

‘A Conflagration of Conversation and Preparation and Anticipation and Jubilation’ - Great Sporting Moments and Memories in Australian Literature

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When Mark Twain came to Australia in 1895 he had begun to endure what the late Professor Manning Clark would have called his ‘long, weary, heartbreaking years’. With about as much business sense as Christopher Skase and myself combined, Twain had invested in what he hoped would be the Apple Mac of the 1890s. Alas, a Mac the machine was not. Bankruptcy. Hence, Twain’s world lecturing tour to try to recoup some of his losses.

The resulting book of memoirs and impressions, published as *Following the Equator* in 1897, often exposes Twain’s steadily darker view of the human condition. But on one subject, in Australia, the light shone within him. As Manning might again have said, on one subject Twain thirsted for the cup of life, and wanted it more abundantly. The Cup to which I refer, the most sacred receptacle in Australia, was, of course, the *Melbourne Cup*.

When Twain visited Australia’s most celebrated southern city of the 1890s, with its shimmer of Bendigo and Ballarat gold, he was not interested in museums, or public gardens, or theatres, or wool centres, or the sumptuously housed and appointed squatters’ clubs. He responded to Melbourne as, in his words, ‘the mitred Metropolitan of the Horse-Racing Cult’. Melbourne Cup day, he exulted, is the ‘Australasian National Day’. In chapter XVI of *Following the Equator* we read:

Day after day the races go on, and the fun and excitement are kept at white heat; and when each day is done, the people dance all night so as to be fresh for the race[s] in the morning. At the end of the great week...[they] lie down and sleep two weeks, and get up sorry to reflect that a whole year must be put in somehow or other before they can be wholly happy again.¹

In conclusion, Twain asserts:

Cup Day is supreme . . . Supreme. I can call to mind no specialised annual day, in any country, whose approach fires the whole land with a conflagration of conversation and preparation and anticipation and jubilation.

If Twain had added 'indignation', 'flagellation' and 'inebriation' he would have had it exactly right. The Melbourne Cup stirred in the nineteenth century, and has continued to stir, the sporting passions of a nation.

Yet, it would be wrong to consider the Cup out of social context. White Australia has been pretty well besotted with sport in general since Phillip brought the first cargo of convicts to Botany Bay: organised cricket in 1802; the first public race-meeting in 1810 where, the *Sydney Gazette* records, 'betts [sic] to a considerable amount were depending';² the first organised prize-fight in 1814; and, by the end of the first century of white occupation, sports such as Australian Rules football, rugby, tennis, lawn-bowls, cycling, rifle-shooting, rowing and billiards enjoyed substantial and ever-increasing popularity.

Several years before Twain arrived in Australia, in fact, Edward Kinglake reflected on the white centennial celebrations in his book *The Australian at Home* (1891), discerning in the local population an even more expansive secular spirituality than that to be described by Twain. As Kinglake put it: 'Every Australian worships the Goddess of Sport with profound admiration...'³ Now, Edward Kinglake was only one, and by no means the most extreme in a long line of commentators and creative writers determined to utilise or speculate upon this seminal area of

Australian behaviour. From the controversial Reverend John Dunmore Lang in the 1830s to Mark Twain in the 1890s, Nettie Palmer in 1930s to Patrick White, Alex Buzo, Tom Keneally and Roger McDonald in the 1980s, Australian and overseas writers have either cast a critical eye on the Australian sporting passion or they have made clever, sometimes loving artistic use of it.

Having indulged my love of horse-racing literature in my last two papers for this journal, and lest I be typecast as a hopeless and totally irredeemable Frank Hardian punter, let me diversify and dwell on a few of the great *sporting* moments and memories in Australian literature. You don't need me to tell you there have been many. Our sorely missed and much loved mate Barry Andrews did that in his monumental paper 'The Willow Tree and the Laurel: Australian Sport and Australian Literature' at the inaugural ASSH conference in 1977.⁴ Baz conveyed the full range of the subject; in this paper I would like to concentrate on a few of my personal favourites, using Mark Twain's rhapsodic Melbourne Cup as my guide. Australian sport, in the hands - and pens - of some of this country's finest creative writers has had its own great days of fire and passion, of conflagration: namely, in the incisive rugby league and cricket *conversations* of playwright Alex Buzo; the punting *preparations*, premonitions and prognostications of novelist Frank Hardy and his mate, jockey Athol George Mulley; the fine *anticipation* and style of Dal Stivens' memorable cricket yarns and tall tales; and, finally, the sheer *jubilation* of those Australian Rules aficionados David Williamson, Ian Turner, Manning Clark and Bruce Dawe.

