

# Deb Lloyd

## THE DISAPPEARED

Our huts were built in foothills of rainforest  
all verandas and no doors

Tree snakes coiled around the rafters and the ropes  
slung from the frangipanis

We baked bread every morning  
leaving the doughs outside to rise twice in the sun

Half we ate (it was good!) — the others we traded for fruit,  
but even this was not allowed.

No barter, no exchange.

Once we had men who came and went (these are their children)  
But they have all been Disappeared.

Now they are memirages.

The more you loved them the more you see them

loping and gliding,

round a tree

through a doorway

across a floor

parting the cane ...

The most favoured hide things from us as if to remind us  
We begin to search, then realise where to go  
We run to that rock where the children are playing  
and, there it is! Book, cotton, ladle, hairpin  
— whatever they have hidden.  
As soon as you touch that thing, up jumps your memirage!  
To see them like this makes we women frightened and  
feel like to cry  
(forgive me if this upsets you, but who can I talk to?)

This is why the rock is sometimes  
scattered with bits and pieces —  
until the children gather things together.  
They do not fear their fathers, understand?  
Their way of seeing is strong,  
to them they are angelspirits  
who can see what the living do.