

# Verse

## *Ayer's Rock*

It stands,  
As the sun sets in a fan of crimson,  
It darkens slowly into the night,  
Like an ancient sentinel, guarding  
The silence and grandeur of ages past.

It stands,  
As a shadow against a lurid sky;  
Its ghastly ethereal dome splitting  
The horizon, like a massive tomb  
For those the desert has claimed.

It stands,  
Mid mulga plain and arid desert,  
And in the distance, a camel train  
Slowly wanders, like a fleet of ships,  
Sailing on a lifeless sea of sand.

It stands,  
Powerful beauty of fierce red rock,  
Carved by the elements and time.  
A masterpiece of Nature's finesse;  
An amazing wonder of our world.

December 1961.<sup>1</sup>

Leave the last glass for my body  
as it sits there

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<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Carey Chronicle*, December 1961, p 45. In darkest irony, six months later, during the June 1962 holiday, the Peterson family drove to Adelaide, instead of my going to Ayers Rock with a Carey school group, when my fellow student Brian Streiff fell to his death and my friend Paul Jackman bravely stayed on the Rock with him overnight.

ruminating

And lightly run off after him. He turns, smiles  
and I am. Incredibly.

busying, cutting, re-arranging  
cleverly analysing  
snatching at truths and symbols  
thinking and moving alone                      lonely?  
solitude that city of self  
'are you having a lazy afternoon at home  
or something?'                      Oh no, I'm  
very busy working but not  
wasteful. Will never amount to anything  
for God's sake do something with your life!  
Lazy as bloody hell                      remorse sears  
And guilt hands its dense pungent smog  
Suffocating creativity. Always running  
Never quite fast enough

I giggle to myself  
at my sinfulness  
stab!

crisp folds  
crinkle  
forms decay: the sea atomises  
to a bubble, delicate  
and I sit inside my shiny glass sphere  
sensitive, aware.

it's all happening baby  
with a no set of values,  
baby?

Two stained figures standing  
Sand-saturated, grasp  
Gasp at nothing, unfeeling  
So far separate  
Though surely one flesh?

## *So glad*

I'm so glad that you are mine, yeah,  
Yea – ea – ea – eh,  
Now I'm happy all the time,  
Yea – ea – ea – eh,

When I know you're near to me, yeah,  
I just know I want to be,  
I'm free.  
I love – ove you.

When you touch me with your eyes, yeah,  
Feel so tall I want to cry,  
I love – ove you.

## *Panegyric*

West  
is  
best  
est.

## *the rape of the sluggish sea urchin*

slowly sinking in a squelching seething  
stinking sea of Clag                      Zara love me  
and carry me off to the land of the slothful taxidermists  
and I'll be your baby tonight.

## *playtime*

a soldier's life is lots of fun,  
he's always on the run – oh,  
run – oh, run – oh,

he's always on the run.  
with a bang – bang here,  
and a squelch – squelch there,  
here a bang, there a squelch,  
everywhere a stab – scream.  
a soldier's life is lots of fun,  
he's always on the run – oh,  
run – oh, fun – oh,  
he's always on the run.  
ooh, goody bang – bang, goody got you,  
a – a – a – a – a – a – ah!                      dead.

dead?

### *anniversary*

surely clinging  
to those horny talons, hands bleeding.  
the eagle spirited must soar clear  
over tiny frustrated black sphere.  
returning,  
obliterating placid insensitivities  
like sand falling, cuts  
piercing the clinging, fetid fog:  
a whipping scream,  
emasculating crass securities  
and fly unfeared  
by the citadel  
of love, onion. For ever and never.

### *best friends and lovers*

david so beautiful  
paul was a tease  
ken was a groover  
manny could please  
murray big-brothered me  
marcel was sweet  
allan was innocent  
geoff was a breeze.

but all things considered,

the nicest of all  
was my girlfriend Shirley  
cos she paid the bill...

### *marvel note*

please God keep me with you  
through fields of lace and parachute silk  
humped not shot with bramble thorns  
so sniffing toe-pads and wonderment  
of you  
so a prancing parson waves at me  
his hat blows in the gutter  
I stare at him and he stares back  
but we begin to laugh  
cos a gypsy wizard shelters me  
when the other people mutter, flutter  
butter, stutter, tutter, gutter, rutter,  
so be my Reg, come fly with me  
then buzz and be my bumble  
and so together maze them all  
perhaps assail the jumble

davey and knick can come Saturday evening  
that good with you?  
till Wednesday after six, that's  
(a bit) rich...

### *where do you go to my lovely?*

you talk like Spike Milligan (or Harpo Marx)  
and you smile like Buster Keat-on  
but your clothes are all perfectly tasteful  
and your ears never catch sight of your hair

you live in a secluded apartment  
off the Boulevard Maltravers  
where you keep your Peter Townshend records  
and a friend of Drew Laird, yes you do

but where do you go to my lovely  
when you're alone in your head

won't you tell me the fears that surround you  
I want to look inside your dread, yes I do

I've walked round your mind full of trophies  
you picked up round East Ivanhoe  
and the plaything you stole from Geoff Phillips  
your loveliness goes on and on, in her eyes, yes it does

and when it comes to despising  
you go to the other extreme  
poor Bryan had to flee to America  
and Drew's switched over to boys, in the team, yes he has

just occasionally now when the night falls  
you're to be found at the O.E., they're under your spell, can't you see?  
No you can't

but, you sip your seven ounce slowly  
and your stomach never gets upset, any more, no it won't.

your name it is heard in high places  
(Heidelberg fuzz were most entertained)  
you know famous Eric Dunshea  
he sent you a postcard for Christmas  
and you keep it just for fun, for a laugh, ha ha ha ha.

and your life it is beautifully programmed  
and you tolerate it just for fun, for a laugh, ha ha ha ha.  
I remember ....

c1968

### *poin' laiga*

Poin' laiga? Why do I seek him?  
Why? Because those smiles  
Are such gifts surrendered  
From amongst the stonefaced scowls  
Of course his camp phase ended  
Long ago, but that  
Jaunty sweet tight arse  
Smiles its own smile  
He sounds just so,  
Flicks his hair, and pours  
Another beer.

Norman at the Crown and Anchor, Lewisham, September 1974.

*for Frances birthday*

Secrets, smiles for year-days,  
Other countries: only tomorrows  
Submit a richer tender,  
Where can and want are the same

Birthday into a new year happily  
For you Frances, Richard.  
31 December 1975.<sup>2</sup>

*sudden song*

Never thought of you as sandy-haired:  
Now with that moustache you seem that way.  
Never thought of you as misty-eyed:  
Now even if I dared I could not say.

Your quick smile swallows up that frown of mine  
Your eyes know too much for your mind's own good;  
Yet self-contained and private as you always were  
You seemed to know me more than I could say.

I wonder if you've winked at unicorns?  
Sensed you had, but kept that to myself,  
And even if you didn't then, you might well've done.  
Such an implacable Assyrian sphynx, it seems.

For Norman at the Crown and Greyhound, Dulwich, September 1975.

YY UR  
YY UB  
ICUQ  
4ARP

July 1976

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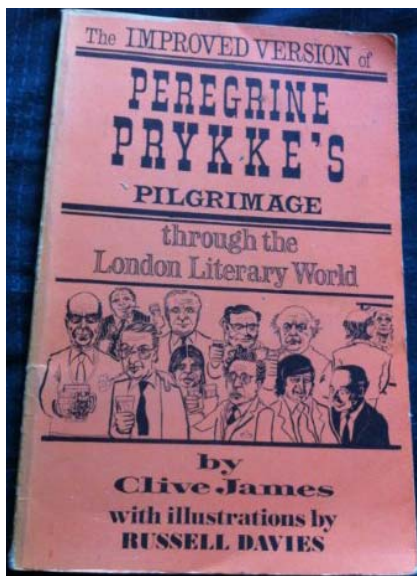
<sup>2</sup> This on a birthday card was the last communication with Frances for some 20 years. She returned it and all our correspondence from 12 June 1973 – 31 December 1975, for me to photocopy, then I returned it to her.

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## YAWN SLIGHTER

## IN THE

## EDUCATION SITUATION



With various apologies to Clive James.<sup>3</sup>

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### A Guide to some of the Characters encountered herein...

