

Memories of Vin Buckley, Spelt from Sibyl's Golden Leaves

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This elegant autumn weather
filling goldcoined Grattan Street
brings you obliquely back again,
small-footed, huffing along to Martini's
 rather slowly
toward grilled whiting gradual white wine,
your bag full of serious minor complaints
against the universe.

'Now piss off, mate,' you said to a classic bore
with all the gallantry of a dauphin.

 You rendered unto Caesar
the shit that was Caesar's, wittily;
when in form, you could really be
as flash as a rat with a gold tooth
or a courteous falcon.

 Dear old friend, you thought
the sexy creatures in 'They Flee from Me'
just might have been racehorses.

Your wit was that of the hooded owl,
scrupulously nodding. Once you fell
into the fireplace, dancing with Gwennie
among the aphorisms of claret-purple cronies
and rose up unscorched, blinking.

 This Maybright weather
is no doubt still trickily playing
on those huge trattoria windows
behind which we sipped and planned
to change the whole face of Australian Lit,
 outwitting the weasel cunning
of dwellers in the great Coathanger's shade,
harbourdazzle apparatchiks
and marxified weanlings.

Yellow, frail, eddied, an elm leaf
 trails its gyre around me.
Trust nobody but women and old friends,
your ghost would still say,
treading on soundless delicate shoes

