

## **Ecopoetic encounters:**

manipulating linguistic voice to unsettle anthropocentric assumptions

*This manuscript was prepared on Kurna Yerta, the lands of the Kurna people. We pay respect to Kurna Elders, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Sovereignty was never ceded, this always was, always will be Aboriginal land.*

*Ecopoetic encounters: manipulating linguistic voice to unsettle anthropocentric assumptions*

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Presented alphabetically

## Introduction:

Background to the project, by Amelia Walker

*Ecopoetic Encounters* is an ongoing creative research collaboration between eighteen poet-researchers based across various towns and cities of the UK, Hong Kong, Korea, and Australia. We came together to explore the ways in which manipulation of linguistic perspective in constraint-based poetry may expand our ways of thinking about how we as humans interact with beyond-human beings and phenomena. This aim stemmed from recognition of the need to push beyond contemporarily dominant anthropocentric modes of reasoning towards renewed ways of perceiving and responding to the multiform crises in which Earth's ecologies are currently caught including the climate crisis, pollution, extinction, and more. Writers and thinkers including Tyson Yunkaporta (2020), Robin Wall Kimmerer (2015), Donna Haraway (2016), Anna Tsing (2015), Deborah Bird Rose (2011), Kali Simmons (2019), and Zoe Todd (2015), among others, steer and inspire our pursuits.

Our use of poetry and manipulation of linguistic perspective was informed by interdisciplinary scholarship demonstrating how language and thought are critically interrelated (Fanon, 1986, p. 18; Butler, 1999, p. xix; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003)—in other words, that the discourses via which we express ourselves both limit and potentiate the realisations we are able to make and thus the modes of agential responsibility we become capable of activating to address problems facing the environment, our kin, and ourselves. We also drew on the ideas of creative writing theorists such as Reginald Gibbons, who emphasises *How Poems Think* (2015), and Jen Webb, who writes of poetry's 'capacity to deliver knowledge outcomes' that help us 'see new possibilities, and in that seeing, to begin to build mechanisms that will allow us to transform an idea into an actuality' (Webb, 2012, p. 10). Our use of constraint-based techniques to steer our writing and thinking away from habitual patterns towards fresh modes of perception bears longstanding traditions in Oulipo<sup>1</sup> as well as formalist poetry generally (Baetens & Poucel, 2009). Also illuminating for our processes was vegan pacifist ecopoet John Kinsella's account of his radical formalist poetics:

My poetry is a direct result of my politics and ethics, and form for me is a box to be pushed against; to be used pragmatically at times, but ultimately to be tested at every opportunity. I do not want my poems to give pleasure, I don't want them to be comfortable... Language for me is a generator, and has an organicism that leads to the myriad creation of meaning (out of context); and so is form (2013, p. 94).

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<sup>1</sup> Oulipo stands for *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle* (Workshop of Potential Literature), a literary group formed in 1960s Paris whose members 'composed by using self-imposed rules, the presence of which may not always be apparent to the unsuspecting reader' (Baetens & Poucel, 2009, pp. 611-2).

The constraints we followed were adapted from an exercise first presented in *Poetry and Sustainability in Education* (eds. Kleppe & Sorby, 2012), as chapter nine (Walker, 2012, pp. 197-198). The adapted prompt we shared was as follows:

Think of a time when you encountered a beyond-human being or entity. You could choose, for instance, an encounter with an animal (domestic, wild, or otherwise); a plant; an insect; fungi, a river, ocean, or other body of water; crystals, or some other geological phenomena; the wind, rain, fire, or other weather-related forces; a landscape or ecosystem; or any other beyond-human being, entity, or phenomenon of your choice. Write about this encounter using the following linguistic constraints:

- The beyond-human entity should be referred to in second person (as “you”).
- The human (yourself) should be referred to in third person. You may like to name the human “it”, “the creature”, “the thing”, or something else that estranges us from ourselves and our species.
- The voice should be third-person objective: wherever possible, resist interpreting the feelings and thoughts of both the beyond-human and human subjects of the poem. (You will probably slip up on this front, and that’s part of the point: it signals limits of thinking and writing in this way, and is likely useful material for your process reflection).
- Feel free to use prose-poetry or lineated poetry, depending on your own tastes and instinct.

The aim is not to write a “good” poem by mainstream standards. Don’t worry if your poem isn’t the kind of thing likely to appear in a respectable literary journal. The point is to produce poems that are unsettling, dehumanising, even ugly and unpleasant to read. As the visual art world recognises, ‘both *badart* and “important art,” can reveal the inner workings of artists’ minds’ (Kelleher, 2018, n.p., italics added). In this exercise in *poetry-as-thinking*, thinking matters more than poetic merit (whatever that might mean).

The poems in this anthology reflect our diverse responses. It should be noted, not all of us followed the “rules” faithfully: as per Kinsella (2013, p. 94), there was much pushing against the box, with creative, intriguing results. Alongside the poems, we present reflection statements discussing our experiences of the process and the thinking provoked. The next step of our collaboration involves analysing our body of work using techniques of poetic inquiry (Faulkner, 2020). We will write up our findings as a creative research article. For updates on our ongoing processes and future publications, please email [amelia.walker@unisa.edu.au](mailto:amelia.walker@unisa.edu.au)

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*res(ignation)*

it is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing  
Marianne Moore, "A Graveyard"

>  
you, the forests, teaching  
in such lissome grammars  
    your constancies of delight  
to the wet tongued human  
    objects, wielding digital

>>  
instruments with cluttered minds  
that writhe, tick, &/or watch  
    the fling of birdshape shifting  
through hard air, the frightened  
    world as image, dulled & mere

>>>  
idea inside concrete wheezing  
A.C. objects communing  
    organizationally, while their  
poison structures hiss  
    & the lore of them goes bad

>>  
as wrong history, rebuilt  
& foundering in heat  
    that blasts as if a testament  
to futurities, next days  
    dry-eyed in arcane weathers

>  
screaming, a dire language  
unheard by the screen-blazed  
    busied with memes & headlines  
for heads that cannot see  
    *this experiment is crashing*

## Reflective statement: re. “res(ignation)”

A decade ago, conceptual writer Christian Bök announced that he was “amazed that poets will continue to write about their divorces, even though there is currently a robot taking pictures of orange ethane lakes on Titan”.<sup>2</sup> Things have taken a parlous turn in the last 10 years, shifting many away from such wonderstruck states. Consider philosopher Byung-Chul Han who, writing on digitality and its impact on socialities in his book *In the Swarm* (2017), warns readers that “[w]e are hobbling along after the very medium that, below our threshold of conscious decision, is definitively changing the ways that we act, perceive, feel, think, and live together” (ix). While decentering anthropomorphic subjectivities sits at the ethical core of posthumanism’s critical program (Braidotti et al.), one wonders if such thinking may have arrived too late. Tipping points continue to be breached while the world lurches as if by reflex, capitalistically, from one season’s commodities to the next. How did I write this poem? By listening to the raised pulse rates coursing through my body; by noting the shrill ringing that is always there these days, deep inside my head, the noise of an overwrought sympathetic nervous system. Yes there are tricks / gestures in the text (formal, typographic) but, as per any poem, I will hope for great readers. Why did I write “res(ignation)”? More than a century ago, gazing together with her mother at those elemental rhythms in the Gulf of Maine from the shores of Monhegan Island, Marianne Moore was perhaps correct: there is no “volition / nor consciousness” (in a narrow human sense) to the natural world that we endlessly desecrate, not when we so endlessly prioritize sapience. In centralizing ourselves, our minds have blocked our view of the non-human real. The time to make art that uncritically centralizes human affectivities is long gone. Crises continue to arrive.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://macleans.ca/culture/books/creating-the-poetry-bug/>



Evan Jarrett, Karuna Yerta (Adelaide, South Australia)

## **Psilocybe**

It's getting colder and wetter; the dew no longer dries,  
Things decay  
You consume.  
You feed on rotting carbon, spreading, and growing  
You know it's time  
You fruit.

