

Westerly

Volume 62 Number 2, 2017

Notice of Intention

Westerly has converted the full backfile of Westerly (1956–) to electronic text, available to readers and researchers on the *Westerly* website, www.westerlymag.com.au. This work has been supported by a grant from the Cultural Fund of the Copyright Agency Limited.

All creative works, articles and reviews converted to electronic format will be correctly attributed and will appear as published. Copyright will remain with the authors, and the material cannot be further republished without authorial permission. *Westerly* will honour any requests to withdraw material from electronic publication. If any author does not wish their work to appear in this format, please contact *Westerly* immediately and your material will be withdrawn.

Contact: westerly@uwa.edu.au

Westerly acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Australians. We celebrate the continuous living cultures of Indigenous people and their vital contributions within Australian society.

Westerly's office, at the University of Western Australia, is located on Whadjak Noongar land. We recognise the Noongar people as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land.



This project has also been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



Publisher

Westerly Centre, The University of Western Australia, Australia

General Editor

Catherine Noske

Associate Editor

Josephine Taylor

Editorial Advisors

Cassandra Atherton (poetry)

Rachel Robertson (prose)

Elfie Shiosaki (Indigenous writing)

Editorial Consultants

Delys Bird (The University of Western Australia)

Barbara Bynder

Caterina Colomba (Università del Salento)

Tanya Dalziell (The University of Western Australia)

Paul Genoni (Curtin University)

Dennis Haskell (The University of Western Australia)

John Kinsella (Curtin University)

Ambelin Kwaymullina (The University of Western Australia)

Susan Lever (Hon. Associate, The University of Sydney)

John Mateer

Tracy Ryan (The University of Western Australia)

Andrew Taylor (Edith Cowan University)

Corey Wakeling (Kobe College, Japan)

David Whish-Wilson (Curtin University)

Terri-ann White (The University of Western Australia Publishing)

Administrator

Asha Ryan

Commissioning Editor

Lucy Dougan

Web Editor

Chris Arnold

Production

Design: Chil3

Typesetting: Lasertype

Print: UniPrint, The University of Western Australia

Front cover: I Dewa Putu Mokoh, *The Antique Shop*, 1991. Chinese ink and acrylic on canvas, 80 × 60 cm. Courtesy of Mary Hill and the late Chris Hill. Image by Brad Coleman/John Curtin Gallery.

All academic work published in *Westerly* is peer-reviewed.

Copyright of each piece belongs to the author; copyright of the collection belongs to the *Westerly* Centre. Republication is permitted on request to author and editor.

Westerly is published biannually with assistance from the State Government of WA by an investment in this project through the Department of Culture and the Arts and from the Literature Board of the Australia Council. The opinions expressed in *Westerly* are those of individual contributors and not of the Editors or Editorial Advisors.

62.2 | New Writing from
Western Australia
Fiction
Poetry
Interview
Essay

Westerly

Soles—
Ishikawa Itsuko

Tr. Paul Munden and Rina Kikuchi

Ishikawa Itsuko (b. 1933) is a committed anti-war and anti-nuclear activist poet. She was born in Tokyo. The war experiences of her childhood left her with a legacy of perceiving her naive culpability in the violence of the Japanese Imperial Army across Asia and the Pacific. She has written extensively on the topic. Her second collection, *Wolf*, was awarded the Mr H Prize (1961). Her collection *Chidorigafuchi e ikimashita ka (Have You Been to Chidorigafuchi?)* (1985) won the 11th Earth Prize.

become shoes

on command: *become shoes!*

So many shoes—crossing the bridge to a foreign land...

hobnails

on command: *be hard as nails!*

Stab someone, anyone—nail the whole street...

become oranges

on command: *become oranges!*

So many oranges, unsold, going to waste—chucked out...

become chairs

on command: *become chairs!*

Hard pressed—we endure without muttering a word...

become frogs

on command: *become frogs!*

From spring through to summer—croak croak croak...

become mud

on command: *become mud!*

Mud—listening to the crane-fly's summer song...

become a boomerang
on command: *boomerang!*
become a ladder
on command: *ladder!*
become leaves:
on command: *leaves!*

become an eagle *and* a hawk
on command: *eagle! hawk!*
We tear our bodies in two
and *fight!*
on command: with airborne ferocity, clawing each other's eyes—
feeling each other's pain—from within...

with shredded skin—and while resting, bleeding,
we're commanded: *become a drum!*
Drum—such a sorrowful beat...

become a screw
we were told, but some struggled
and were crushed—burned...
our friends, dying under our riveted gaze.

Oh to return to our human form,
mumble the many screws,
only to become flat fish—on command
but they do it anyway, become soles...
and those soles who from the bottom of their hearts yearned to resist
gain fins but can't swim...

flailing—they float to the river's surface.
Others,
perfect transformations,
mock those adrift,
whose eyes are full of tears,
floundering, dying.

There follows an age
without command.
Human souls all along,
we just changed form:
painfully, into shoes; sorrowfully, into frogs;
all of that forgotten, by almost everyone.
Come the day—when we regain our humanity,
how will we cope, we poor soles?

Paul Munden is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Canberra, where he is also Program Manager for the International Poetry Studies Institute. He has published five collections of poetry, most recently *Chromatic* (UWAP, 2017).

ヒラメのこと

靴になれ
といわれたら 靴になった
おびたらしい靴が 異国の橋を渡った

鋷になれ
といわれたら 鋷になった
だれを刺すためか おびたらしい鋷が道にあふれた

蜜柑になれ
といわれたら 蜜柑になった
売れ余った沢山の蜜柑が 掃いて捨てられた

椅子になれ
といわれたら 椅子になった
重たい尻に押しつぶされても じっと黙って耐えた

蛙になれ
といわれたら 蛙になった
長い夏の日を 啼いて過した

泥になれ
といわれたら 泥になった
泥になって 静かに蚊とんぼの歌をきいていた

ブーメランになれ
といわれたら ブーメランになった
脚立になれ
といわれたら 脚立になった
葉っぱになれ
といわれたら 葉っぱになった

鷺と鷹にいつぺんになれ
といわれたら 体をちぎって鷺と鷹になった
けんかしろ
といわれたら 空中で烈しく眼を突つき合った
どちらも自分だったから どちらがやられても痛かった

皮がむけ 血がにじんだ姿で休んでいたら
太鼓になれ といわれた
太鼓になって かなしい音で鳴った

こんどはネジになれ
といわれて苦しくネジになりそこなった太鼓は
つぶされ 火で焼かれた
ネジになった私たちは じっと死んでゆく友を見た

人間にもどりたい
おびたしいネジがぶつぶつ云っていた
でも ヒラメになれ といわれると
やっぱりヒラメになった
しんからいやいやヒラメになったものは
ヒレがあっても泳げなかった

もがきながら 川の面に浮びあがる
いくつかのヒラメを
うまくヒラメになったものたちが
嘲笑って突ついた
眼に涙をためて
泳げないヒラメは死んでいった

それから長いこと
命令は下らなかった
ほんとうは人間で
ヒラメに化けただけのことを
靴になった日の苦しさや 蛙になった日のかなしみも
もう ほとんどが忘れてしまった
いつか 人間にもどれる日がきたとき
ヒラメたちは 私たちは どうするだろう

Original poem, 'ヒラメのこと' was published in '子どもと戦争', 1976.