

An Anthology

Edward Sexton

Walls Unseen

Come play, come fight,
With all your might,
Come sing, come swing,
Pretend you're King.

I would, I would,
If only I could.
I will, you see,
When I am free.

He watched the others
Play all day.
He heard them as
He turned away.

The little boy with
Legs of steel
With mouth deformed
Walks like a seal.

He cannot run
He cannot play,
When others do
He clumps away.

For him, no life
Of sun and fun,
For him the darkened
Cellar deep

Of battling to walk,
Of fighting to talk,
Of trying so desperately
Hard not to weep.

One day with Mum,
His big bright Sun,
He asks why God
Has done this.

She softly cries,
With tear-stained eyes,
And strokes his soul
With a kiss.

Culture, Somewhere on the Lower North Shore

When all they want is a word, a taste
Of Yves Saint-Laurent in street cafés,
Romantic scenes in narrow streets,
Arc de Triomphe on the Champs-Élysées;
When all they want is a scent, a sound,
The crêpes très bonnes, the Tuileries,
And all sit forward to bathe in the sweet
Celestial words of the voyager;
I shall look about me, see
The softening hues of autumn gums,
I shall feel the sun which reaches
Down the hall upon my back,
And I shall lean back, laugh in reply:
My Paris? Ice on the Seine.

Gastronomy, Somewhere in the French Riviera

My rumbling bumbling belly falls,
As though the flagstones' gravity calls.
It assumes a more recalcitrant pose,
Somewhere down amongst my toes;
Thick scented snails enrich my mind,
Leave all my earthly thoughts behind.
I couldn't eat more, my good garçon,
He pours more wine and I eat on.
Extravagant herbs caress my tongue,
Taking my soul to when I was young.
A frog by the pond sees me relish the dregs,
His heart skips a beat as he pulls back his legs.

True Romance

If he spies a lonely tree,
He cries with joy, O bliss! O glee!
To find such a one, he shall skip hence,
To achieve immortal transcendence.
Not for him the withered leaves,
The blackened church, the high cold eaves,
He was born to live with hope,
Not waste it all like a cynical Pope,
Let none say he has lost the plot,
He'll dazzle them with one ink blot
Which represents, nay, which portrays,
The glory of past summer days,
O! He shall smoke and he shall flow
With substances of 'clouds' and 'snow',
And he shall see what none else dare,
The life within the desert bare.
For Xanadu, and daffodils,
Or nightingales, or sinuous rills,
Can only be of true intent,
When the wonderful genius author is bent.

Seventeen very fat, bald old men.

Seventeen very fat, bald old men
Wearing nought but nature's air,
Wobbled gently in the sun,
Their bald heads gleaming just for fun,
Why then should I care?

Aha, but they are more than men,
These tubs of lard divine.
They feel, they hear, they know their God,
Their feet with flapping sandals shod,
Watching this journey of mine.

And as I passed with conscience black,
With all my worldly woes,
I felt I'd like to be like that,
With balding head and stomach fat,
Leather sandals on my toes.

Navigator

The six-fold silence sleeps at sea,
No civilized mariner near,
The vast scene is empty, save for a man,
Clutching his raft with fear.

Where are my instruments, readouts and gear,
My vessel, my Lord of the wind?
Overcome with such ease; I ponder alone,
Alone as a man who has sinned.

My ship, you see, my solo craft,
Dropped to fathoms untold,
I was spared, Neptune intrigued
By this creature so small, so bold.

At home my trip was a blueprint of time
So assuredly detailed I never thought twice,
Superb calculations to steer me home,
Guaranteed success at any price.

Nothing remains of my proud attempt,
It rests on submarine sands,
My head thrown back, I outstare the sun,
Laugh madly, so far from Man.

Ode to an unknown Sydney University Arts Student

To he who said "The world is flat"
I flourish with my finest hat.
To she who seeks a world without men,
I grin aloud and do it again.
For those who swear at the world's m.ps
I add my own obscenities.

But he who toasts the status quo
I wish to drown in liqueurs of woe.

For bad engineers and femmes fatales,
Or mindless fools who scorn without vowels,
Embody the world's own paradox
By patronising bright red socks.

Let none tell me the future's grey,
It brightens more with each new day.
Call me bizarre, a fool! I'll live.
Just never call me a Conservative.

