

Poetry Series

jerry hughes

- poems -

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jerry hughes (January 4,1931)

Words have always been a source of fascination, but at school I wore the affliction of dyslexia like a shroud. Unable to read and write like my classmates, I withdrew into a world of animals who became my constant friends and companions.

Now in the autumn of my years I look back not in anger but with regret, that the advances made in teaching autistic and dyslexic kids today, weren't available to me. But as the French say, c'est la vie.

Works:

You Did Alright Kid
Bits & Pieces
Goodbyes Aren't Easy
Hard Labour

! A FEW WORDS OF A KIND

I write this for no particular reason
other than to release stifled emotions,
and say to the woman I have loved for
more than half my lifetime -
Should I stumble now and then, stumble
with me so's I don't feel lonely...

jerry hughes

! A GLORIOUS INNOCENCE

Theirs was a glorious innocence
those lads who went to war.
To fight upon a foreign field
they'd never seen before.

Jim McLean, a farmer's son,
just eighteen and a half.
A strapping lad with an open face
who liked to joke and laugh.

Young Jim fell saving a mate
on their very first campaign.
Through a hail of fire he carried Bob,
till a bullet shattered his brain.

He wasn't to know that Bob was dead
when he tried to rescue him.
Such was the glorious innocence
of a farmer's son named, Jim.

jerry hughes

! ALMOST TWENTY YEARS

It's almost twenty years since my mother died.
I've searched my heart to find the sorrow I should
have felt then, and now.

Strange, my most vivid recollection is of being caned
and called stupid, for not knowing the times tables.

Mother dear, you didn't know better, neither did I.
I forgive you...

jerry hughes

! ASPECTS PER SE

I'm told my childhood was so bad, it became
the catalyst for the emotional fuck-ups that
pursued me into my Autumn years.

I envy the dead-beat who picks up a lit cigarette
butt off the pavement - takes a deep drag, coughs
his lungs up and wipes his streaming eyes.

His next most important function is to fossick the
rubbish bins for an evening meal before retiring
to a railway siding and;

Pulling his hands into the ragged length of his torn
pullover falls into a deep, dreamless sleep.

While we the comparatively lucky ones, go to bed
worried about being robbed.

jerry hughes

! AT LAST, RAIN

The drought seemed endless.
Bushfires raged like hell on earth.
A million hectares decimated
and no rain predicted.

It's as though the land was cursed
to frizzle and die horrendously, in a
cataclysm of heat and dust.

Days turned into weeks, still no rain.
Firefighters weary and tired fought on.
Forecasters could only make a guess,
global warming gives no clue.

Then, as if the heavens wept it came,
little droplets first but here it was, rain.
Dry gardens greened, trees perked up.
The earth smelt good, and little puddles
were a metaphor for better days ahead.

jerry hughes

! BEYOND THE BLUE HORIZON

Yesterday didn't happen.
Tomorrow is an assumption.
With our future in the hands
of morons, armageddon isn't
a possibility - it's a certainty.
Why?
Because you chose to ignore
the old Cree Indian saying -
'you can't eat money'

jerry hughes

! BLIND and TOOTHLESS

An eye for an eye
a tooth for a tooth,
so the parable says.
The end result?
Blind and toothless
people fighting over
mushy food. See,
nothing changes.

jerry hughes

! DON'T FORGIVE THEM THEY KNOW WHAT THEY DO

They sit in board rooms, or in that bored room,
planning how you'll get further into debt buying things
you don't need, or use once and put away.

They'll plan insurgencies in the name of democracy
to teach people who've survived for a thousand years
without it, how wrong they've always been.

They'll tell you god is good and in him they trust, while
they manipulate poorer nations' economies until they're
wholly dependent on loans for survival.

They'll never tell you they're hypocrites and liars who hold
the bible in one hand and a gun in the other.

And who are these people? Look over your shoulder there's
one standing right behind you.

jerry hughes

! DOORS

A metaphor for life, doors.
From our earliest years we
open and shut them without
a thought, yet they symbolise
our journey to the very end.
When is a door not a door?
When it's ajar. Oh, so jocular.

jerry hughes

! FIRE!

Handcuffed, maniced and blindfolded,
he stood before of the firing squad awaiting
the prescribed military execution.

The colour sergeant, most inappropriately named said -
'Do you have anything to say before the sentence of the
military tribunal is carried out? '

Breaker Morant replied, 'Shoot straight, you bastards'

Addendum: Morant asked his blindfold
be removed before execution and it was.

jerry hughes

! FIREFIGHTER

The thirty fifth day of heat, smoke,
dust and exhaustion.
Still the inferno raged unabated.
The wall of flame seemed to draw
closer, ever closer.
Back burning didn't help when the
wind swung north, worsening an
already hopeless situation.

Come on blokes, get the fuck out.
the fire chief barked, it's pointless.
Where's Nugget? he asked.
Over there, someone said above
the confusion.

Hiding emotion the fire chief said.
Mate get back to town pronto.
What's the problem, chief?
The fire chief swallowing hard replied,
The bastard swept through.
Sorry Nug, you've lost your house.

Fuck the house, the wife and kids okay?
The fire chief didn't speak, he just stared
at the ground. Jesus Christ, Nugget said,
and ran into the wall of fire.

jerry hughes

! FIRST BORN

Mark, my first born and I,
didn't see eye to eye for
a long time. Generationally
and diametrically opposed
on issues I didn't, or didn't want
to understand we drifted apart.

But love must never be denied.
...I love you son...

jerry hughes

! FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL

Quasimodo was issued a stern
warning for sliding up to young
girls and murmuring: 'Would you
like to see my bells? '

jerry hughes

! GENTLEMAN FARMER

He was usually attired in a tweed hacking jacket, jodhpurs, though he never road a horse, brogue lace-up shoes - and of course a cravat.

He drove a Rolls Royce Silver Spirit on unsurfaced roads with a couple of slobbering working dogs on the back seat. A concession to farming?

Insisting he be addressed as Mr Asquith, or Sir, never Bertram his given name, he accumulated considerable wealth. But it wasn't revealed until he died intestate, he'd underpaid his workers for 25 years and if they dared complain, sacked them.

A pillar of the church who contributed regularly to the Tory coalition, indeed he was - a gentleman farmer.

jerry hughes

! GIRL CHILD

From mewling and puking,
nappy wetting and fouling,
to standing and demanding.
The miracle of procreation,
beautiful in construction oft
degraded - but in her belly
is the begining and the end.

jerry hughes

! HAND IN GLOVE

Fitting perfectly you slipped into the glove
of our lives as though you'd always been
It would be incomprehensible without you
there's so much of you - integrally in us

jerry hughes

! HARD LABOUR

It's there for appreciators to
appreciate and detractors to
detract.

The moving finger having writ
moves on.

jerry hughes

! HOPE

The bench was there, but not the
man who called himself, Hope.
Had he, as Greek philosophers
describe, become a last despair?

I asked some fellow passers-by
had they seen him, 'who' they asked.
A rough and ready said, 'mate,
there ain't no hope, never was. '

But a book of poetry
A comb
Darned socks
A grubby shirt
And seventy cents
Inside a plastic bag
Said there was

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! HUMILIATION

Hugh Miliation had such
a debilitating impediment
that, by the time he'd said
'Woooooummmmmbbb.'
His wife had completed her
gestation and given birth
to twins...

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! HUMPTY DUMPTY

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the kings horses, and all the
kings men said, 'Jasus Humpty
you're pissed again.'

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! IF ONLY

If only...
We didn't expect so much of ourselves
and those nearest and dearest to us.
Learnt life's lessons sooner to impart
them firstly to ourselves, then to others.
Realise how lucky we are to love and
and be loved - above all our freedom.
If only...

jerry hughes

! IMAGES

In too frequent dreams the images
returned - the screaming of shells,
the pitiful moaning of the maimed.

'He drank to forget, a bit too much.'
his neighbour said. 'A bonza* bloke.'

'But at the end he was just fucked in
the head. Poor bugger.'

*colloquial Australian for a great mate

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! INCARCERATION

NOT RECOMMENDED
NOT NICE.
ASK DAVID HICKS...

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! INFIL - TRATORS

We're being taken over -
by junk food eating junkies,
with a syringe full of shit
their constant companion.

As is genital herpes, s t d's
and virulent, mutating a i d s.
We're being taken over and
be-jasus, they're welcome to it.

jerry hughes

! KOLLEKTIVSCHULD*

Guilt is collective and
cannot be dismissed.
Not by the wave of a
hand or by legislation.

When we eat well while
thousands starve, we are
severely and collectively
guilty of gross disregard.

When we manipulate the
poor to get even wealthier,
we are collectively immoral
and guilty of the worst crime.

*Grateful thanks to Cia Frizzell
for the title

jerry hughes

! MICHAEL CONNOR

Little soul -
you didn't grow into your name,
but what you left is indelible.

Michael, Hebrew for godlike.
Should the parables be right
godlike you were.

Little soul -
In our fondest, loving memory
you live.

jerry hughes

! MISANTHROPE

Miss Ann Thrope
didn't like people at all.
They laughed at her club foot
because she couldn't kick or hit a ball.
They laughed at her vollumious breasts
because they bounced about like a huge
suet pudding inside her mainsail brassiere.
They avoided looking at her squinty eyes, not
knowing which way, or at whom she was looking.

Miss Ann Thrope
didn't like people at all.
So she took a bottleful of barbiturates and went to bed.

jerry hughes

! MISAPPREHEND

Miss Apprehend joined the police force
because A, she liked being in uniform.
B, because she liked the power it gave her.

So she exercised it whenever she she felt it
necessary, until the day she pulled a driver
over for a minor misdemeanor.

Regrettably for her, he was a psychopath who
leaned out of his window and blew her brains out.

Moral: You can't change the world with a uniform
and attitude...

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! MISCARRY

Miss Carry used to load the trolleys
at the supermarket check-out, until
one day she got so pissed off, she
threw the products all over the store
and with a lound, 'you can stick this
job right up your arse, ' walked out...

jerry hughes

! MISDEMEANOR

Miss D' Meanor was always doing silly things,
like forgetting to put a g-string on under her short,
short miniskirt. Until the day she was seen bending
over in public place, and sited for decent behaviour...

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! MISS MUFFET

Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet
playing with herself.
Measure for measure, double
the pleasure, the tuffet was an elf.

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! MOSES

You can do better, she wrote.
Can't we all be questioned?
How quickly tides turn when it
doesn't flow the way you like.
I'm no Moses I cannot part the sea,
take me as I am or let me drown.

Explanation: Written in reaction to
a disappointment

jerry hughes

! NATURE AT HER VERY WORST

With joy we saw the Peahen with her chick
in our neighbours yard. She walking proudly,
the chick trotting beside her.

Days went by and we didn't see them, then
talking with Michael, on whose property
they lived the sad tale was revealed.

The Peahen hatched four chicks, two vanished
overnight, then a third, and finally the fourth.
Foxes, wild dogs, stray cats, who knows?

Michael said, the Peahen calls plaintively for her
chicks day and night, Alison and I, share her grief,
for this is nature at her very worst.

jerry hughes

! NO NEW MESSAGES

No old messages.
In fact no messages
of any kind, or unkind.
So I'll sit in a corner and
sulk at this injustice.
I can't retaliate if there's
nothing to retaliate to.
Awww, fuck 'em all.

jerry hughes

! NULLI SECUNDUS

Darling boy, you were not of me,
but you are of my love past and
present, like the one who cradled
but lost and weeps for you, as I do.

Michael Connor, you will always be
a part of me and I love you, as I love
your mother, my surrogate daughter.

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! OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

Old Mother Hubbard
went to the cupboard
to get her little dog a bone.
But when she got there the
cupboard was bare - so
she ate the dog instead.

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! PAIN

The pain is in me, not in you.
It is my mythological crown of
thorns and personal cross.
Entomb me, and you'll see me rise...

jerry hughes

! PERSONA NON GRATA

I was
I am no longer
or shorter

jerry hughes

! PHILANDERER

Phil Anderer couldn't maintain a relationship for any length of time - in desperation he went to a psychologist to unload his worrisome problem.

An hour later it was ascertained his mental condition was above average, given the circumstances. Finally the psychologist said, while you're here let's give you a physical.

Phil Anderer stripped off and as soon he did the psychologist said, I can see the problem clearly. What, what? Phil asked anxiously. Your dick's too small the shrink said, hiding his mirth.

jerry hughes

! QUESTION

How many no's does it take
to make a yes?

No expresses denial, refusal
or disagreement.

Whereas

Yes expresses consent,
agreement or approval.

So don't say no
when you really mean yes.

jerry hughes

! RABBITS FOOT

Supposed to bring you good luck?
Not so for the rabbit, who now hops
around in an ever decreasing circle.

jerry hughes

! RAPTOR

Magnificent creature much maligned,
a travesty of your former self.
Wired to a fence, proud head askew,
bright eyes lidded in acrimony.
Your bold cry as you soared free stifled,
when a bullet smashed into your breast,
spiralling you to death.

'Look, there's a Wedgie! '
Weekenders say driving by.
Take a good look unseeing eyes.
Look at what's left of nobility.

Explanation: Throughout the 40's and 50's
and beyond, farmers shot Wedgetailed Eagles
in sheer ignorance, believing they killed lambs
and new born calves. Displaying the kill wired
to a fence wings spread wide, for all to see.

jerry hughes

! REFLECTION

When you eventually get around to reflecting on what you've done you should say, 'I'm a sirry irriot' but you can't. Your highly educated pride won't let you. You know you won't.

I think of you, bleed for you, but I'll be damned if I'll acquiesse to be a puppy on a lead for you.
I'm me, violent, angry, unrelenting, but above all else - I love you very much...

jerry hughes

! RENT ASUNDER

It's irreparable - rent asunder.
Where once there was love,
trust and joy - recrimination.

Where once we mataphorically
walked hand in hand we walk
alone, in shadows of the past.

No more anticipation, the bird
has flown with a seat empty, and
emptiness is the operative word.

jerry hughes

! RING-a-ROSIE

'Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis'
(the times have changed and we with them)

I saw, she saw, seesaw.
Catch a, can't say that word,
by the toe, hear him holler.
So, ho, it's Christmas again.

Disillusioned he shouldered
his cross and made for the Inn.
This time he had a Mastercard,
and the manger was a car park.

jerry hughes

! RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

Jasus, is there no fucking equilibrium?
Children lie and their parents defend their lying.
Nomatter how much evidence is presented to the
contrary.

What's the point blood is thicker than love, or truth.
One serves a purpose, but if that purpose intervenes
look out - you'll always be wrong nomatter how right.
Bottom line, mother love rides above all...

jerry hughes

! SO IT WAS

Imagination plays tricks shaping words
until they are out of context and vulnerable
to misinterpretation. The theme becomes a
novelette of fantasy but in the final chapter,
heartache pain and regret. So it was...

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! SOAP BUBBLES

See them rise, float away and gently burst.
The child blowing them skyward didn't know
he was creating a perfect metaphor for life.
In their translucency those bubbles capture
the colours we enjoy, surrounded by fragility.

jerry hughes

! SOME FARMYARD FABLES

Lambs can be sweet,
but sheep are dirty.
I once knew a sheep
whose name was Bertie.
Bertie never washed his face.
His other end?
A damned disgrace.

A pig named Dick
got terribly sick
devouring too many slops.
Be careful then
when approaching his pen,
or you'll slip, on what
sick Dick drops.

Harry the horse
can sometimes be coarse,
especially on the run.
When riding the trap
you'd best be aware,
of the crackers
he fires from his bum.

