**Prescribed Structure 6 – The Bush Poet**

**The Australian Identity:**

* Unique geography
* Diversity
* Aboriginals
* Torres Strait Islanders
* Multi culturalism
* Opportunity for a better life
* Mateship
* Fair go
* Ability to accept
* Laid back
* Friendly

**Bank Notes:**

* $5 – Queen Elizabeth
  + The 2001 note features Sir Henry Parkes (pro commonwealth) and Catherine Helen Spence (a suffragette)
* $10 – Banjo Paterson (Australian Bush writer, 1993 replaced Henry Lawson) and Dame Mary Gilmore (writer and socialist, worked for rights of women, children and Indigenous Australians, she envisioned a fairer nations)
* $20 – Mary Reibey (business woman and trader with a rags to riches story) and Reverend John Flynn (Royal Flying Doctor Service)
* $50 – David Unaipon (“Australia’s Leonardo Da Vinci” and an Aboriginal spokesperson) and Edith Cowan (first female politician)
* $100 – Dame Nellie Melba (Helen Porter Mitchell: renowned opera singer touring world wide with a near 3 octave range soprano voice) and Sir John Monash (engineer, university vice chancellor and WW1 military officer)

**Poems In the Debate:**

* Henry Lawson – Up The Country
* Banjo Paterson – In Defense of the Bush
* Edward Dyson – The Fact of the Matter
* Lawson – The City Bushman
* H.H.C.C – The Overflow of Clancy
* Francis Kenna – Banjo, of the Overflow
* Paterson – An Answer to Various Bards
* Lawson – The Poets of the Tomb
* Paterson – A Voice from the Town

**Up The Country – Henry Lawson:**

I am back from up the country -- very sorry that I went --   
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;   
I have lost a lot of idols, which were broken on the track,   
Burnt a lot of fancy verses, and I'm glad that I am back.   
Further out may be the pleasant scenes of which our poets boast,   
But I think the country's rather more inviting round the coast.   
Anyway, I'll stay at present at a boarding-house in town,   
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.   
  
`Sunny plains'! Great Scott! -- those burning   
wastes of barren soil and sand   
With their everlasting fences stretching out across the land!   
Desolation where the crow is! Desert where the eagle flies,   
Paddocks where the luny bullock starts and stares with reddened eyes;   
Where, in clouds of dust enveloped, roasted bullock-drivers creep   
Slowly past the sun-dried shepherd dragged behind his crawling sheep.   
Stunted peak of granite gleaming, glaring like a molten mass   
Turned from some infernal furnace on a plain devoid of grass.   
  
Miles and miles of thirsty gutters -- strings of muddy water-holes   
In the place of `shining rivers' -- `walled by cliffs and forest boles.'   
Barren ridges, gullies, ridges! where the ever-madd'ning flies --   
Fiercer than the plagues of Egypt -- swarm about your blighted eyes!   
Bush! where there is no horizon! where the buried bushman sees   
Nothing -- Nothing! but the sameness of the ragged, stunted trees!   
Lonely hut where drought's eternal, suffocating atmosphere   
Where the God-forgotten hatter dreams of city life and beer.   
  
Treacherous tracks that trap the stranger,   
endless roads that gleam and glare,   
Dark and evil-looking gullies, hiding secrets here and there!   
Dull dumb flats and stony rises, where the toiling bullocks bake,   
And the sinister `gohanna', and the lizard, and the snake.   
Land of day and night -- no morning freshness, and no afternoon,   
When the great white sun in rising bringeth summer heat in June.   
Dismal country for the exile, when the shades begin to fall   
From the sad heart-breaking sunset, to the new-chum worst of all.   
  
Dreary land in rainy weather, with the endless clouds that drift   
O'er the bushman like a blanket that the Lord will never lift --   
Dismal land when it is raining -- growl of floods, and, oh! the woosh   
Of the rain and wind together on the dark bed of the bush --   
Ghastly fires in lonely humpies where the granite rocks are piled   
In the rain-swept wildernesses that are wildest of the wild.   
  
