



The  
Worry  
Egg

ROBERT HANDICOTT

FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN LITERARY STUDIES

## THE WORRY EGG

For Barry and Elizabeth

## ROBERT HANDICOTT

Robert Handicott was born in Brisbane in 1952. A teacher of English and German, he has lived in Townsville since 1976, and his first published poem appeared that year in the Sydney little magazine *Leatherjacket*. In the late 70s he hosted the community-access radio programme *Write from the Word Go!* on 4QN. From 1980 to 1985 he served as North Queensland editor for *The Border Issue*, an annual anthology of poetry by resident Queenslanders, before co-editing with Elizabeth Perkins *North of Capricorn: An Anthology of Verse* (FALS, 1990), which appeared while he was teaching for twelve months in Berlin. His previous collections of poetry are *Small Beer* (1982) and *North, South & Elsewhere* (1988), both published by Queensland Community Press, Brisbane, edited by Barry O'Donohue. He is a bachelor, a lover of literature, art and music, and a busy elder in the Presbyterian Church.

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**THE  
WORRY EGG**

**by Robert Handicott**

FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN LITERARY STUDIES

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## THE FOUR LOVES

That book you never gave me back  
Has turned up on the discount rack  
At Tonnoirs, priced at fifty cents.  
It must be a coincidence  
I thought about you yesterday,  
Five years now since you went away.

The cover caught my eye: the fine,  
Familiar, out-of-date design  
I always liked and now and then  
Had hoped to see and buy again.  
Delightedly I took it down,  
And found the book had been my own —

Unthumbed, unread, and probably  
Unopened since naivety  
Possessed me and I thought to share it  
With one truly kindred spirit.  
I'd knelt down at the chopping block ...  
This find's the final aftershock.

You did your best; you gave to me  
Affection, friendship, charity,  
The loves you could. No sense to rage  
Against a printed contents page.  
I'm thankful for this sign you've sent  
Not meaning what you thought you meant.

## ON THE RUN

Unspooling to the sky,  
The road plays out like a rope:  
It dares the dazzled eye;  
Distracts like tenuous hope.  
A dashboard paradiddle,  
A sinking sun to blind you,  
You sit out in the middle  
And put the miles behind you.

But stern as iron bars,  
The windscreen constellation  
(Cast up by scurrying cars)  
Portends your destination.  
Unravelling like a riddle  
The crumbling strands assigned you,  
You sit out in the middle  
And put the miles behind you.

## BEFORE THE EXCISION

For most the heart, the liver, some part within.  
For me, the organ rotted by the weather:  
For me the skin.

I do not love the knife my GP takes  
To carve the cancers out and lengthen life.  
I get the shakes

From local anaesthetic, looking away.  
Nor can I steel myself with words prophetic  
Of Crispin's Day:

That I shall see old age and boast these scars  
As trophies borne in triumph from the stage  
Of civil wars.

This time, although no doubt the wound will throb,  
It won't, perhaps, invite the jokes about  
A butcher's job.

I strip my sorry sleeve — and want to bless  
Those thicker skinned, who never learned to grieve  
That life's a mess.

## HOME COMING

Plumb centre  
On a flat

Red disc,  
Modest houses and sheds

Clump  
Tenacious as spinifex:

Opal-white walls  
And roofs of silver.

In our hay-riding coach,  
The grazier's daughter:

Dry boarding-school eyes  
In flash flood

Become diamonds.

## ON A STREET OF EMPTY SHOPS

Doomed city centres fail like freezing men:  
To save head and heart, they sacrifice hands and feet.  
Arcades shut down from the extremities: a main street  
Drains of its life's blood, never to leap again.

Space after vacant space. "For Rent" signs fade,  
Sag, flop in the dust from plate glass cracked  
By vandals' bricks. Downtown Vancouver once backed  
The same fickle starters: human nature and trade.

The businesses closest the heart, like the lucky houses  
With lights still on in a power strike, round the hospital,  
Can keep up appearances best: it's "Business as  
Usual" —  
Though salesgirls stand unemployed among skirts  
and blouses

And a cafe table was never so easy to get  
(A *particular* table, whatever the time of day!)  
Now the globe-trotting Aussie eccentrics have stayed  
away  
With their dangling corks, and the students of Art  
who met

To sip cappuccinos and fancy themselves on Left Banks.  
Further down, rash hopes disappear overnight —  
unnerving  
As comrades collapsing in battle to regulars serving  
Uncertain commanders, redcoats in outmoded ranks

With no fire to hold — till someone unflinchingly faces  
The whites of his eyes in a mirror, and turns off the  
light.

