A photograph of a cave interior. Large, light-colored rock formations with some brownish staining are visible. The cave floor is covered in water, which reflects the rock formations and the light entering the cave. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a dramatic effect.

# **Top-End Tour, June-July 2018**

## **Part 1**

### **Six-liners**

Robin Ford June-July 2018

Top-End Tour, June-July 2018  
Part 1  
Six-liners

## **Six-liners**

Robin Ford, June-July 2018

On our Top End bus tour I recorded my thoughts in verse. One kind had six lines with a rhyming scheme that went: A B A B C C, and a rhythm that was roughly Dah dum Dah dum Dah dum Dah dum Dah dum (with variations).

There are thirteen of them. Here they are.

## Cable Beach

I clearly am a stranger in these parts.  
I'm more an Eastern Seaboard sort of guy.  
It's half an hour to sunset when it starts.  
We turn our faces to the Western sky.  
What is the object of this strange devotion?  
We've come to watch the sun set in the ocean.



## **A cunning plan**

A Top End tour with Angus, you can guess,  
Was Lyndell's plan, for plants are Lyndell's passion.  
But I felt certain we would have success —  
And I'd find things to do in my own fashion.  
I saw the Kimb'ly and I saw its rose,  
And bottle trees embraced in ballroom pose.



## **Balance of risks**

On forty kays of gravel, dirt and salt  
She drove the bus; a jolly, bucking ride.  
I know that if it's corrugations fault,  
Then 'fast is good', for those of us inside.  
Now fast demands top skill and concentration  
For safe arrival at our destination.





## **Broome's museum**

'Sail-making loft' it said; I went inside.

A light and airy place; uncluttered floor.

Charles Bagg made sails for luggers; made with pride.

The plain exhibit showed that less is more.

He'd come from Sweden, leaving all behind;

He died in Broome's care hostel for the blind.



## **Controlling interest**

McAlpine bent this site to suit his will;  
A lady, dressed in white, had set us straight.  
The vision he defined determines still  
How visitors and landscape may relate.  
And in the car-park just across the way  
The natives hold the introduced at bay.



## Windows

Our bus kept rolling on; the air-con's great.  
We see the country as it passes by,  
But windows, by their nature, isolate  
All other of the senses but the eye.  
What joy! An open boat – we see the view  
And feel the wind, and hear the water too.





## **Preoccupied**

We're on the bus again, this time with choices.

We choose to stop the bus and walk about.

Do I hear ancient, dis-embodied voices

Amid the burn that recently went out?

And all among the charcoal and the ash

Green shoots provide a vibrant colour splash.





## **The hands that feed them**

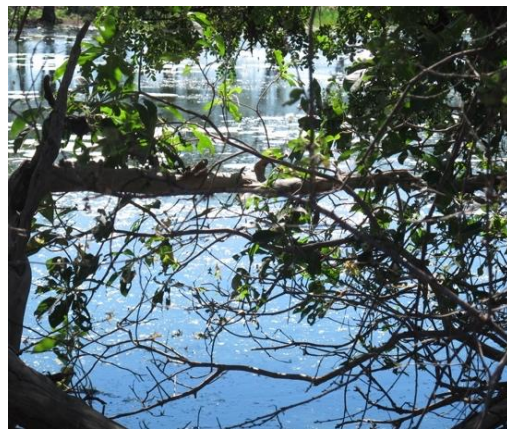
The seven-spotted archer fish can spit  
And hit your hand a metre in the air.  
The catfish, when it comes to hear of it,  
Takes over, and it isn't really fair.  
The mighty Barra takes the hand-held baits,  
And they're the ones that end up on our plates.



## **Brave enough to share**

They chose to take us to their special place  
And hoped that we would come to share their view.  
It spoke to me of beauty, love and grace,  
And life and death and resurrection too.  
I saw the bird life that had been their goal,  
But more than that, the place had touched my soul.





## Sunset again

I'd had my sunset swim on Lake Argyle  
And, captivated by the dusky sky,  
My champagne glass I put down for a while  
And held my cam'ra up before my eye.  
Will any of those photos that I'd taken  
That strange ethereal feeling re-awaken?



## Sea change

A jolly ride; the longest of our trip.  
The best songs, and the worst, up for debate.  
They tested what we knew, and could we flip  
Our minds around and see another state.  
Now yesterday was grand; it was a high.  
Tomorrow we will start the long goodbye.





## Satisfied

I put my glider in my bag this morning  
Dismantling first so it would better fit  
Inside my bag without too much deforming,  
For later on I plan to measure it.  
At first it didn't fly well, and looked clunky,  
But with two fins it glided and looked funky.



## Intergenerational

Looked after by Millennials, (that's Gen Y),

Age now from thirty-five to (say) fifteen.

Unhurried and laid-back, they do not try

Competing in the frantic Gen X scene.

They 'get' that we like tunes from Hank Mancini,

But not the "yellow polka-dot bikini".