Land where gaunt and haggard women live alone and work like men,   
Till their husbands, gone a-droving, will return to them again:   
Homes of men! if home had ever such a God-forgotten place,   
Where the wild selector's children fly before a stranger's face.   
Home of tragedy applauded by the dingoes' dismal yell,   
Heaven of the shanty-keeper -- fitting fiend for such a hell --   
And the wallaroos and wombats, and, of course, the curlew's call --   
And the lone sundowner tramping ever onward through it all!   
  
I am back from up the country, up the country where I went   
Seeking for the Southern poets' land whereon to pitch my tent;   
I have shattered many idols out along the dusty track,   
Burnt a lot of fancy verses -- and I'm glad that I am back.   
I believe the Southern poets' dream will not be realised   
Till the plains are irrigated and the land is humanised.   
I intend to stay at present, as I said before, in town   
Drinking beer and lemon-squashes, taking baths and cooling down.

**In Defence of the Bush – Banjo Paterson:**

So you're back from up the country, Mister Lawson, where you went,   
And you're cursing all the business in a bitter discontent;   
Well, we grieve to disappoint you, and it makes us sad to hear   
That it wasn't cool and shady -- and there wasn't whips of beer,   
And the looney bullock snorted when you first came into view --   
Well, you know it's not so often that he sees a swell like you;   
And the roads were hot and dusty, and the plains were burnt and brown,   
And no doubt you're better suited drinking lemon-squash in town.   
Yet, perchance, if you should journey down the very track you went   
In a month or two at furthest, you would wonder what it meant;   
Where the sunbaked earth was gasping like a creature in its pain   
You would find the grasses waving like a field of summer grain,   
And the miles of thirsty gutters, blocked with sand and choked with mud,   
You would find them mighty rivers with a turbid, sweeping flood.   
For the rain and drought and sunshine make no changes in the street,   
In the sullen line of buildings and the ceaseless tramp of feet;   
But the bush has moods and changes, as the seasons rise and fall,   
And the men who know the bush-land -- they are loyal through it all.   
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But you found the bush was dismal and a land of no delight --   
Did you chance to hear a chorus in the shearers' huts at night?   
Did they 'rise up William Riley' by the camp-fire's cheery blaze?   
Did they rise him as we rose him in the good old droving days?   
And the women of the homesteads and the men you chanced to meet --   
Were their faces sour and saddened like the 'faces in the street'?   
And the 'shy selector children' -- were they better now or worse   
Than the little city urchins who would greet you with a curse?   
Is not such a life much better than the squalid street and square   
Where the fallen women flaunt it in the fierce electric glare,   
Wher the sempstress plies her needle till her eyes are sore and red   
In a filthy, dirty attic toiling on for daily bread?   
Did you hear no sweeter voices in the music of the bush   
Than the roar of trams and buses, and the war-whoop of 'the push'?   
Did the magpies rouse your slumbers with their carol sweet and strange?   
Did you hear the silver chiming of the bell-birds on the range?   
But, perchance, the wild birds' music by your senses was despised,   
For you say you'll stay in townships till the bush is civilized.   
Would you make it a tea-garden, and on Sundays have a band   
Where the 'blokes' might take their 'donahs', with a 'public' close at hand?   
You had better stick to Sydney and make merry with the 'push',   
For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush.

**The Fact of the Matter – Edward Dyson:**

I'm wonderin' why those fellers who go buildin' chipper ditties,  
'Bout the rosy times out drovin', an' the dust an' death of cities,  
Don't sling the bloomin' office, strike some drover for a billet,  
And soak up all the glory that comes handy while they fill it.  
  
P'r'aps it's fun to travel cattle or to picnic with merinos,  
But the drover don't catch on, sir, not much high-class rapture he knows.  
As for sleepin' on the plains there in the shadder of the spear-grass,  
That's liked best by the Juggins with a spring-bed an' a pier-glass.  
  
An' the camp-fire, an' the freedom, and the blanky constellations,  
The 'possum-rug an' billy, an' the togs an' stale ole rations -  
It's strange they're only raved about by coves that dress up pretty,  
An' sport a wife, an' live on slap-up tucker in the city.  
  
I've tickled beef in my time clear from Clarke to Riverina,  
An' shifted sheep all round the shop, but blow me if I've seen a  
Single blanky hand who didn't buck at pleasures of this kidney,  
And wouldn't trade his blisses for a flutter down in Sydney.  
  
