

MARGARET RUCKERT

HARBOUR : HARBINGER

with two heads and uncounted tales between its legs
 Sydney Harbour beckons you for a daytime cruise—
 taste for yourself the finest drop in the world,
 view sandstone houses, mingling with concrete and class
 at a party of salted hors d'œuvres and matching whines,
 masked appetites and floating jetty fashion
 with flat conversation from social question marks
 seeking the answers, largely marked up in red

here at the edge of wave and wood, maritime scum-trap,
 where year-round summers breed action, temperature
 matches the outrage of neighbours—through binoculars
 trained to spot fires of conflict, you notice a line
 of half-height pines, slaughtered for a Water View
 on a good zoom lens; extreme litigation is pill and poison,
 more screen pines take baby steps towards the foreshore
 but a storm surge beats them, or chemical warfare

a smorgasbord—you sway with fellow cruisers, mouth open
 between mouthfuls, looking out in misery; so many millions,
 so many millions not fed today; if science has the answers,
 why won't it share them? away from the eyes of the harbour
 you could query these superstructures of wealth: brash talent
 or colourful proceeds of crime, stand-overs, insider rackets,
 here you say nothing; be the perfect guest on a perfect sea
 with Harbour as your host, offering a glimpse of a perfect life
 or a perfect storm

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