

BEACH WALK

Sun hits crests
and waves slap beach
and feet shuffle sand
and sandals are a'danglin
in one hand.
Thoughts become feelings
shore lines gleam
now eyes heavy with heat,
sense an underwater scene
where Coolness, the friend,
comes on surging through
sun glasses powderin'in
bands of blue
and a curling wave of freshness beckons-
saying, "swim time true!"

POND LIFE

The old dam
marked 'dry' on the map
was needly with reeds
and ploppy with frogs
green upright
gossipy full
deep in the sun-speared
prism of tree shapes
blue floating
in the afternoon
of the dam.

Moon porthole
bonds in the sweetwater ponds

Till -
smooth as a backward bellow in the night
lightning grins white
and thunder clamps
a smouldering lid
down tight.

Still the green ones
ceaselessly haggle, bet and win and
gargle their love
in throaty unheed
of the wrack above.

CLIMBING

I trudge by climbing the spur
among the trees
but as I go
they slide by
until through trunks
and tangled growth
I struggle
though they seem moving
and I seem still.
Some trees are shaggy;
some are smooth
brave and shy
full of leaf
with shards of sky,
blue intense,
I'm left behind
while they swish by.

DEAR DARLING

Down shading undulations
With banks as brown as
the bellies of bellwethers
the old Darling rounds her bends
and swans past her billabongs
tawny with banana shapes and smooth to the grip
as the eyes of a snake.
The river makes a pottery of her trees
with swells and curls and knotty whorls.
A cuckoo's scroll is leafed around somewhere
with sounds like
fruits that glisten in the air.
Below, looped on promenades of dusty booms
pelicans dry wings, wipe bills and heavenly stretch
as if to say: "the wonder of the way, dear Darling,
flows from day to day."

NIGHTWRITE

Thick night
rows by
with drifting wood
clinging to words
gone crusty with
the sweetest
of syllables.
Now the sweeps
are thrusting
in a moonery
of loops and swirls
as the image currently goes
spangling and towing themselves
into patterns called poems.

A GOULBURN RIVER REVERIE

It's layabout country
maybe just a wish away
from the dreamtime
as my thinking steps from banks of caves
to ripen into the gaze
of that man in the valley
gazing - me - I'm marvelling
at the harmony of the sinuous
Aboriginal scene and pondering
by the pools of blue
up to the caves in cliffs
where paintings are
silently singing their myths
of the animals, the people, the birds and the fish
in a boomerang array
along that rivery way.



“THE WIND GUSTS REACHED
A 100 KMS AN HOUR”

A sandstone top
and suddenly the banksias are
in a rush, shaggy with turbulence
wind-bursting everywhere
in whirlpools, currents
and gales of leaves.
Our breath is swept away
in swoons of bark and
now as change seethes and
swarms over the tide above
forged by swells of storm,
we hardly dare to stare
where, hugely waves of cloud
are surfing air
caught in a dim, dark dance
of boom and flare...
Later, we stand calm
in the newly-minted
smell of earth and air.

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Walking in the bush
we felt Pleistocene
with a millennium 2000
overlay.

The shape and feel
of the rocks and plants
flickered by.

The day was blue and cold
shedding cloud
as we slipped and slid away
down to
the Sandy Hollow railway
right where it zippers
into a tunnel of one k
- but was it into a Venus mouth
ripe with a dark vector of fear?

The tunnel ran straight
ending in an egg of light
tingling with foliage
“it’s the easy way”
“how many trains a day?”
“maybe two, who can say.”

Clinkering between the lines
we made the painted, miniature oval
grow slowly into a lace of trees
and with what little light
floating at the tunnel's half way mark
we sensed the safety niches well apart
- no statues with glowing eyes
but a faith of footsteps echoing by.

Suddenly, "There's a train coming!" Someone shouted,
a searching light screwed towards us
and with wind and humming
the tunnel came drumming.

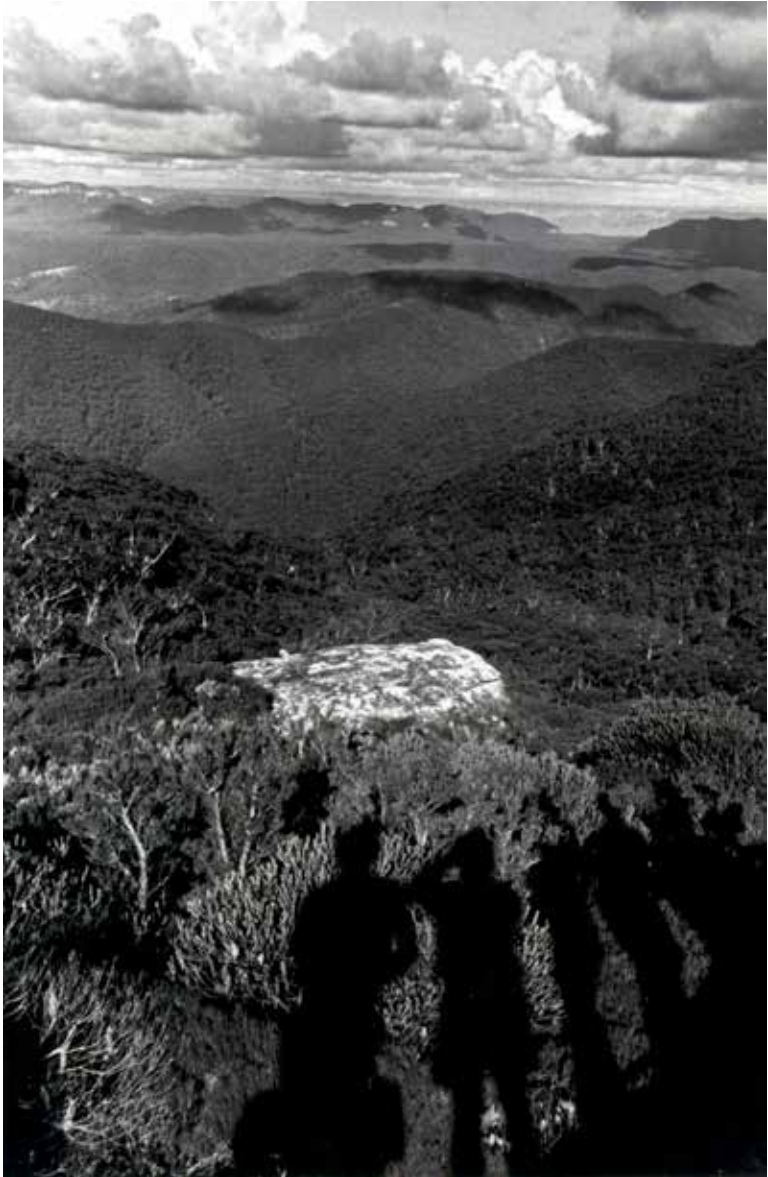
It stirred in our feet
sound mounting second by second
suppressing any idea of a run
we sought the niches two of us for one.

