



Gorge

John Charles Ryan

I.

Beadle's Grevillea

Grevillea beadleana

Devoted I am to this song, being
an ascetic in a dirtless crevice,
bivouacked to a gondwanan terrace,
disciplined I am to disagreeing
without helmet, harness guaranteeing
suction on such crumbly precarious
chasm talus, lacking even a tarsus
for traction nor a tongue, though decreeing
“I found my devotion, go find yours too.
Squat beside me, although not for too long
for I now have too many chores to do,
the glacial nocturne swiftly coming on,
and solitary I shall make it through.
farewell, good on ya for clambering along.”

II.

Gorge Hakea

Hakea fraseri

granite above me—me above granite.
whatbird left me here—here me left birdwhat.
justheard gust beneath—beneath gust heardjust.
planted bones under—under bones planted.

can't be long here—here long be it can.
touch of rime over—over rime of touch.
clutch rim of pure brink—brink pure of rim clutch.
planet below me—me below planet.
fine niche of soil slant—slant soil of niche fine.
shadow behind me—me behind shadow.
whine of gorge torrent—torrent gorge of whine.
below is bellow—bellow is below.
chine of me still here—here still me of chine.
bellow is below—below is bellow.

III.

Beadle's Grevillea
Grevillea beadleana

The bus, weighted
With conservation students,
Bogged in the greasy autumn
Mud of the road, winding out of
Guy Fawkes River National Park.

Darkness dropped
Like a mallet around us. The students,
Too afraid to alight. The rest of
Us huffed and hacked up some downed
Branches to lend enough traction for

The growling beast to climb.
We had come there to survey
Rare Beadle's grevillea flowers, their
One-sided mauve racemes, upright
As blood-hued horse-brush bristles.

Once presumed extinct,
(*The plant, not the passengers*)
Then rediscovered in the '70s
And now known to populate a mere
Five locales in northern New South Wales,
Much like the one we visited:
A sanctum of ravine-crossed country
Pollinated by eastern spinebills,
Yellow-tufted honeyeaters,
Crimson rosellas and the less frequent

Undergrad feathered in fluoro ribbon.
With their silky deep-lobed penmanship,
The Beadles: Gondwanan bonsai among
Less mature sheoak-wisps of the friable
Slope. Their scarlet flowers scripted a fusillade

In the thick olive-green bush.
The bus snarled up the gradient. Its pallid
Light frenzied spectral shapes into motion
But, by the time we reached drowsy Ebor,
The fusillade had softened into an afterglow.