Institutions are trembling. The venerable “Hong Kong”  
might

Not survive '97. Pubs are endangered oases.

On the lookout for somewhere to order their steak and  
three veg,

A grim southern couple (retired), like German  
backpackers,

Like babes in the bush unlocated by kindly  
blacktrackers,

Can't know that what once was the centre has slipped  
to the edge,

That the real heart is beating eight k's to the  
prosperous west.

They know what they see; and they see, with distress,  
drunkards pissing

On a street like the smile of a beggar with most teeth  
missing.

How hope to explain that I still love this part of town  
best?

At dusk (when it's said it's not safe), alone in the lull  
As the riotous myna birds settle and crowd for their  
cuddle

(Our Babylon's lions)—I ache for the city-sized muddle  
Of mis-managed change, remembering shops that were  
full.

## ANOTHER GREAT LEAP FORWARD

First night of the Wet  
the frogs turn up,  
sign on for continuous shifts.

Overnight  
quiet suburbs are re-zoned  
"light industrial"  
by order of the rain.

Factories of frogs!  
Downpipes and drains  
spit them out  
like assembly-line models,  
whole and freshly painted.

## THE ELEPHANT TREE

With pachyderm patience and solemn aplomb  
She holds the long pose on one leathery leg  
For love of her keeper-cum-trainer alone,  
The consummate, kind impresario Sun.

He showers her with light and resweetens her sap,  
Coaxes devotion to show-stopping tricks.  
Fresh leaves of bright green sound her trumpeting  
thanks;  
New pawpaws, like peanuts, intrigue the whorled  
trunks.

## BOWEN MANGO TREES

Two men on a roof  
Scoop sweet heavy golden hail  
From cumulus green.  
Bold as anglers on headlands  
Where breakers explode,  
They wield landing-net handles  
Longer than surf rods.  
Deliberate, patient, their  
Minimal movement:  
Like praying mantis females  
Dismantling their mates.  
(Now they stop their slow knitting,  
Raise a pair of plucked eyebrows.)

## SUBURBAN MANGROVES

Streets broken-down, bushed  
By a creek. Unhemmed back yards  
Fray out into roots;  
Rough squares of old carpet, wear  
To mud. A dinghy's  
A shoe, the pair gulped and lost.  
A fish glints and slaps.  
Uncanny — these trees here now —  
As twigs from Daphne's fingers.

## AFTER RAIN, NELLY BAY

The hills are disrobing  
for the sun; for the moment their heads  
are lost in their petticoats.

## BEDROOM BEASTS

### *Cupboard Spider*

Three legs on one side,  
only one on the other,  
and not backing off

### *Mosquito*

Invisible but busy  
in the dark, she's my guardian  
angel, insistent at one ear

### *Geckos*

The blanket of night  
flicked back, they shrink like schoolboys  
caught with their pants down

## WIND SOCK

Long John Silver has his washing out to dry.  
Busier and gentler than an elephant's trunk

It's cousin to the weathercock  
But pointer to the future.

It fluttered as the Hindenburg  
Nudged toward flashpoint, as the Challenger

Thrust toward benumbing pyrotechnics —  
Faithful in its corner

As wholesome advice;  
Doing one thing well.

It signals from the hand-tinted  
Harbours of biplanes (Croydon, München-Riem, 1930–

Lost with such books  
As came down from great-aunts)

But also from the airports  
Of actual youth:

Hands pressed to our ears,  
Noses pressed to the wire.

To glimpse one through gums,  
Despite golf course and track,

Is a giveaway and gift —  
"All Clear" for heart's take-off —

Limp-peaked as the nightcap on Wee Willie Winkie  
Or sleek as the Concorde

Stretched by the wind's happy toes.

## BOB HOPE AT LONG BINH

Out past the cue cards  
the wonderful guys are  
jumpy as hell.

As at other times before  
the old pro in fatigues  
soldiers on —

but Crosby and Benny,  
Phyllis Diller and the President  
are bringing down the house

around his ears.  
Quickly drafted reinforcements  
— tongue-tied, trembling —

the Bunnies  
make sport;  
but too late

to save the vanishing smirk.  
A producer in distraction  
pulls the plug.

