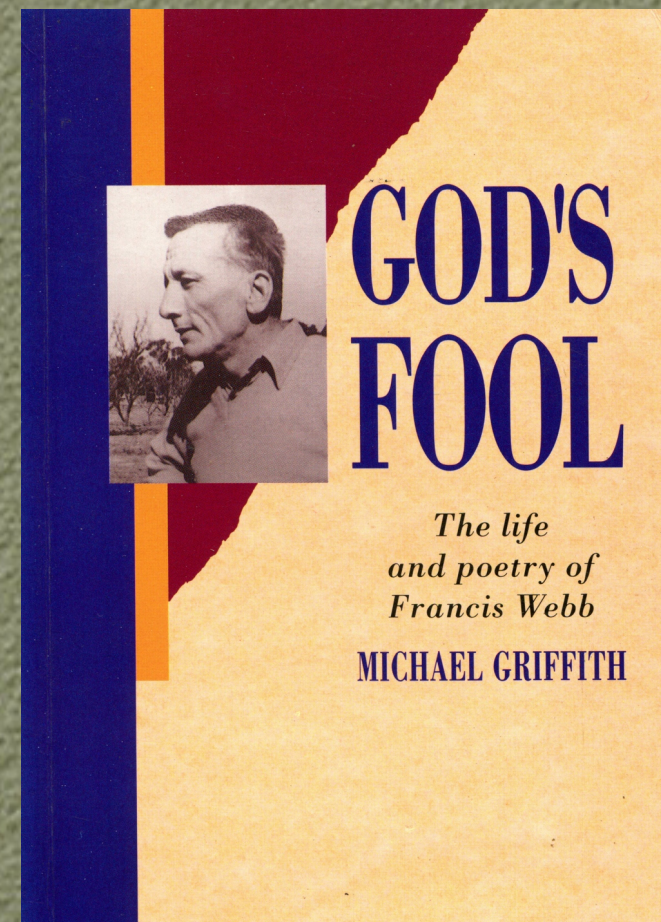


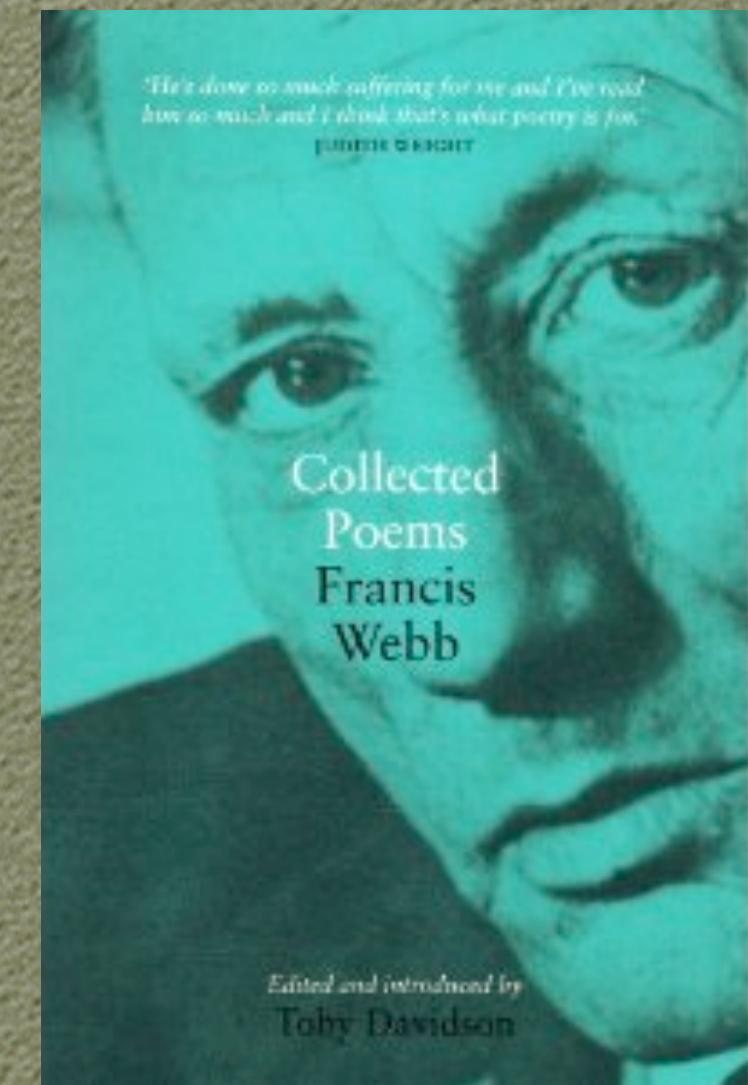
FRANCIS WEBB

“... THE MOST UNJUSTLY NEGLECTED POET OF THIS CENTURY.”

HERBERT READ (1967)



Francis and his childhood pet
George, both in their mid twenties
after the poet's return from England
in 1950



POETRY: A MEANS TOWARDS WHOLENESS IN THE FACE OF PERSONAL DISINTEGRATION



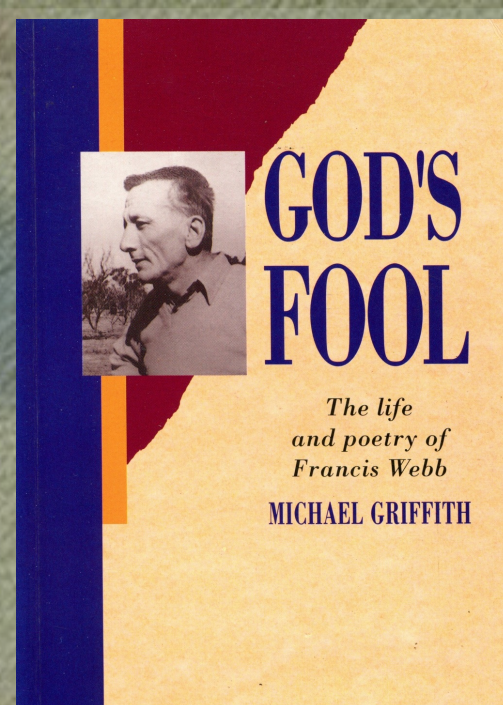
“He’s done so much suffering for me and I’ve read him so much and I think that’s what poetry is for”

Judith Wright on Webb



- “... I have been doing my uttermost to be truthful and to get my alternatives and contradictions down to the last bedrock...”

- Webb’s letter to Norman Lindsay (1948)



FRANCIS WEBB



“End of the Picnic”



When that humble-headed elder, the sea, gave his wide

Strenuous arms to a blasphemy, hauling the girth

And the sail and the black yard

Of unknown Endeavour towards this holy beach,

Heaven would be watching. And the two men. And the earth,

Immaculate, illuminant, out of reach.

It must break - on sacred water this swindle of a wave.

Thick canvas flogged the sticks. Hell lay hove-to.

Heaven did not move.

Two men stood safe: even when the prying, peering

Longboat, the devil's totem, cast off and grew,

No god shifted an inch to take a bearing.

It was Heaven-and-earth's jolting out of them shook the men.

It was uninitiate scurf and bone that fled.

Cook's column holds here.

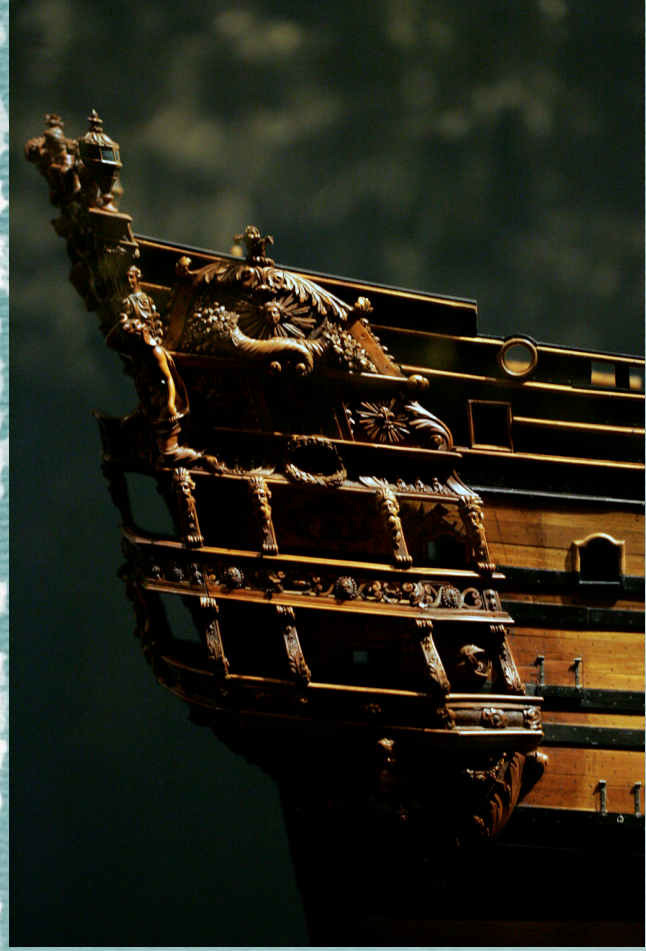
Our ferry is homesick, whistling again and again;