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| YAWN SLIGHTER     | An Innocent <sup>4</sup>                                   |
| ANDEVER SLIGHTER  | His Brother <sup>5</sup>                                   |
| SURELY SENSIBLE   | The UK Education Czar and 'Old Flame' of Yawn <sup>6</sup> |
| ONLY PLATONSKY    | A critic and Lecherous Satyr <sup>7</sup>                  |
| JASPER MURGATROYD | Rupert Murdoch <sup>8</sup>                                |
| BLITHE ELAN       | An Ubiquitous Music Critic <sup>9</sup>                    |
| WUNAN TWENTY      | A Gentle Polymath <sup>10</sup>                            |

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<sup>3</sup> This is my parody of John Slater's world, shamelessly based on Clive James's parody *Peregrine Prykke's Pilgrimage Through the London Literary World: A Tragedy in Heroic Couplets* (1974).

<sup>4</sup> John Slater

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Slater, brother of JS

<sup>6</sup> Baroness [Shirley] Williams, university chum ofv JS,

<sup>7</sup> Oleg Kerensky, university chum of JS, ballet critic for both *The Times* and the *New York Times*

<sup>8</sup> Rupert Murdoch

<sup>9</sup> Alan Blythe, university chum of JS, music critic for *The Times* and *The Gramophone* magazine.

<sup>10</sup> Bryan Magee, university chum of JS, philosopher, author of *One in Twenty: A Study of Homosexuality in Men and Women*, 1966



|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| PLEASE CALL<br>& CALL | A Hysterical Lecherer <sup>11</sup><br>His Friend <sup>12</sup>                                    |
| WHITEWOMAN            | A Madam Mandarin <sup>13</sup>   |
| LAVENDER LANE         | A Faithless Tall Dark and Handsome Thespian <sup>14</sup>  |
| SOB DOR               | A Terse Nurse <sup>15</sup>  |
| LITTLE TEARAWAY       | A Seductive Dwarf <sup>16</sup>  |
| BEENTHERE DUNNIT      | A Tiresome <i>Harper's Queen</i> <sup>17</sup>   |
| TEN DOWNWARD          | A Simple Puzzle <sup>18</sup>  |
| RICHLY PUTAPON        | A Harmless Plague <sup>19</sup>  |
| APPALLING CON         | (His Friend). A Guileless Tease <sup>20</sup>  |
| COST PRICE            | (His Friend). A Diverting Reduction <sup>21</sup>  |
| BECALMED              | A Sinful Radical Trendy Hotbed of Education<br>Situational Licence <sup>22</sup>                   |
| BEDSQUEALS            | A (very) Private Hotel in a Meadow of Scarlet <sup>23</sup>  |
| THE CLEAN BED         | A Chelsea Pub <sup>24</sup>  |
| THE SALUBRIOUS        | Another Pub in Sordid Soho <sup>25</sup>   |
| THE MONSTROUS CLUB    | A Traditional Anti-Zionist Weapon for Effectively<br>Silencing Ideological Opponents <sup>26</sup> |

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So often people say they wonder  
Why I've not slipped back down under;  
Part of the reason's this little blighter,  
Known to the *beau monde* as Yawn Slighter.

From a passing stork he dropped beneath  
And ended (not for the last time) on Hampstead Heath,<sup>27</sup>  
But soon he recovered from this nasty tumble  
And fulfilled pre-natal ambitions as a Womble.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Peter Hall, army chum of JS

<sup>12</sup> His friend, Paul

<sup>13</sup> Baroness [Margaret] Thatcher, one-time Secretary of State for Education

<sup>14</sup> Ian Laurenson, former lover of JS

<sup>15</sup> Bob, former lover of JS

<sup>16</sup> Gerard Conway, former lover of JS

<sup>17</sup> ?

<sup>18</sup> Ian Hayward, former lover of JS, who introduced JS to Richard and so simultaneously discarded both of his lovers.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Peterson

<sup>20</sup> Paul Connor, friend of RP.

<sup>21</sup> Rosalind Price, now wife of PC.

<sup>22</sup> Bedales School

<sup>23</sup> Redfields Hotel, a joyous hotel

<sup>24</sup> The Queen's Head pub, a joyous pub

<sup>25</sup> The Salisbury pub, a joyous pub

<sup>26</sup> The Melbourne Club, a bastion of male society.

<sup>27</sup> It is said that the Heath has for decades been a notorious free-for-all of male homosexual lust.

Of his tender years we know not a thing  
Till, on the High,<sup>29</sup> Yawn's seen promenading;  
And who's this giving his little red flag such a moderate pull?  
Its none other than Surely Sensible.

Yawn's moderate earnestness seems to say:  
'Oh Sure, my favourite colour's Donkey Grey'.  
But these inverted feelings soon vamoosky,  
For upon the scene skips Only Platonsky.

They soon become the best of chums;  
Pursuing concerts, ballets and boyish bums.  
And another sport, too much fun to avoid,  
Is chasing that silly Jasper Murgatroyd.

Now, hovering over our heroic phenomenon,  
Was musically titillating Blithe Elan.  
But, a new Captain of Punts had Pembroke to find,  
Our Yawn's found playing soldiers and more of that kind

Of thing: so occupied Austria, round '51  
Learnt its intelligence from Please Call and Yawn.  
A cuckoo-clock cottage by woodland lake,  
And progress worthy of a rake,  
These soldier lads were on the make.

Good food, wine; to local lads the come-on:  
They barely noticed the lack of wom-en.  
And Weiner Oper by the plenty  
Was our Yawny seen with that Wunan Twenty.

Alas, halcyon army days draw soon to a close.  
Its to wicked Becalmed School, our Yawny goes  
Imbuing our youth with a sense of what's past...

(Fortunately, never continued...)

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<sup>28</sup> Wombles lived on Wimbeldon Common

<sup>29</sup> Oxford's main street.



## *A hundred and sixteen very short ones*<sup>30</sup>

How dull  
of Ian  
to be in  
Mull!!

For John in London, 5 September 1978

Mist veils the Eaglemont hill,  
Birds chirrup eagerly,  
And serenely the Jacaranda still falls.

Sun glowering over rooftops,  
Threatens to turn up the heat,  
And glints from a train encircling the ridge-line.

Sooth cool morning air,  
Stream of cars swish past,  
Still the sun lies low.

To Darrell

Still cool, the sun rises  
Over hushed suburban streets,  
Decorated in hope.

To Darrell

Smell the musky cool mist brush my skin,  
And lies in crystal droplets  
On the open leaves.

Caressing breeze  
Rustles on Russell,  
Leaves and posting  
Christmas cards feelings.

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<sup>30</sup> These are clearly **not** Haiku, which should comprise 17 syllables, arrayed 5-7-5, including a season word (*kigo*) and a cutting word (*kireji*), at the end of one line, although some Haiku writers specifically violate these rules and even those of grammar.

Duck weather on Yarra,  
Ferocious bellbirds  
And pit bull terriers.  
Portents for Christmas?  
Surely not!

Twelve ducks swoop to land,  
In the breezes  
Of the bright cooler day.

Overbearing sun,  
Cloudless sky,  
Relieved by the whisp of a breeze.

Very still,  
Long shadows,  
Doves coo.

Grey and dull overhead,  
Some breezes,  
So even pigeons seem bored.

It seems to have blown windy for months,  
Occasional sprinkles of rain,  
And thinking of you.

Sun beats on empty streets,  
Birds call, a dog barks,  
No sales or cricket here, Boxing Day.

Saw a little green bellbird,  
And a distant darter,  
For the New Year.

Hot sun,  
Wide blue sky,  
Two lurid cyclists  
And a Christmas tree chucked on a nature strip.

Not a soul litters  
The blustery streets of Ivanhoe,  
But me.

Darters are very strange and talented,  
But not as fierce as  
Tiger snakes.

Sun warm,  
Magpies chatter,  
Freeway hums  
And I emerge to face the day.

Such a beautiful sunny day,  
Grey clouds low on the horizon,  
Are under control.

Take your time,  
Then  
Cum.

Dull, drear overcast drizzle,

But now cheerful  
Sunshine emerges.

Overcast overhead again,  
But today no breeze disturbs  
The Jacaranda petals underfoot

Blue sky, warm sun,  
Two chattering cute cyclists flash by,  
Police...

Good evening,  
Sublime watercolour sunrise  
Valley golden.

Baked in the sun,  
Adrift in the silence,  
A distant dove coos. How is Parkdale?

Wotz  
Ap  
Ng?

Haze and glare,  
Cloud across the blue sky,  
As the train silversnakes over the suburbs.

