

Timoshenko Aslanides

Rum and true religion

"THEM SEEM TO STARE wistfully at clouds!" a fisherman said,
as Barramundi, Cod and Salmon, drunk
on the sweet aromatic redolence of aging rum,
offered no objection to being hauled aboard.
Never was fishing the Burnett off Bundaberg so easy.
Rarely was lightning so lucky in striking a spark,
or flame so fortunate to have such willing fuel,
for once the vats were alight, one could only watch
as stills, mash full of juice from sugar cane and molasses,
the innocently fermenting ingredients
that, distilled by condenser and matured in oak, became the rum
which joins the flow of soul and feast of reason,
were burnt; two million flaming litres flowed to the river.
Even the Burnett seemed unsure of itself
as, stomach full, its back ablaze, it ran to sea,
intoxicating the fish it contained, or found,
and which struggling to surface from such an overproof world,
accepted the deliverance of fishermen.

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