

# overland

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# The Story of the Purrrevolutionary Cat: A Bolivian Cat in Exile

ROSEMARY EVANS

*Despite the ever-present danger of counter-revolutionary sabotage, and problems presented by the now 18-year-old American blockade, life in Cuba has its light side, and Cubans are by nature a lively and happy people. This story appeared recently in the magazine Cuba International, written by a Bolivian living in Havana, and here translated by ROSEMARY EVANS.*

The mother cat and three of her kittens had perished when the old cupboard in which she had decided to give birth had collapsed on top of them. We thought that was that; and then we suddenly saw the one little timid survivor lying all alone among the wreckage, his eyes still closed, his front paws still trembling as he lay there, a small brown and white bundle that fitted easily into one hand; with a little pink nose, soft fluffy paws, and a pathetic tail curving above the slim back like an indignant question-mark. The only sign of life was the trembling of the tiny body, and the sad little apology for a miaow.

He seemed not long for this life. We laid him on a piece of cotton wool, and with the help of an eye-dropper managed to get half an ounce of milk down the little pink mouth; then we laid him to sleep in the shoe-box in which we expected him to pass gently away.

But next morning we were awakened by several angry and impatient miaows which we could hardly believe came from that minute morsel of kittenhood. Breakfast was being called for imperiously; and breakfast consisted of milk and vitamins, enthusiastically consumed by the now no longer timid victim of the catastrophe, who soon developed a fat little tummy, a fine pair of lungs, and a positively bulldog personality. In a few weeks "Michi" had developed into something of a snob — he never stooped so low as to catch mice, accustomed as he was to his creamy breakfast milk, his midday fish, and his evening helping of meat.

Up till then I had never believed in the existence of a politically-conscious cat — indeed, cats had always seemed to me to be born reactionaries — but it soon became clear that Michi took a deep interest in world problems, and he never

missed any of our secret evening meetings at my house. As soon as the quorum was constituted, he parked himself quietly beside us and listened solemnly to the discussions. No silly purring, no undignified miaows this cat took politics seriously. He scrutinised everyone so unblinkingly and thoroughly with his large green eyes that one night a nervous member of our group took me aside and whispered worriedly to me:

"Listen — how long have you known that cat? Can you really trust him?"

But I stood up for Michi. Agreed, he now knew enough to have put us all in jail — he had listened to incessant talk about meetings, demonstrations, pamphlets, secret printing-presses, secret addresses, secret names etc.—and yet I trusted him implicitly, and was certain that the police would never get a word out of him, however horribly they might torture him.

Michi had learned to enjoy his saucer of coffee, and was just considering occasionally drinking the odd drop of wine, when the blow fell. My wife and children were deported to Cuba via Mexico, but I was denied a passport to go with them!

We had to sell or give away almost everything we had, and soon there was very little left in the house except Michi and me, and a bed which we shared like the brothers we were. In three weeks our lives had suffered an earthquake. Now the empty rooms contained only memories of our loved ones; and sometimes I would wake at midnight to find Michi sitting beside me, wide-eyed and watchful, deep in thought, and puzzling over the inexplicable nightmare that had broken up his happy little life.

As returning home to feed him was becoming a problem, I began to take him everywhere with me in his basket; we ate at friends' home, he went

with me on business calls, and we became inseparable. Then, when at long last my own journey from La Paz to Cuba was arranged, I suddenly realised that I just could *not* leave Michi behind. He was my brother: he was Comrade Michi. Give him away? Impossible. Put him in a cats' home? Unthinkable.

"I'm going to take the cat to Cuba with me," I announced.

My friends gasped.

"Are you crazy? Who on earth would ever think of such a thing?"

"Only me. He's my comrade, he's a real Patria o Muerte\* cat. And he knows far too much to be left here alone . . ."

The vet advised me to give Michi a sedative the night before we left, so on the 18th July I gave him a capsule of sodium amytal, while several friendly hands held him down, and stopped him giving full reign to his noisy indignation and surprise. Twenty minutes later he toppled off into a drunken slumber in a travelling-bag, and we set off for the airport.

I was travelling to Havana with some Latin American delegates to the 26th of July celebrations. We were chatting happily in the plane at about two in the morning, when suddenly with horror I realised that a certain very familiar and very unpleasant odour was beginning to assail our nostrils: a very natural smell, it was quickly being recognised by us all. There was a feeling of silent mutual accusation among us as the wretched perfume crept round, growing stronger and stronger, and we all began to look behind us to see if there was a counter-revolutionary agent among us who had come to sabotage our journey. I looked round in horror like the rest. Nobody spoke, and we all breathed carefully through our mouths; nobody dared move, in case he should be suspected of being The One.

Then the ghastly truth suddenly flashed through my mind: it was Michi!

And then I lost my nerve completely. Ruining for ever my reputation among these progressive intellectuals (who didn't address another word to me during the entire journey), I seized the offending travelling-bag from the rack and rushed with it to the bathroom, leaving a trail of suspicion and disapproval in my wake, and the hurtful mutter which I *know* I heard:

"He's an imperialist spy!"

Need I go into detail about the unhappy drama in the bathroom, which lasted fully half an hour,

\* Patria o Muerte: Cuba's revolutionary slogan: "The motherland or death."

while I washed the thoughtless sleeping Michi from moustache to tail, and smoked eight cigarettes in rapid succession, so awful was the smell? No. It is enough to say that I marched back with great dignity — amid a host of inimical glances — placed Michi fairly gently among the other bags, and sank exhausted into my seat.

However, worse was to come.

We arrived at 10.30 next morning at Mexico City. I was not worried about Michi, as I knew the Mexican customs men did not open hand-luggage of passengers in transit — though I could imagine the scandal that would break out if I were discovered to be a cat-smuggler.

We got out, went through all the necessary formalities, and I happily laid the fatal bag on a table while I waited in the queue to have my ticket checked — when suddenly my heart stopped. Paralysed with horror, I watched fascinated as the travelling bag began jumping about, as if rocked by an invisible hand. Michi was waking up!

I had now to join another queue to have the bigger case stamped. With an attempt at non-chalance, I nervously shifted the jumping bag from one hand to the other with regular censer-like movements. The customs man looked at my case, then asked for my passport, and I continued swinging the bag from one hand to the other in an apparently carefree manner, trying not to notice the contemptuous glances of the other passengers as they watched my childish behaviour.

Finally the customs man asked me to hand him the bag so that he could stamp it, and I could then take it out of the airport. Obviously a man who enjoyed his job, he stamped it with great enthusiasm, and a faint wail of protest came from inside.

"Who's that crying?" he asked, with surprise and concern.

Somehow or other my voice came back to me.

"It's me," I replied, with great composure. "I have a headache." And with immense dignity I picked up the squirming bag, and marched out of the airport, to totter into the arms of my frantic family.

Now Michi's adventures seemed to be over. My wife had got the correct papers for him to travel to Cuba as a cat of Mexican nationality; but ten days later, when we arrived in Havana, another problem presented itself. Cats are not allowed in Cuban hotels; and it was impossible for us to get a flat right away. Finally, in despair, I took Michi to the Zoo, and placed the problem before its friendly director, Dr. Arce.

A specialist in felines, he showed great interest, and wanted to know all the details . . .

“Well, and what type of cat is it?”

“Well, it’s a — it’s a typical catty sort of cat, you know — it drinks coffee, walks like a bulldog, understands Spanish . . .”

“Yes, but is it an Angora, a Persian, an Abyssinian . . .?”

“No, doctor — as a matter-of-fact it’s a real workers’ cat — it’s very politically conscious, dependable, progressive . . .”

So Dr. Arce took pity on us, and Michi remains a guest at Havana’s Zoo, well looked after, well fed and well loved, his best friends being his next door neighbors, a huge chimpanzee which hypnotizes him, and two monkeys which roar with laughter at humanity, and have taught Michi to

do the same.

And there Michi remains until we get our own home, and he can join us. We visit him twice a week, and tell him how lucky he is, and how exotic — the cat that came all the way from Bolivia to fight for the Cuban Revolution; Michi the Purrrrrevolutionary Cat, who might just have remained in Bolivia to become an ordinary right-wing cat with no interest in the fate of proletarian cats, his activities being confined to singing to the moon, and reproducing his kind.

Instead, Michi is looking forward eagerly to the day when we will all be together again, and the time when (as we hope) he will find the Cuban cat with whom he can build a home and hearth, a real Patria o Muerte girl, who will respect him and love him, as we do.

## Meanjin

The Winter Meanjin carries, among other things, a picture which looks like Athens under the Turkish occupation, waiting for Lord Elgin to carry off the marbles . . . actually it’s the Lady Franklin Museum, Hobart, surrounded by humpies during the 1890’s depression — and it accompanies the first of our new series, States of the Nation, on Tasmania. There’s also a splendid account of Nabokov by Laurie Clancy, Ian Reid reviewing Frank Moorhouse — and Frank Moorhouse contributing a story — plus A. A. Phillips and R. W. Connell on Manning Clark, an Interview with Margaret Atwood, and *Overland’s* very own Acting-Editor on Rolf Boldrewood.

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# Vietnam 77: Flight into Poetry

STEFAN WILKANOWICZ

Flying from Moscow our plane stops over at Kuwait, Bombay, Rangoon, and, probably because of the bad weather, at Bangkok. It is only in Vientiane that the adventure commences. We leave the big jet for the familiar Illouchine 18 which will take us to Hanoi.

For the traveller Vietnam is quite near, both from a geographical and historical point of view: was Laos not the vassal of its neighbour in the east? Soldiers staff the airport, they are simple, pleasant — would it be because of ideological purity? — there is no braid to distinguish one from the other. A minimum of formalities . . . Right from the beginning this army is striking because of a certain simplicity of the people, and at the same time a sort of quietude. Girls in uniform come and go. Two of them have scarlet ties on their plaits. Coquetry or revolutionary adornment? As history has taught over these last decades the Laotians perhaps do not treat their war with too much gravity.

Finally we take off and shortly afterwards we fly over Vietnam. I have put aside a small book of poetry which I am using to prepare myself for the trip. Why have I chosen poetry? To every nation, to every people there belongs a certain area of culture which reveals most faithfully its spirit, its specific character. For Vietnam, if I am not wrong, poetry is this privileged area; consequently I shall frequently return throughout this periplus to these familiar lines:

The fire is still burning,  
The brook softly rustles in the night.  
At that time I think of you.  
Your smiling lips say  
You can see the future.  
I gaze into your eyes  
You are thoughtful,  
And you feel alone among the men.  
In the cool night you yearn for your soldier.  
Close to the fire sadly I sit down.

Like two stars at opposite ends of the heaven,  
We are far from each other like that.  
With you in my mind, I will go resolutely  
I will call upon it with all my might to drive out  
regret

We land. Again soldiers, lots of soldiers. Courteous but watchful, disciplined. The atmosphere is for a thousand leagues bereft of poetic inspiration. Here the presence of the State is felt. The customs formalities are impressively long, the procedure for registration at the hotel is the same.

The hotel is a large modern building on piles, constructed by the Cubans at the lakeside. Inside there is a fish pond, a 'Spanish' patio, exotic plants, especially bamboo, the picturesque, omnipresent bamboo. The hotel only accommodates foreigners, with air conditioning and a shower in each room. An enormous thermos filled with boiling water placed next to a container of tea constitutes the decor. Let us see! Isn't the tea kept boiling all day? Once dried coconut fibre kept the national drink hot. Probably to-day it still carries out this function in a large number of Vietnamese homes, in those homes which we were not permitted to see.

The hotel seemed like a virgin island in the Hanoi countryside, a special area, a sort of extra-territorial embassy, whose door was guarded by sentries. We were only ordinary tourists, but as we were among the first, we were treated as an official delegation and the only outward signs which were missing were the motor cycle escorts.

We were too well fed. Smiling and silent — they did not speak any foreign language — our waitresses brought a new dish every few moments. I imagine that I ate at least three times the supposed ration of one Vietnamese, not to the mention the nutritional value of fine cooking. As to this ration, meat is distributed at the rate of 10 grammes per day and rice at 300 grammes. More-

over, we did not venture to make any comparison, for throughout our stay we never saw Vietnamese eating at close hand.

I have my reasons for being responsive to the type of local beauty, and I was pleasantly surprised to see that charm is not a rare thing in this country. Outwardly everything is standardized: black trousers, white smock, sleek black hair in plaits down the back. This manner of dress not only applies to female government employees but also to the great majority of women in the North. However, the uniform is not monotonous; its modesty and simplicity is touching, although we would have liked to see more tunics, those tunics in which the Vietnamese shine in all their splendour. Nevertheless, in the absence of the national dress, the charm and beauty captures one's gaze without being forceful or dazzling, it is rather moving:

Who told you to possess so much beauty  
So that you can charm the shades of autumn  
with your tears?

It is a pity that an invisible curtain has separated us from the inhabitants. It was as if the people were behind a train window as it departs and that we could only communicate by smiles:

You are the young girl leaning on your elbows  
at the window  
And I, the cloud drifting somewhere in the  
world.

Hanoi is not built up high and does not give the impression of being a large city. The houses are of one or two storeys, and as a result of the war, have an air of neglect. The ground floor is used for shops, work benches, housing, and you can see inside from quite a distance as the doors are wide open. There are quite a few cafes, or rather places selling tea, which are striking because of their simplicity and frugality: a small table, a teapot, some sort of juice, a few biscuits, fruit, and very small stools. In the villages what is provided is even more rudimentary: a very small table, steaming tea, a burning candle. The motionless shadows of the customers, squatting or sitting on the floor, change places on the window of the motorcoach which drives along slowly. What are these people talking about? What fills their silence? Perhaps they are thinking of life in the manner of the poet:

Life pleases me  
Sometimes I know not what it is.  
Life is like a plank between two girders.  
In the morning I hear a dog bark.

In the sky the pigeons were flying.  
Life pleases me  
Sometimes I know not what it is.  
Calm, we gaze at each other  
We do not know what life is.

Perhaps the adults remember the old poem of their childhood:

Listen, my buffalo, listen to my words:  
You will go to the rice paddy, you will plough  
the field  
To plough, to goad the rice, our peasant work.  
You and me, your toil, my effort, which is the  
harder?  
My complaint or your complaint, which is the  
sadder?

The motor coach went on further. The toil of men and buffalo, which can be seen from the window, moves some and frightens others.

A few days later in Saigon, alias Ho-Chi-Minh City, I will discover other cafes, restaurants, and bars which are elegant, Euro-American and abandoned, resembling for brief moments the remains of a type of ultra-modern civilization.

I know full well with regard to Vietnam, to speak of lyricism does not correspond to the current picture, the picture developed by war communique and the new politics. I not only know it but at each moment I am aware of a second Vietnam which is military and political. Its omnipresence cannot be doubted. Nevertheless I am very much at the same time aware of the Vietnam lyric. Would this be a contradiction? Modern poems having love for their theme very frequently end, and in a most unexpected manner, with a political slogan. Contrived or not, still if a contradiction does exist, it is distinctive, burying its roots in the horrifying secular wars with the 'Chinese big brother', in the peasant revolts and fratricidal struggles between the Kingdoms of the North and the South. Moreover, was not one of the most valorous military leaders of the 15th century one of the foremost poets of the country, who not without a ring of sadness, sang of his victory:

In the squall the jaded leaves have fallen.  
Corridors of ants have turned the embankments  
upside down

Corpses litter the Lang Giang and Lang Son  
Plateaux,  
By Xuong Giang and Binh Than, the tide carries  
down blood.  
Sad and terrifying sight the clouds have  
changed colour.  
The day has become dim.

Here is the nation proclaimed, the country unified.

The veiled light spreads anew its rays,  
Uplifted for a moment, the men have found peace.

The foundations of our culture have strengthened  
And for a thousand years our shame is washed away.

The shades of the forebears  
Have offered to the country their guardian presence.

The evening has enveloped the bay of Halong in silence, which is unquestionably the most wonderful in the world. Our steps hug the shore. It is dark and deserted. The lights twinkle in the distance along the coastline and on the rocky islets which seem to have been cast into the bay by the raging spirits of the mountains . . . Our steps grate into the silence. Suddenly a metallic glow lights up the night. We draw nearer and discover a bicycle leaning against the trunk of a palm tree. Next to it are two silhouettes, completely still, one head leaning on the other's shoulder. Silent joy or un-speakable suffering?

If we cannot marry in summer,  
We shall patiently await the coming of winter.  
If we cannot marry in our youth,  
We shall wait until you become a widow.  
Even if you were to be widowed twice or thrice,  
Your neck became wrinkled with cares,  
To me, you would be more beautiful than a young girl.  
Your cheeks will be for me rosier than before,  
You will be slender as in the days of your youth.

But perhaps this conjuring up of the past does not belong to our age. Perhaps more usually:

We tarry in the rain.  
The lamps light up the houses.  
We remain tranquilly standing.  
Silently we gaze at each other.  
Oh! How beautiful are your eyes.  
I will love you unto death.  
I will hold you in my heart.  
I will hold you so tightly  
Before I leave to-day.

In the city of Saigon, I met two soldiers. They walked with unsure steps and observed this strange metropolis. They held hands like two schoolgirls. A young soldier leads us through the presidential palace. He was one of the soldiers who had besieged it. Then we went to the ex-

hibition of "the crimes committed by the Americans and their lackeys".

In my country a blue river flows  
A blue river in which the bamboo is mirrored.

I do not know what river the poet is describing in these lines — the water courses are so numerous in Vietnam! but for me, it is quite simply the River of Perfumes, which waters the city of Hue. The Vietnamese relate that it is perfumed because at its source, it crosses the mountains where plants possessing exquisite scents grow. My primitive nose did not experience any perfumes, but what do I care; the most poetic names are sprinkled throughout the geography of Vietnam. And the countryside . . . no, it does not catch the breath, as does the country glimpsed on the slopes of the Centre, there where the road clings to the side of the steep mountains, which drop straight into the sea. A few hundred metres lower, the ribbon of red sand stretches out ahead, and beyond the resplendent, iridescent sea in a cameo, which changes from soft green to deep violet . . .

At Hue, the beauty of the place is a tranquil reassuring, modest beauty. From the hotel terrace the vast panorama of the river greets our eyes: it spreads out in lazy winding streams, then it divides into two arms which surround an islet fringed with a green belt of bamboo and shooting palm trees. Over a mosaic made up of lilliputian boats — actually junks which are frequently motorized. A few fly a red flag. On one of them we sail upstream, between two banks swarming with life. At the same time as we exchange friendly greetings with the passengers in other boats, we point out the important buildings, the pagodas and churches.

Here next to the barge is a small pavilion, the former royal embarcation point. The imagination is kindled in this spot charged with history. Not far from here in 1915, the young reigning emperor met in a boat at anchor the instigator — disguised as a fisherman — of the conspiracy which aimed to overthrow the French administration. They were betrayed, the rebellion came to nought. The day before his execution, this patriot wrote out the following testament:

He dies without pain, he who wishes to die.  
He dies for his country, he dies with the accord of Heaven.  
He dies with loyalty, without regret for flesh and bone, soon reduced to nothing.  
He will die in a moment, without regard for his head, which will fall.

He dies with integrity, his name will cover a  
thousand leagues,  
He dies in faith, his glory will span a thousand  
years.  
He dies in the joy of knowing it is that way.  
Listen to me:  
I die and have no fear of dying.

In one of the branches of the river before we reach the outlying areas, we pass close by a community of junk dwellers. The scene which is well known thanks to the exotic photographs, becomes ordinary and commonplace. The picturesque does not veil the poverty and lack of hygiene. Once we are far from the city we do not ask for a bath . . . The current is tranquil, but fast. The water clear as crystal, tepid and refreshing.

With my friends, at five or seven,  
We make up a crazy group. I used to swim  
I embraced the waves which purify the heart.

If it does not wash the dust from the heart, would the water have the secret property of allaying pain?

In my country . . . It is Hue that I used to know best of all because of the business-like accounts of this city, a city associated in my thoughts with the story of my wife's family. I used to experience a strange feeling about it: I felt like a stranger who returns to the chosen but still unknown homeland. This mixture of strangeness and familiarity accompanied me throughout my stay in this city. The Vietnamese did not consider me as a foreigner — a tourist who came to contemplate their exotic country — exotic to him — as it was. Nevertheless, I felt a certain right, perhaps a right to the city as 'my' city — and this was also true.

I did not have enough time to try and find the location of the family home, destroyed by the war. But I consistently came across places, the description of which had been familiar to me for a long time, or simply places associated with the destiny of my relations, or which set the imagination working. Whilst I was looking for the old cathedral, using the tower of the Redemption Church which was visible from a long way off as a landmark, I came upon another church which had nothing distinctive about it. I went inside and found many of the faithful at prayer. I took part in the mass. Most of the women wore tunics — something new, for in the North tunics are only worn in the theatre. There were many young people, the songs were simple and beautiful. The seriousness and meditation were striking: here

at this time there was no place for routine nor conformity. I slipped into a seat. While I did not understand the hymns I guessed the content of the prayers by following the ceremony of the mass. I felt at home and I had the impression that I was warmly accepted. I did not cause any reaction, although foreigners were not common. Of course, my presence was noticed, but in a discreet manner. Only a few children could not contain themselves and looked at me straight in the face in order to satisfy their curiosity. There was no doubt: this action came from the heart. For all that had we not prayed together in our Church?

On my return to Cracow, it was with considerable surprise that I learnt that my wife had been baptised there!

Visit to the monuments: the imperial palace, the royal tombs, the most ancient pagoda. As in a film, the doors, the colonnades, the sculptured altars filed past. Stones in human or animal form. A quiet prayerful semi-darkness, the smell of incense. From time to time the impression of an abandoned spot, a lifeless monument. Distinctive roofs, stairways, terraces. Whilst visiting the tombs, these posthumous dwellings of monarchs, it surprised me to think that one of them, the mother of the last emperor, was still living in Hue itself . . . The monuments which I reflected upon seemed to be several centuries old. Someone looked at the cannon and remarked that he had seen ones like them in a European museum, dating from the 16th or 17th century. Our guide explained, however, that the weapons were less than 100 years old. It was all tied up with Court etiquette: only the emperor used this door to enter his palace, and solely the mandarins had access to the second door. Among the objects bearing witness to the past were two enormous boilers which, it appears, were used to fry his Majesty's unruly subjects! It is related that such a device had been installed before his residence by King Dinh-Bo-Linh, who was the keeper of the buffaloes before he ascended the throne, precisely a year after the baptism of Poland (966). When therefore were these boilers used for the last time? — towards the middle of the 19th century.

A pagoda built at the beginning of the 17th century, the oldest one in Hue, outstanding for its high tower, which can be seen from afar. We went ashore from our junk and slowly mounted the steps, contemplating the interlaced design of dragons sculptured on the roof . . . until such time as the 20th century burst into the respectable monument with its procession of cars, photos, inscriptions . . . An original exhibition showed the

persecutions suffered by the Buddhists under the regime of Ngo-Dinh-Diem. An immense photograph of the first Buddhist priest who immolated himself by fire in a Saigon street in order to protest against the discrimination practised against them. I naturally knew the picture which had been distributed throughout the world. Nevertheless, to see it in this place and to see it reproduced in these dimensions provoked quite a different impression. It seemed that it was a statue and not a man which was ablaze, such was the man's immobility and dignity. Next to it was the car in which he had driven to the spot chosen for his suicide. Further on, the photographs of victims at the time of the clashes with the Hue police when the procession arranged for the Buddha's birthday was prohibited.