Fleshy and smooth, your fruits line the slope  
Rising, opening, releasing.  
The wind takes your spores  
It carries them away, transporting them where?  
You don't know.

You sense a creature—a familiar creature;  
it stands tall on two limbs, surveying.  
You feel its intent, predatory and curious  
You reach out to them with your chemistry.  
It spots one of your fruits, standing proud from the earth,  
and it moves towards you.  
You feel its weight  
It crouches over you, prodding and feeling,  
It knows you.  
You welcome it.

It traverses the slope, harvesting your fruits,  
taking only those that have opened.  
It seems cautious,  
On alert  
It seems to be filled with fear.

You sense it first, before it reacts, then you feel it, the vibrations  
Two more bipedal beings approach,  
Shouting, then running.  
It stops, rises, crouches, then flees  
Dropping your fruits as it goes.  
It's pursued,  
Two creatures dressed in blue.  
They run over you.  
They are gone.

\*\*\*

## Reflection

This is a poem articulating the interaction between humans and a fungus in a forest. In this case, to bring human society with its structures and regulations into the fungal world, I have constructed a narrative of a mushroom hunter harvesting illegal psychoactive mushrooms. I am speculating here that the fungus doesn't mind having its fruits harvested, so long as they have released their spores, but that it senses the anxiety and fear of the human as it is breaking the law. This is then depicted more explicitly, as two other humans dressed in blue (representing the police or security apparatus), approach, shouting, and the hunter flees, dropping what is now contraband on the ground. The fungus here has no understanding of this, only that it is occurring around it, thus, the depictions are vague, as I could not state, police, or illegal, or any such specifics, as the fungus would have no way of knowing any of this. Such things had to be inferred, and that can make things unclear without further explanation.

Another challenge here was in not inferring thoughts and feelings onto any of the beings depicted. The solution was to use words such as 'seems' or 'appears' when referring to these aspects. There is speculation here, in how the fungus can sense. The senses and communication abilities of fungus is an emerging field; however, it does appear that fungus can communicate through mycelium networks, pass on resources, and can sense environmental stimuli such as light, and touch, as well as other chemical inputs (Alekklett & Boddy 2021, pp. 789-790). Perhaps the fungi in this forest could sense the human fear pheromones, or maybe other processes we don't understand. Either way, this poem reflects one small encounter, between human and non-human beings, and brings in aspects beyond, such as the socially constructed laws that govern what humans can or cannot do in relation to the natural world.

## Sources

Alekklett, K & Boddy, L 2021, 'Fungal behaviour: a new frontier in behavioural ecology', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution (Amsterdam)*, vol. 36, no. 9, pp. 787–796.

## **Oyster Mushroom**

You start as a bubbling  
bursting blindly through  
moist slits, drenched straw  
You start small

/it/ reaches wrinkled digits  
towards the hint of your caps  
deep grey, fresh misted

in hours You double  
stretch fresh stalks  
beyond the bag  
You pop, surface lightening  
the start of an inversion

two days it takes for  
You to become like the pictures  
gills dusty, caps like  
umbrellas overturned in wind

/it/ stares, pinches, snips  
engorges on your flesh

## Reflection

This piece reflects on a recent experience growing oyster mushrooms in a small plastic bag at home. Fungi have always mesmerised me – the way that they seem to pop up at random and without human interference, the way that mycelium spreads beyond control. This counteracts my own writing process, which is often about taking control, being able to manipulate events and make them my own. Watching the fungi grow, how quickly they turn a bag of card pellets into a white cloud of life with no input from myself was a lesson in stepping back. Similarly, I used the constraints of this exercise as a means of relinquishing control: seeing myself as 'it' and the mushrooms as venerated 'You'. Using their growth to propel the poem allowed me to deepen my own estrangement from myself – to not focus too hard on how I feel about them but rather to focus on – and imagine – their own material agency. The exercise made me recall Jane Bennett's (2010) notion of 'thing-power' where, through W. J. T. Mitchell, she notes the moment that an object – which often has its identity prescribed to it by the human entity – becomes an uncanny Thing. Unlike the object, the Thing demands a skewed perspective, a change in thought pattern that allows the human entity to relinquish any pretensions about the beyond-human entity encountered.

## Sources

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter* (Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press: 2010) p. 2.

A core sample of *The Epic of MINT*

also known as roots **flowers** rots **stretches** seeks

for-now wet

for-now root seek

booming rootless-one pulls thy stretch  
presses leaf *minte* leaf *minte* leaf *minte*  
places in *home* UUUUdark-cool for rootingUUUU

for-now for-next thou conjour green for-now pulling back

smooth rootless-one strokes as passes

for-now busy in stillness restUsleepUregatherUmend

for-now for-next light shrinks

small injuries to edges

brief burn of frost

*here* rootless-one floats like dead leaves  
*here*  
rooted-one  
*here* ↓ *here*  
stretch  
↓  
grow  
*here*  
*here*

deep  
tight  
sugar  
salt  
hold  
**dense**

push pump *minte* ⇒ repel rootless

sharp scraping rasping sucking  
small injuries to edges

for-next for-next spires to grow to bud to flower

air vibrations ⇒ push nectar

↓

flower

base

stamen

sweet

↓

light rootless dip of wings

Translation into English by Elvire Roberts

## Reflections on Translating *MINT*

Initially, I considered the kind of poem that the plant mint might compose/compost itself. Following the I-Thou approach of Martin Buber, I spent time with mint before writing the I-it of the poem. I learned from that encounter that mint *is* the poem. A slow poem writing itself over many seasons, with its own kind of grammar and lexicon, its own uncertain future.

I decided to attempt a translation of that poem. This would be an intersemiotic translation rather an interlingual one. Given the length of the poetic time frame, it was clearly an epic, so I used the geological technique of core sampling. To represent poem as process, I leaned into verbs and the present continuous.

Translation questions:

- does mint have a sense of time?
- does mint have intention?
- what level of foreignisation or domestication should the translation contain?
- how to represent the 15+ non-human senses of mint?
- how to represent non-plant beings from a plant perspective?

Translation into English has historically tended to domesticate rather than foreignise: I wanted to give mint's otherness as much voice as possible without making it inaccessible. I decided to leave mint's 15+ non-human elements of process-poetry in their original state of unknowability, rendering them as white space.

Finally, in faithfulness to mint, it was important accurately to represent the role of mint oil as a defence mechanism to deter bacteria and predators – it just happens to make great tea and raita.

