

Carpet Bowling

by Harry Dunn

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**I'm at the Bowling Club, half an hour early,
To play a game of carpet bowls
But the weather's dark and surly;
The wind moans 'round the corners
Of that tired old upstairs room,
Like a howling Arctic blizzard
And the world is full of gloom.**

**I look out through upstairs windows
To a back-beach white with breakers,
And those sand-bars, at the entrance
Old-time ship-wreck makers
A windy beach, just out of reach,
And wonder why I'm here,
This wintry Tuesday morn'
When I could be back in Melbourne-town
No - not the place where I was born,
But the place I've lived my life,
And in fancy I am torn
Between the sights and sounds of city,
And this little seaside town,
Where I live with darling wife
As we watch the clock run down.**

**And yes, it's looking bleak
Out there, past Petrel Rocks
And even worse at Eagles' Nest
And those smelly old Flat Rocks
And looking east, in this moving feast
Of drizzle, rain and gloom,
All the way to Townsend Bluff,
And I'm standing in this upstairs room
Where indoor bowlers strut their stuff.**

**Some players now arrive, for the hour approaches ten;
Pat books them in and takes their fees
And that gloomy upstairs room - it starts to come alive
Alive with noisy chat, and then
There's a bunch of rowdy women,
And a couple of quiet men
Average age of seventy-five**

And total number, ten.
Enough to make two triples and a couple of pairs today
So, someone toss a coin,
And let's get under way.

There's excitement in the air
And if you didn't know,
You would think that this is big-time comp.,
The way those bowlers go,
And the room rings out with laughter
From seniors having fun
When they should be wise and sage,
What's wrong with these old bowlers,
Why can't they act their age?

Just now, the sun appears,
And the Inlet comes alive,
It's picture-postcard perfect,
But no matter how I strive,
I can't get one near the kitty;
Well, at least I'm still alive,
And is that the smell of lunch-time soup
Wafting from the kitchen?
The sun streams through the windows,
It warms our ageing joints,
And to think that just an hour ago
I was moanin', I was bitchin'
When I should be scoring points.
Well, shame on you, Young Harry,
As Hawthorn Pat would say,
You don't know when you're well off
Just *being here* today;
You need a day in City traffic
And parking, cash and carry
To remind you why you left The Smoke
When you retired and you took stock,
And moved to God's Own Country
And the town of Inverloch.

So, bowl, you carpet bowlers
Roll your red bowls and your blacks,
Bend your knees and your old ankles,
Your artificial knees and hips
And your creaky, aching backs.
And if your back won't bend enough,

**Lean on Zimmer frame or stick
And try to get one past the jack,
More weight should do the trick.**

**And if that jack should leave the mat
When you had a certain winner,
Someone yells - Who the hell did *that*?
But no-one loses sleep, no-one's called a sinner;
In carpet bowls, the game's what counts -
Much more than who's the winner,
And if you've bowled like that all day,
And the fat lady has just sung;
Don't worry, we will soon be back
Our final fling's not flung,
And bowling on the carpet
Will help to keep us young.**