The geese strut about
at a maddening pace
like nazis, or something sim'ler.
They're led by a gander
who trained with the panzer,
and goes by the name of, Himmler.

Poddy the calf
makes us all laugh,
as he prances about on the grass.
But one day he fell
with a bellowing yell,
and slithered along on his nose?

jerry hughes

! SURROGATE DAUGHTER

The wonder of it!
A few months ago there I was,
contemplating my ineptitude with
girl children.

My biological daughter is
happiest when criticizing.
Loving isn't in her equation.

Then, half a world and twelve
hours away a miracle happened.
Beloved Alison and I, were blessed
by the love of a surrogate daughter.

Reciprocity is such she may be of
our flesh and blood. I believe she is.
Indeed, god is good.

jerry hughes

! SWEET NAIVETY

I was thirteen, she sixteen.
I weighed fifty pounds, she seventy-five.
I'd nearly reached puberty, she'd menstruated
but I didn't understand.

'Do you know how to fuck?' she asked.
I didn't but I couldn't tell her..
'Well, sort of,' I said with bravado.
'No you don't,' she replied making me
feel like a fool and raising her dress.

Her knickers were stretched tight around
her fulsome waist, her thighs were damp when
she placed my hand between them and rubbed
it on her wet vagina.

'Nice?' she asked. I couldn't say, 'Nice what? '
So I said 'Yes'. Then this woman smelling girl,
lowered herself onto my shy, virgin cock moving
up and down with such ease I was mesmerised.

Suddenly with a high pitched scream she said,
'Fuck, I'm coming,' and in sexual ignorance I said,
'It's alright, you're here.' Sweet naivety, 'will y'nay
come back?'

.

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! THE DIFFERENCE

The difference isn't subtle
it's a quantum leap apart.
An alcoholic and a drinker.
Bazza was an alchie, he'd
start and end the day with
a vile concoction branded
Fruity Lexia - four litres to
be precise - straight from
the cask - hands trembling.

I like the taste of single malt,
good red wine, and a kick me
in the balls brandy. But to start
the day with unquenchable thirst
as did my old mate, Bazza?
There but for the grace of Allah.

jerry hughes

! THE LAST FIGHT*

'Don't get cocky with this bloke, '
'Nah, I'll floor him
in the first' -
couldn't be beaten,

not by a skinny kid with arms
and legs like matchsticks.

'Okay smartie, do it your way,
but don't tell me later
I didn't warn you.'

Going at the kid with his
usual bustling tactics,
the boy ducked and
weaved and
landed a
stinging punch
to his head.

Unexpected!
It didn't hurt.
'Bastard,
you'll cop plenty for that! '

Rushing the kid.
Too fast,
side-stepping and
landing blows.

Changing to south-paw
to confuse
- sometimes this worked -
not this time -
the boy hit him again.

Round one lost to the boy.

Back in the corner his trainer said
'What did I tell you? Don't rush him.
Box him, counter punch.'

Hearing; not listening.

Round Two.

Rushing again -
straight into a hard left
to the face.
It hurt!

Headshake;

blink away
the pain.

Back the kid into a corner, throwing
a flurry of punches.
A startled look
in the boy's eyes.
Hit him with a looping left to the ribs.

Leaping in pain.

'Got you now,
you bastard,'
flaying him with lefts
and rights 'til
his arms felt like lead weights -

'Why don't you drop? '

The round ended. He'd won it
but the tax on him was hard.

'All square.
Box him. Win on points.'
'Stuff that, I'll finish him off.'

'Tige, he's only winded,
rush him and he'll
out-box you.

Pace yourself.
See an opening,
nail him.
Okay? '

'I'll box the bastard.'

Round Three.

Not rushing just circling:
looking for an opening
that never came.

Something else did.
A left to the eye.
Blood rushing down his face.

Knowing the ref would stop the fight.
Summoning every reserve;
Charging the kid,
throwing punches
like there'll be

no tomorrow.

Fear has its own scent!
That is the lesson of conflict.

Fighters, soldiers and warmongers,
know it.

He knew it.

Throwing a left into the kid's ribs
brought his head down.
Legs buckled, hanging on to the ropes.

Adjudication: 'Let's have a look
at that eye.'

It's over.

'Don't stop the fight? '

'Looks pretty crook mate, back to your
corner.'
It didn't feel so bad.
Blood on singlet,
face and arms.

Glared at the kid still slumped
over the ropes.

'Next time, I'll bloody
flatten you! '

'Geez mate, you can hit! '
said through puffed lips.
It didn't
make him feel
any better. He'd lost.

Back in the changing room his world
fell apart. He'd been warned if the eye
opened up again,
no more fights,
ever.
'Bad luck Tige,
You had him going down.'
No reply.

'You're the best kid I ever trained.
Thirty-seven fights, three losses;
you should be proud.'

'Thanks boss,
thanks for everything.
Sorry I let you down tonight.'

Politics over.
'Look after yourself
and keep in touch.'

'Okay boss, '
Not looking up.
Ashamed to show
tears in his eyes.
Packing bloodied singlet
shorts and runners into a canvas bag.

'Bastard! Bastard! '

Hitting the air defiantly.

*Grateful thanks to Denis Joe for his editing skill and suggestions.

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! THE LINK

Glenn Gould
Johann Sebastian Bach reborn

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! THE LITTLE RAT aka John Howard

His world is falling apart
before his very eyes.
The blatant deceit and lies
have caught up, and the
electorate's saying in no
uncertain terms, 'not happy
John, it's time to go'.

What a relief not to hear his
whining voice, or see his
paraplegic morning walks.
And gleefully watch him sink
into the bin of political trash.

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! THE SADDEST THING

It can't, and won't last forever
the passion, lust and fervour.
And to surrender manhood is,
the saddest thing...

jerry hughes

! TITCH, IN MEMORY*

'God's finger touched him, and he slept'
(Tennyson: In Memoriam)

How can I thank you, sweet boy,
for all the joy your brought?
Because my grief is raw
I hear your gentle call,
and see you everywhere.
One day sweet boy, we'll meet
again - for it is destined so.

* Titch, a magnificent Russian Blue cat
was my constant companion during my
convalescence post heart attack.

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! TOAD

Poor toad.
You carry such
a load of ugliness.
A gash for a mouth.
Big bulging eyes.
A fat round body.
It doesn't surprise
when people wince.
But in your dreams
poor toad, you'll
always be a prince.

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! TOE CAP CAMERA

Voila', the latest craze is to have a
camera lens in the toe cap of a shoe,
to photograph up ladies skirts.
Oh, the ingenuity of perversion but it
all seems so pointless and banal.

What ever happened to the real art
of snowdropping?
When the 'serious' pervert stole ladies
knickers off the clothes line?
Did they suffer from Portnoy's complain?
Never! .

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! TSIPI*

Run free little Tsipi,
without distress, or pain.
You always looked so sad -
but we loved you, just the same.

Thank you for the time you spent
sharing you funny ways.
Run free little Sip-sip, your memory
remains.

* Tsipi was our delightful Russian Blue cat
born with spinal abnormality. Eventually she
went completely lame and had to be euthanized.

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! ULTIMATE HYPOCRISY

Don't do as I do
do as I say
or imagine I say

jerry hughes

! UNCERTAINTY

As his mountain top crumbled, the climber saw a
cascade of debris descending to envelop him.
No longer sure footed he ran faulting down the slope,
until a boulder much bigger than himself, and his dreams,
crushed him into oblivion...

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! UNREACHABLE STAR

How often do we frail, unsure, frightened
and helpless individuals hang on to beliefs
that seldom if ever materialise?
If Dulcinea couldn't help Don Quixote find his
unreachable star? Who can help me?

jerry hughes

! VIGNETTES ON FARTING

LONG TIME NO SEE

She: How awful, we haven't see each other for years, and the first thing you do is fart.
He: Sorry about that, at least it doesnt smell?
She: I've got news for you, buddy.

ROYALTY

Queen: Charles, why do you have that stupid expression on your face? You haven't farted again, have you?
Charles: Sorry mother.
Phillip: He can't avoid his stupid expression, and he's always farting, the rotten tree hugging faggot.

POST EVENING MEAL

She: Harold, are you releasing those sneaky farts again?
He: Not me dear, it must be the dog.
She: It's not the dog, he's sitting quietly on my lap.
He: Then it must be you, dear?

FOOTNOTE:

A fart is a precursor to a crap.
A crap is the end result of a meal.
To stop farting one must stop eating.
If you don't eat you'll die.
Therefore dear friends, fart on.

jerry hughes

! WASHED OUT

Insight - does that mean one surveys
the future through one's rectum?
How dastardly, especially when flimsy
toilet paper succumbs to the slightest
pressure.

There's a lot to be said for running
water as long as you don't drink it.
Flavoured with fish fornication and
washed backsides it doesn't excite.

jerry hughes

! WHALE OIL BEE FORKED!

Hey diddle, diddle!
The cat had a piddle,
as the cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
when the dish had it off with the spoon.

jerry hughes

! WHITE LINES

I feel a sense of desperation,
as if the next turn in the rutted
road is blind, and I'm unable to
control my destiny, or direction.

Oncoming headlights on high
mar my vision, and I hardly see
the white lines that separate life
from serious injury, or death.

Then it happens, my mind turns
off as I press the accelerator to
the floor, relish the eerie squeal
of tyres and the horrendous crash.

'No rush,' the paramedics said.
'He's terribly dead.'

jerry hughes

! YESTERYEAR

I recall, not so very long ago,
but of course it was.
Conveniently I forgot when
we'd lunch together, and as
something delightful walked
in one of us would say -
'Jasus, wouldn't she be - '
Imagine the rest yourself.
Now it's...
'How's your heart, how's your
back - how's your.....? '

jerry hughes

2006

a year to forget
a year of regret
and yet
a bridge to fulfil
what lies ahead

jerry hughes

A BAND WITHOUT ITS DRUMMER

'Adieu Peter Arnold'

The band swung into
'When You're Smiling'
as a tribute to its heartbeat.
The lyrics said it all - Peter
would have wanted it that way.

So we smiled through tears
and hugged one another.
He had touched us deeply.
It was hard to let him go.
Inside the now empty church
his drumkit sat mute.

jerry hughes

A HAPPY POEM

Happy, happy happy.
Grin, grin grin.
Giggle, giggle giggle.
Chortle, chortle too.
Stop right there, cos
men in white coats
are coming for you.

jerry hughes

A LEAF

'I think that I shall never see, a poem lovely as a tree'

A single leaf makes its own history.
Attached to the bough from which it sprung
it is a perfect entity.

As part of the whole a resting-place for birds,
and a refuge for life-forms that we cannot see.
It welcomes the seasons, and greets each day
with an open face.

Throughout its life it made no enemy, yet
men come with chainsaws to fell the parent tree.

jerry hughes

A PUSTULE WITH EVIL BREATH

A consummate liar, some say
a consummate politician.
In reality, one and the same.
Charisma? As much as a cane toad.
Photogenic? As much as a cane toad.
Vocally? Less than a cane toad

Who is this, you may well ask?
It is the Australian prime minature
by default, a pustule with evil breath -
John (Winston?) Howard.

jerry hughes

A WELSH POEM

Di'bach, did you hear?
Bronwyn's getting married,
white dress, veil 'n' all.
Pregnant is she?
No...
There's posh...

As told to me by Bryan 'steaming red thighs' McReid
jerry hughes

ABOUT ERIC

There is a similarity about them.
Eric, and my father.
Quiet men, who went about their lives
doing well for others.
Gentle men, who didn't seek rewards.
The doing would suffice.

When I talk with Eric,
memories of my father flood back.
The timbre of his voice,
an occasional gesture,
the size and shape of him.
I look forward to these moments
joyously, sometimes sadly.

My father's passing...
An unfathomable void.
To Eric, I repeat the words I spoke
the night my father died.
'Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.'

Eric Smith, my friend and mentor, died on
January 4, 2006, aged 92.

jerry hughes

ABU GHRAIB PRISON

humiliation - degradation -
defecation - urination -
enforced masturbation -
genital electrocution -
and worst of all -
religious persecution.

jerry hughes

ADIEU ERIC

To say I'll miss you?
Words clog the mind
and tighten in my throat.
'Go gentle into that good night'
old friend, knowing love lives on.

jerry hughes

ADMISSION

Yes, I am a depressive.
Sometimes unreasonable.
Most times I can ride out the
storm, and with a few well
chosen expletives, rid myself
of the fucking moment.

jerry hughes

AFTER THE FIRST DEATH*

(In memoriam - children of Iraq)

Amidst the rubble and confusion
a child's hand clutching a toy.

Near by

The hand's arm twisted grotesquely
around a young dead woman.

Was it the hand's mother
to which the infant body clung?

Sans hands, sans eyes, sans....

You did your job 'smart bomb' but,
after the first death there is no other.'

* With grateful thanks to Dylan Thomas

jerry hughes

AFTERMATH

'dulce et decorum est pro patria mori'
(it is sweet and glorious to die for one's country)

During two horrific world wars thousands of young men died defending freedom and democracy. That's what they believed as they marched off to a certain death, but it was a lie.

A hundred years on the freedom they gave their lives for, is a freedom for the rich and powerful to manipulate the weak and poor with impunity, under the brave high flying flag of democracy.

jerry hughes

AMEN

Thank god, I'm the age I am.
To live another decade or two
in a country rotting at the seams
seems inconceivable.

More than half the population
of the world exists on less than
a dollar a day, while we throw
away more food than we eat.

The term 'fair go' is now a myth.
Mateship is replaced by me, me,
and more me; in this miasma of
overindulgence and greed.

No longer the land I loved, sweated
and grew calluses for, its destiny is
now controlled by fear; with nothing
to fear but fear itself.

jerry hughes

AN AUSSIE SUMMER

The sun rises early.
'Bloody daylight saving'
Birds fly. Grasses grow.
The Victa's primed and
splutters to life.

Johnny's off to play cricket.
Sarah's off to the beach.
Mum's making sandwiches.
Dad's mowing the lawn
and shooing off bees.

Next door awakes after
an all night party.
'Jesus, I'm still pissed.'
His lament is interrupted
by the flushing of a dunny

A dog barks. A blue-tongue,
uncomfortable with strangers,
waddles into the hydrangeas.

Midday. The sun's ablaze.
Mr. Whippy's van circles.
Children run to it with
shiny coins and eyes.
The sounds of summer
punctuated by flies.

Early evening.
The kids return.
Johnny scored eighty
and took two wickets.
Sarah's red and glowing,
not only from the sun.

Mum's set the table
and prepared the tea.
Dad, the silly bugger,
was stung by a bee.

jerry hughes

ANDREW for Bruce Dawe

God speed Andrew,
may the sun be at your back.
The leaves have dropped
and winter chills your three
score years and more.

It's some months since the hospice rang,
dissolving forty years.
'It should have been me '
you told the dead telephone.
But you held her hand and promised.
Remember?

A nice young couple bought the house.
Have you lived here long?
Thirty-five years, you said.
It's lovely, they told you.
You had to walk away.
'Sorry if we've...'
It's alright, the agent reassured,
he's just a bit upset.

Settle in thirty days?
Sooner, if you like?
Thirty days is fine,
there are a few things...
We understand.

The agent rang.
The cheque's arrived.
One more walk around the house.
He thought he heard the children laugh?

What's left?
Check the list.
Tell the neighbours.
Warm the engine.
Don't forget to shut the gate.
It's a long drive to the Sunshine Coast.
I'll take it in easy stages.
See, I didn't forget my glasses.

God speed Andrew,
may the sun be at your back..

jerry hughes

ANGST

I wish I'd have done the things
I should have, when I should have.
Looking back, and we're told we
shouldn't, I know I could have done
better - been kinder- talked less -
listened more - shared more.