But first, and just to show that I can still approach questions of the heart with a measure of scholarly objectivity, let me say that sport in Australia has not always elicited paens of praise from the literary community. Historically, the critics have on occasion been very severe indeed. In the 1850s, for example, the young English poet and dandy Frank Fowler, apart from labelling Australia 'a depot for the scum and scoundrelism of the old world' referred specifically to the 'gambling

mania' and 'every-day debauchery' of the colony's social life.⁵ Richard Henry Horne, author of the feted (but actually terrible) epic poem *Orion* (1843) and a resident in Australia from 1852 until 1869, approached the issue with more tact, yet he could not hide his puzzlement with certain native enthusiasms, especially the 'fashionable patronage' of racing and cricket: 'The mania for bats and balls in the broiling sun during the last summer [1858] exceeded all rational excitements.'⁶ Native-born writers could be equally uncompromising. Our own Henry Lawson - the poet and short story genius, not the optometrist and bowling genius - Lawson, in a piece in the *Worker* in 1893 lamented that the average Australian 'thinks more about Carbine than one-man-one-vote'. Now Carbine, for the benefit of overseas readers, is about two rungs below the immortal Phar Lap in our list of equine divines. I absolutely refuse to gloss Phar Lap. Anyway, Lawson was totally disgusted with the one-track mentality of city-dwellers:

The Unions might be crushed, the Labour cause abolished, and every fat man get into parliament, and these things would be of less importance to the towney than the fact that Bill Somebody sprained his (blanky) groin at football last Saturday and mightn't be able to play in the forthcoming match.⁷

Writers in the twentieth century have asserted more complex, occasionally sophisticated arguments, but they have only confirmed the old framework. In one of his last public speeches, only a few years ago, Patrick White placed himself in this tradition of rigorous appraisal going back through Lawson to John Dunmore Lang. And he did it with a characteristic mixture of bombast, wit and insight:

. . . today, the sight of thugs writhing in the mud and bashing the hell out of one another in the name of sport has perhaps become part of our national 'coltcher'.... A great number of Australians always seem to be running to or from somewhere - city-to-surf in my native city - capital-to-capital...This passion for perpetual motion: is it perhaps for fear that we may have to sit down and face reality if we don't keep going?⁸

Critics from the literary community, then, have on occasion been very tough when passing judgment on the nation's sporting passion but their voices have generally been lost amidst the number of writers who have unashamedly reflected in their art their interest in one sport or another. For playwright Alex Buzo, born and bred in Sydney, those sports are rugby league, the greatest game of all, and cricket - and both are powerfully represented in two one-act plays, *Norm and Ahmed* (1969) and *The Roy Murphy Show* (1973), along with Buzo's varied contributions to a quite superb book published by Heinemann last year, edited by Buzo and poet Jamie Grant, and entitled *The Longest Game* - a collection, we are told, of 'the best cricket writing from Alexander to Zavos, the Gabba to the Yabba'.

The one-act plays provide an interesting contrast. *Norm and Ahmed* is quite literally an impromptu conversation between stereotypical RSL middle-aged Australian Norm Gallagher and a young, highly intelligent Pakistan university student, Ahmed. Norm asks Ahmed for a light for his cigarette in the opening scene in the play, then physically assaults him, calling him a 'Fuckin' boong', in the play's conclusion - a disturbing, if predictable climax. As with all his best plays, Buzo skillfully allows specific vocabulary patterns to shape character, create suspense and supply comic relief. He manages all three of these things in one short speech of ocker Norm early in the play when Ahmed mentions that he doesn't have time for sport: 'No time for sport', spits out Norm:

No time for sport.?? Jeess, that's a sad state of affairs. I always used to find time to play sport when I was a young fellar. I used to play football before the war. Rugby League. I played lock. That was my position, lock. Talk about cover defence! I used to hit 'em hard and low, round the knees, down they went. They can't run without legs, can they? That was my philosophy. But I was always a clean player, Ahmed, I never put the boot in. Always played hard and clean, I was a good sportsman, too. Never sold the dump to a mate. I always played fair, but if they ever mucked me about, biff! Send for the cleaners. All over bar the shouting. Know what I mean? I remember one bloke. A real coot. Played prop for

Balmain juniors. Tall bloke, he was. A long thin streak of pelican shit. He tried to hang one on me at Leichhardt Oval once, so I administered a knuckle sandwich to him. He woke up in Our Lady of Mercy Hospital. Should have known better; I always observed the true spirit of the game. Every played Rugby League, Ahmed?⁹

The violence inherent in Norm's pervasive tone is almost tangible; the bashing at the end of the play, inevitable. It is riveting and highly provocative drama.

