

DEVOUR

Patrick White was laughing and he only laughed once
so I knew he was joking. He told me if we devoured poetry
like we devour KFC we wouldn't call it poetry. Airports
are amazing. Queues at KFC counters in airport terminals
are amazing. Tell me, why are KFC queues the longest
when there are so many healthy food options? It's like
popcorn chicken appeals to the teenager in us all.
Or maybe it's human nature to choose bad over good.
Until there's a crisis. Then we all get crushed in the rush for the EXIT.
Me and Patrick tried to talk beyond good and evil
but in the dream he morphed into the Crime Minister, swam
in hippopotamus milk and complained he was impoverished
because he couldn't afford bathers. The strips I peel off my Libra pads
are stuffed with facts like Hippopotamus milk is pink.
Like stressed spelt backwards is desserts.
Like the collective noun for a group of ferrets is business.
Like Hippopotomonstrosequipedaliophobia is the fear of long words,
as if there isn't enough in Australia to be afraid of.
As if there isn't enough to be afraid of.
I scour my Libra pad strips for facts like the difference
between a dickbrain and a dickhead.
Like how to run for your life when you use a wheelchair.
Like the value of kickbacks Big Coal receive every year
from the Australian Government.
I would rather read facts than have a period.
I would rather read facts than listen to the Crime Minister.
I would rather write facts than listen to the Crime Minister.
If I was a fact writer for Libra I'd write things like
Your chance of finding a horse on fire in a river is extreme.
Like the Crime Minister's solution for bushfire management is land clearing.
Like Treppenwitz is the German word for something that were it not true
would seem like a bad joke.
I am sorry for putting facts into poetry. I am easily overwhelmed
when I'm bleeding. Now that I'm nearly not bleeding
I am more easily overwhelmed.
Peri-menopause has made me realise I am mortal.
Catastrophic bushfires made me realise the earth is mortal.
I am amazed it took me so long to wake up to these things.
I understood the life of an artist far sooner. In my twenties actually,
after reading Patrick's *The Vivisector*. Being an artist is like
discovering the lost songs of Moses at a Miley Cyrus concert.
Being an artist is like advising the Crime Minister
to change his climate policy settings, and he does.

Being the earth is like falling in love with a picture of yourself
in Vanity Fair, only to discover:

It's an artist's impression of your extinct ancestor.

Being the earth is like trying to cut the moon out of a lump of coal.

I like writing Sunday poems on a Friday. I like reading
astronomy journals in the loo. If only we could skip through
the Virgo Cluster of Galaxies with its curdled milk texture
100 million light years away. It's so hard to stay

to be known to be near.

Yesterday, while I should have been fighting fires
or writing enflamed poetry, I bought a piece of French blue
from the Smelly Cheese Shop. It was small and perfect and blue
and I ate the whole thing for lunch with Seville Orange Marmalade
on Mary's Gone Crackers organic gluten-free wholegrain vegan
basil and garlic crackers. Some days, that kind of comfort?
It's all we can hope for.