

Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:

<http://dspace.flinders.edu.au/dspace/>

This is the publisher's copyrighted version of this article.

The original can be found at: <http://www.textjournal.com.au/oct03/evans.htm>

© 2003 The Australian Association of Writing Programs

Published version of the paper reproduced here in accordance with the copyright policy of the publisher. Personal use of this material is permitted. However, permission to reprint/republish this material for advertising or promotional purposes or for creating new collective works for resale or redistribution to servers or lists, or to reuse any copyrighted component of this work in other works must be obtained from the publisher of Text.

Flinders University

Steve Evans

Behind the Poem and In the Wrecking Yards

Behind the Poem

It's a bit like looking inside a watch,
the way they used to be,
when the case was finally slipped apart
and you saw the delicate machinery;
the naked back-and-forth of it
still whirring its dumb dedication
to the task. Puzzling. Ordinary.

Behind this poem
it is as dusty as the space
behind my desk
where no-one ever cleans.
Small, lost things lie forgotten.
It is as dull as the backstage
of a country theatre.

Someone has dropped a shopping list.
There is a rubber band and a used condom,
a lot of torn tickets and cigarette butts.
The props say tropical island on one side
and unpainted marine-ply on the other,
but there is still a hint of music back here,
the perfume of illusion.
Smoke of the old addiction
hangs in an empty room
where I practice my lines
in your best voice.

In the Wrecking Yards

on a beach in India they drive old ships
up onto the sand
and cut the steel into plates
like scales of an armadillo
flakes of the great dead thing
inanimate
a body scattered by ants

on a scarred bench
the heart of a dissected mouse
beats faintly a while
but it can't be put back together
the textbook doesn't show how
and the teacher doesn't know -
that's not his purpose

in the wrecking yard of poetry
apprentices sit with a spanner
and time on their hands
undoing the lines one by one
throwing old metaphors on this heap
broken rhyme on that
watching light move down the wall
waiting for the bell
the end of the shift

Steve Evans teaches literature and writing at Flinders University in South Australia. His sixth book, Luminous Fruit, was released in July 2003.

TEXT

Vol 7 No 2 October 2003

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/school/art/text/>

Editors: Nigel Krauth & Tess Brady

Text@griffith.edu.au