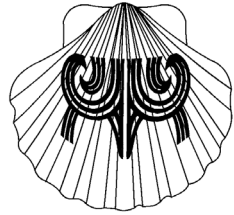
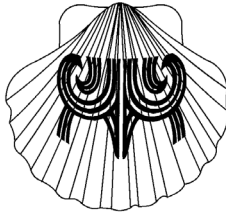
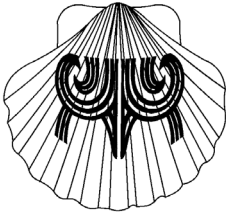


YLLWBRO
&
A.A.M. Bos



WARY—A
SURVEY

Mokopōpaki

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING

Perched high in the eaves of the whare Miss Wētā and her half-brother the spring heeled Kōkako are curious. Looking down, they observe a whānau of plump grey-brown house sparrows, happily attending to their ablutions. It seems a riotous and very social activity, punctuated by spontaneous breakouts for preening and the occasional unnerving burst of group singing. However, it is the scratching of shallow depressions in dry earth and the cowering, then rolling around in these scoops, followed by the flinging of dirt or sand all over the body, and the working of this powdery substrate into the skin with vigourous flicks and ruffles of the wings, that is something of a mystery to them.

“What are they doing?” whispers young Kōkako.

“Dust bathing,” replies Miss Wētā, her long feelers twitching and gathering information, “sparrows are some of the few passerine birds to indulge in this activity, apparently.”

“Peculiar,” says the debonair blue-grey Kōkako with a suave polish of his own beak, “definitely different.”

“Not for them,” answers Miss Wētā, matter-of-factly, “dust-bathing is a common avian maintenance behaviour that keeps feathers healthy and clean.”

In agreeable silence the two siblings watch the carefree sparrows, full of the joys of life, embrace the opportunity to be together and listen to the unintelligible chatter. It is a simple but uplifting pleasure.

“If everybody is looking for something,” wonders Kōkako, “what is sparrow looking for again?”

“A life,” says Miss Wētā simply, “like any other migrant.” Her fierce, armour plated mouthparts click. “What the smallest,

most vulnerable and least valued ever want is to share in all that is good in our land.” The generous and accepting tone of the conversation is then rudely undermined by the vulgar, attention-seeking antics of an off-task, adolescent male. Miss Wētā does not respond well to the typical but tiresome sparrow expression of the lewd. Her hooked hind legs spark with irritation and annoyance.

“Will someone please give that bird a towel?”

—Yllwbro

*Sweet dreams are made of this
Who am I to disagree?
I travel the world
And the seven seas
Everybody's looking for something
Some of them want to use you
Some of them want to get used by you
Some of them want to abuse you
Some of them want to be abused.
Hold your head up
Keep your head up
Hold your head up...¹*

Title track from the Eurythmics, 1983 U.S. debut album *Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)*. With blues-inspired vocal by a ‘desperate-sounding’ Annie Lennox hooking into the ‘dark corners’ of mainstream collective guilt, the Eurythmics driving but clipped and ‘nervy’ synthetic pop transcended the frothy, clichés of early 80’s disco and the nihilistic decadence of ‘New Wave party Muzak’ demonstrating that ‘transistorised white

Eurythmics, **Sweet Dreams**, Annie Lennox & David Allan Stewart (songwriters) (1983)

soul' was not always robotic or 'wimpy.'²

HOLD YOUR HEAD UP

My sister tells a story about being in year seven at intermediate school and catching the bus all by herself. Her stop was the last on a long route that began up in the clay and gorse covered 'badlands' of the state housing estate and wound its way through the hills, down the valley, across the railway line to a neat concentration of independently owned public service accommodation, some with respectable 'harbour views,' on the flat.

My sister says the Māori girls got on the bus first and sat down the back, noisily spreading themselves out, colonising most of the space, taking up their share of seats and some. The Pākehā girls who really wanted to be somewhere else but whose Dads' worked as managers and administrators at the prison or mental hospital or car assembly plant, got on the bus next and squeezing up together, sat nervously down the front. On most days, seats in the middle of the bus were neutral, like Switzerland. Unoccupied territory up for grabs, a contested position of interest only if the dispute was likely to amuse, and the bus driver conveniently distracted. But this day was different. My sister got on the bus as usual, boarding hurriedly before the circuitous drive through the city bypass and on around the sea front. All was calm and all was quiet. "Weird," she thought. Instantly on guard, my sister saw there was one empty seat left with room beside for her overloaded backpack and P.E. kit. Wary, she endured the predictable early morning

gauntlet of peer group review, bundling herself purposefully down the aisle. Something however, was not right. Cautious but still uncomprehending, she swung herself innocently into the vacant seat. There was a group intake of breath. A strategically placed drawing pin pierced her school uniform and punctured the soft flesh of her upper thigh. The mean and rusted point dug deeply into her body, where the viscous little wound bled. No one said a word and neither did she, holding her head up despite the pain and the humiliation.

