

Haiku Bindii *Journeys*





Sunday

winding Dad's clock

the cold key

Haiku Bindii

Journeys

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Haiga by *Julia Wakefield* (photo) and *Maeve Archibald* (haiku)

wondering
where the path leads
butterfly

Lee Bentley

a breeze stirs . . .
bark scraps lift
over flickering shadows

yesterday's paddock . . .
ducks explore the framework
of a new house

Robin Sinclair

Shisan Renku: Armchair Travel

Lee Bentley

side 1

fallen leaves
shimmer in the light
full moon

wind swirls
uncover a forgotten rake

picking up the phone
my childhood rushes
to greet me

side 2

grandfather and I
united on the porch

as snowflakes fall
we stoke the fire and
pour another cup

armchair travel
one tea at a time

side 3

driving through
a kaleidoscope
of tulips

Mary's lamb
frolics in the wet grass

leaping sideways
a fingertip save
divides the crowd

side 4

I'll remember always
your smooth hands

captivated
my two left feet
behave

midnight stroll
on warm sand

Granite Island Haibun

Nigel Ford

A long walk across the causeway to the peaceful refuge of Granite Island

rocky nests
crested birds cresting
granite boulders

Men with rods fish while birds fly overhead and seals frolic by the breakwater

a fisher
pulls his catch from the sea
the seal bites his fish

I walk to the far side of the island where I sit under cloudy skies watching the sea

water fountains
spouting between cresting waves
breaching whales

I slow my breathing in and out in sync with the crashing of the waves on rocks

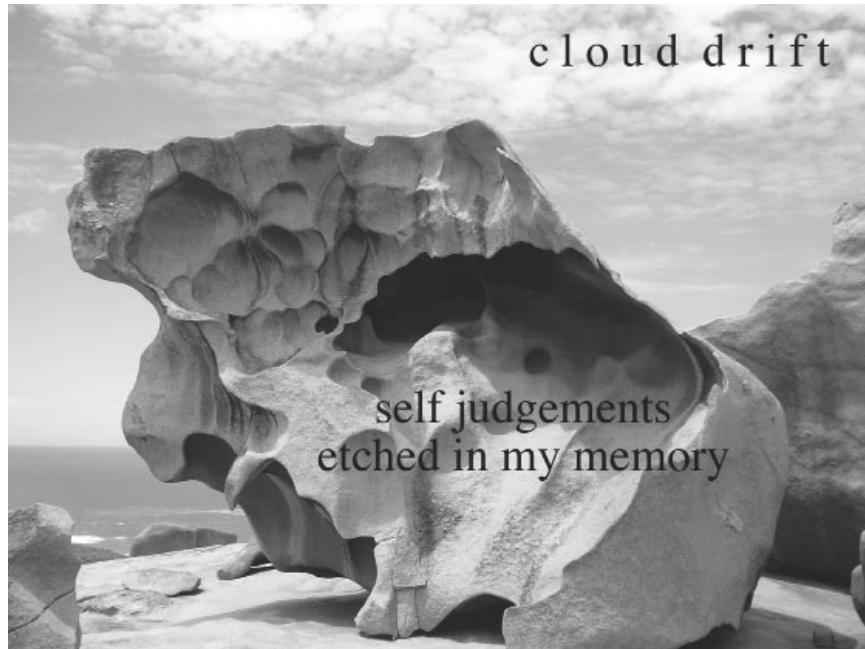
the wind blows
whistling between the rocks
nature's orchestra

My mind is calm, my heart beats slowly and my body feels the tension leave me

the rhythm of life
my heart beats
on my eardrums

I rise slowly to begin the walk from crashing waves back to my noisy house

I walk along
the winding trail
a rocky path



Haiga: *Alexander Ask*

beach house
wrapped in a cocoon
of wind

Lee Bentley

flapping its wings
in a maze of rocks
a trapped ray

at high water
rocks on the reef are swimmers
drowning

Julia Wakefield

beach umbrella
tying down
the wind

king tide
the bay ripples
with jellyfish

rushing over the pink
of his toes . . .
sea foam

Lynette Arden

a passing whale
blows water
up in the air
the anger between us
festering

Alexander Ask

sea grasses
draped over pearly driftwood
passing of the storm

Athena Zaknic



bright dawn
surfers ride
a silver sea

Pam Brow



winter breeze
a rainbow of kites
filling the sky

Bett Angel-Stawarz

jet plane
from the wingtips a drift
of cherry blossom

sipping airport coffee
the buzz
of arrivals and departures

Lynette Arden

Chaos And Calm Haibun

Nigel Ford

The chaos in my life, selling one house, buying another, managing finances, unmanaging funds, dropping shares, raising cash, the thrill of a successful bid, the fear of change, the future, the unknown is threatening to overwhelm me and I retreat to my place of peace and tranquility

lakeside
flowers reflecting
flowers

I control my breathing and my hands that have been shaking, but my thoughts have a mind of their own. I close my eyes and think only of this place

garden sprays
and cascades

waterfall

I journey to another time and place with water and nature all around me, my Kakadu holiday returning me to a peace of my past

the cliff falls
a long drop into

a billabong

My breathing calm, my thoughts no longer racing, I open my eyes and have a great idea for a feature in the garden of my new home

