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Exhumed

Also by Cassandra Atherton

Poetry

Sketch Notes [with artist Phil Day] (Melbourne: Mountains Brown Press, 2015)

Trace [with artist Phil Day] (Braidwood: Finlay Lloyd, 2015)

Pegs [chapbook] (Canberra: Authorised Theft, 2015)

After Lolita (Tokyo and Ontario: Ahadada Press, 2010)

Fiction

The Man Jar (Tokyo and New York: Printed Matter Press, 2010)

Non-fiction

In So Many Words: Interviews with Writers, Scholars and Intellectuals

(Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Press, 2014)

Travelling Without Gods: A Chris Wallace-Crabbe Companion,

Cassandra Atherton ed. (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 2014)

Flashing Eyes and Floating Hair: A Reading of Gwen Harwood's Pseudonymous Poetry

(Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Press, 2007)

Intersections: Gender and History, Cassandra Atherton ed.

(Melbourne: University of Melbourne Publishing, 1997)



Exhumed

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'I want to tell you something lest you should hear it first from any one else. It is that I have recovered my old book of poems. . . The thing was done a few weeks ago. . . The book was in a bad state, but I have recovered and copied every word of the poems I wanted. The matter was of a less dreadful nature than might have seemed possible. Indeed, had I not received medical assurance that all in the coffin would probably be perfect (as it proved to be) I should not have had the courage to make the attempt.'

D.G. Rossetti, 26 October 1869

Inter

Bonds

for Gwen Harwood

You wore a white Bonds t-shirt to bed last night. A plain, white, no-nonsense Bonds t-shirt and I knew it was over. I heard the death knell. And when you asked me if I was Emily Dickinson's ear I nodded. Solitary. Solitaire. Solipsist. 'For whom does the bell toll?' you asked that afternoon. Campanologists? Two in Campagna? Campaniles? 'It tolls for thee.' R.I.P. my lover. R.I.P. my Van Winkle. Rip out my heart. Wrap it in your white t-shirt and bury it beneath your floorboards. Still beating. My little drummer boy. You can beat me but I won't be your English queen, my butcher. My blood on your t-shirt will form a scarlet letter. Spot. Out damn spot! You wore a white t-shirt to bed last night when all I wanted was to be stuck to your back. When all I asked was to peel myself off you in the morning and mount your erect compass needle. But now we are done. Donne. And you peel me like a grape. I slither out of my skin. Skinner. Skin me alive. I thought we were conjoined. Destined to travel in circles until we met again, in the middle. Until we found our core. But like Nabokov's apples, all you manage to achieve is to tempt me with repetition. When I am only your dystopian Eve. There can be no valedictions here. So now our lives are cotton. And although cotton breathes, it is also the sarcophagus of our relationship. Embalmed memories. But I promise to dig you up. Like Heathcliff. Or Rossetti. I promise to unbind you and gather you in my arms. Skin on skin. My sweat will be our glue as I rip off that t-shirt and bond you to me one last time.

Plum(b)

William Carlos Williams was a genius. And he has my lover's initials. Or rather my lover has his initials. I often eat the plums that were in the fridge. But I don't expect to be forgiven. Not everything depends upon that. Or the wheelbarrow of promises that still lies at the bottom of his heart. That's just a vain hope. My lover likes plums. The ones with the tough skins and the scarlet flesh. Not the yellow. We like the same food. Except for chops. I won't eat lambs to the slaughter. Once I was called a 'goo-goo-eyed' vegetarian. Which basically means I won't eat anything cute. With big imploring eyes. Because it would be almost like me eating myself. Baby cows are cute. Pigs are cute. And lambs are definitely cute. Even mutton dressed as lamb. So they are all out. But I eat chicken and fish and sometimes beef. If it isn't veal. He lived on a farm once. So he hates sheep. He tells me that sheep are the stupidest animals ever. They deserve to be eaten. He even tells me the story about how sheep follow each other in straight lines and that the earth becomes shiny and solid beneath their feet. And he and his brothers would ride along their little tracks. On their bikes. Red bikes. Like that wheelbarrow in his faulty heart. One day he might even grow me some plums so that I can pick them and put them in our fridge. I want a red Smeg 473L fridge. I want my whole kitchen to be red. He draws the line at a red fridge. He has never heard of Smeg. Smeagol. Smaug, the dragon. He doesn't believe in the nuance of sound. He doesn't understand the importance of a big, red, expensive fridge. He thinks they are just for keeping things cold. Like plums.

Stella

Last night I pressed my body to the cold tiles on the bathroom floor. Face down. Recumbent. Prone. To making mistakes. My torso left a hot patch beneath the vanity basin. When you came to find me I had misted up the mirror with my heat. I shifted sideways to find fresh tiles while you wrote the words 'We've had this date with one another from the beginning', on the steamy glass. You stepped into my hot spot. Toes curling into the warmth. 'Listen,' you said, 'can you hear it?' Somewhere in my imagination a streetcar still grinds its way down the Desire Line. Even though we both know it has been retired. Retrenched. Put to sleep. And now you will have to rely on the bus to take you to your Elysian Field. I turned my head to the left and stared at the sock line circumnavigating your ankle. You shaved in the double 'e' of Tennessee and called me your Belle Reve. Tristes tropiques. Blanched, I peeled myself off the floor. Sticky sweat clung to the white tiles. You looked for a moment at my flushed belly before taking the bottle of eye drops and tipping back your head, cap in mouth. Gagged. Censored. Silenced. It's Post-Katrina in the Crescent City and I'm still waiting for more levees to burst. Me with my Hurricane box watching Treme on HBO. You drinking Hurricanes at Old Absinthe House in the Vieux Carré. Toulouse St. La Blandisseuse. 'Don't worry,' you told me once, 'it's only a paper moon.' Both knowing it is only you who sails over the cardboard sea. I'm just papier-mâché. You chew me up and spit me out. Pulp. Palpitations. So I paste myself onto you. Moulding myself into your curves. But you're not waiting for the glue to dry. We rot from the inside out.

Lunacy and the Arrangement of Books

for Amy Baillieu

Your new bookshelves are driving Deweyites mad. Spinner wheels in hand, they ache to enforce the decimal classification system on your vertical timber. Pragmatist systemisers, it doesn't matter which Dewey you prefer: Melvil, John, the library cat or even Huey and Louie's brother, they all believe in shelf diagnosis. So, choose your own system, but ask yourself: Is Emma inappropriately touching Moby Dick? Is Don Juan pressed up against Clarissa or lying on top of Jane Eyre? Don't put Madam Bovary and Anna Karenina too close to the edge and remember that given half a chance, The Brothers Karamazov will lean on Little Women. Whatever you do, make sure you keep American Psycho in the plastic wrapper. Frankenstein can bring some life to your Gothic collection but keep Dracula away from The Monk and keep Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in separate sections. Don't worry if you lose The Invisible Man, Voss will go looking for him. I suppose you could order your books by the colour of their spine or the birthplace of their author, but that kind of Creative Intelligence is, in the end, just Experimental Logic

Anonymous

Names are important. Daphne Du Maurier knew that. Names are identifiers. Signifiers. Indicators. Of something more. Names say something about you before anyone has even seen you. Names make you attached. Even if you aren't so attached to your own name. You connect. Like a dog collar and leash. Dog tags. Names are important. Holly Golightly knew that when she refused to give her cat a name. When she let the cat out in the rain. Like Hemingway. John Proctor wouldn't sign his name but Arthur Miller signed his on a marriage licence to Marilyn Monroe. Not her real name. First born children are supposed to like their names more than others do. I have grown into my name. It sounds English. It sounds Victorian. I should have been Jane Austen's sister. Although I would have enjoyed being a Brontë more. If I were American I would be a Dickinson. Names decide your personality. All Brittanys are dumb. All Jameses are arrogant. All Isabelles are difficult. All Hughs are cute. Claire is not a fat girl's name. Despite what The Breakfast Club tells you. There are many derivatives of my name. But not as many as Avdotya in Crime and Punishment. I used to hate my name but now I tolerate it. I like it more when he calls me Bobbin. His human bobbin. I have a collection of wooden bobbins from Lowell and a blue dress from Mill City Clothing. I belong in Massachusetts twirling myself in his sheets. Rotation. Revolution. Spinning ginny. Ginnie to his Riddell.

Kiss

Clip. Like the snip of scissors severing a braid. My wings are clipped. Maimed butterfly. Butterfly 8. You leave me like Starr Faithfull. Washed up. I watched Hearts in Atlantis and the line about a first kiss being 'the kiss by which all others in your life will be judged' plays over and over. Like grooves of the mind. A stuck 45. Who stole my first kiss, a boy or a man? At twelve, I clipped pegs to my lips at bedtime. Hoping to wake to big, throbbing lips, more kissable than my own.

St. Valentine's Day Massacre

You tell me not to answer the phone. But I do. Because your eyes flash gold when you walk past the kitchen. Because Plath was brave enough to answer the phone when Ted tried to intercept it. Because I need to make sure it isn't Assia Wevill come back from the grave to steal you away from me. Her voice is husky. Every third word catches in her throat. Like a diamond clasp hooked inside a black velvet pouch. As she speaks I see her lips. Crimson. Patent leather. Black cherries. She materialises before me as I listen. I am surprised. Somehow my image of Plath has become entwined with Veronica Lake. Probably because of that photo of Plath in a white bathing costume. White hot poet. Yellow hair. Now I see it seductively sliding down over her right eye. Like tiny waves or ripples. One cat's eye is visible. Luminous. Emerald. Fire-illed. I see she is wearing a strapless dress that matches her lipstick in shade and texture. I think of the femme fatales in film noir I studied in second year Cinema and I remember Jean Hale in *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*. But you like Barbara Stanwyck in *Double Indemnity* and I'm more of a Gene Tierney. Either way, I could dress myself as a police officer and shoot out your heart.

