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Wound ever haunting goes near
fear were safe people
Are taken from their lands
Ancestors shine and brighten
the under mine murri

Can we all supper the same
Can I be the poet or a novelist
If hidden life is hid then a
rainbow must colour
Any lonely place. I’ll be there.

— Lionel Fogarty, “Would ever remember …”

This volume considers the relationship between poetry and the trace, investigating whether poetic language and form might provide ways in which to approach what Derrida calls the “mark of the absence of a presence” or “an always already absent present” (Spivak xvii). The trace is an affective site; our relation to it is often of desire, but also of mourning and melancholia. Just as “Nothing is ever lost” so too “Everything is lost” doesn’t sum it up either (DuPlessis 29). In a number of chapters, the trace offers the possibility of tracking the poet in the world, including in relation to breath and to mood. As Rachel Blau DuPlessis suggests, it may put forward the possibility of a “specific trail through an exacting landscape” but is more likely to be a “perpetual unsettling in/the peppy depths of [the] daily” (26; 25). It gestures back to the bodily and to the sensual.

The trace is also historical, “sedimented fossil thought,/ a locale or event in which there is much/ forgetting, salvaging, evolving, condensing” (DuPlessis 27). In its relation to the past, the trace is suggestive to memory but can never record an event with justice. It promises but cannot provide permanency or fixity. Often associated with the archive, we speculate on its incomplete nature, considering narratives of accommodation or how to live with loss. Sometimes it will force us into a journey after
the Other, a journey of desire that Derrida has suggested in *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* may consume and drive us delusively after a kind of truth or origin.

The trace may hold an aura that provides a sense of the communal or collective; it may be a sign that borders on apprehension or the palpable. It may provide a sign of hope or resistance. This may be found in rhythm, an image, a word or a phrase, or a fragment. The trace encourages a wavering, a breaking of linear thought. Language itself is trace-like in the sense of fretwork, of being a net that can hold some things but not all. As Rachel Blau DuPlessis notes:

Given: that things are maddened, spotted, stained: given
that words are fat and juiced with jargon;
given usage, whisk and turn
plus the old effect, the dot that wove a net . . .
Given this – Cannot present argument about trace. (33–34)

I. Breathing and Inhabiting the Trace

One of the key resonances surrounding the term “trace” in poetry and its criticism is what could be broadly called the “biospheric,” the relationship between the writing body and the environment in which a poem is constituted or communicated. In “Cloud, Aura and Poetic Breath in Modernity,” Thomas Ford notes that Walter Benjamin conceives of aura as something which is lost when an artwork is removed from its concrete singularity and conveyed by the media of reproduction:

A strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however, near it may be. To follow with the eye – while resting on a summer afternoon – a mountain range on the horizon or a branch that casts its shadow on the beholder is to breathe the aura of those mountains, of that branch. (104–05).

For Benjamin, aura corresponds to a particular unreproducible atmosphere but is only conceivable at the point in which attention is brought to its decay. Elias Canetti also focuses on breath, viewing it as the only immediate form of common being left to us. Yet, he suggests that we have lost this once unquestionably common substrate of communicative life, that there has been “splintering of the atmosphere”(11). For both, there has been a fracturing of aura or collective breath that once formed the indivisible tissue of being in common. Ford locates this decay of aura as occurring as far back as Romanticism, reading Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud” as a restructuring of breathing “so that each breath now affirms the poet’s solitude in the present, his inwardness”(158).
In “Poetic Composition: Freedom from Mood,” Susan Stewart discusses how musical moods “characterize moments of non-alienation between the physical experience of the world and the mind’s reaching after what it cannot grasp” (185). Susanne Langer says that dynamic patterns of feeling are typically beyond discourse and include the rhythms of life and the rhythms of attention: the organic, emotional, and mental. (qtd. in Stewart 162). Leo Spitzer uses the term *stimmung*, meaning “attunement,” where there is a unity of feeling between persons and their environment. “*Stimmung* is fused with the landscape, which in turn is animated by the feeling of man — it is an indissoluble unit into which man and nature are integrated” (qtd. by Stewart at 164). Stewart suggests that the “most fundamental state of reception is that of the immediate environment provided by the body itself and its surroundings, including weather” (167). In contrast to poems of sympathetic nature in the seventeenth century, the Romantics explored disjunctions between environment and mood, as well as changes in mood brought on by the environment. Stewart cites Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale” where the poet’s state of “dull insensitivity” is more emphatic when contrasted against the “receptive reciprocating mood between the bird’s song and its environment. Alternatively the poet’s suffering in Shelley’s “Stanzas Written in Dejection – December 1818, Near Naples” is “made milder by the atmosphere around him” (170).

