

Western Australia

O Beauteous Southland! Land of yellow air
That hangeth o've thee slumbering, and doth hold
The moveless foliage of thy valleys fair,
And wooded hills, like aureole of gold.

Oh thou, discovered ere the fitting time,
Ere Nature in completion turned thee forth!
Ere aught was finished but thy peerless clime,
Thy virgin breath allured the amorous North.

O Land, God made thee wondrous to the eye!
But His sweet singers thou hast never heard;
He left thee, meaning to come bye-and-bye,
And give rich voice to every bright-winged bird.

He painted with fresh hues thy myriad flowers,
But left them scentless; ah! their woeful dole,
Like sad reproach of their creator's powers,
To make so sweet fair bodies, void of soul.

He gave thee trees of odorous precious wood;
But, midst them all, bloomed not one tree of fruit.
He looked, but said not that His work was good,
When leaving thee all perfumeless and mute.

He blessed thy flowers with honey; every bell
Looks earthward, sunward, with a yearning wist,
But no bee-lover ever notes the swell
Of hearts, like lips, a-hungering to be kist.

O Strange Land, thou art virgin! Thou art more
Than fig-tree barren! Would that I could paint
For other's eyes the glory of the shore
Where last I saw thee; but the senses faint.

In soft delicious dreaming when they drain
Thy wine of colour. Virgin fair thou art.
All sweetly fruitful, waiting with soft pain
The spouse that comes to wake thy sleeping heart.

John Boyle O'Reilly