

Everyday Life on Mount Forehead (two excerpts)

17/1

Yuri signed her name with her stamp
the two characters – KINU (silk) and GAWA (river) –
in red inside a circle of red ink

SILK-RIVER

what an exotic beautiful name I wanted to exclaim
until I stopped to listen to my own language
and heard such names as SILKSTONE or BRIDGEWATER
for what they are which is to say what they might be

ostranenie of course Shklovsky called it

to hear then stop and listen and to hear again

on the TV news at 6pm last
night 'breaking news' of Hone Tuwhare's death

TU to stand to stop to remain

WHARE house

hear the name again

and what stands inside the name

in '77 in Sid (Hirirni) Melbourne's reo class we

were set the composition

'Taku whare tu mokemoke'

poem/prose/song/essay/whatever-you-liked

to speak with the voice of the carved house in the

National Museum

the house is not a house without the people
it does not stand

in 1966 (or was it five

Scott and I went to hear him read almost all of
No Ordinary Sun cigarette after cigarette poem after
poem in the new Teachers College/University lecture theatre
in Hillcrest (the college just moved from Melville
(the university just a little more than an idea

before each poem he apologised for the poem we were
about to hear

funny funny funny old man funny

only one friend

went to Waikato
(the rest of us thought we wanted to drop
dead rather than stay in Hamilton
not from choice but
with mother dying and father in prison it was
all she could afford

good to hear now she teaches at
The New School in New York

*Best not to leave a mark
behind for good or ill*

in her big old Holden she drove me
round the lake under the stars under that tree:

*the girl in the park
did not reach up to touch
the cold steel buttons*

hear again
here again

biking across Hamilton for poetry's sake

23/1

KOTAHITANGA 1889

NZ flag at half mast as Pat Hohepa finishes his
speech, a young man scurries into the house
to announce: 'They read a Tuwhare poem at Sir Ed's funeral –
I heard it on the radio'

but most locals here haven't read any
Tuwhare poem

careful he might write another one with that blue ballpoint
in his left hand

the Wharepaepae urupa is hidden from view
across a paddock where the cars are parked, down a track
then up to the top of a small steep hill

from there you can
look out north south east west as far as the eye
a fine place to rest

there's / work yet, for the living

stopped by the cops for goin' too slow
whoa
just want to get there as late as I can
whoa whoa whoa

red light in my head
blue light in my eyes

long green stick insect waves in the air sitting on
the rimu like a Bill Hammond bird

huhu bug

blunders in to join the drinkers

a fool moon

and a mist at dawn

the land breathes out long and slow

Murray Edmond