Jill Jones works through similar ideas in the contemporary age. In “Traces of Being and Making: Walking Around a Personal Poetics,” she contends that poems are made of the materials of this world and that writing comes from “the senses and rhythms of the working body” (142). Poems reveal ways of inhabiting space. They may “speculate on thresholds of place, atmosphere and human interaction, observations on ‘openings and closures’, of ‘unknown tracks’ marked by all our usual spectres of mortality and transience, of doubleness, (a sapphic effect, perhaps), and the sense of a boundary world” (142):

... walking down my path, i expect to meet myself
hanging around the front door,
a refugee on the verandah, pale face and misleading eyes ... (142)

For Jones, the walking poet emblematises an embodied creative practice. She suggests that “in walking and using means of public transport, there is the possibility of meditative experience invoked by the daily journey, the opportunity for musing on impermanence while at the same time being open to moments of access, of emotion and image, of the language that works with that: of engaging outwardly or inwardly, as one poem anticipates or remembers another poem” (142). As Gayatri Spivak points out in her translator’s preface to Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*, the French word *la trace* “carries strong implications of track, footprint, imprint” (xv).
In “I find by the poem this place: Search and Location in Jennifer Rankin’s Poetry,” Bonny Cassidy suggests that the kinaesthetic quality of moving within a place as a “source of liberty from existential and nationalist anxiety” (128). She nominates the family property of Pine Camp as a key site for Rankin’s contemplation of place and a mythical awareness of it. Through a continual return to Pine Camp in her poetry, Rankin shifts between a perception of a place able to be cultivated and domesticated to a gradual “breakdown between enclosure and exposure” (121). This transformation marks a different relationship between self and land. As with Jill Jones, Cassidy finds that there is an important interrelation between language and body and that the dwelling of Pine Camp comes to emblematise a movement into an intermediary space that is open to the speaker’s “own history and experience” (121). Like Jones, Rankin writes of walking:

and I turned at first in each direction
slipping from one path to another always reappraising
until I could no longer focus and made instead
my own way crossed continually by other tracks. (qtd. in Cassidy at 123)

As Cassidy points out, there is an active perception of the environment, a reappraising, even as the space is marked by the passing of Rankin’s speaker and the tracks of others before her. Cassidy further discerns the physical decay of the hut at Pine Camp, the speaker seeks not to hide behind its walls but to join them: “I go into the mud walls” (qtd. in Cassidy at 127).

John Kinsella views poetry also as an interaction with environment and posits that ecological change is related to change in the lyric. His long poem, “Harsh Hakea,” contemplates the planting of plants native to Western Australia as a political counteraction to an “agricultural (e)state by trade / of corporations” (93). The poem too, is an intervention against writing that is merely a “gesticulate container of toxic sludge/ port of rock-tree mel / scree / / [. . .] of f a’sc r r e t e.” (79) and the endless proliferation of “plasma-screen televisions, new scramble bikes, / four-by-fours” (70). Contemplating “psycho-/geographies, to plant locale, as memory,” the speaker plants

lyrical vestige;

harsh HAKEA. (72)

Patrick Jones takes up the political motivations of an ecologically sustainable poetics in his manifesto-styled “Free-dragging, Slow Text and Permapoetics.” Like Kinsella, he
believes that the poem “participates within a dynamic biosphere, not just in content but also in our comprehension” (106). He argues that the conceptual life of the poet is “materially aligned with her physical being, which is part of her local ecology” (114). The poet [...] participates within the environment that supports her” and that “the generation of toxic wastes, support for capitalised food and the destruction of the landbase [...] alters the way she uses her time and her body” (114). Jones develops the idea of a “slow text” where there is more personality, diversity, and physicality apparent on the page. He also promotes the idea of “free dragging” which is involved in permanent play or “permaplay.” Such play is “militarised” and involves “the composing of transient poetical situations generated by chance encounters with people and things” (115). A free dragging poetry is “a poetry of memory and of free time, spitting everything back onto the street as a compost activator for culture” (115).