The most recent history of Vietnam is still living in memory. The events and the men call to mind its tragic confusion. Once again the question, which I carry deep within me, has arisen: what is the Buddhism to-day? Sometimes it seems to me that it belongs to a past which has disappeared, which has nothing further to offer to this country. Then its spiritual force suddenly breaks upon me. In the past, on many occasions the Buddhist monks had supported the peasants in their revolts, sometimes they even assumed leadership. The French historian, Jean Chesneaux, of Marxist bent, explains this fact by the class bias: Buddhism was the religion of the people, looked on a bad light, even discriminated against by an instrument of the State steeped in

Confucianism. In this vein, the Gialong Code, in force at the beginning of the 19th century, prescribed 40 cuts of the cane to any official guilty of having allowed his wife or his daughter to go to a pagoda or a temple dedicated either to Lao Tseu, or any other gods. However, it seems that these penal measures were never applied: religious syncretism has been and remains a predominant current in Vietnam.

At a given moment, the doors half open and I discern the silhouette of an old Buddhist priest, one of the five who remained after the departure of the community for the new economic areas. The monk smiles, gazes at us for a moment in silence. Not an ordinary face. I have the feeling that he personifies the wisdom of the East and reveals to me one of the mysteries of the Buddhist faithful. No, it is not necessary to explain in the manner of Chesneaux the Buddhist priest's attitude. Their concept of existence and their experience of the spiritual life is a thousand leagues from the sordid world of extortionists and Satraps, so that conflict is inevitable. Was it inevitable between Buddhists and Catholics? Perhaps no, perhaps the conflict has been an absurd incident on the way, arising from a hardening of the heart and the blindness of the men in power. We go down again into our boat.

The river flows, it does not make pain go away,  
The grass is fragrant, it does not comfort the  
heart.

(By courtesy PEN International, Australian Branch).

**Influence and Independence**

I still find D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo* the most effective spring-board for discussion of the Australian identity. As description of the country's texture and as analysis of the national character, it remains, for me, unsurpassed — as pertinent now as when it was written 52 years ago.

I'll start by quoting a couple of extracts and then look at some of their implications for the writer in this country:

It is said that man is the chief environment of man. That, for Richard, was not true in Australia. Man was there, but unnoticeable. You said a few words to a neighbour or an acquaintance, but it was merely for the sake of making a sound of some sort. Just a sound. There was really nothing to say. The vast continent is really void of speech . . .

The communication is silent and involuntary, the give and take flows like waves from person to person, and each one knows: *unless he is foiled by speech*. Each one knows in silence, reciprocates in silence, and the talk as a rule just babbles on, on the surface . . . Each individual seems to feel himself pledged to put himself aside, to keep himself at least half out of count. The whole geniality is based on a sort of code of "You put yourself aside, and I'll put myself aside." This is done with a watchful will: a sort of duel. And above this, a great geniality. But the continual holding most of himself aside, out of count, *makes a man go blank in his withheld self*.

The pointed contrast between Australian outward *bonhomie* and deep private reserve is a marked characteristic, and it's difficult to determine whether it masks a great indifference or is simply apathy. This contrast has gnawed constantly at the consciousness of the more thoughtful writer in this country. It's an indifference accepted with mixed feelings by A. D. Hope in his poem, "Aus-

tralia", the silence a relief from the chatter of cultured apes but also a desert, and man may perish easily in the desert:

Yet there are some like me turn gladly home  
From the lush jungle of modern thought, to find  
The Arabian desert of the human mind.

You find the same will to annihilation of consciousness in the short stories of Peter Cowan, the nihilistic poetry of Randolph Stow, the self-destructive fantasizing of more recent poets like Dransfield and Adamson. You find it in McAuley's poem, "Envoi":

Where once was a sea is now a salty sunken  
desert,  
A futile heart within a fair periphery;  
The people are hard-eyed, kindly, with nothing  
inside them.  
The men are independent but you could not  
call them free.

The men McAuley speaks of remind me of nothing so much as D. H. Lawrence's description of the American temperament: "Hard, isolated, stoical, a killer."

In this nihilistic context then, what are Australians influenced by and what if at all, are they independent of? What does the writer do in a continent "void of speech"? Again, it brings to mind Matthew Arnold's view of the writer in America, a lost soul in "a country where the sky was of brass and iron." Henry James's yearning for Europe contained the same underlying motive: to forget America — "hard, crude, vacant, with its terrible glare."

The lask of a human past, the size of the country, its acute indifference to things human, obliterates people. Lawrence again, in *Kangaroo*:

The past all gone so frail and thin. "What have I cared about, what have I cared for? There is nothing to care about." Absolved from it all. The soft, blue, humanless sky of Australia, the pale unwritten atmosphere of Australia . . . The world a new leaf. And on the new leaf, nothing.

If we look at the older more sophisticated culture of the United States, we find examples of similarity and difference which may help gain perspectives on the present cultural scene, and perhaps point to future developments lurking in the American sphere of influence rather than the British. As far as likeness goes, we have the same language, the common link with many British cultural institutions, bizarre plants and animals, deserts, wildernesses, strange indigenous tribes, the tug away from the mother country towards political independence, and a pull in the world of art between colonial dependence on Europe and a utopianly aggressive sense of independence. Here the similarities end.

The main difference between the two ex-colonial societies lies in the fact that we have nothing in our history comparable with the religious schism that charged the passage of the Pilgrim Fathers — our founders were soldiers and convicts. Australia began as a secular nation and has remained basically secular despite those religious groups whose existence has acquired merely social and political definition. This country began as a slave society — the gaolers and the gaoled, in a context of vindictive punishment and terrible isolation. Men were confined as much by infinite space and formlessness as they were by the compounds of Botany Bay and Port Arthur. From the very beginning, then, there was a whole dimension of transcendental consciousness missing in Australia and no place for the emergence of anything remotely resembling the Transcendentalist movement of New Zealand.

Man has been primarily a natural pragmatist, a sceptical social and political survivor. It's only a short step from the notion of survival at its most basic level to man seeing himself as victim, as having no responsibility for his fate because what happens "out there" is so overwhelmingly against him that to even begin to struggle with anything over and beyond keeping physically alive would be a waste of already-eroded energies. Behind his survival yawns a great metaphysical void, a nihilistic abyss which harbours no ideologies or myths. The permanent forms and categories were never there, so how can their passing be lamented? We can, however, be concerned about the

fact that where there is a gap, there will always be something waiting to fill it. We have had a chance to find an individual idiom, but this has been taken up mostly with irony or caricature — that is, with a range of defences salvaged from the great European certainties against the dark and frightening state of flux and plurality.

The difficulty of actually being able to take in one's environment in spite of the inherited culture is like that of the young child who first investigates language and its relationship to the world of external objects, trying to absorb and assess the details of its own environment freed from the burden of a shadowy and insubstantial family history. And, like the young child, Australia is timid in its search for identity. Poets are still, it seems, blaming the land as unfit for the people, blaming the people as unfit for the land and, to a lesser degree, blaming the politicians and the rich. The victim stance again. If we can claim to have anything like a radical-thinking, opinion-forming intellectual class in this country, it concerns itself with sitting around talking about foul air, pollution, and damage to coral reefs, but rarely does it take responsibility for the actions of its government even though it has been party to the creation of the atmosphere, the very positions on which government acts. How can the writer call himself independent when he refuses the responsibility for the climate created by his words?

Each writer in isolation from his fellows and his environment develops his own private code, his own stance, which becomes, in a way, a kind of rhetoric because it involves what Lawrence described as "man putting himself aside . . . keeping himself at least half out of count." And this principle has found its classic expression in Calvin's theology which is so much the foundation of our modern capitalist society that I can't resist bringing in the connection.

According to Calvin, man is essentially powerless; he can achieve absolutely nothing that is good on the basis of his own strength or merit. The emphasis on the nothingness of the individual implies that there is nothing he should like and respect about himself. It is a doctrine rooted in self-contempt and self-hatred. It is a death-drawn doctrine.

How can the individualist assertion take place in a society that equates self-love with selfishness? How can the artist thrive in a society that continually lops off the heads of its tallest flowers or stunts their growth? How can the individual have respect for his own integrity and uniqueness when he is taught at home, at school, in films, in books,

that to love oneself excludes loving others and that "selfishness" is the arch-evil? In such a climate which is perpetuated generation after generation, there is little likelihood of the emergence of an unashamed ego like a Melville or a Whitman, a Faulkner or a Henry Miller, a Mailer or a Bellow, to blast forth and evaluate the details of the environment with enough security and confidence to admit that they might occasionally have made a mistake and change tack.

Our talk, as Lawrence says, "just babbles on, on the surface." We have developed a rhetoric which stands for human speech but the deepest issues are put aside and scarcely ever faced. If we accept Lawrence's premise that an Australian is "always aware of the big empty spaces of his own consciousness, like his country, a vast empty desert at the centre of him," then what can we expect of the custodians of language, the writers? Separated from life and their fellow men, they live in a sterile kind of limbo, unable to live fully or die having cared passionately, doomed never to obtain a release from self.

Mystified, even repelled by life, they can't face it unless fitted out with a character that is partly assumed. Many seem to be attitudinizing, posturing, as a short cut to achieving a sense of their own tangible existence in a context where the search for identity is at once so fragile and shapeless. In the destructive emotional aridity surrounding them, accessions of tenderness come to sound false and unrealized. It's as if the writer has to stand aside watching himself having feelings. Deprived of feeling, he postulates what he wants to feel, what he thinks he ought to be feeling. And it's this emotional death which is the rock on which most Australian writing founders, and which leads me to describe most contemporary writing as embodying the rhetoric of feeling rather than feeling itself.

This may be related to the problem of the artist's place in this culture which has always been precarious to say the least. The battle between the artist and his society has tended to distort creative perspectives, either because the artist has chosen to retreat into sterile imitative postures or because his bitterness at not being taken seriously has forced him into a resolutely attacking stance which has been corrosive, finally, to his art and to his audience. The writer's position is complicated further by what Judith Wright has referred to as "the almost unopposed ascendancy of material and exploitative attitudes, of an already outmoded utilitarianism of outlook, that prevents any true interaction between art and audience."

It's the degree to which we, as writers, connive, wittingly or unwittingly, with those exploitative attitudes which will determine the likelihood of change in the cultural climate of this country, and whether or not we can claim to be truly independent.

Potentiality has always been one of our more appealing characteristics which is one reason why we have always been so slow to commit ourselves to finally realizing it. We have always entertained the curious fantasy that change may occur easily and without pain. I think the time has come to make some kind of commitment over and beyond the ephemeral values of those cultures under whose wing we've sheltered for so long and whose approval we continually crave. The time has come to abandon our adolescent dreams of omnipotentiality and pseudo-innocence and demonstrate that we can actually define a mature cultural identity. We are like the student who is complacent about having somehow got by without serious work and who likes to imagine that if he really put any effort into it he could achieve everything, but is reluctant to disturb so soothing a dream by making an actual commitment to anything.

The metaphor of adolescence is pertinent to Australian development in more ways than one. The adolescent process is conclusively finished only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification. This new identification is no longer characterized by the playfulness of childhood and the experimental indiscriminateness of youth. It forces the young individual into choices and decisions which will lead to commitments. The job to be done by the young person and by his society is quite formidable.

Societies offer more or less sanctioned intermediary periods between childhood and adulthood, often characterized by a combination of prolonged immaturity and provoked precocity. In the world context, we've had our sanctioned intermediary period for long enough. Our prolonged immaturity looks as if it's going to be indefinitely prolonged if the political scene is anything to go by. I wonder just how long Australia believes history is prepared to wait for us to catch up with this tragic century? Perhaps I'm trying to move too fast, given the time lag between northern and southern hemispheres, but I think this has been used as an excuse past the point when it can any longer be regarded as legitimate.

Identity formation begins where the usefulness of identification ends. It emerges from the selective repudiation and assimilation of childhood

identifications and their absorption into a new configuration. This, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society identifies the young individual, recognizing him as someone who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is accepted and taken for granted. The time has come for us to have ourselves seen for what we are without fear of disapproval, without shrinking from what may appear as our less attractive traits: it may, in the end, mean that we can look at them ourselves and set about changing them.

I suggest that our problem is a failure of intimacy, both with our neighbours and with our fellow beings. That many people break down in adolescence is explained by the fact that often only an attempt to engage in intimate companionship fully reveals the latent weakness of identity. The "engagement" with others is the result and the test of firm self-delineation. As the young individual seeks at least tentative forms of intimacy, he is apt to undergo a peculiar strain, as if such tentative engagement might turn into fusion amounting to a loss of identity and requiring, therefore, a fraught inner reservation, a caution in commitment. When this strain isn't resolved, the young individual may isolate himself and enter, at best, only stereotyped and formalized interpersonal relationships. For where an assured sense of identity is lacking, friendships become despairing attempts to demarcate the fuzzy outlines of identity by narcissistic mirroring.

Like the adolescent in crisis, we swing between mirrors, between fear of contamination from present influences (our resolute and solemn fumigation of overseas aircraft as soon as it touches the tarmac tells much about our quarantine mentality), fear of loss of innocence, and nostalgia for an imagined Eden (for though we lacked the wisdom of serpents, we were never as harmless as doves), and the urgent, insecure aping of whatever ephemeral influences come to hand.

The poignant need to find a sense of identity seems to expose us more than elsewhere to the invasion of commercialism and the cold efficiency of the super-managers, those "specialists" from cultures even more far gone in patterns of exploitation and necrophilous practice than our own. Australians don't have much confidence in their own standards. They tend to be cowed by the prestige of visiting "experts"; even though they may privately harbour reservations, they seldom express these openly. And by being so intimidated, they are often at the mercy of superficial trends and ideologies which include crass

and disruptive approaches to literature and to life itself. The price we pay for our kind of pragmatic culture is a heavy one. The most obvious form of this panic is our flight from the past: the anxiety to be up-to-date, to be shot of unfashionable ideas, to condemn everything unsatisfactory with the same formula — namely, that it is too obsolete for the unimpeded stampede towards utopia.

It's not fashionable to speak of subordinating one's needs and interests to those of others, but if we, as writers, are going to write something on the new leaf over and beyond private myth and mumble, we're going to have to look at the needs of the society we inhabit and ask ourselves what degree of social responsibility we may be prepared to take.

In a country of self-specialists, famished for opportunities of "eminence", the overthrow of inhibition and the relentless celebration of the self are wrapped in the rhetoric of "authenticity", elevated to the sublime cult of "awareness". The prevailing slogan is to live for oneself, not for your predecessors or your children. And so we lose that valuable sense of historical continuity, the feeling of belonging to a succession of generations originating in the past and moving into the future. Our present remains uncorrected by the main history of human suffering.

The need for commitment, with the possible tragic renunciation that this way of life dictates, must include relationships with other people. Man only becomes human to the extent to which he becomes aware of himself, affirms and asserts himself in relation to others. Self-seeking egotism — the prototype of the romantic protest — is remote from self-realization because it results in the alienation of others and the self. People need each other in order to be themselves, and I believe that those who succeed in realizing the greatest degree of independence are also those who have the closest relationships with others. When Yeats spoke of "the terrible gift of immediacy", he knew what he was talking about. For, to give freely of personal concerns, doubts, hesitations, is to become frighteningly vulnerable, and this is a vulnerability the writer needs, and his society needs it too. There are hopeful signs of this in some recent novels: Patrick White's *A Fringe of Leaves*, and Robert Drew's *The Savage Crows*, for instance.

If our development runs closer to the American pattern (and I believe that it does), then it might be worth remembering that the intuition of solidarity tends to come to American writers only when that solidarity is precarious and threatened

as much by the passing of time as by the anarchic instincts of the individual. We haven't yet produced the consciousness of a Melville whose *Moby Dick* is about the alienation from life that results from an excessive or neurotic self-dependence, a warning against the ruinous excesses of individualism. The themes of hypnotic self-regard and imprisonment within the self have absorbed American novelists from the very beginning of their literary development. *Moby Dick* offered an alternative to narcissism. To be Ahab was to be unable to resist the grandiosity of the self with its impulse to shape and control the universe. To be Ishmael was to be able at the last minute to resist the plunge from the masthead into the sea, to assert at the critical moment the difference between the living self and the alien and blasphemous wastes of madness and self-destruction.

We must develop the tragic sense, the intuition that takes us beyond morality in the dogmatic sense into the realm of cosmic piety. This tragic dimension may serve, through the power to empathize with the sufferings of others, to reveal and warn about latent human cruelty. If a writer fails to be aware of his own complicity with evil, it's likely that he will also lack compassion that might mitigate its effects. This is surely the *sine qua non* of what being man means. The development and retention of the tragic view, a resistance to the atrophy of feeling in the face of affliction, a concern for truth through language seem to be measures of responsibility the writer may legitimately take. Only then can we become independent, and we may even become a positive influence towards human integration instead of a passive satellite of the fragmentation of other death-drawn cultures.

I'm reminded of a speech given by the nationalist general Millán Astray at the University of Salamanca in 1936 where the philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno was rector at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. The general's favourite slogan was *Viva la Muerte* (long live death!), and one of his followers shouted it from the back of the hall. When the general had finished his speech, Unamuno got up and said:

Just now I heard a necrophilous and sense-

less cry: 'Long live death' . . . This outlandish paradox is repellent to me. General Millán Astray is a cripple. Let it be said without any slighting undertone. He is a war invalid. So was Cervantes. Unfortunately there are too many cripples in Spain just now. And soon there will be even more of them . . . It pains me to think that General Millán Astray should dictate the pattern of mass psychology. A cripple who lacks the spiritual greatness of a Cervantes is wont to seek ominous relief in causing mutilation around him.

The cry of the crow, scavenger of the dead, is pervasive in this country too; the plunge from the masthead is seductive. We, as writers, can become accomplices in the tearing apart of living structures or we can build living structures in spite of the disappearance of the old patriarchal patterns. The choice of influences retained or rejected lies with us.

The poet Auden, towards the end of his life, said: "As a poet, there is only one political duty, and that is to defend one's language from corruption . . . When language is corrupted, people lose faith in what they hear, and this leads to violence." When the possibilities for communication break down, the bond between human beings is destroyed. In our time of deep and insecure transition, the first thing to disintegrate is language and since this has never been very securely established in this country we have to be doubly wary. If language is the product of a deep-rooted web of potential for empathy between people, a shared structure, then its disintegration implies a break-down in the social fabric.

We hover at the brink of anarchy, drawn like moths to a candle, and the craving for immolation stems from the despair and frustration of being unable to either communicate or to love, the impotence of refusing responsibility for the power of the word. So long as the writer and the people who make up his audience think of themselves as victims, so long as this old Calvinist hangover prevails, so long as man in this country feels "pledged to put himself aside, to keep himself out of count", our identity, whatever it is, will indeed have a dead heart, and writers can't afford to be party to the killing.

MAX PIGGOTT **The Bag**

His wife had been at him for weeks to clear the rubbish from the back of the garage.

"Come on Syd," she'd said, "I can hardly get the car in for all the junk."

The Swans were playing at Geelong today. Too far to travel to watch the game. He'd begun missing a game now and then since his heart attack.

"I'll do it this arvo," he'd replied. He could listen to the Collingwood game on the transistor. Sure to be a beauty.

He found the old gladstone bag in the shed's corner where a broken fibro-cement sheet had allowed rain to penetrate. The bag was grey with mould. He emptied stained foolscap sheets of paper out on to the floor and found the lining torn and the leather breaking away from the metal selvedge.

"Bloody kids," he muttered. "want their arses kicked."

He booted the bag savagely against the wall and, stooping, picked up the biro-stained sheets.

"Tectonic landforms owe . . . huh, that'll help him sell tyres."

He never could understand his son. Boy showed no interest in footy. Wouldn't let him teach him to use his mitts. He recovered the bag and, tossing the papers back, carried it to the heap burning by the edge of the vegetable patch. Overturning the bag, the papers fell to the smouldering ash; then he sat down. It was unexpectedly hot for mid-autumn and his face was pink from sweeping and carrying: the waistband of his floral patterned shorts, dark with sweat, cut into his paunch.

Forty years ago his mate "Bluey" Truscott had scribbled his signature on the bag's lining in Indian ink. He'd shown it to his son when he gave him the bag to use at High School. It

should still be there. He pulled the lining out, but rotten with decay, it broke in his hands and in disgust he threw the bag into the flames. He eased the top buttons of his shorts and sat, elbows resting on his pudgy knees, staring at the slowly burning bag.

"You all right?" said his wife as she added household refuse to the fire.

"Yeah. Why?"

"I've been watching you from the kitchen window: thought the smoke might have affected you."

Her mothering instincts irritated him.

With the rake he lifted the bag's metal hasp from the fire and held it admonishingly before her.

"In the corner of the shed. Dumped there. Bloody Terry just dumped it there."

"He's a good boy, Syd. It was worn out: useless."

"Not until he got hold of it, it wasn't."

"Nonsense. I was ashamed Terry had to take it for school. We could have afforded something better."

He dropped the blackened hasp back into the fire.

"I had it ever since I was a kid. Dad gave it me when I started at Jimmy O'Rourke's gym."

Charred newsprint, whipped by a scurry of wind, left the ash and danced across the yard.

"Old O'Rourke came to our house one night. Dad was away on duty. I answered the doorbell and there was this old drunk; short thickset bloke. I'm Jimmy O'Rourke, he sez, yer Dad home son? No, I sez, so he goes on about m'Dad being a decent copper for gettin' one of his kids off a bike stealin' charge."

"Your Dad was a good man, Syd," she said quietly.

"Yeah. Well, O'Rourke reckons if he can't thank m'Dad he's ready to do me a favor instead. Like to learn to box son, he sez; come to the gym and you can 'ave a year's free tuition."

"You should be wearing a hat in this sun, Syd. Come inside and I'll make you a cuppa."

He was reluctant to move: his piles were aching, but he followed her to the house.

"O'Rourke was good," he said, when he was seated, "a former lightweight champ round the time of the 14-18 War. I was keen to learn: you had to be able to use your mitts in those days. I'd been beaten up by mobs a coupla times, so it could come in useful."

She didn't like the drift of the story. Fragments of his life she hadn't shared, effusing to the surface when he become sentimental over his liquor, she found distasteful.

"Stopped at O'Rourke's for a year; then one night after training he offered me the chance of a four rounder at West Melbourne Stadium. You've got a good left hand, kid, he sez, just keep poking it out and keep your right in front of your chin. You'll be all right. Christ, I was as nervous as shit; up in front of all those nongs yellin' at yer."

"You've never told me you fought?" she said, anxiously.

"I didn't. I squibbed it. Told 'im m'Dad wouldn't let me. They laughed at me. It's worth a coupla quid f' yer, Syddie, he said. A coupla quid: to have m'head knocked off?"

She made to leave the room to spur him back to his garden chores, but he sat on, fingers drumming against the lid of the biscuit tin.

"The bag came real important; a status symbol as they say. All me mates knew I wuz at O'Rourke's and the word had got around I'd sparred with Len Faye and Johnny Condon. They both held titles. Real pros they were; then . . ."

"Is the fire safe, Syd? It's getting windy outside."

"Yeah, she's apples."