Though the golf course  
is a chopper ride,  
the mainland

just a buggy jaunt away,  
a sudden vision  
so distinct

it will forever be denied  
remakes the ending of  
*The Road to Utopia:*

an unprotected target  
on a stage as strange as Asia,  
mown down by obscenity

his writers departed from him.

## TROPICS

Books get stifled, too:  
Crinkling in the Wet season,  
Buckling in the Dry

Breathing easily only  
When we open and read them.

## THINGS PASSING

On a rush-hour bus a man is reading a book,  
A dtv paperback, Heinrich Böll's *Irish Diary*.  
His eyes do not lift from the page to admit an enquiry,  
And our kinship remains unconfessed, like a private  
joke.

The sardine-packed students en route to the various  
schools  
Sound cheerful enough at the prospect of Kafka and  
Heine.  
Beside me, a woman whose Dobermann pup "an der  
Leine"  
Looks nervously round, but knows and obeys all the  
rules.

It's dodge-'em-car traffic; our harrying, chivvying  
course  
Should scramble a fine-printed text into scrabble-  
board letters.  
For the reader, however, the movement of words is  
what matters:  
Berlin changes gear between seasons, unheeded  
through glass.

The glamour of travel, I know, enhances impressions;  
And recognised cliches are well-baited traps for the  
novice.  
But a man reading Böll on a bus on his way to the  
office  
Seems something to savour and save for the sweet  
silent sessions.

## SELF-PORTRAITS

Dandruff falls in the Martin-Gropius-Bau;  
Toothache flares in the Neue Nationalgalerie;  
In the State Museums of the Prussian Cultural  
Heritage

Cancers of various kinds are queuing to see

If the dead, at least, have preserved a well-groomed  
composure.

The eyes of the painters — averted, imploring —  
unblinking,

From the depths of their deepening shadows say Yes  
and then No.

RESTAURANT ➔ a sign says, to steer us from serious  
thinking.

## PRESERVATION, RESTORATION, INTERPRETATION

In Museum- and Galleryland  
It's baths not showers, and justly so:  
Long oppressed legs and downtrodden feet  
Taste Roman luxury. The dull head bows ...  
You too shall be dust, like the emperors  
And artists, he reflects  
On the unsuspecting limbs alive before him.

## ALTWEIBERSOMMER

The chestnut trees are flecked with gold  
As grey hairs trim the head still blond  
And sceptical of chemistry:  
Thinning, but not yet autumn-toned.

Four months before I leave. So much  
To "seize and clutch and penetrate,"  
Make mine. But dreams in German, too,  
Pose teasing problems to translate.

Like Tucho in his Paris park,  
Set free in sloughing off Berlin,  
I've loved the sunshine on my face,  
But never laid the ghosts within.

"Abyss of silent abstinence,"  
Wrote Goes; and Goethe's Faust, on leash:  
"Too old for merely playing games,  
Too young to live without a wish."

## AUTUMN MORNING

### *Berlin-Lichterfelde*

White mould, defining  
the ribs of fallen brown leaves:  
first November frost

o

My garden gate, too,  
is blighted — frost like an old  
black dog's chin whiskers

o

Grassblades, snippings of  
Old Man's Beard; cast-off slippers,  
negatives exposed

o

A plate-glass puddle  
shattered on the parking lot  
waits all day for repair

## GIFTS

On Amrum's  
Wide white *Kniepsand*  
Tiny dark figures  
Like wayward lice  
Were edging with care  
Against the afternoon wind,  
Their microscopic mandibles  
Tasting for amber

(Rare gift from the sea).

A kilometre away  
In a valley in the dunes  
The wind  
Was reburying  
A Stone Age grave,  
Among artifacts found there  
Amber beads

(Choice gift for the gods).

At the goldsmith's  
In Norddorf  
I bought amber  
For my nieces —  
Stones tintured like *Fassbier*  
In polished, globed glasses;  
Like honey at breakfast.  
The bubbles are snowflakes.

(My nieces were children  
Still out of the wind.  
Their gifts were for me.)

## A STREET IN EUROPE

Spring weather, and my winter coat's  
Unbuttoned in the evening air.  
In leafless branches burnished buds  
Give back the lamps' congenial glare.

