

## 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.