

Manfred Jurgensen

FROM "DOUBLE SHADOWS COUNTER YEARS: A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA"

Canto 13 panegyric for gough whitlam

between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

T.S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*

to praise a vision is the credit of agreement,
to laud its blemished execution the pride of those
who witnessed virtue's failure with no honour lost.
this is no song of virgin faith, no eulogy to raped
perfection; let it suffice to make it known australia
came alive once more with thoughts and passions bearing
the promise of this land. could it have been worth it
after all, the history of compromise, the rule of mediocrity,
the backyard dance around the golden hoist, to plant ideas
like summer crop, to issue judgement on the people's share,
to see us grow into our own. time it was, early december,
a punctual experiment to practise breathing; three years of
trust in possibilities, of daring talent and of welcoming
the world. land rights to forge a brotherhood of home,
shame acknowledged in the shake of hands and heads, so much

to learn, to liberate ourselves. the shadows cast in politics,
the quest to re-elect the body. between the lines of skin
and tongue the colonies of old. filter of light: the house
still governing the past. its rooms divided and its curtains
drawn. such theatre amidst the urgings of the day.
connor's plan to reconcile the creditors, to save our dreams
on global loans: belongings not to be reclaimed; we owe
the loss we are, khemlani's gold, the power built on
native wealth, the trust in boilermakers' sons. to rule
the laws of capital the summer ended. we left the farm
our money could not buy. you quoted greece, measured the walls
of china and saw a culture of abundance. your provinces of
that reborn republic, or was it the shepherd of la mancha
inspecting pleasures of the pastoral life? either way, our
hearts were left behind. admit it, gough, we were bad losers.