
Gough and Johnny Were Lovers

R. F. Brissenden

Penguin Books

because of their supposedly unreliable political colouring. Canberra, oddly enough, seemed at the time to be relatively isolated from this – and it was from the security of the ANU's ivory tower that we were able to laugh at the situation in songs like 'Wouldn't it!' and 'The Back-Blocks Academic'.

Vietnam changed this as it was to change so many things. On January 18, 1967 when Air Vice-Marshal Ky from South Vietnam made a State visit to Canberra a contingent of New South Wales police was brought in to help deal with the expected demonstration. Relations between ACT police and demonstrators up till this time had been relatively cordial. With the addition of the boys in blue from over the border, however, a new note of violence entered the scene. Eighty policemen were assigned to control a crowd of two hundred demonstrators outside the Hotel Canberra. Although the demonstration by all (other than police) accounts was orderly, four people, including Bruce McFarlane, a Research Fellow of the ANU, were arrested and charged with offensive behaviour and resisting arrest. McFarlane, a mild-mannered, bespectacled rather stout and unathletic person, was in particular accused of pushing people about and endangering the safety of women and children and of attacking Constable J. A. Fogarty by leaping on his back. After lengthy and expensive legal proceedings all the accused were acquitted.

The situation seemed to cry out for a song, especially as the friends of the accused had to organise a number of parties to raise funds for their defence. 'The Ballad of Muscles McFarlane' was duly written, and passed in time into the local repertoire. In 1970 Ken Buckley published it in his book, *Offensive and Obscene: A Civil Liberties Casebook*, where it forms part of the chapter, 'Canberra Rugger – Sydney Police Style', that deals with the incident.

The only other pieces in this collection that are of an overtly political character are 'Gough and Johnny were Lovers', 'The Ballad of the Drover's Dog' and 'Waltzing O'Reilly'. The events they refer to are so recent that they require no annotation or explanation. It is perhaps worth recalling, however, that the first public rendition of 'Gough and Johnny' was given if not under Vice-Regal patronage at least in the Vice-Regal presence. An account of the occasion is given in a Court Circular prepared by Humphrey McQueen and published in *Meanjin*.⁵

The rest of the poems in the book are also of relatively recent vintage. They are all convivial in tone, they are designed to be read aloud or recited rather than sung, and they celebrate the joys of friendship and the delight that can be found in drinking good

wine in congenial company. If they strike a mellow note than the earlier pieces this is a reflection, among other things, of the way in which Canberra has changed. It is now a city of over two hundred thousand people and is generally a much more civilised place than it was when I and my friends first came to live here.

Two of the most obvious signs of the way things have improved is the increase in the number of pubs and clubs in the city and the increase in the number of poets who now live in Canberra or the surrounding countryside. Among the clubs one of the most pleasant and distinguished is the ANU Staff Centre. It flourishes under the management of the genial and hard-working Jim Murphy: and under his patronage the commendable practice has grown up of inviting some of the local poets – and occasionally some from elsewhere – to contribute verses to the Staff Centre's annual Christmas Wine List. The publication of the List is celebrated with a Poets' Lunch – and most of the pieces in this section were written for this occasion.

Two were not: the lines to Brian Sweeney, as the title indicates, were inspired by the publication of a poem; and 'With a Glass of Spaetlese' was written to celebrate the official opening of the A. D. Hope Building in the Australian National University. But as a Poets' Lunch without Hope is almost inconceivable and as Sweeney has been a Poets' Luncheon guest these pieces are obviously appearing in the right company.

'Company' is in every way the appropriate word with which to bring this introductory note to a conclusion, for although I alone must take authorial responsibility for the verses in this collection, they must also to some extent be seen as part of a communal effort by a group of old friends and acquaintances in Canberra. Over the years these songs and poems have given us all a deal of innocent amusement and entertainment. I hope the fun can now be shared by a wider circle of singers and readers.

