## Caroline Caddy (b.1944)

Wheatbelt
Trees slipstreamed twist once twice into the ground.
It's like flying. Black suction out there and the moon gauge etched through on its lower rim. But the needle's dropped out!

So this is the speed of light.
Hours away we begin our descent toward that town
bunching stretching in one dimension
like flat astrologies
and dawn -
'so the moon-man and the star-girl
pressed a button
and the collapsible house of the sun sprang up ...'
glide path
through Lorentz transformations -
grey gros-grain ribbon
emu feathers
mallee scrub.
Touchdown in the country of the fifth element -
earth air fire water salt
A woman steps out
bends to the window
g'day ...

She hands us a map but no matter how we fold it where we want to be is on the other side -
so much space between the lines.
Did the old surveyors tethered to horse and camel Know they were making these flight plans?
slingshot from an unploughed crease to a patch of scrub no higher than a man's arm
raised above his head -
it is a man!
And what's he waving
pay-day at the gangers' camp givus a lift?
On the move we learn oaths of naturalisation hands held apart in the static clap of track alignment measure of camaraderie and keeping the Croats from the throats of the Serbs.

Signalman! Dialect of pure action.
We must have tripped a set of points -
a town pops up
where the mechanism of sight seems to be
a broken windscreen that cockpit feel
main street like a run-way
control tower pub with its white bionic ear.
We taxi to the meeting place of roses and gum trees shade of crossed arms crossed legs
They disconcert by liberties their limbs take on dry earth
we only allow ourselves by water.
Sinews of movement tied to bone make them
distance eaters
with nowhere to go -
rights wound down to privilege
and that stele over there totting up wars
it moves!
so slowly we can't follow.

A micro-shift of universe
and someone's hand brailles -
'and after he saved the village
he put this stone here ...'
At the hangar
yellow bellies of wheat wagons
shine in long emissions from the mother lode -
engine they are moved by.
She pulls the horizon up over her face
but keeps her finger on the pulse -
one shunt and they roll all the way to the sea
Esperance Geraldton Port Beach
where green glass bars lift the swimmers
by their chins.
One inland surfer waits by his board.
It's a Holden ute white
that special additive that lets him
win the maiden find the grail
it's got to be white
'appear'
without a word.
And for a moment he does
one hand on the swell of the hood
the other pistol-gripped at his thigh.
In the dark behind him or is it ahead
someone shoulders a door -
power-plant hammering out light.
Then quiet almost to the point of believing
still cores exist
but for softly vast from between parked cars -
'please please we've got to talk'...
Vega the weaver girl and Altair the herd boy found their way across the heavenly River
last month.

But sleep sleep
till the sun pulls white sheets
and airbrakes add hectapascals to the morning's
blue expansion
lifting walls trampled rugs of grass
a man at the co-op with a heavy drum angled to him
steering
out past the depot
where mighty grasshoppers with blades in their guts push air.
Past dip-stick lakes on-line one lane
gathering speed
the bitumen thinning thinning
till it has to distort to let us through
welling out at the last minute
and we're there again no word no incantation necesssary
not even wish -
just pull the sprung pin hardback watch the steel ball and let go ...
the land of no geography tables out from our hips.