Norm Gallagher represents at least a percentage of the male football audience; Roy Murphy, TV sports show compare and central character in *The Roy Murphy Show*, is also representative - of the cliché-ridden, egocentric, sport-media frontman. Buzo, of course, taught the Sydney sporting public the meaning of tautology when he first publicised Rex 'the Moose' Mossop's verbal idiosyncrasies in the 1960s. 'Forward progress', that sort of thing. Murphy is a conglomerate Ron Casey and Rex Mossop. An appalling prospect. His speech abounds with tautology, puerile alliteration, new words like 'misconstrual' and, my favourite, 'insinundo', distinctive Australian pronunciations such as 'restaurong', numerous clichés ('the game's not over till the final whistle'; 'horses for courses'; 'a champion team'll always beat a team of champions') and, most resonant of all, Roy Murphy copiously discharges mixed metaphors - or, as Buzo has called it elsewhere, the 'mixo'. 'Mixoes' dominate Murphy's rhetoric. Thus Buzo can simultaneously indulge his love of language and his sporting passion - as he does in the opening scene of the play when Roy Murphy greets his television audience. Spot the mixoes in the following, and the muddled mixoes:

Hello there, good morning, God bless and welcome one and all to the World of Sportsview Roundup Highlights on this glorious morning and what a great day it is too...Top story of the week was the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust's refusal to allow Souths and Balmain to play their Sunday game at the S.C.G. This is just another example of the Trust's narrow-minded, backward-looking, pig-headed kind of attitude...The politicians

on the S.C.G. Trust sit up there in their ivory corridors and won't bat an eyebrow at the storm of protest... They're just a bunch of stuck-up old fuddy-duddies and it's about time they got the boot from the blokes in league who bring in the crust...the Trust better not bite the hand that feeds them or they'll be out on their ears before much more leather flows over the posts...The Rugby League public is sick and tired of the pig-in-a-poke attitude of these dog-in-a-manger dead heads...¹⁰

Buzo's preoccupation with language - and cricket - no doubt prompted his several entertaining contributions to *The Longest Game*, including articles on the sheer boredom on the 1962-3 Australia/England Test series, despite the duel of Fred Titmus and Peter Burge; the austerity and recession cricket of the 1982-3 Sheffield Shield season, especially the symbolic closing of the SCG Hill as we knew it; the excitement of the 1989 Sydney Test between Australia and the West Indies; and, lastly yet perhaps most impressively, an article on 'the Don' at eighty. Two beautiful sentences capture the joys for the reader in the latter piece. First, Buzo on a typical Bradman innings: 'There was none of the intriguing struggle against doubt that characterised an innings by Cowdrey or O'Neill, just a whole lot of glorious certainty. And Buzo on the Don's Test performance: 'His average finished up at 99.94, with its tasteful gesture towards fallibility'.¹¹

Buzo's most humorous responses to cricket come in four sections late in the book. With Jamie Grant, he selects three 'First Elevens' - teams of tautology, clichés and mixoes - along with an 'Invitation Eleven' of 'Great Quotations'.¹² Let me now select the best of their best. Tautology?

*He wants to middle one or two balls in the centre of the bat - Bill Lawry

*Of course, I shall be pilloried (sic) as an anachronistic old fuddy-duddy - Henry Blofeld

*Wes Hall was delighted that his new son is a boy - Tony Cozier

*He's a big scorer, Greg Chappell, once he gets in - Bobby Simpson

The star performer cliché is undoubtedly ‘It’s a big ask’. The best ‘mixoes’?

