

Port Melbourne

the blood clot of sunset
is fading

the sky is a spillage of ink
on blue carbon paper

along the esplanade
the wind

gives mouth
to mouth

to the Norfolk pines

against the wharf
waves rise and fall

then crash
a forklift load at a time

across the bay
stands
a steelwool mesh of cranes

while a half-formed moon
is tugging the night
behind it

Rachel's Insomnia

she walks through room after room
with the artificial stars
of street lights
in each window

hypnotically
her eyes are unpicking the moon
from its black canvas

her every moment
is a vase on the edge
of a shelf
and her unsleep

is a
tap
dripping
against flesh and bone

along the hallway her cat
senses
the shallow breathing
of a mouse

while the second-hand refrigerator
*purr*s
all night

Fortitude Valley

the red light district
is becoming more and more blue with sirens

around an incident
pedestrians gather with the same detachment
as a police line up

the streetlights have fallen halos
and every window is a *peep-show*

the moon has blindfolded itself with clouds
and stars have closed their curtains

along Brunswick Street
sex workers
count the carloads of boys circling
their corner

two times... three times.... four times... five
to keep themselves awake

as night settles down
into its trenches
or becomes an *all nude girl revue*

The Woman from the Shelter House

the woman from the shelter house
lives on the same street

in the playground
her children watch out for bear traps amidst
the climbing ropes
and their sandpit
has turned to quick-sand

behind the breakages of her eyes
her trust and beliefs have been stolen
and the words

that gather along the edge of her mouth
remain unspoken

while the space between her and others is
slammed shut

on the way home her children play
hide and seek
among the street trees

all their escape plans are well rehearsed

The Alberton Hotel

7 p.m.

in a crowded beer garden
voices and limbs crash into each other
bouncers move about as insidiously
as cigarette smoke

above the moon is a high-wire act
streets clamped down with electric light

8 p.m.

sitting in a dark corner
two people argue

she holds his truth out towards the table lamp
as if it were a counterfeit note

9.30 p.m.

between the factory workers
the happy hour has spilled into the next
and then into another

their words merely heap up
like the empty glasses
on the waiter's loaded tray

10.30 p.m.

the local band plays
its last set

the singer's words
are muscle shaped

pushing the last couple around the dance floor

Midnight

at the bar a man sits
his drinks
go down
like flares
with no landing ground

as the night slowly heads towards a new extinction