But life is a learning process.
Aren't we all students?
I wonder what my marks will be,
at the end?

jerry hughes

ANOREXIA

Ann O'Rexia was so thin, she
fell through an eye of an needle
and was never seen again...

jerry hughes

ANZAC DAY

Written by Spike Milligan

If I die in War
You remember me
If I live in Peace
You don't.

jerry hughes

ARGUMENT RESOLVED

I was a feisty fisted lad
who'd fight at the dropp of a hat.
With something to prove I'd blazon on,
regardless of this or that.

My tempered sword was always drawn
more often than my pen.
With something to prove I'd blazon on,
not caring why or when.

Late in the day I sheathed my sword
to pick up my unused pen.
With nothing to prove I must concede,
it's easier now than then.

jerry hughes

ARRIVAL

'unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given' Isaiah 9.6

Thus I was born gory,
and gasping unfamiliar air.
A stranger in an alien world,
alone and afraid.

Separated by the severing
of the umbilical cord,
my bonding delayed
by ritual cleansing.

Imprisoned in swaddling,
I was finally offered
to the woman who bore me,
and she smelt familiar.

Instinct found me her breast
and the comfort of her arms.
Her gentle voice reassured,
and I felt safe.

So this is I.
The ninth letter of the alphabet.
A singular pronoun of the first person.
But this, I am yet to learn.

jerry hughes

ATLAS

Now I know how Charles Atlas
must have felt, lumping the world
around on his brawny shoulders.

All it got him at the end was a
quadruple hernia, fallen arches,
and extreme lower back pain.

Chinese proverb related to the
above: 'Don't fuck with things
you can't handle.'

jerry hughes

AWARENESS

There is a sadness
in the realisation that
love, isn't a figment of
the imagination.

But a reality of enormous
consequence, and the essence
of why we are here.

jerry hughes

BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach
Is
Nothing more need be said

jerry hughes

BAY 13

Bay 13 was the holy grail at the M C G (Melbourne Cricket Ground) where the Australia Rules Football faithful gathered to cheer for their respective teams. It was swept away in reconstruction but the memory lingers. Here's a scene from that past involving, Jezza and Dicko.

Jezza: Here we are. Should be a good game?

Dicko: Yeah. I'll have a quid on the Tiges.

Jezza: You're on pal.

Dicko: Where's ya mate?

Jezza: What mate?

Dicko: You know - that's a?

Jezza: You mean, that's a sausage?

Dicko: Yeah, him.

Jezza; He'll be along, but don't get too close.

Dicko: Is he that off?

Jezza: Like he rolled in a heap of dog shit - look out there he is.

Dicko: And he's heading our way, let's move.

Jezza; Good idea. Christ, there he goes straight into the esky. He'll knock off a dozen tinnies before the match is over. Look, he's spotted the kid selling pies. Jesus, isn't that disgusting? He's rammed the pie straight into his gob, and there's meat and sauce dribbling down his chin onto his filthy jumper.

Dicko: And he's sucking on a can at the same time.

Jezza: Wait till he's pissed, you haven't seen anything yet.

Dicko: Reckon he was pissed before he got here.

Jezza: You could be right.

Dicko: The games about to start and he's bailed up the pie boy again.

Jezza: Cop his head will you? It looks like a busted arse.

Dicko: Mate, I've seen better looking busted arses.

Jezza: Looks like Richmond's about to get a goal, that pofter Royce Heart is right in front of the sticks.

Cop 'that's a' if he kicks it.

Dicko: Beauty Royce!

Jezza: There he goes, imitating the goal umpire, two fingers in front with a toothless cry of, 'that's a sausage'. I've often seen him fall arse over turkey with excitement.

Dicko: The bastard better not fall over me, or I'll shove his esky up his arse.

Jezza: Personally, I wouldn't go anywhere near his arse.

Dicko: Yeah, you're right mate.

Addendum: To the uninitiated, a sausage roll is colloquial rhyming slang for a goal.

jerry hughes

BAZ

'remembering Barry McLaine'

Old friend,
it pains to see you as you are,
grasping at straws of old delights.
Filling in your empty days
with empty, aimless nights.

How long before the trembling and
the shakes?
The snakes and ladders of the mind?
The wobbling gait, the drooling mouth
the lolling tongue?

Old friend,
it pains to see you now.
Remembering you,
when you were brightly young.

jerry hughes

BEAR BATING IN THE U S A

They've treed you, bear.
In fear you climbed for circling below
like hungry sharks, the baying hounds.
Those 'good 'ole boys' who run the pack
will shoot you, not cleanly, but wounded
to the ground.

Defenseless and in agony you'll die,
as the frenzied dogs rip your flesh away.
You've been baited bear, the American way.

jerry hughes

BEAUTY

All things are beautiful
if you look beyond the surface.
A dear departed friend used to
jokingly say, 'Pretty or ugly, it's
nice to have a face.'

You see my face and I see yours.
What transpires is a wonderment.
You say hello, and hold out a hand.
It's taken and we're united, if briefly.

jerry hughes

BEING SEVENTY TWO

Des, what's the time?
Seventy two.
Not your age, you
silly bugger;
What's the right time?
It's never the right time
when you're seventy two.
Jesus! I give up...
So you should.
Should what?
Give up
asking people the time,
when they're seventy two.

jerry hughes

BELLS OF PEACE

'they will beat their swords into plowshares'
Isaiah 2: 4

There's been enough killing, God knows.
Flowers of all nations plucked -
and placed in grievous rows.
Bells have tolled of death too long.
Now let them tell of peace.

Resonate throughout the world
a pealing sweet and clear,
that all mankind should meet as one
in friendship, not in fear.

There's been enough killing, God knows.
Flowers of all nations plucked -
and placed in grievous rows.

jerry hughes

BEND IN THE ROAD

...and then, the final bend in the road.
beyond it, a walk into the unknown.
oh yes, we're told there's something
there - but what? where?

i can't see a smiling, welcoming jesus.
or a scowling, disapproving satan -
in fact, like sargeant shultz, of hogan's
heroes, i see nothing!

i'll make up my own welcoming committee.

dylan thomas - william shakespeare-
gore vidal - samual johnson- alan bennett-
neil simon - dorothy parker - bruce dawe -
spike milligan - and a few hundred more.

jerry hughes

BILLY'S STRANGE ENCOUNTER

Billy, my trombone playing mate,
told me of a liaison many years ago
when, as a muso sure of lip, playing
at a Sunday gig - he chanced upon a
charmer who found him rather sexy too.

Like any true red-blooded male, Billy
made his play, to which the femme-
fatale responded, inviting him to stay
the night, to Billy's great delight.

Ensnared in her cosy nook, Billy
sought to have his lusty way, but when
he placed his hand between her thighs,
he quickly recoiled in fright.
For tucked up in her gusset was
a penis, twice his size!

'Why didn't you say? ' Billy cried,
as tears welled in his eyes.
'But as I'm here, could you complete
the job by hand? '

Thus Billy's strange encounter was
like many of his gigs.
A memorable, one night stand.

jerry hughes

BIRTHDAY POEM FOR ALISON

I don't write love poems,
they just happen.
As you happened to me
those many years ago.

Reflecting on our journey
we've much to be grateful
for - importantly, we never
took each other for granted.

Thank you for loving me.
And letting me, love you:
 'Happy Birthday'

jerry hughes

BLEAK HOUSE

I used to pass it on my way to school,
an eerie place with a tumbled-down fence,
and gates that groaned on windy days.
Around it's terraces gargoyles leered at
passers-by in stoney silence.
Ivy wrapped the house in a green cocoon
and the curtains were always drawn.

A crone lived there they said - died long ago.
But I'll swear I saw her framed by a window,
dressed in crinoline and lace.
A Gainsborough lady of such exquisite beauty,
she took my breath away!
Such are the fantasies of an adolescent boy -
On the threshold of pubescence.

jerry hughes

BLISS

No need for words.
The happening is everything.
In awe we hold one another.
No need for words.

jerry hughes

BLITZ REVISITED - LONDON, JULY 2005

From euphoria to terror
in a matter of hours.
From jumping with joy
to cowering in fear.
From god save the queen,
to god save us all.

jerry hughes

BONJOUR TRISTESSE?

A careless word misunderstood
and waved about like a sword.
Capitulate? Gladly. But there's
a half-way house, so let's peep
inside and see what happens?

jerry hughes

BOSKO and ADMIRA (May 1992)

'If thou must love me, let it be naught
except for love's sake alone'
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

Ethnically cleansed through love,
when all about them hate
of generations raged,
they held hands, while
clenched fists threatened.

Amid the rubble of Sarajevo,
a sniper waited.
Don't discriminate.
Kill!

In the distance two figures.
Aim for the larger target -
Squeeze the trigger -
Got him!

Now the other.
She's bewildered,
distraught, crying -
Got her!

What's this?
She's crawling toward him -
She's reached him?
Don't waste another bullet.

Time for lunch.

jerry hughes

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

He saw her and knew he had to meet her.
This elfin girl with bobbed hair
and an oval face.
Wide eyes and full lips.
Sweet Jesus, her lips!

What's your name?
Helen, she replied.
Of Troy? he blurted foolishly.
She smiled, and her smile
seared into his brain.

Have coffee with me?
I don't know you.
You will, by the second cup.
You sound so sure.
I am. I am.

Only for coffee?
For now.
And later?
I can't tell.
Later is later.
Now is now.

And I have to tell you.
What?
I love you.
You're mad.
You're to blame.
Me?
Yes.
You're so lovely.

I have to go, they're expecting me.
They?
My parents.
For dinner.
Not yet.
I have to.
I've offended you.
No.
Then don't go..

I'll phone them.
What can I say?
Tell them you've fallen in love
with a madman, and you won't
be coming home.
Ever.

You are mad.

Yes, I am.
I love your madness.
Sanity can be so cruel.

Where shall we go?
Where would you like to?
Anywhere, with you.
Are you sure?
As I'll ever be.

I don't even know your name.
What would you like to call me?
Beelzebub?

Are we going to hell?
Probably.
But heaven first, I think.

jerry hughes

BURMA RAILWAY

'In Memoriam'

Dysentery, diarrhoea, dengue fever.
Cholera, malaria and malnutrition.
Add a surfeit of brutality and you've
got a railway.

Not any old railway.
This one is special.
As hundreds of brave men
would attest, if they were alive.

jerry hughes

BUSSIE

Bussie, is what they called her.
Dumpy with acne,
so nobody kissed her.
A Saturday matinee groupie
who seldom saw a film, and
the only tenderness she knew,
was giving 'her boys' fellatio.

As the lights went down,
so did Bussie, gently, to
callous thrusting, intermixed
with muffled laughter.

With the playing of the anthem
Bussie would arrange herself,
smiling sweetly at 'her boys.'
But nobody kissed her.

Why Bussie? Cos she's got a face
like the back of a bus. That's how a
brainless yobbo explained it.

jerry hughes

BUTTOCKS

Isn't it a splendid word?
Signifying those protuberances
which form a hump, or in common
parlance, arse or rump.
However, arse or rump tend to lower
the tone of, Buttocks.

Buttocks.
See them sashy down the street,
accompanied by swinging hips.
Goodness, gracious, what a treat.

Buttocks.
Apropos the female gender, unless
one's inclined to be a gender bender.
In such a case, the merest glimpse
of a laddie's rear, makes a gay chap
overjoyed there's, Buttocks.

Buttocks, with their many uses -
Indeed I say, one could muse for
days and days on, Buttocks.

jerry hughes

CONVOLUTED

The quotient of give and take.
But take more than you give?
Testis in a rat trap would be
less painful...

jerry hughes

CAMERA HOG

On the steps of Parliament House
grinning dementedly, there he is.
Lying about the boat people and
faking concern, there he is.

Lying about the weapons of mass
destruction, when he actually meant
mass-turbation, there he is.

Standing beside sports people and
basking in their glory, there he is.
Grandstanding at the cricket, a game
he knows nothing about, there he is.

A media junkie who'd stand next to
a serial killer to get his vile head on
television, or in the press, there he is.

Who, or what, is this obnoxious pustule
with evil breath? In case you didn't know;
The Australia prime miniature by default
John (Winston, you may laugh) Howard.

jerry hughes

CEAUSESCU'S CHILDREN 1996

Out of the manholes they crawl
to face another hopeless day.
Not rats or cockroaches,
but Romania's children.
Selling their miserable bodies
for food, or glue.

Food only sustains, but sniffing
glue anaesthetises their misery.
Children of Romania, raped,
abused, diseased and forgotten.
Alina, just sixteen was heard to say.
'I want to die? ' Why not?
She's barely alive.

jerry hughes

CELLO

Jacqueline du Pre'
she was the cello.
Casals, Rostropovich.
Tortelier, played magnificently.
But couldn't warm the instrument
in their loins, like Jacqueline did.

jerry hughes

CHARLIE

'much more than a dog'

I buried him near the fuchsias
where he liked to lie, snapping
at the bees and flies that dared
invade his space.

A fiesty chap with a furry face
and big brown eyes.
His whiskers drooped even as a pup,
more so as the years went by.

And when his eyesight failed
he'd follow my voice to jump onto my lap
tail a-wagging, ears pricked and alert.
This was our quality time.

With my companion gone I now avoid
the paths we walked. For habit made
me turn around, and wait.

jerry hughes

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

God rest ye merry gentlemen
let nothing you dismay;
For Jesus Christ your Saviour,
is here now on display.

Hark the herald angels sing,
glory to the cash till ring.
Peace on earth, and mercy mild.
Jesus, in the shops defiled.

Lo, what sayeth that sign above
the sacred star?
'Christmas carols are for sale,
at the record bar.'

jerry hughes

CIRCUMCISION

a little bit here
a little bit there
OUCH!

Alternatively the Hebrew inscription above
a synagogue entrance that reads:
'we keep the piece.' Or is it, peace?

jerry hughes

COCKATOOS

A cockatoo, a-three a-four
flew by, so pleasing to the eye.

Yet their awfully raucous din
can penetrate the air like sin.

How damned absurd,
coming from such a pretty bird.

jerry hughes

COLD STEEL

'I parried, but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now.' Wilfred Owen

Between the trenches no-mans land.
Strategies had us confront one another.
I didn't know you my brother,
but blood would be our bond.

You thrust, I parried.
Thus we fought, and died.
I saw your lips form 'mutter, '
as 'mother' hissed though mine.

jerry hughes

CONSCIENCE

There's so much to regret,
it can't be tabulated.
In my 76th year it's too late,
much too late.
I don't need a father confessor
to absolve me, I need a friend
to say, 'mate, you did the best
you could.' That'll do.

jerry hughes

CONUNDRUM

Is there such a thing as
an original good idea?
Or are all good ideas
swamped by a river of
commercial bullshit?

Ask any self-appointed
advertising guru - there's
no one better qualified
to answer - untruthfully.
I should know, regrettably.

Addendum: With no apologies to
a deceitful industry cloned by liars.

jerry hughes

CONVERSATION

I'm leaving you, Jim.
What's that love?
I said I'm leaving you.
Where to love?
Jesus, Jim, didn't you hear me?
Yeah, love, I heard you.
When'll you be coming back?

Jim, I'm not coming back.
She's right love, it's the menopause.
You'll feel better in a couple of days.
Jim, you're not listening.
I'm leaving you.
Jesus, Mary!
Don't Jesus Mary me, Jim,
I'm going.

Where, for Christ's sake?
After thirty fucking years?
Don't really know. Anywhere.
Shit, what a time to dropp it on a man.
Six o'clock in the fucking morning!

