

STUART COOKE

*[Revised] Thoughts as/on Cumulus*¹

1/4/13

This piece began as an austere review that was to carefully and methodically discuss some of the key features of Robert Gray's poetry.

As if the fact that *I* was writing was entirely incidental.

Because there's no point denying it, or pretending that things are otherwise. For me, poetry – the reading and the writing of it – almost *began* with Robert Gray. Poems like “Diptych”, “Journey: the North Coast” and “The Late Ferry” kindled some of the very first poetic signals in my head. I continued to read him closely well into my twenties and, despite the fact that reading *Cumulus* was the first time I'd read his work in years, some of my strongest inclinations about poetry are to do with what he showed me – whether through his work, or during one of our many meetings.

To write about a book that collects his poetry, then, isn't simply to write about a book of poems, but to write about some of the patterns that are most basic to my own life. This is a poet who gave me a language for habitation in the Australian twenty-first century. Without the bluster of Murray. And the space he provided me was one that *others* could inhabit; it wasn't already overrun by an ironic or confessional *I*.

2/4/13

Life as poetry.

3/4/13

Reviewing a life.

4/4/13

Cumulus clouds: noticeable vertical development; clearly defined edges; may appear alone, in lines, or in clusters; often precursors of

other types of clouds, such as cumulonimbus, when influenced by factors such as instability, moisture and temperature.

Cumulus, accumulate, monument.

The back cover of *Cumulus* says that it's "a landmark in Australian poetry".

Cumulo- is also Latin for "heap" or "pile", which sounds far less ceremonial.

5/4/13

As he has done for earlier editions of his *New and Selected Poems*, Robert has, in *Cumulus*, re-written many of the older poems. Some, like "The Kangaroo", are almost complete revisions of earlier work. What was "A Kangaroo" in 1998 began:

That hungry face
 moves on the grass
 the way an artist's pencil
 retouches
 and shades.²

By 2012, however, "A Kangaroo" has become "The Kangaroo", and has grown an extra stanza. It now begins:

His hungry face
 moves on the grass, in the way that a final
 pencil
 will retouch, or the artist erase. (4)

The sharpening of "an artist's pencil" to "the artist" him- or herself ensures that the latter version is more intimate but, perhaps paradoxically, it also pushes the figure towards the realm of the archetypal. The particular, in other words, has morphed into the symbolic. Yet what really concerns me is the change in meaning that these edits

inaugurate. The earlier, 1998 version suggests that the process of creation involves a series of subtle modulations of an already occupied canvas. The pencil is there, ever-ready, but it is not necessarily being wielded with any kind of authoritarian force. In the new version, however, the pencil still lies dormant, but the artist has been brought to the foreground, and now he/she has a mandate to “erase”.

Many of us might have a conviction that the artwork is never “finished” but lives in a state of constant evolution parallel to the world. So we would appreciate the need to continually revisit older work. But to simply refuse that earlier work – Robert says in his author’s note that these “latest versions” are “the only ones” that he acknowledges (ix) – seems to me to be tantamount to a denial of the life of the artwork itself. After all, it is only because of the alarming impact of “Flames and Dangling Wire” in 1978, and of each subsequent and revised version, that the poem remains with us today.

Presumably, Robert has polished these poems in order to bring into sharper relief those things, out there, of which the poetry speaks. But in doing so he wants to forget that the poems themselves are things, and that they are his things, each with particular qualities that younger versions of Robert thought important. By renovating them for the present, therefore, the poet removes some of those traces that allowed them to survive in the first place. At the same time, by seeking to rewrite everything from a single point in time, he works to deny how the *poetry* – that thrashing energy coursing through all of the poems – might have evolved across a life.

7/4/13

I mentioned earlier that before reading *Cumululus* I hadn’t read Robert’s work for years. When I started to move away from him, it was mostly towards the neo-baroque Spanish of Pablo Neruda’s first books and of the inimitable Pablo de Rokha. It’s no coincidence that I was also going through a period of intense personal transition. I was based in Canberra at the time, and life was too boring, too orderly. I wanted to rekindle something of the chaos I’d known when I was younger; while it was emotionally draining, chaos also provided enough turbulence to continually shake up and revivify my perception. What I am

describing here is almost the complete reversal of the aim of Robert's poetics.