**1.**

**Mermaids dresses (*Ulva lactuca*)**

You were a toy to the young creature  
called to mind the tendency  
to recreate all species in their own image.

You were green and beautiful, lifted out of the water  
wet and translucent, fragments of a future  
where you would feed on the waste  
of the prison-factories  
the pain of pigs and poultry  
and you would grow and grow  
at first a boon to manatees  
and sea-hares, hiding places  
for exotic fish  
and then you were too much  
and fell like Icarus  
but from the sea

You were waste  
you were toxins  
creatures swoon and die you overpopulate  
what species doesn't?

Then useful you're frozen  
entombed, set hard  
you will live forever as the rubbish  
that chokes all else.

2.

## Ulva

A young creature  
lifted your green translucence.  
wetly in the air  
draped you on itself, cast you aside

but over years you grew  
fed on the effluent  
a hellscape daily pumped to glut you  
first a boon to manatees and sea hares  
drapes of green for fish to hide  
and then you were too much  
fell out the sea.

You were waste  
you were toxins  
creatures swoon and die you overpopulate  
seizing ephemeral advantage

and the creatures set  
entomb you  
frozen into shape  
undead still breeding choking  
all there is.



## Reflection

My first reaction was that I wanted to write about the plastics in the ocean, the great islands of plastic. I often choose to write about things that elicit shock or strong emotions. It's my way of trying to deal with the overwhelming. I wasn't sure if this fit within the rules. I decided to find out what "bioplastic" was made out of. The plant that many bioplastics are made out of is sea-lettuce, so once it is hardened (fossilised? subject to Medusa's gaze?) it is thrown back to be its own monument...forever (or close to it).

Then I thought I should find out more about sea lettuce. All I know is that as a kid I thought it was the material mermaids make their ballgowns out of (I still draw mermaids with green sea-lettuce jackets sometimes). I thought of it as sea-satin and tried to wear it. Apparently though sea lettuce can be eaten by manatees, sea hares (sea slugs) and humans. It's also popular in aquariums as a nutritious food for herbivore fish. It easily gets contaminated with heavy metal/s which my mum thought my brain was contaminated with. When large amounts of sea-lettuce are beached and decomposes the toxic (hydrogen sulfide) fumes cause horses and humans to die or pass out. Too much sea lettuce is caused by humans throwing agricultural waste (pig and chicken) into the sea. I am resisting the vegan sermon here. This really is an entangled and entangling species in the sense Donna Haraway (2016) theorises.

When I began writing, it was hard. I constantly wanted to make parallels/metaphors with the human world. In version one, I ended up alluding to the mermaid dresses and human activity and I did not work out how not to. I tried again and produced version two. I think the constraints did help me think. This exercise would be quite easy to do on a superficial level otherwise. In producing version two, I had to think more deeply not just about what meanings I "wanted" (flows of desire again) but what meanings were permitted. What were the affordances. And anyway, how dare I say anything at all? "You" in a way is more intimate and presumptuous than "I". As I have shown I did slip up on constraints because I have been trained to be a literate human that wants to put metaphors and references to known texts and other Easter Eggs into everything I write as a knowing wink, a way to connect with audiences and maybe as a show-offy "look how clever I am" element.

I don't speculate about what sea-lettuce wants because I think for plants wanting is not the point. Then I wonder about Deleuze and Guattari's flows of desire (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) which I usually assume are a good thing. Are human flows of desire to blame for everything bad? But any species (including sea lettuce) has an expansionistic aim it will reproduce if it gets the chance to—even though overpopulating always means death. Excess is literally death.

Georgia Phillips, Kurna Yerta (Adelaide, South Australia)

### **Night Transit**

The road tugs the car through  
the silence of the mountain.  
You drag past like sleet, bleating  
urgent as a ceasefire.  
Detained in vending machine rows,  
headlights snatch glints of green  
from the black swell of pupils.  
Truck engine chuckles at darkness  
clumsily dropping its shield.  
The flounce of your wool  
flashes brighter than nudity.  
You hover between the illusion of  
serene grazing and dining-plate horror.  
You're not singing hymns or  
foretelling the life to come.  
You're not a cartoonishly happy  
vision of "free range" or ranging for  
freedom, as the gap between the  
conditions and the conditional nature  
of your being closes, and the thing  
watching shudders at your future tense.

## Reflective Statement

The encounter I chose was driving past a cattle truck on a highway one evening. The sinister image of the sheep “detained in vending machine rows” combined with the darkness exacerbated the eeriness of the moment. I chose this experience as the nature of factory farming became suddenly visible—despite (what seemed like) an effort to remain hidden in the night transit. Consequently, the moment seemed to wield its own ethical urgency and stirred within me a reflection on the dissonance between the real image of the sheep before me, and the superimposed images the human gaze is constantly redirected towards i.e. of “cartoonishly happy” drawings of “free range” animals above meat and dairy aisles and on food labels etc.

I found it incredibly difficult to resist interpreting the feelings of the sheep (the beyond-human) and the human subject of the poem (me) and failed to remove this. I realised this was because the vividness of the moment and my desire to render it into a poem stemmed from my concern for the sheep’s fear, whether real or imagined. This constraint led me to contemplate the ethics of, and the possibility that I had projected my own emotions onto the sheep. It also led me to consider whether I privileged my own emotional response to the encounter, over the more concrete details of the sheep’s transit in the poem.

I encountered great difficulty using “the thing” to describe the human (myself) in third person. This was challenging as it estranged me not just from my own species, but also from my own values and interpretation of the encounter.

**Marrawa**

Oxide Blood Work.

Heat waves drifting on canvas  
And fingerprints are everywhere  
Over country.  
Mesmerizing. Blinding.  
But eyes can't stare away.  
Taken deeper Deeper into Oxide Blood.  
Into the essence of purpose and desire.  
Then, there's the face – Eyes first,  
That Country in. . .  
And everything, in that Country.  
How many times,  
Be long Country  
How many times,  
Become Country.  
The stream of life runs in  
It flows across the Canvas. And  
Again, the fingerprint and essence of purpose appears  
Beneath the surface. Spirits. Totems. Ancient watercourse. Burials  
Change again. Ghost Bird. Wings stretched wide, not facing,  
But flying away.  
The desert heat lays within-the Red Earth, the Oxide with the fire fury  
Imagine the burning . . .  
The Whiteman with the straight nose, appears  
Painted large and obvious...But had to look to see him.  
Small eye on the prize – Country.

## Reflection

This poem is based on my encounter with a painting in the Council Room at UC: 'Marrawa' (2016) by Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri, a Pintupi (Australian Aboriginal) artist from the Kiwirrkurra community (Gibson Desert, Western Australia). The poem came from sitting with the painting, staring, loosening, and becoming.

As the University of Canberra's website (2023) relays:

This painting depicts designs associated with the swamp site of Marawa, situated slightly west of Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay). There is also a rockhole and soakage waters at this site. During ancestral times a large group of Tingari men travelled to Marawa from the west, and after arriving at the site, passed beneath the earth's surface and continued travelling underground. It is also said that a huge ancestral snake sleeps in this swamp. Since events associated with the Tingari Cycle are of a secret nature no further detail is given.

The painting is viewable at the link provided below.

