



Sampler of eleven poems from *Golden Bridge: New Poems*
by Jennifer Maiden,
Quemar Press, 2023

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Kutuzov's Bridge

Kutuzov the Russian General against Napoleon, so admired by Tolstoy in *War and Peace*, advocated a 'golden bridge' to allow the shivering defeated French soldiers to retreat home where they could be a French burden not a dead weight on the heart of Russia. Differently, but with a like result, the Chinese sage Sun Tzu in his classic *The Art of War* recommended always leaving an escape route for your enemies so they aren't forced to fight you desperately to the death. One of the latest, most sublime, tourist attractions in Vietnam is called the 'Cầu Vàng' or 'Golden Bridge' and was constructed busily and benignly by Hanoi architects for a colonial French village themepark, its landscape the great Ba Na Hills and its struts two giant hands of an earth god holding up the gleaming arch.

Kutuzov would have hands like that:

gnarled and bleached by age and earth, to hold his bridge in a grip both loose, reverential and solid.

Russia, having outwitted, outwaited France, Hitler, Soviet



Union dissolution, grips slowly in a bridge-shape,
mindless of opinion, needing to always leave
supporting survivors behind. Madeleine Albright
died today, remembered for bombing Belgrade
and calling sanctions killing Iraqi children 'worth it'.
Moscow has said its oil must now be purchased
in rubles because of the western sanctions, to defeat
the petro-dollar, is not bothering itself too much
with its own sanctions yet. What time would Kutuzov
have had for sanctions? What time would the old
earth god have to play at chess? The tourists walk
delighted and awed on Cầu Vàng, safely photograph
the endless mountains and the quaint French village.



Tom Uren Woke Up at the Kantei Palace

Tom Uren woke up in an upstairs Kantei Palace rock garden
in Tokyo in 2022. Anthony Albanese, who swiftly was just sworn
in as Australian Prime Minister, and who had at once flown
here for the QUAD meeting, leant pale on his arm,
resting from the deft politeness of India, America and Japan,
the reciprocal suavity of Penny Wong.

Albanese appeared condensed by the tension.

He seemed an older, thinner, calmer man.

'Do you know this place is haunted?' asked Uren,

'Kishida Fumio has lately moved back in,

but previous Prime Ministers describe victims of assassins

drifting in the rooms and there was a Shinto exorcism.'

Albanese said, 'These ornamental rocks are ghosts in stone.'

He had not expected gloom and was grateful for Tom,

but sympathised - he was sympathetic in his bones -

'Is it hard for you to be here, having spent so much time

on the Burma Railway and seeing the Atomic Bomb

explode in scarlet silence over Nagasaki: "Fat Man",



they called it, as you always warned me of that cataclysm?

I have opposed Nuclear Power without exception.'

He pronounced things with attention, like Nye Bevan,
who used his stutter to enforce his reason.

Uren had known at once that Albanese's tensions
could be harnessed to emphasise his passion,
even when Anthony was poverty-gauche and young.

He answered, 'No, I am relaxed now in Japan.

Your opposition to the Iraq War being as strong
as mine, you will be amused that near us is the room
where Bush brought up his dinner in the then

PM Miyazawa's lap.' It was a sign of being humane,
Albanese thought, the way that kind-spirited Tom
would comfort with wry anecdotes of the high ones.

Carved with words, this was indeed a palace in design
for the highest of the high ones. Cats like chiselled nouns
basked together, guarding. With their emperor's frown
outside, two ornamental owls at the door had shown
all who entered their gaunt sneer of possession.

But Uren thought they'd the look of a Covid victim.



His friend was obliged to have survived that germ
at once but Uren gripped his elbow with compassion
for all holding-it together, and felt admiration
that: 'You have refused to rule out lock-down
if necessary, despite imperial capitalism,'
Tom chatted on, 'and I agree with the great Imran Khan
that India's decision to buy bargain Russian
oil would have been right too for Pakistan.'
Albanese also found that reassuring: 'Everyone
here might not always be gladly leant-upon.
We can comfort with a trade deal, not the real one.
I will tell you what happens about Julian
Assange and not discussing war on China, when
I return to you in this artful maze of stones.'
He breathed out shortly in a way that to Uren
was reminiscent of the boxer that he had been,
contracting in, to prepare for the last round.



