Stu Hatton. *glitching*. Melbourne, Australia: (outer) publishing,

2014, ISBN: 9870992445409.

Rosalind McFarlane

Divided into ten sections, each with three to eight poems, Stu Hatton's *glitching* at first appears to be a collection that is quite divided. However, the thematic differences begin to complement each other in what seems to be an accidental and haphazard way, but is instead a deliberate invitation to the reader to consider how errors, transformations and strange pairings form partial and hesitant, but nonetheless fascinating, ways to connect.

As part of the "detours" section with its focus on different places, "syd" (13) is a fascinating example of the kinds of deliberate, but seemingly accidental, connections that Hatton offers. The poem is made up of truncated lines that often feature only one, or one and one part of a word. Here the line breaks act to artificially break up the poem, yet what they also enable the reader to do is to find, at times with difficulty and at times with wonder, their own path through. While each line does eventually form a word and the poem does eventually make a kind of "sense," it is also fascinating to focus on those sections that trip up the reader and instead suggest that a "sense" of this place rather than a logical "sense" is what this poem aims at. For example:

> n too m
> any on
> e-ways   (lines 5-7)

Line 6 initially reads as "any on" and then line 7 "e-ways". Line 6 contains a

carry-on from line 5, making the "any" actually "many" when the line break is not counted, and "on" becoming "one-way" when combining lines 6 and 7, yet the interruption to the reader by making the line at first appear to be "any on" is stimulating. Drawing on the brain's ability to pick out patterns, here the "accidental" word combinations allow the reader to do their own kind of remixing, to approach the poem first as individual lines and from there decide where they want to place emphasis. The reader can also decide to join the letters in order to make words and thus a kind of "sense" out of the poem, or to leave parts as a kind of suggestive conglomeration of sounds and part-words. Poems such as "syd" are so fascinating in that they draw attention to the way poems are read, but also the way places are experienced: in fragments, sometimes chaotic, sometimes making sense, but where we as the reader are always implicated in deciding how to make sense of the whole.

Much of Hatton's work is also characterised by a gradual revealing of details throughout the poem, often in a way that contradicts or negates earlier statements. Curiously, this does not destroy the overall unity of the poem as it could very easily do, but instead it frequently calls into question the accuracy of the persona or the subject of the poem in ways that add a sense of error, transformation or malfunction to the poem. Two examples of this are "clair" (68) and "a dead boy" (103).

The poem "clair" begins with "the eye that sees clearly" (line 1) only for the next line to negate this for the eye "is closed" (line 2). This eye is "not dutifully / scanning the news" (lines 3-4), where the poem introduces the idea of duty but in a negative way, as a form of something that is not happening. This way of introducing an idea through its negative is continued as the eye is "leaving open-eyed sleep / to the fish" (lines 5-6). Rather than being an open form of contradiction that makes the poem appear nonsensical, here the introduction of ideas through their negative introduces an idea of malfunction into the work. Instead of stating directly that the poem's subject is asleep and thus not paying attention, here the persona carefully and gradually reveals a sense of malfunction in the subject of the poem. This sense is reinforced but also developed by the last line where the persona talks about "these tiny / inaccuracies" (lines 13-14), suggesting a sense of error that now pervades not only the subject of the poem, but now the poem itself. Gradually introducing this sense of error allows Hatton to suggest the way accidents and malfunctions frequently appear in increments, gently inserting themselves in ways that are only revealed progressively.

"a dead boy" is another of Hatton's poems that incrementally introduces modifications that gradually change the direction of the poem. Here Hat-

ton opens the poem with "the river is lost" (line 1) and "the flowers dry / and fulvous" (lines 2-3) before revealing the "shards of cold glass in the bed / for which you are now too tall" (lines 4-5). Again here the subject is introduced and then modified, there is a bed which is then revealed as "for which you are now too tall," negating its use-function as a bed. The poem continues by naming subjects only to call them into question. There is "the pale bird in the tree" which is then "made of paper" (lines 6-7). What at first appears to be a live bird in a tree is then revealed to be only paper. Further, it is then revealed that the "tree is made of paper" (line 8) as well, making what at first appears to be a bedroom scene into memory and a paper reconstruction. The bed becomes a tool of reminiscence rather than a place for sleeping and what at first appears to be a scenic backdrop of tree and bird becomes a paper depiction. Each object is here emptied of its conventional meaning, introducing a sense of error, not of the objects, but of what they usually signify. This is reinforced by the ending of the poem where "another dust-wave / climbs away from earth / here where you are sleeping (lines 10-12). Hatton lets the grave-side scene unfold gradually in a way that uses the conventional language of death, the boy is "sleeping" and his memory is being evoked by reference to objects he used in life. However, the way in which Hatton allows this to be revealed introduces a sense of error into the poem, not in a way that interrupts the narrative of the poem, but in one that questions the conventional meanings attached to certain objects, and questions what they mean after death.

By using forms of error, accident, remixing and malfunctions in this collection Hatton comments on a wide range of subjects. In doing so he uses these themes to raise some significant questions about the way in which we typically perceive the world. From poems such as "syd," which are obviously more experimental, to the more lyrical "a dead boy" or "clair," these poems are ones that use themes such as error or accident in inventive ways to suggest the ways in which we think and perceive the world are not always as perfect as we may like.

Monash University
rosalind.mcfarlane@monash.edu