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INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTH EDITION

Heinemann has been associated with school poetry publishing in Australia since 1965, with the production of C.J. Horne and M.A. O'Brien's *Progress in Poetry*, the final edition of which came out in 1990. In 1983 J.A. and J.K. McKenzie began *The World's Contracted Thus*, an anthology which specifically met teachers' requirements for the Victorian HSC English Literature course. This anthology introduced students to a view of English literature that essentially came from pre-war Cambridge, and which reflected the assumptions behind the HSC course. The advent of the VCE in 1992 in Victoria prompted Heinemann to revamp the anthology. John McKenzie included a wider range of poets than before, especially Australian poets. As with the earlier publication, teachers adopted it enthusiastically, and *Lines to Time* went to three editions, the last in 1999.

This fourth edition of *Lines to Time* continues to meet the requirements of the Victorian VCE Literature course. It substantially covers the poetry on both List A and List B. Most of the poets included by John McKenzie have been retained, and any Australian poets who have been removed have been replaced by others, so that Australia's representation in the anthology remains the same.

The passing of time has meant that the poetic landscape has altered as well. Some teachers had their interest and enthusiasm for poetry fired by the 'New' poets who appeared in the Penguin poetry volume edited by Alvarez. That publication is now rising fifty. Phillip Larkin and Ted Hughes have died, and the huge literary and social controversy surrounding Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, which became so important as a focus for the development of feminist readings in the nineteen-seventies and eighties, is receding into literary history. Indeed, the most recent poet to be added to this anthology, John Kinsella, was born the year after the death of Plath.

There has also been a fundamental change in readers' assumptions about what they do when they read. The belief that 'close reading' would enable a reader to discover something essential about both the poem and its author has been attacked from a bewildering number of theoretical perspectives, all of which have questioned the notion that the poem is an expression of the 'solid' personality of the author. Reading is now seen as a far more problematic activity than it was half a century ago. Literature discussions now involve exploring the text for 'ideology'. We are sometimes less interested in what the text says than what it does not say. We are also more aware of the designs of the writing on the reader, and are more conscious of the challenges that history and cultural differences pose for us as readers.

So why continue with an anthology that many educated readers may see as old fashioned? Because, as experienced literature teachers will attest, students over the years have been moved by many of the poems in the anthology and have been prompted to develop a deep interest in literature and poetry. Students have discovered that literature matters, and that reading poetry gives pleasure not found in any other activity. We believe that many tried and true texts could be enlivened by some of the new approaches. A poem such as 'We are going', which has been the subject of discussion in Australian classrooms for many years, could become a site for discussion about different ways of reading poetry. Also, an anthology is a book to explore, to dip into, not just to study. We hope *Lines to Time* will also be chosen for students in Years Ten and Eleven, and that they will find in the selections poetry that touches and surprises them.

Note: in the Donne and Keats selections, we have endeavoured as much as possible to use the versions of poems specified in the VCAA Literature Text List. In some cases this means modernised spellings and punctuation are used instead of the original.

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W.H. Auden: Fourteen poems from *Selected Poems* by W.H. Auden, Faber and Faber, London, 1979.

Raymond Carver: Twelve poems from *All of Us: The Collected Poems of Raymond Carver*, The Harvill Press, London, 1996.

Geoffrey Chaucer: 'The Prologue' from *Chaucer: The Prologue and Three Tales*, eds King and Steele, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1969; 'The Pardoner's Introduction, Prologue, and Tale' from *The Riverside Chaucer*, general ed. Larry D. Benson, Oxford University Press, New York, 1987.

Bruce Dawe: Six poems from *Sometimes Gladness* by Bruce Dawe, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1978.