He swallowed the tea in one gulp. He hadn't thought about O'Rourke's for years. Wonder if it's still there at the back of the warehouse?

"A joker called Young Caesar, fought eight rounders: he took to me when he heard m'Dad was a cop. Sunk one inter me guts—Jesus, it hurt. Old Jimmy saw everything and he gets inter the ring and makes out he's correctin' Caesar's stance. Come on, lead, he sez, then goes in under it and sinks a short right that flattens him. Good old bloke, Jimmy, Real nimble."

"More tea, Syd?"

(She could see him strutting up to the street corner with his bag. Watching for the glances from his mates that would acknowledge he was one of Jimmy O'Rourke's team.)

'Ow yer going tonight Syd? The same stupid questioning she had to grow used to when she knew him as a football star.)

"Mum kept it for me during the war. Never left the top of her wardrobe, she said. Then I took it with me when I started with the Southerners in '46—"

(She remembers the end of season dance where she first met him. Mabel, her friend, knew him. Best pair of legs in the team, Mabel said. Ain't he lovely, Lil? They were married within three months.)

"The bag was the thing, Lil. They saw the bag and they knew you were one of the team. Call 'em Swans now: bloody Swans; sounds like a lot of poofers."

(There's Syd Muller's sheila. Sitting in the grandstand she'd feel the heads turn towards her. The feeling of pride and exultation when he ran onto the ground; his fine hard muscles shiny with liniment.)

"Lost it once," he went on, "the day we got the groun' back after the war in '47. Yank marines had it for a camp—the Gaudalcanal mob. They rooted up the grandstand seats for firewood."

"I should think they would," she said, "coming down from the tropics to cold old Melbourne."

He grunted. "Those bastards would root anything."

"Anyway I left it in the tram goin' 'ome. Had me guernsey, boots and jockstrap in it. Sheila clippie found it and handed it back."

Outside the fire had died.

"The rock-choppers got control of the club. After a while you didn't get a game if you weren't a Mick."

She barely heard him. She was thinking of the nights she waited for him. Aroused by his swift hard body driving through from the back line and the crowd roaring "Come on Syd; go Syddie boy."

He laughed.

"What are you thinking about now?" she asked, without turning from the workbench.

"The beer that bag must have carried; 'undreds of bottles I reckon."

She wiped her hands on her apron. "You needn't go out again, Syd. Footy Round-up'll

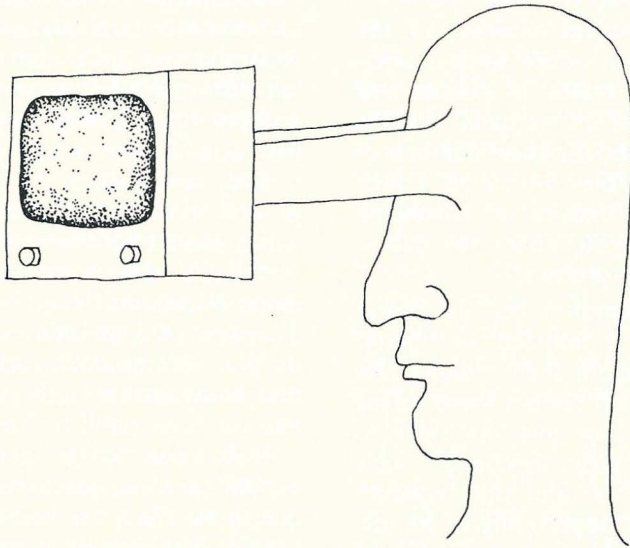
be on telly in a minute. You go in and I'll bring  
you a beer."

"Yeah, that'll be beaut, love." He stopped at

the door.

"Real leather it was, Lil."

"Yes Syd, real leather."



*Jiri Tibor*

# Temper Democratic, Bias Australian

IAN TURNER

The disasters of 1975 and 1977 have forced those of us who count ourselves on the left of Australian politics to look again at many of the assumptions with which we have lived in unquestioning domestic comfort for many years — assumptions about the inherent tendency of the Australian working class to adopt radical positions, about the appeal of reason in politics and the consequent alignment of intellectuals with the working class movement, about radical democracy and social justice, about the Australian Labor Party as the appropriate means of advancing these principles and strategies, about the nature of the Australian political process.

There remains the assumption that the moral values on which the left is founded — liberty, equality, democracy — retain their validity. As do the terms in which the left defines these values — that democracy means not just the right to vote in elections but the right to control one's work situation and way of life; that equality means not just equality of opportunity in an unequal market but equal access to wealth and power; that liberty means not just the absence of political, religious or social oppression but the right of every individual to realise his or her potential. What is at issue is the means by which these values may be won.

Don Aitkin, R. W. Connell and Tim Rowse have, in three recent books, addressed themselves in their own ways to this central pre-occupation of the Australian left—how to roll with the punches (many of them a long way below the belt) and come back fighting.

Don Aitkin: *Stability and Change in Australian Politics* (A.N.U. Press, 1977, \$16.95, \$9.50); R. W. Connell: *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1977, \$7.95); Tim Rowse: *Australian Liberalism and National Character* (Kibble Books, Melbourne, 1978, \$9.50).

Aitkin approaches the question through an examination of the empirical evidence about political belief and behaviour. Connell analyses the class structure of Australian society. Connell and Rowse analyse, from different vantage points, the nature of cultural and ideological hegemony in Australia and the extent to which this hegemony has distorted a left analysis of Australian society and pre-empted or inhibited radical action. Connell and Rowse make particular criticisms of radical nationalism, "Left Australianism", the general position of *Overland* and its editors, which should be discussed in these columns.

Aitkin's book is the most extended and systematic discussion, based on evidence provided by a survey of a random sample of around 2500 people, of attitudes to social class and the relation between class and political behaviour which has yet been published in this country.

It is open to the general criticism that the people surveyed are asked to answer a series of questions which are based on the surveyers' pre-existing assumptions about how society is ordered. That criticism can be directed against all surveys which involve subjective rather than objective criteria; it is a criticism which leads not a rejection of the work but rather to an understanding of its limitations.

Aitkin's book is also open to the particular criticism that the surveys on which it is based were conducted in 1967 and 1969. Since then there has been the election of the Whitlam government, its dismissal in 1975, and the defeat of Labor in the 1975 and 1977 elections. Whether these events—more dramatic than any others in Australian political life except perhaps the crises of 1930-31 and 1949—might have caused people to change their minds about Aitkin's questions is something we can't know until he has conduc-

ted a new survey. But again that merely states the limits of his study.

Aitkin's problem is how to explain the long-term (since 1909-10) stability of Australian politics despite the great change in the Australian economy and the character of the electorate. For nearly seventy years, Australian politics have been dominated by two broad coalitions—Labor and anti-Labor—each of which has enjoyed the continuing minimum support of about 40% of the voters; the electoral argument has been about the other 20%. But, over those years, secondary industry has outstripped primary industry; while, within the work-force and the electorate, white collar workers have outstripped industrial workers.

Analysis of the data revealed by Aitkin's survey indicates a high (87%) degree of 'party identification'—overwhelmingly, voters think of themselves as either Labor or anti-Labor and tend strongly (though not invariably) to vote accordingly. But the level of political interest is low (or was in 1967 and 1969—and maybe still is in 1978, if Malcolm Fraser's desire to get politics off the front pages has been realised). And most people don't believe that there are, or should be, strong differences between the two sides.

By and large, the Labor side is seen as being 'for the workers', but more people identify themselves as middle class (51%) than as working class (43%); this is determined by how they feel about their life-styles rather than by their objective relationship to the labor market and the process of production.

(This evidence seems to support the proposition that the Australian working class is undergoing a process of 'embourgeoisement', on which the pro-Liberal political scientist David Kemp relies for his argument that Labor is a dying political force. But, as Aitkin points out, 'embourgeoisement'—the assimilation of workers into what has been traditionally regarded as a middle-class life-style—is often over-stated; and in any case the proposition ignores the concurrent 'proletarianisation' of white-collar workers, as evidenced in trade union organisation and action.)

Aitkin's analysis suggests that there is a strong tendency for party identification to be inherited, even when the children of traditional Labor voters are moving up the social ladder. Thus, he says that for many party identification may define class identification rather than the other way round. Australians tend not to identify themselves in class terms but they do have a strong sense of national identity. That's all very well,

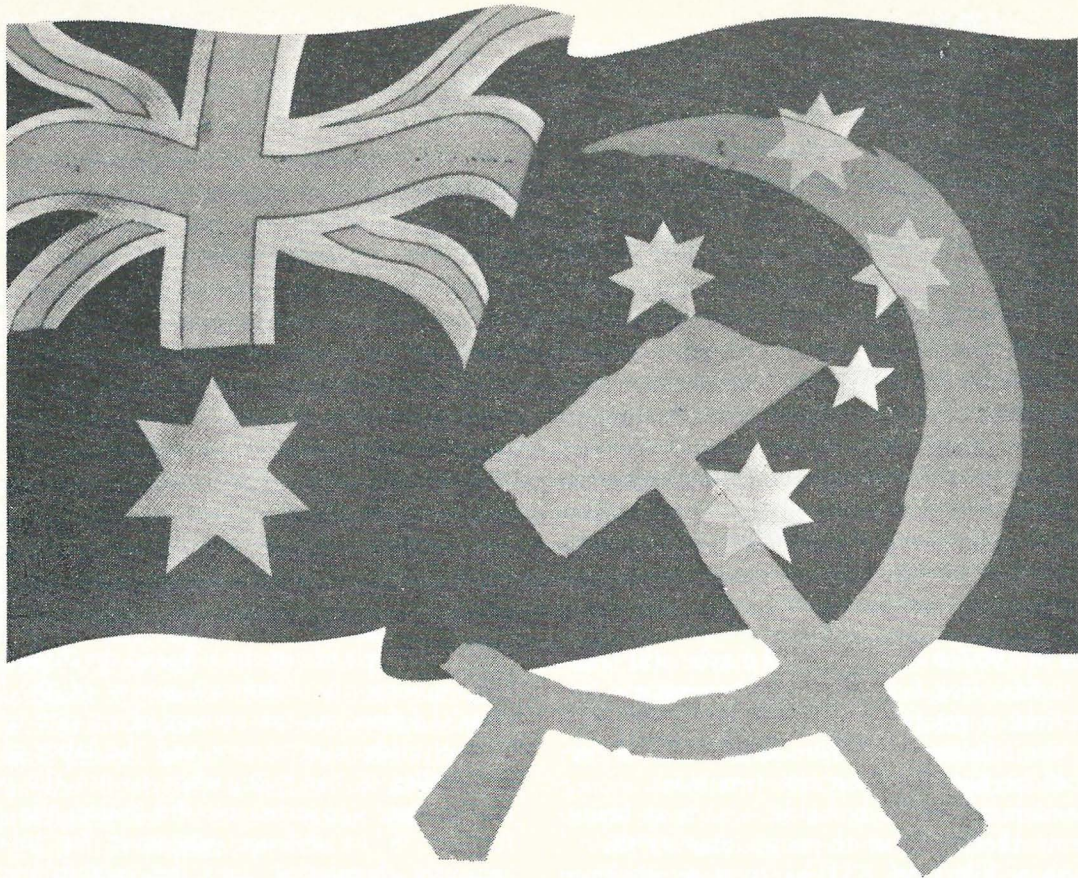
Aitkin says, so long as politics proceed in relative calm; but what happens if the political choices become painful? (Those who want to follow that possibility through might look again at Hugh Stretton's *Capitalism, Socialism and the Environment*.)

The Aitkin inquiry is of great importance to anyone concerned with the day-to-day questions of Australian politics (or maybe the decade-to-decade questions, since that has been the shape of our politics for seventy years). But, as the inquiries of Connell and Rowse suggest, that is not the whole story. An empirical survey of political behaviour may not tell you just why people behave as they do—or, more specifically, why the working class does not behave in accordance with its objective situation and interest.

From different starting points in the present-day debate among Marxists (Connell relates generally to Antonio Gramsci, Rowse to Louis Althusser), both Connell and Rowse seek a deeper, more 'structural' explanation of political behaviour. Their argument is based on three central propositions: the dominant power of the 'ruling class' (defined as the owners of private capital) in the productive process and the labor market; the ability of the ruling class to use the powers of the state (government, the police, the armed forces) in its defence whenever its power is seriously threatened; and the establishment by the ruling class of a cultural/ ideological 'hegemony' over the working class which inhibits the possibility of a successful working-class challenge to its power.

Connell argues that, to understand contemporary Australian capitalist society, it is necessary to analyse the class structure of the society not on the basis of how people rank themselves on a class ladder but objectively, in terms of how people relate to the means of production—that is, whether they are owners or non-owners. Most historians and sociologists have, he claims, dodged that central question. His analysis does not suggest that the ruling class is a monolithic entity; it has its own internal contradictions, and it was the conflict within the ruling class which led to the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, rather than the ascendancy of the working class. On the other hand, the ruling class unites when it feels that its interests are seriously threatened and then it gets its way—as in the Premiers' Plan of 1931 and the Kerr coup of 1975.

This is possible, in Connell's argument, because the working class has no clear perception of its own situation and interest. On this, he gener-



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ally agrees with Aitkin. His investigation of the social-political understanding of school-children produced comparable results to Aitkin's survey—a general self-identification as middle class, based on life style. Connell attributes this to 'bourgeois hegemony', the acceptance by many working-class people of the values of the private property based, individualist, consumption-oriented society. Popular culture incorporates these values and transmits them to the mass audience. Insofar as intellectuals express themselves in terms of community and nation rather than class, they are agents of this hegemony.

Rowse argues a similar case, though without recourse to survey evidence and in rather more abstract terms. It is a most interesting and incisive argument, which runs this way. The 'Left Australian' intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s (Brian Fitzpatrick and me among them) sought to establish a national cultural identity which, against the claims of a British-oriented economic and cultural elite, asserted the egalitarian and anti-imperial values of the 'Australian people' and aspired to a radical democratic Australia. But this analysis and aspiration was based on nation and people rather than on class and was therefore 'populist' rather than Marxist. For that reason, the 'Left Australians' were prisoners of the dominant ideology, the bourgeois-liberal hegemony, which at the same time rationalised the power of the ruling class and worked within the confines of a reformist programme and strategy which legitimised that power. For their own purposes, the dominant middle class had encompassed the immediate demands of the nascent working class and in doing so had manoeuvred the working class into accepting ground rules for political struggle which would ensure the survival of middle class power.

The 'Left Australians' had been able to do this, in an intellectual sense, because they had romanticised the social and political meaning of the rise of the working class and because they had wanted to believe that there was some special and unique potential in the Australian national character and experience.

Rowse suggests that the 'Left Australians' foundered on two rocks. The 'New Critics' (a diverse group including Peter Coleman, Donald Horne, Craig McGregor, Vincent Buckley and James McAuley) outmanoeuvred their populism by celebrating the acceptance of hedonistic, consumption-oriented values by the 'people' and by establishing universal rather than national cultural values. While, on the other flank, the 'New

Left' brought to bear a more rigorous class analysis which demonstrated that both the popular (that is, broad labor) movement and popular values were encapsulated within and therefore reinforced the ruling hegemony.

Well, that's a powerful blast against what the 'New Critics' and the 'New Left' seem to agree was an 'Old Left' establishment—or, to borrow another common expression, the dominance of a left-liberal orthodoxy. Personally, I never felt, through the hard years of the Cold War and Vietnam, that I had a share in any establishment. I wasn't even sure that history was on my side. But the argument demands a serious response. Since both Connell and Rowse have looked in some detail at my published writing over those years, I will respond personally; but I hope that, in doing so, I will argue a general Overland position. (I should say—though I don't think it's really necessary—that I regard the questions raised by Connell, Rowse, and other 'New Left' critics such as Terry Irving, Baiba Berzins, and Stuart McIntyre, as being both important and in good faith, and I hope to answer in similar style.)

The central point at issue is the nature of the ruling class and its relations with the state. As I see it, there is no argument that we live in a class society (in other words, that the 'pluralist' explanation of society makes only very limited sense) and that, within the Australian class structure, private capital is predominant in economic affairs. The argument is rather about whether the coercive forces of the state (the political, administrative, legal, police and military structures) necessarily come down on the side of private capital whenever it believes its general interests to be in danger.

In my belief, the countervailing power created by working-class organisation is such that it is no longer possible to assert a simple ruling-class (capitalist) hegemony. The point was made by the recent publication of the internal British Conservative Party documents concerning the confrontation between the Heath government and the British unions: the working class does not exercise power, but the capitalist class can no longer exercise power without and against the workers. (This begs the question of what is the working class. I believe that, because of the social impact of modern technology, the working class has to be redefined so as to include white collar as well as industrial workers; but that is another argument.)

If that is so, then it seems to me that the radical movement (which I would, for Australian his-

torical reasons, define as radical nationalist and democratic socialist; in Italy or Spain or Czechoslovakia it might be defined as Euro-Communist) must be directed towards advancing that countervailing power and enunciating countervailing values.

That involves not only the working-class movement but a broader popular movement which incorporates working-class interests. To say that is not to assert a 'populist' against a class ideology but rather to assert a community of interest which is broader than a narrowly defined working-class interest, and to suggest that a sensible radical strategy requires the realisation of such a broad definition. It is not a matter of asserting a 'common interest' for the whole of society but rather of re-defining the 'popular' interest in democratic socialist terms. When Overland has said that culture is a majority affair we have implied, I believe two things: that the 'high culture' should not be the exclusive property of a privileged elite, and that, outside the high culture and beyond the manipulation of the mass media, there exists a popular culture which establishes and expresses its own values.

Does that involve radicals in accepting 'rules of the game' which merely serve to bolster the status quo? That doesn't seem to me to be a very meaningful question. Of course the radical movement must accept some rules which regulate political and socio-economic conflict. Otherwise all questions must be decided by the hit-and-run bullets of the Red Brigades. Or, in what is still happily a non-violent situation, by the unprincipled lies which have been used by fringe-left factions against this journal. It is not a question of an impartial state enforcing an impartial justice; it is rather a question of the strength of radical democracy ensuring that social conflict is conducted and favorably resolved without mindless and self-defeating violence, without what Marx described as 'the common ruin of the contending classes'.

To argue in that way is perhaps to confess myself prisoner of a particular history. The 'Left Australians' of my generation were brought up on a series of propositions which were products of their time, and not always consistent: that an inevitable historical sequence (slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism) led to the victory of the working class; that to establish the power of the working class—and therefore socialism—required the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a new kind of state; that the key to this lay in the relation between the

revolutionary vanguard and the mass of the working class; that the immediate way forward lay in the 'people's front'—against fascism, imperialism, war.

In the immediate post-war years, many of us defined ourselves in terms of both radical nationalism and socialism. There did not seem to be any contradiction. We derived our socialism from the 1930s experience, the prospect of major social change in post-war Australia, the advance of communism in Europe and Asia. The commitment of the Curtin government to planning, full employment and social security, and the strength of the militant trade union movement, held out hope of rapid advance.

Nationalism—the assertion of the economic, political and cultural independence of Australia—seemed a necessary corollary, perhaps even a prerequisite. The war had destroyed much of the British connection; Australia had for the first time confronted a serious threat of foreign invasion; the post-war years saw the rise of national liberation movements in the colonial world—and of a new imperialism which threatened a new political, economic and cultural hegemony. Nationalism was not then a dirty word.

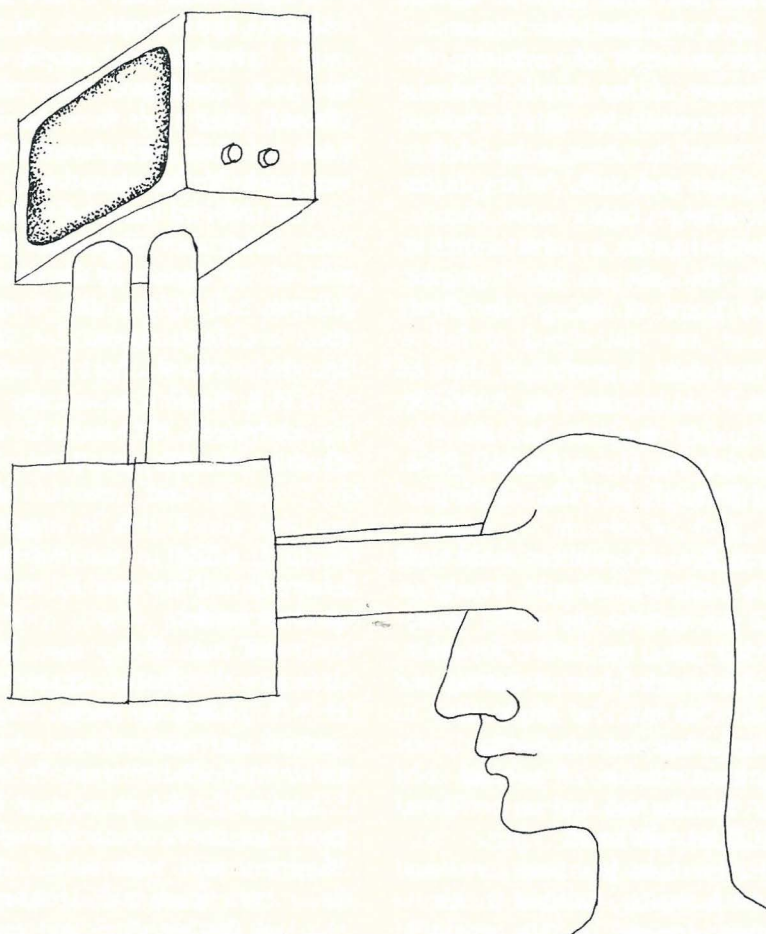
Our reading of Australia history—for a number of us with Manning Clark—strengthened that link. As we saw it, the middle class was Anglo-centric; it was from the working class that whatever there was of an Australian spirit had come. So radicalism and nationalism seemed natural partners; and it was the responsibility of intellectuals to refine and reinforce those values. That did not mean that we endorsed every aspect of that tradition—racism was an ugly blot. Nor did it mean that we saw the dramatic conflicts of the past—Eureka, the 1890s strikes—as evidence of proletarian revolutionary consciousness. But there was a continuing tradition of protest and dissent, of struggle for political rights and social justice, on which we drew to validate our belief in the possibilities of an Australian socialism.

The traumas of 1956-58—the unveiling of the realities of Stalinist oppression and the Hungarian crisis—led not only to a questioning of the particular dogmas we had come to accept but to a far deeper disorientation—if you like, a crisis of faith. We had been prisoners of a mechanistic Marxism (à la Stalin and before Gramsci, Althusser, Marcuse, Lukacs and Poulantzas had been invented) which, assuming the inevitability of working-class victory, had led us to reduce the problem of class relations and working-class consciousness to the relationship between van-

guard (party) and class, as Bob Connell and Stuart McIntyre (in *Intervention* No. 2) have said. Now we confronted the reality of that relationship and the final questions: do all social revolutions, conducted in the name of the working class and the under-privileged, end in establishing the power of an unrepresentative, privileged and authoritarian bureaucracy? does social progress, as we had defined it, really lead to the greatest happiness of the greatest number?

I find the social and cultural analysis of Connell and Rowse very interesting and in many respects compelling. But they do not help me answer those questions. Nor, having read them, do I know where they lead me—what I can do with them, except engage in further analysis. 'Praxis' is removed from the cut and thrust of political action and becomes an object of theoretical debate.