Noodle Hut

You broke up with me in the Noodle Hut. Rang me in the middle of your combination special to say that it was all over. Dumped me while I was in the kitchen searching for The Eternal Husband. I could hear your wooden chopsticks clicking while you talked. You told me you had fallen in love with a character in your book. I said that characters were overrated and couldn't offer you the objectivity you needed. They couldn't read The Idiot to you every Monday after breakfast and help get you out of debt. You told me girlfriends who weren't stenographers were spineless. You wanted nothing more than to hear your words repeated back to you. 'All wives should be philatelists,' you said. But I'm not prepared to steam stamps off envelopes. Or write out your version of The Gambler in longhand every night. So instead I imagine you sitting on your couch in the evenings, propping up your latest creation in the crook of your arm. Balancing her on your knee. While I strain potatoes or abandon them in the colander for the sweet and sour special.

Chelsea Hotel

I've always believed Stevie Smith and Dylan Thomas. That's not the issue. I'm always drowning, very rarely waving. And when I'm not drowning, I'm raging against the dying of the light. So, I chop my fringe too short and run away from Palmers Green to live at the Chelsea Hotel. But the reservation clerk tells me that they changed the policy about long term residents in 2011. It means I have to write my Scorpion and other Poems at the White Horse Tavern instead of the room where Sid killed Nancy. I like the dark wood panelling and the ketchup bottles on the tables. I sit under the framed poster of Under Milkwood and wonder if I could ever get away with a line like 'Let me shipwreck in your thighs.' I order a tuna melt and a Rolling Rock, thinking of Sisyphus as I pick up my pen. I doubt I'll catch pneumonia tonight.

Cat among pigeons

Hope is the thing with feathers...
Emily Dickinson

The cat is not on the mat or in the hat. He is lying on his back in a circle of light. He could be playing dead. Except that's for dogs. And his tail arcs like a snake as it moves from side to side. His telling tail. Telling tales. His right eyelid withdraws a little to reveal a crescent of iris. A pigeon peers at him through the bay window. Her toes curl like red starfish feet over the window ledge, long black nails in need of a manicure. There is a bright blue cuff with numbers around her left ankle. Anklet avifauna. She's some kind of Holly Golightly pigeon. Occasionally she gets the mean reds, but she believes home is where you find it: 'You can't cage a wild thing.' She dreams the cat will find a home in Spanish Harlem, rather than having a true Hollywood ending. A second pigeon joins her. There is a cooing noise from him as he lands. Rusty Trawler. The cat's feet twitch but he relaxes his muscles, he is waiting for a kit of pigeons. No point expending energy without maximum effect. The flutter of more feathers. A baker's dozen of teal and brown birds in the front yard. The cat springs to his feet. Out through the window between Golightly and her chubby mate. Four canine teeth. Kit cat.

Butterfly Hunter

I collect nymphets. Like butterflies. Carefully arranging them on the page and impaling them with a pin. I catch them in my net. It isn't hard. I stroke their angel hair and search for their wings. Just because it helps me remember. My mistakes. My heartaches. Infanta Defunta clearing the haze. I specifically collect my predecessors. Damsel flies. Fireflies. Gadflies. After I find the ghosts of Humberts past, I find their latest conquests. I was once one of them. They are perhaps me. I watch them become me. I wait to hear the clinking of the chains. To see my doorknob morph into a grotesque face. But it doesn't happen. I think about tying a handkerchief around my jaw or putting a candle snuffer on my head to extinguish the light but instead I collect nymphets. To pass the time. There are no ghosts of Humbert's past, present and future. No shrouded Humbert beckons me towards my grave. Bah Humbert!

Seed

...holding in her hollowed hands a beautiful, banal, Eden-red apple.
Vladimir Nabokov

I've given you nine months to coax me out of the foetal position. Nine months to grow large and sticky against my palm. Cross my palm with silver. Start over in the moonlit car park. In the park. This time you have eaten me alive. I look for a child. A 'Rhoda' who reminds you of your mother. I will pour gin down her throat to stop her crying. 'You-gin One-gin', I hear you smile. No gripe water. Maybe absinthe because it reminds me of Granny Smiths; of the tiny ribbon of green circling the hemispheres at the end of my core. The end. I can't be there for you anymore. I can't make your day more palatable. I can't wait for you to cut your teeth on my unmarked flesh. I am planting an apple tree. We'll drown in Apple Pie Moonshine.

Lolita

She liked to dip pieces of orange into her red wine, she watched them float, half submerged. Surreptitiously suffocating. They looked like toes, bleeding ballerina toes. She caught the drips on her tongue. Open mouth. Bruised lips. 'Toe shoes,' she thought. Pink and perfect. She sucked the sweetness from the centre and spat the rest into her palm. She smiled, purple teeth. 'Lolita,' she said because she liked the sound of it. Lolita.

White Noise

You outline the vein of biro between my toes with your tongue. Swirling around my second toe. Wormish. Nipping the tough skin on the ball of my foot, your ear pressing against my warm ankle. I think for a moment just how much I want you to take me ice skating. Just because I like the word 'rink'. Just so you can lace my white boots and hold my hand as I scream white puffs of air. Narnian merry-go-round. But you will never take me ice skating. We only ever go to Smorgy's, The Ramada Inn or the Laundrette in Buckley Street – the one with the big tumble dryer for doonas. I initial your earlobe with my saliva. Nuzzling your carotid pulse with the tip of my nose. You tug on the ends of my hair, your pointy hip bones burrowing into me. Urging me to reach for my blue biro. I scrawl the first sentence of Rebecca on your back. You guess it's Du Maurier by the time I get to the capital 'M' for Manderley. You take the biro from me and press the nib into the freckled pits behind my knees. I ask you to press harder. Pleading with you to write your words in my plasma. Clear, sticky, cherry-tinted words. "For a long time I used to go to bed early". I smile. My skin singing. I want you to continue, to cover me in Proust. But you get impatient and paw at my thighs. I always preferred yo-yos to madeleines anyway so I snatch the pen from you and draw a stave down your backbone. Curly treble clef beneath your jutting shoulder blades. I colour in the crotchets but semibreves have always been my favourite. You guess it is La Wally from the fourth bar. And somehow you know it is connected to my desire for ice skating. Snow. Avalanche. Stalactites and stalagmites. Once you told me an obsession with white could only lead to sickness or marriage. And you said that neither of those were appealing. Neither of them could bind you to me. I search for my mohair beanie under the bed. The one with the big pom-pom my nana knitted for me. As I search, you brand me with the overture to 'Crazy for You' and I pretend I am a bass as you stroke my hips. For a moment you become the

pointy stand that rests on the polished floorboards, supporting the bass. And then you are tired of games. So tired you refuse to list all the songs that have 'Lucy' in the title on the soles of my feet. I try to scrawl all the characters from John Fowles' oeuvre down your right arm but you are already packing the sheets into the laundry basket. You toss me my figure skating magazine while we dress. In silence. We leave the washing in the machine while we go to Smorgy's. Halfway through a bite of cheesy toast I blurt out, 'Nicholas Urfé'. You pick up your fork and scratch 'Sarah Woodruff' into my palm. Maybe tomorrow I will ask you to take me ice skating. Maybe tomorrow after you have written your blockbuster on my eyelids.

Wilkie Collins

I like to be written on with biro. Tracks of blue running down my nakedness like veins. Mainlining sticky ink. I wrote a story about it once. A story about the way I liked my lovers to write their favourite book titles on me. Like I am a pillow book. So that even when the letters are washed away, they are still detectable for a while under a black light. Indelible secrets in my plasma. The first one writes *To Kill a Mockingbird*. China white tattooing me blue. The second scrawls, *Tender Is the Night*. The long tail of the 'g' looping around my elbow. The third presses *Macbeth* into my spine and I think of him unseaming his enemy from navel to chaps! But the name on my lips has always been *The Woman in White*: 'Silence is safe.'

Night Flight

I'm on the wing. Right there watching the mechanics of it all. The hatches. Like mechanised rabbit warrens. Lifting as the wind roars through the space. Square. Room for squares. The Mechanicals would approve. Bottom would be impressed. Titania would prefer something more flowery. When it comes to you, Puck has put Cupid's love juice in my eyes. Pansy. Pensées. Love-in-idleness. I willingly give up children. Yours, mine, ours, my dead friend's little Indian boy. I'd probably give up all the eighteen of Lucille Ball and Henry Fonda's in Yours, Mine and Ours. But, in the end, your love is just turbulence knocking my knees against the seat in front of me. Until I land.

A Room of One's Own

for PH

You weigh me down. Like stones in a coat pocket. Until my incandescence is stifled and my 'nugget of pure truth' is stripped back to a room in my grandparents' house in the suburbs where I once wrote poetry. The white desk is still there, pushed against the bay window. If I open the top drawer, I know that my old fountain pen will still be there. Bite marks on the lid from long days at school. The garish hippopotamus curtains are still too red. The carpet is more of an electric blue than I remember. A little flash of an idea becomes a cat without a tail. How do I write the space between my heart and my pen?

Honey

My life is kitchen sink theatre. There is a wallet full of reasons why. At nineteen my life was a taste of honey. But I was no Jonathan. Back then I had never even heard of the Book of Samuel. I wore your ring on a ribbon around my neck. You thought it was to keep it close to my heart but it had more to do with the fact that I wasn't ready to belong to you. You once told me that you can't stand people who laugh at other people. I've never laughed at you. Even when you told me to call you my Capitano Moro I only wished I could have avoided making my mother's mistakes. Now, every night after work you come back to our tiny apartment like you are a member of the Venetian army and fight for me. For us. For our future. But the inevitability of death upsets me. 'Put that on the stage and call it a blackbird'.

