The Formulaic Text: The Poetry of Bruce Dawe

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Introductory Note

The initial impetus of this paper goes back to 1983 when a group of M.A. in Literature and Communication students came to Murdoch University for their annual on-campus weekend. The students were mainly school teachers enrolled in the external mode of the degree and primarily from Western Australia. We chose to discuss Bruce Dawe for obvious reasons.

In re-reading my notes with a view to their publication, I was struck both by their provocativeness and by the nature of the models constructed to interpret Bruce Dawe's poetry. Moreover, the basic outline of Dawe's poetics began to emerge with a strong enough clarity to warrant a somewhat extended examination of his verse. To foreshadow the rest of this paper what I find in Bruce Dawe is that he writes to a formula and in the discourse of the indicative mood. He has a strong monological presence, no doubt a function of his sense of the 'Australian speaking voice' which does not, as we are told often enough, have to 'resort to any kind of inauthentic vernacular.' Finally, he seems to me to be ideologically unsure of his ground. Let me now move on to the argument itself.

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There's a fascinating book by Barbara Herrnstein Smith called *Poetic Closure* (University of Chicago, 1968) which discusses how poems come to an end. In it Smith makes a useful distinction between 'concluding' and 'stopping': the former involves dynamic structuring, a movement towards a finality which must be considered alongside any definition of closure; the latter is simply an abrupt ending without, as they say, any rhyme or reason. Some excellent work on Bruce Dawe's own sense of 'closure' or 'anti-closure' (we draw attention to the term 'anti-closure' because the modern poet would wish to 'ambiguate' the word 'closure' itself) has been done by the authority on Bruce Dawe, namely Mark MacLeod. In discussing Bruce Dawe's strategies of closure, MacLeod places premium value on 'voice' and 'diction.' These strategies, he argues, reflect the presence of a multiplicity of voices in Dawe's poetry which in turn eschew any easy and uncritical equation of 'subject voice' with 'author voice,' a fact which, we are told, is underlined by his own interest in 'mixed monologue forms.' Since Dawe, as the argument goes, maintains that necessary detachment so vital to genuine poetic creativity, his sense of 'closure'/'anti-closure' is shown to be a function of a kind of a well-tempered voice not to be identified with authorial presence or endorsement. A riot of voices, indeed a polyphonic presence, thus confirms poetic 'difference' and individuality.

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I should like to offer both a reading of Bruce Dawe’s verse and a variation on ‘poetic closure’ by examining, initially, a concept so obvious and simple but little discussed in critical/theoretical parlance. This concept relates directly to the obverse of closure, namely poetic opening. I should like to argue that the nature of Bruce Dawe’s opening line underlines a pattern which is repeated throughout Dawe’s œuvre. This pattern is what I call the ‘formulaic text.’

Poetic Opening

Poems end, this goes without saying (or at least we hope it goes without saying!). But poems begin too in ways in which a letter or, for that matter, even a novel does not begin. If closures are marked by a certain formal dynamism, then beginnings too dynamically anticipate the rest of the text. There are two directions in which an opening line can go. It can either go ‘before’ itself (in which case it does not exist with the text) or it can follow the normal patterns of discourse and manifest discrete lines of development towards an end. Its first impossible move (impossible because it is illogical) can only be defended on inter-textual grounds: what other poems begin in this fashion? how does this line negate an earlier opening? and so on and so forth. Its second responsible move, that of growth and development makes the poem an organic whole, an artistic ‘monad,’ a total aesthetic experience. Now all these are essentially ‘aesthetic’ systems of categorization and we may find them overbearing especially since they suggest that ‘closure’ is related to the ‘responsibilities’ of openings to endings. So poems begin and end. Let us ask ourselves the question, what are some of Dawe’s opening gambits? My initial strategy is to invoke a simple descriptive system which I borrow from traditional grammar. Put very crudely, a discourse may be one of three types - imperative, indicative or interrogative. In other words, it either commands (‘You men there, keep those women back’ 38), states (‘To be a poet in Australia/is to live in Echo Valley’ 199) or questions (‘How could I ever be found?’ 106). Apart from some other obvious opening lines such as ‘Which one’s the dog?’ you find yourself saying’ (83) and ‘What are three little countries in a world like ours?’ (168), which are, it seems to me, highly ambiguous interrogatives in the first instance, Bruce Dawe almost invariably favours the indicative. In view of this it would be best if, for the moment, we dispense with the other two types and examine the range and implication of what we may now call ‘indicative discourse.’ As a mood of ‘statement,’ the indicative is a highly complex system capable of generating an exceptionally complex set of utterances. Indeed, entire texts are constructed around the indicative and even when the grammatical forms of the ‘interrogative’ and ‘imperative’ exist within these texts they are perforce ‘naturalized’ into statements. Very generally, then, the indicative dimension undergoes the following transformations in Dawe’s poetry.