Shisan Renku: Life's Inner Journey

Alexander Ask
Julia Wakefield

1
nightlight
callistemon shadows
stencil a path

drowned in the river
a pearl in the sky

quiet garden
the travelling Buddha
smile set in stone

2
words take time
to make sense

balmy evening
mother's war stories
amongst mosquito corpses

dragonfly squadron
bombed by sparrows

3
maple leaf drizzle
a Pro Hart collage
on the lawn

wind blown love letters
from sky to earth

a single red kite
buffets the grey sky
my heart soars with it

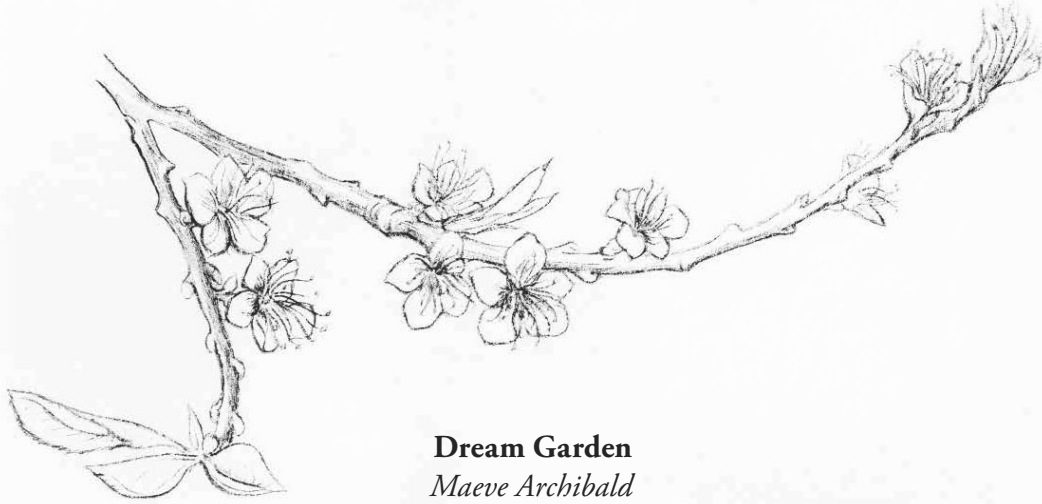
4
hoary streaks
make your words wiser

almond blossoms
in the middle of July
winter grows old

a cold breeze
reminds me of your passing

Alexander Ask (Sabaki):
verses 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12

Julia Wakefield:
verses 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11



Dream Garden
Maeve Archibald

silent grey mist
hiding the tree tops
white muslin curtain

I walk through the gateway into the garden of my dreams and am engulfed by vague shapes half familiar to my straining senses. There in front of me a vaporous tunnel shimmers towards an uncertain landscape, its clammy hand clasps mine, a mute plea. I am lost but for the cool wet drops inside my conscious plan for a garden, orderly and pleasant.

One careful foot after another I venture deeper into a world of whiteout. The set programme now snags on a drift of cloud. The driver is absent and the path chooses itself by a fringe of green feathery pointers. I let it carry me along until the veil slips just a little and I know where I am, close by the lake susurrating a lullaby of sorts. Scylla and Charybdis exchange glances and reach for a distant scene planted in neat rows, bright colours from my recent past. I too reach, choose a dream at random.

sunlight sliding
from leaf to leaf
a beam of gold

I bathe for some time in the golden glow of lazy summer days until the chill of present sorrows breaks through the surface of my consciousness. The colours dim, grow sombre and I am bereft by this barren bed. Only a dried wreath, long left behind, lingers here, no flowers. Gathering up that bouquet I venture further into my dreamscape.

winter sky
indigo dreams spiral
on a sudden drift

The wind shifts, tumbles me along the alley and into a dead end - all about me dark walls made of old leaves. No light here! I scabble about, try to make sense but the map is missing! My despair rakes up a vision I've had before. Something I can grasp. The rough crunch of new turned pebbles wakes my sleep bound will. I creep forward on all fours.

a grey hand
lifts a corner
familiar shapes

I remember that outline and the smell of burning leaves just touching the garden shed late on a Saturday. My father's hat set rakishly on the old shovel. I grasp, I dig it deep and turn up a pot of moonshine. The silver ash of something long hidden gleams momentarily then flits away out of sight. I am uncertain, shall I follow into the undergrowth, risk an encounter? I am seated at the table of bread and honey, next to me a pair of secateurs. Their edge is sharp and sure. I am the gardener pruning from my life the untidy excess of pain. I take my time, survey my garden, pick and choose what to keep what to let go. I take precautions, don garden gloves. There could be resistance. The sharp points of my uncertainties pierce the veil shrouding the plan for today.

walking in clouds
a stumble of mist
on the very edge

For a moment I falter there by the lake. I hear the ripples repeating themselves again on an unseen shore. Tiny buds wave a flirtatious promise. The colour is returning to the faces I see. I take a step into my dream grasping the spring catalogue firmly in my hand and notice that the fog has lifted. The gateway to my garden of dreams has been freshly painted.



alone
one small spider
bravely spins
a web
across my path

no hum
of silence
all I can hear
is the pulse
of my blood

Lesley Charlesworth

swirling apart
galahs and parrots ~
aerial oval

yellow spots
on bare boughs
winter pattern

Judith Ahmed

dandelions
all over the lawn
sunlight

from behind
the barbed wire fence
a rush of violets

Lynette Arden

amongst the green
a touch of vermilion
salutary note

Maeve Archibald

spring day
the vacant house
fills with sunshine

Lynette Arden

autumn afternoon --
the warmth of coffee
and a friend's smile

Bett Angel-Stawarz

sunlit street
a bent old man
prunes roses

Belinda Broughton

in the coffee cup
a gecko
clinging to the ceiling

Alexander Ask

each collected shell
holds the ocean's roar
sea longing
will overcome me
in this dusty suburb

Lynette Arden

Anzac sunrise
the old bugler's lips
quiver

Bett Angel-Stawarz

Port Elliot

sea thunders
against the cliff
rain falls
on pine trees planted
for the fallen

Margaret Fensom

red flower
slowly withering
in memoriam

Lesley Charlesworth

Anzac service
the rustle of the crowd
through fallen leaves

Lynette Arden

Australia Day

three young men draped
in their country's flag
beach barbecue

Julia Wakefield

in cemetery
widow's repeated overtures
her repentance
all over again
an audience of bats

Athena Zaknic

golden sunlight
same one as then
now looks down
on war ravaged remains
of my homeland

Athena Zaknic

generations
of young men
like this one
throwing stones
at the military tank

Belinda Broughton

a crowd of ants
feelers touching
the dead one

Lynette Arden

reach out to me
with cold dry hands
winter's refugee

Marilyn Linn

earthquake, tsunami
cyclone, civil war
in a few days
it's back to the tension
of footy on the front page

Lynette Arden

Weight of loss

Rachael Mead

Marble Hill, Australia Day, 26th January 2011

The people here all seem the kind that would know the second verse to the national anthem and are unlikely to have any friends that call this Invasion Day.

