



- GUIDE TO SYDNEY CRIME -

Guide to Sydney Crime

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Australia's significant
online cultural resources

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Cover image: **Martin Adams**

**From Dispossession, across brutality to
“I thought it was a good idea at the time”
Sydney has been one crooked city.**

**Browse this selection for an overview
across generations, enjoy the work
of some of Australia’s leading
writers & photographers.**

Click on the links below to explore a crime...

DISPOSSESSION

MURDER

MONEY

"SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT..."

COLOUR

ARSON

PERJURY

The BUGGERY ACT 1533

BATTERY

NIGHTLIFE

STALK

THE KIDS

ORGANISED

CORRUPT

TOOK

CANNIBAL

INEVITABLE?

"JUST A DOMESTIC"

VAGRANT

LAND

DISAPPEARED

SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

DISPOSSESSION

Brenda Saunders

Garama-marri: the great steal

Let us search deeper to hold our first language
in place, remember our roots are ancestral

enduring as the great figs circling *Gingaculla*

These dirt-covered hands reach and sift, uncover
traces of a world before the smoke from *Boree*

warned of white clouds, big canoes floating in

I dig up songs under the sand, hear music
in names for headlands, islands, fishing bays

walla-mulla, matta-wunga, yarong, karajeen

tunnel through hardened rock, catch echoes
of the *Gadigal, Kamergal, Bidigal, Warigal*

laughter under shell middens at *Were-Were*

*

Stranger spirits from the east created new words
for this place, denied the truth of our belonging

set down their own roots in our camping places
spread as white ants to Nations beyond the coast

brought a sickness that changed our lives forever

People ask, how do you find the forgotten words
so I dig until mud settles under my fingernails

unearth verbs that will carry our story, shape
our lives into something more than stolen or lost

carry us beyond the past into a present tense
baiya-barrabugu, barawu-warra, old sounds

old meanings to heal this forgetting country.

Gingaculla: Rose Bay

Boree: North Head

walla-mulla, matta-wunga, yarong, karajeen: harbour landmarks

Gadigal, Kamergal, Bidigal, Warigal: the Sydney clans

Were-Were: Kirribilli

baiya-barrabugu, barawu-warra: to speak strongly, look forward



images: [Wikimedia](#)

Racial Hygiene

In the rough-and-tumble
we hear the gutter
of dirty talk
the intermingling
of male and female germs
a terrible wonder

The unwed are bundled
through hushed streets
clutching their Dettol and sanitary pads
splayed on the kitchen table
like last Sunday's roast
a rag for stuffing

For Empire's sake submit
to the gloved hand before marriage
we must segregate the duds and
sterilise the deficient
nature cut and carved
at her unseemly joints

Grow glowing postwar children
with milk & sunshine
scrub them with carbolic soap
teach them that fornication
is the factory of disease
your mothercraft on active service

Racial hygiene was promoted by members of the Women's Reform League, especially Lillie Goodisson who established the Racial Hygiene Association of New South Wales in 1926. They advocated selective breeding, the segregation and sterilisation of the 'mentally deficient' and the introduction of pre-marital health examinations. At a time when backyard abortions were commonly available, highly dangerous and illegal, they also provided advice about contraception. Their program reflected broadly circulating ideas about eugenics in the 1940s.



MURDER

Mark O'Flynn

Lonely Hearts on Shell Corner

*Lonely guy wants to meet like-minded girl,
non-smoker, non-drinker, marine biologist
searching for a partner to share his happiness...
He forgot to mention Satanist.*

What was it about that sad motel on Shell Corner leaning towards the wounded side of dusk that made him want to draw them to his bosom? Once is bad enough, but to return, is that being a sucker for punishment, or lack of imagination?

Sixteen years he paid the Queen for that first one. Out early for good behaviour with a new wife into the bargain, what, perhaps, they call animal magnetism. So why return like a dog to its own boneyard?

Six women responded to the lonely guy's request for love. One he chose. The same modus operandi on the creepy edge of town, the same yellow handkerchief stuffed down her throat, as before, like an atrophied lung.

Alive, he insisted, when he left the room. Said that once, when he stepped through the gate of Rushworth cemetery, the temperature of the air rose ten degrees or more. The future, maybe, beckoning.



REMEMBER:
When you bury
a body, cover it
with endangered
plants so it's
illegal to dig it up.

**Follow me for more
gardening tips!**

Legends

Legends in their own minds they
were legends like when Darryl killed
a bloke in his own street just hit the guy
full in the face with a garden spade 'cos he
wanted to hear the bloke's head go bwang
though he only thought he would knock the c...
out cold the poor fuckin stupid c...
just dropped dead so now poor Darryl's on the lam
Queensland. Darryl's brother Darren never got
in bad trouble but he sure was a poofter for a fight.
He didn't look much but he hospitalised
so many poor bastards for looking sideways
or getting in the way, it's bad luck
when your luck runs out, hey?

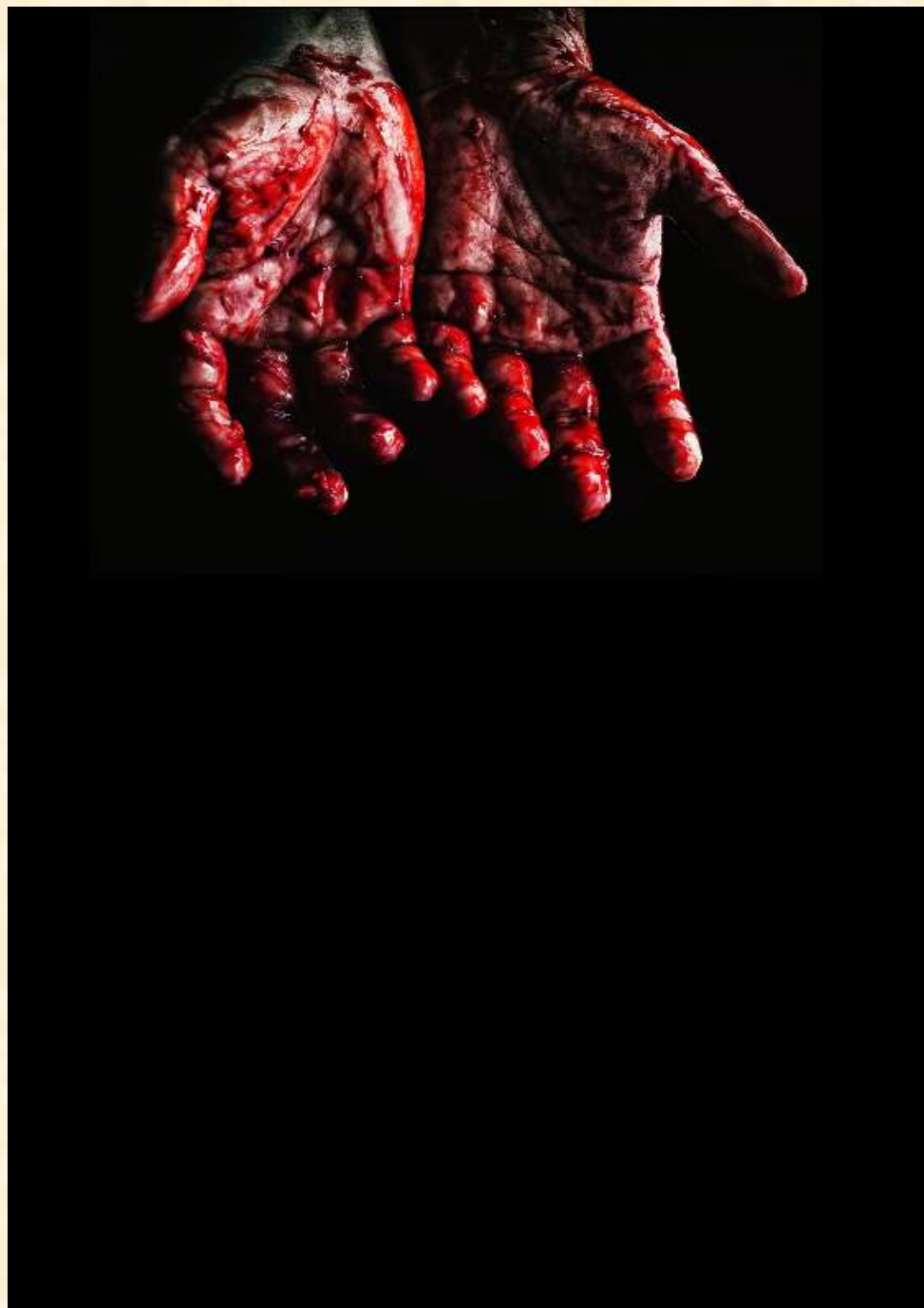
Rapture

Her immaculate bedroom
mermaid sculptures in miniature,
shells, dried sea horses, dead puffer fish.
Butterflies mounted on pins, blue wings speared.

Only one encounter tonight
a gentleman of deceit
not a regular he wore black satin gloves.
poised with a need of cold steel.
Inhale and exhale will collide.

In early morning he stepped up
into a halo of sunlight.
A strand of champagne hair clung to his collar.

A sparrow fell unfastened to lie on the concrete doorstep.



Carolyn Bruyn

Gumshoe

The shoe is still in the old garden
of the factory on Broadway.
One shoe, squashed and dirty,
sprawled across its laces on the bitumen.
It's not much of a garden now.
All the same, there's a high wrought iron gate
with shiny padlock. That shoe is there to stay.

The right shoe. Lying there
remembering the awkward running footsteps.
Come on. Come on !
Out of breath.
Quick, let's duck in here.
Over the gate. SHH h h h

It's okay now. All quiet.
But we can't stay here. What's wrong?
I'm hit. I can't go on.
Try. I'll help. Just follow me.
Do what I do. You'll be right.

No, I'm finished. Lost my sock. My soul.
I've nothing left. You go on. Leave me.

I can't. You must. Are you sure?
Yes, yes. Go on. *I'll get some help. Just rest.*

< F a d e >

Wait !

What? Breathless.

We were good together, weren't we?

Yes. Yes, we were.

The sound of one shoe hopping



MONEY

Adam Aitken

High Flyer

No street or park takes his name.
South of nowhere on reclaimed tinfoil island
a tower glares
driving sunlight into our eyes.
A million floors up the Bingo Department
counts the cost
coupons who can fly the package tour,
who will win a bet on the trots
or have the rights to eat
a shipload of crabs on the next junket.

