

John Low

MUSEUM

In the small museum
among the dead and dislocated husks
of farm and mine equipment,
among the photographs of dredges and sluices,
of grey and sepia men
rocking cradles in dull streams
or riding on loaded drays, their whips
frozen in fleeting power,
hang the portraits of the pioneers.
They stare from the walls like trophies
cut from their moment of time
and pinned, behind glass, in the endless present,
their eyes, muddy pools in a furrowed earth of skin,
concealing a strange world.

Outside I lift my head and breathe in
the sharp air and the blue sky,
deeply, like I've just broken the surface of a lake,
my lungs bursting, my head filled with secrets.

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