

# LUCKY MAN, LUCKY ME

by Harry Dunn

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A month or two ago, it seems like ages more  
We were told we 'd be in lock-down,  
Just like the year before:  
I was miserable of course, for all too well I know  
I'd run out of things to do at home,  
And like to be employed - have something on the go;  
I'm such a pain when not engaged  
Or doing something novel;  
Boredom sets in early  
When I'm locked down in the hovel.

So I spoke to Doctor K, up at Peter Mac  
My head-and-neck oncologist -  
More in fact than that,  
He's a consulting radiologist  
Doctor K, I said - I'm seeking your advice -  
I need something really int'resting, to keep me occupied  
While you treat my dodgy glands and neck,  
With my head clamped in the vice,  
So what can you suggest, by way of entertainment,  
To amuse this ancient wreck  
In need of ascertainment.

The worthy doc lay back and scratched his naked chin,  
He chewed his ball-point pen  
As all deep thinkers do,  
When cogitating - then  
He ordered take-away chop-suey,  
Before delivering his proposal,  
Guaranteed, he said,  
To deal with my concerns,  
Re weeks of boredom and ennui  
So I won't go comatosal.

He said - I can offer you six weeks  
Of travel, discovery, adventure  
With lovely girls attending,  
Picnic lunches in the park, with coffee and hot tea -  
Then reluctantly I asked, fearful of offending,  
What will all this cost - will it break the family banks?  
And he responded - No way, Mr D.  
It's all on Medicare - and absolutely free:

So I cried out loud in heartfelt thanks -  
Lucky Country, Lucky People,  
Lucky, Lucky me!

I didn't ask for further details -  
As he broke it to me gently  
And signed me up for six weeks radiation  
At Peter Mac, East Bentleigh,  
And as for travel, some repetition there,  
Requiring thirty trips by car,  
Five days every week,  
Coming from afar,  
But bles't with caring missus and two good patient sons  
Plus live-in-Melbourne daughter,  
All assisting the Old Man,  
As driver or escorter.

I've seen others down at Peter Mac,  
With the same complaint as me  
Arriving there in taxis, all alone,  
And departing after treatment, in sim'lar company,  
And I feel a touch of sadness,  
That no man should deny,  
And can't help thinking -  
What a lucky man am I!  
Lucky Country, Lucky People  
What a lucky man am I!

Now, as for new adventures, as described by Doctor K,  
I won't say I was misled - not in any way,  
Because it *was* a new adventure,  
Especially my first day,  
With those charming radioligists  
All smartly dressed in black -  
Well, I hope that's not an omen, I opined,  
Or I won't be coming back -  
They took me to a treatment room  
With impressive Star Wars bed,  
Just like the one in San Quentin prison,  
And other US jails,  
Where they make their bad boys dead,  
By injection, so they say  
And if that fails to work  
A heavy blow or two  
To that bad boy's poor old head.

Just In case he 's faking  
Or so I've somewhere read, I must confess  
And of course it can't possibly be true-  
But please excuse me – as always, I digress ..... .

Now, behind this lock-down bed  
Stands a ten-ton piece of kit  
Four massive lobes, like Astrophobes  
With a rotating x-ray head,  
That radiation to emit:  
They masked me up and strapped me down  
Just like a Christmas turkey,  
Stuck a large and ugly gob-stop in my mouth,  
And I know this might sound quirky  
But it 's there to shield the tongue from unwanted radiation;  
They said I'd get a suntan, in the area they were treating  
And after several weeks, - some skin like roasted pork,  
Looking good enough to eat,  
So please feel free to visit me when I'm fully cooked  
But don't bring your knife and fork  
And I know you'll be discreet.

They told me to relax, and this won't hurt a bit,  
Then departed from that room,  
With its massive Evil Eye  
Before turning on the juice  
While I was fastened tight, alone down there to fry,  
And only when I'd had my measured dose of kilowatts  
Did they return to cut me loose;  
Of course *they* weren't exposed,  
To radiation while they worked  
All safe and powder-dry,  
They'd made their mortal mark  
While I was feeling somewhat less than spruce,  
But at least I wasn't glowing in the dark -  
That much I could adduce  
    What a lucky man I am,  
    To survive all this abuse.

Well, that's one down and only twenty-nine to go  
Observed a friendly little tech,  
We'll do you right to Peter Mac perfection,  
And don't forget your teeth, your specs and walker  
You have passed inspection.  
What's that? You don't have a four-wheeled walker?

Sorry, Sir, it must belong to that other poor old gent,  
The one that they just wheeled out  
In spite of his objection...

Now, as for lots of travel, Doctor K was right.  
You travel ev'ry day and of course you come by car  
Just as long as you can drive,  
And coming from afar,  
And the promised picnic lunches, those lunches in the park  
We call it Lunch-time, DIY,  
Where you bring your own comestibles  
And eat them in the car,  
In the hospital car-park  
Your tasty picnic lunch, with ham and pickle sangers,  
Or Mum's home-made pumpkin pie,  
And there's nothing wrong with that.  
    What a lucky man am I,  
    Lucky, Lucky, Lucky  
    What a lucky man am I.

Now, of course we're all aware,  
Of just how good those people are,  
The folks who work up there  
At Peter Mac and other clinics  
Treating hundreds every day,  
Old dudes like me, the under-signed,  
Grumpy ageing cynics  
And sundry other jokers  
Quite a lot of youngish patients,  
Some middle-aged and less,  
Sadly, quite a few are still, or have been smokers,  
In for radiation, surgery or chemo,  
In the hope that Doctor K and those Peter Mac technicians  
Can offer them a second chance at life  
And still fulfil their reas'nable ambitions,  
Their wantin's and their wishin's,  
With their high -tech radiation,  
Their chemo, and the knife.

Oh, Lucky man am I  
To live at such a time - such a time and such a place  
In the larger human zoo  
Where an old and useless case  
is still considered worth retaining  
Perhaps to write another page or two,  
Before he puts the cue back in the rack

And bids the world adieu,

And very grateful we should be  
That so much care is here provided,  
Cost and duty – free,  
To old and ailing Aussies,  
A bit shaky and lop-sided  
Lucky country, Lucky People  
Lucky You and Me