Hunger Stones

(On Michael Hudson's thesis that the US war is not against Russia but against Europe to prevent its economic ties to Eurasia, and on Victoria Nuland reportedly saying separately that war in Ukraine was the only way to stop Nord Stream Two)

In Europe there are hunger stones,
once called milestones or marks,
exposed when a river level drops
that say: if you can read me there must
be famine coming certainly:

A famine in energy
a famine in water
a famine in food
a famine in trust, under
no golden bridge to Valhalla,
no golden bridge to Paris,
no retreat.

Even if Russia in Ukraine
goes slowly to maintain
infrastructure in the bones,
having seen the West's destruction



by air of the whole skeleton
of Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya,
and having remembered Barbarossa,
and the stones of hunger
that killed Putin's brother, but
made him hungry for other brothers, but
made him cautious, made him listen ever
to Kutuzov. There is nothing left in empire
now for Europe - although France invades Sudan
for gas and power - only to celebrate
the dried-up water
on hunger stones with golden bridges over.
There is nothing left to eat.



George Jeffreys: 36:

George Jeffreys Woke Up in Doonside at the Chang Lai Yuan Chinese Garden

George Jeffreys woke up in Doonside at the Chang Lai Yuan Chinese Garden of Friendship. He was on the meditatively placed large stones next to a broad and brilliant waterfall. Confucius and the Duke of Zhou had been dozing beside him, courteously agreeing to meet there, close to where George and Clare and Corbyn lived at Clare's mother's house in Mt Druitt. Clare and Corbyn were playing chasings on a bridge nearby which was in daylight white as bone, but now the moon made into ancient gold, and the shadows from their figures multifold. The arches of the bridge reflected in pleating water formed ovals like Chinese spring eggs. Clare and Corbyn's laughter span wild as thrown coins at the ripples near George's feet. He said, 'In this night that bridge is as gold as Kutuzov's, allowing the enemy to retreat, just as Sun Tzu recommended, too. And after all the fuss about Taiwan it seems China may let it settle down a while, patient, despite all the Five Eye provocations.' Clare heard and called to them: 'But there is a difference between allowing your enemy to withdraw:



as Sun Tzu said, never engage with them when they are going downhill, and another to withdraw and leave your allies, from a position you have chosen not to defend, like the Russians in Kharkov, leaving the Azov to butcher what was left.' The Duke took up the military topic, as Confucius admired the Western Suburbs night, the etched gums surrounding the pagodas, with the incongruity of certain lovelinesses, although he remained a little puzzled by the palm trees. Much of the wood was painted profound Chinese red, with its dark brown tone, too rich for blood. 'When you are stretched thin', said the Duke, 'you must choose what you will reinforce, what not. And if your enemy expands suddenly, after a series of defeats, you must let it exhaust itself with its own new power. That is the wisdom of winter. The Azovs have nowhere to go but Russia, or down into the Don, where we are strong.' George noted Zhou said 'We' about the Russians. Clare came and sat with them on the steep stones. Corbyn was singing songs to sleepy ducks. Clare wore deep blue, a Chinese indigo, darker than the Voodoo azure she had worn once



in flooded New Orleans, when they had met the Master of the Cross
Roads, who then regarded George Bush Junior as an epitome
of evil - now would it be Nuland and the Kagans? Her hand
brushed George's knee and thrilled him, although communicating
as much possession as seduction. The ducks began to croon
broodily back to Corbyn. Confucius smiled suddenly at Clare:
'It is the revenge the Azovs take that will defeat them, just as
the West's attempts to dismember by sanctions now rebound.'
Wisening wizenning winter. But her uneasy soul was filled again
with victims tied to lynching lamp-posts. She said, 'Even if some
were helped escape to Russia, some others trusted and are dead
or used for propaganda.' Confucius said, 'It is a paradox. If you fight
those who act with evil they will worsen sometimes, even the more
so if you fight with strategy.' George said, 'Russia and China's war
is not only with Azovs but the petro-dollar, which will retreat
into a quiet corner: it must not fall too fast.' The waterfall was built
to descend starrily but at an even pace. Clare thought: The Duke,
George and Confucius all seem the same age now: weariness



in them has reabsorbed to fluid sinew. One of the ducks
had led Corbyn to its nest in a lee of bracken. He knelt astounded
to admire the new eggs, as lustrous as the bridge's rounded
half circles now perfected by the water.