In “‘Originals of revisable originals’: Sampling and Composting in the Poetry of Peter Minter, Paul Hardacre, and Kate Lilley,” Kate Fagan extrapolates on Jed Rasula’s statement from This Compost: Ecological Imperatives in American Poetry that, “Poetry is biodegradable thought” (28). She argues that his poetics of compost is similar to an ethical poetics of context, that is, a poetics that is “switched on to the active relations between things, between elements that co-habit in what [Peter] Minter describes as ‘living systems’” (97). She suggests that decolonisation can be found in Minter’s poem, “A Nation of Trees”:

This is the new nature –

snow peas, English spinach & bright

pak choy synthesise foreign matter,

newsprint compost & old hay

break down the suspect plot.

I stand planted in this mix of attributes. (qtd. at 99)

Sampling from A.D. Hope’s line, “a nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey,” Minter marks a different relationship of transplantation to Australia, one that allows a new compound from a “suspect plot” of ‘bad history’ (99). A slightly different strategy can be found in Michael Farrell’s “colonial edits” in which he cuts up and reassembles early Australian poems such as those by John Shaw Neilson, Bernard O’Dowd, and Mary Fullerton. Another term for this, I would add to Fagan’s discussion, might be “transportation,” where there is a temporal rather than geographic crossing. Fagan goes on to analyse how Hardacre negotiates transplantation to Chiang Mai in his volume,
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Love in the Palace of Rats. Hardacre cites from Tenzin Choegyal’s Buddhist tract, Call of the Land,” for his epigraph: “Being a stranger in this land/it seems the day is longer than a year.” Fagan says that Hardacre’s poetry might be best thought of as “pan-tropic,” arguing that cultural translation occurs in the poem, “as one localized moment of encounter” and that this allows the speaker’s “sense of subjectivity to be continually destabilized and re-oriented” (98). As Fagan suggests, Joan Retallack’s concept of knowledge in The Poethical Wager is increasingly pertinent:

The model is no longer one of city or nation states of knowledge each with separate allegiances and consequences, testy about property rights and ownership but instead the more global patterns of ecology, environmentalism, bio-realism, the complex modelings of the non-linear sciences, chaos theory. (Retallack 295)

In “somewhere, Australia.…” toward a new poetics of regionalism,” Keri Glastonbury discusses the problems of a situatedness of place in light of transnational influences. She questions: “To what extent is an identity as a ‘rural’ or ‘regional’ poet still a productive one […]?” (133). She notes that the landscape-based poetics of Anthony Lawrence are not tied to a particular region and that other poets like John Kinsella have had international relocations. Focusing on the poetry of Derek Motion, she suggests that his “mediatised world of online journals and blogging” creates a community “where he connects with other poetry ‘locals’ across a web of nodal points, leap-frogging established hierarchies of reputation and reach” (134). For Glastonbury, a term like “post-regional” is more apt. Analysing poems like “gumi” she can still identify an “idiom tied to place,” a sense of “space and temporality that might mark [it] as a regional poem, as well as an inexorable semiotics that differentiates it from urban youth culture” (135). Another term that Glastonbury proposes is “networked regionalism” (137), which might cover a negotiation of new relationships between the local and the global.

II. The Past and the Trace

In Archive Fever, Derrida argues that the trace shows up the impossibly fantasy of “reliving the other” (98). In “The Pound Addendum: Ezra Pound’s Response to Marianne Moore’s ‘Black Earth,’” Elizabeth Wilson considers how the annotations by Moore to a three-page 1919 prose poem by Pound and a 68-line addendum by Pound in one of his letters to her have functioned as traces to their relationship. While Pound’s addendum mobilises a sexualised rhetoric of contestation, Moore’s annotations in red pencil (“not from here on,” “Not now,” and “This page out”) seems to carry “injunctions against certain acts of reading; spectral commands against reading on or reading further, that still seem to have force” (234). Wilson argues that Moore’s annotations reveal a doubled narrative.
of desire, “a desire to silence existing concomitantly with a desire to sustain” (238).

Wilson notes how in the incendiary poem “Black Earth,” annotations, and addendum have disappeared from or been defused in subsequent collections, with only the occasional flagging by critics that there exists these tantalising traces in the archive.

