

Poetry Series

**Ivan Donn Carswell**  
**- poems -**

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# Ivan Donn Carswell()

...If I said I wrote poetry for a reason I'd have to defend my reasoning every day. So I don't. I write for fun – and if it isn't fun it's better than being bored or feeling useless. I admit to feeling bored and useless occasionally.

But there is more to Poetry than one man's opinion of it.

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There are many views – no less especially here. Most, sadly, are neither original nor particularly new because that is what we've come to expect as an unforgiving characteristic of this Site.

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But occasionally there are gems to be found, wicked nuggets of gold garnered from sparsest sands. I'm tossing in what I can. If you've encountered something of mine you consider worthy, congratulations. Toss me a line. I'll understand!

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My arbitrary decision to limit poems posted here to 100 will stand as long as Poemhunter continues its childishly innocuous and anonymous censorship practises. I have seen no sign of it improving yet.

If  
you're  
bored,  
Try reading: -

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ivan\_donn\_

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## ' Ruddy Shame

A Ruddy shame they've shafted  
Kev this way - he's always been  
a decent man, a nicer bloke you  
understand in politics is rarity -  
a precious gift disgracing all the  
dirty depths these pollied pace

He's plain for sure, of vapid flair  
inflated by sincerity to where it  
makes you cringe; it's cruel - he  
cannot lie convincingly, concede  
or hide distress about duplicity in  
lives his nearest colleagues led

With due regret it made him tick  
I'd guess; his interest isn't power  
of status misapplied, the game's  
right of reply he sacrificed for air  
to breathe that's clear and freed  
intrigues of other's perfidy

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# A Smile At No Expense

dwelling in uncertainty  
that vacillates between  
despair and hopelessness  
swamped in depths of  
darkened introspection  
edged with silver chalices  
dispensing only misery  
– oh, is this figure me

cannot reach beyond good  
yesterday where joy at no  
expense conspires with glee  
to free at least a winsome  
smile – but wasted in this  
hapless halophile  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Accomplice

a day spent assiduously  
avoiding events ordained  
in a bigger universe than  
this tiddly one seems

but like an accomplished  
gymnast I manage to do  
handstands on one arm  
while clutching the means  
to remain upright –

if you could imagine  
cleaning your glasses  
with a single hand you'll  
be close to what  
I mean;

and if you can –  
<i>and be entertaining</i>  
– you're the perfect  
accomplice

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Achieving Holiness

A bare moment's cleanliness warns  
of imminent death; no question that  
virtue comes at the obtuse end of a  
duster wielded deftly - there are no  
accolades to ring in this room swept  
clean of poetic debris, no carolling a  
desk conscience-clear, of farewells to  
hook and feather littered aspirations

But eyes feast on space wondrously  
free of disparate signs someone else  
lived here - discarded skin cells and  
detritus of defoliate hair, of oblique  
insights estranged, compliments to  
order as change achieves holiness  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Adversaries

Why bother with a reply that leaves  
the question alive? By firing blanks  
survival isn't surmised in a gesture  
of obeisance rather than defence;  
old timers say, to keep your hopes  
alive aim where ricochets play the  
odds sweetly and defiance means  
you can't be swayed by deference

The firing line isn't a place to stay  
without an abundance of the best  
copper-tipped epithets - you don't  
need any direct hits to make your  
antipathy evident - and that has a  
way of discouraging adversaries

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# After The Rain

Resurgent greens and stronger hues  
combined within the colours in-between  
will spring again, the reddish brown  
has nearly gone and all the silver  
greys erased in darker shades  
that shine with slickly natured stains  
after the gentle, gentle rain.

Clouded skies unite and demonize  
the dry and dusty plight of days of brutal  
beating sun and scathing wind,  
the thin veneer is quickly peeled  
and puddle-swamped in bloodied muddled  
swirls of coloured slushy earth  
that tinge the tracks of heavy wheels.

The welcome cold at first conceals its  
damp and chilling steel, and in the icy  
shades of night the frigid bite ignites  
less welcome sentiments until the wrap  
of insulation seals the warming heat,  
sanctifies the stolid feet and frigid toes  
with subtle sweep of warming blood.

And in the morning when the sun returns  
to claim the earth the mist surprises, rising  
unabashed and clean again to grace the  
nascent waiting skies after the rain.

Ivan Donn Carswell



# After The Recession

The bitchin' never stops does it...!  
If it's not for becoming a Republic or  
Remembrance to be preferred over  
ANZAC Day its speakers stirring  
about '*refugees*' aka '*boat people*'  
expediently deemed '*asylum seekers*'

And then there's a lobby to suspend  
fiscal stimulation immediately with an  
equally vehement counter-claim that  
to do so will kill the economy despite  
it being pretty much back on its feet  
and nearly in the black again

Concerns regarding carbon tax and  
global warming echo insanely in a  
chamber of confused debate fuelled  
by entrepreneurs straining to abet  
a sure way to make money out of  
the most catastrophic event yet

If I wasn't such a sceptic with less  
than profound views of essentially  
septic scenes of commonplace I'd say  
we are back where we were before,  
on track, and that rabid self-interest  
rules supreme once more

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Aliana Grace

A message came from Aliana Grace  
to say the thongs – okay, *'havaianas'*  
were unerringly what every little girl  
would need first day she walks outside.

Aliana reached three weeks today, tho'  
very sweet and much advanced I think  
her chances of a promenade outdoors  
in pretty pink will be a while delayed.

Yet judging her dexterity in SMS I'll  
have to think again – if she's a prodigy  
her *'havaianas'* I deduce will certainly  
be graced as well as glissé ballet shoes.

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Angela's Poem

letting moments like this slip  
regales a dream's allure  
insubstantial drifts of form are  
sure as melody to inner ear

thoughts are clear and echo  
in the bells' carillon clarity of  
massed accord – resonate to  
peerless themes of simple call□

wonderment entrapped in family  
gauze has kept this seemingly state  
attentive to each living breath –  
and that's the awe

your caring words are piety to  
void the sphere of blasphemy  
epithets of selflessness are  
where I'll make accord  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

## Another barbeque tonight

It rained throughout the night, a truly welcome sound that eases sleep although we barely slept - we were distressed by other things. Today the kitchen's centre ring, the kitchen of Anita's dreams. It's had a long gestation, twenty years it's taken just to reach this actual day (that's in this iteration, there's been some trial versions in the past), and now at last the preparation is complete.

I had already penned a verse called 'Camping in a kitchen', a bit of whimsy yet to be released, I'll post it in the week and let it rest, assured it says what was intended. The work indeed was never easy but it rendered unto Caesar what was hers, now it is the measure of Anita's dreams. To see her vision vested in an emptiness that isn't will be cream upon her cake, a cake she'll bake which time will make her reputation awesome.

Even as I write the rain remains a subtle, soothing sound within the aura of Anita's dreams, a complement surrounding where we live, a sign that what we scheme is timeless in itself, the wealth of what we have and do includes the kitchen soon to be restored to life, includes relief in sight from crippling drought, includes returning green, the birds who flock and scream their joy with mien delight and, good Heavens, another barbeque tonight!

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Australia Day

might have been a consequence of  
three strong coffees or the splendid  
isolation but woe is me, did I forget  
which was our National Day?

'tho every day's a holiday out here  
when living green, in landed hearts  
seasons tend to rule the roost while  
celebrations merely lend a hand

so when I made apologies to friends  
an allergy prevented me attending  
there today (a barbeque no less)  
they kindly told me where and when

National BBQ Day's next Tuesday  
I'm advised as I sneeze vigorously, a  
wet disclaimer of hay-fevered eyes;  
good heavens, how could I forget!  
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Australia Day was Tuesday 26 January

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Backbench Democracy

LNP shenanigans delight the native crowd again – but geeze, Wilson Tuckey quoted in the same shrewd sentence as His Royal Shyness, the Front Bench Opposition Health spokesman, Peter Dutton is beyond belief.

Who'd have seen a semblance of connect between the two except the ABC? That Peter failed a pre-selection bid for the Dickson Seat he holds doesn't have too much to do with Old 'Ironbar' unless you're real short-poled for words.

Senator Barnaby Joyce, a sort of born-again neo-evangelist with National(istic) leanings said, 'relax, it's just Democracy in action', and he may be right; it's that *odd thing* only we and backbenchers in Opposition might get to exercise.  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Beaching Free

If this is the way to celebrate freedom  
from four walls of circumstance - then  
I'm lost and confined as before; we're  
driving to the beach - there'll be space,  
open air and relativity more in tune with  
liberty. My doggy mate Podge shares

Some of these as suits he can wear if  
his cortège of haberdashery fails appeal,  
raising a greater case for emancipation  
than I as he sees the car's confinement  
merely an extension of now and not as  
I imagined means to an end

In his way of thinking if opportunity is a  
rare visitor, its not dissimilar to staying in  
place - so here I am writing while he, in  
good cheer, reclines on the rear seat  
enjoying the change in his 'now' which  
isn't a shared trait, not even vaguely

We alight at Bribie's Sylvan Beach, a  
wry deprecation of deific meaning, into  
reach of a debatable westerly sweeping  
across Pumicestone; Podge doesn't see  
anomalies, breezily pees everywhere  
with incredible dedication

Birthday girl, Ms Munificence, disagrees  
any sense of direction so the wind luckily  
escapes rational categorisation - she slips  
sylph-like into a trance of contentment and  
we are recompensed grandly for making  
this the journey of the day

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Bed Of Roses

Who stole your scented memories  
pot-pourri's of your youth with  
vacant promises – a charlatan  
a superficial swain with wisdom  
urging platitudes you should  
believe in beds of blooming roses

The blooms shall wilt more  
quickly than the dust can gather  
scent will fade before the fragile  
petals lose their colour – even drops  
of fragrant oil cannot engender  
dying blooms to rise again

Phantom forms pretend in ravaged beds  
embraced by brittle thorns and blighted  
leaves of pruned and trenchant covenants  
pallid petals rust in aromatic pots amidst  
an endless trust of odds and ends that  
matter like the photo frames contain  
a past we nearly missed together

So come with me my love ascend  
to watch the shadows lengthen  
on this special day  
lie reposed and reminisce on pillows  
stuffed with petal blooms and be  
amazed our marriage bed is still  
a bed of blooming roses

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Ivan Donn Carswell



# Being Frank

Let's call you Frank,  
Josaia Voreqe is a bit too,  
putting it mildly, Fijian

I might add Bainimarama  
is a mouthful of unsolvable  
vernacular but I'm used to it

Frank, what can I say? Ensign  
when we met and now you're  
Commodore CinC FMF

Not to mention Prime  
Minister, acting President,  
Chief of Defence Staff, etc

You've come a long way  
from the shy, self-effacing  
mild but good mannered boy

Become a martinet for truth  
and loyalty to a Service ill-used  
by its corrupted political chiefs

Today you've paid your Pacific  
neighbours a fair compliment  
in eminent diplomatic sense

Bugger off you Envoys you say  
it's my pseudo-coup and I'll  
get it right my way

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Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama  
prime minister of Fiji  
also called Frank Bainimarama  
born April 27, 1954, Kiuva, Fiji

Fijian military leader who led a 2006 coup that resulted in his becoming acting

president (2006–07) and later acting prime minister (2007–) of Fiji. Although Bainimarama was a Methodist, he attended the Roman Catholic Marist Brothers High School in Suva, Fiji. From 1975 he pursued a career in the Fiji navy, rising to become commander (1988), captain (1994), and chief of staff (1998). On March 1, 1999, he was appointed commodore and commander of all Fiji's military forces.