But still I see how the myth of a daylight bled

Standing in ribbons, over our heads, for an hour. (1953)

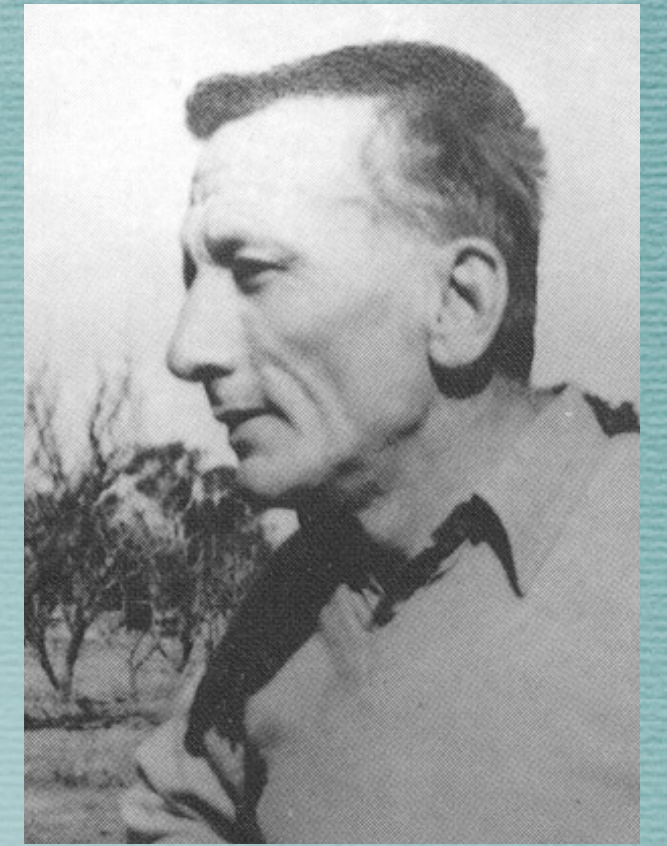
***How does Webb's language choices bring the deeper symbolism of this moment in history into focus?**





FRANCIS WEBB

“Galston”



*“.... intensity of
experience forced
to remake the English
Language...”
Sir Herbert Read*

“Black Cockatoos are somewhere under the sun....”

“ ‘Look at the stars!’ Not a breeze.....”



Five Days Old





Christmas is in the air.
You are given into my hands
Out of quietest, loneliest lands.
My trembling is all my prayer.
To blown straw was given
All the fullness of Heaven.

The tiny, not the immense,
Will teach our groping eyes.
So the absorbed skies
Bleed stars of innocence.
So cloud-voice in war and trouble
Is at last Christ in the stable.

Now wonderingly engrossed
In your fearless delicacies,
I am launched upon sacred seas,
Humbly and utterly lost
In the mystery of creation,
Bells, bells of ocean.



Too pure for my tongue to praise,
That sober, exquisite yawn
Or the gradual, generous dawn
At an eyelid, maker of days:
To shrive my thoughts for perfection
I must breathe old tempests of action

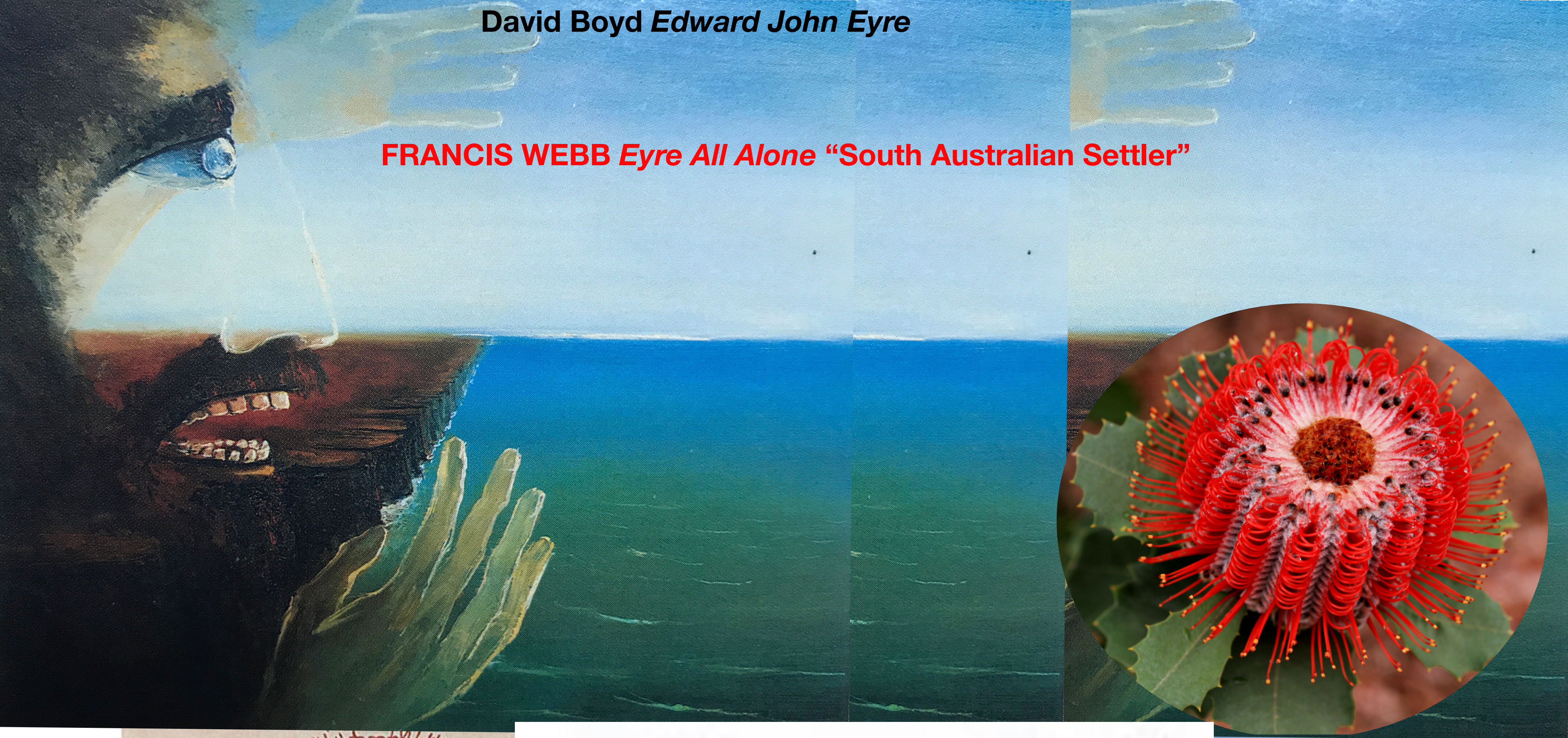
For the snowflake and face of love,
Windfall and word of truth,
Honour close to death.
O eternal truthfulness, Dove,
Tell me what I hold-
Myrrh? Frankincense? Gold?

If this is man, then the danger
And fear are as lights of the inn,
Faint and remote as sin
Out here by the manger.

In the sleeping, weeping weather
We shall all kneel down together.

David Boyd *Edward John Eyre*

FRANCIS WEBB *Eyre All Alone* "South Australian Settler"

