

» JOHN TRANTER



(above)

Lower Manhattan

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
JOHN BYRON.



JOHN TRANTER FAHA has published more than twenty collections of verse, which have won many literary awards. His next book will be **Starlight: 150 Poems** (UQP, 2010). He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Academy in 2005.

Albatross

— after Charles Baudelaire

Sometimes, to amuse themselves, the authorities
bring to heel corporate high-flyers — those
clever executives, men of many devices,
who play exuberantly with Other People's Money
and heap themselves with salaries none could
ever spend in a lifetime of profligacy —
and arraign them in the dock.

Accused of nothing more than clever cheating —
wouldn't we all, given half a chance? —
these kings of the sky falter and mumble.
That brain like a steel trap that could easily recall
a shift in their investments of half a point
months ago, among a welter of obscure trades,
now struggles to remember who said what
about some crucial deal a week ago.
Their mantra — 'nice guys finish last' — which means
'I'm an asshole, and I always win' —
shrinks to 'I'm afraid I can't recall' —
gourmets who could count off every vintage
from the north slope of an obscure vineyard
in the south of France now struggle to recall
a deal involving several billion dollars.

That shark of the market, how daft he seems now,
how frail and elderly, among the silks
who nag and worry at his list of crimes. The poet
resembles this prince of the open skies: When
forced to get a job and earn his keep
the poet's dreams, entangled with his giant ego,
turn him into a blundering buffoon.