All down the road, fine houses. Here  
And there a laughing human voice  
Escapes a window just ajar,  
A muffled television noise

Behind it; but the loudest sound's  
My footfall on the paving stones  
When peace is punctured, somewhere off,  
By hellish, high-pitched wails and moans.

Perhaps a factory changing shifts,  
Perhaps a powerhouse alarm —  
I cannot tell how far away,  
If anyone has come to harm —

But instantly it's clear: it was  
Like this, those fifty years ago;  
Before the storm began to break,  
Before the winds began to blow;

Before the first rush downstairs with cases  
Crammed in disbelief, caprice;  
The purgatorial wait; the listening,  
Blankets tense round shivering knees.

One moment, lives of private care,  
Small joys, and hopeful tinkering;  
And then — the demons howled, and scored  
A thick red line though everything.

The student in the garret closed  
The book whose end he'd never read;  
The old man left his pot of beer  
Unfinished; man and wife in bed

Embraced one last time: all the past  
Evaporated in the heat  
Of present fear; and every soul  
Stood stripped before the Judgement seat.

So clear, so chilling ... Yet I see  
No searchlights, hear no bombs explode;  
The people study, drink, make love  
And sleep and dream all down this road

Where I too live. And now the siren  
Stops. And I'm fumbling jingling keys  
Outside my door ... Light spits of rain;  
A tremor in the chestnut trees.

## THE SCAPEGOAT

Helmut Krieger —  
One of the few  
Grey faces for which  
A name bobs up —  
No classmate of  
Those sunken years  
Was bade to drain  
So sour a cup.

Soft-spoken boy,  
The strife you had!  
The provocation  
Day by day  
From Mr C.  
Our Deputy Head!  
We watched, too rapt  
To turn away.

No uniform!  
But worst of all  
No covers on  
Your books! Until,  
Cowed by the cane,  
You dressed them all  
In "paper" —  
From the *Courier-Mail*.

Poor "Smelly Krieger"! .  
How we roared  
At jokes more complex  
Than we knew!

Saddest of lads  
Lost overboard,  
We were a cruel  
And callous crew ...

One week you left,  
No loss to me.  
(I toed the lines  
Drawn by my betters.)  
Later, we learned  
From old Jack C.  
That German nouns  
Take capital letters.

## INDOOROOPILLY

In photographs from primary school  
The Home Boys are not hard to pick:  
The shirts so faded, shorts so long  
And dark complexions do the trick;

Sometimes the pearly teeth. All shades  
Of grey now, sporting star and dunce.  
Yet none of it connected then  
With something else that happened once:

The visit by the old black man —  
The last survivor of the tribe  
Whose language gave the school its name  
And clinging "Gully of Leeches" jibe.

His boomerang came back; but sticks  
Would not ignite. We saw and smiled.  
"Assimilation" said the booklets  
Handed free to every child.

## ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE

The bugler was off,  
and some of the kids  
are still giggling.

Outside  
the Grade Twelves  
who didn't have to come  
glove softballs  
in the mellow afternoon.

But the Juniors  
lean heavy on the backs  
of the chairs in front of them,  
shuffle  
from foot to foot,  
heads  
vaguely bowed.

It has something to do  
with the old thin man  
with the stick  
who has just addressed us,  
presenting the school  
with this year's book.

A cameraman  
pans — and reaps  
a self-sown crop  
of V for Victory signs.

Reveille  
(the fast one).  
Troy, the class pest,  
turns quickly:  
"Can we go now, Sir?"

## STUDENT NURSES, FIRST TERM

Above my head, the sound of laughter  
Breaks like a long wave on the shore.  
Surprised, I raise my eyes and see  
Five nurses on a balcony.

Their lessons for the day are done:  
They know the small bones of the skull.  
Now in the bracing autumn weather  
They share a secret joy together.

The hospital, well-lit and vast,  
Stretches below them, wide awake,  
A living thing. And they, at heart,  
Still thrill to find themselves a part

Of such an organism.  
As yet its monstrous ailments are  
Unknown to them, except as words:  
For now, the days of scrubbing turds

From bedpans are far off.  
Inklings of wonder at their calling,  
Flesh and blood, and life and death,  
Suspend all time and disbelief.

It's only an epiphany.  
Tomorrow's threatening still to bring  
Frustration and monotony,  
The "Lady Jane" mentality.

But now they laugh and watch the sea.  
A gibbous moon anoints the bay.  
Five nurses on a balcony  
Think loss and morning far away.

