

Classic Poetry Series

**Edwin Greenslade Murphy**  
**- poems -**

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# Edwin Greenslade Murphy()

# The Lodes That Under-Lie

O, calm and clear the liar lies  
Who writes reports on mines;  
Behold what knowledge deep and wise  
His legend intertwines.  
But ah, if he should own the lease  
Supposed to hold the lode

Behold his lying pow'rs increase  
Observe his matchless mode.  
He may not have an ounce of quartz,  
The reef his lease might miss,  
But in his Rougemont-like reports  
THE  
REEF  
RUNS  
DOWN  
LIKE  
THIS.

But if perchance the reef is found  
And proven rich and wide,  
Within another party's ground  
Who pegged him side by side,  
He can't peg in upon the end,  
That's taken long ago.  
And if the lode-line doesn't bend  
He hasn't Buckley's show;  
But shifting reefs is labor light,  
And perfect is his bliss,  
So as his lease is on the right  
It under lies like this.  
But should his lease located be  
Upon the left-hand side,  
The reef in which the gold shows free  
Towards the left he'll guide.  
For that which baulks a modest man  
A mining scribe can do.  
And alterations on a plan  
Will swing a reef askew;  
So once again with pencil deft

He plumbs the earth's abyss  
And as his lease is on the left  
The reef runs down like this.  
But if he has no part or share  
Around the golden ground,  
A tinker's toss he doesn't care

If any reef is found.  
He cares not if it goes an ounce  
Or only goes a grain,  
But if the owners try to bounce  
They're soon amongst the slain.  
He slays them as a mad Malay,  
Slays foemen with a kris,  
And in the mining news next days

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# The Rhymes That Our Hearts Can Read

The Rhymes That Our Hearts Can Read  
We are sated of songs that hymn the praise  
Of a world beyond our ken;  
We are bored by the ballads of beaten ways,  
And milk and water men;  
We are tired of the tales that lovers told  
To the cooing, amorous dove;  
We have banished the minstrelsy of old,  
And the lyric of languid love.  
While we stand where the ways of men have end,  
And the untrod tracks commence,  
We weary of songs that poets penned  
In pastoral indolence.  
The sleepy sonnet that lovers make  
Where weeping willows arch  
Cannot the passionate soul awake  
Of men who outward march.  
Our harps are hung in the towering trees,  
And the mulga low and gray  
Our ballads are sung by every breeze  
That flogs the sea to spray;  
We want no lay of a moonlit strand,  
No idyll of daisied mead,  
For the rhymes that our hearts can understand  
Are the rhymes that our hearts can read.

Edwin Greenslade Murphy

# The Smiths

We had many problems set us when Coolgardie was a camp,  
When the journey to the goldfields meant a coach-fare or a tramp;  
We had water questions, tucker ditto, also that of gold,  
How to clothe ourselves in summer, how to dress to dodge the cold.  
We marvelled how the reefs occurred in most unlikely spots,  
For the topsy-turvy strata tied geologists in knots;  
But though we plumbed the depth of many mysteries and myths,  
The worst we had to fathom was the prevalence of Smiths.  
To say they swarmed Coolgardie was to say the very least,  
For they over-ran the district like rabbits in the East;  
The name predominated in the underlay and drive,  
The open-cut and costeen seemed to be with Smiths alive;  
Where the dishes tossed the gravel they gathered from afar,  
They clustered at the two-up school and at the shanty bar;  
And while Jones and Brown were just as thick as herrings in a frith  
If you threw a stone at random, you were sure to hit a Smith.

There were Smiths from every region where the Smiths are known to grow,  
There were cornstalk Smiths, Victorian Smiths, and Smiths who eat the crow;  
There were Maori Smiths, Tasmanian Smiths, and parched-up Smiths from  
Cairns;  
Bachelor Smiths and widower Smiths and Smiths with wives and bairns.

Some assumed the names for reasons that to them were known the best  
When silently they packed their ports and flitted to the West,  
Till every second man you met to yarn or argue with  
Was either a legitimate or else a bogus Smith.  
It really mattered little till the days the big mails came,  
And then began the trouble with that far too-frequent name;  
For the Smiths rolled up in regiments when the letter 'S' was called,

To drive the post-officials mad and prematurely bald.  
Shoals of Smiths demanded letters that were never to them sent.

Wrong Smiths got correspondence which for them was never meant;  
And many a Smith, whose facial calm shamed Egypt's monolith,  
Bought jim-jams with the boodle sent to quite a different Smith.  
The climax came one Christmas Eve, the mail was on its way,  
And the post-officials yearned to block the Smiths on Christmas Day;

So they faked an Eastern telegram by methods justified,  
Upon it put no Christian name and tacked it up outside;  
It was from a Melbourne lawyer, and addressed to 'Smith Esquire'  
It was stamped 'prepaid and urgent', so t'would confidence inspire,  
And when Coolgardie sighted it and marked its pungent pith,  
There was pallid consternation in the habitat of Smith.

'Our client has informed us you are over in the West,'  
Ran the message, 'and she threatens your immediate arrest;  
She hears you're known as Smith, but says you needn't be afraid  
If you'll come and face the music and redeem the promise made.'  
The population read it, and before the daylight came  
A swarm of Smiths rolled up their swags and took a different name.  
They declined to 'face the music' and return to kin and kith,  
And the maidens who were promised still await the absent Smith.

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