

lose myself in darkness. It is late.  
The North Shore scintillates  
with innumerable lights. In the black water,  
anchored in the bedrock of the harbour,  
Pinch Gut — where intractable convicts  
were crammed and harmed. I imagine myself  
out there, bound by stone and water.  
In fact, I feel I might as well  
be manacled in that fortress  
as fret in this room, far from home.

## ANTHONY LAWRENCE

### EMU EGGS

Here is a dark green swelling  
in flattened grass;  
a clutch of mossy stones nosing  
upward through damp soil.

When disturbed, an emu will leave the nest  
if the eggs are warm with life —  
running off to distract the intruder.  
Infertile eggs are given a nonchalant vigil;  
dead yolk requiring no protection.

The shells of emu eggs have several layers:  
the first, a rough green field  
seen from a great height.  
The second, blue water glimpsed  
through parting clouds.  
The third, a pale eye.  
The fourth layer is a film of skin,  
like river ice, transparent & thin,  
a veil over moving water.

There is no fifth layer.  
The knife scrapes, & the skin collapses,  
the skate goes through.  
One small hole in a blown egg.  
No beak chipping away the rainbow layers; no wet-feathered  
fledgling's climbing out  
through a broken shell.

## ANTHONY LAWRENCE

### JACKAROO HAIKU / FIVE DAYS

#### *Monday*

Scooping grain from a bin  
a mouse  
its teeth in the end of my finger

#### *Tuesday*

At four am      riding  
the Night Horse through fine rain  
I hear the cow bells

#### *Wednesday*

Daybreak      orange light  
two men warming their hands  
over a kero drum

#### *Thursday*

The hollow knocking  
of boots on verandah boards  
voices      Wayne's laughter

*Friday*

A windmill's rusty music      distances  
like a tune from David's  
lute

## ROBERT MAPSON

### OUR PLANE SKIMS THE JUNGLE

our plane skims the jungle  
seeking the lost city:  
xanadu or new york, london or troy,  
following the smooth fingering river.

i read a book on lost civilisations,  
we discuss our lost lovers,  
i am distressed at the few poems i have with me.

on the river we pass lone explorers in canoes  
singing verses from old sagas,  
till the river becomes a road: less still,

a sculpture of the mood of warning, and we land.  
but this is only a tourist spot,  
a point to change cash for plastic toys  
and the city of ideas lies further inland.

i ask of the native seller at a bazaar stall  
why the discrepancy in the prices of his wares,  
crudely carved figurines, perhaps of regional gods.  
"that, sir, is because the cheaper ones have no shadows."