

The Angel on the Mountain

I.

Tanglefalling up the endless onion slope, hoping, maybe, that not all of the onions will fall completely but, some, of course, will have to fall (*she cannot help it*) and they will topple to the bottom of the pile she'd made - land in all the logical-falling-landing spots where onions from onionmountain hilltops will often do. Hopefully, those will not be on top of her head.

Perhaps they will bounce, or, maybe make a terrifying thwacking noise, milliseconds before splattering open and dribbling their putrid (*and rather persistently odoured*) juices onto her scalp, which would then, by gravity, runnel across her face which would by then be horizontal (*because of the effect that such an onion-popping force would have upon her not-altogether concrete-like cranium*).

But this is silly. She will *not* be topped by onion shot today, and she will *not* be buried by allium-fall. She will continue, instead, to trample up her mountain until she reaches the top of it.

And she *will* reach the top (*although it will possibly not be as high, by then, due to the considerable rate of dislodging of onions while scaling the slippery slopes*) and she will see the plane.

She will hear it before she sees it, of course. She will, above the last few sounds of distant dislodged onion bulbs smashing upon the hard black earth of the Lockyer Valley floor, hear the dull drone of a twin-engined cropduster, yellow. With two black circles upon the surface of each underwing. *Four eyes, and staring. All the better to see her with.* And she will wave.

She hopes very much that he might be able to see her this time. She's put on her special blue-green summer dress, with the little yellow and orange flowers, *floribunda bundles of yellow and orange flowers upon a green blue sea.* Rose-shaped flowers, roses for love, but small, *swamped by the sea*, to show how she's so absolutely altogether so completely adrift with her great emotions for him.

A summer dress, that will flutter, and catch his eye, and

he will see it and know at last how much she loves him.

She climbs and the dress ripples in the breeze.

Meanwhile, in the far distant horizon, where the
onion farm ends and the highway begins, small dots of
car headlights are beginning to make themselves visible,
hundreds of tiny little ant-like people in their matchbox cars,
leaning forwards in the dying rays of sunlight, removing
their sunglasses with one hand, fumbling the glovebox door.

Little headlights, on little matchbox cars, in the summer
breeze, on a far distant horizon,
switching on like a long row of stars through space.

And she watches them move and glitter, diamonds on
a necklace, sitting down and making herself comfortable,
her dress in a circle about her knees and waiting for the plane.

And he comes, as always, from the north. Small feint buzz
to begin with, but getting bigger, getting louder, getting
large. Breathing into her dark green world like a
hot wind in February, a lover's breath. With heavy air, with

midnight kisses, rumbling-fumbling, from the north, yellow
firefly, four black circles, man in fireplane coming to find her.

Hopefully one day, this time, to find her. She has made
the mountain very tall. He surely must see it. One day,
this time... she breathes deep. She rises. She waves, she flies.
She flutters. It's getting dark, it's nearly black. The cars
are like diamonds, the plane is a jewel. In her breeze
the dress flutters and little flowers spring backward and
forward and backward and fly tossed like a sorry fleet
on a treacherous ocean, this one last time, a terrible sea.

II.

So tired.

So sleepy tired now, the warm night gives him
dream-droopy eyes and swirling stars are sucked into
his propeller blades like milk through a straw. All about
is fairy silent, but for a windwhish plane, droning home.

Little cars and little houses and that little-big McDonalds sign.
So dot-tiny on the silver highway, this is where he likes to dip.

He takes his dream-plane one world closer, getting lower, getting big. Against the hard black earth of the Lockyer Valley floor he brings it down and sweeps it low. Dream-man tired-man teasing this gravity this wonderful colliding with upside-down molecules of air within air, this careening at the unknown places. This black-night sky this green-brown-earth this larky game... this...

At the half hour after midnight in his bed at his home in Warwick, he drifts incessantly back towards the something that was blue. Something green, something yellow-orange something... half remembered.

The headlights of his plane had illuminated, at the last turn of the fourth left-hand cartwheeling somersault, a small dark-haired flying thing. Very small, in the distance, a flying dark-haired girl, arms flailing and looking up and smiling at his plane. And then, not too long after that, a red-blotched crumpled up piece of blue-green cloth... bundled up into a tiny heap of soft sorrowful curled up knees and elbows and... As though sleeping.

Small dark-haired flying woman. And a huge pile of onions.

III.

Lady whispers softly over the checkered landscape, toward the hill of dreams. She alights upon a daylight scene of roses damped in blood. Early morning soft dead-soft girl, *awake!*
You have forgotten to use your wings again.

IV.

The start of the picking season, August, had been slow, but in three weeks she had developed the general shape of her desire. By the end of September her efforts had sparked a living thing... it grew and it grew so that, by October, they had been able to see it from the McDonald's restaurant on the highway at Lawes, wind whipping up its paper skins.

And she had often joined them there at dusk, with dress dirty, fingernails cracked. Small flowers here and there a little torn or stained with juice, her cheeks hot and flushed with pink. She would smile, then, at their turned-away heads, drinking strong black bottomless coffee, and staring out the window... piecing together her

formulas for the relationships between space, time and aeroplanes.

V.

As usual, it is only birds and clouds who see them leave.

Lady with a gentle arm about a small crooked shoulder,

they move over landscapes toward the ocean in the east.

On the other side of Moreton Bay, where the blue is not so grey and smooth, but choppy, and pure, she drops down like a gull.

They bob on cheek-splashing salty waves, sitting there for a long silent time.

VI.

Every night he comes back and she's gone. Why is it that in dreams he can see her so clearly now? Climbing.

With eyes closed he can see everything. He can see the sideways rolling of slippery bulbs, twisting and tangling under her toes and giving way. He can see the scrabbling clawing willfulness of her determined chin, eyes cast up and looking for him. And he's there, he's flying around every night at dusk, circling the great pile of onions and dipping low, scanning every inch of the hard black earth for one small yellow rose, a flutter in the breeze.