Radical nationalism—which is both a way of looking at Australia's past and a programme for the future—does seem to me to be useful. Maybe seeing the socialism of our time as a continuation of and an advance on the radical democracy of past times makes us prisoners of a bourgeois liberal hegemony, as Tim Rowse has said. But it leads to an attempt to redefine socialist means and ends in terms of a tradition which incorporates whatever is valuable in Australia's past—including intellectual freedom and political democracy—and which carries a specific Australian resonance. So I would still affirm, as a broad statement of the principle on which this journal should stand, the declaration of Joseph Furphy with which we started: 'Temper democratic, bias Australian.'



*Jiri Tibor*

## Ethel and Florence and Arthur and Mattie

ELIZABETH SUMMONS

When out of the blue a New England academic called on me to seek personal details and family background for a biography of my Aunt Florence Green, I was at first astonished that anyone should find her sufficiently interesting to write about. I knew that she had founded four schools and was regarded as a brilliant and innovative educationist with the rare gift of capturing the imagination and affection of her pupils. But she died before I was nine and although I realized at the time that she tried her best to be kind to me, I thought her pious and dull. As my father once remarked, she was probably more successful as a public figure than as a private person.

There is no doubt that my aunt's biographer was hooked to the point of being obsessively protective of her and was disinclined to follow the warts and all treatment I prescribed. But he was fascinated when I told him that my Aunt Flo, along with my uncle, Arthur Green and his wife, Mattie, were the models for Henry Handel Richardson's "Shepherd family" in "The Getting of Wisdom".

One cannot blame her biographers who were fed by H.H.R. with what she thought was good for them and what she wanted the world to believe of her. As for her poor, besotted companion, Olga Roncoroni, who starved herself during the second world war so that her idol might dine in the manner to which she was accustomed, she was surely the most unreliable of sources. She had never been to Australia and had no first hand knowledge of H.H.R.'s childhood.

Henry Handel Richardson has been criticised for being too literal a writer, unable to create characters but sticking instead to "the world of verifiable facts" as Nettie Palmer put it in her full length study of her. Dorothy Green, in *Ulysses Bound*, her painstakingly documented

interpretation of Richardson and her work, refutes this charge and points to what she calls "the curate episode" in T.G.O.W. to prove that H.H.R. "invented more than Mrs Palmer or anyone else suspected".

It seems odd that it has not occurred to anyone that the "Shepherds of the curate episode" might have been real people. No doubt if H.H.R. had been questioned about them she would have claimed that they were inventions, for to have admitted their reality would have involved her in very awkward explanations.

The truth is that the "Shepherds", or Greens, were fairly bursting with life. They were well and widely known at the time of the book's publication and to this day, long after their deaths, they are remembered for the institutions they founded, several of which still flourish.

H.H.R. seldom made any attempt to disguise her characters. She was skilful in devising recognizable pseudonyms—for example, "Mrs Gurlley" was a neat reversal of Mrs Boyes—and she was adroit, too, in juggling times and places so that, while to the initiate identification was assured, nothing could be pinned down by the general reader.

In the case of my own family, each one was drawn with deadly accuracy and bitter malice. H.H.R. picked up every nuance of speech, every gesture and mannerism and then, with a vicious twist, distorted them. In calling the Greens "Shepherd", she succeeded in drawing in three more members of the family whose name was Sheppard and with whom the Richardsons had been even more closely associated. In this way she laid further clues and managed to slay, as it were, six with one blow. To graft my great-uncle Stanley Sheppard's sporadic bursts of irritability (he suffered from gout) on to Arthur Green, who

was neither bad tempered nor a bully was a particularly dirty trick, for Arthur was vulnerable and H.H.R. knew it.

The Sheppards were not readers of fiction and any acquaintances who were rash enough to bring the book to their attention risked having their heads chopped off. The Greens were deeply hurt and with justification.

The Sheppards were the first of these families to appear on the Australian scene. Why Thomas Sheppard chose to leave a comfortable life in Wiltshire to face the hazards of a young and distant colony is a mystery. His father was a yeoman farmer who had distinguished himself at Waterloo and been rewarded with a grant of arms and a substantial addition to his land. Young Thomas was educated as befitted the family's new station in life and sent on the Grand Tour which included India and the Far East where he spent more than two years and found profitable employment. On his return to England he married Harriet Kington, of Bristol.

In 1843, when their two daughters, Amy and Mary, were six and five and their baby, Stanley, was barely two months old, the Thomas Sheppards set sail for the colony of Victoria and settled at Buninyong. Thomas bought up real estate and involved himself in local affairs. He did not join the stampede to the goldfields when the first finds were made in 1851 but sensibly stayed put and built a brewery. By 1857 "Sheppard's Fine Ale and Porter" were widely acclaimed. He soon became a big frog in the Buninyong pond — Chairman of the Municipal Council, Justice of the Peace, President of the Horticultural Society and Chairman of the Cemetery Commission.

Walter Richardson arrived in Ballarat in 1853 bearing a letter of introduction to the Sheppards from their Dublin born cousin, Sherborne Sheppard, and was given a warm welcome. There was a desperate need for qualified doctors to serve the fast proliferating population and an educated man would also have been an asset to the civic and social life of the district. But Dr Richardson soon made it clear that he had no intention of setting up in practice and was content to live off the pickings of the goldfields. The energetic Sheppards were appalled. That he should refuse to use his training for the benefit of the community was beyond their comprehension and branded him as a loafer and a sponger. It also became apparent that he had a drinking problem

of the kind then known as dipsomania. For long periods he would touch nothing but tea, then suddenly go into a bender from which he would emerge after weeks — a wreck who had to be nursed back to health. Many years later my great-uncle, Stanley Sheppard, who was no puritan, said of him, "the fellow was a complete bounder — and *worse*".

Down-to-earth, practical Mary Bailey, who had come out to the colony in 1851 at the age of fourteen and soon afterwards become acquainted with the Sheppards, was much more to their liking. Since Thomas had business interests in Geelong, the family visited the town frequently and sometimes brought Mary back to stay with them. She was about the same age as the girls, Amy and Mary, and the three of them enjoyed long rides together and attended parties given by the local "gentry". There was very little nonsense about chaperones in those early days; the settlers had not broken with their homeland and travelled twelve hundred miles to lock up their daughters, though the girls were expected to behave with decorum. It must have caused some consternation when Mary Bailey, at such an early age, became engaged to the shiftless Richardson, but perhaps the Victorian notion held that the love of a good woman could work wonders.

It is not recorded whether the Sheppards attended the wedding but their present to the bride and groom was a Rockingham teaset.

As for the Greens, their adventures are a saga which I shall relate as briefly as possible. My grandfather, Samuel Dutton Green, graduated with distinction from Durham University and trained for the church at Birkenhead Theological College. He married his first cousin, Eliza Dutton, in 1854 when they were both twenty-four and together they roamed the world for nearly twenty years. Their son, Arthur Green, says in his memoirs, "Had my father been an Elizabethan he would have cast his lot with Drake and Raleigh."

Eventually, in 1862, they settled in New Zealand, where, three years later, Eliza died. Samuel was grief-stricken and, leaving his small daughter Florence in the care of friends, he took his son Arthur home to England to be educated while he resumed his travels alone.

What kind of people looked after my Aunt Florence I have never known, but she was presumably happy enough with them as she was later to call each house she lived in "Akaroa". The fact remains that she was virtually abandoned

for eleven years and it is arguable that this may have accounted for her religious fundamentalism, so different from the intellectual concept of her father and brother and for her total lack of humor.

Arthur Green was sent as a boarder to St Andrew's College, Salisbury. He matriculated in 1874 and entered his father's college at Durham University where he read Law for two years. His course was interrupted when his father, by this time in charge of a parish at Kalk Bay, near Cape Town, sent for him. Arthur, in his memoirs wrote, "I was fascinated by the Cape . . . but my father's heart was in the Australian colonies", presumably meaning that Samuel had met his cousin, Amy Sheppard, on a brief visit to Australia two years earlier and had decided to re-marry.

In December 1876, father and son arrived in Melbourne to be met by the Sheppards and by Florence, now aged fourteen, who had come from New Zealand to join them. As soon as their banns were published, Samuel Dutton Green and Amy Sheppard married and set off for Chiltern, the centre of the vast new parish of Chiltern, Rutherglen and Brown's Plains to which Samuel had been appointed vicar. The heat was blistering but they were both accustomed to extremes of climate and were pleased with the charming new vicarage and its large garden. Their near neighbors happened to be Dr and Mrs Richardson and their daughters, Ettie and Lillie.

Arthur was keen to complete his law course, but despite having done two years at Durham, he found that he had to present himself again for matriculation and start from scratch (though late in the year) at Melbourne University. He passed his first year B.A. with honors four months after matriculating. A meeting with the remarkable Bishop Moorhouse who had just arrived in Melbourne led to his decision to study for the church. Arthur Green's name was first on the list of Moorhouse Scholars at Trinity.

Florence Green still had three or four years schooling ahead of her, so Stanley and Mary Sheppard, who had left Buninyong and taken a house in South Yarra, offered her a home and arranged for her to attend Mrs Meurisse Haydon's Academy for Girls in Caroline Street. Here Florence, who was never deflected by frivolity, applied herself with single-minded earnestness to her studies, determined to equip herself for the higher education that Melbourne University,

under feminist pressure, was soon to offer women students.

My father, Stanley Dutton Green, was born in Colac in 1878 shortly after Samuel's transfer from Chiltern. He was never to know his father for Samuel, who had been struggling with bronchitis during the latter part of his incumbency of Chiltern, died in 1879 at the age of forty-nine, just before his son's first birthday and two months before the death of Walter Richardson.

When Arthur Green graduated in 1879 he was ordained at St Peter's, Eastern Hill, married Mattie Tucker who was already into her thirties (a fact she successfully concealed from him) and after a year in Europe and a curacy at Brighton returned to St Peter's as curate.

Florence had by then matriculated and was among the first batch of women to attend lectures at Melbourne University when it opened its doors to them in 1880. She was perhaps uneasy with the Sheppards, certainly she thought Stanley shockingly worldly. Whatever the reason, she left their house and went to live with her brother and sister-in-law. She was too inexperienced to be aware that a man of the cloth could also have a high level of sophistication and a robust enjoyment of life. Arthur's unquenchable vitality and his gift of laughter were part of his very considerable charm.

It was in the East Melbourne setting that H.H.R. placed her "Shepherds", although most of her material was drawn from her observations of them after they moved to Maldon in 1885.

During her early days at Eastern Hill, Florence conceived her "plan". She was by no means well-off, but had been left some money by her mother which she was totally uninterested in spending on herself. She may have thought it wrong to do so. The money, she decided, would be used to help gifted young girls who would not otherwise have had the means of gaining a good education and Ettie Richardson, whose special qualities she recognized, would be the first, though by no means the last. The "Church Standard" of 16th April, 1926 said of her, "Many girls owed their start in life to Miss Green's generosity and liberality."

Florence begged Mrs Richardson to allow her to pay for Ettie's board and tuition, at Presbyterian Ladies' College which had a high reputation for its teaching and was near to the Greens' Eastern Hill home. Mrs Richardson, who was neither as stubborn, nor as snobbish as she has

been represented, accepted without embarrassment. It is fairly certain that she did not tell Ettie of the arrangement. Florence would not have wanted it known and Ettie/H.H.R. says in *Myself When Young* (chapter VI) "Just how mother contrived to meet the expense of schooling I don't know, I never enquired."

When Arthur Green was appointed Vicar of Maldon in 1885 on the heels of the Reverend J. F. Stretch, Florence again accompanied him. She was dedicated to the ideal of spreading women's education and Arthur, who always encouraged her, suggested that she open a school to serve the large surrounding district where educational opportunities for girls were few. So Trinity Church High School for Girls came into being with my Aunt Flo, aged 23, as its first headmistress.

During his time at Maldon, Arthur, who possessed phenomenal physical and intellectual energy, raised money to add a chancel to the Maldon Church and to build a new church at Muckleford in his parish; held a course of history lessons, "not church history" as he writes in his journal "but general history to which every-

one came, regardless of creed or denomination" and for which he charged nothing; and at the same time took advantage of a course of Theoretical Law being offered by Sydney University. He won the Wigram Allen Prize for Law, took his LL.B. at Sydney and then, while still at Maldon "faced", as he wrote, "the task — a very stiff one as it turned out — of the Doctor of Laws examination". In 1887 he gained his LL.D. and Mattie produced a son.

It was clearly all this activity that gave rise to H.H.R.'s description of "Robbie", overworked and on edge, skipping unappetizing meals to rush off to his history lessons, coming home late to be soothed by a glass of port, lovingly tendered by his womenfolk "Maisie" and "Isabella". On holidays from P.L.C., a child was busy taking notes.

By the time Ettie had left school, Arthur had been appointed to St Paul's, Geelong and my indefatigable aunt had founded Geelong Girls' High School, the main root from which The Hermitage was to spring.

In 1894, at the age of thirty-seven, Arthur was

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*Cliff Green*

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appointed first Bishop of Grafton and Armidale in New South Wales. Florence followed and at his instigation established New England Girls' School. When six years later Arthur accepted the Bishopric of Ballarat, Florence stayed on in Armidale with her school. Although in her retirement she founded another small school in Greensborough, N.E.G.S. can be fairly said to be her monument. She died at the age of sixty-four and was outlived by her elder brother by eighteen years. Arthur Green was, amazingly, Tutor in Theology at Trinity College until 1942, when he was eighty-five. He lived for two years longer, the picture of good health and vigor, wit and intellect unimpaired.

Of all Henry Handel Richardson's books I enjoy *The Getting of Wisdom* the most, preferring its crispness and humor to the rather overwrought atmosphere of her major works. It does not upset me in the least that in it she rubbished my relatives—to the contrary, for in doing so she provided some valuable insights to her own character. There is much that can be called into question about Laura/Ethel in *The Getting of Wisdom* and even more about H.H.R./Ethel in *Myself When Young*.

Professor Leonie Kramer goes to much trouble to explain that *The Getting of Wisdom* cannot be taken as autobiography. I think it would be naive to expect it to be. It is presented as a work of imagination and there is nothing odd about H.H.R.'s manipulation of facts. But it is nevertheless a work about herself. Of course it is not a comic book or a funny book, but it is written with wry humor, something entirely different from comedy. In it the author can look back at her girlhood and see herself stumbling awkwardly through her school life without self-pity, which is more than she could do in "Myself When Young", parts of which I find embarrassing, to say the least.

In this latter work H.H.R. reminds us that in *The Getting of Wisdom* both "place and people were seen through the eyes of a very young girl". But the book is not written by a very young girl. Twenty-three years have elapsed since leaving school and though I don't believe she has forgotten anything about her life at that time, she is still looking at her feelings retrospectively. And she manages to pay off a few old scores.

While having great respect for her work, I cannot escape the suspicion that H.H.R. was a

bit of a fraud. She seemed capable of reducing admirers to sycophancy and turning biographers into apologists. Looking at the photographs of the exquisitely dressed and groomed woman with the hooded eyes and the slight disdainful smile it is hard not to feel that she knew what she was doing.

In chapter III of *Myself When Young* H.H.R. speaks of her mother, before taking the job at the post-office, as having led "the cloistered life of a Victorian lady". Coming to Australia alone at fourteen, even though in the care of the ship's captain? Marrying a man like Richardson at eighteen and living in a log and canvas hut on the goldfields? "Cloistered" is an odd word for all that.

H.H.R. does not say that her family ever possessed "riches" but it seems to be taken for granted that the Richardsons were at times quite wealthy. In *Ulysses Bound* Dorothy Green comments on "the inexplicable change from riches to poverty" which impressed the minds of the children. But Dr Richardson practised so little and so generally unsuccessfully as a doctor, and was so unstable as a man that it is hard to believe that the family received any steady flow of money.

An alcoholic's finances are always shaky and it seems to be much more likely that Dr Richardson was what my very factual family knew him to be than the syphilitic that Dorothy Green is anxious to prove him to be. Everything points to it right from the start—his inability to stick at his work, his prickly nature, his long, unexplained absences from home, the endless quarrels with his wife in their bedroom at night, the odd habits that embarrassed his daughters. Above all the relief when he was away and "the same relief, in an intensified form" when he died.

Tertiary syphilis, or G.P.I., was the diagnosis given by the doctor at the mental home where Dr Richardson died. But I have discussed this with an expert on alcoholism and he regards the evidence of syphilis as slight. He says that every symptom recorded fits in with alcoholism much more than syphilis, which would have been unlikely to have manifested itself early in his life or to have interfered with the practice of his profession. Tertiary syphilis, he tells me, has been called "the great imitator of any disease of any organ", but alcoholism is perhaps an even greater imitator of mental diseases. Knowing that in fact he did drink, his conduct at Chiltern would seem to point to a toxic (alcoholic) psych-

osis and his complete disintegration bears all the signs of this.

It must be remembered that there was no Wassermann Test until 1907, so the diagnosis of G.P.I. could well have been erroneous.

As for H.H.R.'s early loves, it is known that children are frequently emotionally unbalanced between the ages of twelve and fifteen or thereabouts, but not many women would dwell in later life so much on their childhood crushes. Nettie Palmer, speaking of the young Ethel's passion for Jack Stretch, says "so deeply did it affect the potential novelist that it overshadowed her whole girlhood". This emotional experience "she had undergone *before she entered her teens*". Then there was Arthur Green. H.H.R. has a lot to say about Jack Stretch but does not mention Arthur Green, except fictionally as "Mr Shepherd". But it was known that she did have romantic feelings about my uncle Arthur, even by the innocent young Florence. These two loves (if one can call them that) must have been almost simultaneous. She first met Arthur Green in 1877 when she was only seven and was eleven when he was first at St Peter's. She was twelve when she met Jack Stretch. Arthur probably noticed nothing, perhaps Jack Stretch did, but as a fascinating man of thirty it was highly unlikely that he would have been seriously attracted to a gauche schoolgirl. It would certainly have been unseemly for a clergyman to have acted as H.H.R. in *Myself When Young* describes at his farewell party at Maldon when they were sitting on the verandah and (she says) "he took my hand and held it and went on holding it, patting and stroking it."

She never saw Stretch again after he left Maldon, but Arthur Green arrived at Maldon to take his place; perhaps then she tried to make of him a surrogate Stretch. However, twenty years later she recalls her blighted life when Grace Stretch, later Lady Maudsley, speaks of her brother. H.H.R. again remembers "the old misery . . . again I tossed on a hot crumpled bed, my little heart swollen with an ache that was too big for it" and so on.

So what about "Evelyn Soutar", the older girl for whom she had such a passion during her school years? She says, in *Myself When Young* of "this strong fancy" — "it stirred me to my depths, rousing feelings I hadn't known I possessed and leaving behind a heartache as cruel as the first . . . the attraction this girl had for me was so strong that few have surpassed it."

Par for the course perhaps, but it is hard to believe that these passions dogged her all her life. Harder still to believe that Grace Maudsley said to her in 1915, speaking of her brother's marriage, "But it was you E., that he really admired."

It is interesting to note the similarities between the Reverend J. F. Stretch and the Reverend Arthur V. Green, the known facts about their careers, which ran extraordinarily parallel. It is not surprising that H.H.R.'s recollections were muddled, but her mistakes show that she knew both men well.

She tells us that Jack Stretch was at Durham University, "where neighbors used to gather at the windows when he went out, strangers stand stock still in the street to stare at him". But it was Arthur Green who was at Durham (though I never heard that he caused such a stir) and a friend of mine, who was a Maudsley, tells me that Stretch was not at Durham.

She continues, "but chance or fate led him (Stretch) to a meeting addressed by Bishop Moorhouse . . . and he then made up his mind to throw up the law for the church". But Arthur Green, three years younger than Stretch, met Bishop Moorhouse in Euroa and after hearing him speak, decided to study for the church. He entered Trinity College as first Moorhouse Scholar after Stretch had graduated.

Of Stretch's appearance I know nothing except that he was handsome, but H.H.R.'s description of him fits Arthur Green exactly: "features classic and well modelled" — so were Arthur's; "laughing dark blue eyes" — Arthur's were laughing bright blue; "clean shaven in a day of beards and moustaches" — Arthur was always clean shaven; "a cleft chin" — so had Arthur; "tall and slender" — so was Arthur.

She spoke of Stretch as being "the least strait-laced of parsons" but this could certainly be said of Arthur, just as the description of Stretch being a great man with horses and flying about in "a light, two wheel buggy" could equally apply to Arthur though I think the word should be "gig" rather than buggy.

The likeness ends when she talks about Stretch in sloppy old clothes and carpet slippers. Arthur was always immaculately dressed.

Both men had been, briefly, curates at St Andrew's Brighton, though it is true that Stretch went directly from Brighton to Maldon. Both were appointed to Bishoprics in New South Wales at an early age — Stretch to Newcastle in

1892 at the age of 38 and Arthur to Grafton and Armidale in 1894 at the age of 37.

As the Reverend J. F. Stretch ended up Bishop of Bendigo and Arthur Green Bishop of Ballarat, it cannot be said, as H.H.R. hinted, that either man suffered from lack of advancement.

So who was H.H.R. really thinking of in her old age? My belief is that she fantasised all her life as she had fantasised in childhood and by the time she wrote *Myself When Young* she had lost her way among those fantasies.

And why was she so spiteful about the Greens and presumably the Sheppards? Could it be that Florence, always firm, had lectured her for her

foolishness over Arthur? And did she want to punish the Sheppards for knowing too much about her early life?

An amazing thing was said to my mother by her mother-in-law, Amy Green. In old age (and I only knew her as old) my grandmother appeared to be the Victorian prototype, encased in black satin and rattling with jet. Yet she remarked in her matter-of-fact way when the Richardsons were being discussed, "of course poor Mary R. was so much happier *when she was under Stanley's protection*".

Mother was too taken aback to ask questions, but it does seem to fit.

## JOHN McLAREN **swag**

The invasion of Czechoslovakia ten years ago may have spelled the end of socialist hopes in the twentieth century, at least in the western or developed world. This is not because socialists had any remaining illusions about Russia, or even because the Russian action reinforced the generally held belief that socialism and oppression are inseparable, but because the invasion destroyed Alexander Dubcek's incipient program of reconciling socialism and democracy. Yet we need to temper the despair we feel when we think of the fate of Dubcek — or of Allende — by remembering that there is no parallel between the situation they confronted and that which we face. Czechoslovakia was attempting to free itself from a colonial tyranny imposed in the name of socialism, Chile from the poverty of a society whose elite, linked to outside interests, had prevented it from either making the transition to an industrial society or maintaining the institutional supports of the traditional society. Our problem in Australia is rather a lack of nerve, the probability that we will turn back to parochialism and the illusory certainties of the past, blaming the troubles of the present on disaffected individuals rather than the system. Such a stance is likely to produce the equally romantic attitudes of the revolutionary left, who too easily join with the ultras of the right to destroy all established in-

stitutions. The end of such destruction is far more likely to be tyranny than fraternity. Democracy is not merely a desirable means to a socialist end, it is the only way of ensuring that the revolution is not hijacked by a new and more brutal elite.

The photograph on the cover of this *Overland* shows Soviet troops seizing the Czechoslovakian Radio building in Prague, 1968. This unique photo, never before published, was smuggled out of Czechoslovakia for publication in *Overland*.