And the betrayal.

—Yllwbro

SPARROW ICON No.1

CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW

Commander of the Black Pearl and legendary pirate of the Seven Seas, Captain Jack Sparrow is a fictional character in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film franchise. Created by screenwriters Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, and brought to life by actor Johnny Depp, the tricky, not entirely to be trusted, rum-infused, dreadlock and mascara-wearing personality known to the world as Jack Sparrow is based on a fusion of the rock ‘n’ roll anarchy of Rolling Stones’ guitarist Keith Richards, morphed together with the character of Pepé Le Pew, the womanising skunk from the *Looney Tunes* cartoons.

Although of questionable morality and sobriety, Jack Sparrow is the representation of an ‘ethical pirate’ whose ‘occasional bouts of conscience’ get the better of him in the ‘constant and losing battle he has with his own best tendencies.’

A skilled swordsman, Jack Sparrow is a pacifist who uses wit rather than force to outsmart adversaries. This refusal to engage confounds his opponents and Sparrow is able to persuade them to abandon their murderous plans, suggesting, “Why fight when you can negotiate?”³

However, at the swash buckling end of the day, when the defeated face a long walk off a short plank, and are left wondering how the ‘worst pirate ever’ has won such a triumph, the eccentric, rock star buccaneer is quick to remind us, “I’m Captain Jack Sparrow. And honestly, no other explanation is required. Savvy?”⁴

WARY, WARY, QUITE CONTARY: A SURVEY WHO’S LOOKING AT WHO AND HOW? An Explanatory Note

Most of us know the nursery rhyme:

*Mary, Mary quite contrary
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all in a row.*

We tend to think of it as a snippet of harmless verse remembered from childhood. In fact these unassuming lines record a disturbing history of cruelty, atrocity, injustice, inquisition, genocide, suffering and torture. In England.

Although there is some dispute around the precise origins and meaning of the rhyme, many layers of the historical

and allegorical imagery can be explained.

Mary Mary quite contrary

Mary refers to Mary Tudor (1516–1558), elder daughter of Henry VIII, also known as *Bloody Mary* who is best remembered for her systematic persecution, torture and execution of English Protestants.

Mary was *quite contrary* because she remained Roman Catholic despite the introduction of sweeping religious reforms that allowed England to act institutionally as a Protestant country.

How does your garden grow?

A taunt directed not only at Mary Tudor's inability to produce an heir but also to the popular belief that her steadfast Catholic allegiances compromised English autonomy and cultivated the interests of Spain.

How does your garden grow? puns on the influence that the Catholic, Lord Chancellor Stephen Gardiner had on Mary Tudor as her chief minister and advisor.

Garden in this instance also refers to the cemetery and the number of graves that, during the reign of the Catholic, Mary, Queen of Scots (1542–1587), kept growing as persecution of English Protestants continued.

With silver bells

Refers to cathedral and sanctus bells rung during the Catholic

mass.

Silver Bells was also a colloquial term for thumbscrews — a device used in torture where the thumbs of the victim were placed between two hard surfaces and then crushed slowly by the gradual tightening of a screw.

and cockle shells

Cockle Shells were another instrument of torture in this instance attached to the genitals of the victim.

Cockle shells also refer to the badges worn by pilgrims on their journeys to the burial places of saints and other such sacred shrines.

Cockle shell refers to being made a ‘cuckhold’ or the insinuation that Mary Tudor’s husband Phillip II of Spain was unfaithful.

And pretty maids all in a row

Pretty maids refers to nuns at prayer and ladies-in-waiting at court. It is thought that *pretty maids* also refers to the likelihood that Mary Tudor had a number of miscarriages or still born children and to the execution on 12 February 1554 of her Protestant rival the *pretty maid* Lady Jane Grey.

Pretty maid also refers to a prototype of the guillotine, a device known as the ‘maiden’ that chopped the heads off victims. *Pretty maid* is likely to refer to another instrument of torture popular at the time known as the *Virgin of Nuremberg* also called the *Iron Maiden* where the individual being tortured was placed in an upright iron sarcophagus. This cage was then

sealed by two doors studded with strategically placed spikes impaling the body of victim in such a manner that the vital organs were protected ensuring the infliction of pain could be prolonged.

