

My origins, as far as they can be significant in one generation, find place in this vast Australian State, "The Western Third", - a harsh, dry, strangely beautiful piece of earth that has been home to me and to the many others who form a whole generation gifted to this South Land by migrant families.

My parents came from colder lands, reaching out from frustration to the hope of freedom and opportunity offered to those who were prepared to strive.

Still it was that I had to trace my way back to those Northern beginnings before a long-smouldering spark in me could be kindled. Perhaps getting away from the enveloping rat race that closes around the compulsive activist, combined with the awareness of one's roots reaching into that cold grey soil, saved me from the evil of the dumb spirit which earlier in my life had fed on the twin parasites of timidity and procrastination.

There was precious little poetry in the stark simplicity of my own educational upbringing, except, perhaps in daydreams which are the artistic outpourings of the silent majority, a lack which later made me try to give my own students an awareness of this vital ingredient in the forming of the whole person.

Then came the thankfulness of knowing that the dark spirit had not prevailed when I returned again to my native soil. Its drier texture has since fed me a deep and fertile fuel of continuity.

(Written by Pat after studying and travelling in Ireland and other parts of Europe during 1978 and 1979)