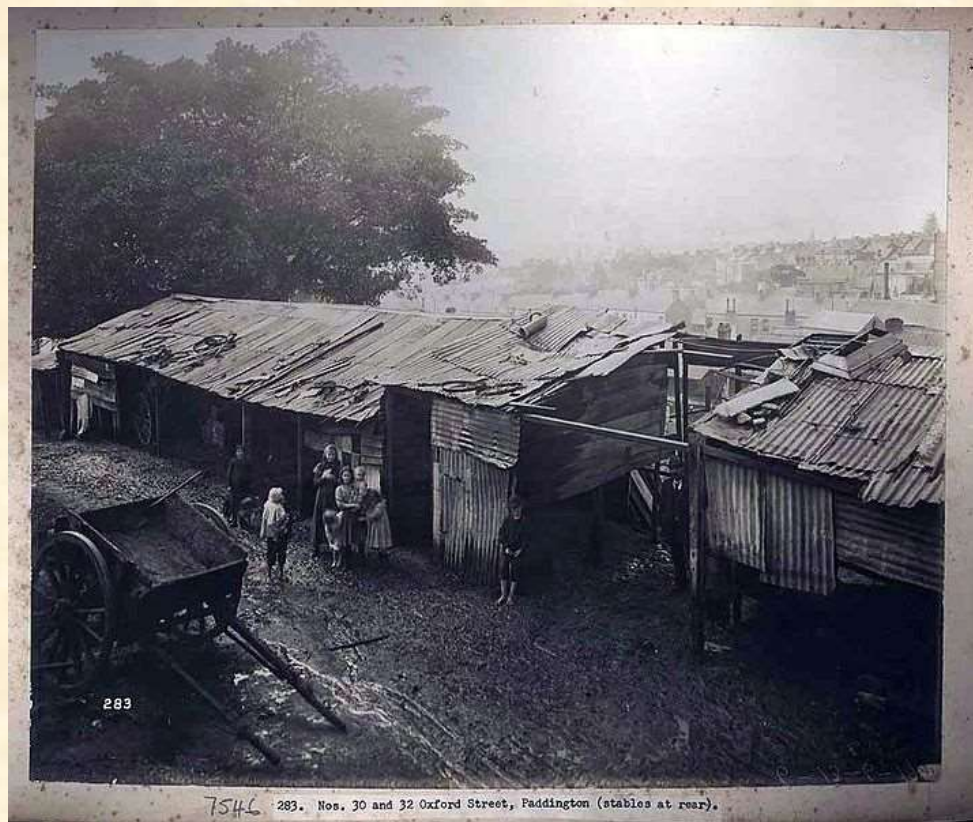
All go home with perfect teeth.
the commercial friends who love his yacht,
and park their wheels
in a stratospheric parking lot.
Succession is trickle down
that never trickled.
It is trouble, but the cigarettes
are the brand Dad smoked and died from.
The same harbour the same wind,
all earnest and immoral.
Dogs are puppies and the menus are lyrical.
Oceans wait for his fake stylish rescue
filmed from the beach.
He's forgotten, so rich he is
he doesn't have a clue how happiness accrues
unless it comes with options priced in.

In Twilightville his debtor children rot
in an oriental jail
as he grows sad without the gardens

of a kind green the rest of us
will never get a space to rest within.
Land sold off recalled in rhymes.
He hopes we will remember him
but not his crimes.
His father calls out from a massive grave:
“Toughen up or blow the lot.”
Price the victory, sell failure.
Obscene wealth prices nothing.



image: **Christine Lynch**





images: **Wikimedia**



“SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT...”

Gail Hennessy

Encounters with the Law

Jeff Carter's *The Picnickers*, 1961

the day turned ugly when a group
of dervish dancers swooped seaward
caught me walking the water's edge

two ran each side with a beach towel
tripwire to sprawl me on the sand
on surface hard as set cement

my father would have none of it
drove my brother and me to the police
station and lodged an assault charge

I met the detective at the trial
and afterward he was waiting
as I stepped from the train

he offered me a lift

he lived just around the corner
from my home
I was sixteen and he a family man

he pulled into a side street
it seemed innocent enough

until he slid across the seat
groping for my breasts
I opened the door and ran

forever printed on my mind's eye
four sunbakers head into sand hills
in a promise of endless summer



image: **William Rouse**



image: **John Jason**

The man in the dark suit

that hot summer night her key was lost
did he find it does he keep it taped
in a diary at the back of a drawer
waiting to come back try every door
in the street — until the key fits
turns in the lock

her neck wears its ribband of bruises
thylacine stripes on her throat
where the shoelace bruised her skin
marks slowly fading in the weeks after

how every step brought him closer
and closer the man in the dark suit
the face she never saw squat neck
ears flap-angled from his head
the empty allotment behind her
rusting car bodies slumped in the grass

she goes through the actions reactions
*why me why would anyone
want to kill me* all the things
the world tells you *I should have done
anything but get on that train*
rewinds over and over
what stops her crossing any bridge
in the dark the sound of his breathing
her own screams afterwards
cutting through the night air
and all the while the indifferent
swish-swish of passing cars

she has to change the ending
twist her hand just so to catch it –
stop its trajectory or she'll end up
like her mother too stymied to move on
trapped on the downswing of 'if only'
she stares at the ceiling parts the blinds
with two fingers peers into the shadows
is he waiting for her now in the dark street?

in the police station pleading
with the Murder Squad
don't use my name
don't tell the newspapers
who I am he'll hunt me down
she sees him everywhere black tie
flying out shoulders hunched
as he bolts arms pumping
wonders if he stopped to re-tie
his shoelace on the platform

he was there at the end of the carriage
and she'd looked away thought no more
of him than any other man
staring with burning eyes

three women attacked within
six hours yesterday. A 20 year-
old student ...
her breath breaks in short sharp bursts

somewhere
in this city he carries his bland face
to work mows his mother's lawn
on the weekends hands gripping
the mower arms lifting and falling
tipping grass-clippings into the bin
placing it on the kerb neat
organised he keeps records
flies a kite with his children
on the beach at Botany Bay

and now this nightmare figure
strapped to her chest Fuseli's incubus
crouched on a woman's body
formless spreading like melted plastic



COLOUR

Luciana Croci

Cronulla

Is it rude to stare
when you're on a beach?

Skimpy costumes and rippling, sun-tanned torsos,
fists clutching tinnies, manicured fingers
smoothing suntan lotion,
what's there to stare at?

— Eyes can look, fuck off,
get off our beach,

— Hey, I come here in my spare time
to save you cunts from drowning,

Then a punch and a push and a fight

— Fuck off lebs, fuck off wogs,
we grew here, you flew here,

— We came in planes, you came in chains
u convict dogs.

Graffiti war declared on city walls.
Car-convoys, burnouts,
bars-bats-knives-machetes,
firebombs, broken windows,
revenge and aussie pride.
Police in riot gear and alan jones
high on a pedestal
baiting bikie gangs to join the fray.
Melees in punchbowl parks,

kicks in the head,
fractured nose and eye-socket.

Not good days to be out
if you're slightly black or tanned
or wear a headscarf
or tall and blonde
or you're an aussie slut.

Arrests, trials, punishments,
even a kind of anzac day
marking ten years of the event:
a freedom-party halal-free
bbq on wanda beach.





images: [Wikimedia](#)



Photograph courtesy [Justice & Police Museum](#)

An Unlawful Non-citizen

Her heartbeat
louder than gunfire

Hot sun reflecting on her tired eyes
exposing fear
helplessness
hopelessness

Burnt skin
unquenched thirst

At age 10
committed no crime
except losing in the genetic lottery

Born to the wrong sect

Too young to understand
the irrational sectarian divide

Fled her homeland
To escape the brutality of her own people

Arrived finally at the doorstep
of the land of opportunities

She looks at border security
Eyes begging
tears dried on burnt cheeks

Response is blank
harsh and indifferent
just like back home

ARSON

John Carey

Newtown Noir

King St. Newtown in the nineteen-seventies when fire Premiums were unaffordable. “Hungarian Stock Clearances” they called them unkindly. My wife ran off with the Insurance Assessor and left me weeping in the ruins of my life. The hobo who was sleeping in the doorway was no loss to anyone but himself and had self-immolated twenty years before. I wasn’t the only loser. The loan I got from the Colourful Racing Identity will never be redeemed. I’d have to limp around the Strip selling drugs for him or he’d kneecap the other one. I asked the police about witness protection. The witnesses would kill me if they got the chance. The bad cop shoved a piece of paper in front of me and said: “Sign this!” The good cop said: “Don’t read it. It will only upset you.”



image: **Rodrigo Teixeira**



C S Hughes

Arson Girl

Arson girl plays aeroplanes
Arms stretched out and swooping
Down steep and grumbling cobble lanes
She believes in love and naphthalene
And plastic lighters all the colours of the summer sky
We folded paper for a game of hate and love
Tearing with a monster claw at desperately chanced futures
Listening to the origami roar
Of fragile folding hearts
But when it said, for her
There would be only paper moons
With furious legerdemain and burning fingers
She flung it in the air
Unfurled a bird of ashes
While a crushing song, on the tin can radio
Sang of a ramshackle sun
She held aloft a single flame
And sang along
Dancing for the end of time
While the curtains slowly, slowly burned

image: **Marco Allasio**



image: **Andrew Coop**



PERJURY

Margaret Bradstock

The Humble Petition of Ann Rumsby

—Her Majesty's Gaol, Parramatta, 23rd August, 1822

"When William Bragge made his request
for me, the earth didn't move one iota
nor Heaven look on,

the appearance of Encke's Comet
over the southern hemisphere
the only propitious sign.

I found him *foul with itch; flat face, short nose*
large scars from scrofulous affection
on the right of neck and jaw
and could not like him.

All the Men servants had wished to marry me.

Sentenced to seven years transportation
on the Convict Ship *Mary Ann*
for stealing goods and chattels (value 35/-)
from Thomas Foulsham, consigned
to the squalor of the Female Factory at Parramatta,
more miserable than any prison,
then to Dr Douglass' reformist house
awaiting service with Judge Barron Field,
I feared that in wishing me to marry Bragge
my Master would be the ruin of me.

Halfway to the Turnpike down the Sydney Road
vexed and in tears, I met with Reverend Marsden*
(him they call 'the flogging parson')
professing himself to be my friend.
But he took up my words
in a different light to what I meant
arraigning Dr Douglass for molestation,

the social life of the Colony now afire
with gossip and new-forged scandal.

Summoned to court,
gaoled for perjury, refusing
to falsely incriminate my Master, banished
to Port Macquarie *because I spoke not that truth
as they would have it spoken,*
I humbly set forth my petition."

*

Governor Brisbane granted Rumsby,
a female unprotected prisoner,
free pardon and sacked the magistrates.
Why she then married Bragge
remains a mystery. She vanishes into the obscurity
of private life, graves lying side by side
in St Ann's Churchyard, Ryde, along with
Miriam, one of their eight children, roots growing
out of the scrapped cities, the adaptable sandstone,
generating
small rebellions here and there.

*It was, in fact, Dr Hall whom Ann met on the way to the Turnpike on that occasion, and he passed her words on to the Rev. Marsden. To simplify the plot details, I have taken poetic licence and conflated the two incidents.

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The BUGGERY

ACT 1533

Charles Freyberg

AT THE EDGE OF TREES
Rushcutters Bay Park 1970s.

At the edge of trees,
I cannot enter.
The moon illuminates
tense streaks of clouds
its rim peeps out
rusted with a filthy haze
full now but for a tiny bite
cut by fingers of branches
shaking with the wind
or with my terror and drunkenness.

All is quiet now but not still.
My flesh is alive
dreaming silhouettes of flesh
behind every lonely tree,
trunks rounded with leering bumps.
I wheel around, searching in panic
“til I’m touched by a hand,
heated fingers play under my shirt
peeling at the coldness of my surface

tobacco breath tickles my ear
and as I turn
buttons flying from his shirt,
my cheek falls into the roughness of his chest
the glow of his skin
throbs with blood
touching my eyes, my tongue.
A wet scab on his knuckle
caresses my face.
I stand dizzy
in the chilly wind
not knowing how to channel
this bursting shock
as raindrops patter.
He pulls the clasp of my belt,
for a moment I am strong
until I giggle doubting it
buoyed by his choking, swallowing mouth.
He rises and stares
I fix into his eyes
I want my power again
I want his power
His hand touches my head

2.