Emily Dickinson: Fourteen poems from *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Little Brown and Company, Boston, who acknowledged permission of the President and Fellows of Harvard College and of the Trustees of Amherst College, 1961, and of Mary A. Hampson and Martha Dickinson Bianchi; 'A Narrow Fellow in the Grass' from *A Choice of Emily Dickinson's Verse* edited by Ted Hughes, Faber and Faber, London, 1968.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(1340?–1400)

Born London, son of a wine merchant. Chaucer was variously a soldier in France, a diplomat to Italy and France, and a senior public servant in England.

from THE CANTERBURY TALES THE GENERAL PROLOGUE

sweet

every root in that liquid

by whose power

Spring's westwind; also

breathed into; wood

delicate new shoots

Aries

birds

stirs, arouses them; hearts

go

pilgrims, especially to Jerusalem;

strands, shores

known

helped; sick

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote[▲]
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour[▲]
Of which vertu[▲] engendred is the flour,
Whan Zephirus[▲] eek[▲] with his sweete breeth
Inspired[▲] hath in every holt[▲] and heeth
The tendre croppes[▲], and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram[▲] his half cours yronne,
And smale fowles[▲] maken melodey
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,
So priketh hem[▲] nature in hir corages[▲],
Thanne yongen folk to goon[▲] on pilgrimages
And palmeres[▲] for to seken straunge strondes[▲]
To ferne halwes kouthe[▲] in sondry londes,
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen[▲] whan that they were seeke[▲].

10

Bifel that in that sesoun on a day
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage

20

1. his: suggesting personification of April.

14. ferne halwes: ancient, distant shrines known.

17. holy blisful martir: holy blessed martyr, Thomas à Becket, who was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral and who is buried there.

20. An inn on the south bank of the Thames at Southwark, the approach to old London Bridge, and beside the road to Canterbury.

with very devout purpose, spirit

To Caunterbury, with ful devout corage[▲],
At nyght was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde[▲].

were intending to ride

spacious

The chambres and the stables weren wyde[▲]
And wel we weren esed atte beste.

briefly

everyone

And shortly[▲], whan the sonne was to reste,

30

immediately

made plans

So hadde I spoken with hem everichon[▲]
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon[▲],
And made forward[▲] erly for to ryse
To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.

nevertheless

before; proceed

But nathelees[▲] whil I have tyme and space
Er[▲] that I ferther in this tale pace[▲],
Me thynketh it acordant to reson

appearance and character

To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem so as it seemed me

*what they looked like;
position in society*

then will

And whiche they weren[▲] and of what degree[▲]
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a knyght than wol[▲] I first bigynne.

40



A knyght ther was, and that a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre[▲],
And thereto hadde he riden, no man ferre[▲],
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse
And evere honoured for his worthynesse.

his king's or God's war

farther

50

At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne

25. aventure: by chance, but also implying adventure.

29. esed atte beste: accommodated in comfort.

34. to the place of which I told you: i.e. Canterbury.

46. Integrity, honour, generosity of spirit, and courteous behaviour were the four main tenets of a knight's chivalric code.

49. hethenesse: heathendom, where people are not Christians.

51. Alisaundre: Alexandria, captured by Christians from Muslims in 1365.

52. He had been honoured by being placed at the head of the table.

*Prussia*Aboven alle nacions in Pruce[▲];*Lithuania; campaigned; Russia*In Lettow[▲] hadde he reysed[▲] and in Ruce[▲],
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.*Granada*In Gernade[▲] at the seege eek hadde he be*Algeciras; Benmarin, Morocco*Of Algezir[▲] and riden in Belmarye[▲].

At Lyeys was he and at Satalye

*the Mediterranean*Whan they were wonne and in the Grete See[▲]

At many a noble armee hadde he be.

60

At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,

*Tlemcen in North Africa*And foghten for oure feith at Tramysse[▲]

In lystes thryes and ay slayn his foo.

This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also

*Palathia in modern Turkey*Som tyme with the lorde of Palatye[▲]

Agayn another hethen in Turkye.

*renown*And evere moore he hadde a sovereyn prys[▲],

And though that he were worthy he was wys

*demeanour*And of his port[▲] as meeke as is a mayde.*foul language*

He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde

70

*person*In al his lyf unto no maner wight[▲];

He was a verray parfit gentil knyght.

finely dressed

But for to tellen now of his array,

Hise hors were goode but he was nat gay[▲];

Of fustian he wered a gypoun

*stained; coat of mail*Al bismotered[▲] with his habergeoun[▲]*journey*for he was late ycome from his viage[▲]

And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

*the knight;**trainee for knighthood*With hym[▲] ther was his sone, a young SQUYER[▲],

A lovee and a lusty bachelor

80

*curly; held in curling irons*With lokkes crulle[▲] as they were leyd in presse[▲];

Of twenty yeer of age he was I gesse.

agile

Of his stature he was of evene lengthe

And wonderly delyvere[▲] and of greet strengthe.*cavalry raid*And he hadde been som tyme in chivachye[▲]*in so little time on campaign*

In Flaundres, in Artoys and Picardye,

And born hym wel, as of so litel space[▲],*lady's*In hope to stonden in his lady[▲] grace.