R. F. Brissenden

Notes

- ¹ *Old Bush Songs and Rhymes of Colonial Times*, enlarged and revised from the collection of A. B. Paterson, by Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1957), vii
- ² 'The Acton School', in *Australia Writes*, an anthology edited for the Canberra Fellowship of Australian Writers by T. Inglis Moore (F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1953), 252
- ³ *The Age*, 20/3/64
- ⁴ See, among others, *The Bulletin*, 28/3/64
- ⁵ 'Down Under Buñuel', *Meanjin* (XXXV, 1, 1976, 219-221)

Gough and Johnny

C



C7

Gough and Johnny were lovers, Oh, and how they did love -

F



C

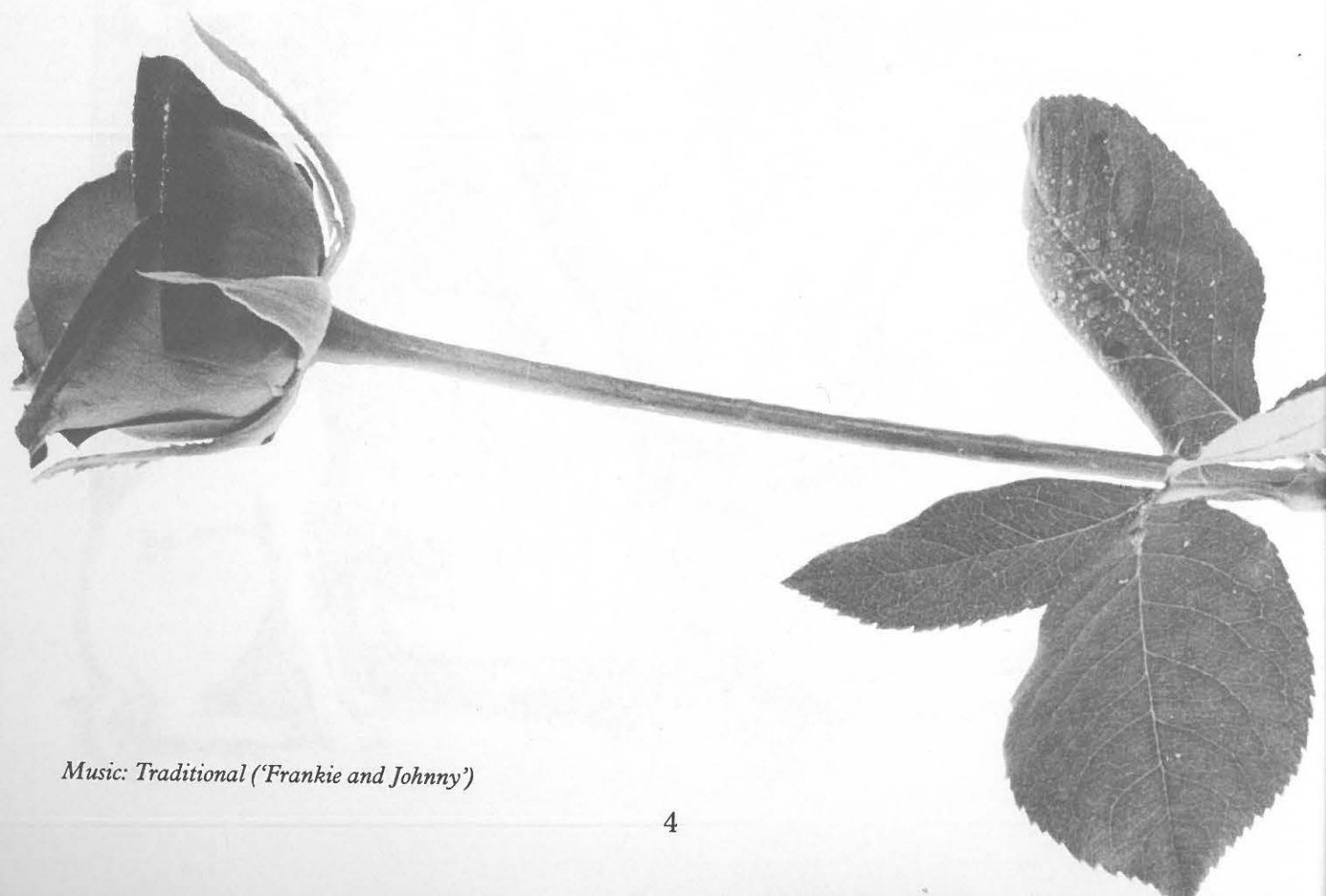
Swore to be true to each other, Just as true as the stars above. He was his

G7



C

man, But he done him wrong.