Night-watches are delightful when the stars are really splendid  
To the chap who's fresh upon the job, but, you bet, his rapture's ended  
When the rain comes down in sluice-heads, or the cuttin' hailstones pelter,  
An' the sheep drift off before the wind, an' the horses strike for shelter.  
  
Don't take me for a howler, but I find it come annoyin'  
To hear these fellers rave about the pleasures we're enjoyin',  
When p'r'aps we've nothin' better than some fluky water handy,  
An' they're right on all the lickers - rum, an' plenty beer an' brandy.  
  
The town is dusty, may be, but it isn't worth the curses  
'Side the dust a feller swallers an' the blinded thirst he nurses  
When he's on the hard macadam, where the jumbucks cannot browse, an'  
The wind is in his whiskers, an' he follers twenty thousan'.  
  
This drovin' on the plain, too, it's all O.K. when the weather  
Isn't hot enough to curl the soles right off your upper leather,  
Or so cold that when the mornin' wind comes hissin' through the grasses  
You can feel it cut your eyelids like a whip-lash as it passes.  
  
Then there's bull-ants in the blankets, an' a lame horse, an' muskeeters,  
An' a D.T. boss like Halligan, or one like Humpy Peters,  
Who is mean about the tucker, an' can curse from start to sundown,  
An' can fight like fifty devils, an' whose growler's never run down.  
  
Yes, I wonder why the fellers what go building chipper ditties  
'Bout the rosy times out drovin' an' the dust an' death of cities,  
Don't sling the bloomin' office, strike ole Peters for a billet,  
An' soak up all the glory that comes handy while they fill it.

**The City Bushman – Henry Lawson:**

It was pleasant up the country, City Bushman, where you went,   
For you sought the greener patches and you travelled like a gent;   
And you curse the trams and buses and the turmoil and the push,   
Though you know the squalid city needn't keep you from the bush;   
But we lately heard you singing of the `plains where shade is not',   
And you mentioned it was dusty -- `all was dry and all was hot'.   
  
True, the bush `hath moods and changes' -- and the bushman hath 'em, too,   
For he's not a poet's dummy -- he's a man, the same as you;   
But his back is growing rounder -- slaving for the absentee --   
And his toiling wife is thinner than a country wife should be.   
For we noticed that the faces of the folks we chanced to meet   
Should have made a greater contrast to the faces in the street;   
And, in short, we think the bushman's being driven to the wall,   
And it's doubtful if his spirit will be `loyal thro' it all'.   
  
Though the bush has been romantic and it's nice to sing about,   
There's a lot of patriotism that the land could do without --   
Sort of BRITISH WORKMAN nonsense that shall perish in the scorn   
Of the drover who is driven and the shearer who is shorn,   
Of the struggling western farmers who have little time for rest,   
And are ruined on selections in the sheep-infested West;   
Droving songs are very pretty, but they merit little thanks   
From the people of a country in possession of the Banks.   
  
And the `rise and fall of seasons' suits the rise and fall of rhyme,   
But we know that western seasons do not run on schedule time;   
For the drought will go on drying while there's anything to dry,   
Then it rains until you'd fancy it would bleach the sunny sky --   
Then it pelters out of reason, for the downpour day and night   
Nearly sweeps the population to the Great Australian Bight.   
It is up in Northern Queensland that the seasons do their best,   
But it's doubtful if you ever saw a season in the West;   
There are years without an autumn or a winter or a spring,   
There are broiling Junes, and summers when it rains like anything.   
  
In the bush my ears were opened to the singing of the bird,   
But the `carol of the magpie' was a thing I never heard.   
Once the beggar roused my slumbers in a shanty, it is true,   
But I only heard him asking, `Who the blanky blank are you?'   
And the bell-bird in the ranges -- but his `silver chime' is harsh   
When it's heard beside the solo of the curlew in the marsh.   
  
Yes, I heard the shearers singing `William Riley', out of tune,   
Saw 'em fighting round a shanty on a Sunday afternoon,   
But the bushman isn't always `trapping brumbies in the night',   
Nor is he for ever riding when `the morn is fresh and bright',   
And he isn't always singing in the humpies on the run --   
And the camp-fire's `cheery blazes' are a trifle overdone;   
We have grumbled with the bushmen round the fire on rainy days,   
When the smoke would blind a bullock and there wasn't any blaze,   
Save the blazes of our language, for we cursed the fire in turn   
Till the atmosphere was heated and the wood began to burn.   
Then we had to wring our blueys which were rotting in the swags,   
And we saw the sugar leaking through the bottoms of the bags,   
And we couldn't raise a chorus, for the toothache and the cramp,   
While we spent the hours of darkness draining puddles round the camp.   
  