The selves of Pound and Moore remain strategically controlled by both themselves and others, and yet they remain, as Wilson demonstrates, always beyond control. Unlike Pound and Moore’s established profiles, Melissa Boyde points to Hope Mirlees’ disappearance from modernist cultural history. Boyde suggests that this is partly because of her travelling, moving between a number of literary and lesbian circles in Cambridge, London and Paris. Accordingly, she could not be so easily identified with a single group. The work of scholars like Boyde and Julia Briggs constitute important interventions in twentieth-century poetry, and, in this volume, Boyde’s chapter on Mirlees extends the discussion of the interrelated destabilisation of a sense of time and of self that comes with movement and complex affiliations.

In “‘Originals of revisable originals,’” Kate Fagan proposes that poetic sampling “be read as a form of souveniring that allows its keeper – or writer – to fabricate a local, personalised relation to historical context while involving her or him in a drama of contested origins” (101). Such souveniring or collecting can be found in the poetry of Kate Lilley. Lilley’s “versary” is a step away from Rasula’s “compost library” and more a ‘circulating library’ in its gendered history. But, as Fagan points out, Lilley’s is an individualised library even as it is an “extensive back-catalogue of feminised genres including 40s and 50s American film culture, country music song lyrics, contemporary domestic and kitsch advertising lingo, and arcane finds from texts by early modern women” (101).

Fagan’s chapter reminds us of the ethical and localised negotiation of origins and pasts. As Susan Stewart notes in On Longing (to borrow from Fagan’s essay), “Without marking, all ancestors become abstractions, losing their proper names; all family trips become the same trip – the formal garden, the waterfall, the picnic site, and the undifferentiated sea become attributes of every country” (138).

One of the sites of sampling in Lilley’s work is from Susan Howe’s poetry, with both writers focusing on the trope of poetic “embroidering.” Embroidering has not only been traditionally a very proper feminine activity (“ladylike,” to borrow from the title of one of Lilley’s poetry collections), but also is suggestive of cultural fabrication, of “embroidering the truth” or refashioning the ‘truth’ to suit one’s own ends. An increasingly lauded contemporary poet, Howe’s poetry meditates on patterns within highly private histories and the broader cultural pressures shaping the survival of women as subjects. Lilley focuses on Howe’s The Midnight, a maternal elegy that throws into question textual processes of mourning, consolation, and repetition. Focusing
on working with material, both literally and metaphorically, Howe transposes sewing techniques like "cut work" to language, considering the "historic interiors" of familial and American history:

1775 landscape America
blindstitched to French
edge silk damask cover (101)

As Howe foregrounds, origins are both invisible effects but also affectively overlaid: "Quick live in my heart I/will trace things things" (157). The Midnight has a precursor in The Liberties, in which Howe reflects upon her own origins alongside the mediation of marginal historical figures, particularly Hester "Stella" Johnson (the acquaintance and possible secret lover of writer Jonathan Swift), and of female literary characters like Cordelia from Shakespeare's King Lear. Jessica L. Wilkinson argues that Stella's "present-absence" in The Liberties is a portrait of competing and drifting trajectories, noting: "Howe's work exhibits the fact that we can no longer refer to an original — these are only fragments, surfaces, glimpses, metaphors" (210). Wilkinson points out that much of Howe's poetry focuses on movement, whether that be of travel, bird flight, or postage. She thus stages mobile subjects.

The difficulty of constituting a self through time is also explored in the work of Robert Lowell and Michael Ondaatje. In "Frame by Frame: The Autobiographical Eye in the Late Poetry of Robert Lowell," Kim Cheng Boey discusses how Robert Lowell was increasingly drawn to the photographic image, perhaps because, as Roland Barthes states in Camera Lucida, "I can never deny that the thing has been there" (76). The photographic image seems to offer a means of fixing the self yet is in fact a site of simultaneous absence and presence. Photographs underscore the self's fragmentary, divided or multiple aspects. They are also haunting in their continual reminder of death. As Boey demonstrates, rather than embedding the self in a photographic instant, what results in Lowell's later writing "are fissures, flaws that expose the contradictions Lowell believes poetry must embrace" (385). Yet perhaps this better provides a means of the self “learning to live in history" (qtd. at 385) with all its unresolved aspects, its points of guilt and darkness.

