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On the Desirability of Wildflowers Whilst Dogwalking

by John Charles Ryan

my Rottweiler named Axle
suspires and strains at his lead
raring steadily like a sled dog
neck barrelled and rippling,
musculature, a sleek black
as the hide of a gorilla, loping
along fickle Lesmurdie sidewalks,

overarched by wattle spoon-drift
and the tentative reds of eucalypts
the sprawling coven of the winter hills
fuchsia grevillea and prickly moses—
his injections are succinic
episodes of *micturus interruptus*
into each cosmetic cranny of lawn,

each errant tuft of trans-hemispheric
grass issued an amber ordinance
a canine-decreed cease and desist
he knows the punctilio of the town—
in the enclaves of bush, a Telstra tower;
underneath the aureole of flowering acacia,
a radiance tempered by solstice mists,

a daily rumpus with a fenced-in dog
perturbs his mild-mannered countenance
sends him into twists of baritone
barking, shaking bowel-deep excitement,
quietened by the red-tailed cockatoo
wrestling jarrah nuts, splitting stone-hard
hulls with beaks like iron instruments—

my companion sees none of this (or alas)
has seen it all along, feigns being impressed
seems mesmerised by sand specks
studding a tennis ball that I pitch in perfect,
slow camber over the sated scrubland
over low-dwelling insect sucking rosettes
above purple splendour herbal ringlets—

he goes tearing down the track after it
snaps the radioactive green orb into his jaws
in mid-stride, sniffs for dog sign language,
leaves a vile dropping that consumes the air—
nose safe in wattle churning of sweetness
it occurs to me, there are too few adjectives
for the tragedies of smell, well, none that egress

Axle goads me 'round the sandy track.

John Ryan is in his last year of a PhD programme in the School of Communications and Arts at Edith Cowan University. Some of his plant poetry has been published in *SWAMP*, *Perilous Adventures*, *Philament* and *Bukker Tillibul* (forthcoming).