

THERE YOU GO

*There is always something
to return to....*

- Julie Flanders/OP

Seven
days to dry
out. Away you
go: no smile
divines

the sky,
inviting
bird beast flower
along, no
glimmer,

just beer
and that speech
'dust to dust' (yup)
dumbing down
the hour

glass. Now
you look, look
through & throughout
the house; peel
onions,

boil meat -
close over
those windows long
after their
yonder

retreats,
also-ran
tide or after-
noon cirrus.
Hello.

Goodbye....
Once uttered
the fleshed sentence makes
makes 'it' so:
water

white wine,
vinegar
balsam. Syntax
remembers
'whanau'

dead. You
hang portraits
on serif hooks,
decorate
space, size

paper
tigers, cross
this vanishing
line – you to
a T –

See me
here? Only
in memory,
an echo
cloning

the air:
the real is
real difficult
see? That gap
between

See me
and *here*, where
your girl ventures
like a ghost,
the sun

going
west, scares you.
God's length height width
depth beyond
your maths,

you queue
for her kiss
or His blessing.
Your tadpole
mouth is

bubbling
with *if but*
and *maybe not...*
You wear one
cross, bear

one up
hill, dying
to reach the end.
And for what?
Snouting

the dark
a man can
poke his lantern
at random,
hoping

he'll get
his girl back....
But why see her
now? Your door
closes

the way
shadow does
on a body
no body
wants: words

tersely
fit around
and about her
transparence.
You turn

away –
the hour turns
down another
sun; suspend
subject-

object
for a pure
solipsism;
abolish
there then.

Forget
her hanging
step, all the rest –
she was all
your rest.

Rest now.
The moon zooms
into focus
through kowhai
you climbed

at ten.
Devouring
moon and flower
alike, you
blink once

twice thrice
scoping those
unique features
worn before
you knew

the world
knew you. Test
that meniscus
between *here*
and *now*,

juggling
dreams like fruit
yet to ripen,
gone to seed.
White pine

rooting
the clay ditch
which irrigates
grandfather's
farmlet,

recall
his ploughshare
pugged, his rare hands
calloused: you
turning

away
as magpies
picked the eyes out
of scarecrows
and lambs.

Twelve hours
of sunset....
The nor'wester
plays with dust
the way

a teen
plays a priest
in confession:
'Yes, my child.'
Come to

God's (x)
senses, you
know why Dad nailed
the skylight
shut – rain

staining
 the antique
Jesus above
 your small bed.
 (Outside,

 makeshift
 as your dream,
a cross honours
 the tomcat
 he drowned.)

 - It's all
 possible:
the grass enthralled,
 earthenware
 clatter,

 button
 rustling silk....
Such workaday
 miracles
 repeat

 here. Now.
 The Scottish
thistle faithful
 as a dog,
 dogged

 around
 your ankles,
scratches thin-skinned
 Paradise:
 'My child.'

 You jump
 verdigrised
railings to graze
 with slate shards
 the pond

 until
 your wrist stings,
this hair-lip wind
 lips and day's
 done. Still.

 A boy
 God rescued
from the babble,
 from the rod
 of men

you played
with the thorn
safely; the breeze
played your hair....
Half-arsed,

the moon
antidote
to Pyrrha's heel,
Socrates'
hemlock,

Hitler's
invective
at Nuremberg,
you look on:
thumbs up

Armstrong
weighs the Earth
while weightless. Sun
down and out
of view,

one man's
premature
step reduces
history
to this

three-phase
occlusion
of the blue eye,
to nuisance
value.

The moon,
selfless, wants
that boy-next-door
called Adam
to walk

rainbows
with God's sin
omnipresent
in his seed -
call it

Huxley's
limitless
self-assertion -
while you want
Rousseau's

repose
in nature,
'sound in body'
if not mind
tonight.

Starlight
clarifies
your *either/or*
into 'Yes,
my Lord....'