Would you like to change with Clancy -- go a-droving? tell us true,   
For we rather think that Clancy would be glad to change with you,   
And be something in the city; but 'twould give your muse a shock   
To be losing time and money through the foot-rot in the flock,   
And you wouldn't mind the beauties underneath the starry dome   
If you had a wife and children and a lot of bills at home.   
  
Did you ever guard the cattle when the night was inky-black,   
And it rained, and icy water trickled gently down your back   
Till your saddle-weary backbone fell a-aching to the roots   
And you almost felt the croaking of the bull-frog in your boots --   
Sit and shiver in the saddle, curse the restless stock and cough   
Till a squatter's irate dummy cantered up to warn you off?   
Did you fight the drought and pleuro when the `seasons' were asleep,   
Felling sheoaks all the morning for a flock of starving sheep,   
Drinking mud instead of water -- climbing trees and lopping boughs   
For the broken-hearted bullocks and the dry and dusty cows?   
  
Do you think the bush was better in the `good old droving days',   
When the squatter ruled supremely as the king of western ways,   
When you got a slip of paper for the little you could earn,   
But were forced to take provisions from the station in return --   
When you couldn't keep a chicken at your humpy on the run,   
For the squatter wouldn't let you -- and your work was never done;   
When you had to leave the missus in a lonely hut forlorn   
While you `rose up Willy Riley' -- in the days ere you were born?   
  
Ah! we read about the drovers and the shearers and the like   
Till we wonder why such happy and romantic fellows strike.   
Don't you fancy that the poets ought to give the bush a rest   
Ere they raise a just rebellion in the over-written West?   
Where the simple-minded bushman gets a meal and bed and rum   
Just by riding round reporting phantom flocks that never come;   
Where the scalper -- never troubled by the `war-whoop of the push' --   
Has a quiet little billet -- breeding rabbits in the bush;   
Where the idle shanty-keeper never fails to make a draw,   
And the dummy gets his tucker through provisions in the law;   
Where the labour-agitator -- when the shearers rise in might --   
Makes his money sacrificing all his substance for The Right;   
Where the squatter makes his fortune, and `the seasons rise and fall',   
And the poor and honest bushman has to suffer for it all;   
Where the drovers and the shearers and the bushmen and the rest   
Never reach the Eldorado of the poets of the West.   
  
And you think the bush is purer and that life is better there,   
But it doesn't seem to pay you like the `squalid street and square'.   
Pray inform us, City Bushman, where you read, in prose or verse,   
Of the awful `city urchin who would greet you with a curse'.   
There are golden hearts in gutters, though their owners lack the fat,   
And we'll back a teamster's offspring to outswear a city brat.   
Do you think we're never jolly where the trams and buses rage?   
Did you hear the gods in chorus when `Ri-tooral' held the stage?   
Did you catch a ring of sorrow in the city urchin's voice   
When he yelled for Billy Elton, when he thumped the floor for Royce?   
Do the bushmen, down on pleasure, miss the everlasting stars   
When they drink and flirt and so on in the glow of private bars?   
  
You've a down on `trams and buses', or the `roar' of 'em, you said,   
And the `filthy, dirty attic', where you never toiled for bread.   
(And about that self-same attic -- Lord! wherever have you been?   
For the struggling needlewoman mostly keeps her attic clean.)   
But you'll find it very jolly with the cuff-and-collar push,   
And the city seems to suit you, while you rave about the bush.   
  
You'll admit that Up-the Country, more especially in drought,   
Isn't quite the Eldorado that the poets rave about,   
Yet at times we long to gallop where the reckless bushman rides   
In the wake of startled brumbies that are flying for their hides;   
Long to feel the saddle tremble once again between our knees   
And to hear the stockwhips rattle just like rifles in the trees!   
Long to feel the bridle-leather tugging strongly in the hand   
And to feel once more a little like a native of the land.   
And the ring of bitter feeling in the jingling of our rhymes   
Isn't suited to the country nor the spirit of the times.   
Let us go together droving, and returning, if we live,   
Try to understand each other while we reckon up the div.