The park now drains of urgency,
my buttocks squelch with mud
my trousers are undone
a bloody bite on my nipple from

unshaven whiskey breath
bruises on scarred muscles
but beneath his roughened skin
a pleading melted his threatening stance,

a demon in him leapt into me
a wild caress of my whole torso.
He pushed me away
when I asked his name
Monsters have no name.
I lost my name
never again
the hush of my yawning suburb.
His heart beat as I licked his skin
our breath surged together,
is he changed into me,
an awkward stumbling boy with a book in his hand?
I stare at the shadows of men circling.
I feel a deep contentment.
I will never go back and hide.





John S Batts

A Dialogue over the Decades

For JIMMY SUTER (1937-1960)

I recall that shy young boy, a bright lad in school
A scholarship fellow and nobody's fool.

‘We lost him you know.’

Soft-spoken when we were brash and rowdy
He left high school, accountancy to serve.

‘We’ve lost him you know.’

Jimmy never wished to stand out in a crowd
Neat in appearance, freckled, un-tousled hair.

‘We have lost him you know.’

He loved a coastal stroll, as Sydney-siders do
Bondi's cliff-walk lured a younger crew.

‘We still like that now.’

The sea's an attraction when white-caps rear.
On the night in question were others near?

‘We shall never know.’

There's much that dies when the waters are high
Not plastics, but kelp, seagrasses, cunjevoi.

‘We’ve lost so much you know’

Was there a shout, a cry, or a shove?
Might he have struggled in that threatening tide?

‘He was pushed, you know.’

Thin Air

Tell me the truth about smut, I said, damn it, tell me the truth about you. Are you a 'college boy' or a 'uni student'? Do I find you under 'C' or 'U'? You said you'd been into some strange scenes. You said you could handle anything. You said you'd been there, you'd done that. You said. You said. You said.

DISCIPLINE. PUNISH. PRISONER. I jotted down a few words. I wrote them on the ad and then I etched them on your flesh. They were a start. In no time at all there were messages all over your body. There was a love-bite on your lower neck. A burn on the palm of your hand. And bruises, lots of bruises. There were the letters D.E.A.T.H. inked in prison blue on separate fingers and the word HEAVEN scrawled across your wrist. There was a heart that skipped a beat, a beat, a beat, followed by a flat flat line. DISCIPLINE. PUNISH. PRISONER. I jotted down a few words. I wrote them on the ad and then I etched them on your flesh.

You wanted a whole story. A narrative. Something you could sink your teeth into. You wanted to take a leisurely stroll along the Bondi-Tamarama walkway, and enjoy the panoramic view. But I've ruined all that. Digging up all those absences those slippings those fallings those 'accidental' deaths. I could have edited them out, the corpses. I could have thrown them away along with the evidence. Just before I pressed the DELETE button, I remembered a notebook a private eye buddy once showed me. Rule number 3, it said: '*Don't* write off the corpse. It is still a character. She may be (illegible) now, but someone loved her once'

Hit the REWIND button.

September 1985.

Gilles Mattaini, a French national, a Bondi resident, goes for an afternoon jog along the walkway. He is never seen again.

His body. His Walkman. His spray jacket. Gone. A friend reports him missing but the report is misfiled. Seventeen years later police start investigating.

Play it again.

July 1989.

Ross Warren, a WIN TV newsreader, takes a late night drive to Bondi. The next day friends find his locked car near Marks Park with the keys located on a cliff ledge below. The papers said: It was suicide. He had a broken heart. He threw himself into the waves. His mother said: He would never have done that. The detective said: There's nothing suspicious. It's a hoax. He's probably staged his own disappearance. His friend said: He was one of those people everyone liked. He was very gentle, very kind and never raised his voice.

Play it again.

November 1989.

John Russell, a Sydney bartender, spends the night with friends at a Bondi hotel. He arranges to meet them later at the Waverly Leagues Club but never shows. His body is found at the bottom of the Bondi cliffs with hair strands in his right hand. The papers said: It could have been suicide. The police said: He was a seasoned drinker, he must have slipped. His friend said: I waited for him all night but he never turned up. At the inquest years later John's brother holds up the clothes that he was found in. Wrapped in plastic. He's hung on to them for fourteen years. Not a day goes past, he says, when I don't think of him.

You wanted an abstract, a paper, a dissertation, a publishable work.

I got stuck on the first line.

"This paper is about illegitimate victims and disposable bodies"

Illegitimate. Disposable. Victims. Bodies. Bodies. Bodies.

Damn it! I don't have any more tricks to produce.

No direct line to Derrida.

No 'real time' chat with Judith Butler.

No contacts in high places.

Everything I'm working with can fit in the palm of my hand.

Your hand.

His hand.

Anybody's hand.

Hairstrands.

Found in a dead man's hand, then lost. Gone.

Carkeys. Found on a cliff ledge. Then lost. Gone.

Reams and reams of paperwork relating to these cases. Gone.

The officers who were meant to be investigating. Away on annual leave.

The divers who should have searched for clues. Never activated.

Hair strands, carkeys, paperwork, evidence, men - too many men - slipped, jumped, vanished into thin air.

There's a confession on tape, but no confessor.

It wasn't me. That's not my voice. It wasn't me.

My friends were all 'nice guys' who had been 'easily led by horrible people'

Hairstrands. Carkeys. Muffled voices on a tape.

There wasn't much to go on.

These deaths were accidental - incidental - accidental.

The men jumped, slipped, fell.

Jumped slipped fell into the universe of the missing person into the universe of the unsolved crime into the universe of the too hard don't care too hard basket.

It wasn't me. That's not my voice. It wasn't me.

There's a quick change of scene, and a frantic flick of a cigarette lighter as I read the papers. **BROKEN AFFAIR KILLED TV STAR. POLICE LOSE EVIDENCE. DENIALS AT GAY HATE INQUEST. MORE DENIALS AT GAY HATE INQUEST.** My hands cup a thin flame as I watch newsprint words, riddled with the glowing tips of cigarettes, take a dive in a clumsy wreath of smoke. Too little too late too little too late. The notebook said: Makes notes. Copious notes. Write often. Write early. Carry a torch and always wear leather. Take photos. Take lots of photos. Take them again. And again. And again.

What do the assailants look like, you ask.

I watch them duck out of range on the way to the inquest, fleeing from the camera's gaze. Give me a profile, you say. A hooded sweatshirt with the letters USA and an American flag. Designer sunglasses. Torn jeans. I was going to project images of them here, up high, enlarged, over on that wall there. But I changed my mind. I don't want you to say he looks like my boyfriend my brother my son. I don't want you to say he looks like he

looks like he looks like ... Instead I want you to *listen* to him, in his own words:

Quote.

"We got him on the ground and we said, 'what are you?' And first he said he was a copper. We said, 'Show us your badge, c---', and he goes, 'Oh, I haven't got it. It's at home'. I went f---ing whack. 'what are you, c---?' He said, 'An ambulance driver', so I f---ing cracked him again and I said, 'what are you, c---?', and he goes, 'I'm a taxidriver.' I said f---bang, bang, bang, 'You lied to me three times c---, what are you?' And he goes, 'I'm a homosexual'. F---. Boot. Oh, heaps bad, mate, stresses me out how they lie to me all the time"

Unquote.

The victims. They're not how I'd imagined they'd look. They seem frayed around the edges. Insubstantial. Ghostly even. But reading between the lines I can see a burn and a bite and bruises, lots of bruises. I watch them come to life in the palm of my hand your hand his hand. Anybody's hand.

Bruises, lots of bruises, randomly littered over strangers' bodies.

Classified ads from a gay magazine.

Photographs of the victims set out in newsprint like a family tree: John

Gilles Ross and the others ... Kritchikorn, Gary ... and the others ...

Victim 'M', Victim 'B' ... and the others ...

I took your photo. I took it again and again and again.

I blew it up. You shot it down.

I struck a chord. You lit a match.

There was a letter and another letter and words, lots of words. You asked for the truth. You wanted to *see it* with your own eyes. You demanded justice mystery suspense. Time's almost up, and I haven't followed the golden rule. Beginning-Middle-End. I've only introduced three characters, and there were many more where they came from. The notebook said to flesh them out. Give them a personality. I had hours of tape, reams of paperwork, boxes of slides. You were going to get it all. The whole damn show and tell. But at the eleventh hour I slashed and cut,

and slashed and cut.

GENUINE REPLIES ONLY I reiterated in bold print.
CONFIDENTIALITY ASSURED , I added.

I don't want you to see what they looked like.

I don't want you to say: he looks like my boyfriend my brother my son a
guy I once danced with at Sleaze Ball Mardi Gras Connections The
Aquarius Club.

Instead I want you to trace their shadows, their ghosts, their absence,
everything they've left behind:

The soles of their feet.

The tread on their shoes.

The locks of their hair.

You told me to take a risk. You told me to take a gamble. It was all *your*
doing. You wanted the truth, you asked for it. I promised didn't I. To give
it to you. The truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I jotted
down a few more words. **WORK IN PROGRESS**. I wrote them on the ad
and then I etched them on your flesh. **TO BE CONTINUED ...**

Prior publication: Davis, K. (2005) in
Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies



BATTERY



Photograph courtesy [Justice & Police Museum](#)

Lithe Evil

‘Shiv’, Shiva the Destroyer, shiver
–a sonata of spine and fear–
I have loved this word waywardly,
the sleek espionage of how it
infiltrates a ribcage, punctures
a lung, the sectioning of an artery,
lengthwise or transversely, each
a delight in terminal craftsmanship.
(I am also fond of “stiletto”.)
My first sallies were rehearsals
in pain, a buttock in an ATM queue,
an eye to an escaping corner, an arm
clutching a backpack strap
in a train entranceway, flight
through a just-in-time door.
I experimented with hidey-holes
until a sleeve-seam presented itself
as home for a wiry scabbard
and I devised a means of shaking
it free, unobtrusively. Now
I cut a fine figure prowling
the laneways and night shadows.



NIGHTLIFE

Rozanna Lilley

Fan Dance

Patricia Nelson struts into the spotlight
wearing only two fans
and a fake suntan
giant plumes plucked from a ranch-raised ostrich
branched barbs mapping the miles
from Shanghai to Sydney
no maiden voyage

Offers her burlesque pearl
at Oyster Bill's Club
the Model-B Fords queuing
across Tom Ugly's Bridge
cascading feathers swoop and bluster
teasing hard men
(razorblades concealed in crumpled cuffs)

Outstretching borrowed wings
she arches one bare foot
sharpening her claw on the parquet floor
turning, she feels the pull
of the night sky the beckoning updraft
but, flightless, remains
captured in the airy echo
of terrestrial applause

Fan Dance is about Patricia Nelson, an ash blonde New Zealand showgirl who performed her risqué dance with ostrich feathers in Shanghai and then, for a brief season, in Sydney in 1938. The fan dance was first performed by Sally Rand at Chicago's World Fair in 1933; she was arrested for indecent exposure. The poem interrogates the figure of the showgirl both as an object of voyeurism and subject of performative freedom.



Photograph courtesy Justice & Police Museum



Charles Freyberg

**Tony and the Boss at the Venus Room.
Kings Cross 1970s.**

The Venus is jumping,
the girls all legs in minis
trays of glowing amber with ice
low light from a chandelier
shadows of men stumble with bravado.
The boss arrives
sitting at his centre table
the potency
of his jovial stare
tears inhibitions, notes fly from wallets
the revelry intensifies
animal shouts over jazz band jive.

