

GOLDEN CASSIA

In late afternoon day after day
the child stands by the gate
and looks at the burning tree

Who he is I do not know

Winter nears its end
the cassia hints of Spring -
one tree crowned with light

The cry of a bird the first star
the tree still bright

As mists begin to fall
he stands in wonder at it all

PARADISO

The sign read: 'To Paradise'.
I reasoned I had little to lose
By following the leaf-mould track
Through tunnels of emerald light,
Cool and mushroom-scented.
The buttressed trees, ferns,
Had an exotic appeal.
A cassowary took fright,
A ring-tailed possum planed
Through interlacing vines.
There were nettles for the unwary:
They lurk in even the best places.

What I didn't expect to find
Along the Paradiso track -
Not a crown of thorns
But around my feet
A garland of bloody leeches.

C.B. CHRISTESEN.