On May 19, 2000, a group led by disgruntled businessman George Speight overthrew the coalition government headed by Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry. Bainimarama persuaded then president Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to resign on May 29, 2000, and took over as head of an interim military government in what many considered a counter coup. The Muanikau Accord, signed by Bainimarama (as head of government) and Speight, led to the release of the insurgents' hostages (including Chaudhry) on July 13. A few days later Bainimarama returned power to an interim government led by newly appointed Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase and Pres. Ratu Josefa Iloilo.

Following elections in 2001 and again in May 2006, Qarase was returned to power, but the dissension between him and Bainimarama continued, particularly with regard to what Bainimarama perceived as the prime minister's soft treatment of high-ranking chiefs and politicians who had been convicted for their roles in the 2000 coup. The government tried to oust Bainimarama while he was overseas visiting troops in October 2006, but the government's alternative commander declined to take over, and senior officers rallied behind their commander. On his return to Fiji, Bainimarama purged the army of senior officers whom he considered disloyal and increased pressure on Qarase's government. In November 2006 Bainimarama demanded the withdrawal of two bills, one of which included the power to grant amnesty to coup leaders; he also demanded the dismissal of the police commissioner, Australian Andrew Hughes. Qarase said that the bills would be put on hold and Hughes's appointment would be reviewed. Unimpressed, Bainimarama's troops effectively took over the reins of power on Dec. 5, 2006. Bainimarama had the parliament dissolved, and he deposed Iloilo to become acting president.

While his supporters claimed that the military takeover was necessary in light of Qarase's corrupt actions, others believed that Bainimarama undertook the coup to avoid prosecution over his alleged mismanagement of military funds, which was then the subject of a government investigation. On Jan. 5, 2007, Bainimarama reinstated Iloilo as president and became interim prime minister; he also promised to hold democratic elections in 2010. In April 2007 he dissolved the Great Council of Chiefs—an administrative body of traditional chiefs with the power to appoint Fiji's president and vice president—after it refused to accept his choice for vice president. In February 2008 Bainimarama reinstated the council and appointed himself chairman. He continued to put off the date for the promised elections.

Morgan Tuimalealiifano

In April 2009 the Fiji Court of Appeal ruled that the Bainimarama government had been put in place illegally after the 2006 coup, a ruling that effectively dissolved the government. Two days later Iloilo announced that he was abrogating the 1997 constitution, and he dismissed the country's judges. He appointed a new interim government with Bainimarama again as prime minister and postponed national elections once again, this time until at least 2014.

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Belonging

that sense of belonging went West  
wrapped in cambric with my dreams  
I know I fit into the Land – it can't  
get better than that but there were  
moments when I saw through wider  
eyes; now I stand where I only see  
clear to the end of each tree row  
without restraint and wonder why

there is no asking more than what  
you gave unstintingly for love that  
ate your grace and nascent wisdom  
greedily – it went to feed without  
complaint a displaced soul who's  
spaced uneasy of his origins

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Ivan Donn Carswell

## Bigrit/I/B

Yesterday's dust storm dashed  
unrealistic pretension about  
Nature's propriety – there's  
nothing better expressed than  
severely reduced visibility

Seeing just 300 metres at a pinch  
suggests something akin to dusk  
at midday; the stench of it rasped  
crudely with each breath and eyes  
vexed with the grit

It had come a long way, 3,000 km  
from origins south blanketing towns  
and cities delaying schedules playing  
all merry hell up the coastline –  
it wasn't just me complaining  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Bilove Ran Out/I/B

the simple account  
- *love ran out*  
no-longer sustained by  
medieval bracelets charmed  
with romantic favour

you could see it  
as attributed by fate  
grafted in years of hard labour  
sold down the river by  
impossible dreams

they were fairy tales  
too deeply inured in  
endless mythologies  
unsecured debentures  
naive fantasies failed

and it's slaughter day  
with a willing cancer  
in the shape of me  
behind a mask for  
a heart broken

love ran out for you  
and you were freed  
while I am nailed  
unrequited  
for eternity  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Birthdays

A Ladies Day not far away  
from where the singing's  
never done – a place where  
bliss extends its hands  
in gracious greetings and  
two birthdays weigh as one

Freja Jean is just a year today  
Patricia May a little more  
but they are borne in harmony  
by joy that joins them  
each to each as only  
dearest family can

We wish you well and wear a  
smile that tells our feelings  
fair – I'd be there in an instant  
all and am indeed a rare and  
privileged fly declared upon  
this celebration's wall  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Blame It On Pollen

The teary eyes do not surprise  
though faerie dust will disagree  
that it disposed a runny nose  
or ever caused a chary sneeze

*'Rhinitis'* you say a mite amazed  
as if a comic malady  
with focus on a mucus to  
effect a balanced sanity

You are for sure it's not your  
war and try to counsel warily  
but this disquiet begets a riot  
and rages on distressfully

Immunity or harmony would  
hardly seem germane to me  
but histamines are warring things  
repelling motes you cannot see

You are fatigued in aching need  
to find a healthy end agreed  
within a pill to calm an ill which  
seethes dissent disdainfully

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Ivan Donn Carswell



# Blonde

Brazil nuts and  
home brewed beer  
an alliterative feast  
for the aesthete; too  
fine to let by without  
annotation

It's where gourmet  
fancy plays loose and  
the feet slide easily  
into discrete stirrups  
astride discerning taste

An adaptation of the  
once infamous *'Blonde  
Australienne'* tamed  
in a riot of dissent  
*<i>we don't drink that here</i>!*

Well Bluey, me old Mate  
we do, I called it Lager  
which you liked yesterday  
& Bitter the day before  
but today it's *<i>Blonde</i>*

Now drink `n stop  
yer bloody whining  
anyone 'ud think it  
*<i>wasn't cold enough</i>*  
– or something

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Breathe Again

keeping a day ahead when  
space occupied by those  
preceding still reeks of  
waste is deemed vagrancy

and planning non-events  
because your life depends on  
it does not explain why no  
demand exists in any case

living in expectancy of a  
life-changing phone-call  
doesn't bring order to the  
chaos surrounding you, so

unleash suspense, be an  
angel freed of tyranny  
leave the mess, hide the  
phone, breathe again  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Cabbages And Beans

Like the dunny door it  
simply bangs incessantly  
until your patience thins

You can refuse to hear  
it if you fry your brains  
in oil with vapid apathy

A fear is that it might be  
right and sadly true but  
then again it might be wind

You've clearly had enough  
if you accede too meekly  
to its patent bullying

This cringing metaphor is  
brazenness acclaimed  
as an incipient authority

While all I see's a pannier  
of *cabbage leaves and  
salty beans*

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Candour

survival questions  
candour in what once you  
held as dear – dumb  
mementos jousting displaced  
souvenirs of time and space  
silent smiling faces snapped  
too long ago now nuance  
in a different way

pictured here you see an  
enigmatic man you knew  
belittled by a subtlety of  
wisdom's barefaced grin  
the gaze of his eyes drawn  
backward to a day etched  
thin by changes anxious as  
his rumpled clothes

a new-age nexus price is  
paid in stunted growth and no  
respite for agonies sustained  
his days are now betrothed  
to tending trophies stuffed  
with frugal dreams aloofly  
kept alive as hopes entombed  
in timeless infancy

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Ivan Donn Carswell

## Cappuccino smile

Ah, the aromas of that conversation,  
the brimming, cappuccino smile  
swirled in chocolate rich and cinnamoned,  
the gentle coffee curlicues interlaced  
in arabesques of creamy foam, redolent  
upon your lips, lilted in the cup of your  
countenance, glazed in syrup gilt.  
Your words were velvet plumes  
of soothing, honeyed dews  
you tea-spooned in my mind,  
the flavoured greetings savoured  
fleeting glimpses of delight,  
the jasmine scented night tasting of Swiss  
pastries, sugared and freshly baked.

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Catch-Me-Now Cachet

been searching for  
an absolute pose  
where pain disappears  
and sleep's sweet

it seems less battered  
in a moment's  
disconnect by eyes  
stochastic shuttering

if it's there I know  
it will be brief  
to capture just or  
ever hold your peace  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Changes

*'strangely'*  
says the way is seldom clear;  
there is so much to fear from  
past events where death  
competes for living space

emptiness defeats all  
claims to commonsense;  
you freely vacillate in  
seamlessly complete  
and utter vacancy

conceding you are beat  
could ease this dissonance  
of harmony estranged – but  
weirdly, knowing that means  
*nothing's changed*  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Cleaned And Purged

Rising from a raucous sleep at 4 am finds  
nothing much has changed. PC takes an  
age in start-up sequencing, reveals a raft  
of system safety checks have failed – it  
then reboots but can't or won't explain.

You could remark intrigued the similarity  
to life is underplayed – but callously a  
disrespect for standards long established  
still engages greater minds in ugly dreams  
of the infallible though deemed unstable.

'This is the here and now' it seems to say;  
whatever else you wish will be in future  
scenes for contemplation – if you make  
priorities, submit requests in triplicate at  
least one month advanced!

You'd think that waking up legitimised an  
entrée to the day, that's but the first faux  
pas; breaking flaky sleep would seem a  
crime until the system's cleaned and  
purged repentant souls of yesterday.

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Ivan Donn Carswell



# Cock Crow

Morning cock-crow mingles with  
a dingo's trenchant wail; dawn in  
breaking yawns and fakes a  
clumsy smile as puffs of dirty  
clouds against a drably linen sky.

Forgettably a dingy day begins its  
present tense; perhaps a hint of  
rain exists in coolness yet to be  
expressed before the sun returns  
and shames an aching metaphor.

If seeking faith in breaking dawn  
then go to sleep again; there's no  
relief in knowing truth pertains to  
dreams in league with hapless  
views retailed by sycophants.

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Conscience

And if it is but pride  
distressed no price of  
pain will pay for such  
absurd rigidity; an  
obstinacy of thought  
precludes less stressful  
ways to make amends  
as yet the mirror turns.

Agreed, it isn't hard to  
see who's wrong and  
fathom why accepting  
that forever and a day  
is bound to conscience  
duly burned.

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Crying to be written

Dawn has reached the ridges to the north and a thin line of light chased the night west; it is the best time of day for me - a cup of coffee, Benson & Scud pretending to sleep in their baskets at my feet, I am seated, ready to write knowing the lounge fire is glowing cheerfully, relaxing into profound thoughts. I had the opening lines when I awoke, a sharp couplet bought at no cost, bright and brimming with promise of more rushing on into an easy progression, and beyond. Sadly it is gone in the inward thrust of the day; a fleeting adoration lost, a whimsical compilation of lyrical brilliance - an amazing ephemeral meeting merely brushing against my mind and floating on, uncontained, wafting into an insubstantial nothingness. It is an image I will borrow nonetheless, a symptomatic consequence of the duress I live in, the distress of one thousand poems crying to be written.

