VISITING GNAMMAS
ON THE BULLFINCH ROAD

The sign said ‘Gnamma Holes’
but we knew gnamma meant holes
anyway. Through the tammar thicket
and loose-limbed gimlet scrub we pushed
to a cleared space where rock pavement
of tawny granite stretched down to a place
where gnamas indeed held cool
deeppgreen water. Autumn storm rains
had refreshed so much
that a seral green meadow
lipped each precious mouth.

There was no inselberg, nor nubbin,
not even a castle koppie; no tor-like tafoni
or majestic waveform rock mantle to be seen.
Just sweet deep jars of sustenance
once only the Wongai knew.

And had hid them ’til brutal horsemen
forced tribal men to madness of thirst
to commit sacrilege
and bring the djanga here.

Now the sign on the main road
makes it all plain. Heavy of heart,
unslaked, we rejoined the road south.