We are here to see the ruins. I want to see them one last time as I've always remembered them, before the rebuilding begins. The National Trust finally found a rich, philanthropic couple willing to take Marble Hill off its hands. So here we are, stickybeaking, intending to sneak off before the Mayor hits his stride in front of the bunting.

national anthem
lips move
without voice

The tour of the ruins is led by a young man, who knows absolutely everything about the history of this site. He is a Marble Hill savant. Enthusiasm lasers from his eyes and his reed thin body seems almost unstable with the effort of containing all this passion within one skin. We easily keep him talking and answering questions for half an hour after the tour finishes, while the next group stands frowning, pointedly looking at their watches.

ruin in sun
hats needed
inside

In the small museum old photographs of vice regal grandeur line the walls. Steep rooflines with fish scale shingles gleam in sepia sun. Edwardian conifers long gone stand to attention beside the driveway as it sweeps to a halt at the formal stone steps under the tower.

charred stone wall
gargoyle has
last laugh

Several old-fashioned glass museum cases hold artefacts dug from the ashes. How do the cabinets manage to support such weight of loss? Waterford pendants from the chandeliers lie there like twisted crystalline bones. The white billiard ball crouches alone, a fossil egg bereft of a mother.

gas lantern
cannot hold
strange fire

Outside I touch the stone embankment where the Governor's family and staff cowered, trembling under blankets, watching the house burn and fall, storey by storey. It is an image that pulsates so intensely, that is so symbolic of this place and its history that it feels as though the hearts of those fifteen survivors should be lying on velvet, displayed with reverence within those glass topped museum cabinets.

howl of wildfire
sound of prayer
erased

§

weather vane
the mystery of time
suspended

Maeve Archibald

empty swing
creaks children's shouts
playground at night

Judith Ahmed



at the auction
of her grandfather's estate
nappy change

Haiga: *Belinda Broughton*

Postpartum

Belinda Broughton

the first touch
on the baby's head
latex gloves

Strange little newborn creature, born through the storm of her body. And her body a foreign thing. The private moment of birth, so public. And here it is: tiny, dark, misshapen, mottled with blood. More like a drowned rat than a baby, she thinks. Another heave and the afterbirth blobs into a basin, is inspected by gloved hands, while doctors poke around her nether regions.

squeaking shoes
the nurses carry away
her baby

Later she lies in white sheets in a white nightgown embroidered with white roses. She feels strange, disjointed, as if her body and its pain did not belong to her. The baby is absent also. She tiptoes down corridors on vinyl floors to peer at him through glass. He is brought to her, attached to her breast, attached to the other breast and taken away again. She looks at him and feels — nothing.

hospital window
a palm tree
shuffles

Her mother comes, whispers, 'You may not love him at first.' Then in-laws, family, friends, until her room is a florist shop.

beyond flowers
on the far hill
one dead tree

Months later, he squeaks in his crib. She presses her forearms to her breasts to hold back the milk. One little fist is poking up, unfurling, and she is reminded of the tip of a fern frond.

specks of lint
dancing in sunlight
the scent of a baby

my name
in tiny stitches
mother's love

Lesley Charlesworth

childhood home
memories fading
with the paint

cubby house
me and teddy
sharing secrets

call from home
my childhood rushes
to greet me

Lee Bentley

auction day
mother's red brick home
now a house

Alexander Ask

childhood home
the wartime glass
wrinkles across the moon

Lynette Arden

power failure
the children tell
ghost stories

Belinda Broughton

Piety
Pam Brow

My bed-time prayers when I was six or seven were to Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, and I prayed fervently that God would Bless Mummy and make her good, plagiarised from AA Milne. I had been attending Sunday School since I was five and loved the felt board, the sand tray, my Sunday school teacher and the tuneful songs we sang, 'Listen to the Pennies, hear them as they fall. Every one for Jesus, He shall have them all'. Proudly I would put my penny into the collection plate confident that another aboriginal woman would wear a crisp white cotton bra. And would be modest. As I grew older I came to love the poetry and music of the hymns and *The King James Bible*. At Christmas we sang carols, 'Away in a Manger' and I was Pleased That Jesus would stay by me forever and love me, and that He would bless all the dear children in His tender care and fit us for Heaven to live with Him there.

I was quite shocked when I heard a group of rowdy boys sing, 'While shepherds washed their socks by night...'

My favourite hymn when I was small had the line Umpa Umpa Poly day, or as the hymn book said, 'Our Triumphant Holy day'.

I tried a dose of piety on my Father once. He was mocking and scornful, and I came to realize that my admission and regular attendance at Sunday School owed more to my parents locked bedroom door on Sunday afternoons than any desire to have a Pious Child.

I went to Church and Christian Endeavour until I left home at seventeen and went into the country to be a nurse. I missed the stained glass window, Bach on the organ, the Sunday evening Singsongs, the study, every thing about it, in other words, but when illness and death and deformity confronted me I lost my faith in Jesus' powers. I still call on him when I am in trouble, but that's another story.

the church hushed dim
stained glass window glowing
in evening's light
children sing a blessing
cleansed of sin we wander home

The Policeman's Cow

Lynette Arden

The policeman's cow first showed me death. Can it have been the first dead creature I had seen? The occasional trapped mouse would vanish before sensitive children might come upon it, but I had seen dead cockroaches and flies. Grandma was expert at fly extermination. With a rolled up Herald her arms worked quicker than thought. Flies made small dry corpses. Mosquitoes too.

We kept chickens and sometimes they died. Not much treatment those days for chickens in a small coastal village in northern New South Wales. Mum gave them castor oil if they looked down in the beak, but this cure had poor success.

palpitating heart
as the sun drops
the wind stills

The police station was almost opposite our house, along the road out of town. There was only one way out of town, as the road terminated on the hill overlooking the Pacific. The thunder of waves always lurked on our sound horizon. Open windows let it flow all through our house, mingling with the sounds of the piano, the squabble of children's voices and the squawk of chickens.

My sister and the policeman's daughter Jillian were friends, being the same age. Jillian had fair ringlets and blue eyes and my mother said a sweet nature. My sister had red curls, brown eyes and a fiery temper. Maybe that was why they got on so well, being opposites in some ways. I didn't take too much interest in this friendship of my younger sister, but one day her father let us look inside the jail cell. In those days, a visit to the moving pictures was a rare treat and a look inside a real gaol cell promised to add glamour to an ordinary afternoon. I can still taste my disappointment at the clean bare space, sunlight filtering through a high up barred window.

'No crime here, only the occasional drunk,' Dad said. He was the headmaster of the tiny school.

small town
the policeman's cow
nibbles the roses

Once Dad sprang up in the middle of the night to chase the policeman's cow down the side of our house in a thunderstorm. After that, he planted prickly bougainvillea there, which eventually grew tall and thick enough to block any passage.

