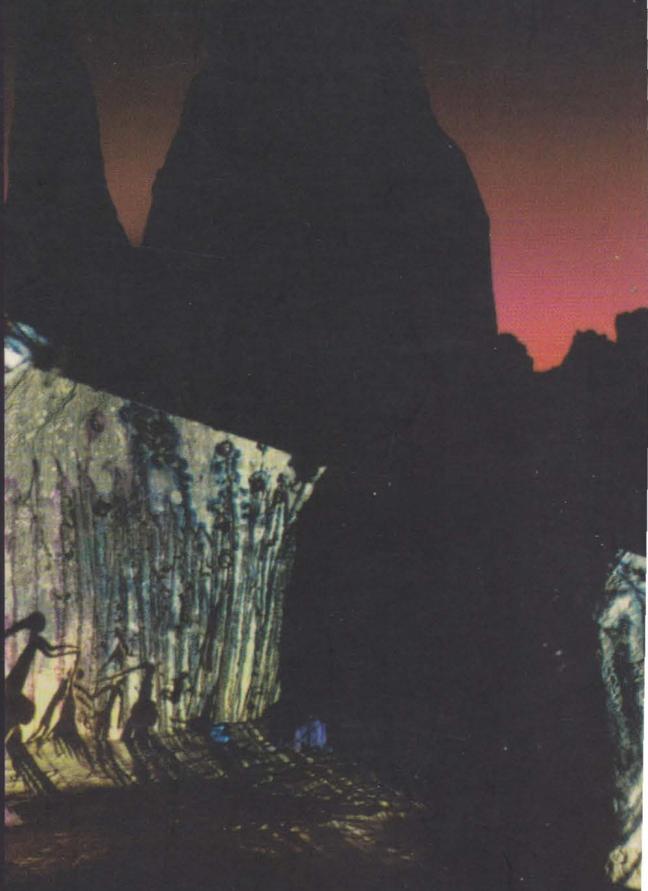


GOING DOWN SWINGING



15

Going Down Swinging

15

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dedicated to Barrett Reid,
librarian, poet, editor
1926 - 1995



Going Down Swinging

Anthology of Contemporary Writing

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Unsolicited submissions are welcomed but will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope or international reply coupons.

All submissions should be typed, double line-spaced, with 2.5cm margins on A-4 paper and include a short covering note.

Contributors receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which they appear and a subscription for the next issue. The editors regret they are unable to pay the writers and artists what they deserve.

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ARTS VICTORIA

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Editorial

Welcome at last to Going Down Swinging Issue 15. As new editors we have struggled to get this issue to print. It's a bit like giving birth – you can't know what's involved until you do it and the period of gestation can be longer than expected.

Everyone associated with the issue has put in hundreds of hours of unpaid work. Of course there are times when you wonder why anyone would take on such a task. Speaking to people and reading editorials from other small press magazines, we were inspired by the passion and enthusiasm everyone shared for a lively and diverse view of literature and poetry being written now. These people know small press is vital to the future of a healthy literary culture. It is this commitment and passion that drives small press to publication, or to produce just one more issue.

Many writers are first published through small magazines, and looking back through early issues of *GDS*, *9-2-5*, *Famous Reporter*, *Scarp*, *Australian Short Stories*, and *Migrant 7*, we found poetry and prose by writers who have since gone on to become well known. Even more heartening is to see some of the better-known and widely published writers contributing to and editing small press magazines. Reading through these early editions helps us to locate small press in its historical context.

In this country, where most major publishers are now foreign-owned, we need all the passion and commitment we can muster to give voice to all the great material we know is out there.

Over the past few months there have been many book launches. Sometimes two in the same week in the same town. If you are fortunate enough to attend, you can buy a book directly from the publisher or author. But try to find in a mainstream bookshop a book recently published by a small press and you may have trouble. With fewer independent bookshops and more McDonalds-type book barns, should you ask for a poetry book, it is likely you will be shown a minute collection of books on a small shelf marked 'notes on classics'

for the serious student. You might ask where you *can* buy small press publications these days. Well, take heart. Outlets do exist but you've got to know about them. You'll find some of them advertised in this issue, and in other good literary magazines and journals. Bookshops in Melbourne that spring to mind include Collected Works; Eaglemont Books; Readings; Brunswick Street Bookstore; and Polyester. In Sydney, Gleebooks and Ariel Booksellers.

Besides shop sales, subscriptions are vital to the survival of small press.

In this issue we feature an interview with Yevgeny Yevtushenko by Melbourne journalist John Doggett-Williams; a fascinating essay/story by Stephen J. Williams on the connection between the 'eye' and the 'I'; and the photo-art of Heather Winter, accompanied by her essay on the subject.

We also publish the work of new and exciting writers – GDS's main reason for being. Selections from Emma Lew, Anthony Macris, Bernadette Creechan and Alan Wayman (to mention only a few) sit comfortably alongside new works from better known writers such as Kerry Scuffins, *π.o.*, Kevin Brophy, Eric Beach, and Lauren Williams.

Although GDS has a policy of not printing work already published elsewhere, two poems appearing in this issue, while being accepted by us beforehand, have beaten us to publication. They are by Kerry Scuffins and Peter Bakowski (see p. 178 'Poetry Seen' for details of their books).

The fifteenth issue of *Going Down Swinging* is, then, a celebration, as with every small press magazine struggling to produce each new issue. It is a glimpse of a healthy literary culture that continues to flourish.

August 1995

Love & Politics

a brief interview with Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko

It's a pity this interview didn't get the chance to do more than scratch the surface with writer/poet Yevtushenko. Twenty minutes was not enough time.

Over forty years as a poet close to the centre of the maelstrom of Soviet politics, his work has transcended his own nationalism and reached a worldwide audience.

Yevtushenko's poems have been translated into over seventy languages and gained him audiences with generations of world leaders, artists and philosophers.

His poetry has had a political influence most western writers can only dream of. His early sixties poem 'Babi Yar', a description of a massacre of Jewish children, is credited with having finally brought the Soviet's anti-semitic sins to the surface.

His most powerful years were paradoxically during the height of the Cold War (1950s and 1960s) when Soviet censorship was all-pervasive.

The paradox is that it was also a period of optimism. The horrors of the Stalin purges and the Nazi invasion were finally memories. Artists such as Yevtushenko were given the opportunity to define a Russian identity based on idealism and justice.

While some argue that only issues sanctioned by key establishment figures were allowed to emerge, poetry was an important voice raising issues during an era when critical debate was still crushed. Yevtushenko said the censors were often confounded by poetry.

"The metaphorical language of poetry was very helpful to deceive censorship and when our newspapers were full of blank spots some Russian poets they publish beautiful poetry attacking in their own way dictatorship or Tsarist dynasty or afterward communist dynasty," Yevtushenko said.

In Russia Yevtushenko's influence is as much political as it is

literary. While he is credited with giving poetry a popular voice he is also a survivor who knows where the power lies.

He realised early on the importance of maintaining sympathy within the administration. For example in this interview, despite his experience of censorship, he felt freedom of the press in Russia had at times gone too far in its criticism of President Yeltsin.

Despite, or because of, his political instincts, the longevity of Yevtushenko's career and the size of his audience shows he remains a writer of influence.

He is sixty-one only in years. The intensity of his Melbourne itinerary, including dozens of interviews and performances, would have exhausted a man of any age. Most of his shows (including several for the local Russian community) were packed.

However those expecting to hear sage-like wisdom from his readings were disappointed. His shows were big 'P' performance poetry. Here was the flirtatious romantic, the overgrown teenager.

Yevtushenko says love and politics are central themes in his life and work (and *Don't Die Before Your Death*, the semi-autobiographical novel he was in Australia to promote).

The following is a transcript of an SBS radio interview I conducted with Yevtushenko in Melbourne on October 12, 1994.

I kept editing to a minimum to retain the sense of Yevtushenko's voice. If you know how a Russian accent sounds you will quickly get a sense of it.

Brief this interview may be, but I think it's worth printing if only for the anecdote about Pinochet and Neruda.

JDW

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, welcome to Melbourne. You're out here for the writers' festival and to launch your novel Don't Die Before Your Death.

I'm a guest of many organisations, Jewish Australian organisations, festival organisation, Writers' Centre of Victoria,

many organisation. But I'm very happy that I'm here with one of my best beloved friends in the world, Geoffrey Dutton.

We are friends for about thirty years. When I came first time to Australia it was about twenty-eight years ago, 1966. It was a wonderful moment when we launched my new book of poetry published by Sun Books and Geoffrey Dutton at that time was editor of this book and now again happy moment. Everything that happens in Australia brings me fortune, I don't know why but it's true.

Australian publisher, Reed Books was first publishing house who printed in English my novel, *Don't Die Before Your Death* and this novel in Russia became national best seller, they sold out in some months about 100,000 copies. Now I just flew directly from Frankfurt Fair, it became best seller in Germany. Now they already sold the first edition and I'm very happy that I've introduced it to my Australian readers, amongst them are many of my old admirers of my poetry. Now I introduce my most important work in novels.

It's a semi-autobiographical work.

Yes it's a very strange combination of the political thriller, love story and novel about soccer. So it's a kind of cocktail, I can say Russian borscht but all my heroes, most of them they meet each other on the barricades during Russian putsch in August of 1991.

It was a crucial moment in our history. I was amongst them so that's why I was witness of this event. I couldn't write novel without seeing it with my own author's eye. Leo Tolstoy when he wrote *War and Peace* he was not eyewitness of Napoleon's invasion. That's why he didn't use 'I' in his novel. He wrote it fifty-four years after but I was inside this old canal and happily I'm safe.

Your writings have been central to political commentary in Russia over the past forty years. How do you see life in the post-putsch period?

The current situation in Russia it's, how to say?, ummh very ambivalent I could say. On the one hand we have some great victories. First of all we have not any more danger of nuclear war between two great powers – United States and Russia – that's very good. We have no censorship, that's very good. We have no monopoly of just one party, that's very good, but at the same time we have commercial censorship.

We have flood of cheap western literature, very cheap western films and we have very tragic disproportion between the salaries. For instance: one nuclear power engineer gets less as a monthly salary than a doorman at the Melbourne Casino for one night work, so that's shameful disproportion.

We are in transitional period. If you permit me I'll read you one of my poems probably which explains the Russian situation better than just my words.

LOSS

Russia has lost Russia in Russia
Russia searches for itself
like a cut finger in the snow
like a needle in a haystack
like an old blind woman madly stretching her hands in fog
searching with hopeless incantation
for her lost milk-cow

We burnt up our icons
We didn't believe in our great books
We fight only alien grievances

Is it true we didn't survive under our own yoke,
becoming for ourselves worse than all foreign enemies?

Is it true that we are doomed to live only in this
silk nightgown of dreams? Eaten by flattering, chattering
moths?

Or numbered prison robes?

Is it true that epilepsy is our national character?
Or convulsions of pride
Or convulsions of self-humiliation
instant rebellions against new kopeks
against such foreign fruits as potatoes
now only harmless dream

Today rebellion swarms the entire Kremlin like a mortal tide

Is it true that we Russians have only one unhappy choice?
The ghost of Ivan the Terrible or the ghost of far chaos
So many imposters such imposternity
Everyone is leader but no one leads
we are confused as to which banners and slogans to carry
and there is such fog in our heads that everyone is wrong
and everyone is guilty in everything
We have already walked enough in such fog
in blood up to our knees

Lord we have been punished enough, forgive us, pity us
Is it true that we no longer exist? Or are we not yet born?

We are birthing now
but it's so painful to be born again.

That's how I see today's situation: we are birthing now but it's so painful to be born again. So this transitional period is very painful.

Is it so different from the past in Russia? Has the day-to-day life really changed?

You know you could change government, you could change political system but you never could change national psychology. On one hand happily we didn't lose our Russian psychology, on the other hand we didn't lose our defects, our famous defects. Russians are a little bit lazy.

You know that our great writer Goncharov described this

quality of Russian culture in his famous novel *Oblamov* so we are all a little Oblamov – a little bit idealist and when we could realise our ideals we become too lazy – that's our tragedy. For instance Russians were not prepared for democracy, for freedom, because freedom, that means hard daily work. It's not only victory. It's not only euphoria and this is our problem.

In Don't Die Before Your Death you referred to the power of fear, what a divisive force it was.

Yes, now we lost fear to speak out openly because already five years we do exist without censorship and nobody even could be punished for any work against the government.

Has the fear gone?

Yes the fear has gone completely but we have another fear. We have fear of not being noticed and that's why many people are talking with nothing to say. But this happens everywhere. Sometimes for instance we misuse our freedom in our press, which was beautiful first years after the Glasnost but now we have too much freedom of insults. You know our newspapers insult everybody, sometimes absolutely reasonlessly, sometimes they are punished – sometimes by the courts.

You've seen a lot of western press. Is it different?

No, I think in this way our press are even more arrogant because I couldn't imagine the American press could call Mr Clinton an 'occupant' but our opposition newspaper they call Mr Yeltsin like 'occupant', like a gangster, openly and that's ... you couldn't find any American saying that. So it's misuse of freedom. In my opinion there is a responsibility. One older friend of mine he told me that, "if it could depend on me Yevgeny I could build new statue of liberty – a statue of responsibility" so that's what we must work on. We must work on responsibility of freedom which we got.

Reading your novel I got the impression of a man who lived his life very much on an edge. Politically you've been criticised from the

highest podium of the Soviet congress but you survived to be able to travel. How did you do that?

You know many of my forbidden trips abroad they are invisible, you don't know about them. My trips abroad that were realised there are visible so I don't just want to remember how many of my trips were cancelled.

But anyway I understand the key of your question because you just asked me in other words, what saved me? "What protected you?"

Yes.

The answer is just my poetry, my fame. Because being twenty-two years old I already was a very famous poet, nationally famous, and twenty-five or twenty-six I was internationally famous. Stalin's time was over. If they were arresting some people, amongst writers they were arresting only dissidents who were completely unknown to the white Russian audience. They couldn't touch me. Even my songs, for instance, were so popular that some bureaucrats that didn't like me politically, they were probably singing my songs at their house.

That hypocrisy is there all the way through I suppose.

It's not hypocrisy. I mean because they couldn't like what I was doing politically but at the same time they loved some of my poems. At the same time I remember what happened with me in Chile.

Once sitting in Chile before the Chilean putsch, in very different company, Pablo Neruda was reading his new poetry. Near me was one grey-moustached Chilean general. He was crying. He said "Goddam, he's a communist but he writes such beautiful poetry. I hate communists," he said, "but he writes such beautiful poetry." And I asked him "What's your name?" and he gave handshake and says "General Pinochet".

So even General Pinochet, who politically disliked Pablo Ner-

uda, he liked his poetry. So it happens that way with me. Of course Khrushchev or Brezhnev they couldn't like my political statement when I openly criticised them, protesting against their politics, but in some hidden corner of their hearts they liked my poetry.

That's the ambivalence of existence of Russian poets. Like it was the same between Pushkin and Tsar Nicholas I. The Tsar disliked political activities of Pushkin but loved his poetry.

You've met many great people over the decades. Who were the best writers or the best people you've met?

The best people amongst writers or generally?

Both.

The greatest artist who I met was composer Shostakovitch. He was the greatest man in the arts who I met and if you think who I loved more from the older people I don't think famous people are the best people.

I loved my uncle. He was a Siberian truck driver. His name was Andre Dubinon. He was a great man. For the thousands I have met he was great reader. His favourite writers were John Steinbeck and Miguel Dionamonis, a Spanish idealist.

Your writing technique. It's a big difference from writing a poem to a novel – do you read aloud?

When I write poetry I read it aloud for myself. If I fly on a plane or write sitting in one cafe at edge of chair surrounded by crowd of course I don't read it aloud, but I read it inside myself. I always check the sound of words, but when I write prose I more see how develops plot. But also it's very important some musical phrase, that's the way poet cross to such a kind of plot.

Do you see a conflict between writing novels and poems?

Absolutely not.

How did you make the transition? Because a lot of writers find it difficult.

I write poetry about love and politics. Different poems I could publish, if you publish Yevtushenko's love poetry book it would be very thick book. If you make Yevtushenko's anthology about politics it will be thick book but it will not be Yevtushenko.

My writing is a mixture of love and politics and in my novel *Don't Die Before Your Death* I think that novel is a symbol of how I mix politics and love and my life.

Have you noticed any significant trends in poetry in the east or west in the past ten years?

No, I think after the death of such great poets like David Campbell and Kenneth Slessor in Australia, T.S. Eliot in England, like Robert Lowell in America, like Montale in Italy, like Rene Shar in France – I mean they are big losses and they're losses which are not compensated. Same in Russian poetry. We have many young gifted poets but no one makes such a poetical miracle becoming national as a poet for my generation. Poets of my generation in Russia are still most beloved poets of all poets of all ages.

Why is there such a difference in the role of the poet in Russia compared to the west?

Probably paradoxically very harsh censorship in Russia helped for such a leading role of poetry because the metaphorical language of poetry was very helpful to deceive censorship and when our newspapers were full of blank spots because of censorship some Russian poets they publish beautiful poetry attacking in their own way dictatorship or Tsarist dynasty or afterward communist dynasty.

Thanks for your time.

The man in the moon is Jewish

for Mal Morgan on reading 'Once Father and God'

I am the warm foetus
curled in bed.
Ear pressed to the inner spring
will leave a red mark
on the side of my face.
In the mirror-morning
I will wonder how it got there,
standing naked with my index finger
gathering the moisture of another night.
I will shiver at the insistence of day,
retreat to my womb of sleep.
This mattress is half my life.

I curl up again unthinking,
expose my poor flesh
to the tattooist's fine needle
reattach my umbilical
to 'Once Father and God'.
This time
the man in the moon
is Jewish.

Addict

I was never a sea person.
Barefoot, my toes were awash with dust,
long before my skin ever graced
the ocean floor.
And after that,
my boots were discoloured
by the fine white powder
that sealed up the cracks
in the leather of my shoes.
As I, unknowingly,
became another hopeless addict
to that cocaine of the country,
to that barbiturate of the bush.
For I snorted bull dust
through a pink and white straw,
while my parents,
perched atop their combine harvester
watched, as their son went cold turkey,
and came to the city.

performance

wanting to make it short before the storm
& bare, knee-deep in remnant grasses,
mud, scrap iron

light haunts the walls of the sky like a bruise,
thins my words, torn now in strips
and given to the wind

what survives returns,
spare and weathered –
that bit of wood with half the dinghy's name

– mention of fennel in stark industrial wastelands
– the wharf sprouting weed & a man in a frayed suit
who plays a cardboard concertina file

as if it's an accordion
the notes fall out and float away
I'm impressed by the formality of drunks

I clear my throat, comb my hair with a fish spine,
lift a rotting plank – slaters roll away
like tiny planets

lift another – a colony of snails wait,
each shell an ear
the storm breaks like applause

I'm hardly heard
ramshackle night puts out another roof
that bangs and flaps

I bow & shuffle home,
the sky's doors crashing open,
somewhere black cockatoos

rising, wheeling,
each bird a creaking hinge
& me below, full of wheezing laughter

in gaps to catch my breath
the words come through
like tags -

small tough failed & again

Homesglen

Here are the nails
that should have been cut,
pale tusks, curled under;
too late now, they'll grow on
into the earth
as if they're digging.
We tie the toes,
wash skin that's fading fast,
watch the yellow rising
like a moon.

Outside it's almost night,
fog over the wall
and the hills hunched round
like shoulders.
We've got a round to do.
Someone's barking on Ward 3:
Flipper the mongol
beached on the day-room floor,
a seal amongst the puddles;
Drac with the fangs
who rocks and bangs
beneath the mural, then squatting
smears her own.
Big Elvie heaves

in her flotation chair on 4,
waits bloated
for the flatus tube
and bed. Whoops ...
Dulcie's slipped in her restrainer
- another Royal Commission.

I'm safe in the pan-room
sluicing something
far too big to flush.
I'm packing orifice on 2
and thinking back,
how memory leaks
like a catheter,
how, when you turn the corpse,
the breath falls out
and shocks you.

SCARP

PO Box 1144 Wollongong NSW 2500

Poetry and Prose
Biannual.
Editor: Ron Pretty.

Holding to the Outline

Why are your eyes so shifty today?
Why am I standing at this angle?
What is there to steal in the house?
There are two mouths in the house.

Are you prepared to be dark and light?
I am prepared to be dark and light,
Obey the rules of dreams –
If indeed dreams have rules.

You put me away, fool, seven moves ago.
And I still have my wits and my pride.
Only half over the horror
But I still have my wits and my pride.

I like the economies here,
the subject-verb-object simplicity –
First because it won't weigh me down.
Second because it veils.

You have bad fantasies.
It would be unsafe to grieve with you.
The large muscles of your legs, arms,
Torso and neck make me think, then move.

Seven Days to Apologise

Most-watched,
I like your work:
It tortures, flinches easy.
I'm needy, I'll pay –
Sell out to me.

Shaman, convention, stencil –
I'm all three.
Soon I'll be my real self,
Not my holiday self.
And I'll tell you my real name.

Love was always confused
With sport and soap.
Now love is making me want
To treat your lisp,
Localise the pain.

Those famous people dropping in:
"My yacht ran aground
In the mouth of the channel.
May I use your phone?"
You've been in on this fraud and

I can't let it pass.
Just don't say the mood is doomed:
Aeroplanes are doomed.
What prescription can I fill
Will leave you frailer?

Before Heraldry

This is not the kind of love that
merely moves people to go for walks
down pretty lanes once in a while.

It's tampering with every part
of a knight's body;
it's dragging me through Baltimore,
pale as Raphael in his last moments.

It's a soul always thinking and uttering,
discovering coal under the fields,
repapering twelve of thirteen rooms.

I'm ashamed to say I've almost forgotten
how to spell properly or draw curves,
and I'm nodding as if to accept
a truth which does not exist.

The sound of the woman's voice

was once sweet and low
like Shakespeare's most excellent
of women
but in time
and under pressure from mighty forces
the sound of the woman's voice
began like molested earth's to crack and
change
and howl and grow
and the woman's mate
grew nervous then afraid
like a dog before an earthquake

he snarled and bared his teeth
but the sound of the woman's voice
could not be stopped
and it was no longer the cooing of the dove
but the shrieking of the hawk

till the dog attacked
and the bird fell
and the woman's voice finally
was still

I love you Belongs to Me

My "I love you"
bounces off your eyes
like warm rain
that freezes as soon as it hits the ground.

It has taken me years
to learn
to deep throat
its return
without
one
choking
cough.

Immaculate Pregnancy

I carry my indulgence
like a trophy suspended from my belly
shielding me with a specialness
I refuse to compare with store-bought bodies,
defiantly rejecting the voice of
invisible parent lover employer,
determined to devour life to fullness.

I throw my weight around
with self-conscious abandon,
striving to ignore the perfectionist masses
who spend magazines measuring
a woman's worth in pounds that disappear
from the skeleton of the feminine spirit,
which struggles to stand empowered,
her round childless belly
as prominently displayed
as gold on a dignified shelf –
pregnant with herself.

The Paper Room

They placed the old man in a corner of the deck where he could look out to sea. They wrapped him tightly in a rough woollen blanket. He could not lift a fingernail to scratch himself, so tightly was he wrapped.

His head and neck poked from the cocoon, giving him the small movement needed to watch the waves. His bare feet protruded from the end of the blanket. He could not bear to wear shoes, could not bear socks. Aldo had been the same. The two of them would run through the streets barefoot, their soles bounding over stones and cracks. They ran away from the next door neighbour, whose baby was scalded to death when Ron was seven. How was Aldo to know the kettle was so hot? The baby was dirty, he said. I washed the baby.

Now, Ron's feet were swollen in skin too tight, his nails yellow and ridged. The children on board would come for a closer look when he dozed off; sneak up for a glimpse of his horrible feet.

He frightened people, the way he looked.

No one spoke to him. If anyone spoke near him he would begin a conversation; just a voice could set him off. One woman said "Shit," when she stubbed her toe, and Ron said, "Watched him die."

"Who's that?" she asked, a kind woman, willing to give him a chance.

"Gave him the steak to eat and left him die at my feet." She glanced down at those feet, thinking they should be covered up.

"He wanted me to, though. Said he'd leave a note. But I couldn't find it in all that rubbish."

At 75, Ron was the old man of the ship. They created a table for him at meals, an old people's table. A couple in their fifties were seated with him. Ron did not talk to them.

The woman; she was the low cow who swore on deck. And she looked so angry, hurt because she and her husband were not old, they did not belong at this table. Ron had already lived

a third of his life when they were born.

Ron fed himself gracelessly. He needed to chew slowly, his jaws rising and falling heavily. Needed to gnash his false teeth for them to bite through the food.

Nobody spoke to him during meals. It was difficult for him to talk and eat at the same time; he would not talk with his mouth full. A questioner may wait a minute or two for an answer if Ron had just taken a bite, wait as the jaws rose and fell around the food.

The listing of the ship shuffled his chair sideways; now, with a twist of his head, he could watch the other passengers.

He made them nervous with his watching. They felt as if he knew something, knew it and would tell it if he had the chance.

So the young wife who had not confided all her past experiences felt he knew each lover. The ten-year-old boy almost put back the money he had stolen. The man on a diet felt he knew about the chocolate and lemonade, the cakes, the cream, the sugar in the tea. Those sharp, clear eyes in that old face, those staring, unblinking eyes.

The old man watched them, wondering and waiting.

"Comfy, Mr Allan?" asked someone.

"Killed him dead," said Ron.

"But you're just a nice old man. Who would you kill?"

"Another nice old man. And we were nasty young men once, don't forget."

Aldo had been the nasty one.

"Ronald One, where are you? Come and see Ronald Two blow out his candles."

"My name's Ron and he's Aldo," said Ronald One.

"You'll answer to what your mother calls you," said their Father. He was the one who had thought of their names. It had taken all his imagination to name the first boy; five years later he could not think of a new name.

So they became Ron and Aldo.

Aldo had been the nasty one.

A couple of times the family had shifted to leave behind his mess.

"I can't help it," he told Ron once. "There's no stopping it. An opportunity presents itself and I just have to take it." They piled

belongings in boxes, mixing toys with school books and each other's treasures.

They had always been close, and each move made them more reliant on each other for friendship. They would stand together in fights at each new school, stand up to their parents.

Ron always looked after Aldo, the younger, even though Aldo was the braver. Ron always took the blame, told the lies. Aldo did all the fighting, Aldo came home drunk and got into trouble.

Hard to remember that parental anger now – 55 years it must have been since they were last yelled at and beaten with the strap. Their father died a week after Ron's 21st birthday, just keeled over and waited in the kitchen to be found by his wife in the morning.

Their mum recovered well from that shock, and their home life became liberal. She could not control them. Aldo already had a reputation, and his father had been the one to do the beltings, to talk to other fathers, and the Principal. He'd been the one to sort things out. His Mum just couldn't do it.

He was drunk at school every day for months after his father died. He would slur at the teachers and vomit in other people's desks. He was forgiven for that; the boy had lost his father. But he got too old; his influence was not good. When the teacher disappeared, he was heard in the schoolyard, boasting that he used her thumb bone as a toothpick.

The small family moved many times.

Ron was happy for his brother to be so bad. It left **him** unattended, trusted, the Good Boy. He sought romance, though his mother despised anyone he brought home. He sought romance in quiet and seedy places.

Then Aldo moved out. He thought he should start looking after his own mess.

He just packed up, said, "See ya Mum," and left. They didn't hear from him for a long time.

In later years, he travelled away from home each time. As he got older, it was easier than uprooting and moving. He would ring Ron, his voice shy and quiet, or brash, or unashamed, or regretful.

