

A drive in the country

At Blue Hole  
I stood by the water's edge  
And watched how swallows swam  
Through the air —  
Wild ducks moving away  
In the weeds  
To their nests in the hollows  
Of blackberries and reeds.

I stood on a rock  
By the roots of a willow —  
Saw how leaves  
Bent their ears to the ground.  
Gum trees shed  
Their bark to the wind  
And she-oaks dipped their hands  
In the shallows.

A chain and rope  
Hung down from a tree —  
Over the water for children to swing from.  
And I thought of a gallows  
To which dead men return  
At noon or in darkness  
To wait for a crowd.

And still I kept looking  
Back to the road —  
Away from Blue Hole  
And the miles yet to go:  
Thinking of the room  
Where an alarm clock was set  
And tomorrow already there.

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But only the soft call  
Of swallows and wild ducks  
Replied to my thoughts  
Through the streamers  
Of blue light.

I spoke to myself  
Like a man who is dying  
And walks away from a road  
That runs only one way.