

Happy birthday to me on earth: the 50th return

I should be bright green
and lost in space, kissing stars
just to lose my lips,
burning off fifty off-beam
years, but here I am — branded.

Surfing safari just to prove I'm not dead

When you paddle out
there is no end to the lust,
no end to wave's loose-
lipped pash: there is only you,
this, and your migrating soul.

Sunday drive in September

The street where we once
lived looked warped and weedy, thus
losing its hostage
hold on me, despite its gold-
crusted memories (now dust).

Baggonise

Ballina airport
luggage carousel knows too
well my tired agony:
too much baggage, too many
dreams of tinfoiled surfboards: cracked.

Us watching the kids swim (Hallelujah)

Love like squeaked cotton
becomes us beneath the wild-
fingered trees as we
inhale clouds and worship the
lake which christens our children.

Blut

He's my cousin, he
who turns back boats like old
girlfriends panting on
Facebook or unwanted knocks
on late night doors: red secret.

Us (afterwards)

It's like reaching through
glass to history to find you
and though I do and
it's real, perfect, the strangest
thing is that haunt of not was.

Sibling song (morning)

I saw my brother
from my bedroom window, he
was walking his dog
at fiveish after the night's
rain, along satin ocean.

Thrill a minute (up)

Two kids in the surf,
one stropping off southwards, sand
hard, heart heavy, eyes
wet with salted umbrage when
we—the love police—find him.

Rock pool

I'm overdressed for
this place, the décor is all
bleached sand, edgy rocks,
impossible blue the new
black: naked is my best choice.

Resort pool

The way you two shout
like snapped tennis racquets at
each other and gulp
chlorine like futuristic
seaweed is all the pool's fault.

Shopping at Target with an 11 year old

When did you become
size 12 and decide that I
am the “Beatch Queen
Mother” all because I crave
to see you in more than that?

You, in 1973

for Rusty

Bikinis of raw
batik and boards of earthen
wax and curvaceous
cars and even rounder lives:
unsurfed oceans kiss small towns.

Aqua sublime

One minute it's all
credit cards and toothpaste on
snorkel masks and burnt
bums then it's nothing but you;
me; the turtle and the sea.

What trees are for

It's queasy work,
bruising fragile family
like they are not your
only butterfly chance to
lose your genealogy.

5.38 am at Lennox Head

Same Pacific lip
looping the sunrise over
an invisible
net, first a fragment arc like
heaven's horseshoe then —kebang!

Fabricated

Sunday markets trip
me, tilt me helterskelter
into the land of
embroidered cotton and flute:
watch out—I'm naked, dancing.

Unsaid

He was just trying
to sell me eye cream made from
unguent of stardust
but his touch triggered truth: that
I talk too much and you don't.

1979: I'm sorry

for SK

I always thought it
was the one who died who owned
every story I
wrote, stood behind each true lie
told, but no: it was you. You.

WEDNESDAY TANKAS

for Daniel Colin

1

Pit Stop

The wild surprise of
samosas at Bex Hill shop:
superb curries and
crisp pears and pregnant pumpkins—
country general store gone gold.

2

Still politics

'Protestors Falls': the
sign recalls history while I
worry about ticks
and how cold the swimming hole
is beneath rainforest memory.

3

Lismore lunch

1950s booths
for milkshakes and nachos and
coffee before we
split up for shopping at
our favourite places, still.

4

Ice cream Sunday: Cousins compete

3pm on a
no-fruit Wednesday, the master
chef Sunday comp has
begun: what colour equals
the best energy, Aunty?

5

Pause

Afternoon tea
almost ready to Facebook
because it is an
event worthy of global
gawp: psychedelic ice cream.

Staff meeting

We are all as old
as linen, crushed lilies first
sweet then pungent
and bruised, but at this meeting
we all have coloured pencils.

Knights (or why bother teaching Latin)

All staff meetings are
tankas, said Ray, in between
reminders of how
Virgil is forever and
ever revelatory.