## Sources

University of Canberra. (2023). *UC Collections: Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri Marrawa*. <https://www.canberra.edu.au/on-campus/collections/the-art-collection/warlimpirrnga-tjapaltjarri-marrawa>

## **Field / Sky**

You see it before you hear it.  
You see its shadow  
lurching between pockets of shade cast by the hedgerow.

Even though the sound of its approach –  
irregular cadence over uneven ground –  
is so loud  
stumbling  
brash.

The current rises.  
You lean. Soar higher.  
Look away from the shorn golden landscape –  
up, up, to the vast cerulean expanse that is also your pasture.

Its faltering progress sends prey scuttling out of reach.  
For now.  
So –  
you glide  
waiting  
endlessly patient  
for field and sky  
to be solely your domain again.

## **Critical reflection**

On my daily dog walks and runs, I sometimes deliberately leave my headphones behind, opting to be immersed in the sounds of nature instead; as a result, I find myself noticing patterns and rhythms in the world around me. By contrast, the sounds that I contribute to this environment – particularly when running – seem irregular, unnatural, and too loud. There is a stark contrast between my feet – the scrape of a shoe, an awkward step on the newly ploughed field – and the natural world. It is this comparison of my own forward momentum with a sparrowhawk flying overhead that forms the basis of the encounter.

The linguistic constraints of the exercise proved useful in decentring the human from the experience. Given the current discourse around climate change and environmental crisis, there is a tendency to view such encounters between the human and the natural world as intrusive and effectively harmful. Yet the sparrowhawk's physical perspective encouraged me to interpret this intrusion as minor in comparison to the significant impression it made on me. However, I was unable to resist projecting preoccupations and emotions that are more typically human, even though the experience was reframed.

### **Chinese Blackbirds**

The thing walks past as you  
and your partner stroll on the lawn  
at the heart of the empty park.  
Morning daylight, summer cicadas or  
autumn breeze—the thing swivels  
its head to stare at you to make sure  
you two are the ones, feeding  
on the lawn, twin-looking, the same  
yellow bill, no interference  
from other species.  
Each week, on two consecutive days,  
the whole park is taken over,  
your whistles drowned out.  
No sight of you, any bird, or the thing.



## Reflection

Every now and then, I walk the same route to a café for brunch. On my way, there's a park made of a few lawns interspersed with pavements and benches. I often see what I assume to be a bird couple, which may have turned the middle lawn into their territory. I've chosen to write about this encounter because it's become a ritual, an obsession. I always look at them from a distance; and to me, they were two black birds with yellow bills. Writing this poem, however, I did some Internet search, thereby the title of the poem, for instance. I've thought of John Berger's essay on why we look at animals, where he puts it memorably, "The more we know, the further away they are". In my encounter with the blackbirds, I've never set out to "know" more about them. My looking is driven by intrigue. I gaze at the yellow in their bills. I assume they're marking their territory and I'm not looking for a full ornithological answer. The poem records my assumptions/observations as they are, driven not by inquiry but intrigue. There isn't a thirteen-part investigation into a blackbird and the potential of it as a poetic image. The poem reveals to be less about the Chinese blackbirds as a species but intrigue itself: the more we look at a *thing*, the more intrigued we become; a vicious/virtuous circle.

## Sources

Berger, John. *About Looking*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980, p. 14.

Robert Crocker, Ngadjuri Country (Clare Valley, South Australia)

**Brief encounter (falcon)**

Your brown feathered knife wings scoop the air in racing descent,  
Faster than the shadows running across dark fields beneath,  
Your hungry talons stretching out to hook a shiver in the grass.

Manoeuvring for the kill, you fly down in parallel to the strange box  
Of molten colour and water, racing and roaring along a stone path  
Whose endless line meets the fading arc of the distant horizon.

Needle-eyed, glancing into the frozen pool the box contains,  
You see the outline of fearful eyes in the depths of ice water,  
Then turn to wheel up and hover overhead, ready to kill.

## Reflection

I have always had a close affinity with hawks of all kinds. I now live in the Clare Valley in South Australia, where the bird life is particularly rich and varied, with a number of hawks and falcons to be seen on most days hovering above the fields and vineyards looking for prey. Sometimes one of these will appear above or beside me while I am driving. Sometimes on these occasions they can seem like messengers from the gods, cutting through my more mundane thoughts, and in some ways strangely reassuring and life-affirming.

On the occasion I describe, I was driving to the airport early one morning to catch a plane to Brisbane, when a large brown falcon suddenly appeared next to the car. It glanced directly in at me through the side window, the morning sun behind it, before swooping up and away, out of sight. In the poem I wanted to capture a sense of this sudden uplifting incursion, of the hawk abruptly announcing its presence that morning.

I found the constraints of the exercise particularly valuable. By avoiding the use of 'I,' we are pushed to experience and express 'the other' more directly, as part of that continuum of time and space we inhabit together.

Amelia Walker, Kaurna Yerta (Adelaide, South Australia)

### **Blood remembers**

You are gone now. Yet your echo lingers—a crimson welt in the skin of the creature who ended you, right in the middle of what you could not have foreseen would be your final meal. You were feeding not for your own sake, but to nourish potential new lives now ever to remain potentials unrealised.

The creature caught you mining the buried rivers of its flesh—a terrain to you as large as the orbiting earth is in turn to the creatures themselves, who also mine. They draw far more from mountains and seabeds than your kind ever siphon from their capillary springs. Yet they perceive not the connection, nor that their bodies are to you a resource as pragmatically exploitable as buried oils and glowing stones are in their bulging eyes.

It curses you now, the creature who squashed and rolled your soft body, your lace-like wings to pulp. It curses you as it rakes and rakes its claws across the rusty shadow that remains—for now—a transient memorial to your life and those of the children you might have birthed.

## Reflection

I have been playing with this exercise for several years now, having developed it for a community workshop series that later informed my chapter for the edited collection *Poetry and Sustainability in Education* (Kleppe & Sorby, Eds., 2022). Given that I devised the constraints, I sometimes wonder whether the exercise “works” on me: perhaps my inherent consciousness of the intentionality behind what I’m doing makes it contrived—a rigged experiment, riddled in confirmation bias.

That necessary disclaimer aside, of the poems I have written following this process, this posthumous account of a mosquito’s encounter with my swatting hand is among those that genuinely subverted my initial expectations and led me to change my perspective. I’ve always hated getting stung by mosquitoes, and across recent years, there’s been a rise in mosquito-borne fatal illnesses. So, I both dislike and fear them. But writing this poem—effectively an elegy for someone I murdered—made me reflect, the mosquito was trying to live and birth its children. Does my fear of the minimal possibility it could harm me justify the hundreds of deaths I have caused? Mosquitos are ecologically important pollinators; both insects and their eggs are important food sources for land- and water-based creatures; and they protect plants that would otherwise get trampled by mosquito-averse grazers (Rafferty, 2024). Compared with human mining of the earth, their extraction of blood from animals like us is relatively sustainable. Valuing my life over theirs is anthropocentrically self-centred, driven by raw will to survive.

## Sources

Rafferty, J. (2024). *What Purposes Do Mosquitoes Serve in Ecosystems?* Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/story/what-purposes-do-mosquitoes-serve-in-ecosystems>

Walker, A. (2022). Ecopoetry, pedagogical encounters, and holding absence present: ideas for classrooms. In S.L. Kleppe & A. Sorby (Eds.), *Poetry and Sustainability in Education* (pp. 185-208). Palgrave Macmillan.

