

Lorraine Marwood

LILY LADY/LILY GIRL

That's the lily lady, in a southerly niche
she waters the shine of green the pale
wax of burgeoning flowers.

I go to take the surplus beans
a bag of passionfruit, the latest
family news from my mother.

I am royalty she treats my shy
words with greatest respect, a smile
a gentle seat, a cup of tea, some cake.

In return I listen to her family
prattle, the relatives still fighting
the Mallee dry, the births, the marriages.

Tippling facts, tippling tea, she repeats
the family genealogy and I see the
richness of her home country.

She looks through the small kitchen
window her husband heavy boots
slow talk slow move is coming.

She bustles the cups, the family tree
stops growing and we move through
the tiny cottage to the clumps of

*lilies, southerly sigh, flowers
from our homestead grown
near the rain water tank, this*

is the final piece of family
news and she cuts three long
stems and I am the lily girl

going home flowers in wax paper
news for my mother
in wax also.

20