Grasmere

after Thomas De Quincey's 'The English Mail-Coach'

You with your Wordsworthian patter can never be Keats. Because you have already lived too long. So I am cast as your Dorothy forever. Give me your wedding ring and let me spot the page with time. I've always liked the way that Cockermouth, Cumberland sounds on my lips. But there is no place like Grasmere.

Postscript: You tell me I am your English mail-coach. But doesn't that mean I am always leaving you behind? Carried away. Like a pen across the page. Glorifying in my own motion, riding through an opium-tinged dream fugue. Towards sudden death.

Plasticine Lover

When Irish darling left me, I made a man out of plasticine to love. He was easy to manipulate. I made him a painter. Not a poet. Poets leave. For sunrises, red wine and cheap pizza. Painters are brazenly polyamorous. They prize intimate networks of love. Communities of love. Hierarchies of love. You need a big love for that, so raise the infinity heart high. My fingers work to give my man the best from all my lovers: the priest's foppish hair, the slim hips from the violinist, the long fingers from the tinker, the tailor's blue Danube eyes, the square teeth from the soldier and sailor, the dramaturge's golden skin and the smooth phallus from the bundler. I craft him from red and white plasticine. Marbling gives way to a uniformly pink hue. I'm sculpting myself a mate. Like Pygmalion. Or Dr Coppelius. A charnel house of lovers' parts. I smooth over the joins and peg him by his shoulders to the clothesline to soften him up in the sun. Make him more malleable. I think of Modigliani and buy a canvas for him. As he softens up, I imagine he is looking at me. Like I'm his first watercolour. All pinks, mauves and suspended pigment.

P.R.B

I wish I had been painted by Millais. Maybe not as Ophelia in a tepid bath. Perhaps as Lady Macbeth. Or Titania. Or Portia. I used to make you sit on a little wooden stool and pretend you were painting me. Stroke after stroke rasping against the canvas. I would unravel my strawberry plaits and stare at you. Sherry eyes. Corsage at my neck. Picking up the small crumbs of wedding cake and passing them through my gold ring. Nine times. But you still didn't get the hint. And so I am suspended in that moment. Forever bridesmaid. I can't be Effie to your Ruskin. So blot out the canvas with grey. Euphemia's hagiography turns on a wheel and a bear, but I can't be your martyr. Writhing in my skin, I call out to Rossetti to paint me. I make you call me Guggums and cling to wild heartsease. We both know the laudanum comes later. So you paint me. Regina Cordium. Hooded lids. Heart shaped pendant. There are two still babies in the shadows. One within and one without. Broken hearted, I become your posthumous Beatrice. Dig me up Dante! Exhume me. Consume me. Shift the soil between us and gather me in your arms. Chase your journal of poems around my coffin with your fingertips as you hold me. Let me hear your mew of pleasure when you have it. At last. My copper hair fills the empty space. But the worm's hole in your journal eats away at your heart.

Modi

I melt into his canvas. Fibres prickling my back as I search for a theme. He stands before me. Giant. Paintbrush poised. He paints a shining black horse with a plaited mane and garland of flowers. Poking me with the end of the brush, I climb onto its wooden tip. He lifts me onto the back of the horse. A flash of Jeanne sleeping in starry jealousy. He snatches the memory and fills my head with a crimson 'M'. 'Modi,' I whisper and he paints a ruby dress over my mauve night gown. La belle dame sans merci. 'I want green eyes,' I tell him. With the tip of his paintbrush he dabs a mixture of emerald and lime over my irises. He smiles and fills the canvas with turquoise waves. The horse becomes a cave, my ruby dress a navy fin and I realise I am Miranda. I float expectantly until he strips away my painted tail and nudges me into the cave. The 'M' collides with the damp walls and he is there. Neptune taming the seahorse.

More

You, with your initials like a wave on my page, are green. Jade green. Though it has always seemed a paradox to me that jade can be green. Maybe it's because you lead multiple lives. Like six and nine. Or the word 'shell' on my calculator. I have tried to teach you that prose is similar to a rose. Like the labyrinthine passages of the internal ear with its subterranean channels. Like Auden being recited at the bottom of a stairwell. It's next Tuesday and you are stuck in the stationery section of Coles with empty pockets and a White Wings cake mix. You want to buy all the green notebooks at \$1.99 each but know they will replenish the stock when you leave. You can never have them all. Somewhere, someone else will be using one of your green notebooks. For school or to record their bank balance. Or for recipes and telephone numbers. I write the word 'concubine' in the condensation and lay my heart on a towel on the floor in front of the bath. But you have a shower and shake yourself dry. You shave in the 'u' and miss three hairs on your cheek. I'd tell you but I'll let her tell you instead. You, with your cornerless copy of *Crome Yellow*, are in love with a stranger. Or at least you think it's love. For now. Until she leaves you for an effete aesthete or an architect. Either way, she'll aim for someone more purple. Turn off the light. I won't mind if you pretend I'm her. Or if you close your eyes when you enter me. And I won't mind if you pick up your paintbrush. Provided that you paint in the pink and leave out the green. Oberon popped out of my thesis and asked me, 'Don't you wish you were Penelope Lively?' And I thought, for that moment, how wonderful it would be. You, with the tired dictionary, know one hundred words beginning with 'z' but all I know is zealot.

Lozenge

Once I inserted my name on a small white tab into one of your cough lollies. So you would swallow me. So I could be encased in Butter Menthol and slide down your throat. But there are two types of cough lolly eaters. And it turns out I was the sucker. So you crunched through the sugared amber and spat me into your palm, peeling me off your skin and pegging me into the bin from across the room. My sticky name in the rubbish. Discarded. Like a house of cards. Face up. I look at the shattered lozenge and remember the windows in your chamber. Like the rooms of my heart. The cellist in my left ventricle plays for me in a long velvet gown as deep blue as Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op 19. This time I slip my name into your Monte Carlo biscuit for an encore performance.

Second Lining

for Woody Allen

Your 'Wild Man Blues' curl like a jellyroll down Decatur, while we march parallel to the Mississippi. No saints come marching in so I hold my umbrella high. Fleur de lys chasing feather boa between the buck-jumping. We're a long way from Earthquake McGoons and those early pre-Crescent days. But you won't play Dixieland now, for anyone. It's preserved as a score in *Sleeper*. I came here for Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner and the staircase from *Pretty Baby* in the Columns Hotel. You came for the tribute to Bechet at Preservation Hall, its haunted façade like a watercolour or chalk drawing left in the rain. You join the head of the parade, clarinet resting on your curled lower lip, but I stay in the second line, thinking of the Lee Friedlander photograph: Young Tuxedo Brass Band, 1966, the old men playing a funeral.

Callous

I'd sing you an aria, if you'd listen. But I'm not sure you'd give me the spotlight. I'd suck in all the air around me. High C sailing past my soft palate. If I wasn't in a vacuum. You could watch my hand trail from my collarbone. If you weren't blocking me. My chest rises all the same. I try not to lift my shoulders and concentrate instead on the buzz in my cheekbones. But we both know it's not enough. So, I step back from the circle of light. Away from the conductor's baton. And I eye the wings.

Fairest of Them All

She searched for mirrors. Of any shape. At least ten mirrors. Her mother's compact mirror. The hand mirror in the bathroom. Her sister's beauty case mirror. She sat in her bedroom and smashed them all into tiny fragments. Seventy years bad luck she thought. It was worth it. She took her best satin shoes from her wardrobe. Size six and a half. Bridesmaid shoes from her cousin's wedding. Hobby glue. Did this count as a hobby? Slowly she glued the shards of mirror to the satin of her shoes. A jigsaw of silver glass. She pressed down each piece firmly. Holding it there until it was secure. The heel was tricky. She had to break the fragments of mirror into even smaller pieces. There would not be one gap. She started on the second shoe, placing the first one in front of the heater to dry. The tinkle of glass soothed her. A pointy shard caught the edge of her finger. She bled onto the inside of the shoe. She did not stop for a Band-Aid. She kept going until her shoes were a looking glass. Peering into the silvered toes she found only a small-scale simulacrum of herself.

Sleeping Beauty

Jade green spirals in and out of her ribcage as she sleeps, the worries of the day playing out on the inside of her eyelids like a twin cinema. He pulls on his bottle-green cords, reaching for the tiny notepad in his back pocket and the pencil on the bedside table. He sketches her pillow with long strokes, emphasising the soft indentation where his head had been resting. His heat bound to the memory foam. Tearing off the sheet of paper, it floats down to rest on her stomach. He watches it rise and fall like the minutes between them. There are no words. She'll have to piece them together in the chartreuse hours of morning.

The Queen of May

Little Alice fell
d
o
w
n
the hOle,
bumped her head
and bruised her soul.
Lewis Carroll

Making Out with the White Rabbit

Long after he has gone, I have him. Still. On the tips of my fingers. I don't want to eat, wash my hands, brush my teeth. I shouldn't talk. I want to be swaddled in Gladwrap and slowly suffocate in his scent. Draw arrows on my neck pointing to his teeth marks. I delight in the marks he leaves on my body. But he is always late and I'm never his important date. So I set my watch to Daresbary time and wear it to bed. I dream I'm eating marmalade on toast and solving Pillow-Problems. When I fall out of bed I'm swallowed by a rabbit hole. Distorted hands claw at me as I fall. I see a glimpse of his waistcoat forever ahead of me. The tick of a pocket watch grows louder until I wake up. Alone. I won't cry when he leaves me. I'll know it's because I have outgrown him. As he always said I would. I won't argue when he closes the door behind him. We will have come to the end. I knew that we were temporary. He told me long before we started. I won't follow him when he leaves me. I'll just watch him leave and scurry down his rabbit hole. Back to Alice.

