

# 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

OUYANG YU