

## JOHN BLIGHT

### AFTERNOON AND EVENING – GATAKER'S BAY

I watch the water. Idly I sit under the pandanus palm, seeking shade until the shoreline's traverse widens beyond the beach and blends with the solidity of night. How venture on this stage — and find the dancers absent? The ballet of the waves has vanished. In the black east a hushed noise of assembly only (departing Dogberries). Not even a garment of light forward of the proscenium of nightfall. I've stayed too long, alone and late; and no moon is billed to appear. The shoreline links a tideless scallop of bays as I stroll up the headland . . . all seats are thrown back, the flat floor of each bay's theatres vacated by the shining audiences of planets, stars, meteors, which I have known reflecting in a customary evening's enchantment. Clouds pall across the sky. Water will soon become a personal sweat of reckoning on my bare head, soaking me through. I have noticed at low tide: rain . . . often rain at the ebb of light . . . and in what company? All whom I may meet: a few cowed priest-like fishermen choosing the gloom for their avowed purpose as I seek refuge.

### THE FORCE DON'T SMELL — (Scotland Yard Reports)

I can't believe that either the Superintendent or his inspectors could do wrong. The team of sergeants was innocent, I knew; although they had to snarl, appearing savage. I don't believe they were; and, as for the poor hampered constables, their ranks were made innocent by unction of direction. I was surprised that there was so little colour in the Force; instead, a niggard pattern — chessboard capbands. Even the 'jennies' po-styled helmets displayed plainly the chessboard complex . . . to make the criminals wonder, "Whose move next?" 'Fences' and 'hoods' checkmated on every confrontation. I moved a pawn away, myself, at near approach of the police entourage car. Doges once travelled between palaces with less aplomb. (Please help me out with terminology appropriate to Omnipotence). Yes! phlegm, nonchalance, impartiality and, Law and Order . . . by the Right, quick march! "They marched 'em orf, the ones on what they could lay 'ands an' 'andcuffs: into the paddy-waggons, then the watch-'ouses where the furniture was missin'." (Who had stolen this?) I lived quietly next door to a constable once. On a poor wage, he was. Could never afford plants in his only bed and, therefore, had no garden and no flowers to take to the angry sergeant; but wore a pistol strapped under his hairy armpit: there, to shoot body odour, I deduced, detecting the mystery for myself . . . yes, acting detective, so finding out reason why 'The Force Don't Smell'.