The account of post-war Vietnam which we published in this issue was prepared and translated for delivery at the PEN conference in Sydney last December. The author, Stefan Wilkanowicz, a Polish writer, was prevented at the last minute from leaving Poland to attend. We are indebted to PEN and the conference organisers for the opportunity to use his work. We expect to publish a further account of his experiences in our next issue.

Not everything that happens in Queensland is due to Bjelke-Petersen. A recent note informs us that *IMAGE* magazine is the fastest growing magazine in Queensland, and is accepting poetry from new and interesting writers. It costs \$2 to subscribe, and authors receive a free copy as payment. Enquiries to *IMAGE*, 18 Durama St., Rochedale, Qld. 4123.

## LANDSCAPES IN AUTUMN: YARRAMUNDI

### 1. The Coral Tree

Lucky I see these autumn hours  
The coral tree fill up with flowers,

Or are they birds, or which is which? —  
They change to either while I watch.

For where the tree is soft and green  
Or on bare branches plainly seen,

Its petals lift a crimson crest  
Like strange exotic birds at rest,

While now with their own crests raised high  
Yellow as sunlight in the sky

And under-wing a light that spills  
Through the green air like daffodils,

Bringing the tree a double crop  
Of curious flowers to crown its top,

Blossoming here or screeching loose  
Come fifty great white cockatoos.

### 2. Dabchick

By Yarramundi's  
Brimming lagoon  
The willows drop  
Their gold leaves down

And the dabchick dabbles  
All afternoon  
Alone and happy  
Like a tiny swan.

### 3. Secrets

How rich with its own secrets  
The autumn earth becomes.  
The few last leaves are purple  
On the blackberry's bare stems,  
And deep, far down, it lives  
Locked in its thorny dreams.

In the sun, in the bleaching grass  
No songs, no wings are found,  
But darkly the cricket makes  
A faint shrill questioning sound  
Like life forced down for winter  
Still speaking underground.

### 4. Rumination

In paddocks where I wander  
Winter's pause from growth  
Brings so much peace to the earth:  
The swallows are over the dam,  
The sky is asleep in the water.

And much to ponder upon  
Have the black-and-white cows and I;  
Content while the swallows fly  
We sit on the hill together  
And chew the winter sun.

### 5. Mud

Blessed be mud  
For mud is good,  
It keeps in mind  
The things it should.

Here's an old dry  
Hoofprint now,  
And out of it rises  
The ghost of a cow.

### 6. Cauliflower and Cabbage

Here by the migrant's cottage  
Stand cauliflower and cabbage  
In their slow secret growth;  
And humbly, you poets of winter,  
Do I bow down to you both.

Cabbage, we two know well  
That while you breathe and swell  
Slow, slow in your dark field,  
Proudly there grows in you  
The green heart of the world.

And you, shy cauliflower,  
In your deep patience and power  
How you do take your time  
Like winter itself through the winter  
Forming your flower of rime.

### 7. Willows

In Taranaki when I was young  
I thought the winter willows hung  
Their twigs in long bare slender strands  
Like harp-strings for the water's hands,  
And when in their first delicate green  
The leaf-buds in the spring were seen  
Then sharp and sweet I seemed to hear  
That harp's green music in the air.

Then God bless earth or God bless God,  
Whoever sets the leaf in bud,  
For though since then I've seen with wonder  
Sixty winters flow like water,  
Now by the river in the spring  
Still I hear that music ring  
Green and beautiful and sharp  
From willows like the strings of a harp.

DOUGLAS STEWART

## Birds over Cane

Green light at four a.m. and  
the derision of crows.  
Nature is as crass  
as ever. By nine on the verandah  
I'm drenched blue, purple, red  
and plants replace the human entirely:  
jutting and true. On this stage,  
the canefield plays backdrop: a beige rush.  
Above it in still air  
the orchestra pit: characters like  
magpies and pigeons saw away, neatly.  
And then the surprise, a modernist  
Solo interlude by a definitely twelve-  
tone bird. A slow, weirdly human  
whistle like the thoughtful whistle  
of a builder when he's just measured  
a joist or a strut.

The wind moves backwards,  
the other birds start up again with the  
schmaltz. Solitary, frowning slightly  
and in his canvas apron, the hidden  
bird begins in another key. Precise  
as cold air he weaves his careful sharps  
and flats.

SUE HAMPTON

## Charlotte

Back from the pub  
with our heads impaled on the savage hooks  
of feminist polemic, and the smash of glasses and the sticky feel  
of table-tops  
where our thoughts should be, we stop on the drive. The stars  
whir over, tightening their grip  
through several notches. We breathe in air as if it were  
pot, and Charlotte hums; that little tattoo of hate and malice  
that holds us all.

And here we are on the drive  
by the fountain, like vacant gnomes. No one will stir. The gravel speaks  
as now and then a shoe  
scuffs sideways. We're bound together. It's not just  
grog: the alcohol's let us sight the invisible: that we haver  
back and forth in a net with its mesh  
wrapped round us, and when  
one moves the rest lean after him: no one here can break this circle. Charlotte  
detaches herself

to the gums, and drops down there  
in her own small holocaust, her own Nagasaki, in a cabbage of steam: she squats  
on her hot thick pillar of piss and a fart breaks round her. The garden  
listens. In the cowless shrubbery  
black twigs scratch her moon of an arse; she makes  
her statement. She's unbuttoned denim. She is wornout leather  
and a dangling belt-buckle. She is dark blue patches of milk  
on her front, from her breasts' excesses. Now as always

she guards all this and holds herself off  
with her meataxe phrases, with Marx, who is never himself in her mouth,  
stirring it glumly. But I know a Mother. I know the scent  
of milk and urine. And two floors up where the baby squalls  
where his Daddie's Thesis  
brews on the rug in a pool of commas and where all the deferred  
hatreds lie, there is something inevitable, something concrete; and something  
like habit or love.

LESLIE HARROP

## Angel from Brooklyn

In the oyster bed the old man  
called you Robin, with his white flesh  
caught amongst the reeds,  
too thick to cut.

And you waited at the foot of the hill,  
your skiff afloat on mangroves,  
as he ploughed down the mountain  
and you remembered him always:

A stooped figure on the ridge,  
arms full of gutted fish.

Yesterday I saw you on the sandbar, Robin  
with your arms thrown wide.  
You were the Angel of the River,  
silver-hooked.

And you heard dark birds  
on the rim of the ocean  
call you through their estuaries of salt:  
the tide in your arms as a woman

And I: Never more woman than that dream,  
running with the mullet to the net.

KATE LILLEY

## Growth Group

Not so easily spoken, the phrases  
that bisect my years. True, I offer  
the two halves of sins and joys, but  
always the facts are lifted imperfectly  
from a fog of mind-drift, that flotsam  
of castaway nights and days more real  
than any declaration. I am learning  
to trade their language, to interact  
in dialogue with pale truth. I heed  
the here and now but rarely with soul —  
the cardboard core of my paper years  
weighs the present, is stacked against  
spontaneous belief.

Spilling the beans  
is a game set up in a closed arena;  
I toss the eye of my chastened self  
before you and play for deliverance.  
Intimacy clowns amongst us, I laugh  
at his trusted antics and weep easily  
from his kickbacks. Our ten heads  
are better than my one, for the time.

FAIRLIE SZACINSKI

1

2

## Moments of Mind

while the window stands vigil  
and the moon sleeps on the floor  
a shadow's edge is moving

\*

my eyes are mad with the dreams  
of the floating world  
but the wind keeps my heart from sleep

\*

when the bird is gone in the sky  
meaning breaks  
beyond the division of space

\*

like mist over mist  
a photographers face  
is as constantly changing  
as the branch that leans  
against the breeze  
of a poem's presence

\*

to a moment  
held long enough  
for possibility

a kiss

to a heart  
beating strongly enough  
for a moment

a breath

for breath  
kissed to possibility  
the heart of

a moment

\*

at dawn when your bird  
makes no line against the sky  
i stand at the waters' edge  
with the wind in my heart  
and see your original face

\*

in the quiet of the heart  
where truth  
is not obscured by living  
a cloud laughs

SWEENEY REED

## Straining the Fence

(With Endra, aged four)

I dig a hole. I get a board,  
sharp knife, the dead rabbit—  
kneel on clay ground before them,  
ritually.

Endra's near-black eyeballs  
absorb the flaying quietly,  
his first time:

the belly is undone,  
the fat, oily colon  
voluptuous.

The guts are very clean,  
the animal is healthy,  
cleanly killed.

The tendons are cut,  
the innards poured out into the fresh hole.

"I want some *milk* Mummy,  
give me milk." All monkey pout-face  
he eyes me suspiciously today  
as he steers like a little wallaby  
around the table towards his frothy cupful.

Our hemisphere of bushland  
shines in mid-morning autumn  
around our timber hut and roses.  
The rabbit pelt dries  
pinned in sun  
while floating bees burr  
toward's the children's honey hands,  
scrounge in the sugar  
where they roll  
like lazing girls on morning sheets.

"I wonder why  
we are going to strain the fence?"  
We walk across a paddock and through green bush;  
Mr Curiosity almost waddles as he helps to carry tools.  
I clamp my two ends of high tensile into the strainer  
and start to work it back and forwards,  
making the long steel glint as it slithers, lifts.  
Endra's eyes are still, his brow puckered,  
as he watches the way the implement  
walks along the wire . . .

". . . we are going to strain the fence?"  
I keep working the strainer and glance at him;  
the long wire reaches through my hand,  
up my arm, into my shoulder as I turn.

His face is an animal, staring  
serious; his skin is sleek  
like an animal's belly,  
his eyes like lips, sucking.  
The wire straightens completely up, tightens,  
taut. At a touch  
the strainer springs off.

As I stand from crouching  
darkness falls on us  
like a cloth.  
We are surrounded by huge eucalypts  
networked. I look around.

Endra is staring  
where the moon has appeared  
like a white moth.

All I see is Endra staring  
at the moon  
which is rising  
for the first time.

*Milk blood and wine  
You take yours Lord  
Give the child some  
And give me mine*

He helps to gather tools, shines the torch,  
holds my hand as we walk in invisible grass.  
Back within is wood fire, warm milk, and wine.  
Spicy steam of rabbit stew lifts from the stove.  
Sweetest girl glances up with love  
Smearing ointment on her bee wound.

MARC RADZYNER

## Homeland

Sunlight slides down the hill  
towards the house, day begins.  
My life slides gently by.

A man with no specific ancestry,  
with no specific homeland;  
but here I change a landscape,  
I exist.

—I dangle aerial roots  
into this thin soil of a family and rough farm.

My son will not sing his grandmother's tzigane songs,  
nor see with the alien eyes of his father  
but he will inherit this place.  
He may live where he was born.

ALLEN AFTERMAN

## Schizophrenic

A ventriloquist has done this.  
Some earth murderer —  
How he has made life grow

To a slow black scar.  
His phalanx of shadow  
Hovers near the town.

Even though they're after my brother,  
There is little I can do: I am eighteen  
And smashed —

The twisted  
Blue heart, a metronome gone wild  
Just managing its satellites; my razor

Sulks alone in the bathroom.  
Poor angel,  
It is no longer necessary.

An ambulance squeals off  
From the scene, the driver  
Clutching my core

Like an unopened telegram.  
What I need is the  
Serenity of motors, their

Blonde rhythm, assassinating —  
I am shattering dew now . . .  
The bruises shine like swollen ice.

ANDREW FLETT

## Vanzetti

The charge that smashed your nerve cells apart  
had too much volume for your corpse to keep.  
Nothing could earth it. From your violent start  
like one of Galvani's frogs against the straps  
it hopped the gap to where the crowds, deep  
around the Charlestown jail, around the world,  
were waiting, latent, for that spark. Perhaps  
the State of Massachusetts when it hurled  
its bolts at you thought that you were not  
in contact, would, alone, absorb the lot.

The charge they hit you with, on the other hand,  
you and Niccola, was absurdly light.  
Murdering payroll guards for fifteen grand  
is nothing to men who wanted the big haul:  
not just the money but the means; who'd fight  
not cops or even judges but the force  
that owned those forces, lethal capital.  
Wrong in law and fact, Thayer was right of course  
to sentence you. Bourgeois justice in this case  
would have been hindrance, but it knows its place.

The heaviest charge is what you've laid on us:  
to keep transmitting those raw lovely volts  
until they think we're all as dangerous  
as you and Sacco. Who will then be shocked?  
Meanwhile we insulate, check for shorts and faults  
and grope for the master switch somewhere among  
the bizarre trappings of the power that knocked  
your body shuddering like a prophet's tongue  
that's running on and down when all is said  
but nothing done yet by the woken dead.

TIM THORNE

## Shire Poem

years after the floods came  
to the paddock  
—basin  
we imagined  
the drowned gums were washing their feet  
all the time their feet  
were being washed  
beneath  
the sky's  
blue-mirror-pool  
it took something absolute  
tide washed the corpse up on our beach  
gently sucking  
later  
we cleaned him up  
soaping  
warm water round his feet  
he did not care  
which parts of him the crabs had left  
nor that we could not get  
the flesh discolourations off  
nor put the pieces back  
his clothes were inkyblue

J. S. HARRY

## Sticks

### Sticks

I might have laid the sticks straight, or  
left them heaped like snared crows' feet. If  
I'd died and you'd chanced upon them  
you'd have regarded them as a  
natural untidiness of sticks.

You wouldn't have picked up one to  
lay on my back for being a lazy  
untidy person, as I lay  
dead.

Why should I stack sticks that  
dispose themselves untidily?  
Do you rule my character must  
lie straight . . . or, really, the sticks?

fear a stick on my back from you.  
I shall laboriously  
stack the sticks.

Whether I can lie  
straight after my labours, may rest  
on your blows administered, the  
whacks dealt out by one who picks up  
one stick only and that, the rod  
of authority.

descrie the rod among the trash,  
beware your back! or you'll be the  
servant stacking sticks for reasons  
similar to those which you would  
teach me . . .

for sticks, themselves, lie  
comfortably untidy. Let  
them lie in their natural  
pose and neither of us bother  
to master the other . . .

let's burn  
now all straight offending rods.

JOHN BLIGHT

## The New Father

He's a pom;  
I keep seeing him as  
a sturdy D. H. Lawrence:

ruddy, with brown beard slightly pointed,  
a roundish tuft of hair above  
deep blue, well-spaced eyes,  
which light with his quick laugh.

He looks good;  
but I wish he'd speak slower,  
and louder, at this his first meeting  
as Father of the Chapel.  
Speaking's not his strong point.

It's his quiet effectiveness;  
the speed with which he catches on  
and gets things done.

He's a good way left, we know . . .  
not easy to fathom:  
there's a hint of deep, secret drives  
that could lead to hard trouble;  
to strikes we can well do without.

We've shelved that fear:  
his kind often do best for you.

And his term is limited.  
He'll be after our votes again next year.

DUNCAN MILLER

## Reading Tsvetayeva during illness

Taking measure, I despise  
any wind that cannot snatch my breath  
any earth that cannot grind  
its great paw so! on my breastbone.

Under that grinding words  
go, courage goes, love becomes  
a hand to wring and beseech,  
the sun goes into a tunnel.

I deny everything. I admit  
anything. Waking to ambush.  
Sleep stands faceless and mutters  
wrong passwords, hand hidden.

Tonight I live joined to my death  
and the knowledge strips me and pounds me  
back beyond the hour of my birth.  
Why breed, why words, except

somehow your homeless black  
wings across a waste, Tsvetayeva,  
lifting, fit the ribs true  
in their thread, cheat the clicking minutes

and rouse up live winds to whirl us  
past bridge-ends and sentried borders  
no matter what fowler wrings necks  
wordless at Yelabuga.

JUDITH RODRIGUEZ

## Father and Son

*'Our hero was a young boy who betrayed his father to the K.G.B.'*

*(Russian girl now in the West)*

### Inventing a Tongue

We tried to do something with A  
then turned to the habits of NO  
which kept flying back in our faces.

There was room for re-employment  
of threadbare old THE  
as a nail or a knife or a king.

We had to take FISH,  
hang it up for a while,  
dry it out properly  
and put it to serious work.

Whose idea was it  
to gather in CLOUD  
and give it new dignity  
with workshop, garage and lathe  
in the industrial scene?

SEXPOT and PLOUGH were rejected  
along with RABBIT or PLEASE,  
but we did like COLOUR.  
It seemed exactly to strike  
the note on which  
to end a sentence politely.

HOSANNA,  
there's a word if you like:  
hosanna this and that,  
you really can use it  
pretty well anywhere  
though there are some would say,  
not in mixed company.

Our grammar was still  
piteously incomplete  
until we learned how  
to use IRONBARK,  
which means what its usage dictates;  
learned from the cradle,  
it is the firm bond  
that links basic concepts together.

We still had need,  
the academy said,  
of a term which expressed  
our true belief  
in the state, in our neighbours,  
that which once  
might have been known as God:  
ARTILLERY  
We settled for sadly.

APOCASCOPE polished us off.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

At table Viktor smiled  
As usual. But I knew.

A waking body knows  
At once that overnight

Autumn has turned to winter.  
Two nights before,

He'd come out of the bedroom.  
'What are you writing, father?'

In a week, the man appeared.  
Everyone in the town

Knew him. He stood about  
Not seeming to watch,

Then in a street or passage  
He'd walk up: We know

This or that about you.  
Before he spoke, I knew.

My son, not yet thirteen.

For the first time  
I went out to the woods

Where the Baptists met in secret  
To pray. I prayed with them,

The meek wives, the old  
Tall-headed peasant, the young

Mathematician who wrote  
Poems no-one would publish.

We weren't beaten to death  
Like those in the next village.

We prayed and we went home.  
That afternoon

Snow-clouds were gathering.  
'Viktor, come for a walk.'

At the town's edge  
The first flakes were falling.

The air darkened, the ground  
Grew white beneath our feet

As we climbed into the woods.  
'Son,' I said. He turned.

I fired into his chest.

No cry. In his eyes, nothing.  
He fell. I touched his hair

And the flakes on it.  
Then turned away. The flawless

White would cover him.  
On the way back I met

The two men who'd followed.

PHILIP MARTIN

# Forgotten Novels of the Thirties

WINSTON BURCHETT

A worthwhile project for some philanthropic publisher, which might in fact pay dividends, would be to produce a paperback series of "Forgotten Novels of the Thirties".

The decade from 1925 was one of tremendous literary activity in Australia. The struggle to place manuscripts must have been intense and the financial rewards of publication frustrating, but in the years between 1930 and 1935 first books were published by Philip and Jack Lindsay, Lennie Lower, Frank Dalby Davison, William Hatfield, Angela Thirkell, Eleanor Dark, Leonard Mann, Jean Campbell, J. K. Ewers, Frank Clune, Leslie Haylen, Mary and Janet Mitchell, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Brian Penton, Christina Stead, Kylie Tennant—to name just the better known starters.

Many of these books were poorly published, in small editions, and soon found their way to the remainder tables. The lucky ones were published abroad, but drew little attention in Australia. It would be easy to select twenty titles from the period's output which made little impact on publication and yet have an important place in Australia's literary and social development. Here are a dozen candidates for resurrection, all to my recollection very readable: *The Emigrant* by Frederick Howard (1928); *Human Drift* by Leonard Mann (1935); *Burnt Sugar* by F. E. Baume (1934); *Upsurge* by J. M. Harcourt (1934)—the banning of this book is discussed in *Overland* No. 46; *The Game Darrells* (1934) and *The Brierley Rose* (1935) by Leslie Haylen; *Earth's Quality* by Winifred Birkett (1935); *Blue North* (1934) and *Sheba Lane* (1936) by Henrietta Drake-Brockman; *The Passage* (1930) and *The Swayne Family* (1934) by Vance Palmer.

But I'll have to increase my selection to fourteen for I must include Ernest Wells and Velia Ercole.

Ernest Wells (*Hemp*, 1933 and *Brave Music*, 1934) was an historical novelist of immense vitality from whom I expected great things. I can only imagine his literary ambitions withered in the frost of the Australian book-buying climate.

Velia Ercole in *No Escape* (Thornton & Butterworth, 1932) wrote of the problems of migrant assimilation. Her book is as relevant today as when it was written, and is extremely readable. The author was the daughter of Dr Quinto Ercole of Grenfell, N.S.W., and her manuscript was awarded a Bulletin prize. She no doubt drew on her own family's experiences. *No Escape* concerns an Italian migrant doctor, Leo Gherardi, his wife Teresa and Banton, the small N.S.W. country town in which he is practising. Leo is a political refugee, and Teresa has left a promising career as a singer in Bologna to flee with him to Australia. He comes about 1905 to this outback town to make enough money quickly to return to Italy where he believes he can purchase a pardon. Teresa is unwilling and unable to adapt to Australian ways and contemptuous of the cultural standards she sees exemplified by the local concert. The Banton social set, for their part, find her foreignness uncomfortable. The lawyer's wife explains to her husband: "The truth is she doesn't fit, she doesn't fit anywhere. And she's got to make herself fit. We can't do it for her."

Leo, on the other hand, gradually gets drawn into local affairs and into acceptance of local ways. He is persuaded, for instance, that he must not demand revolution in hospital equipment and methods overnight. He must gain the confidence of his fellows. Cartwright tells him: "In a big city it's the things a man does that counts. In a small town, it's the man himself . . . we've got time here to find out what a man's like. We let him into our lives and take notice of him."

Teresa, withdrawing more completely into her-

self after two or three mortifying attempts to make contact with the town, senses her husband's lessening interest in an immediate return home, and makes desperate attempts to prevent her only child Dino becoming an Australian "Dinny". The horror of her suicide has been with me for forty years.

This is an objective study of the problem of assimilation. Velia Ercole stands well outside of her characters to examine them. Her book is also

a thoughtful analysis of the positive values of small town life over the city. Cartwright finds satisfaction in the achievements possible to a large frog in a small puddle and reminds Leo: "You know the human comedy is being performed here as it is being performed in any great city in the world. We lack scenery and dressing and all the extravagance that makes a first class show. Our stage is a jim-crack affair. But the performance is darned interesting for all that. It's just as real."

## THE STATE OF FICTION A SYMPOSIUM

with contributions from A. Alvarez, Brian Aldiss, Kingsley Amis, Martin Amis, Paul Bailey, J. G. Ballard, A. L. Barker, Stan Barstow, David Benedictus, Malcolm Bradbury, Melvyn Bragg, John Braine, Christine Brooke-Rose, Jeremy Brooks, Brigid Brophy, A. S. Byatt, Angela Carter, Isabel Colegate, William Cooper, Robert Coover, Elaine Feinstein, Eva Figes, Nicolas Freeling, Giles Gordon, Patricia Highsmith, Michael Holroyd, Dan Jacobson, Diane Johnson, Jennifer Johnston, Gabriel Josipovici, Mervyn Jones, Francis King, David Lodge, Ian McEwan, Olivia Manning, Stanley Middleton, Brian Moore, Helen Muir, Edna O'Brien, Julia O'Faolain, David Plante, Barbara Pym, Frederic Raphael, Piers Paul Read, Alan Ross, Alan Sillitoe, Julian Symons, Emma Tennant, Paul Theroux, Anthony Thwaite, William Trevor, Peter Vansittart, Auberon Waugh, Raymond Williams, Angus Wilson, A. N. Wilson.

in the summer issue of

### THE NEW REVIEW

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from the New Review, 11 Greek Street, London W1.

