

BILL BEARD

SAM DIED.

I never knew you Sam.
Or your mother.
Only your great, round
blue eyes . . . amid flute-filled
fires of joy of nights
in your presence
– the grin and gurgle
as Jane, your aunt,
held you, and bounced your six months
on her knee.

Now, as I stand in the sun
this Sunday morning, beside
my camp fire in a dry creek bed,
I hear the west wind gently touch
a weeping willow tree; see an eagle
fly high in blue sky: and remember
yesterday's letter from Jane
"Sam died. Sam died two days ago.
Oh Bill, it's unbelievable.
I feel so helpless . . ."

two tears trickle off my cheek,
and I sing your eyes
into a far cathedral
of the sun.

So long Sam: until
under other skies,
we may meet, full throatedly.

I sit, naked to the sun,
and sharpen my tomahawk.

UNTITLED

I squat, or stand, in savannah
tablelands, altering
with the wind. A mantis

smiles: there is slow movement
in the leaves

. . . summer is heavy lidded, and
the powerful owl empties his eyes —

pray silently for those who laugh
with the trees;

night is gliding near;
shadows of the pale sky
echo their fear . . .

south coast, the sapphire coast
lies quiescent,
chanting only to the lonely
cloud's neap tide song:
but the eagle still rides
the west wind; and
a man there is seldom alone.

My feet lie dormant,
'neath off-coast hills.

Leaves fall, the half moon
wanes; dark hawks

go to ground, the season of fire
is dwindling

: the cold is hard by . . .