Music: Traditional ('Frankie and Johnny')

Gough and Johnny were lovers,
Oh, and how they did love -
Swore to be true to each other,
Just as true as the stars above.

He was his man,
But he done him wrong.

Now, Gough he went to the Senate,
Just for a vote for Supply;
Gough he went to the Senate,
But they spat right in his eye.

He was their man,
But they done him wrong.

So Gough, he went and saw Johnny.
He said, 'John, it's up to you.'
'Don't you worry, old mate,' said John,
'For I'll stick to you like glue.

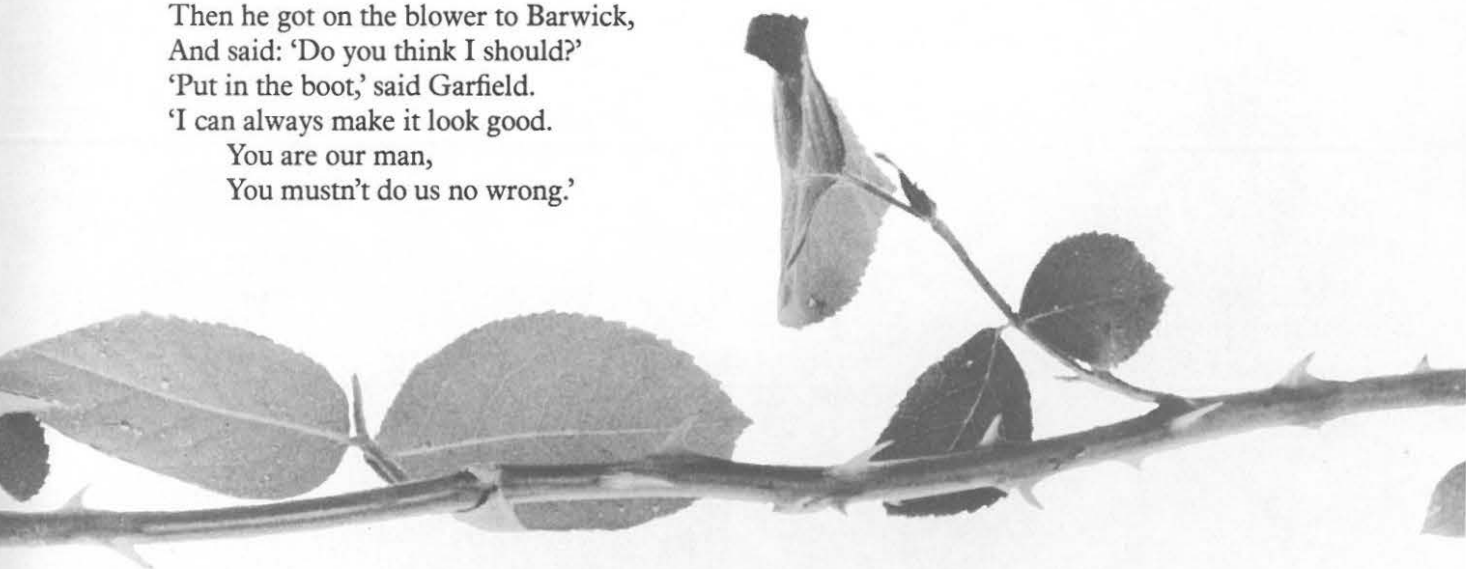
I am your man,
I'll never do you no wrong.'

But he got on the 'phone to Santa
- And I don't mean Santa Claus -
Yes, he got on the 'phone to Santa,
And said: 'What can I do for the cause?

For I'm your man,
I'll never do you no wrong.'

Then he got on the blower to Barwick,
And said: 'Do you think I should?'
'Put in the boot,' said Garfield.
'I can always make it look good.

You are our man,
You mustn't do us no wrong.'

