

Dangerously Close

The grass gives softly. I
doze
listening to lorikeets, to girls
videoing Sunday offcuts.

A woman uncurls her body
in a slow rhythmical dance
around a tall stone.
I sleep with a cloud

squatting on my chest. The hill
above me is coloured in history.
Cattle tear at the earth,
at fences. They chew at scenery.

I sleep in a cloud
and faces I know pass in and out.
My eyes follow voices. The girls
video me

standing up in slow motion.
I'm like vapour, fizzing in the heat.
The woman
dances dangerously close.

I fade into the coolness of a
flowering rhododendron. I
recede deeply, the sunlight
turning green.

The Resurrection of a Man, christened Dog

The Lutherans are singing. The birches
whip their hymns into garbled utterances.

Broad bands of sunlight stand on rooftops.
I push myself hard up the street.

You push hard too. The wind
splatters the stench of cattle inwards

into the suburbs. Who created the look
on our faces? you ask. Who put us here

amongst the peacocks, painted the solar
systems for us to stare at on cold nights,

taught us to tear out people's voices
with our hands, to play with words

as if they were toys. Is this the end
of an argument? Is this the beginning? ...

this resurrection of a man, christened Dog,
who once promised never to go away, the tail-

wagger back from the dead, who now lives
in his house in the hills, who still believes

in an eye for an eye, an ear for an ear, a noose
for a noose. He's the one who taught us about

the beauties of retribution, how to squeeze fire
from a bush, water from a rock, turn wine

into blood, chew on the bones of dead prophets
and feast on their most delicate parts.

He's the one who taught us to smoke cocaine
from an Indian peace pipe, to listen to Tutanekai

playing his flute carved from the leg bone
of my brother, to sit at his paws and suffer

like children. The Lutherans are standing outside
talking visions. They hug each other

when they think we're looking, when they see
you're taking notes for The Christian Monitor.

We walk the Dog, throwing prayer-
wheels for him to retrieve. He says,

he'll take us into the hills to show us his house,
his gardens, the white tulips, the poppies, his fields

of perfume. There's this glamour puss he wants us
to meet, with a heart of gold. She's his wife,

his lover, his mirror, his argument to end all arguments
and he says he loves her, loves her, loves her.