

“A Note for Johnny”



a chapbook by Coral Hull

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"Note"

"would have left" "a note for you" "whilst you slept"
"so many things" "I could" "have done" "but had to run"
"and be named" "through the rocky paddock" "the
granite outcrops" "stretched" "my ankle muscle" "in the

opposite direction" "to how it" "operates" "today you
rested" "whilst I flew" "the clouds were blowing south"
"down the mountain" "as if everything" "was operating"
"backwards/forwards" "properties have a stretch to

them" "it's in the way" "the wind moves down" "the
slopes" "the grasses" "and the shrubs" "the trees" "lean"
"towards that stretch" "the animals" "are blown"
"towards that stretch" "even the fences" "are built"

"down that stretch" "without the builders" "knowing it"
"this goes on" "and on" "it is the story" "of time" "for
now" "this stretch" "with the wind" "the mountains"
"skies" "air currents" "where the birds are stretched" "in

their flight" "stars emanate" "stretch light" "they arc the
sky" "throughout" "the evening" "that is clear" "bright"
"windy" "they hang" "in all the different trees" "the
stars select" "the tree" "to hitch to" "they will be fruit"

"they are night fruit" "they illuminate" "the tree" "move
in" "from that" "they come to the earth" "with old light"

“Tap”

“tap facing” “into the grass” “crickets” “frogs” “tap”
“like the head” “of a horse” “poised” “still” “cold and
majestic” “tap” “never moving tap” “tap” “trapped
inside itself” “never moving” “in the rain” “never

moving” “all summer long” “it was a long summer”
“our longest ever” “the flies” “the tap” “the grass
trembling” “around the tap” “grass thicker” “than skin”
“the grass” “the thick” “bright green” “grass moistened”

“by the tap” “the grass living” “and dying” “in the night”
“the morning” “insects” “all the insects living” “dying”
“around the tap” “that never lives” “or dies” “the tap”
“that faces” “the wild dandelions” “that spring up” “and

knock down” “like the knockdown grasses” “inside the
gale” “the wind” “your hair” “your last smile” “here”
“has carried me” “forwards” “by the Gary scarecrow”
“the apple tree” “no apples now” “but the great brown

horses” “who own” “the mystery” “of this paddock”
“paddock” “in their image” “like all great paddocks”
“inhabited” “by horses” “the grace of horses” “they own
each other” “their sun” “in the mornings” “their calm

places” “out of the wind” “their open gates” “and leafy
“oily dams” “the waterbirds” “oh” “the dark lovely
crow” “lonelier” “than the evening” “more company”
“finally us” “the tap” “nestled” “into the pipes” “of the

house" "pipes" "the backbone" "of the tap" "the only
bone" "that will never release us" "the tap" "with frost"
"is still" "stiller" "than a field" "of frost" "stiller" "stiller
than birds" "before a winter downpour" "on dark" "the

tap" "it is rusty" "cold" "yet it persists" "here" "as itself"
"give this tap" "warmth" "the warmth of your gaze"
"give it" "your innocence" "it will not harm you" "give
the tap" "your curiosity" "questions" "the absolute

place" "you share" "in time" "with it" "your backbone"
"your stillness" "and uneventuating dreams" "your
child's life" "your loss" "the weariness" "of your hands"



"Pines"

"we walked" "the driveway" "of soundless pines"
"together" "it's deep" "emerald" "needles" "deeper than
midday" "it is here" "you care" "about me" "even
though" "gone" "I interpret" "you" "signals" "a rock" "a

tree" "a house" "a sky" "you move" "towards me" "do
your little things" "you care" "about me" "even"
"without" "you" "caring" "here" "you introduce us" "to
property" "boundaries" "open" "the gate" "it allows"

"us" "to pass" "through" "I shut it" "thank-you" "as if"
"it were" "relieved" "to return" "its origin" "of stillness"
"of being" "gate" "or connecting" "the paddocks" "or
fencelines" "or keeping" "animals safe" "he closes me"

"as he comes" "through" "he closes" "my life" "fences
hiss" "either side" "with static" "silent bush" "that is"
"what" "fences do" "they survey" "paddocks"
"encompassing" "our childhood" "my children" "where"

"they grow" "by this house" "moving" "towards it"
"away" "from it" "they create" "tracks" "like cattle"
"moving off" "through scrub" "to waterhole" "fence to
cow" "cow to earth" "earth to wind" "windmill" "rotates

them" "ruffles" "an emotionless" "world" "scarecrow"
"off" "highways" "by our trees" "water trough" "by
bathtub" "paddock" "dead beetle" "in water" "swim
now" "dam it" "swim" "breathe" "gates are linked" "into

arms" "more fences" "electric fences" "they stretch"
"down" "big slopes" "windy days" "clouds that swim"

"Mare"