8/4/13

Whenever I spent time with Robert I always felt a certain anxiety. I had the strong feeling that he expected from his acquaintances a level of wit that I wasn't sure I could match. It involved being incredibly familiar with twentieth century art and literature and having bold, erudite and decidedly non-academic things to say about them. It also involved being able to tell stories of extraordinary feats, and to do so in a way that would captivate a dinner party of the most discerning listeners. One needed the original genius of an independent thinker, or the flare of an urban socialite. It seemed to be, at the very least, that this was what he most admired about some of his contemporaries. I, on the other hand, felt too earnest, too *sincere*. After all, I'd grown up reading Robert's poetry.

9/4/13

From "A Sight of Proteus":

The light on the wet shore has a metallic sheen
as if great ventilator shafts
have been sunk there ... (206-7)

What separates this sort of image structure from surrealism is the "as if", the signal that the poem has entered into a *metaphorical* mode. Otherwise, reality would have no higher ordering mechanism, and things would blend seamlessly into one another.

10/4/13

If there's a single, driving impulse behind Robert's work – if there's a line that you can find in almost all the poems – it's a desire for clarity, for the order established when something is *seen*. "My life ... must be a hymn / to the optic nerve" (from "In Thin Air", 157). Art, he once told me, is for making sense of chaos. "My poems begin as surrealist mess," he said, "which my conscious mind refines into sense." Or, from "Telling the Beads":

I see before me all the most refined
 consolations of belief and thought. (71)

The point is made most emphatically towards the end of *Cumulus*, in the magnificent “In Departing Light”, where his Alzheimeric mother’s unfurling surrealist language is little more than the sign of impending death:

It is all a tangle and interpretation,
 a hearing amiss,
 all just the slipperiness
 of her descent. (235)

Time and time again, the striking resolution of experience into a slice of colour across the retina becomes a moment of tension – a moment, that is, in which we want to study the remarkable vivacity of Robert’s image, but which he must nearly always follow with a prompt and steady retreat.

In “Bondi”, for example, an astonishing interruption of process occurs when “the sea throws over and spreads its crocheted cloth / across the rock table...” (88). This, by the way, is the real, and well-acknowledged, genius of Robert: what we could term a *naïve imagism*, a sustained metaphorical practice that wilfully mixes absurdly disparate worlds (oceans and dining rooms) in order to produce an unforgettable resonance.

But, as soon as we enter into this half-magic / half-organic realm, we are asked to leave: it is “something you can’t watch for long – it is like madness”. The poet’s crazed invention, his fantastical mutation of wave into cloth, is discarded almost as soon as it is proposed. For it is the perceptive process that’s important, rather than any kind of symbolism; the thing needs to be seen in the brightest possible clarity, but only until time “draws it off once again” (88).

This relates in no small part to Robert’s commitment to particular strains of Buddhist thought. In what is surely an *ars poetica*, “Dharma Vehicle”, he describes the soul, and a concomitant “subjective desire”, as a “thorn” which, if “drawn out”, will lead to peace (59). Crucially, the

interest here is not in ever-changing cognitive currents of sense and emotion, but rather in seeing “through” them to what must be the “true” nature of reality. As a consequence, Robert’s image tends to privilege a moment of sight – a *site* – as light is cognitively internalised – a *pause* – at the expense of *flow*. In the words of Martin Langford, the most important operating principle for Robert is that the poetry “proceeds evenly at the pace of an attentive eye”.³

But what I am *not* saying here is that Robert is a poet who seeks abstracted essences, or transcendent truths that are somehow “hidden” within things themselves. Although he decries Marxism, he’s far more of a materialist than many Marxists. In what is surely the seminal essay on Robert’s work, “Robert Gray and the Revision of the Senses”, Martin Harrison writes that Robert observes not only discrete events, but also signals their unceasing nature by immersing his sight within them. “It is not just an instance of how ‘a thing’ (i.e. a perfect moment, a perfect abstract object, a brilliant instant of observation) is abstractly constructed”, writes Harrison, but also an expression of the body’s “transitive relation with [these] things”.⁴ Sight of sites is temporary; even if the other senses are discarded, Robert’s vision always maps a moving world.

11/4/13

Of the naïve images, perhaps my favourite, is of “the baggy sea” that practices “ju-jitsu on the kelp” (“The Fishermen”, 268). Is Robert aware of the spelling error here (“*jiu*-jitsu”)? It does, of course, only make the image yet more naïve.

12/4/13

Things can get a little more problematic, however, when the naïveté extends into reductive ontological claims. In “The Shark”, the fish becomes monstrously *other*, almost grotesque (not to mention a turtle with “its withered Red Indian head”!):

... the head’s simply rounded-off and incorporate

like the nose of a surfboard—it is not the authority
for anything within...

