

After Maralinga

Latin Quarter

The affairs of a handful of natives
Are as nothing when compared with the crowns
It's for the good of all, all the dust that falls
From deep black clouds over out-back towns

You could learn it from the chants of the song-men
'Til the song-men disappeared
Night glowed down under, in a place called 'Thunder'
From a settling dust that even settlers feared

After Maralinga, the half-life lingers
After Maralinga, the moving finger writes to say
After Maralinga:
That a government stalls
While whole lives just waste away

There are at least one hundred and thirty

Though their numbers are set to expand
Who lost their health and the health of their children
Wearing British khaki on stolen land

But meanwhile the physicists insist on accuracy
And meanwhile they total all the bills in the treasury
But between there and the suffering
Something gets lost
Cause they won't add up and they don't pay up the clean-
Up cost

After Maralinga, the half-life lingers
After Maralinga, the song-men come again someday
In their deep-red ochre and their whitest clay