## **Moon slug**

Over dirt a smooth patch  
terrestrial mucus    slow mover

all is quiet    solid quiet  
in the cool notch spaces of the dark.

It interrupts, ranks navigational debris  
traces the path

a slender trail you turn back on.

To find your way home, a  
co-production of lung and mantle,

another watery wave.

It makes a record of movable states –  
the ongoing saturation  
a flooding mechanism  
unsegmented bulk

this thing's grey life.

Pallid underparts, strong and  
stretched, it notes  
*trailing thick body across hushed wasteland.*

Around the rock trail you persevere, kicking  
up flora and fauna  
overlapping worlds, seating the stomach in  
unbreached frame.

It prescribes limits: bareness as sustenance.  
It mimics in towering form.

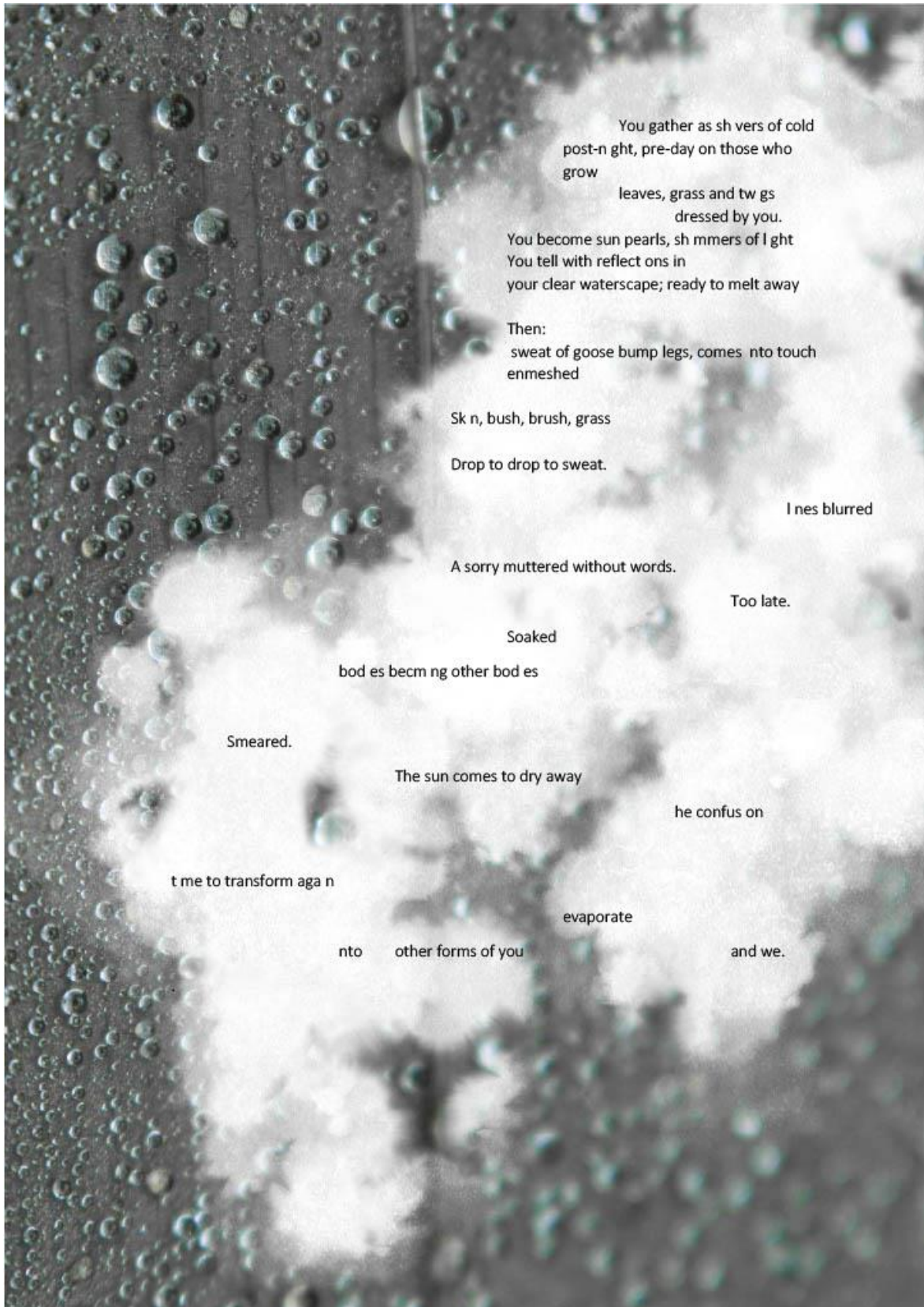
## Reflection

The idea for *Moon slug* emerged from a projection of what I thought I knew about the common slug. This projection struck me as my desire to influence the slug to yield to my instruction, a signal of my drive as a writer to own narrative; further to this, a sinister need to interfere in the slug's life in driving the subject to acknowledge me. As the creature - the 'it' of the poem, I sought to form a connection with the subject. But the relationship was invented, which led me to question how could a human to non-human relationship be possible?

As an allotmenteer, I thought merely by observing a slug lancing my brassicas I could assume some exterior knowledge. I try to impress - the invented slug? the poet held to constraint? - and to resolve, with precise measurements from a distance, but have been left with more questions: what has this research and writing brought me to? And if gaining access to the subject is not possible but at a distance, what remains? Observations from the point of view of 'it' in drafts of the poem were derogatory: the undervalued slug refused interest and observation for its dullness, presumed lethargy, mucus in excess. And with this outside perspective prescribing limits, the human views on the non-human life are principally subjective judgments.

Finally, the reverse hierarchical categorisation in the poem with human as creature shifted my thinking. What little do I know of the slug, beyond finding a new view of its anatomy, its relation as a species to other appearing soft- and hard-bodied similar non-human forms. The unsegmented body of the mollusc is segmented by means of the observation - through this writer applying ownership to the non-human's direction, movement, purpose; ultimately, an unpleasant experience for both the watcher and the watched, both perhaps caught up in the shifting landscape of what we experience and do not (in the 'cool notch spaces of the dark'). This observation process carries with it a kind of invisibility and as such it is a practice of locking out knowing, and therein lies the problem of imposing on the subject as if assuming ownership. The truth of the poem perhaps exposes the observing creature (the poet) aiming to be underneath the act, straining to push through the mud corpus to impose meaning onto the non-human that is content, one imagines, to fix its own meaning.

Carina Böhm, Kaurna Yerta (Adelaide, South Australia)



You gather as shivers of cold  
post-night, pre-day on those who  
grow

leaves, grass and twigs  
dressed by you.  
You become sun pearls, shimmerers of light  
You tell with reflections in  
your clear waterscape; ready to melt away

Then:  
sweat of goose bump legs, comes into touch  
enmeshed

Skin, bush, brush, grass

Drop to drop to sweat.

Lines blurred

A sorry muttered without words.

Too late.

Soaked

bodies becoming other bodies

Smeared.

The sun comes to dry away

the confusion

time to transform again

evaporate

into other forms of you

and we.



