

Blood

John Ryan

*gum trees emit, when wounded, a stream of
reddish fluid of a consistence not unlike thick
blood
– George Fletcher Moore, 1884*

once you've seen blood
you look for it everywhere
the glowing dark enamel

seeping from chambers
where organs pulse
blood impregnating blood

wave after wave
in the columnar light
of late afternoon, a marri

performs a plasma-letting
I taste the feasting flies
with flecks of sugary kino

disintegrating on my tongue
imparting an acrid sting
agreeable as an antiseptic

their lineage inside my blood.
bloodroot spicing bland roots
or the colonial bloodroot

white-flowering under oaks
the profusion of my blood
after a summer camp slashing

how it spilled like a springtide
or an open tap in my eyes
I asked would it ever stop.

strange spangles of crimson
along a suburban Seattle street
after the drunken night ranting

of the neighbours, a terse friend's
nose ruptured from the altitude
of New England Green Mountains

his only ebullition of the day
my scalp sopping like fresh paint
as the surgeon excises a lesion

and all the births I will never see,
including my own, but blood
is everywhere, though the body

dams it back in its remotest gorges
it gushes forth at improbable
moments of indifference—

blood *ortus* blood, *nativitas* blood.