

Not Very Quiet

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You are tumbling, down through the rabbit hole, grasping at air, and she is putting you to the test. She asks: *what is the word for that feeling you get when your eyes blur and you see only shadows on your skin?* Dread, you say, and she nods. Then: *The name for white wine that tastes of limestone?* Pass. Which means: fail. You could make up a word, but what would be the point? She is losing interest, checking her phone, glancing across the room. She asks, *What is the word for when you are falling, and the ground is nowhere near; and all you can do is speak out the names of things you know?* You don't answer; all you know is that naming gives us nothing, not even the ground beneath our feet.

Jen Webb

Jen Webb works at the University of Canberra, and has been published by journals and anthologies in Australia, Canada, the USA, UK and China. She is the author of several poetry collections – most recently, *Sentences from the Archive* (Recent Work Press 2016) – and, with Paul Hetherington, *Watching the World: Impressions of Canberra* (Blemish Books 2015).

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