

## THE FIRST BARBIE OF SUMMER – Ian Bland 2006

the barbie's stood abandoned since winter's early chill  
neglected but for spiders that now colonise the grill

neglected, but protected by a film of grease and oil  
the legacy of those long since left this bovine coil

blackened, stained and rusting, all winter hibernating  
like the spiders it now houses, it patiently lies waiting

you'll clean it up you promise as you trek out to the line  
empty words, like politicians around election time

but as the mercury ascends, so proportionately your fears  
that uneasy sense of panic as barbie season nears

so you crumple up a herald sun and rub in oil and salt  
for the really greasy bits you save the page by andrew bolt

rules applied inside the house, time honoured domestic law  
those rules dissolve like boiling lard once you step out the backdoor

a grill caked in more fat and filth than could possibly be reasoned  
is called a health risk in the kitchen, but out here it's nicely seasoned

meat stewed in a sea of fat, a cholesterol laden tide  
on the bbq it's labelled grilled, while in the kitchen it's called fried

men who frequent kitchens barely long enough to eat  
ignite in primal frenzy at the sight of fire and meat

like moths they swarm the barbie, dressed in shorts and zinc and thongs  
like howard and costello they jostle for the tongs

the favourite topic's bullshit, that blend of myth and truth  
but it's more relaxed when not confined by four walls and a roof

love your carpet, new couch looks great, adore your flying ducks  
that won't cut it in the backyard no-one gives a flying fuck

the barbie is unforgiving of the negligent and rash  
the smallest of distractions, leaves hours of work in ash

unmoved and unrepentant, before a hungry, hostile crowd  
the barbie will not say sorry, just like little johnny howard

does a stainless steel six burner, with rotisserie and smoker  
make your old steel plate propped on bricks seem somewhat mediocre

forget the claims in glossy ads and let the truth be known  
chops and snags taste just as good on whatever rig you own

you can spend five grand to grill a snag, and while it's not the worst  
it's a lot to waste on nebulous claims, like a vote for family first

a barbie's not much chop to the culinary elite  
they'd rather pay a chef to burn the shit out of their meat

the whole thing's too suburban, slightly bogan, even crude  
in their ignorance they fail to see, it's not about the food

it's family and it's friends and it's sharing and it's fun  
it's trading air conditioning, for rain and flies and sun

it's respite from a world controlled by, murdoch, gates and packer  
it's a gentle waltz with nature, to the strains of acadaca

yes the barbie brings escape from this crazy life we lead  
our generic world of fast food chains, pokies and corporate greed

endless, soulless shopping malls where muzak reigns supreme  
body conscious fashions to dent your children's self esteem

the barbie brings us purpose when we're jaded or forlorn  
it's a reason to talk to the neighbours, a reason for mowing the lawn

it's dinner with your kids without the prattle of tv's  
even if the compromise is they're wired to mp3's

the barbie knows no borders, sees no class divide  
colour has no meaning, it seeks what lies inside

resolutely egalitarian, and culturally integrated  
equal and without favour, everything's cremated

keep the bastards honest, don chip was want to say  
words he could have penned in respect of barbie day

you catch a hint of fresh mown grass and crack your first cold beer  
thank jesus christ and all the saints, summer's finally here