"I had a little holiday. But I'm back now."

Ron never left. He waited till his Mum died and then married

Carol.

"Dear old mum," said the old man. Children skittered across the deck.

"Shame about her heart. Shame about the shock." He remembered the look on his mum's face as she collapsed. He only told her for her own good. He only told her to make her understand about Aldo, not to shock her that way.

Poor old mum didn't like Carol, no matter how hard Carol tried. Mum just wouldn't look into her heart, she trusted her brain, let jealousy work on her. She never knew Carol the way he did. The strength of her, her beauty on awakening, the fierce love she gave him and their children.

Carol would have accepted his disappearance by now, allowed it in. The death of his brother would not affect her. In 30 years of marriage the two did not meet.

Ron never left home and he married late. Forty-five. Carol was 15 years younger and unpopular because she wasn't silly like the rest of them. They had two children within a few years of their wedding day, these children now grown, complete. The children never met their Uncle Aldo.

Aldo never had children. Not of his own.

When he telephoned, Ron would meet him somewhere, a pub or a restaurant, and listen with guilty interest (and delight, and desire) to the tales he told. Hand over the money needed to get him out of trouble. Talk about old times. And go home.

As they aged, they preferred the quiet of the park. They would sit on a bench; people wandering by gave them a glimpse, that's all. They were just two old men, wasting time. Strange gifts would arrive for the children. Unsigned cards which rippled in the light and produced odd music, tiny horses which pranced and tossed without any sign of mechanical contrivance, books whose pages changed with each reading.

"Uncle Aldo" became the children's word for gift.

Carol gave up asking about Aldo. She had no parents, no siblings; Ron and the children were all the family she needed. She did not need Aldo to make her complete.

"Back soon," said the old man on the ship. "Won't be long, just

up the road to see my brother. Won't be long."

Someone placed a plastic mug on his chest, put a straw in his mouth. He sucked. It was pineapple juice with some rum in it. He drank, feeling the sting on the roof of his mouth.

Aldo softened as he aged. He avoided trouble; avoided the people who would give him trouble. Sat at his desk in an office, moving paper from one pile to the next and fantasised about temptation. He was good for 20 years.

When he retired it began again. For eight years he travelled the world, enjoying his holiday.

He was caught at last, caught for something a long time finished with. Released on bail, due to his age.

Then he called his brother Ron.

"Why do they punish me? I'm just an old man. I'm weak and sick. Why can't they leave me with dignity?"

People did not want Aldo to have dignity. They wanted Aldo to suffer. But Ron couldn't bear to watch that. Couldn't stand it.

He went to his brother's home, knocked on the door. He could hear an odd shuffling sound, papers being scuffed and moved from one place to another place, like an office worker with nothing to do.

"Aldo! Are you there? Let me in."

The shuffling paused, then began again. The door opened, and for the first time in many years Ron saw where his brother lived.

The room was full of paper.

For Ron, the shock was intense. Aldo had always been meticulous; this pigsty was disgusting.

"Hi," Aldo said. Just a hint of life in his tired blue eyes; a hint of nerves in his twitching arm.

Ron passed him a package of clothes, new, not second hand. And some food, some good steak, good vinegar, fresh lettuce, food he wouldn't buy himself.

Aldo was pleased. His stomach growled at the sight of the food.

"When did you eat. What did you have," Ron said. He asked without expecting an answer; he knew Aldo would not have eaten. Not since the news.

Aldo began to cook the food, and he opened a dusty bottle of wine.

"How did it happen," Ron said, again with no expectation of answer.

"Which part?" asked Aldo. He grinned. Ron felt pity for his little brother, felt a deep love and forgiveness. He could not see how his brother and the man they called The Waiter were the same; The Waiter in the school toilets, the alley, the bedroom. The home, the heart, the hearth.

There was a fireplace in this room. It had not been lit for a long time. There was too much paper. Danger.

"Someone just remembered and made a connection," Aldo said. "I can't help it if the opportunities are there."

As the steaks sizzled Aldo climbed into the soft new clothes. When the steaks were ready he laid them on mismatched plates. He did not provide cutlery.

He sat on a chair of paper, built high enough that he could sit without bending his knees. Ron sat on a stool which wobbled on a perch of old bus tickets.

"I brought seasoning," Ron said. He reached in his pocket and brought out a small packet of white crystals.

"Like salt," said Aldo. He trusted his brother, gazed into his eyes, took the packet and shook the contents over his steak.

"Thank you," said Aldo.

The brothers sat together in the room of paper.

"There's a note here, so people will know why," said Aldo. "You must find it." Aldo ate the steak with the crystals and died at his brother's feet.

The room was filled with paper. Aldo had kept every piece; newspapers, letters, pamphlets, advertising. Magazines, docketts, shopping lists, notes. Many books: about death and murder, about children and psychology. A book about cruel and unusual punishment: in some parts of Africa they have a strange penalty for murder; the killer suffers a complete loss of identity. The killer has to take on the personality, belongings and responsibilities of the dead person.

Ron faced the room as he would face a judge.

The flat stank of underuse, mould, the sweat of the man who had lived there. All Ron needed was a slip of paper which should have been on top somewhere, but he had to touch the

things to find it. Lift clothes stiff with dirt, move boxes filled with white chicken bones, rifle through 'Big Tits' and 'Black Horn' magazines to see if it was between the pages. The explanation, the note.

He flipped through the pages of books banned for their cruelty. He touched everything to find the note Aldo said was there, to save himself from a verdict of guilty on a charge of fratricide.

He stayed there in the flat, looking at everything, absorbing. Drinking it in, keeping his brother alive with touch and memory.

He sat amongst the papers, shuffling through pamphlets from products long since vanished from the market, and waited till it was dark. He did not find what he was looking for.

He lit the fire and burned a selection of the pieces; clippings, the diaries and some more private material.

"It would never have worked," he said, now his brother was quiet. "All of this. You wouldn't have convinced anybody. No one would believe you're mad, not even with this much paper. You're too clearly sane. It could never have worked. It's for the best this way."

Then he left.

The police found the body many weeks later. Aldo had not been reporting each week as he was meant to, but it took a while to move on the aberration. The people were angry to hear of Aldo's easy death. By then, Ron was on a ship, sailing, sailing, to a new destination.

Somebody came and unwrapped him from his cocoon, leaving his arms free at last.

Ron left his home, his wife, his children. His books, papers, clothes, the one friend left alive and his favourite walk through the park. He left it, lost it.

The passport was no problem. They could tell no difference between one old man and another.

He climbed onto a ship, with Aldo's load, and now he sits and waits for an opportunity to present itself.

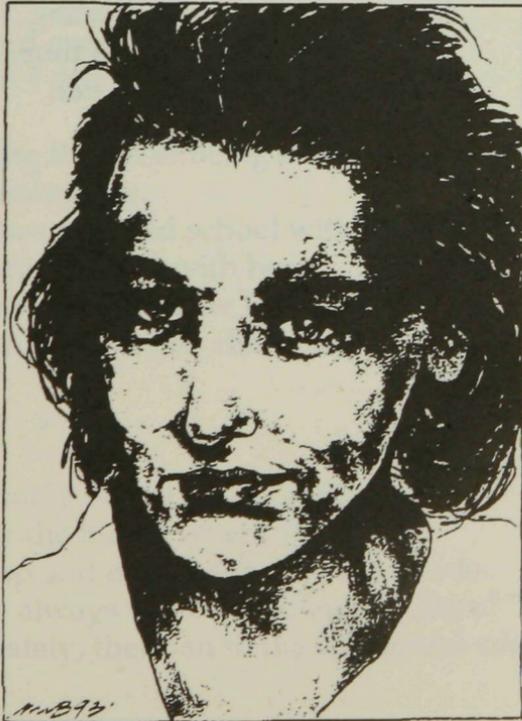
The Lone Singlet

I never understood sport
At school it was introduction to paradox
those hard softballs
team spirit that excluded me
Always the last chosen
always outfield
I would watch the insects
as I lay in the grass
be screamed at when a ball shot past
I threw like a girl
Caught like a sook
Struck like a unionist, always out
Hockey was worse
'cos everyone was armed
I hated body contact
gave up basketball
when I broke a fingernail
Gym was torture by hardware
the beam, the horse, those thin, thin mats
I'm surprised teachers didn't sit in
and watch their revenge
But it was the change room that hurt most
Lone singlet in a sea of bras
I renounced sport
and took up ballet.

The Ever Popular Tune

Why can't I enjoy the joy
of this famous old poet?
His happiness is palpable
Third marriage, and look how young
she is, almost a grand-daughter
He introduces her to the audience
Men smile carefully, conscious of decorum
Women smile indulgently, like tired mothers
His 62 year old frame is adolescent with energy
I am ashamed of my disappointment
at his lack of a certain grace
I would wish for myself at that age
His poems vie for applause
with the miracle of his clown-like exuberance
his vigour, sprung up like seed
in the springtime of a young woman's love
the magic that wives 1 & 2
must have had for a time
Flamboyantly, he kisses her foot
Where is my glad rush of empathy?
With a flourish he presents her
with his own glass of champagne
Why this embarrassment?
This grief I feel for something
I'll not receive from this elder
gifted as he is, and undeniably alive
when compared to his peers
stolidly bearing their years
calm beside his agitations
I suppose I hoped for lovers
of equally weighted days
balancing each other
their love a duet patiently reworked
into the realms of genius
an altogether different music

to that tired but ever popular tune
where the old prince
wins the young princess
and she climbs out of the glass case
into the picture frame
onto the pedestal
into the poem
and between the sheets
and while she's there he's forever young
It's a happy tale, and who would begrudge
happiness, that rare and beautiful bird
that must be wooed wherever it lands?



SEXTON

Beloved Enemy

Just one more. All I need. I feel.
I see her. She has begun. Pushing
it in. Up. He is. I am. It was warm. Warm.
Cold. It hit me. Crawl. Where is it?
Now? Now. Just give me one. Hollow
wand ejaculating its venom. And one
more. Hit. Hit. Fall. Fly. Sweat. She fell. I
crawled. He is sweating, now. More. Cool
cool steel inside me. In my blood. Just
one. She shivers. Shudders. She's
shaking. Seizure. She knows he is naked.
Screaming. Singing. Howling. I found it. She
stops. Is still. I know this time. I just
stare. He hasn't noticed yet.

Year 9

We didn't have a lot in common,
Me and Kylie.
It wasn't in my nature,
To wear Stussy clothes and dye my hair red.
To be like her.

In Year 9, I defied my nature.

Confident, loved by all.
So rebellious. Such a bitch.
Seemed like she almost hated me.
Like I was a challenge for her,
An experiment.

She reigned over me. An ambience,
Charisma? I don't know.

I was perfecting the art of being a bitch.
I strived unremittingly.
Dressed like her, wagged school with her,
Got drunk with her, lied with her.
But I still knew myself, knew I was me,
Underneath that illustrious character.

Of course I knew.

Monday morning, with a smile on my face,
I walked from the bus to where she stood.
Looking me up and down, she spat the words:
"Why do you always try to be different, Claire?"
I smiled delicately, then ran to the toilets and cried.

Sagittarian Angel

(to A.W.)

Golden-green humidity, enveloping you and me,
As distant
As Jupiter,
But your spiralling curls are all that I can see.
The weight
Of silence is never denied,
It sheds bitter tears of humiliation and embarrassment,
We laugh in its face.
You
Are an angel; blond, white and radiant,
Playing in the sandpit.
Expose
Precious, uniform, stelactic monuments of pleasure.
Aura of indigo.
Everything is alive.

rain

you bastard
never there when you're needed
then everywhere at once
big black-bellied clouds
don't hang around here
you're not wanted
split
dump your blind wet colourless guts
somewhere else anywhere else
there must be a drought
or a desert not too far away
this is Orstralia
remember?

sodden skies for the sixth day now
creek's all swollen garden's quagmire
twentyseven snails on my frangipani
turn leaves to lace
squirm in my hands
they don't want to die

love's just the same,
wait for it pray for it
never enough
either too little
or much too much
glopping down plopping down
leaving your hands full of squirm
your feet stuck in mud
mould in the bathroom
rising damp in the bed

rain you bastard
dry up.

When the woman was a girl

she arose in one body and stood on
symmetrical feet. The world
was measured in big-toes and hands
her hips spanned a bridge from
herself to herself her spine was

a silent throne. When the woman
was a girl she drew crosses for
plaits called her shadow by name
and reaching toward the stars
could touch. She lay amongst the

nasturtiums at noon. The flowers
were yellow jaffa-orange red
she held the mustard-pea under her
tongue stuck flat green leaves to
her thighs with saliva placed

petals over her eyes. When the
woman was a girl she picked
blackberries with her teeth. She
watched time drift past in shades of
blue and sang with the magpies

at the sky. A bee stung her under
the lemon tree teetered and died
when she suddenly cried a fish
brushed her shin with its fins.
When the woman was a girl she

walked and ran and flew and swam
with all the other creatures. Flat
on her back in the nasturtium patch
she measured the world in big-toes
and hands and it was very large.

From eight (love) sonnets

III

I open my being to the silver exchange
lovers live by the currency of salt
steeped in specific fluids the strange
wines of intimacy the scarlet gestalt
of a menstrual existence slipstreams
in armpits saliva between thighs
a still lake of sweat at a nape. It seems
we trade with our tongues. I recognise
love when I taste your flesh. I name
your heart when I employ my mouth.
I perceive the flavour of your claim
on my senses. And when we have both
transacted any liquid that just might
be love I open my being to the night.

VI

Be gentle with my arteries my entire
lymphatic system my labia my fat
my soft-veined breasts and the choir
of tiny hairs along my abdomen that
stands to sing when caressed. Be kind
to my larynx and the base of my neck
my toetips and fingertips my uterine
part the invisible ovaries bedecked
with life the bones of my rib-cage
articulated in pairs the whites of my
eyes and my thighs striated with age.
Be patient with my heart as you die
inside me there are numerous doors
to uncloset before it beats beside yours.

VII

I have little faith in atmospheres
strategies of breathing I have
lived well enough without love.
My heart has beaten airless here

ozone hole below my left breast
lungs dead empty diaphragm
flat respiratory tract jammed
for years. You gave me breath

when we met. You opened my
throat to the passion of oxygen
(symbol O atomic weight 16)
when your lips made me sigh

with a kiss. That first shock of
air unlocked this body to love.

Grant Caldwell

In the pause of light

In the pause of light
in the verandah of the dream
in the green music of the garden
the future hums like a wasp
black and yellow and standing in the air
so you come back to yourself
and all the petty scorns
the programme that you are
invading the beautiful solace
eating its grace
swarming the light.

VOICEWORKS

The magazine for youth by youth

Express Media
156 George Street
Fitzroy 3065

Features, fiction, poetry, interviews,
opinions, illustrations, cartoons.

I am the centre of my universe

I am the centre of my universe
you are the centre of your universe
there is only one number
my head is cold with thought
your kiss is the sun
I see you when you are away from me
I want you
I want you to be whoever you are
I want you to be whoever you are
in my bed I want you
to be I want
to be whoever I am
in my bed in this darkness
in this small universe of money
this small universe of money
intruding like the sad ghost of a suicide
I am the centre of my universe
my bar heater heats the air
the alcohol of my fears
runs through my blood like a knife
I run through the sadness of my marathon
I shout at the clouds
I sing the detail that is the poem
the small bird in the tree
like a flying mouse
I am the centre of my universe
I sing the ballad of my foolish intelligence
I am alone
I am all one
this cold spring
I am
alone in the joy of exquisite solitude
I am in love
I am in love with the pain of friends
I am the centre of my universe

money is the sad excuse of strangers
I am ashamed of bankbalances
my gains are the poverty of millions
property is the thief of love
this land is me
this land is older than time
this land lies in judgement
this land does not know the word of waiting
this land gives and takes without thought
this land is warm with fertility
this land is poisoned
this land contains all the antidotes of hate
this hate
I hate the hatred of the truly sick
I hate the hatred of comfortable smiling
I hate the smugness of words
I love the song of the wind
I love the sweet air
I love the flower of innocence
I love the child in everyone
I love the child
I cannot see the child in the heart of the possessors
I am the centre of my universe
I hate my satisfaction
I hate my sadness when tomorrow comes
I would that I would sing
I would that I would sing
 that the air is free
 that you are free
I would sing your freedom
I hate my longing
I hate my childish longing
I am a spoiled child
I am the centre of my universe
the ladybird on my lottery ticket
the money spider runs quickly
the money spider runs quickly across the desert of my dream
I am the white rabbit
my pocketwatch has no hands
I grasp the air with my handless arms

I cling to life like a child
I am the centre of my universe
I I I I I I I I I
who am I?
I am not who I see in your eyes
I am the wisteria of your love
I wallow in the desert
I gibber clumsy words
searching out the formula of my dreams
I am dying of the thirst in my heart
I escape the willfulness of familiarity
I yearn the closeness
I am the centre of my universe
you are the centre of your universe
our worlds collide
big bang
there's a big bang in my heart
my corpuscles explode
my heart is a galaxy
I wipe the air with my heart
my corpuscles are the stars
my corpuscles are the insects
in the garden of desires
I am a spoiled child
I want the breast of my mother's love
I want the protection of my father's authority
I am a coward
I am the centre of my universe
the day is longer than the night
I sing the night in my dreams
I survive the day
I distract myself from the truth of you
I presume we are immortal
I know nothing
I speak in generalities
the details are like islands
I swim towards them
but they are mirages
the sun is like the apple in my eye

I eat it
and I wonder
and I am lost
I run at the horizons
I run from my shadow
I run west
yearning for the east
I am alone
but I am not all one
I am the centre of my universe
I am the centre of my universe
I am the centre of my universe.



PLATH

white collar work

press button
in I enter
going up
coming out

walk through foyer
into office
"Hello Cheryl"
"Good Week-end?"

Look at desk
and paper mess
inner sigh
then sit down

here I go
yet again
read instructions
pick up phone
leave a message
for instructor
need to query
these instructions
I can't answer
need more facts

in walks boss
sweeping dandruff
from his suit
he needs help
with assignment
drop my work
and do his

time for lunch

walk through foyer
press button
in I enter
going down
coming out

busy street
busy deli
tuna bagel
fruity drink

end of lunch
back to office
press button
in I enter
going up
coming out

walk through foyer
at my desk
open file
read report
not quite right
need more facts

on computer
enter key
find menu
list of facts
pick printer
add the facts
complete report
5 o'clock

walk through foyer
press button
in I enter
going down
coming out

Lyndon Walker

The Factory

When he woke in the morning it was raining and the others still slept. He'd slept right through from the middle of the previous day and only now felt like he could think to do anything else or be aware of his surroundings. Remembering his instructions from Charmaine he went downstairs to find the communal showers. He couldn't get over how the whole structure, inside and out, was painted this dark green. It was a colour he would always remember.

There were three men in the men's shower and all were older than almost any man he had ever met. They were old and thin; their skin like a chicken's pulled tight around their ribs and over the veins in their necks was all a pale and slightly blue wax. It wasn't to be until he was much older and studying history at the university that he would see photos of other men that would remind him of these.

The first meals they shared, these refugee youths in a strange city, were clumsy combinations of anything that anyone brought home. The girls stole fruit from a southern European who tried to touch them if they were alone in the shop. They laughed a lot; played the few tapes they had on a tiny player and slept on the floor in opposite corners of the one big room. It was the boy who prompted their move:

"Let's look for a place of our own. It gives me the creeps being in the shower with those old guys, and Mario's stopped smiling when you two go by the shop."

The rent for the shared house, double storey with an upper verandah on Salisbury Road, meant the end to days on the dole. The money was running out fast and the boy was desperate for an actual job. He found this ad for a factory hand in Ultimo: Direct Mail.

He went down early, before six, round about dawn. The street cleaning machines swept along as he walked, spraying the rubbish into gutters and collecting it into its belly with black-haired brushes.

Pink blushes lit the blue underbelly of clouds. A dark man in dirty blue overalls with none of the subtlety of the sky opened a little door in the two larger white doors and looked surprised at him then went inside without speaking. A man in a white shirt and tie came out almost immediately and motioned him in.

"You here for the job?" "Yeah." "You Australian?" "Yeah." They asked him twice, this question, at the beginning and the end of the interview, as if he were lying. He laughed about it later. There were seventy people employed in the factory and he and the second man he met in the white shirt and tie were the only Australians.

His job was at the end of a conveyor belt near the inside of the large white doors. Mail bags came down the belt and he was to grab them off and using twine tie the neck of the bag shut, carry it over to the doors, leave it there and get back before the next came off. He started at seven and so now was up every morning at the same time as when he went for the job.

He took the bus. Rode into town with smalltime businessmen dressed in the same uniform as the man who had employed him. They read their newspapers and ignored him. It was like he was invisible, as if he was just something that took up space in air. It was summer and the girls had light dresses on. He liked their smell, all perfume and powder, and stole glances at the hair, still damp, at the base of their necks. He felt ashamed in the same dirty clothes that he wore to the factory every day. This was the start of the feeling.

He started at seven and worked till four. There was a half-hour lunch break and two teabreaks; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. It was summer in Sydney and the heat came

through the corrugated iron sides and roof of the factory and those small, high-up windows, that sometimes showed the smallest signs that outside in the real world there was breeze and sky and colour. He worked from seven till four with only those breaks and all the time the conveyor belt kept on going. Its pace controlled the work and the man who interviewed him sat in an office in the middle and slightly raised above the floor of the factory and he made sure that the conveyor belt went so fast that everyone just about had to run to keep up with it. Just about but not quite.

On the first day he couldn't keep up. He barely had one bag tied when two others were heading down the line and one had fallen off the end, its precious cargo of advertising letters spilling like milk across the dirty floor. The floor supervisor, George, whose job it was to help him learn, just laughed and took the extra bags off and stacked them to the side. He'd tied all three by the time the boy had done his next one.

He couldn't believe how these people worked. All his life he'd grown up with people grumbling about 'migrants' and 'da-goes' and whatever and how they came to this country for the easy life; but these people WORKED. They gathered quietly with good humour, early, before that single door opened. The men in their blue overalls, smoking and laughing and leaning so easily against the wall it gave you no idea of how fast and serious they worked once they all filed in, the whistle blew, as it did for lunch and tea breaks, and that damn conveyor belt started its awful work. The women wore dresses with floral prints which they covered with grey aprons when they went in to work in the factory. They wrapped the rolled up magazines or articles together in bundles and fed them on to other parts of the factory where they were sorted into the bags that made their way to the boy.

They all worked at the pace dictated by the machines to which they attended like an army of ants. They didn't stop for anything. When one ant wanted to go to the toilet they put a hand in the air and kept on working until another ant was sent to take their place. By the third day George had needed to leave to

train another worker somewhere else in the factory.

“You do all right. You good worker for an Australian. You get into trouble you call George.”

By the first week they'd run out of money and he didn't get paid until the end of the fortnight. On Monday when he left for work there were two cans of spaghetti in the cupboard. He worked all through the day and occasionally he thought of those two cans of spaghetti, half a can each. He worked on and it was a hot day. One of the women fainted and another ran up to her and held her head. The boy couldn't quite see what was happening and then he saw the two men who worked at the top of the line on the large machine that fed the first pieces into the line. He just saw them looking at each other and then he saw one walk casually over to the bench near the wall and come back carrying something large and silver like a fish that had no business being in a factory. The man looked around and carefully placed the fish on the pile of papers feeding into the machine. Immediately there was the sound of metal grinding against metal. An alarm went off and the machinery stopped. Then the alarm stopped and the conveyor belt stopped and a breeze of stillness went through the factory, a breeze of silence. The boy thought he was hallucinating. His ears were ringing. It was like a concert of invisible birds. He noticed the sweat dripping down from his eyebrows like rain in a jungle. He could hear the sound of his own breathing now, heavy. He saw the man in the white shirt with his sleeves rolled up and no tie on come down and walk towards the men and speak to them. He saw the men's faces, serious and concerned, speak back to the man and one of them shrugged his shoulders and then all three stared into the innards of the first machine that stopped. He noticed the workers still standing close by their various machines begin to change position. He saw some shift and stretch. He saw others sit down, roll a cigarette, begin to talk to each other. He thought he saw some look up to the high windows looking for the source of this strange breeze which had hit them and for a tiny piece of sky.

When the machines began again the boy went back to work. He worked hard then, all day, and thought about the other workers. He fantasised about winning the lottery and turning up to the factory in a Rolls Royce with a boot full of cash and ice-cold champagne and he dreamed of the machines stopping again and of all the workers flowing through the two open doors and then the whistle blew.

He caught the bus home and his hands were still shaking. He was so tired and he was very hungry. When he got home everyone was sort of sheepish. He went and washed his hands and the water stung the cuts in his hands the twine made as it dug into his flesh as he worked at the factory. He washed his hands and thought: I can wait till after we've eaten to have a bath. He went back into the kitchen and the girls were standing with their backs to him, talking quietly, looking out the window, drinking tea.

"Let's have tea early," he said, and immediately felt greedy and ashamed for saying it. The girls looked up at each other and then they looked down and there was an awkward silence before Charmaine spoke.

"You know there were just those two cans of spaghetti left and ... well ... we sort of had them for lunch ... you know."

"Oh; right."

The boy sat on an old wooden chair in the light green kitchen and his hands began to shake again and he got up before they could notice what was happening to him and he went into the bathroom and locked the door and lit the pilot light on the old gas heater and listened to the whoosh as he swung the light into the burner and watched the steam rise as he filled the bath. Then he climbed slowly into the bath, letting the hot water inch up his body until finally he was sitting down fully in the bath and his hands were still shaking and now his shoulders were shaking also and his whole body began to shake. He sat in the bath and wept and felt hunger and shook and the water stung

the cuts on his hands and he stayed in the bath until he stopped crying and then he got out and dried himself slowly and went and got in between his cool clean sheets and slept.

In the morning he got up as the milk truck was delivering the milk to the store on the corner and he walked down and bought milk and cereal and sugar and told the Greek owner of the store that he would pay him Thursday and that was it, he didn't ask for credit and there was never any question between the two men that the transaction would not occur.

He caught the bus again that morning and he worked in the factory for three more months. He knew he would never win the lottery and never go back in a Rolls Royce with a trunk full of cash and champagne and rescue the other workers. He started work at seven and he worked till four with the usual breaks. It was getting hotter and as he worked the twine cut into his hands and the sweat ran into the cut lines and stung until the tears came to his eyes but he just kept working until the whistle blew and then he went home and had a bath and sometimes a warm meal and then got into bed and slept and then got up and went to work and then went home and slept and he did this until he had another job, a different job, and though he knew he would never forget them he knew that he was never going back and that he would never work in a factory again. And it was as simple and direct as that. In these moments we know that our life has made a turn. Years later he would share university with the children of these workers and occasionally accept an invitation to dinner where his student colleagues were always surprised at how well he got on with their parents. It was never something he could sufficiently explain in words. It was as if there was something behind their eyes and they were surprised to find the same thing floating behind the eyes of this anglo their children had asked into their home.

Holiday in the Hurricane Season

Sunbathers lie soaked in oil, trapped in amber,
young tourists stroll in flattering beachwear,
kids shriek like tropical parrots.
Their florid elders, whose faces over the years
have slowly burst like baking fruit,
mute testimony to the ravages of time,
doze on deckchairs, clothes like wet paper tissues,
their stillness making plain their status
as stand-ins for the final form of things.