**The Overflow of Clancy – H.H.C.C:**

I've read "The Banjo's" letter, and I'm glad he's found a better

Billet than he had upon the station where I met him years ago;  
He was "slushy" then for Scotty, but the "bushland" sent him "dotty,"  
So he "rose up, William Riley," and departed down below.

He "rolled up" very gladly, for he had bush-fever badly  
When he left "the smoke" to wander "where the wattle-blossoms wave,"  
But a course of "stag and brownie" seems to make the bush-struck towny  
Kinder weaken on the wattle and the bushman's lonely grave.

Safe in town, he spins romances of the bush until one fancies  
That it's all top-boots and chorus, kegs of rum and "whips" of grass,  
And the sheep off camp go stringing when the "boss-in-charge" is singing,  
Whilst we "blow the cool tobacco-smoke and watch the white wreaths pass."

Yet, I guess "The B." feels fitter in a b'iled shirt and "hard-hitter"  
Than he would "way down the Cooper" in a flannel smock and "moles,"  
For the city cove has leisure to indulge in stocks of pleasure,  
But the drover's only pastime's cooking "*What's this!* on the coals."

And the pub. hath friends to meet him, and between the acts they treat him  
While he's swapping "fairy twisters" with the "girls behind their bars,"  
And he sees a vista splendid when the ballet is extended,  
And at night he's in his glory with the comic-op'ra stars.

I am sitting, very weary, on a log before a dreary  
Little fire that's feebly hissing 'neath a heavy fall of rain,  
And the wind is cold and nipping, and I curse the ceaseless dripping  
As I slosh around for wood to start the embers up again.

And, in place of beauty's greeting, I can hear the dismal bleating  
Of a ewe that's sneaking out among the marshes for her lamb;  
And for all the poet's skitin' that a new-chum takes delight in,  
The drover's share of pleasure isn't worth a tinker's d--n.

Does he sneer at bricks and mortar when he's squatting in the water  
After riding fourteen hours beneath a sullen, weeping sky?  
Does he look aloft and thank it, as he spreads his sodden blanket?  
For the drover has no time to spare, he has no time to dry.

If "The Banjo's" game to fill it, he is welcome to my billet;  
He can "take a turn at droving" -- wages three-and-six a-day --  
And his throat'll get more gritty than mine will in the city  
Where with Mister Lawson's squashes I can wash the dust away.  
  
  
**Banjo, of the Overflow – Francis Kenna:**

I had written him a letter which I had for want of better  
Knowledge given to a partner by the name of "Greenhide Jack ",  
He was shearing when I met him, and I thought perhaps I'd let him  
Know that I was "stiff," and, maybe, he would send a trifle back.  
  
My request was not requited, for an answer came indited  
On a sheet of scented paper, in an ink of fancy blue;  
And the envelope, I fancy, had an "Esquire" to the Clancy  
And it simply read, "I'm busy; but I'll see what I can do!"  
  
To the vision land I can go, and I often think of "Banjo",  
Of the boy I used to shepherd in the not so long ago,  
He was not the bushman's kidney, and among the crowds of Sydney  
He'll be more at home than mooning on the dreary Overflow.  
  
He has clients now to fee him, and has friends to come and see him,  
He can ride from morn to evening in the padded hansom cars,  
And he sees the beauties blending where the throngs are never ending,  
And at night the wond'rous women in the everlasting bars.  
  
I am tired of reading prattle of the sweetly-lowing cattle  
Stringing out across the open with the bushmen riding free;  
I am sick at heart of roving up and down the country droving,  
And of alternating damper with the salt-junk and the tea.  
  
And from sleeping in the water on the droving trips I've caught a  
Lively dose of rheumatism in my back and in my knee,  
And in spite of verse it's certain that the sky's a leaky curtain,  
It may suit the "Banjo" nicely, but it never suited me.  
  
And the bush is very pretty when you view it from the city,  
But it loses all its beauty when you face it "on the pad;"  
And the wildernesses haunt you, and the plains extended daunt you,  
Till at times you come to fancy that the life will drive you mad.  
  