"horses/donkeys" "headed towards" "the new paddock"
"delicious" "purple flowers" "over there" "gate open"
"oh" "gate" "gate open" "oh" "oh" "gate"
"open" "the wind" "tries" "to dislodge" "everything"

"sweep it" "into" "the next valley" "the next" "maybe"
"all the way" "into deserts" "beyond these tablelands"
"Mudgee" "Dubbo" "trees say" "but no" "they're
staying" "house is not" "going" "the mare" "pretends"

"she tries to fly" "without her wings" "horses had them"
"once" "her" "tender brown" "velvet muzzle" "soft as
earth" "my hand" "meets" "her face" "in my dreams"
"my late thirties" "here" "she is a plastic animal" "in a

grid of paddocks" "a long way" "away" "you want it"
"to change" "too quickly" "you think" "storms" "in
sunlight" "you think" "going crazy" "if this mountain"
"doesn't shift" "all at once" "the sky" "changes" "or

doesn't" "change" "you" "horses" "gates all open"
"mountains" "the sun" "races" "to change it" "clouds"
"streak" "across it now" "trees turn darker" "a star
appears" "the property" "takes care of itself" "you"

"now grateful" "to be here" "I'm staying" "here" "I'm
old" "the shed" "just the shed" "I'm staying" "just a
shed" "nothing more" "gate open" "peeling back" "the
broken wood" "let me live" "let me" "inside" "myself"

"Mountain"

"the mountain" "has spoken" "its language" "inaudible"
"part of me" "knows" "a great snake" "has passed" "part
of me knows" "geological history" "the geography" "of
the present" "I know" "these little things" "the

mountain" "has spoken" "yet" "it doesn't speak"
"directly of them" "what can I tell you" "of the
language" "that exists here" "which enters" "me?" "only
to say" "this land" "is speaking" "its inaudible"

"present" "itself" "it tells me" "everything" "there is to
know" "about myself" "each moment" "the language"
"is different" "the same" "here" "I can listen for hours"
"I can be myself" "but" "I cannot tell you" "what is

said" "only that" "by speaking" "this mountain"
"describes itself" "if only" "I could" "tell you" "archive
this perfection" "if only" "it could tell us" "of itself" "as
we become it" "your need to articulate" "drove you out

here" "tonight" "to the place of my windy skirts" "my
heart as wild as goats" "this is the mountain view" "the
interaction" "of things" "between" "each other" "the
tablelands" "the raveling underground water" "what

does the mountain do?" "it whispers" "it sings" "but it
has no voice" "it splits" "the storms" "in two" "before
they reach" "the house" "it holds" "my children's
laughter" "within" "its fat and fleecy sides" "nestled" "in

the woolley butt" "and cypress pines" "without mountains" "a giant" "has lost its voice" "the land" "has gained its silence" "more silence" "than it needs" "mountains" "like cows" "without them" "the wind"

"would blow" "down the valley" "like a tide that never retreated" "it would sound lost" "relentless" "the mountains" "channel the wind" "so that it cuts" "through the valleys like currents" "the rivers of wind have been here" "I threw my life into them" "and was released"



"Snake"

"there was a story" "through the mountains" "of a serpent" "who had passed there" "dragging them" "into being" "this was the low table ranges" "of Rylstone" "Kandos" "the serpent's tail" "had merely touched these

stones" "had slashed them" "to the side" "with a dim flicker" "how many lives" "have I lived through?" "is this just another one?" "its fleeting" "barely creating" "a ripple" "like wheels along gravel" "that never leave"

"the edges" "this is just one" "of many properties and scenes" "I'm tired" "and yet" "here" "I loved you" "but for how long?" "how?" "are you prepared?" "to spend" "the rest of your life here?" "with the property

inhabitants?" "this place" "inhabits itself" "seems to ask" "nothing more" "than its perpetual change" "its stories" "it lives" "fully inside" "all its moments" "is still enough to register" "to graze and glide" "and it's

sleep" "as gentle as a calf" "it's growing horns" "all the way up" "in the back paddock" "it's fearless" "as it lives and dies" "all over the place" "how must I learn from it?" "without galloping away" "into the sky?" "what can

the mountain say now?" "it is strange" "how oddly trapped" "one can feel" "even in the wind" "and rain" "it is odd" "to feel" "trapped" "when looking" "at distance" "or into the eyes" "of your loved ones" "even if" "I was

a bird" "there is only" "so much terrain" "I could navigate" "before I landed" "trapped" "by my own exhaustion" "my heartbeat" "inside" "the small feathered breasts" "there is always" "a new landscape"

"beyond this" "I go to it" "have you ever walked" "to the mountain?" "over there" "that giant rock" "passed by the snake" 'last night?" "no" "that is a long way off" "it's five kilometers away" "why must I see this" "as another

brief experience" "rather than living in the present?" "I have lived" "a lifetime" "in every experience" "release me" "from your memory"



