

Senior Lecturer and Convenor

By Jorge Salavert

An overfed vulture, he is plumply perched in his office:
a paper maze has beset his podgy body,
but not his spreadsheet brain:
being a born poseur, he is deftly trained
to sop up, then vomit
ideas others found before him.
Like a condor he rules over the syllabus:
much like a South American dictator,
he will yell you down “for the good of the programme”.
Current affairs are for him the Ché’s exploits of the 60s,
Evita’s long-forgotten miracles
or even Fidel’s current intestinal troubles.
His literary nous is nought, yet somehow ever dilatable:
– *bueno, este...* – from Borges to Catalan separatists, he claims to know
everything worth knowing about almost everything –
though he has mastered
nothing.

He is known to have penned some very bad poetry;
some lines on a poetical driver’s licence.
In public he will mix up his spinsters with the splinters – or even a
sprinter!
No worries:
an idiotic grin easily gets him out of the proverbial ditch.
He will wear it like a badge of distinction:
pretence is his middle name,
faking sobriety, acting out rigour,
he avoids real work as if it were the plague.
He is but an act, a passing cloud,
a fake, for crying out loud,
a shameless shambles, a buffoonish would-be don,
a senior pretender, he imparts just ersatz wisdom.

Afraid

By Jorge Salavert

They are afraid.
From the very first night
they landed on this untamed land-time:
they have been afraid
of its infinite red
of its mind-numbing sky, its never-ending blue pale,
of the stripping barks, afraid of all this and a whole lot more –
they have been wearing a shroud of fear on this unimagined land.

They heard once the kookaburra's laughter
and woke in fear, they could not dream after
for they disturbed the snake's nest
they retreated their souls to their island out west.

They are in fear now
as you and I speak,
of losing their homes, their cars, their LCDs.
They fear for their own, they fear their own:
they are all afraid they might lose their boats,
their snow holidays, their children's football teams
they might drop the ball, gamble their lives away,
or default on their home loan.

They breathe the fear in their fear,
whether in Cooma, in Joondalup, Coomunga or Oodnadatta
fear of those who were here
and even those who came not so long after.

At the Breakfast Table

By Jorge Salavert

Their semantics is erratic: silence
has sentenced their words to an early morning death.
Hazy thoughts have maimed their years
& night-skies mystified their bedtime worlds.
No noon has ever been the same since the day
 when they proffered
 their bodies to the demigod of marriage
& over the years, in unvoiced unison,
they have chosen to dispense with
 so many missing meanings.
Syntax has today yet again ruined their early morning breakfast
 Was there much too sugar?
 Were there far too many adverbs in doubt?
Loss is a sure thing to save the least.
All they feel now is but a stern look across the table.

Moving Graveyard

By Jorge Salavert

Who knows their story?
Tightly packed and secured on this moving graveyard
they are traveling to their ultimate destination
where they will be pulled apart,
only to be sold in pieces, melted or left to rust.
They bear the scars of what did them in,
the fatal impact, the swerving away from life and hope,
and perhaps, like the bravest bull, they may have died killing.

Being beyond repair,
they are now heading up and down the highway,
carrying their secret, sad, soaked-in-blood stories:
a P-plater's last laugh, the unfaithful wife's unfinished SMS,
an overtired lonesome driver or an estranged husband.

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