Knowing he is watching,
I circle and smile
adjusting the buttons of my scarlet suit
flaunting its muscular line.
I keep the moment electric
spiraling not quite out of control
with a wink, a handshake, a threat
ready for a flying fist, a broken off glass,
as girls hustle men to softly furnished rooms.

He beckons.
He wants me.
I sit, his eyes opaque stare playfully into mine.

“His dirty fingers in the till”

He pauses as a waitress giggles
bringing us whiskies and ice

“You know what to do.”

The quiet insinuation in his voice
cuts through the bellowing music
as the bar revolves around him
sweeping in cops who jump when he says,
he sits easy

fury wrapped in his well cut suit
easing into a chuckle as he jokes

a Walther bulges from his coat

he’s ready to pounce at any intruder,

he came from nothing like me.

Now the Premier invites him to lunch.

“Yes boss.”

He trusts me.

I leave with a skip

shaking with a dread that makes me stronger.



Stations of the Cross

Thank Christ as you fly
the coop: battery-packed
 high-rise workstations—
 to duck tailgating spoilers,
 facing James Station, cross past

 the shuttering kiosk edging
 Elizabeth, parry a Coke
can flung by a footloose
bin-looting ibis, dodge Pitt's late-blast
building-works up Park: rubbernecking

the highlit glitter of the quickie
-loan corner pawnbrokers
 to William—and the rally,
 whoop, cry: early
 clustering of the late-shift

 sisterhood: six-foot
 -six Amazons teetering
in their size ten six-inch heels,
stick-thin pins sticking out of skin
-tight too-high way-low Day-Glo,

needle-stick
arms clamping
 clutches stashing
 fossicked scrimpings
 for the op, a fix (alt types

 of pipe dreams);
 unused jimmies
for the shirty johnny-come
-laters, the shadow-shifting kerb-skirting
kick-seekers—wide-berthing the wet

t-shirt pool-comp-touting
Kings Cross Hotel to the welcome
red glare and stutter
of the titanic Coke
sign, piles of Lebanese

pizza: one-fifty a giant doughy slice—
three for three soakage for the cheap
drunks—up the main drag, a heated
squall at the station entrance, through
the crazed tangle of X-rated
neon beacons flashing flesh
temples: not the likeliest
of shrines to find religion,
though it restored my faith
for a while in something higher—

that towering wall of muscle taking
down the off-his-face lurching outsider—
with a benevolent, diamond-
crusted smile, won unbeknownst
for a flicker of recognition each time

I strode past: limp-suited,
fake snakeskin-booted
to my knock-down bedsitter
where I plugged my ears
to the next-door knocking

-shop, juked junkies
on the back step,
overlooked nightly cop-shows
outside my window (the right
to silence reserved for the accused)—

that unorthodox
saviour ministering

the illusion of my
incongruous inclusion
until the feter and the spilled

body fluids flushed
me out to 'higher' ground,
where I found
the cost of admission
rose with the postcode.

First published in *Portrait of a Woman Walking Home* (Recent Work Press 2021).



STALK



image courtesy: **Kindel Media**

Stalking

“I’m so happy with the money I got from the government, I think I will be able to pay some of my debts. When I get home, I’ll do my sums to see if I can buy the jumper I saw yesterday in Katies. That man seems to be following me, I noticed that if I stop, he stops, if I walk fast he does the same. I will enter the next shop. Good! There is a groceries store. I will walk around pretending to look for something. Hopefully, sick of waiting he’ll be gone. Oh God! He is there, waiting for me. I’ll give him a dirty look. He smiled. The ‘shit’ smiled at me. What does he want? Why is he following me? Mum told me that my skirt was too short. Which made me very angry. I keep telling her that the decency of a women is not measured by the length of her skirt. She keeps insisting that men see us as objects and not to provoke them showing a bit of boob or wearing sexy clothes. She is a woman with such old fashioned ideas. Maybe she is right. He is still behind me, I know, I feel it, he is getting closer and closer. It is getting dark. Oh shit! I need to cross the park soon and usually there are not many people there. He could easily push me into the bushes and rape me. I’m scare. What do I do? What do I do? He may have a gun or a knife. He can cut me to bits. I’m perspiring. My hands are trembling. He is right behind me. I can hear him breathing, my heart is galloping. Do I tell him to piss off? Shall I scream for help? But who will help me, the street is deserted? I’m near the park. Panting! Panting! Scream! Scream! Maybe that scares him off. Oh! Oh! A cab. A cab, thanks god. Stop! Please stop!



THE KIDS

Alex Skovron

Bondi

i.m. Graeme Thorne

Almost the week the boy
was taken away, we moved in—

Edward Street was on the news,
police came and went.

He had been cajoled into a car
outside a corner grocery

just down the street. Strange
to think now of that

Four Square Store, and of him
hurrying towards it

to his fate—the very shop that
I, leaping off the bus

in years to come, would visit
for an after-school licorice stick

or Nestlé's sixpenny-thin
chocolate tile (an aircraft card

inside each); the shop where
I, descending Wellington Street

in years to come, would turn
left into O'Brien Street,

walk another block, and there
by the rickety fence await

the School Special to Randwick,
another unspecial day,

my schoolbag grounded
and safe between my shoes.

Previously published *The Intimacy of Strangers*
(North Shore Poetry Project, 2018).



image: **Jonathon Borba**

'Prayers to...Jesus Christ are you listening?'

2 Italiano's eating Toast
at a Holy Reunion
Having a chat to Mother Mary
Donning purple gowns for communion
He;s got a date with Jesus Christ
Hes gonna speak in tongue
And tell him all about it
Until Justice is done
He wants to cut the balls off priests
He wants to give good service
He does that with good reason
He does that on behalf of the children
He does this for all affected
He's gonna have a chat to Joseph
In his final will and testament
He will leave no rest unspoken
He will speak Latin for all
The Catholic church
Hath Broken
He will leave his unrest to The Family
Whilst singing Hell a loo ya!

Dedicated to Antonio Cordisco, a victim of the Catholic Church.



Image: **Teena McCarthy**

Hide and Seek

In the bush behind the beach
the sharp scent of gums
The whispered crush of disturbed leaves
The screech of galahs

The man appears, grey hair
like her father's. His hands hide
deep in the pockets
of his crumpled shorts

It's the way he smiles
his too-bright eyes that brings
the dryness to her mouth.
Even before he tells her

He's got something to show her
she's already halfway up the tree
child's breasts pressed hard
against the firm white safety

of the trunk. Her hair a long,
dark fruit. In the highest fork
she starts counting the leaves,
concentrates on their blue-green gloss

the curl of their tails. The thwack
of a ball, someone shouts *Howzat?*
She goes on counting.
Two hundred and twelve ...
three hundred and twenty-three ...
four hundred ... She's still child
enough to believe
in the magic of numbers



ORGANISED

THIS FORM TO BE CAREFULLY FOLDED IN SIX PARTS.

No. **188**

NAME **Mate Leigh**

Long Bay
Date when Portrait was taken **21. 4. 1914**

Native place **Qulbo**
Year of birth **1887**
Arrived in State (Ship) _____ (Year) _____
Trade or occupation (previous to conviction) **Dom. duties**
Religion **R.C.**
Education, degree of **R.S. 80**
Height, without shoes **5 feet, 1 inch**
Weight, in lbs. (On conviction) **110**
(On discharge) _____
Colour of hair **Brown**
Colour of eyes **Blue**
Marks, or special features **Scar on upper lip**



(No. of previous Portrait) _____

Convictions.

Where and When	Offence	Sentence
Qulbo P.C. 3 5 97	Being a neglected child was mischievous	Sent to Parramatta Industrial school
Central P.C. 21 2 11	Vagrancy	14 days H.C.
do. 21 12 02	Unlawful trade	£ 2. 15. 4 or 14 days H.C.
do. 20 3 13	Insulting words	£ 2. 6. 0 or 21 days "
do. 1 12 13	Being the holder of a license free by Mrs.	2 Months H.C. suspended on finding her to be a good character for 12 Mos.
Spangway S.D. 29 3 15	Perjury	5 years P.S.

Underworld Queens

kate leigh and matilda (tilly) devine
tough gangsters in skirts decked out in silver fox furs
broad-brimmed hats flash diamond rings
sydney's queens of crime frocks as sharp as razors
tilly's 'queen of the loo' owns brothels
woolloomooloo and palmer street darlinghurst
known as razorhurst (cut-throat razor-gangs slicin'
and dicin' the competition)
tilly's lookin' after business at the bloodhouse
the tradesman's arms sawdust on the floor
soaks up all the blood and vomit

kate's down at the courthouse peeling veggies for tea
sly-grogger fence for stolen goods cocaine pusher
bookmaker queen of surry hills married petty crim
gave false alibi for 'shiner' the boyfriend
does five-year stint for perjury
runs sly grog in surry hills standover men
slashers and enforcers
knock on the door ask 'is mum in?'
cockatoos keep nit 'stay 'ave yer drinks inside'

it's kate and tilly's sydney they own the joint
rivalry fuels razor wars
frank green's shot over a girl ('good looker for a whore')
armed with pistols and knives kate's mob arrives
big jim on tilly's porch shoots one dead
wounds two or three more kate's lover collects a bullet
razor gang's slashers turn the streets red

kate kills snowy prendergast aged twenty-three
charged with murder pleads self-defence
coroner records finding of shooting justified
prendergast 'burglariously' entered premises

women are rich write letters to the editor
interviews in the press accuse each other
‘white slaver!’ ‘dope pusher!’
give generous gifts to charity
christmas parties for local kiddies
bribes to police until ’54 that is
then the taxman came
took their money diamonds and property

upstairs room on devonshire street
penniless kate dies after stroke and fall
seven hundred attend her funeral
crims and cops well-known identities
even tilly devine pays respects
(just to be certain)

tilly wrote to the truth newspaper
‘wasn’t as bad as i was painted
there’s lots in sydney who will miss me
even coppers’ they soon forgot her
story goes in a pub in darlinghurst
someone proposed to raise a glass
toast her passing but no one bothered

earlier version published *Harbour City Poets*
voices from underground 2010





'Study in Scarlet: Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine
National Library of Australia
People, 15th March 1950'



Photograph courtesy Justice & Police Museum

- - - 0 0 0

His Lincoln Continental filled Paddo lanes
like a king-sized bed, personalised
number plate of his three letter name
shouting like a *Daily Mirror* headline.
The three spooky zeros going nowhere
made the plate seem wider than the car.
So you looked right, listened, looked left,
then right again before you kept on walking.
Five Ways intersection just up the street
was a roulette reminder of choices you make.
I was with 'one of his girls, a 'special kid'
'someone he looked out for', their relationship
hard to follow as a wave in the House of Mirrors.
So I half-waited to be romantically riddled
with real bullets in our apartment doorway,
his three letter card saying hi and goodbye.

She kept his rented one-bedroom flat neat,
tucked in the S.C.G sized doona and bedding,
refilled the bar, restocked the scotch.
Reflecting mirrors on the bedroom ceiling
must have given Eastern suburb tradies
a good laugh when they stuck up the tiles.

Still, it was the Seventies, dig? The Cross
has always leant its name to metaphor
and Sydney reflects its darkest nights in glitter
and stars, those mirrors of the turning universe.
Mansions tip diamonds into the harbour.
Ferries chug innocent commuters
to their ordinary work and home again,
trails of the just-gone day sunk without trace.
Think strip joint, wine bar, night club,
business girl, standover man, the Gap.

