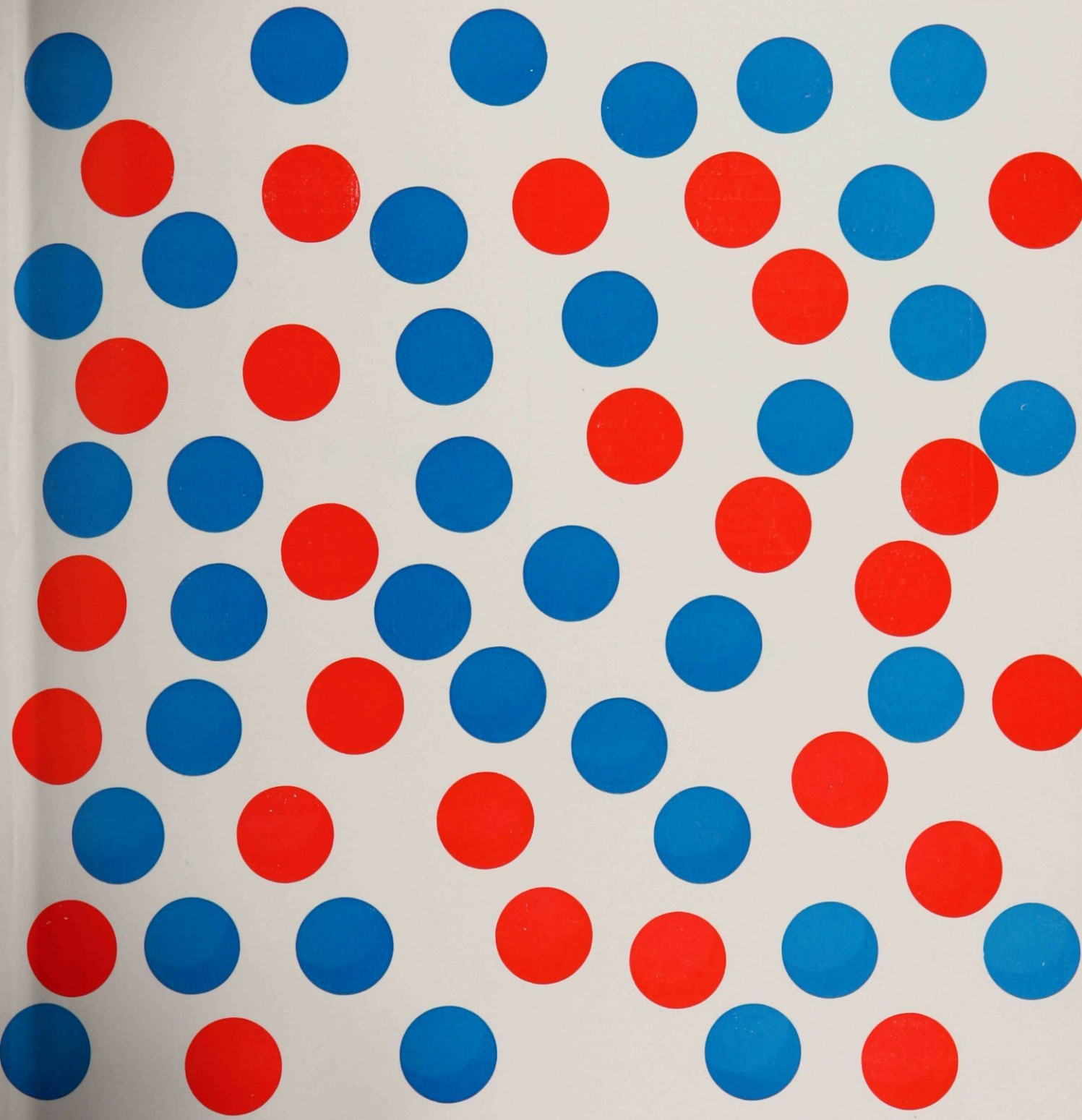


westery



**THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN
AUSTRALIA AND
NEW ZEALAND**

G. W. TURNER, M.A. (N.Z.)

Reader in English Language and
Literature
University of Adelaide

Published 1966 \$4.20 240 pages

In this book the author presents a socio-linguistic study of the rapidly developing new varieties of the English language in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. Turner begins with an outline history of Australia and New Zealand as it affects the development of the language. He then assesses **earlier** studies of Australian English and examines the theoretical implications of the growth of the new varieties of English. There are chapters on linguistic problems affecting literature, journalism and science in the two countries; on phonetics; and on colloquial Australian English, Pidgin English, the special vocabularies of farming, goldmining, etc., and regional variations with special reference to New Zealand.

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a quarterly review

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Westerly hopes to devote the fourth issue of this year to younger Australian writers, and would welcome stories, poems, criticism, general articles. An arbitrary age limit is not proposed, but by younger writers we are thinking of writers under twenty-five, or upwards to thirty. Writers may be published or not have any work yet in print. We would appreciate brief biographical material with contributions. The issue hopes to offer the feelings and opinions of younger people in the fields of fiction, criticism and appraisal of art, music, sociology—in short, to be in some way interpretative of this climate of opinion in its widest sense. If such opinion does not manifest itself sufficiently, and we are over optimistic, then contributions can still be considered for publication in the usual way.

THE PATRICIA HACKETT PRIZE

The Patricia Hackett Prize for the best original creative contribution to *Westerly* in 1966 is shared by William Grono for his poem "The Oleander" and Dorothy Hewett for her poem "Legend of the Green Country".

The Editorial Committee gratefully acknowledges the kindness of Mr. Clem Christesen of Meanjin Quarterly, who acted as judge.

The prize of 210 dollars is awarded annually.

RUTH

THOUGH IT WAS STILL very hot, rain had begun to fall. She could see it by the street-light, falling through the stiff fronds of the palm tree. Outside that little circle of light it was very dark, almost black, so that you could not see the rain, only hear it spattering on the roof. Faces came sudden and coloured out of the dark into the station entrance, laughing, with little raindrops still trembling whole on the skin. It was beautiful, thought Ruth; she would have liked to stay there for a long time, just watching. And this afternoon, as she walked down the road for the last time she had kept thinking, just as she used to at the end of the school holidays when she had to go back to the city, I must remember this, and this, and this—how the sun threw yellow mottled reflections from the trees all over the footpath in Harford Place, and the old man who sat on the last bench at the end of the park and always said ‘How are you, today?’ and the fat Chinese baby at the fruiterers’—as if she would not see them again, or as if, somehow, it would be a kind of solace to remember them.

But she was not sorry to leave, at all, only, perhaps a little tired; and then leaving a place where you had lived for a long time was always a little sad. Tomorrow, when she was with Robert, it would all be different.

The interior of the station was not a cheerful place; the great arched roof, of a greenish glass, was like a church. Under the clocks a row of people sat, their luggage at their feet. They looked sad, Ruth thought, or perhaps they were just bored, waiting for the train. A little boy had fallen asleep on top of a great pile of luggage, and there was something, for a second, about the young man who came and lifted him up onto his shoulder—something in his movement, the way he walked perhaps, which reminded her of Robert. But no, when she looked again, she could not see what it was that reminded her. Slowly, she walked across with her bags, and the guard at the barrier, with a nod, took her ticket and handed it back, with a little hole punched neatly in the side.

When she entered the compartment there was a woman standing by the window, a woman of about fifty, with grey hair in neat waves like the pictures in those old women's journals you found in doctors' waiting rooms. In her hand she held a pudgy hat covered with purple velvet flowers.

'Hullo,' said Ruth, putting her bag down on the floor.

'Good-evening dear,' replied the grey-haired lady, smiling. Very carefully she hung her hat up on the metal hook beneath the luggage rack.

There was a silence and then the woman said, 'As we are to be fellow travellers, I see, let me introduce myself. I am Miss Cockett, Sadie Cockett.'

'I'm Ruth Davidson.'

'I'm very pleased to meet you, my dear.' She sat down in the corner of the seat, and took up a shiny leather writing case. The initials 'S.C.' were stamped in gold beneath the stencilled rose.

'You have caught me in the midst of writing a letter. To a very close friend. We correspond regularly.' And she gave a look, as if she had some kind of secret, which Ruth should have known, or at least guessed at correctly, and ruffled the pages of the little writing pad. 'Though lately I must confess, I have been rather remiss. No doubt he wonders what I have been up to.' She gave a kind of chuckle, and picked up the little gold-tasselled pen that hung dangling from its string.

Ruth sat by the window. The train slid away from the station without a sound, leaving the waving people in little bunches on the platform. Looking out she could see nothing of the city, only the dark, and sudden lights which blinked and scattered. Drops of rain, big and heavy, slanted across the pane. She pulled down the blind and sat looking at the rows of fawn leaves, arranged in a dull pattern on the faded brown cloth.

* * *

'Are you travelling the whole way, dear?' asked Miss Cockett suddenly, from the corner.

'Yes.'

'So am I—yes, I'm going to spend a weekend with some friends in the city. They wanted me to come down earlier, but I couldn't, for, as a matter of fact, I've just returned from a cruise.'

'Oh?' said Ruth. She was fascinated by the way in which Miss Cockett's hands, plump and white, writhed in and out as she spoke, as if she were squeezing a lemon.

'M'mm. To the islands. It makes a change, you know, from one's job. I am in legal work, with the firm of Hooper and Vine. Perhaps you have heard of them. It's quite a big firm.'

'Oh yes, I think I have.'

'I've been with them for years—perhaps too many years. It's "Miss Cockett, where is Miss Cockett?" all day long, till I'm quite rushed off my feet. I really don't know how they'd manage without me. Still it makes one feel quite an important little cog in the works. What do you do, dear?'

'I'm going to teach.'

'A teacher, are you? I had a cousin who was a teacher once. Nan Beckitt. It may seem odd to you that two cousins should have the names Beckitt and Cockett. The children at school used to think so, I can tell you. They called us Becky and Cocky, but we didn't mind, it was all in fun, even then.' She smiled. Her eyes, behind the pointed blue glasses, were very bright. 'You seem young to be a teacher. But then young girls do so many more things now than they did in my day. On the cruise I shared a cabin with a girl who must have been about your age, and she had just driven all the

way down from Queensland by herself in one of those little vo—vox—what do you call them?"

'Volkswagens.'

'Yes, that's right. On those lonely country roads. Anything could have happened. But nothing seemed to worry her. "Miss Cockett," she said to me once, "don't you worry about me, I am a girl who knows how to look after herself."'

'She was a pleasant enough girl, in her way. But so untidy! I don't think there's anything quite so unattractive about a girl as untidiness, sloppiness. Her clothes were flung all over the floor, just where she stepped out of them. She would come in at all hours—not, of course, that I kept a check on her, or anything like that, I just used to hear her come in, and sometimes as late as four or five o'clock in the morning. Goodness knows what she had been up to.' Miss Cockett's eyes, however, implied that indeed, she did know, or could hazard a good guess. 'And in the mornings, she'd never get out of bed till after eleven. The steward didn't think much of her, I can tell you. He said to me once "Miss Cockett, you are a considerate lady—not like her. I like you". He was such a handsome boy. Such very white teeth—and the most beautiful smile. I always think those native boys have such an attractive look about them, something almost—pagan.' And she nodded her head, slightly, and smiled at the washstand opposite, as if the most handsome native boy of all stood there, and offered her, upon a silver salver, some exquisite thing.

* * *

Ruth couldn't sleep in the train. All night long it lurched and rattled through the dark, and stopped, over and over again, with a jolt which shook the whole compartment and set the wire hanger, which held Miss Cockett's silk dress, jangling forlornly. It was hot, too: she pulled the blankets down and crept to the end of the bunk, carefully, so as not to waken Miss Cockett.

On the white gravel station, the station master was talking to the guard; they were laughing together. How strange it looked, so late, under the station light which gave their faces a stiff blue-shadowed look, like dream people. Behind them lay the little town, like all the others, with a single road, a hotel, and a grey painted church and schoolhouse. But it was simple and beautiful; it was peace. The moon was very white. And for a moment, she almost wished that she could get off there, and laugh with the station master, and be met by someone and go down the road in a horse and sulky with a lantern by the side, as if she was a child come for the holidays.

Miss Cockett was snoring. Ruth looked over the edge of the bunk and saw her face, which seemed somehow twisted against the white of the pillow-case; her mouth hung open, and the neat waves were flattened into a swamp-coloured net. How ugly she was, thought Ruth, as she lay down again beneath the sheet. What had she been like when she was young? Perhaps she had been pretty then. But what had happened, what had been wrong, so that she was left behind? She was just left, you could tell. And she was a pleasant enough person—that was what Robert always said about people he didn't like; 'He's a pleasant enough chap,' or she—. But he didn't mean it. She did though. She liked Miss Cockett.

'Oh God,' she thought, 'let me not be like Miss Cockett. Never!'

Even through the dream she could hear the sound of the train, restless and sad. 'You don't want to be alone all your life,' said mother, coming in, standing by the telephone. Behind her hand, with the rings on it, there was a bowl of purple flowers, soft and thick like velvet. She had not lived alone, yet her face, Ruth saw, had a flat, a sorry look. Her hand on the dark table lay white and so heavy it looked as if she could not lift it up. But it would have been worse, if she had been alone. Ruth looked at the phone book and thought, after all, yes, she would ring Robert and tell him when she was coming.

But he was there surely, watching her with his still eyes, his little smile. When she was away from him she always remembered that, the little smile, and the still still face that shut you out.

'Well, when are you coming down? When can I expect you?' His voice, very careful, nipped out the little words.

'If you can tell me approximately, I can get a place ready.'

But it was awful, awful, to hear him arranging it all, so coldly and exactly, in a little world of times and facts and estate agents. But that was how things were. It was only she who must expect them to be different. Her hands were trembling, she hoped he would not see. His own hands, holding the flat leather case which contained his papers, were quite firm. The solemn outline of his face, as he stood there, defeated her. She could not tell if he loved her. And she could not ask him. Never. She could not imagine asking.

'If you don't want to come, Ruth—'

Oh no, no.

She did want to come, to be with him. She didn't want to stay by herself.

It was beginning to rain, a thin, misty rain which caught and hung like cobwebs on the spidery tram wires. An old woman was standing beside her—she thought for a moment it was Miss Cockett, but no, this old woman was older. Her face was all sunk in. 'Oh my dear,' she said, 'what lovely hair you have.' How hard she stared. 'When I was a girl I had hair like that, but mine was long, we had long hair then—and a figure, such a figure I had, oh the men, the men—'. She laughed, her mouth hung open. And she caught at Ruth's arm, as if she wanted to keep her there. It was becoming horrible, she looked around for Robert but he had gone. The rain fell more heavily; great drops hung, cruel and glittering, on the tram wires, which had become thick and ugly, like a great net hung out beneath the sky.

* * *

Ruth woke and the sun was shining. Thankfully she got up and dressed, and sat on the edge of the bunk watching the paddocks go by. Soon they would be in Albury, the border town. Miss Cockett stirred and sat up, taking off her hairnet and looking round for her glasses. Ruth climbed down onto the floor. 'Be careful now,' Miss Cockett said, 'don't fall and hurt yourself.' She was a kind person. You could see that. But Robert would have said, without noticing, 'My God, what an ugly old dame.'

'I'm getting out at Albury for some tea,' said Ruth, 'I'll bring you some if you like.'

'Thank you dear, and would you mind posting my letter—there's a box in the refreshment room. I want it to go as soon as possible, you understand, to atone for my neglect.' Playfully she smiled.

The town was approaching, lying amongst the little hills. Perhaps it was the very early morning which gave the place such a fragile quality. The houses were brown and earth-coloured, against the grey hills. Their roofs looked thin and dry, like wafers placed over the upturned walls. When Ruth stepped out onto the platform there was already a small hot wind blowing across from the west, it rushed into her face and hair. It seemed to blow right through her, hollowing her out, until she was as brittle and dreamlike as the thin houses under the sun.

She stopped for a moment near the end of the platform, and looked down the main street. There were little wisps of hay on the ground, a pale shining gold, like the silk on top of the corn. She remembered so clearly, how the wisps stuck to your clothes as you ran through the paddocks, how if you lay on the grass for a minute your hair was full of them. She dropped the letter in the box and carried the paper cups of steaming tea and the flat railway station sandwiches back to the compartment, where, with tiny delicate movements Miss Cockett was fixing her teeth in front of the hideous washstand.

The train rocked from side to side and pulled away from the shadowy town, jolting away into the long summer dawn. For a moment Ruth felt a little sad, as if she was leaving a place she cared for. But it soon passed; it was not real. The hills and the houses disappeared, and the country was brown and blunt again. The sun was hot through the thick glass window. In Melbourne though, the day could be grey, perhaps it would be raining when they reached the suburbs. It had been last time—she remembered how she had looked out, while Robert was reading the newspaper and seen the heavy sky, factories and little houses grey like pencil drawings, grey cranes and the masts of ships on the dirty river. She imagined getting out onto the wet platform in the midst of luggage and umbrellas and people calling to each other, and she would see him coming through the crowd towards her, slowly, with his little smile. Was he smiling at her, quietly? That was what she always thought—that he found something in her which was amusing, something childish and rather funny. She saw the smile so clearly, at the corner of his mouth—but it was not happy, he was never happy.

But that is why I love him, she thought, suddenly. And she did, she really did. She did love him, no matter what. And she felt herself smile, really smile, because she could not help it. Slowly, she trailed her finger over the dusty window, writing his name on the glass—foolishly, like a sentimental child, she realised, and rubbed it out quickly, as if he had been looking over her shoulder.

'My, you're a dreamer, aren't you?' remarked Miss Cockett brightly, without malice. She had spread a Kleenex over her silk dress and was eating her flat sandwiches with a doubtful complacency.

