

Between Steps

Jan Colville

this tree

sky flying through branches

hooks

light and leaf and years

and in its skin

track marks scribblings

a glimpse of red.

burnt trunk of xanthorrhoea

black whorls counting

slow inches of time

shelters ants from fire.

wallaby dead across this track.

we saw her alive

just yesterday.

you can almost hear her

remembering twilight grass

quiet rain and sky.

velvet pouch empty.

a shallow recess in sand

where echidna kept very still

thought she was invisible.

burrow scraped deep

wombat with young in pouch

waiting for dark.

on the track discarded possum tail devil ate the rest.

a skeleton leaf

cast off

beneath this tree

made no shadow

as it fell

silently.