~ 20/20 Vision ~

A Fu 賦 Wikipedia tells us, is an early

Chinese poetic form in which a place,

An object, a feeling or some other

subject is described in exhaustive

detail and from as many angles

as possible.

For the translator Burton Watson, the

Fu 賦 “consists of a combination of

prose and rhymed verse, prose serving

for the introduction that explains the

genesis of the piece, as well as for

occasional interludes, with verse taking

over in the more rhapsodic and emotionally

charged passages... ”

bon chance! 9 pages

*Well here I am, Tuesday 07:00 in St Vincent's padded chair,*

*one eye dilated one eye done and waiting for the call,*

*and when the suave young surgeon reappears*

*he's sorry but the microscope's burnt out,*

*they've called the rep and ops are off today:*

*come back on Monday, early.*

*A week till Xmas: we re-book trains, re-book our*

*pied-a-terre ~ which offers this online hook:*

Win back your stay: Tell us your best memory of Sydney?

[ max. 200 words ]

*I take the bait but cannot hope to win ~*

*my list's become a retrospective flood*

*an anthem ~ this*

Port Jackson Fu 賦

*Oysters* Messiaen

filling the Concert Hall with wave on wave upon wave

of timpani and brass dusk on the afterdeck facing east

freshening nor'easter catspaws... heeling ketch...

memory tides

train rumbling on the Bridge the rumble down

from the girders to the dinghy in the girders' shadow

close-hauled bailing threading east

who says *'steam gives way to sail' ?*

1957

Walsh Bay in the Bridge’s morning shadow

we farewell City bound for Bundanoon

fivestar sunset luxury Pier One Hotel

2008

Pier One Walsh Bay

*S.S. Hongkong Surety* out of Hoboken

and Oakland two familiar tea chests swinging down

Foodstuffs? any Medicines? *nope*

any Books? *here’s a list*

Portrait of An Artist - he’s no good

*with 26 Horses ~ he’s ok*

any Magazines? eye to gimlet eye *nope*

Off y'go

*Mr Natural ~ Angelfood McSpade ~ we're home!*

midnight City holds its breath

inner harbour foghorn chorus hoots and toots this NewYear in

canines howl

1969

Pier Four

No White Bay’s concrete plain flour job No.1 hold

*in yr own time get it in and go home*

hatchman's newchum welcome

*E wouldnt know if you were up im*

*dumbstruck--*

port winch to the rescue *It'd be true mate if it was you mate*

Snails Bay dolphins timber job midday transfer launch

sparkling--

through the shadow and three bays east the Finger Wharf

and look--

down the gangway off the Mariposa come the Hari Krishna

~ not your songbook comrades

Bellowing supervisors pannikin bosses called [long o] pannos

The Hurricane Lantern *he's not too bright*

his son The Wick

The Mass Murderer Aub—*three DUIs*

*and two pedestrians*

Brown Sugar

1970~

*Spindrift* Saturdays

hoist the Squadron burgee to the peak

*now take a turn around that stay and pull down— hard*

*now take a turn around that turn and see— they cross*

*pull down to make it fast—*

done—

the lad’s learned the locking knot

*Spindrift* Huon Pine

two men to lift the pole and lock it on

haul aft on the sheet and guy and pop the kite

*Gretel’s* cut-down hand-me-down

postmortems in the bar bare feet and beer on the Squadron’s

blue shag pile

sealegs last all night

1962

Flying Angel

George Street North

The Coroner

*The Sun*'ll *want this bloody story* deadline 2pm

morning tea by Dr Oettle’s gentle invitation

below the Bridge’s echo in the Morgue

[“The Act Of Seeing With One’s Own Eyes”]

turn guts to text *tone it down for Granny*

get it in and go home 1963

Ship Inn midday schooner

pegleg seagull wants my chips

Sitting on the dock waiting

for a freighter home

dock strike up in Portland

running out of cash

waiting for a call

at Local 6

East Bay longshore pickup gang we're Harry Bridges' mob

dockside snafu timbers all askew Huey's lost the plot

Huey inhales—

*Man you bin in the Navy man I seen*

*you threw a Matthew Walker round that block*

[careful with the argot don’t say yacht]