*The scoreboard keeps ticking over at a great rate of knots. - Rodney Marsh

*A tiger never changes its spots - Len Pascoe

*Shoaib should have been shot at dawn when he got back to the dressing room - Ian Chappell

*A fog-like rain returned like a bad penny in the morning, delaying the Test’s second day until 3:30pm. - Phil Wilkins

*Viv Richards is the drawcard, he’s the ace up the sleeve, and it’ll be like a bomb going off if he fires on the night. - Martin Kent

*It was a dead heat between Azeem and the ball with the ball just winning. - Norman May

*But England’s lead was only 36 and just two rabbits remaining in the hutch as a crutch for Russell. - Peter Bills

And, finally, the most memorable quotations:

*I have probably made more friends overseas from pigeons than from cricket. - Bill Lawry

*I never like to see anyone hurt playing this game, Rodney, but if it has to happen, then playing the reverse sweep seems as good a way as any. - Richie Benaud

*He’s got a reach like a sick dog. - Rodney Marsh

When novelist and real-life eccentric Frank Hardy assesses the demerits of betting on horses in the aptly titled fictional work *The Four-Legged Lottery* (1958), he barely cracks a grin. We are told, early on, that punting is a ‘mugs’s game’, and for the three principal characters in the *Four-Legged Lottery*, obsessed and unsuccessful punters all, it certainly is. They slowly, relentlessly slide towards tragedy. One of them, Jim Roberts, is literally hung in the book’s finale, leading our narrator - himself in the slammer for racing-related crimes -to prognosticate: ‘Then may that thud form some strange symphony to be played in all the tongues of men, that all men shall know the tragedy of it all - the dreadful

Australian tragedy of it all!’¹³ *Four-Legged Lottery* is chockablock full of similar melodramatic pronouncements.

Fortunately, and perhaps because he started to turn a few tickets or get better inside oil, Hardy co-authored a book in 1975 with famous, or infamous Australian jockey Athol George Mulley; a selection of humorous racecourse yarns entitled *The Needy and the Greedy*. It might not be Patrick White but it is a colourful volume well worthy of its place in the library of Australian sporting literature. It has its fine moments. Athol George and Frank take turns to tell yarns, Hardy supplying some real gems - like the one about the battling trainer who refuses to pay an exorbitant price to the eye specialist for bifocal glasses: ‘I don’t care if they’re by Todman’, he declares, ‘seventy-five bucks is too dear’; then there’s the one about the superstitious punter who reckoned his lucky number was eight:

On August 8 at Randwick races, he saw in his race book a horse carrying 8.8 in the 8th race. It had drawn 8 at the barrier and had finished 8th at its last start.

So he put his last \$8 on it.

And he had to borrow eight cents for his bus fare home.

- and, lastly, the one about the two punters:

strangers to each other, sitting in a Newsreel Cinema. A film of the two horse race between Rain Lover and Big Philou came on.

As the horses turned into the straight, one punter said to the other: ‘I’ll bet you ten dollars that Rain Lover wins.’

‘That’s a bet!’ said the other.

Of course, Rain Lover did win.

Afterwards, the loser handed over his ten bucks.

The winner said: ‘I can’t take your money, I saw the film yesterday’.

‘So did I,’ was the reply, ‘but I thought Big Philou would be improved by the run’.¹⁴

Dal Stevens’ humour in his cricket short stories is of an entirely different kind to *Needy and the Greedy*. He collects his best ten in the

1979 volume *The Demon Bowler and Other Cricket Stories*. Most of the stories demonstrate a commitment to the tall tale. As a cricket writer in one of the yarns, 'The Strange Business at Bombay and Madras', puts it, so succinctly: 'Fiction fucks fact'.¹⁵ Stivens doesn't care much for fact either but, unlike Hardy, he always gives his stories a completely plausible setting. The story 'Indians Have Special Eyesight' begins with the central character's standard boast: 'Ever hear how I bowled Victor Trumper for a duck?'¹⁶ Actually, he is a big fat man with a chin like a cucumber who, the narrator reliably informs us, had worked in the silver mines of Yerranderie. Notwithstanding, the fat man tells all that he had fought Les Darcy - ah, 'he was a great fighter like a Greek god' - and he bowled Trumper: 'There was a batsman for you . . . He used a bat like a sword and he danced down the wicket like a panther'.¹⁷ Nothing much happens in 'Indians Have Special Eyesight'; you get into it as you slowly work into all Stivens' cricket stories. A bit like building a decent innings out in the middle, or watching a day's Test cricket. There is much subtlety and elegance.