Hazel Smith suggests that contemporary writers have used the concept of "afterimagining" as a way to engage with the unknowability and ambiguities of the past. As an image that continues to appear in one's vision after exposure to the original image, the afterimage is an involuntary trace from the past that may trigger an act of afterimagining, an active rearranging or the past through memory. She suggests that afterimagining may be a means of transforming the experience of loss and has been
used by contemporary writers to write a poetry that moves beyond elegy. In M.D. Coverley’s *Afterimage*, photographs of the narrator’s family and of Ethiopia, where the narrator’s father died during World War II, are more emblematic of gaps in both personal and cultural memory. The family photographs are located in what Marianne Hirsch calls “the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life” (8). Afterimagining becomes a form of postmemory, where a generation’s experience and own stories are overshadowed by the narratives that preceded their birth and which were shaped by “traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated” (Hirsch 22). In her essay, Smith considers Coverley’s *Afterimage* in light of Mary Jo Bang’s “The Role of Elegy” and Joan Retallack’s *Afterimage*. With all, there is a sense of occlusion. Whereas Bang’s poem covers personal grief, Coverley’s combines elements of personal and cultural memory, and Retallack focuses primarily on cultural memory. For Smith, Retallack’s afterimagining becomes a “kind of archival and cultural scavenging” (314).

This notion of scavenging is explored through the figure of reclusive Chicago artist Henry Darger in Melissa Hardie’s essay. When Darger died in 1972, he left his one-room dwelling in Chicago as an archive of visual and written material that he had collected and hoarded over many years. In her essay, “The Warehouse of Talent: Fugitive and Hoard in Ashbery, Darger, and Benjamin,” Hardie focuses on Ashbery’s long poem *Girls on the Run*, which recontextualises traces of this archive, while keeping to its sense of improvisation. Darger himself was obsessed with the story of a murdered child, Elsie Paroubek, and when he lost the clipping of it, tried to supplement for its loss through a novel over fifteen thousand words entitled *The Story of the Vivian Girls, in what is known as the Realm of the Unreal of the Glandeco-Angelinnian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion*. Hardie speculates that the “testimonial veracity” of Darger’s work “was registered precisely in the tracing of lived experience as enunciation of the images of serial suffering” (342). Darger, however, distances himself from the realm of real suffering through the doubled memory of the photographs but also by developing a realm of the unreal. Hardie argues that the archive might be a space in which “a transformative relation exists between the fugitive and the hoarded as a form of belatedness” (337). In seeking to trace and revivify Darger’s work, Ashbery replicates Darger’s own pursuit. Ashbery’s poem is self-consciously late in its engagement with Darger’s own sense of seriality and belatedness. Using Walter Benjamin’s metaphor of the collector as a kind of untidy child, Hardie demonstrates how both Ashbery and Darger exhibit a messy fascination with the object. The object become imbued as the “stuff” of memory; the collection ranging across the mundane and the ephemeral.

In “The Poem as Archive: Memory and the Trace in the Poetry of Michael Ondaatje,” Emily Bitto suggests that Ondaatje’s poetry often assembles everyday items, photographs,
and names (among other elements) that fold time between the remembered childhood landscapes of Sri Lanka and the landscapes of a later rural Ontario. In “Pig Glass,” Ondaatje writes, “There is no past until you breathe/on such green glass/rub it/over your stomach or cheek” (84). Linking up with the focus on embodiment by writers like Jill Jones, Jennifer Rankin, and Patrick Jones, Bitto contends that the act of touching, both physically and with the imagination, is an act of creating the past. Following Derrida’s declaration that there is “no originary trace” (Grammatology 61), John Frow proposes a textual model of memory in “Tout La Mémoire Du Monde: Repetition and Forgetting.” He argues that memory is necessarily “predicated on the non-existence of the past, with the consequence that memory, rather than being the representation of physical traces of the past, is a construction of it under conditions and constraints determined by the present” (228). This conveys an ongoing shaping of the past. In Frow’s textual model of memory, “rather than having a meaning and a truth determined once and for all by its status as event, its meaning and its truth are constituted retroactively and repeatedly” (229). Taking this model, time is reversible and “alternative stories are always possible” (229).

III. Politics and the Trace

As with writers like Susan Howe, Ondaatje is interested in that which has been in silence, with that of the marginal. In interview, he has said that “reclaiming untold stories is an essential role for the writer” (Bush). In her chapter, Anne Collett considers how Edward Kamau Brathwaite approaches the question at a broader level of community. Brathwaite asks: “How can a writer speak about ‘the people’, when, as George Lamming dramatizes in The Castle of My Skin, those to whom he refers have no such concept of themselves?” (33–34) Collett points out that Brathwaite seeks “to assert and ensure the survival of ‘tribal’ memory” of Black diaspora in his landmark The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy, with an awareness of today’s plural and fragmented world (401). She states that in poems such as “Jah,” Brathwaite depicts a land that has lost the memory of its most sacred places because “we have neglected our relationship to them: we have forgotten or neglected the naming rituals that bind us to place and give us a sense of intimate belonging” (407).