Air tugged past
faster feathered light
our fear betrayed
doomful - dodge, delight?

A plunger of heat
scoured the tunnel

two mighty diesels
drivers way way up high
now the wheels are marching
beside us stamping the rails
spinning with screech
airless fear squeezed
into our niches beside us
to make a trembling trio of a duo -
hats over our faces.

Light mixes with a metallic glare
and a gibbering lack of air.
Time becomes a second hand
our heads a clock
with seconds slowly crumbling at our feet
a second diesel, piston pressure.
Now coal trucks take breath but dwindling
and we jinkered, exhausted, staggered out.
Then standing in the dim green sunlight of
the Sandy Hollow railway tunnel exit,
we were laughing still - with fright
as we looked at each other
coaly cutouts
black from head to foot - with soot.



BUSHWALKERS' ANZAC DAY

Bushwalkers, past and present, have stood on Splendour Rock looking out over a great Blue Mountain's valley and thinking of Anzac Day.

SPLENDOUR ROCK

Standing on Splendour Rock
facing the Wild Dog Range,
we are charged by wind
and flecked by rain.
Now Anzac Day goes down
through all the trees to the Cox's River -
and there are birds
and gusterly leaves
and in face of the bugle call
sounding the Last Post,
currawongs echo
in wild and winsome flowers of sound
that crimson bloom and fall.
Out over the far Kanangra Walls
light swells and flashes
among thundery clouds
and closer, where sunlight
bursts on one great spur ahead
we imagine a Spirit moving,

on marching forms fading
into the blue-green loveliness of the bush
as other walkers on Splendour Rock stood amongst us
and saw
before the bugles ordered them
to war
Now we stand here on Splendour Rock
where they would like to go
back in the Australian bush
with the Wild Dogs out beyond them
and the Cox's far below.

STRANDWAYS

Along the Strand
The sun is setting
bringing brightness
among the clouds
and the people bobbing
are shapes
pattering, hurrying, drifting
pavement waifs.

They are seeming to imprint
more and more
in my mind's eye a medley,
of contrast...

There's a hanging swamp
set in a way-off wash
of bluest mountain
slung with sky..
closer in, the flowers
as speakable
as watercolour words
flicked in reeds
their ideas being
lightly underlined
in scene by the blackie logged on



with ever open agate eyes,
a wombat trail or two
and the delicate knowing, scent
of kangaroo.

There's a swoop
of gang gangs
red, black and square
in the tail...

Now the sun crouches into
darker shapes...

I'm logging on
for a billy fire of tea...

Both visions real
of street and swamp
and yet I'm stranded
in the swampy crowd of bush
with fractionally less illusion.
It makes for a thoughtful fusion
and as an archetypal sense of longing,
comes less dense.

DRIVING SLOWLY THROUGH BERRIWA

A railway crossing called Berriwa
on the road from Broke to Bulga
shacks stacked on a lean
with sliprails around verandahs
tipping into dead vines
one side of the road: a lizard
in spickled pinklets
overly life-sized on a gate
with a sign, 'Roosters for Sale',
the other side: a cabochon collection
spills over an outside stall
'Not for Sale' leans the sign
but my eyes buy
a scrambling net of fits and forms
in: gum nuttery, crockery, teak and glass
humanish or otherwise
standing and stood
gnomes spilling over
drooping and sleepy
with elegant hats or
floppy night caps
gnomes, cats and dogs and
Dutch gnomes with clogs

and frogs on logs
bleary gnomes with feet like plates
and the curving smiles
of their goofy mates
eyes come blue or black or brown
ever staring, ever round
a crowd all seething with
no motion nothing chattering nothing loud
a totally soundless crowd.
There were too many gnomes to face
it was all too much for me
I rolled along feeling info overload
coming on strong
leftside gliding on, a fence
onstrung with silver hubcaps,
rosettes without roses
but a medley of medallions
a'wink with silver spokes
medals on the chest of an Olympian
that could spin the eyes
if caught in the sun

I moved on.
It was just after 7am and wintery
although one man was up
looking as hairy as I felt
he rose from a splintery verandah
and paused his task of stripping bark
I passed at 5k
(I waved but we had nothing to say)
as he looked up amazed
I waved and gave a passing thought
not original but taut
“Hey , guday !”
because there was a sign behind
saying, “Hay for Sale” so I bought,
still I was grateful for
the crowded start of a promising day
as I picked up the speed
to 40k and sped on grimacing
on my antique way.