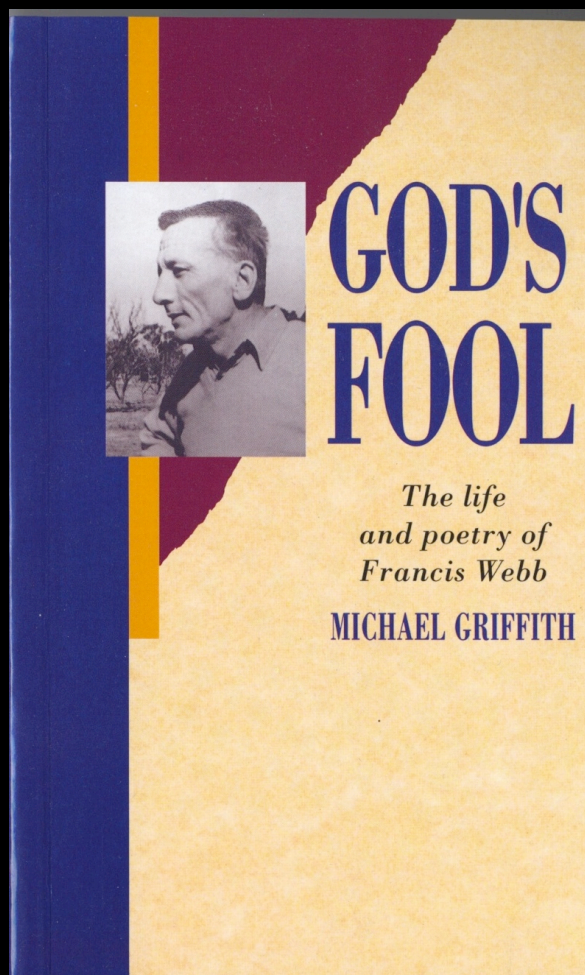


Ferdinand Bauer 1813 Banksia Coccinea





Francis Webb *Poems from Psych.Centre*

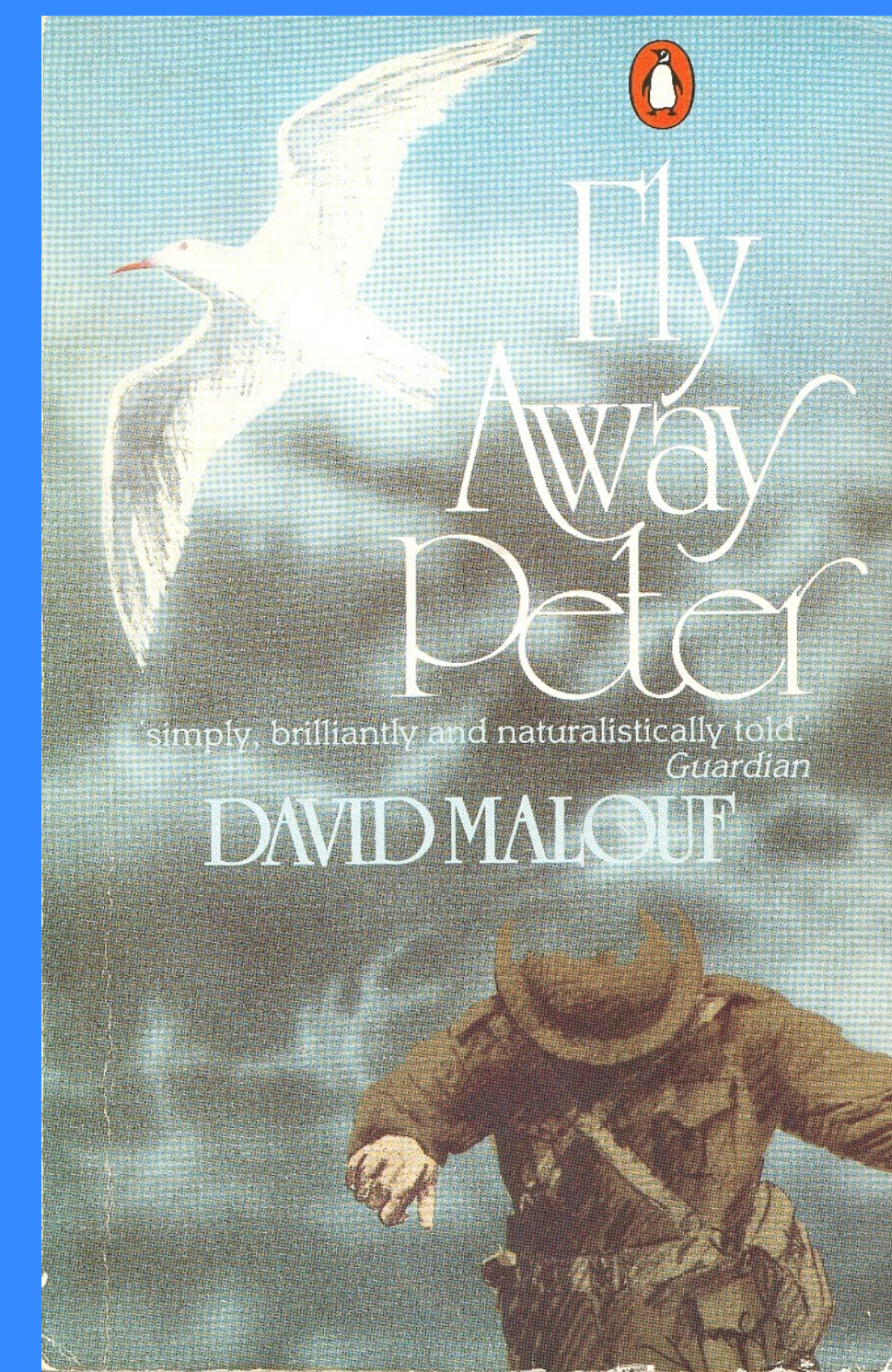


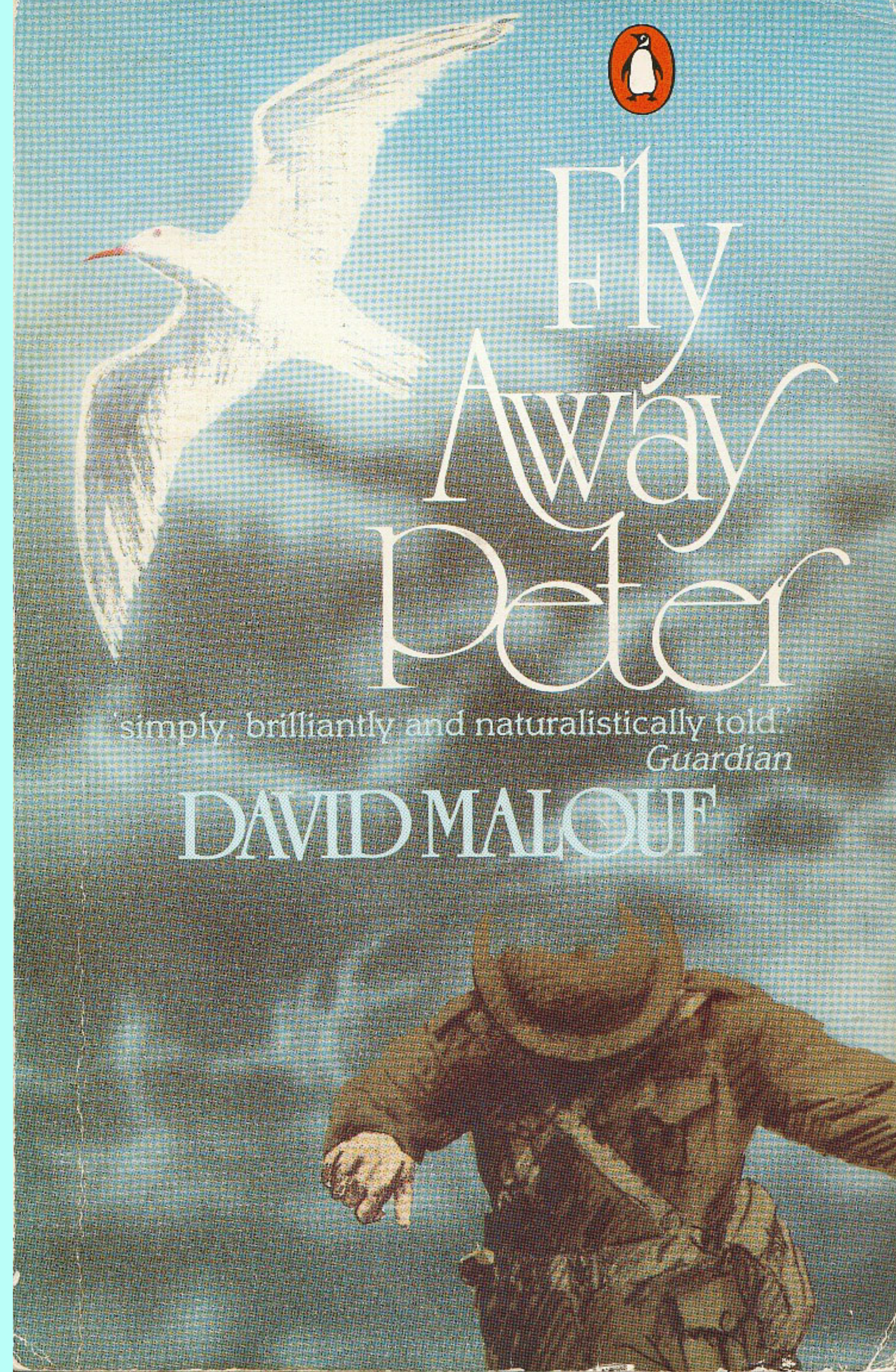
WARD TWO