## THE HOME-BUYER'S SONG

The foxes have holes and the bird has its nest;  
The sons of men, too, seek a roof for their rest;  
But the truth is — there's no use lamenting —  
    Everyone's renting.

We may labour like piglets with bricks, sticks or straw:  
Time knocks for us all like the wolf at the door.  
Whether palacing, flatting, or tenting,  
    Everyone's renting.

Tiled suburbs advance like Saharas of stone;  
The forest, the farmland, the weatherboard's gone;  
Living simply's passé as repenting:  
    The dream's unrelenting.

Yet, citywards, two or three houses with plaques  
Boast names *half* familiar, above brief remarks  
Noting what they found out or invented:  
    People who rented —

But built with the stuffs of the heart and the mind.  
They, perhaps, have left more than addresses behind ...  
Though it deal Aussie pride a good denting:  
    Everyone's renting.

## AT BURDEKIN FALLS DAM

A lanky, laid-back inland sea,  
Matt brown as over-milky tea  
Except where faintest blue creates  
Illusions of far-off estates;

A green and well-appointed park  
Where Bob and Mike unveiled a plaque;  
The ornamental path they walked,  
The platform where they posed and talked:

The traveller sees and finds it good  
To stand where VIPs have stood —  
Not catching till he drives away  
The abiding image of the day.

A faded zebra crossing leads  
From nowhere to nowhere — weeds to weeds —  
To blazing bougainvillea — massed  
In ghost backyards, unglimped, unguessed.

So here it was the builders' lives  
Dropped anchor; here resourceful wives  
Made harbours; here the children hurled  
Themselves about a shipshape world

That seemed to scale, but not for long;  
That vanished like a working song  
From days of gold — like Ravenswood,  
Where older steps say buildings stood

Behind them, leading now to air:  
Stone speculations raised with flair  
As damned investors chased their pile —  
And dams were built — in 80s style.

## DEATH OF A LIBRARIAN

He thought of them as his girls and couldn't bear it  
To see what happened to them and how fast —  
And this although the few that he remembered  
Soon lost all but their outlines in the past.

No father jealous of a daughter's bounty  
Could make an honest suitor so uptight  
As he the young enthusiastic reader  
With book in hand to borrow overnight;

Yet finding on return the least defilement —  
A dog-eared page, a rip, a coffee stain —  
As cruelly as he scorched the stunned offender,  
He stoked the fires of self-inflicted pain.

In dreams the chairs were up, the carrels empty,  
And perfect silence reigned amongst the stacks;  
His darlings were new acquisitions always,  
Bar-coded, gleaming contact on their backs

Till opening hours: new nightmares of the public,  
More pages torn, best-sellers unreturned.  
It wasn't really cancer of the marrow  
But monstrous thwarted love in his bones that burned.

## LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The first door that He came to  
there was no response at all.  
He knocked and waited:  
a radio turned down low,  
padded steps to a squeaky bed.  
No doubt, a collector for something  
they thought.

The next,  
a similar hushing at first,  
then on the third volley  
a muffled suggestion,  
barefoot trek to an inch-wide crack.  
But seeing who it was  
— the crown, and the full-length robe —  
she told Him “Not today.”

The third,  
the knock was lost  
in the racket of kids’ TV ...  
Then the gruff man threatened  
his Dobermann Pinscher  
if He didn’t clear out.

O, sometimes, of course,  
He found that meal,  
a change of clothes and a permanent bunk.

But how many — frozen behind locked doors,  
suspended in twilight behind thick curtains —  
never guess  
that the lamp in the lean figure’s hand  
is brought as a gift?

## THROUGH THE WINDOW OF MY WALLET

Sometimes, after dinner for two,  
Through the window of my wallet, you  
Catch me by surprise.  
Passport photograph eyes  
Are not so easily averted  
As awkward topics of conversation are skirted.

## PASSED DEADLINES

The library book outstanding;  
The tax form overdue;  
The modest bill demanding  
Last month's payment, as you knew:  
It's like stepping from the aircraft  
Into air, just then to find  
As you feel the tug of earth  
You've left the parachute behind.

It's like a startled waking  
From dozing at the wheel:  
Before you've dreamt of braking,  
The roadside ditch is real.  
No use to fill the saucepan,  
No use to fetch the seed,  
For the plant you haven't watered,  
The bird you didn't feed.

