

Editorial Rhymes

Thoughts on Family Trees by a Forester

The family tree means to me
 nothing but the way to insanity.
 Little old ladies have a predilection
 for pursuing the lives of their forebears
 and woe betide he who dares
 to give them an unflattering description;
their ancestors cannot possibly be tainted
 in fact the whole bloody lot should've been sainted.

In her teem, an endless stream
 hoping to fulfil some inner dream.
 "In our family there's been a conviction
 Great-grandfather, tradition says, wasn't really bad
 transported for stealing a loaf of bread — rather sad".
 All convict descendants seem to have this weird affliction
 And it makes you feel good when you find the creep
 has been sent to Australia for bugging a sheep.

Their ancestors always seem to have been the first
 to be born in some god-forsaken place — but worst
 is their conviction that their damned family's unique
 and you think you're going to go round the bend
 as they earbash you about them for hours on end.
 So I think that it's for all archivists I speak
 when I say that if I had my way all family trees
 would be infected with genealogical Dutch Elm disease.

Stephen Howell

From A Reader

What would drive a man to wish
That many family trees
Should suddenly fall victim
To a brand of Elm disease?

The answer seems to me quite clear,
The poem made me laugh,
It also prompted me to write
These lines to Battye staff.

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The sun is out, the weekend's here
You're rostered for the Battye,
Do people ever stop to think
You might be feeling ratty?

In they troop with kids galore
To see the new surrounds,
The quietness of the working week
Seems distant midst their sounds.

There you are, the desk a trap,
Your patience sorely tried,
Do you know what Grandpa did
Before he up and died?

Why can't I copy this, they whine,
Why can't I see things now?
I'd go and look it up myself
But really don't know how.

Can books be taken out, they ask,
Why don't you open longer?
Aren't you lucky working here?
Oh God, please make me stronger!

When you feel you've had enough,
Look past the current berk,
At the happy little readers
Who appreciate your work.

We may not always say so,
In this we're quite remiss,
But our cherished weekend access
Is something that we'd miss.

With your lot I empathise,
But wouldn't take your place,
Thoughts of Elm disease and worse
Would surely mark my face.

So I thank you muchly, Battye staff
For your patience and your time,
To your sanity and humour
I dedicate this rhyme.

Cathie Clement.