Brookings Becomes a Navy Seal

The little pombat - possum-wombat cross, lithe as a possum,
soft as a wombat toy - snuggles on my shoulder as I read
about the blowing up of Nord Stream One and Two, now
most likely the work of the Poles, the Scandinavians, American
and possibly British intelligence, and involving either drones,
depth-charges or Navy Seals. Brookings picks up on the seals.
I don't like to disillusion him too much about anthropomorphism.
Why shouldn't it be real seals, if the Russians once trained
dolphins? I explain the whole thing is part of the American
plan to prevent Eurasian integration, and a desperate ploy
of the Polish right wing to win next elections, but there's no reason
why innocent seals could not be involved, or that they
would not show courage and incendiary skills. They would not
know they were filling the sea with methane, or destroying
any planned German truce with Russia. He is already
'swimming' through the bush and any sidelong tree-trunk
is a pipeline and fairgame. I warn him that in reality the gas
bubbles in the water take away buoyancy, are dangerous



and would slow down his retreat, at which point he becomes temporarily a drone, but boomerang not kamikaze. He boomerangs back to me in that strange aquamarine light special to the dusk bush, and practises a seal-like bark he has picked up from somewhere, flapping his paws together. There is so much energy there must be sleep, and indeed he has wound around my feet, snores slightly, but with a smooth seal-like expression. The Americans are bashful about the hit and there was some confusion between agencies about whether they'd take credit or blame it illogically on the Russians. There may also be a nuclear false flag from the West, where here the sun sets azure, but the little creature is too tired to be a nuke yet, and there is no animal like death he can become as other.



The Dove as Homing Lily

A Canberra demo called a dove Assange.

I've been meaning to tell you about doves - not this time Spotted Doves or the iridescent park ones, but the white doves that are released at a festival or marriage. The demo for Assange released a dove in Canberra a while ago, and apart from the wild hope that this would worry Albanese, I was also troubled about what doves would do suddenly in the air and free. Looking up the facts behind released doves, it is apparently okay:

someone rents them from their cote nearby and they fly home at once because that is where their bed and birdseed are. Perhaps when you read this, Albanese will have cunningly freed Assange by asking Biden to address the Australian Parliament. Of course when Gillard got Obama to speak to the Australian Parliament, she said she wanted to revoke Assange's passport, and agreed to US bases here: that doesn't seem like any sort of bargain, but Albanese may regard listening to Biden as a favour by the listener,



one that deserves reward. They fly with a sort of tessellated
chuckle, doves. It has a note of excitement and alarm,
and of course there is that metallic whirl when they
ascend fast. Unaware they symbolise death,
there are tall spring lilies in our yard
an impossible solar white, each like a feather.
A celebratory dove flares similar in splendour.
The Canberra demo called the dove Assange,
and the dove then flew back home, as pure as hunger.



The Maiden Configuration

Bouncing around as usual between suitable rhyme schemes or none,
I realised that my last poem ended with a trochee, another rhyme
above, and above that two trochees that rhymed with the last one:

there are tall spring lilies in our yard

an impossible solar white, each like a feather.

A celebratory dove flares similar in splendour.

The Canberra demo called the dove Assange,

and the dove then flew back home, as pure as hunger.

When I was about twenty, John Tranter recognised in my poem

Climbing what was probably a related rhyme scheme:

This shadow at my shoulder doesn't shed

The substantial night.

The rope twists all breath

From the mountain

As simple as a bed

Far above life in heavy wind you might

Fall beyond the common cliff of death.

With all my side and ear adhered to stone

There seems a place like hell to draw the dead



Down so soft a body wouldn't wither

But hear the desperate lute lament ahead

To lull the dog across a bloodless river

and he suggested it might come over time to be known

as 'The Maiden Configuration', and for love of John,

I should commemorate that, although at this time

I suppose I may have also configured it nearly again

in the end because it just reminds me of him.

He was about twenty six and always then

he would quote from Wordsworth's *Resolution*

and Independence: We Poets in our youth begin

in gladness; But thereof come in the end

despondency and madness, even said it when

they interviewed him in the *Herald*, to confirm

he'd no illusions about the wages of ambition.

