

Commonwealth of Australia

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MULTIPLE READINGS

Source: Ryan, G 2011 *New and selected poems*, Giramondo Publishing, Artarmon, NSW.

Due to copyright compliance issues it is necessary to combine these readings into one electronic file.

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Eurydice's Suburb

1

The wings of home enfold you and lock
under the city's poisoned coronet or halo
You gaze at the supermarket's petrified food
and respond like a zombie to the past's ghosts
and semblance of meaning
Jewelled cigarette, they got on criminally
Sorrow autonomously surges
Affirmations curl up on the fridge

After, we go to the Parthenon Thai restaurant in Northcote
Social workers cleansing their systems on art's scaffold

Each interview an advertisement, relentless song
Noble games sail towards the Equator
with vested interests bidding to the last
or floundering
Conglomerate personality in the Honours list
He calls him by his job
The dollar tilts with raids and hedges

2

Ills and plaudits sift into the ground or flame
when we farewell
Now no-one knows your faith a 'spotless lamp'
as mail flaps with ads and tenants come and go

Her stainless presentation scales the house
and Saturday was jokes
velvet streets and the roofs' wedges
sky passes like a film

His distant voice marbles the horizon
Lenten bread or manna falls
robust oasis
I scroll through my life
behind the Valiant Safari and Mitsubishi Executive
They return to their belongings
in pink smog and crowned buildings

3

The city's grids at night, paper lights
tossed in desolate water
in the fish-lined plastic sea
You fall asleep in front of the electrodes
and salute the vacuum-wrapped lunch
The strands of history you concoct, praising the tractor
for its patriotism, you buzz into sunset
having shunned the sea's snapped edge
Great Artist of nostalgia, your overflow cups
bristle with distinction,
your studious oeuvre takes its pulpit
Leaves like words arrange and scatter
and potentates shrug

Ismene to Antigone

You should talk some sense into his head
and not stick by, constant samovar
Do you also look for the one love
Good deeds, selfless and arcane
and soulful breakfast. Your crisp assault
to flout and ally the tampered roof that kept us,
a glacier of blood, if your catafalque progresses and the
 keeners ring
past the sunbleached shops' archived ads and forked clothes
and each branded corner and cloud
The mountain shone with neon
above the stacked electric wires toning your street
but I grind into the work
that words might peel his heart
Remember how they fell who went before

You live in the cracked avenues
arguing and warming a kitchen's generations
Last year wept but now the harrowed road

Moths eat the library, huffing past
The best went flickering through folding birch and sycamore
Last year was but now the bladed veil

Once sunset chipped in your hair, farewelling the
universe's inhabitants
Now clouds stop in your frozen cemetery
your wine-dark car turning in the drive
Advertisement flags serrate the 7-Eleven's pediment,
the streetlights set like spoons
Graves dust the hill and the ruptured gums
that whistle your instructions

You take the opal moon for granted
the marching cypress, sunset's bolt
the street's green strip neon selling food
at every calamitous funeral red car lights map like lava
Gold kalashnikov's meted sorrow, an orb, a card

New Year's Day shines on next door's brick wall and chimney
as photos turn the marvellous gardens' First Communion
writing your doctorate on the pillow
whose chains and sigh have passed
I pull the hearth rug's Martha and Mary into my caul

A golden hypocrite reassembles in the Arch of Federation
You, who were always with me, remember how bright the stars
above the ti-tree and eucalypt

We sat out in the fallen landscape, severed from what was
colouring the yard as it had been
She says you're running now in the gold paddocks of your youth
who never reached her age
We lay the falcon china
Above, the hilted Southern Cross

They take away from me what they inspire
He went to what he was
For so long I represent you, a cachet
of just and true, that bones walk instead
and have to rebuild brick by brick
glorious atlas and swab, the stars, the shark sea satin'd
to become what you satirise
back to the circus and caravan
Weepy avenger coarse ground doesn't touch
– clang of sword on mattress –
I hold your fake hand to my brow
to feel love turn on and off like a programme
illustrating a cliché

Blogs fugue into themselves,
stripping time across the shuttling lists
as music plaques over a sacked diary
and the egghead blurb's mountain of claims
and heroic tasks depicted on your shield
You know it like a bath of dirty water
How did you get stuck in that tide of boasts
and souvenirs, his royal eyes light
on the past's porphyried gas
having chucked the dolls of irony
in childhood's plastic bushes and lain path

who slab the air, obstinately
Illness drags you to the talkshows of resolve and parried
 death
a maypole streamers reach to, a cabinet of poison
that twins each other in dispensation for the chute

You breach the galleries' biblical catalogue and pyramid
 of sand
A tinker of song fulfils the relationship you meant to cut
trimmed and cobbled, sworn in on a whim
Rain snaps into place for myself but you, unmourned
who prepared bitterly
Thumbing a mobile, I turn from the choir

Daphnis and Chloe

He rides a segway through the topiaried hedges
of the *Institut pour le Développement Harmonique*
Next it's granite and a TV spin-off
while she squirms in the scullery, an emulsifier
and a theodolite on each hand
when in Preston she crossed a ditch of sobs

She gathers the covenant to heart, before it lobs
her followers. Thought sledges
a wicket, but whether from glee or a stand
against corruption, who knows, a fit of pique
may as well summarise. She blogs: a death-defier
He pails water from a trough

parting a fence's palings with finesse, a cough
whistles. The demonstration magnifies her probs
and immanence, an astrolabe warped like a tyre
falls across some scratched ledgers
that yearn to annotate and squeak
of her chlorophyll, but awfully fanned

cards gloat and claim the land
was swamp. All bets are off
Return to the campfire: its clique
substitutes logs for chairs and sprigs for knobs
a saddle supporting her head edges
its cinders, i.e. the remains of a local flyer

promoting the environment, as if what they require
could ever class a gluey saraband
over dinner of fried wedges
He resumes the inspection, with Prof.
at an elbow, advising how to maximise jobs
and measuring exactly where the fountains leak

Whirr of helicopter off screen, over to Seek
.com. Either that or the National Choir
warbling probity, while an overseer dobs
her in. His wistful Peter Pan'd
check a rabbit fence will slough
the paddocks, while sunset's pink valve ceases pledges

– all Greek to her, she dredges
up some prior ownership, he bobs
among the damned, all the usual stuff