

Clayton Hansen

CURRAWONGS II

(*Strepera graculina*: #750 in Simpson and Day's *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*)

Closer now to parting flight
they, sated on new fruit,
 shine their beaks on the deep red resin
 of eucalypts, like workhouse boners,
put thin edges on their blades, their bobbing heads;
the dissecting rhythm of taking flesh and leaving heart.

Even now they battle for territories,
fence sky's acres, push trees like vessels
 into the armada of their possessions, human
 in their audacious self-proclaiming,
imposing themselves as drunken neighbours do,
ringing shallow favours from the pores of sobriety.

At a time anointed, they reprise their caravans, post gypsy laughter
to the breeze, shifting on a day's new thermals
 their swarthy backs trap daylight like a long
 stretch of ocean, glossed and rippled over by the wind.
They dive and sweep the earth, follow faintly calls and evaporate
like droplets of night into the rising sun.