

STEPHEN OLIVER

Aunty Eve

who always kept the Aspidistras
flying high up in her Georgian house on
the windy Terrace from marble urns

had lipstick bomber pilot red
& nails the colour of flame.

It was often 'elevenses' in her lounge
with Gordons served on a silver platter and
THE GRAND HOTEL, DUNEDIN 1932 engraved

on the rim. "Another 'stim' dear?"
from the mahogany sideboard repository to dozens
of weighty 78 jazz records in brown paper
jackets stacked like so many ossified flapjacks.

Oh she had the most beautiful hands (in her
day) they said used for 'commercials' in the
Women's Weekly & Booths the Chemists.

Who could forget her gravel voice & make-up
mannequin thick

not remember her gin-sweet
breath warm upon the neck? And how some Yank
billeted during WW II (here) "ducky!"
thought she was a "real living doll."

Oh such beautiful hands she had & the crystal light
streaming forth from those great bay windows

onto the iron railings below.