CHAOS

My stars,
To have seen this,
To have seen it! he said, returning
From the flotsam in the funnel of the maelstrom,
From dark beasts growling in the gap of ages,
From the monster-mash of history, the meaningless sword-rust
As junky as the car-piles ruinous at a great town's edge,
From the double-dark on dark than which the middle of the night seemed
brighter,
From the black warp and the black woof, densely interpenetrating,
without weave at the last,
From the silence violated by no speech, where no words had been spoken,
even long before the present words were not
And had one word been spoken down there it would have vibrated like the
most radiant poem, hung down like the heaviest tome of philosophy,
Where one cry or one breath or one crayon line would have been the
creation of music and metaphysics, shape and society, purpose and
history and the tame heavy beasts of the farmer's yard,
The very first word or gesture undoing the creation as a
thunderdrum or lightning-lance shatters the fat purple of summer night,
laying the blest foundation stone or starting a sole rusted clock in
the ruined mansion of the world.

My stars,
I have been there,
I have seen it, he said, returning
To the bright junk on the face of this our world.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

SWAMPED, OR:
THE REASON FOR THE LACK OF
SATIRICAL POETRY

Perhaps it's no more than this: the duck-shooter dreams
All winter of the opening day of the season,
When, like a novice preacher he can pronounce
His gun's deliberate psalm and watch his bird
Topple out of the air, as if fetched down
By the power of the leaden text . . .

And then—when the season's really come—absurd reality!
The swamp breaks out its wild-fowl in such plenitude
The sky is dark with ducks, plump, shootable,
Quacking their doom-laden multiple quacks
(A man could close his eyes, fire wild, and bag
A brace with every blast—but where's the sport,
The skill in this?)

Now that the shooter's chance
Has come, he finds he cannot shoot but stands
Knee-high in water watching them go over,
Disarmed by nature's prodigality, its wry response
To his closed-season dreams.

BRUCE DAWE

NAUTILUS

THE DAY WAS FULL of light—white, gold, silver—all scintillating on the windswept Southern Ocean. In the morning there had been one of those occasional summer fogs, but by midday it had quite disappeared, rolled out and away over the grey surface of the sea, slowly, like an unseen monster sucking back its breath—and then the gulls had taken to their wings again, the little children from the camping ground had started digging up the beach with toy, wooden spades, the lighthouse, perched on a distant pinnacle of rock, completed the western horizon once more, and the fishing boats chugged out over the calm water turning from slate to sapphire in the sunlight. A sense of deliverance was detectable—one does not expect fogs in the middle of summer, just after Christmas. And the stray dogs of the town went begging around the tents and caravans in the camping ground.

But the English boy was delighted. In sandaled feet he flapped through the camping ground and up the sandy track that led through a thin ridge of rush-covered dunes down on to the beach—which spread away on either side like the white, languid outstretched arms of a woman—inferior, he thought, to the clenched rocky cliffs which punctuated it a mile or so from there. A gust of shore wind whisked up the sand at his feet so that it stuck to his glasses—tortoise-shell rimmed, bifocal—but he was too delighted to brush it off, and squinted out to sea through the clinging, gritty grains. The dense fog in the morning, contrasted now with this lucidly sun-outlined seascape, had stirred the poet in him. He was trying to bring about a state of unconsciousness in which he could, for a moment, lose his physical form and be united with the elements, staring out over the ocean, the unblemished panorama, the curve of the earth's surface—it was all shattered by shrieking little brats who came galloping wildly through the dunes, the rushes, the flowering currant bushes, playing at cowboys and Red Indians, popping plastic guns, shooting rubber arrows, saying in triumph, Gotcha apache! then ploughing on with phantom horses.

And a mother back among the caravans, screeching in her cockatoo, working-class voice, "Kevin! I've told you and told you not to play in the creek. There're tiger-snakes and eels in it!"

The English boy came back from the foamy crest of his wave, took out a handkerchief the size of a tea-towel and carefully wiped the sand from his spectacle lens. His nobility had been flouted, he thought—by commonness.

Turning away from the sea he decided to go to Stephanie's caravan and ask her would she not like to go for a stroll up the beach with him? There before him, beyond the camping ground stretched a flat marshy landscape, a few farm houses criss-crossed by reedy creeks that disappeared eventually into low, but dense ti-tree scrub; and yellow Jersey cows swished away flies with their tails.

This was all so different from London, from his slummy, crowded suburb where he had gone to school every winter with leaking shoes. When his uncle first showed him Adelaide he asked, "Now where is the city?" And here, hundreds of miles away on Cape Northumberland, why, it was a wilderness.

He flip-flapped through the row of camps in his sandals, staring back over his shoulder with curiosity at the Russian family's camp—sprawling tents, the foreign language, the mother peeling potatoes outside on the ground, her son strolling about in his bathers and suntan. He disapproved—he knew that they ate peculiar sausages, cooked in butter and oil, green peppers, fried cabbage—never seemed to stop eating; they sunbaked and swam every day and then held parties at night. The two women wore their hair undone and never put on shoes—looking like gypsies, he thought—vigorous, bronze. Even in a camping ground there was no need to become uncivilised, and then look as if you enjoyed it. Other people had fly-nets across their tents, went to bed early with their radios turned down, and prepared their vegetables inside, drank cups of tea quietly in the afternoon, removed their bathers now and then—he thought!

Stephanie was in, and she would go for a walk with him. She was delightful—a science student, slightly built and with ashen coloured hair, blue eyes as pale as lake water, almost grey.

On the beach she bobbed along beside him, just an inch or so taller in fact, thinking of the Russian woman's son—the whole camping ground knew by now that they were Russians—what did he, Robert, this English boy know about bare feet and walking over burrs without feeling them! Burrs, box-thorns and the sharp gravel along the edge of the road? Up and down the beach, everywhere, were the prints of bare feet, some of them washed away by the tide, some buried in lumps of sloppy pink seaweed. And he wore rubber sandals!

The English boy said with a faint smirk, as though it were a quaint sight, "Look what's coming."

She said, "I know, I've seen them," unmoved.

For a group of nuns came rocking mildly up the beach like a flock of penguins, never slackening their pace, never stopping to inspect a shell, yet not caring if the soles of their thick-heeled shoes got a little damp from the sand gleaming so wetly in the afternoon sun. They came every year and stayed in a stark weatherboard house, narrow beds side by side in a closed-in verandah, identical sexless pink nightgowns folded neatly on each undented, pleasureless pillow—and then the walks up the beach in the late afternoon.

As they came level with them, Robert leaned his head slightly towards the girl and said, "I'm an agnostic myself" as though it were a political secret, but she was thinking of what the Russian had told her about his

church in the city where the grey bearded Batushka hobbled up and down in front of the icons, shaking the incense casket which sounded uncannily like a lantern swinging from the rafters of a medieval stable, and how despite the choir, you could still hear jet aeroplanes screaming outside. Robert said, "It's impossible; history proves it. I believe in some ultimate power, but I'm not that unrealistic!"

She was staring out over the waves deepening to indigo and violet under the flurrying shadows of the clouds, as though estranged, unaware of this earnestly metabolising sprig of life getting along beside her on his scrawny legs the colour of toadstool stalks in the darkest glade of the forest. The seaweed and kelp squelched beneath the weight of his sandals which progressed over it like bull-dozer, straight through little pools of stagnant iodine water lying hidden in the bulks of kelp, crunching over sea-eggs, shell fragments, fish skeletons, paying not the slightest heed, his beady stoat eyes fixed ahead on the cliffs.

Suddenly he took her hand. She felt it hot—pulsating, intense. In a voice that quivered with emotion he said, "Stephanie, it's so wonderful to have met someone like you, intelligent, pretty; not giggly and ignorant like the plain Janes at my office!" And pity surged up in her. She felt nothing for him. Could he not see how ugly he was, how his Cockney accent betrayed him, how ridiculous it was for such an unimposing scrap of body to claim knowledge, criticism, artistic understanding? Was he not then just a sort of clown, a mind within a shabby reproduction of the human body, a body incapable of doing the mind justice, conceived between grubby blankets on a Saturday night in London. How he would suffer, yearning after the possession of the beauty and form that would never be seen with him. She thought, I am vain—we are all vain, but still I would be ashamed of him, have no confidence . . .

And then at last they were scrambling over the rocks at the edge of the cliff, when the girl suddenly cried out and hastened forward to something washed up on the pebbles. A white shell, as large as a fine porcelain vase, but as thin as ice, and frail. "It's a nautilus shell," she said, picking it up carefully. "They're quite rare, you know—the egg-case of a type of octopus—how lovely, a real treasure. A worthwhile walk, wasn't it, Robert?" She seemed quite transported with delight and excitement as though she found it hard to believe the reality of her find.

He thought of his Tennyson—he knew his Tennyson, and Keats, and Wordsworth—not Shelley so much, he was more difficult. But his Keats and Tennyson. He wanted to say,

*Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well,*

but suppressed it for fear she would not have heard. And she would not, holding the precious shell cupped in both hands against the blue sky, saying, "It will look beautiful mounted—on polished teak-wood. Beautiful!" He ventured to finger it, but she jerked it out of his reach, trying to laugh, "Do be careful, Robert. It's flimsy, paper-thin. It would be terrible to break it."

And they made their way back up the beach—she, half-dancing, he, his hands in his pockets, feeling secondary.

Behind them the seagulls swooped back and forth from the rocks to the water, like pendants swinging on threads. Occasionally one of the birds would settle on the tip of a wave and go bobbing and dipping away like a plastic toy boat. Nothing was to be heard now but the desolate, primitive shriek of the gulls and the timeless drone of the sea.

° ° °

That night the Russians could be heard singing to their strombolas, the music floating out over the camping ground on the soft night air.

*Oi da lyuli lyuli,
Oi da lyuli lyuli,*

ever rising and rising to a wild crescendo. The English boy went into his tent and tied the flap across. Outside, a few minutes later, his flickering shadow on the canvas could be seen by the light of a candle. Playing cards with himself, bending this way and that like a praying-mantis. He knew they were not Communists; it was just that they behaved like gypsies.

° ° °

Next morning, standing among the dunes, he saw Stephanie go running down the beach to the water, hand in hand with the Russian boy, Sasha, and when they reached the line of breakers he swept her up easily in his brown arms and carried her into the surf.

Pain came into the stoat eyes. She was at their camp last night then! Drinking and making a row—traitor. And he turned away from the beach, walking slowly, but still illusioned by his ugliness. That it might never be revealed to him, that he might be blessed by it. And on the way to his tent he passed Stephanie's caravan where the shell was propped against one of the windows—the beauty and the form that would ever elude him, his unuttered Tennyson.

PLUVIAN

Man is a god. Man is a machine.
A man is the god in his machine.
He is the one who descends from the flies
to establish an opera of modern history
in Western Europe. He is the god who rises
in his chariot from China to proclaim
henceforth the Sun in Heaven speaks Chinese.
He is in your century of the Common Man
my fellow urgent on a tumbling motor-mower
tender to greens of municipal golf links.

Man is, and is what his machine is.
He has no present. He has only regrets
which he refers to as his past. He lives
by projects of the future, being thus
what his ambitions are. He lives by failures
or by schemes which have not so far failed.

I shall not with the press mourn those who burn
inside their phallic capsules on a rocket bed.
I shall mourn for a human failure to attain
what formerly was province of clouded gods,
shadowy now in removal, as I stand

at the perimeter of a water spray
where into heat of later afternoon
my garden sprinkler makes some play of raining
over Iron Barks and Queensland Blues
under the last apple tree. I am
my own rainbows. My regrets patter in dust
and have no ambitions, but I must affirm
that men may still be human nonetheless.
The machine is not total. To confirm
a relative freedom of my will, to declare
for humanity, I unbutton and pee.

I am more powerful than a gardener's engine.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

NOVEMBER 6

Event without implication if not
without purpose, a happening
in a dairyfarming landscape of
lapsed promises where a farmer wore
a construction worker's white helmet
while he drove a red tractor escorted
by three all black cattle dogs.

At the turn off the sign said
a mile and a quarter to the Aero Club.
It was a long mile, metalled, and the quarter
was longer still. The turn off is at
the tennis courts at the side of the highway.
The club is only a beginning, no hangar yet,
no hard standing, a small club house
which is strictly serviceable.

Rain beat us to the field. Flying was
cancelled. We sat in the car, reading.
When the ceiling came down closer and darker
we gave up, started for home, and somehow
got to be part of a drivers' rally, junior grade.
By the time we were back to the turn off,
their checkpoint, we had a string of cars
behind us. In the afternoon

the local TV people screened *Things to Come*,
a backward look at prophecy not wise after
the event, humanity saved by the airmen
who dropped peace gas, blacksuiting crypto-
fascists, but of a pure intention.
Artists were reactionaries. Science was Good.
Progress equalled flying further, faster.
Newer machines were moral. Authority was a gas,
of peace.

All the way home it rained,
and either I sang The Shropshire Lad
or recited his poems about cherry trees,
dead young fellows, crossed love, but not
about farmers in white helmets on red tractors.

We have seen the future, and it does not work.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

A HEDGE OF ROSEMARY

NO ONE KNEW where the old man went every night at dusk. He sat to his tea in his daughter-in-law's kitchen and ate up obediently everything she put before him. She was a sharp woman but quite kind, she called him Dad and stirred his tea for him as she put the cup beside him. She put it a bit towards the middle of the table so he would not knock it over.

"Mind your tea now Dad" she always said, and without looking up from his plate he answered:

"Thank you kindly, much obliged." After the meal he would sit for a while with his boots off, he held them in both hands and studied the soles intently sometimes shaking his head over them, and Sarah would get his dishes done out of the way.

Just about this time, as on other nights, his son John, who had a business in town, came in and he and Sarah had their dinner. When that and the necessary bits of conversation were over they all went into the lounge room and sat in comfortable chairs to watch the television. The house was very quiet with John's three boys all grown up and gone their ways, two to Sydney and one overseas. When the old man had sat a short while with John and Sarah in the lounge he put on his boots slowly and carefully and then getting up carefully from his comfortable chair he went out through the back verandah.

"Mind how you go Dad!" Sarah called after him and he replied, "That's right, that's right!" and went off into the dusk round the side of the house and through a door in a vine covered trellis and down into the street. After he had gone Sarah wondered where he was going. On other evenings she had peered out into the dark fragrance to see if he had gone up to the end of the garden. She thought he might have gone up to the shed for something. Sometimes she had looked in there and had even pushed open the door of the white-washed place next to the shed thinking he might be ill in there. He never would use the one in the bathroom which was so much nicer. But he was never in either place. If she went out of the front door she could never see him; by the time she had picked her way across her neatly laid out suburban garden he was always gone from sight and all she could do was to peer up the street and down the street into the gathering darkness and go back into the house where John was absorbed in the television.

"I wonder where Dad's off to again" she said, but on this night as on all other nights John was not listening to her.

"The Queen's not looking so well" Sarah remarked as some activities of the Royal family came on in the news. John grunted some sort of reply and they both sank into the next programme and did not think too much about the old man walking off on his own into the night.

During the day the old man did practically nothing, he tidied the garden a bit and stacked wood slowly and neatly outside the verandah so Sarah had only to reach out an arm for it. Mostly he sat in the Barber's Shop. He went shopping too, with his battered attache case. He laid it on the counter in the Post Office and opened it with his trembling old hands. Glossy magazines lay in neat rows over the counter.

"Mind my magazines now Dad!" the Post Mistress said, and he replied:

"That's right, that's right!" and when he had drawn his money he said:

"Thank you kindly, much obliged," and back to the Barber's Shop where the paint was peeling from the ceiling and the shelves were littered with old fashioned hair nets and curlers and other toilet requisites long out of date and covered in dust. Faded advertisements hung on the walls but no one ever read them.

Towards the end of the afternoon the shop filled with little boys from school and sometimes little girls came in and would take their turn in the chair unnoticed by the Barber who did not do girls. The children ignored the old man and brushed past him to reach for old magazines and tattered comics which they read greedily, sprawled on the linoleum. The Barber greeted every customer in a nasal drawling voice. He spoke to the old man. "And how are they treating you eh? Pretty good eh?" He said the same thing to everybody, and the old man replied:

"That's right, that's right." If the children had asked him he could have thought up stories about the Great Red Fox and Brother Wolf, but the children never asked him anything, not even the time.

Some days he wandered by the River watching the weaving pattern of children playing on the shore. They never took any notice of him and he sat half asleep in the shade of one of the peppermint trees that grew at intervals along the bank. He sat just a bit back from the sandy edges where the kind-hearted water rippled gentle and lazy and shallow. He was always sleepy at noon after his midday meal which Sarah gave him early at half past eleven so that she could get cleared up in the kitchen. The children never came to him to ask his advice or to show him things. He supposed he was too old. Yet he knew a good many things about the foreshore and about playing in the sand. Back at home he had three things better than plastic spades; he had an iron gravy spoon and an ash scoop and an old iron trowel. These had been for his grand-children years ago when he had brought them down to the shore to play, minding them for Sarah so she could get on and do the house and the cooking and the washing. He never thought about these three things now, they lay somewhere at home behind the stove, he never thought about the Great Red Fox and Brother Wolf either. But if someone had asked him, he could have thought about them.

There was a little merry-go-round there, a corner of jangling music and laughter, a corner of enchantment. When the children went round and round on the little painted horses the old man forgot everything as he sat on a bench and watched them. They smiled and waved and he would nod

and smile and wave and then shake his head because the children were nothing of his and were not waving to him. Once a child was crying on the path and he fished a penny out of his pocket and held it out but she would not take it and hid her face in the uneven hem of her mother's dress.

"You can't get anything for a penny now Gran'pa" the mother said and laughing quite kindly walked on along the path.

When he went out in the evening he walked straight down the middle of the road towards the River. The evening was oriental with dark verandahs and curving ornamental roof tops, palm fronds and the long sweeping hair of peppermint trailing, a mysterious profile sketched temporarily purple on a green and grey sky. Fingers of darkness crept across him and the moon, thinly crescent and frail hung in the gum leaf lace. Dampness and fragrance brushed his old face and he made his way to the River where the shores were deserted. The magpies caressed him with their cascade of watery music. This was their time for singing at dusk and all night if they wanted to. Down by the water's edge the old man crouched to rest and his voice sighed into a whisper sliding into the great plate of smooth water before him.

"No one should be alone when they are old." His thought and his word and his voice were like dry reeds rustling at the edge of the gentle water.

