

1991

# Williamstown Beach

Selwyn Pritchard

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## Recommended Citation

Pritchard, Selwyn. "Williamstown Beach." *The Iowa Review* 21.1 (1991): 24-25. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.3939>

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## Four Poems · *Selwyn Pritchard*

### IN THE WOOD-WOOPS

At the red dirt crossroads sheep gasp,  
bailed in shade beneath an oak.

Dust rolls. Gums rattle. Steps rise to  
nothing but glare. A garden grew,

the corner cropped; wrought-iron wilts,  
headstones, sheep-tended, lean all ways.

I turn from this dry narrative  
but plastic flowers splash fresh earth:

a new grave, the stone proud-polished  
as a Sunday car. And room for more.

*Poatina, Tasmania*

### WILLIAMSTOWN BEACH

After night's hot rage,  
benches and bottles smashed, day  
gleams sharp as cut glass.

Earphoned Desert Rats  
advance, toe sand. Scavengers  
grope in bins, flick scraps.

Gulls scream ignorant  
as graffiti. Spent waves zip  
indifferently.

Arnold long ago  
knew God useless as the sea:  
shrewd functionary,

up before the servants to gentle the bourgeois,  
he died chasing after History's tramcar.

### WITHOUT BARBARIANS

*"And now, what will become of us without barbarians?  
They were a kind of solution."  
C. P. Cavafy*

The succubus moon slides  
cocks ejaculate prematurely  
stars wink at the lyric  
freedom of mass dreaming

and the planet's surface pits  
minutely under electronic  
impacts from incessant satellites  
tenderising brains with

dogs' ideals of liberty  
maintenance of order so  
men love their fists women  
caress lovers powerful as

new cars graspable gearsticks  
full of revs glossy with  
glamour romanticism  
is believing there is some