

The Old School Bus

by Marilyn Martinuzzi (Ryan)

It was really a cream truck
Masquerading as a school bus.
Trundling off to the dairy farms at first light,
Delivering fresh cream to the factory.

Then the old Bedford transformed.
Planks were thrown across the canopied back,
And kids piled in, screaming and yabbering,
Fighting over prize positions,
Tucked up in the smoky driver's cabin, room for only two kids,
Or braced against the front boards of the back,
Wind tangling hair into a twist of knots,
And skirts billowing out. Woo-hoo!
If you were lucky someone would save you a spot
Until it was their stop.

The old bus bolted and grunted over dusty red roads,
Winding its way over picturesque hills,
Gears grinding, brakes shuddering.
Occasionally a hat would fly off.
There'd be a shout, Stop! Stop!
Fists thumping on the cabin roof,
And a little kid would run off down the road to retrieve it.

Red dust would cloud in,
Invading mouth and eyes,
Sinking deep into your hair.
Then the rain would come, and the cold,
Canvas sides would quickly come down, dripping and flapping about.
Like a wet smelly fish.
And we would huddle up,
Damp but cocooned,
In the old school bus.



Watson's Buses
abt. 1948