

QUALUP BELL

when nickel prices plunged
BHP reneged on promises
of glittering wealth to Hopetoun—

now half-hatched façades of
slapdash boom burbs riddle
the hinterland between Veal Street
and the Fitzgerald River heath;

north side of town,
a colossal mining truck wash
stands sentinel, belittling all small
tokens of catharsis—

in the saddened hodgepodge,
retailers peddle couches and caffeine,
with that expectant look of refugees;

but then I found a Qualup Bell
pendulating a fuchsia flower trio
each veined-heart bract
poised breathless at its heights

as the Southern Ocean beat alabaster sand,
it would soon bellow into the earth
fomenting the white-capped sea.

John Ryan