Photo of Pelican in Oil Slick

Stuart Cooke[1]

Wretched bird, it was a photo
I can't forget:
                your beak just
piercing
the oily skin; your wings
hidden in it.

And you were painted
in a thin, fiery light.

In the night of my mind you're
a hump, glazed
in moonlight
like a tongue hurled outwards
in a scream.

To think now
of the scream, your
own scream, hidden or
searing

down axons,
coagulating.

1 Stuart is working on a PhD in Australian and Chilean ecopoetics at the ANU. His translation of Juan Garrido Salgado's *Once Poemas en Septiembre, 1973* (*Eleven Poems on September, 1973*) was published by Picaro Press in 2007.

On Ecology

Increasing tarmac isn't that
what we all wanted we
who lived with trees and
then within them who
carved up rubbish
into the shapes of even
limper detritus don't forget
what you're reading not
just a blatant michael
farrell rip-off but a rig
id refusal to remember
the ground on which
work is written blank white
ground sculpted black
with gushing guilty guilt-
free pens take your pick it's
not really the point the
point is fame the point is
spot lights on random
members of a band an
orchestra an otherwise
exciting poem an exciting
face staring outwards past
history outwards driving
with one hand on the wheel
the other kneading the back
the back of the neck knead
ing it like burning white dough inner
city flames flare up and often
whither etc wretched isn't it this circling
this biting of tails of history's fat earth for a
new an exciting new freeway stretching reaching
all the way and probably further all the way to Broome.

Jack Russell

Suddenly the bus driver
stops with a jolt,
turns off his lights.

A moose has come out of
the impenetrable wood
and stands there, looms, rather,
in the middle of the road.
It approaches; it sniffs at
the bus's hot hood.
—from 'The Moose', by Elizabeth Bishop

I'd been wandering through the park
by the old train station, the one hemmed in
by a dark crowd of pine trees and two

busy roads. I had some time, so I sat down
on a bench. Soon I was joined by an old lady
and her dog, a small shining Jack

Russell sniffing and puffing about, gruff
but eagerly sniffing. Then,
from the bowels of the pines, a great,

white Labrador came bounding towards us.
This little puffing Jack Russell, his coat
shining, let out a shriek

like timber on an angle grinder. The
Labrador loped up to lick my
face but our Jack Russell screeched,

bit at bones, at looser flaps
of furry flesh. And reeling,
this wide-eyed Labrador,

turning back on itself, almost

falling over, shooting
off and yelping, and our

Jack Russell, briefly chasing it,
then trotting, stopped. He glanced back
at his owner, then at me. Always

his shining coat, always the looming pines.
On the train racing north, remembering his
puffing. So gruff and eager. Proud.