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## Bush Tucker

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## **Bush Tucker** *by John Charles Ryan*

(after reading Ginsberg)

soften your palate  
with an amuse-bouche  
fine finger food grilled  
to burst-in-your-mouth  
goodness, yummy!

knife and fork ticking  
the china, slice them,  
spice them bardi grubs  
cooked in hot ash  
or raw with a sprinkle

of blood root zest  
those steaming gooey  
insides sliding down  
your throat like oysters  
next for hors d'oeuvres

marinated orchid bulbs  
with macrozamia nuts  
translucent slivers layered  
on doily-sized yabgeti cakes,  
slathered in tart finger lime sauce

a slow cook stew of tubers  
for your entrée  
gotten from the ground  
with my bleeding hands:  
kara starchy white

as an Old World potato  
the fringe lily tjunguri  
with flecks of cypress  
stem and if there's room  
for the main course

roasted wild yam  
with the flaccid leaves  
of spinachy saltbush

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in a béarnaise sauce  
of emu egg and sour

mistletoe fruit nyilla-nyilla  
for dessert eat quondong pie  
slathered in rooty syrup  
of the Christmas Tree  
or drizzled in a brine

of amber wandoo nectar  
red-eyed wattle seed  
ground and sparged  
like black pepper  
come on people

eat your bushtucker.

**John Charles Ryan** was born in Neptune City, New Jersey in the United States but has been living in Western Australia since 2008. He is presently writing poetry about the flora of Western Australia and completing his PhD dissertation at Edith Cowan University titled *Plants, People and Place*. He has a chapbook called *Katoomba Incantation*.