It has the senile, yellow, ill-wishing look
of a hillbilly grandma's
uncomprehending eyes... (137-8)

Thus, the poem says less about sharks than it does about Robert's ability to mould experience into a staggeringly inventive[/offensive] collection of half-concrete, half-imaginative forms.

Or look at the following, hyper-colonialist stanzas from "Curra-wongs":

... One slowly ate a silhouetted grasshopper,
lifting it with fanfare;
stylised with pride, as though it were holding a broken swastika.
They have tightly brushed-back hair,

snipy Latin features, an expression like a thin moustache,
but the eye is demonized
and belongs to an African carving, more than to an *apache* ... (149)

13/4/13

Curiously, however, in the haiku and the shorter poems Robert has always allowed his imagistic constellations greater freedom. Here his interests in the visual arts are most noticeable; touching on the surreal, images are allowed to rest and ripen without the accompanying anxieties about refinement that are so characteristic of the longer poems:

I sit and watch
the way rain is falling,
its eyes closed.

(from "12 Poems", 203)

A dim road, leaf-stained,
near the lake. In the headlights,
the screendoor ajar.

The sky, thick with stars,
is the floor of a saucepan
that's about to boil.

(from "13 Poems", 247)

What remains consistent, though, is the absence of turbulent sentiment. The speaker watches, but what he sees never suggests any kind of inner conflict or unrest. He has the time, and the inclination, to stop. He's not in a hurry, not weighed down with preoccupations about bills or health or family. Even the environment itself is only ever there, in itself, rather than trembling at the edges with entropy.

14/4/13

Countless reviews and essays about Robert mention his interest in Japanese poetry and thought. I'm not going to explore his Buddhist poetics at length here, both because plenty of others have already done it, and because for me it forms part of his broader commitment to the inescapable immanence of materialism, to the brilliant thingness of things.

Nevertheless, I went to Japan a few years ago, and during the trip I thought a lot about Robert's work. I was in a relationship with a Japanese girl and she had taken me back home to meet her family. To "get in the mood", I decided I'd read some of the great poets, particularly Bashō, Busson and Issa. I was struck by the delicate tension between movement and stasis in much of their work, and by how it reminded me of Robert's. In Bashō, for example:

Stillness—
the cicada's cry
drills into the rocks.⁵

I wrote to Robert about this when I returned to Australia. I can't remember much of the letter, unfortunately, but I remember commenting on how these same, stationary spaces of movement emerged often in his poems, too. Perhaps I quoted from "In the Mallee":

If you stop,
 straight away the big ants pour upwards over your boots,
 jointed, globular and
 stilted ... (241)

Of the Japanese girl, she would come with me to meet Robert a number of times. She seemed to delight him. At one point he asked her to work with him on translating Dōgen. She wasn't a poet, but she was going to make provisional translations, which Robert would then sculpt into poems of his own liking. She didn't have the time (or the inclination!) to do such a thing, but she was too kind to decline, and I also think she felt something of an obligation to him, given that I held him in such high esteem. I remember her crouched over a desk late at night, hurriedly translating poems from a thick volume of Dōgen's collected works so that she could return to completing her university assignments. I don't know if anything ever came of her efforts.

15/4/13

Contrary to what some might believe, Robert's not an "ecological" poet in any rigorous sense of the term. He's not interested in exploring ecosystems of extra-semantic connections between words and things, or in revealing how the human is indelibly connected to the non-. Nor is the world around him, though he is inexhaustibly committed to it, stumbling into irreversible series of ecological collapse. It's not that he isn't necessarily interested in these things, I think, but rather that he doesn't believe that poetry is the place to explore them.

Superficially, his is a parochial, conservative poetry: it avoids complicating matters, it wants to "tell it as it really is". A spade is a spade, even if it's lodged in a simile that sheds light on a detail of its form. But it's actually the case that his poems aren't such apparently simple depictions of "the natural world" at all. Robert's landscapes are more like carefully composed, post-impressionist canvases, where smears of colour can, with heavier emphasis, bring particular objects into focus at the expense of almost everything else. "Australia's finest poet of the natural world", says Kevin Hart, but one might wonder how "Australian" his poetry really is, when so often his landscapes are

composed according to European terms of reference. “The Hawkesbury River” (183-6), for example, is not an attempt to render in language an experience of being *in* that particular region; rather, it presents the place at a remove, so that it might be transferrable, it seems, to the northern hemisphere. The “mountains” (are they really?) are “Caledonian-seeming”, the river has a “repertoire / of Munch shapes”, pelicans fold their wings like “Swiss army knives”, the purity of form of a yacht in the distance is “only matched / by Brancusi’s ‘Bird in Flight’”.

