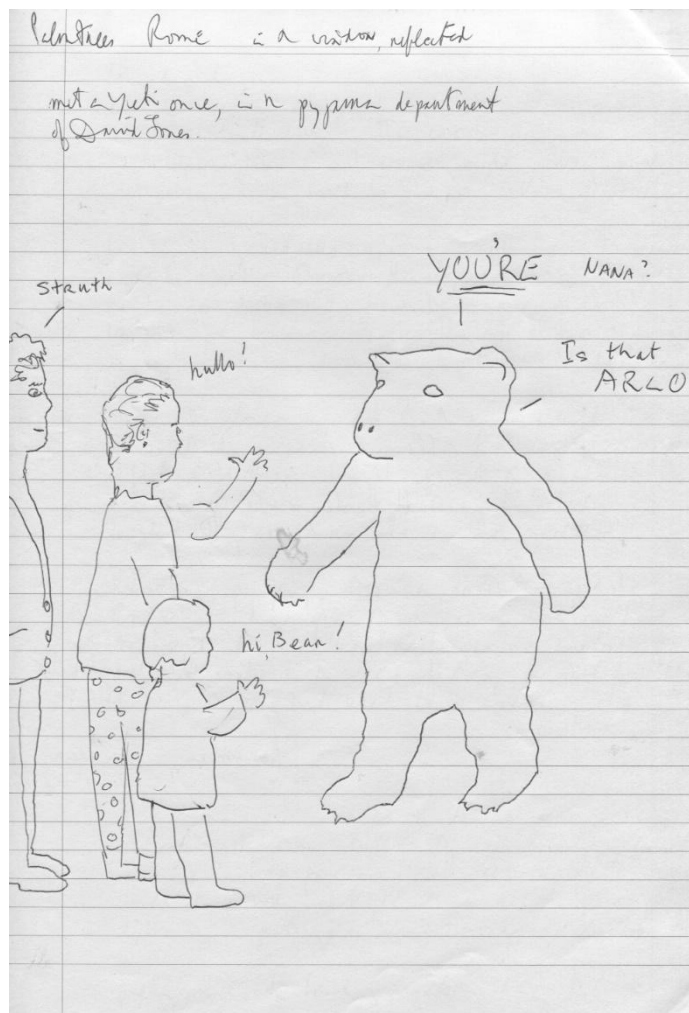


## Oh Boy Bear & Berrigan

Ken Bolton



"I met a Yeti once, in the pyjama  
department of David Jones"

here's my bear—a drawing—  
& I look at it, where a cartoon bear  
greeted three people. A small boy.

"Hi, Bear!" he says. Beside him  
Cath, in spotted pants, T-shirt top—  
"Hullo."

*I'm* drawn in, too,

standing behind them, where  
the left side of the page  
*ends* — so I don't quite fit.

(Cardigan, jeans, heavy shoes.)

*Struth*, I say.

Surprised, the  
bear booms — "*You're 'NANA' ??*" —

& then, "*Is that ARLO??*"

The bear is big, bulky  
& carefully drawn—less

'cartoon' than 'toy' bear. Boy,  
does he have presence.

My coffee  
nearly finished—I see, near the cup,  
a small 'bear' biscuit  
one hand outstretched, the other

to his face, to yawn, 'meant'  
probably, to indicate  
eating or imbibing

On the table, by the bear,  
Ted Berrigan appears—  
(back-cover photo)—

rounded, not *unlike* the bear,

in a blue shirt (blue  
"for going out"—tho he's reclining,  
cigarette in mouth

— & reads, I think, the papers)

I'm on to him, lately  
—he'd've been pleased to know —  
the sonnets, the 'personal' poems

& will read soon 'Tambourine Life'  
& be energised

#  
my plan.  
#

Arlo asked for the drawing:  
a bear,  
& so I put him in, with his  
  
grandmother tall beside him.

*"Put yourself in,"* said Arlo.  
"There's not much room."  
*"You'll fit,"* they both say

I too am reading the  
technical journals—but  
'no help'  
  
for example  
*I* come out  
more comically—  
'red-faced'? 'romping in the wind'?

(& I 'go' ...  
)

#

to pick up a Hyundai  
from Maugham Thiem  
Port Road, Cheltenham

from its 'service'

a morning 'shot to bits'  
*saved* but, by Arlo, Cath, Ted.

"blue-grey turning green"

I never thought it would  
come to this.

It has.

A coffee, dark & hot—  
fabulous reflections  
'about' it — (the saucer,

the spoon, the coffee itself) — and,  
more diffused, *on the table*.

*Where*

is Bronwyn Platten these days?

Eleanor Amor?

Shaun, Ben, Crab ? — John Foubister,

doing a nutty painting  
beautiful & smirking— paintings  
that are funny.

Ben's paintings, that are japes,  
formalist, fast, *winning*.

In London somewhere,  
smart, thinking,

in Melbourne, I think  
(*'smart', 'thinking'*),

lying down, a darkened room,  
waiting for an arm to mend

Ben rolls the dice  
(*Bon ton roulette*)

Eleanor, dreaming, in  
perfect quips, game set match, *et cetera*

#

only a monkey would read this

says Berrigan

yet he "knew not" of what he spoke

#

*Bull's-eye, still* — right?

#

Something Ben might have said,  
as he painted. Bull's-eye.

Their sometime effect.

The effect  
*of Kurt's* big abstractions

— 'not unlike' —

lyrical, loose, casual

(A SMALL PHOTO — TED)

"crossing 6th and 1st  
at ice-cold 6 a.m."

#

Bull's-eye, says Ben ...

... but he's painting

#

It's a matter of  
what you put in.

#

( That sound — Ker-CHING! )

#

Ben Sando  
wins again

stronger than alcohol,  
more great than song

are my hands shaking  
I should know better

### BERRIGAN SHUFFLE

Ted returns,  
6th and 1st, *ice-cold*  
6.09 a.m. He's got  
the paper

#

A wattle bird—functional, beautiful design—  
lands in the tree — casts about, leaves.

And here I am.

Morose, counter-intuitive, something of a zany, **Ken Bolton** cuts a moodily romantic figure within the dun Australian literary landscape, his name inevitably conjuring perhaps that best known image of him, grinning winningly, bow-tie askew, at the wheel of his 1955 Jaguar D-type, *El Cid*. His most recent book (2022) is *Fantastic Day*, from Puncher & Wattman.