

Four Poems · *Selwyn Pritchard*

IN THE WOOD-WOOPS

At the red dirt crossroads sheep gasp,
bailed in shade beneath an oak.

Dust rolls. Gums rattle. Steps rise to
nothing but glare. A garden grew,

the corner cropped; wrought-iron wilts,
headstones, sheep-tended, lean all ways.

I turn from this dry narrative
but plastic flowers splash fresh earth:

a new grave, the stone proud-polished
as a Sunday car. And room for more.

Poatina, Tasmania

WILLIAMSTOWN BEACH

After night's hot rage,
benches and bottles smashed, day
gleams sharp as cut glass.

Earphoned Desert Rats
advance, toe sand. Scavengers
grope in bins, flick scraps.

Gulls scream ignorant
as graffiti. Spent waves zip
indifferently.

Arnold long ago
knew God useless as the sea:
shrewd functionary,

up before the servants to gentle the bourgeois,
he died chasing after History's tramcar.

WITHOUT BARBARIANS

*"And now, what will become of us without barbarians?
They were a kind of solution."
C. P. Cavafy*

The succubus moon slides
cocks ejaculate prematurely
stars wink at the lyric
freedom of mass dreaming

and the planet's surface pits
minutely under electronic
impacts from incessant satellites
tenderising brains with

dogs' ideals of liberty
maintenance of order so
men love their fists women
caress lovers powerful as

new cars graspable gearsticks
full of revs glossy with
glamour romanticism
is believing there is some