

# June

7th June 05

news that the cancer  
growing in your uterus  
must be pruned—  
I write a requiem  
for cut flowers

settling in the ward  
she takes her medication—  
Rose is facing surgery  
I am safely in bed,  
facing a blank wall

*encouraged yet again, to keep writing after reading  
translations of Kawano Yuko and Kuriki Kyoko's tanka*

with each collection  
translated into English  
tanka perceived—  
fountains flowing in still lakes  
ripple water drop by drop

8th June 05

a thought I hold close  
whenever necessary  
and alone  
on the darkest winter night—  
storms gather behind mountains

*friend and poet, Robert, is admitted to Calvary Hospital*

he lies on the bed  
a monk in meditation —  
will he live or die  
petals from a slender stem  
fall onto the window sill

coming close to death  
he wants everything worthwhile  
chocolate éclairs  
pjs ginger beer a hug  
his face turned towards the sun

*9th June 05*

going up the stairs  
going down turning corners  
striding corridors  
I find Rose unfolding hope  
in the centre of a smile

*news that Hatsue Kawamura, a well loved Japanese poet,  
suffered an aneurysm in 2004*

you who wrote tanka  
about Tsukuba Peak,  
lie in a coma —  
you who are lost in a dense fog  
which mountain are you climbing?

at the Dawn Service  
for Anzac day soldiers grieve  
war to end all wars —  
on our return street kids play  
stick 'em up — shoot 'em down dead

mere rumours  
of rain and farmers sew crops —  
dust and stone  
cloud after cloud overhead  
blossoming into shape

*11th June 05*

burning this morning  
the table remains ablaze  
with sunlight till noon —  
placed so a bowl of water  
catches the moon at midnight

*12th June 05*

strumming on the roof  
refrains not played during drought  
am I humming  
in the identical key  
farmers will be singing?

*17th June 05*

I can't give my hand  
for you to hold through Haydn —  
despite your touch  
how comforting it would be  
not to cling to the program

*Douglas Wood was the first Australian to be held captive in Iraq by  
terrorists, 2005*

he is our father  
troops are told when Douglas Wood  
is found blindfold,  
hands bound beneath a blanket—  
how do they treat their mother?

*18th June 05*

*visual artist and friend, Christine James invites me to work with her at  
Weerrawa*

when she says  
she is going to paint  
clouds  
already they drift  
onto her canvas

willow twigs  
against white walls  
in a vase  
underneath a window  
flare at sunset

I throw breadcrumbs  
onto Lake Burley Griffin  
swans and ducks gather—  
unable to contain itself  
the sun bursts over the lake

sitting close together  
tranquilly she meditates  
on water lilies  
flowering with desire  
his hand floats her lap

*21st June 05*

strands of wool  
on wooden floorboards  
fallen so—  
late afternoon  
tangled shadows lengthen

no longer clinging  
to branches of the oaks  
filled with minna birds,  
the last autumn leaves  
fall over roofs cars hope

*25th June 05*

sitting side by side  
Arabs and Jews on buses  
all die together  
I catch the thirty-eight  
sometimes early sometimes late

would they look so ripe  
if they weren't so plump  
against slender stems,  
those bunches of strawberries  
I sew onto my tablecloth?

breadcrumbs  
upon the shed roof  
disappear  
when I close the door—  
magpies caroling

*26th June 05*

mid conversation  
she turns toward trees  
in winter  
dancing on the wind—  
listen! wind chimes

*my close friend, Judith, returns briefly to the ACT*

silently earthbound  
New Zealand birds nest—  
magpies warble  
outside my windows  
how you turn your head