Lines Written at the Melbourne Mental

(A Sequence)

i want to go home
home i want to go
from this place that
makes me mad and low

1

winter again
the sea at port phillip
bay is muddy fury
the sky
over the melbourne mental
an unbroken grey
rain is spitting
and spitting
its cold unconcern
unto the wind-screen
of my second eye
near the intensive care ward
cars shoot past
in a hurry to leave for home
leaving behind them
a world of night
as dark as melbourne

2

they told me it was okay to be here
they said you were fine
all you do is stay for a couple of days
no worry they said
just tell us what’s the problem
i said no problem
i want to go home
they said
this is home
it is literally a HOME
i said i knew nobody here
i did not see my friends
i did not see my parents
i did not see sisters or brothers
how can it be a home
they said don’t worry
it will be a home
if you stay long enough
i wondered if it was like a tree
where any birds can live
but don’t birds have a recognized home to go back to
do they just fly away
never to return
like bullets do
or do they
like my heart
once centrifugalised
go into a seeking cycle

3

nights refuse to go away
with their imaginary darkness
my HOME-mates sleep away their time
before a wasteful T.V.
i was very light-headed
and could not speak
the medicine was circulating in all the creeks
of my blood vessels
like a poisonous snake
whose tongue
was my tongue
whose eyes
were my eyes
and whose body
was my body
i crept up to my psychiatric doctor
and hissed
with a voice loaded with venom
so he diagnosed maximum security
and i thought wordlessly
that it was good for me to breed

4

occasionally
flashes of memory would break out
like fresh diseases:

a big river that flows from the top of a green hill
a surging ocean of white clouds that are holding my plane hostage
a temple that fades in the setting sun
nothing to do with australia
where a rented lodging
was disintegrating
in the afternoon perfection

5

i said i didn’t speak english
so they got me an interpreter
who knew my language
i suppose this poem is what he had written about me
the bastard
taking advantage of my pain
and my devious disease
he didn’t even tell me that he was intending to home me
in this poem
he may capture my soul
but how could he house my body restless
in a lot of words

6

my doctors were all australians
white and refined
trained, sure of themselves
and determined
to put me right
in front of modern technology
and an efficient culture
that i used to worship from another continent
i still do
although i can’t help see double
tremble even when i don’t want to
die a daily death under the effect
of strong medical weaponry
and wake up to see a white refined hospital home
my god disappears with blue eyed angels
that once accompanied me on a purifying journey
in which i drank tap water a hundred times a day
to ethnically cleanse myself
i now see a landscape turning yellow
with wattles
little nameless flowers that were soon done away with
on a constantly mown lawn
much advertised pages
that were weighing heavy
on their commercial dreams
and a melbourne sun
that was as golden
as my psychological imagination
home away
homed in

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