Long sun's rays glinting,  
Footsteps in the frost,  
Solitary, sparkling.

Murmuring breeze,  
Rustling leaves,  
Tempers the overcast humidity.

Eight ducks a-waddling,  
Two boys kayacking,  
In a hollow log, a snake coils.

Sweet cool breeze, blue sky,  
And cheeky chirping,  
In contrast with fearsome yesterday,

The crystal droplets  
Ferocious bellbirds  
Murmuring kayaking  
The world spins on.

Red sun,  
Acrid smoke,  
Weird dark sky,  
You said it seemed the world would end.

Train whisking  
Through dreary suburbs, like Watergardens,  
On the severe Victorian basalt plain.

Mist veils the Eaglemont hill,  
Birds chirrup eagerly,  
And serenely the Jacaranda still falls.

Sun glowering over rooftops,



Threatens to turn up the heat,  
And glints from a train encircling the ridgeline.

Sooth cool morning air,  
Stream of cars swish past,  
Still the sun lies low.

Still cool, the sun rises  
Over hushed suburban streets,  
Decorated in hope.  
Smell the musky cool mist brush my skin,  
And lies in crystal droplets  
On the open leaves.

Caressing breeze  
Rustles on Russell,  
Leaves and posting  
Christmas cards feelings.

Ducks weather on the Yarra,  
Ferocious bellbirds  
And pit bull terriers.  
Portents for Christmas?  
Surely not! Have a happy!

Twelve ducks swoop to land,  
In the breezes  
Of the bright cooler day.

Overbearing sun,  
Cloudless sky,  
Relieved by a wisp of a breeze.

Miniature cricketers,  
Big Loud dads,  
Magpies carol in the mist.

Very still,  
Long shadows,  
Doves coo.

Grey and dull overhead,  
Some breezes,  
So even the pigeons seem bored

Salmon-streaked through indigo,  
Gone to dour helmet,  
Clamped across the valley

It seems to have blown windy for months,  
Occasional sprinkles of rain,  
And thinking of you.

Sun beats on empty streets,  
Birds call, a dog barks,  
No sales or cricket here, Boxing Day.  
Saw a little green bellbird,  
And a distant darter,  
For the New Year.

Hot sun,  
Wide blue sky,  
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And a Christmas tree chucked on a nature strip.

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Ap  
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Cloud across the blue sky,  
As the train silversnakes over the suburbs.

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Tempers the overcast humidity.

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Two boys kayaking,  
In a hollow log, a snake coils.

Sweet cool breeze, blue sky,  
And cheeky chirping, in contrast with fearsome yesterday,  
The crystal droplets

Ferocious bellbirds  
Whispering pigeons. Fierce  
Murmuring kayaking  
A world spins on.

Red sun,  
Acrid smoke,  
Weird dark sky,  
You said it seemed the world would end.

Train whisking  
Through dreary suburbs, like Watergardens,  
On the severe western basalt plain.

Cool and crisp river air,  
Low sun streaks valley,  
Kookaburras scorn bellbirds.                      28.1.03.

Corrugated sky,  
Dull humidity,  
Relentless sprinklers chuffing.                      29.1.03.

Darter on river  
Fallen branch,  
Many red-faced wrens,  
Wagtails,  
Black, red legged  
Waterbirds,  
Golfball landing, plop.                                      13.10.02.

Glare through the dull haze,  
Mauve blossoms wilting,  
But nearly safe home again.

Relentless sun's heat  
And blustery wind,  
Such perfect bushfire weather.

Such a perfect day,  
Blue sky, sun, breeze,  
Now can bushfires rage?

Cool, gentle breezes,  
Through fluffy clouds, sun,  
Soon blasts to forty degrees.

Overcast above,  
Fuzzy hot sun,  
Penetrates the still cool air.

That pink sky, now dark,  
Still smoke heavy and  
Not a star is to be seen.

This drear weather,  
Debilitating,  
Where are those calm Autumn days?

Cool, mauve day,  
Overcast and agapanthus,  
Still no rain.

Cool, dark, overhead,  
Unremarkable  
Can it even think of a last time.

Cool breeze on my face,  
Bellbirds and magpies, and  
Smelly old garbage truck.

Sixteen green parrots,  
Ducks swim beneath me  
And overhead, rainless cloud.

Such dour glowering day,  
Wonder why weather  
Is such bad PR for God.

Spray of tiny wrens,  
Scurry at my feet,  
And sun coruscates off the dew.  
Thirty small green parrots.

A perfect day  
Sun, still, doves cooing  
And afternoon, the Pride March.

Cool, fresh, moist air,  
Low golden glow streaks,  
A balloon hangs silently.

Dappled light,  
Light breeze,  
Slowly the sun climbs,  
Inexorably on.

Cool and crisp the air,  
Slanty glints of morning sun,  
Bird voices, Messiaen-like.

Gentle rain-soaked grass,  
Far doves softly coo,  
In Washington, the beast stirs.

Green parrots again,  
Almost stood on them,  
Gold burst over veiled hills.

Man, so cool today,  
Blue wrens scuttle off,  
Fledgling magpies call to mother.

Sprinklers chff, chff, chff,  
Wrens, bellbirds, magpies,  
Warm glow on the horizon.

Blossoms tumble into lane,  
Doves coo,  
Maybe rain,  
The sky still wavers.

Wave to ballooners,  
Calmed just above the trees,  
Searing sun's orb rises, watching.

Wee anxious scrub wrens,  
Scurry underfoot,  
By the dark silent river.

Lazy start again,  
Sharp, cool breezes,  
Sculptured clouds part to blue.

Swooping, streamlined cloud  
Cool, rustling breezes,  
The plaintive cry of a single crow.

Low gold glints,  
Rising against this hill,  
Now the whole world bursts  
Out gold.

Ten sacred ibis,  
Five Eastern seagulls,



Strut on cool damp, butcher's shop grass.

Breeze stirs, clouds darken,  
Sun perseveres bright,  
Nine sacred ibis,

Lacerated sky.  
Such a gentle beautiful sunset  
Ends this ancient Egyptian day  
As three balloons hang still.

As gin wafts  
In airy arabesques, and  
You sweat at  
The Baroque altar of Corro,  
A pope dies.

For S, 3.4.05

I'm im-  
bibing beneath  
u ... How u?  
Not quite  
a haiku.

For S, 19.7.05

Time, relentless torrent, no sooner  
Seen, than carried away, surpassed  
By another, itself soon supplanted...

For S, 18.12.05

Give my regardz  
To Safeway.

For S 18.12.05

Sun climbs outta  
My sparse back yard  
From distant leafy Wallis Avenue  
Towards its searing ascent.

For DW in H, 24.2.06

Chill breezes braces  
Shoulder blades.  
Walking into  
The heartening sun.

For D, 20.04.06

Snuck out for a slash  
To the great still shroud of night.

20.04.06

Darrell Dear  
is queer  
as a coot.  
And cute.

12 .06.06

Precision  
derision.

Yeah yet...  
...written whilst striding on,  
with sun bleached screen,  
yet the meaning's  
clear enough.

To John, 14.09.06

...so, waxed with wonderment, edged with kool,  
on the move and in the groove, just too brittle for phrases, looning, screaming,  
grabby and gooby-great,  
woof-woof wobble-gone and wangle,  
on into instant psychedelic delirium,  
frenetic freak-out blown mind,  
where the chuntering ripple is,  
you'll go right off at this frenetic frenzy,  
that purist fantasy that's flying low,  
pulse pounding wild and off the ground with that lead-off sound,  
with stacks of wax appeal and platter-party pals,  
where those hits happen,  
go it now team,  
turn it on for maximum dazzle,  
mellow fellows headin' on to hitsville,  
g'd evening there groovos and discotechnocracy,  
so groove it, lets move it finger-snappers,  
headin' on to hitsville with a cheerful earful,  
nine-three-noughtable on your portable,  
colour radio and technicolour bright all on through the day and night,  
right through eleven you're musically revvin',  
coming to you with 5,000 power-packed watts,  
alive alert and a whole lotta fun on the live-wire line,  
raging on with your king of the kilowatts killing the kilojoules,  
watch that roof blow right away, into the flip side of sunset,  
the funtastic sound of thruz,  
turn off your mind relax and float downstream, then fuse together and zazz on  
into timelessness...