Alice

I can't do this any more. Not even for you. Not even for the McDonald's Happy Meal you buy me after we have sex every Saturday afternoon. Do you know I only eat the cookies? Do you know that I drop the fries down the drain in the sink? One by one. Solitary. Lone. Loaning your copy of 'The Waste Land' to anyone who'll take it. You tell me to stick to Ovid. I tell you to proof-read Prufrock and draft a new ending for us. You kiss me and still, behind your back, I drop each fry down the sink. When you make love to me you watch your reflection in my dilated pupils. And when you shower I rummage through your sock drawer. Lone socks wait to curl themselves in their missing partner. I find your Starbucks card and so you read to me. From Moby Dick. Always Moby Dick, never Pinocchio or Peter Pan. I try to tell you that I prefer Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. But you hush me. It is your silence. And who am I to break it? I'm not anyone. I am occasionally Emily Dickinson. But the difference is that I can dance on my toes. Life is 'full as opera'. I think about asking you but it's late and my toes have gone to sleep between your ankles. In the viridian night, I can almost believe you love me.

Doll's House

Eye at the window. Sticky lips resting on the balcony balustrade. She tries to get a closer look but the bridge of her nose clashes with the roof on the first storey. A horizontal line joining her inner canthi. Pink. Strawberry pink with white window frames and door resembling an iced cake. Flawless fondant. The screened porch has been made into a newfangled 'catio' with chicken wire bent around the white pillars of the porch. A tiny white cat purr sits looking out. The girl leans back just enough to open the front of the house like a huge door. Shiny hinges revealed, at last. Inside there are just cavernous spaces. Squares inside squares. Three squared. In the back corner of what should be the dining room she sees a tiny book. She takes it out and rests it on her forefinger. The Hunting

of the Snark. She swivels the house on its base to see the orangery at the back of the property. Glass encased, she sees a tiny blonde girl strapped to a lemon tree. As she peers in, she sees a glass bottle near the tree trunk. Its paper label reads 'DRINK ME'.

Tea Party

It's Saturday. The sky is rippled with purples. A horizon crushed between low hanging clouds. Spreading out, taking on the shape of an anvil. Cumulonimbus. She knows it will rain. 'Teruterubozu,' she whispers. Her mother hangs a tarpaulin over the Hills Hoist and pegs it in place. But as the wind picks up, the clothesline starts rotating and the blue plastic lifts a little at the sides. An invisible hand is twirling the webbed lines like winding a large clock. She spreads out a blanket at the iron base and places the garish, plastic tea set in the centre. Hot pink tea pot. Cherry red cups and saucers. Iridescent yellow sugar bowl. She seats the dolls and teddy bears in a tight circle like a coven. Murdering time. Plastic doll's knees press against bear's fur. Dinah curls up in the doll, Mary Ann's lap and surreptitiously swats the grey mouse's rope tail next to her. But as soon as everyone is seated and anticipating their dandelion tea and silica sandwiches, the wind blows over the plastic tea set. The sandwiches become a dark, grainy stain in the creases of the blanket. Dinah abandons Mary Ann for a place by the fire. The dolls and teddy bears are left on their backs, legs pointing skyward.

Picket Fence

When she was much smaller she remembered digging a hole under the fence and trying to escape her backyard. The dirt was packed and hard as she scraped away the little tufts of powdery grass and burrowed into the dry soil. There was no promise of a rabbit hole beneath a hedge but she still ripped her fingernails until they were jagged and torn, ignoring the

soil that wedged its way towards her cuticles. There was nothing but dirt on her horizon. Dirty crescent moon. Nothing grew in the neglected earth that marked out the perimeter of the house. Barren, sterile land. She thought about plate tectonics. About the earth's outer shell. Lithosphere. She wondered if she dug a deep enough hole, could she really fall all the way to the centre of the earth? Could you fall right through the earth? She kept digging, widening the hole until it was the size of the width of her shoulders. The splintered wood of the fence scraped her knuckles as she stuck her hand under the fence and imagined it wiggling on the other side. She felt something furry as she pulled her hand back towards her body. Suddenly, one by one, six kittens popped through the hole and appeared beside the piles of dirt on her side of the fence. They were tiny and soft with big eyes and they squeaked when she cuddled them. She knew her mother would never let her keep them. So when she was done playing, she poked them back under the fence and filled in the hole until all that was left in her hands was loose dirt.

Playground

Flaky blue paint and cracked bitumen; nothing is child friendly. The monkey bars have rusted and the roundabout is little more than a piece of cyclone fence strapped to a circle of steel tubing. A gigantic wheel going nowhere. 'If everybody minded their own business, the world would go around a great deal faster than it does,' she repeats, gripping the side of the roundabout and running in circles. When she has picked up enough momentum, she sits firmly between the spokes of the wheel. Dizzying. A wooziness spirals from the pit of her stomach to her temples. She lifts her feet to avoid trailing them in the dirt as she spins. When she comes to a stop she climbs the ladder to the slide. The flesh of her thighs sticks to the not-so-slippery dip on the way down, making a sucking and squealing noise. Friction. Burn marks on her flesh. The sun glares at her. The baking heat bleaching her hair blonder. She edges up one side of the seesaw, waiting until she gets to the middle. She balances the plank horizontally,

one foot either side of the pivot bar. Closing her eyes, she holds out her arms, like she's flying. But when she opens them, she's just a girl straining against seesaw logic in a run down playground.

Mini Golf

Green plexipave. Too green. Too smooth. There are ten holes, but the sixth with the turning windmill sails is broken. It's been roped off with iridescent tape like a crime scene. Her golf club has a rusted handle and torn rubber gripping and she smacks its flat head on the ground all the way from the ticket counter. Everything is tickety boo. At the first hole someone has painted red and white roses on a tacky bridge that bisects the miniature fairway. There is only a tiny mouse hole the ball must pass through. After her fourth attempt, she lies down on her belly and hits the ball through the small semi-circle, snooker style, with the handle of her club. It sails through and plops into the hole. Like a decapitated head. 'Heads will roll,' her mother used to threaten if the day's chores weren't done. She collects her ball and realises that all but the last hole is taken. Family of four at the hole with the hump in the middle. Girlfriend and boyfriend at the hole that is skinny in the middle and fat at the ends. A lone man at the hole with the rocks as obstacles. Everyone knows that the last hole swallows your ball. For good. For better or worse. So she stuffs the hole with a screwed up piece of paper and prepares to get her hole in one. As many times as she can.

Sink Hole

It starts with a dying patch of grass under her bedroom window. A straw-coloured circle spotting the emerald lawn. Stripping out colour like peroxide. Leaving it dry and soiled. Her thoughts can never bear fruit here. It's like a book with no pictures. She waits to be swallowed up by bold typeface and italics. She imagines being devoured. To be eaten. She

wonders what it would feel like to be squeezed down the oesophagus. Or to be chyme entering the intestines. Finger like villi. Soft touch. A caterpillar crawls across a dead branch to her window. Liberated from his mushroom Absolem is just a three-inch mandible looking for a leaf. She holds out her palm and he undulates onto her lifeline. Squeezing out of the window she sits for a second on the ledge. On the brink. A threshold moment. The caterpillar flattens itself out as she jumps into the bleached alien crop circle. But she never lands. The earth gives way, swallowing her whole. She is falling right through the earth. The caterpillar grows a hard five and a half inches in her hand.

Disinter

Rubbish

It is Tuesday and I am dreaming that I live inside the trashcan on your Apple MacBook screen. Bottom right. Lid slightly ajar. My head popping up at intervals, not to offer you advice, but to ask you why you left me. You have three reasons but I can't hear what they are. The trashcan graphic is too solid and the sound waves ricochet off the crenellations. Facets. Indentations. You have to type your responses and drag them to me so I can read them. I wait for you in the trashcan. I wait for your mouse to lift me up and make me an icon. I want to be a square pink button with a harp sound when you click on me. I want to shimmer and pulse so you recognise me. I want you to constantly press on me. Double click. (Is there are triple or quadruple click?) I want your mouse to slide over me as I sit. Patiently. Singing Kumbayah and toasting pink marshmallows. Listening for you. You never let anyone else use your computer. No foreign fingers have ever touched the keys so I feel safe. I am only yours. I am the only trashcan you have ever used. I wonder if you have ever been unfaithful. If you have used other computers when I am sleeping. If you prefer other trashcans to mine. I worry every day that you will go to 'Empty Trash' and I will disappear.

Rasp

I straddle you in the deep blue of the cold afternoon with a fairy bread sandwich in my right hand and your gold wrist watch in my left. You like me to wear my mauve mohair earmuffs. But I like to hear you rasp. Against the hollow of my neck. Sometimes I sip sarsaparilla through a twisty straw. But you say it's vulgar and you hate the smell. It reminds you of some cough medicine you had as a child. Thick syrup. Like treacle on your tongue. So I only drink it in bed when I want to irritate you. Fairy bread doesn't bother you so much. Provided that I chew it softly. You like the way the candy bleeds rainbows onto the bread. I like the way the bread reminds me of rainbow pillowcases at my mother's house. The watch ticks in my palm; think metronomes and mechanical heartbeats. The fairy bread has become multi-coloured mush in my mouth. You have twenty five seconds left. I hear you rasp and I arch into you. I arch so much that I can no longer swallow. I arch so much that my head floods with transparent purple flecks. And I think about rasps and raspberries. And the way you stain my mouth scarlet. You buy me punnets of raspberries because you like the way I leave pink streaks across your skin. I prefer fairy bread and sarsaparilla. You refuse to let peanut butter even cross my mind. The rasping stops. Your hand on the back of my neck is suddenly heavy and moist. I try to move but you grasp my hips and grind them one last time against yours. I swallow my fairy bread and put the watch back on your wrist. When you can, you release me. Your fingerprints own me for a time. Until I make another fairy bread sandwich.