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# Curator

My life's a museum of memories buried  
in a mausoleum to matrimony kept  
scrupulously clean – there is no distinction  
between exhibits and things living

I am Curator as well as main exhibit in the  
open-all-hours public gallery that nobody  
views though entrance is freely exchanged  
for tea and sympathy

I expect it stay this way until 'The Company'  
gets made an offer it can't refuse whereon  
I will merge with the grateful trees afforesting –  
acknowledging arboreal dreams

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Dangling

dangling at the end of a rope  
hanging from a helicopter  
hovering a vast  
distance from the ground  
is the appropriate analogy

confidence is a firm grip –  
belief that things will  
be okay your safety net  
but reality says you've  
reached a new stalemate

though nothing explains how  
this came to be the face  
of your predicament  
you are not being saved and  
you're not going anywhere

actuality is a length of rope  
and the whirling blades  
holding you in place  
your choice remains  
to hold on or let go  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Day The Future Died

you see it in the wavering  
there used to be a 'can do'  
flame to power this man, a  
light that burned the brightest  
when the hard times came  
– but now he quakes

hesitation rheums once smugly  
eagle eyes – he looks away  
taloned hands are bent like  
crudely battered remnant  
lips that can't efface  
a righteous sneer

shambling gait explains  
an ingrained fear of falling  
set in place; for years he made  
affection claim dependency  
in she who gave with gracious  
love but sadly went away

parody in awful taste or  
phoenix in its ash, he knows  
he cannot rise less crash with  
no surprise or deep regret  
– I can't forget the day  
the Future died he says  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Delinquency

giving in to rage will not replace  
the waste they idly wrought – instead  
one has to sublimate the energy  
in ways creating useful space

three hundred pieces lay in shreds  
at least beneath the trees – fruit I'll  
never see arise magnificent in size  
and shape or ever take a penny for

though they've declared a raucous  
war I will abate my animosity and let  
the rancour brew; I'll have them stew  
in pettiness afore I make `em pay

I will not start the feud today – I need  
to scheme, assemble men with dreams  
and arms and hopes renewed to beat  
these jackass cockatoos

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Ivan Donn Carswell



# Delinquency 01

You can do Web crosswords where  
you know most of the clues already

Or sit distanced with headphones  
attached, keep the World at arms  
length in timelessness preserved  
by '*Definitive America*'\*

Or you can write, absorb more  
of its waste, and listen – which I do

I am amazed at innocence buoyed  
in pure voices of those young men  
lyrically celebrating our age

Guilt was not invented by their music  
and the words were the same used  
to describe our visions

Tears well-up in soaring strains of  
'*The Last Unicorn*', I am raised and  
at peace with my delinquency

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*\* Audio CD (Jun 29,2001)  
compiling 'America' tracks from  
the 70s*

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Democratie

They're only words  
but I live where every nuance  
clubs sensibility; you speak  
of Democracy as if it's earned –  
where on Earth did you learn that?

Here? Were you a convict?  
I didn't think so – you're a Public  
Servant, by no means the genre  
who made Eureka Stockade  
resonate in our History

Yet you say it is only  
a matter time to a position  
where the Internet will decide  
whether you have a job  
as an Electoral Officer

I am glad you've equated  
public opinion with the state  
of anarchy mass media creates  
but have you learned anything  
other than fear?

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# Did I Forget

as if you paid the going price  
you have delayed facing what  
you know is patently pending  
doing dishes merely suggests  
creative avoidance and vanity  
hand basin scrubbed clean for  
first time ever may register to  
discerning eyes but no air of  
benign justification abides or  
lends credibility

okay – in your defence the  
clay oven chicken is on at  
7: 15 am for a two hour bake  
the day shows signs of relenting  
it will be just another boring  
Saturday with tomorrow's plans  
imminent but entrenched – time  
already spent suggests you've  
given advantage to a quaint  
but selective dementia

you were supposed to write a  
verse today celebrating this  
new-age of reason where the  
key is acceptance – but I don't  
see you doing it yet; it may be  
a vestige of the old ways and  
I apologise for driving hard at  
stratagems I believe deprecate  
that sense of being in touch  
or did I forget something...

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Distance

If I stay  
I will see less  
of what I imagine most  
as the face in the mirror  
grows grey

If I go  
there's no  
guarantee I will greet  
what hopeful thought gladly  
feeds me every day

If I stay it  
will present  
loneliness as a  
hard-wearing  
consequence

If I go  
still being alone  
may see in me  
the best company  
solitude knows

If I go it will  
at least condense  
distance between dreams  
and reality though  
the gulf still stays

It is a fence  
that keeps me here  
the fear that you  
actually wanted it  
this way

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# Distance Is The Mean

What is the sign beside the road that makes  
the line dividing states of love as clear  
as sigils blessed in your taxonomy?

I wonder what it is that bleeds the tease  
of care into a lake of nothingness  
if wayward love departs its flimsy scene

And are the ways to best express this grate  
between the states of '*love*' and '*not love*' clear?  
They're not I fear – and never ever were

If there's a border edge between the love  
I bear for you and that expressed as *not*  
a disaffection then where has it gone?

The cues are spare and far between because  
you flew away; if distance is the mean  
today of comfort's share – an answer's there  
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# Doa

Yeah I'm onto it you say,  
no worries; you don't want  
people getting ideas maybe  
you're basically underdone

There's no way you're  
going to admit to failure  
that hasn't even happened yet  
although it's inevitable

You're heading to the dump  
of evolutionary conjecture  
with it now – expecting to be  
dead on arrival

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# Dog's Life

He rolls in the rich red dirt  
again – purest ecstasy, been  
quite a while since true rain  
fell so 'bathe' the man will  
be thinking – 'shampoo'

Won't get in today he bets  
but the weather's nice so I'll  
nap by the door keep an eye  
on things – I know in the end  
I will win

He'll insist on a bath with  
that queer shampoo; 'tho  
these days there's only  
me and no doggy remarks  
to endure so I'll be ok

And best of all I'll be back  
where the food is stashed  
and all those cashew nuts  
I'm a mite partial too. A  
Dog's life? Sez who!  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Effluvium

you proclaim doggedly it isn't a blank  
page only space undefined in potential  
– but we're on the way to filling it

preferred ciphers need firm consideration  
hence window-dressed anxiety which you  
see as procrastination

not that we avoid writing – see,  
there are tangible words echoed here  
that hint at even greater things

like a case of *lèse majesté* – flirting in  
the face of regal dignity lends less to  
true treason than insouciant disgrace

effluvium, brief and out of place in words  
expressed casually means more of what  
I dream than what I sought to say  
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# Effortless Evasion

it rates as exceptional effort  
hardly raising a sweat while  
avoiding smallest commitment

yet guilt stays upfront and intact  
can't play that off a straight bat  
nothing allays ambits pedestrian

how long did it take you blather  
realising the game is up and  
where's the damning evidence

nothing's there and nothing  
changed you digress despite  
efforts to maintain pretence  
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# Epitomes Of Grace

sickness still remains a sting  
that steals vitality, keenly fed  
on anguish bled from trauma  
deep, tension wed to agony in  
thrall to grief; no pleasure left  
to ease ambiguous disgrace  
endured as much inured and  
endlessly emphatic pain

treachery has schemed in wine  
to solace-seek with shame;  
I sip inspired on fine and aged  
epitomes of grace – memories  
weave lines embracing  
features of your face

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# Festive Irony

you might say I am  
the Spirit of Christmas  
driven by a steady hand  
on the neck of a bottle  
of Cerveza complete  
with lime wedge

this year I gave my friend  
three flyswats opining he'll  
find superior utility in that  
than a six-pack of said beer  
– which he's never been  
fond of anyway

it's a crazy time when  
flies breed faster than Tahitian  
limes can grow now Christmas  
is a day away – he'll see  
irony in plastic swats to  
control global warming  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Few And Far Between

Friendship brakes where reckless  
race regardless; it's not the scene  
of magic mayhem where a greater  
weight is placed on states of seeing  
views unique and consummate

The pain of leaving always pays a  
torrid price – when seen alone is  
death; and keen a company as is  
bereaved the torus speaks out of  
that same mundane geometry

We're friends because we each  
forgave ahead of vicious prices paid.  
One cannot choose the cost before  
the pact is made – true friends are  
few and far between

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# Figurines

the easy way is to not  
recognise a finger in the  
plate to mean a threat

there are no arched eyes  
and the tongue licking is with  
gusto not misconception of taste;

too real is a belief yet  
unrealised, and these  
are not your figurines  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# First Tuesday In November

it isn't subtle but then  
we're used to it although  
the past month seems  
to have been more equine  
than influenza alone contends

it is a virus spread in a  
series of controlled releases  
gauged to culminate  
on the first Tuesday  
in November which is today

the fever hasn't gripped  
me and my punt is clenched  
fists kept in pockets  
resistant to cues saying  
Alcopop will win easy

but commonsense explains  
a horse trained by  
a Cummings has better  
chances – there are  
four of them!

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*for the uninitiated the Melbourne Cup  
is being run this afternoon*

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Focus

they say it won't be suicide  
we've every rogue and vagrant  
angle mapped on that unless a  
finger flips accord – it isn't quite  
unmatched to be exact; so crikey  
he's a bit *eccentric* do you say?

in fact he's one and same as any  
left to rot as refuse of the game  
that failed to make a perfect World  
his trust in god is not exemplar  
of the faith he lost to voices of  
divine dissent that led astray

he planned revenge in thoughts  
that gift him views beyond the  
scope of common man because  
he can – and stands alone askew  
of where he'd like to be but lost  
to what the purpose of it means  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Grievous Air

Showers launder grievous air  
redolent with anguish of an  
allergy; skin that shrieks from  
angry weals breathes easy  
in the soothing rain

Atoms bleached from fastness  
of the atmosphere are quelled  
cannot soar or fuel a fantasy  
of agony to itch and swell  
into nightmarish days

Although too late to salvage  
fragile buoyancy or make up  
time that flooded out of sinuses  
begrudged in manic flow – there  
is a sense of hope reviewed

If everyone is suffered thus  
could conscience but be teased?  
A way with dignity I wish I knew  
to ease the pain that didn't  
mean I passed it on to you  
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Ivan Donn Carswell



## Harder To Catch

You could say TWO green tree frogs  
in the dunny is a double blessing  
or not an ordinary event whereas  
one is a regular happening

Aha, difficulty with the term 'dunny'  
I see – it means toilet, water closet,  
crapper, can, whatever and that  
paints an intriguing picture

GREEN TREE FROGS in the can?  
Yes, water is a natural home to  
them although the venue is less  
than salubrious

I'd rather they sing in the evening  
from trees as is their habit but  
these chaps seem to cling to a  
nether view by preference

It means I'll need to put a sign  
on the guest toilet – something  
clever like 'frog sanctuary – use  
with sense of humour intact'

They're getting harder to catch...  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Having Each Of You As Friends

For more than 40 years we've been good friends,  
since 1963 in fact, from college where we met  
(and managed there to build a strong quartet  
of campus friendship which kept those years intact,  
still yet as clear as yesterday). The musketeers were we,  
four sons of Nereid, or perhaps Persephone,  
as different each from each as each could be,  
all sharing camaraderie uncommon of the time  
and fasting in the line to learn the pedagogic  
trade. We graduated well in '64 and left that year  
to fill the spaces our seniors had vacated in rooms  
beyond the trainees' sphere, filled with probationary  
year acuity. Our meetings in those days were great  
events of poignant merriment and risque cheer  
and exploits, when related, all too soon  
extrapolated beyond the bounds of better judgment  
(as considered by our management), and while  
we often fell afoul we always brushed up well.  
I recall the grande affaires of the early musketeers,  
Aramis, Porthos, Athos and the eclectic Monsieur D'Artagnon,  
but all along I never knew who was who.  
I thought I'd be D'Artagnon, introspective, droll,  
or Porthos muscled with a fork and dark intent,  
singularly bent on righting wrongs,  
but all the talk was wasted in a whirl of traded places,  
perhaps we traded faces in the same, candid space.  
I relive it now and then, I would live it all again  
in hope of having of each of you as friends.

I.D. Carswell

For Scotty, Seal & Abo

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Having Or Not

It wasn't a billion dollar idea but  
the notion that going into the rain  
without a raincoat and getting wet  
could be connected was revelation –  
plainly it was the raincoat's doing;

tried the same plan on a homeless  
soul whose mackintosh had seen  
better days but she demurred. Ain't  
the case for me she says, more like  
one of having or not – if I weren't  
wearing mine then I wouldn't have  
it rain or shine you see.

But I didn't and it still escapes me  
how a waterproof can change duty  
between ensuring you get wet in its  
absence and simply not being yours  
if you weren't wearing it!

