

big punchbowl

Freycinet Peninsula

Sarah Day

if there is no one to welcome us
to this country
with its ringing cicadas and water ribbon,
grass frogs syncopating in its freshwater crucible,
then we come here unwelcomed

if there is no one to welcome us
to this lagoon country
where the lone swan trails its single cygnet
beneath the loving gaze of the sea eagle
her hungry young at home in their tower of sticks,
then we have come here unwelcomed

if there is no one to welcome us
to this shore
where we have left tracks in the pristine glasswort,
then we come here unwelcomed

there is the time it will take
for each string of salt pearls to unbend
inside the shadow of our footprints;
there is also the deep prehistory
of swamp memory and there are the present owners
of this house we have entered unbidden

if there is no one to welcome us
to this forest country
in whose unfading patience the grass trees shiver,
then we have come here unwelcomed.