

Hobart in Heat

This is the wrong place. Unkind, the sun
shows aged stone buildings in a shattering light—
no soft fretting into genteel decline
but scabby, blistered, squat with hot tin roofs;
a visual landscape that belongs elsewhere,
with thistles, stale urine, poster bills.
They hunch vacant, sidelong to the view
across the scruffy sun-struck squares.
Warehouse doors are padlocked, windows broke, bricks loose,
and timbers nailed across to hold what's left,
bars to keep the criminal element out.
Heat haze blurs the ridgeline: the vast cove
is flickering water that does not slap,
breaks up all reflection, and has no tang.
Slack mooring lines trawl for weed.
The waterfront, and anything's for sale ...
Bare flagpoles mean abandoned signals,
irregular standards of the not-so-ready-made.
The colonial is here displaced, not displayed.

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