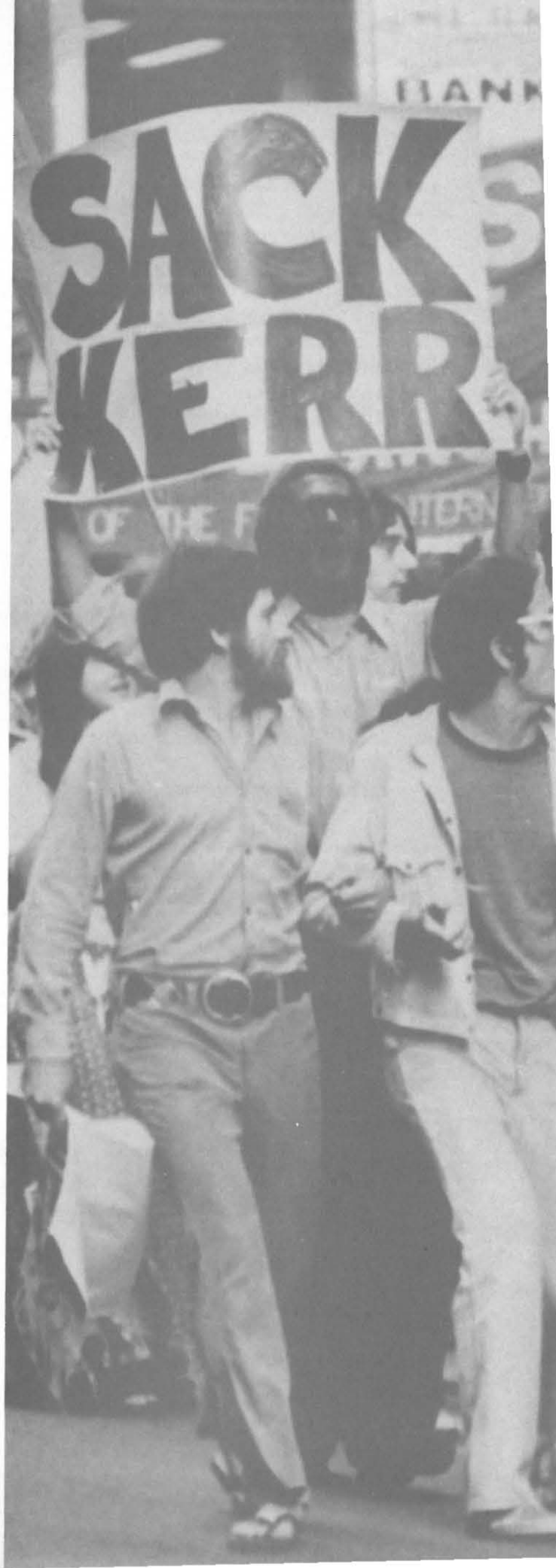


So when Gough went to Yarralumla
There was somebody parked round the back.
'I'm terribly sorry, old mate,' said John.
'But they told me to give you the sack.
I am their man,
I'll never do them no wrong.'

But Gough drew his Constitution,
And he pointed it right at John.
He said: 'There's a clause here, Johnny,
Says you've got to keep me right on.
You are my man,
You mustn't do me no wrong.'

'To hell with your Constitution!'
Said John. 'And to hell with your rules!
The Collins Street push have told me
Them rules is just for fools.
I am their man,
I'll never do them no wrong.'

This story has a moral:
Don't make a cur your friend.
And never ever trust a Grouper, boys,
For he'll do you in the end.
He is their man
And he's done us all wrong.



The Croppy Boy's Farewell to Canberra or Mick Young's Molonglo Lament

C G7 C

It's farewell to those Treasury Benches;

F C

Dear cabinet colleagues, farewell! And fare

F C

well to those four-bottle lunches Where I

G7 C

used for to cut such a swell.

It's farewell to those Treasury Benches;
Dear cabinet colleagues, farewell!
And farewell to those four-bottle lunches
Where I used for to cut such a swell.

*Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ay;
If I'd ordered only three bottles,
I'd still be on those benches today.*

When I was a randy gun shearer
I once heard an old ringer say:
'Watch out for those wide Combes, young feller,
If you're shearing down Canberra way.'

*Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ay:
If only I'd heeded that warning,
I'd not be on the back bench today.*

'The Molonglo mosquitoes are murder,
And the ferrets won't leave you alone:
While the KGB bombs you with vodka,
The ASIO spooks bug your 'phone.'

*Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ay:
If it weren't for those ASIO buggers
I'd be back on those benches today.*

To Port Adelaide I've been transported:
Dear colleagues, consider my fate!
I've collected Bob's boot up my khyber
Just for tipping the wink to my mate.

*Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ay:
If I hadn't whispered to Walshy
I'd still be on those benches today.*

Shed a tear for Mick Young, then, good people;
And for poor Davey Combe say a prayer:
A large lad whose modest ambition
Was to be just a small millionaire.

*Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ay:
If it weren't for that modest ambition
I'd be back there with Bob Hawke today.*

So farewell to those Treasury Benches;
Dear cabinet colleagues, farewell!
And farewell to those four-bottle lunches
Where I used for to cut such a swell.

*Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-dity
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ay:
If I can cut lunch to one bottle
I'll be back on those benches to stay.*



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT
AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE STYLE?

Walking through Canberra or The Ballad of Muscles MacFarlane

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 3/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes, and the chords are indicated by letters (C, F, G7, D7, Em) above the staff. The melody is simple and folk-like, with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics tell a story of a man named Muscles MacFarlane who is walking through Canberra, carrying a gun and a stick, and is being questioned by someone who should see but that terrible man. The song ends with the man claiming to be from New South Wales and not a liar.

Staff 1: Chords: C, F, G7, C. Lyrics: I was walking through Canberra where the bullshit grows thick, With me

Staff 2: Chords: C, D7, G7. Lyrics: handcuffs and notebook, me gun and me stick, When

Staff 3: Chords: C, Em, F, C. Lyrics: who should I see but that terrible man: It was

Staff 4: Chords: C, F, G7, C. Lyrics: Muscles Mac Farlane, the pride of his clan.

Staff 5: Chords: C, Em, F, C. Lyrics: All in blue, all in blue, Each word I swear is true: I'm a

Staff 6: Chords: C, F, G7, C. Lyrics: New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.

Music: Traditional ('Villikins and his Dinah' and 'Riding through Texas')

I was walking through Canberra where the bullshit grows thick,
With me handcuffs and notebook, me gun and me stick,
When who should I see but that terrible man:
It was Muscles MacFarlane, the pride of his clan.

*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*

MacFarlane, he stood at the rear of the crowd;
He was pushing and shoving, which is not allowed.
Men, women and children he'd felled to the ground,
And hundreds of bodies lay scattered around.

