



OK BOOMER, I DON'T THINK SO

Remember

Margaret, Colleen and Sue

These were names from school

I see these women

We all do

Standing in lines to cashiers

Defeated, bent over

Some homeless

Poverty, stigma taken their toll

Avoiding all eyes

They slip away....lost souls

In Woolies years ago

Ashamed and secretly

I squirreled loose basil leaves into a bag

My children liked pesto pasta

A whole bunch was then beyond me

We were little girls of the 50's

Raised to be good wives and mothers

Taught to add, subtract

Make some sense of words

Married, had children....it was the 70's

Then like night time marsupials

Caught in the trapper's glare,

Of a revolution unbidden

Became single mothers

Swept under by the hard,
steel brooms of stigma
Drowning, coming up for air,
But many of us just stayed down there

We don't share Portfolios with husbands
Play tennis, do yoga or pilates
Buy Armani or Gorman labels
Or jewellery from Tiffany's
Don't have houses with too many bathrooms
A yacht moored not far from the wharf
That place up the Coast, down the snow
Or holiday in Berlin or New York

No career or trade to fall back on
No glass ceiling to crack
No money or time for study
Raising children needs a regular pay cheque
We were the typists, cleaners,
 telemarketers,
Punching below our weight
Women disempowered by prejudice
Living a most compromised state
The kids struggled right along with us
Saw much more than we knew
So, don't give us OK Boomer,
We'll not wear that tatoo

Then somewhere along the way
A spark reignited in me
Words came to be my protector
My strength and safe place to be

I'll not succumb to the pity
the put downs and snobbery
I'll not wear those labels
They've tried to place upon me
For words are my wand to wave
To the oblivious and self-satisfied
I know those women in dole queues,
I know how they lost face
Feminism did nothing for us
But led to a life lacking grace.

I'm mindful now of our young ones
Living through these dark COVID times
Thousands in line on the dole queues
As job losses climb and they climb
Don't make the same mistakes
Don't let them just slip away
For they'll build a World beyond us
Far better than we designed
Employing innovation and learned wisdom
With their inventive, brilliant young minds

Beth Jessup, 2020