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Hold Onto The Thought

In ending the whole notion of  
permanence presents fresh  
dilemmas; an 'if it is there  
tomorrow it's probably real'  
sense of shaken confidence  
survives where solidity was  
once so enduring in the  
mind's manic games

If you think it is that way,  
it is, you used to say and it  
was for at least as long as  
you held the thought; 'the  
World must have changed  
as I slept' explains why you  
think you felt completely  
different on waking

Hold onto the thought –  
you've paid handsomely  
for a dilemma you now  
own outright, complete  
with lifetime warranty and  
unlimited on-site repairs  
absolutely guaranteed to  
keep you wondering...

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# If It Proves Anything

A statistical arbiter  
accords two discrete IP entities  
with 100 hits on 45 poems  
listed in review

One I know left a comment,  
thank you HG, but the  
anonymous one needs to  
be thanked too

Such dedication to have  
read so many – even if  
popular reads, or so  
said statistics say

fake IP address  
generators explain why we  
as poets fail and fungus freely  
grows - if it proves anything  
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IP: An Internet Protocol (IP) address is a numerical label that is assigned to devices participating in a computer network utilizing the Internet Protocol for communication between its nodes.[1] An IP address serves two principal functions in networking: host identification and location addressing. The role of the IP address has also been characterized as follows: 'A name indicates what we seek. An address indicates where it is. A route indicates how to get there.'[2]

Ivan Donn Carswell

## In soothing, sweetened words

No, she said, I never knew it was your first. It doesn't matter anyway. I always had an inkling that we'd find a way. And then we did. I'm glad about it just for that. Whether it was good or bad, or would have happened had we made a pact or that it should have happened years ago won't alter facts; it was meant to happen, and it did, and that is that.

His ego shattered in those straightforward words, it was absurd, for years he'd suffered his attraction, never guessed she shared a common thread, and when it happened she had said it hadn't mattered. She recognised his sadness, smiled and hugged him close, I always liked you best because you held to every word I said, your soft grey eyes would stroke my face and never stray, your hands caressed my hands and drifted just a bit towards my breasts, and if your thoughts were centred in my pants I knew of your respect before I felt the hotness of your breath. What occurred just now is but a lusty cup of sugared tea, it does refresh, but once the cup is drained for me there's nothing left to keep except regrets, and leave. If it was your first it was the very best but be assured, I know I need you here to hold my hands, to listen and reflect, to softly talk to me in soothing, sweetened words.

Ivan Donn Carswell

# In-Between

you caught me in-between  
those things I didn't start  
and the few that  
simply got away

a dozen red ensconced on  
dining table doesn't mean  
commencement of a  
monumental drunk

it's rather more intent  
to read each label carefully  
before I lay them down to rest

but somewhere in the middle of  
a sandwich  
planned for lunch and need  
to bake tomorrow's bread

plus espresso machine  
prepared coffee  
– events  
went off the beam

should explain I do  
not see these things  
as jobs to do but mood effects  
which gladly seize the day

and yes, those are Xmas cards  
maybe 2 (or 3 or 4) year's worth –  
they kept arriving as it were  
out of the blue...

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Indemnity

So many leeches preying  
on the frail – a grey  
industry veiled by claims  
of justice in indemnity

A feeding frenzy alright  
for anyone who's claim  
spirals to major repair  
from broken tail-light

Ethics lost set values  
where ego judgements  
gouge rather than be  
deemed to make repairs

It's an insurance claim  
they say – no-one really  
pays so how's that a  
breach of morality?

It is in inflated grins of  
skimmers glibly taking  
their prodigious share –  
padded maliciously

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Ivan Donn Carswell



# Indigestion

don't want to sound  
smug about it but  
<i>where on Earth</i> did  
you get that belief?

you've couched  
all that there is;  
fundamental  
uncertainty

as rational and  
coherent structure  
determined  
extra-terrestrially

gee, was this another  
random outcome  
of something you  
<i>ingested</i>?

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Information Plateau

you've graduated from idiot  
to imbecile to moron and  
sagely claim you are dully  
normal

*by your standards  
you are*

with less structure to get  
in the way you're only  
judgemental of those  
whose thinking opposes  
your unilinear  
views

the simplicity of it  
means everyone with a  
plainly higher IQ is wrong –  
leastways you say this  
as if it is a matter of  
commonsense

in deference to  
dull but normal thinking  
I agree – eagerly awaiting  
your elevation to the  
next *information  
plateau*

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Iraison De /I

this is the house that you built  
not the way you'd do it again  
arguably – but nonetheless  
a mute testament

you made the colours calm  
and the walls permanent  
at least I stayed free knowing  
it was your design

*if it was your choice*; the  
lonely days distance themselves  
in fragrant innuendo, scents  
that cloud reason

they grew here where you  
used to be – do they plague  
you too in your *raison*  
*de renaissance*

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Ivan Donn Carswell

## Is It Relief

If it is relief it comes guised too  
speciously – am I reprieved or  
may I take the cant to task?

Ambivalence like this breaks  
rocks in a conscience disturbed  
by shocking self-revelations

Agreed, mythology is reality  
by dint of a naively innocent  
tho' over-active imagination

What I see may not be the facts  
but I know coolness when I meet it  
and that leaves me abandoned  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# I superwhirly/I

'<i>Superwhirly Turbine</i>' vents adorn  
this roof as credos hyperbole in  
'doohickey' ostentatious-ness

Given attic credence that hot air  
will rise 'til trapped the rationale  
would seem to be defensible

That is until one creaked incessantly  
moaned for no visceral elucidation  
upheld by ordinary reasoning

So three severe trips into confines of  
superheated dimly lit roof space and  
a precipitously steep learning curve

At least the noise abates such that  
sleep may patch together a few more  
moments of repose contiguously

Intense discomfort and some grease  
learned this home repair recalcitrant  
to conquer fear – balance on a beam  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Investment/I

A fête of decayed verse  
engages these indigenes  
of disgrace; there is no  
sweet meat or bread fresh  
on their plates but rubric  
praise that '*if you succour  
me then I will grace you  
measures of the same*'

Though ego games and  
make-believe at best it  
still suggests the worst  
is yet to come – embeds  
their blinded heads  
in disinvested bums  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Joys of the chase

Colours fade into nameless shades of grey  
and where the tinsure of bas-relief crudely  
stands effete, semantic symbolism degrades  
into meaninglessness. The artefacts of an old  
existence deny you humanity but you don't  
recognise them anyway, they are not bound  
to objects of power that bely access to reason.  
In this flat world of monochrome un-ambiguity  
and ceaseless movement you hear in a  
spectrum of sound that defies tympanic  
sympathy, sounds you feel in your teeth and  
in the hair that covers your lean shanks  
and in the scents that surround you.  
You move in a world of here and now,  
where yesterday was a stomach full  
and tomorrow is an extension of  
your hunger for tastes and sounds  
and joys of the chase.

Ivan Donn Carswell

# June Thirteenth

If I didn't mark this day in passing  
if I didn't make this date a part of  
solid History I'd fail – a day to fix in  
memory and memory will prevail

June thirteenth, Gemini of Mercury  
an element of Air – where hunger  
for awareness rests, your love  
therein is seen a proper reckoning

Measure of your length and breadth  
despairs dimensions of your ardent  
heart – cathedral blessed, especially  
in loving – sets your warmth apart

I know and love your being as a  
comforting, liberty from loneliness  
of empty rooms, a candle light of  
passage gleam safely leading home

Blessed I am to know you well for all  
these humble years, your inspiration  
wills me write of you – and I shall 'til  
Lethe waters still my trembling hand  
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Ivan Donn Carswell



# Knowing

knowing what I know won't  
make it an end but there are  
things in a failure which intend  
less – so that is where you stand;  
the late dilettante illusory flame  
elite with panache – derivative  
high-class hype that is still yet  
to be released

sadly it makes no difference  
to me; knowing what I know  
means I keep under wraps the  
same things you seek in the  
public domain – too little to  
burn for such a bright light  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Lacy White

Nothing will placate the so-called failure  
of that night – the week before all pomp  
and circumstance to take its due; you  
lay in lacy white expectantly your eyes  
aglow to consummate our unity although  
arms of sleep reached out enfolding me.

Penance came at dawn in cheeks aflush  
and blushes clean, delight applaudingly  
embracing nuptial cries; 'tis where I'd  
lay awake reprieved forever and a day –  
you are the bride to whom I cede all of  
my time's infinity.

You claim I'd been afraid to touch you as  
a wife that night – and I agree, the waif I  
lusted with upon a beach had fed me well –  
too well to take this fragile angel in my  
arms and bend her to my will she begged  
in ways which made a mockery of me.

My lusting never faced as stern a test as  
wanting you so much – a fear you'd fly or  
run away distressed me such I couldn't  
breathe that night; I slept imprisoned in a  
fight for breath a taste a touch a slice of  
what you promised me as cherished wife.

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Last Of The Dinosaurs

A quaint case of an Abbott and  
two Bishops on the Front Bench while  
the rat Minchin is to be content with  
resources and energy; Ruddock  
back as shadow cabinet secretary –  
hard to believe, but true, whereas  
Barnaby Joyce is to head finance!

Shaking one's head in bewilderment  
suggests the mix is a heady cocktail  
of head-in-sand incomprehension  
about where the future stands;  
unless one views it as already  
behind us, being unattainable  
and therefore sacrosanct

I like the way Abbott says 'if I'm  
proved wrong I'll be marooned  
on an island of stupidity but I  
might be right and a hero'  
He could be, I agree, and still  
doomed to extinction within an  
hierarchy of dinosaur proclivity  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Late

It was 2am  
by your day clock  
meaning would be lost  
contractually in  
that reasoning

But, hey, be  
in the span of this  
conscious patronage, no  
moment is misplaced  
feel the heat

Re-considered  
in a trust reviewed, the  
new regime essays  
forgiveness is  
remote as 2am  
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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Laughing Apace

a silly little cameo to  
tease a smile from otherwise  
engaged nonsensicalities

teeth bared in a taut-lip  
caricature of a grimaced grin  
caught out day-dreaming

yep, that's me, barely inured  
to rhythms within but seen to  
be responding to procedures

it wasn't what I failed which  
made the grade but how I  
lived with such certainty

laughing apace kept peace  
stable and made this  
love of life consummate

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# Liberty Of Trust

not my plans as such but residues –  
ideas that never flew for want of  
gravities' largess; and yet a taste  
of camembert between suggests  
maybe they did

one needs to fail in little ways to  
learn success; as yearning grows  
it plays a subtle tune within, a  
harmony to spurn an easy score  
– of sun-drenched lazy days

therein a ripening begins for  
those whose egos never dream  
as adulation's slave; in learning  
to be free of faux prestige a  
liberty of trust is duly paid  
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# Living Frugally

I may be shy a few superlatives  
but grant me space – the sound  
of thunder rumbling and a gentle  
rain that soothes maternally says  
“*be at peace within this place*”

it is an observation voiced frugally  
in desiccated choruses – unforgiving  
failures played by sunburned  
consciousness without a living  
start or less forgiving end

clemency is nodding as you stand  
shirtless simply listening in cool  
raindrops to a sole koel calling,  
“*hey, are you here yet?*” An  
intimate massage of its majesty

today I cleaned gutters with hands  
cut easily by edges I already knew  
tacitly small sacrifices that drew  
blood – deformed testimony to this  
rainfall’s munificence

and yet you claim there’s no need  
for change because anything as  
godlike as this is plainly too good  
to be estranged – or compromised  
by further dehydration

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# Loss

Which bit don't  
you understand –  
disappointment  
or loss?

I used to say that's me  
the dull bloke next  
to the beaut Sheila  
and they knew who I was

but now you're gone  
they hesitate – was  
I erased the day  
you went away?

