

True Thoughts

PAM BROWN's poetry has been published widely both in Australia, where she lives, and internationally. Since 1971 she has published many books and chapbooks of poetry and prose. Her recent title *Dear Deliria* published by Salt in 2002 was awarded the New South Wales Premier's Prize for poetry in 2004. She has also written reviews, essays, filmscripts and theatre performance texts. For five years she was the poetry editor for the Australian literary quarterly *Overland* and is currently the Associate Editor for *Jacket* magazine.

Also by Pam Brown

Sureblock

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50-50

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Drifting topoi

eleven 747 poems

Test thing

Dear Deliria

Let's Get Lost

(with Ken Bolton & Laurie Duggan)

Peel Me A Zibibbo

farout library software

(with Maged Zaher)

True Thoughts

PAM BROWN



CAMBRIDGE

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Several of the poems were published in: *Let's Get Lost* in a sequence with Ken Bolton and Laurie Duggan (Vagabond Press, Stray Dog Editions, Sydney, 2005) and in the chapbook *Peel Me A Zibibbo* (Never Never Books, Sydney, 2006).

'Train train' was published as a limited edition of 26, signed and lettered A to Z, by Nicholas Pounder's Polar Bear Press in Sydney in 2007.

Poems have also appeared in the anthologies *For the Time Being: The Bootstrap Book of Poetic Journals* (Bootstrap Productions, USA, 2007), and *The Best Australian Poetry 2007* (UQP, Brisbane, 2007).

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'Amnesiac recoveries' is extracted from a collaborative piece, compiled with Susan Schultz, for the Department of Dislocated Memory, International Corporation of Lost Structures
<http://www.icols.org./pages/PB&SS/PB&SS.html>

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under a nasty sky,
rhetorical uncertainty
dogs me



the 326
is never on time.
the bus interchange
 uses up
evening's best hours



all afternoon in a car
parked at the ferry wharf
gazing at sparkling waves,
not reading
not listening to the car radio,
just looking out at the boats
and at the sea planes setting off
and returning



his email began
'i thought of you
while i was
driving to Blockbuster
last night' —
now,
where is that?



she says he
'takes a swipe
at apostrophes'

punch-uation?



the kitchen man
agrees
it's all about oil



a sandwich board
outside Rose Bay Afloat
advertises the sunset bar—
'relaxed atmosphere
and tunes'



after not having
spoken with you
for 13 years,
now
that we've met
you've got me
reading
Deleuze & Guattari
all over again

Amnesiac recoveries

'and thus affectation spreads its asphalt across the comedies'
TONY TOWLE, *Victorian Observations*

2002

I get away
 from the academy
and after breakfast
 dip in the green harbour
 under sprinkling rain.

I know the war continues.
 on tv
 in the background of the frame
the investigator yawns.

that empty-to-the-stomach feeling
 as I enter the building
 to begin
my twelfth year of toil.

I know how to fix everything
 but, obstinate in my resolve,
 withdraw.

who here
 would phone *Interflora*
 for your funeral



shouting for trust's
 like demonstrating for peace,
 like making demands,
like demanding the impossible
 (every other old chestnut)

rank malfunction

comically, a smokescreen
& a mirror obscure
 my literary movements—
I am fixed,
 pinned, inflexible,
 on automatic pilot
as I fly, aimlessly,
 deadly,
 in my depressurised plane
seeking a mountain peak,
 seeking a building



I phone *Interflora*
 late
 this morning,
after a swim in a soup
of cheerful debris—
 tangled crepe-paper streamers,
 napkins, plastic plates
 & other picnic junk

 from yesterday's national
 nationalist holiday

that's right—
 'Australia Day'

when again,
 we prepare to demonstrate
against the government

in empathy with refugees
seeking asylum

not what you remember, not like that,
vague, shadowy,
even 'dim' —

the answering service robot
suggests a url—
www.whatirememberdotcom
'what I remember'
a famous title

I cannot choose
from any
of the ornately arranged
bouquets
on the *Interflora* website.



memoricide—
bombing the library.
collective memory,
the treasures of manuscript,
the texts history, natural sciences,
philosophy, poetry, mathematics
anthologies, dictionaries, treatises on everything,
his story,
collected,
the bombing filmed

in the peace zone,
Coca-Cola
phones the film collector
seeking footage
of 'real UFOs'.

