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Dispersion of Seed, Stirling Range *by John Ryan*

a gap in the range
along Chester Pass Road,
where bullanock grow
on charcoaled soils;

we have come to see
wild things, anxious
as furred buds, instead
lying on the road verge-

the sun-baked corpse
of an old kill, wincing
its last breath, grains
sprawled about, its guts;

umber burlap bleached
tawny brown and riven,
spilling maggots and stones
in difficult morning light;

Hoodini escapee from
roadtrains, persona non
grata at an ill-fated wedding
where wheat sullied the rice;

interloper on an island
of mallee and wattles,
sweeping the understory
in a bile yellow peristalsis.

habitats become habits —
all the shades of saffron and
sinopia signify the storm
of spring as we know it or

djilba as it has been called;
these worlds, sharp with edges
that overlap and occlude,
curl up one day like fern fronds
shrivel the next, dispersing.

Note: 'Dispersion of Seed' was 'Commended' for the 2009 Tom Collins Poetry Prize

John C. Ryan is a second-year Ph.D. candidate at Edith Cowan University. His dissertation invokes the writer-as-botanist tradition of John Clare, Henry David Thoreau, and Pablo Neruda to create poetic interpretations of the unusual and stunning flora of Southwest Australia. He is a graduate of the University of Lancaster's M.A. in Environmental Philosophy, and his research interests include ecophilosophy, landscape writing, and the human-plant relationship.