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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
in a bérarnaise 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.