What is important here is not so much that Robert is well-schooled in European art and geography, but rather that his central concern is the potential for universal recognition of his images, as opposed to a localised, and therefore more cryptically personal, inflection of them. To use a term of Joan Retallack’s, this constitutes something of Robert’s poethics:

What is most needful is that we become modest. And the work
of art that can return us to our senses.

Our only paradise is the ordinary: to be fed by what is really there.

(from “A Testimony”, 160)

16/4/13

There’s a solitude, and a melancholy because of it, that pervades so many of the poems. Perhaps the loneliness is what seduces us into thinking that what he writes of is simply *there*, that the canvas wasn’t sketched out, composed, layered over, that the poem actually comes from a video recorder attached to his backpack as he wanders through the countryside. There is a particular, recurring structure, too. We can find it anywhere across the various stages of his life: the journey to a place, the arriving there, the conscious awareness of his solitude, and a conclusion on the basis of it. Think, for example, of “Journey: the North Coast”, or “Scotland, Visitation” or, slightly altered, “On a Forestry Trail”.

So I turned back.
 The black promontories, spiked and furry with trees,
 drifted in the plumed loch.
 ...
 The apparent spirits
 in the earth have taught us.
 Yet the earth is Empty. It is innocent ...

(from "Scotland, Visitation", 77)

A solitude that presupposes a dehumanisation? Or, disregarding the need for humanisation in the first place, a solitude that imposes a lifelessness? Of *Cumulus*, Langford writes, "There is little agency in his work: he invites us to share his gaze, but there is no attempt to create a space in which one might be more than a witness – in which the reader might be invited to consider what needed to be done. It is in just such spaces, however, that we must live: beyond that solitude in which things become visible, there are messier, less manageable places in which there are others, with whom we must live. Where the poem must dance as well as see."⁶

17/4/13

Reception of *Cumulus* is inevitably going to be clouded by Robert's involvement with the infamous Anthology. And part of me is annoyed at Robert because of this – that he would delimit the potential legacy of his work by involving himself with such a monumentally flawed testament to his and Geoffrey Lehmann's blindness. Peter Minter buried *Australian Poetry Since 1788* with a memorable presentation at a poetry symposium in 2011.⁷ He has also written of how in Robert's own poetry a problematic Europeanisation of Australian landscape means that "it is purified of its real, indigenous history".⁸

But as much as Robert is not particularly interested in Aboriginal cultures – in any of their various forms – and as much as his landscapes are absent of any significant Aboriginal presence, I remain convinced that the thinness of Robert's line does not ultimately exclude the

possibility of Indigenous presence in the Australian landscape. As I've written elsewhere:

The spareness of Gray's line enables a heightened sensitivity to the very smallest changes in texture and pace. Despite such spareness, however, Gray's landscapes seem to *glow* after the speakers have moved through them – it is this glowing, this brilliance of life and colour, which recreates such powerful and vibrant simulations of place ... [However,] a richness of life and colour [is] not synonymous with a bold, all-seeing gaze. Rather, the large amounts of white space around Gray's poems on the page are symbolic of the space he chooses not to touch. In his poetry there is rarely a mention of Indigenous presence ... but his voice doesn't suggest that there *isn't* any to be found.⁹

He certainly doesn't see everything, and he's quite happy to tell you, too:

Our consciousness is like a fine spotlight
that's focused on just one place at a time
...
What is the 'knower' but a passing thought
that's counted there amongst experience?

(from "The Drift of Things", 262)

The point here is that the world isn't revealed in its entirety to Robert in the way that the grace of God grants it all to Murray. When they do appear, therefore, Aboriginal people are shadows, or hovering on the edges of towns, but there is no sense that the poet understands anything about what they might be doing, and he never makes any claims about what they are or are not capable of. It's a convenient denial of relation in a way, but it's also a modesty and a respect for difference that's absent from plenty of other far more interested contemporary discourse.

18/4/13

Somewhat perversely, perhaps, I've often thought about the similarities between Minter and Gray. There's the mutual influence from Japan, for example, or the ways that they draw lines between things to reveal them with a clarity we find entirely suitable, but also entirely surprising. And there's a mutual love-affair with various parts of Northern NSW.