Blue Nights

for Mum

The fever of morning brings cold hands to a hot forehead. You sit in the sticky stillness of my bedroom as I rotate like a bobbin in the sheets. In the spaces between waking and sleeping, I wonder how all of me once fitted inside you. When the deep red fever breaks, you are there to make cucumber and tomato sandwiches, the tomato cut as thin as a graze. You slice off the crusts and I eat the soft, white middle of four triangles, the best sandwich I have ever had. There are no images of you in my hippopotamus-curtained room. No photos of your equilateral sandwiches or long blue silence while I slept. But now, when I wake tangled in clammy dreams, I can still feel your crisp palm like a cold compress on my brow.

Under the bedroom floor

after James Dickey's 'The Shark's Parlor'

It starts with boysenberry swirls behind my eyelids. Twirling like curls of paper ribbon. I can smell vanilla. Not that cheap scent that clings to teenage girls' wrists, but pure vanilla. Long brown stalks of vanilla, tall and slender. Standing upright in a glass tumbler. I hear the sound you make in the back of your throat. Almost a growl. Bear. Bare. And then your tongue is looped through my belly ring. Its pointed, pink tip darting in and out of the silver circle. I arch my back. Strong, pale fingers splayed on either side of your neck. You nip at the small silver ball. Rotating it with your lips. I hear it grind across your teeth. A dull clink. You plunge your tongue into my navel. Spasm. My hips convulse. You pull my belly ring with your teeth. Small tugs at first. Playful. Petulant. Piqued. You pull harder until it tears through the creamy fold of flesh. The bloodied silver ball resting between your lips as you kiss me. You push the metallic ball into my mouth. It rolls onto my tongue. A heavy pea. A ball bearing. A miniature eyeball, only heavier, much heavier. The weight of it forces my chin onto my chest. You trace a line from my breast bone to my belly and it is red. A red snail trail. A long red ribbon. It becomes a river of blood flowing between my breasts. You drink from me. Red tinged teeth. I try to move but you are too heavy. The small silver ball begins to grow until I begin to choke on blood and metal. My navel becomes a gaping wound at which you pry with your fingers. My blood collects under your nails and stains your hands vermilion. You stare at your hands and then at me and leave. The silver ball shoots from my mouth, through the roof in your bedroom and over the tops of the trees in your backyard. The corners of my mouth are cracked and weeping. I prop myself up on your bed, trying not to let the blood trickle onto the icy sheets. I don't know how to get up without using my hands. And they are covered in blood and clutching at the hole in my stomach. It's then I realise that I'm hollow and you have bled me dry.

Slammers

Your lips free float at the bottom of my tequila bottle. Preserved like a worm until the final peg of tequila when they squeeze through the neck of the bottle and smack against mine. On National Tequila Day I take you home and you slither beneath my crisp apple sheets. In the morning between ten and twelve we free float in limpid nectar. Sometimes you tell me my 'bonny blu eyne' are as blue as agave tequilana. Sometimes twa corbies rest on my collarbone and peck out my tongue for you to preserve.

Pineapple

Pineapple gives me atlas tongue. But I still eat it. Still travel the world on my tastebuds. Tropical drifter. Pineapple for breakfast in Hawaii with frangipanis on my plate and pink ahi poke. I never got to the Dole plantation, I was too busy drinking Piña Coladas on Waikiki. Bags of sweet pineapple rings by the side of the road on the way to Queensland. Too many hours in the back seat of my grandfather's yellow Ford. Sticky fingers winding down the window and my grandmother passing me tissues from the front seat. Sweet and Sour Chicken in Hong Kong tasted different from my local Chinese restaurant. But it was still tart and toffee coloured and stained the plate orange. Your birthday in New York. Deconstructed pineapple upside down cake. I had never seen you so disappointed. It was a pineapple sponge. Right side up. With a piece of candied pineapple on the side. You blew out the candle, I ate the sugary pineapple ring and we left. In our tiny apartment I made you a Betty Crocker pineapple upside down cake. I longed for a syrupy can of Golden Circle. But you told me to close my eyes. You lit a stumpy candle and told me that I could have your wish.

Vongole

He clammed up over his spaghetti alle vongole. Mid-twirl of his fork. Three of the four tines on the hollow of the shiny spoon. He clamped his lips together, envying the way the vongola verace in their stripy shells had opened like compacts. He thought about trying to swallow the knot of spaghetti on his fork. But he wasn't sure two lumps would fit in his throat. There was a time when he would have cut the spaghetti with a knife and fork before eating it. Severed it. But the halo of pasta around his fork made him regret those years. He reached across the table for her hand, picked up his butter knife and carved a single word into her palm. She closed her fingers over it and, with her other hand, reached for his bowl of discarded clam shells. It was a long time before she released his word from her fist.

Just Desserts

I remember us drinking dessert wine at the top of the Rialto. You let me slip my tongue into your tiny glass of golden liquid. Sweet vignette. I have drunk the juice wrung from angels' hair.

Trace

I trace you with tracing paper. I trace your lines and your curves. I trace your thoughts and desires. So I end up tracing myself. We become Magritte's The Rape. To other people's eyes. I try to trace the essence of you. Your voicebox telling me it is impossible as I attempt to trace your Adam's apple. I hold it down and slip my pencil around it. A pleasure dome from which no Porlockean can keep me. My pencil perforates the paper. Your fingers slip down to my hips as you encourage me to lie on top of you. The tracing paper crinkles. It is a thin barrier between us. But I can see you beneath it. I can just make out your shape. Outline. Like a crime scene. My unbroken pencil-thin line and you my victim. You lie down for me. I think of us on either side of the paper. You pressed up against the shiny side, me on the matte. Our imprints waiting to merge. But we become two different sides of the same piece of paper. I am your inverse shadow. Your opposite. I line up our noses but then my legs are much shorter than yours. If I line up our toes then my head will rest on the silky paper of your chest. So I line up our hips. And rock you awake. So that I can trace every inch of your desire for me. To keep an accurate record. Scribe. 'Cuckold me,' I'm told. But we are way past that. You roll us over so that I am beneath you. The paper crinkling again like Boxing Day rubbish. And I feel my ribcage. I am constricted. Boa constrictor. Accordion pleats. Flattened. Doughy thighs cushioning my blue shins. I trace you with tracing paper. I trace you for the time when you are gone. Your shape. Your fingers. The slight curve of your hip. I trace all your lines and curves. I trace your thoughts and desires. So I end up tracing myself. And all I see is my blunted pencil.

Entitled

for Gerty was womanly wise and knew that a mere man liked that feeling of hominess. Her griddlecakes done to a golden-brown hue and queen Ann's pudding of delightful creaminess had won golden opinions from all.

James Joyce, Ulysses

Dedicate. Dessicate. Desecrate. I have always been afraid of being buried alive in coconut. Or drowning in magenta. Husk. Husky. Hussy. I like to eat popcorn with strawberry milk. And ambiguities on toast. Travelling at night. I wear alphagetti soup and thigh boots. Or integrity in the small of my back. You always tell me that I occupy some cramped alleyway in your aorta. I want to be your lungs. A cramped aorta is not enough. Why can't I have your entire left ventricle? I eat pancakes drizzled with maple syrup and rain. Spattering. Splattering. Smattering. I feel like an adverb, not really needed, just adding to the verb. Or a lollipop sticking to a personal adjective. Or perhaps a possessive pronoun in my kitchen. You want to kiss me in mango yoghurt. Your icecream fingers playing with Barbie Doll hair. Scissors. Schism. Scission. You reach for my rhinestone-studded skin, tracing the throbbing turquoise veins with silver. But I am too grave. To write the title page.

Chlorophyll

She sewed seed beads around the frayed hem of her wedding dress. In the shape of minnows. He watched her scallop glitter glue for the scales and add a single sequin for the fin. She wore the dress while she sewed. Twisting in the lacy fabric. When she finished sewing the fifth minnow above the jagged tear in the lace, she hesitated. Frozen. Staring at the door. As the clock chimed nine she knotted the cotton and severed the end with her teeth. Holding out the tattered skirt in a semi-circle, sea-green minnows glinted in the dim light. Darting around the bottom of the dress. Swimming around her neck, green fish made from paperclips wound with lime thread and malachite beads linked head to tail. She looped her arm through a shadow and sipped chartreuse. Muttering something about it being their special drink and the colour of her kamikaze dress. Lifting the layered lace. Waltzing with the darkness. Arms outstretched as she hummed into the decaying void.

Chigger

I remember many Septembers.
Joe Brainard

I remember tiny, black hyphens. Or dashes. Pressed against the plain glass. Plate glass. Peering in. They line up like bird scratchings. Or Sanskrit. Or Dickinson's handwriting. They lie in wait. Watching the windows. Midges. I remember midge bites, like itchy red braille up and down my legs. Scaly scabs. Not as bad as the chigger bites I got in America. Central Park. Bryant Park. Miniscule chiggers chomping into me. Leaving me with measles-like red spots. Mosquitoes seem to bite at night. You hear them. See their sting in the dusky light. I remember Calamine lotion, pink and chalky, being dabbed down my arms and legs with cotton wool balls. I remember the smell of Aerogard. And bug zappers at barbecues that lit up to attract and fry unwanted insects. Purple light. Like neon. I fell in love with fireflies in Pennsylvania. I remember trying to take photos of their luminous green abdomens as they took off and landed in the long grass outside my house. Luciferin. Cold light. I remember fireflies dotting the park with bioluminescence. Some femme fatale fireflies flash in patterns to attract males, only to devour them. There is a theme here. A memory of an intention to foil intent with light.