For 30 November 2006

Memories of me

Maybe it's the wind blowin' the papers  
Spooks you of me

For Darrell, 5 November 2006

>>Geeze

Like i hav all da time in da world

>>Oh my gowd

Like

>>Like youknow

Totally

>>Youknow

From Steven, 27 March 2007

### *Animo et Fide: Gordoniums*<sup>31</sup>

Do you still squeeze the toothpaste  
from its bottom?  
And select a clean hanky each day?  
Still wash hands and say grace before meals?  
And after, never ever lick the knife.  
Can you drive all the way to Seaford  
without getting carsick once?  
Does the Point Nepean Road past Carrum  
seem odd now with bitumen?  
Does your driving lack direction  
offered from the back seat?  
And you drive to Richmond still I bet,  
by Madden Grove and those  
devilish Boulevard turns.

Does twenty-eight still cast a shadow?  
Feel guilty weekdays staying beneath  
the sheets after seven?  
Having fallen asleep, crystal-set plug in ear?  
And still sucking that left thumb?  
Are Sunday evenings incomplete

---

<sup>31</sup> The excellent motto of Carey Baptist Grammar School.

without Nana's homemade egg and bacon pie?  
And Friday night without fish and chips?  
Or sleek rabbit from the butcher?  
Crays in *The Argus*, and a tall dark man,  
every New Year's Eve?

Is Skip still leaping the backyard fence?  
Does green and purple PEWA grace my blackboard?  
Do you fear tearing the gift-wrap  
And save string. Are you  
still occasionally moving the stumps  
to let a car pass by in Withers Street.  
And keep that door key  
in the shoe polish box?  
When was it you last moved the swishing sprinklers?  
Cicadas still shrill, doves coo, magpies carol  
and the foreshore is anxious with tea-tree.

28 March 2007

By and large  
Life chucks up  
Such sweet wonders.

3 February 2008

For Her Majesty QEII  
Bliss comes  
With one third gin  
Two thirds Dubonnet  
And two clinking cubes  
Perfectly sharp  
And served by a loyal queen.

27 February 2008

### *In Fealty to the Tsarina*

I know nothing of Russia,  
I dislike vodka;  
but Geoff,  
once, whilst working for the USSR government at Aeroflot,<sup>32</sup>  
as a teenager, went alone to St Petersburg  
and saw the Kirov;

---

<sup>32</sup> He actually worked for Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, not Aeroflot the Soviet airline, but Aeroflot sounds better.

but at great risk to his job,  
demonstrated with a placard  
at Covent Garden in favour of Nureyev's defection.  
He subsequently met Nureyev  
at the Covent Garden stage door  
soon after he'd defected.  
I saw him perform at the Palais here  
and at the London Coliseum and was almost moved to tears  
(by Nureyev,  
not Geoff,  
though he also of course,  
on numerous occasions).

On my tenth birthday,  
Michael Leunig and I both watched the endurance of  
Emil Zatopek from the Soviet Union in the Marathon  
in the XVIth Olympiad  
from our different parts of the G.  
But I'd have preferred to see  
Nijinsky.

My only other link with Russia is my affair in 1972 with  
Philip Romanoff  
at his comfy 1930s flat in Royal Parade.  
He was a most cultivated clerical friend of Wilhelmus,  
who was descended from the Imperial Russian Royal Family and looked it,  
had been a monk and became one again soon after our relationship  
(I think not causally connected)  
at the silent Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance,  
the Trappists of Tarrawarra.  
He persuaded me to use a hand razer,  
as my Braun-resistant stubble was too intrusive  
for his taste.  
And I've have done so every day since  
and still think of him as I do.  
I'm unsure how much you've kept track of your subsequent relatives since your  
tragic death,  
but you may know of him.

I'll be there in silver fox,  
but probably not Daz who works on Sundays and Mondays.

Reply, 11 May 2008

Darebin down ramp late

Dark and sparkling ground  
Stage left leaves scatter  
Eerie phosphor light,  
Taillights draw away

20 May 2008

### *Ever So Slightly Foxed*

Teetering on the roof like Cheops,  
high over the freeway-choked  
and golf-coursed valley,  
I catch the sun glinting off the windows  
of the house where I grew up.  
Behind and much further distant,  
lies the city skyline: office towers,  
the Royal Exhibition's dome  
and the Museum's wedge.  
Traversing further clockwise,  
well beyond the horizon,  
jets climb from Tullamarine,  
leaving for the rest of the world,  
thousands of kilometres away.

Today I received planning permission for this imaginary rooftop belvedere:  
maybe it will happen.

May 2008, for Jennie Paterson, Assistant  
Slightly Foxed, 67 Dickinson Court  
15 Brewhouse Yard  
London EC1V 4JX

### *For Tim*

I see that Joel  
Has another book of verse  
And worse  
That some  
Even rhymes.

And worse again  
The book of Joel  
Long preceded

The two of Timothy.

21 June 2008, by SMS

### *For David*

That brief encounter  
Up quality street  
Down memory lane  
That boulevard of broken dreams.

Against all odds  
Our ricochet romance  
Another time, another place  
Is all that heaven allows?<sup>33</sup>

18 August 2008, by SMS

### *Papal sulphur*

A white flash  
at sunrise,  
A brace of sulphur crested  
alight in unison  
on the flickering black tips  
of the cypress-sentries;  
like a vision of Pentecost  
after the blackout.

3 September 2008, 7 am

Ta 4 tha msg,  
received whilst sailing back from Marios'  
and a dark Rick Amor exhib at Niagara  
ova tha CHill opass  
warmed by the sun,  
roof down.

---

<sup>33</sup> David Lean, Noel Coward; Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard, Stanley Holloway, 1945;  
J M Barrie; Katherine Hepburn, Joan Fontaine, 1937;  
Mack Sennett, Steve Allen, Bing Crosby, 1949;  
Sung by Constance Bennett, *Moulin Rouge*, 1934;  
Jeff Bridges, Richard Widmark, 1984;  
Rudy Vallee, 1954;  
Lana Turner, Glynis Johns, Sean Connery, 1958;  
Jane Wyman, Rock Hudson, Agnes Moorhead, 1955.

Listening to a scary Shostakovich  
*E Minor Piano Trio 2:*  
It can be at my funeral too,  
after Brahms' *German Requiem*,  
Pet Shop Boys' *Suburbia*,  
*Peter Grimes*' 'Sea Interludes,'  
or something from *Billy Budd*,  
The Necks' *Sex*,  
and *Visions of Johanna*.

Didn't know of Cliff's bio,  
nor of his companion.  
My only link to Cliff was  
whilst living with Ian,  
who later introduced me to J,  
he told me he'd flirted in Brighton with  
Cliff's then 'companion.'

And what is it you think of  
Brian's *Lucky old Sun*?  
Tomorrow never knows.

To David, 6 September 2008

Dapper finches flit  
neurotic, oblivious,  
but secured from me,  
By a transparent eighth of an inch of  
fused alkaline sodium, cullet and silica.

28 September 2008

You trudge back to work in the early dark,  
The weak Waterloo sun,  
Rising over Centaur Street  
In that deep dirty snow,  
As sporadic Rinso flakes still fall  
Regent's Canal freezes over.  
As if Christmas never was  
In your heteropolar reality,  
Such an unrealistic beginning,  
Your all too real new working year.

And we roar down the Nepean



The 307CC roof down  
Another fuckin' Sunday driver  
As Gurrumul sweetly sings  
From the cd stack  
Through his other history  
His colours across the afternoon sky  
As Bonbeach flashes by  
Soon climbing Olivers Hill  
And Frankston curves serene  
Its glistening bay.

For Steven, emailed 6 January 2009

A perfect day  
So silent and still.  
Yet leaves whisper  
In a slight breeze.  
One brushes my cheek  
As it falls.

18 January 2009

### *Funeral Erration*

For the benefit of Mr P there will be a show today  
In billy-carts.  
The Petersons will all be there:  
The surly witch and even Chase, what a scream!  
From Ivanhoe East to Ivanhoe and  
Lastly through LED-screens of real flambé  
Technologically, Mr P astounds the world.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> (Being) for the benefit of Mr. Kite  
There will be a show tonight on trampoline  
The Hendersons will all be there  
Late of Pablo-Fanques Fair, what a scene (Have you seen it? It's great, they got stuff.)  
Over men and horses hoops and garters  
Lastly through a hogshead of real fire!  
In this way Mr. K. will challenge the world!