Brathwaite takes up the role of tribal drummer, linking “surviving cultural, spiritual and political aspects of Afro-Carribean life” with “bodily sensation and integral human relationship with the natural world” (406). Poems like “Jah” seek to give “voice to silence, giv[e] body to the disembodied, giv[e] name to the unnamed, giv[e] a sense of belonging to longing” (401). Yet while it might be viewed as “advocating a return to the divisiveness and isolationist politics of tribalism and religious separatism” (410), Brathwaite’s placement of the poem in a new collection of poetry that “sympathises with the privation, loss and suffering of isolated individuals in the ‘global’ world..."
affected by Hiroshima, Chernobyl, and 9/11 [...] shifts the original focus of the poem from the specific agenda of creating Caribbean community, or even a wider pan-African/Black community, to something more humanist” (410) As Collett discerns, Brathwaite’s poetry is as much of a “journey back” as a “cumulative journey forward into the future” (401).

Brathwaite is an overtly political poet. In her chapter, Sue Gillett also considers Pablo Neruda’s emergence as a political poet in light of the death of his friend Federico García Lorca in 1936. Having had an appointment with his friend who failed to show up, Neruda notes that, “And so the Spanish war which changed my poetry, began for me with a poet’s disappearance” (Memoirs 22). Whereas Neruda’s writing prior to Spain in Our Hearts (written and published during the Spanish Civil War in 1937) had revolved around melancholia and embracing “nothingness, absence, the unrepresentable, the beyond, and the unobtainable” (356) Spain in Our Hearts seeks “to bring a light to the destruction being waged against the Spanish people: ‘bring, bring the lamp, see the soaked earth, see the blackened little bone eaten by the flames, the garments of murdered Spain.’” In adopting the role of witness, Neruda moves away from melancholia to a process of mourning.

In focusing on the relationship between the body’s pulses and language in Neruda’s work, Gillett suggests that it is emblematic of Julia Kristeva’s idea of poetry: “Literary creation is that adventure of body and signs that bears witness to the affect...It transposes affect into rhythms, signs, forms” (22). Gillett argues that a poem like “Almeria” “attempts to force the signifier ‘blood’ into the register of the silent Real. This blood is still ‘steaming and burning’; is voluble in its silence and traceable to the bodies of once living people” (371). In bringing an “intimate, identificatory, and imaginative relation to sensory, suffering bodies,” Neruda’s mourning condemns fascism and “reanimates the memories of its resistance” (371): “may my blood keep this taste of shadow/so that will be no forgetting” (Neruda, Residence 295)

Joy Wallace points out that Aristotle viewed ethics as a branch of politics, questioning “what it is to live well, to attain happiness and security, at the level of a whole society” (374). She cites J.M. Bernstein who suggests that “self-reflection without transcendental reflection is the ethical act of self-consciousness that brings the subject before and into his or her historical situation” (Bernstein 16). In her chapter, Wallace explores Hazel Smith’s ethical investigation into the relationship between the artist and the medium or instrument of her creativity. This occurs alongside a further investigation into the relationship between the creative subject and her community. In a number of poems, Smith foregrounds the lack of proper instrumentality of the musical instrument, the musical instrument refusing to be simply an object of the artist’s use and, indeed, often demanding a painful bodily relationship with the musician. While poems like “Fullers’
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Walnut Cake" questions the lack of sustenance and inauthenticity of a cake, it also suggests that the violin is unable to have the power to heal the rupture between the creative subject and her community. The poem "Viola's Quilt" focuses on three women, each of whom has a different experience of Jewishness. Thought to be "suitably Semitic" (Smith 14), the violin is seen to be a way for the creative subject to connect with her community. While the violin fails in this task, another object—the quilt—does suggest a matriarchal reimagining of community, absorbing three generations of Jewish women and foregrounding process over product, a Levinasian "enjoyment" in the "concrete living of life" (qtd. in Wallace at 381). Wallace argues that while the poems are not presented as autobiographical, Smith's years as a professional violinist gives insight into the ethics raised by Keys Round Her Tongue (375). Crossing between music and poetry, Smith's experimentalism wavers between an anxiety that language is haunted by the unethical and by embracing the possibilities of language and its materiality.