Or, compare Peter's recent poem in *Southerly*, "Roadside Bramble":

... A path trodden flakes of rock
 Through clumps and bristles of grass and wet-stemmed seed-heads
 Drooping over bright plastic bits and rusting caps
 Squashed with dirt into a bleak loam
 A field scattered with the bones of my predecessors
 Wandering aimlessly over turquoise hills, smoky dead trees
 I find I'm outside the future, overgrown
 Great walls of roots & earth crumbling sodden in the muddy
 weather
 Wooden claws of hackberry gum
 Knotted foetal in the grey wind, contrail chords in the sky
 Lines unfurling between hard matter and blue
 Blown above a jetliner's silver precipice
 Disappearing into the end of a broken branch
 Time and space are orange as mud in gravel
 Trees a-glint with a wild fire
 Sparks flying across the horizon ...

with Robert's early "Landscape":

I head for the railway,
 wading
 dead grass that's matted
 like an old dried mop,
 using a stick.
 Then walk
 between the rails on

sleepers, shale;
 the smell is soaked oil.
 Either side,
 as if they're covered with ash
 and brandish
 leaf and cone as weapons,
 the bent-kneed
 banksias
 in corroboree.
 But all sound has been sucked from the air
 at noon, like air
 by fire. I only hear
 the immense quiet
 of the bush –
 that seems to dilate
 now, on
 a bell-miner's note.
 There is just
 this light hammering upon
 metal, say
 on the satin, polished
 line ... (7)

Could it be that this country has more to say about what *we* say than we might think?

19/4/13

Still thinking about comparisons, but this time between the beginning and the end of Robert's own oeuvre. Unlike almost any other poet I've read, Robert only seems to have become greater with age. The last two books, *Afterimages* and *Nameless Earth* are unrelenting tides of colour, sound and *emotion*. Unlike the rest, too, their poems are reprinted in *Cumulus* without substantial revision. For Harrison, the later poems "are more powerfully constructed as psychological moments, dependent on the tonal qualities of the spoken word as much as on their visual and painterly envisioning".¹⁰ Although Robert has always been

an architect of subtle rhythms, by *Lineations* (1996) they are yet gentler, like extensions of a body's breath. "In Departing Light" is one of Robert's greatest poems because he is now – to refer to Harrison again – thinking of experience not only as an evolution of sense, but *also* of how sense is "conditioned both by the externally visible world and by a series of threshold and perhaps unconscious associations"¹¹:

... I think that the chaos in her mind
is bearable to her because it is revolving
so slowly—slowly
as dust motes in an empty room. (237)

Or, compare the first poem in *Cumulus*, "Journey, the North Coast" (1), with one of the last, "Home Run" (273). Like "Journey", "Home Run" is about a moment of revelation upon seeing "the ocean / from the North Coast train" (surely they'll have to dedicate a section of this train line to Robert one day). In the earlier poem, we're looking in as if through a window: there's the speaker; he has just woken up. The key to the structure is the "flakes of light" that parcel visual and cognitive moments together in hard, polished sentences:

The train's shadow, like a bird's,
flees on the blue and silver paddocks,
over fences that look split from stone,
and banks of fern...

By the time of "Home Run", however, everything is so much more conversational. "You" are part of the poem; it is *for* you that it's written:

... You know that you'll arrive soon
at this place on the coast, the first ingress... although, I am wrong,
I'm remiss;
there is a glimpse of the sea
and of an estuary, before that; no matter... you know you will soon
come to the place I mean
when you've left Nambucca...

What I'm tracing here is a trajectory "along which the relationship between nature and human experience becomes harder to fathom, more intimate and more attuned to the negative force of the instinctual".¹² What for Harrison is the brooding, disconcerting influence of the unconscious manifests in the slippages between images, the increased frequency of conjunctions and hyphens, all of which are signs of a subterranean current of uncertainty that gently lifts the image from the concrete mooring it once enjoyed in "Journey". And the imagination is freer, too; it pursues the echoes of photons after the scene has disappeared from view:

... lying amongst these trees, you will see, is a creek
 with many tendrils, like a root,
 appearing everywhere, through acres of long grass, a seemingly
 broken water,
 coloured like the water
 we washed our brushes in at school.

The thing-in-itself is no longer "out there", no longer some sort of distant signal. It has moved closer, as Robert has moved closer to it, and now they are almost indistinguishable.