When he had rested a few moments he walked on through the stranded ghosts of the swings and the merry-go-round. The little wooden horses, their heads bent and devout, were dignified in their silence. The old man walked by unnoticed, for why should the little horses notice him, he walked this way so often. A little farther on he turned up the grass bank away from the River. The slope was hardly a slope at all but he had to pause more than once for breath. Soon his hand brushed the roughness and fragrance of rosemary and his nostrils filled with the sharper scent of geranium, and he fumbled the wooden latch of a gate and went in and along the overgrown path of a neglected garden. The hedge of Rosemary was nearly three feet thick and sang with bees in the heat of a summer day. Geraniums like pale pink sugar roses climbed and hung and trailed at the gate posts, and again on either side of the crumbling woodwork of the verandah trellis. Later on the air would be heavy with the sweetness of honeysuckle but the old man was not thinking of this. He fumbled again at the latch of the door and made his way into the darkness inside the familiar place which had been his home and his wife's home and his children's home for more years than he ever thought about now. In the kitchen he felt about with his old hands till he had candle and matches.

Three years back he had been ill with pneumonia and fever and Sarah declared the place unhealthy and smelling of the River and drains, or lack of them; and herself finding it too much to come there every day to see him and his house as well as her own which took a deal of doing on her own. So she and John had come one Sunday afternoon in the car and fetched him to their place and had nursed him well and comfortable. And later, had sold his place to the owner of some tea rooms further along the River, the other side of the swings and the merry-go-round. So far the man who had bought it had done nothing except sell the furniture and even some of that, the shabby good-for-nothing stuff, was still there. As soon as the old man was well enough from his illness he had started to walk back to his place. At

first he had only got as far as the Barber's Shop on the corner, and then to the Post Mistress where the road widened before turning down to the sandy wastes by the River. And then one day he managed to the bench at the merry-go-round, and after that strength was his to walk right to his place. And he went inside and sat in the kitchen and looked about him thinking and remembering. But he did not think and remember too much, mostly he rested and was pleased to be there. He laid his attache case on the kitchen table and opened it with his trembling old hands, he unpacked his shopping into the cupboard by the stove. He had little packages of tea, sugar and matches. Then he took out his pipe and tobacco and sat and smoked his pipe. Sarah objected to the smell of his cheap tobacco in her home, even if he smoked out on the verandah, she complained all the time afterwards, and went from room to room opening windows, shaking curtains and spraying the air with something pine scented to freshen the place up as she called it. So every night he walked down home and had his pipe there. He did not say where he was going because Sarah would insist that he stayed in her place to smoke and then all that airing and freshening up afterwards.

During the day he sometimes spent an hour tidying up the old tangled garden as much as an old man can. He stacked up some wood and split a few chips for the stove. People passing the Rosemary hedge would wish him "Good-day" if they saw him in the garden, but mostly people took no notice of him. They were busy with their children or with their thoughts or with each other. The old man came and went in peace and every night he came home to his place and smoked his pipe and sat and rested. He did not think much because there is no use thinking over things when you can do nothing about them any more. His children were gone their ways, they mostly were like Her. She had been a great Reader and had sat reading her life away. She read everything the old Post Mistress could get for her, novelettes they were called years ago. Bundles of them had come to the house. The children had mostly been like her and she had taken them with her into the kind of world she lived in.

He had come, as a very young man, from the Black Country in England, from the noise and dirt of the chain-making industrial area where people lived crowded and jostled together in indescribable poverty. The women there had muscles like men and they worked side by side with their men in the chain-shops pausing only at intervals to suckle their babies. He had carried his younger sisters daily to his mother and had later cared for them in other intimate ways as he minded them in the blue-brick back yards and alleys which were the only play grounds. When he had come to Australia he had gone straight to the country where he had been terrified by the silence and loneliness. He was afraid of the heat and the drought too, but more than that he could not stand the still quiet nights in the bush when he was alone with the silence. And the white trunks of the gum trees were like ghosts in the white light of the moon. He had longed to hear the chiming of city clocks through the comforting roar of the city and the friendly screech of the trams as they turned out of the High Street into Hill Street. He missed the heave and roar of the blast furnace and the nightly glow on the sky when the furnace was opened. All his life these had been his night light and his cradle song. So he went from the country to the town and found work in

one place and then in another and later was employed to look after the Foreshore, there was the house there for him too, and, though it was quiet, the city and the suburbs were spreading towards him reassuringly.

If any one had said, "Tell me about the chain-shop" he could have told them about it and about a place he once visited as a boy, where, in the late afternoon sunshine, he had walked with his Father down a village street, and standing on the village green, were twelve geese. They were so still and clean and white. Beautiful birds, his Father had said so. It was the stillness of the geese in his brief memory of the countryside that had made him leave the jostled crowded life among the chain-makers and come to Australia. But no one ever asked him about it so he never really thought about it any more except perhaps for a moment while he sat smoking, but only for a moment.

So on this night as on all the other nights he sat and rested and smoked his pipe in the neglected old house which had once been his place. He was so comfortable there he forgot it had been sold. Though Mr. Hickman, the man who had bought it, had called once when the old man was doing the garden. Mr. Hickman had said he was having the place demolished in a week or two because he wanted to start building.

"You've got some fine roses there" Mr. Hickman had said after the pause which had followed his previous statement.

"That's right, that's right" the old man had replied and they had stared at the roses together while the bees hummed and sang in the hedge of Rosemary.

But this had been nearly a year ago and the old man did not think about it because there was nothing he could do about it. So just now he sat and rested and enjoyed his pipe and was pleased to be there. When his pipe was finished he remembered he must walk back. He got back to his son's place just after nine and Sarah said, "How about a nice cup of tea before bed Dad" and he replied, "Thank you kindly, much obliged". And he sat down in the kitchen and took his boots off carefully and stared at the soles of his boots. He shook his head a bit very slowly and set the boots down beside his chair. Sarah stirred his tea and put the cup down towards the middle of the table.

"Mind your tea now Dad," she said.

"Thank you kindly, much obliged," he replied.

"Have a good walk Dad?" John asked him.

"That's right, that's right" the old man said and he drank up his tea.

"Good-night Dad!" Sarah said.

"Good-night Dad" John said.

"Good-night, good-night" the old man said and he took up his boots and he went off to his bed.

ORPHEUS AMONG THE TROGDYLITES

Having rejected society
He donned his (purple) duffle-coat,
Stuffed his pockets full of manuscripts,
Mislaid his mistress,
And scuffed off in the general direction of History.

Meeting a passing poet
He Caesared him, and rendered him
His own gold only, as is Caesar's due,
And ransacked his rhymes
While onamatapeeing in his pocket.

Meeting a passing grocer
He knew him gross, and samurai'd
Him from behind, and dined upon the droppings,
Then towed the body
Twice round the Troy of his mind behind his chariot.

Meeting a passing inspiration
He wrote a novel, "Maidenhead
Regained", which was quite Waughful in its wit,
Then dipped his quill into
A queer sex-saga, "Vosstoevsky's Villa".

Passing a meeting wood
He lost himself among the trees
Trying to blaze them all; but, undeterred,
Brought mind to matter
And soon lay down and slept, so solving everything.

Meeting a passing tramp
He tramped on him, leaving him marked
By History; but the ungrateful tramp
(Conformist renegade)
Pursued him, broke his nose, and stole his shoes.

Barefoot but shod with visions
He followed History's voice around
The wooden world; to find himself one day
Back with his mistress:
For the magic voice he'd heard had been his own.

JOHN UPTON

THE TWO FACES OF LOVE

HERE, IN THE HURRICANE

“Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still”

“Ash Wednesday” . . . Eliot.

O keep me from the dark, my only love,
I dare not fail or falter from you now,
I sit among my books as double-faced
As Helen, feel chaste sunlight on my brow:

Feel summer, winter, spring go past my window,
The leaves bank up like letters in the hall,
Only from Autumn comes the tug of fire
That no-one answers, nobody at all.

Where have I come to who was once beloved,
To what dark island in what ceaseless sea?
I cannot break the vows of humankind,
As easily as I broke my chastity.

The two in one you have become for me,
The godhead where the flesh and spirit meet,
I cannot turn and leave you at my back
Knowing you are the saviour in the street:

Knowing you are the face that cannot turn,
No Judas and no Pilate in my life,
You will not wash your hands, cry crucify,
At cockcrow you will take me for your wife.

But if you must deny me, let it be
Because I do not measure to your will,
Courage must have no part of this disgrace,
Only the charge that I could not sit still.

O do not let me lose you, let me wind
You in the falling circle of my brain,
I could not learn to care and not to care,
My fault was great . . . here, in the hurricane.

LAST SUMMER

In the little house with the sparrows,
The heavenly dew descends,
The wind-bells chime in the jacaranda,
Is this how the world ends?

The air is so thin and fragile,
We can hear spiders' spin,
Shut up the house this summer,
Let nobody in.

A shadow hops in the garden,
The small sparrow sings,
Time spreads, the sun drops suddenly
And clips his wings.

A flurry and fall of sparrows
Dropping into the sea,
What old man sits on the seashore
And counts and counts for me.

The grasshopper flicks and stumbles,
Hesitant in the grass,
The sea pounds and the rain pours
On this dark house of glass.

I lie so still at midnight,
You cannot hear me weep,
And who is there to tell you,
You cry all night in your sleep.

DOROTHY HEWETT

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Abraham Lincoln,
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“THAT’S THE WAY IT GOES”

WE WALK DOWN the street, not caring. We are in a cityscape of blueblacks and greyblacks with an abstract of neoncolour squeezed straight from the tube. Neons, blaring at us like a thousand transistors tuned to a jazzy drumbeat of light. We don’t read them, we just feel them. There is this boy on the corner in faded jeans and a mesh t-shirt, looking at us like a dog waiting for its dinner. You can almost see his tongue lolling. What a creep. We feel his eyes on us as we walk past. That’s the way it is.

It’s early, a between-time of coming and going, as we wander down to the Quay. Time on our hands, for a coke, for a look at the water, perhaps to ring someone. Who would we ring, though? Maybe Jan, who has flu and couldn’t come. So we debate what we’ll tell her because we haven’t really decided yet what we’re doing. Just as we all agree we’ll go to the picture with Sophia Loren in it, Bev admits she’s seen it twice already and then Shirl says she was going to go next week with that new boy she met at the dance, so it doesn’t look like we’ll be going to that one and, when we talk about it some more, we think perhaps we won’t go to the pictures at all, anyway. We crowd into the phone booth and flick through the book and then find that none of us has a sixpence but as we can’t decide what we’re doing, there doesn’t seem to be much point in ringing Jan at all.

But not to worry.

It’s too hot for anything. The ferries plough back and forth and we suppose if we liked we could go to Manly but no one suggests it so we don’t. The lights are nervous; their restless images tremble in the water. But the water under the jutting wharves is very still, cold and black and rather frightening as though it could quickly and silently fill your lungs with death.

We talk about death. Account ye no man happy till he die, says Bev. That’s Euripides. She reads a lot and she’s really clued up. Shirl has confused ideas about dying. She’s not sure what she believes in and drifts about in a sort of blind alley of agnosticism. We talk about people who have died, like our grandparents and soldiers in Vietnam and that kid at school who was killed in a head-on car smash. That was last month; we all put in sixpence for a wreath and kept looking at her desk wondering how anyone who had been so alive could be gone, just like that.

Let’s go, Bev says. Let’s get away and go somewhere. There’s the Coolibah. We can sit all night there and maybe see someone we know or meet

someone worth talking to. Bev says she's allowed to go there and Shirl can go where she likes; her parents never mind. We're all old enough to take care of ourselves.

You go downstairs to the Coolibah. It's a long low room packed with people, mostly kids our own age but all sorts of others, too, even a few with grey hair. The lights are pinkish and sort of glow from the ceiling and there is a lot of smoke and tight pools of people spilling into one another so that you can hardly tell who's with who. Music oozes through them, through us, music oozing and swirling round the room. The air is hazy with smoke but some sort of air conditioning makes it all bearable. We pay our six and six at the door and grab some coffee, looking for seats where we can all be together, though that's not good when you're looking for someone. Not that we care much really about talking to anyone else; we haven't been friends all these years for nothing. We can joke and kid one another. Sometimes Shirl's not quite with you but Bev's really on the ball.

On the little platform, some creep with an American accent is just winding up and now there's a local group coming on and they aren't half bad. The lead guitarist is really doing things with that music and he has a fantastic strum. There's some anaemic-looking girl with them, not much older than us, with long blonde hair you can tell she wasn't born with that she keeps tossing back all the time like she was Mary from Peter Paul etcetera.

Shirl says she's not too bad at all but Bev thinks she can't sing for nuts. Her dress is all wrong, too, but boy! can that guitarist really send you. We talk about the way we pestered our parents into buying us guitars last year and about the blisters we got for the first few weeks until our hands toughened up. Our first enthusiasm has worn a bit thin though we get together spasmodically to practice and none of us was around when God gave out the voices.

The dim lights and throbbing, catchy rhythm of the music make us resolve to get some really serious practice in. We could form our own group—who doesn't these days?—called, let's see . . . the Three Numbskulls or something like that. But we'd have to find a vocalist somewhere. The main thing is to keep it up. I guess none of us is very good at that. Too lazy. You ask our parents. This reminds us to check on the times we promised to be home, but we find we have plenty of time yet.

There are these boys near us who make an impression at first so we try to catch what they're saying, which is quite a lot and not exactly in whispers either. It's not too difficult to pick up bits and pieces of what they're saying. It turns out they're discussing beaches, the lot of them, and which surf's the best and where to ride your boards, but from what we can hear we begin to wonder whether they could tell Bondi from Queenscliff. Brother, are they dumb! They don't half love themselves, either, sitting there with great sloppy smiles as though they owned the place.

Let's not strain our eyesight looking at that, Bev says, and we don't. We're not looking for the likes of them. Would we know what we were looking for even if it came and hit us in the face? We ponder this a while, and decide we probably wouldn't. That's how it is.

We sit there a long time, sitting and talking, just sitting. We have another cup of coffee. It's pretty dreary but no extra charge. Soon it becomes obvious

to us that we're just plain bored but it's an effort to get up and go and none of us has come up with any bright ideas about what we'll do next. By this time, anyway, we can only scrape up a couple of bob between us at the most.

The music oozes through us, like we said. It gets you after a while, that's why we stay. When you're older you drink a lot, and this is our way of getting drunk, of escaping into an unreal twilight of rhythm and noise and people. This is our way, drowning in a sea of rhythm. We don't like doing it alone. Here you can do it with everyone else. Sometimes it is frightening being alone.

But now that the hours have drowned us, now that we have sunk down and down with the ripples of sound engulfing us and flooding our senses, now that our minds and souls are saturated with it, we fight to come up for air. We want to go. We ought to go. And in the end we do, merely because Bev says come on. We go up the stairs and out into the night and it is like dropping exhausted on to a beach of warm pure air. It is still too early to go home but too late to do anything else much. Just walking doesn't seem fun anymore and, anyway, Shirl's new sandals are beginning to hurt.

However, we do walk. Up by Hyde Park, but not through it, where the trees hold fast their secrets and unquiet shadows move and hold their breath till you pass. We know better than to cut across the park and have the coppers asking us how old we are. That happened a while ago when we were walking through with some boys. We guess the boys were a bit startled though we weren't doing anything wrong.

So we keep to the footpath, glancing occasionally at the broad low islands of grass that are lapped nightlong in rising tides of darkness. From the centre of the park, the memorial looms pale and shadowy. It should have some meaning, we know, but the significance escapes us, though we dimly remember soldiers who marched through the pages of our history books and who, like Jesus, somehow died to save us. It is something we cannot fully grasp. We accept it, though, because it is not something to be flippant about.

There have always been wars and there always will be, though we cannot believe war could come crushing down now on the ripening harvest of our own generation. Bev starts singing "It's Good News Week" and the irony is there, powerfully so, yet somehow just beyond reach because though the deadly fallout drifts down and down we know it only with our minds and not really with our hearts at all. We want to understand, we try to understand, yet somehow can't get steamed up about it as we ought. But we don't laugh either.

We talk about Bob Dylan and Joan Baez and agree they're terrific. There is a new song out about the colour problem and we try to remember all the words. Just as we are getting it right, two American sailors stroll past, their faces and hands incredibly dark against the crisp white of their uniforms, and looking so cheerful it's hard to connect them with race riots and lynchings and the dreadful happenings in the States. Shirl says she'd march in a freedom demonstration but she wouldn't marry a coloured person and Bev says she would never want to get married anyway. We laugh and ask who'd want her, and get back to Bob Dylan and how we ought to be doing something worthwhile, even just singing about things that matter. Our whole lives, in

a way, have been utterly wasted. This sobers us. But all we can do, it seems, is to talk about it. What else? Oh, crikey, what else?

We can all do our share of talking, that's for sure. Do you know peace is something we talk plenty about these days? After all, it practically is our world now, isn't it? We have to live in it and before too long we'll be taking over. They try to blame us for everything, but they can't hang the lot on us, not wars, anyway. We didn't cause them. Our generation has hardly been touched except that Shirl's brother has been called up. Bev's brother is only fifteen; will it be his turn one day? This sort of thing brings it close. It makes Vietnam just around the corner.

Well, anyway, you can't blame wars on us so we can argue about them with our parents just as we can argue about everything else that has gone wrong in their generation. We'll do better. We have to believe that. We cannot believe that war will come again or that we'll be part of it. It's rotten that kids like Shirl's brother might have to fight because of the mess our parents made of the world. Well, not our parents, really, but the whole of the great mass of people who lived before us.

Beside the margin of the still black pool of the park we walk on slowly, quietly now, thinking of the still black water under the wharves and the flickering lights of the ferries. Here the lights are steady, cool and static amid the trees. Across the street, neons flaunt their pennants. Like we said, we don't read them, nor do we see each single individual tree or shop or car or bus. But everything is felt, everything part of the restless and shadow-misted hours.