• “Pneumo- Encephalograph” / “ Harry” /

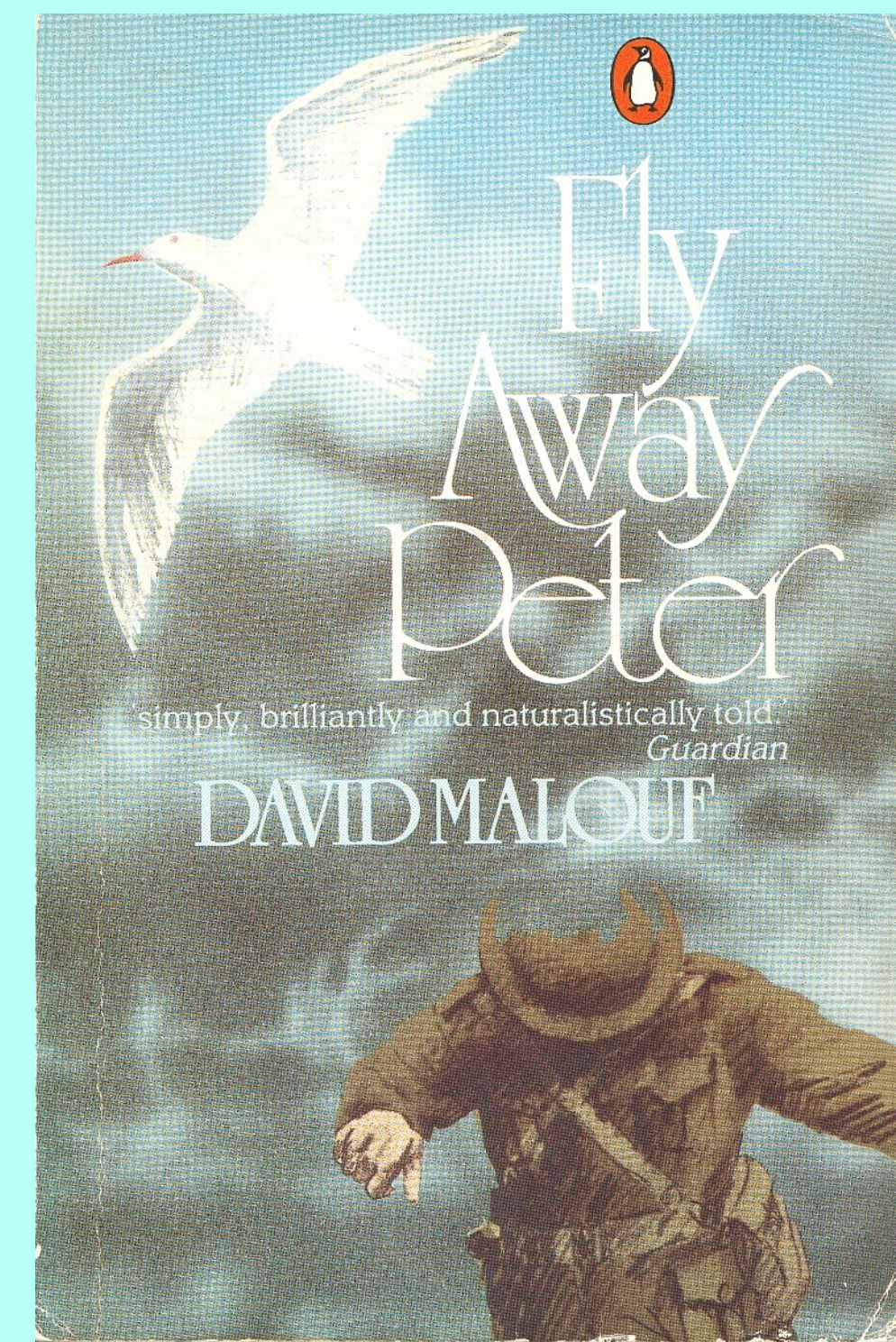


*O pain's amalgam with gold let some man sing
While, pale and fluent and rare
As the holy spirit, travels the bubble of air.*





