

## Two poems by Anne Elvey<sup>1</sup>

### **nanoq**

**After viewing *Nanoq: Flat Out and Bluesome* at the Heat exhibition,  
RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, September 2008**

each time i pass  
nanoq prone  
each time i pass  
the funereal crate

each time i pass  
the beams framing  
a transperancy of air  
like fur that is not

white but reflects  
the light each time  
i return to the heavy  
rods and the bolts

in the paws  
of the taxidermy feet  
each time i look  
down and

away i  
want to roll  
forepaws care-  
ful dangerous

wrestle in the  
snow i  
want to forget  
what colonisers do

crunching forward  
our prows ploughing  
northern ice  
like children

restless for the new  
watching a polar  
performance in the heat  
at the gold coast

*the bear's going  
to catch the fish  
mummy look  
nineteenth century*

tourists shot  
35 polar bears  
in one day  
for sport like a game

of whist while  
drinking  
rum  
to pass the time

the stuffed  
carcasses stand  
caught  
as if

at the moment the heart  
stopped brain  
suddenly silent  
like the merest fragment

of wind's pause  
and ice floes'  
cessation (a shifting  
scape of sound

the adventurers thought  
nothing) caught  
as if at the moment  
the shot found

flesh  
the bear had  
something in mind  
to do

standing full  
height or bent  
toward prey an  
intention truncated

and immortal behind  
glass or holding a  
bowl of flowers  
in a private house

or here laid out  
in a crate with feet  
bolted (like nails  
hammered on a friday)

and i glance  
sidelong and i  
glance sidelong  
feeling i can't care

enough but  
wish for ice  
to roll in and nanoq  
to roll there fur

transparent and white  
fur transparent and  
white with something in  
mind to do

## Feral Names<sup>2</sup>

### In honour of Val Plumwood

Names exhibit the mining of relevance. Bi-  
ota of the same introduced to place: feral I  
register the landscape in affection, paste  
All Saints' Day to the monologue of Babel.

Human gods find tongues extraordinary,  
mark, mark an ancient memory, an accident  
filed in the Colonial Office. Will a  
name connect the naming, the voice land talks of dry?

I count small plants, green fronds, the hair of sisters.  
There is song for awe in rite and land. There is mourning.

## Notes

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1. Anne Elvey's poems have appeared most recently in *Going Down Swinging, Island, Mascara Literary Review* and *The Best Australian Poems 2010*. She has two chapbooks published: *Claimed by Country* (PressPress, 2010) and *Stolen Heath* (Melbourne Poets Union, 2009), and a book of ecological biblical criticism, *The Matter of the Text: Material Engagements between Luke and the Five Senses*, forthcoming in 2011 from Sheffield Phoenix Press. The Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, Monash University, and Melbourne College of Divinity support her research and writing. Website: <http://anneelvey.wordpress.com/>.
2. This is a found poem, the words or letters drawn in order from Val Plumwood (2002), "Decolonising Relationships with Nature", *PAN*, 2, pp. 7-30 (from pages 26-27).