20/4/13

What is it about his greatest work? What makes it as great as anything I've ever read? The fiery luminosity of those long, sinuous lines as they streak across the page, before fracturing with various, subtle rhythms into shorter breaths. The way his image doesn't necessarily reproduce anything like a sensation of seeing the original object first-hand, but rather reframes the object anew, or removes it from its earlier condition of existence and places it somewhere else – somewhere closer and more integral to the lights of my present moment. But most of all, the way he reminds me of the miracles: sound; sight; this long, green coast; our parents' careful attentions; the way a poem might guide me, like a benevolent spirit, to a new home.

21/4/13

After all that, it's a little deflating to come to the end of *Cumulus* and find "Wing Beat", a poem about losing a summer by spending it in a winter of the Northern Hemisphere. After a vast compendium that details a search for a method, a poetics that would bring Australian landscapes to life in the English language, why leave us with more thoughts from the global north? Isn't it a slap in the face of the poet's entire project?

This was my first impression, at any rate, before I realised, "Of course not". While the poem says he has "gone / northwards" for just one season, in so many ways Robert's whole oeuvre is about crossing back and forth between the old countries and this one:

Although I've gone
northwards, I will cross the lawn
at home – the trees and yard in bloom –
in the mirror in an empty room. (330)

His images are not of what he sees in the Australian continent as it presents itself to him, but of what he'd like to show you, as you arrive from somewhere else.

22/4/13

Thoughts on the lines in the sketches at the end of the book:

- rarely anything more than pencil;
- blurrier over time;
- nothing's in sharper relief than the angophoras
in *Within the Light* (1985).

23/4/13

I haven't heard from Robert for a couple of years. He didn't come to the launch of my first book in 2011, even though his blurb was on the back cover. He'd left Sydney to move back to the North Coast, and I couldn't get in touch with him to send a copy to his new address. I've often wondered if his silence is to do with my drift towards the avant-garde,

which he'd probably interpret as a kind of surrender to an overwhelming complacency:

Épater les bourgeois? Certainly,
but there is another complacency one mustn't
overlook: *Épater les avant-gardistes*.

(from "Minima", 314)

I'm no doubt over-imagining things here. But it remains the case that when we first met – back in 2004 – he had already been a god of my poetic universe for a long time. As the years passed, however, and I started reading more widely, my pantheon became a little more cluttered. I remember trying to explain to him the virtues of Robert Adamson's *The Clean Dark*, for example. For Robert, Adamson's persistent need to "go out of focus" was frustrating, while for me this kind of wavering uncertainty of sight and meaning was only becoming increasingly interesting. But Robert, unlike Adamson, has remained part of my ontological bedrock. No matter how far I open the linguistic system, I can never forget the cognitive – no, the *corporeal* – impact of a crystalline image.

In "Valedictory" he urges "the artist / not to make himself ridiculous, in his years of recognition" (291) ... Recent Anthology aside, I'd like to think that Robert has achieved this. Still, it's sad to think that a consequence of the wars of an older generation might be that my interest in perceptual clarity *and* conceptual revolution can only, for a poet like Robert, be a sign of sacrifice, rather than of the milieu he did so much to shape.

25/4/13

Instability. Contorting cumuli leave fingers, tangles, wisps through the atmosphere.

NOTES

- 1 Robert Gray, *Cumulus: collected poems* (St. Kilda: John Leonard Press, 2012).
- 2 In Robert Gray, *New and Selected Poems* (Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove, 1998), 3.
- 3 Martin Langford, "Cumulus: Robert Gray and the Visual Arts of Poetry", *Meanjin* (2012). <<http://meanjin.com.au/articles/post/cumulus-robert-gray-and-the-visual-arts-of-poetry/>>
- 4 Martin Harrison, *Who Wants to Create Australia? essays on poetry and ideas in contemporary Australia* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 2004), 39-40.
- 5 In Robert Hass, *The Essential Haiku: versions of Bashō, Buson and Issa* (Hopewell: The Ecco Press: 1994), 40.
- 6 Langford, op. cit.
- 7 Peter Minter, "The Whitewash of Australian Poetry Circa 1988: Lehmann and Gray's neo-colonial kitsch and the disappearing of modern Aboriginal poetry" (2011), available at <<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/17612651>>
- 8 Peter Minter, "Afterimages", *Sydney Morning Herald* (June 29, 2002).
- 9 Stuart Cooke, "Eventing: wandering through the physiology of Australian Narrative", *Antipodes* (December 2007), 120.
- 10 Harrison, op. cit., 41.
- 11 Ibid., 42.
- 12 Ibid., 43.