David Malouf
Fly Away Peter

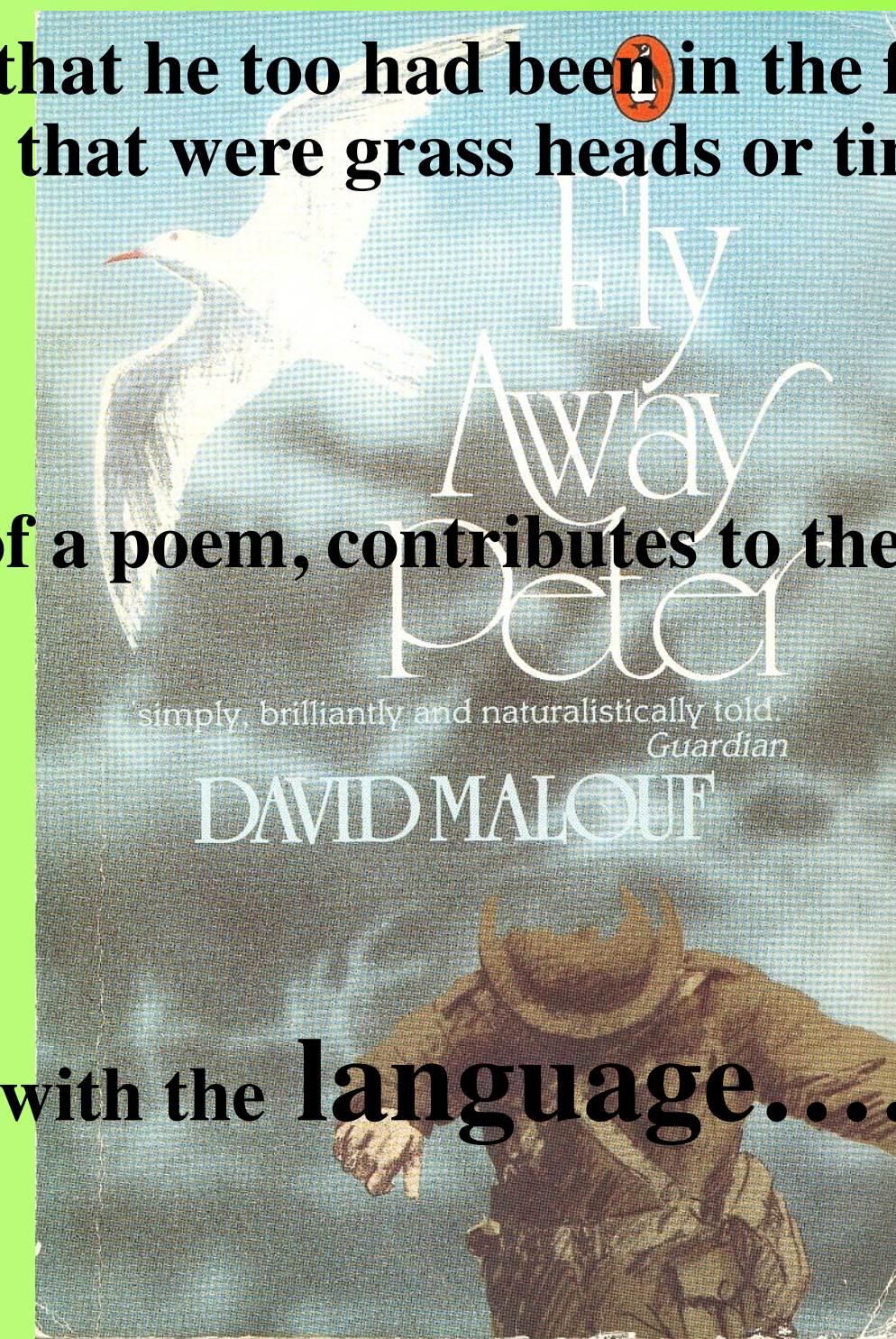


A POETIC NOVEL



Poetic Resonance

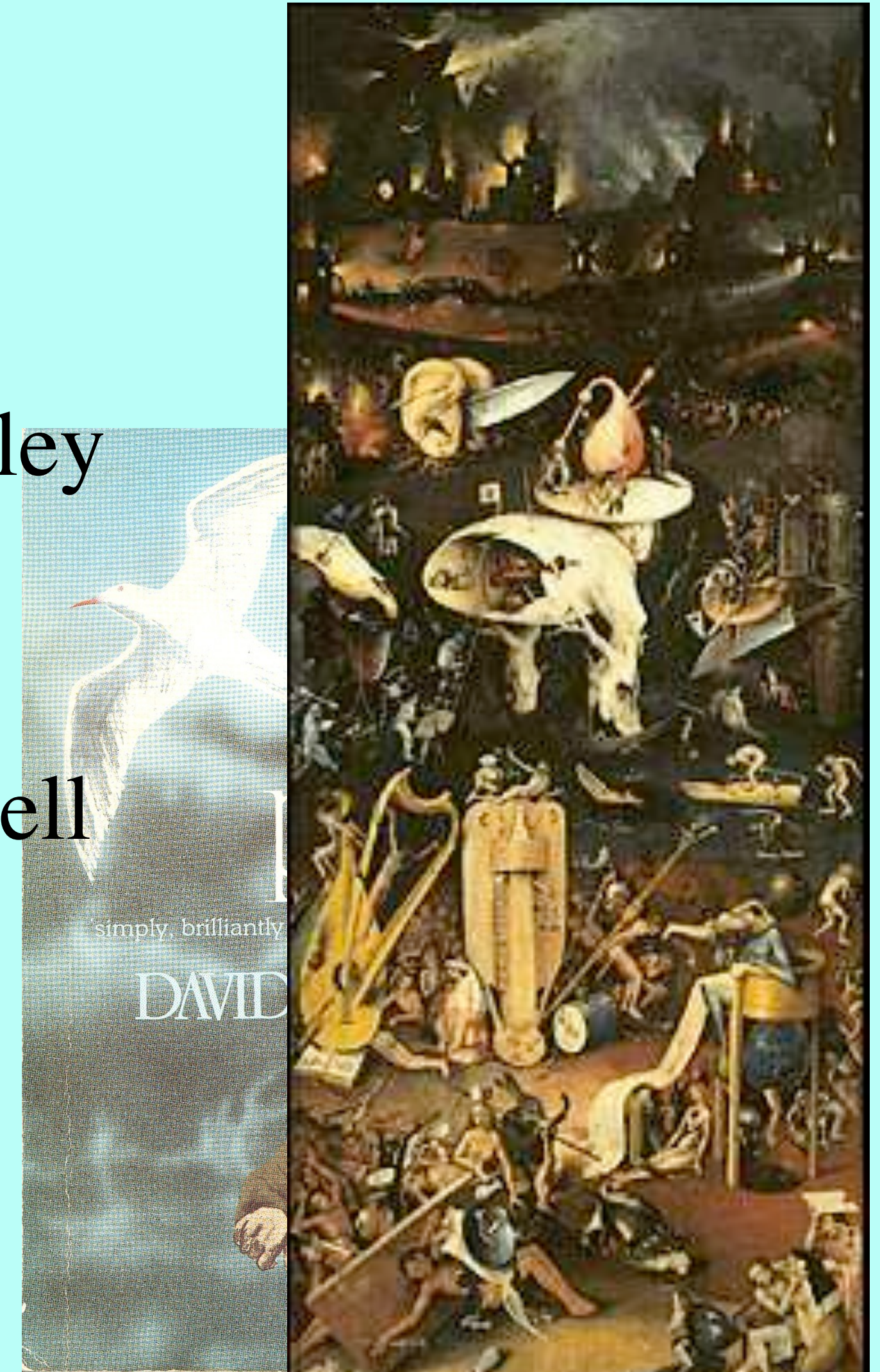
- p.28-29/27 “He was there but invisible; only he and Miss Harcourt might ever know that he too had been in the frame, hidden among those soft rods of light that were grass-stems and the softer sunbursts that were grass heads or tiny flowers.”
- p.83/ 81 Here the form of the sentence, its structure or shape, just like the structure of a poem, contributes to the intensity and purpose of what is being said.
- p.137/129, a paragraph which is only four words long, “A clear October day.”
- Poetic License- a poet or writer has earned the license to do what she or he wants to with the **language....**





A SYMBOLIC NOVEL: EDEN & HELL/ JERUSALEM & BABYLON

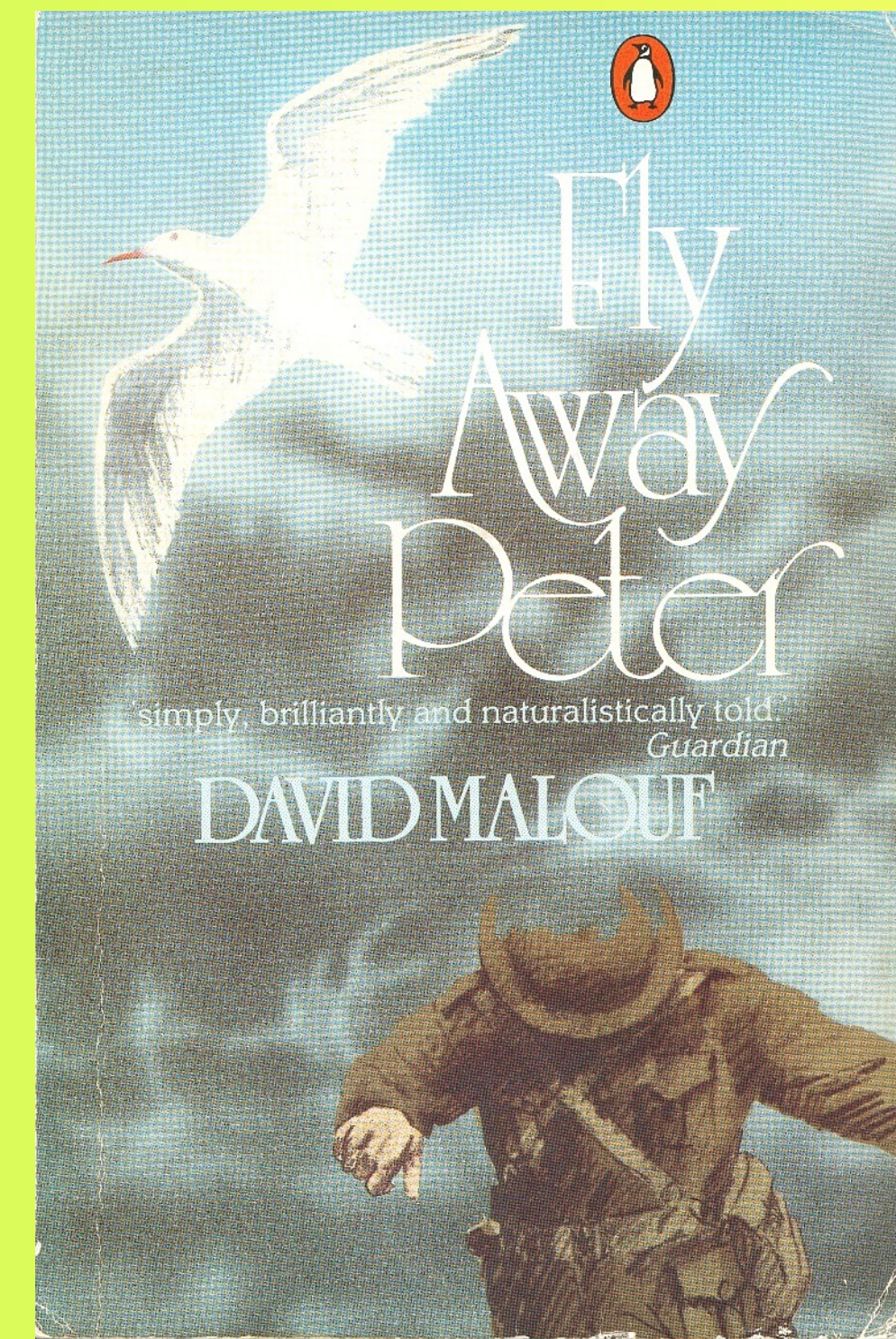
- Australia before the first world war - in its natural landscape and through its characters, Jim Saddler, Ashley Crowther, and Imogen Harcourt -is represented as an Edenic place.
- In Chapters 9 through to 17, we are taken to hell, the hell that was Europe during the 1st World War .
- Images of light and dark: p.1-3/1-3, p.59/58, p.28/ 26.
- “The light and then the dark”





ASHLEY CROWTHER

- The contrast between Europe, the old world and Australia, the new world, is focussed most sharply in the descriptions of Ashley Crowther, pages 9-13/ 8-12



But for Ashley... he did not impose that other, greener one upon it; it was itself.... He liked... its ragged edges, its sprawl, the sense it gave of being unfinished.... For all his cultivation he liked what was unmade here...

