

Classic Poetry Series

Michael Farrell
- poems -

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Michael Farrell(1965 -)

Michael Farrell (born 1965) is a contemporary Australian poet.

Michael Farrell was born in Bombala, New South Wales in 1965. He presently lives in Melbourne, where he is the Australian editor of Slope magazine.

Awards

Harri Jones Memorial Prize, 1999: winner

The Age Book of the Year Poetry Prize Dinny O'Hearn Poetry Prize, 2003,
shortlisted for Ode Ode

Blood On The Futon

which leads to new territory going
off on a wild with desire goose chase
everything bad everything funky lifts
off the roof making distinctions between
minimalist & excess absurd we can
learn to loathe all forms everything hands
down from grandparents if youre unlucky
greatgrandparents can make you gifts
of separation guilt poverty general
meanness particular cruelty you can
tell ive gone over to the poor white side
of the equation ill throw it away when
ive sucked the blood out of the old
mattresses the lying photos are a far
removal from religious revival i can
pile up detail on unnecessary detail
i can list the chooks & cows by name
that i abandoned for a life of random
now everythings under control again
im not going out like i did last night
like a flashing siren like a regular moron
pretending to possess something resembling
rhythm dont follow me im heading
for a cliff im brewing with resentment
ive a presentiment alls leading
to plastic in the afterlife cheers

Michael Farrell

John Ashbery Impersonator

he looked around the festival crowd
relieved to be alone he didnt see me apricot
& or lilacshirted crouched behind a stand
i noted everything he said to use later in
a poem in which the silent changes might
occur how right he was the spoken word
seemed to lift off the page live alone
or in camberwell i saw him write youll notice
me ill be the one not wearing a red sash
how right he was were enlivened by stories
comparing ephemera why ask a plague
of locusts by what right like me he wore
return to sender sideburns & carried the aim
of this government cattleprod these were mere
favourites when everything he said said i
am he he wasnt what was he he wants to
go it alone but at this time of year the
best place to see eclipses are asylums
as i grew bigger sweat patches & my desire
to smoke affected my lungs i thought his
lips formed in french what he was saying
in english with a fluency monolingual
ventriloquists could only applaud by stamping
their feet & screwing their papers up
page by page & throwing them onto in
amorous & arrogant tribute to those
whose unfortunate gestures couldnt be represented
here today the festival stage i paraphrase
j a the spectacle not the spectator was hung
i hold up my prod & ask please im willing
who did & were you like when young

Michael Farrell

Nude Descending A Liftshaft

she gets up removes her gender which
the mission wont require the nudes initials
arent tattooed as far as past observers
could tell were not privy its happening the
emptiness which freaks out conservatives
with their lift manuals & repertoires of
degas etcetera oh no does the operation
involve violence are the former touts
at bottom sing out nude of descending
vibrations i glanced at such a nude one
night while reading the well moonlite
the twyborn affair i descended into
the underworld of australian fiction
there are many emptinesses give me
the rough teeth the subliminal gums
the open mouth of the pub sloth
i & the visiting execs take the stairs
which afford a view of the empty city
theres nothing significant in this
conversationwise we think the nude
we hear wild animals in footsteps
some things are too heavy to carry
the invisible nude assumes a new
eroticism are there attendants first
aid givers insurance covers calmly
we await the crash with paperbacks
scoffing at the critical remarks
heard from radio news ambulance
workers secretaries so much wasted
ability a thought we read in each
others minds mentally slapping into
fictions our falls & little fetishes

Michael Farrell

Person With A Flute

when a person speaks to you in the water
a sexual interpretations available & if
they lift a flute to their lips by all means
call this suggestive there are other musics
coincidentally that day you see the first
vermeer you remember girl with a flute
called a masterpiece why would you
dispute it & if you in your ignorance
though perhaps rightly compare the songs
you heard this morning with madrigals &
fitting the words underground overground
wombling free to the tune & you compose
a poem & coincidentally & unprecedented
in your experience you remeet the instigator
that is the fluteplayer during the composition
even though youve no cigarettes to offer only
movie chat & water talk the person who entered
your emotional life & your poetic life on
the same day as vermeer seems today more
like a black & white print than sexy paint
on canvas you keep going towards the water
having gained more than lost you tell yourself
that youre not a little child youre not a little rat

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Proust Aboard A Doomed Corvette

the blue car was too slow marcel
insisted this was a virtue so we
toured the galleries gave cats lifts
painted bodies as we passed there
were some whose souls we entered
briefly & saddened like weevils
in an opened cheese remained
illdisposed to heroics haircutting
ate nothing so this is the moon
marcel remarked gloomily the life
forms are disappointing i dont
understand what god was getting at
leave god out of it i said
annoyed at last by his trilby
twitching watch the road baron
he replied there arent any moon
roads anyway i thought you
were driving out of petrol time
to abandon vessel lay low hope
a cattle farmer comes along we
can steal his wife horizon his
bitter expressions well the first
figure to come along was an army
deserter we were too sentimental
to harm we lent him a cork
shelter a phone that remembered
princes number ned kelly shrieked
mp we continued without holdups

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