On a Train to Altona

Michael Crane

All the socialites in Toorak and Brighton are buying gowns for the Charity Ball and their Range Rovers are being serviced, the catering paid for in advance, while I’m on a train to Altona as it winds past the oil refineries far away from the Town Hall ballroom.

All the artists at the fair held in the Exhibition Centre trade room exchange business cards and resumes preparing to ambush an agent, while I’m on a train to Altona and the Westgate bridge in the distance carries the burden of drivers on its shoulders.

All the business men and fancy dancers argue who will pay the restaurant bill refusing to tip the waiter and scowl at the chef and a million mobile phones receive text messages, while I’m on a train to Altona where impoverished choirs rehearse in rundown warehouses by the beach.

It’s a train to Altona carrying me far away from the arguments of the city, away from bickering women and demanding men. Maybe the beautiful people don’t live there but the children don’t seem to mind singing nursery rhymes in kindergarten as the flame from the oil refinery reaches the sky.