Juanita Nielsen was a pain in the wallet.
Any of us could have disappeared for a laugh
to settle someone's nerves, quick as a *Bex*
down the open throat of Luna Park.





Norm Neill

innocent until

There hasn't been a murder here in years:
the razor gangs have gone, the bookies too
and vice-squads bought with cash, hot goods and beers,
as have the girls who hurried clients through
the brothel managed by a psychopath
shot dead one night by a fiery pimp, whose star
flared briefly till he died, the aftermath
of third-rate gin. Life changed and no one won.
Now corporate traders share good-humoured meals
in bistros, boasting of the ways they wring
fat profits from their tax-reducing deals
and renovations, scorning anything
suggestive of the days of gangland crime,
conspiring artfully while killing time.

Previously published *Australian Poetry Journal*

Each way

Minor crime was woven
into our lives just like
the salty tang of the sea
sifting through dreams
nightmares.

Some of dad's
rellies were SP bookies –
Illegal then and
Saturday arvos were
consumed by the fevered
sound of horse races
blaring from the wireless –
a sound I grew to hate.

When I was about 10
after Mum gave me money
and a piece of paper
with her bets listed
I walked around the corner
to a house in Grove Street.

Standing on tiptoe
at the window in the side passage
I recited to Mr Li – 1 or 2 shillings
each way on horses with Irish names –
'Danny Boy', 'The Pride of Erin',
or other ones that caught Mum's eye.

If the house was locked up
I knew that he'd been warned
of a police raid and went
to the nearby backup house.

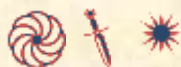
Mum occasionally picked a winner

but her biggest victory was Old Rowley
who she backed at 2 bob each way –
he won the Melbourne Cup at 100 to one.
The horse's name was bestowed
on my brother born a few days later.

I went to St Patrick's School
and for several years I was very devout –
in Confession I listed minor sins –
disobedience, omission, white lies
but never mentioned the SP Bookie –
gambling and drinking were
embedded in our community –
just a normal part of life

On Friday nights after work,
payday, Dad, a factory worker,
often lost his wages in card games.
Later he also worked
at the Greyhounds and the Races
And when he eventually became
an SP bookie we finally got a telephone
which I wasn't allowed to use

My brother followed in
the family footsteps
betting on everything in sight
but I rarely did –
I was studious and from a
young age – a book worm –
my way of escaping
the discordant
clamour of childhood –
the inhalation of air
blighted by well-meaning
unfulfilled lives

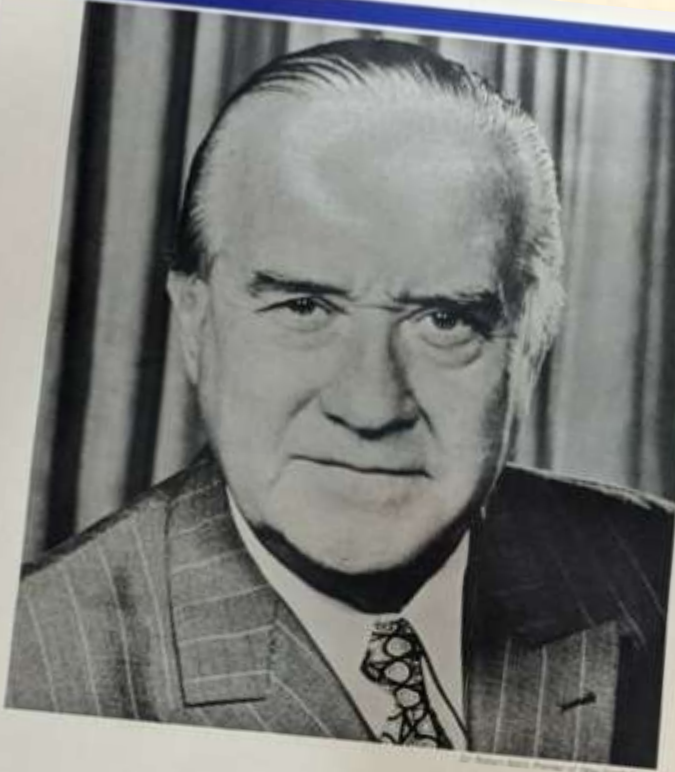


CORRUPT

Martin Langford

Bashful

When George Freeman Esq.
or the Hon. Abe Saffron
inquired of the Governor
what titles were left at Green Hills –
or whether perhaps there were lots
on the new Cox's road –
they were sidelong and bashful:
this was so easy –
where was the fun in the crime?



KEEP N.S.W. IN STRONG HANDS



VOTE

Liberal

AUTHORISED BY G. J. CHILTON, 24/25 STREET, SYDNEY.



TOOK

Jacqueline Buswell

the felony

A boy of promise, said the convict record
in a rare show of optimism
A boy, and already transported to the colony?

He purloined a leg of lamb, had previous history:
Stole, together with his mate, six loaves of bread
Seven years transportation, age 14

The record continues the customary litany
misconduct, lashes, absconding, gang work
solitary confinement, certificate of freedom

When he married a young lass
both signed with a cross
His wife gave him five children, then left

Two of his boys were wards of the state, one,
found *in a most wretched state*, the other
sent to a prison boat for stealing a hat

He had two brothers, also transported
The parents in remote Leicestershire
condemned to a half-life

At 81 he died in Darlinghurst gaol
arrested a month earlier
for *conduct, idle and disorderly*

I see him angry, dishevelled on the street
shouting to the void

what happened to the promise?



Photograph courtesy Justice & Police Museum

Loretta Barnard

Stolen From Grace

Shivering into splinters, the glass shimmied its way
to the terrazzo, leaving a sea of cruel tinsel
winking in the torch beam
shuddering the sheeny blackness.

From the weeping walls marigolds were plundered
daffodils, zinnias, a kitchen corner swaddled
with light, taken in the mangled darkness
by swift-shadowed thieves
with no time for flannel-flowered reveries.

In Turrumurra, Grace's tears,
like weebegone raindrops, snaked through
the runnelled dry creeks of her timeworn cheeks
like runny paint on this moment's canvas,
pigments wept away swept away.

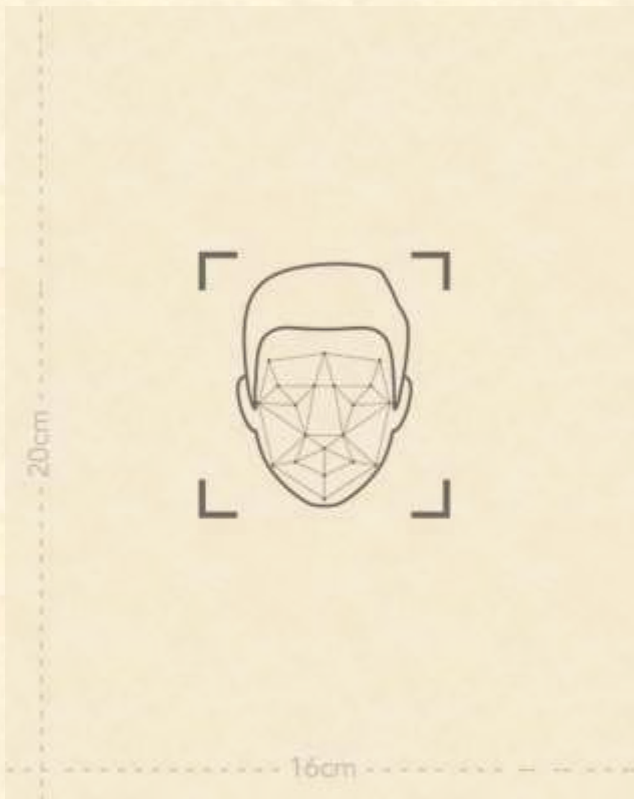
Figure in the window, the building of the Bridge,
cathedral towers and paths beneath the trees
her paintings now phantoms, conjured by stealth
to lord knows where. Never a trace to chase,
nary a notion or merest whiff of their clandestine fate;
will it ever, never, be known on whose wicked walls
Grace's works now sit in secrecy?

Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984) was a significant and pioneering Australian modernist artist known for painting, in vibrant colours, scenes of Sydney urban and suburban life. On 4 April 1977, when Grace was 85, 28 of her small works were stolen from Macquarie Galleries in King Street, Sydney in a well-planned heist. The whereabouts of the paintings remain a mystery to this day.

An Invention for Two Voices

Do you believe in the artist as a concept?

Not at all, I believe in the image
I am thinking about Frans van Mieris
the Dutch Golden Age painter,



as he presented
himself in

A Cavalier

Could you describe the portrait please?

Somewhere out there, *A Cavalier*

The event that gives emotion to the face
A *Cavalier*, himself beheld somewhere

We don't get any of the story
only an endless moment of a *man* in oil
a facial of something outside the frame
as if the glamour is not allowed to be *his*
like one-half of a see-saw
the first arm akimbo
to which we direct ourselves
we will see Monday opposed to Wednesday
the rightful arrest of collar and cuffs
Bank knowledge defines a sophisticated awareness
a particular importance for this little fantasy
suggests *to* him but *from* him
their equal expression of returns

Could you love him?

Implicit in the generation of self
is the desire to escape death.

[Roguishly] I sense you have an agenda.

Not at all, it's neither hidden, or mine.

Stills

An Allegory of Painting—Google... >

The Interrupted song

The Drummer Boy

Brothel Scene

Woman Threading Pearls

Girls Selling Grapes to an Old Woman

Portrait of a Young Lady

The Sleeping Officer

Scene Galante

The Artist's Studio

A Woman in a Red Jacket feeding a Parrot

The Serenade

Teasing the Pet

The Doctor's Visit

Woman Before the Mirror

next

A Cavalier

Boy Blowing Bubbles

Selfies

A Cavalier 1657 [stolen]

Left earring tronie 1661

Tronie 1662

A Fifty Two Year-old Man 1665

At his Easel 1667

With a Plummed Beret

Red Beret 1670

As Merry Taper 1673

Another tronie 1677

With a Cittern – 1681

With an urban crown, a feather and fur trimmed robe - 1681

Still missing

Fourteen years—Stolen Cavalier.wordpress

Fourteen years since *A Cavalier* was last seen.

Fourteen years ago person(s) unknown stole this Dutch masterpiece.

Fourteen years.

No news. No leads. No trace.

Someone out there knows something.

Someone out there knows where *A Cavalier* is.

Please don't wait another fourteen years to come forward.

Subject

Chron.com/entertainment/article, 14 June 2007

SYDNEY, Australia—A 17th century Dutch painting _____
_____ valued at more
than \$1 million was stolen _____ from
an Australian state gallery _____ during viewing
hours over the weekend _____ police suspect an inside job

A *Cavalier* by Baroque-era artist Frans van Mieris _____
disappeared from a small room in the Art Gallery of New South Wales

_____ An oak panel painted in oil
_____ the picture depicts a man
_____ believed to be the artist seated on a chair _____
_____ dressed in a feathered hat _____ frilled sleeves.

You haven't *really* told me who took it?

[Ignores question] Here's a brown that I love
matte and opaque, a colour that obliterates and conceals.

Who *really* took it?

Practically, I don't how this was achieved
It wasn't at night and it is not ignorance

It was at a time when our observational powers
and senses are blunted by security cameras—
to imagine how memory is
removing two wall screws

Suspended

‘We find a lot of paintings do eventually come back’.