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# Mango

tempted to write 'dork' for the  
crossword clue *Stallone role*  
suggests I didn't see much in Rambo

which is true but then I'd play  
mutant Christmas Mango  
if the price was right

so the first Kensington Pride\*  
consumed this year from my trees  
attracted proper ceremony

twelve days to ripen seems  
to fit this grand occasion  
although ensorcelled in a bowl

and whichever way you view  
that gustatory connection it's  
still lost on Johnny Rambo  
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\* Mango

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# March Flies

Playing games  
with *Tabanids* while  
picking avocados surely  
is one useful way to  
stave off boredom

*Tabanids* you ask?  
March or Horse flies –  
those big, viciously  
biting nasties that fly  
like drunken sailors

Got twenty (at least)  
today – bitten thrice and  
felt it fair trade despite  
being disgracefully  
outnumbered

It's mated females who  
get on the bite – males  
are do-good vegetarians  
withal, notwithstanding  
it isn't even March yet!  
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# Market In The Rain

Bob's view was we couldn't run  
away, rain didn't demand unilateral  
surrender; we were men-at-arms  
used at least to deprivation and  
where was impending danger?

Didn't stop the weak and gutless  
leaving but not many came. The  
wimps parade to exits gave us  
strength in a belief that we were  
made of steely sterner stuff.

We fooled no-one but us I had to  
say; in pouring rain who came to  
buy our goods? True undeniably  
it was, and if it ever stopped or  
eased we'd likely get to see.

In the event it didn't and I packed  
to leave; I know he envied me but  
stayed to sell his dragon fruit. The  
pilgrims earned his doggedness he  
said by being resolute.

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# Meandering

so what do you do  
have another beer, stir  
the bolognaise or shoot  
something? You can try  
all without guarantee  
ennui will abate

in a day mortgaged to  
circumspect reflection  
relief of knowing comes  
after the cockatoo's 'kiss  
this' salute and Mellencamp's  
<i>"Way To Your Heart"</i>

I haven't lost the place  
I marked in the Book of Life  
the children are safe  
and no news is good news –  
so far it's merely me  
meandering  
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# Mementos

No escaping them and  
they are blessed by  
origins survival true

A fleeting glance cannot  
allay devotion beaming  
through reminding me

There is a life they say  
in tones and colours  
of the palest shades

And these mementos  
blaze above the pyres  
of love's mislaid lament

Your sentence is to die  
a thousand deaths with  
each enamoured glance

I cannot look and try to  
turn away – nothing left  
but pungent memories

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# Memories

It's been a year, a mood that  
never leaves is hid between  
the moments when I think of  
you with clarity and those  
where fear abrades a faultless  
view of purity august

Did you ever dare adjust a  
measure of this malady? No peace  
in conscience known has dwelt  
with such a trenchant loneliness;  
I'd vet an answer candidly if  
you despaired the same as me

I live alone in emptiness and  
fear it for my sanity – I hear  
your voice deceiving what I know  
is not, admitting to an anxious  
need too deep entrenched to quell,  
a heritage of Hell replete

There is no joy in silent trees even  
though they gainfully appease  
my angst in noble quietude; it is  
the wash beyond benign serenity  
I need, the memories that bathe  
in want of you prolonged

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# Metastasis

If I am to return to this life it  
won't be as a brown snake I  
killed this afternoon or mosquito  
that died violently this morning  
no chance I'd make amends for  
their passing by being them

I could be a straw that broke  
the camel's back; maybe I am  
and regret serial incidents  
still happening – hard to say  
the fact is I'm on a limb and  
beyond wrack or reason

Thoughts no more suicidal than  
random gusts of lambent wind  
shirr dreams I'd rather forget  
seems I'm bound in the shame  
of your leaving metastasized  
by letting you go

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# Morning Coffee

coffee's a dream and warm  
French bread compliments  
where croissants will cloy a  
sentiment already appraised  
it is simplicity raised where  
taste remains pure and origins  
clear; no milk or sugar in the  
cup, no jam or honey please

just a smear of butter to melt  
of its own largesse on a bread  
that gloats this early morning's  
pleasure – already I sink out of  
sight on the scents, drown in  
expressive benevolence

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# Movin' On

groovin' mind and mood to  
'Cherry Bomb' won't make  
me sing though breaking  
bones of raucous sleep

my day begins nostalgically  
to Mellencamp sung sweet  
in simple words he's said  
so well there's no recoil

morning's melancholy takes  
the strain and says there's  
room to move if you'd just  
step away from memories

nothing left to wear as clothes  
but past and prospect chic as  
gay superfluties out of an old  
rucksack – I'm on my way  
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# Mutations Of Self Interest

Besides dreary politics  
the functioning of law  
conspires to weary me  
although I'm neither pro  
nor con its song and dance

I see philanthropic  
mutations of self-interest  
in the claim: *"Vote for  
<b>ME</b> and I'll give you  
what <b>YOU</b> want! "*

I know that what it  
really stands for is a  
statement of intent:  
*'Vote for <b>ME</b> and I'll  
give you what <b>I</b> want! '*

On the other hand law  
is less an Institution than  
an Ass who sits absorbed  
in rictus on an egg-like  
ego contemplating self

Regrettably the hatch is  
neither planned nor heritably  
compatible *but nonetheless*  
protected it will be by full  
force of an Ass! *</i>*

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# My Enemy My Friend

My enemy my friend  
whom I know without compromise,  
when I listened to the  
deconstructions avowed of you  
as your brand of pernicious  
lies I was ashamed.  
I know where you situate  
in matters that joined us  
in vigorous hand to hand  
(and at times bloody) debate,  
I know where you opposed my  
belated philosophies you would stand  
as firmly of the same belief as I  
that they needed to be uttered freely.  
But you never said those things  
you are unjustly accused of by the  
makers of plastic peace,  
you only claimed they could be  
said in a free and democratic state.  
And in a few hysterical moments  
your worthy sentiments were crushed  
by the heel of the much vaunted principles  
you said would take your noble life in  
denying the freedom to oppose them.

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# Need

I see the cherub's grace in this  
expression strained with angst  
I know it less than as it seems

she's reined by circumstance in  
ways unveiled by able chance  
that preys on gravid sympathy

although we held her warming  
tight in gracious arms embrace  
in basics of her need we failed  
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# New Year's Day Reflections

New Year's Day and  
I am tired picking avocados  
thoughts expanding beyond  
caring foliage concealing  
the self-same fruit I seek

is this really you, a voice asks,  
more from morbid curiosity than  
intent I guess, but I am lost  
for an answer; can I get back  
to you, I say

only if you see better reason  
for hanging there precariously  
scaring the sh\*t out of your  
absent family it says, and the  
least of all, *me*...

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# Nod To Agree

going to be  
a day where  
the plan is stated  
upfront  
agreed  
progressed directly  
beginning to end

nothing simpler  
no diversions  
delays

*no excuse things*  
to be done: *</i>*

wash the Ute  
vacuum and scrub the cab  
(needed it for years)  
polish the dash

easy

I see you're  
shaking your head

you NOD to agree  
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# Not The Same

I noticed recently that people  
move away from me like I'm  
diseased he sadly says

At the grocery they'd greet me  
with a smile and ask 'how are  
you today? ' Now they turn away

I feel an antique ache inside that  
hollows me – you know I'm shy  
does that surprise?

The lonely man they think I am  
has died for sure or stays away  
too far beyond a certain cure  
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# Nowhere To Run

I had wanted to say scathing words about ideology germane to female genital mutilation; I could not see justification pertains for an act only inimitable as barbarous. In diffuse debate I learned how little I knew.

If preservation of innocence is taken to extremes there are ways I couldn't dream to perpetuate that blissful state; clitoridectomy is just one which screams the loudest distaste to my hormonally challenged ears.

I did the reading, looked up diagrams saw pictures of unsightly scarring too horrendous to accept as imperatives of racially deemed social distinction. Innocence isn't preserved by cutting pre-pubescent's non-consenting flesh.

I rested my case. Then in an easy afternoon I learned of circumcision and a host of procedures utilised to raise breasts and reduce wrinkles including genital modification not too dissimilar. And there was nowhere to run...

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# Nuptials

Occasionally I am impressed – it doesn't mean I can be bought by tawdriness which scoops the cream too easily yet today I saw evidence where men who usually ignore ceremony were bound by its circumstance

The scene; a campfire of durable lineage in the middle of the day and four men. I knew from the previous evening's debris there's no escape – littered wine bottles some nearly empty kept counsel in ritual silence

The beer we drank excused why we were there and the Marquee for Saturday's wedding said it more eloquently; I guessed your company is somewhat sullied by the event of a daughter's nuptials I say ingenuously

Yeah sure – but the bugger's this fire, it's too hard to invent another way of everyone seeing where we are at, like it's a traditional tract that says *'gather round and look at me you tossers, this is the only thing that matters'*

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## On Your Birthday, Today,

On your birthday, today, there is time to reflect  
On the essence of our intimacy,  
From a beginning in the spring-tide of youth  
To an afterward secured in the distant mist,  
And for what reason and to what end it endures.  
Each year I feel the consequence, keen  
With up-welling of sentiment,  
Where new love springs before the old  
Has run its course (but its course is never run),  
And each day adds its weight to the sum  
We bear on that date this day in June,  
To solidify with birthdays gone by  
In an endless, banquet bequest.  
Today we take time out to renew  
And revisit the mood of our youthful love.  
Tomorrow, with the same tremulous excitement  
As beset us when we danced on its eve 'til dawn  
We will wed again.

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Order

intoxication of the previous  
evening plays callous games  
not so much a classic hangover  
as a sense of disappointment  
that evades capture and  
categorization

what on earth were you thinking  
sounds more like Mother talking  
than a rational grip on morning's  
reality yet you tidied up and put  
the empties away before  
you went to bed

waking to last night's dishes  
usually says things are much  
the same but today's greeting  
frankly puzzles – you can't  
explain the sense of order  
decide what must have changed  
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# Otter Dreams

it is the same recall that  
bathed in your maternal stream  
an otter sleek and quick  
in play – a timeless dream

too swift the years that  
weighed against a buoyancy  
of thought and deed – too  
late to claim offense

and then you went away  
to seek another you - the  
one that grew apart in days  
of darkened dissonance

otter dreams suspended  
in a trance of tenderness  
liquid memories enhanced  
by waters calling agelessly  
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# Patch Of Weed

I'll cede at worst a patch of  
weed explains the workings  
of our minds to me – you  
see a garden there that  
needs its share of TLC and  
fair enough it works quite  
well when offered it; but  
deep within lurks onion grass  
that hasn't gone away

flowers and shrubs have  
been addressed by diligence  
at best explained in photos  
that suggest you're right; the  
stunning views declare per  
chance a scene of classic  
elegance to hold the sway;  
but deep within lurks runner  
grass that bides its time

in chaste array I see today a  
renaissance of plan; Mother  
Nature's chicken weed with  
sticky seed has run amok  
it dies designed by industry  
of making me to strut and  
prance its tune in fluency  
of knowing we'd have never  
had an even chance

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# Paternoster

they were not words I chose  
but echoes ringing free of  
circumstance; the wine gave  
me an absolute and cast-iron  
guarantee that I was not to  
blame – as if I cared.

\$30 retail wouldn't seem the  
cause by my acerbic happenstance  
although enough I knew it wasn't  
sole and only origin to where  
the paternoster true  
anomalies were born

if you will give me words  
I know I'll pay your price  
before you ever see the cause  
of phrases jemmied from the  
vault of what it was before  
they made us nice...