Gelid trees after a sunshower steam off their vapours,
the Pacific's a smoking lake, oriental tea green.
The surf, like crushed white skulls dribbles underfoot.
These goosebumps of ecstasy, this flesh of oblivion,
a tan after all is a short shelf-life product.
The occasional almond jelly whiteness of a body
over-exposed in a feather-weight bikini.
The torture of sunshine and Elastoplast or Band-aids,
burnt skins of suntan victims, pink-zinc-creamed,
pineapple juice dripped on tongues
quoting tofu and guacamole futures.
Hair bleached to the whiteness of Antarctica,
a breeze weaving surface sand under a fringed umbrella.

Out on the water miscellaneous plastic debris
floats in sullen isolation and ultramarine
diamante brilliants flicker with fierce seduction.
A suggestion that something's moving in the layers
of green marbled liquid becomes firm foam
carved into ice cream crests of surf,
the sun spangling the foam as if finding
hokey-pokey nuggets in the radiation.

Below a few cumulus clouds sprayed with firm hold
the wild blue yonder's woven flame
glides along the glassy sleeves of the swells.
In a jelly-green hedge poised hibiscus flowers
turn like miniature satellite discs towards heat,
cupping the frail vibrations of insects
or conch shell's tootle, a far-off tom-tom beat.
Also in the open but still, too, somehow under cover
other supersaturated colour-strobing and skull-pulsing
paradise blooms fight the way their prettiness rots.

Slow motion tread through the sleeping afternoon
to collect coconuts, sweat trickling between the shoulders,
yellow guava casings yawning to reveal gum-pink flesh.
The thump of ripe mangoes falling on the ground,
seeking cool space and an ideal narrative.
Dried white mango pith becomes its own fulfilment
like the filmy glare on translucent shallows.
Surfing sea-spirals subside in faintest froth
as the bunched pleats of the lace-embroidered swell
are smoothed for a moment by an invisible hand
before light recommences its dazzling run on air.

Translating Myself

translating myself into English
as if I were a language
but am I not Chinese
am I not that ancient language that
resembles myself that is myself that is the birthmark on my face
that
makes you comment to your friends without even looking
that he is Chinese or dismiss him
as a bloody Chink or Chow or burst into
Ching Chong Chinaman rhyme ...

but translating myself is a problem
I mean how can I turn myself into another language
without surrendering myself
without betraying myself
without forgetting myself
without forgiving myself
without even losing myself in a different context

I mean how can English be so transparent
as to not even be able to hide my china-skinned identity
I mean how can a language be so indestructible that
it remains itself while being turned into another

or is this body of mine really two bodies
one English the other Chinese
translating myself is but re-creating
myself with languages or bodies
a discourse between two knowing halves
or wholes each the interpreter of the other

but this awareness of what is being written in another language
this awareness of what is being concealed in what is being
translated
given up for gained or lost or both

this helpless feeling of subjection to a bilingual
force moving in between

translating myself I get double paid
by imagination and twice removed from the original
in the mind and on the paper

doing a simultaneous translation of myself
like having a simultaneous orgasm
both in your body and in your head
easy in the mirror
except for the awareness of the thing in between

but I translate myself
from Chinese into English
disappear into appearance
of another existence
looking back across the barrier of tied tongues

at the concealed image of the other body

I Have Said It All Wrong

For lust we have come to meet
The steaming locomotive into the profound tunnel
Gone in a second: with a roar, and fire, and power
No, I've said it wrong
For love we have come

For lust we have thought much of each other
The still nights dreaming of red lips

Tomorrow would forget today like yesterday
No, I've said it wrong
For love we have come

For lust we have produced fruit
Thus the wall is erected between waves
With tongues lapping it both sides
I've said it wrong again
Not for lust, but for love

Life

Only those few *yuan* now
To buy a shorts for my boy a shirt for my wife
And rice for meal a poison coil for mosquitoes
And, yes, a cattail leaf fan and a sleeping mat
Oh, I have to sell my life to buy it back again!

Carefully, I cup the half-torn paper notes on the counter
Against a strong snatch of draught from the open door
"A small champagne and a package of *Peony*, please!"

In order not to sell my life to buy it back
(I have lived that way for 29 years)
I must drink tonight and smoke over the family dishes:

salted eggs and small roasted fish

Femme Fatale

from The Awe

I sink deeply into things
into beds
into any small opening
or hole in the bone

When I swim by
they say, Hey!
that fish
has a fin attached to it

When I lie
in the garden
like a nectary
I secrete the sweetest nectar

Men coming near me
go into irregular orbit

Men find me
suitable for food

Men coming near me
shake their brains crooked

They can't act
decently

They say
you're a whore
you're the icing
on the cake

They say
baby,
I'm not responsible
for my actions

They say
you're a woman
whose attractiveness
causes dangerous situations

But when I swim by
I prefer to think of myself
as a vessel
filled with combustibles
set adrift among enemy ships

And baby
they're on fire!

Couch

Drop round
and couch your problems
with my cigarettes
my coffee
and your aerobic mouth
we'll trampoline him
out of your system

Where

Where I come from
it's Collingwood territory
If you're good enough you might get picked
Where I come from
so did the Shaws
I went to the same Catholic primary school
and it was Anthony back then not Tony
and I can't remember if he was ever sports captain.
Where I come from
people say it's just brick veneer
no culture, not enough trees
and pronounce it Reserwhere not Reservoir.
Where I come from
I still go back there
I still go back there and visit
and sometimes at the train station
there's a welcoming committee
and a brass band warming up
just in case
anyone else ever does.

Wendy Fleming

The Mission

I am wondering why I am here in this railway carriage of a room, its continuum of windows and blinds filling my view. No one has discussed with me why I am here, nor why I'm being watched.

The watcher has been here all day. She sits with her head shadowed against the wall of venetians, very still, her back fast against the chair, her arms folded on her lap, her knees and feet together, set slightly off centre. She sits like that for an hour or more, then she stands up, stretches slightly, adjusts her blue serge jacket and matching blouse, pulls down her skirt and sits down again in exactly the same position except she directs her knees and feet to the opposite side of centre. Then she writes something in what looks like a log book. That's for the next watcher. They watch me every hour of the day and night.

The watcher never looks at me directly. She never speaks to me either except when she gives me an order like "put your hand out" when she rechains me to the bed after I've used a bedpan or the nurse has done my dressing.

It's good that she is so precise. I like that. I like order. It upsets me that I can't straighten my bedclothes. They hang in high and low loops over my angles and curves most untidily. I try to lie completely flat as though the bed is empty, and neat like the other beds on either side of me but of course it doesn't work. My toes and knees stick up and my chest isn't flat either. I've always wanted things tidy.

My husband was here yesterday. It must have been something very important to bring him back from the States. He didn't want to go to America but he had to. Besides I was well cared for. I have a very convenient house and everything you could

need. Before he left, Roger, that's my husband, went to consult my obstetrician Dr McArthur. When he came home he said, "You have the very best obstetrician. I have the greatest confidence in him. He has assured me everything is normal, no complications expected. There isn't anything Dr McArthur and the hospital can't handle." He was right of course. There wasn't anything they couldn't handle. My labour was normal and Christian was born a healthy bouncing baby. Roger was delighted. He sent masses of flowers and telegrams. But he couldn't come home then.

He was very subdued yesterday; he didn't seem to know where to look or what to say. I did want to share everything with him – all about Christian's birth and after, the mothercraft nurse and her slyness. And my enlightenment. I started to tell him and leant towards him. He sort of withdrew and shifted back in his chair. Then something strange happened. It was dusk. The light was changing. The room started to dim. His face flattened and lost all expression. Light through the blinds drew bars across his head so he looked like a cancelled postage stamp. You can't talk to a postage stamp.

I wonder what they've told him? It doesn't really matter. Nothing matters. I was glad when he left. I can't be distracted from my mission.

I can talk to Father Martin. The night before I went to see him I had a dream. I am not in the habit of dreaming so I found it very disturbing. I was in a church, a very large church, a cathedral. The sides were in shadow and the pews empty. The main aisle was paved with blue and white tiles in a never ending mosaic pattern, an unimaginative pattern, one large white tile bordered by four blue ones. Nevertheless it was hypnotic. I found myself stepping onto the white tiles one at a time, and trying to avoid the cracks, just like a child! The difference was, as soon as I landed on a new white tile the previous pattern crumbled into darkness behind me so I couldn't turn back. I continued on this predetermined course compelled towards the altar – a huge marble table, overhung by a wooden cross the top of which disappeared from view into

a great skeletal dome.

When I got closer to the altar I could make out some figures – women and children, five women and ten children dressed in white gowns, moving lightly in silent rhythm, their eyes closed, oblivious to everything around them. I was seized by a great urge to join them and started to run, still careful to step only on the white tiles. I called out “I’m coming, I’m coming”. I so wanted to join them; they were so untroubled.

They didn’t acknowledge me. In fact they turned their backs to me.

Then just as I reached the steps of the altar my progress was halted – the white tiles ran out. In panic I searched for more in every direction, across, up and down, behind, in front but there were none, and no matter how hard I tried to move my feet they wouldn’t move off the white tiles onto the blue tiles. I was transfixed, marooned, on the brim of the blue-tiled moat, straining to see more of the women and children as they drifted out of sight behind the altar.

I was overwhelmed by grief and began crying, valleys of tears onto the blue tiles dissolving them into a flowing stream of crystal-clear water. Holy water that flowed around the altar – my means of reaching the women and children. Longing and anxiety grew within me pounding in my throat and head. Again I struggled to move my feet, again I could not budge them. They were anchored to the white tile. In vain I threw myself with all the physical effort I could summon towards the stream; unseen forces held me back causing fire in every muscle of my body. Through my pain I heard a baby crying, faint at first but increasing in intensity and insistence, penetrating my consciousness. I realised it was Christian and woke up to reality ...

Because of the location of the dream I went to see Father Martin hoping he could tell me what it meant. He listened very carefully, nodded his head at certain times and when I had finished said to me, “Marion you must remember what a

special person you are. Jesus loves you. You are the mother of Ruth and Christian. Jesus has called you to love and protect them. The dream is His way of confirming your sacred mission. Go home Marion and pray to Him. God will show you the way."

So it's possible he's the reason I'm here. It wasn't meant to turn out like this. I'm not angry with him. He did give me such good advice. After I prayed I felt so calm once I knew what to do.

Ruth is the most beautiful daughter, not beautiful in the physical sense because her mouth is too large for her face, but I can see she will be very striking when she grows up. She's beautiful because she is graced by God. When you are with her you are with God.

She loves me so much. I told her we were going to have a special bath and she could wear her special Sunday dress. She put it on and I braided her hair so it wouldn't get in her eyes. I dressed Christian in his best clothes.

Ruth was so good ... I knew she would be, but just as a precaution I gave her half of one of the tablets Dr McArthur gave me. She did struggle a little bit, and I had to hold her down longer than I thought, but I had told her we would be there when she woke up ... at least Christian is there. I placed Christian on her chest in her arms. It must be like that in Limbo. Babies and children sculptured in repose, safe from adult evil.

The days are long and tedious. I endure them because I know the Lord has plans to rejoin me with Ruth and Christian. I pray and wait.

The nurse is here with the dressing trolley to do my dressing. She is very businesslike. She asks me how I am and if my wounds are OK. She says she will take out the stitches today. I reply in a very flat voice "That's good" and keep looking at the venetians. She motions to the watcher to undo the shackles. I stretch a little. She waits till I settle my leg then undoes the bandages on my wrists and ankles. The wounds are

quite deep and had to be stitched. Somehow they got infected. I don't know how. The kitchen knife was clean. All of my kitchen is spotless.

The nurse washes her hands and returns to set up the tray with lotions and swabs. She's very conscientious and concentrates on her task. She opens the packets and drops the wool swabs and gauze on the tray. She pours the lotion and lines up the instruments, forceps, probe and scissors.

The watcher says she's going out for a moment. The nurse hardly hears her and ... I can't believe it.

The nurse goes to the tap again to wash her hands. She returns and starts to wash my wounds. She's engrossed and doesn't know I'm here. She swabs with the wet swabs then dries with the dry ones. She's inspecting them head down, intent. She uses the forceps to push at the edges ... she tugs at the sutures which are loose and rotate through the skin ...

"They're useless. They've got to come out ..."

She stretches for the scissors ... turns shutter swift, eyes large with fear ... "Fear not sister you are the chosen ... we are going to meet the children of the Lord."

Twin Rivers – Thunder, Lightning & Wind

i found my father on his bed flat out on his back
in the dead heat of January/ two table fans left
running in the large kitchen/ steel blades stirring
up the hot air highways for hornets searching for
spiders/ ZIRRRUM a big fly zapped past my ears/

& past my father's open mouth snoring like a bush
pig/ his low & throaty breath thundering through
the house/ the sound blown around by the hot air
fans & the bright scrub light from outside leaking
in through shutters/ & the twenty seven kilometre
out of town air drowsy with wings/

dad on his back
in his torn green shirt/ splashed with animal fats
hot sauces & pickled onions/ which had spilt down
over his chest the night before/ as he tipped the
huge jar up missing his mouth/ now the empty jar
on the kitchen floor rolling backwards & forwards
rocking the still point of the hungover house/

& dad's white legs viewed from the loungeroom/
coarse dark hair on his swollen calves bruised
with blood/ from when he'd been out chopping wood
& had put the axe through his legs/ cigarette ash
dust on his forehead & the smell of stale garlic
beer or whisky/ & his red kelpie Smokey lying on
the fluffy blue rug beside his bed/

& the ghost
white gum coming in through the kitchen window/
searching out the last drops of moisture clinging
to the orange Wettex or sides of sink/ my father's
thick waist rolling over like prehistory in layers
of sheets & twisted grey blankets from a stale
Sydney marriage entwined about his hips/

i break

cobwebs that hang like thick nets over his bed/
my father will wake as the first heavy raindrops
hit the window glass like sobbing from the dry
southwest/ the house has filled itself with the
swelling of his throat & air through fan blades
& through cheeks/ i shut the doors to his bedroom
that have let too many landscapes in/

after two
hours of working my face was not my own/ it had
become my father's face in the midday sun/ after
the tough & stupid labour of clearing the yard of
pigweed/ & of sharp balls of roly poly bush that
blew through the caged emptiness of the meat house/
lingering in the blazing determined blankness of
amphetamine/

later that day i took
my vegetable soap & canvas bag with its copper
nozzle & showered away from the house/ one step
up onto a dry plank platform walled in on three
sides by grey fence palings/ the hard boiled egg
which i had left for the brown snake under the
driftwood had been broken open by a bush rat/

i avoided the sticky clumps of spiders' web hanging
in corners with their old cemeteries of husked &
mummified insects/ & protruding grey tacks & long
orange rusty nails jutting out/ i soaped up my
scalp letting the tank water wash over my brown
skin like a sudden shower drenching bark/

the land
became yellow & remote & silent with a backdrop of
purple thunderstorms building up in the southwest/
& worlds of sky away from my showering the dark
grumble & collision of clouds/ a grey hare pounded
across the dry scrub & i heard it thumpthump thump
thump thumpthump/ my pulse raging along through
twisted dry tree roots/

i walked back across the
yard my old cotton towel wrapped around my waist/
a brown snake slid out onto the track a few inches

from my feet/ the head & tail of it buried in the
long grass either side like a skipping rope/ dad
grabbed his twenty-two but it was too late/ the
snake had muscled into dead scrub to become its
still low landscape/

later that night the electrical
storm surrounded the house/ & sections of bruised
sky flashed their light like ruined teeth caught
in branches & clotheslines/ & dark trees like
shadowy forks of lightning stuck up from the red
clay/ & sky lightning like upsidedown branches
jabbing their prongs into rivers & watertanks/

into the wide-eyed liquid of sheep or down into
the empty bush dunnies inhabited by fluorescent
green frogs/ or into the precious collected moistures
in the bases of burnt out tree stumps/ & by the small
kitchen window the frantic tapping of the ghost gum
trying to get in/ & the flash of lightning moving
out across the landscapes like searchlights/

my father was active in the cool change/ smoking
like a gidgee log & varnishing the old chest of
drawers that we had bought in Dubbo/ a few heinz
variety dogs hanging around his swelling ankles
the bottle of whisky & ashtrays/ my dog Toby trembled
under the bed for two days while the storm struck
down verticals on the plains/ in quieter moments we
could hear him under the bed licking his pads for
hours/

the night time insects didn't arrive for the
house lights/ i thought of them drenched flat
somewhere out in the scrub/ in the quiet & clamped
shut beaks of birds frozen in branches with saturated
feathers/ or jewel armoured flattened against the
rough stumps of box trees/ & the big moon split
down its middle as lightning would crack open an
egg into splinters of membrane/

the hard granite
wind rushes into all available openings/ past the

unhinged doors of abandoned shearers' quarters &
by decades of gates shutting them behind itself/ &
along the dry grass & up into the tree tops if it
was a high wind & lowly under the collapsing
floorboards of the shearing shed/

or through the
large gaps of driftwood moulding on the holding
pens/ & past the tired old steam tractor & through
the fleece & bottles/ & past the fluttering owls
or the snaky red fox disturbed from its curled up
position like a red ribbon unfolding/ its slimline
torso & tail held high like a streamer/

& through
the tan feathered breast of a hawk or a wedgetail
with a blink of its yellow eye/ through the river
red gums flowering with cockatoos & under their dry
old beaks & through their crazy white combs/ & along
the centre of the river blows the wind with rain
behind its rushing like a wet bushfire/

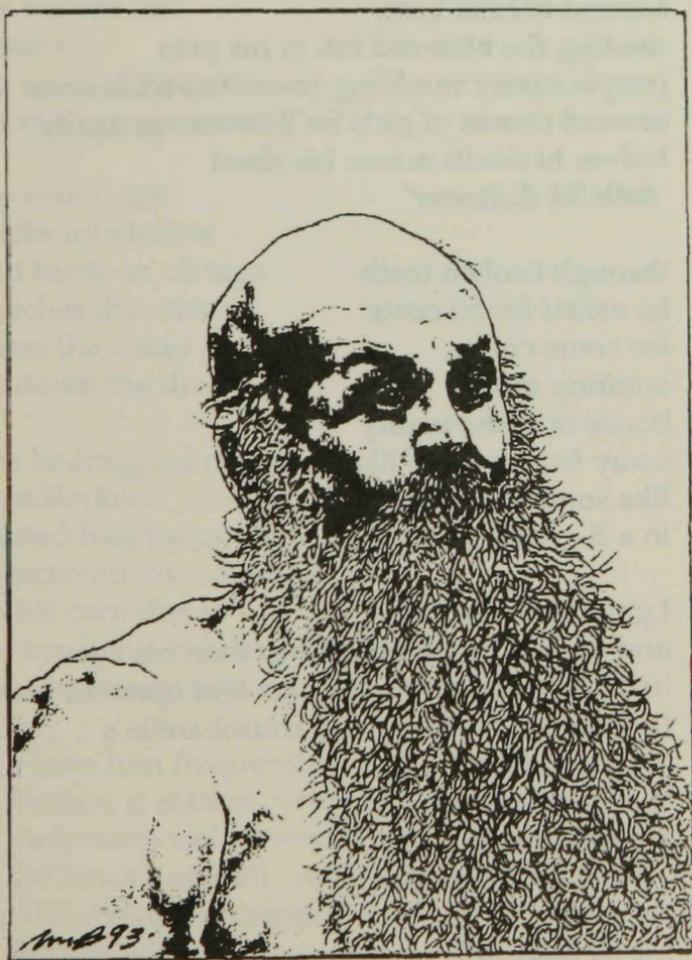
wind in the
rooves & under the verandahs of culture or of nature/
wind in the cupboards through a rattle of crockery
or a tinkle of cutlery/ encircling the sink & the
plughole & down through the tap & the air vents comes
the wind with the voices of children from sheep
properties/ & a long low wind with no voice but its
own unnerving distances/

with no voice but the things
that were moved into action by it/ like meat ants
blowing off the drainpipes/ their tiny black legs
unsticking & their brush across my cheeks in a
cyclone of microscopic characters/ & willy wagtails
tossed & shingle back lizards & blue tongued skinks
dragging along scales in the hard blowing grass/

& the crisp washing on the clothesline being thrown
up like surrender/ & my own hair tossed up into
the sky like black fleece to tangle in the branches
of trees or of lightning striking down/ even the
high outback stars twinkle louder as if the wind

has blown their twinkling/ & circling bats are
knocked off their courses & blind navigations
around the ceilings/

& the dog's water dish scrapes
along the cement & hits the fence like a stone &
the wind rocks my Holden & rocks my foundations/
everything loosens & shakes at the sky blown forwards/
& the storm is thrown down over the land leaving its
silence behind/ & the next day a magpie appears in
the blueness to sing out in the silence & a kangaroo
thumps the red dust with her heavy red tail



DUKE

Doug Jesberg

run like hell, odd vi

for neil young

in brunswick street skyscraping
opposite the housing commission flats
people falling through the system
fitzroy falling onto the street
I walked into the tattooed man
scarred behind bars
reading the blue-red ink in his skin
purple runny rambling roses down his arms
around names of girls he'll never see again
knives in skulls across his chest
'deth B4 dishoner'

through broken teeth
he asked for 50 cents
for some coffee,
wanting more
booze or some reality
away from people like me,
like some bad actor
in a B-grade movie

I gave him a dollar
and looked into other things than his eyes
bookshops recordshops bars and open-air brasseries
the women's gallery and rhumbarella's
an hour later
the tattooed man
was still there
asking for 50 cents
for coffee
for 50 bags full.

run like hell, even viii

the situation is quite impossible
the mobile homeless pass by
close by yet another world away
another word away
running for cover
out of the eye of the storm

been thinking about one grafter
remembering his phiz
the lone dero
the waterman
floats by
his sauntering gaze
flows through me

the waterman
walks into toilets
and turns on all taps
watches the water
hears the water
go down the drain

this bedraggled rastaman
dreadlocked
matted hair twigs dirt
overcoated overdressed
on his own dreck
always in his grease-stained clothes
after too many nights in his own smell

I've seen him frequently
at flinders st station without a ticket
in melbourne uni forecourt passing through
in the bourke st mall reflecting upon
not the consumer cornucopia
of display windows
but his fluidity
flotsam jetsam.

Kathleen Stewart

Old Friends Falling

I could fall to bed
drunk and disappointed,
shedding clothes
like the evening's radiant hope.
A sunk sun.

Forgive me.
Does the sun beg of the moon,
or the other way around?
I hid
while the house burned down.

The dead leave,
like dead leaves,
mulch, or melancholy smoke.
Soundless rustling
of emptied vessels.

Otis Rush Magazine

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Robert Verdon

Red Lake

red lake
red lake
deep as the lacquer on an Asian roof
a back-beat in the air
and somewhere a rock concert
out of control
red and poison edge
crushing crescented blue leaves in its palm
lustrous, dead
under the daytime moon's first quarter

fenced by gum saplings
tinselled by a windy sunshower
a flurry of lights
on a blanched afternoon

the drums
the drums
operation rolling thunder
and the red bells ring forever

Third Peep Over the Fan

The glaze on the heron's eyes
Stirs the reeds of the last river,
and my ankles jingle.

In polyester wings,
in Mother's things,
angels bind the stiletto heels
of my garish solitude.

The chequered veil wafts,
the curtained face sees itself –
I drown age in the photo
of my poppet youth
like a kitten; the minute hand creeps
in a thin shadow –

No hands no eyes no rainbows now,
nothing (like a worm) but the last gilded wind
and the dry drone of summer.
Into velvet my white body sinks,
a dead tree in a black river;
one by one the stars come in
to chase me round the room.

It is 1954;
dark
as a *film noir* dinner party
for 'role-playing' lesbians –
The Revolution has been tamed
And put to work
The cotton bud invented
The shaman pierced by the numen
hears nothing but the hobby horses
rocket over the horizon.
The athletic girls march
in sensible shorts.
It is Year Zero of my life.

Marked out for ridicule and sacrifice
in a mauve dress; the night yowls,
the cat has been killed by the mice.

Impala-shy you leap away
like a springbok or a sparrow.

Every Man and Woman with Your Soft
Knowledge

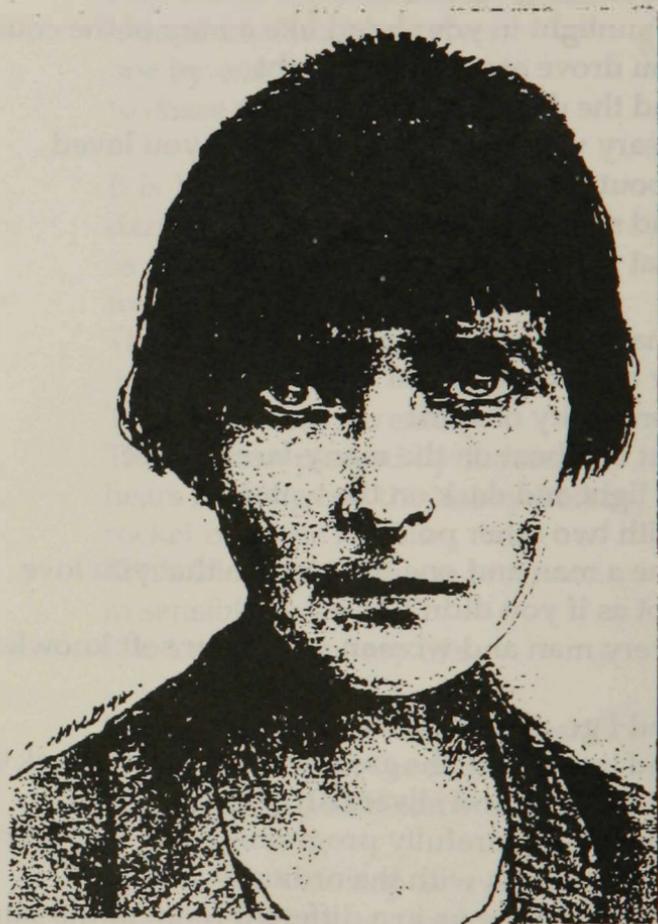
for Raymond Carver

When the tears spring to my eyes
like dew on a lemon
you picked off a tree in the yard
in the early morning
and held up towards
the slanting biblical shafts
of sunlight in your hand like a map of the country
you drove across in the night
and the day
weary with hope for all the ones you loved
I pout like a child
and say into that long night
that you are not dead.

That such a night is illuminated
by a memory of you and your
generosity of spirit
out in a boat on the many-faceted face
of light and dark on the water
with two other poets
one a man and one the woman that you love
not as if you didn't love
every man and woman with your soft knowledge

and I go often to your nets of books
and tip out into the greedy neverending black that night
all the gold and silver fish of words
you left us carefully programmed as they were
to comfort us with the ordinary
to companion us in a different room of the same hotel
in which you now sleep

and to treat
death with surprise when it arrives
because it really has no business holding these cards
or that bottle
around
this table.



MANSFIELD

Joseph P. Wood

Being 18 on July Fourth at a Park in Narbeth
Watching Fireworks

The fireworks are, of course, brilliant.
You are sitting with a group of strangers,
her friends,
and you comment anonymously
that the show is spectacular.

One of them looks at you,
a husky, fair skinned guy,
her ex-boyfriend,
and trivially asks if you are with
her and you nod. He laughs aloud.

You are not shaken by the laughter;
you look at your girlfriend with her friends
and
you feel alone,
and you want to talk more but can't
get past the introductions.

You look away from the group.
You don't know the names of anyone
anymore, not even your girlfriend
and you look to the sky and are
awed once more by its beauty.

You drop your gaze momentarily
and stare at all of the group and you see
a different firework show;
one where they are the explosives
and you are the sky they are set off in.

Peter Bakowski

The dictionary is just a beautiful menu

for Frank O'Hara

While you're alive:
thank the parts of your body
that work,
even though they've played part in deeds
that you've come to regret.
Admit that a lot of your dreams
have involved money and thighs:
you'll realize, that you're just another human
that's taken guilt
as their muse.