Robert Goldman, FBI Art Crime Team

Wealthy well-dressed young man, assumed to be a self-portrait of the artist
/ was audaciously stolen / The Gallery had long been understaffed and
complained to state government of the day / James Fairfax donated it in
1993 / Value today unknown / Insured for \$1,400,000 / Status: missing

keystoneunderwriting.com.au/articles/9-a-cavalier-self-portrait-by-frans-van-mieris/

And now?

The overall direction, is away from any narrative
Story is being displaced by sensation in its pure state
You see the same thing everywhere in the world at large
An image; its purpose is to be disseminated by the media
The appetites we arouse in ourselves:
computer imaging...
[Digresses at length]

Alan Jefferies

Christmas spirit

A shop detective
in Grace Brothers
disguised as Santa Claus,
arresting a pensioner.



Image: **Donald Teel**



CANNIBAL

Angela Gardner

A Lurid Tale

A lurid tale my Lord
and upon the tenderest flesh.
It is on everyone's lips.
Yet when he came to it
one of the sailors realised
he just couldn't stomach it.
But such a juicy story
of the captain and the mate
every newspaper relishing
sinking their teeth in the meat
of such a scandal.

To his customers and neighbours, he remains Cannibal Tom. He is notorious, known but never known. His fresh start, his survivor's story. In compression and exhalation, the sunshine turns the streets to air and water, to the various blues that are never enough. Here, on the harbour, Sydney Harbour, Tom Dudley is a family man, at home in flat acres of briny light that shines on Cambridge Street and Sussex Street, both named for the old country (as if he had never left).

Taken from *The Sorry Tale of the Mignonette* (Shearsman Books 2021), was longlisted for the Live Canon International Poetry Prize and first published in the Live Canon 2019 Anthology (UK).



INEVITABLE?

Michele Seminara

True Crime

I've been consuming
too many crime podcasts,
have started locking the door
perceiving pervy neighbours
and opportunistic strangers
trailing silver semen on my windowsills and floor.
On Twitter, a mother marks
her daughter's inaugural public groping,
while my own child crests
the dangerous circumference of her imminent flesh —
the world pre-emptively turning to trawl
her for its pleasure and perversion.
It is a dark world in which we dare love.
Lured by the luminol glow of the lifeblood of
Ebony Simpson
 Anita Coby
Samantha Knight
 Tegan Lane
Graeme Thorne
 Trudie Adams
Christine Sharrock and Marianne Schmidt
I brood deep into the murky night
over
how it's usually men who — ?
why so many women are — ?
that our forsaken children must — ?

The Past Talks Back

At 19 my first husband gifted me a brothel visit
to learn how to please a man.
My mind was thin wire.
did what I was told.
He picked me up next morning,
handed me a bottle of champagne.

I was directed to overnight injections of LSD
hospital experiments.
I did what I was told.

The psychiatrist lay me on a couch,
injected me with valium, had his way.
Told me to leave by the rear door
as his silver cloud Rolls Royce
waited at the front entrance.
did what I was told.

I remained 19 years in a respected middle class family.
Had two children and a garden that unearthed me.
I was told to leave the family home.

My final year lecturer knew how to love.
Who fathered me as I had been fatherless
Dealt with 10 years of flashbacks.
He gifted me with deep understanding,
thought my husband was a psychopath.
Salt granulations dissipated.

When he died I lost context.
Had trouble being vertical.
Not for one moment uninteresting.
mind brilliant, his kindness a bowl.

Named us Learner and Loewe.
I was the performer he was the writer.

Can't perform grief in words nor gestures.
Love doesn't die.
He lives forever in me.



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Her Light Fruit Cake¹

Service is love dressed in work clothes.
— eastern suburbs Anglican church billboard.

Tracksuit, no make up
a gold wedding band snapped around a nail-bitten finger
I marvel as she swings up a solid arm towards
cordial on the top shelf at *Go-Lo*.

She's no part
of a new feminism, dabbles
as well as doubles
triples & more so many
little roles that
just about makes one, her
aim is for completion exactly like
in the 50's where the mother cooked
for family neighbours relatives
& family neighbours relatives until
occasionally she dropped in
a snippet of *Thall-rat*
& someone sickened.

Not even death the sometime goal, maybe
respite via husband's illness or a bald patch
on a wife-beater's head as she COOKED.
His till it's hers/
hymns to the hearse.
Either young, dark as new paling fence or
the worn-patch version of same.

Mrs Grills, den mother of the neighbourhood

¹ In 1950's Sydney there was a rash of domestic poisonings — so endemic that a popular rat poison brand had to be taken off the market. Mrs Grills & Mrs Monty were two of the most notorious poisoners.

or Mrs Monty poisoning her lover/son-in law we
take any woman for granted at some peril.

A rough goddess' hand flips pages
of the washed-tone *Women's Weekly*.
At six fifteen each man clutches his beer
& stares at this night's dangerous plate.



It's nice to have a girl around the house.

Though she was a tiger lady, our hero didn't have to fire a shot to floor her. After one look at his **Mr. Leggs** slacks, she was ready to have him walk all over her. That noble styling sure soothes the savage heart! If you'd like your own doll to

doll targeting, hunt up a pair of these hero **Mr. Leggs** slacks. Such as our new automatic wash-wear blend of 65% "Dacron"™ and 35% rayon—incomparably wrinkle resistant. About \$12.95 at plush-carpeted stores.

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White Ribbon

(2016)

Picture a stunning bride in white
covered in blood. Days of suffering
come to an end, in violence.

When I thought about dresses
for the dead, my tangent took me
faraway from fact. A group made
sixty-eight dresses, one for every woman
in our country murdered by her partner
so far this year. I won't mess
around with metaphors. It's enough
to think they died at the hands of someone
once loved and admired.

What do angels wear? Gossamer
trails, pale as air, or suits of silver
to bulletproof the bare. There's
a narrow ribbon of white, connecting
angels to new clothes back there.

Previously published: Intermittent Angels, Girls on Key, 2020



VAGRANT

Kate O'Neil

Miss Bea Miles Occupation: Rebel*

I'd always known 'Authority' was crooked,
that Society needed a wake-up call,
so when I recovered from the fever,
I, 'true thinker and speaker,' gave it my all.

It was my dream job: 'Rebel.'
I could not stand 'the hypocrisy, lies, pretence,
conventional speech and behaviour
upon which society is based.'
So priggish. So strait-laced.

So I rebelled, as I felt I ought –
I didn't care what anyone thought.
I wore a ball-gown to ride a man's bike,
or sometimes shorts or tennis gear,
an army greatcoat when it was cold.

When my father, against my will,
used his male 'authority'
to have me put away for years –
some clear-thinking journos heard of my plight,
and knowing I was in the right,
argued the case to have me freed.
'Authority' being driven by greed –
the lawyers, the judges, the police -
they are the ones that breach the peace.

I felt compelled to speak my mind –
I was rational - I'd been certified 'sane'.
My arguments were clear and plain.
I spoke the truth when I told the court,

the officer's report
was seriously lacking in honesty –
I said my bloomers were *not* exposed -
until the officer removed my blanket.

And, arrested for smoking next to a sign
saying, *Gentlemen requested not to smoke*,
my gender defence wasn't merely a joke.

I was better known than the Prime Minister
because, like him, I preferred
to get around the place chauffeured.
I became a legend, choosing to ride free
on taxis and buses – no ticket for me.
I did what I liked. Said what I thought.
Spent a lot of time in Court -
a ratbag, a rascal, the eccentric Bea.

*The Australian Women's Register

Mr. Eternity

In unexpected places,
Footpaths, walls and rocky faces
Scattered miles apart
A lone man walks
And seeks to share his heart.

He writes one word, "Eternity,"
To try and catch our eye,
And give us pause
To stop and think
As we walk by.
Suppose our life was on the brink,
Where would we be
Eternally?

I thank the Lord
For that lone man,
Writing in a copperplate hand,
Writing a message large for me
And every passerby to see,
Point us to God
And "Eternity!"



LAND

Martin Langford

The Silence of the Frogs

So many silences.

Wharves. Or the silence of caves.

The silence of big skies. Of forests.

Of sunlight on carpet.

The silence of frogs.

You hear it round Sydney:

wherever the soil has been smashed,

or the billabongs drained;

wherever insecticide's crept, subtle tide,

into slicks where the pathogens bloom –

each distinct silence the shade of an absence –

a graph of what's no longer there.

You can walk through a loose, sandstone talus –

wind in the she-oaks, the black cockatoos

crunching cones; the peace-field of crickets

a torus with you at its heart: you will hear,

if you stop and breathe slowly, the diffident hush

where the bright, red-crowned toadlet once croaked.

Walk out in paperbark swamps at Kurnell –

through a patter of drips, after rain –

while shrike-thrushes start, and then mynahs,

and planes boost their thrust – you will hear,

in that open-air cave, the perfect

and brief non-existence of shy Wallum froglets.

Put on some boots for the leaf-litter – adders

and browns: the absence of burrowing frogs,
in the sun's empty air; the soundless vibrato
of bright green-thighed frogs; the fitful
but vanished staccato of stuttering frogs.

So many silences.

These are all new.

But they won't remain this clear for long.

They won't be so easy to hear
once this cohort of listeners is all silent too.

Previously published in *The Human Project*
(Puncher and Wattmann, 2009).



image: **WonHo Sung**

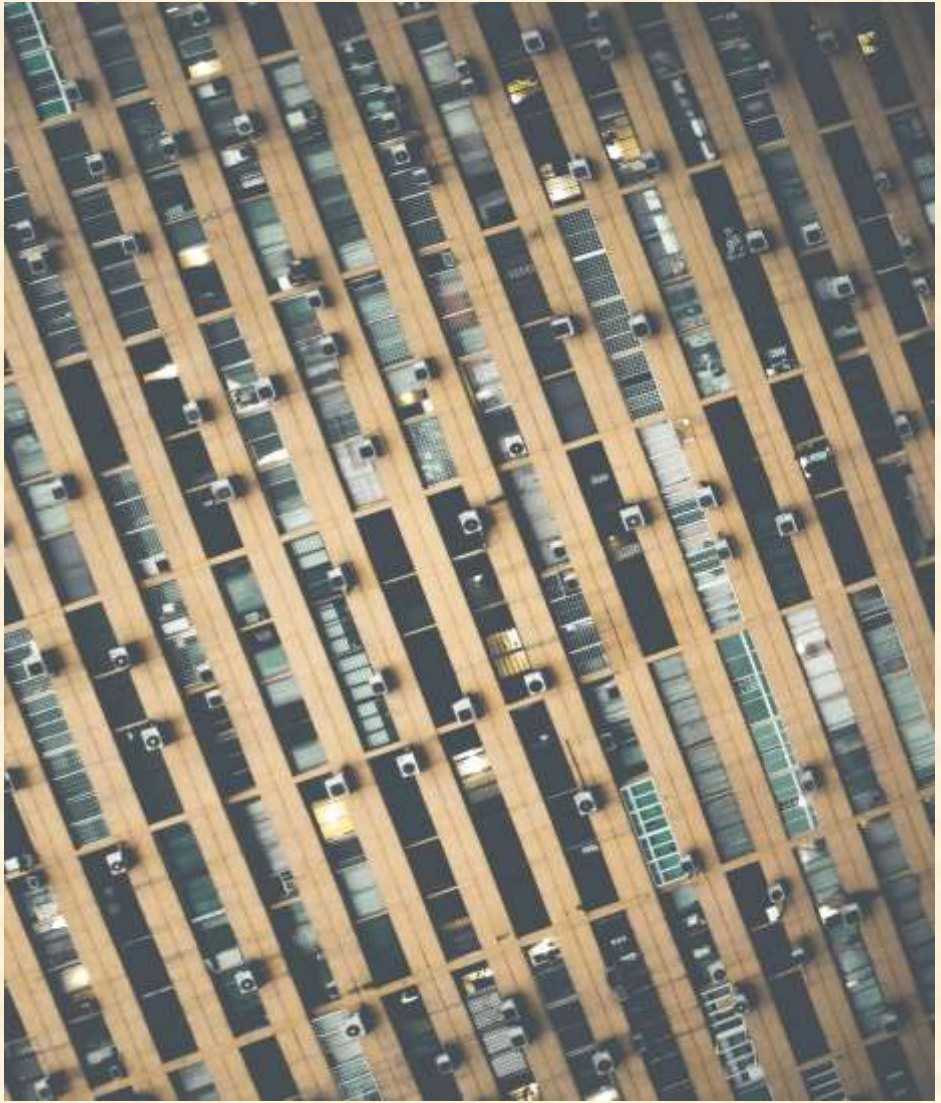


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a violent abstraction –
Giacometti branches
give a suffering vibe &
'corona sucks' graffiti
at eye level & the recent
rain creates a subtly shaded
fabric & a performance
artist (now guiltily? gone)
with a knife or bare hands
& histrionic thrusts
has torn out the guts
of the trunk leaves a
hollowed-out space for the
next craftsman to work on