One summer it rained heavily for days on end, with us running round with buckets to catch drips from the leaking roof and wedging up rags against the doors to stop water coming in. After the rain stopped, our class walked to the swimming pool for sports afternoon. I knew where to place my feet in every turn on that path

down to the bay, but after the wind and rain parts of the sandy track had altered. One section near the top of the path had collapsed. We all stopped, milling round to get a good look.

Someone said, 'That's the policeman's cow, isn't it?'

It was unnaturally motionless, but from the top you could see it was the cow, Jersey colour. We knew the breeds.

My father said, 'Move back,' and directed us down the hill with one of the mothers while he went back to get the policeman.

If I think about that day, I can remember the scatter of clouds pummelling away at the blue sky, darting shadows across the slinky tufts of grass, the uneasy shuffle of the children and the onset of unwelcome knowledge. Knowledge of a subject we knew not to talk about, but not why.

Forty years later, we still didn't talk about it, even when her hair fell out from the treatment, even when she moved into the hospice. The last time I spoke to her was on the telephone from South Australia. 'They tell me I have two weeks to live, if I'm lucky,' she said.

'I love you,' I said, but I heard the phone clatter as she dropped it. I don't know if she heard me.

crematorium
they have dressed my sister
as a wax doll

§

our birth cord still ties
you lay beneath my breast
for only nine months
yet a mother's heart
still beats for you

Judith Ahmed

cherry season
she cleans
the child's grave

Lee Bentley



Haiga: Alexander Ask

on the beach
ten sand castles
destroyed by one wave

Marilyn Linn

butterfly wing
on the sea
a windsurfer glides

Alexander Ask

silver gulls
search for tourists
tossing food scraps

Marilyn Linn

seaside café
sharing sandwiches with a crowd
of hungry gulls

Lynette Arden

Perfect Weather

Lee Bentley

Tasmanian winter. Constant rain and driving wind. Perfect beach weather.

Barefoot, in shorts and jacket, walking on the cold, hard, damp sand, I feel alive. The crashing waves quiet my mind, the solitude a relief. Not for me a postcard tropical resort. Pleasure is walking directly into the numbing wind, then feeling the relative heat when I turn around and have the wind willing me onwards. Afterwards, wrapping my hands around a warm cuppa, I feel that maybe, just maybe, I will survive.

hanging
out over the water
spinnaker run

§

Corellas

Belinda Broughton

dust trails
from a tractor
turning circles

From his freshly seeded paddocks, corellas rise into the air in a single panic. Several thousand, screeching, confused, confusing parrots. They settle their destruction into dark trees, fold their neat white wings and raise the question-mark of their crests.

The Farmer says, 'When I was a kid, they were that rare! Once I rode my pushbike twenty miles just to see a flock of twenty. Thousands now. Do a bit of damage. But look at 'em in those trees; they look just like huge white flowers.'

under his hat
the blue calm
of the sky

red winds
bury fence lines
deepening
with the drought
lines on country faces

Bett Angel-Stawarz

sale yards
akubras shade
sun-bleached eyes

Belinda Broughton

still the road unfolds
grey tarmac under a grey sky

Judith Ahmed

mud cracks –
in random patterns
bull ants scatter

Alexander Ask

jagged horizon
shards of tree stump
silent witness

Maeve Archibald

spinifex dot-painting country

Belinda Broughton

fire blackened
the yukka stands erect
not giving in

Marilyn Linn



The Soldier's Black Saturday
Bett Angel-Stawarz

the valley
darkens...
burnt orange sun

burning hills
and burning home...
human flesh

racing flames...
the seared earth
melts his shoes

radiant heat
the mother and child
sitting still

family coffins
the soldier hobbles
on burnt feet

blackened landscape
through charred bark
green shoots

Triparshva Renku: Last Summer's Bushfire

Lynette Arden, Marilyn Linn, Alexander Ask

Side 1 (jo)

last summer's bushfire
how cold the frost
on charred land

flames in the hearth
pull closer together

wrinkled mother
cross stitches
the lapis lazuli sky

the young girl in her mind
dances across the stage

moon glow
on pampas grass
the butterfly emerges

a breeze flutters the flag
on the castle tower

Side 2 (ha)

from battlements
tourists with binoculars
gaze over the ocean

a misty spray of sea cologne
over a weary surfer

iridescent sunlight
shimmers through a saint
of stained glass

her silky skirt scatters
the colours of summer

dark shadow
of a weeping fig tree
drapes across us

the fragrance of you lingers
long after you have gone

pigeons take flight
as a train whistles
through the station

the stutter of crickets stops
at the first raindrop

as clouds part
an overflowing dish
captures the moon

the taste of chestnuts
from the pot belly heat

Side 3 (kyû)

shoes lined up
ready to jive
as I put the music on

the green bamboo blind
swings in time to the beat

balancing
one child with another
on the playground seesaw

the smell of fresh cut lawn
drifts around us as we walk

through the pink trees
over a wooden bridge
a ray of sunshine

in the old tree hollow
a rosella chick breaks shell

Lynette Arden (Sabaki)
verses: 2, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 19,
22.
Marilyn Linn verses: 1, 4, 5,
10, 12, 13, 17.
Alexander Ask verses: 3, 8, 9,
11, 16, 20, 21.





A Pair

Belinda Broughton

quivering
the shadows of leaves
on his back
the blue moonlight
as smooth as skin

our wooden house
trembles in the storm
but we
cradle each other's feet
with our feet

a dog barks
somewhere far off
not yet dawn
he shifts closer
to share my warmth

droplets
on the naked tree
pooling
blue light
his aging eyes

lovers dance
across fresh mown grass
barefooted

Marilyn Linn

tattered bark
peeling off ~
strip tease

Judith Ahmed

like armour
on sleeping breasts
the book

all the islands
have goosebumps
hot bath

Belinda Broughton

under the bed
his shoelaces
tangling with mine

two small crescents
in his eyes
May moon

Lynette Arden

the bamboo whispers
butterflies take flight
I wait for you

Marilyn Linn

fading daffodils –
once again he rings
her answering machine

Lynette Arden

winter darkness
illuminated by frost
from our mouths
exchanging ideas
with blind punches