But I somehow often fancy that I'd rather not be Clancy,  
That I'd like to be the "Banjo" where the people come and go,  
When instead of framing curses I'd be writing charming verses,  
Tho' I scarcely think he'd swap me, "Banjo, the Overflow".

**An Answer to Various Bards – Banjo Paterson:**

Well, I've waited mighty patient while they all came rolling in,   
Mister Lawson, Mister Dyson, and the others of their kin,   
With their dreadful, dismal stories of the Overlander's camp,   
How his fire is always smoky, and his boots are always damp;   
And they paint it so terrific it would fill one's soul with gloom --   
But you know they're fond of writing about "corpses" and "the tomb".   
So, before they curse the bushland, they should let their fancy range,   
And take something for their livers, and be cheerful for a change.   
Now, for instance, Mr Lawson -- well, of course, we almost cried   
At the sorrowful description how his "little 'Arvie" died,   
And we lachrymosed in silence when "His Father's mate" was slain;   
Then he went and killed the father, and we had to weep again.   
Ben Duggan and Jack Denver, too, he caused them to expire,   
After which he cooked the gander of Jack Dunn, of Nevertire;   
And, no doubt, the bush is wretched if you judge it by the groan   
Of the sad and soulful poet with a graveyard of his own.   
  
And he spoke in terms prophetic of a revolution's heat,   
When the world should hear the clamour of those people in the street;   
But the shearer chaps who start it -- why, he rounds on them the blame,   
And he calls 'em "agitators who are living on the game".   
Bur I "over-write" the bushmen! Well, I own without a doubt   
That I always see the hero in the "man from furthest out".   
I could never contemplate him through an atmosphere of gloom,   
And a bushman never struck me as a subject for "the tomb".   
  
If it ain't all "golden sunshine" where the "wattle branches wave",   
Well, it ain't all damp and dismal, and it ain't all "lonely grave".   
And, of course, there's no denying that the bushman's life is rough,   
But a man can easy stand it if he's built of sterling stuff;   
Though it's seldom that the drover gets a bed of eiderdown,   
Yet the man who's born a bushman, he gets mighty sick of town,   
For he's jotting down the figures, and he's adding up the bills   
While his heart is simply aching for a sight of Southern hills.   
  
Then he hears a wool-team passing with a rumble and a lurch,   
And, although the work is pressing, yet it brings him off his perch,   
For it stirs him like a message from his station friends afar   
And he seems to sniff the ranges in the scent of wool and tar;   
And it takes him back in fancy, half in laughter, half in tears,   
to a sound of other voices and a thought of other years,   
When the woolshed rang with bustle from the dawning of the day,   
And the shear-blades were a-clicking to the cry of "Wool away!"   
  
Then his face was somewhat browner, and his frame was firmer set --   
And he feels his flabby muscles with a feeling of regret.   
But the wool-team slowly passes, and his eyes go slowly back   
To the dusty little table and the papers in the rack,   
And his thoughts go to the terrace where his sickly children squall,   
And he thinks there's something healthy in the bush-life after all.   
But we'll go no more a-droving in the wind or in the sun,   
For out fathers' hearts have failed us, and the droving days are done.   
  
There's a nasty dash of danger where the long-horned bullock wheels,   
And we like to live in comfort and to get our reg'lar meals.   
For to hang around the township suits us better, you'll agree,   
And a job at washing bottles is the job for such as we.   
Let us herd into the cities, let us crush and crowd and push   
Till we lose the love of roving, and we learn to hate the bush;   
And we'll turn our aspirations to a city life and beer,   
And we'll slip across to England -- it's a nicer place than here;   
  
For there's not much risk of hardship where all comforts are in store,   
And the theatres are in plenty, and the pubs are more and more.   
But that ends it, Mr Lawson, and it's time to say good-bye,   
So we must agree to differ in all friendship, you and I.   
Yes, we'll work our own salvation with the stoutest hearts we may,   
And if fortune only favours we will take the road some day,   
And go droving down the river 'neath the sunshine and the stars,   
And then return to Sydney and vermilionize the bars.