It's time to go, Bev says, and we look at one another and shrug, agreeing reluctantly. Time to go, time to cross the street and turn down toward Wynyard, time to turn our backs on the fantasy we have not been quite able to create. We are almost past the flooding silence of the edge of the park when these three boys step out. They look real cool. They're not louts, you can tell. It could be that they were waiting there all along but it all happens so casually that there are the three of us and then the three of them too so what can we do but stop and say hullo? Two of the boys are dark and dreamy and the other's quite fair and kind of cute. They're all right. And, after all, we're in the middle of the city, aren't we? So what's the harm?

Shirl starts on a long tale about what we did at the Coolibah and who was singing and what we thought of them, and you can always count on Bev to say something witty. We are all giggling a bit because none of us wants to take the lead but, as it turns out, none of us has to anyway because after a while we all just stroll off together quite naturally. It is as though this is the way we started out. They tell us their names and we tell them ours, just first names, but we can't pin them down to saying where they live or what they do.

Halfway down we stop in a milk bar and order chocolate malteds. In the mirror along the wall we all stare at one another, seeing ourselves with the startling clarity such images give, and seeing the boys, too, who are very ordinary looking after all and who stare back at us frankly as though we aren't noticing. By the winks and gestures and furtive remarks it seems the boys are

sorting us out and there is something about the way they are doing it that makes us suddenly uneasy in the pits of our stomachs.

One of them tells a dirty joke that's not very funny and it's clear that Bev is beginning to have doubts about where we go from here. We drink the milk shakes without saying much and pay for our own. Nearing Wynyard, the boys say they're going that way, too, but by this time we're not so sure we want them hanging around any more and Bev is giving us warning glances so we tell the boys this is where we part ways.

They just laugh.

The pavements are dark and cool and echo under our feet.

You can leave us here, we say. They laugh again.

We're going your way, like we said, they say, and there is a kind of sneer in the way they say it.

It's too early for the theatre crowd so when we get to the platform it's pretty well deserted. The boys tell us to come on down to the end carriage, but we don't, and find one with a few people in it and sit together. The boys are hanging round sulkily, trying not to attract too much attention and pestering us to go down the end. They open the door and whistle. One of the women looks round and they beat it to the next compartment.

We sit there feeling virtuous. Like we said, we know how to look after ourselves.

The boys sneak back. Get lost, we mutter.

They snarl an obscenity at us and hop off at the next station and good riddance to them. We relax then, too tired to remain restless but feeling that the evening has somehow been a bit of a flop. We don't know why. We've been out, had fun. Or have we? We're all pretty quiet because there doesn't seem much more to be said.

That's the way it goes.

THREE SMACKS AT EMPSON

*Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.
It is not the effort nor the failure tires.
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.*
‘Missing Dates’.

(i)
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills
gives way to dogs’ rills
and then to slag hills.
But the rhythm succeeds if the waste rhyme kills.
I’d shudder to be a skin that shrills.

(ii)
But the poem takes off and provides real thrills.
Only you can argue the other way of course.
It’s not so much the waste that kills
it is the effort, win or lose.
What gets you down is bit by bit
shredding of effort to the quick.
Like whistling away a tune
till what was once your favourite
no longer exists.
Or like whittling a stick
till suddenly your knife slips
and all you’re left is cut to bone.
(iii)

It’s not the waste that silts the blood.
What gets you down is the dates
with poems or girls you’ve hardly missed.
It’s not the weight of Chinese tombs
or the poisonous fumes from dogs or slag
that lie on you and slowly choke
like bilious meals you can’t throw up.

It’s not the fires you haven’t lit
that torment you. It is your wit.
What burns a hole is not the waste.
It is word-play, the practised flip
of the coin of logic turns your stomach.
It’s your dialectic does the trick.
It’s the double-headed poem makes you sick.

W. T. ANDREWS

WATER AND ROCK

Out of sheer rock from which
no seed can spring,
water germinates
to fill a cup of stone,
moving, unmoving.

Consider its shape; it has
no shape of its own.
See its colour; it has
neither shade nor tone.
It is heavy and clear, its own
likeness and metaphor.

The rock is heavy and dense.
The dense and the clear
have only weight to share,
and sharing, draw from each other
transmutation and colour.

Water receives the rock's
load of dark reflection,
and rock mirrors water
as a tree mirrors the breeze.
Two elements take from each other
weightless images.

O see the rippling stone
and the rock-still water.

MARGARET IRVIN

TURN ON THE HEAT . . . O LOVE, O LONELINESS . . . TURN ON THE HEAT . . . O LOVE O . . .

WEST AUSTRALIAN NOVELIST Gerry Glaskin's first, controversial, play for one character, "Turn on the Heat" had just finished a season at the Hole in the Wall Theatre in Perth, so I took a tape recorder and got together with . . .

GERRY GLASKIN . . . whose many novels are paradoxically more popular in England, America and on the Continent than in his own country.

FRANK BADEN-POWELL, co-director of Perth's theatre in the round, The Hole in the Wall, who produced "Turn on the Heat".

EILEEN COLOCOTT, talented professional actress and Baden-Powell's wife who played the gruelling role of Marion Marlowe in the play . . .

An extraordinary play, written for only one actress and one set, it had a contradictory impact in the playwright's home town . . . all the way from the bitchy, "What do you think of Glaskin's play? I hear he's written a good short story" to audiences with tears running down their cheeks. There has been immediate interest from theatre managements in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, London and the Continent.

The story of the play is based on the last few hours in the life of an American actress who bears a more than passing resemblance to Marilyn Monroe. Her name is Marion Marlowe.

Glaskin, Baden-Powell and Eileen Colocott admit that when the play was performed in Perth they expected to be lynched.

DOROTHY: Why did you choose this particular form Gerry? Was there a reason for it?

GERRY: Yes, there was. While I was in Amsterdam they had just opened a new theatre, the Mickery Theatre in Loenerslot, which is a suburb like Dalkeith. The Mickery is like the Hole in the Wall, just a theatre in the round, and the presentation they had there was by one marvellous actor, Henk van Ulsen in Gogol's "Diary of a Madman".

It was about twenty-six or twenty-seven bitty scenes with changes of scenery and costume. Making enquiries afterwards I found there wasn't really a

play for just one woman, except "Sorry, Wrong Number" which runs for less than half-an-hour, and it does have voices offstage and a figure appearing at the end. So I thought it would be a tremendous challenge, first of all to write a monologue, a full length play, no change of set, a minimum set and the cast a majority of one without any stage contrivances.

Also, now I think I've written all too many bloody books and I've got sick of writing books because of the loneliness. I wanted to depict the loneliness as a major theme so that theatre could start to understand the loneliness of the novelist, of working alone, acting alone and so forth. The theme of Marilyn Monroe (the play is very loosely based on this, but, in fact, it is not Marilyn Monroe at all) I chose because I felt that she had died in desperation from loneliness more than anything, and it seemed to me to have that one room and the one person in it would show the loneliness. It was also tied up with real personalities. When I was going over from London to New York for the P.E.N. Congress I knew Arthur Miller was to be the international President and I rushed to see "Incident in Vichy". (I hadn't seen "After the Fall" in English but I had seen it in Dutch and read it in English.) After being with Arthur Miller for about four weeks at the Congress I realized how one sided his whole attitude was to Marilyn Monroe, and I thought I'd like to depict the other side of the coin even if it's only a fictitious thing.

DOROTHY: Would you say the style is rather like stream of consciousness in the novel?

GERRY: Yes, that's possibly so. I have used the contrivance of telephone calls but I didn't want to show the actress declaiming to an audience all the time. Everything she says has to be almost natural as though talking to herself, especially when she has already been warned about madness, and is terrified of going mad like her mother, so that every now and again she says, in the play, "I mustn't talk to myself".

DOROTHY: I've heard you say, "I write entertainments". It seems to me it's a very logical step for a novelist seeing his writing as primarily entertainment for a larger mass audience rather than the more restricted audience for a strictly "literary" writer, to move into the theatre where, I believe one of the principal aims is straight entertainment.

GERRY: I think it's a more logical step to move to the cinema, where you have a far greater audience and a far greater scope. In fact, after doing three film scripts I find there's a tremendous scope in films which is only just being explored, and which I've started exploring myself. I was never interested in writing for theatre at all. In fact I wanted to tackle this theme as a novel, and then I realized that the best dramatic effect would be in theatre. But not conventional theatre. I think you know I never write the same kind of book twice. So I wanted to write something that was totally different, even for theatre.

DOROTHY: Is this play an entertainment in the same way as your novels are?

GERRY: Yes I suppose so. I think that anything is an entertainment providing it is told straightforwardly, and the artist genuinely tries to explain things to the reader and doesn't use what I call sham attitudes in trying to be mysterious and abstruse. I don't believe in being abstruse at all. I believe

you can have your profundity in the clear straightforward thing, like Graham Greene, who's my god.

DOROTHY: Frank, when you first read the script of "Turn on the Heat", what was your first reaction?

FRANK: Do you want an honest answer? I'll give you one. I thought, an unusual play, different, needs savaging. I felt I'd like to do it. In the theatre that we run at the Hole in the Wall we've always tried to present something that's new, something that's different, without being arty crafty. We try to present entertainment but restricted entertainment, not trying to appeal to a mass audience. Admittedly most of our audience is a mass audience, a lot of people who come a few times rather than a few people who come a lot of times. But I thought, well, this is a play that's unusual. It's got a gimmick about it. It excited me to read. I gave it to Eileen to read and when she wept buckets I thought, fair enough. This must have a certain appeal for everybody. It would be worth trying for a week, perhaps a fortnight, no longer, to see what happens with it.

DOROTHY: Eileen, did you weep buckets?

EILEEN: Yes, it was late at night and I'd put off reading the play, but, as I turned each page my interest grew and grew and grew. I'd say here and now I don't know anything about writing, good or bad, all I know is what interests me gets my attention, and from this point of entertainment I think that this is where Gerry, in his books and in this play, has got it. You cannot stop listening and looking. I couldn't stop reading it. I completely forgot I was reading a script. I was involved in the character. I cried my eyes out until I stopped reading the play.

FRANK: As a matter of fact she said, "I don't care whether it's done but if it's done in Perth nobody else but me is going to play it."

EILEEN: I'm not conceited about my work. In fact I'm more inclined to be the other way, but, having read this I thought, well, I know, I *know*, in Perth, there is nobody else that can play this part. It's the only play I've ever felt this about.

DOROTHY: Why did you feel this?

EILEEN: Just physically she says she's thirty-six. I'm nearly thirty-six. And the feeling I've always had for Marilyn Monroe. I always felt terrific sympathy for her, and just as written, as a person I felt there was so much of it any woman could understand, particularly the loneliness thing, so many women have come to me and said, "Oh! I can so much understand the loneliness". Most women at some time in their lives have felt this terrible loneliness and desperation that she felt, the terrible sadness and waste of it all. Emotionally it just got me *there*. Intellectually, I don't know, good or bad, but emotionally it got me in. And this is what I found from people who saw the play. They emotionally forgot themselves and belonged and became part of what was going on.

So many people felt they wanted to put a rug over me when I said I was cold. They felt they wanted to stop me taking those last pills. If you can lose yourself in something, if the audience forgets their own lives completely, then surely this is bloody good entertainment.

DOROTHY: Gerry, you said on the first night that you hadn't seen the play from the time it went into rehearsal?

GERRY: One reading when we began, because I had qualms about a play like this being performed in Perth. You know it's only an accident that I'm out here at all anyway and I thought, while I'm here I'd like to get it read. And then when Eileen read it and when I had seen her I just thought she is IT. I'd be very lucky to find anybody else who could do it as well anywhere in any theatre in the world. A few days later I sat in on the reading of the second act. I made no suggestions to Frank on production, none at all, but he produced it almost entirely as I envisaged it. What wasn't there was just the set, it would have been too expensive to have a circular bed. To tell you the truth, to see this play for the first time on opening night I was so churned up about it, I'd never got so churned up about writing the damn thing.

FRANK: He buggered up the curtain call.

GERRY: I was just a walking zombie.

EILEEN: Isn't this what Frank always says. A play is three things. I get rather cross when people say, "A marvellous performance". They don't know anything about the author or producer. As far as they're concerned they don't even come into it, but, to me, the end result is only a combination of these three things. Personally if I hadn't felt as much as I did about the play I couldn't have played it. Secondly, without Frank's help in the great traumas I had, learning and playing it, I couldn't have done it either.

FRANK: A feeling I have in theatre is that any play to be a success is founded on an equilateral triangle of author, actor, director, with no one thing more important than the other, so that the director feels, well, this is wrong, within certain limits he has the right to say, "it's wrong, and if I'm going to direct it I won't do it this way", and, in exactly the same way, the actress has got to have the same right to say to the director, "No, *you're* wrong, you and the author are both bloody wrong". Out of this I think you build on a solid foundation into the pinnacle of the finished performance.

EILEEN: Frank and I both feel that the natural and obvious way in acting and producing is the right way. You don't do arty crafty things with the production. You don't give it something it hasn't got.

FRANK: Well, this is rather funny because we DID this arty crafty thing in the finale of Gerrys' play . . . the death scene, in which we had quite a bit of fun working out lighting, which is fairly important at the Hole in the Wall because the audience is so close. I had a certain musical effect coming in at the end, and it was only overstating what Gerry had already written. We tried it and it worked terribly well, most effective, until you sat down and analysed it cold bloodedly. Instead of sitting there as director and hugging yourself, thinking what a smart little fellow I am, you looked back and thought, this isn't doing justice to the play as written. I'm putting an overtone in that just isn't there, let's take it out.

I think a director is a little like, shall we say, a conductor trying to conduct a composer's piece of music. We've got to find out exactly what the author was trying to get at, though, at times, authors can write feelings they don't themselves realize they've written, and then conduct the orchestra of your actors to bring out the overall pattern, as *you* see what the author wrote. Now my only thing about this play when I said I thought it needed savaging, is that it is a novelist's play. Gerry's next play will be a playwright's play.

When you're reading a novel there comes a time when you get to the bits the author puts in, you can flick the pages, scan them, pick three or four or five sentences out of the whole page which gives you what you are looking for. But in a play the audience can't scan the play. They're stuck there. "Turn on the Heat" was a play in which the main sense was at times overstated, so this is what I did. I thought, well, okay now. I've got to take this as a play. Here I think we would scan it. Were I to produce it again I'd probably like to take, say, another five minutes out of it.

DOROTHY: Gerry, when you saw it on opening night, did those cuts stick out like sore thumbs?

GERRY: No, this is very funny. When I got Frank's copy for retyping for the first time I saw how many cuts had actually been made, and I hadn't even realized. I wrote it so that it could last for a full two and a half hours for more sophisticated audiences, such as Amsterdam and Paris, who *will* listen . . .

FRANK: I bet they don't . . .

GERRY: They don't want spectacle in front of their faces all the time. I do realize the terrible strain on the one actress so I wrote it so that if she was to skip an excerpt it wouldn't matter. If you want to condense it from two and a half hours to one and a quarter hours you can, simply by taking out this excerpt or that, and leaving it. I'm going to have it published in this form; the full play as written, but with italics in the cuts Frank made.

FRANK: But this *IS* the wonderful thing about your play Gerry, the warmth and feeling for humanity, for the woman herself, and your dialogue is easy to say. When you get one person on stage for one and a quarter hours, unless the dialogue is true dialogue, then your audience would have got up and gone home in the first five minutes.

You get people in Perth, sophisticated or unsophisticated, coming round with tears streaming down their faces, saying "Loved the performance, couldn't stand the play." This, to me, is the greatest bit of self-hypnosis. It is only *the play* that is touching them. What they are saying when they say they dislike the play is that they are disliking the things the play is making them think about.

GERRY: Yes, I think this is very true.

FRANK: Rather than disliking the play itself, all of a sudden the play makes them stop, think or listen, or just sit there for five minutes. It says, "Now, shut up and sit there and be quiet, this is important". A Perth audience perhaps doesn't like to be dictated to in this way, because we've just, over the past three years, in any way got away from "Paddy, the next best Thing", "Peg of my Heart", and "Up in Mabel's Room", in the theatre. This is why we were keen to do this play at The Hole.

DOROTHY: You had to be careful what you did up in Mabel's room, too.

FRANK: One of the most amazing things about this play from the Perth audience point of view is that an actress could stand on stage and say, "You mother-f—— son of a bitch" and not one person in the audience complained about it. We've had people complain about what we did with "Entertaining Mr. Sloane", and about the rape scene in "Homecoming" . . .

EILEEN: The rape scene in Gerry's play . . . nobody wrote in about it.

FRANK: The rape scene, fair enough, but I thought people would have the vapours over that language. I think it's the same sort of thing that applied with "Dylan" . . . the scene where Dylan says "What a lovely pair of titties" and goes "Beep, beep". Basically I think we're all quite dirty minded. Now, as long as we've got a chance to pass it off as culture we can sit and read the thing about Ophelia . . . "Shall I lie in your lap . . . didst thou think I spoke of country matters?" and nobody has the vapours because it's Shakespeare. The same with "Dylan" . . . this is about a man who is recognized as a great poet, therefore he is *with* culture. G. M. Glas-kin God bless his greying hairs, is an author of some standing and therefore people think, he wrote it, he does write racily, but, because *he* wrote it, it must be alright.

GERRY: I wanted to show in this play, and I did it twice, you can be as obscene as you like, and it is not obscene if you have got sympathy towards the character, and this is the build-up in the Prologue offstage. She is desperate to bring somebody in, even somebody she despises, and her anger is so terrible when he won't come in that the word has to be an obscenity. It expresses anger but not obscenity. It's not obscenity for obscenity's sake. And then of course I did that rape scene particularly to show that you can talk about ANYthing at all, even in the public audience of theatre, provided it is done with sensitivity and compassion, and to try to explain a point of view. To me the play cannot be the play at all without the rape scene, because it shows the reasons for the disintegration of her entire personality.

DOROTHY: A prologue offstage with the stage left completely empty, only the furniture to look at and one offstage voice to listen to, isn't this a big gamble theatrically?