Alexander Ask

Valentine's Day card
 unused
 unloved

Marilyn Linn

walking home
from the bus stop at dusk,
her steps slow
.... on his fourth stubby
he is waiting

lonely spinster
dances the night away
in the pages of her novel

Athena Zaknic

widow –
married friends forget
her phone number

Bett Angel-Starwarz

Journey through Paradise

Jill Gower

I relax in the back of a hired car behind the local driver. Morning heat rises from the road. Through the loudspeakers the blare of the one cassette repeats itself over and over, becomes a source of irritation. Outside, lush vegetation inches over the roadside, green ferns cluster around the bottoms of trees. The occasional flash of a bright flower among so much green is startling. Orchids tangle, their tentacles knitting branches together, binding them as one.

arms that once
comforted me
embrace another

The landscape has become more open, and ahead I can see the most stunning rice paddies, a mass of velvet emerald slopes. In the distance dark shapes of mountains. Bent over double in the marshy waters, the rice farmers take individual shoots from their baskets, painstakingly plant one after the other, pushing them into the mud. The sun shimmers. The farmers sweat in the humidity.

from seeds
of discontent
pearls of wisdom

Along the dusty road we pass more farm workers as they quietly return from their day's labour. Heavy working implements are balanced across shoulders. They walk mostly in single file. One woman balances a basket of water melons on her head, another, pots and pans. We drive on towards the sea where in some places rice paddies slope right down to the edge of the water, waves rinsing the edges.

waves wash away	angry thud of waves
the anger	becomes
return me to myself	a peaceful ripple

The car struggles up towards the distant peaks, winds around narrow mountain roads and down over the other side at an easy pace. Dusk hovers over the road – soon the monkeys playing on the road will head for the forest.

mandarin sun
slinks behind mountains
monkey shadows

lavender
washed with rain
July's incense rising

rosemary flowering
blue once more
her memory fresh again

after the cancer scare
tears of relief
wattle dangling
merry pompoms
above my head

Dawn Colsey

slick figures skating
on shimmering ice
memory guarded well
as arthritic fingers
fumble for aspirin

Athena Zaknic

olive grove
roots mature
and twisted
the grey of yesterday
still on my head

Alexander Ask

a wasp buzzing in my mouth
the dentist's drill

Dawn Colsey

trying on hats
a different face belongs
to each one

Lee Bentley

onion ~
eyes smart as
peeling layers of doubt

Judith Ahmed

antiques shop
an old couple check furniture
for wear

Lynette Arden

fanning myself
with the menopause brochure
hot flush

Belinda Broughton

tendrils of bark
around my feet
memories

Maeve Archibald

cold fingers
deleting Mum's number
from my phone

Belinda Broughton

Mount Buller winter

Alexander Ask

night clatter
from the chalet roof
snow fall

sense of comfort
in your voice
fireplace embers

still chairlift
snow covered eucalypts
leaning against the wind

a lonely crow's screech
the crack
of a falling branch

a thousand stars
twinkling on the snow
midday sun

a gully run
under a fallen tree
late August

ice melt
last remnants of winter
trickling away from me

§

winter lingers
in the fireplace
half an axe handle

Alexander Ask



*a strong silent presence
and an absence
of birdsong*

Margaret Rawlinson

Haiga: Margaret Rawlinson

marshmallow landscape
slowly melts
black ice

a crow
perches on an icy powerline
black and white

winter reflection
fractured clouds
in the birdbath

candlelight reflects
in a child's eyes
snow lantern festival

Margaret Rawlinson

Christmas haiku

Athena Zaknic

small child
to bed for the longest night
Christmas eve

yearly gathering of the clan
for Christmas dinner
silent night

cherries in the snow
continents unite in peace
at Christmas

§

proudly the widow
brings roasted poultry
to the Christmas table
her last jewel now
in the pawn shop window

Athena Zaknic

no christmas tree
excitement gift-wrapped
or divine child
I wear my scarf
between two cultures

Judith Ahmed



My slice of paradise

Judith Ahmed

scaffolding forest
hiding jagged minarets
dome appears golden

The pure, white walls of the Minna mosque soared towards the heavens; I wondered what it looked like inside.

One Friday I went to Ibrahim Babangida Hospital for physiotherapy and came home miserable, full of self pity. We did ablution. For the first time I went to the new mosque for Jum'ah prayer.

goats sit on the road
traffic jam ~
Jum'ah prayer call

Since I was late they opened the women's door for me. I climbed up the stairs and arrived in the women's gallery just in time for the prayer.

'Allahu Akbar,'

The amplified voice of the imam soared up to the gallery, hit me like a cannon ball and reverberated through my whole body, reaching every cell. As my tears flowed, all pity and depression fell away. In the *Qur'an* He has promised that after hardship comes ease. I prayed with my sisters as one body. 'Boom,' – a gunshot boomed out as the Imam chanted the final *Assalamu alaikum* at the end of the prayer. After the prayer I peered through the latticework. Men wearing loose robes, with turbans, greeted each other as they left.

Outside people sold Arabic books, prayer beads, oranges and kola nut. I gave sadakah money to a boy in a wheelchair and a middle aged man. The sight of so many destitute, crippled people reminded me how God had blessed me with a kind husband, good food and clothes. As Samson drove around the back of the mosque we saw a group of Sufis chanting in remembrance of Allah.

Next Friday Mohammed dropped me off at the mosque. After the prayer I knelt down in *zikr*, meditation. I had learnt *Ayultul Kursiy*, the verse of the throne, in Arabic and recited it at the end of each prayer. I reflected on the *ayat*, one of the most noble in the *Qur'an*. Yellow lamplight glowed behind my eyelids. Filled with peace and joy, I felt awed by our Creator's majesty and glory expanding through the universe.

for a second
I glimpse infinity
after prayer

And so the Jum'ah prayer became a feature of my life.

pilgrims . . .
the same prayer
in many languages

Bett Angel-Stawarz

sheet of bark
Pieta cradles her son
his limbs awry

Maeve Archibald

stalagmites
meet stalactites ~
cathedral columns

Judith Ahmed

birds chirp
church bells
echo

Lee Bentley



singing hymns
in white surplices
magpie choir

Jill Gower



by eight
the black sky lightening
insistent
piano notes
reaching climax

Dawn Colsey

lotus pond
a motionless heron
stabs its reflection

twilight stillness
the hay lying down
in its cut grass smell

forty years ago
delighting in droplets
on dead twigs
the perfect roundness
I still contain