*Nah man sailboats 'sa locking knot*

1969

*MV MyEnid*

out of Mosman Bay

[home of the *Bumblebees*]

skipper Cap'n Smith (retd.)

retired from piloting the Torres Strait at night no lights

grizzled cheek horizon eyes we're bound for Broken Bay

for Spencer Wiseman's Woolloomoorang Freeman's Reach

Keep to the high bank or you'll have us aground

two apprentice helmsmen a dad and mullagatawny soup

his mullagatawny soup

eh mullagatawny soup

1952 ~

albatross tarinna

following our dawn service to The Heads

charred *MyEnid* out of Mosman Bay hove-to in the swell

two lads a father and Commander K, R.N.

ashes to the wind saltwater deep

Farewell, *MyEnid*'s skipper

albatross heads east

1958

Chowder Bay 1941 ~

Sunderlands in C-major Catalinas F-sharp

soar right to left across my memories panorama to The Gap

barefoot down the steps slim magnolia buds beyond my reach

steep serried crimson tigerlily terrace

unloved persimmon barren Snow Queen peach

slip prickly pear creaking bamboo stand

itchy toes down down down all fiftytwo

*Morella Road ~ quick* over the melting tar

behind the Moreton Bay behind the pub the squishing figs

New Year's dragon spluttering in the park

and on the sand soft bellygrunting wharfies picnic tug 'o' war

and archived—

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited parasols and boaters

and [perchance] grandfather Harry... *there! in spats*

their outing done assembled

for the photograph and the ferry home

from Chowder Bay

scatter my ashes in Chowder Bay

on Saturday March 7 1959

I take the ferry and the bush track home

to Chowder Bay Morella Road

to gather up belongings

for my exile

at born-to-rule St Paul's lectures commence Monday

unannounced and unwelcomed

I skirt their sotto voce vortex

and from the safe haven of my room

retrieve my belongings and depart unknowing

*she'll get the furniture*

*he's off to live in sin*

not ever to set foot again in barefoot paradise

no dog no dinghy

*unforgiven*

anthems lead to this

[from Anthem Variorum]

“ *We can, of course, bear in mind psychoanalytical methods*

*for determining the personality of a poet, and thus find a*

*measure of the pressures--but above all of the oppressions*

*--to which a poet has been subjected in the course of a life.*

*But the poetic act itself, the sudden image, the flare-up of*

*being in the imagination, these are inaccessible to*

*such investigations…*”

Gaston Bachelard

The Poetics of Space

Envoi ~

The dolphins still stand in line off Long Nose Point: the timber--

archipelago meranti-- all but logged out now; the freighters,

dismembered on a beach in Gujarat.

On George Street North, the gold-leaf public entrance to the Coroner’s

Court is locked. The rear stone steps look down two flights to a square of

dead blank ground... the Morgue. Departing souls buy UggBoots in the

Courtroom proper, and next door at The Angel, they tuck in to Thai

before they join the rattle and hum of wardrobes on little plastic wheels

rolling up to board a mega-deck *Pacific Odyssey*.

The barracks on the northern shore of Chowder Bay-- now that the

ministry for flogging off the foreshore's had its way-- is yet another

restaurant with a view. [History’s prescient: the barracks once had tea

rooms stencilled on the roof, subterfuge to fool the Japanese.] And at

this restaurant with its view across the channels to its twin at Watson's

Bay, I understand they serve, with their cafecitos and espressos, a

“Colonial Brown Sugar ~ the Taste of Yesterday”— neither coarse unrefined.

solstice 08:00

leave the wharf the diver

poised on the gunwale of the launch

brass helmet spanner'd tight lead boots eddy in the tide

leave the dinghy beneath the jetty gently rocking

*Gurugal, Gurrugal*

barefooted

over the pocked sandstone

past the basking seal

out to the southmost point

*Gurugal, Gurrugal*

*Koreé, Koree*

not a ripple

the midden

[first panel of Anthem Variorum]

*“Look well at the Pacific before you die. The best*

*of the promised paradises have neither*

*its hues nor its splendour. ”*

Etel Adnan

SEA and FOG

“Description is my anchor.

The sight of the sun is

my security. ”

Anna Couani

The Harbour Breathes