Northern Lights

I map things out. I like to pin places down on my world map with thumb tacks. Not everything is mappable. When I was little I'd go to the South Melbourne market with my mum and buy old maps, stamps and coins. My favourite was a reproduction of an Icelandic Skalholt map from 1570. I used to trace the outline of Britain, Iceland and Greenland with a careful finger. Learning where they all were, exploring their rough edges. And I'd laugh at the place called Labrador and ask if our dog had travelled all that way to be with us. On Multicultural Day at primary school I dressed up as an Icelander. I wanted to dress as the aurora borealis but my mum told me that was ridiculous. I'm not sure where that map has gone. It's probably in a box in my grandparents' shed. Packed away. Now someone is mapping my genes. Genome mapping. I wonder what my chromosomes look like. I hope they look like the Northern Lights.

Vertigo

She loves the romance of a rooftop. Something about being closer to the stars. There's clarity in the air and the strange movement of light across the sky. The answers to the universe float just over the edge. She can see them, but they are beyond her outstretched fingertips. The stained concrete is cold through her dress, but she edges forward. And that's how he finds her. Lying on the edge, her neck reaching out like a gargoyle; her arms embracing the silence. He grabs her by the ankle like an anchor. Or a shackle. She whispers into the void. He wants to believe it's his name.

Milperra

My fingers on your tender buttons. Your lips on my light blue shadow.
Heat shimmies under the door in the cracked motel room and humidity
nudges the petals of the frangipani behind my ear. I peel a boiled egg
for my breakfast, sitting cross-legged on the bed. White teeth-like shards
devour the stained quilt. In the eighties, there was a bikie battle here. I
have to close my eyes as I walk across the car park. Or I hear the crack of
the guns. The crack of my eggshell. The crack of my heels on the asphalt.
On Father's Day, I place a chair against the door.

Midnight

When you leave me, part of your heart will still beat in the empty space between my sheets. When you go, the imprint of your body will throb in the darkness on the mattress next to me. And when I stretch out my arm to feel you, your absent fingers will trail up the veins in that arm. But for now, you fall asleep, arms around me, warmed by the red neon of the Safeway sign.

Poacher

Crispin was washed away by magnitude.
The whole of life that still remained in him
Dwindled to one sound strumming in his ear.
Ubiquitous concussion, slap and sigh,
Polyphony beyond this baton's thrust.

Wallace Stevens, 'The Comedian as the Letter C'

Most people don't know that Hermes Pan choreographed all of Fred Astaire's routines. Fred gets credit for the lot. Every pick-up. Every wing. Every turn. Dancing on the walls and the ceilings, Pan. Waltzing with a coat stand, Pan. Tapping with a drum kit, Pan. Pan is a great name for a choreographer. Especially someone who choreographs tap. It reminds me of Sunday afternoons when I search for my poacher in the cupboard. My saucepans and pots clink together. Stylish syncopation. I choreograph musicals that start with a 'C'. I choreograph in my kitchen at midnight. I get credit. Somewhere at the back of the programme. Page seven. Or eight. But my name is neither Pan nor Astaire. I thought of changing my name to something with 'ova' on the end. Like Anna Pavlova or Natalia Makarova. But it still reminds me of my poacher and I need more inspiration than a dirty pan with holes. Steam. Steam Heat. A member of the cast once told me that Pajama Game was an entertaining musical but the 'Come on Union, Get Hot!' number had to go. It's the best number in the production. Bowler hats and girls in men's evening jackets with shnets. I can't choreograph it though. It doesn't start with a 'C'. Hermes Pan would have loved it. It has sections of tap and jazz. He could really have done something with it. Though I must say I love Bob Fosse's work. He was in Kiss Me Kate. I can't do that either. Pity I can't choreograph phonetically. I'd freelance choreograph productions of Copacabana, Carousel, Camelot, Calamity Jane, Chicago, Chess, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and Can-Can. Superstition. Naturally my favourite song to choreograph is "Cell Block Tango". The six merry murderesses are great. I like the

one who says she didn't kill her husband, he just 'ran into my knife ten times!' Kander and Ebb are great. Librettists are great. Gwen Harwood wrote the libretto for 'The Fall of the House of Usher'. I'd like to be a 'dutiful librettist', some day. Until then, I'll spend my days wondering if choreographers who don't get credit for their work have the Hermes Pan Complex. And I'll avoid theatre people who say 'Chookas' before a show because it reminds me of my poacher.

D.C. Pigeons

Washington pigeons are more corporate than their New York siblings. They straighten out their necks in less theatrical ways and hang around the Pentagon looking for crumbs falling from the lips of Defense Department workers. Fat and full, they people-watch at the base of the Dupont Circle fountain until a patron from Kramerbooks & Afterwards, shakes remnants of red velvet cake onto the pavement. A beating of wings precedes a dessert storm.

Pigeon Fancier

Pigeonhole. Pigeon toed. Pigeon hearted. Pigeon pair. Pidgin English.
Pigeon racing. Pigeonite. Stud Pigeon. Homing Pigeon. Clay Pigeon.
Pigeon pea. Roasted Wood Pigeon on toast. Walter.

Cox

You say you are almost ready to breed Cox's Orange Pippins with me. Planting the seeds of a future together. Sweet apple branches reaching into our own corner of the sky. I imagine our cider-drunk love. Your buttonholes full of apple blossoms creeping up your lapel. I am thrilled to the core but that gives you the pip. You want to train thoroughbreds for the Cox Plate. A stable of champions reared on Cox's Orange Pippins. And your buttonhole will be stuffed with the fat tutu petals of a Cecile Brunner rose that I pick for you at Moonee Valley on race day. But I won't be Gai to your Robbie. We won't have a Fine Cotton affair. My heart is as big as Phar Lap's but you have a birdcage for a ribcage and your heart only fancies a tutter at the track. Arrhythmia. Tachycardia. The beating of the hooves down the strait. So I sit with my back to the track at the bistro while you order warm apple crumble and take a gamble on our future.

Buoyant

Hot pink mooring buoys in the Albert Park Lake. Like shiny bicycle helmets or giant clowns' noses, flushed pink. I imagine there is a body strapped to the bottom of that buoy. Cycling beneath the surface, fighting against the tide. Not getting anywhere. Once I took you on the paddle boats at Half Moon Bay. I wanted to paddle into the sunset with you but you wanted to return to the shore. So we sat there, neither of us paddling. Fixed to the spot. Like a moored boat bobbing up and down. After twenty minutes you turned us around and we headed back in silence. Now you tell me that you and your brothers used to cycle around the lake and so I imagine you with a buoy for a helmet. It makes me laugh and as I leave you at the two kilometre marker, I don't look back.

Homesick

Every second Saturday you go home. You still call it home. Like a wild rock pigeon. Even though your home is now with me. In the flight or flight of the moment, you take off. Home. But not to me. I can't be homely, not even for you. And I'm not sure I want to be your safe house. I'd settle for being your shelter. But sometimes I think our house is only made from sticks. And sticks are easily reduced to dust. Every Ash Wednesday the priest would mark me with charcoal. A smudged cross on my forehead. I am a marked woman. I bear my cross. It is heavier than the albatross around my neck. Who knows if I can rise like a phoenix this time? Your mother cooks you an Oedipal roast and tucks you in. And you sleep soundly. In that childhood bed. Without me. The doona cover hasn't changed since you were a boy. Beige. Fawn. She still fawns over her dear son. While I try and be your Bambi. But it will never work because I can only offer you stir-fried vegetables or molé chicken. Never venison, even if you're game. But somehow it's homemade biscuits and gravy that you crave. Home cooked meals. On mismatched plates. You once told me that I was the apple pie in the sky of your eye. I drive you home every second Saturday and you tend to your garden. Your secret garden. Full of briar roses and day-lilies. A thorny issue, when the day-lilies die after one day in bloom. I am a thorn bird. I impale myself on your thorn. I sing as I slowly die. Alone in our apartment. The only thing you can grow here is bamboo, basil and cat grass. You keep it on the balcony. But I can't use the basil on my margarita pizzas or spear it on a toothpick of tomato and bocconcini. It's not mine to take. Consume. So I watch it thrive and wish that you would bring me roses instead. So that I could prick my finger and be your Sleeping Beauty. Spinning your wheel of fortune. The treadmill in our apartment's gym is no match for the dirt tracks and weary roads in Riddell. Or the green-white stick you walk to every second Saturday. Countryed. Country matters. I am an Ophelia in an

undiscovered country. I could be your America. If you knew who Donne was, but you don't. So you call me from the telephone seat in your hall until you are too cold to talk. The incubator that is our apartment is no competition for the menthol cold at your home. You tell me the cold is invigorating. But I like to be warm. I want an open fire. I want my hearth. Home is where the hearth is. 'There's no place like home.' I click my heels together three times but I am still here.

Tsundoku

Wakugi

for Bay

Sunset's gold haloes you on the wooden footbridge. Hands deep in pockets, you walk an orange path of light. I've loved you longer than the Shinano River. Every line of you is forged in me. When the flood comes again you will take me to the Hakusan shrine and peg our hearts together.

Ekiben

I am on the Narita Express, making another trip to Tokyo. A young girl wheeling a trolley begins selling green tea, beer and ice-cream. Most passengers have pre-purchased their ekiben. They buy Asahi beers from the trolley girl. I watch them eat and envy their skill with chopsticks. I love bento boxes. I don't like my food to touch.

