

# Shag Bay

A Compositional Poem for Eight Voices

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## Direction

To read the poem Shag Bay you will need 8 copies, one for each of the eight people who will read the poem, or play it.

There are eight pages and it should take about eight minutes to read.

The poem is set out just like a musical score.

Each voice is placed like an instrument, it has its own number and row, and the page is divided into bars. Each voice comes in at a point in time.

To begin with, just start reading in your normal reading voice, a compositional poem's rhythms are those of most everyday spoken Englishes. Remember to come in on cue, remember to keep reading and not wait for those who forget.

Accuracy to the score itself is not as important as the integrity of the reading itself. Each performance should be itself; there will be good one's and there will be bad ones.

Practice helps.

Eventually the reading will take over and the mistakes will disappear. The role or responsibility of each voice may then become apparent. Repeating the reading builds the piece just like walking a path to your favourite place.

Remember, reading together is the thing!

2004

# Shag Bay

1

1) the sand speaks each a lone voice

1) against yours

2) the stones speak softly

2) for you

3) the tools speak for themselves

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4) I say easily the most about

4) it all

5) the work is too often its own reward

5) never spent

6) let's hearth our things, at tomorrow and today,

---

1) we've not forgotten

2) us

3) or them,

7) and one more thing

8) at all

---

2

1) sand

2) stone

3) blocks

3) blocks

3) block

1) each wave

4) in walls near my house

4) it begins

5) From the new quarry

6) the lines of deposition wave in solid silence

1) each grain lies true  
2) the rest  
3) or hole  
3) a wall  
4) i leave my place to find  
4) they've come from  
5) the place  
5) here  
5) to find  
6) there  
7) a memory  
8) there is

---

1) I drive  
3) drive  
3) drive  
3) kangaroo drive  
4) i drive to the walls  
4) i drive in a car made of minerals  
6) named for Bedlam  
6) made for me

---

1) I drive  
1) mineral  
2) we drive as one thing  
2) we drive  
2) we drive  
3) drive  
3) drive  
3) drive  
4) and me  
6) driven together  
8) apartly

---

4) door shut and keys to pocket i purse against the west  
3) the gravel rises over a mound of earth and shell grit  
7) and walk easy  
8) into the wind

**3**

1) bits

2) until we turn  
4) and a head nods right at where  
5) not just ways over broken silence  
7) the path bears traces  
7) wind at our left

---

1) seperate  
3) the half bricks break out of tussocks among discarded things, they lie out of form  
5) gone is their stolen mortar  
6) over  
8) under

---

1) gone  
5) resourceful  
6) by the hearth thieves, with an eye for resources  
7) as gone as the middens burnt for lime  
7) in their needs to house kitchens

---

1) one in a cave  
3) only one midden survives  
4) i walk by them carefully  
5) leaving depressions in the ground  
7) less easy

---

2) we walk to where the wall breaks  
3) in a hole in a wall  
4) I walk to where the wall breaks  
5) a place  
6) named for Bedlam  
6) Shag Bay  
7) many places  
8) we walk to where the wall breaks  
8) Shag Bay

4) but i walk passed

6) the white gum guards a turn

5) to where the power lines stray through

7) past

---

3) their determinations and decisions constrain the plants to low heights

4) I have come to a meeting of the ways

5) and they demand a road over the rubble of the factory

---

3) but now we step down a dry slope to the rock and water where

4) i step too

5) industry

7) built to bridge a river with offerings of fertility

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1) ox bones and sheep bones litter the shore and under the rusting boiler

2) chicken bones and ox bones litter the shore and under a rusty boiler as it sips the incoming tide

8) and sucks out

---

3) next to the unburdened piers

4) now nettles grow in the rich sour soil

7) but the business went broke here

8) opposite the new quarry

---

3) the afternoon light breaks the shutter on the box

4) in my hand

5) concrete

6) now but plinths to industry airs

7) task

8) equal to the eye

---

4) i'm there

5) to our quarry

5) chalcedony tools

6) the path continues

6) there are none to greet me

7) to our quarry

8) but there here is not;

2) the rock looks like rock  
 1) but they are  
 3) the rocks and crockery  
 6) but the broken crockery does not  
 7) place yesterday today  
 8) together these things

---

4) and so there is now a day for all this  
 5) movement on the water  
 6) mountain river sea  
 7) so there is now a day for all this  
 8) a here among us

---

1) a word  
 3) at tomorrow  
 4) a view of all this  
 5) kitchens look over water  
 5) waters by the town  
 6) mussel midden wall  
 6) things and meetings held

---

2) we hold you  
 3) they meet on good grounds  
 6) as you sit among the sagg fibrous in the breeze

---

1) i hold you  
 5) plastic on rock  
 5) as I grind these things into meal  
 6) as we stand in the bay wet in the wind  
 7) ...meeting to take the waters' tidings

---

2) we feed you  
 3) meet to eat  
 4) there is now a day for all this  
 5) things we've made  
 7) these things that become us  
 8) made to work

3) and made from things      3) of like minds  
4) meetings of things and makings  
6) meetings of agreement and command      6) the very thing  
7) we mouth  
8) we learned the words we make everything

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4) while across the water works in their refineries pollute in producing purity      1) the thing  
5) or things made to meet by hand and eye      5) and the things we eat  
6) water river port

---

4) there is now a day for all this

---

4) the baked clays slip between steps into the track's gravel and fill      **6**  
5) the track works a way over the stone and baked clay fragments      7) broken works between

---

3) over lives processing in succession to demand and desire  
4) the history around me saddens like iron  
5) breaking work      7) this is history  
8) elsewhere

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2) not here      1) carried here in our metal  
4) to save me the pain it seems      2) getting there  
6) the history around me ignores me for us

---

8) for later  
2) broken to me  
4) however i call  
5) state my presence between moments hearing now  
6) no redemption however  
7) I call in the Bedlam

1) another claim  
3) walls  
4) i call my place in the morning calls, another call,  
5) brokered under  
7) between futures broken on a wall made history  
8) before  
4) the thing is a name

---

1) however I call  
2) into the state I am in  
4) i am in the morning calling  
6) however I call  
7) however around me history ignores me

---

5) there was no place, no place at all

---

1) each **7**  
3) the rocks and crockery  
4) i had left my place to find  
5) the track works a way over the stone and baked clays  
7) and walk easy

---

2) the rock looks like rock  
3) the gravel rises over a mound of earth and shell grit  
3) the rocks and crockery  
4) but  
6) the path continues

---

1) the half bricks break out of tussocks among discarded things  
5) brokered under  
6) but the broken crockery does not  
7) but the business went broke here

---

1) broken me  
3) broken me out  
4) broken to me  
6) the very thing  
7) these things that become us  
8) but

4) green casuarina cones taste fresh and bright

5) evening light

6) the sun's words smell like a lullaby

7) the day that day some day

8) morning light

---

1) each

2) everyone lives

3) until

2) our faces meet to cry

4) the wallaby meat roasting

5) through the westard view mosaicked by smoke

6) the sun and I

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7) the day that day some day

8) everyone lived