Adrian's parents and his two brothers met him at Spencer Street Station and told him how much they had missed him. He was irritated by the fuss they made. They seemed to think it was homesickness that had persuaded him to leave the seminary. Yet he had told them clearly in his last letter that he was only leaving because it was God's Will that he should serve Him in some other vocation rather than as a Charleroi priest.

Adrian's mother served his breakfast in bed on his first morning at home. He enjoyed it, but he let her know that the students ate huge breakfasts at Blenheim, in case she thought he had come home half-starved.

Mrs Corcoran from down the street popped in to see him after breakfast. She said, "I know the Charlerois are a very strict order. Was their rule just too hard for you, Adrian?"

Adrian said, 'No, Mrs Corcoran, I was surprised how easy it was to live the Charleroi life. I only left for private spiritual reasons.' The woman nodded solemnly, but he knew she was puzzled.

That evening his father asked him what he was going to do with his life. Adrian said he wanted to pass his matriculation exam. His father said he was mad to attempt a whole year's study in six months after all the strain he had been under. Adrian agreed to apply for a clerical position in the Victorian Public Service and to study one matric subject in the evenings. The following year he could study the remaining subjects full-time at a coaching college. He could pay his fees from the money he saved during his six months in the Public Service. If he passed his exams he could go to the University.

Adrian's father advanced him the money for his textbooks for matriculation English Literature. He bought the books in Melbourne a few

days later and sat up until midnight looking for outstanding poems.

By far the best was "The Scholar Gypsy" by Matthew Arnold. Adrian had always thought of England as a crowded country, but the poem allowed him to hope that in rural counties such as Oxfordshire there were hills and meadows so remote that a man could wander there for years meditating on mysterious subjects or striving for a secret ambition beyond the understanding of ordinary people.

He was getting ready next morning to visit the State Library to study a detailed map of Oxfordshire, when his father reminded him that he had to be interviewed that morning for a position in the Administrative Division of the Public Service of Victoria.

On the train into Melbourne Adrian started to learn "The Scholar Gypsy" by heart. When he saw the strained faces of the people around him he realised there was something fateful in his discovery of the poem just when he had come back from the seminary to the secular world. Many a young man in his position would have been so dazzled by the attractions of modern living that he would have forgotten his high ideals and plunged into a life of pleasure. "The Scholar Gypsy" was a reminder to Adrian that even though he had put aside his ambition to be a priest or a monk, he was still called to a special vocation and marked out from other men.

Walking from Flinders Street Station to the State Government offices he bent his head low and gripped the lapels of his suit-coat in one hand as though he wore an antique cloak that flapped around him in the English wind. Whenever he caught sight of himself in a mirror or a shop window he adjusted his expression to give himself the vague abstracted air of the Gypsy.

He walked so fast that he arrived early at the State Offices. He was pleased to see that the building overlooked a large park with plenty of English trees. There was time for a short walk under the elms. He avoided the paths and kept to the shelter of the tree-trunks like a man who did not want others to grow curious about his great secret.

On the lawns of the Treasury Gardens he realised he wasn't taking "The Scholar Gypsy" seriously enough. He had been too anxious about the outward appearance of the Gypsy when he should have been adjusting his own inner life to follow the example of that dedicated solitary. Walking towards the main door of the State Offices, Adrian tried to sum up the Gypsy's philosophy of life. But then he saw he had been confused all along — he had been too impressed by the similarities between the Gypsy and himself to realise that the Gypsy was not in fact a poet. It was all right to admire the zeal of the fellow as he journeyed through beautiful Oxfordshire landscapes with his head bent low and his thoughts on higher things. But the proper model for a young poet in Adrian's position was Matthew Arnold himself.

Adrian sat down quickly on a seat in the main hall of the State Offices and turned up the Biographical Notes in his poetry book. Unfortunately there was nothing inspiring about Arnold's life. The man who wrote such magnificent poetry had ended up as an inspector of schools.

Adrian walked up the massive stone stairway with his poetry book in his hand. It was almost time for his interview. He had less than two minutes to make up his mind on an issue that could affect his whole future. There was a strange significance in his finding out, just as he was applying to join the Public Service, that one of the greatest English poets had worked for the Government as an inspector of schools. Work in the Public Service was supposed to be easy. A public servant's mind would still be fresh at the end of the day. He could read and write until late at night. At weekends and during his fifteen days' annual recreation leave he could travel around Victoria in search of poetic landscapes.

Adrian considered giving up his studies for the matric exam and becoming a public servant by day and a poet by night — the Matthew Arnold of the Victorian Public Service. Yet this would be a dreary life compared with the Scholar Gypsy's. On warm afternoons he would be hunched over a desk instead of leaning on a

gate watching the harvesters or lying on his back in a boat.

He stood outside the room where he was due for his interview and asked himself bluntly was he going to be the Scholar Gypsy or Matthew Arnold. He looked up and down the enormous corridor. A public servant was walking towards him—a young fellow in his twenties. Adrian looked hard at him. The knees of his sports trousers were shiny, and his grey cardigan had grease-spots down its front. The fellow carried a sheaf of papers. They looked important, but he held them carelessly as if to show he was not in awe of them.

What decided the issue for Adrian was the way the young public servant walked. He was in no hurry. He dragged his feet a little; several times he veered slightly to one side for no apparent reason; and he stared slowly and thoughtfully all round him. Of course he wasn't looking at the drab walls and ceiling of the State Offices. He was thinking of his real life in his quiet room at nights and weekends. He was probably not a poet, but he had a mysterious other vocation, and all day he saved his energy for it.

Adrian knocked on the door, relaxed and confident. He could spend his life in the Public Service and still be a Matthew Arnold or a Scholar Gypsy or any other poet or hero of a poem.

The interview didn't bother him. His father had warned him that most of the top men in the Public Service were Freemasons. When the interviewer asked what he had been doing since he left St. Carthage's College, Adrian said he had been at a boarding school in New South Wales. He answered the other questions honestly and saw that the interviewer was impressed with his results in the Leaving Certificate examination.

At the end of the interview the man said, 'You'll be advised by mail of the result of today's interview. If you're appointed, you'll probably start on probation in the Education Department — we're under-staffed there at the moment.'

Adrian thought the interview had been a little too impersonal. He wanted to end it on a friendly, informal note. He said, 'The Education Department? That's a coincidence. A man I admire very much spent many years as an inspector of schools.'

The public servant was ushering Adrian to the door. He said, 'Oh? And what was his name?'

Adrian said, 'Arnold. Matthew Arnold. But he lived in the nineteenth century.'

The public servant looked hard at Adrian. It was the first sign of interest he had shown since the start of the interview. Adrian went away wondering whether the fellow read poetry in his lunch-hour or at home in the evening.

Adrian didn't tell his parents that he planned to give up study and spend the rest of his life as a public servant and poet. He spent the last of his money for textbooks on a book called *The English Countryside in Colour*, a railway map of the British Isles, a loose-leaf folder and a ream of foolscap paper.

A week after his interview he received a letter advising him of his appointment on probation to the Administrative Division of the Public-Service of Victoria. On the following Monday he caught a train to Flinders Street Station and walked through the city streets towards the Treasury Gardens and the State Offices. The footpaths were crowded with office workers and shop assistants. Adrian saw they were no better than the city-dwellers of the nineteenth century who had made Arnold so unhappy.

He knew much of "The Scholar Gypsy" by heart. Along Flinders Street he recited appropriate passages under his breath. He hissed:

. . . this strange disease of modern life,

With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
at a young fellow who was thumping his leg with his rolled-up newspaper as he walked, and staring through the locked glass doors of a cinema.

He murmured:

And then we suffer; and amongst us One,  
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne;  
when he saw an old fellow in a gabardine rain-coat sitting at a tram-stop with his lunch in a brown-paper bag in his lap.

When he rounded the corner into Spring Street, he almost broke into a run. Ahead of him were the Treasury Gardens — a walk of five hundred yards between trees and shrubs before he reached the State Offices. Because it was winter and the elms were bare, he recited the stanza describing the Scholar Gypsy's winter journeys.

He said the words aloud quietly until a fellow with rubber-soled golf shoes came up quietly behind him. When he saw the fellow beside him, Adrian started singing the words as though they were part of some sentimental ballad from the hit parade. But the fellow still looked at him suspiciously. He had a small brown leather

case and he was heading for the State Offices. If he turned out to be one of Adrian's immediate superiors, Adrian would have to start singing whenever he passed his desk or met him in the corridor to convince the fellow that he hadn't really been talking to himself in the Treasury Gardens.

Adrian began work in the Teachers' Branch of the Education Department. The Officer-in-Charge of the branch said, 'We're up to our eyes in work and we haven't even got a proper desk for you yet. If you wouldn't mind taking that table and chair we've pulled up beside young Stewie's desk and giving him a hand. He's your Section Leader. He'll show you what to do.'

The Officer-in-Charge left Adrian with a man in his twenties named Stewart Coldbeck. Coldbeck put a few bundles of papers in front of Adrian and gave him some instructions. Adrian obeyed without knowing what it was all about. He spent the rest of the morning finding names of teachers or telephone numbers of schools or going to a big cabinet and reading details from teachers' record cards.

In the afternoon Adrian began to understand what was going on. Coldbeck and the fellows in his section were arranging temporary appointments of teachers to primary schools. The second term of school had just begun, and many teachers had transferred from one school to another. The Teachers' Branch was supposed to fill the vacancies that had arisen as a result of these hundreds of voluntary transfers. The Branch couldn't send just any teacher to fill a vacancy—only a teacher whose present appointment was a temporary one.

Coldbeck explained: "They're at our mercy, the temporaries. We just ring up the headmasters of their present schools and bung these forms into the mail and they go wherever we tell them to. Most of them are young—the experience does them good."

Adrian looked at the form that Coldbeck bunged into the mail. It was headed in bold capitals:

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF VICTORIA  
NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT  
(TEMPORARY)

He had never dreamed he would handle anything so powerful on his first day in the Public Service. He put the form carefully back on its pile and said to Coldbeck, "You mean, even if

a teacher had lived all his life in Melbourne you can use one of these forms to send him to Portland or Mildura?"

Coldbeck said, "If they've only got a temporary appointment we can give them another appointment anywhere in the State. Mind you, we're supposed to be reasonable. If Ouyen or Sea Lake needs a temp we sometimes try to find someone who's already in that area. The trouble is we hardly ever have time to search through our lists for someone like that. We're usually so busy we just grab the first temp we can lay our hands on."

After a few days Adrian began to understand the work of the Teachers' Branch. On the Friday afternoon he found himself with nothing to do. (Coldbeck was out of the room organising the weekly tipping competitions for the races and football.) He studied the list of State primary schools in Victoria. There were hundreds he had never heard of. Teddywaddy, Tempty Traynor's Lagoon—most of their names were uninviting by comparison with the places he studied each night on his map of England.

Yet on each page of the Education Department's list he found a few names straight from England. Macclesfield, Malmsbury, Mortlake—their green fields and leafy hedgerows promised peace and poetic inspiration far from the dust and scrub of the Mallee and the Wimmera.

Suddenly there was work to do. Adrian sharpened a green pencil from Coldbeck's desk and turned to the first page of his list of schools. When he found a name from England he put a tiny green dot beside it. He worked through page after page until five o'clock. Then he took the list home in his leather satchel and spent most of the weekend with it.

On the Monday morning Coldbeck came in and threw his newspaper on his desk and said, "Now, young Adrian, let's get cracking and shift some more of those temps." Adrian grinned at him. He was looking forward to his day's work. His life in the Public Service would not be drudgery after all.

The Headmaster at Horsham needed a temporary assistant urgently. Coldbeck told Adrian to find someone for Horsham from the list of temporary teachers. Adrian paused a moment and thought of the little village of Horsham. Someone from his list was about to be transferred to the flat fertile countryside of Norfolk.

The first name on the list was Rosalie G. Mentiplay. She had a pleasant name that would

have sounded well among the farmlands of Horsham. But she was already in England—at Blackburn, a well-situated town in the north-east, if he remembered correctly.

Adrian left Miss Mentiplay at Blackburn and considered the next name—Rodney W. Louch. Mr Louch was at present in a temporary position at Warragul. This was just what Adrian had been looking for. He would move the young man from the uninspiring haunt of Gippsland aborigines to Horsham. With any sort of imagination, Rodney W. Louch could turn his temporary transfer into a spiritual pilgrimage from the harsh landscapes of Australia to a greener country.

Adrian made a note of Louch's journey on his blotting pad. He wanted to think of the fellow during the next few days while he was actually travelling to Horsham. Then he took all the necessary details across the room to the typist so that Louch's Notice of Appointment would be in the mail that afternoon. He didn't ask Coldbeck for his approval. He planned to present Coldbeck with the notice already typed and pretend he had forgotten to show it earlier.

The next few vacancies were at schools with names unconnected with England. Adrian chose temporaries to fill them without much interest and passed the names to Coldbeck's desk for his approval. Then the school at Penshurst required a temporary teacher.

Adrian was ready. Penshurst, he knew, was buried among the hop-fields and green swards of Kent. It was a worthy destination for any traveller. Brenda Y. Epworth would welcome the chance to set out from grim-sounding Black Rock for the rural peace of Penshurst.

At the end of the morning, when Coldbeck was approving Adrian's transfers he frowned at the two that were already typed. But then he shrugged his shoulders and initialled them and took them with the others to the Officer-in-Charge. Adrian kept a straight face but he was overjoyed. He realised he need not have taken special precautions to get his English transfers past Coldbeck. All temporary teachers were a nuisance to Stewie. So long as Adrian filled the vacancies, no one would query them. Every day he could send two or three young men and women on long arduous journeys that would bring them at last to idyllic English landscapes. It was almost as satisfying as planning poems or studying maps of England at night. In his poetry he was trying to describe spiritual journeys from everyday

drabness to serene landscapes of the imagination. At work he was sending people to places whose very names evoked poetic imagery—but they were real people and real places.

During the next week Adrian sent nine young teachers on pilgrimages from colorless Australian places to destinations in rural England. When the demand for temporary teachers was over, Coldbeck gave him other work to do. But in his spare time he prepared for the transfers in the third term. He prepared a list of the most deserving cases—the temporaries in suburbs of Melbourne such as Brunswick, Coburg and Maryborough—and made a note to give them first priority when vacancies occurred at places on the map of England.

Each day at lunch-time he walked in the Treasury Gardens. Many other public servants were there—middle-aged men strolling in threes and fours around the paths, groups of young women on seats around the lily-pond, young fellows playing football with a bundle of newspapers. But Adrian avoided them all. He walked fast, backwards and forwards over the least-frequented stretches of lawn and in the shadows of thickets and beds of shrubbery. He was looking for places where he could stand and see nothing but lawns and trees in any direction, with no sight of a city building or an asphalt pathway.

His method was to find first a secluded spot where a mass of bushes hid the whole facade of the State Offices to the north. Then he would pace a little way in different directions trying to bring other foliage between himself and the city skyline to the west. Sometimes when he had got rid of the city, he looked back and found that a corner of the State Offices had come into view again. When this happened he had to move slowly backwards, one foot at a time, trying to watch the city and the State Offices until both had disappeared again. When the north and west were filled with greenery he turned to the south and tried to eliminate the Jolimont railway yards.

During his first week in the Public Service he found two spots from which he could see only trees and lawns and sky. He carefully noted their bearings on a piece of paper and decided they were enough for his purposes for the time being.

On the following morning before he left home he took his book, *The English Countryside in Colour*, and let the pages fall open. They opened at a picture of Symonds Yat, Monmouthshire. He

read the text and looked once more at the picture to get the mood of the scene. At lunch-time that day he went to the first of his chosen spots in the gardens. He stood on the lawn and moved his feet by inches until he had turned a complete circle. He did this several times with his eyes fixed on the slowly changing vistas of greenery. And all the time he tried to see around him the landscape of Symonds Yat, Monmouthshire.

Next day he stood at the second of his spots and performed a similar mental exercise that took him to Wickon Fen, Cambridgeshire. The day after, he contemplated Paynings, Sussex, from the Devil's Dyke. There were only forty coloured scenes in his book, but if he found more of the right spots in the gardens he could combine each of them with each of the forty illustrations and provide himself with hundreds of poetic landscapes to savour.

In the evenings he drew up plans and tried to devise a title for a long poem about a man who discovered early in life that every landscape gave rise to a distinctly different mood in his heart (or soul—Adrian had not decided which of these words to use). There were sensual landscapes, landscapes suited to romantic love, religious landscapes and purely poetic landscapes. After viewing all four kinds, the man decided to dedicate his life to the fourth—the poetic. But then he made a tragic discovery—the landscapes that seemed most poetic were all in a distant country. Because it was impossible for him to visit that country he had to make a supreme effort of the imagination to re-create its landscapes in his everyday world. He tried various ways of doing this, but he realised in the end that the best way was to delineate them in his poems.

Here Adrian's rough drafts became so complex that he seriously considered abandoning rhyme and metre and using free verse to express himself more easily. Even so, he saw it would be hard to write a poem about poems containing landscapes that inspired poems. Sometimes he thought it would be easier to save up his Public Service salary for a few years and travel to England and take his poetry notebook to a shady spot in Oxfordshire or Gloucestershire and look out at the hills and hedgerows and let the verses roll off his pen.

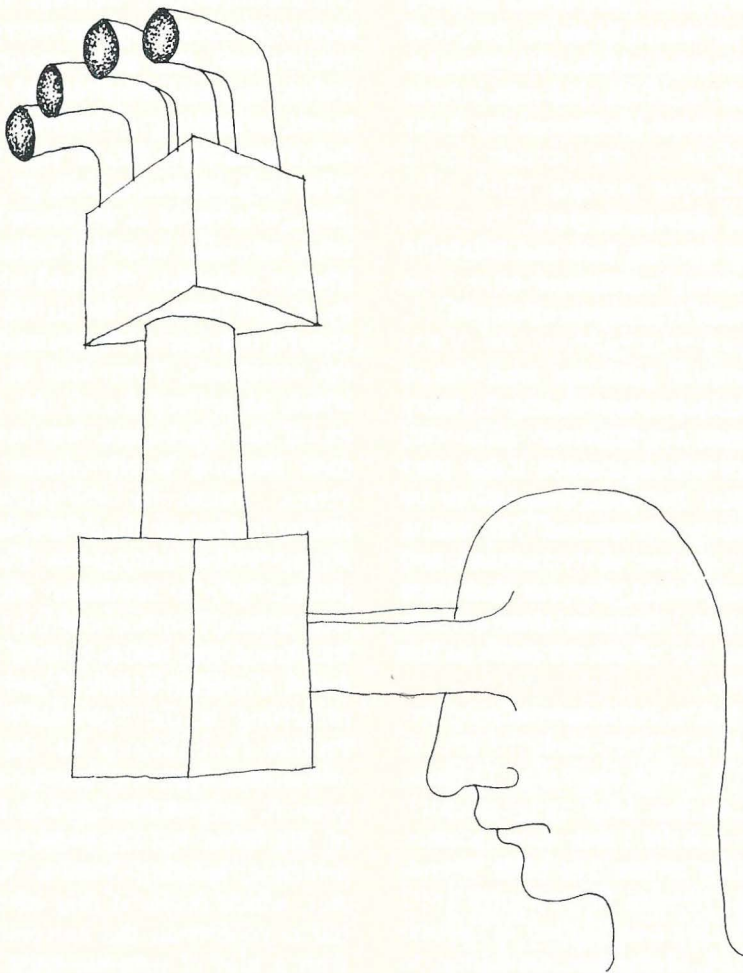
One morning when Adrian was coming down from the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills towards the State Offices, someone behind called his name and ran to catch up with him.

It was Terry O'Mullane, dressed in a public servant's sports clothes and carrying a rolled-up *Sporting Globe*. They walked together into the State Offices. O'Mullane said he had been working in the State Rivers Department since the beginning of the year. Cornthwaite and Seskis were still at St. Carthage's doing their matric.

They stopped in the corridor outside the lift. O'Mullane moved close to Adrian and said, "And what's all this I hear about you running away from the monastery? Stan Seskis rang me up a few weeks ago and said he'd heard you were back in Melbourne, and you know what I told him? I said the priests probably found the poor bastard sticking up pictures of film stars in his room and kicked him out. Those were the days.

We were only kids then. It doesn't hurt to look back and have a good laugh at some of the silly things we talked about. Listen, I'll meet you outside the building at one o'clock and we'll have a good yarn in the Treasury Gardens. I've joined the Young Catholic Workers in my parish and we've got this colossal dance going every fortnight. There's Catholic sheilas from miles around."

Adrian said he would meet O'Mullane at lunch-time. Then, all morning at his desk, he worked at shifting his precious landscapes from their sites in the Treasury Gardens back to the pages of *The English Countryside in Colour*. By lunch-time the gardens were just a place where oafish public servants dreamed of Y.C.W. dances.



*Jiri Tibor*

# Marshall-Hall and the Wowers

LEN FOX

The poet Shelley is linked with early Australian painting through the title of Arthur Streeton's famous 1896 Hawkesbury River landscape "The Purple Noon's Transparent Might". The painting was completed (in the artist's own words as given by Ann Galbally in her recent book on Streeton) "with a kind of artistic intoxication with thoughts of Shelley in my mind". And the title comes from Shelley's "Stanzas Written In Dejection, Near Naples":—

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,  
The waves are dancing fast and bright,  
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear  
The purple noon's transparent might. . .

Other titles of Streeton paintings were taken from poems by Wordsworth and Adam Lindsay Gordon. But, in any study of Streeton's links with poetry, a man emerges who is a much lesser poet than Shelley or Gordon, but who deserves to be remembered for three good reasons. He had a considerable influence on our early painters and also our early musical world; he was the main figure in a student 'demo' of more than seventy years ago; and he was one of our pioneers in the fight against Grundyism.

George Marshall-Hall, a musician-philosopher-poet born in England in 1862, came to live in Australia in 1890 after being appointed Ormond Professor of Music at the University of Melbourne. He painted a little, and soon became friendly with Australian artists. His close friendship with Streeton can be seen in Streeton's 1892 portrait of him, in Streeton's dedication of twenty-one panels in his 1907 Melbourne exhibition to Marshall-Hall, and in a long poem by Marshall-Hall published in 1897, "Hymn to Sydney", which is "dedicated to Arthur Streeton in his camp at Mosman's Bay", with a poem of dedica-

tion beginning: "O Poet of the Brush! More rare than thine was ever song yet heard?" (The description of Streeton as a "poet of the brush" agrees with later comments by Ursula Hoff and other critics that, whereas the French impressionists tended to paint everyday objects in an unemotional and even scientific way, the Australian impressionists often painted in a poetic mood, expressing a "national mythos".)

Marshall-Hall was a very minor poet, but in 1898 he published a book of poems which caused perhaps more of a sensation than has any other book of verse ever published in Australia (Ern Malley included). He had already, as described by Keith Dunstan in his book *Wowers*, come under fire from some churchmen for a speech at the Melbourne Town Hall on 1 August 1898, in which he praised the virtues of war. But the full ire of the philistines was aroused when, a few days later, a small volume of Marshall-Hall's verses, innocently (or provocatively?) entitled *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, appeared. The Argus review, headed "A Public Scandal", complained of "a lewdness which is insulting to womanhood"; other journals arose in support of the Argus, and letters poured in from such people as "A Victorian Mother" and "In Loco Parentis", protesting at the "obscene" verses, and at the Professor's criticisms of the Christian religion.