FRANK: This is the bit that I argued with Gerry about, whether an audience anywhere in the world would find this acceptable. We read things and watch things without a word being said, but in a play like this where you have NOTHING to watch other than the set, your attention IS divided. You can sit down and LISTEN to a radio because you've got a focal point to focus your attention on, listen to a record on a record player, because you've got a focal point. In the theatre your focal point is the stage. It must be. This is what the theatre exists for. You put a character offstage and your audience still focuses its attention on the stage. In a theatre in the round they've got the furnishings to look at, in a larger theatre they've got furnishings and set, while they are half-listening.

In all honesty that original offstage prologue would have run five times longer as it was written. I almost cried at Gerry for this, "Look, I love your play, but please let me cut this", and he said, "But it's doing this and this and this . . ." but God bless him he said "Right, go ahead and try". I feel that no matter where you are, if it's the Berlin Ensemble or the Widgiemooltha Light Opera Company I think this same basic principle applies . . . your audience come in and expect to have their attention focused on the stage. In a sound play, a recording, radio, sure, they sit there and listen to this, they focus on the radio itself.

EILEEN: They imagine the scene offstage in their mind, don't they?

GERRY: That's what they're going to do with this play.

FRANK: The audience in a play tends to imagine the scene ON STAGE. They'll allow a car to arrive, or somebody talking offstage briefly and they'll build a skeletal resemblance of the house around the one room; but it is that one room on which their main centre of attention focuses, and that's why the length of that offstage scene was the only thing in the play I felt strongly about. An audience needs an element of surprise all the time, they need surprise to keep them interested, surprise or complete predictability.

DOROTHY: What was the prologue offstage *doing* Gerry?

GERRY: I wanted to write theatre as different as possible. I wanted to make it difficult for the audience, to prove the power of the play itself, to have the audience almost screaming for her to come onstage, so that when she does it's a tremendous relief. I would still like to see it done. After all the whole play is so different from conventional theatre. I didn't interfere with any of Frank's cuts because I wanted to look at the play absolutely dispassionately, and consider that it will be in the hands of producers all over the place, and I'm still living in Amsterdam or Helsinki or Winnipeg, you can't run around the world seeing how your play is produced. So this one does it this way, that one does it that way.

FRANK: Talking this over, Gerry, with another director in another state, and discussing this problem of the first ten minutes, he wanted to have a photo montage of the actress playing the part, in various poses. While this was going on he would pick out different moods in her facial expressions with spotlights.

GERRY: Well, it's a bit gimmicky, but I think it could be done.

EILEEN: I don't like it. It gets away from the realism.

GERRY: What I would like done with a photo montage (and I actually thought of doing it myself) is that, when she has died there is a screen and a montage of various scenes all the way through the play from "I'm the sex symbol of A-mer-ica cha", the boop de boop, the drinking . . . on the telephone . . . there's so much movement and so many different scenes I think, towards the end, an audience forgets just how much an actress has been through. I think it would have been most effective to have short stills shown at the end. But again this is a bit gimmicky, so I didn't write it in.

EILEEN: No. People said they didn't want to see anything else at the end. This is the way it got a lot of people. They felt so choked up they didn't want to see anything else.

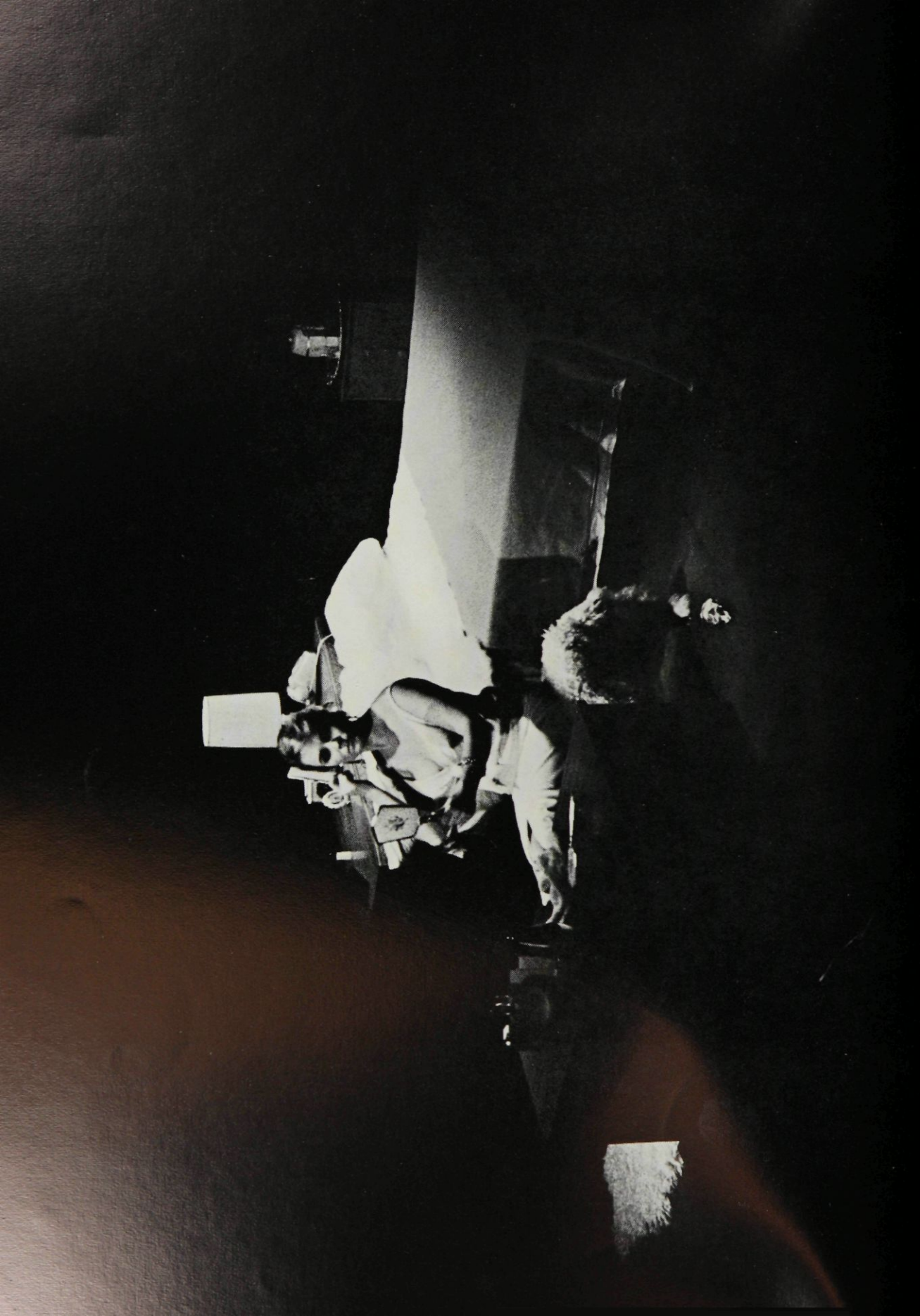
FRANK: You know, rather than in the round, I'd like to see it done in a three sided theatre, rather than four sided.

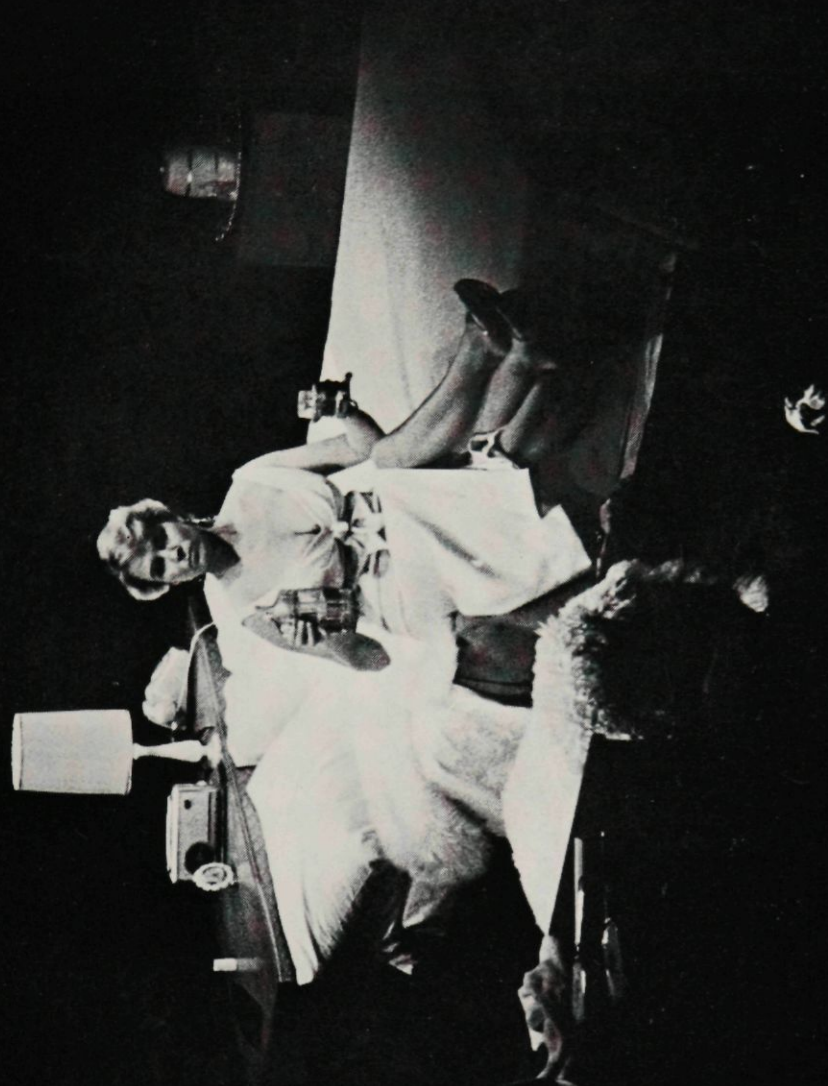
EILEEN: I would too, actually, because I felt conscious all the time of those few people behind the head of the bed.

FRANK: From the production point of view you had to move the actress from time to time when feeling, logic, and naturalism didn't necessitate movement. You just had to think, well, those poor bastards have been sitting there for twenty minutes looking at her back. It's time we let them see her face.

DOROTHY: Frank, when you only had one actress to move on stage, did you find you had to think up moves?









FRANK: You have to think up moves at any time. But, for a director to do a play with a cast of one from a movement point of view is much harder than with a cast of five, because when you've got a cast of five you can have every side of the audience seeing one of them, and one side seeing two and so on.

EILEEN: Except that Edgar Metcalfe, when he saw the complete run through at rehearsal, said, for the first time, in seeing theatre in the round, he felt he never worried about sitting with my back to him for a long time.

FRANK: Don't forget we also put him in our best seat.

EILEEN: But I did have my back to him during the very emotional bit over the phone to Mark, when he tells her what is wrong with her and she cries out, "No, No, No". All the way through that I had my back to him.

FRANK: Sure, but this scene is the sort of scene whether you're looking back, front, side or top it's just as effective, it's big stuff. You're making moves in the violence of the feeling which cover almost the whole width of the bed. A violent feeling can be expressed just as easily with a back or a bum.

DOROTHY: Gerry, did you write this play for the round?

GERRY: For the seven-eighths round. The Mickery Theatre is a seven-eighths. It has an apron stage. This, I think, is the perfect form of theatre. It is almost an arena but you can have two separate stage entrances, as I had written in the play.

DOROTHY: Do you see yourself as a completely unconventional writer? Is that what interests you?

GERRY: I don't have an image of myself as a writer at all. I don't know what kind of status I have. I still think that I'm not a literary writer but I'm not purely a commercial writer either. A theme interests me, I spend months and months thinking it out, and then I put it down on paper. Once it's done it's over and done with.

DOROTHY: If you wrote another play would you use as unusual a form as this one?

GERRY: Yes, but it would have to be altogether different again. I was thinking of doing three one act plays, called "ONE", "TWO", "THREE", starting off with one character, then two, then three.

EILEEN: Can I bring something in here, Gerry. This character, Marion Marlowe, I've heard you say wasn't Marilyn Monroe, she was you really?

GERRY: Yes, that's true. I think being a professional writer you do get fed up with the mediocrity you've got to deal with, the publishers, agents and so forth, over and over again, the sheer stupidity of it. The contracts that are made for you and you realize you could have got so much more out of it. The frustration that comes up; for instance, American publishers in New York who held a novel, "A Lion in the Sun" for a year, when it was already published in England, was a best seller, translated into French and Dutch, and then these people wrote back and said, "Well, we think a lot of this novel, but, in the first place, Singapore is too remote and all your characters are British and Australian . . .". And, this is very serious Dorothy . . . they said "We would guarantee a first edition of 60,000 copies if it was rewritten with a Cuban setting, much more topical than Singapore, and some of your characters were Americans. Now we realize that you've written another novel, and that it is already out in England, and you're

working on something else, and if you are too busy we have a whole editorial staff here who have done a Harvard course in creative re-writing . . .".

FRANK: This really kills me. And I love your other little anecdote about Americanizing all the expressions . . .

GERRY: In "The Land That Sleeps" they changed cattle station to ranch, garages to gas stations, all the way through Australia. That was why I did a bitchy prologue to the British edition saying that, although I thought the Americans were quite justified in doing this because it was commissioned for an American audience, for a British or Australian audience please try to read the Australian equivalent.

FRANK: Can I throw one comment in here which is rather wonderful about this play. I love Australian theatre, Australian writing. We are too self-conscious at times of our own beginnings and our own background. You get Mrs. So and So with an accent strictly from Katanning saying, "Why do they always write Australian plays in which everybody talks like THAT? Why can't we have an Australian play set in Dalkeith?"

GERRY: With BBC accents.

FRANK: What do we call an Australian play? Is an Australian play about Australia, or is an Australian play written by an Australian? I'm going to claim you Gerry, and say this is an Australian play.

EILEEN: With a universal theme, which is marvellous.

FRANK: Okay, so here we have an Australian play set in New York. Now what I keep waiting for is somebody to say, "Why doesn't he write what he knows about?". They won't because, probably, they don't know whether you've got the answer to this or not. This is one of the most frightening things that happens in Australian theatre, this continuing national inferiority complex about anything we write in theatre. The moment you say, as I said about Dorothy's play "This Old Man Comes Rolling Home", that "this is a great Australian play" nearly everybody said "Ahhh!". Look at the sum total of Australian plays. What have we?

EILEEN: "The Doll" comes top.

FRANK: "The Doll" which I think was fabulous, "The Shifting Heart", maudlin Peg's Paper, weekly rep. stuff . . . "I tell you Clarry if God is not Australian then he must be Italian", and a true Australian character called Clarry whose talking all the way through about "them f—— dings", and then says, in the final lines of the play, "To my son, to young Gino". Well, at this stage I want to throw up.

You get Seymour's "Break in the Music" and "One Day of the Year", which I think is great, although I don't think Alan can write about women. We've got "On our Selection" . . .

DOROTHY: White, Porter, and now Thomas Keneally: "Sergeant Yuk Objects": "The Slaughter of St. Theresa's Day".

FRANK: How many plays have we got and why don't managements do them. Because they're box office death. The moment you say you're going to do an Australian play everybody runs that fast AWAY from the box office it doesn't matter.

Now, here, to me, was a chance to take an Australian play, put it on with an author, who, let's face it, where do you sell most of your books, Gerry?

GERRY: Anywhere on the Continent or in Britain . . . overseas.

FRANK: To take an author whose standard was recognized from a world point of view, put his play on in his home town and, literally, see what would happen. This, to me, was one of the fascinating challenge things in doing Gerry's play, my little battle to say that this is the only way we're going to encourage our authors, particularly our budding authors. A budding Australian actor can cut his teeth here in Australia in amateur theatre and so on, and eventually he can go over to England, work in rep. for a couple of years, then come back, and he can earn a living and be a success in his own country. An Australian playwright can't go to England and come back and earn a living and be a success in his own country. I think this is dreadfully wrong, that part of theatre, part of this pyramid of three tips; the actor can be a success, the director can be a success, but the author can't be a success in Australian theatre. Okay, if his name is Fred Crutch and he comes from Wyoming or Wigan he's alright, but if he comes from Widgiemooltha we really don't want to see it because it can't be much good.

GERRY: This is part of the Australian inferiority fixation, not complex.

FRANK: But why have we got it?

GERRY: Frankly I thought all three of us would be lynched.

DOROTHY: Why did you think you'd be lynched?

GERRY: For such a theme, I suppose.

FRANK: I don't underestimate our Perth audiences quite as much as that.

EILEEN: I would disagree a little bit about Perth audiences. I think that Perth, a small town, growing, but nevertheless still a small town, is a far better thriving theatrical community and cultured community, than Sydney or Melbourne. We played in a theatre in Sydney which seats about 130 . . . The Old Tote . . . and they told us "You won't get a full house on Monday and Tuesday" . . . and this is SYDNEY . . . the one legitimate straight theatre in Sydney for a special season! I thought, well, in Perth we do better than that.

FRANK: I think your audience lays down its own cultural standards but I think you bring them to it. I think a Perth audience will come to see anything well enough done.

GERRY: I've been away too long. I realize how much Perth audiences have grown up and it's a very delightful surprise.

DOROTHY: Let's talk a bit more about this reaction of audiences. What sort of audiences did you get to "Turn on the Heat", a good cross section?

FRANK: A little bit more women than men. We generally find at the Hole, (this is rather a fabulous thing) that our audiences would be about 45 per cent men and about 55 per cent women, whereas, in most theatres you'd find the percentage about 30 per cent to 70 per cent. This time I think we went back to 40 per cent men, 60 per cent women. The play got to the men though. This was the most amazing thing. You know one tends to think well, alright, this is about the loneliness of a woman. As Eileen said, the play appealed to her because Gerry was writing about the feelings that every woman experiences, but it wasn't only the women who were touched by the play. The number of men I know who are good big butch men, and the ones who never come to the theatre at all, be they members of Parliament, as in one case, or bus drivers, they said "You know, this got to me".