**The Poets of the Tomb – Henry Lawson:**

The world has had enough of bards who wish that they were dead,   
'Tis time the people passed a law to knock 'em on the head,   
For 'twould be lovely if their friends could grant the rest they crave --   
Those bards of `tears' and `vanished hopes', those poets of the grave.   
They say that life's an awful thing, and full of care and gloom,   
They talk of peace and restfulness connected with the tomb.   
  
They say that man is made of dirt, and die, of course, he must;   
But, all the same, a man is made of pretty solid dust.   
There is a thing that they forget, so let it here be writ,   
That some are made of common mud, and some are made of GRIT;   
Some try to help the world along while others fret and fume   
And wish that they were slumbering in the silence of the tomb.   
  
'Twixt mother's arms and coffin-gear a man has work to do!   
And if he does his very best he mostly worries through,   
And while there is a wrong to right, and while the world goes round,   
An honest man alive is worth a million underground.   
And yet, as long as sheoaks sigh and wattle-blossoms bloom,   
The world shall hear the drivel of the poets of the tomb.   
  
And though the graveyard poets long to vanish from the scene,   
I notice that they mostly wish their resting-place kept green.   
Now, were I rotting underground, I do not think I'd care   
If wombats rooted on the mound or if the cows camped there;   
And should I have some feelings left when I have gone before,   
I think a ton of solid stone would hurt my feelings more.   
  
Such wormy songs of mouldy joys can give me no delight;   
I'll take my chances with the world, I'd rather live and fight.   
Though Fortune laughs along my track, or wears her blackest frown,   
I'll try to do the world some good before I tumble down.   
Let's fight for things that ought to be, and try to make 'em boom;   
We cannot help mankind when we are ashes in the tomb.

**A Voice From the Town – Banjo Paterson:**

I thought, in the days of the droving,   
Of steps I might hope to retrace,   
To be done with the bush and the roving   
And settle once more in my place.   
With a heart that was well nigh to breaking,   
In the long, lonely rides on the plain,   
I thought of the pleasure of taking   
The hand of a lady again.   
I am back into civilization,   
Once more in the stir and the strife,   
But the old joys have lost their sensation --   
The light has gone out of my life;   
The men of my time they have married,   
Made fortunes or gone to the wall;   
Too long from the scene I have tarried,   
And somehow, I'm out of it all.   
  
For I go to the balls and the races   
A lonely companionless elf,   
And the ladies bestow all their graces   
On others less grey than myself;   
While the talk goes around I'm a dumb one   
'Midst youngsters that chatter and prate,   
And they call me "The Man who was Someone   
Way back in the year Sixty-eight."   
  
And I look, sour and old, at the dancers   
That swing to the strains of the band,   
And the ladies all give me the Lancers,   
No waltzes -- I quite understand.   
For matrons intent upon matching   
Their daughters with infinite push,   
Would scarce think him worthy the catching,   
The broken-down man from the bush.   
New partners have come and new faces,   
And I, of the bygone brigade,   
Sharply feel that oblivion my place is --   
I must lie with the rest in the shade.   
And the youngsters, fresh-featured and pleasant,   
They live as we lived -- fairly fast;   
But I doubt if the men of the present   
Are as good as the men of the past.   
  
Of excitement and praise they are chary,   
There is nothing much good upon earth;   
Their watchword is nil admirari,   
They are bored from the days of their birth.   
Where the life that we led was a revel   
They "wince and relent and refrain" --   
I could show them the road -- to the devil,   
Were I only a youngster again.   
  
I could show them the road where the stumps are,   
The pleasures that end in remorse,   
And the game where the Devil's three trumps are   
The woman, the card, and the horse.   
Shall the blind lead the blind -- shall the sower   
Of wind read the storm as of yore?   
Though they get to their goal somewhat slower,   
They march where we hurried before.   
  
For the world never learns -- just as we did   
They gallantly go to their fate,   
Unheeded all warnings, unheeded   
The maxims of elders sedate.   
As the husbandman, patiently toiling,   
Draws a harvest each year from the soil,   
So the fools grow afresh for the spoiling,   
And a new crop of thieves for the spoil.   
  
But a truce to this dull moralizing,   
Let them drink while the drops are of gold.   
I have tasted the dregs -- 'twere surprising   
Were the new wine to me like the old;   
And I weary for lack of employment   
In idleness day after day,   
For the key to the door of enjoyment   
Is Youth -- and I've thrown it away.