

Water II, 2013
edited Andrew Slattery

Rain

It was rain
the way her body
fell through his arms
even as he held her,
and her irretrievable glance
was drowning water
and implacable memory
until, in the evening,
with blinds drawn
and his sense of her
a remnant vision
of the lit afternoon,
he felt her slide
into his being.
He was no longer male or female,
held where time
crashed about his head.
When three- and seven-
and twelve-years-old
he'd known maleness
as something given.
Now he swam in her
and was lost from himself,
time's filaments
stretching from his body.
He, too,
was becoming rain.

Remembering

She had wanted
to make her memory tangible
after sifting a cache of letters
and scanning dashed-off emails;
having read his escapist left-behind books
and considered how he'd hiked
away from anniversaries
to remote and dangerous places—
and reminding herself
that her affection remained
like something she wore—
she decided to sew a dressing-gown,
cutting and joining his abandoned clothes.

Afterwards she'd step into her nakedness
and then into her memory of him—
how she'd felt wrapped up by him
in those first sedentary months.
Standing at the back door
she'd face her crowded garden,
her feet cold on slate tiles,
her body cocooned
by shirt-jacket-tie-and-scarf.

River

Hating her parents for grounding her
she scrambled through the bedroom window,
falling clumsily onto the driveway.
Three streets away the river's shore
was ti-tree, wattle and tangled grass.
She followed the foreshore's casual fringe
of broken shells, lazed in a deluge
of white summer light. Poisoned arrows
hissed through trees, hooping bird calls
encircled her body, scrubland shade
weighted her eyes. Hours later
she traipsed back to recriminations,
to sit in a bath and dab at sunburn
with calamine lotion and a flannel,
drips snailpacing down her face.
A dagger wound reddened her arm.
Her parents argued, accompanied by
the lounge room's clattery fan, addressing
the topics of money and dissatisfaction
as the rectangle of a prison window
darkened in remote Samarkand.