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"Rapture: South Branch Mortlock River,
Doodenanning," "Canto of the Dry River
Empyrean (30)," "Rapture 6: The Crescent of Little
Beach"

John Kinsella

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Three Poems

JOHN KINSELLA

Rapture: South Branch Mortlock River, Doodenanning

A vapor trail adhering to the bed
of the south branch of the Mortlock,
extra weight in water, crystallography.

The bridge — rail lines sandwiching
concrete — is more likely to be washed
away for its weight. The water must

come eventually, in a rush. The scrub's
died back, quandong fruits seared
to nuts. Lichen's symbiosis

holding the parasite host together.
Commensal? Guest host? The host
offered near the cemetery where

a recent burial is still piled high.
Walk by reverentially, bright new wire
marking distance. Protocol. Respect.

Bush burial and the bone-dry river white,
dead town, signing living history: sports field,
cricket pitch, school teacher's cottage,

tea rooms with hinge of iron stove,
golf course overlaid, still active. Degraded
bush, they'd call it. South branch

of Mortlock the salt of their earth,
earth piled high, dust dry, fresh where
the serpent goes and they don't follow:

there, the river flows
in the shadow of rainbows.

Canto of the Dry River Empyrean (30)

We cross river after river,
dry deep into their beds, riparian
fragility, cauterizing winds

whipping sand and dust
into an effluvium of white rose
we imagine, brought in

from elsewhere. I clarify.
I see lightning in cloudless
skies. I see luscious fruits

burgeoning out of riverbanks.
I taste and see synonyms
for beauty splash against

the windscreen. All I see
is perfectly out of kilter.
All levels are leveled out.
We cross river after river.

The Oath of Office

Rapture 6: The Crescent of Little Beach

Whale bones within the bay engrain the sands
of Little Beach: waves lift from flatness
to hit the granite pivot, top dress, then scour.

Children make gothic castles out of sand
that sticks together just long enough: filigree
of kelp, all else beach-combed at first light.

Why go further than these trappings of paradise,
held in by peaks and islands, the intelligence
of granite and scrub, shifting densities

of sand? Sail out of the bay where edges,
fall away into narratives of economics?
Dragging of footprints onto the clear,

washed panel around the waterline's
ambiguity, sunlight through clouds, light
we expect to find over our shoulders,

glancing off currents; bluer-green aura
of mirror, a sensation of safety.
We expect and accept the indigo depths:

out in the bay, sheer weight of weed
gripping the floor. Opened out, closed in.
Sand compacts in whiteness. *Granite*

Banksias: like mesophytic cultures
choosing to share a language
of distance and chance, parlay

before curving out into the crush
of the Southern Ocean. Always
diving fresh water. Phrases. Easily

injured. Inured, drawn into the crescent,
out into the bay, sight is sonar,
those blue-green variations in depth

voice-overs of a Western Whipbird. Rowdy
with tranquility: Noisy Scrub Bird!
Nocturnal ambulation of rediscovery:

Gilbert's Potoroo. The glimmering
taint of extinction? Phases of interest.

Rest here. Rest easy.