

Through Mach 1, 60,000 feet.  
There are gold hills, old stones as well,  
carried in the mind —  
the Concorde's fuselage cold,  
the young hand touching a shoulder — voice  
smooth, polite — "Canapés sir? Bollinger?"

#### PRISCILLA WHITE'S LUNCHEON PARTY

The guests in the drawing room began  
talking. Caught in the silence of old  
furniture, they had waited  
for a signal from the other side of the door —  
so still a maid might have whisked them  
off a chair or a sofa  
with an ostrich tail duster — not one  
eyelash would have moved.

Suddenly the signal, caught by each,  
ran wildfire sentences together.  
Did you read that the Prime Minister died  
in his dreamless sleep? Rosemary White  
had three children at the same time —  
someone else died, I've forgotten his name,  
a niece born on the Horn of Africa — birds  
migrating — lemons ripe in Seville.

Somehow all the pieces of their conversation  
made sense to the tables and chairs.  
There was an Art Deco water color, a Siren  
playing a sitar, in a blue pastel gown flowing  
around her like seawater — Everyone looked —  
Silence — a feel of wavelets on the feet,  
sandcastles subsiding as the tide  
played its "touch and tell" game with the truth.

At 5PM the front door closed on the last guest.  
A halfeaten biscuit was on a plate, a glass of Chardonnay  
untouched, warned "Do not disturb the disorder" —  
statements about children and husbands,  
the latest BMW's ABS brakes. Fragments of speech  
no one will ever decipher — and the seawater coming  
and going — tides brushing away sandcastles, Rosemary  
White, Seville — a feeling no one was here.

#### ENCOUNTER WITH A FOX WHEN I WAS 10

I remember the red fox  
on a hill right at dawn —  
I had come there to inspect  
the rabbit traps I set

the evening before —  
take the small hunched forms  
out of the jaws of iron  
kill and skin them —  
reset the traps for more.

I sat looking downhill  
at the river sliding by,  
silent and the steel dusty  
light of the rising sun,  
leaf shadow — and the cut stone  
that I was, not moving one breath —  
so the fox came within three feet ....

Facing, we stared at each other,  
stone blasted, still,  
no twitch of arm  
nor even his green eye looking in  
as he dug into me and I  
to him, deep to  
ancestry and origin

stood there, sat there — still —  
among the rabbit carcasses  
and the skins and the sun's blade  
skinning the dawn sky,  
each powerful as an anvil,  
stock still in the knocked silence  
of beast against beast against hill  
and the cold metallic grip of the traps  
touching one another  
and the day's kill.

— John Millett

Berrima NSW-2577, Australia

#### AFTER TU FU

This June snow  
has surprised everyone —  
fat flakes have dusted  
the branches, dirt and  
pine needles. Even the  
clumps of lady bugs don't  
know what to make of it.  
Spreading our blanket,  
we picnic all the same.