In "Poems from Guantánamo: Testimonial Literature and The Politics of Genre," Nina Philadelphoff-Puren analyses Poems from Guantánamo: The Detainees Speak (2007), a collection of poetry written by seventeen men confined in Guantánamo Bay. The volume, she asserts, is important in beginning "the long work of rehumanisation that is so urgently required for those whose lives have been so violently overwritten by the dominant narrative of the War on Terror" (426). Yet, despite being framed as the "direct staging" of autobiographical 'voices', the collection remains "shadowed by profoundly attenuating proscriptions and silences" (424). Often initially produced out of evanescent materials such as stones or marked on Styrofoam cups with toothpaste or a fingernail, these original materials are destroyed and the poems recalled and transcribed. Philadelphoff-Puren points out that such poetry was viewed by the Pentagon as constituting a "presumptive security risk" (in that it could conceal coded information) and they would first go through a process of approving only poetry deemed fit for public consumption (427). Further, it was thought that then translating them into English would also diminish the risk. Translators were limited to "linguists with secret security level clearances" (Falkoff 5). As Philadelphoff-Puren points out, poems like Jamah Al Dossari's "Death Poem" are "devoid of details which would link it to his specific predicament in Guantánamo Bay" (431). It is unsurprising, then, that a detainee like Al Dossari would seek to articulate his testimony in a more forensic genre than poetry, one which framed his testimony as non-literary speech and factual. Despite this, the poetic genre has benefits, with poems like Al Dossari's testifying to a condition of 'inexpressibility' (430):

Take my blood.
Take my death shroud and
The remnants of my body.
Take photographs of my corpse at the grave, lonely. (32)

As Philadephoff-Puren argues, the poem “has a paradoxical temporalisation in that the speaker may be speaking as a dead person,” thus dramatising the August 2002 torture memo “in which the only subject who is legitimately able to testify to having suffered torture is a dead one” (429). Such contradictions are able to be accommodated and effectively relayed in the poetic genre.

David McCooey also considers the paratextual contexts of poetry and its role in the public sphere in his chapter “Poetry and Public Speech: Three Traces.” As he notes, there is a rich spectrum in the contemporary uses of poetry that escapes critical scholarship. This includes poetry fridge magnets, occasional poetry in weddings and funerals, and the intertextual use of poetry in film and other media. His chapter considers three examples of how poetry has been utilised in sometimes unexpected ways as political articulation. These include the political cartoons of Michael Leunig which parodically critiqued Australia’s stance on the Iraq War and David Hicks (the Australian citizen incarcerated in Guantánamo Bay and the first person to be tried and convicted under the U.S. Military Commissions Act of 2006). The second is the role of Australian poet Les Murray in the drafting of a proposed preamble to the Constitution of Australia. And the final example is the quotation of William Ernest Henley’s “Invictus” by the Oklahoma City Bomber Timothy McVeigh. While Murray’s poetic language is deemed appropriate for the symbolic charge of a nation’s Constitutional preamble, McVeigh’s quotation is volatile in its uncanniness, foregrounding the ‘unhomely at the heart of hearth and home.’ As McCooey discerns, McVeigh’s quoting of “Invictus” is far more than an act of self-heroising, for in the poem being ‘of’ and, indeed, emblematising the values of the culture that McVeigh attacked, his act underlines the terrorist as being ‘one of us’ and moreover, culturally literate, even sophisticated in the deployment of citation, irony, symbolism, and poetic speech.

IV Death Becomes the Author
In “Tracing Meaning without an Author: RACTER’s Inspired Electronics and The Computerisation of Poetry,” Sally Evans considers how computer-generated poetry can challenge the humanist presumptions underlying writing and how the author-figure may be simply a textual effect. Josh Mei-Ling Dubrau also investigates experiments with computer technology, focusing on John Tranter’s use of a computer speech-recognition program. She suggests that in using it as the base of a ‘translated’ poem, the “subject/author in a position of creating meaning, rather than disappearing under it” (300). For Dubrau, the Real is the unacknowledged trace of poetic representation but
that the subject may find expression beyond the Symbolic register in poetic discourse. Besides Tranter's adaptation of Rimbaud's *Métopolitain*, Dubrau also attends to how the sound and careful visual construction of Kruchenykh's "Dyr Bul Shchyl" works against the unintelligibility of the words themselves.