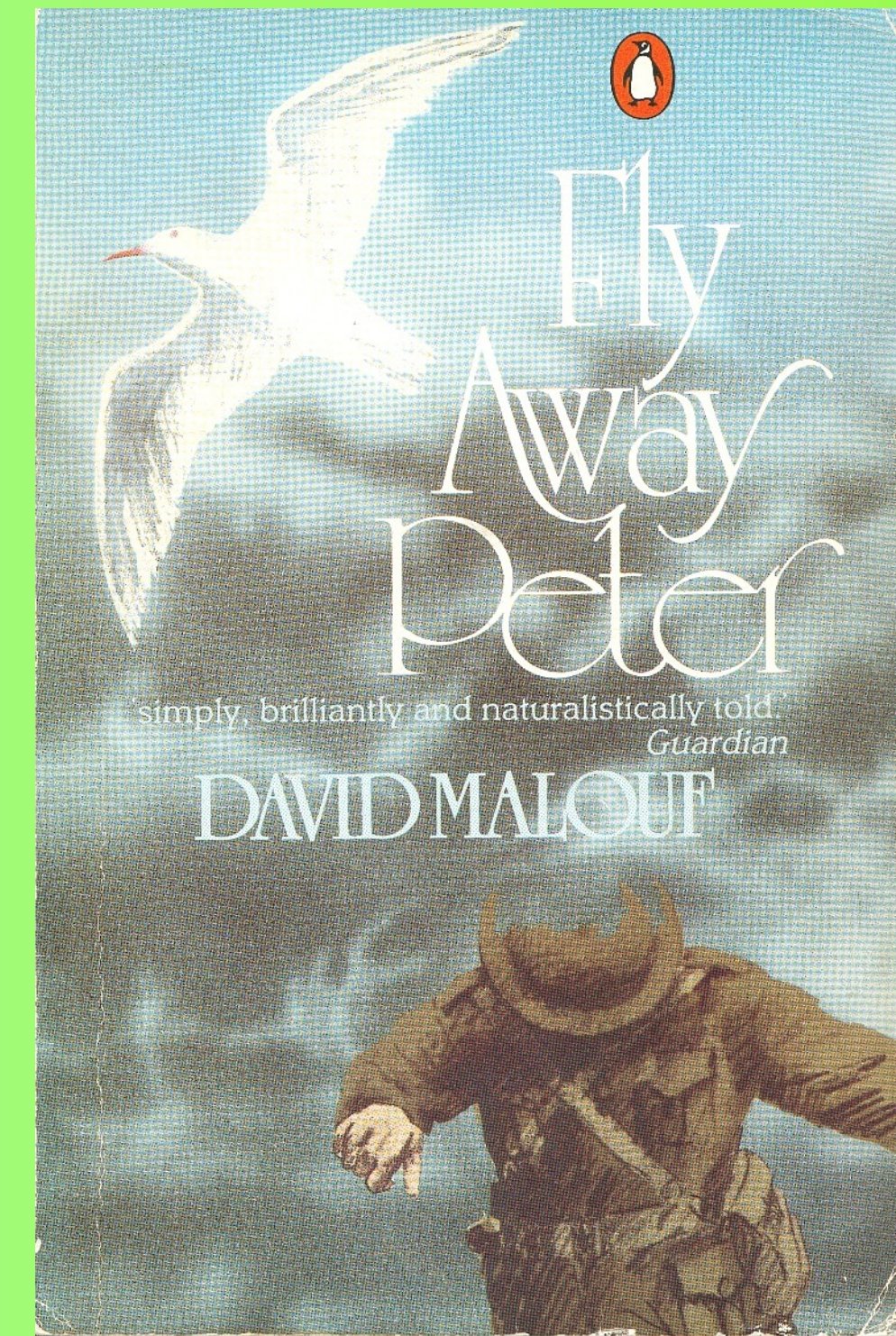
p.12/11

Fred Williams, Upwey Landscape, 1965



JIM SADDLER

- Jim Saddler and then Imogen Harcourt are shown by Malouf to have the sensitivity to tap into the extraordinary quality of the Australian landscape, especially through their passionate interest in birds.

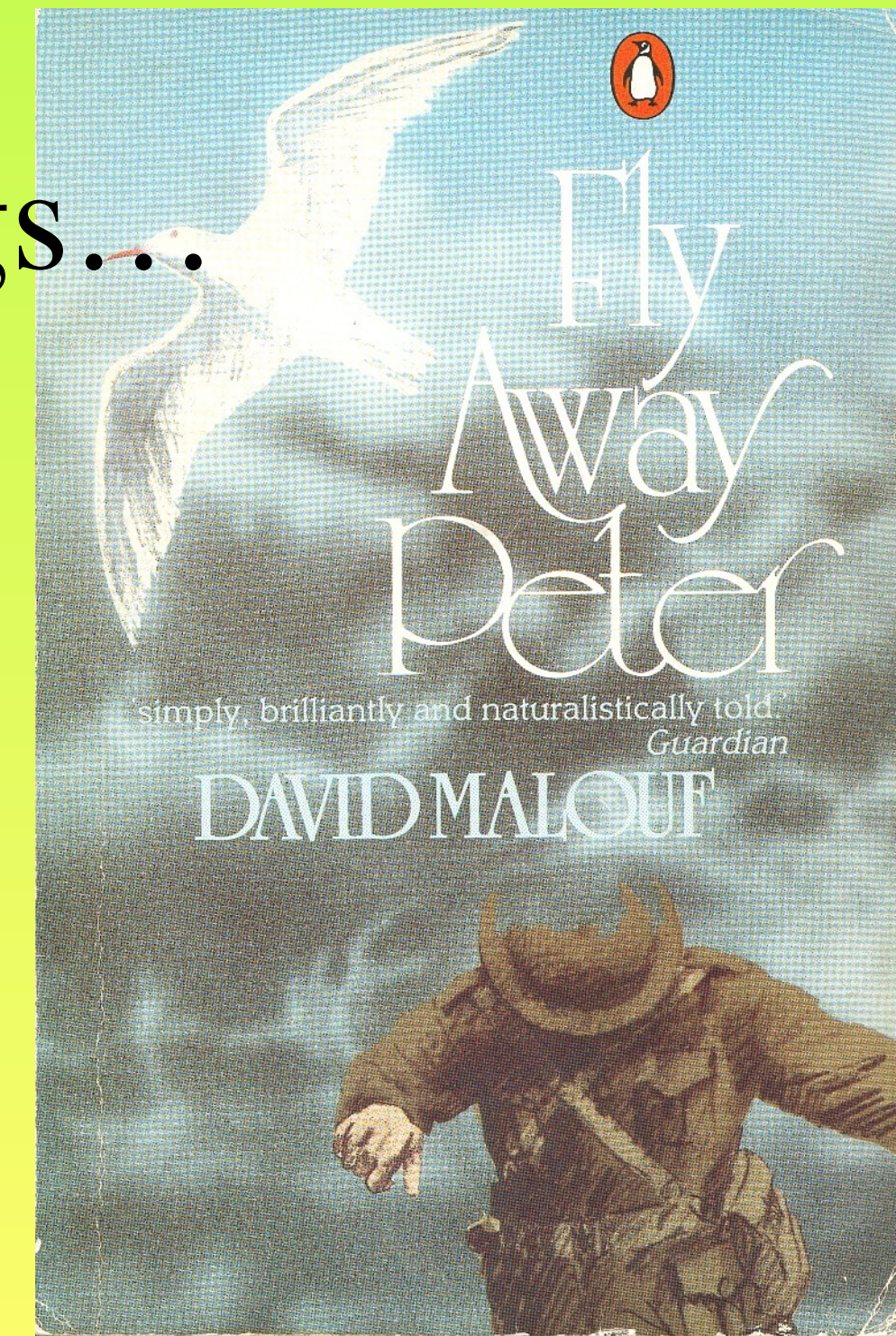


JIM SADDLER

continued



- p.15-16/14-15 symbolic description...
- p.2-3/ 2-3 his extraordinary aliveness to things...
sense of Wonder, Passion, Excitement....
- p. 16/15, “the fire of an individual passion”.
- See also 28-29/26-27, 45-46/44-45, 48-50/47-49

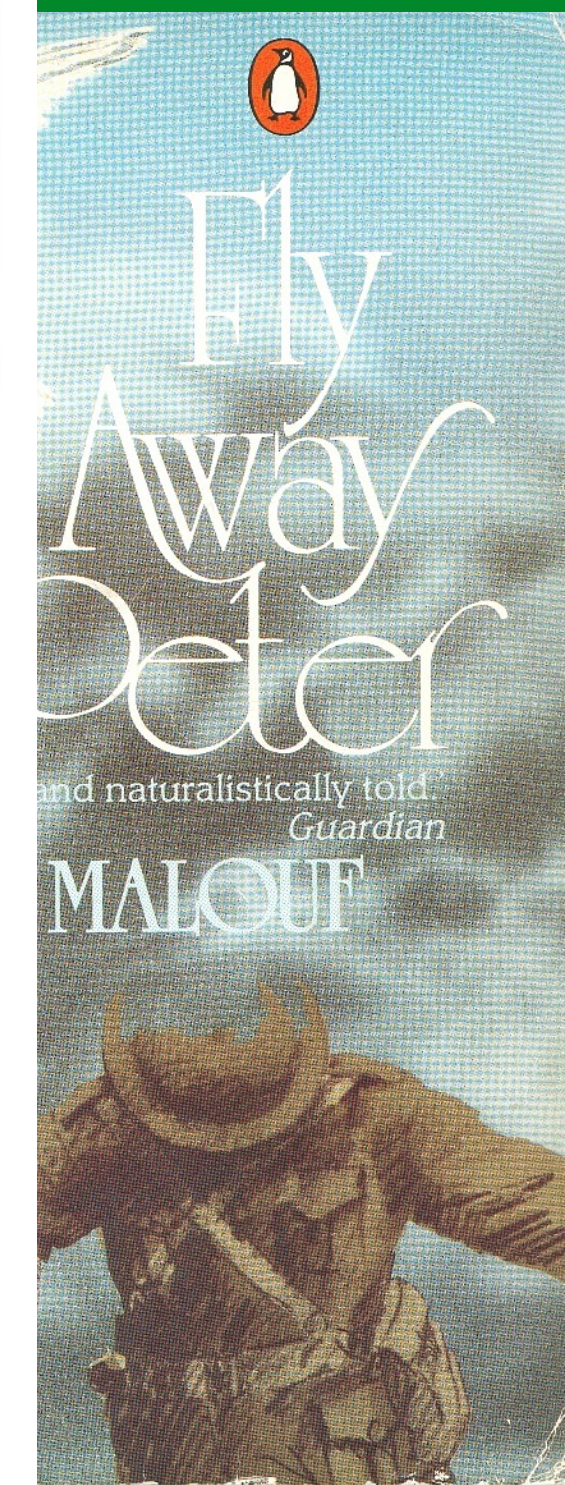


- p. 17-19/16-18
Through Jim's eyes, Malouf shows the outer aspect of the landscape, but also reveals the inner reality of it at the same time.

