

Barry Fruit Bat

The Balgowlah Grey-Headed Flying-Fox
(*Pteropus poliocephalus*, aka Fruit Bat)
Camp was established in Balgowlah in 2010.

My name is Barry Fruit Bat.
I'm writing to redress
the weird disinformation
that causes us distress.
When proposals were accepted
to move us to Balgowlah
the residents protested
they could think of nothing fouler.

They complained that we were filthy:
we poo when upside down.
They failed to see our shiny fur's
not caked with substance brown!
When we awake at sunset
our instinct's not to hop
on a bowl made out of porcelain.
We fly and then let drop.

Some humans call us vampires
and to some we give the creeps
but when it comes to forests
we bats contribute heaps.
Our native friends, koalas,
we always aim to please
by ensuring we drop lots of seeds
to give them lots of trees.

At night we leave our bat camp
and can fly a hundred k
on a round trip for a forage
then we hang about all day.
Sixty thousand seeds we spread
in a single night's excursion.
Few other pollinators
can manage such dispersion.

Don't call us blind: our eyesight's good.
I'm sad you think we smell.
We're herbivores and fly from blood
like bats straight out of hell.
We're not cuddly like koalas
and unlike the kangaroo
we don't hold up the nation's crest
but can't you love us too?

Okay, we make a bit of noise
and since we're Megabats
if you should walk beneath us
you'll be hit by mega-splats.
But think of this: we've given you
so much pleasure in
eating fruit like mangos
with juices down your chin.

Helen Lyne