

Jo Gardiner

After Weeks of Rain, a Morning Walk and Glossy Black Cockatoo

To love with all one's soul and leave the rest to fate.

—Nabokov

In the dream it rained so much inside the house
the water rose to elbow deep

and all the lamps went out.

On the road to Broken Rock Ridge, a morning
damp with moss and forest litter.

Among the stones a shard of glass,

and in the breeze that drew the hair across
the backs of trees that drank

the dregs of night and what

the earth had drunk, her sudden voice—a hinge's
creak, a house breathing in and out

the sun that warms its wood.

On the she-oak's shoulder, she cracked a cone
and freed the song inside a sky wide enough

to amplify the narrowest of hearts.

In her mourning gown of polished dusk, she flared
inside the air's cool arms.

Frilled and tucked, her crimson tail a Chinese
lantern in the light, she leaped

away, and left a bird inside the dream—
a lamp to burn

the winter from the coming dark.