He was never an ambitious man. Even then

he always quoted Mallarme: *The whole of my admiration*

goes to the Great Mage, inconsolable and...

he would pause not to get it wrong

obstinate seeker after a mystery which, he was firm,

he does not know exists and which he will pursue, for ever on



that account, with the affliction
of his lucid despair, for it would have been
the truth... Later I saw he had used the quote in
Rimbaud and the Modernist Heresy, his long lines
debunking inverted commas with inverted commas, fine
limpidity, intensity never abandoned, nor deliberation.
We first met so he could lend me his battered
volume of Enid Starkie's *Rimbaud*, and I gave him my opinion
that Rimbaud in attempting to create real gold from
poetry's alchemy was too contemptuous of illusion.
It is a dark evening now, capricious with breezy spring.
Tranter once told me the difference between seasons
here and Northern Hemisphere is you don't see them,
and I'm thinking of his own torrential imagery, when
each rapid contradicts the next in sunshine.



Betrayal

Helmer reviews a book from Harper Collins (Murdoch)
by one of John le Carré's lovers, points out the lack
of reference to Russia, and also to the fact that
le Carré continued to be an Intelligence asset
to establish anti-Soviet propaganda in the wake
of Kim Philby, like anti-Russian fictions in the Press
and BBC now about assassinations, Novichok,
although the book seems only to obsess
on sex and size. There are movies like *Mincemeat*
I'd add, also designed suavely to stress
the need for boy's own propaganda, but
what I remember is the bleakness in the world
of Cornwell/le Carré's shadows, that he wrote
as Cornwell when a child waiting for school to beat
him, the pain 'excruciating'. All inside are betrayed
by not betraying, shrink in loss. And Russia outside is
unusually inarticulate as death.



Blood Moon, Beaver Moon

From the concrete in front of the night house
the lunar eclipse was at first clouded out but then
it sailed higher and became a gold scythe that cupped
the mottled garnet of the big soft red moon
in its arm, so that I remembered that old border ballad
Sir Patrick Spens : "I saw the new moon late yestreen
with the old moon in her arm, and if we go to sea,
master, I fear we'll come to harm." It seems
a fitting warning against goading Russia and China
into a war simultaneously as some Hail Mary
strategy by the American Military, Australia
arming itself with nuclear potential, Xi
deciding he must prepare his military for war,
Putin still hoping for an incremental bridge
using electricity, maybe giving the Poles Galicia,
which is anyway a swastika incarnate. Blood moons
always seem incarnate by their nature. By the time
this one had cleared the roof by metres,
it was atmospheric silver on impossibly



radiant fogs again. Katharine stops photographing it.

We return inside to eat, having inadvertently
observed some Indian fast to watch it, at least
according to Twitter, where Elon Musk,
having unsuccessfully 'couped' Bolivia,
settles for a 'massacre' of ex-comedians,
most of whom are anyway warlike now.

At the end of *Doctor Who* in a seminal image
Yaz carries the dying female doctor
back to the Tardis in her arms across
a destroyed landscape, and the franchise
has been taken over by Disney, the BBC
always preferring the blood to the beaver.

In America, this is the beaver moon
suggesting sylvan industry to them,
and the blood is incidental. It was more
beautiful as it vanished, I thought, last night,
like a Bourbon rose on a gold bridge upside down.



Tom Uren Woke Up in Bali

Tom Uren woke up in Bali at the Golden Bridge between

two islands,

Nusa Lembongan and Nusa Ceningan. He was on the Lembongan

side, watching the perfumed dawn also wake restlessly - in

a gossip

of palm trees and withdrawing tide - and Anthony Albanese sat

by his side, as they watched the light increase on a seaweed

farm, and the patchwork seabed patterns under the sunny structure,

which was indeed bright yellow and long, the hue even deeper

in this beginner's light. Albanese had been at the G20 Summit

and Uren was not hoping for too much from anyone who had

been left-wing in their youth but who was sensitive and scarred

from the loneliness of too long lack of power. For some reason,

he remembered Paul Keating's horror at formica tables, that

despite numerous discords he had once told Keating he should

smile more - Keating had a sweet grin, not seen often.

Albanese gave Uren a sweet grin now: if he were a surfer

he would see, he thought, Bali as a huge wave smoothly taken.

Xi had spoken to him with quiet civility, but admonished

Trudeau for lack of confidentiality, he had not angered France



further about the subs, although he was not sure what U.S. forces were going to do with Western Australia, given them by Gillard, and neither was Macron, who had a French horror at anyone else's delusions of power.

