

Spider Songs

The spiders down here'll kill
or cause white necrotic patches
of leprous-looking skin;
turn your flesh to porridge,
take fingers,
make your veins burn.

On ships that rock
across to Oz, thumping stubborn
through a lonely empty
grey and wind-frilled Tasman
sea, they wait,
beneath rusting containers
lashed with cables, lashed with salt.

I've seen the threads
of their webs, walking wary to
a forecastle on orange
evenings, when the light
struck them right,
tight as harp strings, tight within
metal sandwiches waiting,

while I longed all along for
the symmetry of my childhood
spiders strumming safely,
kindly still there, filling
the fog-filled
hedges of home, hanging
them with sagging beaded
silver hexagons now, at dawn.

Angry Young Man

Truth's gate is too low
But he doesn't know it
Yet: he sets off riding
Too high, too fast,
After ideals only
In the mind's sky.
The earth comes charging
Up to meet him.

A young man about the town,
Waving banners in the street,
Still he dreams
Of throwing gauntlets down
At the feet of windmills,
Killing dragons.

But the scales prove
Inaccurate: how long before
He gives up pretending
The impossible calculation
Of Justice? Stubborn,
He'll wither in confusion's flame,
Until the shame of the answer
Finds him out.

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