Address. In its various forms this opening generates poems with straightforward narrative and a recoverable matrix. ‘Speak to him’ (69), ‘You’re the accused’ (65), ‘You men there’ (38) constitute one type of ‘address’ (type A). The other (type B) is much more personal with a greater identification of subject-voice with addressee-voice. ‘Katrina, now you are suspended’ (78), ‘Dear one, forgive my appearing before you’ (74), ‘Okay Uncle Arthur let’s go’ (205) while not being true imperatives (in fact type A too does not require the addressee to
follow any command/direction), nevertheless have the characteristics of 'address.' But since pure imperatives (as commands) cannot generate the kinds of poems Dawe writes — poems in fact of liberal humanism — the imperative is thus simply a ploy (a gambit?) which is effectively bracketed with the indicative. 'Pure' imperatives (go, kill, murder, scream, etc.) require a vehemence quite at odds with the subdued, semi-detached voices endorsed by the poet.

Temporal. By 'temporality' I simply mean a poetic opening which 'conjoins' a time marker ('when,' 'last night'), a space marker ('at the Wonchip crossroads'), a spatio-temporal marker ('at Shagger's funeral,' 'On the train rolling north,' 'Looking down from bridges,' 'Every summer we construct the sea') with an incident either as a personal reverie (recollections in solitude, the mark of the artist in isolation) or, in the virtualite of adverbials ('when' is extremely ambiguous), as a projected occurrence or, finally, as a metaphorical expansion of the semantic field opened by the first line. So on the latter score, we read 'When something like this happens, ... it is like falling in love,' where 'like falling in love' predicates, metaphorically, a further evasion of what this something is. Metaphors 'defer' meaning and the essence of poems of this kind is indeed an endless deferral of meaning. This, of course, doesn't mean that closure becomes irrelevant; rather poetic closure must not be confused with a 'closed text.'

Didactic. Didactic openings are not uncommon in fiction. Recall Anna Karenin ('All happy families are alike but an unhappy family ...') and Pride and Prejudice ('It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune ...') in this context. And didactic openings — defined very generally here as openings with a 'universal under-pinning,' the sort of discursive style one readily equates with moral claims or judgements — are not unusual in poetry either. Often didactic openings presuppose the genre of allegory and one of the best known examples of this type in Australian Literature at any rate is A.D. Hope's 'For every bird there is this last migration' ('The Death of the Bird'). Like other 'opening' types, didactic ones too generate a particular kind of narrative structure. Bruce Dawe's 'The man has need of the dog' (184) clearly forges ahead into the world of allegory. Similarly, 'Beasts mourn for beasts' (193) must invoke comparisons with man, either in some extended form or simply as a point of reference. What I'm really saying here is that the principle of generation is linked to poetic openings. In other words, the overall narrative of the text is conditioned by the opening discourse. Bruce Dawe does not use didactic openings too often but some of his other openings, especially those in which comparisons are made ('epic' beginnings as we may wish to call them) have the capacity to generate poems which are similar in tone and substance to those with a more central didactic opening. 'Like the murderer on the far bank' (181), 'Love, like trouble, steps out' (191) and even 'To be a poet in Australia' (199) may be included here.

Self-as-subject. Finally indicative discourse also incorporates openings about the self, especially those in which the 'poetic' voice often coalesces with the poet's voice. Here I/we follows a narrative of self unfolded in verse. 'I am
a part of this bull-neck civilization' (166), 'I never walked abroad in air' (190) and 'Every summer we construct the sea' (196) either begin poems of autobiographical projection/suppression or, through a certain detachment, become riddle-like verses to be deciphered again through the conventions of allegory. The latter, however, do have a tendency to relapse into sentimentality, mawkish voices concerned with the unknown, other, heroes of humanity. This category, of course, is not meant to exclude poems with 'didactic,' 'temporal' and 'vocative' openings for all those categories, regardless of the form the narrative takes, have 'voices' and it is the special position of the voice (ideological, linguistic, etc.) that allows us to construct point of view and, ultimately, meaning.

