

Radiation

A Poem by Michael Darby (1993)

When Herbie was a younger man the money came in fine
Selling beef to feed the workers at the local uranium mine.
The mine was worked on Herbie's place for nearly fifteen years
And Herbie owned the pub where miners bought each other beers.
They closed the mine! So Herbie wrote to the United Nations
Demanding compensation for his nuclear mutations
And to show he was entitled to a payment quite immense
He illustrated his remarks with photographic evidence.
"Yer scientific fellers better take a Captain Cook
Them four drumsticks in the photo came from just one single chook
Here's a twenty-four inch cockroach that keeps knocking off me tea
And Cavendish bananas growing on me mango tree.
Here's me pair of love birds who keep on having rows
And my five best Brahman bulls who've lost all interest in the cows.
Them radioactive tree-stumps cause a most unpleasant itch
And that black albino wombat was born to me kelpie bitch.
Me youthful wife has aged so much she's looking like her mother
My elder sister Harriette is now me youngest brother
And to prove these radiations change a natural condition
The local member has become a humble politician".