And then,
extinguished
by dew-drenched grass,
the firefly;
a gneiss

tombstone
withdrawing
its inscription
from mourners,
worn smooth

before
you press on:
What's the story
boy? The plot
devolves

with earth
revolving
the sun. Windows
boarded up,
four walls

ignore
their prospects.
Among the dunes
size nine shoes
pursue

the dream;
you, whistling
the terrier,
disappear
with moon,

hermit
crab, turtle-
dove swirled out of
time. Nothing
coming

out of
nothing else
becomes nothing:
ice-crystal
at noon....

- You want
the lot. Yes,
silhouetted
acridid
wings' film;

the bells
peeling snow
from the ski-slope
until dogs
smell naught;

the Lord
destroying
all and sundry
come Monday
morning,

your heart
heavy as
Abel's body;
'another
dollar'.

Above
(but where else?)
a jumbo jet
trails the sun
which flares,

landing
on just one
engine in fields
where berries
adhere

to barbed
wire-fences....
- You retire to
the silence
candles

echo,
attempting
an audience
with the Lord
(*mea*)

culpa)
this Christmas,
when everyone
says *Goodbye*
again.

Hello.
You assume
the future – more,
you induce
future

events:
the image
your word makes here
makes the world
over.

Your fears
fulfilled by
their influence
alone, you
do not

receive
each second
as of right, you
purchase it
with words....

- Is this
plausible,
a liar's line
or widow's
account

after
Anzac Day?
(You watch as she
hugs that shawl
'Dad' wrapped

her in
before he
boarded the train
to Linton;
elder-

scent spills
on medalled
chests: your eyes lift
- irony -
towards

heaven,
which you doubt
arches over
whoever
you are.)

Beyond
survey-pegs
there's 'inherence'
(John Ruskin);
you hear

the God
who's not there.
You're staunch before
nor'wester
streaking.

Almost
dawn - 'almost'
bores - and the Lord
performs *yes-*
and-then-

again
routines (jeez)
where nothing is
but nothing
is clear.

Your need
to seize more
than the day takes
you away
from here

and now
to reclaim
an absent rib.
Cross the road....
Gargoyles

over-
reach the church
where mothers meet
their maker
with hymns.

Prayer,
that foreign
yet familiar
language; soft
prayer,

aching
memory
of a heaven
heavy as
granite;

prayer
urgent as
the locust's rasp –
the locust
that falls

only
to soar once
more, scarlet-shanked
as sunset
or dawn.

Desire's
worming through
to the surface
of surface
as you

shore up
your story
surely as earth
hoards parents
and friends.

Each plot
puts its name
to the wind's face,
exchanging
down up

left right
but never
vice and virtue.
Your spirit
shelters

amongst
the heat-haze
like the locust.
You never
cared for

any
kiss save this
last - between cause
and effect
it came

like Christ
flaring as,
aureole-spill,
the locust
closes....

Time to
go, Time.

IN MEMORY OF RACHEL JANE MCDOWALL

I'm bound by the beauty
- Jane Siberry

Each hour's a stone kicked by kids in Nikes
your way. You half-explain to Rachel Jane
Death is when you leave our house for the street:
your scarf trailing, a frayed cortege
scattering pigeons.... And your voice splashes
a white-washed courtyard,
graffiti

for the unemployed dust that hangs around
the tobacconist's sign – a sign that flicks
God's fly-blown light off your shoulders, over
the bodies of strangers. These days,
while His sky rests on our earth, you plot out
your daughter's options
through a glass

darkly, through blackberries that catch the scarf
she knitted for your birthday. A sundial
quickenning your fingertips, you can tell
the time. *I'm bound by the beauty....*
You stride between trees that are the history
you don't want to know
by heart, no

(even though you don't know its boundaries
this bush is still bush; bodiless, Rachel's
not Rachel). A straining horse you shudder
as if your vertebrae were ducts
for steam; as if Boyle's Law meant you could cool
off despite her scent
in your hair,

her hair at your neck; as if good luck was
under this stone. *I'm bound by desire,*
I'm bound to keep returning, I'm bound
by the beauty of the light. So
what are you going to do – when doing
it does not go half
the distance?

Imagine.