

OurLand

Thursday night

In the Food Hall look up far enough
see browning palm tree leaves,
hear electric keyboard notes beneath
announcements, children crying.

Back in distraction there's dinner
from Japan, America, Greece, Malaysia,
or Red Rooster. Children prefer America
(it sucks them through a straw),
but the elderly queue for their origins.

The new land is new no longer,
the old land is always here
in bains-marie. Some old women
in black, sit foodless - it's warm
dinner's later at home, where there's cooking.
But hmmm this does smell good.

Cheep cheep sparrows on tables
pick up crumbs from any world,
but who will collect that child
who can be found outside The Reject Shop?
It's been half an hour and you might
eat something yourself.

One day they'll build a swimming pool here;
there's an air-conditioned church,
reduced hours for Sundays. Plastic plants
at the door are shiny, but above his ponytail
an ageing hippy's bald spot gives no reflection.
His flourless bread sanger tastes okay.

A bin waitress wipes your table,
flicks a two-hour mark grin
from a three-hour shift.
Enough wipes a week
makes a family trip to Noosa.
Next year.

It'll be nine 'o clock soon
but you won't know til the kids
are asleep in their prams
and you get a throat-tight feeling
you know you've missed
the first half hour of something
on what channel was it?

Keyboards are gone, there aren't enough

people to drown out strums of Mexican guitar.
So let's pack up our sombreros,
pick up our Myer bags and walk.
It's fifteen kilometres per hour
in the car park and the road to home
is lined by wheelie bins in military green.
Lids open, saluting us.