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# Pawn Played For A Fool

one thought kept  
strong to traverse  
a whole backbone  
and return enriched  
is beyond me

I am plagued  
by insurrection –  
demands stream  
from places alien to  
my mother tongue

feet do not obey  
hands and this  
abdomen swears  
worse than the tongue  
which enables it

thoughts come and  
go erratically, management  
fails dismayed in places  
where sense used to  
mean reason

it is a state of anarchy –  
I am a pawn played for  
a fool possessed by  
intractable ideas of  
new-age humanity  
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# Peace Enough

it is impossible to discern  
real ties between unwritten  
shopping lists, injured shoulder  
and mild depression –  
so I rest easy

I know, I know, the  
tamarillos need picking  
they glare from unmown  
grass beneath the trees  
with angst restrained

been a hard week, grass  
growing out-of-control  
social calendar stealing  
what little poise remains  
I could be excused

which I won't be, there's  
always that self-righteous  
bloody-mindedness playing  
devil's advocate – defence  
against deference, so I'll fail

but you will never know;  
now if this shoulder would  
relent maybe I'll find peace  
enough and contentment  
in your epic victory  
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# Pearls

Let me say less fear of  
contradiction or dissent  
the only food that I'd  
refuse would be the  
pap of politicians

I've heard it said by  
better men as sustenance  
of eloquence; the words  
inspiring sense of worth  
are made of mute consent

Give to those who lead  
a freely sanctioned glory  
and feed the rest who  
carp and whine as pearls  
cast-off to well-fed swine  
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# Phoneless

losing your mobile phone  
in an orchard where trees  
visibly rustle amusement  
doesn't make finding it easier

observe; if Velcro fails to  
contain Nokia's venturesome  
free spirit and you're phoneless  
time condenses dismally

sane reasoning won't restrain  
spectral sphincters expressions  
of disbelief; how could you be  
so stupid they self-flagellate

yet you see it in mind's eye as  
lonely and as clear as millions of  
leaves littering – but you hear only  
the birds twitter and the wind

seven times you roamed and rang  
before the ringtone activates; seven  
times in seven rows then melody  
of Abba's winsome tune awakes

*"Money, money, money  
must be funny  
in the rich man's world"*  
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# Pictures

pictures jumble through a lucid  
sleep without a patterned chain  
indistinct ideas play millisecond  
games inspired by chaos rules  
I'm lulled into a fool's belief of  
paradise but lost for focus of  
reality – I sense but do not see  
if anchors sure are holding  
me secure in place

a face within the anarchy has  
merged in peaceful dreams  
and draws me in; on waking  
once again the thought returns  
too strong to rate as random  
chance – I beg to see the  
image vague reframed in  
views of She with whom  
I've always longed to be  
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# Plastic Providence

go back to bed at least  
and stay in it; it is a  
sanctuary for feelings  
fleeing consequence

each day begins a  
vacancy that's never filled  
no applicants compete  
for empty space

your doubt is spread on  
wings which will inflate  
the disbelief – as if it  
always rightly is this way

you watch a petty thief  
of time implicitly through  
eyes deceived; complicity  
conceives your plastic fate  
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# Pocketful Of Dreams

I need these lines to be  
at least about those things  
I meant to say, not words  
selected for their odd  
texture or dubious origins  
<i>and there I go again</i>, just  
words which equate a  
sense of where a you  
and I appear

I'm no grievous poet yet  
and never hoped to be but  
you are one who's free to  
scribe to stars with whimsy  
consummate

a consequence of reading  
far and wide and thinking  
on beyond and yet you chose  
to make me one whose words  
delight – a constant liberal  
want to sense what's ever  
shared

so be assured, faeries are  
not myths of legends lost too  
long from ancient times but  
visions new with origins today

they insulate it seems  
against a tawdriness of  
structured thought - allay  
all fear of being caught  
without a pocketful of  
complimentary dreams  
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# Privacy

Should I know your feelings  
as you do and if I did would  
it intrude in places where I  
wasn't meant to be?

A notion we are boldly free  
disposing bounds too intimate  
and frail for public view inflates  
the price of liberty to choose

If chains be set to where from  
moments shared to moments  
where you need to hide would  
it efface that mutuality?

If disillusioned one could bear  
the pain in open spaces and  
again be seen embracing with  
an elegance of pure romance

That truth is too obtuse to let  
it guide the course you chose  
is known and I'd impose in places  
where you need to go alone

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# Proof

Not knowing what to look for weighs  
scales against finding what I would  
not likely recognise anyway –  
feels like certain failure

Yet the money paid rests easy  
in a bank's ownership that fails  
intelligence tests of what  
I'd expect legitimacy to be

But stubbornness invades with  
a brusque sense of 'Yeah,  
Screw the Establishment'  
I'll not give in yet

Examine ageing registers and there  
vaguely familiar yet in cogent detail  
Parcels of Shares I didn't recognize  
I ever really owned

But the quandary remains  
how in all honesty can I represent  
a me I never was and what  
would the proof of it be?

The preamble says  
He whose name bears witness on  
these Certificates of Ownership  
I am to prove I am  
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# Reading Clouds

I just record these things, he  
glibly said, it's what I see; if  
you can take a meaning then  
that's surely fine by me.

First, a face in profile, strong  
nose, prominent brow crowned  
in bouffant afro, an eye widens  
blue – pursed lips exhale a puff  
of smoke in cloud exude drawn  
slow in hazy strands, features  
last to fade the eye and nose.

And then a boxing kangaroo, a  
caricature of cockiness with  
head upraised and ears alert,  
paw in fisted stance. It couldn't  
be a dog as was my want initially  
so commonsense and I agreed; a  
strong and stable sight it stayed  
in view for quite some time.

The last intrigued; a hollow in  
the cloud allowed a view beyond.  
Lighter greys and pastel blues  
outlined the figure from a mural  
which I knew; the scene a focus  
on creation where just Adam's  
hand and face appeared.

If Michelangelo had meant I see  
this marvel in the clouds with  
focussed clarity then you can  
be assured I'm rightly proud.

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# Recondite

if they're yours  
balls in a garlic press  
imply something recondite  
and untenable

based, one proposes  
in illusory oohs and  
aahs as pressure  
is applied

I suggest, sceptic  
to the end, clarification  
is in sizes – if they fit  
*don't spare 'em*  
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# Rejoice

Again rejoice, the golden  
voice of godlike Barnaby  
begets a view of National  
spew reserved and  
served as rustic  
common sense.

On *'The Economy'*  
his mien has been chameleon  
yet say the least he now espouses  
freedom from restraint  
if votes ensue that dam  
the shocking waste.

And is he Hockey's mate  
who speaks for Treasury?  
Well woe proposed to those  
opposed to anal debt constraint;  
as minister, may God forbid,  
he'll feature as a laxative.

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*Barnaby Joyce is Tony Abbott's  
Shadow Minister for Finance*

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# Return

I'll make no predictions but  
to say this flight comes closer  
to the *'you'* you were than the  
*'you'* you then became

There is a host of memories  
some of them the same as  
those you greeted glad in  
cause of bonded family

They didn't realign or care  
to run away, watched in  
quiet, kept words still that  
ached to comfort you

And they will with sober  
views relate their warmth  
unguardedly, share themselves  
with thorough grace

The shame of it remains no  
means can give you back those  
perfect years – although they're  
there and ever yours to claim

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## Rise To See

an answer would stare you in  
the face if your gaze could rise  
to lips above those comely breasts  
the sultry curving hips  
the lissom buttocks swell

it is all's well in its place  
you're caged mind's eye between  
your hopes hard pressed and  
thighs warming the love  
alive's concealment of rank distress

it is so good to see you,  
you say, meaning why can't I  
see more of you please  
I'd die to glimpse the  
promised land

and she replies in tinkling  
notes sweeter than water  
ringing over ancient stones  
the answer's in my eyes  
if yours could rise to see  
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# Rite Of Change

the life that never went away  
remains in silent piles of clothes  
that stay awaiting gentle hands  
to put them where they're meant to be;  
I see a patent rite of change  
and patiently do best I can  
to balance themes

I never add an item shed  
in sensing chance that constancy  
will play a role; I understand  
that keeping peace is goal and game  
and match triumphant in this frame  
of referenced complacency

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Roles

He goes on-stage to play  
a role with histrionics  
script-sustained in sneezing  
misery he views  
abhorrent to the craft.

It isn't affectation when  
it preys upon a self he  
can't renew, there is no  
balanced sense of who  
he is if guessing fails.

Cues are missed and lines  
delivered lifelessly – a  
deathly silence blooms  
as faux applause in  
every way imaginary.

He says in self defence it  
isn't me on-stage but He  
who lost His Faith; I'm ill  
and know I cannot play  
the role as well as He.

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Room For Two

I am centre of the Universe.  
Let me explain; that is me,  
a separate, unique entity.

Nonetheless it is also true  
there IS no centre of Nothing –  
how can there be?

But at least we exist, or  
I know I do, recognisably,  
because I am centre of me.

Were I centre of you  
you might not agree  
there was room for two.

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# Rules Misread

So I was wrong  
it proves I guess I am  
the kind of guy whose  
outside the square thinking  
determines where he gets  
misinformation

Helen Rowland said  
'To be happy with a man you  
must understand him a lot  
and love him a little  
To be happy with a woman  
you must love her a lot and not  
try to understand her at all'

It didn't reach me except  
as a woman's oversimplification  
of an impossible study and there  
is the rub; I do understand the  
woman I love but her happiness  
won't stay intact

I saw where Rowland's words lead  
in this infarct following exodus of the girl  
who loved me a lot but understood  
me not at all – and I claim foul  
We were deceived by a call  
from the rules misread  
in another's game

Ivan Donn Carswell



## Sacred Space

even sacred space has room that's  
not invasion proof - there's liberal  
confirmation raids incurring greater  
anguish now occur most every day;  
from where I stand the pathway's  
trampled smooth by errant feet  
competing in unseemly haste to  
dump their woes and beat retreat

they ask of me a counsel I abide in  
wisdom of the ages scribed in gothic  
script declaiming options lost by  
overcrowding private life; yet to  
tell them where to go is not the  
kind advice they'd want to hear  
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# Savoir Faire

if I have learned anything it is  
the *savoir faire* of silence – not  
that I can't say the right thing  
but an innocent, all-over-in-an  
instant keeping-the-peace guile  
of a stilled-tongue wins. So let me  
lick your lips – pierce that inner  
sanctum you are guarded about

it is not an answer I know but  
the drawn out groans of pleasure  
suggest nerves much in need;  
there is unwell denial where a  
clear conscience prevaricates  
awaits an anxious requital

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# Saying Goodbye

my old dog is dying  
he won't look at me  
in a way that say's don't worry  
this is just a slight aberration  
asserts that no-fuss personality  
I always relied on

I choke back tears try to  
convey a strangling sorrow  
but he wobbles away without  
comment; it's so sad, he's  
much more the man of me  
than ever I am

just yesterday  
he lay in my lap contented  
again the eternal pup at home  
with his earth and his origins  
where fanged legends howl  
frank admiration

today he knows he's dying  
but he won't let me pray  
for him or evoke icons  
he'll die as he must  
it's simply his way  
of saying goodbye  
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# Scenes

isn't scenes of beastly screaming  
voices drown a stasis bleeding  
forcing choices vilely reeking  
where I cling to my own debris

caught within I hear the chaos  
chorused in a choral singing  
bartered hubris numbs my senses  
stripping me of all true feeling

solitary innovation  
calmed by complex contemplation  
choosing where it will be standing  
how to save itself oblivion

no-one knows her more than she does  
cheating them of goals outreaching  
bringing me to where I'm ceded  
alone inside a crowded room

entombed within a baleful vault  
no-one leaves and doors are bolted  
intellect has trialled and faltered  
grieves it wouldn't have succeeded

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# Secrets

I discovered you yesterday  
excuse me for being flabbergasted  
and somewhat trite

still recovering from a  
vagrant thought you might  
actually understand me

or do I misconceive  
intelligence for the insight  
of a knowing smile?

your grin replies  
enigmatically, *"that secret's  
safe with me!"*

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# Seeing With Clarity

it's only been since March  
you protest – just nine months  
not a lifetime wasted

not as if I didn't want them  
repaired but a day expended  
thus seemed too much to pay

Heaven's sake *sunglasses* don't  
make that much difference even  
if they're tinted reactively

one wonders what I missed since  
seeing with great clarity and this  
miniscule perversion of shame  
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# Self Interest

it is as good as your word  
which wasn't good anyway  
a cut-rate ticket to nowhere

you claim sentience and a  
stake in charity – a tall ask  
for a turd whose insight ends  
where self-interest wanes

ask yourself which fixations never  
change – and count your blessings  
the centre of all things that matter  
defines terms of engagement  
not where you think you are

for this sleight of hand you'll  
pay in grandiose pretensions  
rendered dust – it was never an  
option to posture over

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# Seminally Explained

wine stains  
cabernet merlot I guess  
on the desk where dust  
accumulates and I write

the one an excess  
the other a Sapphic  
expression seminally explained  
in grains too small to reason with  
but no less an influence  
on thoughts of a friend  
obsessed with not  
getting any

won't let dust rest  
believes declaring disillusionment  
with one-sided abstinence  
validates trading places as a  
strap-on making inroads  
into monastic celibacy with  
his born-again 'coming out'  
as a new-age lesbian  
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# Sense Of Worth

Barely concealing emotion and tentative as if mutely accusing me of complicity she asked if I had seen her little dog. We've known each other seven years; while she displays at times an artifice beyond her age I knew that this was tender-raw and real.

