

1984

Two step for Jim Lee

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Abstract

First year out as teachers say first year in a wild west high where kids fired bobby pins not pellets first year out in wood and fibro a bachelors' house with divorcee who wore always af failed kimono and had an 'understanding' with her gentleman SP

'You have done all you could, my dear. Please don't torment yourself,' he added as he noticed silent tears rolling down her furrowed cheeks.

'No one could have done anything for him. He had only himself to blame for this kind of end.'

Then he went down the hall, placing his hat on his head. With a final, sympathetic glance at Eva, he left.

She stood by the closed door for a long time, as if lost in thought. Then, slowly, a smile spread across her thin face and she whispered gently to herself,

'Yes. He had only himself to blame...'

Geoff Page

TWO STEP FOR JIM LEE

First year out
as teachers say
first year in
a wild west high
where kids fired bobby
pins not pellets
first year out
in wood and fibro
a bachelors' house
with divorcee
who wore always
a failed kimono
and had an 'under-
standing' with her
gentleman SP

the rent just three
pound ten a week
in currency
called back and burnt.

Each day I caught
a bus with kids
and swung home on the
train through Granville
and on my wide
ironic bed
rebuilt an ego
limb by limb
from shards that Form 2
hadn't stolen
wrote up hopeful
notes for lessons
that never quite
were given.

Thirty tons of
Auburn solids
fell from the sky
per acre of ground
not all of it on
the white drip-dries
I offered upwards
from the clothesline.

With half my life
in institutions
(chin-ups for the
bourgeoisie)
I boiled an egg hard
every morning
leathery as maxims.

Nearest to a
friend all year
was old Jim Lee
across the lino
who ran the ever-
greens each night

(accordion now
instead of piano).
He'd worked the Cunards
in the thirties
and conjured as you
stood and watched
wire brushes on a
weathered snare
a dance floor edged
with weighted palms
and open to the stars.

He had a clerk's hole
now somewhere
and offered sticky
port in jars
warned against women.

I had some drums there
with my suitcase
sailing high
on the wardrobe top
to practise though
my split a door
six rooms would be
as many tom-toms.

Told by chance
of my parole
he bought an opener
from Coles
and scratched on it a
stave with quavers
that old two-bob-
each-way advice

Moderato Ma

Non Troppo

a motto close
as any other
I'd try for twenty
years or life.