

Fly on the Wall

Fly, like many other like-minded brethren (and sistren), has little idea precisely how to react to the apparently unprecedented onslaught of ill fortune that this year, half of which only has run, has brought upon what Fly with all sincerity calls his beloved country and profession. It has been, barring the odd sparkle such as the first ever win for the men in green at the House of Pain, unequivocally, undeniably and resoundingly, an *annus horribilis*. Moody's, bless their little souls, have apparently not cottoned on, or know something Fly doesn't, if recent headlines are anything to go by, and Fly, as ever, clings to reeds of hope in a state of dwindling denial. Yet he certainly finds it more difficult to sound clever when countering the whinge brigade and more often than not appears to be joining their chorus of laments. So, when of an evening he reads Dryden (yes, he does do these things), it strikes him again that couplets such as one finds in *Absalom and Achitophel* allow laments to be issued whilst offering a sort of lyrical shield with varying tone from the consequences of setting out a somber catalogue of angst responding to the here and now when these tend to get uncomfortable for the likes of the well-heeled.

So, issuing due apologies to Dryden, Fly sallies forth on



Illustration © Jacob Krynauw



Not Half a Bad Year

*Ten years ago, when Fly did sign the book,
The years ahead had promise in their look;
Although the bears were running in the street,
They danced to tunes of democratic beat
And yes, the Court, the highest in the land
Was building strong its ever taller stand
And work was good, and pay was never bad
And Fly in short was quite a happy lad.*

*And ten years on? Well, work is just as good
And pay is better, as of course it should,
But somewhere, something horrible is loose
And somehow, someone cooked the golden goose;
Or so it seems, when evenings come by
And when Glenfiddich turns a little dry;
Quite who did what, quite what got lost and where,
One does not know, but, hell, it's hard to bear.*

*For Fortune, she of ever harsher blast
Seemed all at once ten thousand bombs to cast –
It was as if to hope had been a sin
That only brutal punishment could win:
God, did she wield her weapons of despair!
As wails and whimpers carried in the air
And though she spared no portion of the land –
On Justice did she smite her hardest hand.*

*The darkness brought by failing power plants
Was light when viewed against the banshee rants
Of those who wanted Justice nowhere near
The men whose power reckoned they more dear
And so the very house of Justice shook,
Whilst to the seas themselves her children took;
What end awaits her is too soon to tell
But, hear me brothers: o, she is not well.*

*Meanwhile who visits this our land we kill;
We help our beastly neighbour gorge his fill
Of blood and lust for further years to rule
As loyalty remains our highest school,
The few with much build ever higher walls
Safe (mostly) from the wrath and hungry calls
And in their nervous dens of fevered trade
They count the piles that always will be made.*

*And years from now? A Fly is much too small
To know such things, or anything at all.
But what he knows, be it in prose or verse,
Is: it's been better and, by God, been worse
And this year too has still her half to run
And then there's more (the earth spins round the sun)
Until it's done, or Fly done long before,
Of good and bad there always will be more.*