She explained unenthusiastically of the six loose at home it was a tan and white Jack Russel male, cheeky nature but disposed to truculence. I agreed I had; a week ago he'd boldly entered the back yard, indecorously peed on flowers then ran away.

Missing since morning, looked everywhere she said. The pout and rising lilt suggested sentiment suppressed by doubt concerning my veracity. If I did I'd let her know, I said and was sincere – unless he went near chooks who had survived the last calamity.

Her innocence and pluck combined to make me sad. This dog was raised in anarchy, a barefaced terrorist never trained, properly leashed, or ever obeyed a simple command. If there was to be a grim prognosis on its end, why then for it sure it would be bad.

I'd prefer she did not see her dog again or know its fate. Guiltless of the act I share a view protecting her which stays my sense of righteousness; she's blameless in her narrow view by dearth of parenting – a lack which skews an anxious sense of worth.

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# Shopping Trip

So when are you going to go  
fishing then? 115 mm of rain says  
nothing's getting done while the  
anticipatory pleasure of still more  
to come remains discrete

And it's not as if it wouldn't rain  
weren't you there – although, agreed,  
enjoyment couldn't be the  
same as standing out in it  
soaking up your privileged share

Eight days now you have delayed  
a shopping trip in case you miss  
a passing shower. Claiming *'I'm not*  
*that obsessed about it'* doesn't quite  
ring true somehow

This pique of moribund despondency  
paints your thoughts grey and makes  
you live anxiously; it's not for me to  
say but you to do – at least shopping  
takes the legs off such unease

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# Spill

His Grace,  
Tony Abbott, MP, made the  
grade today - one vote in it  
though he'll crow with manic  
majesty that he's true  
saviour of our plight

or in an dearth of  
drought-worn selfless  
accolades from lesser  
lights be forced to  
clench his fists and  
bully-boy his views

Malcolm Turnbull  
graciously amused that he'd  
been done and dusted well  
but with integrity could  
say at least Joe Hockey  
stayed unbent

so why are we who  
need intelligence on  
climate change through  
Liberal dreams about to  
see extinction of the  
Dinosaurs again?

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# Stardom

*i* wanna be popular  
she cries i don't care how  
i get there i wanna be top  
of a tree with a star and  
adulation dripping  
off of me

then lass he says  
change your ways  
be less yourself and more a  
vague but persistent rumour  
writing verse is a  
pathway to fame

*i'll* do it she says *i'll*  
write nite and day and read  
and revise and excite admirers  
with the best rhymes  
and nicest annotations  
you can think of

then gather admirers  
from friendly conspirers  
he says - quality matters  
but masses of like-minded  
drifting together will  
make you a star anyway

*i* want to be cried over  
after i'm dead and bathed in  
the same adulation i had  
when alive - i want to be  
held in enduring  
affection

sadly he says there's no  
guarantee that your fate after  
death will be properly weighed  
the same crew that made you

a star on the tree will also be  
dead most irrevocably

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Straw Hats

Try not to see them as  
ideograms; they are just  
straw hats hanging on the wall.

You see vacant space for a  
head intended but it doesn't  
persuade personality is gone.

A silk scarf wound around the  
hat demanding most hangs  
gloomily, memories are no relief.  
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# Succour

I cannot claim to share your  
view or see a scene the same  
as you – or where it was and  
when with who

it was a set of fickleness to  
best your sober sense in ways  
I saw as gaming plays against  
an unrelenting deference

be assured I'm on your team  
as true as you in thought and  
deed – tacitly I'd lead if you  
in fact agreed to follow me

I know that you have gone alone in  
seeking things you've never known  
discoveries of who you are and  
where and what you've grown into

sadness is I'm left bereft to dull  
routines that make me deaf  
suggesting your largesse I miss  
as succour only you express  
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# Surrender

This is more than punishment  
there's no relief, bones bared  
will shatter easy echoed clean  
purgatory's superior, at least  
a chance to expiate and win a  
place in Heaven; here callous  
stasis maims mobility only  
graven silence imitates

If you knew just how you  
sentenced me I'd reason to  
progress beyond conjecture  
set in stone; it is more comfort  
than not knowing whether you  
saw thus before surrender

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# Surrender (Rev)

Resolve collapsing in upon  
itself enfolds mythologies  
unbarring blemishes – no  
energising oddity is manifest  
in making light of sense  
impaired directionless

But nothing's there, no  
glimmered passing shadow  
shrouded breath of fragrant air  
echoes of a lilting laugh  
mellow tone so redolent  
an absent presence sensed

I'm lost to what I knew  
before you grew apart  
and flew away – yet still  
estranged from whence it  
came to grant this daunting  
gauntlet you passed on

My loneliness despairs and  
knows no reason to prolong  
a vapid sham – no motives  
weigh defence against my  
giving in because it makes  
the better sense

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# Sympathy

Bandaging the wrist of the hand  
that cries foul plays mind-games  
look at me it says with a white  
flag emblazoned – you can't miss  
this face of vulnerability or fail  
to see the pain nobly etched  
bravery's for fools tamed to  
the taciturn god of reticence

Faced with plague-like aches  
contumacious in persistence  
do you choose silent obedience  
or vicarious praise in sympathy  
from insecure watchers who  
jealously self-flagellate

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# Tactile Cues

Well he said  
the worst that can happen is  
you fall down a disused  
elevator shaft because  
the sign's in Braille

meaning I ask – you  
shouldn't have  
been there

meaning  
you don't  
read Braille

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# Teabags

it isn't coping but it is a way  
to keep pace with how little things  
change, I count teabags  
used since you had a cup with me  
700 is my guess  
averaging two a day  
but not counting coffee

one wonders if I've lost the  
plot in an introspective rut  
too deep to see both sides of –  
believing time is measured only  
in residue of past events; okay  
so what, I have at least 700  
reasons to know I'm lonely  
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# That View

that view made sense when you  
espoused it – a “*here and now*”  
philosophy with hairy bits extant;  
although today’s composure  
won’t relent

it says we didn’t know the World  
back then; can’t cavil or consent  
or least equate to scrutiny that  
lent us this – acerbically I’ll wont  
concede

we knew the needs as well as they  
who played equations with their  
stocks and shares – but we were  
less imbued with vanity; my fear  
was only love of you

and there I am besmeared; to  
whom do I owe sustenance? If  
it were you I’m free of guilt I  
fondly think – you needn’t say  
a word

and now these views conspire  
to bleed the life of you to whom  
my admiration knows no bounds;  
our freedom paid no dues for sure  
but truly you are not in need  
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# The Covetous Edge

8 am, been up since 6 busy  
cleaning inboxes, checked the  
top tank bore water return  
all's well in a World of searing  
wind-raised fire danger

So far anyway, yet to make  
that cup of coffee which takes  
me to the covetous edge of  
this day's being – it is a delay  
not easily explained

The idea I *<i>need</i>* to be where  
sh\*t hits the fan reflexively  
engages lower gear – more  
a fail-safe cut-out switch than  
a self-contained expression

Coffee will make me believe  
I *<i>am</i>* the difference whether  
awake or merely imagining  
it; though in another way I'd  
really prefer disconnection  
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# The Other Half

it is not the way you planned  
to begin; an admission before  
positing this solemn submission  
seems less a canny route

saying, "you are never less  
than half my thoughts" sounds  
profoundly inexact – if at all  
possible though cutely quaint

there's a *je ne sais quoi* 'pure  
vulnerability' in those words  
for sure but their import might  
be too easily misconstrued

a statement of intent with which  
one proves truth by well meant  
and easily observed activity  
the Saint in you assumes

while the Lawyer asks wryly and  
with *sang froid* of long standing  
familiarity, "well then, what is it  
that occupies *the other half*? "

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# The Thing Is...

the thing is I knew  
why I stayed  
it made more sense  
than simply giving in  
besides there's nowhere else  
I'd rather be alone  
with memories

oh, for sure  
it's true that  
you can claim  
estrangement isn't  
new it lasted in  
suspension more  
than forty years

and took the same  
redressing vows it broke  
as tragic words unsaid  
while mending novice  
wings to fly courageously  
without a map and land  
on one leg blind

but nothing's really  
changed my mind  
except this new reality  
wherein I see the  
fracture is the leg  
you broke as sacrifice  
in finding pain

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# The You Of You

It doesn't go away – no shelter  
from the emptiness; a pure  
and empty space invades what  
used to be

A presence that was here remains  
in truth, evades the cleaning broom  
as easily as air – dispersing in the  
face of it

And yet it stays as cogent as a place  
preserved – a fortitude of memories  
a physicality exposed as  
naked truth

Senses are seduced in echoes from  
a past reduced to ashes spread and  
hasty footprints traced through  
nascent dust

But emptiness still grows when lust  
consumes an empty eye for touch  
and tooth and smell of it that  
sadly fled

No sound can fill the space you  
left so patently contused; without  
the You of You this place  
is badly deficit

5 August 2009, I. D. Carswell

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Thinking Survival

Distancing yourself is brave  
it takes more than a Devil's chance  
to face scars of burdened conscience  
without bearing similar marks

A bizarre maxim of  
read-between-the-lines intent  
gained your attention too easily  
admittedly you were a pushover then  
though now you refuse to reason

Today I have to ask again – what  
is the sense of continuing the farce?  
it proves nothing to be right  
or wrong or ashamed – loneliness  
is still the end event

Thinking survival in a blue funk  
dressed in nothing more circumspect  
than faded positano T shirt and  
pair of green ocean one board shorts  
hardly makes me a guru

Nor am I blessed with optimism – could  
one find lesser fashion sense so obtuse  
it doubles back on itself becomes  
<b><i>de rigueur</i></b> because so <b><i>fait accomplis</i></b>?

Wearing ugg boot slippers you'd  
approve of for security hugging  
my feet with tenderness absent  
in this monastery

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# This House Which Is Lived In

This house which is lived in resounds  
with the chorus of voices bound in the press  
of its generous, unconcealed blessings;  
affection is neither distressed nor restrained,  
nor caught in the intricate mesh of wicker  
and wire-ordered veins of its living construction,  
contained within gentle, carbon-breathing walls.  
The halls are hung with wooded reminders that ask  
your forbearance - the task is benign  
and in the heartbeat pulsing rooms  
you find an arcade of worthy mementos  
defined. The rooms are clothed in guises unique  
and disconnected each from each,  
yet oddly unified, resting easily before eyes  
sorely seduced, wearing tenant characters  
deduced in muted shades and crafted shadows  
folded into thriving colour and softening drapes  
hung or flung in wide, comforting curves revealing  
the objects ordinarily placed in ordered disorder;  
this space is so soothing and yet it deceives  
in the ease that it steals your heart.  
Where do you start in derisory word  
and hackneyed phrases to describe this house  
which astounds and amazes?