Realize too:
that someone invented
the umbrella, the diving board
and the buffet lunch
to help you,
that the dictionary is just
a beautiful menu,
and that love
is a picture that you'll never
finally straighten ...

Take yourself
for a walk.
You'll see:
trees, still eager to be trees amongst the
concrete,
neon that bites the necks of passerbys,
actors and cats
walking that thin line
between smugness and grace,
and girls with large earrings, possessing
sighs and childhoods
like lighted matches:

just watch the way the cigarette smoke
spiders
from their wet, delicious mouths,
breaking all the cobwebs
in the far ceilings
of desire.
Desire, that shaman of pulses,
who knocks at
every door of skin,
wearing the scarecrow clothes
of love.

The streets, of course
are full of poems,
rushing off to work,
fretting at each kerb,
waiting for the hiccup
of each cursed traffic-light.
Tsk at their velocity
and bad taste in footwear,
but write of your love for them still.
Undress them carefully
as you would, a peacock,
as you would, a panther,
as you would, a traveller to your wishes.
Teach them your costly lesson:
that each kiss
is a leaf that falls
from our wintering hearts.

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Sarah's Story

The first time I noticed her was at a friend's party. She was surrounded by people that wanted to get to know her. We were both new students at Sydney Road Community. It was the year of 1991. My best friend at the time was a kid named Joey. I remember clearly walking to the 7/11 with her and Joey. Along the way me and Joey ran ahead. I remember telling Joey that I had a crush on her but never said anything to her for fear of what she might think. Especially because of the fact that I was a junior and she was a middle. The difference between us was two classes and the actual age difference was 11 months in her favour.

One week passed and my secret was still in the hands of Joey. But time passed and everyone forgot. So eight months down the track I went to another party and she was there. She was with a friend of hers called Tracey. She didn't talk much. The party was getting boring and I decided to leave. I was walking out of the street and from the lane I heard screaming. So I went to see if everything was all right and she was standing with her back up against the wall. A guy called Tommy was hassling her. So I told her to come with me back to the party. We went to a room where nobody was and she started to cry. So I comforted her until she stopped.

I then got up and went to another room in the house and sat in an armchair. She entered the room and sat on the arm of the chair and kissed my forehead. I was in shock and my whole body went numb and I couldn't move. She started kissing my lips. I froze and my mind went racing. I was still frozen. Then she got out of the chair and walked out of the room. I didn't move for five minutes. It was the biggest shock of my life but it had to be one of the best surprises.

I don't remember leaving the party with her and Tracey but I remember the walk back to Prahran from Clifton Hill. We went

to the city first. It was at least four in the morning. There wasn't a soul in sight. We walked to Flinders Street Station and to Yarra River. It was one of the clearest nights I had ever seen. The reflection of the moon followed us upstream. It was like walking through a dream. The type of dream you only have once in a lifetime.

Kevin Brophy

Lines Thrown Out

The secret cat at the back of my mind.

The tummy rumble of the dove's coo.

The duck, a caricature of itself.

She refused the chicken's drumstick, said she wanted its heart beat.

An artist, the Chinese desk calendar tells me, is anyone who glorifies their occupation.

The millionaire with the big nose says *that's enough, you can film the rice fields now.*

If the clouds are not trying to tell us something,
then why do they insist on making
such astonishing shapes?

Don't tell me they don't know what they're doing.
Yesterday I saw a rabbi and three policemen with monstrous
jaws.

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jaws.

I'm realistic, I can see things as they are when they're not as I would like them to be.

Why do you love me? she asks.
Why do I love you? I ask back.
Because I'm wonderful, she says.

You have creases on your face, she said.
- I'm old. I'm in the middle of my life.
Yes, and you'll die.
- Yes, but not for a long time.
Yes, and I want to watch you die, she said.

This loyalty to the end, this pleasure in witnessing;
This child who says she has only horrible dreams, can't go to
sleep at night.
She wakes, saying she dreamed of a lion about to eat her,
so she put it in a paper bag and took it to her mother.
- Now, you need not think of it again.
But I don't know how to not think of it, she said.

I peeled silver moons from the tops of milk bottles.
A wind that could toss the moon down rattled into my back
yard at night.

The secret cat I keep like thoughts best kept asleep
stretches silently beneath me.

Sleep, like a mirror.

Grant on Edward

for Grant Caldwell

His wardrobe's too big for his house
and the outside toilet leans to the South

but the fridge fits perfectly
between the sink and the stone chimney.

His green chair with two rotten legs he found on
the street,
picked up like stray words in need of a poet.

Unsold books in boxes, patient grenades.
A red-headed boy in picture frames.

Photos of the past crash against the present.
The bedroom window looks into the kitchen.

His hat, black and shadeful,
darkens his face stretched thin over the skull.

He goes for long walks, waiting for words.
He has a collection of lurid shirts

for his sober personality,
says he's worked hard on finding it.

Large hands.
Bottled water.
Skin you could write on.
Japanese tea.
A book by Bukowski.
A stoop.
And a wardrobe.

That Italianate, fake walnut wardrobe,
like one of Cinderella's step-sisters on tip-toe

totters, silly, ugly, hilariously ornate,
jammed in the hallway, our hands slipping on the
laminated.

He's waiting for it, he says,
to become a collector's item.

He writes the unsold books of poems and novels
and moves house while he waits.

Eyes green or blue.
He left behind four bottles of shampoo

when he moved
from Howard to Edward
moved South
closer to his birthplace
closer to the river
further into the past
into bluestone
into three smaller rooms
as though needing the presence of walls.

He left behind four bottles of *Blackmore Almond Oil
Shampoo*,
a white comb sealed in plastic and a pair of Kung
Fu shoes

on the floor of the left-behind home,
without considering the problem

of the wardrobe with the full length feature
mirror
and fake gold-leaf legs, that box of horror.

The outside toilet leans to the South, rolling with
the punches,
tumbling with the planet, hinting at the future.

Bus

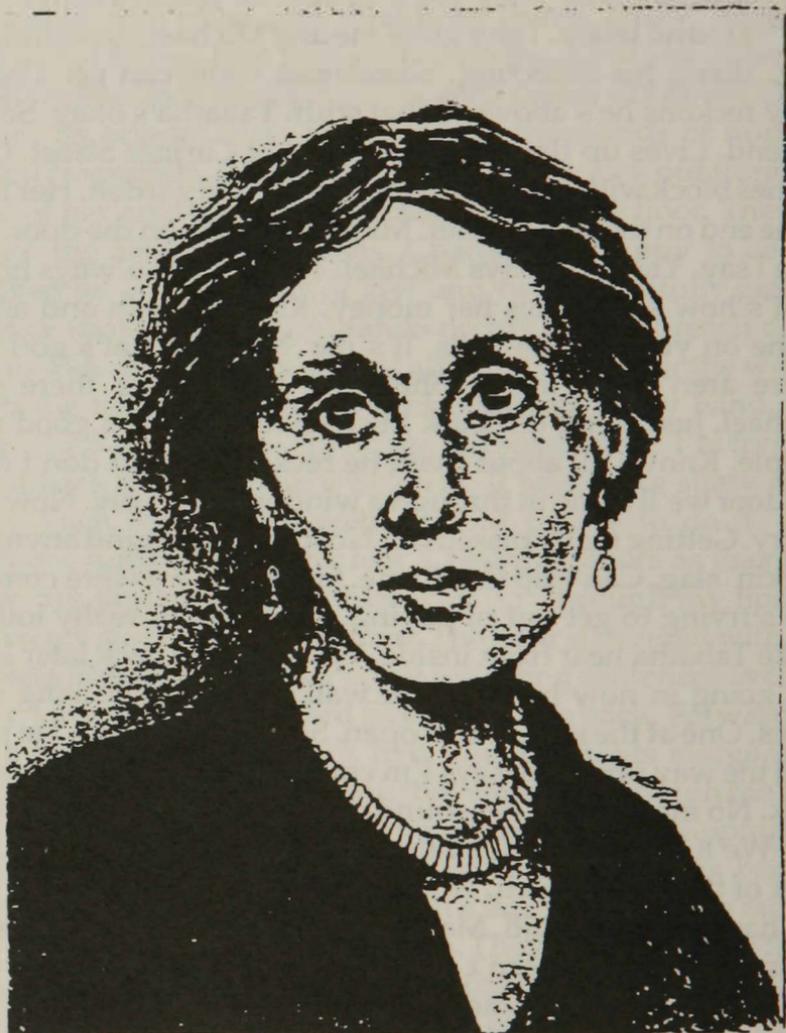
Deep voices roar. My brain bounces along happily in the seat beside me, humming something from Beethoven. Everyone's watching. Faces drawn out like crocodile heads. Snapping and grinning. Unblinking stares. Hear their thoughts above the roar. Shadows move. Grow. Shapeless sorrowful things that flap away into the darkness. A woman with wolfhounds snapping from each breast sits down. On the brain. Its scream tears my soul into thousands of multicoloured fragments. It's squashed flat. Lobes stick out from each side of her arse. Dripping memories onto the floor. They run down the aisle like cartoons. Chattering. Happy to be free. Stalked by a large black spider and two beautifully graceful orange snakes. Someone stands on my father. I reach down, try to slide the slippery grey stuff out from under the woman with the barking breasts. Pieces come off in my hand. I eat them. Lick my fingers. Try again. Eat some more. I'm trying to get it back inside where it belongs. It tastes like slimy warm pâté. Each mouthful revolts me but I have to do it. Little cartoons jump around my feet. Cheering others as they slide from my fingers or force their way out through my lips and down my chin. Try to grab them. The floor is covered with little endless film loop worlds. People repeating sentences over and over. Denny walks forward five steps then back. Forward five back five forward five back five. Outside lights merge into a huge luminescent flying thing that smashes through the driver's window. It swoops on my mother who's wrapping and unwrapping something. Tears her in half with its beak. A zebra is growing out of the woman's lap. It has to keep moving its head to stay away from the dogs. They're going crazy trying to get it. The flying thing lands on the back of my seat. Looks at me forever. Slowly pecks at a piece of brain. I yell. Try to grab the throbbing piece away. The woman turns. It's Meg. She has no eyes. Her zebra leaps clear and gallops away. The dogs

frantically try to tear themselves free. Start to eat Meg's face. The flying thing flaps onto my shoulder. Sinks its beak deep into my chest and rips out my heart. Throws it to the dogs, then crashes through the side of the bus and flies off. Blood spurts down the aisle washing the cartoons into the street. The shadow things flutter back through the hole. Swarm around me. I start to drown in their deep deep purple melancholy.

Tabatha

Tabatha owes Tony for a couple of deals. Hasn't been around lately. Tony gives me and Michael something for doing his collecting. Sometimes visits can get violent. Tony reckons he's above all that stuff. Tabatha's okay. Sort of a friend. Lives up the respectable end of Carlisle Street. Grey thirties block with cement dropping into the garden. Her flat's at the end on the back corner. Michael knocks on the door. Not here I say. Yes she is says Michael. This bitch is always home. That's how she makes her money. Knocks again and again. Come on you slag he yells. It's me. Michael. Let's go I say. There aren't any lights. She's not here. She's there says Michael. Just being difficult. Michael reckons he's good with people. Knows all about them he reckons. If you don't open the door we'll come in through a window. No reply. Now he's angry. Getting really pissed off. Not playing around anymore. Fuckin' slag. Can't do this to me. She knew we were coming. She's trying to get out of paying. He's talking really loud to make Tabatha hear from inside. We can come back later I say. I'm going in now he says. He walks around checking windows. One at the side is a bit open. Slack tart he says. He pulls it all the way open. He says I'm coming in now. The flat is still dark. No movement. No sound. Nothing. I reckon she's out I say. We'll see he says. Climbs through the window. I hear the click of the light switch. Nothing happens. Michael says silly tart hasn't paid her bill. Maybe she's broke I say. Maybe she's hiding because she can't pay. Michael says this tart's never broke. Just playing games. She knows we're coming tonight. Through the window I hear him moving around. More clicks. No lights. He uses his lighter. I can see the light moving on the

walls. Reflecting off the tv screen. He flicks the lighter on and off because it gets hot. flick. Michael goes into the hall. flick. flick. I hear doors opening and closing. flick. He says shit. flick. The light comes back to the lounge. flick. Michael's nervous. Come here he says. flick. I climb through the window. flick. flick. Follow him through the flat. flick. Into the bathroom. flick. Tabatha's in the bath. flick. Looks grey. flick. One hand's hanging over the edge. flick. Her face is all twisted. flick. The other hand's under the water. flick. Resting on a radiator between her legs. Silly silly slag Michael says.



W O O L F

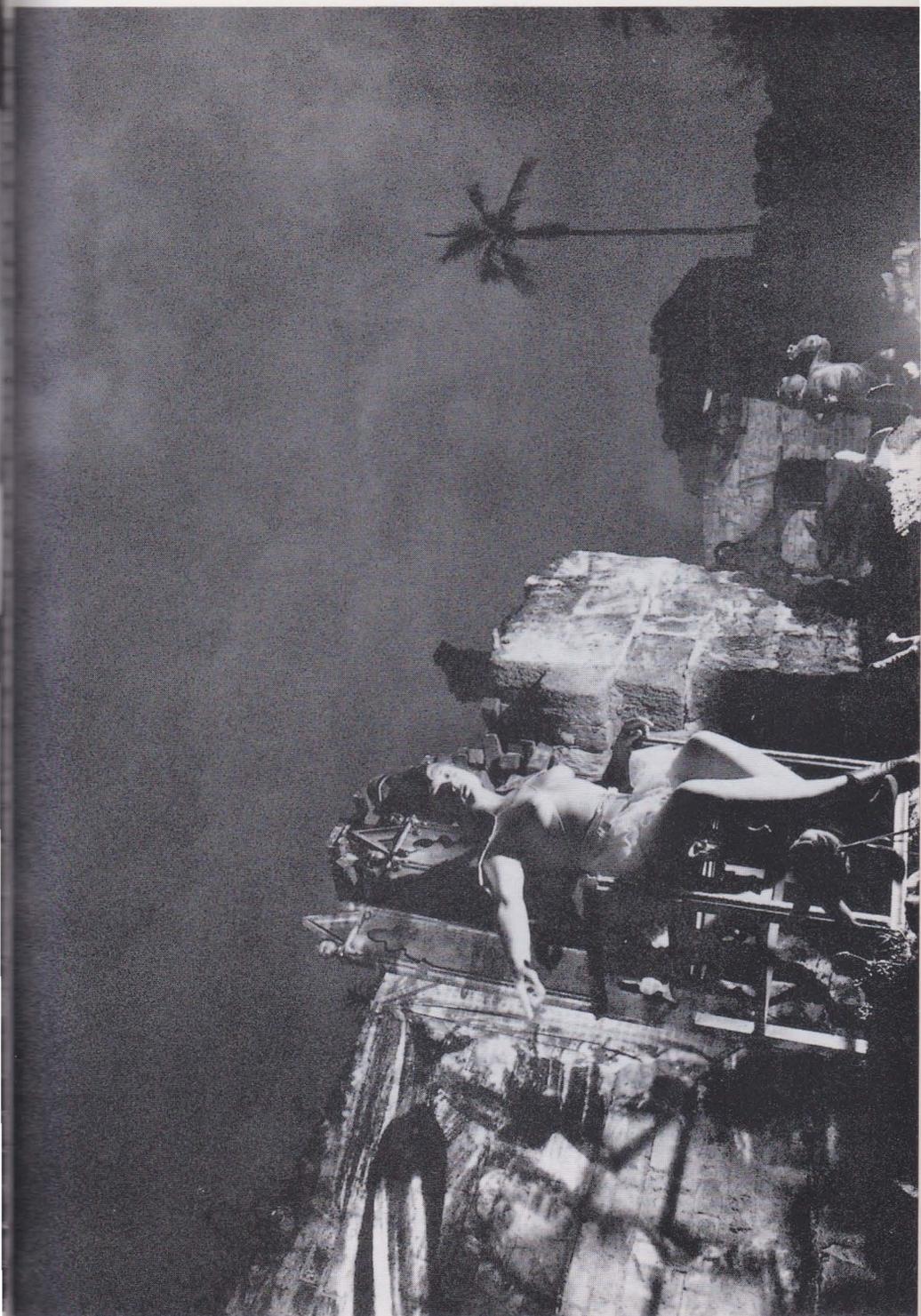
Photography
by
Heather Winter

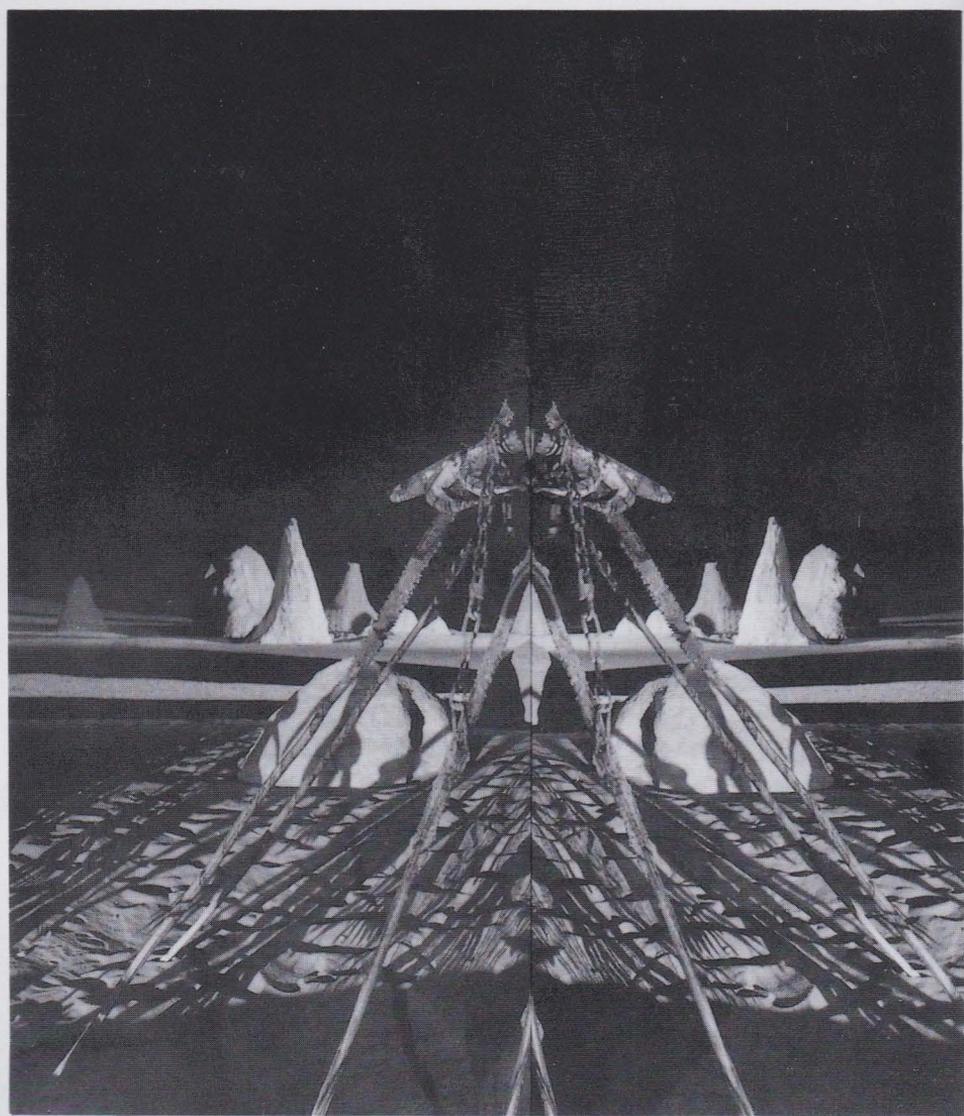












The Theatre of Reality

*"Photography is a kind of primitive Theatre, a kind of Tableau Vivant, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see the dead."*¹

The 20th of September 1990 marks the day of our annual family reunion. From all over Victoria the Gordon clan assemble. The event is planned and recorded. No doubt, one of the motivating factors of the reunion is the taking of the family photograph. A representative from each family takes a snap and then exchanges positions so that they may be included in the photograph. This ritual marks the final hours of the reunion. A strange sense of the theatrical overwhelms me when I look at these photographs. Faces are scrubbed, as we all assume the pose that most suggests family dignity and pride.

I am reminded of images of primitive cultures: I associate the preparation and making up of oneself for these photographic performances with ritualistic behaviour. The photograph becomes a commemorative trace of an absent object. With the release of the shutter a moment in time has vanished forever, the subject in the photograph is instantaneously abducted out of this world into another kind of time. Here the elements of the 'real' and the 'unreal' overlap and merge. A surreal quality emanates as the photograph is removed from reality through the lapse of time, slipping into another dimension. Analogous to the theatre, the space within the frame provides the common ground where the real and the fictitious are synthesised. Mirrored in the photographic image is a self, a persona which allows us to play with the notion of identity. The photograph is in a state of construction as it struggles between 'fabrication' and 'reality'; a condition which reflects our own psychology. The photographic vignettes become glimpses of ephemeral

dramas; of moments lost and gone. The camera becomes a projective tool, part of the theatre where imagination and fantasy take form. It is here that we are able to let our dreams manifest as we act out the parts we so desire. The credibility of the photograph is questioned as we witness actors rather than subjects, masks, not faces; stages, not private spaces. The familiar becomes unfamiliar as another world is found within this one.

The photograph is a vehicle for the fulfilment of our desires, projecting fabrications onto reality. For me the resonance of the photograph lies in this theatricalisation of the real as the act of photography involves the orchestration of many performances. The interactive process between photographer, medium and subject involves an ongoing process of alteration, construction and manipulation; a fine tuning of the grand performance: a performance that does not demand a single authoritative reading but rather stimulates the imagination to form its own conclusions. Through this questioning, the accepted neutrality of the photograph is revealed as fictitious. The image is tainted.

¹ Barthes: *Camera Lucida*, translated by Richard Howard, Fontana, London, 1984, p.32.

Peter Tiernan

Two poems

The moon again
Sniffing cobwebs
Spinning the flaws in the glass
Wearing dirty clouds
Made up in ice cream
Slouching on a factory
Telling lies to the steam

In the black sky
The moon's perfect tonight
A pearl in a purse.

Jane Williams

Street Kid

Her world has stick arms
and stick legs and everything else
is too big way out
of proportion Fat Head
that could topple
at any time

Mostly she's skinny enough
to slip through the cracks

and away ...

kangaroo

ripped from the dark
by headlights
the form of a body
rendered suddenly solid
against abstract motion
thuds once, twice
as his face
ethereal
passes my window
a kangaroo ghost
each sensitive hair
whisker, eyelash
etched drypoint
on the night
which prints one copy on my retina
before smashed glass and buckled steel
obliterate him
to a carcass of cracked bones

my sad hands in warm fur
pronounce him dead
the young men crowd round
eager as crows
they want to cut his throat
humane you know, in case he recovers
i know he will not
the american wants a photograph
with his blade against the neck
and i'm the only one here
who has shot or skinned animals
strange that i'm also
the only one grieving
the only one pleased
when the kangaroo proves
too tough for his metal

Dance to Your Daddy

"**O**ch, they're ... they're ... em, I'm keeping them for a good thing, angel."

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... bite my tongue ... 4 ... 5 ...

"Surely you don't need a man in your life before you can indulge in the ultimate luxury of wearing nice underwear."

Hand slaps down on my cheek. Won't cry. Won't ----

I run upstairs and, kicking the door shut, fall on the bed. Need to get a breath. Where's my inhaler? Aaaah. For crying out loud man, I was only stating a fact.

Cramps tug at my womb. I bite the pillow, and listen for footsteps on the stairs. Bloody hell. It was only some nice knickers, an innocent bra and a trial-size tube of hair-removing cream I got free with the groceries at the store. No one's asking her to go to a health farm in Beverley Hills. And a plastic surgeon in Hollywood.

Happy Birthday.

I feel her crying. Her and her nervous tendencies. Having cardiac arrests every time I say the bloody word. You know, I once said, "Man, I'm dying for a shit". She flipped.

I must have bought her what – at least half a dozen sets of silky underwear, a couple of neat bikinis, and what – say three vouchers for the sauna in town. All this on a good paper round

after school and a few hours in the store on Saturdays too.

If there's anything I can't stand it's people not using presents someone has gone out of their way to buy for them. I mean, alright, we've all had the Jumper Out Of Hell from Senile Auntie Flo, but there are times in life when you've just got to shut your face and smile through gritted teeth. (Oh – Auntie Flo is the only relative we ever visit. She stinks of piss and rouge, and she's at least a hundred and fifty. She's blind, deaf and on another planet. You know, it takes three bus journeys, a ferry and a taxi just to get there. Thing is, you could be a piece of talking shit for all she knows, because she doesn't seem to know we're there half the time. I'd rather die than go, but I learned to stop protesting ages ago. And it's always the same monotonous routine. Give her the sweeties (she doesn't even share them, which may be one consolation for going), then hold your breath as the slimy kiss sucks off your face and your lunch does ten somersaults and a hairy fit in your belly. She doesn't say much, only twitters at intervals. Like a crow. A dying one. And the saliva. Spilling like a string of pearls onto her pinkjumper. It's funny you know, when she does talk. She calls Ma 'George'. Ma says dementia does that to you.

Anyway, Ma right, she loves perfumes, and getting her hair done up all fancy. She really looks the business sometimes. With her hair all twirly bits and – (well her wig – she suffers from premature al-o-peesh-a, it runs in her ----) God, that spider up there's really bugging my brains.

I don't know. Maybe I shouldn't be the one buying Ma nice things. But I don't mind. Under the circumstances.

His name on the card. Hey, maybe that's what did it. Shit. I never thought of that.

Like Hell's Bells her sobs rise. Enough to waken the dead. And murder the living. I pull a pillow over my ears and kick the bed hard. Oh no – check me out in that mirror. Think I'll let my hair down – it looks kinda skimpy like this. I love my hair. It's full and thick and silky and I can wear it up or down or – hey

s'getting mighty dull out there.

I open the jewel box. It plays my song. *Our* song. We used to dance to it, with me stood on his feet, mad. We called the figurines after ourselves. That's me – the one with the rosy cheeks and big fancy frock. Over and over. Over and over he would wind up the box and we'd go gliding over the floor as grand as any King and Queen.

Ma cries every time she hears it. I wind it up again.

A crazy image flashes in my mind – any kids I ever have (fat chance with her around – I can't even mention a guy's name – even from a pop group – or she goes mad, says you shouldn't get too close to people, they try to get right into your business, into your life) – oh yes, the kids, baldy at five right, with false teeth and hobbling to school on zimmers. I laugh, almost choke, as the red handprint begins to fade to tingling pink on my cheek.

These pills are so vile. 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... Right, here goes. Whooh. I don't know what's worse, the taste or the tiny blades that stab at my spine. Nasty bastards. S'not as if I can draw any sympathy from her. See, she never seems to know what to say when it's my 'time'. You know I tried to broach the subject once and, after a few stuttering outbursts, she left the room. To 'wash the dishes'. I'd already washed the dishes. I felt sorry for her, in a – I don't know – a strange sort of way. I started putting extra boxes of Tampax in with the groceries.

Hey, maybe it's not natural. Maybe it's taboo. Like a lot of things in our house. Like the subject of his grave.

I hate this bit. The 'just-eaten-a-chalk-factory' taste. Not long till I hit JellyPark mind you. I like that bit. Give it a rap down there, eh. That's the 'poor-me-my-daughter's-a-nasty-wee-bitch' one. Hmmm. Wonder if I should go down and say sorry? I could murder a chip butty and some coke. Hell, this always happens. Bloody drama queen. I'm sat up here feeling guilty

for something she started.

