



Francis Webb: Collected Poems

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"For many of us, readers and poets alike, Frank Webb's verse has been the gold standard by which complex poetic language has been judged...a master of last lines, of last stanzas and final phrases." - Les Murray ***
Francis Webb (1925-1973) grew up in North Sydney with his paternal grandparents, who encouraged his love of music, books, and the sea. In 1942, during his final year of secondary school, his writing first appeared in the Bulletin, which led to friendships with Douglas Stewart, Nan McDonald, Rosemary Dobson, and Norman Lindsay, who illustrated his debut collection A Drum for Ben Boyd. In 1943, Webb joined the Air Force, completing his training as a Wireless Air Gunner in Canada in late 1944. After a sea voyage from Canada to England in 1949, he suffered the first of a series of breakdowns which increasingly restricted his life, but not his prodigious poetic gifts. Despite being regarded as one of Australia's greatest poets, Francis Webb has been out of print for 20 years. Webb's final changes to several poems in 1969 were ignored by then editor Douglas Stewart, so this book is the first collected edition that is faithful to the poet's own wishes, which 'rewrites' the Webb legacy and several famous poems. The book is introduced by the Australian poetry researcher Toby Davidson, and it is accompanied by 100 pages of notes utilizing the latest scholarship and commentaries.

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