

## Australian Poetry Group – April poems 2024

### CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

#### Mitsubishi Moments

At peak of summer

the paddocks have all turned blonde

like Toorak mothers.

Those flying foxes

object to the horrid phrase,

Bats in the belfry.

Humans are not quite

the full sixpence, but can still

flatter, flirt and charm.

Presence absorbs them

and they do self-expression

in outdoor cafes.

With large speaking eyes

she hinted she was part of

these exciting times.

Like avenue elms

green political leaders

turn out all the same:

One learned from Stalin

the strong magic of changing

municipal names.

The migrant from Prague

trundles in his wheely bin

past the limp yucca.

## **The Swing**

On a swing at midnight in the black park. Between poplars  
which are towers of light for a hidden street lamp and inky  
she-oaks my arc is maintained. From lighter to darker I go,  
from dark to light; but only, as ever, to return.

Here we live in the imperfect syntax of light and darkness;  
wanting to write a sentence as perfect as the letter o in praise of  
things. For things exist supremely; all our values cohere in things.

The austere prose which could outline the world with a  
physicist's clarity never arrives. We move through the fugal  
elaboration of leaves, through centuries of drowning flowers.  
Unsatisfied, uncertain, I am swinging again tonight in the park.

## **Where the Wind Came**

Where the wind came wildly running it first of all  
sang in a citriodora's tall harp,  
raced across unguarded lawns,  
shook a few boughs of stain-coloured prunus,  
whistled through our hedge, owed seedlings double,  
set up a sudden rattling in the doors,  
came up to me charged with the ghosts of cool dry autumns,  
lost summer, dwindled spring  
when I first met you, last saw you, dear various friends,  
and whirled away to the south up a tufted ridge  
leaving us where we were, on our own ground  
in a world of continuous change and loss,  
just what we have to make do with.

## **Daphne Fitzroy**

A crunch of bear-coloured hair,  
the self smallish, bespectacled, in a royalblue blouse  
her nose rhymes with her chin's

attenuated line.

Pale heartshaped face (nice cheekbones there)

sipping a yellow short drink

fortyishly

as she keeps breaking out into

an indrawn laugh

that's impish, an imp would say,

at least winsome,

as she pivots fro and to again

between boyfriend and barmaid,

mouth small as a sparrow's.

Light slanting down from the left,

now she fondles

a fancy bottle of crème de cacao

and laughs like a drain

behind her angled, rising cumulus of smoke.

## **Erstwhile**

Your girlfriend rang me up today,

Your former girlfriend,

no, that isn't right,

the present friend of all that once was you:

your fetch or

what remains in the little photographs:

a boy in black-and-white

riding a horse into the scrub

or, freckled, reading out of doors,

both times T-shirted,

your hair a thick, dark bowl-cut,

my erstwhile son.

Oh yes, she rang today,

had taken somebody out to see your grave

near the forked white trunk,  
and we were sad together  
on the phone, for a hard while  
thinking of you, long gone now. Hence.  
Where? Where are you?  
In poor fact I can never come to grasp  
the meaning of it all, supposing  
that to be what religion's all about.  
The loss remains behind  
like never being well.

## **ANNA WICKHAM**

### **Note**

Women love wisely for shelter and for food.  
How much of their chastity in prudence?  
How much of their fidelity is self-defence?  
I, the chaste wife, have loved like a harlot for a reward.  
I loved, that I might learn courtesy, from an instructed mate,  
I loved that my sons, might be the lineage of kings.  
My soul dies of a dead dream that multiplies within me.  
My mouth is dumb, because I give no willing kisses,  
My flesh shrieks with the cold of constraint.  
My brain dies, starved for ecstasy.  
I lose courage, because of safety,  
Beauty because of restraint,  
Sanity of the sake of ordered ways.  
Where is the inheritor of dreams,  
For I would speak with him, before I die.

### **The Cherry-Blossom Wand**

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,  
And carry it in my merciless hand,  
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,  
With a beautiful thing that can never grow wise.

Light are the petals that fall from the bough,  
And lighter the love that I offer you now;  
In a spring day shall the tale be told  
Of the beautiful things that will never grow old.

The blossoms shall fall in the night wind,  
And I will leave you so, to be kind:  
Eternal in beauty are short-lived flowers,  
Eternal in beauty, these exquisite hours.

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,  
And carry it in my merciless hand,  
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,  
With a beautiful thing that can never grow wise.

### **The Warning**

May lovers become poets,  
While all poets must be lovers.  
But lovers will write verses in honour of Love,  
And poets will love in honour of Poetry.  
Therefore my dear young Lady,  
If you are to be this poet's lover  
You must love verses more than a man.  
Or surely you will die of love.  
You are so beautiful,  
That he might imagine from you for half a year,  
But in the end, your beauty will be dead for him,  
And not as fragrant as a bowl of rose-leaves.  
Neither for his purpose must you be very chaste,  
For this pleases neither the lover, nor the poet.  
See, here is a young man who sells India-rubber,  
He, with a rhyming dictionary  
Has constructed for you, two sonnets, and an ode.  
Turn to him. He is an industrious man, of good heart.  
He will sell rubber for you,

'Till you are old.

Love him, dear prudent young lady,

For he will endow you.

### **The Egoist**

Shall I write pretty poetry –

Controlled by ordered sense in me –

With an old choice of figures and of word,

So call my soul a nesting bird?

Of the dead poets I can make a synthesis,

And learn poetic form that in them is;

But I will use the figure that is real

For me, the figure that I feel.

And now of this matter of ear-perfect rhyme,

My clerk can list all language in his leisure time;

A faulty rhyme may well be a well-placed microtone,

And hold a perfect imperfection of its own.

A poet rediscovers all creation;

His instinct gives him beauty, which is sensed relation.

It was as fit for one man's thoughts to trot in iambs as it is for me,

Who live not in the horse-age but in the day of aeroplanes, to write my rhythms free.

### **Inconsequent Lover**

I will drive you down odorous hours

With a whip of white exquisite flowers,

Till, worn by my wooing, you lie

On a bed of delight, and so die.

I will steal from the magicky night

Blue Moth for a young acolyte;

And a sad, solemn mass shall be said

For the beautiful thing that is dead.