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.