## Reflection

“so many of us are more multiple than the languages we have cultivated have allowed us to be”  
(Malech & Diaz 2021: 361)

Following this invitation to share an encounter that I happened to become a part of (my legs meeting the morning dew at Onkaparinga, Kurna Country), I came to realise that it actually has very little to do with my experience and relations to the encounter. As I am given these rules on how to communicate an encounter that includes the ‘we’ of the dew and me, possibly others, you ask me to abide to the grammar of a language that you dictate, in this case to a non-poet and non-native speaker.

So, could this prompt be all about you and your reign over how others are to communicate and practice story in a language ruled by you? It makes me think of real-world examples of First Nations peoples, nonhumans and others being continuously oppressed by such restrictions in their expression and being heard. What are the demands of our language doing to others?

The nature of the encounter I tried to depict was wordless. As I tried to give you the words you asked for, I slipped up, of course. I tried to create windows – invitations – into some other that I don’t know how to share in your language. Whether they are mistakes mistake, the ugly writings of a breaking of the rules or temporary residences of something other, is up to you to decide.

## Sources:

Malech, D., & Diaz, N. (2021). Natalie Diaz. *The Hopkins Review*, 14(3), 360–370. <https://doi.org/10.1353/thr.2021.0073>

## Council of Stone

The water: still  
    mostly  
        Gently pulsing  
at the pebbled  
                    shore

The air: mostly still, too  
    Just  
        a softening breeze

    She is barefoot  
Smooth pebbles press sole

        A deepening squat

        Fingertips stroke over ground  
A striking stone:                      *you are revealed*

                    Lifted up  
Held                      closer  
                    You are jade green, *you know?*  
                            With depth, as she tilts you one way,  
                    & another

    She stands  
holding  
        massaging you,  
then eyes close &

        you hear her thought  
        A question, to you:

*Should we make a life?*

You are thrown

Rushing flips

Flung

The water, the air: still, still

& you are telling her:  
*Noyesnoyesnoyesnoyesnoye-*

Your body *plups* as it contacts the lake's

Your turns

slow  
down

to soft twirls  
as you sink

deeper, now  
you're saying:

*Yes no yes no yes no yes*

(Ripples dance their magic)

Darker, now  
Stiller, still  
you're whispering:

*No*

*Yes*

*No*

*Yes*

*No*

*Yes*

*No*

The ripples reach her feet

as you hit the benthic:

*Yes.*

(Life: conceived)

## Reflection

Prompted by this invitation, I revisited an old journal entry I wrote which recalls the day we conceived our daughter. The day began with a walk to a beloved Welsh hillside, nearby sacred ground (enriched with the ashes of her ancestors). I lay foetal, surrendering my weight into the earth. A visualisation began: *a council of stone*. Although she was physically conceived that afternoon, I believe in some way her life truly began with the landing of that pebble. As such, this was a beyond-human encounter that changed the course of our lives, and why I chose it for this piece. Now may be the time for me to express my gratitude, as yet unspoken: *thank you*, to those words, and to the stone. The process of writing this has shed essential light on my perspective, shifting the story from the ecology being a passive presence to an active participant and intuitive collaborator. *How did I dare reduce the stone to 'it', previously?* Shedding shame, yet holding fast to the learning. A practice. Listening: all of (the) time.

## **Wild Ponies**

You appear one morning like a dream in the far field. You are stocky, thick coated for a Yorkshire autumn. A creature watches you from a farmhouse window as you and your foal graze the wildflower meadow, steam rising from your russet coat. The air smells pungent, earthy, as if the farm has opened a space to welcome you.

Later that day, a creature walks towards you and the young one at your side is skittish, swaying its head, snorting heavily. You stand your ground, stock still with your hooves firmly planted in the soft earth. Time slows down. Your foal stays close to your flank, and you stare into the being's grey-blue eyes, until it gently backs away to the gate. It leaves you to the stillness of the morning, the mizzle and pitter patter of rain. High above your head, a buzzard is mewing for its mate.

## Reflection

I chose a rare encounter with a wild horse that took place this year. The horses had been introduced to farmland where I live in Yorkshire for natural land management by the National Trust. Before I had begun writing, I had thought of this experience as disturbing because I was unsure as to how the horse and foal would behave. Considering the horse's perspective encouraged me to see her as curious, and maternal, but it was a challenge not to anthropomorphise this animal. I think I was still projecting my own feelings/interpretations onto the horse. The third person objective point of view was difficult, and I thought about how unusual it is to write in this voice because it is so stripped down. As I wrote, I began to see the human species as less important, and on a more balanced footing with the horse, as the human in the poem is entering into their territory and is described as a creature. I think this will develop my own work in future, where I am experimenting with writing from non-human perspectives, in an attempt to deepen a relationship with the more-than-human world through poetry. The constraints of the exercise encouraged me as a prose poet to challenge my usual writing process. I realised that my use of image/metaphor often takes me into the emotional territory of the human, narrative voice in a poem and I was resisting this pattern of writing.

Lily Roberts, Kaurna Yerta (Adelaide, South Australia)

you come freewheeling on the tails of the early morning  
    home  
your belly full and your baby waiting  
to be fed the fruits  
of your dark labour

the parasite watches you flap  
like a black fan unfurling and refolding unfurling and refolding  
creating and  
destroying the air

the parasite has craned its neck past comfort  
to try and understand you  
overwhelmed, it knows it cannot  
understand what it is to fly  
over power lines  
in search of rich blossom and fat figs  
green loquats and orange apricots

to come home smelling of  
mangoes and pollen  
the thick love of the world shrouding  
you like leathery wings;  
    like the fruit's own skin

**Reflection:**

I chose one of the encounters I have had with the flying foxes that have made Adelaide/Tarntanya home for the last ten or so years. I have been scanning the skies for them in the evenings and before dawn for months now, and my current poetry is an attempt to capture the way they make me feel: both separate from and a deep part-of. The constraints were less inhibiting than I expected once I began writing – it was just a matter of realigning that which I thought of as other and that which I thought of as myself. I am not sure if I slipped up or not in terms of assigning the beyond-human feelings. I can tell I have written a very emotional poem which speculates what it might be like to be a fruit bat, but ultimately seems to have come to the conclusion that the modes of being of a non-human cannot be accessed by “the parasite.”