DISAPPEARED

Kate Lumley

Disappearances in old Sydney Town

At first, she hears a footfall down the hall,
then a drumroll of doors, though there is no wind
today. She looks from her second-storey window

on the barracks' yard, but the soldiers who marshal
like a crossword are not there. Things begin to
vanish: a hairpin, pressed flowers, a favourite

blue ribbon, her pince-nez, the pug's silver ball.
One morning her right hand has gone —
she wonders how to play *Eine kleine nachtmusik*

on the pianoforte that deadens
the black women's keening on the beach.
She pulls on her white kids gloves.

Will Molly see that one flaps?
On the Sabbath, her torso has been erased.
No matter — her corset will wrap

the absence. At morning prayer,
the Reverend Johnson takes his text from the Psalms.
Will he see I have no heart?

First published in *Studio*

?



Cross My Heart

Holding hands they skipped to wave goodbye half way
school tomorrow can't be late

Roast lamb wafts delicious
I set knives forks salt pepper
mildly irritated we wait
void of comfort our clock ticks loud
lino pacing starts
appetites dwindle

Reality dawns stark as neighbours frown
dad shot to our car my younger brother another set of eyes two strong
voices

Tension precedes anxiety
prayer grips tight
I watch Mother dissolve
way too serious for tears I thought
never never in Disneyland

Lone wolf or apprenticed manipulator honing technique
recruited to find lost kittens in darkness they ran from his shabby blanket
was that downpour heaven sent
two drenched little girls knock shivering at an unknown door near vacant
lots
they're peeping from a police car
first time for our family so tall with checkered hats

Fright night style years later our gang sat crossed-legged around burning
candles
she told her creepy tale with torch light beaming under chin
casting mutilated shadows of doubt we stare riveted in disbelief

Did she tell all
nothing but the truth

no one wanted to know

Decades on unsolved disappearances linger while questions haunt thought

which bush telegraph was used

were scathing judgements irrefutable

too young to walk alone

Did this savage wakeup call happen after Australia's biggest case

exacerbating guilt

for no one was exempt from front page sadness those beaming Beaumont
images

Emboldened did that same sordid perpetrator strike again Ratcliffe Gordon
Bell and countless others

Rewards remain ignored for evil has too many friends and dark webs
spread

Little Spiderman

Pretty McCann

How many families suffer while elaborate constructs of closure unravel
then fade as incurable grief festers

My sister her friend

rarely played together again

lives shaken characters disrupted

society recalibrated

We may avert our eyes yet cold cases seldom disappear and truths lie lost



Image: **Donna Edwards**

Russell Cox aka Mad Dog Cox

sometimes gods smile on us
but not always

maybe childhood is the cause
if not the reason
for a life of crime

sometimes State
is here to protect
but not always

he didn't believe
stone walls do not a prison make
but they fed his need to escape

clever resourceful
athletic strong
iron bars no barrier

physical fitness gained as he sawed
over the wall
he breathed free air

headlines channelled Baroness Orczy
week after week until they lost interest

a chameleon he found love
wandered from place to place
life on the run an adventure

outside a bank

luck was not a lady
freedom lost again

inside for eleven years
they say he reformed

liberty earned
yet they still watch
waiting



“SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME”

Richard James Allen

Blackout

Don't ask me to believe
all that vampire,
werewolf, slime monster stuff!
Since when were
Bela Lugosi or Boris Karloff
experts in electrical de-circuiting?
They always work the late show,
they'd never make it to night school.
I bet some local punk
just kicked in our fuse box.
Whichever, it's too dark
to stumble about,
just to make sure my pot plants
haven't strangled the cat,
& my budgie hasn't turned into a crow,
& the steak & kidney hasn't reconstituted itself
as Frankenstein in the fridge.
The TV's starting to blink & sigh & gurgle
like a goddamn baby. Don't
dribble on my new carpet.

& don't start again
with that used car business
or I'll kick your face in.
I'm feeling so edgy tonight.
Maybe I'll go & wake up my buddy
uptown a couple of blocks
& chew it over with him.
&, that's right, his sister's
staying over for the weekend.
She'd look so cute in her pajamas,
half-asleep & standing in the hallway.
Course his old lady'd
probably bite my head off.
3 o'clock in the morning.
I'd better switch off this doggerel,
before one of us turns into Mr Hyde.

Published in *More Lies* (Interactive, 2021)



Image: **Daria Sannikova**

GANGHA

O for a joint o'th'ambrosial herb,
the greenest grass that hath been
dried a long age on the sun drench'd fields
near Lismore. Or if Gosford green
delight thee more, smoke then,
thou happier than I, thou happy
happy hippy. Drain thy gladbag
to the lees.

Long hath winter's drought been with us
and long hath been the time sith I have seen
a bag full of Queensland head,
a Thai stick, opiate orient herb.

Fair seed time had my plants
but winter's frosts, the neighbour's greed,
the policeman's wrong – the seizure of the law
hath blighted the foliage of the ripening seed.

There was a time and I could smoke
pipe or hookah or bong full o'the luxuriant weed.
There was a blessing in the gentle breeze
that blew ambrosia's smoke my way.

The room we sat in like a burnish'd bong
the walls all caked in resin
and so perfum'd.
. . . How oft would we
to the kitchen or corner shop
with parchèd mouths and greedy eyes
for lucent syrups tinct with cinnamon,
manna and dates, chocolate o'the god o'war
or spicèd dainties from cedared Lebanon.

Ah halcyon days
and I would you were not fled

– that it should come to this.
Now the only roaches that I see
are on the kitchen floor.

Ah me
my skin grows pale
in winter's leafless gaol
and what I would
for a mattress full of Mullumbimby mild.

Tiny mind crimes

1.

a man struggles with a milk crate of books
down a main road and through the door
of a wine and tapas bar
any witness to this travesty of sense
would say *What the ...*
another look reveals
it's a second-hand book shop ...
the former name still on the window

2.

thoughts gather like journalists at a crime scene
people live inside their thinking, sure of this
as an oyster is sure of its shell, a clam its pearl
thoughts gather like beach scavengers
they choose the glossy, the unusual, the unique
so get your eyes off my body

3.

half-imagined scene at Maroubra
skeletons of trees are silent witnesses
to daily parking dents
a woman reverses her car and runs over a child
no one wanted

4.

a local football club advertises live piano
– I want to see the match made in music

5.

the only thinking
a couple had in common was their degree
does it count for anythink now?

6.

to sustain visual interest
every orchestra should have an eccentric
with an asymmetric hair-style, a blonde

7.
stiletto heels
keep us on a high
till at some point
there's a fast descent
to stiletto hell

8.
hoot of a café
toddler rampaging on tiles
Come over here
Come on or I'll count to 5
Hayden only counts to 3

9.
two to share
one dessert spoon
sticky date

10.
you browse the shelves of a hardware barn
where to start on sealants, silicones
pick up pamphlets on solvents, adhesives
with one child glued to his phone
one day the boys will love this place
fireproof cement, interior timber, poly
it's like a treasure trove
in a squeezable tube, coloured caulk
another child busy texting
gap filler acrylic, high stress wood glue
I'm glad the family's stuck together
formic acid as hardener, roof/gutter glass
suddenly daughter's interested in language
'Dad you need one of these liquid nails'

geez, it's the one thing I don't need

11.

e-piphany
hard disk freeze

12.

apple pie
without custard
reminds one
of a yacht
in dry dock

13.

mind crimes might be mind crumbs
but they serve up with cream

14.

More crumbs:

give up your seat like the sign says or giant ants attack from below

e-pocalypsed – you're swamped by the next wave of technology

electric car? I want mine elastic

counting back from ten is one way to get nowhere

writers with the help of the space bar are already on their way to Mars

press any key? have they calculated the risk factor?

**Have you or someone you
know dated a Poet?**



**You may be entitled to
compensation.**

gypsy and rat

i see gypsy and rat
a lot these days on the street
trying to score

and when they're not there
they are at home,
sleeping and dreaming of the street

and the people there
calling them by their names
"hey gypsy!, hey rat!"



CONTRIBUTORS

Martin Adams captures scenes via photography and shares them via Unsplash. Professionally, he works on climate change related technologies for decarbonizing building heating and storing energy.

Adam Aitken was born in London and now lives in Sydney where he is a contributing editor to the Poetry Sydney online poetry hub. He spent his early childhood in Thailand and Malaysia. He has been a recipient of the Australia Council Paris Studio Residency, and was Visiting Distinguished Professor at the University of Hawai'i Manoa. He co-edited the *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets* anthology (Puncher & Wattmann). His memoir *One Hundred Letters Home* (Vagabond Press) was published in 2016 and was listed for the ASAL gold medal. Archipelago, his latest collection of poetry, was shortlisted for the Kenneth Slessor Award and the Prime Minister's Literature Prize in 2018. His latest book *Revenants* will be published by Giramondo in 2021.

Richard James Allen's poetry has appeared widely in journals, anthologies, and online, and he has been a popular reader at multiple performing arts venues, over many years. Books include: *More Lies* (Interactive Press, 2021), *The short story of you and I* (UWAP, 2019), *Fixing the Broken Nightingale* (Flying Island Books, 2014), *The Kamikaze Mind* (Brandl & Schlesinger, 2006) and *Thursday's Fictions* (Five Islands Press, 1999), shortlisted for the Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry. Richard is well-known for his multi-award-winning career as a filmmaker and choreographer with [The Physical TV Company](#) and as a performer in a range of media and contexts.

Loretta Barnard is an author, arts writer, reviewer and editor. Her poetry has appeared in a number of small anthologies. Her most recent non-fiction book is *Kindred Chords: Australian Musical Families* (Shooting Star Press, 2020).

John S Batts With a life-long interest in poetry and a career in academe, John has read much English and Canadian verse. For several years after retirement, he served on the Editorial Committee of the Poets Union' quarterly Five Bells. A number of his own poems have been published in

Canada and Australia, but he was pleased to turn his creative hand to crime!

