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A Way Ahead *by Meg Mooney*

after months of brown and dust
strange, difficult days in my head
the rain is an ending, or at least a pause

we walk among rocky towers
cut out of azure sky
pearly white steps
now set against dark soil

only hours after the rain
fingers of light blue liverwort
reach out across pale blocks
ferns unfurl hopefully
in cracks and cavities
rocks hold bowls of water
a few spoonfuls to basin-size

down in the creek bed
ghost gums lay white sashes
across shiny green cycads
we breathe in damp earth and wet wood
spiced with eucalyptus

walk along the flank of a ridge
and down into a narrow gully
to a spring of tan water
candelabra wattle and reeds gathered round

we sprawl on the rocks
blow and cosset our tiny fire –
'do you think we'll keep it going?'
I ask my friend,
'only if we're determined' she says –
and at last we have our tea

Meg Mooney is a natural scientist and poet and have been in central Australia for 23 years now, living and/or working in remote Aboriginal communities for most of that time. My poems often have a strong narrative and attention to detail and focus on my association with Aboriginal communities and the landscape. For the dry country: writing and drawings from the Centre, by myself and artist Sally Mumford, was published by Ptilotus Press in 2005, and I have had poems published in a range of journals and anthologies.

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