

Nine Poems from Blue Mountain Journal

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