"Dandelions"

"my talking feet" "feet talking of tiredness" "walking"
"and walking" when I see the great distance" "I think"
"so far to go" "across little jagged rocks" "out" "in the
field" "and ditches" "that make the ground unstable"

"you could twist" "your ankle" "these are ankle twisting
fields" "slow" "undulating" "tablelands fields" "footfall"
"and rock moment fields" "not your regular territory"
"look down" "and live" "here" "right now" "it happens"

"the barbed wire" "on the gate" "snatches the sleeve" "of
your shirt" "wait awhile" "it says" "wait a while here"
"it says" "have you seen" "the way" "the wind" "or
even" "the slightest breeze" "gently tilts" "the

dandelion?" "there are some days" "on the Rylstone
property" "that are so gentle" "the sky takes on this
gentleness" "so that even the autumn sun" "tilts in the
breeze" "like a giant dandelion" "and the birds are

drunk" "and slow to land" "and the dandelions" "are
trembling" "at the base" "of your shoe" "all our
existence!" "all our existence!" "all our existence!"



"Donkey"

"the flies" "of the donkeys ears" "and legs" "the magpies" "and the currawongs" "of the dam" "and the honey-eater" "wiping his beak" "on a branch" "the three donkeys" "hee-hawing" "like bagpipes" "Chrissy"

"Chrissy" "oh Chrissy" "was very sick" "the day" "the apple dropped" "from her mouth" "her big donkey head" "could not chew it" "she looked" "as if she wanted" "me" "to do" "something" "I held her" "head" "to my

chest" "like a barrel" "a donkey's head" "is so large" "so much expression" "the warm" "brown" "buttery eyes" "the daylight" "melts in them" "birds" "in the nearby trees" "crows" "magpies" "some wrens on the wire

fence" "that have picked the bugs" "from her buckled back" "Chrissy, dying" "gently the slobbered apple" "drops out of her mouth" "you can be invisible" "she sees it fall" "onto the ground" "she lies down" "the farm

doesn't take long" "the farm is moving" "around the bones" "the farm" "doesn't" "take much time" "to eat the flesh" "and bone" "after four weeks" there was nothing" "left" "of Chrissy" "nothing left" "of her" "just

a patch" "of her rich chocolate fur" "stuck to the skull"
"a wet rug" "chocolate fur" "the farm has eaten her"
"polished her bones" "bones still moist" "sucked on"
"by daylight" "dawn came, coldly" "all her brief life"

"the property" "has not loved her" "as you had hoped"
"it would" "did she hurt?" "but" "no longer" "it has
eaten her up" "now polishes" "her bones" "her eyes"
"gone first" "delicious" "to birds" "you can be invisible"



"Moon"

"is that the moon?" "the sickle moon" "cold faced"
"across the fields" "how can we describe" "the moon"
"again" "to those" "we love" "our children?" "how
would we describe" "the moon" "to the flying fox" "so

that they didn't all grin" "at us?" "how" "to listen" "to
everything?" "the cows that live inside" "the peace of
the tabletops" "from the dawn" "'til dusk glow" "ask
them" "listen" "they will speak to you" "with their

silence" "the peace" "of the stars" "the gaseous clus-
ters"

"of the milky way" "the peace" "of the huntsman" "with
the banded legs" "positioned" "by the opened window"
"the peace of the old blue heeler" "who followed me"

"way out" "to the grazing chestnut horse" "beyond the
house paddock" "the peace of my hat" "my coat, boots"
"my childhood" "my lover" "the sun on my forearms"
"the peace" "of the house paddock" "that is" "his"

"responsibility" "the peace of responsibility" "the peace
of land" "without any" "the stars" "hanging" "in
treetops" "midnight fruit" "fruit" "passing through" "the
many hours" "of the early morning" "from midnight"

"the branches" "held the stars" "just like" "they had"
"created them" "like it was" "the branches" "who had
created" "the raveling light" "the light" "which had
taken a thousand light years" "or more" "to travel" "to

the branches" "of the casuarinas" "the stringy barks"

"Kangaroo"

"she" "had not even tried" "to move" "her bony white
body" "into the clover" "that had come" "after rain" "it
was the old mother" "who had been hanging around"
"with the joey" "why do you think" "she came" "in so

close" "to the house" "to die" "was she lonely?" "as if a
kangaroo" "doesn't get lonely" "like us" "apart" "or
together" "we" "two lonely people" "was it something"
"inside her" "that brought her to the gate" "of the small

cottage?" "picture" "our small cottage" "our place of
loneliness" "of togetherness" "a dot" "out in the frosty
fields" "even we" "were cold" "cold as taps" "the water
iced up" "in the pipes" "the guttering" "stretching itself"