The celebrated Mr. K.  
Performs his feat on Saturday at Bishopsgate  
The Hendersons will dance and sing  
As Mr. Kite flies through the ring don't be late  
Messrs. K and H. assure the public  
Their production will be second to none  
And of course Henry The Horse dances the waltz!  
The band begins at ten to six  
When Mr. K. performs his tricks without a sound  
And Mr. H. will demonstrate  
Ten somersets he'll undertake on solid ground  
'ving been some days in preparation  
A splendid time is guaranteed for all

Mr P performs again in frumpish drag  
At Springvale, and Underground  
Don't be late. In this way Mr P  
will challenge the girls!  
Messers D and A assure the public  
Their production will be second to none.  
And on and on, Mr Roo will bump and grind!

The station platform  
at dusk indigo,  
An ice blonde,  
Her cigarette just so.  
And me,  
Departing in one minute.

9 May 2009, 5.35 pm

On the train, across the aisle  
An acneed Morman offers:  
'How was your Sunday?'  
'I think today's Saturday,'  
'Sorry I meant Saturday,'  
'I'm sure you guys get lots of things wrong.'  
And his gorgeous mate opposite me,  
Giggles.

After an event full day,  
Breakfast one-thirty at Marios'  
Six-thirty on Southbank with Tony Lee  
Dvořák, Bruch and Aaron Copeland  
A mighty concert.  
In these last days of the Concert Hall  
Before Truscott and Grounds  
Are made over.

But what stays fixed  
Is the movie of Samson  
Saved by his Delilah  
In the remote  
Of the remote

25 May 2009

---

And tonight Mr. Kite is topping the bill.  
(It's me. In the thing.) Lennon/McCartney.

Happy birthday to you,  
Happy birthday 62,  
Happy b dear Gazette,  
Now you've caught up to me too!!

For Gary, 3 June 2009

Yesterday, my mother's birthday: she 93.  
The day after Geoff's: he 55.  
Those staining losses return, consecutively.  
Life's neat pattern.

SMS to Chris, 6 August 2009

Another thundering collapse  
And I'm pinned  
Beneath a heap  
Of killer books  
Mostly about Denmark.

For DD, 28 August 2009

Hope  
You not  
Miss Amor.

SMS to John, 12 September 2009

Looking' 'bout  
this comfy  
mocca joint;  
part eccentric,  
inappropriate priorities,  
part accretions and  
fascinating laminations.

SMS to Steven, 15 September 2009

Interesting ducks  
are always welcome.

R...

you kindly  
left out the word  
old.  
Bless you  
Lindsey Glover

2 December 2009

### *Listing lovers*

A sharp computer wit  
A stylish sylph,  
A lithe punctilious Greek,  
A serene French bikie,  
A dark petrol-head,  
A shy thespian pianist,  
A bar boy,  
A campy musicals tragic,  
A distinguished English official,  
A lyrical Dilly boy,  
A lab assistant,  
An almost architect,  
A Burmese chef,  
Two aboriginal academics,  
A Maori street-life,  
And a swimming coach.

28 January 2010

They say you're  
kind, wise, avuncular;  
But never partnered,  
steared you own show  
for forty-five years,  
never seared by spousal  
addiction, dry-milking, or AIDS.  
So friction doesn't abrade,  
it sears.

On John, 26 February 2010

God, once a trifle deaf  
Now deaf as a post.

I step outside to defecate.  
A glowering jet sears overhead,  
Threatens to drop its load.  
Oh shit! Its Anzac Day...

Sunday, 25 April 2010

first day  
today  
teachin  
at  
deakin

Thursday, 29 April 2010

One night, last week,  
a dour tawny frogmouth,  
a species never previously sighted here,  
on the overhead cable  
sedately surveying my front garden,  
DD says an omen.

Earlier this week a bat,  
clutxching and straddling  
overhead wires in the next street,  
quite dead,  
DD warns a second omen.

Yesterday morn a willy wagtail  
flitted and sallied cross the back lawn,  
DD exhorts yet another omen.

Today got home, to find  
alarms flashing, because  
a small bird in the house,  
DD says a fourth omen.

The bird had knocked over  
and spilt salt, DD says a fifth omen.  
Is there the slightest survival chance  
from this fearful animism?

To Stevie, 26 May 2010

Ed Ruscha  
Likes  
The semantic quality of 'twenty-six.'  
I prefer the expansiveness  
Of twenty-seven.

20 November 2010

Reasons why  
*Robert Rooney's*  
*Over 100 yards of paper unrolled*  
*on South Hill, Eltham, 31 May 1970.*  
could never be recreated.  
1. 31 May 1970 is well over  
2. South Hill is now dense with mcmansions  
3. Fire in a public place is now prohibited  
and, by now,  
4. Rooney's probably lost interest.

20 November 2010

## *Twinset*

'And over her left kidney  
was a bird's eye view of Sydney.'<sup>35</sup>

As well as twinning Sydney  
with Doreen,  
as we always have;

Another obvious twinning is  
randy Russell  
with grateful Gertrude.

24 November 2010

## *Alpha males*

A is for Andrews, too numerous to mention:  
Boyle, Kaighin, Provan, Rodda,  
St John, Slater and Stuart,  
B is for Ben, Bodhan and Bryan  
C is for Carl, Clyde and Conan  
D, mostly for Darrell

---

<sup>35</sup> Refer to the Appendix.

But Damien, and Davids:  
Christansz, Jarman, Morrison, Wheeler and Do  
E is for Eric  
F is for Frances  
G is dear Geoffrey, and Skellern, once J.  
For the Grahams, Carbery and Do  
Also for Gary, Thomas and Jaynes  
H is Hendrikus  
I is only Ian  
J is just John  
K is Kenneth ensconced in Shenzhen  
L is just Logan  
M is Manny and Morgan  
N is the Nicks: Boyle, Stephenson and Mapp  
O is just Oliver, never forgotten  
P is Paul, Peter and Phil. As well as HM,  
Q is the queer that most of us are,  
R is the Richards and Roberts,  
Renee, Roger and Ryan  
S is for Steven, Stephen and Steph,  
For Shaun and for Sean  
T is the Tonys and Timothy Deane  
U is only you who I care for the most  
V is Aunty Vern, I lived with a week. And  
W is Wilhelmus. Then it just tapers:  
X  
Y and  
Z

Strolling rolling rural lanes to Ivanhoe  
Dodging coruscating blossoms  
A Sedgeway murmurs past  
How do you find it mate?  
Its great!

Australia Day 2011

After soaking rain  
The electronic whirr  
Of unseen crickets.

6 February 2011

Vernacular: [Darrell](#)

Egyptian: Raaf  
Greek: Manny  
Roman: Jeanne Marie Teutonico  
Christian: Boyles  
Byzantine: Gordon  
Medieval: Peter Cock  
Renaissance: John  
Mannerist: Paul  
Baroque: Carl  
Rococo: Geoff  
Late Nineteenth Century: Finky  
Art Nouveau/Secessionist: Lene  
Constructivist:  
Futurist:  
Modernist:  
Post Modernist: Me  
Hi Tech: Andrew  
Deconstructivist: Steven  
Blobist:

28 February 2011

Ppp, pp

Pissing,  
Pissed,  
At the pissier.

Pissed off!  
Outside it's  
pissing down...

1 March 2011

Something nibbling silently,  
Crumbling, eroding,  
Necrosis insidious,  
Insinuating from outside in  
Like crevasses in the sun  
Billions of cells stealing away  
Where do they go?  
Lost things: wallet, keys, notebook.  
Numerous ordinary words now lost.  
'I know it perfectly well.' And he may;  
But articulating it comes harder.



Confidently launching sentences,  
Then nothing.

Initiative stolen  
Lost ability to plan ahead  
Whole days lost to a muddle  
Arriving two hours early, even more.

That perceptive, articulate, analytical mind,  
All that gotten wisdom  
Incrementally eaten away  
From outside in.  
Like rot in a walnut.

But some days are better,  
Sometimes taking advice,  
Daily ritual endures,  
And still, humour sneaks through.

17 April 2011

In the early mist  
Glistening nets  
Span yucca spears  
Like miniature Frei Otto

And again an entire web suspends  
From hedge to cypress  
And sways in slight breeze  
Like some sublime lorgnette

A miracle  
In serene silence  
Like that which  
Astounded Maddalena.