In the classic story 'The Batting Wizard from the City' - for many readers the doyen of all Australian cricket yarns - the 'Wizard', a willowy young man, drifts into the change sheds at a country cricket ground because he'd heard the side was a man short. The opposition has an express fast bowler. The feared Demon. Is he brisk?? 'Have you ever seen a bullet?' 'If you take a cricket ball, soak it in kerosene, put it alight, and fire it from a cannon The last time we played him his first ball went through my beard and set it afire'.¹⁸ The Demon is quick. Yet, slowly, delicately at first, and with unorthodox technique - for which he apologises to the skipper - the Wizard puts the frothing Demon to the sword. Naturally it's drinks all round at the pub that night though, as our narrator tells us, 'some time during the evening he disappeared and we never saw him again'.¹⁹ If this was a baseball story in America, the Wizard would have headed to the Big Apple and played first base for the Yankees. Stivens' stories have that laconic, identifiably Australian touch.

Probably my favourite is 'When Trumper Went to Billabong'. Typically cloaked in realism, the great Victor Trumper takes a team of internationals, as part of a goodwill tour, to the small country town of Billabong. The locals are ecstatic and prepare for the big day for some six weeks. As the pitch is, naturally, 'full of gibbers' - rocks, for non-Australian readers - so the town specially puts down double matting. Alas, when Trumper finally bats, his spike catches in the matting and he is bowled by one of Alf Tonks' 'donkey drops'. Skipper Mallee Mick - shock, horror - appeals! The whole town is paralysed; Trumper walks. The narrator winds down the story with real Lawsonian flourish, or lack of flourish:

It wasn't much of a day after that. Victor Trumper's team got themselves out fairly quickly and we got ourselves out very quickly, but it was no go for a second innings by Victor Trumper. At four o'clock a dust storm got up and that was the end.

By five o'clock Metho Bill wasn't the only one shickered. Mayor Pook, Tom Jones, and the whole team except Mallee Mick had joined him. Mallee Mick was probably shickered too but we didn't know because at twelve o'clock he had left the field and gone bush. A couple of kids had heaved gibbers and a dead cat at him as he made off in Swampy Joe's buggy.²⁰

This is vintage Stevens, certainly one of the highlights of Australian sport literature. Finally, the coterie of Australian Rules writers: Williamson, Clark, Turner and Dawe. Together, they manufacture a host of memorable moments, yet with totally different approaches: David Williamson exposes the shortcomings of the modern game and its club administration; Manning Clark simply expresses his love and thanks; Ian Turner does the same, but he is always alert to possibilities of humour; while Bruce Dawe's several football poems recognise the social and cultural implications of what many regard as Australia's most artistic code.

First Williamson. His play (and feature film) *The Club* (1978) recreates the committee room of a top Melbourne professional football

club - complete with 'new-breed career administrator', 'flashy import', 'poor old coach' and 'interfering ex-president'.²¹ Williamson exposes the pettiness, jealousy and inflated egos behind the scenes. No longer is playing for the love of the game the primary catalyst. As Jock, the ex-president, says: 'These days the game is so bloody tough that you've got to get your players so scared of making a mistake that they go out there and play the game in a state of fucking terror. Fear's what wins you premierships'.²² Flashy import Geoff, the man the club can't motivate, gives one player's response to the pressure:

All right. If you really want to know, what's going on is that I'm sick to death of football and I couldn't care less if I never played another game in my life. It's all a lot of macho-competitive bullshit. You chase a lump of pigskin around a muddy ground as if your bloody life depended on it and when you get it you kick it to buggery and go chasing it again. Football shits me.²³

Australian Rules football, it must be said, does shit its share of Australians, but Manning Clark is not one of them. Wasn't it Manning who wrote in the *Age* on Grand Final day that if Carlton won the big one it would be like seeing 'my love come to me'? Clark's Rules writings are the verses of one long hymn of praise and thanksgiving - for example, the delightful article 'At the Footy', republished in his *Occasional Writings and Speeches* (1980). In it he recalls trying, unsuccessfully, to convince some Russians in Moscow that Rules footballers were like ballerinas. Indeed, in one of his last public speeches, when he launched poet Mark O'Connor's *Firestick Farming* late last year at the ANU Bookshop, he was at it again. Mixed in with his usual artistic insights was one caveat for O'Connor.

