

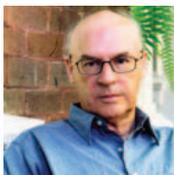
» VIVIAN SMITH



LEFT

Caligo eurilochus at the Schmetterlingshaus, 2006. Photograph by Manfred Werner.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



VIVIAN SMITH FAHA was reader in English at the University of Sydney before retiring. His most recent book is *Here, There and Elsewhere: New Poems*, Giramondo, 2012.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
GABRIELLE SMITH.



IN THE BUTTERFLY HOUSE, VIENNA

I expected silk and colour, old brocade,
exotic palpitations, streaks of gold,
rosenkavaliers flirting in the shade,
but suddenly the day turned cold.

Was this the wrong time, or the wrong year,
a switch forgotten yesterday?
A few were starting to cause fear,
cloth that flutters as it rots away,

and several had an eyepatch on each wing,
drawing to repel admiration,
staring one way, flying off the other

wanting to be thought some other thing.
One tried an occasional gyration—
call it a final fling, brother.

VIVIAN SMITH



» VIVIAN SMITH



LEFT

Frederick Elliott, Sydney Harbour
early lighthouse for guide to
shipping at Bradley's Head.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

In 1924, at a time of personal crisis when some of his Surrealist friends had decided to give up writing, Paul Éluard disappeared from Paris on a round the world voyage which gave him a port of call in Sydney.

ÉLUARD IN SYDNEY

Disparaître c'est réussir

They are such witty bastards, all those guys.
I left them to their tight artistic scene,
flummoxed by the questions they can't answer.
Success means disappearing from their screen.

Tristesse drives me through the slack tropiques,
a friendship shattered and a lover lost.
A first class journey to review my life
and only I know how to count the cost.

Some good will come of this or I'll jump ship
and do a Rimbaud, follow sea and sky.
Sumatra, source of camphor, passes by;
plumbago is completely ceylonese.

They're either red or blue these southern trees.

Poems start to catch me by surprise.