

Thirty minutes away from our moorings we passed the approximate spot where several years before a fishing-boat running for shelter from a southerly gale had broken down. Hoping quickly to adjust the fault in their engines they refused a line from another launch which carried on to port. The rest of the story is not known: a little wreckage was found, but the four men of the crew were never heard of again. It's not the only fishing-boat tragedy there has been in the Island Bay fleet. And most of the trouble is caused by that wind from the south which can whip a calm day and a flat sea to fury in less than two hours. The fishermen are always watchful, but two hours isn't long to gather in the equipment and reach shelter. Sometimes it hasn't been long enough.

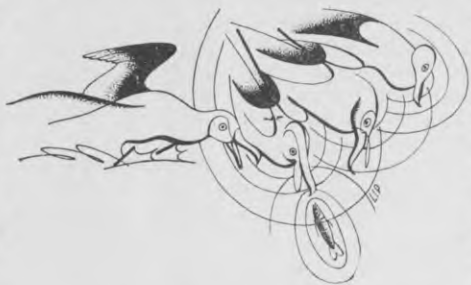
The day had been profitable (at least to the fishermen). A good groper catch, the liver boxes full, plenty of bait for the crayfish pots. And also a crate of groper

throats, the tastiest, tenderest, most sought after pieces of fish in the sea. You never see them in the shops: according to the crew the reason is if the fishmonger is courting he gives these titbits to his sweetheart; if he's married he eats them himself.

Island Bay twinkled round the coast. Past the heavy hanging rocks, the sea threshing against them, we chugged into the boat harbour, picked up our moorings. Thankfully I stepped from the dinghy to dry, safe land. It was where I intended to stay: the "Wild Duck's" crew, on the other hand, working on the theory that there are more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, would be away again with the dawn. I wished them luck.

"Here's a groper for you — that'll make you happy," said the skipper. I tucked the parcel under my arm.

But it wasn't that that made me happy. It was Mother Earth. I felt for a cigarette. I wondered if it was too late for a beer.



## MODERN VERSE: A LETTER TO KORERO

In *Korero*, Volume 2, No. 19, September 25, 1944, p. 10, appears "The Comrades," presumably intended to be verse.

Perusal of this item has caused a good deal of discussion among a section of this mess who are interested in verse, A.E.W.S., and *Korero*.

I may as well say at once that a poor view was taken of it, and human nature, especially that of soldiers, being what it is, some very devastating criticisms were made.

One member was urged to write a letter to *Korero* embodying some of these criticisms. He modestly suggested that no one had a right to criticize so drastically unless he could show that he could himself produce something better.

The enclosed poem represents an effort on the part of one of us to do so.

The theme, presumably an echo of Colonel McCrea's second stanza of

"Flanders Fields," is the same, but treated from a different viewpoint and rather cynically.

The chief point it is wished to emphasize, however, is that poetry to-day is being harmed by the idea that if muzzy half-articulate thoughts can be written in irregular lines so that on the printed page, to a casual glance, they appear to be poetry, they, in fact, are poetry.

No one wishes to discourage the poetically inclined from trying and persevering, but it is doing such a person a disservice to praise highly what is really very mediocre. I am assuming that printing in *Korero* is equivalent to very high praise. It would be better for the paper and the writer if the editor were to refuse his contribution, pointing out where it fails, but holding out a hope that after revision it would be accepted.