

Ray Stuart

## REVERIE

*Papua, 1961*

Shortly after arrival in Moresby  
there is a strong pull to the hill  
that overlooks Pari village.

At a wartime gun emplacement  
I sit in kunai grass  
among the company  
of long-departed gunners,  
the southward sea an unbroken ribbon  
as it flows down the east seaboard ...  
infiltrating harbours and estuaries  
sheltering families and lovers.

At the foot of the hill  
the yelping of village dogs  
and the hum of the school at play  
distract me from this reverie.

Along the coast the Rigo road swelters  
in haze that extends into jungle ranges  
where blank spaces on old maps  
are overprinted with the vagary  
*'Heavily timbered  
Numerous Native Hamlets'*

