

Wheatbelt Pneuma

POEM | John Charles Ryan

the Mullewa Caravan Park seems
sopped in yolky undulations of canola
where hippopotamus-sized RVs turn
then lurch before the pretty graffiti

-emblazoned on the ablution block

wreath flowers riding the railway lines
or lipping along footpaths in the monochrome,
these candied stromatolites in a silica sea
entrusting their souls to the umber ground

-and the acacia desert which cups

seed grains in its apertures—
they lie as flower germs all the year
then the sun's azimuth slants
and the lilt of the wind gads

-pip flesh to flower – the earth gestures

in florid rings beside corrugated
arterials grumbling from Geraldton;
what gives you posture at the verge
tramped over by incautious boots?

-you are the land's augury, like us

short-lived sparks in recalcitrant soil
a star-struck choir nodding to God
in unison or a congregation clothed
in ruby and off-white finery

-heads tipped piously to the ground

they listen to the primeval incantation—
when pneuma fused breath and heat,
the woven flower of *Leschenaultia macrantha*
flexed a green heart girded by blood fire

-asking the secret earth to sing.