

Homeless

**Who are you? Strange, lost, lonely man,
Living in the park out of a shopping bag.
Sleeping bag, wine cask, dry, old crusty bread,
Under bushes in the playground you have made your bed.**

**Thin legs made thinner, encased in tight, black jeans.
Lonely, but well cared for; then nothing's as it seems.
Round and round in circles, hand behind your back
You mirror the hurdy-gurdy, turning in its track.**

**Shoppers come, shoppers go, riding, walking, jogging,
driving to and fro,
No-one sees you, no-one hears you, no-one wants to know,
How you came into their neighborhood, how you came to be a hobo.**

**Children's laughter, does it cheer you? Or chant, "You don't belong"?
Your life's so lost, so lonely amidst the shopping throng.
Fear does not allow me to reach out for your hand,
Inquire and include you in a world that's locked you out.**

**Tangled mind, lost youth, drugs and liquor ease your pain.
Your demeanor says it's finished. There is nothing more to gain.
We're so quick to make a judgment. So harshly we condemn.
Have we all become so blinded to the plight of troubled men?**

Judi Moylan

It was summer and a hobo had made a temporary home in the local park. He was drinking from a bottle in a brown paper bag and had his crude bedding under the low growing bushes.

He kept turning round and round with his hands behind his back, muttering to himself. There was a hurdy-gurdy in the park and his actions seemed to mirror it. I wanted to engage but felt uncertain and afraid. I thought about taking him some food. I did not take the children back to the park that summer, but the sadness of this plight would never leave me.

The last census in 1911 revealed that there were over 105,000 people classified as homeless in Australia. This figure was up from 89,728 at the time of the previous census in 2006. It is sobering that the growth in the number of homeless is increasing during a time of almost unparalleled economic growth in Australia. Both governments have continued to make savage cuts to welfare.