Poems

Abstract
GUILLAUME’S LOOM, HASTINGS, 1080, HER FATHER IN THE PATIENTS’ GARDEN, NEWCASTLE BOROUGH LUNATIC ASYLUM, 1919

This serial is available in Kunapipi: https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol20/iss3/5
I made a loom for Mathilda, my English daughter. 

I called. I wanted to show her 
The strong clay rings I’d made to hold the thread 
As hard and near as I held her. I wasn’t proud 
Of the rest – a rough affair of stick and thole 
Cut from the worst English wood, I think hazel, 
And English wool.

I am not lost. I harbour my loneliness here 
By the larkspur. Here, where the hand of my daughter, 
Margaret’s hand in hard love, took my elbow – 
The smell of the ward’s in my hair. 

Behind me now, the black clocktower, the wall – 
O God, our … God, reported missing and presumed, etcetera, 
When they built that wall. 

I’ll take my soul and sixpence when I go. 
I’ll go to Muriel, though she is laid 

Aside. My mother, Dad, my mother’s … Margaret said. 
The stones of the path in the patients’ garden – 
Narrow then wide, narrow then wide.

Note: The hospital, taken over by the Ministry of War during World War I, is now known as St Nicholas’ Hospital.