Work No.1

A.A.M. Bos

House Sparrow, Passer domesticus (2018)

Epson Premium Lustre print in custom frame

Edition of 3, 1 AP

Male house sparrows have a boldly streaked tawny to chestnut brown back, stubby tail, red legs, sharp black bib with white cheek and distinctive grey cap. House sparrows are closely associated with humans and nest in man-made sites such as ‘holes in walls and roof spaces.’ When pre-fabricated foundations are not available, house sparrows will build a ‘large, untidy nest in a bush.’ House sparrows feed mainly on ‘insects, seeds gathered on bare ground,’ and in built environments, crumbs and ‘food scraps.’ Introduced in 1867 to control plagues of marauding insects eating their way through recently cleared farm and pastureland, less than fifteen years after release into the wild the sparrow population had grown to such an extent that the ‘pert, mischievous, and immensely reproductive little bird’ itself became the unwanted pest. In 1882 the Small Birds Nuisance Act authorised local authorities to put aside funds for ‘the destruction of Sparrows or *other birds* injurious to crops.’⁵

Sparrow Clubs were organised and members paid a bounty on each sparrow head, egg, or fledgling bagged. By 1889 it was clear the containment of sparrows initiative had not been as successful as hoped and new legislation was introduced, empowering local authorities with the ability to use poisoned grain in their small bird eradication programmes.

HONGERWINTER

Sparrows hip and hop, off and on, the corrugated iron fence outside the kitchen window. They fascinate me. Every morning over the toast crumbs, I watch them from the breakfast table. The humble sparrow is mostly taken for granted, seen only as a small, nondescript, brown bird that lives near houses, nests in gutters and craps on the washing. But if you look carefully, sparrows, like every creature on the planet, have discovered their own unique way of being in the world.

I think people are a lot like sparrows. We live in communities and work together. Like sparrows we understand strength in numbers and reproduce quickly, populating wherever we go. Sparrows exist with us and beside us and make their homes where we make ours, finding shelter under the eaves, and food left out on the lawn or barbeque table. Garrulous and opportunist, the unfussy but street-smart sparrow is a strategic inhabitant of the suburban garden. Tolerated by the ultra territorial Tūi, sparrow comes and goes as it pleases, alert and unafraid but always wary of a bigger, more bossy, beak.

I admire the sparrow. Transported from the other side of the world and relocated to the colonies as insect eating

protectors of agricultural economies, sparrows like so many imported as migrant workers, have arrived and adapted only to be exploited and then discarded. Having outstayed their welcome, the ever-optimistic sparrow is left to fend for itself but the bright-eyed bird has got the measure of us, and can anticipate our behaviours, never missing the chance for a quick feed or to snatch some discarded fluff to build a nest and raise more sparrows...

No one really makes a point of noticing the sparrow. My mother did. She lived in a war zone and endured famine. In September 1944, after the intense Allied bombing of the Netherlands that preceeded the failed British-led attack on Nijmegen, ironically named, 'Operation Market Garden,' when the long held Dutch hope of 'liberation by Christmas' had been completely crushed, my mother, aged 14 years, and two boys from her street were out in the countryside foraging and searching for food. Like many, the children were desperate and starving. My mother said that while roaming a landscape totally ravaged and destroyed by conflict what she remembered about this terrible time was that everywhere they went, everything had gone. Nothing was left. No trees, no birds, no rats, no cats, nothing, not even sparrows. All gone. Annihilated. Blown to bits or eaten.

For my mother a sparrow sitting on a fence was a sign of peace and plenty.

May this symbol speak also to you.

—A.A.M. Bos

In Memoriam

Hendrica Bos Marcus (25 September, 1930 – 8 July, 2005)

Work No.2

Yllwbro

Ngā Waiata Mai Rānō o Ingarangi: Songs of Old England (2018)

Plywood, zinalume, fixings, pine dowel, stainless steel wire,
wallpaper, Le Corbusier Polychromie acrylic, mother-of-pearl

Sparrow Whare

Joseph Banks (1743–1820), naturalist, botanist and self-funded patron of the *Endeavour* expedition (1768–1771), Cook's first voyage to New Zealand, was very taken with the beautiful voices of our native birds. In his journal, Banks notes there are 'several' that 'sing much more melodiously than any I have heard.' He describes being 'awakened' on board ship by a great, massed chorus of birdsong that rose up out of the bush, 'from whence we are distant not a quarter of a mile.' The birds, Banks observes, 'seemed to strain their throats with emulation,' making the clearest and sweetest 'wild music' possible, 'almost imitating small bells, but with the most . . . silver sound imaginable.'⁶

