

Phil Brown

TRAVELLING NORTH

Sweeping north all time expands,
The slow miles stretch behind:
The sculpting sun creates, with hands
Of heat and baking wind,
A landscape where now, all things simmer;
People, birds and beasts all shimmer
In a light that saps the mind
Blanching all their precious lands.

Towns are drowsy, one's asleep —
The pub is open wide
And cool, the amber hours creep,
A rising drunken tide:
It drowns the problems, cures all sorrows,
Kills todays, postpones tomorrows;
One old Kelpie stands inside
And someone's always there to weep.

Days are longer, evening's drawn
Down on the slothful plain.
The cattle, grazing there since dawn,
Lift heads to sniff at rain —
Across the ranges, quickly sweeping,
Into gullies it comes seeping,
Filling tanks to ease the pain . . .
Some dusty farmers smile and yawn.

At last the hot, unflinching sun
Has disappeared, taken the drought
For now. Some yarns are being spun

And some cold beer is brought
To table at a grateful station
Where, to break the dry duration,
They 'thank Christ!', then drink a draught
And watch the creeks begin to run.

Sampson Ngwele

TELEPHONE

In the beginning,
God placed man in Eden
and spoke to him from a distance
without a telephone.

Today,
Man imitates God
and speaks to another from a distance
through the telephone

as God listens.