Tranter outlines the process of his Rimbaud translation in "Feints, Apparitions and Mode of Locomotion: The Influence of Anxiety in the Poetry of John Tranter." Besides a speech-recognition program, he notes using the computer program Brekdown to produce new poems. Brekdown reconstructs a text, analysing the likelihood of particular characters following other groups of characters in a writer's style. Feeding in a poem by Ashbery would generate "Her Shy Banjo" by Joy H. Breshan, the new author's name also being provided by another computer program, Namegram. In feeding in two different texts, Tranter creates a blended style to generate the draft of seven experimental prose pieces that become *Different Hands* (1998). An example of this is blending Ginsberg's "Howl" with the first fifteen pages of *The Bobbsey Twins on a Bicycle Trip*, producing "Howling Twins."

Tranter turns to other methods of appropriation and destruction, such as using Ted Berrigan's technique of obliterating words in a previous text with typewriter 'whiteout' to create another text. Tranter did the similar to *The Tempest* and called it 'Blackout.' He also used end-words lifted from the work of other writers in what Brian Henry has called "terminals," with Henry noting:

Because Tranter overwrites — and in the process simultaneously effaces and preserves — his source poem while retaining the anchoring points of the source poem, his terminals are both conservative and destructive. (140–41)

In "Dead or Alive: The Radical — or Reactionary — Nature of Stillness in Poetry and Other Conceptual Art Forms," Michael Farrell considers how Japanese-American artist On Kawara introduces death as a possibility while simultaneously contradicting in it in his four telegrams with the message: "I AM STILL ALIVE." On Kawara famously does not allow photographs of himself to be published, nor appears in public, his identity being both suppressed and sustained. Farrell extends this to poets like Frank O'Hara and Ern Malley, who he sees as having also played with a doubled sense of death and life. For Farrell, stillness is not as much death as a calling to attention, to heighten the sense that one is "STILL ALIVE."

In a related vein, Bernadette Brennan shows how Francis Webb's poems like "A Drum for Ben Boyd" dramatises the journey towards death rather than the moment of death itself, just as "A Death at Winson Green" drives towards the moment of death while refusing to name it. She argues that it is only Webb's final poems that
death is more fully explored and articulated. As Brennan points out, Webb viewed dying as a movement into eternal life, so death paradoxically signifies birth. Yet unlike Catholic doctrine which moves from death to resurrection, Webb moves more ambivalently from resurrection to death. In “Socrates,” the poem refuses to answer whether Socrates will “trump the last tricks of space” (Webb 350) and presents only an uncertain destination. Indeed, “tongues of love” are overpowered by darkness, giving way to “stillness” and “silence” (Webb 350). In “Sturt and the Vultures,” Webb’s birds turn not outward in a Yeatsian ‘widening gyre’ but towards a centre that may then implode. Lured towards earth, the birds represent both death and poetic vision, and signify a lack of redemption. One is left with a void that is between transcendence and the body on the ground, a space in-between offered by Webb that Brennan suggests provides an alternative thinking and naming of death.

In “Entering ‘a Kind of Grave’: The Use-Value of Poetry,” Emily Finlay cites Georges Bataille who characterises poetry much like Blanchot’s notion of trace, “wherein the present is always absent in relation to the past and the future, and thus (to borrow from Lycette Nelson) ‘the loss of identity of the subject occupies a central place’ (439–440). For Blanchot, the trace was “the anxious search for what was never written in the present, but in a past to come” (17). Poetry, in seeking “the identity of reflected things and the consciousness that reflects them, wants the impossible” (Bataille Literature and Evil 45). Blanchot argues that writing does not leave traces, but rather makes traces disappear “more definitely than one disappears in the tomb” (50). He contends that, “Poetry leads from the known to the unknown ... It places one, in this way, before the unknowable...poetry is sacrifice, but of the most accessible sort” (Inner 136). For Bataille, the poetic subject is in a relationship of ‘immanence’ with the object, a state of perpetually unfulfilled desire.

The trace, then, remains elusive. Yet something about poetic discourse seems to make it a favoured medium through which we continually pursue it. As this volume demonstrates, the trace remains a teasing imperative within contemporary poetry as it was for the Romantics. The dynamic “life” of poetry is precisely in this complex relation to evanescence.