

Katoomba Incantation

one.the ups

bivouacked,
between Sydney and Bathurst-
alembic of buskers and brisk air:

Katoomba by dusk,
after the tempests
I take notice of myself
in an acrobatic city
refulgent amidst its
frangible sandstone terraces;

in the sunken green dimples
of treed land between tin roofs,
obstreperous white cockies,
ravish seeds of casaurina
agitating the backstreet silence
above The Gully.

locals are crammed into arteries
off Katoomba Street, souped-up
exhaust system epiglotti
bellow foully like indigestion
for tourists moseying towards
a share of the mountain dogma;

the cart-wielding madmen
clanking cans of Coles beans
outside biodynamic food stores,
insult lavender with body odour;
within earshot, passing freight-
Great Western Highway's incantation.

this little city whose sun gods
are spat upon by clouds;
stoic city of gentle bookshops
and end-times exegeses in cafes,
of Land Rovers in low gear,
the cocksure vendors of adventure.

two.the downs

my neighbor,
he is a rubbish bin master-
obsessive-compulsive about them:

expert in their etiquette
and impeccable with their timing
-never sooner, never later-
his is an exertion of love
unfolding in the little valley
sidewalks of Wembley Downs.

the same person every morning
is fast-walking for heart fitness
while magpies and crows cackle
and release sudden white shite
onto the perfect black bitumen,
aiming for joggerheads.

such artistic, altruistic birds!
dripping mandalas of excrement
(like Pollack), dropping divinatory
splotches for the benefit of Buxton
Street's residents, but who cares
about the occult these days.

instead conversations revolve
around the sounds of crow feet
on corrugated roofs at 6am,
the ball & chain watering schedule,
that bloody bark-shedding bastard
of a gumtree and its shitbirds!

all this, before the god of sun
stymies the involuted clot of creation
singeing the hirsute dunes of Floreat
collapsing houses, imploding seas
liquifying Scarborough's Priapus
between Fremantle and Hillaries.

three.between

indian pacific,
fractals of mulga bush-
swatheline through Australia:

ten hours to Kalgoorlie,
dark walk in the wide streets
of the Golden Mile, next day
tropical gales at Cook
old gaol propped like outhouses-
bush hospital a stack of rocks.

step off at Adelaide to retrieve,

Internet palaver, downgraded
to the Red Seats to the Pacific,
families crawl aboard, why don't
they just fly? backtrack towards
Alice Springs, then abruptly east.

watery heat of Broken Hill,
suspension of thought, movement
through the night, fetally
expiring through the undefined
expanse of the Blue Mountains-
early morning call, off at Lithgow.

wind tossing hair, a searching
look behind sunnies, a snapping
of the train into motion
last look of eyes, a burning
impression of always ever,
either leaving or arriving.

John Ryan