

*Nine Poems from Blue Mountain Journal*

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**David Brooks**

DREAM SONG

Stone-  
deaf and slack-shouldered, more  
like Mr Bones  
than a George Steiner of sheep

Henry reads the post-breakfast morning  
alert to the slightest.

mood  
of the cockatoos  
across the valley

direction of breeze  
scent of jasmine and fox poo

GURDJIEFF

George Gurdjieff  
in search of ancient wisdom  
travelled the length of Asia Minor  
and I can't but salute him: his sacred hymns  
are a deep knowing

but for me this room, these  
windows  
are enough

I cycle for exercise.

when the sheep come  
I look into their searching eyes

if a strange bird calls  
we turn almost as one

TREE FROG

Standing in the kitchen, late, ‘flooded  
with uncertainty’, as I was about to write

though perhaps not flooded, but uncertain certainly  
and regretful, having just heard  
of the illness of a long-ago friend

the night  
humming quietly as it always does, sound  
of traffic on the A32

rhythm  
of a tree frog  
breathing in  
and then tapping out  
the one simple note  
over and again

keeping a time  
we’re no longer part of

FENCE

Poetry clings to the surfaces  
like the chill on door-handles  
years in a desk-top  
pollen  
on a glass left out

sometimes, if you  
ease into it, approach  
it slant  
it may take you somewhere

into the creak  
of a magpie's wings, say,  
or the bottom  
of a paddock  
down among the trees  
where that ironbark  
fence has been waiting  
fifty years for you to see

UNDER THE LAST BLUE OF THE SKY

Under the last  
blue of the sky  
the trees with their thousand arms  
lean in toward the cabin

warm light  
spills from its windows

wind  
picks up

a gentle  
shuffling of branches

as if someone  
were playing music

and I am, I am

ADAGIO MORNING

It's one of those  
Vivaldi adagio mornings

forest  
underlain with canals

largos of hooves  
shuffling over damp grass

shadows of gondolas  
lapping the trunks of stringybarks

ARRIVAL

leaving the house I check an item of mail  
kept on the boot-bench two days

to give the spider who'd settled on it  
a chance to move safely away

time in this place so  
different from what it used to be, no

rush to anything, only an occasional disturbance  
to the peace of grass and trees, sound

of frogs at night  
human voices every day or two

I could tell a long story  
of how I came to be here

in truth it's impossible to say

ORPHEUS 2 (*The Dance*)

How could a sheep  
be a god of poetry, trafficker

and harbinger of darkness?  
yet just this month

he's brought almost twenty verses  
and is here again, Jason attendant

insisting on their daily  
allocations

whisps of thyme  
snagged in their breast-wool

forest  
singing behind them

trees  
swaying in the dance

ORPHEUS 3

As if I were Hades himself  
he comes sometimes, eyes

downcast, muzzle  
close to the ground. Penitent,

guilty of nothing but his own innocence  
leaning in through the door

to search the room's shadows as though  
there were a question he's wanted to ask

or he's lost something hereabouts  
and is half afraid he might find it

each of us  
staring into the other's helplessness, going

back into the noonday dark