

had shared, the wire and sky, the sand, the grass, the rhythm and the intaglio of ghost creeks upon the floodplain. She returned to rest her head upon the boiling skin of landscape, or upon his toad-like chest; to listen to the beating of the subterranean watercourse so far below the wind and soil; to Bells's gruff kindnesses; to his abandonment. Her face upon the smooth stone of her pillow, her own dry grave awaiting, she called out: "Come back, and walk with me! Bells! Let's walk infinity together!" her lips scarcely vibrating, her tongue clicking like a sick cockatoo. The illness had left her still-young frame smooth and light as paperbark. "We'll trace the lovely channels, Bells. We'll trace the sandlines and the cattletacks... Ah, bring me some breakfast!" she stammered, or begged.



michelle dicinoski

INLAND SEA

You've drawn a whaleboat through desert
for years in search of an inland sea.
A fever of faith kept you moving towards
the centre towards your elusive truth.

The return would be triumphant:
a voyage from heart to fringe
imagining sea names, headlines, fame.
But even the top of that boat stayed dry.

You drank from meagre pools.
Your tongue turned to thistle and your
skin dropped like bark.
When you dreamed, you dreamed of water.

At last you've found the centre holds
nothing for you.
The heart is barren.
Return by foot and horseback

and do not speak of shame.
You will find abundance here, at
these margins of uncommon wealth.