

*KOONUNG CREEK*

By Mark Cornell

Koonung flows  
dark and swollen  
in the Autumn rain,  
Beyond neon roads  
behind back gardens,  
you hear her surging cascade.  
Koonung roves,  
her murky brown flanks  
gather in the bobbing wildflowers,  
Below the dying grey glow  
she swamps the crumbling grey banks  
to hiss through the still suburban hours.  
Ancient creek bed within which it's said  
Fish glide down the Dreamtime  
to stalk below the ashen sun as he sets,  
red below the smouldering stumps of the sub-divide.

*WIND GIFTS*

Moonlight straddles the edge  
of the dark peninsula,  
curling ribbons of white  
swell to break this leaden darkness.

Waxing winds coil through  
the shattered shore stones, hissing  
tidal songs coldly brew  
behind our glowing faces leaning  
for relief into the flaring hearth;  
whistling tunes flow from our thawing hearts.

***THE CHANGE***

A crossbow of stars burns through  
the rippled seashore cloud,  
mauve sheets fall from the moon  
to wrap around the skeletal bowed  
gum trees glistening with dew.  
Searching the night sky for truth  
you find the pine pyramid shroud,  
ships groan below the shoulders of Orion  
silver wind hauls up the cold south,  
whale circles her calf in gentle motion  
her breath hisses through the night air,  
the Change brushes through my hair.

***OUR DUSK VISITOR***

As Dusk starts Golding in  
we receive our nightly visitor,  
Perched high on the gum's white limb

secure behind his grey green curtain.  
He weaves a delicate circling melody  
part of which he's learnt from our old neighbour,  
then he imitates a Spring breeze  
other times some crackling radio tune he's heard.  
We drop our conversation over a meal  
turn our eyes towards his gentle song,  
anxiousness from daily chores is healed  
as we take in the little sky messenger from beyond.

***MINNALOUSHI***

Minnaloushi, walky talky puss  
my companion of fifteen years,  
we bought you after moving out  
a furry fixture to our rental flat,  
Whenever I lounged on our couch  
you'd warble as you pounced  
on my lap then prepare my stomach  
for a nap, or off we'd go to the blessed  
realm of rest tea and conversation  
with my friend about a better nation.  
We'd read everything together, the news  
good novels, letters of youthful cheer,  
You were by my side when I wrote  
the big novel, short stories these poems,  
your little engine purred as I stroked

your ears, chin, flanks, your nose  
butted my fingers asking for more  
your scent coated my hands  
your tale flicking, your stretching claws  
reminding me of love's simple demand.  
Minnaloushi I stroked you all night as you lay  
awaiting the final rounded sleep,  
your green eyes wide open to see  
winged eternity usher you to her keep.  
Although my study's empty  
I can still smell your fragrance  
Your little soul snuggles into me  
helps me shuffle through tomorrow's events.

***SUNSET AT FANORE***

Fierce gold red sun  
melts over the isles,  
simmering old head lunges,  
dragging flared canopies behind,  
violet fingers of cloud  
darken, crimson mists  
gather to shroud  
the outstretched solar limbs,  
blood red flames hang over my brow  
flagstones catch fire,  
vast blue blinding patches hover

over this rippling vision of time.  
Lighthouse of Aran hurls his flame  
rhythmic beams flare my study white,  
flickering hearth shadows bounce on the pane,  
tides bear me through this long writing night.

***THE CROSSING***

You no longer want to hold my hand  
perched upon a new chapter of your life,  
Beaming as you make your stand  
you cross the street towards the other side.  
With your gold uniform and floppy blue hat  
I understand it's time to say goodbye,  
I waddle behind you carrying your huge bag  
below the chalk moon Summer sky.

I say to you always feel free,  
to ask questions, help is always close by.  
We walk through the gates busy  
with children's games and adult flight.  
I hesitate but you just choof along  
Have I lost the wonder for life's song ?  
Sixties music blares from the speakers  
joyous soundtrack to my childhood repeats.

I help you find your name to put your bag away  
kiss your golden hair tell you to have a good day,

your closest mate who counted the sleeps  
little chin starts to shake but doesn't weep.  
His Dad asks me how I am, good I bleat out  
while my eyes stare down at the grey asphalt.

Your blue eyes tell me your ok  
I wave goodbye and turn away,  
to march through the stilled roads  
and echoing hollows to home.  
Time; Merciless and Steamrolling  
Grounds dry our brief daydreaming.  
Sixties music bles from the speakers  
joyous soundtrack to my childhood repeats.

***SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN***

She's the ocean's first embrace  
her green shoulders of mountain ash lace  
rest high above the silver street lights,  
red ribbons glide along her side at twilight.

Like her sister the ever changing sky  
she's a vision not structured by man,  
She stretches across the hazy afternoon light  
on her side like a blue dreaming dragon.

Sugarloaf Mountain I remember you as a child,

weaving around your old roads watching the city  
shrink from your black flanks on a summer night,  
my sister hiding her face as the gold stars took pity  
upon our endless yellow furnace days at school  
your rising valley breath ruffled and soothed,  
Dad's cigarette ash glowed like a meteor  
while Mother murmured through the gear's roar.

Sugarloaf where forest shadows blanket homes  
swaying limb cathedrals scratch the backbone  
of the constellations circling our brief stay,  
their patterns alter while you knowingly remain.

**Bio:**

Mark is of Irish ancestry. As a child he grew up listening to stories; either in the form of tall tales told by his extended family or the lyrics of his favorite songs on the radio. He started writing poetry when he was seventeen. He has traveled to Ireland twice and during one of these visits was married to Kimberly in a Registry Office in Dublin. Mark has been writing Short Stories and Novels for a number of years. He took family leave for three years to look after his son Thomas. He now works as a Conciliator with Consumer Affairs.