What difference does the time make?
You could have waited till after breakfast.
You'll have to get your own now.
Don't you want any?
No. Not this morning.

Listen love, let's talk about it?
No Jim, we're all talked out, years ago.
Why didn't you say something?
I did. You didn't listen.
When?
Does it matter?

Aw, fuck Mary, you just can't get up
and leave. What'll I tell them at bingo?
Bingo? Just tell them I left you.
Yeah? For who? For what?
For no one. No that's not right.
Tell them I left you... for me.

I don't understand, thirty fucking years
down the gurgler. And what about our
trip up north? It's all paid for.
You go, Jim. It'll do you good.
Never know, you might score one of
those rich sunshine coast widows?
One with the second or third face lift,
with silicon filled tits.

And what will you be doing?
Me? . Doing? Nothing. Just nothing,
and won't that be wonderful?
Can't we?
No, Jim, we can't. Now, will you phone
me a taxi please? Wait. I'll do it myself.
I'm going for the papers, will you be here
when I get back?
I don't think so.
Then, it's goodbye?
Yes, Jim. It's goodbye.

jerry hughes

CONVOLUTED

today is
the yesterday
I'll forget about
tomorrow

jerry hughes

CORHANWARRABUL

Gently rolling hills where once
the ancients lived, and shared
you bounty. How sad to see you
now so dispossed. Where ferns
and eucalypts reached for the sky,
brick veneers clone like mushrooms
to appal the eye.

But deep within your heart
where shovel has not turned,
your memory returns to when
the ancients called you, mother.

Corhanwarrabul, is the Aboriginal name for
the Dandenong Ranges. The 'ancients' are
the Aboriginal people, the original occupants,
who arrived in Australia 4000 years ago.

jerry hughes

CORNUCOPIA

It's said too much is excess,
and too little, frugal.
As nothing exceeds like excess,
is frugality the untimate penance?
Yes.
Adam shouldn't have shaken that
apple tree...

jerry hughes

COSMETIC

I met a man recently
who said he was, Jesus.
He was certainly stereotypical.
With long flowing robes, sandals,
a beard, and a bit on the scruffy side.
Impressed I asked him for further proof
for instance, nail scars in hands and feet?
I was singularly unimpressed when he replied.
' I've recently had cosmetic surgery.'

jerry hughes

CRIKEY!

When swimming in an ocean full of fish 'n' things,
don't mess with batman, he's got a nasty sting.

jerry hughes

CROCODILE TEARS

I find it quite extraordinary,
this explosion of sentiment
over one death, by accident.
At the very same time hundreds
of children in Ethiopia and Uganda,
died of curable illnesses or starvation.
Unknown and unreported.

.

jerry hughes

CROWDED BUS

'Sorry if I offend, ' she said.
'Offend? ' I asked quizzically.'
'Your sensitivities, ' she replied.
We were strap-hanging in a
crowded bus on a very hot day.

Her tanned arms merged
into deep unshaved pits.
' I never use deodorants,
this offends some people, '
she spoke seriously.

'Doesn't offend me, ' I said.
'In fact, I like that funky smell.'
'Really? ' she smiled.
Ours was the next stop.

jerry hughes

CUNNING LINGUS

I put my face between her thighs
and travel to ecstasy -
Her olfactory is overwhelming,
so time and space don't matter.
I'm at the centre of creation.
I am a god...

jerry hughes

CYNICISM

When you come to the end of a perfect day.
and sit alone with your thoughts.
You can bet your sweet arse some bastard
will find a way to fuck it up.

jerry hughes

DACHAU 1933 -1945

Picture this in your mind's eye.
It happened not only to Jews, but
resistance fighters, ministers of
religion, gypsies, writers, poets,
actors and musicians.

The living skeletons liberated in 1945
were found huddled in groups, picking
fleas and lice from their stinking bodies.

Erik smiled, vomited blood and collapsed.
Claus riddled with dysentery, died in a pool
of his defecated bowels.

30,000 died of disease, cold, hunger, or in
the gas chambers. Of those who survived,
many died later from typhus.

Did we learn anything from this horror?
Can it happen again?
It can...

jerry hughes

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Wonderful lady fight on.
Your indomitable spirit
towers above the Generals
who would silence you.

The gentle people you inspire
though bloodily suppressed,
need you as their symbol.

Fight on brave lady;
History will do the rest.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has
been detained under house
arrest in Myanmar (Burma)
since 1989.

jerry hughes

DE PROFUNDIS

I should have been there,
to hold you when you were
scared, and cuddle you,
when you were sad.

I should have been there,
to see you blossom from
adolescence to womanhood,
almost in the blinking of an eye.

I should have been there,
but I wasn't.

jerry hughes

DEAD MAN SHOUTING

Why is that dead man shouting
and struggling to free his bonds
to enter once again, a world of
the animated dead?

jerry hughes

DEATH BED

I was with him the day he died,
still proud and stoic.
He was in pain, I could see
it in his face. The occasional
grimace, and sharp in-breath.

'Can I get you anything? '
I asked. 'No son, ' he replied.
'Just be with me, to the end.'
It nearly broke my heart, but
I said, 'of course, of course.'

A minute later he was dead.
And a glorious chapter of the
Aussie digger died with him.

jerry hughes

DEATH OF A DAUGHTER

With a convulsed, 'help me, '
she collapsed to the floor.
Filthy and stinking.

I'd seen it all before.

Then with pleading eyes
and outstretched arms
she -
urinated, deficated,
vomited and died.

jerry hughes

DECIEVED

To be deceived is cruel.
To live by broken promises
pathic...
To reflect on past joy?
Heartbreaking...

jerry hughes

DECISION DAY

'the courage of Bob Dent'

In 15 seconds you'll be dead.
The decision is entirely yours.
The pain you've borne makes
the act so simple.

No more palliative injections.
No more morphine.
You cried as the pain increased.
No more - today is decision day.

You searched your conscience
and said your goodbyes.
Unwavering you press, YES.
Miraculously the pain decreases.

Bob Dent was one of the first
to accept voluntary euthanasia
in Australia.

jerry hughes

DEFINITIONS A to Z

Addendum - a dumb den
Bassinet - a net for bassins
Camembert - a vaudeville duo
Demijohn - a shot chap
Earwig - a wig for an ear
Faggot - a cigarette butt
Genteel - a gentle eel
Hamshackle - to shackle a ham
Innuendo - an Italian suppository
Jacobus - a bus for Jacob
Karma- car for your mother
Lectern -opposed to right turn
Manhood - a hood for a man
Nark - Mark with a harelip
Ozone- near the G spot
Panhandle - a handle for a pan
Quisling - child good at quizzes
Rescue - a place to rest a cue
Samovar- Sam's dead
Tarpaulin - thanking Pauline
Ulterior - the inside of exterior
Voile - misspelling of volia'
Whortleberry - a berry that whortles
Xenophobia - being scared of Xeno's
Yom Kippur - a kipper cooked in Yom
Zee - American mispronunciation of Zed

jerry hughes

DEVASTATED

The news, a sledgehammer blow.
Multifarious reasons we may never
comprehend.

But know this, most generous of souls,
you are much loved by two, whose love
grew stronger just by knowing you.

For Tara with unreserved love always,
Jerry and Alison.

jerry hughes

DIG A HOLE, FILL IT IN

Dig a hole, fill it in.
Dig it again, fill it in.
Jesus, what's the point?
There isn't any point.
Just dig a hole, fill it in.
See how much better
you're getting at it?
Dig a hole, fill it in.

jerry hughes

DIRTY UNCLE BERTIE

When I'm an old man
I'll follow girls down the street,
but probably forget why.

When I'm an old man
I'll wear a tatty old raincoat,
even when it isn't wet.

When I'm an old man
I'll wear my trousers above my ankles,
with belt and braces to keep them up.

When I'm an old man
I'll dribble food and drink down the front
of my shirt, and I won't care.

When I'm an old man
I'll...I'll...I'll... Aawww stuff it!
I'll do as I bloody well like!

When I'm an old man -
I'll be a right old bastard! !

jerry hughes

DISPOSSESSED

We don't clear tall buildings
in a single bound any more.
The people we admire are
surrendering to mediocrity.
Leaving the buildings wondering.
'Will we ever be hurdled again?'

jerry hughes

DUH?

He looked about fifteen.
Leaning slovenly on a wall
by the post office, his eyes
showing the animation of a
dead fish.

His face erupting with zits of
various size and colours, and
teeth I'd rather not describe.

Resplendently attired in the fashion
of the day, long shorts with the crotch
touching the ground. Topped off with a
once white T-shirt, U S A emblazoned
front and back.

Curiosity made me ask the question.
'Are you American?' He looked at me
blankly so I asked again, this time I got
the answer I expected - 'duh?'

Addendum: To think, this towering intellect
could be a future prime minister of Australia?

jerry hughes

DWINDLING CHILDHOOD

'Lie still, and be forevermore a child' Christopher Dowson

Your new remote beauty is impressive,
but not lovely.
I fear, the sudden aloof awareness
of these barren heights to which no
longer child -
You foolishly aspire, and ruthlessly descend;
Self-banished from your elfin realm,
in which you dwelt and frolicked.

jerry hughes

EASTER

During Easter I contemplated
God's love, through Christ.
Until these images swirled
and filled my head.
Crusades in the name of God.
Millions killed in two world wars.
Concentration camps, incurable
disease and on-going famine.

Gentle folk, I rest my case.

jerry hughes

EMBITTERED

It isn't so difficult.
When it's over, it's over.
Recrimination?
'He said - she said.'
It doesn't matter who said what, or why?
Climbing to a mountain top is easy.
The descent, is always harder.

jerry hughes

EMILY & SYLVIA

EMILY in celebration

Twix life and death
she wrote the words
that shook the tree
that held a Christ.
And, like his,
her life closed thrice.

SYLVIA

'even in your zen heaven we shan't meet'
from Lesbos

Posthumous poet
spinner of words
bitter, sad and sweet.
Nothing would quell
the fire in your loins -
But death

(my humble tribute to these outstanding writers)

jerry hughes

EMOTIONAL

I tend to get emotional these days.
May be it's the weight of years,
and the accumulating fear of -
'not enough time? '

So much to do,
so much I should have done -
Now it's me,
against a relentless clock.

jerry hughes

ENOUGH, ALREADY

E 4 exemplification

N 4 negativity

O 4 obstinacy

U 4 unworthiness

G 4 gridlock

H 4 heterodoxy

jerry hughes

EROGENOUS

One of, if not the greatest
evolutionary gift granted
to man.....Woman

jerry hughes

EVERYONE'S SON

He was everyone's son,
a splendid, strapping lad -
with a smile to make an angel blush,
so innocent, shy and wide.

There was goodness in every gesture,
and in every stride of his bold step -
as he marched off with his regiment to
a war not of his making, but he went.

Without complaint he went, believing
it was his duty to fight beside his mates -
even if the odds were great, and they died
in thousands like slaughtered sheep.

Now he's sheltered by an unmarked grave,
where memory saves forgetfulness -
and his final treasured letter is all that
remains, of everyone's son.

jerry hughes

EVULSION

'to the memory of Peter Shoobridge, and his daughters'

Gentle poet, what drove you to this extreme?
A scene from a private living hell?
Severing the hand that took your daughters lives,
you placed a rifle to your head.
There was no audience when the shot rang out,
or when the curtain fell, on the silence of the dead.

jerry hughes

EXPLOSION

excruciatingly beautiful
the heart momentarily stops
the body tenses and eyes
go out of focus myopically
jerry hughes

FACING THE WALL

How will I know?
When he turns to face the wall.
Why would he do that?
It's called release, recognition,
a return to the womb.
I don't understand.
You don't have to, just accept.
Won't he be lonely?
Only for a while.
Then?
Open the storeroom of memory
and be glad.

jerry hughes

FANTASY FULFILLED

My old mate, Johnny Pethers
had a driving-force ambition to
fuck a cop 'in uniform' - a female
cop of course, there was nothing
queer about Pethers.

One night while driving home his
fastasy came true - he was pulled
over- lo and behold - by a female
cop, in uniform.

One of his tail light globes had blown.
Pethers turned on his charm, and
promised to have the globe replaced
first thing in the morning.

Adding, 'by the way, I live just around the
corner, would you like to call in for a drink
when you finish your shift? The female
cop said yes - so like any good story with
a happy ending, the rest was history.

jerry hughes

FERAL KIDS

They're out there - in their thousands.
Street kids, sleeping rough, sniffing glue,
shooting up. Out of sight, out of mind?
While the wealthy squander millions,
governments downsize the welfare state.
Be proud Australia, these are your children.
Outcasts of generations too preoccupied
with self, to read the signs.

jerry hughes

FIN

Anger is inconsolable and irrational.
But at certain times understandable.
The flip-side is rational and intellect.
Use it, before it uses you...

jerry hughes

FINAL ACT

The curtain is drawn.
The stage is empty.
Lights are turned off,
as the players leave
for their seclusion.

The script with 'break a
leg' scribbled across it,
lies where a player left it
in hasty retreat.

jerry hughes

FINITE

The very last tankful.
How far will it take me?
Don't accelerate.
Don't spin the wheels.
Conserve, conserve.
What for?
I'm going nowhere.
Neither are you.

jerry hughes

FLEDGLINGS

A lump in the throat when
holding it in my hands.
Then the thought occurred,
will these words survive?
I must walk away, but in so
doing wish these fledglings
a safe journey in their flight.

jerry hughes

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

For chrissake, give it up,
the sea said to the shore.
The tide has ebbd and
flowed, and the current has,
as all currents do, pulled the
remnants beyond your reach.
Take your bucket and spade
and go home - the waiting is
over, long over.

jerry hughes

FOR A DANCER

Sad little face,
sad wide eyes.
The nymph of you
belies your womanhood.

Ah, that I could
by magic means
flower that within
you, unfulfilled.

But I am just a poet
writing words,
released to air
like fledgling birds.

The strong survive,
the weaklings die.
Sad little face,
sad wide eyes.

jerry hughes

FOR ALISON

From earliest remembrances to now,
through an uncontrolled attack of lust
I nearly lost you, and myself.

The road's rutted, and the person with
the lolly-pop sign won't make it easier.

Let's slow down to an easier pace,
so that the children we once were,
may cross safely...

jerry hughes

FOR DAVID

Bewilderment and questions
answered by release.
Quietly the curtain dropped
ending the final act.

But the script continues
as it must.
So the players pause then
as one, applaud.

This was a good life.

jerry hughes

FOR DENIS JOE

Wordsmith extraordinaire,
it would have be a lesser
world without your waterfall
of words splashing into our
minds. You faced your demon
and survived. Amen

jerry hughes

FOR MICHAEL SHEPHERD

A prodigious talent
with a biography that
reads like a who's who.
Beyond the accolades
someone, I'm proud to
call a friend...
Happy birthday, friend.

jerry hughes

FOR REID. B aka red hairy McThighs

A friendship formed over a glass of goon
many moons ago.
Jointly surviving heart attacks induced by
copious gallons of booze and long lunches.
Jasus C, how did we keep up the pace?

Doctor's saying, 'it's a bloody disgrace what
you're doing to your bodies.'
With us replying in a Minnie Bannister voice,
'What's that....buddy? '

Miraculously we're still here, looking forward
to another steaming curry.
But it's difficult to write a true accolade to this
friendship made

Except:

'We've owww'd together for more than forty years,
and it don't seem a day too much.
Let's keep laughing to the very end and
then say - 'let's go dutch.'

jerry hughes

FOR TARA

'a variation of the girl from Ipanema song'

Tall and svelte, and young and lovely
the girl from London town goes walking
and all the men that see her go -
'faaark! '

When she walks it's like a samba, that
swings so cool and sways so gentle.
The men she passes, each one she passes
goes, 'faaarck! '

jerry hughes

FOR THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children' Genesis 3: 16

By decree we stole their birthright.
Little heathens in our Christian eyes.
We had to make them white, from the inside.
So we plucked them from their mother's arms
and farmed them off to Christian homes,
or fearsome Christian institutions.

