

SCHOOL BUS BALLAD

Max Fatchen

It clattered past the paddocks with petrol-fuming fuss
While cows would gallop, tails aloft,
to race the old school bus.

And down along those country roads it gave a bumpy ride,
A school Mum at the steering wheel and lively kids inside.

It picked up waiting children, their heavy schoolbags slung,
While sheepdogs from verandahs importantly gave tongue.
It backfired like a howitzer and blokes cried,
'Thar she blows,'
Alarming shearers in the sheds and panicking the crows.

When winter veiled the ranges and the rain beat
like a drum
The old school bus rolled onwards steered by that
dauntless Mum.
It carried on regardless of heat and dust and mud,
It once outraced a bushfire and struggled through a flood.

The old bus swerved and rattled and took some
careful turning,
Depositing its precious load at local seats of learning,
The sums, the reading and the rest,
how pupils' knowledge soared
And when the day was over, they clambered back aboard.

This transport now long obsolete has met its rusty fate
but there's a local legend for those that stay out late,
That, from a nearby wrecking yard a ghostly bus will glide
A school Mum at the steering wheel and lively kids inside.