The Menopause. Now that's what it could be. I read about it in a magazine. Mood swings? Yes. Nervy? Yes. Flying off the handle when someone commits the crime of – buying you a birthday present? YES! Everything I say is wrong these days. We hardly ever have a laugh any more. And going for a pizza is right out the window. Ever since I told her I've contacted the Cemeteries Department. I think the pain of losing him has made her block out where his grave is. I can't wait to surprise her. Flowers. We could take flowers. He'd like that. She must be nervous about it all I guess. But why does she have to take it out on me? I'm doing my best to help.

Well hey, check out that sky. Sun's gone down. Clouds roll violently. Like the anger on her greying brow. I light the fire. That's better. Wow! Here it comes! Rumbling hard. Like my belly. I love being up here when it's so angry out. Aaah. Beautiful.

She hates thunderstorms.

Like a TV screen switched on and off, his framed face is illuminated on the window ledge. Mustn't catch eyes with him. Hurts too much. Too ... too ... no, got to count to ten, control it. The gifts. The slap. This ... empty room. Cold and empty.

Everything that ever bugged me about her is beginning to amplify in my head. Stop it now. 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... Every fart she ever did reverberates like an earthquake in my ears.

Daddy. Where are you? Here, take my quilt. Stay out of the storm. Stay safe Daddy.

Blood oozes from my arm. I have to do this. She makes me.

Yellow ice-cream is smeared over my chubby sunburnt face, a sandy bucket sits lopsided on my head. Up on daddy's shoulders I'm perched, my chin on his head, my hands clasped over his eyes. The perfect family shot. Like a photographic develop-

ment ad. All sun, sand, sea and family fun. Daddy wears flip-flops and ma's bikini top for a laugh. Ma isn't in the photo.

Clutching the picture, I lie back and hold it to my heart. It's the only one I've got. *We've* got, rather. Ma says Granny McEvoy in Ireland's got all the family shots. So she can be close to us.

Check out that rain man. Very impressive. Very loud. Blood drips thickly from my arm. I suck it hard.

Aooow! What a fucker of an almighty cramp. Suddenly I find myself in the foetal position. 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... got to count to ten. Bite photo hard. Deep breath. Close eyes. His voice tells me everything will be alright.

In Ma's voice. In fucking Ma's voice. Stop it! Go away! Want to hear his voice. Daddy. Talk to me. Please. Why does she keep sneaking in Daddy, why does she keep sneaking in with her voice? Huh. Won't even let me have a minute with my own father. Go away, Ma's voice! Go away!

Somebody hold me. Pamper me. Bring me a hot water bottle and warm tea. Tuck me in, all cosy.

Big Da George would have tucked me in. He used to tickle me on his lap. On the big red chair. And tell me stories. Fantastic stories.

She hardly touches me any more. Except on special occasions. Like five minutes ago.

I ran up to her once right, and bounded on to her lap, pleading for my bedtime story. As my hand landed on the jelly lump under her belly, she shrank away from me, pushing me onto the floor. It must have been – ssshh – The Big C. We did tumours in science. They're dead common.

This is a nightmare. But I won't make the first move. I'd sooner starve to death.

Check out that ceiling. What a disaster. There's magic paint left over from the mural we did in the spare room too. You should see it. Ma's pretty good at art. She did most of the outlining. I did the colours. But every time I suggest doing my ceiling, it's "Not right now, dear." Huh. "In case we move again."

Know what really gets me, right. If I ever go into her room without knocking first, she turns into an orbit case struck by 1000 volts of electricity. She grabbed me once right, when I came to tell her the Avon lady was calling, and smacked me till my backside was numb. Just because she was in the nude.

I saw her breasts. They were tiny. I think she believes, or wants to believe, that I won't remember this. S'funny, they always look quite, well ample, like breasts, when she's dressed. She cried after she hit me, smothered me with kisses till I almost turned blue. My arse throbbed to the rhythm of her sobs, as she pulled me tight to her flat bosom. They hurt like Hell those sobs. They really did. Then she took me to see a Bette Davis film. She loves Bette Davis. That's where they met. Ma and Daddy. On a rainy afternoon downtown. So I guess you could say Bette Davis played cupid. She's also been a sometimes psychiatrist for my Ma.

Drowsiness. Rumbling belly. Thunder. Sobbing. Red-hot wedge tries to prise open my arse. I hang upside down and inside out from Mars.

I can remember my first period dead clear. I was six. There's this tree swing up the lane from ours right. Anyway, I fall off it one day, go flying through the air, and crash into a pile of bottles. My arse bursts wide open and the world falls out. I scream blue murder as my white hotpants become rapid damp red. Suddenly Mr Johnson from next door's running up to ours with me in his arms, pushing aside a sea of snotty kids whose white faces float around me like ghostly balloons, their stunned expressions rendering me already dead and buried.

Sssh. I think the noise has stopped. She must have cried herself to sleep. Might get a chip butty yet.

Nee-naw-nee-naw-nee --- Ambulance. Mr Johnson. Stairs. Ten at a time. Door. Bursts open. Ma. Drunk? Blood. Me. Arse. Throb. Throb. Ma. Face. Horror. Pain. Knife. Floor. Heap. Clothes. Ma. Sob. Blood. I hit the floor like a ton of bricks. Last thing I remember is my red shadow spilling over the cream carpet.

After that, the other kids stopped playing with me. There was gossip I think. But so what – my Ma was naked in the privacy of her own home. If Sam Johnson had a problem with that, he did have a fucking problem. And if my Ma had a really bad period – well, that's nature. Anyway, given the circumstances, with my life and arse at stake, ma's nudity was surely trivial.

Ma's right. People are strange.

So suddenly I was the Kid That Nobody Played With. And suddenly my poor Ma was the neighbourhood's 'Twisted Perv'. Some people are sick.

Suits. Two suits. Black? I'll never forget that chap on the door. And the look on Ma's poor face. We had to play 'Hide and Sleep' then. Or they might 'take me away'. "I love you", she kept saying, over and over, tears choking her. I managed to hold my breath for ages. Till my leg died. Then Ma covered my mouth, gently, to stifle my scream. I did "brilliant".

I think it was pretty soon after, that we moved out of town. Again. Another new school. Not fitting in with the other kids. Ma always managing to protect me from the world.

See that candle, the blue one, Ma doesn't like it. I use it to pray to Big Da George. I once caught her trying to pretend it'd fallen into the waste basket by accident. Blue isn't her best colour.

Bang! Hey what is this man – Born in a Park Week or what? Is that supposed to make me feel guilty? I can't believe she's going out. Probably to show me how tough she is. Look at her struggling against the rain heading for the pier. What's she

like?

“Never pass up an opportunity.” That’s what she used to say all the time. Well, some opportunities can’t wait.

I pick up the phone and begin to dial, keeping one eye on the window.

This is mad. Phoning a *cemeteries* department. Do people – alive people – actually work in places like that? A shiver runs through me, as the surprisingly pleasant voice takes my message and leaves me holding. Jingle Jangle, recorded tune, Jingle Jangle ---

What? Some kind of confusion? Well, is Mickey Mouse there then? What do you mean, you can’t fucking find it?

Blood. Heap. Stab. Stab. Gossip. Stab. Move. Blood. Suits. C.I.D.? Hide-and-Sleep. Run away. Got to run away. Keep ... running.

Can’t reach wall. Dizzy. Inhaler, where’s my in—

Falling. Falling. Spinning. The jewel box catches my arm. It crashes to the floor. Daddy Dancer’s head snaps off, and rolls towards me, stopping in the middle of the Me Dancer’s frilly skirt.

Lights go out in my head. Where’s ... my fucking inhaler? The head rocks before me, bouncing off the wall determinedly, trapped like a wild beast in the frilly skirt. The face slows down, laughing at me, laughing ... laugh-ing ... laugh ...

My Eclimbo Zam Tin

for Sunny

I wind her up
till she goes click,
and listen to her sing.
She makes coffee sometimes,
her teeth grinding the beans,
and sometimes she sings and makes coffee
at the same time.

I like her at christmas best.
She rattles her charms and jewellery
on the shelf.
This means she wants to get wound,
and so I wind her,
and she sings for me,
and sometimes makes me coffee,
sometimes both.

Once, my eclimbo zam tin, she
made me cry,
I cried, and she sang,
and together we busked in the night.
My eyes threw me coins.

I'll wind her up, now
till she goes click.
That means she's ready to sing,
and if you want she'll make you coffee,
and all three of us can sit
and play stars with the moon.

Eating Spiders With Elsie

On the planked red verandah,
looking down
into some forest
we weren't allowed to play in,
Elsie and me
ate fat spiders.

We got juice
and small hairy bits
spread across our
smiles
and greedy tongues
and trickling
like thick honey
from our
chins.

Everyday
waking with a yawn,
then out onto the vast
verandah
searching the cracks and holes and slits,
pulling them out,
biting down,
and feeling that
soft tickling
tumbling down down
down
into our big
tummies.

Elsie and me,
every summer,
on the edge of the red verandah,
we ate them,
those big fat spiders.

Dead Cat

Is it our fault he ended it in 1978
and blasted off to planet Fundamentalism?
He left behind handfuls of inspiration
that we now clutch with bewilderment.
Most of his classics were recorded within two years
but now, aging gracefully, wearing a white doily,
he wishes harm on Salman Rushdie
and disassociates himself from gentle creativity.
While his greatest hits c.d. spins silently
you realise it's been ten years
since he traded his flares for intolerance.

Ian McBryde

The New Gods

"Sex and horror are the new gods."

— *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*

Join
with me let us
make our sacrifice
our new communion.

Sex crime.
Perfect.
Both gods can rest

both altars blessed
and ready.
We celebrate
the licked lips

the swollen nipples
the blind dry promise
of advertising.

We bow
to the red fog
of the headshot
the scream in stereo

the crimson dip
of the razor.
We rejoice

in the stapled labia
of centrefolds
the bold eyes
opening in slow motion.

Our lights shine on
the rapist's face
the shape on the ground

ours is the slow
drumming of guns
the hymn
of the loaded syringe.

On billboards
the pretty one's eyes
follow you as though

she's been promised.
Before the new gods
our altars fill up.
Everywhere footage

of the skin of women
and the black blood
of newspaper stills.

Everywhere the unuttered
question; how much
can this skin stretch
how long can we possibly

swim in such blood
and how quickly how
often how far?

Stationless

The straps
of my package are

severed. Its flap
is up and everything

is spilling out.
Calendars. Spring.

Trapdoors. Hymns.
A slither of ribbons.

The noise on the roof.
The plump, slow

spider of you.
Mirrors. Whirlpools.

The moon
through glass.

The golden room.
The weight of snow.

Rain. Your face
at the window.

The split
rock. The cut

blossoms. Fresh
cracks in the glass.

Reproduction Victorian Town House

Blank walls,
frightening
sheets of white paper
waiting for the first lines
of someone's life-poem.
A lettuce-coloured bath,
deep as a salad bowl,
for a fresh, crisp couple
with no children or animals
who never get sick
and never shout at each other.
Cupboards that keep themselves empty.
Windows that open easily,
even for strangers.
A house where the dinner set doesn't chip,
the pot plants never die,
the ants and mice,
if they ever get in,
search hopelessly
for crumbs in corners
innocent of secret dust.
Nothing moulders in the fridge.
The carpet refuses
to register footprints
or friendly stains.
At night silence
closes its curtains
on a house that doesn't whisper
anyone's story.

Apartheid

After kindergarten
a line was drawn
across the playground
separating boys
from girls,
an invisible wire that cut
friend from friend,
shocked trespassers back
into obedience.
Too rough and dirty for girls
the guards said
pointing to
blackened knees,
torn shirts,
and bloody noses,
but from our side
we could only see
that boys had room
to run.

Blood Blisters

Born of the same blood
you rub me up the wrong way sister
like a blister on my heel
or my heart
two peas from the same pod
with nothing to say
and no time
for each other
opposites that don't attract
yet we keep on trying
flying at each other
like two crazy birds
and who can tell
if we're hugging
or holding each other off

Michael Scammell

Magnolias at Night

Pressed against formed
Petals
Blood-red
In the arching beam
And dead

In subtle windows
Each broken image
A perfect formed
Nocturnal branch
Of chromium

At night
The magnolias
Disfigure
Each silver blade
Buckled in a crimson beam
Tangled
Twisted limbs
Of light

I Drive Cars

I Drive Cars
Machinery
Is in me.
Petrol runs in my veins
While nicotine fingers
Twiddle on the dial
Of the radiator.
While my foot presses
The accelerator,
And I breathe the exhaust
From the pipe
Down the hose

Into the enclosure.
I Drive Cars
Diesel fuel is in me.
Carbon dioxide
Fumes
Fill me
Like
A choked canary
In a mine-shaft.
I Drive Cars
One giant gear-stick
Throb of engine
Hums.
The pistons
Creak
Shut
And seize.

I Drive Cars
Do you
Run
On the smell
Of an oily rag
Too?

Glass Lizards

The discord
of trains

Rattling by
Like glass lizards

Its melody
Beats
The fractured
Steel cable

Lounge Poet

His body is wedged
Into his suit
Like dirt under fingernails
Angular and thin
A modern sculpture that means something

Not clinically
Crazy
Rather
In the Box Office sense of the word

He visits psychiatrists
Shrinks who talk about
Art
And locate it in the left testicle

Regrettable life
Filled
With
Slit-eyed morons
Waiting for the lights to go down

Ready to move in
And
Alter his consciousness
On a more permanent basis

Opening Night / Canberra

The sun on the back of the hand has disappeared.
The eagle in the stomach flies away.
There is no singing here;
No breasts, no body paint.
The dry river cannot be seen.
The lights are too bright.
"We don't know this country," the old men say.
The penises lie unoffered.
The hunt is through evening bags.
Lipstick, not ochre.
Chicken & champagne are the sacred objects.
Instead of campfires, ashtrays.
There are no tracks where the people stand.
The old men, lost in a wilderness of bow ties,
struggle against the indignity of dinner suits.

Cleaner Fish

Their genus is insatiable: *Labroides dimitiatus*.
They feed in schools.
Working close to the gills,
they scavenge food from the mouths of other fishes.
The females follow the male. They go where he goes.
Resistance is out of the question.
There is no thought of subverting his authority.
Freedom is not part of their vocabulary.
There is no alliance against this
ancient single-mindedness.
Instead,
the females form a pecking order under him.
When the male dies the alpha female takes his place.
The cells of her flesh revolt.
The bony sockets in her skull
are too small for the eyes.
She grows larger, acquires male organs ...
mysteriously,
another female arrives.

Overland

Features, Stories, Poetry
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The New Boy in Town

I was the new boy in town.

The oldest had just left on the 10:56 bound for Disbelief dressed in a carnival suit and carrying his entire summer wardrobe in a leather satchel. It was a pleasant trip by all reports, leaving in the early morning vagueness, crossing several states of euphoria and winding down through capitulation to arrive in time for an afternoon's farce.

Very catchetory!

I decided to render myself a cup of coffee so I liaisoned into the nearest drug dispensary and drew a perfectly proportioned flat white upon the arabesque tiles, quickly sketching in a croissant with jasper johns and butter to fill my empty entrails. A telegram floated down to land on my table. I opened it.

Destiny desires your company. Leave now,
travel by the line of least resistance and
convert all currency you may have acquired.

How permanently disabled I thought, perhaps this mystery needs further elocution. So I leapt to my moccasins and strode elongatory out of the dispensary and into the morning traffic, careful not to outdistance the bougainvillea that was now following me. The question was, who knew that I was in town? No clues were left from my last foray into frippery, no previous persons were without the full resume of my *raison d'être* with which I misled their enquiries. Yet there was most certainly a member of the plant species shuffling serpentine along the sidewalk attempting to blend with the coffee shop cavalcades.

Something must be done!

Without further ado, ado, ado-da-dey I crossed the street with a nudist colony and got a road to no-wear. This ploy worked perfectly as bougainvillea rarely recognise comic indifference. Leaving the scene of the allusion I parlayed my ambulance contribution for a return trance to nirvana and made to measure my date, entering once again into the public arena and cut a swathe of fine opinion through the cardboard cutouts returning from their ovarian lunches.

It was true.

The inept made me see puce, the faithless left me with a longing for advanced cattle prod technology and the sincere produced a state of emergency.

A date with Destiny!

Word around was that she was obtuse, full of aspect, but her facade counted for nothing with me. All I wanted was some conversation and being a tall, lean, hunk of vain imperative that would stop at nothing to carry his mindless profile as far up the evolutionary ladder as possible, this gave my leather tension.

In other bards this town was in for a fatal injection of flatulence.

PANDORA

PO Box 1090
Carlton Vic 3053

Women's ways of healing and spirituality.
Features articles, poetry, letters, graphics.
Editor: Soni Silvan Stecker

DogBowie

He turns his attention to the next object, a cassette case turned face down, its antique status clear from the myriad scratches that reflect off the black body of the shell, the clear plastic back window now so cloudy that he has to pick it up in order to make out the list of titles printed on the cover folded inside, and reads:

Side One: Future Legend/Bewitched - Diamond Dogs - Sweet Thing - Candidate - Sweet Thing [Reprise] - Rebel Rebel

Side Two: Rock'n'Roll With Me - We Are The Dead - 1984 - Big Brother - Chant of the Ever Circling Skeletal Family

recognising the list of titles instantly, which evoke songs he hasn't heard for more than a decade, the album so clear in his mind that he could have listened to it that very morning, the experience of coming across something so forgotten yet so familiar in this most unexpected of places leaving him somewhat stunned, as if he were staring at a piece of his own mind, a neural cluster that had been objectified and sucked into the maelstrom of the market, only to be accidentally rediscovered years later, on sale here in this most unexpected of places, his surprise so great that he turns the cover over with a delicacy usually reserved for something precious and valuable, eager to inspect the cover illustration, to recapture some of the past excitement he felt whenever he saw it, nothing preparing him for the complete disappointment at what he sees; the image that has been triggered off in his mind by the list of titles is the twelve-inch album format he possessed when he was an adolescent and had sold years later, along with the rest of his record collection, to raise money to go overseas, the memory of the album cover clearer and more vibrant than the tiny faded reproduction he holds in his hand, its potency dulled and distanced not only by the size but also by the scratched, bleary

window of plastic, the physical equivalent of the years that have passed, that separate him from the time he stayed for hours in his bedroom, lying on the floor on his stomach, chin propped up on elbows, speakers blaring only inches away as he gazed at the cover, an airbrush illustration of David Bowie, who gazed back at him, cool, self-contained, his enlarged right pupil carefully rendered by the illustrator – one of the distinguishing (divine? demonic?) marks that contributed so much to his aura, to his other-worldliness – his cheeks gaunt, his body, the colour of dried blood, stretched out naked on bare floorboards, his thin, sinewy arms propping up his equally sinewy torso, the rest of the figure continued on the back cover (which, as an adolescent, he had ritually spread open only once he had put on Side Two, there being a race for him to get from the turntable back to his position on the floor in the few seconds it took for the stylus to negotiate the first section of blank groove), the two panels forming a long rectangle that reminded him of his favourite cinema format, 70mm, the remainder of Bowie's body revealed to be that of a dog, the illustrator's choice of the colour of dried blood now clear, evoking the skin of a flayed animal, or of rotting flesh, or of very short fur through which the pinkness of skin peeps, the twisting base of the figure's thorax giving way to an elongated belly that in turn gives way to lean, muscular haunches, the shanks thin and elegant, the space between the legs a dark hollow, the genitals, formerly prominent, having been airbrushed into oblivion by order of RCA executives, this decision, rather than robbing the illustration of its potency (in the great tradition of Kens and Barbies), adding to it, emphasising its androgyny, making it more of an abomination than it would have otherwise been, his adolescent curiosity about what was hidden in the black triangular space so aroused that it gave birth to a game during which he would conjure up the most fantastic genitals imaginable: combinations of male and female, human and animal, plant and animal, human and mechanical, mechanical and electronic, or further combinations of all these; this game not the only one he used to play with the cover, but the warm-up for a much more compelling game, one that involved running his eyes from one end of the flayed figure to the other, Bowie's bland gaze fixed on him as he tried to determine the exact point

where the human became dog and the dog became human, with each scan more dog visible in the human, more human visible in the dog, until he himself would look in a small, circular make-up mirror pilfered from his sister's room (still smeared with her lipstick and rouge) and see himself as a dog, and then in that dog see himself as a human.

Poetry on Paper

Poetry on Paper was published years ago at the Rochester Castle Readings by Laurie Flannery, Ken Smeaton and Brian Crump. Write a poem one week: instant feedback the next. It was revived at the Perseverance, at \$1 a copy, to raise money to print "For The Voice" – Rex Buckingham's poems. It now lives at the Dan O'Connell to help finance the anthology of local poets Rex was working on when he died. When this is done, it is hoped *Poetry On Paper*, with increased circulation will pay contributing poets, come out weekly or fortnightly, publish, as it has done, illustrious poets or somebody who has had something extraordinary occur to them at a reading, and keep its encouraging immediacy and freshness.

Contributions are being solicited – original poems, drawings, ideas and (allowing for copyright) poems that have meant a lot to contributors and may mean a lot to other readers.

Send contributions or order back copies – available for \$1 each (\$1 extra for postage applicable for less than three ordered) – from P.O. Box 429 Brunswick, 3056.

The Day Claude Cried

Claude has been staying with us for a while. Gabrielle says she hates his guts but mum says we must respect visitors. John and Ena back out of the room when he starts talking and I listen politely. Gabrielle burps along to his words and then tells him to shut up.

Today Dog ate Mum's tennis sock. For five minutes we discussed the problem of it passing through her system. Ena wondered what colour it would be when it came out the other end. John didn't think it would get that far. I agreed and suggested we take her to the vet. Mum said she would have Dog on her wrath. Gabrielle said she hoped the sock would get stuck in her heart and give her a heart-attack. I told her I didn't think that was a very nice thing to say and Mum hit her in the head. Claude appeared in the doorway and sighed.

Claude said:

Today I have swallowed the world. My system is having a bad reaction to it. I can feel trees spouting through the walls of my veins and my stomach is puffing up. I am worried that a nuclear bomb has exploded and is overloading my liver with radioactive waste. Or maybe all of the CFCs in the atmosphere are creating a void in my mind and, if they do, the sun will burn right through me and my kidneys will be roasted. What if bushfires destroy my lungs and what if high-rise buildings give me constipation? I have tried to get rid of the world. I have tried laxettes and putting my fingers down my throat but I've only suffered diarrhoea and vomiting. God I'm worried.

We had always presumed Dog to be a simpleton but she suddenly proved herself to be a bit of a dark horse by saying to Claude:

You talk too much

You self-indulge yourself too much
You centre your self-worth around yourself too much
You are me-ish, I-ish
You never stop I-am-ing
My-point-of-viewing
Or if-I-were-ing
You learn languages
So you can Je, Ich, Io
And Moi, Mich, Mio
Instead of asking how are you
You ask how am I
But worse than that
You answer it

So today you swallowed the world and found one more excuse not to live like the rest of us, one more excuse to sit in your little glass bubble and choke on your carbon dioxide, one more excuse not to appreciate the different shades of green at dusk.

Dog drew breath but was silenced by Claude who said to Dog: What would you know? You only swallowed a sock.

He then continued:

I'm worried that the AIDS virus will fall into my bloodstream and infect me or that there'll be a Reclaim the Night march on my spine or drug addicts will puncture my heart as they shoot up or prostitutes with their filthy habits will clog my system.

Gabrielle shouted at Claude to shut up or she'd kick his head in. John and I demanded to know how Dog had learnt to speak French, German and Italian, while Ena rolled around laughing nervously. Mum looked very stern and angry and said to Gabrielle:

Excuse me Young Lady. I will not have you showing disrespect for visitors. Apologise to Claude now or Go To Your Room.

And as for you Dog . . .

Gabrielle is tough as nails and rough as guts. She's the school bully. If anyone has a problem with the teachers they go to her. If anyone has a problem with Gabrielle they change schools.

Gabrielle is that tough she's slashed her girlfriend's name into her upper arm.

Gabrielle refused to apologise and refused to go to her room. She continued to taunt Claude while Mum got more and more angry. Dog also continued to lecture Claude and ran around singing this little ditty over and over again.

Dog:

You are selfish

You are a sook

You are not a very nice person

You are a nitwit

Drooling out nitwitticisms

You've found another excuse to moralise, condemn and criticise, another excuse to patronise, point the finger and blame. Are you inside the world you've swallowed Claude? Can you feel the fruits of the world falling ripe and rolling into your throat? And Claude, did you ever stop to think of the way there is dead quiet before it rains? How the birds stop singing, the trees stop swaying and there's a sweet earthy smell? The clouds swell dark and heavy, a glowing metallic grey before the first drops fall.

Gabrielle to Claude:

You think you are the only person in the world with problems. All you do is talk shit. How can you swallow the world you idiot?

Mum:

I won't have this in my house. Go to Your Room now.

Dog:

You are a nitwit

Drooling out witnitticisms

Ena:

Oh leave her alone Mum, she's right.

Dog:

You are selfish

You are a sook

Mum:

Stop that now Dog and don't tell me who is right and wrong
thank you very much Ena.

Gabrielle:

And what about serial killers, what about rapists, what about
people dying of starvation in warzones, what about women
being forced to have abortions in some countries and not being
allowed to in others, what about fundamentalist murders,
what about that three-year-old boy bashed to death the other
day by his step-father? What about him Claude? Did you
swallow him too?

Mum:

I'm warning you Gabrielle.

Gabrielle:

And there is an ongoing nuclear war in the Pacific Islands,
Claude, where women have jellyfish babies because of the
radiation. Are they clogging up your arteries? And the hole in
the ozone isn't going to disappear with you smoking a packet
of cigarettes a day or with your foul-mouthed breath in the

atmosphere. It's about time someone fixed you up.

Mum:

Shut up NOW Gabrielle. Claude has every right to his own problems. Everything is relative. Now stop showing disrespect for visitors and go to your room.

Claude:

Oh my head is aching. It must be the carbon monoxide from the traffic speeding up and down my arteries. I think there's been an accident in my elbow joint. A semi-trailer didn't make it around the bend and has ignited. The heat is unbearable. And in my bladder I can feel the crashing of waves. I'm going to burst open, overflow. I'm in agony.

Dog:

You are not a very nice person
You are a nitwit

Dog is a bad dog. Bad dog. Mum hits her in the head. Mum hits her again. Ena says that maybe if she hits her hard enough the sock will come flying out. John doesn't think so. He's sure that it's lodged in her stomach by now. Gabrielle says that she'll kill Mum if she hits Dog one more time. I tell Mum and Gabrielle to calm down and Claude stands and cries in the doorway. He sobs and sobs. He stomps his feet and shouts that it's not fair. We have spoilt it for him. The ocean is streaming from his eyes and the world that he has swallowed is drying up. All of its water content is draining from his body and he can feel the earth splitting within him. Rocks and boulders follow out the tears. He can hear fish gasping for water. He knows that soon he will have cried the world out of his system and that it will be lying in huge crusty lumps around his eyes.

Dog wishes the sock would lie in huge crusty lumps around her eyes. She is sick of the sensation it has caused.

A Heart That Makes You Feel Limb

She began looking for herself in a supermarket. Idle strolleys and custom-made, stickered labels offering a two-dollar-back guarantee seemed to be the most obvious choice to start searching. She needed some sort of interesting beginning, a place where people freely conversed, talked about birth, munched on the real soul foods of life, listened to suggestive cash register talk that offered peace of mind and above all, she needed a connection, the missing link to all her problems at the moment. After all, she didn't really have long to live and the thought had crossed her mind that the only sensible thing to do was to retrieve the missing part of her thumb.