Belinda Broughton

aiming for unity
choosing between
zen books

Belinda Broughton

condensation
blurs the view
coffee shop window

Margaret Rawlinson

obituary page . . .
my name not there
so I go to work

Bett Angel-Stawarz

commuter bus
the guide dog's eyes catch
early morning light

glass tower
each pane holds
a different piece of sky

poured jeans
at the hems
her feet escape

outside
the city building ~
smoke signals

Lynette Arden

bright umbrellas dance
through dark puddles
on spindly legs

Marilyn Linn

fifth floor balcony
frostbitten long johns
urban stalactites

old man retches
grimy kettle whistles
grey dawn chorus

Julia Wakefield

passing a yawn along the queue

rush hour
a huddle of coats
at the bus stop
the faces of strangers
light up for the child

plump breasts
in a little black dress
the adolescent girl
so indecisive
about crossing the street

Belinda Broughton

Atami

Lynette Arden

cliff top hotel
pines silhouetted
against a ruffled sea

western size
my *yukata*
drags on the floor

kneeling
we consume steaks
and the burlesque show

east wind
sunlight sparkles
over chopped waves

lacquered red
small pavilions
frame sky and water

the cliff path appears
and disappears ...
sea mist

contorted driftwood
stranded on shingle
sea swash ...

salt spray
my hair turns
to string

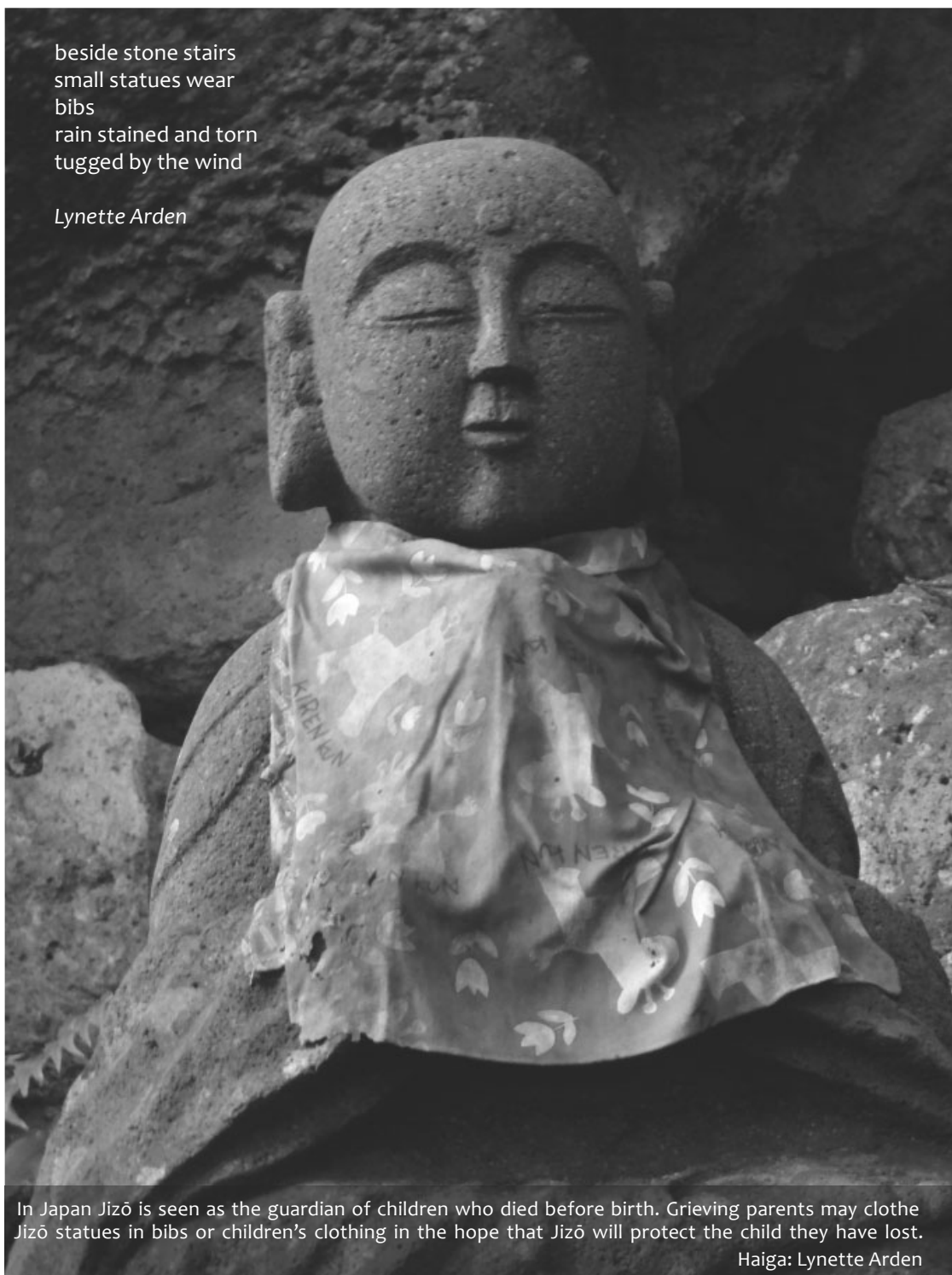
the hotel shop
displays luxury gifts ...
leaving empty handed

yukata neatly folded
I pack
memories

farewell bows
the bus climbs hills
towards Tokyo

beside stone stairs
small statues wear
bibs
rain stained and torn
tugged by the wind

Lynette Arden



In Japan Jizō is seen as the guardian of children who died before birth. Grieving parents may clothe Jizō statues in bibs or children's clothing in the hope that Jizō will protect the child they have lost.
Haiga: Lynette Arden

on the hessian rug
a centrepiece of yabbies
piled high –
campfire smoke still drifts
around my dad and me

Bett Angel-Stawarz

catching tadpoles
barefoot in the creek
children's laughter
takes me home
with my jar and satisfaction

Pam Brow

retired
Dad takes up
speedboat racing
shaking off chalk dust
he spreads a wake of foam

the Pacific
ripples over rock pools
to the shore
where we gathered cowries
took home sand between our toes

thanks to my mother
who taught me about life
by living
through unbending days
unbent

