

Anne Frances Elvey

From west to east the body waits

Ice is rare.

 The wind lifts its green partners
and time
is marked by the midday

throb. The hour

 pushes its pram to the corner shop.
A woman
nurses. Plastic

tablecloths are

 scalloped and checked. A hinge creaks.
A bell.
Four women

sing their way

 in. We've been partying with Elvis
they explain.
The fridge thuds

closed. A TV

 raises its volume. Guided by nose
and touch
a small mouth

gropes for a breast.

 Two yield to their talent. Outside
red
borders the road.

Lace billows

 at a window. A goods train passes.
Eucalypts
throw shade

full of holes.

 We leave the wheatbelt. A gough
of sand
spills and spills

through the long
drive, as we imagine country other-
wise.
Home is more

temperate. Camellias
dropped months ago. Lorikeets
arrive
late to fruit

shrivelled on the limb.
The wind carries the tang of sea.
A rainbow
spans the road.

Our bare feet
feel the slick of snails. The basil
is gone
next day. A gift

to live by remains
when its instrument is past use.
Reft
from what it loves

the body waits
for the postie and will not be told
there's
no mail today

there is no
better place. A magpie loiters by
a trolley
as a bus pulls up.

Performing hue

The sun is long
behind the shudder that undoes
the prey. I am on the beach toward
evening. Seagulls skim
the darkening sea, dip
to a soft kill. Peach

spreads—and gold—across
the deepening teal and tints
the edges
of cumulus and leaves ragged
strips
of cirrus on the blue.

There is no red as might be blood
or rose or heart
or gut
turned by the rend and jaw
of life requiring
life. In that gut

the others feed
and keep—and in their code
remember aeons
of knowing. This is precipice
as much as it is
balance, the tilting

world, horizon reaching
past the star we round elliptically.
A coolamon moon (hung
over my wary track up
through the scrub) is my stolen
metaphor, the sun's cratered shard.

White and White

White and White lived
their law separately in the garden
of England beside the Medway
and beneath a future road.

White was transported for stealing
six geese and a carpet
bag, his third offence.
The geese squabbled on the *Marion*.*

a convict transport ship arrived
Van Diemen's Land 16 Sep 1845

White left farm
labour in Maidstone and *settled* invaded
Balardong country. Fresh
from the *Raleigh** he was a *pioneer*.

a passenger ship arrived Fremantle
31 May 1852

White whipped a daughter
because she cried when bull ants
bit. By forty-two he died—
a Menzies mine canary.

White's daughter defied him
and became at eighteen the first
teacher in a one-teacher school
in a paddock near Goomalling.

White married White.
They had twelve children. Local
Balardong ate at their table
before the Great Depression.

White grew up in South Yarra
and left school at thirteen.
He played football on factory
rooves and once fell through.

White, who was an altar boy
in prison, complained that Pentridge
had changed. He died in a nursing
home afraid for his life.

White nodded from the station
wagon, heading down Nicholson Street
where White had lived with his new
wife in the Cairo Flats.

White wished they could return
to the borders of country and wait
for welcome. She liked the Tent Embassy
and took out a mortgage on Bunurong land.