Neon Love

Room 3077. Shinjuku morning. In fitful slumbers of hot pink I levitate. Urging you to slip your hand beneath the small of my back. There is so much you have to learn: the coddled eggs, the bacon and the prawn gyozas at The Viking Prince. The bananas I store in my bag until I can smell their sweetness. Their brown spot miasma. Initially you will miss toast. Real toast striped by the toaster. You'll ache for spaghetti jaffles. It will take time. In the meantime, don't wait for people to hand you tissues advertising contact lens solution and shampoo. For them to offer you the latest mobile phone deals on the back of Band-Aids. For their eyes to slide over you on the train and move on. Gaijin. The Studio Alta

TV screen distracts me. A male teen sings punk rock in a silk dress. His whining reminds me of a lonely cat. I dream that you appear beside me. With a sprig of cherry blossoms. And a commitment to stay with me for the rest of your life. Or mine. But you have never bought me flowers. Or shown up unexpectedly. And you won't stay for a lifetime. Because neither of us has a lifetime left to spend. Together. Or apart.

Shinjuku Morning

You feed me prawn gyozas for breakfast. Early in the morning. In the Shinjuku Prince Hotel. You give each prawn parcel a little squeeze between your fleshy thumb and forefinger before you reach across the table. My mouth opens. A little pink 'O' and you fill it to the brim. Pink inside pink. And I love pink. You take me to a Hello Kitty love hotel in Shibuya. We take the Hachiko exit and pass the statue of the faithful dog that waits forever. Cast in bronze. I wonder how long you will wait for me to come home. I have somehow wormed my way into your heart. You smile and skewer the cherry in my Manhattan with your swizzle stick. We walk up the hill like Moon in Whisper of the Heart. Love hotel hill. Dogen-zaka. I am yours for the resting rate of four thousand yen. If you listen, you can hear the cherry blossoms pop. I sit on a blue tarpaulin looking up at the sky between the branches of the cherry trees. Ueno. This is my bridal veil. Soft pink petals are the confetti that binds me to this place. You are restless. The plastic crinkles. We return to the Shinjuku Prince Hotel. You coddle me like the coddled eggs at the buffet. I am not ready to leave.

Hot Fish Guts

after Yukio Mishima's Patriotism

At a restaurant around the corner from the Mercure Narita hotel they had hot fish guts on the menu. You wondered if they would be nicer than cold fish guts. And I'm still not sure. I ordered furaido potato and you had your usual katsu don. Once I ordered a pizza from Shakey's pizza restaurant in Harajuku and you had the Japanese burger: burge. It was the worst meal we had ever eaten. Your burge was plump and grey; we weren't sure what meat it was made from. My pizza was a thin, biscuity mess. You said that it was our fault for not eating proper Japanese cuisine. Italian-American Japanese food is a travesty. Still, if it was a choice between that and hot or cold fish guts, I'd choose the Japanese pizza.

A-Bomb Dome

Genbaku sabaku. The ghosts of the charred and melting, forever running into the river. I stand on Aioi Bridge and imagine the black rain. I've seen Sadako's paper cranes. But it's Shigeru Orimen's burnt lunchbox that I remember most. The carefully prepared bento. Soybeans, barley and stir-fried vegetables. Reduced to coal. It's the story of his mother finding him in a foetal position. Recognising him only from the name inscribed on that lunchbox. It's the charcoal streetcars lined with corpses. It's the skeleton of the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall that remains. The bomb exploded directly overhead. Hypocentre. Lit an eerie green and orange at night. It is as if people still inhabit the space. If you listen. You can almost hear history. Pika-don.

Rapunzel

I called you Rapunzel
because you stole my hair.
Stole it from under my
sleeping head. Or from
the bathroom floor after I
was sick for you. I could've
danced in red shoes with
a plait striking the curve
of my back. If it weren't
for you. I could've drunk
champagne and written
letters to my lovers. Poison
pen. Poisson distribution. I
could've been the nurse-
child grown up. I could've
been Kathryn de Merteuil.
If it weren't for you. Your
father left us when you
guessed his name. Guessed
it just to spite me. Sprite.
And now there is only
us. Bound like Chinese
feet. I could've danced en
pointe if it weren't for you
clinging to my knees. Needy.
Needling me. I could've
danced the Tarantella if
you had let me out of the
doll's house to breathe. But

your greedy lips took what
Lady Macbeth despised.
Lactose intolerant. My body
rejected you two months
too early and I watched
you die. In my head. Over
and over. In the first
eight weeks I pushed you
down the S-bend but you
clawed your way up and
out of the bowl. My own
foetal attraction. So now,
what do you want from
me? What more can you
take from me? The colour
from my cheeks on rainy
days? The tannin from my
grandmother's teacup? Tell
me. What more can you
steal from me while I sleep?

Intertexts in Order of Appearance

11 Gwen Harwood; 11 Emily Dickinson 'I Felt a Funeral in my Brain'; 11 Robert Browning 'Two in Campagna'; 11 Washington Irving Rip Van Winkle a short story first published in London, 1819; 11 Katherine K. Davis 'The Little Drummer Boy' (1941 song) first recorded in 1955; 11 William Shakespeare *Macbeth*, specifically the character, Lady Macbeth; 11 Edgar Allan Poe 'The Tell Tale Heart'; 11 Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* 1850 fiction set in 17th century puritan Boston, Massachusetts, US; 11 John Donne 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'; 11 I'm No Angel (1933 film) Dir: Wesley Ruggles; 11 Vladimir Nabokov *Lolita* 1955 fiction, adapted to film by Stanley Kubrick in 1962 and in 1997 by Adrian Lyne; 11 Emily Brontë *Wuthering Heights* 1847; 11 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; 12 William Carlos Williams' poems 'This is Just to Say', 'The Red Wheelbarrow' and 'A Poem is This'; 12 J.R.R. Tolkien *The Hobbit* 1937; 13 Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire* 1947; 13 *Treme* (2010–2013 HBO TV series, four seasons); 13 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec *La Blandisseuse* 1886 (oil on canvas, Private Collection); 13 Harold Arlen, 'It's Only a Paper Moon'; 14 Terry Belanger *Lunacy and the Arrangement of Books* 1982; 14 John Dewey; 14 Melville Dewey (and at various points in his life, Melvil Dui); 14 Brett Witter & Vicki Myron Dewey: *The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World* 2008, non-fiction story of a cat in residence at a public library in Iowa, US; 14 The Walt Disney Company, comic-book characters Huey, Dewey and Louie Duck; 14 Jane Austen, *Emma* 1815 novel adapted for film in 1996, Dir: Douglas McGrath; 14 Herman Melville *Moby Dick* 1851, novel adapted to screenplay by Ray Bradbury & John Huston, (1956 film) Dir: John Huston; 14 Tirso de Molina's libertine Don Juan, was introduced in the drama *The Seducer of Seville* (1630) becoming famous after Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni* (1787); 14 Samuel Richardson *Clarissa* 1748; 14 Charlotte Brontë *Jane Eyre* 1847; 14 Gustave Flaubert *Madame Bovary* 1856; 14 Fyodor

Dostoyevsky *The Brothers Karamazov* 1880; 14 Louisa May Alcott *Little Women* 1880; 14 Brett Easton Ellis *American Psycho* 1991; 14 Mary Shelley *Frankenstein* 1818; 14 Bram Stoker *Dracula* 1897; 14 Matthew Gregory Lewis *The Monk: A Romance* 1796; 14 Robert Louis Stevenson *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* 1886; 14 H.G. Wells *The Invisible Man* 1897; 14 Patrick White *Voss* 1957; 14 John Dewey *Creative Intelligence: Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude* 1917; 14 John Dewey *Essays in Experimental Logic* 1916; 15 Daphne du Maurier; 15 Truman Capote *Breakfast at Tiffany's* 1958; 15 Ernest Hemingway 'Cat in the Rain' in short story collection *In Our Time* 1925; 15 Arthur Miller *The Crucible* 1953 play; 15 Marilyn Monroe; 15 Cassandra Austen; 15 *The Breakfast Club* (1985 film) Dir: John Hughes; 15 Fyodor Dostoyevsky *Crime and Punishment* 1866; 15 Jack Kerouac was born in Lowell; 15 Gwen 'Ginnie' Harwood; 15 Thomas 'Tony' Riddell; 16 Giacomo Puccini *Madama Butterfly* (opera) first performed in 1904, partly based on both John Luther Long's novel *Madame Butterfly* (1880) and Pierre Loti's novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887); 16 *Butterfield 8* (1960 film) Dir: Daniel Mann; 16 Starr Faithfull; 16 *Hearts in Atlantis* (2001 film) Dir: Scott Hicks; 17 *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre* (1967 film) Dir: Roger Corman; 17 Sylvia Plath; 17 Ted Hughes; 17 Assia Wevill; 17 Veronica Lake; 17 Barbara Stanwyck; 17 *Double Indemnity* (1956 film noir) Dir: Billy Wilder; 17 Gene Tierney; 17 *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*, an event in Chicago, February 14, 1929; 18 Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novels *The Eternal Husband* 1870, *The Idiot* 1869, and novella *The Gambler* 1867; 18 Anna Snitkina; 19 Stevie Smith 'Not Waving but Drowning' in *Scorpion and Other Poems* 1972; 19 Dylan Thomas 'Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night' in *In Country Sleep, And Other Poems* 1952; 19 Dylan Thomas *Under Milkwood*, play for voices, first read by the author with actors at The Poetry Centre, New York, 1953, adapted for radio by the BBC in 1954; 19 Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen; 19 *The Myth of Sisyphus*; 20 Emily Dickinson "'Hope" is the thing with feathers'; 20 Dr Seuss *The Cat in the Hat* 1957; 20 Holly Golightly and Rusty Trawler from Truman Capote's novel *Breakfast at Tiffany's* 1958; 21 Vladimir Nabokov's *Theory on Butterfly Evolution*; 21 Maurice Ravel 'Pavane pour une infante