"a long and creaking stretch" "a cat's old back"
"arching" "railways sleepers" "big highways" "this
relief" "from ice" "all the night" "when the ice was
endless" "dark" "like we had forgotten" "everything" "a

relief" "from clear winter skies" "stars" "so many stars"
"and not a kangaroo" "amongst them" "we were cold"
"as her dying" "as though the winter sky" "was shining"
"its icy stars" "down through the roof" "she" "didn't

move" "far" "on her last night" "she didn't need to" "a
greater movement was occurring" "within her" "the
birds" "took her eyes" "all the birds" "not long" "after
dawn" "with the sun" "came the scavengers" "the farm"

"does not waste" "it utilizes everything" "deliciously" "a
strip of flesh" "was dragged from her mouth" "she was
cold" "stone" "dead" "so soft" "this ancient departure"

"FENCE"

"i'm the fence" "follow" "the fence" "Johnny" "are you there?" "yes" "i'm going to follow" "the fenceline" "yes" "yes" "follow it" "judy" "follow the fence" "the fence" "through" "the grass" "through the long" "dry

grass" "the fence" "cuts the air" "makes way" "a snake" "of barbs" "wire and endings" "cuts corners" "travels far" "through many places" "follows itself" "you will follow" "yes" "yes" "follow" "the fence" "the rabbit"

"the rabbit got under there" "last night" "the big rabbit" "the hungry" "rabbit" "at dusk" "ready" "for your garden" "the rabbit" "through there" "yesterday" "the rabbit" "today" "silence" "through the fence" "the

hungry silence" "of rabbit" "through" "the fence" "to feed" "on your garden" "your night garden" "to strip the leaves" "with the hawthorn slugs" "in the long night garden" "quiet rabbits" "come in" "to eat" "the english

cottage garden" "the fence" "watching" "oh yes" "the fence seeing" "and moving by" "the fence" "raveling by" "like a river" "like a king river" "like a tiger snake" "the powerful movement of the fence" "the fence

forever" "cut by a tree" "the tree" "slides onto the property" "as if it wanted to join us!" "through the fence" "its branch!" "its giant snout!" "a wooden reptile" "collapsed through the barbed wire" "its scale" "its

wood" "for kilometers" "on end" "as if nothing else mattered" "it's unseeing eye" "here" "its mighty collapse" "and its crashed" "snapping the thirsty wire" "oh" "no" "the tree fallen" "oh no" "the fence cut" "oh"

"no" "fix it" "fix the fence" "no boundaries" "fix the fence" "the tree cut me" "the tree" "the mad tree in the mad storm" "cut" "me down" "fix" "the fence" "go back" "go back" "the other way" "we check the

boundary fence" "where a tree has fallen" "in a weekend storm" "and has crashed through" "it is a woolley butt" "and its bark" "flakes away" "through my fingers" "in fine hairs" "the tree is not good" "for burning" "johnny

told me" "and so" "you will chop it" "and leave it" "to the ground" "and ground inhabitants" "the tree fell" "like a crocodile" "from up north" "slipping from the land" "into a swamp" "the tree slides onto the property"

"as if it wanted to join us" "through" "the fence" "its branch" "its giant snout" "is collapsed" "through the barbed wire" "there is a mighty tree" "here" "and its crashed" "snapping" "this thirsty wire" "on thirsty lands"



"Cows"

"black angus" "cows" "are not lazy" "feeders" "they will wander" "the paddocks" "migratory" "hierarchical" "they will stay here" "forever" "like you" "johnny" "who would not kill them now" "for johnny had said"

"he would never kill" "those few last cows" "the fog clears" "we receive cows" "dark angels" "they emerge" "from mist" "where the eucalyptus" "drown" "they call" "this place" "their own" "a cow" "can be heard"

"downwind" "forever" "this brilliant morning" "they lived" "they held it" "like a cow would" "in the sway" "of the velvet hips" "some cattle" "who know this place" "have the breeze" "as a body" "the boulders as hearts"

"their milk lines" "of mothers and calves" "like streams" "flooding the sunlight" "this is first light" "after the magpies sang" "the big mob of cows" "were the first" "to receive the sun" "at Rylstone" "on their fat black

backs!" "i stood before them" "those black nuns" "who did not want me there" "without johnny" "so i didn't stay long" "the lines of light and shadow" "blew down the slope" "being the hoofs of the cows" "bringing the

hoofs to my feet" "we all stood along the hill" "like whispers" "bellowing" "in the broad daylight" "it was as though we were standing" "alongside" "a giant free falling wheel" "propelled by sun" "birdsong" "that

rotated the bands of light and shadow" "to where we stood" "and back into the wide blue sky" "this light from the cows is coming towards me" "in rotational bands" "along the complex timeline" "of the Rylstone property"



End Matter

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