

Peter Hunt

MOPOKES

I've never understood how it frightened
early settlers, with its dim, distant sound,
its strange lonely cry that haunts the night.
Under stars, I feel it rather like the surf
washing on the passive shore,
Lulling, companionable, sharing
tranquil dark with me, and firelit dreams.
I remember how in Queensland forests
we used to wake to symphonies of birds
rich in wild and harsh delight, carolling,
chortling, laughing and singing up the sun,
bright as wattle, waratahs,
and red bush-orchids; but no voice or song
among them pleased me nearly half as much
As the trochaic, pensive cry of "mopoke".

••

Alan Alexander

RECORDERS

Sounding as if on water rather than air
the tones of recorders re-instill
the woody heat of the afternoons
with a time to wait before the rush from school.

Primary days. And the gardeners at work
round the flank of brick. A woodwind tone
enters shadow, rises in the trees,
the rush of love for a daughter and a son.

••