

## HEROES

(with apologies to Ogden Nash)

by Harry Dunn

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Recently, I watched the annual Bravery Awards,  
Where heroes get their well-earned recognition;  
They're fawned on, photographed, schmoozed and much adored  
They get medals which acknowledge and confirm  
Their courageous disposition.  
But this type of thing is not for me:  
Craven cowardice is *my* natural condition.

When the odds are long,  
And things go wrong,  
My fighting spirit will rapidly diminish;  
But I still take delight  
In *starting* a fight  
And I only join in at the finish.

Raw courage is preached by preachers who preach  
And reckless behaviours encouraged  
By coaches who coach and teachers who teach  
But my *strength* is in care and discretion;  
You won't find *me* standing fast, unfazed by a blast,  
Where hair, skin and teeth could be lost,  
This, I consider, is madness,  
With a quite unacceptable cost,  
So mine is likely to be - a half-hearted and late intercession.

The bravest of souls set impossible goals,  
Like those adventurers exploring the earth,  
They explore the tropics, they challenge the poles  
While others fight bulls for their jollies:  
Not me; my idea of adventure is a nice quiet game of lawn bowls  
And double-strength mints are my most challenging lollies.

If some bogan insults  
The missus or me, when we're Inverloch Orienteering,  
Do I respond straight away with passion and pulse-

Well, not straight away -  
I wait till that bogan is well out of hearing,  
And *then* I let fly with a self-righteous repulse,  
It's much safer than facing that ignorant hoon with the ear-ring.

I let genuine heroes carry the torch,  
While I'm downing a couple of chardies,  
Sitting quietly out on the porch  
Resplendent in one of my old woollen cardies.  
Raw courage is fine for my six-foot mates,  
And some nuggetty blokes, self-reliant,  
But it's a riskier thing, you'll appreciate,  
To give as good as you're asked to take,  
When you're a five feet three inch discombob -ulate  
Facing up to a two-metre giant.

So, to paraphrase Mister Nash,  
Who wrote long before I was born  
That real courage, heroics and dash  
Were qualities rare and forlorn  
But needed by burglars and brave aviators,  
And yachties who sail solo for months, night and morn  
And those chaps who wrestle large alligators;  
Steeplejacks need it, so do our firemen,  
And for brave soldiers, it's probably the only requiremen'

I have no reason to crave  
Those newspaper headlines, or a dead hero's grave,  
And I firmly believe that he who fights and runneth away  
Liveth to fight yet another day.

For me, between two points the shortest distance  
Lies in the line of least resistance.  
So, I'm prepared to leave all chances of glory  
To some courageous young stranger:  
For I am no derring-do dog, in the publicity manger.

Many things aren't what they seem,  
And this is wisdom's crown:  
While the crazy game-fish is swimming upstream,  
The more *sensible* fish swims down.

So, I intend to establish **Aussie Cowards Anonymous**,  
And our patron will be the late, great Sir Noel.  
So Cowards Anonymous will be fully eponymous,  
Named after the best-known Coward of oel.  
We scardies will sit round, making public confessions  
Of cowardly acts  
And other transgressions,  
Our eyes will be downcast with shame and remorse,  
Our cheeks will be flushed and they'll burn-up,  
But the main problem here will be, of course -  
Getting real Aussie cowards to turn-up.