

# Buddha Moon

Mark Tredinnick<sup>1</sup>

The boy goes out into the night,  
                where the cold is deeper than it should be  
and he frightens something onto the balcony roof. He puts his hands to his ears  
and runs back in asking us *What did he say?*  
*What did he say?*

The Buddha moon hangs  
                                   between this world and the next.  
 Someone's torn the night's clothing and it falls at our feet  
 and the naked stars stare down as if they know  
 what's coming next.

Tonight there is nothing  
between us and all of us  
are hallowed and all of us lost. Later we sleep and if the others come they come  
as possums on the roof and mice in the walls and they slide  
in beside us: two small boys.

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## River syntax

*For Les and Eugene and the Kedumba River*

### I. Upstream

In the grammar of the river people,  
it is said, every verb runs upstream  
or down. Current becomes voice. But which way  
is active, do you think, and which passive?

Upstream we are refused; upstream we rage.  
Downstream we surrender and imagine  
and age. Upstream one dreams; downstream one hopes.  
One verb will make a future for itself;

another verb, defeated, has turned back  
for something it was in the beginning  
and never shall be now. For, look: current  
becomes tense; topography, destiny.

### II. Down

If you dam a river, do you speak an  
intransitive verb? And what about you,  
speaking of damnation, which direction  
would you be headed then? A dry creekbed —

is that the river in subjunctive mood?  
For when she flooded — remember those days —  
she was imperative; and when she goes  
the way she should, she's indicative — though

what she indicates is never the same  
thing twice. And everything you did not  
say or do and might yet become — is that  
the aquifer, and is it running dry?

For the river is your soul; the river  
is your sentence. You are what she's trying  
to say, and she is what you will become,  
if she can only get your syntax straight.

## **Cowshed One**

Straight from throwing what's left of yesterday to the hens  
and loosing them into their yard, I walk to the cowshed and I bank

a fire in the stove in the room where by now in years now gone  
sixty cows would already have stood and let themselves be milked

and sent back to the paddock and the river and I walk  
back to the house for coffee while the fire makes up its mind.

Through the French doors I look back at the yellow shed askew  
in the morning and I watch it send up smoke into the rain and I think

my shed is a ship the world has sailed past in the night. But then the news  
comes on the radio and there's the world run aground again on my shore.

—Burradoo, 25 April 2007