

# **Notes on the Edge of Empire**

## **Islands**

**They are plots in the ocean's story  
not to be discovered  
but recovered like memory  
from the library of the sea.**

## **Sealed**

**Fearless at first,  
they did not sense our bloody business  
on this dark discordant rock**

**until our clubs and cudgels struck,  
as wounds unwound all natural time,  
then they retreated to the sanctuary sea.**

**The shoreline complained;  
in a few brief months the capricious coast  
was a bewilderment of orphans.**

**Our try pots seethed,  
fur pelts burst their salted barrels,  
upon the ravaged rookery.**

**All this to oil an empire's gears  
to fuel the flagging London lamps  
and muffle, with fur, boardroom ears.**

**There was no god in that abandoned place  
to redeem the roar of loss  
across the sea in Hobart Town.**

**Our only consolation was our solitude.**

## **Moribund**

**On the plundered rookery the sealer laments:**

**Barrel staves, bleached bones and mineral silence.**

## **The Albatross Descending**

**The high air is his element,  
wind the tutor of his wings.  
Between the satellite moon  
and the earth's curvature  
he navigates, a solo pilot  
compassed by the wind.  
An ancient gravity  
stalls his flight and land,  
magnetic and rock sure,  
commands his return.  
Down he swoops  
from his avian gods  
to his mate  
the impatience of her beak  
the obligation of the nest  
the demands of earth.**