2003
it's all about oil
cars park anywhere
well, people park cars
anywhere here

no car here has a
No War on Iraq
sticker
or anything like it



last century ended
after frightening
almost everyone
with various versions
of totalitarianism,
too much to be ashamed of

as I write as you read
the USA
is bombing

(please fill in the blank spaces)

some of the same
enemies
this century



turrurrism

war on turrurrism cramped
by cost bungling

cost cuts to vital weapons programs
and border control demands

war on turrurr setback



we rally for peace
we play with the kids
the armada heads for the gulf

Death by droning

the skywriter
 does the third letter,
we already recognize
 the brand name
(I couldn't write a memoir
 to save myself,
that would have been
 the beginning—
a fine day a bright sky a skywriter
 circa 2003
 ('circa'—a word
 I detest) but
droning on is not
 my way,
mine's more a kind of
 devolution
or maybe,
 simply, to make art
through spaces,
 without notes to myself —
 none — myself to myself),
chasing the unknowable,
'drink your noumenal—
 you'll feel
 much better!'
and so, to conclude
 'frenzal rhomb!
 what kind of a name is that then?',
 just doesn't work

Ultradian rhythm

oppspinn,

I think that's
Finnish for 'made up'

places to go like Sarcadia
or Sfax
or here, just across the tram-track
from Bingo
on the top floor next door
to Blockbuster

(a kind of
pre-cognitive landmark)
under the antenna-nest
of the dream bird
that hatches the egg
of experience, boredom.

also 'made-up'
& performed —
optimism, like
peacetime's modern luxury—
having a grave
all to yourself

down below
the traffic
sounds like the sea,
like the Pacific (perhaps)
rising under
a pall of poison,
islands sinking
as morning's white moon
still dangles
in the sickly blue

behind the mobile phone tower.

sherbet-brained,

fizzily beginning to feel

like Nietzsche spake—

nothing is worth anything

insects frolic

in my hairs,

I open another dusty book

in the weak Roman shade

seems like Brisbane

summer grey

and I've come so very far

to make this small comparison

Euro heatwave

unrelenting draughts of heat
the ceiling fans combat
 suggest a beach,
but there's
 only hilly streets
and drunks on benches,
 alive or dead?
like some other century's call
 for unknown corpses
in Piazza Barberini—
 'anyone know this one?'

urticaria ghosts
 my once-pale forearms,
calcium scum
 smears the glass,
everywhere seems brutal,
 historically,
from steam torture
 (how is that done?)
to hanging



the tinnitus
 of traffic, industry,
railway, wakes me early
to
 another red sun
rising to backlight
satellite dishes, phone towers,
 abstracted antennae—
rooftop silhouettes

we do here
 what we do there
except that here
 we do it in wrong décor

on RAI2 tv
 the military
 does the weather,
the next band does
twenty-four hour no-stop
 catholicism
(if you need them)

I hear how
littlejohnnyhoward
 'walks on water'
 for the 'Australian public'
despite 'many cock-ups',
and then ..

begin this poem
with
 "I've been reading
 a biography of
 Samuel B. Beckett"
(his 'B'
 being for 'Barclay'
 being my 'B' too,
 maternally, Scottish) (this is
incidental, but, incidentally,
 Beckett is (was) & I am
 also Huguenot)

he says (in 1940) that he lives
 'fatalistically'
that politics is useless,
 & talking politics, worse.
he's right,
 I drop my fervour.



I have taped
 a photo up—
early C20, earlyish—
 a man in a suit
and hat