DOROTHY: This question you brought up, Frank, of Australians hating to think about certain themes or not wanting to be made to think about certain things in this play . . . do you think this is symptomatic of Australian audiences . . . do they hate to think about loneliness, alienation, sex, rape?

FRANK: We love to think about sex, we love to think about rape; we hate to think about alienation, loneliness, we hate to think about politics in a play, irrespective of what political context.

EILEEN: This is where I think this play got to most people, because it was an emotional thing about human beings, so there was no political thing, no religious thing, nothing to argue about, just a purely personal reaction. The personal reaction amazed me. Men and women both got something from it . . . the loneliness of it, which is so frightening in this day and age. There's so many lonely women, more than men. I don't know why.

FRANK: Oh, I don't know, there's lonely men too. Women admit it more readily.

GERRY: The lonely Australian man can go to the pub and rub shoulders with his mates.

FRANK: And be even more lonely than he was before.

DOROTHY: Eileen, did you find this play tremendously exhausting, emotionally?

EILEEN: Emotionally, yes. I was just fraught. I suddenly began to sum up after I'd stopped playing and I was really going round the bend. I honestly was beginning to get to the stage where I wasn't sure which was which. I'm not a method person, but it was, literally, the character takes over. I think I'm a pretty down to earth person, but, at the end of those three weeks, I began to wonder who I was. I began to wonder if we do a world tour, or an Australian tour, what's going to happen to me at the end of it.

GERRY: This is what happened between the Burtons when they were filming "Virginia Woolf".

EILEEN: This play has affected Frank and me personally more than anything. I was, emotionally, so peculiar I didn't know myself what I was going to do or say, and Frank would cope with me very wonderfully. I was almost getting to the stage of thinking about committing suicide, almost thinking, quite logically, this is the only way out.

DOROTHY: Gerry, you said you wanted to depict loneliness on the stage, so that people would know what the loneliness of the novelist was like. Did you become a playwright partly to escape the loneliness of the writer by becoming part of the teamwork that produces a play?

GERRY: No, that didn't help in my case because I didn't take any active part in the production. I should have chosen the theme of the writer himself, I suppose, who gets up out of his bed, especially if he is living alone in a foreign country with a foreign language spoken all around him, and then just goes to his typewriter, works alone all day till at the end of that day he is almost a screaming idiot and he wants to rush out and just look at faces.

DOROTHY: Eileen, in the programme notes Frank made a point about the loneliness of working in a theatre with just the director and one actress. Did you feel this?

EILEEN: Very much so. The big thing about working in the theatre for me is that I honestly enjoy rehearsals more than playing, except when the play has an unusual quality which this one has. Creative work usually (or re-creative work as some people call it)—to me you do this in rehearsals. You see someone else create something wonderful and you are sparked off. That's where acting is marvellous. It's a team thing. I'm not a star person. I like building up something together with people. I'm not a writer or a novelist. I can't work by myself. I don't believe in people being prima donnas in the theatre, but in this play, for the first time in my life, I was a prima donna, because I couldn't do it any other way. Once I got going emotionally, the only way, in rehearsal, to remember the lines, and to keep the emotion building up, was to start from the beginning and build. Frank would stop me and say, "Just a minute love, I think you should do . . ." and I'd say, "Nn, Nn?" . . . completely lost in what I was doing. I'd say, "I can't go on" and we'd have these terrible battles. But, eventually, Frank realized that I couldn't go on. I had a picture, a pattern, in my mind of almost every page in the script. The writing to me was terribly naturalistic, so naturalistic it was hard to learn. In theatre, if it's slightly unrealistic it's easier to learn. I did not at any time base this on thinking or working on Marilyn Monroe. To me it's all in the play. You've got to take those lines that are there and play them. It's as if it's me playing it.

DOROTHY: Did this feeling of loneliness you and Frank had help to create the loneliness theme of the play?

FRANK: It made it hard bloody work. From the director's point of view, say you've got a cast of two, you've got one up, one down. The one that's up gives you that lift to go on. Here if you were down it was a hard, physical, concentrated fight to get back. This play was to me completely satisfying. When I saw it on opening night I felt I could not have done anymore with it, Eileen could not have done anymore with it and Gerry . . . I don't know . . . his potential as a playwright is, as yet, untapped.

DOROTHY: Gerry, did this make you want to go on writing plays?

GERRY: Yes. I didn't want to write anymore. There was just going to be the one. But the opening night was much more exciting than getting the first copy of my first book in my hand.

EILEEN: Because physically the acclamation is there, from people all round you.

DOROTHY: This loneliness business Gerry, did you suddenly feel on the opening night the loneliness begin to dissolve?

GERRY: The novelist's loneliness? Yes, it did, because you never HEAR any acclaim from your own work. To sit there and watch an audience . . . it's the first time that it comes through.

FRANK: It's the first time you have a contact. People can come up to you and say, "Look, I love your books, Mr Glaskin", but it's cold. You never bump into somebody who says, "Look, I'd like to meet you, but I'm reading your book. Excuse me". In theatre, more than anywhere else, it's the complete proof of the pudding.

GERRY: You never see people laughing or crying over your books. This is the wonderful thing, to see an audience laughing or crying over the words you have written.

FRANK: But look, an author when he writes a book, as you said, Gerry, it's a lonely thing, but he can find some kind of reaction, even if he gives it to three of his friends to read they can give him an opinion, and from these opinions he can develop as an author, can't he?

GERRY: Sometimes.

FRANK: A playwright writes a play that needs flesh and blood actors. He has to present it on stage before an audience to develop. But your management, your small theatre management, like ourselves, (and we run a pro theatre and we're in business to stay in business), so somebody comes along with a play, and they say like "Here's an Australian play", and you think, Jesus, how much can we afford to lose on this. This is your first thought. We took "Turn on the Heat", literally, because we had a grant of 400 dollars from the Elizabethan Theatre Trust we hadn't used.

GERRY: Did it lose money?

FRANK: We made six dollars.

EILEEN: Crazy, isn't it?

FRANK: But then again had we run longer possibly we would have made more. We curtailed the season.

GERRY: A book can spread by word of mouth and therefore it will reach an audience no matter what adverse or inadequate criticism it gets, but in such a small city, a play can't do this. I feel myself it's a mistake to produce a play five or six nights in the one week. The Mickery Theatre has a marvellous way of doing it. They have two shows running concurrently, but they don't begin and end together. One play starts at the beginning of May and runs for three months. Then, in the middle of June, the new play begins and they overlap.

FRANK: We had thought about this at one stage. We hoped to produce "Rattle of a Simple Man" and "Virginia Woolf" as a double bill. But you see, this is a crazy thing. We've found out from this market research we've been doing that the reason why people don't go to the theatre is that they're afraid they might not enjoy themselves. They might waste a night. They pick up the paper and they're so used to taking everything they read in the "West Australian" as gospel truth, if the critic says "This I did not like" they say, "Well, the chances are we won't like it either". And they don't go. We had a classic example of this with "The Owl and the Pussycat". Everybody that saw it loved it but we played to indifferent business, because we got an indifferent write-up in Perth. We took the same play to Adelaide, the Adelaide critics loved it. We played for three and a half weeks in Adelaide in a theatre seating three times as many as the Hole. And now people in Perth are saying, "Why don't you bring back 'The Owl and the Pussycat'? We didn't see it. We'd love to see that. It must have been a very good show. You did so well with it in Adelaide, didn't you?".

EILEEN: From a Perth point of view Eastern States is big time, England is better, and as for America . . .

FRANK: That's what Hal Porter said . . . Australian theatre seems to be becoming dominated by expatriate English queens. It would be nice to get a few balls and a bit of virility back into Australian theatre.

GERRY: I feel that for the playwright and the novelist to have international stature they have to forget this nationalism all the time and tackle a uni-

versal theme. In so much Australian writing the Australian background is not a background at all. It is a foreground, so much of a foreground there are no characters. The landscape is the character and any characters are only little shadows.

DOROTHY: But isn't this because when people are struggling to express a new environment the landscape tends to take the focus of their attention?

FRANK: Okay, for sure, but how do we then develop our own native drama, which we must develop? How can we, without we encourage Australian writers writing in theatre about Australia? We do it in novels. An Australian writing a novel about Australia knows he can sell his book, but an Australian writing about Australia in the theatre is death.

GERRY: It will come exactly as it did in books, I think. Australian writers of world repute have to establish themselves overseas. Then, once that is done, they can come back and write an Australian book, because then your overseas and your Australian audience are going to accept it. But not in the very beginning.

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

CONSERVATION FOR TODAY

Australian Birds in Colour, Keith Hindwood, A. H. & A. W. Reed.

A Continent in Danger, Vincent Serventy, Andre Deutsch.

Animals and Birds in Australia, Graham Pizzey, Cassell Australia.

Wild Australia, M. K. Morcombe, Lansdowne Press.

The past twelve months have seen a notable, if little noticed, event in Australian publishing. One might hope it indicates also a notable shift in Australian awareness. The publication within a very short time of a number of high quality books devoted to Australian birds and animals, to the Australian natural environment, indicates a willingness among publishers to accept what even a few years ago would have been regarded as a serious financial risk (the risk may not have been in reality so serious—books like Roughley's *Wonders of the Great Barrier Reef* and Cayley's *What Bird is That* hardly disappointed their publisher). The books which have been appearing recently, and there are more than the four discussed here, are books which reveal care in planning, fine quality reproduction—there are none of the almost total failures of colour evident in so many earlier books—with, in the main, superb photography. And what must delight most of us who have had to look enviously to overseas publications for this, there is splendid colour. That not all this colour work could be done in Australia, and that Australian printers are pricing themselves out of these kind of books, is perhaps regrettable, but at last such books are becoming available.

Reading them, one is both profoundly depressed, and given a cautious optimism. De-

pressed, in that they show all too clearly that our regard for the wildlife about us, for the protection of a natural environment, is about at the same level as that of native tribesmen of the newly emergent African nations. In fact, with them the battle for conservation seems more in the open, more a battle. With us, the forces of destruction have scarcely been opposed. In the short time we have been in the continent we have entered with zest the race to exterminate the other creatures who would inhabit the earth with us. In this respect we have an impressive record, documented in one of these books.

Yet we may find as well some optimism. At the simplest level, that these books have been produced at all suggests enough people are becoming interested in an environment not consisting solely of agricultural exploitation and urbanisation. We may be beginning to look at the wealth of bird and animal life still left, and at the beauty of our plants and shrubs and trees; and look at them in the context of trying to defend them. If the one note all these books sound in common is clearly conservation, then perhaps they suggest there are more people beginning to listen. Just as such books must surely increase the numbers willing to begin.

Hindwood's *Australian Birds in Colour* is a book we have waited a long time for. This kind of book is a standard in England, Europe, America, a book which offers careful photography with good colour reproduction, and concise, informative text. It is most attractive in its own right, but one might hope it is the beginning of a group of books useful for identification and description of Australian birds. Cayley—the standby here—is a pioneer work, immense in scope, but unfortunately useless in

detail; the recent new edition has been even more unfortunate—our egrets have developed a blue rinse and our waterfowl a variety of unknown colours (a child's class must scorn some of the pages, such as those illustrating the ducks and bitterns). Books such as *Australian Birds in Colour* can build on this kind of general survey and provide detail and accuracy. There are fifty-two species shown, the colour is rich, but reasonably true, in many cases impossible to fault. Perhaps on one or two points one might carp—the photographs, though showing obvious skill, are almost all of birds at the nest, and do not offer as much information about the bird concerned as a wider variety of pose might do; and nearly all are oddly standardised. There has been pretty ruthless 'gardening' (one wonders whether the nests survived the retreat of the photographers) and the bird sits left to right across the page—entering from the right, as it were. The poses are virtually identical. But this is carping, it is a book to welcome, everyone who looks at it will wish it to be followed by others. And it is sobering to think that this is the first time there has been available adequate photographs of some of these birds. We are so much more concerned with our coloured supplements of football heroes in the weekend magazines.

A Continent in Danger gives more weight to text than to illustration, though the photographs are all of interest, and cover birds, animals, and reptiles. The book is one of a series concerned with conservation on a world basis. The text contains information, anecdote, reminiscence, description—and it is not always easy to find one's way. The style is informal, colloquial, given to name dropping and personal reminiscence. If this sometimes seems to get in the way of the subject, it is aimed perhaps at the kind of wide audience the author has reached through his radio and television programmes. (By the way, what has happened to Serventy's television series on Australian wildlife resulting from his recent round Australia trip? Is it not to be shown here, or is the ABC too busy with its repeats of repeats of Arthur J. Rank films to bother with original material? That mighty gong has by now sounded too often for us all.) If Serventy can reach a fraction of that audience with this book, which is a plea for understanding and tolerance of our wildlife, then conservation

must become something of a reality to a great many people.

The book offers a considerable amount of documentation on the position of species and assesses the present precarious position of many of them. This is information not collected in such accessible form before, and valuable to anyone interested in conservation. A feature of the book is the last portion which gives a summing up of the present position, and what Serventy calls a plea for action. Here the style becomes more forceful, straightforward, and the writer comes out with some definite ideas for the preservation of wildlife in Australia. It is easy to bemoan the slaughter of almost every form of bird and animal life on this continent, but much less easy to be positive and constructive for its preservation, to stick one's neck out on a subject most people here seem afraid even to consider. It is not easy to run counter to the great Australian tradition of slaughter and destroy. The ideas of the 'plan' are positive and constructive, and should provoke worthwhile discussion—some of them offer our only hope of going forward.

Animals and Birds in Australia is the largest of these books in format. This allows justice to the reproductions, some of the best, surely, of Australian wildlife. For one who has followed Pizzey's work with appreciation from almost the beginning, the development of his art is interesting. In his earlier book, *A Time To Look*, Pizzey gave technical details of the photographs, and once this practice was not uncommon. Photography is more sophisticated now, perhaps more standardised, and the data upsets the balance of the book, but such details might still interest many people?—certainly the growing number of amateur photographers in this field.

This is a splendidly produced book. In scope it attempts to cover the continent, and provides sections based on natural divisions of the country, such as The Great Hardwood Forests—The Isolated South West—The Mallee. This is logical and helpful, though by no means perfect, since few areas are self contained in all respects. Probably one's first impression is sheer pleasure at looking through this book, so much so that it is some time before one realises how comprehensive and enlightening it is. Pizzey's text is concise, the distribution diagrams valuable—it is surely time we had

these, however difficult they may be to compile at present. His style, often evocative, is highly effective in suggesting something of the very feel of the country. It is a counterpart to his photography—passages such as those on *The Great Grasslands* remain in the memory as clear and vivid as his photographs.

Wild Australia is rather smaller than Pizzey's book, and does not aim so wide. A comparison of types of colour reproduction in the two books is also interesting—in the end it is a matter of personal inclination, probably, as to which is preferred. But a comparison can be made, for instance, of the photograph on Page 5 of *Animals and Birds in Australia* with that on Page 6 of *Wild Australia*, two remarkable forest studies. Or the colour plates of the lyre birds in both books. Morcombe's bird studies perhaps illustrate the wider scope of his photography by comparison with the more uniform studies of *Australian Birds in Colour*. Morcombe's birds are seen in the varied situations of their daily lives, against a wider environment, and we know something more of them by looking at these photographs. His high speed shots are particularly good.

But for many people his flower photographs will stand out most vividly. If the colour in all these reproductions is slightly enhanced, it is enhanced uniformly, and one is forced to remember, or to admit for the first time, the beauty of the originals. The book provides a good answer to those who feel it is not difficult to photograph trees and flowers. Morcombe has *seen* these banksias, orchids, hakeas—the whole variety he has captured—in the way most of us have imagined we saw them. And so he makes us look again. His skill is obvious, but his vision is that of the artist; he will have many imitators among amateur photographers.

The text is not extensive, but is surprisingly rich in detail, and the points he discusses aptly selected. Surprising, because what he has to say does constantly surprise us, whet our appetite. Our easy assumptions and casual insights are constantly challenged and deepened. For instance, what he says of the eucalypts seems very obvious—as he says it. In several books devoted entirely to these trees one may not be given some of this apparently obvious information. So too in his discussions of the

adaptations of particular birds and animals to particular types of trees and flowers he gives life and clarity to biological and ecological details. At times, perhaps, his need to condense makes his points obscure—for instance, his discussion of the mistletoe bird and its relation to the parasitic plants seems to imply that this bird is common where the Christmas Tree (*Nuytsia*) is common. But is this so? However, these doubts challenge the reader, and are likely to spring from our own deficiencies. The book is splendidly designed and produced.

All these books are a delight in themselves. And they make a common call for conservation. Serventy concludes with the comment: "In the words of the World Wildlife Fund our motto must always be: 'Act now. Tomorrow may be too late.'"

Indeed, tomorrow we are likely to find the things these books treat, only within the covers of the books themselves. Our national passion for destruction, our blind determination to copy from overseas all the techniques of industry and patterns of urbanisation without any concern for wider ideas which we might also import, does not suggest a tomorrow. Wherever we look—from the local scene where nature reserves are handed to golf clubs, where lakes and swamps are ruthlessly made local shire rubbish tips, to the scandal of ruining the Lake Pedder reserve in Tasmania—we are coldly set to erase our natural environment. How can we assume a tomorrow? In this inevitable spread of urbanisation how can people value wildlife, a natural environment they have never seen? That they never will see? To the average Australian today wildlife is something he imagines he sees in Kings Cross. A stale joke. And the joke is on him, because even that reserve of the human species will not last long!

Our path forward perhaps denies this kind of tomorrow. Lewis Mumford puts it this way: "For his own security, as well as to ensure the proper worship of his god, the machine, post-historic man must remove any memory of things that are wild and untamable, pied and dappled, unique and precious: mountains one might be tempted to climb, deserts where one might seek solitude and inner peace, jungles whose living creatures would remind some surviving, unaltered human explorer of nature's original prodigality in creating a grand diver-

sity of habitats and habits of life out of the primeval rock and protoplasm with which she began."

So we may be left with today. And the need to act now to retain even for today some of the heritage these books so clearly put before

us. Is it too optimistic to hope they reflect a growing need, an awareness that will help to secure even briefly a little space on this continent for something other than human beings? For something other than man made surroundings? For more than one type of beauty?