With an analysis of this kind it is possible to make certain very general claims about Dawe's verse. Apart from the obvious question of the particular kind of discursive practice adopted by the poet (here he is primarily an author of the 'indicative mood' who writes to a formula) it is possible to say other things about his technique. Before examining Dawe's verse in some detail, let us, provisionally at any rate, make some claims about Dawe's poetics. Dawe's poems are essentially narratives and, unlike many other poets with whom he shares significant affinities (notably Emily Dickinson and e.e. cummings) he writes extended narratives. There is nothing 'truncated' about Dawe's narrative structures; he gives them elaborate beginnings, middles and ends. Given this, Dawe's verses obviously hit a chord in the common reader. Now 'accessibility' and 'readability' may be interpreted as poetic strengths if one wishes to consider questions of 'directness' and so on, or they may be read as weaknesses if one were to say that they eschew retroactive readings. Simply put the fear is that one need not go beyond a minimal reading of a Dawe poem to construct its meaning. The more conceptually useful point I'd like to make about Dawe's poetics, however, is that his verse is written to a strict formula. This formula may be summarized as awareness and/or perception followed by recollection. An opening with a spatio-temporal location is thus favoured over others. This 'location' may either be in the simple present ('Why, in this strange and beautiful land' (170)), in the eternal present ('All day, day after day' (92)) or in the future present ('When you are older' (219)). But 'when' is highly 'polysemic' too for it may be used to indicate a process: 'When Greek women drop a piece of bread' (164). In this case 'when' is a marker of something whose force resides in it being habitual. So 'when Greek women drop a piece of bread' . . . 'they kiss it.' We may simply call this technique 'recollections,' which conform to the rules already referred to above and (b) Temporality.

I should now like to examine four poems chosen more or less at random. My aim in the second half of this essay is to relate my general observations to actual practice.

Text A: 'Widower' (131)

The poem has a classic Dawe opening: 'when' followed by the consequences of whatever went before 'when'. One function of the 'when' syntax is to generate consequence. And so the poem proclaims its interest in what happens to people after a massive chapter of their life has come to an end. The poem is very
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... readable (as most of Dawe’s poems are) because there is no evasion of the normal narrative flow, so much so that both story and plot — real, historical time and narrative time — for a while become one. In other words the temporal unfolding of the narrative in the text is identical with its real unfolding in time. Text-history is equivalent to ‘real’ history. What do I mean by words which, though common enough, in this context seem to invite complex responses from you? Well, what I am getting at is that the narrative of the ‘Widower’ can be recuperated upon a first minimal reading of the poem. After some event (conversations in the house, after a funeral perhaps) someone (who is not the persona since that voice is clearly with the narrator) in the evening closes the front door, walks down the ‘long hall,’ ‘past the closed room’ and out into the garden. There, alone, he notices the ‘peaches’ and rubs thyme ‘between thumb and forefinger’ a gesture which Grace and Caroline Bell too, we recall, enact while watching the veterans march on Anzac Day. ‘Thyme’ in this instance is replaced by another herb, ‘rosemary.’ As night falls, amidst the whirring of insects, he re-enters the house with the wind howling/creaking all night. This then is what may be called the story line. There is a simple ‘matrix sentence’ — something like ‘the widower is lonely’ — which gets transformed into a narrative structure. Here, in this narrative, nostalgia, remembrance and loss, get transformed into metaphors of loneliness. But is there something else we can say about the poem? In other words, is the text in fact identical with the minimal reading we have offered? Can paraphrase in short replace the text? Is ‘meaning’ identical with ‘significance?’ To discover poetic ‘significance’ we must follow closely those ‘moments’ in a text which defy easy, natural semantic actualization. It is through these resistances that a text emerges as a unit of ‘significance.’ Poetic ‘significance’ is thus a question of semiosis, of fractures in representation or mimesis. This is because the mimetic orientation of a poem (constructed through a system of referentiality) is always destabilized at some point in the poem. It is this point of instability which leads us to the second level of reading and to the construction of poetic significance. Can we, therefore, find instances in the text where our naturalization of poetic representations are questioned?

(a) the sheeted quietness,
(b) . . . where, hours on end, the wind
    Creaked like an ageing bachelor whose bed
    Appears too narrow and too small for him
    With the whole world in which to lay him down.

