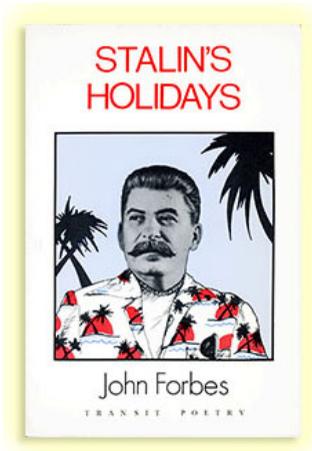


John Tranter:

THE AUSTRALIAN POET JOHN FORBES suffered a heart attack and died suddenly at his home in Melbourne on 23 January 1998. He was forty-seven.

*Jacket 3* is dedicated to the memory of John Forbes, and features five poems by Forbes, several photos, and poems and articles from a dozen contributors.



John Forbes was part of that vigorous generation of young writers whose fresh styles and new ideas began to be noticed in the late 1960s, though he was younger and arrived a little later on the scene than most of them. When I was editing an issue of *Poetry Australia* magazine, I rejected some poems he sent to me – he was still a teenager – in late 1969. But I published his second book, *Stalin's Holidays*, in 1981. His growth as a poet and critical thinker during the 1970s and 1980s was extraordinary. He absorbed masses of

novels, poems, military history, philosophy, and cultural and art theory, and developed a cynical understanding of politics. All this found its way into his subtle and ironic verse.

This feature gathers some pieces that look at his life and at his poetry:

[>>] John Forbes talks to Australian poet John Jenkins in 1980

[>>] Ken Bolton on the poetry and life of John Forbes in 'John Forbes: An Introduction'

[>>] Ken Bolton: poem: 'Coffee & John Forbes'

[>>] Ken Bolton: poem: 'Hi John'

[>>] Ken Bolton: poem: 'People Passing Time'

[>>] Ken Bolton: poem: 'Perugia to John Forbes'

[>>] Ken Bolton: two poems: John Forbes, 'The History of Nostalgia, and Ken Bolton, 'Dazed' (for John Forbes)

[>>] Ken Bolton: poem: 'Luminous Hum'

[>>] John Tranter: poem: 'God on a Bicycle'

*A note on the poems by Ken Bolton:*

Two of these poems, 'Perugia to John Forbes' & 'Dazed', were written & published in Forbes's lifetime: one is formally addressed to him, the other could be considered so. The rest look back & consider John: the sequence is 'Coffee & John Forbes Poem', 'Hi, John,' & 'People Passing Time', all within a year or so of his death ; then 'Luminous Hum' exactly a decade on (as is clear from internal evidence).

'Dazed' & 'Perugia To John Forbes' were published in *'Untimely Meditations' & other poems* (Wakefield Press, 1997).

The trio were published as *Three Poems For John Forbes* (Little Esther books, 2005) and in *At The Flash & At The Baci* (Wakefield Press, 2006); 'Coffee & John Fobes Poem' appeared first in *Heat*; 'Hi, John' appeared first in *Southerly*.

'Luminous Hum' is in *Sly Mongoose* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2011); it appeared first in *Southerly*.

*A note on the poem 'God on a Bicycle' by John Tranter:*

Written in Melbourne in about 1992, the poem was sent to John Forbes. He later fell off his bicycle while carrying a vacuum cleaner, and broke his elbow.