The accepted invitation  
You remember late at night;  
The unwritten explanation  
For the card you didn't write:  
You can kick yourself and curse yourself,  
It doesn't change a thing  
For the friend wheeled in for surgery,  
The girl you didn't ring.

## FROM MY DIARY, BERLIN, 1990

A colleague, a scholar and teacher of Latin, informs me  
Of something amazing I'd otherwise no way of  
knowing.

It's wonderful news, and I hope it warms you as it  
warms me:

There's no doubt apparently, interest in Pliny is  
growing.

Old Pliny, the devil, he's back from the brink like the  
panda!

The true cognoscenti are confident — privately  
crowing.

No pushing from public relations or crude propaganda,  
The snowball's in motion — and interest in Pliny is  
growing!

The cultural shows on TV are as yet uncommitted:  
It's all Günter Grass, Joseph Beuys, perestroika, the  
Wall.

Opinions expressed on the state of the arts are  
embittered;

And one thing's for certain, there's no word of Pliny at  
all.

But that will all change if he's sprayed over buildings  
and T-shirts —

The hot tip at parties that all the top people are  
throwing.

Marcel Reich-Ranicki will marshal the media experts,  
Then make his pronouncement — and have all the  
punters kowtowing!

Or so I imagine. My colleague has spared me the  
details —  
And freed me to dream of a world where we'd reap  
without sowing.  
The Death of the Book (at whatever the price that it  
retails)  
May yet prove a bogy — if interest in Pliny is growing.

## LEGEND

The innings played in 1902  
Is not available on diskette;  
But moments of it feature yet  
In memories of a failing few  
Who couldn't name the current crew  
To win a friendly two-bob bet,  
And wouldn't believe it if they knew  
The pay the modern players get.

Thus Legend, like an old man's mind,  
Enlarges archetypal deeds  
From days before the floods come in  
— The thousand tests' distracting din —  
That men may meet some deeper needs,  
And faces glow though eyes grow blind.

## SEND-OFF FOR A GREAT AUNT

*I.M. Evelyn Dinsey*

As, when the cruise ship went astern,  
My coloured streamer in its turn  
    Broke, falling to the tide;  
No whistle-blast here, no brass band,  
But sudden slackness in my hand —  
    To learn that you have died.

By telephone we seldom use  
My father's voice conveys the news:  
    "She passed this morning. Yes."  
Should tears well up to mist my eyes?  
I feel no stab of cruel surprise,  
    No stirrings of distress;

Just slackness. Then the moment goes.  
The conversation overflows  
    With memories of you.  
But loss sounds in my father's voice:  
Where have they gone, the little boys,  
    Who loved the aunt they knew?

How can it be? What! No more hugs?  
No Auntie, wrapped in travelling rugs,  
    To greet us with a kiss?  
No Scottish pride: "I always say ..."?  
No tales of Home, the Farm? Today  
    But hints at all we'll miss.

The ship now goes ahead. You take  
At last the voyage we all must make;  
    You are not loath to go.  
I look to find you at the rail —  
Familiar figure, waving — , fail:  
    For you have gone below.

### MY FATHER'S SMILE

Turning in early as always,  
my father respectfully  
combs his hair, never knowing (as he says)  
whom he'll meet in his dreams.

I look up from books.  
Sleep marbled with dreams!  
Limbs sopping with sleep —  
the mind clear as a pool ...

But clean-shaven and trimmed  
despite shaggy appearance,  
I answer (I hear it and feel it)  
in kind: his fun in my chuckle

his smile on my face.

## LIGHTS OUT

and the dark  
by day crammed into cupboards  
squashed behind open doors  
cowed beneath beds

greet the dark flooding in  
through the flyscreens  
wholly as rock pools  
welcome the tide.

The body on the bed,  
having walked in the light,  
at first thrashes and flounders  
in alien shallows —

then metamorphosis  
the miracle occurs: and fatigue  
forces fins  
as in a travesty of Darwin.

## THE WORRY EGG

This is the one that won't crack,  
the one you kick out  
that always comes back.

This is the lump in the chest  
that shortens your step;  
the lie in the nest.

This may be all that remains  
for clutches of promise  
and infinite pains.

(And this, as you toss on your bed,  
can seem a grenade  
hurled at your head.)

Yet this is the arsonist's match;  
the grain in the oyster.  
This is the catch.

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