had heaved, line of mouth hard, eyes darting until turning to her, new with child. “Our nest is made, “I’ll tell her now.” The reed-beds by the speeding train became a sallow gray but westward, over the river, a crimson sky flared. Closer they leaned at closing of the day.

THE WARREN WEEPS
(From: FOUR IRREGULAR SONNETS FOR RICHARD WALDENDORP)

These wide white thighs of sand are parted here so the acrid river’s stream can disperse into the Southern Ocean’s chilling clear waters, where sperm and humpback linger, nurse new calves, grow strong enough, turn south, head towards pack ice and grey storm waves with spindrift and fume flying—plankton their bread as someone once said. A mission that saves a beached school roused people. In a band
volunteers came over the sand dunes seeking blistered dark mounds that lay on the land in a shallow rush of surf. And life leaking undone in crushed lungs, skin had turned grey but they laved and nursed and got them away.

SONG FOR A GIRL
(a palimpsest for John Dryden)

Young I am walking in an orchard of maturing fruits and see a lover yield.
How to keep these images of green shade?
I believe this taught me when to feign.

Take me from these dry wheatlands to forest where trees grow young and true till I need recall no more those bodies jerk in dust; roll of eyes.

Stay not till knuckles ring hollow on the water tank’s lowest rungs and to betray he that has sired you and your kin; to stay longer would be to deceive the rest.

Could I find fresh water to replace dust-brimmed teacups? And full of truth, brisk, and of sound mind and body, shed the mire of years; again to be fifteen?