

BARRY O'DONOHUE

APRIL MUSIC

You'd think young men when grown up
would let history fall away,
tuck it up in albums, cupboards, in their
musty attics
with the sepia prints.
The past has a knack of always entering
through back doors, shuffling in
through disguises – a forgotten friend
from up north, old songs on Anzac day,
beer over war stories, a letter from away
over there? You'd think the future
when written, would fold the past away
neatly, and file it under '*unredeemable*'.
Just watch the screen doors in April,
everyone's gathering, cassias flood
the ground with yellow streamers, bands of
musicians form in silent armies all over
the land. Shut the door, shut out the world,
drink tea and think of swimming off Keppel Island,
drink Scotch, wine, drink away the years
and stumble onto a beach at Gallipoli
where lines of bloodstained men stand
in the grip of a legend – it's over
or begun? Switch out of here, turn the stereo
up, and let the music flood out the sound
of wind whipping through rocks,
the crunch of footsteps on sand.
Have another drink, you can't blot out
the past – today, the armies will march

again, and the past will be our past
singing old war songs,
breathing hard once again
in the hearts of old men.

E. S. FARAGHER

SPRING TRAFFIC ISLANDS

Man's hand, in these banks has planted daffodils
To herald spring with golden trumpet frills;
Yet thoughtless feet have trampled them
When hardly the bud had burst the stem;
Their petals pure the traffic's smoke
Has soiled with filth-filled air, and choked
The few survivors, so winter chills
Seem here to stay, despite the sunlight's cheery play.

Yet wait! Below broken blooms, once haughty,
What strange gardener gave weeds such glory?
For still blazing yellow cloaks the banks
From dandelions in endless ranks.
This flower no trampling kills, thank God,
This flower no trampling kills.