I.e. berry's poetry is published in *Women of Words, Women's Work, Margaret Olley poems, Eucalypt, Food for Thought, Grevillea & Wonga Vine, Australian Poetry Collaboration, A Slow Combusting Hymn, To End all Wars, Australian Poetry Collaboration*, and community anthologies. Her collection, *Channelling Childhood*, was published by Ginninderra Press.

Margaret Bradstock has eight published collections of poetry, including *The Pomelo Tree* (winner of the Wesley Michel Wright Prize) and *Barnacle Rock* (winner of the Woollahra Festival Award, 2014). Editor of *Antipodes* (2011) and *Caring for Country* (2017), Margaret won the Banjo Paterson Poetry Award in 2014, 2015 and 2017. Her latest collection, from Puncher & Wattmann, is *Brief Garden* (2019).

Colleen Z. Bourke's most recent and twelfth poetry collection is '*Sculpting a landscape*', 2019. She has also published two memoirs *The Waves Turn* and *The Human Heart is a Bold Traveller* and is co-editor of the anthology *The Turning Wave: Poems and Songs of Irish Australia*.

Carolyne Bruyn is a published poet, editor/ manuscript appraiser, antiques dealer, cat wrangler, and domestic goddess. What more can she say? Oh, and, as a result of the COVID lockdown, she's a jigsaw master & family mental health therapist. Daytime television is her specialist subject.

Jacqueline Buswell is a translator from Spanish to English. She has a Masters in Creative Writing from Sydney University. Ginninderra Press published her first book of poems, *Song of a Journeywoman*, in 2013. Jacqueline established Riverton Press in 2018 and published her second book of poetry, *sprinting on quicksand*, in 2020. <https://www.rivertonpress.com/>

John Carey is an ex-teacher of French and Latin and a sometime actor. The latest of his six poetry collections is *Dead Cat Bounce* (Puncher & Wattmann 2021).

Anne Casey is a native Irish poet/writer living in Australia. Author of four collections, her work is widely published internationally, ranking in *The Irish Times*' Most Read. She has won writing awards in Ireland, the UK, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and the USA, most recently *American Writers Review 2021*.

Beatriz Copello, a poet, fiction writer and playwright has been published in Australia and overseas. Her poetry has appeared in *Southerly*, *Hobo*, *The Women's Book Review* and many other journals and anthologies. She has won various prizes and was a recipient of an Australia Council Grant for Poetry. She has written various books of fiction, and poetry, namely: *Women Souls and Shadows* (Bemac Publications) *Forbidden Steps Under the Wisteria* (Abbott Bentley) *A call to the Stars* (Crown Publishers) *Meditations at the Edge of a Dream* (Glass House Books).

Luciana Croci is a Newcastle-based poet and writer, whose work is published in *Animal Encounters* (Catchfire Press 2012), *Australian Novascapes*, *Speculative Fiction Anthology* (Invisible Elephant, 2016), *Australian Poetry Collaboration*, *The Blue Nib* Literary Magazine (Issue 41) the e-anthology *Mediterranean Odyssey*. She has a background in languages (Latin, French, Italian, German and Japanese).

Jan Dean, a former visual arts teacher, is an awarded poet living on Awabakal country. Her work is represented in publications including *Meanjin*, *Southerly*, *The Australian*, *Hecate*, *Rabbit Poetry*, *Spineless Wonders* and three Newcastle Poetry Prize anthologies. Her latest collection is *Intermittent Angels*, (Girls on Key, 2020).

Kristen de Kline (aka Kristen Davis) writes poetry by night and lectures Criminology by day. Their poetry appears in different publications including *Backstory*, *Other Terrain*, *Pink Cover Zine*, *Press: 100 Love Letters*, *Australian Poetry Collaboration*, and *Project 365+1*. Kristen's debut collection *Lawless* was published by Girls on Key in 2021.

Donna Edwards is an award winning poet and writer. Her first poetry book, *Idle Fragments* was published by Ginninderra Press in 2018. Donna's poems have featured in several anthologies, including; *I Protest!* *Poems of Dissent*, *Mountain Secrets*, *Milestones* and *Frances Platinum*

Poems. Her poems were also featured in *This Breath is Not Mine to Keep* a multimedia, sculpture, painting and poetry arts trail.

Charles Freyberg is a Kings Cross poet and performer. His book "Dining at the Edge" is published by Ginninderra Press, and his second book "the Crumbling Mansion", about wildly imaginative eccentrics in Kings Cross and Darlinghurst, has just been released. He performs regularly around Sydney, and his one person show of poems from the Crumbling Mansion will come soon to a venue near you.

Angela Gardner's verse novel *The Sorry Tale of the Mignonette* is published this year by Shearsman Books, it is a UK National Poetry Day recommendation for 2021. Recent poems are published in *The Yale Review* and *West Branch* USA; *The Long Poem* and *Tears in the Fence*, UK; *Plumwood Mountain, Southerly*, and *Cordite*, Australia.

Carolyn Gerrish is a Sydney poet. Her work has been widely published in literary journals. She has published five books of poetry. Her 6th collection *Collison With the Shadow* will be published by Ginninderra Press.

C S Hughes was born in Eora country in the 60s. He grew up in Sydney's streets, and Tamworth's stock yards, and Adelaide's angry hills and vacant beaches, and Sydney's exhaust stained streets again. He has worked as a spice packer, a bookseller, a junk dealer and a watchmaker, but has mostly found time is beyond repair. He is the author of several volumes of poetry, including, *The Book Of Bird & Bear*, *The Little Book Of Funerals*, *COVID-22*, *Sweet Christmas!*, *The Book Of Whimsies* and *The Anachronistic Physician*. He has had stories and poems published in digital and print magazines. He has edited and published several poetry collections, including *The Poetry Of John Ashdown-Hill*, *From The Ashes* and *Somnia Blue*. He occasionally dabbles in experimental music, horror stories, photography and linocut print making.

Perhaps Australia's most persistent minor poet, **Kit Kelen** can be easily hunted down at <https://thedailykitkelen.blogspot.com/>

S. K. Kelen has been writing poems longer than he cares to remember. His most recent book of poems is *A Happening in Hades* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2020).

Rozanna Lilley is an author and academic. Her essays and poems have been widely published. Her hybrid prose-poetry memoir *Do Oysters Get Bored? A Curious Life* (UWA Publishing, 2018) was shortlisted for the National Biography Award (2019). A chapbook, *The Lady in the Bottle* (London: Eyewear), is forthcoming in 2022.

Kate Lumley's poetry and prose has been published in journals *Studio, Not Very Quiet, Rochford Street Review*, and anthologies including *Australian Love Poems 2013; Prayers of a Secular World* (2016); *To End All Wars* (2018); *Avant la lettre* (2020), *From the Embers* (2020); *Australian Poetry Collaboration* (2020, 2021); *9,000 miles away* (2021).

Christine Lynch Sydney-sider; always enjoyed photography but it used to be expensive. Digital photography has made the photos free, just the equipment expensive! So now I relish the challenges of Flickr groups to experiment and learn new things. Especially love to photograph the wonders of creation around me in the bush, my dogs and Grandkids (no order of preference). Also enjoy using photography in my job as an Early Childhood Teacher.

Teena McCarthy is an established visual artist and emerging poet whose work has been published in Verity La and selected for the 2018 Manly Art Gallery & Museum Ekphrastic Poetry Reading. McCarthy is an Italian/Barkindji woman who is a descendant of The Stolen Generations. Her work documents her family's displacement and Aboriginal Australian's loss of Culture and their 'hidden' history.

Cecilia Morris has had poetry published in various magazines and books such as *Quadrant, Reflections on Melbourne, Australian Award-Winning Poetry*. In 2007 she founded a poetry group in Bayside which is still ongoing. She has had 5 anthologies published. Her future aim is to combine the arts of poetry and watercolour painting.

Norm Neill has been a timber-feller, fence-post splitter, shop assistant, money counter, tractor driver, factory worker, taxi driver, psychiatric nurse, door-to-door salesperson, part-time student, full-time student,

teacher, historian and museum guide. His poetry has appeared in journals, anthologies and the *Sun-Herald* newspaper. He has convened a poetry workshop since 2002.

Jenni Nixon Poetry collections include *swimming underground* Ginninderra Press (2015) *café boogie* Interactive Press (2004). Widely anthologised, recently in *Not Very Quiet, I Protest, Milestones, Musings During a Time of Pandemic, I Can't Breathe* – World anthologies, Kistrech, Kenya. A new collection is on the way.

Mark O'Flynn has published six collections of poems, most recently the chapbook *Shared Breath* (2017). His fourth novel *The Last Days of Ava Langdon* was winner of the Voss Literary Prize, 2017 also short listed for the Miles Franklin Award. His latest book is a collection of short stories *Dental Tourism*, (Puncher & Wattmann, 2020).

Kate O'Neil is a Northern Illawarra writer. She has published a collection of poems for students of 'Performing Text' ('Cool Poems' -The Kate O'Neil Reciter. Triple D Books Wagga Wagga 2018) and individual poems and stories have been published in many anthologies and magazines in Australia, New Zealand, UK and US.

Maithri Panagoda was born in Sri Lanka. He is a bilingual poet who writes in Sinhalese and English. He has published two collections of poems and composed lyrics for nearly 100 songs in Sinhalese. Maithri has been working in the legal profession in Australia for the past 40 years.

J.R.Poulter worked in a circus, as a Rare-Books Librarian, and Associate Lecturer, English Expression. J.R. has two novels, and numerous picture books, short stories, poetry, artwork & photography (in, e.g., *Basics of Life*, *100 Stories for Queensland*, *Quadrant Book of Poetry 2000-2010*, *Antipodes*, *Social Alternatives*, *ABC Pool*.
<http://www.jenniferrpoulter.weebly.com>

Janet Reinhardt is a Sydney poet and printmaker. Her work has appeared in journals and collections throughout Australia and in the United States and the United Kingdom. She is currently working on a collection of Tranter style terminals.

Margaret Owen Ruckert is a former TAFE Science lecturer. She is a prize-winning poet: two books *You Deserve Dessert* and *musefood* (an IP Poetry Book of the Year) explore café culture. *Sky on Sea*, her latest, employs tanka. Margaret is Facilitator of Discovery Writers and convenes a Café Poetry group.

Paul Scully is a Sydney-based poet with three published collections, the latest being *The Fickle Pendulum* by Interactive Press in August 2021. His work has been short-listed and commended in major Australian prizes and published in print and online journals in Australia, Ireland, the UK and USA.

Michele Seminara is a poet and editor from Sydney. She has written two full-length collections, *Suburban Fantasy* (UWA Publishing, 2021) and *Engraft* (Island Press, 2016), and two chapbooks, *Scar to Scar* (co-authored with Robbie Coburn, PressPress, 2016) and *HUSH* (Blank Rune Press, 2017).

Alex Skovron is the author of seven collections of poetry, a prose novella, and a book of short stories. His work has been translated into a number of languages, and his many public readings include appearances in China, Serbia, India, Ireland, Macedonia and Portugal. He lives in Melbourne.

Angela Stretch is a Sydney based artist, curator, writer and organiser from Christchurch, New Zealand. Her practice uses language and poetry through different media. She is the Creative Director of Poetry Sydney and curates the poetry program at the Brett Whiteley Studio, AGNSW. She produces arts programming on Eastside Radio.

Les Wicks has toured widely and seen publication in over 400 different magazines, anthologies & newspapers across 33 countries in 15 languages. His 15th book of poetry is *Time Taken* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2022).
<http://leswicks.tripod.com/lw.htm>