Further Symptoms

After Nathanael O’Reilly’s Symptoms of Homesickness

Replaying it over again. Elaborating and further defining the conversation you’re not likely to have with your boss, The one where you inform him that despite it all you are leaving for home at the end of the semester.

Driving to Canada because it’s more like home. Little things add up to a vibe that simply seems ‘more right’, all the while knowing that these little things, in and of themselves, appear silly and inconsequential.

Scouring the Niagara Peninsula for British bakeries where scowling Scotsmen in pastry-caked aprons sell meat pies, sausage rolls and pasties. Dragging yourself through the Caribbean grocery stores of Toronto at dawn looking for an angry Milo fix.

Sticking metallic decals of the Southern Cross on your rear window. Carrying receipts in your wallet from the pubs and country cafes you went to on your last trip home.

Owning The Man From Snowy River and its sequel. Owning Mad Max and Road Warrior. Not owning Beyond Thunderdome, because it was shit. Seeing Baz Luhrman’s Australia, because it was glorious shit. Watching all eighty-nine minutes of the very shitty Olsen Twins film, Our Lips Are Sealed.

It was filmed in Sydney.
Finally nailing the tricky third verse
of *I Still Call Australia Home*,
as printed in *The Aussie Shower Songbook*,
which your sister sent over for Chrissy one year.
Naming your daughters Olivia and Elle,
and watching the Ashes online in the work day wee hours.

A longing for the Gallipoli Peninsular,
and an inexplicable affection for Turks.
Using phrases such as “Don’t go the raw prawn with me”,
and “Are you putting on the dog?” which,
if you’re honest with yourself,
are archaic and you know it.

You learned them from *Gallipoli* in 1983,
but you use them anyway,
fully aware that you sound like a dickhead.
Talk Australian for us

Talk Australian for us
go on
talk Australian

I don’t care what he says
I just like the sound of him talking.

(Uh, yeah mate. I’m still here.
Right beside you.
Didn’t wander an inch.)

Be Australian for us
make yourself comfortable
we’ve got a box for you

I’ve always wanted to go there
but I’m afraid the flight will be too long.

(Wait there a sec – did you actually say that?
Or did I just read the ‘box-thing’
In your eyes?)

Talk Australian for us
I have a few diphthongs to spare
so I can do it – wanna hear me?

[…] There!
I’m Australian too.

Sean Scarisbrick