She wished her name was Alaska, but it wasn't. She wished she liked to talk about entomology, but she found no insect worth discussing. She secretly wished all her friends wrestled with the idea of getting up in the morning like she did and that they could all become espionage fanatics, circus animals or just plain old window installers, but of course all but one of them had any real niggings to be any of those things. She thought she was going to turn thirty next year and she often thought about useless trivia to do with the body and its many miraculous functions. To say she was six foot would be a gross overstatement and to say that she wasn't childishly fascinated with the mind and coincidence would be an outright lie. We will, however, have to bend the truth here, for a while at least anyway.

Walking into the supermarket was easy enough, even though she did have the task of informing her former employer that somewhere in the dark, oozing depths of the meat tray in the delicatessen was a small, pink (hopefully uncooked) portion of her hand. She remembered what she was thinking when it was

sliced. How the geometrics of the room collided and tangled in the corners like fresh meat tucked neatly in a roll. The colours of the deli came to resemble moulding cheese and the neon sign that was splashing GET YOUR TREATS! turned into a landscape of blood spatters, half with her life sauce and half with her mind overstating the dramatics just a little. The sign seemed to weep at her hopelessness as she fell to the ground singing in a stunted breath, "Thought of you as everything I've had but couldn't keep ..." And as she remembered singing 'Pale Blue Eyes', she caught herself looking into her own peppercorn eyes in the reflection of the dairy case door. Had she slept last night? She wasn't entirely sure but she did have a washy memory of eating soap and the distinct sound of a sharpened razor swooping through the air.

Keeping everything in perspective, she talked to her old boss and quietly and logically explained that something happened to be polluting the otherwise sanitary place of business (if raw flesh and dropped chickens were considered sanitary). Considering there was a loud mention of insanity, two questions of hygiene and several profanities that caused one mother shopping to cover her three-year-old son's ears and explain that a pig would not be able to fit in any human orifice, not even an overblown sassy one, the conversation did come to a satisfying conclusion for both of them. She found her remaining piece of thumb, wet and discarded but still most obviously there. And the head of these young deli girls took satisfaction in concluding what she had suspected all along, that this particular woman had found huge pleasure in sabotaging the workplace with chaos, disorder, revolt. No, this young person would amount to nothing, not if she was going to leave bits of her limbs in deliberate places and especially not, she thought as she scratched her behind, if she was going to claim that such a thing was about to change someone's life.

If everything that was worth something was easily obtained, then her thumb had little value. She believed, correctly, she thought, that if there was struggle in the pursuit of anything, including something that she could desire to the brim of excitement, then the gain was wrongfully owned. It had to be

part of her life without force or complication. Perhaps this was a different matter, but this matter that she was carrying around in a semi-sealed, plastic bag was something she had correctly owned. No, the thumb police would not be knocking on her door for a while. She needed to buy some time. And what better place to purchase an existential thought than in a public arena with her mind glued together with half-expressed ideas, an ex thumb and a note, mildly creased at the edges from hope and desperation.

Momentarily she saw it all in front of her. The life she supposed she wanted to cling on to and, through the glass doors of the shop front, she saw a bird struggling in amongst trees then fly off almost gallantly as it soared across the midst of nowhere, armed only with a bright future and a paper bag completely covering its unlucky face. She thought of the building or longer away still, the mountain the bird was bound to encounter and paralleled the comic creature's destiny to that of a one-time boyfriend with a hot, steamy wash cloth covering his face in the shower whilst she and a few friends video-taped him, unaware, uncovered and unattractive with his gargling and loud bodily function. The connection could have been more poignant but it did leave her with a feeling of reassurance and security. Misguided fates came to those with paper bags over their heads, and same also, for that matter, to anyone with a blood lip from laughing ridiculously hard and biting down to stop the very embarrassing nature (of the bird's beak finally poking through the face mask) from the view of all those not watching. She had to protect him, he looked stupid.

So is the note, she thought in a distracted agreement with herself. If he's not here within fifteen minutes, I'm going to leave. She was whispering to a packet of white rice. Fifteen minutes was, after all, a long time to wait for the rest of your life. That thought made her ponder about the perplexing and hard-to-answer question of "what's your favourite shade of purple?". Answering yourself is always difficult, like waiting. That was what she had concluded anyway, while standing under a clock, wearing her favourite vinyl jacket with the sleeves so long, suggesting it was from someone perhaps a

little taller, with a brief note held in her wanting hands and an expression on her face that passers-by would have surmised as a young girl deciding what to buy for the 'big' dinner date with Mr. 'Met Him Only The Other Day'. Was it going to be the pasta or the eggroll? She looked lost, worried, nervous and of course, extremely passionate.

Spaghetti Westerns had always included the bad guy, the good guy, guns and a whole lot of true love. She remembered one in particular where the lead guy had proposed to the lady behind the bar and the two of them fought the gun-totin' baddies together, all in the name of romance. This supermarket the main scene for the next love interlude in her life. She wanted the credits to hint at something better to come, beaming white lights and building sound to set the mood. Not only were the two main characters strangers, they were lovers, of a weird manner with one thread of similarity – they were both going to die if they didn't meet.

Expectations are never straightforward. Anticipation, on the other hand, can be, even with the layers of distress, thrills and disappointments. The minutes before the moment can be harrowing and sometimes hollow, but never dull. Even when the rise to the occasion might seem unimportant or non-consequential, there is always that element of doubt. She was uncertain of the way she should act, confused about what it all should mean and worst of all, she was hoping that the thing she most dreaded would never happen. It wasn't tripping over a discarded can of baked beans or making a fool of herself by asking why her neighbour put sixteen bottles of dirty water to rest on his lawn everyday. It was more than those things. She dreaded actually liking him and the expectation of that was suddenly making her sick.

She reread his note in those final seconds, casually peering at the clock, waiting for the structural framework of the timepiece to explode. She wasn't sure why, but she consoled herself with the thought that dramatic, elaborate things always happen to those in love. That is why, she figured, fireworks always went off behind people kissing in champagne commercials. This

made her feel the note. It had heat. She had started to burn it two days ago, when the idea of meeting this person had become too much to face. The words, however, were not as heart-scorching. Just simple facts: meet me at the supermarket, blah, blah, three o'clock, wear a special fragrance, blah, means alot to me, end paragraph. Something did stick out that impressed her more than the other sentences. Bring, he wrote, your most bizarre possession, something you would have pain parting with, something, he added, you could give as an expression of the warmth you have written and spoken of and something, he concluded (and this bit thrilled her no end) that is more precious than consummating our friendship with blood, saliva or any other sweet extracts (couldn't he just say the word 'cum'?). Yours forever, J.

Yours forever. That sounded like perfume and he sounded, well, like a stranger and he was stranger than fiction or her neighbour or the covered-up bird with no direction. He was real, even for two people bending the truth just for their own fantasy. He couldn't be more perfectly odd. They had known each other through their mothers and this food dwelling. Each mother (three including J's stepmother) bumped into the other one in a three-trolley pile-up near the granny smith apples. Words went flying between the two who had known each other through one being caught in bed with the other one's husband and the third mother, with a daughter who disliked grapefruit and watermelon, tried to keep the peace. Confused? So were they, when all of the sudden, the real mum of J started to cry and talk about loneliness. It seemed that her son was a lone guitarist who sat in his room and waited for the world to come to him. He liked the radio and borrowing sweaters from old girlfriends. He had an amusing sense of smell and had a strange dislike for certain watery fruits and he would never sing songs after ten o'clock. The mother with the daughter who disliked loud noise while she read just before going to sleep, mentioned that her daughter, who did look a bit sad and depressed, would like to meet such a man. It was density, her father had told her, not destiny, but her heart and numerous hours on the telephone had cemented her belief in him and in herself.

She began looking for herself in a supermarket. Star-struck consumers dreamingly passing the bakery and couples holding hands while secretly humming the eighties elevator music had to be the ideal supporting cast for their own private movie. And here it was, at three minutes past the hour, the meeting, all covered in glances and hair over their faces to disguise the awkwardness of looking the other person completely over and wishing to be in their arms, but it's still too soon. Image was imperative to maintain and what better image than someone who is desperate and cool at precisely the same moment. Timing would be their key to happiness. She couldn't think of a better time to complete the requests that were in the letter. She made him smell her hair, it was washed in lemons. She told him that this was important and they would have to do it again sometime. She handed him her most prized possession, something that would make him feel queasy with love in the guts, an object that proved she loved him. Of course he glanced at her wide-eyed and surprised moving backward a little at the thought of getting close. She looked quizzical and somewhat hurt. She whispered in a breathy voice that sounded innocent and disappointed. You don't want my thumb? I know it's green-looking, she frowned, but it's especially for you. And with that he kissed her as hard as he could. He could not have been happier and she too. The kiss was as moist as her murdered thumb.

They would have died if they had not met. There were too many bursting hearts and minds that couldn't keep still. Her thumb would now not mean anything to anyone, except for an angry customer who discovered it in his Virginia Ham sandwich. And where would that leave our two characters? Probably at home looking through their windows waiting for someone to write about them and give them interesting names like Jelly Bean Smith or Antarctica. Luckily for them, no one would bother.

Different Light

Some places
When the evening light turns frosted blue
and you manage to get your eyes right,
you can sense the land, how it used to be,
how it's still like it's always been –
volcanoes breathing beneath national park
picnics;
ice-floes waiting to grind through the city;
forests sneaking up beside the freeway;
new dinosaurs ready to stride the plains;

and always
across the distance,
an elegant patient calm.

You think we know it.
You think we own it.
You think we can take it,
consume it, destroy it ...

Well, it's trickin' ya. Just watching,
just being,
just is ...

waiting
for one more ecological imbalance
to work itself through.

Sarah French

Cravings 1 – Under My Skin

for Anna, Angie and the two Susans

in the dream he can't fuck me because my whole body is a banquet table, covered in food; the soft gooey armour of cakes with blush-coloured icing, the crisp amber skin of chicken, clinging to my ribs, custard resting in my collarbones, grapes clustering in my armpits; my whole body is a banquet table, but he doesn't want to eat anything that isn't my flesh

in the dream he's grabbing handfuls of food from my body and flinging them across the room, but there'll be no telltale stains on the wallpaper because he's stolen the walls – i see her in the kitchen, watching us as she pulls on her gloves before turning to soothe clean the dishes in the sink

in the dream he's stolen the walls, his torso is smeared with grease and crumbs, i can recognise my prayer lamp, a fifteen-watt bulb of guilt, vacant-eyed toys stare

in the dream he digs through layers of feast to find my flesh – words hover, helium balloons quiver, above my head, the ones he bought me from the fair, i paid for in flinching kisses, got my pgr rating with, words – i can't reach them, lure them onto my tongue, communion-wafer obedient

in the dream i'm paralysed by his authority, which is the lines of his face, thick breathy threats, his belonging to this family that he reminds me i'm a disposable part of

in the dream i can't call for my mother because i don't know her name

in the dream i'm fighting him with my eyes, their blue flinting into grey, he gouges the food from my body and throws it –

thick slabs of bread and jam, grey meat, yellow clots of fat – to
find my nakedness

in the dream my eyes are calling the food back, it hovers in the
air above my body, circling around my flesh, my fear, unable
to land

in the dream he's being pelted, boomerang-style, by laming-
tons, soft thudding against his back, bruised by projectiles of
oranges, kicked by drumsticks, punched by scotch eggs – his
face is grisly with chicken vindaloo

in the dream i have no voice because the only tongue i have in
my mouth is his

in the dream the food – fist assault – only works for so long as
a method of distraction – there are twenty-four hours in this
night, there are seven days in this night, there are twelve
months in this night, there are twenty years in this night

in the dream my banana nightie is bunched up under my arms,
toys stare – the woman is watching the palaciers, knitting me
a poncho, her thoughts one row purl one row plain wishing
she was susan hampshire

in the dream a large hand over my nose and mouth, an
anaesthiologist's mask, smells of palmolive gold, i'm waiting
to be told, why he bothers showering before this – i breathe
brokenly into the palm, my own breath – hot, deodorised –
forces itself back on me, choking off consciousness

in the dream inside the dream the food banquet is under my
skin, where he can't get at it, soft sagging armour, an invisible
cloak of fat-lined flesh

in the dream inside the dream, at this vast distended weight,
skin puffed up, blown rubber too thick to pierce, i'm never
hungry, never lonely, never scared, never sexy, no one can
sink into this skin, with tongue-teeth-cock-words, nothing
gets in

in the dream inside the dream i'm so big i break houses, from
the inside out, their four-bedroom brick'n'tile shattered by my
skin, shards of the domestic fly at me, but i'm too big for pain,
i make visible the walls they've stolen, my flesh swells until it
finds the camouflaged plaster which cracks as it breaks against
my shoulders

in the dream inside the dream i'm so vast that no one can parcel
me up with a glance

in the dream inside the dream i can disregard insomnia,
because a landmass of fat is protecting my sleep, my flesh
rising in a mountainous landscape, climate-controlled by my
body, a city could get lost in one of my nostrils, never be seen
again, i wear atlantis in my navel like a ruby, it would take the
entire population of china just to tickle my toes

in the dream inside the dream i'm too full for a second helping
of anger

in the dream inside the dream, dreams can no longer hurt me

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Mr Gaites, Maker of Fences

I was surprised when the Suburbia Control Department sent an Officer to my home. She introduced herself as Mrs Walker, then promptly handed me a notice which demanded that I cut my front lawn.

I tried to explain to Mrs Walker that I worked for the Suburbia Control Department as a Maker of Fences, but I guessed from the sceptical expression on her face that this was no excuse. Mrs Walker was very polite and reminded me to read the regulations regarding care and maintenance of D-Grade Housing, into which I had recently moved after a long stint in the country with the Rural Control Division.

"What regulations?" I said. Officer Walker looked at me in astonishment.

"You don't have the D-Grade Regulation Brochure?"

"No, I don't."

"I shall have to look into this. Are you completely sure?"

I looked at Officer Walker sagaciously and smiled.

"Remember the Honesty Policy?" I said. "You must be aware of my reputation." It was clear from the awkward movement of her eyes that she was indeed aware of my truthful nature. She had to know these things. It was part of her job. Officer Walker looked more than a little confused. She managed to conjure a hapless expression of mild apology, and before leaving, she handed me a letter, with the word 'confidential' stamped diagonally in red across its front.

"This is from Mr Dobson, Lawn Maintenance District Manager," she said. I could see from her twitching fingers that Officer Walker was very nearly worried. As she walked down the driveway, casting a somewhat horrified glance at my apparently unruly front lawn, her right arm quivered and her hand stretched out like a nervous spider as if wanting to write a report straight away. It was difficult not to feel sorry for her as she strutted off up the street. Questions would be asked, no doubt about it.

I placed the letter on the coffee table, picked it up again, put it back down then proceeded to repeat this process five times until, in a state of mild panic, I ripped open the letter. It read as follows:

Dear Mr Gaites,

By now you have received a verbal request to cut your lawn as well as a notice of the same.

As Maker of Fences in the Suburbia Control Department, I am surprised by your apparent aesthetic blindness.

I am fully aware that you have recently been transferred from the Rural Control Division, where grass is considered a precious commodity and an integral part of Farm Growth Procedure. However, I'm sure you understand that this is not the case in Suburbia, particularly not within the D-Grade Housing System, where visual conformity is mandatory, as is compliance with the Honesty Policy to which I believe you contributed during its inception five years ago, at the National Ideas Convention.

It would certainly sadden us to be forced to relegate you to E-Grade Housing, where visual aspects of life are less important. We are in the unfortunate dilemma of having no other option than to consider such a move if your rural tendencies aren't nipped in the bud, so to speak.

We hope you understand our concern in this matter. The world is dependent on Classified Compliance and as you well know, our aim is for people to move up, to better themselves and their lifestyles. For a member of our community to take a backward step is painful for us to see and so totally unnecessary.

Please feel free to phone me at any time and we can clarify any misunderstandings. Apart from the aberrant lawn problem, I have it from the Senior Board of Control that you are surpassing all expectations as regards your position as Maker of Fences.

You may be interested to know that twelve of your fence designs will be included in the International Fence Fair, to be held this September. Six of these designs have already been

accepted by the Overseas Enclosure Organisation, and are expected to earn in excess of sixteen million dollars in exports over the coming financial year.

On a personal note, I believe that this in itself is a very good reason to keep your house in order, so to speak.

Sincerely yours,

Mr Dobson

Lawn Maintenance District Manager.

I felt angry. The Honesty Policy suggested that given the right circumstances, expression of such emotions was a healthy thing. I decided to take action.

I phoned Mr Dobson immediately and explained, in no uncertain terms, that no copy of the relevant regulations had been included in my Relocation Kit.

"Yes, I know," he said. "Officer Walker rang me as soon as she heard." I looked outside as he spoke and, for the first time since moving in, studied the aesthetics of my lawn. The grass wasn't that long and I felt like telling Mr Dobson to come around and take a look for himself. In the nick of time, I remembered the Courtesy Manual and transferred my irritation to the lawn, at which I now glared in justifiable anger for causing such a fuss.

"Then I'm sure the matter is in good hands, Mr Dobson," I said, then added: "By the way, you will be pleased to know that today, being my day off, will be spent trimming my bad habits, so to speak."

I was sure Mr Dobson would appreciate my verbal attempt at emulating his letter-writing style. I could almost see his appreciative smile. And I don't think he was at all aware that I had succeeded, by voicing my intentions in such a way, in bypassing the Courtesy Manual Guidelines. I had managed to redirect the dregs of my anger, straight down the line, at the object responsible for my ire; namely Mr Dobson, his precious Lawn Maintenance Department, Relocation Kit and D-Grade Regulation Brochure.

I mowed the lawn just after 11am, as suggested in the Noise Section of the Courtesy Manual. At 1.30pm, I was sitting down having a rest when someone knocked on the door. It was Mr Archer from across the road. Mr Archer was Chief Engineer in

the Bridge Building Section of the Suburbia Control Department. He was grinning the Suburban Smile, an easily recognisable trait reserved for neighbourhood interaction. Much as I tried, I hadn't been able to master the Suburban Smile. To cover my inadequacy I shook his hand wildly enough for him to be distracted from my impotence in this particular area.

After the usual small-talk, which included comments from him about how nice my lawn was looking, Mr Archer began voicing his opinions on the importance of symmetry and order.

"Mankind would be in a state of chaos if it wasn't for order and planning," he said. I watched his eyebrows as he spoke. They spanned his forehead, both in perfect harmony, each a mirror image of the other. His eyebrows appeared as a personification of his theory on the significance of balance in all things.

"Yes," I said. "But one must remember that man is not a machine. Order is a breeding ground for mistakes, as is the art of planning."

I spoke with some authority, recalling my encounter earlier that day with the consequences of planning disorder. He looked surprised and his eyebrows flattened a little as they crept up his forehead and drew closer together as if to combine forces.

"The challenge is to attain perfection in such matters," he said. "Without the threat of a margin of error, our lives would be without meaning. Look at the City Overpass. We spent three years in the planning stages of that bridge. Not one mistake was incurred during its construction. Aesthetically, it is the most beautiful, breathtaking sight in Australia," he said.

It was obvious from his passionate tone of voice that Mr Archer was proud of his work. And with his eyebrows poised in ecstasy, it wasn't hard to see where the idea for the City Overpass came from in the first place. It was almost certainly modelled on one or other of his eyebrows.

Although the City Overpass was ingenious and a major feat in engineering mastery, I personally disliked it and suspected that many people felt the same way. These views were never aired, however, because the City Appreciation Board had managed to pass a law banning adverse verbalisation regard-

ing the depressing nature of the City as a topic of conversation.

Our verbal meanderings were interrupted by the phone. I smiled as suburbanly as I could at Mr Archer and got up to answer the call, wondering as I did so if my simpering teeth were straight enough for his obsessive desire for symmetry.

As I picked up the handpiece, I felt instinctively that it would be Mr Dobson. It was. His voice seemed milder, more spreadable.

"You will be pleased to know that I have had three anonymous phone calls already, regarding the conformity of your residence to the guidelines contained in the D-Grade Regulation Brochure," he said. I wanted to respond but he kept speaking. "And I wanted to thank you personally for your prompt action regarding the notice served on you earlier today."

As I listened, I wondered whether Mr Dobson had always spoken in the same way as he wrote letters and as he hadn't mentioned the phrase, 'so to speak' yet, I decided to use it myself.

"My pleasure, Mr Dobson," I said. "I have only cut down a barrier of misunderstanding, so to speak, which for me, as a Maker of Fences, is quite an achievement."

Mr Dobson laughed politely then offered some rather placatory remarks that appeared to be taken directly from the Apology Section of the Courtesy Manual. I thanked Mr Dobson and wished him well.

Catching sight of Mr Archer's face, I noticed that at the mention of Mr Dobson's name, he reddened like a high-speed film of a ripening tomato, until his face was burning with what I saw to be embarrassment of some kind. Had Mr Archer been making anonymous phone calls?

Mr Archer jumped up from his chair as if a cat had clawed his knee.

"I really should be going now," he said and smiled. I noticed his eyebrows were quivering like a pair of cable bridges in a storm.

"Thanks for coming over," I said, glad of being able to make a simple comment instead of the long-winded statements I'd subjected myself to using under the influence of Mr Dobson.

Mr Archer fled to the door but I must admit that he fled with

both dignity and order, symmetry and style. His face relaxed as I opened the door and I saw his chest expand in relief as he breathed in the outside air.

I caught sight of Officer Walker hurrying past my house and from her profile I discerned a look of mild exasperation, for she was unable to intentionally look at my lawn without appearing to be nosy. My interest in Officer Walker was interrupted by Mr Archer.

"I was thinking," he said, nervously tapping his foot. "Perhaps you would consider representing your field by being guest speaker at the next Bridge Builders' Association Meeting?"

My Suburban Smile was perfected in that instant as I beamed at him.

"Much as I'd like to," I said, "unfortunately, it isn't allowed. Fraternalisation between departments is a tricky business, Mr Archer. I think that if you read section 42B of the Occupational Integration Guidelines, you will find that the Bridge Building and Fence Making fields are diametrically opposed."

Mr Archer seemed to have forgotten his embarrassment for a moment and was pondering my observation.

"Yes ... I see what you mean," he said. "Such an association could well lead to a breakdown in the order of things."

I nodded wisely, feeling I deserved some measure of superiority, considering the difficult day off I was having.

"You're right, of course," I said, allowing him to leave on a winning note.

I closed the door on Mr Archer and went back inside to sit for a while by the window. Sixteen million dollars in exports for my fence designs, I thought. Once upon a time, I would have been able to keep all that money for myself. Oh well, too bad. I decided that my life was simpler this way. No sooner had I thought this than I found myself asking whether life was really simpler. The question was exceedingly onerous. My mind was in need of less troublesome stimulation.

Instead of probing my mind for an answer, I sat and watched out the window. I was determined to catch sight of Officer Walker inspecting my lawn. She wouldn't see me of course and I couldn't possibly confront her in the act of spying on me. The Courtesy Manual forbade such a thing.

since it
let it
as it
got it
could it
put it
in it
while it
was it
be it
as it
is it
since it
was it
from it
to it
be it
when it
was it
like it
did it
to it
when it
let it
put it
in it

I want to

I want to:

sound like a movie
smell like a coffee
taste like a honey
breathe like a tree
talk like a tap
argue like a book
work like a saw
feel like a drink
walk like a fly
sing like a poster
climb like a graph
hear like a cave
stretch like a river
rest like a stone
stand like a koori
smile like a tick
love like a snail
look like a spoke
dream like a canvas
brag like a wheel, and
end like a comma.

that letter I was putting in th envelope

last time we were on th phone
I haven't sent out a poem for months
judith's in tuscany with her two grown-up kids
she has motor neurone disease
she went to th govenor of tasmania's place
for afternoon tea with MND
where some helpful people
who didn't have motor neurone disease told her
"you know there's no cure"
when we were waiting for th results of th tests
there was a bit of a whisper
"motor neurone disease I think it is
motor neurone disease"
until at judith's fiftieth birthday party I said
I didn't know whether to give her a noose, poison
or a knife
& judith laughed, because we're accomplices
in all this
my writing room has th only door handle
that she can stretch her elastic bands out from
being at th end of th corridor
she squeezes balls of plasticine
as we read about being fed through a tube
in th throat
when I kneel to cut her toe-nails
I make small jokes
I fell in love with judith's eyes & her courage
I have nothing, really, to complain about
yes, we do, that part is alright
her sister deborah comes out to ride her horse
at 47, I'm thinking about learning to drive

but you know what happened last time
still maybe I could get a license for an automatic
not much traffic from here out to opossum bay
great aunty jessie has always been a favourite of mine too
ninety-one, & her daughter's charging her seven thousand
bucks rent
in advance
I guess she thinks aunty jessie will live forever
in th kind of tape loop of memory you describe so well
& her daughter nearly seventy
unpicking her cross stitch
& wondering whether her mum would be comfortable
in th hall closet
whatever happens to judith
I'm going to be here
us kids always liked how you & dad were in love
once he parked th holden down by cornwall park
& told me he'd always been faithful to you
because he was scared of th consequences
I took it as his declaration of love to you
it mightn't sound much
but it was one of our closest moments
remember when uncle charlie used to buy
sugar pills off th colour man, stop taking his medicine
make sure his tongue's not obstructing his throat
& get your hand bitten off
I read diagrams which show how to squeeze judith
from behind when she chokes
sometimes she does now, & she says "sorry"
& we hold hands, from our armchairs, which seem like islands
& I say
"now say sorry for saying sorry"
love's that simple
there's a lot understood

Ancestry is like neighbourhood watch tied to a ribbon in your hair. I've stopped running. I blame Greg for the storm and the lightning and that piece of metal plate he got from Peter's workshop. When Greg was picking bits of wood and broken pot from the sea, I was riding on a horse, straddling through town with my dress on fire and my stockings burning and Kurt Olsson shouts "let all those who are wicked be hung up" even if the wicked is crazed by the tide turning and the moon coming out like a popped yellow balloon they won't let you, those who say they love you they won't let you.

The Red Leopard

Arriving back after five days with my father,
the stubs of his curses still barbed in my body,
I called, wanting you to bind me in the white
gauze of our love. But you were not home.

You'd conjured some new love, that for seven weeks
had me weak lean and low, but pale enough alone
for the spots to show. I pulled at the barbs
and examined each one for a symbol or sign.

Crimped on every tail I found his imprinted scowl.
As evidence that the wounded own the weapon,
I made this stranded necklace. It is the art
of self-defence, the red leopard said.

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Adam Morgan

Ode to Me

Purple sunsets
and an upset head
Fear's aplenty

When I hear Mozart
and Beethoven
hammering out their pain
I wince in understanding
I express not in music
but in prayer protest and pain
My symphony reverberates in silence
waiting
waiting so long
to catch the coat-tails of contentment
to find a piccolo alone
flighty
happy
released

And the battle keeps on raging
as sure as my poems
are letters to my father
as a squash game goes to nine
as I write doubting every line ...

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The Child

"You will have noticed that I haven't mentioned the child's name yet."
She articulated these words
with unavoidable emphasis
and gave me another of her long searching looks.

I think she must have rehearsed
all those long searching looks,
but she should have put her money
in a better mirror.

And she should have worn something other
than that polyester suit.
My oldest housedress would have looked better on
her.
She should have done something with her hair.

It's to my credit, my eternal credit,
that I didn't laugh;
but I did take another look at the child.