The Tree

At the top of the hill stood the tree,
A tree of ageless wooden strength,
A tree of time, of old gnarled roots,
A tree that beckoned softly to me.

I sat beneath its canopy,
Autumnal, falling, leafy shade,
Warmed by the glow of the soft setting sun
And it silently stooped to whisper to me.

Its tale was told with polished grace,
To me it seemed a timeless sound
Of running feet, grassy days,
Leaves brushing gently on my face.

An ancient cool, a stirring breeze
Took off some dried up, shrivelled leaves
Of red and gold and orange tawn,
Took them off with natural ease.

And as I watched this primordial wind
Astir in its wild old blowing rite,
I thought of man, the world-tree's leaf,
Sorrowful hopes for man the blind.

The ritual breeze began its song,
Banished the hopes of my soul's lament,
As one by one, yet all at once,
The beauty of the leaves was gone.

I stood again in awe of this,
My thoughts colliding, grave portent,
As all the leaves of that great old tree,
Gave the ground their final kiss.

Wind

I sailed out towards the sea,
Where winds blow on to infinity,
And felt the touch of a timeless breeze
Which would help me conquer the seven seas.

Millions of diadems under the sun,
Drew me on as if I had come
To the glittering edge of reality,
My eyes straight ahead as it called to me.

It seemed the most absurd idea,
To abandon land and glide out here,
But when the night shows its diamonds to me,
It becomes profoundest sanity.

But should I look back, what then would be?
I fear the wind's cold mockery.
As if I'd passed too close to the sun,
The gods breathe hard, my hubris done.

The tourist

The Savannah reaches its dusty, dusky edge,
Where plains meet sky with painful clarity,
As if the earth is displaying its immensity.

Wild animals of Africa hunt and are stalked,
A timeless cycle in a moment's sight,
As if this landscape would make known its might.

The blanket sky is filled with a chorus
Of cries and shrieks of primeval significance,
as if to share their vocal magnificence.

But still, wild scene, for on the rock,
The tourist raises the lens to his civilized eye,
As if he could hope to capture wonders pass him by.

Alone

Alone on the sea, the wide blue sea,
I sought to touch divinity,
But 'neath those endless starlit vaults,
Found profoundest sanity.

Vincent

The spirals of sky, the darkest night,
The moon of brightest cadmium light,
The elegant church on the grassy hill
Absorb his mind, as beauty will.

Such a tender tree, the cypress *seul*,
Upon a bank where winds uncurl
To greet the town with loving caress,
His thoughts dark shapes, his quiet soul blessed.

Starry night in Saint Rémy,
The moon still lights his mind, a sea
Of shifting colours, changing sight,
As he draws back his brush, complete the night.

The artist sighs at his painting new,
Reflected in eyes of china blue,
He could reveal the secrets of the world,
Through madness exquisite and oils swirled.

A Russian Soldier Goes Mad on the Finnish Front

The white unknown stretches forth,
A breath is seen before my face,
My bearskin hat is pointed north
Toward another time and place.

The Finnish soil, it mixes in
With all my warlike senses grey,
In all my life I ne'er did sin
So much as on that cold, dark day.

For if I gaze upon my mind,
My cachéd soul of pain I ban,
For what shall I gaze on, what shall I find?
The innate blackened soul of man.

Importance

Millions of green-ants are swept away,
Borne on the current of Yesterday,
The ebb and flow of the great flash flood,
Spilling their precious blood.

A prehistoric cycle breeds the torrent,
Leading to slaughter so abhorrent,
A miniature civilisation is gone
But the world rolls on.

And at the very same moment in time,
We up the ladder of progress climb,
Our thoughts aimed high beyond the sky,
we shall succeed, we need only try.

But why are we so mighty on high,
Above all things natural, above the sigh
Of grass in the breeze, or of poor fated creatures,
With our multiple special features?

The truth, cold hard, we are no more
Than any titch with legs of four,
We fangle the new, we fly from the past,
Still nature holds us fast.

The Sun warmly laughs in his golden shroud,
The silver moon giggles behind a cloud,
Look at these little ones who think they are strong.
The world rolls on.

Irish Grandfather

Old man shovel with his soiled hands black,
Sees us approach, and turns his back.
And why should he not? There is nothing innus
That's truer than turf - and we didn't bring Guinness.