Marshall-Hall was summoned to the university council, and at first agreed to resign at the end of his term, but then decided to fight back on principle, quoting Section 23 of the University Act, which declared that no religious test should bar anyone from the university, and backing this with a hint of possible legal action. As a result, the council (on which leading churchmen were prominent) carried a resolution condemning Marshall-Hall for "the libidinous character of his poems" and "his ostentatious parade of disbelief

in Christianity” which, the council declared, “tended to make many parents shrink from allowing their children to attend the teachings of the University”—but the resolution went on to say that the council, in view of its limited powers, would take no further action, except to warn the offender that council considered it would be impossible to reappoint him when his tenure of five years ended in 1900.

Feelings ran so high that the Presbyterian Assembly burst into cheers as it carried a resolution expressing its abhorrence of Marshall-Hall’s utterances and calling for the university to be armed with ample powers to deal with such a case.

The poems that caused such a sensation were so mild that today they seem merely old-fashioned; they could have been published in the 1940s and no one would have even suggested they were obscene. Apparently one thing that shocked the philistines was that Marshall-Hall had published poems reminiscent of Swinburne or Shelley under the title of “Hymns”. A second offence was that in his introduction he had expressed the belief that happiness and beauty lay in man’s unity with the universe and added: “But of all forms, the form which awakens this supreme happiness most clearly, most powerfully, most ecstatically, most generally, is the relation between man and woman — Love — the mutual caresses of lovers are the physical expression of the deepest intellectual truth. In the supremest moment of passion (as in the corresponding mental state of pure contemplation) the *ego* is annihilated.”

And thirdly, the somewhat old-fashioned poems about “groves” and “glades” and the Greek gods were interspersed with a number of short, pithy, down-to-earth barbs. The following three are examples, the first being a verse from a poem entitled “To a Parson, On His Refusing a Glass Of Wine With Contumely”:

Hence with your narrow creeds! your trite  
Theologies, and dogmas drear!  
More in a merry heart the gods delight  
Than prayers and groans that scare  
The night. . .

#### THEOLOGICAL

One thinks this, another that,  
According as he’s lean or fat,  
Those that cannot think at all  
Theologians we call.

#### KING DAVID

O David was a worthy king,  
Merrily could he harp and sing.  
He became the father of his nation  
By dint of prayer and fornication.  
He loved his lass, and he loved his Art,  
And he was a man after God’s own heart.

If such verses caused some to see him as a devil incarnate, there were others who found him a likeable and even an admirable person. An article on him in the *Adelaide Gleam* of July 1900 by B. Wibberly, who had been one of students, described him as a man of “originality, versatility, vigor and enthusiasm” and of advanced educational ideas. “There was an indefinable something, a strange magnetism and contagion about his enthusiastic individuality, that exerted a subtle and commanding influence over everyone brought within its charmed circle.” Wibberly quoted the *Adelaide Advertiser* of expressing sadness at Marshall-Hall’s “erratic, not to say erotic, effusions in verse”, but admitting that “he has raised musical art in Australia to a pitch that calls forth sincere appreciation and unstinted praise of his genius and work. . . one of the most candid critics, most popular of teachers, and most capable and enthusiastic of musicians.”

This judgment is confirmed by Sir James Barrett in his autobiography *Eighty Eventful Years*, in which he tells how Marshall-Hall in the 1890s helped to pioneer musical development in Melbourne by conducting a series of orchestral concerts (and without payment). This led to a small committee being formed to establish a permanent orchestra. The honorary secretary and later business manager was solicitor M. P. (Phil) Fox, brother of the artist E. Phillips Fox, and a glimpse of the characters of the two men is given in this extract from the book:

There were plenty of humorous incidents, as the good musician of those days was much more Bohemian than he is today. On one occasion, the professor told Mr. Fox that he must have a fourth rehearsal or there would be no concert. Mr. Fox said, “Very well, I will return the subscribers’ money and tell them that you will not conduct.” The professor said, “We will settle it; you can conduct the orchestra, and I will look after the management.” Mr. Fox replied, “I will not make a worse mess of the orchestra than you will of the management!” But the professor got his fourth rehearsal.

M. P. Fox of course is no longer alive, but his daughter Mrs Shirley Schneider of Adelaide wrote

to me recently to say: "My father had a tremendous admiration and affection for Marshall-Hall and I remember many visits to his widow, spent in Marshall-Hall's studio. His was a personality that lingered—strong, self-willed, self-opinionated, original, whimsical, towering over others and yet basically childlike. I still have many of his books on music, where the notes in the margin reveal a devastating and yet almost schoolboyish criticism. His wife was gentle, kindly, devoted—a perfect foil to his masterfulness."

Mrs Schneider quotes Marshall-Hall's marginal notes on a book on the Pianoforte Sonata—"B—Ass! Puerility! Godforsaken, dry-as-dust jargon!" And at the end: "The driest, emptiest, most pitiable collection of inconsequent rubbish that ever yet man was impertinent enough to ask five bob for." And, in another book that criticised the "bad taste" of parts of Schiller's Ode and the manner in which this is allegedly reflected in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony finale, Marshall-Hall has written: "Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! O! Superfine Assidity!", while throughout the book are liberal sprinklings of "Bosh!" "Worse Bosh!" "Ouff!" "Amateur Nonsense!" "Bah!" "Absurd!" "Booh!"

This opinionated and schoolboyish side to his character was clearly balanced by a mature and warm love for music, and a complete dedication to the ideals he believed in. His work in establishing a Conservatorium of Music had apparently been over and above anything he had been required to do, and even while criticising him the university council had to praise him for his "excellent work". But the philistines continued their campaign against him, and when, in June 1900 the university council made a move towards reappointing him, the headmasters and headmistresses of the church schools met to protest and organise a deputation to the council, while shocked letters to the press branded the professor as a "bigoted and aggressive infidel".

It was a time of hysteria. The Boer War was on, and the relief of Mafeking, announced on 21 May, had led to what the Argus called "a magnificent demonstration" at the Stock Exchange. "Change burst into vigorous cheers," the paper reported, "and a playful hilarity that knew no bounds." Main features of the "magnificent demonstration", according to the report, were "very frequent deep bumpers", knocking off of other people's hats, and scenes in which judges and "venerable pillars of the church" were jostled and tossed about. But, the Argus hastened to add,

"every man there was a Britisher, and ready to undergo any amount of discomfort on such an occasion without complaining". The paper went on to describe "magnificent cheers and the waving of flags. The spectacle was superb. . . tremendous cheering. . . renewed cheering. . . cheers, bugles, trumpets, etc. . . a grand demonstration. . . patriotic fervor. . . delirium. . . boisterous spirits. . . abandon—using the word in its full French significance. . . damages to the extent of about £100 was done, but that is a trifle to the Stock Exchange considering the occasion."

And under the heading "The Humor Of The Day", it was reported that a gentleman at the Town Hall meeting (the same evening) had stood silently by while the crowd shouted "Rule Britannia". Noticing his silence, "a patriotic bystander" had promptly wiped the silent man's face with a wet umbrella.

Perhaps something of the same patriotic spirit inspired the deputations which went to the university council on 18 June to demand that Marshall-Hall be not reappointed. But they didn't have it all their own way. The Argus the following day reported that "about a hundred University students gathered downstairs and gave three cheers for Professor Marshall-Hall and three groans for the deputation. They then sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow'. Subsequently, when the deputation went into the council-chamber the students made their way upstairs to the next room, where they continued to cheer for the professor and groan for the deputation. The vice-chancellor directed one of the officers to put them out, but this was found to be impossible."

Dr Crowther, on behalf of the deputation, used terms such as ". . . scurrilous . . . music with bad morals. . . gross and indecent. . . reappointment would be a disaster. . . great fight against immorality. . ." but, in the words of the newspaper reporter, "at this stage the door of the chamber was pushed open, and the students in the next room gave three cheers for Professor Marshall-Hall." Dr Crowther attempted to continue, but after a further interruption complained: "I cannot go on with this interruption." Here the door was again pushed open and the students gave three hearty groans for the deputation leaders, followed by "a voice" from the deputation: "It shows what sort of influence this man is exercising in the University."

Then a counter-deputation was ushered in, representing the teachers of the Conservatorium, the Liedertafel, the parents of past and present

students of the professor, and the Victorian Artists' Society, the latter being represented by Tom Roberts, John Longstaff, John Mather, John Ford Paterson and Frederick McCubbin. They spoke highly of Marshall-Hall and his influence on music and other arts. Marshall-Hall also had the support of his fellow-professors.

There must have been a feeling of anti-climax when the meeting was adjourned till a week later, with the vote finally showing nine for reappointment and nine against, and the vice-chancellor giving his second and casting vote against. The philistines and the Argus rejoiced.

A number of Marshall-Hall's teaching staff resigned to work at the new Conservatorium he now launched. In 1912 Marshall-Hall went to London where his opera "Stella" was produced. In 1914 Marshall-Hall was offered his old job as

Ormond Professor of Music, to resume in 1915. Time had vindicated him. In mid-1915 a portrait of him by E. Phillips Fox showed him still with the look of keen vitality and ironic but understanding humor on his face. But he was to die of appendicitis a few weeks later.

A tablet to his memory in the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music carries the phrase, "His soul was aflame with music". And it is clear that it was aflame with more than music. Sir James Barrett wrote of "the essential humanity which irradiated the man", and in these days, when a new generation is making a stand for honesty and human values against hypocritical moralising, it is good to remember George Marshall-Hall as a pioneer of music, and also of a broader human struggle.

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PHILLIP EDMONDS **Poetry in Publication**

Stephen Murray-Smith has started the ball rolling. He has articulated (Swag No. 64) the views of many readers of contemporary Australian poetry. First books are popping up like 'weeds' according to one view, cluttering up the 'market', and furthermore many new writers are seen to be incomprehensible. The other view seems to be that poets are an aesthetic select breed creating 'things'. If people read them ok, if they don't (or cannot stand the intellectual pace) so what.

Michael Dugan in "Poetry in Publication" (Overland no. 67) can't seem to make up his mind. On the one hand he is (in the article) promotion arm for the 'coterie' publication, (incorporating the implied assumption that because you are 'small' you are therefore serious) and on the other hand he is critical of this position for being 'self-indulgent' and 'hobbyist'. As the editor of a 'small' magazine which is neither 'coterie' or 'populist' I find the argument is circular, without looking at how most poets see themselves in this society. I am sure I speak for many people when I say that we'd like to sell a hundred thousand copies of each book; but people have the strangest ideas about words — 'coterie', 'self-indulgent', 'hobbyist' for example.

Books of poetry and literary magazines can't be publicized widely because this is a rigid economic system based on profit and therefore speculation. Therefore, to view the 'social' relevance of poetry vis a vis sales figures within an idealised libertarian framework is totally naive. I think that both Dugan and Barbara Giles (in a rejoinder, Overland 68) are doing this — naively believing that good poetry should be read by 'the people', and moaning that it isn't being. I do that as well, because you want to pay your bills, but surely it is the image of the poet that counts here. Hundreds of people (my sample) have said to me that poets are either 'queer', 'romantic', 'dreamy' or 'im-

practical'. Despite knowledge to the contrary within the literary world itself, there exists this monolithic 'Dylan-esque' image of the artist. Poets say they don't like it, but existing readers seem to need it, and lo and behold many young poets promote themselves as tortured, tragic figures. No wonder that much contemporary poetry is a procession of semi clever wordage, and that dead poets are the most popular.

The populist assumptions of Dugan and Giles seem to imply that the activity of poetry is by its very nature 'left-progressive'. I hate to disillusion them. It was only three years ago that a well known Melbourne poet told me that it didn't matter what government was in as long as the grants kept coming. I believe that is the position of most artists in this country.

Poetry is not selling in Australia in 1978, ask any bookseller. The 'market' has on it an enormous range of titles and no matter how good they are, they will not be promoted by retailers with a vested interest in a multi-national dominated market. The activities of the Literature Board are essential so as to preserve Australian literature—good, bad, or indifferent; but its role is essentially stop gap. The result is that large foreign owned publishers bleat on the one hand about 'market' interference<sup>1</sup>, and on the other hand accept large subsidies from the Literature Board.

We are faced with the spectacle of 73 literary publications coming out each year, all of whom have dwindling 'markets'. Part of the reason is in my view because of the physical difficulties of distribution, and partly because of the timid relationship most poets have with their country.

In the late 60s certain Melbourne booksellers had poetry as a major line, but there were extenuating circumstances. Presently, 'the market' has passed through a period of change. We are

back with issueless pot-boilers, 'quickies' and resignation. But the poets live on, their egos extended, faced with their need for print, with minimal political awareness as to how 'good' poetry never reaches the populace, and too few see themselves as having a role in fundamental social change. Because of this, writers in this country are classic 'outsiders' — isolated, alienated 'individualists'. No wonder most readers couldn't care less. There are exceptions. The system requires that 'star' billing be given to individual artists. Such artists offer up a further reflection of convenient images through their need to survive. Coupled with this: poets and most 'literary' people have a missionary attitude to the 'people'. If not open contempt for philistine Australians, there exists the mistaken assumption that they are set apart from the rest of society, an essentially neurotic view.

I was interested to hear in Adelaide the Canadian poet Margaret Atwood explain how she became political about her art. How she was in effect forced into her position through being idealistic and ambitious for her talent. This is a position that is becoming clearer for some Australian writers as they realize that their work has something to do with the need for socialism in this country.

Paradoxically the avant-garde (which Murray-

Smith refers to in 'Swag' no. 64) propagate a 'left' image and at the same time they are the arch elitists of 'our' culture, the interesting, exotic, romantic end products of an alienated social structure. Furthermore, the so called 'right'<sup>2</sup> represented by Les A. Murray appear to be among the only writers challenging the trendy 'left' image of the coming republic, an image that excludes 'straight' lifestyles and cows.

An acquaintance of mine believes that every poetry publication should look like the products of the American publisher *Celestial Arts* — glossy covers and cliches, at best mindless mysticism. Serious literature has always been embattled, and here gimmicks abound. There may be a 'market' for the 'art object' publisher. The times are opportune, and inflation is rampant. As for serious writing, the future is clouded, yet there are cosmetic surprises; new presses and new writers. Everything possible should be done to protect 'our' literature, but without involvement in the total perspective, poetry in this country will remain basically covert.

<sup>1</sup> see 'The Australian Book Trade' Report of the Aust Book Trade Working Party 1975. ABPA 1975.

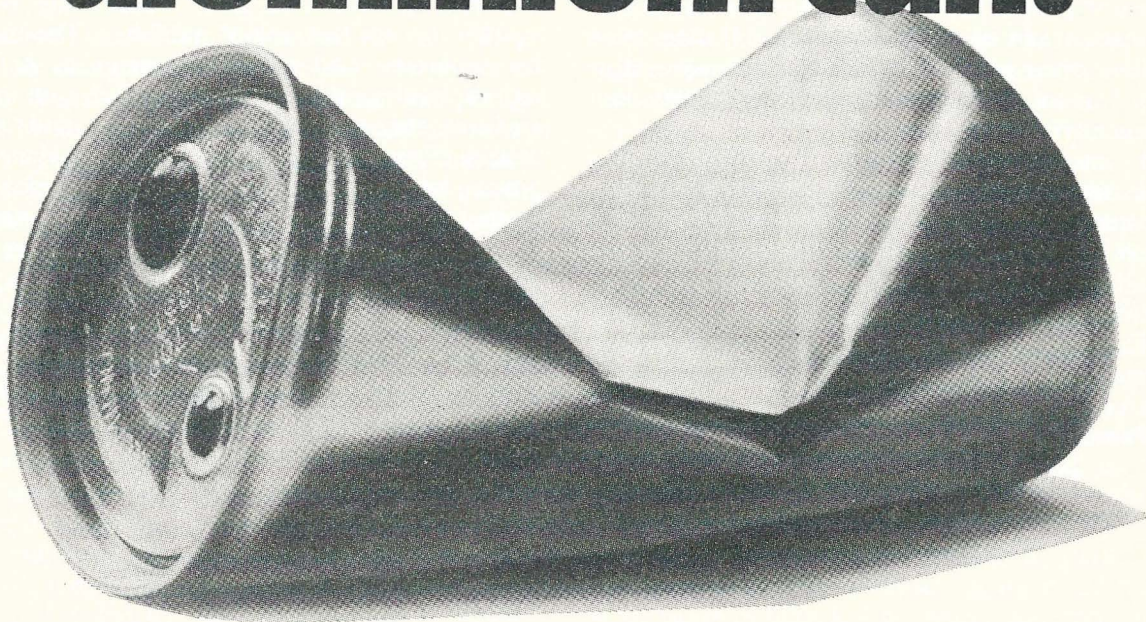
<sup>2</sup> Michael Wilding: review of Ed Sanders — 'Investigative Poetry' 'Togatus' (Tasmania Student Union) 1977.

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# books

## WHAT SOME POETS ARE UP TO

Frank Kellaway

Geoffrey Dutton: *A Body of Worms* (Edwards and Shaw).

Lawrence Collinson: *Hovering Narcissus* (Overland Press/Grandma Publications, \$3, \$6 numbered and signed).

Eric Rolls: *The Green Mosaic* (Nelson).

Rudi Krausmann (ed.): *Recent German Poetry* (Aspect Publications/Goethe Institutes in Australia).

Rudi Krausmann: *The Water Lily* (Makar Press).

Makar, Vol. 12, Nos. 2 and 3.

John Jenkins: *Blind Spot* (Makar Press).

Lyndon Walker: *The Green Wheel Barrow* (Makar Press).

Graeme Curtis: *At Last No Reply* (Makar Press, \$1.20).

Peter Annand: *These Ducks* (Makar Press).

Tom Thompson: *The Island Hotel Dreams* (Contempa).

Jennifer Maiden: *Mortal Details* (Rigmarole of the Hours, \$2.50).

Lee Knowles: *Cool Summer* (Freemantle Arts Centre Press, \$3.25).

Dutton has always been an interesting poet from the time he contributed to *Angry Penguins* and brought out his first book *Night Flight and Sunrise* which showed some influence of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, to his seventh and latest volume *A Body of Words*. This book is entirely original and exhibits a healthy variety of mood, content and tone of voice. Its variety makes the book continually interesting and enjoyable to read, which is worth emphasising because, as any conscientious reviewer knows, the reading of a great deal of poetry, sometimes even when it has some admirable qualities, is a chore and a bore, largely because the poets have only one tone of voice and are not interested in the shape or chime of what they write.

Dutton doesn't use rhyme in this latest book. The fact that he served a fair apprenticeship in traditional forms earlier on may have something to do with the careful shaping of most of these

later, freer poems. However, too often for the reader's comfort he shows a cavalier disregard either for rhythmical consistency or for varying the rhythm as a means of emotional expression. An otherwise interesting poem like 'Yellow Crocus', for example, wanders aimlessly from one sort of rhythm to another and is almost impossible to read aloud convincingly. It ends with a fly-away rhythm which takes the wind out of its own sails. 'Slice open the bulb, you will not find/yellow of next summer/ only the death of this.' I believe this is a fault with many of the poems. It goes hand in hand with occasional wordiness and recourse to cliché which were far rarer in his earlier poetry and suggests that perhaps Dutton is publishing more, and less selectively, than he did when his reputation was less secure. However it would be ungrateful to overemphasise these faults in view of the book's vigour and richness.

Dutton has always written witty, angry poems of social comment and they are here in force. The book begins and ends with eloquent poems about the way we are killing off the country and the way city-dwellers are living off it. Perhaps the finest of the poems in this manner is 'The Stranded Whales' which presents outrage in the coolest and most telling way through minute observation laced with irony. 'And a lady teacher with a knowledge of biology/ Succeeded at last in slicing, though slippery with blood,/ And giggly, a complete anterior fin,/ which will reveal, when cleaned down to the skeleton,/ An arm, a hand and five fingers, just like a human's.' There is also a clever, disillusioned poem which Labor supporters won't much like about 11 November 1975. The subject matter covers gliding, burning off, harvest, his family and other people, all the poems making interesting comment in vivid poetic language. There are also several poems translated from the German of Heine and the Spanish of

Pablo Neruda. However more than half the book is taken up with love poems or poems about love. The attitudes are admirably robust, never solemn, sometimes bawdy but the theme is always sexual love never mere sexuality. The best of these show Dutton still true to a strong lyric impulse which has always been important in his poetry. 'Unexpected Meeting', 'City Weathers', 'The Detritus of Love', 'The Disguises of Zeus', 'Dream at Dawn', 'Touch', 'X-ray', 'Swimming Naked' are all fine. The long cycle, 'A Body of Words', is a brilliant fusion of commentary on a girl and a love affair with quotations from the Oxford Dictionary. I had to admire its wit but I must admit I didn't greatly enjoy the way the lyric impulse was shattered by the quotations, though of course that was the point of the exercise. Still it smacked a little too much of an exercise in virtuosity.

Laurence Collinson has been writing poetry almost as long as Dutton; *Hovering Narcissus* is his third book of poems. Like Dutton he has also published fiction. These are all poems in traditional measures and forms, most of them regularly rhymed. It may seem perverse in a reviewer who sees value in these disciplines and enjoys them for their own sake to complain that in Collinson's handling they sometimes tend to archaic stiffness. In the first poem, for example, though the reminiscences of Marvel are intentional they do nothing to avoid a quaint archness. 'Apples for taut teeth to chunk/ peaches in whose seas are sunk/ voyaging lips.' There is a similar reference to Housman later on which seems to me equally artificial. However although this is an annoying mannerism it is peripheral to the book's central quality which is honesty — a genuine attempt to come to grips with his homosexual experience and set down exactly what he feels about it. It would be less than straightforward if I were not to declare my heterosexual prejudice. I find one particular stanza entirely distasteful. 'From the remorseless cabins of his body/ love reeks and I exult that from seeds of excrement/ I breed poems.' I have an irresistible urge to add, 'like maggots.' Still, that was the only time I drew my old maidish skirts tight around my knees. On the whole it seems to me the attempt is admirable and results in some very original and interesting poetry, particularly when Collinson forgets to be literary. 'The Cheat' describes the relationship with his lover with almost Proustian subtlety. 'Getter and Giver', 'Meeting Who?' 'Description', manage to be witty and sincere at the same time and are elegantly turned. 'Night of Bliss' ends: 'Brains or balls? He wasn't

sure;/ he fussed his flesh with intellect;/ he forced my intellect reflect/ on assonance: enjoy — endure./ How could I, when he came, deplore/ his going; wine turns sour or wise?/ Sufficient fretting years despise/ longwinded lover, urgent bore.' The best poems are shapely, intelligent, vivid and honest.