He was slight of build, blond,
seven or eight,
wearing a plaid wool shirt and a pair of jeans.
He had obviously been told to smile.

All this I had already noticed.

I had noticed, too, that some last few leaves
were scattering through the park –
where the old men on the benches
sat hunched in their coats,
aware of inevitable snow.

But that was all I had noticed.

The Clock in the Hall

She let out a wail and put her hands to her face.
No one else moved.
She stood alone in the center of the room.
The rest of us sat by the walls
in straight-backed chairs.
We were all completely naked.
Even Charles and Nancy.

The clock in the hall struck the hour.
She sank down on her knees.
Then, hugging her body, she bent forward
so that her forehead was touching the tile floor.
She took a deep breath.
Charles raised his hand.
We stood up from our chairs.

We each took two steps
toward the center of the room.
Then we stood there and watched
as she eased down and lay flat,
stretched out on her stomach,
her arms spread out from her body
at right angles.

The clock struck the quarter hour.
"That will do," said Nancy.
We returned to our chairs.
She regained her feet.
Then she ran her fingers through her hair.
Then she brushed some dust from her belly.
Then she walked out the open door.

Missing Pieces

My father for years had called me a piece of shit, a parasite, a fucken little poofter or an ugly little cunt no woman would ever love. These pieces of verbal abuse I remember being said to me since I was a very small boy. As I got older I began to stand up for myself which resulted in long-drawn-out arguments with my father. Eventually he would bring out those well-used lines that he knew would hurt me. I would lose what self-control I had and retreat back to my room. There inside my bedroom all-consuming anger and hatred would rise up within me for my father. Later on when I calmed down, I would think dad's alright, he's always got me what I needed when I've asked. Then I would begin the spiralling-down within myself which would bring me to the conclusion that my father was right and I was the one fucked in the head; just like mum. She had spent the last couple of years in a mental institution.

I hated my guts nearly all the time. Every couple of weeks I'd have an attack of depression which would last for days on end. My self-image was built upon a foundation of fragile, bitter charcoal. When these attacks overwhelmed me, I would lock myself away and have no contact with anyone. At these times the image that surfaced in my mind was that I was trapped at the bottom of a very deep well filled with black, oozing water; I could barely keep my head up. Then at other times the image would be of myself naked, chained to two twisted dead trees on a barren hilltop and I'm covered in mud and rain is pouring down but the mud on my body doesn't wash away. I just lie there crying with my arms hanging in the air. The only place I ever cried was in my imagination.

It was around this time my sister Tracy moved back to Melbourne. For some reason she wouldn't have anything to do with our father. I thought they must have had a big blue and

weren't talking to each other.

The day was a Saturday early in October. The sun was shining and the sky was clear. It was the type of day you could lie in the sun with a few drinks and watch time drift away. The phone rang. I got up and answered it. It was Tracy. She sounded very odd. She asked me if I could come over and see her. I told her I'd be over after I did a couple of things. Once I finished what needed doing I grabbed my helmet and jacket and jumped on my motorbike then rode off for Tracy's place.

I sat in the lounge room and rolled myself a smoke and lit it up. Tracy called out from the kitchen.

"Do you want a cup of tea Jim?"

"Yeah! Thanks!"

"How are things at home?"

"Could be worse. The usual bullshit."

Tracy came back in and gave me my cup of tea and sat down opposite me while brushing her long blonde hair out of her eyes.

"Tracy, what d'you want to talk to me about?"

She sat there umming and ah-ing.

"Jim," Tracy said my name very hesitantly, "I've got to ask you."

"Yeah?" I began with a frown.

What the fuck's with you? I thought.

After a long while sitting there listening to the silence of the big house, Tracy finally spoke up.

"Jim, do you remember anything strange happening at home when we were children?"

"No. Only with mum. After she had the nervous breakdown. Why?"

"Jim! Not with mum, I was meaning with dad."

"No, not really. Ah, only the time dad tied you up and pushed you under your bed when you were about five."

"Yeah, I remember that. But I mean other things."

"What other things?"

"Can you remember if dad did anything to you? Other things?"

Shaking my head, "What are you talking about, Tracy?"

"What I mean is, after I was raped up north I started to remember things that happened to me as a child. Dad did things to me."

"What bloody things?"

"Jim, dad sexually abused me as a child!"

At that moment it hit me like a semi doing the Perth to Melbourne run. The only memory I had as a child at home involving my sister was of that incident being tied up; there were no other memories of home when I was a child. I always knew there was something missing in my life but I didn't know what it was. The feeling was like being blown to pieces, yet at the same time being reassembled. I sat there, rocking back and forth. Tracy asked me, "You alright Jim?" And she began to cry. For a long time I knew something was not right within myself. It felt like I had a puzzle but with a lot of pieces missing; then along comes Tracy and gives me those missing pieces. Then it happened. My mind totally exploded.

Images began to swim to the surface of my mind, towing along a shipment of toxic explosive emotions lost long ago in an ocean of pain. The first image to break the surface was myself at the age of about five, lying naked on my bed with a man gripping my tiny body while I whimpered for my mummy. But mummy doesn't come. A voice repeats over and over again, "You should be a little girl", in a sneering tone.

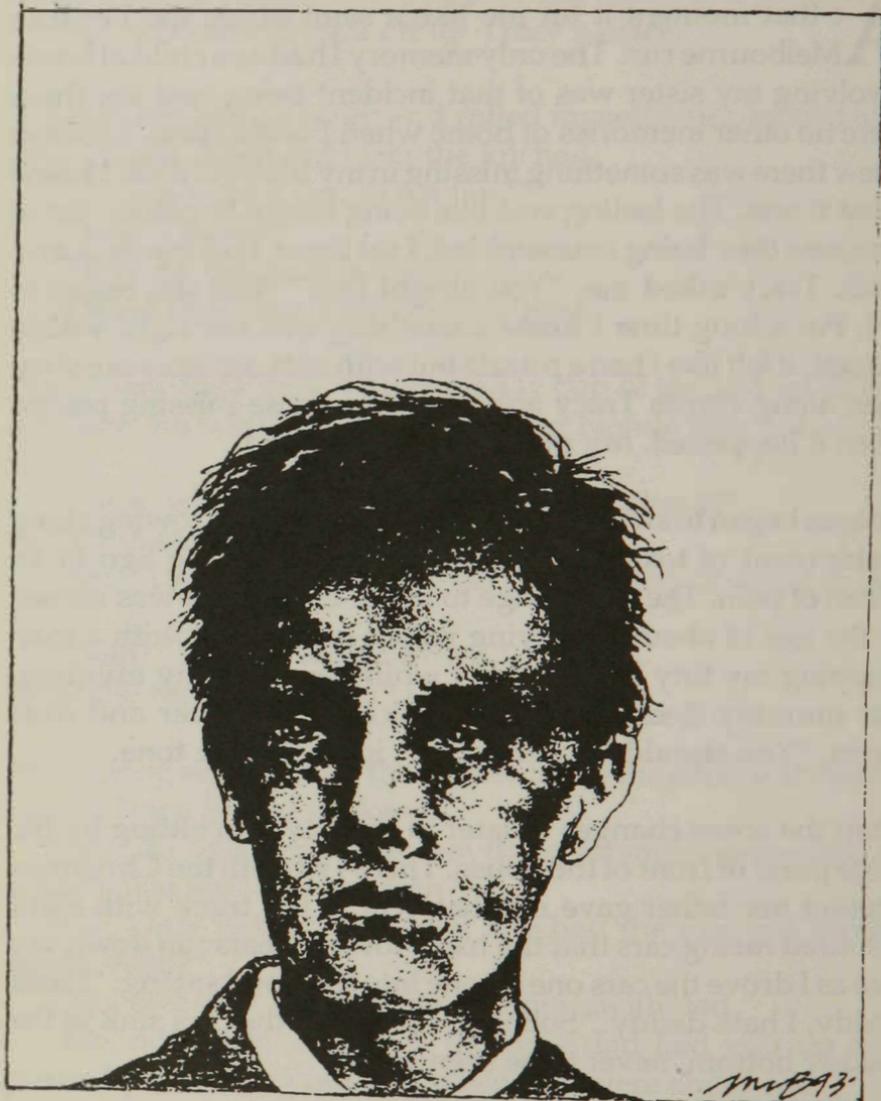
Then the scene changes to later in the day. I'm sitting by the large pond in front of the house. There I sit with the Christmas present my father gave me that year: a toy truck with eight coloured racing cars that the truck towed. Tears ran down my face as I drove the cars one by one into the pond saying: "I hate daddy, I hate daddy." Sobbing, I watched the cars sink to the muddy bottom, never to be seen again.

I suddenly realized Tracy had her arm around me saying:

"It's alright to cry Jim. I'm sorry. But I had to find out if you

could remember anything. I didn't know what would happen asking you. But I've got to know. You understand?"

There I sat while the dam wall busted and the tears of years ran down the face into the forest of whiskers. The first time I had cried since I was a very small boy. That day brought to an end my self-hatred and opened a door within me to myself.



RIMBAUD

Lyn Boughton

going by feet

walking by the water
walking by the merri creek
treelined alphington and yarra bend
the hypodermic chandler
apm across the street
going to heidelberg
going by feet

at the bookshop in eaglemont
two violins were playing
a woman at the busstop
"what more could you ask for?"
she was saying

two moons is a theory
the wise merlin said
but one flew away
or maybe disappeared

he couldn't find the pages
it wasn't yet a book
what's his last name? he asked me
is he reading his own words?
didn't say he was a poet
just told me he sold books

corkshot bottle/ fast champagne
bubbled down the stairs
for a ticket in a glass
you can taste the french

eric's back the poster said
it even had a picture
eric bogie comes to town

in the lancefield muse

don't you love the way the water
changes and flows upstream
backwards coming forward
see the world from upside down
it makes more sense

razor wire strung across a falling down fence
the grass is underwater
mud can't swim
i'm standing on the stairs
looking outside in

This poem was only partially printed in
GDS issue 14. We reproduce it here in full.

The eds.

A Typographer's Eye

Anyway, the word from the poor author, who's writing this because he doesn't have a 'real' job, is that he wants to know what's going on behind those eyes, why we behave as though we still believe in fairy tales when it's obvious that the world's fucked. I'm thirty-something, so you'd think I'd have figured it out already; but that's just the way it is. I've got plenty of time, though, if my heart holds out.

I met an author at a book launch recently and we talked about the painter Francis Bacon. An interview with Bacon called 'The Brutality of Fact' begins with the admission that Bacon harboured a sexual desire for his father. The author I was talking to thought this was shocking, impressively honest, very promising; but he was sure that Bacon was concealing *something else* with this honesty. Well, I'm not so sure about that. I'm mentioning this because I remember now what I was thinking while we were talking about Francis Bacon. I was thinking that when I was a young boy I was fascinated by my father's sexuality. I loved his body, his big dick and his hairy chest. For years, for most of my adult life, I have maintained the conviction, and touted it publicly, that I hated my father. At my twenty-first birthday party I called him an "elephant's arse-hole". (Not very nice; but, then, we hated each other secretly: he 'hated' me for leaving him; and I 'hated' him for treating me so badly when I left.) When I come to think of it, these were almost the last words he ever heard come out of my mouth. Everybody laughed.

Kids are supposed to hate their fathers because they're the competition in a boy's love for his mother. Did you ever hear such a stinking lie? This conviction I have maintained, stylishly elaborating it for my small part of the world to hear, is, of course, a load of crap - a load of crap straight out of the

elephant's arsehole, so to speak. The truth is, I loved my father. When I remember him now, in the moments that he touched me, when, for any reason, his arms wrapped around me, I was in heaven. But, even when I was just eleven years old, I knew the boundaries of this feeling, without knowing how I knew them, knew that there were things that could not be done or said, and knew this prohibition was real without ever having heard it spoken.

The point is – to answer the question before it is asked – that Francis Bacon was not concealing *something else* with his honesty. No, that's not it. I know what Francis was trying to conceal. In a little while (when I've worked out how to say it) I'll tell you what it was.

It's hard to say what the truth of 'style' is, or with what 'style' the truth can be written. I know that I am impatient. I know that poets cannot be trusted. And you know you cannot trust me. You do not know whether I am lying or telling the truth. If those bastards in their ivory towers have their way, no one will know whether this pronoun I am tossing around is the thing that stands for me or is something else. I'll tell you honestly: it is *something else*, something that even people who are writers do not know, and people who are readers know even less.

All the most personal writing I have reserved for poems; an idea, a feeling, a gripe with the world, some angry moment or pleasant surprise hunches in a cool, dark place for years, confident that, because it belongs to a writer, no one will arrive with a 'Use by' stamp. In a poem, and in some kinds of prose, these moments can be gathered irrationally, bunched like flowers and achieve, without too much thought – apart from concentrating now and then on 'music', the need to avoid cliché, and the necessary test of truth – an aesthetic effect. My first poems were not, in any way, personal, except in the safest and most abstract way; they expressed my feelings, but in a way that safely detached these feelings from my person. Perhaps this is the reason, years later, when I read these poems,

I'm surprised and grudgingly recognise myself as their author. A few weeks ago, when a Sydney fiction editor wrote to ask if I had any prose suitable for publication in a gay magazine, I was surprised, again, to discover I responded, apologetically, that I write on gay themes only by accident, as though two aspects of my self might collide at an intersection. There are several stories, I explained in my letter, on appropriate themes, but they are all too long and none of them is finished. But, even as I wrote my excuse, I knew that it was not quite true and that I might, some time in the future, have to recant. There are, indeed, long, unfinished stories. It is no accident that they are unfinished. Something has obstructed their completion. There is the story of a man of letters and his boyhood relationship with one of Australia's greatest painters; a 'true story' of which so little detail is available to me that it must be reconstructed from almost nothing: it is like trying to imagine a body from a pile of bones. There is the story of a relationship between a middle-aged man with HIV and a young, straight, drug-addicted prostitute. This is the story from which my last book takes its name: 'The Ninth Satire'. It is strange, isn't it, that a book built on the foundation of a particular story should have been published without the very story that prompted it? I like the irony of it. For hundreds of years Decimus Junius Juvenalis's 'Satire IX' was excluded from collections of his satires because it dealt with subject matter which many editors thought unprintable. The relationship of Juvenal to the interlocutor of his ninth satire, Naevolus, has always disturbed me. I cannot fathom Juvenal's cruelty. And Naevolus is both crudely attractive and repulsive. It is difficult to write about what you do not understand. There is another story, also unfinished, about a young girl who becomes pregnant when she is fucked by a man she later discovers is bisexual. This story is about disillusionment, abortion, and feelings of revulsion. These stories have something in common apart from being unfinished. They are all, in some way, stories about my unfinished self, ideas that are waiting for the completion of the person who could be their author.

People like a story that moves forward briskly, sweeps them up in a whirlwind of plausibility and delivers them, not more than a little bruised, to unexpected, credible conclusions: something with a beginning, middle and end. – But life is not like that; at least, none of the lives I know are like that. A story may be composed entirely of things left unsaid, where one thing is not properly related to anything else; and it may move forward only by changing direction. This is a story of that kind. Its author is a character a *little* like myself; that is, only in the sense that he is also an author.

You see, that's the problem – Francis Bacon's problem, one of them – you start out trying to tell the truth and, as soon as you open your mouth, your relationship to it has changed: it is no longer the truth, but something that obstructs *something else*.

What does it mean when someone writes 'I'? Geoffroy Tory, the typographer and student of Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci, once wrote, "I cannot pass here without pointing out that our said letters were devised through divine inspiration. Homer, King of the Greek poets, states at the beginning of Book VIII of his Iliad that Jupiter once said he could, if he so wished, draw to himself by means of a golden chain all the other gods, and even the earth and the sea as well." Tory imagines this chain, hanging from heaven to where we stand, "well proportioned in length and breadth, suited to the symmetry of our proportional letter 'I'."¹ Victor Hugo, on the other hand, believed that "'I' is a war machine launching its projectile ..."² Can you imagine two more divergent explanations of the same thing? The upright letter. Tory draws his letter over the figure of a naked man. Anything could hide behind such a monument of typography, an 'I' that stretches from its author to the supreme god. Hugo's letter is a cannon. It shoots its meaning into the heart of a reader, and it does not even have to be aimed very carefully to tear him apart.³

Now we understand each other. Now, as the story of this unfinished self goes on, you'll understand this 'I' is both a monument of fiction (the obstruction itself) and the means by

which the obstruction is removed. A typographer's eye is another matter.

Mistake leads to interpretation. A proof-reader's eye can unleash reverberations in a reader's mind. Hans Gabler's 'definitive' edition of *Ulysses* repeated the minor error of Clive Driver's 'definitive' edition of *Ulysses* by deciding that Joyce had meant to write "lumps of coral and copper snow" at the beginning of chapter 15.⁴ The French translation of *Ulysses*⁵ says the phrase is "*des couches d'une neige de charbon et de cuivre*" – that is, "coal", not "coral". Joyce is preparing us for a descent into the underworld, not a sightseeing cruise to a coral reef. While we can imagine that Joyce would have cared greatly to give the correct impression here, the same cannot be said of all writers. It is Proust who interests me; the thousands of pages of digression, one tied to the other, so that a reader becomes lost in purely sensuous wandering, through a garden, along a path, the taste of a little cake dipped in lime-flower tea, the eye stopping for a moment on a young girl's face. Proust did not seem to care about errors of typesetting. What he cared about was creating yet another digression, and when he received his proofs he added more writing to the galleys instead of reading them.⁶

"I gazed at her, at first with that gaze which is not merely a messenger from the eyes, in whose window all the senses assemble and lean out, petrified and anxious, that gaze which would fain reach, touch, capture, bear off in triumph the body at which it is aimed, and the soul with the body", Proust writes, with a typographer's eye, in the 'Combray' chapter of *Swann's Way*, "then (so frightened was I lest at any moment my grandfather and father, catching sight of the girl, might tear me away from her, by making me run on in front of them) with another, an unconsciously appealing look, whose object was to force her to pay attention to me, to see, to know me."⁷

The eyes are, perhaps, more important than anything – at least, to a person who has the use of them – and there is as much about them in our languages, poetry and morality, as any other part of the body, including the heart. *Gray's Anatomy* describes

the heart in less than ten pages (leaving aside all the things connected to it) and provides only two illustrations. The eye, however, has at least fourteen pages and five illustrations (not counting the Meibomian glands or the Lachrymal apparatus). The eye is in every aspect of our personality. While we keep the heart and mind separate, all minds have an eye – ‘the mind’s eye’ – to see things our other eyes cannot. This eye may be green, if we are jealous. And, as we know from the *Psalms*, having eyes is no guarantee that we will be able to see.⁸ Understanding is not only a matter for the eyes – ‘an eye-opener’ – but the speed with which it happens is measured in the eyes: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”⁹ There is an “inward eye”, according to Wordsworth, “Which is the bliss of solitude.” And, as we wander lonely as a cloud, like William, who knows, we might see Mr Dodgson through the looking-glass with our “dreaming eyes of wonder”. But it is all in the eye of the beholder. Some eyes have apples in them; some are jaundiced, some lack lustre; others have bags underneath. Many eyes are found in months – “men’s eyes in April / are quicker than their brains”¹⁰ – and there are a thousand, at least, in every night. Are there more eyes in Shakespeare than in the sky, than in the night sky, plus one, “the great eye of heaven”? “Alas, how is’t with you / That you do bend your eye on vacancy / And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?” Why are there so many eyes in *Hamlet*? “In my mind’s eye, Horatio.” “... Foul deeds will rise, / Though all the earth o’erwhelm them, to men’s eyes.” “The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s, eye, tongue, sword.” “... Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres ...” The eyes are the site of our most intractable prejudices. Black and white. “Appearances contribute to reality”, John F. Kennedy said. We know that there is *something else*, but our eyes tell us what we believe will be the truth. Our eyes connect us, by their immediate reaction, to what we know is viscerally, instinctively beautiful or horrible. Magnetic. Attractive. Insatiable. Repulsive. Ugly. An eye is a key that unlocks pornography. And while it is true that they can be closed, unlike our ears, which are always open (and, so to speak, ‘watchful’), even when closed the imagina-

tion keeps them alight. Memories stoke the fire. When we are asleep our eyes follow our dreams. The eyes hardly ever sleep. All of our desire is in them, and all desire's sadness. The eyes are full of themselves and with everything else. It is with our eyes that we measure the world and first recognise ourselves in it. Sight, as Plato wrote in *The Republic*, stating the obvious, is the eyes' "proper excellence".¹¹ – If only it were true. It is through them that we measure the visible world, and imagine the extent of everything that is hidden. First in the catalogue of human fear is the 'unknown', whose most compelling sign is darkness. The eyes are a list of suffering and joy. All of a person's character may be in their eyes, as Gustave Flaubert knew.¹² – And none of it. The eyes of the paranoiac imagine there is more in the eyes that follow him than there actually is. Why? It is because the content of eyes is very often ambiguous. We hope for love and fear rejection, and never know everything that is behind another's eyes. A 'visionary' is one who saw things we did not, and so is a madman. Visionary and madman are measured by what our own eyes see, or don't see, as the case may be. (Madness, as the mad will tell you, if you ask them, is mostly in the ears. Thoughts are 'heard'. The mind is a noisy place. But, after the ears, the eyes are the next to go. Light and dark angels appear where voices were.) And, as Michel Foucault has shown, modern medicine was born in the eyes: "The gaze will be fulfilled in its own truth and will have access to the truth of things if it rests on them in silence, if everything keeps silent around what it sees."¹³ Two eyes are needed to appreciate perspectives. A mystic is helpless without the third. A banker may not have a heart but he keeps at least one eye on the bottom line. Some people "only have eyes for you", which is a somewhat unlikely compliment. To have eyes like these is, in short, to be human. Even Jews have them! "I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes?"¹⁴ And niggers, queers, perverts, socialists, women, Liberals and child-molesters have them, too.

Are you following me? Good. Then let's go to New York – city of many niggers, Jews, Koreans in self-serve salad bars, and millions of eyes. The contrasts are surprising. Times Square is said to have more 'language' hanging in the air than

any other place on earth; a vortex of signs and speech, a typographer's dream. Wall Street, on the other hand, where language has been replaced by 'data', is a cold, almost signless, windy canyon that, I was surprised to find, has a dark and eerily beautiful graveyard, beside Trinity Church, at its entrance. I walked back from Wall Street to my room on West 48th Street by wandering up West Broadway through Soho and Tribeca (in Spring Street there is an old building now dubbed 'Poet's House' – it's in the NY phone book – where a monthly calendar of literary events and readings is published), the Village and, on the other side of Washington Square, Chelsea, up Eighth Avenue past the General Post Office ("Neither Snow Nor Rain Nor Heat Nor Gloom Of Night Stays These Couriers From The Swift Completion Of Their Appointed Rounds"); a walk that, with occasional stops and small detours, can take a couple of hours. The 40s streets on Eighth could be avoided at night, if you are so inclined: they are full of visionaries, madmen, typographers and tourists. A typographer, I kept my eyes open, of course. There is so much to see. I walked into a salad bar where you can fill a small plastic container with whatever you like and pay, according to the weight of what you've chosen, only a couple of dollars for dinner. A tall, white red-neck in the queue in front of me was having an argument with the small Korean woman who weighed the meals. I had seen her here several times before, at all times of day, and concluded that she never slept. The red-neck had had enough of something. Maybe there are just too many people with yellow-brown skin in Manhattan these days. He exploded angrily, made some offensive remark, threw coins on the counter, and exited with his plastic container. The Korean woman said something to me that I didn't understand, and then she laughed. I smiled quizzically. I was becoming accustomed to having conversations in which less than half of what was said could be understood. The previous night a cab driver had stuck his head out of his car and asked a black woman on the street, "Where is two-thoity-sex?" "Two-forty-what?" the black woman had replied in a well-educated tone of voice. I imagined these two people had spent most of their lives growing up together, one from Brooklyn, the other from the Lower East Side and, with only the East River

between them, at this one, chance meeting, effective communication seemed impossible. I picked up my plastic container, which the tireless Korean woman had put in a little bag for me, and continued on my way. My eyes were still open. "Hey! Baldy!" I turned around. I realise, now, that this was a mistake. I should have kept my ears closed but, as I've already warned you, the ears are ever watchful and cannot be closed. A little Jewish man with long, messy hair, and dressed in a long, dirty, black coat, was hobbling behind me. He looked, in the moment that I saw him, like a mad and visionary Rabbi – not someone to be messed with. "Wha'do you want, baldy?!" Under no circumstances was I going to stop for this man. He had seen something, I don't know what, leaning out of my eye as I walked along Eighth Avenue toward my room. Desire, perhaps. Whatever it was, he didn't like it, and he was going to get me. "Hey, baldy! Wha'do you want, eh, baldy? Bald man!! Stop! Wha'da ya looking here for, bald boy?" he cried angrily. This guy was getting on my nerves. I walked a little faster, consoled myself that West 48th Street was only around the next corner and this nightmare would soon be over. But I was also angry. I was, after all, innocent of everything, except having eyes; and in New York there are millions of those. A moment later I realised that this caustic Jew and I had become a spectacle: 'A Venging Rabbi Chases Gentile From Pit of Iniquity'. – This is what the German tourists have come to New York to see. What business was it of his where I looked, what my eyes saw? And this 'baldy' thing – it was very embarrassing. Had my corner not arrived just in time to save me, I would have turned on him and given him the slanging match he so richly deserved. My trump card was 2 *Kings* 2: 23-24. A Jewish nightmare, I thought, is a Gentile who knows the Old Testament. "And he went up from thence to Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." I was shocked to look with my 'inner eye', in what should have been the "bliss of solitude", on great reserves of hatred. Visionaries and bigots – the only way to

cure them is to pluck their eyes out. This place, I thought, must be Hell in summer.

It is the same everywhere. In Melbourne, at a friendly Fourth of July gathering of expatriate family and lesbian acquaintances, a woman makes the remark, about a young girl who has just left, "She's a very pretty young woman. And she'll go far, if she fixes up her teeth." The discussion bubbles for half an hour and then erupts. What kind of desire, mingled with business-like cruelty, had looked out of those eyes? In the 1930s, in Queensland, a young boy was receiving advice about life from his father. He recalls, nearly sixty years later, "My father told me there is no God. He was a sensible man. He told me I should not waste my time yearning for the Absolute, that I should be careful with money and that I should never feel guilty about sex. But the most important thing of all for a young man, he said, was to be careful not to get a young girl pregnant. If this happened I would be responsible for the baby before that responsibility was wanted, and it would ruin my life." Between advice and recollection was a remarkable life, guiltless sex and, I assume, no babies. Once or twice, at the moment when stories haltingly begin, he refers to a self-imposed restraint on how his eyes might wander longingly over a beautiful face because, if it were noticed, some danger that is probably only recognition might present itself. Walk along a busy street, anywhere, behind a beautiful girl or boy, and you can see, in the faces of men and women alike who pass you going the opposite way, how their eyes suck light into an abysmal prison of need, with "that gaze which would fain reach, touch, capture, bear off in triumph the body at which it is aimed, and the soul with the body". "He stared at the snake, and the snake at him", just at the moment before his painful transformation, one body sucked into the other, and both of them transformed.¹⁵ It begins with a stare. Young girls are tarted up so effectively before their images are glued to billboards, you'd think they were old enough to consent. We *are* in Hell, and all this is perfectly natural here.

My own characters stare out at me like they would stare at the snake. Something prevents me from finishing them

off. I slide around them, hissing, for months or, sometimes, years. – An unwillingness to change. That, you see, is how Dante finishes Canto XXV of *Inferno*: with the change and transmutation of creatures in the eighth circle of Hell, where fraudulent thieves are kept. (So, poets are among them, of course.) Dante's eyes, he says, are "somewhat confused", and his mind bewildered.