I choose these examples because in our narrative re-construction we avoided incorporating them. The first, ‘the sheeted quietness,’ tends to predicate ‘the closed room,’ suggesting that this room is ‘in’ sheeted quietness. Now since only connotation can take us beyond this descriptive statement, we must read the phrase figuratively. We could read it as a metaphor but I think we will be more precise if we read it as a metonymy of death. ‘Sheeted quietness’ gives a dimension of meaning to the ‘closed room’ which takes us back to the opening line, and beyond that to the title of the poem. There is, naturally, a certain ‘ghostliness’ about ‘sheeted,’ a silence which permeates the first stanza of the
text. Sound jars consciousness, and sound must be avoided at all cost. And so the shrilling noise 'Of the glass in the left-hand pane' is carefully forestalled, and a series of negations/suppressions strengthen this silence. The 'loosening shadows of the evening,' the 'long hall,' 'rubbed automatically,' 'stock-still,' 'darkness,' 'indifference,' 'asks no questions,' all these expressions avoid contact with noise. Questions are not asked, for questions begin dialogue and dialogue begats endless chatter/noise. This ghostly sombreness, the widower's sense of final loss, is punctuated by a noise which has the automatism of a camera clicking. But cameras are clicked (by someone of course) to 'freeze time,' insects 'whirr' to break the 'freeze,' to bring movement, to defy stillness. Cameras, need I say, reinforce stillness by giving false permanence to a mental image which is never fixed. So it is then that the object in the text 'unfreezes' and goes 'back into the house.'

At this point what we would habitually equate with the widower's own sense of disorientation, is transferred to the wind. The final three lines are an extended metaphor (not a metonym) of the creaking wind. Grammatically, the protagonist's narrative stops at the point of entry into the house. A shorter, fragmentary narrative, supersedes the dominant narrative and, in formal terms at any rate, is independent of the latter. This is, of course, poetic mimesis which, unlike other forms of representation (the poem thus far), proposes to show through 'transfer' (a kind of a dialogue between discourses, a 'talking cure') the kind of poetic significance which the text achieves and which turns the final lines into a paradox: the play on the narrowness of the bed. The move from the 'widower' to the 'ageing bachelor' is mediated by the 'wind' creaking 'like an ageing bachelor.' At this point resistance to casual naturalization, the easy illusion of a minimal narrative, foregrounds itself and subverts the paraphrase. Who, we ask, 'lays him down?' Paradox defies any easy resolution and in doing so warns us that poetic closure does not mean reduction of verse to one meaning. We've isolated two points of resistance in the text to show what, finally, enables the text to operate at a second level and this may be called its significance. Once the second order of meaning has been isolated, the text ceases to 'mean' what the narrative suggests it does mean; instead the text, momentarily at any rate, becomes a unit of significance where all details, all 'ungrammaticalities' (like the final line for instance) merge into one. Before we can comment on Dawe's technique further, let us examine our second poem.

Text B: 'The Frog Plague' (80)

I've suggested in my analysis of Text A that a text is a transformation of a matrix sentence. Now you may find this a 'reductionist' ploy but I think the device may be of great use in our analysis. It is, therefore, with the matrix sentence of 'The Frog Plague' that I wish to begin this section of my analysis. 'Civilization and barbarism': I advance this as the matrix 'sentence.' I should now like to follow its poetic transformation. The opening line, again in the indicative is what I have called 'spatio-temporal.' It is 'In stagnant pools, by disused tennis courts,' in these areas (and, of course, in similar ones elsewhere) that 'Time breeds us mediocre monsters.' A first reading stops here because already we have an ambiguous line. We, therefore, casually disambiguate:
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(a) Time, the subject, breeds us (who are) mediocre monsters where 'us' is mankind

(b) Time, the subject breeds us (who are) mediocre monsters, where 'us' is 'mediocre monsters' (i.e. frogs)

(c) Time, the subject, breeds for us (i.e. mankind) mediocre monsters (i.e. frogs)

The third line of the poem clearly endorses interpretation (c) and, also, allows for the construction of an easier narrative. And this, of course, is readily seen. Within a primarily descriptive system the poetic persona simply catalogues the habitat of frogs and man's singular revulsion towards them. Our own summary corresponds, in intent at any rate, quite closely to the poetic description given by Dawe. But again, if the equivalence were one to one, why write poetry? If, in other words, a prose summary could displace the original poetic text, why analyse verse? We must return to our earlier claims. Up to a point this naturalization is possible and even permissible, and in this poem the easy recuperation of the description with most of its immediacy intact can be stretched further than in many other poems of Dawe. But there is already something crudely formulaic about Dawe's poetic style. Only towards the end of the poem (vide 'The Widower') is poetic mimesis (the system of poetic referentiality we have reduced to a paraphrase) threatened through the insertion of the symbolic. It is this symbolic form of representation (the kind of line(s) that readily enters allegory) which resists habitual interpretation.

