

Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language

Volume 3
Issue 2 *Hydrobotanica*

Article 13

January 2009

Driving South

Sally Clarke

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Clarke, S. (2009). Driving South. *Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language*, 3(2).

Retrieved from <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes/vol3/iss2/13>

This Poetry is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes/vol3/iss2/13>

driving south *by Sally Clarke*

I

*first rain after summer dry
pigeon shakes feathers*

close isobars, strong cold front,
last night's weather forecast fulfilled,
we drive into a bleak landscape.

blue-green gums reach for grey sky,
outlines reflected in cloud shapes,
black on the road, a discarded tyre tread.

in drought-denuded fields, square-rumped cows
wait for feed, congregate around farm gates,
huddle near homesteads.

cars speed towards us, headlights on,
windscreen-wipers struggling against sudden squalls
a passing log truck's oily thrown spume.

opposite the church with a red steeple,
country bakery warmth, friendly faces,
hot tea, a sweet apple slice to cheer us on.

beneath suddenly-clearing skies,
a new-born calf, splayed legs uncertain,
flicks ears in unfamiliar space.

first green already flushing paddocks,
party balloons tied to a verandah
pluck colours from the faint rainbow.

II

*fledgling pigeon tries new wings
mother walks away*

an altogether other day!
sunlight sheening gum trees,
angel clouds streaming clear skies.

we ignore the brand-new by-pass,
go the old way, make for
our favourite lunch spot

blond grasses wave from the roadside,
callistemons bleed shadows,.
paper barks are snow-capped,

Perth pinks smear a lipstick touch.
the dams are full, vines beginning to sprawl,
roses budding at the ends of terraces.

well-fed cows tug at tender grass,
hold head-to-head meetings under shady trees,
sit content in rustic rumination.

plastic-wrapped hay rolls spool paddocks,
a technological leap from my country childhood's
rows of new-mown grass pitch-forked to dryness.

I lose count of glossy black crows
daring sorrow and joy on the road ahead,
slip into holiday languor.

Sally Clarke is the biographer of Western Australian author Donald Stuart, *In The Space Behind His Eyes* (2006); editor of *Kaleidoscope Twentieth Century* (1999) produced for the International Year of the Older Person; and one of five WA poets published in *Amber Contains the Sun* (2008). Her articles, poems and award winning short stories are widely published.