Easter Monday 2011<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> The Church of Santa Maria Maddalena is in Via della Maddalena, which enters the Piazza del Pantheon. The unique facade was finished c1735 in very late and elaborated Baroque transmuting into Rococo flourishes, with motifs reminiscent of Borromini, but dissolved in ornament and in no longer comprehensible shapes, that are unique in Rome, as if to support the discredited view that the Madelene was a prostitute. She was in fact the only person named by any of the canonical gospels as a witness to all three: Jesus' crucifixion, his burial, discovery of his tomb and first witness to the Resurrection and referred to early as the apostle to the apostles.

Early guide books credit Giuseppe Sardi with the its design, though from 1732-34, it has been suggested that as architect of the congregation of the Ministri degli Infermi, the Portuguese architect Manuel Rodriguez Dos Santos directed its completion. However its greatest similarity is to the design of the extraordinary organ case behind the façade by Hans Conrad Werle (or Wehrle), also of 1735. Anthony Blunt, *Guide to Baroque Rome*, Granada, Frogmore, St Albans, Hertfordshire 1982, p 89 and Stefan Grundmann, *The Architecture of Rome*, Axel Menges, Stuttgart and London, 1998, pp 254, 269 & 270, with plan and façade photo. The Right

On his new bike,  
A boy turns a corner  
And is killed.

Perhaps six months after,  
Workers in orange jackets  
And numerous warning signs  
Modify the rounding kerb,  
Slightly.

Anzac Day Holiday 2011

Stoke the fires of Hades, Franco  
And bring forth  
Capricciosa.

14 June 2011

### *Last things*

Always called him Step,  
never knowing that  
Henry stole the Hen  
from Stephen.

We used to call Tim  
Mothy,  
But no-one says I'm  
Hard.

12 September 2011

Children,  
animals,  
indoor plants:  
all unnecessary.

15 September 2011

At 2 pm,  
the announcer at  
ABC Classic FM discusses  
special qualities of the legato

---

Reverend Bishop Andrew St John was installed on her saint's day in St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, and then delivered a homily about her.

and fingering  
of the Viennese horn;  
whilst at the G  
the ball bounces  
in the AFL Grand Final.

1 October 2011

### *City Bar Crawl*

Right on the corner  
of Elizabeth and a'Beckett,  
Still the door is hard to find:  
tucked in off a car-space  
and up bleak stairs  
is Workshop, bright, airy and loud.

Order of Melbourne,  
Preposterously named  
for a Swanston Street  
roof garden  
with only a  
smidgen of style.

Into Little Lonsdale Street  
is Rue Bebérons,  
Niftily named, geddit?  
But venerably historied:  
from cherished Todd,  
past seedy Cash,  
spawning progeny,  
from Canal St Martin  
to Gertrude Street.

Pronounceable only  
to Mandarin speakers  
is Jwow. Its comfy cellar  
easily mistaken  
for the bowling alley  
adjacent.  
Sahara

Having always averted parenthood,  
at sixty-four

I was  
ensnared  
by motherhood.

I remain,  
yours truly,  
handmaiden  
to the demented.

Guy Fawkes Day, 2011

After the exhaustion  
of the climb,  
I find  
a dragonfly in the hedge,  
sunning.

Christmas Eve, 2011, 30° C in the shade

That Christmas Day,  
fifteen years ago,  
bright and sun-drenched,  
magpies still carolling,  
I had to I drive him in  
to Royal Parade.

And watched intently  
as the vitreo-retinal surgeon,  
young Dr Luckie,  
of the film star looks,  
accompanied by Chet Baker in  
'Once upon a Summertime,'  
to resist the threat of  
*Cytomegalovirus retinitus*,  
injected his eyeballs.

6.20 am, Christmas Day, 2011

I fear  
Graham's confessed  
former role  
frocked up  
as an alter boy,  
implies not  
transubstantiation,  
but transvestism.

13 January 2012

Va  
Cant.

En  
Gag  
Ed.

18 January 2012

### *Mother's Day tomorrow*

My mother died too early,  
And as if in retribution,  
My Father, far too late...

After so often recounting  
his own father's last words:  
Thanking him  
for what a good son he'd been,  
I fondly hoped he might emit  
something similar.

I kept visiting daily,  
after his beloved daughter  
gave it all away.  
But after a couple of false attempts  
he died, without conversation,  
without statesmanship,  
fading away to nothing,  
alone.

But the great mystery  
she wrought with her death  
remains.

12 May 2012

### *Otherworld*

Always had bad dreams.  
Often of unreconcilable loss  
From which the only escape is waking

Often, fortunately, soon forgotten.

In London once, my shoes quite vanished  
Condemned to wander Oxford Street,  
Feet bare and raw.  
And last night, stuck

In an some interminable airport queue  
That momentarily called to leave,  
My suitcase unaccountedly left,  
Was lost, and never found.

Secure in full light,  
But in sleep pursued  
By pesky imps  
And dark subconscious fears.

25 May 2012, the Coldest Day.

Quite unexpectedly,  
in a gesture of great  
tendernesss,  
for a dream,  
the youth, rather plain,  
sitting next to me,  
gently turned to rest his head  
on my shoulder. And I  
barely grazed his hair  
with the back of my hand.

27 June 2012

Last night they said  
my mother died.  
Not as we thought aged 38 in '56,  
but 95 and yesterday.  
We'd not been taken to her funeral then  
because there wasn't one.  
We'd been told she'd died  
to keep her darkening insanity from us.  
She'd been put away all those years,  
somehow in Spencely Street Asylum,  
her mind ensnared  
in darkness.

11 July 2012

Having bragged that  
I need not get up in the night,  
After our eve of wonders  
I got up  
Thrice.

18 August 2012

Overheard on the train before Jolimont:  
'But have you actually met anyone  
who was gay?'  
'Jonesy.'  
'But Jonesy's got a girlfriend!'  
'Yeah. Jonesy is.'

24 August 2012

### *On inconveniencing Logan and John*

Ferried to the surgery  
On the dot of four  
Aghast! It's 51 weeks behind,  
Or one week before.

28 August 2012

It seems the days just flicker by  
Like watching some merry-go round  
Trying to grab moments to use  
As the rug of life is pulled  
From beneath my feet.

2 September 2012

An evening,  
out alone, on the prowl.  
The constant peruse,  
interspersed with snatches reading  
the *London Review of Books*.

How has every UK utility  
since Thatcher's  
amateur, or overly academic  
grabs, fallen to foreign ownership

often to other governments,  
particularly the French.

As usual, first at Radio,  
Then to DT's:  
eye open, and  
there a lively eve,  
blazing camp energy,  
flinging about,  
disco fuelled  
by DJ Daz, old as me,  
full on pumping,  
away, away.

But best of all,  
the taxi driver home  
Vietnamese (I asked, daring once to do that).  
The car a family concern, he said.  
He did the Fridays, though  
he was in fact an expert  
in surveillance;  
which means cameras.

He told me all casinos  
have some Mafia involvement  
in their ownership, he said.  
And Macao's, he said,  
is bigger than Vegas.

More than all at DT's,  
he seemed to me,  
so very sweet.

14 September 2012

## *Manifesto*

*for a dictator*

Free education!  
Free transport!  
And free utilities for all!  
(Electricity, gas, water, sewer,  
telephone, and Internet: all free).  
Free health care.  
Free social welfare.  
Shelter and food sufficient for all.



But all of these means-tested,  
so the wealthy contribute.

No shame to bear  
for being poor, less able, or mentally ill.  
Everyone needs earn  
enough to live decently on.

None shall exert power over another.  
And welcome all refugees,  
as we did, in those years between  
White Australia and Stop the Boats.  
For 28 years Holt, Whitlam and Fraser's  
arms were open; then clamped shut  
a rabbit trap snap,  
by Howard's Tampa,  
inexorably, irrevocably,  
in 2001.

Prohibit gambling,  
and dealing drugs.  
Remunerate usefulness and value,  
not status.  
Celebrate, and seek for  
universal peace: not war.  
Abolish the military and defence;  
away with all war industries!  
Thought of uniforms and ceremonies:  
the more flamboyant and perfumed  
the better!

Wary of certainty,  
that leering lure,  
punish with restraint,  
retrain and educate.  
Abolish retribution,  
and revenge:  
a tooth for an eye,  
and for an eye, a tooth;  
and so ameliorate guilt.

And recast the public service as  
a service to the public,  
a source of continuity

and public memory.  
Away with competitive adversarialism,  
in litigation, parliamentary debate,  
and so much sport.  
Cherish wisdom, not numbers,  
or deceptive 'democracy.'  
Seek to own in common, to share:  
property, skills, resources and services.