Negating forty thousand years of nurturing
with a stroke of a pen - our benevolence
profoundly misplaced, we dressed the the girls
like mammy dolls, the boys in sailor suits.
We taught them of a Jesus Christ, and
wondered why they couldn't understand?

Forgive us our trespasses
and our foolish pride.
We were wrong!
Money cannot compensate
and words sound hollow.
In reconcillation, I offer my hand.

Addendum: Until the early 1970s, Aboriginal
children were taken from their mothers, sometimes
by force. Adopted by white families, or placed in
institutions, they were deprived of their heritage,
language and culture. Oh yes, we were wrong!

jerry hughes

FOR WILFRED OWEN (1893 - 1918)

'When lo! An angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not a hand upon that lad,
But the old man would not not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe. one by one.

(from 'The Parable of the Old man and the Young')
Wilfred Owen

Dead at twenty-five, poet and chronicler
of a war too terrible to contemplate.

Genius touched the soul of one so young,
who left this imagery of desolation.

The youth of all nations plucked
before their sap had risen.

Amongst them you, young soldier-poet,
to whom I dedicate this, in memoriam

jerry hughes

FORGET ME NOT

What's that little blue flower?
A forget-me-not.
Has somebody forgotten you?
I suppose they have.
Who are they?
Oh, just people.
Are people just?
I suppose they are.
You suppose a lot, don't you?
I suppose I do.

jerry hughes

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS

Forty-eight hours have passed
since the dawning of the new year.
Has anything changed for the good,
bad or indifferently? Not really.
It's very much more of the same.

But wait...The media and television
and are still flogging the hanging of
Saddam Hussein. And James Brown
was buried in a 24-carat gold coffin -
as if we needed to know?
Indeed, indeed nothing's changed.

jerry hughes

FOUND FRAGMENT

I'm scribbling in incessant rain,
and mud has turned to slush.
The stench of death is all about,
and God's deserted us.

Last night I saw young Andy die.
He cried his life away.
I felt so bloody helpless.
Will it be me, today?

jerry hughes

FREEDOM OF SPEECH?

The right to abuse, to use
every filthy four letter word
ever spoken, or yet to be.
The right be be vile, hurt,
abuse and denigrate.

But wait, like the promise
of those 'free steak knives'
there's more!
Where was this attitude born?
At home, through gross parental
apathy, of course.

jerry hughes

FRIENDSHIPS

I have few friends and I love them.
I've lived long enough to see many
of them die, and I miss them.
They are getting fewer, so I don't
read the obituaries any more.

jerry hughes

FUNCTION

'Have you been told
how lovely you are today? '

Say this to your woman every
morning, even with her gooey
eyes and early morning breath.

Cos when she's showered and
ready to face the world in which
you are her major player, she's
the girl you fell in love with who
still loves you. Remember this?

jerry hughes

GALLIPOLI for Gina

'how we blooded youth for battle'

It came.
The command.
Take the hill!
But Sir...?
No buts Captain,
take the hill.
Sir...I must protest.
Captain, you're facing a
court-martial for insubordination.
Take that hill..., Now!

Sparks, have you got the line
to H Q fixed?
Not yet Sir, shouldn't be long.
Sparks, every second counts.
I'm doing my best, Sir.
Sorry lad, I know you are.
Let me know the second.
The second, Sir.

Lieutenant Hadley?
Sir!
Fixed bayonet charge.
Sir, they'll be massacred!
Lieutenant Hardley, that's
the order, pass the word.
Yes..., Sir!

Sparks, how's it going?
Nearly there, Sir.
Lieutenant.
Sir!
We go with the flare.
Are they ready?
Ready, Sir.

Oh, Christ, there it is....
Lead the charge with me?
I'm with you, Captain.
Rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat.
They died with yells
frozen in their throats.

Sir, I've reached H Q.

jerry hughes

GARGANTUAN for Les Murray

Your willy-willy of words
spiral through, leaving
a flavour and scent
of how things were,
or ought to be.

In my dreaming time
I too search for words
to describe, to cajole?
But unlike you, dear Les,
it isn't easy for me.

My childhood nightmare,
'I cannot read the word'
still haunts.
But I love our language
so I must write.
And reading yours,
determines mine.

jerry hughes

GAY DECEIVER

I remember when a gay deceiver
was the name for a padded bra.
Now that innocent term refers to
a promiscuous homosexual.

jerry hughes

GEORGE W. BUSH

If you look like an idiot,
think like an idiot,
talk like an idiot,
and even walk like an idiot,
chances are, you are an idiot.
And George W. Bush
qualifies unequivocally.

Addendum:
With one more neuron George W. Bush
would be a moron, as well being an idiot.
What a shlemiel...

jerry hughes

GLENROWEN

Adieu Ned Kelly

Such is life
Such is death
The black cap
The words
'May God have mercy'
The hypocrisy
The myth
The fiction
The profiteers
The bullshit
You're beyond that now
Ned.

jerry hughes

GOD

I dedicate this poem to my friend and mentor
Abu Raschid, who taught me the true meaning
of tolerance. He was a Muslim.

Is there a God?
What does he look like?
Is he that benign, long-bearded figure
artists have painted over the years?
Is he a Jew?

A dear friend, deceased, following
a long discourse said, 'God is God.'
Thank you, Abu.

jerry hughes

GOD DAMN IT!

I've just been told an old friend has been diagnosed in the early stage of Alzheimer's, and I'm shattered.

Profoundly deaf as well, this is a cruel twist of fate for a man who in his prime, was bigger than life itself.

I'm sad and angry at the very same time. Sad, to see my old friend deteriorate. Angry, because there's no known cure.

As the weeks go by I'll sit with him and talk about the times we shared, even when he won't, and he won't recognise me.

Old friend I won't desert you, friendship isn't just for good times. And we have so many good times to remember, you and I.

jerry hughes

GOODBYE

Goodbye, is so final.
It ends everything, dismissing
all the goodness by tying it up
in a shabby parcel, and posting it
stampless to the dead letter office.
There to sit on a shelf with the other
goodbyes, that suffered the same fate.

jerry hughes

GOODBYES AREN'T EASY

Goodbye dad,
I'll see you soon?
But in my heart?
He looked so frail -
but sharp as a tack
the old bugger.

Drive away.
Don't look back.

Jesus Christ!
Those wasted years.
Tell me about me, dad.
Tell me about you.
Was I?
Did I?
I couldn't have.
Really?

Tony?
I wrote you.
Don't be sad.
He didn't suffer.
(Thank god you didn't know)

Yes dad, I should have seen
him more. It's the distance...
Always the bloody distance.

Goodbye dad,
I'll see you soon?

Drive away.
Don't look back.

jerry hughes

GREY DAY

The leaves on the trees are rheumatoid
with cold. They wave feebly, beckoning
the sun to bring back summer - but
the sun went to Europe for the world cup,
and won't be back 'til Spring.

jerry hughes

GYM JUNKIE

Some get a kick from cocaine.
I'm sure that if, I took even one sniff,
it would bore me terrifically too.
But I get a high pumping iron.

jerry hughes

HAARLEM HERO

The Dutch folk narrative tells of Hans Brinkers, an 8 year old boy, observing water escaping from a dike wall, bravely put his finger in to stop the hole from widening.

Preventing disaster to his town and community, he was indeed a brave little boy. Much braver than I, for there are some dykes I wouldn't put a finger into, even wearing a welders glove.

jerry hughes

HAND IN HAND

Look how they walk apart,
each to their lonely end.
Not hand in hand as lovers do.

So, my darling
before distance widens
beyond reach and sight
look this way;
Give me your hand.

And the last to see us will say.
We saw them kiss,
then walk beautifully naked
into a sea of bright blue water.
Leaving their bodies like
old clothes upon the shore.

jerry hughes

HARDWAY HARRY

His intellectuality drowned by consuming gallons of booze over several decades. Yet he retained, by some miracle, an impeccable memory which doubtless contributed to his eventual demise.

I write of Harry, who left university where he was studying law, to join the RAAF, and fly several missions over Europe as a navigator, in those flimsy flying coffins. T'was then, in his smart uniform with the gold braid that Harry lost the plot, to never fully recover.

A once bright mind that could recite, verbatim, entire passages from Shakespeare's plays, deteriorated to that of a lowly legal clerk, when he should have been a barrister. Here's the rub, because he remembered much too much about some very forgettable people, Harry vanished - as though he'd never been.

But 'those in the know' proclaim, Harry was destined to be part of the concrete floor of a multi-storey building, and not even a plaque to remember him by.

jerry hughes

HEAVEN?

I don't believe in heaven, or hell.
What I do believe is this.
At the moment of my death
I will know two things.

If I am missed and loved,
that is all the heaven I need.
If nobody gives a damn,
that will be my hell.

jerry hughes

HE'S GOT TO BE A TERRORIST

'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself'
Franklin Delano Roosevelt: 1933

They're running around like
headless chooks, blaming him,
them, or anyone who doesn't
fit the norm.

'He's got to be a terrorist! '
The clean shaven, gold braided,
white shirted policeman said
he was. So he must be.

Can't argue with that,
particularly if you're turbaned,
and have a flowing beard.
'He's got to be a terrorist! '

'He's a Muslim man of God, '
is spoken in defense.
To this insane reply, 'Not ours.'
'So he's got to be a terrorist! '

Encouraged by this madness,
skinheads don black shirts, give
the nazi salute and scream....

'He's got to be a terrorist, let's
kill the bastard! '

jerry hughes

HINDSIGHT - for Tony

'How sharp the point of this remembrance is'
(Shakespeare: The Tempest)

Jesus, why didn't you say something?
You could have written, telephoned?

Sent a message, I would have come.
We could have talked it through.

I always thought you were a rock -
but I didn't know about the cracks.

Distance does that, it makes the
visible, invisible.

Still have our taped conversations.
But I haven't played them - since.

Can't say I'll meet you on the other
side - neither of us believed in that.

Meantime I'll locate your plaque -
and read you some of my poems.

jerry hughes

HISTORY LESSONS?

History hasn't taught us a thing.
The killings go on, as ethnic hatreds
harboured over centuries suddenly,
and inexplicably flashpoint.

Thousands die as we look on in disbelief.
The old can't explain this horror, mercifully
the very young won't remember.

jerry hughes

HOLOCAUST A D

The convulsed night
holds forth a star.
Immeasurably the star
expands, explodes,
and from the abyss
spears a porcine squeal;

'Father, have mercy.
Understand.
Kiss me.
Preserve me.
Father, forgive me! '

The hapless puppet Judas,
like a cast aside doll
hangs from a branch;
As a murdered tree
is resurrected briefly
into a living ornament of wood.

jerry hughes

HOT SUMMER NIGHT

a stifling hot night the bed
felt uncomfortable yet you
lay there with a sheet covering
your nakedness undulating with
your breath as a sail does in a
gentle breeze you might have
been asleep that is until I saw
your hand move to where your
garden blooms and the smile
on your face said you weren't

jerry hughes

HOW SAD

Unrewarded persistence brings naught
but frustration, and a diminution of talent.
Take a bow, the customary curtain call
and exit - head held high...

Afterthought: Funny, I can't think of one?

jerry hughes

HOWLERS

From the abyss of my being begins a howling.
And those who do not understand, but stand by
listening, cannot know why such howling did begin.
Now we give fellow howlers more pain, that they,
and we, and you and I, can howl collectively.

jerry hughes

HUGE LOSS

Mal Morgan, in memorium

I read your poems and weep.
Not so much for you, but the
fact you'll never write again.
And there is sadness, boy'o.

Your words thundered at the
injustices you felt so deeply.
Caressed, as would a lover,
the things that brought you joy.

Thank you for your journey,
and those of us who follow
have giant steps to fill.

jerry hughes

HUSK *

Today I saw my old mate, John.
At a place you enter through a
door that only opens inward -
shutting out the world outside.

Inside I found my old mate, John.
Or should I say his outward husk,
slumped in a chair, unaware of
time, of day, or month or year.

I attempted to communicate but
I fear he didn't comprehend, yet
through his eyes he recited those
poignant T. S. Eliot lines:

'This is how the world ends:
Not with a bang, but a whimper.'

*John was in an advanced stage of
Parkinson's, and died shortly after.

jerry hughes

I AM A CAMERA

Behold the sadness of old age.
Wheeled in by young, strong men,
these fragile responsibilities
gratefully acknowledge their total
dependency with smiles, and nods.

'See you later, Nell? '
Smile, nod.
'Take care, Mary.'
Smile, nod.
One can almost hear them say as one.
'These ceilings look familiar.'

jerry hughes

I C U intensive care unit

I remember it well.
Well, sort of.
Surrounded by doctors
and nurses,
with anxious faces.
It's called the I C U.
This is where you live,
or die.
I preferred to live.

jerry hughes

I DON'T NEED

I don't need to climb a mountain
just because it's there.
I don't need to forge a fucking
stream just to prove I can.
I don't want to work my arse
off 'til I'm sixty - but I will.
And I didn't need to write this
stupid bloody poem - but I did.

jerry hughes

IMAGES

In a quiet dream
I saw you walk toward,
then pass yourself.

There was no shadow
of your journey, but I
knew where you'd been

jerry hughes

IN MEMORIAM (Port Arthur: April 28,1997)

'there is no grief which time does not lessen or soften'
(Cicero: Epistolae 1V.v.)

It is raw this memorium day.
Nerve ends scream quietly,
where a year ago a sick child's
mind made mayhem.

That child is in a different
playpen now, deprived of toys.
Cared for by severe nannies
he simply gathers space.

It is raw this memorium day,
consoling words are said.
And with the setting of the sun,
nannies put the child to bed.

On April 28,1996, Martin Bryant, a psychologically disturbed young man shot and killed 35 people, seriously wounding another 37, at the Port Arthur Prison Colony in Tasmania. He is the 'sick child' referred to in this poem.

jerry hughes

IN THE BEGINNING

An apple fell from the tree.
Eve bent over to pick it up.
And God said:
'Adam, put on your trousers.'

jerry hughes

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

In the name of the Father,
Crusaders sallied forth
raping and murdering.

In the name of the Father,
the Vatican turned its back
on the Holocaust.

In the name of the Father,
we assassinated Gandhi,
and Martin Luther King.

In the name of the Father,
the Irish killed one another,
and the British urged them on.

In the name of the Father,
paedophiles lurk behind
dog collars and cassocks.

In the name of the Father,
children are sold or enslaved.

In the name of the Father,
this is a father I can do without.

jerry hughes

INALIENABLE RIGHT

I watched a friend kill himself,
and I didn't try to stop him.
It was his inalienable right.
Fuck the hypocritical right to lifers,
this was one-hell-of-a brave man.
Riddled with cancer and writhing
in pain, his final words were:
'Mate, make sure I do it right.'

jerry hughes

INAUSPICIOUS

Although 2005 ended inauspiciously -
we released helium filled balloons with
messages of good cheer to appease
the ether gods.

All a bit passe really.
The powerful and wealthy nations
oppressed the weak and vulnerable.
And the poor descended the poverty
ladder in ever greater numbers.

We legitimate invading sovereign states
on manufactured lies, rob them of their
resources, and instil a deomocracy that's
totally foreign to them.