Eric C. Rolls' *The Green Mosaic, memories of New Guinea*—the blurb sets our expectations high. The poems, it says 'are shattering in their beauty; intense, often erotic, they testify to the universality of emotions and transcend cultural and racial barriers.' In the first poem in the book 'Red-plumed Bird of Paradise' Rolls puts down some of his ideas about poems. 'A good poem is as startling as a desert flower—/ It is something you'd not expect to find./ It is not designed for an audience/ But it is intended finally for presentation to an audience./ A miracle needs to be witnessed.' Later of the bird he says, 'He is not tradition/ He alters the concept of bird.' The poems in this book all fall very far short of miracles, nor do they 'alter the concept of' poem. Still in spite of these inflated claims and those of the blurb, *Green Mosaic* is an interesting and original piece of writing. The book is a string of loosely poetical prose pieces, or if you prefer it, prosy free-verse pieces, which are easy and enjoyable to read and which do give a very vivid picture indeed of the New Guinea that Rolls remembers. Furthermore it contains a lot of interesting, intelligent comment. I particularly liked the conclusion to 'The Missionary'. 'But it was the Devil's accent on souls/ That most reduced the confidence of the New Guinea demons./ They had trafficked in bodies./ New Guinea became a more comfortable place to live in./ The removal of physical threat/ Was more real than a postponed psychological threat./ The Devil offered some immediate benefits./ He was responsible for making a lot of apparent Christians./ As usual his game was somewhat obscure.'

The quotation gives a taste of the prosy, relaxed rhythms characteristic of most of the pieces. However sometimes rhythms are used skillfully to help express the emotional drift of a poem as in the quirky, painfully hobbling poem 'Leprosy', or 'Pig Killing' with its jerky, rushing rhythms. One admirable thing in *Green Mosaic* is the way in which vivid, compellingly interesting anecdote is woven into the fabric of the book. The first 'Sergeant Tawil' poem, 'Bogari', 'Ashur' and 'Pitik' are my favourites among pieces of this sort, but there are at least as many others which are almost as vivid and interesting. If one over-

looks the prosiness and slackness of rhythm in individual pieces, *Green Mosaic* is an impressive achievement. The anecdotes, the descriptive pieces and the reflective commentary support one another strongly to produce a most intriguing account of an intelligent man's recollections of his wartime (and later?) experience of New Guinea.

Rudi Krausmann is the editor of *Recent German Poetry*. The book starts with an introductory essay (about 7000 words) on the contemporary situation in German poetry, by Olaf Reinhardt. It is interesting and informative and, except in the case of one Swiss poet, Kurt Marti, of whom he gives a detailed account, deals largely with poets writing before those represented in the anthology in order to give an idea of the tradition. The first section is an attempt to put post-war German poetry in its historical setting. He deals briefly with the 'question of how literature was possible at all after Auschwitz.' 'There were a number of answers . . . to try to come to terms with or explain the guilt, to try to treat the horrors in some adequate literary fashion, or to ignore it for the time being, take stock and make a fresh start.'

The poems are all translated by Krausmann, half of them in collaboration with Reinhardt and the other half in collaboration with John Tranter. The German text is printed opposite the English so that with even a little German it is possible to get a feel for the rhythms and the sound of the original. The translations are comely and workmanlike and as near as possible they are literal. It's hard to imagine the job being better done.

The poems themselves are predominantly witty social and political comments, almost all satirical, many of them cynical and world-weary. 'Hopes for a better world/ are prehistoric' (Bisinger). 'Once we are/in/ we're allowed to ask questions' (Brechtbuehl). 'Living with murderers/ is an understandable desire/ if one clings to life', . . . (Fried). In this vein I liked best the savage but very funny 'Song of Yourself' by Heisse, and Karsunke's 'Kilroy was Here', an indictment of American occupation/intervention. There was also a strong surreal element represented honourably by Grass and others. Of these I liked best Pforte's 'The Elephant in me' which concludes with the elephant, who has just taken possession of his visitor's chair, addressing him. 'Ah Dietger, you know/ for a change, just once/ I would like to have your thin skin.' Concrete poetry is represented by Kriwet. A poem like a primitive painting by Ritter is unlike any of the others. One beautiful poem by Huchel, resonant and

mysterious, about a barn owl, seems to have found its way into the collection by mistake.

Krausmann's own poetry in *The Water Lily* is very like the predominant strain in his anthology. It is hard to say whether that is because he just happened to select those poets with whom he had a lot in common or whether he believes that their writing and his own, this particular manner, represents the spirit of the times, the *zeitgeist*. Certainly Reinhardt in his introduction mentions with approval Benn's 'guide in how to write modern poetry, or more accurately, what to avoid if one's poems are to be regarded as modern.' John Tranter too in an interview in *Makar* Vol. 12 No. 2 makes the same assumption that what we should be about is getting with the trends and even talks about people 'updating' their styles. Thank God Blake had never heard of the *zeitgeist*. Imagine him trying to write like Wordsworth!

At all events Krausmann's *Water Lily* is world-weary, defeatist, cynical and attempts to turn it all off with a charming smile. 'Every rule is impossible/ every art superfluous/ every statement meaningless/ every canvas nothingness . . .' I can't quote enough to give you the smile. Apart from the longish *Water Lily* poem there are extracts from two other works, *Structures* and *Maps*. At their best these are clever and witty. 'china/ was too wise/ for too long/ which made it change/ its politics/ to have:/ instead of lasting proverbs and starvation/ passing slogans and prosperity.' However most of the pieces give the impression that he is trying too hard and the worst of them are downright silly.

Manfred Jurgensen is another German poet writing in English. *A Kind of Dying* is in four sections, 'Ward twelve', 'Post-mortem', 'Fragments', 'Foreplay and afterthought'. The first section written out of an experience in a mental hospital is depressed but convincing. The second section starts with an eloquent and moving poem to his father. There is also a poem *In Memoriam A.S.* about Anne Sexton. Most of the others are about a past love affair. The most telling contains the lines, 'the same old merry-go-round/ on which you took us/ for our first ride/ a hit parade ago/ now all that's left/ is sheet music/ the stubborn reading/ of an exercise we know by heart.' The third section of fragments is often surreal, witty or both. I liked best the last section. It is not given a heading-page though the table of contents indicates that it begins on p.48. The first four poems in this section are among his best. 'Song', 'Man without reason', 'Angelica pectoris',

'Speech defect'. I also particularly admired 'Silent night' towards the end.

Jurgensen writes with a mastery of the language which ought to be the envy of most of our young, native-born poets. He experiments with forms but sees no reason to avoid traditional shapes and measures when they are appropriate to a particular poetic impulse. The book gives a strong impression of integrity. There is no slack acceptance of ennui; indeed most of the poems get their strength from a vigorous, often a grim struggle with suffering and despair. The poems are always tough-minded, frequently working out conceits which are quite modern and individual but reveal the same sort of intellectual panache as our English metaphysicals do. 'Love/ an open cut mining/ bloody archaeology of syllables/ layers of repetition released in one word/ love/, how i fumble in a language/ of so many tongues.' Jurgensen sees himself as the servant of the poem. 'it is not true/ that my poems/ are all/ about me/ on the contrary/ i am/ all about/ my poems'.

Makar is one of the most interesting poetry magazines being published in this country at the moment. The numbers which I have in front of me are Vol. 12 nos. 2 and 3. They include intelligent and provocative interviews with John Tranter and R. F. Brissenden as well as poems from young as well as established poets including: Tranter, Brissenden, Vicki Viidikas, Jennifer Maiden, Lyndon Walker, Rudi Krausmann, Gwen Harwood, Andrew Taylor, Thomas Shapcott, Kris Hemensley, Stefanie Bennet, Eric Beach, Shelton Lea and many others.

Makar Press is involved in an enterprising venture publishing individual books of poetry. This batch for review includes seven of which Krausmann's *Water Lily* is one. I will comment briefly on four others. I particularly liked John Jenkins' *Blind Spot*. Most of it is satire, some of it hilariously funny, all of it clever, articulate and at times eloquent. The first long poem in five parts, 'Read this', cuts two ways at advertising techniques and at literature appreciation. A verse paragraph from 'The Very Beautiful Women' will have to suffice as a meagre sample. 'I once thought that the most beautiful of the very rich and/ beautiful women were beautiful — not for other women, nor for/men — but for themselves alone. But recently, a supreme irony/ has occurred to me. It may be true that the very beautiful women/ spend so much time on their perfect images because they suffer/ a supreme lack of confidence. They secretly feel they are

ridiculous!/ And perhaps with good reason. For the very beautiful is as much/ a freak in this world as the hideously ugly. They may feel/ intuitively that at the extremes the circle rejoins. Are they always/ then a hair's breadth from being spurned as grotesque?'

Lyndon Walker's *The Green Wheelbarrow* is quirky and original. 'Transposition' is perhaps the cleverest. It begins, 'The idea of being another man/ has always/ admired me./ Has brushed my hair/ in the bathroom mirror, slowly.' At its best the poetry has a directness of emotion, an immediacy which carries the reader along at a rush. He is good at conveying the spirit of particular places, 'Frazer Island', 'Casino', for example.

The best poems in Graeme Curtis' *At Last No Reply* are about people. The observation is sharp, the attitudes are compassionate and humane though the expression is generally cool. 'At the Meat Counter' and 'B.H.' tend towards the chilly but are nevertheless among the best. Only very occasionally, as at the end of 'Cold', does he slacken into banality.

Peter Annand's *These Ducks* is slighter. Typical subjects: 'Treeless Hills', 'Sheep', 'Cadbury Castle', 'Owl', 'Folly Bridge', 'Oxford'. I thought the best were 'Elegy for an Orcadian Fisherman', 'George Braque' and 'Owl' which ends, 'wrapped in the scandalous legends/ of generations of looking/ incomparably lovely;/ ready/ to have your eyes out.'

*The Island Hotel Dreams* is by Tom Thompson. It is a diary in free verse or a prose poem in diary form. It is a hectic rave about the narrator travelling in Thailand with a girl, both of them high on drugs. The girl becomes hysterical, wants to screw a lot of Thai men, gives away her jewellery, demands the narrator sit in front of her for three hours eating pineapple, burns her traveller's cheques, tears up her paper money, gives away a camera. Eventually the narrator half horrified, half staggered with admiration for her performance, manages to get her onto the Bangkok Express. The writing has a breathless panache. It is a gripping story with frightening scenes of drug hallucination. To one who has had virtually no experience of this kind it appears to be an entirely authentic account of going over the edge. The thing I liked best about it was the way the author made you share his admiration for the girl. I'd have hated to be with her; I'd have been scared stiff; but I must admit there is genuine vicarious pleasure in the accounts of people who have the courage to flout all the sexual and social conventions, particularly those involving the

ownership of possessions, partly just for the hell of it and partly because these are seen to be supporting and concealing violence, sadism and corruption.

Jennifer Maiden's *Mortal Details* is her fourth book. I found the poems in her first book *Tactics* much more readily available to me. It seems likely that this is my fault because she is obviously an intelligent poet and a good craftsman with the ability to coin what Max Harris once called the 'electric' image. 'The black and omnipresent burning dew./ A leaf as stiff as jade, inhabited/ By curt quarrels of light.' However a poem like 'Fabrics' in the new collection seems deliberately perverse. Sections 4, 5, 6 of its nine sections are characteristic. '4/ an ease of rote 5/ You rub/ an antibiotic itch, I quell/ a brilliant coffee headache/ with pink milk/ Truce-tense, one yearns/ for any avid lapse, but/ valium-serene, the children/ drift through shopping centres, hover/ at the opulent smell of roast fowl/ 6/ "she still had some/ of her milk teeth".' However the book contains two stories in prose which have some of the intellectual élan of her earlier poems. 'Lindy Cary' is the more successful. Its line is clean, the writing limpid, the psychology deft and subtle. It has a suggestive resonance which implies a good deal about nefarious human debts. The second story, 'Mortal Details', is longer and more ambitious. It concerns the bungling of a premeditated murder and the assisted suicide of the would-be murderer. I don't believe it succeeds because the reader doesn't get to know enough about Noel Betts to understand either his motive for murder or later for suicide. That four people should connive in the suicide in the way they do is not made convincing either. Even though it's a failure the writing is individual and vividly suggestive in detail.

Lee Knowles' *Cool Summer* is the fifth of a series of publications brought out by Freemantle Arts Centre Press of which Nicholas Hasluck's distinguished *Anchor* was the first. It is a very attractive book of poems accompanied by photographs. The pictures are by Hans Versluis and complement or offset the poems without ever attempting to illustrate them. The photos are of old farm buildings and machinery and a beautiful print of a weathered fence post holding up barbed wire above flowers and grass terminates the book.

Of the younger Australian Poets I've read, Lee Knowles has the strongest sense of history. Sometimes there is a feeling of the past being alive in the present and relevant to contemporary experience as in 'Going Back' which ends, 'I stole

a small stone for my father and caught a bus back to reality/ sure I had touched a hand across the sundial/ that did not find me strange.' Sometimes she is obsessed by the apparent nothingness of time past. 'Nearby among a tangle of grass, bones and paddy melons/ an old sheep displays some passing interest.' The poems about Dutch seamen 'Batavia Incident', 'Kalbarri,' 'The Voyage of Abram Leeman', 'Cape Leeuwin', are all intensely imagined and written with an easy, flowing free-verse style with a light hand on the tiller. In the poems about her grandparents the historical interest is more curious and wondering. Lee Knowles is fascinated by different perspectives and her interest in history carries over into her interest in living people so that the difference of perspective in looking at an old woman through the fairy-tale spectacles of childhood and in looking at her as a rational adult becomes very like a difference of outlook between two centuries: 'Phoebe'. Particularly in some of the more personal poems and the poems about particular people which are shorter, she achieves a strong sense of organic shape: 'Drive in the Hills', 'Upstairs Woman'. The book ends strongly with a vivid historical piece: 'The Highlands'.

*Cool Summer* shows a breadth of mind, a variety of interests, a wry compassion, an ability to imagine vividly which remind me a little of the poems of Dorothy Hewett, though in manner and style they are entirely different. Best of all, although Lee Knowles' poems are mature they suggest the possibility of development in a number of different directions. If she can avoid the trends, achieve greater compression and manage to extend her sense of organic form to longer poems she will certainly become an even better poet than she already is.

## FORM AND CONTENT

Judith Wardle

Stefanie Bennett: *The Tenth Lady* (Cochon & White Tara, \$7.80).

Nigel Roberts: *In Casablanca for the Waters* (Wild & Woolley, \$8.95 and \$3.95).

John Tranter: *Crying in Early Infancy: One Hundred Sonnets* (Makar, \$8.50 and \$3.95).

Each of the three poets whose latest book is reviewed here has published enough verse to be regarded as fairly well established in the Australian poetry scene. Some of the reasons for their position can be seen in the present collections.

The strength of Stefanie Bennett's work lies

in her sense of form. Unfortunately there is often more form than content in *The Tenth Lady*. In some cases the form is graphic, as in the repetition of “does” throughout the central lines of “Scissors know”,

does as  
the wind does  
does arch  
as the hand raised overlong

In this case the pattern does not contribute to the sense, and indeed the associations are so private and the syntax so ambiguous in places that for this reader there is very little sense in the poem at all. This problem of private significance can be illustrated by a quotation from “All Fox”:

The sink stands. Gurgles. We’d  
come out of it  
Bright sanctions [sic] flares, repeat  
constitution  
a sleet and dry lie.

This reminds me of Tristan Zara’s cut up poems rather than of the work of Emily Dickinson, who is invoked in one of these poems. Stefanie Bennett achieves most where she is least pretentious, as in “The Thaw” which begins

A dam is opening its gates in your eyes;  
Perhaps  
the snow on your eyelashes has melted  
Perhaps  
you are visualising some lost country

Nigel Roberts’ *In Casablanca for the Waters* again has a strong visual element, both in the form of the poems and in the use of photographs, stills from films and paintings. The graphic element is good, and at best the poems vindicate his challenge

so what  
that it looks  
like  
cut up  
prose

There are no problems with interpretation in these poems, which in expression at least belong to the public arena. Yet there is a surprisingly academic element in some poems, references whether verbal or visual that require a specialist knowledge: pictures by Modigliani, and Brueghel, allusions to Keats, Whitman, Baudelaire, Auden; and surely some of the meaning of “The bed” derives from the allusion to Donne’s *Elegy XIX*, “Going to Bed”?

columbus  
i seek no new worlds i  
will remain here

to chart  
this isabella’s  
coastline

This is not a complaint, more an expression of surprise, that someone so concerned with public statements should be in some ways a poet’s poet. I like what he does, except when the propaganda becomes too trivial, as in the poem about Ashe’s win at Wimbledon. Observations of small details of life, such as marijuana leaf pendants on sale at Waltons, spark off witty comments. Though at times the tone is unnecessarily shrill, restraint appears where it is appropriate, as in “this poem is”, dedicated to Charles Buckmaster.

The formal elements of John Tranter’s *Crying in Early Infancy* are stressed by the subtitle, *One Hundred Sonnets*. Not that there are many conventional sonnets among these fourteen-line poems. There are only three of them, one of which begins appropriately, “He’s older now, and has learnt the need to survive./The evening’s carefully planned.” It is rather that one is aware of control in the experimentation with varieties of form: from standard metrical lines (see the fine trochaic tetrameter of sonnet 92), to ones where only the stressed syllables are significant in the pattern, to almost free verse working in thought-units. Rhymes are equally flexible, with variations on the traditional sonnet pattern, some poems with just the occasional true rhyme, others loosely linked by assonance or consonantal rhyme, and some completely free. At best, the different formal aspects match the mood of the poems: for instance, the partly rhymed sonnet 44 is arrested by its one short line:

Today broke like a china plate,  
rain and cloud, drifting smoke;  
tonight fell like a suiciding athlete  
or a bad joke.

In the twentieth sonnet, Tranter writes, “This book’s a catalogue of dreams.” Dreams are often difficult to interpret, and so are many of these poems, because this is ‘confessional’ poetry, the poetry of private experience. It is not that I would like his book “to move / eagerly from phrase to phrase, yet casually”, as he puts it, but that I find it impossible in some cases to guess whether a particular poem is indeed an account of a dream, with only dream logic, or an obliquely metaphorical account of some incident in his life or some public event. Nevertheless, John Tranter’s poems have a wider range of emotion and subject than the other two works reviewed here. Psychological, emotional and sexual aspects of his relationships are treated with wry humour,

affection, or bewilderment; and around his personal world, the environment is sketched in by references that range from the latest war to the latest music, from *The Student Prince* to Wittgenstein.

## SURVIVING THE HORROR

Geraldine Starbrook

Matylda Engelman: *Journey Without End* (Lantana, \$5.50).

Of the 5.7 million Jews who perished under Hitler's purge during the last World War three million were Polish; nearly 10 per cent of Poland's pre-war population.

Matylda Engelman was one of those fortunate enough to survive and also one who did not have to endure the hellish conditions of a concentration camp. Nevertheless she has a story to tell that borders on the harrowing, the events of which were certainly desperate. Indeed, she made a promise to God that if she survived, she would record her experiences.

The book opens on the 27th August, 1939, with Matylda and her young baby (her husband had gone to Palestine to establish a new life for his family there) fleeing on a packed refugee train from Bielsko on the Czechoslovakian border to Warsaw. Warsaw was generally believed to be a comparative centre of safety now it was rumoured that the Nazis were coming. (The Jews were actually sealed within the city's ghetto in November, 1940 and in mid-May, 1943 it was liquidated). Anti-Semitic feeling is soon evident on the train amongst the jostling people. Thus begins Matylda's continuous trek back and forth, from town to Warsaw, from Warsaw to town, as she flees in the hope of keeping one step ahead of the impending disasters—'Journey Without End'—a journey for self-survival but more importantly a journey motivated by the determination to keep her baby with her and to protect her at all costs from the holocaust all around them.

One needs to know a little background to visualise the state Poland was in. After the country became a republic in 1919 on the condition, guaranteed to the Allied powers, that it would protect and safeguard the civil and political rights of its minorities, it almost immediately went back on its word, in its failure to uphold these ideals.

The rise of Nazism in Germany as the thirties progressed and the death of Marshal Pilsudski in 1935 accelerated her fascist course and anti-Semitic feeling, the latter resulting in many types of legislation against the Jews. It is a credit to them that despite this attitude they managed to maintain a vital community for some time. Germany invaded Poland on 1st September, 1939, thus beginning the Second World War.

After what seems an eternity Matylda and her daughter end up at Brost in Austria where she works as slave-labor at a local vineyard belonging to a Mr Schultz. Conditions are hard and she alternates between pleasing and displeasing her employer. However, he turns out to have no love for the Germans. The story ends with the approach of the Russian soldiers scattering their German foes in their path.

Along the way Matylda manages to obtain a forged identity card in December, '42 and assumes the role of a Polish Christian. She loses most of her family, shows much initiative in implementing her plans and receives various kinds of help from selfless friends. They include Wanda, who lives outside the Warsaw ghetto, Dr. Dworek, a compassionate and courageous man and 'Wasniek', whose probable identity is that of a priest working for the Polish underground in Czenstochowa.

Like Zofia Kruk/Penny Harding, the Polish author of *A Taste of Fear*, Matylda Engelman has chosen Melbourne for the basis for her new life and has also left the writing of her memoirs for some considerable time. The latter is probably due to the problem of learning our language and the fact that it might be a while before one is prepared to relive such memories on paper.

Just looking at the actual production of the book itself, composed in Sri Lanka and printed in Singapore, I thought that it might tend to irritate as the type-setting is large and the paragraphs widely spaced. However, I got used to this quite quickly and indeed it is probably an asset for readers with poorer eyes. 'Gila', the much-loved daughter, has illustrated the cover with an appropriate design.

Books such as *Journey Without End* deserve to be read, and should be read, as the qualities of determination, courage, and faith in God which emerge from this type of literature are both moving and inspirational.

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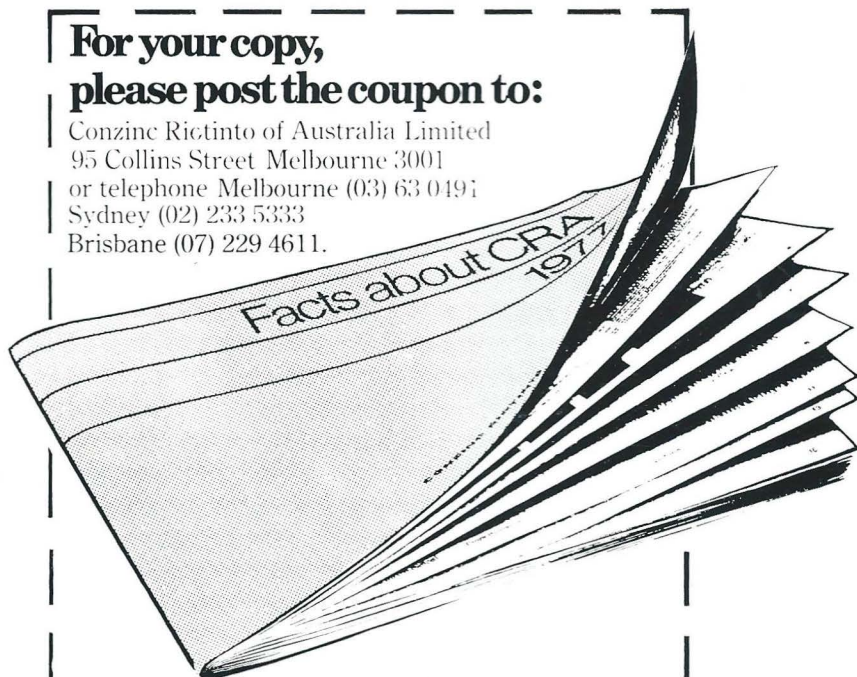
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