Melting Pot

—Tharatorn Supasiti

The old W-class tram trundles slowly to a halt. “All alight here, folks,” calls the loudspeaker, “last stop, Disneyland.” The passengers around you glance sideways at each other, unsure whether to laugh or to cringe. Most satisfy themselves with cursory rolled eyes. “Just kidding folks. Last stop, Docklands.”

Docklands has changed dramatically since you last visited, with shops, cafes and restaurants having sprung forth and filled just about every corner. You’re momentarily washed away by the vibrant and colorful atmosphere, but the gloominess returns in the shape of a gang of protesters, rudely disturbing your peaceful trance. “No Channel Deepening! No Channel Deepening!”, they vehemently chant as they pass leaflets, badges and magazines to innocent bystanders, most of whom show interest in neither them nor their cause. You grudgingly accept a leaflet, and promptly tuck it away in the back pocket of your jeans.

In search of the actual docks you turn off into an alleyway, and soon find yourself walking in a different world. In stark contrast to the welcoming waterfront, this area is still reminiscent of its heavily industrial past; before any “tourist friendly” gentrifications. Wharf workers wearing sweat-drenched singlets scurry past, effortlessly subsumed into this melting pot of commerce, industry and labor. Recalling the task at hand, as well as the ominous words of Sam Kekovich, you begin to hunt around for signs of a suspicious shipment of beef. The “A.S & G.B Shipping Co.” building catches your attention, not because of its poorly designed architecture, but rather due to its incongruous logo, in surreal juxtaposition with the nature of the company...