

on the last night
we searched for my face
in the dunes.
leave me on this lake
in the eyes of a pipi
beneath the dark south head

in the trembling solder tear of a cockatoo
in the asthenospheric spines of sheep and of deer,
in all the life that clings to my lighthouse
like the prawns moving
from the silent weed of a submerged forest
to touch the rising wrinkled sounds of skin.

down here
there are more stars
than grains of sand
and more prawners
than opaque disciples of moonlit flesh
flicking at my calves.

ii

down here I see you running
along the shores, down
to the tideless lakes
beneath the south headland.

I know you from the flick of your prawning light
I've tasted your sweat in the spines of buckled prawns
I am quicksilver
spraying from the land
with fragile driftwood spines
silently and meatlessly ripping off the dunes.

from this headland
I think of the horizon-spine
where arched prawns cleanly drown
in my moon-sent luminosity.

iii

fleshless spines and shells settle on the
horizons of skin and sand and sand and
stars fleshless spines and shells settle on
the horizons of skin and sand and sand
and stars fleshless spines and shells settle
on the horizons of skin and sand and
sand and stars fleshless spines and shells
settle on
. spines and shells settle on the
horizons of skin and sand and sand and
stars fleshless spines and shells settle on
the horizons of skin and sand and sand
and stars fleshless spines and shells settle
on the horizons of skin and sand and
sand and stars fleshless spines and shells
settle on the horizons of skin and sand
and sand and stars fleshless spines and
shells settle on the horizons of skin and
sand and sand and stars fleshless spines

and
. *sand and sand and*
stars of skin and sand and sand and stars
fleshless spines and shells settle on the
horizons of skin and sand and sand and
stars fleshless spines and shells settle on
the horizons of skin and sand and sand
and stars fleshless spines and shells settle
on the horizons of skin and sand and
sand and stars fleshless spines and shells
settle on the horizons of skin and sand
and sand and stars fleshless spines and
shells settle *on the*

iv

I am the Nation that is a Prawn, Sucked
from its fleshy shell by a thirsty and
screaming mother. I am Prawnner and I
have the raw foetal soles that follow my
prawn-father's footsteps, rare and tender
melaleuca roots stripped from her
steaming forest womb.

On Sundays I walk through the scrub
and I listen to the loggers, cramped by
their fresh-mown mangrove swamp.

Down here she kept them legless on the
flicking gritty head of my national drink,
the prawns stored in the spine between
sand and stars. *I am the Nation that is a
Prawn, Sucked from its fleshy shell by a
thirsty and screaming mother.*

*after this comes a solitary cold shift
of the hottest months; I'm inbound,
away from the turn
of the beach.*

v

today when we walked to the northern headland,
away from the turn of the beach,
we're-formed
in the cool earth of dawn, traveling
in skinless fleshless light.

the buckled prawn in a bowl
can slowly uncurl
and settle with a shell, and the people
turn
into ancient melaleuca roots
sliding beneath the grains of sand
with the pipis beneath her soles

away from the patterns of the lighthouse
to the mountains under the dunes,
the earth
under sand under
skin.

here, high, on the mountain
 the prawns are stored
 in the horizon's spine

*Here, high, Sheep poise
 as Sweat
 gathers
 as Eyre
 on King
 George's Sound
 as the red-prick eyes of city prawns
 are held under heavenly tollgates
 and drown in moon-sent luminosity*

*I cast my shadow over you,
 a lake of chromed bodies,
 dribbling
 down from the roads,
 over passing lands and cities,
 and over dreams of wearing the shining sweat-crusts shells ,hanged,
 over
 turning
 driftwood poles*

in the horizon
 here, high
 in distant flesh

in the trembling solder tear of a cockatoo
 in the asthenospheric spines of sheep and of deer,
 in all the life that clings to my lighthouse
 like the prawns moving
 from the silent weed of a submerged forest
 to touch the rising wrinkled sounds of skin.

down here
 there are more stars
 than grains of flesh
 and more prawners
 than opaque disciples of moonlit sand
 flicking at my calves.

on the last night
 we searched for my face
 in the dunes
 . leave me now
 below the head
 in the fine shell of my eyes

Sally Treloyn