

oh the cruel war

an old gardener
with straw hat and shears in hand
and anzac medals
is standing on the corner
near a trimmed hedge
outside what i think is a
so-called repatriation hospital
with a smile on his face
watching children play
on the swings in the park
on the opposite corner

than fill a thousand graves

and is he thinking
this is what i fought for
maybe
or is he thinking
theyll have to stop that soon
and take up arms

just the agonies of hell

i should talk to him i spose
but we probably havent anything-in-common
in any case
and besides
my son is on the swings

DAVID FOOTT

ballad

my great grandfather was a collector
he collected many things:
a pair of war binoculars
even a pigs nose ring
his shelves were filled with all
the great books of the world
& record cabinets overflowed with voices often heard
he loved stamps & model trains
the pin feathers of exotic birds
shells & stones & coins from all around the world
he filled rooms with insects
mounted on paper white
& explored the world submicroscopic far into the night

they say he changed that afternoon
great grandma passed away
he became a child again
with nothing left to say
so he just sat in silence
in his room of clocks that stopped

the local council said one day
a motel must be built
our collective duty must be done
the town must be improved
they came to tell grandfather
that he would soon be moved
but he didn't seem to hear them
it's hard to change your ways
so they sent out the removal men
to shift him far away

said Hefty Joe the foreman
"jeez it's like a ruddy museum
wonder where the old bloke is
be damned if i can see 'im"

& so they huffed & panted
& shifted his old place
to a new & better location
on a modern housing estate

but the movers in their hurry
for progress & spiral growth
mistook grandpa for a wax dummy
& packed him away in a box

EDWARD DEANE