

## FOUR POEMS



*Bruce Dawe*

### EVERGREEN

When the eulogies are over  
and all the obvious guilts are gone  
for words said and words unsaid,  
for deeds done and those not done,  
when these have faded like the wreaths  
which the grave-diggers take away  
and hares have the cemetery to themselves  
from evening to the break of day,  
when the names in conversation less  
and less often resurrect the life,  
and the years have sealed up memory's wounds,  
and blunted the most piercing knife,  
then, like some ultimate treachery  
(willed, even when most bitterly fought)  
there comes a cumulative pain  
invading daily thought—  
a last guilt that can never cease,  
fed as it is on all that's been:  
the guilt of forgetting, the one grave  
on which the grass is evergreen.

### ON RE-READING YEATS'S "EASTER 1916" *for Philip Martin*

Reading aloud to myself  
That poem which aches to be read,  
I thought again of how much  
I owed (but have never said)  
To you, for that voice which your own  
Took up, thus making us see  
How passion and art may move  
So interchangeably—  
Like light's mercurial game  
On the stream of imaginings,

Even in such moments plucking  
Heart's harp with its sorrowful strings  
So that the mind in running  
Its fingers over the notes  
Blurs the print to the eyes,  
Thickens the voice in the throat,  
Just as, drawn out of ourselves  
By the God-given flight of birds,  
We are swept by a tumult of love  
Beyond the compass of words—  
Take then, dear friend, this thanks,  
Folded like a paper boat,  
And on deep memory's stream  
Suffice to let it float  
Further than ever it might  
Have hoped to sail on its own,  
Clear of the waiting reeds  
And the weirs of oblivion...

#### THE CRAZY PLACE

They move into the crazy place  
from various directions; some  
goofy-footed already, others  
with limbs writhing like triffids  
(they are already residents  
of another planet and the earthlings  
are terrified); for some visitants  
a howling vacuum  
is crying in sixteen extra-terrestrial languages  
to be filled, a plastic star or flower  
more real than the real; money—  
that relic of the third planet—  
changes hands; somewhere in Lemuria  
some very important aliens with  
the ability to appear human  
get considerably richer; meanwhile  
the poverty of those lying sprawled  
where even the paving is crazed  
breaks out all over them in pustules; trembling  
fingers pluck continually at the frayed ends  
of consciousness, time—  
now every city has its own Bombay  
and every night is a bombers' moon...