Lynette Arden

Train Song

Lynette Arden

pale hills
ring-barked eucalypts stand
on crooked shadows

silver grass fleeing under the moon

curved track ~
craning to see
the last carriage

a hanky flapping white from a window

cold air
hot metal canisters
warm feet

next door using bloody every second word

carriage junction
swaying in the scent
of dust and iron

buying limp sandwiches with loose change

train motion
the water jug tilts
against the horizon

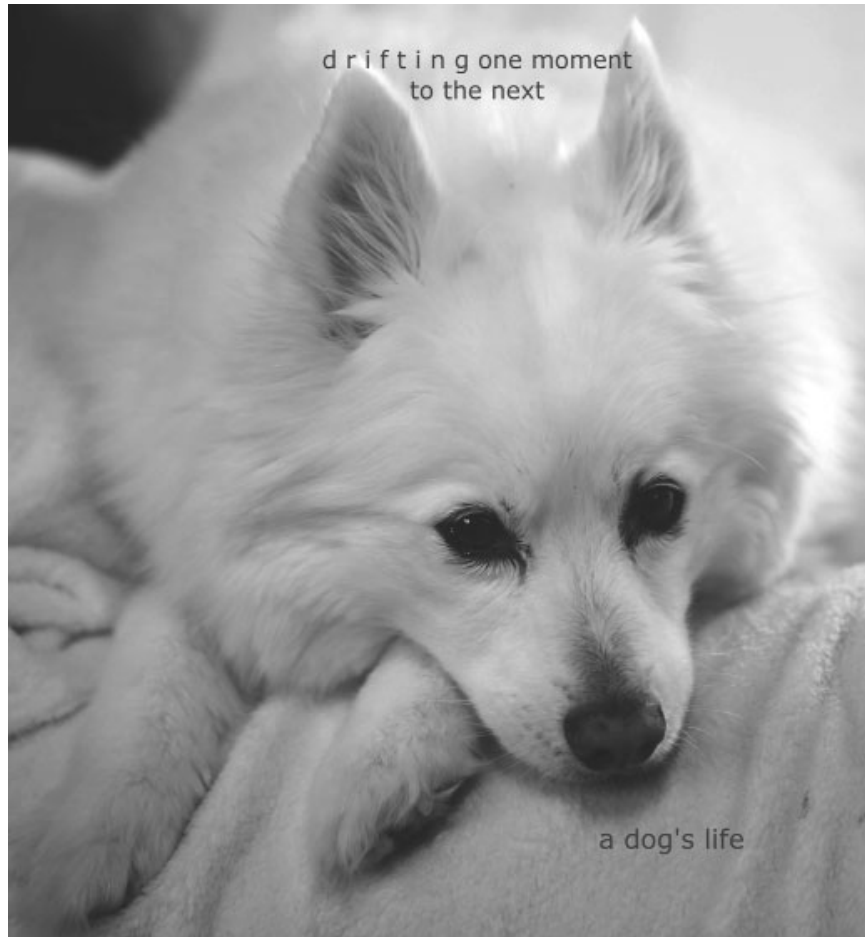
metal and glass clink water tastes of cold

dawn –
the railway bridge dives
between clouds

we clatter down windows entering the tunnel dust

home station –
beginning to recognize
familiar faces

lifting my suitcase my father looks old



Haiga: *Alexander Ask*

in his sleep
guarding us
the puppy

old dog
feigning surprise
at her own fart

Belinda Broughton

dog walk
each step he completes
with enthusiasm

Alexander Ask

Autumn evening
shadows stretch like cats
snatching up the sun

Julia Wakefield

the cat curls
into the sunshine
first frost

Bett Angel-Stawarz

midsummer's day
on its last panting breath
the ginger cat sleeps
contented
by the rustling curtains

Athena Zaknic

sanctuary
the blue cat
stalks her memory

Maeve Archibald

spring sunshine
the cat's slow breathing
on the windowsill

willow pattern
the bowerbird displays
his best blue chip

Lynette Arden

small birds at winter dusk
their nesting cries thin
among bare branches

Dawn Colsey

hot summer morning ~
I cross shadows
with a cyclist

gold sun dazzle ~
along shaded streets
rosellas fly

Margaret Fensom

on the fence
a choir of Noisy Miners
in surplices

Pam Brow

percussion
inner city
courtyard

furry caterpillar
entering the
beauty shop

Lee Bentley

a fleet of galleons
the ladies assemble
for aquarobics

Julia Wakefield

in the brass slot
of the letter box
junk mail

Lynette Arden

rooftop garden
the elevator
stops short

Marilyn Linn

Autumn nights
Rachael Mead

late night typist
bats click
through the trees

footsteps at night
on my skin
a spider

pollen dusts
my coffee
autumn constellations

cloud swathed moon
another quilt
on the bed

cold night
the stray cat paces
the bag lady

one for the road
the moon swaying
in a wine glass

Lynette Arden

drought
a fallen leaf curls
over its shadow

Lynette Arden

white kite against black sky
screeching cry
cockatoo in winter flight

Dawn Colsey

an ocean
in a raindrop ~
drought

Judith Ahmed

rain drop
on a thorny twig ~
traveller takes a pause

how the rain sings
in the gutter ~
journey into dark

Margaret Fensom

sunshowers
gild the rain-forest floor
pale light from wet leaves

stormy day
my blue and white umbrella
inside out and flying

Pam Brow

storm clouds darkening –
one rip
releases rain

purple jacarandas
against encircling gloom
lightning
rips

the
sky

Marilyn Linn

first fat rain drops
wiping his face
the frog

Belinda Broughton

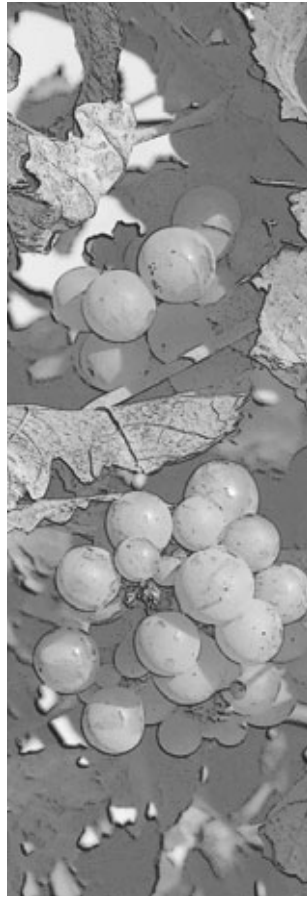


caught by the camera
and garlanded with willow twigs
a piano floats on its back
the tsunami
playing its tune

