

Bill Wootton, Viewpoint

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Gritty. Empathic. Defiant. Goodfellow's poems accrete in *Punch on Punch off* (Vulgar Press 2004, 0 9580795 2 8, \$14.95pb). His is a bone-stripped style. Crisply observant. Human. Reporting back:

*'write one about the hard times
& how only sucks get overtime
we militants -
we don't get a look - in then
write that he said
& shot me with his double-barrelled
eyes.'*

Blue-collar workers, underpaid and under-provided-for workers are Goodfellow's meat and potatoes but there is also a fair sprinkle of personal poems and pleas for tolerance in the suburbs. It is the voice that gets to you in the end. Very hard to do. Be so brazen, so sound, so ironic, so readable. Goodfellow writes about 'The grind' of work but also arouses narrative interest. Just how difficult is it to sustain a relationship when a partner is restricted by the chains of poverty and overwork? Sometimes a revelation of 'the facts' helps to explain:

*'...the reality remains that she is
in fact a single mother on a pension
that she is twenty five years old
& has two kids under school age
that she did not complete year 12...
knowing that another car payment
is already overdue...
& that the tyres are just about
as worn down as she feels after yet
another early start.'*