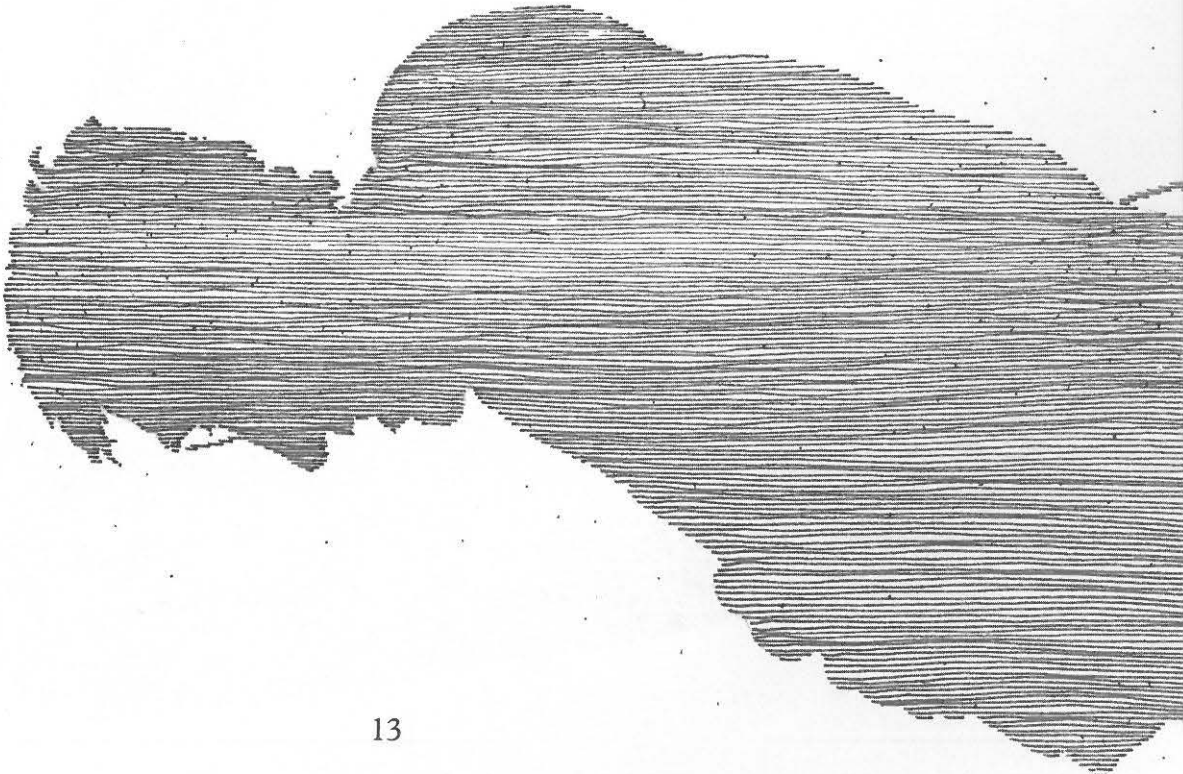
*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*

I'm a tough Sydney sergeant, that none can dispute,
With an ivory skull and a size fifteen boot;
I eat students for breakfast and hoodlums for tea,
But Muscles MacFarlane scared the Christ out of me.

*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*

He stood eight feet tall and weighed twenty-five stone;
Like two bloody red stop-lights his spectacles shone.
So me and me coppers, we turned tail and ran
At the sight of MacFarlane, that terrible man.

*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*



As Muscles MacFarlane advanced to attack
Even Iron-Fist Fogarty showed him his back;
And that's how MacFarlane, with one mighty bound,
Bore Fogarty struggling, brave lad, to the ground.

*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*

Once MacFarlane was down we all jumped him, of course,
For that's what we're taught in the New South Wales force:
If a bloke's on the ground we can all put the boot in,
If he gets up and runs, then we're licensed to shoot him.

*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*

That's me story, Your Worship – it's here in me book;
And if you don't believe me you're welcome to look.
And should Muscles MacFarlane attempt to deny
What I've said – just remember that policemen can't lie.

*All in blue, all in blue,
Each word I swear is true:
I'm a New South Wales copper, I can't tell a lie.*

Wouldn't It!

(Sung to the tune of 'Wouldn't It Be Lovely' from My Fair Lady)

All we want is a chair somewhere,
Sydney or Melbourne – we don't care –
Or Timbuctoo, if they'll pay the fare:
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely!

Lots of students for us to teach,
A VC's job within easy reach,
And one enormous chair a-piece:
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely!

Oh, so lovely sitting abso-bloomin'-lutely pat,
We'd be emeriti, before they'd wriggle us out of that!

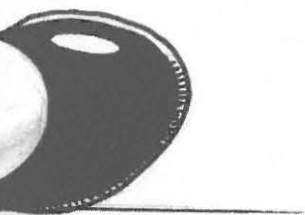
A chair for you, and a chair for me;
Think how respectable we would be –
We'd even give talks on the ABC;
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely,
Lovely, lovely, lovely, lovely!

But it's no damn' good dreaming dreams like these;
It's no good having three referees;
Somehow or other we can't please –
They don't think we're lovely.

They don't want you, and they don't want me,
But the reason's not very hard to see:
They want mediocrity –
Yes, they think it's lovely.

Oh, so lovely when professors never make a noise;
Universities don't like the wild colonial boys.

So Canberra is the place for us –
Nobody there ever makes a fuss:
If you ride the right or the left-wing bus
They still think you're lovely,
Lovely, lovely, lovely, lovely.



