds*, was published by Cockatoo Books in 2010. She is currently working on her next novel, 'Spotlighting' due to be completed soon.

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