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."