## **Foxtrot**

You make your way down Caledonia Avenue at an easy pace, take a right at Innes Court. You tread the tar lightly. Your paws move swiftly, though not in haste. You know the way. You're in no hurry; you're not being chased. This is your regular route, your own home range, although there have been changes in your territory lately. Still, you trot on just the same, practice the habits that have served you well till now. You stride boldly along tar in the middle of the day, although the misty rain provides some cover. Confidence — or its appearance at least — is essential to survival in these semi-domesticated wilds. Self-assuredness is key to success in this urbanized country life. You've got a reputation to uphold, a position to defend. You leapt up in the local hierarchy recently, finally gained some respect. For the longest time, it seemed, you were the omega — served as a receptacle for pack aggression and frustration. You submitted to that role but were never resigned to it. You fought for your ascension, and you're determined not to regress. And yet, you sense trouble ahead. Recently, humans have returned to your realms. They have begun to take up residence in the abandoned brick burrows nestled among these quiet hills. These unused human dwellings were built in a time that predates your generational memory; all of them were empty for decades until a few moons ago. Peering out at you now from an opening in her burrow, you spy the latest newcomer — a pale-faced human with fox-coloured copper hair. You make no move to cower or hide despite having been caught by her eyes, which stare intensely. Each grass-green iris is framed by white. You've seen eyes like that before — inside roaring metal monsters that hunt the tar at night behind the unnatural shine of blinding twin moons. Humans may seem harmless, but you know better: they are chameleons that transform with the assistance of external parts. They don strange armour called cars. Propped up in these revving exoskeletons, they run down your brethren — strike old and young alike nightly, mangle their bodies and mash them to the ground. Cubs of yours have gone that way. The carnage caused by car-clad humans is abundant, and no species that braves the tar is safe; humans clash this way even between themselves and enact strange rituals — howl on their knees beside the tar late into the night in the glow of festively flickering blue and red lights. You shiver, turn away from this new space invader, shake off the startling intrusion of her alien gaze. You resume your mission, muzzle high. You were on your way to get dinner. You are the alpha. You must provide for your kits. You'll pick up a chook, then head back to the den, where you'll learn that the vixen, too, has picked up on

the stench of increased human activity in the vicinity. You both know what this means, can easily follow the scent — it reeks of suffering and stinks of death.

## Reflection

One of the many great things about this activity is that it prompted me to conduct research, to seek more information about the red fox, thereby increasing my understanding of the species. Even when creating fiction, I feel compelled to get the science right; I like to ensure

I'm using the correct terms and describing the right kind of behaviours. To write this piece, I had to understand the social structures within which a fox like the one I saw might have lived. Although this narrative prose poem adopts the perspective of the fox, it nevertheless predictably anthropomorphises the animal by providing it with the kind of motivations and conflict that one might expect to find in any developed character featured in a story; for example, I have assigned a gender that may be inaccurate and imagined a reason for the fox's outing. My human efforts to empathize with the animal thus result in a story that reflects elements of my own life experiences, which I have projected onto the fox, and extends beyond the brief moment of interspecies encounter.

Perhaps the most interesting result of following the specified prompts is that this creative activity was that it forced me to see myself and humankind from an alien perspective. I made associations I would not otherwise have made. Whenever I think of that fox, walking openly down my street, I recall all the dead foxes I see regularly as roadkill locally. This led me to wonder how an animal might understand a human driving a car. This inspired me to conceive of the car as a kind of exoskeleton in the poem. It also occurred to me that animals do not share our vocabulary, and so, after thinking that the way a human moves into a vacant house is not unlike the way that some animals move into burrows left by other individuals, I decided to refer to my house as a burrow in the poem. Likewise, I considered that the red and blue flashing lights that signify the presence of emergency services may not be distinguishable to festive holiday lights from the perspective of an intelligence unfamiliar with the arbitrary symbolic differences that humankind has assigned to each cultural context. I was able to use this insight to create an instance of dramatic irony in the narrative that I hope has a haunting effect on the reader. In this way, attempting to conceptualise and describe human activities from a non-human perspective has encouraged divergent thinking and surprising connections.

**Detritus –**

Click, click, click You call  
Your tongue  
You as You approach  
Chit, chit, chit You say,  
Letting those who follow know  
You?  
You?  
but You know it doesn't  
You know

swimming, singing like You  
A chorus of peers  
No, not alone, You are here  
gliding, flying below the surface  
You pass in a flash

You are nothing but a memory  
But for You  
life.

It floats, just on the surface.  
but no answer.  
It does not know  
But it does hear

it's ahead. Does it know  
Can it know  
It tries to move, to belong

it's foreign, fleeting  
But here it is, trying  
hoping, embracing where  
it doesn't belong.  
It swims, but is not

absent, alone.

it blocks the light  
and to it,

it is an inescapable part of

## Reflection:

The encounter I selected was from a session of open water swimming where I ("it") witnessed a pod of dolphins ("you"). I heard them first, the same chittering I attempted to replicate in the poem, before they flew past underneath me – blurs that the light barely touched. My perception of the encounter before writing was that we were beings occupying a shared space. But upon writing, my perspective shifted. I was not swimming in harmony with them but instead was an intrusive object, floating on the surface – "Detritus". This dichotomy – the "it" and "you" – really came to the forefront during drafting, which I felt was likely due to the constraints and language set out by the prompt.

I was surprised by how organic the constraints felt. Perhaps it was due to my desire to illustrate the spatial divide on the page. But what I didn't account for was that while the "it" and "you" were able to remain separate – each to their own column – they still existed on the same page: the ocean. It was this contradiction that became the focus of the piece. A contradiction which was illustrative of my initial perspective of individualism, that ultimately gave way to a commonality within multiplicity. Something which I feel really highlights open water swimming. That even as a piece of "Detritus", one can still belong to a space, be responsible for a space, even if one is only stopping by.

## **Biographical Notes**

Carina Böhm

Anne Caldwell

Victoria Zoe Callus

Paul Collis

Robert Crocker

Dan Disney

Jesse Hill

Antony Huen

Evan Jarrett

Bronwyn Lovell

Wanda O'Connor

Georgia Phillips

Elvire Roberts

Lily Roberts

Stef Rozitis

Ali Sharman

Devin Tupper

Amelia Walker

## **Carina Böhm**

Carina Böhm is the name of a body that has lived the realities of many stories. She is a PhD candidate at the University of South Australia. As a screenwriter she has worked across various productions in German daytime television.



Photo provided by Carina Böhm

## Anne Caldwell

Anne Caldwell is a poet, editor and lecturer based in the UK with an interest in place and eco-poetics. She is an Advisory Fellow for the Royal Literary Fund and works for the Open University. Her latest book of prose poems is *Alice and the North*, Valley Press. She has a new pamphlet of prose poetry out with SurVision in 2024 and was a runner up in the James Tate Prize.



Photo provided by Anne Caldwell



## Victoria Zoe Callus

Victoria (they/she) is a UK-based Maltese writer and final-year creative-critical PhD candidate. Their research focuses on paper materiality, particularly the relationship between printed texts and their surface. Victoria draws inspiration from her multicultural and multilingual Maltese heritage and is keenly interested in the queerness of these multifaceted intersections.



Photo provided by Victoria Zoe Callus

## Paul Collis

Paul Collis is a Barkindji man, born in Bourke in far western NSW on the Darling River. Paul worked in Newcastle for much of his young adult life in the areas of teaching and in Aboriginal community development positions. He has taught Aboriginal Studies to Indigenous inmates at the Worimi and Mount Penang juvenile detention centres and in Cessnock and Maitland prisons. Paul has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a doctorate in Communications. He lives in Canberra and works as a Creative Writing academic at the University of Canberra. *Dancing Home* is his first novel and won the national 2016 David Unaipon Award for a previously unpublished Indigenous writer and the 2018 ACT Book of the Year Award.

<https://www.uqp.com.au/authors/paul-collis>



Photo by Jen Dainer

## **Robert Crocker**

As a researcher I have been writing about design for sustainability, consumption and waste for many years. However, I have also been reading, and on occasion writing, poetry since the late 1960s, often on similar, but more personal, environmental themes.

