

Don't go there

"Don't go there" he says
I go anyway
The patterned soles of my boots leave patterns in the grey
dust.
He looked done in,
The man in the heavy yellow suit
He'd been there
He'd looked upon Hades and survived.
He dropped the hose and walked on
Leaving his own patterned tread among the grey forest
ashes
In a stupor I thought.
He'd said "Don't go"
I go anyway.

It's the quiet that gets you
Or is it the explosions that create the quiet?
The sudden jets of sparks
The glowing hell holes once mighty forest giants
Fighting death with fiery life
Sighing loudly, shifting, collapsing with the effort.
Striving to stay alive
"Watch them big 'uns" he shouts
"They ain't done yet
Don't go there."
I go anyway.

Smoke catches at my throat
I want to run
It gently shrouds the ravaged bushland
Calming it
"Even the wallabies are coughin'" he'd said.
"Poor buggers.
I need a rifle, not a water hose" he'd said.
"Don't go there" he shouts
"But!" I say ... I go anyway

The sky has been swept away
Gone with the cataclysm of fire
A rain drop
Big, falling slowly to plop in the pattern of my boot
Like a tear.
More tears, slow, mixing with my own tears.
This is the legacy we leave our children
A generation angry, deceived, deserted.
I think "I won't go there"
I go anyway

This is our greed
Our political ignorance
Our indifference to our earthly home.
They said "Don't go there"
We went anyway.

How do we apologise?
How do we atone?
I had to go there to see.

Tears mingle with raindrops
Falling fast now plumping into the ashen earth.
A blackened hand touches my arm
He's back.
"You had to go" he says
I nod.