



Poem

The cloud

It's a shame about the bright fluorescent light rectangles
reflected in its glass
with those clear images of blue water containers
on a shelf above the staff's food cupboards
(for emergencies like earthquakes and bushfire).
No matter where I stand, there's the reflection
of a door, two fridges, chipped cream walls, myself.

Behind those distracting elements, a moment in time —
one eternal moment in Australian time —
draws me to change focus.
I've been here before: trotting head down with the kelpies
behind a mob of unshorn bums and bleats —
through the calf-high yellow grass
perhaps swishing a stick, dropped
by one of these shaggy tired gums —
awake enough to step around other fallen slim branches
horse manure, rabbit holes and fresh sheep pebbles.

I've been here before
but not as the rider of a plump palomino
leading its piebald companion
into the crowded trees where a ghostly drift —
white dust soft as silken powder —
daily stops my eye and thought.

Annie, dead from cancer these two years
donated this — her father's masterpiece —
to an unworthy wall in a workplace kitchen.

I think of that dust as her spirit arising from
the sharp hooves of sheep
pursued by a man, perhaps her father, driving
the kelpies and himself towards her
towing the second horse
to bring her back.

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