

At an Adelaide book launching

*The grand refurbished staircase spirals slow,
Deep carpet muffles each ambitious tread;
Rich timber, rich brass fittings catch the glow
Of that sweet light diffused from overhead.*

*Advanced upon the rise, coiffured and tanned,
Nonchalant against the balustrade,
The famous poet languid flaps his hand
And wafts aloft a sprightly rodomontade.*

*We're full of envy, admiration too,
We acolytes who throng the entrance hall,
Where brazen urns reflect on who is who
And ancient charts project from every wall;*

*When soft - surreal with virtual coincides!
As from the Fellows' Gallery higher up
A portly daughter of Parnassus glides
In plaid and twinset, bearing Hebe's cup*

*Or something like - a heavy hemisphere
Or nardoo stone, an Island anchor weight,
A granite wheel unbalanced ... Weird draws near,
Portentous, enigmatic as blind fate!*

*The poet hesitates; the press gone speechless, parts.
The stately figure sweeps across the floor
Beneath the sign, "The Institute of Arts"
Etched back to front in glass above the door,*

Adrian Mitchell: At an Adelaide book launching

*And out into the world of common clay.
Amazed, his flights of fancy miss their mark;
Transfixed, it seems there's nothing he can say,
His fizzing wit gone whistling in the dark.*

*What did it mean? What might she signify?
Her arcane meaning endlessly deferred -
The first cast stone, well-aimed, wants no reply ...
The art of sinking waits upon a word.*

Adrian Mitchell