

# burning bright

caroline caddy



would stick in the mind   unique brand   on the side of the globe  
the whole thing held in the palm of a hand  
by the smell of one crushed leaf.

I'm flying with my forehead up against the window  
fascinated by glimpses  
of distance and isolation and wondering  
what it would be like living there  
deep at the ends of the earth  
when someone in the seat next to me asks   where do I come from?  
As if waking from sleep  
I blink in strong sunlight  
seeing the pale trunks of tall karri trees  
the small towns and long straight roads  
the ocean cliffs that face Antarctica  
and realise  
I am.

## Great Southern

Driving between Lake Grace and Lake King

the land takes on the light or darkness of its sky  
so quickly so easily

marginal country

parts of it had to be named 'lake' so the rest could be  
ploughed and harvested.

Out here in the tail-wind

like a faint leftover tilting of the earth

that blows the thin film of water all one way  
and calls it full

then blows it back

I am blown on a millimetre wave of life  
between towns inches deep.

I've met blokes out here

who will attempt anything and it's nothing

fix a gate with a piece of wire kill a beast for the table  
build a boat.

They are the ones who guide the juddering harvesters

through blistering days dusty nights  
till everything they reach for

a glass of beer a dinner plate  
is stippled with wheat.

They are the ones who turn to speak in a roadhouse

and bring those paddocks  
right up to the counter

and after harvest the hot winds push south  
to Hopetoun on the coast to fish and visit grandfathers  
retired on three thousand acre  
‘hobby farms’.

They are the ones who when I say what I do don’t flinch  
but turn the idea over  
like an oil sheened tool  
and the handing back and forth between us of the warmed metal  
is a thesaurus

so that I feel I’m being given a kind of permission  
to be out here in my car blown between  
Lake Grace Lake King Lake Varley Lake Cam  
on the long reflective straights  
where life is thinly spread  
and words must work.



We park with the rest of the town facing the wide oval  
and there are the teams  
the skinny the muscly the hairy the lumpy  
ranging over the ground  
scuffling at the limits of rules  
then using those same rules to work back through each other  
touching base  
and as the clouds part goalposts cars trees  
everything stands out  
with an even greater clarity young and urgent.  
This is the light we must go in  
driving out past the lakes  
close and blue now  
surrounding us including us  
for a few kilometres  
in their deep and solid union with the sky.