Costrain intolerance, oppression,  
and hegemony  
from all religions, sects,  
and those lacking imaginative empathy.  
For them, the punishment shall be  
placement for a term,  
amongst peoples who are different.  
And when not used for their own ceremonial,  
open up all churches, and religious spaces  
as quiet places for music, art,  
reflection and meditation for all.  
Nuture dissent, diversity, creativity,  
of all kinds. And joy prevail.<sup>37</sup>

Firstly for Raaf, 8-20 October 2012.

Each morning  
enthroned in a small adjacent room,  
I gaze, amazed, upon  
the gleaming Manhattan  
you created in  
my laundry.

For Graham in Berlin, 9 October 2012.

Darrell found  
in the bed  
a tiny hard pellet. Did

---

<sup>37</sup> Sir David Cannadine (b1950-, UK historian) identified six forms of **identity**, of sectional solidarity, that have been invented, established and sustained to perpetuate antagonism: religion, nation, class, gender, race and civilization. Each has been used to promote collective interests, each claims a primary loyalty and presents the identity as innate, exclusive and adversarial. Each is sustained by affirming memories, traditions that are intolerant of others, and historians have contributed to this identity-obsessed way of seeing the world. Historians are part of the problem, in that they are trained to identify divergences and disparities, rather than similarities and affinities, many were complicit in bigotry and partisanship to confirm a spurious solidarity, consisting of multiple and shifting identities operating in the messy, complex, contingent, multifaceted, interconnected, joined-up reality of human relations: a view that is a projection of contemporary liberalism with its values of pluralism and emphasis on the autonomous individual (c/f: **dualism** and **Manicheanism**).<sup>37</sup>

we spend the night  
with a possum?

To Darrell, 19 October 2012.

At funerals,  
such difference  
between  
'I did it my way'  
and the  
'I am what I am.'

22 October 2012.

You could drag me from bed,  
or bed me from drag.

Or I can drag you to bed  
and drug you  
till you're dead.

Converse, RP and DD2, 22 October 2012.

### *That dares not speak...*

In the old days  
There was the closet.  
There still is  
it seems  
in some instances.

For the elderly in those  
Templestowe homes,  
for instance,  
afraid amongst  
cannoodling creaking hets,  
to be seen to love  
each other.

But there's another closet  
to take an instance,  
for the old. Self-imposed,  
when at fifty-three his eyes met  
yours; and you seventeen,  
his student.

Such memories.  
Those nights: such fun you had  
Together. Missing  
so many last trains,  
and sleeping close  
and caring.

For him, he knew it was  
the love of his life, as they say.  
For you, he could sense some  
equivalence, at least.  
So much you shared,  
But he knew he could never  
impose on you the burden,  
as he thought it,  
of declaring to you his love.

Yet he feels no sadness,  
no hard-wrenched yearning.  
He is content in his knowing  
you, and your regard  
for him, and silently sensing  
you may feel for him, something  
the same. The words  
unnecessary.

28 October 2012

### *Ghosts...*

There's an incessant creaking  
outside, just above my bed; and a  
cold blast of air from the ceiling.  
A small pool of water appears  
on the cold concrete toilet floor,  
and outside the dining room window, a  
rhythmic knocking.

1 November 2012

### *Civilization*

I'm sitting at a favourite table at Paul's

Café Ivanhoe. On the distant horizon is the tall grey reinforced concrete chimney of Amcor paper plant, clad with the earliest glass curtain wall in Australia. To its right is the slender spire of the Mary Immaculate Church: brash modernism by Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell, but in the tradition of twelfth century Gothic. To its right and nearer, is the couth Arts-and-Crafts façade of the former fire station, once noted by Edquist.

Bookending the straggling shops at left are two modest 1930s Two-storied shops: the nearer is fan-rendered Spanish Mission. Just visible is the Romanesque brick tower of the Uniting Church. Behind me at right is St James's Anglican Early English Gothic, with exquisite windows by Christian Waller. At its left is its red brick Arts-and-Crafts hall by Alexander North; and behind me, just out of view is the great Dudkian Heidelberg Town Hall: the citadel. 1 November 2012 <sup>38</sup>



<sup>38</sup> This derives from Kenneth Clark's famous, but ethically indefensible decription of his definition of civilization (no Asia or Middle East, nor did he consider the rest of the world). 'I am standing on the Pont des Arts in Paris. On one side of the Seine is the harmonious, reasonable facade of the Institute of France, built as a college in about 1670. On the other bank is the Louvre, built continuously from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century: classical architecture at its most splendid and assured. Just visible upstream is the Cathedral of Notre Dame - not perhaps the most lovable of cathedrals, but the most rigorously intellectual facade in the whole of Gothic art. The houses that line the banks of the river are also a humane and reasonable solution of what town architecture should be...' Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation*, 1969, opening lines.

Steven Wallis wrote a witty version to me on a postcard. The **Pont des Arts** (1803), is an iron footbridge across the Seine. This **view** also includes, to east: **La Conciergerie** (Palace of Justice), its square north-east tower **Tour de l'Horloge** (1370), **Hôtel de Ville** (east, town hall, reproduction facade, C17), **St Jacques Tower** (east, C16), **St Gervais** (east, 1657), **Hôtel des Monnaies** (south-east, Mint, 1572 & 1641) and the **Grand Palais** (north-west, 1900).



Hoyts Ivanhoe Theatre<sup>39</sup> (Former Paradiso, 227 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe, 1381-1286 seats, 25.10.24, 1.01.35 purchased Hoytsclosed 3.07.1968, demolished).

The day he left  
I contracted  
a severe dose  
of lovesickness.

Guy Fawkes Day 2012

Oh for a day  
without incident;  
for calm serenity,  
unruffled by wavelets,  
for ordinary tedium;  
perhaps not.

20 November 2012

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<sup>39</sup> 'Ivanhoe Paradiso,' *Cinema Record*, Issue 245, 3.2004, [54](http://caarp.flinders.edu.au/venue/408/view D Catrice, 1991, Cinemas in Melbourne 1896-1942. Thesis (MA) Monash University, 1991, □'Fire in picture theatre' The Argus June 12, 1929 p. 19 references a fire at the Hoyts Ivanhoe Theatre, Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe and □Film Weekly, Film Weekly: motion picture directory, Film Weekly, Sydney. 1946/7-1967/68</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

I've taken almost a thousand  
photos since seventy-three,  
with no knowledge of how.  
Often well composed  
catching a certain light,  
an image.

And these  
You wouldn't call them poems;  
though for me  
they express something  
clumsily, yet  
otherwise left unsaid.

20 November 2012

### *Post-modern*

All my life, it seems  
I've feared  
and practised  
superfluity.

Catching something sparkling  
that could be said  
and too often saying it,  
to excess.

20 November 2012

So much we do is never seen, and  
gets immediately shelved.  
At least God and I know you wrote  
that report. And the elephant  
is grinning from his castle.

For stevie, 23 November 2012

### *Fostering...*

When one does arrive  
at Cockfosters,  
is there a there there?

There, perchance,  
to seek  
a cock to foster?

Or never go,  
actually,  
the full distance?

6 January 2013



Joined together  
must be dressed true. Use  
only mitre, or full butt joints.  
allow connection

by others. Biscuit,

or tongue the joint.  
must not be hard screwed..  
purge and charge. Hose cock  
col. stop valve  
satin brushed  
chrome.  
2013.

18 June

*Prefer to straddle*



Prefer to straddle.  
Decline to shine.  
But looking to you  
like a dog to a bone. Or,  
enough to get me rolling on.

It's not crucial,  
so doesn't matter  
if you glow with praise.  
Running low on superlatives,  
I'll have to lift my game.

So you've got your own God?

Unaffiliated with religion.  
Swarmed now by young girls,  
Garlanded in confirmation white,  
Just fresh from losing  
the virginity of free will.

Wow! I just finished ice-cream...

In a way, J taught you  
to be a father. Everyone  
looks so happy  
in advertising. Whilst  
my phone suffers

an existential

crisis.

For David, 19 August 2013.<sup>40</sup>

Just because  
the usual usual  
is usual usually;

doesn't mean that  
the usual is usual  
always.

---

<sup>40</sup> Extracted from msgs from David Do, between 9-18 August 2013, with a just few additions from the press.

It's pissing,  
mate.  
You pissing  
in the pisser,  
or pissed  
at the pisser,  
mate?

