

Peter Boyle

JOURNEYS

It is now I would like to fall
into deep sleep and to travel
far into some remote land,
feeling every bump of the local bus bearing me
further and further away from every known formality:
work, income, house, family,
at each change of transport
leaving a further item of baggage behind
till there is nothing left to dispose of,
only myself and what I stand up in
without wristwatch or book, pen or paper,
with only the sun for calendar,
the white face of the sea to soothe my aloneness,
and seated beside me old women and their grandchildren
bumping along in the same bus,
speaking only village dialect I cannot recognise,
and smoking and flicking lighted cigarette stubs about
in back of the bus that rolls around with spilt petrol
and when I try in some patois of the islands
to warn "hati hati benzin"
they all break out giggling and toss
little sparklers at me
as we lurch forward,
the first stars above the coastline
winking at my elbow.

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