

Ghost Gums

Whitely as stardust, a ghost-gum resists
the day's coarse smear of heat.

Rises by quartzite walls:
white against so orange-red;
towers, a monument, marble arms flung out
impossibly wide and high in a desert;
rock-like among rocks, her waist reflecting
night-frost and noon-sear.

Exultant branchlets upstretch
weeping tresses of springtime green.

The flame robin flirts in her shadow.
High above, like eye-pupils,
two black dots winging and circling
up in the hot yellow, searching.

How can she rise so assured
when all around is seared and crippled?

In certain nooks by invisible soaks or banks
of forgotten rivers under the sand
each under its cloud of tossing green,
a doric column, not gracile, robust.