

Long Paddock

Kate Lilley

Anniversary (Summer Vacation)

for Melissa

Our first date was *Summer Vacation: 1999*

(*Nen no natsu yasumi*, 1988)

at the Walker St in North Sydney in 1990.

I had never been to a cinema (or anything else)

across the bridge. The film was avant-garde:

it was unclear whether the actors were girls or boys.

(They were girls playing boys. A good omen.)

We caught the train back to Town Hall station,

walked up Oxford St in the rain

and had Thai at the Silver Spoon off Taylor Square

(it no longer exists, nor does the Walker St;

all the repertory cinemas are gone:

Valhalla, Dave's Encore, the Rose Bay Wintergarden

where I first saw *Virgin Spring*).

We had coffee on Stanley St at Bill and Toni's

downstairs (not its real name.
Almost nothing has changed
since I first went there in the 70s.)
You say it wasn't Bill and Toni's,
it was the one across the road
under No Names. Your memory is better.
On our second date I fell down the steps
of the Museum of Contemporary Art
and got up unshaken. (Another sign.)
The first gift I gave you was a tartan shopping trolley.
You wheeled it up and down the hall with a big grin.
You gave me your umbrella.
Since then we've lived in half a terrace in Annandale,
my parents' crumbling georgian in Darlinghurst,
an arts and crafts jewel box in Potts Point (Kings Cross),
and a warehouse in Surry Hills
(ex-hat factory and lock-up).
Clover's Harmony Park, across the road,
is a toy dog scene at twilight.
(You were a cat lover without a cat
until Vanessa rescued Dora.)
At the Hotel Hollywood, diagonally opposite,

aka the Nevada until 1940

when Paramount Pictures opened on Brisbane St,

Kelly McGillis played Diana Maitland,

the lesbian Professor in *The Monkey's Mask*

(aka *Poetry, Sex in Japan*)

a decade before coming out (after Jodie),

boarding a cruise in Florida in 2009.