

Home by Dark

*Also by Pam Brown*

**Books**

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Cafe Sport  
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Small Blue View  
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50 - 50  
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In my phone  
Anyworld  
More than a feuilletton

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**Pamphlets**

Montréal  
Train train  
Sentimental

**Theatre**

As Much Trouble As Talking (with Jan McKemmish)

# Home by Dark

Pam Brown

Shearsman Books

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Thanks to Melbourne-based artist Jon Cattapan for his generosity in  
allowing the reproduction of a detail from his painting  
'Atonal Group Study 2' for this book's cover.

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I

Just keep staring into that English-language night sky.

KEVIN DAVIES





## Windows wound down

parked under  
a chalky old light pole,  
windows wound down,  
dozing on the front seat,  
on the radio  
Chinese classical music

hot night tonight,  
across the road  
a man is wearing  
his hat, indoors.

the stars that I love,  
when I remember  
to look at them,  
blink above the building

\*

I've memorised  
a Keats sonnet  
for February  
a Tom Clark poem  
for March

&  
julienned the carrots  
for spicy carrots  
with harissa, cumin,  
parsley, garlic, lemon,  
while listening  
to crazy music—  
Albert Ayler

\*

a Czech poetry paperback  
bought in 1971,  
there's a 30 cent ticket  
to the Penguin Reserve  
on Phillip Island  
and a poignant note  
tucked between the pages  
of a poem marked with a pencilled 'x'

'x'—Vladimir Holan, Changes—  
This is our hope : that we have passed  
the limits of the last reality.  
But while consciousness disappears  
it is the very consciousness  
whose constant changes  
remain ...

the note—

P

I can't bring myself to write  
what's in my head  
I am splitting up north I guess  
I love you

B

\*

The Collected Poems  
of Gwen Harwood  
is on the table  
but I should  
prepare a talk  
for Zines in April

\*

going on online,  
a small discussion  
(between 3 poets)  
about experimental poetry  
and free verse that one poet says  
is really  
*anecdotal 'sincerity'*  
*wrapped up in the unified 'I'*

oh dear I think that must mean me,  
with whom I am definitely stuck,  
I have  
my limitations, though  
not always 'sincere',  
and never 'unified'—  
only paranoid

\*

do carpenters  
read novels  
about carpenters?  
do pastrycooks  
about pastrycooks?  
poets read novels  
by poets,  
like  
Roberto Bolaño

yes, it seems so

\*

another phone call  
more cancer  
and another  
a month later

like Michael said,  
now we'll spend  
the rest of our lives  
watching our friends die.

\*

*End of the First Week*

\*

by the time they caught Karadzic  
everyone here had forgotten  
who he was, what he'd done

\*

water on mars ?  
let's fuck mars up too

space terrain  
flag a claim,  
space fear sphere,  
see you tomorrow

\*

why not  
recalibrate your lifestyle

how did Jean Genet  
live in hotels  
for so long?

\*

she wiped her face  
with the wettex  
then turned to kiss me

let me  
track your parcel  
darling

\*

find a city,  
well, find a city first, I agree,  
find myself a city to live in.  
David Byrne, Cities

I can't google-map my past,  
where we lived is classified

\*

cept  
f u Peter P !  
u know y

\*

walk the spoodle  
and the labradoodle

past the pot of pesto  
under the patio gas heater

grown men  
with ridiculous dogs

\*

*End of the Second Week*

\*

the podiatrist's fingertips  
are orange with nicotine,  
my corn recoils

\*

lithium eclipse  
a new cocktail

ice wine  
a minor fever

\*

booking in to  
the Nasty Uncles Hotel  
one moonlit night,  
a double-bed room,  
a mean argument,  
a bus stop

\*

the first Koreans of the season,  
cloth hats, one silver coolie,  
comic-print backpacks,  
peering over fences at plants  
imported from Korea—

it's Spring

\*

*End of the Third Week*

\*

gone solar

\*

cicadas sucking sap  
underground—  
that's optimism

\*

I'm not going  
to Zines in April,  
too old too tired too late

but

still in opposition—  
dead prepositions,  
and needless adverbs

\*

industrialising pollination

my white paper poem  
has  
no conclusion

I would like to see  
some viridian,  
in my opinion  
a neglected colour

\*

*End of the Month*



## Holiday Guide to Everything

thin thread,  
spider strokes a fly,  
weak sunlight on a tree

the ratio of frequencies—  
yellowish green  
with pink edges

I'm indoors  
scrubbing grime  
from stainless steel ridges  
on the draining sink

recessions don't stop  
for Sunday

don't open the door  
don't answer the phone  
we need nothing

the wind  
has blown the devil  
and the dog uphill

fog ascends  
round the catchment area,  
water seeps under the tor

on the highway  
a weird tree stump  
in a cage—  
The Explorers' Tree

some pioneer  
tried to understand  
the everywhen,  
blackfella time

but me,  
I wait  
long hours,  
even years

meanwhile

the jury plays sudoku,  
short sentence dreaming

Joe Henderson  
beams lasers at the high notes

satellites police the stars

sesame seeds stick  
in a tooth socket

acquit me of my consternation,  
is this my holiday ?

pollination is a dying art

the dead princess's car wreck  
up for auction

## Wet flannelette

who are those people  
running on my grass?

\*

dragging the wheely bin  
to the footpath,  
a shooting star  
zim a flash  
above the dark pathway  
at the back of the house

through the window  
little green standby lights  
on the computer equipment—  
the cat burglar's runway

it's a carbon toe-print  
in there

\*

empty street  
in a couch potato smalltown,  
every human indoors  
in home-entertainment

\*

flagpole  
in a bare yard

\*

the best rubbish  
behind  
the buildings—  
cardboard boxes,  
twisted wire,  
wet carpet, wet flannelette

## Country town

frisky calves  
in the morning frost,  
that's this nature thing,  
the big cows too  
are warming up,  
blowing fogs of breath  
between each cuddy chomp,  
the sun is rising, as is steam  
from wondrous and plentiful  
green streams of piss

in the paddocks  
along the railway line

\*

hours later, after lunch,  
reciting a poem—  
    sheep and cows  
    standing for hours  
    beneath the boughs—  
to half a dozen  
variously demented elders  
at the day care centre

what is this life  
if full of care  
we have no time  
to stand and stare

corny even in memory

\*

a different morning  
coming back from the station  
with an unused day-return ticket,  
I wave, a feeble flick, to Viken,  
he's in the doorway to his gallery,  
opening up for the day,  
I've just vomited  
into some weedy shrubs  
next to the garage,  
so I'll miss an appointment,  
this is my quotidian  
but it's not everything

\*

on the bus  
a German backpacker  
explains  
'the stolen generations'  
to her Dutch girlfriend,  
they're carrying didgeridoos  
in custom-made canvas cases

\*

every morning  
breaking fine spider webs  
on my way to the car

\*

black cockatoos  
squealing and hissing  
in the radiata pines up on the hill  
above the Catholic church

down here  
Orchestra Baobab's  
'Made in Dakar'—  
drowning them out  
from the humid verandah

\*

outside the take-away  
four and twenty myna birds  
scrabbling for a chip