TOWNSVILLE FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN STUDIES AWARD

Under a resolution of the Preliminary Committee of the Foundation for Australian Studies within the Department of English of the University College of Townsville, an annual prize of a value of not less than \$500 to be known as the Foundation for Australian Studies Award has been approved "for the best book published each year in Australia and dealing with any aspect of Australian life".

Explanatory Notes

1. Publications entered may be in any field of Australian writing, for example, fiction, poetry, and drama, letters, and descriptive, biographical, or historical writing. They may be in verse or prose.
2. The essential qualifications are
 - (a) That the publications be published in Australia, even though they may be printed elsewhere; and
 - (b) That they deal with some aspect of Australian life.

Judges

The Foundation has appointed the following judges for the purpose of selecting the prize-winning entry, and all have agreed to act:

Professor G. A. Wilkes, Department of English, University of Sydney, N.S.W.

Dr. Stephen Murray-Smith, School of Education, University of Melbourne, Carlton, N.3, Victoria.

Professor Colin Roderick, Armati Street, Melton Hill, Townsville, Queensland.

Conditions of the Award may be obtained from The Warden, University College of Townsville, Townsville, Queensland.

RECENT POETRY

Who is Wheeling Grandma?, Laurence Collinson, Overland, Melbourne, 1967, \$1.95.

Sheaf Tosser, and Other Poems, Eric C. Rolls, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1967, \$1.75.

Commonwealth Poems of Today, edited by Howard Sergeant, John Murray, London, 1967, \$1.75.

It is ten years since Laurence Collinson published his first volume of poems, *The Moods of Love*. He was then thirty-two and had earlier been a founder and co-editor of *Barjai*, a literary magazine for youth. Now comes his second volume, *Who is Wheeling Grandma?*, and it is natural after ten years to expect some change and to hope for some development. There is change, but little development. His later poetry has lost some of its youthful exuberance and expansiveness. Only in three longer poems towards the end of the book does he allow himself room to expound fully (perhaps a little too fully) on his former attitudes of scorn of hypocrisy, hatred of war, and contempt for conventional morality.

All three have the most unlikely-sounding titles—for poems, that is. “Being and Non-being” sounds like a philosophical or metaphysical treatise; instead it’s an ironic poem—not very subtle—about a rich man, Mr Fatt, who loved children, but when he gained political power assented to the use of “the Weapon . . . to Save Our Land From Alien Thought” and, we are told, “a million children died”. This, no doubt, is a truthful statement of *one* aspect of the contemporary human dilemma. The weakness of the poem is that it does nothing to probe into the reasons for the dilemma and adds nothing to our understanding of something we all know exists. “Ballad of the

Organization Stockman” is a somewhat heavy-handed approach to an old theme: how to escape the servitude of work. By using a Banjo-Paterson-verse-pattern-and-rhythm he attempts some facetiousness, but it doesn’t help very much, and once again what he is saying is not at all new and gains nothing by the method adopted. “Aspects of Modern Education” explores the duplicity and dishonesty of adult attitudes to some tentative ventures in sex by a couple of early adolescents. It is carried along by a certain vitality of its own for the better part of eleven pages, and, of all the work in this second volume, is most reminiscent of the earlier Collinson.

It is in the poems preceding these that we find the greatest amount of change, and this may be summed up as a retreat into brevity. Many of them are tightly compacted poems of eight or twelve lines, and some like “The Boat” do genuinely convey a great deal within a small compass:—

The lover drowns as dreams capsize;
troubling waves like time in flood.
His daily boat dissolves in blood
as past and future tempests rise.

You signalled (his considered view);
in your assurance he set sail;
his foolish craft: for two, too frail . . .
his own fault: he invited you.

Another poet (and almost certainly Collinson when younger) might have taken eighty lines to say what he says there in eight! Too often, however, these brief poems say very little.

His first volume, *The Moods of Love*, took its title from a sequence of fifty-three sonnets to which some critics gave high praise. But it

was a very uneven sequence. In rare cases, he showed he could work successfully within the disciplines imposed by the sonnet:—

This is a city where a million sleep;
this is my city where my life is held
to a million other lives by scars as deep
as history, and by history impelled.
Here in this city I know a thousand faces:
casual as the wind they touch my mind.
Here in this city in a hundred places
I am met by a hundred comrades of my kind.
Here in this city half a dozen friends
may seek for me, or I for them, in stress
(a friend is one who uncorrupted lends
compassion in a time of loneliness).
Yet of this million all but one I spurn:
in need of love, only to you I turn.

Here the poet shows admirable control of his chosen form, but elsewhere in the sequence he often begins well enough and loses himself in words:—

My many faults I try to hide from you
since I would be perfection in your eyes,
but that ferocious defect I most rue
is too unprepossessing to disguise.

Those last two lines are incredibly nonsensical. Sometimes he does not even begin well. I find it quite impossible to fit the laughter of any human being to the imagery used in the following:—

I love you when you laugh: you have a
chortle
like a creek that's heard a dirty joke and,
hunching
its bubbling shoulders, gives a raucous hurtle
over rasping stones and fades off faintly
crunching.

After all, love-sonnets have to be good to be good; there have been some highly skilled practitioners in *that* field!

I have quoted these extracts from the original sequence because *Who is Wheeling Grandma?* contains an addendum of eight more sonnets. Their poetic treatment is, if anything, a little more free, the language more idiomatic, the imagery less strained, but now the mood has changed from rapture to one of loss and longing for what is lost. In other words, Collinson is ten years older, but not necessarily wiser, for a wise man does not pine for what is

irrevocably lost as he appears to do at the end of the seventh sonnet:—

. In fact,
already several lay here whose love lacked
nothing but love. But dear, I'll not conclude
because your flesh compares unfavourably
you still don't mean the whole damn world
to me.

The best poem in this new volume is "Hand in Hand", which begins:—

The unbearable elegance of young lovers
pardoning the pavement with their velvet
steps;
the city receding, the ticking neon,
the hills and churches pleasurably tumbling,
the startled girders stiffening with pride.

He goes on to show how the smile of young lovers "transmutes all objects to chattels"; everything bows to it. The poem concludes:—

And I bow also
as the unbearably elegant young lovers drift
by me,
and I sing in a joy without language;
and turn aside, in terror of the noon.

There is genuine beauty and understanding here, but there is also perhaps something very significant in that last line. Collinson, now in his early forties and approaching the noon-tide of his life, can only watch and no longer share the "unbearable elegance of young lovers". Is this what has reduced his poetic output over the past ten years to such a slender and, compared with the promise of his first book of verse, such a disappointing handful of poems as those contained in *Who is Wheeling Grandma?*

Sheaf Tosser, and Other Poems, by Eric C. Rolls, is a first collection by a poet who has all the exuberance of the younger Collinson, but who has far more control. He dares a great deal more than Collinson ever did, but he never puts a foot wrong. It is almost anachronistic to come upon a poet like Rolls in this age of cerebral poetry. He has something of the bard about him, a natural gift for wry and macabre narrative, and he is courageous enough to give emotion free rein, yet mature enough to remain completely in control. I doubt if any other contemporary Aus-

tralian poet has attempted a passionate cry of grief like "Death Song of the Mad Bush Shepherd":—

O Lord, the girl is dead
That lay to me in my bed.
O Lord, my Lord, her lips were red, her lips
were red, so ruby red,
O Lord, my Lord, her lips were red, her lips
were red, but now
she is dead.

It could so easily get out of hand, but it doesn't. It borrows something of the intensity of the negro spiritual, as many of his other poems derive from the traditional ballad. Naturally, Rolls does not confine himself to this sort of thing; he would perhaps be unbearable if he did. What sustains him, apart from his pure poetic touch, is his awareness of other people, and, since he is himself a farmer, his personal affinity with the earth, the seasons, the creatures and the humans who inhabit his own small earth. Although, like most poets, he often expresses his own reactions to life, he can equally well project his vision outside of himself. He does so, with warmth and tenderness and very often with humour. Unlike Collinson, he seems little concerned with the duplicity and hypocrisy of others; like Collinson, he is deeply concerned with love, but presents its personal problems to the reader with more genuine feeling:—

We walked in the growing wheat:
With love we bewitched it.
With caresses we made a bag;
With kisses we stitched it.

The bag was well-weaved and strong.
We wished and we filled it;
We jerked the lugs and stood it
Taking care lest we spilled it.

And gladly we rolled in the wheat:
Our love was fulfilled.
The seed was put firm in the bed
And none of it spilled.

This poem, which symbolically is called "The Crop", takes love out into nature; it doesn't confine it within four walls of a room or the even more inhibiting walls of a poet's intellect. It concludes:—

I chose you and knew what I chose:
We each chose the other.
A father has care for his child,
And love for its mother.

Love is a theme running through most of the poems of Eric Rolls. Sometimes, as in "Meg's Song and Davie's Song" and "O Meg, Unbind Your Breasts", there is more than a suggestion of the influence of Robbie Burns. One feels this, too, in "He First Sees His Wife Suckling Their Son", one of the finest poems in this book:

John leans by the door
And fears to go within
For seated at ease on the floor
Meg is suckling their son.

This poem may perhaps be regarded as complementary to "The Crop", but note how here the poet has moved into the third person which at once broadens and enriches the feeling so that it encompasses the emotions, not merely of the poet himself, but of all men and all women.

While there are unmistakable older influences in his poetic statement, Rolls is nevertheless a poet of today. He is alert to what he sees, and often this becomes a delightful whimsy like the fifty-one magpies who

Climbed, rolled and swooped
So much out of fashion
I saw no birds at all
But fifty-one charwomen in a park
Tumbling in a merry lark
Trying to shed 'twixt work and tea
Centuries of propriety.

Or the homely, yet inevitable outcome of the domestic task of shelling peas:—

And down upon my knobbly knees
Always trying, sometimes able,
To find the one beneath the table.

The volume opens with the most startling whimsy of all "The Quick and the Dead", and ends, surprisingly enough, with a bracket of children's poems, the Miss Strawberry sequence being particularly successful, although here, too, his lively sense of fun is touched with the macabre.

Eric Rolls is a very welcome newcomer to the Australian literary scene. His *outgoingness* gives his poetry a quality unusual in this age

when so many of our poets seem to live only within themselves and expect us to share that doubtful privilege. I venture to suggest that his work belongs to all time in such a way that it will continue to be read long after much of the cerebral poetry of many highly praised contemporary Australian poets is dust with the cerebrums that produced it. For all his whimsical humour and the fact that this is his first published volume, Rolls doesn't strike me as young in years, but this is a guess on my part. At least we can be sure of one thing: he remains young at heart.

Neither of these poets is included in the Australian contingent which, by virtue of alphabetical priority, occupies pride of place in *Commonwealth Poets of Today*, edited by Howard Sergeant, and published by John Murray for the English Association. Their omission is understandable; Collinson is just not good enough and Rolls, even were he known to the editor, perhaps doesn't write the sort of poetry which, to judge from this book, would appeal to him. Those he has chosen from this country, however, show that Mr Sergeant is closely in touch with what is being written here and from this we may assume an equal familiarity with contemporary writing in other Commonwealth countries. The result is an excellent and interesting anthology and one which will be welcomed for the new horizons it opens up.

The concept of Commonwealth poetry is as vague as the Commonwealth itself, which is a somewhat loose affiliation of nations sharing, apart from their political ties, a common use of the English language and a background of English literature. Mr Sergeant makes it clear that many of them have other languages and literatures as well, although this volume does not explore that aspect of their literary expression. He quotes Professor A. L. McLeod as saying that "whereas seventeenth century literature was the especial interest of the first fifty years of the present century, it appears that Commonwealth literature will be the particular interest of English scholars in the next fifty". This is an interesting speculation although it is difficult to see why it should be a valid one, except that it is only now, for the first time in history, that we have poets in various countries, with vastly different cultural backgrounds, expressing themselves in

this way. Hitherto, we have thought of poets and novelists from the English-speaking United States of America as having developed a literature of their own, in a measure deriving from that of England, but one which has attained individual distinction and independence. Some have even dared to suggest that the older Dominions of the British Commonwealth have similarly begun to move in that direction, and it is not beyond the realms of possibility that those who have more recently emerged from a purely colonial relationship to Great Britain into independent nationhood may at some future time go their own way both politically and culturally. If they do so, will what we now think of as Commonwealth literature become fragmented into a number of national literatures? Is the concept therefore purely one of the present time?

The reader cannot escape such queries as he goes through this anthology. Nor, it seems, can Mr Sergeant completely divorce the "political" from the "cultural". For example, he includes a number of South African poets who, since their own country withdrew from the Commonwealth, have chosen to live in the United Kingdom. These have a section of their own: "South Africans Within the Commonwealth". Those who have elected to remain in South Africa are omitted. Even while the collection was being made history did not stand still: Rhodesia also withdrew from the Commonwealth (although there *is* a small Rhodesian section), Singapore became separated from Malaysia, India and Pakistan were for a while in conflict, and there were, as Mr Sergeant puts it, "several unconventional and sudden changes of government". He admits also the difficulty in some cases of determining nationality. Douglas Livingstone, for instance, was Born in Kuala Lumpur, spent his early years in Australia, Ceylon, Scotland and South Africa, before going to Zambia where he appears to have spent most of his life, and now resides in South Africa. He is included under "Zambia". Indeed, he is the only poet representing that country.

This difficulty of who belongs to which country is not the least of this anthologist's problems. There is also the matter of selection. Australia is represented by 34 poems from 21 poets. It could be argued, I think, that a richer sampling of our contemporary poetry might have been made by fewer poets

each represented by a greater number of poems. Judith Wright deservedly has four, but A. D. Hope and R. D. FitzGerald have only one each, while Douglas Stewart's two hardly do justice to certain important aspects of his verse. However, it is good to see comparative newcomers like Gwen Harwood and Bruce Dawe included, although the latter's "Prayer for Those in Coma", while a good piece of reflective writing, does not give the true flavour of his work as a whole. It would no doubt be impossible to achieve this for any poet in an anthology covering such vast territory as this one does, without making a much more bulky book.

In his Introduction, the editor points out that "in the culture of every nation, two elements can be clearly distinguished, the indigenous (or regional) and the cosmopolitan". It is clear from this book that his own bias is towards the cosmopolitan. Except for some examples from the newly emerged nations, there is little poetry showing truly indigenous influences. As far as the older Dominions are concerned he sees four broad phases in the development of their poetic traditions:—

1. The initial stage, dominated by a sense of exile, with its concomitant moods of nostalgia and melancholy;
2. The gradual recognition of the new country, marked by an increasing attention to its landscape and prominent characteristics;
3. The growth of a national outlook, often aggressively self-conscious and insistent upon exploitation of local colour and the use of stock symbols of a superficial nature;
4. Finally, the emergence of an indigenous tradition capable of assimilating what was still imported.

"Not until the fourth stage was reached," he explains, "was it possible to abandon the colonial outlook altogether." The poets representing the three older Dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand—have all reached this fourth stage, and it may be assumed that the poetic tradition behind the contemporary poets listed under "British Isles" did not have to go through these four phases—at least, not in comparatively recent times.

The poets of the new African States are closer to their indigenous backgrounds or, as

Mr Sergeant puts it, "are to a large extent dependent upon their own oral and folk traditions, whatever language they choose for the purpose", so we do find here something less than cosmopolitanism. Much of their poetry reflects their new political awareness and is expressed in "the traditional rhythms and language of the African drums". Were it not for these and if the poems had not been grouped under "national" headings, the reader could often be pardoned for wondering about their source. Where, for instance, would you imagine the following belonged?

I lost the scroll of instructions you gave
To guide me to the door of your home;
I sat in distress on life's crossroads
And asked the wayfarers and the caravans
To show me the way to my destination.
Some said the way was long and tortuous,
You had said it is short and delectable;
Others opined it was narrow, winding and uphill,
They shouted it is the dream of bigoted fanatics—
You said it is the ultimate reality
In a world that is worth but a moment.
Then you came and handed me a chart.
I found I was sitting at the very gate,
Not knowing I had reached your doorstep.

Words like "wayfarers" and "caravans" could perhaps be claimed as having an indigenous significance, but they could equally as well be taken as figures of speech. Actually, this is the first poem in the "Pakistan" section, and indeed, as we read we are constantly aware of what is happening in Commonwealth poetry today. The poets, using a common language and deriving to a greater or lesser degree from common literary sources, are producing a common poetry. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing could be a fruitful source of argument, and I do not propose to pursue it here.

The impression one gets from this collection of poems—all of them of undoubtedly high standard and chosen with the greatest of care—is that the conventions of modern poetry have invaded all countries where English is spoken, irrespective of their historical or developmental backgrounds. The editor's own preferences seem to have excluded the pure lyric, just as, with rare exceptions like "The Lament of the Banana Man" by Evan Jones

of the West Indies, it excludes anything with the quality of folk poetry. The long-distance value of this book is that it may lead those interested to take a closer look at the entire poetic output of some of these countries. And such a closer look could perhaps discover that there are poets elsewhere like our own Judith Wright who can, by some subtle alchemy, transmute the indigenous into the cosmopolitan and yet retain something of the original flavour. The immediate value of *Commonwealth Poems of Today* is that it opens, although in most cases only to a slight degree, several doors hitherto closed to most of us. It certainly does draw our attention to what the editor describes as the cultural upheaval that has taken place in many of the new African States. As he puts it, "Quite suddenly, it seems, and almost without warning, we have been confronted by writers of the stature of Chinua Achebe, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Christopher Okigbo, Abioseh Nicol, David Rubadiri, Wole Soyinka, Kwesi Brew, Cyprian Ekwensi, Gabriel Okara, and George Awoonor-Williams, to name but a few of the poets, playwrights and novelists whose work has been brought to our attention during the last few years".