What's on the horizon for 2006?
Regrettably, more of the same?

jerry hughes

INCONGRUITY

In Canada, they club Harp seal pups
to death. So that (ladies?) can swan
about in coats made of seal pup fur.

In Australia we kill brumbies our wild
ponies, kangaroos our national symbol,
and camels brought here by Afghans to
develop this nation.

The Japanese kill whales, for research
they say. Does anyone know how many
whaleburgers one whale produces?

In Spain they kill bulls in the guise of sport.
Torturing the poor damned animal before
it's ghastly release.

In Mexico they attach metal spurs to cocks,
and watch them rip each another apart.

In our 'civilised world' we permit battery farms
in which the hen has minimum space to lay.
Before it's turned into Kentucky fried.

Therefore the logical question must be put:
'Why aren't we allowed to execute politicians? '

jerry hughes

IT IS WRIT

I write this because
you are on my mind
immensely.
There is none like you
I have loved before.

I write this for
those evergreen times
when you entered the
unknown of me and, seeing
yourself loved, strutted like
a favourite to applause.

I write this for
the years that pass slowly.
For the time to come when
the days quicken, and the
biological clock runs down.

jerry hughes

JACEMO*

His name was Jacemo,
later anglicised to, Jack.
A nondescript little man,
distinguishable only by
the tattooed numbers on
his forearm.

He came with nothing,
and left with even less.
Save a scribbled note
in Yiddish that read.

'Please, will some kind person
say Kaddish for me? '

*Jacemo is pronounced, Yakamo.
And thank you, Michael.

jerry hughes

JACK KEROUAC

On the road Jack.
Hit the road Jack.

Follow his footsteps.
Walt Whitman.
He wrote songs for himself.

You wrote for a generation
who followed a drummer
with a different beat.

Critics didn't like your work.
But, like you said Jack,
critics tend to beat their meat.

Guilt

Sat you on Desolation Peak
not for 40 days and nights,
but 63.

You tried to zen it away
but it didn't happen.

So you drank
until you couldn't remember.

Fame and booze
spun you away - Jack.

But the road goes on.

jerry hughes

JOHN HOWARD and his TUPPERWARE WIFE

They represent us, and Australia overseas,
the misshapen dwarf John Howard, and his
awful tupperware wife.
He with the charisma of a cane toad,
she with the warmth of a deep freeze.
Between them, they symbolize mediocrity
at its very worst. Surely we don't deserve that?

jerry hughes

JUXTAPOSED

I am.
You are.
But this twain
can be juxtaposed
when we meet,
not as strangers
but souls, expiated.

For I am of you
as you are of me.
and my needs
are no less than yours.

Hence, no clause
or injunction
can alter that
which binds us.

jerry hughes

KARADZIC and MLADIC *

Psychopathic murders,
you shouldn't be tried.
Nothing you say in your
defence can justify.

Instead, you should be
put in cages side by side
for all the world to see.
There left to rot and die,
in excremental misery.

Karadzic and Mladic,
you can't be tried for
crimes beyond belief.
What you did, you did
with genocidal pride.

* Bosnian Serb war criminals charged
with 16 counts of genocide and crimes
against humanity in Bosnia-Herzegovina,
between April 1992 and July 1995.

jerry hughes

KERRY PACKER HAIKU

Seven billion dollars one day.
Shitpence the next.
See, there is a god.

jerry hughes

KIND OF BLUE

' a tribute to Miles Davis, the most influential jazz trumpeter of this, or any century'

A defining moment in jazz history.
Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bill Evans,
'Cannonball' Adderley, Wynton Kelly,
James Cobb and Wynton Kelly.

The Album: Kind Of Blue

The titles:

So What

Freddie Freeloader

Blue In Green

All Blues

Flamenco Sketches +
alternative take.

To hear is to travel to another place.
From the throb of the African drum to,
the sophistication of the blues with it's
roots in the pain and anger of slavery.

Kind Of Blue exemplifies it all. Listen.

jerry hughes

KINDNESS

Stranger, whence come you?
From yonder place.
Why come you here?
To find a friend.
You look familiar stranger.
Do I?
Yes, I've seen you before.
Where?
Here.
Then, I cannot be a stranger.
Sup with me tonight, friend?

jerry hughes

KIWI - for Simone

A flightless bird?
Nay...
Her words soar.

jerry hughes

LA CHAMBRE

This is where she moves and breathes
and has her being.
And thinks, and writes and reads,
and lives her secret inner life.
And this is where she sleeps,
where I now sit in staggered unbelief.

And this is where,
I wish it were not so
and yet I wish it were,
if I could be here then
to comfort her...

For this,
is where she sometimes weeps.

jerry hughes

LAND MINES

'short is the road that leads from fear to hate'
Giambattista Casti 1721 - 1804

In Aghanistan, Cambodia, Angola
Bosania and Mozambique, there are
in excess of 45 million land mines laid
to maim or kill.

The victims are usually civilians,
many of them children.
Over five million new mines are
laid around the world every year.
A mere 10,000 are cleared.

It cost \$3.00 to make a mine.
Over \$1000 to uproot one.
What kind of madness is this?
Death and mayhem for profit?

jerry hughes

LANDSCAPE

Without you.
the lushest terrain becomes
a desert.
No oomph. No Jesus look
at that!
More like Wille Nelson singing,
Nessun Dorma.

jerry hughes

LAURIE THE LION

I climbed into his cage
to read him poetry.
For Laurie is a lion
inclined to artistry.

He listened for a while
and didn't seem perturbed.
That is, until in one of them,
I used a naughty word.

Laurie snarled, his hackles rose,
about that word I'd read.
He came toward me fangs ablaze,
and then bit off my head.

Of course I died a gory mess,
in sad and sorry state.
And thus became in death that is,
the poet, Laurie-ate.

jerry hughes

LET IT BE

Anger isn't the answer.
Raging doesn't help.
But write it down, write
it out, then, let it be...

jerry hughes

LIKE A GARDEN GATE

William Count Basie, it's
the notes you didn't play
that made you swing, like
a garden gate in a storm.
Indeed, you made less more.

jerry hughes

LIKE OLD WINE

There's a certain satisfaction
in getting older.
The adrenaline rush of youth
abated, days don't hurry by.

I take all the time I need.
I have a surfeit of time.
Time is now my friend.
Not a companion of haste.

jerry hughes

LOVE

Love cannot be
departmentalized
or quantified.
It is..

jerry hughes

MACHINATIONS

To be or not to be?
That is the answer.
The question is -
Why did it happen?
Incommensurably
it should never have.

jerry hughes

MALAISE

It's a sick, sick world.
Depression, bipolar disorder.
Schizophrenia, self-loathing.
Multiple-personality syndrome.
Alcoholism, drug dependency.
Sexually transmitted disease.
Fear of nothing but fear itself.
If you survive all that you may
live to enjoy life's true reward;
LOVE.

jerry hughes

MEIN F - FOR HERBERT

I call him Mein F, because
he is my friend, and the F
stands for friend, not Fuhrer,
As has been misconstrued
by limp wristed fairies singing,
'god save the.....'

Mein F, is beyond the petty
bourgeois, and his English
is better by far than those who
claim it as their native tongue.

So Mein F, stick two fingers in the
air, and tell them to shove it up their -
BUM!

jerry hughes

MERCI

Some days later.

An early morning sun
filtering through leaves.

A distant magpie carolling
and joined by its mate.

The neighbourhood still
retains its loyal familiarity.

A Bach cantata on the radio.
Indeed, it's good to be alive...

jerry hughes

MERV

A mate from yesteryear -
funny as a fart in a pickle-bottle,
his wit dryer than a summer day
but he didn't know or care..

'Jez, who's this joker, Les Sylphides? '
A mervism at its best, like the time we
drank at a different pub he downed his
pot and dryly remarked, 'Jeez, this beer's
crook - I'll be glad when I've had enough.'

Unpretentious, dry, and seriously honest,
Merv, old mate, you were one of the best.

Addendum; Crook: not good or pretty bad
jerry hughes

METAPHOR

metaphore
metafive
metasix
metaseven
metaeight
metanine
metaten.
You're out!

jerry hughes

MILLIPEDE

With all those legs,
one would suspect
you'd travel at high speed?
But observing your ridiculous gait,
they just impede you, silly millipede.

jerry hughes

MINDS EYE

11/11 Armistice Day

I can't forget the misery and destruction.
Young men turning old before my eyes.
The shell-shocked babbling to themselves.
The exuberance of bravado, or cowardice
brought about by fear - in that graveyard of
the dying, and the dead.
To pay homage and give thanks, quietly say
these poignant words: 'Lest we forget'

jerry hughes

MIRROR MIRROR

'who's that pretty girl in the mirror there? '
from West Side Story.

Your beauty, somewhat tarnished now,
still outlines the joyous lass you were
those summers ago, when men stopped
in their tracks just to look at you.

Oh, how cruel time can be.
Now the only recognition you receive is,
'Mum, where's my footy socks? '
'Mum, isn't dinner ready yet? '

Now you're mum.
Once you were, darling.
Your sun set when he didn't take you,
not that way, anymore.
Now you lie beside him remembering
how your passion rose with his.
And your eyes ask, 'what happened? '

jerry hughes

MORNING GLORY

'Coffee, tea or me? '
she asked with a wry smile.
Arms folded accentuating her
cheeky breasts, hips twitching
to the rhythm of her pulse.

'Come over here, ' he asked.
'No, time to get up, ' she said.
'In a minute, ' he pleaded.
'Please, come over here? '

And she did...

jerry hughes

MORNING POEM

To tell you that I love you
is but a half truth.
To gauge the depth and width
of my love is unfathomable.
But this I know, without you
I am a shell, waiting for a
hermit crab to climb inside.

jerry hughes

MORTAL

I look into your eyes
and see magic.
I touch your hand and
feel the vibrations of
centuries; Reminding
me that we are mortal,
and the span we are
permitted in finite.

jerry hughes

MOUNTAIN PONIES

'Line 'em up! ' the starter barked.
'We haven't got all day.'
As twenty of the Snowy's best
are gathered for the fray.

The starter fires his pistol high
and suddenly, they're off.
As forty pairs of frenzied hooves
go thundering down the rough.

They're bunched up tight before
the pass and leading from the sway,
the winner of last years event,
Bob Wilson on his Bay.
A stranger on a dappled mare
rides easy in the pack.
He's waiting for the moment
to let the mare attack.

They're stretched out now before the climb
through stringy bark and brush,
and Wilson, on his mighty Bay
rides fiercely from the push.
They forge the creek at Yabby Traps
with saddles now awash.
They're keen of eye and sure of foot
these ponies from the bush.

The stranger on his dappled mare
keeps up a steady pace.
They bridge the gap to Wilson's Bay
before the mountain face.
He coaxes her with 'go on girl'
and lets the reins go slack.
With every stride she catches up
until they clear the pack.

The steep descent down Blind Man's gorge
is threacherous that day.
The ground is hard, as hard as flint
and doesn't suit the Bay.
Then Wilson sees the stranger pass
upon his bonny mare.
Gliding down the mountain slope
as though the ground weren't there.

He spurs the Bay for extra pace.
he spurs him once again.
The big horse baulks, then trips and falls
whinnying in pain.
The stranger and his dappled mare
are clearly out of sight,

as Wilson mounts his injured Bay,
who's given up the fight.

The legend goes the stranger won,
but didn't claim the purse.
He road for sport to prove to all,
he had the better horse.

jerry hughes

MRS F

Old Mrs Fancourt, gone to God,
smelt of lavender and wees.
I'm sure she wore those bloomers
that came down to her knees.

Her teeth were false,
her hair was permed,
her lips were flaming red.
Despite her faulty bladder though,
she never wet her bed.

jerry hughes

MUCH LOVED

I know you well much loved.
Through the peaks and valleys
of your exquisite body.
The shadow hint under your arms,
the lettuce-crisp between your thighs.

Blindfolded,
I could kiss a thousand mouths
and still know yours,
by texture and taste.

You are absolute.

jerry hughes

MY FATHER'S VOICE

Last night, in a fretful dream,
I heard my father say -
'It's never as bad as it seems;
Don't succumb, fight on...
You showed great courage as a boy.
Now show the courage of a man.'

jerry hughes

NAUGHTY BOY

I knew a kid who grew up
believing his name was -
'naughty boy.'

Thirty five years later he
came home - shot his wife
and three children -
then himself...

jerry hughes

NAUGHTY NURSERY RHYMES

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
hiding his face all day.
Jack, you see, was sexually abused,
so he wouldn't go out to play.

Hickory dickory dock,
the mouse ran up the clock.
And got tangled in the pendulum
which neatly severed his cock.

Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet
sobbing her heart away.
She was in love with the piper's son,
who was outrageously gay.

The Owl and The Pussy-cat went to sea
in a beautiful pea-green boat.
A storm blew up and tipped them out,
and a crocodile ate them both.

Tom, Tom, the piper's son
had a wildly gay affair.
Now due to chemotherapy,
Tom is losing his hair.

Mary, Mary quite contrary
how does your garden grow?
'Mind your beeswax! ' Mary said.
'Why do you need to know? '

Simple Simon, met a pie man
going to the fair.
Said Simple Simon, to the pie man;
'Show us your dick then? '

jerry hughes

NEVER THE TWAIN

We put up the barriers, you and I.
With some misguided notion that
one of us, was superior to the other.
Prejudice based of the colour of skin.
Wasn't it, brother?

At the end of the day does it really matter?
For when we shuffle off to seek a better place,
we'll face each other sans colour,
equal in the eyes of God.
Won't we, brother?

jerry hughes

NEWCASTLE SMELTERS

Yawning chimneys belch carcinogens from hell.
Heat melts the marrow in the bones of those
who stayed to tend these effigies of a revolution.
When the final pour is made, the furnaces cool,
and men draw their wages for the last time.
You'll hear the clapping of a single hand.

jerry hughes

NIL DESPERANDUM for Mahnaz

It was cold and wet
and there he was,
sitting on a park bench
sorting his worldly possessions
into a plastic bag.

A book of poetry.
A comb.
Darned socks.
A grubby shirt,
and seventy cents.

I said, 'G'day mate,
what's your name? '
He answered -
'Hope.'

jerry hughes

NO EXPLANATION

What we do, we do incalculably.
If we questioned every thought
and action we'd never make mistakes.
Nothing would surprise us...
Wouldn't that be a kick in the head?

jerry hughes

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE

My hands are dirty
so I'll wash them
500 times today -
1000 tomorrow.
The day after that -
I'll lose count.

jerry hughes

OF CHILD

Look into the eyes of a child and see,
beauty born of purity.
No evil there to mar the light,
or darkening to dull the bright.

Look into the soul of a child and see,
the way that all mankind should be.
Sweet, and lovely phase of child, you'll age.
O, shame. O, pity.

jerry hughes

OF LOSS

The ocean of pain is overwhelming.
It's depth unfathomable. Yet.
That which is lost in the flesh stays in
the heart and mind kaleidoscopically.
For we are the keepers of memory...

jerry hughes

OF MY MOTHER (1905 - 1988)

Remembering her
through the mist and mystery
of my childhood,
I recall my mother.
Yet cannot see her
though my child's eye.

She stood tall, beautiful
and remote, like a movie star.
Real but not.
Bonded, but separate.

Now, with the reality
of her imminent death
I feel compassion,
but no pain.

I look for some remembrance,
a token of the bond.
The truth of her being
and find none.

jerry hughes

OF THE IRISH

O sad, yet happy people,
your innate sense of humour
is tested to the nth degree
by bloody British treachery.