Ivan Donn Carswell

## Those Early Words

Reading those early words wryly  
brings fragile pleasure - a spare  
grin lingers, there's a rare uplift  
in spirits usually dour to baseline;  
seems we're almost reconciled in  
denying the same consequences and  
concealing a leer long lost from  
fabulous ages past and gone

And they were treasured times for  
sure - flair omnipresent, no doubt  
concerns and we could never fail;  
purity of thought pranced casually  
on pages, frolicked in open rhyme  
and aired rhythms in a burlesque  
extravagance - nothing mattered  
but the words and what we were

Cheered by pure innocence and a  
heart of gold it shocked to learn  
not all shared the same nature; it  
was there we forged armour worn  
as bonhomie - swallowed all the  
elixirs dictionaries contained and  
swore allegiance to a glamorous  
view of our brand new unity

Yes, the power sprang again from  
the same words - it meant we're  
still in resonance, less upbeat but  
in tune nonetheless; these days  
we'd allay others fears with more  
circumspect consideration but we  
still agree with that oblique leer  
and a caustic tongue in cheek

Ivan Donn Carswell

# To Win A Game

How do you win a football game? Not by skill alone or clever plays,  
in modern days the game has changed and subterfuge and actors  
ways will pave the path to glory. Fitness pays a fair reward to keep  
a fleetness in the feet, a clearness in the head, and special food  
and clever drinks recharge the cells when batteries are low or dead.  
But referees are certain keys to all the famous victories.  
Linguistic tricks of lunatics in soccer strip are even matched by  
hieroglyphs from coaches dressed in two piece suits, with  
hearts on sleeves, grieving for the chances missed, pleading  
with the referee for plays he did or didn't see, for ploys that failed  
to turn his head, for verdicts made and judgements dread.  
And referees are equal keys to infamy or certain fame.  
Then there's the crowd, a seething throng of attitude and energy,  
baying for their chosen team, living in a plastic dream of cinematic  
death or glory; dressed in kind and cheering on, drinking, singing,  
chanting long and loud the songs expressing hopes and fears of masses  
pressed in servitude, praying for a famous win, praying to the soccer rood.  
But referees are willing keys to all the prayers and eulogies.  
How do you win? Why do you care? Theatrics grimace everywhere,  
a game so crafted for the stage with pathos, bathos, great despair,  
actors playing parts and reading scripts with human traits, protagonists,  
antagonists, depicting gallant characters with artful flair,  
it's all encompassed there, entwined in referee maturity, so grin  
and bear it friend, you see, it looks so good on home TV.

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Toilet Seat

I am a man and need not change  
the way I am; I'm free of toilet  
agonies and trained by mother's  
hand to competence. I disagree  
the toilet seat resolves how one  
should pee no matter what you  
ladies think – my male design  
precedes the toilet anyway.

Come to think of it our genders  
were established long before this  
damn debate began; today no  
sanity exists in claims that vanity  
is compromised to see the seat  
upright. It never bothers me!

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# Too Late

Allegorical? No way  
it's the stone age  
truth coming out  
in a rash

It's where you  
chose to be by  
run-out-of-gas  
dead reckoning

Plain as the nose  
on your face if  
you can't deal  
with the facts

Looking askance  
won't change where  
you're at on a raft  
of excuses at sea

Too late to mend  
years choked by  
self-preservation  
too late to grieve

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## Too Wit

The things that hatch through narrow cracks  
are not the enemy we must believe; to see  
them in their plenitude as opportunists who  
have little choice, soloists out flying all alone  
are males, they'll die for pheromones which  
promise paradise. Cannot find a solid source  
for their largesse, suspect it doesn't have a  
cause for brains and yet they'd die for sex?

Mealy moths again are trying my propriety  
I must admit I do not know what motivates  
the little twits; all processed grain is double  
sealed and yet they breed. I freeze the items  
where their signature is clear, feed it to the  
ravenous and stay too wit, ashamedly naive  
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# Took Forever

it took forever to reach a point  
where *forever* wasn't relevant  
like three sips more than originally  
intended; even revelation asked  
on someone else's behalf – still  
debating whether or whom,  
*"...WTF's this all about? "*

not a response that downplayed  
every nuance, indeed a clever and  
erudite reply that's got me wondering  
whether I can cope with another tot  
of The Black Douglas – tonight's  
answer to scholarly speculation  
in a poet's glass

if I knew the answers I wouldn't be  
asking the questions you are; it never  
mattered before whether you understood  
because you never knew me and  
as much as you think you do now  
whether you are prepared  
to share the same fate

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# Top Dog

We're simpatico Benson and me  
his views of our new life mesh  
sweetly though I see in him a  
greater change; he used to be  
a canine as\*\*\*le with wannabe  
pretensions aired in fang-bared  
assertions of theatrical  
dominance.

Yet in an instant he'd be the  
cute face-licking bosom buddy  
expected of a dog at the foot  
of the tree. Now there's only  
him and I so I say, '*you're top  
dog Benson*' and wince at his  
dry '*why does that sound so  
unconvincing*? ' reply.

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# Tune

Tonight I miss you  
tears are just a blink away  
robust thoughts of you which  
kept an emptiness at bay  
have fallen short too easily  
and hopelessness  
invades

I know you'd say  
I need a focussed way  
outside myself by caring less  
and being more in tune  
with other vibes but I  
am deaf without  
your ears

Habit surely  
weakened what had made me  
strong and fears of insufficiency  
prolong a pain I must endure  
because you're gone –  
tonight has simply played  
that tune again

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Ivan Donn Carswell

# Un Australian

I dunno if I'm being ridiculous  
but the term "*un-Australian*" is  
as un-Australian as our origins allow.

Because a few poofers from Lygon  
Street or the ABC might conclude  
differently doesn't mean I'm wrong.

Our diverse History says we're  
not the same; any mug can see  
we're *'hundreds & thousands'*.

And thank whomever for that! Now  
if you want to have a few beers and  
a barbie this arvo then go on...

It's summer and this is Australia –  
just don't go round calling others  
*un-Australian* 'cause they won't  
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\*non pariels or 'sparkles'

Ivan Donn Carswell

# Vestiges

Watching you die old  
friend is the hardest bit  
you're suffering – it is hidden  
in your eyes though you  
will not admit the  
light grows dim

Darker tendrils slowly  
choke your power to live  
sadness grips me like  
a prophet's eyes so  
bloodied in relentless  
vision

Everything we ever did  
together rings with  
free and careless energy  
yet abject you lie abed  
was it surely meant  
to be this way

You'll leave old friend  
I'll try to take it light as  
you command; you don't  
say yea or nay that it's  
right to me – only that  
it *IS* your way  
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# Vision

Crossroads of change these moments  
of lucidity; startlingly clear visions lasting  
nanoseconds each but you are there  
transported through incomprehensible  
dimensions glimpsing an instant

It may be an easy view where sense  
comes complete; my fragmented scene  
showed tawdriness in what I do sadly  
explained in simple words why joy flees  
revealed sotto voce how it pitied me

I cannot complain I try to say, there's  
a cheap and easy explanation! Like  
the hair on your unshaven face hides  
what you wanted to say – cringes  
when you can't speak the words

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# Visionary

not a matter of choice  
more prospects of maturity  
yet to be attained

they're future things - scenes  
glimpsed or guessed from  
mutable presentiment

and yet you're here and  
now - a malignant portent  
waiting patiently

where direst signs lack  
authority to make malefic  
mayhem out of contempt

so you're biding time  
debating whys and wherefores -  
a prophetic sage

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# Warmish Day

'nother warmish day, 34° on the patio  
irrigation underway in an Orchard too  
easily dehydrated by parable to deny

deeply ingrained psychology sprays  
delusionary water where precious drops  
of rain would soothe sun-savaged weals

inane ideas afoot in arid contempt of  
what makes the debate germane is  
amply evidenced but I'll save the trees

so save yourselves wear buoyancy  
vests learn how to float between  
troughs and crests of arrant treason

warming is merely a warning before  
the downpour begins and a freeze  
proceeds to inaugurate your pain  
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# Wary Lines

they're wary lines thus traced  
in contours of your face – I'd say  
apologia for ageing not  
the way we've done

I see those youthful signs  
in places where we crème to  
stave a caving in and wonder  
who you were

I know – you are eternally  
a breath of air, the who of whom  
we were before these corrugations  
came to stay

the word *Adonis* doesn't mean  
a thing to you I'll bet  
and yet it's you for sure  
and therefore also me  
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## Weighty Advice

Giving me room to decide you think subtly suggests key words causally linked to effects known – for instance 'too much for one to do alone' actually means 'quit'; I know it could suggest a bit more too, like 'get help' or 'make room for some-one else' but there is a true history to this cryptic advice

As nice as it is to know you do care there is still an impasse to deflate in a predicament less intended than unsubtly rash; clear thinking initially would have seen weight was being added where none ever used to be  
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# Wet Sunday

a shaker of margaritas sipped  
slow after a whimpered Sunday's  
soaking but no pain evident yet  
he says to the swathe of damp  
clothes now hanging – grins at  
Saturday's sanguine effigy

how bloody little you knew he  
muses – like anyone can read  
weather maps but you when  
we could have philosophically  
stayed in bed listening to the  
rain instead of being in it

I suppose the cockatoos got a  
laugh – but today even they  
were less vociferous, which had  
me thinking maybe they suffered  
too and that nearly made up for  
a damply dismal ending

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# Wither Away

a way to piss  
yourself off thoroughly  
and guarantee morbidity  
is by trying to please

even if you want  
only one significant murmur  
of appreciation it will be  
denied as culpable guilt

attaining satori through  
pleasure expressed vicariously  
in others' rapt satisfaction  
is fantasy

you cannot feed off  
expressions dressed as  
giveaways after the  
banquet has ended

your appetites are the  
ones which need to be  
satisfied in every available  
gustatory sense

as the saying goes - if  
you don't eat emotionally  
you don't shit nor do you  
pee but you wither away  
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# Wordless

I guess we ran out of talk –  
the who's that and what does it mean  
stuff we used to survive on

and the unrequited repartee  
which burdens silence still  
as tacitly cynical clichés

this debris seems greater  
than leavings of  
just two disaffected souls

like take-away scraps  
balanced on the lips  
of wordless garbage bins  
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# Wrong Side Of The Rail

If it wasn't for the Melbourne Cup  
coming up Tuesday, November third  
we'd be stuffed for exhilaration, otherwise  
closure of Beerwah's rail crossing this  
weekend has a few hearts dismayed

I heard one 30 year resident planned to  
parade nude along the road in protest on  
the day it closes; it's no business of mine  
what she does with her clothes but that's  
patently a ridiculous extreme

Commerce on the wrong side of the rail  
would seem to be opposed to closure for  
purely business reasons - complaining  
they face ruin when customer numbers  
fail to ring their tills enthusiastically

Wasn't it always that way (and who gives  
a damn now our bespoke overpass - see  
diagram, is to be put into use) : if they fail  
it won't be from lack of access but the way  
they displace their businesses acumen

And the benefits outweigh the whining  
although the Pub may not agree; their  
modernisation seemed a cue for the  
protest to flourish on the other side  
of the town's conflict-ridden rails  
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# Your Gift

keeping track of time while  
emotionally configuring a  
response to it meant I missed  
the window where I may have  
weighed what the future is

needless to say what I lost  
has been repaid in a show of  
largesse out of proportion to  
promises and no calculable  
deficit in quality received

but I still need to discern how  
it fills your being with a glow  
of contentment which evades  
me; I have no way of knowing  
what I am seeing

*was that your gift to me?*  
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