

ASHLEY HAYWOOD

Portrait

I

tableland face
seed-heads full
of epitaphs

blinker the eye
of blank paper:

 a protected whole
 for a time

 for a time
steps fold in old graves
fertile tussock mounds

II

gravediggers arrive in the night
with shovels and lunch-bags and *gently*

disturb
this face of grasses
the quiet of closed throats
 ruminating undulations
 practising all the possibilities of water.

apple cores

like pumice stone

but no sonic

echo

of sand and sand on steel in the airy open

III

what is in your *mouths*?

parched clay slabs

thousands gaping

layered like accidents

shattered crockery

fossilised shell

stone tools

and

and some

spell

riddles

who ate whom?

self-making

is unpretty

a body turned inside out

is all scratches and teeth to make a itself into a net

or nests

tail-ends fall from the sky

but who can tell

what this body won't cough-up to feed itself?

IV

foamy crests in the distance

wailing mourners come

a sea of habits

take flight
of white noise

songs

call up the crows

charcoal
sketching the open
into a maelstrom

they deal a death blow
quick as flint

V

ashes buried in the steppes

you see

you see!

you were always mostly empty space