So dance, Colleen, dance.
Sing, Paddy, sing.
Never let those bastards
quell your Irish soul.

jerry hughes

OLFACTORY

Some women have it in abundance.
Loosely called pheromones it's beyond
explanation. An excitement starting with
a look, a touch, but most of all a smell
that stirs the primeval need to procreate.
Ah, but there's the rub...

jerry hughes

ON THE DEATH OF MY BROTHER

Today I learned the truth.
The loneliness of your decision,
stiltedly and painfully revealed
twenty-eight years later,
by a son, who still grieves.

Those falling leaves of time now
decomposed, invade your space.
A silent sentinel?
I must find that place because,
we didn't say goodbye.

jerry hughes

OVER THE YEARS

Everyone is sleeping.
The trees are motionless.
The wind, a whisper.
Sleep hums like a current
through the bright steel night.

Hills fit into hills like lovers.
Their great straddling thighs clasping -
still greater darkness where they meet.

A star breaks and arcs across the night like God,
striking a match across a cathedral ceiling.

Therefore I wish -
my lips making your name.
It is so still... so still...
I am sure that you must hear me.

jerry hughes

PARROTS

'a tribute to the survivors'

Moulting old parrots
with palsied nodding heads,
survivors of World War One
lie quietly in their beds,
waiting for the call.

For them the last post
hasn't played.
Well might it soon, for
death is no stranger.
Behind the cataracts and
the fading sight...
They're seen it all.

jerry hughes

PAUPER'S GRAVE

Before the age of accolades
we tipped a hero, like a bag of
spuds, into an unmarked grave.

He never spoke about his deeds,
in truth, got angry when asked and
replied, 'You wouldn't fucking know.'
But I knew that his younger brother
died in that bloody war.

'Medals? Fuck the medals, he'd say.
They won't bring young Bill back.
Go find some other bastard to annoy.
The war is over, so am I.'

The last time I saw him he was stooped
and consumptive, coughing blood.
'It's the fucking gas, mate. It'll kill me.'
And it did.

But no one knew, cept the few -
who stood beside his pauper's grave.

jerry hughes

PREDESTINED

'for Allie-pie'

Many years ago
you walked into a dingy room
and entered my life.
And we made love -
The girl of you, the man of me.

It wasn't love at first sight,
although you took my breath away.
Sensing how unsure you were
I had to make you stay -
and stay you did, to my delight.

Our love affair was short and sweet,
and I couldn't forget you -
Not through all those years when
you went your way, and I went mine.

Thirty years on I claimed you -
and willingly you came.
Waiting had made it stronger;
So our predestined love,
must not be denied again.

jerry hughes

PROGRESS ON PEACE?

Little Palestinian girl, holding
her brother's hand, sobbing.
'Please, Mr Soldier, he didn't
throw the stone? '
Please, Mr Soldier, don't
arrest my brother?

Little Palestinian girl, six, or
seven or eight. Who knows?
But, Jesus Christ Almighty!
She's just a little girl pleading,
as she holds her brother's hand.

Little Palestinian girl, I feel your
pain, and rage against your fear.
I'd like to hold you close and say,
'It's alright, your brother will return.'
I'd lie to you, if I must -
just to see you smile.

jerry hughes

PROPHECY

'The best of seers is he who guesses well'
Eruipedes: Fragment

Like panicked wildebeest,
we are gathering momentum
toward annihilation.
Only the old will be saved this terrible fate,
for they have outlived their uselessness.

The nuclear button is pressed
and nothing can stop the journey.
It will end in cataclysmic glory
when the air stifles, rivers clog,
trees die, and children mutate
into brainless beings.

See. The cloud on the horizon grows
with the thundering of a billion hooves.
It's getting closer -
No. There's nowhere left to run.
It has begun.
And you, ignored the warnings.

jerry hughes

PSEUDONYMS

If you don't have the confidence
to write under your name, don't
mislead unsuspecting readers.
Your given name, 'also known as, '
then we'll all know who you are.

jerry hughes

QUESTIONS

Who am I?
Where did I come from?
Where am I going?
Age-old questions we've asked
ourselves over the centuries.
Let me answer mine.

Who am I?
A child of the great depression.

Where did I come from?
The union of a man and a woman.

Where am I going?
I'll let you know when I get there.

jerry hughes

RAIN

'Isn't it a lovely day to be caught in the rain? '

It was blowing a gale and
pouring, the day we met.
More rightly, bumped into
one another.

The first thing I noticed
when she tilted her head
to say 'sorry, ' were her eyes.
Deep set and astonishing.

'My fault, ' I began to say,
as we ran hand in hand
for cover - and a future
neither of us expected.

jerry hughes

RATIONALISING

I once complained because I had no shoes.
Until I saw a man who had no feet...

jerry hughes

RECENT EXECUTION

The circus is over.
The clowns removed their costumes
as he plummeted into a net-less abyss.
Re-varnish the beam, untie the knot,
roll up the rope, and wait for the next
young man to start the circus, again.

jerry hughes

REVELATION

As her final flimsy garment fell,
all the bells of heaven rang as one.
Condensing time to a word. Love.

.

jerry hughes

ROAD RAGE

It starts with turning the ignition key.
Cough, splutter, splutter, cough.
Shit, the bloody carby's flooded.
Give it a few moments, now turn
the key. Cough, splutter, cough
splutter and suddenly, varroom!

Accelerator flat to the floor -
the engine screams in
protestation, as blue smoke
emits from the exhaust.
'That'll teach you, you bastard.'

In first gear up the driveway, stop
to shut the gate. Motor stalls...
Grim faced, turn the key...
Splutter, cough, splutter splutter.
'You rotten mother, start, fuck you! '

Friendly neighbour walking dog
pauses to ask the obvious...
'Having trouble with the car, mate? '
Enough, already - I don't need this.
Unsmilingly answers, 'Get fucked.'

Inspired by, Sherrie Gonzales-Kolbs
poem A Common Jam

jerry hughes

ROADS END

Confusion, delusion,
incontinence....
What a shit of a poem.

jerry hughes

RWANDA 1994

A latter day-day holocaust?
Between April and May 1994,
600,000 Tutsis were massacred
by the Hutu militia at an average
of 10,000 each day.

What did the so-called civilised
countries do about this travesty?
NOTHING

jerry hughes

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Who am I today?
Who was I yesterday?
Who will I be tomorrow?

jerry hughes

SEASONS

WINTER

Thunder, lightning, hail and rain.
The wind howls, flapping my overcoat
around my knees, as I walk sideways
sything through this harshest season.

SPRING

With the birth of a single flower
others envious follow suit, until
the earth bursts into a symphony of colour.
Evergreens join in too. Why should they
miss out on Spring?

SUMMER

Begins with beaches and barbecues.
Girls in bikinis brown as berries,
and just as succulent.
Lads growing beer-guts sucking tinnies.
And no matter where you go, mosquitoes.

AUTUMN

Colours change from green to gold,
then rustic brown with reddish hues.
It's time to hibernate as sap falls,
waiting impatiently to regenerate.

jerry hughes

SHADOWS

They walk in isolation
as a crowd mills around
scurrying to its destination.

Who are they these shadows?
Where are they going?
Nobody asks. Nobody cares.

He, walks lamely.
She, with an easy elegance
of a childhood discipline.

He mumbles an incoherent mantra
to the rhythm of the traffic.
She hears him and asks.
'Would you like some wine? '

He stares at the bottle.
'Give it to me, or I'll kill you! '
She falters.

He plunges a knife into her chest.
'Oh, Jesus, ' she cries,
slipping to the footpath.

He sits her on the bus stop seat
smoothing her dress, and putting
on a shoe that had fallen off.

A crowd scurries to its destination
as a single shadow stands -
silently sobbing.

jerry hughes

SHAYNA MAIDELEH - Yiddish for beautiful girl

I remember you.
The hunger of your mouth
biting kisses from my lips.
Your nipples hard as acorns
on my chest.
The parting of your thighs,
and that moment when
you cast aside the girl,
to be my woman.

jerry hughes

SMILE (1918)

After the thunder, silence.
In disbelief we wondered,
is this really peace?

It came too late this truce,
signed by the blood of those
who died in their thousands.

So huddled in our trenches we
wept, as a distant voice began
to sing a now familiar song:

'Pack up your troubles in your old
kit bag and smile, smile smile.'

jerry hughes

SO MOTE IT BE

'Adieu Kevin Smith'

Another old friend dead.
So the bell-toll of mortality
peals louder as we gather
to celebrate his life, in death.

jerry hughes

SOJOURN

I was there.
Believe me,
there's nothing
No daddy-o, laddy-o,
or spook.
No vestal virgins,
haloes or harps.
Furthermore, I don't
recommend the trip.

jerry hughes

SOME DITHYRAMBS

TOAD

Poor toad.
You carry such a
load of ugliness.
A gash for a mouth.
Big, bulging eyes.
A fat, round body.
It doesn't surprise
when people wince.
But in your dreams
poor toad, you'll
always be a prince.

FERRET

A ferret up my trousers.
A ferret in my jocks.
Quick!
Help me get the bugger out,
before I'm Goldilocks.

MILLEPEDE

With all those legs,
one would suspect
you'd travel at high speed.
But observing your ridiculous gait,
they just impede you, silly millipede.

EMETT

Scurrying across the ground
chameleon-like, blending into
patterns, vanishing in a second
to re-emerge the next.

What messages do you carry?
What secrets do you bring?
Your purpose astounds,
minuscule earth-bound thing.

For eons you've survived
with strength beyond reproach.
In common with your hardy friend,
the cunning cock-er-roach.

DRAGON FLY

A dragon fly hovering
above a mantis praying said,
'Greetings, O holy one,

I've come to seek advice.'
'That's nice.' the mantis replied.
'Come closer, my eyes are rather weak.'

As the dragon fly did, with blinding speed
the mantis' forelegs flew.
The dragon fly entrapped, unhappily died.
The moral of this story being -
It's better to be heard, than seen.

jerry hughes

SOMETHING ROTTEN

Shakespeare: Hamlet, Act i, sc 2,1.184

What a piece of work is man - how noble in reason - how infinite in faculty - in form and moving how express and admirable - in action how like an angel - in apprehension how like a god - the beauty of the world - the paragon of animals...

And then there's George Bush, Tony Blair and John Howard?

jerry hughes

SPIRITUAL QUEUE JUMPING

It starts with passing a joint.
Harmless? Well?
A bit bolder?
A touch of acid?
Fuck me - look at the pretty pictures!
Want more?
Why Not?
How about a little jab of horse?
No, it's too addictive.
Who told you that? G'arn try it.
Okay. Just his once.
Just this once.
Just this once.
Just this once.
Just this once.

My thanks to Keppel Cassidy for the title

jerry hughes

SUDDEN SILENCE

Suddenly there'll be silence.
Inexplicable and eerie.
As if Armageddon is
but a hair's breath away.

It'll happen when....

The creativity of centuries is
washed away by a tsunami
of mediocrity, and replaced
by Muck Everything on a
sesame seed bun.

jerry hughes

SUICIDE

Which side is suicide?
Left side, right side or,
right down the middle?
No one ever came back
to tell us. The bastards!

jerry hughes

SUN WOMAN

She stood on a city corner
in summer's first noon,
blind-eyed to the sun,
arms across her chest,
eyelids closed.

Her hair was cropped
and grey and straight.
Yet her face was beautiful
and still, and noble.

As she stood
drinking in the sun;
In this place of people
rushing to appointments.
She didn't realise she'd
saved the world -
by giving old sol
someone to shine upon.

jerry hughes

SUNSET TRAVELLER

Called many things, sun,
sol, sonne, soleil, ra.
It warms the cockles of
my heart, and burns my
sea-spray skin.
A bright light the day I was
born it'll empathise when I
become, a sunset traveller.

jerry hughes

SUPPLICATION

Let my words be meaningful.
Make them resonate to touch
the hearts of the untouchable,
and worthy of the seventy-five
years of my traverse.

jerry hughes

SYD and JACK

'Just call me Syd.' he use t'say,
a trifle stooped and chesty.
The old bloke loved a beer or two,
though it sometimes made him testy.

He'd roustabout from place to place
but always earned his keep.
'Turn me hand to anythin',
from milkin' to shearin' sheep.

Syd's drinkin' mate was Jack O'Toole
with whom he shared a shack.
Jack use t'work on the railways,
until he done his back.

Afta thrity years they flicked him
and docked his wages too.
T'was then old Jack got on the grog,
he had nothin' else to do.

Their humpy was a lean-to
made from scrounged old things.
Its roof and walls a hotch-potch
of flattened kero tins.

The fireplace was a bit of a joke,
but it kept the old blokes warm -
When the wind and rain howled through the cracks,
at the slightest hint of a storm.

Jack came to town one Sat'dy night
without old Syd in tow.
He went to the pub where they always drank,
and ordered a pot. Then two.

'Where's ya mate? ' the barman asked.
'He hasn't been in for a while, '
'Gorn' says Jack, sippin' his beer
and hidin' his grief with a smile.

'D'ya mean he's left Barooga,
afta all this time in one spot? '
'Nah, gorn to gord, ' old Jack replied,
sinkin' the second pot.

'Let's fill 'em up and drink to Syd.'
the barman quick replied.
'Yeah, let's do that, ' old Jack agreed,
wipin' a tear from his eyes.

jerry hughes

SYDNEY - 1962

A basement nightclub of sorts.
Dirty wallpaper curling and flaking off walls.
Musty glasses on chequered tableclothes.
Cigarette butts in overflowing ashtrays.
Spilled beer sopped up by crumpled paper napkins.
Loud canned music.
A drunk with his hand up a girls dress.
Molls and poofers watch, like spiders.

A rancid smell from the kitchen.
Stale urine stench from the toilets.

The music gets louder, egging the dancers on
to exaggerated gestures of simulated sex.
A braless blond, obviously pissed, gyrates on
her own and falls over. Nobody picks her up.

The music stops.
Tables fill with sweating bodies.
A gawky lad stares at his heart's desire.
'Geez, I'd like to stick one up her, '
he says, loudly to his mates. They giggle.
She looks at him coldly and lowers her riding miniskirt.

Lesbians kiss in a darkened corner.
A yobbo says to his mates, 'Cop the lessos, will'ya? '
'What they need is my big dick up em.'
One of them retorts, 'Yeah, if you fuckin-ad one.'
They all giggle.

The cops walk in.
Silence.
They arrest the blond with the braless tits.
She vomits on them as they carry her out.
Everybody cheers.

2am, closing time.
Girls walk in procession to the evil smelling toilets,
passing the lesbians still at it.
One says, 'Shirl, how do they do it? '
Another replies, 'With dildos, stupid.'

The gawky lad is still intent on his heart's desire.
She responds to his dopey gaze with a raised finger,
and a loud, 'Fuck off! ' He visibly wilts.

I pay for my coffee and leave.

jerry hughes

TERROR-TORY

In the west we start each day,
having spent the night in
a comfortable bed.

In the east they start every day,
having spent the night on a dirt floor.
Hungry.

This can't, and must not go on...

jerry hughes

TESTOSTERONE

Confucious say:
'Man without raging erection racks. '

Carl Gustav Jung say:
'Man without raging erection lacks.'

Air-head Yobbo say:
'Huh? '

jerry hughes

THE BIG C

Time to say goodbye.
Silence. Awful silence.
Then.
A last embrace.

Emotions to the fore.
Tears mixed with anger.
The inevitable question.

Why?

Rationalising doesn't help.
We all have to go sometime.
I know that, damn it....

Medication for pain every
four hours.
A clock ticking her life away.

She wouldn't have the operation.
'I'm 83, and I've had a good life.'
It should have been better?
Too late for recrimination.