Dawn Colsey

in the flattened space
after the cyclone
memories of fruit
tasting sweeter
than ever before

Veronica Shanks



from a roadside stall
fruit and spices
jam-packed in a jar
the lingering taste
of our last holiday

Veronica Shanks

spots of blood
blackberry juice
on my hands

Maeve Archibald

smooth ovals
chocolate eggs in gold leaf
the burden
of calories weighing heavy
on the shelf

Jill Gower

crushed eucalypt
wafting on a breeze –
your aroma
rising on the steam
as I iron your shirt

Bett Angel-Starwarz

rainfall flows
in gutters
takes me back
to my childhood
sailing paper boats

Alexander Ask

counting the ducks
the little boy
gets it right

aha moment
the child realising
please works

Belinda Broughton

little thing
on a piece of string –
child walking Chihuahua

Dawn Colsey

drifting soap bubble
a rainbow
touches my face

three quarter moon
my neighbour sings
to her unborn child

Lynette Arden



Japanese garden
even the butterflies
are bonsai

autumn leaf ~
a hand print
on the window

Margaret Fensom

raindrops
a myriad fleeting nipples
on garden pond

Margaret Rawlinson

autumn sunshine
a burnished shield
face of evening

Maeve Archibald

scrying
the surface of the pond
for truth
I can only see the sky
that a fish swims through

dreamy sunshine
a baby magpie plays
pick-up sticks

Belinda Broughton

leaving my Hills home
I take one last walk and feel
shells in my pocket

Julia Wakefield

leaves flutter and fall . . .
even the autumn sun has drifted
down the sky

Robin Sinclair

summer's day
in the warm silence
a butterfly flutters

Athena Zaknic

sunrise
orb weavers hold
open house

Marilyn Linn

river at low tide
a heron tiptoes across
a rippled sunrise

Julia Wakefield

three black swans
the ripples of the river
file behind

Alexander Ask

a cascade
over the waterfall
birdsong

Maeve Archibald

moon moves
out of eclipse
we sip red wine
waiting for life
to be whole again

Lesley Charlesworth

income
less expenses
but how
do I tally
the sunlight on my back

Belinda Broughton

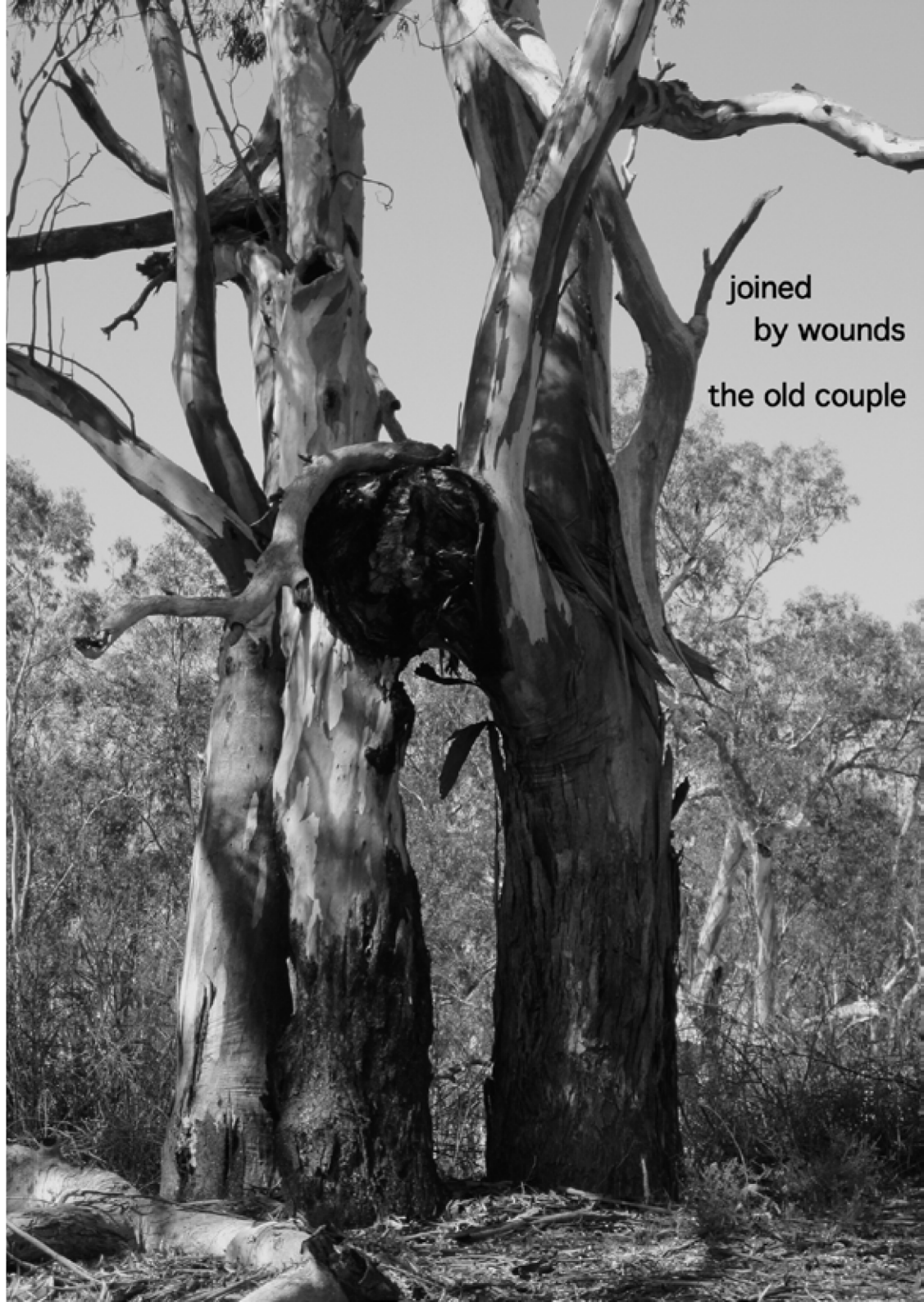
a single brush stroke
on rice paper conjures
a songbird
now handled only with gloves
in the museum vault

tossing his mane
switching his tail
this horse will not loiter
on the brush stroke
that shapes a mountain

Lynette Arden

waiting for a haiku
a blow fly
pats my back

Alexander Ask



joined
by wounds
the old couple

