



## Waiting Games

*Rita Tognini*

(i)

jacarandas dangle apricot seedpods  
sasanquas bloom dusky pink or white  
liquidambar stain cinnabar  
almond and other fruit trees  
sacrifice leaves  
golden candles glow on banksias  
and after rain  
spindly soursob sprouts in the undergrowth

(ii)

teddy bears are pinioned to gates  
or peer from behind panes  
rainbows on footpaths  
assure 'All will be well'  
while toddlers lead somnambulant dads  
past playgrounds cordoned off  
like crime scenes

(iii)

two doors up  
the half-panelled gable  
of a house under construction  
gapes  
and snaking air conditioning ducts  
flash silver smiles

(iv)

hopscotch games chalked on pavements

chart life's ups and downs

SMILE

START

HOP

LEAP

DANCE

SPIN

JUMP

and if you—

FINISH

Good Job!

(v)

at Central Deli

clients self-isolate from friends

queue for latte

macchiato      cappuccino

fingers hovering over phones

poised like chess players

for that crucial      move