— Baggy amphibians play a sombre chess
And in at the bright window something gapes.

Natural language (the primary modelling system) rejects outright 'baggy amphibians play a sombre chess' for, quite clearly, frogs do not play chess. But we know that 'chess' is symbolic of life itself and in many literary/filmic texts (in Bergman's The Seventh Seal for instance) the Devil plays chess with man. So the considerable semantic field of the game of chess gives ‘baggy amphibians’ a power in excess of their ‘real’ value. It is the way in which ‘life’ (defined as fully as we can) revolves around these amphibians (that it is us and not them who are being hunted) which creates a primary paradox in the poem. Here again ‘meaning construction’ leads us finally to poetic significance and we have to re-read the text to find the specific ironic discourse which sustains this deft move on the part of the poet. I have given the impression that this line almost saves the text from becoming ‘undergraduate.’ I think there is some truth in this, especially as our analysis also unMASKs the classic Dawe technique: a ‘natural’ language given a twist at the end. This twist is invariably paradoxical, aimed at subverting the easy identification of word and meaning (more accurately signifier and signified) in the text. I've used the word ‘formulaic’ to describe this. Can we defend ourselves any further?

Text C: 'Homecoming' (92)

A sense of unending (and even futile) activity hits us as we read this elegy, for many the 'one outstanding poem' that the 'Vietnam War produced.' No unfamiliar names are mentioned except for the strange sounding 'tarmac at
Tan Son Nhut’ (Tân Sơn Nhút, Saigon International Airport means literally, ‘newly painted’) or ‘the hulls of Grants.’ Time too is ‘all day,’ and ‘movement’ hides pity, fear, rage or agony. The poem has a quick tempo, it doesn’t wish to ruminate on events and rushes headlong, almost geographically, from Saigon to Australian towns, cities and suburbs. ‘Bringing the dead home’ (the matrix) is presented through an activity which avoids direct human contact. We can quickly see the pointlessness of the entire war and those of us familiar with the late sixties and early seventies moratorium marches respond to the poem with an unusual immediacy. But what more can be said about it beyond its quite obvious didactic force? Where are the resistances? How does it challenge ‘natural’ modes of representation? Again we return to the formula: an initial extended reflection followed by an essentially metaphorical discourse which almost invariably heralds a paradox:

and on to cities in whose wide web of suburbs
   telegrams tremble like leaves from a wintering tree
   and the spider grief swings in his bitter geometry
   —they’re bringing them home, now, too late, too early.

The tendencies we discovered in the other poems are evident here too. Only towards the end does the poem resist easy naturalization and proclaim a paradox. The grief so disconcertingly absent from the poem so far gets a poignant expression in perhaps the best two metaphors in the entire poem: ‘telegrams tremble... bitter geometry.’ But since the poem clearly carried a particular ideology, an ideology basically of the futility of our involvement in Vietnam, it is the final line with encapsulates the paradox of that involvement:

— they’re bringing them home, now, too late, too early.

‘Too late, too early’; yes ‘too late’ because they’re dead but why ‘too early?’ Is Dawe endorsing, finally, the political necessity of ‘our boys’ being there? Or is he being ironic, the mode that we detect in ‘The Frog Plague’? Or finally, is the nation not prepared for the return of the dead, to be buried in forgotten suburban graveyards? So ‘too early,’ at this slightly cynical ideological level, worries us because the return may be deemed ‘dishonourable’; they bring back with them the shame of defeat — and grief, ultimately, feels terribly uncomfortable with shame. But my aim here has not been to examine Dawe’s humanistic ideology, what Alexander Craig many years ago called ‘this poet’s warm humanity’; rather I am concerned with Dawe’s poetics as a particular form of expression. And here again, from the opening line, which conforms to the classic pattern of the indicative, to the paradox at the end, Dawe writes within a well-established formula of ‘recollection’ and ‘resolution.’

