



Poetry of Wellington Park

kunanyi – the mountain – mount wellington

Greg Lehman

muwinina. mumirimina. nununi.

These tribes of Aboriginal families
know the mountain as more than rock.
kunanyi, it is called.

Tribal land made in sacred country.

Season of rain and wisdom of stories past,

kunanyi brings forth life.

For two thousand generations past. And forever more.

Songs and dance honour this power.

Listen. These words still carry in the wind,
so that kangaroo and mountain berry
will always grow
in kunanyi's forest cloak.

Sourced from the mountain...a people's perspective, Emily Stoddard, 2004

my kunanyi (Mt Wellington)

Rosie Smith

My backyard, My playground, My mountain home
I love your many beauties
The many paths that take me up and down around and around
over many rocky valleys through running creeks and falls
Water as fresh as the snowy caps upon your mountain top
You bear scars upon your being from days gone by and of today
Yet you remain proud in all your glory
You give positive direction to those that are lost, you are harsh
at times and protective at others
The sun shines on and upon your many hidden places, air so clean
it burns your nostrils with each breath
Fragrance of the eucalypt and native bushes and mossy wet
Ground surround your being like no other
You have felt the depths of my anger and the extent of my
happiness
I love your rocky ways and forest tracks I sit with your many
shelters and feel the warmth you offer
I have smelt and felt you through rain, snow, mist, autumn
winds and scorching hot days
I have walked you in the early morning and late at night
You have been a guiding spirit for our people of yesteryear as
you are to people of today
You are home to many living things and to creatures of the night
You have given me and shown me the value of living and all that
is life
you are my kunanyi

Sourced from River of Verse, A Tasmanian Journey 1800-2004, ed. Helen Gee, 2005

Nature's Dreams

Danielle Evans

I stand atop the mountain plain
Where beauty meets the sky
This gentle day awaiting rain
A poet's breath would cry

For other's penned more eloquently
This celestial hiding place
Yet never more completely
Than the glory on my face

With constant grace so richly crowned
It lacks my defences
In knowing I have truly found
A palette for my senses

Regarding not the rays
That melt against my brow
In softened words I praise
The wonder here and now

From Heights unmeasured gravity
In snowy caps to stream
I only feel unworthy
To survey nature's dream

Sourced from *The Sunday Tasmanian*, 14 March 2004

Hobart

Lex Banning

Porpoises play in the channel,
gleefully changing their elements
for the benefit of passing tourists.

Stone grey buildings curving
along the waterfront;
old stores and public houses.

The city is tight and orderly,
largely built by the felonious
hands of the bonded ancestors,

whose bones lie underneath
the levelled turf of the park
behind the Houses of Parliament,

and whose tombstones are made to form
an earth-retaining wall
about its circumference.

The grass is long by the wall,
only the curious mainlander
comes to read the inscriptions.

For the city is sober now,
and given to circumspection;
Even with ten o'clock closing.

Wind on the mountain's summit,
fretting the teeth of the basalt;
distant snow in the sun.

Headland piled on headland,
and at the foot of the mountain
a scattering of habitation.

Sourced from *Along these Lines – from Trowenna to Tasmania, at least two centuries of peripatetic perspectives in poetry and prose*, edited by C.A. Cranston, 2000

A Mountain Sequence

Andrew Sant

1 Photograph in a Pub

In the foreground
an imported scene with
Georgian warehouses
stacked like boxes
along the quay; boats
jam Sullivan's Cove
with their arrivals
and departures –

so much activity
so far off the map:
things haven't changed;
a gunboat, sails lowered
protects the scene,
dominates the foreground
of the picture where
curious seagulls veer

and dip (they're not
quite used to being British).
I go to this scratched photo
to see what it was like in the 1840s
whilst having a drink
-this pub was here-
and see what's changed, what cannot:

Mount Wellington (a local
Everest or Fujiyama)
is erected, snow capped,
pictorial, behind it all,
distantly accepting the new and frantic settlement
though without the road
like a cord wrapped

round its vast treed
and bouldered breadth.
It looks so fresh, unchanged.
You feel a sense of dominance
looking back, the past's
activity overcome; the mountain,
ageless, corrects that,
ignoring years like melting snows.

2 *Bush walk*

Hours extend into the length
of the track; keep going

(footsore, invigorated)
past these trees and these trees

that extend forwards
and back: it's a landscape

which you continue
overcoming, like an obsession;

variations, those dips
and rises, on a theme

that feeds on itself
like a forest

whose variety multiplies
within its own

limits so that
discovery is to surprise

what fresh nuances
of light, perfume, air

shed on this track, these trees
absorbing recurrence.

3 *Bearing*

It's as if a school of whales
beached themselves here and fossilised,
these ponderous boulders seem dimly animate
even as I leap across them.

You can locate where you live
by taking your bearings off the estuary
if it's, otherwise fathoms of cloud will
swell round so there's only you, and the boulders floating here.

4 *Weathers*

Sunlight multiplying the plateau's boulders
that seem composed for leaping from

one to another; it's a playground
for the wet wind that jostles

the low, clutching growth of shrubs,
roots stiff with age and exposure, spindly

and twisting over the thin soil, bleached
rabbit droppings; plants breed sparsely

at ground level, undercover, cleansed
by the thoroughness of the weathers,

the snow melting back in spring,
rinsing everything it encounters as it goes.

5 *The Transmitters*

Transmitter, fast talkers, reaching
beyond the sunswept postcard views
across boatless estuaries, forests ignorant
of populations where roads wind in pursuit
of single, weatherboard houses
signalling again the defeat
of pre-historic silence.

When I've walked the hushed
streets of small, one hotel settlements
at night and heard only the voices received on T.V.
penetrating the darkness, the voices
of other countries seem visitant, dream-like,
making any dimly lit shack a home.

Those voices, never before so adaptable-
it's a kind of cunning that requires
neither bushcraft nor food
as they travel, with messages,
out towards far destinations: say,
somewhere a hotel's collapsed, significantly
as a fallen tree's echo
on the edge of this wilderness. In houses,
with lights on, receivers translate the silences
of the understanding air, each
house a stopping place, relieving
the air of its load
of distraction, boredom, the variety
of ploys used to gain invitation;
south of here there's the sea, freezing
uninhabited islands to home in on.

Sourced from *Along these Lines – from Trowenna to Tasmania, at least two centuries of peripatetic perspectives in poetry and prose*, edited by C.A. Cranston, 2000

Nailing Pooranateré

P.R. Hay

On a proposal to erect a cable car on Mt Wellington, Tasmania.

This mountain now. Assume it rich and slippery
of mood. Let it nudge the morning talk abroad.
Let it slip within the old town's skirt.

From the steps of the House of Blah I see
a fret of green life reaching forward
from the upturned shield of rock and dirt.

The men of power are brought back to earth
and this cannot be tolerated. The suits
grow a nervous twitch. Birth
and renewing birth threaten manly hubris.

Then hear the edict of the oddly wise.
This beloved thing of stars and snow and thunder
has to go. We will tread it under.
Clap it in irons. Put out its wildering eyes.

Sourced from *Island*, Summer 95/96