but my kneecap bruised to a crescent shape
of stone, when I went home. And still I limp.

SCRUB CITIES:
(Remembering Between Wodjil and Tor)

This anti-city
is dreaming
in insect hum
and rustle of feet
over leaf litter
along ant trails;
in the catacombs
of termite mounds
in call of currawong
and flicker of bronzewing;

In pulse of stone
on stone, diorite
and schist, mica
felspar and quartz
and crusts of laterite;
rocks speaking to rocks;
In straps of mallet
and mallee and wandoo
that swing from bough
and trunk. In the
fingerling twigs under
leaf crowns, winds
whisper narratives
of remembered storms;

In farming energies
distant, persistent
a hundred years
or more of imprint
images shaping sere
rectangles, wedges
of remnant woodlands
once free-range foraging
for their tammars,
woylies, euros and wallabies;
brush-tail possums
and skitter of numbats.

Later the noise of engines
joined these other ghosts.
Blackened steam barrels
on steel wheels hauled power
of multiples of horses
in a box of coal lumps
or cords of cut wood.
Tall smoke stacks thundered
in time with whirr
of flywheel, hiss of driven
piston and flapping belt;

And as the chaff was bagged
or plump sheaves winnowed,
windmills creaked and spun.
Then there were draught horses
snuffling in nosebags, stamping
even in dead of night;
and creak of harnesses
clank of trace chains,
rattle of the mouldboard plough;

In whine of separator
as the cream poured into
the bowl, in the one-lunged
Lister pounding at night
in the engine-house behind
the workman’s bothy;
or at shearing time
the Wolseley chugging on
and combs whizzing in the cutters
as a shearer yanks down
on the wire. Generations
of workers are shadows
haunting the boards of sheds;
In deserted farm gardens
spiders are busy creating
lines of text spun upon
these lands. And as
they re-read assiduously with
finger tips their own braille history
of granite monoliths and swales,
saltmarsh and sand-ridge
the infinite numbers
of plant species, mosses, lichens,
and ancient animal life,
we other travellers haunt
the twilight of our lesser texts.

GRANITIC VERTEBRAE
‘The weight of granite will damage vertebrae’
John Kinsella

How to defy the universe
can begin with gravity.
You find a boulder, crowbar
it out of the earth to set
it as the base of your wall.

First align your feet to meet
the centre of this stone globe,
tense your calves and lock both knees
for a start. The thighs then must