This is exciting, but what concerns me more is the nature of the poetry which Mr Sergeant has chosen and which sets its pattern on the selection as a whole. This is perhaps unwittingly summed up in a clever satirical poem

by Edwin Brock of the British Isles, "Five Ways to Kill a Man". The first four, the requirements of each briefly etched in with historical details, are in chronological order: by crucifixion, by piercing with a lance, by gas warfare, and by bombs dropped from an aeroplane. The poem concludes:—

These are, as I began, cumbersome ways
to kill a man. Simpler, direct, and much
more neat
is to see that he is living somewhere in the
middle
of the twentieth century, and leave him there.

That, the cynic may say, is exactly where this anthology leaves us. He may, with some justification, feel that poetry has become standardized and has lost contact with the source of vitality which in the past came from the indigenous rather than the cosmopolitan. More rationally, however, we could say that this book brings together for the first time two new concepts: the one a Commonwealth of Nations irrespective of colour or race, the other the poetic output of these people speaking not only one language but with almost one mind. However you look at it, it does contain a wealth of good things and is certainly a collection that is worth serious study. At a different level, it could also prove a companionable book for many years to come.

THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE

Eleanor Smith, *The Beckoning West*: The story of H. S. Trotman and the Canning Stock Route, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1966, \$3.75.

H. S. Trotman, deputy of the great surveyor, A. W. Canning, died soon after Mrs Smith's account of his reminiscences was published. We are fortunate then that she met him when she did, because the result of their collaboration is one of the more interesting of a number of recently published reminiscences about the pioneering days of this State. This underlines the need to record the reminiscences of survivors of this period before it is too late. Others might well take Mrs Smith's book as a model. She has recorded Trotman's words skilfully, writing her book so that he appears to tell his own story, laconically but fluently.

I could not review this book disinterestedly, because twice in the last few years I have had the good fortune to visit the lower end of the Canning Stock Route, which Trotman helped to survey. Having, to my surprise, succumbed to the fascination of the desert landscape on the first trip, I was interested to observe its effect on a party of seventeen-year-old youths that I accompanied on my second visit. Trotman told of the privations of his expeditions but could still say, quoting a native, that he was "heartcrying alonga that country". One youth in our party confided, after a day spent exploring a beautiful sandstone ridge that abuts the edge of the Stock Route near Mt Davis, that "he was not happy to be in that country, but was beginning not to be happy to be leaving it".

I hope that Mrs Smith's book will reawaken interest in Canning because he deserves to be

known as one who led a number of epic surveying expeditions. It was not his fault that his two major achievements, the surveys for the Rabbit Proof Fence and the Stock Route, were not crowned by the success of these undertakings. The Rabbit Proof Fence turned out to be something of a 'folly'; the need for the Stock Route was soon surpassed by the opening of northern ports.

There should be no conflict of interests if the Stock Route were declared a National Park. A completely surveyed and pegged strip following one of the major feats of exploration, would be a unique kind of National Park. It stretches about 900 miles, from Wiluna to Hall's Creek, cutting across a major desert but including isolated areas of considerable beauty. It is doubtful if anyone would ever wish to run cattle between about No 10 Well and Hall's Creek, and there do not appear to be any major mineral deposits. If there were any minerals their extraction need not seriously interfere with conservation. Although it would not be a normal 'tourist attraction'—except at the Wiluna end—it is surprising how frequently small parties of naturalists or Museum parties work in the area.

At No 9 Well (using Canning's original numbering) there are the remains of the fort that the Forrest brothers built in 1874 when attacked by natives. This ought to be preserved. Near it is a ring of stones of aboriginal origin. It is possible that the small party of white men blundered into an important corroboree. The small stone fort that they built may have protected them by appearing more 'powerful' than the smaller aboriginal stone circle. It is a moving experience to stand on the rise overlooking Weld Springs, site of the well. From

this ridge the natives attacked, and one can imagine the shock that they must have suffered when men, riding horses and appearing therefore like strange half-human beasts, blundered amongst them. The Forrest Fort should be preserved, even if the only danger to it at the moment is blundering cattle.

Not far to the north east, in the terracotta sandhills, Gibson perished and Giles barely survived. The Stock Route could serve as a memorial to the explorations of Giles and of the Forrests as well as of Canning. It is not inappropriate that only the Forrests' expedition could be considered to have fulfilled all expectations. So many of the major explorations in Australia began as great visions and ended in disappointment or tragedy. I believe that this may have worked into the national mystique, contributing to the growth of that element of the Australian temperament appearing as a refusal to take anything very seriously for fear that hopes prove hollow. At its worst this appears as philistinism or apathy, but it can have its positive side, giving a sardonic edge to intelligence, helping to avoid extravagance of enthusiasm.

Although *The Beckoning West* is Trotman's story, it is clear that Canning is the real hero. Trotman does not conceal that the expedition parties did not run smoothly when Canning was absent. He was obviously a natural leader, gifted and stoic. During the Rabbit Proof Fence survey the camels ate poison and a number died. To obtain more camels, Canning set out to ride to Wallal on the coast. Two camels died, so he continued on foot and then walked back to his party when he had sent his messages to Perth. He had walked 210 miles in 5 days, alone, through unmapped, arid land. How many of our children, steeped in the Hollywood and television legends of the American West know anything of the epic feats of their own State? Mrs Smith's book could help to overcome this ignorance of one at least of the great—even heroic—figures of the past century. The laconic quality of Trotman's narration shows up, rather than diminishes the quality of Canning's exploits.

If the book is re-issued, as is likely, there are two things that might be amended. Mrs Smith's Appendix IV numbers all the Stock Route Watering Places from Wiluna. This appears to be a later system of numbering than that originally used by Canning. The

original numbers survive on some wells (e.g. the sign-post to the No 5), on some maps and in local usage. In the area Pierre Springs is still known as No 6 (not No 9) and Weld Spring is known as No 9. Perhaps the alternative numbers could be shown as well. Also Trotman refers to the magnificent desert oak (*casuarina decaisneana*). He believed that the handsome casuarina overhanging the steps of the University Sunken Garden was a desert oak. Fine as it is, it happens to be another species from the Pacific Islands.

F. W. CHESHIRE

THE LANDSCAPE OF AUSTRALIAN POETRY

Brian Elliott

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AUSTRALIAN BOOKS IN PRINT

FILLING SOME GAPS

In the past ten years or so, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of Australian books reprinted, including some that now have very little interest—if any—for the common reader. The long-established publishing firm of Angus and Robertson, which must hold the copyright of more Australian authors than any other publisher, has been particularly active, and has not confined its efforts to reprinting its own authors. Among the reprints in recent years have been novels by Christina Stead and Miles Franklin, and stories by Barbara Baynton, all originally published abroad. It is a welcome development, and a cheering reflection of the changes that have been occurring in Australian publishing.

Christina Stead's novels have been very difficult to obtain, even in university libraries; but, as R. G. Geering remarks, in his fine introduction to *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, there is "no other contemporary writer of ours who deserves to be more widely read". *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* was first published in 1934, and when reprinted in this edition in 1965, it was the first of Christina Stead's novels ever to be published in Australia. (Since its appearance, Sun Books has published *The Salzburg Tales*, and Angus and Robertson *For Love Alone*.) Mr Geering rightly stresses her individuality of style, reminding us how strongly she differs from the conventionally realistic fiction that we have taken as characteristic of Australia in the thirties. Why, then, has a writer with qualities hitherto rare in Australian fiction been so little read and known in Australia?

I haven't seen any of the Australian reviews of the first edition of *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, but I note that those literary historians

who have noticed her work have praised her highly. H. M. Green thought her "among the leading Australian novelists of the day", and found "affinities with genius". Colin Roderick called her "the most gifted of living Australian novelists" (in 1950), and Cecil Hadgraft saw her as "one of the few novelists from this country with a style". These are tributes from specialists who have had the chance to read her published *oeuvre*. Walter Stone, long an admirer of her work, devoted an issue of *Southerly* to her in 1962, but apart from that there has been little discussion of her, as one can see by consulting the Pelican volume, *The Literature of Australia*. Whatever the reviewers may have said at the time, she was not accepted as part of the Australian literary scene and did not become a presence in the lives and work of Australian writers as much less original local writers did. She was neglected, and the significance of her work—pioneering work, as it now seems—went unrecognized. One reason for this was probably that she lived abroad; but there must have been other reasons. If Miles Franklin's comments in *Laughter, Not for a Cage* are in any way representative of local reaction, it would seem that her work was resisted. Miles Franklin wrote disparagingly in her lectures on the Australian novel:

Then, too, like a very big toad into our backyard puddle plumped Christina Stead's *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, or *Seven Poor Men of Bloomsbury*, as the wags insisted, because of Sydney being presented in terms of the Bloomsbury coterie, then in full cry. The word genius was lavished on this writer. Her work had Teutonic massivity, often graded highly as intellectual weightiness.

The sneer at Bloomsbury is expressive of the provincial hostility towards experiment in writing that the nationalistic local writers seem to have felt at that time.

Looking at the fiction of the 'thirties from the perspective of the present, one can now see that some important beginnings were made. It seems to me that the novels of Christina Stead (*Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, 1934), Kenneth Mackenzie (*The Young Desire It*, 1937), and Patrick White (*Happy Valley*, 1939) are the real foundations of the modern novel in Australia. There may be other novelists (like Chester Cobb, an early adherent of the stream of consciousness technique) who ought to be mentioned here, whose work I have not yet read. At least, one can say of the three I have named that they were responsive to twentieth century developments in the novel—especially the work of Lawrence and Joyce—in a way that was not common in Australian fiction. Their work parallels, to some extent, the beginnings of modern poetry in Australia with Slessor and FitzGerald.

The neglect of a writer like Christina Stead is, unfortunately, not as rare in Australia as one would hope. There is the history of Furphy's *Such is Life*, and the lack of interest in Henry Handel Richardson until the final volume of her trilogy received glowing notices in London in 1929. Even such a well-read and perceptive critic as Nettie Palmer, who became Henry Handel Richardson's leading interpreter in Australia, did not appear to know of her as late as 1924, when she published a survey entitled *Modern Australian Literature*. The lack of authoritative literary criticism in the past may be part of the explanation for such neglect; but I wonder how often it is a result of the lack of disinterested concern for literature among local writers?

Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* is now largely of historical interest. In 1901 A. G. Stephens hailed it as "the very first Australian novel to be published"; that is, the first that was wholly indigenous in outlook and idiom. Its success may well have contributed to Miles Franklin's failure to develop as a writer. It has been out of print since she "firmly withdrew it because the stupid literalness with which it was taken to be her own autobiography startled and disillusioned then constrained her", as she said in *Laughter, Not for a Cage*. How disturbed she was by this reaction

is apparent from the sequel, *My Career Goes Bung*, not published until many years afterwards, and from her re-working of her own experience as a young authoress in *Cockatoos*, one of the "Brent of Bin Bin" series. An unstated reason for the suppression of the book may have been Havelock Ellis's use of the episode where the heroine lashes her handsome admirer with a stockwhip when he tries to kiss her. Ellis quoted it in *The Psychology of Sex* when discussing the relationship between love and pain.

The recent reprint gives no details of the book's history, except for the statement that it was banned from republication by Miles Franklin herself until ten years after her death. An unprepared reader is likely to wonder what all the fuss was about. Its naive and passionate nationalism and feminism, once so fresh and new, now seem dated, and the main interest lies in the psychology of the complex and frustrated girl, who revealed herself perhaps more fully than she knew in her attempt at a fictional autobiography. Miles Franklin is one of those writers more interesting for their personality than for their performance, and should this novel ever be republished, I hope that the publishers will see that it is properly introduced.

The publishers have included a photograph of Miles Franklin on the jacket of *My Brilliant Career*: I wish that they had done the same for Barbara Baynton, whose *Bush Studies* have been attractively republished, together with a memoir by her grandson, H. B. Gullett, and a critical study by A. A. Phillips. Mr Gullett's memoir is lively and often amusing, and is able to suggest to the reader the robust personality behind the stories. It makes one hope that he or someone with an equally agreeable style will attempt a full biography of Barbara Baynton, whose life would make a good novel—of a kind very different from her own fiction!

Barbara Baynton's stories, scrupulously realistic in their surface details, are not so much studies of bush life (which the title would suggest) as exercises in farce and melodrama. What gives them their permanent interest is the intensity of the perceptions that are expressed through the fictional modes. Barbara Baynton's output was small, but these stories show a remarkable degree of craftsmanship. Whether farcical or macabre, her stories are written in a firm, controlled style and with a

surprising detachment. Without having any pretensions to be a literary critic, Mr Gullett throws out some good tips for the reader who wishes to understand her better. He tells us that her father liked Dickens, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, and, most significantly, Edgar Allan Poe; and later remarks of Barbara Baynton herself:

Her powers of observation were her own, but sharpened by Dickens. Like the Russians she was never absorbed with trivia; the major passions, and only they, engrossed her. She never balked at horror and, as de Maupassant did, she knew how to use suspense. She shows, too, the faults of her sources. . . .

She enjoys horror and suspense, but never indulges herself in her actual writing: it is her cool, plain style that gives her stories of bush horrors such power, such a feeling of nightmare. Although she presents savage details that another writer might have preferred to avoid, she is never crudely sensational. Mr Phillips provides an interesting commentary on the stories, but it is a pity that what we have here is the text of a lecture that has been reproduced elsewhere, and was written before Mr Gullett's memoir. Mr Phillips, rather oddly, finishes his commentary with some speculation about "a sense of spiritual darkness emanating from the land itself", which finds expression in Barbara Baynton's stories. A consideration of her literary sources would, I think, be more to the point.

Louis Stone's *Jonah* is another Angus and Robertson reprint of the past few years, first as a hardback, and more recently in the new paperback series, Pacific Books. It is a good choice for a series designed for a mass market—among other titles is T. A. G. Hungerford's *The Ridge and the River*, perhaps the best Australian novel about the Second World War—and deserves the wider circulation that paperback publication should bring (the quality of the book production is, however, disappointing, and this may affect its sales adversely). Ronald McCuaig's discursive and uncritical introduction adds little, if anything, to the value of the book.

These few titles that I have picked out for comment appear to have been presented with one eye on students of Australian literature, who will, in time, become a factor in the book market if the American experience is any

guide. Looking at these titles with such students in mind, I am struck by the inadequacy of the editorial work, except in the case of *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*. R. G. Geering knows Christina Stead's work thoroughly, and provides a balanced and really helpful introduction. Ronald McCuaig, however, seems to regard his function as being to write a eulogy. One could wish that Australian publishers would learn from the example of their American competitors like Signet or Rinehart.

The editorial work has been better done, on the whole, in the Australian Poets series, also published by Angus and Robertson. This is an attempt "to create a library of the selected poems of leading Australian poets, past and present". The idea is an excellent one, and as far as book design and printing go, it has been well-carried out. The two most recent editions are a selection of Hugh McCrae by Douglas Stewart, and Christopher Brennan by Professor A. R. Chisholm. Douglas Stewart, showing a predictable and irritating hostility towards McCrae's critics, nevertheless manages to suggest "paths" to the poetry. Professor Chisholm attempts less, but his brief introduction to Brennan's verse is admirable.

There is no indication from the publishers of the poets to be added to this series in the future. Thirteen titles are now listed; a fourteenth, *Charles Harpur*, was withdrawn not long after it appeared in 1963, and there has been no announcement that it will be replaced. The text of the withdrawn volume was justified on the ground that there was a need "to provide quickly a selection for the use of students". If the silence of the publishers may be taken as meaning that a fresh text is being prepared, then no news is good news. There is no adequate edition of Harpur's poetry—not even a selection—though the late J. Normington Rawling wrote a detailed, rather ponderous biography, and Judith Wright wrote an excellent critical study in the *Australian Writers and Their Work* series. The collected poems of Harpur will take a long time to produce: a selection in this series would help to create a public for the larger work when it is eventually produced. Harpur is a poet who was unfortunate in life—and, it would seem, in death also.

Apart from Harpur, there are some other gaps that ought to be filled soon. Kenneth

Slessor, for some reason, has been omitted, his poetry being available only in the comparatively unattractive Sirius Books series. Kenneth Mackenzie's poems would also be a welcome addition. There are some difficulties in the way of including younger poets, but the publishers should be ready to take risks in presenting poets of the present. None of the poets so far included seems undeserving of a place. Whatever one may think of the poetry

of Kendall and O'Dowd, they have historical importance and should be known.

In making available the work of Australian poets in this inexpensive series, and in representing important Australian books, Angus and Robertson are doing something that is very worthwhile, and not to be assessed in terms of profit and loss. My general criticism of what they are doing would be that they do not always recognize just how worthwhile it is.



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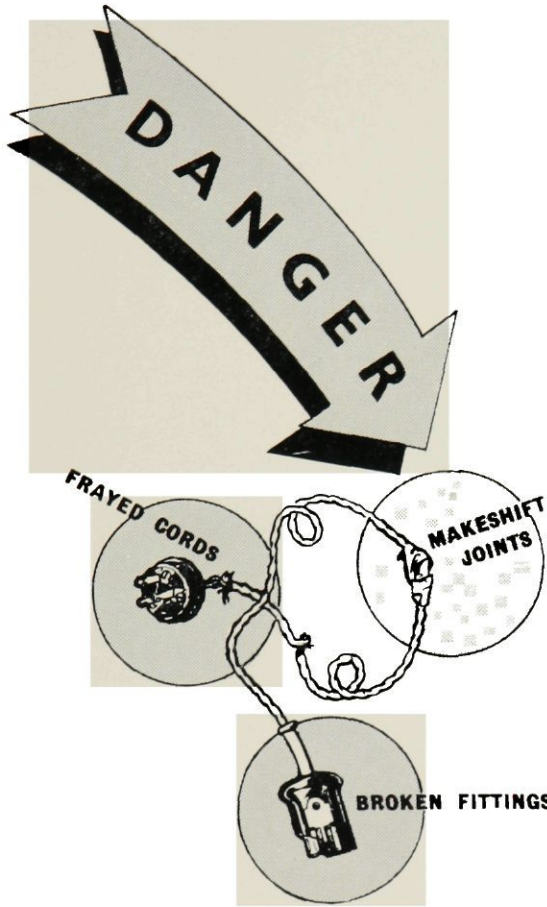
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