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After Rain

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After Rain

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I

When it rains
the smell is not
petrichor but
charcoal,

a musty sickness stuck
to brittle
ground.

Underfoot and patient
after that long trace
Saturday
calling up the blood
moon, mobile

networked ahead of all hotspot maps
and embers of rage, your damp ghost,
Fire, candles our shaky
after-calm.

II

Shiver.

III

I heard the cuckoo-shrike
Sunday,
afternoon cloud
sousing
the scarp
flat, black-faced
at birth, no silent evacuee smudged by carbon's terror plume.

Good Luck Bird, Molly Aura, Fortune-sifter, Greyscale Glider, Canopy Seer. Good luck, bird.

IV

Behind the over-cooked pot, umber water jar rent by heat in those early hours you slept unbroken with kiln free to run, leaf shards huddle where they dropped the night we ran once, twice, three times from fire’s arc.

V

Country of the faeries no more, flammagenitus bears dry dead thunder. Pyro-crickets underground queue after rain to resurface.

Figure 1. The approaching Currowan-Morton fire front, as it crossed the Shoalhaven River to enter the Wingecaribbee district of the Illawarra (Southern) Highlands of New South Wales, 4 January 2020. This vantage point of watch and act was above the village of Fitzroy Falls, just out of sight below the water reservoir in the middle ground, in Wodi Wodi and Yuin country. (Photograph: Louise Boscacci).

1 A flammagenitus, from *Cumulus flammagenitus*, is a fire cloud commonly known as a pyrocumulus. The most intense version is a pyrocumulonimbus, capable of generating its own thunderstorm of lightning and black hail, and casting embers kilometres ahead to spark new blazes. (WMO, International Cloud Atlas, n.d., https://cloudatlas.wmo.int/en/flammagenitus.html).