Two for Darrell, 15 September 2013.<sup>41</sup>

It seems  
I've lived my life  
as narrative, in chapters  
of the novel that's been  
for years in my head,  
though perhaps I'll never  
write. And unfolds daily  
as chapters: an adventure  
not yet lived, let alone  
written.

8 October 2013

Once,  
breaking up was  
the end of a relationship. Now  
its just  
a truncated call.

17 October 2013

### *Black Tie Dress Code*

Business opportunity for u:  
straight eye for the queer bi? [RP]

Oh my, I must reply  
with a message that will try  
to rhyme with your bi eye.  
Or should I stop to defy  
the world the intellect of bum alumni.  
By the by, I do not like your black tie  
it runs too far down your third thigh.  
Is that a sigh to leave you dry and high?

David Khoa Do, 14 November 2013

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<sup>41</sup> Also, **piece of piss**, and **pisstake** ('Don't you pisstake me, mate.'). Refer:  
<http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=180961>

Living quite happily  
in a city with  
interesting weather,  
and without  
the distraction  
of harbour views,  
Harry Seidler,  
and that so-called  
'opera house.'

22 November 2013

### *Evidence of Christmas*

Must get 115 cards designed and out;  
Just a few cards in,  
And none from any under fifty.  
I bolster them with birthday's still.

Work's stopped for days on site.  
Still and silent the pass day,  
Few shops open, but admittedly more  
than Anzac, or on Cup Day

A nice email from Dave in Norge  
that even doesn't mention Christmas.  
Can't find my Jesse Norman, CD,  
sonorous, and called *Christmastide*.

Next lunch at Matteo's  
Daz and Dave  
sybaritic, fun, and  
Scheherazade.

25 December 2013

### *A bright new penny*

Penny has another man.  
How many to now recall?

The one she took to Portugal,  
One bass player in the indie band,  
Another lived in Ivanhoe,  
And sweet Mark, the ace bike

mechanic, and racer.  
The shrill-voiced graphic artist,  
disappeared. Superseded by  
the creepy graffiti artist, vanquished.

Now, we heard, an older, northern man,  
implausibly, farming crocodiles, for bags:  
favoured by Louis Vuiton,  
and quite plausibly, Pen.

28 December 2013.

### *Stanzas of forty-five years*

Hungrily groping  
Inappropriate fumbling.

Surreptitiously shoulder-nuzzling  
And long silences.

Intertwining, moving  
Risk in the grass.

Libidinous naked romping  
Intimate caressings.

Sex-on-demand  
Inexorable, interest paid.

Early risings  
Silent leavings.

Reciprocal explorations  
Tender intimacies.

Dogged mechanics  
Needy release.

Solitary imaginings  
Sensuous finesse.

4 January 2014.

Today,  
Morry Schwartz (Architecture, UniMelb, 1966-68)

launched his *The Saturday Newspaper*,  
The Saturday and Sunday Age went tabloid too.

It's fifty years since The Beatles first arrived here  
(Later that year, the Stones and Beach Boys, too).  
And today, it's fifty years since my first day of Architecture at UniMelb, which  
we celebrate tonight at the University Club. 1 March 2014.

Salmon smudge screened by bamboo  
announces the seventeen years since  
some impatient God snatched you,  
greedily and peremptorily  
in that St Mary,

where Fleming chanced upon penicillin.  
Seventeen years we've been apart,  
full of rich happiness, we've not shared;  
and numinous moments secure  
in slides' fidelity. 11 June 2014.

That blissful night, my icy father dying,  
we devoured deep kisses  
as Hoddle's traffic surged all around;  
and my sister's irritation turned to anger. For Steven, 11 June 2014.

Last night,  
returning to my car parked  
behind Le Pine,  
grey figures fussed as  
a gleaming trolley  
discharged  
its shrouded burden  
into closing doors.

Who's catenary closed?  
Who's narrative occluded?  
Who's aspiration expired?  
Who's life resolved? 22 September 2014.

Drinks time in Kardamili, sheltering  
beneath the precipitous Greek coast.

An ancient Wiltshire hill, and  
an equally ancient meadow throughout a year.

Venice, while Italians ruled,  
and the disharmonious family of  
George III.

Roman, Bauhaus and gay persecutions  
and Anne, patroness of Handel, Hawksmoor, et al.

Venice again, with Rem...  
The Silk Roads then traversed,

And all about Sir Ambrose Heal...

14 October 2014.

Today,  
my first shower  
without my leg  
in a garbage bag.

The crystal stream  
flowed freely down:  
unfettered  
bliss!

10 January 2015.



# Appendix

## Lydia the Tattooed Lady

[E.Y. Harburg & Harold Arlen]

Oh Lydia, Oh Lydia  
Now have you met Lydia  
Lydia the tattooed lady  
She has muscles men adore-so  
And a torso even more-so  
Oh, Lydia, Oh Lydia  
Now have you met Lydia  
Lydia the queen of tattoo  
On her back is the battle of Waterloo  
Beside it the wreck of the Hesperus too  
and proudly above waves the red white and blue  
You can learn a lot from Lydia

There's Grover Walen unveilin' the Trylon  
Over on the West Coast we have Treasure Island  
There's Captain Spaulding exploring the Amazon  
And Lady Godiva--but with her pajamas on  
She can give you a view of the world in tattoo  
If you step up and tell her where  
Mon Paree, Kankakee, even Perth by the sea  
Or of Washington crossing the Delaware.

Oh Lydia, Oh Lydia, now have you met Lydia  
Lydia the queen of them all  
She has a view of Niagara which nobody has  
And Basin Street known as the birthplace of jazz  
And on a clear day you can see Alcatraz!  
You can learn a lot from Lydia!  
--Lydia the queen of tattoo!

Lydia, oh Lydia, have you met  
Lydia, the queen of them all!  
She once knocked an admiral off of his feet,  
The ships on her hips made his heart skip a beat.  
And now the old man is in command of the fleet,  
For he went and married Lydia!

---

## And the version sung by Groucho Marx,

at Carnegie Hall in 1971, with Marvin Hamlisch in the background vocals!

(la la la la la)

Lydia, oh Lydia, say, have you met Lydia?  
Lydia the tattooed lady  
She has eyes that men adore so



And a torso even more so  
Lydia, oh Lydia, that encyclopedia  
Lydia, the queen of tattoo  
On her back is the Battle of Waterloo  
Beside it the Wreck of the Hesperus, too  
And proudly above waves the red, white and blue  
You can learn a lot from Lydia

(la la la la la)

When her robe is unfurled, she will show you the world  
If you step up and tell her where  
For a dime you can see Kankakee or Patee  
Or Washington crossing the Delaware

(la la la la la)  
(la la la la la)

Lydia, oh Lydia, say, have you met Lydia?  
Lydia the tattooed lady  
When her muscles start relaxin'  
Up the hill comes Andrew Jackson  
Lydia, oh Lydia, that encyclopedia  
Lydia, the queen of tattoo  
For two bits she will do a mazurka in jazz  
With a view of Niagara that nobody has  
And on a clear day, you can see Alcatraz  
You can learn a lot from Lydia

(la la la la la)  
(la la la la la)

Come along and see Buffalo Bill with his lasso  
Just a little classic by Mendel Picasso  
Here's Captain Spaulding exploring the Amazon  
Here's Godiva but with her pajamas on

(la la la la la)  
(la la la la la)

Lydia, oh Lydia, that encyclopedia  
Lydia, the queen of them all  
She once swept an admiral clean off his feet  
The ships on her hips made her heart skip a beat  
And now the old boy's in command of the fleet  
For he went and married Lydia

I said Lydia  
He said Lydia  
I said Lydia  
He said Lydia  
Ole!

---

But it is the Kingston Trio's version that refers to Puddletown, and which somehow John must have known:

## THE TATTOOED LADY Kingston Trio

We came to town to see

That old tattooed lady,  
She was a sight to see,  
Tattooed from head to knee.

My Uncle Ned was there,  
He came to gape and stare.  
"I've never," he declared,  
"Seen such a freak so fair!"

And on her jaw  
Was the Royal Flying Corps,  
And on her back was a Union Jack,  
Now could you ask for more?

All up and down her spine  
Marched the Queen's own guards in line,  
And all around her hips,  
Sailed a fleet of battleships.

And over her left kidney,  
Was a bird's-eye view of Sydney,  
But what we liked best  
Was upon her chest,  
My little home in Waikiki.