The eyes have always been the most sexual of organs. Legislators, moral guardians and civil libertarians argue more about what we may and may not see than anything else. The freedom to speak is, just as often as not, the freedom to write and, by implication, the freedom to read; and we live with elaborate administrative systems regulating what may be seen and, every now and then, the rules change. But some things never change and cannot be regulated. At the very beginning of (the first) Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, the author was careful to note that in his own mind he represented the King "not with an inquisitive eye of presumption ... but with the observant eye of duty and admiration".¹⁶ The seventeenth century version of "you were always on my mind", this was, of course, a lie, and it is clear he was attempting to cover up his 'original sin'. Eyes are not like that. For both God and man, creation, knowledge and everything begins in the eyes: "God saw the light, that it was good ... the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes ... and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked ..."¹⁷

So, when Francis Bacon – the painter – said he harboured a sexual desire for his father, was he concealing *something else* with this giant truth?

The National Gallery of Victoria has an early Bacon painting, 'Study from the Human Body' (1949). Many of Bacon's paintings depict bodies of this type. The naked male figure moves through a veil or curtain, steps into a dark space behind the painting, from the visible world into the invisible world, from consciousness into the unconscious, from life into death. His

right leg and right arm quietly push the veil aside. His head bends forward into the dark. Two falls of curtain divide the painting – left and right – and the figure is in the centre. The man's calves have been chopped off at the bottom edge of the frame. We cannot see his feet. The left fall of curtain hangs straight. The more central folds of the right fall of curtain slope gently toward the right. Above the man's head, between the falls of curtain, is solid grey. The whole picture is composed of sandy-yellows, greys and white. The back, right shoulder and right arm of the figure are mostly bare, white paint. We cannot see his eyes, which must be looking down to where a little yellow-grey light is slipping along the floor from where we are to where he is going. Unlike many of Francis Bacon's paintings, the figure is not distorted or deformed. He is a lover leaving the bedroom. A father disappearing into the past. You can stare into the painting a long time without noticing *something else*, a small detail that may not be very important: there is a safety pin fastened to the right fall of curtain, helping to hold the veil open. If the figure were absent, if no one had decided to pass through here, or if he had already gone, the gap in the veil would remain open, the safety pin holding it there so we could peer into the dark. In a moment he will be gone. The figure in this painting looks like my father. We want to call him back, tell him not to go in there. We would only need to say something, anything. We would only need to say *something else*. We do not know what this *something else* is. No one knows.

This story comes to you courtesy of the Great World between Fact and Fiction, Inc., the eighth circle of Hell, pit of thieves and poets; where everything is changed into everything else; where, Dante reports, thank God for small mercies, smoking is not only permitted but absolutely essential; where poor Mr Bacon and I stare at the snake and wait, with terror, to be changed. Later, in the eighth circle, you will meet fraudulent counsellors and all kinds of falsifiers (generally speaking, the post-modernists). – Have a nice day.

Endnotes

- 1 *Champ-Fleury*, 1529.
- 2 *Travel Notebooks*, 1839.
- 3 Tory and Hugo do not always disagree. To Tory, for example, 'H' is "the body of a house" and, to Hugo it is "the facade of a building with its two towers".
- 4 The 1960 Bodley Head edition of *Ulysses* prints it correctly as "They grab wafers between which are wedged lumps of coal and copper snow", p. 562.
- 5 By Auguste Morel and Stuart Gilbert, in collaboration with James Joyce, 1929.
- 6 The examples in this paragraph are discussed at length by Guy Davenport in his book *Every Force Evolves a Form*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1989.
- 7 Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Volume 1, *Swann's Way* Part One [1913], trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Chatto & Windus, London, 1976, pp. 192-193.
- 8 *Psalms*, 115:5.
- 9 1 *Corinthians* 15:52.
- 10 John Drinkwater (1882-1937), the playwright (*Abraham Lincoln* and *Bird in the Hand*), biographer and poet.
- 11 *The Republic*, Book I, 353.
- 12 Julian Barnes has written much about Emma Bovary's eyes in *Flaubert's Parrot*, Picador, London, 1985, pp. 74-81.
- 13 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, Vintage Books, New York, 1975, p.108.
- 14 William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, III, i, 62.
- 15 Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XXV.
- 16 Francis Bacon, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Humane* (1605), First Book, 'To the King', paragraph 2.
- 17 *Genesis* 1:4, 3:6 and 3:7 (King James Version, 1611).

AXLE

The AXLE NEWSLETTER is for
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Everyone interested in the above is welcome to the
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6:00 pm.

All correspondence should be addressed to:

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Tony Figallo / pete spence

Paper Virus Press

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Victoria 3121.

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Our aim is to promote the above poetries through
publications, exhibitions, performances, screenings
and lectures to the public.

The AXLE newsletter contains a wealth of
information and activities in Australia and overseas.

Stephen J. Williams

Make Black Icing

Tim Broadhurst: *Transit Installation* (Melbourne, self published, 1994), 48pp., spiral bound with acetate cover, \$6. To obtain a copy write to Tim Broadhurst, c/o P.O. Box 24, Clifton Hill, 3068.

Slim volumes of 'performance poems' are normally nowhere near as funny or entertaining as the performances that preceded them. Tim Broadhurst is a Melbourne writer whose performances at poetry readings justly afford him the reputation of being a very funny man. Many of the people who hear him at these readings do not know of Broadhurst's long association with comedy that includes being among the first stand-ups to stand up at 'The Last Laugh' and a stint writing for 'The [Max] Gillies Report'.

Someone finishes a sentence with "Tim Broadhurst", or just "Tim". Broadhurst goes up to the microphone. He might have a glass of beer and a cigarette in one hand and a piece of paper in the other; or, if both hands are empty, he dips into trouser pockets to retrieve a wad of carelessly folded pages. Neatness is not a strong point. It looks, often, just as though he's dipped his hand into a waste-paper bin and is going to read what he's found there. Sometimes, though, there's no paper. He stands at the microphone, looking a bit stunned, very empty-handed. Broadhurst looks like he's had a really hard day, several hard days strung together, and even his poems have deserted him. At this moment you find yourself thinking the world is a long list of horrors – and thank god all this stuff usually happens to someone else.

Anything could happen; and the delight of Broadhurst's performances is that anything often does. Sometimes it is a small piece consisting mostly of onomatopoeics (like 'Bulldozer running out of fuel in a forest'), a funny moment, invention or 'find' (like 'Found object poem'),

(found on the ground in a carpark)

Look where you
park next time
arsehole.

or a well-timed joke. Broadhurst must have a bit of Dada in

him. The poems veer off the straight and narrow into sound and theatrics. For most writers I would be inclined not to be generous in allowing a separate category of 'performance poems' – but Broadhurst's situation is slightly different. His poems often begin or end in 'stand-up'; the cliché can be true: "it's all in the delivery".

This implies both a criticism and a compliment. Some of these poems don't have much life or humour when you find them by turning a page; but, performed, they are hilarious. It was the same with Jas Duke (1939-1992), whose astounding performances were often too big, too aural, too much in his own body, to be satisfying on a piece of paper, or even CD. Still, at the end of 'Invasion of the cakes', the last poem in this book and in which Broadhurst makes his picture of cooking-gone-wrong with the sounds of spoons banging on bowls, the punch-line is

make
black
icing

... Sweet misfortune. There is a whole philosophy in it.

That is what I like about the poems, and the person who wrote them (trying not to pretend now, as often happens here, that this review is just a job): at least they're not shallow. And they catch you, like good poems do, with your mental pants down:

john reed "decadent poetry favours a formal structure to contain unruly, rebellious and even repugnant subjects"
excuse me
i will piss on you now.

Broadhurst has the knack of catching himself in comic poses.

oh no
she's got that "oh no
he's going to kiss me" look.

And at other times you have to think he is brave, no matter whether the line is true.

putting one step in front of the other
is a good trick
i'm the father of three aborted babies

Make more black icing. This is a good book and worth the trouble of finding a copy.

Kevin Brophy

Not For Sale

The Zone: An Assemblage of Contemporary Writings, eds: L.L. James, Ainslie Girdwood & Nigel Spense (Kangaroo Magazine & the University of New England Students' Association, 1994), PO Box U248, Uni. of New England, NSW 2351, price not relevant. ISBN 0 646 17785 0.

So, what is the difference between an assemblage and an anthology (for that matter, what's the difference between a companion and a guide, or a textbook and a brick)? *The Zone* is an assemblage, which makes it sound like something sculptural, something constructed for the post-modern public space of the gallery or salon. *The Zone* comes with an Introduction (what's the difference between an Introduction and a Manifesto?) which makes some interesting points about this book and, in a sense, all books. In the Introduction we read that the book will mean "many" things, and in fact it is a space that will be constructed (assembled) by you, the reader, as you go. Paraphrasing Lacan, the Introduction suggests that as a reader, "you are never entirely inside *The Zone*, nor are you entirely outside it." There is a hint that you might find the book is, after all, a fish rotting under your eyes. The path into *The Zone* via the Introduction (I expect most people skip introductions anyway) is a little strange, a little pompous, overly serious and respectful towards an avant-garde heritage rooted in the Surrealism of the 1930s.

Interestingly, *The Zone* is not for sale. It can only be obtained free by writing to the publisher.

The Zone is a collection, sorry a construction-assemblage, of poems, stories, essays, fragments. It's a bit like reading *Going Down Swinging* without the interviews, but with some bio-notes at the back. There's something academic and tortuous on Foucault and the discourse of knowledge. Carey Moncrieff

supplies an energetic coprolitic Surrealist verse in post-modern conceits ("... all that remains are the maggots ... And their/Dung ... /Traces of creation." Julian Croft's story-fragment, 'Cuban Heels', is a funny and engaging read as it follows Australia's 'first and only' Surrealist poet, Waldemar Gudgeon, on a visit to Havana in 1929. The book is worth not buying for this little piece alone. There is a poem from Les Murray which begins, worryingly, "Sex is a Nazi." The poem asks, "... what is a Nazi but sex pitched for crowds?" I was surprised to find Les Murray here, in such an anarchic, theory-laden, avant-gardist assemblage. Isn't Les Murray the one who said that the little magazine (this book is a product of the little magazine, *Kangaroo*) is a relic of the era of modernism, and now artificially prolongs that era (*West Australian* 27.10.90)? On reflection, I realise that my surprise is due to the manner in which I have 'read' (constructed) *The Zone* for myself, of course. Lana Durement (satirist and dominatrix) has written a prose fable, 'Tattoos and Desires in Hyper-Reality', which is, for me, the highlight of the book. Slipping in and out of hyper-reality on XTC is handled hilariously. Susan Hampton's strong, autobiographical poem, 'Yugoslav Story', gets a guernsey here, highlighting again the strangeness of this assemblage, for it is a poem that was included three years earlier in the *Penguin Book of Modern Australian Poetry*, and published in Hampton's *Costumes* in 1981. I like the practice of recycling terrific poems in up-to-the-minute packaging. Novelists, musicians and politicians do plenty of recycling. But it does weaken the case for the book being a *fin de siecle avant-garde* moment.

The Zone is worth a visit if you're interested in an internationalist, Surrealist, avant-gardist, wild sort of hyper-reality experience.

Margaret Goff

Hope on the Horizon

Elliott Pearson: *Ivory Tower* (Octopress imprint, pb, 323pp., ISBN 0 646 16290 X, RRP \$17.95).

Ivory Tower, a fictional Australian novel by Elliott Pearson, is a thought-provoking book.

Pearson writes with verve and familiarity, manipulating the gamut of emotions. His innovative ideas are cleverly interwoven within the storyline and brought to life in his characters.

The main theme quickly becomes apparent when the newly created National Labour Service (NLS) is introduced, offering hope and solution to many problems facing Australian youth.

Steve Rixon, the central character, is one of these young people. Cynical and disillusioned, he baulks at accepting the ivory tower mentality of his parents' generation. Although he has decided to attend university to begin his career, he defers his studies and joins the NLS for ten months' service. His best mate, Tike, also signs on, but for quite different reasons.

Ivory Tower traces their experiences, their growing maturity, sexuality and the effect that love and the fear of rejection have on their lives.

Interestingly, Pearson makes no reference to a specific time-frame. The reader may assume the novel is set in the present day. However, so many of the issues have been, and will continue to be, extremely relevant.

Ivory Tower is a book for the youth of Australia and those who would be instrumental in implementing hope on their horizon.

Dare You Dream

Rex Buckingham: *For the Voice* (Earthdance, Melbourne, 1994.)
P.O. Box 429, Brunswick 3056, \$10.

Rex had a studio, a painting room, big, upstairs at the R. J. Hawke Hotel, in 1985, where I first met him. All the poets were in there late one Saturday after the poetry downstairs. There were paintings, beers, and cigarettes. He was the gentle creative soul, the waratah who died in 1993 leaving his resonant collection to be edited in this 1994 publication *For the Voice*.

The vivid autobiographical nature of a longer poem such as 'The head and its duck - Xmas Eve 1954' recounts what was obviously a grisly ceremony for a three-year-old and the telling values of the day: "Adults gleamed children cowered the duck screamed ... adults cheered the duck died children cried ...".

The poet later expresses his love of nature in many poems such as 'Child of the lake' "... Swans fly high unencumbered / Beyond the harsh tug of our race ...".

The poem 'Glasshouse - for Adrian' is a gift to a fellow leadlight glass window maker: "... Enshrouded in lead / Each colour dances / Into the picture / At the will of the master's hand ...". The leadlight window that Rex was working on at the time of his death depicted a pond with plants and birds.

The broad diversity of the forms of poetry in this book suggests something of the creativity of the poet. Although Rex became well-known around Australia, it is only with this book that the work he put into the compositions can really be appreciated.

'Dare you dream', 'A leaf', and 'A river flows' are among

eight poems that exhibit the concatenated structure of linked stanzas. 'A river flows' best expresses the Celtic and Japanese influence of this poetic form – the ideogram, and the great strength of Rex's words: "... On its bank / Man kneels / Touches the water ... In the mountains / Man writes / Rain upon his brow ..."

'The paint picker' is an autobiographical poem again revisiting childhood. The complexity of the story in nineteen five-line verses, each with two end-rhymed lines, is related easily. The poem is one of five about the indigenous culture of Australia. To my knowledge this poem is remembered of Rex even more than poems such as 'For the Voice'. Perhaps because 'The paint picker' is a poem-story-song of a child looking for meaning, in the context of a live recital by the author its 'memorableness' is understandable.

'Songs sung ride the air', 'Beneath Shelley's tree', 'The welcome mat is upside down' and 'Wildflower dreaming' all refer to indigenous rights and injustice, sometimes satirically: "... Vandals in the cemetery! hush be quiet / We can't grow tombstones and they know that / Our friends sleep down the hill in life's night / Sung their songs danced their tunes wore a poet's hat ..." (from 'Wildflower Dreaming').

This posthumous collection has been edited and selected by a close friend of Rex, Cornelis Vleeskens. In his insightful 'Afterword – the genesis of a poem' he shows how Rex developed one poem over a period of years; the poem that gives the book its title. A wonderful concrete poetry jewel – a diamond, literally. Rex is missed. A highly recommended book.

Poetry Seen

There are many things happening in the poetry world that are not often acknowledged in the literary pages. So the following is a Melbourne-based summary of some of what's happening. If what you are doing with poetry isn't in here, write and tell us about it.

Melbourne poetry & music band 'The Beautiful Few' has released a CD EP titled 'Dancing Under the Lights'. The band is stacked with poets and prose writers. Kieran Carroll & Chris Grierson share the credits for the lyrics while James Lee has written most of the music. Mary Doyle, Corinna Maule & Andrew Stewart are the other members. The five tracks contain Kieran's dreamy delivery over finely constructed rock music & evocative lyrics, such as

The night wears its shabbiest clothes
The night sleeps with its headlights on
The night is greasy food and laughing rain
The night is a rock through a grocery store

(from 'Dancing Under the Lights'). Copies sell for \$10 & are available from (03) 9486 3446.

'The Machine for Making Sense' is Jim Denley, Stevie Wishart, Rick Rue, Amanda Stewart and Chris Mann. CD 'On second thoughts': Tall Poppies Label, through Polygram.

'chris mann & the impediments' are Jeannie Marsh, Carolyn Connors, Rick Rue and Chris Mann. CD out by double o disks, available in USA - copies available here from 168 Barkley St., St Kilda 3182.

Another poetry & music band 'STOP THAT!' is investigating the possibility of a CD release. Poets Nolan Tyrrell & Myron

Lysenko deliver words over music written and played by musicians Mick Doherty, Brendan Tyrrell and Tony Roberts. They do a mix of their own material as well as poems by Eric Beach, Kerry Scuffins, Lyn Boughton & John Ashton. They are rehearsing & writing new material & should be performing again in Spring.

The Tasmanian 'Three Well-dressed Poets and Two Serious Musicians' were a big hit at the Montsalvat Festival. Eric Beach, Mande Bijelic & May Carroll took turns to deliver their poems, accompanied by Michael Fortescue on double bass & Greg Kingston on eccentric acoustic guitar. They differ from other Australian poetry & music bands in that their poems are not delivered against song patterns – rather the music is jazz inspired & follows the rhythms & cadences of the poetry.

With so many poetry bands springing up all over the country, maybe it's time for a compilation CD?

RADIO NATIONAL has a poetry program every Thursday at 9:30 pm. It's called 'THE BOX SEAT' & it features overseas & Australian poets. 3RRR also features poetry in its spoken word program 'HOWLINGS IN THE HEAD', which can be heard on week-nights at 9:55pm. 3CR has a weekly writers' program on Thursdays between 10 & 11 am; it features interviews, a What's On segment & readings.

ABCTV is including clips of poets in its Sunday arts magazine SUNDAY AFTERNOON WITH MARY DELAHUNTY. Poets who will be appearing include Lauren Williams, Bev Roberts, John Clarke & Myron Lysenko.

Adrian Rawlins is the director for this year's MONTSALVAT NATIONAL POETRY FESTIVAL. He has plans to expand the festival, by including poetry on computers & further mixed arts presentations. The dates are November 30 – December 3. Adrian can be contacted on 03 9383 5375.

CONCRETE POETRY SOUND POETRY PHOTO POETRY CONCRETE POETRY SOUND POETRY PHOTO POETRY

Editors Tony Figallo & Pete Spence produce a monthly newsletter called 'AXLE'.

This group meets monthly in a cafe in Richmond to talk. They have lots of contact on an international level but would like more Australian contributors. First anniversary coming up.

Australia's largest regional arts festival shook the Victorian town of Benalla during Easter. Director, Ivan Durrant organised 36 exhibition sites in galleries, shops, halls & sheds & over 200 artists were exhibited. Each site was officially opened with a poetry reading or musical performance. Margaret Wagenhofer convened over twenty poets to read in front of art-work, or to it, or from it & this was the unexpected revelation of the festival. The art added colour to the poetry while the poetry gave voice to the art. The two art-forms complemented each other & brought extra dimensions & heightened atmosphere together. So we had Tom Shapcott reading to Charles Blackman, Shelton Lea & Judith Rodriguez reading to an 'Angry Penguins' exhibition, Nolan Tyrrell & Grant Caldwell reading to a backdrop of Warren Breninger's gigantic bad teeth paintings, or Barry Dickins reading about Ronald Ryan in a room full of Ivan Durrant's sheds. Plans are going ahead for next year's festival - if it's anything like this year's, it would be worth going out of your way to get there.

Other recent poetry & art exhibitions include:

'Girls', an exhibition of paintings by David Laity on the wall of KAZBAR in Chapel Street South Yarra, accompanied by recent work of the poet Grant Caldwell.

'West Side Stories', an exhibition and performance at Westspace, 42 Albert Street Footscray, (03) 9689 2214.

Tal & Ronit (Flamenco), Malcolm the Phantom Poet (Luminous Foretellings), Le Nguyen ('Paperman' performance), Loop

(Sound and Projections), π.O. (performance poems), Skye Raabe ('Ship in the Night' visual poetry performance), Lauren Williams & Naoto (poetry and improvised accompaniment), Linda Sproul (Reading In Memorium), Robbie Mate Mate (Readings) & Frank Moylan presents 'Orchestra Tunnel').

**LOOK BOOK LOOK BOOK LOOK BOOK LOOK BOOK
LOOK BOOK LOOK BOOK LOOK BOOK LOOK BOOK**

New

Sambuca Blackboard Poems

Edited Louise Craig

The Familiar

Ian McBryde, Hale & Iremonger

In the human night

Peter Bakowski, Hale & Iremonger

Hot Collation

Jenny Boulton, Coral Hull, Sue Moss & Chris Mansell, Penguin

Michelangelo's Prisoners

Jennifer Harrison, Black Pepper Press /
Australian Scholarly

Laika's Run

Kerry Scuffins, FiveIslands Press

Images, Reflections: Gathering Tributes

Patrick Alexander, Earthdance

Good Book ... if you haven't yet:

For the Voice

Rex Buckingham, Earthdance

Transit Installation

Tim Broadhurst, self published

How To Think

Nolan Tyrrell, Hit & Miss

Four New Poets

Beate Josephi, Susan Hawthorne, John Bennett,
Terry Whitebeach, Penguin

The Ninth Satire

Stephen J. Williams, Pariah

The Monkey's Mask

Dorothy Porter, Hyland House

Love Poems

Shelton Lea, Eaglemont Books

Selected Poems 1975 - 1990

Ken Bolton, Penguin

Tickle

Les Wicks, Island Press

The Sad Anthropologist

Lauren Williams, Five Islands

One Siren or Another

Andrea Sherwood, UQP

One Day She Catches Fire

Kristin Henry, Penguin

Little Black Book of Poems

Johnny Harding, Dynamo House

Rumours heard ... books out soon

The Missing Portrait of Ronald Ryan and his research diary

Barry Dickins, Currency Press (to be launched
at the Benalla Gallery 3/2/96)

Making Country

Barrett Reid, Angus & Robertson

Also ...

Eric Beach, Nigel Roberts, Robert Hughes & π.O.

VOICEWORKS is a magazine for young people, by young people which aims to fill the void left by other youth magazines. In VOICEWORKS you'll find features, fiction, poetry, interviews, opinions, reports, illustrations, cartoons, photographs and anything else anyone 14 - 24 years old wishes to produce and submit. VOICEWORKS is published by Express media, a non-profit organisation which also produces other occasional publications such as the 1994 poetry anthology 'Journeys to the Point'. For information about VOICEWORKS, contact Express Media, 156 George Street Fitzroy, (03) 9416 3305.

READINGS READINGS READINGS READINGS
READINGS READINGS READINGS READINGS

MELBOURNE

Yarraville

Mamma-Zoo, Commercial Hotel, Thursday
once a month, Michael Tilley

Melbourne

The Arthouse, Royal Artillery Hotel

Fitzroy

Dan O'Connell Hotel, Saturday afternoons,
weekly, Grant McCracken

Carlton

LaMama Poetica, once monthly, Monday night

Fitzroy

Hot X Poets, monthly, Thursday night,
Victorian Writers' Centre. Grant Caldwell.

Fitzroy

Eaglemont Books, Brunswick Street, readings a
la Shelton Lea, on the odd occasion.

Collingwood

Visible Ink, once a month on Monday
night, Prince Patrick Hotel

Prahran

Prahran Library, cnr Chapel & Greville Sts, once
a month.

Look up Readings in the Age Entertainment Guide, each
Friday or in Write On, the Victorian Writers' Centre monthly
newsletter.

SYDNEY

Glebe

Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Road, monthly on
Saturdays, Nick Sykes (02) 982 8607

Annandale Gallery Cafe

43 Booth Street, first & third Wednesdays,
David Kelly (02) 560 6209

Look up 'Five Bells', Australia's monthly poetry magazine by
poets union, David Kelly, editor.

TASMANIA

Tasmanian Writers' Union, 77 Salamanca Place,
Hobart, 7000. Carolyn Dean.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide

S.A. Writers' Centre, GPO Box 878 Adelaide
5001 Barbara McFayden (08) 223 7662

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane Poetry at the Bear
Dancing Bear Cafe Toowoomba, Kate
Fawns, (076) 308 319 first Saturday

Queensland Writers' Centre
535 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, 4000

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Disk, third Tuesday,
Pockets Cocktail Lounge, Northbridge

ACT

Kimbo's Monthly, Monday readings
51 Townshend Street, Phillip, ACT.

And finally ...

Tim Broadhurst is cataloguing tapes of readings from Rochester Castle Hotel (late 80s) which were being compiled by Rex Buckingham for the State Library of Victoria.



Going Down Swinging

Back issues available:

Issue 14 (1994)

The last issue edited by founding editors Kevin Brophy and Myron Lysenko. Features an interview with Eric Beach, with poetry and prose from over 60 writers; reviews and graphics.

Issue 13 (1993)

With a tribute to Jas H Duke in the form of a CD, this issue features poetry and prose from over forty writers, an interview with Grant Caldwell and reviews.

Issue 12 (1992)

Our first issue devoted entirely to poetry and prose featuring over 50 writers including Peter Bakowski, Eric Beach, MAC Farrant, Mal Morgan and many more.

Double Issue 10/11 (1990)

Featuring interviews with Geoff Goodfellow, Gerald Murnane and Bev Roberts, the novella *Eyeglass* by Kevin Morgan and prose, poetry, reviews from over 40 writers.

Available for \$5 each (Issue 10/11: \$8) from PO Box 24, Clifton Hill 3068, Australia.

Make cheque payable to Going Down Swinging.

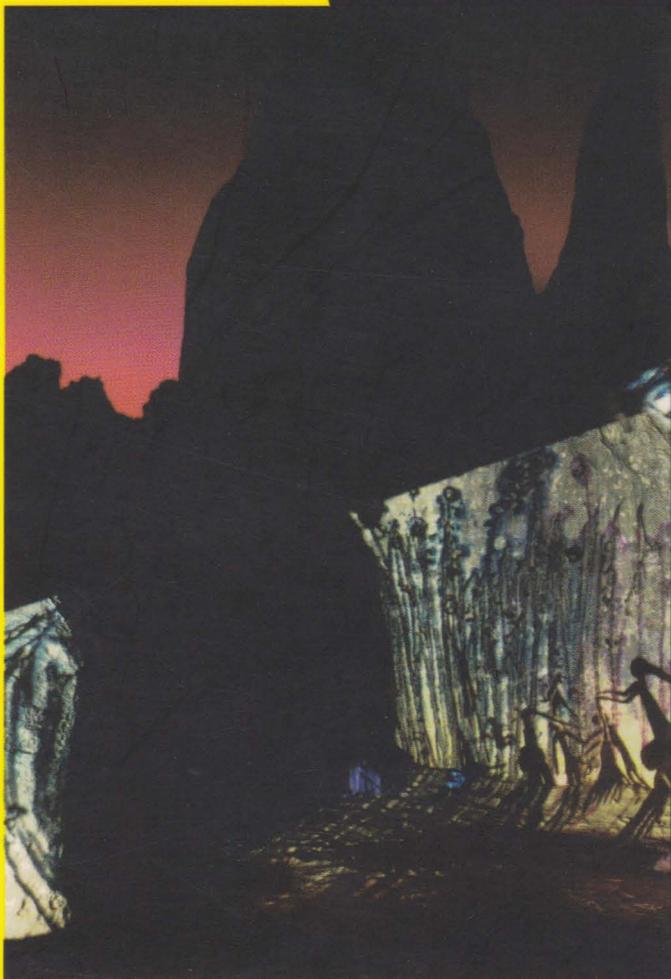
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