Why?

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This of all questions, the persistent toddler’s, 
the ancient pursuit of the modern mind 
that summons less knowledge than it infers, 
the bewildered cry of the maimed and blind, 
the death rattle stuck in the feeble throat 
when the maker fails to return the call, 
the clicking of catechisms learned by rote: 
this is the most perennial Why of all. 
A word too hard for word, number, or sign 
to render redundant, explain away, 
a voice too susceptible to decline, 
a mark to start and end every day. 
I shrug my heart, retaliate with hot 
and cold passion and say to Why; “Why not?”

1 Dr. Syd Harrex is a foundation member of the Flinders University English staff, long-term founder Director of CRNLE, and widely published author of books and essays on postcolonial new literatures. He has published six volumes of poetry, the most recent being Dougie's Ton and 99 Other Sonnets (Adelaide, Lythrum Press, 2007). His poetry collection, Atlantis and Other Islands, was runner-up for the Commonwealth Poetry Prize and a British Book News Shortlist selection.
Laughter

is radical noise. Its rule is to break
all rules, with welcome venom if need be.
It is elastically voice-and-chord strung,
tone’s virtuoso, yet it is not song.
Laughter is difference and unity;
it swaps cultures as chickens cross roads,
yet the joke’s not on Colonel Sanders
who laughs all the way to the Pentagon.
Laughter punctures megalomania
but is self-collapsing. In the theatre, its regime
never fails, but life’s its other standard.
The laughter of evil does not qualify;
parody of course, but sarcasm not.
The child is its natural habitat.
The Best is Yet to Come  
(for Janie)

Distressful as it is when time is out of joint, and the brash world's a kangaroo wilderness, and this petty pace from day to day syndrome makes for dubious havoc on the awkward stage of self-confidence: this, however, is a time to plant, time to fruit. Years as good as they get for, in Yeats' words “the young in one another's arms.” This is what I believe for you and us and where we go from here, luscious with faith and commitments: love's get-together of past and present – like the tides, thresholds, that embraced in first and last places long ago, reincarnated in our song.