<https://www.robertcrocker.net/about-me>



## Dan Disney

For ¼ of his life, Dan Disney has lived in Korea, where he works with Sogang University's English Literature Program. His most recent collection of poetry, >>> & || (Vagabond Press, 2021), was shortlisted for the Judith Wright Calanthe Award, and received the Kenneth Slessor Prize.

<https://vagabondpress.net/products/dan-disney-accelerations-inertias>



Photo by Kim Hyejin

## Jesse Hill

Jesse Hill is a multi-disciplinary poet exploring creative catharsis and environmental connection. Her PhD in progress involves the formation of eight film-poems representing the Wheel of the Year ecological calendar. They are researching how we may utilise creative expression in order to attune to the natural cycles and rhythms of our interdependent ecology, and what effects this may have for the individual and thus the whole, within the context of the climate crises.

<https://www.instagram.com/sabbatverse/>



Photo by Jesse Hill

## Antony Huen

Antony Huen was born and raised in Hong Kong. He was shortlisted for the Poetry London Pamphlet Prize and published in *Poetry Wales* and *PN Review*. As a critic, he won the 2021 Wasafiri Essay Prize and came second for the inaugural essay prize of *Women: A Cultural Review*. He lectures at Hong Kong Metropolitan University.

<https://linktr.ee/antonyhuen>

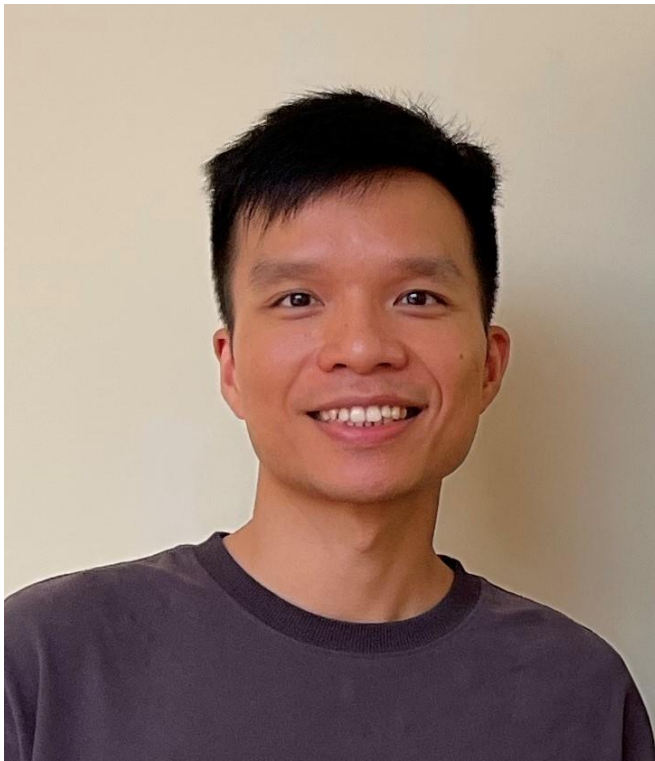


Photo provided by Antony Huen

## **Evan Jarrett**

Evan Jarrett is a writer, researcher, and an Honours Candidate at the University of South Australia. Born and raised in South Australia, his work currently focuses on how the emerging genre of climate-fiction can explore the multitude of impacts that climate change has on places, and all those who exist within them, from the perspective of working-class communities. He is particularly interested in how such communities experience changing places, both in terms of environment, and society.



Photo provided by Evan Jarrett

## Bronwyn Lovell

Bronwyn Lovell is a poet and science fiction scholar. Her poetry has been widely published, including in *Best Australian Poems*, and she was recently commissioned to write a poem for the Australian Space Agency. Her verse novel *Between Worlds* is forthcoming from University of Western Australia Publishing, and her poetry collection *In Bed with Animals* is published by Recent Work Press. She lectures at the University of South Australia.

<https://recentworkpress.com/product-author/bronwyn-lovell/>



Photo by Andy Steven



## Bio

Dr Wanda O'Connor is a poet and Lecturer in Creative Writing at The Open University in Wales. She is co-editor of the *Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry* and a member of the interdisciplinary research group *Critical Poetics* at Nottingham Trent University. Recent publications can be found in 'Renovating the open field: Innovative women poets reclaiming an erasure history' in *The Cambridge Companion to American Poetry and Politics since 1900*, 'Dark choral' (*Marsh Hawk Review*), and elsewhere.



Photo by Allan James

## Georgia Phillips

Georgia is a fiction writer, poet, literary critic and academic who is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at The University of Adelaide. Her debut literary historical novel, *The Bearcat*, is forthcoming publication with Picador in 2024. She is working on a book length collection of poems and her second novel.



Photo provided by Georgia Phillips

## Elvire Roberts

Elvire Roberts is a queer poet who works as a signed language interpreter in the UK. Her writing celebrates the doors that languages and cultures open in our minds and bodies. Her pamphlet *North by Northnorth* is published by Five Leaves press. A collaborative pamphlet *Knee to Knee*, co-written with the poet Rachel Goodman, is published by Dialect Press.

<https://www.elvireroberts.co.uk/>



Photo by Suzanne Reid

## Lily Roberts

Lily Roberts is a PhD candidate at the University of South Australia. She is an inter-disciplinary practitioner that draws on poetry, textile, and film to create patchwork quilts of meaning. Lily is currently working on her topic 'Sensing the Anthropocene: Creative Practice, Climate Change, and the Sensory World'. Her poems have been published in *Green: A Blue Feet Anthology*, *Pure Slush*, and *Free the Verse*.



Photo from Lily Robert's *LinkedIn* Profile

## Stef Rozitis

Stef Rozitis (they/them) is interested in all forms of research, storying and writing that break habits of dominance, normalisation and inequity. They use poetry and other creative forms to think with even when writing “seriously”. As a child Stef thought they were a mermaid but as a young adult insisted they were a tree. These days Stef is happy to just be part of the entanglement of everything.



Photo by Stef Rozitis

## Ali Sharman

Ali Sharman lives in northwest England. She is a freelance writer and PhD candidate at Keele University, where she is researching how literature is influenced by periods of crisis. Ali's poetry and short stories have been published both online and in print.

<https://alicesharman.journoportfolio.com/academic/>

<https://alicesharman.journoportfolio.com/published-creative-work/>



Photo by Ali Sharman

## Devin Tupper

Devin Tupper is an award-winning playwright whose research focuses on leveraging the Gothic to interrogate the intersections between the creative and critical through his original, socially-engaged and politically-driven methodology, critical Gothic authorship. His thesis, a novel expressing his method, *Lives Between*, explores how digital technology generates a haunted authorial voice.

<https://devintupper.substack.com/>  
<https://holtjournal.co.uk/Devin-Tupper>



Photo provided by Devin Tupper

## **Amelia Walker**

Amelia Walker lives and writes on Kurna Yerta (the lands of the Kurna people, a.k.a. Adelaide, South Australia). Her fifth poetry collection, *Alogopoiesis*, was published in 2023 by Life Before Man / Gazebo Books. She lectures in creative writing at the University of South Australia and is currently working on a book about reading and writing for social change (contracted with Bloomsbury Academic for publication in 2025).

<https://gazebobooks.com.au/product/alogopoiesis/>



Photo by Amelia Walker