



To Spring Hope, Here and There

For John O'Rourke

"Hope is the thing with feathers" – Emily Dickinson

This morning, a kookaburra surfed the fence post
outside my kitchen window, headstrong in the squall,
unfussed in the gale, a stubborn figure in a snow globe.

Furry green apricots plunged to the ground, sprawled
in litterfall, pirouetted into the parsley patch (yellowing
and gone to seed) pinged the tin roof as noisy miners
mimed in feather bushes nearby. But, for you, Christmas
trees will soon bloom in fiery coronas bellowed by falsettos
of long-billed corellas, and kangaroo paws will overstep
the ancient scarp. I remember the sensation of noonlight
sharpening to summer's taper on my neck near the river
of the black swan, as sulphur-crested cockatoos wheeled
daredevilishly in a mob on the horizon. Here, crimson
rosellas veer then disappear into the olive orchard, hulking
wallaroos chew wadges of couch grass, magpies gargle
among their parliament before rain gurgles into the concrete
tank—and when I think I understand what ensouls us all, this land,
it bolts from the warm inside of my hand—green elusive pulse
of wren and wagtail, our filigreed dreams of hope unleashed.
I won't forget, at Jarrahdale, when ring-neck parrots seesawed
in the golden grevillea and, at dusk, red-tailed black cockatoos
rummaged for marri nuts with their beaks hard as steel pincers.
I think hope is as tough as feathers—a seed scatters, a bird shudders
on spectral wings, sings of things we must have faith in to imagine.

John Ryan