SANCTUARY

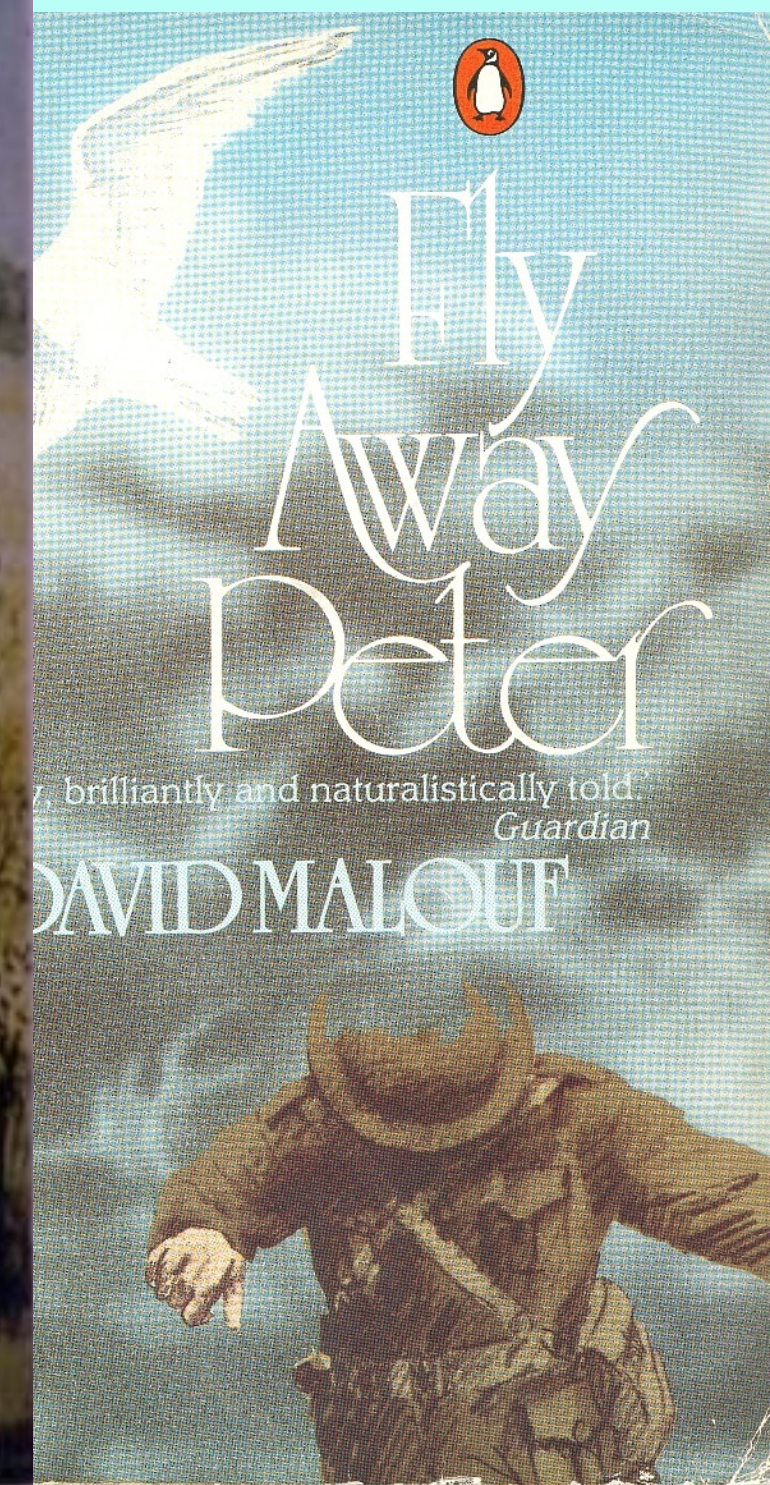


Symbolically since the beginning of time, a circle has been a symbol for perfection, for completion, for wholeness...



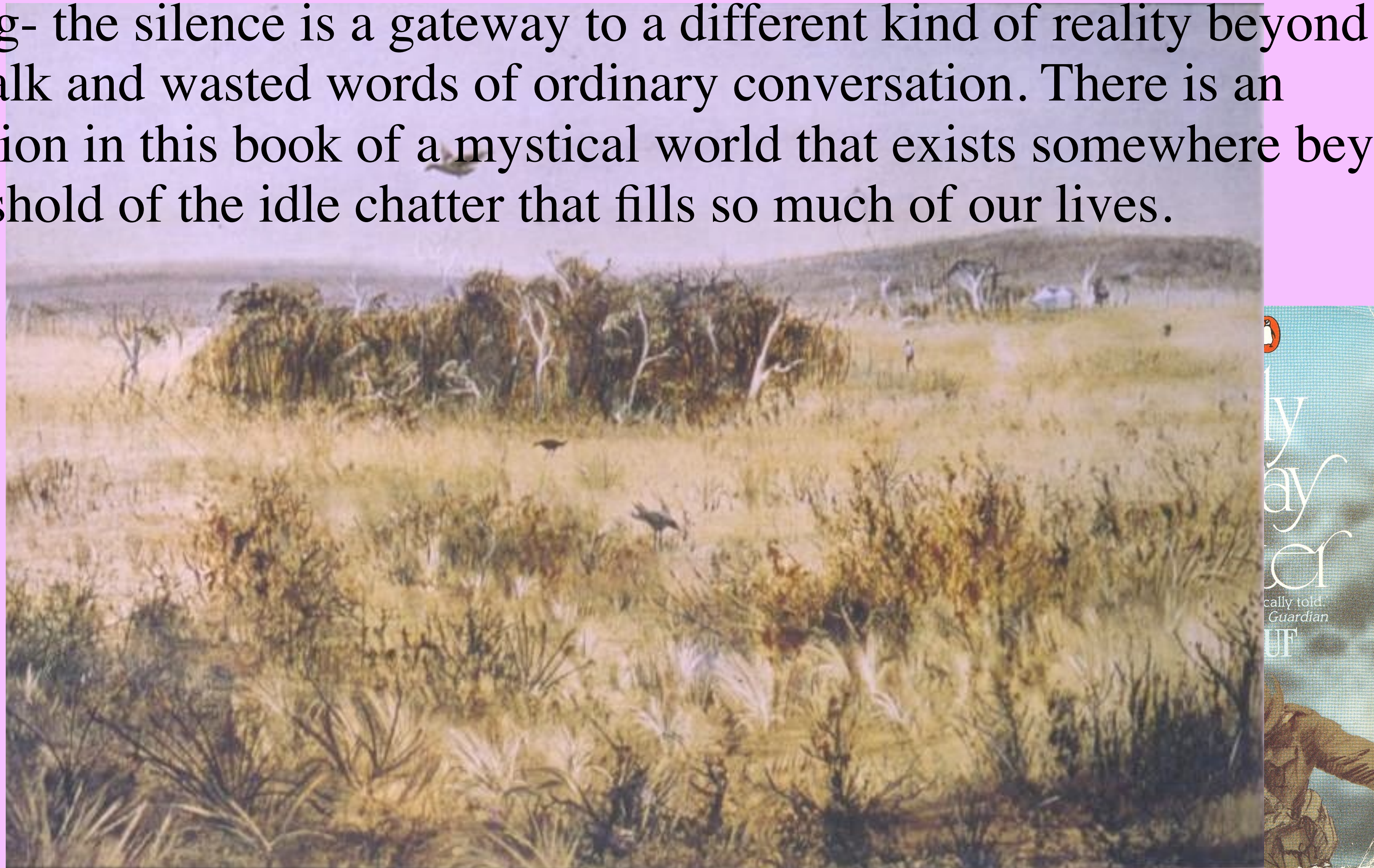
SANCTUARY

- So the emphasis in the book on this place as a sanctuary makes it a book that is deep reflection on ecological issues relevant for our times... it presents a powerful appreciation of the value of the primitive and unspoilt landscape of Australia as a source for regeneration and renewal for the world.