Albanese was delighted anyway to see Uren again, and felt they had enjoyed some reassuring chats in Tokyo. This was a lovely headland and he would not have been here but for this appointment. Uren overcame his own first reluctance, since Gore Vidal had asked him several times to encounter Albanese in some vulnerable sunrise in a sumptuous setting, raise the matter of Julian Assange once more. He told this to Albanese, and that 'I approve of the reprieve for Collaery, despite still costing Collaery funds and reputation, but I'm disappointed by the continued prosecution of Richard Boyle and David McBride, the whistleblowers on taxes and Afghanistan and had hoped they were legally safe because of legislation. But anyway what message can I take to Vidal about Assange? Gore still waits often at the cellside of Assange in Belmarsh prison. He has proved to be the sort of hero I witnessed in Weary Dunlop, one who endures in all senses with no conflict between



the soul and the backbone. As with Assange himself.'

All the scenery about them was fragrant, radiant, Buddhist
from functional humble bridge to green-blue seaweed orchard.

Albanese knew Dunlop had been a Buddhist, wondered what
it would be like to save life through distancing life's desires.

They had no grip on you then, but it wasn't a simple thing
like Keating exchanging tables for French clocks. He said,

'I was thinking how Macron and Keating might have had
a conversation about Empire antiques. There seem to be no cars
on this bridge we watch, only every scooter you can imagine.

I have recently had a near fatal car accident, and Covid.

The line I walk is as straight as the bridge below us,
and as long, long, long. When I was younger and my body's
scope was rounder I might have fought for your
whistleblowers as if against a war. Now I wonder if I can
insert myself in keyholes. Do you understand?'

Uren understood most things, and was pleased at least
that Albanese in his efforts to unlock things
like a skeleton key looked less like a skeleton.

Again the memory

that abstracted and incarnated Tom seemed to wander:

'I would lend my flat to Jim Cairns in Canberra so he could



spend time with Juni Morosi without talk. They were of course
then more into Wilhelm Reich than Buddha, but deliberate
sacrifice of power is a thing to respect. The newspapers
talk of your globalist friends, the rounded company directors,
and I can see you learning to surf them like a wave, like
Nye Bevan drinking champagne with Beaverbrook, perhaps.
Did you know that seaweed farm is fairly recent? By all accounts
it is successful, though. There are all sorts of cultivations
that succeed unexpectedly. I met my last love at the Opera
where she was singing, and we lived together like a fine duet.
So what will I tell Vidal about Julian that will not just be Quiet
Diplomacy as yet?' The bridge became brighter as the sun
rose,
ennobled their uncovered faces, like profiles on coins.
'Tell him I may speak soon', smiled Albanese.



Essay in Progress

When I observed in an essay in progress that the strange Ukrainian habit of broadcasting their wrapping in plastic sheets, tying to street-posts and beating those they considered gypsies, thieves, dissidents or collaborators might not be a PR mistake, or an unfortunate warning, mal-enthused, but rather a deliberate password to and entertainment for those in western power-structures with covert s-m tastes, I had not considered their new project: the Russian soldier in the same white glad-binding bound as a spider briskly wraps its prey and buried alive for an eager audience. An audience of who? This is not gold propaganda, like that of the unbelievable in all senses Pramila Patten the UN envoy who revamped accusations Libyan forces were given Viagra to rape innocents into the same story about Russian forces in Ukraine, but a decision



that the western s-m audience is not just into torture
but into the most extreme redroom snuff. Pre-war
Zelensky playing a piano with his cock, or mocking
the deliberately bombarded and water-deprived in
the Donbass is a distraction, like the heroine who squirts
the police chief with a soda fountain in *Our Man*
in Havana so that no one questions her further,
just a feisty eccentric actor, although in fact
she works for MI6. You may there say because
I'm relaxing into literary reference, looser rhymes,
and you are reading from where and when you are,
when I hope Ukraine is just Afghanistan all over,
and Russia has its Russian-speaking east, its secure
zone too vast for Nato shelling, and what's left
is not considered news-agency, intelligence-agency
lively any more, the world healthily multi-polar,
that therefore you think this work I write now
more contemporary in discussing China - but that
is not you, is it, with your memory? I am in love



with your use of memory. You can tell me what
happened to Zelensky? I hope the Azovs did not
kill him when the lack of electricity caused him
to resort to negotiations, reassuring them they would
be as false as Minsk, but Bandera people, and Neocons
may not have trusted him to lie again. You are going
I hope, to say he thrives in Zurich, Tel Aviv, or
to paraphrase Fowles, some Florida of the heart?
But now I have you to myself and the quartz blue
dawn rises in the wrinkled window yet.

I was
waiting for the lyric of your presence, to be calmer crossing
that bridge made from all you remember, and forget.

