

Language-Wars

Remembering a Fortune in Bed

language is not vocab plus grammar: it's a place in our case known as shakespeare country. as much as we might fight it. if you want someone to die (in a poem) that's a kind of wishful thinking, a kind of faith in language known as hamleting. it can't end well (but poems must end). a friend might observe (using google translate) that a verb is like a mulga snake. perhaps, but they're always writing about hell and crying. that's why people like to ask 'what's australian about australian poetry? it all sounds like shakespeare to me' (they haven't read anywhere near all, but they mean the canon)

[freeze]

waltzing matilda is hamleting, no more boomerang is hamleting (no more daddy) or else othelling (no more fidelity) unless it's not tragic (in which case love's labours lost?) the man from snowy river's all's well that ends well (at speed) or possibly midsummer night's dream, and the orange tree king lear. in spanish it's andalusian folk ballads tearing at the edges of quixote. that's why we can't have translations in our anthologies: because we're fighting our own wars. strategies include anderson bottoming in his forest, robert walker denying the australian bible. given the land writes everything and beyond that the earth, given the streets are laid down with technology (a dog in a ute on a road named george) like giant microsoft word or apple metaphors (trees like videogames) we can assume that everything shakespeare wrote was already inscribed with antipodean destiny and that america et al (ie latin) all serve the present moment: as i, in this most ironically democratic country, pour poison into the ear of the king (ie audience). is it

that simple? can we wake up from dreams of dust
or edicts from lord mayor howard? and can we
with our three introduced toes, make them ours?

[put on backpacks]

Teaching The Unconscious

Thinking about Somebody reading Proust

the monologue of at least three voices: the said
the thought and the said to self, if not the unthought
and unsaid. how but in our fictions, our mind
novels or sub stories can we know our reflections?

[run to door]

we act innocently, though we say the worst to
ourselves, without thinking it. it really is a poem
this scene at the party when we finally bump into a
person we know, having tired of so much just met
excellent company. sunday lawyers, merchant
sonneteers, you know the types. 'the pear doesn't
fall far from the tree/ nor can it roll like an apple'

[faint spraying of water]

is it passive aggressive to pour oil into a musical
instrument? the more you read the more you know
you pity. but i was describing a scene of paranoia
and linguistic violence. it hurt the nerves to hear
such word choice, when harmony had been the
heretofore ruling note. the practice of irony can
lead to bad habits, of belief in the second voice
forgetting the second ear. to bring fresh boiled corn
to a cocktail do, to spill butter on another's shoe
these are allegorical crimes. men cannot adequately
parody sex – except in the act. the social can only
be rigorous in its own terms: it doesn't exist to
blame the elderly for the past causing so much bad
present. though if only they'd been better
revolutionaries we could be better wastrels is one
interpretation i'm heartened by. while pedagogy
trolled the inviting restroom walls, the young
patrolled the jukebox. every tune they coined derided
a dancer's romantic decisions. it was mean but it
was the perfect justice to go with the kicked up drinks

[emphatically]

Unimportance

Riding a Bike away from a Library

there doesn't have to be any writing. put something
like a chair between pain and the reader. make
the full stops glisten, get a typist. show there's
no bloodstream. everyone welcomes that. accidentally
run over a child in words. make a bandage appear
on an outdoor face. lawyers will applaud if they're
bored. this is not a country show, where goalposts
in icing find favour. the war made sense to the
folks in sentences and old farms lent by ex-inlaws

[tyre suggesting whale]

a beach house would be preferable (next time?)
want some lemons, pick some lemons. meanwhile
there are students on the grid, romanticising away
about other kinds of art and support. it seems the
rides parked near the mine have been stripped
for training placebos and packaging. we didn't
know what the loss of the differential would mean

[books tossed from window above]

the land speaks: says snow, coral, fejoa (an interpretation)

[king cuts foot on bone]