In the early distance a cock
crowed thrice. Too soon cock,
too soon. A month to the day,
my mother died.

jerry hughes

THE BLUE HORIZON

Yesterday didn't happen.
Tomorrow is a possibility.
Our future is in the hands
of morons so armageddon

jerry hughes

THE DREAM

She rode the stallion bareback,
pressed against his spine.
They galloped free together.
It simply blew her mind.

He was the stallion of her dreams -
sleek, and strong and tall.
Of all the things she ever loved,
she loved him best of all.

She died from a massive overdose.
It was just a matter of course.
And on the floor beside her was
a drawing of a horse.

This fragment from her childhood
when innocence was sweet.
The thing she loved the most of all,
lay crumpled at her feet.

jerry hughes

THE HORROR

Her naked body peeling as she ran;
Mouth wide open, screaming in fear and pain.
This image of a Vietnamese girl-child,
an innocent victim of a napalm attack,
made the front page of newspapers around the world.
Still the war went on...
Children died. Mothers grieved.
Incongruously, the photographer won an award...

jerry hughes

THE HUNGER

The acceleration is incredible.
The body tenses like a spring.
The hunger is uncontrollable.
The the mind, if not the voice
says, 'fuck me! '

jerry hughes

THE LAST WALTZ

Don't play the last waltz for me.
I've got two left feet that don't
coordinate.
Apart from that I get vertigo.
So please, don't play the last
waltz for me?

jerry hughes

THE LONG DROUGHT

Clouds gathered darkening the sky.
A distant rumble told of rain, and
the parched earth prayed -
'Please. let it pour.'

The first drops made little rivulets
and the trees sighed, 'ah, bliss.'
The rumble grew louder, followed
by a mighty clap of thunder.

Down it came, the blessed rain.
Unevenly at first, then harder.
The scorched earth drank it up
in thirsty gulps, and the trees
were cleansed of gathered dust.

Just as suddenly it stopped.
'Don't go rain.' the earth implored.
'You've barely wet our surface.'
But the rain had gone -
and the trees wept rusty tears.

jerry hughes

THE MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS

As a fanatical football follower
many years ago, I well recall
an incident during a grand final
when, at half time, as the urinals
overflowed not only with people,
I followed my queue, cross-legged
in anticipation of a bursting bladder
to find, within this portal of equally
anxious bladders a figure, prone,
drunk and saturated, feebly saying,
'give us a hand, mate.'

Of course, nobody did, and in this
scurry for relief I saw him pissed on.
Imagine though, if you would, sitting
next to this most unfortunate chap on
a bus or a train, on your way home.
Indeed it was the milk of human kindness.

jerry hughes

THE MIRE

I now live in an alien land.
My country has changed from
a caring and compassionate society
to one, whose people feed off each other
like piranhas in an ever shrinking pool.
Be warned, don't wade in...
If the piranhas don't get you -
the mire around them will.

jerry hughes

THE NEK August 7,1915

Inspired by Alan Attwood's article, 'Into a Dazzling Flame' on the Dardanelles campaign.

The third Australian Light Horse Brigade, horsemen without horses, attacked the ridge. Support from New Zealanders on a captured Chunuk Bar was not forthcoming.

The barrage finished early leaving them exposed. As the first wave charged, the Turkish gunners mowed them down. A second was slaughtered only minutes on.

An officer called a halt, but he was overruled. So a third wave was massacred, and in the confusion a fourth. Like moths into a dazzling flame they charged the Nek and died.

Addendum: Within minutes 800 Australian soldiers, mainly lads, lay dead or seriously wounded on an area no larger than two tennis courts.

jerry hughes

THE NIGHT MY FATHER DIED

Quietly his body sagged
and, like a distant star,
blipped out.

There was no organ peal
nor host of seraphim, to
mark his passing.

The closing of a screen
with little reverence was,
the final act.

Thus ended a life tinged
with sadness and regret yet,
glorious in defeat.

Though many years have passed
I vividly recall;
The night my father died

jerry hughes

THE NUMBERS GAME

'to the memory of our lads who died in Vietnam'

They spun the barrel
but you didn't win.
Your number came up,
and within weeks, they'd
turned you into a killing machine.
But they didn't teach you
how to die.

With uniform pressed,
buckles gleaming,
spit and polished,
you followed the Judas officer
up the gangplank, into the hell
of Vietnam.

On your very first patrol,
you didn't see the sniper
camouflaged in leaves.
But his trained eyes saw you,
and taking aim, fired once.
The only sound you made,
a sigh -
echoed around the world.

jerry hughes

THE ONSET OF MADNESS

OVERINDULGED SANITY

jerry hughes

THE PUN

In a little village in Porto Rico, they lived
streets from one another, went to the same
school, played in the same park, saw their
bodies develop, if not their minds.

In America where the streets are lined with
gold, so they were told, she studied hard,
and earned a degree in law inforcement.

He took the easy road, joined a gang, carried
a gun, sold drugs to feed his habit. And so the
drama had begun.

In a dim, dark alley she cried, 'stop, or I'll shoot! '
He recognised her voice and smiled. He ran.
She fired. He fell. The last words she heard him
speak were: 'Don't cry for me, agent Tina'

jerry hughes

THE SOUND OF SANITY

'please observe how grammatically correct this poem is'

There's some that does
and some that don't -
and some that never try.
So say hello to the some
that does, to the some
that don't - goodbye.

jerry hughes

THE WINO IN THE PARK

Inspired by Dylan Thomas' poem
'The Hunchback in the Park'

I'd seen him on many occasions
throughout all seasons, sitting,
and sipping wine from a brown
paper wrapped bottle.

To me it seemed the same bottle,
unchanged in time and space.
And one would occasionally hear,
'Isn't he a damned disgrace? '

Apparently he didn't care what was
said. He'd courteously nod his head
and smile, as if to say, 'I hope you
have a better day than mine? '

One morning he wasn't there, so
I asked his park-keeper friend,
'Where's the wino? ' His answer
was succinct. 'He's dead.'

'How? ' I asked in genuine surprise.
His reply, a staccato, 'How? '
'Of sadness and disappointment.'
'Of love he never found, or gave.'

'That's how he died.' There wasn't
anything I could say. But now, when
walking through the park, I always
try to find a different way.

jerry hughes

THE WONDER OF IT

Suddenly, someone you didn't know
some weeks, months ago, becomes
integral, as if she always belonged
This is the joy of living and learning
Nothing stops, yet nothing is forever

For Tara with love, Jerry and Alison.

jerry hughes

THERE

In my minds-eye I conjure you
as would an enchanter, playing
to a crowd of one.

I will your nakedness to see
your curvatures ebb and flow.
To trace so lightly the shape
and size of you.

And there, within the shadow
of your hips, there, below the
down that entices the vee,
the explosion of your being.

jerry hughes

TICKETS PLEASE

Tickets please.
Sorry, what was that?
I said, tickets please.
Oh, yes, I had one.
Had one?
Bought it yesterday.
Did you get one today?
Did I have to?
Yes, you're only valid daily.
That's strange, I didn't feel
at all valid yesterday.
Doesn't matter...
Tickets please.

jerry hughes

TOMORROW

I stood in summer rain, watching
the pain of my city wash away.
The town hall clock that stopped
the day the soldiers came, groaned
back to life chiming the wrong hour,
but we didn't care.

Flowers bloomed on cue, nodding
their heads in approval to the breeze.
Children played in once deserted streets,
their laughter tinkling like crystal.
Dogs barked, cats meowed. birds sang.

An old lady lifted the hem of her dress
and waltzed to the Strauss in her head.
Today, we won't count our dead.
That we will do tomorrow -
in the awful shock of Peace.

jerry hughes

TRAUMA

'recollection of a dsylexic childhood'

He wrote it on the blackboard,
spun around, pointed at me saying,
'Stand up, what's that word? '
'I don't know, Sir, ' I replied.
'What? ' he snarled. 'Are you stupid? '
'I suppose I am, Sir, ' I said sitting down.
'Don't sit till I say you can.
Stand up and leave the class, '
I did, to giggling and snickering ringing
in my ears. Sixty years on I occasionally
hear that pain, but I've learnt how to block it out.

A PROUD SURVIVOR

I am a dyslexic confident survivor,
Battled the taunts to emerge braver.
School was a nightmare best forgotten,
Tables 'n' writing made my brain molten.

Tears in my eyes I remember very clearly,
When asked in class to read a poem loudly.
No report card had more zeros than mine,
My handwriting? A crow walked on the line!

The written symbol and the spoken word,
Foxed and cornered, I revolted out loud.
Now I write poems without much trouble,
With rhythm flow words without a fumble.

No fear or angst just high self-esteem,
Vivacious tranquility colours my dream.

Nalini Hebbbar
(21st August,2006)

jerry hughes

UNDER MILK WOOD

A Play For Voices
by Dylan Thomas

First Voice (very softly)

To begin at the beginning:
It is spring, moonless night in the small town,
starless and bible-black, the cobblestones
silent and hunched, courters'-and-rabbits'
wood limping invisible down to the sloeblack,
slow, black, crowblack fishingboat-bobbing
sea.

The houses are blind as moles (though moles
see fine at night in the snouting, velvet dingles)
or blind as Captain Cat there in the muffled middle
by the pump and the town clock, the shops in mourning,
the Welfare Hall in widows' weeds.
And all the people of the lulled and dumbfound town
are sleeping now...

jerry hughes

UNFORGIVING

To err is human, to forgive divine,
so it is said.
Tentatively I put out a feeler for
reconciliation, to receive a cold
rejection - second hand.
I tried daughter, but I'll try no more.
Spit on my ashes, if you can justify
the act. I won't be smoldering then.

jerry hughes

UNHAP - PENIS

Aye Jock, ya hard as a rock th'noo.
But will ya, after a wee drink or two?
Aye Jock, it's a terrible disgrace when
brewers droop takes pride of place.

jerry hughes

UNSUNG HEROES

'The battle of the Somme'

What sunrise set before those young men fell?
Facing insurmountable odds, they squelched
through mud to fight a pointless bloody war -
because 'the enemy' was there.

The Generals safe in tents gave orders,
and returned to coffee and cigars.
They weren't concerned. They were
following orders too from higher up,
where in cosy carpeted rooms, old men
in morning suits sent despatches, tapped
their pipes and refilled them.

The King in his castle secure and whisky
warm, telephoned his Minister for war.
'How goes it at the Somme?' The answer
was succinct and like the colour grey.
'As well as can be expected, Sir.'
'Our casualties?' the King enquired.
'Considerable, Sir.'
'Oh' was all the King could say.

Meanwhile at the Somme,
their bodies soaked in mud, and blood
and rain, 420,000 unsung heroes, died.

jerry hughes

VALE: RONALD RYAN (February 1976)

The barbarism of the procedure,
worse than any Greek tragedy.
No, this wasn't theatre -
this was murder.

We hanged a man to satisfy
a drunken premier's whim.
Therefore the sin of omission
rests with him -
not the man who pulled the lever.

Ronald Ryan was the last person hanged in
Victoria, under a Tory government. After his
execution hanging was abolished in Australia.

jerry hughes

VINCE JONES

Last night I heard him sing -
thirty years since the last time.
His hair is now white, but his
voice is like good wine nurtured
by a connoisseur in the vault of
his heart - for safe keeping.

His celtic love of love shines
through his music and his lyrics.
He didn't sell his soul to America,
but stayed here, in Australia, to
sing his song of hope.

jerry hughes

VOYEUR?

I saw an old chap
standing under a stairwell,
gazing up at mini-skirted girls
walking up, or down.

Not every girl mind.
Mainly those with long slim legs
and neat, tight buns.
Oh yes, he was discriminating;
A connoisseur one might say

Of the female form,
from ankle to buttocks.
Occasionally he's sigh,
close his eyes, and wet his lips.

He wasn't doing any harm.
Just an old man paying tribute
to girls who didn't know, much
less care, that Eros existed.

jerry hughes

WE

We of the human race do solemnly swear,
we will not perish by nuclear holocaust,
or by any other wrath.

Our technology is too far advanced to
permit such catastrophes.
We can negate them before they start
because, we are the wisest of the wise.

After all, didn't we abandon God?

jerry hughes

WEATHER REPORT

It rained last night, not rain
but pain.
A downpour of misery.
Tomorrow we can expect
more of the same.
The rest of the week?
Your guess is as good as
mine shares went up 4%

jerry hughes

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, MAL?

for Mal Morgan

Once that seemed eternity
shortens and encapsulates.
Forget-me-nots bloom by the roadside,
and I look at them in wonder.
How can such fragile flowers
buffeted by a traffic storm survive?

I then recall the wise old Sage who said:
'The smallest of us has the strength of ten,
if you believe.'
'In what?' I asked.
'Yourself, of course,' the Sage replied,
and placed some flowers in my hands.
A posy of forget-me-nots.

That was many years ago,
before roundabouts and speed-humps
and people whizzing by in cars,
oblivious to those brave forget-me-nots.

Mal Morgan, a fellow poet died
prematurely of cancer.

jerry hughes

WILSON CHAPEL - January 27,1998

for Barry

It was time to say adieu.
So we gathered in a chapel,
the few of us who knew him well.
The preliminaries over, his brother
reminisced with love and humour.
An old friend, and his surrogate son,
read some of his favourite things -
ending with a poem written for,
and about him.
The casket lowered slowly to an ancient hymn,
'Help of the helpless, O abide with me.'
It was over.
Awkwardly we took our leave of the living,
leaving the undertakers to their formal duties.

jerry hughes

WITHIN THE WIDTH OF MY HANDS

Now all I can encompass is
within the width of my hands.
I miss the colours of the seasons
and the force of nature's will.

Once more that old familiar path
my childhood steps retraced.
Dark shadows abate to let a surge
of youthful joy embrace.

How well the tug on the string
of a high flying kite.
Old Sam, chasing his tail.
Gracie Fields spinning on a 78.
The bookcase with leadlight panes.

So sad these things of the past.
The mind remembers, the rest forgets.
That fleeting burst of youth has left,
turning the page is difficult now.

Words blur, as the brain slurs from
one forgetfulness to the next.
Only these fragments remain,
within the width of my hands.

Voices, but I do not see their lips.
A slight sting in the arm.
Warmness fills and my mind is clear.
A dear voice says, 'Sleep now, sleep.'

The light dims, and I feel the tug
of the kite's string.
Come kite, let's fly.
Chase your tail Sam,
there's a good dog.

jerry hughes

WOMBAT

Rollie-pollie, wobble-wobble,
shuffling on your feet.
'Good morning, Mr Wombat.'
the others creatures greet.

Without an upward glance,
you simply muttered, 'eff? '
Goanna said to Wallaby,
'I think old Wombat's deaf.'

jerry hughes

YONDER

When I was a youth
you were not born.
When I was a man
you were a child.

Yet our seasons,
mine of autumn brown,
yours of summer gold,
blend perfectly,
beneath a midnight sun.

jerry hughes

YOU

You are a child born in the womb
of my imagination.
Conceived within myself, shrouded
in words and nurtured like no other.
You are the love of all my years
condensed to one explosive...
YES!

jerry hughes

YOUTH SUICIDE

'O, that this too too solid flesh would melt'
(Hamlet: William Shakespeare)

What made that young man suicide?
An over-use of drugs, or the demons
in his head caused by social pressure?
Was it too much leisure?

As a child he was nurtured and loved.
Sometimes, a little overindulged?
Academically bright and good at sport,
the world was his oyster, or so we thought.

So we chronical bald facts but seldom learn
the truth, of why these young men suicide;
And extinguish inexplicably, their brightest
flame of youth.

jerry hughes