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Miscarriage of Meaning (Poem)

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Abstract

1901 and the great Australian silence fell with deafening reality over the brown earth. A silence, screaming out its permanency in mortar and sand, recording in Joycean confusion, tho' lacking his learning and wit, that ineluctable modality he would ascribe to Bloom some years on. What measure of law could flaunt its own origins so glibly?

Miscarriage of Meaning

Barbara Nicholson

1901 and the great Australian silence
fell with deafening reality over the brown earth.
A silence, screaming out its permanency
in mortar and sand,
recording in Joycean confusion,
tho' lacking his learning and wit,
that ineluctable modality
he would ascribe to Bloom some years on.
What measure of law could flaunt its own origins so glibly?

I turned to the visionaries of ancient Hellene:
Speak Solon, Thucydides, Socrates,
where in your wisdom
Did you set the precedent?
I searched tirelessly there
For some rational explanation,
Tried to establish a noble element in the intent,
But in all the Hellenes
Found neither trace nor hint
Of future obfuscations that would metamorphose
The very heart and soul
of your legacy to the world.
Democracy!
What sweet, sweet thoughts you dreamed.
And in another world a world away
a different Dreaming,
more ancient still
than that of those thinkers of Hellene,
the Brown People lived in the perfect democracy.
A million campfires bore witness
to their timeless enjoyment
of a system of law enriched by its soul.
Can anything last forever?
What happened?
Who were these pale strangers
Who took the ancient law
From the Brown Land
And sucked the sacred life force from it?
What name could the Brown People
Give to the synthesis
Imposed so brutally?
Democracy?
No, no, no! could it be
De-mock-eracy?