

Short-list

- 'The Lawn'
Ray Liversidge, VIC

The lawn

Spring has returned. The earth is like a child that knows poems.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

He is mowing the lawn, again.
Again it is unnecessary.
Like pulling grey hairs from
A greying head.
On another warm November evening
I put down the newspaper with
The interminable stories on emissions trading,
The growing number of climate change sceptics,
To watch him do what he does
Every other Sunday:
Go at it like there's no tomorrow.

I want him to stop mowing the parched lawn,
But his body moves with such speed and purpose
That I fear he is afraid of grass
And its slow and chthonic growth.
I want him to take the lawn clippings collected
(Like analects) in the grass catcher,
And spread them at the foot of the tree
Leaning into the corner of his garden.
I want to shake him like the wind shakes his cottage garden
When it blows hot and hard from the north.
I want him to enter his house
When he has finished using the edge trimmer
And pick up a dictionary
And look up the word concinnity...
I need him to listen to the earth,
Know poems.