For me there was only one thing lacking, Mark, in this collection. The one great absentee or absence in these poems was the members of Collingwood football team. I know that you have great passion for the Collingwood team. There are some wonderful human characters in your collection; but I'm sorry that there's no eulogy in it for the great half-back line of Lucas,

Kingston and Tuck, I'm also deeply sorry that you made no attempt to compare them with a much superior line of Brown, Deakin and Clarke for Carlton.

I was hoping that there would be a sketch in *Firestick Farming* of Mick McGuane. I was hoping to meet James Manson in your words and not just on the television screen. I hope quite seriously that one day some of these Godlings will catch your eye, and you will confer on them the same immortality as you have conferred on the fish of the Barrier Reef and your old parish church in Ararat.²⁴

Ian Turner's contribution to the lore of Australian Rules football centres on his celebrated annual lectures - the Barrassi Memorial lectures - delivered mostly at Monash University between 1968 and 1978. He became known as the 'Footy Professor'. Fortunately, for those of us unlucky enough never to have heard one of the famed Turner Barassis, the final lecture is reproduced in his selected writings *Room for Manoeuvre* (1982). It certainly whets the appetite, reflecting his ear for the vernacular, love of humour and appreciation of the therapeutic value of leisure time - or, as he termed it, 'play'.²⁵ Turner was in no doubt that Rules football should be included in serious academic discourse, citing as evidence a cross-section of eminent theses. For example:

Professor Dunn's pioneering work, *The Incidence of Brain Hernia Among Reserve Eighteens*; Professor Waller's definitive text, *The Brownlow Medal and The Rule of Law*; Professor Bradley's penetrating analysis, *Barassi and Hamlet - a Comparative Study in the Tragic Hero*; Professor Davis' distinguished monograph, *Informal Voting for the Collingwood Committee*; Professor Andrew's piledriving paper on *Minor Surgery of the Back Pocket*; and my own modest contribution, *The Tigers, the Blues and the Class Struggle*.²⁶

Ian Turner and I have at least two things in common: a love of sport and a love of graffiti. In the '78 Barassi he recorded for posterity the notice outside a church in Hawthorn which said: 'What would you do

if God came to Hawthorn today?’ Whereupon a graffitist had appended: ‘Move Peter Hudson to centre half-forward’.²⁷ I can add two more examples to the illustrious area of sport graffiti. When I was in Vancouver, Canada, in the late 1970s, at the entrance to Lions’ Gate Bridge, a dedicated and active disciple had written ‘Jesus Saves’, to which an ice-hockey disciple had been inspired to add: ‘And Clarke knocks in the rebound’. Bobby Clarke was the incumbent Canadian ice-hockey captain. My other example - and this, for the large number of ASSH soccer buffs - is a sign I saw in the early 1980s at the Ranger uranium mine on the outskirts of Kakadu. There it was: ‘Ranger 3’ - three kilometres down the track - to which an incensed footballing Catholic partisan had inscribed ‘Celtic 4’.

Let me conclude with what might just be the finest example of Australian sport literature of them all. It needs no glossing for me. Bruce Dawe’s wonderful testament to Rules football, Australian society and Australian culture: the poem ‘Life cycle’, dedicated to Big Jim Phelan:

When Children are born in Victoria
they are wrapped in the club-colours, laid in beribboned cots,
having already begun a lifetime’s barracking.

Carn, they cry, Carn...feebly at first
while parents playfully tussle with them
for possession of a rusk: Ah, he’s a little Tiger! (And they are...)

Hoisted shoulder-high at their first League game
they are like innocent monsters who have been years swimming
towards the daylight’s roaring empyrean

Until, now, hearts shrapnelled with rapture,
they break surface and are forever lost,
their minds rippling out like streamers

In the pure flood of sound, they are scarfed with light, a voice
like the voice of God booms from the stand
Ooohh you bludger and the covenant is sealed.

Hot pies and potato-crisps they will eat,
they will forswear the Demons, cling to the Saints
and behold their team going up the ladder into Heaven,

And the tides of life will be the tides of the home-team's fortunes
- the reckless proposal after the one-point win,
the wedding and honeymoon after the grand-final...

