

Justin Macdonnell

PACKAGE TOUR

I

I walk into any
shop and feel
the sugar underfoot
and the hot past
on my neck
from supermarket
bags that burst and spill
their memories on the floor.

II

The weeds that grow
between the cracks
between the toes
of concrete blocks
are much the same
in any street
in Adelaide
or Iguazú.

III

In love, moving out
of a rain shadow
into the green,
I have come
usually to take the low
risk tour by bus
before the chaos
of an unknown train.

IV

If I had looked
out earlier I could
have seen myself
walking along that
part of the corniche
visible from the hotel
window marooned in a moment
of green water just as now
I can see a young
man in a yellow shirt
who turns like a
girasol and waves at
me and I feel the stab
of time sharpest
of all flowers to fall
on in the Spring

V

The past is a hard
footpath no one
knows again
I only use
old shoes
to walk it
that wore me
out before
I started
lust leaves no
steps behind
us to explain.

VI

It's so quiet in the bus
when the others go
duty free shopping. Silence
swells like a balloon in
the heat as the driver and I
having no other language
smile at each other.

VII

In the dusk of the hotel
lobby before the excursion
left an urchin
went to polish
his shoes for a tourist
until the man impatiently
shoved him aside to
get on the coach
but the boy had already
started so the gringo who
did not pay, had one
bright shoe that shone
in his face for the rest
of the day and one dull.

VIII

I had forgotten even
the low watt power
of lust. I thought
it had been folded away
like blankets in
summer

now

I wake up to this rough
towel, bruised by a new
day, knots in my
hair

not

with the casual
pickup, hung
over, gritty feel
of other mornings

but

pressed under
the browsing thumb
of time turning
my skin page
by page.

IX

This morning at check
out there are fine
pleats of rain around
us and a single bulb
sun quite unsuitable

for tourist
photography.

Apart
from the grin of one
yellow shirt, I have
only instamatic joy
printed in my hand
to take back home.

X

Afterwards with glue
or hinges
I can arrange
the little coloured bits
of where I come
from, where I've been
into a pattern
some according to value:
time, passion, yellow, one
hundred centavos to the peso;
others alphabetically
as in an album:
Martinique, Monrovia, Montevideo.