

Allan Lake

Along Brighton Beach

Gave my bicycle its head this morning:
instead of heading north to Botanical Garden
found myself freely gliding along beaches
towards Brighton where houses, size of boutique
hotels, glare at Port Phillip Bay. Charming
century-old homes now demolished so these
brash glass boxes can capitalise on the sun.

Sophocles said: *wealth makes an ugly person
beautiful to look on*. Via that logic everyone
should admire the beached walls and wealthy
occupants of this Melbourne burb. Still,
having managed to avoid the trap of wealth –
even middling wealth – I survey with dismay
this brazen display from the public bike path.

Why, today, my rusty bike would venture
down Conspicuous Consumption Boulevard
none can say but the vast bay now appears
a dependent clause, scrap of beach a mere comma.
Owners must rattle round like last captive
coffee beans in an echo chamber tin.
High fences insure nosy neighbours cannot
view their quiet rituals of sun worship.

Maybe my bike was pedaling me toward
appreciation of my one-bedroom flat back
in humble Elwood or perhaps it lost its way.
Regardless, this world was never just;
faith invested is often faith embezzled.
I returned home no wiser, only slightly
older and made the bed, that islet where,
in near darkness, I dream and sleep
as well as any Sophocles.

Allan Lake, a stray from Allover, Canada, now writes poetry in Allover, Australia. Latest chapbook of poems, 'My Photos of Sicily', published by Ginninderra Press, 2020.