January, 1770, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768–1771*

[Volume One]

Work No.3

Yllwbro

The Temptation of St. Anthony (2018)

Bamboo garden stakes, cloth binding, nails

Maquette for proposed bronze

Backyard bean frame and tomato tripod. References *The Temptation of St. Anthony* (1946) a painting by Salvador Dalí in which a gravity defying caravan of elephants with long, spindly, stick-like legs, carrying the weight of the world on their backs, strike out across a surreal, high altitude desert.

Work No.4

Yllwbro

Tioreore: Large Magellanic Cloud (2018)

Bottle tops, mother-of-pearl

The Pilgrim's Mantle. Guiding *Compostela* or 'field of stars.' *Tioreore*, the Large Magellanic Cloud is a satellite galaxy of the Milky Way containing vast clouds of gas that are slowly collapsing to form brand new stars.

References an ordinary, everyday corrugated iron fence and the obstacles that confront those about to set out on faith journeys of their own. Alludes also to the make-and-do Depression Years technique of substituting expensive lead head nails with more accessible three-inch nails modified by a protective capping of recycled bottle tops.

Work No.5

A.A.M. Bos

Te Ara ki Rangihoua: The Way to Rangihoua (2018)

Scallop shell, twine, moko adhesive

Pilgrim's accessories derived from the traditional scallop shell drinking vessels and identity tags carried by those travelling the *Camino de Santiago* — *The Way of Saint James* — a network of walking tracks in northwestern Spain, that since medieval times have led to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and the shrine of St James the Apostle. Many walk the *Camino de Santiago* as a form of retreat and regard the act of journeying as a path toward spiritual insight and growth.

References *Hīkoi Rangihoua*, the pilgrimage way initiative being developed by Te Hāhi Mihinare — the Anglican Church in New Zealand that returns to the site of the mission station established at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands where the Reverend Samuel Marsden celebrated the first Anglican service on Christmas Day, 1814. On this occasion the reading introducing Māori to the 'Tidings of Great Joy' was taken from the Gospel of Luke 2:8-10.

Alludes also to the story of Tarore, the 12 year old daughter of Ngāti Hauā chief Ngakuku who attended the Mission School in Matamata and learned to read in te reo. At that time one of the few books available in Māori language was a recently published translation of the Gospel of Luke. Tarore read her father's copy of the new book again and again, and kept this treasure in a purpose-made kete she wore on a chord around her neck.

On 19 October 1836, while camping at the foot of the Wairere Falls in the Kaimai Ranges a raiding party from a rival iwi surprised the group of travellers Tarore was among. During the skirmish that followed she received a fatal blow to the head. Tarore was killed and the book stolen.

When the body of Tarore was returned to her people at Waharoa, there was much talk of utu and revenge. However, at her tangi, Ngakuku, the bereaved parent took up a radical position. Rather than advocating violence, he preached against reprisal, saying that there had been too much bloodshed in the land. Ngakuku spoke instead of forgiveness and called on the people to lay down their weapons and embrace the way of peace.

Work No.6

A.A.M. Bos

Wairau Stream (2018)

Brass outdoor tap, grate, enamel

Personal point of departure close to the home of the artist, that connects with the path to Rangihoua.

I am walking along Wairau Road. Beside me the bright blue artificial turf of the playing fields at the Girls' High School never needs to be mowed. Pity the poor worm and the muddy strip of grass now carpeted in plastic that used to be their home. At the traffic lights, I wait for a break in the constant flow of rush hour vehicles. Escaping the choking cloud of exhaust fumes and diesel emissions between phases, I take my chance,

and like ancient explorers of the Pacific, island hop across the clogged intersection safe to the other side. On the pedestrian footbridge beside the concrete processing plant, I look down over the railing, into an open culvert. The view is depressing. Below me, the watercourse is stale and stagnant, the ecosystem dead. I feel terribly sad and am reminded of a poster I collected as a 15 year old that illustrated the devastating environmental impact the growth of cities has had on the natural world. The poster showed how intensification and urban development did irreparable damage to our inland waterways and pictured a healthy, life-giving stream slowly being killed, confined to a drain and reduced to nothing more than a piece of functional plumbing.

I have never forgotten this image.

—A.A.M. Bos

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