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Atherton, Cassandra 2016, White noise, *Double dialogues*, no. 18, Winter: Lighting our darkness.

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Originally published online at: <http://www.doubledialogues.com/article/white-noise/>

**Available from Deakin Research Online:**

<http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30086427>

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# DOUBLE DIALOGUES

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Issue 18 Winter 2016  
LIGHTING OUR DARKNESS

## White Noise & Other Poems

Cassandra Atherton

### 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 Urfe." 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.