The Ballad of the Drover's Dog *With apologies to Henry Lawson*

A musical score for a song in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: A, E7, A, A7, D, D#dim, E7, and A. The lyrics are: 'Across the stony ridges Across the Canberra plain Bill Hayden the bold drover Comes riding home again. Up Queensland way he's battled To mend the old machine - But now the struggle's over And he's kept the party clean.'

A *E₇*

Across the stony ridges Across the Canberra plain Bill

A

Hayden the bold drover Comes riding home again. Up

A *A₇* *D* *D_#dim*

Queensland way he's battled To mend the old machine - But

E₇ *A*

now the struggle's over And he's kept the party clean.

Across the stony ridges
Across the Canberra plain
Bill Hayden the bold drover
Comes riding home again.
Up Queensland way he's battled
To mend the old machine -
But now the struggle's over
And he's kept the party clean.

His faithful mates are waiting
To greet him with a cheer:
'You rolled them, Bill, in Brisbane.
You'll be in the Lodge next year!'
But stormy clouds are gathering;
The sky turns inky black;
And the faithful ranks start thinning
Behind the drover's back.

Through the wilderness he's led them:
It's all gone the way he's planned.
Now across the last wild river
They can see the promised land.
'Come on boys!' cries Bill the drover.
'This is what we've waited for.
Just one last dash together,
And we'll reach the further shore.



'We've breasted bigger rivers
When floods were at their height.
Now the current's flowing our way:
We'll be home and hosed tonight.
The polls are rising nicely,
Malcolm's sinking like a stone . . .'
But when he looks behind him
He finds he stands alone.

All the tried and trusted comrades
Who for years have stayed the course
Have left him for another
Who rides a flashier horse.
And who could now have blamed him
If he said: 'I've had enough.
You're a mob of thankless bastards?'
- Bill is made of sterner stuff.

He turns his trusty stockhorse
And takes the second place.
'The leader's not important, boys:
What matters is the race.
Ride boldly, lads, ride boldly
And never fear a spill.
I shall not stand between you
And the light upon the hill.'

But he bends to speak to Rover
The best dog on the plains,
And murmurs to his horses
As he strokes their shaggy manes:
'Here's just a word for history
To set the record right:
This good old drover's dog of mine
Could lead us home tonight.'



The Canberra Blues

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the staff at various points: C, C7₃, C, C7, C, C7, C, C7, B7, C, Am, and C. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes.

Let's sing a song of Canberra, the nation's capital: It's a
very pretty city, but it's got no heart at all. You get those
bad Canberra blues, Get on the
booze; You get those awful Canberra blues.



Let's sing a song of Canberra, the nation's capital:
It's a very pretty city, but it's got no heart at all.
You get those bad Canberra blues,
Get on the booze;
You get those awful Canberra blues.

We drink a lot of beer here, we've got a lot of friends;
It's like being at a party, but the party never ends.
You get those bad Canberra blues,
Stay on the booze;
You get those awful Canberra blues.

I came to this fair city, looking round for work.
That was twenty years ago today - I'm still a base-grade clerk.
I've got those bad Canberra blues
Which I can't lose;
I've got those bad bureaucratic blues.

Got no little girlie to cheer up my life -
If ever I get any loving, it's with somebody else's wife.
I've got those bad Canberra blues.
I'm on the loose.
I've got those mean adulterous blues.

Go east or west in this fair city, of one thing you may be sure:
You'll see the same damned faces that you saw the day before.
You'll get those bad Canberra blues,
Get on the booze;
You'll get those dreadful capital city blues.

You're broke and go into a bar, no matter when or where -
The mates that you've bought drinks for will be somewhere else, not there.
You'll have those bad Canberra blues
Without the booze;
You'll have those awful dry old blues.

Some people say they'll never stay, it's driving them insane:
They get right out of Canberra by the quickest train or 'plane.
They leave those bad Canberra blues,
They leave the booze;
They leave those awful Canberra blues.

But here's a little mystery I'd like you to explain:
Those folks who run away from here, they all come back again -
Back to those bad Canberra blues,
Back to the booze,
Back to those governmental, bureaucratic,
University, academic,
Matrimonial, very adulterous,
Always alcoholic blues.