Silence

- Chapter 4 ends with a reference to “their double silence” It is a novel built around an exploration of the meaning and significance of silence and watching- the silence is a gateway to a different kind of reality beyond all the casual talk and wasted words of ordinary conversation. There is an exploration in this book of a mystical world that exists somewhere beyond the threshold of the idle chatter that fills so much of our lives.



War

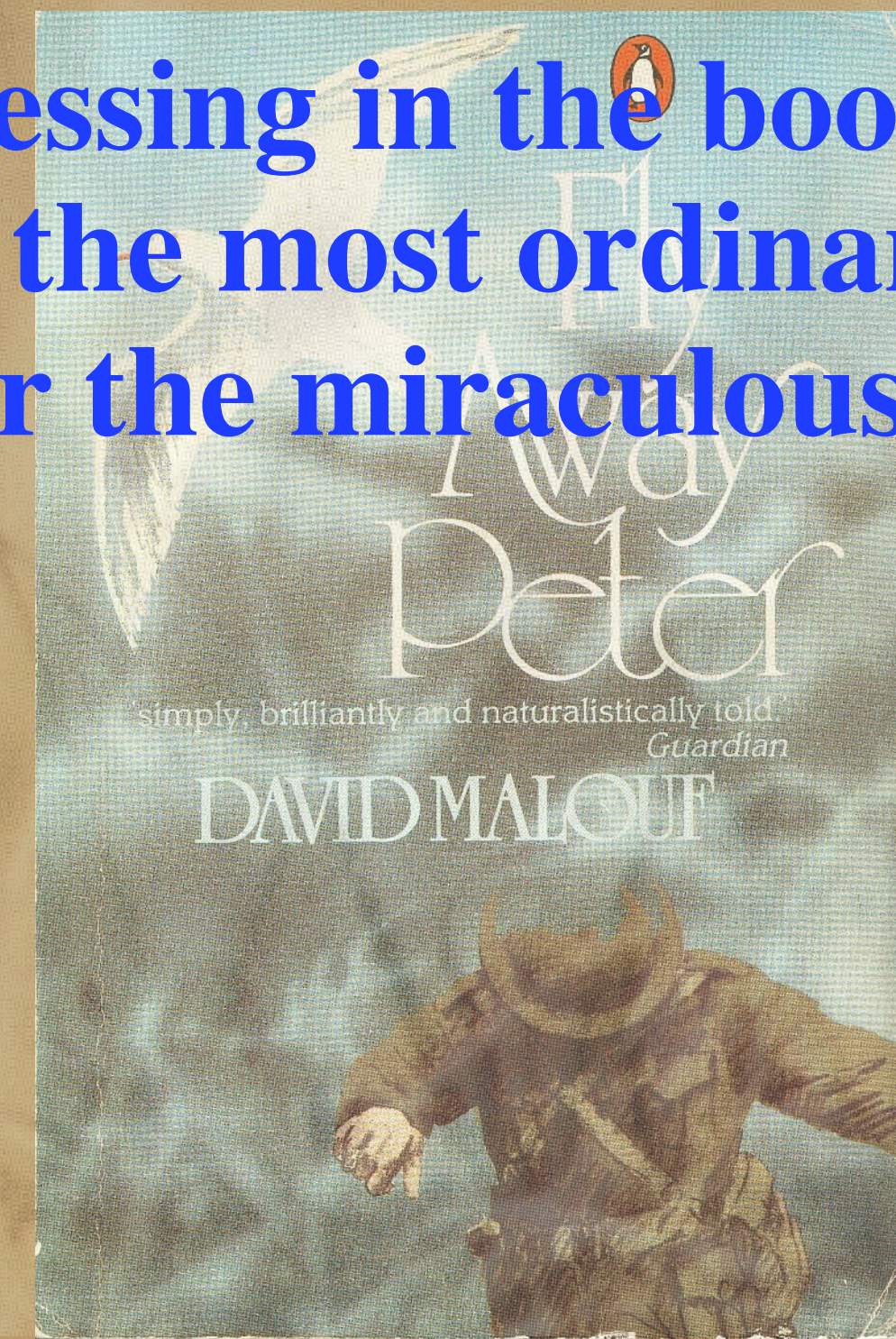
- Chapter 5, p.37/p.36



“The most ordinary thing in the world”

• (Last page of Chapter 7)

- and yet the most extraordinary... this might in some way be a central theme in this book: how the extraordinary can somehow be found in the most ordinary- all hinges on the state of mind of the beholders- the incognito of revelation.... (Last page of Chapter 7)
- This episode is a metaphor for what Malouf is expressing in the book as a whole- namely that with intensity, with attention, the most ordinary events can become extraordinary- the site in fact for the miraculous.



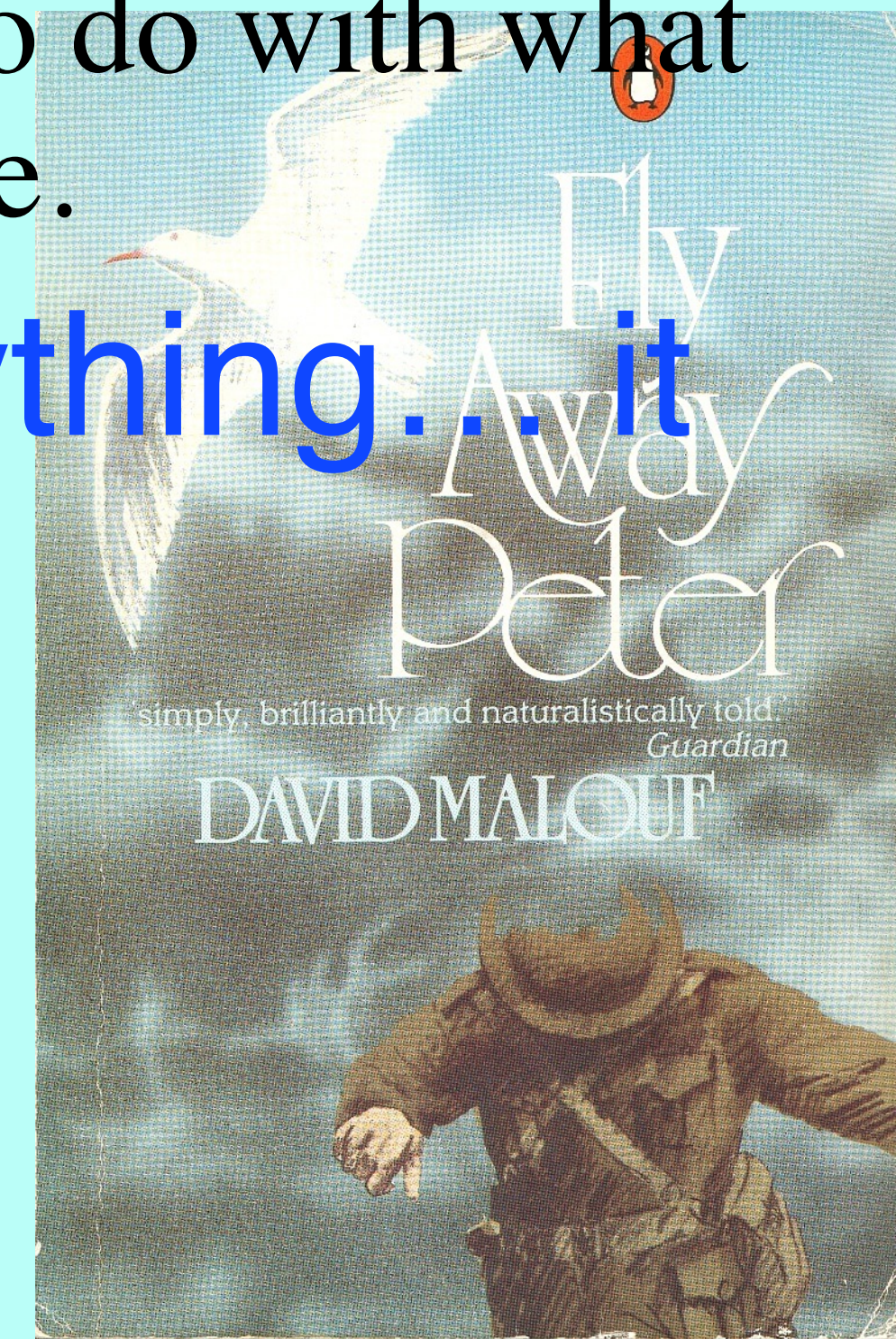
War

- Chapter 8 & 9



Conclusion: Chapter 18

- Eden, Hell, Redemption
- Imogen p.138/130: “What am I doing here?”
- P. 139-140/131-132
- What she is finding in her intense meditation, almost beyond ordinary language, is that she becomes convinced about what is of true and enduring value in life. It has nothing to do with what the world normally credits with value.
- “common and real... not for anything... it simply was.”



An
extraordinary
new event...
p.141(133)

*Judith Wright's "The Surfer":
He thrust his joy against the weight of the sea (593)*