58. Lyeys: Ayas in Armenia; Satalye: Attalia.

75. fustian: a coarse cotton cloth; gypoun: a tunic worn under chain mail armour.

BALLADS

The ballads presented here are from southern Scotland and northern England. Originating in Elizabethan times, they were passed orally from generation to generation, gradually being modified, so that when they were written down in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were sometimes many versions of the original ballad.

THE THREE RAVENS

There were three ravens sat on a tree,

Downe a downe, hay downe, hay downe

There were three ravens sat on a tree,

With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

There were three ravens sat on a tree,

They were as blacke as they might be.

The one of them said to his mate,

‘Where shall we our breakfast take?’

‘Downe in yonder greene field,

There lies a knight slain under his shield.

10

‘His hounds they lie downe at his feete,

So well they can their master keepe.

‘His haukes they flie so eagerly,

There’s no fowle[▲] dare him come nie.’

bird

Downe there comes a fallow doe,

As great with yong as she might goe.

She lift up his bloody hed,

And kist his wounds that were so red.

2 and 4. These lines make up the refrain for this ballad. Line 2 is repeated after the first line of each verse and line 4 after the second line.

shroud, grave, of earth
 She got him up upon her backe,
 And carried him to earthen lake[▲].

20

first hour, sunrise
 She buried him before the prime[▲],
 She was dead herselfe e're even-song time.

lover
 God send every gentleman,
 Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman[▲].

THE TWA CORBIES

two crows; moan
one
 As I was walking all alane,
 I heard twa corbies[▲] making a mane:
 The tane[▲] unto the t'other say,
 'Where sall we gang and dine to-day?'

turf
knew
 'In behint yon auld fail[▲] dyke,
 I wot[▲] there lies a now-blain knight;
 And nae body kens that he lies there,
 But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

'His hound is to the hunting gane,
 His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
 His lady's ta'en another mate,
 So we may make our dinner sweet.

10

neck bone
thatch
 'Ye'll sit on his white hause bane[▲],
 And I'll pike out his bonny blue een:
 Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair,
 We'll theek[▲] our nest when it grows bare.

'Mony a one for him makes mane,
 But nane sall ken whare he is gane:
 O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
 The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

20

SIR PATRICK SPENS

(FIRST VERSION)

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
 Drinking the blude-reid wine:
 ‘O whar will I get guid sailor,
 To sail this schip of mine?’

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
 Sat at the kings richt kne:
 ‘Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
 That sails upon the se.’

long The king has written a braid^a letter,
 And signed it wi his hand, 10
 And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens
 Was walking on the sand

laugh The first line that Sir Patrick red,
 A loud lauch^a lauch^d he;
 The next line that Sir Patrick red,
 The teir blinder his ee.

‘O wha is this has don this deid,
 This ill deid don to me,
 To send me out this time o’ the yeir,
 To sail upon the se! 20

‘Mak hast, mak hast, my mirry men all,
 Our guid schip sails the morne.’
 ‘O say na sae, my master deir,
 For I feir a deadlie storme.

‘Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,
 Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
 And I feir, I feir, my dier master,
 That we will cum to harme.’

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
 To weet their cork-heild schoone;
 Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
 Thair hats they swam aboone.

30

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
 Wi thair fans into their hand,
 Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens
 Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
 Wi thair gold kems[^] in their hair,
 Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
 For they'll see thame na mair.

combs

40

half over

Haf owre[^], haf owre to Aberdour,
 It's fiftie fadom deip,
 And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
 Wi the Scots lords at his felt.

SIR PATRICK SPENS

(SECOND VERSION)

I THE SAILING

The king sits in Dunfermline town
 Drinking the blude-red wine;
 'O whare will I get a skeely[^] skipper
 To sail this new ship o' mine?'

skilful

O up and spak an eldern knight,
 Sat at the king's right knee:
 'Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
 That ever sail'd the sea.'