

Scott-Patrick Mitchell
Extract from *Clean*

him

out farther, stars are the
art in heaven. hollow be the

sky that does not contain
them. hello be the aim of

an introduction. twine
winged one, my heart is

undone. you are worth every
penny from above. give in

& say let us go to bed
for we need to undress

for we need to undress
& press us against us.

it will lead us to
temptation, which will

quiver an upheaval. for
i am your winged one

& our love will flower
song in the face of the

eternal. forever
endeavour to be a

lover, a partner, a boy,
a man.

on how to be a bird

surrender. give in. have faith that jumping,
submission first, will yield results: how

else can a fledgling be expected to leave a
nest? disappointment is grounding. success

is callus: you must catch every failure &

then let them go. from this process, learn to

treasure the shape of being victorious. bow
like a cello with a note reverberating in its

throat: this universe is the hand guiding you
to resonate. orchestrate conquest, not over

others, but the enemies within: doubt; doubt;
doubt. do not doubt yourself. see how, even

just then, it begets itself? there are those who
can assist you, bend twigs like mother bird

catches worm to dangle. achievement is
growing feathers: it happens, with time.

soon you too will have a cap full of plumes,
a head filled with wings, a horizon to fly into.

Red Flowering Gum

Home is a syllable in your heart. In order to speak it whole, clap it out: with glee; in ovation; as sarcastically as the Venus de Milo. Here, build new monuments from stone, adorn altars with flowers, the likes of which you have never known. But the Latin names are familiar, because back where you came from, somebody thought it'd be a good idea to teach a dead language to a blossoming mind. You now know 14 ways of saying you are bored in a tongue that nobody but biologists and doctors can understand. But you are not bored, not once you venture outside, feel sun in skin and discover *Corymbia ficifolia*. Firework fixed in blue. Firmament confetti bloom. Red flowering gum. You've only seen a tree bestowed with such beauty when bearing fruit. Or weighed down with the ornament of other seasons, consumed. But here, these trees spark strange light into sight. Cacophony of extravagance, brilliant in being unobtainable. That is until at school, when asking a fellow classmate what they are, they climb trunk and limb, begin showering red flowers down. And you, being a stranger learning how to spell this new home, you begin to clap.

Marri: Remembering Meelup Regional Park (An Obituary)

The forest breathes us in. We are chasing bush orchids. Kambarrang is brimming. Through a macro lens, petals bend, fill the screen. Blue; beard; duck. Your grin dazzles, blonde hair curling around my heart. We laugh. The forest smiles with us. Donkey; elbow; leek. Beyond the breadth of this, ocean swims. Here is the

place of the moon rising. The forest sighs. As do I. You smile wide, engulf tree and leaf and trunk. Fire; slipper; sun. You say to me how love is a like a wildflower: a moment that recurs again and again when the conditions are perfect. As in how they are between us. Now. In this instance. Your kiss persists, travels through time, backward and forward. Fairy; helmet; hare. The forest knows that, in two years from now, we shall give up this connection. How, in four years time, I shall write these lines, and our love shall exist once more. For a moment. How sometimes a poem is just a memory, remembering. Hammer; rattle; babe-in-a-cradle. And I want to believe that love lasts forever, but the conditions fall apart, like us. This is why we take photographs. This is why we write from the heart. That is why I dance with you now, beneath the marri trees, in the hope that one day you would marry me. The forest breaths us out.

Ingredients for Grief *Imagined Endings 3*

Skin – *You have to make friends with gravity*, my mother says when I ask her how to cope with aging. Her body is a topographical map, spanning three continents and 86 years. She collects chiaroscuro as bruising: they fade into bushfire sunsets, lilac daybreaks. When I ask her what the collective noun for a wrinkle is, she replies: *I am*.

Hair – Moon gathers in her mane. I can judge the quality of her sleep by how big her hair is the next morning. It's either cloud or tempest. Selene's rain falls from my mother's scalp, collects in collarbone. She uses it to water the garden, grow mangoes. Each strand of hair that works loose, my mother uses to stitch the sun into the sky.

Bones – The big toe on my mother's left foot is broken, has been since I met her all these years ago. Yet she still walks as if a dancer. *You must always carry yourself with dignity*, she explains, *no matter the pain*. This is the secret she hides inside my body.

Death – It takes approximately two and a half hours for a body to burn when cremated. In her sleep, my mother will turn to smoke somewhere before dawn. I will begin that day in a pattern that repeats until my own smoke-filled dream envelops me. At her funeral, I shall read the eulogy, and will not cry. As promised.

Ritual – Once home, I will wear my mother's memory as a coat of ashes. I will sob. The tears shall grey. Rivulets soaking carpet. I will go outside, curl foetal, as if a seed, beneath her mango tree, the rain washing me clean. One day I will make friends with the weight of this.

