

passage

iron bird or monster
lepidopteran gargantuan
galah bible behemoth
of wind and shrieking sound
of howl and scream and
sound storming the jet
stream split these silvered
hair or cirrocumulus
this winged and magic
flight chasing dark dusk
light chasing sun moon
day night chasing snow
and cackle cold minus
thirty winnipeg clear
to queensland to aussie
heat and rain typhoon
chasing canada to cairns
trading home dakota cree
ojibwa for home of aborigine
of djiru and gunggari
for home of kokowarra
blow ride chase slide
this iron bird and i
we've fallen into summer

the land down under
 home of wombat and bandicoot
 home of boomerang and plonk
 home of walkabout and billabong and swag
 of didgeridoo-woowooowooooo
 home of the outback
 home and dumping ground
 for criminals bankrupts poor and other british undesirables
 world's smallest continent
 biggest island
 home of indigenous australians
 fifty thousand years before the european invasion
 before dutch and british janszoon dampier cook
 before old world disease measles smallpox influenza
 home of the wandering tribes
 either never had a home
 or always at home
 go home mooses
 home of emu platypus
 and tie me kangaroo down
 home of the cassowary
 birder's paradise
 home of peter carey and janette turner hospital
 used to be home
 and the band played waltzing matilda
 these black words from the burning bush
 home of the homeless
 about as far as i can get from home

flightless bird native to queensland
tall as a tall person two metres
and ostrich-shaped
with black plumage
with bright blue neck red wattles
according to the pictures
with brown casque on head
eats fallen fruit
or fruit hanging from low branches
and sometimes frogs snails snakes insects
casuarius casuarius southern cassowary
female bigger more brilliantly coloured than male
lays three eggs in nest on rainforest floor
only the male incubates
only the male cares for chicks
nine months' care
while female wanders off to look for another mate

carpet snake creek scrubby
 creek zigzag creek two mile
 creek healy creek stoney creek
 althaus creek breakaway
 creek sleeper creek leichhardt
 creek alice river lilypond creek noah's
 ark creek southwater creek
 surveyor creek allera creek little
 crystal creek big crystal creek orient
 creek wolfram creek lorna
 creek tinkle creek reedy creek
 charley creek hay creek maiden
 hair fern creek deep creek seymour
 creek black river byabra creek one
 mile creek ripple creek brownwater
 creek christmas creek kingsbury
 creek figtree creek jourama
 falls spring gully five mile
 swimming hole sunday creek newmans
 creek stoney creek again fishers creek
 yellow waterhole wallaman falls corduroy
 creek south maria creek bridge creek porters
 creek muller creek blady grass creek
 damper creek broken pole creek bairds
 creek clarkson creek lagoon creek
 sunbeam creek czars creek stagnant creek
 whitfield creek limbo creek tully river
 banyan creek carmoo creek sugar
 cane creek wylie creek boobah creek moresby
 creek big maria creek bells creek
 liverpool creek johnstone creek fools
 lagoon bamboo creek kingfisher creek
 dairy creek fools lagoon? who'd bother
 writing verse anyway if they felt at all
 happy about their lives they'd be snoozing
 on the chesterfield in the veranda

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(one more river
and that wide river is jordan
there's one more river to cross)

wake in the middle of night one moment smiling dream
paradise next moment startle awake noise (and sweat-
soaked sheets) what's that noise rain must be rain
it's rain sound of rain rain drumming on roof rain

pound on roof rumble on roof maybe thunder too some
where far in the distance such clamour such cool
breeze on my back through window after all these days
and nights of heat open window better get up to check

watch rain through open window watch buckets of rain
barrels of rain cisterns of rain rain beating playing rain
thumping and crashing torrents and torrents of rain
soothing sound of rain lie down and sleep again think

dream of childhood then morning toast coffee jam
connie says hundred millimetres rain overnight and later
walk in bowling green bay national park while sted
sleeps (now i'm retired sleep every day till noon he says)

walk while sted sleeps bins strapped round my neck of
course find fairy gerygone and little woodswallow find
blue-winged kookaburra and family of red-tailed black-
cockatoo find bird paradise find noon find large drop

of water on arm splat find another find rain here comes
rain ten seconds rain i'm soaked through like someone
dunked plunked me in alligator creek nearby like mary
jesus baptized me ho-ly it's rain it's started to rain again