



HELEN JONES.

Robert Handicott

DANIEL

“Bloody boots!” says Daniel two years old
When he’s told to put a toy back in his room.

Studied efforts to wean him on to “muddy boots”
Have failed: he is hooked on the alliterating plosives.

Either he or his little friend April
Down the road must have heard somebody fall

To imprecations on the obstacles,
Stumbling out of bed or down the steps.

Now the formula, punctuated often with an eloquent
Kick, answers well in every setback situation —

And the intonation tells you that he means it.
In our eyebrows and the corners of our mouths he
detects

Muffled stirrings of a closetted convention:
The hardened old blasphemer under lock and key
inside.

How many high ramparts from my Roget or
Macquarie
He can flatten with his “bloody boots” and “bum”!

Plan B is to pretend not to hear such words;
But we growl beneath our breath like baffled lions.