



“**T’ r a z a j y r**”

By David Prater

let's pretend i'm an eagle: okay, now, here are my wings,
and with them I shall launch myself from this obscure eyrie,
and together with my fellows -

[yea, comrade eagles!!]

i will fly back to my own beaches, my own daylight savings time,
to see the surf club at Ballina, to witness the sunset at Yamba,
and then to sleep on the beach all night so as to catch
the sunrise! W000t! and to ask myself,
knowing well the answer: could Brunswick Heads ever be as miserable
as olden Europe sometimes is (that is, on the days when it rains?)

[which means most days! LOL!]

and then if the rhetorical answer is no, then it's all settled:
i'll sit and watch that sun rising until it burns my scalp,
until its death rays meet my bald crown in a victorious union,
and i'll slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen and slap on a hat;
yes, even though i'm an eagle and have no need of such things,
i'll pack them into a small dilly bag and attach it to my claw
right before i launch myself from my faraway eyrie and -

[hang on, didn't i just -

ehm ...]

oh i shall replay my grand ascent from my eyrie just for kicks!
and then wait for myself on the briny shore of Lake Ainsworth,
near Lennox Head there,
where Kombie-van campers greet me with toothbrushes and grins,
and the skirts of the young women have been sewn with stars.
and why shall I re-do all of these things i have already done?
why, to remind myself of the fact that here, in the cold north,
i am surrounded by a cold and clammy dark that knows my name,
a dark fog disguising itself as some kind of cool suede jacket;
yea, because here the winter lasts for six months of the year,
and the sea itself freezes and cracks and pops, then disappears,

and the snow blows horizontally, and is generally a big nuisance.
snow everywhere, even in cupboards, soccer balls and underwear -
and inside my breasts reside many ice-cold and evil thoughts ...

[right, so you're now a female eagle and -]

[SHUT IT.]

and so this is why i cannot possibly stay here a moment longer -
no, not even for a nano-second, with snow inside my underpants!
let me pretend that i'm an eagle, as in this poem's first line,
and let me simply, rhetorically and magnificently don my wings

[as though i need to actually put them on]

and fly non-stop, or perhaps with a brief stopover in Singapore -
or maybe even Bangkok - no, make it Singapore, okay? as i said,
non-stop to Coolangatta International Airport, where a shuttle
bus shall await me, and I shall travel on, onwards to Stradbroke,
or maybe just settle in a heap in Byron Bay. there dwell tourists
who shall tend to my tired wings, who like to twirl fire sticks
after dark on the beach, and who are generous with the makings
when rolling those peculiarly patchouli cigarettes of theirs ...

yes, and after the sun has gone down totally, and I look up to
the wooded hillsides dotted with million dollar bungalows, i'll
see the intense wisdom on nature's part of beckoning me there,
where pizza crusts and empty chip packets proliferate in carparks
and i can stuff myself silly on unsophisticated carbohydrates.

[ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ]

then, and only then, i'll rise once more (sure, a little clumsily)
from my doona, paddle pop stick and hypercolour t-shirt eyrie,
and fly a few clicks south to the shore of Lake Ainsworth, right by
the old Department of Sport and Recreation camp there, and I'll
park myself there for a millennium or so, and watch the ti-tree
waters rippling in the breeze, or in the wake of some kid playing
hide and seek with the sky. after all, beauty is beautiful where-
ever you look for it or find it. so let me perch, undisturbed, in
the branch of some otherwise unremarkable tree, preferably green;
let the sun set slowly over the whole tableau like the light at
the end of a movie, and let me die there, one day,

cradling childhood in my arms.

A free transliteration of Graham W. Reid's translation of “**Т’ р а з а ј у р**” (“T’ga za jug,” or “Longing for the South”) by Macedonian writer Konstantin Miladinov (1830–62).

David Prater was born in Dubbo, Australia in 1972. He holds a BA from the University of Sydney, an MA from the University of Melbourne, and a PhD from Swinburne University of Technology. His first poetry collection, *We Will Disappear*, was published by Papertiger media in 2007, and Vagabond Press published his chapbook *Morgenland* in the same year. His poetry has appeared in a wide range of Australian and international journals, and he has performed his work at festivals in Australia, Japan, Bulgaria, Canada, the United States, and Macedonia. He has also undertaken two writers' residencies in Seoul, Republic of Korea, and has worked extensively as a teacher, editor and researcher. Since 2001 he has been the managing editor of *Cordite Poetry Review* (<http://www.cordite.org.au>), an online journal of Australian poetry and poetics. He currently lives in Karlskrona, Sweden, where he is undertaking post-doctoral research on electronic literature and pedagogy at Blekinge Technical University.