Text D: ‘Creative Process’ (217)

If we reduce this to its underlying narrative what we get is really a fable. It seems to me that the narrative underpinning of this text belongs to the genre of fable and it is the conventions of this genre which control the way in which it is written. A moral fable often has a protagonist who is foolish and the question of folly is raised to new heights through a specific instance of the protagonist’s foolishness. In this poem ‘we’ the plural protagonist suitably
hidden behind a pronoun yet so patently naked, enacts a particular narrative (because this happens yearly) simply to underline this folly. One of my worries with this poem is that apart from the moral question/issue raised at the end of the poem, we hardly ever go beyond the minimal narrative. Beginning with a 'temporal' opening (one of Dawe's favourite opening gambits), the poem moves briskly through a predictably Australian 'climatic' register. Indeed the force of the rain/drought alternation and our habitual responses to this extreme alteration are so marked that the 'we' is easily invaded by, or collapses with, a mythic national consciousness. In the process 'fable' becomes an 'allegory.' But beyond this identification, beyond the metaphors which give us this sense of unmediated recognition, what we get is really a fable of relentless human folly. 'Relentless' because there is a certain inevitability about it. In this case the entire narrative becomes 'metonymic'; it is a fragment that displaces all our prejudices, and indeed all our actions in life. The lack of gratitude, the absence of generosity, these the poem represents through a narrative of 'rain' and 'drought.' The crucial lines are:

— how petty and arrogant seems our previous boredom,
   how just a punishment seems our present drought!

The poem begins with 'when the drought breaks' and ends with 'our present drought,' bringing beginnings and ends together, establishing the necessary artistic concordance. But our 'present drought' may be read either as our 'gift of drought' or the 'drought which is here with us now.' 'Punishment,' 'present,' reinforce the first meaning and carry echoes of 'previous.' What we get here again — through the necessity of the symbolic — is a specific kind of poetic closure, one that we associate with fables: narrative followed by didactic discourse. It is my contention that this is Dawe's predominant technique, it is a trick, a gambit, a favourite ploy. Bruce Dawe writes humanistic fables.

Conclusion

It is perhaps unwise to claim so boldly that Bruce Dawe writes to a formula and is almost alarmingly predictable. Yet it seems to me that the almost total absence of the 'interrogative' — the mood of question — finally leads Dawe to write versions of what are clearly minimal realistic texts. These texts have a narrative, often extended ones and these texts move towards the expression of a particular point of view which is invariably couched in a moral of some kind. If there are voices, they do not shift significantly from poem to poem. A powerful enough second voice to counteract the poem's first dominant voice too is generally absent. If read Dawe as a poet who espouses all the decent values of civilization, who is, if one wishes to give him a political tag (which poets detest) a 'social democrat.' But social democracy does not lead, necessarily, to poems of great imagination and power. And ultimately it is the fear of the unknown and the consequences of radical changes which subdue Dawe's voice(s). And, furthermore, it is precisely this that prevents him from the kinds of linguistic experimentation which could lead to a re-examination of poetic representation. There is too easy an acceptance of the 'naturalness' of language here; and a corresponding timidity towards fracturing language, to make it speak afresh, to find a 'purer' style. Dawe clings on to the concepts
of narrative closure, to in fact 'fables of identity.' In doing so his poems are written in one dominant discourse — the discourse of his opening lines, the discourse indeed of the indicative. This discourse accepts the referential power of language and metaphors' abiding grace (after all the collection under discussion here is called 'Sometimes Gladness,' a partial phrase which invites theological completion). It accepts furthermore the naturalness of order and history.

This being so, Bruce Dawe must now tussle with the tyranny of language itself, and engage in the ideological consequences of that encounter.

Notes

1. The Oxford History of Australian Literature, p.419.
6. For Bruce Dawe's own ideas on the subject see 'Bruce Dawe' (Australian Poet in Profile), Southerly XXXIX, (1979), 355-63 and Greg Shepherd, 'From Garden State to Garden City: The Progress of Bruce Dawe,' English in Australia, 74 (December 1985), 26-28.
10. Chris Wallace-Crabbe uses the phrase 'one-shot poems' to describe poems which are basically 'analogical.' See 'Bruce Dawe's Inventiveness,' Meanjin XXV (1976), 94-101.
14. '... Dawe's is the most democratic voice in Australian poetry,' writes Vincent O'Sullivan in a recent review of Sometimes Gladness. See Westerly 1 (March, 1985), 88.