défunte' ('Pavane for a Dead Princess') 1899 solo piano; 21 Dolores Haze and Humbert Humbert from Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* 1955; 21 Charles Dickens' most popular novella, *A Christmas Carol* 1843; 22 Vladimir Nabokov *Lolita* 1955; 22 Gwen Harwood 'In the Park'; 22 Rhoda Penmark from *The Bad Seed* (1956 film) Dir. Mervyn LeRoy; 22 Eugene Onegin [pronounced You-gin One-gin by Nabokov]; 23 Lana Del Rey 'Lolita' (2012 song); 24 C.S. Lewis *The Chronicles of Narnia* 1950–1956, series of 7 high fantasy novels; 24 Daphne du Maurier *Rebecca* 1938; 24 Marcel Proust *Swann's Way* Volume One, *Remembrance of Things Past* a novel in seven volumes published between 1913 and 1927; 24 Alfredo Catalani *La Wally* opera first performed 1892; 24 *Crazy for You* 1992. A Broadway musical theatre production directed by Mike Ockrent adapted from George and Ira Gershwin's 1930 musical *Girl Crazy*; 25 John Fowles' novels: *The Magus* 1965, specifically the character Nicholas Urfe and in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* 1969, the character Sarah Woodruff; 26 Wilkie Collins; 26 Sei Shonagon *The Pillow Book* non-fiction journal of Shonagon's time as a court lady to the Japanese Empress in early 11th century; 26 Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird* 1960; 26 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night* 1934; 26 William Shakespeare *Macbeth*; 26 Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White* 1859, one of the first mystery novels; 27 William Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; 27 *Yours, Mine and Ours* (1968 film) Dir. Melville Shavelson; 28 Virginia Woolf *A Room of One's Own* 1929; 29 Shelagh Delaney *A Taste of Honey* (1958 play) (1961 film) Dir: Tony Richardson; 30 Thomas De Quincey *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* 1822; 30 Thomas De Quincey 'The English Mail-Coach'; 30 William and Dorothy Wordsworth; 31 *Big Love* (2006–2011 TV series, HBO); 31 George Bernard Shaw *Pygmalion* play first performed 1913; 31 *Coppélia* (1870 ballet); 31 Mary Shelley *Frankenstein* (1818 novel); 31 Amedeo Modigliani; 32 Sir John Everett Millais *Ophelia* 1851–2 (oil on canvas, Tate Britain) and *The Bridesmaid* 1851 (oil on panel, Fitzwilliam Museum – University of Cambridge); 32 William Shakespeare *Macbeth* (character Lady Macbeth), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (character Titania) and *The Merchant of Venice* (character Portia); 32 Euphemia 'Effie' Gray; 32 John Ruskin; 32 Saint

Euphemia; 32 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; 32 Elizabeth Siddal (Guggums was D.G. Rossetti's nickname for her); 32 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Regina Cordium 1860 (oil on panel, Johannesburg Art Gallery) and Beata Beatrix 1871–1872 (oil on canvas, Tate Gallery); 32 Elizabeth Siddal; 32 Amedeo Modigliani; 33 Jeanne Hébuterne; 33 John Keats 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'; 33 Miranda (1948 film) Dir. Ken Annakin, British Comedy about a mermaid; 33 Robert Browning 'My Last Duchess'; 34 W.H. Auden; 34 Aldous Huxley's first novel *Crome Yellow* 1921; 34 William Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (character Oberon); 34 Penelope Lively; 35 *House of Cards* (1990 UK TV series, four episodes) Dir: Paul Seed; 35 Sergei Rachmaninoff *Sonata for Cello and Piano in G Minor Op. 19–3*; 36 *Wild Man Blues* (1997 documentary film about Woody Allen, jazz musician) Dir: Barbara Kopple; 36 *Earthquake McGoon's* is a nightclub in New Orleans, Louisiana; 36 *Sleeper* (1973 film) Dir: Woody Allen; 36 Tennessee Williams; 36 William Faulkner; 36 *Pretty Baby* (1978 film) Dir: Louis Malle; 36 Sidney Bechet (Bechet is also the name of one of Woody Allen's children); 36 Lee Friedlander *Young Tuxedo Brass Band*, 1966 (gelatin silver photograph); 37 *Callous* is a play on Maria Callas; 38 *Cinder-Ella*; 39 *Sleeping Beauty*; 40 Lewis Carroll *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) including references to Daresbury time, white rabbit, pocket watch, rabbit hole; 40 Charles L. Dodgson (alias Lewis Carroll) *Pillow-Problems* (1895 non-fiction) contains 72 Mathematical problems; 41 T. S. Eliot's poems: 'The Waste Land' and 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'; 41 Ovid; 41 Herman Melville *Moby Dick, or The Whale* 1851; 41 *Pinochio*; 41 J. M. Barrie *Peter Pan* 1911 novel; 41 Emily Dickinson 'I cannot dance upon my toes'; 41 Lewis Carroll's long poem, 'The Hunting of the Snark'; 42 Jessie Chiang 'Teruterubozu' (song) released on her album *Teruterubozu* 2008; 49 'Kumbayah my Lord' (folksong); 50 Carebears [toys]; 51 Joan Didion *Blue Nights* 2011 memoir; 52 James Dickey 'The Shark's Parlor'; 53 'The Twa Corbies'; 54 Bruce Dawe 'The Drifters' (final line 'Make a wish, Tom, make a wish.');

54 Betty Crocker; 55 Dino Joannides *Semplice: Real Italian Food: Ingredients and Recipes* 2014; 56 *The Song of Songs*; 56 George Wilson 'The Sleep of the Hyacinth'; 57 Rene Magritte *Rape* 1934 (oil on canvas,

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); 57 Samuel Taylor Coleridge 'Kubla Khan'; 57 'Boxing day rubbish' refers to Gwen Harwood's 'Suburban Sonnet: Boxing Day'; 57 Kay Kyser 'Three Little Fishies' 1939, children's song; 58 James Joyce Ulysses 1922; 58 Robert Graves; 59 Based on Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens' novel Great Expectations 1861; 60 Joe Brainard 'I Remember'; 61 John W. Freeman Storms in Space 2012; 62 Vertigo (1958, □lm) Dir. Alfred Hitchcock; 63 Gertrude Stein Tender Buttons 1914; 63 The Milperra Massacre on Father's Day, 1984; 64 Edgar Allan Poe 'The Fall of the House of Usher'; 65 Wallace Stevens 'The Comedian as Letter C'; 65 Hermes Pan; 65 Fred Astaire; 65 Peter Pan; 65 Anna Pavlova; 65 Natalia Makarova; 65 The Pajama Game (1957 musical □lm) Directors: George Abbott & Stanley Donen; 65 Bob Fosse musicals: Kiss Me Kate, Copacabana, Carousel, Camelot, Calamity Jane, Chicago, Chess, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang & Can-Can; 65 John Kander & Fred Ebb 'Cell Block Tango' song in Chicago 1975 musical; 66 John Kander (composer); 66 Fred Ebb (lyricist); 66 Edgar Allan Poe, The Fall of the House of Usher (also a one-act opera of the same name by Gwen Harwood and Larry Sitsky); 66 Gwen Harwood 'Memoirs of a Dutiful Librettist'; 68 Walter Pidgeon; 69 Gai and Robbie Waterhouse; 71 Sophocles Oedipus Rex Ancient Greek tragedy □rst performed 429BC; 71 Bambi (1942 animated □lm) Supervising Dir: David Hand, Walt Disney Co; 71 Brothers Grimm 'Little Briar Rose' (fairy tale); 71 Colleen McCullough The Thorn Birds 1977; 71 William Shakespeare Hamlet (character Ophelia and Act III, Scene ii); 72 John Donne 'To His Mistress Going to Bed'; 72 The Wizard of Oz (1939 □lm musical) Directors: Victor Fleming, George Cukor & Mervyn LeRoy; 74 Hello Kitty (brand name); 74 Hachiko; 74 Whisper of the Heart (1995 □lm anime) Dir.: Yoshifumi Kondo; 75 Yukio Mishima Patriotism (1961 short story translated into English 1966); 75 Sadako Sasaki; 75 Shigeru Orimen; 76 Brothers Grimm Rapunzel; 76 Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, Les Liaisons Dangereuses 1782 novel (character, Kathryn De Merteuil); 76 Henrik Ibsen A Doll's House play □rst performed 1879 (character Nora); 77 William Shakespeare Macbeth (character Lady Macbeth and Act I, Scene v); 77 Fatal Attraction (1987 □lm) Dir: Adrian Lyne.

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Australian Book Review, Australian Poetry Journal; Cordite Poetry Review; Cuttlefish Literary Magazine; Etchings Literary Journal; Famous Reporter; Foam:e; Griffith Review; New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing; Island Magazine; Lemuria: Rajasthan Association of Indo-Scrivener Creative Review; LiNQ; Mascara Literary Review; New Orleans Review; Peril Magazine; Otoliths; Overland; Rabbit Poetry: A Journal for Non Fiction Poetry; Southerly; Stereo Stories; Tincture Journal; Unlikely Stories: Episode 1; Verity La; Wet Ink.

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Cassandra Atherton is an award-winning writer and scholar. She has been awarded a Harvard Visiting Scholar's position in English from 2015–2016 and was a Visiting Fellow at Sophia University, Tokyo in 2014. She is an affiliate of the Monash Japan Studies Centre. Cassandra has published eight books and her most recent poetry books are *Trace* with illustrations by Phil Day (Finlay Lloyd, 2015) and *Pegs* (chapbook, Authorised Theft, 2015). Over the last three years, Cassandra has been invited to edit six special editions of leading refereed journals and is the successful recipient of more than 15 national and international grants and teaching awards. She is the current poetry editor of *Westerly* and was a judge of the Australian Book Review Elizabeth Jolley Award in 2014. Cassandra was invited to judge the City of Melbourne Lord Mayor's Prize for Poetry in 2015 and the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Prize for Poetry in 2015 and 2016.