They will not grow old as those from more northern States grow
old,
for them it will always be three-quarter-time
with the scores level and the wind advantage in the final term,

That passion persisting, like a race-memory, through the welter of
seasons,
enabling old-timers by boundary-fences to dream of resurgent
lions
and centaur-figures from the past to replenish continually the
present,

So that mythology may be perpetually renewed
and Chicken Smallhorn return like the maize-god
in a thousand shapes, the dancers changing

But the dance forever the same - the elderly still
loyally crying Carn....Carn...(if feebly) unto the very end,
having seen in the six-foot recruit from Eaglehawk their hope for
salvation.²⁸

NOTES:

1. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, 1897: repr. *Mark Twain in Australian and New Zealand* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 161-3.
2. *Sydney Gazette*, 5 May, 1810; repr. Frank Crowley, comp., *Colonial Australia 1877-1840* (Vol.1), (West Melbourne: Nelson, 1980), p. 173.
3. Edward Kinglake [Edward Rock Garnsey], *The Australian at Home*, 1891; quoted in Stephen Murray-Smith, ed., *The Dictionary of Australian Quotations* (Richmond: Heinemann, 1984), p. 137.
4. Barry Andrews, 'The Willow Tree and the Laurel: Australian Sport and Australian Literature'. Paper presented at first ASSH Conference, The Making of Sporting Traditions', 1-3 July 1977 (University of New South Wales); repr. Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan, eds., *Sport in History*, (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press), 1979.
5. Frank Fowler, *Southern Lights and Shadows: being Brief Notes of Three Years' Experience of Social, Literary and Political Life in Australia*, (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Co., 1859), pp. 44-7.
6. Richard Hengist ['Orion'] Home, *Australia Facts and Prospects* (1859), quoted in Murray-Smith, *op. cit.* p. 120.
7. Henry Lawson, *Worker*, 1893:repr. Leonard Cronin, ed., *A Camp-Fire Yarn - Complete Works 1885-1900*, (Sydney:Lansdowne, 1983), p. 309.
8. Patrick White, 'A Sense of Integrity', in David Headon, ed., *Looking Beyond Yesterday - the Australian Artist and New Paths to Our Future*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 68-9.
9. Alexander Buzo, *Norm and Ahmed* (1968), in Frank Bladwell, ed., Currency Double Bill Series (*Norm and Ahmed* and Louis Esson, *The Woman Tamer*), (Sydney: Currency Methuen, 1976), p. 21.
10. Alexander Buzo, *The Roy Murphy Show* (1971), (Sydney: Currency Methuen, 1973), pp. 104-5. See also pp. 107, 109, 111, 113, 119.
11. Alex Buzo, in Alex Buzo & Jamie Grant, eds., *The Longest Game*, (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1990), pp. 436-7.
12. Buzo & Grant, *Ibid.*, pp. 413, 422, 426, 431-2.
13. Frank Hardy, *The Four-Legged Lottery*, (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1958), p. 224.
14. Frank Hardy and Athol George Mulley, *The Needy and The Greedy*, (Canberra: Libra Books, 1975), pp. 17, 51, 71.
15. Dal Stivens, *The Strange Business at Bombay and Madras*, in *The Demon Bowler and Other Cricket Stories*, (Collingwood: Outback Press, 1979), p. 40.
16. *Ibid.*, 'Indians Have Special Eyesight', p. 1.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 5-6.
18. *Ibid.*, 'The Batting Wizard from the City', p. 9.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
20. *Ibid.*, 'When Trumper Went to Billabong', p. 77.
21. See Lou Richards, *The Greatest Game of All*', introduction to David Williamson, *The Club* (1977) (Sydney Currency Methuen, 1978), pp. vii-viii.
22. Williamson, *ibid.*, p. 47.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
24. Manning Clark, launching speech for Mark O'Connor's *Firestick Farming: Selected Poem 1972- 1990*, 26 September 1990. Text supplied courtesy of Mark O'Connor.

25. See Ian Turner, *Room for Manoeuvre - Writings on History, Politics, Ideas and Play*, Leonie Sandercock and Stephen Murray-Smith, eds., (Richmond: Drummond Publishing, 1982), especially section 'The Meaning of Play', pp. 277-325.
26. Turner, 'The Greatest Game: The Barassi Memorial Lecture', in Turner, *ibid.*, pp. 308-9.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
28. Bruce Dawe, 'Life-Cycle', in *Sometimes Gladness: Collected Poems 1954-1987*, 3rd ed., (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire), 1988, pp. 81-2.